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Human Rights Council

Forum on Minority Issues

14th session: *Conflict Prevention and the Protection of the Human Rights of Minorities*

Item 2: *Root causes of contemporary conflicts involving minorities*

Delivered by H.E. Andranik Hovhannisyan, Permanent Representative

Madam Chair,

Armenia extends its appreciation for the organization of the 14th session of the Forum. We thank the distinguished speakers for their insightful remarks. We are especially delighted about the engagement of the multilateral institutions which had been established also with Armenia's active participation.

Global and regional early warning and prevention mechanisms are pivotal for addressing the root causes of disastrous wars and violent conflicts. Hate speech, entrenched misperceptions between various groups along national, ethnic, religious and cultural spectrum, and incitement to violence should be treated as a number one warning signs against the conflicts unfolding or looming on the horizon. In our days this scourge is further amplified by the social networks, instantaneous and unrestricted dissemination of any information by their means.

Armenia is a strong proponent for the human rights solutions protecting both individuals and minority groups *per se*, anchored on the UN Charter and our core international human rights instruments. This is the compulsory minimum that should be complemented by the vigorous regional arrangements, vibrant national human rights institutions, and active civil society.

My country is a home to several minority groups whose representatives enjoy both equal rights and special protections for the preservation and development of their traditions, religion, language and culture. The Constitution prescribed that the national minorities should be allocated with the seats in the National Assembly, and currently there are MPs from the Assyrian, Kurdish, Russian and Yezidi communities, who are well integrated into the political life along the whole spectrum both through the parliamentary majority and opposition.

Armenia's institutional approach to the human rights of minorities is driven by my nation's historic experiences, both positive and negative. In many instances Armenians enjoyed full protection of their rights, but on the others they were forced to flee persecution and were subjected to atrocity crimes. We are convinced that such crimes should be addressed by application of accountability, promotion of truth, provision of remedies and reparations to the victims, and guarantees of non-recurrence.

In conclusion, Armenia emphasizes that it may take a spark to start a fire, but a great deal of political will be necessary to channel the efforts on upholding human rights and introducing accountability mechanisms for redress.

I thank you.