



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia
Special Session of the General Assembly on the Follow-up to the
Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and
Development (ICPD)**

22 September 2014, New York

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

This Session is coming at a time when our world faces a number of critical challenges. We must strengthen our resolve and implement the ICPD Agenda, which is vital for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and defining our post-2015 agenda.

During the last 20 years, since the adoption of the Programme of Action, Georgia made considerable progress in advancing the agenda in several priority directions.

Our population agenda has been very successful to date: fewer women are dying in childbirth, more unwanted pregnancies are prevented, and young people's opportunities have expanded. But much more needs to be done.

My country is working on a host of programs focused on caring for our population and improving their wellbeing.

Most significantly in the last year, the government launched its flagship program on Universal Health Care (UHC) that ensured every citizen of Georgia with a basic package of out-patient, in-patient, and emergency health services.

Georgia also has a comprehensive social protection strategy with the primary focus on the protection against poverty in old age and targeted assistance to poor and vulnerable people.

A new public-private solidarity fund will mobilize non-budgetary resources to support the most vulnerable.

In December 2013, the Parliament of Georgia ratified the Convention on the Right of the Persons with Disabilities. Then, in January 2014 the Government adopted our new action plan to ensure equal opportunities of persons with disabilities.

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.

Another major challenge remains the issue of IDPs. Over 450,000 people in Georgia were displaced by several waves of conflict. Their right to return to their homes of origin remains violated, since they are not granted the conditions for the safe, voluntary, and dignified return.

The principal goal of the government remains to promote the social-economic integration and improved living conditions of IDPs until their safe and dignified return is possible. We are implementing several different plans to achieve this goal.

Despite these remarkable achievements, much remains to be done. We are mindful of the challenges that still remain to improve the quality of lives of all our people, ensure equality and protect the environment for succeeding generations. We therefore share the urgency of the findings of the review.

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.

I thank you.