

Report of the 8th Istanbul Process Meeting

Pakistan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva organized the 8th Istanbul Process (IP) virtually, on 16 February 2022. The meeting's agenda was set on the theme "10th anniversary of Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolution 16/18: Looking Back and Moving Forward".

This meeting included three segments; (I) High-Level Inaugural Session, (II) Panel I: Ten years of Istanbul Process: Looking Back and (III) Panel II: Moving Forward: Next Ten Years and beyond (**Program is annexed**).

High Level Inaugural Session

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Geneva moderated the High-Level Inaugural Session. The Session opened with a keynote address by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, followed by statements from Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, OIC Secretary General, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Minister for South and Central Asia, United Nations and the Commonwealth of the United Kingdom, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, US Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Human Rights, Ms. Uzra Zeya, EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr. Eamon Gilmore, President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Federica Villegas, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, High Representative for UN Alliance of Civilization, Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, and former OIC Secretary General, Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu.

The **Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Shah Mahmood Qureshi** noted that the discourse over drivers and incidents of religious intolerance, discrimination and violence had gained greater visibility during the past twenty years. He referred to the unanimous adoption of HRC resolution 16/18 as an important milestone to combat religious intolerance through its 8-point Action Plan. He noted that IP had indeed catalyzed a 'decade of dialogue' raising further awareness, and understanding, as well as exchange of good practices among and by States, civil society, faith leaders and media.

Mr. Qureshi shared concerns over the steady rise in hate speech, intolerance and even physical violence and attacks on individuals, groups, and sites due to their religious beliefs or significance. He argued that such acts were either an outcome of securitization of policies or due to incendiary rhetoric deployed by public office holders for electoral gains. He expressed the view that sections of mainstream and social media had willingly or unwittingly become conveyor belts of prejudice, hate, discrimination and violence.

He emphasized that there was a growing realization about the problem with business models that prioritize profits over human rights principles as well as on legitimate concerns over lack of transparency and accountability vis-a-vis online content moderation. Highlighting the disproportionate impact of prejudice, hatred and discrimination on Islam and Muslim population worldwide, he expressed deep concerns over the state-sponsored nature of hostility and phobia, directed against Islam and Muslims e.g., the so-called “legal” bans on wearing of hijabs in public places and construction of mosques or minarets; state-tolerated pogroms and public calls for genocide; and destruction of Islamic religious sites, Holy Scripture and symbols.

Going forward, Mr. Qureshi stressed the need for codification of the globally agreed norm of not associating terrorism with any religion, nationality, or civilization. He also proposed to build synergies in approaches and collaborative actions between IP and other relevant inter-governmental processes. He thanked Turkey for its plan to host the next IP meeting.

The **Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu** expressed concern that racism, hate crime, Islamophobia, antisemitism, and religious intolerance had reached an unprecedented level. He referred to reports by (a) the German Federal Criminal Office, which recorded a 40 percent increase in– racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia since 2011; (b) Canada’s police reported a 7 percent rise in hate crimes since 2019 and (c) US Department of Justice - hate crimes reached their higher levels in 12 years. He noted that HRC resolution 16/18 and IP provided tools to counter these dangerous trends.

Mr. Cavusoglu said that rise of intolerance was correlated closely with the use of populist rhetoric by politicians. He called for promoting a culture of peaceful co-existence as well as adopting measures to criminalize incitement to violence based on religion or belief. He expressed the view that more often than not the right of freedom of speech was invoked to deliberately offend Muslims. He drew attention to the Turkey-Spain joint initiative of Alliance of Civilization, launched in 2005 which had emerged and one of the widely supported initiatives with 156 members.

He noted that OIC Foreign Ministers have designated anniversary of Christchurch shooting (15 March) as International Day to combat Islamophobia. A similar proposal was under consideration by UN General Assembly.

Mr. Cavusoglu announced that Turkey would be hosting the next meeting of the Istanbul Process.

The **OIC Secretary General, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha** described HRC Resolution 16/18, as a crucial step to resolutely combat hate speech, intolerance, discrimination, and incitement to violence based on religion or belief. He stated that these challenges have emerged as a threat to humanity at an unprecedented level and to the point that they were now jeopardizing international peace and security.

Recalling the terrorist attacks on the places of worship in New Zealand and Sri Lanka in 2019, the Secretary General stressed that such attacks demonstrated that hatred could lead to extremely terrible violence of mass killing. He emphasized that terrorism had no religion, and any misguided person regardless of his or her faith could conduct a terrorist attack. He underscored the need for joint actions to reverse these trends and prevent such atrocities from happening again.

The Secretary General said that the previous seven meetings of IP had been instrumental, and it was important to take stock of the progress and plan. He underscored the need to devise concerted actions to harness the full potential of 16/18 Action Plan. He reaffirmed OIC's engagement with IP and highlighted OIC's efforts aimed at effective implementation of the Action Plan. He apprised the participants of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory's monitoring activities as well as on the role of the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC).

The **Minister of South and Central Asia, the United Nations and the Commonwealth at the UK Foreign Office, Lord Ahmad** referred to the consensus adoption of resolution 16/18 as a landmark achievement and historic breakthrough in global efforts to promote freedom of religion or belief for everyone. Tragically, in 2022, he expressed concern that not just religious intolerance or discrimination, but religious persecution remained a reality for many religious communities and peoples of faiths across the globe.

He said that a robust legal framework and actions set out in resolution 16/18 underpinned UK's efforts. He highlighted UK's religious diversity while explaining various national efforts to promote freedom of religion or belief and fight against all forms of hatred including anti-Muslim, antisemitic or any form of religious bigotry. He recounted such efforts including working with schools, faith groups and civil society partners, facilitating faith exchange programs, dedicated services for hate crimes reporting, and anti-Muslim attacks programs. He informed that around 8 million UK pounds had been allocated to enhance security of worship places across the country.

Lord Ahmad reaffirmed UK's commitment to collaborate with friends and partners to promote freedom of religion or belief. He referred to the UK sponsored

meeting of the UN Security Council to raise awareness about persecution of members of religious minorities in conflict situations in March 2021. In terms of way forward, he indicated that the UK would be hosting a meeting of the international religious freedom alliance as well as an international Ministerial Conference on freedom of religion or belief in the summer of 2022.

He emphasized the need for stronger advocacy, collective actions, and collaboration to give hope and justice to victims of persecution due to their beliefs and faiths. He called on the international community to reaffirm its shared vision, enhance mutual understanding, and promote friendship between religious communities as well as between religious and non-religious communities.

The **US Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Human Rights, Ms. Uzra Zeya** underscored the continued significance of resolution 16/18 to protect and advance two inter-related rights i.e., right to freedom of religion, and freedom of expression. She emphasized the complementarity of these two important rights. She lamented that people and communities remained vulnerable to abuse and discrimination on accounts of religion or affiliations while far too many continued to engage in hateful and discriminatory discourse including through social media.

Ms. Zeya stressed further investments in education systems as the only effective approach to promote mutual respect and tolerance. She also underlined the need for effective implementation of anti-discrimination laws and accountability for acts of violence and incitement against persons based on religious beliefs. She was of the view that efforts to ban or criminalize speech were not effective means to address the underlying concerns. It was in this spirit that that the USA opposed blasphemy law and other laws that seek to criminalize insult to religion. She emphasized that the best way to deal with offensive speech was to drown out voices of hate with positive speech.

She affirmed US's commitment to offer expert advice at the bilateral level and to share US domestic experience in combatting religious intolerance.

The **EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr. Eamon Gilmore** said that IP had become a vital space for states to engage in dialogue and exchange views aimed at developing understanding to combat religious intolerance and hatred and follow-up collectively on the implementation of HRC resolution 16/18. He noted that over the last two years, stigmatization, discrimination and violence had unfortunately grown. During COVID 19 pandemic, some states imposed uneven restrictions on fundamental freedoms of individuals and even blaming minorities for spreading the virus, which was

unacceptable. He also noted that harassment, discrimination, or killing due to religious beliefs or atheist beliefs was unacceptable.

Referring to the reports of EU Fundamental Rights Agency, he recognized minorities still faced hate speech, hate crime and negative stereotyping. He reiterated EU's commitment to engage with CSOs and religious representatives to improve the policy framework and informed that the EU had elaborated its first-ever strategy to combating antisemitism last year.

Mr. Gilmore suggested: (a) inclusivity in the IP with more participation of CSOs, minority communities and women of faith to make the process meaningful and (b) IP should complement discussions held within UN fora both at UNGA and HRC. He expressed the hope that the upcoming discussions would be fruitful and help in identifying specific good practices to combat negative stereotyping such as investing in law enforcement training or increasing interfaith engagements. He voiced support for the work of the Special Rapporteur on FORB.

The Special Representative highlighted the EU's commitment to condemn discrimination, violence, and persecution against or by any person based on religion or belief. He reaffirmed that the EU was a strong advocate of the right of everyone to have or not have a religion or belief or to manifest or change religion while condemning criminalization of apostasy and abuse of blasphemy laws.

The **President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Federico Villegas** shared the view that international community regarded the resolution 16/18 as well as the Istanbul Process as key tools to combat intolerance based on religion or belief. He informed that until the 38th UPR Working Group Session, more than seventy states have supported around 180 recommendations on combating intolerance, discrimination and violence based on religion or belief.

Ambassador Villegas argued that any challenges, including those posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, exacerbated religious intolerance against persons based on religion or belief. Similarly, the increasing use of social media platforms to amplify religious intolerance and discrimination through texts, speeches and images had added another layer of complexity. He recommended utilizing the Special Procedures as well as the UN Treaty bodies in the fight against religious intolerance. He said the start of the fourth cycle of the Universal Period Review in 2022 would provide an excellent opportunity to further advocate for the implementation of HRC resolution 16/18. He stressed that national human rights institutions, national mechanisms, and civil society organizations could also include a specific analysis of the implementation of the 16/18 action plan in their reports.

He noted that the Istanbul Process should remain alive, as a platform for states and individuals to exchange their views, good practices, challenges, and lessons learned as part of the implementation of the 16/18 Action Plan.

The **Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Nada Al-Nashif** expressed concern over the rise of intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, and incitement to violence against persons based on religion or belief. She called for urgent action to address how state and non-state actors used the COVID pandemic as a pretext to justify the harassment and intimidation against members of specific communities including minorities.

The Deputy High Commissioner said that the Istanbul Process was now more relevant than ever. As the first dedicated intergovernmental follow-up mechanism, she referred to resolution 16/18 as an exceptional example of the Council's work that reflected creativity, political will, and cross regional collaboration. The High Commissioner's report about human rights of Rohingya Muslims quoted Resolution 16/18, Rabat Plan of Action, and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights to address incitement to hatred in the name of religion. Similarly, she pointed to the report of the Special Rapporteur on FORB, stressing that these three documents could provide essential guidance for strategies to combat antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, and other forms of intolerance.

She suggested designing comprehensive policies and human rights education projects to address the root-causes of hate speech rather than criminalizing hate speech, which did not reach the threshold of Rabat Plan of Action on the incitement to hatred and violence.

The Deputy High Commissioner encouraged states and other stakeholders to redouble their efforts to implement the 16/18 Action Plan and called for efforts, inter alia (a) political and religious leaders should speak out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and hate speech; (b) teaching material and curricula should promote respect for pluralism and diversity in the field of religion or belief; and (c) exchange of lessons learned and promising practices.

The **High Representative for UN Alliance of Civilization, Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos** deplored the alarming rise in racism, xenophobia, hate speech and discrimination based on religion or belief including Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and other forms of religious intolerance. He warned that such trends were a threat to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as well as to democratic values and international peace and security. He underscored the significance of HRC resolution 16/18 as a framework of our collective response in

combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization of and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief.

Mr. Moratinos noted that the inclusivity and cross-regional aspect of the Istanbul Process had allowed an exchange of good practices in addressing intolerance based on religion or belief. He argued that amidst the complex global context, the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated all challenges and brought new ones to the forefront. In his view, the most relevant theme of discussion was the proliferation of social media outlets, providing fertile ground for xenophobia and hate speech. He stressed that emergence of populism and the far-right ideology added fuel and amplified the spread of bigotry and rhetoric.

He called for urged action both at the national and international levels. States must devote particular attention to the inclusive education, and an adequate legislative framework by providing necessary institutional, administrative, and legal tools. He argued in favour of strengthening the current mechanism as well as establishing more platforms where victims could directly report incidents of hate speech, hate crimes and other intolerant acts based on religious and belief, including Islamophobia and antisemitism, and Christian phobia.

Former OIC Secretary General, Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu narrated the historical context of resolution 16/18, and the process of its negotiation and adoption. He recalled that protests and violence had erupted following the publication of Danish cartoons attracting global attention and Muslims across the world felt deeply hurt by the incident. There were discussions in the human rights community on the question of fixing responsibility while exercising freedom of expression. Referring to his conversations as OIC Secretary General with the then UN Secretary General, EU High Representative, and the Spanish Foreign Minister to tackle the challenge of religious intolerance, he noted that based on initial discussions, a 'Trilateral Statement' was issued simultaneously in New York, Jeddah, and Brussels on 7 February 2006. This statement condemned the violence, described the caricatures as 'insulting' and 'offensive,' and emphasized that freedom of expression entailed responsibility and discretion.

He referred to wide range of engagements between OIC, EU, OSCE, HRC and other stakeholders. He recalled that the main point raised by European countries and the USA was the "incompatibility of the concept of defamation of religions" with the constitutional principle of "freedom of individuals." After consultations, the term "vilification" was used in place of "defamation." This turned out to be a major step forward from the OIC side to open the door for compromise.

Highlighting key points of his speech to the 15th HRC Session, he explained OIC's efforts to evolve consensus especially on eight-point proposal in the statement which found resonance with all the negotiating partners and later resulted in the adoption of consensus resolution 16/18 in March 2011. To sustain the historic resolution 16/19 and to create a political momentum, OIC Secretary General and US Secretary of State jointly convened a ministerial event in Istanbul with the participation of the EU High Representative and other OIC and Western countries. He also highlighted the decision of the European Court of Human Rights addressing Islamophobic actions that occurred in 2009 and ruled in 2018 that "defaming the Prophet Muhammed goes beyond the permissible limits of an objective debate and could stir up prejudice and put at risk religious peace and thus exceeds the permissible limits of freedom of expression".

Panel I: Ten years of Istanbul Process

The objective of this panel discussion was to take stock of achievements such as legislative and administrative measures to combat hate speech, intolerance, and discrimination based on religion or belief.

OIC's Permanent Observer in Geneva, Ms. Nassima Baghli moderated the panel. The panelists for the session included (1) Executive Director, OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), Mr. Marghoob Saleem Butt; (2) EU Ambassador in Geneva, Ambassador Lotte Knudsen; (3) Netherland's Special Envoy for Religion and Belief, Ambassador Jos Douma; (4) Chief (Human Rights Treaty Branch), OHCHR, Dr. Ibrahim Salama; (5) Executive Director, Universal Rights Group, Mr. Marc Limon; and (6) Head of Article-19, Ms. Anna Oosterlinck.

The Panelists made the following important points:

- Presented a brief overview of the negotiations that led to the adoption of resolution 16/18.
- Resolution 16/18 helped bridge the political divide between OIC and the western states especially narrowing down the debate on hate speech, victimization of religious minorities and freedom of expression.
- IP has the capacity and capability to define and address the legal concept of "incitement to religious hatred" far from politicization and polarization of the core issue.
- Acknowledged that condemnation by western leaders and distancing of their governments from Islamophobic acts was a welcome step to achieve the common objective of protecting the multicultural fabric of contemporary societies.

- Emphasized that defining the threshold of incitement to hatred and violence was essential to prevent the traps of bigotry, extremism, hatred, and violence.
- IP has been instrumental in promoting the right to freedom of religion.
- Underscored the need for continued global efforts for stricter enforcement including through data collection for acts of religious hate to ascertain when and where it happened and how to prevent it.
- The efficacy of educational programs for the public at large and government functionaries in law enforcement and judicial departments as well as campaigns against hate speech and disinformation in the digital sphere.
- Social media could also be a good vehicle for positive messaging and campaigns.
- The EU had adopted a code of conduct on hate speech in 2016 together with social media platforms, which has facilitated the removal of hate content.
- Various social media platforms were implementing a code of conduct for the removal of hate speech.
- Shared disappointment over the lack of concrete follow-up actions after the 7th IP meeting.
- For resolution 16/18 to have a real impact, all countries must invest in monitoring and reporting with particular focus on the rights of vulnerable communities.
- Reiterated commitment to further strengthen mechanisms through the provision of sufficient personnel and funding.
- Emphasized the need for integrating the UN work and regional initiatives.
- Participation of diplomats, civil society and advocacy groups and gender representation in IP meetings could be a parameter to gauge its success.
- The need to identify balance between political and technical aspects of the Process.
- While continued political commitment was important, a parallel technical track was equally essential for sustaining the impact of resolution 16/18.
- The need for synergizing Rabat and Beirut processes.
- Highlighted the role of faith actors especially as a strategic tool for resolution of issues.
- Acknowledged overall progress on every element of the resolution 16/18 i.e. contribution of states and scholars in addressing the issue and encouraged more active role of media and journalists.
- There was no need to renegotiate documents but focus on implementation of the Process and recommended upscaling the role of IP including having regional meetings to share and learn from experiences and best practices.
- More free speech can tackle hate speech as shrinking space would not only restrict free voices but would limit freedom of all people to speak out to counter intolerance.

- The future of 16/18 depends on the continue political commitment and more sustained constructive relationship with the human rights mechanisms.
- Violations of human right resulted in promoting intolerance. Criminal law may only be used under exceptional circumstances involving violence.
- Noted scapegoating of communities in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

An interactive session followed the panel discussion with participants in which they referred to adoption of resolution 16/18 as a landmark achievement. The following key elements emerged from the discussions:

- a) IP mechanism was an important instrument to build bridges and overcome obstacles.
- b) There was a need for innovative and viable strategies to counter new & emerging challenges related to religious discrimination and stigmatization based on religion or belief including fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue.
- c) Religious intolerance, racism, violence, and discrimination were on the rise despite successes.
- d) Growing and continuing instances of Islamophobia, attacks on places of workshops and destruction of religious buildings necessitated greater attention.
- e) Political commitment was essential to strengthen implementation of resolution 16/18.
- f) Reaffirmed support for diversity and inter-religion fraternity as well as Alliance of Civilization initiative.
- g) Rights to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression constituted pillars of human rights architecture.
- h) Challenges of offline & online hate speech including disinformation and propaganda pointed to the need for concerted efforts to combat them.

Panel Discussion 2: Moving Forward: Next Ten Years and Beyond

The objective of the panel discussion was to identify new manifestations of emerging challenges in the area of religious intolerance, discrimination and xenophobia and generate discussion on how best to address them.

The second panel discussion was moderated by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi and included panelists (1) Pakistan's former Permanent Representative to UN Geneva, Ambassador Zamir Akram; (2) Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on Genocide; (3) Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief; (4) Ms. Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, Former UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues & member of UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; (5) Mr. Richard Lappin, Head of Organic Content Policy (EMEA), Meta (Facebook); and (6) Mufti Aziz Sadik Hasanovic, President of Islamic Community in Croatia.

The panelists made the following significant points:

- While political consensus on HRC resolution 16/18 had endured, new challenges had emerged due to political, economic, and technological reasons, such as promoting hatred and religious intolerance for political gains; proliferation of online hate speech due to technological advancements; and economic scapegoating of religious minorities, especially amidst the COVID-induced socio-economic challenges.
- Balanced and effective implementation of point 5 (f) of the Istanbul Action Plan was particularly important, in addition to affirmative measures such as promoting inter-religious dialogue, harmony and peaceful co-existence.
- There was a need to avoid double standards and treat people in same way who were engaged in antisemitic and Islamophobic speech.
- There was need to do more since marginalization and discrimination against people based on race and religion continued across the world.
- Discrimination based on religious identity was rampant even in democratic societies though countries with strong democratic institutions could better respond to violence against religious minorities.
- Hate speech was a blatant manifestation of intolerance in the society and if left unchallenged, it could lead to genocide, crimes against humanity and other atrocities in the longer run.
- Globally, the rights of religious minorities continued to be poorly practiced and implemented. It was therefore essential to adopt minority rights' approach.
- Religious leaders could make an important contribution to the fight against discrimination and other forms of maltreatment of people.
- There was a need for a whole of UN approach to effectively address rising trends and challenges in the domain of religious intolerance.
- Beyond HRC resolution 16/18, the UN Secretary-General Action Plan on Hate Speech was a key achievement, which had inter alia tried to define the complex phenomenon of hate speech.
- In addition, the Rabat Plan of Action provided vital tools to address the mushrooming challenge of online and offline advocacy of religious hatred as well as legally define threshold of hate speech.
- There had been three key challenges in context of countering online hate speech: (i) there was no agreement on the definition of hate speech; (ii) different societies had various levels of tolerance vis-à-vis speech; (iii) Hate speech was contextual, making it difficult at times to decide which hateful content must be immediately removed from social media platforms.

- Facebook’s content policies were publicly available. During the last quarter, Facebook took down 22.3 million pieces of content on hate speech, out of which 97% were due to Facebook’s own initiative.

During the interactive segment, following points emerged:

- a) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), in its articles 19 and 20, was clear in terms of the right to freedom of expression and the duties and responsibilities germane to exercise this freedom as well as the prohibition of incitement to violence.
- b) In context of countering hate speech, it was important to maintain the delicate balance between freedoms of religion and expression as being mutually reinforcing.
- c) Certain conflicts stemmed from discrimination against people on the basis of religion or belief. History demonstrated that hate speech was one of the precursors to genocide.
- d) Political as well as socio-economic integration of religious minorities remain important to combat discrimination and hate speech.
- e) Governments were encouraged to use the definition of hate speech, as contained in the UNSG Action Plan, and integrate it into relevant domestic laws and policies.
- f) Social media platforms and private businesses needed to be more transparent regarding the formulation and implementation of their content moderation policies.
- g) Forging horizontal and vertical collaboration and coordination between governments, social media companies and other relevant stakeholders was essential.
- h) On-going efforts at national and regional levels were highlighted to counter hate speech and defend freedom of expression i.e. promoting inter-cultural dialogue, human rights education, and raising awareness about rights of minorities.

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi concluded the session by sharing his sense of the following eight key takeaways of the meeting:

- I. First, the continued significance of IP and HRC resolution 16/18 and its action plans as an essential anchor point in galvanizing international action and cooperation in this key area.
- II. Second, it was important to preserve the international political consensus on resolution 16/18 as a framework for frank exchange of views.
- III. Third; there was a clear need for further actions to galvanize implementation and enforcement through dialogue, raising awareness, promoting tolerance, and promoting values of peaceful co-existence and pluralism.

- IV. Fourth; there was also a need for effective and balanced implementation of both affirmative and prohibitive measures, as listed in the 16/18 Action Plan.
- V. Fifth; digital era presented a range of new challenges and opportunities to address concerns around hate speech.
- VI. Sixth; there was also a need to bring coherence and define basic legal and normative standards and benchmarks. This could be explored by resuming discussions on an international instrument for countering religious intolerance.
 - I. Seventh; it was important to forge partnerships both horizontally and vertically to accelerate cooperation and dialogue among various stakeholders in terms of implementation of 16/18 Action Plan.
 - II. Eighth; more attention was needed to strengthen the organizational structure and administrative part of IP to build on the institutional memory.

As the next host of the IP meeting, Ambassador Sadik Arsalan, Permanent Representative of Turkiye to the UN in Geneva shared his perspective on the salience of addressing the rising and contemporary challenge of discrimination, xenophobia, and faith-based intolerance. In this context, he reaffirmed Turkiye's readiness to host the next IP meeting. Turkiye would host the next meeting of the Istanbul Process and looked forward to the effective and meaningful participation of all key stakeholders in the meeting.
