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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1161st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 October 2017

On the International Day of the Girl Child

Mr. Chairperson,

On 11 October we mark the International Day of the Girl Child, which was declared by a United Nations General Assembly resolution in 2012. Its goal is to draw public attention to the challenges faced by girls all over the world, to find ways to solve these problems and to recall the importance of protecting their rights and empowerment.

This includes, *inter alia*, combating discrimination and violence against girls, as well as measures to ensure their access to education, jobs, medical care and instruction in the field of women's health. This is extremely important because girls are future wives and mothers.

Protecting children's rights is a priority for Russia. Combating trafficking in children, sexual violence and child pornography; reducing rates of homelessness, neglect and child abandonment; providing recreation and ensuring better health for children, including those living in difficult circumstances; and improving social services for children with disabilities are far from being the only challenges that we all need to address to ensure the well-being and harmonious development of the younger generation.

When developing policies in this area, governments need to consider the particularities and differences in the needs of girls and boys. We are sure that the foundations for the child's personal growth and development are laid in the family. That is why the Russian Federation pays special attention to the support of this most important social institution.

In this regard, we welcome the declaration supporting the institution of the family and traditional family values, which was adopted on 11 October 2017 at a meeting of the heads of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In particular, it emphasizes the need to develop effective measures aimed at creating favourable conditions for creating a family, protecting the health of the mother and child, developing the institution of adoption and supporting young parents. It highlighted the importance of co-operation in solving problems related to domestic violence, violation of the rights of the child, prevention,

suppression and investigation of crimes against children, reducing child mortality and improving the culture of child rearing.

We are grateful to the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship for the decision to hold a seminar this year on protecting the rights of children who find themselves in difficult circumstances. Girls are often more likely than boys to find themselves in situations that are dangerous for their life and health, become victims of violence, especially sexual abuse, fall into the hands of traffickers or face discrimination. We have seen that in every State there are difficulties and achievements in this area. It is obvious that the discussion of this topic needs to continue.

Against this background, the position of a number of OSCE countries, which completely ignored the Warsaw event, is perplexing. It turns out that their assurances of their commitment to protecting the rights and best interests of the child are losing credibility. Lack of time and human resources is a problem faced by all delegations without exception, and this cannot be an excuse.

The selective approach to OSCE commitments and human dimension events is unacceptable, especially when it comes to the younger generation.

Thank you for your attention.