

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
WORKING SESSION 15

Tolerance and non-discrimination II (continued), including ensuring equal opportunity for women and men in all spheres of life, including through the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, prevention of violence against women

As delivered by Mr. Davit Knyazyan, Head of the OSCE and Conventional Arms Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Mr. Moderator,

Promotion of equality between women and men and countering violence against women is a priority for the Republic of Armenia.

In the past period Armenia registered significant progress in establishing normative framework for countering domestic violence. Armenia signed Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Following active public discourse with participation of parliamentarians, civil society, women's organizations and other stakeholders the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence and Restoration of Family Harmony was adopted. Both documents significantly enhance legal basis for protection of women and contribute to more effective work of law enforcement agencies.

Women, peace and security agenda is another important dimension. We are currently in final stage of the work of intergovernmental working group aimed at elaboration of a national action plan on implementation of the UN SC resolution 1325. The Action plan entails two important pillars: gender mainstreaming in security sector and empowerment of women affected by conflicts. We would like to extend our gratitude to the OSCE Gender Section for organizing workshop on elaboration of a national action plan in Yerevan this March. The workshop, which brought together relevant government agencies and civil society was very useful in raising awareness on best practices of elaboration of NAPs.

Armenia Cooperation Programme is aimed at ensuring continuity of programmes of the OSCE Office in Yerevan. One of such projects, prioritized by the Government of Armenia is economic empowerment of women. We are grateful to all those countries who have pledged their political and financial support to women resource centres in Armenia. The centres's activities to promote economic empowerment of women, has a multiplying effect, by contributing to their political participation.

Public and political participation of women at all levels is important priority of the new Armenian Government.

Coming to recommendations, first, we would like to stress the important role of the OSCE in promoting engagement of women residing in conflict areas, their representation and participation in various processes, including reconciliation, confidence building measures or de-escalation. The OSCE and its various actors dealing with gender perspective in conflict situations can bring an added value if they streamline their projects and initiatives on the needs of women residing in conflict areas.

Second, OSCE should promote unimpeded humanitarian access to women residing in the conflict areas throughout the entire OSCE region.