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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
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AT THE OSCE ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

1 September 2021

**Working session IV: Early warning, conflict prevention,
crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation – lessons learned
and the way ahead (10th anniversary)**

Madam Chairperson,

When discussing this session's topic, we need to be guided by the fact that the OSCE – as a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and as a body intended to facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes within its area of responsibility – is equipped with a “toolkit” for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Effective performance by the OSCE in these areas is one of its key tasks, and this imposes certain obligations on the participating States as well. However, more on that later.

Looking back at the OSCE's working experience in the framework of the conflict cycle, we may note that, despite an impressive amount of experience in crisis management, which enables it to react to emerging conflict situations in a manner commensurate with their scale, the OSCE has in effect nothing to boast of when it comes to the effective use of its “arsenal” of available means for preventing and resolving conflicts in its area of responsibility. This is a bitter lesson to be drawing on the anniversary of the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council decision. And it also says a lot about the deepening crisis of trust in the OSCE as an internationally recognized mechanism for facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes and tackling crisis hotspots. In our view, we should engage without further delay in seriously reconsidering the current state of affairs together with the OSCE Chairmanship, the Secretary General, the Secretariat and the Conflict Prevention Centre. The authority and prestige of our Organization are at stake.

Nevertheless, the OSCE's existing resources offer a broad array of instruments that, whilst technically complete, still has the scope for necessary adjustments to be made. It goes without saying that some practices can and should be improved, modernized and updated in response to emerging new challenges. This should be an ongoing process. At the same time, the severity of the conflicts in the OSCE area varies and, unfortunately, it is clear that the existing instruments are not always used effectively. I would stress that it is the practical effectiveness of the existing mechanisms that is of cardinal importance.

The constant attempts to introduce elements not directly related to the task in hand into the conflict resolution process – in particular, elements taken from the ultra-liberal agenda that has recently come into

fashion in certain countries – are distracting the Organization from attending to its fundamental tasks and causing it to dissipate its resources. This was strikingly demonstrated yet again in the three-day online seminar on the conflict cycle organized by the Chairmanship in May, where “gender” issues basically left no room in the event’s programme for any of the practical aspects of the OSCE’s work on crisis response and overshadowed the question actually at issue.

And here is another important point. As we move forward in enhancing the crisis management toolkit, we should not allow any departure from the basic rule of consensus. This principle of collectively shared responsibility is paramount.

Finally, the need to establish more effective co-operation and co-ordination between the participating States and the Organization’s executive structures is emerging ever more clearly. There is a crisis of trust that needs to be overcome. It is understandable that the diplomats working at missions to the OSCE are prepared to defend to the utmost the national interests of the States they are representing. But our professional duty consists in looking for solutions and mutually acceptable compromises while leaving aside propagandist clichés. It is this approach, based on the political will of the participating States, that will enable us to harness the multi-dimensional potential of the existing set of conflict cycle tools fully, efficiently and successfully.

Thank you for your attention.