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**STATEMENT BY MR. VALERY VORONETSKY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 908th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 April 2012

**In response to the address by Ambassador Konstantin Dolgov,
Commissioner on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome Ambassador Konstantin Dolgov, Commissioner on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, to this meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council and we thank him for his informative statement.

The issue of human rights is today unquestionably an important item on the international agenda. This is also a significant area in the work of our Organization.

As we are all aware, all participating States without exception face problems in meeting their OSCE commitments with regard to the “third basket”. This is made eloquently clear, for example, in the most recent reports to the Permanent Council by the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Belarus is in favour of a balanced and thorough dialogue based on mutual respect and equality regarding the human rights question, including within the framework of the OSCE.

We are opposed to the selective singling out of some issues for unwarranted attention and the silent disregard of other issues and to the permanent focusing of attention on some participating States and the failure to address no less serious problems requiring urgent solutions in other countries.

Another cause of serious concern is the fact that the human rights issue continues to be openly exploited by certain countries as a means of advancing their own political and economic interests. An approach of this kind has no future. It runs counter to the very concept of human rights, discrediting it and undermining the principles on which it is based.

We should like once again to draw the attention of our partners to the recent resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council entitled “Human rights and unilateral coercive measures”, which expresses concern at the fact that unilateral coercive measures have a negative effect on human rights, development, international relations, trade, investment and co-operation.

On the whole, we share the Russian Federation’s approaches to the entire range of issues dealt with in the OSCE’s “humanitarian basket” and we trust that there will be further close and fruitful co-operation within the OSCE and in other international forums.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.