



STATEMENT

as delivered by Ambassador Slavica Milacic, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the UN, WTO and other international organizations in Geneva

**Agenda item 8 (c) Clearance and destruction of cluster munition remnants and risk reduction education
Geneva, 26 November 2020**

Mr. President,

As I am taking the floor for the first time, let me join the previous speakers in congratulating Switzerland on taking over the Presidency of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Montenegro welcomes the compromise solution of holding the first part of the Second Review Conference in virtual format due to the health situation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We see all this as another proof of Switzerland's traditional commitment to the Convention and its effective implementation. This is also an opportunity to express our gratitude to Afghanistan and Sweden for their contribution as thematic coordinators, as well as to the Implementation Support Unit for its diligent and hard work.

Mr. President,

Montenegro fully subscribes with the EU statement, and therefore I would like to make just a few comments in my national capacity.

Montenegro remains firmly committed to the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It has been demonstrated most notably by clearing all cluster munition remnants on its territory, in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the Convention.

This successful endeavor has been conducted under the framework of the "Country Coalition" concept with Norway as donor and the Norwegian People's Aid as an operator, contributing to the successful fulfillment of Montenegro's obligations under Article 4, before the deadline. Hence, in terms of cluster munition remnants, we are proud to be in position to officially declare that the territory of Montenegro is a free zone.

Having said that, it does not mean that this process was devoid of challenges. As shown during the implementation phase, the initially identified suspicious contaminated area of 1.71 square kilometers was about 10 percent larger, resulting in additional tasks.

Mr. President,

By completing this activity, we can confidently say that Montenegro has fulfilled all time-bound obligations under the Convention on the Cluster Munitions, before the deadline. In this regard, we are deeply grateful to Norway for the effective partnership and their diligent work and contribution.

It is also worth mentioning that additionally to clearing requirements, the Article 4 calls for further measures to prevent harm to civilians, stressing the importance of risk reduction and the risk education activities in this regard.

While we are proud of the mentioned achievements, Montenegro stands equally ready to fulfill other remaining obligations, notably those related to the victims' assistance.

Let me conclude, by recalling that Montenegro and Croatia have become the latest States Parties to successfully complete cluster munition clearance.

On this note, I would like to reassure you, Mr. President, of our full support to successful and action-oriented deliberations.

I thank you.