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**Statement on behalf of the delegation of Georgia  
At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Plenary Meeting  
of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

Debate on the sub-item (b) of the agenda item 13 entitled  
“Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and  
Development”

**New York, 9 October 2014**

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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset let me thank the Secretary-General for his outstanding work and elaborate reports: “Framework of actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014” and “Recurrent themes and key elements identified during the sessions of the Commission on Population and Development”.

This year we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICPD with a comprehensive assessment of the status of the implementation of the Programme of Action as a critical opportunity to take stock of achievements, remaining challenges and to define a clear vision for future action. The 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) and the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Follow-up to the Programme of Action on the ICPD provided good fora for deliberations in this regard.

Hereby let me briefly comment on the status of ICPD implementation in Georgia. Over the last 20 years, the country, while going through socio-economic and political transition has made significant progress vis-à-vis ICPD agenda:

- Cairo platform priorities across population development, reproductive health, women and youth empowerment, protection of displaced populations, enabling environment for children with disability and elderly have been reflected in national development plans and legislation.

- Historic gains were documented in reproductive health, including decreases in maternal (from 49.2 to 27.4), infant (from 21 to 12) and under-5 mortality rates (from 24.9 to 12.0) since 2000. Abortion rates have also decreased (from 3.7 to 1.6) with parallel increase in contraceptive prevalence rate (from 20% to 54%). Screening programs for breast and cervical cancer were introduced in 2005 and universal Access to HIV treatment has been maintained since 2003.
- Georgia introduced its flagship programme of Universal Health Care Programme in February 2013. If in 2012, only half of the population was covered by public or private health insurance, today every citizen of the country is guaranteed with a basic package of health services.
- Expansion of social protection schemes provided better security net for socially vulnerable population groups, including families living under poverty, old-age pensioners, IDPs and people with disabilities. In 2013 old-age pensions and social allowances were increased from 2012 baselines by 50% and 100%, respectively.
- Women empowerment has been yet another priority positioned high on the national development agenda and Georgia surpassed a 10% threshold for women representation in the Parliament in 2012. Women hold key Ministerial portfolios in Justice, Education, and Foreign Affairs and lead the National Security Council and the Central Election Commission. Economic empowerment of women has been also visible since 1994 with 30% of women being primary breadwinners and 20% heading business enterprises.
- Based on international assessment, Georgia has been categorized among the countries successful in combating trafficking, an achievement made under the leadership of the National Coordination Council Against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Responding to young people's special needs and recognizing the importance of investing in Youth for country's sustainable development, the national Youth Policy was adopted in 2014, elaborated through a participatory process with UNFPA and UNICEF support based on knowledge gained from Youth SRH surveys and Youth Situation Analysis.

But despite these remarkable achievements, much remains to be done not only in Georgia, but in many parts of the world.

We therefore share the urgency of the findings of the ICPD beyond 2014 review, which show that, despite significant gains in poverty reduction and economic growth since the International Conference on Population and Development, many have been left behind, lacking fulfillment of basic needs, meaningful work, access to social protection, or public services in

health or education and that there are still significant barriers for many around the world to enjoy their human rights.

To tackle remaining challenges in my country, specific measures are being undertaken aimed at: ensuring sustainable and inclusive economic growth, benefits of which will be available for the whole population (that is underlined in the Socioeconomic Development Strategy – Georgia 2020), improvement of demographic situation, ensuring equal opportunities of person with disabilities, responding to young people’s special needs, ensuring integration and participation of older persons in society, further enhancing of gender equality and empowerment of women, improvement of the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of sex and age disaggregated data for informed policy-making.

My country has taken several legislative and institutional steps to address the Human rights challenges, including adopting a National Human Rights Strategy for 2014-2020, the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2014-2015 and a new Anti-discrimination Law.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me underline that my country is proud to join the international community in reaffirming its support for the ICPD Programme of Action and stands ready to further contribute to this effort. As articulated in meeting summary of the 2013 UNECE Regional Conference ("Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st Century"), we support Human Rights centered approach for post 2014 agenda for action. Furthermore, the experience clearly states that only comprehensive, results-oriented, rights- and evidence-based strategic planning process that engages all concerned stakeholders and focuses both on access to and quality of services can ensure progress towards equity, individual dignity, well-being and sustainable development of Nations.

I thank you for your attention.

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