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EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

5th National Report on the implementation of
the European Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

(Articles 1, 10, 15, 18 and 20
for the period 01/01/2007 – 31/12/2010)

Report registered by the Secretariat on 25 March 2012

CYCLE 2012

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHAPTER (revised)

5th National Report on the implementation of the Revised European Social Chapter

Submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

(Article 1 §1, §2, §3, §4; Article 10 §2, §4; Article 15 §3, Article 18 §1, §2, §3, §4 and Article 20 §1

For the period 2007-2010)

5TH REPORT

Of Georgia for the implementation of (Article 1 §1, §2, §3, §4; Article 10 §2, §4; Article 15 §3, Article 18 §1, §2, §3, §4 and Article 20 §1 of the European Social Chapter (revised)

TBILISI 2011

For the period 1 October 2007 to 31 December 2010 made by the Government of Georgia (GoG) in accordance with Article C of the Revised European Social Charter and Article 21 of the European Social Charter, on the measures taken to give effect to the accepted provisions of the Revised European Social Charter, the instrument of ratification or approval of which was deposited on 01 July 2005.

In accordance with Article C of the Revised European Social Charter copies of this report have been communicated to the:

- Georgian Trade Union Confederation
- Georgian Employers' Association

ARTICLE 1 – THE RIGTH TO WORK - §1, §2, §3, §4

Article 1 – The Right to Work

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work, the Parties undertake:

1. To accept as one of their primary aims and responsibilities the achievement and maintenance of as high and stable a level of employment as possible, with a view to the attainment of full employment;
2. To protect effectively the right of the worker to earn his living in an occupation freely entered upon;
3. To establish or maintain free employment services for all workers;
4. To provide or promote appropriate vocational guidance, training and rehabilitation.

Appendix to Article 1§2

This provision shall not be interpreted as prohibiting or authorizing any union security clause or practice.

Information to be submitted

Article 1§1

GoG Response:

Reduction of unemployment and jobs creation is one of the main priorities of the GoG for reduction of poverty.

It should be mentioned, that in 2008 the research “Labour Market in Georgia: Lack of Jobs or Structural Mismatches?” was provided by the World Bank. According to the research, in spite of establishment lots of working places in Georgia, the unemployment rate is still high, because of unqualified human capacity.

Consequentially, low qualification of the local labor force is one of the most acute problems for Georgia’s growth and more specifically for the labor market and employment. Accordingly, the GoG is oriented on enhancement and development of quality of education for further facilitation of employment in particular in view of decreasing the labor mismatch through better quality human capital in the country.

The GoG sees this problem as the critical impediment for creating the grounds for economic and social advancement, as well as for modernization of the country. Taking into account the above-mentioned, the GoG is aiming at the enhancement of the human capital quality in the country. This in turn will allow to effectively solving the labour market mismatch problem through increasing the quality and subsequently competitiveness of the Georgian labour force for reduction of unemployment.

In order to improve human capital quality in the country, the GoG has undertaken active reforms in all segments of education, such as general, vocational and higher education. Reforms in the education sector broadly have been focusing *inter alia* on eradication of widespread corruption, improvement of quality of education, streamlining of institutional and management mechanisms of education establishments and improvement of necessary infrastructure.

Along with a number of measures to stimulate Georgia's economic growth (i.e. improving the legal base and enforcement of the property rights, fighting corruption, easing bureaucratic barriers to making business, lowering taxes, granting cheap credits and tax breaks to start-ups as well as other enterprises, improving public infrastructure, helping local companies to gain access to international markets, etc.) the GoG implemented several state programmes aimed at improving professional skills of the job-seekers.

The State Programme - Development of Professional Training Infrastructure "Vocational Education for Employment" was launched to create a modern vocational education infrastructure and reduce structural unemployment and the resultant skills mismatch in the labour market.

Goals of the Programme included:

- Development of four vocational education centers already existed in the country;
- Establishment of several tens of new vocational centers based on the needs of the private sector;
- Development of relevant infrastructure to promote vocational education and create better employment opportunities for the job-seekers.

The Programme was implemented in close cooperation with public and private actors. Along with necessary financing, the GoG contributed by providing physical infrastructure (buildings and facilities) for establishing new professional training centers.

This Programme provided for a great deal of flexibility and adjustability to market conditions since the fields of study and training programs' curricula as well as the number of students to be enrolled by the vocational centers were determined by private companies - potential employers of successful graduates of the program.

In addition to the above mentioned Programme, the Ministry of Science and Education of Georgia has elaborated a Strategy on Vocational Education Training (VET) 2009-2012 in close cooperation with the European Commission. The document has been adopted by the GoG and necessary budgetary arrangements have been made to ensure the implementation of the Strategy.

Yet another state programme to be mentioned here is the "Programme for Vocational Training and Retraining of Job Seekers" implemented in 2007 and 2008¹.

Main elements of this Programme included the provision of free employment services as well as apprenticeship opportunities to the unemployed. The Programme aimed at reducing structural unemployment caused by latest restructuring of the economy and addressing the problem of the skills mismatch in the labour market.

¹The same program was also conducted in 2006.

Special centers for collecting the information about unfilled job vacancies as well as applications of job seekers willing to participate in the Programme were established by the LEPL Social Subsidy Agency – an affiliate organization under the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Assistance of Georgia (MoLHSA). After necessary verification and data processing job seekers had been provided with the information about matching job vacancies. Applicants were free to accept or reject a particular job offering, whereas in the case of a substantiated refusal to fill a job vacancy the applicant still had a chance to receive a new job offering. Those who accepted offered positions and started their work received monthly payment under the state Programme in the amount of 200 GEL.

This Programme was one of the most successful examples of fruitful public-private partnership in dealing with structural unemployment in the country. Over 1 400 enterprises participated in the Programme on a voluntary basis and provided necessary means and facilities for on-the-job training / retraining of the unemployed. Overall, more than 113 800 unemployed persons participated in the Programme.

It should be emphasized, that “Cheap Credit” State Programme for 2008 and 2009 have also contributed to a job creation in various regions of Georgia. Under this Programme private enterprises working in tourism, agriculture and export-oriented sectors of Georgia’s economy received low interest development credits. Along with financial considerations, one of the main criteria for selecting winning projects was the number of people to be employed in these projects.

Approximately 65 mln of GEL was allocated from state budget for “Cheap Credit” Programme. Overall, 133 projects were financed and the number of new jobs/beneficiaries of the approved projects exceeded 35 000 persons.

It should be emphasized, that municipalities carry out a number of programmes for enhancement of employment. For example, the executive body of the largest municipality Tbilisi City Hall provides the following employment programmes:

- From 2010, “English and Computer Skills Programme” was started. The aim of this Programme is to provide for job-seekers English and computer courses free of charge.
- From September, 2010, special employment programme was started. Everyone who is 18 years old can participate in the Programme. There is no age limitation; accordingly, older workers also may participate in the Programme. Residents of 30 other municipalities may participate in the Programme. The Programme includes:
 - Registration of job seekers in unified electronic data-base. The data-base is daily updated and includes information regarding: personal data, education, job experience of job seeker.
 - Consultations with businesses in order to allocate vacancies.
 - Selection of persons from data-base for the business.
 - Provision of vocational education and trainings for job-seekers.

Totally, 52 670 job-seekers are registered, 70% of them already undergone English and computer skills courses free of charge and 500 persons are employed from the above-mentioned data-base.

- Programme for facilitation local business development are undergoing. The Programme is aimed at provision of support and consultations for beneficiaries in enhancement of their business skills, accessibility to the financial resources, starting business.

Article 1§2

GoG Response:

According to paragraph 1 of article 30 of the Constitution of Georgia, “Labour shall be free”. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the Labour Code of Georgia “Labor relations shall emerge by the agreement reached as a result of expression of free will of the parties, based on parties’ equality principles”.

As for non-discrimination clauses, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the same article stipulate that: “... 3. Discrimination of any kind is forbidden during the labor relations, such as: discrimination by race, color of a skin, language, ethnic and social belong, origin, property, class, working place, age, sex, sexual orientation, limited abilities, religion or membership of other unions, family status, political and other beliefs;

4. Direct or indirect oppression of a person that aims to or causes the creation of a frightening, hostile, disgraceful, dishonorable and insulting environment is considered to be discrimination. Creation of conditions that directly or indirectly worsens a person’s condition in comparison to other person in the same conditions is also considered to be discrimination;

5. The need in persons’ differentiation due to a job’s peculiarity that is conditioned by the essence and the specificity of a job or by the conditions of fulfillment of a job that aims at a legal achievement of a goal and is a commensurate and inevitable mean for its achievement is not considered to be discrimination.”

As for the reservation in paragraph 5 of the Article 2 of the labor code provided above, it is applied through special legal acts concerning public service (i.e. nationality and age limitations, knowledge of state language, etc.) and law enforcement agencies (i.e. checking for past criminal activity, etc.) or through licensing requirements for certain professions (i.e. medical doctors, judges, etc.).

In addition, it should be emphasised, that foreigners and persons without citizenship, legally residing on the territory of Georgia, have equal rights and guarantees secured with the same guarantees, as citizens of Georgia (Georgian Law on “The Legal Status of Foreigners”). According to the paragraph 11, 6 of the Law of Georgia on “The Trade Unions”, discrimination of workers by the employers based on trade union membership is prohibited.

The GoG is not aware of any case of infringements of the legal right of the worker to entering freely into a gainful occupation in our country.

Article 1§3

GoG Response:

As it was described earlier in this report (*see: GoG Response on Article 1§1*), free employment services were established and maintained either at the national level (programs for vocational training and retraining of job seekers of 2007 and 2008) or at the local municipal level (Tbilisi Municipality Employment Promotion Program, implemented since 2010).

Based on the experience gained by implementing the above mentioned programs and approaches, it became clear that employment services provided at the local level are far more effective in terms of

employment promotion than the same services offered at the central level. It has therefore been decided to continue and expand the geography of free employment services offered at the local level (for the moment, Tbilisi Municipality Employment Promotion Program, covers not only the residents of Tbilisi, but also residents of 30 other municipalities of Georgia).

A special government agency – LEPL Public Service Bureau, established under the Law on Public Service, maintains web-based employment service² for those who are interested in getting job opportunities in a public sector. More than 300 public bodies throughout the country are united under this system and place the information about job openings free of charge. End users of this information system also enjoy provided services freely.

A number of privately owned web-based employment services are also available in the country. Some of them are free of charge for both - potential employers and job-seekers³, and some of them are free for job-seekers whereas potential employers have to pay a symbolic fee for placing an announcement about a job opening (30 GEL per announcement)⁴.

Finally, please take note that GoG cooperates and endorses the implementation of donor funded projects that provide for free employment services. One example of such fruitful cooperation is the creation of job counseling and placement centers in Tbilisi and Batumi under the USAID funded Job Counseling and Placement Project implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Five new centers to be located in 5 other major cities (Kutaisi, Poti, Akhaltsikhe, Gori and Telavi) are under development for the moment.

Article 1§4

GoG Response:

A considerable part of the reforms undertaken by the GoG in recent years to improve the quality of education in general has been devoted to the system of vocational education and guidance in the country. The aim is to transform the soviet-style professional education system into a market driven one, where emphasis is put on the needs of the growing economy and quality of education.

Starting from 2005, several new conceptual documents were prepared by the GoG, leading to enacting a new Law on Professional Education in spring 2007.

In 2009 the GoG developed and approved a special strategy of professional education, which contains all necessary steps to be undertaken in the years to come.

The GoG embarked on the institutional reform of the VET system. The latest wave of reforms was undertaken in September 2010, which resulted in optimization of the professional education centres,

² www.hr.gov.ge

³ www.hr.ge

⁴ www.jobs.ge

the quantity of which is currently 20. The new professional education system consists of 5 levels, which is in full compliance with the relevant system existing in Europe. The professional education centres have been reformed into professional colleges, which provide education at first three levels.

There were two types (broad levels) of vocational education: vocational education and training (craftsmanship, or occupational education) provided by VET Centers and higher professional education provided by Higher Educational institutions. Nowadays, there is one whole system of Vocational Education that covers/includes 5 levels of vocational education. The first 3 levels are provided by Vocational Colleges, community colleges, higher educational institutions and general educational schools; the last two levels (IV and V) are provided by community colleges and higher educational institutions. All education institutions with appropriate licenses are also authorized to carry out VET programmes).

Students can apply for vocational education (3 levels at least) after completion of basic level of general education (IX grades). As for professional higher education, applicant should have completed full secondary education (XII grades). Upon completion of a VET programme, a certificate of a specialist is issued.

Currently there are 20 state and 75 private vocational education institutions, in addition to 17 state and 5 private higher education institutions offering vocational education programmes. Around 8000 students are educated in the state institutions and around 5000 - in private ones. According to the data by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the last 2 years saw the doubling of private education institutions, which shows increasing demand, and is an evidence of the private sector trying to overcome the constraint.

Apart from the state efforts to reform the sector, a number of international donor organisations have been contributing to the process. EU, UNDP, USAID, GIZ, NRC and IOM in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science provide special assistance programs for VET development in the country.

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia implements the EU project “support for the vocational education and training sector of Georgia”. The overall objective of the project is to support development of the sector of vocational education in Georgia and to enhance the credibility and attractiveness of the VET system. This objective matches with priorities set in national VET strategy (2009-2012). The project aims at continuous progress towards integration of the Georgian VET system into common European education space, which implies creation of an effective system capable of providing domestic and international market with competitive workforce. Three priority objectives underline these goals: 1. Increased access to VET and support to professional development throughout life; 2. Quality and market relevance of VET; 3. Participatory governance, management and financing system in VET. Project implementation period is 2009-2012. The total cost of the programme is 19,000,000 Euro, with the following components: 1) Budget Support: 17,000,000 Euro and 2) Technical Assistance: 2,000,000 Euro.

GIZ provides private sector development program in Georgia. The main goal of the project is to improve general conditions for the development of a labor market-oriented VET system in Georgia, increased public private partnership (PPP) schemes in this area, and identify and balance mismatches on the labor market. GIZ implements the project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Project implementation period is 2009-2011 and project budget is 2 ml Euro.

UNDP also provides assistance to VET development in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. UNDP has been supporting the development of the vocational education and training system in Georgia since 2006. This area is included in UNDP's plans for the period of 2011-2015 as well. The strategic vision of UNDP programs is ensuring employment of vulnerable population through development of their professional skills and turning the VET centers into hubs of local economic development. UNDP activities were financed from various donors, including the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC), the European Union (EU), and UNDP's own funds. Currently, UNDP is present at 9 regionally based VET centers in different regions of Georgia. It has plans to expand geographically and functionally the VET development targeting more vulnerable population and people with disabilities in the future. The above mentioned VET centers offer courses in such areas as construction, agriculture, tourism, processing and industry.

USAID develops Vocational Education Project in Georgia for the period of 2008-2011. The project is focused on improving vocational education and training in construction and tourism by building direct partnerships between vocational schools and employers to improve the country's ability to meet workforce needs. The program provides short-term, intensive training to meet job opportunities created by post-conflict reconstruction projects as well as secondary support industries through rapid, intensive courses that directly meet the needs of employers. Currently, the program cooperates with 6 vocational educational centers country-wide. Project includes activities such as rehabilitation of infrastructure, preparation of modern study materials, training programs for teachers. 5544 people were trained in the framework of the project, 67% of which were subsequently employed.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) also participates in the VET development process in Georgia through its project Youth Education Pack. With the assistance of NRC internally displaced persons were trained in 9 vocational educational centers throughout the country in different fields. Only in 2010, 754 beneficiaries participated in the program. The project implementation period is 2008-2011 and the project budget is 480 000 USD.

In addition to the abovementioned, International Organization of Migration (IOM) with its project, Consultation and Employment, created the consultation and employment centers in 7 VETs across the country. Project implementation period is 2010 – 2012 and the project budget is 144 000 USD.

Vocational education system of Georgia provides a good example of cooperation between state institutions, private sector and donors. Currently the sector is increasingly driven by private sector demand, number of private professional education institutions growing gradually.

ARTICLE 10 – THE RIGHT TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING - §2, §4

Article 10 – The Right to Vocational Training

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational training, the Parties undertake:

1. to provide or promote, as necessary, the technical and vocational training of all persons, including the handicapped, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, and to grant facilities for access to higher technical and university education, based solely on individual aptitude;
2. to provide or promote a system of apprenticeship and other systematic arrangements for training young boys and girls in their various employments;
3. to provide or promote, as necessary:
 - a) adequate and readily available training facilities for adult workers;
 - b) special facilities for the retraining of adult workers needed as a result of technological development or new trends in employment;
4. to provide or promote, as necessary, special measures for the retraining and reintegration of the long-term unemployed;
5. to encourage the full utilization of the facilities provided by appropriate measures such as:
 - a) reducing or abolishing any fees or charges;
 - b) granting financial assistance in appropriate cases;
 - c) including in the normal working hours time spent on supplementary training taken by the worker, at the request of his employer, during employment;
 - d) ensuring, through adequate supervision, in consultation with the employers' and workers' organizations, the efficiency of apprenticeship and other training arrangements for young workers, and the adequate protection of young workers generally.

Information to be submitted

Article 10§2

GoG Response:

In addition to efforts on developing the system of vocational education and training (*see: GoG response on Article 1§4*) the GoG takes other measures to tackle the problem of youth unemployment in the country.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia (MSYA) - a special government body established in 2010 to deal, among others, with specific problems of the youth in Georgia - implements the following programs aimed at promotion of youth training and employment:

- “Resource Centers’ Project” - 8 information centers have been created for youth throughout Georgia. Centers organize vocational trainings for interested youth and provide consultations on career planning. These services are free of charge.
- “Foster-child Business Project” - Provides grants to the youth, including young persons with disabilities, to implement their business ideas.
- Project “I Can Help” - Under this project, university students help children without parental care to reveal their talents and prepare them for independent living in the future.

MSYA started the process to develop a specific “Youth Policy” document which will include specific provisions on vocational training and employment of youth.

According to the policy directive reiterated several times at the highest governmental level, line ministries and state agencies are encouraged to promote the wide use of formal internship programs to attract students and young specialists to the employment in public sector. This practice has been established and maintained for years at national as well as at local level of governance.

The involvement of local businesses is also worth to be mentioned. The meetings of the representatives of large and successful companies with would-be graduates of higher education institutions are held regularly to familiarize the students with the particulars of various businesses and draw their attention on the requirements for getting jobs in Georgia’s companies. The process is largely endorsed and promoted by the Ministry of Science and Education of Georgia.

Article 10§4

GoG Response:

Since the GoG views the problem of long-term unemployed to be closely connected with the structural changes to Georgia's economy and the resultant skills mismatch problem in the labor market the emphasis is put on the development of systems of job counseling and vocational training and retraining that are readily accessible for all age-groups of population of working age.

As for the measures taken by the GoG to promote jobs creation and employment and to develop the system of vocational education, they are described earlier in this report (*see: GoG response on Article 1§4*). Additionally, the GoG would like to emphasize, that the long-term unemployed are given a special priority treatment in the described projects implemented at both national and local levels.

ARTICLE 15 – THE RIGHT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO INDEPENDENCE, SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY
- §3

Article 15 – The Right of Persons with Disabilities to Independence, Social Integration and Participation in the Life of the Community

With a view to ensuring to persons with disabilities, irrespective of age and the nature and origin of their disabilities, the effective exercise of the right to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community, the Parties undertake, in particular:

1. to take the necessary measures to provide persons with disabilities with guidance, education and vocational training in the framework of general schemes wherever possible or, where this is not possible, through specialized bodies, public or private;
2. to promote their access to employment through all measures tending to encourage employers to hire and keep in employment persons with disabilities in the ordinary working environment and to adjust the working conditions to the needs of the disabled or, where this is not possible by reason of the disability, by arranging for or creating sheltered employment according to the level of disability. In certain cases, such measures may require recourse to specialized placement and support services;
3. to promote their full social integration and participation in the life of the community in particular through measures, including technical aids, aiming to overcome barriers to communication and mobility and enabling access to transport, housing, cultural activities and leisure.

Information to be submitted

Article 15§3

GoG Response:

Social integration of the persons with disabilities is one of the top priorities of country's social policy.

The Law on Social Protection for the Persons with Disabilities of Georgia sets the basis for the state policy as regards to persons with disabilities (PWD) and defines the rights of PWDs as well as the means for exercising these rights on equal terms as those of other people to ensure favorable conditions of living and participation of PWDs in societal economic and political life. The above-mentioned Law stipulates that:

- The state shall recognize sign language as the mean of interpersonal communication and create necessary conditions for its wide use and development (Article 5);
- Government bodies, enterprises, establishments and organizations shall provide PWDs with conditions that enable them to have free access to residential, public and industrial buildings, and transport and communication facilities (Article 7);

- It is prohibited to design and build settlements and residential areas, and to construct or rehabilitate buildings and facilities (including teaching and educational, cultural and entertaining, sports and fitness, airports, railway stations, marine and river transport complexes and facilities, telecommunication facilities and individual means of communication) if these facilities do not meet the needs and requirement of persons with disabilities (Article 8);
- Government bodies and agencies at central and local levels are obliged to ensure that cultural, entertaining and sports facilities are readily accessible for PWDs; these bodies and agencies are also in charge of provision of special sports equipment and other needed facilities to PWDs. These services shall be free of charge or be accessible on favorable terms by PWDs, as defined by legislation in force (Article 9);
- Enterprises, establishments and organizations irrespective of their ownership or economic activity can donate funds for building social, cultural and sports facilities as well as for purchasing and storing relevant equipment intended for PWDs. These funds shall not be taxed according to legislation (Article 10);
- Enterprises and organizations providing services to PWDs or producing goods, special technical and other implements for PWDs enjoy tax breaks and other benefits as defined by legislation (Article 12);
- PWDs shall be assisted by financial means (disability pension, monetary social assistance, etc) as well as by technical means, including special vehicles, wheelchairs, orthopedic and prosthetic implements, special printed materials, loudspeakers and alarm devices, as well as by medical, social and vocational rehabilitation and domestic services (Article 24);
- PWDs in need of a caregiver or a personal assistant shall receive such service at home or in hospital facility to be provided by social service agencies (Article 26);
- The state shall promote social integration and development of PWDs and associations established by them through economic means (such as favorable loans, tax breaks, addressed subsidies, special funds, etc.). The rules, terms and conditions and the amount of such economic incentives has to be defined by Georgia's legislation (Article 32).

According to the Law on State Pensions of Georgia, working PWDs are not deprived of the entitlement to the state pension in contrast to other pensioners.

The system of assessing social economic standing of households applying for social assistance in Georgia (under the Law on Social Assistance) provides for special treatment of the fact of having a PWD as a household member. Under the means-testing system these households score lower compared to other households with no member with disability and have better chances to get social assistance along with state funded health insurance for all household members.

In 2008, the Concept on Social Integration of Person with Disabilities was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia. The concept envisages empowerment of PDWs to prevent their alienation from country's social, economic, political and cultural life.

A special Government Council concerning the problems of PWDs was established in 2010. The council is composed of the representatives of GoG and legislature and about 50 non-government organizations (unions and associations) founded by PWDs. The council is chaired by Prime Minister of Georgia. The main function of the body is to elaborate relevant policy issues and coordinate the implementation of state policy on PWDs throughout the country.

State Action Plan on Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities for 2010-2012 was prepared in cooperation with all interested parties and adopted by the GoG in 2010.

The above-mentioned Action Plan is intended to:

- Improve the life of PWDs by means of creating favorable environment;
- Decrease the number of PWDs through providing timely prevention and rehabilitation services;
- Support equal participation of PWDs in all aspects of social life;
- De-stigmatize disability related issues.

Among other things, the above-mentioned Action Plan covers the following areas:

1. Accessibility of information on disability related issues:

- Raise public awareness on disability issues and fight the stigma associated with the problems of disability by means of training journalists and implementing relevant educational programs;
- Create counseling centers first in Tbilisi and then in the regions to provide legal, medical and other advisory services to PWD;
- Provide sign language translation of news on national TV.

2. Accessibility of environment and services:

- Increase the accessibility of public infrastructure - state institutions, other public buildings, transportation terminals (airport, auto stations, wayside infrastructure), for PWDs by enforcing relevant legislation;
- Overcome the lack of communication (accessibility of means of communication for the blind and deaf), support computerization;
- Provide wheelchairs, prosthetic and orthopedic items other needed aid devices (cochlear implants, hearing aids, crutches, walking sticks).

It should be emphasized, that various programs for the PWDs are implemented at national level:

1. A whole array of services (a number of them are newly introduced) for PWDs has been offered in recent years under State Programs administered by subordinate agencies of the MoLHSA. The aim of these services is to ensure better social integration of PWDs and the prevention of worst forms of disability and social exclusion by early diagnostics, intervention and rehabilitation of PWDs. These services include:

- Providing care in day centers (including transportation to and from the centers and the catering);
- Institutional care of persons with mental disorders (24 hour residential care, full board and treatment, as needed);
- Community care of PWDs (for the age group 16+);
- Recreation and resort rehabilitation of children with disabilities;
- Psycho-somatic habilitation / rehabilitation of children with disabilities (for children with neuromuscular disorders);
- Early intervention for children with mental and physical retardation;
- Early diagnostics of developmental disorders of children;

- Sign language interpretation service for deaf and dumb;
- Development and distribution printed materials (using Braille printing), audio books and audio players to blind persons;
- Provision of free aid devices, such as: wheelchairs, crutches, walking sticks, orthopedic and prosthetic appliances, analogous and digital hearing aid devices, cochlear implants

It is should be emphasized that, budgetary allotments for the program have increased gradually from 3,829,106 GELs in 2006 to 5,152,600 GELs in 2010, notwithstanding the fact that Georgia experienced an episode of negative economic growth in 2009.

2. In addition, 1 infant home taking care of children less than 3 years of age with limited abilities and serious health problems, 2 residential institutions for children with disabilities (3-18 years of age) and 2 residential institutions for adult (18 years and more) PWDs have been functioning under the state supervision of the MoLHSA in the reporting period (2007-2010). Financing, physical infrastructure, and standards and quality of care in these institutions have been constantly improving in this period.
3. The GoG supported the initiative of the MoLHSA to develop foster care services as one of the means of deinstitutionalizing state childcare services, including those devoted to children with disabilities. Adequate financing of the service was warranted by the GoG. As a general rule, monthly salary of a foster parent taking care of a child with disabilities is set 33% higher than that of a foster parent taking care of a child without any disability. The additional incentive envisaged by existing regulations is that the duration of caring after a foster child accrues to the length of service of a foster parent. The selection of foster families is based on tough criteria of compatibility to be checked by social workers employed by the Social Service Agency (affiliated to the MoLHSA), entrusted the function of the State Body of Guardianship and Care. Special attention is given to checking social-economic standing of a prospective foster family to ensure that financial incentives are not a driving force of the desire to become a foster parent.
4. Another service for PWDs provided and supervised by the MoLHSA is a service of personal assistance and care. The service is run under the arrangements for a non-military service for young adults. These conscripts work as personal assistants and / or caregivers of PWDs either at home or at residential facilities. Up to 80 PWDs received the service in the reporting period.

ARTICLE 18 – THE RIGHT TO ENGAGE IN A GAINFUL OCCUPATION IN THE TERRITORY OF OTHER PARTIES

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to engage in a gainful occupation in the territory of any other Party, the Parties undertake:

1. to apply existing regulations in a spirit of liberality;
2. to simplify existing formalities and to reduce or abolish chancery dues and other charges payable by foreign workers or their employers;
3. to liberalise, individually or collectively, regulations governing the employment of foreign workers; and recognise:
4. the right of their nationals to leave the country to engage in a gainful occupation in the territories of the other Parties.

Information to be submitted

Article 18§1

GoG response:

The Georgian legislation guarantees equal rights for engaging in gainful occupation on the territory of Georgia both for the nationals and the foreigners residing in the county.

The Georgian legislation guarantees protection from any kind of discrimination in labour relations: “Any type of discrimination due to race, color, ethnic and social category, nationality, origin, property and position, residence, age, gender, sexual orientation, limited capability, membership of religious or any other union, family conditions, political or other opinions are prohibited in employment relations”. According to the Labour Code “in the course of employment relations the parties should adhere to basic human rights and freedoms as defined by the Georgian legislation (Article 2, Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 6 of the Labour Code (2006)).

The Constitution of Georgia does not provide with any kind of limitation on the rights related to employment: “Foreigners and non-citizens residing in Georgia have equal rights of the citizens of Georgia” including rights related to labour relations.

Foreigners and persons without citizenship, legally residing on the territory of Georgia, have equal rights and guarantees secured with the same guarantees, as citizens of Georgia (Georgian Law on The Legal Status of Foreigners). The law on The Legal Status of Foreigners:

- Protects the universally recognized rights of foreigners regardless of race, color, language, sex, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property and title (Article 1).
- Citizens of 65 countries and territories (including EU countries) can enter and stay in Georgia up to 360 days without a visa (Article 4§5).

- Citizens of other countries need an ordinary visa to enter and stay in Georgia either up to 90 or 365 days based on the type of visa issued by competent authorities (Article 9§2).
- Though Article 11§2(e) of the law stipulates that a work permit may be required to obtain a visa, as defined by Georgian legislation, in fact, there are no work permits required by our legislation for a legal employment of foreigners in Georgia.
- A foreigner willing to stay for more than 360 days in Georgia for work or study is obliged to obtain a temporary residence permit (Article 9§1¹), to be issued for the maximum duration of 6 years (Article 19§1) with the possibility of extension on the same terms as defined by the initial permit (Article 19§1). A permanent residence permit can be issued upon completion a six-year period of legal residence in the country (Article 20 (a)).
- One of the grounds for granting a temporary residence permit to a foreigner is that he or she is engaged in lawful employment in the country (Article 19§1(a)).

There are no restrictions on ordinary types of employment set for foreigners in Georgia. The exceptions include state security, military and law enforcement services regulated by special laws, civil service (a person should be a national of the country and know the state language). The employment in so-called regulated professions (i.e. medicine) may be subject to passing licensing examinations or other procedures envisaged for certifying or recognizing a person's qualification.

In addition, it should be mentioned, that The Georgian legislation guarantees equal rights for both residents and non-residents for establishing and operation of business and for purchase, ownership and sale of property in Georgia. There are no restrictions on foreign ownership of property or assets in Georgia. There are no controls or restrictions on capital flows. There are no limits on capital repatriation and currency operations, both for residents and non-residents of Georgia. Capital repatriation and currency operations are freely carried out through the banking system.

Article 18§2

GoG Response:

The norms regulating the issue of residence of foreigners in Georgia have been discussed earlier in present document (*see: GoG Response on Article 18§1*).

Pursuant to Article 42 of the Law of Georgia on Legal Status of Foreigners, foreigners in Georgia shall be taxed on the same terms as the citizens of Georgia or persons without citizenship legally residing in Georgia.

There are no additional taxes or dues to be paid neither by a foreign employed person nor by an employer who hired a foreign worker.

Article 18§3

GoG Response:

Georgia probably has the most liberal regulations of issues regarding the employment of foreign workers in the country.

Norms and regulations as defined by the Labour Code of Georgia and other acts concerning labor and labor relationships are applicable on equal terms for both - citizens of Georgia and foreign workers.

Article 18§4

GoG Response:

The GoG pays due attention to protecting the rights of Georgia's citizens working in foreign countries, who, admittedly, are not always engaged in legal employment.

One of the latest developments in this area is the signing (Brussels, Belgium, 2009) "The Partnership for Mobility" declaration with the European Commission and 16 members of EU involved in the initiative. The goal of "The Partnership for Mobility" initiative is the promotion of legal employment for Georgian citizens in EU countries, including the conclusion of bilateral treaties on circular migration. Additional benefits of the implementation of the initiative include simplification of visa procedures for entering EU countries, especially for training and education purposes. The framework of cooperation also provides for offering employment opportunities to citizens returning home after being legally employed in foreign countries. It should be noted that the readiness to implement such kind of projects was expressed by the representatives from Bulgaria, Sweden and Poland.

The revised plan of cooperation in the framework of "The Partnership for Mobility" was approved on 15th of September, 2010. Works are still ongoing with interested parties to prepare relevant cooperation projects. One of the first projects, negotiated with France, is almost finalized for the moment. The draft agreement provides for offering legal employment opportunities (up to 18 months) to up to 500 Georgian citizens in professions that are in short supply in France. New agreements under "The Partnership for Mobility" initiative are still to come.

As it was mentioned above, the GoG started working on bilateral agreement regarding circular labour migration with France. The aim of this agreement is to enable the young people wishing to enhance their professional knowledge and skills to work by their profession in France. This program covers people higher as well as vocational education. The negotiations between Georgia and France on this agreement are already completed and will be signed in near future. In addition, 19 countries expressed their readiness to start negotiations on similar agreement.

ARTICLE 20 – THE RIGHT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUAL TREATMENT IN MATTERS OF EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF SEX

Article 20 – The Right to Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment in Matters of Employment and Occupation without Discrimination on the Grounds of Sex

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex, the Parties undertake to recognize that right and to take appropriate measures to ensure or promote its application in the following fields:

- a) Access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;
- b) Vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation;
- c) Terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration;
- d) Career development, including promotion.

Appendix to Article 20

1. It is understood that social security matters, as well as other provisions relating to unemployment benefit, old age benefit and survivor's benefit, may be excluded from the scope of this article.
2. Provisions concerning the protection of women, particularly as regards pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, shall not be deemed to be discrimination as referred to in this article.
3. This article shall not prevent the adoption of specific measures aimed at removing *de facto* inequalities.
4. Occupational activities which, by reason of their nature or the context in which they are carried out, can be entrusted only to persons of a particular sex may be excluded from the scope of this article or some of its provisions. This provision is not to be interpreted as requiring the Parties to embody in laws or regulations a list of occupations which, by reason of their nature or the context in which they are carried out, may be reserved to persons of a particular sex.

Information to be submitted

Article 20 §1

GoG Response:

It should be emphasised, that in 2004 the Gender Advisory Council under the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia was created. The Advisory Council was the first institutional mechanism aiming at enhancement of gender equality.

In 2009, the Advisory Council changed its status and became the Parliamentary Permanent Council for Gender Equality (hereafter – the Council for Gender Equality). The Council for Gender Equality brings non-governmental and governmental representatives to discuss and issue recommendations on gender issues, to help ensure that women's voices are heard on an equal footing with men in formulating public policy and decision making at the national and local levels.

The Council for Gender Equality is composed of parliamentarians, NGOs and representatives of the Executive Branch of the Government.

The Council for Gender Equality meets on a regular basis to discuss gender equality related issues and policies.

The members of the Council for Gender Equality are conducting regular visits in different regions of Georgia and are meeting representatives of local government, NGO representatives and citizens. In the framework of the “Gender and Politics Program in the South Caucasus”, gender advisory council was provided with technical assistance – 8 members of the council, as well as all female parliamentarians were supported with computers and other technical equipment.

According to the “Action Plan on Gender Equality” for 2007-2009, the Law on Gender Equality was adopted in March, 2010 for ensuring legislative framework for gender equality issues. Since April 2010 the Law on Gender Equity is enacted. This Law is major step forward towards improving gender issues at the legislative level.

Major trends of gender State policy have been determined. The objective of the Law are as follows: provide inadmissibility of discrimination in all areas of life, creation of appropriate conditions for realization of equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for man and woman, support elimination and eradication of discrimination based on gender.

The Law promotes and ensures equal rights for man and woman in political, economic, social and cultural life. According to the Law, in order to protect gender equality, the following should be ensured without discrimination:

- Equal treatment of man and woman in the evaluation of work quality;
- Equal individual rights of man and woman;
- Equal availability of education for man and woman and free choice of education at every stage of learning;
- Assistance of eradication of violence in family and society;
- Free choice of profession or job type, official promotion, professional training/retraining;
- Taking positions in public service in accordance with profession, skills and qualification;
- Etc.

The principle regarding equal treatment of man and woman in the evaluation of work quality into the legislation implies equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value. Accordingly, the equal remuneration for men and women is envisaged by the Law and legislation is strengthened in this regard.

The Law contains provisions regarding gender equality in employment relations. Pursuant to the Law, in employment relations, the following is inadmissible:

- Discrimination, persecution or coercion of a person that is aimed at or results in the creation of a threatening, hostile, belittling, or insulting environment.
- Any undesirable verbal, nonverbal or physical action of sexual character that is aimed at or results in the creation of a threatening, hostile, belittling, or insulting environment.

According to the Law, Government should support equal employment opportunities for both genders.

In addition, the Law stipulates that the creation of comfortable employment conditions for pregnant women and nursing mothers that excludes their participation in heavy-duty activities, harmful or dangerous conditions and during night hours should be ensured.

The Law envisages competences of the Council for Gender Equality, which acts as a lobbying unit for gender issues and is entitled to:

- a) Develop and submit to the Parliament of Georgia for approval an action plan concerning gender equality and ensure coordination and monitoring for the implementation of this action plan;
- b) Analyze Georgian legislation and develop proposals to eradicate existing elements of gender inequality in legislation;
- c) Ensure expert analysis of draft legislative laws to determine the provision of gender equality for man and woman;
- d) Develop and plan separate activities aimed at achieving gender equality to realize equal rights of man and woman;
- e) Develop and introduce monitoring and evaluation systems for gender equality activities and develop relevant recommendations;
- f) Request and receive all information and documentation concerning the study of gender equality, except information the confidentiality of which is provided by Georgian legislation;
- g) Consider submitted applications, documents and other information with respect to violation of gender equality, respond and develop relevant recommendations within the Council's terms of reference;
- h) Invite representatives of international or local organizations involved in gender issues or/and experts to discuss gender equality issues;
- i) Exercise other rights provided by Georgian legislation;

The Council for Gender Equality submits an annual report on the state of gender equality in the country to the Parliament of Georgia, prepares reports on the progress of fulfillment of international obligations on gender equality.

Pursuant to the Law, the budget, priorities of social-economic development, municipal programs and plans of local self-governing bodies shall be designed so that any form of discrimination is excluded.

It should be emphasized, that the Public Defender of Georgia, within the terms of reference, provides monitoring of gender equality protection and responds to facts of violation. The Public Defender of Georgia exercises the rights empowered to him or her by the Georgian Organic Law on Public Defender to provide gender equality in the country.

Article 2, Paragraph 3 of Labour Code stipulates that discrimination of any kind as to race, color, language, ethnic and social belonging, nationality, origin, property and position, residence, age, gender, sexual orientation, limited capability, membership of religious or any other union, marital status, political or other opinions are prohibited in employment relationship. Paragraph 4 of the same Article stipulates that direct or indirect oppression of a person, aimed at or causing creation of intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or insulting environment, or creation of such conditions which directly or indirectly impair his/her state compared with other persons being in the similar conditions shall be deemed as discrimination.

It should be mentioned, that the Law on Entrepreneurship is gender-neutral. Notably, women's representation in financial sector is higher than men's.

According to the Georgian legislation, women and men are equal before the law with regard to property. Women have the right to independently apply for, and receive financial resources (credit, loans).

The Labor Code stipulates the following principles regarding women rights at work:

- It is prohibited to conclude a contract with an underage, a pregnant woman or a nursing mother, on performance of hard, unhealthy and dangerous work.
- An employer shall ensure the protection of a pregnant woman from a labor that endangers the welfare, physical and psychical health of the woman and fetus.
- Overtime employment of a pregnant woman, a woman in a postnatal period or a person with limited capabilities without the consent of her/his person shall be inadmissible.
- It shall be impermissible to employ a minor, a pregnant woman, a woman in a postnatal period, a breastfeeding woman or a person with limited capabilities, on a night job (22 pm to 6 am). A baby sitter who takes care of a child under age of three and/or a person with limited capabilities can be employed on a night job only with consent of her/his person.
- An employee, upon request, is entitled to a total maternity leave of 477 calendar days to cover pregnancy, delivery and child care. Of pregnancy, maternity and child care leave, 126 calendar days will be paid, while in case of a complicated delivery or if mother gives a birth to two or more infants – 140 calendar days of paid leave will be granted.
- Compensation of pregnancy, maternity or adoption leaves is paid from the State Budget according to the rule set by the legislation. An employer and an employee can reach an agreement regarding an additional compensation paid by an employer.
- During the five years following the birth of a child, the employee, upon her/his request, shall have the right to an additional 12 weeks of unpaid child care leave. Child care leave can be taken either all at once or incrementally, but not less than 2 weeks of leave should be used per year.

Gender equality is guaranteed by Georgian legislation and it protects them from any kind of discrimination.

According to the Article 14 of Georgian Constitution, everyone is free by birth and is equal before law regardless of race, color, language, sex, religion, political and other opinions, national, ethnic and social belonging, origin, property and title, place of residence.

According to the Georgian Law on General Education Article 13, any kind of discrimination is prohibited during the entry into schools.

According to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, Article 3: one of the main goals of higher education in Georgia is to prohibit all kind of discrimination in the educational system.

According to the Georgian Law on Broadcasting, Public Broadcaster shall reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age and gender diversity in programs.

According to the Georgian Law on Police, the police shall protect human rights and freedoms regardless of nationality, property, race, social and ethnic belonging, gender, age, education, language and religion, political or other opinions.

According to the Georgian Law on the Procedures of Execution of Non-imprisonment Sentences and Probation, the employee of the National Service of Probation is obliged to protect human rights and freedoms regardless of nationality, property, race, social and ethnic belonging, gender, age, education, language and religion, political or other opinions.

Georgian legislation includes enforcement mechanisms regarding prohibition of discrimination due to the gender. The enforcement mechanisms are reflected as penalties and sanctions on discrimination, namely:

- The discrimination due to gender is the violation of the Georgian labour legislation. The Code of Administrative Violations, section 42 punishes violations of labour legislation and labour protection rules by a penalty, namely: the violation of labour legislation and labour protection rules by the authorized official of enterprise, legal entity, organization will result in a penalty in amount of a minimum of 100 times the labour remuneration and the same violation committed within one year following the imposition of an administrative penalty will result in a penalty in amount of a minimum of 200 times the labour remuneration.
- According to the Article 142 of the Civil Code, breaking the equality of people because of their race, color, language, gender, attitude towards religion, faith, political or other opinions, national, ethnic, social, belonging to any rank or public unions, origin, place of residence or property, having encroached the person's right is punished with penalty or compulsory work for a year or imprisonment for two years. The same action:
 - a) Using the authority;
 - b) Causing a hard result, is punished with penalty or imprisonment for three years, taking the right of activity or dismissing for three years or without it.

Accordingly, equality of gender is guaranteed by the Georgian legislation. The Georgian labour legislation is gender-neutral.

There are several international as well as national organisations active in the field of gender equality and women's issues in Georgia. These include UNDP Gender and Politics Programme in the South Caucasus. The UN in Georgia is currently also involved in other regional projects, including the "Southern Caucasus Anti-Drug Programme (SCAD)" implemented by UNDP, the regional UNIFEM project on women and peace building." USAID support through the American Bar Association/ Georgian Young Lawyers Association's local activities in training and legislative reform and NDI who currently work to increase women's participation in decision-making by, for example, training of women leaders. They also strengthen women's NGO's ties to parliament as well as support cooperation between women MPs and women in the

regions. The majority of the projects have a strong women’s focus rather than a gender and development focus.

There is a small group of mainly women, within civil society, who are very committed to gender equality and women’s issues in particular. Approximately 200 NGOs were registered as working on women’s issues in Georgia and actively involved in the elaboration of gender equality policy.

Moreover, Georgian legislation contains provisions of positive discrimination:

- According to the Tax code favourable treatment for personal income tax is granted to single mothers. The legislation does not envisage any concessions for a single father.
- According to the Civil Code the court shall be bound to determine which parent shall be awarded the custody of child and although the decision of the court must be gender neutral, in child custody disputes women have been treated more favourably.
- There is a difference between retirement age of men and women. According to the Georgian legislation a retirement age for man is 65 and for woman – 60.

Table 1. Share of Female Employees in Some Government Entities in Georgia (2009)

Government Organization	Share of women in employees
Administration of the President	65%
State Minister’s Office on the Diaspora Issues	38%
State Minister’s Office for the Reintegration Issues	60%
Ministry of Energy	32%
Ministry of Education and Science	57%
Ministry of Refugees and Resettlement	28%
State Chancellery	31%
Parliament of Georgia	41%
Tbilisi City Hall	22%
Office of the Prime Minister	59%

In addition it should be emphasized, that number of women employed in healthcare sector significantly overcomes the number of men (See table below).

Number of Doctors in Georgia			
2005		2009	
women	men	women	men
14 352	5 959	13 787	6 822

The GoG is aimed at creation of the equal opportunities for employment of men and women. Enhancement of employment implies improvement of human capital quality, which be achieved through the improvement of higher and vocational education quality and thus better quality graduates with enhanced employment opportunities.

The following analysis has been mainly based on the data provided by the National Examination Center, which reports to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Data analysis is mainly performed for the period from 2005 till 2010, as systematized and unified data became available after the introduction of the unified national examination in 2005, administered by the National Examination Center.

In 2010, total number of students admitted to the higher educational institutions reached 22 576. Starting from 2005, when the unified national examination requirement was introduced, until 2010 total number of students admitted to higher education institutions increased by 36.8%. This increase indicates that generally Georgia's population attaches significant importance to higher education.

It should be noted that the GoG tries to encourage the development of technical professions in the country taking into account recent economic development trends and actual gradually increasing demand. For this purpose starting from the academic year 2010-2011, Ministry of Education and Science changed the system of state grants for studies in higher educational institutions. Namely, total (100%) as well as partial (70%, 50% and 30%) grants are envisaged for technical professions, such as science, engineering and IT, while for other professions only 100% state grant is envisaged. This means that on a merit-based system students applying for priority professions become eligible for grants, both total and partial, whereby in the areas other than science, technology and IT, either total or no grant option exists. It is anticipated that this changed system will encourage students to apply for technical professions.

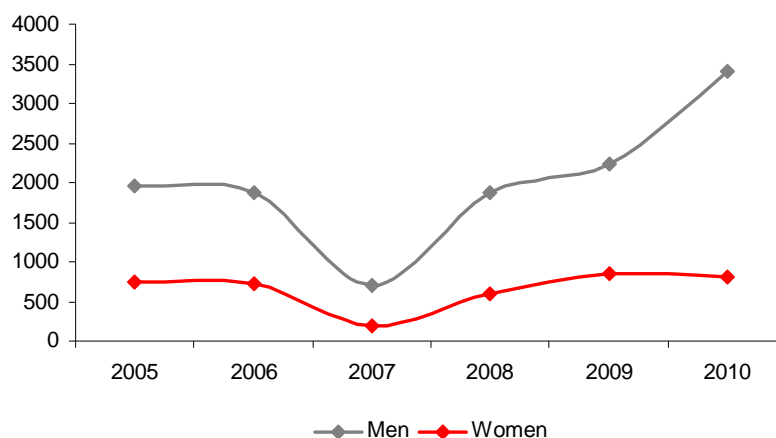
In general, state grants are offered based on merit. The results of 4 exams for each student are summarized: Georgian language, foreign language, general abilities test (which in the total score is multiplied by coefficient 1.5) and one chosen subject based on the preferred specialization. This summary score is the basis for receiving state grant. In 2005-2010, total number of students receiving all types of state grants increased by 105.3%. Moreover, as already mentioned above, over the last 5 years the amount of state grants on education increased significantly, almost 15 times, from 955 000 USD in 2005 to 14 102 000 USD in 2010.

From the information provided below, it is obvious that male and female students in Georgia have equal opportunities to study in higher educational institutions and in some areas female students even outperform male students.

Share of female students in the total number of students is higher than share of men and keeps increasing. Based on the most recent data from the National Examination Center, in 2010, number of female students admitted to Georgian higher educational institutions is even higher and equals 59% of total admitted students. In 2005-2010 number of admitted female students increased by 40.4%, while number of male students increased by 31.9%. This means that in a merit-based system, both genders have at least equal opportunities to study in higher educational institutions and no discrimination towards women in this regard is applied in Georgia.

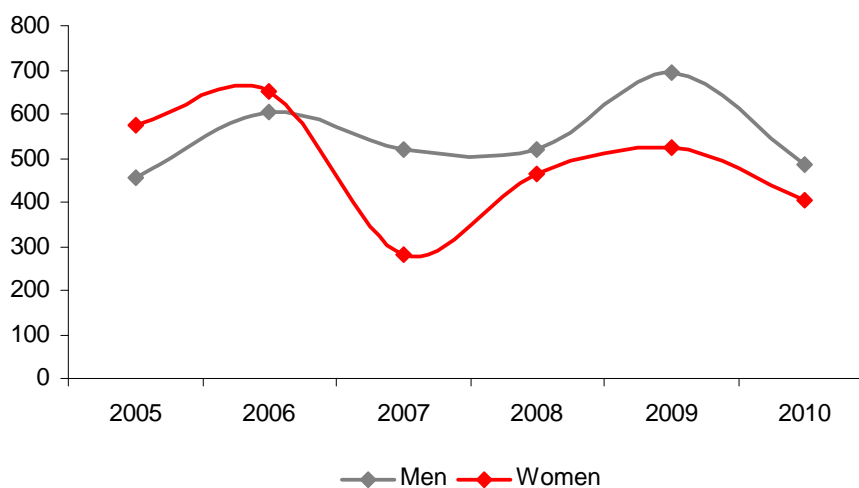
Although technical fields have been traditionally male dominated in Georgia, in recent years slight increase in number of female students in such technical areas as departments of engineering can be observed. Namely, in 2005-2010, number of female students admitted to the departments of engineering increased by 9%. Hereby it has to be mentioned that number of male students increased by 73.6% and the overall increase of student numbers in these fields has been conditioned mainly by the increase of male student numbers (chart 1).

Chart 1. Number of Students Admitted to the Departments of Engineering



Data of the National Examination Center shows that women are also well-represented in the departments of science, where number of male and female students is almost equal and at some stages number of female students has been even higher (see the chart 2 below).

Chart 2. Number of Students Admitted to Departments of Science



It is relevant to look at performance of female students in unified national examinations in science, math, general abilities test and English language. Female students dominate in the total number of students with highest grades in the science exam in the unified national examination. Namely, in 2010, share of female students in the top 20% segment was 71.4%. In 2005-2010 number of female students in the top 20% segment in science exam increased by 125.4%, while the number of male students increased by 80.3%.

While the share of male students in the top 20% segment of math exam is generally higher than share of female students, during the last three years share of male and female students in this regard became almost equal and in 2010 female students constituted 48.7% of the top 20% segment. It should be also noted that in 2005-2010, number of male students in the top 20% segment in math exam decreased by 35.5%, while number of female students increased by 1.6%.

As for the general abilities test (GAT), here in the top 20% segment, distribution of male and female students is almost equal. Namely, in 2010, female students constituted 49.8% of the top 20% segment. In 2005-2010, increase in number of male and female students with highest grades in GAT was almost equal, namely, number of female students increased by 15%, while number of male students increased by 14.4%.

Female students stably outperform male students in the English exam and over the years dominate in the number of students with the highest grades in this exam. In 2010, female students constituted 60.1% of the top 20% segment in the English exam.

When it comes to the distribution of state grants, it should be emphasized that number of female students receiving state grants is higher than number of male students. As grants are distributed based on performance in the unified national exams, it also indicated that women general perform better than man and have higher scores. For instance, in 2010, females constituted 61.9% of total state grant receivers. In 2005-2010, number of male students receiving state grants increased by 94.5%, while the number of female students increased by 112.6%.

The introduction of a merit-based system of education and university entrance examinations substantially improved the situation with regard to the access of ethnic minorities and students from less advanced socio-economic status to education and opportunities in this regard. With respect to the gender situation in the education sector, women constitute higher number of students and higher number of those with better scores, which subsequently conditions the fact that female students represent higher number of state education grant recipients in the overall student body in Georgia.

The high accessibility of education for women positively affects employment through the higher quality employees and better development prospects. Based on data provided by the National Statistics Office of Georgia, unemployment rate of women in 2010 (14.5%) reduced compare to the 2009 (15.4%). Moreover, in 2010 unemployment rate of men (17.9%) is higher than the same indicator for women (14.5%).