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Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

First Preparatory meeting of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

Opening Session

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Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan thanks the Ukrainian Chairmanship, as well as the Coordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and his Office for organizing the First Preparatory meeting of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum which theme is “Increasing stability and security: Improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities in the OSCE region”.

We would also like to thank OSCE Secretary General and the guest speakers for their introductory remarks.

We are confident that this meeting will provide good platform to discuss important aspects of the linkages between energy and environment and their impact on security and cooperation in the region.

It will also help us to promote cooperation and exchange of best practices, good governance in the energy sector and sustainable management of energy resources, leading to stimulate deeper dialogue among the OSCE participating states.

Dear colleagues,

During the last two decades, Azerbaijan has implemented major energy projects in the region. This has led to creation of a new geo-economic situation in the region, contributed to regional cooperation and accelerated the integration of the wider Black Sea-Caspian basin with the Euro-Atlantic community.

Let me highlight that energy security is gaining prominence on the agenda of the OSCE participating states and by successful implementation of the major oil and gas projects and regional infrastructure developments, Azerbaijan, now has increasingly important role in providing energy security of the Europe.

We attach great importance to the agenda items covering environment and energy links, environmental risks and challenges of energy related activities, opportunities for environmental cooperation on energy related activities.

Mr. Chairperson,

At this juncture, I would like to reiterate few points of importance to the Delegation of Azerbaijan concerning the framework of this Preparatory Meeting.

We are all aware that, energy and related impact and risks to environment is a complex issue that needs multifaceted approach.

However, there has been lack of comprehensiveness during preparation of this important meeting on the mentioned topic. In this regard, we very much regret that the proposals and comments we made on the agenda of this First Preparatory meeting, have not been taken into due consideration.

Such selective attitude to discussing risks and threats could create the perception that the OSCE intentionally considers those issues which accommodate interests of some participating States, whereas proposals of other participating States to ensure comprehensive discussion of all risks and threats are rejected.

We are afraid that neglecting the issue of the environmental impact of certain types of energy-related activities, such as nuclear energy production, which has never been excluded from relevant OSCE documents and commitments, will create the grounds for already existing risks and threats to evolve further in an uncontrolled, non-transparent manner and without building confidence, which should be unacceptable for participating States.

In our view the mentioned narrow approach to environmental security is incomplete, it limits the OSCE agenda in the second dimension and does not serve creating an atmosphere of trust and security.

In this regard, our delegation will use each opportunity to redress the balance of the agenda of this meeting. During discussions our delegation will raise those aspects which are directly linked to the environmental impact of energy-related activities, particularly that of nuclear energy production, which we strongly recommend to include to the summary and report of the event.

More detailed information on those risks and threats, which have not found their reflection in the agenda, will be presented by our delegation during relevant sessions and distributed as an official document of this meeting.

Once again, we would like express our thanks for bringing these two important subjects, the energy and environmental footprint thereof together, which will ultimately lead to increasing stability and security in the OSCE region.

In conclusion, I would like to invite participants of the meeting to exercise an interactive exchange of their visions and ideas on the topics discussed and wish them successful deliberations.

Mr. Chairperson,

I wish to register this statement on behalf of the delegation of Azerbaijan.

Thank you.