

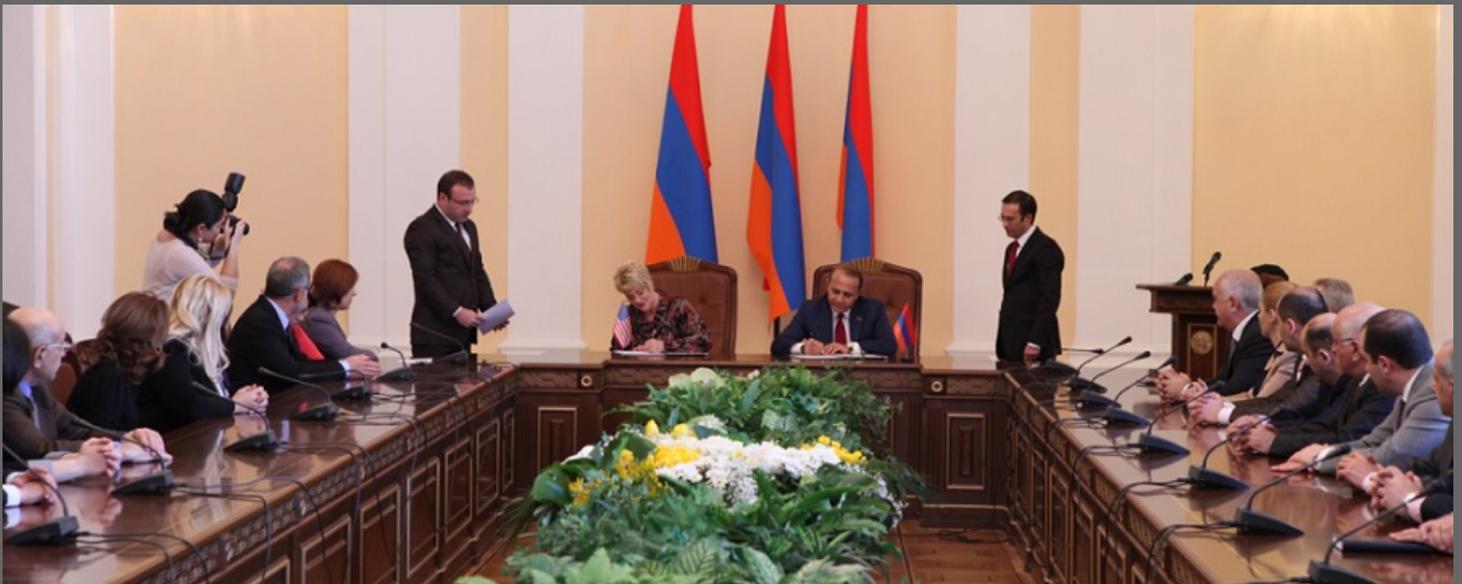


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**ARMENIA**

# SUPPORT TO THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAM (SANAP)

QUARTERLY REPORT  
(JANUARY 1–MARCH 31, 2014)



APRIL 15, 2014

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.



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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AUA	American University of Armenia
COC	Chamber of Control
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
GIZ	German International Technical Cooperation Agency
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
IR	Intermediate Result
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NA	National Assembly
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
SANAP	Support to the Armenian National Assembly Program
STA/M	Senior Technical Advisor/Manager
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# 1.0 OVERVIEW

## 1.1 PROGRAM SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Tetra Tech was awarded the USAID-funded Support to the Armenian National Assembly Program (SANAP) in Armenia, with an effective start date of September 5, 2012. This \$4,269,138 program is working to strengthen the National Assembly's institutional capacity by accomplishing the following objectives over four years (2012-2016):

1. Representation of citizens' interests by selected committees increased.
2. Oversight of the executive branch by selected committees improved.
3. Analytical capacity of selected committees improved.
4. Rules and procedures governing selected committees made clearer and institutional capacity increased.

During its first year the project worked with five standing committees.

- Financial - Credit and Budgetary Affairs
- Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs
- State and Legal Affairs
- Territorial Affairs and Local Self Government
- Ethics<sup>1</sup>

Beginning in October 2014, SANAP began working with three additional committees.

- Healthcare, Maternity and Childhood
- Agriculture and Environment
- Economic Affairs

SANAP focuses its energies on helping to build the capacity of selected committees by strengthening the skills and knowledge of committee Members of Parliament (MPs), enhancing rules and procedures of select committees, improving legislative analysis by staff and members, and expanding outreach to citizens and civil society.

In addition to its work with parliament committees, SANAP works with individual members of parliament elected from single-member districts. The project seeks to assist MPs who wish to strengthen

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<sup>1</sup> Because of its quasi-judicial nature, hearing and adjudicating complaints, the Ethics Committee's involvement is limited to assistance with strengthening its rules and procedures, and partnering with the committee to increase ethics rule awareness among all MPs.

constituent links. SANAP also works with women MPs interested in forming a non-partisan group focused on collective policy advocacy. Finally, SANAP works to support other USAID projects that deal with issues requiring parliament consideration.

This Seventh Quarterly Report covers the period between January 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014.

## **1.2 POLITICAL BACKDROP**

During the final four months of 2013, two events reshaped Armenian politics.

On September 3, the President announced he was backing away from an EU free trade agreement and aligning Armenia with Russia's Custom Union. Later, on December 23, Russian control of Armenia's gas imports appeared to become absolute when the parliament approved the sale of the remaining 20% ownership of the Armenia state gas company, ArmRusgasprom, to Russia's Gazprom. As part of the deal, media sources reports that Gazprom will have the power to block natural gas imports from other countries until 2043.

As this report was being prepared, two additional events occurred that will reshape the political landscape further.

- ✓ On April 3, the Armenia's constitutional court ruled that the country's controversial pension legislation violated the law.
- ✓ On April 4, the Prime Minister announced his resignation.

Critics of the government saw the resignation as a victory. Yet it remains to be seen if subsequent change in government will strengthen reform, reinforce consolidation, or simply represent a reshuffling of the status quo.

For SANAP, there may be tangible effects. It is possible that SANAP will see one or more committee chairs named to government posts. It is rumored that the National Assembly (NA) Speaker is a potential Prime Minister (PM) candidate. If the current Speaker becomes PM, SANAP will need to establish relationships with the new Speaker and his/her team.

This potential change in key NA staff reinforces the need for SANAP to remain focused on building the NA as an institution. While SANAP works with individual MPs and staff, long term impact will come from continuing to focus on changes that will result in institutional reform.

## **1.3 KEY ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD**

### **SUMMARY**

During this reporting period, SANAP focused on improving parliament hearings, expanding civil society engagement, and strengthening relationships with the National Assembly. In addition, website enhancements were completed, the Fellows Program started, various research and analysis was completed in partnership with NA staff and preparations began for budget oversight activities later in the spring.

## **IMPROVED PARLIAMENT HEARINGS**

### **✓ JANUARY STAFF WORKSHOP ON IMPROVED PARLIAMENT HEARINGS**

The January 23-24 event, held in Tsaghkadzor, brought together over 30 parliament staff to discuss ways to improve parliament hearings. Information was provided on the different forms that parliament hearings can take and their respective purposes. Interactive sessions discussed hearing goals and strategy, information gathering, hearing structure and messaging, and effective follow up. Other sessions gathered participant input on innovative ways to promote public participation. At the workshop conclusion, a working group was formed to start work on a parliamentary hearing manual.



Group work at the Staff Retreat on Improved parliament hearings

Concepts and materials from the workshop have been subsequently reinforced by regular SANAP follow-up consultations and technical assistance.

As a result of the workshop, staff now have a better understanding of the value of parliamentary hearings and are incorporating best practices into their work – as evidenced by improved hearings that have taken place in the Agriculture and State and Legal Committees.

### **✓ PARLIAMENT HEARING MANUAL**

At the Tsaghkadzor workshop SANAP and parliament staff agreed to jointly form a working group to develop a parliament hearing manual – a practical guide for effective hearings with all necessary materials to promote success. The group has met twice during the reporting period and have drafted first sections of the manual.

### **✓ STATE AND LEGAL MPS WORKING TO STRENGTHEN COMMITTEE HEARING RULES/PRACTICES**

Concurrently, the State and Legal Committee has been discussing ways to promote better public hearing practices among MPs. A rapporteur had been named to lead the effort and discussions held on the best way to promote a committee chair conversation on this issue. SANAP has provided extensive research materials for this effort. The goal is to promote a set of model committee rules of procedure that, while lacking force of law, will serve as a guide for committee chairs.

### **✓ PUTTING BEST PRACTICES TO WORK**

Related to the State and Legal effort at promoting more effective hearings, the committee sought to spearhead the effort by testing model hearing practices. The hearing on web-based media / defamation issues, held on March 31, was an effort to implement best practices in planning, research, hearing procedure, and follow up. Observers noted the qualitative improvement in the discourse as a result.

## **EXPANDING CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT**

During the reporting period, SANAP has observed a qualitative improvement in civil society engagement. There is a broader understanding of the term civil society, to include CSOs and average citizens, but also individual experts, businesses, associations, media, and academics. Utilizing this expanded array of expert

civil society resources have helped to improve hearings in the Agriculture and State and Legal Committees, as well as pre-hearing activities in Committees on Territorial, Human Rights, and Health.

✓ **CSO DAY**

CSO Day was held at the National Assembly on February 25. Eighty CSOs from 12 issue clusters were represented, along with tables filled with relevant issue research materials. Dozens of MPs visited the tables and spoke with CSO experts. Several follow on meetings were held with MPs. The State and Legal Committee is experimenting with changing committee sitting procedures to invite CSOs to directly present legislative proposals to the entire committee.

✓ **CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN HEARINGS**

Building on past work, and as a result of the staff workshop on improved parliament hearings, committees expanded engagement with civil society. Key stakeholders were invited into pre-hearing consultations, experts were specifically invited and encouraged to testify at hearings, and continued civil society engagement has become a regular part of post-hearing follow up.

**STRENGTHENED RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

✓ **MOU SIGNING BETWEEN USAID AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

On February 21, 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between parliament and USAID affirming support for the principles and goals of SANAP.

✓ **CHIEF OF STAFF**

There has been good initial progress in working with the Chief of Staff on organizational and capacity development improvement issues. A working group was formed, a two day retreat planned, conceptual approval of a strategic plan was agreed to, and space for a small SANAP office in the NA was identified.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES OF NOTE**

✓ **FELLOWS PROGRAM KICKOFF**

Seven SANAP Fellows were approved by committee chairs and embedded in the committees. The Fellows will work with staff on issue research and legislative-policy analysis. While just a few months old, the addition of highly talented young people is positively affecting the work of committees.

✓ **RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

An array of research was prepared for and with committees on international comparative rules of procedure, traffic management, water management, physician professional development, trade unions, local government administrative performance, economic statistics, and budget oversight. At the same time, committees have shown evidence of expanding their own research material development.

✓ **PREPARATION FOR BUDGET OVERSIGHT**

In preparation for May release of the annual Budget Execution report and committee review, SANAP has been working with committees to identify topics of oversight interest, background material preparation, and technical workshops to understand the budget cycle and the role of parliament.

# 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF CONDUCTED AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR EACH COMPONENT

## 2.1 OBJECTIVE ONE: REPRESENTATION OF CITIZEN INTERESTS INCREASED

### ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

#### CSO DAY (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 1.1.1)



RA National Assembly President Hovik Abrahamyan and Deputy President Hermine Naghdalyan speaking with CSO representatives at the CSO Day event at the National Assembly

Civil Society Organization (CSO) Day was held on February 25, 2014, at the National Assembly. The event presented 80 CSOs active in 12 issue clusters related to NA committee jurisdiction. The CSOs had an opportunity to speak with MPs and staff, as well as present research materials and publications.

As a result of the event the following Committees: Human Rights, State and Legal, Territorial Management and Educations, organized follow up meetings with CSOs. Legislative proposals were exchanged. In State and Legal, the committee sitting procedures will be modified to

provide an opportunity for CSO's to directly present legislative ideas to the committee. This format change – formalizing CSO participation – is expected to be tested in April around the issue of the replacement of women on electoral lists.

The NA Speaker described the event as a great success and pledged to hold future CSO days in the parliament.

#### **CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN PARLIAMENT HEARINGS (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 1.1.5)**

During the quarter, SANAP worked with committees to strengthen civil society participation in parliament hearings.

A general observation during the reporting period is that there has been a qualitative improvement of parliament committee / civil society engagement.

First, the notion of civil society expanded to include not just CSOs, but also individual experts, journalists, business people, think tanks and professional associations. Second, civil society was increasingly viewed as a strategic information resource. Third, committees incorporated civil society into their strategic planning for parliament hearings. For example:

- The Agriculture Committee held pre-hearing information discussions with several environmental NGOs prior to the Lake Sevan Hearing, and invited experts to testify at the hearing.
- The Human Rights Committee has maintained an ongoing dialogue with a coalition of civil society interests related to trade union issues, as the committee works to develop a package of reform proposals.
- The Territorial Committee held pre-meeting information discussions with groups interested in urban parking/traffic management prior to the committee meeting on the Yerevan parking issue.
- The State and Legal Committee developed a pre-hearing working group of key stakeholders to gather feedback on draft legislation related to Internet defamation issues. The committee also structured key witness testimony and, as a result of hearing feedback, created a post-hearing working group to continue legislative discussions.
- The Health Committee has encouraged broad based civil society input into the legislative proposal on physician continuing education. It has also led a sector wide discussion to advise the committee on key priorities.

SANAP believes that the improved understanding of the role and value of civil society input is the result of ongoing consultations with committee chairs, broader knowledge of available civil society resources (stemming from the CSO database and SANAP civil society relationships), and training on the role of civil society in parliament hearings as covered in the January 23-24 retreat in Tsaghkadzor.

#### **CONSTITUENCY STAFF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 1.2.3)**

Following on the November 29, 2013, SANAP workshop for assistants of majoritarian MPs, SANAP has provided follow up technical assistance for staff to encourage proficiency in constituency casework. SANAP is working with 14 MP staff on 5 major competence areas related to constituent casework; case information gathering, effective interaction with government officials, follow-up constituent communication, recordkeeping and reporting, and case closure procedures. MP staff identified their needs and SANAP has provided one-on-one technical assistance. As of March 30, technical assistance has been completed with 7 MPs. It is expected that all constituency casework technical assistance will be complete by April 30.

During the next quarter, SANAP will work with majoritarian MPs and staff on effective constituent outreach.

### **ASSESS COMMITTEE CONSTITUENCY EFFORTS (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 1.3.1)**

During the quarter SANAP staff developed an interview questionnaire and observed committee constituent meetings. Findings will be compiled into a summary report. During the next quarter, SANAP will review findings with committee chairs to explore areas for improvement.

### **ACTIVITIES PLANNED**

#### **ACTIVITY 1.1.3: CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN PARLIAMENT HEARINGS**

Hearings and field visits will be ongoing during the remainder of the parliament session.

#### **ACTIVITY 1.1.4: CONSTITUENCY WEEK**

Planning underway: expect to be completed April – June, but could be delayed due to the on-going discussions to identify the next PM.

#### **ACTIVITY 1.2.1: CONSTITUENCY MANUAL**

Communications section planned will be completed and training held.

#### **ACTIVITY 1.2.3: CONSTITUENCY STAFF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Technical assistance is expected to be completed and initial work on constituency outreach started.

#### **ACTIVITY 1.3.1: ASSESS COMMITTEE CONSTITUENCY EFFORTS**

Assessment and recommendations are complete and a process to discuss findings will be pursued.

### **PAST AND ONGOING CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS**

None.

## **2.2 OBJECTIVE TWO: EXECUTIVE BRANCH OVERSIGHT IMPROVED**

### **ACTIVITIES PERFORMED**

#### **BUDGET SPENDING OVERSIGHT (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 2.1.2)**

During the budget formulation and approval in the fall, SANAP worked with committees on budget performance oversight. During the spring, the focus is on budget execution.

The budget execution report is traditionally delivered to the parliament in May, so work in this quarter was preparatory.

Armenia legally requires the government to provide an annual budget execution report to parliament, and for parliament to vote on that report. Parliamentary rejection of the report is considered a vote of no-confidence. Normally, joint hearings are held with the budget committee to review the government report and question officials. The meetings have been generally seen as an empty formality. Budget formulation and review have little connection to program performance. There is little in the report that can help parliamentarians determine if funds were spent wisely or in accordance with the legislature's priorities.

Last year, SANAP played a strong leadership role in helping committees to understand how to monitor budget execution. This year, however, partnership on this activity is far more demand-driven. Committees see the value of the exercise and staff have received training to allow them to assume a greater responsibility for preparing information for MPs on the budget execution report.

Committees have also selected an interesting array of subjects to review.

- Territorial Committee will review fulfillment of administrative responsibilities in the Marzes as they relate to education.
- Human Rights will review spending on housing for orphans who graduate from state residencies.
- Agriculture Committee will look at government farm subsidy programs.
- Economic Committee will review rail transportation spending.
- Health Committee had not selected a topic by the end of the reporting period.

The work of the State and Legal Committee may be the most potentially interesting. In 2013, the committee set a standard for collaboration in setting program indicators. In particular, the Ministry of Justice committed to reporting on program indicators with the first quarterly budget execution report for 2014, a report that is issued almost concurrently with the 2013 annual report.

In addition to identifying topics for review, committee staff have received introductory training. SANAP Fellows have also worked to prepare information packets of government background data related to committee-identified topics.

While last year, budget execution reporting was led by SANAP and outside experts, this year the program seeks to begin transitioning development of information and reports to committee staff. The results of this effort will be seen in the next quarter.

#### **LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 2.2)**

With the assistance of a SANAP Fellow, the program worked with the Budget Committee Chair to prepare additional background research material.

Concurrently, there is committee interest to oversee government program implementation. A first example is the Human Rights Committee's interest with housing programs for orphans who graduate from programs for children and adolescents. During the next quarter, SANAP will work with the committee to link spending analysis and field visits to evaluate government performance.

#### **ACTIVITIES PLANNED**

##### **ACTIVITY 2.1.2: BUDGET SPENDING OVERSIGHT**

SANAP will work with committees to review government expenditures.

##### **ACTIVITY 2.2.2: LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT**

SANAP will conclude work with the Chair of the Budget Committee on legislative oversight research and assess next steps. The program will work with the Human Rights Committee as they proceed with oversight of housing for orphans.

#### **PAST AND ONGOING CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS**

None.

## **2.3 OBJECTIVE THREE: COMMITTEE ANALYTICAL CAPACITIES INCREASED**

### **ACTIVITIES PERFORMED**

#### **EXTERNAL ANALYTICAL SUPPORT FOR STAFF AND MPS (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 3.1.1)**

During the quarter, SANAP provided a range of supplemental research and expert support. The Project seeks to support Armenian technical expertise and, over time, to build the parliament's own capacity. In this early phase of the Project, SANAP focuses on introducing research as a tool for better decision-making, helping committees to effectively use research, and building demand for expert analysis. To migrate to sustainability, consultants are also asked to work with committee experts as a way to build collaborative research capacity (**Activity 3.3.3 and 3.3.4**).

During the quarter, SANAP sponsored the following activities:

#### **Budget Oversight / Budget Execution**

- Presentation to MP staff on the Armenia Budget Cycle
- Presentation to MP staff on Budget Execution Report review process
- Discussion / TA with NA head of Financial Department and Deputy Chief of Staff regarding parliament program indicators (in accordance with State and Legal Committee request)
- Discussion / TA with Economic Committee Chair /Staff to discuss process for budget execution report indicators

#### **Health Reform**

- Supplemental information on Physician Continuing Professional Development

#### **Local Government**

- Development of indicators for local government administration
- Background briefing on potential local government consolidation options

#### **ACTIVITY 3.2.2: FELLOWS PROGRAM**

The SANAP Fellows Program was successfully launched in the first quarter of 2014. The program advertisement attracted nearly 200 applicants. After interviews and screening by SANAP, committee chairs made final selections.

The eight Fellows selected bring impressive credentials. Five of the Fellows hold Masters degrees in business administration, economics, political science and law. One Fellow holds a JD and two are PhDs in the fields of law and economics.

SANAP Fellows joined the Program for orientation in January 2014 and joined committees in February. The Fellows have participated in committee activities and served as research/analysis/operational support staff.

Fellows receive ongoing mentoring and training from SANAP and participate in weekly staff meetings.

In a short time, they have helped to promote change in several committees, working in collaboration with staff on background research, legal analysis, hearing preparation, and use of report templates. In one committee, the fellow taught committee staff higher level spreadsheet techniques for quantitative analysis.

#### **ACTIVITY 3.3.1: BUDGET EXECUTION ANALYSIS**

During the reporting period, preparations have been made for the budget execution reporting cycle that begins with the early May report submittal to parliament. Committees selected topics for oversight, background budget and policy materials have been collected, and staff have been trained

In April, individualized committee consultations will take place so that committee staff are prepared to play a larger role in the analysis process.

#### **ACTIVITY 3.3.4: STAFF ANALYTICAL CAPACITY IMPROVED / POLICY ANALYSIS**

During the reporting period SANAP staff, fellows, and external experts worked with parliament staff and committee members on the following reports:

- Policy analysis related to agricultural water use models for the Lake Sevan hearing;
- Legal analysis for the web-based media/defamation hearing;
- International practice for parking and traffic management for the Territorial Administration committee sitting on Yerevan parking issues;
- Local Government Consolidation; and
- Physician Professional Development

Through the process, committee staff expanded their knowledge of research information sources. Analysis was used to consider policy options, along with related strengths and weaknesses. Key civil society stakeholders were engaged to provide additional feedback through consultations and public hearings, and to help refine policy alternatives resulting in a legislative proposal.

On the issues of Lake Sevan and Yerevan parking, although the outcome did not change, the research and analytical materials prepared with the assistance of the Project resulted in a shift in the nature of the discussion with government to a much more fact-based conversation. MPs were far more informed, and were treated by government more as coequals. Analytical research provided to the committee provided alternatives to government's often one-sided advocacy for policy.

On issues related to web-based media / defamation, and physician professional development, improved analytical capacity and policy analysis is positively affecting the legislative process, as proposals have been reshaped and refined as a result.

#### **ACTIVITY 3.4: PARLIAMENT WEBSITE UPDATES**

SANAP's subcontractor concluded its upgrades to the website. However, due to country security policy, XML conversion is being reviewed by the National Security Council before being released as a live upgrade. It is anticipated that all upgrades will be live and operational by the end of the next quarter.

The upgrades include new tools for monitoring of changes in legislative documents, a system to allow citizens to receive email notifications and subscribe to National Assembly news feeds, a mobile-friendly

version of the parliamentary website, and access to parliamentary data in Open Standard (XML) documents.

Going forward, as part of work with the Chief of Staff on parliament operational improvements, SANAP expects that Intranet processes and content will be a topic for improvement.

#### **ACTIVITY 3.5.1: STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES / PARLIAMENT OVERSIGHT TRAINING**

On March 5, SANAP held the second in a series of in-house workshops for parliament staff.

The workshop focused on the budget cycle, and was held in partnership with the EU Advisory Group. Review of the budget cycle was designed to provide basic background information for subject matter committee staff, in preparation of joint work on budget oversight.

The presentation examined budget formulation, approval, implementation and evaluation. Staff brainstormed and discussed parliament's role in the budget process.

In early April, SANAP will hold a follow-on workshop focused on the budget execution process and parliament's role in budget oversight.

#### **ACTIVITY 3.5.2: STAFF RETREAT / PARLIAMENT HEARING IMPROVEMENTS**

The January 23-24 event, brought together over 30 parliament staff to discuss ways to improve parliament hearings. Information was provided on the different forms of parliament hearings and their purposes. Interactive sessions discussed hearing goal and strategy, information gathering, hearing structure and messaging, and effective follow-up. Other sessions gathered participant input on innovative ways to promote public participation.

As a result of the workshop, staff has been incorporating best practices into their work – as evidenced by improved hearings in the Agriculture and State and Legal Committees.

#### **ACTIVITY 3.5.3: STAFF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Please see Activity 4.4

#### **ACTIVITY 3.5: ONGOING PARLIAMENT STAFF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

SANAP held regular consultations with MPs and parliament staff on a variety of topics. Subjects of technical assistance included:

- Committee strategic planning – with Human Rights, Territorial, State and Legal, Economic, Health and Agriculture committees
- Strategic planning for parliament hearings – including overall aim, goals, strategies, information needs, use of witnesses – with State and Legal / web-based media / defamation hearing, and Agriculture / Lake Sevan.
- Issue background research – with State and Legal / web-based media/defamation, and Agriculture/ Lake Sevan, physician professional development, Yerevan parking, and trade unions.
- Indicators and questions for budget oversight – with all committees on topics selected
- Parliament hearing model practices -- with State and Legal
- Post-hearing reporting – State and Legal/Web-based media/defamation and Agriculture/Lake Sevan

- Casework and constituency outreach – with single member district MP staff
- Integrating civil society information into the legislative process

These one-on-one consultations are a core function of the SANAP approach. They serve to build a strong foundation of understanding for staff, engage them more fully in the parliament process, and improve their capacity to serve the committee members.

## **ACTIVITIES PLANNED**

### **ACTIVITY 3.1.1: EXTERNAL ANALYTICAL SUPPORT**

External experts will assist with budget execution, local government consolidation, legislative policy analysis and parliament committee rules reforms.

### **ACTIVITY 3.2.2: FELLOWS PROGRAM**

SANAP's Fellows will contribute to research, policy analysis, report writing, and organizational support.

### **ACTIVITY 3.3.1-3.3.5: ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES**

SANAP will work with committee staff to develop increased capacity on budget execution, policy analysis, and legislative review.

### **ACTIVITY 3.4: PARLIAMENT WEBSITE**

SANAP will collaborate with parliament to explore additional website enhancements.

### **ACTIVITY 3.5.1: IN-HOUSE TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

SANAP will host at least two additional staff professional development workshops during the quarter.

## **PAST AND ONGOING CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS**

None.

## **2.4 OBJECTIVE FOUR: COMMITTEE RULES AND PROCEDURES MADE CLEARER AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY INCREASED**

### **ACTIVITIES PERFORMED**

#### **RULES OF PROCEDURE (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 4.1)**

The 2013-2014 Work Plan expected that parliament Rules of Procedure changes would move slowly and that second year activities would be limited to analysis. Because of strong interest by the State and Legal Committee chair and SANAP support, progress on this issue has accelerated somewhat.

The State and Legal Committee seeks to focus on rule changes that would modestly shift decision making authority to committees, in line with mainstream parliament practices in many countries. To help build the case for change, the committee will hold a public hearing on the issue in mid-May.

During the reporting period, SANAP worked with the committee on refining background research to identify appropriate parliament models. Working with other partners (OSCE, EUAG), SANAP worked to identify possible international experts who could make presentations at the hearing.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST LAWS, RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR PARLIAMENTS (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 4.3)**

In October 2013, the State and Legal Committee held a successful and well attended parliament hearing on ethics and conflict of interest rules. SANAP and the OSCE provided a range of support for this event. During the reporting period, the committee finalized a series of the draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of NA with respect to Ethics.

However, the process was delayed awaiting requested changes from the Ethics Committee for High Ranking Officials. Despite numerous reminders, the Ethics Committee did not present any proposed amendments, so the State and Legal Committee has decided to proceed unilaterally. It is expected that the draft will be presented as a legislative initiative during the spring session.

### **PARLIAMENT HEARING MANUAL (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 4.2)**

On January 23-24, SANAP held a two-day workshop for committee staff focused on improved parliamentary hearings stressing hearing strategy, preparation, information needs, role of civil society input, effective questioning, and post-hearing reporting.

At the workshop, there was strong support for jointly developing a parliamentary hearing manual. Several committee staff volunteered to be part of a working group led by SANAP to work on this manual. During the reporting period, the group developed a draft first section focused on hearing strategy and preparation. It is anticipated that the full manual will be ready for use in the autumn session of parliament.

**Improved Parliament Hearing Practices** -- During the reporting period SANAP supported two public hearings – one on Lake Sevan and the other on web-based media/defamation. In both cases, the committees showed improved strategic planning, civil society engagement (both in the preparation and hearing phases), as well as development and use of background issue information. Additionally, the State and Legal Committee intentionally sought to use the hearing on web-based media/defamation as a platform to follow a set of model parliament hearing practices. Strategy, key stakeholder engagement, background issue development were part of the hearing. In addition, there was focus on identifying key witnesses, providing them with hearing materials, and encouraging prepared statements/comments at the hearing. MP witness questioning structural changes were encouraged as well (for example allowing follow up questioning).



MPs at the Public hearing on Lake Sevan Draft

It is encouraging to see a multi-faceted approach to parliament hearing procedural reform. Taking a practical approach, committees are trying new practices and replicating those determined to be effective. Simultaneously, the State and Legal Committee is leading efforts to institutionalize change through rules reforms, and staff is leading efforts to institutionalize best practices through development of a parliament hearing manual.

#### **COMMITTEE RULES OF PROCEDURE (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 4.1)**

During this quarter, the State and Legal Committee—the subject matter committee for parliament rules of procedure—continued preparation for a planned legislative reform effort in the spring of 2014. The chair worked with SANAP—as well as OSCE and EUAG—to plan a parliament hearing on the topic in the 2014 spring session.

Based on prior SANAP research and technical support the committee selected countries with appropriate models, and in turn, worked with partners to identify appropriate international speakers.

The hearing is now planned for mid-May, and will seek to build upon model parliament hearing practices the committee is supporting.

It is hoped that the hearing will support an effort to expand committee powers to initiate and amend legislation independent of government.

#### **PARLIAMENT IN HOUSE OPERATIONS (WORK PLAN ACTIVITY 4.4)**

During the reporting period, SANAP worked with the NA Chief of Staff to develop a framework for cooperation and support.

SANAP worked with the USAID Mission and the Chief of Staff for signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the parliament on February 21.

SANAP and the Chief of Staff Office;

- Collaboratively organized Civil Society Day in Parliament on February 25, 2014.
- Identified office space in parliament and agreed to work together on enhancing the NA training room. SANAP is getting design / bid proposals for both.
- Formed a working group to move forward on operational reform issues
- Planned a first parliament department head workshop for April 4-5

It is anticipated that as a result of the workshop, a set of issues will be identified for collaborative work. Moreover the Chief of Staff and SANAP agreed in principal to develop a parliament strategic plan, following a pattern of several parliaments internationally, and serving as a guide on capacity development and operational support.

### **ACTIVITIES PLANNED**

#### **ACTIVITY 4.1.1 COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON COMMITTEE RULES**

SANAP will support the State and Legal Hearing on strengthened parliament committee rules, as well as encourage expanded use of “best practices” in all parliament hearings.

#### **ACTIVITY 4.2 PARLIAMENT HEARING MANUAL**

SANAP will work with staff to continue development of the manual.

#### **ACTIVITY 4.3 ETHICS / CODE OF CONDUCT**

SANAP anticipates supporting the drafting of an ethics reform proposal and perhaps a spring public hearing on this topic.

#### **ACTIVITY 4.4 IN-HOUSE OPERATIONS PLANNING**

SANAP will work with the Speaker and Chief of Staff to identify staff needs and begin work on a parliament strategic plan.

#### **PAST AND ONGOING CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS**

The April 4 resignation of the Prime Minister raises a number of potential challenges for the Project and the collaboration that has been established with key officials in the NA. The current NA Speaker is rumored to be among the front-runners for the PM post. If he leaves the NA and is replaced, it is uncertain how this will affect the commitment of parliament to carry on with the institutional reform underway. A new Speaker, also raises questions about the relationship with the current Chief of Staff. It is also expected that other MPs may take positions in the new government, including some of the current committee chairs with whom SANAP is working. Who would replace them elicits concern about the possibility that a new government may draw away reformer MPs who champion change in the NA.

It is expected the new PM will be announced by April 14, with a new lineup of ministers announced soon thereafter, so hopefully the period of uncertainty will be short lived.

#### **SPECIAL CROSSCUTTING INITIATIVE – WOMEN MP GROUP**

During the reporting period, the Women MP initiative remained stalled. Increasing political polarization has made a nonpartisan coalition very difficult to form.



# ANNEX I: QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT



**QUARTERLY REPORT by Line Item - FY2014 Q2**

**CONTRACT NO.: AID-11-TO-12-00001**

**ARD PROJECT NO: 1846-ARMENIA SANAP**

**Total Estimated Cost \$4,269,138**

**Total Obligated to Date \$2,000,000**

		Total Expenditures	Expenditures	Expenditures	Expenditures	Total Quarterly Expenditures	Total Remaining Budget
CATEGORIES	BUDGET	Through Mar 31, 2013	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14		
TOTAL LABOR	\$1,355,379	\$549,554	\$31,146	\$32,506	\$31,952	\$95,603	\$805,825
TOTAL SUBCONTRACTS	\$117,750	\$14,174	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$103,576
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	\$1,676,787	\$462,551	\$13,950	\$17,602	\$23,291	\$54,843	\$1,214,236
TOTAL INDIRECT EXPENDITURES	\$896,659	\$335,261	\$17,868	\$18,944	\$19,389	\$56,201	\$561,398
SUBTOTAL	\$4,046,575	\$1,361,540	\$62,964	\$69,051	\$74,632	\$206,647	\$2,685,035
FEE	\$222,563	\$74,885	\$3,463	\$3,798	\$4,105	\$11,365	\$147,678
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$4,269,138</b>	<b>\$1,436,425</b>	<b>\$66,427</b>	<b>\$72,849</b>	<b>\$78,737</b>	<b>\$218,013</b>	<b>\$2,832,713</b>



# ANNEX II: CASEWORK SECTION OF CONSTITUENCY MANUAL



# CASEWORK

Chapter from Constituency Handbook

**CASEWORK** means working with government to help resolve citizen problems.



**Casework** or **constituent service**, is one of the important functions of legislators. It is part of the Member of Parliament's (MP) responsibility to represent, and it provides the Member with a direct link to the needs and concerns of the citizens s/he represents. For citizens, constituent casework tells citizens that the Member wishes to make government work effectively and responsively for their needs.

For single-member districts, “constituents” are the citizens, organizations and businesses that reside in a member’s district. “Casework” is the description and/or resolution of a constituent problem. A case includes the description of the problem, notes of conversations, copies of responses from governmental agencies, and correspondence with constituents.

Generally, an MP allocates casework responsibilities to one or more staff members. They review and respond to needs, complaints, or personal problems posed by constituents..

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*Casework involves “interpreting, interacting, explaining, distributing, and interceding on behalf of constituents toward relief of some problem between them and the bureaucracy”*

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## ROLE OF THE STAFF PERSON IN CONSTITUENCY WORK

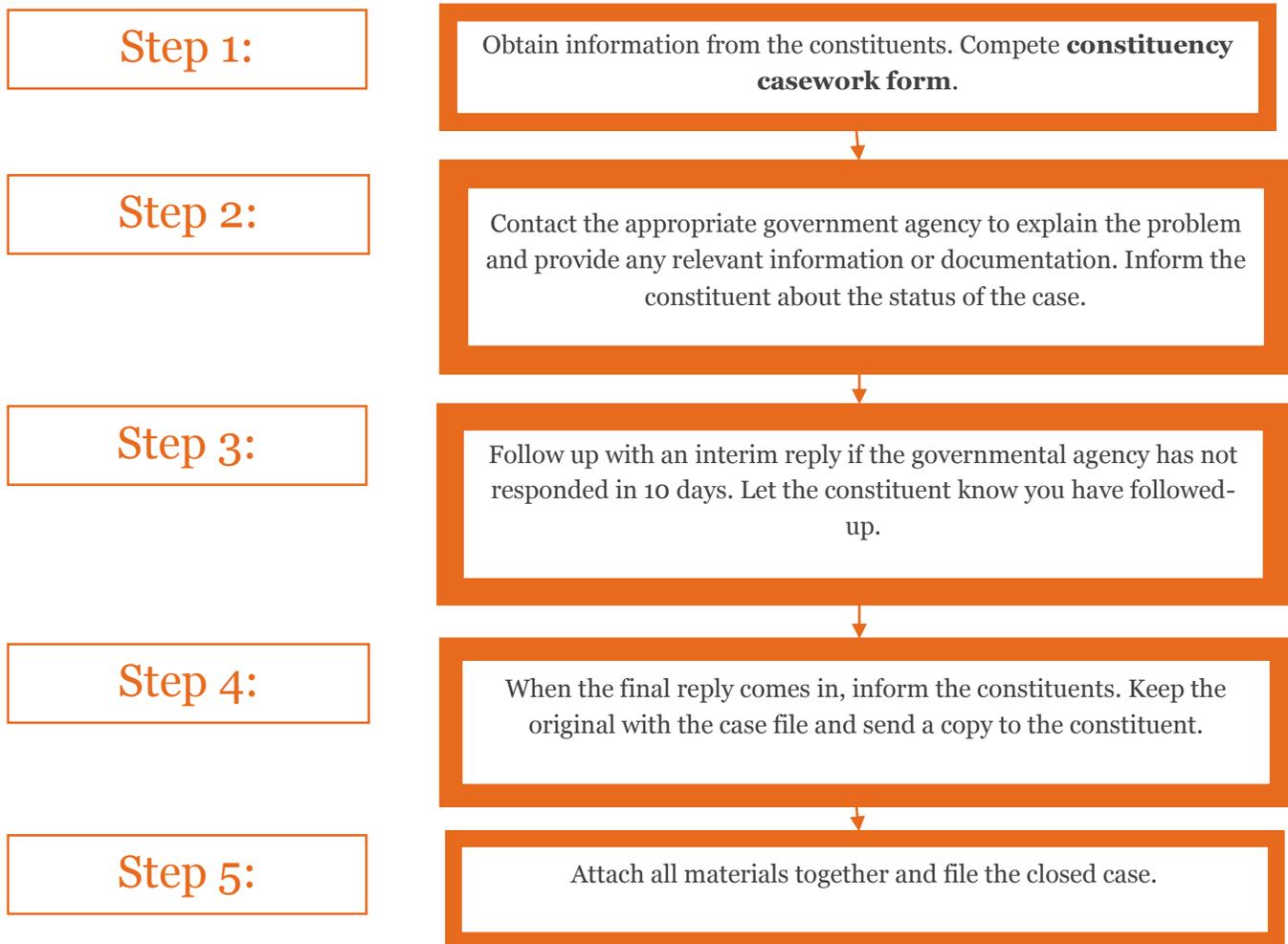
In addition to assisting with legislative matters, a staff person also helps the Member serve his constituents in a more effective manner.

### ***Rules of Procedures of the National Assembly (Chapter 1 Article 11 (2))***

2. By the assignment of the Deputy, his/her assistant:
- a) prepares the documents to be submitted to the National Assembly for debate;*
  - b) prepares analytical, information and other materials necessary for the exercise of the powers of the Deputy;*
  - c) organizes the reception of citizens by the Deputy;*
  - d) performs clerical services.*



## CONSTITUENT CASEWORK IN FIVE STEPS



## CONSTITUENT CASEWORK

- In personal or telephone interviews, get name (verify spelling), address and telephone number. Make sure to get all other pertinent information.
- Inquire about action the constituent may have already taken. It's helpful to develop a time line, listing previous actions in chronological order.
- Never guarantee or promise anything. Because you cannot force a governmental agency to render a favorable decision, you should not create any expectation.
- If it becomes obvious during an interview that you cannot support and handle the case, let the constituent know that early.
- Make sure the constituent has made application before you make an inquiry.
- The constituent should be given periodic status reports on the case. Even if you have nothing to report, reassure the constituent that you are dealing with it. All cases need to be contacted every 15 days to at least check-in.
- If you do not know something about a particular request or problem, do not hesitate to let the constituent know that you will need to do some research.

- Make sure the case file contains all information.
- Notify the constituent promptly of responses to your inquiry, whether favorable or unfavorable. If suggestions or alternatives are available, don't hesitate to make them.
- Don't forget to thank agency personnel for exemplary work. A Complimentary letter to the person's supervisor can be helpful in creating goodwill for the future.

# Constituent Case Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Issue Description

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Backup Documentation? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Key Contacts

Name	Phone	Email
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## Actions with Government

Date	Action
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Communications with Constituent

Date	Action
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Issue Closed

Date	Resolution Summary
_____	_____

## OPTIONS



### REFER THE CASE TO ANOTHER (USUALLY LOCAL) AUTHORITY

The most common problems arise when constituents are not sure where they can go for advice. In these instances a legislator and staff should try and help people with the right direction. Staff can phone other agencies, set appointments, or draft a brief letter to the local administration encouraging them to assist the constituents. These activities are relatively simple and quickly handled, and they might be enough to help the constituents. In some cases, especially where the local government is unresponsive or otherwise unable to help, legislator's office can engage CSOs to assist the constituents.

### REJECT THE CASE

Saying "no" is never easy for a politician. Sometimes, it may be best to not get involved. In the cases such as family disputes or monetary disagreements, involvement in jurisdiction or in a criminal investigation legislator should be honest with the constituents and reject the case.



### RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF MULTIPLE CONSTITUENTS COLLECTIVELY

In some cases, problems of many constituents can be dealt with on a collective basis far more efficiently and effectively than on an individual one. A creative way of addressing the issue is to organize local meetings or forums, inviting people for discussions. An alternative approach might be to obtain the pro bono legal services of an attorney to provide assistance to the constituents. It will reduce staff time. Another approach is submission a joint applications, such as mailing all the complaints to the respective agency with cover letter stating that the legislator would like to resolve issues of all applicants.

### GET INVOLVED PERSONALLY AND FIND A SOLUTION FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Legislator can play the role of advocate and can contact the appropriate agency or person and be directly involved in resolving the constituents' problem. Legislators and staff should carefully maintain the impression that the office is simply ensuring that a constituent is receiving fair consideration within the administrative process.

## HOW TO WRITE LETTERS

- Good news before bad
- Requests before justifications
- Answers before explanations
- Conclusions before discussions
- Summaries before details
- Generalities before specifics



In many situations citizens do not have a basic understanding of where they need to go for help or how they should go about solving their problems. A letter from a legislator may clarify and expedite the process. Once the office has acquired the basic information on a particular case, a standard letter addressed to the appropriate authorities may prove critical to a constituent's success. It also affords the constituent a valuable piece of evidence that someone at the political level is concerned with working out a solution.

### Ways to Respond to Constituent Issues

Become a good listener

Act professionally and ethically

Find the best alternative solutions

Monitor the Execution of Subsequent Actions



## SAMPLES OF LETTERS WITH TYPICAL LANGUAGE USED IN CONSTITUENCY WORK

Type of the letter	Language
Letter to Constituent	<p>Thank you for contacting my office about the problems you have encountered with _____.</p> <p>I have contacted <u>(the appropriate officials/agency)</u> on your behalf and explained the matter as you outlined it to me. I asked that your problem be given careful attention and that everything possible be done to help you.</p> <p>I will contact you when I receive a response.</p> <p>Until then, please do not hesitate to let me know if there is anything else I can be doing for you.</p>
Letter to Constituent -2	<p>Thank you for contacting my office to request _____.</p> <p>In an effort to be of assistance, I have contacted the <u>(appropriate agency)</u> to secure this (information) (material). I will contact you as soon as I receive it.</p> <p>In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.</p>
Agency Inquiry with Constituent Letter Enclosed	<p>Enclosed is a copy of correspondence I have received from my constituent, _____, concerning _____.</p> <p>I believe you will find the letter self-explanatory.</p> <p>I would appreciate it if you would review the enclosed letter and provide me with any information that may be helpful to my constituent. Please direct your response to my office at _____.</p> <p>I am grateful for any assistance you may be able to provide in this matter.</p>
Agency Inquiry – without Constituent Letter Enclosed	<p>My constituent, _____, has contacted me about _____.</p> <p>I would appreciate it if you would provide me with whatever information you feel may help address my constituent’s concerns. Please address your response to my office at _____.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.</p>
Agency Follow-up – No Response	<p>It has been quite some time since I contacted you about _____.</p> <p>Since I have not yet received a reply, I wanted to take this opportunity to follow-up with you about the status of this matter. I have enclosed a copy of my original inquiry for reference purposes.</p> <p>I would appreciate any information you may be able to offer that will help me respond to my constituent. Please address your reply to my office at _____.</p> <p>I look forward to hearing from you.</p>
Interim Reply to Constituents– Received Letter from Agency	<p>Knowing of my interest and concern, officials with _____ (agency) sent the enclosed correspondence to me to advise me of the most recent developments in _____.</p> <p>I certainly regret that this is ta-keep you advised of new developments.</p> <p>Please let me hear from you if there is anything else that I should know about your case.</p>

Interim Reply to Constituents – No Response Yet	<p>Although I have heard nothing further in response to my inquiry on your behalf regarding _____, I want to reassure you that I will continue to pursue this matter until it is resolved.</p> <p>As soon as I have something definite to report, I will be back in touch with you.</p> <p>Meanwhile, please let me know if there is anything else I can do to assist you in this or any other matter involving the federal government.</p>
Final Reply to Constituents – Favorable	<p>In response to my inquiry on your behalf, I have received the enclosed letter from _____.</p> <p>I want you to know how pleased I am that this matter was resolved in your favor.</p> <p>I appreciate the opportunity to be of assistance, and I hope you will not hesitate to contact me in the future if I can be of service.</p>
Final Reply to Constituents – Unfavorable	<p>In response to my inquiry on your behalf, I have received the enclosed letter from _____.</p> <p>I deeply regret that this matter could not be resolved in your favor.</p> <p>However, please keep me advised of any new developments, and let me know if there is additional information that might help resolve the case more favorably.</p> <p>Thank you for contacting me.</p>

## CASE STUDY: A VILLAGE BUS STOP IS BEING CANCELED

*“Bus line through the district has canceled a stop at a large village. People in the village rely upon the bus to get to the town. No serious reason is given for the cancellation. One day, the head of the village calls the MP office and asks for help. What can MP do?”*

There are the steps MP office can take to try to help.

- Step 1. Verification that the bus stop would indeed be cancelled.** There is a need to confirm that the information is true and actual. A few phone calls and meetings can verify the information.
- Step 2. Research on the impact of the services stoppage.** MP staff should investigate the impact of the services stoppage, how many people would be affected, were there really no other commuting alternatives? The MP’s staff found out that cancelation of the bus stops would impact a few hundred constituents, who would be forced to drive two hours to and from their job in the town. Transportation Company did not consider the number of passengers enough to warrant the service. The staff also found out that the service was not very expensive to maintain and the problem is worth fighting for.
- Step 3. Staff to staff meeting.** MP instructed his staff to meet with the staff of Transportation Company to explain the situation and explore the solutions. Local representative of Transportation Company claimed that the decision was made by headquarter and issue is beyond their control. MP’s staff was aimed to find is it possible to solve the problem with a simple phone call or informal meeting.
- Step 4. Letter to the Head of Transportation Company.** MP sent letter to the Head of the Company to reopen bus stop. Copies of the letters were sent to subordinates of the Head of Transportation Company and to other potentially influential decision-makers, such as parliamentary committee overseeing transportation issues, and or the Ministry of Transportation.
- Step 5. Communication with the public.** To publicize his advocacy efforts, MP’s office distributes press release announcing that he had written to the Head of Transportation Company and asked for reopening the bus stop. The press was contacted to show the public that MP was active on this issue. Even if advocacy effort failed, constituents need to know that their MP was active and concern about local issues.

- Step 6. Meeting with Head of Village and interested constituents.** The MP scheduled a meeting with local elected officials to discuss the proposed plan. Since MP and Head of Village were members of different political parties, working together on the issue was used to demonstrate bi-partisan cooperation in addressing local problems.
- Step 7. Meeting with Head of Transportation Company.** MP's staff arrange meeting with a high level representative of Transportation Company to discuss potential alternatives and solutions. In preparation for the appointment, MP's staff prepared a short memo that outlined several option for resolving the problem. With these option on the table, the Head of Transportation Company agreed to reopen bus stop, with some cutback in frequency. The Company was pleased to have avoided a lengthy fight over a relatively minor issue.
- Step 8. Follow up: MP calls to local officials, press release.** After the meeting, MP's staff initiated follow up. MP personally called the Head of Village to tell the good news. Then staff prepared press release announcing MP's successful intervention in the problem. Finally, MP sent a letter to the Head of Transportation Company thanking him for cooperation and explicitly confirmed the details of the compromise agreement.
- Step 9. Research long-term solutions.** The MP recognized that the solution he arranged might be a temporary one and could not be expected to be very secure. Therefore, MP recognized that he had to help find a long term solution and in recent years he has supported efforts to establish local transportation company.



# ANNEX III: COMPARATIVE MEMO ON LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES





# Comparative Memo on Legislative Process in European Countries

Prepared by:

USAID | Armenia, Support to the Armenian National Assembly Program (SANAP)

February 3, 2014

Yerevan

Within the scope of USAID | Armenia, Support to Armenia National Assembly Project

This memo was prepared upon the request of NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs. It is meant for informational purpose only, and served as a supportive material during the discussions on the role of the committees in legislative process. The memo consists of background information on NA Rules of Procedure and comparative table, outlining legislative process in Baltic Countries, Poland, Slovenia, Serbia and Czech Republic.

## **Background information on legislative process in Armenia**

The draft laws pass three readings. Draft amendments to the laws usually pass two readings, unless the National Assembly decides to have three readings.

### **Official submission of the draft: before the 1<sup>st</sup> reading**

The Speaker sends the draft to the lead committee. The committee adopts its conclusion within 30 days after the receipt. At this stage the committee discusses the draft in general and votes on positive conclusion.

- a) If the positive conclusion is adopted by the committee, the draft is proposed to be included either in general agenda of the session or both in general agenda and 4-day session agenda of the plenary.

The 4-day session begins with voting on the agenda. If the committee conclusion is positive, it is considered as included in the 4-day session agenda of the plenary unless an objection is raised in the plenary. If an objection is raised, the plenary votes on including the draft into agenda.

- b) If the positive conclusion is not adopted by the committee (does not get enough votes in the committee), the issue of inclusion of the draft in the agenda is separately discussed and voted in the plenary.

If the draft is included in the 4-day session agenda of the plenary, it is ready to be discussed in the first reading.

*So, at this stage the committee actually **has a yes or no vote**. The final decision, however, is taken by the plenary.*

### **1<sup>st</sup> reading in the plenary**

During the first reading the draft is discussed in general and voted in its entirety. The draft is presented by the author, who then answers the questions of MPs. The lead committee also presents its opinion and answers the questions. Speeches of MPs follow. The final speech is the author's speech, who can amend the draft on the spot and suggest to vote on the amended draft. The draft is voted. If it does not get enough votes, it is no longer considered.

### **Preparation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading**

The draft which passes the 1<sup>st</sup> reading is subject to preparation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. MPs and the Government have the right to present their suggestions on the draft. All suggestions to amend the draft are presented to the Administration of the National Assembly within 14 days. Upon expiry of this term, the Administration refers the suggestions to the author and the lead committee within 24 hours.

The law does not envisage any process in the lead committee. Within 30 days from the receipt of suggestions, the author presents its version of the draft to the lead committee, together with the list of all suggestions, including author's position on each suggestion. Suggestions, which have been accepted by the author, must be included in the text, provided to the lead committee.

The lead committee discusses the draft presented by the author and votes within 14 days after its receipt. If the draft gets enough votes, it is proposed to be included in the agenda of 4-day session agenda of the plenary to be discussed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

*At this stage of preparation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading committee also has a **yes or no vote**. Some committees have envisaged certain provisions concerning voting on proposed amendments during the committee sittings, however, committee votes on proposed amendments have no legal consequences and just form the basis for the overall opinion of the committee. The author is the owner of the draft law and only the author has the right to amend the draft during its preparation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing.*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> reading in the plenary**

If the author has amended the draft based on suggestions or recommendations of the lead committee, the newly formulated provisions of the draft law are voted in the first reading. Then parliament starts discussions for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. The procedure is the same as for the 1<sup>st</sup> reading: presentation of the author, Q&A, speech of the lead committee representative, Q&A, other speeches, voting. The author then proposes to pass the draft in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. The draft, therefore, is again voted in its entirety. If it doesn't get enough votes, the draft is considered as rejected. The author then has the right to demand that the parliament votes separately on each proposed amendment without discussion. Suggestions that have been accepted by author are considered as accepted and are not voted separately unless there is an objection from any of the parliamentarians.

The final vote is delayed until the end of the 4-day session so that the author incorporated the voted amendments in the text. The draft is then voted in its entirety.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> reading**

The lead committee in agreement with the author can only propose editorial changes for the third reading. The draft is voted in its entirety. If it doesn't pass the 3<sup>rd</sup> reading, the author may propose that the draft is returned to the stage of submitting suggestions. If not, the draft is rejected.

## COMPARATIVE TABLE ON LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<p>The decision on including the draft in the agenda and forwarding it to the leading committee is taken by the Parliament Speaker, based on the conclusion of the Coordinating Committee. During its first reading the draft is presented by its author and a speaker designated by the Parliament Speaker. Where no decision on rejecting the draft or sending it for further elaboration is taken at the plenary session, it is deemed that the draft has been passed at its first reading. The draft is sent to the supervisory committee, and subsequently, it cannot be returned to its author for further elaboration.</p> <p>Exceptions include cases when the author requests sanctioning the draft at its first reading. If such a request is satisfied at the plenary session, then the possibility for achieving a final approval of the draft after its general discussion is assessed and a thorough discussion is initiated during which only changes of editorial nature and amendments to the effectiveness dates can be proposed.</p>	<p>The leading committee discusses the draft and issues its conclusions. At least 1/5 of the committee members may provide their special opinion.</p> <p>The conclusion is presented at the plenary session after the draft is presented by its author. The presentations are followed by a general discussion of the draft, and upon its completion the chamber may decide on returning the draft to the committee. If such a decision is not taken by the chamber, then its discussion article by article starts. Proposals can be set forth during this session. Upon the completion of the discussion the chamber may decide on returning the draft to the committee for revision.</p> <p>Where no proposal on rejecting the draft is made during the second hearing, the draft is voted during its third reading. The third reading takes place at least 72 hours after the receipt by all MPs of the proposals presented during the second reading. During the third reading only proposals of editorial nature may be made.</p> <p>By the end of the third reading discussions first the proposals on rejecting the draft are considered, followed by a discussion of other proposals. Subsequently, the chamber passes a decision on either adopting or rejecting the proposed legislation.</p> <p>96.1 – The issue of confidence to the draft legislation can be raised by the government along with setting a three-month timeframe.</p>
<b>Serbia</b>	<p>The draft is forwarded to the competent committee. As a first step, the committee conducts a general discussion of the draft. If the draft is approved at the committee as a whole, then the committee passes to</p>	<p>Amendments to the draft may be proposed by the competent committee before its detailed discussion.</p> <p>The detailed discussion of the draft focuses on the articles for which proposals have been made, as well as the newly proposed</p>

	<p>more detailed discussions and recommendations. Subsequently, the committee presents its conclusion to the Parliament, including its formulated and adopted amendments and special opinions.</p> <p>At the plenary session the draft is first discussed in general. Then the Parliament starts its thorough discussion within the legally set timeframe.</p> <p>Proposed amendments are presented to the Parliament Speaker who forwards them to the competent committee. The committee may reject incomplete or offensive proposals and present to the Parliament its conclusion pertaining to other ones. Proposals which are not in conflict with the Constitution and the legal framework are accepted by the author and the competent committee. They become a constituent part of the draft and are not discussed separately.</p>	<p>provisions are considered.</p> <p>This discussion is followed by a voting. First the issue of the acceptability of the draft as a whole is voted, and then the voting of the presented proposals takes place.</p> <p>After the above voting, as well as in the absence of any proposals the draft is voted as a whole.</p> <p>At the phase of detailed discussion written proposals can be set forth by the author of the draft, the competent committee and the government if their need arises from any other approved proposal of change.</p>
<p><b>Slovenia</b></p>	<p>The author may propose considering the draft at the technical level by the committee before the actual readings take place, and the committee issues its respective conclusion. Upon presenting the draft, its author informs about the proposals set forth by the committee.</p> <p>The first reading takes place by sending the draft to MPs. If a discussion at a plenary session is not requested by at least 10 MPs within 15 days, then the draft is deemed to have passed its first reading.</p> <p>In special cases the draft is discussed at the session in general (by focusing in the need for its adoption, the principles, the main legislative solutions), and the draft is either approved or the legislative process ceases.</p>	<p>The draft approved per its first reading is sent to the committee where it is thoroughly discussed article by article.</p> <p>The proposed recommendations are voted. The substance of the discussion, the proposals, special opinions, voted amendments are reflected in the committee conclusion which also includes the text of the amended draft.</p> <p>The committee conclusion is the basis of discussions held at the plenary session. Proposals are discussed and voted on separately. Modifications and additions to the draft legislation can be proposed also at the plenary session but they should pertain only to the articles which are ‘open’, i.e., have been amended by the committee. Proposals are presented in writing with an opportunity to provide inputs concerning the latter.</p> <p>If the plenary session does not vote on any proposal concerning the version approved by the committee, then the draft legislation is voted on at the same session.</p> <p>If proposals concerning less than 10 percent of the articles of the</p>

		<p>draft legislation are accepted, then, based on the request of its author, the draft is put to its third reading at the same (four-day) session no sooner than 24 hours after the submission of the documentation summarizing the results of the second reading. If proposals concerning 10 percent and more of the articles of the draft legislation are accepted, then the text of the draft is subject to editing and, as a rule, it is presented for the third reading at the next session.</p>
<b>Poland</b>	<p>As a rule, through the first reading the draft is discussed at the committee level and in some cases in the Sejm. At the committee level the draft is discussed in general (the main principles). If the draft is discussed in the Sejm, at the end of the discussion the Sejm decides on appointing a leading committee or rejecting the draft.</p> <p>The committee prepares the draft for its second reading by working on its text (along with establishing a working group, attracting external experts, etc.). The conclusion issued by the committee reflects all affected amendments, as well as its proposal to reject the draft or to adopt it with or without further amendments. The proposals that have not been accepted by the committee are also reflected in its conclusion.</p>	<p>During the second reading the discussion focuses on the committee conclusion, and other proposals can also be made at this session. The author is also entitled to make proposals for whom the second reading is the deadline for revoking the draft. In the event of proposals, the draft is sent again to the leading committee which issues its further conclusion concerning the proposals (Article 47!). Where no proposals are made, the second reading is followed immediately by the third one.</p> <p>During the third reading the supplementary report of the committee is heard. The Sejm first discusses the motion on rejecting the draft, if any, then each proposal separately and finally, the draft as a whole which also reflects the adopted proposals.</p>
<b>Lithuania</b>	<p><b>Phase I (consideration of the draft)</b></p> <p>The Parliament Speaker or the Presidium may send the draft to the committee in order to receive its preliminary opinion.</p> <p>The opinion is presented at the Seima during the first reading discussions of the draft. During the first reading the Seima decides on adopting the draft and starting its discussions or to reject or postpone its adoption along with identifying the steps to be followed by the author before presenting again the draft</p>	<p><b>Phase II (discussions of the draft)</b></p> <p>During the discussions the Seima focuses on the committee conclusion by following a specific sequence (Article 151(3)). If the Seima does not approve the version proposed by the committee or the proposal on rejecting the draft, then it returns the draft to the committee for consideration or designates a new committee which discusses the draft by following the procedure applicable to the leading committee.</p> <p>New proposals concerning the draft can be presented at least 48 hours before the plenary session. The leading committee should</p>

<p>to the Parliament.</p> <p>By deciding on adopting the draft and starting its discussions, the Seima also identifies the timing of its consideration at the plenary session, as well as by the committees. If the draft significantly changes the existing legal regulations and it is approved by the leading committee or at least 1/5 of the Seima members, then the draft is sent for an independent expert assessment. The expert assessment report is presented during the discussions.</p> <p>The leading committee convenes its session within one week of receiving the draft and takes decisions on all matters pertaining to its discussion (designates a speaker, requests inputs, involves experts). The committee may decide on returning or further improving the draft (in the latter case the committee may set up a joint working group involving, <i>inter alia</i>, the author of the draft).</p> <p>The committee identifies the timing for submission of proposals to the committee concerning the draft. The committee members responsible for the draft (i.e., the working group) organize committee hearings with the participation of those that have presented their proposals. Based on the hearing results, the draft committee conclusion on the draft legislation is prepared.</p> <p>The hearings are followed by a committee session. Based on the committee hearings, the committee passes a decision on any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approving the draft as presented by its author or approving the draft further improved by the committee</li> </ol>	<p>convene before the plenary session for the purpose of discussing the mentioned proposals. Only proposals of editorial nature can be made at the plenary session. Each proposal presented in advance is discussed and voted on separately.</p> <p>After the discussion the Seima takes any of the following decisions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approving the draft validated by the committee together with the proposals made at the Seima session and identifying the date of adopting the draft</li> <li>2. Presenting the draft for public consultations</li> <li>3. Returning the draft to the leading committee for further elaboration</li> <li>4. Postponing its discussion</li> <li>5. Returning the draft to its author for significant improvement</li> <li>6. Rejecting the draft and, as necessary, initiating the elaboration of a new one</li> </ol> <p><b>Phase III (adoption of the draft)</b></p> <p>At this phase the plenary session focuses only on those proposals that are supported by at least 1/5 of the parliament members. In this case voting on the above proposals can take place only after receiving the opinion of the leading committee. Unless otherwise decided on by the Seima, the voting is conducted on an article-by-article basis. All articles on which no proposals are made, are voted on together.</p> <p><b>After discussing all articles, the draft is voted on as a whole (Article 159)</b></p>
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	<p>together with its conclusion □</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Accepting or rejecting the presented proposals</li> <li>3. Postponing the decision making and returning the draft to the working group of the committee along with identifying the actions to be taken by the above working group</li> <li>4. Presenting the draft for public consultations</li> <li>5. Returning the draft to its author for further elaboration, or</li> <li>6. Issuing a negative conclusion on the draft / rejecting it.</li> </ol> <p>Three committee members may present their special opinion which is incorporated in the conclusion issued by the committee.</p>	
<p><b>Latvia</b></p>	<p>The decision on accepting the presented draft and forwarding it to the committee is taken by the Seima, based on the opinion of its presidium.</p> <p>The designated committee may prepare an alternative draft for discussing it at the first reading. In the event of receiving another draft amendment to the same law, the committee can combine the drafts and prepare an alternative one or present them separately or formulate them as proposals for the second reading.</p> <p>According to the general rule, the Seima does not discuss the draft unless it has been considered by the committee. Nonetheless, a draft with a negative conclusion from the committee is discussed by the Seima if its author so insists or if the draft has been presented by the government.</p> <p>At the first reading the Seima discusses and approves one of the presented alternative drafts by voting on them in the order of their presentation.</p>	<p>The draft is prepared for its second reading by the leading committee which issues its conclusion on the presented proposals and its own ones.</p> <p>During the second reading the discussion and voting on certain articles takes place. The proposals of the leading committee and other duly provided ones are discussed severely, followed by a voting on the draft as a whole.</p> <p>The same applies to discussing the draft at its third reading with the exception that the proposals presented and not accepted at the second reading cannot be presented again at the third reading.</p>

<p><b>Estonia</b></p>	<p>The presented draft is sent to the leading committee which comes up with the proposal to include it in the agenda for its first reading. The first reading of the draft should take place no later than seven parliamentary weeks after the date of its submission. On the author's consent, the committee may present the revised version of the draft.</p> <p>At the plenary session the discussion around the draft is general, and where no proposal in rejecting the adoption of the draft is made by the leading committee or the respective fraction the draft is treated as passed at its first reading without voting.</p>	<p>Proposals concerning the draft that has passed its first reading are presented to the leading committee within the set timeframe. The proposals are discussed at the committee; a summary report on the above proposals is prepared, and the committee prepares a new text of the draft for the second reading. The committee also issues its conclusion which includes the discussion outcomes, expressed opinions, justifications supporting its decisions.</p> <p>The draft is included in the agenda for the second reading based on the recommendation of the committee.</p> <p>At the plenary session the draft is discussed article by article. During the second reading proposals can be made and they can be voted on only if their presenters, or a parliamentary committee or fraction so request.</p> <p>If a proposal is rejected by the leading committee or receives less than two votes, then the draft is not voted on.</p> <p>If a proposal passes the voting, then it is included in the text of the draft legislation.</p> <p>After voting on proposals, the Presidium, leading committee or the author of the draft can request suspending its second reading. If such a request comes from a fraction, then it is voted on. In the event of suspension, a timeframe is set for presenting proposals concerning the draft.</p> <p>If no proposal on suspension is made, then it is deemed that the draft has passed its second reading.</p>
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# ANNEX IV: SAMPLE SANAP FELLOWS WORK FOR COMMITTEES



# **SAMPLE Fellows Report for Committees**

## **Information for Evaluating Education**

### **Spending In RA Marzes**

**(translated from Armenian)**

#### **Overview and Main Issues**

This paper poses questions to the RA Government and territorial administration bodies for the purpose of assessing the efficiency of education spending in the marzes.

The questions are prepared based on an analysis which also covered the reports on education prepared by marzpets with a special emphasis on the inconsistent use of indicators in the reports, the lack of specific information and the weak correlation between the applied indicators and the identified objectives.

Taking into account the legal powers of the territorial administration bodies and the State budget appropriations, the activities of the territorial administration bodies have been classified into three groups:

- A) Activities aimed to increase accessibility of schools
- B) Activities aimed to organize the school educational process and extra-curricular education and oversight
- C) Property management and use.

In order to assess the efficiency of the performance of marzpetarans in the above three areas, additional information is needed. To this end a questionnaire has been prepared to be distributed among RA Government and territorial administration bodies. At a later stage this exercise can become the basis for establishing a unified system of indicators.

#### **Introduction**

In the Republic of Armenia education is provided through educational institutions which are divided into the below categories under the RA Law on Education:

1. Pre-school education
2. Secondary education
3. Primary vocational education (crafts)
4. Technical education
5. Tertiary education

6. Supplementary education, including off-school one,
7. Post-graduate education.

At the marz level State budget financing is provided for pre-school education under the Program for Preparation of Children Aged 5-6 for School, and for general education - at elementary, basic and secondary schools (other than high schools). In some marzes of Armenia financing is also provided for off-school education.

In the marz budgets the lion's share belongs to funding for education: in 2013 and 2014 it accounted for 89.2% and 89.1% of the total marzpetaran budgets accordingly. This explains the reason for assessing as a priority the efficiency of spending in this area.

Marzpetarans report on their education-related spending (the reports are published in their websites) which cover the performance of the marzpetaran and the social-economic situation in the marz for the concerned year. They also include information pertaining to the education sector. Nonetheless, this information is not systemized and the indicators used in the marzpetaran reporting are not consistently and commonly applied. This does not allow for a comparison of education indicators across different marzes.

For example, in the 2013 report of the RA Armavir Marzpet it is stated that 1400 computers are available at 114 schools<sup>1</sup> (using the 'number of computers' indicator), and the 2013 report of the RA Kotayk Marzpet specifies that 11000 students were provided access to computers<sup>2</sup> (by using the 'number of students' indicator) while the 2013 report of the RA Aragatsotn Marzpet mentions that computer equipment at the value of AMD 3,138,000 was provided to schools of the Aparan and Talin regions (by using the 'spent financial resources' indicator). As stated in the 2013 report of the RA Gegharkunik Marzpet<sup>3</sup>, during 2012-2013 the inclusive education system was significantly widened, there were no children left outside the education system, around 300 children from socially vulnerable families were provided with clothes and stationary. In addition, the 2013 report of the RA Kotayk Marzpet shows the total number of students and first graders but it does not reflect the enrollment rate indicator.

The correlation between the reported indicators and set indicators is weak. The reported indicators do not clearly show whether marzpetarans were successful in accomplishing their identified objectives. From this perspective an adequate approach is taken only in the report of the RA Aragatsotn Marzpet where a comparison of the actual indicators against their targets is shown in the form of a table<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Report on the 2013 Performance of the RA Armavir Marzpet and Social-Economic Situation in the Marz, <http://armavir.gov.am/files/docs/6592.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Report on the 2013 Performance of the RA Kotayk Marzpet and Social-Economic Situation in the Marz, <http://kotayk.gov.am/files/docs/6681.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Report on the 2013 Performance of the RA Gegharkunik Marzpet and Social-Economic Situation in the Marz, <http://gegharkunik.gov.am/files/docs/6748.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>Monitoring and evaluation report for 2011-2014 social and economic programs, and the 2013 annual work plan of the RA Aragatsotn Marz, <http://aragatsotn.gov.am/files/docs/6011.pdf>

## **Distribution of Education-Related Powers among Different Units and Levels of Administration in the Republic of Armenia**

The RA Law on Education and other legal acts define the powers of different units and levels of RA administration in the area of education. The review of the above laws shows that there is a clear distinction of powers in the education area. Therefore, it can be stated that a territorial administration authority has clear powers in the education area, and their exercise is directly linked to the accomplishment of education objectives.

For the purposes of this review, below the powers of territorial administration authorities set forth by the RA Law on General Education are presented with reference to the appropriate articles:

1. The powers of a marzpet (in Yerevan city, the mayor) are:

1) Ensuring the implementation of the government education policy within the territory of the marz (of Yerevan);

2) Overseeing the implementation of the legislation of the Republic of Armenia in education and the normative legal acts adopted by the government body authorized in the area of education, and the implementation of educational programs in consistency with the public general education standard;

3) Coordinating and overseeing the recordkeeping of school age children, ensuring their enrollment in an educational institution;

4) Ensuring the construction, operation and maintenance of buildings handed over to public educational institutions by the right to use;

5) Conducting attestation of the principal of a public educational institution and its teaching staff in line with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Armenia;

6) Supporting the process of evaluation or testing of the knowledge of students and graduates of educational institutions;

7) Exercising other powers as laid down by laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Armenia.

## **Expenditure incurred by RA Marzes in the area of education**

RA State budget expenditures aimed to implement the government education policy are executed through the marzpetarans according to the below budgetary sections, groups and classes:

1. Pre-school education: 09-01-01
2. Elementary general education: 09-01-02
3. Basic general education: 09-02-01
4. Secondary (full) general education: 09-02-02
5. Off-school education: 09-05-01
6. Ancillary services to education: 09-06-01

The anticipated funding to the marzpetarans for 2013 and 2014 under the appropriate line items is presented in the below Table 1:

*Table 1*

<b>Expenditure item</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Total marz expenditure</b>	<b>55,925,623.80</b>	<b>53,400,305.00</b>
<b>Capital repair of educational facilities</b>	171,688.20	1,307,687.90
<b>General education, including:</b>	47,874,461.60	46,793,724.80
Elementary general education	17,848,794.20	16,433,609.80
Basic general education	20,636,083.00	19,697,174.50
Secondary (full) general education	9,389,584.40	10,662,940.50
<b>Delivery of transportation services to teachers of public schools and school age children</b>	<b>49,507.00</b>	<b>49,507.00</b>
<b>Special education, including:</b>	<b>938,638.70</b>	<b>920,365.90</b>
Elementary general education	344,513.90	309,878.30
Basic general education	553,688.30	492,076.80
Secondary (full) general education	40,436.50	118,410.80
<b>Inclusive education, including:</b>	<b>546,547.80</b>	<b>328,434.20</b>
Elementary general education	276,368.60	159,137.90
Basic general education	256,200.20	151,634.20
Secondary (full) general education	13,979.00	17,662.10
<b>Off-school education</b>	<b>232,549.50</b>	<b>149,862.70</b>
<b>Reimbursement of textbook fees to children from socially vulnerable families</b>	<b>71,216.30</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Pre-school education</b>	<b>482,279.20</b>	<b>1,560,398.10</b>

It follows from the review of the above figures that the bulk of education-related spending of marzpetarans falls on the part of general education, special education and inclusive education. Hence, several questions arise: the primary one is to find out how successful territorial administration authorities are in involving school age children in the available educational

programs. Are the territorial authorities consistent in their work and whether they exercise their powers to register and enroll children in the mentioned educational programs?

But quite often the level of enrollment does not reflect the reality. In a situation where financing is provided on the per capita basis, there are incentives for registering a maximum possible number of students and accordingly increase the financing. However, a certain category of children regularly misses the classes<sup>5</sup> for various reasons, for example, poor social conditions, transport problems to reach school, sickness, field work in villages, etc. Some of the student absenteeism issues are under the direct control of marzpetarans, and therefore they are provided with the appropriate opportunities to address these issues effectively. For example, under the 2014 budget funding is envisioned for reimbursing textbook fees to children from socially vulnerable families, while under the 2013 budget financing was planned for the delivery of transport services to teachers of general public schools and school age children. This allows territorial administration authorities to support children in reaching their schools.

The mentioned funds are used also for secondment of teachers to schools in remote (small) communities thereby attempting to address the problem of insufficiency of specialists and, having in mind the lack of specialists, to organize the minimum educational process as approved by the Ministry of Education.

In the RA marz spending the line item for capital repair of educational facilities is also a distinguishable one.

## **Questions and Clarifications concerning the powers of territorial administration bodies**

Based on the above expenditure items, spending can be classified according to the following directions:

- A) Activities aimed to increase accessibility of schools
- B) Activities aimed to organize the school educational process and extra-curricular education and oversight
- C) Property management and use

### **A) Activities aimed to increase accessibility of schools**

The powers of territorial administration bodies for increasing the accessibility of schools, according to RA legal acts, cover the following:

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<sup>5</sup>Hua, Haiyan, Dr., *School Wastage Study Focusing on Absenteeism in Armenia*, Yerevan 2008

- *Public administration is ensured within the territory of each marz through the implementation of the government territorial policy and coordination of the activities of territorial services of the central executive agencies<sup>6</sup>,*
- *The territorial administration body coordinates and oversees the recordkeeping of school age children, and ensures their enrollment in educational institutions<sup>7</sup>*
- *The territorial administration body reimburses textbook fees to children from socially vulnerable families<sup>8</sup>*
- *The territorial administration body provides transportation services to teachers of general public schools and school age children<sup>9</sup>*

Based on the foregoing, the below questions need to be answered for the purposes of assessing accessibility of schools:

- How many children are registered in the marz?
- How many of the registered children are enrolled in general education? Please provide the number of children outside school in the breakdown of vulnerable groups described in the 2011-2015 government education development program:
  - Age groups
  - Parentless children
  - Children from multi-child families
  - Children with special needs
  - Other groups of children
- How many children have more than 120 hours<sup>10</sup> absenteeism for the below listed reasons?
  - Social problems,
  - Transport problem and school remoteness,
  - Inaccessibility of school facilities,
  - Involvement in seasonal works,
  - Other

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It is expected that answers to the above questions will help to identify the specific groups that at risk in terms of exclusion from general education, and how the territorial administration body, based on actions coordinated with marzpets and central executive bodies and their regional services, addresses the issue of enrollment of risk groups and ensures regular attendance of students at classes through effectively accomplishing the objectives that fall within the powers of the territorial administration body.

<sup>6</sup>RA President Executive Order on Public Administration in the RA Marzes

<sup>8</sup>2014 State Budget Law

<sup>9</sup>2014 State Budget Law

<sup>10</sup>Order of the RA Minister of Education and Science on Approving the Procedure for Mastering of Educational Programs by Students of Educational Institutions, Conducting Their Final Testing or Attestation, Transfer, Graduation of Students, and Transfer of Students with 120-200 Hours' Absence at Classes to the Next Class or the Next Grade of General Education, and Revoking Order No. 391-N of the RA Minister of Education and Science of April 22, 2011.

**B) Activities aimed to organize the school educational process and off-school education and oversight**

In this area the territorial administration bodies are granted the following powers under the Armenian legislation:

- *Overseeing the implementation of the Armenian legislation on education and normative acts by educational institutions as promulgated by the government body authorized in the area of education, and the implementation of educational programs in consistency with the public general education standard<sup>11</sup>;*
- *Conducting attestation of principals and teaching staff of public educational institutions in line with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Armenia<sup>12</sup>*
- *Delivering transport services to teachers of general education schools and school age children<sup>13</sup>*
- *Delivering off-school education<sup>14</sup>*

Based on the foregoing, the below questions need to be answered for the purposes of assessing the activities of organization and oversight of the educational process and off-school training:

- What is the average indicator for the minimum and maximum mandatory programs for the marz as defined based on government standards?
- Please provide the list of marz schools where the number of delivered programs is below the mandatory minimum number established under the government general education standards.

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Based on Government Decree No. 439-N (dated April 8, 2010) which relies on public general education standards, the actual level of delivered programs in the marzes which is below the minimum threshold can be assessed and an understanding about the extent of consistency of educational programs in marzes with the maximum standard threshold can be obtained.

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- Do all the schools have quality teachers to deliver the courses? If not, please list the schools with lack of teachers.
- How many teachers are commissioned to work at schools with insufficient teaching staff?

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It is expected to quantify the extent of insufficiency of teachers at the marz level and compare the assessed figure against the expenditures incurred under the appropriate budgetary line item.

<sup>11</sup>RA Law on General Education, Article 31, Paragraph 1(2)

<sup>12</sup>RA Law on General Education, Article 31, Paragraph 1(5)

<sup>13</sup>2014 State Budget Law

<sup>14</sup>2014 State Budget Law

- Which communities in the marz have extra-curricular programs?
- How is the involvement of students from adjacent communities in extra-curricular

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These questions will allow to assess the efficiency of spending the funds provided to marzpetarans for the purposes of extra-curricular education.

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programs ensured?

### **C) Property management and use**

In the area of property management and use the territorial administration bodies are granted the following powers under the Armenian legislation:

- *Ensuring the construction, operation and maintenance of buildings handed over to public educational institutions by the right to use*<sup>15</sup>
- *Exercising control of the use and maintenance of public property attributed to general education institutions*<sup>16</sup>
- *Based on the founder's decision or in cases stipulated by their charter, providing consent to leasing out the property*<sup>17</sup>
- *Providing consent for the conclusion of major transactions in disposal and (or) acquisition of property*<sup>18</sup>

Based on the foregoing, for the purposes of assessing property management and use, the following should be identified:

- What is the carrying value of property used for educational purposes in the marz?
- Does the marzpetaran have property management inventory and maintenance system?
- During the last 3 years how much has been spent from the State budget and other sources for renovation of schools and acquisition of property?
- How many of the renovated schools have observed the urban development norms pertaining to persons with disabilities<sup>19</sup>?

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It is expected that answers to the above questions will help conduct a comparative analysis of the extent of renewal of school property between different marzes. The questions will allow to identify to what extent the needs of children were taken into account in renovating the school. Did the school renovation have an impact on the renewal of children with special needs? Were these children obliged to interrupt their studies during the winter months or go to the neighboring community with better conditions?

<sup>15</sup> Government Decree No. 1392-N of July 25, 2004, Renewal of Children with Special Needs  
<sup>16</sup> Annex to Government Decree No. 954-N of July 15, 2010  
<sup>18</sup> Annex to Government Decree No. 954-N of July 15, 2010

<sup>19</sup> Government Decree No. 332-N of February 10, 2006

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- What is the number of cases of leasing out public property that has been handed over to schools in marzes? What are the value of leased property and the level of inflows from the property lease?
- How many items of property used for educational purposes were disposed over the last 3 years and what is the amount of inflows from these disposals?

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These questions will help assess the efficiency of property use. The property value will be compared against the inflows from the lease or disposal of such property and its maintenance costs.

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### **Consulted Documents**

1. RA Law on Education
2. Ra Law on General Education
3. RA Law on Local Self-Governance
4. RA President Executive Order on Public Administration in RA Marzes
5. 2011-2015 Government Program for Development of Education
6. RA Government Decree No. 439-N of April 8, 2010 on Approving the Procedure for Setting and Approving the Public General Education Standard, and the Public General Education Standard, and on Revoking Government Decrees No. 771-N and 900-N of May 27, 2004 and June 17, 2004
7. 2013 report on performance of the RA Armavir Marzpet and the socio-economic situation in the marz
8. 2013 report on performance of the RA Kotayk Marzpet and the socio-economic situation in the marz
9. 2013 report on performance of the RA Gegharkunik Marzpet and the socio-economic situation in the marz
10. Monitoring and Evaluation Report for 2011-2014 Social-Economic Programs of RA Aragatsotn Marz, 2013 Annual Work Plan
11. Report on the 2013 Social and Economic Situation in Ararat Marz
12. 2013 Monitoring and Evaluation Report for Measures Set in the Annual Work Program, RA Lori Marz
13. 2013 report on performance of the RA Shirak Marzpet and the socio-economic situation in the marz
14. 2013 report on performance of the RA Syunik Marzpet and the socio-economic situation in the marz
15. 2013 report on performance of the RA Vayots Dzor Marzpet and the socio-economic situation in the marz

16. 2013 Annual Report of the RA Tavoush Marzpet
17. Hua, Haiyan, Dr., *School Wastage Study Focusing on Student Absenteeism in Armenia*. Yerevan: 2008.
18. *Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD, 2013. Print
19. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>

# ANNEX V: MEDIA CLIPS



## ANNEX IV: MEDIA CLIPS

MEDIA CLIPS: WWW.PARLIAMENT.AM

19.03.2014

### **NA Standing Committee on Agriculture and Environment: Parliamentary Hearings on the RA draft law On Approving the Annual and Complex Programmes of the Events for Restoration, Maintenance, Reproduction and Use of the Ecosystem of the Lake Sevan**

[http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat\\_id=2&NewsID=6489&year=2014&month=03&day=19&lang=eng](http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat_id=2&NewsID=6489&year=2014&month=03&day=19&lang=eng)

19.03.2014

#### **Parliamentary Hearings are Held**



On March 19 the NA Standing Committee on Agriculture and Environment organized parliamentary hearings on the RA draft law “On Approving the Annual and Complex Programmes of the Events for Restoration, Maintenance, Reproduction and Use of the Ecosystem of the Lake Sevan,” where the NA deputies, representatives of the ministries, international organizations, the NGOs and the scientists took part.

The Chairman of the RA State Committee for Water Management of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration Andranik Andreasyan in his report has noted that there is deficit of water in the Ararat Plateau, and it is proposed to fill in it from

the Lake Sevan.

Andranik Andreasyan answered the attendees’ questions, which related to the evaluation of the influence of the water outflow from the Lake Sevan, the construction and the operation of the new reservoirs and the ecological risks of the Lake.

In his report the RA Minister of Nature Protection Aram Harutyunyan has mentioned that the temporary character of the bill is very important, which will allow to solve the issues connected with the irrigation during the upcoming 5 years, then to restore the water resource.

Representatives of the NGOs, scientists, ecologists delivered speeches and expressed their concerns on the bill.

According to the ecologists, the increase of water will damage the ecosystem of the lake, promote the swamping of the lake water and will create ecological risks.

Summing up the hearings the Committee Chairman Martun Grigoryan expressed conviction that the raised issues and the presented recommendations would be debated at the upcoming sitting of the Committee.

### **NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs: Parliamentary Hearings on the Theme “Online Libel and Defamation: The Existing Problems and Proposed Solutions”**

[http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat\\_id=2&NewsID=6517&year=2014&month=03&day=31&lang=eng](http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat_id=2&NewsID=6517&year=2014&month=03&day=31&lang=eng)

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### **Parliamentary Hearings on the Theme “Online Libel and Defamation: The Existing Problems and Proposed Solutions”**



On March 31 on the initiative of the NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs parliamentary hearings were held on the theme “Online Libel and Defamation: The Existing Problems and Proposed Solutions.” Deputies, journalists, representatives of local and international NGOs and experts of mass media took part in it.

The Chairman of the NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs Davit Harutyunyan has informed the attendees that the legislative initiative authored by the deputies Arpine Hovhannisyan, Davit Harutyunyan, Edmon Marukyan, Naira Zohrabyan, Elinar Vardanyan, Tevan Poghosyan, Armen

Rustamyan, Stepan Demirchyan, Gagik Jhangiryan and Heghine Bisharyan refers to the regulations of the comments containing libel and defamation in the materials of the internet media.

According to the authors, the problem of regulating the field exists in our country, too. Davit Harutyunyan has clarified that the goal of the hearings is to discuss the international experience, raise the problems and jointly find ways of solutions to it.

The co-author of the legislative initiative Arpine Hovhannisyan presented the legislative initiative, as well as the experience of different countries in the sphere under discussion.

The participants delivered speeches. The Chairman of “The Committee of the Protection of the Freedom of Speech” Ashot Melikyan has proposed to remove the bill from the circulation, as it is dangerous for the media, as the authors have demonstrated an unilateral approach and the interests of the media has not been taken into consideration. His views were shared by Suren Deheryan, the Head of the NGO Journalists for Future, and Levon Barseghyan, the Chairman of Asparez club. In the opinion of the expert of the media Samvel Martirosyan, the draft law raises numerous questions, and all active users can have problems. Davit Harutyunyan has noted that the authors of the proposals to remove it from circulation seem not to be aware of the provisions of the draft law under debate.

The deputy Naira Zohrabyan in her speech has noted that the journalists and editors, who deem necessary the regulation of the sphere, also applied to her for elaborating the initiative. She has informed the participants that the problem has also been discussed in the PACE; there has been a recommendation to the national parliaments to make initiatives.

By Alexander Arzumanyan's conviction, the sphere has no need of legislative regulation. According to him, an attempt is made to enter into a sphere where control is impossible.

In the deputy Margarit Yesayan's word, the proposing legislative solutions will endanger the freedom of speech and the principles of democracy, with whose words did not agree the deputy Edmon Marukyan, who considered inexpedient to apply to the court in case of any such demand.

In her final speech the key reporter Arpine Hovhannisyan has touched upon the voiced views, has documented with satisfaction that almost all the speakers hold the same opinion that there are problems in the sphere and they need to be solved. She has proposed the participants of the hearings to submit constructive recommendations, which the authors are ready to discuss.

Summing up the hearings Davit Harutyunyan referred to the raised questions and recommendations, noting that there were valuable recommendations during the discussion, which would be discussed in the working group to be formed.



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