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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1305th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

11 March 2021

International Women's Day

We should like to congratulate you, Madam Chairperson, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ms. Ann Linde, you, Madam Secretary General, and all our esteemed female colleagues on International Women's Day. We wish you good health, joy, prosperity, creative inspiration and continued professional success.

This day has been celebrated in Russia since 1913. Nowadays, 8 March is a public holiday in our country. International Women's Day has been included in the United Nations annual list of commemorative events since 1975. It is significant that the first female ambassador in the world was the Ambassador of the Soviet Union to Sweden, Alexandra Kollontai, and that the first and second women in the world to go into space were Valentina Tereshkova and Svetlana Savitskaya. There are many more such examples. A Russian woman, Tatiana Valovaya, now heads the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Our country is 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. The National Action Strategy for Women is a testament to this. It is now in its fourth year of implementation and is scheduled to run until 2022.

Women in Russia traditionally play an active part in public and political life. They hold key leadership positions in all branches of government, including the legislative, executive and judicial branches. For example, 33 women are 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). Moreover, the federal-level posts of Governor of the Central Bank of Russia, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission, Commissioner for Human Rights and Commissioner for Children's Rights are all held by women.

There are many women in the armed forces of the Russian Federation – almost 40,000 of them, including more than 4,000 officers.

A similar picture can be seen in business. According to the All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization Opora, about 30 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises were owned by women in

2020. At the same time, the number of female entrepreneurs in our country is growing steadily, as evidenced by last year's annual Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs.

In the context of the pandemic, the task of ensuring the social and economic rights of all population groups is becoming highly relevant. Special attention should be paid to women, without whom the progressive development of our countries would be impossible.

Once again I congratulate you all on this occasion.

Thank you for your attention.