



**Government Program**  
**2019 – 2020**

September, 2019

## Vision

The Georgian Dream—Democratic Georgia political union has established the work of the Government of Georgia on the key principles established by, which serve the cause of building a democratic state, ensuring the country's economic development, taking active steps toward the country's territorial integrity and de-occupation, and Georgia's full European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

In light of abovementioned principles, the 2019-2020 Action Plan of the Government of Georgia will focus mostly on achieving rapid, tangible outcomes for every citizen in that period. The Government will focus its efforts on the following key directions:

- **Security and Human Rights:** Security is the cornerstone of the country's development. Given the country's occupation, and growing internal and external threats, it is important, on one hand, to deepen cooperation with the country's strategic partners as a guarantee of long-term security and, on the other, to ensure the effective functioning of the defense system and structures for domestic security and order in line with international standards. At the same time, adhering to high standards of human rights protection is of a paramount importance.
- **Economic Development:** The Government's economic policy draws on freedom of business, active dialogue with business, and putting in place a predictable business environment. Importantly, the Government must ensure a level playing field and adequate infrastructure, and enable the private sector to gain a competitive access to world markets.
- **Education and Human Capital Development:** The state must promote the empowerment of human capital as an important factor for economic development by ensuring decent social welfare and developing a quality healthcare system, also by allowing every member of society to access these goods.
- **State Governance:** the implementation of the Government's policy will rely on enhancing the quality of governance and result-oriented work, all of which will be visible and tangible for every citizen.

## 1. Security and Human Rights

### 1.1 Foreign Policy

Given the existing challenges, the effective implementation of Georgia's foreign priorities, deeper cooperation with strategic partners, and the engagement of the international community in the country's de-occupation and stronger territorial integrity are of utmost importance for the country's security.

The main priority of the Georgian Government's foreign policy is **the strengthening of the country's sovereignty and the peaceful restoration of its territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders.**

The Government of Georgia will continue its efforts to constrain and eliminate the Russian Federation's steps toward the actual annexation of Georgia's occupied territories, also to ensure the de-occupation of the Regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, to prevent conflict escalation, and to ensure peace and security on the ground.

In this context, Georgia will continue its constructive and active participation in the Geneva International Discussions, the most important format co-chaired by the EU, UN, and OSCE, and US participation, to solve security and humanitarian issues arising from the conflict between Georgia and Russia.

The Geneva Discussions cannot be viewed in isolation from the geopolitical environment, and international support will be attracted to further this process, including efforts seeking to accentuate Georgia's issue at high-level meetings with the Russian Federation.

Intensive work will continue to ensure that the Russian Federation fully meets its international obligations, including under the August 12, 2008 Ceasefire Agreement achieved through EU mediation, along with confirmation and fulfillment by the Russian Federation of its obligation on non-use of force, withdrawal of Russian forces from the occupied regions, creation of international security mechanisms on the ground, and enhancement of international engagement in this process.

To this end, every available bilateral and multilateral international format will be used, including the UN and its Security and Human Rights Councils, OSCE, the European Council, and bilateral meetings with partners.

Proactive work will continue on the full implementation of the mandate of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia's occupied territories.

Special attention will be paid to the humanitarian conditions of the populations of Georgia's occupied regions and to ensuring human rights protection, to which end international efforts will be further consolidated and negotiation formats will be used effectively. To ensure the further mobilization of support from partner countries and international organizations, the international community will be further informed about the state of affairs in Georgia's occupied territories, and on the steps taken by the Government of Georgia toward its peace policy. Active work will continue to provide international human rights mechanisms with access to the occupied territories.

Efforts will continue to ensure the safe and honorable return of the IDPs and refugees from Georgia's occupied territories as a result of several waves of ethnic cleansing.

The Government of Georgia will continue working actively in the international arena in order further to cement the so-called non-recognition policy.

Under the peaceful conflict-resolution policy, special attention will be paid to fostering reconciliation and engagement policies. That involves peace-building, implementation of people-oriented policies, allocating support to the conflict-affected populations on either side of the boundary line, and their assistance and social and economic empowerment, also confidence-building between the populations artificially torn by barbed wires. The effective implementation of *A Step to a Better Future*, the Georgian Government's peace initiative, will be given priority. Special attention will be paid to facilitating and developing direct dialogue and cooperation based on common interests between the torn societies. Active work will continue toward the further mobilization of international support.

The Government's foreign policy will be actively directed toward **Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration**.

To ensure **full integration into the EU**, the Government will use every mechanism of cooperation with

the EU. The EU integration agenda will rely on the roadmap defining particular directions and key priorities, such wise/thus enhancing the systemic, predictable, and transparent character of European integration.

According to the roadmap, the Government of Georgia will:

- Continue the effective implementation of the Association Agreement, including DCFTA, as the main legal foundation for Georgia-EU relations.
- Take concrete steps toward deeper security and defense cooperation with the EU.
- Take concrete steps toward sectoral integration into the EU further to align the country with the EU's sectoral norms and policy.
- Enhance participation in EU framework programs and cooperation with specialized agencies in order to foster the empowerment of Georgia's institutions in various fields in line with EU standards.
- Carry out legislative compatibility analysis to draw closer to EU legislation.
- Continue the effective use of opportunities offered under the Eastern Partnership.

At the same time, the Government is committed to deepening political dialogue with the EU and EU member states in order to ensure Georgia's European integration. The Government will also study new integration opportunities further to draw closer Georgia to European institutions. Maximal effort will be invested toward ensuring the effective functioning of visa-free travel to the Schengen Area, which offers our citizens new opportunities for deeper people-to-people contacts. The Government of Georgia will also continue negotiations with the EU on signing a circular migration agreement.

**NATO integration** is one of the most important tasks of Georgia's foreign and security policy, and one of the key contributing factors for strengthening the country's security and ensuring stable development, the priority supported by the vast majority of the population and enshrined in the Constitution of Georgia. Georgia will continue consistent effort toward the actualization of the Allies' decision at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest that "Georgia will become a member of NATO."

Georgia will continue the effective use of the key NATO integration tools, such as the Annual National Program, the NATO-Georgia Commission, and the NATO-Georgia Substantial Package, along with reforms for democratic development and stronger defense capabilities. In addition, Georgia, as an integral part of the Black Sea security architecture, will continue participating in strategic discussions with the Alliance, and will deepen practical cooperation, in line with the decisions of the 2018 Summit in Brussels and the April 2019 Foreign Ministerial.

Georgia will also ensure participation in NATO-led missions and operations in order to contribute to common Euro-Atlantic security.

Notably, on the invitation of the Government of Georgia, the fifth visit of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) is planned to be held in October 2019, in Batumi, an event of crucial importance in terms of both political and practical cooperation between NATO and Georgia.

The NAC visit prior to the meeting of the leaders of NATO in December will be indicative of the fact that Georgia, as a NATO aspirant country, holds an important place on the Alliance's agenda as a valuable

and reliable partner to NATO. This visit on the part of the Alliance will send a strong political message of support for Georgia.

To achieve the goals under the foreign policy, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms of diplomacy will be used.

#### **Under bilateral diplomatic formats:**

Partnership with the United States, Georgia's key ally, will continue and further deepen, including on the country's de-occupation, strengthening Georgia's sovereignty and security, NATO integration, and democratic and economic reforms. In particular, we seek to:

- Further deepen cooperation in every priority direction under the US-Georgia Strategic Partnership Commission.
- Continue working on the priority directions defined in the Joint Declaration on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the US-Georgia Strategic Partnership Charter.
- Continue working on the adoption of the Georgia Support Act by the US Congress further to cement the strategic partnership between the two countries on a legislative level.
- Keep and expand the strong bipartisan support for Georgia in the US House of Representatives and Senate in order to ensure the adoption of important statements, resolutions, and legislative acts on Georgia.
- Deepen defense and security cooperation with the US in order to enhance Georgia's defense capabilities and ensure the institutional development of the country's armed forces.
- Strengthen cooperation with relevant US agencies to deepen trade, economic, and investment relations, including in order to launch negotiations on a free trade agreement.

Of vital importance will be the issue of advancing bilateral partnership with Western European states to a strategic level, and continuing and further deepening partnership with traditional allies, European states.

Promotion of regional stability and well-balanced regional policy will continue.

Political, economic, cultural, and other sectoral agreement-based/legal relations will continue with the countries of the Near East and Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Active cooperation in bilateral and multilateral formats will continue with the countries of Asia and Oceania. Work will continue toward strengthening ties with Central and South-Eastern Asian countries, along with developing positive sustainable cooperation dynamics.

#### **Multilateral Diplomacy**

Active engagement in international organizations (UN, OSCE, the European Council), and relevant implementation/positioning of the country's national interests, is an important direction under the foreign policy.

Georgia will continue working actively to keep the issue of Russo-Georgian conflict in international organizations.

Georgia will make maximal use of international organizations to draw the member states' attention to the human rights situation and ongoing violations in the occupied regions.

In 2019-2020, Georgia will chair the Council of Europe. The Government will spare no effort to ensure the successful planning and implementation of the chairmanship.

Active work will continue toward developing cooperation with other international organizations.

To enhance Georgia's visibility abroad, and to ensure high information-based public trust in the country's foreign policy, thematic awareness campaigns and other relevant activities will be carried out under **strategic communications**, along with providing the population with information and information environment monitoring in order to identify and prevent disinformation.

One of the key priorities of Georgia's foreign policy is **promoting the development of a unified and strong diaspora** with close ties to the homeland. To this end, it is necessary to develop sustainable ties with the diaspora in order to provide compatriots with access to the opportunities offered by the state, and to ensure the effective implementation of Georgia's national interests.

The Government will promote the implementation of the shared interests of compatriots and diaspora organizations, to preserve national identity and cultural uniqueness, to ensure the effective performance of diaspora organizations, and to foster close cooperation with governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations and host countries.

Special attention will be paid to the engagement of the diaspora in Georgia's social and economic development, and to fostering the honorable return of Georgia's citizens living abroad to their homeland.

In 2020, the reconstruction/rehabilitation of the Leuville Estate will start.

## 1.2 Strengthening the Country's Defense Capabilities

Given the existing hybrid challenges, Georgia needs mobile and effective armed forces with a high level of combat readiness, sustainable defense and deterrence skills, and adequate equipment, fully compatible with NATO forces. Such forces are the main components of threat deterrence.

The key mission of Georgia's armed forces is to protect the country, to which end special emphasis is placed on the introduction of the total defense approach and the development of its military component. At the same time, participation together with Alliance and partner states continues in international missions to combat terrorism and promote global security. The country's armed forces also ensure the support of civil authorities in times of natural and technological crises within the country.

To accomplish these tasks, the strategic defense development document and transformation plan have been drawn to include a number of activities aiming to develop the defense system/defense forces by 2020. This is fully compatible with the NATO defense and deterrence policy, and it involves ensuring defense systems enabling sustainable armed forces with a high level of combat readiness closely to coordinate with other agencies in order effectively to fulfil the task of defending their country.

Consequently, the Government of Georgia, as part of developing the national defense system, will continue working on the adoption of the principle of total defense.

The goal of total defense in times of peace is to create mechanisms that help quickly and effectively mobilize the country for defense purposes should an act of aggression arise. The creation of a total defense system will ensure the distribution of responsibilities and duties between the armed forces, state institutions, and the population, this way helping the defense system focus on its immediate tasks and use its forces effectively.

In order to enhance management effectiveness under the total defense approach, in times of both war and peace, the culture of task-based management will be further adopted in the armed forces to include active phases of evaluation, exercises/military simulations, and implementation.

Together with the US as Georgia's key strategic partner, the Georgia Defense Readiness Program (GDRP) will continue, as part of which the infantry battalions of the defense forces will be retrained and equipped through 2020.

Due attention will be paid to the further reforming of the capabilities of engineering, logistics, and special forces, of the air defense, air transport, anti-armor, intelligence, artillery, management and control, communications, and computer systems, also of cybersecurity and strategic communications, and of the national guard.

In light of modern requirements, the initialization of military education: important segments of officers and sergeants will continue, and so will their alignment with NATO standards. The further development of the NATO-Georgian Joint Training and Evaluation Center (JTEC) will significantly increase defense evaluation capabilities, and will also support the implementation of the NATO Partnership Interoperability Initiative. In addition, will be fully streamlined, with the further development of initial combat readiness and doctrine centers in line with NATO standards.

Under the Alliance's Enhanced Forward Presence, the transformation of defense logistics will continue. The initiatives under the NATO-Georgia Substantial Package (SNGP) will be implemented to use both bilateral and multilateral formats for achieving a high level of compatibility through effective support from the Alliance.

With the total defense principle in mind, reserve units will be further prepared. To develop the territorial component of active reserve, the development of enhancement plans for the reserve program specialists will continue which involves defining relevant positions for reserve specialists in regular units.

In light of the requirements of national defense, and especially the principle of total defense, it is critically important to ensure high-level interagency cooperation and coordinated action within the defense sector. Accordingly, work on reflecting ways to improve the unified governmental approach and coordination mechanisms will continue at the conceptual level by adopting the 2020-2030 National Defense Strategy and, based on this strategy, through implementing relevant activities at the agency level under the National Defense Readiness Plan.

Effective steps will be planned to enhance military scientific research, and to develop the military industry and enhance its export potential. In this context, the following measures are planned:

- Production of bulletproof vests and combat helmets, and equipping the units of the Ministries of Defense and Internal Affairs with locally manufactured gear.
- Further improvement and development of the Didgori armored vehicle to fulfil such combat and

support functions as communications, medical, firefighting, intelligence, and artillery support (mobile rocket launchers).

- Additionally, a firearms management module will be developed, a system of target identification, acquisition, and location will be created, and so will be a unmanned helicopter platform, armored fighting vehicles, and hail cannons.

In parallel with GDRP, the remuneration of its participant units will grow in stages.

In addition, the development of military medical capabilities will continue, and so will the process of enhancing the effectiveness of medical services/rehabilitation for the personnel of the armed forces and the Ministry of Defense, their families, also for veterans, families of fallen service members, and civilians, along with social reintegration and resocialization measures for wounded/injured service members, and co-financing of apartments under construction for service members.

### 1.3 Safety, and Law and Order

To ensure the country's safe environment and to protect law and order, it is important to implement criminal law policy based on actual data and analysis, and to put in place inevitable punishment. In this direction, it is necessary to ensure the effective participation and work of every member of the judiciary and relevant responsibility-sharing.

Consequently, it is important to continue the reforms within the state structures in charge of safety and law and order with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of their performance.

To ensure an effective public security and law and order system, the further development of **the Ministry of Internal Affairs** will continue in line with the concept of systemic upgrade. This concept incorporates structural reforms as well as essential changes and legislative initiatives.

**The Criminal Police reform will continue as the foundation of police work.** In particular, the clear separation of the operative investigation and district directions will be completed throughout Georgia. The gradual replacement of the district direction with public-oriented policy work will continue. The institute of law and order officer will be developed, and modern-standard police services with relevant law and order officer units will be created, with prevention of crime as their key goal.

**Substantial Criminal Police reform will continue with the goal of enhancing the quality of investigation.** This reform incorporates three components. Firstly, the investigative direction will be separated from the other Criminal Police directions, a preliminary plan will be used to retrain acting investigators based on the learning program developed by the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and new personnel will be attracted.

**Separation of investigative and prosecutorial functions** reform based on the reform of the Code of Criminal Procedure is one of the most important components of the investigative system reform. The reform seeks to ensure greater independence for investigators in the process of investigating, to enhance the quality of investigation, and to strengthen prosecutorial supervision, also to separate investigative and prosecutorial functions so as to define their level of responsibility based on the stage in investigation, and to ensure the effectiveness of investigative and prosecutorial work. Under said reform, a package of amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure has been prepared along with the action plan, all based on the recommendations of the Venice Commission.



The third component of the investigative system reform seeks to **put in place an effective quality monitoring system** at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. To this end, the mandate of the Human Rights Department has already been enhanced to transform it into the Department for Monitoring Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality, with its main goal being the enhancement of investigation quality. The department will monitor investigations into various categories of crime to identify possible investigative flaws and develop recommendations.

**The Border Police reform will also continue**, and so will the development of human resources, border infrastructure, and modern border surveillance technologies. The development of a unified system for analyzing border management risks, and its integration into the relevant analytical system, will continue.

The Coast Guard of the Border Police plays a vital role in the process of practical NATO-Georgia cooperation in the Black Sea. Cooperation with the Alliance will further deepen in the direction of coastal security. Coastal protection capacity-building and the development of the joint maritime operations management center will also continue. The existing successful cooperation with international partners and donors will deepen further, which is crucially important for the successful implementation of Border Police reforms.

The new stage in the **Patrol Police** reform will continue significantly to improve the effectiveness and transparency of the work of the Patrol Police, also to simplify administrative processes, enhance access to police services, introduce modern technologies, and ensure the structural optimization of the unit. Under this reform, **standard action procedures** and **modern means of offense identification** will be adopted. **The foot patrol inspector corps** will be strengthened to enhance safety and law and order standards in directions overburdened with tourism and entertainment infrastructure. The Government will also continue developing such policing instruments as **contactless patrolling** which is necessary for overcoming the challenges facing road safety. The policy for simple access to police services will continue, and the concept of **the unified service center** will be adopted throughout the country.

To enhance the quality of operative incident response, **the Joint Operations Center and the 112 Service will merge**. The ministry will remain active in the continuous introduction of modern technologies and the development of analytical systems.

Defense pronation approaches will be adopted, including the model for **analysis-based police work**. To this end, the creation of networks of analysts at police units will continue throughout the country.

**Cooperation with international police structures will deepen**. Based on the 2017 agreement, Georgia will actively cooperate with Europol. In parallel, bilateral police cooperation will continue, the existing network of police attachés will expand, especially in the EU member states, and joint investigative groups will be put together to enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation. In response to issues arising from Georgia-EU visa-free travel, police cooperation will be strengthened, and so will be migration flow management, effective border management, and the implementation of the readmission agreement.

To attract qualified young workforce into the system, and to enhance the motivation of the acting personnel, **an effective human resources management system** will be established to ensure effective mechanisms for hiring, qualification enhancement, promotion, and social security. The rules for employment will be improved further. The Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will focus on professional training/retraining of police officers. Consequently, educational programs will be developed

to counter challenges identified in police work. Career growth will be based on objective and transparent criteria, merit and qualification. Social security mechanisms for police officers will be improved, and their remuneration will increase gradually. At the same time, the system of internship will be developed to ensure the attraction of motivated qualified human resources into the ministry.

The implementation of the program for **road safety** will continue, which seeks to improve pedestrian, passenger, and driver safety, and to cut the number of traffic accidents. Road traffic management will use greater volumes and numbers of modern technologies. To this end, the system of points will be further improved, and so will be the integration of the practical component of driver's license exams in the actual city setting, and the development of a legislative framework for preventive measures, including amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses, with a view to ensuring the effective regulation of individual directions.

Actively combatting **organized and drug-related crimes** will remain one of the ministry's priorities.

To enhance effectiveness in the direction of **emergency management**, it is planned to develop operational capabilities/resources, to enhance readiness level and the quality of response. It is also planned to overhaul equipment/technical resources and fully to modernize infrastructure, also significantly to further international cooperation.

In line with said reforms and the challenges facing the ministry, it is also planned to continue and further advance **the legislative framework**. Legislative amendments will apply to combatting organized crime, the laws regulating criminal law and administrative offenses, bettering the quality of road safety, adoption of effective mechanisms for combatting domestic violence and violence against women, effective regulation of cold weapon circulation, and others.

The creation of **new digital police products** is underway, including: anonymous reporting platform, border crossing electronic system, motor vehicle information platform, citizen feedback system, and others, which, given the development of modern information technologies, will provide citizens with simple and effective access to police services.

The development of the penitentiary system and ensuring its compatibility with international standard remains a priority direction. The process of further improving the penitentiary and crime prevention systems is based on ensuring compatibility with the highest European standards for enforcement of sentences and alternative forms of sentencing, which, at the same time, will further cement the protection of the rights and dignity of convicts.

**Further to enhance the quality of the penitentiary and crime prevention systems:**

- Defendants will continue to be provided with the ability of remove participation in court trials (using technical means).
- Relevant measures will be carried out to allow for adopting new approaches in the process of early release.
- Relevant legislative amendments will be made to enact laws and regulations reflecting the best international practices of enforcement of sentences.
- To enhance the quality of management in penitentiaries, the construction of new smaller facilities will continue, while larger facilities will be transformed into smaller ones, and infrastructural

improvements will be made to the functioning penitentiaries.

- Effective rehabilitation and reintegration programs will be strengthened in the penitentiary and probation systems.
- To ensure employment and resocialization/rehabilitation of convicts, vocational teaching, education, and training/retraining will be offered along with improved moderation opportunities.
- The rights of defendants, convicts, employees, and visitors in penitentiaries and probation facilities will be improved.
- Provision of relevant medical and rehabilitation services will continue in penitentiaries and probation facilities through improved measures for preventing and mitigating infectious diseases, prevention of suicide and self-inflicted harm, and services for mental health.
- To enhance the effectiveness of medical assistance to mentally ill defendants/convicts in penitentiaries, relevant legislative amendments will be prepared in line with the specifics of the penitentiary system.
- To enhance the opportunities for the employees of the penitentiary and probation systems, thematic training/retraining programs will be developed.
- A new instrument for evaluating risks and needs of convicts will be adopted.

In addition, the further improvement of the juvenile justice system is of crucial importance for ensuring law and order in the country. A package of amendments to a number of legislative acts has been initiated in the Parliament of Georgia. These amendments involve the further institutional reform of socialization and rehabilitation mechanisms for juveniles. **It is planned to put in place an adequate legislative foundation for approving a mechanism for the referral of juveniles under 14, meeting the best interests of children.** In particular, this initiative involves the creation of a new structural unit, the Juvenile Referral Center, at two similar LEPL subordinated to the Ministry of Justice: the National Agency for the Execution of Non-Custodial Sentences and the National Probation Agency. This new unit will, in line with legally prescribed procedures, ensure the coordination of the system of juvenile referral. It will be also indicated that the system of juvenile referral, and its participant agencies/institutions, stages of referral, procedures (including those involving decisions on referring juveniles, based on their best interests, to boarding schools, along with the enforcement and reconsideration of such decisions, also issues pertaining to monitoring the process of juvenile referral), and other issues related to the work of the system of juvenile referral will be defined by the Law of Georgia on General Education, the Code of Georgia on Administrative Court Procedures, the Rules for Juvenile Referral approved by the Government of Georgia, and other legislative and legal normative acts.

#### 1.4 Human Rights

As a result of the reforms implemented in the recent years, institutional mechanisms for the protection of human rights have been developed and advanced. The integration of the human rights-based approach into the process of state policy-making and law-making has become the Government's priority.

The Government of Georgia actively continues the implementation of the Government Action Plan for Human Rights, which details the Government's priorities in the field of human rights.

In this context, the Government continues to ensure the strong protection of **property rights**, also reliable and safe property registration procedures, including through adopting new technologies. Registration procedures will be further simplified under the land registration reform, which will support the finalization of the process of initial registration of land lots.

Effective measures will be taken for the enjoying the right of **equality**, and to prevent and eliminate every form of human discrimination.

Measures will be taken to protect **gender equality** in every area of social life. Rapid and effective response will be ensured to deal with every instance of gender inequality and gender-based violence.

The Government of Georgia will actively continue implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and, based on their individual needs, promoting their full integration into every aspect of social life.

**The rights of persons with disabilities** will be protected based on the principle of reasonable accommodation and their needs. To ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities in social and political life, the state will support their employment and infrastructural adaptation to their needs. The Government will promote equal access to public transport by developing and enforcing relevant standards for access to means of movement and travel.

Relevant measures will be implemented to ensure the full implementation of the Parliament-approved Law of Georgia on Social Work, including additional resources allocated alongside the growing numbers of social workers to ensure their proper qualification and adequate remuneration.

**The policy on civic equality and integration** will prioritize providing all citizens, regardless of their ethnic background, with opportunities fully to engage in every area of social life, the country's economic development, and civil processes. Therefore, the implementation of the State Strategy and Action Plan on Civic Equality and Integration will continue.

Equally prioritized will be the enhancement of the knowledge of the official language. Official language teaching programs will be strengthened and further diversified to suit the needs of every segment of the population.

In compact settlements, access to public services will be enhanced for ethnic minorities. In terms of improving access to every stage of quality education, effective steps will be taken. Programs focusing on the empowerment and engagement of ethnic minority youth will continue, and the preservation and protection of cultural uniqueness will be promoted.

Special attention will be paid to access to media and information and, accordingly, to the engagement of ethnic minorities in the unified information space.

In terms of labor rights and workplace safety, the Government of Georgia will continue working on the full practical implementation of the relevant legislative framework. Work-related health safety will meet the standards of the International Labor Organization and the EU.

The effective practical enforcement the adopted workplace safety regulations and the effective implementation of the labor inspection mandate will be prioritized.

To ensure effective and **independent investigation** of possible facts of torture/inhuman treatment the Government will promote the institutional establishment of the independent investigative mechanism under the State Inspector Service, and will support reforms seeking to ensure its development. The State Inspector Service must enhance public trust in investigative processes into such offenses, and it must transform into an agency capable of carrying out investigations that raise no questions about their integrity/objectiveness.

A brand new **Enforcement Code** will be developed to align enforcement with modern international standards. The code will include a number of innovations that mainly seek to reinforce the parity principle in the process of enforcement, also to draw the country's acting legislation closer to the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Steps will be taken toward enhancing the effectiveness of the judiciary as a result of planned amendments to the Civil Procedure Code of Georgia which seek to recognize the 1965 Hague Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters, and the 1970 Hague Convention on the Taking of Evidence Abroad in Civil or Commercial Matters, as mandatory for the Georgian state. Appending these conventions is required by the Georgia-EU Association Agreement. Georgia's joining these conventions will help improve cooperation between courts on civil and commercial cases, and will simplify the rules and procedures of mutual assistance in legal issues between countries, also ensuring the timely and effective resolution of civil and commercial disputes.

The development of state services focusing on the needs of citizens will continue, and unrestricted access to them will be ensured further. To this end, the construction of public service halls and community centers will continue in Georgia's regions, cities, and villages. By the end of 2020, nine new public service halls will open (in Bolnisi, Tskaltubo, Samtredia, Gardabani, Akhmeta, Kareli, Zestaponi, Khashuri, and Terjola), along with 22 community centers (in Dusheti, Ambrolauri, Kobuleti, Keda, Khulo, Tkibuli, Tsageri, Tetrizkaro, Kachaghani, Chrebalo, Gldani, Chiatura, Dedoplistzkar, Baghdati, Vani, Khobi, Ninotzinda, Aspindza, Kaspi, Chokhatauri, and Kharagauli).

## 2. Economic Development

Economic policy of the country is based on the principles of free market, whereby the private sector serves as the main driving force of economy. Economic Policy of the Government of Georgia will be aimed at making structure of the economy more sustainable, further development of business and investment environment, facilitation of small and medium enterprises, fast development of the infrastructure.

To ensure the long-term and high economic growth, Economic Policy of the Government of Georgia is predominantly aimed at engaging economic factors and public funds in the economic performance of the country to its maximum degree.

### 2.1 Macroeconomic Stability

Economic Policy of the Government of Georgia is based on the loyalty towards the principles of macroeconomic

stability, as a foundation of economic development.

Fiscal discipline, low level of unemployment, maintenance of sovereign debt within a sustainable level, price stability, independence of monetary policy, gradual reduction of the current account deficit and maintenance of stability in the financial sector are the basis of a long-term economic growth in the country.

Fiscal framework is based on the following principles:

- Cost optimization process is continued. Cost savings will be used to increase the public sector investments;
- Along with the improvement of social policy, low level of budget deficit will be maintained;
- Government debt ratio to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be maintained at a stable level. In addition, borrowing will occur to finance the long-term economic growth enabling investment projects.

Government of Georgia aims to maintain the trend of improving sovereign rating of the country, which will make it possible to ultimately achieve an investment level credit rating (BBB-/Baa3).

## 2.2 Effectiveness of Public Funds Management

Essential precondition of the effective fiscal policy is to have an effective and transparent system of public funds management (PFM). Success of the steps made in recent years is evidenced by the 5<sup>th</sup> place of Georgia in the recent Open Budget Index, Fiscal Transparency Assessment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Self-Assessment Report by PEFA Methodology.

Work is ongoing towards internal the introduction of financial control and management, which ensures the establishment of sound and effective management systems at budgetary organizations and transparency of the budget itself.

Common system of investment project management will be introduced, which will ensure the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of investment projects and fund targeted at them.

Active work will be continued for the assessment of fiscal risks towards their identification and management. Analysis of the existing contingent liabilities will be intensified.

## 2.3 Employment

One of the key benchmarks indicated in the Economic Policy of the Government of Georgia is the facilitation of employment for general public and increased competitiveness. In addition, role of the authorities in the actual facilitation of employment is predominantly expressed in the support of the private sector as a generator of jobs and employment opportunities. State supports employment by improving the business and investment environment, development of vocational education, support of small and medium enterprises.

In addition, thorough analysis of the labor market will be carried out both in terms of supply and demand to enable the reduction of unemployment and increase of employment, for the implementation of an evidence-based effective economic policy. Labor market studies will be performed to identify the human capital needs at enterprises and to reduce the existing imbalance with skills available at the labor market. Close coordination between job seekers and employers will be incentivized to increase the flexibility of the labor market. State ensures the increased accessibility of information for career planning, training and retraining. State actively supports engagement of potential employers in the process of vocational training.

## 2.4 Business Environment

Government of Georgia continues to pursue active reforms for the further improvement of business environment and support of entrepreneurship. Namely the following actions will be carried out:

- Principle of unviability of private property will be protected;
- Dialogue with businesses will become stronger, for the identification and resolution of existing problems. Institute of the Business Ombudsman will be empowered further;
- Simple and fair tax administration rules will be maintained and improved. In addition, operation of taxation and control bodies will be aimed at the prevention of tax avoidance and evasion;
- Introduction of digital and advanced technologies will continue, which will enable the business sector to benefit of modern and effective services on the one hand and to ensure the reduction of tax avoidance and evasion risks for fair tax administration on the other hand;
- Introduction of automated filing of tax return will be launched within the revenue administration, which will significantly save time and other essential resources on interaction of businesses with tax authorities;
- Tax and customs legislation will be approximated with EU directives;
- State support programs will be analyzed by taking into account their effectiveness and outcome. They will get adequately modified;
- Facilitated exposure of entrepreneurs to international markets will be continued and potential of the existing free trade agreements (FTAs) will be absorbed, within which businesses will get support in meeting the international standards of production and development of their systems; Scope of FTAs will be further extended (to include Israel, India, USA, Gulf countries) to gain exposure to new markers;
- Active and tangible steps will be made for the engagement of state-owned property in the economic performance of the country. Also, modern principles will be introduced in the management of natural resources, within which maximum benefit will be obtained for the economy by taking into account the best management practices;
- Policy based on the principle of One Stop Shop will be actively pursued for the improvement of investment climate. Coordination mechanisms will become stronger both with central and local authorities. As a result, effectiveness of communication will be increased with international and domestic investors;
- Support of innovative and high-tech investment projects will be continued;
- Reform of the insolvency system will be carried out to improve the procedures related to insolvency procedures. More incentives will be offered for the rehabilitation of enterprises and more guarantees will be offered to protect the rights and lawful interests of creditors;
- Regulation Impact Assessment (RIA) will be widely introduced and thus effect of each decision on the economy will be analyzed prior to such decisions with an aim of preventing their potential negative impact;
- Potential impact of each reform and initiative on the country ranking in international ratings will be evaluated prior to such reforms and initiatives;
- **New Law on Entrepreneurship** will be adopted and will reflect the commitments assumed by the country within the Association Agreement (AA) and EU directives envisaged in the annexes of the AA, thus approximating the corporate law of Georgia with that of the EU legislation;
- State will gradually exit from such sectors of economy that have a potential of independent operation and development with an aim of facilitating the competitive business environment.

## 2.5 SME Support

Development of access to finance tools is important for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are aimed at the reduction of restrictions originating from insufficient collateralization of businesses, thus preventing the borrowing by viable businesses. Government of Georgia will further develop the credit guarantee scheme to this end. Credit guarantee scheme will substantially simplify access to finance for SMEs, facilitate additional lending in the economy, improve the liquidity at SMEs.

Effective implementation of Strategy of Georgia for SME Development in 2016-2020 is important for overcoming challenges faced by the country in the advancement of small and medium enterprises.

Produce in Georgia being a public institution will actively pursue its work towards the development of domestic production and hotel industry, export promotion and attraction of investments.

Produce in Georgia will continue co-financing the loan interest for enterprises and hotels within its industrial component to improve the access to finance for SMEs.

Also, support of companies with export potential will be actively continued towards export development by using various tools (international fairs, international trade missions, international conferences, B2B platform).

Georgian Innovations and Technology Agency (GITA) will continue with grant co-financing within its access to finance component to further support the SMEs.

In addition, legal definition of start-ups and rules for gaining the status of a start-upper will get defined, thus enabling the status holders to benefit from programs particularly tailored to support and empower the start-ups.

## 2.6 Georgia as a Regional Hub

Long-term economic development of the country requires the transformation of Georgia into an international investment, communication, transport, logistics, energy, technology, education and financial hub, which will enable us to find the best use of domestic and regional potential of the country. This will facilitate the advancement of transport and logistic sector of the country, competitiveness of the national production and advanced productivity, boosted exports, attraction of more direct foreign direct investments (FDI), introduction of advanced technologies and innovations in the country, comprehensive engagement of Georgia in the international economic processes.

It is important for Georgia to continue with efforts and greater facilitation of development in the energy corridors through Georgia, including the direct access to the European energy markets. It is essential that active work is pursued towards attracting more international cargo through the transport corridor trespassing Georgia, as well as for the creation and extension of new transport corridors.

Construction project of Anaklia Marine Port will be continued, which will not only have a significant impact on improving the transit potential of Georgia, but will also increase the role of Georgia in the region, thus turning it into the logistics hub.

**Transport systems will be improved** to facilitate the development of infrastructure compatible with international standards, multi-modal and inter-modal shipment and logistic centers; work will be continued towards integration of the transport systems of the country into the Trans-European Network of Transportation (TEN-T) through the execution of TEN-T investment plan defined for the countries of Eastern Partnership. Work is in progress towards developing the modern logistics centers in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, which will facilitate the collation of logistics centers in a single cluster and full realization of the transit and logistic potential of the country. Also, construction of



Kutaisi Logistics Center will give an impulse to the development of a cargo terminal at the international airport of Kutaisi.

Considering the favorable geographic location of Georgia, it is essential to establish a common transport system and best use of the transit potential in the country. Government of Georgia has already made significant steps towards this end.

**Completion of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) Railway Project** will significantly reduce the time required for transportation of cargo between Asia and Europe, which is a pre-requisite of additional volume of shipments transported through the country.

Government of Georgia will carry out active policy for the further development of the transport sector and for the full absorption of a regional hub potential by Georgia. Namely, **integration in the international transport systems** will be continued to improve the competitiveness of the transit corridor and intensified regional cooperation.

Work is planned with partner countries towards digitalization of the transit corridor through Georgia through formation of a digital logistic platform within the transit corridor, which will increase the effectiveness of cargo transportation in the country and ensure its sustainability.

Policy of an Open Sky will be facilitated in the civil aviation sector, which will ensure the entry of new air companies to the Georgian market, development of new direct air flights, increased intensity of flights and extension of the geographic coverage, affordability of air flights, as well as the maintenance of an increasing annual trend of passenger transportation.

Entry of Ryanair to the aviation market of Georgia is noteworthy towards this end, which will fly to 3 destinations by 2020. At the same time, it will gradually increase the direct flights from Georgia to Europe.

Feasibility Study will be carried out for the development of a ferry and container transportation between Georgia and countries of the Black Sea region, which will facilitate the eradication of current challenges within the referred segment of the transit corridor and further improvement of it.

Government of Georgia will pay a special attention to the implementation of competitive and effective regional projects within the New Silk Road towards transportation, telecommunication and energy.

## 2.7 Development of Infrastructure

Construction of new highways will be continued for the full utilization of the geographic location and logistic potential of the country. Roads of international significance will be built throughout Georgia, which will connect regions to each other. Construction of roads of regional and local importance will be continued.

Roads of domestic sovereign importance will be rehabilitated for the development of regions, agriculture and tourism in the country.

Various municipal, cultural, tourism, sports, education and healthcare infrastructure will be developed further to eradicate inequality and create decent living conditions in the regions.

Provision of quality drinking water round the clock to general public is one of the priorities of the Government of Georgia. This goal will be achieved gradually within the several following years. Round the clock supply of water will be provided to 430 000 additional subscribers by 2020.

Construction and rehabilitation projects for the water supply and sewage facilities will be actively continued in a number of cities, towns and villages, including the settlements at the border line.

Waste management will be carried out in line with European standards. Municipal waste collection service will

be improved nation-wide.

Development of concepts, schemes and plans will be continued for the spatial planning of the country and municipalities, along with the land use and development regulations for cities, towns, villages and settlements in the country.

High-speed fiber optic infrastructure will be built in addition in the regions within the scope of **internet penetration project** in the country, as a result of which over 85% of the population will gain access to the main fiber optic internet infrastructure.

## 2.8 Sector-Specific Economic Policy

### 2.8.1 Energy

Main direction of the Energy Policy defined by the Government of Georgia is to improve the energy security of the country and degree of independence, along with a gradual reduction of dependence on the imported energy resources through the utilization of domestic energy resources, diversification of supply sources and routs.

Following will be done for the effective implementation of the Energy Policy of the Government of Georgia:

- Furthermore transparent and attractive investment environment will be created to stimulate investments in the energy sector;
- Work will be continued for the reduction of dependence on imports through a rational utilization of local energy resources;
- Infrastructure will be developed for the creation of a safe and stable transmission and distribution system of natural gas and power energy. Project has been launched for the improvement of natural gas supply through a gas storage facility with a capacity of 210-280 million cubic meters;
- Additional resources will be allocated for the provision of natural gas in rural areas, as a result of which 1.3 million subscribers will gain access to natural gas supply by the end of 2020;
- Energy legislation will be improved and get approximated to European standards; By signing the Association Agreement (AA) and by acceding to the Energy Community, Georgia is setting a precedent of replicating the energy legislation from EU/Energy Community to the Caucasus;
- New Law on Energy will be adopted as a result of reforms implemented in the energy sector and a competitive market of power energy and natural gas will be created. Reforms and facilitated competition will lead to the uninterrupted, high quality and fairly priced provision of energy to consumers. Regulated and deregulated activities will also get segregated.
- Work will be continued for the best use of renewable energy. Energy efficiency measures will be implemented in various directions. Work is in progress on the National Action Plan for Renewable Energy and primary legal framework is being developed both for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

### 2.8.2 Protection of Environment and Agriculture

Protection of environment, maintenance of its sustainability and rational use of natural resources in parallel with a sustainable development of agriculture is a significant challenge. This topic is particularly crucial in the current process of climate change Facilitation of climate-smart agriculture responds to three crosscutting challenges, which are as follows: food security, adaptation with climate change and mitigation of climate change.

Government will continue with its policy of active protection of environment and development of agriculture, which aim to ensure a sustainable and healthy environment, **improvement of ecology in the environment**, improved competitiveness in agro-food sector on the grounds of sustainable development principles, stable growth of high-quality production, food security, food safety and rural development.

**Within the scope of a common development policy of agriculture** following will be done for the improvement of living standards in rural areas and increased economic performance:

- **Development of cooperatives will be supported** in the agro-industrial sector;
- Development of a market system for cattle milk and meat products, reduction of losses, improved food safety and quality, higher competitiveness and productivity, along with an increased sales potential;
- With an aim of integrating components creating **value added** in the full cycle, authorities will facilitate the development of **crop** warehousing, sorting, packaging, processing and distribution sectors; **agriculture insurance** project will be continued and increased affordability of agriculture machinery will be facilitated;
- Irrigated land parcels (equipped with water supply and drainage systems) will be increased. **Irrigation and drainage systems** will be developed and improved. New legal framework will be established to facilitate the introduction of modern decentralized systems of irrigation system management. Namely, associations of water consumers will be established through amalgamation of farmers;
- **Degraded soil** studies will be performed, along with measures to recover and improve their fertility;
- Legal framework will be created for **windshield management** and development; windshields will get planted;
- Modern and **flexible system of extension** will be established, measures will be continued and extended in support of **environmental education** and higher public awareness on environment.

Establishment of an effective and flexible system of state control is pursued in the area of **food and fodder safety, veterinary and plant protection**, along with its further improvement. Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary areas will be approximated with **EU Directives** as committed under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Inter alia it will ensure the establishment of European standards at the domestic market and increased export potential of agriculture produce and food, which will play a significant role in the development of economy and positioning of the country as a reliable trade partner.

**Environmental Impact Assessment process** will be improved and electronic system of environmental decision-making will be introduced. Establishment of e-governance will make the existing procedures more transparent and will ease the interaction with investors. In addition, engagement of general public in the decision-making process will become more effective.

**Effective system of environmental responsibility** will be established for the prevention and eradication (compensation) of environmental damage.

New rules of regulation will be introduced for the **protection and maintenance of bio-diversity** for the sustainable use of biologic resources. State will ensure the extension of **protected areas** and promotion of tourism. **Sustainable forestry management practice** will be introduced and supported through the establishment of the effective mechanisms of forest care, protection and recovery, which will facilitate the maintenance and improvement of qualitative and quantitative forest indicators. Forest control mechanisms will be improved.

For the reduction of threats originating from natural disasters conditioned by the climate change, **hydro-meteorological surveillance network** will be extended and modelling capacity will be developed; national system of early warning will be introduced.

**Atmospheric air, water and soil quality monitoring and assessment system**, along with the **systems of atmospheric air pollution with harmful substances and recordings of water use**.

Transition to the **integrated water resource management system** will be continued, which is based on the sustainable management of water resources and European principles of basin management.

Waste and chemical substance management system will be improved. Various mechanisms will be introduced in line with the applicable EU standards, which will facilitate the prevention of waste generation and re-use of the generated waste.

Quality of **nuclear and radiation safety** will be improved and a new system will be established for the management of radioactive waste, which will ensure the protection of humans and environment from potential harmful impact of radiation.

### 2.8.3 Tourism

Development of tourism is one of the priorities of the Government of Georgia. Inflow of visitors and subsequent income from tourism industry is growing annually. Tourism is a significant driving force of economic growth in the country and Government of Georgia plans to carry out the following measures for the further development of the priority sector:

- Small tourism infrastructure will be improved and developed; locations of tourism potential will be updated. Road infrastructure will be improved to facilitate a better accessibility of tourism destinations;
- Marketing activities will be intensified at the target and potential new markets (including the high spending ones), which will facilitate the attraction of more foreign tourists and respectively higher revenues to the country;
- Marketing activities will be intensified at the domestic market to facilitate the development of domestic tourism;
- Development of eco-tourism as an interesting product of tourism will be facilitated;
- For the development of business tourism, GNTA will attract more high spending tourists to Georgia; events and investments will be facilitated towards this end;
- Special focus will be made on the improvement of service quality. Staff will be trained to increase the quality of service to international standards; development of higher education and vocational training programs and institutions will be facilitated in the tourism sector; various activities will be implemented for the improvement of service quality (tightening of fire safety, improvement of passenger transportation, etc.);
- Intensified cooperation between the public and private sectors will be facilitated for the creation and promotion of products in tourism. Platform of interaction with the private sector will be established with a one-stop-shop principle, which will collate all the essential information and active communication will be carried out through it.

## 2.8.4 Transport

Active policy will be pursued by the Government of Georgia for a further development of the transport system and namely:

- In parallel with a development of the transport potential of Georgia, maintenance and improvement of the traffic safety is the most significant priority;
- Introduction and integration of environmentally clean and innovative technologies will be facilitated in the transport system;
- In line with EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA) and Agreement of Common Air Space **legislation of Georgia will be approximated to the EU Directives and Regulations on transport**, which will facilitate the increased safety of transport operations and sector-specific integration with EU;
- **Ensured road safety in the country is one of the significant priorities of the Government of Georgia.** Implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Road Safety will be continued through the cross-sector cooperation;
- Work will be continued for the establishment of a common information system of further improvements in the technical inspection system and periodic technical inspections;
- Restructuring is planned in the railway transportation. New legal and regulation framework will be developed through the reform, thus facilitating the improved effectiveness in the sector and safety of transport operations;
- It is essential to digitalize government services at every marine port of Georgia for the development of transit potential of the country and collation of data into a common online platform. It will facilitate the increased throughput of cargo at ports and will also enable them to plan shipment volumes in advance for line/regular admission of vessels by categories and volumes of cargo. First phase of the project will start in 2019 and implies an integration of every service in the marine sector and analysis towards the reduction of existing bureaucracy, while the second phase includes a design and piloting of the software application;
- It is important to modernize the state registry of vessels operating under the Georgian flag and attraction of high capacity ones, which will significantly improve the sovereign image of Georgia as a marine country and will facilitate the development of complimentary services within Georgia through the introduction and implementation of a marine cluster concept. It is important to note towards this end that such significant activities will be facilitated as ownership of vessels, marine insurance, marine financing, marine logistics and multi-modal forwarding, primary and subsidiary marine services, etc.;
- It is important to increase the level of education for sailors in Georgia and to improve their employment indicators. Government of Georgia will continue to facilitate the education of Georgian sailors, along with their professional growth and development.

## 2.8.5 Regional Economic Policy

One of the priorities of the Economic Policy pursued by the Government of Georgia is to develop regions in the country, thereby eliminating the inequality, introducing effective and innovative systems of quality service delivery locally, and increasing the role of regions in the economic advancement of the country.

Government of Georgia has a Strategic Vision on Regional Development, which is based on the EU attitude towards equalization policy for economic and social development. It implies an integrated, inter-sectoral and site-specific planning and implementation of respective policies.

For a further empowerment of the local self-governance system and increased degree of its independence, reform predominantly aims to increase the authority of local self-governance on the grounds of subsidiarity principle, introduce the effective and innovative systems of quality services at the local level, increase the role of self-governance in the development of local economy and provide relevant material and financial resources to self-governance bodies.

Application of new approaches will be ensured in the process of planning for regional development.

### 2.8.6 Management of Natural Resources

Vision of the Government of Georgia is to find the best use of every natural resource and to thereby ensure the sustainable management of resources on the grounds of environmental protection principles. Current and anticipated initiatives are significant towards this end. Namely:

- Update the legal framework – within Phase II of the Reform supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); Develop and update the regulations in the sector;
- Introduce an integrated licensing system – simplified access to land plots in the title ownership of the state for the purposes of fossil processing;
- Introduce an advanced system of geologic data management;
- Update the fiscal regime – introduction of a royalty system on the grounds of market values;
- Revise and improve the licensing regime – introduction of a pre-qualification system of investors through online tendering;
- Improve the supervision function – introduction of a monitoring system on the grounds of risk assessment;
- Improve the environmental monitoring mechanisms – improvement of ore re-cultivation system;
- Introduce a social responsibility system in the sector;
- Introduce an effective system of reporting and analysis;
- Assess the geologic and economic potential of minerals available in the country by taking into account the modern standards and methodology;
- Development of perspective investment projects and pro-active work with target investors.

## 3. Education and Human Capital Development

Development of human capital in a modern state is the prime source for the advancement of a country, which should be engaged in its economic performance. Good education and development of skills is essential for the development of human resources by ensuring the effective system of education. Equally important is the accessibility to quality healthcare, decent social security, healthy life style, availability of opportunities for participation of our citizens in the cultural and sports life of the country. Hence, Government Policy is aimed at the establishment of an effective system required for the development of human capital, rather than any particular sector.

### 3.1 Education and Science

Government of Georgia will carry out a new, comprehensive and diverse stage of the reform towards education being its most significant priority. It is intended to establish such system of education, which will advance civil awareness, increase competitiveness, improve the linkages between education and science through equipping children, students, youth and adults with relevant theoretic knowledge and practical skills in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Development of human capital is perceived as a key precondition for a long-term economic and public progress of the country. By taking into account the comprehensive nature and significance of the reform, its successful implementation requires increased allocation of resources towards education.

Focus on the process of teaching and learning within the education system will ensure that knowledge seeking individual (child, adolescent, youth and adult) will be equipped provided for throughout the life with relevant tier of education in line with the life-long learning (LLL) principle. Safe, abuse-free and kind environment will be offered at the education institutions. Development of education infrastructure will be ensured for every level of education.

Education Reform will be carried out towards every level of the education system: early and pre-school education, general schooling, vocational training, higher education and science.

#### 3.1.1 Early and Pre-School Education

Fundamental reform of the education system starts with a pre-school level. Kindergartens will turn into the pre-school education institutions and **state standard of quality will get established to ensure the preparedness of children for general schooling.**

Inclusive and safe environment will be ensured at pre-school education institutions, along with the protection of best interests of children. System of control will be intensified for the introduction of pre-school education standards. Quality assessment, development and management model and mechanisms will get designed for pre-school education at the national level.

Establishment of new infrastructure and improvement of the existing ones will be continued for the increased accessibility of pre-school education institutions.

System of staff training and retraining will be enforced in line with a professional standard of teaching. Occupation of teachers and caregivers will be developed, along with the attraction of young and qualified new staff.

Operation of groups for preparation of children for their general schooling will be supported at the pre-school level both at the premises of kindergartens and schools.

#### 3.1.2 General Schooling

**High quality and universal access** to education will be a key priority of general schooling. Development of equal and inclusive knowledge, skills and national values compatible with modern requirements will be ensured towards this end and education system will get developed for the success of pupils to make sure that upon graduation s/he is competitive at the labor market and meets interests of a long-term economic and public advancement of the country. New standards and mechanisms will be established for quality assessment of schools and education.

Benchmark of general schooling will be the future life of pupils and their preparation for building a democratic society. With this aim, methodologies and strategies will be introduced to the teaching and learning process that

ensure the development of thinking, creative, technology and labor skills, promotion of healthy life style both within formal and informal education.

Within the scope of a New School Model, teaching and learning culture will get upgraded and empowerment of teachers will be supported at schools. Support Teams seconded to schools will help teachers through intensive trainings in such transformation, which will be aimed at the development of a comprehensive thinking ability among the pupils. State will facilitate diverse activities and projects for children, which will help them in developing analytic, creative and innovative thinking, team work, acquisition of competences in leadership, entrepreneurship, arts, civil and social studies.

State ensures establishment of equal conditions for a full realization of opportunities of free development, talent and personal abilities of each individual, irrespective of their ethnic origin, religious affiliation or place of residence. Targeted programs will be implemented for the teaching of the official language at a high level and facilitation of integration.

Design and development of new national **curriculum** and respective resources for education will be continued in line with modern requirements and targeted at high standards for improving the education quality in the country. Arrangement of the medium level will be changed and teaching model will be introduced on the grounds of differentiated approaches for technical and natural sciences, humanitarian, arts and vocational training to be intensified.

With an aim of ensuring pupils with quality textbooks and education resources, development and improvement process will be continued for the assessment of textbooks, in view of content and technical parameters to be compatible with the age and ability of child development. For the quick development of general schooling and in parallel with traditional teaching, it is very important to introduce strategies for technology and innovation studies. Information technology (IT) capacity of schools will be substantially upgraded, **use of technologies and role of distance learning** will be increased in the process of teaching and learning. Diverse digital resources and support materials of education will be created.

Teachers are the main corner stone of success within the reform. Hence, authorities will care for the **improvement of professional prestige of teachers and their decent remuneration. Payroll will be increased annually commensurate to the qualification of teachers.** State ensures the resolution of uninterrupted professional growth of teachers. Development of practical skills and advancement of professional knowledge will be ensured, along with an intensified methods of modern teaching and application of technologies in the process.

Creation of a safe, inclusive and multi-cultural environment will be ensured at schools. Services and programs will be developed for the prevention of bullying and abuse. Special attention will be paid to the improvement of quality service delivered by wardens and psychologists for the protection of physical and psycho-emotional safety; focus will be made also on the introduction of media literacy and digital citizenship programs. Special attention will be dedicated to the quality and extended scope of inclusive education, along with a professional development of special teaching.

Significant investments will be made in the construction **development of general schooling infrastructure and construction of new schools.** Full rehabilitation will be carried out in public schools and natural science labs will be established.

Special programs will be enforced for the institutional development of small schools and those in high terrain regions. Mechanisms will be established for transforming these schools into Centers of Culture and Education of respective villages, which will unite kindergartens, schools, vocational college, library, sports and creative clubs.



### 3.1.3 Vocational Education

Vocational education should ensure the provision of qualifications adequate to the labor market requirements to individuals in a short period of time, along with a retraining of those already engaged in the labor force that no longer have qualifications meeting the current requirements of the labor market. New phase of reform in vocational education opens up completely new opportunities both for the youth, as well as for the adult population: number of short-term certification programs of training/retraining will be increased, which will be aimed at making individuals meet the market needs in the efficient and effective manner; integration of general schooling component in the vocational education will result in the acquisition of general knowledge along with professional skills. As a result, opportunity of transition will be created from general schooling to vocational education, while from vocational to higher education.

At the same time and in line with the requirements of labor market and international education trends, a so called Short Cycle programs will be implemented to develop new qualifications and practical competences within Bachelor's Degree studies for students. As a result, employment opportunities of graduates will be increased and linkages between different tiers of education will be strengthened to support the realization of life-long learning principle and development of human capital in the country.

Public-Private Partnership will be intensified; in line with an increase of motivation and interest of the private sector, **dual or work-based scope of learning** will be extended. With this approach employers will get fully engaged in the development and implementation of vocational education programs, along with the selection and assessment of students. In parallel with skills required for employment and for facilitation of job creation and small entrepreneurship, priority will be given to **entrepreneurial education**. Increased awareness and education of entrepreneurship will facilitate the formation of such specialists that will themselves turn into employers by using the knowledge acquired through the education system and mechanisms established to support entrepreneurship.

Key priority will be the skills upgrade of adult population and satisfaction of their education needs. Vocational training and retraining programs will be accessible in every region of Georgia and apart from education institutions these programs will engage private companies and sector-specific associations.

Mechanisms will be introduced for the recognition of informal education. Individuals that have work experience, knowledge and skills, but lack a certificate/diploma, face a need to have their qualifications recognized. Hence, almost every sector is interested in recognition of informal education, particularly on the background of increasing demand on qualified labor force in the country and prospects of legal and decent employment overseas.

New standards and framework of quality assurance will be enforced for the improvement of vocational education and its quality, which will be fully compatible with the European framework. Consistent system of **professional growth** will be introduced for teachers of vocational education, which will serve as a basis of differentiated remuneration of teachers. Infrastructure of vocational education institutions will be developed and network of vocational education suppliers will become diverse within the format of public-private partnership.

### 3.1.4 Higher Education

When assessing the higher education institutions (authorization/accreditation) a development-oriented model will continue to be used in future, which is based on the European standards and recommendations of quality assurance (ESG 2015). Wide-scale reform will be implemented with an aim of full compliance with European requirements of the higher education quality management and development system, which will envisage recommendations of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and European Quality Assurance Registry in Higher Education (EQAR). Higher education quality assurance system of Georgia will get in full compliance with European requirements by taking into consideration the referred recommendations.

Intensified cooperation between Georgian and foreign universities, development of joint and foreign education programs, international accreditations and development of recognition mechanisms for foreign accreditation programs will be supported by the state with an aim of sharing the best international experience. Priority will be given to the development of education programs oriented at employment and integration of research in the process of education.

New, results-oriented model of funding will be gradually introduced in the higher education system, which will enable universities to transit from management oriented at the number of students to the management oriented at quality to plan directions of strategic development, carry out joint and exchange programs of education together with leading higher education institutions, attract foreign academic/scientific personnel and students, fund scientific research of international magnitude and integrate such studies in the process of education. Indicator of targeted specialization will be considered in addition in the facilitation of regional universities.

State will particularly support the increased role and significance of **advanced technologies** in the process of higher education, including the intensified component of distance education.

### 3.1.5 Science

**Priority scientific directions will be identified** by taking into account the economy of Georgia, requirements of its strategic development and public needs. Additional measures will be planned for their strengthening.

State will support the scientific research oriented at quality and results. **Scientific cooperation with overseas scientific centers and universities** and implementation of joint projects will be facilitated, along with scientific research of foreign scholars in Georgia and Georgian scholars at scientific centers of global importance, along with an implementation of joint research programs by Georgian scientists together with foreign scholars. Career growth of young Georgian scientists will be endured and their engagement will be facilitated through an introduction of targeted programs in science. Cooperation will be intensified with various scientific funds overseas with an aim of implementing additional funding and implementation of joint projects. State will support accession of Georgia to European research and scientific platforms. Membership process will be successfully completed in the main European scientific platform (EURAXESS).

**Infrastructure opportunities** of science will be strengthened as the state will support the introduction of advanced technologies in the scientific-research institutions.

State will facilitate the intensified **Kartvelian Studies overseas** and within the country along with Georgian Studies.

State will support cooperation within the research and innovation program of the European Commission branded as **Horizon 2020**, which is aimed at the implementation of outstanding research and innovation ideas, international cooperation by offering new prospects of funding to Georgian scientists, research oriented industries, small scale innovative enterprises, businesses and other interested parties. State will support the engagement and active participation within the following framework program of the European Commission branded as the **Horizon Europe**.

#### 3.3.1. Youth Policy

Government of Georgia aims to increase the youth engagement in the economic, public, cultural and political life of the country with an aim of developing the youth engagement in various sectors of economy for their self-realization, which will facilitate their professional growth and increased competitiveness, full utilization of their potential and improved opportunities of employment. Special attention will be paid to the internationalization of youth activities, establishment of partnership relations between Georgian and foreign youth and implementation

of joint projects. Information support will be provided for the improved awareness of the youth and improved access to resources.

Support and encouragement of youth activities will be continued from the state in order to increase youth participation in the decision-making process and civil engagement. Informal education, professionalism, programs and projects facilitating employment and mobility will be intensified. Government of Georgia will start work towards establishing a comprehensive eco system for the youth.

Apart from support of young entrepreneurs, state programs will facilitate various types of activities, including those of civil, culture and sports. Access to youth and children camps will be increased and intellectual component will be intensified within this project. Special attention will be made on the precise and nature studies, arts and sports. Funding of projects focused on hobby education and recreation will be continued. Operation of winter and summer scientific schools, along with study tours to international scientific centers will be intensified for promoting science.

Process of youth policy setting and respective youth service design will be improved in cooperation with local authorities. Development of Youth Action Plans will be continued, along with the introduction of mechanisms and models for youth engagement at a local level.

Scale and magnitude of youth projects will be extended; civil engagement and social entrepreneurship will be supported with an active engagement of the NGO sector.

Cooperation will be intensified with EU on the development of youth mobility, development of skills and policy setting within the EU Erasmus+ Program, while cooperation within the EU4Youth Program will be oriented at the development of an institution of a young worker, promotion of volunteer work and development of skills required for employment among the youth.

### 3.3.2. Culture and Sports

Support towards sports and culture ensures the social and economic development of the country, thus connecting various sectors with each other and playing a significant role in their development, facilitating tourism, entrepreneurship, establishment of a healthy life style, crime prevention, development of cultural diplomacy, promotion of the country and its positioning at the international arena, etc., extension of imaging project substance both within the country and overseas, connections between people and cultural dialogue.

### 3.3.3. Culture

State programs towards culture will be predominantly based on Culture Strategy 2025, which defines the state vision, aims and goals in the field of art and culture.

**Decentralization process is ongoing for the management and funding of culture with an aim of transition to an effective management model of culture. Namely, National Fund of Georgian Culture is being formed as a legal entity of public law (LEPL), as a result of which a more flexible model of management will be created in the field of culture, along with the mechanisms approximated to European standards by taking into account the principles of good governance.** Engagement of experts and professionals will be increased in the process of decision-making and policy setting for various sectors of culture. Work will be continued for the diversification of funding in the field of culture.

**Legislation** related to the protection of culture and cultural heritage will be improved; new nominations will be developed for their entry in the representative list of intangible heritage of the mankind and preliminary list of

world heritage will be updated. Work will be continued on the study of Georgian cultural heritage, along with the conservation-rehabilitation works at sites and monuments. **Work will be continued for the management of cultural heritage and development of effective mechanisms of funding.**

**Accessibility of culture** will be increased for general public; maintenance of cultural identity of ethnic minorities will be facilitated, along with the development of creative skills among people with disabilities.

Utilization of entrepreneurial and tourism potential of culture will be facilitated, including **cultural routing, traditional arts and crafts, tangible and intangible cultural heritage in terms of other potential**; state will facilitate the creation of **spaces required for the development of creative industries** and electronic platforms.

**Process of integration with Europe will be continued** within European organizations and programs for culture through membership and engagement in various platforms. **Internationalization of Georgian culture and promotion of the country** will be facilitated at the international level through cultural diplomacy; intensified international cultural relations will be facilitated, along with an increased international mobility of artists, dialogue between cultures, implementation of joint projects at the institutional, organizational and individual levels. **Wide-scale cultural projects will be implemented**, which will facilitate the increased attractiveness of the country and international awareness, development of tourism and regions.

Arts Education Policy and Strategic Development Plan will be developed; work will start towards **improvement of legislation and regulations on education**, wide access to arts education, quality and increased competitiveness of education, along with **the creation of a new model of arts education funding. Modernization of infrastructure at arts and creative education institutions** will be continued, along with their refurbishment.

### 3.3.4. Sports

State will carry out an effective policy for increasing the number of people engaged in professional and mass sports. Special attention will be made on the engagement of children and adolescents in various types of sports. Affordability of sports education will be ensured, along with a professional retraining of coaches; support of sports coaches working in high terrain regions will be continued.

Construction of game fields, gyms and sports palaces will comply with international standards, along with mass sports facilities; effective model will be created for the management of sports infrastructure, which will be based on the effective cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Affordability of sports education will be increased and solid basis will exist for the supply of sector with professional staff.

Coordination with sports organizations and various establishments will lead to the development of a **Sport Tourism Development Strategy**, which ensures the attraction of additional investments to the country along with the promotion of Georgia. Work will be continued with this aim to host international sports tournaments in the country and **standards will be defined for hosting such international sports events in Georgia.**

Effective system will exist for dispute resolution in sports. Model will be introduced for the protection of interests of sportsmen and their engagement in the decision-making process. Process will be continued towards accession to the existing international sports conventions, their ratification and introduction.

### 3.3.5. Healthcare

Authorities of the country under the rule of Georgian Dream have given foundation to the policy of healthcare and social security based on the principle of social responsibility. Main achievement of the social policy oriented

towards a human being is the enforcement of a Universal Healthcare Program, which has given foundation to the universal coverage of every citizen of Georgia with medical services.

Government of Georgia will maintain the Universal Healthcare System in future, which will become more oriented towards patients and will further reduce the out-of-pocket payments on medical care.

Introduction of a selective contracting system will be actively pursued with an aim of increased effectiveness and quality of the Universal Healthcare. In addition, method of funding and global budgeting will be introduced on the grounds of correlation between funding and diagnosis for vulnerable groups, which will ensure a more effective use of funds earmarked for the program.

Significant changes will be made to the Healthcare Policy. Early disease diagnostics will become a priority with an aim of preventing their complications. Implementation of various preventive measures is aimed at the improvement of public health and quality of life. Following stage of primary healthcare will be carried out; mechanisms will be improved for financing the primary healthcare system; infrastructure will be improved and upgraded; role and significance of a general practitioner (GP) will increase. Introduction of digital technologies and telemedicine will be introduced in the nearest future. It will enable general public to benefit not only from services of specialized doctors, but to get check-ups on the site. It is aimed at the improvement of medical service quality.

**Funding for specialized programs of healthcare** will be continued. All patients with respective needs will continue having the opportunity of getting admitted to the unprecedented program of Elimination of Hepatitis C; psychic health service quality will be improved both at out-patient and in-patient levels. Immunization of children will be continued according to the National Calendar of Vaccination.

Management of cancer diseases and effective treatment will become one of the leading priorities of the state. Foundation will be given to effective and advanced methods of treatment for individuals suffering of cancer diseases.

Program of medication provision to individuals suffering of chronic diseases will be continued with an aim of increased affordability.

Transition will be made to the electronic healthcare system throughout the country. Electronic cards will be created for every patient, which will capture every significant data and information related to the health of patients.

Post-diploma and life-long professional education will be ensured through the systemic reform of medical education, which will facilitate the provision of quality healthcare services to patients.

### 3.3.6. Social Security

Major principles of Social Security Policy of the Government of Georgia are: effectiveness of the social security system, fairness and transparency, increased support and incentives for employment.

Government of Georgia will continue pursuing **targeted social programs** for the vulnerable groups of population with an aim of easing their material conditions. Targeting of the referred programs will be improved and more fair distribution of the available resources will be ensured with an engagement of local authorities. Mechanisms will be introduced in this process for the facilitation and support of employment in view of labor capacitated members of socially vulnerable households.

Pensions will be increased in 2020 and legislative mechanisms will be introduced to ensure an annual increase of monthly payment of pensions.

Authorities will intensify the implementation of an effective policy of housing for **internally displaced people (IDPs)**. Construction of residential blocks will be continued for the IDP households and private houses will be purchased for them within the scope of a project branded as Rural House. Properties will be bought out from legitimate owners of houses currently occupied by IDPs. All the dilapidating facilities will be closed down that trigger risk of life under the applicable expertise opinions. Allocations from the State Budget will exceed 200 MLN GEL in 2019-2020 for the provision of housing to IDPs. State will intensify support for the access to sources of subsistence, small entrepreneurship and IDP cooperatives for the IDP households.

Acquisition of houses for **eco-migrant** households will be continued throughout the country, along with a registration of title ownership on houses and land parcels transferred to eco-migrant households in past years.

### 3.3.7. Public Administration

Implementation of Government Policy will be based on the increased effectiveness of public administration and results-oriented performance, which will be vividly tangible for every citizen.

Public administration reform will be continued through increased effectiveness, financial stimulation and incentives. Namely, in response to the challenges of democratic governance, Government of Georgia continued to implement an **Open Governance Reform** in close cooperation with EU Delegation and together with countries of Eastern Partnership, which will play a fundamental role in the integration of Georgia in the EU.

Cornerstone of the reform is attuned with public administration principles of the EU and manifest in the effective and efficient governance, engagement of citizens and service of public interests; formation of a transparent, foreseeable and accountable public administration.

At a later stage of public administration reform opportunities will exist for a life-long professional development and increased remuneration commensurate to qualifications of civil servants.

By taking into account the preliminary functional analysis and findings of legal entities of public law (LEPL), they will get optimized and categorized. Additional functional analysis of LEPLs will be carried out, as a result of which functions that can be performed by the private sector more efficiently will gradually move out of the public sector.

**Local authorities** will be empowered. Along with the establishment of a small, flexible and effective municipal governance, their authority and responsibility will increase through fiscal decentralization.

Share of local budget revenues will gradually increase in the consolidated budget revenues to ensure adequate financial resourcing of the increased authority and responsibility of municipalities.

Along with an increase of financial resource allocation, effective programs will be carried out for the improvement of municipal governance, within which project financing will increase according to the results of improved public funds management by municipalities.

Mechanisms will be developed for the engagement of citizens in the local self-governance, including the participation of ethnic minorities.

**Advancement of e-governance** is utterly important for the development of the country. Government of Georgia intends to digitalize internal business processes within public institutions for a greater effectiveness on the one hand and for offering simplified, customer-oriented and quality e-services to citizens and businesses on the other hand.

With this aim, Government of Georgia will continue work towards a common policymaking on the design and provision of public services, which will improve the online service delivery together with a physical interaction, along with a digitalization and optimization of fees for new and additional public services. Work will also

continue for the introduction of additional tools of qualified electronic signatures and stamping, which will significantly accelerate the time of service delivery, thereby enabling citizens and organizations to seek public services online and in a safe mode.

High standard of transparency will be introduced at public institutions and effective mechanisms will be created for public control.

Fight against corruption will become more active to ensure the effective public administration.

Following **European approaches** will be introduced in the **fight against corruption**: implementation of mechanisms that prevent corruption and public awareness on the crimes involving corrupt practices. Effective coordination will be pursued towards steps made under the fight against corruption and civil society will get engaged in the process.

Property Declarations of government officials will continue to be monitored, along with public awareness on ethics code and performance standards that will be set out through respective measures at public institutions for the establishment of accountable and integral environment with an aim of facilitated implementation of an anti-corruption policy.