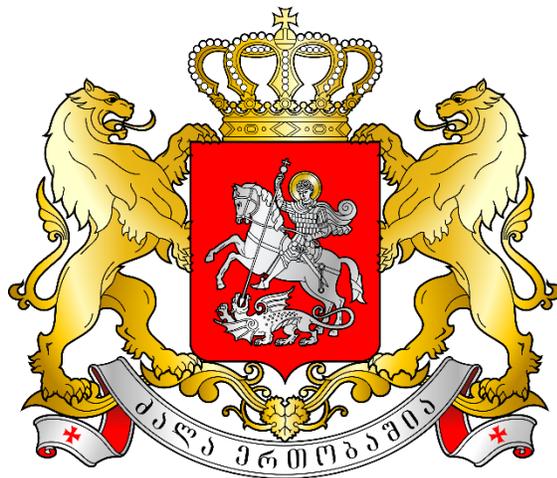


Freedom
Rapid Development
Prosperity

Government Platform

2016-2020



November 2016

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Foreword

Since 2012, the Government of Georgia has managed to overcome significant challenges and build a state based on key principles of democracy: justice, freedom, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights. It has established a state where property is inviolable and business is free, and where the courts and media are uninfluenced by the authorities. In this democratic state police forces are not influenced by partisan politics, and everyone has access to education and healthcare. The government's goal is to implement realistic and reasonable reforms.

The government continues to work on strengthening the rule of law in order to promote the independence of courts and the operation of law enforcement agencies, in line with European standards. In Georgia, the government protects the freedom of expression and an independent media and is striving to create a system that ensures access to quality education and healthcare for all citizens. Under this government, state social programmes will continue to improve, new job opportunities will be created, and poverty will be eliminated.

Moreover, the government remains focused on supporting small and medium businesses, promoting entrepreneurship and start-ups, developing agriculture, and furthering the country's integration into the world economic system.

The country's safety and its regional position will also be strengthened. The government will continue to deepen its efforts towards integration into the EU and NATO. Another focal point of the foreign policy agenda will be to uphold the policy of non-acknowledgement of occupied territories and the de-occupation of the country by further engaging the international community. The government will continue to create direct dialogue and reconciliation processes with Abkhazians and Ossetians.

The Government's Four Point Plan

The four-point plan of reforms will be implemented for rapid development, in order to fully meet the key challenges of building a modern government and spurring economic growth. With this plan, the government will focus on particular areas, which will promote qualitative changes in the development of the country, ensure economic growth, and improve the well-being of the population.

Using the four-point plan, the government will implement the following:

- **Economic reform** will focus on the promotion and strengthening of the private sector. In this regard, the government has a whole package of initiatives, which will make doing business in the country more attractive and profitable. Important tax incentives will be developed, and property taxes will not apply to businesses, in case of reinvestment of profit. Due to the reforms, hundreds of millions of GEL will remain in business, which will promote investments, accelerate economic growth, and create thousands of jobs. Over the past four years, the government has made significant changes to Georgian tax legislation. The tax environment will become even more business-friendly and maximize the promotion of investments, while also helping programmes that facilitate start-up creation and innovation, adding additional jobs to the private sector.
- **Education reform** provides for the development of human capital and its effective engagement in the development of the country. A dual or work-based learning approach will be implemented in the vocational education system by means of public-private partnerships. In order to develop human capital using this approach, teachers and employers will implement joint training programmes that will ensure students gain new skills and capabilities. Higher education will be based on the needs and requirements of the economy. Higher education priorities will be defined and funded based on analysis of the labour market. A range of other needs, essential for sociocultural or national development of the country, will be taken into consideration as well. Consequently, the competitiveness of students and future employees and their readiness for the labour market will improve.
- **The spatial planning scheme** will be the main framework of the country's development. Spatial planning is an important tool for sustainable development and improving quality of life. Within

the framework of the spatial planning reform, the government is preparing plans for regulation regarding the development of cities and villages. The goal is to put an end to spontaneous development. With proper spatial planning, Georgia will become a year-round tourist destination, which will ensure new revenues and their stable distribution all over the country. A transport network connecting various regions will be designed and developed throughout Georgia. Geographic location will no longer be an obstacle for business and transportation. The Georgian road network will also become more attractive for transit, connecting regions and promoting the development of tourism, as well as agriculture in highland and remote areas of the country. With the proper arrangements and reasonable spatial planning, Georgia will fully realize its development potential and Georgia's position as a transit hub will be further strengthened.

- **Public governance reform** ensures the elaboration of public services policy, the improvement of service quality, and more effective agency performance. Rapid economic growth requires an increase in the effectiveness of government. Within this framework, a unified “business house” will be established where all respective public agencies will provide services to businesses based on a “one stop” principle. As a result, public engagement in the governance process will be increased and effective monitoring of government processes will be ensured. Online services will also be improved with the addition of more long-distance services, which will consequently optimize the cost of public services. Society will become more engaged in the governance and decision-making processes. The government will also ensure that the public has the tools for effectively monitoring the processes. Additionally, the new reform will guarantee rapid growth and qualitative change in the country's development. The reform will also promote speedy and effective decision-making in order to achieve Georgia's rapid development goals.

By implementing the four-point plan, Georgia will become a modern and developed country with infrastructure of international standards, labour resources in compliance with the demand of the labour market, a safe and stable business environment, and effective public governance. These key components precondition rapid development and prosperity. This is the way to make qualitative change to the country's economy, which will become a prerequisite for a new stage of rapid development.

1. Democratic Development

In 2012-16 Georgia achieved fundamental success in all directions of democratic development. The protection of human dignity, rights, and freedoms became a key priority for the government. As a result, Georgia saw a rise in the quality of democracy and political systems and a significant improvement in the engagement of the civil sector in decision making. The government will continue its work in order to ensure the results it achieved are sustainable and irreversible.

1.1. Protection of Human Rights, Democratic Governance and Rule of Law

Overcoming the difficult stage of democratic transition was significantly preconditioned by conquering human rights problems that existed in the past. Over the last four years, institutional mechanisms for the protection of human rights were developed and improved through legislative changes as well as system reforms.

The Government of Georgia permanently improved the standards of the protection of human rights in accordance with a national strategy for human rights.

The improvement of Georgian criminal law will continue through additional reforms and the participation of the civil sector in accordance with international standards and best practices.

In 2015, Georgia adopted the Juvenile Justice Code, unique and exemplary throughout the region, which reflects all standards and norms of international law in juvenile justice. The government will ensure that the establishment of the principles and norms of this code are put into practice.

With the purpose of further improving the **penitentiary system**:

- Vocational education will become accessible for more and more inmates; higher education will become available in low-risk penitentiary facilities; new job opportunities will be provided for inmates; programmes for psychosocial rehabilitation of inmates, including rehabilitation of individuals with different addictions, will be strengthened;
- There will be a new type of non-custodial sentence; house arrest for adult convicts will be implemented, the execution of which will be controlled by electronic monitoring; house arrest will also be used in the early release process;

- A new non-custodial preventive measure and pre-trial probation will be implemented, which in compliance with international standards and recommendations will significantly reduce the number of defendants in pre-trial custody;
- The classification of inmates into low, medium, increased, and high risk categories will be continued by a multidisciplinary team, which will effectively combat criminal subculture in penitentiary facilities, decrease violence between inmates, and cause a reduction in repeat offences;
- A new penitentiary facility will be established, which will release low and medium risk inmates;
- The execution of punishment in accordance with an individual plan will be continued;
- The phased rehabilitation and modernization of penitentiary facilities will be continued;
- The promotion and strengthening of infrastructural development and primary healthcare will be continued;
- Work on delivering penitentiary healthcare services will also be continued;
- Procedures concerning parole release will be improved;
- The mechanisms for life sentence prisoners' release will be refined, and the mechanism for the release of an inmate due to age or illness will be improved.

The state will continue to ensure strict protection of property rights. The progression of judicial reform and restoration will continue. Within the framework of the Constitution and in accordance with Georgia's international obligations, the government will use all legal mechanisms at its disposal to restore every citizen's rights violated by the previous government.

Moreover, the legislation and supervision system regulating the right to privacy will be improved and compliant with international standards. The development of mechanisms for internal and external control will also be continued, which will ensure high standards of protection over the right to privacy during investigative activities. The implementation of the mentioned changes will ensure a reasonable balance between privacy rights and the safety of the country and people. Effective measures will be put in place to raise public awareness regarding the right to privacy and protection of personal data.

Effective measures will also be applied to the realization of **equality** rights, in order to prevent and suppress discrimination on any grounds.

Freedom of Belief will be ensured for all religious unions and every individual. The government will promote the development of a culture of complete tolerance.

In order to ensure the protection of the rights of **ethnic minorities**, the government will implement

an action plan 2015-2020 for civil equality and integration. Every citizen of Georgia, regardless of ethnic origin, will have the opportunity to engage fully in all fields of social life, economic development, and political and civil processes.

Special priority will be given to the improvement of the knowledge of state language; consequently, the effectiveness of the programmes for teaching the state language will be improved, and access to state language programmes will be enriched. The targeted teaching of the Georgian language will be ensured for representatives of ethnic minorities employed in the public sector.

The government will guarantee greater access to administrative proceedings documents and social services for ethnic minorities in densely populated areas. In accordance with the strategic document of education, effective steps will be made, and access to high quality education on all levels will be improved. Access to media and information will also be enhanced, which is a pre-requisite for the engagement of national minorities in the information space and a successful civil integration process.

The government will continue the development of infrastructure and social and economic capacities in regions populated by ethnic minorities. This includes the improvement of access to comprehensive information in an accessible language. The Government of Georgia will safeguard the preservation and development of the cultural identity of ethnic minorities and promote a tolerant environment throughout Georgian society.

Effective measures will be implemented for ensuring **gender equality** in all fields of social life, especially in political and economic activities, and at the decision-making level. Each instance of violation of gender equality will be addressed promptly and effectively. The government will promote raising awareness of gender issues.

The implementation of legislative reform will be continued in order to prevent and combat **domestic violence**. In particular, The Council of Europe **Convention** on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“Istanbul Convention”) will be ratified. Legal protection of the victims of domestic violence and their access to psychosocial programmes and shelter will also be improved. The government also plans to continue its work on raising awareness of domestic violence and strengthening the rights of women and children.

The rights of people with disabilities will be protected, based on the principle of reasonable accommodation, taking into consideration their specific needs. In order to achieve full integration of people with disabilities in social, economic and political life, the state will work further to create and promote employment opportunities as well develop a solid regulatory framework for the adaption of buildings to ensure the freedom of movement for every person with special needs. The government will also promote equal access to transportation through the elaboration and implementation of respective standards.

In addition, active combat **against trafficking, torture, and inhumane treatment** will be continued.

1.2. Institutional Mechanisms for Protection of Human Rights

Institutional mechanisms targeting the protection of human rights will become even stronger in Georgia in the coming four years.

A strong, competent, and independent Court is a cornerstone of the country's development. The actions of the government will be focused on improving the confidence in **the Court system**. Raising the trust of each citizen and the private sector in Georgian justice is our priority.

The third wave of justice system reform will be finalized, which will complete the Court system reform aimed at ensuring the independence of the Court on an institutional level, as well as the independence and impartiality of individual judges. As a result of the implementation of the third stage of the Court reform, the rules for selection and appointment of judges and disciplinary proceedings will be improved. Cases will be distributed randomly and in electronic form. The reform of the High Council of Justice will also be applied. It will be implemented with the purpose of improving judges' qualifications and their professional retraining. In the first half of 2017, an electronic system for case distribution will be piloted in one of the biggest Georgian Courts. In the summer of this year, based on changes made to criminal procedural legislation, the territorial jurisdiction of jury trials will be distributed throughout the country.

Commercial colleges and chambers will be established in the Common Court system, which will specialize in considering commercial and tax cases. As a result of the reform, the quality and speed of justice will be increased dramatically in commercial and tax disputes. The establishment of mediation as an alternative tool for dispute resolution will also be facilitated by legislative and institutional mechanisms, which in general will improve the investment climate and increase the volume of direct foreign investments and economic growth.

The independence of the **Constitutional Court** will be ensured.

Prosecution will continue to operate as a system focused on the interests and needs of society, which will ensure maximal protection of defendants and other participants in the process. Various new approaches in combatting crime will come into operation, and existing investigation and prosecution practices will be refined and approximated to European standards. The participation of society in crime prevention will increase. To ensure the independence of ordinary prosecutors, the system for prosecutors' appointment, disciplinary responsibility, dismissal, and promotion will be enhanced.

The criteria will be elaborated for transparent and unbiased assessment of prosecutors' performance. The programmes for retraining and improving the qualification of prosecutors will be continued.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs will implement an analysis-based police system, to ensure maximal efficiency of crime prevention and police operation.

Public engagement in identification and solutions related to justice and order is important for improving the reliability of the police. Therefore, communication with non-governmental organizations, the academic community, the media, and the business sector will be strengthened.

The **modernization of criminal police** will continue throughout the country. The role of technology in police performance will be increased, which will strengthen crime prevention, significantly improve the quality of investigations, and build up the capacity of the police.

A **road safety programme** will be implemented, which will improve the safety of pedestrians, passengers, and drivers and reduce the number of accidents. The use of technology in traffic administration will also be increased.

Border management system reform will be finalized according to the planned terms, which will confirm the modernization of the border police, as well as its standardization and unification.

The development of an **emergency situations management system** will be finalized, which will guarantee effective coordination and quick responses. Special attention will be paid to illegal migration and the management of the risks associated with that, as well as capacity-building of the ministry and an improvement in its coordination with other agencies.

Cooperation will be improved with **international police structures**, especially with EUROPOL.

An **effective system for management of human resources** will be developed to ensure the proper operation of the police system and to base career advancement on objective criteria, merits, and qualifications.

Significant investment will be made in **the academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs**. New programmes will be implemented, technologies will be updated, and an international training centre will be established based on the academy.

Police reform will continue to improve cooperation between the police and public.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs will work to ensure **better access to high quality services**, as well as continue the development of this field and the offering of additional services.

The independence and effective operation of the **State Safety Service** will be ensured.

The independence of the **Public Defender's Office** will be guaranteed, and its active cooperation with the Parliament of Georgia and other public services will be promoted.

1.3. Public Governance Reform, Policy System, and Civil Society

The government will implement effective and fair policy to ensure the further strengthening and engagement of our governance system, policy system, and civil society.

In 2015, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a new “Law on Public Service,” which will provide grounds for the implementation of **public service reform** and “good governance” principles. Gradually, a career model of public service will be developed, which will ensure the recruitment and promotion of servants in accordance with objective criteria.

The **implementation of a system for policy planning and monitoring** will be continued throughout Georgia. The plan is based on the idea of developing a transparent, result-oriented public engagement principle of accountability. The entire system for policy planning and monitoring will provide grounds for the implementation of UN sustainable development goals on a national level and allow for their integration into national planning documents.

Within the framework of public governance reform, active work will continue concerning capacity-building of self-governance with regard to the management of public finances, accountability, and governance, in order to ensure successful implementation.

Local self-governance will also be strengthened. The authority of the municipalities will be expanded based on a subsidizing principle, the implementation of which will be based on a continuous and consistent process of planning and social-economic development. The purpose of this is to ensure fiscal decentralization. The share of revenues in the local budget will gradually increase in the revenues of a consolidated budget. Additionally, the tools for public engagement in implementation of local governance will be strengthened. The territorial units of the municipalities will be equipped respectively, in order to improve public service quality and accessibility. The network of “public centres” will be expanded all over Georgia, providing state and local services to all big and/or remote settlements.

Respective steps will be made to ensure effective coordination of activities for **combatting corruption**, increasing public engagement, raising public awareness, and implementing and strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms. A system for monitoring property declaration will be implemented, which will facilitate proper monitoring – in particular, verification of the accuracy of the data provided in the declarations.

Georgia, as a regional leader in combatting corruption and a co-chair country of OGP, will continue its work in this direction. With this in mind, Georgia will continue its close cooperation with OECD,

GRECO, and other international organizations.

In November 2016, the government approved the third action plan of the **Open Government Partnership**, which contains 24 ambitious and innovative commitments. As a result of their implementation, Georgia will further uphold its reputation as one of the leading countries in the field of e-governance in the region and the world.

The norms regulating the accessibility of public information will be improved and a new Law on Freedom of Information will be elaborated. This will ensure the compliance of Georgian legislation and practices with international standards and best practices of other countries. The practice of issuance of public information will also be improved.

2. Economic Development

Economic development in the country will be based on the principles of a free market, which is a precondition for a stronger private sector. Based on the principles of a free market, the government's economic policy will focus on further development of the private sector and finding solutions to existing problems in that area, which will promote a strengthened private sector and an enhanced job market. The government will target its support towards specific population groups that need it the most, until a desirable level of economic development is reached.

Inclusive economic growth is a priority of the government's economic policy. The government aims to implement a model, in parallel with economic growth, which reduces poverty and unemployment. The economic policy of the government, together with economic efficiency, will be guided by social security and justice principles.

In order to ensure long-term rapid economic growth, the goal of the government's economic policy is to maximize the inclusion of economic factors in the development of the country. The four-point plan focuses on the development of business as the main driver of economic growth, maximal use of human resources in the development of the country, and the implementation of open governance principles.

2.1. Macroeconomic Stability

The economic policy of the government is based on an adherence to macroeconomic stability as the cornerstone of economic development.

Fiscal discipline, low unemployment, stability of prices, independence of monetary policy, gradual

reduction of the deficit, and maintaining the stability of the financial sector are key factors for long-term economic growth.

Georgia is a small open economy; consequently, it cannot be isolated from ongoing events in the regional and global economy. However, a stable macroeconomic environment is important to mitigating the impact of negative external shocks.

To achieve macroeconomic stability and effective implementation of the budgetary process:

- A permanent process of optimization of expenses will be continued, which will focus on the release of resources and their distribution to priorities; administrative expenses will be reduced and their increase in the future will be limited;
- The perfection of programme budget principles will be ensured;
- Transparency of the budget will be increased;
- The state debt will be maintained against GDP, which will ensure a stable credit rating and a positive investment image of the country;
- The effective coordination of fiscal and monetary policy will be ensured;
- Temporary measures, envisaged by the legislation, will be used to mobilize budget revenues for funding large-scale projects that are important for the country's development;
- The independence of the national bank will be untouched;
- An increase of crediting in GEL will be promoted.

2.2. Employment

The main focus of the government's economic policy is on employment.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2017 by the World Economic Forum, a key problem for doing business is still the lack of a qualified labour force. Meanwhile, unemployment remains an acute problem. This clearly indicates a misbalance in the labour market. The demand coming from the private sector cannot be satisfied by the labour force currently available in the labour market.

In order to eliminate misbalance in the labour market and improve qualitative and quantitative indicators of employment, education reform will be implemented in accordance with the four-point plan. As a result, the competitiveness of students and future employees and their readiness level for the labour market will be increased.

The requirements of the labour market will be studied, and close coordination between job seekers and employees will be promoted. The state will provide informational support to job seekers in terms of choosing a profession, training, and retraining. The state will actively facilitate the engagement of

potential employers in vocational retraining processes.

Higher education will be based not on an asymmetric demand, limited by several dominating professions, but on real needs facing the country. Consequently, the imbalance existing in the labour market will be eliminated. The social or cultural needs important to the country's development will be taken into consideration as well.

2.3. Business Climate

To further improve the business climate and promote entrepreneurship, the government of Georgia will continue the implementation of active policy – in particular:

- The principle of the integrity of the right to property will be respected;
- The legislation for regulating civil cases, entrepreneurial matters, insolvency, execution issues, and alternative means for dispute resolution will be refined;
- The peaceful enjoyment of property will also be ensured. An administrative rule (non-judicial) about the prevention of immovable property infringement or other interferences will come into force and be used as an effective tool to protect property rights in complicated inheritance and neighbourhood disputes. An alternative effective procedural mechanism for defending rights with judicial rule in this category will be developed, and control over the terms for enforcement of Court decisions will become stricter.
- The reform of the tax disputes system will be implemented.

The government's four-point plan **tax administration** will also be improved. Seizures of business accounts will never happen without a Court decision. The terms of tax inspection of companies will be regulated, and pre-trial detention for economic offences will be abolished, except for special cases. These steps will give more freedom to businesses and create additional economic development potential.

A main achievement of the government is the promotion of start-up businesses. For the first time, a "start-up" funding instrument was introduced in Georgia. "Start-up" funding is a key element of rapid development established in the four-point plan.

With regard to **improving access to finances**, existing programmes for promoting entrepreneurship will be developed and optimized in terms of improved efficiency.

To promote effective relations between the government and the business sector "**Business House**" will be established. As a result, all respective agencies will provide services to businesses based on a one-stop principle, and businesses will spend less time and resources.

Existing **online services** will be improved further. The government's goal is to create a possibility of registering a company or making changes to already existing data electronically, without a representative physically coming to the office.

Offences related to **economic crime** will be decriminalized, including:

- Criminal responsibility will be abolished for actions that in essence are tax violations, such as incorrect and/or incomplete fill of waybill (reducing number or/and price of goods), transportation of goods for more than 10000 GEL without waybill, and sale without marking of non-excise goods, which are subject to mandatory marking, a violation of accounting rules;
- The limit on the imposition of criminal responsibility for tax evasion will be increased up to 100,000 GEL, which on the back of the reduction of the limitation period since 2017, will bring significant effects to business;
- Full amnesty will be announced for the offences provided by articles 210 (the production or use of a false tax document) and 218 (tax evasion). Consequently, the individuals who committed the mentioned crime up until 1 January 2013 will be released of criminal responsibility and punishment.

Insolvency system reform will be carried out to improve procedures related to insolvency/bankruptcy proceedings. Business liquidation procedures will also be simplified.

A **regulatory impact assessment (RIA) tool** will be implemented widely, which will allow for advanced analyses of the impact of each decision on businesses, to safeguard against possible negative influence.

A **moratorium** will be announced on the introduction of new licenses and permits. The moratorium will refer to activity of any type, except for those imperatively requested to be licensed, according to international agreements signed by Georgia. The moratorium will also cover the establishment of a regulatory body, except for the case when it is imperatively requested by international agreements signed by Georgia.

The legal framework for **protection of investments** will be strengthened, and a new Law on Investments will be developed to promote the implementation of local and foreign investments, which will fully respond to modern requirements and challenges. This law will define a legislative norm, a principle that, despite changes made to the legislation of different fields, will ensure that investors maintain liberal norms and benefits in force for a particular term, and enable the investor to plan business freely without expecting a change in regulations (worsening) in the nearest period upon making investment.

To promote a competitive business environment, the state will gradually come out of the sectors of the economy that have the potential for independent functioning and development. State support of

competitive sectors will be increased, in regard to an increase in local production as well as export potential.

2.4. Economic Reforms

To stimulate economic growth in Georgia, besides improving the business climate, the government of Georgia plans to implement large-scale reforms.

2.4.1. Capital Market Reform

The existence of a developed capital market provides the possibility for attracting long-term financial resources for companies, along with bank crediting. With that, the capital market develops a competitive environment not just for issuing credit, but also for the distribution of savings. Moreover, if due to any reason bank crediting is restricted, the bond market may play a balancing role. The capital market functions not just to supply financial resources to businesses, but it is also an additional instrument for the allocation of the population's savings. Consequently, a developed and transparent capital market facilitates stable economic growth and improves the welfare of the population.

One of the main objectives of the government of Georgia is establishing Georgia as regional financial centre. To achieve this goal, the following activities will be implemented:

- Development of a competitive environment will be promoted. This will exclude discrimination of single segments, instruments of market participants, or their privilege or monopoly. The state and regulators of capital markets ensure the open and transparent operation of the participants of a fair principles-based market;
- Respective taxation regimes will be refined.
- Improvement of financial education levels will be promoted;
- The guaranties for protection of the rights of consumers and investors will be guaranteed. The interests of small and less knowledgeable investors will be protected, which is a key precondition for development of the capital market. Special attention will be paid to regulatory, educational, corporate management, and financial accounting issues.

As a result of the reforms that will be implemented in the upcoming years, capital market development will be an effective source for attracting resources. It will enable every market participant to receive a full range of technology-based financial services. In addition, a regulatory

environment compliant with international best practices will ensure high-level reliability and protect investors.

2.4.2. Pension Reform

The government will implement pension reform, aimed at a transition to an accumulative pension fund. This is a component of capital market reforms, since it promotes the development of long-term financial resources.

The main task of pension reform is the improvement of the population's welfare, as well as ensuring the financial sustainability of the existing social services system. Taking into consideration fiscal stability, a private accumulative pension is the optimal model. A private pension system will enable the citizen to make savings, proportional to the salary earned by the employee during the years.

In addition to stimulating the economy, a private accumulative pension system will increase private savings as a means of mobilizing long-term financial resources, which will promote development of the local capital market.

2.4.3. Land Reform

Inventory of public property will be implemented, taking into consideration the interests of private owners.

In August 2016, "the Law on special rule for systemic and sporadic registration of the rights on the land parcels and completion of the cadastre data, within the frame of the state project" came into force for a two-year period. This will dramatically simplify and improve citizens' ability to access the process for land registration. This will promote reimbursement of the costs for planning/measuring drawings for registration of agricultural lands. The state supports citizens in obtaining property certification documents and conducting disputes resolution through mediation. The programme for promotion of privatization of lands in highland areas is approved and its implementation will be started.

2.4.4. Development of Public-Private Partnership System

Public-private partnerships are a key factor for attracting investments. It is noteworthy that during last 4 years several projects were implemented through cooperation between the state and

businesses. Improvement of respective legislation is essential for further strengthening public-private partnerships.

When large-scale infrastructural projects require significant financial resources, such as energy and transport, this form of cooperation distributes the associated risks to both the public and private sectors and mobilizes resources from the state and private sector, which makes the implementation of important projects easier.

The government will develop respective legislation and a system for broadening public-private partnerships. The system will facilitate the inflow of investments in Georgia and the rapid and effective implementation of significant infrastructural projects by the state and business.

2.5. Spatial Planning

Spatial planning is an important tool for ensuring the sustainable development of the country and raising living standards. Its main objectives include the improvement of relations between urban and rural areas, promotion of the development of high quality tourism, the establishment of Georgia as a transport and logistics hub between Europe and Asia, the development of an investor-friendly environment, and the reduction of environmental impact.

With regard to spatial planning, the government of Georgia will actively implement its policy. The spatial planning scheme of Georgia will be prepared, and a master plan for Tbilisi land use will be finalised. Spatial planning schemes of the Akhmeta and Mestia municipalities will be prepared as well as master plans for the development of 12 villages in Tusheti and 10 villages in Mulakhi communities; land use in Kobi-Gudauri, Bakuriani-Didi Mitarbi, Bakhmaro, Kobuleti, Khelvachauri; and regulation of the development of Ikhaltso ravine, Shaori and Utsera.

With proper arrangement and thoughtful spatial planning, Georgia will become a year-round tourist destination, which will ensure new incomes from tourism and their stable distribution during the year.

The development of tourism infrastructure in the Tskhaltubo, Samtskhe Javakheti, Kazbegi Gudauri, Mtskheta Mtianeti, Tusheti and Racha regions and the creation of resorts at an international level will be continued. In accordance with urban development plans, Gudauri Kobi, Bakuriani, Didveli, Kokhta Mitarbi, Tetnuldi Hatsvali, Goderdzi ski resorts will be developed and new elements will be added to existing resorts. Opportunities for using the resorts in the summer will also be considered.

2.6. Foreign Trade Relations

Establishing free trade relations with the rest of the world is one of the key priorities of Georgia's economic policy.

The EU-Georgia Association Agreement, in particular the DCFTA, offers Georgia vast economic opportunities, in terms of increasing exports, attracting investments and improving productivity in the country. The Government of Georgia values strong trade relations and continues to see progress in that area:

- An agreement was signed with the EFTA;
- Negotiations on free trade were finalized with the People's Republic of China;
- Negotiations on a free trade agreement are underway with Hong Kong;
- Negotiations on expanding the free trade agreement will be conducted with Turkey;
- The development of liberal trade regimes will be continued with priority countries.

Consequently, the export potential of Georgian products and diversification will be improved.

Another key goal of Georgia's economic policy is the effective and proper use of opportunities from free trade agreements. As a result, Georgia will continue the implementation of active policy, in particular:

- Supporting businesses entering new markets; in particular, export related costs will be alleviated and export associated risks will be insured;
- An online platform will be developed, which will provide Georgian exporters with full information regarding analysis of markets in their interest;
- The institute of commercial attachés will promote the expansion of export markets for Georgian products;
- To maximize the opportunities provided by free trade agreements and to ensure compliance with EU requirements, state support to respective enterprises will be increased (financial as well as technical). This will especially apply to agricultural enterprises. Regulations provided by the EU Association Agreement will be introduced, taking into consideration certain Georgian peculiarities. In the beginning of every year, the government will approve and make the list of regulations to be adopted public.

In order to promote foreign investments and increase Georgian exports and the country's full participation in the international economic process, the government will implement the following:

- On a legal basis, the regulation of foreign economic relations will be improved and expanded (in regard to promotion of investments, avoiding double taxation, trade promotion and so on);
- Direct relations as well as the development of cooperation between Georgian and foreign businessmen and business unions will be promoted, and the protection of Georgian business interests abroad will be continued.

2.7. Infrastructural Development

The improvement of infrastructure is a significant precondition of development in Georgia, which will assist in integrating international transit projects and promoting economic development.

The Government of Georgia will develop a clear plan for **the country's infrastructure**. Taking Georgia's geographic location and increasing transit traffic into consideration, the construction of new highways will be accelerated, existing roads will be reconstructed and road infrastructure will be upgraded and modernized. Secondary roads connecting the regions will be constructed all over the country to facilitate international transit. The new roads will be the backbone of the country, connecting all regions with one another and the capital. Geographic location will no more be an obstacle for business operations and movement.

This project will also strengthen Georgia's important role in the region as a transit hub. The construction of the 800km East -West Highway, with a total cost of 3.5 billion USD, will be finalized by 2020. The construction will make Georgia's road network more attractive, increase tourism development, promote the revival of agriculture in remote and highland areas and connect all of Georgia.

The government has set the provision of **high quality drinking water for 24 hours** as a key priority as well. This goal will be achieved gradually in the upcoming years. Almost 360,000 people will be provided with drinking water for 24 hours by 2020.

Projects concerning the construction and rehabilitation of the **water supply and sewage and treatment facilities** will be continued in several cities and villages. Special attention will be paid to construction installation works on water supply systems in Pankisi Gorge and border villages of Kaspi and Kareli municipalities, which will be finalized in the near future and will significantly improve water supply quality for up to 20,000 people.

Waste management projects will be implemented in compliance with European standards and include:

- The improvement of municipal waste collection services throughout the country;
- Existing landfills will be brought into compliance with the requirements of national

legislation and will be closed gradually;

- New regional sanitary landfills will be set up based on European standards;
- Waste separation and treatment systems will be implemented.

Within the framework of **the internet access project**, 8000km of infrastructure will be provided and 90% of the country's population will have access to the internet.

2.8. Sectoral Economic Policy

In addition to global activities focused on a fundamental transformation of Georgian economy, the Government of Georgia is implementing policy directed at the transformation and development of specific sectors driving economic growth.

2.8.1. Energy

The main priorities of Georgia's energy policy are the improvement of energy security and independence, a gradually decreased dependence on imported energy resources through utilization of local energy resources and the diversification of supply sources and routes.

The Government of Georgia continues to work on improving its energy supply. Electrification and the metering process will be continued, with a special focus on the villages that currently do not have electricity and the highland areas.

The Government of Georgia's energy policy plans to:

- Reduce dependence on imported energy by rational utilization of local energy resources;
- Promote investments in the energy sector;
 - In 2017 – 2020, at least 500 mw installed capacity will be provided, and an infrastructural investment of 3 billion GEL will be implemented in energy sector
- Develop infrastructure for the development of a safe and stable transmission system and distribution of gas and electricity;
- Continue gas storage construction plans, which will ensure the development of essential strategic reserves. In order to improve the gas supply, the government has already implemented a project targeting gas storage of 210-280 million cubic meters;
- Strengthen Georgia's role in the energy sector. Georgia actively participates in the implementation of the "Southern Gas Corridor" project. The government is also working on improving Georgia's capacity for exporting electricity;

- Improve legislation regulating the energy field in compliance with European standards;
- Promote transparency, competition and independent regulation in the energy sector to improve the investment climate;
- Promote scientific and technical progress and the implementation of innovations;
- Optimally utilize renewable energy sources, which is a government priority;
- Implement energy saving and energy efficient policy;
- Supply gas to 200,000 families by the end of 2020;
- Provide electricity to 1,000 families in the so called “villages without light”, and ensure no village remains without electricity.

2.8.2. Agriculture

The government will continue its agricultural policy agenda, aimed at improving competitiveness based on principles of sustainable development, increasing stable production of high quality products, and ensuring food security, food safety and rural development.

Supporting the development of cooperation within the agricultural sector will be a strategic priority of the government’s agricultural policy. Special attention will be paid to the implementation of activities focused on building up the capacity of cooperatives.

The government also plans to implement a rational management of agricultural **land fund**, which will develop the agricultural land market and promote the intended use of agricultural lands. Several activities will also be implemented to develop a farmers’ registry and a geo-informational system of land use.

In addition, special attention will be paid to research of **degraded soils** and their effect on restoration and improvement.

The entire **rural development policy will be elaborated**, with a focus on improving the standard of living and economic activity in rural areas. The state will also promote the **implementation of post-harvest technologies**, as well as the development of the storing, sorting, packing, processing and distribution sectors. This will ensure the integration of value-adding full cycle components. **Agricultural insurance** will also be improved, which will help protect farmers’ interests.

Ameliorated (irrigated and drained) land areas will be increased. **Irrigation and drainage systems will** be developed and improved. Tariff methodology will be approved. Implementation of modern irrigation systems and the development of water users’ unions will be promoted.

Special attention will be paid to the **improvement of the knowledge** of individuals employed in the agricultural sector, the development of scientific research activities with a focus on agricultural

business and the elaboration of respective extension packages. A flexible system of modern extension will be developed.

The government plans to continue its work on promoting **farmers' access to finances**.

Significant projects will be implemented for improving access to **agricultural equipment**.

The government will define key indicators and respective methodologies to provide better **monitoring of food safety in the country**. An effective and flexible system of state control over **food / feed safety, veterinary treatment and plant protection fields** will also be elaborated and further improved.

Food safety, veterinary treatment and phytosanitary fields will be approximated **with respective EU legislation**, envisaged by the DCFTA plan, which will be implemented within the terms provided by the Association Agreement. This will protect human life and health, consumers' interests, animals' health and welfare, and the health of plants. It will also help establish European standards in an internal market and increase the export potential of agricultural products, which will play an important role in the development of the economy and help establish an image for Georgia as a reliable trade partner.

Respective activities will be implemented towards the **development of bio agricultural farms and the implementation of climate wise agricultural practices** throughout the country.

A coordinated statistical system of collection, distribution and use of data will be improved. And the **agricultural market's information system** will be refined.

Significant attention will be paid to the **promotion of agricultural products** in local and international markets.

2.8.3. Transport

Based on the advantageous geographic condition of Georgia, it is important to develop a transportation system that will maximize Georgia's transit potential. The government has already made significant steps in this regard.

A significant project, the **construction of the Anaklia Port**, will have an influential impact on the improvement of Georgia's transit potential and also elevate Georgia to a regional role as a logistics hub. In future, the Anaklia Deep Water Project will be promoted.

The **Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project** was recently finalized, which significantly reduces the time necessary for moving cargo between Asia and Europe and is a prerequisite for attracting additional freight traffic through Georgia.

The Government of Georgia will implement policy to further develop the transportation sector in order to fully utilize Georgia's potential as a regional hub, in particular:

- **Integration into international transport systems** and the improvement of regional cooperation will be continued in order to increase the competitiveness of the transit corridor. Negotiations will be continued with other countries regarding the establishment of new transport corridors through Georgia, and their development (for example: Lapis Lazuli, Persian Gulf, Black Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea);
- **Transport systems will be improved** by ensuring that the development of transport infrastructure complies with international standards, and developing multi-modal and inter-modal traffics and logistic centres;
- **Open sky policy** will be promoted in the civil aviation sector;
- **“The Agreement on Common Aviation Area between European Union member states and Georgia” will be implemented**, which will ensure the development of flight safety, aviation security, environmental protection, protection of consumers' rights and the integration of Georgia's aviation space into the wider aviation community;
- The **development of small aviation and transport infrastructure** will be promoted in highland areas, which will support the economic growth of these regions;
- In accordance with the EU Association Agreement, legislation will be analysed and carried out with the aid of EU directives and regulations, which will further improve transportation operations safety in Georgia.

2.8.4. Tourism

The development of tourism is another key priority of the Government of Georgia. The flows of visitors and income gained from tourism increase every year. Tourism is an important driver of economic growth, and the government will implement the following activities to its further development:

- Road **infrastructure** will be improved and developed. The roads providing access to cultural monuments and other sights will be improved, which will stimulate tourism;
- **Marketing activities** on target and potential markets will become more active, which will attract more tourists and revenues;
- **Protected areas** will be expanded and eco-tourism will be promoted;
- The development of **different types of tourism** will be promoted (including: medical, sport, wine, and so on);

- The government will promote the **development of business tourism** with the help of the convention bureau, which will attract high-earning and high-spending tourists to Georgia and increase investments;
- A special focus will be put on **retraining personnel** working in the service sector in order to improve the service quality so it meets international standards;
- One strategic direction the tourism policy will take will be to transform Georgia into a **four-season tourism country**, which will ensure new tourism revenues and a stable distribution during the year;
- **Winter resorts** will be developed further in accordance with thoughtful development plans and their summer potential will also be taken into consideration;
- Cooperation between the public and private sectors will also be promoted in order to enhance tourism products and marketing.

2.9. Regional Economic Policy

Additional key priorities for the government are the **development of the regions** of the country and the elimination of inequality between them.

The Government of Georgia has a strategic vision for regional development, which is based on the economic and social development equalization policy of European regions. This means integrated, inter-sectoral and territory-focused planning and implementation of respective policies.

The implementation of social-economic development strategies and action plans throughout the regions will be actively continued. Plans for each region are outlined in the “Regional Development Programme of Georgia for 2015-2017,” which is also being implemented. In accordance with the mentioned approaches, the government will elaborate the regional development plan for 2018-2020, which will be focused on the promotion of balanced economic growth throughout the regions.

Regional development, gradual decentralization and an active role of territorial units in stimulating local economic processes are still viewed as key factors needed in order to achieve national success. Namely, goods and services produced in the regions, increased investment attractiveness and competitiveness, and enhanced physical and institutional infrastructure can all qualitatively improve the living standards of populations. While implementing respective regional policy, self-governments will be engaged and their needs will be taken into consideration in accordance with the priorities for development of each region.

Pursuant to the Law on Development of Highland Regions, the government will continue its

provision of social and economic support of the highland areas, the promotion of local production, the improvement of demographic conditions in the highland areas, and improving the welfare level of the highland areas population. Work will also be continued to enhance the development strategy of the highland areas based on strategic goals, objectives and activities that will be implemented in the midterm period.

The needs and priorities of populations in the conflict-affected areas will be taken into high consideration in the process of planning regional development.

New approaches will be used in regional development planning, which will ensure intersectoral and complex development and economic models adjusted into a local context.

The government will facilitate the engagement of **private business** in the development of social, cultural, environmental, education, and research and infrastructure programs on a regional level.

The regional development **funding system** will continue to be improved using cost effectiveness analyses.

The instruments and tools used for **supervising and reporting** on regional development will be upgraded.

The legal basis and institutional provision tools for regional development will also be improved.

A comprehensive study and systematization of local economic and tangible assets and their potential will be conducted to assess their reasonable management and use.

2.10. Protection of Environment

The protection of the environment, maintenance of its sustainability and the rational use of natural resources in parallel with economic development are important challenges and priorities facing the Government of Georgia.

To ensure a sustainable and healthy environment, the Government of Georgia will continue with its reforms. In accordance with the requirements of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, the gradual implementation of **modern environmental principles and standards** will be continued. Georgia will continue to fulfil and enforce the commitments accepted by bilateral and multilateral environmental agreements and sustainable development goals in regard to environmental protection.

Environmental management will be improved, taking into consideration modern approaches. An **environmental impact assessment system** will be developed based on transparent procedures. The list of the activities, subject to an environmental risk assessment, will be refined. The beginning phases of the project will assess the reasonability of planned activity, which will protect investors

from meaningless financial expenses. With these efforts, the participation of the population in the decision making process will become even more effective. Strategic environmental assessment will be done based on spatial arrangement and urban development plans. The government will also plan different programmes for various sectors, which will enable the country to take into consideration the environmental aspects in planning development for different sectors.

To prevent and eliminate (compensation) the damage to our environment, an **effective system for environmental responsibility** will be developed.

The issues related to **exploring and extracting minerals** will be put in order, to stimulate the interest of the private sector in this field. Ecological aspects will be taken into consideration in the licensing process and the state will be able to use and utilize the resources effectively.

New regulatory norms will be implemented to **protect and maintain biodiversity** and the sustainable use of biological resources, including in hunting and fishery fields.

The state will ensure the expansion of **protected areas** and ecotourism.

In order to implement and promote a **sustainable forest management practice**, effective mechanisms will be established for taking care of, protecting and restoring forests, which will promote the maintenance and improvement of qualitative and quantitative indicators of forests.

To reduce the preconditioned risks of climate change, a **hydrometeorology observation network** will be developed, modelling capacities will be strengthened and a national early response system will be implemented.

According to the commitments the government accepted in the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**, effective steps will be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

An **air, water and soil quality monitoring and evaluation system** will be developed in order to improve air quality. Also, qualitative norms for liquid fuel will be defined and an emission **accounting system** will be improved.

The transition to **Integrated Water Resources Management System** will be continued, which is based on European basin management principles.

The quality of **Nuclear and radiation safety** will be improved and a new system for management of radioactive waste will be developed, ensuring the protection of people and the environment from possible harmful impacts of radiation. In line with that initiative, **chemicals management and control mechanisms** will be enhanced.

Environmental education and environmental awareness activities will be continued and expanded.

3. Social Development

3.1. Health Care and Social Insurance

After the 2012 elections, the government announced healthcare and social policy based on principles of government's social responsibility. The further perfection of that policy will ensure a decent life and welfare for each Georgian citizen.

3.1.1. Healthcare

The main achievement of human focused social policy is coming into force with the **Universal Health Care Program**. Within the framework of this programme, more than 2.4 million cases have been funded since 2013.

The government will maintain the **Universal Health Care System** in the future, since it saved the lives of many and prevented poverty. Every citizen of Georgia will still be protected from high healthcare expenses. Taking into consideration international best practices, the models of public-private cooperation will be reviewed in order to ensure a higher contribution from employed people in covering healthcare costs.

The next phase of **primary healthcare** reform will be implemented. The tools for funding the primary healthcare system will be improved and the role and importance of a family doctor will be increased, which will save the state and citizens expenses.

Disease prevention will be a priority. The focus will be moved from response to diseases to prevention and timely detection of diseases in order to avoid complications.

Specialized health care program funding will be continued and all patients will be eligible for the hepatitis C elimination programme. The quality of mental health programmes will be improved on the level of inpatient, outpatient and community based services.

Special attention will be paid to **maternal and child health**. The plan for regionalization of perinatal medical centres will be implemented throughout Georgia. As a result, children's immunization in accordance with the national calendar, and provision of pregnant women and infants with preparations essential for healthy development, will be continued.

Modern and effective methods for treatment of **oncologic diseases** will be introduced.

Financing the healthcare system will be based on improving the existing standardized basic package of universal healthcare and using diagnosis-linked and global budgeting methods for reimbursement of services, which will ensure more reasonable and predictable spending.

Reform will be implemented to improve **access to medications**, as a result of which vulnerable groups will have better access to outpatient medications.

The quality of healthcare services and medications will be ensured by means of adequate **state monitoring** as well as based on an improvement of the legal basis.

The **implementation of an electronic medical records system** will be started all over the country, which will facilitate an improvement in healthcare quality.

The provisions of technical regulations for ambulatory activities subject to licenses, permits and containing high risks will be compliant with challenges.

The quality of Georgian healthcare will be ensured by reform of **medical education**, which provides competent medical staff. The post-diploma education system will be improved, which on one hand will improve the results of successful preventive and treatment processes for patients, and on the other hand will reduce expenses for healthcare facilities.

3.1.2. Social Security

The key principles of the government's social security policy are poverty reduction and eradication, efficiency in the social assistance system, fairness and transparency, and an increase in and promotion of motivation for employment.

The **social security system** will be enhanced to further improve the social conditions of the population. Operation of the system will be ensured based on objective criteria, excluding subjective factors and making the monitoring system stricter.

A new model for a **cumulative pension system** will be implemented, which will become the guarantee for a decent existence for individuals of pension age. A cumulative system means co-funding by employee, employer and state budget.

Employment of qualified persons of pension age will be facilitated within the framework of the programme "**Life continues**".

The government will continue effective policy for providing living space for **IDPs**. The construction of multi-apartment residential houses for IDPs will also be continued. Apartments will be procured from developers in Tbilisi and other big cities. Houses for IDPs will be procured within the

framework of the “House in village” project. More than 24,000 IDP families, who have ownership in residential areas, as well as condominium associations established by them, will receive ownership of areas of common use (attic, basement, and so on.). Compensation from the owners of residential areas occupied by IDPs will be continued. In parallel, work is underway with donors and investors to construct new dwellings for IDPs within the framework of a public-private partnership in both urban and rural areas. The state will continue its significant support of IDPs in small-scale entrepreneurship and cooperation.

The process of legalization of residential houses and land parcels for **eco-migrant** families will be continued. The government plans to procure houses for almost 1,000 eco-migrants throughout the country.

To improve **demographic conditions**, different social programmes will be strengthened. Different types of **elderly policy** will also be promoted, and the role of social workers will be increased to help families facing social problems.

Punishment will be liberalized in regard to the use of light drugs. The state will improve access to and the quality of healthcare services for drug addicts. With prevention programmes, the state will help deter engagement, especially the engagement of young people, in illicit drug use.

Taking into consideration the best practices of EU member states, Georgia will elaborate the regulations on limiting access to gambling, especially for juveniles and sensitive people. State control over the implementation of the mentioned regulations will become stricter. A preventive education component will be strengthened in order to deter big groups and young people from gambling.

3.2. Education

Education is one of the most important priorities of the Government of Georgia. The government plans to develop the education system, which will equip children, young people and adults with respective theoretical knowledge and practical skills and ensure in-depth understanding of national and universal values, thus raising civil awareness. All of these efforts will provide grounds for economic and social development as well.

Over the next four years, the Government of Georgia is planning systemic changes in the education field, in order to make the education and science system a solid basis for democratic, economic and social development. Continuous education will be ensured. The education system will be focused on quality, accessibility and inclusion. Effective steps will be taken to promote Georgia’s education system to occupy a leading position in the region and become a regional education centre.

3.2.1 Early and Preschool Education

To ensure universal access, **free** early and preschool education will be maintained in the system.

In order to ensure equally high quality early and preschool education, **universal quality standards**, state educational standards, high standards for infrastructure and logistics and universal standards for food and hygiene will be introduced to all public and private early and preschool education facilities starting in 2017. A safe and nonviolent environment will be ensured and control over implementation of that standard will be strengthened.

A new **professional standard** for caregivers and caregiver teachers will come into operation. The professions of caregiver and caregiver teachers will be promoted, personnel will be retrained and young people will be attracted to the profession.

The government's improvement of pre-school education facilities **infrastructure** and the establishment of new facilities will be continued.

The functions of school readiness groups will be supported in kindergarten and throughout all school levels.

3.2.2 General Education

High quality and **universal accessibility** of general education still remain priorities. Therefore, the government will develop an equal, safe and inclusive education environment with a focus on student success. In order to achieve high standards of development in educational environments, new standards of authorization will be implemented with a focus on high quality teaching and learning results.

To improve the quality of education, new **education plans**, curricula and textbooks will be developed, with a focus on high standards and in compliance with modern requirements. Their implementation will be started in 1st-6th grades from academic year 2017-2018 and then all three phases of general education will be covered gradually.

Differentiated approaches will be implemented at schools with a focus on technical, natural and social sciences, as well as art and vocational education.

A **national examination system** will be developed and the role of modern technologies will become more important in the process of conducting exams.

The government aims to **increase the prestige of being a teacher**. The state will promote career development through their continuous professional development. Development of a reimbursement

system and motivation packages will be continued. An increase in teachers' salaries will be implemented in accordance with a defined 1 January 2017 plan, and the average salary will reach 800 GEL. The salary increase will be determined based on economic development. Social protection guaranties for teachers will also be increased. To improve teaching, learning and the school management process, the government will implement large-scale programmes for the professional development of teachers and principals, starting in 2017. The programmes will be funded by the government as well as within the framework of the 14 million USD Millennium Challenge Compact project.

Free lessons, adjusted to students' interests, will become an essential part of school life. The state will promote diverse activities and projects, which will help pupils develop and improve analytical, creative and innovative thinking, team work, leadership and entrepreneurship skills, as well as civil and social competences. It will also help promote sport activities and a healthy life style.

The role of modern technologies as well as of distance learning will be strengthened in the teaching and learning process. The information and technological capacities of schools will be increased significantly. Diverse electronic resources will be prepared in the form of supportive teaching materials and games. Moreover, an electronic teaching platform will be developed, with the help of distance lessons on Georgian language, geography and history, which can be provided to representatives of diasporas.

Significant investments will be made **in the development of school infrastructure** based on modern standards, including the construction of new schools. Beginning in 2017, in parallel with the programmes funded by the state, a full rehabilitation of almost 100 public schools selected within the framework of the Millennium Challenge Compact will be continued. The schools will be provided with natural science laboratories, which will enable more than 37,000 students to study in schools that meet modern standards. Within the framework of the programme funded by the EU and Council of Europe, some schools in Tbilisi will also be rehabilitated, with a focus on improving their energy efficiency. The state will also provide capacity building programmes for small village schools in highland areas.

3.2.3 Vocational Education

A **dual, or work-based learning approach** will be implemented in the vocational education system through public-private partnerships. In order to prepare qualified personnel, the college and employer will share the competencies envisaged by the curriculum. Consequently, students will get theoretical knowledge at the college and in parallel develop necessary skills that can be applied to a real working environment. The implementation of a flexible modular teaching approach will be

continued, which will provide young people with the opportunity to attend a full modular programme and adults single modules. The curriculum envisages intensive practice after theoretical learning. Consequently, the competitiveness of the students and future employees will be increased, as well as their readiness for the labour market.

Based on a labour market survey, the state defines the priorities of vocational education and ensures employers' engagement in the implementation of vocational programmes as well as in the process of selection and assessment of students.

Vocational education will be focused on the **educational needs** of adolescents as well as of adults. The educational system for adults will be developed in cooperation with the private sector. Diverse programmes for vocational training and retraining will be put into operation. In parallel, flexible mechanisms will be developed for transition from vocational to higher education and that system will become more inclusive and open.

Entrepreneurial education will be a priority in order to create jobs and strengthen the private sector in parallel with the development of skills necessary for employment. Together with preparing for a profession, the students will study entrepreneurship. The program includes the ability to participate in activities that support operation of the public and private sectors (competitions, financing, promotion of start-ups) and to start one's own business based on knowledge and a profession.

The **quality assurance model and national qualifications framework** has been prepared in accordance with European approaches and will be introduced, which will facilitate the mobility of students and employees and the development of a continuous education system. In this model, vocational colleges will be supported by the implementation of joint programmes in cooperation with European and other successful educational institutions and prepare staff in accordance with international standards.

According to the Millennium Challenge Second Compact, signed by the US and Georgian governments, from 2016-2019, 16 million USD will be allocated for the implementation of **new curricula for vocational education** in accordance with international labour market standards.

Cooperation with the EU will be continued, to help the **capacity building of human resources**, which will facilitate sustainable development. This cooperation will also facilitate the implementation of **lifelong learning principles**, by connecting education and employments fields.

The **infrastructure** of vocational education facilities will be developed and the existing geographic network will be expanded by public-private partnership.

A coherent system will be introduced for **professional development** of vocational education teachers, and their study visits abroad will be encouraged. The remuneration policy will be based on the analyses of knowledge, experience and achieved results.

3.2.4 Higher Education

New effective models of higher education will be implemented, with a focus on strengthening areas related to the needs of the country's development, improvement of public life and the economy, all identified based on labour market analyses.

Effective models of quality management will be implemented in accordance with international standards for higher education. The new standards and procedures for authorization and accreditation will be focused on results and development, as well as on ensuring high standards. The priority will be given to the integration of learning and scientific research.

An integrated bachelor's and master's educational programme will be implemented to improve **the teachers' training system**. In public and private higher education institutions, a 60-credit teacher training accredited educational program that will be funded by the state to facilitate the recruitment of new staff at schools, will be introduced.

Specialized programmes will be supported to integrate leading Georgian specialists successfully working in scientific research centres and universities abroad into the higher education system.

The state will provide special support to increase of the role and importance of **modern technologies**, in the higher education process, including strengthening the distant learning component.

The state will promote the **internationalization** of higher education and sharing international best practices.

The large-scale project "**Study in Georgia**" will be implemented to attract foreign students to higher education institutions in Georgia. This effort will better position Georgia as a regional educational centre.

The University City will be built in Kutaisi and become a leading regional centre, in regard to exact, natural, mathematic, engineering and other sciences.

3.2.5 Science

Supportive measures will be implemented for transforming Georgia into a strong **regional scientific centre**.

Priority scientific directions will be identified and supported, taking into consideration the requirements of strategic economic development and the needs of society.

Scientific cooperation with the centres and universities of other countries and the implementation of

joint projects will be promoted, as well as exchange programmes enabling the government to invite foreign scientists to Georgia and send Georgians abroad for scientific research. The younger generation's participation in science will be encouraged with the implementation of targeted programmes.

Infrastructural capacities of science will be built.

The state will facilitate the implementation of **modern technologies** in scientific research facilities.

The state will facilitate the strengthening of the Kartvelian study abroad departments.

The state will promote cooperation within the framework of the EU Commission Programme "**Horizon-2020**," which offers a new prospect for international cooperation and funding to Georgian scientists, businessmen and other stakeholders.

3.3 Culture, Sport and Youth Policy

Funding allocated by the state for the development of culture is being increased year by year. According to the EU Association Agreement, the Ministry of Culture and Protection of Monuments of Georgia put forward and the government approved the "Strategy of Culture 2025," which defines the vision, goals and objectives of the state in the cultural field. Georgia is the first among Eastern Partnership countries to become a member of the EU Programme "Creative Europe."

Over the next 4 years, the following measures will be implemented in the field of culture, sport and youth policy.

3.3.1 Culture

Legislation related to the culture and protection of monuments will be improved. The Cultural Heritage Code will be elaborated, which will provide respective legislative grounds for the protection of cultural heritage and finding alternative ways for fundraising, while diversification in the field of culture will be continued.

The **management of culture** will become more open, transparent and inclusive; participation of experts and professionals will be increasingly included in the decision-making process and the elaboration of sectoral strategies.

The **accessibility of culture** will be improved for broader sections of society, especially for populations residing in remote regions, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Infrastructural projects will be implemented for the maintenance of cultural heritage. Culture will be promoted for a broader

group of society and potential media coverage will be used to promote the development of culture and the creative sector.

Culture will be integrated in other sectors, especially in economic policy. Communication will be strengthened between workers in the cultural field and business structures, and partnerships between the public and private sectors will be encouraged. The use of cultural potential in terms of entrepreneurship and tourism will be promoted, including **traditional national crafting**. Within the framework of the “Creative Georgia” programme, the state will promote the development of creative industries, laboratories, and incubators. Tools for promoting the creative industries will be elaborated and the use of the export potential of culture will be improved. Also, new mechanisms for resources and coordination, as well as electronic databases, will be elaborated.

The **Internationalization of Georgian Culture** will be promoted, and Georgian artists will participate in important international activities, inter-cultural dialogue and joint projects that will be facilitated on an institutional, organizational and individual level.

The development of art education will be facilitated and the qualification of specialists in the sector will be improved. Art will be promoted in general education facilities.

3.3.2 Sport

Vocational and higher **sport education** will be accessible for teachers and coaches. The reform of sports at universities will be implemented.

The **development of mass sports** will be promoted, including the engagement of vulnerable groups in sports. The state will implement effective policy to increase the number of individuals engaged in professional sports by 15% and the number of citizens engaged in mass sports by 25%. Special attention will be given to the engagement of children and adolescents in sports. The development of sport in penitentiary facilities will also be promoted.

Combined football and rugby pitches will be constructed in accordance with international standards and new sport facilities will be built in regional centres. An effective model will be developed for the **management of sport infrastructure**, which will be based on cooperation between the public and private sector.

Funding of **football clubs and programmes** of different levels will be continued during the following 4 years. The transfer of men’s football teams, children’s and women’s football, as well as age-specific teams (including national team) to private ownership will be promoted.

A **sports tourism strategy** will be outlined in coordination with national sports federations, which together with the general promotion of the country will precondition effective use of existing sports

infrastructure.

3.3.3 Youth Policy

The state will continue supporting **youth activities**, including funding informal education programmes, hobby education and recreation projects. The role of local self-governance will be increased in regard to youth policy.

The number of camping centres and tourism paths as well as social and youth cafes will be increased to promote **youth tourism**;

Cooperation with the EU will be deepened to promote youth mobility, volunteering and the development of nongovernmental organizations.

Cooperation with the nongovernmental sector to promote and develop youth projects will be improved.

More support will be provided to informal education programmes focused on the **inclusion of people with disabilities**, including a number of projects focused on employment.

4. Foreign Relations, Safety and Defence

4.1 Foreign Relations

Stability and prosperity provide the basis for the peaceful and sustainable development of a country. The goal of the government is to continue the process of building a modern and stable European state, with a developed democracy, and to improve upon its progress. The best way for achieving this goal is to continue on the path toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Georgia is in a complex and changing geopolitical environment. Considering the existing global and regional challenges, Georgia's integration into NATO and cooperation with the US as a key partner are essential to ensuring the sovereignty and safety of Georgia. Improving cooperation offers an opportunity for the development of a stable and predictable political and economic environment, which is a key component for long term economic development.

The formation of a stable and predictable environment in the country requires the minimization of threats coming from Russia, implementation of rational policy, de-occupation of the country and restoration of territorial integrity - without sacrificing strategic interests.

The development of a safe and stable environment based on the continuance of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and rational policy with Russia, is a precondition for the improvement Georgia's investment attractiveness and effective use of the benefits provided by the EU Association Agreement. All these provide grounds for prosperity and long-term development for the Georgian population.

To achieve these goals, the government identifies the following priorities for foreign policy:

- Strengthen security and sovereignty, obtain the de-occupation and restoration of territorial integrity through peaceful resolution of conflicts with the Russian Federation;
- European and Euro-Atlantic Integration;
- Promotion of economic development;
- Worldwide promotion of Georgia's positive image;
- Strengthen ties with Georgian diasporas and promote their engagement in Georgia's development process.

4.1.1 Strengthening Safety and Sovereignty

De-Occupation and Restoration of Territorial Integrity by Peaceful Resolution of Conflict with Russian Federation

A few key foreign policy priorities include: the inviolability of internationally recognized borders; strengthening Georgian sovereignty; de-occupation of Georgia; and the restoration of territorial integrity. These are only possible through peaceful efforts.

The Government of Georgia continues its efforts based on the provision of full implementation of the obligations accepted by the Russian Federation within the Ceasefire Agreement of 12 August 2012 and increasing international engagement in this process.

Georgia will continue constructive participation within the format of the Geneva negotiations. The government's efforts will be focused on progress in negotiations regarding key issues, such as: non-use of force; provision of international security arrangements in the occupied territories; and the safe return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Special attention will be paid to preventing further escalation of the Russian–Georgian conflict, as well as to consolidating international efforts to ensure the safety and protection of human rights in the occupied territories. Work will be continued to promote the full implementation of the only international mechanism available to date in Georgia - the EUMM mandate on occupied territories.

Active work will be continued in order to put into operation international mechanisms aimed at the protection and monitoring of human rights in the occupied territories, especially in the most vulnerable Gali and Akhalkalaki regions.

Within the policy of the non-recognition of the so-called independence of the occupied territories, Georgia will make an effort to provide fair information to the international community regarding the situation in the occupied regions in order to prevent risks associated with possible acknowledgement. The government will continue to maintain and strengthen the efforts of international organizations and partner states in regard to the non-acknowledgement policy.

One of the key priorities of Georgian foreign policy will be the mobilization of an international effort to promote the safe return of IDPs and refugees to their places of residence. Georgia will make sure that this issue remains on the agenda of international discussions and in the spotlight of the international community until this fundamental right is realized.

Within the framework of the government's policy of peaceful regulations regarding the conflict, special attention will be paid to reconciliation and confidence-building in communities fractured by the war and occupation lines; dialogue between the people separated by the conflict; confidence-building projects; and a response to the humanitarian needs of the population affected by the conflict. All of these efforts will be carried out by means of public diplomacy and the promotion of common interests based on cooperation.

The Government of Georgia will continue making healthcare services and treatment for hepatitis C accessible for the population residing in the occupied territories. The construction of multi profile clinics will be finalized by 2017, which will provide services to the whole region, including residents of the occupied territories. The Government of Georgia will offer the people on the other side of the occupation line benefits and prospects for a better future associated with the European development of Georgia derived from cooperation with the European Union and other partners.

4.1.2 European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia

Integration in the European Union

Georgia's goal of full integration into the European Union is based on and fully reflects the strong will of the majority of Georgian citizens who want to become decent and plenipotentiary members of a community of democratic countries.

The association agreement represents the framework for political and economic integration of Georgia into the EU. The goal of the government is to use the opportunities provided by EU integration fully and effectively.

A political dialogue will be continued between the EU and EU member states, regarding Georgia's integration.

Effective implementation of the Association Agreement will be continued, which includes the DCFTA component. Cooperation will be deepened within the framework of the institutes envisaged

by the Association Agreement.

The government will continue cooperation efforts in order to improve mobility and communication between the people. The visa free regime will also provide additional opportunities for Georgian citizens.

Institutional and sectoral cooperation will be continued with the purpose of sectoral integration with the EU.

Cooperation will be improved within the framework of CSDP.

Cooperation will be continued with civil society, which offers an opportunity for a successful implementation of the Association Agreement, consolidation of public opinion regarding EU integration, and mobilization of available knowledge.

NATO Integration

Full integration in NATO is another main objective and a precondition for strengthening the safety of Georgia and its stable development. Georgia will continue its practical implementation of the decision made by NATO partners at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest that stated, “Georgia will become a NATO member.”

In July 2016, at the NATO summit in Warsaw, Georgia adopted initiatives regarding important issues, such as: development of aviation capacities, joint trainings, cooperation on Black Sea safety, crisis management capacity building and improvement of the strategic communication field.

In order to accelerate integration into the alliance:

- Preparation for membership will be continued, using existing practical instruments (NATO-Georgian Commission, Annual National Programme, NATO-Georgia Substantial Package);
- Effective implementation of NATO-Georgia Substantial Package, aimed at improving Georgia’s defence capacity, which will support Georgia in preparation for Alliance membership. Work on the implementation of new initiatives adopted at the Summit in Warsaw will be continued.
- Georgia will still be an important partner of the Alliance in strengthening international security;
 - Active cooperation will be continued with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, which actively supports the objectives of Georgia’s integration in NATO, as well as its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

4.1.3 Promotion of the Country's Economic Development

Long term economic development of the country requires the promotion of Georgia as an international investment, communication, transport, logistics, energy, technology, and tourism and finance hub. This will all ensure the full utilization of Georgia's transport and transit potential, development of national production and increase in exports. It will also help attract foreign investments, and promote the country's full participation in the implementation of modern technologies and activity in international economic processes.

It is important for Georgia to continue its development efforts in its energy corridors, and establish and expand new transport corridors.

The government will pay special attention to the implementation of inclusive, competitive and effective regional projects in regard to transport and energy, within the framework of the Silk Road.

A key priority of the government is the establishment of business relations with other countries and increased cooperation to facilitate the country's integration with liberal markets around the world. In this respect, the government's policy will be focused on strengthening economic components of Georgia's diplomatic representation abroad and the implementation of a system of commercial attachés.

4.1.4 Promotion of Georgia's Positive Image Worldwide

An additional foreign policy priority is Georgia's presentation in the international arena as a stable and safe country that serves as a regional leader in terms of democratic development and successful reforms. The government plans to promote Georgian reforms to international audiences in order to create a positive image of the country worldwide and share experiences with other countries.

The presentation of Georgia as a country with an ancient history and diverse culture requires active cultural diplomacy. The government's policy will be focused on promoting Georgia's engagement in international cultural life. There will be a bilateral and multilateral effort in regard to the development of international cultural and humanitarian cooperation and the promotion of joint international projects.

The establishment of contacts and cooperation with other countries will be continued. The development of Georgia's cultural and intellectual potential will be promoted through active cooperation with UNESCO. World heritage monuments, one of key factors facilitating tourism, will be promoted and the nomination process for new monuments will be facilitated. The cooperation with UNESCO will be continued in order to solve problems related to world heritage monuments.

4.1.5 Strengthening Ties with Georgian Diasporas and Promoting their Involvement in the Development Process

Georgia's foreign policy puts an emphasis on the protection of the rights and legal interests of Georgian citizens residing abroad, as well as strengthening ties with them. The Georgian diaspora plays a key role in the economic and social development of the country.

The government wants to see an intensification and systematization of relations between the state and the diaspora, along with the resolution of problems through joint efforts.

The promotion of a national and cultural identity of the Georgian diaspora is extremely important, which will facilitate the diaspora's engagement in the promotion of the country worldwide and strengthening its positive image.

The government will actively participate in the resolution of particular social issues concerning the Georgian diaspora. Effective legal and consultation mechanisms, as well as on-the-spot support, will be provided to the diaspora representatives.

At the same time, the government's policy will be focused on maximizing engagement with Georgian citizens residing abroad and their family members. Their return will also be facilitated.

Bilateral Diplomacy

The government of Georgia will continue strategic cooperation with US, as a key partner, in particular:

- The partnership with the US will be deepened to enhance Georgia's defence capacity and contribute to the institutional development of the armed forces; Cooperation with the US will be deepened in the fields of education and science. Active work will be done under the US Millennium Challenge Corporation's second compact, in order to improve the quality of general, technical, vocational and higher education. Exchange programmes for students and researchers will also be intensified;
- Bilateral trade and investment relations will be continued within the HLTID format, as well as in regard to free trade.

The most important implementation of Georgia's foreign political objectives will be deepening cooperation with European countries and focusing on strategic partnerships. The Government of Georgia will continue its work on effectively presenting the results of reforms implemented in Georgia to European audiences, and promoting Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

During last 4 years, a lot was done to strengthen cooperation with our neighbour countries: Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The promotion of trade, economic, cultural and people-to-people contacts will be continued with the Russian Federation within the framework of rational and de-escalation policy.

Close cooperation with Eastern countries in the trade, economic, transport and energy fields is critically important for Georgia. That cooperation helps Georgia to connect Europe and Asia using the Silk Road. The use of potential cooperation and rising awareness of Georgia in the region are priorities for the government. Special attention was paid to the implementation of inclusive, competitive and effective regional projects, as well as to people-to-people contacts within the framework of Silk Road.

Economic, cultural and other sectoral agreements and legal relationships will be improved bilaterally with Middle Eastern, African, Pacific, Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Multilateral Diplomacy

Another important priority is active cooperation with international organizations and their institutions, especially concerning the successful implementation of democratic reforms, an increased role of international organizations in the peaceful resolution of the Georgian–Russian conflict, confidence building and safety in conflict-affected areas, and the development of tools for the protection of human rights.

During Georgia’s membership period in the UN Human Rights Council (2016-2018), Georgia will use this format to attract the Council’s attention to human rights conditions and violations in the occupied regions, including through particular initiatives.

To promote the development of international mechanisms for the protection of human rights in the occupied territories, work will be continued with the respective institutes of international organizations (UN, OSCE, CoE).

Work on the country’s priorities will be continued in regard to all three OSCE dimensions: military, political, economic and humanistic.

Regional cooperation will be continued within the framework of the Democracy and Economic Development Organization GUAM. In 2017, Georgia as the GUAM chair country will continue to cooperate on basic issues of the organization’s agenda. Relations will also be developed with regional organizations of Arab countries, such as the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Additionally, collaboration will be improved with the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), Portuguese-Speaking Countries Community (CPLP) and other international organizations.

Strategic Communication

The achievement of these foreign policy priorities requires active strategic communication regarding the steps implemented by the government. Only then can the government maintain support from the population for its foreign agenda.

Direct contacts will be established with the people and information regarding the government's operations will be distributed with the help of digital diplomacy.

To maintain support for Georgia's European and Euro Atlantic integration:

- Effective steps will be taken against anti-Western propaganda, using information, strategic communication and not counter propaganda or other non-democratic means;
- Active information campaigns will be continued to provide precise and comprehensive information regarding the EU and NATO, challenges and opportunities associated with Euro-Atlantic integration and the reforms implemented in Georgia;
- Cooperation will be continued with the civil sector, in regard to the facilitation of projects and coordination of joint efforts;
- The information and communication strategy will be elaborated on European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

4.2 Strengthening Defence Capacity of the Country

Georgia needs balanced, adaptable, effective, flexible, sustainable and mobile armed forces, which are compatible for participation in NATO's international operations, can support the civil government in case of manmade disasters, respond adequately to threats on borders, and direct military aggression.

To reduce security challenges, there needs to be a full transformation of Georgia's defence system and expanded development of its military capacities. This goal fully complies with Georgia's NATO aspirations.

In order to develop a strong and effective system, the Government of Georgia will approve and implement a **four-year programme**, which will become a strategic plan for the implementation of a new defence vision and provide the groundwork for transformed and modernized military forces. The implementation of the programme will be based on achievements in the military field, successful programmes in the armed forces, joint NATO-Georgia projects, and new visions of reforming the military forces, which will be developed in the following five directions:

- **Strategy and management** – improvement of the quality of defence plans and the level of management systems integration, and effective distribution of resources;

- **Forces optimization** - development of balanced unity of military capacities, which preconditions national security;
- **Forces readiness** – focus on critical factors: personnel, education, trainings, equipment, education, sustainability;
- **Institutional reforms** – improvement of the Ministry of Defence management tools to ensure effective support of operational requirements of the armed forces;
- **International engagement** - participation in international programmes and activities to improve military capacity and compatibility with NATO and partners nations.

For successful realization of the vision:

- Competencies will be distinguished between General HQ and the Ministry; the system for management of the Ministry of Defence and General HQ and institutional consultancies will be integrated, improved and optimized;
- Institutionalization of the rules and procedures for management of existing resources will be implemented to ensure the transparent use and accountability of defence resources;
- Combat capacities and mobility of the armed forces will be improved; further development of air defence and anti-tank opportunities will remain key priorities;
- A reserve and mobilization concept will be agreed upon;
- Ways to recruit and maintain qualified personnel will be identified;
- The share of personal expenses in the defence budget will be reduced to ensure compatibility with NATO standards. Also general expenses of the Ministry of Defence will be optimized and rights, duties and functions will be strictly distinguished inside of the Ministry of Defence;
- The logistical system will be upgraded; common technical and construction standards will be implemented;
- Cyber capacity and cyber security of the armed forces will be improved;
- Military medical capabilities will be improved, for which proper distribution of the country's national resources will be ensured;
- Capacity building of special forces will be promoted;
- Reform of military police will be continued.

The presented government programme defines the main goals and objectives which ensure freedom of the citizens of Georgia, as well as the rapid development and prosperity of the country. “Georgian Dream” has the power to maintain peace, cope with challenges and lead the country forward.