



**Statement of Ambassador Nassima Baghli,
Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
to the 14th session of the Forum on Minority Issues**

Geneva, 2 December 2021

Mrs. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like first to thank Mr. de Varennes, Special Rapporteur on Minority issues for inviting the OIC to participate in this 14th session of the Forum on Minority issues.

Mr. De Varennes is to be commended for organizing 4 Regional forums in preparation of this important event which allowed us to get a broad picture of the situation of minorities in the world and the many difficulties they are facing in their daily life.

Minorities are often exposed to multiple forms of discrimination, stereotyping and hate speech which contribute to exclude them from the public life in all its dimensions.

This exclusion produces negative impacts on the cohesion and stability of societies and can even provoke crises and conflicts.

Some communities have even been stripped of their citizenship like the Rohingya in Myanmar.

Minorities are also the target of populist and extremist politicians who, for political gains, incite to racial or religious hatred.

As to social media, Mr. de Varennes indicates in his report to the 46th session of the Human Rights Council, that 2/3 of hate speech in social media targets minorities.

Mrs. Chair,

In the face of such a situation, we need to redouble our efforts to guarantee the rights of minorities and promote cohesive, stable and resilient societies through an effective implementation of the tools we have at our disposal.

In doing so we should avoid any politicization of these matters.

The UN have developed important instruments aiming at promoting the rights of minorities that States should effectively implement, notably the UNGA Resolution on the "Promotion and protection of the rights of person belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities".

The implementation of this resolution clearly contributes to the political and social stability of States.

Another important resolution, also of great importance for minorities, is the Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 on discrimination and incitement to violence based on religion or belief.

The OIC is concerned about the surge of these phenomena especially Islamophobia which is posing a threat to peace and security in the world.

Freedom of expression should be exercised with responsibility as not to hurt the religious convictions of people.

Mrs. Chair,

With the multiplication of conflicts across the world, the OIC has been expanding its activities to promote global peace through preventive diplomacy and the promotion of dialogue and mediation.

The protection of the rights of Muslim minorities figure high on the agenda of the OIC.

The organization follows a clear and realistic policy in this field, guided by the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States.

In this framework, the OIC engaged in some mediations with regard crises involving Muslim communities in Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand and the Central African Republic. In Sri Lanka, the OIC played a key role in addressing concerns of the Muslim community in the aftermath of policies affecting its rights in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Regarding the Rohingya community in Myanmar, the OIC, has been at the origin of the important decision of the International Court of Justice in considering provisional measures to prevent further acts of genocide against this community, which sets a historical precedent in legal efforts in upholding the rights of persecuted minorities.

Interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue have been a priority for the OIC in developing a culture of peace and moderation among nations and civilizations.

Moreover, and in the face of rising Islamophobia across the world, the OIC has established, within its General Secretariat, an Islamophobia Observatory tasked with tracking and analyzing the facts and trends related to this phenomenon.

The OIC-Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, for its part, undertakes studies and research in the field of human rights including advancing the fundamental rights of Muslim minorities in non-Member States.

In concluding, I would like to say that we are looking forward to the deliberations of this Forum and wish it all success.

I thank you.