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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1216th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 February 2019

**In response to the presentation of the priorities of the Chairpersons of the
Economic and Environmental Committee and the Human Dimension
Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the two distinguished Committee Chairpersons for presenting their priorities. We hope for the appointment as soon as possible of the Chairperson of the Security Committee, whose work covers the highly important tasks of combating terrorism and other relevant security challenges.

We are pleased that the distinguished Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, Mr. Kairat Sarybay, will continue to lead the Economic and Environmental Committee. We appreciate his great personal contribution to strengthening the second dimension.

In the Committee's programme of work we should like to highlight in particular the meetings on disaster risk reduction, on sustainable development, on anti-corruption, and on the consequences of the digitalization process. The positive start made on the digital economy and human capital at the Ministerial Council meeting in Milan needs to be exploited.

We note the successful start of economic events with the convening on 28 and 29 January of the first preparatory meeting for the 27th Economic and Environmental Forum. The discussions there confirmed the relevance of the OSCE as a platform for considering ways of fostering economic progress and security through energy co-operation, new technologies, good governance and connectivity.

It would also be useful to study how to use fossil fuels more effectively and "cleanly". This is important as well for improving sustainable energy systems with a high proportion of renewable energy sources.

The task of developing Eurasian transport routes and corridors should not be overlooked. It is an integral component of the concept of aligning integration associations in the OSCE area and creating a common economic space on the continent.

It is important to increase the unifying potential of the second dimension by continuing professional and depoliticized discussions. We look forward to the continued expert input of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

We congratulate the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, Mr. Ivo Šrámek, on his appointment as Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee. We hope that this will breathe new life into its work, increase its practical output, particularly in the context of the preparations for the Ministerial Council meeting in Bratislava, and make it possible to avoid the use of human dimension issues for opportunistic ends.

We have acquainted ourselves with the Committee's provisional plan of work for 2019. We note the inclusion of the topic of tolerance and non-discrimination, and also economic, social and cultural rights. It contains issues that recur year after year, such as participation in public and political life, freedom of the media, and violence against women. Nor are we spared an "exotic" theme of a kind, in this case the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. We understand that this date is relevant to the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but we urge our colleagues not to abuse their function as Chairpersons.

Meanwhile, highly topical issues are missing: protection of the language and education rights of national minorities, combating aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, eliminating statelessness, preserving historical and cultural heritage, non-interference in private and family life, protection of children, freedom of movement, the development of human contacts, and others.

The mandate of the 2014 OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel regarding the elaboration of declarations on combating intolerance and discrimination against Christians and Muslims has still not been implemented.

We expect the Slovak Chairmanship to take account of these omissions when preparing the package of OSCE human dimension events this year.

Thank you for your attention.