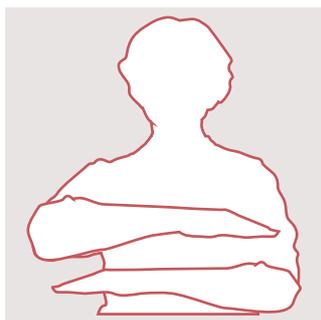
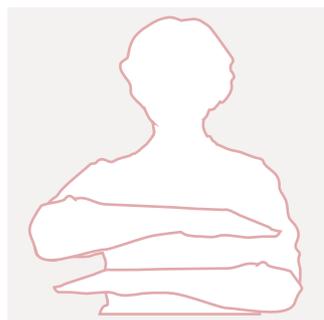
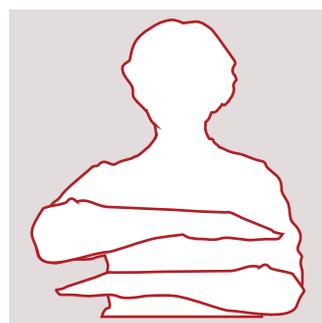
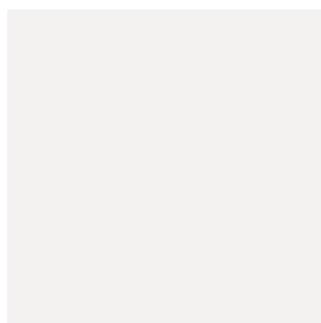
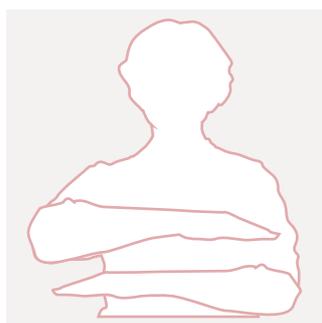
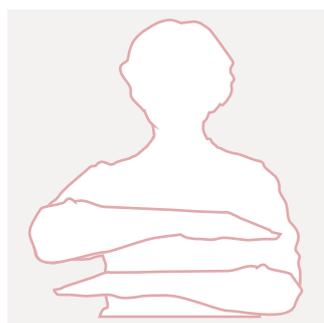


Women's Agenda for Development

In the Lead-Up to the RA Snap Parliamentary Elections



Campaign

EQUAL

Equal rights and opportunities for women and men



Government Offices of Sweden

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The Women's Agenda has been developed within the framework of the program EQUAL: Promoting Women's Political Participation at National Level in Armenia funded by the Government Offices of Sweden and implemented by OxYGen Foundation for Protection of Youth and Women Rights in cooperation with the experts of ProMedia-Gender NGO and WomenNet.am website.

2018

EQUAL Campaign Presents
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The key objective of the Women's Agenda is to invite the attention of the parties and party alliances running in the National Assembly snap elections to issues ensuring equality of women and men with the expectation that they, if elected, will not only voice these issues from the Parliament's podium, but will also propose solutions to them.

Guided by the approach that under the parliamentary system of governance political forces making up the RA National Assembly will bear responsibility for improvement of the legislative field and for policies implemented by the executive power,

We propose that the political forces purporting to be represented in the legislative body clarify their attitude towards mechanisms ensuring women's and men's equal participation in the country's developmental processes, which will allow the public concerned about these issues to make decisions on their choices.

The Women's Agenda does not purport to include the entire diversity of women's issues, however, it contains a number of important questions necessary for their solution:

1. Do you support the 50/50 participatory model formulated within the framework of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which implies equal involvement of women and men in politics, economy and social life, as well as their equal representation at decision-making levels?
2. What steps are you planning to take to promote de facto equality of women and men as stipulated by Article 86 of the RA Constitution?
3. What steps are you ready to take for implementation of the RA Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities between Women and Men?
4. Are you prepared to be consistent in improving the legislative field on prevention of domestic violence and in advancing the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence?
5. Are you planning to bring to life the principles declared within the scope of the RA Gender Policy Conceptual Framework and to take into account women's and men's interests and needs in socio-economic development programs?
6. Are you ready to initiate steps towards the formation of a national machinery ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities between women and men for the purpose of effective implementation of the relevant policy coordination?
7. What is your attitude towards and position on the following issues?

- Insufficient representation of women in all the branches and at all the levels of state governance;
- Ineffective utilization of women's potential and discrimination against women in labor market, lack of opportunities for combining work-related and family responsibilities;
- The higher vulnerability of women and children and women-headed households in terms of poverty;
- The higher vulnerability of rural women in terms of availability of resources and services;
- Double discrimination against women with disabilities and absence of opportunities for full social inclusion;
- Reproduction of gender stereotypes impeding women's progress through the educational system and mass media outlets;
- Grave policy shortcomings in ensuring accessibility and affordability of healthcare services for women.

All the organizations concerned with the above noted issues are welcome to join the Agenda.
The Agenda is open to comments and suggestions.

Statistics related to a number of issues and recommended solutions

Issue 1

Women do not take part in decision - making regarding the country's development: they are underrepresented in almost all the branches and at all the levels of state governance.

Facts

- Women make up only 18% of the deputies to the RA National Assembly of the recent sixth convocation; during the years of independence the pace of increase in the number of women in the legislative body has been insufficient for ensuring women's and men's equal representation in the Parliament and at the decision-making levels within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals and other international obligations.
- The RA Cabinet of Ministers includes only two women (11%), and only ten out of 62 deputy ministers are women (16%) (as of June 2018).
- There are no women among governors, only five out of 30 deputy governors are women; only one out of 49 mayors elected during the October 2018 elections is a woman and that took place for the first time after the introduction of the local self-government system.
- Over the twenty years of existence of local self-government bodies, women's number among community heads has not exceeded 2%. Currently, that number has significantly decreased: out of 502 communities only eight are headed by women (1.6%), and out of 3830 municipal councilors only 401 are women, which makes up 10.%¹.
- Some progress, thanks to the application of the quota, has been recorded only in the composition of Yerevan City Council, where women make up 27.6%, as well as in the composition of the Gyumri and Vanadzor City Councils, where women councilors make up 24%.
- The number of men in managerial positions exceeds that of women by 2.4 times².

Are you ready

- To increase the gender quota and provide for other mechanisms that will guarantee women's and men's equal, 50/50 representation at the National Assembly, appointed positions of the executive body and local self-government system.
- To develop mechanisms for intraparty promotion of women and carry out activities to prepare women leaders.
- To include gender equality component in the personnel policies of state governance and local self-government bodies by creating personnel reserve of relevant specialists.
- To enhance the gender module in the training programs for public servants.
- To adopt the 2018-2022 Strategy and Plan of Action for ensuring the realization of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Armenia³.

¹Women and Men of Armenia, Statistical Booklet, Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2018

²Ibidem

³<https://www.e-draft.am/projects/731/about>

Ineffective utilization of women's potential, elimination of discrimination against women in labor market, creation of opportunities for combining work and child care.

Facts

- Due to women's employment limitations and discrimination against them in the labor market, Armenia suffers an annual GDP loss of at least 50-60 million dollars.
- Women's share of work resources makes up 55%, however, economically active (employed or job-seeking) women make up 52.8%, whereas the same indicator among men is 70.7%⁴. Moreover, the economic activity gap between women and men in the age group of 25-34 stands at 40%.
- Women's average salary is lower than that of men by 32.5%, although the educational level of employed women and men is almost the same: 30.3% of women and 28.1% of men have higher education or are involved in postgraduate studies.
- The unemployment level in Armenia is the highest among the CIS countries⁵: among women it stands at 17.8%, and among men at 18.1%. At the same time, there are significant gender differences in terms of duration of unemployment and reasons for not working. Seventy per cent of the officially registered unemployed are women; long-term unemployment level is especially high among women making up 57% of the jobless women⁶.
- In 2016, the poverty level in Armenia was 29.4% with 1.8% being extremely poor and 8.0% very poor. Fifty-six point six per cent of the poor are women, and 43.4% are men.
- Sixty-six per cent of the economically inactive population are women, which is largely conditioned by women's family responsibilities (pregnancy, childbirth, household duties, care of children and elderly, etc.)
- The prevalent majority of the economically non active women are housewives at a time when 40% of these women have higher or vocational education.
- Women perform the greater part of the unpaid work in households, which does not undergo any value assessment and is not reflected in the national accounts system.
- Among those not working due to family circumstances 99% are women, which attests to the fact that the means of state support for combining family responsibilities with a career are insufficient.
- The reasons for women not working are interconnected with the problem of low enrolment of children in preschool institutions: as of 2017 (from the number of the population in the 0-5 age group) children's enrolment in preschool institutions made up 30% -35.6% in towns and 17.2% in villages. Especially low is the level of enrolment among children in the age group 0-2 making up only 4.8%.
- The study of Armenia's population reproductive behavior has demonstrated that, although the surveyed women (42%) and men (36%) prefer to have three children, most of them, more than 50%, had two children, and 20.5% -one child. Among the cited reasons were noted absence of appropriate workplace and worthy remuneration, as well as more than half of those surveyed evaluated state support as insufficient for organization of child care and in terms of opportunities for combining child care with work⁷.

⁴Women and Men of Armenia, Statistical Booklet, Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2018
<http://www.cisstat.com/>

⁵Labor Market in the Republic of Armenia, National Statistical Service, 2017

⁷Study of the RA Population's Reproductive Behavior, UNFPA, 2017

- Youth (16-30 age group) continue to remain a stable vulnerable group in the labor market with 47.9% of economic activity level, 30.3% of low employment level and 36.7% of high unemployment level. According to the 2017 data, almost 46% of female youth in the age group of 15-29 and 23% of male youth do not study and do not work⁸.
- Women's share in the RA large, medium-sized and small businesses does not exceed 10%. Women's share is higher in microbusiness and makes up 20-25%⁹.
- The poverty level in Armenia makes up 29.4%. Fifty-six point six per cent of the poor are women, and 43.4% are men¹⁰.
- Women-headed households make up 30% of the poor and 34% of the entire population. The poverty level of women-headed households is higher, and the poverty level of women-headed households with children up to six years of age reaches 42.6%¹¹.

Are you ready

- While reviewing the RA Labor Code, to take into consideration special needs of women in labor market, including expansion of opportunities for combining work and family responsibilities.
- To initiate programs aimed at promoting women's employment and economic empowerment, including home craft and jobs with IT component.
- Within the scope of investment policies, to take into account the development of those productions which provide for women's employment.
- To introduce special programs promoting women's entrepreneurship, including business consultancy services.
- To provide opportunities for women to combine family and professional responsibilities, to support an equal distribution of family responsibilities and advocacy for family models based on mutual respect.
- To develop and introduce child care support effective mechanisms, models, and infrastructures for working women taking care of children up to three years of age.
- To expand the network of preschool institutions, create and develop an institute of nannies, assist women who, after childbirth, want to remain competitive in the labor market, through diverse professional adaptation programs.
- To provide social security, maternity protection and child care opportunities to women working in the non-formal sector (unregistered employees).
- To take steps to implement recommendations regarding women's labor rights and entrepreneurship development made within the framework of Concluding Observations on the RA fifth and sixth periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- To promote implementation of initiatives aimed at ensuring equal labor rights for women and men in Armenia¹².

⁸Women and Men of Armenia, Statistical Booklet, Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2018

⁹Gender policy in Armenia and the right of women entrepreneurship <http://employers.am/News.aspx?NewsId=39&lang=eng>

¹⁰Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, National Statistical Service, 2017

¹¹Abide

¹²Including promotion of adoption and implementation of the *Roadmap on Ensuring Equal Labor Rights for Women and Men in Armenia*, developed as a result of participatory discussions.

Rural women are especially vulnerable in terms of resource and loan accessibility, lack of land ownership, irrigation and water supply, use of machinery, sale of the produce and absence of transportation and other infrastructures.

Facts

- Thirty-one point three per cent of the republic's labor resources are engaged in agriculture, women make up 53% of those resources, which makes them an important participant in agricultural development¹³.
- Most of women are deprived of social guarantees because of their non-formal employment (unregistered workers).
- In rural areas, 27.3% of households are headed by women (34% at the national level), meanwhile the per capita income of these households is lower than that of men-headed households and they have a lower standard of living.
- Women-headed households are especially vulnerable due to the absence of agricultural machinery, low accessibility of their land plots, and problems related to irrigation opportunities and financial means.
- Women take virtually no part in decision-making regarding their communities and are, thus, deprived of the opportunity to express their interests.
- Up to date, all the elections held in consolidated communities have resulted in decrease of women's representation among councilors by two-three times. As a result, only seven out of 453 rural communities are headed by women (1.5%), and women make up only 10% of the councilors.

Are you ready

- To take measures to expand social guarantees for women engaged in the area of agriculture.
- To support the Government in raising the level of responsibility of territorial administration and local self-government bodies to elaborate and implement programs targeting development of transportation and social infrastructures in rural communities.
- To promote agricultural cooperation development through gender mainstreaming, engaging women in cooperatives.
- To develop mechanisms for ensuring active participation of rural women in decision-making processes, including community-related decision-making and elaboration of development programs.

¹³Women and Men of Armenia, Statistical Booklet, Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2018

Eliminating discrimination against women with disabilities and ensuring their full social inclusion.

Facts

- There are 205,166 persons with disabilities registered in Armenia, including 99,888 women¹⁴. In contrast to men with disabilities, women are doubly vulnerable: women with disabilities are more frequently subjected to discrimination, as well as to psychological, physical and sexual violence. In addition, they have problems connected with reproductive health.
- One of every six children with disabilities or 16% lives or studies at an orphanage or special-type boarding schools. Moreover, girls with disabilities are more often placed in an orphanage than boys and they enjoy fewer visits.
- The risk of isolation from society is higher among girls. Five per cent of boys with disabilities and 7% of girls never leave their homes or leave homes only to visit a doctor.
- One of five children with disabilities or 18%, including 17% of boys and 21% of girls, do not attend school. This rate reaches 26-27% among children with locomotor problems and/or mental impairment. Stereotypes are an additional obstacle for not going to school. In this respect, girls with disabilities are more vulnerable.

Are you ready

- To take into account the gender component in state policies and programs aimed at formation of an inclusive society to address the special needs of women with disabilities.
- To provide for gender-sensitive approaches within the framework of the system of overall inclusiveness which is being introduced in the republic.
- To develop and implement special measures to overcome additional obstacles of stereotypic nature for women and girls with disabilities to promote the accessibility of education, employment, healthcare, social life and decision-making for them.

Issue 5

Reproduction, through the educational system and mass media outlets, of gender stereotypes impeding women's advancement

Facts

- The educational system and mass media outlets are most important social institutions that reproduce and enhance gender stereotypes.
- The textbooks contribute to formation of social roles of women and men and of perceptions about their behavior rules. The existing textbooks are striking in terms of their severe gender imbalance instilling among the students the image of an active, initiating, conquering, protecting and creative man.
- Local and foreign soap operas demonstrated on TV develop skewed values: the family is the most distorted institution, husband-wife or man-woman relations are dominated by the image of the abusive man, and women are prevalently portrayed as non-working and only concerned about marriage of convenience¹⁵.

- Research demonstrates that 86% of those people that are covered by Armenian mass media outlets are men, and only 10% of the entire information flow is devoted to women. Expert opinion also belongs to men: the ratio of men to women experts is eight to one¹⁶.
- The mass media publications continue to reproduce a number of stereotypes¹⁷ underlying the preference for a male child, which promote discriminatory prenatal sex selection practices¹⁸.

Are you ready

- To include the gender component particularly in professional training of journalists and to support development of gender-sensitive policy in mass media outlets.
- To provide for gender expertise of the published school textbooks.
- To include the presentation of women's and men's equal rights and equal opportunities in all criteria of the educational sphere, methodological materials, programs, textbooks, and training manuals.
- To include topics on equal rights and equal opportunities of women and men and prevention of gender-based violence in training programs for the staff of general education schools and TVETs and to provide for conduct of gender expertise of retraining programs.
- To support organization of informational campaigns revealing the entire cause and effect chain of discriminatory sex selection practices, including emphasis on gender inequality as a main reason.

Issue 6

Prevention of violence against women and creation of state support mechanisms for persons subjected to violence

Facts

- According to the data of Armenia demographic and health survey, four out of ten women subjected to physical or sexual violence have never applied for help and have never told anyone about the violence¹⁹.
- According to the data of UNFPA 2016 sociological survey on Men and Gender Equality in Armenia, the Armenian society is inclined to justify violence against women: 27.7% of those surveyed have agreed with the statement that “Women deserve beating in some cases,” i.e. every fourth person justifies violence.
- In 2017, 793 cases of domestic violence were examined. Criminal proceedings were instituted against 196 of them (44 cases were sent to court and proceedings were discontinued against 152 of them), instituting criminal proceedings was denied with respect to 597 cases.
- Annually, NGOs dealing with the problem of domestic violence receive about two thousand alarm calls on their hot lines.
- According to the official data, 47% of sexual harassment and other cases of violence against minors take place in the family.
- In 2010-2017, 50 women were killed as a consequence of domestic violence, and nine deaths have already been recorded since the beginning of 2018.

¹⁶Research on *Woman's Image in Armenian Media*, UNFPA, 2011

¹⁷*Monitoring of Online Print Media on Sex Selection in Armenia*, International Center for Human Development, 2016

¹⁸The newborn sex ratio in Armenia was distorted back in the early 1990s and currently stands at 1.10 or 110 boys per 100 girls (the natural ratio per every girl is 1.04-1.06). And although as compared to 2005 (1.16), this indicator tends towards decrease, it is still high and, if it continues like that, it can lead to serious demographic consequences. The sex ratio quotient is especially on the rise in case of third-time childbirths reaching 1.30 or 111 boys born for every 100 girls.

¹⁹*Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015-2016*, Main Results, ADHS/National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, 2017

Are you ready

- To ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) by the Republic of Armenia.
- To create working mechanisms for prevention of violence against women, protection of those subjected to violence and persecution of abusers.
- To adopt a national program on combating violence against women of the Republic of Armenia.
- To clarify the mechanisms for enforcement of the RA Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection of Persons Subjected to Domestic Violence and Restoration of Solidarity in the Family.

Issue 7

Ensuring accessibility and affordability of healthcare services and reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates

Facts

- The maternal mortality rate in Armenia equals 25 deaths per 100 000 live births: this rate is 1.5 times lower than the average rate in the CIS countries (29.0), but almost five times higher than the average European rate. According to the recent evaluations of the maternal mortality rate, one of every 1900 women in Armenia may die due to pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum complications
- The deaths of parturient women recorded over the past two years attest to the fact that there are serious problems in this sphere, both in terms of accessibility and oversight of childbirth assistance and in terms of legal consciousness of women and the public. Only in 2016, ten mothers died during pregnancy, childbirth and afterwards. In 2017 and during the ten months of 2018, seven cases of maternal deaths have been recorded.
- The limited financial affordability of healthcare services continues to remain a serious problem in Armenia and it, first of all, adversely affects women since, as compared to men, they incur more healthcare expenses.
- Lack of women's awareness of modern methods of family planning and as a consequence, increase in the number of artificial termination of pregnancies, which continues to remain the most common way of family planning. Armenia's women cannot afford modern hormonal contraceptives due to their high price and only five out of 1000 women use them²⁰.
- The timely discovery and quality treatment of oncological diseases among women continues to remain one of the most essential healthcare issues.
- The analysis of statistical data demonstrates that in spite of the undertaken measures women's reproductive health has been deteriorating over the recent years. More frequent are pregnancy and childbirth complications. The number of self-willed and medically-indicated artificial interruptions of pregnancy and early childbirths is on the rise. During childbirth, surgical interventions are required in 43% of the cases, including 22% of Caesarian²¹.

²⁰The implementation of the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* in the Republic of Armenia during 2009-2012, Alternative Report, Armenian Association of Women with University Education, Yerevan, 2014

²¹Ibidem

Are you ready

- To improve the quality and oversight of childbirth assistance services, as well as to undertake measures targeting awareness raising of maternal health to prevent maternal and infant mortality.
- To expand and enhance programs on awareness raising of women's reproductive health and prevention of diseases, including the National Program on Improvement of Reproductive Health.
- To expand Mobile Gynecological Service and Urgent Obstetric Care systems for the residents of hard-to-reach and poor regions.
- To raise the awareness of socially insecure women on the state-provided free inpatient medical services.
- To expand state-subsidized periodic prophylactic examinations of women.
- To ensure consistent application of the tools developed and introduced within the framework of the policy on prevention of discriminatory sex selection of the fetus without medical indication and provide for oversight over the implementation of the legislative requirements, as well as to enhance and toughen the control over registered and non-registered drugs inducing artificial termination of pregnancy.
- To plan for a dramatic boost in funding for healthcare in the RA Law on the RA State Budget bringing it at least to 3% of GDP.