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Women's economic empowerment is increasingly considered to be a prerequisite for realizing gender equality, strengthening women's agency and achieving sustainable development for all. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to build strong economies, establish more stable and just societies, achieve internationally-agreed goals for development sustainability and human rights and improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities.

The goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to reduce inequalities and to "leave no one behind". This will require identifying groups who have been left behind, understanding the causes behind their exclusion and developing and implementing strategies of inclusiveness.

In Armenia:

- Women's participation in the labour market is **33 percentage points** lower than that of men. The gap between male and female labour force participation has changed very little since the year of 2000. Data for 2017 show **34%** of employed women working part-time, compared with 18% of men.
- Working women earn **37%** less than men. While some progress has been made since 2012, when women earned only 58% of the wages of their male counterparts, more efforts are needed to reduce the wage gap. According to the International Labour Organization's Global Wage Report 2018/2019, Armenia has the second greatest gender wage gap among 17 upper middle-income countries.
- Women and men have almost equal rates of tertiary education, however almost **40%** of women with at least a tertiary education do not participate in the labour force.
- **48%** of unemployed women in Armenia, cited family responsibilities as a reason.
- Women carry out almost **5 times more** unpaid household work than men.
- With respect to patterns of power and decision-making in the economic domain, the majority of employers in Armenia are men, though twice as many women as men contribute to family household income. Men also occupy the vast majority (**70.5%**) of senior roles such as legislators, senior officials and managers in the public and private sector as compared to women (**29.5 %**)
- A persistent gender pay gap affects women in the country. In 2017, the gender gap in economic activity rates of women and men in Armenia was especially high for the **25 to 34** and **35 to 44** age groups (**around 20 to 30 % respectively** for each group). The main reason for this difference among the middle age groups is young women's engagement in family responsibilities (pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, household duties, etc.).

In order to address the mentioned issues and increase women's representation in gender equal economic growth thus ensuring their full, equal, and effective participation in all spheres of society,

the WINNET Armenia Network of Women's Resource Centers, operating in the regions of the country, calls the government and all interested parties to:

- Develop and implement the adequate legislative and policy frameworks to enable women's economic empowerment;
- Develop and deliver gender-responsive programmes, public services, strategies and plans for economic empowerment of women.
- Support a gender-balanced approach to maternity and paternity: a) develop programs to support women's re-entry into the labour force after maternity leave; and b) prevent the abuse of labor rights following maternity leave, introduce awareness raising campaigns to sensitize employers on their legal obligations and the business benefits of supporting the return of female employees following maternity leave.
- Incorporate a women's economic empowerment lens in the development of programs for skills and professional training for women in non-traditional sectors such as in the IT sector, financial management, transportation, logistics, etc. where salaries tend to be higher. To address the high unemployment rates of young women, explore different educational options such as short-cycle VET education, which may match women's training with available jobs and market demand

Thank you for attention.