

Information relating to the implementation of the agreed conclusions on «Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development» adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixtieth session

STRENGTHENING NORMATIVE, LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

- Armenia has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 13 Sep 1993. Armenia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 23 Jun 1993. Armenia has signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 24 Sep 2003, ratified it on 30 Sep 2005. Armenia has signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography on 24 Sep 2003, ratified it on 22 Sep 2010.
- The Republic of Armenia has prepared a National Review dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The report is available at the following website https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing_20/Armenia.pdf. Based on the provisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in 2019 the Government has adopted a comprehensive Action Plan and Gender Strategy for the next five years.
- On 10 July 2020, during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development conducted online Armenia presented its second Voluntary National Report, which highlighted achievements in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, in such spheres as addressing economic and social development issues of women in border communities, special protection of displaced women and girls, promoting political and public participation of women, assistance to victims of domestic violence, data collection and analysis, countering trafficking and exploitation.
- The draft Law of the Republic of Armenia «On ensuring legal equality» was developed by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia. The draft was put to public discussion on 15 July 2019. According to Article 29 of the Constitution of Armenia, «Discrimination based on sex, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, world view, political or other views, belonging to a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age, or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited».
- The second priority of the 2019-2023 Gender Strategy envisages overcoming gender discrimination in the social and economic sphere, expanding women's economic opportunities. The Law «On ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men» defines «sexual harassment» as a form of gender-based discrimination. The draft Law «On ensuring legal equality" contains an article referring to the prohibition of discrimination in labor relations.
- According to part 2 of Article 178 of the Labor Code of Armenia, men and women shall receive equal pay for the same or equivalent work. During 2016-2019, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises of Armenia provided significant assistance to women entrepreneurs in supporting entrepreneurship, providing business information and consultation, credit guarantees, business internationalization of start-up entrepreneurs. Within the framework of the 2019-2023 Strategy for Gender Policy Implementation, a number of employment programmes aimed at equal distribution of equal family responsibilities between women and men, providing sufficient conditions for childcare are implemented.
- Measures have been undertaken to raise the level of awareness of broad sections of the society

on the issues of HIV infection. According to the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia No 65-N of 18 October 2013, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is included in the list of diseases requiring free urgent medical care guaranteed by the State for the population.

- Armenia promotes a socially responsible private sector, which acts in line with main international principles of human rights. Developing its national machinery for the advancement of women Armenia promotes the activities and works of gender commissions adjunct to Marzpetarans (regional governance offices), which also involve private sector with the aim to ensure social partnership and support.

- The Government of the Republic of Armenia approved the «State programme on primary assistance for reintegration of citizens returning to the Republic of Armenia» by Decision of 19 March 2020. The programme envisages provision of primary assistance to citizens of the Republic of Armenia returning to Armenia, including women to ensure their full and sustainable reintegration in the future. In line with the provisions of the Law of Armenia «On employment», refugees and returned migrants are included in the annual state employment assistance programmes.

- Within the implementation of the recommendations given to Armenia by CEDAW (UN Committee on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women) in its last Concluding Observations in 2016, Armenia undertook special steps for improving the situation of women in disaster-affected areas. In particular, in 2019 over AMD 26,745 billion (55, 212, 632 US \$) of capital investments were made from the State Budget and other financing sources, including in housing, water supply, and other fields. Within activities of the Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures of Armenia, implementing the Decision of the Government of Armenia of 19 November 2009 «On approving the procedure for placing asylum seekers in temporary reception centres and providing them with subsistence means» asylum seekers, including women were provided with necessary subsistence means: food, personal hygiene items, clothes, shoes at the expense of the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia.

- The Armenian Government continues to prioritize the needs of female refugees and displaced people. On 28 February 2019, Armenia adopted the first National Plan on the implementation of the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The National Action Plan focuses on prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery with clear objectives, timelines and performance indicators. It identifies a concrete set of measures to increase the engagement of women in the security sector, including in peacekeeping missions, promote political participation and economic empowerment of women in context of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. It puts particular emphasis on the protection of rights of vulnerable population groups, such as women residing in border communities and women affected by conflicts.

- Armenia is carrying out many activities in the health system as well as in the field of awareness raising in order to promote and protect rights of women for sexual and reproductive health. Within the framework of the implementation of the Strategy for improving reproductive health a lot of campaigns and training courses were accomplished: in 2016-2019, in collaboration with «Women's Rights Center» NGO, awareness-raising campaign was carried out for 115 obstetrician-gynecologists working in maternity hospitals of the capital and in regions.

- The third priority of the 2019-2023 Gender Strategy prescribes the priority «Enhancing full-fledged and effective participation of and equal opportunities for women and men in the field of science and education». For the purpose of promoting the participation of girls in the field of information and telecommunications, the National Institute of Education of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Armenia implemented «Technovation», the largest global technology entrepreneurship programme, for three consecutive years. With regard to the cases of

dropping out of school and efforts aimed at ensuring continuity of education at secondary school, the abovementioned Ministry has developed the draft of the «Procedure for identification, record-registration and referral of children dropped out of compulsory education».

- According to the 2020-2022 National Strategy for Human Rights Protection, the domestic violence and violence against women must be criminalised in line with international standards, which suggests relevant amendments and supplements to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.
- Wide range of training courses (in particular, organized by the Academy of the Ministry of Justice) and programs have been conducted and amendments to the national legislation have been made in order to transform national gender stereotypes, in line with the principle of promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. With the aim of raising awareness of pupils and identifying the main issues of discrimination on the basis of sex and elimination of stereotypes in 2016-2019 meetings on various legal topics were organized in schools of general education and other educational institutions by the Police of Armenia.
- During 2016-2019 significant amount of work has been implemented within the framework of the Strategy for proportional development of marzes (regions) for the purpose of reconstruction, furnishing of medical institutions, ensuring the accessibility and availability of high-quality medical care for the population of rural areas, health of women, notably for the protection of maternal health. The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations has conducted awareness raising activities targeting rural women and girls.
- Following the Velvet Revolution in Armenia in April-May 2018, the draft laws regulating the field of disability are being revised and amended. The draft Law «On the rights of persons with disabilities» has been developed.
- Legal regulations aimed at ensuring equality between women and men are defined by the Constitution of Armenia, the Family Code of Armenia and other legal acts. According to Article 49 of the Code, parents shall have equal rights and bear equal responsibilities towards their children (parental rights). The Law of Armenia «On prevention of violence in the family, protection of persons having been subjected to violence in the family and restoration of solidarity in family» has been operationalized.

FOSTERING ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR FINANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

- As of 2019-2020, the Government has adopted a Procedure for providing financial assistance to victims of domestic violence. Two shelters have received financial assistance from the state budget. In the process of implementing the SDGs in Armenia, the country actively and successfully cooperates with our international partners in order to attract the best practice and methodologies, as well as new and innovative tools of financing the implementation of the SDGs. Taking into consideration the state of emergency declared in Armenia since 14 March 2020 because of COVID-19 pandemic, organizations providing services to centers for victims of domestic violence have used alternative means for providing services, exchanging and providing information. These are social platforms, online discussions, financial assistance for food, medicine, apartment rental services.
- It is also envisaged to intensify and promote the activities and works of gender commissions adjunct to Marzpetarans (offices of regional governance). National level of the implementation of the gender policy includes «Rural Financing Structure» of «Rural Areas Economic Development Programme» implemented by the Ministry of Economy of Armenia.
- In 2019, the working group on making amendments to the Law «On political parties» was

launched in the National Assembly. The provisions of the Draft include a requirement for at least 40% representation of each sex in the executive bodies of political parties. In case of failure to meet this requirement, the political parties will be deprived of the opportunity to receive financing from public funds. Mandatory provisions on promoting the political participation of women and young people are also considered to be included in the programme documents of political parties. It is also considered to require the political parties receiving financing from public funds to spend a certain percentage of those funds on promoting the political participation of women.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND WOMEN'S FULL AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING IN ALL AREAS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Based on the provisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in 2019 the Government has adopted a comprehensive Action Plan and Gender Strategy for the next five years. These documents are intended to encourage the representation of women at all levels of decision-making process. In the process of advancing gender commissions adjunct to Marzpetarans (regional governance offices) and improving the quality of their works, the implementation of projects aimed at the empowerment of rural women and their involvement in decision making process at the local level is prioritized.
- The first priority of the 2019-2023 Strategy for Gender policy implementation refers to the improvement of the national machinery, advancement of women, equal participation of women and men in governance and decision-making.
- The Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia has prescribed gender-sensitive quotas (the quota has increased by 10%, as compared to the previous number), which are aimed at enhancing the representation of women in the legislative power. It has prescribed a requirement for the women representation in the list of political parties, alliances of political parties running in the parliamentary elections to be 25%, which is envisaged to increase up to 30% starting from 2021. Out of the total 1444 candidates running in the elections of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on December 9 2018, 464 or 32% were women, and, as a result, out of 132 Deputies of the National Assembly, 32 or 24% are women. In the composition of the National Assembly of previous convocation women deputies constituted 18%. Out of 18000 national observers accredited by the Central Electoral Commission for the parliamentary elections, 10951 or 62% were women, and of 1163 journalists 696 or 60% were women.
- Distant learning modules for civil servants have covered courses on women's rights and gender equality for leading and professional positions of the Civil Service.
- Survey has been conducted in the public, jointly with the United Nations Development Programme Office, to find out public perceptions of the role of women and men in the field of public service, the obstacles for engaging in the public service.
- In April 2020, the National Assembly adopted amendments to the Criminal Code, which criminalised calls for public violence on the ground of Article 29 of the Constitution on prohibition of discrimination. This, in fact, criminalised the extreme manifestations of hate speech, i.e. hate speech containing calls for violence. As Article 29 of the Constitution among others prohibits also discrimination based on sex and political views, this amendment protects all the citizens against the calls for violence on the ground of sex and political views, including women holding public positions and engaged in politics.

STRENGTHENING GENDER-RESPONSIVE DATA COLLECTION, FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW PROCESSES

- Inter-agency Commission was established by Decision of the Prime Minister of Armenia of 24 July 2019 with a view to preparing the Seventh Periodic Report of Armenia on Implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The representative of the Statistical Committee of Armenia is included in the composition of the Commission.
- The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia, as an authorized body, implements centralized record-registration of cases of domestic violence in accordance with the procedure established by Decision of the Government of the Republic of 10 October 2019. According to that Decision, the first comprehensive record-registration data will be summarized starting from 2020. This will include not only the exact number of cases but also provide a clear picture of the types of violence and their territorial distribution. The Decision also envisages collecting statistical data on persons with disabilities.
- The Information Centre of the Police of Armenia keeps official statistics on crimes/violence committed against females, as well as domestic violence. The Police of Armenia also placed the data of the persons in preventive card record-registration system. The system contains data on persons against whom a measure of protection has been ordered for committing violence against the female considered to be a family member.
- The Statistical Committee of Armenia (Armstat) collected statistics within the framework of Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015-2016 (ADHS 2015-2016), which has been conducted since 2000, at five-year interval. The ADHS has provided information on domestic violence disaggregated by different socio-demographic characteristics. The results of the 2015-2016 ADHS are available in the bilingual analytical report published on the official website of the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia at: <https://www.armstat.am/file/article/adhs-2015-armenian.pdf>.
- The Statistical Committee of Armenia in cooperation with the UN has developed the National Reporting Platform (NRP) for SDG indicators (<http://sdg.armstat.am/>) which is an important tool to disseminate and communicate national statistics and related information to the global SDG indicators, providing the SDG progress monitoring framework, including on SDG5.