

## **Action Plan for the Implementation of the State Strategy on IDPs during 2012-2014**

### **I Overall Goal and Achieved Results**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1. With the aim to provide long-term and sustainable solution to the needs of IDPs from the conflicts in the 90s, on 2 February 2007 by its Decree #47 the Government of Georgia endorsed the State Strategy on IDPs persecuted (in further text “the State Strategy”). The Annex to the State Strategy, which was recognized “On the Endorsement of the State Strategy on IDPs” and adopted on December 2008 by the Governmental Decree #854, integrated the population displaced as a result of the August 2008 conflict into the overall State Strategy. On 30 July 2008 by the Decree #489 of the Government of Georgia, The Action Plan for the implementation of the State Strategy on IDPs during 2009-2012–persecuted (in further text “the Action Plan”) further builds on the findings and priority needs identified in the United Nations / World Bank - Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) and benefits from a broad consultation process. In August 2008, after the Russian military aggression against Georgia the Action Plan was reviewed and by the Decree #403 on 28 May 2009 it was approved. The Action Plan has been updated annually; the version that was valid until recently was adopted on 3 November 2011 by the Decree #551 of the Government of Georgia. The Action Plan is based on the 10 point plan for the strategic development of Georgia, which was presented by the Georgian Government in October 2011.

1.2. Following the official adoption of the Action Plan, it shall be subject to revisions on annual basis on the basis of an independent interim evaluation. Both mechanisms will be initiated by the MRA in consultation with all the partners. Revisions of the Action Plan, if necessary, will be adopted by the MRA led Steering Committee overseeing its implementation and subsequently approved by the government of Georgia.

1.3. The main goal of the State Strategy is to promote IDPs’ socio-economic integration and improve their living conditions. To reach this goal, the Action Plan strives to provide long term solutions to the accommodation needs of the IDPs, the reduction of their dependency on the State and the integration of the vulnerable IDPs into the state social assistance programs based on clear and transparent criteria until their return becomes possible.

1.4. To meet the above objective, the State Strategy foresees a number of activities focused on provision of adequate durable accommodation and integration measures.

1.5. All the main principles of the implementation of the State Strategy (Chapter VI) will be fully adhered to in the implementation process of the Action Plan, with particular focus on those related to: voluntary/informed decision making and free choice of IDPs,

dialogue with IDPs and their participation in decision-making, gender equality, protection of the rights of the child and respect for other recognized human rights. This will be ensured through the provision of legal counseling and information campaign. The Action Plan will be implemented in accordance with fair and transparent criteria, and will ensure participation of internally displaced women and men in the planning process and a well-informed choice in all the decisions that affect them. The Government of Georgia recognizes the importance of the Resolution N1325 of UN Security Council<sup>1</sup>. The Action Plan envisages the main principles of the above mentioned resolution.

1.6. The MRA will update and implement a comprehensive information campaign endorsed by the Steering Committee that will in systematic and comprehensive manner raise awareness of IDP's on all the elements of the AP, thus enabling them to make an informed decision.

## **2. Durable housing solution in 2012- 2014**

2.1. Directions towards Durable Housing Solution of IDPs are as follows:

2.1.1. The activities related to Durable Housing Solution of IDPs will be implemented in three phases.

First one includes IDPs living in CCs, who are in need of Durable Housing and the government offers them their current apartments.

The second phase includes IDPs in CCs but government cannot offer them these buildings (because they are not habitable for technical reasons, rehabilitation is expensive, is privately owned, represents strategically important public building); as well as IDPs living in Private Accommodation who are in need of Durable Housing Solution. The third phase will cover the IDPs who are refusing the housing alternatives offered by the government, the government will examine alternative possibilities of DHS provision for those IDPs.

At last stage AP will consider possibilities to target those IDPs who are not in need of being provided DHS.

The first and second phases of the AP launched in 2008-2009 and will continue in 2012-2014 years. The third phase will begin after first and second phases are over.

2.1.2. The IDPs living in CCs

The alternatives offered to the IDPs living in the CCs refers to two cases: the CCs that can be used for durable housing and the CCs that are impossible to be used for durable housing because of different reasons (are not habitable for technical reasons, rehabilitation is expensive, is privately owned and the owner doesn't want to use it for this purpose, represents strategically important public building).

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<sup>1</sup> UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) [on women and peace and security], 31 October 2000

IDPs living in those CCs that can be used for durable housing will get living units into their ownership according to the minimal standards adopted by the SC.

As for IDPs who live in the CCs that cannot be used for durable housing, they will be offered DHS gradually in the rehabilitated state-owned idle buildings, newly built blocks of flats or houses purchased by GoG according to the priorities outlined in the guiding principles, criteria and procedures governing the process of durable housing allocation.

The CCs that cannot be subject to rehabilitation; are not habitable; their conversion into flats is more costly than other alternative solutions; is privately owned; represents strategically important public building will be closed down (i.e. not registered as the Collective Centers) will return to its primary function, will be ruined or will be sold out.

The IDPs who refuse to get units into their ownership in the CCs, will continue living in the same units. The CCs will be closed and the IDPs will be registered as an IDP in a private sector. The above-mentioned IDPs will live in those CCs until the Ministry offers the alternatives.

#### 2.1.3.IDPs registered in private sector

Those IDPs registered in private sector with no DHS or live in difficult living conditions, will be offered DHS gradually in the rehabilitated state-owned idle buildings, newly built blocks of flats or houses purchased by GoG.

2.1.4.The above-mentioned subjects about IDPs' housing (2.1.2. - 2.1.3.) are basic,though the Ministry may offer them other alternatives (social housing, one-time endowment gifts by the government or a private investor.)

2.2.The DHS provision activities include: transfer of ownership on the flats in CCs to IDPs, rehabilitation of idle buildings, allocation of IDPs into these buildings and transfer of ownership on them to IDPs. Allocation of IDPs in newly constructed apartment blocks, accommodation of IDPs in individual houses (purchased or newly constructed) in rural areas.

2.2.1. The rehabilitation of Collectives Centers (CCs) and the transfer of living units (privatization) into the ownership of IDPs currently living in them are the two interlinked activities that will be coordinated by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Accommodation and Refugees (MRA). In cases where a particular CC will be benefiting from both rehabilitation and privatization, the transfer of ownership on them will be implemented after the completion of rehabilitation works.

Not all the CCs suit for durable housing solution. Those buildings shall be closed down that: cannot be subject to rehabilitation; are not habitable; their conversion into flats is more costly than other alternative solutions; is privately owned; represents strategically important public building. IDPs living in such kind of buildings will be offered alternative solutions.

Accommodation space – flat, will be transferred into IDP ownership at a symbolic price – 1 GEL.

There are two categories of the CCs to be offered to the IDPs for the privatization in the first stage:

- 1) CCs under the State possession;
- 2) CCs to be bought by the State from the private owners and offered to the IDPs.

IDPs in CCs who are eligible and in need to receive durable housing will be able to make a well-informed decision and accept or reject the offer. Resident rights of eligible IDPs in CCs remain untouched irrespective of the CC privatization / rehabilitation until an IDP has opted for one housing alternative identified

2.2.2. Other alternative solutions are: rehabilitation of idle buildings, construction of new apartment blocks, accommodation of IDPs and transfer of living units into the ownership of IDPs (New blocks of apartments will not be constructed in Tbilisi), allocation of IDPs in individual houses purchased or constructed in rural areas. Within the framework of this project, those IDPs will be provided with solutions that live in CCs that will not be subject of rehabilitation and/or privatization, also IDPs in private sector that are extremely poor and are under the risk of staying homeless.

2.2.3 The rehabilitation, reconstruction and building standards approved by the Steering Committee on 17 September, 2009 and acknowledged by the Government on 30 October, 2009 are the guideline of the durable housing solution, as for rehabilitation of CCs and idle buildings as well for construction of apartment blocks.

2.2.4. The decisions regarding the rehabilitation process will be made in the best interest of IDPs, and wherever possible, with participation of concerned IDPs, ensuring gender equality.

2.2.5. Privately owned CCs that are habitable, in case of owner's consent, will be bought by the State for a reasonable price (the price shall not be higher than the cost of an alternative housing solution) and will be transferred to the IDPs.

2.2.6. Once property owners, IDPs will have an opportunity to establish condominiums with gender balanced condominium committees which, in accordance to existing Law on Condominiums, can benefit from the municipal programs to solve the issues such as: fixing roofs, ensuring adequate cleaning and maintenance of the common spaces (e.g. elevators, entrance, etc.), ensuring waste disposal, uninterrupted water supply provision, etc.

2.2.7. In case the IDP family refuses to get the ownership on the accommodation space in the CC, it will not hinder the process of providing IDPs with durable housing solutions. IDPs living in those buildings will be registered in the data-base as living in the private sector. Individual electricity counters will be installed in the building and provision of solution will be moved to later stages.

2.2.8. In case IDP family, in need of DHS, rejects moving into a built, rehabilitated or purchased building offered by MRA, an alternative offer will be made only after other IDP families are provided with DHS.

2.2.9. The arrangement foreseen in 2.2. will be implemented and will continue from 2012 to 2014 according to the guiding principles, criteria and procedures governing the process of durable housing allocation.

2.3. Programs, targeted at the solution of IDP long-term problems for IDPs not in need of durable housing solution, will be implemented after the activities given in the step 2.2. subject to available financial resources.

2.3.1. In collaboration with NAPR, IDPs who own accessible real estate will be identified. A thorough assessment of this category will be conducted and those IDPs who were identified as in need of assistance will receive one time assistance, for the purpose of improving their living conditions, according to available financial resources; or alternatively will be provided with construction materials in case an IDP family has a capacity to rehabilitate the dwelling by own means. The government will ensure that women-headed IDP households are fully engaged and benefit from these processes.

2.3.2. IDP families not wishing to accept living space because they have adequate income and desire to acquire property on their own will be identified. In certain cases provision of the financial assistance instead of living spaces will be possible. In those cases the amount provided will not be higher than the amount needed for an alternative housing solution. The amount offered will be less than the sum necessary for the construction of a house. In case of a positive decision, disbursing of cash amounts will start during the stage after 2.2.

2.3.3. After carrying out the activities aimed at improving the IDP integration, IDP social assistance system will be transformed from the status based to the needs based system, based on rational, clear and transparent criteria for the determination of IDPs' eligibility. This will be achieved in close cooperation with relevant Ministries and other Government counterparts. Assistance not having social nature, but based on the IDP status will be provided on an exceptional basis, with particular attention to vulnerable persons.

### **3. Socio - Economic measures**

3.1. Government Decree #854 of December 4, 2008 about Amendments to the Decree N47 of Georgian Government, 2 February, 2007 about the State Strategy on IDPs envisages social integration; reduction of IDP dependency on the State support orienting the status-based IDP assistance to needs based one, integration of vulnerable IDPs into targeted social assistance schemes. As indicated in the Joint Needs Assessment and Global Needs Assessment, the social integration measures and livelihood opportunities

are strongly interlinked, and only multi sectoral strategic response to this problem will provide salient long term solutions.

3.2 Elements of socio-economic integration include but are not limited to: Infrastructure rehabilitation; access to health services according to the Georgian Legislation as well as psychological support and counseling; targeted social assistance; access to education, livelihoods, economic opportunities and employment with the equal participation of man and women. The support of international community and local nongovernmental organizations will be sought to formulate and implement the projects targeted at the IDPs social-economic integration.

Access to Health Care Services will be ensured for all IDPs through State Healthcare Programs. Since August 6, 2008 internally displaced families from the occupied territories affected by the armed invasion of the Russian Federation provided with DHS by the Government or other legal persons in purchased, rehabilitated or newly built apartments have access to medical insurance within the framework of state programs.

3.3. The main objective of the Action Plan is the durable solution of IDP problems. Durable housing solution is the major need of IDPs, the provision of which is not feasible without providing IDPs access to the sources of income. In order to solve the mentioned task the MRA plans to elaborate the strategy and implement the project targeted at improving the livelihood opportunities. The projects will have short-term intervention character targeted at smaller groups of IDPs, so that as a result of implementing the projects they will be better positioned to integrate into the host community.

3.4. The Action Plan also aims at raising the awareness of IDPs by following means: provision of information through the hotline and reception center of the MRA, exchange of information through the meetings with the groups of IDPs in their settlements, consultation meetings, round table meetings, provision of information to public through mass media, usage of information technologies etc. The MRA plans to introduce the reception center experience of the MRA central office in its 4 regional offices, which will improve the quality of service for IDPs rendered by the MRA.

## **4. Financial Resources Necessary for the Implementation of the Action Plan**

The Decree Annex about the estimation of the resources needed for the implementation of the IDP State Strategy Action Plan includes concrete directions, activities, implementation dates and overall assessment of the financial resources necessary for its implementation.

## **5. Coordination mechanisms**

5.1. Overall coordination will be the responsibility of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is an MRA-led decision making body to coordinate joint efforts by the Government of Georgia and international organizations in operationalizing and implementing the State Strategy for IDPs and its Action Plan. Membership of the Steering Committee consists of: Governmental and Non-governmental organizations as well as two representatives from the NGO community (1 Georgian and 1 international). Representatives of other organizations can be invited by the Steering Committee to its meetings in order to provide input on a specific issue. The members of the Steering Committee are nominated by the above mentioned governmental and international organizations and approved by the ministerial decree of the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Accommodation and Refugees. Each organization has one vote to approve the decision of the Steering Committee. Minutes are written about the meeting and approved decisions and the Chairman and Secretary of the Steering Committee sign them. In case, any of SC members do not agree with the made decision, he/she has the right to share his/her position in the meeting minutes.

5.2. The aim of the Steering Committee activity is to support the socio-economic integration of the IDPs, provision of proper living conditions and durable housing solutions for IDPs, eliminate their dependence on state and include the most vulnerable IDPs in the unified State Social Programme.

5.3. SC meets once in three months and if needed holds a special session. The Steering Committee has the right to formulate decisions on different issues related to the implementation of the Action Plan, such as formulation of guiding principles, criteria and procedures governing the process of durable housing allocation, rehabilitation standards and approval, etc. At the same time the committee has the right to present all approved documents to the Government of Georgia.

5.4. The Steering Committee discusses plans and formulates priority direction. Decisions will be specific and time-bound. The Steering Committee's discussions and decision making are informed and supported by technical expertise, data and advice. Recommendations and decisions of the Steering Committee will be reported to the Prime Minister's office, other senior Government officials and representatives of the diplomatic community. Expert Groups will be commissioned by the Steering Committee to provide technical assistance and address specific time-bound tasks required for the implementation of the Action Plan (e.g. elaboration of standards, legal issues, etc.). The Steering Committee operates within a framework of adopted Terms of Reference and meets quarterly.

5.5. Steering Committee will be responsible for transparency of activities. MRA will conduct the monitoring of the projects' implementation. Different governmental, non-governmental and international organizations will be involved in financial and technical support and the implementation of these programs.

5.6. The inter-ministerial coordination will be done through the regular meetings of the governmental agencies, as well as through the direct communication with the specialists per certain thematic aspects identified by various departments of the ministries. The

contact persons in the municipalities will be identified to deal with the IDP thematic. The governmental agencies will be involved in implementing the projects identified in the AP according to their sphere of competence. E.g. MRA will be responsible for coordination process of the Action Plan Implementation, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development – Allocation of real estate, plots of land and buildings for DHS programs, NAPR – Registration of real estate and registration of ownership of transferred estates within DHS programs, MoRDI – implementation of construction/rehabilitation programs, MoLHSA – social services and other entities according to the competence.

5.7. The MRA in cooperation with the partner organizations works on updating AP in order to ensure that IDPs participate in the process of extension of the Action Plan. To be more specific, the Action Plan reflects the recommendations and suggestions about solving the problems of IDPs divided into the groups according to age, gender, type of accommodation. The participatory assessment was done by UNHCR and the MRA.<sup>2</sup>

5.8. It is important to keep IDPs and the public in general informed about the projects envisaged by the Action Plan. In addition to the activities identified in the Action Plan the members of the Temporary Expert Groups within the Steering Committee will work out and implement additional activities as required. The Work Plan on the Durable Housing Solution will be subject to annual update and will be accessible to public.

## **6. Arbitration**

IDPs are able to address to the existing administrative mechanism for complaints that exists in the form of general administrative practice in administrative bodies and court.

## **7. Visibility**

MRA will take into consideration the regulations of donor organizations regarding these issues

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

MRA will collaborate with the Public Defender, UNHCR, other agencies implementing monitoring, and donor organizations during the implementation of the Action Plan. It includes data exchange and other activities. If there is a need of external evaluator the decision will be made at the SC meeting.

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<sup>2</sup> For full report please refer to [http://mra.gov.ge/UploadedFiles/booklet/83/PA%20report%20141211\\_GEORGIA\\_ENG.pdf](http://mra.gov.ge/UploadedFiles/booklet/83/PA%20report%20141211_GEORGIA_ENG.pdf)