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ARMENIAN WOMEN OUTLINE PRIORITIES TO INCREASE THEIR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ROLE

YEREVAN, ARMENIA – More than 300 Armenian women leaders today called for increased support for women’s political and economic participation in the country following a two-day conference here on women in politics.

At a news conference, the women released a document outlining the top priorities identified at a nationwide conference, “Women in Politics,” hosted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), with support from the United States Agency for International Development.

The document also called for improving women’s access to healthcare and reducing domestic and gender-based violence. The leaders identified these as spheres where policy recommendations need to be developed in order to better address women’s concerns. In the political and economic areas it recommended creation of a quota to increase women’s representation in national and local elected bodies and passage of a gender equity law and other measures to improve business opportunities and working conditions for women.

The document focuses on issues that have gone largely unaddressed in Armenia. Where legislation exists, it is often poorly understood or implemented.

Armenian women plan to use the document to encourage political parties to address these priority issues for women as they create campaign platforms for parliamentary elections next year. It also identifies potential platform components for individual women who are considering running for office.

The recommendations outlined in the document will be refined over the next several months by working groups focusing on each of the individual issues. The groups will include conference representatives, including women from both Yerevan and the regions, and political party and civil society members. Experts from academia, international organizations and government bodies charged with developing policy recommendations in the respective issue areas also will be invited to participate.

Several international women leaders supported the Armenian women participants by offering their expertise. They included Meryl Frank, former U.S. representative to the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women; Marie Yovanovitch, U.S. ambassador to Armenia; Diana

Janse, Swedish ambassador to Armenia and Georgia; Robin Carnahan, Missouri secretary of state; and Bladorodna Mingova Krepieva, former Macedonian member of parliament and ambassador to Albania.

The United Nations, British Embassy and British Council in Yerevan also generously contributed to the conference.

The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information is available at www.ndi.org.

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