Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by thanking Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences, for their reports. I would like to congratulate Mrs. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on her appointment as Executive Director of UN Women, wish her every success during her tenure and pledge Montenegro’s full support for her efforts. I take this opportunity to commend Mrs. Michele Bachelet, the former Executive Director, and Mrs. Lakshmi Puri, Acting Executive Director, for their remarkable work and able leadership of the entity.

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

We acknowledge that the year behind us brought some important developments for our continuing efforts to advance women’s rights. By adopting strong conclusions on violence against women during the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) we made significant headway for strengthening women’s rights. It is important now that all stakeholders, in particular states, comprehensively implement the agreed outcomes of the CSW. Another step forward was the adoption of the Security Council resolution 2106 on ending sexual violence in conflict. Ending all forms of violence against women and girls represent one of the priorities for Montenegro, at the national as well as international level. It is for this reason that we welcome the Ministerial Declaration on Ending Sexual Violence. Montenegro is proud to have joined 123 states that have endorsed the Declaration so far. Sexual violence and the use of rape as weapons of war are unacceptable, while ending impunity and bringing justice to
victims and survivors remain crucial. While welcoming renewed attention and focus to this issue, it is clear that we must redouble our efforts if we want to eradicate this scourge that endangers many societies and women and girls around the globe.

Mr. Chairman,

Ever since regaining the independence in 2006 and establishing solid legal and institutional framework for achieving gender equality, Government of Montenegro has been firmly dedicated to the improvement of status of women, focusing on their political participation, economic empowerment and life without violence. Our commitment is also manifested through the fact that Montenegro is party to all major international instruments for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. We are strongly dedicated to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action, UN Security Council resolution 1325 and other instruments that aim for gender equality.

With regard to the implementation of gender equality policy in Montenegro and equal opportunities for women and men in all areas of social life, particular attention has been paid to greater participation of women in politics, economic empowerment of women and encouraging entrepreneurship, as well as measures to combat violence against women. Following Government’s proactive and strategic approach, cooperation between relevant state institutions and NGO sector resulted in the development and adoption of the new Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality for the period 2013-2017, which envisages nine priority areas for future activities that aim at full realization of women’s rights and gender equality.

Gender equality, as a matter of priority, has been incorporated in the MDGs national agenda for Montenegro. In this vein, ambitious goals and targets were set for the year 2015. In the area of economic empowerment, employment rate for women was set at 50%, while unemployment was placed at 9%. 2015 target for participation of women in elected bodies at national and local level, including the seats in the Parliament and ministerial positions in the Government, was set to be at 30%. Notwithstanding positive trends witnessed in many aspects (for example constantly decreasing participation of women in the total number of unemployed people), much progress and work is to be made in the upcoming period, especially regarding political and participation of women in decision making positions. Challenges also remain in areas of improving economic status of women, elimination of all forms of discrimination at the work, combating violence against women, especially domestic violence, encouraging women to start their own businesses, etc. New Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality will seek to effectively address this shortcomings. Moreover, elimination of stereotypes and prejudices about the position and role of women in the society is something we will continue to focus on, through multi-sectoral approach, education and public campaigns.
Montenegro firmly supports the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, as well as overall women, peace and security agenda. We are currently drafting the National Action Plan for the implementation of this resolution. Fulfilling obligations arising from 1325 resolution is part of the recently adopted Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality. Recognizing the importance of the said resolution, Montenegro organized regional seminar on “Women’s Role in Building Integrity and Promoting Good Practices in the Defence and Security Sector, Experience from South Eastern Europe”, which was held in Podgorica on 25 September 2013. The seminar was an opportunity to examine the challenges and opportunities faced by women from southeastern Europe in promoting good governance in the defence institutions. The programme focused on assessing needs and developing recommendations to further enhance the practical tools to assist building integrity with capacity-building activities.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by expressing our belief that the 2015 development agenda will ensure gender equality, as central element for our new development goals. My country will certainly continue to promote and be committed to this goal.

Thank you.