

ARMENIA'S GENDER POLICIES: EVOLUTION AND PROSPECTS

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This article aims to present a review of the development of national gender policies in post-Soviet, independent Armenia. For analytical purposes, the period of over 20 years (1995-2018) can be split into 3 easily identifiable stages, with each stage having its specific features and characteristics. It is important to explore how the focus shifted from women's socioeconomic issues to advancement of women to women's empowerment and gender equality and equity and from de jure to substantive equality and how that shift was reflected in policy priorities spelled out in relevant national documents (laws, Gender Policy Concept Paper, national and strategic Action Plans, etc.) and how policy implementation and monitoring affected subsequent policymaking. The review also addresses major problems and challenges, obstacles and opposition that gender policies have encountered in this country and seeks to outline prospects for the future and to provide a number of recommendations.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: IMPACT OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD AND EUROPEAN ORIENTATION

When Armenia gained independence, it entered a transition period which turned out to be complicated and protracted because of the *necessity* to carry out reforms simultaneously in the political, economic, social, cultural and ideological spheres and because of the *economic blockade* and *imposed war*. Even though real progress has been made in a number of spheres, some problem areas were not paid due attention at the beginning. One such area is gender equality. However, the absence of gender equality makes it significantly more difficult (if at all possible) to ensure the adequate functioning of representative democracy, to ensure consolidation of democracy and a transition to liberal democracy and participatory democracy. Viable present-day democracy is grounded in the principle equality of opportunity (and sometimes even of equality of results) for women and men, including equal participation and balanced representation at a decision-making level in all spheres of public life, including public administration, the legislative and judicial branches of government, the economy, science, education and other social spheres, etc. However, the transformation of socio-political and

economic systems with a view to building a modern democracy has been accompanied in Armenia, as in other post-Soviet countries, by exacerbation of gender-based discrimination and gender asymmetry and imbalance.

Researchers point out that an official policy of gender equality was pursued in Armenia back in Soviet times, due to which the legal and social status of women was improved and the scale of female participation in the labor market grew considerably. However, Armenia did not carry out that policy in the first years of its independence.¹ That can be accounted for by ideological, economic and socio-cultural factors.

The Armenian Government started paying some attention to gender issues only in the mid-1990s, more precisely in connection with the *World Conference on Human Rights* (Vienna, 1993), the *International Conference on Population and Development* (Cairo, 1994) and the *Fourth World Conference on Women* (Beijing, 1995) as well as with the drawing up and submission of the initial country report for the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) Committee.² The Declarations, Programs and Platforms for Action adopted at those conferences became guidelines for taking action for Armenia as a participating country.

The *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* stressed that "the human rights of women ... are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights" and that "*the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community*".³

The *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development* was an important milestone also because it underscored the importance and pivotal role of women's empowerment. As one of the 179 States that adopted this forward-looking Programme, Armenia subscribed to the idea that "*the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic ... status is a highly important end in itself ... and in addition, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development*".⁴

The strongest impact was made by the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* adopted at the *Fourth World Conference on Women*. As an agenda for the advancement of women, their empowerment and the achievement of a genuine, *de facto* equality between women and men, the Platform for Action contains strategic objectives as well as concrete actions with implementation-related recommendations, including the strategy of integration of a gender component (the so-called 'gender mainstreaming').⁵

In the years that followed, the gender equality issue turned out to be even more significant and topical as European integration became one of the

country's top priorities since gender equality and the principle of non-discrimination (including on the basis of gender) are key European values.

Years ago it was the leading European countries that initiated or supported the adoption of the most important international legal instruments, first of all the CEDAW (1979) and a number of International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions that aimed to secure *de facto* equality between women and men in the economic sphere.⁶ Those countries' input into the organization of the above-mentioned *World Conference on Human Rights* and *International Conference on Population and Development* as well as four World Conferences on Women (Mexico City 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985 and Beijing 1995) and a number of regional meetings and other events brought gender equality issues to a central place on the global agenda and considerably contributed to progress in their resolution.

Since from the European perspective the *de jure* and *de facto* equality of men and women is not merely a component of democracy but also a key principle that a present-day democratic society is predicated on, the West European countries put forth the idea of parity democracy,⁷ and in the run-up to the Beijing Conference on women they proposed adopting that idea as a strategic goal for the entire world. However, since the idea did not garner the necessary support at the Conference quite a few European countries started paying more attention to designing regional instruments to promote and endorse the gender equality principle, first of all within the framework of the European Union and Council of Europe.

The issue of equality between women and men has been a key point for Europe for several decades now. Gender equality is regarded as a major human right, a fundamental democratic value and a basic principle of European civilization, an important requirement of social justice and a prerequisite for sustainable development, which is focused on each person and their interests. Gender equality is also a goal that European countries should strive to achieve.⁸

In other words, for advanced, democratic societies gender equality is not only a useful instrument for achieving sustainable socioeconomic development targets⁹ and for ensuring comprehensive development and adequate use of human potential but also a prerequisite for attaining social justice and a new quality of life for the individual as well as for the local community and society at large by means of transition to a new economic and social model. Gender equality is "a value in its own right" as stated in the document of the European Institute for Gender Equality.¹⁰

INITIAL STAGE IN THE FORMULATION OF NATIONAL GENDER POLICIES: 1995-2009

Close attention to gender equality issues started in Armenia also due to close cooperation with the European Union within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative. Gender equality is one of the so-called 'cross-cutting issues,' i.e. the problem areas which take center stage on the agenda of the dialogue that the EU maintains with partner countries. This requires mainstreaming gender into action and cooperation plans.¹¹

Following the main international documents on gender equality, Armenia produced a number of national documents on achieving gender equality that laid the groundwork for formulation of gender policies and their subsequent implementation.

Among the international documents that should be mentioned first are the CEDAW Convention,¹² the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, Political Declaration and Outcome Documents adopted at the 23rd Special session of the UN General Assembly ('Beijing+5', June 2000), the Millennium Development Goals,¹³ and the Declarations of the Council of Europe (CoE)¹⁴ as well as Recommendations of the CoE Council of Ministers¹⁵ and CoE Parliamentary Assembly.¹⁶

The main national documents that were drafted and adopted in that sphere are grounded in the Armenian Constitution. In the course of the Constitutional reform of 2005, Article (N^o 14¹) was added to the text of the Constitution. It bans discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of sex.¹⁷ The same principle of non-discrimination has been retained in the text of the Constitution amended in conformity with the results of the referendum held on December 6, 2015 (Article 29). Besides, a new Article (N^o 30) that mandates equality of women's and men's rights was also added to the Constitution.

The *National Plan for the Improvement of Women's Status and Enhancement of Their Role in Society for the Period 1998-2000 in the Republic of Armenia*¹⁸ was one of the first attempts to formulate State policies in the area of ensuring equality of women and men. It was designed to start the carrying out of those policies during the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the drawing up of the second periodic Report for the CEDAW Committee. The main objectives of the National Plan were to *improve* guarantees for women's rights and fundamental freedoms, to *expand* women's representation in decision-making positions of power, to *promote* measures for protecting maternity and combating violence against women, to *conduct* gender studies and a gender impact analysis of legislation, to *collect* sex-disaggregated statistical data, etc.

Even though the National Plan was neither ambitious nor large-scale, yet, as the Armenian Government indicated later in its Report to the UN CSW, the National Action Plan was not implemented in full. The reasons include insufficient funding, the absence of coordination between different agencies and the lack of clear arrangements for implementation.¹⁹

However, it should be noted that the Action Plan had considerable symbolic significance and sent a serious message to the public at large. It demonstrated official recognition of the existence of problems in that sphere and confirmed the political will to solve those problems by establishing and carrying out effective policies.

The experience was analyzed and used for drafting a new, medium-term *National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society for the Period 2004-2010*.²⁰ This Action Plan defined principles, priorities, and main directions of the Government policies for resolving women's issues within the framework of Armenia's international obligations. The Action Plan unequivocally stated the goal of **securing not only equality of rights but also equality of opportunity for women and men**, especially in decision-making in public and political life. It also set out objectives and measures to improve women's health and their socioeconomic status, to combat violence against (and trafficking of) women and to introduce innovative approaches in education, culture and mass media that would be in line with the new Government policies. The Action Plan noted the absence of a Government agency that would be endowed with adequate powers to address issues related to women's rights. Regarding it as a serious problem, the Plan devoted a separate section ('Institutional reforms') to this shortcoming and for the first time formulated the task of designing effective institutional mechanisms that would deal with women's issues.

At the same time the Action Plan was heavily influenced by traditional views as it brought to the forefront the family duties of women as a priority that women should bear in mind while engaging in educational, professional, social, political and other activities.

A substantial contribution to the implementation of the National Action Plan was made both by international organizations' support (first of all OSCE/ODIHR and UN agencies) and by cooperation with local non-governmental organizations. The latter's participation was not limited to being Action Plan implementation partners. NGOs also conducted monitoring, thereby assisting in making interventions better targeted and, thus, more effective.²¹

It should be noted that besides setting concrete goals and objectives on the basis of stated priorities, the national documents also reflected prevalent ideas and theoretical and practical approaches. In the first 15 years (from 1995

through 2009) the focus was on improving the status of women and on enhancing their role in society. This can be accounted for by the influence of the BPfA as well as by newly-established cooperation with the CEDAW Committee and the UN CSW. The focus gradually shifted to the philosophy and issues of gender equality, where equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men are emphasized and equality is interpreted not only as *de jure* but also as **substantive** equality.

SECOND STAGE (2009-15): A BREAKTHROUGH AND TACTICAL RETREAT?

No small role in this paradigm shift was played by the Armenian Government's Program for 2008-12. It earmarked gender equality (defined as "ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the economic, social and political spheres") as a priority direction for policies aimed at reaching general consensus, building the social State and strengthening social justice.²²

It was within the framework of such an approach that groundbreaking gender policy documents were drafted and adopted marking the transition to a new stage in the history of that policy. Those documents are the Republic of Armenia (RoA) *Gender Policy Concept Paper*, the *RoA Law on ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men*, the *RoA Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015* and the *RoA National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence for 2011-2015*.

The *RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper* was approved by the Armenian Government on February 11, 2010.²³ The Concept Paper is the first comprehensive Government document which spells out in a consistent and systematic way the main principles, goals and objectives of the gender policy as well as its implementation strategy and tools. The Concept Paper examines the following 6 sectors in detail: public administration, socioeconomic sphere, education, health, culture and media and the fight against gender-based violence and trafficking in persons. For each sector a situation analysis was made and priority problems, main goals, objectives and strategy and principal directions of gender policy implementation were identified.

The stated main objectives of the gender policy are: attainment of gender equality in all spheres of public life, the securing of equal representation of women and men in decision-making at all levels, elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination, provision of equal economic opportunities, in particular in employment and the labor market, and equal accessibility to economic resources and the development of a democratic culture, tolerance and gender dialogue in society.

The principal strategic measures laid down by the Concept Paper include establishing and using effective national machinery and institutional

mechanisms, mainstreaming gender into all projects and programs, taking special measures and conducting a gender impact assessment (first of all of the laws currently in force and of proposed draft laws) and regular monitoring.

Proceeding from the provisions of the Concept Paper and with a view to implementing it in full and effectively, the Armenian Government tasked leaders of relevant Ministries and Committees²⁴ to draft within a 6-month period a *Gender Policy Action Plan for 2011-2015* and to submit it to the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, which was then to finalize it and submit it to the Government within two months.

At the same time the RoA *Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* was drafted and adopted. The drafters of the Law took into consideration the relevant experience of countries of Western and Eastern Europe as well as of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. From 2003 through 2010, 8 CIS countries adopted a similar law.²⁵ In most CIS countries the issue of the necessity and advisability of the adoption of a separate law on gender equality was raised in the mid-2000s in the aftermath of the 26th plenary session of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member Nations (held on November 18, 2005), where the *Model Law on State Guarantees for Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women* was adopted.²⁶

In Armenia the said Law was adopted by the National Assembly on May 20, 2013²⁷ after a long period of revisions, consultations and parliamentary hearings and took effect after the RoA President signed it on June 11, 2013. The necessity of the adoption of the Law was stated in the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women²⁸ and in the European Neighbourhood Programme Action Plan.²⁹

The main goal of the Law is to ensure gender equality in all sectors of public life and to provide legal protection to women and men against gender-based discrimination (Article 2). The Law, therefore, lays down the guarantees for ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities to women and men in all those sectors (Article 1).

The Law is yet another legislative expression of the country leadership's declared commitment to gender equality principles and norms. Even prior to the adoption of that Law, Armenian legislation did not contain gender discriminatory norms³⁰ as confirmed by its expert analysis and assessment.³¹ There were also definitive legislative and regulatory frameworks that aimed primarily protecting maternity, women's reproductive health and their labor as well as their educational and other rights³² and to ensure equality between sexes in the family.³³

Special measures were used to promote women's political rights with a view to securing their more balanced representation in the country's National Assembly. Thus, the RoA Electoral Code of 1999 introduced a 5% quota for women on political party lists in proportional representation elections. Gradually, from 1999 to 2011 this quota was raised to 20%. The most recent Electoral Code (adopted on May 25, 2016) raised the gender quota to 30%.³⁴ Thus, important steps have been taken towards reaching a 'critical mass', which is necessary for having a real impact on the decisions made (according to the UN, the critical mass is at least 30%-35%),³⁵ and towards laying the groundwork for attaining balanced representation of both sexes (according to the Recommendation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, it is at least 40%;³⁶ in 2015 a new benchmark of 50/50 for equal representation of women and men in decision-making positions in all spheres was set by the UN within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda which integrates Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]).³⁷

Notwithstanding the importance of those measures, these have yet to be translated into practice and to yield tangible results as currently women account for only 18.1% of Parliament members.

Given this context, the adoption of a standalone law that aims at ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men was significant because it brought State support to a new level and enhanced further evolution of State policies in that area. In brief, the key positive features of the Law are the following. The Law:

- prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex,
- for the first time provides a definition of *discrimination* on the grounds of sex and of *forms* of that discrimination (direct and indirect),³⁸
- outlines the main spheres of public life and the relations that are subject to regulation by that Law with a view to securing guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities to women and men,
- authorizes the use of temporary special (compensatory) measures aimed at redressing a gender imbalance and describes their typology stating spheres, parameters, boundaries and timeframes for their use,
- aims at developing a culture of gender equality, tolerance and pluralism and at eliminating patriarchal stereotypes and the culture of domination and violence,
- lays the legal groundwork for establishing mechanisms for ensuring gender equality, stressing particularly the functions of *control* over compliance with provisions of the Law and of *support* for mainstreaming gender into Government policies in all spheres,
- requires integration of a gender component into State, regional and community development programs.

The Law also bridges gaps in the Armenian legislation. For instance, because of the 24 June 2010 amendments to the Labor Code, Article 221, which prohibited, *inter alia*, sexual harassment was removed. The Law unequivocally prohibits sexual harassment qualifying it as a form of direct discrimination (Article 6).

Anti-gender Campaign: A Temporary Setback

In the summer and fall of 2013 an aggressive campaign (subsequently dubbed the 'Anti-gender campaign') was launched. Orchestrated from abroad and aimed at discrediting European values and at torpedoing the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union, the campaign targeted both the *Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* and activists of the women's movement. Distorting the meaning of concepts (first of all, that of 'gender') campaigners demanded that the law be repealed or, at least, be substantially amended.

After Armenia made its geopolitical choice in September 2013 and the underlying motives that had driven the campaign disappeared, the campaign gradually petered out. After numerous heated discussions, the Armenian Government and Parliament did not withdraw or amend the Law.

Reaffirmed Priorities

Adopted on May 20, 2011 by the Armenian Government's Protocol decision № 19, the *RoA Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015* was, in a sense, a roadmap for the State gender policy. The Plan outlined priority directions for the policy in 6 sectors, viz. public administration, the socioeconomic sphere, education, health, culture and public information and prevention of gender-based violence and exploitation of (trafficking in) persons.

The main objectives of the Action Plan were:³⁹

- to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex,
- to attain de facto equality between women and men,
- to ensure equal opportunities for both sexes so that they could fully realize their potential,
- to overcome underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in the legislative and executive branches of government,
- to raise gender awareness and the sensitivity of the public at large,
- to introduce a system of indicators for assessment and monitoring of the gender situation dynamic,
- to help women acquire relevant legal, professional and other knowledge and skills,
- to mainstream gender into development plans and programs,

- to reduce socioeconomic inequality,
- to improve women's economic opportunities,
- to ensure women and men equal access to quality education and healthcare,
- to develop a culture of non-violence and to build capacity for prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking in persons and for provision of assistance to victims.

A most important prerequisite for successful formulation and implementation of the Government gender policy is to have well-functioning institutional mechanisms and national machinery for gender equality. Local experts and international organizations time and again emphasized the necessity of creating and strengthening such mechanisms. The above-mentioned Law contains a provision for an authorized Government body tasked with implementation of the Government gender policies (Article 9). Subsequently the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues was designated as the authorized body.⁴⁰ However, the Ministry's mandate, powers and functions did not meet the requirements for the national machinery.

The Strategic Action Plan set the task of "strengthening a unified system of national machinery and institutional mechanisms for gender equality policy formulation and implementation."⁴¹

'National machinery' is the name a special entity, which is situated at a high level in the Government and which *sets priorities* for the Government's gender policies, *approves documents* wherein the said policies and/or their implementation measures are formulated, coordinates actions of State and non-State entities in that sphere and supports their efforts to mainstream a gender-equality perspective in all strategies and policy areas.⁴²

'Institutional mechanisms' are State and non-State entities that deal with eliminating gender-based discrimination and *attaining* substantive gender equality through taking part in the Government's gender policies formulation and/or implementation or in monitoring of and control over their implementation.

In addition to the existing institutional mechanisms,⁴³ in the course of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan the structures dealing with gender issues were set up in Regional Governors' Offices and in the Yerevan City Hall, and gender theme groups were established in some Government bodies.

A central issue is the establishment and strengthening of the national machinery. In December 2012, the Women's Council under the RoA Prime Minister (which had been established in 2000) was designated as the national machinery by a Prime Minister's Decree.

Upon the request of the RoA Government, in 2013-2014 the UNICEF Armenia Country Office commissioned an analytical study on the national

machinery and institutional mechanisms. This study was subsequently conducted by a group of national experts and was then taken as a basis for finding an optimal model of national machinery. By two RoA Prime Ministers' Decrees (N^o1152-A dated November 19, 2014⁴⁴ and N^o 178-A March 9, 2015) the *Council on Affairs for Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities between Men and Women in the Republic of Armenia* was established and the composition and regulations of the Council were approved.⁴⁵ In official documents the Council is referred to as the national machinery.⁴⁶

With respect to the parameters stated in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Council meets the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (d): its level is indeed very high and it is unquestionably in a position to influence development of all government policies. However, as regards paragraphs (b) and (c), the Council does not meet the requirements.⁴⁷

Thus, the establishment of the Council as the national machinery is unquestionably a positive step. First of all, it is a message to the effect that the Government regards gender equality issues as a priority.⁴⁸ Besides, the Council was established as a permanently functioning high-level body⁴⁹ that is tasked with coordinating efforts and supporting policy formulation and adoption (including strategic programs that aim to implement the policy). In other words, the Council can ensure sustainable impacts and outcomes. At the same time, the establishment of the Council removed the national machinery issue from the agenda, and it will not be easy to raise the issue again in the near future in terms of reforming the Council. Another serious problem is that so far the Council has held only one meeting, even though it is mandated to meet at least once every four months (Regulations, para. 13).

Renewed Focus on Combating GBV

The fight against gender-based violence was a component of the above-mentioned Strategic Action Plan. Nevertheless, since the issue of gender-based violence is topical and significant, the separate *National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence for 2011-2015*⁵⁰ was drawn up and adopted at the 17 June 2011 session of the Armenian Government by Protocol Decision N^o 23. The main goal of the Action Plan was to minimize the scale and scope of gender-based violence in the country. With a view to achieving that goal objectives were set and measures defined in three main areas, viz. gender-based violence *prevention*, comprehensive *assistance* to and *protection* of survivors of violence⁵¹ and *prosecution* of perpetrators.⁵²

The Strategic Action Plan and the National Action Plan served as a basis for the formulation of annual plans that spelled out concrete actions and measures, and the Ministries and Agencies as well as regional governments subsequently reported on their implementation.

As an authorized body for coordination of activities in the area of the Government's gender policies, the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues approached UN agencies with a request to undertake comprehensive monitoring of the implementation of the above-mentioned Action Plans and to provide recommendations for drawing up new Action Plans. The UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF Armenia offices set up a group of national experts that conducted the commissioned study. The findings of their monitoring demonstrated that the planned and implemented actions are on the whole in line with the objectives set in the Strategic and National Action Plans, taking into consideration the national policy priorities and the international obligations assumed by the country. Since the Action Plans lacked criteria and indicators, it was at times difficult to give a precise and definitive assessment of the degree and effectiveness of implementation. Nevertheless, on the basis of both the reports, statistical data and studies and of the expert assessments a conclusion was drawn that the implementation of the Action Plans was an important step forward in attaining gender equality and that the positive dynamic should be sustained with further appropriate actions. The Report contained an impressive list of concrete recommendations and suggestions that can enhance effectiveness of gender policies.⁵³

THIRD STAGE: POST-2015 DEVELOPMENTS

At this stage, State gender policies have so far been less consistent and more problematic than before. Recent developments, and especially what transpired in 2017, gave grounds to civil society activists and experts "to characterize the government's engagement with gender issues as "formal, artificial, and non-constructive" and "lacking in sincere discourse""⁵⁴.

On the positive side, the term 'gender' has made a comeback in the official discourse and in some Government documents, and Armenia has reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality not only by adopting in September 2015, with other countries, the UN General Assembly Resolution *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Targets but also by taking ownership of those Goals and nationalizing them, including Goal 5 ('*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*').

More importantly, on January 18, 2018, Armenia signed the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence* even though in December 2017 the chance that the Government would sign it looked slim. The ratification of the Convention will entail its incorporation into the national legislative framework as an integral part of the latter.

Another very important positive development is passage (on December 13, 2017) of the stand-alone law on combating domestic violence (DV). Even though it was an important step forward, the inconsistency of the Government policy became visible, especially in connection with the adoption of the Law. The Law had been drafted several times over the preceding 10 years or so, and the Government was not particularly eager to adopt it notwithstanding the pressure brought about by civil society and international organizations. In fact, it was conditionality⁵⁵ on the part of the European Union that 'forced' the Armenian Government and Parliament to finally adopt it. However, many in the ruling 'elite' were very unhappy about the Law, and it is most likely that they lent a helping hand to anti-gender activists to launch a campaign in an effort to mobilize the general public to torpedo the Law. While they failed to do so, the Government and especially Parliament did their best to accommodate the demands of the anti-gender and anti-Law campaigners to a maximum extent. The final text was significantly watered down and numerous important recommendations⁵⁶ made by women's organizations and other CSOs, individual experts and thinktanks were virtually disregarded.

An unequivocally negative impact on the gender equality situation in the country was made by the time gap between national Action Plans. The positive dynamic that was registered in the aftermath of the two above-mentioned Action Plans lost momentum. While it was initially expected that, based on the assessment of the implementation of the two above-mentioned Action Plans, a new Action Plan for promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence for 2016-2020 would be drawn up and adopted, that did not happen. Neither did the plan to produce an Action Plan that would cover the period from 2017 through 2021 materialize. In early 2018, there is still lack of clarity as to when a new Action Plan will be finally approved and adopted by the Government. On 12 February 2018, the RoA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues posted the *Draft Strategy and Action Plan for implementation of the policy ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities to women and men in the Republic of Armenia in 2018-2022*. While the document aims to set priorities, expected outcomes, indicators and activities, it is on the whole beneath criticism since the proposed policy actions are not adequate to the formidable challenges existing in that sphere.

A FEW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEW ROADMAP

Despite a number of positive changes, gender inequality, inequity and discrimination have not been eliminated in Armenia yet.⁵⁷

At present, when a new national strategic document is at the formulation stage, it makes sense to outline the following priorities for the Government's gender policy against the background of the Sustainable Development Goals

proposed by the UN and adopted by almost all member States for the period of 2016-30.⁵⁸ This will help to redress a gender imbalance and to overcome gender asymmetry and thus to improve the country's standing and ranks as measured by important international indices such as the *Gender Inequality Index (GII)*, *Gender Development Index (GDI)* and *Global Gender Gap Index*.

Thus, in my view, it is necessary:

- to considerably increase women's representation in decision-making in the executive and legislative branches of government with a view to achieving a "critical mass" and subsequently the balanced participation of women and men; and to strengthen the existing positive trend in women's representation in the judicial branch of government;
- to ensure significant economic empowerment of women and the closing of an income gap between men and women, including via State regulation of entrepreneurship and the labor market, and to make consistent efforts to overcome horizontal and vertical segregation in the labor market;⁵⁹
- to create an enabling environment for better and more effective implementation of the Law on ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men,
- to enhance the effectiveness of efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes and to develop a democratic gender culture;
- to pay due attention to encouraging the Government to fund gender studies⁶⁰ and to encouraging State institutions to conduct gender studies;
- to ensure gender sensitivity in educational standards, syllabi, textbooks and other educational materials and to introduce gender education at all stages of the education system from primary school through university;
- to increase the effectiveness of coordination of efforts to combat gender-based violence, including, inter alia, via improving the recently adopted Law to combat domestic violence, ratifying the Council of Europe Convention and establishing a referral mechanism for survivors of gender-based violence;
- to design and pursue an efficient strategy to combat sex-selective abortions, which pose a serious demographic threat to the country's national security.

ENDNOTES

¹ See, for example, *Country Gender Assessment: Armenia*. Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2015, p. xii; E. Duban, *Gender Assessment USAID/Armenia*. Wash., D.C.: USAID, 2010, pp. 3, 13-14; A. Pittman, *Exploring Women's Rights and Feminist Movement Building in Armenia: Learning from the Past and Strategizing for the Future*, pp. 3, 11 and 32; http://media.wix.com/ugd//c5c87c_c87914f6eeb70cd5db729f306e399d83.pdf.

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- ² The initial Report was submitted to the CEDAW Committee in September 1995 (CEDAW/C/ARM/1. *Consideration of Reports Submitted by State Parties under Article 18 of the Convention. Armenia*. 26 September 1995).
- ³ *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, Adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna on 25 June 1993 (paragraph 18) (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Vienna.aspx>).
- ⁴ *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population & Development*. N.Y., UNFPA, 2004, p. 22.
- ⁵ Fourth World Conference on Women, N.Y., UN DPI, *Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration*, 1996.
- ⁶ First of all the *Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation* (June 25, 1958) and the *Equal Remuneration Convention* (June 29, 1951). Both Conventions were ratified by the Republic of Armenia on December 21, 1993.
- ⁷ The Council of Europe defines 'parity democracy' as "the full integration of women on an equal footing with men at all levels and in all areas of the workings of a democratic society, by means of multidisciplinary strategies" (M. Sineau, *Genderware – the Council of Europe and the Participation of Women in Political Life*, Strasbourg, CoE, 2003, p. 28).
- ⁸ Armenia declared its commitment to the implementation of the *Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017* adopted by the Council of Europe.
- ⁹ In the Resolution adopted at the 6th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Stockholm, June 8-9, 2006) gender equality was qualified as a prerequisite for economic development (*Proceedings of the 6th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men*, Strasbourg, CoE, 2006, p. 7). The EU document emphasizes that "gender equality is a key factor in achieving long-term sustainable economic growth" (*More Women in Senior Positions: Key to Economic Stability and Growth*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2010, p. 14).
- ¹⁰ *Benefits of Gender Equality*. Online discussion report: *Women and Political Decision-Making*, Belgium, European Institute for Gender Equality, 2014, p. 6.
- ¹¹ See, for instance, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development EU Plan of Action 2010-2015* (in particular Specific Objective N° 3 "Place gender equality issues systematically on the agenda of dialogue with partner countries") <http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/content/eu-action-plan-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-development-period-2010-2015-0> .
- ¹² The Republic of Armenia ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* on June 9, 1993 and the Optional Protocol thereto on May, 23 2006. At the same time it should be noted that from January 1981 the CEDAW Convention was in force in Armenia as a constituent Republic of the Soviet Union until Armenia gained independence in September 1991. Armenia also ratified a number of related Conventions: UN *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* (in 2007), [European] *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (in 2002) and Protocols thereto and the Council of Europe

- Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings* (in 2008). On December 25, 2003, the Republic of Armenia finalized its accession to the European Social Charter, where a number of Articles spell out equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.
- ¹³ These are the Development Goals that were formulated on the basis of the Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 by leaders of 193 UN member States.
- ¹⁴ *Declaration on Equality of Women and Men* (CoE Committee of Ministers, adopted on November 16, 1988), *Declaration on Equality between Women and Men as a Fundamental Criterion of Democracy* (adopted on November 14, 1997 in Istanbul by the 4th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men), *Gender Equality: A Core Issue in Changing Societies* (Declaration and programme of Action adopted on January 23, 2003 in Skopje by the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between women and men) and *Declaration: Making Gender Equality a Reality* (adopted in Madrid on May 12, 2009 at the 119th Session of the Committee of Ministers).
- ¹⁵ Recommendation N° R(85)2 *On Legal Protection Against Sex Discrimination*, Recommendation N° R(96)5 *On Reconciling Work and Family Life*, Recommendation N° R(98)14 *On Gender Mainstreaming*, Recommendation N° (2002)5 *On the Protection of Women Against Violence*, Recommendation N° R(2003)3 *On Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Political and Public Decision-Making* and Recommendation N° R(2007)17 *On Gender Equality Standards and Mechanisms*.
- ¹⁶ E.g., Recommendation 1229 (1994) *On Equality of Rights Between Men and Women*, Recommendation 1269 (1995) *On Achieving Real Progress in Women's Rights as from 1995* and Recommendation 1413(1999) *On Equal Representation in Political Life*.
- ¹⁷ Furthermore, the national legislation introduced criminal and administrative liability for discriminatory acts for a large number of reasons, including sex-based discrimination (Article 143 ['Breach of citizens' legal quality'] in Chapter 19 ['Crimes against constitutional human rights and freedoms of citizens'] of the RoA Criminal Code. Under Article 156, unfounded refusal to hire a pregnant woman citing pregnancy or a person with a child under 3 years of age, or ungrounded dismissal, citing this reason, entails liability).
- ¹⁸ The National Action Plan was outlined and approved by two Government Decrees (N° 242, April 15, 1998 and N° 406, April 26, 1998).
- ¹⁹ Republic of Armenia. *National Report for the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York 28 February-11 March 2005*, Yerevan, 2005, pp. 1-2.
- ²⁰ On April 8, 2004, the Armenian Government adopted Decree 645-N to approve the National Action Plan and a list of its implementation measures. The National Action Plan was approved by the RoA President on May 17, 2004.
- ²¹ The most comprehensive and large-scale monitoring was conducted in 2006 by experts from various NGOs within the framework of the review and evaluation of implementation of the recommendations of 3 basic international documents aimed at

attaining gender equality (*Monitoring of the Implementation of the CEDAW Convention, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Armenia*, Yerevan: AAWUE, 2006 [in Armenian]).

²² *Republic of Armenia Action Plan for 2008-2012*, Annex to RoA Government decision N380-A of April 28, 2008, pp.43-44 (in Armenian).

²³ http://www.un.am/res/Gender%20TG%20docs/national/Gender-Concept-Paper_Engl_2010.pdf.

²⁴ The RoA Minister of Foreign Affairs, the RoA Minister of Health, the RoA Minister of Agriculture, the RoA Minister of Education and Science, the RoA Minister of Territorial Administration, the RoA Minister of Economy, the RoA Minister of Culture and the Head of the RoA Police.

²⁵ Kyrgyzstan (2003), Tajikistan (2005), the Ukraine (2005), Moldova (2006), Azerbaijan (2006), Turkmenistan (2007), Kazakhstan (2009) and Georgia (2010). A similar Law has not been adopted yet in The Russian Federation, Belarus and Uzbekistan.

²⁶ "Model Law on State Guarantees for Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (Adopted in St. Petersburg on 18 November 2005 by Decree № 26-11 at the 26th plenary session of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member Nations)," (*Information Bulletin*, Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member Nations. № 37 (2006), pp. 328-341 [in Russian]).

²⁷ Of the 117 MPs who took part in the vote, only one MP voted against, 8 MPs abstained, while 108 MPs voted for the adoption of the Law.

²⁸ *Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women/ Forty-third session / 19 January-6 February 2009/*, CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1 /

²⁹ http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/action_plans/armenia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf.

³⁰ The only criticism that had been leveled at the Armenian legislation in that respect by relevant international organizations was that the marriage age was set for women at 17 and for men at 18. That provision in Article 10 of the RoA Family Code was amended on April 30, 2013 and the same marriage age of 18 was set for both sexes.

³¹ See, e.g., *CEDAW Assessment Tool Report*, Yerevan, ABA/CEELI, 2002; G. Grigoryan et al., *Gender Expert Assessment of the Republic of Armenia Legislation*, Yerevan, UNDP, 2007; *Advancing Equal Rights for Women and Girls. The Status of CEDAW Legislative Compliance in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, N.Y., UNFPA, 2009; A. Yesayan et al., *Assessment of the Republic of Armenia Legislation from a Gender-Based Violence Perspective*, Yerevan, UNFPA, 2009.

³² E.g., The RoA Labor Code includes a number of most important provisions that aim to ensure equal rights to women. Thus, paragraph 2 in Article 178 states that men and women shall get equal pay for the same or equivalent work, while paragraph 3 in Article 180 stresses that in case of the application of the qualification system of work, one and the same criteria shall be applied for both men and women and this system shall be developed in such a way as to exclude any gender-based discrimination. Privileges have been given to certain categories of women (pregnant women, women with small children) as regards overtime work and night working

hours. They may not be involved in hazardous or harmful work, the employer may not dissolve a labor contract with a pregnant woman on his own initiative, etc. (Articles 114, 144, 148, 155, 164, 172 and 258). The RoA *Law on Education* states that the RoA shall ensure the right to education irrespective of ethnicity, political views, social status and other circumstances, including gender (Article 6).

³³ The RoA Family Code states that both maternity and paternity are under the safeguard and protection of society and the State (Article 1), that both spouses are free in choosing job, occupation, profession and residence and that they have equal rights in the family (Article 24), in providing material support to one another (Article 77) and in the right to alimony from an ex-spouse upon dissolution of marriage (Article 78).

³⁴ The RoA Electoral Code (adopted February 5, 1999), Article 100, paragraph 2. The RoA Electoral Code (adopted May 26, 2011), Article 108, paragraph 2. The RoA Electoral Code (adopted May 25, 2016), Article 83, paragraph 4. It should be noted, however, that the 30% quota will be used only as of 2022; until then a 25% quota will be used (Article 144, paragraph 14).

³⁵ See, e.g., *Monitoring the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, SG Report, CSW, 39th Session, 1995, Addendum. Part II, Section G, para. 20. Doc. E/CN.6/1995/3/Add.6.

³⁶ "... Balanced participation of women and men is taken to mean that the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%." *Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Political and Public Decision-Making. Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 Adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 12 March 2003 and Explanatory Memorandum*, Strasbourg, CoE DGHR, 2003, p. 7. In 2010, in its Resolution 1706, PACE recommended countries with a proportional representation list system to consider introducing a legal quota which provides a high proportion of female candidates (ideally at least 40%). *Increasing Women's Representation in Politics Through the Electoral System*, PACE Resolution 1706 (2010). <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17809&lang=en>.

³⁷ *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (Adopted at the 59th session of the CSW, March 2015). <http://www.unwomen.org/->

[/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/declaration-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4833](http://media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/declaration-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4833).

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New York, UN, (September 25) 2015 (UN Document A/RES/70/1); *Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action* (September 27, 2015). [http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/9/press-release-global-leaders-](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/9/press-release-global-leaders)

[meetinghttp://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&referer=/english/&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&referer=/english/&Lang=E); *Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality*, <http://www.unwomen.org/->

[/media/headquarters/attachments/initiatives/stepitup/stepitup-brochure-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4739](http://media/headquarters/attachments/initiatives/stepitup/stepitup-brochure-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4739).

³⁸ In theory, prior to the adoption of the Law the CEDAW Convention definition of discrimination on the grounds of sex could be used because, as per Article 6 of the Armenian Constitution of 1995, "International agreements are a constituent part of the legal system of the Republic of Armenia." (This principle has been retained in the text of the Armenian Constitution amended on December 6, 2015. Articles 5, 61 and 81). However, it has never been used in legal practice in Armenia.

³⁹ See Annex 1 to the Armenian Government's May 20, 2011 Protocol decision № 19.

⁴⁰ Even prior to that, the Government's February 11, 2010 Protocol decision № 5 (wherewith the *RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper* was adopted) stated that the Minister of Labor and Social Issues was responsible for coordination of gender policies in Armenia (Paragraph 33.4 says "To delegate to the RoA Minister of Labor and Social Issues the powers for coordination of gender policies").

⁴¹ Annex 1 (paragraph 10) to the Armenian Government's 20 May 2011 Protocol decision № 19.

⁴² As per CEDAW Committee General Recommendation № 6, national machinery should be situated at a high level of Government, have adequate resources, commitment and authority to (a) Advise on the impact on women of all government policies; (b) Monitor the situation of women comprehensively; and (c) Help formulate new policies and effectively carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination (CEDAW Committee. *General Recommendation No. 6* [seventh session, 1988]). In greater detail the national machinery was described in the Beijing Platform for Action where 4 conditions for its effective functions are spelled out: (a) Location at the highest possible level in the Government; (b) Institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate decentralized planning, implementation and monitoring...; (c) Sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity; (d) Opportunity to influence development of all government policies (*Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration* [Fourth World Conference on Women], New York, UN DPI, 1996, p. 116). It should be noted that initially the national machinery and institutional mechanisms were meant for the **advancement of women** but after Beijing+5 (held in 2000) their mandate was expanded and priority was assigned to **ensuring gender equality**.

⁴³ First of all, the Department for Family, Women's and Children's Issues in the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues was established (in 1997); an additional function of coordination of activities in the field of women's and gender issues was assigned to one of Deputy Ministers of Labor and Social Issues (in 2000); there was also a transformation of regional Departments for Protection of Children into Departments for issues of protection of children, families and women.

⁴⁴ This Decree also abolished the Women's Council under the RoA Prime Minister that had been functioning since December 2000.

⁴⁵ The Council is composed of the Prime Minister, 4 Ministers, 9 Deputy Ministers, the Deputy Head of Police and the Head of the Social Affairs Department of the Prime Minister's Office. Also involved as Council Members, by their consent: a Member of Parliament, a Cassation Court judge, and Head of the RoA President's Office Amnesty, Citizenship, Awards and Titles Department. A Working Group was

established under the Council. It is composed of 2 staff members of the Government Office, staff members of 13 Ministries and agencies and, by consent, one staff member of the Office of the RoA Parliament, one staff member of the Yerevan City Hall and one member of the National Commission on TV and Radio of Armenia.

⁴⁶ See, e.g., paragraph 1 of Annex № 2 to the RoA Prime Minister's March 9, 2015 Decree № 178-A.

⁴⁷ First of all, it should be noted that there is not a single representative of NGOs, think tanks, universities and research institutions of the Academy of Sciences, or the media in the Council. It is odd because representatives of those entities are members of other Councils under the Prime Minister. Therefore, the experience of the Women's Council under the Prime Minister that existed from December 2000 till November 2014 was not taken into consideration. Representatives of all the said entities are not members of even the Working Group (WG) affiliated with the Council. True, NGO representatives can and are invited to the WG sessions, but they do not have an equal status with the WG members. In other words, they are not even *non-voting* members of the WG, to say nothing of the Council. Neither does the Council meet the standard criteria for national machinery in terms of budget and expertise.

⁴⁸ The final National Report on the Millennium Development Goals (published in October 2015) states: "Gender equality should remain one of the main priority areas" (*Millennium Development Goals: National Progress Report. Armenia 2015*, Yerevan, UN Armenia Office and RoA Government, 2015, p. 74).

⁴⁹ According to its *Rules of Procedure*, the Council has to convene a meeting at least once every 4 months (Paragraph 13 of "Rules of Procedure of the Council on Issues of Equality between Women and Men in the Republic of Armenia", *Annex № 2 to the RoA Prime Minister's 9 March 2015 Decree № 178-A*). However, so far only one meeting has been held since March 2015.

⁵⁰ The existence of gender-based violence as a serious social, health, economic and human rights problem and the necessity to make consistent and well-coordinated efforts to combat it were officially recognized due to, *inter alia*, the findings of the first nationwide survey conducted in 2008-10 jointly by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the RoA National Statistical Service (V. Osipov Et al., *Nationwide Survey on Domestic Violence Against Women in Armenia*, Report, Yerevan, UNFPA Project "Combating GBV in the South Caucasus" and RoA National Statistical Service, Yerevan, UNFPA, 2011).

⁵¹ The Action Plan is the first document which contains an objective of designing and introducing a national referral mechanism for survivors of violence (i.e. the mechanism for referring survivors of violence to relevant entities for obtaining assistance and protection). The model of the national referral mechanism, which includes principles, functions, structure and monitoring tools, principal stages of the process to refer survivors of violence to relevant entities and to provide them protection and services, as well as the existing negative and positive factors that affect the establishment of the national mechanism, was created in 2011 as an outcome of the research conducted within the framework of the special UNFPA project and was submitted to the Armenian Government (V. Osipov, *Recommendations for the Establishment of National*

Referral Mechanism for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan, UNFPA, 2011).

⁵² See: Annex 2 to the RoA Government's Protocol Decision № 23 of June 17, 2011.

⁵³ *Assessment of the Implementation of the RoA Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 and of the RoA National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence for 2011-2015, Report*, Yerevan, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, 2015 (in Armenian); http://un.am/up/library/Assesment_2011-2015_Gender%20Policy_arm.pdf.

⁵⁴ Ani Jilozian, *Gender Politics in Armenia: An Exploration of Legislation, Anti-Gender Rhetoric, and Community Strategies*, Yerevan, WSC, 2017, p. 11.

⁵⁵ "The redevelopment of the draft of domestic violence law by the Armenian government, however, is neither an indication of its sudden increased awareness of the issue - nor the magical manifestation of political will. Under its Human Rights Budget Support Program, the European Commission has made an €11m grant to the Armenian government. One of the conditions of the grant's provision was the adoption of a standalone law on domestic violence," (Anna Nikoghosyan, "The Paradox of Armenia's Domestic Violence Law," *Open Democracy*, November 22, 2017; <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/anna-nikoghosyan/paradox-of-armenia-s-domestic-violence-law>).

⁵⁶ To mention but a few publications that contained research- and studies-based recommendations: *Femicide in Armenia: A Silent Epidemic*, Yerevan, Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, 2016; *Qualitative Study on Increasing the Effectiveness of the Existing Practices and Initiatives Concerning Provision of Multi-Sectoral Response to Domestic Violence in Armenia*, Yerevan, EU, ICHD and UNFPA, 2017 (in Armenian); *Analysis of the RoA Criminal Law from the Perspective of the Criteria Set by the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*, Strasbourg, CoE, 2017 (in Armenian); Ani Jilozian, et al., *Impact of Domestic Violence on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in Armenia*, Yerevan, WSC and OSF-A, 2017.

⁵⁷ The final National Report on the Millennium Development Goals stated that two main targets set by Armenia within the framework of Goal 3 ("Promote gender equality and empower women") were not achieved. The proportion of women members of the National Assembly, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Regional Governors was to reach by 2015 at least 25% and that of women Community Heads 10%. In reality the proportions were 11.0% and 2.1% respectively. The conclusion drawn in the Report states: "... women in Armenia are deprived of engagement in decision-making positions in economic and business sectors as well as in the political life of the country," *Millennium Development Goals: National Progress Report. Armenia 2015*, Yerevan, UN Armenia Office and RoA Government, 2015, pp. 34, 37.

⁵⁸ See *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, New York, UN, 2016, pp. 18-32 (UN Document A/RES/70/1).

⁵⁹ One of the studies that contains an analysis of the said issues (including horizontal and vertical segregation on the labor market) and recommendations on how to solve them is a recent publication of the UNFPA Yerevan office (*Gender Gap. Diagnostic*

study of manifestations of discrimination against women, Yerevan, UNFPA, pp. 3-5, 16-20 (in Armenian)).

⁶⁰ The study commissioned by UNFPA found that under 5% out of 263 studies and surveys conducted in Armenia in 1995-2015 on gender and/or women's issues or on issues having a gender component had been conducted by governmental institutions. Virtually none were funded by the Government (V. Osipov, and J. Sargizova, *Bibliography of Studies and Surveys Focusing on Gender and/or Women's Issues or that Have a Gender Component: Armenia*, Yerevan, UNFPA, 2015).

**ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՍԵՌՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ (GENDER)
ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ. ԲԱՐԵՇՐՋՈՒՄ ԵՒ ՀԵՌԱՆԿԱՐՆԵՐ
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Հայաստանի Հանրապետությանը սկսեց ուշադրություն դարձնել սեռությանը հարցերին 1990ականների կեսերից, երբ եվրոպական համարկումը եւ ԵՄԻ հետ սերտ գործակցությունը դարձան երկրի առաջնահերթություններից: 1998-2010՝ ՀՀ մշակեց եւ իրականացրեց գործողությունների ազգային երկու ծրագրեր՝ կանանց կարգավիճակը բարելավելու եւ հասարակության մեջ նրանց դերը բարձրացնելու: 2010-13՝ մշակուել եւ ընդունուել են «Հ Գեներային Քաղաքականութեան Պետական Հայեցակարգը», «Կանանց եւ Տղամարդկանց Հասասար Իրաւունքների եւ Հասասար Հնարատրութիւնների Ապահովման Մասին» ՀՀ օրէնքը, «Գեներային Քաղաքականութեան 2011-2015 թթ. Ռազմավարական Ծրագիրը» եւ «Ընդդէմ Գեներային Բռնութեան 2011-2015 թթ. Ազգային Ծրագիրը»: Հայեցակարգը առաջին համապարփակ փաստաթուղթն է, որը համակարգուած ձեւով շարադրում է սեռութային քաղաքականութեան հիմնական սկզբունքները, նպատակներն ու խնդիրները, իրականացման ռազմավարութիւնն ու գործիքակազմը:

2017 Դեկտեմբերին ընդունուել է «Ընտանիքում Բռնութեան Կանխարգելման, Ընտանիքում Բռնութեան Ենթարկուած Անձանց Պաշտպանութեան եւ Ընտանիքում Համերաշխութեան Վերականգնման Մասին» ՀՀ օրէնքը, 2018 Յունուարին՝ «Կանանց Նկատմամբ Բռնութեան եւ Ընտանեկան Բռնութեան Կանխարգելման եւ Դրանց Դէմ Պայքարի Մասին» եւս Ուխտը:

Չնայած դրական փոփոխութիւններին, ՀՀում դեռեւս չեն վերացել սեռութային անհասարկութիւնը, անարդարութիւնը եւ խտրականութիւնը: Ներկայումս, երբ մշակուում է նոր ազգային ռազմավարական փաստաթուղթը, անհրաժեշտ է անւալացնել. կանանց ներկայացուածութիւնը իշխանութեան մեջ, ապահովել կանանց տնտեսական հզօրացումը, անւի արդիւնաւէտ պայքարել սեռութային կարծրատիպերի դէմ, ապահովել կրթական չափանիշների, ծրագրերի եւ դասագրքերի սեռութային զգայունութիւնը եւ ներդրել սեռութային կրթութիւնը, անւի արդիւնաւէտ պայքարել սեռութային բռնութեան դէմ, մշակել եւ վարել պտղի սեռով պայմանատրուած յիփութեան ընդհատման դէմ պայքարի արդիւնաւէտ ռազմավարութիւն: