

Your Excellency, President Macron, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues,

I am deeply honored and privileged to be among the hosts of this important gathering. Speaking to you today as an in-coming chair of the most powerful global movement for openness and deeper democracies, endorses that Georgia has chosen the right pass to empower citizens and strengthen governance.

Throughout our OGP journey we have partnered with many of you, have followed good practices or shared our success stories with different stakeholders. I am thrilled to witness the results the OGP countries illustrate across the globe; and yet, we have many lessons to learn not only from each other or from civil society organizations, but from journalists, entrepreneurs/start-ups, etc. who have knowledge of details that matter the most to achieve excellence in good governance. Hence, I welcome all of them, we are honored to have participate in today's event.

Notwithstanding the success, the theme of today's gathering is **"Rebuilding Trust in Governance"** – an issue that requires a long-term strategy to tackle. I encourage all of you to use this time for exchange, debate and collective reflection on how democracy can be reinvented.

Dear colleagues!

Exactly a year ago, we met and discussed the vision on questions, such as:

- How do we plan for the next years to ensure that we deliver transformational impact in the lives of citizens?
- What are the specific steps we will take to broaden the focus from open data and open budgets to Sustainable Development Goals, anticorruption and service delivery which directly affect lives of ordinary citizens?
- How do we dominate focus on closing a feedback loop?

These are the key questions my government used as a base to build our chairmanship vision.

It is our government's honor to be trusted to serve as the next chair of OGP and contribute to a future for a powerful global movement for openness and deeper democracies. In the modern times, when innovation and technology have become leading pathways to success in the global economy, the definition of open governance has expanded. While advocating for enlarging the scenario, we aim to dedicate our co-chair term to strengthen the basics of open government – to ensure people's opportunity to influence government decisions that affect their daily lives. Strategic goals the Georgian government together with our co-chair Mr. Mukelani Dimba will be dedicated to pursue are: **(Goal 1)** Strengthening co-creation and citizen engagement; **(Goal 2)** Advancing transparency and the fight against corruption; **(Goal 3)** Generating innovation in public service delivery; and **(Goal 4)** Building a better partnership.

Let me briefly explain the rationale behind our strategic goals:

Goal 1

This approach led to shaping one of the goals **aiming to strengthen co-creation and citizen engagement**. Practice shows that civic engagement, in most cases, is key to successful reforms that address the needs of the public; while on the other hand, leaving civil society outside the conversation damages democracy. Hence, it will be the co-chairs' priority to ensure peer learning of successful experiences and promote innovations for further improvement.

Goal 2

We also aim to propose concrete ways to advance reforms at the global, national and sub-national levels in **transparency and anticorruption**. Anti-Corruption reforms continue to be the top priority for the Government of Georgia as a part of the overarching goal to enhance functional democracy upholding principles of transparency, accountability and the rule of law in the country. Georgia has a solid track record of combating corruption and creating institutionalized mechanisms for Anti-Corruption policy coordination and monitoring.

Goal 3

We have also set a goal to **promote innovation in public service delivery**. Georgia has gone through rapid transformation, with notable success. Our reform priorities include ensuring unimpeded and efficient access to public services even for those living in remote villages. These efforts bring public administration closer to citizens through the production of services more tailored to the needs of users. Experience shows that improving the design and quality of public services, coupled with the efforts to foster public participation through closing the feedback loop, is a process that enables government to build a real bridge connecting each and every citizen. We are willing to work with OGP countries to generate new ideas and take the public service delivery to the level that better responds to our citizens' needs.

Goal 4

Regarding our goal to build a better partnership, we all come from different starting points and might have different priorities, however, strengthening the OGP is a common interest that should especially unite us.

Today, OGP stands at a turning point when each of us should take responsibility in positioning OGP as a powerful global movement for achieving openness and deeper democracy and as a countervailing force against the closing of civic space and distrust in government.

And as we communicate the key values of OGP, let's emphasize **the importance of inclusive approach of a government as an indicator of success in achieving openness**. Georgia prides itself to be among a few countries where all branches of the government are involved in the OGP process.

We strongly believe that a comprehensive approach at the national level has defined Georgia's overall country performance in various directions. Hence, with the aim to foster the broadening of collective ownership of OGP domestically, we aim to encourage OGP participating countries to raise the bar of openness at the judicial, parliamentary and sub-national levels.

I thank all countries for trusting us to serve as the chair of the partnership and stand ready to dedicate all our resources to make our tenure a success. I believe that in the era of globalization success cannot be achieved without global partnership and mutual support.

Thank you!