

Gender Equality in the Context of the Laws of the Russian Federation and Republic of Abkhazia

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This article is dedicated to comparative and legal studies of Constitutions and effective laws of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia with respect to personal rights and freedoms and particular focus on gender equality. Similarities and differences in regulation of gender equality are also outlined herein. This scientific study seeks to identify methods of solving the problems caused by gender inequality in Russia and Abkhazia. This study has identified the cause of problems in the sphere of regulation of gender discrimination in Russia and Abkhazia and offers the appropriate solutions.

Key words: Gender equality, women rights, human-rights.

Development of constitutionalism within the post-Soviet area stems from the ultimately important events in the life of the ex-USSR republics involving the adoption of fundamental laws – constitutions. It is not only about fixing the independent political and legal status of the new states, but also about fundamental changes to the very essence of the legal systems. It is our opinion that constitutions of the Russian Federation (hereinafter – “the RF”) and the Republic of Abkhazia (hereinafter – “the RA”) prioritize the chapters dedicated to human and civil rights and freedoms. We particularly focused on gender equality regulations.

Equality of men and women is still a hot topic for most European countries where regulatory legal acts have been developed and adopted with respect to gender parity in various spheres of public life. *“Over the last 50 years, gender equality has transformed our society. No*

longer are specific jobs reserved for men or for women. Our universities are close to having true gender parity in admissions, and the traditional family model is increasingly being redefined for modern attitudes and working styles—in fact, stay-at-home fathers whose spouse goes out to work now accounts for 10% of UK families.” (Darnell and Gadish, 2013)

Gender equality as social and legal phenomenon is still a novelty in Russia and Abkhazia. While the West is struggling for equal rights, Russia and Abkhazia are apparently fixed on traditional values of a strong, big family. “State documents refer to the women’s rights (as opposed to gender parity), specifically emphasizing the opportunity to combine family and job for women rather than men.” (Bydaragin, 2013)

Our society is inclined to have negative attitude toward gender parity. For example, about 100 feminists marched in Moscow in March 2014 under the slogans for protection of women’s rights, against gender discrimination, domestic violence and reproductive freedom only to be attacked by nationalist thugs. (Human rights in Russia, 2014)

However, according to the program of

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activities of the Union of Women of Russia in 2013–2017, reconciliation of equal rights and opportunities of men and women appears to be one of the fields of concern. (The Union of Russian's women, 2013), would also like to note that gender ravestva generate significant social and economic problems (Kryukova *et al.*, 2015)

The Union of Women of Abkhazia has been rallying since 2007 for revision of the existing regulatory legal acts or for adoption of new laws, which would specifically promote true observation of the women's rights and their protection against domestic violence that has considerably grown in Abkhazia after the tragic events of war, blockade and isolation.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Abkhazia has been chosen for comparative analysis of legal regulation of gender equality in Russia. Once a member of the USSR, the Republic of Abkhazia has been fighting for self-determination and sovereignty for the last twenty years. In addition, legal system of Abkhazia is also part of the civil law that is similar to legal system of the Russian Federation, which only facilitates the comparison.

All of the above explains the choice and relevance of the topic.

Different Approaches to the Definition of the Terms "Equality" and "Gender Equality"

Equality is one of the fundamental values of social life. This category and its meaning have been the focus of sophists, lawmakers and common people since ancient times. A number of historical eras and mindset of the authors shaped by their social and economic status, stages of scientific cognition and methods finally yielded several ways and approaches to understanding of this category.

Philosophy distinguishes formal equality (similar attitude in similar situations) and fundamental ethical equality that is based on the so-called golden rule of morality, meaning recognition of equal dignity of each representative of human race.

Religion distinguishes Judaic and Christian approach to equality. The previous is based on equality of people recognizing that they all have been created by God (monotheistic concept of equality) – a positive equality, whereas the latter is based on the community evolving from the original sin (so-called universally negative

equality) (Ivin *et al.*, 2004).

Classical, medieval and enlightened scholars (Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, More, etc) suggested their own approaches to the category of equality.

From the point of view of mathematical equality (Leibniz), equality is a relationship between interchangeable objects which, by virtue of the said interchangeability, are treated as equal (sort of similar to Aristotle's idea of arithmetical and geometrical equality).

According to Marxist theory, people became obsessed with the idea of equality as class segregation commenced (Shahnazarov, 1959). Therefore, the older concepts of equality were complemented by the ideas of social and communist equality.

The idea of social equality implied equal attitude toward the means and instruments of production, civil rights and duties, and equal right to enjoy values, material and spiritual, created by the society (Konstantinov *et al.*, 1960-1970).

Legal aspect of equality, its legal nature and meaning were reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) where several articles were dedicated to equality: Article 1 – All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; Article 7 – All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination; Article 10 – Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him. Other sides of the equality are also addressed in Article 21, Article 23, etc. (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Article 2 specifically points out that no distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status shall be tolerated (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). In essence, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that all people are equal. Equality in the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights implies equal values, rights, protection by the government and equal duties of all people regardless of their distinctions.

The idea of universal equality also formed the basis of fundamental laws of Russia and Abkhazia (see Constitutions of the RF and the RA, Chapter 2 – Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not mention or explain the category of “gender equality”. The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women does not mention this term either. However, following the analysis of the Convention, one may be able to outline the borders of this term. Therefore, gender equality should imply the ability of men and women, in equal conditions and without any discrimination, to exercise their interests in the sphere of education, employment, healthcare, politics, as well as civil, economic, cultural, social, etc. interests.

Pursuant to Article 2 of the Convention, the signatory states unconditionally agree to use all means available for the purpose of elimination of any discrimination against women and undertake to introduce the principle of equality of men and women in their national constitutions or any other such laws, unless they have already done that, and use the said laws and other appropriate measures to promote practical application of this principle; taking appropriate legislative and other such measures, including sanctions, wherever and if necessary, to eliminate all and any forms of discrimination against women, etc. (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979).

METHOD

Object of study – rights and freedoms of the man and citizen of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia.

Subject of study – legal acts of Russia and Abkhazia regulating the equality of men and women and their ability to exercise their rights in various spheres without any discrimination.

This comparative and legal study is based on application universal, general and private scientific and legal methods of cognition. The use of formal and comparative law research methods is particularly important. In addition, the study of legal systems of two countries shall be consistent with principles of scientific cognition, such as

consistency, scientific nature, historicism, feasibility, etc.

The research of phenomenon known as “gender equality” in the Russian Federation is mostly focused on social aspect (e.g., “Gender Inequality in the System of Political Power” (Ivanova, 2005) and “Formation of National Gender Equality Mechanism in the Russian Federation” (Ismagilova, 2010). So far, Russian legal science can boast relatively few studies in this sphere, one of the most complete projects here being the thesis “Theoretical and Practical Issues of Gender Equality of Citizens in Contemporary Russia” (Gordina, 2005). On the other hand, Abkhazia has no scientific thesis whatsoever dedicated to “gender equality” as social and legal phenomenon.

According to the review of scientific works, no one ever conducted historical, legal and comparative studies of gender equality in Russia and Abkhazia.

Actuality and lack of scientific insight predetermined the topic of this study.

RESULTS

Similarity of Russian and Abkhazian Legal Policy in the Sphere of Gender Equality

- a) Neither the Constitution of the RF, nor the Constitution of the RA mentions “gender equality”.
- b) Both the Constitution of the RF and the Constitution of the RA make provisions for the principle of gender equality. According to Article 19 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, all people shall be equal before the law and court. The State shall guarantee the equality of rights and freedoms of man and citizen, regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property and official status, place of residence, religion, convictions, membership of public associations, and also of other circumstances. All forms of limitations of human rights on social, racial, national, linguistic or religious grounds shall be banned. (The Constitution of The Russian Federation, 1993).

Gender equality is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Abkhazia in Article 12 – Basic rights and freedoms are the birthright of

human beings. Everyone is born free. All are equal before the law and the court without distinction of race, nationality, sex, language, origin, property status or position, domicile, religion, beliefs, ideology or other considerations (The Constitution Of The Republic of Abkhazia, 1999).

Differences in Russian and Abkhazian Legal Policy in the Sphere of Gender Equality

a) Equality of men and women was separately addressed in Clause 3 Article 19 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation: “Man and woman shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms and have equal possibilities to exercise them”. This is how the authors of the law and the multiple nations comprising the Russian Federation emphasized the immense social importance of this norm by declaring and voting for this Constitution in 1993. Unlike the Russian Constitution, the Abkhazian lawmakers eschewed specification of equality of men and women, finding the language of Article 12 (see above) exhaustive.

- a) We tend to see certain logic in the Russian wording of the same Article, which is to once again emphasize the importance of gender equality for Russia and the focus of the government and society on this matter.
- b) In 2003, members of the State Duma of the Russian Federation (V.V. Volodin, E.F. Lakhova, O.V. Morozov and G.I. Raykov) petitioned for the lower house of the Parliament to consider the draft law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for Their Realization”. The primary goal of this draft law is to outline measures facilitating the implementation of the state policy to secure equal rights, freedoms and opportunities of men and women, to prevent gender discrimination, and thereby promote strong and sustainable growth of the country.

This draft law was designed to promote refinement of provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation concerning the ban of gender discrimination and bringing the individuals to liability for breach thereof. Consideration of this draft law entailed the study of key concepts of gender equality and breach thereof, as well as the most vital spheres of social life wherein any such breach occurs from time to time, and mechanisms

facilitating the protection against the infringement of the rights and restoration of social justice.

The draft law appears to be the first legal instrument to explain the terms “gender”, “gender factor”, “equal opportunities”, “gender equality”, “discrimination”, etc. Members of the Parliament suggested the draft law with definition of gender – social aspect of relationship between the man and the woman that manifests itself in every sphere of public life, including politics, economy, law, ideology, culture, etc. “Gender equality” should be construed as equal legal status of women and men, as well as equal opportunities to exercise the said status, allowing men and women alike to freely develop their potential, skills and expertise for participation in political, economic, social and cultural processes, and to enjoy their accomplishments (The Draft Federal Law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for Their Realization”, 2003).

This draft law is still pending in the Russian Federation, unlike similar draft law that ensures equal rights and opportunities for men and women, that was drawn by the Government of the Republic of Abkhazia in conjunction with Women’s Association of Abkhazia, adopted by the National Assembly of the RA and signed by the President of the RA in 2008 (The Law of the Republic of Abkhazia “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women in the Republic of Abkhazia”, 2008).

Comparative Legal Analysis of the Law of the Republic of Abkhazia “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women in the Republic of Abkhazia” and Draft Law of the Russian Federation “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for Their Realization”.

Before this draft law, Russian lawmakers hardly ever bothered to get insight into gender phenomena. For lack of a better official definition of the said phenomena, one should make do with the one mentioned in glossary of the Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation dated 06.10.2005 – “On the Concept of Preventive Education in the Field of HIV/AIDS in the Educational Environment”.

According to the glossary in the said letter, “the gender” means a “culture-specific

combination of features defining the social behavior of women and men in their relationship...” (The Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation “On the Concept of Preventive Education in the Field of HIV/AIDS in the Educational Environment”, 2005)

Same as in Russia, Abkhazian lawmakers first noticed the problem of gender equality only at the time of consideration of a similar law developed to secure equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the Republic of Abkhazia in 2008.

Both the draft law of the RF and the Law of the RA have one common goal – formalize measures in pursuance of the state policy aiming to secure equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for men and women.

Following the comparative analysis of the Russian draft law and the Law of the Republic of Abkhazia, we would conclude as follows:

Articles of Chapter 1 of the Law of the Republic of Abkhazia and the draft law of the Russian Federation – General Provisions – are dedicated to key terms used in the said documents, their definitions and boundaries. Despite the explanation of seemingly common terms, there are a number of differences. The Abkhazian wording of “discrimination by gender” is more precise due to the reference to public relations which may become the object of discrimination. The Russian draft law refers to an abstract discrimination, although definition thereof contains an explanation that is close, implicitly and content-wise, to the goal of the law. However, we tend to believe it would be more correct to define a specific kind of discrimination which the law is drafted to deal with.

The Law of Abkhazia singles out discrimination by gender and also makes provisions for various forms of potentially discriminating deeds (direct and indirect discrimination), which is quite innovative for the laws of Abkhazia and has no comparable counterparts in the Russian draft law. A detailed approach to the matter which we consider to be the focal point of this law that is directly tied to the goals thereof, is of great practical importance. The Law of the RA defines direct discrimination as any deed that is discriminating any particular person against another person of the opposite gender in similar situations; meanwhile, indirect discrimination should rather mean any actions, rules, criteria or practices

identical for men and women *per se* but manifesting themselves in unequal consequences or results for any specific gender.

Neither document recognizes discrimination by gender any actions related to protection of maternal functions (as in draft laws of the Russian Federation), such as benefits, privileges and additional guarantees for women under applicable labor laws; limitation of the man’s right to demand divorce (under the Law of the RA); call to military duty (for men); different pension ages for men and women established by applicable laws (the Law of the RA); qualification requirements for activities where gender features represent a decisive factor due to specific conditions and methods of conduct of any particular activity, etc. In addition, unlike the draft law of the Russian Federation, the Law of the Republic of Abkhazia defines indiscriminating measures aiming to protect women under criminal and procedural laws of the Republic of Abkhazia. Therefore, this is yet another provision that the Abkhazian lawmakers spelled out (Article 3) in a comprehensible to layman manner, whereas the Russian lawmakers resort to the more abstract wording (Article 2) that requires extended interpretation.

As regards the ways of securing equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the abovementioned instruments, the Russian lawmakers resorted to the path of maximum elaboration, in contrast to Article 4 of the similar Law of Abkhazia. Members of the Russian Parliament offered a rather extensive list of ways for the state policy to attain and maintain gender equality, specifically:

- a) Formation of legal basis for securing gender equality;
- b) Improvement and development of the laws regulating this sphere;
- c) Gender-specific expert examination of regulatory legal acts adopted by the state authorities;
- d) Adoption and implementation of special programs to eliminate gender discrimination;
- e) Fostering and propaganda of cultural equality of men and women;
- f) Protection of the public against information aiming to discriminate citizens by gender, etc. (the Draft Federal Law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Realization”, 2003).

Wording of the similar Article of the Law of the RA is limited to “gender-based expert examination of the adopted decisions and control measures in this sphere”. The Law of the RA provides detailed description of the ways for the state policy to proceed in Chapter 4 – Mechanism of Ensuring Equal Rights of Men and Women. However, it does not tackle such important aspects as fostering of the equality culture, formation of legal basis, securing the gender equality, improvement and development of the laws regulating this sphere, etc., which, in our opinion, is caused by the problems with implementation of these provisions resulting from lack of the necessary material and technical, organizational and other conditions, as well as establishment of an independent legal system of Abkhazia at this time. Patriarchal traditions that have been dominating the Abkhazian community for ages play a certain role in this matter. Both the Law of the RA and the Draft Law of the RF make provisions for maintenance of gender statistics (Article 16 and Article 5 respectively).

The Russian draft law (Chapter 2) envisages guarantees for securing equal rights and opportunities in science, training, education, economics, culture, labor and employment, as well as certain social relations (insurance, social care). The Law of the RA also sets various guarantees that the state will secure equality of men and women. Technically, comparing the methods set forth in the Russian draft law, one may detect quite a number of differences. For example, along with the need to secure equal rights and opportunities of men and women upon employment, equal accessibility of vacancies, equal remuneration for equal labor, equal rights as they pertain to advanced training, provision of safe labor conditions – for men and women alike – as in the Russian draft law, the Law of the RA complements this Article with provision about the need to apply the same disciplinary sanctions for the same offense committed by the employees, regardless of their gender (Article 5).

Both the draft law of the RF and the Law of the RA oblige the employer to prove the absence of intent to discriminate by gender. This is exactly how this provision is worded in the Russian version. Therefore, the Russian draft law promulgates presumption of the employer’s guilt

if circumstances mentioned in the disposition of this norm (Article 9) are realized. Similar Article of the Abkhazian law is not as explicit in calling to account the employer accused of gender discrimination. However, under this law, the employer who rejects a candidate is required to explain (if the candidate requests so) that the candidate is rejected because some other individual has better qualification, vocational training and other advantages to fill the vacancy in question (Clause 2 Article 7). The Law of the Republic of Abkhazia “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women in the Republic of Abkhazia” prohibits publication of the advertising contrary to the principle of equality of men and women, including the announcement and holding of tenders for individuals of the same gender, unless the gender is the decisive factor for the employee to perform his/her labor functions in a proper manner.

The draft law of the Russian Federation makes separate provisions for equal opportunities in the sphere of public and municipal services (Article 3). Equal access to public service for men and women is guaranteed by the Law of the RA (Chapter 3 Article 13).

Chapter 4 of the draft law of the Russian Federation is dedicated to the guarantee of equal voting powers. It emphatically points out that one needs to factor in the gender equality factor while drafting the lists of political candidates and nomination of the latter, including nomination of candidates to the public authorities and local self-government bodies, composition of the election commissions on various levels, etc. The Abkhazian lawmakers are rather vague in Article 12 where gender equality in politics boils down to the opportunity of men and women to join any public associations, political parties and trade unions. We believe this ‘truncated’ specification of the constitutional norm regulating the equality in the RA (Article 12) is nothing but subtle attempt to keep women away from the office.

The mechanism that secures equal rights and freedoms for men and women and equal opportunities for their realization includes coordination and supervision by the President of the Russian Federation, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Government of the Russian Federation, executive authorities, local self-

government bodies, the Ombudsperson and public associations.

Being one of the principles of the Russian constitutionalism, gender equality shall be taken into account at the time of appointment of various judges of the Russian Federation. In addition, pursuant to Article 19 of the Draft Law, the Government of the Russian Federation shall make reports on the state of affairs in the sphere of equality of men and women and have them published by mass media.

The Law of the RA assigns the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Abkhazia to conduct the appropriate policy ensuring gender equality. The Cabinet is, therefore, authorized to conduct gender-specific expert examination of regulatory legal acts, develop and implement governmental target programs with the purpose of elimination of gender discrimination, etc. More importantly, the Abkhazian law contains a norm that requires the Cabinet of Ministers of the RA to develop the Concept of Improvement of Women's Status in the Republic of Abkhazia, which, regrettably, has not been adopted so far.

Public control plays a significant role in promotion of gender equality and the implementation arrangements. Under the Law, the Public Chamber of the Republic of Abkhazia is to exercise the said control functions. The Chamber has the power to conduct gender-specific expert examination of the regulatory legal acts, register and keep records of violation of gender equality, petition to the state authorities and local self-government bodies in writing to have the detected violations of gender equality eliminated, report to the President of the RA on an annual basis about the state of affairs in gender policy and publish the same report in mass media (Article 15).

On the whole, the Law of the RA and the draft law of the RF have a lot in common and both are adopted in accordance with applicable international laws.

DISCUSSION

Adoption of the Law of Abkhazia "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women in the Republic of Abkhazia" is indicative, on the one hand, of a sufficiently developed legal system of Abkhazia while, on the

other hand, it demonstrates the desire to express in the national laws principles of gender equality despite the problems caused by partial recognition of the national identity and sovereignty of Abkhazia by the UN member states, which prevents the RA from ratification of such important international legal acts as the 1979 Convention.

It appears, though, that the said law is mostly of declarative nature, because it fails to outline real mechanisms that would ensure realization of the constitutional principle of gender equality. In addition to political problems, one should point out economic difficulties due to which Abkhazia is currently unable to provide sufficient funding for implementation of this regulatory legal act. All of this is manifested in Article 14 and Article 15 of the relevant law concerning the establishment of public rather than state control over securing of equal rights and opportunities of men and women. Studying the reasons of declarative nature of the Abkhazian law, one should also factor in the cultural component. One should keep in mind that legal system of Abkhazia took shape under the influence of patriarchal ideology and the resulting common law which, in a varying degree, still holds a certain, and quite honorable, place in the Abkhazian society. One may agree with Zarina Gabueva whose article dedicated to mechanism of protection of women's rights in the Republic of Abkhazia points out that "the culture of protection of women against discrimination in Abkhazia is in an infant state so far. More often than not, a woman is doomed to be misinterpreted, and sometimes ridiculed, whenever she tries to protect her rights by turning to, among other things, the state authorities" (Gabueva, 2011).

The Law of Abkhazia and the draft law of the Russian Federation regulating the gender equality are remarkably inferior to similar laws in England ("Gender Equality Duty. Code of Practice. England and Wales") or France ("Gender Equality Bill").

The British and French laws were adopted exactly with the purpose of developing the legal mechanisms to eliminate discrimination by gender in a number of spheres. The British reckoned that declaration of certain norms alone will not facilitate the fight for gender equality. The British laws makes provisions for encouragement of companies which abide by the principle of gender equality upon hiring their employees. A number of norms in this

law aim to eliminate unlawful discrimination and oppression in the sphere of employment and professional training (including higher and extended education) of the people who undergo sex change surgery, whether in the past, present or future (Gender Equality Duty. Code of Practice. England and Wales, 2007). Some provisions of the law are dedicated to elimination of the gap in salary of women and men; child care allowance to fathers payable by the state and by employers; motivating the girls to make professional career, etc.

CONCLUSION

Being a party to the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Russian Federation endeavors its best efforts to maximize the introduction of principles of the said Convention in its national legal system. However, by virtue of objective and, sometimes, subjective reasons, this law is long overdue. The Government of the Russian Federation in its formal feedback on the Draft Law points out that provisions of the draft law duplicate norms of the effective legislative acts, whereas the norms set forth in the draft law are already included in industry-specific legislative acts. The biggest excuse, though, is the absence of funds in the federal budget for implementation of measures suggested by the lawmakers (Formal Feedback on the draft Federal Law No. 284965-3 "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Freedoms of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Realization", 2011). The latest hearings on this draft law were scheduled for February 2013 but never happened.

Unfortunately, both genders suffer in Russia and Abkhazia from stereotyped understanding of their roles and demands in the society. The society of these two countries is not ready so far to break those stereotypes due to patriarchal culture and orthodox dogmas. Whether it is good or bad is still to be seen. However, it is apparent that neither the influence of progressive Western culture, nor participation in Conventions will be able to break the stereotypes or shift cultural foundations any time soon, unless the people of these countries actively respond to human demands they may experience.

It is our opinion that gender equality

regulations in Russia and Abkhazia may be improved through fostering and propaganda of education in pre-school, secondary schools and high schools.

It is particularly important today that proper funds are assigned to the scientific research programs dedicated to the study and application of legal mechanisms to regulate gender equality. It is absolutely necessary to engage European experts in these studies who may share their considerable practical experience in this sphere.

Finally, we would point out that, despite the problems facing the Russian lawmakers and the Abkhazian law enforcers and common citizens, introduction of these laws is an important step toward the struggle against gender discrimination in the Russian and Abkhazian society. We only hope that any problems arising out of or related to the adoption and practical implementation of these regulatory legal acts will be handled in a timely manner, and the said norms will be consistent and provide an opportunity to implement principles guaranteed by the state, such as the gender equality principle.

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