



Over entire Lithuanian history women working hard in the family farms, being the breadwinners along with men, took care about preservation of national culture, language, national identity and heritage.

In Lithuania women make about 30 percent of rural population. They are active in self-employment, they establish their small and medium-sized businesses, even in the areas not so common for women. More and more women living in the rural areas are interested in career possibilities in the areas alternative to agriculture. Women are active community leaders and are active in promoting implementation of social, non-profit initiatives. One of the largest associations of rural women – Lithuanian Association of women farmers – actively contributes to promoting entrepreneurship among rural women, promoting rural women's alternative crafts, reduction of social exclusion as well as improving social partnership and the quality of life in the rural areas, including the most necessary services, cultural and community life.

A number of development initiatives essentially contributed to the improvement of situation of rural women in comparison to urban women. We have seen this in communication technologies, such as easy access to the Internet in rural areas, use of mobile phones by majority of population. This ensures rapid delivery of information, opportunity to watch cultural events both at national level and over the world, so contributing to the quality of public and cultural life of local communities, including easier access to various services, for instance, bank and postal basic services. Better social environment recently adopted law on protection against domestic violence creates preconditions for protection of victims of violence and punishment of perpetrators everywhere, including rural areas, where access to the crisis centres was limited.

However, despite of all positive results achieved regional disparities in Lithuania still exist. Situation of rural women in comparison to that of urban women still differs in terms of social health and child care services as well as services of care about family members. Relevant infrastructure is less developed in the rural areas too. Therefore we will continue further our actions targeting rural women. A lot is done and lots remain to be done.

Thank you Modern Chair.