

# LITHUANIA

Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and privileged to address this House. I believe this is the right place to discuss the issues of greatest concern to the international community.

The recent years have been marked by many challenges. All countries, large and small, had to tackle the financial and economic crisis. They also had to deal with the painful consequences of natural and man-created disasters.

In a global world, all our countries must share responsibility for the future.

The scale of our deeds and the openness of our hearts will make the difference, not the size of our territories. Here, I would like to share with you some views from Lithuania.

Let me start with our proposals in the fields of security and environment. Lithuania launched the initiative to have a resolution on sea-dumped chemical weapons to the General Assembly. Lithuania wants to strengthen international efforts in raising public awareness about dangerous ammunition buried in the sea. It is in every country's interest to go for voluntary information exchange in order to strengthen common security. Each and all must be aware how deadly dangerous these dumped chemicals still are. We need to have guidelines on how to behave in case of a disaster. That is why the UN involvement and eventual resolution on this issue are indispensable. That is why I call on the United Nations to take a much more active role in very concrete projects even if they may seem not big enough for the world.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen, Gentlemen and Ladies!**

Gender equality is another topic of vital importance for the Nations. We decided to promote it in the framework of the Community of Democracies. That is another example of focused action. Gender equality issues are rarely associated with overcoming the economic crisis or stopping climate change. However, it has been estimated that the elimination of gender discrimination in the labor market could increase the GDP by as much as 30 percent.

It seems that Lithuanian people have decided to test this estimation in practice! It is of no surprise for us that women in Lithuania hold a number of top positions in politics and in business life. It is only natural that Lithuanian women made their own the famous saying: **When the going gets tough, the tough get going!**

But we need yet much more of coordinated efforts. Gender equality on a global scale will only become possible when a certain level of security and economic development is achieved.

Let us **all** put **all** our efforts together to eradicate intolerance and discrimination which so often are the main reasons for so many conflicts in the world! By doing this we also pave the road to the Millennium Development Goals that we all strive to achieve. European Union activities such as the European Institute for Gender Equality based in Lithuania can serve as a lead to other regions.

I strongly hope that the high-level meeting on gender equality issues, which will be held within the framework of the Community of Democracies in Vilnius, Lithuania, on June 30 next year, will explore many more new ideas and good practices.

Dear Participants of the Summit!

Security, environment and gender equality – all are interdependent. And all need to be adequately addressed on the international agenda. It is a prerequisite for ensuring sustainable development.

The European Union has been for years the largest and most responsible donor worldwide, the best example for any country willing to contribute. These European values are very dear to my country, member of the EU since 2004.

Lithuania has limited resources. However, we supplied humanitarian aid to Haiti, Pakistan, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, and other countries.

We have engaged in such difficult initiatives as the training of national security forces of Afghanistan. Working together with the people of Ghor Province in Afghanistan Lithuania has funded a number of community-based education programs, built nineteen schools which have opened-up their doors also for girls, founded the first public library in the province's capital of Chaghcharan. That is our modest contribution, but it works. I am sure – each time we implement a concrete project, we move closer to achieving our global objectives.

Dear Fellow Leaders of the Nations,

Dear Leaders of Communities and Municipalities!

I invite you all to contribute. We should welcome, support and multiply every constructive effort, however small it may seem. Only joint efforts and concrete deeds will bring positive change to international politics.

Let us develop initiatives, let us implement best practices and let us work together!

Thank you for your attention.

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