



*Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations
28, chemin du Petit-Saconnex / 1209 Geneva*

Statement

by

**H.E. Dr. S.M.K. SAJJADPOUR
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

on

***“Incitement to Racial and Religious Hatred
and the Promotion of Tolerance”***

**at the 2nd Session of the Human Rights Council
Geneva, 22 September 2006**

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In the Name of God

Mr. President,

My delegation associate itself with the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC. We take note the report of the Special Rapporture on freedom of religion or belief and Special Raporture on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Islamic Republic of Iran id deeply concerned about the overall rise of intolerance against Islam and Muslim communities motivated by growing phenomenon of Islamophobia and its manifestations in some western countries.

Recent events such as the publications and reprinting of defamatory caricatures and recent defamatory statement have indicated that Islamophobia is a serious human rights challenge.

As indicated 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 expression is not absolute and it should not be used to incite racial or religious hatred. The Council should strive to balance all aspects of human rights which are an extremely delicate exercise.

Mr. President,

This Council has an important role and responsibility to redress this dangerous tendency and take concrete steps to promote racial and religions tolerance. The Council should call for a continuing dialogue amongst religions, cultures and civilizations. In this regard we support organizing a high level segment to promote inter – religious and inter – cultural dialogue.

Finally, we believe that it is time for the Council to elaborate the possibility of drafting a legally binding instrument to combat defamation of religions and to uphold respect of religions and religious beliefs.

Thank you