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**STATEMENT BY MR. VALERY VORONETSKY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE
20th OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 6 February 2012

Anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism

Opening session

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, allow me to thank Mr. Brian Hayes, Minister of State at the Department of Finance of Ireland, Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, Mr. Goran Svilanović, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the distinguished speakers for their detailed and clear statements, which have set the appropriate tone for the work of this preparatory meeting.

The annual Economic and Environmental Forum is a key event within the OSCE's "second basket" and an important and useful format for developing dialogue and co-operation among participating States on the most pressing economic and environmental issues related to security.

We believe that the new, improved cycle for the economic and environmental dimension introduced last year, which provides for two preparatory meetings and the Economic and Environmental Forum itself, has proven itself and is in fact helping to increase effectiveness and efficiency within the second dimension.

We consider the focus of this Economic and Environmental Forum on good governance to be completely justified. Combating corruption, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism are relevant to all participating States. The constant attention paid to this subject and the specific joint actions in this area are driven not only by new threats and challenges to security, but also by the ongoing international financial and economic crisis, whose roots are linked to a large extent with the violation of the basic principles of good governance, both at the State level and in the private sector. We agree with the Irish Chairmanship that good governance is crucial for sustainable economic development, stability and security in the OSCE region.

The Republic of Belarus sees anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism as priority issues in the fight against organized crime and the solution of problems related to ensuring national security. Belarus is consistently improving its legislative framework and practical mechanisms in this area, among other things by progressively introducing the relevant international standards. Our country is a participant in a wide range of specialized international and regional legal instruments and associations, including the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism.

In this context we also co-operate closely with the OSCE. In particular, a number of national events were held in Minsk in 2007 and 2008 with the Organization's assistance in order to study international best practice in combating corruption and cybercrime.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today's preparatory meeting is a good opportunity for us to exchange experiences and best practice in anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. It also gives us a chance to attempt to define the OSCE's role more precisely and determine the specific contribution it can make in this area.

Overall, we believe it is essential to continue to step up efforts in the economic and environmental dimension, which is an integral element of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive and co-operative security.

Finally, allow me to wish all participants an interesting and fruitful meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.