

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Third Cycle Mid-term Voluntary Report of the Republic of Armenia

February, 2023

The Republic of Armenia continues its good practice of submitting voluntary reports under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Third Cycle Mid-term Voluntary Report of the Republic of Armenia has been open for public discussion with participation of representatives of interested ministries, agencies, NGOs and international organisations.

On December 14, 2022 at the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the support of the UNDP office, a public discussion of the 3rd voluntary mid-term report prepared by Armenia in accordance with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process was held.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the aggressive war unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh and its people in September 2020, followed by Azerbaijani aggressions against sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country since May 2021, the recent of which took place in September last year, have impeded the consolidation of a democratization process in the country and shifted Armenia's priorities and agenda, both domestic and international. In particular, the financial and human resources of Armenia are directed to provide support to thousands of forcibly displaced people, IDPs, disabilities and other affected population. Crimes committed by Azerbaijan have led to gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, affecting the entire picture of human rights.

Azerbaijan's armed attack on the sovereign territory of Armenia on September 13-14, 2022 resulted in serious and massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, with disastrous effect on the enjoyment of all human rights. In particular there have been registered evidence of patterns of violations of the rights to life, including arbitrary executions, enforced disappearances, violation of the prohibition of torture and ill treatment, gender-based sexual violence, etc.

Since 12 of December, 2022, Azerbaijan has been keeping Nagorno-Karabakh under blockade, thus grossly violating the Lachin Corridor regime set by the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, and cutting off the lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the rest of the world, blocking and stopping of the movement of people, and food and medical supplies and other vital goods. Parallel to that, the Azerbaijani authorities regularly cut the natural gas supply to Nagorno Karabakh, during severe winter conditions, depriving the peaceful population of NK from heating, hot water, and other basic necessities, making to provide primary medical care, education, the work of state bodies and agencies. Such fundamental and inalienable rights as freedom of movement, access to proper medical care and education are grossly violated. The access of international organizations to NK, including the humanitarian organizations such as OCHA, UNHCR by Azerbaijan is absolutely contradicts the requirements of international humanitarian law principles, as well as the Trilateral statement.

Despite the grave situation, the Armenian Government takes steps to ensure protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

UPR RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION	STATUS
Theme: <i>Ratification of & accession to international instruments</i>		
Consider ratifying core human rights treaties to which the country is not yet a party.	Armenia has acceded to all main human rights treaties except for one, which has been signed but not ratified.	
Consider ratifying the <i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families</i> .	Ratification of the Convention by the Republic of Armenia is not practical as it contains a number of provisions inconsistent with general directions of national migration policy.	
Ratification of the <i>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> .	The <i>Optional Protocol of the Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> entered into force for the Republic of Armenia on January 25, 2023.	
Ratification of the <i>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure</i> .	The <i>Optional Protocol</i> was ratified on 19 January 2021.	
Ratification of the <i>Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty</i> .	The <i>Optional Protocol</i> was ratified by Armenia on 19 March 2021.	
Ratification of the <i>Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence</i> (Istanbul Convention).	Armenia has signed the Convention in 2018. More awareness raising campaigns are to be launched for ratification of the Convention, which takes time.	
Ratification of the <i>Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse</i> (Lanzarote Convention).	The Republic of Armenia ratified the Convention on 11 May 2020.	
Theme: Cooperation and Follow up with treaty bodies Cooperation with human rights mechanisms National reporting and accountability mechanisms		
Continue cooperation with the human rights treaty bodies and special procedures of the United Nations, submitting reports to various treaty bodies and pursue efforts to promote human rights	Cooperation of the Republic of Armenia with UN human rights treaty bodies and special procedures is an ongoing process. As of today, Armenia has submitted to the treaty bodies all the reports required.	

Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for United Nations treaty body elections.	We are currently developing an open, merit-based mechanism of selection national candidates for UN treaty body elections, including a national database of experts.	
Continue the ongoing efforts aimed at promotion of human rights and submitting relevant reports	Reports concerning human rights issues are being regularly submitted to various bodies monitoring the field, including the UN, CoE and OSCE.	
Establishing a national reporting and accountability mechanism.	Development of the mechanism ensuring accountability on the international commitments of Armenia is on the way.	
Theme: Legal and institutional reform		
Consider adopting a comprehensive national policy against all forms of exploitation of persons.	The Republic of Armenia implemented six three-year national strategic programs of relevant measures since 2002. The 7 th national program for the years 2023-2025 and its Road Map, was approved by the Government's Decision of January 5, 2023.	
Amend the Criminal Code to include homophobia and transphobia as aggravating criminal circumstances.	Article 71 of the new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia entered into force on 1 July, 2022, provides that committing a criminal offence with the motive of hatred, intolerance or enmity based on racial, national, ethnic or social origin, religion, political or other views or other circumstances of personal or social nature is regarded as an aggravating circumstance in respect of criminal liability or punishment.	
Take the necessary further steps for the judicial and legal reforms.	The new Strategy for Legal and Judicial Reforms for the period of 2022-2026 has been adopted.	
Theme: National Human Rights Institution		
Provide sufficient and sustainable funding to the National Human Rights Defender's Office, including for the operation of its regional offices and preventive mechanisms.	The budget of the Office of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, including of its territorial subdivisions, is an integral part of the State Budget and the funding is extended under a separate line. The activities of the HRD as the National Preventive Mechanism is funded from the same budget. Moreover, the annual State Budget allocations to the HRD Office and the Staff thereof, as well as to the Defender, as the National Preventative Mechanism, could not be less than the amount for the previous year, and tends to increase every year.	
Theme: Equality and non-discrimination		
Racial discrimination		
Take prompt and resolute action against all instances of violence, hate speech and hate crime, online as well as offline, especially targeting women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.	The new Criminal Code of Armenia has criminalised the public speech intended to incite or advocate hatred, discrimination, intolerance or hostility based on racial, national, ethnic or social origin, religion, political or other views or other circumstances of a personal or social nature, as well as dissemination of a material or an object, and public call for violence, publicly justifying or propagating such violence, as well as dissemination of a material or an object for that purpose.	

	The Police of the Republic of Armenia conducts monitoring of this issue via Internet.	
Implement the recent recommendation of the OSCE/ODIHR by ensuring credible and effective oversight over adoption and enactment of the draft law on ensuring equality before the law.	The draft law "On Ensuring Equality Before the Law" was developed and submitted to the Government in December 2019. The Law was later returned for further amendments. The adoption of the Law has also been enshrined in the National Strategy for Human Rights and the follow-up Action Plan for 2020-2022.	
Continue to strengthen anti-discrimination policy and the protection of vulnerable groups and ensure the effective and timely implementation of programmes supporting all socially vulnerable population groups.	The draft laws of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments and supplements to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social assistance" and related laws" were developed with a view to improving the living standards and social conditions of citizens, raising the quality and purposefulness of provided social services. The draft laws were submitted in September 2022 to the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. In 2023 it is envisaged to introduce a new system for indigence assessment, through which social support programmes will be more targeted.	
Continue the efforts in strengthening gender equality.	The 2019-2023 Strategy for Implementation of Gender Policy defines the priorities of the gender policy, which focus on creating favourable conditions for women and men for them to exercise their rights and opportunities in all fields of social life. The policy of the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the undertaken reforms are consistent with the UN <i>2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> and contribute to meeting the sustainable development goals, in particular goal 5, which states as follows "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".	
Continue efforts to fight trafficking in human beings.	Once the information on trafficking in human beings and related crimes received, persons involved in or related to such crime and the victims of trafficking, all territorial units of the Police of Armenia immediately inform the specialised unit of the General Department of Criminal Police. The Criminal Police records the received information and analyses it in details. The number and profiles of persons exposed to trafficking are being specified and all the necessary measures are taken to reveal the crimes committed and to ensure the legal protection of those affected. To raise the awareness of population, especially the youth, on trafficking in and exploitation of persons, to enhance the level of their legal consciousness, as well as for the prevention purpose, the officers of the territorial units of the Police of Armenia regularly hold meetings and talks at educational Institutions explaining the dangers of exploitation of and trafficking in human beings and ways to avoid them. Police of Armenia regularly updates relevant materials on trafficking on its official website "police.am". Also, relevant materials are prepared and broadcasted by the Police of the Republic of Armenia, and a hot line service on trafficking in and exploitation of human beings operates in the Police in a round-the-clock regime.	

<p>Continue the efforts towards further protection of the rights of national minorities.</p> <p>Enhance the efforts to protect and guarantee the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including ethnic and religious minorities.</p>	<p>The national minorities in the Republic of Armenia have equal rights and equally enjoy all the rights.</p>	
<p>Conduct broad public education training and awareness raising with a view to combating hate speech, stereotypes and discrimination.</p>	<p>Appropriate actions enshrined in the National Strategy on Human Rights Protection stipulate awareness raising campaigns that are being carried out periodically.</p> <p>On 23 February 2021 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the OSCE/ODIHR and the Police of the Republic of Armenia, according to which the Police of the Republic of Armenia has appointed a national liaison officer, who as a representative of the Police of the Republic of Armenia shall coordinate the implementation of the training programme for law enforcement bodies on the subject "Fight against hate crimes". Within the framework of the mentioned Memorandum a training course was held from 25-27 January 2022 in the Educational Complex, attended by 2574 police officers. The training results were analysed and submitted to the OSCE/ODIHR.</p> <p>To raise awareness on fight against hate speech, it is envisaged to include in the model annual plan for in-service training the topic "Fight against hate crimes".</p>	
<p>Take measures for better protection of rights of women, children and people with disabilities, for elimination of discrimination and further strengthen the social protection system.</p>	<p>The Government of the Republic of Armenia extends funds from the State Budget to NGOs involving people with disabilities to finance the actions for developing the adaptive sports.</p> <p>The draft law "On making an amendment to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the Rights of the Child"", the draft Law "On making amendments and supplements to the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia" have been developed with a view to protect the rights of the child through more viable mechanisms.</p> <p>The draft law "On making amendments and supplements to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of children deprived of parental care"" developed and put into circulation shall likewise create guarantees for exercising the rights of children and other similar groups left without parental care.</p> <p>In 2022, the draft legal act defining the preventive measures carried out among minors was updated and developed, relevant amendment was made to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the Police".</p>	
<p>Combat hate speech and hate crimes based on skin colour, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, belief or disability, by incorporating appropriate wording into the legislation.</p>	<p>The new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia criminalized the mentioned crimes.</p>	
<p>Introduce legislation criminalising racist organisations and</p>	<p>Is regulated pursuant to Article 330 of the new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.</p>	

participation in such organisations.		
Theme: Human rights and climate change		
Adopt a comprehensive, gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies.	<p>On 3 November, 2022, the Decision No 1692-L of the Government of the Republic of Armenia "On approving the 2022-2026 Climate Change Adaptation Plan in the Sector of Water Resources". The Decision was developed also based on gender analysis of the sector and gender impact assessment and relevant provisions were incorporated into the documents along with the measures addressing the needs of women (https://www.e-gov.am/gov-decrees/item/39264/)</p> <p>Draft Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia "On Approving the Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and the List of Actions for 2022-2026", "On Approving the Concept of Climate Change Adaptation in the Agricultural Sector and the Action Plan", "On Approving the Plan on Climate Change Adaptation in the Healthcare Sector and the List of Actions for 2022-2026" specifically focus on the impact of climate change in those sectors on women and provide for relevant measures aimed at mitigating that impact and (or) adapting to changes.</p> <p>On 24 October 2022, the Ministry of Nature Protection and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs initiated a framework discussion on the draft "Action Plan for 2023-2025 aimed at mitigating gender and social impacts of climate change" with the participation of state institutions, members of the Inter-agency working group on gender-related issues and climate change issues, as well as representatives of non-governmental organisations.</p> <p>In 2021, the Law "On the rights of persons with disabilities" was adopted. The Law enshrined provisions defining the social inclusion of persons with disabilities and the prohibition of discrimination.</p>	
Theme: Prohibition of torture and ill-treatment (including cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment)		
Conditions of detention		
Ensure that all forms of torture and ill-treatment are fully criminalised and take steps to eradicate torture and ill-treatment, and effectively investigate, prosecute and punish such acts.	<p>Regulations on torture and ill-treatment have been brought in line with International standards under the new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.</p> <p>During 2020, 143 criminal cases and during 2021, 156 criminal cases were examined in the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Armenia under the elements of crimes provided for by Article 309.1, part 2 of Article 309 and Article 341 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia with regard to unlawful detention of citizens at the units of the Police and other bodies, <i>de facto</i> depriving them of liberty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as well as other alleged violations of human rights by officials.</p> <p>Complaints and allegations of persons subjected to torture shall promptly, not later than within 24 hours, be sent to the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Armenia.</p>	

	Pursuant to Article 5.1 (Preventing torture, inhuman or degrading treatment in the Police) of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Police", to protect human rights, prevent and reveal the possible cases of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, the entrances and exits of the administrative buildings of the police units shall be equipped with video recording systems. The premises used for interrogation are equipped with audio and video recording systems.	
Repeal the statute of limitations for the crime of torture and other equivalent acts under the Criminal Code.	Part 9 of Article 83 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia defined such an exemption, which states that no statute of limitations is applied to persons committed a criminal offence provided for by Articles 133-154, Article 308, point 1 of part 2 of Article 441 or Article 450 of the Code, irrespective of the time of committing the criminal offence.	
Continue to build and strengthen the investigative capacity of the Special Investigation Service to ensure effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of acts of torture and ill-treatment.	The Special Investigation Service was dissolved and the Anti-Corruption Committee was created.	
Define torture in accordance with the <i>Convention against Torture</i> .	It is defined in Article 450 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.	
Abolish the solitary confinement of juveniles as a disciplinary measure, both in law and in practice.	Article 47 of the new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia prohibits solitary confinement of juveniles as a disciplinary measure.	
Safeguard the full enjoyment of the procedural rights of detainees from the very outset of detention, including its notification, and prompt access to medical and legal assistance.	Arrested persons are kept under custody or detainees are kept under detention in accordance with the Constitution, Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code, as well as the recognised norms and principles of international law. Exerting physical violence, as well as inflicting inhuman or degrading treatment against arrested or detained persons is prohibited. The terms and the procedure for keeping arrested persons under custody or keeping detainees under detention refer to all arrested or detained persons irrespective of nationality, race, gender, language, creed, political or other views, social origin, property or other status.	
Theme: Good governance and corruption		
Continue the positive steps to ensure the rule of law and development of the democratic institutions.	This is an ongoing process implemented through reforms in relevant sectors.	
Further strengthen national capacities in the promotion and protection of human rights, taking into account the concluding observations of the treaty bodies and the recommendations of the universal periodic review.	In developing the sector-specific strategies of the Republic of Armenia the concluding observations of the treaty bodies and the recommendations of the universal periodic review are continuously taken into account.	
Ensure that a human rights approach is reflected in the Government's Activity Plan approved by the Government in 2020.	The Activity Plan of the Government for 2021-2026 approved by Annex 1 of the Decision of the Government of Armenia No 1902-L of 18 November, 2021 enshrines the commitment to develop the Action Plan for 2023-2025 deriving from the National Strategy for the Protection of Human	

	Rights.	
Continue the fight and strong commitment against corruption in full compliance with the legislation of Armenia.	<p>A methodology for risk assessment at local self-government bodies has been developed and provided to local self-government bodies.</p> <p>Under the Law "On local self-government", the Community Council of Elderly is authorised to approve the Plan of Local Anti-Corruption Measures as presented by the head of the community.</p> <p>The process of developing the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and the Activity Plan for 2023-2026 has been launched.</p>	
Fully implement the 2019-2022 Anti-Corruption Strategy and continue to adopt Government plans to fight corruption.	The Strategy is implemented according to the schedule, and a performance report is published at the end of the year.	
Establish strong and independent anti-corruption institutions and ensure proper and transparent vetting procedures of judges, prosecutors, investigators and police officers.	The Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Committee and the newly established anti-corruption courts operate in the Republic of Armenia.	
Theme: Administration of justice and fair trial		
Access to justice and remedy		
Accelerate efforts to reform the judiciary system in order to ensure independence of justice.	A Strategy for judicial and legal reforms has been elaborated after the review of the Strategy for 2019-2023 taking into account the advanced international practice in judicial and legal reforms. The Strategy includes spurring measures to reform the justice sector within the next five years.	
Take effective measures to protect the independence and integrity of the judiciary system, as well as to ensure non-interference in the affairs of the judiciary by member of the executive.	A Strategy for judicial and legal reforms has been elaborated after the review of the Strategy for 2019-2023 taking into account the advanced international practice in judicial and legal reforms. The Strategy includes spurring measures to reform the justice sector within the next five years.	
Establish transparent processes for the nomination, appointment and disciplining of judges and the termination of their powers based on international standards, and distribute court cases in a proportional manner to ensure a balanced workload for judges.	<p>Changes are continuously being introduced to the Constitutional Law "Judicial Code of the Republic of Armenia" to ensure that appointment of judges and imposing disciplinary liability are in line with international standards.</p> <p>Relevant advisory opinions are requested from the Venice Commission.</p>	
Ensure the efficiency and adequacy of complaint systems concerning the work of institutions that provide treatment or care for persons with disabilities.	Boxes for complaint have been placed in institutions providing round-the-clock care and protection, as well as in the day care social centres, which are regularly reviewed; there is an access to the Internet and telephone communication in such institutions.	
Theme: Freedom of opinion and expression and access to information		
Intensify efforts in creating a safe and enabling environment for civil society, human rights defenders and journalists and ensure that threats and attacks against journalists and human rights defenders, notably those working in the field of anti-discrimination and women's rights,	<p>In the framework of human rights protection police officers cooperate with human rights defenders, as well as representatives of international and non-governmental organisations. Safe operation of NGOs and is ensured by the legislation and the necessary information is provided.</p> <p>The body in charge of the proceedings takes all measures provided by the Criminal Procedure Code</p>	

are duly investigated.	of the Republic of Armenia to identify the perpetrators and reveal the crime, as well as the circumstances of the crime.	
Step up the efforts to enact comprehensive media regulations, including by adopting the legal measures to ensure media ownership transparency and independence of public broadcasters.	Armenia has adopted a policy of reforming the legal framework of the media in order to bring the legislation in compliance with the international standards. To this end, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia applied to the Council of Europe for expert assistance.	
Adopt specific laws prohibit hate speech and take concrete steps to end smear campaigns and threats against human rights defenders.	Article 329 of the new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia envisages a sanction for public speech inciting or advocating hatred, intolerance or enmity against a person or group of persons based on race, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religion, political or other views or other circumstances of personal or social nature, as well as for disseminating materials and object for that purpose.	
Theme: Human trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery		
Continue implementing the government programme for social and psychological rehabilitation services for victims of human trafficking.	Social and psychological rehabilitation services is provided to victims of human trafficking. It is regulated by the program "Social and psychological rehabilitation of persons subjected to trafficking of and exploitation in human beings and sexual abuse" and funded from the State Budget. The funds doubled in 2020 and 2021 as compared to 2019, amounting to around AMD 40 million against previous AMD 19 million.	
Continue efforts to combat trafficking in human beings and protect victims of trafficking by speeding up the full implementation of the National Action Plan.	While the National Action Plan for 2020-2022 was in effect, the following new legislative changes also were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On 1 July 2022 the new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia and the new Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Armenia entered into force, - On 29 May 2022 the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments and supplements to the Law "On identification of and support to the persons subjected to trafficking in and exploitation of human beings"" was adopted, - Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on establishing the minimum standards of the quality of required services provided to victims of trafficking and exploitation and the indicators for identifying a person as a victim or a victim of a special category by the Commission for the Identification of Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation, - The draft law "On making amendments to the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia", defining the term "compulsory or forced labour", which is submitted to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia. 	
Redouble efforts to tackle effectively trafficking in persons while assisting the reintegration of victims into society.	32 criminal cases were initiated during 2020-2022 with regard to cases of labour and sexual exploitation. Assistance is provided to victims and victims of special category as appropriate, with a view to	

	<p>eradicate deviations from the normal course of life caused by trafficking in human beings and/or exploitation, and to fully ensure social reintegration of the victims.</p> <p>Victims and victims of special category are provided assistance, which may include f accommodation and in-kind support, restoration of essential documents, medical assistance and service, psychological, consultative, legal aid, care-giving, including in an appropriate institution, provision of translation services, access to basic, secondary education or primary vocational (handicraft) education, ensuring employment, organising safe return, provision of one-off monetary compensation.</p>	
<p>Implement the Law On identification of and support to victims of trafficking in human beings and exploitation and commit to addressing the issue of trafficking in persons and exploitation of the prostitution of women and girls.</p>	<p>The National Plan for Combating Trafficking in and Exploitation of Human Beings for 2023-2025 includes the framework of protection and support to victims of trafficking in and exploitation of human beings.</p> <p>Relevant awareness raising campaigns and public events aimed at changing the social and cultural environment and perceptions, and raising the awareness among general public, is planned.</p> <p>Persons subjected to trafficking in and exploitation of human beings and sexual abuse are provided with services defined by the legislation, and it is regulated through the measure: "Social and psychological rehabilitation of persons subjected to trafficking in and exploitation of human beings and sexual abuse"</p>	
<p>Continue to strengthen its efforts to combat trafficking in persons, in particular women, girls and children, with regular monitoring.</p>	<p>By the end of 2023, it is planned to improve the application of monitoring instruments to make them more accountable both at the decision-making level and in the reporting.</p> <p>Regular inspections are conducted in the city of Yerevan and in all regions to detect and prevent the cases of exploitation of children and involvement of children in begging.</p>	
<p>Ensure that the implementation of its laws, policies and programmes on anti-human trafficking is gender-responsive and disability-inclusive.</p>	<p>The National Plan for Combating Trafficking in and Exploitation of Human Beings for 2023-2025 envisages implementation of this point.</p>	
<p>Theme: Rights related to marriage and family</p>		
<p>Adopt programmes that would help the promotion of the rights of families and children and provide full support to the institution of the family.</p>	<p>The draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making an amendment to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the rights of the child"", as well as the draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments and supplements to the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia" have been developed to ensure protection of the rights of the child through more viable mechanisms.</p> <p>The draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments and supplements to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of children deprived of parental care"" has been developed and put into circulation, which shall likewise create guarantees for exercising the rights of children and other similar groups left without parental care.</p>	

	<p>The Strategy for development of the field of labour and social protection, which directly addresses the mentioned issues, is being elaborated.</p> <p>Since 2020, children in difficult life situation and their family members are provided with day care services, services of preventing access to institutions and reunification of children taken into care in special institutions, providing in-kind packages on behalf of the State. Also, six state-owned institutions that provide day care services to children, who are in a difficult life situation and to their family members, operate in Armenia, thus promoting the rights of children.</p> <p>To promote the rights of children, the Police develops a list of actions to be carried out under its Annual Plan for 2023 for the protection of children's rights. Such list was forwarded to the competent body during previous years and in 2022.</p>	
Theme: Human rights and poverty		
<p>Consider further institutional, legislative and policy measures targeted in particular at improving the well-being of children living in poverty.</p>	<p>Services provided to children in difficult life situation are continuously expanded and improved. The draft laws, mentioned earlier, pursue the aim to protect the rights of all children, including those living in poverty, through more viable mechanisms.</p> <p>Family and social benefits and emergency assistance is provided to socially indigent families registered in the family indigence assessment system within the scope of the continuous social assistance programmes.</p>	
<p>Continue to combat poverty and social inequality with the consolidation of social programmes to benefit the most vulnerable population groups.</p>	<p>In 2023 it is envisaged to introduce a new system for indigence assessment, through which social assistance programmes will be more targeted. The packages of non-financial services shall be offered to meet the primary needs of people in the education, healthcare and social sectors. A specific format for dealing with social issues will be introduced, starting from detection of the problem and ending with settling the problem. It is planned to lift the families out of poverty through capacity-building and development of skills of families in difficult life situations and in poverty, by enacting measures for employment and self-employment and by applying the models for gradual reduction of poverty.</p>	
<p>Continue the efforts to reduce poverty, as well as increase social programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of the population.</p>	<p>"Emergency social assistance" programme is introduced and operates in the city of Yerevan and its goal is to provide emergency assistance to secure primary social needs of beneficiaries in difficult life situation and in need of an urgent assistance. Starting from February 2024, the program will be implemented in the entire country. The authorities plan to fully launch a food card system in 2025.</p> <p>A new indigence assessment system based on a hybrid method of checking out the family resources has been elaborated. The new system provides for the guaranteed minimum income policy enabling to overcome the extreme poverty.</p> <p>In December 2022, authorities envisaged to launch a social mortgage system to create annually the decent living conditions for families belonging to a certain social group through housing.</p>	

<p>Enhance efforts in scaling up the successful implementation of programmes that ensure inclusive economic growth, job creation and fighting poverty.</p>	<p>It is envisaged develop such an Employment Strategy, wherein a separate target group would be the unemployed members of families deemed as indigent. This method would allow to contribute to eradication of poverty through economic rehabilitation of an unemployed family member.</p>	
<p>Theme: Right to health</p>		
<p>Continue its efforts to strengthen the health-care system by developing a national health insurance scheme.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Health is in the process of developing the concept paper on comprehensive health insurance and its implementation schedule, with full implementation expected in 2027.</p>	
<p>Adopt measures to tackle discrimination against HIV-positive individuals in the healthcare system and take steps to make treatment more accessible in the regions.</p>	<p>Within the scope of the National Programmes on prevention of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Armenia, health workers continuously undergo educational and awareness raising programs aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV. Stigma and discrimination courses are included in all professional education trainings for healthcare professionals working with HIV-infected. A stigma index survey is also planned.</p> <p>The authorities adopt measures to facilitate access to HIV/AIDS medical assistance and care services in Armenia, particularly in the regions of the country. In a decentralised manner, HIV/AIDS prevention/early detection measures are implemented in primary health care medical organisations in all the regions of Armenia. A pilot programme is also being implemented to provide antiretroviral medications for treatment of people with HIV. In all cases, the decentralisation of services shall be preceded by outreach activities for health workers involved in the programme to exclude manifestations of stigma and discrimination towards the patients.</p>	
<p>Promote the health-care system and continue to improve the availability and accessibility of health services in all regions.</p>	<p>The Activity Plan for reforms in the primary health care sector of Armenia provides for the implementation of measures aimed at raising the quality and efficiency of services.</p> <p>In Armenia, the practice of transferring patients from remote regions of the country through the sanitary aviation service is in place (in 2020 — 141 patients, in 2021— 85 patients, in 2022 — 85 patients were transferred as of 10 October 2022).</p> <p>Within the scope of state programs (order), emergency cardiology (Stent for life) services are provided free of charge to the entire population. These services are carried out in three regional medical institutions of Armenia. The state programme of thrombotic treatment of acute ischemic strokes of the brain and mechanical thrombocthemias has also been implemented free of charge (the programme operates in 4 medical institutions).</p> <p>To provide haemodialysis medical treatment and service to the people living in rural areas as close as possible to their settlements and to ensure the access to and affordability of haemodialysis service, a haemodialysis service has been provided in Tavush, Kotayk and Shirak regions (marzes) of Armenia during 2020-2022.</p> <p>To improve the access to palliative medical assistance and service, the Ministry of Health has licensed 11 medical regional institutions of Armenia, and a state program (order) has been placed</p>	

	in the 6 relevant medical institutions.	
Strengthen public awareness of health services for people living in rural areas and continue the process of improving the infrastructure of primary health care in rural communities.	To raise awareness in rural communities about the healthy lifestyle and its fundamentals, the public health authorities launched a public communication program. It is planned to build 20 rural clinics/primary health care centres in Syunik, Gegharkunik, Tavush, Shirak, Lori, Armavir, Ararat regions (marzes) of Armenia and to renovate polyclinic buildings of 9 regional medical centres.	
Promote the right to health by facilitating people's access to health-care institutions, expand access to quality care to all components of society.	Primary healthcare services are provided in Armenia free of charge to all groups of population irrespective of social status. The scope of PHC services, laboratory and instrumental diagnostic studies are approved by appropriate orders of the Minister of Health. In 2021, the Government of Armenia by its decision expanded the care services to be implemented in all regions, taking into account the high demand for community-based services.	
Continue to invest in the activities reducing the infant mortality rate.	Measures targeted at reducing the level of infant mortality in the country continue to be implemented. In particular, a working group in charge of implementation of the measure and a schedule of measures aimed at improving intensive child care services in the regions have been set up. The algorithms for conditions frequently encountered in paediatric intensive care will be developed and published regularly. Children's rapid response outbound service performed through the land transport have been regulated. A service of inter-regional significance has been established. The Clinical Guideline for the Management of Apnoea of Prematurity has been approved, caffeine citrate has been included in the treatment regimen; it has been imported and is now available in Armenia. Thanks to these measures, the outcomes of neonatal pathologies are significantly improved.	
Theme: Sexual and reproductive health and rights		
Introduce comprehensive and evidence-based sexual education in Armenian schools.	Currently, "Healthy Lifestyle" course is taught at general education schools of Armenia. Pursuant to the new state standard of general education approved in 2021, the pilot standard and programmes for the "Healthy Lifestyle" course for grades 5-11 were developed and approved. The course will be tested in the Tavush region, then it will be implemented throughout the country in the 2025-2026 academic year. The course is largely comprised of topics related to sexual and reproductive health. The 5-11 grade students, in accordance to their individual age characteristics, will study the stages of maturation, peculiarities of sexual and reproductive system, how to avoid unwanted pregnancy, measures to prevent HIV/AIDS and other topics.	
Continue enhancing women's access to basic health care and sexual and reproductive health services, in particular for rural women.	Beneficiaries of the state program "On establishing the procedure for free medical aid and services through the application of assisted reproductive technologies and under privileged conditions and defining the requirements for beneficiaries" are residents of bordering communities with overwhelming majority of rural settlements. Pursuant to the Order "On approving the procedure for organising outpatient obstetric and	

	<p>gynaecological medical aid and services, the volume of examinations for fifteen-year-old girls at outpatient medical organisations and the methodology for implementation within the scope of free medical aid and services guaranteed by the State", the examinations are carried out during the year.</p> <p>Pursuant to the Order "On regulating the works of outbound rapid response service for pregnant women, parturient women and postpartum women carried out through land transport", a medical organisation of the third-level maternity care and intensive therapy service for pregnant women, parturient women and postpartum women is being established, where necessary.</p> <p>Special attention is paid to provide more access to healthcare services of women living in the regions of the country. For example, free mammography examination of women aged 50-69 is conducted through mobile mammography device with the provision of further professional treatment in case of a detected problem (such programs have already been implemented in three regions). Women with disabilities receive full medical aid package, including the supply of medicines, and, starting from 2019, also infertility treatment along with the assisted reproductive technology.</p>	
<p>Fight against selective abortions.</p>	<p>Within the framework of the "2020-2023 programme of the Republic of Armenia on prevention of the gender-based sex selection and the list of actions for the implementation of the programme", the Ministry of Health elaborated and approved the Training Manual "Prevention of the gender-based sex selection through changing the attitude of healthcare workers and improving the consultative skills thereof". The Manual was already applied in Yerevan and 4 regions (marzes) of Armenia.</p> <p>The outcome of joint actions undertaken years ago and continued up today is obvious: in 2008-2012 girl/boy gender parity was 100/115, this ratio was reduced to 100/108,8 in 2021.</p>	
<p>Theme: Right to education</p> <p>Human rights education, trainings and awareness raising</p>		
<p>Continue to strengthen efforts to ensure education for all, paying special attention to children from economically disadvantaged families.</p>	<p>In 2022 the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On approving the state programme for development of education in the Republic of Armenia by 2030" was adopted. The main goal of the Program is to form an effective and internationally competitive education system based on national and universal values to contribute the development of the Republic of Armenia through providing with the opportunity to receive high-quality education for everyone in accordance with his or her needs and abilities at all stages of life. One of the main strategic directions of the programme is to create a universal, inclusive, learner-oriented educational environment accessible to everyone throughout Armenia.</p> <p>The main targets of the programme are: transition to universal inclusive education at all levels of education, providing preschool services available in all settlements with 95% enrolment of children, ensuring that no child is left out of the compulsory education system; providing scholarships and compensation. The program also ensures that no bright students leave their higher</p>	

	and professional education due to inability to pay.	
Ensure that the right to education is effectively offered to all, especially to girls and to children with disabilities, in particular to those in the most remote areas of the country.	<p>Transition to the system of universal inclusive education has been effected in all 10 regions /marzes/ of Armenia and in Yerevan. Students have been transferred from special schools to public schools operating in their communities.</p> <p>We've launched a three-tier system to take care of educational needs of children and have established a position of teacher's assistant. Thus, the opportunities for children with special educational needs to receive high-quality education have been expanded.</p> <p>About 8700 pupils with special educational needs study in about 1400 public schools of Armenia.</p>	
Take effective measures to raise awareness of international human rights instruments and of the human rights obligations, including in the judicial and law enforcement sectors.	The Ministry of Justice of Armenia conducts trainings at the Academy of Justice for representatives of law enforcement bodies.	
Theme: Participation of women in political and public life		
Continue to promote gender equality and take the necessary measures to increase women's participation in political and social life, as well as in economic development.	<p>The 2019-2023 Strategy for Implementation of Gender Policy in the Republic of Armenia defines the priority directions of the gender policy. The aim of the Strategy is to create favourable conditions for women and men to fully exercise their rights and opportunities in all fields of public life, taking into account also the international commitments.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies 5 main priority directions: preventing gender discrimination; improving national mechanisms for the promotion of women; equal participation of women and men in governance and decisions-making; overcoming gender discrimination in social and economic fields; enhancing economic opportunities for women; enhancing full-fledged and effective participation and equal opportunities for women and men in field of education and science and in healthcare.</p>	
Implement the National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.	In June 2022, the Republic of Armenia adopted its Second National Programme on UN SC Resolution 1325 for 2022-2024. The implementation of the Program is on the way.	
Ensure equal participation of women and men in public and political life.	The election reforms of 2021 envisage that in communities with more than 4000 voters the elections of the Council of Elders are held under proportional electoral system. In parallel, the reforms provide that the electoral list of a political party (an alliance of political parties) and the list of each political party includes the number of representatives from each gender, starting with the first place on the list, must not exceed 70 per cent of each in integer triples (1-3, 1-6, 1-9 and subsequently till the end of the list).	
Theme: Violence against women		
Promote the protection of women against violence and ensure a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of all allegations of	In 2021, 129 criminal cases of domestic violence with an indictment against 135 persons were sent to the court.	

domestic violence.		
Establish national programmes against gender-based violence and create an institution dedicated to promoting and guaranteeing women's rights.	<p>Training courses, meetings and discussions are held by the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan within the framework of the project "The path towards Armenia's ratification of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence". The project is aimed at strengthening the capacities of the officers of the specialised sub-divisions of the Police of Armenia in prevention and fight against violence against women and domestic violence, protection of victims of violence, criminal prosecution of the perpetrators of violence, as well as in the promotion of gender equality.</p> <p>Annual training programmes of the Academy of Justice of Armenia include training for judges, investigators and prosecutors on the following topics: 1. Prevention and fight against violence against women and domestic violence. 2. Ensuring gender equality through the activities of judges, prosecutors and investigators 3. Criminal law and criminal procedure with regard to fight against gender-based domestic violence and juvenile delinquency.</p>	
Criminalize domestic violence as a stand-alone crime and ensure that there is swift and impartial investigations into such crimes, and a wider network of reception centres and State services.	<p>Law of the Republic of Armenia "On prevention of domestic violence, protection of persons subjected to domestic violence and restoration of solidarity in family" is currently under review.</p> <p>The new Criminal Code provides that the violence by a close relative is an aggravating circumstance.</p> <p>In the new Criminal Code the concept of "close relative" includes the spouse, former spouse, parent, including step-parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, the child (including adopted child, step-child, foster child), brother, sister (including step-brother, step-sister), grandfather, grandmother, grandchild, spouse or former spouse of the adoptive parent or foster parent, parent of the spouse or former spouse, as well as for the parent of the spouse or former spouse — the son-in-law or the daughter-in-law, irrespective of the fact of co-habitation. The person who is in or has been in actual marital relations shall also be deemed to be a spouse or former spouse.</p> <p>The new Criminal Code prescribes also criminal liability for crimes of psychological coercion (Article 194), physical coercion (Article 195), and crimes against sexual freedom and sexual inviolability.</p>	
Theme: Persons with disabilities: independence, inclusion, accessibility, mobility, protection and security in high-risk situations		
Take measures to remove all barriers preventing people with disabilities from participating fully in society, paying special attention to children with disabilities.	<p>In 2021, the Law "On the rights of persons with disabilities" was adopted. According to the Law, the State guarantees the creation of conditions and equal opportunities necessary for independent life and inclusion into community of persons with disabilities equally with others.</p> <p>To ensure accessible and equal conditions for persons with disabilities, the Law prohibits discrimination based on disability and ensures access to physical environment, information and communication.</p>	

Continue to take measures to implement its Comprehensive Plan for 2017-2021 on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.	The term of the Comprehensive Programme for 2017-2021 on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities expired and a new one, for 2022-2027, was elaborated and circulated for approval and adoption.	
Develop and implement a comprehensive education strategy to promote inclusive education in both urban and rural areas of the country.	The 2021-2026 Programme of the Government of Armenia provides that it is crucial for all levels of education to ensure the creation of an environment for inclusive education, modernisation of the content of educational programmes, modernisation and re-equipment of necessary infrastructure, enhanced use of modern information technologies in the training and management systems and strengthening of the "education-science-labour market" correlation. Lifelong learning is also encouraged. The draft "State programme for development of education in the Republic of Armenia by 2030" prescribes the following strategic directions: creation of a universal inclusive student-oriented educational environment, increase of efficiency of education, internationalisation and export of educational services and products.	
Take steps to ensure access of persons with disabilities to state administration buildings, cultural and recreational facilities.	<p>Installation of ramps is envisaged as a mandatory condition in the projects for capital renovation of cultural institutions throughout the country.</p> <p>The problem (free movement and access to toilets) is entirely solved in newly built or renovated museums. Regional libraries of Gegharkunik, Tavush, Lori and Armavir regions (marzes), the Stepanavan Culture and Entertainment Centre are completely convenient for the movement of people with disabilities.</p> <p>The elevators have been repaired and put into operation in the National Gallery of Armenia. Necessary conditions have been created on the first floor of Tumanyan and Sergei Parajanov museums for wheelchair persons. There is a ramp at the entrance to the first floor of the National Children's Library, and the movement inside the building is carried out with the help of an elevator, and there are special sofas in the reading rooms. A total of 38 information panels in four languages and Braille have been installed in the territories of more than 36 monuments.</p>	
Introduce policies and programmes raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities aiming at growing their participation in the open labour market, and remove obstacles to physical accessibility and access to information and communication.	To raise awareness of persons with vision and hearing impairments, the "Guide to medical care and service for persons with disabilities" was elaborated.	
Promote employment policies and programmes for persons with disabilities, complementing them with the use of quotas to allow their effective participation in the labour market.	In 2020-2021, 667 persons with disabilities were included in the state programmes for regulation of employment. Out of this number, 581 persons were employed in result of the programmes. In 2020-2021, certain quotas have been set. In 2022, the programme "Provision of support to rural economy through promotion of seasonal employment" was implemented and 150 persons with disabilities were included in the program (13.4% of the total number of the beneficiaries).	
Theme: Children: definition; general principles; protection		

Budget and resources		
<p>Continue protecting the rights of children, especially children facing difficult life situations, as well as adopt legislative acts prohibiting all forms of violence against children.</p>	<p>The draft Law of Armenia "On making amendments to the Law "On the rights of the child" prohibits any form of violence against child, ensures measures for the prevention of violence and the provision of support to children subjected to violence.</p> <p>The new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia defines the types of crimes against interests of the family and the child, sanctions for such acts and prescribes the peculiarities of the criminal liability for the juvenile.</p> <p>In the field of protection of children's rights, the Police cooperate with other interested bodies, local self-government bodies, representatives of territorial administration of curatorship and guardianship and social support.</p> <p>While ensuring protection of the rights of minors in a difficult life situation, the Police are guided by the regulation on inter-agency social cooperation.</p> <p>In 2022, the draft legal act on preventive activities carried out among minors was updated and a relevant amendment was made to the "Law of Armenia on the Police".</p>	
<p>Develop an oversight mechanism to monitor the situation of children placed in residential institutions, foster families or under guardianship or trusteeship.</p>	<p>The oversight mechanisms over foster families are prescribed by the Decision of the Government of Armenia of 2019, and the monitoring mechanisms over functions of curatorship and guardianship bodies were established upon similar Decision of 2016.</p> <p>The current mechanisms for supervision shall be reviewed in the course of legislative reforms that are being elaborated.</p>	
<p>Adopt a law to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the <i>Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> and reduce institutionalization of children with disabilities by preferring family care and community-based services.</p>	<p>To prevent the institutionalisation of children with disabilities and their relocation to institutions and to facilitate children's reunion with their families, delegated services are provided to the children by various organisations, including day care services.</p>	
<p>Continue strengthening legislation to ensure better protection for children left without parental care and children with disabilities.</p>	<p>The draft Law "On making an amendment to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the rights of the child", as well as the draft Law "On making amendments and supplements to the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia" have been developed to protect the rights of the child through more viable mechanisms.</p>	
<p>Take further steps to provide options of early detection and care for children with various types of disabilities in observance of the principle of inclusiveness.</p>	<p>To take care of children with disabilities in a family environment, specialized foster care was created upon relevant Decision of the Government.</p> <p>To ensure inclusion of children with disabilities, certain measures were applied. About 20 children placed at the round-the-clock care institutions and learning at special schools were transferred to general education schools.</p>	
<p>Theme: Children: family environment and alternative care protection against exploitation</p>		

<p>Continue efforts, in partnership with the UNICEF and local non-governmental organisations, to address the abandonment of children born with health issues and disabilities at the level of maternity hospitals.</p>	<p>In 2019, within the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and the "Bari Mama" NGO, training courses for medical workers, professional counselling, sticking posters to prevent risks of abandoning a child in maternity hospitals and other medical institutions were carried out. Such a cooperation made it possible to prevent abandonment of children due to quick action.</p>	
<p>Continue efforts to end online and offline child sexual exploitation and abuse.</p>	<p>In 2020, Armenia ratified the Council of Europe <i>Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse</i>. Besides, there is a new draft law that contains provisions on prevention of violence against children, and an authorising norm to provide support to a child subjected to violence.</p> <p>Amendments and supplements made to the minimum standards of the care for children at institutions also address issues of mandatory conditions aimed at prevention of violence within the institutions.</p> <p>To raise awareness of parents of students on the violence against children, consequences of exploitation, crimes committed through social networks and their consequences, the educational institutions conduct meetings and conversations for parents and educators.</p> <p>The specialised sub-division of the Police of the Republic of Armenia conducts monitoring of the domain of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian segment of popular social networks in order to detect information with illegal content, including websites that distribute child pornography, violate the Internet Safety Tips for Children, and promptly respond, detect and disclose the offences committed or in preparation.</p> <p>The actions with regard to children who becomes victims or witnesses of crimes, including trafficking, are carried out in the presence of a psychologist or a pedagogue, and the biological, psychological, social, age and gender characteristics of the minor are taken into account.</p> <p>Interrogations with minors are carried out with appropriate breaks to exclude fatigue. The questions posed in a clear, understandable language for the child. Interests of the child are paramount in all actions related to children.</p>	
<p>Intensify measures to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse in accordance with the Lanzarote Convention and consider its ratification.</p>	<p>Armenia ratified the Council of Europe <i>Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse</i>.</p> <p>Meetings and conversations on various legal topics are regularly organised at public schools and other educational institutions to raise awareness among minors, to prevent various crimes, including sexual violence, to teach them how to apply to the relevant law enforcement bodies in cases of physical, family or sexual violence and on importance to inform parents.</p> <p>In 2020, a separate appropriately equipped room for minors subjected to sexual violence was opened to prevent their re-victimisation and for interviews.</p>	

Continue allocating budget funds to programmes related to children for the further development of the system of protection of the rights the child.	In 2022, within the framework of the programmes implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, the budgetary funds for the child related programmes have increased in accordance with the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework.	
Theme: Rights related to name, identity and nationality		
Design and adopt legislation with regard to stateless persons to register them and to provide them with identity documents.	The draft Law "On foreigners and stateless persons" and a package of related laws is currently in the stage of discussion.	
Theme: 2030 Agenda and other voluntary commitments		
Consolidate the progress made towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and in the improvement of human development indicators, continue with good practices aimed at establishing the necessary structures to implement the SDGs, as well as for better enjoyment of human rights.	<p>The sustainable development goals are among milestones of the Government's strategy plans, including the five-year plan of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.</p> <p>The Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Committee and the Anti-Corruption Courts have been established to effectively fight against corruption.</p> <p>To strengthen the protection of human rights, the Strategy of Human Rights Protection for 2020-2022 and its Action Plan, with a number of major reforms, has been adopted in 2019. The new Action Plan for 2023-2025 deriving from the Strategy for Human Rights Protection has been launched with the support of the UNDP Office in Armenia.</p> <p>In the context of the reforms of the system of integrated social services, the Unified Social Service was launched on the basis of unified system of assessment of social needs. The aim is to increase the effectiveness of the management of the social protection system and quality of social services.</p> <p>The Government prioritises public administration reforms to ensure increase in the effectiveness of services provided to citizens.</p> <p>The implementation of institutional reforms in the field of digitisation also deserves special attention, which affects all spheres of vital importance.</p>	
Theme: National Human Rights Action Plans (or specific areas)/implementation plans		
Cooperation and consultation with civil society		
Keep moving forward with the National Strategy for Human Rights Protection with a view to guaranteeing the exercise of the right to health and a decent living standard.	Implementation of the Strategy of Human Rights Protection for 2020-2022 and its Action Plan, was one of the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The 2023-2025 Action Plan is underway. A Coordinating Council has been established to monitor this process. The Strategy covers all the areas of life and one of the chapters is devoted to the right to health.	
Ensure participation of civil society and international organisations in public discussions organised by the Coordinating Council.	There is no joint coordinating council in Armenia. There are coordinating councils by sectors, adjunct to a number of ministries. NGOs and representatives of international organizations take part in the activities of the councils.	
Theme: International criminal and humanitarian law (including crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide)		

<p>Continue concerted efforts at the international level for the prevention of the crime of genocide.</p>	<p>Armenia continues to make efforts to strengthen the international agenda for prevention of genocide. In March 2022, the UN Human Rights Council adopted the Resolution "Prevention of Genocide" initiated by Armenia.</p> <p>In December of 2022, the 4th Global Forum "Against the Crime of Genocide" was held in Armenia, entitled: "Prevention of Genocide in the Age of New Technologies".</p> <p>The Forum discussed the role and the use of new and emerging technologies in preventing genocide and other mass atrocities. The discussions of the Forum have been summarized in the Declaration of Joint Action, where, inter alia, <i>tools and mechanisms necessary for prevention of future mass atrocities have been reflected.</i></p> <p>More information on the Forum is available at https://www.genocideprevention.am</p>	
<p>Theme: Rule of law and impunity</p>		
<p>Carry out prompt and effective investigation into all threats and attacks on human rights defenders.</p>	<p>Police officers cooperate with the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, representatives of international and non-governmental organisations active in the field of human rights, to ensure their safety. Comprehensive and objective investigations are being conducted into the acts of violence against them.</p>	
<p>Theme: Right to participate in public affairs and right to vote</p>		
<p>Initiate a comprehensive electoral reform to adopt a new electoral code developed in close consultation with civil society organisations, taking into account the recommendations of international and local observation missions.</p>	<p>Reforms in the Electoral Code of Armenia were going in parallel with drafting of a new Constitution.</p> <p>Based on the reports of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission regarding the elections to the National Assembly held on 20 June 2021 and 9 December 2018, the joint urgent opinion of the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR on the amendments to the Electoral Code and related legislation, the recommendations of the CEC and civil society organisations, as well as on the results of discussions with the interested bodies, the "Centre for Legislation Development and Legal Research" Foundation of the Ministry of Justice of Armenia prepared a Report on the Electoral Code and practical problems.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) have initiated breakout sessions on electoral reforms.</p>	
<p>Adopt the Law on National Minorities and take further steps to achieve greater representation of minorities in public and political life.</p>	<p>A draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On National Minorities" provides for a more systematic definition of national minorities living in Armenia, their rights and the mechanisms for their protection, and defines the scope of activities tasked to government and local government bodies in that sphere. The draft Law envisages the establishment of a Chamber of National Minorities as a platform for discussing the issues of national minorities and proposing solutions.</p>	
<p>Theme: Death penalty</p>		
<p>Introduce a de jure moratorium on capital executions, with a view to</p>	<p>Death penalty is abolished in the Republic of Armenia.</p>	

the complete abolition of the death penalty		
Theme: Sexual and gender-based violence		
Take measures to define, to prohibit and to penalise sexual harassment.	The <i>corpus delicti</i> of sexual violence has been defined in the new Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.	
Conduct prompt and thorough investigations into all cases of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and hold perpetrators to account.	Any form of violence against any person is punished under the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.	
Strengthen the capacity of the judiciary, law enforcement and social workers to enhance an effective response to cases of gender-based violence.	<p>The Ministry of Justice of Armenia conducts trainings for representatives of law enforcement bodies through the Academy of Justice.</p> <p>In 2021, a training course on "Prevention of all forms of domestic violence and violence against women" was held for employees of the structural sub-divisions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia, social workers and psychologists of NGOs operating adjunct to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as for employees of the "911 hotline" service of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the key role of media representatives in the dissemination of information, as well as in forming of opinion, a three-day online course on "Gender equality and prevention of violence against women, including domestic violence" was conducted for media representatives.</p> <p>In 2022, the Academy held a training course for social workers of domestic violence support centres. The course was aimed at raising awareness with regard to domestic violence, models of rehabilitation and empowerment of persons subjected to violence.</p> <p>With the support of the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs jointly conducted the public awareness raising campaign entitled "Violence in silence" aimed at fighting against domestic violence.</p>	
Revise the Criminal Code to include domestic violence as a stand-alone criminal offence and domestic violence as an aggravating circumstance, and invest in the creation of shelters to ensure the effective protection of women as well as women victims of domestic violence.	<p>Relevant provisions on prevention of and combating violence against women and domestic violence have been included in the new Criminal Code.</p> <p>The new Criminal Code envisages violence by a close relative as an aggravating circumstance.</p> <p>The new Criminal Code prescribes also criminal liability for crimes of psychological coercion, physical coercion, and crimes against sexual freedom and sexual inviolability and other crimes.</p>	
Continue to strengthen the legislative framework related to the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of victims of domestic violence.	In 2021, the Investigative Committee as the body conducting criminal proceedings applied protection measures provided for by law for the victims of domestic violence. Namely, the protection measure provided for by point 8 of part 1 of Article 98.1 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Armenia was applied to 5 minor victims in 1 criminal case and the minors were transferred to different child support centres, and the rights of parents were limited by the	

	decision of the court.	
Enhance public awareness for reporting of cases of domestic violence.	The Ministry of Justice of Armenia conducts public awareness raising campaigns to change public perception of domestic violence and violence against women. In 2021, the awareness-raising campaign "Violence in silence" included also social advertisements, such as video clips, banners etc., as well as a website https://www.violenceinsilence.org to inform the public on this topic.	
Intensify efforts to prevent violence against women, particularly domestic violence and sexual violence in the workplace.	We intensify efforts to gather official statistics on the cases of sexual harassment, including at the workplace.	
Continue enforcing legislation to combat domestic violence and extend rehabilitation services for the victims.	Law "On prevention of domestic violence, protection of persons subjected to domestic violence and restoration of solidarity in family" is currently being revised by the National Assembly. Within the framework of the programme created for victims of violence, relevant services are provided to them based on the assessment of the needs of each beneficiary.	
Establish special procedures to investigate cases of domestic and sexual violence.	The body conducting the proceedings with regard to cases of crimes committed in the specified areas and against specific persons undertakes all the measures provided for by the Criminal Procedure Code of Armenia to identify the perpetrators and reveal the crime, as well as its circumstances.	
Strengthen efforts in fight against domestic violence and violence against women.	In 2022, with the support of the Council of Europe, three consultative meetings were held with the representatives of the responsible state agencies to discuss the multi-sectoral response to cases of domestic violence. The meetings were held with joint social services, child protection services, divisions for the protection of the rights of family, women and children, departments for healthcare and education of regional governors' offices of Kotayk, Ararat and Lori, as well as with the representatives of the Police and support centres for persons subjected to domestic violence. The Investigative Committee regularly educates its investigators through relevant seminars, as well as professional trainings with courses related to peculiarities of investigation related to the given sphere. A relevant narrow sectoral sub-division has been separated within the structure of the Investigative Committee, namely, the Department for Investigation of Human Trafficking, Crimes against Sexual Immunity of Juveniles and Illegal Turnover of Drugs.	
Theme: Freedom of association		
Strengthen protections for the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, including revising the current Law "On freedom of conscience and religious organisations" in line with recommendations of the Venice Commission.	Draft amendments to the Law "On freedom of conscience and religious organisations" have been elaborated.	
Ensure that the application of the law governing peaceful assembly and freedom of association is not discriminatory, in particular towards the most vulnerable groups such as national and religious minorities	The Yerevan Municipality discusses the notifications received regarding public assemblies in accordance with the requirements of the Law "On freedom of assemblies" without any discrimination. During 2020-2022, "Kurdistan" committee submitted notifications about holding	

and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.	a public assembly, which was authorised by the Municipality.	
Theme: Cultural rights		
Organise campaigns and educational programmes to raise awareness of the importance of cultural heritage.	Organising and implementing educational programmes is mandatory in all museums and libraries. To raise public awareness about the monuments, the communities are provided with relevant educational programmes, lectures and information materials. To apply the UNESCO Convention for the <i>Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage</i> , 5-10 educational programmes are organised each year to increase knowledge and understanding of intangible cultural heritage and to ensure dissemination of the knowledge and skills.	
Theme: Advancement of women		
Leverage the relatively high percentage of women in the high-tech sector as a driver for further inclusion of women in the economy as a whole.	<p>There are number of programmes in support of the establishment of a high-tech and information society in Armenia.</p> <p>In 2021, a total of 2896 participants applied for courses to receive specialisation in IT sector; 1531 (52%) of the applicants were women: 790 (51%) - from Yerevan, and 741 (49%) - from regions. In 2022, a total of 847 participants applied for the programme; 316 (38%) out of the applicants were women.</p> <p>9 organisations out of 43 who received a grant within the framework of the Grant Programme "From Idea to Business" in 2021 had female leaders (21%).</p> <p>The Programme "Technovation Armenia" enables the young girls (from 8 to 18 years old) to become leaders and innovators in solving problems in their communities through the development of technologies and entrepreneurial skills.</p> <p>In 2020, Armenia was chosen as the leading country for the coalition on "Technology and Innovation" formed within the framework of the Generation Equality Forum. The initiative is aimed at promoting cooperation between states, international organisations and civil society.</p> <p>In accordance with the data of the first semester of 2022, the involvement of women in the field of information technologies in Armenia comprised 43%, according to the data of 2021 this indicator was 40%.</p>	
Effectively implement the government strategy on the gender policy implementation 2019–2023 in order to continue moving towards full equality and the empowerment of women	<p>The Government of Armenia continues to undertake measures to integrate the gender component in legislation and policy, to improve the national mechanism for advancement of women, to adopt measures for awareness raising to overcome the stereotypes existing in society, to prevent domestic violence and to fight against gender discrimination.</p> <p>The 2019-2023 Strategy for Implementation of Gender Policy defines the priority directions for the gender policy aimed at creating favourable conditions for full enjoyment of the rights and opportunities by women and men in all fields of social life. The Strategy takes into account also the international commitments of Armenia.</p>	

Continue efforts towards the promotion of gender equality, particularly in the labour market.	To ensure the involvement of women in the labour market, the Programme "National Accelerator of Women's Entrepreneurship" is envisaged for 2022-2025. The overall objective of the Programme is to provide complex support at the level of ecosystem to promote women's entrepreneurship; empower women so that they could act as actors for the change through targeted gender-sensitive activities.	
Accelerate the adoption of laws aimed at ensuring gender equality.	The Law "On ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men" guarantees for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men and regulates relations arising with regard thereto.	
Continue implementing legislative reforms that guarantee transparency in electoral processes and greater representation of women in the legislative body.	The Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia sets a 30% gender quota for women. In the electoral lists of all 25 political parties and alliances of the parties participating in the elections held in June 2021, the representation of women was 31-44%, 21 political parties and 4 alliances participated with 2498 candidates, of which 925 were women (37%). Two of the electoral lists of political parties were headed by women.	
Foresee a regulatory framework for the informal sector and ensure that women working in this sector have access to social protection, maternity protection and child care subsidies.	The strategy for the development of labour and social protection and the strategy for employment are at the stage of elaboration. These strategies address the specified issues in detail.	
Theme: Children: juvenile justice		
Continue efforts to improve juvenile justice.	Child-oriented regulations have been introduced in the new Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code of Armenia. There is a Council for juvenile justice ¹ functioning in Armenia. Continuous works have been carried out in this direction, concerning both the furnishing of separate rooms for the interrogation of minors, and the special trainings of investigators. Qualified psychologists with appropriate specialisation are involved in the investigation.	

Another note worth to be mentioned, refers to the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Despite the fact that the Republic of Armenia had declined the recommendations on ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court with amendments thereto, however, the Government of Armenia now has launched a process of ratification of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

¹ <http://www.forchild.am/>