



"The Anti-Corruption Policy" Conference

For Immediate release

Today's conference is the final event of the Anti-Corruption Week. *Transparency International - Georgia* and *Georgian Young Lawyers' Association* will talk about the flaws in the country's anti-corruption system. The organizations will also present their recommendations that relevant agencies should consider in order to eliminate the existing shortcomings.

Georgia has achieved considerable success in the fight against various forms of corruption since 2004. Petty corruption has, in fact, disappeared from the daily life of Georgian citizens. Services which justice houses provide to the citizens, the creation of a database of civil servants' property declarations, and the introduction of an innovative electronic system of state procurement and online governance mechanisms have enhanced the transparency of the government's activities in a number of areas. Nevertheless, there remain risks of abuse of power on the part of high-ranking officials. Over the past years, there have been many examples of alleged cases of elite corruption (privatization, licensing, etc.).

To create an effective anti-corruption system in Georgia, it is important to:

- Establish **the mechanisms of checks and balances in the Georgian governance system**, which involves ensuring the independence of the Parliament, the judiciary, and the media
- Create an **independent anti-corruption** agency which will be free of control from the ministries or other agencies of the executive branch and will be accountable to the Parliament and the public. The agency should combine the corruption prevention, investigation, and public communication functions.
- Strengthen the **public service political neutrality and independence** protection mechanisms (perhaps by increasing the powers of the Civil Service Bureau)
- Strengthen **the existing mechanisms for the protection of whistleblowers in order to prevent corruption in the public service**. It is also advisable to extend the safeguards for whistleblowers to the private companies who dispose of budgetary funds.
- Augment **the list of officials given in the Law on the Conflict of Interests and Corruption in the Public Service** who are required to file property declarations. It is also recommended to set up a mechanism for the verification of the information contained in the declarations submitted by officials.

- Ensure **political impartiality of the State Audit Office**. It is recommended that the management of the Office be adequately qualified and politically neutral. The internal audit bodies must also be well-running and sufficiently independent from the management of relevant agencies.
- Ensure **political neutrality and independence of the prosecution**, which could be implemented by adequate separation of the prosecution from the political component of the Ministry of Justice.
- Establish **procedures and mechanisms to ensure the adequate separation of political and commercial interests**. In this respect, provisions regulating further employment of the officials in the private sector after they leave public service need to be improved.
- Extend the requirements of the Law on the State Procurement onto the **funds set up by state agencies** managing the budget resources.

9 December is the International Day for the Fight against corruption. In this regard, within the anti-corruption framework, "Transparency International - Georgia" has held various activities during the entire week. The Week was organized with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

