



Statement on behalf of the OIC Group¹, delivered by Amb. Bilal Ahmad, during 14th Session of the Adhoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards

General Statement

22nd July 2024

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the OIC, we congratulate you on your re-election as the Chair-Rapporteur of this Adhoc Committee and appreciate your skillful stewardship.

We also thank the OHCHR for its technical assistance and continued support.

The OIC member states deeply value the mandate of the Adhoc Committee aimed at negotiating the additional protocol to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

We strongly believe that contemporary global challenges demand our collective response to further strengthen the legal normative framework against racism and racial discrimination.

In recent years, Adhoc Committee's task has received greater significance especially in view of growing contemporary global challenges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, hate speech and religious intolerance and hatred.

Madam Chair,

Increasingly, racist and populist ideologies are fueling violence against individuals due to their race, colour, religion or belief and ethnicity.

Influenced by such ideologies, refugees, migrants and indigenous communities are also often targets and victims of structural and systemic discrimination, undermining their dignity, rights and freedoms.

Unfortunately, anti-Muslim hatred is often tolerated or sanctioned by some states and glorified through media, under the guise of "freedom of expression", "counter-terrorism" or "national security" measures.

We remain concerned regarding the reluctance on part of the concerned states to prevent glaring manifestations of racial discrimination, including Islamophobia, through enacting adequate legislations and ensuring their effective implementation.

Sadly, the recurring public and premeditated acts of desecration of Holy Quran in some states continue. These instances are emblematic of wider and extant structural Islamophobia embedded in these societies.

¹ Except Albania

Unfortunately, these states remain ill-equipped to effectively respond and hold perpetrators accountable, thus reinforcing global concerns regarding states' commitment to fulfill their obligations under international human rights law.

The lack of deterrence measures is also indicative of the existence of substantive legal gaps in international legal standards for protection against discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

To avoid this gap, further strengthening the ICERD through additional protocol is, therefore, both timely and vital.

Madam Chair,

On the conclusions and recommendations adopted during the 13th session by the Adhoc Committee, we would like to reiterate the importance of addressing the issue of discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief, in the additional protocol.

Similarly, since the onset of this century, online tools and social media platforms have progressively been transformed into conveyor belts for disseminating and amplifying hate speech. We also underscore the need to appropriately explore the impact of advent of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the scale and intensity of hate speech.

Madam Chair,

We appreciate that the group of legal experts would be assisting the Chair-Rapporteur in this session and we look-forward to engaging with them on a range of issues and elements that could be included in the additional protocol.

This Committee has a clear mandate by the UN General Assembly and the Council. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 34/36, the OIC echo calls for early commencement of negotiations on the draft additional protocol to the ICERD.

Availing this opportunity, we reiterate the importance of ensuring geographic balance and diversity of legal systems while selecting the group of legal experts as enshrined in successive HRC resolutions.

We request the Chair-Rapporteur to present the initial draft of the additional protocol based on the inputs of the legal experts and member states that could be used for further intergovernmental negotiations.

The OIC assures the Chair-Rapporteur of its constructive engagement during the session.

I thank you.