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**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE OSCE AT THE  
CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE 23rd OSCE ECONOMIC  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Prague, 14 to 16 September 2015

**Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability  
through co-operation**

**Opening session**

Mr. Moderator,

First of all, allow us to thank the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia Ivica Dačić, the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Didier Burkhalter, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Jakub Kulhánek, the OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Yurdakul Yigitgüden for their informative statements.

We should also like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for their wonderful organization of this Forum, as well as the Czech authorities for their traditional hospitality.

Water governance in the OSCE area, which was chosen as this year's core theme, is the logical continuation of last year's discussions and is very important from the point of view of finding answers to the current environmental challenges, which requires the combined efforts of all participating States.

Today's concluding meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum presents a good opportunity to share experience and best practices in effective water governance and preventing and combating the consequences of natural disasters, such as floods and freshets. It is also a chance to analyse the impact of climate change on the state of water resources and determine how our Organization could make a concrete contribution to solving a range of water-related issues in the OSCE area.

I should like to take this opportunity to assure you that Belarus is prepared to play an active part in joint efforts in this regard. An expert from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus is participating in the Forum's work and will

present a report during the second session on exchanging national experience in the water sector.

Mr. Moderator,

Belarus has consistently supported further stepping up participating States' efforts in the economic and environmental dimension, which is an essential component of the OSCE concept of comprehensive and co-operative security.

Social and economic development and protection of the environment, including effective water use, have a direct impact on all of us, as well as our quality of life and well-being. Additional efforts by the OSCE in these areas could make a real, practical contribution to the sustainable development and stability of our countries.

We hope that the work of the current Forum will encourage further strengthening of co-operation between participating States and become an important milestone in the preparations for the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Belgrade in December.

In conclusion, allow us to wish all participants interesting and fruitful discussions.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.