

## ELECTION PROGRAM

1. Unity as the Main Prerequisite of Second-generation Reforms
2. International Relations and Security
3. Competitive, Innovative Economy
4. Securing Decent Life
5. Effective Public Administration System
6. Balanced Development of Territories

Dear Compatriots,

Over the last 16 years, our country has passed a complicated path of statehood formation. After the Artsakh liberation struggle, having also overcome the economic crisis, social conflicts, party and political antagonisms, we are building a new life based on fundamental democratic principles. Consequently our life, still slowly of course, is changing to a better one.

The core of our today's job is to strengthen the statehood, to form a society that is based on pluralism, nondiscrimination, tolerance, fairness and solidarity.

Political developments in our country should be based upon principles of safeguarding human dignity, freedom, equality, strengthening rule of law, and ensuring democracy.

Recent amendments and supplements to the RA Constitution have created the required prerequisites for these goals, provided the most balanced relations between branches of power, and secured effective exercise of democracy and public self-organization.

The 2008 presidential elections will prove that the improvement of the electoral processes and the holding democratic elections in Armenia will become a permanent tradition.

We should be more focused on the future today and not waste our capacity on useless disputes of the past failures and mistakes. Full co-operation and the carrying on of a constructive dialogue of these goals and objectives, which are related to our national priorities, is a prerequisite to building the future.

The Armenia, we are striving for and which we will attain

We have a clear and feasible vision for the country. Our strategic goal is to build up such an Armenia, that it will unite all Armenians by preserving and developing national traditions and using the best achievements of the world civilization.

In Armenia, we are striving for an atmosphere of mutual respect so that love and indulgence should prevail.

The Armenia, we are striving for should be recognized as a country that ensures the best conditions for business and investment in a competitive environment. Our future is for a knowledge-based society.

In Armenia we are striving for a decent life and the possibility for self-expression for every citizen in the country should be ensured. For any Armenian family education and knowledge will be the values that enjoy the highest demand.

The Armenia we are striving for should become a stronger democratic country with an effective administration where human beings are of the highest value and their inalienable rights prevail.

In Armenia, we are striving that everyone will be equal before the law. There will be no artificial barriers between the state and citizens. In Armenia, we are striving that the people will be neither poor nor privileged.

It is not easy to make a reality of all of these goals. Achievements have never come easily to our people. We have always succeeded to win thanks to our will and unity. The formula of our victory is that we have the will and determination for new victories. Then Armenia shall go forward towards new achievements, towards Armenia of victories, towards Armenia of welfare!

The guarantor and vanguard of building this Armenia should be the RA President, setting the objectives:

- To strengthen and protect the Constitution as a primary task.
- To ensure the regular operation of the legislative, executive and judiciary bodies as a critical guarantee for the effective functioning of the state system.
- As the guarantor of independence, territorial integrity and security of the Republic of Armenia, to be guided by not only the current national objectives but also by the logical setting up and solving in the right perspective the strategic approaches and problems.

## Second-generation Reforms Program

### 1. Unity as the main prerequisite for the second-generation reforms

The main guarantee of our country's development is the spiritual unity of our people, which presumes forming the necessary atmosphere of co-operation and confidence. Nerses Shnorhali gave the best approach for building up a civil society: *"Unity as primary, freedom as secondary, and love in everything."*

Our motherland Armenia is the focus of political, cultural and economic interests of the majority of Armenians spread all over the world. Armenians globally are truly interested in Armenia's development, which means that from now on it is not possible to elaborate or implement any universal program without considering this factor.

Our competitive advantage is the united potential of all Armenians.

We will undertake the introduction of a public and private partnership concept paper. This will ensure the joint development and implementation of critical national and local programs with the exclusion of any state functions that may damage regular development of free competitive market relations.

We will be open for constructive suggestions, discussions and co-operation by also acknowledging and addressing the role of the constitutional institutions of the nation and the National Assembly.

Raising the cultural level by preserving our national cultural foundations as the expansion of our citizens' outlook is an important condition for building up a new society. Culture will enhance the connection of Armenians worldwide ensuring and preserving our unique place in the dialogue of civilizations.

The historical and cultural heritage of the Armenian people, our natural wealth and many traditional features of our national identity will make Armenia an attractive country of organized recreation.

We have a splendid opportunity to form an unprecedented reality as a result of the presidential elections. We would be free from senseless conflicts and tension, ensuring harmonic and effective co-operation of the legislative and executive powers with an independent judiciary in order to meet the objectives sought for so long by our past generations.

## 2. International Relations and Security

2.1. In parallel with the current challenges the rapidly changing world opens a new window of possibilities for Armenia.

Our country's foreign policy should become more active and innovative by ensuring Armenia's active participation in international and particularly regional processes, requiring the following:

- Expand and deepen multilateral and inter-state bilateral relations. Their sympathetic matching would create favorable conditions for developing political and economic relations, together with the expansion of trade and the promotion of cultural co-operation with other countries.
- Continue membership of international institutions and deepen co-operation based on the priority of ensuring the country's political and economic interests in the integration process.
- Use of the unique possibilities of information and communication technology for international co-operation and consolidation to increase our competitive advantages and ensure co-operation of all Armenians.
- Build up economic, financial and cultural co-operation based on internationally accepted rules.
- Introduce international best practices and criteria for citizens and businesses. On the one hand to raise performance and on the other to promote relations with their international counterparts including the creation of mechanisms to protecting the interests of our citizens and businesses abroad.

The Artsakh issue will be within the focus of the RA President's activities.

Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh issue will be based on the following principles:

- The right of the Artsakh people to self-determination should be recognized and conditions should be created for ensuring it.
- Security of the NKR population and its borders should be ensured.
- RA and NKR should have a common border.

It is obvious for any reasonable person that any complicated process, particularly settlement of a conflict, is not possible to carry out immediately or overnight. It is a complex integrity of actions carried out in several steps.

We seek a constructive dialogue and a peaceful solution based on an agreement of all the parties involved in the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, and including mechanisms ensuring successful implementation of this solution.

We should build up regular relations with our neighboring states. We will be committed in the issue of establishing diplomatic relations with Turkey and opening the borders. There should be no preconditions, such as the rejection of the necessity to recognize the Armenian Genocide or any precondition associated with the Nagorno-Karabagh issue, or any other underlying issues.

2.2. Our region is in the focus of the interests of different geopolitical powers and contradictions are unavoidable.

The national security strategy will be aimed at ensuring the stability of our country and region. Overcoming contradictions which first means independence, defence of the state and people, peace and international co-operation, protection of the Armenian identity and welfare.

The geopolitical situation in the region demands a well-organized and effective defense system.

Building a unified multistage system of national security by the public authorities is the main security related task for the coming years. We should be ready to counteract all threats and hazards.

### 3. Competitive, Innovative Economy

***The second-generation reforms*** will create the best conditions for business and investment.

The tax and customs structures in our country should be internationally competitive to encourage business.

Economic regulation should not discourage the formation and development of business. On the contrary, it should serve the goals of ensuring equal conditions, supportative development and reduction of risk.

We will keep on supporting the formation of Armenian companies that meet international criteria by investing into emerging concerns and providing financial support to small and medium enterprises in their rapid growth stage.

The introduction of corporate management systems into the real economic sector will be stimulated. Enterprises with state ownership will introduce the best corporate management criteria. The state

will constantly encourage development of enterprises working transparently with the purpose of raising public confidence in business.

Institutional modifications and infrastructure modernization will be in the center of attention by harmonizing the solution of ongoing, medium-term and long-term issues.

As part of the second-generation reforms, we would implement an industrial policy of new quality. Innovative industry and high-value services development would guide economic growth and deepen integration with developed markets.

Industrialization of agriculture and the full launching of the manufacturing and reprocessing market chain will ensure higher income in this sector for those involved.

Armenia's financial system has a real potential to become the financial center in the region. The Stockholm's Stock Exchange entering Armenia is graphic evidence of that. Implementation of a joint action program will create the serious prerequisites to achieve this objective.

We will continue our policy of deepening financial intermediation. Financial services will be affordable and accessible all across Armenian territory. Any newly created family will have the possibility to purchase an apartment or a car.

Insurance companies and accumulating pension funds will create saving incentives. There should be no one in Armenia who is not insured from the threat of life-threatening accidents and poverty.

#### 4. Ensuring Decent Life

Second-generation reforms would be directly reflected on the entire nation's welfare. Every person should feel their possibilities for self-expression are broadening and their quality of life is improving.

Favorable conditions will be created to provide jobs for people. "The job should seek for the person." This means having an effective labor market which would identify the issue of structural unemployment. This would include targeted re-training programs to make human resources skills and specialties consistent with the workplace.

We need qualified specialists.

##### 4.1 Education and Science

The urgency of economic development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to form a knowledge based society. The main drivers are ideas and discoveries and the ability to introduce these into everyday life sooner rather than later. *"Having a low education level in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means having a low living standard."*

It is necessary to adopt new laws, to reconstruct the system of science and education. This would create possibilities to ensure the scientific and educational potential of all Armenians.

Solving this particular problem will open the doors for all future developments.

Building such a future will be subject to what extent we will succeed in creating an effective, competitive and up-to-date scientific and educational system.

Knowledge will be the only stable currency; therefore, a reliable way of enrichment is to get a good education.

#### 4.2 Healthcare

The objective of our program approaches in this sector is to make a transition to a new phase of healthcare reforms.

Medicine will be accessible to everyone.

The quality of medical services will be significantly improved thanks to the application of high technology.

The healthcare requirements that are high in demand will be identified and steps taken to create Armenia as a healthcare center for the region. Modernizing resort centers (Jermuk, Arzni, Dilijan, Aghveran) will significantly contribute to solving this issue.

Concurrently we have to realize that healthcare is not just the provision of high quality healthcare services but also an effective system of health protection and disease prevention.

We should support healthy lifestyle by developing physical culture and sport.

Human health is our priority.

#### 4.3 Pension System

We consider a further rise in pensions to be a critical social issue to ensure that pensions are significantly higher than the poverty threshold.

In parallel the introduction of a multistage pension system will be continued and will include an accumulating pension system.

Our population should learn how to save. The younger generation should undertake the responsibility to secure their old age by participating in an accumulating system of pension security.

We will ensure decent life for pensioners.

Disabled people, orphans, families having many children, war veterans, families of killed soldiers, refugees with difficulties and those people who are not able to solve the problems they are facing without the state's care.

We will expand targeted social programs by also involving the private sector, which will contribute to the rehabilitation of the moral and psychological atmosphere.

### 5. Effective Public Administration System

*Second-generation reforms* are not possible to implement without forming an effective public administration.

An effective public administration means managing state resources by business laws and saving each dram by consistently increasing operational effectiveness and transparency.

We still have to learn how to clearly formulate the desired results and make their performance monitoring possible. The quality of services provided by state and local self-governance institutions will significantly increase and the public will have a possibility to evaluate these reforms.

We will ensure that the performance of agencies is annually evaluated based on these principles, and the Oversight Chamber will be involved in operational auditing.

Effectiveness of public investment and high efficiency in the state sector become priorities which require improvement of the public administration system by employing corporate management rules.

We would develop programs and introduce an electronic governance system which would enable the provision of public administration services via the internet in public administration and local self-governance institutions. This would speed up service for citizens reduce risks of corruption.

Corruption, the shadow economy and unequal competitive conditions. The resolution of these issues is in the area of effective administration, and requires decisive change of administration technologies, measures and methods. One of the key issues of our policy will be efficiently and consistently struggling against bribery and corruption.

Overcoming corruption requires overcoming a problem more complex than just preventing bribery and tax-evasion. We will strive for a new Armenian mindset that will not tolerate the phenomenon of corruption. Personal contacts must not be the basis of our system and whoever promotes bribery will not be considered as a comrade, friend or fellow party member but as a law breaker.

It is clear that this issue will not be solved overnight or by only debating this issue. An integrated and comprehensive program is needed. The public will not believe the authorities if this struggle is not led by the President of the Republic.

## 6. Balanced Development of Territories

One of the critical functions of the modern state is to ensure a balanced territorial development. Unbalanced territorial development became a serious drag on the socio-economic evolution. At the expense of other territories, Yerevan is overloaded with cultural, healthcare, industrial, financial, public administration, justice, educational functions. Relocation of some of these functions from Yerevan to other places has become a necessity.

Changing the system of territorial administration will be an important step aimed at the increase of the level of self-governance and responsibilities of territorial administration authorities. Financial leveling mechanisms will be improved. The growth of the budgets of local self-governance authorities will be ensured, and access to public services will be first organized in the districts.

Prevention of the emigration of the population in remote and border districts will be a subject of constant attention. The main reason for population outflow is lack of work or narrow specialization and low social activity which leads to social indifference. Realizing that, there will be an integrated approach displayed for the development of the entire Armenian territory.

A national territorial development program will be organized as part of the public-private partnership concept paper.

***Dear Compatriots,***

***Today we should look into the future. We have passed a path of difficulties and benefited by gaining experience and knowledge.***

***We know all the problems which worry every citizen of Armenia. We also know how these problems should be solved.***

***We will do everything to overcome unemployment and poverty in Armenia, to improve the life of the ordinary man and woman as soon as possible, to make our country securer, so that we live in a strong democratic country and have a fair society. We will achieve all of these with your confidence and support.***

***May the Lord give us wisdom to revalue the achievements and multiply national potential and attain new heights.***

***Forward, Armenia!***