

Statement by

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**At the High Level Segment
of the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Commission on
Sustainable Development**

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Mr. Chairman,

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania associates itself with the statement made by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

We welcome the integrated approach to the problems considered at this session and related to different aspects of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa.

Water, forests, biodiversity and climate change influence all the topics of this session. From the Lithuanian point of view I would like to mention a few important aspects from our recent experience.

Lithuania being a small country in terms of its territory and population, but rich in water, forests, biological and landscape diversity, seeks to find balance between economic, social and environmental objectives.

In order to preserve biodiversity and healthy environment, some new economic measures have been introduced in Lithuania in the last few years. We have been giving state financial support for organic farming and for afforestation of lands unsuitable for agriculture. We also apply compensation mechanisms to land owners, who have environmental restrictions on economic activities.

The constantly increasing territory of protected areas and forests in Lithuania, the growing number and areas of organic farms, demonstrate that the applied measures are effective. Last year we afforested 3.5 thousand hectares of land. Currently forests amount to almost 33 percent and protected areas total about 15 percent of the territory of the country.

We believe that this will positively contribute not only to sustainable development in general, but it will also benefit rural development and rural livelihood in particular.

Agriculture and climate change are closely related both from mitigation and adaptation points of view. With economy growing and the level of social living standards rising, more and more countries face absolutely new challenges and threats, such as droughts and water scarcity.

For a long time such a phenomenon as “a drought” was not relevant to Lithuania. Quite the opposite - flooding problems were more actual. Lack of rain in summers and heavy showers in autumns inflict big damages to agriculture.

Understanding that droughts may occur more often in the future because of climate change, in years to come we plan to renew the monitoring, evaluation and forecasting system of the hydrological regime and extreme hydrological phenomena (floods, droughts).

The development of renewable energy from agricultural and forestry biomass could further contribute to reduction of CO₂ emissions. The use of renewable resources is one of the top priorities in our national policy. The share of these resources in primary energy balance in Lithuania will be increased up to 12 percent by the year 2010.

In the last few years there has been significant growth in the use of biomass from forests and agriculture for energy generation, especially in district heating.

We consider that the use of biomass is an opportunity and a challenge. One of our major concerns is that a growing demand for biomass does not put in danger environmental stability of forest ecosystems, landscape and biological diversity. Therefore we support the initiative to develop sustainability criteria for biomass production.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania strongly believes that this session should be followed by actions leading us to a further strengthening of the environment pillar of sustainable development.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.