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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE
FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 30th OSCE ECONOMIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 14 and 15 February 2022

Promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

Opening session

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming the participants to our meeting and thank the Polish Chairmanship and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Igli Hasani, together with his professional team, for the good organization of this meeting.

We are beginning our work under the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum of 2022, which marks the Forum's 30th anniversary. This year raises hopes for recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and renewed economic growth.

The challenges posed by the pandemic to the global economy and the economic downturn underscore the importance of enhancing co-ordination between individual countries and international co-operation in relevant areas.

In the Russian Federation, as in many other OSCE participating States, a variety of extensive and systemic measures are being taken to deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

For example, the banking industry is working with the federal authorities to implement concessional lending programmes in the sectors most affected by the pandemic-related restrictions. Small businesses and socially oriented non-profit organizations are given grants for the payment of salaries. The moratorium on scheduled inspections of small enterprises continues, and the rules for them to participate in public procurements were simplified during the pandemic.

In 2021, crisis support for small and medium-sized businesses in Russia totalled more than one trillion roubles (or more than 13 billion US dollars).

Due attention is being paid to young people in the current context. At the end of last year, the Government of the Russian Federation approved a long-term programme to promote youth employment until 2030. One of the main tasks of the programme is to make modern education more responsive to the needs of employers and to create conditions that allow students to combine study with employment or entrepreneurship.

The programme includes such measures as subsidies for employers to employ young people who find it difficult to find work, including those with disabilities, and help for young people to move to regions where there is a shortage of staff.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the context of the theme of this Economic and Environmental Forum, we consider the expansion of trade, economic, financial and investment co-operation to be among the priorities for the OSCE area. We believe it is necessary to overcome the tendency towards protectionism, one manifestation of which is unilateral economic sanctions.

We attach particular importance to the facilitation of transport links as a driver of international trade; we note the key role of the introduction of digital technologies as an engine of progress.

We are ready to participate actively in the events of the 2022 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. We trust that the Forum will be fruitful in formulating new ideas and useful recommendations for the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.