

LITHUANIA
Oral Statement to the CEDAW Committee

Presentation of SHADOW REPORT
On the Implementation of CEDAW and Women's Human Rights in
Lithuania

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Thank you Madame Chair

We represent the Lithuanian Coalition of non-governmental organizations for the protections of women's human rights, which brings together more than 60 women's NGO in Lithuania.

We are most concerned with the lack of will on part of the government to implement special measures to ensure timely access to equality for women without delay, Domestic Violence, women's participation in politics; women in the labour market and the gender pay gap; as well as the lack of sustained funding of women's groups, impacting on their ability to organize their work.

We are well aware that Temporary Special Measures as articulated in the Convention hold the key to women's equality. However, given that the law demands legislative action for implementation of special measures, it cannot be resorted to in a timely manner- as the government will have to pass a law every time it wants to institute a special measure. This means that women's rights will not be addressed without delay.

We recommend that the legislation be amended and policy measures put in place to ensure that special measures can be effectively used- especially at the regional and local levels, to address women's requirements.

We welcome the Action Plan of the National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against women, as well as the draft Concept of Protection against domestic violence. However, much time is being expended on these steps, while the women wait for adequate legal protection from domestic violence. We strongly recommend that the state identify a precise time frame for fast-tracking the adoption of law on domestic violence- built on the Model legislation provided by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences, in consultation with the women's groups.

These issues are made worse by the limited participation of women in politics, from leadership positions. In 2004 only 20 % of women were elected during the elections for Parliament. The municipality election also shows a disparity. We call for the special measure to be undertaken by Government (including quota system) to ensure equal and effective participation.

Even in terms of employment, women face the glass ceiling in the public sector, as they represent only 30% of senior managers of public authorities. The case is the same for the nomination of high government functionaries such as administrative directors, chief education officer, and ambassadors.

In the labour market women are met with deep horizontal and vertical segregation- which results in gender pay gap, which is at 20 % on an average. We recommend that the state take immediate steps, without delay, to implement special measures to ensure parity in promoting women and providing programmes that would support career growth for women; including regulation of private sector employers. We recommend that this system of gender equality planning at work place be incorporated in the Law of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and be regularly monitored through the Equal Opportunity Ombudsman.

We welcome the two National programs for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2003-2004 and 2005-2009), as concrete steps taken by the Government to implement substantive equality. However the lack of resources-both financial and technical, do not allow for effective implementation. We strongly recommend for adequate sustainable resources for this National program as well as ensuring participation of women's groups in it implementation to ensure that women benefit in fact from these steps.

In year 2000, the Committee recommended to the State the development of a policy to ensure sustainable funding for national and local women's groups. However, even today, resources to women's NGOs are fragmentary, based on special competitions and programs, and not constant and continuous. This limits the capacity of women's NGOs to fulfil their roles in supporting women's human rights in Lithuania. We call for a clear procedure that would institutionalize support for women's NGOs and to ensure sustained and sufficient funding. We also call for transparency for state action in this regard through issuance of a public annual report on the support provided by the State to women's NGOs.