

48

Check against delivery

19th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group (28 April-9 May 2014)

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Rytis Paulauskas,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania
at the review of Nicaragua
7 May 2014**

Mr. President,

Lithuania welcomes the esteemed delegation of Nicaragua and thanks for the informative National Report.

Lithuania commends all efforts by the State to protect the rights of women and to prevent and reduce gender based violence. In particular, we are pleased to note that the numbers of Nicaraguan women in ministerial and legislative positions are the highest in Latin America (40 percent in parliament, 50 percent in local governments). We also welcome the adoption of the Comprehensive Law against Violence against Women in 2012. The law, however, in 2013 was amended and as a consequence, the protection of victims has been weakened, impunity for abusers has been facilitated contrary to the international obligations. In this regard, Lithuania recommends to Nicaragua: 1) to reverse the amendments weakening the protection provided under the Comprehensive Law against Violence against Women, 2) to ensure that all reports of violence are thoroughly investigated and that the perpetrators are brought to justice, 3) to provide the necessary assistance to the victims of violence, including through adoption of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

We note with concern the restrictions on the enjoyment of freedoms of expression, of assembly and of association. As an example, on 22 June 2013, parastatal forces forcibly removed young persons and elderly adults who were holding a vigil outside the Social Security Institute, months after the events, the outcome of the inquiries is still unknown. The lack of guarantees for the functioning of free and independent media is also of a major concern. In this regard, we recommend to Nicaragua 1) to create and ensure enabling environment for free and independent media; 2) to guarantee the right to freedom of assembly and of association in accordance with international obligations and 3) to continue ensuring that cases where police officers accused of failing to protect peaceful protestors are promptly and fully investigated, and those responsible are brought to justice.

Lastly, Lithuania recommends to Nicaragua: 1) to ratify the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, 2) to promptly accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and to implement it in national law.

I thank you.