Vienna, 3 November 2014
President of Montenegro, H.E. Mr. Filip Vujanović

Dear UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,
Dear representatives of the UN member states,
Dear hosts, representatives of the Austrian Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address you on behalf of Montenegro and confirm that Montenegro joins the efforts of the United Nations and Secretary-General in solving special needs of the developing and least developed countries. Economic growth of these countries has significantly been limited due to their distance from the world market. As a transit and geographically small country, Montenegro sends a clear message from this Conference. I mean mobilization of additional international support for the landlocked developing countries as well as renewal of partnership with international financial and development institutions for these countries. This is crucial for full implementation of the basic document for the work of this Conference - Almaty Programme of Action.

After ten years, we can be sure that development of infrastructure and connection, integration of transport systems, especially railway system, together with fostering legal basis for cooperation with transit countries, are prerequisites for economic progress of the landlocked developing countries. The role of the United Nations in this context is important, especially when it comes to better coordination of technical and financial assistance, primarily financial institutions - UN affiliations - World Bank, IFC and major donors, as well as ensuring concessional credits.

Moreover, we have been aware that, over the last decade, further mechanisms of support for so-called "closed" countries have been developed internationally, such as trade facilitation, aid for trade, aid for development, while the development of regional trade cooperation has certainly contributed to the improvement of economic situation in most of the 32 landlocked developing countries.

However, just like ten years ago, we have been faced today with basic problems of the "closed" countries as to: how to respond to their development challenges in the context of "distance"; how to ensure a sustainable economic development with high transport prices, how to attract capital, activate domestic resources and increase export revenues. The fact is that, besides achieved technological progress, direct coastal access and transport are very important for trade development, and trade is still a significant stimulus for economic progress.

The current time at which we discuss this topic, after a decade since the First Conference took place, has been marked by a high level of economic and other social uncertainty - stagnation of highly developed countries, slow growth of new markets and stagnation of most developing countries. New time and new challenges require new responses of the international community.

As a coastal and transit country, Montenegro is a good example for openness and support for landlocked countries. Montenegro has good political and good neighbourly relations, offers facilitations in border crossing/administrative and physical, with plans in expansion of
investments for joining regional infrastructure projects that will enable other countries to have easier and less expensive access to the coast.

In addition to infrastructure, stability in energy supply is also important for "closed" countries. Montenegro joins regional projects in this field as well, which will empower and connect many countries - both landlocked and transit ones. By joining Southern Corridor and Ionian Adriatic Pipeline: TANAP-TAP and IAP, whole region will be economically empowered. It is worth to mention here our plans for further improvement and investment in joint transport projects with Serbia and other Western Balkan countries - Belgrade Bar railway and development of the Adriatic Port of Bar.

It is also important for each transit country to be a reliable partner, partner for peace and political stability to the landlocked countries that are far away from world markets - and it is just what Montenegro is.

Mr. Secretary General, Montenegro remains committed to the Almaty Declaration, as well as to the Programme of Action, which address special needs of the landlocked developing countries. Montenegro will continue to support efforts of the member countries and UN system in developing Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation, including efforts within multilateral trade system as well.

We think that issue dedicated to a renewed support for landlocked developing countries should be included in the Post -2015 Development Agenda, which has currently been defined by the United Nations. Efficient participation of so-called "closed" countries in the international multilateral and regional trade system can, primarily, be achieved through the development of the transit system, and integrations in this direction should find their place among sustainable development goals of the United Nations after 2015.

I am confident, Mr. Secretary General, that with your commitment and leadership, this Conference will also be another success of the United Nations system towards a clear vision as to how, through better cooperation and evaluation of measurable results, a more efficient implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action can be ensured in the next period.
Once again, I welcome all participants of this international conference and wish a successful work.

Thanks for your attention.