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*23rd session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, 2 - 13 November 2015*

*Statement by H. E. Mr. Rytis Paulauskas, Ambassador,*

*Permanent Representative of Lithuania*

*at the review of Georgia*

Mr. President,

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

Lithuania highly commends the progress of reforming the judiciary aiming at de-politicizing and strengthening the independence of the High Council of Justice. Enhancing the transparency of the judges' appointment mechanism and assessment of the judicial performance helps to increase public trust in judicial system that we recommended during the first cycle of the Georgia's UPR. We also welcome the expansion and strengthening of the Legal Aid Service. We recommend to further improve the justice system by fully implementing international fair trial standards, such as ensuring adequate access of lawyers to their detained clients and that confidentiality of communication between them is protected, to ensure access to justice by all persons including women and minorities.

Lithuania commends the Georgia's efforts to ensure decent conditions for all IDPs and refugees by implementing the national strategies, however, we understand that the situation of victims very much depends on the international political process. We recommend to continue and intensify cooperation with the international community in order to ensure access of international human rights and humanitarian actors and monitoring mechanisms to the Abkhazia, Georgia, and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, to monitor, report and address the human rights situation of IDPs.

Lithuania welcomes the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (for 2014-2016) and the Action Plan for Combating Domestic Violence (for 2013-2015) and recommends to further effectively implement them by ensuring required financing and reinforcing the capacities of professionals.

Thank you.