

## **WS 16: Tolerance and non-discrimination II**

HDIM.DEL/0517/2017/EN

21 September 2017

Madam moderator,

It is disturbing that one-third of women worldwide have suffered physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. We emphasize that gender-based violence is not just a gross and continuous violation of human rights – violence against women also presents substantial economic costs. Lost potential, support programs, health, judicial and numerous other indirect costs can be as high as 5% of global GDP. Keeping in mind that two thirds of serious gender-based crimes are not reported, this number may be quite conservative. Therefore, we underline that ending violence against women benefits not just women, but the entire society.

Combatting violence against women is one of our domestic and international priorities – Lithuania is an active and vocal supporter of gender-related issues in different international formats. Lithuania, together with Chile, addressed the UN General Assembly last November, calling for action to reduce the cost of violence against women, which was later reflected in the Human Rights Council adopted decision on Combating Violence against Women.

Nationally, Lithuania is continuously improving and evolving domestic legislation aiming to ensure gender equality and provide a more efficient response to violence against women. We're in the process to enter the final stage of ratification of Istanbul Convention. In order to strengthen our compliance with the UNSC resolution 1325, Lithuania is reviewing, in close cooperation with civil society, its national action plan on women, peace and security.

In this morning's side-event we heard shocking testimonies about massive persecution (and even torture and killings) of LGBTI persons in Chechnya based only on their sexual orientation. This is grave reminder to all of us that in the OSCE region still exist grey areas, where people live in fear and rule of law

doesn't exist, and that we, OSCE participating States and Institutions are lacking effective emergency response mechanisms to crises such as in Chechnya.

Let me finish with couple of recommendations:

We call the OSCE participating States and the OSCE institutions to promote economic and social cost-awareness of violence against women in the public and among policy-makers. At the same time, we would like to invite the OSCE participating States to share their good practices on reducing these costs through domestic and international measures, as well as collecting statistics to measure the economic effects of violence against women. We also call upon participating States to review their national legislations with a view to eradicating all gender-based crimes.

I, thank you, madam moderator.