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Statement by MONTENEGRO

H.E. Ambassador Milorad Šćepanović

Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other International Organizations

Mr. High Commissioner,

Excellences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to address you on behalf of the Government of Montenegro and express the appreciation to the work and support of the UNHCR for refugees and displaced persons, particularly nowadays when challenges are increasing.

Taking care of refugees is a global and shared responsibility and it was necessary to find new approaches. In the world where there is a lot of polarization, we are happy that 18 months long multilateral process lead to finalization of the document that will enable international community to address one of the most sensitive issues – refugees. The adoption of this document will improve coordinated activities of international community in providing timely response to refugee movements and supports to host countries. We commend the Assistant High Commissioner Turk for his leadership in the process of consultations of the Global Compact, ensuring active and constructive engagement of all member states and civil society.

Montenegro was actively engaged in all rounds of formal consultations and we are pleased that all our proposals are reflected in the Global compact. This document puts forward new vision of how international community will engage and we strongly believe that GCR will enjoy systematic and broad support.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to point out achievements of Montenegro in resolving the issue of refugees, displaced and internally displaced persons. As reliable partner, Montenegro undertakes all measures and activities for eventual acceptance of migrants and refugees in the case of a sudden influx, in line with international standards and national capacities. The Government of Montenegro has prepared the Plan of Action for this situation and established Operational team. We opened Centre for migrants and prepared the special locations for refugees' reception. The Border Police Department continuously implement the Plan for Enhanced State Border Control, through enhanced presence of patrols at the border and checkpoints of the main roads towards the border.

We are conducting a number of activities to improve socio-economic status of refugees and displaced persons, with special focus on the education, health care and social protection. Government in cooperation with the UNHCR Representation in Montenegro continuously assists to displaced persons and internally displaced persons to apply for resolving their status.

Law on International and Temporary Protection of Foreigners has been implemented since 1 January 2018, which ensures efficient mechanisms for asylum seekers as in the EU countries, and access to adequate protection and fair treatment. In accordance with the newly adopted Law on Foreigners, the mechanism for establishing statelessness will be included and activities will be undertaken to recognize status of stateless persons, and Montenegro is in exclusive group of countries that regulated this question.

Montenegro in cooperation with neighbouring countries has successfully implemented several sub-projects through the Regional Housing Programme, which resulted in permanent resolving housing issues for displaced and internally displaced persons (6,063 individuals/1,177 households).

In order to respond to the increased number of migrants Montenegro needs additional accommodation capacities, funds for providing financial assistance and costs to these persons during the procedure of their accepting and leaving. Additionally, there is a need for a comprehensive mechanisms for regional cooperation, which will help to address its root causes of migrations, in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit and in line with international law.

I would like to emphasize the adoption of Global compact as the excellent opportunity to make strong commitments and concrete initiatives for providing support and ensure political endorsement at the highest level. I use this opportunity to reaffirm the support of Montenegro to Global compact, and our readiness to remain reliable partner in ensuring full implementation of the GCR.