



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ MISIJA JUNGTINĖSE TAUTOSE
PERMANENT MISSION OF LITHUANIA AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Statement of Mr. Patrikas Skrudupis
Advisor to the Minister of Social Security and Labour
of the Republic of Lithuania
at the 56 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
New York, 29 February 2012**

Madam Chair, excellences, distinguished delegates,

Lithuania is grateful for the honour to address the Commission on the Status of Women at this 56th session. Lithuanian delegation fully aligns itself with the Statement made by Denmark on behalf of the European Union and reaffirms its commitments to further activities towards empowerment of rural women, their equal economic opportunities, and opportunities to participate in decision making, and towards promoting women's rights in political, economic, cultural, social, educational and other fields.

Lithuania highly appreciates the work of United Nations Commission of the Status of Women, as well as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) towards advancement and empowerment of rural women. We are paying a lot of attention to full and effective implementation of women's rights, referring, first of all to CEDAW, Millennium development goals and Beijing Platform for Action. The results of our efforts were presented in the Fifth periodic report, submitted to the CEDAW Committee this year. Seeking to contribute more to the activities of CEDAW aimed at combating all forms of women's discrimination and striving for *de facto* equality between women and men, Lithuania proposed its candidate to this respectful Committee. Furthermore, targeting rural women, Lithuania actively participates in the Governing Body of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's European Commission on Agriculture.

Madam Chair,

It is difficult to overestimate women's contribution in rural development and agriculture, food security and eradication of hunger, in climate change and sustainable development as well as in a number of other areas.

Over entire Lithuanian history women working hard in the family farms, being the breadwinners along with men, took care also about preservation of national culture, language, national identity and heritage.

Today in Lithuania women make about 50 percent of rural population. They are active in self-employment, they establish their small and medium-sized businesses, even in the areas not so common for women. More and more women living in the rural areas are interested in carrier possibilities in the areas alternative to agriculture. Women are active community leaders and more active as men in promoting implementation of social non-profit initiatives. One of the largest associations of rural women – Lithuanian Association of Women Farmers – actively contributes to promoting entrepreneurship among rural women, promoting rural women's alternative crafts, reduction of social exclusion as well as improving social partnership and the quality of life in the rural areas, including the most necessary services, cultural and community life.

A number of developments have essentially contributed to the improvement of situation of rural women in comparison to urban women. Well developed information technologies, such as easy access to the Internet in rural areas, use of mobile phones by majority of population. This ensures rapid delivery of information, opportunity to watch cultural events both at national level and over the world, so contributing to the quality of public and cultural life of local communities, including easier access to various services, for instance, bank and postal services, health services. Furthermore, recently adopted Law on protection against domestic violence creates preconditions for protection of victims of violence and punishment of perpetrators everywhere, including rural areas, where access to the crisis centres was limited.

However, despite of all positive results achieved, regional disparities in Lithuania still exist. Situation of rural women in comparison to that of urban women still differs in terms of social, health and child care services as well as services for dependant family members. Relevant infrastructure is less developed in the rural areas too. Therefore we will continue further our actions targeting rural women. A lot is done and lots remain to be done.

Thank you Madam Chair.