

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Right Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/24/2

Information for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Georgia is among those states developing Human Rights Strategy– a comprehensive document, general framework for the protection and promotion of human rights. On 5 July 2013 the Resolution №169 of the Government of Georgia was issued. According to the resolution the Interagency Council for Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan was established. Council has drafted strategy and presented to the Parliament of Georgia for approval. Strategy determines strategic priorities for 2014-2020. Each strategic priority includes particular goals and guiding principles. With a view to ensuring the achievement of the goals defined by the Strategy, development of Action Plan of the Government for 2014-2015 is underway. The Action Plan combines those fragmented action plans that deal with different human rights, e.g. minority rights and protection of equality, gender issue, freedom of religion and conscience, rights of disabled persons, etc. Respective thematic action plans are being developed by the Council. Action Plan is expected to be adopted by May 2014 (*Reply to Q.9*).

International and non-governmental organizations were actively involved in the process of developing the strategy. Discussions also took place with organizations dedicated to protect individual human rights. A special website containing all relevant information on the strategy development process and on its progression has been set up. With the help of this website all interested parties have been regularly provided with updated information on developments and have been able to engage in the process by offering their comments and criticisms to the Council (*Reply to Q.6*)

The strategy envisages that far-reaching legal and institutional reforms, derived from constitutional principles and aimed at building a democratic, social and constitutional state that must be dictated by needs at the local level and take into account national traditions. The main goal of the Strategy is to develop systematic approach in ensuring the implementation of obligations stemming from human rights in everyday life. To this end, representatives of all branches of government, notably of the Government of Georgia, as well as all officials at the central and local levels must acknowledge and fulfil the obligations placed upon them, namely, the constitutional duty to ensure respect for human rights (*Reply to Q.2*).

The main goal of the Strategy is to develop a strategic approach to ensure the implementation of obligations stemming from human rights in everyday life with a view to build an interagency, multi-sector, unified, and consistent policy and, accordingly, implementing good governance. The Strategy is aiming at consolidating institutional democracy which ensures that governmental bodies and public servants do what is allowed, while individuals do what is not prohibited by the law. The Government of Georgia seeks to apply a human rights-based approach in the drafting of its policies and programs and in their monitoring and assessment. In essence, this implies the

active involvement of the rights-holders in making decisions on the development process; it also serves the purpose of ensuring the accurate implementation and increased transparency and accountability of human rights obligations by elected representatives and civil servants at all levels. A human rights-based approach also attempts to strike a balance between genders, through the consideration of the varying needs of men and women in any given situation. Therefore, it is important that ministries, agencies and organizations, introduce and gradually develop their capabilities of applying a human rights-based approach, especially in the planning and provision of public services, thus enhancing the overall process for providers and recipients alike. The Strategy explicitly requires from the state to respect, protect, fulfil and promote human rights. With a view to achieving the vision and goals, the Strategy envisages legislative and institutional changes, as well as changes in practice. The Strategy aims to ensure that every person in Georgia understands the essence of his or her rights and is capable of implementing these rights in practice with a view to ensuring wellbeing and dignified life. The Strategy is designed to promote the development of free, independent, and active citizens who are aware of their role in a democratic state in terms of both implementing their rights and fulfilling their obligations. The authorities, on their part, should take steps to enable people to play an active role in the protection of their rights and the development of democracy (*Reply to Q.5*).