FORUM: General Assembly 3

QUESTION OF: Freedom of religion versus freedom of speech

MAIN SUBMITTER: Uganda

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

*Reaffirming* the commitment made to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to religion or belief,

*Further reaffirming* the obligation of states to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion or belief and to implement measures to guarantee the equal and effective protection of the law,

*Recalling* also the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information can play in strengthening democracy and combating religious intolerance, and also that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it special responsibilities,

*Condemns* those acts that advocate religious hatred and thereby undermine the spirit of tolerance,

*Further recalling* that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group,

*Fully aware* that violence can never be an acceptable response to acts of intolerance on the basis of religion or belief,

*Affirming* further the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information can play in strengthening democracy and combating religious intolerance,

*Deeply conscious* of the positive role of human rights education and training in promoting tolerance, non-discrimination and equality,

*Further condemns* incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons based on their religion or belief in all regions of the world,

*Emphasizing* 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 centers or places of worship,

*Recognizing* the valuable contribution of people of all religions or beliefs to humanity and the contribution that dialogue among religious groups can make towards an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

*Further Recognizing* also that working together to enhance the implementation of existing legal regimes that protect individuals against discrimination and hate crimes, increase interfaith and intercultural efforts and expand human rights education are an important first step in combating incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against individuals on the basis of religion or belief,

1. Welcomes international, regional and national initiatives aimed at promoting interfaith and intercultural harmony by combating discrimination against individuals on the basis of religion or belief;
2. Recognizes that the open, public, structured debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national and international levels can be among the best protections against religious intolerance and can play a positive role in strengthening democracy and combating religious hatred, and affirms that continuing dialogue on these issues can help to overcome existing misperceptions;
3. Notes the speech given by Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the fifteenth session of the Human Rights Council, and draws on his call on States to take the following actions to foster a domestic environment of religious tolerance, peace and respect by:
   1. Encouraging the creation of collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action towards shared policy as servicing projects in the fields of education, health, conflict prevention, employment, integration and media education;
4. Creating an appropriate mechanism within Governments to identify and address potential areas of tension between members of different religious communities, and assisting with conflict prevention and mediation;
   1. Encouraging the efforts of leaders to discuss within their communities the causes of discrimination, and evolving strategies to counter these causes;
   2. Speaking out against intolerance, including advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence;
   3. Adopting measures to criminalize incitement to violence based on religion or belief;
      1. Recognizing that the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence;
5. Calls upon all states:
   1. To take effective measures to ensure that public functionaries, in the conduct of their public duties, do not discriminate against an individual on the basis of religion or belief;
   2. To encourage the representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion, in all sectors of society;
   3. To make a strong effort to counter religious profiling, which is understood to be the invidious use of religion as a criterion in conducting questionings, searches and other law enforcement investigative procedures
6. Calls upon states to adopt measures and policies to promote full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and to take measures in cases where they are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction;
7. Calls for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs, while still allowing the freedom of opinion on such dialogue.
8. Calls for the creation of the Organization for Promoting Interfaith (OPI) an organization, which will promote interfaith in areas known as anti-interfaith or known for not tolerating other religions by mean such as but not limited to:
   1. Educating people about the necessity of at least tolerating other religions by, with support of the parents, talk to children about different religions and show them from a young age that everyone is equal,
   2. Discuss and clarify the opinions of teenagers on interfaith and other religions by leading debates in high schools;
9. Calls upon all states who have not yet done so, to become signatories and parties of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as ratify the multilateral treaty which commits its parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals which includes the freedom of speech and freedom of religion.