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 PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

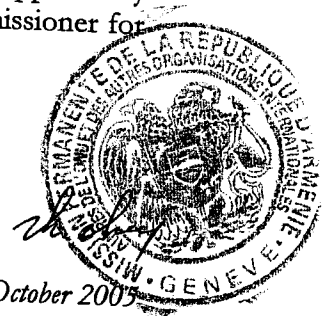
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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, in response to the letter from Ms. Yakin Ertürk, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, dated 16 August 2005 (Ref: G/SO 214 (89-9)), has the honour to transmit herewith the information received from the governmental institutions of the Republic of Armenia.

The Permanent Mission kindly requests the Office to forward enclosed information to the attention of the Special Rapporteur.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Enclosure: 3 pages.



Geneva, 28 October 2005

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
 HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Geneva

OHCHR REGISTRY

- 2 NOV 2005

Recipients : SPB
SRA (Endo)

(Translated from Russian)

Reply to the enquiry by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, sent to the Government of the Republic of Armenia on 16 August 2005 (ref.: G/SO 214 (89-9))

I. On 8 April 2004 the Government of the Republic of Armenia, by its decision No. 645, drew up and adopted the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and the Enhancement of their Role in Society in the period 2004-2010, which comprises eight components:

- Equal rights and opportunities for men and women in decision-making and social and political life;
- Enhanced social and economic status for women;
- Education;
- Improvement of women's health;
- Violence against women;
- Trafficking in women and girls;
- Role of the mass media and cultural institutions in publicizing women's issues and shaping positive female role models;
- Institutional reform.

Very effective preventive measures undertaken by the Armenian police in their work with teenagers include periodic visits by police officers to schools and other educational institutions to talk about legal topics.

In 2005, as part of the "Zang" legal socialization project funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States Department of State, the Project Harmony organization, working with teachers and law enforcement officials, has launched a manual entitled "Legal Mosaic", which includes a special section on violence, in 100 State schools throughout Armenia. The project aims to provide young people with information and develop the social skills required for advancement in a State governed by the rule of law.

One of the missions of the Armenian police is to protect human life, and specifically to prevent and detect crimes, including violence against women.

In taking appropriate measures to prevent violence against women, the Armenian police force cooperates with the Armenian Motherhood Fund and the voluntary organization Centre for Women's Rights.

In the event of complaints of violence received from citizens or representatives of organizations, all incidents are recorded and investigated by the police and assistance is provided to the victim. Battered women can also call a telephone hotline.

The police take steps to detect unreported incidents of violence against women.

Investigations of crimes against women, including violence, are conducted in accordance with Armenian law, specifically the Criminal Code, and if there is sufficient evidence cases are referred to the courts.

The Armenian Criminal Code contains a number of articles on violence, namely 110-113, 118 (Battery), 119 (Cruel treatment), 120, 121, 131-133, 138 (Rape), 139 (Sexual violence), 140 (Coercion to perform acts of a sexual nature), 141 (Performance of sex acts with a minor) and 142 (Indecent assault).

In protecting human life and preventing and detecting crimes against persons, the Armenian police comply with Armenian laws and regulations currently in force.

Information supplied by the Armenian police

II. In April 2004 the Government approved the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and the Enhancement of their Role in Society. One of the strategic goals of the programme, which covers a seven-year period (2004-2010), is to combat domestic and social violence against women.

The strategy has several goals: develop indicators to identify violence and subsequently incorporate them into statistical accounting methods, study violence and analyse its causes, organize training and advanced training courses for specialists (social workers, medical workers, law enforcement officers, etc.) working with battered women, establish community-based services to tackle and prevent violence, and set up social and psychological rehabilitation centres to assist victims of violence.

An information campaign highlighting all aspects of the programme has now been completed. The campaign was aimed at the stakeholders most directly involved, i.e. actors from self-regulating organizations, the mass media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The role and place of each component in the implementation of the programme has been clarified. The Government has assigned responsibility for programme implementation in all regions of the country.

It should be added that gender-based approaches, as a reflection of government policy, are taken into account in the programme itself and in the presentation of information.

III. *Legislation.* There are no special provisions in Armenian law guaranteeing social assistance and protection to battered women. Nevertheless, provisions that are essentially designed to protect citizens against violence are being developed in the context of ongoing review and renewal of legislation. Legislative provisions are currently adequate for this purpose, and subsequent modifications, amendments and clarifications are planned. Relevant legislation includes the recently adopted Labour Code and State Labour Inspectorate Act and the Social Assistance Act, which has already been submitted to Parliament for consideration.

The new Armenian Labour Code became law in June 2005; it reflects the new economic realities in the country and recasts the relationship between employees and employers. Article 221 of the Code deals with flagrant breaches of the Labour Code and other statutes and

regulations containing employment law norms. This article states that flagrant breaches shall be defined as “violations of the equal rights of men and women or sexual harassment of employees, subordinates or beneficiaries”.

The responsibility for investigating these and other breaches lies with the State Labour Inspectorate, whose remit includes not only occupational health and safety and State oversight, but also the prevention of breaches of employment norms. Pursuant to article 10 of the State Labour Inspectorate Act, adopted in April 2005, the agency’s terms of reference include oversight of statutory safeguards applicable to persons under 18 years of age and women, investigation of cases of sex discrimination and discrimination in hiring practices, and taking measures to protect workers’ rights where violations have occurred.

The Social Assistance Act, which among other things lays down the principles for the organization and delivery of social services, has been drafted and submitted to Parliament for consideration.

The Act prohibits any form of discrimination and makes provision for social assistance to persons who have suffered physical violence and/or mental abuse.

The principal forms of assistance are advice, rehabilitation, financial compensation, legal assistance, care for victims and help finding temporary accommodation.

To enable social services to perform their work more efficiently, training and advanced training courses are planned for specialist social workers.

Thus, efforts to tackle domestic violence and violence in society are entering social discourse for the first time. Obviously, police measures alone are insufficient, especially in cases of mental abuse. The involvement of social structures in efforts to tackle violence will facilitate the development of clearer indicators for defining violence and make it easier to devise more effective ways of confronting this evil, including through prevention.

Information supplied by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues