

Check against delivery

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Statement by H. E. Mr. Rytis Paulauskas,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania
at the review of Afghanistan
27 January 2014

Mr. President,

Lithuania welcomes the esteemed delegation of Afghanistan and takes a positive note of the cooperation between our countries, including Lithuanian engagement in Ghor Province.

We welcome steps by the Government aiming at respecting and observing women's rights. At the same time, we remain concerned that violence against women is widely spread, women's *de facto* participation in government remains low. We recommend Afghanistan 1) to intensify its efforts to ensure full and effective implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women, and 2) to implement UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, including by supporting the participation of women in peace talks and electoral processes and continuing to increase the proportion of women in state institutions.

Lithuania notes with concern that the Mass Media Law proposes greater control over the media. We also remain concerned about the reported killings, attacks and kidnappings of journalists and human rights defenders. Lithuania recommends Afghanistan: 1) to ensure that no government entities restrict the right to freedom of expression and that media regulations conform to Afghanistan's international human rights obligations; 2) to end threats, attacks and killings of journalists and human rights defenders and to ensure prompt and effective investigation in order to bring those responsible to justice.

Lastly, we are concerned about the recruitment of children by State and non-State armed groups. In this regard, we recommend Afghanistan 1) to take immediate measures in order to comply fully with the OP-CRC-AC; and 2) to implement the Action Plan to end the recruitment and use of children, signed with the UN in 2011.

I thank you.