



GEORGIA
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Statement by Mr. Giorgi Mikeladze, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission
of Georgia
to the United Nations
Agenda item 84 “The Rule of Law at the national and international
levels”
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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

Georgia aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the European Union and in addition I'd like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on today's important discussion topic, which reinforces the notion that the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels are foundation of UN System: peace and security, human rights and development. Georgia reiterates its full support for UN, to strengthen the implementation of International law, anchored in the Charter of the United Nations.

The protection of human rights and respect for rule of law requires a strong legal framework and highly functioning institutions that hold both, individuals and the government accountable for their actions. In Georgia significant progress has been made to advance a capable justice system and we spare no efforts in this direction. As a part of the overarching goal, we enhance functional democracy, uphold principles of transparency, accountability and the rule of law, while justice sector reforms continue to be the top priority for the Government.

On 29 December 2016, the Parliament adopted the so called “Third Wave” of judicial reforms. Amendments, *inter alia*, entail clear guarantees for non-interference with judicial decisions; a principle of automatic and electronic distribution of cases is introduced to ensure impartiality of the president of the court, while assigning cases to individual judges; every court decision will be published at the court's website;

Moreover, legal aid programmes are a central component of strategies to enhance access to justice. The new Law of Georgia on Legal Aid Service ensures independence, accountability and transparency of the Legal Aid Service and reinforces social guarantees for public lawyers. The Legal Aid Service is now an independent institution accountable directly to the Parliament. Based on the needs assessment survey, new consultation centers were opened in mountainous regions and regions populated by ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chairman,

Strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights are cornerstones of our work to achieve sustainable development. The Government of Georgia has prioritized SDG's taking into account the country's development context and started working on integrating SDG's targets into national policy framework. Georgia is actively promoting the SDG 16 at international level and is committed to the consistent implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Goal 16 serves as a key enabler, committing Member States to the development of effective, accountable and transparent public institutions. After organizing a high level Meeting held at the UN Headquarters, on free and accountable institutions last year, at the end of this month Georgia will host an Annual Showcase organized by WFUNA and Forum +16.

Currently, Georgia, also chairs the Open Government Partnership initiative. We have a simple, but powerful goal to serve and empower our citizens. Our main aspiration is to ensure peoples' capability to influence governmental decisions that affect their daily lives. To fulfill our vision, we have identified strategic goals: Enhance citizen engagement and citizen-centered governance, Advance transparency and fight against corruption, Generate innovation in public service delivery. We strongly believe that a comprehensive approach of our efforts at the national level has defined the overall country performance in various directions.

Mr. Chairman,

Peaceful settlement of international disputes is one of the core elements of the Rule of law at the international level. We do believe that expanding the scope of justiciability of international disputes is vital to enhance the efficiency of international judicial institutions. Notably, we have been effectively cooperating with the International Criminal Court since the Prosecutor announced preliminary examination over the 2008 war situation in Georgia to achieve objectives of the Rome Statute and enforce justice. As an enabling factor for the full-fledge cooperation with the ICC we have put in place adequate implementing legislation of the Rome Statute at the national level.

Georgia fully subscribes to the notion that without the rule of law and accountability, impunity reigns and neither justice, nor peace can be achieved.

Strengthening and promoting the rule of law is our common responsibility. In view of this, Georgia stands ready to join efforts with the international community for the advancement of the rule of law around globe.

I, thank you.