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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1432nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 July 2023

On the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on gender equality

Mr. Chairperson,
Madam Secretary General,

We take note of your report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan to promote so-called gender equality. Unfortunately, the document continues to be replete with non-consensus confrontational ideas, pseudo-theories and assertions. Its focus on the Ukrainian issue does not stand up to criticism. We categorically oppose the attempts to promote dubious concepts and artificial linkages between “violent misogyny and violent extremism” and between “gender and climate change, corruption, violent extremism and online violence” through documents of this kind. The actions of the Secretary General are clearly regulated by procedural documents and must be consistent with the decisions agreed upon by all participating States.

In terms of “placing the women, peace and security agenda at the forefront”, we recall that the performance of the tasks and functions of the agenda has been entrusted to the United Nations. The resolution of the same name can hardly be used as a universal tool for promoting the participation of women in all spheres of public life. All the more so because there is no uniform understanding in the OSCE of how the topic should be pursued further here, as evidenced, *inter alia*, by the lack of consensus on a relevant draft declaration during the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm.

With regard to combating violence against women, awareness-raising training is clearly insufficient. We call attention, for example, to the persistence of the problem of social and economic inequality. It is important to take measures to eradicate institutional barriers and poverty, reduce social stratification and create incentives for economic inclusion. It is useful to harness digital technologies and create conditions for combining family responsibilities and child-rearing. Russia, for example, has an extensive network of State and municipal preschool institutions with an almost 100 per cent access rate.

Mr. Chairperson,

We took note of the report on the implementation of the so-called Gender Parity Strategy, including the efforts to increase the number of women in the Organization. We recall that Regulation 3.01 (b) of the

OSCE Staff Regulations and Staff Rules clearly defines the criteria for the recruitment of OSCE officials as follows: “the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity, taking full account of the principle of recruiting staff from all OSCE participating States on a fair basis and the importance of achieving gender balance”.

As can be seen from this wording, “gender balance” is by no means the only requirement for job candidates. We regret that the report presented by the Secretary General does not provide a clear picture of the way in which all these criteria are applied in a balanced manner to the selection of applicants.

As can be seen from section 1.2 of the report, the recruitment process for new staff includes a number of measures to ensure gender parity. Among other things, vacancy notices encourage applicants from the under-represented sex. It would be interesting to understand whether this rule would apply to men if they were to be “under-represented” at any level in the future?

We also note the policy of extending the application deadline if one gender makes up less than 20 per cent of the list of candidates. We doubt that this approach enhances the efficiency of human resources management. Artificially slowing down the competitive selection process does not allow vacancies to be filled in a timely manner, which, as we understand it, reduces workforce capacity and negatively affects programmatic activities. However, given that such postponements do occur, contrary to logic and the best interests of the case, why does the same approach not apply to geographical under-representation? Against the background of the titanic efforts being made to achieve “gender balance”, ignoring the tasks of ensuring the equitable representation of participating States in the OSCE smacks of discrimination and double standards. We believe that this policy does not fulfil the requirements set out in Regulation 3.01 (b).

Mr. Chairperson,

We affirm that Russia’s approach to gender equality remains unchanged. On the whole, Russian women are well educated and economically active. They hold key leadership positions in our country – there are 37 women in the Federation Council and 73 in the eighth State Duma. The Central Bank and the Central Election Commission are headed by women; the federal commissioners for human rights and children’s rights are also women. The share of women’s entrepreneurship has reached 90 per cent in the social sector and 58 per cent in the service sector. They are widely represented in the business sphere, including in small and medium-sized enterprises. This is not to mention the high proportion of the “weaker sex” among highly qualified researchers.

Mr. Chairperson,

Multiple challenges to women’s rights persist in the OSCE area. We call upon participating States to fulfil in good faith their commitments to promoting women’s rights and to ensure equality between women and men.

Thank you for your attention.