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13.06.14.

To: Open Government Partnership Support Unit

Subject: Application to Run for Open Government Partnership Steering Committee

This letter is to express desire on behalf of the Government of Georgia to take part in the upcoming Open Government Partnership (OGP) Steering Committee (SC) elections. We are convinced that Georgia will be able to provide valuable contribution to the OGP through its participation in the SC.

Georgia was among the first countries to join OGP in 2011. Since then, Government achieved substantial progress in implementing its ambitious commitments. Georgia has invested huge efforts in making the Government truly open, participatory and accountable. By applying advanced technologies, as well as innovative and modern approaches to governance, we aim at building integrity and public trust in the Government, increasing its transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, and making it more accessible and accountable to citizens, which, eventually, will contribute to empowering of the latter. The OGP membership helps Georgia consolidate its commitments to democratic and open governance and bring the internal *modus operandi* into the spotlight of international community. Further, it encourages us to go beyond current achievements, undertake new commitments, share good experiences with the partner countries, learn from others and engage in the openness, transparency and accountability contest with the partner governments.

The developments that have taken place at the national level demonstrate that we take this initiative seriously, and are willing to comply with the OGP principles and regulations enshrined in the OGP Articles of Governance and Open Government Guide.

2013 was the year of major changes in the way OGP has been managed at the national level. We created a powerful and functional dedicated national coordination mechanism – **Open Government Georgia's Forum**, the structure of which resembles the governing body of OGP, co-chaired by representatives of Government and civil society elected by the Forum. The Second National Action Plan of Georgia, which was drafted jointly by the Government and the NGOs, is a clear testimony of our commitment to the initiative and its principles. Countrywide public consultations planned and implemented by the Forum in line with the Guidance for National OGP Dialogue served as a tool to empower citizens and collect highly valuable feedback to find out what people consider to be most relevant issues that should be included in the Government's agenda.

The draft of the Second National Action Plan, which is ready to go through the relevant executive and parliamentary procedures, underlines the transparency and accountability agenda of the Government of Georgia. Increasing openness and accountability of public administration by developing a separate act of the **Freedom of Information**; encouraging greater civil society involvement through the **Open Government Georgia's Forum** and by promoting public engagement through e-petitions portal - **ichange.ge**; streamlining our unique **Community Centers** at the regional level; developing a citizens' portal that should serve as a firm platform for both receiving public services and communicating with the Government; developing **Open Data Portal** and **E-archives** for greater accessibility of invaluable information stored at the national archives - these are some of the ambitious commitments the Government undertakes to meet the needs and demands of the people of Georgia.

Clearly, Georgia can be taken as an example to show how the OGP process contributes towards greater openness and accountability at the domestic level by increased level of cooperation with civil society. By establishing the obligation of state agencies to proactively publish public information and adopting the list of information subject to proactive publication we brought the standards of access to information to a higher level. We take pride that our achievement in this area was praised at the OGP London summit where Georgia was among the 7 finalist Bright Spots showing how open and accountable government is changing people's lives.

Georgia has a number of strengths and clear potential to become a regional leader in upholding the OGP values and to contribute to the SC work. Georgia's fight against corruption and increased accountability through unique e-governance and transparency initiatives, as well as its innovative projects have already attracted huge international interest and won the UN awards: the Public Service Hall – the Georgian invention of service-delivery has received the UN Public Service Award in *Improving Delivery of Public Services* category; the UN Award in *Preventing and Combating Corruption in Public Service* category was given to the Georgian Electronic Government Procurement (Ge-GP) and the Online Asset Declaration systems. Indeed, OGP is a platform where our experiences can be shared widely.

We have been very active in taking advantage of the OGP formats, including the thematic Working Groups. At the same time, we have worked hard to be active contributors to the OGP process internationally.

We reaffirm our strong will to continue being an active partner in OGP and contribute to the unique process of experience sharing, and the healthy and engaging competition of the governments to open up, empower citizens and advance the values of modern democratic government.

Indeed, the Government of Georgia would be highly privileged to have a seat in the SC, and take the responsibility of promoting widely the values enshrined in the Open Government Declaration. We stand ready to dedicate the necessary human resources to support Georgia's participation in the OGP Steering Committee and to make required financial contribution as determined by the SC at its last session.

Here is the information about the key contacts to support the OGP Steering Committee work:

Ms. Thea Tsulukiani, Minister of Justice of Georgia

Ms. Rusudan Mikhelidze, Secretary of Anti-Corruption Council of Georgia

Ms. Ketevan Tsanava, National Coordinator for Open Government Partnership Georgia.

Respectfully,



Thea Tsulukiani
Minister of Justice of Georgia