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The working session 4
Tolerance and non-discrimination I

Intervention of the Republic of Lithuania
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Ms. Moderator,

In my intervention I would like to address two main points, namely:

- Lithuanian experience ensuring **gender equality** and
- activities **against violence women.**

Lithuania has been the first country in the Central and Eastern Europe, which in adopted the **Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**, which covers employment and education areas and established Office of Independent Ombudsmen on Equal Opportunities.

Well-developed national system today covers all levels and is functioning in close partnership with non-governmental women's organisations, social partners, scientists and researchers on gender issues.

Gender mainstreaming principle integrated into the programmes and projects, especially the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The programme ensures systematic and consistent solving of gender equality problems.

Careful monitoring of its results once again proves efficiency of gender mainstreaming tools in eliminating imbalances between women and men in all areas of life and allows reaching concrete results:

- Women's education level for years remains higher of men. The number of women prevails in most higher education sectors, except technical, agricultural and military spheres. In 2004 the first women absolvent group has graduated the Military Academy.
- In the second quarter of 2006 women's employment rate reached 61 percent, so exceeding Lisbon target for 2010.
- Unemployment rate of women remains lower or equal to that of men's since 1994.
- In the whole, women's earnings as percentage of men's in 2005 comprised 82,4 percent In few areas like education and science, construction, social insurance women's earnings in average are equal or significantly higher as of men, as for instance in social insurance field – 100,3 percent, in education – 121,2 percent.
- In total in 2005 women comprise 43 percent of the managers and this indicator is the second best in the EU. Women constituted about 30 percent of the heads of small and medium size enterprises in 2005.

Lithuanian mass media is mature enough to understand and cope with wide range of gender issues as well as to present it to audience. In recent years number of articles on gender problems in press has increased significantly. Journalists are quite active – they do their own investigations on gender sensitive issues, monitor gender balance and attitudes in advertising, follow and highlight important

cases in courts, successfully cooperate with all levels of institutional machinery, first of all Equal Opportunities Ombudsman Office, Women's organizations, Gender studies centres.

On second point, I would like to say that **violence based on gender conflict** (including battering or other domestic violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, sexual harassment and other forms of violence) are incompatible with human dignity and honour.

Legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania establish sanctions for violence. Violence suffered by a human being in different spheres of social life, outside his or her family 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. However, there are no special norms as regards exclusive liability for family violence the victims of which as a rule are women. Regarding concerns, expressed on this issue, I would like to inform, that we are analyzing and discussing, how better adjust our legal system in order to effectively ensure protection against domestic violence. Appropriate proposals for actions will be elaborated in 2008.

Work for combating violence 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 of the part of society, in particular of women's organisations was of great importance in rendering support and assistance to women – victims of violence, and organising information campaigns. Assistance (including shelter, psychological and legal support and advice, hotlines) is provided by Women Crises Centres, mostly run by NGO's.

I would like to inform, that **National Strategy on Combating Violence against women** is already prepared as well as Action plan against violence. It's implementation will start in 2007. The main priorities of the Strategy are: prevention, prosecution, support and assistance to the victims of violence and work with perpetrators.

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, improvement of legislation and procedure's of application of legal provisions, consolidation of the role of law enforcement institutions, and of the system of health care are very important.

Thank you