

PC.DEL/1206/18  
12 October 2018

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1197th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 October 2018

**On the International Day of the Girl Child**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 11 October we mark the International Day of the Girl Child, proclaimed by a United Nations General Assembly resolution in 2012. Its goal is to draw public attention to the challenges facing girls all over the world, to find solutions to these problems and to recall the importance of protecting the rights of and empowering girls.

This includes, in particular, combating discrimination and violence against girls, and also measures to ensure their access to schooling, employment, education on women's health, and health care. This is extremely important, because girls are future wives and mothers.

In 2018, the world will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the main document on children's issues – the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We are convinced that taking care of children, as the most vulnerable group in society, should be a priority for any State. In this regard, it is regrettable that not all OSCE participating States have ratified this important international treaty. (The only country that had not acceded to this instrument is the United States of America.)

Protecting children's rights is a priority for Russia. Combating trafficking in children, sexual violence and child pornography, reducing child homelessness and neglect and child abandonment, providing children's recreational and health activities, including for those living in difficult circumstances, and improving social services for children with special needs are far from all the challenges that need to be overcome to ensure the well-being and harmonious development of the younger generation.

In formulating policies in this area, States need to take into account the characteristics and differences in the needs of girls and boys. We are convinced that the foundations for the personal development of the child are laid in the family. That is why the Russian Federation pays particular attention to the support of that invaluable social institution.

Girls are often more likely than boys to find themselves in life- and health-threatening situations, become victims of violence, particularly sexual, fall into the hands of traffickers, or experience discrimination. We are certain that each State has its own difficulties and achievements in this area. It is clear that discussions on this topic need to continue.

We have taken note of the concept of the “sexual rights of the child” mentioned by our Canadian colleagues in their statement. And this is against the backdrop of trends in a number of countries to liberalize approaches to the age of puberty in children. The promotion of such ideas is fraught with the creation of an atmosphere of impunity for those who harm the physical and mental health of minors. We note that there is no such concept in any universal human rights instrument. We should like to recall that, in accordance with Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the traditions and cultural values of each people are important for the protection and harmonious development of the child, and the State should provide an educational system that promotes respect for the child’s cultural identity and values and for the national values of the country in which the child is living.

As for the calls to enhance the status and authority of the Gender Section of the OSCE Secretariat, this issue falls primarily within the competence of the participating States. In our opinion, the Section is meeting its challenges with its current status.

Thank you for your attention.