

LITHUANIA

A Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000) Period 2000-2004, Lithuania

Part I

Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

Lithuania is continuing to follow commitments made in Beijing in 1995 by constructive implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provisions of which is fully transposed in the National Programme for the Advancement of Women (1995), adopted as a follow up in the national level to Beijing Platform for Action as well as two Action Plans for the Advancement of Women of Lithuania implementation of which is explicitly described in the report of Lithuania to Beijing +5.

In 2000-2004 a major development in the reform of the legal system was accomplished in Lithuania. Adoption and implementation of the new legislation in line with international commitments was an extremely important step in bringing Lithuania's legal system in line with the highest human rights standards and the principles of gender equality. The most important legislation in this field is Law on Equal Opportunities for women and men, the Law on Equal Opportunities which covers anti-discrimination issues on the ground other than sex, updated *Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania*, New Civil Code and Civil Process Code (2002), New Criminal Code and New Criminal Process Code (2003), establishing stricter punishment for trafficking in human beings, domestic violence, especially Articles 120, 121 and an Article 132' the Criminal Code on more strict amenability for domestic violence and isolation of perpetrator from family (2 June 2004) as well as an Article 152 the Criminal Code on criminal liability for sexual harassment (2003); New Labour Code (2003) ensuring equal opportunities of women and men in the employment, including equal pay, opportunities of reconciliation of work and family life, matters of parental leave, protection of maternity; Law on the Security and Health of Workers, Decree Regarding a List of the Risk Factors and Dangerous Workplaces for Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers and other legislation.

Consequently implementing international commitments especially in gender equality policy and matters related to that issue Lithuania signed the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. Ratification documents of the Protocol are already submitted to the Parliament. In 2003 Lithuania has ratified *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and children, supplementing UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime*.

Since the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly in 2000 policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as gender mainstreaming strategy as an important tool for achievement of gender equality objective, has been further developed through priority provisions in the programme of the Government establishing priority areas in gender

equality aimed: to ensure equal opportunities for men and women in seeking education, in upgrading their qualifications, in employment, promotion, setting the salaries; to enable women to participate on equal conditions in all areas of political and public life and high-prestige activities, to occupy leading positions in public administration institutions, as well as the several the programmes related to most important areas of concern (see critical areas), further development of legislation and national machinery. *The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004* was approved on 3 June 2003. It foresees activities on equal opportunities for women and men in employment, education, politics and decision-making, as well as measures on protection of equal rights, including women's human rights, combating violence against women and trafficking in women, health protection and environment issues, development of tools and methods, improving statistics, measures for combating stereotypes and strengthening of institutional capacities, awareness raising measures. The Programme was developed in view of the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men in all activity areas to be achieved by using the strategy for gender mainstreaming, defined as organisation, reorganisation, improvement, development and evaluation of political processes so as to incorporate the perspective of gender equality into all areas of politics, into all levels, in all stages and of all actors, normally participating in political activity, evaluation of any planned activity, legislation, strategies and programmes in all areas and levels taking into consideration the impact on both women and men.

The Programme covers and the wide set of integrated measures according to almost all critical areas focused on the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Most of measures foreseen are in line with the Recommendations and comments of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, submitted to Lithuania after consideration of the initial and second periodic report. (Initial and second periodic report on implementation of the UN convention on Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) were considered in New-York in 2000. and the third periodic report is to be submitted in 2004. The Programme (www.socmin.lt) includes concrete tasks and objectives, actions and measures, terms for implementation and responsible institutions and financial resources for implementation of every measure. The total budget of the programme is above 700 lt.. Most of the measures have already been fulfilled. Implementation of the Programme is to be extended until 2006.

The implementation of the Programme is monitored by the permanent Inter-Institutional Commission established by the Government on 7 March 2000. Representatives from all the thirteen Ministries, Department of Information Society and Statistics department are appointed to the members of the Commission. The Commission is in charge of co-ordination of activities of national institutions in implementing and mainstreaming the policy of equal opportunities and rights for men and women. The Commission works in close cooperation with other structures of national machinery, especially non-governmental women's organizations, Ombudsmen's Office.

In 2000-2004 the Government of Lithuania adopted several gender-mainstreamed national programmes, which are being implemented by joint efforts of governmental institutions and non-governmental, organizations. Such programmes facilitate progress especially in the fields where inter-institutional co-operation is needed and secure necessary financial resources. These programmes are: Programme of increasing of Employment, National Action Plan on Human Rights, National Programme for the development of Small and Medium Sized Business, The

National Programme for Control and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2002-2004; Educational Preventive Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2003-2004; Pilot Programme on Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking to the Society, National Programme for Control and Prophylaxis of HIV/AIDS 2003-2008; The Programme on Nutrition Improvement for Babies and Children to 3 Years of Age; The National Programme on Drug Control and Drug Prevention 1999-2003; The National Programme on Child and Mother Protection 2004-2006, Strategy and action plan on decreasing of domestic violence (to be adopted in 2004) (the more explicit description of the programmes is presented in Part II).

National machinery, established since 1995, is successfully developed further. Today it covers broad range of active players, including parliamentary level (Commission for Family and Child Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (Parliament) and Women's Parliamentarian's Group; Governmental level (Adviser to the Prime Minister on gender issues, responsible Minister and gender equality body, focal points in every Ministry, Interministerial Commission on Equal opportunities for women and men, responsibilities of all governmental institutions to implement equality in the area of their competences in line with the gender mainstreaming approach), independent Ombudsman on Equal Opportunities, social partners and more than 100 active women's organizations. The most recent achievements in this area are establishment of persons responsible for gender equality in local municipalities and establishment of Equal opportunities Development Centre as implementing level in gender equality machinery.

All segments of national mechanism are interrelated in implementing different fields of critical areas following the Beijing Platform for Action. Discussions on different problems of gender policy have mostly been held in the inter-ministerial Commission and the debates within Parliamentary groups: Commission on Family and Children Issues; Parliamentary group of women from different political parties in the Seimas; the Committee on Human Rights Social and Labour Issues, on European Affairs. In 16 April 2004 the international conference "Family Policy within the EU Space" was organised by the Commission on Family and Child Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and Gender Studies Centre at Vilnius University. The purpose of the Conference was to introduce the Family policy and gender policy in Baltic countries. The major problems that were discussed are closely related with a new political status of Lithuania as a new member of the European Union. Despite the promising perspectives for women in a European labour market as well as growing economical independence of women and more sufficient protection of human rights, such problems as unequal balance of women in politics and decision making, different situation of women in rural areas in comparison to cities, situation of poverty of vulnerable groups, trafficking in human beings - all these challenges are to be addressed in the future as well.

The Constitution and legislation of the Republic of Lithuania consolidates and guarantees equal rights for men and women. The implementation of measures of almost all critical areas following the Beijing Platform for Actions has been consequently accomplished through The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004. Processes of the integration into the European Union also positively situation of women in the working life, professional career, participation in politics and public life, changes in attitudes in the society. Nevertheless, achievement of the goal of gender equal society takes much longer time. In real life problems in

this area still exists. Changes in political and economic systems followed by democratic reforms require gradual attempt to remove all forms of discrimination and create equal opportunities for men and women in Lithuania.

It should be mentioned that gender equality in Lithuania is understood both as promotion and advancement of women and equality of rights and opportunities of both genders. Dual approach - gender mainstreaming combined with special positive actions are used to reach the objective of gender equality. Attention therefore is paid to such issues as men in gender equality, specific men's problems (especially men's health problems) as well. Thus in the ongoing National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, sufficient attention is paid on male values, esp. hierarchy of patterns of behavior and social well being of men. More and more men and young boys in present-day Lithuania express active interest in issues of gender equality in different situations of everyday life. First Men's Crisis and Information Centre is established in Lithuania 2 years ago.

In year 2000 the UN CEDAW Committee has recommended Lithuanian Government “to develop clear criteria for rendering and ensuring governmental financial support on the national and local level for the work of women’s NGOs”. It also suggests that the “Government increase awareness among individuals and corporations regarding possible donations to women’s organizations”. Within the frame of national programmes (The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004; The National Programme for Control and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2002-2004; Educational Preventive Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2003-2004; National Programme for Control and Prophylaxis of HIV/AIDS 2003-2008; The Programme on Nutrition Improvement for Babies and Children to 3 Years of Age; The National Programme on Drug Control and Drug Prevention 1999-2003; the National Programme on Child and Mother Protection 2004-2006) a productive social dialogue between NGOs, social society groups and the state institutions is growing every year. In 2000-2004 the government has funded approximately 50% of total budget of NGO’s activities. Furthermore every person is allowed and encouraged to support non-governmental organizations by transferring 2 percent of his/her income taxes to the non governmental organizations upon his/her choice.

Part II

Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty third special session of the General Assembly

A. Lithuania's progress towards social inclusion and poverty reduction

Full participation in the European Union's social inclusion process, the Open Method of Coordination on poverty and social exclusion is a high priority for the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, especially given the importance the Government has given in recent years to poverty reduction. In this context a Poverty Reduction Strategy was prepared in Lithuania in 2000 and the Government adopted an implementation programme for the period 2002-2004 (the Poverty Reduction Programme) in November 2002. The Programme lays down priority goals and actions (measures) for poverty reduction which the Government and other state institutions intend to undertake with the aim of reducing poverty. These are very significant documents which have considerably enhanced public awareness and strengthened institutional activities in the area of poverty reduction.

The Lithuanian Government have identified the following most urgent challenges in relation to tackling poverty and social exclusion: to increase the level of employment and reduce unemployment, especially long-term unemployment; to tackle rural poverty and revive disadvantaged rural areas; to develop the social protection system so as to ensure that those who are unable to work are guaranteed an adequate income while also ensuring a closer link between the payment of unemployment benefits and active labour market policies; to tackle educational disadvantage and to ensure that all citizens gain the skills necessary to access and participate in the new information society. The measures aimed to overcome these problems are gender mainstreamed taking into consideration vulnerable situation of women.

The implementation of the range of social inclusion measures will require efforts of many institutions and significant resources. Measures aimed to further combat poverty are composed in Lithuania's first National Action Plan on poverty and social exclusion, to be confirmed in 2004.

Contribution on UNDP-Lithuania towards the goals of poverty reduction is to be underlined as of particular importance. During the international conference "Social inclusion in EU accession countries from the perspective of the Millennium Development Goals", the publication Common Country Assessment for Lithuania prepared by United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office on behalf of the UN Country Team in Lithuania has been presented. This baseline analysis was provided in order to contribute to the Government's monitoring of country's progress towards social inclusion and poverty reduction.

This year, in the Common Country Assessment for Lithuania the socio-economic progress of the country is analysed from the perspective of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals have been defined during the Millennium Summit in New York, on September 2000, where 147 heads of state and government participated. The Summit adopted the Millennium

Declaration, which maps out the course for the United Nations and the world community to confront global challenges. Millennium Development Goals were derived from this Declaration, for each country to choose its own form of commitment to create an environment conducive to development and elimination of poverty. Millennium Development Goals are defined for 2015. They focuses on eight key areas: halving extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development.

Lithuania's progress analysis from the perspective of the Millennium Development Goals is based on data mostly provided by the Department of Statistics of Lithuania and other sources. Poverty, education, medical care, environment, and other related indicators are analysed and country's progress in the areas of social inclusion and poverty reduction is evaluated in the publication. Recommendations are also provided after each Millennium Development Goal is evaluated in the country context as to possible future policy options taking into account the point of view of the relevant global conferences.

The Common Country Assessment is issued for the second time in Lithuania. The publications like this are being prepared in many countries in order to examine the national situation in relation to internationally agreed goals set by action plans or programmes at the UN Global Conferences and at the Millennium Summit. Common Country Assessment is a part of the instruments to bring greater coherence to the UN activities at the country level.

B. Education and training of women

The system of education is open to all inhabitants in Lithuania and is capable to meet the needs of all population groups and both sexes. Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania states, that education at the level of state and municipalities schools, vocational training, and college type schools is free. *Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania* issued on 28 June 2003 forbids discrimination on the grounds of sex and ensures gender equality.

Lithuanian women make much more effort to achieve high level of education than men do. In 1998 in high schools girls amounted 50,6 percent; in college type schools - 65,2 percent and in higher schools and universities - 57,8 percent. In the last five years the tendency has remained almost unchangeable. In the 2002-2003 academic year, female students constituted 51% of high school students, 59.8% of college students and 61% of university students. There is an evident increase in women seeking of higher scientific degrees. In 1998-1999 there were 51,8% women in the studies for PhD's degree (from the total number of those seeking for PhD degree) and 48,2% men. In 2002-2003 academic year women comprised 64,5% from the total number of those seeking for PhD degree.

Following further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, in 2003 Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has adopted the Resolution No. IX-1700 on the *National Strategy of Education: 2003 – 2012*. One of the main principles of the Resolution is to increase

women's access to all levels and types of education and training as well as to ensure their lifelong learning. Female students with children are granted additional social security and financial aid:

- Female students with children who are studying at higher schools can be provided with social grants;
- The time of redeem of the Government's loan for studying can be postponed for female students until the child is 3 years old.

The *National Strategy of Education: 2003 – 2012* too has paid sufficient attention to the link between women's enrolment in higher educational institutions and labour market dynamics. Within the scope of the *Strategy*, centres of professional consultation and information will be established in the higher schools of Lithuania, which will ensure more productive link between an employer and an employee.

The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004 was approved on 3 July 2003. The Programme foresaw the activities that followed the guidelines of Platform for Action in the field of education and training of women. The Programme carried out projects which included measures for improving lifelong learning for older women; designed set of measures for encouraging women to achieve higher scientific degrees; designed set of measures in preventing gender stereotypes in educational curricula and materials, also establishment and promotion of networks of women- scientists.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania issued Decree No. ISAK-1699 of November 28, 2003 on *Educational Preventive Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2003-2004*. According to the *Programme* preventive educational measures against gender discrimination and gender stereotypes in materials, as well as in the process of high education are implemented: methodological recommendations for teacher's preventive work among students of high school are developed; Preventive-informational campaigns in cities and province against trafficking in girls are being carried out; Training for high schools' teachers (training for trainers) in the issues of trafficking in children have been organized; new curriculum on gender-sensitive material for elementary schools "Good practices in Social Skills' Developing" has been issued.

It is widely acknowledged that technological change can bring new opportunities for all women in all fields, if they have equal access and adequate training. It is highly important that starting 2003-2004 school year there were conventional educational norms and common programmes introduced in high schools in Lithuania, which the Ministry of Education and Science issued by the *Decree No. ISAK-1015* of July 9, 2003. According to the Decree a new curriculum in *Technologies and Information Technologies* has been introduced. The new curricula in *Technologies and Information Technologies* encourage girls to seek employment in high-growth and high-wage sectors and jobs.

C. Women and Health

The Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2001–2004 pays considerable attention to the development of healthy lifestyle, including support for public

healthy lifestyle movements, promotion of availability of family planning and reproductive health, availability and quality of health care, in particular in rural areas. Implementation of the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2001–2004 covers support provided for numerous programmes aimed at prophylaxis of contagious diseases, health development and reduction of disparities in health levels among the country’s population.

The data of the Health Information Centre of Lithuania reflect the growing incidence of harmful habits in Lithuania. The number of men everyday-smokers increased from 43,3 per cent in 1994 to 51,5 per cent in 2000, and of women – from 6,3 to 15,8 per cent respectively. 33,9 per cent of men and 11,5 per cent of women consumed strong alcoholic beverages at least once a week. Compared with the previous surveys this figure reached its peak in 2000. The numbers of women with higher education consuming strong alcoholic beverages at least once a week considerably increased since 1994 (from 5,2 to 14,3 per cent).

Like other countries Lithuania also faces problems distinct for older people. Life expectancy of men in Lithuania is 65,9 years, and of women – 77,4 years. The gap between female and male life expectancy is almost 11 years, however, these additional years as a rule involve chronic diseases, disability, and dependence. Dependence is accompanied by mental, economic, psychological and social determinants, which mostly contribute to deteriorating the quality of human life. Most serious disorders affecting health of older people are dementia, depression, cancer, cardiovascular disorders, osteoporosis, traumas, etc.

One of the goals covered by the Programme “Health for Everyone in the 21st Century” is healthy ageing, i.e. ensuring that by the year 2020 all people older than 65 are provided with the opportunity to use all their health potential and to live active social life.

Although the health status of women is better than that of men in Lithuania, both women and men encounter certain health problems. General health indicators of population are presented in the table below:

	2000	2001	2002
Death rate of adults for 1000 population			
Women	9,9	10,2	10,4
Men	12,5	13,3	13,5
Death rate of infants for 1000 alive births			
Girls	147	92	105
Boys	147	158	133
Sickliness TBC			
Women		826	785
Men		1780	1635
Life expectancy			
Women	77,45	77,58	77,58
Men	66,77	65,95	66,21

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania initiated a wide range of health preventive measures. Only during the 2000-2002 in Lithuanian cities and province more than 553 preventive programmes were organized and performed. In 2002 57.4% of the programmes were directly devoted to promote children's and gender sensitive supportive programmes, those for the health of pregnant women, nursing mothers and mothers with children under 3. In 2003 10 informative announcements were released specifically for health care of elderly women and men, which were spread among the Health Care Services and media. The most important attention is paid to family health care, to the fulfillment of highest standards of psychical and mental health. Thus in 2000 in Lithuanian counties and municipalities 156 935 meetings with population on related questions were organized, respectively in 2001 – 187 303, in 2002 – 175 418, 2003 – 186 382. In the 2000-2003 there were 3837 brochures published on health life promotion.

On 14 October 2003 the Government approved the *National Programme for Control and Prophylaxis of HIV/AIDS 2003-2008*. In 2003 The Centre of Social Integration for Risk Groups was established within the frame of which adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, have an access to sexual and reproductive health information, education, social services and psychological assistance.

Abortions present one of the most acute problems for women in many post-communist countries. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that there is a decreasing tendency in the number of abortions:

DEVELOPMENT IN THE NUMBERS OF ABORTIONS IN 1999 - 2003

Year	Artificial abortions Total	For 1000 women of 15 - 49	For 100 alive births
1999	18 846	20.0	52.2
2000	16 259	17.2	48.1
2001	13 677	15.4	44.0
2002	12 495	14.1	42.5
2003	11 513	12.9	37.7

Data provided by the Health Information Centre

Pregnant women are treated as a specific risk group and are under most attentive supervision of the law and the state. On 19 March 2003 the Government issued a Decree *Regarding a List of the Risk Factors and Dangerous Workplaces for Pregnant women and Nursing Mothers*. The Decree stipulates for guarantee of adequate working conditions for pregnant women and nursing women, thus, obliging the employer to provide full information about risk factors of the given workplace.

The Decree No.88 issued by the Ministry of Interior On 17 February 2000 stipulates for not accepting to guardhouse women who are more than 6 months pregnant and mothers with minor children.

One of the most important health problems among women in Lithuania is anaemia during pregnancy. The incidence of anaemia has only begun falling in the last few years. In 1980 - 2.9%

of pregnant women had anaemia and in 1995 it reached the peak of 36.1%. Then the cases of anaemia began to decline slowly:

THE PERCENTAGE OF ANEMIA IN PREGNANT WOMEN

	2000	2001	2002	2003
The percentage of anemia in pregnant women	29,1	27,4	28,0	25,9

Data provided by the Health Information Centre

The Programme on *Nutrition Improvement for Babies and Children to 3 Years of Age* started in 1993 and is aimed at educating the society and advocating the benefit of breast feeding to the health of babies. The next stage of the Programme was implemented in 2000-2003, and the third one is on progress. National Program of the Mother and the Child is adopted in 2004.

Women are more willing to take care of their health than men are. According to the data of the survey conducted in 2001 women (17.8%) constituted the biggest part of audience in various health supportive programmes. In the meantime men were much less active (8.8%). Nevertheless, educational work promoting physical activity and explaining its positive influence on the ageing organism is badly performed both for women and men. According to the gerontological inquiry, exercise among elderly women of Vilnius and Kaunas is not popular: the majority (68.3%) do not exercise, do not have the need to lead a physically active lifestyle and do not understand the importance of physical culture in everyday activities.

D. Violence against women

It is satisfactory to announce that during the period 2000–2004 new legislation and sanctions as well as integrated measures were introduced to prevent violence against women and children. Legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania establish sanctions for violence. Violence suffered by a human being in different spheres of social life is punishable according to the respective Articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania – murder, bodily injury, rape/sexual assault, and other types of physical violence. Violence in society means physical, psychological and sexual coercion experienced by an individual in public life outside his or her family. However, there are no special norms as regards exclusive liability for family violence the victims of which as a rule are women. Legal acts do not provide for the definition of family violence.

Assistance (including shelter, psychological and legal support and advice, hotlines) is provided by 16 Women Crises Centres. The principal activities of the recently established Men Crises and Issues Information Centre are focused on work with perpetrators.

Work in this field covers organisation of training for police officers, social workers, public information campaigns, surveys of the origin of violence, surveys of the role of women and men and gender studies (in particular related with the role of men and boys as well as with all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence). Active support on the part of society,

in particular of women's organisations was of great importance in rendering services to women – victims of violence, and organising information campaigns.

A new Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania (*Article 152*) provides a criminal liability for sexual harassment. An Article stipulates a penalty by imprisonment or arrest for verbal, visual, audio, or any other form which forces a person to participate in unwanted sexual contact or attention. It must be stressed that a victim of sexual harassment can also apply to the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman.

Domestic violence still remains a very frequent form of violence against women and children. The records on domestic violence presented by Lithuanian Department of Statistics are not sufficient, for victims of violence not always report about assaults committed against them. According to the data of Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, in 2003 during the period of May-January women became victims of domestic violence in half of total 19 312 registered offences. It is necessary to note, that Minister of the Interior on May 8, 2003 issued a new Decree No. IV-160 on centralized recording of victims, which will improve victims' registration according to their sex. On 2 June, 2004 Lithuanian government has approved amendments to the *Criminal Code, Articles 120, 121 and a new Article 132'* which impose more strict amenability for domestic violence and isolation of the perpetrator from the family. The proposed amendments are to be presented to the Parliament of Lithuania for adoption.

According to the data of the Ministry of the Interior of Lithuania, there were 129 cases of child sexual abuse registered in Lithuania in 2002: 67 cases of depraving actions towards children (those of exhibitionism, sexual touching and fondling of children's genitals, forced touching of male's genital, pornography demonstration) and 62 cases of sexual crimes (rapes and attempts to rape and sexual intercourse with a sex-immature person under 18). Comparing the data on depraving actions that is twice as much than in 2001 when 29 children became the victims of depraving actions. In 2002 almost half of children exposed to depraving actions were under the age 14. In 2002 girls comprised more than two-thirds (68.2%) of the total number of victims of sexual violence: among the 129 cases of child sexual abuse 53 girl rapes were registered. Every four girl was under the age 14. Referring to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, Beijing Action Platform and Programme of Advancement of Women in Lithuania, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania carried out integrated strategies on preventing violence against children. In 2000 The Office of Ombudsman for the Protection of the Rights of the Child was established. On 20 May 2003 the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the Decree No. IX-1569 on *National Conception on Children's Policy*. Ratification of *The Protocol to prevent child trafficking, prostitution and pornography, supplementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)* is currently in the process.

Wide range social measures as well as legal acts are taken to prevent trafficking in women and prostitution. On 22 April 2003 Lithuania ratified *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. In 2002 the government approved the *National Programme for Control and prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2002-2004*. The programme aims at organizing a system for the control and prevention of trafficking, which involved a broad range of preventive methods including

educational, socio-economic and medical measures as well as legal initiatives. The Ministry of Social Security and Labor organized in 2002 and 2003 tenders for social assistance projects directed towards the reintegration of trafficking victims. This Ministry approved, on July 2003, a *Program for Psychological Rehabilitation and Professional Orientation and Employment of Victims of Trafficking and Prostitution*, which is currently being implemented. Also, an increasing number of public institutions and NGOs provide assistance for victims of trafficking and prostitution. It should be noted that combat trafficking is one of the main priorities of Lithuania's regional co-operation. As a member state of the Council of Europe, as Lithuania actively participates in drafting of the Council of Europe Convention on Actions Against Trafficking in Human Beings, following the decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2003. A number of initiative are taking place and seminars are organized in the Baltic sea region. Within the framework of Nordic Baltic cooperation –Nordic-Baltic information campaign against trafficking in women held in 2002-2003 simultaneously in all Baltic and Nordic countries. Cooperation networks between Lithuania as a state of origin, transit and the countries of destination were established in order to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Bilateral international agreements recently cover joint cooperation between Lithuania and 16 other countries.

Integrated social assistance to women and children who suffered from all forms of violence is provided. On 10th of November 2003 the Ministry of the Interior of Lithuania, the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior and Lithuanian Women's NGO "Vilnius Women' House" made a triangular agreement within the frame of *National Programme for Control and prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2002-2004*. Telephone lines for giving advice to the abused women on psychological, legal and other matters, including information on shelter institutions were established in Lithuanian cities and towns. It must be stressed that a project of a new *National Programme for Control and prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2005-2007* has been submitted to the government.

In 2002 the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior together with Child Development Center at Vilnius University prepared and published methodological recommendations to police officials alongside with providing training covering analysis of cases of violence and abuse in the family against women and children. Methodical recommendations have been prepared for investigation order of domestic crime cases and reports received from medical institutions on injured persons, as well as general requirements on implementation of preventive measures. In 2003 Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior organized training for 342 representatives of NGO' and social workers "Violence in Family".

Combating violence against women is a complex phenomenon. The present multidisciplinary approach to responding to violence covering assistance to victims of violence, imposition of sanctions on perpetrators, appraisal, education and training of public and specialists from respective spheres and victims of violence, procedure of application of legal provisions, consolidation of the role of law enforcement institutions, and of the system of health care, has been rather limited so far. The absence of the system of respective complex programmes to address this issue encompassing all of the aforementioned spheres and of the coordination between actions of different authorities and non-governmental organisations has been obvious. Therefore the concept and action plan to combat violence against women with a view to

developing the system to fight such violence and to ensure a set of measures covering education of law enforcement personnel, support to victims of violence, dealing with perpetrators, information, education and health care of society and victims of violence, to be implemented together with relevant NGO's is already drafted and would be submitted to the Government in the third quarter of 2004.

F. Women and the economy

The system of free economic market provides equal opportunities for all citizens to seek economic independence, however, in practice it is not always the case.

At the beginning of 2002 the general rate of employment of women and men was 48,1 per cent. According to the data of the Department of Statistics under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Department of Statistics) the rate of employment among women (aged 15 and over) during the same period was considerably lower than the rate of employment of men and accounted only for 44,7 per cent (of men – 52,2 per cent). The general rate of employment of the population in Q3 2002 compared with the respective rate at the beginning of the year increased to 51,3 per cent.

Employment rates among women pre-pensioners are low. At the beginning of 2002 the rate of employment of women aged 50–64 was 44,9 per cent, and the rate of employment of men of the same age group amounted to 54,4 per cent. It should be recognised that finding a job is particularly difficult for elderly people both, women and men.

In 2002 the rate of unemployment of women was only slightly lower than that of men. According to the data of the National Labour Exchange, the average annual unemployment rate of women was 11,3 per cent, and of men – 11,4 per cent.

Nevertheless, in all rural inhabited areas the share of women exceeded men in the total number of the long-term unemployed and individuals enrolled at the labour exchange from 6 to 12 months. On 1 November 2002 the rate of unemployment of women already exceeded the rate of unemployment of men and reached 10,9 per cent (the rate of unemployment of men was 9,9 per cent).

At the beginning of 2002, 65,9 per cent of all employed women worked in the sector of services (16,1 per cent – in the sector of education, 14,6 per cent – in the sector of trade, repairs of vehicles and personal and household goods, 11,7 per cent – in health and social work sector), with only 18,8 per cent engaged in manufacturing and 12,3 per cent – in agriculture. Distribution of men in the same year was more balanced, i.e. 46 per cent of men worked in the sector of services, 22,5 per cent - in industry (18,7 per cent – in manufacturing, 10,1 per cent – in construction), 21,3 per cent – in agriculture, and the rest - in other spheres of business activity.

Both vertical and horizontal segregation by gender in the labor market has economical consequences -- payments for male and female works are still not the same. Even though the new Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania contains the provision stipulating that men and women

should receive equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value, the statistic shows the differences between men and women's salary:

AN AVERAGE WOMEN'S SALARY PER HOUR IN COMPARISON TO MEN'S, %

YEAR	%
2000	83,9
2001	83,9
2002	83,9
2003	83,4

The data provided by the Statistics Department

It should be stressed that even though current economic activity of women is lower than that of men, women's unemployment rate is lower:

LABOUR FORCE RATE, EMPLOYMENT RATE, UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2002 (age 15-64)

	Women's %	Men's %
Activity rate	65,7	73,2
Employment rate	57,1	62,3
Unemployment rate	12,9	14,6

Women are much more active in the labor market and willing to start their own business and gain economic independence. According to the data of the Statistics Department women ran approximately 38% of businesses in 2002. Women are also much more active in obtaining new knowledge and qualifications. Following further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania accomplished the project "Assistance for the beginners" (2002), which was devoted to women entrepreneurs. The total number of women managers is continuing to grow. In 2000 women comprised 39,6% and in 2001 – 40% among managers.

A joint project between Lithuania and Finland, namely "Promotion of women's entrepreneurship" had the significant impact on encouraging women to take an active part in economic life. The results of the project were widely discussed in the seminar on 29 August 2003 in Vilnius. As an outcome of the project a study on financing women entrepreneurship as well as methodological material "The most favorable aspects of crediting of women entrepreneurship" were published. Within the frame of the project 100 women entrepreneurs participated in two-day seminars.

A special attention was paid to women and their problems in agriculture. In 2002 Ministry of Agriculture hosted an international conference "Women and village community". The same ministry also financed and coordinated the project "Women's role in the process of integration in EU" (2003).

In 2002 a three-year initiative started to help women in rural and less developed areas in Lithuania to be trained to go on the Internet. The initiative helps more than 800 women and their organizations harness the power of information and communications technology (ICT). The project set up five regional cyber centres and provided equipment to women's organizations and develops training methods and an ICT handbook in Lithuanian. It also set up a Women's Information Portal on the Web, with features such as a digital library, a database of women's groups, mailing lists, and a search engine. As of November 1, 2003, 485 women have been trained.

However, one of the difficulties women encounter in their careers is an uneven domestic division of labor. The latter still remains unaltered and women bear the main burden of domestic chores. Moreover, some researchers assert that double work burden has become harder in the last years and the share of domestic chores performed by a woman even increased in 2000 to compare with 1994.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEKEEPING AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE OPINION OF MARRIED LITHUANIAN WOMEN AND MEN, %

Family member who,, is:		Married men, %			Married women,%		
		Man	Woman	Both	Man	Woman	Both
... does everyday meals...	1994	4	73	16	3	76	13
	2000	3	79	17	3	81	12
...cleans the accommodation...	1994	3	60	26	4	66	17
	2000	4	79	18	5	73	14
...does everyday shopping...	1994	10	50	34	12	56	23
	2000	8	64	27	8	67	23
...washes dishes...	1994	4	57	27	5	62	19
	2000	5	66	21	3	72	18
...looks after the disabled and elderly...	1994	3	33	37	2	37	33
	2000	3	35	26	3	40	23
...washes and irons clothes...	1994	3	76	14	2	76	14
	2000	3	83	11	2	83	9
...takes important decisions...	1994	33	16	48	24	33	38
	2000	27	16	54	16	31	52

Excerpted from G.Purvaneckiene: "Decision-making on Family Level".

The goal to find more effective decisions in order better reconcile parent's work and their responsibilities with family obligations remains one of the crucial issues in social and family policy in Lithuania.

It should be noted, that while many young Lithuanians have benefited from the current economic transformation, life has become more difficult for the elderly, particularly those who live on the fixed income. The situation for women over 60 is extremely difficult because usually they are already alone, for life expectance for men is 12 years less than that of women. Additionally,

women live longer but they are not necessarily healthier than men. On the other hand, there are optimistic signs that are becoming much more active participants in the labor market. In 2000 there were 3,8% more elderly (51–60 years old) women entrepreneurs than men were in the same age group. As an outcome of the Second World Assembly on Aging (Madrid 2002), the network of age-focused NGO's "Gabija" was established. The main goals of the network are: work with and for elderly people, collecting information about the needs of the elderly, looking for ways to fulfill these needs, strengthening the relationship between NGO and governmental institutions,

G. Women in power and decision-making

Equality in decision-making is essential to the empowerment of women. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible.

The number of women elected in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania reduced from 18,1% after 1996 election to 10,6% following 2000 elections. Total it comprised 15 women in 2000-2004 Parliament. There are 15 women Members of Parliament out of a total of 141 (11%) since the elections of 2000. This figure was 18% in 1999. No women at present head any of the 14 Seimas Committees, and there are 6 women out of 14 chairpersons on the Seimas Commissions (43%). On the other hand, women are better represented in the government. For the first time after Lithuanian independence in 1990 the government has the largest number of women ministers, namely 3 out of 13. On the municipal level women as members of municipal councils comprise 20,6%. Even though there is a tendency of growth of women's representation, they are not represented enough in local municipalities: out of 60 mayors only 2 women were elected in 2003.

One of the most important factors determining women's ability to reach the highest leadership positions is general opinion of Lithuanian women, including women, about women involvement in politics and governance. If Lithuanian remained quietly indifferent in women's participation in politics in the period from 1994 to 2000, it should be stressed that attitude of people has changed remarkably in the last months. There were two women candidates among the five in the early presidential election on 13 June 2004. For the first time in the history of elections in Lithuania, woman candidate, namely the former Prima Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene, received 242,749 votes (21.44 percent) making her way to the second run-off. Nearly 71 percent of Visaginas, a town near Ignalina n-plant, known for its apathy during elections, voted for Prunskiene to become the country's leader. Women in NGO took very important initiatives in encouraging Lithuanian women to vote for women candidates.

Following further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly to promote women's participation in politics, a two-year project "More women in politics", supported by SIDA, started in March 2002. Project is leaded and carried out very successfully by Kaunas Women's Employment Information Centre. This project was initiated during the Reykjavik

follow-up conference “WoMen and democracy” held in Vilnius on 15-17 June 2001 and aimed at increasing the number of women in politics and decision-making through different project activities, including mentorship and networking, continuous trainings, awareness raising. The project contributed to the elections to the European Parliament. As a result of project activities and due to the high competences of project leader 6 women out of total number 13 mandates have been elected in June, 2004. It is important to underline one more achievement – 2 women were out of total 5 candidates in the Presidential elections held in June 13, 2004. Second round of the elections is to be held in June 27, 2004. Two candidates – one woman and one man got to the second round. Woman candidate in the second round of the Presidential elections is the first occasion of such kind in the history since restoration of independence of Lithuania.

Human rights

Fundamental human rights in Lithuania are established by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania which promulgates that all people shall be equal before the law and a person may not have his rights restricted in any way, or be granted any privileges, on the basis of his or her sex, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, etc. Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania also guarantees civil and political rights, the right to work, education, social and health care. The Republic of Lithuania legislation: labour, civil, criminal, family law regulating marriage and family relations, ownership right, right to employment and other rights, are free from provisions discriminating individuals on the basis of gender.

The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Equal Opportunities was adopted in 1998 followed by setting up the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman to supervise the implementation of the provisions of the aforementioned Law. A person who considers himself or herself as being discriminated on the grounds of gender may apply to this Office. Other actions are also undertaken to provide women with the opportunity of exercising human rights de facto, to create women-friendly environment by improving the supervisory and monitoring mechanisms, implementing legal literacy, and organising public awareness-raising campaigns on these matters.

The measures of the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004 in this area are aimed To improve the existing legal base and mechanism of implementation of legal acts; to encourage cooperation between different components of the gender equality institutional mechanisms, to make actual assessment of equal rights of women and men in all regions of Lithuania; to educate society in the matters of women’s rights as human rights.

J. Women and media

Raising public awareness in the first instance directly facilitates unbiased treatment of genders and stereotyped roles of men and women. The gender mainstreaming strategy emphasizes the importance of public awareness (in particular in combating the traditional patriarchal stereotypes).

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women after considering the initial report and the second periodic report of Lithuania on 16 and 22 June 2000 expressed concern about the persistence of traditional stereotypes regarding the role of men and

women in the family, in employment and in Lithuanian society. The Committee was also concerned about the lack of targeted educational programmes, mass media campaigns to eliminate these stereotypes. The Committee urged the Government to design and implement comprehensive programmes in education and mass media in order to promote roles and tasks of women and men in all sectors of society.

Advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviour, especially of children and young adults. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women. The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004 have established the main guidelines for actions to implement the United Nations Committee's recommendations on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: to encourage mass media to describe modern women objectively and deal with gender equality issues, to promote more women to editorial boards of the mass media and create favorable conditions for their career development and skills improvement, to pay more attention to issues of human rights and professional ethics in training programmes for would-be journalists, to develop measures prohibiting spreading of violence against women, pornography, advertising prostitution, humiliating the dignity of women.

In 2003 the researchers of Vilnius University conducted the sociological study "An Analysis of Sexual Stereotypes in the Media". The main goal of the project was to reveal the images of men and women as well as the depiction of relations between the sexes in the Lithuanian media. In 2001 the women's programs at Soros foundations in 12 countries initiated and launched the pilot documentary film project, "Gender Montage: Paradigms in Post-Soviet Space" with the goal to make visible a large stratum of the widespread social, political, and economic problems of women living in the post-Soviet space in order to transform gender biased public thinking. Lithuania took an active participation in the project and presented the documentary "Tomorrow will be better?".

It is satisfactory to announce that Lithuanian society believes in the power of mass media and recognizes it as the most important preventive measure fighting trafficking. The most popular answers in Lithuania are realistic punishments to be imposed on traffickers – 60% (the youth also mentions this measure first – 52%). Mass media are second: provide/disseminate information about what to do when fallen into traffickers' trap (34%).

Quite a low representation of women in politics and all bodies of decision-making can also be related to negative attitudes and behavior of media towards a woman politician. Women remain either unnoticed in politics, or still described negatively. Women's opinion towards political issues is neglected, they are seldom invited to political "clubs" and discussions.

Women and environment

An essential role women have to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns is emphasized in the international documents and highlighted during global events. Successful response to the environmental issues obviously

depends upon all groups of society and upon involvement of proactive, educated and problem-aware population.

Women's contribution to management, conservation and use of natural resources has been recognised and is being supported. Through their management and use of natural resources, women provide sustenance to their families and communities. As consumers and producers, caretakers of their families and educators, women play an important role in promoting sustainable development through their concern for the quality and sustainability of life for present and future generations. Governments have expressed their commitment to creating a new development paradigm that integrates environmental sustainability with gender equality and justice within and between generations as contained in chapter 24 of Agenda 21. Women often play a leading role in promoting ethical aspects of environmental protection, reducing resource consumption, processing and re-use, to minimise pollution and condemn boundless consumer attitude. Women's experiences and contributions to an ecologically sound environment must therefore be central to the agenda for the twenty-first century. Sustainable development will be an elusive goal unless women's contribution to environmental management is recognized and supported.

In Lithuania society and women's organisations lack information on the issues of ecological education and skills necessary to involve Lithuanian women into the process of environmental decision-making and implementation. Society still lacks awareness of likely hazardous environmental impact on women and effects of gender equality on the promotion of environmental protection. Activities of women's non-governmental organisations are inadequately linked with settlement of environmental issues. Therefore the Ministry of Environment initiated the project aimed to encourage women's organisations to get involved in addressing the environmental issues by providing them with necessary information, knowledge and skills, to improve raising awareness of society and in particular of women about environmental condition of a particular place of residence and about changes of such condition. to promote ecological training programmes of public and women's organizations, to create network of women's organizations active in the field of environment protection.

Part III. Institutional development

Institutional mechanism of the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men covers several interrelated levels: parliamentary, governmental, and public.

By the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Equal Opportunities for women and men implementation of equal opportunities for women and men is obligation of every state institution, of employers, educational system, providers of goods and services. Implementation of the Law supervised by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman Men and women who have experienced gender-based discrimination as regards employment, education, provision of goods and services, or sexual harassment have the right to apply to the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. The Ombudsman investigates complaints relating to discrimination and sexual harassment, supervises the mass media so that it does not place discriminatory advertisements, investigates administrative cases and imposes administrative sanctions that are administrative fines. According to the Law in Lithuania, the Ombudsman does not need a formal complaint to investigate breaches of this legislation and can act independently.

Parliamentary level consist of the Family and Child's Affairs Commission, Human Rights Committee, the Women's Parliamentarian's Group established in 1997. It involves members of the Parliament from all political parties and is headed by a chairperson who is re-elected at the beginning of each parliamentary session (for a period of 6 months). The group serves as a meeting point where Parliament's women could exchange their opinions on different issues.

The Prime Minister's Counsellor appointed in 2002 is responsible for the matters of equal opportunities for women and men and for dealing with non-governmental organisations.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is charged with coordination of the implementation of equal opportunities of women and men in all spheres. In observance of ministerial regulations, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is also responsible for the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men in the field of social security and labour.

In 2000 the **inter-ministerial Commission of Equal Opportunities for women and men** was formed by the Government. It comprises of representatives from all ministries, the Department of Statistics and the European Committee under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. This Commission is a standing and non-profit seeking body coordinating activities of public authorities in implementing the policy of equal opportunities and rights of women and men, rendering conclusions and proposals to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and other public authorities as regard the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and rights of women and men, encouraging promotion of ideas of equal opportunities for women and men in close cooperation with the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman and non-governmental organisations. The Commission is responsible for coordination of the implementation of *The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004*. Commission's members, namely all ministries and the Department of Statistics, prepare annual reports on the implementation of the Programme measures for which they are responsible. The financing of the Programme measures is proposed from general –allocations of the Republic

of Lithuania State budget funds, approved for the ministries and institutions participating in the implementation of the Programme, so creating conditions for gender mainstreaming activities.

The Interministerial Commission for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women is responsible also for the follow-up action plan to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and for the implementation of recommendations regarding the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Municipal level is not sufficiently developed yet The Municipality of Vilnius was the first municipality in Lithuania, in which a person in charge of the matters of equal opportunities for women and men was appointed in 2001.

Public sector comprises of non-governmental organisations, especially numerous and active women's NGO's actively involved in different aspects of gender equality. An informal coalition of non-governmental organisations for the protection of women's rights set up in 2001 invited other structures of the institutional mechanism as project partners – the Group of Women-parliamentarians, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, the Commission of Equal Opportunities. The electronic network of the Women's Issues Information Centre, which is one of the most active women's organisations, unifies over 130 public authorities, non-governmental organisations and individuals. This most rapid and effective way of communicating information guarantees the opportunity to exchange ideas, experience and proposals, other necessary information and promotes informal cooperation between different sectors. One of the crucial missions of the Centre is assisting in implementing the Action Plan of Advancement of Women of Lithuania. In 2000, the Government of the Lithuanian Republic and the Women's Issues Information Centre were organizing a major conference for the Baltic States, on the "Beijing +5: achievements and perspectives". The Women's Issues Information Centre remains the national information service in Lithuania about the position of women and it is the main Centre for national and international exchange of information. Involvement of social partners is not sufficiently developed yet.

Established focal points for gender equality and empowerment within ministries and departments are in close connection with the Interministerial Commission for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women. Following the implementation of the action plan within the critical areas, the Commission organized trainings of specialists of territorial labor exchanges and labor market services aiming to improve vocational guidance and to increase the chances for women to find jobs; developed recommendations on integration of gender mainstreaming into the training programs for lawyers, social pedagogues, social workers, police officers; elaborated recommendations how to integrate the gender mainstreaming into the development programmes for primary health care specialists and training programmes for physicians and nursing specialists; prepared recommendations how to incorporate the course of gender equality into the training programmes for public servants.

Following the implementation measures of *The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004*, Public Administration Institute of Lithuania launched a new educational curriculum "Women, men and Public Administration". The aim of the programme is to challenge gender stereotypes and to raise awareness in the unbiased treatment of genders and

roles of women and men; to introduce the new curricula into education of public servants, so ensuring necessary trainings on gender equality for all civil servants.

The monitoring mechanism is established to measure progress in gender equality through the governmental level and independent body, namely Interministerial Commission for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities Ombudsmen

Gender mainstreaming has been developed through the implementation of national programmes. In 2000-2004 there were accomplished or still are in progress the following main programmes: The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004; The Programme of Increasing Employment of the Republic of Lithuania for 2001–2004, the Guidelines for the Development Strategy of Small and Medium Businesses by the Year 2004 and Small and Medium Businesses Development Measures for 2002–2004, the National Action Plan on Support and Protection of Human Rights in the Republic of Lithuania, supported by UNDP, the Poverty Reduction Programme, the National Programme for Control and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2002-2004; Educational Preventive Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution 2003-2004; National Programme for Control and Prophylaxis of HIV/AIDS 2003-2008; The Programme on Nutrition Improvement for Babies and Children to 3 Years of Age; The National Programme on Drug Control and Drug Prevention 1999-200; the National Programme on Child and Mother Protection 2004-2006.

One of the main obstacles to achieve sufficient implementation of equal opportunities for women and men is the absence of municipal level in the institutional mechanism. Municipal local level is not sufficiently developed yet. The Municipality of Vilnius was the first municipality in Lithuania, in which a person in charge of the matters of equal opportunities for women and men was appointed in 2001.

In 1997 the Department of Statistics appointed a person responsible for gender statistics. Thus since 1997 Statistics Lithuania has started to compile and produce more detailed statistical data disaggregated by sex in order to show the fact situation of women and men in all areas of life. Annual Statistical publications “Women and Men in Lithuania” have been published since 1997. As the demand for the information on gender statistics is continually increasing, it is very important to use various sources of information efficiently. However, the problem of coordination of social surveys carried out by various institutions and utilization of their results remains. Another problem is the possibility to estimate the dimension of negative social phenomena (narcotics, alcoholism, trafficking in women and girls, domestic violence, hidden unemployment of women or their informal employment and underemployment). There is still not enough information on the situation of rural women, especially older rural women, as concerns their cash income, health situation, access to free health care services and social and cultural opportunities. In order to analyze the needs of users better and satisfy them a workshop on Gender Statistics was organized in October 2000, in Vilnius. Accession to the EU positively influenced further progress in collecting and desegregating statistics by gender, following common standards of the EU.

Nevertheless there is still not enough space for women’s NGOs to promote women’s right and to implement The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004,

due to lack of funds at the national, regional and local levels. Low practice of sponsoring and philanthropy in Lithuania could be mentioned as one of the reasons.

Part IV

In 2000-2004 significant measures and action plans were taken in order to ensure implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004 was approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania as one of the most important action plans for implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the principles of the National Programme for the Advancement of Women (1995). The programme foresees activities and projects in the areas of employment, education, politics, decision-making, as well as measures on protection of equal rights, including combating violence against women and trafficking in women, health protection and environmental issues, development of tools and methods, improving statistics, measures for combating stereotypes and the strengthening institutional capacities. Within this programme, governmental actions against domestic violence are foreseen, in particular, directed to the improvement of legal framework for the isolation of the offender from victims, development of the network of crisis centers, raising public awareness for women, etc.

Implementation of the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is to be extended until 2006 with the concentration on the critical areas, which require further action, including outcomes of Beijing +10. One of the priority areas will include institutional development. In the next draft of the new Programme The Government foresees to widen the municipal level and to establish a position of equal opportunities for women and men in the biggest municipalities of the country.

In order to establish equal rights and opportunities for women and men to participate in the labor market, the Government foresees measures to change societal stereotypes as regards the place of men and women in the economic activity of the country, to create conditions for women and men to better reconcile their work responsibilities with family obligations.

To improve girls abilities to acquire better-paid specialties, the new Programme will take measures to modify textbooks and curricula taking into account the principle of gender equality as well as preventing from gender biased curricula and textbooks; will create more favorable conditions for women to seek education, career, and occupational proficiency.

The new Programme will encourage to perform research work as well as statistical information in all kinds of violence against women and children (prostitution and trafficking in women and girls, domestic violence, child sexual, psychical, psychological abuse), in order to clarify what kinds of discrimination exist in Lithuania as well as to establish the priorities to address.

The Government will ensure effective measures in promotion of equal opportunities for women to seek full participation in decision-making in the bodies of state power and governance, political parties and trade unions.

Through the integrated gender dimension into the development programmes for primary health care and training programmes for physicians, the awareness in family planning and reproductive health will be further developed; the Government will ensure the implementation of the programme “Health for Everyone in the 21st Century”, which is primarily devoted to promote healthy ageing.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that there are still remaining gaps and challenges encountered in all critical areas:

- Employment opportunities for women and men are still influenced by the established stereotyped societal role of the woman and the man, despite of the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania establishing equal rights and opportunities for women and men to participate in the labor market;
- The number of girls studying at higher school exceeds the number of boys, however specialties selected by girls are less promising in terms of career and earning;
- There is still lack of programmes designed for improving lifelong learning for older women;
- Despite the ongoing process of democratization, the degree of participation of women in decision-making at different levels is still low. A small number of women in decision-making bodies undermine the integration of gender mainstreaming into these critical spheres of influence;
- Despite the policy of public awareness, trafficking in women and girls still remains the most previous problem of social life. Statistical data about extent and tendencies of trafficking as well as victims of trafficking is not sufficient.
- Sexual education is inadequate. There is a lack of information about family planning methods, contraceptives, prophylaxis of sexually transmitted diseases, especially within rural population.

The success of a state aiming at implementing democracy, social and economic progress, observing human rights, cultural and vocational improvement, is directly related to the level of participation of both, men and women, in the development of these processes. Lithuanian Government is putting it's priority on a policy to ensure equal opportunities for women and men. In spite of progressive laws, ensuring equal opportunities, and positive movements in society, Lithuania will put it's efforts further to change society attitudes about equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of life. Lithuania will meet it's engagements to the implementation of Beijing Platform for action, CEDAW and other relevant UN documents by close co-operation with public, non-governmental and international organisations as gender equal society is a long-term objective and number of problems remain to be addressed in the future.