



Intervention, delivered on behalf of the OIC by Mr. Afaq Ahmad, Counsellor, at 11th Session of the Adhoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards

09 December 2021

Madam Chair,

The OIC thanks the legal experts for their contributions during the consultations held last year and highlighting the substantive gaps in international legal standards on discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

The international human rights law is explicit in its call on states to uphold their human rights obligations without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language and religion. This principle is codified and spelled out in the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all core human rights covenants as well as Durban Declaration.

Madam Chair,

We note the diversity of views among legal experts with reference to religious discrimination either through an exclusively separate legal instrument or plugging the gaps through an additional protocol to the ICERD.

However, it is evident from these discussions that substantive gaps do exist in international legal standards for protection against discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. This recognition of legal gaps underscores the need for a legal instrument to counter contemporary forms of discrimination including Islamophobia. The OIC stands ready to start negotiations on a new legal instrument while at the same time building on this Committee's valuable work to strengthen ICERD through an additional protocol.

Evaluating this challenge from the perspective of multiple, compounding forms and inter-sectionality of discrimination remains paramount. CERD has been and continues to raise its concerns against growing incidents of discrimination on the basis of religion including Islamophobia in certain countries. In its general recommendation 32, CERD has recognized the inter-sectionality of racial and religious discrimination which is also rooted in individual's national and ethnic origin. To avoid protection gap, reinforcing ICERD through additional protocol is therefore timely and vital to combat contemporary forms of discrimination.

For these reasons, the OIC reaffirms its commitment to remain constructively engaged. We trust that other stakeholders would participate and engage to commence the process of negotiations on the legally binding instrument or additional protocol to ICERD. I thank you.