



2030 M Street, NW, Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 728-5500
fax: (202) 728-5520
mail: contactndi@ndi.org
www.ndi.org

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Contact: NDI Georgia Program Officer Teona
Kupunia +995577 719134, teona@ndi.ge;

October 10, 2011

ECONOMIC ISSUES ARE FOREMOST ON THE MINDS OF GEORGIANS, NDI SURVEY FINDS

TBILISI – A survey of political opinion in Georgia, released today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), shows that jobs, rising prices and territorial integrity are the top three priority issues for Georgian citizens, who also believe that politicians are not talking enough about jobs and rising prices.

In the survey, 62 percent mentioned jobs, 42 percent mentioned rising prices, 31 percent mentioned territorial integrity and 31 percent mentioned poverty as among their top three priority issues. Meanwhile, 44 percent of Georgians said that politicians are not talking enough about jobs, 62 percent said they are not talking enough about rising prices and 54 percent say they are not talking enough about poverty.

Speaking at a press briefing, Luis Navarro, NDI's country director in Georgia, said, "Economic issues remain the primary concern and focus of Georgian citizens. While Georgians have a more optimistic view of democratic progress, they want increased accountability from their government."

The results reflect data collected September 9-21 in face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of 2,425 Georgians. The survey looks at issues of public importance, perceptions of democracy and attitudes toward reforms, as well as various domestic and foreign policy issues.

Asked whether Georgia is a democracy now, 45 percent of Georgians said yes compared to 39 percent who said no. When the same question was asked in an NDI survey last March, 44 percent said no and 39 percent said yes.

NDI's survey work was funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and carried out by Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC).

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NDI is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information is available at www.ndi.org.