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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR STEFANO BALDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY
TO THE OSCE, AT THE CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE 30th OSCE
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Prague, 8 September 2022

**Promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through sustainable economic
recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

Opening session

Italy aligns itself fully with the statement by the European Union and wishes to add some observations in a national capacity.

We should like first of all to reiterate our thanks to the Polish Chairmanship for organizing the 30th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which is devoted to the topics of post-pandemic economic recovery and the opportunities for sustainable and inclusive economic development in the OSCE area. We likewise thank our colleagues from the Czech Republic for having provided faultless hospitality this year, too.

Unfortunately, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine – to which an immediate stop must be put, as we continue to urge – has forced a sudden change in the agenda for our work, compelling us to reflect on the consequences of the conflict for economic and environmental security.

The war has confronted us with new challenges, such as food security and the risks to the environment and the protection of biodiversity arising from military operations. It has again highlighted the urgency of safeguarding the security of energy supplies and the protection of critical infrastructure, such as nuclear power plants. It has made evident the need to accelerate the energy transition, strengthen efforts to tackle climate change and seize the new opportunities offered by technological development for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth.

While maintaining its firm support for the full sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and its active solidarity with the Ukrainian population in the face of Russian aggression, Italy has worked tirelessly on these topics at the national level and in co-operation with our main partners and allies.

With regard to food security, we provided staunch support for the process facilitated by Türkiye and the United Nations which led in July to the resumption of exports of grain and other raw materials from

Ukraine. This is an important outcome that has made it possible to avert a food crisis with a global reach – a crisis for which Russia bears sole responsibility.

Italy has also worked on strengthening its national security framework through the diversification of energy supplies in the short term and by strengthening the use of renewable energies in the medium to long term.

Effective energy diversification can be based only on environmental sustainability and inclusiveness, by ensuring adequate protection for the population groups that are most vulnerable and ultimately most exposed to the sudden increase in the cost of energy and, more generally, of raw materials.

Inclusiveness also means promoting active participation in decision-making processes by groups, such as women and young people, who can make an essential contribution to the development of our societies and to the prospects for economic recovery. In this regard, we wish to recall the steadfast support provided by Italy for the innovative extrabudgetary projects which the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities is implementing in Central Asia on the empowerment of women in the energy sector and in the Western Balkans on youth entrepreneurship.

In recent months, extreme weather events have been recorded with greater frequency both in Italy and in many other OSCE countries, such as droughts, the melting of glaciers, fires and violent storms, with often tragic consequences. We shall have the opportunity later on, during the dedicated side event, to delve into the important nexus between climate change and security in the light of the Ministerial Council decision adopted in Stockholm last December. But we wish to reaffirm at this point Italy's vigorous support for the OSCE extrabudgetary project on climate change and the importance which we attach to the decision to devote a specific detailed study under this project to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and its impact on the environment.

Mr. Chairperson,

When responding to the pressing challenges of our times, we must rethink our economic and urban development models in the name of social and environmental sustainability and make the best use of the opportunities offered by new digital technologies. It is to this new model of development – inclusive, interconnected, sustainable and shared – that the candidacy of Rome to host Expo 2030 is likewise dedicated. The city's candidature dossier was presented in Paris yesterday. This is further proof of the priority attention and commitment which Italy devotes to these topics.

Thank you.