



## Thirteenth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues,

### *Hate Speech, Political Figures, Social Media and Muslim Minorities*

#### **Madam President,**

Around the world, we are seeing a rising tide of xenophobia and intolerance – including rising anti-Muslim hatred. Social media is being exploited as platforms for undermining social cohesion, peace and stability. Political discourse is being weaponised to stigmatise, dehumanise and demonise Muslims as one of the main targets of hate speech.

ODVV echoes the Secretary-General remarks that hate speech is spreading like wildfire through social media and constitutes a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace.

In addition to the role of social networks, ODVV emphasises the effective role of States policies on leading the social media. In some cases, an expression of hatred by a high ranking government official, fans the flames of anger among millions of people and can lead to violence. While in other cases, a political figures' rational and logical approach, encourages tolerance and mutual understanding. We believe that combating Islam under the cover of fighting 'Islamic separatism' justifies systemic discrimination against Muslim people.

Considering the alarming reality that over the past 75 years, hate speech has contributed to atrocity crimes, including genocide, ODVV urges political figures to make their best to maintain a balance between freedom of expression and prohibition of hate speech.

ODVV urges States to adopt policies on how to tackle hate speech and incitement to hatred against minorities and how to deconstruct the way minorities are portrayed in the social media.