

## **PRSP Social Partnership Agreement**

### **The undersigned parties prioritizing:**

- *the issue of overcoming poverty in Armenia and the Armenian Poverty Reduction Strategy Program aimed at this purpose*
- *Public participation in PRSP elaboration, evaluation and monitoring activities*
- *enhancement of social partnership institutes within the scope of PRSP participatory process and ensuring continuity and efficiency of participation*

### **Taking into account the experience of PRSP and PRSP participatory process of the previous phase:**

the Parties sign this agreement (hereinafter Agreement) expressing their willingness to take part in the PRSP elaboration, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring process till 2012 as a stakeholder.

### **1. General Provisions**

1.1. The purpose of the PRSP Social Partnership Agreement is to reach an agreement over the general principles underlying the PRSP elaboration (including current stage of update), implementation, evaluation and monitoring processes on through harmonization of interests of different units representing different layers of society.

### **1.2. The Subject of the PRSP Social Partnership Agreement.**

The subject of the PRSP Social Partnership Agreement is the identification of basic principles of the social partnership institutes as well as definition of rights and responsibilities of the parties.

### **1.3. The Background of the Social Partnership Agreement**

RA Legislations, other legal acts, the PRSP and the Concept of Development of PRSP Social Partnership Institutes serve a background for the PRSP Social Partnership Agreement.

## **2. The Basic Principles of the PRSP Social Partnership Agreement**

### **2.1 The Objective of PRSP Social Partnership**

The purpose of PRSP Social Partnership Institute is to harmonize the interests of representatives of different layers of the society, public institutions and coordinate their efforts directed towards elaboration of PRSP and its efficient implementation.

### **Goals and Objectives of the PRSP Social Partnership Institute are:**

- Provision of all stakeholders with equal opportunities for presenting and defending their position and interests.
- Creation of preconditions for increase of effectiveness of PRSP implementation by means of active involvement of the civil society in the development of PRSP policies, as well as in the decision making, monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Supporting creation of favorable environment for enhancement of the civil society

### **2.2 The Basic Principles of the PRSP SPI Operation**

### **The core Principles of SPI operation:**

- Organization of the of the PRSP SPI activities and design of the managerial system on “bottom up” principle
- Ensure equal opportunities for participation for all parties
- Ensure transparency and accountability of the PRSP SPI activities
- Making the voice of large layer of the society, especially voice of the poor audible.
- Enhance the cooperation between the civil society and Government over the PRSP implementation based on harmonization of their interests.

## **2.3 The Main Problems of PRSP and the Ways of Solving Them**

### **2.3.1 Full public involvement in the policy development processes**

- Formation of policy Boards within the RA Ministries and state agencies involving the members of PRSP Working Group representing NGOs and members of Negotiating Groups. Envisage establishment of such Boards within the local self-governance bodies
- The PRSP Working Group twice a year should present relevant reports to the public and assure open discussion of the latter
- In the course of RA Government and National Assembly decision making process the PRSP Working Group should present special opinion from the PRSP perspective and assure its discussion

### **2.3.2 Assure involvement of the civil society in the program implementation within the PRSP framework**

- Establishment of a relevant legislative field which will define the spheres and type of services that can be realized through involvement of non-governmental organizations or some other means.
- Supporting establishment of the civil cooperation network and assure implementation of ongoing activities providing required financing, including provision of public funding.

### **2.3.3 Increase efficiency of monitoring and evaluation within the scope of PRSP**

- The parties assure continuous monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP implementation, actions and the outcomes cooperating in this process with the other parties or their representatives
- Formation of fast response monitoring groups in marzes and communities with the involvement of NGOs. The above-mentioned groups should conduct continuous monitoring of the programs implemented within the PRSP framework at the local level.

## **3. Parties of the Social Partnership Agreement**

The parties of the PRSP Social Partnership Agreement are the units signing the above presented agreement and representing the following groups:

- RA Government
- RA National Assembly
- Local-Self Governance Bodies
- Political Parties
- Trade Unions
- Funds
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Independent Scientific Research Centers
- Mass Media
- Unions of juristic persons
- Profit-making organization
- Armenian Apostolic Church and other religious organizations
- Other formal and non-formal organizations

### **3.1 The Rights and Liabilities of the PRSP Social Partnership Parties**

#### **3.1.1 The Rights of the Parties**

The Parties have the right to:

- a. Take part in PRSP elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process
- b. Take part in the formation of SPI structures and management bodies as well as in the election of authorized representatives delegated to PRSP management bodies
- c. Apply for and receive any information and papers/documents related to the PRSP implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes
- d. Spread information, documents related to the PRSP implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes
- e. Organize or take part in public events (e.g. seminars, workshops, negotiations)
- f. Submit proposals and receive relevant responses from the PRSP SPI organizational structure and PRSP administrative bodies
- g. In case of refusing to accept the special recommendations submitted by any of the parties demand from the PRSP Management Bodies written justifications.

#### **3.1.2 The Liabilities of the Parties**

The parties are obliged to:

- a. Adhere to the “bottom-up principle” in all spheres of PRSP related activities, implement activities aimed at increase of public awareness for expanding public participation in the PRSP processes
- b. Implement activities aimed at increasing public awareness over the PRS processes for expanding the inclusiveness in the PRSP participatory process
- c. Implement activities aimed at formation of a will to participate in the PRSP processes and raise consciousness over the interests among wide layers of public
- d. Collect and present to the PRSP Management bodies proposals reflecting the public opinion and interests
- e. Mobilize the public and private resources for lobbying incorporation of submitted proposals in the PRSP policies.
- f. Act constructively, contribute to the development of cooperation and support implementation of all identified issues
- g. Ensure transparency and accountability of PRSP processes (elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and of the activities of the involved parties
- h. Ensure interrelation between PRSP SPI parties and the society
- i. Take part in the activities aimed at formation, development and functioning of the SPI organizational structure
- j. Take part in the work of PRSP management bodies.
- k. Adhere to the basic principles reflected in the given Agreement and to the mission fixed in PRSP SPI.

### **4. The Institutional Framework Ensuring Exercise of the PRSP Social Partnership Agreement**

4.1 The participatory managerial system of the PRSP consists of two levels: The PRSP Steering Committee and the PRSP Working. The PRSP Secretariat organizes the activities of PRSP Steering Committee and Working Group.

4.2 For assuring efficient participation of the civil society in PRSP elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes a PRSP SPI organizational body will be established (the “PRSP Civil Society Network”). The activities of the above-mentioned institution will be aimed at mobilizing the stakeholders, coordinating the activities implemented in the framework of the participatory process and focusing solution of the PRSP related issues.

The elements of social partnership can be traced in the PRSP management structure. Both the PRSP Working Group and PRSP Steering Committee are set up and function on the basis of the public participation principle.

The PRSP Civil Cooperation Network is a system, which consists of Negotiating Groups, PRS Civil Cooperation Network Secretariat, and Civil Cooperation Network Board. The mechanisms of formation of PRSP Civil Society Network, including the establishment of structural, units are presented in the Annexes.

The establishment of the PRSP Civil Cooperation Network, including regulations and the procedures will be fulfilled by the parties signing the Agreement.

## **5. Termination of the Agreement**

1. The Agreement is terminated
  - The period of validity of the expired has expired
  - The parties refuse to continue cooperation
2. Each party can withdraw from the Agreement informing in written form the other parties in advance.

## **Annex 1**

### **Mechanisms of Establishment of PRSP Social Partnership Organizational Settings and the Scope of Rights and Liabilities**

#### **1. Involvement of Large Layers of the Society in the PRSP SPI Development Process**

- 1.1 Representation of wide layers of society in the Social Partnership institutes will be assured by means of the open procedure of signing the Social Partnership Agreement. This will provide an opportunity to all civil society representatives to sign the agreement. To this end the information about the formation of Social Partnership Institutes and the Social Partnership Agreement will be spread through mass media.
- 1.2 Due to the fact the process of signing the document is open all the civil society settings both, formal and non-formal can become a part of the Agreement. The member organizations of the units that sign the agreement can also act separately and sign the agreement as separate units.

#### **2. Involvement of the Social Partnership Agreement Parties in the Development of the PRSP SPI Organization Structure**

- 2.1 Only the civil society institutes that have signed the agreement can take part in the development of a Civil Cooperation Network (hereinafter CCN). The RA Government and the RA National Assembly, the self-governance bodies, judicial bodies can participate in the CCN establishment process. Their engagement in the SPI will be assured through the PRSP representation in the PRSP Management Settings with a deliberative vote.
- 2.2 The civil society representatives that parties signed the Agreement to should call a General Meeting during which the CCN negotiation groups will be formed, the management structure will be approved, and the charter, regulations and the procedures will be adopted. During the establishment and operation of the CCN each of the formal and non-formal institutions undersigned parties (including the unions, associations, networks and other type of units that have acted jointly) will have one vote.
- 2.3 The negotiation groups can be formed on the basis of sector and territorial characteristics as well as on the basis of common interests during the poverty reduction. One unit can be represented in different Negotiating Groups, however with vote.  
Organizational and technical support will be provided by the RA Government.

#### **3. The PRSP Social Partnership Institutes: The Framework of their Rights and Liabilities**

- 3.1 The Civil Cooperation network is a non-formal institution consisting of representatives different civil society settings, which is involved in the PRSP development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes and also in coordination of the participatory process. The PRSP CCN is an institution consisting of Negotiation Group, CCN Secretariat and CCN Board.
- 3.2 The PRSP CCN Negotiation Group is a non-formal setting established for assuring involvement of wide layers of society in the PRSP participation process. The latter are classified either according to the field of their activity, or on the basis of the priority fields identified in the framework of PRSP implementation process in which the above-mentioned institutions.
- 3.3 The PRSP CCN Board is a non-formal institution consisting of the Negotiation Group representatives. The Board should also coordinate the activities of civil society institutes engaged in the PRSP Participatory process.
- 3.4 The PRSP CCN Secretariat is a permanent remunerative body, established for coordination of the CNN activities, which is guided by the annual work plan and working regulations approved by the CCN Board.

### 3.5 The Scope of Rights and Liabilities of SPI

For coordinating the activities the CCN can organize public expertise, consultations and hearings devoted to the projects (policies, programs, laws, action plans), as well as realize independent monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP implementation process, implement different activities and initiatives aimed at increase of public awareness on the PRSP development, implementation and evaluation processes.

### 3.6 The Scope of Rights and Liabilities of the PRSP CCN Negotiating Groups

The number of the negotiating groups involved in the PRSP CCN is not limited. Temporary groups targeting the short-term problems also can be constituted.

#### 3.6.1 The Negotiating Groups are responsible for:

- Expanding public participation in the PRSP processes especially at marz and community level.
- Development of relevant papers/documents, recommendations reflecting the public opinion about the PRSP policies, action plans, PRSP development, implementation and evaluation
- Election of their representatives in the CCN Board
- Ensuring the feedback between the negotiating groups and the main stakeholders.

#### 3.6.2 The Negotiating Groups have the right to:

- Invite civil society institutions to get involved in the Negotiation Groups
- Invite representatives of civil society institutes, international organizations as well as citizens to take part in the activities of the Negotiation Group
- Initiate and implement public expertise, consultations and hearings of projects (policies, programs, laws, action plan), independent monitoring and evaluation of PRSP implementation process, implement different activities aimed at increase of public awareness about the PRSP development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes
- Apply to the PRSP Secretariat and CCN Secretariat for additional information
- On behalf of the CCN Board apply for the request for proposals announced within the framework of PRSP implementation and participatory processes.
- Develop and submit to the CCN Board proposals related to provision of Negotiating Groups with relevant resources required for involvement of the latter in the CCN annual activities.
- Present their opinion concerning the approval of the CCN annual work plan in written form
- delegate two representatives to the CCN Board from each of the settings involved in the Negotiating Group by rotation
- the Negotiation Groups can set tasks covering certain issues discussed within the scope of PRSP before their representatives delegated to CCN Board
- Demand from their representatives reports about the progress in fulfillment of certain tasks, performance, as well as about the activities implemented within the defined reporting period.
- Suspend participation of the Negotiation Group representatives in the works of the CCN Board on the presenting a written substantiation
- Withdraw form the PRSP Steering Committee, Working Group and CCN informing in written form in advance.

### 3.7 The Scope of Rights and Liabilities of the CCN Board

#### 3.7.1 The CCN Board is responsible for:

- Planning, coordinating and controlling the work of the CCN
- Coordinating participation of the PRSP CCN in the activities of the PRSP Steering Committee and Working Group.

- Presenting and defending the position of CCN in the PRSP Working Group and Steering Committee
- For managing, controlling and assuring accountability over the resources provided for the CCN settings from the bottom up.

### 3.7.2 The CCN Board has the Right to:

- Develop the annual work plan of the CCN and after the final approval by all Negotiating Groups present the latter to the PRSP Working Group and Steering Committee
- Apply to the Negotiating Groups for receiving the opinion of the latter about any of the issues discussed within the scope of PRSP
- Elect the PRSP CCN Secretariat staff members
- Appoints tasks for the CCN Secretariat
- Develop and adopts the internal regulations of the Negotiating Group, CCN Secretariat and CCN Board
- Elect representatives from the CCN member organizations as well as from other institutions and assure their involvement in the activities of the PRSP Steering Committee and PRSP Secretariat by fixed quotas
- Demand from the representatives of the CCN delegated to the PRSP Secretariat and Steering Committee reports on certain issues as well as on the activities implemented during the reporting period
- Suspend participation of the CCN representatives in the activities of the PRSP Steering Committee and Secretariat presenting a written substantiation
- Participate in the process of decision making concerning the request for proposals announced within the scope of CCN annual work plan
- Elaborate program recommendations concerning the development of Social Partnership Institutes and the exercise of relevant functions by the CCN and present the latter to donor organizations
- Apply to the PRSP Working Group, Steering Committee, RA Government as well as other agencies for additional information

The institutions involved in the CCN Board can not apply for RA Government requests for proposals announced within the scope of PRSP implementation, monitoring and evaluation process.

### 3.8 The CCN Secretariat is responsible for:

- Coordination of information flows within the CCN
- Coordination of information flow between the CCN, PRSP Working Group and Steering Committee

#### 3.8.1 The CCN Board has the right to:

- Apply to Negotiation Group, CCN Board with the request of presenting their position concerning relevant issues discussed within the PRSP framework
- Post any information about the CCN activities and/or relevant papers reflecting their position on PRSP website
- Apply to the PRSP Working Group and Steering Committee with a request of providing relevant information about their activities and/or papers reflecting their position.

3.8.2 The staff of the CCN Secretariat should be formed by vacancy announcement. The head of the CCN Secretariat is in charge of the CCN administration

3.9 The rights and liabilities of the PRSP Working Group and Steering Committee should be defined by special concept on formation of PRSP management bodies and their functions.

# CHART

## OF THE PRSP SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

