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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1202nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 November 2018

**In response to the report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and
Environmental Activities**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the distinguished Ambassador Vuk Žugić, and thank him for his interesting and informative report.

We note the Office's contribution to ensuring the success of economic and environmental dimension events in 2018. The discussions that took place within the framework of the 26th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on the digital economy and human capital development provided a good basis for the Italian Chairmanship's preparation of the relevant draft documents for the Ministerial Council meeting in Milan. We are counting on constructive and fruitful work to reach agreement on them. We firmly believe that there is a need to preserve the positive focus on digitalization and prevent the emergence of new dividing lines in cyberspace now.

This is also important in terms of developing the future work of the Organization in the second dimension. Digitalization is gradually encompassing all spheres of life and requires constant attention. This was confirmed, in particular, by the results of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in May of this year. We have taken note of the proposal by the Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator regarding the creation of an informal platform for dialogue on digitalization and the OSCE's role in that process. We would be interested in receiving additional information to enable a detailed study of the initiative.

We support the Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator's efforts in the area of good governance and the fight against corruption. The OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Developing Anti-Corruption Strategies for the Digital Age held in Rome on 12 and 13 November made an important contribution to promoting this topic. The First Deputy Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation, Oleg Plokhoy, took part in that forum as a keynote speaker.

We welcome the Office's work in strengthening economic connectivity with a focus on transport. As the meeting of the Economic and Environmental Committee confirmed on 7 November, the development of transport corridors is an essential prerequisite for developing economic co-operation and maintaining stability and security in the OSCE area.

We are counting on the continuation of dialogue on economic connectivity through the alignment of integration processes, such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the European Union and the One Belt, One Road initiative, with a view to creating a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

Given the theme selected by the future Slovak OSCE Chairmanship for the 27th Economic and Environmental Forum, the Office's expertise in the area of energy will also be in great demand next year. In that context, we note the successful holding on 25 and 26 October in Malaga of the OSCE Mediterranean Conference, at which Russia was represented by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Pankin. The results of the Russian Energy Week international forum held in Moscow from 3 to 6 October with the participation of a record number of experts from the energy sector – over 9,000 people – could also be useful.

We note the Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator's activities to fulfil his mandate in the environmental sphere. At the same time, we are against linking the problems of environmental protection and climate change to threats to peace and security. We believe that professional and non-politicized discussions on this topic should be held with the involvement of generally recognized experts in specialized bodies that have the tools to develop long-term solutions, primarily in the United Nations.

We are in favour of providing the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities with appropriate financial and human resources for its work.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ambassador Žugić and his team continued success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.