



## **Draft Resolution A/HRC/49/L.31/Rev.1 on “The role of states in countering the negative impact of disinformation on enjoyment and realization of human rights”**

### **49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

#### **Explanation of Vote before the Vote delivered by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative**

Mr. President,

Pakistan attaches great importance to countering disinformation for promotion and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, especially in today’s digital age.

With a view to shaping global response to this contemporary problem, Pakistan, with support of partners, pioneered the UNGA landmark resolution 76/227, which was adopted through consensus.

This omnibus resolution articulates States’ perspective on a wide range of thematic areas related to disinformation.

In terms of its deliverables, the resolution has mandated the UN Secretary-General to present a report on the topic at the 77<sup>th</sup> UNGA session, based on information and best practices of States. It has also invited the Geneva-based UN human rights machinery to consider the human rights impact of disinformation.

Initiating L.31/Rev.1, before the Secretary-General’s report, is pre-mature and rushed.

Nonetheless, we engaged constructively to enrich the proposed text in three significant ways.

**First**, disinformation is among the main vehicles deployed to stoke discrimination, reinforce negative stereotypes, perpetuate stigmatization and incite violence against individuals and communities on basis of race, color, religion, nationality and ethnicity. The overlapping outbreak of ‘infodemic’ and ‘hate pandemic’ during the COVID times attest to this fact. The Council should therefore unequivocally condemn deliberate creation and proliferation of false and manipulated information, targeted against rights-holders.

**Second**, while we recognize contribution of free speech as antidote to disinformation, we strongly believe that it is essential to build legal deterrence against any advocacy of hatred, that constitutes incitement to violence, in line with ICCPR Article 20. Similarly, reinforcing duties and responsibilities, germane to exercise of freedom of expression and opinion, should be part and parcel of a multidisciplinary approach against this scourge. In this regard, we reiterate our serious concerns over packaging and deliberate spread of disinformation to incite phobia against Islam, and its adherents for electoral purposes.

**Third**, social media platforms have become a conveyor-belt of disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech. The profit-driven business model of these companies, coupled with their opaque and algorithm-driven content moderation policies, have resulted in real-time, human rights



consequences. Therefore, it is imperative to stress upon these business enterprises to uphold their basic human rights responsibilities and carry out due diligence during conception, development and deployment of their products.

We thank the core group for its willingness to listen and accommodate our suggestions. We also take positive note that the resolution spotlights the growing problem of state-sponsored disinformation campaigns. Pakistan has been victim of such campaigns, including at this very Council. The independent EU Disinfo Lab's two investigative reports have recorded this disturbing phenomenon.

**Mr. President,**

Despite our observations on rushed nature of the initiative, we will join consensus on L.31/Rev.1 in line with our strong commitment to counter disinformation. I thank you.