

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

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Statement of the Delegation of Armenia

As delivered by

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Mr. Chairperson,

Since last year Armenia has made certain efforts to strengthen its capacity, actions and legislation aimed at ensuring greater equality between women and men.

When it comes to the processes which entail certain cultural change and reconsideration of traditional roles of the genders, one needs to be cautious and realistic in assessing the achievements. Those achievements could be considered sustainable once they are well grounded into emerging social and cultural practices.

At the same time, there are issues requiring urgent attention and actions of the Government particularly in the field of combating domestic violence. The Government adopted the Strategic Programme against Gender-based Violence for 2011-2015 and the annual program of activities against gender based violence.

In order to elaborate a separate law concerning domestic violence, including violence against women an interdepartmental working group was set up. The draft law on Domestic Violence was elaborated in the scope of “Legal initiatives against domestic violence” program and in close consultation and coordination with all NGOs active in the field and advocating for total elimination of this phenomenon. The draft law is currently in the process of finalization and submission to the Government for further approval.

As far as capacities are concerned, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is tasked to address the combating domestic violence, in particular prevention domestic violence and rehabilitation of victims.

Raising public awareness is one of the most powerful tools used to address the issue. Knowledge of rights, available support services, protection opportunities and remedies that can be sought is empowering and helping unveil the silence accompanying this crime. To this end, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs with the support of the UNDP office in Armenia, carries out an awareness-raising project on Gender Policy in the South Caucasus, part of which refers to domestic violence.

It is envisaged to have state-run shelters/crisis centers established for victims of domestic violence to provide a range of services to ensure protection of victims’ social and legal rights. Currently,

services for victims of violence, including hot-lines, shelter and social support are provided by NGOs specializing in this area both in Yerevan and in the regions.

Concentrating on the certain aspects of the gender discrimination does not prevent the Government from undertaking holistic approach towards ensuring greater gender equality.

Currently, the Armenian Parliament is elaborating a law on gender equality and equal opportunities. The draft law which already underwent its first reading inter alia puts special emphasis to the equal economic opportunities. The draft law prohibits any preferential recruiting treatment to any gender when it comes to the public service. For example, no indication of gender should be mentioned in the job announcement. The state as an important employer should set the standard of recruiting and this is something that new legislation is supposed to accomplish.

Political representation of women is certainly key indicator in evaluating overall progress in this important field of the protection of human rights. The newly established legislative requirement of having 20 percent women candidate in the lists of political parties and blocs was fulfilled during the recent Parliamentary elections. The outcome of the elections in this particular aspect indicates modest yet some progress towards women empowerment.

Thank you.