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I. R. IRAN

**In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful**

**Mr. President,**

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of OIC.

I would like also to appreciate Mr. Doudou Diène, Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance for his statement as well as his comprehensive report.

The increase in racist violence and xenophobic ideas in many parts of the world, in political circles, in the sphere of public opinion and in society at large, as a result of the resurgent activities of associations and political parties established on the basis of racist and xenophobic platforms and charters, and persistent use of those platforms to promote or incite racist ideologies are alarming.

Increased trend on defamation of religions endangers peaceful and harmonious co-existence among societies and civilizations. Political resistance to cultural diversity has led to the denial of the very humanity of the immigrant, indigenous people and foreigners. In this context, the most serious manifestation in the struggle against racism is the shift from words to action as reflected in the resurgence of the racist violence and democratic legitimization of racism and xenophobia.

~~The normative gaps in the struggle against racism have led to continued manifestations of racism and intolerance including racial and religious profiling, and rise in Islamophobic incidents. Therefore it is vital for the review process to address the gaps in the existing normative framework and to deal with racism in a comprehensive manner.~~

As reflected in the relevant articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the right to freedom of expressions is not absolute and it should not be used to incite racial or religious hatred, ~~such as the defamatory cartoons or etc.~~

The conclusion of the Special Rapporteur that defamation of religions is on the rise, is alarming. The recent case of defamatory cartoon in Sweden vividly testifies to this conclusion. Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the publication of the said offensive and blasphemous cartoon of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) in a Swedish newspaper.

~~My delegation~~

We would like to reiterate once again the necessity of drafting a convention to combat defamation of religions and accordingly request the special Rapporteur to present its viewpoints in this ~~respect~~ **CONCERN**.

**Thank you,**