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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 981st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 January 2014

**In the run-up to the opening of the XXII Olympic Winter Games and the
XI Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi in 2014**

Mr. Chairperson,

For the first time in Russian history, the XXII Olympic Winter Games and the XI Paralympic Winter Games will open in Sochi on 7 February. Olympic participants and guests are eagerly awaiting this key event in the sporting world, as are the billions of sports fans around the globe who will be avidly following the games.

The Sochi games offer a unique opportunity for people to come together and affirm the ideals of freedom, friendship between nations and fair play. Events like these help to affirm the principles of democracy, equality, respect for human rights and an inclusive society in international relations and domestic policy.

The Olympic Games are designed to depoliticize the most pressing international problems and create additional opportunities for building bridges between countries and nations. In light of the 2014 Sochi games, a special United Nations General Assembly resolution was adopted on an Olympic Truce in November of last year. The blue flags of the United Nations will fly at the Olympic stadium in Sochi and truce walls will be erected in the Olympic villages, on which people will be able to leave their wishes for maintaining peace on earth.

Greater use should be made of the unifying potential of sport and of the harmony between human rights values and the Olympic ideals to promote universally recognized human rights standards. The United Nations Human Rights Council resolution on “Promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal” is evidence that constructive co-operation can bring positive results.

One of the most important challenges is that of combating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in sport. A spirit of tolerance and respect for all Olympic participants and spectators will foster mutual understanding, respect and support among the participants and guests at the Winter Olympics.

The Russian authorities have taken all the necessary measures to ensure the security of the games and remove possible terrorist threats. To that end, more than 40,000 members of the law enforcement agencies and security services will be deployed. We shall use all the experience that has been gained during similar events in other countries. In that connection, security measures will be carried out in such a way as to avoid creating any unnecessary inconvenience for participants in the games, Olympic guests and journalists. We are grateful to all the countries that are co-operating with Russia in this matter and providing us with the necessary support.

Distinguished colleagues,

We have prepared a small photo exhibition on the Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi, which is located in the foyer on the second floor. We invite you all to take a look at it after this Permanent Council meeting.

We hope that between 7 and 23 February all sports fans will gain real enjoyment from the Olympic Games in Sochi and the results achieved there, and that the lucky ones attending in person will enjoy the beauty and hospitality of this wonderful Russian city.