

## Statement by the Republican Party on “The Political Agenda of the Next Two Years”

Tbilisi, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Two years ago on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012, the Georgian Dream coalition, which was created by Bidzina Ivanishvili and which brought together six political parties, achieved victory in parliamentary elections. With this victory, which brought about the formation of a Georgian Dream-led government, each component party in the coalition took on the responsibility of governing the country. As a result of the 2013 Presidential and 2014 Local Self-Government elections, the coalition is in power at every level of government.

Today, two years after coming to power, we believe that the Georgian Dream coalition has successfully reached an important stage in its political mission. The authoritarian regime of the United National Movement has been dismantled, an irreversible course towards European integration has been guaranteed with the signing of the EU Association Agreement, and the foundations have been laid for the country’s democratic modernization by freeing the judiciary, business and media from political control. At the same time, however, various problems and challenges have arisen.

The Republican Party believes that, in the two years remaining before the parliamentary elections, the Georgian Dream coalition must take on the following fundamental tasks, which are vital for ensuring Georgia’s progress and development:

1. **Strengthening the institutional foundations of multiparty democracy**, which requires the steadfast defense of political rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution; correspondingly, in terms of the electoral system, the achievement of a broad consensus; the establishment of an environment of tolerance for a diversity of political and other viewpoints and the acceleration of the country’s democratic development founded on the EU Association Agreement.
2. **Faster-paced development of democratic institutions**, which requires the improvement of a constitutional system of checks and balances among different branches of government; the maximal institutionalization and de-personalization of governance; preventing lines from being blurred between the ruling political powers and the state-administrative system and setting the constitutional and democratic agenda based on the rule of law, rather than on personal factors.
3. **The formation of a competitive and fast-growing national economic system**, which requires more clarity and consistency in the government’s economic strategy; the gradual shift of priorities from meeting short-term social needs to an accelerated pace of economic growth and the creation of more jobs; the reduction of the state’s economic activities along with the end of state pressure on business and an end to the practice of state control of business, and bringing about new possibilities for the population through the EU Free Trade Agreement and Visa Liberalization process.
4. **The foundation of effective state governance**, which requires the development of a staffing policy based on professionalism and qualifications and the elimination of

political or other forms of discrimination; preventing the domination of central and national government and local self-government bodies by the special forces and party structures; strengthening the results of the first stage of self-government reform (making full use of the legally-defined competencies of mayors, *gamgebelis* [heads of municipalities] and *Sakrebulo*s [local town councils]) and the immediate initiation of the second stage of reform (increasing the financial and economic basis of municipalities and their structural optimization); implementing measures for a second round of criminal justice reform, regulating the Prosecutor's Office, Police Forces and Special Services according to European standards in order to completely preclude the restoration of a repressive police-state system.

5. **Ensuring the security of the country**, which requires the intensification of the NATO integration process; stronger efforts to implement, in a complete and timely manner, the measures envisaged in the NATO cooperation package; guaranteeing the coordinated functioning of the country's state bodies responsible for security and foreign policy and the elimination of the practice of public recrimination on these issues between high office-holders.

The fact that many of these problems have been inherited from the former United National Movement government cannot continue to serve as a self-justification for the Georgian Dream coalition. In order to successfully carry out the next stage of political tasks, the coalition's own system must be refined. The coalition is made stronger by being more democratic, by being a coalition in which the partner parties' interests are taken into account, based on a strong and perceptible collegiate relationship at every level of government whenever decisions are taken - decisions corresponding to the coalition's founding principles as well as when raising the level of executive discipline.

In order to achieve and consolidate this, the Georgian Republican Party hereby suggests to its coalition partners two possible ways to improve efficiency and to better structure the coalition: either it can make the currently assembled coalition – which was created with the aim of unseating the previous authorities - into a European-style coalition, which would form the basis of a coalition agreement completely redistributing responsibilities and clearly and practically uniting them on a shared political platform, or alternatively to make it the kind of coalition in which the component parties are guaranteed the freedom to position themselves according to their own ideologies and to make clear their differing positions within the framework of agreements reached within the coalition.

The position of the leaders of the Georgian Republican Party on this issue has been made clear to the governing body of the coalition (that is, the Political Council), and we are certain that, together with our partners, we will continue to make the right decisions in the near future, living up to the responsibilities we have accepted jointly before the nation that elected us. At the same time, we and our coalition partners are accountable to the electorate, and we ought to be ready to take into account their views on the issues raised in this statement.