

Check against delivery

15th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group (21 January-1 February 2013)

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Rytis Paulauskas,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania
at the review of Serbia
30 January 2013**

Mr. President,

Lithuania welcomes the esteemed delegation of Serbia and thanks for the National Report providing information on the implementation of recommendations from the first cycle of the UPR.

Lithuania welcomes a number of positive developments in strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights since the first UPR, notably the adoption of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination and the establishment of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. We are also pleased to note that a normative framework for strengthening the position of women by adopting the Law on Gender Equality, National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and promoting Gender Equality has been set up. At the same time we share the concern of the Human Rights Committee about the existing stereotypes regarding women in society, including women belonging to minority groups, as well as about the low number of women in high-level and decision-making positions. In this regard, Lithuania recommends to the Government of Serbia: 1) to implement existing legislation related to gender equality in order to ensure that men and women are treated equally and stereotypes regarding women are eradicated, 2) to strengthen the role of women in a high-level decision making process and increase the representation of women within State and local administration.

Lithuania welcomes the fact that in 2012 the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was signed by Serbia and relevant strategic documents have been adopted. However, we remain concerned that despite the existing legal framework domestic violence still prevails. Therefore, Lithuania recommends to Serbia to take additional measures in order to improve the implementation of legislation protecting against domestic violence, including through awareness raising campaigns and training on domestic violence for officials.

Lithuania would like to note that recent incidents concerned with Albanian community in South Serbia showed that further efforts are needed to improve relations with national minorities in Serbia. Therefore we would like to invite Serbia to pay special attention to the non-discriminatory treatment of national minorities throughout the country, which could be ensured through the establishment of direct dialogue in addressing issues related to national minorities.

I thank you.