

January 13, 2011

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) recently presented the results of its focus group research in Armenia. The research demonstrates that women and youth in Armenia face tremendous cultural and economic barriers to civic and political participation and offers insight on potential methods for better engaging them. Attached, please find the corresponding PowerPoint Presentation.

The focus groups, which were conducted in May 2010 with the assistance of the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) and with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), reveal the most pressing needs and interests of women and youth in Armenia. In particular, focus group participants highlighted problems including: unemployment; poor quality of higher education; corruption, particularly in higher education; and limits on freedom of expression. For women, the severity of these challenges is exacerbated by the very patriarchal society in which they live; a 2010 report by the World Economic Forum¹ currently ranks Armenia 106th out of 131 countries in terms of its political representation and empowerment of women.

NDI presented these results to more than 45 representatives of local embassies and international and domestic organizations at the December 10 event in Yerevan. In early 2011, the Institute will share these findings with government institutions and political parties to encourage better inclusiveness and representation of and improved outreach to these two underrepresented constituencies.

If you would like more information about NDI's focus group research or its programs in Armenia, please contact Gegham Sargsyan in Yerevan at gsargsyan@ndi.org, or Edmund Rhoads and Alex Hiatt in DC at Edmund@ndi.org and ahiatt@ndi.org.

¹ "The Global Gender Gap Report 2010," The World Economic Forum, <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2010>, 60.