

Thank you Mr. President,

My delegation aligns itself with the explanation of vote made by the delegation of Pakistan on behalf of the OIC countries members of the Council on draft resolution L.15/Rev.1.

Egypt attaches the greatest importance to the promotion and protection of the freedom of religion, as enshrined in its constitution. It is on this premise that Egypt has been a traditional supporter of the resolution on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, while maintaining that its provisions are to be applied in a manner consistent with tenets and principles of Islam.

Since the start of the consultations on the current draft during the first part of the sixth session, my delegation has consistently expressed its concerns regarding the ^{apparent} lack of coherence of the text with its subject matter, namely the elimination of all forms of intolerance, including provisions which are not anchored in international human rights law, as well as the exclusion of some cardinal principles in this regard.

Of particular concern was the manner in which the draft approached the issue of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the freedom of religion or belief, ~~which we fully support the continuation of,~~ in total disregard of the understandings reached in the context of the Institution Building Text of 18 June in relation to the review, rationalization and improvement of mandates. This eventually led, and justifiably so, to the deferral of the consideration of the draft.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to continue consultations after the first part of the sixth session, as the European Union decided to run the same resolution at the Third Committee of the General Assembly, in circumvention of the negotiations underway in Geneva. Despite the obvious impact that this had on the Geneva process, as well as other persisting concerns, my delegation decided to engage constructively in the consultations, when they were finally resumed, on the understanding that the New York and Geneva processes were separate ones, and that the context of the draft was the review of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. This dictated that the terms of reference of the Rapporteur be adequately addressed, as well as ~~all~~ bringing all surrounding substantive provisions in line with facts and realities of the day, ~~and not least, the theme of the resolution itself.~~

~~see~~ In particular, the outrageous campaign of deliberate & systematic ~~st~~ negative stereotyping of religions ^{in particular} & their adherents & symbols ^{in some societies} ~~is~~ ^{whether} the media ^{or} by political parties & groups, ~~in some societies~~. This constitutes the worst form of religious intolerance one could think of.

Mr. President,

We acknowledge the efforts made by some of the co-sponsors, including the delegation of Portugal, to bridge the existing gaps. We appreciate the fact that a number of our concerns were reflected in the revised version of L.15. However, it became more and more apparent at the latter stages of the consultations that, ~~in the name of politics~~, some of the more crucial proposals of the OIC, which fully conform with the scope of the resolution, would not be accommodated, ~~nor contemplated, for reasons we can not understand~~.

The take it or leave it approach, was unfortunately applied, in practice, with regard to our more immediate concerns, and ~~no~~ genuine will was demonstrated to address these concerns in the final hours.

~~At the realization of this fact,~~ It became obvious to my delegation that the problem transcended a mere amendment of the text, but ~~that the problem~~ was of much more complicated institutional nature. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the broad number of delegations, from all regions of the world ~~but one~~, who were ready to support most of the OIC amendments, including co-sponsors of L.15.

Mr. President,

Egypt regrets that the Council seems to have missed an ~~historical~~ opportunity to comprehensively address the issue of religious intolerance in ~~its founding stage~~. We hope that the experience drawn from this process will be of benefit to everyone in the future, whether ~~in what~~ concerns religious intolerance, or all other themes under consideration by the Council.

My delegation has exerted all its efforts with a view to achieving consensus on the draft, and deeply regrets that it is not the case.

In view of all

~~For all~~ the previous considerations, Egypt will abstain on L.15.

I thank you.

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