



Statement of the Delegation of Georgia
The 80th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
“Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear distinguished guests,

At the outset, I should note that it is my honor and great privilege to address the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) today.

As a representative of Georgia, which is deeply committed to sustainable development through progress and innovation, I am proud to share our national perspective with you.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Georgia has long recognized the importance of knowledge-based, innovation-driven, and private sector-oriented economy development. One of the key areas where Georgia has fully embraced digital innovation is governance and public services, especially to tackle various challenges in order to improve the lives of our citizens.

Through initiatives such as e-government platforms and digitalization of administrative processes, we have enhanced efficiency, transparency, and accessibility in our public institutions.

The Georgian Public Service Hall (PSH) is a pioneering initiative in public service delivery that has significantly transformed the way citizens interact with the government.

The Goals of Public Service Hall are:

- To provide customers with high quality services of state and private institutions through "one-stop-shop" principle;
- To promote public services development;
- To offer various and innovative services to customers.

More than 20,000 customers, including local as well as foreign citizens, visit more than 100 Public Service Hall branches throughout Georgia on daily basis. Customers have access to more than 470 public services in one space.

Georgia is leveraging digital technologies to promote economic growth and innovation. We have invested in building a vibrant startup ecosystem, fostering entrepreneurship, and attracting foreign investment in the tech sector.

In 2014, Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) was established, which gave a strong push to the expansion of Georgia's innovation ecosystem. It set the stage for the establishment of innovation support institutions all over the country. The goal of the agency is to foster the development of the national innovation ecosystem, offering various types of supporting mechanisms to the community, including: Infrastructure; Access to Mentorship; Access to Finance; Community Development and Tech Education.

Georgia is positioning as a regional hub in innovation and technology entrepreneurship, attracting more international IT companies, startups and experts. Moreover, the flexible tax regime prepared by

the Georgian Government, where profit taxes and income taxes are each reduced to 5% for international IT companies, led to the entrance of more than 120 global IT companies in the country.

Your Excellences,

I also would like to use this opportunity to inform this distinguished auditorium about the successful reforms and plans of my Government.

The Government of Georgia has conducted successful reforms, which have been duly reflected in the international rankings. Reforms have established a liberal, stable, secure and corruption free business environment, which turned Georgia into an attractive country for investing. Our expectation is that integration with the world's liberal markets will significantly increase country's attractiveness as a valuable investment destination.

Georgia's Free Trade Agreements with the EU, EFTA and CIS countries, China, Türkiye and the UAE further enhance our emerging status as a regional hub. These agreements already provide investors with access to vast markets, yet the economic policies of our Government additionally encourage investors to expand their businesses in Georgia and take advantage of our access to a 2.3 billion-consumer market.

Georgia – positioned as a natural bridge at the crossroads of Europe and Asia – is transforming day-by-day into a multi-dimensional regional hub. My Government has invested significantly in modernizing infrastructure, enhancing connectivity and fostering efficient trade routes.

The Middle Corridor across Georgia is fast emerging as a stable and secure alternative to traditional routes. It has already become one of the shortest and most reliable East-West transportation options.

Georgian Government is heavily investing in large-scale infrastructure projects. The development of port infrastructure, including the Anaklia Deep Sea Port, is a priority to ensure our competitiveness. This green-field PPP project will create a state-of-the-art deep-sea port on the Eastern

coast of the Black Sea. Upon completion of all phases of development, the Anaklia Deep Sea Port is expected to have the capacity to handle 100 million tons.

Georgia as a candidate member state of the European Union (EU) and a member of the European Energy Community supports and shares EU's principles and targets and has clearly expressed its intention to connect to the single energy market of the EU via the implementation of "Black Sea Submarine Cable Project" between south Caucasus region and European Union. The Black Sea Submarine Cable project aims to connect South Caucasus Region directly to the Eastern Europe via sub-marine cable crossing Black Sea with the approximate length of 1155 km (1115 km underwater cable and 40 km onshore). Its development will highly contribute to Energy Security of the EU and Caucasus Region.

Your Excellences,

As you may be aware, since 2015, Georgia is organizing the high-level Silk Road Forum biennially and in October of 2023, Tbilisi hosted the Silk Road Forum 2023 attended by more than 2000 delegates from 60 countries. The forum covered transport, Middle Corridor perspectives, trade related issues, finance, digital connectivity and many more. With the participation of high-level political officials, we also had very active business engagement. This again shows that the interest in diversifying, creating more effective and resilient transport and trade connections is very high.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that Georgia is ready to play our role as a regional hub of energy transit, freight transportation and digital interconnections and we remain committed to leveraging digital innovation as a driver of sustainable development. We believe that by harnessing the power of technology, we can overcome existing challenges, unlock new opportunities, and build a better future for all.

Thank you.