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**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN SERBIA
AT THE 700th MEETING OF
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 February 2008

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank my distinguished colleagues for the sincere congratulations. As we heard, there are some good news from Serbia: The second round of presidential elections, held on 3 February, was another proof that Serbia is capable of conducting elections in compliance with the highest democratic standards. All segments of the Serbian society, including media, NGOs, political parties and, last, but not least, the citizens showed maturity and responsibility with regard to the electoral process. It was with trust in this democratic procedure that 67.2% of registered voters cast their ballots, which was the highest turnout since the elections in autumn 2000, when Milosevic was forced to step down and democratic forces started to rebuild and reform the Serbian society.

Serbia's commitment to democratic principles and values, reflected in these elections, was forcefully confirmed by the assessments of ODIHR and Council of Europe observers. The old and new president of Serbia, Boris Tadic, won, according to preliminary results, 50.7 per cent of the votes, his political opponent from the Radical Party received support of 47.3 per cent of the voters.

Mr. Chairman,

Unfortunately there are also some not so good news from Serbia. While the outcome of the elections was supposed to overcome dilemmas concerning Serbia's future, we now face a serious government crisis due to rising tensions, the causes of which are not only home made.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman