
Will The New Poverty Reduction Strategy Have The Same Drawbacks?

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Member of the ARF's parliamentary faction Artsvi Minassian and member of the Heritage Party's parliamentary faction Larissa Alaverdian commented on the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper during a debate held in Hayatsq Club on August 28.

Larissa Alaverdian was the Ombudsperson during the process of organization of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and was involved in the preparation works.

Alaverdian believes the Armenian strategy was more realistic than the strategies of other countries because all layers of the civil society were involved in the drafting process. Most importantly, the strategy was drafted without any external support and consultancy. Nevertheless, Alaverdian voted against adoption of the strategy since the main problems facing the society were ignored.

Alaverdian believes the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is a document of not only the government but also of the opposition since all forces had an opportunity to participate in its creation. It was only the legislature that did not have the desired role and influence in the process of drafting and implementation of the strategy. Meanwhile, the National Assembly should have participated in the discussions and made its proposals regarding the strategy.

Artsvi Minassian stated the ARF believes that the PRSP had several drawbacks - a number of sectors were left out of the initial draft. The Strategy has failed to become a document supporting the economic development as opposed to similar documents in the neighboring states that set the goal of economic development and not merely poverty reduction.

"This document aims at addressing this comprehensive problem without presenting ways of future development," Minassian said adding that now when the possibility of extending the strategy till 2021 is under discussion significant amendments should be made stating what economic, political and social model Armenia will have by that time.

Demographic policy is one of the outstanding issues left after the initial drafting of the PRSP. The ARF has addressed this issue in its electoral program and believes that the country's economy and its future cannot be built further unless we find solutions to the existing situation. It is necessary to implement specific measures rather than merely presenting the situation.

Even the World Bank has commented on the poor demographic situation in Armenia in one of its reports. Minassian believes that the minimum consumption budget and composition should be at the foundation of any development program.

Equal regional development should be one of the issues discussed in the PRSP context. "One of the negative factors is that we have the society and the economic resources concentrated in Yerevan and we do nothing to achieve equal development in the regions," Minassian said. This direction is one of the important ones in the ARF's electoral program.

Minassian believes such development should be based on the special advantages of the regions. Each region with its resources should be a more productive unit and each member of the society should have income generation opportunities. Without these conditions we cannot speak about equal regional development.

The debaters expressed their hope that the new PRSP will be widely discussed and the above-mentioned drawbacks will be eliminated because it is obvious that the existing strategy is doomed to failure.
