



National statement delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during the Panel Discussion on Countering Negative Impacts of Disinformation on the Enjoyment of Human Rights at the 50th session of Human Rights Council

28 June 2022

Mr. President,

We thank the panelists for their reflections.

It is clear from the discussion today that we have reached an inflection point when it comes to disinformation in its various dimensions.

Modern technologies and social media platforms have enabled creation, and proliferation of false information at a scale and speed, that is unprecedented in human history. The profit based business models dictate the design of algorithms and content moderation, which have so far failed to stem the tide of disinformation.

The human rights impact of these converging developments has been shocking and well-documented. The capacity to disinform has been strategically weaponized by state and other actors to polarize societies, incite violence and Islamophobia, often for electoral gains.

State-sponsored disinformation campaigns are a cause of serious human rights concern and potentially a national security risk. Pakistan has been a target of such campaigns, including at this very Council, as chronicled by the independent EU Disinfo Lab's two investigative reports.

We recognize the importance of free speech and media literacy as antidote to disinformation. Building legal deterrence and reinforcing duties and responsibilities, germane to exercise of freedom of expression, should also be part of a multidisciplinary approach to counter it.

Business models, content moderation and advertisement policies of social media companies must comply with international human rights law. Let us be very clear that the right to freedom of expression does not cover offline and online dissemination and amplification of hate speech and paid fake news.

Mr. President,

Countering disinformation will require sustained efforts and international cooperation. Pakistan is pleased to have pioneered the UNGA landmark resolution 76/227. We look forward to the UN Secretary-General's report mandated under this resolution. We encourage the sponsors of this panel and the Geneva-based UN human rights machinery to benefit from this process. **Thank you.**