



GENDER POLICY

CONCEPT PAPER

FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

The concept paper has been prepared within the framework of the project on
PROMOTING MORE GENDER-SENSITIVE LEGISLATION IN ARMENIA

The project “Promoting More Gender-Sensitive Legislation in Armenia” is implemented by OxYGen Foundation in cooperation with National Democratic Institute (NDI).

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
NDI	National Democratic Institute
PP	Political Party
RA	Republic of Armenia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations Organization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BACKGROUND

The Concept Paper is produced within the framework of the joint project by OxYGen Foundation and National Democratic Institute “Promoting More Gender-Sensitive Legislation in Armenia”.

The project aims to build the capacity of key stakeholders, with the specific focus on women MPs, on gender mainstreaming of legislation by offering a practical exercise on what gender-sensitive legislation (GSL) is, why it is important, what it consists of and how to ensure that it works for constituents.

The project also aims to build the awareness and responsibility of political parties within and beyond the Parliament on legal and voluntary measures that political parties can adopt to enhance gender equality within party structures by introduction of gender equality principles into intra-party developments.

This paper targets to impart gender sensitivity to the Political Parties’ internal policies and procedures and offers a number of ideas to support gender equality efforts.

Parties can use these as starting points in planning work on gender equality in politics. The ideas that draw on research, best practice, and recommendations from around the world, are examples of desired results that parties may seek to achieve.

The paper is based on the meetings with the representatives of political parties: women leaders, grassroots members, and potential recruits or allies, of diverse identities and backgrounds, as well as research¹ and other work in the area conducted by OxYGen Foundation in the last 5 years, which allowed to identify barriers, capacity gaps, and opportunities for women’s political leadership and participation, and to analyze differences in how existing rules and practices in political parties affect men and women political participation.

¹ Women’s Political Participation in Armenia: an Analysis (OxYGen/ NDI, July 2020), Survey on Public Perception of Women’s Political Participation in Communities (OxYGen. UNDP July 2019), Snap Parliamentary Elections -2018: Research on Peculiarities of Women’s Electoral Behavior (OxYGen/EU, 2018-19), and Analysis of Women’s Participation in Yerevan City Council Elections (OxYGen/ProMediaGender/2018), etc.

RATIONALE

Attainment of women and men's equality is one of the main goals and an inalienable part of the international development agenda. The principle of gender equality reflects the idea that it is impossible to achieve full realization of human rights without ensuring equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for men and women. This principle is enshrined in numerous international documents, agreements, national constitutions, and legislative acts of the states of the world, including the Republic of Armenia.

The principle of women and men's equality was recognized as one of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter adopted by world leaders in 1945 and was confirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)², the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)³ and other relevant UN and European documents.⁴

The Republic of Armenia has not been left out of this crucial process either and during the independence years has, on the one hand, ratified the above noted international documents and, on the other hand, developed a number of national documents on gender equality:

- Equality before the law and prohibition of discrimination are principles enshrined in the RA Constitution. According to Article 28 of the Constitution revised in 2015, everyone is equal before the law. Article 29 of the Constitution stipulates the prohibition of discrimination, and Article 30 of the Constitution separately states the legal equality of women and men.
- In addition, Article 86 of the Constitution defines promotion of de facto equality between women and men as a main objective of state policies.
- Gender equality safeguards are envisioned in *the RA Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Women and Men* (2013), which primarily defines general regulations (for example, general principles and directions of the state policy in the area of ensuring gender equality).

In addition, the RA Government has periodically adopted national programs on improvement of the situation of women in the Republic of Armenia and enhancement of their

² UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, the Republic of Armenia ratified it in 1992

http://www.un.am/up/file/Universal%20Declaration%20of%20Human%20Rights_official%20translation.pdf

³ CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW), ratified it in 1993 <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=60505>

⁴ Including the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030; Council of Europe Declaration on Equality of Women and Men, Istanbul Declaration on Equality between Women and Men as a Fundamental Criterion of Democracy, 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men, Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making, PACE Resolution on Mechanisms to Ensure Women's Participation in Decision-Making, Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Gender Equality Standards and Mechanisms, etc.

role in society (1998-2000, 2004-2010, 2011-2015), including the recently adopted Strategy and Action Plan on Implementation of Gender Policies in the Republic of Armenia in 2019-2023.⁵

It is widely acknowledged that the failure to include women and gender perspectives in political decision-making weakens the legitimacy of democratic institutions and processes.⁶ Achieving gender equality in political parties and other institutions of political participation and representation is central to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals⁷. SDG5 aims to achieve ‘gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls’ by 2030; and one of its indicators is that *women should have full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life in all countries*. SDG16 aims to achieve *effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*. To effectively contribute to the attainment of these and other SDGs, political parties need to improve their internal structures, processes and practices.

Political parties’ commitment to promoting gender equality can be demonstrated by articulating the norms and objectives of gender equality in key documents such as concept papers, policies and strategic plans. As a major first step, this creates an enabling environment that influences the processes, practices and culture within parties. Institutionalizing a gender equality perspective in the conceptualization and development of a political party’s strategic plan is crucial *inter alia* in order to⁸:

- understand gender inequalities and gaps within the party,
- foster the adoption of measures to address these inequalities and gaps,
- institutionalize gender equality as an integral goal for the party’s vision and practices,
- define strategies and accountability mechanisms to address gender inequality in all party operations and programs,
- enhance a party’s capacity to harmonize societal interests and the needs of both women and men.

In other words, the processes and approaches within the political parties should be mainstreamed with gender equality principles and understanding that it is the only way that leads to transformation of institution and eliminates discriminatory practices.

⁵ STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA 2019-2023 (2019), <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=151906>

⁶ Caspar F. Van Den Berg et al., Strategic Planning for Political Parties: A Practical Tool (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2015)

⁷ Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015), <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

⁸ International IDEA, A Framework for Developing Gender Policies for Political Parties (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2016)

THE CONCEPT

The Concept paper is based on the overall understanding that the **Principles of Gender Equality and Equity** between women and men is a human rights issue as well as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable, people-centered development.⁹

The Gender Policy Concept Paper takes into account that:

- Women make up more than half of the population and the electorate of Armenia, but continue to be seriously under- represented in political and public decision making,
- In spite of the existence of *de jure* equality, the distribution of power, responsibilities and access to economic, social and cultural resources between women and men is still very unequal,
- Low representation of women on a decision- making level in political institutions, including political parties, may hamper women’s participation in political and public life,
- Balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making is a matter of the full enjoyment of human rights, of social justice and a necessary condition for the better functioning of a democratic society; and that
- The realization of balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making would lead to better and more efficient policy making.¹⁰

This concept paper is in consequence with the National and International legal acts and treaties¹¹ and ***reflects the commitment of the political party to attain gender equality.***

⁹ UN OSAGI

¹⁰ Source: Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, adopted on 12 March 2003 and explanatory memorandum, [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec\(2003\)3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec(2003)3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

¹¹ RA Constitution (amended 2015); RA Constitutional Law on Parties (2016, amended 2020); RA Electoral Code (amended 2016); RA Law on Providing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2013); RA Gender Policy Concept Paper (2010); Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Policy Implementation in the Republic of Armenia 2019-2023 (2019); United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights(1948); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights(1966); United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); Beijing Platform for Action (1995); Sustainable Development Goals (2015); European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950); European Social Charter (revised 1996), Materials of the European Ministerial Conference on Human Rights held in Rome in 2000; Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, adopted on 12 March 2003 Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member states of the Council of Europe: Recommendation No. R (85) 2 on legal protection against sex discrimination; Recommendation No. R (96) 5 on reconciling work and family life and Recommendation No. R (98) 14 on gender mainstreaming; Recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly: Recommendation 1229 (1994) on equality of rights between women and men; Recommendation 1269 (1995) on achieving real progress in women’s rights as from 1995 and Recommendation 1413 (1999) on equal representation in political life.

A. PILLARS

The Political Party's Gender Policy Concept Paper is based on the four main pillars:

I. Enabling Environment

- Advocate for possible constitutional and/or legislative changes, including positive affirmative measures, which would promote the gender equality principles and facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making.
- Promote research on the obstacles which prevent women's access to political and public decision-making at the different levels and Initiate state programs to overcome the existing situation.
- Promote awareness raising campaigns on the importance of gender-balanced representation in political and public decision-making as a prerequisite for genuine democracy.

II. Intraparty Developments

- Undertake necessary actions to put Party's internal culture, rules and procedures (including recruitment of members and nomination of candidates) in compliance with the gender equality principles and facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making.
- Ensure establishment of the Gender equality or Women advancement Commission within the party.
- Ensure women's representation among the founders, members, and governing bodies of the party, based on the principle of proportionality of women and men as enshrined in national and international documents and related laws.
- Ensure Capacity development opportunities for Parties members, both women and men in a non-discriminatory manner and based on the real needs and interests.
- Ensure application of the gender mainstreaming technics in party documents, actions, and programs, to include the requirement of upholding the principle of gender equality principles as a mandatory condition.
- Ensure application of the Gender Responsive Budgeting approaches in preparation of the party's budget and allocations (including state incentives state subsidies or other privileges aimed to expand women's participation and advancement in the political parties).

- Ensure Periodic Gender audits of the Party's organization and procedures.
- Develop Party's Action Plan to promote Gender Equality Principles and approaches.

III. Electoral Processes and Participation in the National Assembly

- Ensure compliance with the principles of gender equality while performing electoral processes,
- Check the activities of the pre-election, election, and post-election stages through "gender lenses",
- Ensure that the party's program is gender mainstreamed,
- Carry out activities to ensure equal conditions and opportunities in realization of women and men's constitutional right to elect and to be elected,
- Apply the mechanism for "positive discrimination" to secure the number of nominated female candidates,
- Ensure election campaigns are non - discriminatory and cover the issues of equal rights and opportunities for men and women,
- Apply a mechanism for safeguarding women's de facto representation in the elected National Assembly,
- Ensure Non – discriminatory and transparent approaches when nominating/ confirming/ voting for Parliament officials and responsible personnel at the National Assembly.

IV. Monitoring

- Implement profound monitoring and mentoring of the political processes in Armenia, including implementation of the relevant legislation and state programs in accordance with the gender equality principles and importance of balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making.

B. PRINCIPLES

In order to be able to implement the abovementioned Gender Policy Concept Paper the following principles should be kept:

Commitment

The Political party commits to upholding the women's human rights and to contributing to gender equality in line with international human rights instruments, ensuing applicable

international and domestic law; to use methods and tools to promote gender equality and reduce gender discriminations and disparities in its operations; and to measure the outcomes and impacts of its activities on women and men.

Comprehensiveness

The comprehensiveness applies to scope and scale of the political party programs. The Political party shall apply its gender policy to all its programs and activities irrespective of program size, whether implemented by itself or in cooperation with international, regional, or national counterparts.

Accountability

The Political party shall be accountable for its gender mainstreaming efforts and its gender-responsive results and outcomes, including through regular annual reports in a transparent and comprehensive manner. Gender monitoring of its program's impacts is to be integrated into the PP management frameworks. The Political party shall demonstrate:

- *An institutional framework for gender mainstreaming, such as a commitment at highest management level to gender equality,*
- *Policy and action plans that address gender equality and gender-responsive activities, Ability to undertake gender assessments, to assess the potential roles, benefits, impacts and risk for women and men,*
- *An ability to identify measures to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate adverse gender impacts; and/or*
- *A monitoring and evaluation process that accounts for gender mainstreaming efforts, including the use of gender-disaggregated indicators.*

Competencies and Generation of Knowledge

The Political party shall consider relevant gender expertise and gender balance in the appointments of its staff and members.

The Political party shall accelerate learning on the implementation of gender-responsive actions and to contribute to addressing existing knowledge and data gaps, shall document the experiences and knowledge gained from the implementation of its gender policy.

The Political party shall ensure capacity development opportunities for Parties members, both women and men in a non-discriminatory manner and based on the real needs and interests.

The Political party shall organize regular gender training for the staff and members and to

complement its own gender capacity with consultants or through the establishment of a gender advisory group.

Communication

The Political party shall communicate its commitment to gender equality, its gender policy and related implementation guidance to other stakeholders and the wider public and seek periodic feedback.

The political party shall be faithful to the principles of non-discrimination and shall avoid biased approach and sexism in its communications within the party and/or with other stakeholders as well as during the election campaigns.

Review and Revisions

The gender mainstreaming approach set forth in the Political party gender policy requires sustained commitment and a regular tracking of its progress. The Political party shall adjust its approach in accordance with the experience gained in the implementation of the gender policy.

C. IMPLEMENTATION

The current Concept paper is to be implemented through the Annual Action plans, which shall be developed by the Political party based on the following:

- Overall analysis of the situation with Women political participation in Armenia
- RA Constitutional Law on Parties
- Political Party's internal documents and procedures
- Political Party's program
- Periodic monitoring and evaluation of the previous action plan, including analysis of achievements and improvements

Gender Equality Action Plan

To ensure proper implementation of the Political party's Gender policy the following Template for the Action Plan (comprised with the *Targets, Objectives, Activities, Indicators, Verification sources, Responsible for Implementation, Timeframes and Resources needed*), is proposed. Please see the Annex 2.

USED AND RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

RA Constitution (amended 2015);

RA Constitutional Law on Parties (2016, amended 2020);

RA Electoral Code (amended 2016);

RA Law on Providing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2013);

RA Gender Policy Concept Paper (2010);

Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Policy Implementation in the Republic of Armenia 2019-2023 (2019);

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966);

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979);

Beijing Platform for Action (1995);

Sustainable Development Goals (2015);

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950);

European Social Charter (revised 1996),

Materials of the European Ministerial Conference on Human Rights held in Rome in 2000;

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Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, adopted on 12 March 2003 and explanatory memorandum,
[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec\(2003\)3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec(2003)3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

Annex 1. Key Gender Terms

The Gender Policy Concept paper refers to the following key gender terms.

Gender: refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context and intersects with other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age. (Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (UN OSAGI))

Gender Balance: refers to the goal of having the same number of women and men in decision-making bodies and among staff in the different levels of organizational structures.

Gender Equality: refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities and access of women and men and boys and girls and the equal consideration of their respective interests, needs and priorities. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue as well as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable, people-centered development. (UN OSAGI)

Gender Equity: refers to the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls. It recognizes the need for potential differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or historical or social disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms. The process of gender equity leads to gender equality as a legal right and obligation.

Gender Mainstreaming: refers to a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming involves the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the experiences and concerns of women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated, if necessary, through targeted actions to ensure that women's voices as important actors are heard.

Gender responsive: refers to the consideration of gender norms, roles and relations and to addressing inequality generated by unequal norms, roles and relations through changes within a given social setting through remedial action.

Gender sensitive: refers to the consideration of gender norms, roles and relations but does not necessarily address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles or relations through remedial action beyond creating gender awareness.

Women's empowerment: can be best understood as an expansion of agency throughout women's lives, especially via participation and decision-making. (UNFPA)

Gender Equality Action Plan of the (name) Political Party

For the period of January 1, 2021. – December 31 2021

BASELINE DATA: e.g., Research, statistical data available, sex disaggregated info on PP members					
TARGETS: e.g. Increasing women’s participation in all areas and roles e.g. strengthening women’s decision-making influence e.g. including gender equality and issues of concern to women in party policy and action					
OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	VERIFICATION SOURCES	RESPONSIBLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES
Indicate SMART objectives and/ or activities	Fill in Measurable, qualitative and quantitative indicators	Indicate sources for the verifications of indicators and results	Assign a person/ dept/ unit responsible for implementation	Fill in realistic timeframes of implementation	Calculate earmarked resources for implementation and monitoring
e.g. Conduct a gender assessment	e.g. - Number of reviewed documents - Number of respondents (disaggregated by sex)	Gender assessment results report	Sociologist, gender expert	Jan- February 2021	AMD 1,200,000