

National Review of the Republic of Armenia

on Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015

The Government of the Republic of Armenia, when preparing the report, was used the Guidance note prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and UN Women. All the interested ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the Police and the Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia participated in the preparation of the report.

Section One: Overview analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995

A great number of changes have previously taken place in the policy on improving the status of women, which, in our opinion, can be regarded as the achievements of the Republic of Armenia in this field, in particular the legislation has been revised and improved, institutional mechanisms have been established, research, educational programmes and advocacy plans have been implemented, state social protection programmes have been regularly reviewed and a transition in the policy from women's issues to gender issues has been made. Information on these developments has been included in the reports prepared by the Republic of Armenia and submitted to different UN bodies.

The last Report on implementation of UN Millennium Development Goals in its part dealing with Armenia states that the country is successfully achieving the third Millennium Development Goal (gender equality).

The activities aimed at fulfilment of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action may be conditionally divided into three stages and the each one is the logical continuation of the previous one. The brief overview provided below presents the chronology of gradual changes and achievements in the given field.

Thus, in the first stage (1996-2002), a relevant subdivision was established within the structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, namely the Department of Family, Women and Children Issues. The Department, among other issues, was mandated to identify, analyse and assess the issues of women. Subsequently the first three-year National Action Plan — the "National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing their Role in the Society", was developed, gender-related expert review of the legislation of the Republic of Armenia (of a number of primary laws) was carried out, recommendations were elaborated, capacity building programmes were initiated, within the framework of which specialists from interested public administration bodies were trained, discussions pertaining to the issues of the field were held throughout the whole territory of the Republic of Armenia and campaigns covering the women's issues were conducted.

The implemented activities served as preconditions for the next stage (2002-2008). A number of analyses revealed that it has become necessary to enhance the powers of the functioning institution for implementing targeted programmes aimed at resolution of women's issues, coordinating and controlling the activities pertaining to women's issues in bodies of executive power, making proposals on legal regulation of women's issues as well as ensuring co-operation with legislative and judicial powers, non-governmental organisations.

It was all reflected in the second "2004-2010 National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women in the Republic of Armenia and Enhancing their Role in the Society" approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 645-N of 8 April 2004. At the same time, procedures for introduction of gender policy implementation mechanism and gender training were initiated in public administration and local self-governing bodies.

Divisions for Protection of Rights of the Child have been established in Marzpetarans (regions) of the Republic of Armenia and in Yerevan Municipality. The Statutes of the mentioned Divisions enshrine issues with regard to ensuring the development, implementation and co-ordination of targeted state programmes of gender policy in the region. In parallel, still in 2001 the procedure for the promotion of professional qualification of servants of civil service system introduced in state and territorial administration bodies of the Republic of Armenia was initiated aimed at developing their gender thinking, imparting gender-related knowledge and raising their gender sensitivity. A component (module) for imparting gender-related knowledge has been introduced in the training programmes on "Human Rights" and "Gender Issues" approved by the Decision of the Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia No 567-N of 8 July 2008. Every year, nearly 200 civil servants participate in mandatory training courses funded from the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia. In fact it was these procedures that contributed to a transition of the state policy from women's issues to gender issues dictating new approaches in the formulation and solution of political, social and economic issues of the public.

In that context a Concept Paper on Gender Policy in the Republic of Armenia was developed which was approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 11 February 2010. The Concept Paper was aimed at creating gender equality, eliminating all types of discrimination on grounds of gender, ensuring equal rights of men and women in the labour market and the employment sector and equal access to economic resources, establishing democratic political culture and tolerance, gender-related dialogue in the public through the inclusion of the gender criterion in all spheres of life.

The Statute of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 618-N of 13 May 2010 enshrined the tasks of studying gender issues, elaborating state programmes for the solution thereof, co-ordinating and monitoring the activities of the implementation thereof as well as studying the issues of trafficking in human beings, elaborating social rehabilitation programmes of trafficking victims and monitoring the implementation thereof.

With the view of solving the main issues set forth in the Concept Paper targeted strategic action plans were approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 was approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 20 May 2011 that defined the priority directions of the state policy on men and women.

With the view of achieving the goals predetermined by the Strategic Action Plan each year the Government of the Republic of Armenia approves annual/yearly gender policy action plans. The measures included in the given action plans are aimed at introducing the gender component in the field of administration and at the level of decision-making, in the policy development process at national and regional levels in social and economic, education, health, cultural and public information fields and in the political practice, as well as are aimed at overcoming gender inequality in all spheres of public life, irrespective of gender, and obtaining equal rights and opportunities.

With the view of reinforcing and improving the institutional mechanisms developed Standing Committees on gender-related issues were established in 2011 in the Marzpetarans (regional administration) of the Republic of Armenia and in Yerevan Municipality and in all administrative districts of Yerevan (12 administrative districts) upon the executive orders of regional governors and the Mayor of Yerevan.

The Standing Committees assist in elaboration of annual/yearly gender policy action plans and action plans to combat gender-based violence in marzes and in the city of Yerevan as well as in activities of the implementation thereof, introduction of gender policy in communities, marzes and reinforcement of mechanisms of co-operation with interested bodies, public and international organisations functioning in Yerevan.

One of the most important achievements concluding the current stage is the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men" in May of 2013 which defines the guarantees for ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities of men and women in political, social, economic, cultural and other fields and regulates the relationships arising with regard thereto.

Legislative Guarantees

The legislation of the Republic of Armenia ensures equal rights of men and women and equal opportunities for the enjoyment of those rights. When defining fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms the phrases “every person” and “every citizen” are mentioned in the Constitution without any reference to either men or women.

The legislation of the Republic of Armenia is to the extent possible called to ensure equality of rights of men and women in public and political life.

In particular, according to Article 14.1 of *the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia*, everyone is equal before the law. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic peculiarities, language, religion, ideology, political and other opinions, belonging to a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age, or other personal or social circumstances is prohibited.

The Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia adopted on 11 October 2004 and entered into force on 21 June of 2005 defines — as its principles — freedom of labour, including the right to work, prohibition of any forms (nature) of compulsory labour and violence against employees, legal equality of parties to labour relations irrespective of their gender, race, national origin, language, origin, nationality, social status, religion, marital and family status, age, beliefs or viewpoints, affiliation to political parties, trade unions or non-governmental organisations, and other circumstances not associated with the professional skills of an employee, ensuring the right to fair working conditions for every employee, equality of rights and opportunities of employees.

Article 3 of *the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia (adopted on 26 May of 2011 and entered into force on 26 June of 2011)* defines that “Electors shall — irrespective of national origin, race, gender, language, religion, political or other views, social origin, property or other status — have the right to vote and to be elected”. Thus, the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia also excludes all forms of discrimination, including on the grounds of gender.

According to Article 143 of *the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia (adopted on 18 April of 2003 and entered into force on 1 August of 2003)*, a violation of nationals’ legal equality, in particular direct or indirect violation of human and citizen's rights and freedoms on ground of national origin, race, sex, language, belief, political or other opinion, social origin, property or other status, which has harmed a person’s lawful interests are considered as a criminal offence. Thus, the violation of Article 14.1 of the Constitution is criminalized under the mentioned article.

The Family Code of the Republic of Armenia (adopted on 9 November of 2004 and entered into force on 19 April of 2005) states the legal equality of spouses in the family, mentioning that each of the spouses is free in choosing the work, occupation, profession and place of residence (Article 24). The mutual voluntary consent as well as marriageable age of men and women entering into marriage is necessary for concluding a marriage.

Brief overview of legislation relating to equality issues and implementation practice

Article 39 of the Constitution enshrines the right to education: "Everyone shall have the right to education. Basic general education shall be compulsory. Secondary education in state educational institutions shall be free of charge. Every citizen shall have the right to free education on competitive basis in state higher and other vocational educational institutions, as prescribed by law. The State shall provide financial and other support to educational institutions conducting higher and other vocational educational programmes and students thereof in cases and in the manner provided for by law". In 1999 the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education" which, based on the constitutional provisions, guides in a certain extent the development of education system. State guarantees for the right to education are enshrined in this Law according to which, "The Republic of Armenia shall ensure the right to education, irrespective of national origin, race, gender, language, belief, political or other views, social origin, property status or other circumstances." The said Law also stipulates the legal equality of women and men. After the application of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education" legal acts regulating separate fields of education were also adopted. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On higher and postgraduate professional education" was adopted in 2004. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On primary vocational (handicraft) and middle level vocational education" was adopted in 2005. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On general education" was adopted in 2009. These Laws regulate the principles of state policy of the Republic of Armenia in different levels of education, organisational and legal, financial and economic grounds, legal relationships of natural and legal persons engaged in the education process, the grounds for the right to education at different levels of education enshrined by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. After the adoption of the given Laws a number of legal acts that supported the correct application of these laws were approved.

According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On medical assistance and services to the population" adopted in 1996, both men and women enjoy equal rights to medical assistance. Maternal and infant health care has been identified as a principle priority, which is under the auspices of the state. Laws, decisions of the Government, a number of normative methodological documents regulating the medical practice and the legal framework relating to reproductive health and reproductive rights of the person have been developed.

In 2011, based on high rates of women's mortality from cancer of reproductive organs, including breast cancer and cervical cancer in the mortality and morbidity structure and aiming at prevention of those diseases and reducing the rate of mortality, the Decision " On concept paper on prevention, early detection and treatment of common non-infectious diseases and on approval of the list of measures ensuring the implementation thereof" was approved within the framework of which later the Decision "On approving the national strategic programmes and the timetable of measures aimed at prevention of three diseases with higher level of mortality — diseases of blood circulation system (cardiovascular diseases), malignant growths and pancreatic diabetes" was approved.

During 2011 relevant amendments were made to the Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 318-N and 748-N as well as examinations of comprehensive health

condition and reproductive system of boys aged 14-15 and girls aged 15, identification and treatment of pathologies were carried out which serve as solid guarantees for improving the adolescents' health, becoming a healthy parent and preventing infertility.

The greatest and the most effective reform was the execution of the instruction of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia issued on 11 September 2007. According the mentioned instruction, Obstetrical state certificate programme was introduced on 1 July 2008 within the framework of "Obstetrics and Gynaecology Aid" Budget Programme which is effectively implemented ensuring real, actual outpatient and inpatient free obstetrical aid. Those reforms are especially aimed at supporting vulnerable groups, improving the quality and accessibility of medical aid for women and elimination of inequality and differences between men and women depending on urban and rural settlements, the level of well-being of the family, education level, etc.

Although the legislation is rather favourable in this field, however, the analysis of the situation of women reveals some restrictions on reproductive health issues, particularly in terms of availability of more effective contraceptives for women and certain types of medicine (necessary for medical abortion), limited possibility for both women and men to use assisted reproductive technologies. Manuals on Pregnant Women, Infant and Baby Nutrition Practice intended for the healthcare practitioners of obstetrical and primary healthcare institutions and public awareness materials intended for pregnant women and nursing mothers were approved by the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia No 544-A of 7 March 2013.

It should be mentioned legislative reforms are ongoing.

For the fulfilment of the requirements of the international commitments assumed by the Republic of Armenia the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments to the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia" on 30 April of 2013 which entered into force on 8 June of 2013. The main purpose of the Law is to ensure gender equality between men and women. While the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia has defined the age of 17 as a marriageable age for women and the age of 18 for men the revised Family Code defines the age of 18 as a marriageable age for both women and men.

Point 2 of Article 40 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments and supplements to the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia" (HO-117-N) adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 7 August of 2010 envisages making an amendment to point 2.1 of Article 114 of the Labour Code according to which an employment contract with a pregnant woman may not be rescinded at the initiative of the employer from the day of submitting a statement on pregnancy to the employer until one month after the date of termination of the pregnancy and maternity leave.

A new provision was introduced to the Code, according to which an unpaid leave for a period of up to two months is provided to a husband of a woman being on a maternity leave or on a leave for a child care under the age of one upon the employee's request (Article 176 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia). In fact, this provision is not so feasible since the leave granted to a father is unpaid and the interest in enjoying that right is not so great.

Articles that regulate overtime work (Article 144), night work, shifts, weekly uninterrupted rest are gender-sensitive articles of the Code. The mentioned provisions define the rights pertaining to family responsibilities of employees bringing up a child (for both women and men). In this respect an exception is Article 258 of the Code (Protection of Maternity), according to which the engagement of pregnant women or women bringing up a child under the age of one in heavy, harmful, particularly heavy and particularly harmful activities established by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia is prohibited.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On state pensions" on 1 January of 2011 which defines the conditions and terms of awarding privileged pension for women.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Decision "On declaring amnesty on the occasion of 20th anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Armenia" on 3 October of 2013 (NAD-080-N) which envisages a release from punishment of pregnant women or persons having a child under the age of three as of the day of entry into force of the decision.

In addition to the above mentioned, we would like to inform that a number of legal acts have also been adopted in the Republic of Armenia. In particular, the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 351-N of 2 April 2009 "On approving the procedure for accompanying and protecting the arrestees and detainees by the Police of the Republic of Armenia adjunct to the Government of the Republic of Armenia", while enumerating the characteristics for accompanying the arrestees and detainees, states that a healthcare practitioner is invited for women with obvious signs of pregnancy accepted for accompanying. The results of the medical examination as well as a record on allowing or prohibiting the accompany by a physician is made in the personal records.

A new draft law of the Republic of Armenia "On social assistance" has been elaborated by the Government of the Republic of Armenia which has already been submitted to the National Assembly.

The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On state benefits" contains a number of provisions aimed at the protection of maternity. The Law relates to family benefits, childbirth and childcare lump-sum benefits. During the reporting period certain changes have occurred both in terms of the financial costs of the programmes and the policy thereof. Thus, if until 2009 the benefits have been granted only to those registered in the Family Benefit System, starting from 2010 everyone is entitled to childbirth lump-sum monetary assistance irrespective of being included in the system. In 2012 the amount of childbirth benefits granted to the parent for the birth of the first or the second child amounted to AMD 50 000 and starting from the birth of the third child — AMD 430 000 for each newborn child. Certain changes occurred in 2014. The amount of childbirth lump-sum benefits granted for the birth of the first two children has remained unchanged and it has dramatically increased in case of birth of the third child and more. The amount granted for the third and fourth children currently amount to AMD 1000000, whereas for the fifth child and for each next child — AMD 1500000. Moreover, a family capital is formed through financial resources transferred as a state aid in the form of childbirth lump-sum benefits for the birth of the third child and the next children.

The rights of women, apart from national legislative acts, are also protected by the international treaties ratified by the Republic of Armenia. The Republic of Armenia accedes to a number of international treaties aimed at protecting the rights of women, in particular, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on Political Rights of Women, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. The Republic of Armenia has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (on 14 September of 2006) which has enabled the citizens of the Republic of Armenia to submit complaints to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Notwithstanding the steps taken, the Republic of Armenia still continues to focus on issues, such as more participation of women in the political and public life, promotion of women's participation in the economy, poverty reduction, strengthening of the institutional mechanisms for gender equality, a number of issues on social and health sectors.

Section Two: Progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2009

Poverty Reduction

In September 2000, all 189 Member States of the United Nations made a commitment under the Millennium Declaration to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015. Joining the Millennium Declaration, Armenia, in fact, made a commitment to include the Millennium Development Goals in its national long-term and strategic plans and undertake strategic programmes to direct economic growth to human development. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) mechanism was elaborated in Armenia with the support of international organisations and PRSP process launched in May 2000 by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The 2008 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) involved the programme period of 2003-2015. It was Armenia's first long-term and strategic programme for social and economic development since its independence. After 2006, however, there was a need to review the PRSP main implementation results, strategy programme, indicators and priorities and in 2008 the PRSP was to a certain extent amended and was renamed to "Sustainable Development Programme", taking into account the fact that the SDP content and structure are somewhat different from the PRSP as it encompasses wider dimensions and represents the country's social and economic development plan for 2008-2021.

The current agenda of the Development Policy of the Republic of Armenia implies encouraging broad-based public participation in ensuring economic growth. In this respect, necessary grounds for inclusive growth are highlighted in terms of social and economic long-term development. It should be noted that women's economic participation has dynamically increased in recent years, which also creates necessary guarantees and sustainable grounds for reducing poverty, income and consumption gap between the men and women in the public.

Thus, for example, according to the national official statistics the difference between the poverty rates by gender is not significant. In 2011 poverty rates in case of 35% of population comprised for men and women respectively 34.5% and 35.5%, whereas the proportion of women among the poor population is lower by 8 percentage point from that of men. If the gap between an average monthly monetary income per men and women was approximately twice as large in 2009, it was already 1.7 times in 2011. A dynamic progress is also made in the field of employment. In 2011 the number of employed women increased by 23,800 persons even with respect to almost all types of economic activities as compared to the reduction of the overall number of employed persons of the previous year.

The mentioned indicators evidence that the policy measures encouraging women's economic participation have already started to produce positive outcomes. Enhancing women's participation and employment is especially encouraged through various business development tools and mechanisms. The economic policy aimed at guaranteeing the right of equal access to the existing opportunities is first reflected in the "Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Programme for 2011-2015" adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on 20 May 2011 and by the directions stipulated in its Annual Action Plan.

Education and professional instruction of women

According to the data of the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, illiterate people and people having elementary and incomplete elementary education comprise 3.1% of the population and approximately 30% of the age group above 10 years has some degree of professional education. Literacy rate of adults and young people comprise approximately 99% and there are no significant gender disparities in this regard¹.

This fact is also shown by the data of the 2001 census of the Republic of Armenia, according to which:

- the literacy rate for 15- to 24-year-olds has comprised 99.8%;
- the ratio of the number of literate men to women at the age of 15-24 has comprised 1.01;
- the literacy rate for permanent population at the age of 15 and above has comprised 99.7%.

In Armenia, education is recognised as one of the preconditions of sustainable human development. Currently, the educational field development policy in Armenia attempts to conform with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and aims to tailor the results of the reforms so as to have significant influence on the economic growth, poverty reduction, easing of inequality, maintenance of ecological security and human development processes both in short-term and long-term perspectives. With the view of both ensuring accessibility of quality education and increasing the

¹ Armenia 2010 National Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals

effectiveness of the education field, reforms at all education levels are carried out in the country. Those reforms are also supported by separate strategy and concept papers.

As it was mentioned, the Republic of Armenia approved the "Sustainable Development Programme" in 2008 (previously known as the "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper"), which in 2012 was reviewed as "Republic of Armenia Perspective Development Strategic Programme for 2012-2025". Quality of education and ensuring equal accessibility of education at all education levels are recognised as priority directions in the mentioned programmes.

In 2011, the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education development state programme of the Republic of Armenia for 2011-2015", which underlies the strategic programmes and development concepts approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the field of education. Based on the achievements recorded in the system of education, the programme is aimed at gradual development thereof predetermining priority directions and strategies for the development of the field. In particular, this programme sets the following goals²:

1. to raise accessibility of education at all levels, to create equal opportunities for quality education for all in line with his or her preferences and abilities, particularly:

- to reach gross enrolment in primary (elementary) and middle schools to 99%;
- to extend the opportunities for all school-aged children, including children with special educational needs, children of national minorities and of all other vulnerable groups to receive quality basic education by creating inclusive education opportunities in all general education schools;
- to reach gross enrolment in upper secondary (high) schools, including in primary vocational education programmes to 95%;
- to increase enrolment in vocational education programmes by 10%, especially on behalf of young people from vulnerable groups;

2. to improve quality of education bringing it in line with internationally recognised standards ensuring the contentment of the public and business community in educational services, particularly:

3. to ensure progressive growth of funds allocated from the State Budget to education and effective use mechanisms thereof, particularly funds allocated from the State Budget to education reach up to 4% of GDP.

Enrolment in the general education

² Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education development state programme of the Republic of Armenia for 2011-2015".

According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On general education, "12-year secondary education shall be implemented in the Republic of Armenia. The basic general education shall be compulsory, except for the cases prescribed by law. The secondary education shall be free at state education institutions".

Based on the enrolment ratio by gender at different levels of general education, the following remarks may be made. In Armenia there is no a significant problem with regard to enrolment in general education. Comparably, the gross enrolment in secondary education is rather high: in recent years it comprised approximately 90% in average.

In 2012, the highest enrolment of learners was recorded at primary level (1-4 grades) comprising 96,8%³. This may be explained by the fact that the literacy of learners at school is mainly developed at primary school.

The enrolment in basic education system (1-9 grades) slightly reduces comprising 94,8%, which is homogeneous in terms of regional, gender and poverty groups and there are no significant disparities in this regard. The gross enrolment ratio in an upper secondary school is comparably low comprising 74,1%. However, it is necessary to consider that after completing the basic education 10% of learners continue their education at primary vocational and middle level vocational education institutions and actually almost 10% of learners do not continue their education in upper secondary school.

The basic general education is compulsory for all, except for the cases prescribed by law and this is perhaps the reason why the enrolment ratio in basic school is high. Thus, in general, it should be noted that all groups of the population have access to a basic education and there were no significant disparities in this regard. Therefore, the enrolment of all children in basic school is guaranteed in Armenia.

The secondary education in Armenia is also free. The enrolment ratio in the system of secondary education (1-12 grades) comprises 89.2%.

In addition to the aforementioned facts it should also be noted that there is also gender disparities in the overall composition of learners in the Republic, i.e. the number of boys among learners at primary and basis schools prevails. However, the situation is different in case of an upper secondary school where the proportion of girls among the learners becomes higher, which states that boys as compared with girls more often drop out the school after completing basic education.

With respect to overcoming the aforementioned problems, the goals defined by the "United Nations Millennium Declaration" and the "Education for All" global movement are benchmarks for the development of Armenia by 2015. In particular, with regard to the 2nd Millennium Development goal Armenia set a goal that gross enrolment in basic school should reach 99%, whereas in upper secondary school — 95% by 2015. Time series of Millennium Development goals indicators for Armenia defined for the field of education are presented in Annex 1⁴, according to which "Gender Equality Index (the coefficient of correlation of girls' gross

³ RA Social Situation for 2012

⁴ Time series of Millennium Development goals indicators, 2013

enrolment ratio to boys' gross enrolment ratio)" comprised 1.06, whereas it comprised 1.02 in a primary school, 1.02 — in a basic school, 1.21 — in an upper secondary school.

Enhance accessibility of vocational education and scientific and technical activities

Since 2001 enrolment ratio in vocational education programmes have steadily increased, however, these rates are still lower as compared with that of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The gross enrolment in vocational education programmes in 2006 comprised approximately 38%, whereas approximately 28% — at only higher and postgraduate education levels as compared with 21.3% in 2003 (according to the data for 2004, it comprised 43% for countries of Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries).

According to the statistical data for 2012, enrolment ratios of learners for separate vocational education levels are as follows:

92.1% of learners of primary vocational (technical) education institution were enrolled in a tuition-free learning system, whereas 7.9% — in a paid learning system and 26.6% of the total number of students were women.

The gross enrolment ratio for students in primary vocational (technical) education system comprised 4.1% (the gross enrolment ratio for women comprised 2.3 %, whereas the gross enrolment ratio for men — 5.8%), "Gender Equality Index (the coefficient of correlation of men' gross enrolment ratio to women' gross enrolment ratio)" — 0.40%.

The situation in secondary vocational education institutions (SVEIs) has changed in favour of women, where they comprise 52.9% of the number of learners. 92.1% of learners of secondary vocational education institutions were enrolled in the tuition-free learning system. The gross enrolment ratio for students in secondary vocational education institutions comprised 11.0% (the gross enrolment ratio for women comprised 11.9%, whereas the gross enrolment ratio for men — 10.2%), "Gender Equality Index (the coefficient of correlation of men' gross enrolment ratio to women' gross enrolment ratio)" — 1.17%.

According to Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey results, the enrolment in higher education institutions (18-22 age group) comprised 37%⁵. Women also prevail in the composition of learners at higher professional education level. Women in the composition of learners in the Bachelor's programme comprise 52.1%. The gross enrolment ratio in the Bachelor's programme has comprised 44.9% (the gross enrolment ratio for women — 46.5%, whereas the gross enrolment ratio for men — 43.3%). 15.4% of learners was enrolled in the tuition-free learning system, whereas 84.6% — in the paid system. "Gender Equality Index (the coefficient of correlation of men' gross enrolment ratio to women' gross enrolment ratio)" in the Bachelor's programme has comprised 1.07.

Women in the composition of learners enrolled in the Master's programme comprise 68.2%, whereas the gross enrolment ratio comprised 10.2% (the gross enrolment ratio for women —

⁵ Social Snapshot and poverty in Armenia, 2013

13.7%, whereas the gross enrolment ratio for men — 6.6%). 27.1% of students were enrolled in the tuition-free learning system, whereas 72.9% — in the paid learning system, moreover, the number of women in the paid learning system is significantly big (76% of the total number of woman master's students is enrolled in this system). "Gender Equality Index (the coefficient of correlation of men' gross enrolment ratio to women' gross enrolment ratio)" in the Master's programme comprised 2.08.

However, the situation dramatically changes in the fields of postgraduate education and science, particularly women in the composition of learners enrolled in doctoral studies, comprise 42% and 23.5% — at post-doctoral researches.

Women among specialist researchers carrying out scientific and research works and developments comprise 45.1%, whereas women's participation rate among Doctor of Sciences comprise 19.4% and 45.3% — among Doctors of Philosophy.

It should be noted that in recent years — in the period of 2007-2012 — the gross enrolment ratios of learners significantly increased in the field of vocational education. In particular, the gross enrolment ratio in the field of primary vocational education became 4.1 from 1.7, in the field of secondary vocational education it became 11.0 from 8.2, this increase is insignificant in the Bachelor's programme, it reached 44.9 from 44.4, whereas the ratio in the Master's programme has increased almost thrice reaching 10.2 from 3.4. Moreover, the mentioned changes have equally influenced on the enrolment ratios of both men and women.

Non-discriminatory approaches to the selection of profession and occupation

The following principles stipulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On higher and postgraduate professional education” shall be the accessibility of education according to each individual's abilities, uninterrupted nature and consequentiality of the educational process, competitiveness, transparency, publicity, etc. This Law shall also define the academic freedoms of the academic and teaching staff, research workers and students of a higher education institution. It is particularly mentioned that students may, upon their discretion, according to inclinations and needs, choose a profession, the type of higher education institution and the form of instruction, terminate or continue their education. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On primary vocational (handicraft) and middle level vocational education" shall also stipulate corresponding provisions on academic freedoms of learners.

Thus, students are free to select their professions based on their preferences and abilities. The gender situation in the selection of a profession is as follows:

Higher enrolment of women in the field of primary vocational (handicraft) education is noticed for professions of arts, design and service, but in recent years — for professions of economy and management, informatics and computer engineering as well. Economics is also added to this list of secondary vocational education institutions.

The situation in the field of higher education is as follows: Higher enrolment of women in the composition of learners has usually been noticed in the field of health, pedagogy and arts. Although the prevalence of the number of women in the field of health, pedagogy and arts is

traditional, but currently, women also prefer the fields of economics and management, informatics and computer engineering, natural sciences. This is preconditioned by both high demand in the labour market for these professions and formation of new relations in the public, as well as by the need of equal participation of men and women in various spheres of public life.

Whereas in the field of scientific and technical activities women continue showing more interest in natural sciences, humanities and social studies and in recent years technical sciences has also been added to this list. Women enrolled in doctoral studies prefer political, physical and mathematical sciences, and medical profession — in post-doctoral researches.

At the same time, the analysis of the statistical data on the composition of the teaching staff by different levels of education, allows us to make the following observations:

Women among pedagogues in general education school have comprised 84.3%.

Women among the number of pedagogues at primary (handicraft) education institutions has comprised approximately 64.5%, whereas 75.4% at secondary vocational education institution.

Women in the number of academic and teaching staff of the higher education institution have comprised 50.5%. This indicator has increased in favour of women in recent years.

The above mentioned figures show gender disparity of the pedagogical staff in the field of education. There is femininity especially in the field of general education. It can be said that the prevalence of women in the field of education is traditional. However, the situation drastically changed especially during the 1993 crisis. Because of the salary levels and low rating of the profession and poor social protection a huge number of men pedagogues left the system. Whereas certain gender balance is noticed in the composition of academic and teaching staff in the system of higher education.

Non-discriminatory approaches to education and professional instruction (democratization of education, inclusion of instruction of law and elements of sex education in education programmes, the opportunity to instruct representatives of other nations in their native language)

The education development policy of Armenia in the current stage is closely connected with the development trends in the international educational community. The sector-related reforms are aimed at the liberalisation and humanitarisation of education, establishment of values of public tolerance, freedom, fairness and respect for others. To this end, educational criteria and programmes have been reviewed, new subjects and professions have been introduced at all levels of education.

A new education system has been established with regard to the transition to a 12-year education system within the framework of reforms in the field of general education. The instruction field of "Social Sciences" of the new system covers the characteristics of the person as an individual and a citizen and his or her socialization experience. Here, the concepts of rights and responsibilities, home, family, society, trust are stipulated among the requirements for the learners which are directly aimed at imparting a learner comprehensive knowledge about the individual and the public, upbringing socially active person and citizen carrying national and universal values.

In particular, "Life skills", "Ecology", "Social Studies", and "Me and the World Around Me" subjects were introduced in the field of general education. Thematic units relating to the fundamental rights, gender equality, rights of national minorities, tolerance and civil society have been included in the curriculum of the subject "Social Studies". "Tolerance" manual for teachers has been developed, which teaches the learners to topics of tolerance, co-operation, conflict resolution, etc.

Special training courses like gender policy, equality between the men and women have been held in a number of higher education institutions of the Republic.

"Healthy Lifestyle" course has been introduced and taught in 8th-9th grades of general education schools, a package of training materials for teachers of this course has been elaborated (module, materials for distribution), teachers teaching the subject receive relevant trainings. The course has contributed to raise the awareness of the learners about a healthy lifestyle and basics for preparation to individual life.

In the field of professional education, university-ification of education was carried out, new fields of studies were introduced, autonomy of higher education institutions in the fields of management and financing was increased.

The education institutions switched to the council management system, the autonomy and responsibility of the education institutions increased, the activities of the institutions became more transparent.

Pupil councils were established in general education schools with the view of enhancing pupils' autonomy. This initiative provides an opportunity for the young people to have active participation in the improvement of their school and community life, acquire skills of team player, leadership, communication, needs identification, planning and implementation of events. The members of pupil councils may participate in the management of school with an advisory vote.

The representatives from the founder, authorised state body, students, pedagogical staff, social partners, as well as from the employment services are included in the collegial management bodies formed in the primary and secondary vocational education institutions. There are also pedagogical and student councils in the institutions.

The participation of students in the management councils of the higher education institutions has also increased. The participation of student representatives in the student councils of the higher education institutions comprises 25%. The students in the higher education institutions may join the student councils, student think-tanks and other student organisations. In addition to being involved in the management councils of the higher education institutions the students and their organisations have also functions of planning and supervising the activities, the part of activities are aimed at identifying socially vulnerable students of the higher education institutions and providing relevant support.

Career centres have been established in the state higher education and middle level vocational education institutions in recent years, which carry out consulting and guiding activities among the students with regard to the employment issues.

Meanwhile, the education institutions have their websites which contribute to the awareness rising of students on programmes being implemented and the legal issues. The official websites of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia (www.edu.am and www.armedu.am) are also great source of information. With the view of ensuring the participation of the stakeholders forums and public consultation pages have been created, which ensure a feedback. There is also an English website of the higher education <http://studyinarmenia.org>.

Spiritual upbringing

The principles of the state policy in the field of education referred to in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education" stipulates that the education in education institutions is of secular nature. Religious activities and advocacy in education institutions are prohibited.

Accessibility of education to foreigners

The state language of Armenia is Armenian and the education in education institutions is provided in Armenian. However, it is not an obstacle for foreigners to study in their native language in or out of schools. According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On language", "The general education and upbringing in the communities of the national minorities of the Republic of Armenia may be organised in their native language in compliance with the state programme and under state sponsorship, by compulsory teaching of the Armenian language". At the same time under the relevant decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in individual cases (in schools at mountainous, highland, borderline rural settlements, in urban and rural schools having classes of languages of national minorities and in other cases) a class with less number of learners may be opened upon the authorisation of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. This decision provides an opportunity to open classes consisting of only Yezidi children in Yezidi communities.

The admission to school of children of a citizen belonging to a national minority is carried out through teaching the child in his or her national (native) language or at school (classroom) providing a course in that language, and in case of absence thereof the choice of the language of instruction is made by the parents of the children (learners).

The choice of the instruction language for children of foreign citizens, persons not having Armenian citizenship, those with dual citizenship, as well as if one of the parents is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, and the other is a foreigner is carried out by the parents of these children (their lawful representative).

Around 42 public schools provide education in the Russian language for the population of Russian or Slavonic origin, where the public subjects are taught in the Russian language, except for the Armenian language and literature and the History of Armenia. Meanwhile, there are around 60 general education schools in the Republic of Armenia which provide extensive course of Russian.

The Yezidis and Assyrians residing in Armenia have established a teaching and methodical base in the public education system with the support of state institutions. There exist Commissions on "Iranian Studies" and "Semasiology" established in the National Institute of Education of the

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia which carry out expertise of syllabuses, textbooks, manuals in the Yezidi, Kurdish and Assyrian languages.

A programme for the development of education of the national minorities and its schedule were elaborated according to which each year textbooks are published with the view of studying the language, literature and culture of the national minorities of the Republic of Armenia.

“The model curriculum of general education school (grade) of the national minorities” has been approved, according to which 41 hours per week has been allocated for teaching the native language and literature of national minorities in the 1st-12th grades. The criteria and programme for the 1st -12th grades of Kurdish and Assyrian languages have been approved.

Based on the initial applications submitted by the communities of the national minorities residing in Armenia, State Budget funds are allocated for the publication of textbooks. Owing to the allocated funds, textbooks in the Assyrian language for the 1st-2nd grades, the “Alphabet” of the Kurdish language and the textbooks for the 2nd-4th grades were published. The textbooks of the Yezidi language for the 1st-8th grades have been developed and published. The Yezidi Community has also had an active participation in the development of these textbooks. The Yezidi specialists of the National Institute of Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia have been involved.

The co-operation on issues of the Russian language instruction is more comprehensive. “Armenian studies-5” textbook and textbooks of Mathematics for upper grades have been translated from Armenian into Russian and provided to the pupils of the schools of national minorities by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia.

The National Institute of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia regularly conducts trainings for Yezidi teachers, as well as courses of the Armenian language have been held for the representatives of the national minorities.

The Russian language is also included in the list of subjects of the Olympiads for schoolchildren held annually in the Republic. Competitions and festivals of the Russian language are held among pupils. The pupils of Armenia take part in the distant Olympiad of the Russian language. There are permanent training courses, as well as seminar-consultations for Russian language teachers in the National Institute of Education of the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Armenia and Russian Language Development Armenian Centre. Within the framework of the co-operation with this Centre issues related to textbooks, educational materials and training of teachers are discussed.

The Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Armenia has endorsed the publication of "Introduction to Aramaic and Assyrian studies" textbook with the view of introducing it into the higher education system.

The developing and publishing process of the textbooks is continuous and new textbooks will also be published in the nearest future.

Based on the "Memorandum of Understanding signed at the session of Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Industrial and Scientific Co-operation between the Republic of Armenia and the Hellenic Republic" the Yerevan State Armenian-Greek College of Tourism,

Service and Food industry was established. Here, the experience of the tourism field of Greece has been applied and instruction of professions like "Tourism" and "Service in hotels and tourist complexes" was introduced. Taking into account that fact, the subjects "Greek Language" and "History of Greek Culture" have also been included in the curricula. Moreover, the Greek language has also been included in the optional subjects of the curricula of all the professions taught in the college, the instruction of which is optional.

In recent years Armenian language courses have been held for refugees residing in Armenia. In particular, in 2012-2013 Eastern Armenian language courses were held for Iraqi and Syrian Armenians with the initiative of the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia. Currently, this initiative is greatly supported by the Armenian Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Provision of necessary funds for the implementation of reforms in the field of education

In recent years positive developments have been recorded in the dynamics of public expenditure on education. Currently, the structure of public funds distribution at different levels of education is compatible with the indicators of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, in 2007 approximately 87.1% of public funds allocation on education is directed to the general education field, whereas 10.1% — to the financing of professional education programmes. In 2010 those indicators comprised respectively 82.3% and 14.2%, in 2012 — 83.1% and 13.2%, in 2013 — 81.8% and 14.3%. (The average figures for OECD countries comprised respectively 72% and 20%).

With the view of contributing to the reforms implemented in the field of higher education in recent years, the volume of allocations from the State Budget directed to the professional education programmes is increased.

With the view of meeting the target indicators defined by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education development state programme of the Republic of Armenia for 2011-2015" programmes aimed at improving education quality and increasing the accessibility of education will continue to be implemented and will be funded from the State Budget by years. Meanwhile, the support to the reforms implemented in the field of general education and professional education will continue within the framework of "Education Quality and Relevance" credit project of the World Bank.

Women and Health

Demographic and health situation as well as women reproductive health situation in Armenia by 2009

Demographic and health situation and trends in Armenia for the period of 1997-2008 was not satisfactory since mortality rate was relatively high comprising 8,3-8,6 per 1000 population, fertility, delivery and natural growth rates were reduced which continued remaining low for approximately twice as compared with that of 1990.

Thus, if the delivery rate was 77.000 in 1985 and 78.000 in 1991, in 1995 it was 48960, in 2000 — 34276, in 2005 — 37499, and respectively 40105, 41185 and 44413 in 2007, 2008 and 2009. In 1999 the natural growth rate per 1000 population comprised 16,3, whereas in 1995 — 6.4, in 2000 — 2.7, in 2008 — 4.2, 2009 — 5.2 which means that the rate has decreased approximately three times.

As opposed to the other CIS countries, the natural growth, despite its reduction in the recent decade, still remains positive by varying at the range of 2.1-5.2.

Main issues

In terms of reproductive health indicators Armenia significantly conceded the average European indicators.

In 1996-2009, maternal and perinatal mortality ratios exceeded the ratios of the European Union by four and three times respectively.

According to the data of the Demographic and Health Survey conducted still in 2000, the use of modern contraceptives is still low (20%) despite high level of awareness (98%) among women.

Induced abortion was still used as a family planning method but the indicator in the dynamics showed a trend of decrease. If in 1995 induced abortion comprised 30 per 1000 population, in 2009 it comprised 15 per 1000 women of reproductive age.

The prevalence of cervical cancer and breast cancer showed the tendency of increase from year to year and the concerning matter is late diagnostics of advanced cancer.

The right of adolescents to education and reproductive health services was not completely preserved. In a majority of cases sexual problems of men and aged people were ignored.

Obstetric aid is mainly financed from the State Budget but it remains under-financed in terms of acquiring medicine, medical devices, medical accessories and paying salaries to employees. The salary of the medical personnel did not exceed 100-200 USD.

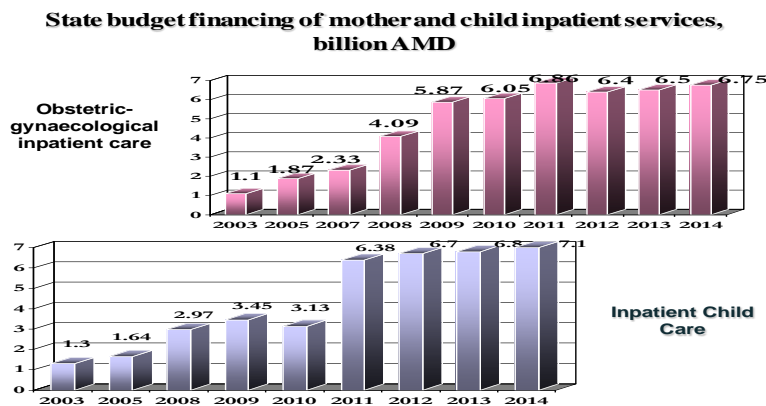
Since 2009 the 2010-2013 demographic and health indicators in Armenia have shown positive trends which is characterised by the decrease in delivery rates.

As in the previous decade and currently as well, according to the annual target programmes guaranteed by the State socially vulnerable women — during pregnancy and delivery and in case of diseases requiring emergency medical care — are provided free health care services the scope and financing of which are increased from year to year after the period of the Beijing Conference.

In recent years the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia has emphasised the policy directions aimed at mothers and children among its priorities. As a result, approximately 3.5 times of increase of financing (in 2006, AMD 1.99 billion for the obstetric aid programme, AMD 1.77 billion for inpatient child care programmes, as well as AMD 6.4 billion and 6.7 billion respectively in 2013) of obstetric aid and inpatient child care programmes has been recorded.

This unprecedented growth of budget allocations gave the opportunity to implement continuously both the Obstetrical state certificate programme introduced on 1 July 2008 and the Child Health Certificate State Programme introduced in the health system on 1 January 2011 as a logical continuation of the mentioned programme.

Owing to the measures implemented the main indicators of obstetric aid has been improved — the early registration indicator of pregnant women for antenatal care has increased by 35%, antenatal screening indicators for pregnant women has been improved, in particular, 80% of pregnant women has been subjected to ultrasound examination for three times and almost 95% of pregnant women have been tested for HIV.



With the view of increasing the availability of health care services extensive measures are carried out to render free medical services, free medicine to population groups with special needs, to arrange their examination and treatment in the polyclinic of their service area.

The analysis of the statistical data shows that the essential decrease in the total morbidity and mortality rate for principal diseases, in particular active tuberculosis, malignant neoplasms, and sexually transmitted infections among women of all age groups as compared with men is noticed.

Life expectancy for women is 78 years and for men — 72 years.

HIV/AIDS

In the Republic of Armenia the data on HIV infection are collected through current and periodic biological and behavioural examinations for HIV infection. The current examinations include detection and registration of HIV/AIDS cases, epidemiological analysis of the case by age, gender, transmission route, possible place and time for the acquisition of infection, different population groups, administrative units, etc., as well as the registration of the case and submission of reports according to the prescribed procedure. With the view of detecting HIV infection prevalence rate and of clarifying epidemic development trends periodic biological and behavioural examinations are carried out which give the opportunity to assess HIV prevalence among population groups at higher risk and to detect behavioural factors contributing to HIV prevalence. Approximately 95% of pregnant women are examined for HIV. All HIV-positive

pregnant women are provided with prevention of mother-to-child-transmission. In the Republic of Armenia, since 2007 no case of HIV infection has been recorded among children born from mothers received prevention. After diagnostics of HIV infection dispensary surveillance is carried out within the framework of which periodic laboratory and instrumental examinations are implemented; in case of indications antiretroviral treatment is delivered. All citizens of the Republic of Armenia irrespective of gender have equal rights and are entitled to health care services with regard to HIV/AIDS, including antiretroviral treatment and care.

Structure and network of reproductive health care service system

In the Republic, preservation of women's reproductive health is ensured through wide network of health care organisations existing in the Republic of Armenia. Armenia is one of the unique countries which has health care organisations even in the smallest rural settlements (about 800).

In Armenia there are 614 medical and obstetrical stations, 255 primary health care (Ambulatory/Polyclinic) organisations, 80 polyclinics, 101 antenatal clinics and cabinets, 52 medical centres, as well as obstetrics and gynaecology inpatient departments, independent 11 maternity hospitals, 4 out of which in Yerevan and 7 in marzes.

If the availability of health care services (in terms of geographical area) is a matter of concern especially for rural population, it equally refers to both men and women.

With the view of reducing the differences of health care service quality and availability by urban and rural areas, 11 major medical centres were put into operation in marzes at the reporting period within the framework of proportional regional development programme. Approximately 40 rural health centres and family doctor's offices were repaired.

Modernised medical institutions not only undergone capital repairs but they were equipped with modern medical devices, accessories and furniture, moreover, the medical personnel passed training courses.

An obvious progress was also recorded in terms of improving the quality of 1-03 ambulance service, acquiring new ambulances, modernising the service, equipping with devices and replenishing with quality personnel.

With the view of increasing the availability and accessibility of reproductive health care services for women the Obstetrical state certificate programme was introduced on 1 July 2008 for women residing in rural and remote regions, making the availability and accessibility of free health care services feasible for all layers of women. 32 centres were established in the city of Yerevan and all mazes of the Republic that provide young people with voluntary reproductive health services.

Trends in maternal and reproductive health situation since 2009

Maternal mortality rate (number of deaths per 100 000 live births)

Maternal mortality rate (number of deaths per 100 000 live births) is considered an integral indicator, reflecting maternal health status. According to WHO instructions, if the number of the

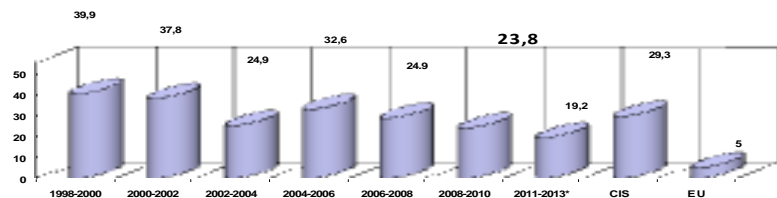
country population does not exceed 5 million, the dynamics of maternal mortality rate is more reliable and realistic when comparing the average triennial rates. According to the data of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, the average triennial rate of maternal mortality in Armenia (per 100 000 births) reduced as twice in 2000-2010 (39.9 — in 1999-2000, 23.8 — in 2008-2010 and 19.1 — in 2011-2013).

Owing to enhanced accessibility and improved quality of health care service, it was possible to reduce the maternal mortality rate and ensure the expected outcome, i.e. to reduce the triennial rate of maternal mortality. Thus, according to the data of the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, the maternal mortality rate in 2008-2010 was 24.9 per 100 000 live births, while it was 19,2 per 100 000 live births in 2011-2013, i.e. the average triennial rate of maternal mortality was reduced by around 25%.

According to preliminary data of the National Statistical Service, 8 cases of maternal mortality were registered in the Republic in 2013 comprising 18.6 per 100 000 live births.

However, the average triennial rate of maternal mortality in Armenia significantly exceeds the average level of the same rate in the EU countries but it is twice as lower as compared with the rate of CIS countries.

Maternal mortality rate per 100 000 live births, according to the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia



*2011-2013 preliminary

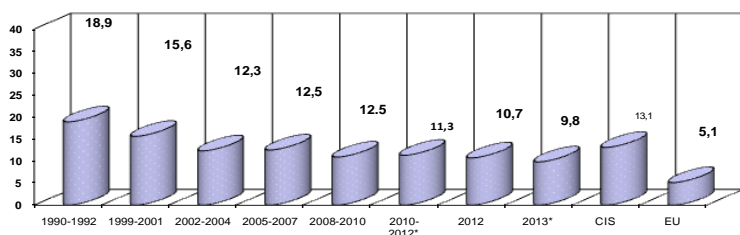
Infant mortality (rate – number of deaths of children less than one year of age per 1000 live births)

Armenia is characterised by an average level of infant mortality (according to the classification of the World Health Organisation) which showed an obvious decreasing trends in the period following 1990s. A progress has been recorded both in terms of mortality rates of children under the age of five and infant mortality rates. In Armenia, the infant mortality rate is far more favourable as compared with that of many CIS countries, however it exceeds twice the average European level.

According to the data of the National Statistical Service, in 1990-2012 the *infant mortality* (hereinafter referred to as "IM") rate deceased by more than 40%. Perinatal diseases take the first

place, congenital malformations take the second place and respiratory infections and diarrhoea take the third and fourth places in the structure of causes for infant mortality. According to the data of the same source, Armenia is characterised by an average level of infant mortality rate (according to the classification of the World Health Organisation), which decreased by more than 1/3 during the period of 1990-2012 (18.6‰ in 1990, 10.8‰ in 2012).

Trends in infant mortality ‰ per 1000 live births, according to the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia



*- 2013 p. Preliminary

The statement of fact is proved by the 2011 Report of the WHO Regional Office for Europe "On levels and trends in child mortality" according to which in Armenia in 2010 the newborn mortality decreased by about 0.5‰ compared to the previous year (12‰ in 2009, 11.5‰ in 2010) whereas the infant mortality decreased by 0,9‰ (18.4‰ in 2009, 17.5‰ in 2010). According to the same source, the estimated rate of infant mortality in Armenia decreased by 2.6 times during the period of 1990-2010.

As compared with CIS countries the level of infant mortality rate in Armenia is favourable, it takes the fourth place after Russia, Ukraine and Belarus but it is almost twice higher than the European average rate.

Thus, both the official statistical data and the alternative survey results state that in the period of 2009-2013 positive trends in basic medical-demographic indicators describing the maternal and child health sector were recorded, that is maternal and infant mortality rates have decreased for almost 1/3.

Status of and trends in induced abortions

Due to the improvement of a medical procedure of induced abortions and introduction of medical abortion programme, major changes have been made in recent years in term of preventing and reducing the cases of maternal mortality caused by induced abortions and its complications in the structure of maternal mortality.

Trends in family planning and use of contraception

The 2010 Armenia Demographic and Health Survey (2010 ADHS) collected information on knowledge and use of contraception.

The 2010 ADHS found that over half (55 %) of married women used some method of contraception at moment of conducting survey. Approximately half of contraceptive users rely on a traditional method (28%) and another half on a modern method (27%). The most commonly used method is withdrawal (25%), followed by the male condom (15%), and the Intrauterine Device (IUD) (10%).

Contraceptive use levels rise rapidly with age, peaking at 70% among currently married women at the age 30-34 and then declining to 37% among those women at the age of 45-49.

Women's morbidity and mortality

In families the gender discrimination disappears in the care of the child with his or her birth and this is revealed by the analysis of gender-age structure of the child mortality. Mortality rate among boys is much higher than among girls almost in all age groups (partially preconditioned by biological factors). The latter evidences about the absence of discrimination in the care of girls.

Women's morbidity and mortality as compared with all other group of diseases (genitourinary, oncologic, cardiovascular, infectious diseases, etc.) is lower than that of men almost in all age groups.

Assessment of opportunities to achieve the 5th Millennium Development Goal

As regards the 5th Millennium Development Goal (“Improve maternal health”), it may be stated that many of the goals set may be assessed as accessible based on the current trends.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target 6. A Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	<p>** Potentially accessible</p> <p>The maternal mortality ratio in Armenia was estimated at no more than 11,2 per 100000 live births</p> <p>In 2009-2011, it comprised 15,7 per 100000 live births</p> <p>In 2010 and 2011, that is in different years, it comprised 6,8 per 1000000 live births</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target 6.B Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	<p>Accessible</p> <p>✓ The rate of pregnant women who had at least one antenatal visit has increased by 6% as compared with 2005 and has become 99%</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Antenatal services and care - 4 and more visits comprised 93%, whereas birth rate at maternity hospital became 99.4% ✓ Obstetric aid of 100% of pregnant women was carried out by skilled medical personnel.
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Thus, the maternal mortality ratio in 1989-1991 comprised 32.6 per 100000 live births. Great variations of ratios have been recorded in the coming years. Since 2009 a noticeable decrease during 2009-2011 comprised 15,7 and 6.7 per 100 000 live births separately in 2010 and in 2011, if such trends persist the goal to reduce maternal mortality ratio up to 11.6 per 100 000 live births by 2015 may be achieved.

Percentage of births attended by skilled medical personnel

Currently in the Republic, almost all births (99%) are attended to by skilled medical personnel.

According to recent survey data (2010 ADHS), almost all births (100%) were attended to by skilled medical personnel.

There is an improvement of indicators compared to the corresponding indicator 91,5% for the period 1996-2000.

The 2005 ADHS reports that almost 96.5% of all births were delivered at health facilities and the proportion of births delivered at home declined and comprised in total 0,4% in 2010 (8.5% in 2000, 2.2% in 2005).

According to the data of the National Statistic Service of the Republic of Armenia, **adolescent birth rate** declined from 69.1 in 1990 (per 1.000 women aged 15 to 19) to 25.7 in 2008 and 20,8 in 2011.

Although there are some differences in the corresponding indicator when stratified by the urban/rural criterion, in 2011 the adolescent birth rates in urban and rural areas comprised respectively 11,6 and 23,4 live births to women aged 15-19 per 1,000 women in the same age group.

Fight against violence

According to the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No 213-A of 30 March 2010, an Inter-agency Commission on Combating Gender Based Violence was established. The mandate of the Commission is to raise the effectiveness of measures, compile information and establish information exchange mechanisms aimed at preventing gender based violence and, as a matter of priority, to develop a National Action Plan on Combating Gender Based Violence.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted the National Action Plan on Combating Gender Based Violence, the 2011-2015 Strategic Programme Against Gender-based Violence on 17 June 2011. These Programmes are implemented in three directions: early detection, prevention, support.

The legislation of the Republic of Armenia regulates the violence by a number of legal acts, in particular by the Criminal Code, Civil Code and Family Code of the Republic of Armenia. According to these legal acts, violence is not distinguished by the gender of the victim. Any violence is criminally punishable irrespective of gender. Crimes accompanied with violence are criminally punishable. It may also be used in a family. It is worth mentioning that violence committed against pregnant women and minors is considered an aggravating circumstance under certain articles.

Upon the initiative of non-governmental organisations a draft law “On family violence” was elaborated in the Republic of Armenia which was submitted to the Government for the opinion. Before transferring the law to the Government, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia submitted the draft law to the interested bodies with the view of receiving an expert opinion. All state agencies involved in the legal and justice sphere, as well as the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor’s Office, judicial structures and the Police expressed negative opinions on the draft law. The opinion was submitted to the Government and, as a result, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia assigned the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs "to ensure the inclusion - in the legal acts - of the manifestations of domestic violence, as well as the effective violence response and prevention mechanisms" while making amendments to a number of legal acts within the framework of the Legal and Judicial Reforms Programme, moreover, they were assigned to discuss and involve new possible measures in already functioning Social Assistance and Protection Programmes.

The issue concerning sexual and physical violence against women, as well as domestic violence, are constantly at the focus of attention and under supervision of law enforcement bodies. A juvenile service operates under the Police of the Republic of Armenia, the officers of which perform activities aimed at preventing and detecting cases of abuse against minor girls. The process is implemented in a close co-operation with other subdivisions and services of the Police, juvenile divisions functioning in the local self-governing bodies, other interested ministries and agencies, as well as international structures and local non-governmental organisations. Every case of domestic violence and violence against women is registered in the prescribed manner at the territorial police department. Afterwards, data on the registered case is collected and it is registered separately at the Information Centre of the Police of the Republic of Armenia.

Women and the economy

In Armenia the role and participation of women in the economy are highlighted and encouraged through various business development tools and mechanisms.

In particular, since 2001 small and medium-sized entrepreneurship (SME) State Support Annual Programmes have been elaborated and financed from the State Budget in Armenia. Within the

framework of the programmes targeted measures were implemented in the following directions. i.e. encouraging business initiatives of women entrepreneurs, information and consultation support, education, marketing promotion and increasing accessibility of credit resources. In particular, it is necessary to point out the outcomes obtained in the following directions of SME development policy during 2009-2013:

- within the framework of entrepreneurship and financial support to start-up entrepreneurs which is, by the way, implemented in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), approximately 300 women entrepreneurs were considered beneficiaries;
- information and consultation support was provided to approximately 15000 businesswomen —more than 30% of the total number of beneficiaries;
- about 850 women were enrolled in the education assistance programme comprising approximately 37 percent of the total number of those receiving assistance;
- 45 women entrepreneurs received assistance to promote the released products and provided services to markets;
- approximately 10 women entrepreneurs, which comprised about 9% of the total number of those receiving guarantees, have used loan guarantees.

The Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 predetermines the creation of new jobs for women in the sectors of industry, especially in the light industry. In this context, in recent years under the platform for public-private sector co-operation tax privileges were provided to a number of organisations functioning in the Republic which, within the framework of investment projects, created in total more than 1600 jobs for women.

Within the framework of co-operation with international donors a number of programmes were also implemented aimed at strengthening the economic opportunities of women and especially vulnerable women and at increasing accessibility of economic resources. In particular, with the help of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Women's Entrepreneurship Support Sector Development Programme launched in Armenia the implementation period of which is 2013-2017. The program comprises an integrated approach to enable women entrepreneurs and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Armenia to play a greater role in economic development. Support is provided mainly to women entrepreneurs offering them favourable terms for lending and improving their entrepreneurial capacity building. The Programme Technical Assistance component started in 2013 and currently there are more than 50 female beneficiaries.

The "Best Women Entrepreneur" Award contest announced by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia has launched since 2013 with the help of the Asian Development Bank, which is aimed at encouraging women's entrepreneurial activities and initiatives in the field of economic development of Armenia, as well as at duly appreciating their achievements in different sectors of economy, providing publicity and support to Armenian woman entrepreneurs. The Award contest will be held in 6 nominations — "Best woman employer", "Best woman innovator", "Best woman benefactor", "Best brand by woman entrepreneur", "Best young woman entrepreneur", "Best start-up woman entrepreneur".

Women's Participation in Decision-Making

Gender sensitive quotas aimed at increasing women's representation in the legislative power were defined in the new Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia adopted on 26 May 2011. In particular, Article 108 defines: " ... The number of representatives of each gender must not exceed the 80% of each integer group of five candidates (2-6, 2-11, 2-16 and subsequently till the end of the list) starting from the second number of the electoral list of a political party, of an alliance of political parties and of each of the parties included in an alliance for the elections to the National Assembly under the proportional electoral system. 25 candidates shall be included in the electoral list presented by a political party, an alliance of a political party for the elections to the National Assembly under the proportional electoral system. The number of candidates included in the electoral list of a political party may not exceed the three-fold of the number defined by this Code for the number of mandates of deputies of the National Assembly under the proportional electoral system. Other persons not being members of a political party may also be included in the electoral list of that political party".

Based on the results of the parliamentary elections held on 6 May 2012 the number of women enrolled in the fifth convocation of the National Assembly increased up to 14.

Two women ministers are included in the structure of the Government of the Republic of Armenia who manage the Ministry of Diaspora and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia. Woman deputy ministers work at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (two deputy ministers), as well as at the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Finance.

Currently, 11432 physicians work in the health system, 851 out of them are obstetrician-gynaecologists, 188 — neonatologists. Although the majority of them (7994) are women but only 363 out of 810 physicians holding managerial positions in the health system are women. It is also worth mentioning that the number of women in law enforcement bodies has increased in recent years. Thus, today we can state that the number of women in the Police of the Republic of Armenia has dramatically increased. Over 45% of the officers of the Department for Protection of Minors' Rights and Combat against Domestic Violence of the General Department of Criminal Investigation of the Police of the Republic of Armenia are women.

Institutional mechanisms for women's promotion

In 1996 a relevant subdivision — the Department of Family, Women and Children Issues — was established within the structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. The Department, among other issues, was mandated to identify, analyse and assess the issues of women. Further, the functions of the subdivision were much more expanded.

The Women's Council adjunct to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia is one of the most important mechanisms functioning in Armenia, which is engaged in women's issues. The Women's Council co-ordinates the implementation of the Gender Strategy in all sectors of the state policy and at all levels of public administration. The aim of the Council is to contribute to increasing the status of women and to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in the social, political and economic spheres by closely co-operating with civil society

organisations. Currently, the proposal to make the Council a national mechanism for improving the condition of women and implementing a gender policy in the Republic of Armenia is under considerations.

Women and the media

The Armenian television and radio companies play a great role in the process of overcoming the gender problems.

Based on the objectives to ensure the freedom, independence and diversity of the broadcasting media an independent regulatory body functions under the law.

Public and private television and radio companies function on the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

Public Television and Radio Company is a state institution with a special status. With the view of ensuring the constitutional right of a person, the independent public television and radio company established by the State ensures by its operation a diversity of informational, political, economic, educational, cultural, children and youth, scientific, sports, entertainment programmes, other programmes of informational nature important and significant for the public as well as programmes on the Armenian language and history.

During the selection of a participant licensed as a result of competitions held in 2010 for carrying out on-air broadcasting of television programmes of republican, metropolitan, regional coverage through the digital broadcasting network, the independent regulatory body takes into account the broadcasting policy programmes of private televisions, one of the components of which is the ability to promote pluralism according to the business plan submitted by the participants.

Broadcasting policy programmes of the existing television and radio companies aimed at ensuring gender equality include programmes which actively cover (in case of radio they are transmitted) events dedicated to the elimination of cases of violence by the use of different forms of violence against women, as well as cases of domestic violence against women, woman journalists and woman entrepreneurs. Programmes aimed at identification and elimination of circumstances pushing women and girls into prostitution are broadcast. A woman appears in news and journalistic programmes as a full member of the public. Events dedicated to the reintegration of women subjected to violence into the public, acquisition of professional skills as well as improvement of women's living standards, extension of their participation in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country and of their role in the public are covered.

Article 22 ("Impermissibility of the abuse of television and radio programmes") of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On television and radio" shall prohibit broadcasting of programmes containing propagation and worship of violence and cruelty, television and radio programmes of erotic nature, films containing horror and explicit violence, programmes with potential negative impact on health, mental and physical development, upbringing of minors. But there exist no mechanisms that will set forth standards for defining restrictive content and a time limit.

The President of the Republic of Armenia, by emphasising the issues raised, requested the Public Council to take the issue under its auspices by holding consultations with the National

Commission on Television and Radio, management of television companies, non-governmental organisations concerned about the issue and by elaborating programmes for changing broadcasting policy of both the Public and private television companies.

According to point 1 of Article 27 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments and supplements to the Law "On television and radio" adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 10 June 2010, the Council of Public Television and Radio Company — the managing body of the Public Television Company — is composed of five members at least one of which is a woman.

Part (b) of Article 8 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On advertisement" in force at the field of television and radio shall prohibit the advertisement that contain insulting expressions, comparisons and images relating to race, nationality, professional or social origin, age group or gender, language, religion and other convictions.

Women and the environment

The establishment and development of the civil society continues in the Republic and this process is largely contributed by the UNECE Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters as well. Armenia acceded to Aarhus Convention in 2001.

Since 2002, 15 environmental information centres (Aarhus Centres) have been established in Armenia with the initiative of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia and with the support of OSCE Office in Yerevan. The aim of the Aarhus centres is to establish liaison and necessary mechanisms between the state bodies and non-governmental organisations for promoting the access to environmental information as well as ensuring public participation in consultations on environmental issues.

Intergovernmental Commission was established under the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia with the view of elaborating Action Plan necessary for the fulfilment of commitments assumed by the Republic of Armenia within the framework of Aarhus Convention and of co-ordinating actions necessary for the implementation thereof. The Commission involves representatives of non-governmental organisations.

Public participation issues are also regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On amendments and supplements to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On expert examination of the impact on the environment" approved by the National Assembly.

“Hotline” has operated since 2007 with the view of ensuring a quick response to citizens’ questions.

There are cases when the Government, taking into account the additional arguments submitted by non-governmental organisations, made amendments to its decisions or undertook measures to solve environmental issues (for more details see the National Report for Rio+20).

Section Three: Data and statistics

The statistics regarding the matter is posted on the following website:

<http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1487>.

Section Four: Emerging priorities

a. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as after the 23rd special session of the General Assembly a number of state programmes have been implemented in the Republic which include measures aimed at gender equality and advancement of women. Although some measures have been implemented, there still exist issues that need to be addressed, including the ones related to ensuring rights of more vulnerable groups of women (women with disabilities, refugee women, women in poverty, etc.).

There is a need to draw more attention to the issue of participation of women in the political and public life, promotion of women's participation in the economy, poverty reduction, strengthening of the institutional mechanisms for gender equality, as well as in a number of important issues on social and health sectors.

b. In the past two decades the Government of Armenia initiated a number of executive and legislative acts to tackle a wide spectrum of issues in the field of human rights. A strategy has been developed addressing issues stemming from the consequences of population ageing and social protection of the elderly people. The Demographic Policy Strategy and Action Plan, State Youth Policy Strategy, National Strategy, Program and Actions Timeframe on Reproductive Health Improvement (2007-2015), the Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan (2011-2015) and Gender Policy Concept Paper and Strategic Action Plan to Combat Gender-based violence (2011-2015) have been adopted and implemented.

Armenia was one of the first States within the CIS adopting a law regulating the sphere of social protection of persons with disabilities (PWDs). The policy implemented in respect of persons with disabilities is comprehensive - starting from the care of PWDs in special institution up to creating necessary conditions for education and rehabilitation of PWDs and ensuring equal opportunities. Government introduced a series of regulatory documents related to children: the Law "On Social Assistance for Children Left without Parental Care"; Annual Program for protecting children's rights; the 2006-2010 Strategy for reforms in social support of children in difficult life situations, Policy Concept on providing state support to families with three and more children.

Armenian legislation in the field of HIV/AIDS has been significantly revised in 2010-2011, with a view to protect the rights of people living with HIV. The Concept on the State Regulation Policy on Migration with its 14 priority areas was adopted and the 2012-2016 Action Plan containing 147 concrete activities has been introduced for its implementation. During the recent

years, Armenia has considerably improved its national legislation to increase the effectiveness of its efforts towards combating all types of trafficking in persons. The nationwide system of mandatory medical insurance to make healthcare far more accessible for population is expected to come into force as early as January, 2015, although the government-funded health/social benefits for public sector employees have already been in place already for a couple of years. Armenia was able to show outstanding results – changes affecting the lives of children happening not only in schools, but also in the hearts and minds of the public.

While there has been a significant progress in implementing the ICPD agenda at national, regional and international levels, there is still much to be done in the fulfilment of individual rights and capabilities which are the foundation of sustainable development and even more relevant today. Among the most important and critical areas requiring further and urgent concentration of efforts are sexual and reproductive health rights and combating HIV/AIDS, gender equality, gender-based/domestic violence and gender selective abortion, needs and rights of aging and young people, PWDs and children, disparities between rural and urban settlements.

Armenia is resolute to work together with Member States and other stakeholders to help the Commission facilitating an all-inclusive and human rights-based post-2015 agenda.

Annex 1

Armenian Millennium Development Goals Indicator Time Series* (field of education)																
Goals	Targets	Indicators	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Source **	
MDG 2. Achieve universal primary education	Target 3. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	6. Gross enrolment ratio in educational institutions, %													AR	
		- elementary (1-4 grades)	94,6	94,7	93,9	90,0	91,8	93,1	93,2	95,5	96,1	96,8	96,7	95,2		
		- basic (1-9 grades)							95,9	93,5	92,1	91,6	97	94,8		
		- upper secondary (10-12 grades)							82,9	81,9	83,9	84,4	79,3	74,1		
		- secondary (1-12 grades)							89,2	90,8	90,2	90,1	92	89,2	RA NSS	
		- primary vocational (handicraft)							1,7	1,9	2,5	3,1	3,2	4,1		
		- middle level vocational							8,2	8,6	8,5	8,7	10,1	11		
		- Bachelor's							44,4	45,1	44,8	44	43,2	44,9		
				- Master's						3,4	5,4	7,1	8,3	10,1	10,2	AR
				7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5, %	89,2	89,3	92,1	93,5	98,3	97,8	99,5	96,9	101,0	96,0	93,1	
		8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, %	100										99,8	2001 Census 2011 Census		
MDG 3.Promote	Target 4. Eliminate	9. Gender parity index in education systems:														

gender equality and empower women	gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	- elementary(1-4 grades)	1,01	1	1,01	1,0 2	1,03	1,0 2	1,0 1	1,0 1	1	1,0 1	1,0 1	1,0 2	AR
		- basic (1-9 grades)							1	1,0 1	1,0 1	1,0 1	1,0 1	1,0 2	
		- upper secondary (10-12 grades)							1,1 5	1,1	1,1 2	1,1 6	1,1 9	1,2 1	
		- secondary (1-12 grades)	1,05	1,03	1,02	1,0 2	1,03	1,0 3	1,0 2	1,0 3	1,0 3	1,0 4	1,0 5	1,0 6	
		- primary vocational (handicraft)							0,3 8	0,4 2	0,3 5	0,3 6	0,3 2	0,3 9	RA NSS
		- middle level vocational							1,9 5	1,8 8	1,7 9	1,6 3	1,2 9	1,1 7	
		- Bachelor's							1,2 5	1,1 9	1,1 8	1,1 6	1,1	1,0 7	
		- Master's							1,3 4	1,6 6	1,9 2	2,1 5	2,3 6	2,0 8	
		10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old	1,00											1,0 1	2001 Census 2011 Census

* Definitions, limit values, calculation methodologies of the Millennium Development Goals - see at website: http://www.un.am/en/MDGs_in_Armenia

**ILCS – Integrated Living Conditions Survey

AR – Administrative Register

RA NSS – National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

2001 – 2001 Census, RA Summary Census Materials

2011 – 2011 Census, RA Summary Census Materials