

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

United Nations Development Programme



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GENDER AND ELECTIONS IN GEORGIA

ABSTRACT

The present case study presents an analysis of gender and political participation in Georgia. Women's participation in political decision-making and policy formulation is still not equal to that of men and has actually shown a downward trend over time. The general character of political exclusion of women is based on prevailing social and political discourse and cultural and traditional approaches. The recent changes made in the electoral system, decreasing the number of parliamentary seats elected on the basis of party-list proportional representation and increasing single-mandate constituency seats, have negatively affected women's political participation. Since 2006, UNDP and other UN agencies actively supported interventions that contributed to a number of important policy changes on gender equality in Georgia, such as the adoption of the 2010 Law on Gender Equality. Further advancing women's political participation will require holistic and multi-faceted efforts by women, governments, international actors and civil society. This study identifies strategies for increasing the political role of women in Georgia, focusing on a combination of international community's/organizations facilitating role, governmental action through legislation, and civil society activism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. METHODOLOGY	5
3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK	6
4. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS	8
4.1 WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT	9
4.2 WOMEN IN POLITICAL PARTIES	10
4.3 GENDER IN THE PLATFORMS OF POLITICAL PARTIES	11
4.4 CHANNELS FOR WOMEN'S ENTRY INTO POLITICS	12
4.5 WOMEN'S MOTIVATION FOR ENTERING POLITICS	12
5. BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS	13
5.1 MISMATCH BETWEEN FAMILY LIFE AND POLITICAL CAREER	13
5.2 THE "MANLY" MODEL OF POLITICS	13
5.3 THE PERCEPTION THAT POLITICS IS "DIRTY" AND "UNFAIR"	13
5.4 LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES	14
5.5 LACK OF PARTY SUPPORT	14
5.6 UNFAVOURABLE ELECTORAL SYSTEM	15
5.7 LACK OF SOLIDARITY OF WOMEN TOWARD WOMEN	15
5.8 LACK OF MEDIA INTEREST IN GENDER ISSUES	16

5.9 LACK OF QUOTA SYSTEM	16	
6. THE ROLE OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	16	
6.1 DONOR SUPPORT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	16	
6.2 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS EFFORTS TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY	17	
7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	18	
7.1 KEY FINDINGS	18	
7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS	19	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	22	
ACRONYMS		23
APPENDIX 1 - THE LIST OF RESPONDENTS	24	
APPENDIX 2 - RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS	25	
APPENDIX 3 - GEORGIAN LAW ON GENDER EQUALITY 2010	26	
APPENDIX 4 - ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY 2011-2013	30	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNDP has been undertaking a series of case study research projects about the opportunities and challenges for women's participation as voters in the Europe and the CIS region. The case studies focus on women's electoral participation and political parties, take stock of women's electoral participation and the interventions by various national and international actors, and distill lessons learned to strengthen future programming. The present case study presents an analysis of gender and the electoral legislation reform process in Georgia.

The growing worldwide recognition of the importance of gender equality has led to some positive changes in terms of achieving gender equality in Georgia. Following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Georgia ratified a variety of human rights instruments and thereby committed itself to promoting full respect for human dignity and to achieving gender equality and equity. These commitments have been translated into new laws and practices. As a result of intense lobbying by UN agencies, local women's NGOs, and the Gender Equality Council, on March 27, 2010 the Georgian Parliament adopted the Law on Gender Equality. The law specifies the importance for ensuring gender equality in employment, family relations, social protection and education, and also equal participation of women in senior representative agencies. In order to ensure the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality, the National Action Plan for the years 2011-2013 has been approved with the Council leadership. This plan calls for specific steps to assure gender equality in different spheres of civil life, such as mainstreaming gender in education, health and social services, encourage equal participation of men and women in the field of economy, improvement of gender statistics, support institutionalization of gender in the state budgeting processes, support for equal participation in decision-making in the peace process and reconstruction, etc.

Women's participation in political decision-making and policy formulation is still not equal to that of men and has actually shown a downward trend over time. Women make up almost half of the members in some political parties, but they do not enjoy the equal status with men on party executive boards or among candidates for the elections. Despite being active and productive in mobilizing party membership and voters, as well as fundraising and campaigning for mostly male candidates, women rarely attain leadership positions within political parties or stand for elections. For this study, the platforms of ten political parties that took part in the last parliamentary elections in 2008 have been reviewed from a gender perspective. Practically none of them, with only few exceptions, has a clear policy on mainstreaming gender equality and women's rights. Once elections are conducted and positions are assigned, women are no longer visible.

An examination of the political careers of the most well-known women in the parliament, political parties, local government and governmental structures, highlights some typical ways for women entering into politics in Georgia: young women educated abroad; leader women recruited into politics from a successful professional career; women's advancement through different courses and schools of women leadership, a relatively new channel for women's entry into politics; and women moving from a successful career with the ruling party to the opposition. There are a variety of obstacles that hamper women who are interested in entering into the politics, to wield any meaningful power in political parties, or get elected.

The general character of political exclusion of women is based on prevailing social and political discourse and cultural and traditional approaches. Traditionally, women in Georgia assume most of the household and childcare responsibilities. For women who work outside of home, which is often required by the hard economic situation, there is little time left for public activism. A lack of developed social systems and government support for mothers, rigid and conservative gender roles, and drastic reduction of funding of childcare facilities and services refrain women from more active participation in social and political life. Lack of financial resources is also cited as one of the major reasons for the small number of women in politics. Public funding is allocated for political parties to conduct election campaigns, but it is not sufficient for women's promotion, as they often have low positions in their political parties and have no access and power to control the allocation of these funds.

The recent changes made in the electoral system of Georgia have negatively affected women's political participation. According to the amendments in the Constitution made on the eve of the parliamentary elections in 2004, the size of the Parliament of Georgia decreased from 235 to 150 members, 75 out of whom are elected on the basis of party-list proportional representation, and the other 75 based on single-mandate constituencies. The decreased number of seats was one of the reasons of women's under-representation in the parliament, because women candidates are generally listed at the bottom of the party lists. The relative increase of seats available for single-mandate constituencies also negatively affected women's chances in elections. Because of high personality-driven competition in such elections, most of the candidates in single-mandate constituencies are men and the women's chances are very low. In the last

parliamentary elections in 2008, only one out of nine elected women was elected from the single-mandate constituency, while others were elected through party lists.

In May 2008 a coalition of women NGOs began to promote the introduction of amendments to the existing elections legislation to allow for temporary measures (quotas) to increase the number of women in parliament. The Coalition collected over 32,000 votes in the capital and other regions of Georgia supporting this initiative. Unfortunately, the proposed amendments have not been discussed in the Parliament. In spite of the fact that the petition campaign failed and resulted a discouraging practice for many, gender activists believe that it provided a real boost to the coalition's efforts at visibility, and demonstrated significant growth in the organizational ability of women NGOs.

The UNDP is one of the key donors in Georgia mandated with developing gender policies and empowering and advancing women in decision-making processes at all levels. Since 2006, UNDP and other UN agencies (UNFPA, UN Women, etc.) actively supported interventions that contributed to a number of important policy changes on gender equality in Georgia. These included supporting the establishment of the first national gender machinery, namely the Advisory Council on Gender Equality, as well as facilitating the elaboration and adoption of several Gender National Action Plans. As a result of the concerted effort of UN agencies in close cooperation with the Advisory Council on Gender Equality and many women's organizations, the Law on Gender Equality was adopted and the Advisory Council was given permanent status. UNDP has also facilitated the elaboration of a new National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2011-2013) within the framework of the UN Joint Program "UN initiative in Support of Greater Gender Equality in Georgia"¹.

Other major international organizations and INGOs working in the field of gender equality and women's issues in Georgia include USAID and SIDA, the US and Swedish international development agencies, respectively. They support increasing women's participation in decision-making, through programs like NDI's Future Women Leaders Program and the project "Building Public Confidence in Electoral Process", designed to increase women's participation in politics and prepare women to seek elected office. Other initiatives are OSCE/ODIHR's support to strengthen the organizational coherence of the women's movement by establishing and developing a coalition of women's NGOs. INGOs like the Kvinna till Kvinna (Sweden), Global Fund for Women (USA), National Endowment for Democracy (USA), and Mama Cash (Netherlands) are among the other few international actors that are working for the political empowerment of women, although their assistance and efforts on this direction are limited and insufficient, as elaborated below.

Advancing women's political participation requires holistic and multi-faceted efforts undertaken by women, governments, international actors and civil society. The strategies identified for increasing the political role of women in Georgia focus on a combination of international community's/organizations' facilitating role, governmental action through legislation and civil society activism, e.g. gender and political sensitization of society and especially women; capacity-building for women in politics;

active work with women and leaders of political parties, encouraging and assisting them in establishing the women's section within their party structure, and facilitating the integration of gender perspectives in their political manifestos and strategic documents; lobbying for legislation which establishes incentives to support women candidates; developing and strengthening the network between women and members of political parties, women parliamentarians and women NGOs; strengthening the cooperation of international organizations with civil society in advocating for women's substantial inclusion into politics; and collecting, monitoring and disseminating the facts and statistics on women's political participation.

In particular, donors have to make long-term and consistent investment, so that women's movement and organizations can strengthen their capacity, grow, learn and evolve. International assistance providers are encouraged to:

- ✓ Provide training (directly and/or through local NGOs) for women candidates or elected women to improve their political skills and capacities;
- ✓ Facilitate and support cross-party cooperation among women;
- ✓ Facilitate international conferences on gender issues in the capital and the regions of Georgia to disseminate and popularize the successful experience in the world on women's advancement in politics;
- ✓ Expand financial support to women's NGOs working on promoting women's political participation in the capital and regions of Georgia;
- ✓ Provide consultation and advice to the government on legislation, electoral systems and best practices that can advance women's participation in the electoral process.

¹ The UN Joint Project "UN Initiative In Support of Greater Gender Equality in Georgia" is a joint initiative of the following UN agencies in Georgia: UNFPA, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF and UN RC office with UNFPA being a Managing Agent of the initiative.

1. INTRODUCTION

Georgia's post-independence transition was characterized by sharp economic decline, devastated industry, massive unemployment and a series of ethnic conflicts that had a tremendous impact on women's lives. These social, economic and political upheavals also affected the traditional role of women and men in society. Women have challenged the existing cultural and social perception of their role as stay-at-home housewives by taking on tasks and roles that once belonged exclusively to men. They became responsible for the material well-being of their families. However, drastically decreasing social benefits and the collapsing state-run system of family and childcare support have disproportionately affected women. The increasingly hands-off state policies toward the family have not been countered with an increase in men's work contribution in the home. Women have been forced to bear a double burden, continuing to work in social and private sectors while also remaining the main caretakers at home. Such traditional practices and attitudes make it challenging for women to actively engage and advance in the political life of the country.

The strengthening of women's organizations and movements since the 1990s and the subsequent enhancement of women's leadership capacity in Georgia inspired many women leaders to get involved more actively in politics. But women's aspirations have not always translated into equal representation in political leadership positions. Despite being active and productive in mobilizing party membership and voters, as well as fundraising and campaigning for mostly male candidates, women rarely attain leadership positions within political parties or stand for elections. Once elections are conducted and positions are assigned, women are no longer visible. Today, the role of women in Georgian society reflects neither to their numerical strength, nor their leadership potential in the socio-political life of the country. There is still much to be done to ensure stronger mainstreaming of gender issues, greater consistency across policy areas, and improved awareness of gender perspectives.

This report summarizes the findings of a UNDP-supported study that aimed to analyze the political participation of Georgian women, including in national and local governing institutions and in political parties. The paper identifies internal and external conditions and factors that affect the creation of an enabling environment for women's political participation. It then looks at the role of national and international organizations in shaping strategies to promote women's political participation/representation. Finally, the paper summarizes key findings and offers policy and programming recommendations for national and international actors. Though there are a number of publications related to women's positions and roles in politics in Georgia, there is a need to update, challenge and refocus discussions to reflect prevailing trends. The present report aims to do that, presenting current trends and offering recommendations for supporting women's political participation in Georgia.

2. METHODOLOGY

To consolidate the electoral cycle approach, and develop stronger substantive and programmatic linkages between electoral assistance and democratic governance, UNDP launched the Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) in 2009. GPECS provides targeted assistance to strengthen national capacity for electoral administration and management over time. One of the key objectives of GPECS is to achieve the full and equal participation of women as voters and candidates. It seeks to harmonize efforts and synergies between electoral assistance providers and those targeting women's increased political and electoral participation, and to develop a strategy for UNDP programming on gender mainstreaming in the electoral cycle. In this way, the GPECS Gender component seeks to contribute to a normative shift amongst electoral management bodies, electoral administrators, parliamentarians, political parties, policy makers, UN staff and the international community about the full and equal participation of women in electoral processes.

In this context, UNDP has been undertaking a series of case study research projects about the opportunities and challenges for women's participation as voters in the Europe and the CIS region. The case studies focus on women's electoral participation and political parties, take stock of women's electoral participation and the interventions by various national and international actors, and distill lessons learned to strengthen future programming. In particular, the case studies address the following questions:

1. What is the current status of women's political participation?
2. What are the main issues limiting women's political participation, especially through political parties?
3. How were these issues addressed by national and international actors, including UNDP?

4. What lessons can be used to inform future programming and strategic interventions in the area? What are the possible strategies/approaches to address this issue in the future?

With these in mind, UNDP has developed two country case studies, one for Georgia and one for Romania. The present report presents the findings of the Georgia case study. Under the broader questions above, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the current status of women's political participation? More specifically,
 - What institutional mechanisms and legislative framework exist to address the participation of women in politics?
 - What are the current trends with regard to women's participation in politics in Georgia?
 - What are the positions of political parties on the role and participation of women in politics?
2. What are the main issues limiting women's political participation, especially through political parties? What challenges impede the effective participation of women in politics?
3. How were these issues addressed by national and international actors, including UNDP? More specifically,
 - What has been the contribution of civil society, international and national organizations to enhancing women's participation in political life in Georgia?
 - What measures have been put in place by various stakeholders to address the barriers hindering women's participation in politics?
4. What lessons from these cases can be used to inform future programming and strategic interventions in the area? What are possible future strategies/approaches to address this issue?
 - What recommendations can be made to promote women's political participation?

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources of data. At the desk review stage, the study commenced by reviewing reports relevant to elections and women's political participation, the country's main laws and regulations on gender equality, official statistics and various survey results, manifestos, and programs and policies of political parties. Building on this foundation, qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth interviews formed the empirical base of the study. Fifteen interviews were conducted with representatives from political parties, local NGOs and international organizations, gender experts, female and male Members of Parliament (MPs) and local government. The interview questions varied depending on the respondent's affiliation.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The last decade was a watershed for women's empowerment in Georgia due to the creation of a legal framework and institutional machinery for gender equality. Gender equality legislation provides an important basis for ensuring women's rights and political participation in Georgia, building on the requirements of international obligations and agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Being a signatory of the main human rights instruments related to women, Georgia committed itself to promote gender equality through incorporation of gender issues in its legislation, policies and programs. The state's attitude towards gender equality is enshrined in Article 14 of the Georgian Constitution, of which reads: "All human beings are born free and equal before the law regardless of race, colour, language, sex, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social affiliation, origin, property, birth or place of residence." Gender-neutral language and general recognition of non-discrimination on the basis of sex could be found in almost all the major legislative acts. However, these general provisions are not complemented with effective legal mechanisms and concrete measures for achieving equality. For instance, the Election Code of Georgia recognizes equal political rights for both men and women. But the lack of special measures (either temporary or permanent) that would make this general provision operational, results in an extremely low representation of women in the elected bodies.²

² The report was prepared by women's rights NGOs in the framework of the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR), July 12, 2010, p. 2.

As a signatory to the MDGs, Georgia committed to achieving Goal 3 - "Promoting gender equality and empowering women" by 2015 and developed a strategic plan for its fulfillment with the main focus on equality in employment and equal access to the political arena and all levels of decision-making. As a result, two new structures were established, the Gender Equality Advisory Council under the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia (hereinafter "Council") in 2004 and the Gender Equality Governmental Commission (hereinafter "Commission") within the executive branch in 2005. The establishment of the Gender Equality Advisory Council was sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and supported by UNDP at the Parliament of Georgia. The Council was the first institutional mechanism supporting gender equality, which aimed to bring together representatives from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies to discuss and develop recommendations on gender issues and to ensure that women's voices were properly heard and respected during the elaboration of public policies and in decision-making at national and local levels. The working group composed of the Council and the Commission developed a State Concept on Gender Equality, which was adopted by the Georgian Parliament in July 2006. The Concept was aimed at protecting equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men. It set out the principles of gender equality in all areas of life, and proposed a framework for effective measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of sexual discrimination and ensure gender balance.

In September 2007, the Georgian government approved an Action Plan for the implementation of gender policies in Georgia from 2007 to 2009. The Action Plan foresaw creating a legislative base on gender equality, addressing existing gaps in legislation, promoting and raising public awareness on gender issues, and conducting educational and information campaigns. It also provided for the establishment of an Interdepartmental Commission on Gender Policies in Georgia, whose main function is to coordinate government policy and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan. However, the implementation of the Action Plan was not successful and none of the state structures expressed any willingness to conduct gender analyses of old laws, newly adopted laws or laws that were being proposed.

While the State put minimal effort toward implementing its gender equality strategy for 2007-2009, NGOs and international organizations made real commitments to advancing the status of women. For instance, NGOs working on gender issues initiated several activities concerning the elaboration of legislative amendments.³ As a result of intense lobbying by UN agencies, local women's NGOs, and the Gender Equality Council, on March 27, 2010 the Georgian Parliament adopted the Law on Gender Equality (see Appendix 3). The law specifies the importance of ensuring gender equality in employment, family relations, social protection and education, and also equal participation of women in senior representative agencies. According to Article 11 (2), the state ensures equal opportunities in elections of representative bodies: "Equal opportunity for participation of representatives of both sexes shall be ensured in enforcement of the right to be elected in a representative body." Among other provisions, the Law also gives the Council a permanent status, in order to provide gender expertise for legislative acts, make recommendations, and provide annual reports to the Parliament. In reality, the Council's authority is limited to the framework of the mandate of the Parliament - legislative and oversight functions - while the implementation is fully vested in the Government.

In order to ensure the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality, the National Action Plan for 2011-2013 was approved, with Council leadership. The National Action Plan calls for specific steps to assure gender equality in different spheres of civil life, such as mainstreaming gender in education, health and social services; encouraging equal participation of men and women in the field of economy; improving segregated statistics; supporting institutionalization of gender in state budgeting processes; and supporting equal participation in decision-making in the peace process and reconstruction. It is a great achievement that the Law and its Action Plan were drafted through the coordinated effort of UN agencies, government and local NGOs. According to interviewees, the existence of a gender equality law in Georgia is a very important step forward towards gender mainstreaming and further reforms. However, some interviewees also expressed their disappointments regarding the final version of the law, which lacks some important provisions. For instance, the proposal on providing incentives for political parties, such as additional free air time during pre-election campaign if they have 50 percent or more female candidates on their party list, were not reflected in the law.

While the Law on Gender Equality is a useful tool to improve government performance toward gender issues and hold the government accountable to its gender equality commitments, the initial analysis of the law and its implementations shows that they leave much to be desired. The gap between the law and the reality of women's lives continues largely unaffected by these documents. The Law does not spell out any supporting mechanisms for practical implementation of the measures envisaged in the document. According to various women's rights NGOs, the following deficiencies in the law hinder its proper implementation:

³ Irma Aladashvili and Ketevan Chkheidze, *Monitoring of Gender Equality Strategy and 2007-2009 National Action Plan on Gender Equality*, UNFPA (2009), p. 32.

1. There is no enumeration of obligations for the executive branch, which has the decision-making capacity and is entrusted with the implementation of gender equality policy in the country.
2. There is no set of procedures on how to protect victims of direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of sex.
3. There are no established rules for compensation in cases of discrimination or sexual harassment.
4. There is no description of discrimination on the basis of sex, and the specific forms it can take in different areas (such as political life, social protection, healthcare, etc.).⁴

In spite of the fact that the Law has numerous deficiencies and weaknesses, the very adoption of gender equality legislation is nonetheless considered an important move towards broader recognition of gender issues in Georgia, which in turn would affect policy processes, mechanisms, and actors.

“The present Law on Gender Equality is more of a concept than an effective mechanism for gender equality. However, given the fact that the Law on Domestic Violence became more and more refined after the years, we hope that this law will eventually improve as well. The fact that we have the concept of gender equality raised to the rank of the law is an indication that the process has moved forward.”⁵

Another interlocutor emphasized the importance of resources and good will of the government to ensure the proper implementation of the law:

“For the law to work, it requires resources, amendments in the state budget and implementation of certain actions. The law lacks concrete mechanisms of implementation, because it puts obligations and responsibilities on government shoulders, and the government lacks political will and readiness to assume such responsibilities.”

It is worth mentioning that the governmental agencies and other institutions, and especially the Council that is responsible for dealing with gender equality issues, lack clearly defined roles, and do not have the capacity, skills and resources to undertake their prescribed functions: “The Gender Advisory Council works with virtually no resources, the funds are not allocated in state budget for its operation... the Council also needs at least one full-time unit, to coordinate ongoing work.” It was suggested that for the Council to work effectively a certain structure, with members, regular meetings and a joint workload, is needed.

“Today the Council has no structure. There is only an MP, who is concerned with gender issues, and a number of women NGOs. I had not attended the Council’s meetings as a member for almost two years and I was surprised to find out during recent adoption of the Action Plan for Gender Equality that I was still counted as its member.”

The Law on Gender Equality also proscribes clearer obligations for the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia (a human rights ombudsperson) to monitor possible violations of the law and to respond. Although the Office of the Public Defender has operated a specialized division on the Rights of Children and Women since 2001, it largely focused on the rights of the child, and gender equality has not been included consistently in its activities or bi-annual reports.

Many gender experts and women representatives of political parties believe that there are combinations of reasons hampering the proper implementation of the law, including deficiencies in formulation of the law; lack of knowledge of the law among the ministerial, legal and judicial bodies as well as among the general public; weak capacity among designated implementing bodies; absence of political will; and limited resources. In addition, due to hard economic and social problems faced by Georgia, gender equality has a low priority compared with economic and other structural reforms underway in the country and, thus, does not attract the same level of resources and commitments from the government.

4. WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

⁴ The report was prepared by women’s rights NGOs in the framework of the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR), July 12, 2010, p. 3.

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from interviews with key respondents conducted in 2011 (see list of key respondents in Appendix 1).

There is an upward trend for women's political participation in the world. Globally, the proportion of women parliamentarians at the national level has increased by 8 percent from 1998 to 2008, reaching the global average of 18.4 percent.⁶ In Georgia, by contrast, women's representation in politics has fallen to its lowest level since the country became independent in 1991. Women constitute only 10.2 percent of local government and 6 percent of parliament. According to a recent survey, 39 percent of the population thinks that 9 women in the parliament are too few, and 31 percent think that this is sufficient number. It is interesting that 56 percent of those surveyed think that the performance of men and women in elected positions is equal, whereas 21 percent believe men perform better than women. It is encouraging that the majority (68 percent) of those surveyed expressed their readiness to vote for a woman candidate in the next parliamentary elections, while only 15 percent answered negatively.⁷

When asked why women's active involvement in politics is important, the majority of the gender experts and political parties representatives interviewed, relied on the concepts of social justice, human rights and democracy as the basis of their arguments:

"The women comprise more than half of the population in Georgia and for the harmonization of the society and for ensuring that points of views and interests of the different groups are taken into consideration, women's participation in politics as well as in other spheres of social life is important. And this is in the interests of the whole society, not just a part of it. Inequality generates injustice and social problems."

It was also emphasized that during difficult times for Georgia, women stood up for their families' well-being and proved their ability to lead and manage their families:

"The role of women is essential and indispensable in the family. If the woman is strong, the family is strong as well. The country is a big family, and it necessitates intelligent and wise women in leadership positions... the driving seats in government have to be occupied by women and men equally."

"Women are quite successful in local and international NGOs. They have great connections with society, governmental structures, good managerial skills and they are constantly working on their development and sustaining a positive image, which means that women are ready for politics and could well adjust to the political environment."

Some interviewees also noted that women's leadership styles are different and that their consultative and cooperative approaches would change politics for the better. It was pointed out that by participating in decision-making, successful women leaders can serve as role models to the young generation of girls and boys.

4.1. WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

Women are vastly underrepresented in politics at the national and regional level, although they make up 59 percent of the electorate.⁸ In the parliamentary elections of May 2008, women were elected to only nine out of 150 seats in the parliament. After the election, the opposition boycotted the parliament to protest the results, which they claimed were falsified. Therefore, the total number of remaining seats in the parliament was 138 and women controlled only seven out of those (6 percent).⁹ Eight of the female MPs were elected by party lists and one by majority (first-past-the-post system). Notwithstanding their low numbers, women parliamentarians hold high positions in the Parliament, as Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and the Head of the Advisory Council on Gender Equality, the Chair of the Procedural Issues and Rules Committee, and Deputy Chairs of the Committees on Health and Social Issues, Human Rights and Civil Integration. In contrast to the low numbers of women MPs, the majority (57.8 percent) of Parliamentary staff are women.¹⁰

⁶ Leadership and Political Participation, Fact Sheet, UN Women, National Committee Australia, available at www.unwomen.org.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=86246

⁷ Public Attitude in Georgia: Results of a September 2011 survey carried out for NDI by CRRC.

⁸ Nana Sumbadze, *Gender and Society: Georgia*, p. 35

⁹ Women MP from Opposition parties – Eka Beselia and Pikria Chikhradze, refused to take mandates.

¹⁰ Gender Assessment USAID/Georgia 2010 p. 17

Female representation in government is higher within the executive authority (15.7 percent). Within the Cabinet of Ministers, women ministers head three out of the 19 ministries: the Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, and the Ministry for Reintegration. A 2008 assessment of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Protection found that women comprised 52.5 percent of all ministerial employees but held only 24 percent and 26 percent of high positions, respectively.¹¹

Representation of elected women at the local level is slightly higher than at the national level. Of the 1,645 people elected under the proportional and majority systems in the 2010 local government elections, 169 people or 10.2 percent were women.¹² However, there are no women serving as heads of administration (gamgebeli) or chairs of local councils (sakrebulo) and city mayors. Women have relatively more chances of being elected in local elections than in parliamentary ones, since they are better known in their cities or towns: “in highly competitive election races, women school directors won the seats in the local councils of their respective towns, due to their popularity and respect. The suggestion to run for the elections came from the population.”

There seems to be an agreement among women’s rights activists that women who enter into politics and occupy senior level positions are not always supportive of other women, do not push for gender sensitive agenda, and tend to maintain the status quo. One of the most common explanations is that women need to gain a footing in the male-dominated politics and win support of their male counterparts, so they deliberately choose to be accommodating:

“One problem for a woman is to enter politics, and another one is to take a hold in it. Being in a male dominated environment, a woman [politician] is forced to play by the rules of the game imposed by her male counterparts and as a result, she distances herself from gender issues.”

There is also agreement that when women will be significantly represented in the political and decision-making structure, more attention will be paid to gender issues: “only women’s critical mass in politics could ensure the shift of state policy towards gender equality.”

4.2. WOMEN IN POLITICAL PARTIES

In many developed countries, political parties play a key role in mobilizing women and promoting their political leadership. Active female party members have succeeded in getting certain programs included in party platforms and adopted as official party policy. In doing so, the parties adopt guarantees for implementing the principle of gender equality. The role of women in political parties is therefore a key determinant of the women’s prospects for political empowerment.¹³ Political parties are important channels for political participation in Georgia. Parties determine which candidates are nominated and elected and which issues achieve national prominence. Unfortunately, women’s power to set the agenda and influence the decisions of the Georgian political parties is significantly lower compared to their overall participation in these parties’ activities. In 2006 the overall number of women in decision-making structures of parties stood at 9 percent,¹⁴ and among the 180 registered parties in Georgia,¹⁵ only four were headed by women.

Women’s political activism has been a valuable resource for many political parties in Georgia. During election period, women’s groups are widely used in door-to-door campaigns and for the organization of grassroots meetings. Political parties sometimes praise the role of women in their rhetoric, while edging away from any active and fundamental commitments to achieving gender parity in their party structure. The role of women in political parties is perceived more instrumentally, i.e. more as a means of raising political support for the party and less for leading positions in the governing structures. Prior to the 2010 local government elections, at a conference organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), eleven Georgian political parties taking part in the election signed an action plan entitled

¹¹ Charita Jashi, and Mikheil Tokmazishvili, *Gender Dimensions of the Financial Policy of Georgia*, UNDP/SIDA (2009), p. 133

¹² Official data provided by the Central Election Commission . 06 July, 2010.

¹³ “Gender Reconstruction of political systems.” Ed. AN Stepanova and E. Kochkina. SPb., Aletheia, 2004, “Policy of gender equality in Nordic countries” <http://www.owl.ru/win/books/genderpolicy/stepanova2.htm>

¹⁴ «The political landscape of Georgia – Political parties – achievements, challenges and prospects” (Политический ландшафт Грузии), Gia Nodia, Alvaro Pinto Scholtbach, Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and development, Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. 2006. page 173

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 52

“Win with Women.”¹⁶ Nonetheless, despite political parties committing to enhance women’s representation in their ranks, the number of women nominated by political parties remained low.

A review of the composition of the political parties’ electoral lists for the 2008 parliamentary elections found that women accounted for 28 percent of all party lists.¹⁷ Among the twelve political parties in the pre-election campaign, only one nominated three women candidates in their top ten candidates. One party included two women, eight included one each and two had all male lists. No party put a woman candidate at the top of the list, and only three parties had women in the top five on their party lists. In sum, only 9.2 percent of top ten positions on party lists were women, 20.8 percent of the next ten positions, and 15 percent of the next ten positions (21st to 30th on the lists), and therefore only a very small number of women had a chance to be elected through the party lists.¹⁸ The number of women nominees through the majority system was also scarce, although relatively better than in the proportional system. Among majority candidates women comprised 10.1 percent. The highest number of women candidates was nominated by the Republican Party (13 candidates), the Labour Party (11 candidates), and the unified block of Women’s Party (10 candidates).

Among the candidates who were nominated in single-mandate constituencies, only 10.9 percent were women, and 18.2 percent were proportional lists candidates. Prior to Election Day, 35 female candidates belonging to opposition parties withdrew their candidacies. As a result, only 169 women were elected, out of a total of 1,645 *sakrebulo* members (10 percent). In the Tbilisi *sakrebulo*, women account for 14 percent of elected council members.¹⁹ Women were elected in higher proportions under proportional lists than under single-mandate constituencies, indicating that women generally encounter more problems to be nominated and elected in single-mandate constituencies. In Tbilisi, six female candidates were elected from proportional lists, and only one in a single-mandate constituency. Outside Tbilisi, the share of women elected from proportional lists was 14 percent, while women accounted for only 7.2 percent of candidates elected in single-mandate constituencies. Out of 73 women elected in single-mandate constituencies, only five had been nominated by opposition parties.²⁰

4.3. GENDER IN THE PLATFORMS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

For this study, the platforms of ten political parties²¹ that took part in the last parliamentary elections in 2008 have been reviewed from a gender perspective. Practically none of them had a clear policy on mainstreaming gender equality and women’s rights. In general, the social position of women is viewed largely through the prism of family interests and reproductive health. Political parties tend to see women as objects rather than subjects of social and gender policy. Some parties, namely the Christian Democratic Movement and the Georgian Labor Party, mention women in the role of mother and outline the need for policies which protect the family, and which will improve the demographic situation in Georgia. They propose some financial support for pre- and post-natal care for women, monthly assistance for families with pre-school children, and single grants when people start families and on the birth of each child. The Labour Party stresses the importance of “proportional representation of women in the governing structures” and undertakes to introduce a “fundamental policy against domestic violence and discrimination in the family.”

The electoral block of the New Rights party, with the “United Opposition” and the “People’s Council,” does not refer to gender or women’s issues in their pre-election programme, although one of its leaders, David Gamkrelidze, stated in his 2008 presidential election campaign that “real equal opportunities and equality of the sexes should be a major resource for the development of democracy and of the Georgian economy.” Such statements have mainly rhetorical, rather than practical importance, since none of the political parties elaborate on specific strategies and realistic mechanisms on how they intend to fulfill the promises on gender equality once they come to

¹⁶ On 28 April 2010 at a conference in Tbilisi organised by NDI the plan was signed by the following political parties: “New Rights”, “United National Movement”, “National Council”, National Democratic Party, “Topadze-Industrialists”, “Georgia’s Way”, the Democratic Party of Georgia, the Republican Party, Christian-Democratic Movement “Our Georgia - Free Democrats” and “Kartuli dasi”

¹⁷ Georgia: Women’s Participation in Politics, Social Science in the Caucasus, August 4, 2008 available at <http://ccrc-caucasus.blogspot.com/2008/08/georgia-womens-participation-in.html>

¹⁸ Nana Sumbadze, *Gender and Society, Georgia*, page.42

¹⁹ *Participation of women in electoral process: Findings and Conclusions*, Final reports by OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Missions deployed to 2008 presidential, 2008 parliamentary and 2010 local elections: extracts, available at http://www.cec.gov.ge/files/1LEVANI/All%202011/ENG/DAY_2_ODIHR_Election_Obs_Mission_Report_Gender_extracts_ENG_50_COPIES.pdf

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ United National Movement; Christian Democratic party; Republican party; New Rights; Our Georgia – Free Democrats; Labour Party; Women’s Party “For Justice and Equality”; Conservative party; Our Country; Democratic Movement – United Georgia.

power. Women's Party also does not suggest in its party documents any practical mechanisms for promoting women participation in decision-making and leadership positions in power structures. Its charter refers to the aim of "supporting women's participation in the implementation of democratic reforms," researching and examining the factors hindering women's political participation, and making specific recommendations. It also talks about running trainings, seminars and conferences on women's political participation. However, it lacks references to specific measures which would ensure women's equal representation in decision-making institutions.

Among the priority areas of the electoral block uniting the parties Traditionalists - Our Georgia and Women's Party - there is no emphasis on problems specific to women, nor is there a mention about the necessity to increase women's representation in politics. This electoral block does not set any goals or measures to implement gender policies in their work. Neither does The National Movement, the party which received 63 percent of votes and a constitutional majority in the last parliamentary elections, nor Our Georgia, the Free Democrats, the Republicans or the Conservatives, consider any specific aspect of gender policy. Thus, the party programs and platforms illustrate that these parties have no clear political agendas and coherent strategies for greater inclusion of women in politics. Their program documents do not entail any references to women's issues and do not reach beyond viewing women solely in light of their reproductive functions.

4.4. CHANNELS FOR WOMEN'S ENTRY INTO POLITICS

An examination of the political careers of the most well-known women in the parliament, political parties, local government and governmental structures, highlights some typical ways for women entering into politics in Georgia.

Women among the "new generation politicians." These are young women educated abroad. Some political parties in Georgia are interested in their potential and include them on their party lists. It is well known that president Saakashvili has a habit of appointing young ministers, including women,²² and openly claims that pulling the younger generation into positions of power is a deliberate strategy to build a new Georgia free from the legacy of Soviet domination. Some [women] interlocutors, however, complained that "these women have neither the necessary education nor any political experience whatsoever... they are brought into politics by men just as a decoration, and a tool to reflect back men's ideas".

Women recruited into politics from a successful professional career. Some of these women, like Rusudan Kervalishvili, the Vice Speaker of Parliament from the United National Movement, came into politics from some of the largest businesses in Georgia. Eka Beselia, one of the former leaders of the Movement for United Georgia, came into politics as an accomplished lawyer. Inga Grigolia, serving as a member of Tbilisi city Council from opposition Christian-Democratic Party, was a famous television journalist. Tinatin Khidasheli, member of Tbilisi city council from the opposition Republican Party, came to politics from the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA).

Women's advancement through different courses and schools of women leadership This is a relatively new channel for women's entry into politics, but it already produces certain results thanks to the women's NGO sector and some international NGOs. Women running on party lists and some candidates in single-mandate districts in local government elections in 2010 have actively participated in different trainings and courses on leadership and political activism.

Women moving from a successful career with the ruling party to the opposition. Nino Burjanadze, who was a speaker of the parliament of Georgia from 2001 till 2008, and served twice as acting president of Georgia, left the ruling party due to disagreements and established an opposition party, the Democratic-Movement United Georgia. Salome Zurbishvili, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, was dismissed from her post, and shortly after established a new opposition political party called Georgian Way. Both of these women are now viewed as radical opposition leaders.

4.5. WOMEN'S MOTIVATION FOR ENTERING POLITICS

²² For instance, Vera Kobalia, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development; Khatuna Kalmakelidze, Minister of Correction and Legal Assistance.

There are many factors that affect a potential woman candidate's decision to contest an election and enter politics. One of the most commonly mentioned motivations was that they want to serve their country: "when your country is passing through difficult and critical times and the situation is extremely unstable, and women feel that they have sufficient knowledge, energy and skills to serve their country, they want to come to politics." Another motivation was to improve the lives of the communities in which they live, and be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. The interviewees also believed that women are motivated to make government policies fairer and more socially oriented.

Male respondents also believed that if men's motivation is more pragmatic, and they are seeking certain status, attention, power, and personal benefits, the motivation of women differs. Women are "primarily driven by public interests rather than by financial and other material benefits." It was also stressed that "women would never resort to sleazy political methods or perpetrate a fraud... they tend to be committed to the principles [more than men]". Hence, there appeared to be a general consensus that a greater number of women in politics would also bring more fairness into politics.

5. BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

There are a variety of obstacles that hamper women who are interested in entering into politics, wield any meaningful power in political parties, or get elected. The general character of political exclusion of women is based on prevailing social and political discourse and cultural and traditional approaches. Overall, the low priority of gender equality issues for government largely stems from indifference and unawareness of the society on the importance of women's political participation in Georgia:

"There is no public demand for gender equality and justice in the country. This, in turn, makes it clear that the national women's movement in its current state cannot be called a social movement empowered by the population's support"

5.1. MISMATCH BETWEEN FAMILY LIFE AND POLITICAL CAREER

Domestic responsibilities are widely perceived as one of the major impediments for women's political advancement. Traditionally, women in Georgia assume most of the household and childcare responsibilities. For women who work outside of home, which is often required by the hard economic situation, there is little time left for public activism. The families that are struggling economically and have restricted household incomes cannot afford the services needed to relieve a woman of these burdens. Lack of developed social systems and government support for mothers, rigid and conservative gender roles, and a drastic reduction of funding of childcare facilities and services prevent women from participating more actively in the social and political life. The emphasis placed on women's domestic responsibilities is reinforced by the prevailing cultural attitude regarding the roles of women in the society in general. Despite the fact that the boundaries between women's public and private life are gradually blurring in Georgia, the domestic domain continues to be perceived as the legitimate space for women while the public space is primarily associated with men.

5.2. THE "MANLY" MODEL OF POLITICS

Since the political scene is dominated by men, political life is organized according to what are perceived as masculine rules. As a women interlocutor said: "men created their own "world" in politics, and they feel themselves comfortable there. They have their own code of conduct and speak in one language and are not interested in inclusion of women who would disturb their usual state of affairs." The present masculine model of politics is based on the competition and confrontation. Women usually dissociate themselves from such environment and are mostly accommodating and concessive:

"If the interests of the party are at stake, a woman never puts her personal interest before the others, and tends to stand down... many times I gave in the place on the party's list in favor of men, and in spite of the fact that I have appeared out of play, I preferred to put party's interest before my personal ambitions... such attitude differentiates women from men in politics, who would never do the same."

Another barrier which prevents women political participation is the working schedule of parliamentarians, which is not supportive for working mothers, especially women MP. Women cannot balance the demands of family life with the requirements of work that involves late hours, travel and scarce facilities. Consequently, they rarely receive support from the family for entrance into politics.

5.3. THE PERCEPTION THAT POLITICS IS "DIRTY," "UNFAIR" AND "UNSAFE"

There is a widespread belief in Georgia, frequently mentioned during interviews as well, that dealing with politics is a dirty business. Many interlocutors complained that negative PR techniques and intimidations are frequently used during elections and in general political competition. On one hand, these factors upset women's confidence in their ability to confront and withstand intimidating practices. On the other, women simply do not want to adjust to such conditions and prefer to stay out. Some members of the opposition parties stressed during interviews that strong pressure put on opposition is one of the serious impediments for women: "women are indispensable for the party, they have a strong sense of justice... they do not reconcile with injustice which is so common in politics, and sometimes they have to pay for it."

5.4. LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Lack of financial resources is cited as one of the major reasons for the small number of women in politics: "The biggest barrier for women is financial resources. Without financial means, it is meaningless to enter politics." Women running as candidates cannot raise the same amount of money as their male counterparts. Women have less access to and support from powerful moneyed networks. The limited economic resources hinder women from pursuing advancement and leadership positions in their internal party structures and in politics in general.

"In the conditions of mass unemployment and the dire socio-economic situation in the country, many employed women prefer to be content with what they have and do not risk to lose it in search for uncertain political advancement."

Members of political parties also emphasized that men from the businesses sector are more likely to become candidates for elections and could fund their own campaigns, while women have less access to financial means, and consequently less chances to win:

"The chances for women to win in elections are rather limited compared to that of men, what women could set against the big money? Businessmen start fulfilling 10 percent of their election promises before the pre-election campaign and get the votes, even though most pledges are remaining unfulfilled after elections."

Public funding is allocated for political parties to conduct election campaigns, but it is not sufficient for women's promotion, as they often have low positions in their political parties and have no access and power to control the allocation of these funds.

5.5. LACK OF PARTY SUPPORT

In addition to the socio-cultural and financial barriers that impede women's access to politics, institutional factors such as the internal functioning of the political parties, have a significant impact on women's chances to be elected. During elections, political parties allocate much fewer resources to support women candidates than to support men candidacies. A lack of transparency and accountability regarding campaign finances within the parties, in addition to hindering effective party building, also negatively affect women members.

Political party leaderships, which consist predominantly of men, maintain firm control over the selection of candidates to contest elections and determination of the order in which candidates are ranked on the electoral ballot. These leaders are usually not gender sensitive and do not fully understand the importance and benefits of gender equality for their parties and for the country in general. It is quite rare that women are given a chance to be placed at the top of the party lists, where chances to win are higher for women. Obtaining winnable positions in a party list is particularly problematic for women, since political parties are for the most part closed entities and many maintain the "men's club", and affiliation in such male-dominated environments may be the determinant factor for advancement. "In political parties, where the practice of internal party elections is non-existent and nepotism in party nominations still prevails, opportunities for women are rather limited." To overcome these barriers for women's advancement in political party and in politics in general, some women interlocutors suggested introducing a quota system that could be integrated in the internal party rules

for ensuring the inclusion of a certain percentage of women in the party's power structure and/or in party lists.

"Men politicians have their own circle. They go to watch football match and drink beer together. And this socialization later produces the party list, which is dominated by men. It is extremely difficult for women to infiltrate and integrate themselves into such entity."

Some male political leaders counter this argument by saying that women and men receive equal treatment during elections and the party is willing to spend resources on a candidate depending on her/his chances of winning. However, women interviewees stressed that the support provided to female candidates is not proportional to what male candidates get. Women politicians complained that political parties nominated female candidates into constituency, where the chances for the party to win were minimal.

"In spite of the fact that women have quite good chances to be elected in a particular constituency, they are nominated to run for election in another electoral district where their chances are rather limited... party leaders usually accompany male candidates at the meeting with the electorate, but would do less or none of that with women candidates."

"They [i.e. the party leadership] tend to fill the empty spots and use women to keep up appearances in the eyes of the international community and the society. It's a tactical move to avoid being seen as unsympathetic to women and show that the party cares about women...but in fact, this does not correspond to reality."

A significant part of the problem of inadequate representation of women in party structures and lists is the absence of strong women's wings within the parties. Political parties either lack women wings altogether or the existing women wings exist only formally and therefore, cannot effectively lobby for empowerment and representation of women in the party's leadership positions, and for the inclusion of gender issues in political parties' policies, platforms and programs. On the other hand there is a problem of insufficient cooperation of women politicians with women's civil groups, which contributes to women's weak representation and low positions in political parties.

5.6. UNFAVORABLE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Electoral systems have important implications for women because they affect how political parties are likely to view the nomination of women as candidates for political office. The recent changes made in the electoral system in Georgia have negatively affected women's political participation. Georgia has a mixed electoral system. According to the amendments made to the Constitution on the eve of the parliamentary elections in 2004, the size of the Parliament of Georgia decreased from 235 to 150 members, 75 out of whom are elected on the basis of party-list proportional representation, and the other 75 based on single-mandate constituencies. Thus, with the decrease of the size of assembly the number of mandates was reduced by around 35 percent²³ and the number of candidates has changed in favor of those elected from single-mandate constituencies.

The decrease in the number of parliamentary seats was one of the reasons of women being under-represented in parliament, because women candidates are generally listed at the bottom of party lists. Once the number of proportional seats was reduced, men listed at the top of the party lists left less number of seats available for women candidates.

The relative increase of seats available for single-mandate constituencies also negatively affected women's chances in elections. Because of high personality-driven competition in elections, most of the candidates in single-mandate constituencies are men and the chances for women to win are very low. "The majority system does not help participation of women in politics at all. Where electoral victory is decided by big money and nepotism, the women's chances for electoral victory are very low." In the last parliamentary elections in 2008, only one out of nine elected women was elected from the single-mandate constituency, while others were elected through party lists.

5.7. LACK OF SOLIDARITY OF WOMEN TOWARD WOMEN

²³ Parliament of Georgia, 2008 UNDP project on Gender and Politics in South Caucasus, (data file), available at http://www.parliament.ge/files/1123_18877_599770_elections_2008-GenderAnalysis.rtf.

Lack of solidarity among women is another important impediment to women's political participation. According to interviewees, this barrier has different manifestations. On the one hand, women who already established themselves in politics are not supportive of other women, and do not push for a gender agenda. On the other hand, women voters are also reluctant to give support to women candidates:

"It is sad that we are still observing the lack of solidarity among women... The women voters are not always supportive to women's candidates. Women and society in general are more critical and demanding of female candidates, and have higher expectations from them than from male politicians... There are many examples, when women from political parties expressed indifference to women's problems; they are not always open enough to come and speak with women constituencies or women's organizations. They rarely lobby for gender issues and as a rule they are first opponents to special measures that would facilitate women's entry into politics..."

5.8. LACK OF MEDIA INTEREST IN GENDER ISSUES

The treatment of women politicians by the media poses one of the most serious barriers to the women in politics and discourages them from running as candidates. The prevailing image of women politicians in the mass media is either pathetic or scandalous. It is rare for the media to focus on coverage of women leaders, who could be role models for the society. Women politicians are portrayed in the media according to dominant stereotypical norms. For instance, media mostly concentrates on the look and dress codes of these women and devotes more interest to personal life of women politicians than to their political activity. A lack of proper coverage of women's issues and the activities of women politicians results in a lack of a public forum for raising public awareness about these issues.

5.9. LACK OF QUOTA SYSTEM

Many gender activists think that the introduction of a quota system in Georgia would be an effective and practical mechanism to ensure women's equal participation in politics.

In May 2008 a coalition of women NGOs began to promote the introduction of amendments to the existing elections legislation to allow for temporary measures (quotas) to increase the number of women in parliament. The Coalition collected over 32,000 votes in the capital and other regions of Georgia supporting this initiative. Unfortunately, the proposed amendments have not been even discussed in the Parliament. In spite of the fact that the petition campaign failed and for many it was discouraging practice, gender activists believe that it provided a real boost to the coalition's efforts at visibility, and demonstrated significant growth in organizational ability of women NGOs. According to a gender expert:

"such negligent attitude towards women's initiative, once again proves positions of our state toward gender issues... the quota is temporary and supplementary measure for overcoming hidden barriers impeding enhancing of women's politics... and those people who view this measure unfair or offensive are expressing their "gender-blindness."

The most widespread argument of opponents of the quota system in Georgia is that this practice would lead to having unqualified MP. However, those who are in favor of such temporary measure argue that:

"This is a "pseudo argument", since the men who decide everything in the parties, do not want to give in the positions to women. In tough competitive environment during elections, any party would seek and recruit decent and intelligent women, and there are sufficient skilled and well-deserved women even inside of the party, so there is no risk that unprofessional women will occupy the seats."

Some members from political parties also consider quotas as an important tool for achieving gender parity in governance, since they do not see a prepared society or a state willing to promote gender equality in Georgia.

6. THE ROLE OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

6.1. DONOR SUPPORT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Most international donors have a policy to mainstream gender into their work. However, there are very few international organizations and international NGOs (INGOs) which specifically support women's empowerment and their political participation in Georgia. UNDP is one of the key donors in Georgia mandated with developing gender policies and empowering and advancing women in decision-making processes at all levels. Since 2006, UNDP and other UN agencies (UNFPA, UN Women, etc.) actively supported interventions that contributed to a number of important policy changes on gender equality in Georgia. These changes included supporting the establishment of the first national gender machinery, namely the Advisory Council on Gender Equality, as well as facilitating the elaboration and adoption of several Gender National Action Plans. As a result of the concerted effort of UN agencies in close cooperation with the Advisory Council on Gender Equality and many women's organizations, the Law on Gender Equality was adopted and the Advisory Council was given permanent status. UNDP has also facilitated the elaboration of a new National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2011-2013) within the framework of the UN Joint Program "UN initiative in support of Greater Gender Equality in Georgia".

Other major international organizations and INGOs working in the field of gender equality and women's issues in Georgia include USAID and SIDA, the US and Swedish international development agencies, respectively. They support increasing women's participation in decision-making, through programs like NDI's Future Women Leaders Program and the project Building Public Confidence in Electoral Process, designed to increase women's participation in politics and prepare women to seek elected office. They also strengthen the ties of women NGOs to the parliament and support cooperation between women MPs and women in the regions. Other initiatives are OSCE/ODIHR's support to strengthen the organizational coherence of the women's movement by establishing and developing a coalition of women's NGOs. This coalition has helped maintain the representation of women in Georgian politics, and mobilized public support for special measures to increase the presence of women in the parliament.

INGOs like the Kvinna till Kvinna (Sweden), Global Fund for Women (USA), National Endowment for Democracy (USA), and Mama Cash (Netherlands) are among the other few international actors that are working for the political empowerment of women, although their assistance and efforts on this direction are limited and insufficient, as elaborated below.

One of the major criticisms of the gender activists interviewed for this study was that, in addition to scarce resources allocated by the donor community for women's political empowerment and gender equality issues in general, many donors work fragmentarily and for the short term. Consistency and on-going support to promote women in politics is core to sustain momentum and build on advances made. While the donors' funding criteria focus primarily on outreach and institutional sustainability, they pay less attention to programs at grassroots level, which would have greater and more sustainable impact on the changes of social consciousness toward gender equality. Not sufficient attention is paid to programs aimed at strengthening capacity of women's organizations working directly with society at the grassroots level, with voters, their elected representatives and women candidates in order to mobilize social demand for achieving gender equality. Substantial, predictable, multi-year, core funding of women's organizations and their movements is needed to ensure tangible and sustainable results.

6.2. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' EFFORTS TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY

There are more than 40,000 NGOs registered in the country, although only about 10% of these could be considered as active.²⁴ Out of these, about 70 functioning NGOs in Georgia primarily focus on women's issues. The activities of women's organizations in Georgia are as diverse as the women whom they serve. Each has its own style and approach, comparative advantages and beneficiaries. These NGOs focus on social and health care issues, legal counseling, education, conflict resolution, trafficking and domestic violence, networking, and a small number focus on strengthening women's political participation. According to available data, only 8% of women's NGOs consider women's political empowerment as their priority area.

The majority of organizations are working in the capital, and some have offices in the regions as well. The women's NGOs have formed several coalitions, such as the Women's NGOs coalition in Georgia established through the support of OSCE/ODIHR, and UNIFEM supported Women for Peace Coalition.

²⁴ Nana Sumbadze, *Gender and Society: Georgia*, p. 57

The activities implemented by NGOs on women's political empowerment varied from conducting training for women leaders and representatives of political parties; organizing political schools for women; raising awareness on and mobilizing society, particularly women voters, around gender issues; carrying out gender monitoring of the elections; collecting gender related information and sharing it among stakeholders; conducting advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns to bring positive changes towards gender equality etc. Women's NGOs are quite active in helping politicians and elected representatives remain in contact with their constituencies, keeping them focused on problems specific to women.

Paradoxically, while over the years women's NGOs have gained significant experience, gender equality and women's political empowerment have begun to receive less attention from the donor community. The women organizations expressed their concerns regarding several issues, which they consider as major constraints for their work.

Firstly, the women's groups emphasized the limited number of donor organizations supporting gender equality and women's empowerment issues, which is aggravated by the fact that even those that supported women's initiatives in the past have either reduced their support or simply withdrew. Secondly, most of the donor-funded projects are short-term and of small-scale, project-driven efforts, which abandon some successful achievements halfway. Women's NGOs leaders complained about the lack of a long-term program-based approach on the side of the donors:

"We have lots of examples when the donors give money for training with voters or members of political parties, but when it is needed to continue and develop established activities, they stop... the common justification is that they could not provide financial support to the same organization second time, or just refer to lack of resources for continuation... with such attitude it will be impossible to achieve the desired results."

Thirdly, the donors are usually choosing a small number of NGO partners, and only rarely try to expand the circle of partners. This approach limits the activities possible not only to a particular geographical area, but also narrows the specific expertise accumulated in different women's group and the circle of potential beneficiaries.

Women interlocutors stressed that the achievements in the areas of gender equality and women's political empowerment are not feasible without the presence and work of strong women's movements and organizations. Therefore, substantial investment is required to scale up and strengthen the capacity of women's organizations all over Georgia, as well as provide support for women's movement.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 KEY FINDINGS

The study made a number of key findings. One is that the empowerment and promotion of gender equality is still a controversial concept in the Georgian society in spite of the fact that after the Rose Revolution significant steps were taken by the Georgian government towards establishing a national gender machinery, and introducing gender legislation to address social, economic and political inequalities between men and women. The study indicates that only limited progress has been made in translating the commitments into actions on the ground. Machineries are ineffective because they are marginalized in national government structures and remain inoperative due to the lack of financial resources and insufficient political support.

Gender equality standards are not among the priority areas of the government, and there is no strong public demand to push the issue of gender equality and women's political empowerment forward. It could therefore be concluded that neither society nor state are ready to undertake changes and commitments. There is no full recognition of the importance and necessity to achieve gender equality.

Another finding is that although there is a sufficient number and diversity of women who are interested in running for office and assuming leadership roles in political party structures, these women face numerous structural constraints, which hinder their self-realization in the social and political life of their country. These include unfavorable social and legal environments, lack of financial resources, non-supportive, conservative and male dominated party structures, greater family responsibilities, a lack of the political network necessary for electoral success, a lack of support from other women, biased and stereotyped media coverage of women

contestants or politicians.

The study also finds that cooperation between women from civil society and women politicians is weak and fragmented, which in turn inhibits the creation of partnerships on women's rights agendas. The absence of a strong women's movement which could vocally advocate for women's inclusion in politics was pronounced as a significant hindrance for women candidates.

Donor interventions in support of women's political empowerment often suffer from an inconsistent, fragmented and short-term, approach. Project-based interventions do not provide sustainability, which is essential for successful gender mainstreaming.

Equal participation of women and men in decision-making and improvement of the political status of women is a significant precondition for ensuring accountability of national governance and for the sustainable development in all spheres of life. The upcoming parliamentary election in Georgia is an opportunity to enhance women's political participation.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Advancing women's political participation requires holistic and multi-faceted efforts that need to be undertaken by women, governments, international actors and civil society. Meaningful and determined action by political parties is particularly important. Based on the discussion above, the study makes the following recommendations:

The recommendations identified to increase the political role of women in Georgia focus on a combination of international community's/organizations' facilitating role, governmental action through legislation and civil society activism.

The first recommendation arises from the necessity of gender and political sensitization of society and especially women, by providing them with political and gender understanding through educational programs, awareness raising and advocacy campaigns. The media plays an important role in educating and promoting the idea of gender equality as part of this strategy. It should provide gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoid negative stereotypes and provide women and men candidates with equal airtime and print space.

The second recommendation focuses on capacity-building for women in politics (those who hold elected or appointed positions in the parliament, government, local municipalities and as active members of political parties) through conducting training on gender sensitive issues, lobbying, campaigning, and empowering them with knowledge and tools on how to more efficiently participate in the political life of the country. It is also important to seek to involve men politicians in such initiatives. Since women need the support of their male colleagues, partners and electorate, the men's concerns and perspectives with regards to solidarity with women politicians has to be taken into account. This will increase the value of women's social and political messages.

The third recommendation is to undertake active work with women and political party leaders, encouraging and assisting them in establishing a women's section within their party structure, and facilitate the integration of gender perspectives in their political manifestos and strategic documents. This assistance should come in the form of training programs, consultations and financial incentives for political parties nominating women in winnable seats.

The fourth recommendation is lobbying for a legislation that establishes incentives to support women candidates. For instance, political parties' funding for election campaigns could be linked to the percentage of women candidates put forward by the political party; or provide the premium to parliamentary political groups depending on the proportion of women elected from their parties.

The fifth recommendation is the creation of a collaborative structure, such as parliamentary caucuses on women's and gender equality issues which would enhance multi-party collaboration and give women a forum for building the common agenda.

The sixth recommendation is to develop and strengthen the network between women and members of political parties, women parliamentarians and women NGOs. The existing Advisory Council on Gender equality could serve as focal point for training, communications and other logistical support for women. While women in power structures could advance the interests of women in civil society and voice women's concerns and perspective in the official policy making, women's organizations, on the other hand could provide elected women with data and information from the grassroots, and demonstrate that the elected women have widespread support and an active constituency.

The seventh recommendation is to support and expand the successful experience of the League of Women Voters in Western Georgia. This could include setting up the regional entities of Women Voters in different regions of Georgia, conducting educational training on gender issues and political participation, advocacy and public campaign. The League of Women Voters will advocate for women's interests before elected members at national and local levels, and will lobby for the solution of existing problems and concerns that are vital to women. They will systematically undertake gender monitoring of activities of elected members at national and local level and political parties, and advocate for integration of gender concerns into their daily activity.

The seventh strategy is to strengthen the cooperation of international organizations with civil society in advocating for the substantial inclusion of women into politics. This could include providing advice and consultation to the government on legislation, electoral systems and best practices that can advance women's participation in the electoral process; providing training to elected members of parliament and local government, political parties, journalists, and others to raise awareness on the importance of women's political participation and gender sensitivity.

The eighth strategy is collecting, monitoring and disseminating the facts and statistics on women's political participation. Particularly, there is a need to collect and disseminate information on how elected women managed to make a difference through their daily activities. Establishing the database of potential candidates is desirable as well, since this would help identify key persons, who could be involved in broader campaigns on women's political empowerment.

To government structures

- ✓ Establish a process of regular public reporting on the implementation of the National Action Plan on Achieving Gender Equality;
- ✓ Integrate gender perspectives into national budgets in order to better align policy commitments on gender equality with resource allocations;
- ✓ Develop a gender statistics program to monitor women's participation in different spheres of civil and political life in the country;
- ✓ Establish a system of promotional measures for state-funded organizations to implement non-discriminatory policies and practices to increase the number and status of women in their organizations;
- ✓ Introduce legislation that requires political parties to adopt democratic procedures for their internal operations and provides incentives for political parties to promote women candidates, including resources, training and increased access to broadcast time.

To political parties:

- ✓ Integrate issues that are of special concern to women as priorities into their political platforms, programs, and procedures.
- ✓ Promote the establishment of women's sections or wings within party structures;
- ✓ Provide assistance for women's advancement in party leadership positions;
- ✓ Adopt internal democratic procedures, which would allow for broader intra-party consultations, including primaries, when nominating candidates;
- ✓ Ensure women's participation in all internal party leadership structures and nomination processes for elected and appointed positions through the introduction of internal party quotas;
- ✓ Organize trainings for party members (men and women) on electoral and PR campaigns, media relations, the organization of meetings with voters, mobilization of financial resources etc.

To civil society actors:

- ✓ Provide trainings for women party members and election candidates on gender, women leadership, election campaigns, working with the press;
- ✓ Strengthen and expand work with women (as well as men) voters, and mobilize their effort in support for women candidates;
- ✓ Advocate for legislative changes to advance women's empowerment;
- ✓ Carry out wide public debates with representatives of political parties on the feasibility of establishing internal party quotas to ensure gender balance in leading positions of party structure and electoral party list;
- ✓ Establish and develop cross-party networks of women;
- ✓ Advocate for improvement of media coverage of women's issues and women candidates;
- ✓ Identify women willing to run for elections and create a database;

- ✓ Study the experience of political parties of other countries in achieving gender balance through affirmative actions and promote the most successful examples within political parties and wider society;
- ✓ Persuade international donors to support projects aimed at advancing women's political participation.

To Media:

- ✓ Support and encourage journalist training on gender equality;
- ✓ Provide gender-sensitive coverage of elections, present women leaders as full-fledged and active participants in political and social processes;
- ✓ Provide women and men candidates with equal airtime and print space;
- ✓ Focus on issues of special concern to women in news programming;
- ✓ Undertake voter and civic education programs aimed specifically at women.

To international actors:

- ✓ Support the development of the women's movement by investing more in alliance building, networking, linking and learning.
- ✓ Donors have to make long-term and consistent investments, so that women's movement and organizations can strengthen their capacity, grow, learn and evolve;
- ✓ Expand financial support to women's NGOs working on promoting women's political participation in the capital and regions of Georgia;
- ✓ Provide consultation and advice to the government on legislation, electoral systems and best practices that can advance women's participation in the electoral process;
- ✓ Provide training (directly and/or through local NGOs) for women candidates or elected women to improve their political skills and capacities;
- ✓ Facilitate and support cross-party cooperation among women;
- ✓ Facilitate international conferences on gender issues in the capital and the regions of Georgia to disseminate and popularize the successful experience in the world on women's advancement in politics.

Cover Photo: Georgian Parliament, from <http://en.trend.az/regions/scaucasus/georgia/2135777.html>, accessed May 2013.

Acknowledgements: Case study developed by

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ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Centres
CSO	Civil society organization
GPECS	UNDP Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support
GYLA	Georgian Young Lawyers Association
INGO	International nongovernmental organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

APPENDIX 1 – KEY RESPONDENTS

1. Rusudan Kervalishvili, Chair of the Advisory Council on Gender Equality, and Deputy Speaker of Parliament of Georgia, member of United National Movement, Tbilisi, 19.10.11
2. Guguli Magradze, Chair of Women's Party, Tbilisi, 19.10.11
3. Lia Gvetadze, Christian-Democratic Party, Kutaisi, 24.10.11
4. Merab Meshveliani, member of Kutaisi City Council, United National Movement, Kutaisi. 24.10.11
5. Darejan Tskhvitaria, member of city Council, United national Movement, Poti, 25.10.11
6. Shalva Gogitidze, head of the Ajara Chapter of the Georgian Party, Batumi, 26.10.11
7. Zaira Zneladze, member of the Labour Party, Batumi, 26.10.11
8. David Robakidze, head of the Ajara Chapter of Labour party, Batumi, 26.10.11
9. Dalila Chikava, member of the Zugdidi City Council, majority deputy, Zugdidi, 27.10.11
10. Nona Toloraia, head of the Zugdidi chapter of the Republican party, Zugdidi, 27.10.11
11. Natia Natsvlishvili, Governance Team Leader UNDP, Georgia, Tbilisi, 19.10.11
12. Lela Bakradze, Program Analyst, UNFPA Georgia, Tbilisi, 21.10.11
13. Tamara Sartania, Program Officer, NDI, Tbilisi, 28.10.11
14. Teona Pachulia, NDI/SIDA, Program Officer, Tbilisi, 28.10.11
15. Lika Nadaraia, Chairperson of the Women Political Resource Centre (WPRC), Tbilisi, 19.10.11
16. Helena Rusetskaya, Chairperson Women's Information Centre, Tbilisi, 28.10.11
17. Alla Gamakharia, Chairperson of Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi", Kutaisi, 24.10.11

APPENDIX 2 – RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS SIGNED BY GEORGIA

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966
- International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979
- European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1950
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995
- Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, 1994
- The UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008); as well as Resolution 1888 and 1889
- Resolution 1544 of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe about the situation of women in the South Caucasus, 2007
- Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals, 2000

APPENDIX 3 – LAW OF GEORGIA ON GENDER EQUALITY

Chapter I. General Provisions

Article 1. Scope of the Law

The Law establishes the fundamental guarantees of equal rights, freedoms and opportunities of women and men granted by the Constitution, defines legal mechanisms and conditions for their implementation in relevant spheres of social life.

Article 2. Aim of the Law

The aim of the Law is to ensure prohibition of all kinds of discrimination based on sex in all spheres of social life, create appropriate conditions for implementation of equal rights, freedoms and opportunities of women and men, support prevention and elimination of all kinds of discrimination based on sex.

Article 3. Definition of terms used in the Law

1. The terms used in the present Law shall have the following meanings:

- a) *Gender* – social aspect of relationship between the sexes which is demonstrated in all spheres of social life and implies perceptions against any of the sexes based on socialization;
- b) *Gender equality* – part of the human rights pertaining to equal rights and obligations, responsibilities and equal participation of women and men in all spheres of private and social life;
- c) *Discrimination* – any kind of differentiation, exclusion and/or restriction based on sex by means of differentiated recognition of the fundamental rights and freedoms, unequal expression, suppression or full rejection of abilities in a direct or indirect form;
- d) *Direct discrimination* – discrimination against a person based on sex on the grounds of a legal act, program or other tools of public policy (except in cases specified under paragraph “f” of this Article);
- e) *Indirect discrimination* – a legal act, program or any other tool of public policy which is not directly indicating on discrimination, but is associated with discriminatory result through enforcement (except in cases specified under paragraph “f” of this Article);
- f) *Special measure* – a measure intended for correction of results induced by an act of discrimination and targeted at the group of people in need of special protection due to gender characteristics;
- g) *Equal opportunities* – a system of remedies and conditions for achieving equality of rights and freedoms of women and men;
- h) *Equal treatment* – recognition of equal rights and opportunities of both sexes for education, labor and social activity, in legal and family relations and other spheres of social and political life, prohibition of direct or indirect discrimination based on sex.

2. Other terms used in the present Law shall have the meaning defined under the effective legislation, if not otherwise specified.

Chapter II. Guarantees of ensuring gender equality

Article 4. Gender Equality Guarantees

1. The state supports and ensures equal rights of women and men in political, economic, social and cultural life.

2. In order to ensure gender equality the following principles shall be adhered to without discrimination:

- a) Equal individual rights and freedoms of women and men;
- b) Equal access to education and free choice of education at all stages;
- c) Legal equity of spouses;
- d) Equal rights and responsibilities towards children;
- e) Support to elimination of violence in family and society;
- f) Free choice of occupation or profession, career promotion, vocational training;
- g) Employment in public service based on profession, skills and qualification;
- h) Equal treatment during performance appraisal;
- i) Equal social security in case of diagnosing illness or disability of women and men;
- j) Equal access to healthcare for women and men;
- k) Equal access to information for women and men.

3. The legislation of Georgia on gender equality is based on the Constitution of Georgia, international treaties and conventions, this Law

and other regulatory enactments.

Article 5. Maintaining statistics in the sphere of gender equality

Official statistical reports related to gender issues shall be completed with data differentiated by sex.

Article 6. Gender equality in labor relations

1. The following are inadmissible in labor relations:

- a) Any kind of direct or indirect discrimination, persecution and/or forcing measure based on sex which is aimed at or induces conditions that are intimidating, hostile, humiliating, impairing dignity or abusive to a person;
- b) Any type of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical act of sexual nature that is aimed at or induces impairment of a person's dignity or creates humiliating, hostile or abusive conditions for him/her.

2. The state shall support equal access to employment for persons of both sexes.

3. During employment and performance of service obligations persons of both sexes can be placed in unequal position and/or privileged on the basis of the scope, specific character or terms and conditions of work performance, serving as a lawful cause and representing an adequate and necessary measure for accomplishment of work.

4. Favorable work conditions shall be ensured for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers as prescribed by Georgian legislation, which excludes their activity under difficult, hazardous and unsafe conditions, as well as during night hours.

Article 7. State guarantees for ensuring gender equality in the sphere of education and science

1. Everyone has the right to freely choose the profession and specialty based on his/her abilities. This equity shall be secured by equal access to general, vocational and higher education without discrimination.

2. The state shall ensure equal conditions in receiving general, vocational or higher education by women and men in all educational institutions, including participation in implementation of educational and scientific processes.

Article 8. Equal access to informational resources

Central and local government authorities, legal entities of public law are obliged to ensure equal access to information kept with them or available to them for all persons interested in obtaining public information despite sex as prescribed by the Georgian legislation.

Article 9. Gender equality in the sphere of healthcare and social protection

1. In the sphere of healthcare and social protection universal and equal access to medical assistance shall be ensured for the population without discrimination based on sex.

2. Special measures implemented for the purpose of support to the health of mothers and children, family planning and protection of women's reproductive rights, as well as state policy for protection of pregnant women and motherhood, and other measures implemented in view of gender characteristics shall not be considered as discrimination.

Article 10. Gender equality in family relations

1. In family relations, in marriage and divorce women and men enjoy equal private and property rights, including the right to choose family name, profession and occupation and bear equal responsibilities. In family relations direct or indirect limitation or privilege in the rights and obligations based on sex is inadmissible.

2. Women and men in the family shall have the equal right to independently make decisions on the issue of participation in labor and social activities.

3. Issues related to child-rearing and other family matters shall be resolved between the spouses together by mutual agreement. Equal opportunities for activities of spouses and child rearing shall be guaranteed and ensured.

4. Equal rights and obligations of women and men to be guardians, caregivers, trustees, and adoptives of children shall be ensured.

5. The rights and responsibilities of spouses in house work shall be equal.
6. The spouses shall have equal rights in ownership, purchase, management, use and disposal of property.
7. The spouses shall have equal rights pertaining to leisure activities and participation in all spheres of cultural life.

Article 11. Guarantees of equal voting rights

1. Everyone has the right to take part in elections on equal terms without any discrimination.
2. Equal opportunity for participation of representatives of both sexes shall be ensured in enforcement of the right to be elected in a representative body.
3. Women and men can be elected on equal terms without discrimination.

Chapter III. Supervision over protection of gender equality

Article 12. Support of gender equality by the Parliament of Georgia

1. Pursuant to the Regulations of the Parliament and the Georgian Legislation the Parliament of Georgia shall ensure elaboration of legislative issues in the sphere of gender, support for execution of the decisions of the Parliament thereto, control over the performance of entities accountable before the Parliament.
2. For the purpose of ensuring regular and coordinated work on gender issues pursuant to the Regulations of the Parliament and Georgian Legislation the Parliament of Georgia shall establish a Gender Equality Advisory Council. The membership, statute, functions and authority of the Council shall be determined under this Law, the Regulations of the Parliament and the Regulations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council which shall be approved by the Chairman of the Parliament.
3. The Gender Equality Advisory Council shall be authorized to:
 - a) develop and present to the Parliament of Georgia for approval the Action Plan for Gender Equality, ensure coordination and monitoring of implementation of the Action Plan;
 - b) perform analysis of the legislation and draft proposals for overcoming gender inequalities existing in the legislation;
 - c) provide expertise of draft legislative acts submitted under legislative initiatives with respect to gender equality assessment;
 - d) elaborate and plan activities to achieve gender equality, ensure enforcement of equal rights of women and men;
 - e) elaborate and implement the monitoring and evaluation system of activities targeted at ensuring gender equality, develop recommendations;
 - f) request and receive any information and documents related to the study of gender equality issues, except for the confidential documentation under the effective legislation;
 - g) review applications, documentation and other information submitted with respect to violation of gender equality, take steps in response within its authority and develop appropriate recommendations;
 - h) during review of gender equality issues invite representatives of international or local organizations and/or experts working in the relative field;
 - i) implement other rights granted by the legislation of Georgia.
4. The Gender Equality Advisory Council shall submit to the Parliament of Georgia the annual report on the status of gender equality in Georgia, prepare reports on the status of implementation of obligations assumed at the international level with respect to gender equality. On the basis of a relevant decision of the Chairman of Parliament the Council shall be entitled to represent the Parliament of Georgia in international relations with respect to gender equality issues.
5. Organizational structure, code of practice and relations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council with state authorities shall be defined under the Regulations and the Statute of the Parliament of Georgia.

Article 13. Support of gender equality by local authorities

1. Local self-government bodies shall in accordance with the Organic Law of Georgia on Local Self-Governance and other legal acts of Georgia develop and implement activities on the local level to ensure identification and elimination of discrimination based on sex.

2. The budget, social-economic development priorities, municipal programs and plans of local self-government bodies shall be implemented in a way to exclude any kind of discrimination based on sex.

3. State authorities within their authority shall provide organizational, informational and other types of support to the local self-government bodies for prevention of discrimination based on sex and protection of universally recognized human rights and freedoms in their activities.

Article 14. Authority of the Public Defender for protection of gender equality

1. The Public Defender of Georgia shall ensure within his authority monitoring of the respective sphere and taking responsive measures on violations of gender equality.

2. For ensuring gender equality the Public Defender of Georgia shall implement the rights granted to him under the Organic Law of Georgia on Public Defender.

Chapter IV. Transitional and final provisions

Article 15. Measures to be taken for enforcement of this Law

The state and local self-government bodies shall perform analysis of effective statutory acts within the scope of their activity within 6 months upon enactment of this Law, as required.

Article 16. Enactment of the Law

The law shall be enacted upon its publication.

President of Georgia,
Mikheil Saakashvili,
26 March, 2010

APPENDIX 4 - 2011-2013 ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER EQUALITY

Resolution of the Parliament of Georgia About Approving "2011-2013 Action Plan for Implementation of Gender Equality"

In accordance with sub-paragraph "a", paragraph 3, article 12 of the Law of Georgia "About Gender Equality", The Parliament of Georgia decides:

1. To approve the attached "2011-2013 Action Plan for Implementation of Gender Equality".
2. This resolution to enter into force upon publishing.

The Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia

D. Bakradze

Tbilisi,
5 May, 2011
No. 4672-Ilb

Enhancing Gender Equality Institutional Machineries					
Goal: Supporting implementation of the State Policy on Gender Equality					
Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time Frame	Funding Resources
1.1 Supporting Institutional Strengthening of Gender Equality Council	1.1.1. Refinement of the Gender Equality regulations as necessary	Regulations have been refined by the end of 2011	Council Parliament of Georgia	2011	State Budget
	1.1.2. Enhancing efficiency of the Council activities and supporting the implementation of its functions by creating additional staff position (for providing technical and administrative support for the Council and for coordinating the activities of the Council)	The Council Coordinator and other support staff, as needed, has been hired and functions	Parliament of Georgia Council With the cooperation of interested donor community	2011	State Budget Donor Organizations
	1.1.3. Supporting institutional strengthening of the Council by providing technical assistance (providing expertise, organizing separate research, software and information-analytical provision (including creation of a web-site), ensuring technical equipment and functioning, if needed)	Number of experts, providing technical support to the Council for analytical activities, number of organized studies, developed program/software (including web-site), allocated technical facilities (computer, fax, photo-copier, transport and communication means etc.)	Parliament of Georgia With the cooperation of interested donor community	2011-2013	State budget Donor Organizations

	1.1.4. Providing Council with concepts, draft action plans and programs by the relevant line ministries, other state institutions and regional and local authorities for the purpose of working out recommendations for the integration of gender equality principles	Number of relevant state documents reviewed by the Council	Council Georgian Ministries of Education and Science, Environment; Economy and Sustainable Development; Justice; Accommodation and Refugees, Energy and Natural Resources; Culture and Monument Protection; Agriculture; Finance; Labor, Health and Social Affairs; Corrections and Legal Assistance; Regional Development and Infrastructure; Sport and Youth Affairs Regional and local authorities	2011-2013	State budget Donor Organizations
	1.1.5. Introducing gender analysis of the draft laws by enhancing parliamentary committees' staff capacity and skills	Trainings on the gender analysis of the draft laws have been conducted Number of the Parliamentary Committees' staff participating in the trainings	Council Parliament of Georgia With the cooperation of interested donor community	2011-2013	State budget Donor Organizations
	1.1.6. Enhancing coordination and cooperation of the Gender Equality Council with the Executive Branch (on the central and local level) and local self government by creating network of contact persons and by increasing their knowledge and qualification on the Gender Equality issues	Identifying contact persons in all relevant line ministries of the executive branch and local self-government and increasing their awareness and qualifications on the Gender Equality issues in the process of the NAP implementation Number of trainings conducted for enhancement of skill set of the contact persons	Council Georgian Ministries of Education and Science, Environment; Economy and Sustainable Development; Justice; Accommodation and Refugees; Foreign Affairs; Energy and Natural Resources; Defense; Culture and Monument Protection; Internal Affairs; Agriculture; Finance; Labor, Health and Social Affairs; Corrections and Legal Assistance; Regional Development and Infrastructure; Sport and Youth Affairs Local self-government With the cooperation of interested donor community	2011-2013	State budget Donor Organizations

1.1.7. Enhancing coordination and cooperation between Gender Equality Council and Women Forum elected in Sakrebulo	Number of joint activities and meetings	Council Women's Forum elected in Sakrebulo With the cooperation of interested donor community and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget Donor Organizations
1.1.8. Supporting dialogue and consultations between the Council and Civil Society, inter alia, by drafting and discussing annual reports on the implementation of the National Action Plan	Annual Conference on the monitoring and evaluation of the NAP Number of joint activities of the Civil Society and Council regarding NAP Number of the consultation meetings between civil society and Council and their intensity	Council With the cooperation of interested donor community and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget Donor Organizations
1.1.9. Supporting introduction of the accountability system on the implementation of the Gender Equality Law and National Action Plan: a) by submitting the report to the Council by the relevant line ministries and local self-government once a year on the status of the implementation of the Gender Equality Law and the Action Plan; b) by submitting the report to the Parliament by the Council once a year on the status of the implementation of the Gender Equality Law and the Action Plan (Article 12 sub-paragraph h)	Number of the annual reports submitted by the relevant line ministries and local self-government bodies to the Council Humber of the annual reports submitted by the Council to the Parliament	Council Line ministries involved in the implementation of the National Action Plan, local self-government bodies With the cooperation of interested donor community and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget Donor Organizations
1.1.10. Monitoring of the implementation of the National Action Plan for the purpose of developing the new Action Plan	Monitoring of the present NAP has been conducted	Council Parliament of Georgia With the cooperation of the interested donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget Donor Organizations
1.1.11. Developing the new National Action Plan	The draft National Action Plan has been prepared	Council Parliament of Georgia With the cooperation of the interested donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget Donor Organizations
1.1.12. Supporting the functioning of the Gori Gender Equality Resource Center	Gori Gender Equality Resource Center is functioning	Council Local self-government bodies	2011-2013	State Budget International and Donor Organizations

			With the cooperation of the interested donor organizations and NGOs		NGOs
Education and Increasing Public Awareness					
Goal: Support introducing gender aspects in the educational field and increasing public awareness on the Gender Equality issues					
Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time Frame	Funding Resources
2.1 Considering gender aspects in the key pieces of legislation in the field of Education	2.1.1. Gender based analysis of the key laws on Education and drafting package of recommendations for integrating gender aspects upon necessity	Gender bases analysis of the key laws on Education has been completed by the expiration of the NAP timeline Package/number of recommendation worked out on the basis of the analysis Package of draft legislative amendments is worked out as the result of the analysis	Council Ministries of Education and Science; Justice Interested international organizations, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
2.2 Supporting the introduction of the gender aspects in the field of education	2.2.1. Gender based analysis of the following documents and working out the package of recommendations: - National Curriculum - Teachers' professional standards	Gender based analysis of the listed documents has been completed by the expiration of the NAP	Council Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia With the cooperation of the international , donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
	2.2.2. Creating support materials for the Civil Education Workbook	Support materials for the Civil Education Workbook have been prepared	Council Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia With the cooperation of the international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
	2.2.3. Analyzing the issues of the healthy lifestyle covered in the educational curriculum of the public schools and working out the package of recommendations as required	The issues of the healthy lifestyle have been analyzed by the expiration of the National Action Plan	Council Ministries of Education and Science of Georgia; Sport and Youth Affairs With the cooperation of the international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs

	2.2.4. Working out training modules on gender aspects for the teachers' trainings and conducting trainings for the teachers	The training modules on the gender aspects have been prepared to the teachers' trainings Number of conducted trainings (based on the worked out modules) Number of the trained teachers	Council Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia With the cooperation of the international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
2.3. Supporting increase of public awareness on gender issues	2.3.1. Popularization of the normative acts on the Gender Equality and public perception periodical survey on Gender Equality, discussion of the outcomes	Number of meetings conducted for the purpose of the popularization of the normative acts Number of the meeting participants (per regions) Number of the distributed hand-outs Law is translated in English, Abkhasian, Osethian, Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian Languages The guidebook of the law has been published and distributed Regular public perception survey on Gender Equality has been conducted by the expiration of Action Plan Research outcomes are disseminated and publicly discussed	Council With the cooperation of the international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs
	2.3.2. Conducting media campaigns on gender equality issues via the following: • Free of charge PSAs • Talk shows • Newspaper Articles • Informational Materials • Radio Broadcasting	Number of media outlets, where the PSAs /talk shows have been aired Number of Talk Show participants Number of PSAs/Talk Shows Number of newspaper articles and informational materials Number of Radio Programs/Radio Stations	Council Public Broadcasting Company With the cooperation of the international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs
	2.3.3. Conducting seminars/trainings/conferences /events targeted towards women, men and youth (particularly, the rural population, IDPs and ethnic minority women) on the following issues: • Gender stereotypes and gender based discrimination (inter alia cultural/traditional grounds); • Women economic empowerment; • Reproductive Health ;	Number of trainings/ seminars/ conferences/events Number of participants in the trainings/ seminars/ conferences/events Number of target groups	Council Public Broadcasting Company With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs

	- Increasing women's participation in the peace building process; - Property Rights;				
Economics					
Goal: Encouraging equal participation of men and women in the field of economics					
Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time Frame	Funding Resources
3.1. Supporting the familiarization of the gender budgeting analysis on a all levels of government	3.1.1. Cooperation with the relevant authorities for familiarization of the gender budgeting principles	Number of the working meetings with the relevant state authorities Level and number of the public officials participating in the meetings	Council With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs
	3.1.2. Conducting seminars and trainings on gender analysis of the budget for the representatives of the governmental authorities	Number of trainings/seminars Number of participants in the seminars/trainings/participants Number of the informational and analytical materials prepared on the gender budgeting	Council Relevant line ministries and local self-government bodies of Municipalities With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs
3.2. Consideration of the Gender Equality Principles in Economic Policy and Employment level	3.2.1. Studying and analyzing gender segregation in the state and public sector	Results and if needed, recommendations of the conducted analysis have been prepared Number of conducted researches (per sector)	Council Ministries of Economy and Sustainable Development; Regional Development and Infrastructure; local self-government bodies of the selected Municipalities With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs
	3.2.2. Supporting equal participation of men and women in vocational programs/trainings, with consideration of the essence and specifics of the profession	Number of men and women participating in the programs	Council Ministries of Science and Education; Economy and Sustainable Development; Regional Development and Infrastructure; Sport and Youth Affairs and local self-government bodies of the selected Municipalities With the cooperation of the	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs

			interested international, donor organizations and NGOs		
3.3. Enhancing Women's Economical Potential	3.3.1 Supporting business oriented education and training of women employed in the fields of agribusiness, small tourism business, and folk industry (especially those living in the rural areas, IDPs and women from ethnical minorities) and increasing their access to new technologies for enhancing their economic potential	Monitoring results Recommendations developed based on the monitoring results	Council Ministries of Agriculture; Economy and Sustainable Development; Regional Development and Infrastructure; Finance; and local self-government bodies of the selected Municipalities With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs

Statistics

Target: Improving Gender Statistics

Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time Frame	Funding Resources
4.1. Supporting Georgian National Office of Statistics for improving gender segregated statistics	4.1.1. Improving segregated indicators and data according to gender	New indicators have been worked out by the expiration of the Action Plan term Number of meetings/consultations conducted for developing new indicators	Council Ministry of Justice of Georgia National Office of Statistics With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs
	4.1.2. Preparation and dissemination of the annual statistical compilation "Men and Women in Georgia"	Statistical brochure/issues	Council Ministry of Justice of Georgia National Office of Statistics With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs
	4.1.3. Inclusion of gender aspects in statistical researches funded by the government, with consideration of the content	Number of researches undertaken in which gender issue have been included	Council National Office of Statistics and other participant state agencies With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and	2011-2013	State Budget International and donor Organizations NGOs

			NGOs		

Women's Political Participation					
Goal: Supporting Equal participation of women and men in the decision-making process at all levels					
Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time-frame	Funding resources
5.1. Refinement of the legislative basis for supporting women's participation	5.1.1. Gender analysis of respective legislation/normative acts according to the International Best Practice and international commitments, and if needed, elaboration of the package of recommendations, with consideration of gender equality principles	Number of normative acts being analyzed from the gender perspective	Council	2011-2013	State budget
		The package of recommendations developed as a result of gender analysis	Ministries of Justice; Foreign Affairs and other relevant line ministries National Security Council With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs		International and Donor Organizations NGOs
5.2 Supporting equal participation of women and men in the political life	5.2.1. Supporting gender mainstreaming into the Political Parties' programs to support women's increased participation	Number of advocacy meetings conducted with the Political Parties	Council	2011-2013	State budget
		Number of women candidates in the Party electoral lists by the expiration of the NAP	With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs		International and Donor Organizations
		Number of elected women members of parliament			NGOs
	5.2.2. Supporting sustainability of the network of women elected in the local municipalities and strengthening their capacities	Number of training sessions and seminars	Council	2011-2013	State budget
		Number of women participated in the training sessions Number of issues/topics covered by the training sessions	With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs		International and Donor Organizations NGOs
	5.2.3. Elaborating special programs aimed at identifying women leaders at the grass roots level (including rural women and representatives of national minorities) and increasing their skills and capacities	Number of training sessions conducted at the grass roots level Number of women leaders identified	Council With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
	5.2.4 Conducting analysis on the employment of women on the governmental positions, in public service, ministries and other relevant state institutions and preparing package of recommendations as required	Number of meeting held Analysis have been prepared and the package of recommendations have been worked out as required	Council Parliament of Georgia Government of Georgia With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs

Security and Peace Building					
Goal: Supporting women's participation in the peace building process					
Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time-frame	Funding resources
6.1. Ensuring women's broad and active participation in the peace-building processes at the local and international levels	6.1.1. Elaboration of the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security according to the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1829, 1888 and 1889.	The Action Plan is elaborated	Council National Security Council Ministries of Education and Science; Economy and Sustainable Development; Justice; Accommodation and Refugees; Foreign Affairs; Finance; Labor, Health and Social Affairs; Regional Development and Infrastructure; Sport and Youth Affairs With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
	6.1.2. Supporting women's initiatives in people to people diplomacy, by inclusion of civil society	Number of activities for implementing people diplomacy initiatives and number of participants	Council National Security Council State Minister's Office on Reintegration Ministries of Accommodation and Refugees; Labor, Health and Social Affairs; Regional Development and Infrastructure; Sport and Youth Affairs With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
	6.1.3 Mainstreaming gender in the conflict affected populations' reintegration and rehabilitation processes	Gender is mainstreamed in the State Strategy on IDPs by the expiration of the NAP Gender is mainstreamed in the Action Plan for implementation of the State Strategy on IDPs by the expiration of the NAP	Council National Security Council Ministries of Accommodation and Refugees; Economy and Sustainable Development; Labor, Health and Social Affairs; Regional Development and Infrastructure; Culture and Monument Protection; Sport	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs

			and Youth Affairs With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs		
Health and Social Protection					
Goal: Mainstreaming gender in Health and Social spheres					
Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time-frame	Funding resources
7.1. Analysis of access of the population to quality RH services and information	7.1.1. Analysis of inclusion of comprehensive module on RH services in the curriculum for training of Village Doctors in order to improve the quality of RH services provided	Comprehensive module on RH services is included in the curriculum for training of Village	Council Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and other state agencies With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
7.2. Analysis of regulatory framework of the healthcare field	7.2.1. Analyzing relevant legislation in terms of gender and working out package of recommendation as required	Analysis have been conducted and package of recommendations has been prepared, as needed	Council Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and other state agencies With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
7.3. Analysis of regulatory framework of the social protection field	7.3.1. Analyzing relevant legislation in terms of gender and working out package of recommendation as required	Analysis have been conducted and package of recommendations has been prepared, as needed	Council Ministries of Labor, Health and Social Affairs; Regional Development and Infrastructure Local self-government bodies With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2010-2013	State budget International and Donor Organizations NGOs
Environment Protection					
Goal: Supporting Equal Participation of Men and Women at All Levels of the Decision-Making Process on the Issues of Environment Protection					

Target	Activity	Indicator	Implementers	Time-frame	Funding resources
8.1. Supporting increased participation of women in the decision-making process on the issues of environment protection	8.1.1 Supporting active participation of women in process of managing, planning and preventing issues related to the environment protection on the local level	Number of women involved in the process	Council Ministries of Environment Protection; Energy and Natural Resources Local Self-Government Bodies	2011-2013	State Budget Local Budget International and Donor Organizations
8.2 Increasing women's awareness regarding environment protection issues	8.2.1 Enhancing women's participation in the discussion of the planned and implemented issues within the Aarhus Convention	Number of meetings conducted Number of women involved	Council Ministries of Environment Protection; Energy and Natural Resources With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs Aarhus Centre in Georgia	2011-2013	State Budget Local Budget International and Donor Organizations
	8.2.2 Conducting seminars/trainings for the vulnerable groups on the following topics: - Impact of radiation on the population; - Minimization and separation of the waste products	Number of conducted trainings/seminars Number of participants on the trainings/seminars	Council Ministries of Environment Protection; Energy and Natural Resources; Economy and Sustainable Development; Labor, Health and Social Affairs; Accommodation and Refugees With the cooperation of the interested international, donor organizations and NGOs	2011-2013	State Budget International and Donor Organizations