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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1314th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

20 May 2021

On the presentation by the UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Åsa Regnér

Madam Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome the UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Åsa Regnér.

The Russian Federation has a long tradition of observing women's rights. Their equal participation, including in the political process, was ensured long before it was enshrined at the international level.

The issues of observing women's rights, eliminating gender discrimination and achieving gender equality remain a Russian priority, both domestically and internationally. Last year was no exception – even when combating the coronavirus our country remained attached to its international commitments. In particular, the implementation of the action plan for the second phase (2019–2022) of the National Action Strategy for Women 2017–2022 is ongoing. This multi-pronged strategy is aimed, among other things, at increasing the competitiveness of and demand for women in the labour market, at encouraging them to embark on entrepreneurial activities and to study mathematics and natural sciences, and at enhancing their digital literacy.

Russia is taking comprehensive measures, in accordance with its international obligations, to prevent and eliminate the various forms of violence against women. In particular, one of the focuses of the aforementioned National Strategy is to prevent social hardship and violence against women.

Russian women are a politically, economically and socially active part of society and to a large extent determine the course of the country's development. Conditions are created to enable them to realize their full potential through a combination of family and professional life.

We believe that one of the most important components of efforts to improve the situation of women are measures to promote the family as an equal union of women and men. In fact, supporting this institution is one of the social priorities of the United Nations and an important prerequisite for social stability.

The OSCE has accumulated a body of diverse commitments related to the promotion of gender equality, women's participation in public and political life and the elimination of violence. The

corresponding 2004 Action Plan clearly established the understanding of gender equality as the equality of women and men. Attempts by individual countries or OSCE executive structures, such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, to widen the interpretation of this concept are unacceptable, as they run counter to the principles agreed by all participating States.

Another worrying trend is the widespread implantation of a “gender” theme, often in its non-consensus, neoliberal sense, in the work of the OSCE executive structures. This can be clearly seen in particular against the backdrop of the current budget discussions. This approach is counterproductive.

Furthermore, ensuring gender equality, both within OSCE structures and within participating States, should not focus on figures alone. Women and men need to be promoted on the basis of their professional skills, knowledge and experience. The OSCE’s programmatic and project activities should be based on this, rather than on the artificial imposition of quotas.

We stand ready to share our experience in dealing with problems in this sphere and to make use of the positive practices of other countries and are open to co-operation with the international community in all areas relating to ensuring the rights and improving the situation of women and girls.

In conclusion, we should like to inform you that the Third Eurasian Women’s Forum is scheduled to take place from 13 to 15 September in St. Petersburg, Russia. It is traditionally organized by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Women parliamentarians and representatives of executive authorities, international organizations, global corporations, businesses, academia and other bodies are traditionally invited to this authoritative international platform to discuss the women’s agenda. The involvement of such a wide range of participants allows for the most serious and productive discussion.

In conclusion, we reaffirm Russia’s willingness to continue developing constructive relations with UN Women and wish its staff robust health and success.

Thank you for your attention.