

Speech for the ICPD Conference

Dear Chairperson, Excellences, distinguished delegates, honorable guests, it is my pleasure to be with you today within the framework of the UNECE Regional Conference.

Combating inequalities, social exclusion and human rights violations are challenges of global nature which require global solutions. Let me highlight **Gender-based violence /Violence against women/domestic violence** as one of the most painful issues in Georgia.

According to the new National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia (2017)¹, one in seven women reported having experienced domestic violence and one in five women reported having experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of women who have reported to the police an act of violence committed by an intimate partner: 18 per cent in 2017, compared to 1.5 per cent in 2009. Also, the percentage of women who believe that domestic violence is a private matter has decreased from 78 per cent in 2009 to 33 per cent in 2017.

We see this positive trend as a result of a comprehensive approach of the Government to combat gender-based violence. At this stage, I would like to address special thanks to UNFPA and UNWomen for their utmost important role in combating GBV in Georgia.

The state actions in this field are part of the National Human Rights Strategy for 2014-2020 . Building blocks of the national efforts to combat gender-based violence against women are:

1. Strong gender equality institutional mechanisms.

First of all I would like to underline the standing Gender Equality Council at the Parliament of Georgia, chaired by the First Vice-Speaker. The primary objective of the Council is to ensure proper implementation of systematic and coordinated activities related to gender issues.

The Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence established under the Prime Minister's Office, as well as the Gender Equality Department at the Public Defender's Office of Georgia could be considered as another examples of strong institutional mechanisms.

2. Strong legislative basis – Georgia has adopted the *Law On Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence* in 2006, followed by periodic 3-year National Action Plans. Several waves of amendments were adopted by the Parliament to harmonize national legislation with the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe.

¹ National Study on Violence against Women. Summary Report. 2017. UN Women, National Statistics Office – GEOSTAT

The Human Rights Committee has initiated the wide-scaled institutional reform of the Social Worker to establish strong and comprehensive state mechanisms to support vulnerable groups, amongst others also survivors of GBV.

3. Multi-sectoral response to GBV: The government of Georgia has made significant advances towards developing comprehensive policies, establishing systems of accountability and creating services for survivors and perpetrators.

With UNFPA's technical assistance the SOPs for health care providers on revealing, documenting and referring the cases of violence against women are piloted together with the new medical forms for documenting cases.

4. Awareness raising: it makes gender-based violence against women and girls intolerable. For example, in 2017 the number of restricting orders issued increased by 30%, compared to 2016. Furthermore, according to the new study², there has been a significant increase in the percentage of women who have reported to the police an act of violence committed by an intimate partner: 18% in 2017, compared to 1.5% in 2009.

To conclude, I would say that we are and will continue to strive for sustainable development together with our national and international partners in order to meet the needs of current and future generations.

Thank you.

² National Study on Violence against Women. Summary Report. 2017. UN Women, National Statistics Office – GEOSTAT