

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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General discussion on priority theme:
“Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”
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Honourable Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,

It's my pleasure to address the 57th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. I express my gratitude for the opportunity to discuss the measures of eliminating and preventing violence against women and girls at the high international political level and also to share the acquired experience.

Violence against women is one of the most flagrant violations of human rights. It touches women irrespectively of cultural, religious, economic or geographic backgrounds across all countries. It can happen in every area of life – more often at home, but also at work, school, on the street or in the media – and it can take different forms. Violence against women is a serious issue of concern and therefore elimination of it must be a priority for all of us.

In order to combat violence against women effectively all relevant actors must implement consistent and comprehensive measures: from the criminalisation of all acts of violence against women and girls, to comprehensive preventive and protective measures. In this context I would like to share the experience of our country.

Lithuania is paying a lot of attention to full and effective implementation of women's rights, referring, first of all to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals and Beijing Platform for Action. Detailed results of our efforts were presented in the Fifth periodic report, submitted to the CEDAW Committee last year. I am glad to mention, that in 2012 Lithuanian representative became CEDAW member for the first time.



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Lithuania applies a holistic approach towards the issue of violence against women. Our National Strategy for Elimination Violence against Women, adopted in 2006, sets out such priority areas as improvement of legal framework; comprehensive assistance and support to victims; sanctions to perpetrators; public education and awareness. The Strategy is implemented by relevant ministries in cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

We have improved legal framework by adopting the new Law on Protection against Domestic Violence which took effect on December 2011. This law aims to protect all victims of domestic violence, but we pay particular attention to women and girls. The Law defines a broad concept of domestic violence. It covers action and inaction which makes intentional physical, psychological, sexual, economic or other effects to person incurring physical, material or non-pecuniary damage. Due to its damage domestic violence is attributed to the category of offenses of public importance. The Law provides that victim of domestic violence is not only a person against whom the violence has been used, but also a child, who witnesses such a violence or lives in a violent environment.

A significant innovation, determined by this Law is that a police officer, having recorded case of domestic violence, is obliged to take immediate measures to protect the abused person and to initiate an investigation without submission of an official complaint. Therefore perpetrators can be subject to immediate measures, such as removal from home, as well as prohibition of approach, communication and contacts with the victim.

Lithuanian Law on Protection against Domestic Violence also provides framework for the creation of specialized assistance centres which offer integrated assistance services to the victims, including psychological and legal help. Presently there are 16 specialized assistance centres in different municipalities of Lithuania. We are also preparing the national programme for the provision of assistance to victims of domestic violence 2013-2020, ensuring relevant violence prevention, intervention and postvention.

Considerable attention is also paid to the promotion of parents' responsibility for their children, focusing on the work with families at social risk and developing the positive child raising skills without violence.

Within the year after the new law came into force the police received about 19 thousand reports of alleged domestic violence, where the majority of victims were women. They have led to about 8 thousand pre-trial investigations. Some positive tendency has already been noticed as number of reports of domestic violence has started to decrease. Although notable results have been reached in our country, we are well aware that we have to proceed with our work eliminating violence against women and girls.

Dear Colleagues,

I sincerely hope that this meeting will be an important opportunity for States not only to share the good practice, but it will also inspire states for relevant steps to combat violence against women and girls efficiently at all levels. As there is a common human right - a right to live free of violence – and we share a common responsibility to support it.

Thank you for the attention