

EXCERPT FROM THE  
P R O T O C O L  
OF THE RA GOVERNMENT SESSION  
11 February 2010, No 5

33. ON THE APPROVAL OF THE GENDER POLICY CONCEPT PAPER

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1. To approve the Gender Policy Concept Paper in accordance with the Annex.
2. The RA Minister of Foreign Affairs, the RA Minister of Healthcare, the RA Minister of Agriculture, the RA Minister of Education and Science, the RA Minister of Territorial Administration, the RA Minister of Economy, the RA Minister of Culture, the RA Chief of Police, shall submit within a six-month period to the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs the 2011-2015 Gender Policy Action Plan (hereinafter the Action Plan) to be implemented in the respective areas.
3. The RA Minister of Labour and Social Affairs shall review and submit to the RA Government within a two-month period after receiving the Action Plan, the 2011-2015 Gender Policy Action Plan.
4. To delegate the authority to coordinate the Gender Policy in the RA to the RA Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

PRIME MINISTER OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

TIGRAN SARGSYAN

18 February 2010  
Yerevan

**Annex**  
To the protocol No.5  
of the RA Government  
Session of February 11, 2010

## **CONCEPT PAPER GENDER POLICY**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Fundamentals**

The Gender Policy Concept Paper (hereinafter the Concept Paper) defines the primary directions and general strategy of a state policy in relation to men and women and refers to the equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities by all citizens in all spheres of social life regardless of their sex.

The Concept Paper is based on the RA Constitution and laws, on international conventions ratified by Armenia, as well as on other international policy referral instruments.

The Concept Paper rests on the belief that gender equality, being the first and foremost democratic value, one of the fundamental human rights and a precondition for achieving social justice, is a prerequisite for the formation of a democratic, social and rule of law state.

In the 2008-2012 Action Plan, the RA Government recognizes gender equality, which refers to the equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities by men and women in economic, social and political life, as the first-priority direction in the policy.

Achievement of gender equality implies:

- Safeguarding equal conditions and equal opportunities for utilizing their own potential by men and women;
- Ensuring the equal participation of men and women in all aspects of social life in order to foster the socio-economic, political, cultural development of the country;
- Eliminating discrimination on the basis of sex and achieving equality for men and women;
- Equal treatment and equal attitude toward both sexes.

Gender equality promotes sustainable development, improvement of democratic processes and organization of vital social activities on the bases of true equality, solidarity, cooperation and tolerance for all social groups, as well as the efficient use of human potential and raising the quality of life.

The Concept Paper is focused on the creation of favorable conditions in legal, social, economic and cultural spheres of life aimed at the enjoyment of equal rights and equal opportunities for both men and women. It is a ground for the bodies of state authorities and local government, and for civil society institutions to develop action plans and activities directed at the promotion of gender equality.

The Concept Paper advocates an analysis of gender representation in all spheres of socio-political and socio-economic life, as well as at all policy-making levels. This is a precondition for ensuring the sustainable democratic development of society, for establishing an open, democratic and just society, the ultimate goal of which is building a rule of law state.

The Concept Paper shall be implemented with the participation of a wide stratum of society and with close cooperation between state authorities and civil society institutions.

## **1.2. Implementation of Gender Policy in Armenia: Main Principles, Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

The Gender Policy will be implemented by introducing gender criteria into all spheres of socio-political life, and by developing special programs and means to overcome gender imbalance and widen women's opportunities, and shall be based upon the following principles:

- **Compliance** with the main provisions of the RA Constitution and the international commitments of the country;
- **Democratization** in all spheres of social life;
- **Respect** for fundamental human rights and freedoms and assistance in free and creative development and maximum self-expression;
- **Publicity**, open, transparent and public development, discussion and adoption of decisions;
- **Expansion** of opportunities of the enjoyment of declared rights by women and men;
- **Promotion** of true equality and a balanced democracy
- **Harmonization** of national and personal interests of citizens regardless of their sex;
- **Social partnership** between state bodies and NGOs;
- **Continuity** of the state Gender Policy; and
- **Study** of national and international experience and its application and performance.

### **Main Goals of the Gender Policy**

- **Achieving** gender equality in all spheres of social life aimed at the sustainable development of society and the provision of democratic reforms.
- **Ensuring** equal representation of women and men at all levels of decision making.
- **Overcoming** all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex.
- **Creating** equal opportunities and equal accessibility to economic resources for women and men in the spheres of labour market and employment.
- **Forming** a democratic political culture and supportable gender dialogue in society.

### **Main Objectives of the Gender Policy**

- **Draft** a RA law "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women" and submit it to the RA National Assembly for approval.
- **Develop** and **implement** a comprehensive campaign of "positive action/measures" aimed at stage-by-stage actual safeguarding of equal opportunities, including the expansion of women representation at the decision making levels of governing bodies including political and discretionary positions.

- **Shape** an egalitarian gender culture to overcome patriarchal stereotypes and promote positive public perception of the concept of equal participation of men and women in public administration and other areas of social life.
- **Form** a unified system of national and institutional mechanisms for the development and implementation of gender equality policy.
- **Develop** and **introduce** a system of indicators for evaluating and constantly monitoring the progress of the gender situation.

### **Gender Policy Implementation Strategy**

- At national and regional levels, inclusion of the gender component into the process of policy development concerning socio-political, social, economic and all areas of cultural life, as well as political practice.
- Creation of a RA Government Task Force on Gender Expertise of projects on socio-economic development, state budget and political practice.
- Discussion of the expedience of the establishment of an expert team within the RA National Assembly for gender analysis of draft legislation.
- Introduction of gender criteria in the process of designing long-, mid-term and targeted programs for national development.
- Creation of a national mechanism for the accomplishment of gender equality.
- Gender expertise of legislation.
- Development of gender equality policy and securing monitoring for its implementation process.
- Implementation of special measures to overcome gender imbalance in all spheres of social life.

### **1.3. Gender Policy Implementation Means**

**Legal:** drafting normative legal acts aimed at the implementation of gender equality policy, and gender expertise in consideration of its impact on women and men.

**Organizational:** ensuring effective coordination between governmental and non-governmental bodies, assisting civil society institutes, establishing think-tanks and analytical information centers on gender issues, integrating national scientific potential in the study of urgent gender issues of Armenian society, constant state and social monitoring of gender situation in society.

**Advocacy, awareness raising, educational:** raising public awareness regarding the implementation of the government policy, shaping public opinion aimed at supporting the ideology of equal enjoyment of opportunities by women and men in all spheres of social life, raising the legal culture among the population.

**Human resource:** implementing measures aimed at raising gender awareness in the sphere of professional and public servant training; teaching skills for gender expertise, introduction of inter-curricular as well as special courses in high schools.

**Logistical:** developing institutions, organizations, think-tanks, laboratories and infrastructures promoting the implementation of Gender Policy; strengthening of their material and technical base through the involvement of businesses into the process of the Gender Policy implementation.

**Financial:** Ensuring financial resources for activities aimed at the implementation of Gender Policy, monitoring purposeful spending of funds, attraction of extra-budgetary funds.

Activities envisioned by the Concept Paper will be implemented in accordance with long-term state programs, with budgetary and extra-budgetary funds.

## **II. Gender Policy in the Management Sector and at Decision Making Level**

### **2.1. Situational Analysis**

Gender Policy of the Republic of Armenia in the Management Sector and at the decision making level has been aimed at establishing the equal representation of men and women within the management system, the expansion of women's opportunities at the decision making levels of governmental bodies aimed at increasing the efficiency of the democratization process and public administration system.

The RA Law "On Civil Service" of 2002 was aimed at establishing a unified civil servant training system, which would build a legal framework for improving regulation of relations in the area of civil service through hiring, selection, and training, and for improving the management system. The RA Civil Service Council has been established to regulate, monitor and oversee the sector.

To increase women representation in legislative bodies, the RA Electoral Code was amended to reflect the following: the former 5% minimum quota on female candidates for the National Assembly elections running by party lists has been raised to 15%. The number of women in the parliament grew by 4.1% in 2007 compared to 2003. For the first time, a woman was elected as the deputy speaker of the parliament.

Measures taken in accordance with "The 2004-2010 RA National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing their Role in Society" have set preconditions for increasing women's representation in the area of management, facilitated their professional development and promotion, as well as creating a pool of female human resources. A growth in the number of women in all civil servant positions has been registered compared to 2005. A targeted approach has lead to equal representation of men (51.5%) and women (48.5%) among all categories of civil servants.

The number of women has increased at the level of political decision making within executive authorities. Two women have been appointed ministers and one as a governor (marzpet).

Despite the measures taken, gender representation in the area of management and decision making remains out of balance.

Women constitute only **9.2%** of the RA National Assembly deputies. There are no women in 7 (Standing Committee on Health Care, Maternity and Childhood, Standing Committee on Foreign

Relations, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Environment, Standing Committee on Defense, National Security and Internal Affairs, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Standing Committee on Territorial Management and Local Self-Government, Standing Committee on Financial-Credit and Budgetary Affairs) out of the 12 Standing Committees of the RA National Assembly.

Women and men representation in political and discretionary positions in the executive branch remains imbalanced. Women representation in ministerial and deputy ministerial levels has decreased from 8% in 2002 to 4.8% in 2008. Only 2 out of 65 deputy ministers are women, making up almost 3 %, 1 out of 21 deputy governors (deputy marzpets), and 2 out of 10 chiefs of staff of the governors. Men dominate the staff of governor's offices.

Imbalanced gender representation lingers in the highest and chief positions of civil service, where men constitute 89% and 65%, respectively.

In fact, “femalization” has taken place at lower levels of public administration, where women constitute 58% in senior and 64% in junior positions. In 2002-2008 the unequal participation of women was noticed during competitions for civil service vacancies. Women constituted 8% of the total candidates for the highest positions and 30% for chief positions.

Gender imbalance persists at the management level of the city mayors' offices and local self-government bodies. There were no women among 48 city mayors or 51 deputy city mayors during the entire course of democratic reforms. Women constitute 0.5 % of 553 city council members (avagani), and only 2.6% of village communities' leaders.

No female candidates have run for Deputy Mayor of Yerevan in the past 10 years; none of Yerevan's 12 communities have female leaders or deputies. They constitute less than 0.5 % of members of community councils in the capital city.

The system of human resource training and professional development operates without a precise policy on human resource/staff training, which impedes the accomplishment of gender balance in the area of management, as well as at the level of political decision making. In the staff training process, 61% of women were trained for junior positions, 82% for leading positions, only 32% for chief positions and 22% for the highest positions.

The preparation of highly qualified cadres is conducted with no consideration for the gender factor, and does not comply with the urgent demand for the further democratization of the management area. Imbalanced representation of women and men at the level of political decision making impedes social justice in society and the country's further democratic development.

## **2.2. Priority Issues in the Management Sector and at the Decision Making Level**

- Imperfection of the RA National Assembly temporary special measures for the expansion of women representation aimed at overcoming gender imbalance within the body of representative democracy, as well as inefficiency of the mechanisms of law implementation.
- Imbalanced representation of men and women at the decision making levels of state authorities and local self-government bodies.
- Absence of a legal framework to expand women representation within local self-government bodies.

- Inefficiency of mechanisms to safeguard the political rights of representation of women in the executive branch, as well as in all areas of the country's socio-political and economic life.
- Absence of an effective system of personnel training and professional development aimed at the balanced promotion of women and men at various levels of public service.
- Absence of a government incentive scheme aimed at balanced gender representation in managerial positions of political parties, as well as ensuring the inclusion of the necessary number of women in proportional lists of candidates for RA National Assembly elections.
- Imperfection of cooperation mechanisms between government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the matter of training female staff as well as utilization of the potential of female cadres who received informal training from NGOs.
- Dissemination of gender stereotypes through mass media, firmly established negative public perception of women participating in politics, and of the image of a female politician and leader.
- Absence of a system of shaping the perception of gender equality within society as a way of establishing a socially oriented civil society and balanced democracy and as a pan-European value.

### **2.3. Main Goals and Objectives of Gender Policy in the Management Sector and at the Decision Making Level**

#### ***Goals:***

- ***Ensuring*** the balanced representation of women and men at all levels of decision making in representative and executive bodies as a precondition for higher quality decisions and reinforcement of social compliance.
- ***Increasing*** the number of women in the RA National Assembly and at the decision making level of government bodies through the adoption of temporary legislative measures.
- ***Utilizing*** the intellectual and creative potential of women to enhance the effectiveness of public administration and local self-governance.
- ***Integrating*** the social and political resources of women in the process of the democratization of society by overcoming discrimination on the basis of sex and gender stereotypes, as well active engagement of women into socio-political life.

#### ***Objectives:***

- ***Integrating*** the gender component into the country's political and economic development strategy and programs and regional development plans; introduction of gender expertise of socio-economic programs and plans and the evaluation of political practice at all levels of management.
- ***Creating*** a balanced attraction of intellectual resources of women and men in the process of democratization of public administration and local self-governance; introduction of the gender

approach into personnel policy through impartial inventory of opportunities and resources for women and men.

- **Ensuring** gender balanced representation at the decision making level, as well in the highest government positions by creating the necessary conditions for raising legal-political awareness among women and providing comprehensive training in organizational and management skills.
- **Taking** measures to enhance women representation in the RA National Assembly, a body of representative democracy, from 15% to 30%, in political and discretionary positions of the executive branch to 25%, in the highest and chief positions of civil service to 30% and in local self-government bodies to 25%.
- **Developing and implementing** programs aimed at raising awareness among government officials and public servants regarding the importance of gender balanced participation in the resolution of major political issues as well as in the country's sustainable development.
- **Provisioning** incentives to [political] parties whose activities are based on the consistent development of internal democracy, who give consideration to the gender factor when forming ruling bodies and facilitate the promotion of women into electoral lists through ensuring gender balanced representation.
- **Supporting** NGOs by the government/state and implementing special measures of social policy, as well as expanding the access to opportunities and resources for women engagement in politics.
- **Provisioning** of a social partnership with NGOs, developing women's civic activism through the establishment of a training system and encouraging women leaders, shaping their positive self-evaluation directed at overcoming self-discrimination and accomplishing gender equality.

#### **2.4. Primary Directions of Gender Policy in the Management Sector and at the Decision Making Level**

- Overcoming insufficient women representation at the decision making level of legislative and executive authorities, local self-government bodies, aimed at the expansion of opportunities for the participation of women in political life and the achievement of social justice and tolerance in society.
- Introducing the gender dimension into the public administration sector aimed at the democratization of administrative practice and enhancement of the effectiveness of management bodies, as well as improving the process of making and adopting decisions.
- Improving the legal, governmental and organizational measures aimed at achieving equal opportunities for women and men, and ensuring gender equality and gender equity in all aspects of social life.
- Forming of national and institutional mechanisms for the successful implementation of gender policy. Creation of conditions for balanced and full participation of women and men in the process of decision making at all levels of government bodies.
- Supporting civil society institutions, which implement educational and awareness raising programs to promote women's social political activism among women leaders and NGO activists, in order to prepare them for political activities.

- Establishing a social partnership between government bodies and civil society institutions aimed at resolving the issue of achieving gender equality and equal rights of women and men and ensuring equal opportunities in socio-political, economic and social areas; assisting in the fulfillment of social functions by NGOs and enhancing their capability to influence social processes.
- Implanting positive public perception of gender equality and women leaders through mass media, educational institutions and other agents of socialization by dissemination of information on gender equality policy. Assisting in the formation of the personality factor through the enhancement of self-evaluation of women and positive motives for their promotion in the political arena.

## **2.5. Gender Policy Implementation Strategy in the Management Sector and at the Decision Making Level**

- **Conduct** monitoring of the implementation of the state Gender Policy and the 2008-2012 RA Government Action Plan aimed at achieving equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in the spheres of socio-political and socio-economic life by appointing responsible officers in all state bodies at national and regional levels.
- **Conduct** activities aimed at full scale implementation of concluding observations, made by the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, concerning Armenia's third and fourth joint periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, to ensure gender balanced representation at the decision making levels of government bodies and the establishment of national machinery for Gender Policy.
- **Develop** and implement activities aimed at the fulfillment of the RA's commitment to bringing national human rights legislation into compliance with international standards.
- In order to ensure balanced representation of women and men at decision making levels in legislative and executive government bodies under Armenia's commitment: **amend** the RA Electoral Code to set a 30% quota, considering the European Council recommendation of about a 40% and 60% ratio of "balance threshold", and take measures for the gradual expansion of women representation in the highest and chief positions at all levels of the executive branch.
- **Incorporate** classes on gender issues into educational programs for training and professional development of managerial staff, as well as public servants at all levels through educational institutions providing trainings to public servants.
- At the national and regional levels, regularly **collect, analyze** and **disseminate** statistical data regarding the participation of women and men in public and social life.
- **Compile** a database of successful women in the areas of politics, education, science, culture, health and economy, aimed at their further promotion to managerial positions.
- **Develop** mechanisms of social partnership between state authorities and social society institutions. Develop and implement activities to support NGOs working in the informal education sector to promote the enrichment of legal-political and professional knowledge, and acquire modern socio-political methods and technologies aimed at forming a pool of competent female cadres and their further promotion to various levels of government bodies.

- **Provide** extensive media coverage of the 2008-2012 Government Action Plan on the provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of socio-political and socio-economic life, with the purpose of ensuring gender balanced representation at the management level within legislative and executive branches, as well as boosting women activism in the course of democratic reforms.
- **Implement** activities to support media outlets covering women's contribution to the country's political, economic and social life, and which impartially reflect the importance of the issue of gender equality as a balanced ground for democracy and as a precondition for overcoming gender stereotypes and the practice of discrimination on the basis of sex.

### **III. Gender Policy in the Socio-Economic Sector**

#### **3.1. Situational Analysis**

The RA Government strategy, aimed at the development of the socio-economic sphere, has made due consideration of the necessity of a gender approach in the process of evaluating the impact of economic reforms on women and men.

The RA Labour Code adopted in 2005, as well as the RA Law "On the State Labour Inspectorate" regulates legal relations in the labour and employment areas with due consideration to the gender factor and excludes any manifestation of discrimination on the basis of sex. Labour rights of working parents are regulated at the European level. The RA Labour Code views parenthood, and not motherhood, as the object of legitimate working relations.

The RA Labour Code envisages similar remuneration schemes for equal or equivalent work by women and men.

The 2005 RA Law "On the State Labour Inspectorate", among the inspectorate's other authority, stipulates for the investigation of cases of discrimination on the basis of sex during recruitment, and undertakes measures to protect employees from violations of their rights.

Nevertheless, in the situation of the transition to a market economy, gender imbalance in the area of labour and employment has not been overcome yet.

Although the distribution of recruited employees generally reflects the gender ratio of the labour force as 64% men and 55.4% women, a gender structure of the unemployed demonstrates a disproportionate distribution of unemployment among women and men. The decline of women economic activism as well as the "femalization" of unemployment continue. Unlike men, the employment of women of different age groups continues to remain at a significantly low level. 48.8% of women and 75.9% of men are employed.

Women constitute 70% of the officially registered unemployed. Officially, the rate of unemployment among the age group of employable women (30-39 years old) is 60.1%. Women of the ages 50-54 are especially vulnerable to the risk of unemployment and poverty.

A qualitative change of the structure of the unemployed is taking place. Women experience difficulties in job seeking more than men; whereas job placement opportunities for young women, women entering the labour market for the first time, single mothers and women of pre-retirement

age are minimal. The risk of members of households headed by women finding themselves in extreme poverty is one-third times higher than that of other households.

Divorce, as well as a large volume of long-term labour migration of men, increases the probability of women finding themselves in extreme poverty. The high mortality rate among men of employable age, there is a 7-8 year difference between the life expectancy of men and women, results in an increase of the number of unemployable and single retired women among the most socially vulnerable group. Women constitute 60% of all pensioners and 56% of social security pension recipients, which exceeds the number of male pensioners 1.3 times.

Women constitute the majority of laid-off staff as a result of optimization in the education and health spheres. Measures directed at professional development and job placement have yielded no tangible results so far. Women are subject to lay-offs more often than men and have more difficulties in finding a job. Outflow of women continues from influential and highly paid sectors, such as the credit, insurance and banking sectors and positions in the high technology industry. Economic growth occurs in construction, transportation and mining sectors mostly, where women employment is low.

The level of legal and social protection for women and men in the private sector is low, where they encounter such problems as the absence of employment contracts, a low level of social security and inadequate working conditions. There is a higher risk of discriminatory treatment in the informal sector of the economy.

Inadequate access to finance, credit/loans, real estate, property ownership and land use complicates the integration of women into new economic relations, limiting women's professional growth and their promotion in business. Women constitute 20-25% of business owners, 36.2% of the self-employed and only 10.3% of employers.

Despite the government effort to increase the salary in sectors with a dominating women presence, such as education, health, culture and social security, women as a social group are paid less in the listed sectors because as a rule they are involved in lesser paid sectors.

The average salary of women constitutes 60% of men's salary. Women constitute the majority in the lower paid sectors of the economy. The average monthly salary of women in the management sphere makes up 60.4% that of men, in cultural and art spheres - 65%, in health and physical culture and social security - 63% and in trade and catering - 68.2%. The average income of women remains lower than that of men. Women have the opportunity to receive higher wages in sectors with a dominating men presence.

A discrepancy between the implemented policy and the legislation, as well as discrimination on the basis of sex still exists and is coupled with existing social traditions. This becomes especially visible in the process of the application of laws.

The unequal position of women and men in the economic sphere increases the risk of discrimination with regard to the enjoyment of rights and opportunities, and the traditional division of gender roles becomes a strong factor for gender inequality. Women spend five times as much time performing unpaid house work than men, as a result of which women have 1 hour 40 minutes less free time than men. A total of paid and unpaid work for men is 6.5 hours, and for women 7 hours 51 minutes, whereas profitable work - 1.44 hours and 5.18 hours, respectively.

Economic dominance between women and men is not distributed evenly; the availability of economic and social resources to both sexes is also different. Representation of women and men in

managerial positions of the economic management sphere is imbalanced both at high government and community levels. Women are represented only in the lower grades of the economic grading system and are practically deprived of participation in the decision making process concerning major economic issues, and, consequently, from the opportunity of voicing their interests.

### **3.2. Priority Issues in the Socio-Economic Sector**

- High level of unemployment. “Femalization” of unemployment;
- Gender discrimination (segregation) in the labour market and employment sector;
- Large share of women in the informal sector and increased discriminatory treatment;
- Outflow of women from highly paid sectors;
- Gender-related disproportion of wages and incomes;
- Low representation of women in the business ownership sector and in leadership of organizations; and
- Gender imbalanced representation at higher levels of economy management.

### **3.3. Main Goals and Objectives of Gender Policy in the Socio-Economic Sector**

#### ***Goals:***

- ***Reducing*** socio-economic inequality, eliminating inequality in the social status of women and men.
- ***Ensuring*** equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market and employment sector.
- ***Overcoming*** gender-based discrimination and bias in the labour market and employment sector.

#### ***Objectives:***

- ***Take*** comprehensive measures to eliminate the negative consequences of structural reforms in the socio-economic sector aimed at raising the competitiveness of women and securing gender equality, reduce discrimination by profession and reduce gradually the wage differences of women and men.
- ***Assist*** in providing equal access to economic resources and economic authority for men and women and overcome the marginalization of women in the labour market and employment sector.
- ***Reduce*** discrimination on the basis of sex and its further elimination in the economic sector; include the gender component in the system of economy management.
- ***Integrate*** women into decision making levels of the economic management sphere and in the area of distribution of public resources and property.
- ***Increase*** the role of women in entrepreneurship development, assist in boosting the economic activism of women in rural areas.
- ***Assist*** in the equal distribution of work, professional and family responsibilities between women and men.

- **Develop** mechanisms for legal protection from gender based discrimination in the workplace and in the process of hiring and termination.

- **Strengthen** social protection for vulnerable and low income households headed by women and in incomplete households.

### **3.4. Primary Directions of the Gender Policy in the Socio-Economic Sector**

- Gender analysis of economic development and budget policy.
- Development and implementation of mid- and long-term programs to increase the production capacities with due consideration to step-by-step balanced integration of women and men into employment. Support small and medium sized businesses by means of integrating the female labour force with the purpose of stimulating the trade and domestic industries, as well as the development of ethnic handicraft culture.
- Ensure equal remuneration schemes for jobs of equal value and social importance. Ensure a gradual salary rise for state-funded employees and a reduction of gender discrimination in the wages and employment spheres.
- Undertake measures to decrease the number of workers in hazardous and dangerous working conditions, prevent job-site injuries in extremely hazardous industries, as well as reduce the harmful impact on men's health.
- Develop and improve the legal, governmental and institutional mechanisms at the national and regional levels, which will ensure compliance with anti-discriminatory norms stipulated by labour legislation aimed at guaranteeing equal treatment for women and men during hiring, promotion and termination.
- Informational support to the policy of equal rights and opportunities of men and women. Increase the accessibility of information resources for female business owners.
- Study the gender aspect of poverty; implement support measures targeting socially vulnerable groups, incomplete households, households headed by women with multi-children families, pensioners and the disabled.

### **3.5. Gender Policy Implementation Strategy in the Socio-Economic Sector**

- **Conduct** gender expertise of the RA laws and other legal norms regulating working relations; develop and implement activities to ensure the principle of equal remuneration for equal and similar work and eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex.

- **Conduct** periodic monitoring of the RA legislation on rights and guarantees of working women, strengthen state supervision and stipulate penalties for violation of legislation and sex discrimination. Conduct public gender expertise of normative legal acts and conduct assessments of working conditions of workers employed in hazardous and dangerous jobs.

- When designing and implementing socio-economic policy, **give due consideration** to the gender aspect of sectors with a dominating women presence. Stimulate additional job creation and salary increase in the light and food industries, social services and population services sector.

- **Conduct** constant monitoring to ensure compliance with UN Conventions and International Labour Organization documents ratified by Armenia, aimed at the introduction of gender criteria into priority issues, as well as at safeguarding the rights of women and men in the employment and labour sectors.
- **Conduct** evaluation of normative legal acts with respect to safeguarding the equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities in the labour market by women and men and develop mechanisms for their effective implementation. Draft legislative acts to stipulate economic incentives and privileges to increase employer interest in hiring workers with family responsibilities with part-time or flexible schedules, as well as home-employment.
- **Improve** the existing state and private investment programs directed at job creation for women and develop new programs. Launch programs designed to establish a "business incubator" system and develop small and family businesses by training women in the basics of entrepreneurship and providing further assistance in developing their own business by the provision of business plans, privileged loans, equipment and raw material.
- With respect to the gender component, **conduct** assessment of environmental and working conditions impact on health, including the reproductive health of the staff employed by companies of all types of ownership. Conduct measures to ensure the job security of men employed by mining and construction companies. Develop standards for evaluating working conditions and vacation periods in companies of all types of ownership.
- **Improve** the system of additional training in order to improve professional development and qualification, create conditions for reintegration into work activities for women returning from leave connected to pregnancy, childbirth and child care.
- **Ensure** support for gender related research in the economic sphere, including studies of issues related to discrimination on the basis of sex in the labour market and the employment area.

## IV. Gender Policy in the Education Sector

### 4.1. Situational Analysis

The Policy of the Republic of Armenia in the education sphere was directed at the democratization of educational institutions, improvement of the quality of education and its accessibility, pursuit of principles of social justice and safeguarding equal opportunities for citizens of both sexes.

The RA education laws, including the laws "On Education" (1999), "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education" (2004), "Primary Vocational (Crafting) and Secondary Specialized Education and Study" (2005), "On Preschool Institutions" (2005), "Education for Persons Requiring Special Conditions for Education" (2005), define priorities and principles set out by the state educational policy and provide for a unified organizational-legal and financial-technical basis for the coherent functioning of all elements of the system.

The following operational documents: "The Education Development National Programme 2001-2005", "Public Education System", (2004) "The RA Strategy on Primary Vocational (Crafting) and Secondary Specialized Education and Study" (2004), "National Program for Education Development for 2008-2015", "The RA Concept Paper and Strategy for Pre-School Education Development" (2004), "2008-2015 Strategic Program on Pre-School Education Reform" (2008) have created prerequisites for the improvement of educational content and enhancement of the

effectiveness of system management. Funding volume of the education sector almost doubled in 2008 compared to 2003, thus reaching 2.9% of the GDP.

Educational criteria have been introduced, the full transition from 10 to 12-year education has been completed, and the method of school graduation exams has changed, thus contributing to overcoming the gap between secondary school and high school. High school has switched to a dual-degree teaching system, while a credit system is being developed in line with Armenia's commitment under the Bologna Process.

Nevertheless, the adopted laws and programs aimed at the development of the education system have not undergone gender expertise to ensure the creation of a gender oriented educational strategy and to study the impact of the reforms on boys and girls, as well as the issue of actual access to education for women and men in the situation of world socio-economic instability and globalization.

No gender study has been conducted in respect to the educational and methodological curricula that is introduced in public schools, especially in social sciences that shape democracy beliefs and civil values.

The education system fails to convey gender balanced expectations as to the role of women in society or ideals of their equality with men. Textbooks contain material and pictures depicting gender stereotypes, while their influence on the formation of the student's personality is neglected; they do not facilitate the formation of an egalitarian gender culture.

There is a gender imbalance among the teaching staff in public schools, where male teachers constitute only 15.8%. Imbalanced representation of men and women does not facilitate the formation of positive gender conception. "Femalization" of the school teaching staff impedes full socialization of boys and girls, their equal preparation for military service and defense of national security, posing a risk of a "Malization" crisis.

An absence of due supervision over of children's school attendance in recent years has predetermined a trend of lower engagement of children in the main education system, thus impeding the ability to enjoy the fundamental constitutional right to mandatory basic education. In general, 8% of children in the country, and 13.5% of children in certain provinces (marzes) do not attend school, do not socialize in educational institutions and do not acquire the civil qualities necessary for social life. 75% of children expelled from or not attending school are boys, thus predetermining gender imbalance at the next levels of education. The current situation may lead to the emergence of a pool of functionally illiterate citizens in the near future.

The pace of re-orientation of the higher education system toward a knowledge-based economy and post-industrial society is insufficient. The reform of high school is conducted without consideration as to the **rapid development of education**, perspectives of Armenia's engagement in the Bologna Process, directions of country's economic development strategy or gender peculiarities of cadre demand and job placement opportunities for potential graduates.

In the course of system reform, the need for gender expertise of the process of training of specialists in gender issues, legislation, political process, as well as prospective and mid-term targeted programs for country's development is neglected.

The Gender component is introduced slowly into the content of education in specialties like economics, law, political and social sciences. Professional training of students is devoid of gender

education as a factor for raising socially active and responsible citizens adhering to the ideals of democracy, social equality and justice.

The initiative to institutionalize gender related education in high and secondary schools undertaken by NGOs has not gained much support.

The enrollment in higher educational institutions is planned without consideration to the cadre demand in the labour market, innovative branches of the economy or job placement perspectives for the graduates. Given the dominating presence of girls in bachelor (54.9%) and master's (5.6%) studies, they remain underrepresented in the technical and natural science education spheres, which opens a window for entry into highly respected and highly demanded occupations in the labour market, in particular occupations in the information and communication technology sector. The number of girls is significantly higher in private universities (59.6%).

The gender imbalance among students predetermines gender disproportion in a number of social areas, which complicates job placement and exacerbates unemployment and social tension.

The number of students enrolled in pedagogical studies significantly exceeds the current demand for teachers. In the 2005-2006 school year, 4,731 students were accepted into pedagogical universities, neglecting the reality of lay-offs of teachers as a result of optimization; only 2,048 out of 2,507 graduates of the same year found employment. In the 2007-2008 school year, women constituted 84.2% of the entire teaching staff and more than 90% of pedagogy students. Naturally, the issue of job placement of women among certified teachers (with a diploma) is discussed more often than of men. In state and private pedagogical higher educational institutions the need for state regulation of student enrollment in certain specialties has become urgent, creating a need to institute special measures aimed at overcoming the gender imbalance among teachers by increasing the number of male teachers.

In past years, the trend of a decreasing number of women has been noticed in the area of graduate studies such as master's and doctorate, as well as in science. Naturally, the gender-based split at the level of master's and doctorate studies has led to a decrease in the number of women with scientific degrees among faculty members of higher educational institutions, as well as in scientific research areas. There are four times less women with doctoral degrees than men.

The process of democratization of the education management sector proceeds slowly, one of the reasons of which is imbalanced gender representation. Women do not enjoy full participation in the process of development of the education strategy by the Government. During the past four years, no woman has been appointed minister or deputy minister of RA Ministry of Education. There are only three women among 11 department heads in regional governors' (marzpet's) offices or mayor's office of Yerevan.

No work is being conducted to accomplish a balanced representation of women and men in the management of secondary schools. Despite the fact that women constitute 84.2% of the total general secondary school staff, the number of men prevails among school directors, equaling 60.2%.

Women representation remains low among university rectors, deputy rectors, heads of chair and heads of faculty, although women constitute 57.5% of faculty members. Only 2 out of 23 rectors of state universities are women, whereas they constitute 35.5% of the 62 private university rectors. None of the rectors of the three state pedagogical universities, with a share of female students reaching more than 90%, are women.

Men prevail in institutions like student councils, which are shaping important civil qualities of student self-government and developing organizational and leadership skills. Gender issues are not paid due attention in their activities.

Imbalanced representation of men and women at all levels of management and decision making of the education sphere does not ensure truly democratic governance.

#### **4.2. Priority Issues in the Education Sector**

- Adoption of education laws and programs without gender expertise or consideration of their impact on the educational system and on sustainable social and democratic development.
- Reform of secondary education content without integration of the gender component, especially in social sciences. Introduction of teaching-methodological curricula in primary and secondary education without gender expertise or consideration of the need to overcome gender stereotypes.
- Absence of a comprehensive concept or methodology for educating the rising generation in civil activism and gender equality, social compliance, democratic norms and principles of respect towards human rights and freedoms irrespective of sex.
- Drop out of children and youth, especially boys, at the primary school level.
- “Femalization” of the teaching staff in secondary schools and dominance of women among students of higher pedagogical institutions.
- Slow pace of introduction of gender related inter-curriculum and special courses in high schools, as well as scientific research on gender knowledge and challenges in the curricula of higher education institutions.
- Imbalanced representation of women and men in the areas of education management and education policy development.

#### **4.3. Main goals and Objectives of the Gender Policy in the Education Sector**

##### ***Goals:***

- ***Creating*** optimal conditions to maximize the creative and intellectual development of both sexes by further improvement and democratization of the education sphere.
- ***Educating*** socially active and responsible citizens, shaping an egalitarian gender culture, supporting gender equality in society, social justice and enjoyment of social freedoms.
- ***Establishing*** gender balanced representation at all levels of the education sphere.

##### ***Objectives:***

- ***Integrating*** the gender component into the state education policy.

- **Strengthening** state supervision of children's enjoyment of the constitutional right to education; **integrating** boys and girls fully into the main education spheres pursuant to the RA "Law on Education"; **increasing** the responsibilities of parents and local governments for the full integration of children into the school education.

- **Ensuring** equal access to quality education at all levels for both sexes.

- Step-by-step, **integrating** gender knowledge into the education sector directed at shaping an egalitarian gender culture among the rising generation and preparation of socially responsible, active, democracy oriented citizens.

- **Encouraging** girls to receive an education which would allow them to acquire influential and marketable occupations, to receive education in technical and natural sciences and to engage in scientific work.

- **Promoting** the engagement of boys and men into pedagogical work and education of the rising generation at the secondary school level.

- **Increasing** the number of women at the levels of decision making and educational policy design in the sphere of education management.

- Constant **monitoring** of program content, teaching and methodological curricula and other training material intended for overcoming patriarchal gender stereotypes and practices of discrimination on the basis of sex.

#### **4.4. Primary Directions of Gender Policy in the Education Sector**

- **Safeguarding** equal access to state educational infrastructures and services for women and men, creating optimal conditions regardless of sex for personal development and gradual integration into unified higher educational system within the European area by ensuring equal degrees or taking into consideration the content of education ,where gender dimension remains one of the core ones.
- **Designing** a philosophical education concept aimed at the full self-expression of women and men, as well as the elimination of biased attitudes towards one of the sexes.
- **Forming** an egalitarian notion of gender relations, drafting new education curricula and manuals directed at the creation and implantation of principles of gender equality, as well as at overcoming traditions that encourage patriarchal gender stereotypes.
- **Integrating** gender education into the curricula as a mandatory component at all levels of the education system.
- **Increasing** women's representation at all levels of decision making and education policy development within the education management system.

#### **4.5. Gender Policy Implementation Strategy in the Education Sector**

- **Establish** a body within the RA Ministry of Education and Science to conduct gender expertise of prospective and mid-term development programs, training-methodological curricula for professional development of pedagogical staff and other training literature.

- **Create** a training-methodological framework for teaching the basics of gender related knowledge, including programs, textbooks, training and methodological manuals for all levels of the education system.
- **Develop** a methodology for conducting gender expertise of education, legislation, sub-legislative acts, policies and programs, as well as introduce analytical tools aimed at the introduction of gender perspectives.
- **Promote** the process of institutionalization of gender education and gender researches, **develop and introduce** inter-curricular and special courses at all levels of the education system.
- **Establish** inter-university chairs and gender research centers, **promote** scientific research of gender-related issues.
- **Design and introduce** special programs which keep in mind the encouragement of women and men to choose professions atypical for their sexes, where they remain underrepresented.
- **Institute** special temporary measures, material and moral incentives for boys and men enrolling in pedagogical higher educational facilities by setting a mandatory employment period in secondary schools.
- **Institute** state education loans based on gender differences with longer repayment periods and low interest considering government priorities in training of certain specialists.
- **Establish** special training and professional development courses for training female staff for managerial positions in the education sphere.
- **Overcome** gender imbalance in the education sphere and within the management of administrative structures and safeguard equal career, professional and creative growth opportunities for women and men aimed at the democratization of the education management sphere.
- **Increase** women's representation in the management of educational institutions directed at the further democratization of the education sphere and improvement of morale and the psychological environment of educational institutions.

## V. Gender Policy in the Health Sector

### 5.1. Situational Analysis

The RA Government has conducted the targeted work of reforming the health system, setting as a priority the accessibility and quality of medical services to any and each individual. The 1996 RA "Law on Medical Assistance and Service", the 2002 RA Government decision "On Adoption of National HIV/AIDS Prevention Program" and the 2002 RA Law "On Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights of Human Beings" are all aimed at the improvement of the legal regulation of the health sphere.

The following laws and legal acts have been introduced to improve the quality of health services: "Maternal and Child Health Care 2003-2015 Strategy", "National Program on Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention of Cervical Cancer in Armenia, 2006-2015", "2007 –National Strategy, Program and Actions Timeframe on Reproductive Health Improvement ", "Strategic Plan on the

Response to HIV Epidemic in the Republic of Armenia for 2007-2011", as well as the "Primary Health Care Strategy of the Republic of Armenia for 2003-2008".

The transition to free outpatient services in polyclinics in 2006 created an opportunity to expand the scope of preventative measures and to undertake additional measures directed at the examination and early diagnosis of all categories of the population. Introduction of vouchers for childbirth assistance as of 1 July 2008 mitigates corruption risks in the health sphere.

The reform of the health system has facilitated equal access to primary medical services for women and men, increased the social protection of vulnerable groups and conditioned positive progress in national healthcare.

Armenia's cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) has facilitated the development of health policy and advancement of the sector by applying modern medical technologies.

Nevertheless, the adopted legislation and state programs have not passed gender expertise and, as a result, no consideration has been given to the peculiarities of the needs of women and men, as well as the impact of the reforms on various sex and age groups of the population.

The Budgets were compiled without taking into account all gender peculiarities of the most problematic areas of healthcare, in particular without considering gender-sensitive indicators while organizing for the prevention of widespread diseases.

The issue of public health remains rather acute due to the absence of mandatory health insurance, timely and age-risk-based medical treatment using costly medical technologies, as well as the absence of preventive measures for men's (prostate diseases) and women's (breast cancer, etc.) diseases.

Malignant tumor morbidity has different manifestations depending on sex and age group: women aged 20-59 constitute 59% of all patients while the risk of malignant tumor at a younger age among boys is almost three times higher than among girls.

The Gender peculiarity of tuberculosis morbidity is manifested by the fact that the number of infected men exceeds that of women fourfold; in 2007, 63% of all TB infected patients under the age of 14 were boys.

The prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS and the treatment of virus-positive persons mandate us to consider the fact that the number of registered male patients exceeds that of females fourfold.

The gender approach is necessary in order to determine the means of addressing the issue of the difference in male and female life expectancy. The average male life expectancy is 6-7 years less than that of females. The rate of male mortality is higher among all age groups, particularly boys under 5 and adult men over 55, which leads to gender imbalance in the population. The rate of male mortality is particularly higher among men of employable age. Men are more subject to the risk of cardiovascular disease, psychosomatic diseases, distorted behavior, suicide and drug addiction. In 2008, the number of men suffering from myocardial infarction was 2.5 times higher than the number of women. Men constitute 64.6% of the total number of patients with mental disorders, while the number of suicides among men is 5.6 times higher than among women.

The rate of child mortality remains high, reaching 10.8 per one thousand as of 2008. A large number of diseases and complications during pregnancy and childbirth affect the health condition of newborns and is one of the main causes of child mortality. Despite the decreased trend (in 2008

it decreased to 10.8 per one thousand compared to 15.5 in 1996), the child mortality rate remains rather high. In rural areas child mortality from ages 1-5 is 1.6 times higher than in urban areas. Thus, if 94% of women in urban areas have access to medical assistance, including pre-natal and child delivery assistance, only 83% of women in rural areas have this opportunity.

The reproductive culture of women and men remains low, abortion being used as the main family planning method; birth rates decline, reducing the average number of children per family which may lead to serious demographic consequences.

The low level of health care culture continues to pose a problem, coupled with the absence of special education and information measures aimed at the promotion of healthy lifestyle in the sense of gender concept. As a result, the population, especially men, fail to pay sufficient attention to their health and/or seek timely medical attention. Anti-smoking advertising is not utilized effectively which, given the limited opportunities of access to adequate medical service, creates a risk of reduction of the quality of life.

Women, who constitute 70% of health sector workers, have not been represented in ministry management and are deprived of directly influencing the state health policy development. The imbalanced representation of women and men at various levels of the sector management and leadership and in the management of medical facilities does not contribute to the resolution of the major challenges of healthcare or its quality improvement. The existing major challenges in the health sector have gender peculiarities and require a gender oriented approach.

## **5.2. Priority Issues in the Health Sector**

- Limited access to quality health services for men and women
- Absence of gender expertise of laws, programs and strategies aimed at a differential approach to the health protection of men and women.
- Low level of saturation of medical facilities with modern equipment in regions (marzes), especially in rural areas.
- Low level of awareness of the population about the ways and methods of health protection, early detection and prevention of female and male diseases.
- Insufficient cooperation of health organizations and institutions with NGOs.

## **5.3. Main Goals and Objectives of Gender Policy in the Health Sector**

### ***Goals:***

- ***Ensuring*** access to quality and gender balanced health services based on respect and protection of all social groups.
- ***Creating*** conditions for the health protection of men and women, ensuring a healthy lifestyle and the reproduction of a healthy generation as preconditions for national security.
- ***Ensuring*** the balanced representation of women and men at all managerial levels of the health sector.

### **Objectives:**

- **Initiating** the gender expertise of laws, programs and strategies directed at the improvement of the health sphere with the purpose of integrating the gender component into the main profile areas and considering their impact on different sex and age groups.
- **Developing** criteria for sex- and age-based medical services, establishing preventive measures for women's and men's health with regard to age and working conditions; considering the gender component when introducing the criteria for quality medical services; ensuring their monitoring.
- **Ensuring** quality and accessibility of medical services to all social groups of the population, safeguarding equal rights and opportunities for women and men with respect to receiving quality medical services and choosing a medical facility irrespective of their agency affiliation or ownership.
- **Developing** a program for furnishing urban and rural medical facilities with modern, hi-tech medical equipment aimed at safeguarding citizens' equal rights to quality medical services and its accessibility irrespective of their place of birth.
- **Preventing** diseases which cause serious social consequences, as well as diseases affecting the reproductive health of women and men.
- **Increasing** the awareness of the population with an increasing sense of responsibility for leading a healthy lifestyle and for personal health.
- **Promoting** reproductive culture among women and men through the implementation of formal and informal education programs covering major health challenges, reproductive rights and healthy lifestyle.
- **Gradually mitigating** the gender imbalance in leading positions within healthcare management at the levels of ministry, governor's offices (marzpet's offices), relevant agencies, as well as medical facilities.

### **5.4. Primary Directions of Gender Policy in the Health Sector**

- Ensuring quality and accessible health services; designing a system of preventive measures and programs for all social groups country-wide with consideration to the gender factor.
- Improving the reproductive health of men and women, reducing the rate of maternal mortality, developing a family planning system and increasing the birth rate.
- Raising public awareness on the rights and opportunities in medical services and health protection, as well as on the principles of a healthy lifestyle by means of formal and informal education and media propaganda.

### **5.5. Gender Policy Implementation Strategy in the Health Sector**

- **Study** the social, economic, and environmental causes of general diseases of women and men; design programs to mitigate their negative impact on reproductive health with respect to sex and age.

- **Design and implement** programs for prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of socially dangerous diseases affecting women's and men's health. Develop and implement programs for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of women in rural areas.
- **Create** conditions for more effective implementation of the "Healthy Motherhood" program accompanied by the expansion of treatment opportunities for women in the regions (marzes) and rural areas. Design and introduce modern medical technologies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of a healthy generation and the prevention of child mortality.
- **Ensure** state and NGO (public) monitoring of the childbirth voucher program, take measures for the prevention of any violation in this area.
- **Design** a national program on family planning with consideration to the existing situation, national peculiarities and goals of the health policy. Furnish healthcare facilities in regions and rural areas with necessary specialized types of medical assistance services.
- **Provide** financing for prevention and early diagnosis campaigns with respect to their peculiarities and impact on women and men of all ages. Ensure the distribution of budget means based on priorities and with consideration to their gender peculiarities.
- **Conduct** scientific studies of major health challenges for women and men, set criteria for the quality and effectiveness of medical assistance.
- **Develop and implement** programs on healthy lifestyle and anti-smoking campaigns aimed at increasing public responsibility for personal health.
- **Develop and implement** mechanisms to ensure safe working conditions for men and monitoring of the mining sector and other hazardous industries.
- **Develop and implement** awareness programs for the prevention of HIV/AIDS by engaging NGOs and media.
- **Ensure** support to NGOs engaged in the protection of health for women and men. **Combine** the efforts of governmental organizations and NGOs to shape public opinion about informational and educational programs and healthy lifestyle and to implement other measures.

## **VI. Gender Policy in the Culture and Public Information Sectors**

### **6.1. Situational Analysis**

The 2008-2012 Action Plan of the RA Government sets as culture priorities the issue of raising the level of public culture and culture production, preservation of the ethnic origins of the national culture, overcoming of provinciality, expansion of the world outlook of citizens, and safeguarding of the population's access to national and world cultural resources for the upcoming year. The main directions of the culture sector were defined as follows: proportional development of culture, protection of cultural heritage, development of modern infrastructures in art, promotion of cultural practice, utilization of modern technologies and cultural education.

The activities of cultural facilities and organizations are directed at safeguarding the equal rights and opportunities for women and men to participate in cultural life, using scientific achievements,

enjoying moral and material benefits of personal authorship and creative activities as well as freedom of creative work.

The “2004-2010 Republic of Armenia National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society” stipulates the coverage of gender equality principles by culture and mass media, as well as the promotion of public ideals of women and men, raising the prestige of women.

Nevertheless, culture related legislation, strategies and programs do not undergo gender expertise, thus impeding the ability to evaluate the issue of safeguarding the right to free cultural and creative work for women and men, as well as the right to equal access to cultural values.

The scope of activity of artistic unions, recreation centers and mass media is extremely slow to react to the existing needs. The activity of cultural facilities does not sufficiently promote egalitarian democratic culture in society.

At times, the culture sphere and mass media implant stereotypes and groundless viewpoints according to which the equality of women and men and concepts of gender equality are foreign and unworthy for the national mentality. It is portrayed as unnatural for an Armenian woman to engage in social and political activities. The idea that women traditionally see their vocation only in the family is imposed on the public.

Cultural facilities, mass media and civil society institutions fail to conduct the proper work to raise the level of public gender culture or to emphasize the role of women throughout the historical development of Armenian society. At the current stage, besides gender tolerance and egalitarian relations of women and men typical of the Armenian mentality, they fail to provide information promoting the public perception of values of equality and self-expression of female intellectual potential in all areas. There are no targeted programs covering the process of Armenia's compliance with ratified international documents concerning the state gender policy and gender equality.

The absence of statistical sex-disaggregated data regarding the spectators of concerts and theater performances and museum visitors complicates not only drawing a real picture of consumption of cultural production by men and women, but also the development of a gender oriented strategy in the culture sector. No consideration is being given to issues of gender imbalance existing in the aforementioned sector when designing the policies and programs of cultural facilities.

A Gender composition of culture facilities staff is conditioned by the ongoing “femalization” of the sector, where women constitute 97-98% of library workers, 85% of museum staff, as well as the staff of music, arts, fine arts schools and youth culture centers.

Despite a certain amount of recorded progress, cultural and media institutions fail to take serious and consistent measures to change the existing stereotypes about the social role of women, or even pay sufficient attention to the positive portrayal of the role of women, their significant contribution to the development of free thinking and to the cultural and educational sphere. They pay no attention to the history of prominent female politicians and social workers. There are very few creative works, presentations, publications and other materials in literature, theater and media, depicting women, who represent half of Armenian society, and are engaged in active work for public benefit in various vital areas.

The media frequently presents to the readers and audience materials of a discriminatory nature about women. The coverage of gender equality concepts by mass media is limited to random measures: the broadcasting of conferences or roundtables, or interviews with political party or

NGO activists. The scarce journalistic material is published or broadcasted on the occasions of national women's days, such as March 8 and April 7.

The majority of mass media, having no precise gender concept, continue to spread out and implant the idea of "the natural destination" of women and their sole role in the family of raising children. The stereotypical depiction of women is particularly common in advertising and commercial broadcasting. The mass media reproduces outdated gender stereotypes and makes no efforts to overcome them or shape the image of a contemporary Armenian woman. Numerous programs, films and even cartoons contain elements of propaganda depicting violence and aggression as necessary attributes of manliness.

Special women oriented media forms public opinion about women having exclusively family responsibilities, which are of no interest to other members of the society. Eventually, this estranges them from discussions regarding urgent problems of social development and impedes public perception and weakens the image of a contemporary woman as a full member of the society. The content of women oriented printed material and television programs limits their familiarization demands mainly to jewelry, fashion, cooking and sexual relations between women and men, etc..

Issues of concern for women managers, leaders, businesswomen, self-educated contemporary women who combine domestic and professional responsibilities and who fully and actively participate in the political and social processes fall beyond the scope of the media. The majority of mass media do not address the issues that would concern women managers, leaders, businesswomen and self-educated contemporary women who combine domestic and professional responsibilities from the standpoint of active participants in the political and social processes.

Women oriented print and electronic media fail to include popular science periodicals and programs devoted to issues of labour and employment, the equality of women and men, political participation of women and other issues. The current situation in the media sphere is a result of wide spread stereotypes among journalists that major gender challenges do not apply to Armenian society.

## **6.2. Priority Issues in the Culture and Public Information Sectors**

- Adoption of laws and programs in the sphere of culture without gender expertise and introduction of the gender element.
- Insufficient coverage and demonstration of the significant contribution made by women in textbooks of humanitarian subjects of secondary schools and higher educational institutions, in the spheres of contemporary works of art and literature, national preservation, Armenian culture, education and science.
- Insufficient knowledge by journalists and mass media policy makers about contemporary scientific surveys of gender equality and the international obligations of Armenia. Lack of the gender concept in activities of the mass media.
- Reproduction of patriarchal gender stereotypes by the mass media.
- Limited introductory functions of the mass media addressing issues solely of one gender.
- Insufficient demonstration of positive images of women by the mass media.

- Lack of statistics on the cultural demands of the population, participation in cultural life and association with cultural values.
- Lack of sex-disaggregated statistics on employees of institutions of culture, lack of surveys concerning reasons for gender inequality in certain spheres of culture.
- “Femalization” of staff at art schools, libraries and museums.

### **6.3. Main Goals and Objectives of Gender Policy in the Culture and Public Information Sectors**

**Goals:**

- **Overcoming** gender stereotypes in society and **forming** an egalitarian gender culture for achieving gender equality, social justice and social freedoms.
- **Ensuring** optimal conditions for citizens of both sexes through associating with values of national and global culture and utilizing creative work potential by means of future improvement of the system of culture.
- **Overcoming** future “femalization” of institutions in the spheres of culture and achieving balanced gender representation at all levels of governance of culture.

**Objectives:**

- **Including** the gender component into state policy in the sphere of culture;
- **Introducing** gender knowledge in the system of education for the formation of a true image regarding national traditional egalitarian gender culture;
- **Ensuring** equal opportunities for both genders for receiving quality aesthetic education;
- **Spreading** regular and fundamental knowledge among mass media policy makers and employees in the sphere of culture about historical facts regarding gender relations in Armenian society, contemporary gender surveys, as well as international obligations and programs of the government on the equality of women and men;
- **Overcoming** stereotypes incompatible with Armenian traditional gender relations and contemporary living conditions and rooting a principle of indiscrimination in the mass media policy;
- **Permanent monitoring** of the enforcement of cultural constitutional rights of the population, **broadening** the cultural demands of the population, as well as broadening selective surveys and statistics of those who participate in cultural life and associate with cultural values;
- **Providing** statistics categorized by gender regarding the consumption of culture and about all categories of employees employed in cultural institutions. Providing sex-disaggregated statistical data on culture consumption and in all categories of employees employed in cultural institutions.

#### **6.4. Primary Directions of Gender Policy in the Culture and Public Information Sectors**

- Including the gender component in the state policy in the sphere of culture.
- Introducing the principles of gender equality and indiscrimination in the sphere of culture and in the mass media.
- Overcoming images obstructing national traditions and culture, as well as sexist stereotypes.
- Encouraging the defeat of gender stereotypes and encouraging gender balanced demonstration of positive images of women and men by the mass media.
- Introducing gender education into the departments of journalism of higher educational institutions.
- Expanding the participation of women in decision making and at policy development levels of the system of culture governance.

#### **6.5. Gender Policy Implementation Strategy in the Culture and Public Information Sectors**

- ***Introduction*** of gender expertise of laws, sub-legislative acts, policies and programs concerning the sphere of culture.
- ***Elaborating*** analytical tools for the introduction of gender perspectives in the sphere of culture and mass media policy.
- ***Encouraging*** positive coverage of the main gender issues through print and electronic media and spreading the idea of equality for women and men.
- ***Establishing*** educational-methodological curricula into the departments of journalism of higher educational institutions for teaching gender subjects: programs, textbooks and other methodological handbooks.
- ***Introducing*** the gender component into the major subjects of departments of journalism of higher educational institutions.
- ***Creating*** initiatives for the enhancement of gender sensitivity of the mass media through special projects for publishers, editors, journalists.
- ***Providing*** state funding to support social programs of social importance, which involve mass media and audiovisual technologies (movies, performances, and advertisements), addressing gender equality issues.
- ***Introducing*** gender knowledge among employees in the sphere of culture and in the system of training of journalists.
- Permanent ***monitoring*** of mass media outlets for assessing the gender situation in the country, balanced reporting of positive images of women and men, as well as for detecting sexist and gender stereotypes.

## **VII. Gender Policy in the Area of Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Human Exploitation (Trafficking in Human Beings)**

### **7.1. Situational Analysis**

The Government, by confirming its support of the policy of prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, and by considering this violence as one of the gross violations of human rights and a demonstration of discrimination which entails social disintegration, has made consistent efforts in the direction of the prevention of violence.

“The 2004-2010 RA National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing their Role in the Society” envisages measures for the prevention of violence against women, defines time frames, as well as defining the ministries and agencies responsible for carrying out the above measures.

The government, in following the long-term strategy and principles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1994), has implemented projects on the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination, prevention of trafficking in human beings, improvement of the legislative framework aimed at the protection of women and men subjected to violence, as well as projects designed for their social-psychological rehabilitation and improvement of the system of a consultation provision by social services.

In 2005 the RA Law “On Social Protection” was adopted which defines a concept of violence and social support by the state to individuals found in dire conditions.

In 2006-2007 the RA National Statistical Service, with the participation of non-governmental organizations, conducted three surveys about the collection of data on violence against women in the family and in the workplace.

In 2006, the government of Armenia joined the “Blueprint of the Council of Europe to Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women, Including Domestic Violence” in the framework of which the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs drafted an action plan that involves a set of measures: round table discussions, meetings with civil society and interested international organizations, dissemination of publications and booklets, and information postings on Internet. Needs assessment, collection of statistical data and assessment of situation were conducted in the framework of the Action Plan.

In a conference held in May 2008 the implementation results of the Action Plan were summarized and the activities to be carried out in that sphere by the government and civil society were outlined.

With the support of the UN and other international organizations, the non-governmental organizations, in cooperation with state institutions, held the awareness campaign on “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence”. The state institutions and non-governmental organizations took part in the campaign organized by the Council of Europe, as well as in other events held in the framework of the announced year to combat domestic violence.

Certain work for prevention of violence and protection of victims has been conducted by non-governmental organizations with the support of international funds (Global Learning, USAID, and the Global Fund for Women). Projects for the protection of victims were implemented in Yerevan, Martuni, Gyumri, Yeghegnadzor: hot-lines and trust telephones operated, shelters were built,

medical, legal and social consultations were provided, crisis centers operated (“Hope”, “Family Center”, and the“Center of Mother and Child”), and information, analytical and educational projects were implemented.

Starting in 2008, the functions of the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs began to include the social protection of victims of violence. The 2008-2012 Action Plan of the RA Government includes measures on the prevention of violence and social support to victims of violence and their household members. A midterm state project “Establishment of Crisis Centers for the Victims of Violence” for 2009-2011 was adopted. In the RA 2009 state budget, 16 million drams was allocated for funding services to victims of violence.

Armenia has ratified the main international instruments concerning the fight against trafficking in human beings: the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2001) and its protocols, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005). In October 2002, an interagency commission was established on the issues of fighting against trafficking in human beings, which became an interagency council by the decision of the Prime Minister in December 2007, under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister and the participation of the ministers concerned. In 2004, the Concept Paper on the “Prevention of Illegal Transportation, Transfer and Trafficking from the Republic of Armenia for the Purpose of Exploitation” was adopted. In 2004-2006 the “The Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings from the Republic of Armenia” was implemented. The second 3-year plan “2007-2009 National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings” and a time-table for its implementation are underway.

The Criminal Code of Armenia provides provisions that envisage aggravation of the punishment for organizing illegal migration for the purpose of labour and other types of trafficking.

Despite the measures taken, the major challenges of gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings still remain vital for the country. The geopolitical and socio-economic conditions of Armenia, unemployment, illegal migration, the social-economic dependence of women in the family and unresolved household problems result in an increase in gender-based violence. The RA “Law on Family Violence” has not been adopted yet.

Such conceptions as the phenomenon of demonstration of a stigmatic approach by society towards victims and the necessity of fighting against it are still absent.

## **7.2. Priority Issues in the Area of Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings**

- The lack of legislation on the prevention of gender-based violence and mechanisms for permanent monitoring of the implementation of the existing normative-legal acts.
- The imperfection of precautionary actions of legal, political and administrative nature for the protection of a person against all types of violence.
- The insufficiency of comprehensive surveys of the essence, reasons and consequences of the given problems, including violence and trafficking in human beings.
- Underestimation by society of the effect of violence and trafficking in human beings on all spheres of social life, and on the moral and value orientation of Armenian society.
- Insufficient application of legal instruments for the protection of victims.

- Absence of state programs for victims of violence and trafficking in human beings, as well as programs for the rehabilitation of persons who committed the violence.
- Low awareness in the population about gender-based violence and trafficking. Intolerant and stigmatic approach of the population towards the victims of violence and trafficking in human beings.
- Absence of a database of facts of violence against people.

### **7.3. Main Goals and Objectives of Gender Policy in the Area of Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings**

***Goals:***

- Consistent efforts for the ***reduction*** and ***prevention*** of all types of gender-based violence for achieving legal, social and economic equality in society.

***Objectives:***

- ***Adopting*** a law on the prevention of gender-based violence for the enhancement of the effectiveness of the process of implementation of law, clarification of procedures of accepting applications from victims and their examination.
- ***Drafting*** projects on the prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking; organization of special services of psychological assistance and rehabilitation to victims and persons who committed violence.
- ***Organizing*** training courses of contemporary technologies for the fight against gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings for employees of law enforcement bodies, social services and health spheres for the purpose of rendering assistance to victims of violence and persons who committed violence, including rehabilitation and other types of services.
- ***Supporting*** scientific surveys, information collection and statistical surveys of reason, nature and consequences (including effective measures of prevention and elimination) of different types of violence and trafficking under state supported thematic survey funding.
- ***Gaining support*** by state and social institutions for non-governmental organizations within the framework of activities of prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings.
- ***Founding*** of a statistical database on gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings.
- ***Enhancing*** public awareness and implementation of educational-consultative projects on the major challenges of violence and trafficking in human beings aimed to amend the stereotypes of gender violence.

### **7.4. Primary Directions of Gender Policy in the Area of Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings**

- Adopting of legislation and normative-legal acts aimed at combating gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings in accordance with the requirements and norms of the UN

model legislation and other legal instruments, including the harmonization of existing legislation and normative-legal acts with international norms.

- Improving the process of implementation of the law, improving the system of training and retraining employees of law enforcement bodies, social and health services for the purpose of rendering practical assistance to victims of gender-based violence and trafficking.
- Scientific-methodological support to activities of social institutions and other bodies working with victims of violence and trafficking in human beings for conducting permanent monitoring and upgrading of projects and events.
- Strengthening the fight against violence and the formation of a culture without violence through the publication of agitation materials and real coverage of major challenges by the mass media.

## **7.5. Gender Policy Implementation Strategy in the Area of Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings**

- ***Introduce*** the mechanism of gender expertise of legislation and normative-legal acts.
- ***Establish*** the system of protection for victims of violence and trafficking. Develop the sphere of protection of victims of violence and trafficking; establish crisis centers in Yerevan and in the regions (marzes).
- ***Organize*** the training and retraining of relevant employees of interested bodies for work with victims of violence and trafficking, as well as with the persons who committed the violence.

## **VIII. Summary**

### **8.1. Preconditions and Urgency of the Implementation of the Concept Paper**

The Concept Paper was developed with consideration to the experience gained in the course of the implementation of two National Programs of the government “The RA National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing their Role in Society” for the periods of 1998-2000 and 2004-2010, the midterm and targeted projects in the social-economic and culture spheres, including major challenges and strategic objectives of the state Gender Policy in socially important spheres of activities of the state and the public and the mechanisms of their implementation.

The Concept Paper was developed in consideration also of the experience gained in the course of the implementation of projects by the NGO sector that were dedicated to major gender problems and were implemented both with effective cooperation of the state bodies within the framework of social partnership and together with international organizations. In developing the Concept Paper, international experience was studied and used.

Certain legal, organizational and ideological preconditions have been created in the country for improving the gender situation, for overcoming the imbalance in socio-political, economic and social spheres and for carrying out a purposeful Gender Policy.

The vitality of the Concept Paper of the Gender Policy of the Republic of Armenia is predetermined by the following circumstances:

- The achievement of gender equality is recognized by the government as a priority direction of social policy;
- Armenia has declared its adherence to the ideals of democracy and social fairness and has taken the path toward joining European structures where the ideals of gender equality are of priority importance;
- Armenia has undertaken a number of obligations by ratifying the main conventions and international treaties of the given sphere;
- A political will has been formed for changing the gender situation;
- Society accepts the urgency of major challenges of gender equality;
- Bases have been formed for the survey of major challenges of gender related issues, including the major challenges of gender equality, achievement of gender balance, gender-based discrimination and discrimination;
- Awareness raising projects are being implemented to overcome gender stereotypes and to perceive that gender equality is a necessary condition for safeguarding human rights, social equity and democracy; and
- Projects are being implemented that are directed at the enhancement of political awareness, legal awareness and political activeness, as well as the development of political leadership of women.

## **8.2. Concept Paper Implementation Strategy**

For carrying out the Gender Policy of the Republic of Armenia, the government:

- Will develop an action plan of implementation of the Concept Paper for the period up to 2015,;
- Will prepare a bill of proposals for legislative activities in the sphere of gender policy, including a draft legislative proposal regarding state guarantees to equal rights and opportunities for women and men;
- Will establish institutional structures at the national and regional levels with the appropriate powers for the implementation of the Concept Paper; and
- Will support the dissemination in Armenia of the ideas of gender equality and provisions of the Concept Paper by way of implementation of information-educational projects.

## **8.3. Concept Paper Implementation Mechanisms**

For the effective coordination of all steps of the implementation of the Concept Paper at the national, regional and local level, the government will form a National Mechanism, as well as the necessary institutional mechanisms for achieving gender equality.

The National Mechanism will be vested with the powers of coordination of activities of all institutional mechanisms and structures at the national and local levels. The National Mechanism will have a clear mandate and wide competences for the incorporation of the gender component into the policies of all spheres of social life and development programs, for the development of gender situation evaluation indexes, as well as for carrying out gender expertise and permanent monitoring and for classification of relevant financial and human resources .

For ensuring a balanced participation of women and men in socio-political, economic and socio-cultural life of the country, for embedding democratic values and norms, tolerance and social solidarity as fundamental principles of social relations, for ensuring the accomplishment of social and gender equity for the improvement of the quality of life and for the formation of civil society, the existing organizational mechanisms will be strengthened and new mechanisms responsible for the implementation of the Concept Paper in all spheres, at all levels of the system of state governance will be created.