

# Sierra Leone the Annual Showcase

## Sixteen Plus Forum

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### Panel: Reconciliation, Dialogue and Empowerment: A Global Perspective

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**Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguish Audience,**

let me **greet** you on behalf of the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation, the national civil society organization of Georgia and **express** my gratitude and sincere thank you for organizing such a great, important and needed Forum **to highlight** the developments on our ways towards the implementation of SDG 17 and additional +.

International Center on Conflict and Negotiation since its foundation (in 1994) serves and promotes peace in Georgia and South Caucasus covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia alongside with the 3 frozen conflicts around Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno Karabakh. ICCN acts as a Regional Secretariat of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC) from 2003.

Let me provide you with brief frame of Georgian Government's activities towards the SDG 16+.

After about 2 years of working, in October 2017 SDG Secretariat of Georgia which works under the Government of Georgia adopted the "SDG 16+ Country Nationalization Document". The Government identified all 17 goals as a priority and the Document is covering all of them accordingly.

As for my organization - ICCN works to assist the implementation of 16th and 17th Goals of UN SDG.

We promote peace education and lead the dialogues between the parties involved in conflicts covering South Caucasus region. We used to work on all 3 frozen conflicts on the territory of the former Soviet Union (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno Karabakh) but after the Georgia-Russia crisis 2008, we are developing a long-stand Track 1,5 Dialogue and negotiation as well, searching ways out of the crisis through expert participation and policy recommendations for both governments.

Diverse dialogue and negotiation formats in the South Caucasus that ICCN developed and supported aim to ensure inclusive participation and effective influence of official peace processes in the region e.g. Geneva International Discussion (GID) (after 2008 Georgia-Russia crisis) and Minsk Group (1992) over the Armenia-Azerbaijani crisis in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. ICCN works to provide CS recommendations to the Geneva International Discussion (GID) and other Track 1 format stakeholders so there is a participatory process guaranteed.

For all Track 2 and 1,5 Dialogues creating conditions for bringing parties to the negotiation table became possible through our work with experts and grassroots on national and regional levels. Thus several unique formats have been initiated and developed by ICCN with extensive support of our global partners like GPPAC regional members and Global Secretariat.

Among the unique formats initiated and developed by ICCN let me highlight following:

1. The **Tripartite Dialogue** on Post-Conflict Natural Resources Management. In particular the dialogue on energysecurity in Abkhazia in which Abkhazians, Russians and Georgians participated;
2. **Georgia-Russian Dialogue** that we call the “Istanbul Process” – to bring Policy recommendations elaborated between civil society and academia to the High Level decision-making of both parties;
3. **Network of Women Mediators** of South Caucasus (NWMSC) that has been initiated and launched in 2017 by ICCN. The Network covers all 3+3 entities (representatives from secessioned territories) of the region and aims to promote **recognition and inclusion** of national peace mediators in all Track 1 negotiations and subsequent actions under the Peace Processes of the South Caucasus;
4. **Peace Journalism** covering all parties involved in conflicts;
5. **Georgia-Armenian and Georgia-Azerbaijani Dialogues** to seek complementarities between the European and Eurasian Trade spaces **influencing** and possibly creating tensions within the region, e.g. the trade agreement between the EU and Georgia (AA/DCFTA) and The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)
6. The South Caucasian Networking Partnership led by ICCN in partnership with GPPAC to develop and implement annual strategic plans complementing the 2030 Agenda for Peace.
7. Crosscutting activities under all programs are gender and women inclusive policies to ensure women’s active engagement in planning and implementing.

## CHALLENGES:

We as a peacebuilding and conflict transformation think-tank organization are lacking the effective strategic dialogue on Peace policy and decision-making on national and international levels.

As an example let me provide you with the approach of the Georgian “SDG 16+ Country Nationalization Document”: the two SDG’s Goals #16 and # 17 of the national document are very general and are not addressing directly Peace and peacebuilding as an essential area needing attention and actions before, during and post-conflict. This type of approach of the State policy document is slowing down the developments supported by the International Stakeholders and implemented by CSOs on grassroots levels.

## SUCSESSES AND SOLUTIONS:

Instead we are lobbying the State policy that would support CS in addressing Peace as a goal that is supported by National Governments: e.g.:

- the establishment of **State Peace Foundation(s)** that would be capable to accumulate resources from the state budget and promote peace on national level; A State Peace Foundation – is a strong demand of ICCN proposed and lobbied for a while in Georgia. The aim of establishing of such a foundation is to deliver a strong message of political will to increase state effectiveness in peacebuilding at all levels and empower innovative peace initiatives of war-affected civilians and divided societies of Georgia. The State that is responsible for conflict resolution by peaceful means must fiscally support and promote peace activities initiated by the civil society for sustained peace.
- **the recognition and legitimation of national peace mediators** so women and men mediators from national levels are engaged in all peace processes before during and after the conflict; Peace processes lead and/or participated by the governments of the parties involved in conflicts, are distanced from the societies, formats of Track 1 negotiations are closed and no participation of CS is envisaged. Obviously asymmetric situation has emerged through the certain gaps between the public's expectations of receiving positive results from country based Peace Processes and the realities the governments are reaching out of official negotiations. This gap has deepened frustration to the governments and distrust to the participants of the negotiations. Frustration and distrust of the public towards their country's peace processes contributes to the growth of the unfavorable and even aggressive public attitude to peace negotiations. We have to promote inclusive peace processes when national resources (mediators) are recognized and engaged in all level peace processes to ensure participation and ownership while building peace.
- Stimulation of **Peace Journalism** on all levels to assist the peace processes and peace infrastructures.

We are ready for consolidating our efforts for reaching and sustain a peace in and around us.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.