

Statement of Mr. **Dalius Bitaitis**,  
Vice Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania,  
delivered at the High-Level Segment of the Fourth Session of the Conference  
of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
7 September 2011, New York (United States of America)

Mr Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to be here today at the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of States Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and I am looking forward to discussing relevant issues of the implementation of this important Convention and sharing the acquired experience.

The rights of persons with disabilities must be protected both by legislation and in practice. I am proud that Lithuania was among the first states, which signed the Convention and its Optional Protocol. We have ratified these essential documents in 2010 and immediately initiated actions for proper implementation of the Convention aimed to meet the expectations of persons with disabilities. I would like to share with you some of our initial experiences concerning this issue.

Firstly, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania established the institutional mechanism for the implementation of the Convention. Functions of the focal point were delegated to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, since the latter is in charge of coordinating the issues on social integration of the disabled. Other state institutions were designated as sub-focal points according to their competences and activities.

Though the appointment of the coordinating mechanism is not obligatory for the State Parties to the Convention, we believe that it adds an important element for the effective implementation of the Convention. Therefore this function was also delegated to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Ministry initiates actions in various sectors for the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities and coordinates the implementation of the Convention on the local, regional and national level. It also ensures the participation of the disabled and their organisations in the implementation of the Convention and in the monitoring processes.

An independent mechanism has been also established for promoting, protecting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention in order to prevent the violations of the rights of the disabled. In Lithuania these functions are performed by the Ombudsman of Equal Opportunities jointly with the Council for the Affairs of Disabled at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. These institutions investigate claims and submit proposals, observations concerning the improvement of legislation and practical implementation thereafter.

We believe that it is very important that the persons with disabilities and respective organisations are involved in implementation of the Convention. In Lithuania this is done through my mentioned Council for the Affairs of Disabled which submits proposals and recommendations concerning better implementation of the Convention to the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

Referring to the provisions of the Convention we have drafted and adopted the National Programme for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities for 2010-2012, which is implemented through its Plan of Measures. Some measures of this Plan were proposed by the interested institutions jointly with Non-governmental organisations.

Seeking to ensure the sustainability of the National Programme for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities for 2010-2012, a new programme for the period of 2013 – 2019 will be developed along with a Plan of Measures for its implementation where specific measures, funding and implementing bodies will be defined. Representatives from the organisations of the disabled are involved in all this work.

Dear Colleagues,

Though the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a rather new convention and Parties, including Lithuania, just started its implementation, however, a huge number of States Parties to the Convention and its Optional Protocol indicates the big concern and obligations undertaken with regards to the people with disabilities, pursuing to ensure their human rights both on national and on international level. Therefore, I am sincerely convinced that this Conference will be another step forward in reaching this goal.

Thank you for the kind attention