

GOVERNMENT OF ARMENIA

COMMITMENT STATEMENT

At the Global Leader's Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

New York, 27 September 2015

At this important juncture of 2015, when we are marking 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BDPfA), 15 years of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, and embarking on the next generation of development goals, it is important to highlight the need to see gender equality and empowerment of women both as a stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting target throughout other goals.

Since 1995 significant progress has been achieved in implementation of gender equality policy in Armenia. The Republic of Armenia adopted legislation and several strategic documents to promote gender equality in all spheres of economic, social and political life. The principle of equality is widely reflected in the Armenian legislation. Key international documents and standards in the field of protection of women's rights, including BDPfA, became a guideline for further action in this field.

The Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 and Gender and Strategic Action Plan to Combat Gender-based violence for 2011-2015 are the basic components of the national anti-discrimination policy. The adoption and further implementation of these national strategies is a targeted work, whereby one Program of Actions is followed by the next one, containing detailed plans for each year.

Gender Policy Concept Paper was adopted on 11 February 2010. This Programme Document is a major contribution targeted at ensuring gender equality in the country, since it defines the primary directions of the state policy in relation to women and men.

Among the steps undertaken to ensure equal participation of women in political and public life, we should underline the changes made in the Electoral Code in 2011 which incorporated gender sensitive quotas. According to the amended law "the number of representatives of each gender must not exceed 80 percent of each group of five candidates starting from the second number of the electoral list of a political party contesting seats under the proportional electoral system (article 108, para.2 Electoral Code, 2011).

The Law "On equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men" was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 20 May 2013. The main objective of the Law is to ensure equality between women and men in all areas, provide legal protection against discrimination.

Armenia observes with concern the ongoing conflicts in the world impact on rise in global forced displacement. About 16.000 persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria have sought protection in Armenia. This new wave of displacement adds to similar challenges already faced by Armenia, hosting and integrating of hundred thousands of refugees from Azerbaijan and a few thousand displaced not so long ago from Iraq. Women refugees are the most disadvantage and vulnerable part of population and Armenia will continue its work at resolving of problems of these people.

Equality between men and women remain among the Armenian Government's human rights priority and Armenia will continue implementation of the policy aimed at elimination of discrimination and creation of equal conditions for women and men in all spheres of political, economic and social life.

Following commitments by Armenia have to be underlined:

- To ensure effective implementation of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on "Equal rights and equal opportunities of women and men".
- To sign the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.