

Forward from Civil Society Organizations

Georgia joined global initiative Open Government Partnership (OGP) in September 2011 and since then, with active cooperation between Georgian Government and the civil society, our country has already seen substantial progress on its way towards achieving OGP goals. Georgia can be regarded as one of the most successful models in terms of fulfillment of OGP commitments obligations. This is illustrated by the fact that Georgia has been shortlisted for the OGP "Bright Spots" prize at London summit in 2013. Notwithstanding this, still a lot needs to be done to fully implement the principles declared by Open Government Partnership. The Georgian Action Plan 2014-2015, prepared with most active participation of the broader society, serves this very goal.

It should be noted that the Action Plan for 2014-2015 has more extended format and includes obligations of much more public institutions, than the action plan for the previous years. The ambitious action plan reflects most of recommendations from the civil society and includes important commitments aimed at: implementing mechanisms for access to information, fight against corruption, transparency, improvement of civil service, working out effective platforms for responding to ideas of the various groups of the society and their problems, etc. Involvement of the Legislative Body of Georgia into OGP activities is especially welcomed, since it lends still higher standard to the Georgian Action Plan.

It should be stressed that transparency of the Government contributes to raising awareness of the citizens on these activities of Government and ultimately, its increased accountability. On the other hand, access to information about Government activities is an obligation of any democratic state. Involvement of the society increases effectiveness of Government actions and improves quality of its decisions. We welcome that while preparing new action plan, the Government of Georgia has considered these conditions and has opened space for broader participation of the society. Regular meetings of Open Government Georgia's Forum, with participation of the representatives of the Government, CSOs and international organizations have been a significant tool for contributing to this process and its successful development.

It should also be welcomed, that in order to refine the action plan and better inform the citizens, public consultations have been held throughout the whole country. The meetings aimed at raising public awareness, collecting thoughts and ideas from the public so that the action plan and obligations undertaken by the Government within the framework of OGP meet needs and priorities of the citizens.

At the same time we believe that for the success of the new action plan it is of utmost importance that the Government ensures highest possible involvement of both public institutions and the society on each stage of fulfillment of the action plan. The successful implementation of those extremely important and ambitious commitments undertaken within the framework of OGP action plan can only become possible if there is effective cooperation between the Government and interested society, as well as through raising awareness of the citizens and their direct participation.

On behalf of the civil society organizations represented in Open Government Georgia's Forum

Giorgi Kldiashvili



Co-chair of the Open Government Georgia's Forum

Director of Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)