



# Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

OCTOBER/2021

## Minister Levan Davitashvili Chaired a high - level meeting under the UNECE’s Aarhus Convention in Geneva



In the course of the high-level meeting, attendees discussed the core document of the Aarhus Convention – “Geneva Declaration on Environmental Democracy for Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Development”, under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

*“It is a great honor for us to participate in the meeting of Aarhus parties on behalf of Georgia. Apart from discussing environmental matters, we have an honor to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Aarhus Convention. We have ensured progress through mutually conducted projects, which shall proceed through strengthening environmental*

*democracy, at a local, as well as international scale. We shall expand the Aarhus family and make it stronger” – the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili stated. He also stated that the Geneva Convention is a policy-oriented document, which aspires to ensure sustainable, inclusive and consistent success.*

Apart from the specially invited guests and member parties to the Aarhus Convention, the respective high-level meeting enjoyed presence of Ministers, State Secretaries, various delegations, leaders of regional, international and non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of the civil society. The session was attended by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Ms Nino Tandilashvili and Head of the Mission of Georgia to the United Nations Office in Geneva and other international organizations, Mr Aleksandre Maisuradze. For the second consecutive time, the meeting enjoyed co-chairing from the MP Maia Bitadze, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, who has also served as a chairperson of the Aarhus Convention Bureau. It shall be noted that a seven-year period of co-chairmanship of Georgia has commenced with a vital decision to establish a mechanism in the form of a Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention to provide a rapid response to alleged violations. .

## The Green Climate Fund (GCF) launched a new project “Supporting Forest Sector in Georgia – ECO.Georgia”



The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Economy of Georgia, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) signed Implementation Agreement for Technical Cooperation Projects”; the respective agreement was signed between Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili and Minister of Sustainable Development and Economy of Georgia, Ms Natia Turnava, Head of the GIZ’s Caucasus Office, Mr Karl Testensen, as well as the Lutz Jarchynski, head of the ECO Georgia Programme Director Mr. Lutz Jarchynski.

*“We launched a project, which will accumulate a 47 million Euro of total grant assistance from the Green Climate Fund, German and Swiss Governments. The project will provide assistance for shaping a wise management framework of forests, as well as formation of climate-effective and climate-smart technologies, which will improve forest management. The project will make a profound impact on improving life of local dwellers, as well as foster forest and forest resources control, apart from conservation of biodiversity. The project will facilitate new forest code and enforcement of new approaches” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

As an attempt for implementing the project, the GCF advisory board issued a 33 million Euros of grant assistance in the year of 2020, which had been approved. The project will be implemented during the period of 2021 – 2027, for seven years and co-funding has been issues by the German Federal Government (100, 000, 000 million Euros) and the Government of the Swiss Confederation (4 090 000 million Euros).

*“Georgia has launched implementation of crucial reforms, which are related to effective usage of forests and cultivation of energy-effective technologies; therefore, it is of utmost importance that Georgia enjoys support and guardianship from international organizations, which as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), as well as the Swiss and German governments. Such assistance is vital for raising energy-effectiveness, as well as fostering ecotourism” – Minister Turnava stated.*

The project will foster restoration of forest, decreasing loss of forests, as well as sustainable management and conservation of the latter; the efforts will foster oxygen at forests, as well as development of energy-effective and alternative fuel markets. The project will improve wellbeing of local dwellers and increasing role of local self-governments into sustainable forest management, raising awareness, improving vocational skills and deploying the corresponding policies and regulations.

The respective effort will support GHG limiting targets set for Georgia within the Nationally Determined Contributions Under the Paris Agreement. Moreover, the project will foster implementation of the new forest code. The project spans across the eight municipalities (Akhmeta, Dedoplistskaro, Kvareli, Tianeti, Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti and Chokhatauri) of Guria, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Kakheti.

In frames of the event, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili, Ambassador of the Federal Republic to Georgia, H.E. Hubert Knirsch and GIZ's Caucasus Office, Mr Karl Testensen



opened a new office of the GIZ in the premises of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia.

Signing ceremony enjoyed presence of Ambassador of the Federal Republic to Georgia, H.E. Hubert Knirsch, H.E. Christian Schoenenberger, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassadors of Swiss Confederation to Georgia, as well as heads of diplomatic missions, as well as trustees of the Guria, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Kakheti regions; as well as representatives of the ministries.

## Minister Levan Davitashvili signed an inter - governmental agreement with the Federal Advisor of the Swiss Confederation



At the meeting hosted by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in Bern, Ms Simonetta Sommaruga, Advisor to the Swiss Confederation and head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) and Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili signed an inter-governmental agreement. The respective agreement anticipates enhancement of inter-governmental partnership, which will enable the Georgian counterparts to undertake various priority projects through Swiss financial support and for softening impact of the climate change.

*“For the first time in the history of an Independent Georgia and after multi-year cooperation; an inter-governmental agreement was signed*

*between the two countries, which will enable Georgia to finance efforts for softening climate change. These specific mechanisms will assist in supporting economic development of Georgia, as well as boost contributions made by Georgia and decreasing greenhouse gas emission at a global scale” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

In the course of the meeting, Ms Simonetta Sommaruga stressed out importance of the agreement, which anticipates specific social and economic assistance to Georgia.

*“We are able to demonstrate to the world that the bilateral relations can benefit implementation of the Paris Agreement, as we are capable to cultivate high standards” - Federal Advisor of the Swiss Confederation.*

The meeting hosted at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in Bern was attended by Ms Nino Tandilashvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Revaz Lomnadze.



## Minister Levan Davitashvili met with the Executive Secretary Under - Secretary - General United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Ms Olga Algaerova

The Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili met with the Secretary General of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Ms Olga Algaerova in Bern, Swiss Confederation. In the course of the meeting hosted at the United Nations Office in Geneva, attendees discussed enhancement of circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources.

Minister Davitashvili thanked the Secretary General of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Ms Olga Algaerova for a fruitful cooperation; he also stressed out on the UNECE-supported assistance projects, which enhance environmental legislation and environmental management. While scrutinizing possibilities for future cooperation, Minister Davitashvili stressed on the role of civil engagement into the decision-making pro-

cess. He also briefed Secretary General Algaerova on developing strategies for circular economy development in Georgia and deploying extended consumer responsibility; parties also discussed importance of deploying integrated water management system in Georgia, which has already resulted into the draft law on “Water Resources Management”, that has been presented to the Government of Georgia and will be followed with the Parliamentary hearing.

Secretary General Algaerova positively evaluated progress harvested in Georgia in terms of environmental matters, which demonstrate the country aspiring to deploy new reforms; she also stressed on the future assistance from the UNECE.

The session was attended by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Ms Nino Tandilashvili and Head of the Mission of Georgia to the United Nations Office in Geneva and other international organizations, Mr Aleksandre Maisuradze.



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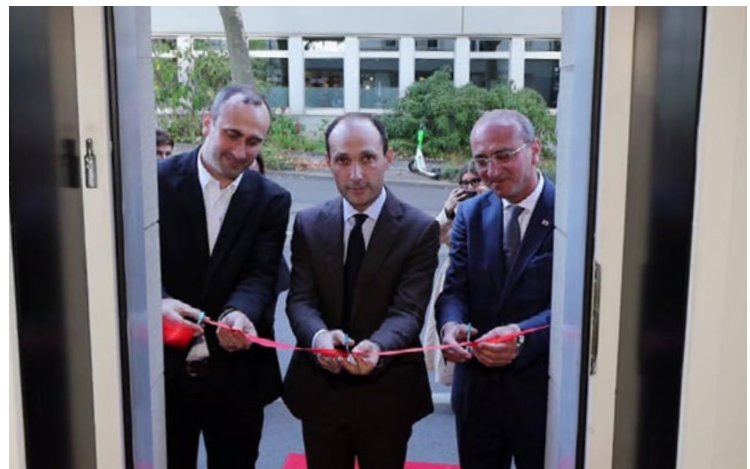
## The City of Zurich welcomes Georgian wine gallery

Opening of the Gallery was attended by the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili.

*“The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia has supported opening of the first gallery of Georgian wine in Switzerland. It will make a profound impact toward promoting Georgian wine, which has already been becoming accessible at target markets. It is of utmost importance for us to have the Georgian wine present at highly profitable markets. Those wine centers, just like the gallery, actively promote Georgian wine through meaningful engagement of the diaspora for featuring it at both, Swiss and global markets” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

Minister Davitashvili also briefed that the newly launched wine gallery will feature 12 Georgian wine-makers with various varieties.

The idea itself belongs to a Swiss-based Georgian businessman, Mr Zviad Arabidze, who has also opened and supports operation of the Sunday school and library for Georgian diaspora in Zurich. The opening ceremony was attended by various representatives of business circles, as well as the Georgian diaspora. As Mr Arabidze stated, Georgian wine has 8 thousand years of history and it



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will be easy for it to acquire an effective spot at the Swiss market. It is crucial for the respective gallery to provide consumers with a highly competitive wine and educate interested parties on the Georgian wine and history.

## Minister Davitashvili continues official meetings in the Swiss Confederation



Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili met with Ms Ruth Huber, Vice-Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In the course of the meeting, attendees discussed cooperation in the areas of environmental protection and

agriculture. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is one of the key donor organizations for Georgia, which provides financial assistance to numerous projects undertaken in Georgia on environmental protection and agriculture.

*“It is crucial that the Swiss counterparts are partners and supporters of Georgia in a highly priority areas, such as enhancing livestock farming, strengthening value chain of agriculture, cultivation of international standards in the food safety, co-funding of agriculture, softening climate change and adaptation with the latter” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

Attendees to the meeting also reviewed priorities for future cooperation. Ms Huber stressed out that the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation will proceed with supporting Georgia’s agriculture and environmental protection spheres.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Ms Nino Tandilashvili, as well as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Revaz Lominadze.

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## Minister Davitashvili: “International markets are more interested into Georgian hazelnut”



During his official visit to the Swiss Confederation, the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili visited one of the largest chocolate factories Camille Bloch, where, owner of the factory, Daniel Bloch briefed the Minister on the full cycle of chocolate production.

The Swiss-based factory “Camille Bloch” ensures export of chocolate to various large countries, such as Germany, Austria, Italy, France and the United States. The production is of an outstanding quality in terms of hazelnuts and cocoa grains imported from Africa and South America. The company has cultivated hazelnut gardens in Georgia and will ensure a total investment of 15 million Euros, which will result into employment possibilities for 150 locals.

As Minister Davitashvili stated, this will be a high-quality agriculture project, which will harvest additional economic and social profit for Georgia; moreover, the Georgian Government-deployed effective strategies have resulted into significant increase of trust toward the Georgian hazelnut sector at international markets.



## Minister Levan Davitashvili met with Peter Wiebler and Marika Olson

Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili met with Peter Wiebler, USAID Mission Director and Marika Olson, Team Leader of Economic Growth Office of USAID to discuss matters related to climate change, challenges in the fields of water and waste management. Attendees also spoke about ongoing and planned programs related to the agriculture.

Minister Davitashvili thanked USAID for a multi-year assistance provided and stressed on effective cooperation and importance of bilateral partnerships between the two countries.

In the course of the meeting, Mission Director Wiebler stated that USAID continues to assist Georgia’s programming in the areas of agriculture of environmental protection; USAID professes particular interest in climate change related matters; Wiebler also expressed readiness to assist Georgia in undertaking actions, which will soften climate change, support energy-effectiveness and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.



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## Minister Levan Davitashvili attend a preliminary meeting of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26)



The preliminary meeting of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) was organized through coordination with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, as well as the Embassies of Italy and United Kingdom. Opening remarks at the event were delivered by the Minister Levan Davitashvili. The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) will take place in Glasgow, during the period of October 31 – November 12, 2021.

*“Almost every country awaits the United Nations Climate Change Conference, which is the 26th consecutive meeting under the The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC . It is crucial to embrace that we already have a document with very precise and accurate Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); an international assessment of the document has stressed out that Georgia is one of the most runner-up countries with a climate change strategy and action plan, which has already been accepted by the Government and which has been designed in accordance with the international standards” – Minister Davitashvili stated.*

Minister Davitashvili also briefed on a major impact that environmental pollution entails for the everyday life of the country, as well as various areas of economy and agriculture; he also stressed out how it affects each and every citizen. Attendees to the meeting provided information on responsibilities of various countries for tackling challenges related to the Climate Change; they also scrutinized various efforts undertaken by Georgia for fighting the climate change-driven challenges and mediating risks.

The meeting was attended by the Italian Ambassadors to Georgia: H.E. Enrico Valvo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom to Georgia, H.E. Mark Clayton, H.E. Kelly C. Degnan, Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary of the USA to Georgia, as well as representatives of various public and private sector attended the meeting.



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## Deputy Minister Khanishvili met with the Kuwait Delegation



The first Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Giorgi Khanishvili met with the representatives of the Business Chamber of Asian & Gulf Countries (BCAGC), which was attended by Mr Muhammad Zafir Al-Arada, Secretary of the Kuwait Electronic Media Council and Mr Davit Tsirdava, Vice-President of the BCAGC.

*“Together with the Kuwait delegation, we have discussed potential for trade relations between the two countries. It is crucial that within the diversification effort, Georgia annually expands markets, which will be utilized for expanding markets for production from the villages. We have successful record of cooperation with the Gulf region, with regard to rural-agricultural and livestock production. I believe that we will be able to enhance trade relations with Kuwait” – Deputy Minister Khanishvili stated.*

It shall be noted that the Business Chamber of Asian & Gulf Countries (BCAGC) is a non-commercial union established as a joint effort with the international partners; the union has already made significant steps forward and has set long-term plans for future.

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## The International Potato Center (CIP) organized a conference for discussing implemented projects’ outcomes and existing challenges



Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Solomon Pavliashvili attended a conference organized by the International Potato Center (CIP), which aimed at enabling state and donor organization to discuss implemented projects’ outcomes and incumbent challenges in the respective field.

*“Quality and harvest of the potatoes in Georgia requires significant improvements. The Ministry is actively engaged into facilitating enhancement of the industry. Last year, we exported 30 tonnes of potatoes, which clearly demonstrated that we have a huge capacity in this regard. Support of the International Potato Center and the contemporary technologies will open up new possibilities for our farmers to produce highly competitive production and export the latter” – Deputy Minister Solomon Pavliashvili stated.*

Georgia’s potato industry spans across nearly 25,000 hectares, while each of the hectares harvests around 12 tonnes, which is less than those in the European countries. The core problem of an industry is low quality seedlings of potatoes used for cultivation purposes.

The Scientific-Research Center of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia has been cooperating with the International Potato Center since 2016. The Center assists the Ministry in cultivating elite species and innovative methods, which will complement increase of food safety and consistent grow of farmers’ income. Within the 5 years of the project, we have already cultivated three new types – Meskhetian, Meskhetian Red and Javakhetian, which have also been adapted to an environment and have a resistance to deceases; these types also demonstrate high income. Registration of 3 types is underway.

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