

As written

**A Statement of Vilija Blinkeviciute vice – minister of Social
Security and Labour
Of the Republic of Lithuania at. the Hague Forum on Population
and - Development
8 – 12 February, 1999**

Mr. Chairmen, Your Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I would like to thank the organisers for the provided opportunity to participate in this Forum together with other participants from all over the world concerned with population and social development issues.

I am very pleased to represent Lithuania which - just like other -countries - approved the Programme of Action of the ~~International Conference on Population and Development~~ ^{ICPD} adopted in Cairo in 1994. In celebrating the Fifth Anniversary of this Programme I would like to stress that this Programme is an informational collection which is important not only to Governments but also to NGO's and individuals dealing with social development issues. In Lithuania the goals and undertakings of this Programme are integrated into the national strategy of the State and are reflected in the objectives of the implemented social policy. Integration of the population and social development strategies, securing of equal opportunities for men and women, reproductive health services, strengthening

of the partnership with NGO's, - these are very important issues of today.

Dear Chairmen, economic and social transformations in Lithuania have virtually changed the existing demographic tendencies and made the long-term prediction^h of the number and the composition of the population harder. Ever since 1992 the number of the Lithuanian population has been decreasing; however, the speed of decrease has been slowing down. Only if the most optimistic preconditions come true in the nearest 20 years, the number of the Lithuanian population will increase a little; otherwise it will either become stable or decrease. In Lithuania (just like in many European countries) the ever decreasing birth rate has the major influence- to the ageing of the population, and this becomes a very urgent issue. ~~In this connection, after the United Nations declared the year of 1999 the Year of Senior Citizens, Lithuania adopted the Programme of Action for dealing with the most urgent problems of the senior citizens.~~

~~Dear Chairmen,~~ taking demographic tendencies into consideration, the Government of Lithuania seeks to integrate demographic factors into social development strategies and into all stages of resource distribution planning in order to meet all demands and to improve the quality of life of the present and future generations. Lately every effort is being made for the

development of the Social Budget Model of the International Labour Organisation based on which (and taking demographic tendencies into consideration) social expenditure. (retirement benefits, relief, employment, health, etc.) estimates are being drawn. This allows us to define the social security level that the country may achieve and to forecast indices (taking demographic and economic development into consideration) according to which the existing system may be supported. The results of this model may be used in making social policy decisions.

Dear Chairmen, the development of the Conception of Lithuanian Family Policy was started shortly after the Cairo Conference, and it was adopted in 1996. Its formulation was greatly influenced by the Recommendations of the European Population Conference held in Geneva and by the Cairo 'Programme of Action. Considering the fact that the securing of the equal opportunities for men and women was especially stressed by the Cairo Conference, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania passed the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in 1998; the Law provides for the establishment of the ombudsman institution of the equal opportunities for men and women.

Lithuania supports the issues raised in the Programme of Action, viz. to decrease the mortality of mothers, infants and

children, to provide reproductive health services, to make education generally accessible. In this connection Lithuania implements the Mother and Child Programme which has the health priority. The Family Planning Programme was approved in order to improve the reproductive health of women and the sex education of teenagers. Taking the regulations, objectives and the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference into consideration, this programme should be given a greater attention and better financing. We agree with the provision of the Cairo Conference that abortion is not a method of family planning. Women attending Women's Consultation Clinics are introduced to contraceptive means and methods.

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 Dear Chairmen, in order to effectively deal with population and social development issues, extensive and efficient co-operation between state organisations and NGO's is necessary. In Lithuania NGO's have an ever increasing role in defending the women's rights, dealing with family planning, children and youth issues, providing social services to the senior citizens. The Government is searching for ways in order to deal with issues of financing the said organisations. ~~The Law on Social Services passed in 1996 could serve as an example of that; the said Law provides NGO's with an opportunity to receive financial aid from the state or municipality budget.~~

Having the commitments of the Cairo Conference in mind we have to continue our search for ways of effective co-

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operation with municipalities, NGO's and other organisations. I believe that the co-ordination of actions, distribution of information and the public consent will determine the successful implementation of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference.

Thank you for your attention