



National Statement, delivered by Mr. Danyal Hasnain, Second Secretary, during the 16th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues
1st December 2023

Item 3: Legal and Structural Approaches to More Inclusive Societies

Madam Chair,

We recognize the importance of this year's theme for the forum.

We also agree that more conversation is needed for adopting legal and structural approaches to building inclusive societies.

We identify three immediate challenges in this regard:

- i. Globalization and migration have transformed the demographic character of many societies, whereas the existing legal and structural approach in these societies have not adopted to this change.
- ii. Digital connectivity and social media have demonstrated that disinformation can be weaponized against minorities, obstructing inclusivity.
- iii. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), with its many benefits, poses both challenges and opportunities for building inclusive societies.

Madam Chair,

2023 has also deepened our fears regarding the increasing propensity of certain political actors to instrumentalize the diversity of religion, race, nationality, and ethnicity for achieving certain political goals.

We have witnessed the amplification of otherization, demonization, and stigmatization of minorities.

Targeting religious symbols as an expression of hate has become widespread.

In this backdrop we notice unfortunate reluctance in adopting legal legal deterrence against hate crimes.

Madam Chair,

The recent banning of "Halal" meat, and imposing restrictions on girls to wear their traditional dresses are some indicators that certain minorities have been increasingly threatened and their cultural heritage targeted by certain populist political actors.



Madam Chair,

Domestically, Pakistan has enacted various policy, legal and institutional measures to strengthen safeguards for protecting the rights of religious minorities.

All incidents constituting religious hatred against any minority are duly investigated, the perpetrators face strict legal and judicial process.

We take this opportunity to invite all stakeholders to chart common avenues to curb the menace of religious hatred, which is neither new or restricted to any one particular region or country.

Madam Chair,

We believe that there is a need to:

First, enact legal deterrents on incitement where needed. HRC 53/1 is an important milestone in this regard.

Second, build policy approaches based on international cooperation on fears of the 'otherization' theory dialogue and engagement.

I thank you!