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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1265th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

30 April 2020

**In response to the report by the
Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished Ambassador György Szabó for his presentation. Over the reporting period it proved possible to fund the projects of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan out of the existing budget for 2019. We note the efforts by this field operation to rapidly adjust its programmatic activities so as to be able to provide effective support to Kazakhstan in the context of the spread of COVID-19.

We trust that the Programme Office will carry out its mandate in strict accordance with the requests of the host State. Its work should be structured in principle with account taken of Kazakhstan's priorities and should be guided by long-term national development benchmarks. We note the support that has been provided for initiatives of the National Council of Public Trust.

We welcome the continuity in most of the Office's programmes related to non-military aspects of security. These have above all to do with counter-terrorism (including support for Kazakhstan's efforts to deradicalize those of its citizens who have been repatriated from Syria and Iraq) and combating the drug threat and organized crime.

The economic and environmental dimension continues to be a particular thrust of the Office's activities. The work carried out in this area is quite varied and includes enhancing economic governance; countering corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism; and providing assistance with environmental protection, notably protection of the ecosystems of transboundary river basins.

We note the Office's projects in the human dimension, in particular those aimed at strengthening human rights and the rule of law, and also those aimed at countering trafficking in human beings and domestic violence.

We have taken note of the Office's support for the publication "Hate Speech in Kazakhstan: Statistics, Cases and Recommendations". We recognize that finding a balance between freedom of speech

and State measures against incitement to national, racial and religious discrimination is no easy task. We assume that documents of this kind dealing with a particular State are prepared by OSCE field operations or relevant OSCE executive structures only upon request of the State in question.

The report touches on the question of establishing an “OSCE Thematic Centre on Sustainable Connectivity” in Nur-Sultan. We would remind you of Russia’s support in principle for this initiative by our Kazakh neighbours, which reflects their interest in modifying the forms of co-operation between their country and the OSCE.

Relations between Russia and Kazakhstan as allies are very broad and multifaceted on the whole, both at the bilateral level and within the framework of the principal inter-State associations, that is, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the United Nations, and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia. Our joint efforts are aimed at ensuring that Kazakhstan continues to enjoy political stability and economic prosperity, and at enabling it to build its capacity for tackling the fundamental challenges of economic development.

Finally, allow me to thank Ambassador György Szabó for the fruitful work he has carried out in his post for over four years now. We wish him and the Programme Office’s team every success.

Thank you for your attention.