

For Planning Purposes Only
September 14, 2015

Contact:

Partners: Parliament of Georgia, National Democratic Institute, Congress of Chile, Open Government Partnership

****MEDIA ADVISORY****

Georgian Parliament Hosts Global Legislative Openness Conference

Tbilisi, Georgia - More than 70 foreign delegates, including government, parliamentary and civil society leaders from across the world, will convene at a global legislative openness conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, between September 14 and 15.

Hosted by the Parliament of Georgia in cooperation with the Open Government Partnership's Legislative Openness Working Group, the conference, entitled *Committing to Openness: Parliamentary Action Plans, Standards, and Tools*, will focus on assisting parliaments in adopting new international standards of openness and to commit to greater citizen engagement. The Legislative Openness Working Group is co-chaired by the Congress of Chile and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The conference will be attended by prominent members of parliament, government and civil society leaders from around the world, including senior parliamentary representation from Georgia, Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Brazil, Latvia, Lithuania, Jordan, Malta, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine.

The meeting is the final event of the [Global Legislative Openness Week \(GLOW\)](#), a week-long call to action for civil society groups and parliaments to further the agenda of legislative openness.

Follow updates on the conference on Twitter at #OpenParl15 and #OGPGeorgia.

WHAT: Meeting of the Open Government Partnership's Legislative Openness Working Group. Conference titled *Committing to Openness: Parliamentary Action Plans, Standards, and Tools*.

WHO: More than 70 members of parliament, government and civil society leaders from across the world, including senior parliamentary representation from Georgia, Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Brazil, Latvia, Lithuania, Jordan, Malta, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine.

WHEN: September 14-15, 2015

WHERE: Parliament of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Georgian Parliament Hosts Global Legislative Openness Conference

Bringing together government, parliament, and civil society leaders to advance legislative openness

The Parliament of Georgia, in cooperation with the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the Congress of Chile, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and a number of international and local organizations in Georgia, convened a global two-day conference on legislative openness in Tbilisi, Georgia on 14-15 September 2015. The conference, titled *Committing to Openness: Parliamentary Action Plans, Standards and Tools*, was attended by more than 70 foreign delegates, including government, parliamentary and civil society leaders. Conference speakers called on parliaments around the world to advance legislative transparency and expand opportunities for meaningful citizen participation in the legislative process.

"Parliament is the democratic institution closest to the people. In Georgia, we formed an Inter-Factional Working Group that worked closely with civil society leaders to develop a

concrete plan for increasing parliamentary openness, with specific, objective milestones, to make sure we are on track. We are pleased that this work is recognized internationally and we are honored to host this meeting of the Legislative Openness Working Group,” said Davit Usupashvili, Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, during opening remarks.

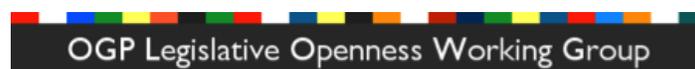
The meeting was the final event of the [Global Legislative Openness Week \(GLOW\)](#), a week-long call to action for civil society groups and parliaments to further the agenda of legislative openness. The campaign is spearheaded by the Legislative Openness Working Group of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a multilateral initiative with 66 participating countries.

“Citizens are demanding greater accountability from their leaders, as well as new ways of engaging with their governments and parliaments. While every legislature comes to this discussion from a different starting point, there are always opportunities to improve public integrity, transparency and citizen engagement. OGP and the legislative openness working group provide an important platform for civil society to engage with elected leaders to suggest reforms to improve their democracies.” said Scott Hubli, Director of Governance Programs at National Democratic Institute. NDI and the Congress of Chile serve as co-chairs of the Working Group, which was formed in 2013 to expand the scope of commitments made by Open Government Partnership countries.

Chile was the first OGP country to create an independent action plan focused exclusively on legislative openness -- a model that the Working Group is encouraging other parliaments to follow. “Having an open legislature means that we can adapt to social and technological changes, respond to citizen demands and stay close to the people who elect us,” Chilean Senator Hernán Larraín said. “Providing more information and expanding citizen participation -- in a deliberate and meaningful way -- will make legislatures more effective and help us to ensure that democracy works to deliver solutions to the problems citizens face in their daily lives.”

Georgia was among the frontrunners in Europe to subscribe to the Open Parliament principles and promote legislative openness in the wake of the OGP. The Parliament of Georgia, supported by the NDI, endorsed a Declaration on Parliamentary Openness in April 2015 and later, in July, with assistance from the European Union and UNDP, adopted the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan.

The conference on legislative openness was made possible with support from USAID, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), KohoVolit, European Union, UNDP, Transparency International Georgia, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), and the U.S. Embassy.



The Legislative Openness Working Group of the Open Government Partnership aims to deepen the exchange of knowledge across governments, parliaments, civil society and international institutions in the development and enactment of commitments on legislative openness. For more information, visit <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/groups/legislative>.