

## **42TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

### **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE MEXICAN DELEGATION AT THE SIDE EVENT “MIGRATION: BUILDING A NEW VISION OF GOVERNANCE BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOLIDARITY”**

September 16th, 2019

Good afternoon,

I thank the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, for the invitation to co-sponsor this event. It is an honor to share today’s panel with Ambassador Omar Zniber and other distinguished panelists.

Excellencies, delegates, dear colleagues,

This panel could not be more timely. Just last week, we witnessed a series of deadly attacks in Johannesburg against migrants from other African countries, motivated by political narratives that blamed foreigners in South Africa for taking local jobs and committing crimes. Similarly, last month, a young man influenced by supremacist ideas spread in the Internet and motivated by hate, opened fire in a supermarket in El Paso, Texas, with the aim of killing “as many Mexicans as possible”.

These two cases are not isolated. New incidents of violence motivated by hate speech against persons belonging to a group or minority are reported every day, in every region, regardless of culture or government system. From

Christchurch, to Colombo, to Pittsburgh, research suggests that in the past years, hate crime has reached unprecedented levels globally.

Hate speech has no place in our societies. It is an attack on tolerance, inclusion and diversity, and a serious threat to the promotion and protection of human rights. It endangers social stability, democratic values and the rule of law. If left unaddressed, hate speech can lead to acts of violence and conflict on a wider scale, with damaging consequences for everyone.

Unfortunately, migration continues to be used by some to advance political agendas and achieve electoral gains. Migrants are too often demonized and vilified, either in the media or in political narratives, for fears about unemployment, welfare systems, crime or terrorism, or to justify migration control policies that are far away from reality.

A constant sense of crisis is invoked in different regions, encouraged by political figures or media outlets reporting about “unprecedented numbers of migrants“, or “waves of migrants“, or even worst, an “invasion by migrants“, all statements based on dangerous stereotypes and perceptions, rather than on data and evidence. This practice has become so prevalent, in part as a result of the Internet and social media, that it has become increasingly difficult for the general public to discern between facts and false information.

Migration has always been part of the human experience and it will continue to be part of our interconnected world. Migration flows have not grown out of control, as it is suggested. International migrants make about 3.4% of the world's population and, proportionately to overall global population growth, this figure has remained stable. Migrants do not have a negative impact in the economy or wages of destination countries. In reality, they contribute 9.4% of global GDP and, 35% of them, are highly skilled, being often entrepreneurs that contribute to create jobs in destination countries. It is also false that migrants commit crimes in higher numbers. They are actually far less likely to commit crimes than their native-born counterparts.

Although there is consensus that hate speech is intolerable and demands an immediate, united and firm response by everyone, that response has not been strong enough. Governments in particular have a responsibility to be vigilant to all manifestations of hate speech, to adopt preventive and corrective measures to address them, and to promote a culture of tolerance, inclusion and respect for human rights.

There are different tools available to governments. Besides the Rabat Plan of Action, the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration contains principles, tools and policy options to combat hate speech and promote an open and evidence-based public discourse on migration. The Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, in particular, have a role to play in monitoring and reporting on the root causes and effects of hate speech in

the protection of human rights, identifying best practices, and providing technical assistance to governments that require it to develop policies and programs to prevent, address and counter this phenomenon. The Strategy and Plan of Action of UN Secretary General to combat hate speech is an additional effort to strengthen coordination across the UN system.

Moreover, all sectors of society have a responsibility to counter misleading narratives in order to promote an informed, balanced and humane view of migration and migrants. It has been demonstrated that perceptions can be changed through people-to-people contact and sharing of stories that unite communities. In this sense, I congratulate the Office of the High Commissioner for its campaign Stand Up For Migrants, which contributes to humanize migration by giving a voice to migrants to share their own stories.

Finally, fighting hate speech and dealing with racist and supremacist groups does not mean suppressing freedom of expression. As Secretary General Antonio Guterres has said, it means preventing that speech from escalation to something more dangerous, that encourages the execution of crimes.

We aim to move forward together in initiatives to put an end to hate speech and its negative consequences, and achieve the goal of building societies free of hate, intolerance and discrimination.

Thank you.