



National Assembly-CSO Cooperation Platform

Annual Review Meeting

Platform Agenda - 2020

December 19-20, 2019

The goals of the meeting:

- To summarize the results of the meetings of the National Assembly-CSO Cooperation Platform and outline mechanisms for making the Platform more active and effective,
- To develop an Action Plan of the National Assembly-CSO Cooperation Platform for 2020 aimed at improvement of gender policies in the country.

Participating in the meeting were more than 50 representatives of the National Assembly, the Government and Civil Society, who made their contributions to the formulation of the Platform agenda.

The meeting was organized within the framework of the program Modern Parliament for a Modern Armenia. The Project is implemented by UNDP in Armenia in partnership with the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, OxYGen Foundation, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and International Center for Human Development. The project is funded by the UK Good Governance Fund and the Government Offices of Sweden.

1. **The annual summary report on the Platform activities**, which was based on an assessment carried out among the Platform participants, was presented by the OxYGen Foundation expert Tamara Hovnatanyan.

The assessment report is provided [via this link](#).

2. Development of Proposals

The meeting discussions resulted in presentation of a number of suggestions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Platform activities. The suggestions can be grouped in the following way:

➤ **Expansion of the composition of the Platform participants:**

- To expand links with organizations dealing with protection of women's rights, to establish cooperation with the Ombudsman's Office, the Council on Women Issues and other relevant departments;
- To engage more female MPs, including those who do not share the positions voiced at the Platform;
- To expand the participation of MPs, including male MPs;
- To ensure two-way links and communication with the marzes. Either to organize visits to the marzes or to organize some meetings right in the marzes, or to maintain an inclusive approach by engaging female representatives of local self-government bodies in the Platform activities, particularly, in the discussions on changes to the Laws on Self-Governance.

➤ **Expansion of the content:**

- To create working groups on issues requiring more professional discussions and to convene parliamentary hearings, as necessary;
- To organize visits to the marzes, including important issues for a given marz. This way the issues on the Platform's agenda can also be discussed with target groups;
- To carry out preparatory work for consideration of sensitive issues, including the ratification of the Istanbul Convention;
- To generate more suggestions, to carry out work targeting to transform greater number of proposals into legislative initiatives;
- To respond to legislative initiatives on women issues at e-draft website;
- To develop suggestions on legislative regulation of the social protection of rural women;
- To continue work towards improvement of the Electoral Code, using as its basis the roadmap on protection of women's labor rights submitted to the Government by *OxYGen*;
- To initiate activities aimed at creation of self-regulatory mechanisms against gender violence and its propaganda in mass media;
- To organize preparatory work to introduce gender-responsive budgeting;
- To develop an action plan to increase the role of women in local self-government bodies through legislative initiatives and advocacy campaigns.

➤ **Selection of topics:**

- In order to select topics, to use as a basis the priorities of 2019-2023 Strategy on Gender Policy Implementation adopted by the RA Government, which are consonant with the approaches of the document *Women's Agenda for Development* serving as a basis for the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Platform;
- To put the topics to be discussed to vote in advance to determine the priority order and urgency of their discussion.

➤ **Other formats and modes of activities:**

- To make the Platform meetings more frequent;
- The Platform can come up with statements on urgent issues;
- To present the suggestions made at the Platform in the form of a unified document;
- To create also an online platform so that the agenda becomes more flexible and it is possible to discuss the current issues and to present suggestions at that very platform;
- To participate and contribute to the Beijing+25 process and to the work of the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women devoted to it, taking into consideration the fact that during this period Armenia will be the country chairing the Commission;
- To take part and/or to respond to a number of events aimed at women's and men's equal rights and opportunities, including:
 - The process connected with the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action,
 - The fifth anniversary of Sustainable Development Goals,
 - The 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325,
 - The presentation by Armenia of a regular periodic report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- To join the initiative "Not in my Parliament" proposed by PACE and, thus, to come up with messages ruling out hate speech and sexism. The civil society should also join this initiative;
- To respond to attacks against female human rights activists and to consider the possibility of disseminating a joint statement on behalf of the Platform;
- To voice and present the issues discussed at the Platform at the sessions of the Council on Women Issues through MPs and CSO representatives to the Council:

➤ **Ensuring publicity:**

- To publicize the positive results of the Platform's work, and although the Platform's being closed is an advantage, it is worth ensuring publicity regarding some issues;
- In some cases, the discussions can be broadcast live to ensure the participation of a wide public so that it is clear that the women represented at the National Assembly are solving problems and should be reckoned with (editor's note: this suggestion was rejected during the discussion);
- To publicize the Platform activities through dissemination of annual reporting and organization of periodic press conferences.

➤ **Capacity building:**

- To raise the public awareness of international documents and conventions not only among the Platform participants, but also among students and youth;
- To publicize the importance of Istanbul Convention's provisions and mechanisms and to focus efforts on introducing them in the national legislation and, thus, achieve the Convention's actual goal and avoid the existing apparent political confrontation with respect to the Convention;
- To organize presentation of the international experience and international documents associated with the discussed topics for MPs;

- To build the capacities of the NA MPs and to create expert groups to ensure the gender sensitivity of bills and speeches, as well as to reveal the legislative gaps and to provide relevant documentary materials.

3. Development of Action Plan:

Based on the above noted suggestions and as a result of joint discussions, an action plan was developed for the Platform's future activities. It includes:

- I. Actions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Platform's activities
- II. Actions aimed at expanding the content of the Platform discussions
- III. Actions aimed at building the capacities of the Platform participants.

Below is presented the preliminary version of the Action Plan, which is subject to approval and endorsement by the Platform participants.

2020 Action Plan

for National Assembly-Civil Society Organizations Cooperation Platform

(Preliminary version)

#	Activity	Clarifications
I. Activities aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Platform Operations		
1	Approval of the Platform Action Plan /for a period of one year/	The preliminary version of the Action Plan is prepared based on the proposals voiced during the wrap-up meeting of the Platform and is subject to final agreement and approval by the Platform participants.
2	Expansion of the number of legislative initiatives, including:	

	<p>2.1. Mandatory response to legislative initiatives associated with women’s issues at E-draft website,</p> <p>2.2. Submission of proposals to MPs authoring legislative initiatives related to women’s issues,</p> <p>2.3. Preparation of proposal packages on gender mainstreaming of different laws and their presentation to key players,</p> <p>2.4. Presentation of legislative initiatives and their discussion at the thematic meetings of the Platform,</p> <p>2.5. Formation of working groups on legislative initiatives, as necessary.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Publicizing the Platform activities, ensuring the visibility of issues discussed at the Platform, including:</p> <p>3.1. Presentation and dissemination of the annual report,</p> <p>3.2. Organization of periodic press conferences and presentation of some thematic discussions,</p> <p>3.3. Preparation and dissemination of videos to clarify issues discussed at the Platform or some legislative initiatives,</p> <p>3.4. Preparation of videos on topics discussed at the Platform to present experiences and success stories or viewpoints of actual people,</p> <p>3.5. Use of the toolkit of MP statements and parliamentary hearings to publicize the Platform discussions,</p> <p>3.6. Dissemination of joint statements on behalf of the Platform.</p>	<p>-</p> <p>- Statements on the most sensitive issues are made in the event the Platform participants reach a consensus.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Ensuring two-way communication between the Platform and the marzes (administrative-territorial units), including:</p> <p>4.1. Organization of regional target meetings with the involvement of MPs representing the given locality,</p>	<p>- If expedient, to combine the regional meetings with electoral processes.</p>

	<p>4.2. Involvement of female representatives of local self-government bodies in the work of the Platform, and, particularly, in discussions of changes to laws on local self-governance,</p> <p>4.3. Development and organization of joint campaigns to increase the role of women in local self-government bodies.</p>	
5	Dissemination of joint statements on behalf of the Platform	
6	<p>Promotion of cooperation with the Council on Women Issues, including:</p> <p>6.1. Invitation of the Council Chairperson or other members to the Platform discussions,</p> <p>6.2. Organization of joint events with the Council.</p>	
7	Ensuring the inclusiveness of the Platform discussions through involvement of other stakeholders, including youth groups, ethnic minorities, mass media, and marz representatives.	
II. Activities aimed at expanding the content of the Platform discussions		
8	<p>Laying the priorities set out in the 2019-2023 Strategy on Gender Policy Implementation adopted by the RA Government at the basis of the Platform discussions, including:</p> <p>8.1. Perfecting the national machinery for women's advancement, equal participation of women and men in governance and at the decision-making level,</p> <p>8.2. Overcoming gender discrimination in the socio-economic area, expanding women's economic opportunities,</p> <p>8.3. Expanding women's and men's full and effective participation and equal opportunities in the areas of education and science,</p>	<p>-The approaches of the document on <i>Women' Agenda for Development</i> placed at the basis of the Platform activities by the Memorandum of Understanding coincide with the priorities of the Gender Strategy.</p>

	<p>8.4. Expanding women's and men's equal opportunities in the area of healthcare,</p> <p>8.5. Preventing gender discrimination.</p>	
9	Organizing a joint discussion with the Council on Women Issues on ensuring gender sensitivity of laws and introduction of clearly coordinated mechanisms for conduct of oversight.	
10	Introducing suggestions to the Draft amendments to the Law on Parties.	
11	Introducing suggestions to the Draft amendments to the Law on Local Self-Governance.	
12	Discussing changes to the Law on Local Self-Governance in the City of Yerevan to provide for representation of women in appointed bodies, as well as to address other issues.	
13	Introducing proposals to the Draft Amendments of the Electoral Code to ensure the 40/60 proportion within the gender quota, as well as to address other issues.	
14	Organizing discussions related to women issues of ethnic minorities.	
15	Establishing a working group to ensure the participation of the Platform representatives in the 64 th session of the Committee on the Status of Women and other Beijing+25 events and to organize an awareness-raising campaign.	
16	<p>Establishing the institution of public reprimand for hate speech and manifestations of sexism through joint public actions and campaigns by the Platform participants –MPs and CSO representatives, including:</p> <p>16.1. Carrying out an action on social media platforms by the initiative of MPs and in accordance with “not in my parliament” model and special hashtags to rule out sexism and hate speech from the Parliament's podium,</p> <p>16.2. Involving youth groups in public actions, including representatives of street art to make appropriate graffiti,</p>	

	<p>16.3. Monitoring manifestations of sexism and hate speech in statements and speeches of statesmen,</p> <p>16.4. Introducing proposals to legislative initiatives aimed against manifestations of sexism and hate speech.</p>	
17	<p>Developing suggestions on legislative regulations of social protection of rural women, including identification and assessment of issues related to their social protection.</p>	
18	<p>Continuing activities aimed at improvement of the RA Electoral Code on the basis of the Roadmap on protection of women’s labor rights developed by OxYGen Foundation in a participatory format and submitted to the Government.</p>	
19	<p>Establishing a working group for ensuring gender sensitivity of mass media, including:</p> <p>19.1. Presenting and publicizing final conclusions and suggestions regarding monitoring of gender sensitivity of mass media,</p> <p>19.2. Studying and presenting the international experience in terms of possible mechanisms and legislative or other regulations for ensuring mass media gender sensitivity,</p> <p>19.3. Organizing, if necessary, discussions on possible changes to the Law on Mass Media,</p> <p>19.4. Organizing discussions on creation of self-regulatory mechanisms in mass media against gender-based violence , hate speech and sexism with participation of mass media and Ombudsman, including also on the creation of an independent institution with a regulatory function,</p> <p>19.5. Developing ethical rules to be upheld by political figures, mass media and those structures that are responsible for media content, including also for the productions of television companies,</p>	

	<p>19.6. Adding regulatory provisions on discrimination, sexism, gender sensitive vocabulary in the ethical rules for journalists,</p> <p>19.7. Clearly formulating gender sensitive vocabulary for journalists to avoid expressions of sexist nature.</p>	
20	<p>Presenting a proposal to the Council on Women Issues to ensure mandatory representation of women among invitees to events or meetings financed from the public funds, including:</p> <p>20.1. Conducting preliminary monitoring in this direction to reveal the general picture on women's participation among invitees to and experts and speakers at the state-organized events.</p>	
III. Capacity-building of the Platform participants		
21	<p>Developing the capacities of MPs to ensure gender sensitivity of their statements and draft laws and to provide them with relevant expert materials, including</p> <p>21.1. Establishing working group («women's shadow cabinet») to ensure gender sensitivity of laws and legislative initiatives with involvement of different experts, including those from the National Assembly Department for Legal Expertise.</p>	
22	<p>Increasing the awareness of the Platform participants on international documents related to women's rights and the State's commitments within their framework, including:</p> <p>22.1. Organizing awareness-raising campaign to raise the awareness of MPs and all the Platform participants regarding the Beijing+25 processes,</p> <p>22.2. Raising awareness of Istanbul Convention among MPs.</p>	-CEDAW, Sustainable Development Goals, Resolution 1325, Beijing Platform for Action, documents of the Council of Europe, of the OSCE, etc.
23	<p>Conducting preparatory activities for introduction of gender-responsive budgeting, including:</p> <p>23.1. Introducing the requirement of data presentation on gender impact in addition to</p>	

	<p>economic and legal conclusions regarding legislative initiatives,</p> <p>23.2. Ensuring the participation of MPs and the NA specialists in the pilot program of the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues and the Finance Ministry.</p>	
24	<p>Studying the international experience and organizing international visits to ensure experience exchange on introduction of gender sensitive approaches in the work of the Parliament.</p>	