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**STATEMENT BY MS. NELI SHIOLASHVILI, COUNSELOR OF THE PERMANENT
MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**UNITED NATIONS
THIRD COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA ITEM 28 (a)
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

NEW YORK, 13 OCTOBER 2010

Mr. Chairman,

Since it is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor in this Committee, let me convey my sincere congratulations on your election as the Chair of the Third Committee and wish you and the members of the Bureau a very successful session.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

This year has been marked with a transformative decision to create a new and stronger entity, the UN Women. Georgia welcomes its establishment as a basis for strengthening a gender pillar, which is poised to better address the challenges related to gender equality and empowerment of women worldwide. We believe that the UN Women would also strengthen and coordinate the national efforts aimed at improving the quality of life of women.

The Government of Georgia attaches great importance to the advancement of women on both, legislative, as well as on executive levels. An ambitious legislative agenda has been laid out to built-in the gender conscious approaches into the decision making process. In this context I would like to single out two major laws adopted recently by the Parliament of Georgia. One, adopted earlier this year, the Gender Equality Law, provides for the establishment of a national women's machinery, the enhancement of women's security, and the strengthening of women's

political participation. It also introduces a gender-responsive planning and budgeting by the government.

Another one, the Law on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection of and Support to Its Victims, substantially amended in 2009, represents a commitment to address domestic violence through a wide range of social and legal services. The law strengthens the efforts to prevent and combat domestic violence by promptly responding to reports on violence, providing victims with shelter facilities, and ensuring the safety of whistleblowers, among other measures.

The major driving force behind these undertakings has been the Gender Equality Advisory Council, a group promoting the gender agenda throughout state agencies, and raising public awareness. It is comprised of Members of the Parliament, representatives of executive branch, the Public Defender's Office, and non-governmental groups. The Council, headed by a vice-speaker of the Parliament has become a prominent body influencing legislative as well as executive agendas.

It has been under the guidance of the Council that two state-run shelters for the victims of domestic violence have been recently established. In addition to providing victims with secure place of residence and appropriate living conditions, support and rehabilitation activities have been also introduced, such as legal counseling and court representation, medical and psychological assistance, all of them implemented as cooperative efforts with local NGOs.

While addressing the gender related issues, we draw particular importance to the assistance programs targeting most vulnerable groups, first and foremost the internally displaced persons. The rights and hopes of these individuals - women, elderly and children, who became the victims of ethnic cleansing resulted in the foreign military invasion in 2008 and the ongoing occupation of Georgian territories have been partially addressed by consecutive resolutions of the General Assembly. As mentioned above, the Government of Georgia spares no efforts to provide the IDPs with decent living conditions and financial support.

Mr. Chairman,

As a responsible international actor, Georgia has been loyal to the international obligations it has undertaken as a signatory to all major international conventions combating violence against women, namely the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (Convention C 100), and the Protocol to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime - to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

Today we have more effective tools to handle the gender-related issues, and as a part of wider international policy we are committed to continue with our efforts aimed at improving the quality of life of women in the country.

Thank you.