



UNDP, FAO, UNECE, ILO Joint Programme
Strengthening Georgia's food and energy resilience
under

Joint SDG Fund: Development Emergency Modality – Response to the Global Crisis on Food, Energy, Finance

POLICY DIALOGUE

Food and energy resilience: policy, institutions and people

24 March 2023, 14:00 – 18:00

Venue: Art House, 18 L. Gudiashvili Street, Tbilisi

Format: Hybrid

Languages: English and Georgian (with simultaneous interpretation)

Background

Georgia's GDP growth averaged 4 percent annually between 2011 and 2021. Nevertheless, critical structural challenges remain, including weak productivity, skills mismatch on the labor market, poor learning outcomes, slow job creation and limited availability of decent jobs. In addition, Georgia's trade openness, and reliance on income from tourism, remittances, make it vulnerable to external shocks. Still, the swift post-pandemic rebound (economy growing at 10.4 percent in 2021 and 10.1 percent in 2022 (preliminary): surpassing its pre-COVID output) has demonstrated the growing resilience of Georgia's economy. Economic recovery also supported a reduction in poverty: in 2021 absolute poverty was reduced to lower rates than in pre-COVID 2019, especially among women (by 2.3 percentage points). However, in conjunction with post-COVID global crisis and global supply chain disruptions, rising inflation on food/energy commodities is further exacerbated by Russian aggression in Ukraine. Georgia's inflation remained high at 9.8 percent, as of end-December, 2022. Households, especially those in rural areas and vulnerable, have been experiencing pressures mainly from higher food and fuel prices.

As Georgia has significant economic ties with both Ukrainian and Russian economies, the adverse impact is felt through trade, remittances, FDI, commodity prices, and logistics. The double shock of food and fuel price increases pose an immediate danger to groups of the population who are already in/at risk of poverty.

In addition to market diversification, Georgia is looking inwards and seeks to bolster food security self-reliance through domestic production. This strategy requires a clear understanding of agricultural production and its potential for growth in the short-term. Unfortunately, information currently available to policy makers is unreliable for this purpose and needs to be improved. Significant energy price increases are having a negative impact on production capabilities and costs for producers, especially from rural areas. They, consequently, may result in the weakening of the competitiveness of these producers and increasing their vulnerability. Reducing energy consumption can be achieved by improving the efficiency of the food production. Food producers and processors can ensure food safety while being energy-wise and reducing their carbon footprint.

The current vulnerabilities are challenging Georgia's path towards achievement of SDGs and calling for increased food and energy resilience.

Joint Programme Strategy

The overall aim of the programme is strengthening Georgia's resilience to food and energy crises and protection of the livelihoods of those most vulnerable to the impact of these crises. This is attained by joint UN support towards the following outcomes: (1) Strengthened systemic capacity of Government of Georgia to conduct and make use of sound data collection and analysis for designing effective food and energy crisis mitigation responses; and (2) Improved access of vulnerable people to the food and sustainable, affordable energy sources. Intended corresponding outputs are: for Outcome 1 - 1.1 Tool developed for analysis and forecasting potential impacts of food and energy crisis on vulnerable groups enabled by ; 1.2 Assessment of the institutional formation and function capacities for utilizing agreed analytical tools; 1.3 Governmental agencies received technical assistance to successfully apply analytical instruments to redesign programmes and ensure progress toward SDGs; 1.4 Enhanced capacity of small business to introduce energy efficiency measures in rural areas. And for Outcome 2 – 2.1 Mitigative interventions developed countering adverse impact of the food and energy crisis. (This could include adjustment of the existing state programme to meet SDG targets and do not necessarily mean design of the new programmes); 2.2 - IT software designed enabling registration of agricultural workers, and economic units enabling access to social protection and formalization of labour relations; 2.3 Social protection scheme (re)designed with recommendations for extension to workers in agriculture.

Objective of the Multistakeholder Dialogue

The main objective of this multistakeholder dialogue is to review the key findings and achievements of the Joint Programme and hold strategic policy discussions based on policy, institutions and people dimensions on food and energy resilience.

The dialogue among key stakeholders will include the identification of possible priorities to achieve food and energy security and accomplish relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The dialogue also may serve as a platform for the exchange of information on existing approaches, challenges, and perspectives to the further development of food and energy resilience of Georgia.

Target audience

Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Ministry of IDPs, Labor, Health and Social Affairs, National Statistics Offices, international organizations, relevant CSOs, representatives of academia and other international and national stakeholders.

AGENDA

13:30 – 14:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
14:00 - 14:10	<p>Opening Remarks:</p> <p>Sabine Machl – UN Resident Coordinator</p> <p>Vakhtang Tsintsadze - Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia</p> <p>George Khanishvili - First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia</p>
14:10 – 15:00	<p>Session 1. Measuring impacts for inclusive decision making</p> <p>Welcome Remarks: Nick Beresford, UNDP RR (5 minutes)</p> <p>Impact on vulnerability and focused response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP presentation - Givi Adeishvili (Chief Economist), Levan Pavlenishvili (UNDP Consultant) (20 minutes) • Reflection from Government – Mr. Vakhtang Tsintsadze, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia • Q&A <p>Moderated by George Nanobashvili (UNDP Economic Development Team Leader)</p>
15:00 – 15:40	<p>Session 2. Improving Data Collection and Analysis Tools</p> <p>Rapid Assessment of the Data Collection and Analysis Tools in Agricultural Sector Key Findings and Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO Presentation - Lasha Zivzivadze (FAO Consultant) (20 minutes) • Reflection from the Government – Mr. George Khanishvili, First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (TBC) • Q&A <p>Moderated by Jumber Maruashvili, FAO Senior Policy Advisor</p>
15:40 – 15:55	Break
15:55 – 16:35	<p>Session 3: Does social protection respond to needs of workers in agriculture sector?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in coverage of workers in agriculture with a focus on informal workers - Dimitri Gugushvili, ILO consultant (15 min) • Raising awareness of a need to formalize employment relations using IT - Giorgi Bitsadze, ILO consultant, (15 min) • Reflection from Social Partners
16:35 – 17:15	<p>Session 4. Improving energy efficiency by small businesses in rural areas</p> <p>Assessment of energy consumption by small businesses in rural areas. Recommendations to reduce energy costs and improve energy efficiency. Case studies on energy efficiency measures introduced by small businesses in selected rural areas.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNECE presentations - Nadejda Khamrakulova (Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division); Liana Garibashvili (Consultant); Ms. Elene Gvilava, (Consultant) (20 minutes) • Reflection from Government - Ms. Margalita Arabidze, Head of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Policy and Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia • Q&A <p>Moderated by Mr. Oleg Dzioubinski, Regional Adviser, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division</p>
17:15 – 17:35	<p>Conclusions and Future Steps UNRC leads</p>