

Survey on the Implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights

Response of the Government of Georgia to the Questionnaire

1. The first Georgian National Human Rights Strategy was adopted by the Parliament on April 30, 2014. The seven-year strategy is a policy document identifying human rights priorities and it was developed through very inclusive drafting process involving the state agencies, international and non-governmental organizations. It was elaborated on the bases of the recommendations from the national and international non-governmental organizations, the Public Defender's office, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and specifically the country report by the then EU Special Adviser on Legal Reform and Human Rights in Georgia – Mr. Thomas Hammarberg.

Following the Strategy the Government of Georgia adopted Governmental Action Plan on human rights (2014-2015) on July 9, 2014. The Action Plan is a comprehensive document covering two first years of the implementation of the Strategy. It lists goals, objectives, activities, responsible agencies, timeframes and indicators. On July 9, 2014 the ministerial level Human Rights Council chaired by the Prime Minister was established in order to monitor the process of the implementation of the Action Plan. As an additional guarantee for the effective execution of the Action Plan, the Human Rights Secretariat, responsible for productive Inter-Agency coordination and close monitoring was created in the Administration of the Government of Georgia. The Secretariat manages thematic working groups with the involvement of all responsible governmental agencies, as well as non-governmental and international organizations.

On June 13, 2016 the Cabinet of Ministers of Georgia adopted the new Human Rights Action Plan (2016-2017) to ensure further implementation of the human rights strategy. The drafting process of the action plan was very open and participatory, including analyzing relevant local and international reports as well as consultations with the local and international organizations. The new action plan is bigger and more comprehensive document consisting of more than 900 activities and three new chapters, among them is a chapter on Business and Human Rights.

The concept of the chapter on business and human rights was presented by the non-governmental organization Civil Development Agency (CiDA). CiDA is one of the few organizations in Georgia, working on promotion of international corporate responsibility standards among relevant stakeholders in Georgia, such as businesses, CSOs, Government and the general public. CiDA coordinates two corporate sustainability platforms namely - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Club and the United Nations Global Compact Network

in Georgia. Both of these platforms unite business and non-business participants, encouraging cooperation with the overall aim to promote sustainable development in the country.

On December 16, 2015 together with CiDA the Human Rights Secretariat of the Government Administration of Georgia organized the round table to discuss the possibility of including chapter on Business and Human rights in the governmental human rights action plan with governmental stakeholders such as Economic Council of the Prime-Minister, Business Ombudsman of Georgia, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Finance.

As a result based on CiDA's recommendations and international standards the Human Rights Secretariat developed the separate chapter on Business and Human Rights. The draft document was shared with the international and non-governmental organizations for their comments and suggestions that were discussed together with the responsible governmental agencies.

The adopted chapter on Business and Human rights consists of two objectives and seven activities, such as: conduct national baseline study on business and human rights (BHR), awareness raising on BHR, organizing multi-stakeholder round tables and conference on BHR, translation of international standards in Georgian and elaboration of national BHR AP. Existing BHR Chapter serves as a government's commitment to adopt the chapter with more comprehensive and relevant activities, that will be based on the findings of the baseline study identifying gaps in state and business implementation of the Guiding Principles.

2. The Guidance on National Action Plans on Business and human Rights as a whole provides very comprehensive and practical information, in particular elements of development of NAP described in a very detailed manner from stage zero to the stage of implementation and renewal of the document. Furthermore, it is based on the individual approach, recognizing the specificity of each country and describes different experiences of a NAP development.

As for the improvements, document can become more practical with more user friendly approach in several aspects, such as: providing information on core challenges and the possible risks that countries face at the preparatory stage; additional specific information about example countries on their level and timeframes of the NAP development in order to easily identify within relevant experience from the country context; existence of the specific check list on the procedures and steps to be taken by the country in the process of NAP development.

4. After the adoption of the action plan the Government of Georgia started taking necessary steps for its implementation. On April 22-23, 2016 together with Civil Development Agency (CiDA) and Global Compact Network Georgia the Human Rights Secretariat organized an international conference “Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility in Georgia”.

The event hosted more than 100 Georgian and foreign delegates and participants including the speakers and business ethics experts from the Headquarters of Ericsson, TeliaSonera Group, Local Networks at the United Nations Global Compact's New York, as well as a delegation from Global Compact Network Poland. The conference dealt with issues such as international standards on corporate sustainability, as well as international and Georgian practices in the field and the future perspectives for the development of corporate social responsibility in Georgia.

On July 8, 2016 in partnership with the Human Rights Secretariat the conference on “Progressing on Corporate Social Responsibility Agenda in Georgia” was organized within the framework of the Corporate Social Responsibility Week in Georgia. The conference covered three main topics: vision of the Government of Georgia for the Development of CSR on the policy level in Georgia, vision and practice of businesses in the CSR field in Georgia, vision of international organizations on the present and future developments of CSR in Georgia.

On July 29, 2016 the Human Rights Secretariat organized the round table aiming to support employment of persons with disabilities. During the meeting representatives from Ministry of Labour Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Social Service Agency, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, CiDA and American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia, discussed the perspectives of the state and business cooperation in tackling issue of employment of persons with disabilities and/or with special educational needs.