



Statement, delivered by Mr. Umair Khalid, Third Secretary, at the Interactive Dialogue with UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy: 49th session of Human Rights Council

10 March 2022

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her well-researched report.

Big Data and Artificial Intelligence have permeated every aspect of modern life, with promising socio-economic benefits. The increasing use of digital technologies to cope with the disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic attests to this fact.

However, these new and emerging technologies have also infringed on a wide range of fundamental human rights, especially the 'gateway right to privacy'.

There are growing concerns over lack of universally agreed norms that should govern the collection and treatment of users' data by social media companies. Driven by commercial interests, these companies have sold personal data of its users to other business enterprises without their consent. Algorithmic biases are also an outcome of imbalanced treatment of users' data by these companies, resulting in real-time acts of discrimination, intolerance and violence against individuals due to their race, religion, ethnicity and nationality.

We, therefore, agree with the Rapporteur that there is pressing human rights imperative to develop laws on personal data protection and privacy rights. These laws should clearly specify obligations, rights and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, outline sanctions for non-compliance, and offer legal remedies to the affected individuals.

Dear Rapporteur, often presence of data servers by private companies outside national jurisdiction has posed operational challenges to States to take swift action in cases of privacy breach. What ways and means do you recommend to address this challenge? Thank you.