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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1220th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 March 2019

**In response to the report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and
Environmental Activities**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the distinguished Ambassador Vuk Žugić, and thank him for outlining the work priorities for the current year, many of which we share.

The economic and environmental dimension remains one of the pillars of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. In the 2003 OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, it was stated that economic co-operation among the participating States and international and regional organizations is an essential way to enhance stability and prevent conflicts in the OSCE area.

The OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Milan clearly demonstrated the unifying potential of the second basket. It showed that with political will, consensus may well be reached. As a result, two important documents were adopted – the Declaration on the Digital Economy as a Driver for Promoting Co-operation, Security and Growth and the Ministerial Council decision on human capital development in the digital era – which reflect the OSCE's collective approach to global economic processes. It is necessary not only to preserve, but also to strengthen the depoliticized and constructive nature of work in this field.

We note the Office's contribution to the successful launch of economic cycle events and the holding of the first preparatory meeting for the 27th Economic and Environmental Forum in January. Solid groundwork has been laid for discussing how to promote economic progress and security in the OSCE area through energy co-operation, new technologies, good governance and connectivity. We look forward to continued fruitful discussions during the second preparatory meeting in Bratislava in May.

We support the Office's commitment to further addressing issues related to digitalization. This topic is becoming increasingly evident in our everyday lives and requires close and constant attention. In the aforementioned Milan Ministerial Council Declaration,

the participating States committed themselves to strengthening co-operation in order to maximize the benefits and mitigate the risks associated with digital transformation. We consider it important to concentrate on consolidating the positive impact of digitalization on economic processes and society as a whole, rather than focusing on the search for the challenges and threats emanating from it. We have taken note of the Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator's efforts to develop co-operation with States on digitalization and to launch a thematic electronic platform. We firmly believe that this will contribute to a more active exchange of States' experience and best practices in the field of digitalization.

We support the Co-ordinator's efforts in the sphere of good governance and combating corruption. We are awaiting new conceptual contributions from the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption, Professor Paola Severino.

We welcome the Office's work to strengthen economic connectivity. An important component in that regard is the development of transport corridors, which is a key prerequisite for establishing economic co-operation and maintaining stability and security in the OSCE area. We look forward to the continuation of dialogue on economic connectivity in terms of the alignment of integration processes, such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the European Union, the One Belt, One Road initiative and others, in order to form a large Eurasian partnership.

In the light of the Slovak Chairmanship's priorities, there is demand for the Office's experience in the energy sector, the protection of critical energy infrastructure and the improvement of energy efficiency. More attention should be paid to the "clean" use of fossil energy sources and to the role of renewable energy sources in enhancing the sustainability of energy systems.

We note the Co-ordinator's activities in the environmental field. The discussion on disaster risk reduction held at the Economic and Environmental Committee on 18 February was extremely useful. This subject should be discussed further. We expect a fruitful exchange of experience in the field of hazardous waste management.

At the same time, as we have repeatedly stated, it is inappropriate to directly link climate change issues with threats to peace and security. In addition, the argument that inequality between women and men exacerbates environmental problems in the region is exaggerated. We urge the Co-ordinator not to introduce non-core aspects into the second dimension.

We advocate appropriate provision of financial and human resources for the Office's activities.

In conclusion, we should like to wish the distinguished Ambassador Žugić and his team success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.