



ԵԱՀԿ-ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**29th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**  
**“Promoting comprehensive security, stability and sustainable development in the OSCE area through women’s economic empowerment”**  
**First Preparatory Meeting**  
**Closing Statement by the Delegation of Armenia**

*15-16 February 2020*

Mr. Moderator,

Let me first thank the speakers for their interesting and thought-provoking interventions. These discussions became another opportunity to assess and reflect on the achievements and challenges that our societies face with regards to the empowerment of women and advancement of their rights, and we take this opportunity to thank the Swedish Chairpersonship for introducing this topic for consideration.

In Armenia, throughout years we have constantly increased the role and engagement of women in almost all areas of socio-economic life. At the same time, while having many achievements with regards to the promotion of women's rights, we are still discovering the new perspectives and benefits of more active women participation in our political and socio-economic life. And there are a number of important measures and activities aimed at further empowering women, possibly in all aspects of our life.

The active participation of women in the political life of Armenia is another benchmark in our efforts to empower women and enhance their participation in public life. The amendment of the Electoral Code so as to increase women's representation threshold from 20 to 25 percent is an important step to this end. It is envisaged to further raise the threshold up to 30 percent. Equally, there is an increased number of women holding high positions in the public administration.

The issue of women’s rights is also on our foreign policy agenda. Since March 2019, Armenia Chaired the 64<sup>th</sup> and will chair the 65<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the Commission on the Status of

---

HADIKGASSE 28, 1140 VIENNA

Tel: +43 1-890 63 63

E-Mail: [armeniapm@armenianmission.at](mailto:armeniapm@armenianmission.at)

Fax: +43 1-890 63 63 150

Women. The Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations in this capacity initiated and chaired a number of thematic discussions and meetings.

Taking into account the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic, the Armenian Government initiated a number of social assistance programmes for different population groups, including for women. Among other things, those programmes aimed at the elimination of unfavourable economic consequences resulting from the pandemic. In 2019, the Government of Armenia approved the 2019-2023 Strategy for Gender Policy Implementation of Armenia and the Action Plan. The strategy addresses such important issues as reducing social and economic inequality between women and men, increasing women's competitiveness in the labour market, expanding economic opportunities and many others. There are also a number of important legislative initiatives in the areas related to the improvement of women's rights. We also recognise the important role of women when it comes to promoting peace and security as such efforts are more effective when women are regarded as equal and full-fledged partners.

Mr. Moderator,

Women have been among the most affected groups by the large-scale war unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh and its people. Even as we speak about important issues of the empowerment of women and women's rights, several Armenian women are being held hostage, in prolonged incommunicado detention by Azerbaijan, in flagrant violation of international obligations and commitments, including under the international humanitarian law. Even more, some of them were captured and imprisoned after the cessation of hostilities.

By saying this, Armenian delegation is puzzled by the decision of the Swedish Chairpersonship of the OSCE to provide in the context of the Forum a speaking slot for story telling about gender sensitive policies of Azerbaijan, a country that keeps women as hostages without allowing even the ICRC visitations. Armenian delegation is disappointed that instead of putting pressure on Azerbaijan to immediately release and ensure safe return of captive civilians, including women, whose life is under the threat, to their homes, the Swedish Chairpersonship provides an additional opportunity for an image promotion of that country.

We would expect at least a sign of sensitivity on the part of the Chairpersonship in this regard since the vast majority of the participating States, particularly Armenia, welcomed the inclusion of the topic of empowerment of women as priority.

I thank you.