

## Forum: "Human Rights as a Global Human and Moral Value"

On December 9, 2010 UNFPA Armenia supported a big forum on "Human Rights as a Global Human and Moral Value" focusing on women's rights, gender equality, the role of women in higher levels of governance and international and national mechanisms to stop violence against women. The forum was jointly organized by Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE) NGO and UNFPA CGBV project within the framework of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence 2010 campaign in Armenia.

The event was led by the panel of speakers representing UNFPA, UNDP, AAWUE as well as specially invited MPs and RA Government officials.

Mr. Zahidul Huque, UNFPA Country Director for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia welcomed the participants. In his speech he cited global statistics concerning women's representation at the highest decision-making levels in political and economic fields, pointed out that on average only about 17% of women worldwide are represented in the national parliaments and governments and stressed the importance of introducing quotas that would help women to overcome existing barriers in this field. In his opinion, in order to have fair and balanced representation, the quotas proportion has to be distributed as 50-50%. "Inequality between women and men is undermined by historical imbalances in decision-making power and access to resources, rights, and entitlements for women... In a world that fosters development of countries, there is almost nothing more important than equality between men and women," said Zahidul Huque, UNFPA Country Director for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Mr. Artak Davtyan, Head of the Parliament Standing Committee on Education, Science, Culture, and Youth Issues confirmed Mr. Huque's words by adding that "We don't have much to be proud of in terms of participation of Armenian women in the activities of the legislator – the National Assembly". UNDP Representative, Ms. Maria Dotsenko presented a new publication on Human Rights prepared by UNDP Armenia and stated the importance of protection and promotion of women's human rights. After welcome speeches of panel members, Ms. Jemma Hasratyan, AAWUE President announced a group of experts who then conducted thematic presentations for the forum participants. The group of experts included Ms. Lilit Zakaryan, AAWUE Vice President, Ms. Geghetsik Grigoryan, President of "Support to Constitutional State" NGO/legal expert, Ms. Elena Vardanyan, Member of Public Council under the RA Prime Minister, Ms. Tamara Hovnatayan, President of "ProMedia-Gender" NGO, Ms. Anahit Aghoyan, representing AAWUE regional Kotayk branch, Ms. Armenuhi Kyureghyan, AAWUE Lori branch representative, and Ms. Armine Ghukasyan, AAWUE Gegharkunik Representative. During the forum, the participants had a chance to view a collection of photographs from the regional photography contest on the topic of "Violence Against Women" as well as obtain knowledge and information materials distributed by UNFPA CGBV project and UNDP. The forum was attended by a large number of civil society representatives, RA government officials, including MLSA and Family, Women and Children Issues Departments of regional administration centers, RA National Statistical Service, international donor community and mass media.