ARMENIA

Armenia is a small landlocked country with population of less than 3 million. The GDP per capita was $3,880 in 2017. Over the last decade, Armenia has undertaken wide-ranging, comprehensive institutional, economic and social reforms towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Overall, Armenia identified and committed to fulfilling 16 national targets with 65 indicators in the process of MDG nationalization. Armenia has achieved 22 indicators and has made progress towards another 10 indicators by 2015. The progress was weak in poverty reduction, gender equality (particularly women's participation in decision-making), and governance areas.

Some of the issues remain in environmental protection, such as deforestation risks, use of solid fuel by the population, availability and access to access to sanitation. The poverty level in Armenia is still high, with 30% of population below the poverty line. In September 2015, the Government of Armenia signed on to Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In May 2016, the Government launched the MDGs wrap-up report and formally kicked off the SDGs nationalisation process with setting up also its architecture. Employment rate for 2016 was 50%. Married men are more than twice as likely as married women to be employed (89% versus 42%).

SDGS IMPLEMENTATION

In **May 2016**, the Government started the SDGs nationalisation process. For this purpose, the coordination structure and institutional framework were designed and four inter-agency thematic working groups were established.

In **June 2017**, the Government prepared its medium-term development programme, which established strong synergies with the SDGs. Fur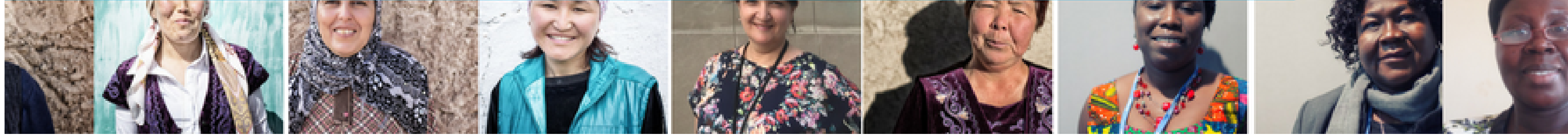thermore, the Center for Strategic Initiatives was tasked to revise and update the Armenian Development Strategy transforming it to a long-term strategic development framework until 2030, incorporating into it emerging priorities and needs, integrating crosscutting and innovative approaches as both a vision and a methodological tool. The Armenia Development Strategy 2014-2025 sets the strategic goals, targets and indicators in multiple economic and social areas.

In **June 2017**, the Government expressed its interest to present the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) in July 2018 High-level Political Forum (HLPF).
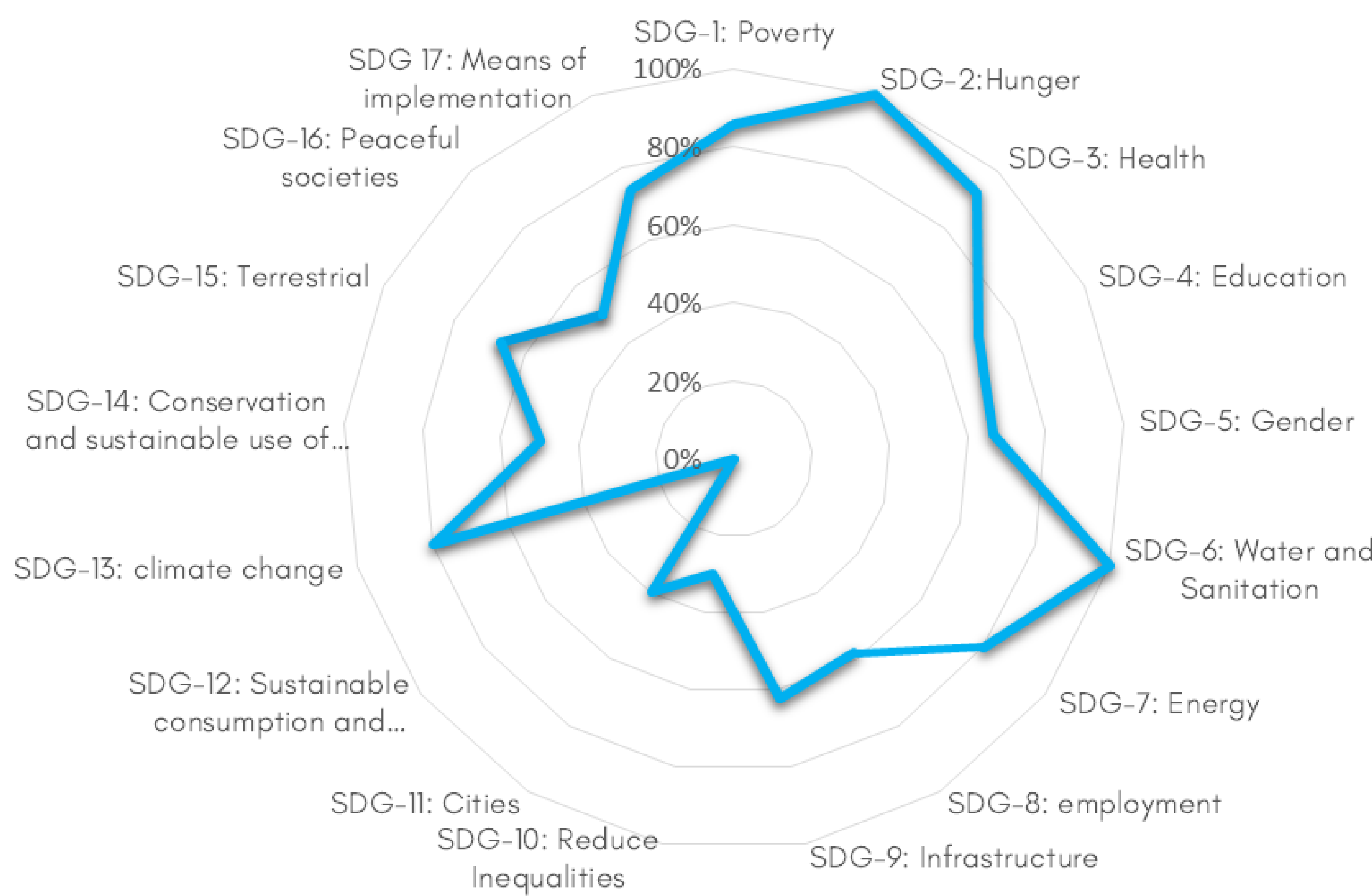
In **June 2018**, the VNR was circulated to key stakeholders for their comments and inputs. The VNR was not ready for the wider dissemination and discussion. Furthermore, few CSOs, were involved in the consultation process. There is no national CSO coalition in the country.

PRIORITISED SDG TARGETS

Radar chart with axes: SDG-1: Poverty, SDG-2: Hunger, SDG-3: Health, SDG-4: Education, SDG-5: Gender, SDG-6: Water and Sanitation, SDG-7: Energy, SDG-8: employment, SDG-9: Infrastructure, SDG-10: Reduce Inequalities, SDG-11: Cities, SDG-12: Sustainable consumption and..., SDG-13: climate change, SDG-14: Conservation and sustainable use of..., SDG-15: Terrestrial, SDG-16: Peaceful societies, SDG 17: Means of implementation. Scale: 0% to 100%.

Source: Rapid Policy Integrated Assessment in Armenia.

INITIAL FINDINGS

	2015	2016	
1 NO POVERTY ♀ ♂	0.1% 0.1%	0.11% 0.8%	**Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex**
1 NO POVERTY ♀ ♂	30.1% 27.9%	30.2% 28.5%	**Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions**
5 GENDER EQUALITY	no data	no data	**Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location (data is not available)**
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	98.1%	no data	**Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (Sex aggregation data is not available)**
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	69.9%	69.7%	**Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water (no sex disaggregation available)**

Source: National Statistical Service.

INITIAL FINDINGS

There are strong inter-linkages between SDGs 1, 5 and 6. Although, the Constitution and the legal framework of Armenia guarantee and promote equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, women are not able yet to fully benefit from equal opportunities. Women are less engaged in decision-making positions. For example, the proportion of women elected to the Armenian parliament was 9.9 percent in 2017. Examples of inter-linkages between goals 1, 5 and 6.

There are number of issues related to national data availability. To monitor and evaluate SDGs effectively, these issues should be addressed. As example is shown in the table above, there are a considerable number of areas, national indicators defined in policy/strategy documents that do not have data disaggregated by gender. For example, data on women's time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, especially time spent because of lack of water and sanitation, should be assessed.

- **References**

- Rapid Policy Integrated Assessment in Armenia. Key Observations, Findings and Provisional Recommendations
- Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Voluntary National Review (VNR); Republic of Armenia Highlights
- "Rio + 20" National Assessment Report
- National Statistical Service
- Armenia: 2015-16 Demographic and Health Survey. Key Findings

POLICY ROUNDTABLE

Resulting from the policy meeting on Armenian stakeholder dialogue on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Ruraldaf organized a policy meeting on Armenian stakeholder dialogue on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Yerevan, the capital of Armenia on 18 June 2018. The meeting was organized in partnership with WECF-International in the framework of Women 2030.

The aim of the policy meeting was to discuss: (i) Provision of input to the Armenian VNR based on priorities of stakeholders, and; (ii) Create strategic partnerships across actors to support the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at national level.

The meeting was attended by 27 participants representing national stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, National SDG Innovation Lab, Armenian Statistical Service, International Organizations (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Armenia and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Armenia), academia (Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU)), Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and independent experts.

During the meeting following themes were presented: the national SDGs and what they mean for Armenia; Preparations of the VNR to the United Nations HLPF 2018;

Civil society participation in preparation of national SDGs; Women2030 input to HLPF; SDG 6 implementation in Armenia. Later, group discussions were organized on Key challenges and best practices in Armenia.
After intensive discussion participants agreed for the VNR recommendations and input for the VNR intervention at the HLPF.

The following priorities emerged:

- Phase out government support for unsustainable economic investments in particular in the mining area, and to make polluters pay (chemicals, heavy metals);
- Gender equality is still far for being achieved (SDG5) as Armenia has a particular low representation of women in higher level decision making;
- Many of rural communities do not have access to safe water and sanitation, this should be a priority, including attention for menstrual hygiene management in schools and workplaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

By civil society, women and other stakeholders, resulting from the policy meeting.

1 Unsustainable economic sectors have received government support in the past, for example mining, whereas new sectors such as IT have not. Can the Agenda2030 process help to inverse these prioritizations?

2 Armenia is increasingly a water-stressed country, and still has about 570 rural communities that have no drinking water and sanitation service providers. The situation for

rural areas is particularly problematic and in many schools there is no safely managed water and sanitation. What is the Government doing to ensure schoolchildren's right to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation? The situation for women and girls is particularly problematic as they require menstrual hygiene management policies, even though indicator 6.2.1 does not specify needs of women, girls and vulnerable groups, the target 6.2. does mention this, can the VNR reflect this as a priority area for action?

3 Municipal waste includes more and more plastics and other harmful substances that release harmful chemicals when burned and polluted the waterways with micro fibres that re-enter into the food-chain, and often waste management is seen as a cost, not as a potential source of resources, can the VNR reflect this as a priority area?

4 Women are the motor of Armenia economy, but are hardly represented in decision making positions, as traditional gender roles prevail, how can the VNR reflect the need for awareness raising and policies that help to create work-life-balance for women and men equality?

All participating organizations were interested to establish CSO platform/coalition on implementation of the SDGs.

ABOUT SHADOW REPORT

Reviewed by Rural Sustainable Development Agricultural Fund (Ruraldaf)

"Rural Sustainable Development" Agricultural Foundation was created in 2009 by the initiative of a group of young specialists and people who are interested in rural development issues. The mission of the organization is to contribute to the sustainable development of rural population, particularly women and children, ensure the active participation of the local population in the improvement of their living conditions, creating the perception of their rights to be healthy and to live in a healthy environment, through environmentally sound and sustainable agriculture.