**Margaret Ann Uyehara, US Ambassador to Montenegro**

**Speech at the Open Government Partnership’s public consultations**

**Podgorica, Montenegro (12 October 2015)**

I am very glad to be here to discuss the importance of the Open Government Partnership initiative and to encourage everyone in this room and others who work on implementing this important project the aim of which is to improve the transparency in the government. As you know, the governments of the United States, United Kingdom and six other countries launched the initiative in 2011 by endorsing the Open Government Declaration.

Transparency is the best safeguard against corruption and tyranny. In a democracy, citizens must hold their government accountable and they only do this if the government is transparent about what it is doing. But creating a more open government requires the partnership between the government and civil society representatives who work together to improve openness and accountability

Constructive cooperation between the government and civil society make a huge impact in many areas, for instance, in creating new and advanced legislation in combating organised crime and corruption, finding solutions for increasing transparency of public administration and improving the services provided to citizens.

True cooperation demands a constructive approach by all stakeholders, it requires an atmosphere where proposals and initiatives coming from non-governmental partners are evaluated in the same manner as those proposed by the government. Everybody's ideas have to be debated, have to be heard in a transparent and respectable manner.

 All these discussions can be difficult, and sometimes noisy, but they are absolutely essential and today's event is part of that process. The aim of the OGP initiative is to develop a culture where all sectors of the society work together transparently to secure a better future. And I know that everybody here wants a better future for Montenegro. So, thank you very much for your time and I look forward to working with all of you and best of luck in your work today.