



An open platform established for the cooperation between CSOs and the RA National Assembly of the seventh convocation for EQUAL rights and EQUAL opportunities for women and men

COMMUNIQUE



On March 8, 2019, at the *Golden Hall* of the National Assembly, an MoU was signed between the RA National Assembly and CSOs thus establishing a bilateral open cooperation platform to ensure actual equality of women's and men's rights and opportunities.

The provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding are as follows:

The RA National Assembly of the 7th convocation and representatives of civil society organizations are endorsing this Memorandum of Understanding, having agreed to cooperate within the framework of the following positions upholding and safeguarding women's and men's equal rights and equal opportunities in the country development processes:

1. Parties are determined, within their authorities, to ensure civil society participation in legislative initiatives aimed at empowerment of women in the political, economic and social areas, as well as the promotion of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.

2. Parties agree to jointly implement public events aimed at promoting equal participation of women and men in the county development processes.
3. Parties agree to hold consultations on other issues included in the [“Women Agenda for Development”](#) document that is of their interest, as well as to discuss the progress of jointly implemented activities and plan future joint activities.

Decisions made during the event:

- To organize NA-CSOs platform periodic meetings to promote the provisions embodied in the Memorandum
- To establish a working group involving the NA and CSO representatives to organize the activities of the Cooperation Platform
- The platform is open to join for cooperation and joint initiatives

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding was preceded by an extensive discussion about women political participation, NA and CSOs cooperation mechanisms to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men. Participating in the discussion were MPs of the three political forces represented in the National Assembly, CSO representatives, diplomats accredited in the Republic of Armenia, experts, and mass media representatives.

Opening remarks were made by:

Lena Nazaryan, Vice President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia



“March 8 is, first of all, our day of gratitude to all those women across the world who, before us, contributed their efforts and lives to the struggle for women’s emancipation and solution of problems... The struggle for women’s rights should continue. Today, in Armenia, women have overt and covert problems: although women have legal equality enshrined in the RA Constitution and laws, in practice, possibilities for exercise of women’s rights continue to remain limited.”

[Video of the statement in brief](#)

Margarita Hakobyan, Executive Director of the OxYGen Foundation



“If the indicator of women’s participation at the national level is 24%, at the local level, in local self-government bodies it is, to put it mildly, rather of concern. We have only one female mayor, only seven women village heads in 502 communities, no women governors in the marzes, and only one female minister within the Government. We hope that this platform of cooperation with the National Assembly will create a possibility to address the issues of equal opportunities not only in the socio-economic area, but also in the political area.”

Lotta Yonson Fornarvei, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden



“On the International Women’s Day, attempts are made to reveal and point out those challenges that confront women not only in Armenia, but in the whole world. We should create political alliances between political factions and parties, and we should be able to overcome the challenges through cooperation.”

[Statement in brief](#)

Presentation



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Judith Farnworth, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of Armenia



“We encourage, strengthen, and create platforms and I am optimistic that this platform will also be an additional opportunity to fully utilize women’s potential and talent. I am confident that it is possible to do that if women are given a full-fledged opportunity to utilize their potential.”

[Statement in brief](#)

Issues voiced at the working meeting:



1. Clarification of the state policies on ensuring equal participation of women and men in the country development processes and formation of the national machinery guaranteeing equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.
2. The importance of development of gender sensitive laws aimed at the re-valuation of women’s roles and of strategies providing for clear mechanisms of equality and introduction of bills based on them.
3. The importance of women’s potential in public administration and local self-governance bodies, and development and implementation of the necessary steps to be taken to promote women’s involvement.
4. Development of mechanisms for labor rights protection to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.
5. Need for introduction and implementation of gender sensitive educational programs
6. Developing effective mechanisms for the implementation of the law on domestic violence against women and the necessity of introduction and implementation of legislative reforms aimed at bridging the legislative gaps.
7. The importance of protection of the rights of women and girls of the ethnic minorities residing in the Republic of Armenia.
8. The necessity of taking steps targeting to overcome gender stereotypes, sexism and discrimination.
9. The importance of cooperation between the civil society and state institutions as a precondition for effective state governance.

Useful links

The complete video of the event: [link](#)

Photos on Facebook: [link](#)

WomenNet.am's coverage of the event: [link](#)

Noyyan tapan's coverage: [link](#)

Panorama.am's coverage: [link](#)

Aravot.am's coverage: [link](#) [link](#)

If you have any questions and suggestions, you can contact

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The event was held within the framework of the program EQUAL: Promoting Women's Political Participation at the National Level, which is being implemented by the OxYGen Foundation in cooperation with experts of the Pro-Media Gender NGO and WomenNet.am website through funding support of the Government Offices of Sweden.