

**The Office of the Public Defender of Georgia**

**Speech delivered by the Deputy Public Defender of Georgia, Ms. Natia Katsitadze**

Mr. President,

Distinguished members of Human Rights council, ladies and gentlemen, this statement is made on behalf of the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia.

Involvement of the NHRI's in the UPR process is important to ensure an objective review of country's human rights situation and implementation of recommendations thereof. In this regard, we are glad to note that the government of Georgia was actively collaborating with our institution during the whole UPR process.

The majority of recommendations issued for Georgia have been immediately accepted by the government after the review of the Georgia's report on 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group in November, 2015. However, we still have important points which should be considered, such as:

- Establishment of the **independent investigative mechanism** which will investigate the facts of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment committed by law enforcement officers, including in penitentiary facilities. Existence of independent investigation mechanism, with prosecutorial authority is crucially important as there remain questions concerning the effectiveness of the investigation carried out by the Prosecutor's Office into similar cases.
- Creation of efficient **labor inspection**, which on one hand will ensure maximum safety of working conditions for employees and harmonization of Georgian legislation with the EU and ILO Standards on the other.
- The fair **selection/appointment and promotion of judges**, which has a substantive impact on a state oriented to democratic order, rule of law and human rights. Selection of judges that fully meet the high judicial status is the primary guarantee for an independent and impartial judiciary.

Furthermore, Georgia still needs to make efforts to successfully fight against domestic and gender based violence, strengthen effectiveness of antidiscrimination legislation and take all possible measures to ensure protection of fundamental human rights in occupied territories, among others, education of ethnic Georgians on their native language.

We will continue our constructive work with Georgian government in the process of implementation of recommendations and we hope that we will have significant improvements in all fields of human rights which are challenged these days in Georgia.

Thank you very much!