

Security and Progress

The Electoral Program of the Republican Party of Armenia

2017-2022

Security and Progress Symbolize 25 years of Independence

For centuries, our people have dreamed of a Free and Independent Motherland, and of an Armenian state. The dream of our own state was determined by the resolve to establish a strong foothold on the Armenian soil, to be the masters of our own country and future.

Deprived of statehood, the Armenian people has preserved its uniqueness and managed to continuously develop and create. Wars, persecutions, and attempts at obliteration were doomed to failure owing to the willpower of the ARMENIAN people and the survival centers, namely, the Armenian family, our religion and the Armenian language. The Armenian family has been the safe haven of solidarity for generations where the elderly passed values to the young. When we had no statehood, our Church undertook the functions of the state and safeguarded knowledge, the language and national features. Despite trials and tribulations, our nation never lost its self-esteem, never forsook its dream of the independent Armenia, never gave up and lastly has achieved its goal.

After many centuries, the free and independent Armenia enables us to have our own stance, to defend it and to be responsible for it.

In 25 years of independence, we have not yet achieved all our goals. Over this period, we have overcome numerous hardships: the Earthquake, the Artsakh war, the disruption of socio-economic relations due to the demise of the USSR, the failure of economy, etc.

Over these years, we have achieved numerous successes but we also made mistakes and still face unresolved problems. Many people are hurt by injustice and harbor disappointment, distrust, and indignation. Many people have emigrated and abandoned their homes to provide better living standards for their families. It means that we have not yet built the country of our dreams.

But over the entire course of our history our people has never given up the dream of having the country of our dreams. Moreover, the current predicaments and faults cannot prevent us from making our dream a reality. It's only those who do nothing that make no mistakes. Learning from our own mistakes and working hard we will go ahead building the country of our dream: the FREE, INDEPENDENT, FAIR, and INTELLECTUAL ARMENIA.

We are a freedom-loving nation which implies the duty to defend freedom and ensure the Motherland's SECURITY. Armenian villages, towns and borders must be secured, and this security shall be always focused on the citizen of the Republic of Armenia.

We are a creative nation and it implies most favorable conditions needed for

PROGRESS. Every single citizen of the Republic of Armenia shall have equal opportunities for creativity.

It is high time that our dream comes true. It is high time that we change ourselves and change our reality. No one is going to live our life for us. No one is going to do what we are supposed to do.

Only we ourselves shall continuously improve our security. Only we shall ensure progress. It is only us and no one else.

And with support from the people, we are ready to continuously improve our entire security system extending it to social security, protection of human life and property, and other rights, including food security. We are ready to put our idea of equal opportunities into life thus essentially contributing to the progress of this country.

SECURITY FOR THE COUNTRY. SECURITY FOR EVERY SINGLE CITIZEN

We live in a region where numerous threats and dangers reside. The probability of armed conflicts is high. The April adventure of Azerbaijan and Turkey's stance in this respect have proved once again that there is no alternative to permanent and consistent improvement of this country's security.

No nation and no country are regarded by us as enemies. Likewise, the Armenian people has demanded and demands that the authorities of the two neighboring countries put an end to the policy of denying the Armenian nation the right to existence, self-rule, sustainable and safe life thus instigating their societies to commit acts of violence and xenophobia.

First of all, we shall continue to focus on the detection and neutralization of current and potential military and political threats, risks and challenges to our national security, on improving our combat readiness and equipment of the national army.

Continuous reform and harmonization of the security system with modern requirements, the measures to prevent external challenges and to ensure adequate retaliation have included and will include political, diplomatic, legal, economic, information and, if needed, military and other integrated actions.

The achievement of the goals and implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Republic of Armenia in accordance with the Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization will remain priorities. Armenia will consistently contribute to the further enhancement of the CSTO.

At the same time, partner relations with the North Atlantic Alliance will be further deepened to raise the combat readiness of the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, to improve the army's cooperation with the public and to continuously reform the defence system.

The domain of security also covers social protection, human rights, including guaranteed rights to life and property, and food security. From now on, we shall achieve a situation when every citizen can rest assured that his future is safe. In dire straits, our citizens shall feel the support of the state. To achieve it, we will keep introducing sustainable mechanisms of poverty reduction, will be continuously raising the minimal salary and will substantially reform the state employment policy. At the same time, if the individual is able-bodied, we will do our best so that he would need minimal state welfare support, as he would be capable of providing for himself and his family.

OUR SURVIVAL IS ANCHORED TO THE ARMENIAN ARMY

Prevention of any military infringement upon our state depends on the correct and targeted development of our defence potential in compliance with modern criteria of professionalism, discipline, orderliness, transparency and control. We are well aware of the balance of forces in the region and know well how to respond to encroachments upon our security.

We will not get bogged down in an arms race for the sake of arms race. It is pointless. At the same time, we are well aware of the problems faced by our armed forces. Our resources are quite sufficient to solve these problems.

We will continue to equip the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia with modern armaments and weaponry, including the ones manufactured in this country. In this domain we have achieved significant results which in the forthcoming years will be multiplying. We will spare no expense to upgrade our army.

Ammunition and weapons as such cannot determine the outcome of hostilities. The face of the Armenian army are the Armenian Soldier and Officer who have time and again proved that the crucial factor in the battle field is morale, the ability and readiness to use weapons, will-power, courage, decisiveness, self-esteem and nobleness. The armed forces of Armenia shall rank amongst the best in the world. To achieve it, we have a major prerequisite, an irreplaceable treasure, namely, our valiant soldiers and officers. Henceforth, serious efforts will be made to raise the morale, professionalism and tactical skills of the army personnel.

The conscript soldiers are the future of the country. They are our future ministers and prime ministers, our scholars and entrepreneurs, ambassadors and governors. The army experience combined with good-quality higher education is our tomorrow's society, which is taking shape in front of us.

We have a new, well-established and powerful cohort of intelligentsia that did not exist before. It is our Officer Corps that is becoming a worthy part of our elite. To become a member of the intellectual and official elite shall be the desire of our most advanced and educated youth. The commissioned officer is well regarded by the society because his biography is evidence of success.

Permanent improvement of officer promotion, especially, junior ones, is one of our priorities. **The army shall set the standard for fairness in our society.** That is what we are focused on.

At the same time, the army can become the driving force of economy and technology progress. The army is the largest consumer in the country. Therefore, it cannot help having an impact on the advancement of national economy.

The funds to meet the needs of the army that range from provisions to construction materials, and from weapons to software, etc. shall be, as much as possible, expended in Armenia. When feasible, we are going to give preference to the Armenian manufacturer expecting that thus added value will be created in the country. The case in point is, first of all, hi-tech where the army is the main customer of created innovations. Armenian specialists are capable of finding solutions that meet modern requirements and the army shall use these solutions.

Most importantly, at last: corruption shall be eradicated in the armed forces, and the army personnel shall, once and for all, be ridden of daily social problems in order to focus on the raising of fighting capabilities and continuous enrichment of knowledge. This is task №1 which we are going to resolve in the near future, and in which we have achieved significant progress.

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH

Our goal is that the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is finally determined by the people of Artsakh. We shall never forego this principle.

Our approach is clear: we are going to support all the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to promote peaceful negotiations aimed at the fair settlement of the problem. At the same time, we are going to continuously improve our defence capability so that the enemy is never tempted to solve the problem in a way other than peaceful negotiation. That is our approach.

We are going to continue working on the involvement of the Republic of Artsakh as a full-fledged party in peace negotiations.

The efforts of the Republic of Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora will focus on the decisions made by international organizations that exclude and prevent a belligerent solution to the problem.

Maintaining advanced socio-economic development of Artsakh remains an important priority. The Republic of Armenia is going to consistently provide comprehensive support to the political and economic development of Artsakh.

PROGRESS-ORIENTED FOREIGN POLICY

The goal of our foreign policy and the formula of our participation in foreign affairs are development and deeper relations with our partners, and the growth of the cohort of Armenia's friends in the world. For 25 years, we have been in partial blockade. We take it for granted and move forward to progress despite this fact.

We will give a new impetus to our relations with Georgia and Iran, especially, with an emphasis on the realization of the entire economic potential, and will enhance and develop our relations with partner countries.

The Russian Federation is an ally of the Republic of Armenia. It says a lot. We will raise the strategic partnership with the Russian Federation to yet another level.

We will seek to impart new dynamics to our friendly partnership with the United States under the new administration.

We will continue developing relations with **France, Germany, Greece and other European countries on the basis of a common civilizational value system.**

It is gratifying to note our flourishing relations with China which will be sustainably developing with the same spirit.

Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union has opened particularly broad opportunities for the economic development of this country. In this respect, we will support our entrepreneurs in using the opportunities given by the Eurasian Economic Union.

In the course of reforms conducted in this country, the cooperation with the European Union plays a key role. We will continue to deepen our relations with the EU having soon successfully completed the negotiations on the new legal framework.

Hospitality and tolerance, as well as preservation and promotion of traditional values are characteristic of the Armenian people. This distinctive feature of our nation shall be permanently emphasized in our relations with the outer world and our foreign partners.

In foreign affairs, we will pay special attention to the inflow of economic investments into this

country via Armenia's diplomatic missions, thus creating a favorable economic environment for both domestic and foreign investors, reasonably in advance.

We will continue our efforts to keep the issue of prevention and condemnation of the crime of genocide and elimination of consequences of the Genocide high on the agenda of the international community.

ORGANIZED DIASPORA CONSOLIDATED AROUND THE MOTHERLAND

The Republic of Armenia is the Motherland of all Armenians. We are going to create an environment in which Armenia will become the center of consolidation and fulfillment of possibilities and potentials for Armenians.

In the course of its history, the Armenian people in fateful moments always proved its consolidation and unity. Following the establishment of independency, our brothers and sisters have been constantly standing by the Motherland and every day are ready to defend Artsakh.

We are proud of the Diaspora, which came into being as a result of our dramatic history. We are consolidated with the Diaspora, and Armenia is our lodestone, the center of our unity and concord. We shall do our best and even more to unite all our compatriots around the Fatherland.

Our Diasporan brothers and sisters shall not consider themselves merely benefactors, nor shall we regard them as such. In many domains they have acquired rich experience, knowledge and skills which, when applied, may create new societal quality, propose new ideas, introduce new work culture, and create new goods and services in Mother Armenia. Our compatriots in the Diaspora shall be able to generate added value in Armenia. Armenia shall become attractive also for them so that they could establish and develop business and generate profit. We are going to take this path of joint work.

No doubt, our attention will be also focused on self-organization of Armenians in the Diaspora, on maintaining national identity and attracting youth.

Nowadays, we cannot be satisfied with our current achievements. We shall aim higher. An historical chance has befallen us to assert ourselves with the multiplied force of Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

The establishment of the new political system and the introduction of the new political culture in this country are on fast-forward. As a result of Constitutional reforms in Armenia, the

governance system will become more open, flexible and internally sophisticated. It will match the dynamically developing, multifaceted structure of our society. It will be in line with the political culture of free, well provided for, and broadly thinking people.

The amended Constitution is a new impetus for a new beginning: we have created a unique opportunity to give a new momentum to the development and to rectify errors. With the introduction of the Constitution, Armenia shall establish itself as a state and society where:

- power is transparent and trustworthy for the purpose of the citizens' wellbeing in the present and in the future;

- the justice system is impartial and riden of influences; the lawmaker is competent and respectable; civil service is the most revered occupation as it gives an opportunity to serve the motherland and the people, and requires relevant professional qualification;

- the living standards in the society are high; the society is civilized, tolerant, and humane; economy is dynamically developing based on the human potential of the entire nation; everybody enjoys an equal opportunity to develop; unfair competition is banned; resources are redistributed by efficient state policy;

- responsible management of the environment and nature resources is crucial for the survival of the nation, and, most importantly, for the welfare of the future generations;

- human rights are a strong and well established system of values; the citizens of Armenia, Armenians, the Yazidis, Russians, Assyrians, Greeks and other ethnic minorities enjoy full-fledged freedom of expression.

Indeed, we live in a unique time. We have the possibility to build anew a free, fair and strong Armenia. The Constitutional reform indeed gives us such an opportunity, and we shall use it in full.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

Nowadays prosper not the countries possessing oil, gas and other natural resources but the ones that possess necessary conditions and environment for full-fledged fulfillment of their human potential. Armenia's greatest "natural resource" and treasure is MAN.

The power shall create an environment in which anyone can reveal and fulfill one's potential. To advance this environment, broad reforms will be carried out, from improving the efficacy of the governance system to the increase in social security guarantees for every single individual citizen.

The civil service system shall be staffed exclusively with professional cadre, regardless of origin and social status, and the prerequisite for being employed shall be dedicated service to the

motherland and fair remuneration.

Our diagnosis is as follows:

The public administration system in the Republic of Armenia prevents the RA citizen from using the services of RA state bodies, as they are oftentimes complicated and confusing. RA citizens and entrepreneurs are oftentimes disappointed by the interaction with the state machine because of bureaucratic, temporizing and inert behavior of the civil servants.

Our goal is a transition from the classical post-Soviet bureaucracy to a flexible, efficient and proactive system of public administration.

To achieve this goal, the RA legislation will be revised in order to solve the following problems:

- To reduce unnecessary daily interaction with public administration bodies to the minimum.
- Increased accountability and transparency of public administration bodies, and establishment of efficient feedback between them, the citizens and entrepreneurs.
- Establishment of key indicators for the accountability of executive bodies which would enable to measure results and to stimulate initiative, proactive behavior and diligence in agencies and officials.

TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Our diagnosis is as follows: in provincial and community administrations, general management, and, in particular, property management, are insufficiently effective. Community budgets, revenue and expenditure are insufficiently transparent and controllable for community councils and public at large. Financial markets and cash flows are not sufficiently accessible for the provinces and communities which is a serious obstacle for even development.

Our goal is to upgrade the system of territorial administration and local self-government, and to improve efficiency and accountability thereof. In this respect we plan the following:

- to stipulate in law the eligibility requirements to the candidacy of the governor appointed by the Government, clearly specifying the rights and duties thereof. Along with consolidation of communities, to continue decentralization, delegating broader state competences to the communities. At the same time, the functions of provincial administrations will be reviewed in terms of dramatic restriction of their economic functions.

- To regulate cooperation between the bodies of territorial administration (governors) and local self-government bodies.

- To evolve development plans for each province and community, making them compatible, complementary and targeted. In particular, attention shall be paid to province development strategies, turning them into guidelines for public and especially investment policy in the province.
- In parallel with community consolidation, in large communities to introduce the model of indirect election of the community leader and the relevant election system for community council members, and to raise the role of the community council in budget execution.
- Within the framework of civil service reform, to introduce efficient mechanisms for staffing the community service with knowledgeable and experienced professionals, one one hand, and on the other hand, to introduce mechanisms of their professional and career development.

Further extension of the fairness principle to the system of local taxes; introduction of a unified real-estate tax starting 2018.

Benefits to border-line communities will be continuously extended. In terms of development of border-line towns, we suggest efficient distribution of resources and a quest for new resources for the fulfillment of new tax incentives and new initiatives.

We are concerned about the everyday life of our citizens outside the capital, especially, in rural communities. Enabling conditions for the citizens' employment shall become the everyday concern for the local self-government bodies; various solutions will be offered here.

JUSTICE, COMBATTING CORRUPTION

Both the citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms, and democracy need protection, first of all, from corruption, which engenders arbitrariness, unfreedom and injustice. We have embarked on the creation of such a protective mechanism. The judicial and legal system shall be in its center.

Our purpose is to establish an institutional anti-corruption framework which would enable us to efficiently prevent this tumor from hindering our progress, and to ensure inevitable prosecution of the perpetrators of corruption.

Our solution to the problem is as follows:

- To introduce administrative or criminal liability for high-ranking officials for their failure to file property and income declarations, or for false declarations.
- To apply the elements of the crime of "illegal enrichment".
- To develop the anti-corruption institutional system including the revision of the

principles for the establishment of the anti-corruption board.

- To improve preventive anti-corruption mechanisms and accountability of the law enforcement bodies before public at large.
- To introduce an effective system for whistleblower protection and conflict of interest prevention.

We shall establish a modern and effective judiciary system that would function in compliance with the amended Constitution. Also, we shall get rid of the suspicious attitude to the law and the court that exists in our reality. One ought not merely to exercise justice but justice in its turn shall be visible and convincing, and shall be perceived as affirmation of fairness. It is necessary to create working conditions in which any court ruling would be perceived as affirmation of justice, and none of the parties to the litigation would have doubts about the legitimacy, impartiality and soundness of the act.

Our diagnosis: judiciary has poor ratings owing to ununified judicial practice and common perception of corruption in courts. Confidence in courts is low and as a result, even given the significant caseload, the rate of justice-seeking in court is low.

This situation is exacerbated by the following three major factors:

- Insufficient independence of judges.
- Lack of effective mechanisms to hold judges and courts liable for the inappropriate exercise of justice.
- Deviation from the requirement to consider court cases within reasonable timeframes.

As a result, RA citizens and entrepreneurs prefer to keep clear of courts, and oftentimes seek illegal ways of protecting their interests. Consideration of court cases has no reasonable timeframes, and as a result, court hearings claim too much of the litigants' time and resources.

Our goal is a transition from the poorly rated court system to a fair, trustworthy and effective court system.

A major task for the making of the judiciary is the introduction of practice in compliance with the Constitutional reform through full-fledged Constitutional guarantees of independence. First of all, it suggests detailed definition and stipulation of effective mechanisms for the council of justice to be founded in 2018 to perform its competences, and ensuring the guarantees of judges' independence.

The second problem is to specify the Constitutional guarantees of judges' and courts' independence while, at the same time, introducing appropriate procedures for the evaluation of judges' performance, as a counterbalance. In particular, it is suggested to stipulate by a legal act the scope of competences for each judiciary instance and the mechanisms of disciplinary

liability for offences committed by judges.

To observe reasonable timeframes for consideration of court cases it is suggested:

- To determine the optimal number of judges and distribution thereof and mandatory regular consideration of this issue.
- Measures to alleviate the court case load.
- To establish by legal acts clear deadlines for the execution of court actions and rulings, and to establish simplified procedure in some cases.
- To develop extrajudiciary settlements of disputes, in particular, arbitration tribunals, delegation of some court competences to other bodies (e.g., notaries).

Special priority will be also given to the consistent improvement of efficiency by the Procuracy and investigation bodies. In the context of Constitutional reform the competences of the Procuracy, the status of investigation bodies and the requirements to their activity will be specified.

PROGRESS IN ECONOMY

Historically, the Armenian is a hard worker who generates added value by the sweat of his brow. Bona fide entrepreneurs who create jobs shall be supported. Economic conditions shall be equal for all, while nepotism and shadow economy shall be eradicated from our reality. No one is going to do it but ourselves, and we are destined to succeed. Therefore, we will be conducting continuous and tangible economic, tax and customs reforms, including amendments to the legislation and human resources policy.

Today Armenia's economy needs efficient solutions. We shall shape an environment in which domestic manufacture of quality but affordable goods would replace imports on the market.

First, the priority in the economic policy will be given to:

- Further enhancement of macroeconomic stability.
- Further improvement of the investment environment and attraction of new investments.
- When necessary, assistance to entrepreneurs, including SMEs, and economic incentives.
- Equal competitive conditions in economic life and eradication of nepotism.

Business environment

Our diagnosis: despite the progress reflected in surveys on business environment assessment conducted by international organizations, in Armenia there is still:

- Disproportionate or unequal enforcement of law by administrative bodies.
- Low efficiency of the judiciary in consideration of administrative or economic disputes and intellectual property rights.

As a result:

- Low efficiency in the chain “business idea-business initiative-business plan implementation”.
- Low contribution of the SMEs in the GDP.
- High risks for business plan continuity.
- Poor confidence in success through private entrepreneurship.

Our goal: transition from the business environment containing unpredictable risks to a business environment with minimal state regulation, utmost clarity, proportionate and equal enforcement, stability and predictability, while business disputes are resolved fairly and effectively, especially, in terms of deadlines.

For a fast transition, first of all, the following problems shall be solved:

- adding new effective tools to the mechanisms of state support of new business initiatives,
- creation of efficient mechanisms of state support in order to turn SME initiatives into viable business plans,
- monitoring of large investment programs and regulation of their specific problems.

Investment

A high level of foreign investments in Armenia is the prerequisite for high long-term indicators of economic growth.

Our goal: dramatic increase in the current unsatisfactory level of foreign investment.

To this end, the following problems shall be solved first of all:

- to build up investment protection and confidence,
- to create additional possibilities for investment programs and implementation thereof,
- to build Armenia’s image as a reliable and profitable country for investment.

Priority steps:

- creation of an investment fund to stimulate the implementation of selected feasible investment programs,
- subject to discussions with the business community, and based on the best international

experience, an efficient model of public-private partnership in Armenia will be offered.

Export stimulation

Armenia as a country with a small domestic market, shall build its development model based on economic growth boosted by export.

Our diagnosis: so far, the share of export in the GDP is unsatisfactory. High centralization of export in terms of markets and the assortment of exported goods is a matter of concern. The amount of export to neighboring countries is unsatisfactory.

Our goal: transition from a narrow export economy to a diversified economy with an infrastructure for export stimulation, rapidly responding to demand on the external, and first of all, neighboring markets.

Taking into account the distinctive features of Armenia's economy, breakthrough export growth shall become the driving force of economic development. As the first goal, it is necessary to achieve 40-45% export share in the GDP.

To solve the above problems and to promote export, previously unused or insufficiently used instruments and application thereof are being revealed, in order to create a necessary platform for the penetration to new markets and enhancement and broadening of our position on current markets.

To solve the above problems it is planned to:

- maximally use the opportunities on the markets which offer favorable trade regimes for Armenia,
- ensure the entry of Armenian goods on the markets of the regional countries and significant increase in export, making the results of certification performed in Armenia known through the establishment of special trade zones in the region and participation therein,
- stimulate business ties, enhancement of the image of Armenian goods abroad, and to reveal new export markets,
- broader apply instruments of state export support,
- make the diplomatic representatives of the Republic of Armenia more active to promote export of Armenian goods, to reveal and apply previously unused new opportunities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The following are the infrastructure problems in the Republic of Armenia:

- insufficient state regulation of transport and road assets,
- lack of a modern system of passenger traffic management,
- lack of an efficient system of quality assurance in road construction,
- unsatisfactory level of necessary state incentive programs and measures for further development of IT,
- unsatisfactory level of incentive programs and measures in renewable energy and energy efficiency,
- need to raise service quality in drinking water supply (water supply duration, water quality, etc.),
- flights from the country are performed in a limited number of directions.

Our goal: availability and constant development of quality and safe infrastructures in the Republic of Armenia meeting the best global standards with application of modern innovative tools and with active participation in international cooperation programs.

To this end, we are ready:

- to evolve and carry out the five-year plan of road safety in the Republic of Armenia (2017-2021),
- to create and launch a new system of road assets management by means of road stocktaking, mapping and digitization,
- to create and launch a new system of quality assurance for road construction programs,
- to carry out integrated measures for further accelerated development of ICTs, removing hindrances and using new incentives,
- within the framework of the open skies policy, to ensure free competition conditions for air lines,
- for the needs of the domestic market, and in order to use the opportunities of trade with Georgia and Iran, to make a transition to the new modern power market,
- to conduct gradual and continuous institutional reforms in order to raise service quality in drinking and irrigation water supply.

Forthcoming steps:

- to develop and introduce the most efficient two-stage mechanism of quality assurance in road construction programs,
- to regulate interstate and domestic passenger traffic, especially, in terms of evolving and introducing a new route network in order to provide affordable means of transportation

for unserviced towns of the Republic of Armenia,

- to continue the investment program of the North-South transport corridor; private investors are planned to be engaged;
- introduction of on-line control over road cleaning, servicing, and cost efficiency.

RURAL PROGRESS

In the Republic of Armenia, agriculture is a major sector of economy as it accounts for a significant share of the GDP and employment.

Our diagnosis. In the sector there is:

- very slow development of the class of modern farmers, lack of bodies and procedures promoting its establishment,
- unsatisfactory propagation of intensive agriculture and advanced technologies,
- low mechanization of agriculture,
- low efficiency of subsidizing mechanisms,
- inefficient system of agricultural produce sales,
- unused agricultural land,
- low level of cooperation of farms,
- overdue loans of entrepreneurs.

As a result:

- numerous farms with low productivity cannot provide sufficient living standards,
- low fulfillment of agricultural potential,
- food import is higher than optimal.

Our goal is gradual transition to the export-oriented and highly productive food processing chain in the context of integrated agriculture and maximal employment.

To solve the problems of the sector it is planned:

- in 2018-2020 to improve the targeted usage of agricultural land.
- In 2018-2020, to create relevant conditions for the planting of up to 100 ha of new intensive orchards per year.
- To establish a data base of unused farm land, and to consolidate fragmented parcels of land.

- To encourage the introduction of efficient methods of irrigation (including, dripping).
- To make loans more accessible for agriculture.
- To carry out a consistent program for the improvement of breeding properties of agricultural animals.
- During meat sales, to specify the requirement of mandatory animal slaughtering at abattoirs, with the goal of 65% animal slaughtering done at abattoirs in 2017-2018.
- To introduce affordable mechanisms for the upgrade, maintenance and supplies of agricultural machinery.
- To improve the system of awareness raising and agricultural extension services.
- To make pilot insurance programs in agriculture continuous.
- In order to manufacture quality wine, to approve technical specifications for wine, permissible processing and winemaking methods, and to introduce the isotope system of quality assurance and the requirement of relevant labeling.

We are going to attach great attention to food safety. We will rectify the drawbacks in control mechanisms and improve efficiency so that food quality in shops would not raise concerns. At the same time, we will seek to raise food security in this country as a strategic goal.

PROGRESS IN TOURISM

Tourist companies have not yet entirely discovered Armenia which still remains underestimated. That's why we are facing the problem of the relevant presentation of Armenia, its landmarks, its exceptional history and whatever attracts tourists on the external and domestic markets. We shall develop various domains possessing high tourist potentials and raise the level of Armenia's recognition.

Our diagnosis: on the global market, Armenia is not yet sufficiently known as a tourist destination; the number of tourists of non-Armenian origin is not high so far. Tourist infrastructure is not sufficiently developed yet. In addition to being landlocked, and two borders out of four being blocked, there is also competition in air transportation and the geographic diversification problem.

As a result:

- Tourism does not contribute to economy to the extent of its potential.
- Tourism's impact on provinces is limited.

Our goal: by means of continuous improvement of competitiveness of Armenia and Armenia's

tourist product on the global market to ensure a two-digit increase in the number of tourists and even distribution thereof over the entire country.

To this end, it is necessary to do:

- Active and efficient marketing and promotion on target markets.
- Facilitation of border-crossing procedures; introduction of a visa-free regime for the citizens of Japan, Canada and some countries of the Persian Gulf.
- Significant increase in access to Armenia through efficient open skies policy.
- Improvement of RA legislation aimed at the introduction of quality criteria in services and favorable investment climate .

Forthcoming steps:

- To improve support of existing private initiatives in new domains with high tourist potential (mount climbing, bike tourism, extreme tourism, wine tourism, medical tourism, ecotourism, religious tourism, etc.).
- In a number of towns and villages of this country, programs will be undertaken to improve tourism comfort and attractiveness.
- The integrated development program for Gumry airport “Shirak” will be implemented.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

The Armenian people has always valued education. Nowadays, the main prerequisite for success of the state is an educated generation, and the source of wellbeing is knowledge. Our dreamland is intellectual Armenia. Therefore, education shall be of high quality and accessible for all. Qualified specialists in this country shall be always in demand and feel state support. Our task is to provide curricula and textbooks meeting international standards and requirements of the evolving world. We shall do our best so that our universities rank among the most prestigious schools in the world.

A major prerequisite for the economic development of states is the establishment of such domains in science and hi-tech that generate added value. For many years, we have managed to achieve success and tangible results in science. In the IT sphere, currently, we also witness such success. However, the results of applied science in Armenia shall be competitive on the global market of innovations. That is why most of financial support to science shall be channeled to applied-science domains promising tangible results. Thus, for our country which finds itself in a “neither war, nor peace” situation scientific innovations applied to the military industrial sphere will be very important. We shall establish a favorable environment for scientific research and creators of high-quality scientific products.

Our diagnosis: the following problems can be seen in the system of education and science of the Republic of Armenia:

- Low outreach of preschool education.
- Low public accountability in general education institutions.
- The financing system of the functioning educational institutions does not efficiently solve the current problems.
- The content of education does not entirely meet the requirements of social development.
- Science infrastructure does not match the modern requirements to the development of science.
- Total amount of engineering and applied research is very small in financed research.

As a result:

- The curricula are not satisfactory and do not meet current requirements.
- The criteria of textbook content and compilation are unsatisfactory.
- A small amount of innovative and technology methods of teaching in the education process.
- Lack of pedagogic and technical aids for good-quality teaching in rural schools.
- Unsatisfactory cooperation “university-research institute-labor market”.

Our goal: an education system whose graduates will be endowed with modern knowledge, broad thinking and who will act as the foundation of intellectual Armenia.

To this end, it is necessary:

- To develop a new mechanism to finance schools in the category “medium work load school” and “incomplete work load school”.
- To reform the financing of higher education linking it to each discipline rather than each semester.
- To broaden the network of preschool services and examine the efficiency of kindergarten inclusion in the system of 12-year education (1+11).
- To develop on-line courses, video lessons and classes, and to ensure introduction and accessibility thereof in RA rural communities.
- To establish a national syllabus with an emphasis on foreign languages, sciences and mathematics in general education curricula.
- To harmonize discipline curricula with modern requirements, to establish new criteria

for textbooks and to revise textbook content.

- To carry out a structural reform of higher education system and to establish technology/engineering and science clusters.
- To broaden and to diversify the internationalization of universities.
- To ensure permanent and active participation of Armenia in the processes that are underway in the European higher-education area on the all-European and national levels, and to consistently implement the ideas and tasks of the Bologna process.
- To carry out a structural reform in the sphere of science.
- To increase the share of applied research in the programs of basic financing of science and technology, following from the requirements of the market and the concept of state development.

The teachers of this country determine the priorities in education, therefore, the state shall be very considerate with teachers. The teacher in this country shall be valued and feel the state's concern. The teacher's work shall be prestigious and in demand. The teacher shall be proud of one's profession and status.

HEALTHCARE

We need healthy citizens and the state's commitments include the highest possible service quality in public health. Healthy way of life shall become an indispensable part of our life. That is why our task is to ensure the high quality of medical aid and services guaranteed by the state, and the gradual introduction of health insurance. It is necessary to provide free medical aid based on the principle of vulnerability and social justice. At the same time, the state shall stand by any patient who needs urgent surgical intervention.

Our diagnosis. Armenia's healthcare system faces:

- Disparity in state budget allocations and obtained results.
- Uneven territorial distribution of healthcare infrastructure and professional personnel.
- Lack of quality medical aid and unified service standards.
- Low level of targeting in healthcare services, poor control over allocated funds and lack of efficient quality management due to lack of a unified electronic system in this sector.

As a result:

- The RA citizen oftentimes has to pay additionally for free services introduced by the state.

- For the most vulnerable groups of population, the principle of social justice oftentimes is not observed.

Our goal: a transition from the current procurement system that is mostly functioning in the shadow and not by market mechanisms, to targeted actions. **To institute a healthcare system based on the control over allocated funds and on efficient quality management mechanisms.**

In the near future, in order to raise the efficiency of the RA healthcare system and service quality, it is necessary to gradually take the following measures:

- To review the legislation regulating medical aid guaranteed by the state, and services. When defining the scope of beneficiaries of free medical aid in the main healthcare programs, poverty and social justice shall be the fundamental principles.
- To make a gradual transition from the current actual distribution of budget funds between medical institutions to the model of healthcare service procurement, at the same time enhancing the methods and analytical approaches in order to calculate costs of medical services and to develop a pricing policy.
- To adapt the most advanced medical protocols approved by associations of European and American doctors, and based on the latter, to introduce clinical guidelines for patient management and mandatory protocols.
- To carry out clear division of functions of the outpatient and hospital sectors, and to introduce standards for the activities of medical personnel, and encouragement mechanisms, based on personnel performance. To develop and implement a program of personnel, property and professional reforms aimed at the rectification of problems in public ambulatory institutions.

CULTURE

We are rich in cultural values and history, however, we shall not only preserve but demonstrate them to the world, making our culture attractive. At the same time, we shall be open in terms of studies of and familiarization with other nations' culture. That is why both our own and foreign culture shall be accessible for our citizens.

Our diagnosis:

- Uneven development of culture in the provinces of this country.
- Unsatisfactory manifestation of the unified cultural potential of the Diaspora.
- Low efficiency of the economic component of culture development.

- Scarcity of cultural programs and TV broadcasts.
- Unsatisfactory representation of other cultures in Armenia.
- Low efficiency of modern IT and technology application by culture institutions in service provision.

Our goal is broad demonstration of Armenian culture in the RA and abroad through economic incentives in using the culture product and services, cultural and historical heritage and culture values. **Preservation and propagation of culture heritage. To this end:**

- To implement the program “Culture in the provinces of Armenia” in order to solve the problem of even development of culture in provinces.
- To upgrade the mechanisms of grant programs and state order placement in this sphere.
- To give a new impetus to the creation and propagation of the continuously updated assortment of culture souvenirs that meet modern requirements.
- To change the format and principles of state aid to the contemporary Armenian writers: namely, to provide indirect support to book publication (except publication of first books and Diaspora literature), by raising awareness about the author and his works. It is also planned to establish a special fund for the promotion of translations from Armenian literature.

NATURE PROTECTION

In order to protect human health and to improve the quality of life we are going to enhance state control over the environment, i.e., air and water quality, vegetation protection through higher requirements to waste processing.

The proper environmental approach will be a mandatory condition for the implementation of urban development or business projects.

We will continue the rehabilitation and preservation of the ecological equilibrium of Lake Sevan.

Our diagnosis:

- Systemic corruption risks due to unsatisfactory law enforcement in this domain.
- Lack of state monitoring of the environment and nature resources, and lack of a unified management information system.
- Insufficiently targeted use of the financial resources generated from nature-use and environmental-protection fees.

- Lack of a unified system of issuance of environmental-protection permits.
- Low efficiency of the state supervision system.
- Poor efficiency of the systems for the management of specially protected nature areas.

As a result:

In terms of nature protection, the rights of RA citizens are insufficiently protected.

Due to the complicated and uncoordinated system of issuance of environmental-protection permits, the RA citizens and entrepreneurs oftentimes reject their own business ideas; corruption and shadow risks occur.

Our goal: through a policy stimulating the preservation, improvement and rehabilitation of the environment, and reasonable use of nature resources, to ensure real stable economic growth.

To solve the problems in this domain, we plan:

- To finalize the adoption of legislation on environmental policy.
- To develop the concept for the introduction of green economy.
- To build a system of reasonable use of nature resources and unified management of the environment.
- To ensure a unified system of “single-window” electronic issuance of permits and licenses in nature protection.
- To amend the legislation regulating waste water drainage and treatment; to finalize water basin management plans.
- To engage the private sector in the introduction of automated water resources management systems. In the fish farms of Ararat valley, to introduce energy-saving and water-saving systems of automated water resources management.
- To establish new national parks with private sector, community and state participation. To review the management system of specially protected nature territories. To finalize the management plans. To develop conservation mechanisms and skills, including the application of modern technologies.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The worker shall feel the least need for support from the state, being capable of providing decent life for oneself and one’s family, and the state shall work hard to this end. We are aware of that, and we will do it. We will safeguard the interests of our workers, and we will

feel that they are the allies of our state.

At the same time, the state's No. 1 concern shall be the domain of social protection.

Our diagnosis: the system of social protection established over the past years in the Republic of Armenia, still needs to be improved in terms of efficiency in some aspects, despite the improvements and reduction of corruption risks, namely:

- Insufficiently targeted evaluation of family vulnerability as a result of which families that do not differ much in social terms may be assigned substantially differing statuses.
- Imperfection of the allowance data base which is insufficiently targeted and does not comply with modern requirements to management methods.
- Unsatisfactory protection of rights, equal opportunities and favorable conditions for the disabled.
- The current allowance system does not encourage active job seeking.
- Many vulnerable families remain beyond the scope of state social aid.

Our goal is to establish an effective, targeted and transparent management system in the sphere of employment and social protection.

In this sphere the following programs are planned:

- Raising the efficiency of management and making state employment regulation programs more targeted.
- Full-fledged introduction of the institution of volunteer labor.
- Radical revision of the minimal social/labor guarantees and salaries in order to improve the investment climate and stable employment conditions.
- Introduction of the unified information system for social protection.

In terms of improvement of the targeted assessments of vulnerable families, it is planned to amend the assessment procedure of family vulnerability.

To improve the quality of life of children in dire straits, in order to ensure the child's right to live in a family, and to grant social protection guarantees to the child and his family:

- Schedules for the establishment of family and child centers will be developed and approved, as well as legal acts to reorganize institutions (child care boarding schools).
- Population social protection institutions will be reorganized and unloaded; new rehabilitation centers will be established.

As a major goal: when assigning pensions and allowances, the contacts of the beneficiary and

the official will be reduced to the minimum. To this end, it is planned to centralize the decisions on assigning pensions and allowances, to broaden electronic services, unified application of the laws of the Republic of Armenia on pensions and allowances.

To improve the management system in social protection and services, the following is planned:

- Institutional systems of case management considering employment programs as a component of case management.
- Revision of the family allowance system also considering allowances as a component of case management and not as a grant to maintain subsistence.
- Introduction of the integrated social services system (full-scale application).

In order to protect the rights of the disabled and to ensure equal opportunities and accessible conditions, it is planned to improve the legal framework:

- Adoption of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on the protection of the rights and social integration of the disabled, and the ensuing legal acts.
- Introduction of new criteria for defining disability with a precise definition and differentiation of the notions of “being disabled” and “being diseased”, and providing relevant aid packages.
- Introduction of a model for the new definition of disability based on the principles of WHO International Classification of Functioning.

YOUTH AND SPORTS

The youth that has confidence in its future will create strong and sound, safe and forward-looking families. We shall create an environment in which our youth endowed with the highest potentials in the society will fulfill itself, be happy and act in harmony with their conscience. That is why through education, we shall make our youth committed to Armenian traditions and be “global citizens”. We shall also be consistent in providing youth with jobs and implementing special support programs for socially vulnerable families.

The problems of quality and access to education for youth will be considered first priorities. Academically proficient youth, regardless of their social status, will have an opportunity to acquire professional education. We will continue the state youth policy to support the most creative youth in terms of research and education.

For us **the problem of youth employment** remains a priority which will be resolved through the creation of new jobs, promotion of youth employment and improvement of their

competitiveness on the labor market.

We are going to increase the number of youth accommodation programs.

We will be continuously campaigning for the healthy way of life. On the state level, we will be emphasizing the importance of physical culture and sports and pastime in nature's lap far away from computers and gadgets.

In the domain of sports, the main focus of our policy will be the broadening of the outreach of sports clubs and schools by means of making them more affordable. In order to ensure mass coverage of sports and physical culture a new financing model will be applied based on the cooperation of the state, community and the private sector.

Dear Compatriots!

The hay-harvesting villager and the high-ranking official, the entrepreneur and the narrow specialist or any working person shall be appreciated and be in the state's center of attention as they represent one single image of the citizen of the Republic of Armenia regardless of their position, status, profession and social standing. The citizens of Armenia are the guarantors of the future we are dreaming of, knowledgeable, hard-working, proud and forward looking. Nowadays, they are creating the future by their hard work.

We are ready to work with everyone who wishes to create in order to organize our common home.

We believe in our people and its ability to work, to learn, to appreciate the new and to apply our abilities and good will.

We will draw upon the values of the strong traditional family. Yes, we believe the family is our society in miniature and an important stimulus of state progress. By means of family consolidation we are going to consistently solve our problems.

Obviously, presently we are facing difficulties and problems but if we rethink our traversed historical path, and the trials and tribulations we had overcome, then we will realize that today's problems are surmountable and not vice versa. Let us be optimists and trust that safeguarding the state, which we have attained with such difficulty, and moving forward, we will turn this state into ARMENIA of our dreams.