



Beijing+25: Armenia's Commitments, Achievements, and Challenges

Meeting of the National Assembly-Civil Society Cooperation Platform

COMMUNIQUE

On July 29 of this year, a regular meeting of the National Assembly-Civil Society Platform was held. The meeting was devoted to the Beijing+25 processes and it specifically focused on commitments undertaken by Armenia within the framework of the critical area of concern *Women and Armed Conflict* highlighted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The year 2020 marks 25 years since the day when, in 1995, more than 17 thousand official delegates from 189 countries, including from Armenia, came together at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and made commitments to the unanimously adopted Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Today, within the framework of the Beijing +25 process initiated to implement these commitments, Armenia has a more than active role since in 2020-2021 it is chairing the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which is an oversight body for issues related to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Participating in the meeting were MPs, representatives of the Government and state structures, representatives of civil society, and experts.

The meeting was convened within the framework of the project *Modern Parliament for a Modern Armenia*. The UNDP “Modern Parliament for a Modern Armenia” project is co-implemented with the OxYGen Foundation, the International Center for Human Development, and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, in cooperation with the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia. The project is funded by the United Kingdom's Good Governance Fund and the Government of Sweden.

Presented during the meeting were:

- Information regarding the global process of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as activities carried out by the Republic of Armenia in this respect.
- The section of the alternative report on *An Analysis of Implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* devoted to the critical area of concern on *Women and Armed Conflict*.
- Details regarding the process of realization of the 2019-2021 National Action Plan on implementation of the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace, and Security*.

I. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Armenia

The expert Tamara Hovnatanyan presented the 25-year-long history of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the processes that have unfolded over the past years, the priorities set and challenges encountered, as well as the role of Armenia in these processes.

Extracts from the presented material:

- Taking part in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 were 47 thousand participants from 189 countries: 17 thousand official delegates and 30 thousand activists from non-governmental organizations. Armenia too participated in this process with 26 participants: eight members of the official delegation and 18 representatives from civil society organizations.
- Beijing Platform for Action highlights twelve critical areas of concern, each of which contains a brief analysis of sectorial issues, strategic objectives and description of the actions to be taken. The twelve critical areas of concern cover poverty, education, healthcare, violence, armed conflicts, economy, decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the status of women, human rights, mass media, environment, and the girl child.
- The Beijing+25's slogan is *Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future*.

- On March 22, 2019, Mher Margaryan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, was elected chair of the UN Commission on the Status of Women for its 64th and 65th sessions to be held in 2020-2021.
- It is planned to convene a special session in September on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In the lead-up to this session, expanded discussions are being organized with the involvement of all stakeholders.

See detailed information on the topic in the presentation made at the meeting:



II. **Alternative report on *An Analysis of Implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Armenia*: the critical area of concern on *Women and Armed Conflict***

The expert Natalya Martirosyan highlighted the *Women and Armed Conflict* section of the alternative report prepared within the framework of the *Modern Parliament for a Modern Armenia* project. The section provides general evaluation of the achievements and systemic problems of Armenia's state policies for ensuring women's rights and equal opportunities in the area of prevention and resolution of armed conflicts over the past five years. The report also contains recommendations for the Government and legislature.

The six strategic objectives for the critical area of concern on *Women and Armed Conflict* in the Beijing Platform for Action are concerned with both issues of women's protection and women's direct participation in the process of resolution of conflicts, which is important given the existing situation in the Republic of Armenia and ongoing long-term conflicts.

While presenting the critical area of concern on *Women and Armed Conflict* in the Beijing Platform for Action, the speaker also highlighted the importance of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace, and Security* and actions taken in Armenia in this direction. Among the most important achievements the speaker noted the adoption of the National Action Plan (NAP) aimed at implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace, and Security*. During the discussion, observations and problematic issues related to the NAP implementation were noted as well:

- The underrepresentation of civil society structures in the NAP implementation and the non-utilization of their extensive experience and expertise in this direction can reduce the effectiveness of the planned activities in terms of successful implementation of the plan.
- "The output indicators" in the NAP, which are not clearly defined in some cases, are difficult to measure and do not take into account the mid-term and long-term impact. It would also be desirable to have a more comprehensive and detailed monitoring plan in place.

- The biggest concern about the National Action Plan is the absence of funding from the state budget: NAP does not include allocated budget or its estimate. It is apparent that without commitment of serious financial means it is difficult to expect high activity effectiveness and significant results.
- It is important to integrate the commitments to the issue of *women, peace, and security* in the key national and interdepartmental policies and to reflect them in relevant documents and planning and monitoring processes.

See the complete version of the revealed problems and suggestions in the report.

III. **The process of realization of the 2019-2021 National Action Plan for implementation of the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace, and Security***

In addition to the discussed topic, Head of the Department for Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs Karine Sujayan presented the activities undertaken by the Republic of Armenia with respect to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Ms. Sujayan highlighted the importance to the existence of the document since it:

- Specifically emphasizes the possibility for making the voice of women residing in conflict zones heard, as well as the involvement of women in all stages of the Karabagh conflict and utilization of their potential in serving the process of conflict resolution. The importance of Resolution 1325 is especially great for Armenia since it appeals and relates not only to member states, but also to those non-member states that are located in the conflict area.
- Specifies the existing actors, defines the timetable for implementation of activities and mechanisms of monitoring and oversight.
- Ascribing priority importance to women's participation as outlined in the provisions of the resolution, it is necessary to note that at the state level, especially in the Minsk Group negotiations processes, women, unfortunately, have zero participation.

The meeting participants also came up with a number of suggestions related to the NAP implementation:

- To improve the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with civil society organizations since there is a problem with access to information regarding the processes carried out by the state, which relate to peacemaking and processes ongoing within the framework of international commitments. It is necessary to create working platforms of the Ministry and civil society organizations, which will clarify the cooperation formats and will make it more effective.
- To initiate a discussion through engaging the RA Ministry of Defense to also consider issues of internal reforms, such as women's involvement in power structures or women's conscription for a fixed-period military service.
- To ascribe importance to incorporating a gender component in the process of reforms in the police system. It was suggested that non-governmental organizations dealing with women's issues be

involved in the Coordinating Council for police reforms strategy and related 2020-2022 action plan or cooperate with civil society organizations engaged in this council to ensure the incorporation of a gender component in the process of reforms, which is in line with the relevant provision of Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace, and Security*, which notes that police reforms should contain a gender component.

USEFUL LINKS:

National report on Implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Armenia –[link](#)

The alternative report on An Analysis of Implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Armenia, which covers 3 critical areas of concern: *Women and Armed Conflict*, *Women and the Economy*, and *Education and Training of Women* - [link](#)

The regular issue of **the EQUAL newsletter** devoted to the 25th anniversary of adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – [link](#)

The 2019-2021 National Action Plan on implementation of the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace, and Security* – [link](#)

Information Brochure: 2019 – 2021 National Action Plan of Armenia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security – [link](#)

UN Women's report on *Gender equality: Women's rights in review 25 years after Beijing* based on generalized approaches of Beijing Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goals - [link](#)