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EEF.DEL/1/24  
29 April 2024

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR  
THE 31st OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 29 and 30 April 2024

**Enhancing security and stability in the OSCE region through digital innovation,  
contributing to sustainable development and climate adaptation**

**Opening session**

Madam Chairperson,

We join in the words of welcome addressed to the participants in our meeting and express our appreciation to the Maltese Chairmanship and to the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Bakyt Dzhusupov, and his team for organizing the meeting.

It is gratifying to note that the participating States managed to rise above dogmatic political stances this year and to agree on a decision to hold the Forum after the failure of the mediation efforts undertaken by last year's Chairmanship. This allows one to hope that it will be possible to resume constructive co-operation under the second "basket", which is traditionally the least politicized area of our Organization's work.

The agenda for the event ahead of us is very rich and encompasses a wide range of issues that are highly important for the OSCE participating States. In the context of the current Economic and Environmental Forum, the priorities for Russia are enhancing the effectiveness of digital transformation of the economy on the basis of home-grown technologies, human capital development, the reduction of negative impacts on the environment (including through the transition to more environmentally friendly transport), the use of modern technologies in agriculture and the development of digital tools for combating corruption.

The effectiveness of work in these and many other fields of activity within the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension has been stymied by serious challenges in recent years. They include a fragmentation of the economic space, the severing of trade links and falling-apart of technology tie-ups, a slowdown in economic activity, the disruption of transport, logistics and supply chains, volatile energy and transport prices, environmental degradation and a growth in greenhouse gas emissions. These negative trends are to a considerable extent due to the zest for unilateral restrictive measures shown by a number of

the Organization's participating States. However, the economic and environmental damage caused by their imposition is affecting in equal, if not greater, measure the very instigators of such illegal initiatives.

We should like to dwell briefly on the topics that have been proposed for discussion. We welcome the fact that the agenda for the meeting reflects issues related to access to sustainable, affordable, diversified and reliable energy supplies, including through the strengthening of measures to protect energy infrastructure. This topic is indeed relevant. In that regard, it is regrettable that the rupturing of the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines has to this day not been investigated; no one has as yet been held accountable for that crime.

We cannot fail to respond to the accusations by the Kyiv regime's Deputy Minister of Energy. We should like to recall that the strikes against energy and transport infrastructure were carried out in response to the attacks on the Crimean Bridge and Russian oil refineries, and that they were aimed at degrading military capabilities. The accusations concerning attacks on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam are absurd. We are all perfectly aware of the importance of propaganda in modern armed conflicts, but one should be wary of taking everyone for a fool. Three nuclear power plants are in operation in Ukraine. Any right-minded person understands that it is pointless for Russia to carry out strikes exclusively on a nuclear power plant that is under our control when no damage is being done to nuclear facilities on the opposite side. It is a similar story with the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam.

At present, international trade in the goods and equipment required for the energy transition is running up against numerous bans and restrictions, as is international co-operation on the environment and in the dissemination of low-carbon technologies. Even though it has currently been made harder for Russia to access "green" technologies and international financing, our country is implementing a Strategy for socio-economic development with a low level of greenhouse emissions during the period up to 2050, and it has announced its plans to achieve a carbon-neutral economy at the latest by 2060. The Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation was adopted in October 2023.

We are of the view that the energy transition should be gradual, balanced and nationally tailored. We intend to put together a low-emission economy model that involves reducing emissions both by developing renewable energy sources, hydropower and nuclear energy, and by enhancing the efficiency of hydrocarbon use. In addition, we should like to reiterate that the energy transition to modern renewables is not a panacea from the point of view of energy security. The risks due to the situation in hydrocarbon markets are being displaced by the advent of an age of dependence on supplies of minerals and metals, including rare earth metals, that are critical for the development of the green energy sector. There is already active engagement in a struggle for access to relevant resources, and the competition in this field will merely keep growing.

Our country is making a palpable contribution to the safeguarding of global food security. Last year, more than 45 billion US dollars' worth of agricultural produce was exported, the overwhelming share of which (87 per cent) went to developing countries. Russia exported a record 60 million tonnes of grain. The biggest purchasers were China, Türkiye, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Algeria. Some 200,000 tonnes of free grain were shipped to the poorest African countries: Mali, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Central African Republic and Eritrea.

Corruption is nowadays taking on novel forms and exploiting new means and tools, including digital and information and communication technologies. In that regard, response measures by States aimed at preventing corruption, and at identifying and neutralizing sources of corruption and the associated threats, must be appropriate and effective. One such tool consists in digital and smart technologies, in the digitalization of government, all of which are being actively developed and adopted in our country in line with the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan for the period 2021–2024.

We are willing to actively participate in the discussions during, and on the margins of, the first Preparatory Meeting for the 2024 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. We trust that the meeting will be productive in terms of formulating new ideas and useful recommendations for the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.