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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1092<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 March 2016

**In response to the address by Mr. Ralf Kleindiek,  
State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs,  
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, I should like to congratulate our women colleagues on International Women's Day, 8 March, and wish them every success and prosperity. This holiday is widely celebrated in Russia and has been declared a public holiday. In our country, it is not only an occasion to admire the beauty of women but also an opportunity to express our respect for working women and mothers, and serves as a symbol of our concern about women.

Having undergone a number of changes in Russia, 8 March has acquired some key features: particular attention to the problems of motherhood and to the empowerment of women in the national economy and the government of the State, the honouring of their ability to achieve great heights in their profession and assimilate new things while at the same time remaining attentive mothers and wives.

We are grateful to Mr. Ralf Kleindiek for his interesting presentation.

We consider that the OSCE has solid experience in promoting gender equality, including the 2004 Action Plan. In 2014 in Basel, we adopted an important decision on combating violence against women.

There are, however, still problems. We believe that the main thing is to focus on creating conditions in which men and women can both fully develop their potential. All discriminatory restrictions with respect to employment need to be eliminated. It is the State's task to ensure a favourable environment in which women can combine family and a career. In that connection, due account should be taken of the special role played by women in preserving cultural, religious, moral and family values, and in bringing up children. The OSCE could make a significant contribution to the practical solution of issues regarding the vocational retraining of men and women at a time of growing unemployment, the protection

of large families and single parents and their children, and social assistance to mothers or fathers bringing up small children.

We are concerned that many countries underestimate the importance of the economic and social rights of women, whose situation has deteriorated considerably as a result of the economic crisis. Steps need to be taken to address the imbalance by focusing in the OSCE on safeguarding equal rights and opportunities for men and women in economic, social and cultural spheres.

Violence against women in all its forms and manifestations, including in the context of the current migration crisis in Europe, must continue to be combated.

We regard United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security as an important point of reference for the protection of women during conflicts and the enhancement of the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and also in post-conflict reconstruction. However, it should not be forgotten that resolution 1325 is applicable only in certain situations, and therefore we cannot agree with its excessive promotion in the OSCE and especially its extremely broad interpretation. We take the position that the leading role in this regard should remain with the United Nations.

We support the work and professional approach of the OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, Ms. Miroslava Beham. Her visit to the Russian Federation in July last year, which we appreciate, permitted among other things a detailed discussion of the future development of gender policy in the OSCE. We are open to further constructive co-operation with the Secretariat's Gender Section.

Russia is actively involved in the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UN-Women Executive Board. We believe that the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women should ensure transparency and accountability in its activities and on a conceptual level should be guided by the CSW set-up. As for the way agreement is currently reached on the Commission's conclusions, this should be an intergovernmental process, taking into account the positions of all member countries.

Mr. Chairperson,

Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that: "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." Unfortunately, the problems of the family have so far not received the attention they deserve in the OSCE.

Protection of the family is becoming especially relevant against the background of the aggressive imposition of extremely neo-liberal views, which are destructive to the institution of the traditional family and human reproduction.

We should also like to underscore the importance of protecting children. This question is at the heart of the activities of many international and regional organizations, but currently receives precious little attention in the OSCE's work. The fact is that children are the most defenceless and vulnerable population group and require special protection. Conflicts, trafficking in children, child labour, sexual violence, child pornography, domestic

violence, and restricted access to education, social welfare and medical care threaten children's lives, safety, health and moral development.

We recall that at the 1990 Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE the participating States decided "to accord particular attention to the recognition of the rights of the child, his civil rights and individual freedoms, his economic, social and cultural rights, and his right to special protection against all forms of violence and exploitation." We believe that this topic needs at last to be given objective consideration in the OSCE, and we call on the Chairmanship to make efforts to that end.

Thank you for your attention.