STATEMENT

By H.E. Mr. Milorad Šćepanović

Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations

at the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee

Agenda Item 109 – International drug control

10 October 2013

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Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during this session, I would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of the full support of the delegation of Montenegro in your efforts to lead the work of the Committee to its successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

No country is immune or unaffected to the phenomenon of drug trafficking as it represents a significant threat to the international peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and rule of law. In order to effectively address world drug problem, first line of action and perhaps the most important one has to be at the national level. The Government of Montenegro has placed the battle against organized criminal groups, including illicit drug traffickers, at the top of its list of priorities. In this sense allow me to recall that Montenegro is party to all relevant UN conventions. While taking a responsible and proactive approach, and with technical and expert assistance and cooperation of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, my country has recently adopted ambitious national drug strategy for the period 2013-2020 as well as the Action Plan 2013-2016 for the strategy implementation. Strategy follows closely the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on the World Drug Problem. The National Drug Strategy and the related Action Plan, which draw from international experience and lessons learnt from around the world, symbolize a firm determination of Montenegro to seriously tackle the challenge of fighting illicit drug trafficking, drug abuse and drug production in a coherent and integrated manner. My Government’s proactive approach towards fostering efficient cooperation and developing a strategic direction for combating drugs-related challenges has been acknowledged and praised by the UNODC.
Montenegro remains resolute in further strengthening and developing the ongoing prevention and treatment efforts and measures, with special focus on youth as a group that needs to be protected from the harmful effects of drugs. The National Council for the Prevention of Drug Abuse, with the President of Montenegro at its helm, was established to institute measures and activities aiming to prevent drug abuse as well as to treat and re-socialize drug addicts.

By undertaking health-centered perspective and human dimension on drug use and dependence as inseparable part of the comprehensive and balanced approach of the national policy on drug control, Montenegro is continuously working, together with UNODC, to enhance drug dependence treatment. UNODC has also donated special equipment to Montenegro’s forces for detecting illegal goods that will contribute to our overall actions in fighting drug trafficking.

Mr. Chairman,

It goes without saying that in order to effectively address world drug problem national efforts, although crucial, are not sufficient. They have to be complemented by the joint regional and international actions and cooperation, at all levels. In this direction, full implementation of UN conventions and other international instruments and international partnerships, including partnerships with as well as partnerships of international organizations, are vital in order to reach strategic and operational coherence. One such example of joint inter-agency approach designed to help states in curbing illicit drug trafficking is the regional project of UNODC and World Customs Organization called “Container control programme”, in which Montenegro actively participates. Paris Pact Initiative, aimed at combating opiates trafficking coming from Afghanistan, represents another framework for international anti-drug cooperation, where UNODC made a contribution with detailed analysis on the flow of narcotics on the territory of Western Balkans.

We have to recognize the important and valuable work and broad support of the UNODC in assisting and coordinating the efforts of member states in countering illicit drugs. For this reason I would like to emphasize the significance of ensuring predictable and sustainable financing so that the UNODC can be in position to deliver on its mandate and thus continue to make a difference in the global fight against drugs.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to conclude by expressing my country’s readiness to participate in the 2014 Commission of Narcotic Drugs High-level review of the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on the World Drug Problem, as this would be an important event that would set the stage for the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs.

Thank you very much.