



LITHUANIA

**Twenty-first Special Session of the General Assembly
for the review and appraisal of the
Implementation of the Programme of Action of the
International Conference on Population and Development**

Statement by

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania has aligned itself with the statement made by Ms. Brigitte Zypres, Head of the German delegation on behalf of the European Union. I would, therefore, now, like to introduce the Lithuanian perspective on the relevant issues.

Mr. President,

ICPD Programme is of key importance to the Governments, as well as 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 our Government and are reflected in the objectives of the social policy. Integration of the population and social development dimensions, securing equal opportunities for men and women, availability of reproductive health care services, strengthening of the partnership with NGO's, - these are urgent issues of today which are important to every country.

Mr. President,

Lithuania will follow the UN recommendations to organize the year 2000 Population Census Round. The Census will be carried out in 2001 and will enable to collect precise demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population.

In Lithuania, just like in many other European countries the ever-decreasing birth rate has major influence on the ageing of the population, and this has become a very urgent issue. After the United Nations had declared the year of 1999 the Year of Older Persons, Lithuania adopted the Programme of Action to deal with main problems of senior citizens.

Mr. President,

Considering demographic tendencies of our country, the Government of Lithuania seeks to integrate demographic factors into social development strategies and all planning stages of resource distribution, in order to meet all demands of the citizens and to improve the quality of life of the present and future generations.

Over recent years, Lithuania faced with a new challenge - increased migration. Therefore, one of our priority tasks is, on the one hand, to combat illegal migration and, on the other, to provide legal and social basis for refugees and asylum seekers. A party to major international instruments on migration, Lithuania has recently adopted a special programme on migration control prepared in accordance with the relevant EU regulations.

Lately, every effort is being made to develop the Social Budget Model of the ILO based on which social expenditures: retirement benefits, relief, employment, health and other expenditures - should be included. This allows us to define a social security level that the country may achieve as well as to forecast indicators (taking into consideration demographic and economic development) according to which the existing system may be supported. The results of this Model may be used to make social policy decisions.

Mr. President,

The elaboration of the Concept of Lithuanian Family Policy was started shortly after the Cairo Conference. The programme on Family Policy was adopted in 1996. The content of the programme was greatly influenced by the Recommendations of the European Population Conference, held in Geneva, and by the Cairo Programme of Action.

Taking into account the principle of equal opportunities for both sexes underlined in the Cairo Conference as one of the human rights, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in 1998. This Law requires establishment of the Ombudsman Institution to monitor equal opportunities for women and men.

Mr. President,

Lithuania supports the goals formulated in ICPD Programme, especially those aimed at decreasing the mortality rate among mothers, infants and children; providing reproductive health care services and sexual education programmes. Lithuania successfully implements the Mother and Child Programme focused on the maternity and child health care. We agree with the provision of the Cairo Conference that abortion is not a method of family planning. Therefore, women attending Women's Consultation Clinics are consulted on the issue and introduced to contraceptive means and methods.

In Lithuania, NGO's have an ever-increasing role in defending women's rights, dealing with family planning, children and youth issues, providing social services to the senior citizens. The Law on Social Services adopted in 1996 guarantees financial support from the state and municipalities for those NGO's. This approach is reflected in the Infrastructure Development Programme which was initiated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania and financed by the Government.

With Cairo Conference commitments in our minds, we should continue to search for ways of effective- co-operation with municipalities, NGO's and other organisations. I believe that the co-ordination of actions, distribution of information, and the public support will ensure successful implementation of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference.

Thank you for your attention.