CONSERVATIVE PARTY PLEDGES TO OPEN CONSULAR OFFICE IN ARMENIA

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“The pledge to open a trade and consular office demonstrates the Conservative government’s ongoing commitment to strengthen commercial and social ties with Armenia," said Mr. Kenney and added: “Canada-Armenia trade is increasing rapidly and this new office will help spur even more growth. That’s good news for the economies of both of our countries.”

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The minister pointed: “This past year, under the Harper Conservative Government, trade between Canada and Armenia totaled nearly $120 million, a 1,700 percent increase compared to 2005. Canadian imports from Armenia have tripled and Canadian exports to Armenia have increased 6,000 percent since 2005. A new trade office would further Canada’s growing trade ties with Armenia by supporting Canadian companies doing business in Armenia, supporting export development, providing and enhancing economic relations between both countries.”

Mr. Kenney also touched upon the plight of Syrian Armenian and other religious minorities who are being persecuted and face ethnic cleansing at the hands of ISIS terrorists. He mentioned that in the last five years the Canadian Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, resettled over 25,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees. He said that Canada is not trying to empty Christians from the Middle East and Mesopotamia but would try to help people who have fled the region by providing a safe haven for them in Canada.

At the end of the gathering Mr. Kenney met 50 newly-arrived Syrian- and Iraqi- Armenian refugees. The refugees were settled in Canada through the Government's generous private refugee sponsorship program.

Vatche Demirdjian, president of Armenian Canadian Conservative Association, said he highly valued and appreciated the Conservative Party initiative in establishing a trade and consular office in Yerevan. “This is a dream come true for the Canadian-Armenian community. We have waited for a

long time for this positive decision. The Conservative Party, Prime Minister Harper, Minister Kenney and the Canadian Armenian community should be proud of this announcement," he said. He congratulated the Canadian-Armenian community for "this great success." Demirdjian added: "So many of our community organizations, including the ACCA, have worked diligently to make this day become a reality." He then appealed to Canadian-Armenians to return the favor to the Conservative Party and its candidates by voting and helping party candidates.