

EXPERT CONSULTATION REPORT

TRANSITION PROCESS: ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY, REFUGEE INTEGRATION, AND SOCIAL COHESION IN ARMENIA



May 13-14, 2024, Yerevan, Armenia



Norad



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Executive Summary

The Government of the Republic of Armenia reported the arrival of 115,183 refugees resulted from military hostilities since September 2023, with women and girls comprising 52% of this population. To address the urgent humanitarian needs of these refugees, the Armenia Inter-Agency Refugee Response Plan (RRP), led by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), was activated in October 2023. This coordinated effort aimed at bolstering national response mechanisms and provide essential support over a six-month period.

As of April 2024, the Government of Armenia has granted temporary protection (refugee status) to all newly arrived refugees, ensuring their right to reside, work, and access vital services in Armenia such as healthcare, education, and social welfare. Over 82,000 individuals have been issued refugee cards by the Ministry of Interior's Migration and Citizenship Service, facilitating their adaptation and access to these fundamental rights.

UN Women proactively established a Gender Task Force (GTF) in October 2023 within the Refugee Coordination Forum, dedicated to advancing gender mainstreaming and empowering women and girls in the refugee response. Refugee women have encountered multifaceted challenges, grappling with increased care burdens for children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities,

while navigating barriers to economic participation due to unfamiliarity with the new environment, limited social networks, and cultural and linguistic differences. The psychological trauma resulting from the ongoing crisis has further hindered women's ability to secure decent employment and engage in community initiatives. A significant number of refugee women are heads of households, relying on government-provided humanitarian assistance, particularly housing and cash support. However, the urgent need for financial stability places them at heightened risk of exploitation and abuse.

As the RRP shifts focus towards the integration of refugees into national development frameworks and the fostering of social cohesion, UN Women emphasizes the critical importance of ensuring the meaningful participation of women-led organizations (WLOs), women's rights organizations (WROs), and those working on peace promotion and with underrepresented groups. Their involvement is essential in shaping inclusive and gender-responsive policies and programs that effectively address gender inequalities and promote sustainable development. This consultation, convened by UN Women, was designed to inform strategic discussions around the transition process and a gender-responsive Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus in Armenia.

Objectives:

Day 1

of the consultation aimed to convene representatives of WLOs/WROs to facilitate a collaborative identification of key priorities, challenges, and opportunities related to gender equality, women's empowerment, and the inclusive integration of refugee women and girls in the transition context. This discussion was informed by their valuable insights and lessons learned from providing primary support to the refugee population.

Day 2

of the consultation focused on fostering the active participation of WLOs/WROs in discussions regarding the transition plan and the integration of refugees into national development strategies. It aimed to ensure their meaningful engagement within existing and newly established coordination bodies, particularly in relation to the implementation mechanisms for the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).

Outcome:

This report presents the outcomes of a two-day consultation with civil society organizations (CSOs). It summarizes key discussion points and outlines recommendations for further action and collaboration.

Participants: around 50 people

WLOs/WROs: Women's Fund, Women's Center.Shushi, Women's Resource Center, You are not alone NGO, Sose NGO, Women's Rights House Gyumri, Kanani NGO, Coalition Against Domestic Violence Against Women, Resource Center for Women's Empowerment, Agat NGO women with disability, Armavir Development Center, Democracy Toda, Helsinki Assembly, Human Rights Research Center, Women's Support Center, Women's Agenda, Femforward NGO, Sexual Crisis Assault Center, Krunk NGO, Ukrainian Forum NGO, Martuni Women's Council, Winnet, Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRR) - Armenia, For Equality Human Rights NGO, Oxygen and several refugees.

Government representatives: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA), United Social Services, Ministry of Justice, Investigative Committee, Municipality of Yerevan.

Donor Community: The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Swiss Cooperation Office (SDC), Embassy of Canada, European Union (EU) Monitoring Capacity to Armenia, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Armenia, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Armenia, Embassy of the United States of America to Armenia, World Bank Group, Embassy of Japan in Armenia, Council of Europe Office in Yerevan.

UN Agencies: UN Resident Coordinator Office, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Children's Fund Armenia (UNICEF).

DAY 1



Introduction

Ms. Kaori Ishikawa, UN Women Country Representative in Georgia and Liaison for the South Caucasus, welcomed participants, emphasizing the vital contribution of women's organizations to identify opportunities for greater refugee inclusion and gathering recommendations for further actions to strengthen gender mainstreaming and equality in national plans, including the Transition Plan to address residual humanitarian needs for the refugee population and the upcoming third WPC NAP for Armenia. As the second NAP nears completion, Ms. Ishikawa called for strengthened collaboration between the government and civil society to enhance the next iteration of the NAP and further advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the region.



Kaori Ishikawa, UN Women Country Representative in Georgia and Liaison for the South Caucasus

Session 1: Protecting and Empowering Refugees in Armenia: Insights from Government, Civil Society, and UN Agencies



Sophie Bostanjyan, Head of the Department of Human Trafficking and Women's Issues at the MLSA

Ms. Sophie Bostanjyan, Head of the Department of Human Trafficking and Women's Issues at the MLSA, highlighted the Ministry's efforts since September 2023 to address the needs of displaced populations, particularly women. These efforts include implementing "safe space" programs across all regions to address gender-based violence (GBV) and empower women.

A recent MLSA needs assessment reveals significant challenges for refugee women, particularly in employment. Only 16 percent of refugee women in Armenia have found work matching their skills, compared to 60 percent in Nagorno-Karabakh. This underscores the urgent need to address the gender labor gap and enhance economic opportunities for these women.

Sophie Bostanjyan further emphasized challenges faced by women with disabilities and caregivers, especially those with larger families. The MLSA's draft gender strategy, developed with international partners, prioritizes addressing critical issues like employment, disability support, and assistance for families with more than three children.

The MLSA representative outlined six priorities of the gender strategy:

- Eliminating gender discrimination in decision-making and promoting women's equal participation.
- Fostering gender-sensitive labor markets to reduce the gender gap and enhance labor protection.
- Ensuring equal opportunities in education and science for women and men.
- Achieving gender equality in the health sector.
- Preventing and addressing GBV and discrimination against women and girls.
- Integrating gender-responsive approaches into climate change policies and raising awareness.



Knarik Mkrtychyan, WPC expert and founder of Women's Agenda NGO

Ms. Knarik Mkrtychyan, WPC expert and founder of Women's Agenda NGO, highlighted the importance of UN Resolution 1325, the first document to formally recognize women's roles in conflict. She acknowledged civil society's advocacy for NAPs, noting Armenia's adoption of two NAPs since 2019. These plans emphasize international and national cooperation, monitoring and evaluation, awareness-raising, and local implementation. However, Ms. Mkrtychyan identified key challenges, including inadequate budgeting, weak monitoring and evaluation, and limited localization efforts.

She stressed the need for strategic budget allocation, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and stronger localization to effectively implement the NAP and advance the WPS agenda in Armenia.

As Armenia develops its third NAP, Knarik Mkrtychyan recommends prioritizing:

1. Socio-economic support for displaced women, including access to services, livelihoods, and psychosocial support.
2. Economic empowerment of conflict-affected women through vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and financial access.
3. Strengthening women's negotiation skills in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
4. Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track NAP progress and ensure accountability.
5. Gender-responsive approaches to emerging challenges like cyber security and climate change.
6. Increased localization and involvement of local governments in NAP implementation.
7. Gender-sensitive budgeting to promote equality across all sectors.
8. Effective communication mechanisms between government agencies, civil society, and international partners.



Gwenolenn Le Couster, UNHCR Senior Emergency Officer

Ms. Gwenolenn Le Couster, UNHCR Senior Emergency Officer, presented results of Armenia's RRP and introduced the transition phase. Launched in October 2023 with 60 partners, the RRP has garnered 51% funding of its \$97 million appeal, engaging over 100 organizations in its implementation.

Ms. Le Couster emphasized the critical role of the GTF, and highlighted the increased involvement of women-led and refugee-led organizations in program delivery and adaptation.

Given that 52% of the refugee population (4% of Armenia's total population) are women and girls, Le Couster underscored the necessity of gender-sensitive approaches. The transition phase aims to develop long-term strategies that combine ongoing humanitarian support with scaled-up development initiatives to effectively address refugee needs and ensure their integration into Armenian society.

For the transition phase (April-December 2024), UNHCR representative mentioned several key considerations:

Strategic coordination to address ongoing humanitarian needs while transitioning towards sustainable solutions.

Responsible exit from the emergency phase, ensuring continued support for vulnerable populations.

Alignment with development frameworks, including the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), to foster sustainable solutions.

Strategic advocacy to promote refugee inclusion and well-being.

Targeted interventions for profiles at heightened risk, particularly refugee women and girls, to ensure their protection and empowerment.

Session 2: Women-Led Organizations on the Frontlines: Insights from Refugee Response Efforts



Women leaders from grassroots organizations shared their firsthand experiences and insights gained from providing frontline support to refugee populations throughout 2023. Their reflections highlighted both the successes and challenges encountered, offering valuable lessons for strengthening future humanitarian responses.

Lisa Matevosyan, Women's Center Shushi NGO (refugee NGO based in Yerevan): Drawing on extensive experience supporting refugees in the 1990s and 2020, the Women's Center Shushi NGO adapted their expertise to address the unique challenges of the 2023 crisis. While the host community demonstrated greater acceptance, the lack of hope for immediate return required a long-term focus.

Adjusting to the new environment in Armenia proved challenging, compounded by the severity of the 2023 consequences and the organization's small team navigating personal trauma. Despite these obstacles, beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the NGO's efforts.

Collaboration with the Women's Resource Center facilitated integration into Armenia's NGO landscape. A notable success involved engaging refugees in assistance efforts, such as sewing bedding for fellow refugees, fostering empowerment and financial independence.

Liana Sahakyan, Sose NGO, Syunik Region: Upon witnessing the initial influx of refugees, Sose NGO was compelled to mobilize immediate community support offering basic necessities like hot beverages, diapers, sanitary pads, and hygiene items for the next 7-8 days since the influx started through support from Women's Resource Center and Women's Fund.

Recognizing the importance of psychosocial well-being, we provided art therapy sessions, likely the only such service in Goris. Moving forward, we are committed to empowering displaced individuals, particularly women, to rebuild their lives.

Through partnerships with various organizations, we aim to equip them with skills and resources for economic independence and recovery.



Naira Harutyunyan, You Are Not Alone NGO, Vayots Dzor Region: In response to the recent crisis, the “You Are Not Alone” NGO expanded its reach to provide essential support to refugees, including psychosocial assistance. Operating in the border zone, mapping resources, securing accommodation, and identifying host families for the newly arrived refugees was prioritized. Dedicated volunteer network played a crucial role in collecting and distributing essential supplies, and in collaboration with partner organizations, we established a dedicated space for breastfeeding mothers at a registration point in Vaik.

Our strong partnerships with government institutions and commitment to capacity building have enabled us to effectively respond to this crisis and provide comprehensive support to those in need.

Nare Hayrapetyan, Resource Center for Women's Empowerment, Kotayk Region: The organization conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, gathering data from 6,303 refugees to understand their housing and support requirements. However, the lack of a unified database hindered coordination with state agencies.

The state-initiated three-month economic empowerment project for refugee women encountered challenges related to employer selection and monitoring, with some beneficiaries reporting underpayment. To address this, we emphasize the importance of responsible employer engagement and clear program guidelines.

A successful initiative was the establishment of Refugee Empowerment Hubs, providing centralized information and support. However, challenges remain in ensuring consistent support and equitable resource allocation, as smaller organizations often bear a significant workload but receive disproportionately less funding.



Kristina Baghdasayan, Kanani NGO, Shirak Region: In Shirak, Kanani NGO observed varying needs among displaced individuals. While active refugees readily engaged in support programs, passive ones lacked access to such mechanisms. We are committed to ensuring equitable assistance for all, focusing on long-term empowerment and mental health.

With support from the Women's Resource Center, we have facilitated the adaptation of displaced women through psychosocial support and motivational sessions with local women. A particularly impactful initiative was a dialect therapy session where women shared cultural traditions and fostered mutual understanding.

Moving forward, we aim to address the challenges faced by modern families by creating a platform for active participation and collective problem-solving. Through these efforts, we strive to promote resilience, unity, and empowerment among displaced and local communities.

Session 3: Gender-Responsive Action for Refugee Women and Girls: Identifying Vulnerable Groups

Representatives from various WLOs and WROs engaged in a participatory exercise to identify and address critical areas of concern for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in refugee response and transition processes, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups.

Key vulnerable groups identified include:

- ▶ **Women with disabilities:** Experiencing varying degrees of physical and mental health challenges, often facing compounded discrimination and heightened vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

- ▶ **Women facing multiple vulnerabilities:** Including single mothers (regardless of the number of children), pregnant women, and elderly women, recognizing the unique challenges and intersecting disadvantages faced by each group.
- ▶ **Survivors of violence:** Encompassing victims of trafficking, domestic violence, sexual violence, and other forms of GBV, acknowledging the long-term physical and psychological impacts.
- ▶ **Women affected by conflict and displacement:** Particularly those with missing, deceased, injured, or detained family members, as well as families who have lost their primary breadwinners.

Participants highlighted the interconnectedness and intersectionality of vulnerabilities faced by women, emphasizing that many women experience multiple forms of disadvantage simultaneously. Social capital, or the lack thereof, significantly impacts women's access to resources and support.

Key challenges identified include:

- ▶ **Data and Knowledge Gaps:** The availability of both quantitative and qualitative data on specific vulnerable groups remains insufficient.
- ▶ **Capacity and Resource Constraints:** Service providers often lack the necessary training, expertise, and financial resources to adequately address the complex needs of these women.
- ▶ **Social Stigma and Discrimination:** Negative societal attitudes and discriminatory practices further marginalize vulnerable groups, hindering their access to services and opportunities.
- ▶ **Unequal Access to Services:** Many vulnerable women face barriers to essential services like housing, healthcare, and transportation due to factors like cost, location, and lack of information.

Session 4: Identifying Key Priorities, Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities for Refugee-Centered National and Local Development Plans

In the next collaborative exercise, participants identified key priorities, gaps, challenges, and opportunities for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within the context of developing more refugee-centered national and local plans. This participatory process aimed at ensuring that the specific needs and perspectives of women refugees were integrated into all priority areas.

1. Promoting women's leadership and political participation

Challenges

- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Limited awareness and understanding of existing processes
- Discrimination and stigma based on refugee status
- Language and cultural barriers
- Resource constraints (time, transportation, childcare)
- Environmental and physical obstacles
- Lack of experience with formal decision-making structures
- Lack of transparency and trust in decision-making processes

Opportunities

- Integrate refugee women into existing programs and events to promote inclusion and participation.
- Ensure equal opportunities for refugee women in all aspects of programming and decision-making processes.
- Recognize the potential that exists, even if limited, among refugee women. Inclusion efforts should aim to harness and cultivate this potential.
- Stimulate participation and empowerment by tapping into the existing potential of refugee women.

Key directions

- Foster intersectoral collaboration to address the needs of refugee women comprehensively.
- Empower through non-formal education to enhance knowledge, skills, and agency.
- Promote meaningful participation in civil society, including decision-making and program design.
- Center refugee women's voices in the design and development of programs and strategies.
- Amplify refugee women's stories to foster empathy and understanding.

Key partners

- CSOs,
- Expert groups,
- Local businesses,
- Establish regional committees dedicated to promoting refugee integration,
- Advocate for the establishment of a temporary parliamentary committee dedicated to WPC.

Resources required

- Legal services,
- Trainings,
- Small educational grants.

2. Women's economic empowerment

Challenges

- Conditional employment: Refugees may lose their status if they seek formal employment, as this often requires them to become Armenian citizens, a step they are currently hesitant to take.
- Unpaid care work: Disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities.
- Limited childcare options: Lack of accessible and affordable childcare.
- Language barriers: Hindering communication and integration.
- Violence and exploitation: Increased vulnerability to trafficking and harassment.
- Lack of awareness: Limited knowledge of rights and entitlements.
- Skill gaps: Especially among GBV survivors, impacting job prospects.
- Intersectionality of discrimination: Refugee status compounding existing biases.
- Exploitative labor practices: Vulnerable to unfair treatment by employers.

Opportunities

- Cultural diversity can be leveraged to foster growth and innovation.
- The influx of new labor resources can contribute to state-building and economic development.
- Past experiences, particularly lessons learned from the 1990s, can inform current development strategies.

Key directions

- Awareness campaigns to educate refugees about their rights
- Provision of information on protection mechanisms by both the government and NGOs
- Legislative reforms focusing on anti-discrimination and education
- Implementation of mandatory language training programs
- Establishment of a working group to monitor state employment programs
- Introduction of flexible daycare options for refugee families with children
- Awareness programs to combat trafficking
- Development of educational programs to facilitate entry into the Armenian labor market
- Enforcement of measures to regulate employer conduct
- Establishment of a labor rights hotline for advice and support

Key partners

Joint Working Group for Monitoring State Economic Empowerment Programs comprising:

- NGOs specializing in the economic empowerment of women
- NGOs focusing on refugee rights
- NGOs advocating for the protection of women's rights
- Research organization
- Woman refugee representative from a rural community
- Woman refugee representative with a disability
- Single mother program beneficiary
- MLSA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) representative
- Representative from the Ministry of Economy
- Representative from the Labor Inspection
- Representative from the Parliamentary Working Committee

Purpose and Activities of the Group:

- Raise awareness about existing issues related to the economic empowerment of refugee women.
- Generate suggestions for improving state economic empowerment programs.
- Ensure proper implementation of these programs.
- Manage hotline operations and provide legal advice on relevant issues.

Resources required

- Conduct awareness-raising programs in collaboration with the business sector to educate them about the rights of women and refugees.
- Create tailored labor procedures for employers aimed at safeguarding the rights and well-being of women and refugees in the workplace.
- Implement incentive support programs designed to attract refugees to contribute positively to the workforce.
- Establish banking privileges specifically tailored for women and refugees who aspire to start entrepreneurial ventures.

3. Ending violence against women

Challenges

- Limited awareness of rights among women.
- Widespread distrust in the system and institutions.
- Barriers to information access for persons with disabilities.
- Inadequate protection of social rights, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Lack of a gender-sensitive approach in state policies and local governance.
- Insufficient observance of confidentiality in sensitive cases.
- Lack of implementation of key protection instruments, such as the Istanbul Convention.
- Persistence of traditional values that hinder progress towards equality.
- Limited economic independence for women, perpetuating dependency.
- Unequal distribution of social roles based on gender stereotypes.

Opportunities

- Presence of state-supported domestic violence centers in all regions of the country.
- Collaboration between state and non-state sectors in addressing domestic violence.
- Formulation of comprehensive conceptual frameworks for preventing and responding to domestic violence.
- Facilitation of the exchange of effective international experiences on addressing domestic violence.

Key directions

- Engagement in policy development at both central and local levels.
- Active participation in local-level discussions and decision-making processes.
- Implementation of awareness-raising initiatives and strategic communication campaigns.
- Safeguarding social rights through effective measures.
- Enhancement of gender sensitivity within state structures.
- Assurance of privacy through diverse mechanisms.

Key partners

- Collaborate with local United Social Services Units to distribute information about free social services for refugees, including hotlines.
- Conduct training sessions for police personnel, United Social Services Unit staff, local government representatives, school staff, hospital employees, and primary care unit staff.
- Establish a Monitoring Group for Gender Strategy to oversee and evaluate implementation efforts.

Resources required

- Increase funding allocated to GBV projects.
- Provide support to women's rights defenders to enhance their resilience.
- Develop a collective healing platform to facilitate healing and support for survivors of GBV.

4. Women, Peace, and Security: Humanitarian Response and Preparedness

Challenges

- Low awareness and consequently, lack of public interest in WPS issues.
- A one-sided approach to security, focusing either on social or military aspects, neglecting the comprehensive nature of WPS.
- Limited engagement of NGOs in the WPS sector.
- The role of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution is underemphasized.
- The NAP on WPS is not operationalized effectively.
- Resources are severely limited, with most funding coming from international sources and minimal contributions from the state and NGOs.
- Lack of competency and political will to implement WPS initiatives.
- Shifting focus of activities, leading to inconsistency and lack of progress.
- Absence of clear indicators in NAPs to measure progress and impact.
- Burnout among stakeholders due to limited resources and support.
- Lack of institutional memory, leading to the repetition of past mistakes.

Opportunities

- Involvement of international structures and adherence to international documents.
- Existence of an inter-agency committee.
- Willingness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to engage in cooperation.

Key directions

- Provision of socioeconomic support for refugee women.
- Promotion of economic empowerment for women affected by conflict.
- Enhancement of women's negotiation capabilities.
- Establishment or improvement of monitoring mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives.
- Integration of "cybersecurity" and "climate change" into the WPS agenda.
- Localization and strengthening of the role of local governments in WPS implementation.
- Implementation of gender-sensitive budgeting throughout the NAP execution.
- Allocation of long-term funding for frontline NGOs working on WPS issues.
- Empowerment initiatives for women human rights defenders.
- Addressing the humanitarian needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Key partners

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Interdepartmental Commission for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325
- RA MLSA (especially for humanitarian response work)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (for crisis response preparedness)
- CSOs working on the agenda of the Central Committee
- International networks focused on the implementation and localization of UN Security Council Resolution 1325
- Local self-government bodies
- International and Local Committees of the Red Cross

Resources required

- Implementation of joint awareness-raising training on WPS for both the government and civil society, facilitating collaboration between them.
- Series of training sessions on Gender-Responsive Budgeting.
- Allocation of funds by the international community for NAP implementation.
- Capacity building of regional NGOs, including the creation or updating of crisis management strategies and mechanisms.
- Implementation of early response and/or violence and conflict prevention mechanisms within the CSO sector.
- Development of an online information platform providing access to coded data of individuals in need of humanitarian assistance, detailing aid provision, and outlining further steps accordingly.



DAY 2

Introduction

The second day of the consultation convened representatives from Armenian state bodies, international embassies, and UN agencies to deliberate on the findings from the previous day's discussions.

Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Ms. Tatevik Stepanyan, opened the session by acknowledging the progress made through collaborative efforts between civil society, international partners, and the government. She emphasized the importance of expert and civil society engagement in identifying legislative gaps that emerge during implementation.

Ms. Stepanyan affirmed the collective commitment to enhancing the social protection system's resilience and responsiveness, highlighting the need for targeted recommendations from women-led and refugee-led organizations. She stressed the importance of prioritizing resource allocation based on specific proposals to ensure maximum impact in the face of limited resources.



Tatevik Stepanyan, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs



Françoise Jacob, UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia

UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia, Ms. Françoise Jacob, underscored the UN's commitment to gender equality both globally and locally, emphasizing three key areas of work in Armenia: combating GBV, promoting economic empowerment, and advancing women's political participation. She acknowledged progress made in some areas while highlighting the need for continued efforts, particularly in increasing women's political representation and ensuring sustainable financing for essential services provided by NGOs.

Ms. Jacob drew attention to challenges such as the deprioritization of gender issues during crises, the limited progress in women's political participation, and the lack of adequate funding for NGO-providing services. She further emphasized the need to address the often-overlooked needs of marginalized groups, such as women with disabilities.

Regarding the WPS agenda, the UN Resident Coordinator acknowledged Armenia's progress with its NAPs while advocating for greater civil society inclusion in the formulation of the third NAP. She stressed the importance of gender-inclusive peacemaking and urged for investments in training women for participation in peace negotiations at all levels. She also called for the inclusion of provisions in peace deals to ensure gender balance and a gender perspective in negotiations.

Final Session: WLO/WRO Representatives' Actionable Recommendations and Resource Requirements for Effective Inclusion of Refugee Women in the Transition Phase

The consultation culminated in WLOs/WROs outlining their proposed engagement mechanisms and contributions to the transition plan:

- Establish a temporary working group led by WLOs/WROs to develop recommendations for incorporating refugee-related issues into the Gender Strategy Implementation Plan.
- Create a Monitoring Group to oversee and advise on State Employment Programs, ensuring inclusivity for refugee women and marginalized groups.
- Integrate WLOs/WROs into Armenia's Gender Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Process to ensure their voices are heard and insights considered.

- Include WLOs/WROs in the drafting of the Third National Action Plan (NAP III) to incorporate the perspectives and needs of refugee women.
- Engage Refugee WLOs/WROs in Armenia's Gender Machinery to ensure their representation in decision-making processes.
- Collaborate with Parliament to advocate for anti-discrimination legislation.
- Establish state-run hotlines to provide psychological and legal assistance to refugees.
- Form an advocacy platform for refugee women to amplify their voices and experiences.
- Support the government in adopting ILO C190 to address workplace harassment and violence.
- Implement short-term training programs for refugee women to enhance their employability.
- Ensure refugee children have access to kindergartens without bureaucratic barriers.
- Provide paid care services for elder refugees.
- Ensure accountability and transparency from regional and local governments regarding refugee programs.
- Implement gender-responsive budgeting within local governments.
- Develop a Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) scheme tailored for refugee women in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy.
- Establish a platform for collaboration between WLOs/WROs and businesses to create economic empowerment opportunities for refugee women.



To successfully implement the recommended actions for addressing the needs of refugee women, WLOs/WROs identified several critical resource requirements:

- Resilience building: Strengthen the capacity of WLOs/WROs to address challenges such as burnout and disaster recovery, including the establishment of healing platforms.
- Monitoring and evaluation tools: Develop tools and mechanisms for effective monitoring and evaluation of state programs on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Capacity building for gender impact assessments: Strengthen the capacity of relevant stakeholders to conduct gender impact assessments of state policies and initiatives.
- Capacity building on WPS: Provide comprehensive training and support to state agencies and CSOs on the WPC agenda.

- Resource allocation for care services: Allocate adequate resources to support essential care services for women and their families, including healthcare, childcare, and eldercare.
- Gender Responsive research and data collection: Invest in comprehensive research, including academic studies, case studies, and qualitative and quantitative analysis, to inform evidence-based policies and interventions.
- Establishment of new shelters: Expand the network of shelters and safe spaces for survivors of domestic violence, providing essential support services.
- International advisory group on WPS: Establish an international advisory group to provide expert guidance and recommendations on WPS policy and programs.
- Diverse expertise: Secure the expertise of professionals in various fields, including monitoring and evaluation specialists, to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of gender-focused initiatives.

Annex 1: Agenda

Day 1: May 13	
09:30 - 10:00	Registration
10:00 - 10:15	Opening Remarks: Ms. Kaori Ishikawa, UN Women Country Representative in Georgia and Liaison for the South Caucasus
10:15 - 10:30	Presentation of Conference Objectives and Agenda
10:30 - 11:30	<p>Gender Equality Policy Framework – Priorities, Achievements and Further Developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Armenia’s Gender Strategy 2024-2028 by MLSA. • Reflection on Armenia’s WPS Priorities for the NAP III by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) • Presentation of Transition Plan by UNHCR <p>Q&A</p>
11:30-11:45	Coffee Break
11:45 - 13:00	Panel Discussion: Reflections, Best Practices, and Lessons Learned from Refugee Response
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 15:00	Exercise 1: Identification of Priority Groups for Residual Humanitarian - Transition - Peace Nexus Process: Needs, Capacities and Resources Needed
15:00 - 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 - 16:30	Exercise 2: Identification of Key Priorities, Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities for Refugee-Centered National and Local Development Plans
16:30 - 16:45	Day 1 Wrap-up

Day 2: May 14

09:45 - 10:00	Summary Key Conclusions and Priorities of Day 1
10:00 - 11:00	Exercise 3: Completion of Template on Resources with Reference to National Plans, WLO/WRO Engagement Mechanisms and Contribution to Transition Plan
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 - 11:45	Keynote addresses: Ms. Tatevik Stepanyan, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Ms. Françoise Jacob, UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia
11:45 - 13:00	Presentation: Master Plan to Armenian Government and International Community followed by Q&A
13:00 - 13:15	Wrap-up of Day 2 and Event
13:15 - 14:00	Lunch

Annex 2: Participant List

Organisation Name	Name	Surname
Women's Fund	Gohar	Shahnazaryan
Women's Center.Shushi	Gayane	Hambradzumyan
Women's Resource Center	Lara	Aharonian
You are not alone NGO	Naira	Harutyunyan
Sose NGO	Liana	Sahakyan
Women's Rights House Gyumri	Gohar	Vardanyan
Kanani NGO	Kristina	Baghdasaryan
Coalition Against Domestic Violence Against Women	Nvard	Manasyan
Resource Center for Women's Emp	Nare	Hayrapetyan
Agat NGO women with disabikity	Gayane	Grigoryan
Armavir Development Center	Ani	Tovmasyan
Democracy Today	Gulnara	Shahinian
Helsinky Assembly	Natalya	Martirosyan
Human Rights Research Center	Anahit	Simonyan
Women's Support Center	Hasmik	Gevorgyan
Women's Agenda	Knarik	Mkrtchyan
Femforward	Irina	Hovhannisyan
Sexual Crisis Assault Center	Anush	Gabrielyan
Krunk NGO	Mariam	Avagyan
Ukranian Forum NGO	Elena	Shevchuk
Martuni Women's Council	Serine	Aghabekyan
Winnet	Ruzanna	Torozyan
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