



# GEORGIA

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**General Assembly**  
**21<sup>st</sup> Special Session**

Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the  
Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Delegation of Georgia let me extend sincere congratulations on your election as the President of the Special Session of General Assembly.

As a full-fledged member of international community, Georgia remains committed to the goals of Cairo Conference on Population and Development and Hague Conference ICPD+5.

The collapse of Soviet Union has brought about devastating effect on the economic, political and social life of Georgia. We have gone through and survived the harsh period of civil war, internal **conflicts**, economic crisis, that had heavy consequences on the society. The unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia resulted into the massive outflow of population from these regions. Consequently the most vulnerable groups of population: children, women and elderly are put on the verge of endurance. The most acute problems of the protection of women's rights are related to the IDP women. According to the most current data, the population of Georgia is 5, 4 million. The NGOs working on population issues, indicate that the total number of emigres from Georgia makes **500,000**. The social and economic hardships is a main reason for the emigration. Beginning of this year, the Government of Georgia was planning to conduct the survey, but the budgetary crisis this important initiative was not completed. The data below are based on the information from the State Statistics Department.

Even though Georgia is a developing country, nevertheless from the point of view of demography, it can be considered among the developed countries. Beginning 1995 the average population growth rate is 0.1%. It is necessary to mention that in certain regions of Georgia especially in the mountainous areas, depopulation can be traced. Responding to this challenge, a month ago the Parliament of Georgia passed the law on Social and Economic Development of mountainous regions, aimed at elimination of disparity in development. By the year 2010 the population of Georgia is expected to reach **5,8** millions. The process of internal migration, together with the ongoing urbanization processes, also has a high level; the share of urban population is being increased up to **2/3**. Even though there is a certain positive dynamics in infant and maternal mortality rates make 23 and 33 accordingly, child mortality rates under age of 5: male -28, **female-27**.

Average indicator of fertility rate is 1.9. The average life expectancy of males is **68,5** and of females **76,7**. Health and education expenditures make less than 4% of GDP while international assistance to Georgia is USD 1, 172 000 millions. Proceeding from the above and taking into account its social resources and strong political will for the

implementation of the program of action in order to attract investments towards its development, Georgia has set priorities in the field of reproductive health, that has already been ensured by the State legislation, in particular by family code and law on health protection. The several chapters of health protection law are devoted to the implementation of this right. The funds have been earmarked for the special programs in state budget, including anti-HIV programs, education programs on family planning and access to the contraceptives, for the fertile age population and adolescents.

It is necessary to mention special needs of young people in education, health care and development, in particular in connection with the sexual and reproductive health for realization of their individual potential and maximize their input into social development process. The state policy targeting the change of the age structure is sensitive to the needs of the elderly population of the country, the percentage of which is increasing due to the fall of the birth rate. Notwithstanding historical and cultural tradition by which the elderly people were very much respected, the improvement of their standard of life requires continuous political efforts for the mobilization and utilization of available resources in the context

of families, communities, civil organizations and private sector. Development of health care, financial security and creation of sustainable livelihood for the elderly- is one of priorities in the context of aging population of our country. The foreseeable consequences of the demographic development, as a integral part of the elaboration of policy and strategy - making of the programs of social development, is the main principle of concept of "Unified state, social - demographic, family policy of Georgia till the 2000". The concept was brought into life by the order of the President of Georgia.

The special attention in the context of sustainable development is drawn to the problems of women **from** gender perspective. The decree of the President on the creation of the Commission on elaboration of state policy on the development of women and for the adoption of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women by the year 2000 ensured process in this direction. The plan provides for the establishment of institutional mechanisms and strengthening the role of women in decision making process.

In elaboration and implementation of the abovementioned and other programs the **NGOs** play important role. It is important to mention that despite the limited resources, the state budget envisages the establishment of special **fund** for the development of civil society. These are just the first steps of the newly born democracy, emerging from the deep crisis. They are targeted to the preservation and development of our main assets - human resources.

The countries with the their economies in transition, with the support of international community can be compared to the young plants. Although they need special care, but could grow into the **powerful** fruit-bearing tree, for the benefit all.

Once again let me express my gratitude for the assistance rendered by the international community and donor organizations to our country and I dwell on the hope of our increasing cooperation.

I thank you Mr. President.