

PAKISTAN

before
Explanation of Vote after the vote by the OIC on the Draft Resolution L.14 on
Freedom of Opinion and Expression, during the 12th Session of HRC

Mr. President,

I am making this explanation of vote *before* after the vote on behalf of the member states of the OIC who are members of the Human Rights Council.

The OIC attaches immense importance to the right to freedom of opinion and expression. It is nevertheless our firm belief that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities, in accordance with international human rights law, which clearly prohibits advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred as an important safeguard to ensure the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all.

We welcome the joint Egypt-US initiative that strives to address contemporary issues in the discourse on freedom of opinion and expression. The OIC engaged with this initiative with a very constructive and flexible approach to reach a consensus outcome. Building on the 2005 text, the current resolution has rightly included issues of incitement to racial or religious hatred, negative racial and religious stereotyping, reaffirmation of the need for responsible use of this freedom as well as to combat and address its abuse in accordance with obligations under international human rights law.

The OIC strongly believes that negative stereotyping or defamation of religions is a contemporary manifestation of religious hatred, discrimination and xenophobia. It results in negative stereotyping of the followers of those religions and beliefs and leads to incitement, discrimination, hatred and violence against them, hence directly affecting their human rights. We, therefore, welcome the concern expressed in OP-4 on negative racial and religious stereotyping and the need to combat and address such incidents or phenomenon.

The OIC would also like to put on record that as per our understanding the references to obligations under international human rights law concerning combating and addressing the abuse of freedom of expression include relevant provisions of ICCPR, ICERD as well as general comment number 15 of CERD Committee.

We further hope that *today's* ~~this~~ consensus outcome ~~on some of the importance issues~~ would lead to better understanding of our concerns regarding defamation of religions as well as to adopt the corresponding resolution by consensus in future.

I thank you Mr. President.

This defamation applies not only to individuals but also to the religion and belief systems.