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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE
OSCE GENDER EQUALITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Vienna, 10 and 11 July 2014

Opening Session

Madam Chairperson,

Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men is an important condition for the respect of human rights, as well as the realization of the principles of democracy and sustainable social development. It is pleasing that the OSCE has developed a solid set of commitments in this area. It is important to focus on implementing them without duplicating the efforts of other international organizations.

The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality remains a useful point of reference for implementing our common tasks in this area. We view gender equality as one of the conditions for achieving social justice and as a vital and extremely important prerequisite for development, peace and security.

We note that in spite of the problems that do exist in this area, the situation in the OSCE is fundamentally different from that in other regions of the world, and for the better. The level of gender equality that we have attained is already such that we must move away from positive discrimination and avoid turning efforts to ensure equality between men and women into a race for percentages. It is essential to ensure that equal access for women and men to education, employment and participation in public and political life is based primarily on their high level of competence and professionalism.

This applies to the oft-stated idea that as soon as the proportion of women in authoritative and legislative bodies reaches even just 50 per cent, society will suddenly become stable and safe. There is no fact-based research to back this up, nor are there any reliable statistics. The main thing is to ensure that the right people enter politics and government structures; experts and specialists in their field, irrespective of their sex.

Whichever areas might be affected by the challenges of greater inclusion for women – whether they be military, economic, social, political or public – it is vital that these efforts be based primarily on the conscious desires of women themselves. Improving their awareness and performing regular sociological studies plays an important role here in planning and implementing policies to ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

There is no doubt that efforts to include women in public and political life are essential. However, other, no less relevant, areas, such as the social sphere should not be sidelined. The OSCE could make a major contribution to retraining men and women in a climate of rising unemployment, as well as to protecting the rights of large families and single parents, and providing social security for mothers.

The rights of women who choose to prioritize family and child-raising as their main goal and primary occupation require particular attention. We should also not lose sight of the special role played by women and mothers in protecting traditional family, moral, religious and cultural values.

Combating violence remains relevant. However, the idea that it is mainly women and girls who suffer from domestic or sexual violence is not entirely accurate. Boys are no less vulnerable. As for violence during armed conflict, United Nations data demonstrates that men and women, boys and girls are all equally affected.

In Russia, serious attention is paid to laying the ground for equal access for men and women to politics, as well as public, economic, social and cultural life. In our country, women make up 54 per cent of the population. And in 2014, Russia was number one among developed countries in terms of the proportion of management-level roles in companies occupied by women: 43 per cent. Total employment rates have also risen to 76 per cent of women aged 20 to 49 with children under the age of 18.

As of 1 July 2014, there are 674 public associations registered in Russia. Women are actively involved in their work on an equal footing with men. Many women are successful in politics. The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation is headed by a woman, Valentina Matviyenko. Many important ministers are also women. The work of the Central Bank of Russia is led by Elvira Nabiullina. Recently, a woman was appointed as the new Children's Rights Commissioner: the well-known public figure Ella Pamfilova.

The State devotes great attention to creating conditions whereby women and men can successfully balance work with family priorities and raising children. We are prepared to share these approaches to implementing gender equality policy and supporting the special role played by women and mothers during this Conference.

This year marks ten years since the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We think that every country has something to share. We hope that during this Gender Equality Review Conference, we will manage to share best practices in ensuring gender equality, not only in political, public and economic life, but also in the social and cultural spheres. This is fully in line with the Concluding Document of the 1989 Vienna Meeting of the CSCE.

Furthermore, we believe that it would be useful to use the forum provided by the OSCE to hold regular discussions of specific issues in ensuring equal opportunities for men and women. For this purpose, we should involve a broader base of experts from participating States and explore the possibility of holding annual expert seminars involving specialists who are practitioners in this field in their countries. It would also be useful to exchange experience on the institutional promotion of gender equality in various countries.

Thank you for your attention.