Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time I take the floor, let me begin by congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election. We have high confidence in your skills and leadership to bring this session to its productive conclusion. On that path you can count on Montenegro’s full support and cooperation.

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. However, I would like to offer some additional remarks about our national experience and some of the achievements of my country in the domain of the agenda item under discussion.

Mr. Chairman,

Efforts of countries to modernize their societies and economies by exploring the information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be viewed in the context of creating dynamic and integrated knowledge-based economies. The Government of Montenegro is fully cognizant of the importance and benefits associated with developing ICTs and internet for advancing inclusive information society and strengthening economic, social and cultural cohesion and integration. Therefore, my country has so far undertaken many activities and implemented numerous projects and measures to make sure that we follow as closely as possible the trends of the modern world in ICTs. In this vein, we are dedicated to taking concrete steps to continue building up our normative framework, including through introduction of new and modern legal provisions and laws for knowledge-based society, in order to harmonize our legislation fully with highest European and international standards. Furthermore,
we have focused on the development of information-communication infrastructure, education and training of our staff as well as on awareness raising and affirmation of the ICTs, that is the significance ICTs have for the overall development of a country as a whole.

As a result of this comprehensive strategic approach, we have reached tangible progress on many fronts. In 2011 Montenegro was ranked 44th in the world in competetiveness in the field of ICTs. Our strongest aspect and at the same time pillar of our ICT development is competence of individuals for the use of ICTs, where we took 37th place. Our achievements and advancements in health care sector, electronic communication, postal services, telecommunications and mobile communications, serve as strong platform that will enable future growth and expansion.

Recognizing the progress made so far, and with an aim to continue to follow modern global trends, Government of Montenegro adopted the Strategy for the development of information society for the period 2012-2016. Strategy, which encompasses electronic communication and broadband access to internet, has a clear vision – to make Montenegro a digital society. Strategy sets some ambitious goals – by 2016 we should have 200 Government internet services available to our citizens, we should also have all schools and universities equipped with computers and internet, etc. It will not be easy to reach these goals. But the potential that Montenegro has at its disposal, especially with our young population, and with synergetic actions between the key stakeholders, we have a reason to believe that our country will be further distinguished for the use of electronic services. By more intensively taking advantage of and relying on the use of modern technologies, our society will be able to function more efficiently, at all levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Montenegro will remain firmly commited to building modern, democratic and effective society, while taking decisive reliance on the possibilities and advantages of ICTs. We will continue to be open for cooperation with other states at all levels and to active participation in relevant regional and international initiatives.

As a crucial issue with wide-range implications, we are hopeful that ICTs will find its appropriate place in the post-2015 development agenda.

Thank you.