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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR MARIO BARTOLI, DELEGATION OF ITALY
AT THE 2022 OSCE ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

28 and 29 June 2022

Mr. Chairperson,
Secretary General,
Dear colleagues,

In addition to what has already been expressed in the statement by the European Union, I should like to add a few comments in a national capacity.

To start with, I should like to join the expressions of condolence to Ukraine for the horrific bombing of the shopping centre in Kremenchuk, a sad reminder of the seriousness of the violations of human rights and humanitarian law we have been witnessing for more than four months.

For the first time, we are meeting in the framework of the Annual Security Review Conference without a defined work plan and with an ostensibly open agenda.

Far from being the product of a compromise, the absence of the traditional agenda configuration is a strong and unequivocal message reminding us that there is one and only one threat to the security of our region at present, the aggression by one participating State, the Russian Federation, to the detriment of another participating State, Ukraine.

We do not need to examine the seriousness of this threat in detail. The white space in the agenda reminds us of this, without appeals or differentiation.

But the same white space reminds us that the conflict, as I mentioned, is an open wound in our security community, a tragic violation of its principles and the commitments undertaken by all of us, the participating States.

We are therefore faced not with a failure of OSCE instruments, but with the sad and disastrous outcome of an approach based, particularly in recent years, on the stubborn, repeated and unjustified refusal to implement them. I refer, in particular, to the non-renewal of the mandates of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and the Observer Mission to the checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk, the refusal to engage in discussion or implement the confidence- and security-building measures provided for in the Vienna Document and the failure to meet commitments in the third dimension. We cannot fail to emphasize how until the last moment our Organization offered the means

and platforms to prevent the conflict and to avoid the tragedy we have been experiencing for more than four months now.

It is a tragedy that is measured in the number of victims, in the images of destruction, and in the drama of refugees and displaced persons, more than 130,000 of whom have found shelter and assistance in Italy.

But it is also a war that threatens to create a humanitarian crisis of extraordinary dimensions, jeopardizing grain supplies not only in Europe but in poorer countries and causing instability and serious security threats.

The violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Ukraine and the risks posed to food and energy security are the result of political choices. As such, responsibility can be clearly attributed.

The question of accountability in connection with this responsibility stems from the need to protect the framework of principles and values on which the peaceful coexistence of States rests – principles and values that the Russian aggression against Ukraine has openly violated.

In that regard, I should like to recall the remarks by Matteo Mecacci, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), who a few days ago recalled that “impunity for torture committed during an armed conflict is not an option”. I cannot but fully agree with his words.

On the issue of accountability, Italy supported the activation of the Moscow Mechanism in March and early June and contributed financially to the ODIHR project to monitor violations of human rights and humanitarian law in Ukraine.

The most immediate goal at the moment is to continue to support Ukraine in every sphere, as reiterated recently in the European Council and at the G7 meeting. This support has the sole objective of achieving a peace that respects the rights and wishes of Ukraine. It is an objective that requires a collective effort by the international community, including international organizations.

Italy will not cease to support diplomacy and seek peace, continuing to work to keep channels of dialogue open and promote action at all levels and in multilateral platforms to foster the prospects for peace and mitigate the risks of a worsening security crisis.

We believe that the OSCE can and should continue to play its role in this scenario as the main regional platform for addressing security challenges, although we are aware that since 24 February, our Organization has been operating in a very different security setting.

For participating States, this must remain a clear and unwavering political commitment. And this commitment must be demonstrated by safeguarding the resilience of the Organization, its principles and values, its structures, including its field operations, its mediation and facilitation activities, its instruments and the *acquis* of political commitments adopted over the years.

However, we cannot forget, even more so in this dramatic phase, that the OSCE can play the role we ascribe to it only if it can count on a consistent political commitment to ensure adequate resources and their timely availability. The failure to adopt the Unified Budget to date deprives the Organization of the means to fulfil the commitments and ambitions that have been repeatedly invoked during these two days.

I should like to close by recalling what Prime Minister Mario Draghi said after his recent visit to Irpin: “I heard about horror, but I also heard about hope – hope for reconstruction, hope for the future. That is why we are here today, to help Ukraine build its future.” The horror that overcomes us when confronted with the thousands of civilian victims of Russian aggression must be a warning and a further incentive to build a future of peace and stability for Ukraine and our entire region.

Thank you.