

Elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief

Introduction of draft resolution L.15/Rev.1

Mr. President,

I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the European Union and all the co-sponsors, in a total of 71 States from all regional groups, draft resolution contained in document L.15/Rev.1, entitled "Elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief".

Draft resolution L.15/Rev.1, inter alia, condemns all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief as well as violations of the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and urges States to take measures to put an end to all such forms of intolerance and discrimination. It recognizes with deep concern the overall rise in instances of intolerance and violence against members of many religious communities in various parts of the world. Any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is also condemned, and States are urged to take all necessary and appropriate action to combat it, and to step up efforts to implement the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

One of the core elements of this draft resolution is the extension, for three years, of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, and the specification of the terms of reference of such mandate.

Mr. President,

The co-sponsors of draft resolution L.15/Rev.1 have endeavoured to the maximum of their efforts to try to achieve consensus on this text. Last September, after prolonged negotiations, we accepted to postpone action on this draft to the second part of this 6th session of the Human Rights Council. Extensive negotiations held during the inter-sessional period led to the alteration of no less than 24 paragraphs out of 40, in order to accommodate concerns expressed by interested delegations.

Draft resolution L.15/Rev.1 reflects these changes, which include the alteration of the structure of the text, with the split of its substantive part and of the part dealing with the Special Rapporteur's mandate, as well as the specification of the terms of reference of this mandate. Among many other alterations, new language was included on the promotion of tolerance and the importance of interreligious and intrareligious dialogue, as well as on the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders.

Introduction – Straight vote

Unfortunately, fundamental divergences of views on some issues have made it impossible to achieve consensus, as it has been the case in previous years. The final compromise package proposed two days ago by the main sponsors of draft resolution L.15/Rev.1 failed to achieve this purpose. After so prolonged discussions, and so extensive revisions, co-sponsors have been forced to conclude that negotiation efforts have been exhausted.

Still, we welcome the constructiveness of all delegations which participated at the negotiating process and, in particular, ^{I would like to pay homage to the efforts} ~~the transparency and positive spirit~~ of Ambassador Massod Khan. We believe this enabled us all to bridge a number of important differences, and hope that consensus can be re-established in the near future.

We equally welcome the withdrawal of document L.49, containing proposed amendments to L.15/Rev.1, but continue to regret the fact that this draft resolution may not be adopted by consensus as it has always been the case, and as it happened just two weeks ago on a resolution on a similar topic adopted at the General Assembly Third Committee in New York.

We thus ask Members of this Council to express their support to the subject-matter and the goals of this draft resolution by voting in favour of it. It is our hope that draft resolution L.15/Rev.1 will be adopted with the broadest possible support.

Thank you, Mr. President.