

**Statement by Ms. Karine Sujayan
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High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges

Towards a global compact on refugees
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**Special session on lessons learned and good practices in applying the
comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF)**

Mr. Moderator,

Armenia strongly supports the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and believes that the Comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) can become an important guidance for further implementation of our collective commitments towards refugees.

As a country respecting and implementing the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, Armenia continues to receive and host large numbers of refugees. Armenia is the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees (over 22.000) in Europe on per capita basis.

The policy of Armenia is based on principle of not just providing space but taking appropriate actions in pursuit of durable solutions for refugees among which are local solutions and voluntary repatriation.

Despite limited financial and economic opportunities Armenia has willingly managed to avoid the practice of settling refugees in camps.

The Government of Armenia explicitly acknowledges the value and potential of displaced population and has setup simplified procedures for refugees to become naturalized citizens. A few years ago UNHCR called naturalization process undertaken by Armenia as “one of the most successful voluntary naturalizations of refugees...” Among naturalized refugees were some of the 460.000 ethnic Armenians forcibly displaced from Azerbaijan.

The significant progress has been made in achieving self-reliance and progress in local integration of Syrian refugees.

The Government offers Syrian refugees a choice between three protection options namely by way of (i) simplified acquisition of citizenship, (ii) accelerated asylum procedures, or (iii) privileged granting of short, mid-term or long-term residence permits.

There are a number of factors cumulatively contributed to an improved environment which facilitated and accelerated the most crucial economic dimension of the integration process. Among these factor, the increased general efforts of the Government to promote small and medium enterprises. The 2016 tax reform reducing tax burden and simplifying procedures for family enterprises, was beneficial for the displaced entrepreneurs. Government has facilitated the import of cars, personal belongings and some machinery by waiving customs duties, created some possibilities to enjoy access to Universities free of or with reduced fees, established a school with the Syrian curricula for the refugee children.

The next step was the reforms in the field of refugee legislation and strengthening of the human rights chapter in the amended Constitution.

Government of Armenia highly values the important role of the UNHCR office in Armenia in settling the problems of displaced persons in general and its swift and effective humanitarian response to new displacement resulting from the Azerbaijani large-scale offensive operations along the line of contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan in April, 2016.

Mr. Moderator,

Despite the progress made there are still significant challenges, and therefore it is paramount to continue the support in order to successfully conclude the multifaceted response process. The principle of international solidarity is particularly important when we refer to countries with low and middle income. This factor is also mentioned in the preamble to the 1951 Refugee Convention which literally reads: “considering that the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries, and that a satisfactory solution of a problem of which the United Nations has recognized the international scope and nature cannot therefore be achieved without international co-operation”.

Thank you