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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1262nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 March 2020

On the report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished Ambassador Vuk Žugić for presenting the work priorities for the current year.

We welcome his Office's desire to expand the scale and scope of programmes designed to support participating States in the implementation of their commitments in the fields of economic activities and environmental protection. The growing number of requests for such support confirms the relevance of the second dimension as a space in which constructive efforts can be undertaken to enhance stability and prevent conflicts in the OSCE area. It is important to preserve the depoliticized nature of work in the economic and environmental dimension, which remains one of the pillars of the Organization's comprehensive approach to security.

In this respect, we are pleased to take note of the Office's plans to continue implementing projects aimed at strengthening trade and transport connectivity and at simplifying customs and border procedures. The development of transport corridors is a key prerequisite for economic co-operation and also constitutes the basis for aligning integration processes in the OSCE area with a view to establishing a "Greater Eurasian Partnership".

On the other hand, we are disappointed that the report does not mention any plans to implement Ambassador Žugić's proposal for organizing a commemorative event to mark the 30th anniversary of the CSCE Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe that was held in Bonn in 1990. In our view, it would be wrong to abandon the idea of reviving the spirit of co-operation and reaffirming the Organization's commitment to the principles laid down in the Concluding Document of that landmark conference.

We take note of the Office's contribution to the successful organization of the First Preparatory Meeting (held in Vienna in February) for the 28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. The discussions at the meeting confirmed the relevance of the topic of preventing and combating corruption, which was selected by the Albanian Chairmanship as a priority theme for this year's Economic and Environmental Forum. We support the idea of studying the role of digital technologies in the fight against corruption. We are determined to continue engaging in dialogue on ways of increasing international

co-operation in this field both at the Second Preparatory Meeting in May and during the anti-corruption conference that, as announced by the Chairmanship, will take place in Tirana in July. We look forward to working closely with the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption, Paola Severino.

We agree with the point made that it is necessary to raise the profile of environmental issues in the second dimension. We are willing to look for unifying principles that might eventually lead to consensus documents.

At the same time, as we have already stated on a number of occasions, we believe that it is inappropriate to link climate change issues directly with threats to peace and security – particularly in the context of extrabudgetary activities. We urge the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities to adhere strictly to his mandate and also to take into account the Organization's Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations when designing projects the implementation of which would imply going beyond the OSCE area's geographical borders.

We are sympathetic to the Office's desire to support States in implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. What is important, though, is to avoid a duplication of efforts with other relevant international bodies, first and foremost the UN itself.

In view of the ongoing discussions on the budget, we are in favour of ensuring that the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities is provided with adequate financial and human resources for its work.

Finally, we want to wish distinguished Ambassador Žugić and his team every success in their future work. As in the past, you can count on our support.

Thank you for your attention.