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**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR STEFANO BALDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY,  
AT THE 2022 ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION  
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING**

15 November 2022

**Opening session**

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

First of all, we should like to take this opportunity to thank the Polish Chairmanship for the work done in the economic and environmental dimension during this difficult year marked by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Our heartfelt thanks also go to Ambassador Raunig for his expert steering of the Economic and Environmental Committee and to Ambassador Hasani and his colleagues at the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for their continued commitment to supporting the participating States.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine 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 ensuring the security of energy supplies and the protection of critical infrastructure. It has confirmed the importance of issues that have long been considered priorities, such as 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.

The OSCE can make an important contribution to dialogue and co-operation among participating States on these matters by strengthening the implementation of shared commitments in the economic and environmental dimension of security and paying due attention to the issues of inclusiveness and empowerment of the most vulnerable groups.

We welcome the Polish Chairmanship's choice to dedicate this annual Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting to the topic of women's empowerment and the effective participation of women, with equal leadership opportunities, in economic and environmental protection activities.

This is a topic of the utmost importance for Italy, with which we are engaging through multiple initiatives at the international and national level.

The promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls, gender equality and women's empowerment are priority issues in Italy's work at the United Nations, in the G20 and in its interactions with partner countries. Within the OSCE, too, we believe that fully harnessing the role of women in society, in

the world of work and in conflict mediation and environmental protection activities can make a significant contribution to the full implementation of our common commitments. In this sense, we support the extrabudgetary project on women's empowerment in the energy sector that the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities is implementing in Central Asia.

At the national level, last year, after an extensive and participatory consultation process, Italy adopted its first National Strategy for Gender Equality, which outlines five priority areas (work, income, skills, time and power) for enhancing women's rights, with detailed and measurable targets to be achieved by 2026.

In particular, the National Strategy defines goals and actions to reduce the gender gap in employment, increase female participation in the labour market and promote women's entrepreneurship by fostering, *inter alia*, the adoption of measures to increase the presence of women in typically male-dominated sectors, ensure the reconciliation of personal and professional life and support the sharing of parental responsibilities.

In this context, of particular importance is the recent introduction of a national certification system for gender equality to encourage Italian enterprises (including small and medium-sized ones) to adopt appropriate measures to reduce the gender gap and ensure equal pay for equal work and maternity protection.

Thank you.