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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1310th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

22 April 2021

On the celebration of Earth Day

Mr. Chairperson,

In 2009, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/278, 22 April was designated International Mother Earth Day.

In that document it is acknowledged that the Earth and its ecosystems are our shared home, and that “in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature and the Earth.”

Particular attention is accorded in Russia to environmental protection and the preservation of biodiversity. The objectives of conserving nature in all its diversity and promoting a sensitive attitude towards national resources are enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

In addition to the Constitution, environmental activities are governed by federal laws and regulations. Thus, pursuant to Decree No. 176 of the President of the Russian Federation of 19 April 2017, the Environmental Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, covering the period up to 2025, is being implemented. Moreover, the Ecology national project is also running; it was approved in 2018 by the Presidential Council for Strategic Development and National Projects. Work under the project is being carried out in five areas, namely, waste disposal and processing; protection of water bodies and enhancement of drinking-water quality; reduction of air pollution; protection of nature and animals; and adoption of the most environmentally sound technologies.

The purpose of the Ecology project, which is scheduled to run until 31 December 2024, is to fundamentally improve environmental conditions and to have a positive effect on the well-being of Russians. Both federal executive bodies and civil society organizations (and citizens) are taking part in these multifaceted activities. Incidentally, it is precisely on International Earth Day that various environmental events and campaigns are traditionally held in Russia, such as the famous *subbotniks* (unpaid working Saturdays), during which all who wish to do so can take part in smartening up their courtyards and streets and planting trees and shrubs there.

The country's highest leaders are keeping constant watch over environmental protection matters. In line with Decree No. 76 of the President of the Russian Federation of 8 February 2021, the Government is tasked with drawing up and approving a programme on environmental development in Russia and on climate change for 2021–2030 with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of scientific and technical activities and devising knowledge-based technological solutions.

Such solutions must focus on ensuring environmental security, that is, improving the state of the environment; studying the climate and mechanisms for adaptation to climate change and to the consequences of the latter; and ensuring the sustainable and balanced socio-economic development of Russia based on a low level of greenhouse gas emissions by conducting research on the sources and sinks of greenhouse gases and taking measures to mitigate the negative impact of such gases on the environment.

It is planned to promote co-operation between a number of federal ministries and agencies on the one hand, and regional academic organizations and funds supporting scientific, technical and innovative activities on the other.

During his address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation yesterday, President Putin instructed the Government to continue working on enhancing national legislation for environmental protection on the basis of the following principle: "If you have made a profit at the expense of nature, then clean up after yourself."

International Mother Earth Day, which is being celebrated today, is a good opportunity for us to remember the importance of co-ordinating the work of the entire international community when it comes to climate action and nature conservation on our planet. Addressing the World Economic Forum at Davos in January this year, President Putin emphasized: "Only together can we achieve progress in resolving such critical problems as global warming, the reduction of forestlands, the loss of biodiversity, the increase in waste, the pollution of the ocean with plastic and so on, and find an optimal balance between economic development and the preservation of the environment for the current and future generations."

At today's online summit of world leaders dealing with climate, President Putin will lay out the key approaches followed by Russia as it seeks to establish broad international co-operation aimed at overcoming the negative effects of global climate change.

Thank you for your attention.