Information on behalf of the Republic of Armenia

for the Report of the Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education,

to the attention of the Human Rights Council

(within the review of the achievements of the mandate over the last 25 years)

1. **In your country, are education issues approached through the lens of the human right to education, and if so, with what challenges and results? In your view, what is the added value of such an approach in your work?**

Based on the capabilities of the Democratic and Civic Education principle defined by the new General Education Standard of the Republic of Armenia, the final expected results of the elementary, basic and secondary programs, which include the human rights education component, have been defined. This component is one of the key ideas in the thematic content of the Social Studies taught from the grades 7 to 12. A thematic topic: "Abilities of democratic culture" is included in the program of the pre-attestation training course with the involvement of 20% of school teachers of Armenia every year.

In November 2022, the National Assembly of Armenia approved the State Program for the Development of Education in the Republic of Armenia until 2030. The vision of the Program is based on the Strategy of Transformation of Armenia until 2050, and, in particular, on its first priority target: "To educate an advanced, creative, proactive, capable and competitive citizen through the comprehensive, inclusive, innovative and generally accessible development of knowledge, culture, consciousness and skills, a citizen, who prioritizes self human rights as important as self obligations and who, first of all, considers himself/herself responsible for his/her own well-being and health".

**3. The human right to education entails States' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education in international human rights law. To what extent are these obligations clearly identified in your country's legislation and in practice?**

Within the framework of the "Education for Sustainable Development" program, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Armenia has taken comprehensive measures in order to ensure quality education in educational institutions to create a universally accessible, learner-centered educational environment since 2019.

In particular, reforms have been launched in the field of general education with the aim to increase the quality of the secondary education, to ensure equal access to quality education for all the segments of the population at all levels of secondary school (as well as pre-school), and continuously increase the efficiency of the system.

In 2020-2021, extensive changes were made to the Law on General Education of the Republic of Armenia in the following directions:

* Preservation of contemporary requirements for the content of general education and the educational environment.
* On February 4, 2021, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved changes to the state standard of general education, which emphasized the necessity to provide the education based on one’s abilities. After testing the subject standards and programs for 2021-2022, 2022-2023 academic years in the Tavush region of Armenia, they will be introduced in a phase-by-phase manner in all educational institutions of the Republic of Armenia.
* Subject programs and teaching mechanisms of the STEM have been completely revised, the Government would supply all educational institutions with the necessary science laboratory equipment by 2026.
* The process started in the Tavush region and in the high schools of Armenia is aimed at ensuring an effective testing of the standard and a suitable environment for implementation. The program also includes schools in different regions of Armenia.
* Upon the decision dated November 18, 2021, the Armenian Government setup the measures of construction and reconstruction of 300 schools and 500 kindergartens and their supplement with the necessary property and equipment. According to the roadmap of the project this work is planned to be carried out in 337 schools and in 521 kindergartens/preschools by 2026. There are 27 schools and 57 kindergartens that had implemented the program by the end of 2022.
* It is also planned to have, until 2026, classes consisting of 20 students in high school and 25 students in primary school and provide them an accessible and inclusive educational environment.

Based on the above-mentioned priorities, as well as other national strategies and international commitments, the ultimate goal of the Strategy is to provide and promote accessible, inclusive and quality education and life-long learning opportunities for everyone in Armenia, aimed at the development and fulfilment of everyone’s potential.

**4.** **Has the right to free education been progressively implemented at all levels of education in your country, based in particular on article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child? If yes, please provide examples. If not, please explain why not.**

The Armenian Constitution enshrines the right of education for every person. Secondary education in public educational institutions is free.

The Law on Education defines:

The basic general education shall be mandatory. The requirement on compulsory nature of basic general education shall be retained until the learner attains the age of 19, if it has not been met at an earlier age.

Secondary education in public educational institutions shall be free. The State shall ensure for the citizens of Armenia free of charge general secondary education, Programs of general education shall be aimed at comprehensive development of an individual, formation of his or her world outlook, creation of bases for the selection and mastering of appropriate vocational education programs relevant to the preferences, inclinations and abilities thereof.

The general education shall be aimed at comprehensive and harmonious development of mental, spiritual, physical and social qualities of learners, formation of a person as a future citizen, professional orientation, preparing him or her for independent life and professional (vocational) education.

**5. Is the right to education considered a justiciable right in your country and if so which aspects of that right? If so, please provide a short summary of emblematic cases.**

The principles of state policy in the field of education are as follows:

1) humanitarian nature of education, primacy of universal values, human life and health, free and comprehensive development of the individual, education of civic consciousness, national dignity, patriotism, legality and environmental worldview;

2) accessibility, continuity, sequence and conformity of education to the level of development, characteristics, as well as the academic eligibility of students, ensuring the mandatory state minimum;

In order to ensure the inclusion and continuity of education, the Armenia Government's Decision, dated February 11, 2021 established the procedure for the identification and referral of children excluded from compulsory education. The requirements of the Decision apply to children aged 6-18 without any discrimination, who for various reasons did not attend the school or dropped out of education.

**6. To what extent are the non-discrimination and equality principles respected in implementing the right to education in your country? Have past recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the right to education of vulnerable and marginalized populations been taken into account? If so, can you list which ones?**

On December 1, 2014, the National Assembly of Armenia adopted the “Law on Amendments and Additions to the Law on General Education”, which envisaged a transition to universal inclusive education in the general education system. In Armenia, the universal inclusive education system will be introduced by August 1, 2025.

According to the Action Plan and schedule for the introduction of the Universal Inclusive Education System approved by the Protocol Decision of the Government of Armenia, dated February 18, 2016, Armenia has made a transition to universal inclusion in the field of general education by regions. In each region, child-pedagogical support services have been established to support schools in providing educational services according to the child's needs.

*Clarification of learner-centered and effective mechanisms in the process of inclusive education.*

With the new regulations of the law, the scope of the understanding of special educational needs has been expanded, whereby children with special educational needs are not only children with physical or mental characteristics of development, because even children with exceptional abilities, as well as children belonging to vulnurable groops, such as victims of violence, refugees or displaced children, poor and destitute, children orphaned by conflicts, children with language difficulties and children belonging to ethnic minorities, can also have difficulties in learning.

It was also suggested to renounce the concept of "increased amount given to children with special educational needs". Instead, a new funding mechanism was established to effectively organize the education of the mentioned students, and the educational institution will be provided with funding to create the necessary conditions.

With the adoption of "Law On Amendments and Additions to the Law on General Education" by the Prime Minister of Armenia, guided by the Sustainable Development Goal 4, several new or amended legal acts had been developed to ensure the implementation of student-centered education (starting from March 2022).