



# GEORGIA

Statement by

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Madam Chairperson,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to participate in the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which coincides with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Conference.

Madam Chair

The Government of Georgia supports the draft declaration for this session and reaffirms its commitment to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcome document of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Session of the General Assembly.

I am grateful to the Commission for this opportunity to present the achievements, challenges and future plans of Georgia in terms of Gender Equality. First of all, I would like to note, that I come from a country where as far as in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the liberal values, tolerance and gender equality were the bases of society and the state policy. At that time, Georgia was a powerful country, ruled by a woman. The allegorical verse by the greatest poet of that epoch - "The lion's whelps are equal, be it male or female" - reflects the spirit of the medieval Georgia and since then, our society has been built on the values of equality.

After re-gaining its independence in 1991, Georgia suffered a dramatic socio-economic downturn, further compounded by the civil war and armed conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 2003 the proportion of the people living below the poverty line was more than 50%, while 17% lived in extreme poverty. These numbers indicate the hard economic situation in our country which makes it difficult to have significant achievements in the social and gender policy.

Despite these problems, the new leadership of Georgia understands that solution of gender problems requires specific strategies to be worked out and implemented by the State. After November 2003 Rose Revolution the new Government accelerated the process of reforms thus reaffirming its commitments to fulfil the international obligations, among which the improvement of women's status is specifically underlined.

As the result of increased emphasis on the women's status and gender equality issues substantial progress has been made in Georgia. For instance the number of NGOs working on Gender Issues sharply increased and exceeds 175 today while before the Beijing Women's Conference only 34 Women's NGO existed in Georgia. The

working group, established by the several coalitions of women NGOs, prepared and submitted the CEDAW shadow report to the Committee at every hearing.

In cooperation with the international organizations and civil society the National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan (2005-2006) has been adopted, the necessary amendments to the legislation were made and the Ministry of Interior established an Anti-Trafficking Department. The department has already started to investigate cases.

We have also made some progress in the area of increasing women's participation at the political decision-making level. In the 2004 Parliament women's representation has increased from 7% to 9.4%. Women chair the Parliament of Georgia, the majority faction and 2 out of 13 parliamentary committees. There are three female ministers in the Government - the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the State Minister of Refugees and Settlement and the State Minister on Regional Policy.

In 2004 the Parliament of Georgia formed the Advisory Council on Gender Equality Issues, which is chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament. The Council is mandated to prepare — the draft State Policy on Gender Equality, recommendations for harmonization of Georgian legislation with the international obligations set out by the MDGs, CEDAW, Resolution 1325, Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action and other documents, as well as ensure firm oversight of their implementation.

In parallel, creation of the Governmental Commission on Gender Equality is in progress. Duties of the Commission will include working out the National Action Plan for the implementation of the State Policy on Gender Equality. The consecutive step will result in establishing the Gender Focal Points at all Ministries, that will work on the Gender issues within the respective spheres.

Despite those achievements the vast amount of work is still to be done. The gender mainstreaming process needs to be integrated more effectively, especially in the economic policy of the Government, in allocation of budgetary funds, regulation of the labour market, social policy and healthcare. The female economic activity should be enhanced through implementing various programs promoting their professional training.

Thus, we plan not only to act within the framework of results achieved, but make substantial efforts to improve and support gender equality in our country. Here, I would like to emphasize the important role of international organizations, UN and its agencies, European Union and Council of Europe, as well as bilateral donors. We hope that the successful and fruitful cooperation and assistance will continue. The Georgian Government always values the moral, technical and financial support of

our friendly governments and organizations and I would like to extend my gratitude on behalf of Georgian people to the global community for the support and trust in the process of democratization in my country.

Finally, I would like to mention that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March Georgia had the National holiday — the Mother's Day and tomorrow we join the world's women and men in celebrating the International Women's Day. I would like to congratulate all women here and wish that with our collective efforts women of all over the globe would lead their lives in dignity without problems frequently mentioned during this high forum.

Madam Chair,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for your time and attention.