

**NATIONAL REPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

**FOR THE FOURTH ROUND REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF 2018-2022
OF THE UNITED NATIONS MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION
ON AGING AND THE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

PART I. RESUME (GENERAL INFORMATION)

In preparing this report, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia cooperated with governmental and non-governmental organisations, in particular, received information on the work done to address the problems of old age from the Ministry of Healthcare and a number of interested non-governmental organisations.

The draft report was discussed with the members of the Inter-agency Commission on the Problems of the Elderly. By the way, since 1998 there has been a relevant inter-agency commission in the Republic of Armenia, first on the Issues of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, and since 2012 on Overcoming the Consequences of Aging and Resolving the Issues of the Elderly. The personal staff and the statute of the Inter-agency Commission on the Problems of the Elderly was last updated and edited by Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No 535-A of 24 May 2021, which was conditioned by the adoption of Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 498-L of 8 April 2021 "On approving the programme of improving the care services provided to the elderly and introducing and developing the community-based services and the plan-schedule of measures ensuring its implementation for 2021-2023".

The method of drawing up the report is the summary analysis of the study of work done in the field, including policy development and improvement of legislation, and the information received from the "bottom to top".

A lot of work has been done in the Republic of Armenia to implement the 10 commitments of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging for 2002, but it is yet not enough.

In particular, in only two of the marzes of the Republic (Shirak and Lori) groups of active elderly have been formed since 2018, who participate in the process of making important decisions for the community (Commitment No 2). Works have been carried out to adapt social security systems to demographic changes and their socio-economic consequences, in particular, the amount of pensions and allowances has increased by at least 30% over the past 5 years, reduced tariffs for some utility services have been set for the socially vulnerable elderly and so on (Commitment No 3). The establishment of the Elderly Protection Network in 2017, which has more than 10 non-governmental organisations as its members, may be considered an achievement. There has been no draft legal act or programme related to the field that has not been previously discussed with members of the Elderly Protection Network.

For the social inclusion of the elderly, for the provision of rights-based services in the foreseeable future, we have set the following priorities:

1. increasing the accessibility and availability of social and health-care services provided to the elderly, improving the quality of services;
2. preventing their access to the institutions of round-the-clock care by creating a favourable and healthy living environment in the family for the elderly;
3. raising awareness of the elderly about their rights and interests, improving the mechanisms for the protection thereof;
4. ensuring mandatory participation of the elderly in all spheres of public life, especially in the resolution of problems concerning them;
5. expanding and developing the network of community-based services for the elderly;
6. developing an institute of gerontology and geriatrics, etc.

General information

This report was prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, which is a state body authorised by the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the field of social protection of the elderly. There is a Division for the Elderly in the system of the Ministry, which coordinates the problems related to field of issues on the elderly, provides appropriate solutions thereto, makes proposals on policy development, making changes in existing legal acts, social inclusion of the elderly, protection of their rights and interests and on development and implementation of other social programmes. Coordinates the work of organisations providing care services for the elderly, gives methodical instructions, develops care standards, prepares documents necessary for holding grant competitions announced for the purpose of providing the delegated services, etc.

Over the last 10 years, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has adopted three national strategies on the problems of the old age and on social protection and inclusion of the elderly:

1. Protocol Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 31 of 2 August 2012 "On approving the strategy for solving problems arising from the consequences of aging of the population and the social protection of the elderly and the action plan for the implementation of the strategy for 2012-2016";
2. Protocol Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 20 of 18 May 2017 "On approving the strategy for overcoming the consequences of ageing and social protection of the elderly and the action plan for the implementation of the strategy for 2017-2021";
3. Protocol Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 498-L of 8 April 2021, "On approving the programme for the improvement of the care services provided to the elderly and introducing and developing the community-based services and the plan-schedule of measures ensuring its implementation for 2021-2023".

1. CURRENT SITUATION

At present, the Republic of Armenia faces the challenge of aging population and is considered an aging society, which requires development and introduction of new approaches and mechanisms to respond to the needs of the elderly and the existing challenges.

Up to now, the Republic of Armenia has focused its main resources on meeting the social and material needs of the elderly, while in the modern world the scope of needs of the elderly is considered to be more multilayer and diverse. To this end, the provision of various services to the elderly becomes a priority, which is possible through the review of services and approaches.

The two main directions of programmes for the elderly are the promotion of active and healthy aging and the organisation of care through community-based services. In contrast to the institutional way of providing services, which inactivates the elderly, deprives them of autonomy, isolates from the immediate environment, controls life and freedoms, the purpose of community-based services is to create opportunities for the protection of the rights of the elderly.

It should be noted that Article 84 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia stipulates that ensuring decent standards of life for the elderly is one of the main tasks of the state in the economic, social and cultural spheres, and therefore it is obliged to take measures for implementation thereof.

Current situation and problems in the field of solving the problems of aging and the elderly

(1) Demographic situation

Aging of population or demographic aging is the increase in the proportion of the aged population, which is the result of long-term demographic changes, reproduction, birth rate, mortality of population and the shifts in their ratio.

There are two types of population aging: from the bottom, which is a consequence of

decrease in birth rate, and from the top, which is a consequence of increase in average life expectancy at a low birth rate, and a decrease in mortality at an older age. Both of these types exist in the Republic of Armenia.

According to the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, as of 1 January 2021, the population of the Republic of Armenia amounted to 2 964,1 million person (as of 1 January 2020 — 2 961,0 million).

As of 1 January 2020 the number of people over 65 in the Republic was 365 000 person*, out of which 221 100 women and 143 900 men. The data of 2021 have not been published yet.

The number of the elderly is 12,3% of the total population.

Among the number of people with disabilities, the number of people of retirement age and higher is 81 147, out of which 44 804 are women.

The elderly with disabilities make up 22,2% of the total number of the elderly, and 42,5% of the total number of people with disabilities (about 191 thousand).

In the Republic, only 4680 people over the age of 65 — which makes up 1,3% of the total number of the elderly — enjoy various care and social services — state provided and non -state provided (round-the-clock care, home care, day care centres) — according to the marzes and Yerevan.

According to the population forecasts made by the United Nations Population Fund, in Armenia the number of people over the age of 63 will reach more than 20% by 2050.

The employment rate of the elderly — and not only the elderly — is quite low. In the total number of employed population, people that are 55+ make up only 19%, and the number of employees aged 65+ reaches only 14% in the total number of the elderly.

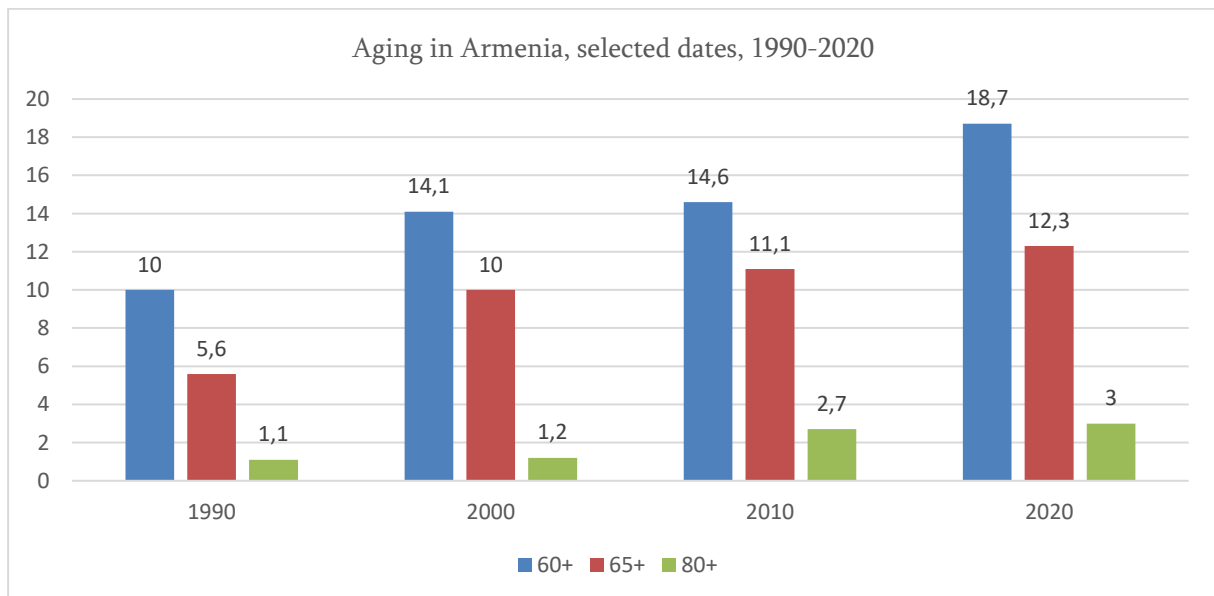
** For information, let us mention that in the Republic the number of people over 63 is 434 600, out of which 261 100 are women and 173 500 are men, but since the legislation of the Republic considers elderly a person over 65, we take as a basis the*

above-mentioned 65+ numbers.

Life expectancy of the population of the Republic of Armenia in 2020 was 75.4 years, moreover, the life expectancy of women is 78.7 years, and that of men — 71.9 years. The increase in life expectancy has led to another demographic problem — aging.

Demographic aging of the population is one of the existing main problems of the demographic situation, the process of which has greatly accelerated in the Republic in post-Soviet years. Aging of population or demographic aging is the result of long-term demographic changes, reproduction, birth rate, mortality of population and the shifts in their ratios, as well as the result of migration, partially.

According to the UN Demographic Aging Scale, if the proportion of the population aged 65 and over amounts more than 7%, the given population is considered to be aging. As of the beginning of 2020, that index made 12.3% in Armenia.



Problems existing in the field

From the point of view of the state, the main concerns conditioned by the declining population are: the decreased opportunities for future economic growth, aging of population with its consequences, increase in expenditures per capita, especially in rural areas, national security issues.

Despite the fact that various programmes, measures have been implemented, legal acts have been adopted in recent years in the system of overcoming the consequences of aging and the social protection of the elderly, there are still many unresolved issues and new challenges, in particular:

- (1) in 2004, the Republic of Armenia ratified a number of articles of the European Social Charter (revised), but did not ratify or assume the obligations provided for by Article 23, which relate to the issues of social protection of the elderly;
- (2) lack of variety of services provided to the elderly, as a result of which the primary needs of the elderly are mainly met, while a number of other socio-psychological, socio-cultural, educational, legal and other needs get almost no response, as well as such scarcity of legal mechanisms and appropriate resources for the provision of urgent social assistance to people in unpredictable and crisis situations;
- (3) insufficient quality of services provided to the elderly, problems related to accessibility, availability and targeting. In the current system, the provision of services is based on the fact that a person belongs to a certain social group (loneliness, having no heir, homelessness, etc.), the non-sensitivity of methods for the quality control and monitoring of services provided to the elderly;
- (4) numerous obstacles in the process of enjoying general services, including their bureaucratic nature, physical inaccessibility, discriminatory treatment of the elderly, etc;
- (5) low level of awareness of the elderly about their own rights and the existing services;

- (6) lack of mechanisms necessary for ensuring the participation and inclusion of the elderly, which is expressed by passivating approaches, declinatory, stereotyped attitude, which is mainly reflected both in the logic of service delivery and in the value system of the society;
- (7) lack of mechanisms for complete collection of the activity indexes of the elderly in the Republic; the 22 key indexes proposed by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for the assessment of the activity of the elderly in the regional countries describe the level of employment of the elderly, their participation in social life, independent, healthy and safe life, opportunities and favourable environment for active living by the elders, but, at present, only 11 indexes are collected in Armenia, and because in modern societies the indexes of activity of the elderly are a necessary tool for measuring the potential of the elderly, so the indexes missing in Armenia are an obstacle for complete assessment of the activity of the elderly;
- (8) lack of approaches and mechanisms necessary for ensuring the employment of the elderly;
- (9) incomplete involvement of the institutes of gerontology and geriatrics in the solution of the problems of aging in Armenia;
- (10) in addition to the above-mentioned, in 2020, new problems were added to these problems, in particular, the deterioration of the condition of the elderly as a result of the pandemic and announced quarantine conditioned by the Coronavirus disease, the need for additional services and resources, and then difficulties in carrying out unforeseen work to accommodate the citizens — including the elderly, to provide them with shelter, food, and other basic necessities — evacuated from Artsakh due to the war unleashed by Azerbaijan on 27 September.

Description and volume of the services provided to the elderly in the Republic of Armenia

There are the following types of social services provided to the elderly in the Republic of

Armenia:

- (1) round-the-clock care services, which are provided by round-the-clock institutions (boarding houses) of general type or special institutions for social protection of the population; these services are provided by both governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- (2) day care provided by day centres of social care; these services are provided only by non-governmental organisations;
- (3) home care, which is provided at home by organisations providing social services and care; these services are provided by both governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- (4) provision of temporary accommodation — is carried out by providing temporary accommodation to homeless persons not having a specific place of residence; this service is provided only by a non-governmental organisation;
- (5) provision of accommodation to persons with a certain status, including the elderly, by providing accommodation in houses of social housing stock and in a shelter for persons classified to special groups; these services are provided by both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

There are 12 institutions (boarding house, care centre, care house) of round-the-clock care services for the elderly and (or) people with disabilities (including people with mental health problems) in the Republic, 8 of which are non-governmental.

About 6000 elderly persons are served with all types of services (round-the-clock, home care, day care) by both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Based on the above-mentioned, the work done and the adopted legal acts are viewed from that point of view.

From the work done in the field of issues concerning the elderly in recent years, the

following can be distinguished:

- (1) complete set of standards and practical guidelines for the care of the elderly developed by the National Institute of Labour and Social Research of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia for the governmental and non-governmental organisations and organisations carrying out delegated or market-based activities of such type;
- (2) provision of guarantee assistance to lonely elderly persons through discounts of utility services;
- (3) establishment and expansion of a network of community-based small care houses and day-care centres for the elderly for the purpose of social inclusion of the elderly, ensuring active and healthy lifestyle, and for meeting the socio-cultural needs more completely;
- (4) the role of non-governmental organisations and the cooperation with them in the provision of social services to the elderly is invaluable. More than fifty organisations have joined the social assistance network, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia has signed bilateral cooperation agreements or memoranda of understanding with some of the organisations. In particular, cooperation agreements were signed with the "Armenian Red Cross Society", the "Armenian Caritas" Benevolent NGO, the "Mission Armenia" Charitable NGO and a number of other non-governmental organisations in the field of issues concerning the elderly;
- (5) close cooperation with the "Elderly Protection Network", to which more than 10 organisations dealing with the issues of the elderly are members;
- (6) formation of active longevity groups in communities by non-governmental organisations, in particular, by the "Armenian Red Cross Society". These groups include active elderly persons (about 200 elders) on a voluntary basis, whose voices can be heard both during community decision-making and at higher levels.

- (7) introduction of the Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People for the development of gerontology and geriatrics in the Republic;
- (8) introduction of the "Elderly Protection Network" jointly with the Ministry in the training of specialists working with the elderly;
- (9) implementation of rule-making activities of governmental and non-governmental organisations and improvement of those activities;
- (10) delegation of services provided to the elderly to non-governmental organisations through provision of grants. In particular, in 2020, 10 organisations — instead of 5 organisations in 2019 — won the competition for the provision of grants and they provide services to the elderly. Thus, 5095 beneficiaries (1420 beneficiaries by governmental organisations) are included in the services of round-the-clock care, home care and day care centres, provided to the elderly by 10 non-governmental organisations under the contract for the provision of grants. This process is continuous and implies expansion;
- (11) We attach importance to the work "Legal Gerontology" (2016) authored by A.Ghambaryan and A.Gasparyan. The work presents the theoretical basics of legal gerontology, the general basics of the constitutional rights of the elderly. Special attention was paid to international legal documents on the rights of the elderly, as well as to the mechanisms of control. The work is highly educational for those dealing with and interested in the rights of the elderly.

Material security of the elderly

The main source of income for the elderly is the pension, the average amount of which was AMD 46 847 as of December 2020.

Proper ensuring the realisation of the right to social security, including the right to a pension, is also closely linked to the right to a decent standard of living (existence). The ensuring of social rights presupposes a certain level of decent living conditions and social protection. To this end the following shall be necessary:

- regular increase of state pensions by ensuring a progressive increase in the average pension in relation to inflation;
- expanding the framework of on-line provided services and continuous reduction of corruption risks by minimising communication between the beneficiary and the decision makers;
- improving the quality of services provided to the beneficiaries;
- increasing the efficiency of the pension payment process — a gradual transition to a non-cash payment system.

In addition to the pension, the socially vulnerable elderly receive also family allowance in the amount of AMD 18 000 per month. About 20 000 lonely elderly persons receive family allowance in the Republic.

II. WORKS PERFORMED TOWARDS THE RECOGNITION OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE ELDERLY

Over the past decade, the following principles have been enshrined in the Strategic Documents for the development of the field of the elderly, only by use of which it will be possible to achieve the goals of ensuring decent conditions for the elderly:

- (1) **respect for human rights;**
- (2) **autonomy:** provides the opportunity for the elderly to live an independent life and make various decisions;
- (3) **participation and inclusion:** ensures the voice of the elderly to be heard at all levels — micro-level (personal), meso-level (group or community), macro-level (policy development). Existence of a society that respects the rights of the elderly, for the establishment of which it is necessary to work simultaneously with the elderly, their immediate social environment and the entire society;
- (4) **recognition, evaluation and use of the potential of the elderly;**
- (5) **equal opportunities:** ensures the activity of the elderly in various fields,
- (6) **exclusion of discrimination;**
- (7) **solidarity of generations:** ensures a harmonious society through mutual assistance;
- (8) **inter-subject and inter-sectoral cooperation:** provides a diverse response to the needs of the elderly, which requires sustained cooperation between different responsible units as well as sectors.

On the one hand, the elderly are the strongest group in society, as they can be richer than other members of the population due to life achievements and can have relatively high capital, can integrate smoothly into society, and also benefit from child support at their old age. On the other hand, the elderly are the most vulnerable part of the population. They become more vulnerable during economic downturns and reorganisations, armed conflicts, mass violence, displacement, and major disasters.

The lack of accurate information about their integration into the economic life of the society contributes to the spread of stereotypes about the elderly, according to which they do not give benefits, they only need care.

Since 2018, active programs aimed at promoting healthy old age have been implemented by also non-governmental organisations, in particular:

1. in 2018, the Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People launched the first Armenian-language information website www.GERONTOLOGY.am for the elderly, their family members and specialists.
2. The Healthy Aging Innovation Centre was established in 2019 with the support of the United Nations Population Fund. The Centre served 45 beneficiaries under the grant of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. In 2021, the programme continues to operate without the financial support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, by engaging 30 visitors.
3. Since 2020, in the city of Vayk in Vayots Dzor and in the city of Ijevan in Tavush marz, there has been a home care service for the elderly over 65, which in the same year served a total of 160 beneficiaries under the grant of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. Currently the service continues to operate without the grant of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, by engaging 40 beneficiaries.

In June 2021, the first Geriatric Centre was opened in Armenia, providing geriatric and gerontological services.

The Armenian Red Cross Society has been working hard to solve the above-mentioned problems. Since 2016, it has established active longevity groups in two marzes of the Republic based on participation, which allows persons to play an active role in improving their own and community life. More than 200 elderly persons are included in the groups.

The role of "Mission Armenia" Charitable NGO in the social inclusion of the elderly in Armenia, in protection of their rights and interests and provision of decent living conditions deserves high appreciation.

Since 2018, the organisation has been certified by the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Aging and has regularly participated in the sessions of the working group during the mentioned period by making direct suggestions and submitting analyses during the on-line consultative discussions.

"Mission Armenia" Charitable NGO is also a member of "HelpAge" and "AgeNet" international networks and "Global Alliance for the Rights of the Elderly" and is actively involved in the initiatives and campaigns for the protection of the rights of the elderly at international level. The organisation made joint statements with the above-mentioned institutes at the sessions of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Aging.

The organisation, in cooperation with the "Alzheimer's Care Armenia" NGO, headed by geriatrician Jane Mahakyan, has launched a telephone communication for the provision of advisory assistance to persons with Alzheimer's disease, since September 2019.

In September-December 2020, the organisation implemented an experimental programme funded by the "Umcor Armenia" Foundation, setting up a sewing lab for the elderly aimed at promoting the self-employment of vulnerable and socially vulnerable elderly living in the city of Yerevan and in Kotayk marz and promoting economic stability and creation of opportunities for self-sufficiency. The sewing lab goes on operating and expanding.

"Armenian Caritas" Benevolent Non-Governmental Organisation has a great contribution to the training of specialists working with the elderly, mainly nurses and caregivers. At the same time, working in four marzes of the Republic, the Organisation provides care, health and social assistance to the most vulnerable elderly persons, numbering more than 300 persons. The Organisation engages active elderly persons as volunteers in its programmes. Within the framework of the Programme "Warm Winter" of the Organisation, every year, during the winter months, more than 600 lonely elderly persons receive financial support for gas and electricity bills, which provides a warm environment for the elderly in winter.

Healthcare services

According to the current legislation, medical care and services for the elderly in the primary health care units are provided free of charge.

In 2021, the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia developed and adopted the "Strategy for the Development of the Healthcare System of the Republic of Armenia for 2021-2025", which outlined the goals of the strategy in the field of healthcare of the elderly and the strategic directions to achieve them. The strategy also envisaged implementation of measures, in particular, the development of a Manual-Guide "Peculiarities of Care Services of the Elderly" and implementation of training courses for nurses based on the Manual-Guide.

Three main goals of 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration: as for the three main goals of the Ministerial Declaration held in Lisbon in 2017, the Republic of Armenia still has a lot to do to achieve those three main goals, despite some of the above-mentioned works done.

Those three goals are mentioned below:

- (1) recognising the potential of older persons;
- (2) encouraging longer working life and ability to work;
- (3) ensuring ageing with dignity.

A lot of work has been done to achieve the first and the third goals mentioned above, and will be continued (see in this information).

A number of provisions for ageing with dignity are envisaged in the "Programme for Improvement of Services Provided to the Elderly" (hereinafter referred to as " the Programme") adopted in 2021, in particular:

1. One of the main goals of the Programme is to create and maintain a favourable

environment for the elderly to live in the family and community, as well as to provide services that meet their needs.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goal, the following tasks have been set:

- (1) promoting active and healthy aging;
- (2) providing dignified and professional care to the elderly in need of long-term care;
- (3) developing community-based and home services provided to the elderly.

It is based on the position that the preferred place for the elderly to live with dignity is their home and family, and therefore the sectoral policy with its social, economic and healthcare components should have a preventive significance of not appearing in care institutions. In the rare cases where it is not possible to ensure active and healthy aging of the elderly in the family and there is a need for long-term care, the community-based services should be provided.

2. The following requirements should be the basis of the activities of organisations providing services to the elderly:

- (1) quality services;
- (2) available, affordable and targeted services;
- (3) variety of services;
- (4) wide geographical distribution of services;
- (5) comprehensive and urgent response to the need of a beneficiary (holistic model of needs assessment, multidisciplinary team, assessment of a problem in crisis situations and urgent solution, etc.);
- (6) application of activating and individual approaches;
- (7) supremacy of the rights of the elderly over the agency interests;
- (8) exclusion of discrimination against the elderly;

(9) provision of opportunities for the realisation of the rights of the elderly (having a private life and area, being informed about their own rights in an accessible way, etc.);

(10) other requirements defined by international and local legal acts.

Community-based services are more people-centred in their nature, they emphasise the transition from a holistic approach to the individual, as well as the role of the family and community in the lives of the elderly, encouraging their active participation in community life and decision-making.

The process of ageing with dignity presupposes the introduction of a wide range of community-based services for the elderly, which will provide an opportunity to ensure the self-realisation of the elderly, their participation in various spheres and levels, inclusion in public life, decision-making, continuous development of their social, physical and mental abilities.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

According to the summary results of the situational analysis, international successful experience of individual countries, studies of international processes and documents related to the elderly, necessary professional discussions with representatives of interested governmental, non-governmental and international organisations carried out, the medium-term actions (for the implementation during the upcoming three years) for the introduction of alternative services provided to the elderly in Armenia are envisaged.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (taking into account also the statutory goals and functions of the Ministry) — with the active support of the interested state administration and local self-government bodies, international and non-governmental organisations cooperating with the Ministry, as well as on the basis of "public-private" mutually beneficial partnership — will be the main implementing state administration body responsible for ensuring the implementation of the presented

medium-term actions.

In particular, the following medium-term actions — certain and complementing and interrelated with each other — are proposed to introduce a system of alternative services provided to the elderly in Armenia:

1. in-depth and comprehensive assessment of the existing needs for alternative services for the elderly according to individual forms or models (in the marzes of the Republic of Armenia and in the city of Yerevan);
2. full quantitative and qualitative (of conditions) assessment of the total demand for alternative services, including solvent demand, presented by the elderly (in the marzes of the Republic of Armenia, in the city of Yerevan);
3. compiling the final list of alternative services subject to introduction as a result of comprehensive analysis of an objectively and completely assessed needs and demands, according to the marzes of the Republic of Armenia and the city of Yerevan;
4. complete development and approval of a description (passport), issuance procedure, evaluation criteria and methodology for each alternative service included in the list;
5. carrying out complete financial calculations and assessments required for the pilot introduction according to the form of each alternative service included in the list;
6. pilot implementation of all the alternative services included in the list for a limited number of elderly people in pre-selected areas, taking into account:

- (1) available financing opportunities;
 - (2) massive opportunities to delegate social care services to non-governmental organisations;
 - (3) resources already released or being released as a result of the ongoing reorganisation of social protection and care institutions (labour resources, professional potential, buildings, constructions, furniture, and other resources);
7. comprehensive evaluation of the test results of the alternative services included in the list, from the point of view of expediency of further continuation, as well as from the point of view of their cost-effectiveness (emerging real demand — the lowest possible cost of the service provided — offered effective price in the main chain);
 8. introduction of positive and cost-effective alternative services in terms of continuity, taking into account also the possibility of financing in that direction from the State Budget of the given year;
 9. development of business plans for the introduction of alternative services for the elderly (according to each form of the offered services, with the necessary description, calculations and evaluations) to organise the provision of these services with private investments within the framework of for-profit entrepreneurial activities;
 10. organising a study visit of policy makers on the introduction of a system of alternative services for the elderly and on its practical application, in order to study the experience of a specific country, which is deemed expedient from the point of view of introduction in Armenia, with a pre-designed agenda, which should follow the logic of the actions mentioned above;

11. development of specific solutions to increase the targeting and the cost-effectiveness of social services currently provided to the elderly at home, as well as in day care centres in Armenia as well as ensuring the consistency of those solutions in parallel with the introduction of a system of alternative services (for instance: a network of small community houses) for the elderly;
12. development of a national programme for the introduction and further development of an institute of gerontology and geriatrics, in accordance with the positive international experience and based on the existing objective need;

The implementation of the proposed medium-term actions should be accompanied by regular and systematic notification of the public (especially potential investors, the elderly and their family members, interested NGOs) about the opportunities being formed, directions offered for cooperation, work done and the results obtained.

Some of the above-mentioned proposed medium-term actions are already included in the Programme for the Improvement of Services provided to the Elderly (for 2021-2024) adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on 8 April 2012 (hereinafter referred to as "the Programme").

It is expected that during the operation of the above-mentioned Programme and by the end of the operation of the Programme:

- (1) the entire legislative framework of the sector will have been revised;
- (2) the social needs of the elderly being taken care of both in the social protection institutions and outside them will have been assessed (need of about 1000 elderly people is estimated);
- (3) the list of community-based services to be introduced will have been approved according to types of services and according to communities;
- (4) the quality of existing services will have been improved;

- (5) day-care centres will have been established in 10 marzes of the Republic, each with at least 50 visitors;
- (6) three crisis centres will have been established in the Republic for 60 elderly people for the purpose of providing support to the elderly in unpredictable and crisis situations (each for 20 persons).

The establishment of such centres became necessary due to the difficulties arisen during the provision of services to the elderly isolated during the quarantine period because of coronavirus disease, as well as conditioned by the provision of accommodations, food, other basic necessities and services to the persons displaced from Artsakh due to the war unleashed by Azerbaijan in September 2020;

- (7) home care service will have been introduced in all the marzes of the Republic. At least 80% of the total number of elderly people in need of home care receive the expected service, and at least 20 elderly people in need of inpatient care (if they do not have a caregiver) receive round-the-clock home care on a pilot basis based on the assessed need;
- (8) the issue of ratification of Article 23 of the European Social Charter (revised) on Social Protection of the Rights of the Elderly will have been considered, which will ensure the existence of another international instrument in terms of protection of the rights of the elderly.

As a result of the implementation of all the above-mentioned measures, the quality of life of the elderly will undoubtedly be improved.

At the same time, the non-governmental organisations have also fixed their upcoming activities in the field of solving the problems of the elderly, in particular:

"Mission Armenia" Charitable NGO envisages to continue provision of services to the elderly during 2022-2024 by intensifying the activities of day care centres, introducing alternative and innovative services, as well as promoting the opportunities for employment and self-employment of the elderly, adhering to the principles of active aging.

For the coming years the Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People envisages to:

1. develop the activity of the first geriatric office with also the component of telemedicine;
2. conduct training courses in Malta for specialist in cooperation with the UN International Institute on Aging;
3. develop Clinical guidelines and practices;
4. provide education and qualification of geriatricians and gerontologists;
5. develop a passport for speciality of "Geriatrics";
6. develop a passport for speciality of "Caregiver";
7. develop the Programme of "Foster School";
7. develop educational standards for the subject of "Geriatrics";
8. organise awareness-raising meetings for the elderly, doctors and other specialists working with the elderly throughout the Republic;
9. inform the elderly and specialists about dementia and other mental disorders.

As a summary

Within the framework of cooperation between the state and the NGOs, it is assumed that in the coming years the quality of life of the elderly will be significantly improved, community-based services will be expanded, healthcare and social services will become more affordable and accessible and discrimination on the grounds of age, sex and other grounds will be eliminated as far as possible.

The ultimate goal of the development of the field of aging of the Policy of Social Protection of the Republic of Armenia is to improve the quality of life of the elderly.

The priorities of the development of the field are the following:

- (1) to create a society for people of all ages, especially implement a gradual and smooth transition from institutional care services to community services in parallel with the process of aging with dignity for the elderly, emphasising the role of the family and the community in the life of the elderly, as well as the active participation of the elderly in community life and the decision-making;
- (2) to provide equal opportunities for making use of the package of social services aimed at providing support to persons belonging to different social groups and those who are vulnerable or at social risk in the social protection system, excluding any type of discrimination (equal inter-group opportunities);
- (3) to provide equal opportunities for making use of all types of services from the package of social services aimed at providing support to a separate social group in the system of social protection offered to each vulnerable person belonging to that group or at social risk in the social protection system, excluding any type of discrimination (equal intra-group opportunities);
- (4) to ensure the provision of effective right-based social services based on needs throughout the whole life of a person;
- (5) to involve the potential of the elderly in the decision-making process at the local self-government level;
- (6) to develop and implement measures aimed at continuous increase of state pensions.