

Statement – Item 9 GD

Thank you Madam President,

The Universal Rights Group remains concerned at the continued rise of intolerance and discrimination around the world, including on the basis of religion or belief.

Such hatred, both online and offline, is at the source of innumerable human rights violations, tears at the fabric of societies, leads to systemic injustice and in the worst cases violent conflict.

For this reason, nearly 10 years ago, this Council adopted resolution 16/18, which committed all member States to take specific measures at the national level in policy, law and practice, to address intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, as well as its root causes.

In the spirit of dialogue and cooperation, the international community established the Istanbul Process as a forum for all stakeholders including government officials, faith leaders, academics, and civil society representatives, to share their experiences and good practices in implementing the 16/18 8-point action plan, which includes, building collaborative networks, establishing mechanisms to identify tensions, providing outreach training, discussing root causes of discrimination, speaking out, criminalizing incitement to violence, using education to combat negative stereotyping and promoting an open debate and interfaith dialogue.

In November of last year, the Netherlands hosted the 7th meeting of the Istanbul Process in the Hague. On that occasion, URG announced that it was partnering with Article19 to create a new digital platform for the Istanbul Process.

Today, Madam President, I am pleased to announce that the website of the Istanbul Process has been launched and can be consulted at istanbulprocess1618.info

Though this repository cannot replace in-person meetings, we hope it will be a useful tool for States, international organisations and civil society to continue combatting all forms of religious intolerance and discrimination, while serving as a platform to facilitate States' reporting commitments.

Thank you