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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1325th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 July 2021

**On the implementation of the OSCE Gender Equality Action Plan**

Madam Secretary General,

We take note of your report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We can see a marked increase in the number of women holding posts in the Secretariat over the past few years, including posts at the managerial level. According to statistical data on the staffing of the OSCE executive structures as of 30 June 2021 (document SEC.GAL/49/21/Rev.1), women occupied 165 internationally contracted and seconded positions in the Organization's four institutions, which translates into a share of 52 per cent. Moreover, at the D2 and D1 levels they hold four out of the seven existing posts, or 58 per cent. In the category of locally recruited staff, there are almost twice as many women (193) as men (99).

Thus, several target values for the representation of women in the OSCE institutions across all categories of posts have been not simply attained but even surpassed. The question is what next? Do the heads of the institutions, including the Secretary General, intend to work towards consolidating the balance that is now in place or will they continue to increase the representation of women by further reducing that of men? We believe that the latter would not be in keeping with the Organization's previously approved mandates with regard to ensuring gender equality.

We realize that the representation of women does not look so rosy in the field operations as it does in the institutions. Nevertheless, we are convinced that it is essential to base efforts to implement the 2004 Action Plan upon the principle of equal opportunities for all candidates, irrespective of their sex. This is also supported by the fundamental criteria of employment policy at the OSCE, which cannot be reduced to the "gender" factor alone. Thus, according to Staff Regulation 3.01, in personnel appointments it is essential to secure above all "the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity, taking full account of the principle of recruiting staff from all OSCE participating States on a fair basis".

This approach works well in the Russian Federation. In our country, women occupy leadership positions on equal terms with men in all branches of government (legislative, executive and judicial). Thus, 33 women are members of the Federation Council, including the Chairperson and one of her deputies. There are 71 women in the seventh State Duma (compared to 21 in its previous convocation). Moreover, the Central Bank and the Central Election Commission are headed by women; the federal commissioners for

human rights and children's rights are also women. A similar picture may be observed in the business world. According to data from the all-Russian non-governmental organization Opora, Russia is nowadays one of the leading countries when it comes to the number of women entrepreneurs and managers: it is ranked third worldwide in terms of the proportion of women in managerial positions. Women account for more than 30 per cent of company board directors.

It is regrettable that insufficient attention is paid at the OSCE to the issue of fair geographic distribution of posts among the participating States. While special reports are released every year on the pursuit of equality between women and men, there is simply no analysis of or reporting on efforts to achieve fair geographic distribution. We invite the Secretary General to consider how to remedy the situation – for example, by submitting annual reports to the Permanent Council on comprehensive implementation of Staff Regulation 3.01 without restricting these to issues of gender balance.

At the same time, we note the report's thematic focus on the socio-economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and on measures to tackle these for women and girls. However, in this case too, we are convinced of the need to address these aspects without linking them to gender. The focus of our Organization should lie on protection of the family, motherhood and childhood; the occupational retraining of unemployed women and men; and protecting and supporting large or low-income families, along with single parents. Moreover, we acknowledge the need to further increase the participation of women in public and political life.

We agree that it is worth staying focused on combating violence against women. It is important to do this in line with existing commitments, including the relevant decision from the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Milan in 2018. This dangerous phenomenon must be combated by, among other things, adopting measures aimed at improving the economic situation of women and undertaking systematic efforts to curb poverty and social hardship.

We reaffirm that our position with regard to United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security remains unchanged. That document is an important frame of reference for strengthening the role of women in conflict prevention and settlement, and for protecting them during conflicts. Having said that, it is unacceptable to foist on States national action plans in this area, especially outside the context of conflicts or post-conflict reconstruction.

We should like to take this opportunity to wish the Secretariat's Gender Section, with which we have established constructive co-operation, and Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren personally every success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.