



# Address of the Non-Governmental Organization Members of the Open Government Partnership Forum to the Prime-Minister of Georgia

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned representatives of the civil society of Georgia, who had been actively involved in the OGP processes from its inception both internationally and domestically, address you with this letter to inform you of our grave concerns regarding the OGP process in Georgia, and the progress of the country in this OGP Chairmanship year.

We fully acknowledge that you, as a Prime Minister who has taken office very recently, have very little to do with the past drawbacks of the process and lack of meaningful results, but since you will be the Head of the Government and the Host of the fifth OGP Global Summit, we want to inform you about the challenges that Georgia is facing as a member of OGP and as a Chair of the OGP, which is responsible for exhibiting best practice in reforms related to openness, transparency and accountability. Moreover, during the chairpersonship, Georgia has to take commitments on carrying out meaningful reforms that will be directed towards resolving important issues in the country and have a positive impact on the lives of citizens.

Nevertheless, Georgia has not met the expectations on ambitious reforms stemming from the Chairpersonship year. Not only is there a lack of ambitious commitments in

the Action Plan proposed by the Government, but the joint proposal by the civil society on the creation of an independent anti-corruption has not been taken into account, notwithstanding the fact that in the Co-Chair Vision of OGP, advancing transparency and fighting against corruption was declared as one of the strategic goals of Georgia.

Apart from the contents of the Action Plan, we have major concerns, regarding the co-creation process. After months of internal deliberation within the Government, the civil society was given an extremely limited time to provide feedback and recommendations to the draft 2018-2019 OGP National Action Plan. Furthermore, it is very alarming that in spite of the willingness of Georgian civil society to come to a compromise, Government agencies turned down alternative proposals in the very last minute, leaving no time or room for further negotiation. We believe this goes against the spirit of co-creation and casts shadow on the Government's declared goals to be stand out in the year of OGP Chairmanship.

This is a tremendous harm to the reputation of Georgia as an OGP Chair country who is in the international spotlight due to the Summit. Responsibility for this failure fully rests with the Government, together with the Ministry of Justice of Georgia who had been in charge of leading this process.

Since the action plan has not yet been formally adopted, the chance still remains for the Prime Minister to positively turn around the process, acknowledge the problem and urge the responsible authorities to revise the draft action plan and present an ambitious and transformative document at the Summit. As for the future sustainability of OGP, we believe it is important to move away the coordination role of OGP from the Ministry of Justice to the Prime Minister's office, since the most recent processes further demonstrate that the Ministry of Justice cannot enable development of open government in Georgia.

Since we strive to maintain and expand the role of Georgia as a regional leader in the area of open government, we urge you to immediately intervene in the process, so that Georgia can greet the participants of the summit with not only a well-organized Global Summit but also a National Action Plan that will on one hand have tremendous impact on the domestic governance agenda and on the other hand be an example to other members of the initiative, who look up to Georgia for guidance and leadership.

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



*Non-Governmental Organizations Members of the Open Government Partnership Georgia Forum:*

*Georgian Young Lawyers' Association*

*Transparency International Georgia*

*Institute for Development of Freedom of Information*

*Open Society Georgia Foundation*