

**OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION SESSION OF THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE  
Warsaw, 30 September – 8 October 2010**

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**STATEMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

**Wednesday, 6 October**

**Working session 8**

**Tolerance and Non-Discrimination II including**

**-Promotion of gender balance and implementation of the OSCE Action Plan and relevant commitments**

**-Preventing and responding to hate crimes in the OSCE area**

**-Combating intolerance and discrimination**

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**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Mr./Mme. Moderator,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality charts the priority areas towards promotion and protection of women's rights. Preventing violence against women, promoting equal opportunities for women in the economic field and building national machinery for the advancement of women are among those priorities.

Combating domestic violence, including violence against women is among the human rights priorities in Armenia spelled out in the 2004-2010 National Plan for the Improvement of the Situation of Women and Enhancement of their Role in the Society. In order to elaborate a separate law concerning domestic violence, including violence against women an interdepartmental working group was set up. The draft law is currently in its final stages of approval among the government agencies.

Enhancing institutional capacities of the government offices most frequently dealing with victims of domestic violence is a must to ensure effective implementation of all projects and measures envisaged. Raising public awareness and knowledge of rights are one of the most powerful tools used to address the issue. Availability of support services, protection opportunities and remedies, as well as wider knowledge on the existing referral mechanisms empower the victims and help unveil the silence accompanying this crime.

The Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action provide a clear mandate for the national machinery for the advancement of women. One of the principal goals of this mechanism is to promote and achieve gender equality and ensure full enjoyment of women's rights. The national machinery's main function should include monitoring the effective implementation of national legislation based on the principle of non-discrimination and equality, as well as incorporation of international obligations assumed by the States in this field into national policies and agendas. For many years in Armenia the functions of national machinery were delegated to the Department on Child, Family and Women Affairs within the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues. However, with the invigoration of the Women's Council headed by the Prime Minister himself and including representatives of relevant ministries, non governmental organizations active in the field and professional women associations, it is

envisaged to entrust the Council with monitoring functions as national machinery. We are confident that under the current leadership and the increased attention to women issues in general in the country, combined with strong commitment of the government and political will to implement and support international norms in gender equality, this body would become an important tool for promotion and protection of women's rights and their full enjoyment.

Globally the consequences of the financial and economic crisis during the last two years are likely to result in serious setbacks in gender equality and put the gains achieved in recent decades in women's empowerment at risk. For countries in transition all economic shifts have more acute effect on more vulnerable strata. Due to the economic crises within communities and households, the burden of increased economic insecurity and poverty are likely to be borne heavily by women, who use their assets and stretch both their paid and unpaid work in order to compensate for job losses and resulting declines in household income. Hence, one of the main objectives for the Armenian Government continues to be reducing the poverty risks. To this end, the Government has promoted wider involvement of women in income-generating activities, particularly small businesses through micro-credit systems.

With regard to the fight against hate crime, it should be noted that the OSCE community has made significant steps towards putting it into the focus of our discourse and identifying measures that could stop this crime in its inception. Since 2003, when at the Maastricht Ministerial Council this term was introduced into the OSCE Human Dimension language, much work has been done throughout the OSCE area on collecting reliable information and statistics as well as developing major principles of legislation to fight against hate crime. Hate crime is identified as a factor that could instigate interethnic tensions and be the first sign of criminally motivated societal behavior being contemplated. In this respect, we believe that OSCE continued activity to closely follow hate motivated incidents for data collection purposes only is not sufficient and should be accompanied by respective actions by the Office of High Commissioner for National Minorities. The potential of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office to combat intolerance and discrimination should be utilized to this effect as well. We, as a community, should make best use of all early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms, without which it would be very difficult to achieve tangible results. To this end, the Organization should keep to a broad-based approach and cooperate with relevant OSCE structures and mechanisms, all UN treaty bodies and special procedures, regional and sub-regional organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, members of the civil society, and independent scholars and experts.

Thank you.