STATEMENT
by H.E. Mr. Armen Papikyan
Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and
Regular Migration
Morocco, 10-11 December

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the host country of Morocco.

Back in 2016 in New York the UN General Assembly held a high-level meeting and adopted a
Declaration addressing the issues of large movements of refugees and migrants, which
indicated the growing prominence of this problem on the global agenda. Armenia strongly
supports the Global Compacts for Refugees and Migrants and believes that the Comprehensive
refugee response framework (CRRF) can become an important guidance for further
implementation of collective commitments towards refugees.

We are pleased to note that both Global Compacts truly reflect the holistic 360-degree approach
with forward looking and action oriented commitments. These commitments and actions will
enable us to strengthen international cooperation on protection of human rights, fight against
trafficking in human beings, share responsibility for the protection and realization of the rights
of every child and many other aspects.
This is the time to translate our political commitments embodied in the SDGs and in the GCR
and GCM into actions.

We believe that for the implementation of the pledge of leaving no one behind, the universal
application of human rights should be ensured equally and without any discrimination to all
people in need, regardless of their location and irrespective of the political status of the
territory that they live in. There should be no grey areas.

Today the overall situation in the world is complicated with the current humanitarian issues
arising from the migration crisis. Those issues are triggering serious political implications and
challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The phenomenon of the migration has always been an undeniable aspect of Armenian realities
since the country got its independence in 1991 and even before. The RA has about one million
Diaspora in many countries of the world. The RA remains the native country for millions of
Arménians that consider the country as possible final destination for the migration in cases of
necessity.
Today, over 22,000 refugees from Syria sought protection in Armenia, on per capita basis making our country as the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees in Europe. There are doctors, lawyers, as well as persons with other professions and entrepreneurial skills among them. So far the RA Ministry of Health helped 80 doctors displaced from Syria to find job in Armenia. Around 100 migrants managed to develop business plans and establish their own businesses with support of the Government. More than 2000 Syrian migrants were provided with employment assistance. As a result, many migrants found decent work, and they invest their knowledge and skills in various spheres of the social and economic life of our country.

Syrian Armenians, whose ancestors found refuge in Syria one hundred years ago after fleeing massacres and mass deportations, the tragic events later known as Armenian Genocide, were among those who were again forced to flee, under the threat to their existence. The Government of Armenia cannot and will not step aside and watch silently. Measures to mitigate the sufferings of the war affected population including our fellow Armenians and other ethnic minorities were taken by our Government. Batches of humanitarian aid were dispatched and distributed in Aleppo, Damascus, Latakia, Kesab and other war torn regions of Syria. The Government of Armenia will continue its involvement and is ready to enlarge its humanitarian mission. To this end we are ready to discuss and explore avenues of providing humanitarian assistance with all stakeholders who are genuinely concerned with the overall situation of the Syrian population.

Both the Government and the population of the Republic of Armenia note with appreciation and respect skills and entrepreneurial experience of the persons displaced from Syria who found refuge in Armenia. On the other hand these skills are useful for the promotion of the development agenda of the Republic of Armenia, particularly focusing on small and medium enterprise development, and on the other side it enhances the integration potential which could be a source of growth.

Fellow colleagues,

The Government of Armenia exercises utmost efforts in providing for the most rapid integration of these refugees into the society. We attach great importance to integrating our migration policy into our Sustainable development agenda and providing solutions to the problems facing refugees and migrants today.

The Government has taken an open approach and is offering several protection options as well as a set of benefits to persons displaced from Syria, including accelerated asylum-procedures, facilitated naturalization for ethnic Armenians and residence permits. The State provides durable housing, free medical assistance and scholarships, supports them in setting up businesses taking into account their high entrepreneurial skills.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
In committing to the realization of the ambitious 2030 Agenda Member States recognized that the Agenda’s goals and targets should be met for all nations and people and for all segments of the society, with a pledge to not leave any one behind.

SDG Goal 4 of 2030 agenda is aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In this regard the Government of Armenia is taking practical steps. In December 2015 the Parliament of Armenia has approved amendments to the Law “On Refugees and Asylum” to bring its provisions in conformity with European standards. These amendments ensure equal access for all asylum seekers and migrants to education by granting them the same rights as prescribed for Armenian citizens. From 2012-2016 the Ministry of Diaspora has received 2500 applications from Syrian students. The applications of Syrian migrants and refugees to all levels of education are being processed in an expedited manner (400 kindergarten and 2000 school applications have been processed).

The aim of SDG Goal 8 of 2030 agenda is to promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth full and productive employment and decent work for all. To this end all the doctors amongst Syrian refugees and migrants are registered in the database of the Ministry of Health in Armenia. The Government of Armenia has taken steps to provide work opportunities for all doctors from Syria in Hospitals thus making this process mutually beneficial and reinforcing on the one hand migrants are provided with a decent work on the other hand they are investing their knowledge and skills in the field of healthcare of our country. 2000 migrant have been provided with job opportunities in different fields. Armenian government has provided various support packages and as a result over 100 business plans have been developed jointly with migrants.

Our country has also undertaken effective steps to reduce statelessness, whereby about 85,000 stateless persons have acquired citizenship of the Republic of Armenia. Moreover, with the assistance of the UNHCR the Law on Stateless Persons has been drafted, setting up the rights and obligations of stateless persons and regulating statelessness determination procedures.

In addition to persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria, Armenia also hosts refugees displaced due to the conflict in Ukraine as well as refugees from Iraq and, in smaller numbers, originating from a variety of African and Asian countries.

Given the country’s socio-economic situation and the lack of substantial foreign help, the influx of refugees to Armenia represents a serious challenge for the country. Notwithstanding the mentioned achievements, challenges remain in addressing the needs of new arrivals, of the most vulnerable among the displaced and in finding durable housing solutions and long term employment and income sources. Thus, it is important to maintain a sufficient level of support by UNHCR and other international partners to transform the immediate emergency humanitarian response measures into longer-term efforts aiming at durable solutions.
The refugee and migrant crises around the world are serious but not insurmountable. Our own experience tells us that the humanitarian situations of this magnitude require concerted efforts and cannot be solved by any one state alone. Our responses to large movements of people should be grounded in our common values of equitable responsibility sharing, non-discrimination and respect for human rights. We also strongly believe that the plight of refugees and the humanitarian response in addressing challenges associated with unprecedented numbers of refugees and displaced people should by no means become subject to political trade-offs and manipulations.

We strongly believe Armenia is in the strong opinion that the international community must take decisive steps to develop early warning and, more importantly, early action mechanisms, to combat impunity in order to prevent mass exoduses and displacement. We believe not only in the primary importance of early warning but also the need to address root-causes of the existing problems.

Thank you