

A Platform for Cooperation between NGOs and Political Forces Represented at the RA National Assembly for Women's and Men's Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities

Communique



On December 27-28, 2018, a working meeting entitled *A Platform for Cooperation between NGOs and Political Forces Represented at the RA National Assembly for of Women's and Men's Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities* was held in Tsakhkadzor. The purpose of the meeting was to set the foundation for cooperation between the newly-elected MPs and representatives of non-governmental organizations through launching an effective dialogue on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men and taking joint steps to address the issues included in the document [«Women's Agenda for Development»](#).

Participating in the meeting were representatives of the three political forces at the newly-elected National Assembly, specifically MPs, *representatives of local, state and international organizations, experts, and representatives of mass media.*

Among the speakers in the discussions were Ani Samsonyan and Anna Kostanyan of *Lusavor Hayastan* Party, Arsen Julfalakyan and Sos Avetissyan of *My Step* Alliance, and Vanik Elizbaryan, Press Secretary of the *Prosperous Armenia* Party.

Present at the discussion were also representatives of *the Prosperous Armenia Party Youth Wing* Kristina Petrossyan, Marine Hovsepyan, Arpine Atoyan, and Lianna Manukyan.

It was decided:

1. To form a tripartite cooperation platform for National Assembly, NGOs, and mass media outlets, which will operate with the support of a coordinating council and will be composed of representatives of political forces, local NGOs, and mass media outlets;
2. To organize, at the platform's initiative, public hearings at the National Assembly on the issues included in the *Women's Agenda* on March 8. Members of the coordinating council will coordinate the preparatory work.

Topics Discussed:



1. Evaluation of women's participation in the NA snap parliamentary elections
2. Issues included in the document *Women's Agenda for the Sake of Development*

Speaking about women's participation in the NA snap parliamentary elections, expert **Tamara Hovnatanyan** specifically noted, *“Assessing the representation of female candidates in the candidate lists of the participant eleven political forces from the perspective of the gender quota improvement, we can state that the majority of the political forces have demonstrated good will in terms of women's involvement and have on average featured 32% of women candidates. This is more than the 25% quota stipulated by the current Electoral Code and, in essence, the 30% quota can be considered to be a passed stage for the parties. The problem is actually in featuring women candidates in the front-runner positions of the lists: the candidate list of only one participant force, i.e. of National Progress Party, was headed by a woman and women came second in the candidate lists of only three parties: the Republican Party of Armenia, Lusavor Hayastan Party and Christian-Democratic Party.”*



Speaking about territorial lists, she stated as a positive tendency the fact that, if during the previous elections only two women were elected to the Parliament through rating system of election, there were at least twelve women who garnered significant votes through territorial lists in these elections, and thanks to that, the number of women in the Parliament will increase.

The full text of the presentation

Expert **Jina Sargizova** presented the document *Women's Agenda*.



“Today, when the elections are over, Women's Agenda continues to remain actual and can serve as a basis for an effective cooperation with the newly-elected deputies,” noted the speaker.

[«Women's Agenda for Development](#)

Positions of Representatives of Political Forces



Anna Kostanyan, NA deputy, *Lusavor Hayastan* Party

“I am confident that women will get involved in politics more actively since already today we are witnessing a similar trend. I believe that it is necessary to make reforms at the educational level so that the protection of women’s and men’s rights is reinforced through education and culture.”



Ani Samsonyan, NA deputy, *Lusavor Hayastan* Party

“When the woman is made to confront a choice of the family, child birth or politics, we create an artificial discourse. This is a bad message, so we need rather talk more about how women reconcile all this.”



Arsen Julfalakyan, NA deputy, *My Step* Alliance

“Not only in politics, but in almost all areas we need to strive for women’s and men’s 50/50 participation.”



Sos Avetissyan, NA deputy, *My Step* Alliance

“If we are going to have a quota system, but the discourse remains patriarchal, we will not record a change.”



Vanik Elizbaryan, *Prosperous Armenia* Party, Press Secretary

“Naira Zohrabyan, a deputy from the Prosperous Armenia Party, has made a great contribution to the discussions of the bill on Combating Violence against Women held at the National Assembly. She had initiated the organization of parliamentary hearings on the bill. In the upcoming future too we will have opportunities to cooperate on 50/50 participatory model and the other issues.”

Issues Raised at the Working Meeting:

1. Expanding women’s political participation and ensuring equal representation of women and men at decision-making levels,
2. Expanding women’s economic opportunities, eliminating discrimination against women in the labor market, and creating opportunities for reconciliation of work and care of family members,
3. Developing and implementing initiatives aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes that are reproduced through the educational system and mass media and impede women’s advancement,
4. Clarifying the state policies on ensuring women’s and men’s equal participation in the country’s development processes and forming a national machinery guaranteeing women’s and men’s equal rights and equal opportunities,
5. Improving policies providing for accessibility and affordability of healthcare services,
6. Eliminating the social vulnerability of women employed in the agricultural sector and ensuring their access to resources and loans,
7. Creating mechanisms for preventing violence against women and for state support to persons subjected to violence, improving legislation concerned with the issue.

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If you have any questions or suggestions, you can contact:

Kristine Hovhannisyan, Gender Equality Program Manager

Telephone: +37411 308 808; +37491 20 34 51

E-mail address: khovhannisyan@oxygen.org.am



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