



**Explanation of Vote before the Vote, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during adoption of draft resolution A/HRC/47/L.12/Rev.1 on “New and emerging digital technologies and Human Rights”**

**13 July 2021**

Madam President,

We thank the core group for presenting the draft resolution. The text paved the way for HRC’s deliberations to assess potential risks and opportunities associated with rapid technological advancement from a human rights perspective. These deliberations are urgently needed in order to contemporarize the normative framework.

Three trends stand out as the draft text went through various stages of deliberations and updates:

**First**, business enterprises, many of which are pioneers of new technologies, continue to prioritize profit over respect for human rights principles and responsibilities. In seeking immediate commercial benefits, these enterprises have failed to carry out human rights due-diligence during conception, development, deployment and impact assessment of these technologies. As a result, we have increasingly seen their harmful, real-time impacts on rights-holders. The use of algorithm-driven content moderation by social media companies, as the so-called cost-effective measure, represents a case in point.

**Second**, as new technologies have exponentially increased the scale and speed of connectivity and communication across diverse geographical and cultural domains, the largely unregulated digital space has become a conveyor-belt of disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech. Anonymity and encryption enable various actors to peddle discrimination, hostility and violence without any meaningful accountability. This gap needs to be addressed effectively through a balanced and even-handed approach, as enshrined in international human rights instruments, especially ICCPR and ICERD.

**Third**, the COVID pandemic has served as a sober reminder that potential benefits and opportunities of new digital technologies need to be promoted equitably for everyone everywhere. The growing digital divide within and among countries carries the risk of accentuating systemic inequalities and injustices. Therefore, international and multi-stakeholder cooperation in this arena is both urgent and essential in recovering back better and stronger from the pandemic.

It is with these considerations that Pakistan participated constructively in the discussions on the draft resolution, and endeavored to align it with contemporary realities as well as needs.

We appreciate the core group’s constructive engagement and willingness to listen and accommodate diverse perspectives. Given the contemporary nature and orientation of the draft resolution, we would vote in its favour. I thank you.