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Agenda item 4. General debate on national experience in population matters:  
international migration and development

STATEMENT

by

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Mr. Chairman,

Taking a floor first time allow me to congratulate you on your elections as a Chair.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me to present the Lithuanian experience in demographic challenges, international migration and development – on such a complex set of issues.

Lithuania a lot of countries is facing demographic changes. The analysis of the change of the relevant indicators has revealed that we have tendencies manifesting themselves in the decline of a birth rate, ageing of the population, the longer lifespan and etc.

In this context migration processes become of a great importance.

Our experience affirms that international migration and development certainly are interrelated. Lithuania has already experienced both sides of the impact on development. The impact is very recent and is still ongoing in Lithuania because of around 9 percent of Lithuanians' migration during the last 15 years.

Recent labour emigration from Lithuania has played a big role in lowering the unemployment rate. In last year unemployment rate decreased by one third in comparison with 2004. Over the year, unemployment rate of young people decreased almost twice.

But emigration is not the only reason of the rapid decline of the unemployment. According to our evaluation, economy development influenced the decline of the unemployment twice more than the emigration. There is a steady development of economy in Lithuania, linked to creation of new jobs and increasing demand of labour force, as well as further emigration of population.

The emigration from Lithuania has impact on wages increase. In 2005 wages have increased both in public and private sectors and this increase was bigger than GDP growth. In 2005 the average monthly earnings have increased by 12.2 % while the GDP has grown by 7.3 %.

The emigration has also influenced the immigration of foreigners. Owing to the shortage of qualified labour force, Lithuanian employers have started to employ foreign citizens more frequently. We had about 80 percent growth of work permits for non EU Member citizens in 2005.

Moreover, some signs of the tendency of return migration in private sector are seen due to developments in these sectors and subsequent increase of wages.

We do recognize a necessity of carefully regulated migration processes. Therefore Lithuania seeks to create a single comprehensive tool – both political and institutional on all administrative levels – for proper and adequate migration management resulting in appropriate solutions of problems including the demographic ones.

Distinguished delegates,

To conclude Lithuanian experience – yes, we know that there is no one single miracle solution to such kind of issues. And it comes to mind while listening today to the President of the United States on CNN.

But we expect that new opportunities opened by globalized world will have a lasting positive impact on development and further improvements.

Thank you for attention.