

Statement of Armenia
at the 106th session of the IOM Council
Geneva, 27 November 2015

delivered by Mr. Mher Margaryan, Minister Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations and Other International
Organisations in Geneva

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me join other delegations in congratulating the newly elected member-states of the organisation and also extend our thanks to the Bureau of the Council for efficiently leading the proceedings of this session.

The IOM was among the first international organisations that Armenia joined after its independence. For more than two decades of operating in Armenia it has played an important role in facilitating the reforms in the areas of migration management through research, technical assistance, capacity building and implementation of various thematic joint programs.

As a country with a long history of migration, Armenia has been consistently exploring sustainable partnerships aimed at reinforcing the positive link between well-managed migration and development.

It is our belief that better-planned policies on job mobility and demand-driven circular labour migration can significantly enhance the development potential for both sending and receiving societies and help reduce poverty and tackle inequalities on a broader scale. This can cover a wide range of policy frameworks, including bilateral labour agreements and other institutional arrangements.

Migration can also play an important role as part of the global partnership for development if a greater coordination and coherence could be ensured between private sector and governments that go beyond remittances and monetary contributions.

Mr Chairman,

The ever increasing global displacement challenges, ongoing conflicts, including in Syria and Iraq, also significantly affect Armenia. About 17.000 persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria have sought protection in Armenia, making our country the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees per capita in Europe. As a host country, Armenia provides them with an access to civil, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by its citizens, offering them the opportunity of facilitated naturalisation.

This new wave of displacement adds to existing challenges faced by Armenia and we would like to recall the principle of burden sharing and international solidarity, particularly when it comes to the countries with low and middle income.

It is necessary to promote also investment, entrepreneurship and employment with migrant and diaspora communities. We particularly want to emphasize the importance of activities that aim to maximise the development effect of migration such as providing small grants and technical assistance to business start-ups and support for high skill repatriates.

Mr Chairman,

The Agenda 2030 endorsed at the Sustainable Development summit held in September, acknowledges the importance of international mobility for sustainable development and highlights the need to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, legal and responsible migration through planned and well-managed policies (target 10.7). It recognizes the “positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development”, and that “international migration is a multi-dimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries.

The Agenda underlines the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship, and recalls that States must ensure that their returning nationals are duly received. In this regard, we attach great importance to the policies of return and reintegration and effective international cooperation.

On the national level, we have been working closely with our development partners to strengthen our migration management capacities. A joint

Mobility Partnership between Armenia and the European Union is in place since 2011, which is aimed at enhancing cooperation on migration issues with focus on better management of legal and labour migration, development of exchange programmes and joint initiatives in the area of vocational and higher education, promoting effective return and reintegration policy, as well as preventing and combating trafficking in human beings.

An online information system (www.tundarc.am) has been made operational in 2015 to assist migrants with any inquiries they may have about return and reintegration processes in Armenia and relevant programs and services they are eligible for. The system also facilitates the process of lodging electronic applications to Armenian state authorities on specific issues or requests.

Mr. Chairperson,

To achieve progress in monitoring the migration-related SDGs, as well as the cross-cutting indicators, it will be crucial to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of the data on migration.

In Armenia, we have been working towards a more effective use of existing administrative database that would help narrowing the gap between the required and existing statistics on migration. In cooperation with our partners, we continue working towards better migration data collection and among the first results are the recently published official data on asylum.

This year, our State Migration Service introduced a system which regularly collects data on foreign nationals and stateless persons obtaining residence status in Armenia, disaggregated on the basis of a number of criteria, such as countries of origin, gender, age groups and status eligibility categories.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, we want to commend Director General Swing for his dedicated service and stewardship and wish him and his team successful accomplishments of the goals of the organisation in the challenging times ahead.

Thank you.