



**Statement by the Delegation of Georgia
30 October 2006**

Items 67 (b) and (c)

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,

The Government of Georgia strongly believes that full implementation of human rights instruments is essential for the universal promotion and protection of human rights. Today, I would like to briefly note some of the achievements as well as challenges for my country in this domain:

This year, in the view of protection and promotion of human rights, the main priorities of the Georgian Government are the reforms of the judiciary, law enforcement and penitentiary systems as well as adaptation of national legislation for effective implementation of human rights mechanisms and instruments. These reforms are aimed at strengthening the right to fair trial, independence of judiciary and impartiality of the court. The codes of ethics for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement bodies are adopted. At the same time, combating corruption has become the national priority and many public officials accused of corruption were brought to criminal responsibility and punished in conformity with court decisions.

Also, the reforms aimed at increasing confidence-building measures among the general public are underway for the law enforcement bodies. It is important that with the view of the visit to Georgia of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture in 2005 and implementations of his recommendations several criminal cases were initiated on the facts of torture and ill-treatment, judgments were passed against law enforcement officers and all of them were imprisoned. At present the Parliament works on drafting the new Action Plan on Combating Torture.

After adoption of the Anti-Trafficking Law an increased number of traffickers has been brought to criminal liability and punished. Through these measures Georgia was transferred into the group of countries that made considerable steps to fight against this form of trans-national organized crime.

I have to mention considerable progress in protecting the rights of minorities and freedom of religion and belief. The efficient steps were undertaken to fight against religion-based intolerance, investigation in connection with religious intolerance and related crimes was instituted, perpetrators were brought to the court and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

Furthermore, in November 2005, the Parliament of Georgia approved the Concept of Civil Integration in Georgia which is aimed at achieving more active involvement of national minorities permanently residing in Georgia, especially in places of their dense settlement, in all spheres of political, economical and cultural life. The Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities has been ratified and interstate procedures are under way in order to sign and ratify European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Regrettably, while Georgia applies every possible means at hand to reintegrate into the Georgian civil society all nationalities residing on its territory, the human rights of Georgians living on the territory of the Russian Federation are gravely violated. The Georgian Government has made

clear its position on this issue to the international community. Therefore, here we will not elaborate on these violations although we once again call on the Russian Federation and the whole international community to stop such conduct and to protect the rights of the Georgian migrants.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Discussion on human rights situation in Georgia will not be complete without considering the situation in Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia where about 250 000 people were expelled from their birthplaces. Ethnic cleansing and genocide was conducted against Georgians, but also other nationalities were forced to flee the territories of these regions.

Here we would like to once again express our appreciation to the Special Rapporteur on Torture and to the Special Representative on Human Rights of IDP who recently visited Georgia including the conflict zones. They once again underlined the extremely difficult situation in those zones and urged the *de facto* authorities in Abkhazia to refrain from adopting measures incompatible with international human rights standards. It is very important that the Special Representative on Human Rights of IDP urged them to wave the discriminatory legislation regarding the acquisition of "citizenship", to admit United Nations civilian police without further delay and to cooperate in the establishment of a permanent international human rights office in Gali, as repeatedly urged by the Security Council, but regrettably is stubbornly refused by the separatist regime.

As vigorous violations of human rights proceeded the UN Human Rights Office was established in Sokhumi. It started operating with a great delay in 1999 but yet it has not achieved any tangible results in implementing tasks vested on it. The very recent example is inability to urge the *de facto* authorities to provide an urgent medical treatment to a Georgian prisoner of Dranda isolator. The situation with regard of human rights remains extremely precarious in the conflict zones, and particularly in the Gali district populated mainly by Georgians. Most of the grave violations of basic human rights happen in the zone of responsibility of Russian Peacekeepers, who are doing virtually nothing to prevent or confront them.

Another notorious act that has particular relevance to the UN Literacy Decade, is the cultural genocide conducted by the Abkhaz side – Georgian language is banned as the language of instructions in schools in Gali. Georgian literature, history, geography and other subjects are restricted. The separatist regime forces children to study on non-native, Russian, language. The schools are burnt, teachers and students are killed if despite the restrictions they teach/study in Georgian.

Mr. Chairman,

We are confident that the more decisive steps are needed to address all the issues noted above. Strong actions from the international community, United Nations and other international organizations are of the utmost importance. We must exert every possibility at hand and jointly solve these problems.

Thank you