VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW

REPORT OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF SENDAI FRAMEWORK 2015 - 2030
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<td>Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative</td>
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<td>Cabinet Office Briefing Room</td>
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<td>Disaster Risk Management</td>
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<td>Green City Action Plan</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GoG</td>
<td>Government of Georgia</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Review of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</td>
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<td>Train of Trainer</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations Organization</td>
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<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgia presents its first Voluntary National Report (VNR) on the Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (MTR SF) elaborated towards the achieved progress and challenges experienced in the reporting period and beyond. The document illustrates the ambition for the future and highlights Georgia’s approach towards the implementation of the SF.

Since the time has passed after the adoption of the key global disaster risk reduction (DRR) framework, some conclusions can be drawn regarding its implementation, as well as achievement of the Global Targets and objectives set by the Government of Georgia (GoG).

The post-2015 period has been broadly positive and the merit goes to intensive involvement of Georgia’s political leadership, shared responsibility within the local governments, as well as enhanced engagement of various sectors, including businesses, civil society, local, international and non-governmental organizations with an ultimate goal to tangibly reduce disaster risks.

In parallel, the Government acknowledges the climate emergency and the related challenges, and therefore facilitates comprehensive and whole-of-society approach to disaster risk management (DRM), guaranteed by the risk-informed decision-making process.

Hence, with a lead of the Office of the National Security Council of Georgia (NSCO) the VNR of the MTR SF has been developed, which outlines the progress through elaboration of the respective legal framework, policy, programmes, investments, identifying lessons-learned and good-practices, as well as recognizing gaps, challenges and related recommendations, to be considered in the coming years.
METHODOLOGY & THE PROCESS FOR PREPARATION FOR THE REVIEW
Georgia’s VNR on the MTR SF is a product of national consultations and reviews across all sectors, initiated according to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction’s (UNDRR) invitation on the basis of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/76/204 adopted on December 17, 2021. To ensure the whole of government approach, the existing DRR institutional mechanism was used for elaboration of the VNR.

Georgia’s VNR outlines the progress towards implementation of the SF and integration of disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investments at all levels, as well as identifies good practices, gaps and challenges and accelerates the path to achieve the goal of the document and its 7 Global Targets by 2030.

**Assessment Team**

The MTR SF Assessment Team was composed of representatives of the National Crisis Management Center (NCMC) of the NSCO that ensured overall coordination and management of the process.

At the initial stage, the Roadmap was elaborated with defined activities and timelines. Furthermore, to ensure inclusive and multi-stakeholder-led consultations and review, the following sectors have been identified: state agencies, the Parliament, civil society, non-governmental (NGO) and international Organizations, academia and scientific organizations, private sector and media.

### 2.1. METHODOLOGY

The review was conducted to measure the progress of implementation of the SF with a focus on the following areas: progress in risk assessment, information and understanding, progress in risk governance and management, progress in investment in risk reduction and resilience, progress in disaster preparedness, response and ‘build back better’, collaboration, partnership and cooperation.

Following, the competency-based questionnaire for each sector was elaborated and shared online accordingly. The questionnaires were developed in accordance with the UNDRR’s Guidance and Concept Note of the MTR SF.

Moreover, individual consultations with respective stakeholders for precise clarification and insight was ensured. As a final step, the
delivered information was analyzed and shaped into the Report. The process has been immensely supported by the UNDRR Europe’s Office.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The data and information collection and analysis were conducted using several methodological tools

1. **ONLINE SURVEY BASED**
   
   Online survey was based on a competency-based questionnaire developed separately for each target sector.

2. **SF ONLINE MONITORING TOOL**
   
   The data reported to the Sendai Framework online Monitoring tool within 2015 - 2021 was analyzed to measure the progress of achievement towards 7 Global Targets of Sendai Framework by the GoO.

3. **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS**
   
   Face to face interviews were conducted with the relevant representatives of various sectors to gain precise clarification and insight on provided information through the online survey.

4. **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**
   
   The results of the interviews with the stakeholders were complemented by an analysis of extensive documentation made available to the team (international frameworks, legislation, strategies, policies, action plans, and programme and project documents).

5. **PREPARATION OF THE REPORT**
   
   The report was prepared on the basis of the input gained from the online and face-to-face consultations and from the analysis of the Advisory Team members. Throughout the elaboration process the support was provided from the UNDRR’s international expert-consultant for supporting Member States engaged in the MTR process. Before submitting the Report, it was shared with the UNDRR for the review.

Implementing the SF is not only Governments' responsibility, but also it requires an effort by various stakeholders and in this regard, all consultations were designed to be participatory and collaborative.

Approximately 70 representatives of various sectors have been involved in the consultations. Up to 50 out of them provided feedback, data and information, suggestions and comments. Accumulated information has been considered and used for analyses and recommendations.
03
GEORGIA & DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
Georgia is characterized by the frequency and high risk of disasters that pose a significant threat to different sectors of the economy and to human development. The GoG has taken a series of steps to address disaster risk in the country, aimed at strengthening the institutional and legislative setup of the National DRR system, improving disaster preparedness and coping capacities at local and national levels, and ensuring that disaster risk reduction needs are further integrated across development strategies, plans and frameworks.

Therefore, one of the key priority directions of the GoG is an efficient functioning of the crisis management system at local and national levels, which itself promotes sustainable development of the country and strengthens public resilience against the backdrop of increasing natural disasters in the context of global climate change.

In this regard, Georgia intensifies its effort to share and introduce world’s best practices and successfully fulfill undertaken international obligations in the direction to effectively prevent, prepare and respond to natural disasters. Parallely, significant focus is made to tightly collaborate with the international organizations and partner nations under the various programmes/project, as well as to further enrich bilateral, multilateral, regional and international partnership.

3.1. COUNTRY PROFILE

An official name of the country is Georgia (Sakartvelo - საქართველო), as specified in the Georgian Constitution. Located in the Caucasus region of Eurasia, at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe, bounded to the west by the Black Sea, to the north by Russia, to the south by Turkey and Armenia, and to the southeast by Azerbaijan.
Administrative Divisions
Georgia is a unitary state that includes two autonomous republics of Abkhazia and Adjara, and the territory is subdivided into a total of 9 regions, 68 municipalities and 5 self-governing cities.

Form of the Government
Georgia is a Democratic republic, separated into three branches of Government: Legislative – Creates laws; Executive – Implements and enforces laws; Judicial – Assesses and interprets laws.

The Government is constituted by the Prime Minister and the Ministers. The President of Georgia is the Head of the State and represents Georgia in foreign relations, appoints the Government, by guaranteeing the unity and integrity of the country and represents the supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. In Georgia the judiciary is administered through the justice, constitutional control and other forms established by the law. The public justice is one of the forms of administration of the judicial power. The common courts through the civil, administrative and criminal procedures administer the justice. The common courts of Georgia are district (city) court, court of appeals, Supreme Court.

3.2. DISASTER PROFILE
Georgia, due to its specific geographic location and the climate change phenomena, is rather prone to the various large-scale natural and man-made disasters, such as: earthquakes, floods and flashfloods, landslides, mudslides, avalanches, hail storms, droughts, strong winds, forest and valley fires and etc.

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Georgias situated in one of the most seismically active regions in the Alpine-Himalayan collision belt. An analysis of the historical and instrumental seismology of this region shows that it is still of moderate seismicity. Strong earthquakes, with magnitudes up to 7 and macro-seismic intensity at 9 (MSK scale), have occurred in the region. The average period of such events is on the order of 103-104 years.

| FLOODS & FLASHFLOODS |
Rains and flashfloods are also very frequent in Georgia, with recorded high-water levels during the spring and summer months when snow starts to melt. Over 50% of the national territory is prone to floods, which includes over 100 isolated areas. The high level of precipitation characteristic of the foothill areas has a significant impact on river hydrology.

| MUDSLIDES & LANDSLIDES |
Debris flows, mudslides & landslides present a high risk to the majority of the population in mountainous areas, especially those residing along small rivers that destroys irrigation systems, agricultural facilities and road infrastructure.

| DROUGHTS |
Droughts occur most notably in the Kakheti, Shida Kartli and Samegrelo regions. The year 2000 drought in Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli region affected 89/000 people and caused an economic loss of 509 million. Normally, drought affects Georgia as a disaster once in a 15-22 year period, but in the present time, this interval has recently been reduced to 5-8 years.

| STRONG WINDS |
Frequent Strong Winds are observed in the Caucasian ridge zones, kavkaz, Imereti, Shida Kartli, Tbilisi, Khevsureti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions. The frequency of strong winds increased to 6-12 times per year.

| SNOW AVALANCHE |
More than 50% of the country’s territory is located under avalanche risk zones. At present, 5,000 snow slide spots have been identified, and threaten more than 260 populated territories. Observations over the last 40 years have shown that snow slides simultaneously affect various regions in the country once every 3-8 years.

| FOREST & VALLEY FIRES |
Forests are highly diverse due to the country’s size climatic zones and most of forests are mountainous, they play an essential role in water regulation and soil protection. Due to the climate change the impacts in the last decade Georgia faced several severe forest fires causing destruction. 2012 Borjomi forest fires destroyed more than 300 hectares and in 2022 approximately 150 hectares of forest.
Moreover, against the backdrop of globalization, the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic clearly demonstrated that an infection originated in one part of the world could shortly lead to epidemic and then become a global pandemic. All the mentioned disasters, due to their intensity and severity, could lead to loss of life, displacement of population and destruction of infrastructure, which consequently negatively effects the economic growth and sustainable development of the country.

3.2.1. VULNERABILITY PROFILE

Georgia is an upper-middle income country with GDP of USD 18.7 billion (nominal, 2021) and ranking 63rd on the Human Development Index (UN, 2021 - 2022). The main sectors of the country’s economy are trade, industry, public administration, transport and communication, and agriculture. In the last decade, tourism has also become one of the priority sectors. As well, Georgia has had a successful development record, underpinned by prudent economic management over the past decade. Growth averaged 4% per annum between 2011 and 2021 following structural reforms that stimulated capital inflows and investment. The reforms helped improve the business environment, strengthened public finances, upgraded infrastructure facilities and liberalized trade. The poverty rate measured by the international upper-middle-income line declined from 59% in 2011 to 42% in 20211.

Despite the impressive economic growth in recent years, Georgia’s population still experience to live in poverty. 17.5% of Georgian population live under the absolute poverty (Geostat, 2021) and the unemployment rate in the country increased by 2.1% (Geostat, 2021) compared to the previous year and reached 20.6%.

3.3. NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, MANDATE AND ORGANIZATION

The GoG has prioritized to develop efficient national crisis management system covering all levels. A fully operational system ensures secured life and safe working environment, which itself promotes sustainable development of the country and strengthens

public resilience considering increased level of disasters in the context of global climate change.

In this regard, the whole of government approach is reinforced by the relevant legislative framework, the national level conceptual and strategic documents, which are periodically revised and updated according to the existing needs and requirements.

Disaster risk management and efficient functioning of its key elements aims to prevent, eliminate and rapidly recover from the severe consequences caused by natural and man-made disasters. Parallelly, significant focus is made to further enrich bilateral, multilateral, regional and international partnership under the various programmes/projects.

3.3.1. NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In Georgia, as well as in all developed countries, (including the NATO and the EU member states), crisis management operations are carried out through a three-level planning and management process - strategic, operational and tactical. This is a universal model and could be applied to any type of operation or event.

The Prime Minister of Georgia takes strategic decision in order to effectively manage wide-scale crisis situations and execute response measures taking into consideration recommendations of the National Security Council.

Interagency Operational Center (anti-crisis working groups) consists of representatives from different agencies, executes crisis management and coordinated recovery activities. Each working group’s composition depends on the type of crisis.

The Tactical Level unites representatives from one or more agencies, which executes response activities on the ground of incident. According to the crisis nature, a coordinator (lead) is appointed for the Tactical Group which will be selected from a lead Agency.
3.3.2. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The NCMC of the NSCO ensures unified policy planning and coordination in the field, facilitates interagency coordination during crisis, as well as coordinates the elaboration process of relevant action plans for all types of crisis posing threats the national interests, ensures information-analytical support to the Secretary of the NSC and the Prime-Minister. Moreover, it ensures effective functioning of the National Situation Room.

Emergency Management Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (EMS) as the main response force ensures the nationwide coordination of multi-agency response activities.

National Situation Room is a physical facility equipped with modern communication and technical means, which is activated during crisis situation (national-level) and is managed by the Prime Minister of Georgia. The National Situation Room can accommodate up to 100 representatives of various stakeholders in single access friendly working space, providing improved coordination. Modern equipment ensures unhindered information flow and data processing (including video-audio signals) from the incident area.

The National Situation Room was inaugurated in January 2016. The Room was developed with the active participation of the British experts and created in accordance with the UK Cabinet Office Briefing Room or “COBR” concept, while adjusted to Georgia's specifics and requirements.
3.4. GEORGIA AND GLOBAL POST-2015 FRAMEWORKS

The GoG perceives the implementation of the post-2015 global agendas not as a bureaucratic process, but as a conscious, whole of government approach to streamline country’s policies towards the shared vision of sustainable future. Georgia as a signatory state to many international treaties, by joining the three-landmark global agendas, adopted by the United Nations: the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, set the course for a transition to low-carbon, climate resilient societies and economies. The GoG acknowledges that adapting to climate change is a key objective of the agendas and acknowledges that activities related to increase resilience to climate change, parallelly support sustainable development and reduce disaster risks.

The commitment to the international frameworks by the GoG has thus been expressed through the adoption of the “National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy” and its Action Plans(s). Elaborated within the inter-agency working groups and through wide consultation both with the civil society stakeholders, this document established the DRR policy directions and describes set of activities for reduction of natural and man-made disasters, risks and challenges faced by the country.

Georgia’s DRR policy is fully compliant with the international standards and ensures the fulfillment of obligations undertaken under the three interlinked post-2015 agendas. Importantly, this also ensures the implementation of Georgia’s obligations taken under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (EU-AA) in regards to prevention, preparedness and effective response to natural disasters.

Thus, considering existing threats and challenges, the GoG pursues an “integrated approach” to adaptation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. In this regard, with a holistic approach the GoG, envisages the implementation of natural and man-made disaster management measures and harmonizes national efforts in compliance with the 4 (four) Priorities of Action and 7 (seven) Targets of the Sendai Framework, which itself contribute to the achievement of SDGs’ several Goals and its’ Targets (Goal 1 – Target 1.5; Goal 11 – Target 11.5 and 11.b; Goal 13 – Target 13.1; Goal 15) and commitments set out in the EU-AA. Georgia acknowledges that the adaptation process of these document will further promote to reduce vulnerability and enhance state resilience as a whole.
This robust policy approach also seeks to replicate and scale up best practices considering national circumstances, as well as to promote coordination across borders and ensure consistent cooperation with local, regional and international partners to jointly deal with “Transnational Climate Impacts”.

3.4.1. PARIS AGREEMENT

Georgia acknowledges importance to “adapt-forward” its capabilities and enhance DRR procedures in the backdrop of a global climate change. Importantly, in this pathway, Georgia takes into consideration of common ground between the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework and SDGs, which clearly demonstrates unified concept for adaptation towards more resilient ecosystems, societies and economies.

Georgia recognizes climate change as a one of the key factors for disaster risk and its frequency and therefore aligns its national policy with these documents. This approach also includes promoting enhanced adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability, with a view to contributing to sustainable development of the country, which illustrates the global goal on adaptation.

Georgia joined the Paris Agreement in 2015 and is committed to contribute towards the Paris Agreement Goals, and to hold the global average temperature increase well below 2°C, and pursuing efforts to limit to 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial level.

Georgia’ s 2030 Climate Change Strategy

Georgia’s 2030 Climate Change Strategy and its Action Plan, represents practical mechanism for coordinated effort and planning towards meeting the nationally determined targets for climate change mitigation. The document is in line with the European Union legal acts considered under the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia (EU-AA) and the European Atomic Energy Community.

The Strategy and its Action Plan identifies the ways for reaching Georgia’s 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets for climate change mitigation, as set in Georgia’s Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC.

In January 2020, with the ultimate goal to facilitate implementation process of defined targets the Inter-Agency Climate Change
Council (CCC) was established by the GoG, which represents a consultative body to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Climate Strategy and its Action Plan. Moreover, Georgia is in a process of elaboration of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) on the basis of the NDC.

Furthermore, the Climate Action Plan measures, such as reducing emissions from the transport sector or transforming the energy sector, and increasing the share of renewable energy therein, are not directly connected to SDG 13, but they help improve air quality, increase energy security, create more jobs, etc. Consequently, this will have a positive impact on fulfilling of Georgia’s commitments under the SDGs that are indirectly related to climate change.

3.4.2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs enabled Georgia to primarily set its commitment and priorities for the development in the long-term perspectives and as well as to track its progress. The successful implementation of SDGs, promoting achievement of 7 Global Targets of Sendai Framework and vice versa.

The desired outcomes, defined within the SF and the SDGs documents could be considered as a complex and interconnected product aiming at further enhancing social and economic conditions. The SF is complementing the several SDGs (Goal 1, 11, 13 and 15 and etc.).

Georgia Towards SDGs

With the aim to address linking adaptation planning and implementation process within these mentioned documents, the GoG pursues to build resilience within all segments of society, as well as supporting ecosystem-based approaches. The Government understands that the people and community play a central role to develop bottom-up resilience-building policy with the ultimate goal to eliminate roots of the poverty, as well as address basis which causes overall vulnerability.

Georgia submitted its first VNR on the implementation of the SDGs following the adoption of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015, and consequently the second VNR in 2020. Georgia’s SDGs implementation is coordinated by the Administration of the GoG.
The GoG has set all of the 17 SDGs as national priorities and therefore set up the Technical Working Groups in 2016 to work on different thematic areas as well, established the country-specific adjusted national SDGs’ targets and indicators. Therefore, the SDGs’ Council to monitor implementation process and enhance monitoring and evaluation of SDGs, as well as to increase involvement of local self-governments, private sector, and civil society was also established.

3.4.3. ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN GEORGIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

An Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia (EU-AA) was signed in June 2014 and fully entered into force in July 2016. This Agreement aims to provide a framework that allows for deeper political and economic integration between the EU and Georgia, including through the approximation of Georgian legislation with the EU.

The ambitious reforms set out in the EU-AA involve the gradual approximation of Georgian legislation to the EU legislation in the areas of climate change mitigation, energy efficiency, air pollution and renewable energy. Since 2017, Georgia is a member of the Energy Community, and as a member, is accountable to prepare an integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) in order to identify 2030 targets. Moreover, the AA also defines development of cooperation areas related to prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters. This cooperation embraces the objectives related to risk reduction, specifically: 1. Promote institutional connections; 2. Develop information, education and communications; 3. Share best practices related to natural disaster risk prevention or impact mitigation; 4. Collaborate in regards to disaster management to enhance the assessment database of disasters, threats and risks; 5. Collaborate in regards to disaster impact assessment on environment and public health.

Within this framework, Georgia has an active cooperation with specific structures of the EU in order to further enhance its capabilities regarding disasters prevention, preparedness and respond. The Administrative Agreement is signed between the EMS and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Civil Aid Operations (ECHO), which foresees cooperation in the direction of natural and man-made disasters. Within the agreement, the EU agrees to support Georgia’s enhancement of its civil protection capabilities in order to gradually get closer to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.
Additionally, Georgia has a good cooperation with the EU Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC), which is an integral part of the UCPM and is responsible for coordinating the delivery of assistance to disaster-stricken countries inside or outside the EU.

Georgia continued developing its NECP in 2021, with regular meetings of the working groups including public authorities and energy sector stakeholders. Specific meetings with civil society have started in autumn 2021. Depending on the outcome of the consultations, Georgia plans to finalize the NECP in 2022.
04

PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK

RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW
The adoption of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 charted a clear policy pathway for Georgia to prevent, mitigate and/or eliminate natural and man-made disaster risks, as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and challenges. Seven years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework, Georgia has taken concrete steps towards meeting the ambitious aspirations of these transformative plans.

4.1. PRIOR TO SENDAI FRAMEWORK

After the adoption of Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA) in 2005, Georgia, as a signatory country, committed to the marked milestone via prevention and mitigation of disaster risks, enhancement of preparedness and response capabilities to crisis situations through unified coordinated actions and strengthening international cooperation. Though, these efforts have not been standardized and no systemic approach was used.

At the end of the implementation of the HFA, Georgia recognized that efforts had not led to establishment of unified DRR system and that holistic manner was needed in order to promote reduction of risks, sustainable economic growth, social well-being and a healthy environment that strengthens resilience and stability.

In this context, the GoG made a commitment to strengthen the disaster risk management system, improve preparedness and coping capacities on local and national levels, and ensure disaster risk reduction, which has been integrated across sectoral development strategies, plans and frameworks.

In order to define appropriate and realistic targets for risk reduction for the country, the Government spearheaded a comprehensive assessment of national and local capacities conducted by the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) composed of 18 representatives of Government, United Nations’ agencies, non-governmental organizations and the Georgia Red Cross. Based on interviews with 58 organizations and more than 130 individuals at national and local levels in several regions of the country, the capacity assessment identified existing capacities related to disaster risk reduction, pointed out key capacity gaps, and
proposed recommendations on how these capacity gaps can be filled.

The deliverable of the assessment mission was the Disaster Risk Reduction Capacity Assessment Report together with the National Plan of Action for Capacity Development in Disaster Risk Reduction in Georgia.

The result of the assessment and planning process is the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2020 of Georgia, which translates the vision of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction nationally.

4.2. POST-2015 ACHIEVEMENTS

4.2.1 GOAL OF THE STRATEGY

The goal of Georgia’s National DRR Strategy is to create unified, flexible and efficient system, which ensures reduction of natural and man-made disaster risks by joint efforts and coordinated activities of the agencies defined in the Georgian legislation. The system is based on the whole of government approach and fully comply with international standards. At the same time, the unified DRR system is oriented on creation of a safe living and working environment as well as sustainable development of the country and its economy.

The objective of the document is the reduction of the natural and man-made disaster risks identified in the “National Threat Assessment Document 2015-2018” (floods, flash floods, landslides, mudflows, biological hazards, earthquakes, hails, avalanches, strong winds, forest and valley fires, chemical threats, soil erosion by water, draught, hydrodynamic accidents etc.) and to mitigate the possible damage.

Within the Strategy, Georgia ensures the implementation of the goals of three global framework documents of the United Nations: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, SDGs and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Strategy also ensures the implementation of Georgia’s obligations taken under the above documents and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement in the sphere of prevention, preparedness and effective response to natural disasters.

4.2.2. PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

The National DRR Action Plan combines planned and ongoing projects, programs, and initiatives of different Governmental agencies and non-government organizations and has an appendix (Annex №3) with listed additional activities, which are also noteworthy.

The period, set for the implementation of the National DRR Action Plan and its activities, is 4 years (2017-2020). The National Action Plan defines responsible and supporting institutions/organizations, as well as deadlines and financial sources for each activity.
The Action Plans define 183 activities, out of them, 100 activities have been implemented, 12 are ongoing, timeline was extended beyond 2020 to 26, 28 activities have been partially implemented, due to the reasonable conditions 16 activities were not implemented by the respective state agencies. Nevertheless, these activities will be considered as a main focus area to implement in the coming years.

4.3. THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK AT THE HALFWAY POINT: GEORGIA’S PROGRESS

Since the adoption of post-2015 agendas, the GoG through systematic mechanisms ensures implantation of measures and actions to achieve the global outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework that definitely shall promote better understanding the nature of disaster risks, enhance the risk governance and develop new tools for risk-informed decision-making.

The GoG ensures achievement of 4 Priorities for Actions of the SF at all levels through implementation and fulfillment of National DRR Strategy’s Action Plan(s), as well outlines the progress towards 7 Global Targets through the Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM).
4.3.1. NATIONAL DRR STRATEGY TOWARDS SENDAI FRAMEWORK

The National DRR Strategy of Georgia made significant efforts since 2017 to implement the SF, reaching across different geographies, sectors and jurisdictions. These efforts are organized to pursue the realization of the outcome and goal, and 7 Global Targets.

Below is outlined the progress of achievement of 4 Priority of Actions of the SF through the National DRR Strategy.

The measures and activities outlined within the Action Plan and its Annex correspond to the relevant Priorities for Actions of the Sendai Framework and while conducting each activity, Georgia gradually but in a very systematic manner, approaches its way to achieving global goals and building resilience.
4.3.2. MONITORING THE PROGRESS THROUGH SFM

Since 2017, Georgia measures its efforts to reduce disaster losses by 2030, including mortality, numbers of people affected, economic losses and damage to critical infrastructure by providing data towards the progress in achieving the 7 Global Targets of SF through SMF tool. The SMF ensures coherence with the measurements of progress towards the relevant targets of the National SDGs using specially designed electronic system (http://sdg.gov.ge) managed by the Sustainable Development Goals Inter-Agency Council (SDGs Council).

Since the adoption of the National DRR Strategy there has been major advancements in regards to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Sendai Framework Target A – Mortality
Mortality relative to population size has declined in the long-term as Georgia puts its efforts to reduce disaster mortality by 2030. After the adoption of post – 2015 agendas, the mortality rate has been declining due to the measures, activities and various programmes implemented by the GoG and civil society at all levels. The global Coronavirus pandemic outbreak caused a significant increase in mortality rate from the end of 2019.

Number of deaths and missing persons attributed to disasters, per 100,000 population
Sendai Framework Target B – People Affected
Due to specific geographic location of Georgia and increased number of multi-hazard disasters, there is no fixed or declining number of ill or injured people. In 2020 – 2021, due to the COVID-19 outbreak the number of infected/ill has increased.

Number of directly affected people attributed to disasters, per 100,000 population

Sendai Framework Target C – Economic Loss
The available data to report towards Target C is from forestry and housing sector, some of critical facilities such as health and education, and cultural heritage. All the data from the mentioned sectors are accumulated in the respective state agencies and collected without a unified methodology.

Direct Economic Loss Attributed to Disasters in Relation to Global GDP
Sendai Framework Target D – Critical Infrastructure & Services

While reporting to the Target D, the accumulated data within the relevant state agencies in regards to some of the critical facilities, such as health and education, as well as data on disruptions of basic services is used.

Sendai Framework Target E – DRR Strategies

The National DRR Strategy and its Action Plan(s) are implemented successfully by the relevant state agencies within the support of international partners and NGOs. The concept of local-level strategies in Georgia does not exist. However, the Law of Georgia on Civil Protection and its respective Governmental Decrees №452 on the Development of the Rules of Emergency Management Plan and №453 on the Development of Rules on Emergency Risk Management Plan, ensure that after the identification and assessment of local-level natural and man-made risks, the corresponding emergency plan is developed, incorporating prevention, preparedness, response and recovery measures. Since 2015, within the support of NGOs the Emergency Plans have been elaborated in many municipalities across all regions, though they still undergo the official approval process.
Sendai Framework Target F – International Cooperation
Georgia has a Euro-Atlantic course and intensively cooperates with the EU, the USA and the UK, neighboring countries, as well as other partner nations. Substantial attention is paid to the participation and cooperation in regional projects. The best and well-tested international approaches and experiences are shared. Besides, Georgia continues close cooperation with various organizations, including the UN, the NATO and the ECHO.

International Cooperation

Sendai Framework Target G - Early warning and Risk Information
The GoG acknowledges the importance of the early warning (EW) system’s establishment as an essential part of the state resilience and insurance of population safety and the effectiveness of prevention and response activities. In this regard, the GoG has initiated the process of research for developing appropriate systems in the high risk-prone areas. It is necessary to develop a common approach and standards for EW, which will notify/give signals to the population during a crisis situation.
05

PROGRESS IN RISK ASSESSMENT, INFORMATION & UNDERSTANDING

RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW
Understanding the disaster risk is first of the four priorities of the SF and the GoG has a multidimensional approach towards it. The highest importance is acknowledged for adoption of necessary measures addressing three dimensions of disaster risk, namely exposure to hazards, vulnerability and capacity of elements exposed, and hazard characteristics in order to prevent the creation of new risk and reduce the existing risk.

Georgia has a well-established disaster risk management model with its respective tools that provides an opportunity before disaster happens to determine the likely impacts (direct and indirect) and to highlight the most effective measures to reduce or eliminate the impact on population and environment.

5.1. NATIONAL DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Georgia possesses an interconnected four-phase disaster risk management system, which includes prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Georgia’s disaster risk management process includes the identification of an incident’s circumstances and context, which serve as the foundation for a risk assessment. The risk assessment consists of the following components: identification of level of threat, analysis, assessment and determination of the worst-case scenario of the expected threat.
Planning and implementation of risk reduction activities is carried out once the aforementioned process is completed. If the preventive measures fail to eliminate the risk, additional response options will be considered.

5.1.1. DISASTER RISK ASSESSMENT

National Threat Assessment methodology is approved by the GoG as an integral part of the National Threat Assessment Document, which is a classified conceptual document. Within the DRM framework the large-scale threats, risks and challenges are identified and analyzed, through assessing the probability of occurrence (very low, low, medium, high, very high) and possible negative impact (light, medium, serious, very serious, catastrophic). Following the threat assessment procedures, the risk level and its priority is defined on a two-dimensional risk assessment scale. Very high, high, or medium level hazards, which poses threat to the national interest are reflected in the National Threat Assessment Document and consequently the worst-case scenario(s) of natural and/or man-made disaster are elaborated.

In order to reduce or eliminate the impact of identified threats and risks, preventive measures are elaborated within the National DRR Strategy’s Action Plan in a multiagency format. As a result of implementation of disaster risk reduction actions, in most cases, the likelihood of the occurrence and/or the expected negative impact of the threat (from medium, high or very high level will be shifted to the medium or low risk level) may be reduced and/or eliminated. Any of such changes are reflected in the National Threat Assessment Document during the periodic review.
5.2. LOCAL DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Implementation of disaster risk management measures at the local level is regulated by the Governmental Decree №452 on the Development of the Rules of Emergency Management Plan, which provides an instruction for detailed emergency management planning considering all DRM phases and worst-case scenarios for potential emergency situation(s).

Elaboration of the emergency management plans is highly based on proper risk identification, assessment and evaluation process, as well as procedures for development of risk scenarios and risk maps. The Governmental Decree №453 on the Development of Rules on Emergency Risk Management Plan represents a legal base for risk identification and assessment on local level.

5.2.1. CITY RESILIENCE

The local government has a willingness to ensure public safety and sustainable urban development and uses every opportunity provided by international organizations and/or partner countries to enhance resilience.

Within the scope of city resilience enhancement, in 2014 – 2015 Georgia’s two cities, the capital - Tbilisi and Gori - located 76 km from Tbilisi, joined the “Making Cities Resilient” campaign promoted by the UNDRR and the ECHO, with the aim to facilitate implementation of post-2015 agendas and support local governments to reduce local disaster risks. Within the initiative, the city administrations aimed to establish a permanent local capacity for periodic multi-disciplinary disaster risks assessment, raise the
awareness of citizens and mobilize resources for funding with the final outcome to develop emergency management plans.

The “Making Cities Resilient” campaign ensured clear vision of the local governments regarding the steps to build the culture of prevention, promote sustainable urban development and resilience of the cities.

In this regard, in 2016 with the lead of Tbilisi City Hall, the capital joined a three-year “100 Resilient Cities Programme”, which aimed to support the capital in resilience enhancement towards physical, social, and economic challenges, sudden shocks from natural and man-made disasters and also chronic events or stresses. In parallel, in 2017 within the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s (EBRD) Green Economy Transition Policy Dialogue Framework, the Green City Action Plan (GCAP) was developed and adopted by the City Hall, which includes establishment of a Green City Baseline, development of a Vision and Strategic Objectives, a set of Key Programmes and Measures to improve the environmental situation.

Following in 2019, within the scope of “100 Resilient Cities Programme” the capital’s local government adopted the Resilient City Strategy 2030, which aims at building a vibrant city, ready to respond to any challenges and sets a comprehensive roadmap for 2030 with missions, goals, and actions. The Strategy highly promotes successful execution of objectives and goals defined within the global post-2015 agendas. In addition, Tbilisi Land Use Master Plan was also adopted by the City Hall in 2019, which demonstrates a green, connected, compact and resistant city concept.

The above-mentioned precisely outlines, local governments’ understanding that cities are very dynamic and the communities can be vulnerable to different environmental impacts, which range from the quality of air and traffic congestion to pressure on limited green space, land and water resources. This understanding leads to strong willingness and efforts to build resilience cities.

5.3. RISK INFORMATION AS THE BASIS FOR DRM DECISION MAKING

The GoG acknowledges that DRR requires a multi-hazard approach and risk-informed DRM decision-making process on the basis of current and anticipated contextual circumstances.
Herewith, the risk information provides a critical foundation for managing disaster risk across a wide-range of sectors in Georgia. It is well-understood that a risk assessment represents the start point rather than the conclusion of a DRM process, which provides a foundation for a long-term engagement and investment focused on reducing existing risk and avoiding creation of new and/or anticipated risks.

In the context of the new risk information process, proactive response includes retrofitting buildings to withstand the assessed hazard levels, developing new land-use planning guidelines, designing financial protection measures, as well as ensuring emergency responders to be sufficiently equipped and trained. Furthermore, delivery of in-time crisis communication and wide-range cross-sectorial risk information promotes awareness-raising and triggers action to reduce risks itself.

For instance, looking at the last decade, Georgian insurance sector has been strongly influenced by the exposure to natural risks and most of the companies have incorporated insurance policy against unexpected circumstances. At the local/community level, in the process of understanding of hazards an indigenous knowledge plays an important part, which facilitates to make proper decisions, considering the location of important facilities and life-saving evacuation procedures.

Thus, efficient DRM framework should be grounded by a sufficient risk-informed decision-making approach, which on national and local levels should be guaranteed through in-depth understanding of geographic areas (risk-prone zones) along with solid knowledge on intensity and frequency of different hazardous events.

Therefore, adhering this approach could lead toward efficient emergency management covering resilient urban planning and reconstruction in parallel of conducting related simulation preparedness trainings/exercises and supporting evacuation planning, which overall will be resulted in enhanced response measures with the ultimate goal to tangibly reduce the severity of disasters.

5.4. DRR IN EDUCATION POLICY

The GoG acknowledges that more lives can be saved, more injuries prevented, and damage minimized when DRR measures are implemented ahead of a disaster and herewith the education
system has a key role in addressing these challenges by providing DRR education for children and young people. The DRR education is one of the tools in preventing hazards from becoming a disaster.

In this regard, to enhance a proactive attitude to risk reduction education and to build a bridge between the knowledge and behavior, the GoG in close collaboration with partner organizations, throughout the years ensured implementation of various measures, awareness raising and educational campaigns, projects and programmes, some as well are outlined within the National DRR Strategy’s Action Plan. Nowadays, DRR is part of the Georgian educational system, as it is believed that culture of prevention should be built at the very early stage and it is noteworthy to mention some of the achievements of GoG’s efforts.

The DRR training and train the trainer (ToT) module with inclusive approach, has been developed for the National Center for Teacher Professional Development (Teachers House) under the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in Tbilisi and Batumi, where teachers are trained on a regular basis.

Special subjects in regards to DRR, such as Civil Education, Society & Me, Environment & Sustainable Development and etc. have been developed and integrated into the National Curriculum of General Education for the III – XII grade school students.

The DRR learning module with inclusive approach was developed and integrated within the curriculums of six universities (Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Gori State Educational University, Kutaisi Akaki Tsereteli State University, Jacob Gogebashvili Telavi State University, Samtske-Javakheti State University and Shota Meskhiia State Educational University) across Georgia.

Various awareness raising publications and cartoons on what are disasters and how to stay safe, have been elaborated and distributed for pre-school facilities. Educational TV programme “Jokha” (StickMan) for children on fires, earthquake, floods and avalanches has been developed and integrated in one of the leading telecommunications operator’s – SILKNET Home-School programme.
06

PROGRESS IN RISK GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW
Georgia possesses a centralized Crisis Management System, which enables efficient disaster management at all levels based on the whole of government approach. The system guarantees consistent, and coordinated national response and facilitates coherent cross-sectorial activities with the ultimate goal to detect, prevent, prepare and respond to natural and/or man-made disasters and other crisis situations, posing threat to the national interests.

Through close interagency cooperation, the GoG is effectively allocating its organic resources and working with international donors on a bilateral, multilateral, and regional basis to address the needs of the country and fill the gaps, which overall bolsters successful fulfilment of the international obligations and promotes post-2015 Global Agendas.

The system is reinforced by relevant legislative framework, the national level conceptual and strategic documents, which are periodically revised and updated according to the existing needs and requirements.

6.1. CONCEPTUAL DOCUMENTS

In order to ensure functioning of efficient institutional mechanism under which disaster risks are governed with increased coordinated and sophisticated manner, the GoG developed respective regulatory framework, which reflects emerging threats and challenges.

Specifically, in 2015 the Georgian Law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination finalized the institutionalization process of the National Security Review (NSR). The NSR process encompasses a whole of government approach, guaranteed through close interagency cooperation, which prioritizes transparency and broad-based engagement.

Accordingly, the national security policy planning process is executed through the development of national and Ministry-level conceptual and organizational documents with the aim to reduce threats and risks identified in the National Security Concept and the Threat Assessment Document of Georgia. Within the NSR process, the National DRR Strategy and its Action Plans(s) are being elaborated through an interagency cooperative format.
6.2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

From the legal perspective, Georgia’s civil protection system is regulated by the Constitution and respective legal frameworks, including the Law of Georgia on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, the Law of Georgia on Civil Protection, the Law of Georgia on State of Emergency and related sub-laws and Governmental Decrees.

To highlight some of them, according to the Law of Georgia on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, the NSC, is the responsible body for national security policy planning coordination, which informs the Prime Minister of Georgia (PM) regarding the matters posing threat to national security and country’s national interests, thus facilitating the decision-making process at the political level.

The Law of Georgia on Civil Protection defines authority and obligations of the GoG, autonomous republics, municipalities and legal entities.

In parallel, based on the National Plan of Civil Protection, state agencies have considered management of multilateral threats during decision making process at all levels. It ensures coordinated activities of all executive branches of the Government and municipalities within the emergency management field.
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE & ‘BUILD BACK BETTER ‘
RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW
7.1. PROGRESS IN INVESTMENT IN RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE

Sustainable development requires the recognition of multiple benefits of investing in DRR by the Government, private sector and civil society. Investing in DRR not only protects lives and assets, but can also yield additional benefits that can enhance the well-being and resilience of Georgia.

The GoG constantly works with the donor organizations and partner states in order to mobilize financial resources to enhance the gaps and ensure strengthening the state resilience towards disasters.

**INVESTING IN DRR**

- **Avoiding Direct Impact**
  - Structural and non-structural measures contribute to reducing immediate impacts of disasters in terms of human and direct economic losses

- **Enhancing Economic Potential**
  - As country becomes safer to invest in, economic activities will be enhanced

- **Generating Development Co-Benefits**
  - DRR investments can be designed for multi-purpose uses bring co-benefits for sustainable development

Within this scope, the National DRR Strategy’s Action Plan (Annex №2) has the defined budget for implementation. The appendix (Annex №3) to the Action Plan outlined the activities without financial resources though, as all the measures were of a significant importance to be carried out, the GoG approved it and set the goal to ensure mobilization of additional resources. Within the period of 2017-2020 financial resources have been accumulated for the majority of activities outlined within the Annex №3.

The overall budget for the Action Plan (Annex №2) was USD 293 850 309.9 (962 829 925.6 Gel) and the financial resources consists of 55.57% of state budget and 44.43% of budget from grants and programmes of the donor international and/or non-governmental organizations. The mobilized and spent overall budget for the Action Plan’s appendix (Annex №3) was USD 13 930 128.7 (45 643 460 Gel).

Another exemplary model for effective collaboration in the field of disaster resilience enhancement and mobilization of financial
resources is the ongoing seven-year UNDP Programme – “Reducing the Risk of Climate-driven Disasters in Georgia” funded by the GoG, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The Programme’s objective is to reduce the exposure of communities, livelihoods and infrastructure to climate-induced natural hazards through a well-functioning nationwide multi-hazard early warning system and risk-informed local action.

The Programme with the total budget of USD 74 million, consists of 3 different but interlinked projects: seven-year GCF-funded “Scaling-up Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and the Use of Climate Information in Georgia”, five-year SDC-funded “Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation Capacities in Georgia” and four-year SIDA-funded “Improved Resilience of Communities to Climate Risks”.
7.2. PROGRESS IN PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND ‘BUILD BACK BETTER

In the last few years, Georgia has demonstrated a significant progress in strengthening disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Derived from the legal framework, the GoG in a continuous manner spares no efforts to enhance not only prevention, but all the segments of DRM.

BEST PRACTICEIS TOWARDS PREVENTION & PREPARDNESS

Avalanches
In the period of 2015-2022, following the successful execution of researches and the risk reduction activities, resulted in efficient preparedness measures towards snow avalanches and mudslides. Specifically, in the regions vulnerable to the above-mentioned hazards anti snow avalanche and mudslide barriers have been set up.

Forest Fires
For prevention of forest and valley fires, since 2017, roads and fire protection strips have been arranged in most of the forest lines (42 forest districts - 1 802 600 ha.) and as part of preparedness, the Fire Prevention Management Plans were developed, which will be approved by 2023.

Floods and Flashfloods
In a port city – Poti was highly prone to flashfloods and floods for couple of last decades and as it was defined as a national-level threat the preventive measures have been outlined within the National DRR Strategy. Following the plan, various studies and researches have been conducted and to reduce flooding risk of the city and its surrounding areas the existed watershed has been repaired and an anti-flood trampoline-type construction were arranged.

Avalanches
Kvesheti-Kobi road is known for high risk of snow avalanches causing injury and damage to economy. In order to reduce the damage from a disaster Construction of 2-lane 22.7 km long asphalt-concrete road, 6 bridges and 5 tunnels is in a process on Kvesheti-Kobi road, including construction of one 9km tunnel.

Floods and Flashfloods
Due to early forecasting of heavy atmospheric precipitations coming to the Stori basin (Kakheti Region) and based on the risk assessment, relevant agencies/services were informed in time to plan a response. As a result, in close coordination between the NEA and the EMS, evacuation of population was conducted in time and inevitable human casualties were prevented.
7.3. NATIONAL EFFORT TOWARDS COVID-19

Today’s globalized world faces a severe and acute public health emergency due to the ongoing global pandemic derived from Coronavirus disease 2019 caused by a respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) with 278 million cases and 5.4 million deaths confirmed worldwide (26 December 2021, COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update, WHO).

Georgia is no exception. The first case of the Coronavirus was reported on 26th of February, 2020. Since the detection of the first case, throughout 2020 – 2021 936 844\(^2\) cases and 13 860\(^3\) death was confirmed despite following the recommendations elaborated by the leading international organizations, such as World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) to effectively prevent and respond to pandemic outbreak.

From the early days of the pandemic, the GoG set the goal to direct all efforts in two directions, aiming to save both the health and lives of people, as well as the national economy. In parallel to the coping with COVID-19, the GoG has provided citizens with social support while also ensuring the provision of support to entrepreneurs and the economy in order to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

\(^2\) 2020 - 228 410 cases (6135.6 per 100,000 of population), 2021 – 708 434 cases (19 000,0 per 100,000 of population)

\(^3\) 2020 – death – 2528 cases, 2021 - 11332 death cases
7.3.1. COVID-19 PREVENTION

Prevention phase in Georgia started one month before the first case of the virus was confirmed in the country, that involved the implementation of the appropriate coordinated measures through multi-sectoral cooperation, with the aim of ensuring the maximum prevention of the entry and spread of the virus.

On 28 January, 2020 under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Georgia the Interagency Coordination Council (ICC) to combat the Coronavirus was established as the main decision-making platform. It consists of members of the Government, members of Parliament, the Administration of the President of Georgia and medical representatives.

The ICC has identified 4 priority directions: Healthcare - the protection of the health and lives of the population; Economy – The management and recovery of the Georgian economy in the face of the global economic crisis; Safety – The protection of citizens; Supplies and Logistics – The management of an uninterrupted supply of food to the population.

Under the ICC, the Operational Headquarter (HQ) - a special anti-crisis multiagency group, was established and the National Situation Room of the NCMC to the NSCO was activated to ensure the effective and rapid coordination process of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities at central and regional levels. One of the main tasks also was to ensure the efficient resolution of critically important problematic issues. The Operational HQ developed proposals/recommendations for the ICC on matters of tightening and lifting restrictions. The Operational HQ was accountable to ICC.

Within all regions across Georgia, the Regional HQs - a multi-agency task forces were also established that was headed by the state representatives (governors) directly managing the prevention and response activities. The Regional HQs were accountable to the Operational HQ.
7.3.2. PREPAREDNESS TO THE PANDEMIC

Georgia’s National Threat Assessment Document together with the variety of threats, identifies biological hazards, such as pandemics, outbreak of highly dangerous infections and veterinary threats, as one of the main risks to the national interest and through the National DRR Strategy and its respective Action Plans ensures provision of preventive and preparedness measures to avoid, reduce and/or eliminate the risks derived from biological hazards.

In respect to identified pandemic threat within the conceptual document, the relevant response plans are adopted on the basis of the GoG’s Decree №347 on Response to Particularly Dangerous Pathogens and Biological Incidents (2014) and №508 on National Civil Protection Response Plan (2017). Though, during the preparedness phase, it became conspicuous that due to the scale of global COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and its severe consequences there was a necessity for additional measure development in various directions, that ensured effective management of COVID-19 response at all levels.

Hence, the GoG acknowledges necessity for revision and improvement of existing legal framework, related plans and protocols, especially considering the scale of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and its severe consequences. Herewith continues to further develop the system through enhancing its institutional mechanisms and related capabilities in close cooperation with the International Organizations and partner nations that will pave the way towards more secured and safer environment.
7.3.3. RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC

The accumulated experience across the world showed that in the absence of direct treatment or a vaccine, social distancing is the most effective and realistic mechanism in the fight against COVID-19. The non-mandatory nature of the recommendations and the late imposition of restrictions precipitated the collapse of healthcare systems and caused thousands of deaths in many countries. To ensure achievement of 4 priority directions set by the ICC, on the basis of legal frameworks, various measures, rules and restrictions have been implemented. In this regard, the State of Emergency was declared on the basis of the decree issued by the President of Georgia (21 March, 2020) that imposed set of measures.

7.3.4. IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

The Coronavirus pandemic has dealt a devastating blow to the world economy: industries, such as tourism, trade etc., The shock affected both demand and supply. The Coronavirus shock has made a negative impact on the Georgian economy, which depends largely on external factors. The virus impeded the positive economic trends emerging 2019. Namely, there was an unanticipated high economic growth of 5.1%. Tourism revenues amounted to 3.3 billion USD (18.4% of GDP), export revenues to 3.8 billion USD (21.2% of GDP), and net remittances to 15 billion USD (8.4% of GDP). Consequently, the national current account deficit hit the historical minimum: 5.1% of GDP. The unexpected economic growth and improved export resulted in greater budget incomes to allow the state capital investments to hit a record 8% of GDP.

Despite presented positive economic indicators, still, the uncertainty and ambiguity regarding how long the pandemic will last aggravates the economic situation.

In light of the foregoing, the GoG held intensive negotiations with international partners. Georgia was the first country amid the pandemic to receive increased IMF funding that also resulted in significant monetary resources attracted from other donors.

7.3.5. LESSONS-LEARNED FROM COVID-19

Healthcare - Preparedness of healthcare system to avoid the possible collapse, due to the system being overloaded, was identified as a priority of critical importance by the Government at
an early stage. The response to COVID-19 exposed significant gaps in the capacity of public health systems, in regard to human, financial and material resources. Nevertheless, the system was able to adapt workforce and other response capacities and competencies very quickly. The measures have been supported by the mandatory restrictions and various protocols adopted by the GoG.

Preparedness of healthcare system is a vital element for effective crisis management, though it is obvious that it was impossible to be fully prepared to the scale of demand that COVID demonstrated.

**Economy** – Global pandemic effected the economy as well. Nonetheless, the GoG with its Anti-Crisis and Post-Crisis Plans aimed at meeting the needs of as many people and businesses as possible with limited resources. The Anti-Crisis Plan focused on emergency assistance in many directions and the Post-Crisis Plan included activities for the recovery of agriculture, tourism, and construction. Both efficient Plans were designed to foster rapid economic recovery in Georgia after the pandemic. The implemented plans ensured the economic growth of 10% in 2021.

**Safety** - From the onset of the pandemic, the GoG aimed at ensuring the high safety standards to mitigate the negative impacts of the virus and to protect human lives and health. In this regard, various mandatory restrictions have been imposed to protect citizens, as well different information campaigns (#stayhome, #StayHomeStaySafe, #stopcov and ect.) have been launched, as one of the tools with the fight against pandemic. Moreover, the Governmental informational webpage [www.StopCov.ge](http://www.StopCov.ge) was also available in many languages (including ethnic minority).

**Supplies and Logistics** – Georgia is in a process of re-establishment its material reserves' system as one of the elements of state resilience and parallely in order to ensure uninterrupted supply chain, a special plan for food safety was developed to secure, through subsidizing, against price changes on predefined products caused by currency exchange fluctuations. In addition, throughout the different phases of response, the GoG supported business sector to mitigate the impacts from pandemic and to ensure continuity of supply chain.

**Legal Framework** – Despite the fact that Georgia has set of legislative bases, as well as plans for preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters, the scale of global pandemic outbreak defined the need for revision and improvement of the legal frameworks, plans and protocols.
7.4. PROGRESS TOWARDS BUILD BACK BETTER

Recovery is the most complex phase of DRM, involving the greatest number and variety of stakeholders and affecting the greatest long-term impact on a community’s social and economic success. Georgia puts its efforts to execute an inclusive and comprehensive disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction considering the wide-ranging needs of communities, organizations, and individuals.

The GoG with an inclusive approach promotes the principle of leaving no one behind and unsafe, as well as within this scope highlights the importance of gender equality and the role of persons with disabilities in the whole DRM process. Together with the stakeholders via various programmes and projects gender and inclusive mainstreaming into the policies is ensured.
08
COLLABORATION, PARTNERSHIP & COOPERATION

RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW
Enhancement of partnership and cooperation with the stakeholders, different sectors, as well as with the partner states are defined as one of the important priorities within the Georgian DRR policy.

Georgia’s engagement in various international agreements and frameworks has significantly increased aids/assistance (grants) from donor countries and organizations in the field of DRM, which has significantly contributed to the fulfillment of obligations under the post-2015 agendas.

Stakeholders from various sectors that participated in the MTR process, consider collaboration between state agencies and local, international and non-governmental organizations to be the most successful format of cooperation and partnership.

Media sector is quite actively involved in the matters of natural and man-made disasters and their role in the DRR policy is emphasized in regards to providing correct and reliable information to the population. Since 2015, several awareness raising trainings on DRM and how to stay safe before, during and after disasters have been conducted by the GoG in close cooperation with various organizations. Furthermore, guidebooks on safety and reporting during disasters have been published and delivered.

A tangible success has been achieved in regards to the private sector. The resilience of industrial facilities and business in general in terms of disaster risks has enhanced considerably. The majority of participants of the MTR have outlined that they currently possess emergency management plans structured in accordance to business continuity guidelines, strictly aimed at rapid restoration of their services and provision of those services to the masses. Despite of the major impact that COVID – 19 Pandemic had on the private sector, within the support of the government, the businesses rapidly adapted to the situation at hand by maintaining vital segments for their proper functioning and creating a safe environment for their employees.

Active and fruitful cooperation is established with the scientific and academic sector that includes information sharing regarding new risks, sharing expertise, knowledge and participation in the Scientific Expert Group under the EMS.

Besides the above-mentioned partnerships, in 2018 the National Resilience Platform (NRP) - an action-oriented format that unites the representatives of different state agencies and UN Agencies, local/international/non-governmental organizations, diplomatic representatives, research institutions and private sector was established with the aim to identify priorities and work toward specific objectives based on the best available information and data
on DRR. The NRP is considered as one of the effective mechanisms of collaboration with all sectors and it serves as a basis of establishment of National DRR Platform.

8.1. BEST PRACTICE

Since 2016, the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) is celebrated with the lead of the NCMC in close collaboration with the relevant state agencies, including first responders and the local, international and non-governmental organizations. With the goal to raise awareness of population of all ages regarding DRR and to reach as many people as possible, the event has been held in various public locations, such as the zoo, parks and shopping malls.

Generally, during the IDDRR celebration various educational and entertainment activities are presented, including cognitive quizzes and psychosocial games. DRR photo and first responders’ equipment exhibition is also held. A climbing wall for children is installed and Georgian first responders conduct a simulated rescue operation.
09

CONTEXTUAL SHIFTS, NEW & EMERGING ISSUES & CHALLENGES
The National DRR Strategy is a vivid example of how clearly and systematically the national-scale natural and/or man-made hazards are perceived in Georgia. Through the MTR process several gaps and challenges have been identified, which are also acknowledged by the GoG and derived from the contextual circumstances and emerging issues, hindering the national security and its sustainable development.

Georgia lacks a unified data collection methodology and centralized system for accumulation of information regarding natural and man-made disasters of small, medium and greater scale and the data regarding the caused negative impacts.

All-of-society and inclusive approach to the risk-informed DRM process, still necessitates consistent and coordinated approach.

At the local level, additional effort is necessary to overcome the shortfalls related to elaborating respective emergency management plans with an inclusive approach, as well as to develop sufficient capabilities for DRM.

The massive scale of COVID-19 pandemic also revealed necessity to review existing legal framework and related policy papers, which are fundamental especially for ensuring efficient prevention, preparedness and response measures.

Mainly all the available governmental funds, as well as resources defined within the different programme/projects of donor organizations have been accumulated towards COVID-19 response. In the aftermath of global crisis, there is a need for mobilization of sufficient funds for more DRM projects and programmes aimed at building the culture of prevention and preparedness.
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PROSPECTIVE REVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS
Throughout the MTR process priority efforts have been identified, that shall ensure a significant reduction of disaster risks, an increase of community, infrastructure and ecosystem resilience during the remaining period of the Sendai Framework and beyond 2030.

Identification of the outlined areas was largely due to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the systemic nature of the risk of the pandemic and the experience gained from it, including cascading and indirect effects, the flexibility of the response system and the rational distribution of resources is represented as a critical necessity in terms of disaster risk management at all levels.

The efforts of the governmental agencies to manage risks in support of sustainable development often focus on individual, “at the moment” threats. DRM shall be perceived as an inseparable component of complex and interconnected systems, as hazardous events tend to occur simultaneously, leading to even more severe consequences. Depending on the severity of the threats, all sectors shall maintain the constant readiness to adapt to an emergency mode of operation, ensure data protection and an alternative, secure work environment.

The elaborated recommendations through the MTR process shall ensure the enhancement of the Georgian DRM and crisis management system, as well as bridge the already identified gaps and challenges.

10.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REALISING THE OUTCOME AND GOAL OF THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK

Enhancement of Disaster Information Management

It is of the highest importance to ensure systematic and homogeneous collection, documentation and analysis of information regarding natural and man-made disasters of all scales. Accumulation of the unified data regarding negative impacts, including death, injury/illness, damages and destructions, based on pre-existing official data, academic records, and any other reliable sources, shall promote understanding of the disaster trends and impacts, ensure better prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures to reduce the damage on the communities and economy.
10.2. PROGRESS IN RISK ASSESSMENT, INFORMATION AND UNDERSTANDING

10.2.1. ENHANCEMENT OF RISK-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Derived from the experience from the risk management of systematic nature, it was revealed that various groups, institutions and organizations are potentially vulnerable to indirect and cascading impacts. While providing information regarding the disaster risks to public, it shall be used for consideration and application to daily activities to ensure safety of people and infrastructure.

Strengthening at national level and establishing on local level the culture of risk-informed decision-making via incorporating corresponding regulation(s) in the legal framework, shall lead to advanced and effective management of all sectors.

10.2.2. ENHANCEMENT OF LOCAL RESILIENCE

Strengthening the coordination mechanism for effective DRM planning led by the local governmental structures while ensuring the close collaboration and involvement of various sectors of civil society, businesses, scientific/academia and organization(s), shall scale up the local resilience towards natural and man-made disaster.

10.2.3. ENHANCEMENT OF INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Enhancing inclusive approach, considering specific needs of vulnerable groups and their involvement in all phases of the disaster and risk management process is very important through facilitating awareness raising campaigns of population (digital and printed brochures, booklets, leaflets, banners), as well as organizing seminars, trainings, workshops, filming videos for media/TV transmission, with high representation of women, people with disabilities, children, elder population and etc.
10.3. PROGRESS IN RISK GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Revision and improvement of existing legal framework, related plans and protocols, further development of institutional mechanisms and related capabilities in close cooperation with the International Organizations and partner nations shall pave the way towards more secured and safer environment.

10.4. COLLABORATION, PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

It is nationwide acknowledged that it is impossible to stop most natural phenomena happening, though it is possible to prevent it from becoming a disaster causing death and destruction. The recent pandemic outbreak demonstrated that the disasters increase government expenditure due to the responsibility to response and recovery. In this regard, it is of the highest importance to mobilize organic capabilities including state budget in parallel of accumulation of allied support(s) to reduce risks, as well as financial losses.

Facilitation and promotion of collaboration and partnership between government and various sectors, including businesses, civil society, organizations in regards to DRM necessities for development of joint projects/programmes shall remain one of the priority directions.

Enhancement of the existing international cooperation mechanisms across the globe to attract investments and develop modern, scientifically approved, innovative projects shall lead to better prevention and efficient preparedness.
ANNEXES
1. GOG’S DECREE №4 ON APPROVAL OF NATIONAL DRR STRATEGY AND ITS ACTION PLAN
2. NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGY OF GEORGIA 2017 – 2020 (APPENDIX №1)
3. NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGY’S ACTION PLAN (ANNEX №2)
4. NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGY’S ACTION PLAN’S APPENDIX (ANNEX №3)
5. GEORGIA’S 2030 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY
6. VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
7. TBILISI GREEN CITY ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2030
8. RESILIENT TBILISI STRATEGY 2030
9. NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN OF GEORGIA – GOG’S DECREE №508
10. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION CAPACITY ASSESSMENT REPORT 2014
11. NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
12. REDUCING RISKS, BUILDING RESILIENCE – GEORGIA’S NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
13. INTERAGENCY PUBLICATION ON NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM 2022