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Statement on behalf of the delegation of Georgia by Ms. Nino Shekrladze, Counsellor  
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Mr. Chairman,

Congratulating you and the Members of the Bureau on your election, my delegation assures you of our support in guiding the work of the committee.

Georgia has aligned itself with the statement made by the European Union. Now allow me to provide few brief remarks in our national capacity.

The Second Committee of the 68th session has a rich agenda covering the vast scope of the items of global importance. Undoubtedly, striving for the economic welfare has always been one of the main defining aspects of the world order. In the modern era, globalization has even more closely linked the economies of the states and made cooperation for achievement of individual, let alone, global goals inevitable. As the acceleration of the achievement of Millennium Development Goals remains an important challenge, given the limited time frames, defining of the post-2015 development agenda is gaining no less importance, becoming the focus of global discussions. Here, again, tight cooperation among countries remains vital. Georgia, on its part, stands ready to get actively involved in the deliberations on defining the development agenda for post-2015 period with the sustainable development at its centre.

While talking about the sustainable development, let me briefly touch upon the situation in my country in this regard.

In the recent years, Georgia has implemented significant economic reforms, aimed at the establishment of an attractive entrepreneurial framework, which serves as an essential basis for the FDI inflow, creation of new jobs, enhancement of the economic activities in all sectors of the economy and improvement of welfare of the citizens. The mentioned reforms have yielded the positive results as subsequently reflected in various ratings of international financial institutions and
rating agencies and most importantly, in the trend of positive economic growth. The trends in economic development, including poverty reduction, were considerably reversed by the war of August 2008 and the global financial crisis. Nevertheless, the negative trends have been improving slowly since 2010 and real GDP growth in 2012 constituted 6.1%.

The Government of Georgia has undertaken several steps for improving social welfare. Namely, the amount of pension for senior citizens has increased. Social welfare packages for persons with disabilities increased as well. Besides, a nation-wide health insurance program has been introduced and become available for the entire population of Georgia.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that despite the growth tendency mentioned above, poverty has not decreased as much as we would have liked to and at this point poverty and unemployment remain a number one concern of the Government of Georgia.

Mr. Chair,

In order to ensure environmental sustainability, substantial work has been carried out. To reverse the loss of environmental resources, the Government actively integrates the principles of sustainable development into country policies. In this regard, several new laws were introduced during the past 10 months. 70 projects in the field of environmental protection financed by the donor states and international organizations are being implemented with the support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia.

In terms of ensuring environmental sustainability, the Government adopted the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in 2005. The strategy covers the preservation of biodiversity for the period of 10 years. NBSAP for 2014-2020 is planned to be adopted by the end of 2013.

Speaking about the environment, let me underline that Georgia recognizes Environmental Education and awareness-raising campaigns at various levels as one of the major instruments for achieving the Sustainable Development goals. We were particularly pleased that the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “Future We Want” strongly reaffirmed our commitments to the right to education in the context of sustainable development. To further build on this, my Government, in partnership with the UNEP and UNESCO, convened last year an intergovernmental conference “Environmental Education for Sustainable Development: Tbilisi +35”. Among other objectives, the Tbilisi conference provided major opportunity to take stock of what was achieved between 1977 and 2012 and to formulate recommendations towards Education for Sustainable Development beyond 2014.
Mr. Chairman,

One of the key elements of sustainable development is sustainable energy. Georgia follows the world’s prevalent energy strategy – the developing of green energy such as hydro, solar, wind, biomass and geothermal waters. Being particularly rich in hydro resources, its utilization is a priority for my country. The share of hydropower in Georgia’s total electricity generation has been steadily rising in recent years. As the construction of new hydro power plants is completed in coming years, Georgia will be close to 100% clean electricity consumption.

Finally, let me briefly summarize Georgia’s contribution to the development of global economic partnership. As a liberal economy, with the liberal trade regime, Georgia’s legislation does not apply any quantitative restrictions, restrictions of licensing requirements or other non-tariff barriers. The tariffs on import are one of the lowest in the world and export and re-export of goods is exempt from duties.

A full-fledged member of WTO since 2000, Georgia enjoys free trade regimes with all its neighbours and preferential trade regimes with a number of countries. Recently, the European Union and Georgia have concluded negotiations on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) that is integral part of the Association Agreement. The Association Agreement is expected to be initialed during the EU Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Georgia’s readiness to get involved in the deliberations on defining the future development agenda and to contribute, where possible, to the achievement of our common goals.

I thank you for your attention.