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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF BELARUS
AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 21st OSCE
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 4 and 5 February 2013

**Increasing stability and security: Improving the environmental footprint of
energy-related activities in the OSCE region**

Concluding session

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, allow me first of all to express our sincere gratitude to the Ukrainian Chairmanship and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for the excellent preparation for the first preparatory meeting for the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which is dedicated to the consideration of different aspects of energy security in close connection with environmental conservation issues.

The topic of this meeting is extremely relevant and includes precisely those areas in which the OSCE could, in our view, provide participating States with effective assistance in strengthening their security, discussing existing problems and finding solutions to them, and sharing best practices and innovative technologies.

We believe that the working sessions, at which we have examined such issues as developing sustainable energy and increasing energy efficiency, expanding the use of renewable energy sources and the transition to a green economy along with the problems of good governance with respect to energy and natural resources and the protection of critical energy infrastructure, provided rich food for thought as to what the OSCE can still do to develop co-operation and strengthen security in its region. Many of the proposals and recommendations that we have heard seem completely realistic to us and may form the basis for concrete action and specific decisions.

As we have seen from the presentations, within the OSCE and other international organizations and bodies there are today already a number of economic, environmental, scientific and technical programmes being implemented that are directly or indirectly aimed at increasing energy efficiency and developing renewable and alternative energy sources while taking into account as a matter of course the environmental factors at both the global and regional levels.

The Republic of Belarus is, for its part, not only supporting constructive proposals aimed at strengthening energy security and countering various threats and challenges in this sphere, but is also making its own contribution, *inter alia* in the form of initiatives and projects.

Notably, during the meeting the key importance of the progressive introduction of innovative technologies in the field of alternative and renewable energy sources and their significance for the sustainable economic development of the participating States was underscored in particular.

In this connection, I should like to mention that in 2009 Belarus put forward an initiative to the United Nations regarding greater access to a reliable, cost-effective, socially acceptable and environmentally friendly energy supply and to technologies for energy production from renewable sources. In particular, it was proposed that a mechanism should be created to improve access to new and renewable energy technologies for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

We welcome the support for and adoption of the resolution proposed by the Belarusian parliamentary delegation at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly session in Monaco in July 2012 on “Promotion and use of new and renewable sources of energy”, which, in our view, contains a number of important proposals and recommendations to the participating States and the OSCE Secretariat.

On the whole, we believe that the OSCE, as was also mentioned during this meeting, can serve as an important international platform for dialogue and co-operation among different stakeholders as regards the development of renewable energy and ensuring access to new technologies.

Belarus is keen to continue dialogue on this issue, including within the OSCE. Minsk has in recent years been the platform on a number of occasions for regional expert seminars and conferences under the auspices of the OSCE on energy and environmental issues and the protection of critical energy infrastructure. We are ready to continue open and constructive co-operation with all interested parties.

We trust that the questions and recommendations considered at this preparatory meeting in Vienna will be developed further and given more concrete form at the meeting in Kyiv and during the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague. This will make it possible to adopt important strategic decisions and implement specific projects.

In conclusion, allow me to congratulate Mr. Yigitguden on his recent appointment as the new Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and reiterate our willingness to offer him and the staff of his Office every support in their work, and also to wish the Ukrainian Chairmanship every success in further strengthening co-operation in the OSCE economic and environmental dimension.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.