



**Speech presented by the  
Ms. Ketevan Makharashvili  
Member of the Parliament of Georgia  
Coordinator for the Gender Equality Advisory Council  
Under the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia**

Madam Chairperson  
Distinguished experts of the Committee  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honor and privilege to address the thirty-sixth session of the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women and to present Georgia's report on implementation of the CEDAW.

Madam Chairperson  
Distinguished members of the Committee

First of all I would like congratulate the members of the Committee who got re-elected at the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the States parties to the Convention this June. I know that your efforts will continue to enhance the important work done by the Committee in monitoring and support of the implementation of the CEDAW. And here I would also congratulate and welcome the newly elected members of the Committee.

I would also like to thank you, Ms. Manalo, and the members of the Committee whose term will end this year for the wonderful work you have done at the Committee. I believe that you will continue your support for the women's rights and wish you all the success in your future activities.

Madam Chairperson

Now I would like to commence with the presentation of the Georgia's report.

As you're aware Georgia joined the CEDAW in 1994. The initial report regarding implementation of the CEDAW was submitted to the Committee in 1998. It was in February 1999 that the President established the State Commission on the Elaboration of the State Policy for Advancement of Women, which was coordinated by the National Security Council. The NSC staff assisted the Commission in preparing the second and third periodic reports by collecting information from different state agencies and the NGO community. Georgia does not have any formal procedures for approving/adopting reports to be submitted to the UN or other international organizations.

This Commission on the Elaboration of the State Policy for Advancement of Women ceased de facto existence after the Rose Revolution of November 2003.

The new Government of Georgia has undertaken a number of broad and substantive reforms in order to ensure that the processes of democratic development become tangible and irreversible. The changes and improvements are by now visible and sustainable in the

defense sector, law enforcement, energy supply and security, and education. Economic reforms require longer time to affect individual citizens, however the Government is making consistent and continuous steps for setting the proper policies and regulations. Georgia's integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures is one of the high priorities for Georgia and the Government is steadily advancing towards fulfilling the requirements set by these organizations.

The most painful and hindering issues for the development in our country are the unresolved territorial conflicts in Abkhazeti and South Osseti. These conflicts resulted in internal displacement of almost 300,000 Georgians, which especially affects the social security system, along with the extremely sensitive political challenge to return these people to their homes. The resolution of these conflicts through peaceful means is the major objective of the Government of Georgia, where the support of international community, international organizations and most of all, the UN can play a vital role.

Along these reforms gender equality issues were also brought up to the state level, which resulted in the creation of two national mechanisms in the Parliament and Government. In October 2004 the Gender Equality Advisory Council under the Speaker of Parliament was created on the basis of broad participation, thus including not only MPs but representatives of the Government and NGO sector as well. We have made a special effort to have the gender balance on the council while inviting MPs and government representatives to participate. Unfortunately, there are hardly any men working on the women's or gender issues, therefore, the civil society is represented by women only. The mandate of the Council includes analysis of existing legislation, drafting new laws and amendments and preparation of the State policy document regarding Gender Equality.

The Government Commission on Gender Equality was created in June 2005 with a one year mandate, which consists of the Deputy Ministers, MP and NGO representatives. The major task assigned to the Commission is to draft the National Action Plan for strengthening gender equality in Georgia.

Starting from 2004 number of legal amendments or laws have been adopted by the Parliament. Here I would like to outline the major achievements in this field.

- **The Law on State Pensions**

By the law adopted in 2005 the retirement age for women and men has been equalized at 65 years old, with optional retirement for women at 60.

- **The Law on Fighting against Human Trafficking**

Though in Georgian legislation the human trafficking became a criminal offence in 2001, the specialized law, that covers prevention, protection of victims and their rehabilitation was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in April 2006. Corresponding amendments have been adopted to other laws, including Criminal and Criminal Procedures Codes, and

others. The National Action Plan was signed in by the President of Georgia, where all the activities, responsible agencies and specific dates were outlined for the implementation of this law.

- **The Labor Code**

Till May 2006 Georgia used the Soviet Labor Code adopted in 1973, which has been numerously amended during the last years. The new Labor Code adopted in 2006 sets much more liberal regulation of employment in Georgia – allowing the contract between the employer and prospective employee to negotiate most of the terms. However, the code sets minimal standards, including parental leave, number of working hours per week (41 hours), overtime work, safety at work, etc. Several international indices gave high rating to the Georgian Labor Code from the economic reform point of view.

- **The Law on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance of Domestic Violence Victims**

This law was adopted in June 2006, which introduces the term “domestic violence” into Georgian legislation, as well as new mechanisms of protection of victims – restraining and defense orders, state’s obligation to provide social services, shelters and rehabilitation centers for the victims and abusers. The adoption of the National Action Plan by the Government is required by the end of the year.

- **The State Concept on Gender Equality**

First of all I would like to emphasize the wonderful cooperation of the Parliamentary Council and the Government Commission in the process of drafting the national strategy documents – the State Concept on Gender Equality and National Action Plan for its Implementation. The Concept provides for the main directions of the gender equality policy and is adopted by the Parliament. The Concept recognizes the internationally acclaimed principles of gender equality in all spheres of life and provides the framework for introducing and implementing measures for prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination on the ground of sex and for the active pursue of gender equality.

I would like to specifically recognize the special support provided by the UN Agencies - UNDP, UNIFEM and UNFPA in advancement of gender equality in Georgia. I would also like to thank OSCE and USAID for their continuous support in this field.

Madam Chairperson

With this I would like to conclude my brief introduction. And I am looking forward to providing more specific information to your questions and substantive discussions.

Thank you for your attention.