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Statement of H.E. Andrey Avetisyan, Ambassador for International Anti-Corruption Cooperation, at the high-level conference on “Good Governance and the Fight against Corruption in the Digital Era: Strengthening the Principles of Transparency, Integrity and Accountability”
(July 6-7, 2020)

Session II: Anti-corruption strategies and anti-corruption bodies in the OSCE area: best practices and lessons learned.

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

The Russian Federation would like to thank the Albanian Chairmanship for organizing the high-level event on an acute topic for these challenging times.

We see this conference as an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience and to further strengthen international cooperation in fight against corruption.

The Russian Federation is party to all key international anti-corruption instruments, including the UN Convention against Corruption, the Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, and is engaged in the activities of relevant international fora, such as the G20, BRICS and APEC anti-corruption working groups. However, we are convinced that the United Nations should have the leading role in international anti-corruption cooperation based on the UNCAC, which is the only universal anti-corruption legal instrument of binding nature.

Amongst the core principles of the Convention there is a holistic, inclusive and transparent approach to anti-corruption policy development. Article 5 of the Convention stipulates, in particular, that each State-party shall develop and implement or maintain effective and coordinated anti-corruption policies. States-parties have taken many approaches to the successful implementation of UNCAC, including, among others, through the development of national anti-corruption strategies.

In 2020 the development and implementation of national anti-corruption strategies has been set as a priority issue for the G20 by the Saudi Arabian Presidency. In order to share experience, good practices in methodology and approach to this topic the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group has developed a set of nine so-called High Level Principles, which are:

- 1) ensure diagnostic analysis, appropriate governance, and political support;
- 2) take steps to ensure an inclusive design and development process;
- 3) undertake a corruption risk analysis and, if needed, strengthen systems for the collection and use of data;
- 4) adopt an approach that is tailored and ambitious, but realistic in scope;
- 5) articulate a clear vision, explaining why action against corruption is needed and how planned activities will contribute to the achievement of that vision;
- 6) develop an action plan to address identified priorities of these anti-corruption strategies;
- 7) dedicate sufficient resources to ensure successful implementation;
- 8) establish processes or mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation;
- 9) ensure that implementation is effectively reported.

These principles are intended to provide guidance to States who have decided to develop dedicated national anti-corruption strategies.

The Russian Federation took active part in the elaboration of the High Level Principles that are in line with the approach taken by our country. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Russian Federation was adopted in 2010 and defines major tracks

of anti-corruption policy and the stages of its implementation. Every two or three years an anti-corruption plan which is a tool for putting the Strategy into practice is elaborated.

The current National Anti-Corruption Plan for the years 2018-2020 sets such objectives as ensuring the exhaustive and transparent disclosure of the information on income, expenses and property of public officials, enhancing the effectiveness of prevention and management of conflicts of interest, strengthening anti-corruption barriers in public procurement, developing anti-corruption standards and raising public awareness. It contains over a hundred of specific tasks assigned to the competent authorities and entities on a wide range of issues with deadlines for each objective. It is also important that the Plan provides for the mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its implementation. One of the first measures adopted under the Plan was the publication and regular update of the list of the public servants dismissed on the grounds of loss of confidence.

In Russia we don't have a single anti-corruption body. The National Anti-Corruption policy is determined by the President of the Russian Federation and the responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy lies with the Council for Countering Corruption under the President of the Russian Federation, established in 2008. The Council is supported by a special Directorate in the Presidential Administration.

In accordance with Federal Law "On Countering Corruption", other public bodies are authorized to conduct anti-corruption policy. The Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Russian parliament, drafts and adopts the legislation on anti-corruption issues and controls national executive bodies within its competence. The federal, regional and local government bodies take necessary anti-corruption measures within their competence as well.

The enforcement of the national anti-corruption legislation is monitored by the public prosecution. Besides, the Prosecutor-General of the Russian Federation and the prosecutors that report to him are responsible for coordinating the activities of the internal affairs, federal security and customs bodies as well as other law enforcement bodies competent in the field of countering corruption. This regards not only investigation, but also guidance matters.

The joint investigation teams constitute one of the main forms of cooperation among the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation and the operational units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation with the participation of the criminal inquiry bodies. These inter-agency teams, usually established to investigate the most important and high-profile crimes, have proven their effectiveness, especially when the officers constantly provide support to the investigation until it is completed and the case goes to court.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation is responsible for providing guidance for the prevention of corruption in public bodies and organizations, the development of the local government service, the management of public property and the provision of public services. It also controls the implementation of respective measures.

The system of anti-corruption bodies of the Russian Federation also includes anti-corruption divisions and commissions of the federal public bodies and organizations, as well as anti-corruption bodies and commissions of the regional and local government authorities.

Digitalization and promotion of new technologies provides powerful means for strengthening integrity of public administration. Russia has the Strategy for Developing Digital Society, supplemented by the National Plan for Digital Economy. One of the key components of this policy is the digitalization of public administration, aimed at enhancing its efficiency and transparency. As of today, tens of thousands of services at the federal, regional and municipal levels are provided on-line via a specialized portal. There are also so called multi-functional centers that offer their services according to the "single window" principle thanks to their access to unified databases of different public bodies. In addition, most public bodies have specific pages on their web-sites for reports of corruption offences. As for public

procurement, all stakeholders are provided with a free and unlimited access to the information system on public contracts and tenders.

Another important area of anti-corruption policy is the digitalization of the system of disclosure of income, expenses and property of public officials. The control over the correspondence between the income and expenses of public officials and their relatives was introduced by a Federal Law in 2012. The Federal Law “On Countering Corruption” and the federal laws regulating the civil service in specific sectors provide for penalties for the violation of restrictions and requirements to prevent and manage conflicts of interest and the failure to comply with the anti-corruption obligations. The responsibility to control their implementation rests with the Directorate for Countering Corruption of the Presidential Administration and with the human resources units of government bodies. Russian public officials annually submit their income and interests declarations through special software. They are subsequently processed also automatically via a highly potential information analytical system linked to external databases that may contain information about financial and property interests of public officials. This system allows competent bodies to effectively detect infringements and conflicts of interest.

In this context and in accordance with the current National Anti-Corruption Plan Russia pays considerable attention to providing guidance to public officials in effectively preventing conflict of interest. The public prosecution bodies supervise and coordinate practical work in this area, while the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection provides guidance support. In addition, the Directorate for Countering Corruption of the Presidential Administration organizes regular workshops on the implementation of national anti-corruption legislation for the heads of anti-corruption divisions of all public bodies. There are also tailor-made trainings focused on the prevention of and fight against corruption in the civil service for the officials of federal, regional and local government bodies that provide integrated learning of anti-corruption legislation and its practical enforcement. In addition, the General Prosecutor’s Office of the Russian Federation develops and publishes booklets and video-guides on relevant regulations and standards of ethical conduct of public officials.

Russia is ready to further share our national experience in conducting anti-corruption policy with other OSCE countries as well as to learn from their successful examples also during this high-level conference very timely organized by the Albanian Chairmanship.

Thank you for your attention.