Statement by H.E. Mr. Ashot Hovakimian,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
at the 13th United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Congress
Doha, 13 April, 2015

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Qatari Government for hosting the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Obviously, 2015 is the year, when any single important international gathering is obliged to bring an added value to the whole concept of Sustainable Development, the main topic of this Congress.

The congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice made unique and important contributions to the law and policy development, the identification of emerging trends and issues in crime prevention and criminal justice. Regrettably, despite all significant achievements on national and international levels to develop effective, fair, humane and accountable criminal justice systems and institutions, in many parts of the world human beings are deprived of protection and persecuted by those who are motivated by hatred and intolerance. Unfortunately, despite the congresses and the declarations, despite the international conventions and other documents, the denial and the impunity for the most serious crime against humankind – the crime of genocide still needs to be addressed.

Mr. President,

It was exactly one hundred years ago that three countries who are currently permanent members of the Security Council characterized the Armenian massacres as “crime against humanity and civilization”.

Regrettably, we have to confess, that the use of this term becomes relevant in the current realities as well. The concentrated attempts of terrorist groups including foreign terrorist fighters to deprive religious and ethnic groups of their life, property, religion, culture and memory can be indeed qualified as crime against humanity and civilization.

The full implementation of the UN SC resolution 2170, 2178 and 2199 is essential in prevention of massive and grave human rights violations against religious and ethnic groups. Armenia as a nation who survived in 1915 the first genocide of 20th century, the Centennial of which would be commemorated in ten days, has moral responsibility towards the protection of collective and individual rights of the religious and ethnic groups and their members particularly in the situation where their survival is at stake.
Genocide prevention is a high priority for Armenia. Throughout recent years we have tried to mainstream issues of genocide prevention in international cooperation on security and human rights. We are glad that 2 weeks ago the Human Rights Council unanimously adopted an important resolution on Genocide prevention, sponsored by Armenia and co-sponsored by 70 states. The resolution manifests the growing consensus of international community to address impunity and denial of grave and massive human rights violations. We are destined to demonstrate our universal human solidarity to the victims of those crimes and punish perpetrators of mass atrocities under universal jurisdiction.

Mr. President,

It is obvious, that impunity is breeding ground for new crimes. Nowadays we are facing contemporary, technologically sophisticated crimes, one of them – the cyber crime. Armenian citizens are free in their access to the global web, therefore we are sharing all the consequences of that freedom with other nations and very often we are subject for cyber attacks and hackings. Armenia shares the opinion of those, who is in favor of regulations aimed at the cyber security in conformity with all human rights. International cooperation is key to success in addressing global threats since borders of national responsibility are becoming blurred. Armenia is closely cooperating within the framework of the OSCE and Council of Europe in mainstreaming regional instruments into its domestic legislation.

Another ugly phenomenon of the present days is the modern days slavery manifested mostly through trafficking in human beings and human organs. Armenia has achieved significant results in fighting trafficking in human beings. The National Criminal Code has been revised and today the penalty for traffickers is proportional to the crime they have committed. Last december Armenia adopted a new law “On Identification of and Support to Persons Subjected to Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation” that took into consideration a number of recommendations submitted by international organizations and experts.
Mr. President,

It was not my intention to discuss here, at this Congress dealing with specialized agenda, the issue, which is dealt by the internationally agreed and mandated format. In an attempt to cover up its very poor ratings in human rights and fight against corruption, the delegation of Azerbaijan made yesterday false and ungrounded accusations against my country.

Since its independence Azerbaijan did not exercise sovereignty and jurisdiction over Nagorno Karabakh whose people formed their government and organized their political, social, economic and cultural life by the virtue of the right of self determination. The equal right and self determination of people is a purpose of the United Nations which is enshrined in the UN Charter. Azerbaijan and Armenia, along with all other OSCE participating states, agreed that equal rights and self determination of people is among principles of peaceful settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict in the statement of the Athens OSCE Ministerial Council in 2009.

The people of Nagorno Karabakh are entitled to the same human rights and their economic activities are as legal as those international instruments that empower them to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Hence we would call on Azerbaijani side to comply with its commitments of conflict resolution and refrain from any attempt to infringe upon political, social and economic rights of population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Mr. President,

Armenia values all principles of international law and joined consensus on the Doha Declaration on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, particularly the chapeau of the para 5 of the declaration with the understanding that all human rights include right of self determination as it is enshrined in the UN covenant on economic, social and cultural rights and UN covenant of political and civil rights.

I hope that the thirteenth Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice will be able to find new solutions for new challenges. I wish the Congress to continue its work on the very responsible task aimed at the establishment of commonly admissible access to justice and the rule of law.

Thank you.