

# Speech at Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Woman's Empowerment

H.E. Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister

Excellences,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to be here on this historic occasion. I would like to thank our hosts and all those who have tirelessly worked over the last 20 years to promote the vision of the Beijing Declaration and bring us here today to renew our commitment to realize women's rights and equality between women and men.

This is a cause which Georgia has espoused full-heartedly, understanding that gender equality is fundamental to democracy and sustainable development. In 1994 we signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Since then, we have worked hard to implement our commitments.

In 2011, the Parliament of Georgia approved the 2012-2015 National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on "Women, Peace and Security". In 2013, we adopted the Domestic Violence Action Plan 2013-2015, which was followed by the National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2014-2016.

An important milestone was the adoption of the Non-discrimination Law in 2014. We also last year signed the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Georgia fully recognizes the benefits of enhancing women's participation at all levels of decision-making processes. My government benefits from the leadership of women Ministers of Defence, of Justice, of Education. Critical positions such as that of Secretary of the National Security Council, Chair of the Central Election Commission of Georgia, and Chair of the Supreme Court of Georgia are also held by women.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Georgia's commitments have taken us a long way, but there can be no cause for complacency. 2015 is the Year of Women in Georgia. We are working on renewing the above mentioned Action Plans and are committed to further improve our gender equality and women's empowerment policy framework. On 9-10 November we will host the International High-Level Conference on achieving gender equality in the European Neighbourhood region. And today I am here to make concrete commitments.

1. Firstly, Georgia will continue to update, enhance and develop next phases of Gender Equality, Domestic Violence and Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans. We will also develop a national Gender Equality Strategy presenting a longer term, strategic vision of my government on these issues.
2. Secondly, we will enhance our institutional mechanisms on gender by setting up and resourcing an inter-ministerial commission on gender under my leadership.
3. Thirdly, we will continue to update and reform our legal system. It is planned to amend Labour Code of Georgia to significantly enhance the protection of women-employees' rights. We will revise the Gender Equality Law to align the mechanisms of redress of the cases of gender

discrimination with the newly adopted Non-discrimination Law. We will also ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention.

4. Fourthly, we will work with development partners, UN family and civil society to jointly address the practice of early marriages. Specific inter-sectorial Task Force with this purpose will be established at my office.
5. Finally, we will initiate dedicated awareness raising campaigns on specific priority issues such as combatting violence against women and girls and domestic violence, and prevention of early marriages.

Your Excellences,

The final commitment I can make is that Georgia will continue to adhere to human rights standards and implement Georgia's international commitments to women's rights such as CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action. We look forward to a more equal and more prosperous future.

Thank you.