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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1326th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 July 2021

World Day against Trafficking in Persons

Madam Chairperson,

World Day against Trafficking in Persons was proclaimed in 2013. The establishment of such an international day testifies to the global scale of this crime, which is comparable with illicit drug trafficking and terrorism in terms of the danger it represents. The coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly exacerbated this phenomenon. In particular, many experts have detected a “flourishing” of child pornography on the Internet, which modern traffickers are actively using for their nefarious ends.

We have pointed out repeatedly that at the root of this evil are poverty and social isolation, the marginalization of certain segments of the population, the legalization of the sex industry, and insufficient socio-economic support for mothers and children.

Trafficking in human beings has many manifestations, ranging from sexual exploitation to trafficking for the purpose of removing human organs, tissues and cells. Like any other cross-border criminal activity, trafficking in human beings has been put on a systematic footing and is fiercely controlled by criminal groups. Significantly, one third of all the victims of trafficking are minors. Other vulnerable groups include women, refugees and migrants.

It is important to combat the demand for “live goods” of this kind, which unfortunately remains at a steadily high level. Otherwise, unless the root cause is tackled, whatever the actions taken or policies pursued by States, these will not be effective.

To successfully counter this type of criminal “business”, it is no less important to intensify efforts to enhance national legislation and law enforcement methods, and to exchange best practices. As with a whole range of other issues related to the protection of human rights and freedoms, the priority now is to create socio-economic conditions that are able to prevent the very emergence of trafficking. Particular attention should be paid to the “toolkit” of human traffickers on the Internet, especially given the rapid development of technologies.

Much is being done at the global level to counter this evil, with the United Nations playing the leading role. It is a unifying topic for the OSCE as well. As is known, our Organization boasts a robust set of

anti-trafficking commitments. They cover the prevention and elimination of the root causes of the phenomenon (including demand), the protection of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators. It is important to focus on their implementation. We should like to take this opportunity to emphasize the contribution made by the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, which shapes the work of other relevant institutions and units of our Organization.

However, we wish to point out that the preparation of various evaluative and subjective reports most clearly does not help to enhance the effectiveness of anti-trafficking activities, not least in the OSCE framework. What is required to make headway in this area are collective non-politicized efforts by the international community and the exchange of best practices, including through specialist international organizations.

Thank you for your attention.