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## **Follow-ups**

### **Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech**

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The General Assembly adopted on 25 July 2019, the Resolution 73/328, about promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech, at the Seventy-third session, when discussing item 15 of its Agenda.

The General Assembly, reaffirmed the commitment made by all Member States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of all human Rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to, inter alia, religion or belief.

It recalled article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights provisions, and also its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

The General Assembly recognized the importance of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which serve as the universal mandate for the international community, particularly the United Nations system, for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, in particular future generations.

It reaffirmed the obligation of States to prohibit discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief and to implement measures to guarantee the equal and effective protection of the law, and welcomed in this regard, all international, regional and national initiatives, as well as efforts by religious and other leaders to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

The Assembly reaffirmed the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and full respect for the free-



dom to seek, receive and impart information can play in strengthening democracy and combating religious intolerance, and reaffirming further that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities, in accordance with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

It recognized the commitment of all religions to peace and the contribution that interreligious and intercultural dialogue among religions, groups and individuals, in particular religious leaders, can make towards an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind, and strongly deplored all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship, as well as all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines that are in violation of international law.

Bearing in mind the upcoming first International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, which will contribute to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the General Assembly expressed its deep concern at all acts of hate speech that undermine the spirit of tolerance and respect for diversity and constitute a serious common concern for all Member States, and convinced that there is no justification for hate speech, whatever be the motivation, emphasized that Member States, regional organizations, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies, the media and civil society as a whole have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity and in the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief.

The Assembly recognised the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting intercultural dialogue and their contribution to interreligious dialogue, as well as their activities related to the culture of peace and non-violence and their focus on concrete actions at the global, regional and sub regional levels, noted the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and noted also the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, also called the Fez Plan of Action, and the ini-



tiative to develop the Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

It recognised that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind.

1. Recognizes the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development, and calls upon Member States to consider, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realization of internationally agreed development goals;
2. Condemns any advocacy of hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media, social media or any other means;
3. Encourages Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation;
4. Calls upon Member States to engage with all relevant stakeholders to promote the virtues of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, respect and acceptance of differences, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and cohabitation and respect for human rights, to reject the spread of hate speech, that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence;
5. Encourages all States and international organizations to generate public awareness, to enlighten the public about the dangers of intolerance and sectarian violence and to react with renewed commitment and action in support of the promotion of tolerance and human rights, and invites them to continue to pay attention to the importance of mutual cooperation, understanding and dialogue in ensuring the promotion of moderation and tolerance and respect for human rights;
6. Encourages Member States to focus on promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, respect for diversity, and the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief, while underlining the importance of education, culture, peace, tolerance, mutual understanding and human rights;



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7. Invites Member States to further promote reconciliation to help ensure durable peace and sustainable development, and to encourage religious and community leaders to engage in intra- and interfaith dialogue to respond to incitement to violence, discrimination and hate speech;
8. Welcomes the proclamation of the first week of February of every year the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs;
9. Takes note, in this regard, of the launch on 14 July 2017 by the Secretary-General of the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, also called the Fez Plan of Action, and further takes note of the launch on 18 June 2019 by the Secretary-General of the Plan of Action on Hate Speech;
10. Also takes note of the initiative of the Secretary-General to produce a Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, and looks forward to its completion;
11. Invites all Member States, the United Nations system, regional and non governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders to increase their understanding of the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, also called the Fez Plan of Action, and the Plan of Action on Hate Speech, and other initiatives promoting tolerance and mutual understanding.