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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1258th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 February 2020

**On Sami National Day**

Madam Chairperson,

Today, on 6 February, we celebrate Sami National Day. It was on this day in 1917 that the first meeting of the Sami people of Sweden, Norway and Finland was held in Trondheim, Norway. For all the importance of this date, it carries additional meaning for the Sami people of Russia. In the Russian Empire, an administrative division for the Sami people was established as early as the middle of the nineteenth century. It had an elected people's body, in fact their first ever parliament, the Kola Sobbar, and met once a year on 6 February, according to the Gregorian calendar. The Sami Parliament of the Kola Peninsula now operates on a permanent basis.

In Russia, the Sami people are small in number but no less important in our multi-ethnic country. They live mostly in the Murmansk region, where there are over 1,500 Sami.

The Regional Action Plan under the Concept for the Sustainable Development of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples in Russia for the period 2016–2025 is being successfully implemented in the region. A number of specific programmes have been adopted since 2005. For example, measures are being taken to support community-based businesses and self-employment and also to raise living standards. Funds are being allocated to improve the infrastructure of Sami communities. They are being provided with subsidies, notably in the fields of education, medicine and agriculture.

Russia is preserving the Sami language by broadcasting Sami-language television and radio programmes. The indigenous culture of this people is being made more widely known. Fiction and teaching materials on Sami topics are being published. The village of Lovozero, which is considered the cultural capital of Russian Sami, has a Sami national cultural centre and a museum of history, culture and life of the Kola Sami, founded in 1962. Local schools offer Sami-language classes. Every year on 22 May, Sami Word Day is marked in the Murmansk region. The celebration of Sami National Day, which takes place right at this time, is notable for its scope and vibrancy.

Thank you for your attention.