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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 28th OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Vienna, 17 February 2020

Promoting security, stability and economic growth in the OSCE area by preventing and combating corruption through innovation, increased transparency and digitalization

Opening session

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the participants in the First Preparatory Meeting for the 28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. We should like to thank the Albanian Chairmanship and the distinguished Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Vuk Žugić, and his team for preparing the highly topical agenda. We are looking forward to co-operating closely on the theme of the Forum with Professor Paola Severino, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption.

The issue of preventing and combating corruption is of relevance for the entire OSCE area. Future discussions will build on existing OSCE commitments in this field, including the anti-corruption decisions of the Ministerial Council in Sofia in 2004 and Basel in 2014, and the 2012 Dublin Declaration on Good Governance. At the same time, we note the continuity of the 2020 Forum with the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forums of recent years in terms of maintaining the emphasis on innovation and digitalization.

The Russian Federation is consistently implementing the latest National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2018–2020, approved by President Vladimir Putin. In addition to constantly improving national legislation and practical measures implemented within the country, Russia actively participates in international anti-corruption co-operation. We are conducting a joint educational project with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime under the auspices of its Anti-Corruption Academic Initiative. We are a co-founder of and one of the main donors to the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Laxenburg, Austria.

We regard the wider use of digital technologies in countering corruption as one of the priorities both within the country and within the OSCE area. One of the key areas is the continued transformation of public services into electronic format. This avoids personal contact between applicants and officials and at the same time allows feedback from citizens on the quality of services.

In our opinion, attention should also be given to measures such as the creation of digital services for examining anti-corruption aspects of legislation, automated verification of income and property declarations, and digitalization of various corruption-prone areas such as customs procedures, which would help to reduce corruption risks and increase the transparency of customs operations.

In addition, we believe it is important to involve the business community in anti-corruption activities. In Russia, an increasing number of companies are participating in the Anti-Corruption Charter of Russian Business, signed in 2012 by four major business associations. Its purpose is to facilitate the implementation by companies of special anti-corruption programmes covering internal control procedures, procurements on the basis of public tenders and other measures. As part of the Business Corruption Barometer, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of the Russian Federation has conducted regular surveys of entrepreneurs since 2016 to measure anti-corruption sentiments and assess anti-corruption policy in Russia. Last year, the survey by the Chamber covered around 49,000 entrepreneurs from 85 regions.

We are interested in exchanging experiences in this regard with delegations of the OSCE participating States.

Thank you for your attention.