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Georgia needs to take crucial steps to achieve 2015 targets, argues the Report on Millennium Development Goals for Georgia

The first national report on Georgia's Millennium Development Goals, launched on June 12, reports that progress towards achieving these goals is uneven and reveals the necessity of urgent interventions if Georgia is to achieve the set targets by 2015.

The report commissioned by the Permanent Commission that comprised of the experts from relevant Government entities, NGOs and UN agencies addresses the eight MDGs through an analysis of the country's situation and proposes recommendations to the targets that could be applicable to Georgia.

The report reveals that for some areas, such as universal primary education, Georgia is doing relatively well. However, in many areas the potential to achieve progress exist but there is considerable room for improvement. Areas of concern highlighted by the report include the increased number of Georgians living in poverty, the status and living standards of IDPs, the role of women in society, and the deficiencies of the education system.

The report also focuses on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and warns that the high rates of child and maternal mortality, combined with the low birth rate, general rise in the death rate and substantial out-migration could entail depopulation.

The report focuses on problems in environmental protection that include weakness of planning and implementation of environmental measures; increased impact on natural resources; population's low environmental awareness and participation in decision-making; weak law enforcement; and inefficient monitoring systems. Access to safe drinking water is a problem due to uneven natural distribution of water resources and under-funding and lack of maintenance of water supply systems, causing degradation of quality control and creating a menace to the population's health.

The report analyses the progress made in creating environments conducive to the development of partnerships through attaining a suitable climate for economic growth, liberalisation of trade, improvement of banking system and insurance market, and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

It is noted that Georgia has the potential, resources and the know-how to create a poverty-free country and solve existing problems. The report outlines the importance of the integration of MDGs into the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies and programmes on sustainable development. The report argues that current and future development

strategies should reflect the implications of MDGs and their consequences for the growth and development of the country.

Prime Minister of Georgia H.E. Mr. Zurab Zhvania in his foreword letter notes that "The report clearly defines the directions that the development policy of the country should take. Georgian society has proven in recent months that it possesses the capacity to set and successfully implement such ambitious targets."