

Information on water and sanitation issues

- **What are the opportunities and challenges faced by your State in realizing the human rights to water and sanitation?**

The human right to safer water is recognized by a number of national and international programs. The most detailed and comprehensive definition of the right is provided in the 15th General Comment to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted in 1966 at the UN General Assembly, according to which “each person is entitled to receiving sufficient, safe, physically accessible and affordable water for personal, as well as household use”¹. Georgia joined the Covenant in 1994.

- **Are there any specific examples of legislation, policies, budgeting processes, service delivery programmes and projects or accountability mechanisms in force in your country that would be relevant to the realization of the rights to water and sanitation? Could you please provide us with copies of the relevant information?**

There is no specific record made in the Constitution of Georgia as a supreme law, recognizing the rights to improve drinking-water source and sanitary conditions as human rights. Though, Under the Article 37 of the Constitution of Georgia (2008) and other laws of Georgia on Environmental Protection (1996), Georgian Law on Water (1997), Law on Health Care (1997-2013), Law on Public Health (2007), there are described ensuring safer environments for human health, as well as the issues of protection of water supplies of the population, drinking-water sources and their proper usage, water quality and its control mechanisms and sanitary issues. Furthermore, issues of improvement of the existing water-supply conditions and quality control mechanisms are reflected in a number of other normative acts and regulations.

Law on Public Health (2007) aims to provide safer environments for people’s health; strengthening the health and healthy life style of the population; prevent and avoid communicable and non-communicable disease prevalence.

One of the main principles of the Law is:

- Providing the preventive activities to avoid health related threats;

Provision of safer environment and improved drinking-water is required under the articles 22 and 23 of the paragraph 6 of Georgian Law on Public Health.

¹ As of September 1, 2011 the Covenant is ratified by 160 countries. Georgia joined the Covenant in 1994. General comment No.15 to the UN International Covenant “On Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”¹, adopted in 1966 at the UN General Assembly.

Currently, Georgia is a part of the number of multilateral and bilateral international agreements and each agreement imposes certain obligations to the country. Georgia, as a partner country to the European Neighborhood Policy, undertook the obligation to perform the harmonization of its legislation with the legislation of the European Union and introduce internationally recognized environmental approaches, regulations and recommendations, and to align water-related legislation with European water legislation. Full implementation of the EU-Georgian Action Plan will significantly contribute to the introduction of sustainable use and management of water resources, improvement of wastewater treatment, improvement of the quality and safety of drinking-water and recreational waters, protection of ecosystems, elimination of water deficit and ensuring of involvement of all stakeholders.

Government of Georgia has started the reform of water supply systems, which ensures stable provision of drinking-water for the population of Georgia through large scale investments in coming years.

UNECE signed Memorandum of Understanding with Georgia under the EU Water Initiative. Besides, Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNECE and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources protection of Georgia on 19 October 2011 in Tbilisi which provides specific terms of reference for the NPD (National Policy Dialogue) that will focus on: (1) Institutional reform to approximate national legislation to the EU Water Framework Directive, including the preparation of a new National Water Law; (2) Improving the water and health situation through development of targets and targeted dates in accordance with the Protocol on Water and Health; (3) Strengthening trans-boundary water cooperation with Azerbaijan and supporting Georgian efforts to prepare for accession to the UNECE Water Convention.

Existing policy and plans for universal access to safe water are applied to all citizens of Georgia fully equal conditions, poor populations, remote or hard to reach areas, indigenous population, internally displaced, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities. Furthermore, the issue receives adequate attention from the government on the daily basis.

Georgia has joined the GLAAS (GLOBAL ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF SANITATION AND DRINKING-WATER) reporting circle for the first time.