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NDI Poll: Georgians Believe the Country is Moving in the Wrong Direction; Economic Concerns Remain Top Priorities with Widespread Dissatisfaction with the State of the Economy

TBILISI – Poll results released today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and CRRC-Georgia, show that the perception of the country’s direction is at its lowest since 2010, with 49 percent saying the country is moving in the wrong direction, and only 18 percent believing it is heading in the right direction. The top issues for Georgians remain focused on the economy -- jobs (48 percent), rising prices and inflation (34 percent), and poverty (33 percent).

As in previous years, data shows dissatisfaction about the state of the country’s economy. A total of 21 percent of Georgians report that they are unemployed and actively looking for a job. Only a third feel they are better off economically than their parents’ generation, while almost half (43 percent) believe they can afford less than they could five years ago. Half of Georgians report they did not have enough money to pay for utilities at some point in the past six months, and would not be able to borrow 300 Georgian Lari, without interest, if they needed to. Nationally, only 10 percent report having savings, with the highest level of savings among those in minority settlements (24 percent). Georgians describe prevalent economic inequality, with 70 percent saying the economy benefits only a few, and 84 percent hold the Georgian government responsible for the country’s economic problems.

“For several years, pessimism has been growing about the direction of the country, likely driven by the public’s negative evaluation of the economy,” said Laura Thornton, NDI senior director. “Georgians hold the government responsible for their poor economic well-being, sending an urgent signal to Georgian leaders to develop and present concrete plans for inclusive growth and employment.”

Healthcare remains another top concern for Georgians. While the majority of Georgians report satisfaction with the accessibility and quality of healthcare, they are concerned by the high costs of both care and medicine. Over the past year, half of the population reported that they postponed a medical treatment (54 percent) and were unable to buy medicine (50 percent) because they couldn’t afford it.

Georgians continue to demonstrate resilient support for the country’s European and Euro-Atlantic goals, with 78 percent approving EU membership and 71 percent NATO membership. In addition, the vast majority (83 percent) believe that parliament should include at least 30 percent women and approve of a mandatory gender quota (65 percent).

NDI surveys public opinion to help Georgian stakeholders diagnose and address issues of public concern by providing accurate, unbiased and statistically-sound data. This poll aims to capture the most relevant information to foster the development of responsive policies and governance. A wide range of leaders from across the political spectrum have reported that the polls are important to their work and encourage continued polling. The results reflect data collected from July 13-29, 2019, through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of Georgia's adult population, excluding occupied territories, that included 2,131 completed interviews. The average margin of error is +/- 1.7 percent.

NDI's survey work is funded by UK aid from the British people.

This poll was carried out by CRRC Georgia.

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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.

CRRC-Georgia is a non-governmental, non-profit research organization with a mission to promote evidence based debates on policy issues by providing reliable, up-to-date and accessible data and analysis. More information is available at <http://www.crrc.ge>