



Press Release

At UN, Pakistan says fake news and disinformation being employed to de-legitimize freedom struggles

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Pakistan has said that the ill-effects of fake news and disinformation become manifold especially when states resort to their use in situations of foreign occupation – to subdue the voices of people being denied their fundamental freedoms including the right to self-determination.

Ambassador Munir Akram made these remarks while taking part in the general debate of the 46th Session of the Committee on Information (COI), which began here today at the UN headquarters. Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan Ambassador Usman Jadoon is chairing the session.

“We are witnessing this today in the Gaza war and have witnessed this consistently in the case of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. At the core of information manipulation, internet blackouts, censorship and the use of special media laws by the occupation authorities is a sinister design to delegitimize freedom struggles and perpetuate a climate of fear, intimidation and violence,” the Pakistan envoy said.

Ambassador Akram noted what he termed as a “worrisome trend of the use of digital media platforms to target minority communities”. Terming this as tantamount to weaponizing information against the minorities, he said such practices gravely undercut political freedoms and human rights of the targeted population.

He urged the member countries of the COI to make concerted efforts to combat Islamophobia and other forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, negative stereotyping and stigmatization in the information space, stressing the need for promoting the message of tolerance, peaceful co-existence and interfaith and inter-cultural harmony among all peoples.

Addressing the challenges posed by disinformation, Ambassador Akram highlighted the urgent need for a multilateral Code of Conduct to safeguard information integrity on digital platforms. He stressed the importance of establishing international guidelines to safeguard women’s rights in digital spaces and combat gender-based discrimination and online harassment.

With a focus on promoting Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Pakistan UN envoy urged the prioritization of bridging development gaps and addressing inequalities within and among nations. He asked the Department of Global Communications (DGC) to actively report on the implementation of commitments under Agenda 2030 and

advocate for financial support to developing countries, echoing the sentiments of Secretary-General.

Ambassador Akram emphasized that the dissemination of accurate information was crucial to empower nations and advance peace and prosperity objectives. He urged the DGC to launch sustained communication campaigns, leveraging the global network of UN Information Centers and digital media platforms to showcase the UN system's contributions across diverse realms.

Ambassador Munir Akram highlighted the current global landscape marked by growing geopolitical tensions and conflicts, including the genocidal war in Gaza and the prolonged conflict in Ukraine, and emphasized the imperative for adherence to the UN Charter's principles and active commitment to international cooperation.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and international human rights law, including freedom of expression and access to information. He also pledged his country's continued collaboration with the Department of Global Communications and Member States to address contemporary information challenges effectively.

In his opening statement as Chair of the 46th Session of the Committee on Information earlier on, DPR Ambassador Usman Jadoon called on the stakeholders to make joint efforts on key areas, essential for humanity's well-being in an information era.

Ambassador Jadoon emphasized the critical need to maintain the integrity of information by ensuring accuracy and reliability in dissemination, and urged the member countries to invest in the processes to effectively combat the spread of fake news, misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech in all their forms and manifestations.

He highlighted utilizing fact- and science-based information to promote the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and foster bolder climate action, while dispelling myths and conspiracy theories about climate change.

The Pakistan Deputy Permanent Representative further highlighted the need for efforts to address the digital and technological divide by creating an equitable and resilient global information landscape.

“Encouraging cultural and political diversity in reporting and norm-building efforts to foster better understanding and respect for different values and traditions is crucial for dissemination of reliable information,” he said.

The Committee on Information, established by the General Assembly, functions as a subsidiary body tasked with addressing matters concerning public information. Its mandate includes supervising the activities of the Department of Global Communications and offering direction on the department's policies, programs, and initiatives.

The annual 46th Session of the COI, which started today, will continue until May 10, 2024.