**Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations and other international organizations**

**Statement by Montenegro**

**UPR 45th Session - Review of Belize**

**Geneva, 29 January 2024**

Montenegro welcomes the distinguished delegation of Belize.

Montenegro recognizes Belize’s efforts to develop policies and legislative frameworks to better protect and promote human rights in the country.

In this regard, we particularly acknowledge the adoption of the new Strategic Plan of Belize, the establishment of the National Constitutional Commission, the adoption of acts related to the protection of children, health care, and the fight against cybercrime. Now the emphasis should be on their effective implementation.

While we welcome the government's endeavors to address gender-based violence, we are concerned by reports of persistent domestic violence, and increasing cases of femicide. We encourage the Government to intensify efforts to prevent and combat violence against women, including strengthening the institutions in charge for implementing the existing legislative framework, and to effectively investigate all cases of violence against women and girls and bring the perpetrators to justice

Montenegro reiterates its call on Belize to extend an open invitation to the special procedure mandate holders, as well as to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings.

Montenegro recommends to Belize:

1. To establish an official moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it and consider appropriate awareness-raising measures to mobilize public opinion in support of abolition of the death penalty;
2. To designate a functionally independent national preventive mechanism, in line with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT);
3. To continue strengthening inclusion in, and access to, education, especially for students with disabilities and girls and women.

Montenegro wishes Belize a successful UPR cycle.

I thank you.