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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1261st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 March 2020

On International Women's Day

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to congratulate all our esteemed female colleagues on the coming International Women's Day. We wish them happiness, good health, love, peace of mind, creative inspiration and professional success.

This holiday was first observed in our country on 2 March 1913, when lectures were held in St. Petersburg on women's suffrage and on the protection of motherhood by the State. In modern Russia, 8 March is a public holiday. International Women's Day has been officially celebrated by the United Nations since 1975.

Our country is steadfastly committed to fulfilling its obligations relating to the advancement of women. Creating the conditions necessary for their full and equal participation in all spheres of life is a priority of Russian public policy.

A National Action Strategy for Women was launched in 2017 and will run to 2022. This multi-pronged strategy is aimed, among other things, at increasing the competitiveness of and demand for women in the labour market, at encouraging them to embark on entrepreneurial activities and to study mathematics and natural sciences, and at enhancing their digital literacy.

Measures are being undertaken to develop flexible home-working arrangements for women with children. A federal project entitled "Promoting the employment of women by creating conditions for preschool education for children up to the age of three" was launched in 2019.

Women in Russia today play an active part in public and political life. As at the end of last year, 28 women were members of the Federation Council, including the Chairperson and one of her deputies. The seventh State Duma numbers 70 women among its ranks (there were just 21 in its previous convocation). Four of its committees are headed by women, while 18 women serve as deputy committee chairs. Moreover, the federal-level posts of Governor of the Central Bank of Russia, Commissioner for Human Rights and Commissioner for Children's Rights are all held by women.

Russia is taking comprehensive measures, in accordance with its international obligations, to prevent and eliminate different forms of violence against women. To advance the National Action Strategy for Women 2017–2022, a co-operation project is being implemented with the Council of Europe that deals with one of the strategy's focus areas, namely the prevention of social hardship among and violence against women.

We are open to a constructive exchange of views and best practices with everyone who is genuinely interested in improving the situation of women and strengthening their role in society.

Thank you for your attention.