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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1110th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 July 2016

**In connection with the report on the implementation of the OSCE Action  
Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Secretary General,

We are grateful for the detailed report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and note the large amount of work accomplished by the Secretariat in this area in the period under review.

We have established good co-operation with the Gender Section of the Secretariat, whose Head, the distinguished Ambassador Miroslava Beham, paid a successful visit to Russia last year. As a follow-up to this visit, we are pleased to be able to welcome Ms. Beham once again to Moscow in August.

We read the information in this report with interest, including data on the ratio of men and women in the OSCE structures. There are many indications that, in spite of the difficulties mentioned by the distinguished Secretary General, there has also been progress in the promotion of women to positions in the Organization, including executive ones.

The number of projects with gender aspects remains at its earlier impressive level: 317 altogether, one less than in 2014. As the report reveals, however, priority is still clearly given to the participation of women in political and public life, whereas other no less important areas remain in the shadows.

In the 1989 Vienna Document of the CSCE, the participating States undertook to pay attention to ensuring equal rights of men and women in all areas of life. There is a need to attend to the rectifying imbalances by increasing opportunities for women in economic, social and cultural spheres. We hope that the deficient elements in the OSCE's existing commitments will be made good in due course.

We believe that with a balanced approach of this type, the OSCE could make a contribution to international efforts in this area. This concerns vocational retraining for

women at a time of increasing unemployment, protection of large families and single parents with children, social welfare for low-income families, and more. Nor should we forget the rights of women who choose a life in which their families are the main priority.

Protection of the rights of women and children in the context of the current migration situation in Europe demands particular attention. In this regard it is not only socio-economic aspects that are of importance but also ensuring the safety, physical integrity and the right to a dignified life, particularly for women who find themselves in a foreign country with children in their arms.

In conclusion, I should like to stress the importance of promoting equal rights and opportunities for men and women. However, it should not turn into an artificial pursuit of percentages, either in the OSCE structures or in the participating States. The promotion of men and women to a particular position should still depend on their competence and professionalism.

Thank you for your attention.