

Key Points of Moderators' summary of the 5th Meeting of Istanbul Process for the "full and effective implementation of UN HRC Resolution 16/18", held in Jeddah, KSA 3-4 June 2015.

In continuation of the previous four constructive meetings, the 5th Meeting of the Istanbul Process was held in the Headquarters of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 3-4 June 2015 to consider the full and effective implementation of UN HRC Resolution 16/18.

The meeting was attended by a significant number of diverse stakeholders, including UN Member States, Academicians, relevant UN Officials and independent Experts, Legal practitioners, NGOs, Media and civil society representatives, which reflected the importance that the international community attaches to the subject of combating discrimination based on religion.

The meeting was divided into three panel discussions that covered the eight-point Action Plan of Res 16/18 in three broad groups.

Panellists from different legal, socio and cultural backgrounds made insightful presentations on various aspects of the Action Plan as well as useful recommendations based on existing good practices. Participants of the meeting also provided useful inputs and raised important questions vis-à-vis how best to implement the needed steps at different levels by relevant stakeholders in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

The meeting reaffirmed the significance of HRC Res 16/18 as a milestone achievement in the UN's efforts to combat incitement to hatred, discrimination, stigmatization and violence based on one's religion or belief as well as called for all out efforts to preserve international consensus on this important document.

Participants also highlighted the importance of the Istanbul Process as the unique follow up mechanism for the effective implementation of HRC Res. 16/18 and its Action Plan and called for its further strengthening through informal but structured and regular meetings of all stakeholders that would ensure continuity, systematization and sustainability of the process.

Participants also stressed the importance of keeping a record of previous, present and future sessions of the Istanbul Process in order to establish a track of issues discussed and outcomes in each meeting.

Towards this end, the following important points also emerged from the discussions:

- That the Political Commitment at the highest level of political institution is essential for the full and effective implementation of HRC Res 16/18.
- That the concerned Government institutions should give priority to the training of relevant officials as well as encouraging religious and community leaders as well as civil society in addressing the root causes of discrimination based on religion.
- To avoid double standards in the implementation and to promote the message of Res. 16/18 in an objective and impartial manner. This would help preserve the international consensus and encourage effective implementation at all levels.

- The Importance of promoting freedom of religion while out-rightly combating intolerance and hatred based on religion, which are mutually inter-dependent.
- The Importance of ensuring freedom of opinion and expression that was key to exercising the right to freedom of religion. Proscription of speech should be exceptional and must conform to the three-tier criterion given in Art 19 or Art 20 of ICCPR and/ or in keeping with national legal requirements. Rabat Plan of Action also provides guidance in the matter.
- Stressed the importance of positive and affirmative measures in combating religious intolerance, in particular speaking out against acts of hatred, provocation, stereotyping and insults etc. by the Istanbul Process community specially by religious and political leaders from different groups.
- The Existing legal practices used by different countries to address hate crimes, incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence based on religion must be applied universally to provide equal protection to all targeted groups and individuals.
- The Importance of promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue for better understanding and appreciating the differences and similarities as well as to promote respect and tolerance for each other's views beliefs and preferences.
- The Need to preserve, promote and respect cultural and religious diversity that is not only the essence of multiculturalism but also conforms to human rights norms and standards.
- The Importance of providing human rights education from an early stage that includes respect and tolerance of cultural and religious diversity as well as promotes multiculturalism.
- Urged all UN Member States to provide regular inputs to the annual report of the OHCHR on the implementation of Res 16/18 that would enable the High Commissioner to provide analytical review of the progress made including best practices used in combating religious intolerance.
- To strengthen the means of monitoring and reporting on the implementation of Resolution 16/18 by vigorous use and involvement of UPR, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures.
- Appreciated the strong interest and involvement of civil society in the Istanbul Process and urged their enhanced involvement both in the discussions as well as effective on ground implementation of the Action Plan at all levels.
- Welcomed and applauded the announcement by Chile to host the next meeting of the Istanbul Process in 2016.
- Thanked OIC Secretary General for hosting the 5th Meeting of Istanbul Process and excellent arrangements made to facilitate healthy discussions and offering warm hospitality to the participants.