



Republic of Armenia

Major Groups and other Stakeholders Questions and Answers as part of the Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Armenia at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

New York, 28 July 2020

Question 1 – [Considering the high importance of maintaining the principle of inclusiveness and participation throughout the entire process of SDG implementation, what are the planned actions to further strengthen the multi-stakeholder dimension, with the main focus on CSOs and expert community engagement in the process of nationalization of SDG targets and indicators, particularly on SDG 5?]

Response - Reaffirming its commitment to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Government of Armenia has recently established its renewed National SDG Council, as the principal body for the coordination and oversight of the SDG nationalization and implementation process. This is an inclusive and collaborative endeavor between the Government and wider participatory networks, including civil society, academia, the UN country team, etc. that correspond to the “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach. Hence, seven seats of the Council are provided for the senior representatives of civil society organizations that operate in the fields of labor, employment, poverty eradication, education, health, environment and climate change, justice and human rights protection, industry, trade, innovation and infrastructure. The Government has identified the promotion of gender equality and implementation of the SDG 5 as one of the critical factors for the sustainable development in all of the abovementioned areas and fields, and has adopted more horizontal approach towards its representation in the Council, implying that the CSO’s that has applied for the seat in the Council in any of the fields, should include the promotion of gender equality in their programs and actions during the 2-year period of their presence in the Council.

Question 2 – [What are the embraced strategies to mainstream gender equality principles into actions on implementation of all SDGs in accordance with the

Commitments made by Armenia within the framework of the BPfA, CEDAW, and UN SCR1325?]

Response - Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is a priority of the Government of Armenia. In 2019, the Government approved the Gender Policy Strategy and the Action Plan for 2019-2023, defining the priority directions of gender policy and aiming to create favorable conditions for exercising rights and opportunities of women and men in all aspects of social life, also taking into consideration the international commitments of Armenia. In 2019, gender-responsive budgeting elements and indicators have been added to the budget statement for 2020. In 2019 number of municipalities ensured gender-responsive budgeting with support from UN Women/UNDP and GIZ.

Active and meaningful participation of women in political life is another important priority for the Armenian Government. During the snap parliamentary elections in December 2018 women's share increased both in terms of candidates and the number of elected MPs. Currently women represent 24% of the National Assembly of Armenia. The executive power also witnesses steady growth of the number of women at the decision-making level. Since 2018 there is a progress with regard to the number of female deputy ministers (11).

The National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325, adopted by the Government Decree dated February 2019 prioritizes gender mainstreaming in security sector, including peacekeeping and peace-building activities.

On April 23, 2020, by the Decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia N490-A, a Commission was established on Implementation and Monitoring the National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Armenia has prepared its seventh periodic report to be submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has coordinated the reporting process in which all relevant ministries and authorities have been included and have contributed.

Armenia is actively supporting the global efforts for promotion of gender equality, enhancement of opportunities and empowerment of women within the framework of its membership to the UN Commission on the Status of Women for the period 2019-2023. The Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations was elected as the Chair of the 64th and the 65th sessions of the CSW.

Question 3 – [The world is facing an unprecedented threat from COVID-19. With the ambition to leave no one behind, how the impact of Pandemic is considered in the SDG implementation process, with the main focus on women and girls?]

Response – The Covid-19 pandemic and restrictive measures both at national and community levels have substantially restricted economic activities in sectors such as tourism and hospitality, transport, trade, agriculture and services. The pandemic has been particularly detrimental to older persons, people with health conditions, people living in poverty, persons with disabilities, people at risk of domestic violence and youth. COVID-19 pandemic has had and will continue to have significant influence on healthcare, socio-economic and demographic situation in the country. A rise in unemployment is expected, particularly among youth, with deepening of existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, such as for people employed in the informal sector and those relying on remittances. Education quality and accessibility was undermined by the temporary lockdown, affecting in particular the most marginalized groups. Existing vulnerabilities relating to food security and nutrition are worsened by the ongoing crisis and the pressure to fast-track the economic growth will possibly overshadow environmental sustainability considerations.

There is a risk that violence against women and girls may increase or intensify. In order to address this issue a working group on the COVID-19 within the Office of the Human Rights Defender was established aimed to respond to the emergency calls received through the hotline. Hence, the Office continues to work in a 24/7 regime. The Office of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia also established a specialized working group on the domestic violence prevention issues.