

**First Global Refugee Forum
Geneva, 17-18 December 2019**

**Address by H.E. Mr Srđan Darmanović,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Montenegro**

Mr. High Commissioner,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address you today on behalf of Montenegro. The level of participation at the First Global Forum is another confirmation of our joint devotion and commitment to a stronger and more effective response to world's refugee crisis. We have pledged to act responsibly and in solidarity and now, it is time to uphold our promises, and to put our plans into action.

Millions of people are displaced worldwide. Taking care of them is a global and shared responsibility of all actors. Therefore, the adoption of Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) was a historical momentum, providing us with an exceptional platform to reinforce our strong commitments through initiatives aimed at supporting those who are the most vulnerable. It has in fact established the ground architecture for a compact and more equitable international response to large scale refugee crisis and it has proven to be a reliable guide to States and the international community in managing and hosting large number of refugees.

Today's meeting is another opportunity to further define our obligations and plans toward a full and comprehensive implementation of the GCR. However, the main preconditions for achieving our common goal will be a strong political will and devotion of States to act in line with our commitments, thus improving lives of the displaced people.

Mr. Chair,

Building on our own experience from the 90's, when Montenegro responsibly and devotedly provided assistance and protection to over 130,000 refugees

from the region, which accounted for about 20 percent of our population in total, we are ready to actively support our partners through the exchange of good practices and experiences.

From the very beginning of the process, Montenegro had taken active part and was engaged in all rounds of formal consultations on the GCR. We are pleased to see that the most of our proposals are integral part of the final document.

We will continue to be a reliable partner to our neighbours and to the wider international community in finding adequate and appropriate responses and solutions for those who are forced to leave their homes. In that regard, Montenegro has pledged to maintain the effective regime of protection of refugees through harmonization with the EU's good practices. We plan to increase our reception capacities by 2021 in line with international standards taking however special care of the protection of the vulnerable categories. We commit ourselves to the further development of a friendly socio-economic integration environment for refugees, as to foster their self-reliance through effective access to services, while ensuring that no one is left behind (in line with the Agenda 2030). Moreover, Montenegro remains devoted to support all regional efforts and initiatives to reinforce the asylum systems together with the relevant stakeholders.

It is my pleasure to inform you that Montenegro will co-sponsor two arrangements proposed by UNHCR for burden and responsibility sharing: one envisaged to facilitate solutions for a safe and dignified return of refugees, and the other dedicated to strengthening the protection capacity, through support to institutions, preparedness and contingency planning. My Government is strongly dedicated to undertake all necessary measures to implement these obligations.

Mr. Chair,

I use this opportunity to reaffirm our readiness to remain a reliable partner in ensuring full implementation of the GCR. Montenegro will continue to cooperate with the UNHCR and the international community in their engagement to provide new and better solutions for refugees and host countries.

Thank you.