**Information for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**regarding Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**in accordance with the Human Rights Council resolution 19/11**

**Contribution from the Government of Georgia**

1. According to the Labour Code of Georgia, Article 2, Point 3, the equal opportunities of the persons with disabilities for employment is underlined: “Discrimination of any kind is forbidden during the labor relations, such as: discrimination by race, color of a skin, language, ethnic and social belong, origin, property, class, working place, age, sex, sexual orientation, limited abilities, religion or membership of other unifications, family status, political and other beliefs.” In addition, according to Article 17, Point 2: “Overtime employment of a pregnant woman, a woman in a postnatal period or a person with limited capabilities without her/his consent shall be inadmissible.” While according to Article 18: “It shall be impermissible to employ a minor, a pregnant woman, a woman in a postnatal period, a breastfeeding woman or a person with limited capabilities, on a night job (22 pm to 6 am). A baby sitter who takes care of a child under age of three and/or a person with limited capabilities can be employed on a night job only with consent of her/his person.”
2. In order to promote social integration, including the employment opportunities, for persons with disabilities, in accordance to the Decree #978, the Government of Georgia has adopted “**Action Plan 2010-2012 on Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities**”, which outlines measures for the purpose of supporting the employment, self-employment and the involvement in small enterprises of the persons with disabilities through elaboration of educational programs (training/life-long learning)
3. Moreover, in order to ensure the elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities in the area of employment, the according to the Order #57 of March 2, 2010 the Prime Minister of Georgia a Tripartite Commission on Social Partnership has been established. Within the framework of the work of the Commission the issues connected to discrimination of persons with disabilities are discussed and the measures to abolish these practices are undertaken. Furthermore, according to the “**Action Plan 2010-2012 on Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities**” in case of necessity, the issues connected to labour relations should be discussed with all parties. It should also be noted that during the period of the existence of the Commission no case connected to discrimination by the law of the right of employment of persons with disabilities has been dealt with, therefore, no necessity to modify the existing laws has occurred.
4. 4. Education of students with special educational needs (SEN) was declared as one of the priorities by the Georgian Government in 2004, when the educational reform was started. Two projects (Introduction of inclusive education in Tbilisi and regions of Georgia), implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in partnership with Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, have resulted in creation of the educational environment accessible for All. At present moment, principles of inclusive education constitute the integral part of the state policy on general education and are mandatory for all public schools. State budget finances implementation of different follow-up activities directed at sustainable development of child-friendly environment

Despite the visible success of children with special education needs and increased number of these children in public schools (many of them stayed out of schools before introduction of inclusive education), it should be stressed that inclusive education can’t be considered of full value, unless it is introduced in Vocation Education and Training System (VET). Georgia is going to start process of introducing inclusive education in Vocation Education and Training system from January 2013 with the support of Norwegian Ministry of Education and science. Vocational education has special importance and meaning for adequate development and social integration of young people with special educational needs. Every person, despite their different abilities has the right to obtain profession, be active member of the society and contribute to economic development of the country. (Strategy and Action Plan on VET for Children with Special Educational Needs for 2012-2015).

After the Collapse of the Soviet Union, industrial big enterprises and factories have lost their functions and economic development became mostly dependent on market driven competitive environment. Creation of a new, labor market oriented VET system, complying with European and international educational environment, contributing to economic development and self-realization of students was defined as important parts of vocational education reform by the Georgian government. (Strategy and Action Plan on VET for Children with Special Educational Needs for 2012-2015).

It should be stressed, that the goal and the value of the VET educational reform is its compliance with the European standards. Georgia is ready to work for step-by-step creation of VET system, that stands on: (1) flexible and easily comparable system of qualifications, system for the recognition of prior learning and foreign qualifications, different VET student, (2) strong focus on social partnership in VET that implies a close partnership and social dialogue between state, employers, trade unions, (3) Participatory approach and transparency - decision making based on the consultations from social partners, providers, students, trainers and other stakeholders. (4) Regional approach – when VET is oriented to the local (regional) demands. (5) Diversified program options –an opportunity for students to choose the most suited educational program to them. (6) Quality – system equips workforce with knowledge and abilities that are demanded on the internal and international markets and relevant to personal educational interests. (7) Inclusion – the strategy underlines the importance of professional development of each person and provides an inclusive education system for all learners. Today: IDPs, people with disabilities, prisoners, ethnic minorities and other categories at risk (including “street children”), socially vulnerable people do not have access to more than basic education.. The involvement of such groups in future education will ensure their social welfare and inclusion *(VET Mid- Term Strategy 2009-2012).*

It should be noted, that systemic changes in VET system generally, provide opportunity for piloting inclusive education principles in VET institutions. “Strategy of VET Reform” ” is one of the most important challenges in the system. ,,Negligence of the persons with special needs’’ - the strategy clearly defines, that: vocational institutions cannot provide students with special needs with facilities in order to fulfill their potential. consequently enroll only a small number of students of this category, though the fact that there is such a demand is obvious (VET Mid- Term Strategy 2009-2012) Taking into consideration all above mentioned, piloting of inclusive education principles in VET system is the important pre-condition for development of the full value, modern-type VET system.

The goal of the Georgian government for the near future is to support development of the structural changes in Vocational Sector for implementation of inclusive education and giving equal opportunities and accessibility to the people with special needs towards vocational programs and training; to promote their rights to work and be recognized on an equal basis with others (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006) and link mainstream education system to the Vocational system.

***Next steps will include:***

* 1. Creation of support system for introduction of inclusive education in VET at national, regional and local levels;
  2. Creation of the educational support counseling for defining duration of the study period for children with special needs, which provides methodological and material support based on assessment;
  3. Enhancement of the component of social partnership. Inclusive education awareness rising among all the partners (employer, Trade Unions, Different Ministries) involved in VET process and outlining of their roles for better maintenance of the process;
  4. Training of inclusive VET specialists and their involvement in assessment of pre-vocational skills and planning of educational process. Developing competences of multidisciplinary team members and Inclusive specialists in VET for planning transitions of persons with special need from primary education to VE and to working places;
  5. Provision of the accessible physical environment for students with special educational needs;
  6. Enhancement of human resources in inclusive education at VET and community colleges;
  7. Perfection of the curriculums and learning materials of VET Centers for maintaining quality inclusive educational process;
  8. Identification of persons with special educational needs and their inclusion to VET Centers;
  9. Public awareness rising concerning the inclusive VET;
  10. Summer Practical course for students with special educational needs.

**Outcome and Impacts**: As a result, changes ensuring vocational education for persons with disabilities will be made to the educational sphere regulating documents. Teachers in VET should have higher didactic qualifications and all sectors should have competence in Special Needs Education Modules. Accessibility of physical infrastructure will be improved and resources for quality education process will be developed. Entrepreneurship component will be incorporated into the vocational education curriculums. The partners identified by tripartite agreement will be involved in each stage of the process and the mechanisms will be created to activate their role. Recognition system will detail the component of recognition of informal education of persons with special educational needs. Also activities will be realized for involvement of persons from the daycare centers to VET institutions.

**Impact:** As a result, the educational system will become flexible and welcoming for persons with special educational needs, which is the precondition for their self-realization and determines elimination of discrimination on the bases of disability. The outcomes of the project will help to make steps forward to the ratification of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (2006), as some of the main principles of the convention will be fulfilled: legislative changes (Article N 4) , Equity and non-discrimination (Article N5), accessibility (Article N9) , capacity building (Article 24) and promotion of working policy for people with disabilities (Article N27).

1. In order to ensure the targeted distribution of social assistance and financial aid, the Government of Georgia in its Order #93 of March 30, 2010 “the methodology of assessing the socio-economic conditions of the vulnerable families (family enterprises)” and the Order #141/N of May 20, 2010 of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Protection has included the persons with disabilities as one of the important variable in identifying the need for assistance in the process of assessing the socio-economic conditions of the vulnerable families (family enterprises). In particular, according to Article 9 of the above-mentioned Order of the Georgian Government, while calculating demographic index, the people with the capacity to work don’t include the following categories: bedridden/confined to an armchair; persons who are unable to move without help and/or in need of a nurse; persons with severe disability (Group I); persons with moderate disability (Group II); sightless persons belonging to Group I. in accordance with “the methodology of assessing the socio-economic conditions of the vulnerable families”, the declaration requests the indication of persons with severe or moderate disabilities (I, II and III groups) and the children (under the age of 18) with disabilities.

Accordingly, the existence of persons with disability in a family increases the chance of the said family for becoming a beneficiary of the targeted social assistance program.

1. On the basis of the decree of the Government of Georgia the State Coordination Council on the issues of Persons with Disabilities has been created. The organizations dealing with the protection of persons with disabilities are closely involved in the work of the Council. In addition, persons with disabilities and the organizations representing them actively participate in making decisions, preparation and adoption of the action plans and other documents.