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May 11, 2015

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NDI POLL: GEORGIANS CONCERNED ABOUT JOBS AND THE ECONOMY; PESSIMISTIC ABOUT DIRECTION OF COUNTRY BUT SATISFIED WITH PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

TBILISI – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and its partner CRRC Georgia survey public opinion to help Georgian stakeholders diagnose and address issues of public concern by providing accurate, unbiased, and statistically sound data. The poll released today shows that Georgians perceive jobs, inflation and rising costs, and poverty as the most important issues. In the survey, **67** percent chose jobs, **43** percent rising prices and inflation, and **37** percent poverty as among their top three priority issues. Reflecting on these top three issues, less than 3 percent of Georgians described the situation as improved over the last two years. Demonstrating growing concern, only 11 percent reported their household situation as ‘better off’ since October 2012, while 34 percent said they were “worse off” compared to 17 percent in August 2014.

"Above all else, Georgians are concerned about the bread and butter issues of jobs, prices and providing for themselves and their families," said Laura Thornton, NDI's senior director in Georgia. "In general, there is an increase in pessimism about the direction the country is going, particularly with regard to the economy, presenting an important opportunity for political leaders to craft more effective policy prescriptions to address these concerns."

The survey found that only a quarter (23 percent) of Georgians feel the country is moving in the right direction, down from 40 percent in August 2014. For the first time, more citizens believe the government is not making decisions that matter to them (49 percent) than those who believe it is (44 percent). Communication between parliamentarians and constituents remains weak, and citizens have low expectations with regard to their representatives.

The view is not entirely pessimistic, however. The majority of Georgians are satisfied with the public service they have received, and the vast majority (90 percent) of those who have used government offered health insurance reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied.

Georgian citizens continue to support democracy, strong opposition voices, and minority rights, as well as more proactive measures to increase women's political participation in politics, with 68 percent of citizens supporting mandatory gender quotas for parliament. Most Georgians continue to support Euro-Atlantic integration and perceive Russia as a threat.

The polling instrument was developed in consultation with party, government, and civil society leaders and 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 March 27-April 19 through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of citizens of Georgia that included 4,360 completed interviews. The average margin of error is +/- 2,3%.

NDI's survey work is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

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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>