

## Permanent Mission Pakistan

Madame Chair, we recognize the importance of this year's theme for the forum. We agree that more conversation is needed for adopting legal and structural approaches to building more inclusive societies. We identify three major challenges in this regard.

1. Globalization and migration have transformed the demographic character of many societies
2. The shared connectivity and social media have demonstrated that this information can be weaponized against minorities.
3. Artificial intelligent with its many benefits poses challenges and opportunities to building inclusive societies.

Madame 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. In this backdrop we notice unfortunate reluctance in adopting legal deterrence to combat such hate crimes. The recent banning of halal meat, an imposition restriction of 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.

Madame 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 and the perpetrators faced strict legal and judicial process.

We take this opportunity to write all stakeholders to chart common avenues to curb the menace of religious hatred, which is neither new nor restricted to any particular region or country.

Madame Chair, we believe there is need to:

1. enact legal deterrence on enticement to violence against religious minorities. HRC53 is an important milestone in this regard;
2. build policy approaches based on international cooperation and through dialogue and engagement.