

STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Working session 3: Democratic institutions, including:

- **Democracy at national, regional and local levels**
- **Democratic elections**

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Mr. Moderator,

After the massive peaceful assembly movement known as the “Velvet Revolution”, which occurred in Armenia in spring, 2018 the new Armenian authorities assumed the responsibility of building a society with absolute respect of human rights and good governance. As reported by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association Mr. Clement Voule’ after his visit to Armenia last November, the people of Armenia have shown pride for the large-scale and unprecedented exercise of the right to peaceful assembly that has resulted in a long term course for change in the country.

After the new Government was voted in, empowered with the overwhelming support of the people, it embarked on the implementation of the reform agenda aimed at anchoring stable democratic institutions, the rule of law, protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms. Recognizing the vital importance of early Parliamentary elections, the Government prioritized the necessity of conducting democratic elections in compliance with international standards.

In this regard it is important to mention about respective amendments to the Electoral and Penal Codes, which expanded the list of those prohibited from campaigning, lifted restrictions for media observers and increased sanctions and penalties for electoral offenses, in line with previous OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe’s Venice Commission recommendations.

As noted by different observation missions, including from the ODIHR, contestants were able to conduct their campaigns freely and fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, expression and movement were fully respected during the campaign. It is noteworthy that live debate between the leaders of 11 political forces running for the snap parliamentary elections, the first of its kind in Armenia, was held and hosted by the Armenian Public Television. Elections held on December 9, 2018 were generally assessed by local and international observers as free, fair, competitive and transparent and enjoyed broad public trust. It was the first time that election results had not been contested by any party.

Mr. Moderator,

The nationwide parliamentary elections were another important test for the Armenian society which showed its ability and maturity to embrace the demands of democracy and human rights. They consolidated the democratic transformation of Armenia and accurately reflected the existing political landscape.

Concluding we would like to reaffirm the readiness and political will of the Armenian authorities to preserve the public confidence through ongoing and upcoming reforms and in this regard look forward to further close cooperation with respective international organizations.

Thank you.

