

LITHUANIA

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STATEMENT BY

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Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we came together at the Forty-ninth special session of the Commission on the Status of Women not only to reaffirm our commitment to the goals and objectives contained in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action and Outcome documents of Special session on Beijing+5, but also to review the implementation of goals established in these documents, to pledge to undertake further actions as to ensure that words become deeds. Gender mainstreaming, as it was defined in the Beijing Platform for Action, together with specific actions, as the dual strategy today is applied broadly in all areas of economic and social life and results in visible positive achievements in gender equality. Real application of gender mainstreaming requires establishment of concrete targets, further development of tools, especially gender budgeting and gender impact assessment, as well as gender audit, other methods and indicators. Careful monitoring of the results of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, as it was done in 2000, as we are doing now, once again proves efficiency of gender mainstreaming tools in eliminating imbalances between women and men in all areas of life. It is becoming increasingly clear that gender mainstreaming, as a strategy with new methods, tools and approaches is valuable to reach the goal of gender equality.

Madame Chairperson,

Ten years that have passed after adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and five years after the Special Session on Beijing +5 were full of developments in gender equality field in Lithuania. As it comes to naming the concrete results. the Government of Lithuania is glad to report on the progress made and single out the main achievements. Gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming remain a priority policy in Lithuania. Activities in this field include rapid development of institutional mechanisms, tools and methods, appropriate legislation, adoption and implementation of programmes and projects.

The Beijing Platform for Action highlighting importance of institutional machineries as the separate critical area provided necessary preconditions for creation and development of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality as well as inspired to make efforts to ensure effective functioning of such national machineries, including political will and legal preconditions. Institutional gender equality mechanisms in Lithuania, which gained particular acceleration after Fourth World Women's Conference. today cover a broad range of active players. Minister responsible for gender equality, focal points on gender equality in all the ministries, inter-institutional Commission on Equal opportunities for women and men, Women's parliamentary group, Independent Equal Opportunities Ombudsmen's institution, even four gender studies centres - all these structures are effectively acting in Lithuania. The most resent achievement is a start of creation of gender equality focal points on municipal level.

The Government of Lithuania explicitly recognizes the contribution of the civil society, especially numerous and active women's NGO's in promoting human rights of women and equal opportunities for women and men. To implement gender mainstreaming policy in the most constructive way government is engaged in real partnership with NGOs. Social dialogue and dialogue with NGOs is to be encouraged, in order to ensure the participation of key actors in the process. Joint activities implementing governmental policies on gender equality in Lithuania have proved that collaboration and dialogue between decision-makers and civil society are no longer just theoretical framework. Constructive debates between the NGOs and governmental representatives are taking place, setting benchmarks, indicators, deadlines and monitoring processes. The non-

governmental organizations in many cases have been an equal partner to the government in promoting human rights of women.

As a result of active work and collaboration among different institutions, including public sector, legislation has been improved to remove any remaining discriminatory provisions. Implementation of gender equality goals is carried out through the goal-oriented programmes, projects and other measures and activities, executed in the coordinated manner. National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, based on gender mainstreaming provisions, covers implementation of concrete measures in areas of employment, education and science, politics and decision making, women's human rights, violence against women and trafficking in women, health protection and environment, foresees elaboration and improvement of tools and methods, combating stereotypes, awareness raising. Special measures for women are integrated into several other programmes aimed to eliminate imbalances in employment area, promotion of women's small and medium sized business, ensuring of women's human rights. All the programmes and measures include reporting requirements and mechanisms. Furthermore the *Methodology of impact assessment of draft decisions*, adopted by the Government that came into force in 2003 contains requirement on assessment of the impact of the draft decision to the situation of women and men.

Measures implemented within different programmes in recent decade have resulted in decreasing difference in salaries between women and men even in private sector, lower unemployment level of women (almost equal in a moment), facilitated women's participation in small and medium sized business - almost 40 percent of small and medium businesses are headed by women - positively influenced reconciliation of work and family life, raised awareness on different gender equality aspects, greatly contributed to the better protection of women's human rights, combating violence against women and trafficking in women.

Consequently implementing international commitments Lithuania signed Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women establishing a right-to-petition procedure in 2000 and ratified it in 2004 without any reservations. Provisions of Beijing Platform for Action and Outcome document of Beijing+5, recommendations after consideration of initial and second periodic reports on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women encompassed the guidelines for the New National programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Third periodic report is ready to be submitted for consideration soon.

Madame Chairperson,

Recognising the progress towards achieving equality between women and men made during the last decade we fully realise that inequalities persist and the obstacles still remain in many areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. Such issues as involvement of women into decision making, participation in governmental structures, leadership in professional career and businesses, transforming family relations based on the principle of equality and partnership — remain the areas of concern for the Government and the society. Recognizing importance of the full and effective implementation of the goals and commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action and Outcome document of Beijing +5, which constitute an agenda for gender equality and empowerment of women, Lithuania reaffirms its commitment for full implementation of the goals and objectives established in the Beijing Platform for Action as to create real possibilities for both women and men to enjoy fully the benefits of knowledge, labour and economic independence.

Thank you Madame Chairperson.