



საქართველოს მუდმივი წარმომადგენლობა გაერთიანებული ერების
ორგანიზაციასთან

PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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The Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and in reference to the Note Verbale (reference: UNW/2019/004), dated 15 April 2019, has the honour to transmit herewith information prepared by the Government of Georgia regarding the implementation of the UN Resolution (A/RES/72/234) on “Women in development”.

The Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women the assurances of its highest consideration.

Enclosure: 7 pages



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and
the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
New York

**Information provided by the Government of Georgia regarding the implementation of the UN Resolution
“Women in development” (A/RES/72/234)**

- **Integrating a gender perspective in national sustainable development policies and strategies (operative paragraphs 2, 5, 50 and 60);**

In June, 2017 with the establishment of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in the executive branch, the institutional framework for gender equality has changed. An inter-ministerial body located in the executive branch, the Commission was created in order to meet the requirements of Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention. The mechanism is responsible for the adoption, implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plans on Gender Equality, Violence against Women/Domestic Violence and UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.

The National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia 2014-2020 is a key policy document that promotes a human rights-based approach in all policy development and implementation, including considering the different needs of women and men in any given situation. Objective 14 (of 23) is dedicated to the “Promotion of gender equality, protection of women’s rights and prevention of domestic violence, as well as the consequences resulting from such violence”. With a view to achieving the long-term goals, the strategy envisages implementation of effective measures across all spheres to ensure and promote the concept of gender equality; In particular, encourage greater involvement of women in political life, as well as decision-making process; ensure prompt and effective response to all reported cases of gender discrimination; ensure the full compliance of existing mechanisms with international standards for the protection and assistance of victims of domestic violence; conduct awareness-raising campaigns, especially for civil servants, on issues of gender equality and domestic violence; ensure access to legal protection, psycho/social rehabilitative facilities and shelters for victims of domestic violence.

In 2017, two stand-alone National Action Plans and one chapter of the Human Rights Action Plan: Gender Equality Women’s Empowerment for supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment approved by the government include: **National Action Plan on the Implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and the National Action Plan on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims/Survivors covering period from 2018 to 2020**. The Government formed the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues represents an accountability mechanism for the advanced implementation, monitoring and coordination of drafting the National Action Plans on Gender Equality, Violence against Women/Domestic Violence and the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Thus, the development of both action plans and mentioned chapter has been coordinated by the Commission, which comprises deputy ministers and gender focal points from line ministries as well as the Thematic Consultative Working Group with representatives from municipalities, civil society and international organizations.

The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia elaborated “National Strategy of Labour Market and Employment Policy of Georgia 2019-2023”. One of the tasks of the strategy is to promote gender equality and women’s participation in the labour market. The aforementioned strategy foresees that women’s participation in the labour market will be supported by legislative initiatives and special programs. The relevant legislation in the field of the prohibition of discrimination and ensuring gender equality (directives specified in Annex XXX to Georgia Association Agreement) will be introduced, the government will work on the development of quality child-care services and improvement of their accessibility, focus will be made on supporting the improvement of entrepreneurial skills for women and supporting entrepreneurship, innovations, etc.

The future plans and main direction of the state policy with regard to supporting gender equality and women empowerment by the Government of Georgia and the Parliament are well established in the National Human Rights Action Plan of the Government of Georgia for 2018-2020 and the Action Plan of the Gender Equality Council of Parliament of Georgia.

• Promoting active labour market policies on full and productive employment and decent work for women, eliminating gender-based discrimination in labour markets and enacting and enforcing minimum wages (operative paragraphs 23, 25, 28 and 29);

The Law of Georgia on Gender Equality determines states obligation to “support and ensure equal rights for men and women in political, economic, social and cultural life” through ensuring special measures without discrimination.¹ The law guarantees equality of men and women in all spheres of public life, including: labour relations, education and science, access to information resources, healthcare, social security, family relations, participation in elections.²

Since 2013, a lot of effort has been made in terms of protecting women’s labour rights and ensuring gender equality in Georgia. In an effort to meet its international commitments, within the framework of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, Government of Georgia has started placing relevant legal framework in order to advance women’s equality. The Government of Georgia, with active participation and consultations with social partners, has elaborated amendments to the labour legislation, in particular, to the Organic Law of Georgia “Georgian Labor Code”, the Law of Georgia on “Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination”, the Law of Georgia on “Public Service”, and the Law of Georgia on “Gender Equality”. The amendments were elaborated based on the EU directives (2000/78/EC, 2004/113/EC, 2000/43/EC) envisaged in Annex XXX of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, which aims to establish principles to eliminate discrimination in labour markets and apply to all persons employed in public and private sectors. The Parliament of Georgia adopted the legislative package on February 19, 2019. Currently, the Government of Georgia is working on the amendments to the labour legislation in compliance with other EU directives, some of which relate to protection of women’s labour rights.

Since 2015, the Government of Georgia implements Active Labour Market Policy, which includes training and retraining (human capacity development according the labor market demand), supportive employment (employment support of vulnerable and less competitive groups), job fairs in different regions of Georgia, vocational counseling consultations and career guidance.

The policy is implemented through different state programs, i.e. State Program on Professional Training and Retraining and Qualification Raising for Job Seekers and State Program on Employment Support Services. Women are target groups and have preferential rights under the aforementioned programs.

• Eliminating gender-based occupational segregation and gender wage gaps, and improving recruitment, retention and promotion policies for women (operative paragraphs 25, 29, 31 and 48);

¹ Article 4

² Article 6-11

On 27 October 2015 a new Law of Georgia on Public Service was adopted, which stipulated that a remuneration system for public servants is based on the principles of transparency and fairness, which also entails the principle of equal pay for equal work. The Law of Georgia on Public Service along with its bylaws determines equality in public sector with regard to access to employment, terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration, career development, promotion, etc. Concerning the equal pay for equal work, which is envisaged in Directive 2006/54/EC, the relevant amendment is being elaborated and will be submitted to the Parliament of Georgia in 2019 together with other amendments based on other EU Directives. Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia started to work on development of methodology to calculate pay gap. The working meeting was held on October 2, 2018 and the methodology of calculation of pay gap and importance to decrease the gap was discussed. It has been decided that GeoStat with the assistance of UN Women will analyze the first wave of Labour Force Survey (LFS) and will conduct survey on gender pay gaps by positions, which will be published in May 2019; By June 2019, within the framework of tripartite cooperation (Trade Union, Ministry of Health and ILO) the methodology to calculate equal pay for equal work in private sector will be developed in accordance with ILO recommendations and all the outcomes will be presented for discussion in order to achieve overall consensus on the topic.³

• Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, discrimination, and sexual harassment against women at work, and providing remedies, support and services for victims and survivors of violence and harassment (operative paragraphs 14, 32 and 33);

In 2019 the Law of Georgia on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination was amended and now it covers labor and pre-contractual relations, education, social protection and healthcare spheres,⁴ sets prohibitions on directing one individual to discriminate the other,⁵ obliges employer to protect individual equality principles in labor relations, as well as in pre-contractual relations - this includes vacancy announcement and prohibition of discrimination during interview, ensuring access to supplier or services, including provision and access to financial services and insurance benefits without gender-based discrimination.⁶

It should be mentioned, that the Parliament of Georgia approved a bill on sexual harassment, with 102 votes in favour and 0 against. According to the amendment approved in May 3, 2019 the Labor Code of Georgia now includes the following definition of sexual harassment: “Undesirable sexual behavior towards a person,” the law reads, “aims or/and tarnishes his/her dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or abusive environment for him/her.” Using sexual words, exposing one’s genitals, or any type of verbal or non-verbal actions of a sexual nature will be considered harassment, as well as forcing someone into a sexual relationship against his/her will. Sexual harassment is now punishable by a 300 GEL (\$112) fine and 500 GEL (\$187) or one-month correctional labor for a repeated offense within one year. Furthermore, deliberate sexual harassment of a minor, a pregnant woman, someone in a critical medical condition or in the presence of a minor will be punishable by a fine of 500-800 GEL (\$187-\$299), and if repeated, by a fine of 800-1,000 GEL (\$299-\$374) or ten days’ imprisonment.

³ Gender Equality Council Report on Implementation of 2018 Action Plan; pg. 8

⁴ Law on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination, Article 2, paragraph 10

⁵ *ibid*; Article 2, paragraph 5

⁶ Law on Gender Equality and Law on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination, Article 9¹

The ratification and harmonization of legislation with the Istanbul Convention has led to the extension of persons benefiting from the services provided by the LEPL-State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking”. Since 2017, the State Fund’s services cover victims/alleged victims of violence against women⁷.

The State Fund provides the beneficiaries with the following services within **the Shelters** and **the Crisis Centers**:

- Providing psychological-social assistance/rehabilitation;
- Organizing/receiving medical service;
- Providing Legal assistance (including legal representation in court and in law enforcement agencies);
- Translator service, if necessary;
- Promoting reintegration in a family and society and other services;
- Daily accommodation ***in the shelter*** (only for victim and/or statutory victim with his/her dependent(s)), including: nutrition, hygiene and other essentials;
- Daily accommodation ***in the crisis center*** (for alleged victim with his/her dependent(s)), including: nutrition, hygiene and other essentials.

There are **5 Shelters**: in Batumi (opened in 2006), in Tbilisi (opened in 2010), in Gori (opened 2010), in Kutaisi (opened in 2014), in Sighnagi (opened in 2016), and **5 Crisis Centers** - in Tbilisi (opened in 2016), in Kutaisi (opened in 2017), in Gori (opened in 2018), in Ozurgeti (opened 2018) and in Marneuli (opened in 2019) functioning under the State Fund.

A 24-hour hotline for the victims of violence is functioning at the State Fund. Anyone can call on the hotline: **116 006** (Euro number) and get professional consultations from qualified operators and information about the services of the State Fund. Since 2017, the consultations of the State Fund`s hotline on the issues of domestic violence, violence against women, human trafficking, sexual violence is available **in 8 languages**: in Georgian, as well as in English, Russian, Azerbaijani, Turkish, Armenian, Arabic and Persian languages. The service is free and anonymous.

• **Accelerating the transition of women from informal to formal employment through access to decent work, social protection, quality childcare, and education and training, including for migrant women workers and domestic workers (operative paragraphs 10, 22 and 40);**

The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia has adopted “National Strategy of Labour Market and Employment Policy of Georgia 2019-2023”, which aims to promote gender equality and women’s participation in the labour market. The government will work on development of quality child-care services and improving their accessibility and focus will be made supporting the improvement of entrepreneurial skills for women.

Targeted social assistance (TSA) is a special cash assistance programme aimed at reducing levels of poverty of the most vulnerable households in the country. The programme operates since 2006 and is based on the assessment of households using special methodology that uses Proxy Means Testing formula and assesses

⁷ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3710521?publication=0>

households with “wellbeing score”. Since 2015, with the support of World Bank and UNICEF, the revised methodology of assessment and assistance scheme was introduced. New methodology is oriented on family income (or property bringing income); consequently, a family can become beneficiary, which has no income or income bringing property. Assistance is provided based on the gradation system - families, which have lower scores receive more financial support. Additionally, a new child cash benefit was introduced. It should be noted, that social transfers, especially targeted social assistance have a great impact on poverty reduction. As UNICEF „The Welfare Monitoring Survey 2017” underlined, “If TSA with child assistance was removed from household consumption, extreme poverty among children would have increased from 6.8% to 13.1%. These findings demonstrate that TSA+CB (child benefit) has the highest impact on children. TSA also better targets households with children. By 2017, 15.4% of households with children received TSA+CB and 12.6% of them received TSA only vs 7.3% of households without”.⁸

Since 2019, socially vulnerable families with a child/children under 16 years, whose rating score is equal to or less than 100 001, receive 50 GEL as the CB, instead of 10 GEL, that was issued prior to 2019.

From 2019, the subsistence allowance for the families, registered in the database as vulnerable and receiving subsidy under 100001 rating score, will not be suspended during next 12 months even in case of salary existence of the family member ((which is more than 175 GEL per member for 4 months). Child’s benefit (50 GEL per child) and rating score will remain during 24 months in order to enable families to use non-monetary benefits attached to the rating score.

According to law of Georgia on the “Development of High Mountainous Regions”, from September 2016, persons permanently living in the mountainous regions and having state pension/social package, get supplementary benefit which is 20% of the amount of the state pension/social package.

“Demographic situation promotion program” was approved on March 31, 2014. The aim of the program is to improve the demographic situation in Georgia, especially in the rural areas, through financial incentives of birth rate. Under the program, according to the Georgian law on the “Development of High Mountainous Regions”, children born after January 1, 2016, whose one of the parents has permanent resident status of living in mountainous region, also gained the right to receive monetary social assistance.

• Promoting the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities by recognizing, valuing, reducing and redistributing women’s disproportionate share of unpaid and domestic work, increasing flexibility in working arrangements, such as part-time work, and making sustained investments in the care economy to expand access to quality childcare and care facilities for children and other dependents (operative paragraphs 10, 26, 30, 40 and 44);

The Government of Georgia is continuously working on expansion of Organic Law of Georgia “Georgian Labour Code”. Numerous changes have been made to the Labour Code since 2013, targeted towards strengthening the rights of workers at the workplace. The Government of Georgia will continue to sophisticate Organic Law of Georgia “Georgian Labour Code”, thus introducing international labour standards into Georgian labour market, as per Georgia’s Association Agreement with EU, Annex XXX. The issues related to

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/georgia/media/1226/file>

organization of working time, including daily rest time, break time, weekly rest time, overtime work, night work (examination of health conditions of employees working at night) are envisaged in Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organization of working time. Amendments based on the mentioned directive are being currently elaborated and will be adopted in 2020.

• **Promoting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth strategies that benefit women by shifting employment from low-paid, low-skill and low-productivity sectors to more value-added activities [such as agribusiness, manufacturing, financial and business services], and ensuring that industrial upgrading linked to export expansion includes women (operative paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 15, 43 and 48).**

The National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights (2014-2016; 2016-2017 and 2018-2020) contains a section on “Gender equality and women’s empowerment”, which addresses the promotion of women’s economic empowerment, to be achieved through business education and capacity-building support, including in agriculture and agri-business, increasing women’s participation in agricultural cooperatives and ensuring their involvement in rural development.⁹

One of the key components of gender equality is economic strengthening of women which cannot be achieved without strong support from the state. Activity 13.1.4.3 of the National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights foresees “support in increasing women’s involvement in agro-business projects,” by increasing the “accessibility of financial resources.”

The “National Strategy of Labour Market and Employment Policy of Georgia 2019-2023” also foresees improving women’s participation in the labour market and their entrepreneurial skills.

Government of Georgia is implementing a program for training/retraining and increasing the qualification of job seekers, which aims at training and retraining the job seekers, placing them at the corresponding internships, therefor increasing the competitiveness on the local market and thus promoting their employment. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health has approved list of most desired professions,¹⁰ which is part of the list for the job seekers state program professions. In addition, the Ministry of Health also approved a registry for the vocational educational institutions and training programs.¹¹ The Social Agency of the Ministry of Health provides the display of the job seeking individuals on the following website –<http://worknet.gov.ge> where the beneficiaries will undergo trainings with the different industries in various specialties. The program is financed by the government-issued vouchers, and the maximum value of each beneficiary, in accordance with the profession is 1000 GEL. In case of internship the candidate receives 200 GEL monthly for maximum 3-month period. Main goal of the program is to provide professional trainings in the fields highly demanded by the labor market and/or provide internship for employment seekers in order to increase their competitiveness and support future employment. Preconditions for obtaining services of State programs on training and qualification of employment seekers includes: presentation of basic education

⁹ See, Activities 13.1.4.1-13.1.4.5, Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights for 2016-2017.

¹⁰ Full approved list can be found at http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01_GEO/Dasaqmeba/Samush-Madziebl/08-10-2018.pdf

¹¹ http://ssa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=1215

completion certificate, but this limitation does not apply to women, who were not able to complete basic education course due to early marriage. Also, in case of even opportunities, women are given priority and granted a right to participate in the program.¹² In 2017, 2290 employment seekers participated in the program, 1612 participants were women. In the scope of the above-mentioned program, 334 women were employed in 2017.

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development in association with the Ministry of Agriculture launched the state program "Produce in Georgia", the main objective of which are: promotion of entrepreneurship in Georgia; stimulating local production - especially in least economically developed regions; new enterprises development; creation of new jobs; and increase export potential. Although this program is not designed to address gender issues directly, it creates new opportunities for women. In 2015-2018, the number of beneficiaries within the framework of the Micro and Small Entrepreneurship Promotion Program of Georgia "Produce in Georgia" amounted to 9389 people, including 3783 women that makes 40.3% of total applicants.¹³ In 2018, the Office of the State Minister in partnership with the Academy of the Ministry of Finance, conducted a training course "How to Start and Develop Business" for 16 women residing in Kvemo Kartli region and 14 women from the Pankisi Gorge. As a result of the training the participants were given the opportunity to expand theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills of entrepreneurship, also elaborate specific business- plans. The successful projects were financially supported by the UN Women (Tbilisi Office); A large scale door-to-door information /awareness raising campaign is regularly conducted for ethnic minority women on state programs and services as well as various issues (women's rights, antidiscrimination, domestic violence, early marriages, trafficking, Georgia's European integration process, etc.).

In order to increase employment opportunities for young representatives of ethnic minorities and support their engagement and civil integration process, in December 2017, upon initiative of Ministry of Justice, State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, amendments were made to ordinance of the Government of Georgia N40, dated June 18, 2014 "On Approval of Rules and Conditions for Internship at State Agencies". In particular, procedures for representative of ethnic minorities to participate in internship at state agencies have been refined. According to the amendments, students representing ethnic minorities, who have completed "Georgian Language Educational Program" will eligible for internship at state authorities, will gain experience and develop professional skills. The entire process will support engagement of young generation, especially girls.

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Information provided by the LEPL "Enterprise Georgia"; letter№ EG-04/434; date: March 29, 2019