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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1268th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

21 May 2020

**In response to the reports by the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and
the Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome Ambassador Pierre von Arx, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, and Mr. Alexander Wolters, Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.

We are grateful to the distinguished Ambassador von Arx for his detailed report. We note its wealth of information and the transparent approach to reporting on the Office's activities. We appreciate the fact that the field presence is fulfilling its mandate in close co-operation and co-ordination with the host authorities, acting in line with the long-term national guidelines contained, *inter alia*, in the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2040. We welcome the Office's participation in the Development Partners Coordination Council.

The consultation mechanism with the participation of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes it possible to influence the structure of the Office's programmatic activities, keep track of the implementation of projects and calculate their practical impact. We should like to mention in particular the Office's attitude in favour of placing completed projects under the control and management of Kyrgyzstan. This is a key condition for the successful work of any OSCE field operation, which is aimed primarily at helping to build the institutional capacity of the host country. We are in favour of applying this practice across the Organization's entire area.

The balancing of the Office's project portfolio between the three dimensions is to be welcomed. We support its initiatives for combating terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, corruption, money laundering and trafficking in human beings, and also for facilitating the provision of police assistance to citizens in remote parts of the Kyrgyz Republic and for capacity-building of the border service in countering transborder threats. We are ready to continue providing assistance in the further training of Kyrgyz law enforcement officers at institutions of higher education affiliated with the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

We can see the added value in the Office's activities in the economic and environmental dimension. We hope that once the situation with COVID-19 has stabilized, the impact of assistance in this field will only increase. This will benefit entrepreneurship development, employment growth and the expansion of trade with countries in the region. We emphasize that the implementation of any projects with a regional scope should be strictly guided by the specific wishes of Kyrgyzstan and its neighbours.

Within the human dimension, we have taken note of the Office's assistance in strengthening the rule of law, supporting judicial and prison reforms, including the introduction of the Unified Registry of Crimes and Misdemeanours, and promoting human rights. Also of interest is the practice of organizing international summer schools for graduate-level students and junior diplomats from countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as Afghanistan and Mongolia.

We welcome the field presence's readiness to adapt its mandated activities to meet the needs of the host country in countering COVID-19. Russia continues to provide a wide range of assistance to Kyrgyzstan. Specifically, in March and April, testing kits were delivered to carry out 52,000 COVID-19 tests. As part of a United Nations World Food Programme initiative funded by Russia to help Kyrgyz families in need, more than 33,000 inhabitants of different regions of the country received such support in April and May. The provision of other financial assistance is also under consideration.

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek has proved its worth in terms of training and building dialogue among youth representatives from Central Asian countries. In view of the memorandums on co-operation with foreign institutions of higher education and research centres, including Russian ones, the Academy could become a centre of excellence and a space for international student exchanges.

Mr. Chairperson,

As Ambassador von Arx rightly noted in his report, in February, the Russian and Kyrgyz Presidents launched the "Cross-Year of Kyrgyzstan and Russia", the programme of which includes more than 200 events. Our countries are working together to ensure regional stability and co-operating on military matters, both at a bilateral level and within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Close co-operation has been established on the integration track in the Eurasian Economic Union. We are intent on further progressive and comprehensive strengthening of diverse ties.

In conclusion, we should like to wish the distinguished Ambassador von Arx, Mr. Wolters and their staff continued success.

Thank you for your attention.