

**Statement by H.E. Milorad Scepanovic, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to UNOG and other International Organizations in Geneva**

**11 November 2019**

**Second Ambassadors' Round Table on Investing in the SDGs**

Mr. President Sarkissian,

Mr. Secretary General Kityi,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank UNCTAD for the invitation to participate at this very important and timely event, as Montenegro believes that the implementation of the Agenda 2030 is of utmost importance and that the discussion on means to foster SDGs implementation will contribute to the achievement of different development objectives.

Since the launch of Sustainable Development Goals, and the development paradigm shift from MDGs to SDGs, it has become clear that the implementation of ambitious global agenda will require that all resources be put together: sources from governments, philanthropic organisations, and also financial institutions and different stakeholders. It is estimated that meeting SDGs will require spending of projected 5 to 7 trillion US dollars per year, and at the same time, the implementation of proper policies and different frameworks.

Geneva "ecosystem" presents a unique system that hosts different actors working on diverse aspects of the SDG implementation including humanitarian response and human rights. The city presents the operational and technical hub of the UN and several multilateral agencies that have a wide array of thematic and academic expertise. Being a permanent representative at the relatively small mission, every day I witness abundance and richness of topics that diplomats in Geneva are encountering, and also how significant a collaboration between different entities is, as well as the importance of avoiding "silos" mind set with a view of achieving best results.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2016, after a comprehensive consultations, the Government of Montenegro adopted a National strategy for sustainable development until 2030. The Strategy defines principles, strategic goals, measures and sub-measures for achieving long-term sustainable development of Montenegro. In line with the transformative character of the National Strategy, we have committed ourselves to implementing harmonized, integrated, long-term sustainable development measures. We put in place a comprehensive structure of the line ministries and different public entities that allowed that intertwined character of the Strategy is well reflected. Also, we are strengthening the National Council for Sustainable Development, horizontally positioned organizational unit within the public administration system as we believe that the best results will be achieved through the harmonization of activities of numerous stakeholders at local and national levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Investment is a key driver for sustainable development, and attaining SDGs will not be possible without appropriate investment policies. Montenegro is working on the creation of the enabling environment and as a result, in the last 12 years, about 6.5 billion EUR have been invested in Montenegro, in the implementation of different projects in the fields of tourism, transport, energy, agriculture, and telecommunications. The net inflow of foreign direct investment in the first six months of 2019 amounted to EUR 227.3 million, which is 48% more compared to the same period last year. Through more efficient judiciary and institutions that provide protection and security of an unhindered business, we have strengthened the rule of law. We also reformed the banking system, defined that domestic and foreign investors has an equal status and also, liberalized our foreign trade system. Furthermore, several significant capital projects are underway, including construction of the Bar-Boljare highway, that will have a significant positive impact on the development of the country connecting north and south, and the construction of the Montenegro-Italy sub-marine energy cable project.

Mr. Chairman,

My country, Montenegro, is characterized by both multi-ethnic harmony and political stability. Montenegro is a firm supporter of multilateralism and in all fora we communicate that approach. We are developing good relations with our neighbors. Accession negotiations between Montenegro and the European Union were opened in 2012 and are in a well advanced phase, and Montenegro became a 29 NATO member state in 2017, which has contributed to Montenegro's attractiveness as an investment destination. The implementation of the concept of open market economy is bringing considerable and positive impulses to the country.

In this context, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with its network of embassies has a real opportunity to support the promotion and facilitation of the SDG-relevant investment in the country. The promotion of the SDGs related investments requires that the relevant institutions, on the first place the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – in charge for the economic diplomacy - and the Ministry of Economy, build partnerships with a broad range of institutions, including investment agencies, investment funds, donor agencies and relevant international organizations. I would particularly point out a significance of a good cooperation with Montenegrin Chamber of Commerce, Employers Union, and with the Montenegrin Investment Promotion Agency, which illustrates that the Agenda 2030 on global, but also on a national level, can only be achieved through the cooperation and partnerships.

I believe that this event will be a success, as the Ambassadors' Round Table does provide a comprehensive platform to discuss key and emerging issues in the area of investing in the SDGs that have a long term impact.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.