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**INTRODUCTION BY NORWAY FOR THE SIXTH SESSION
OF THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE
ON TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

As delivered by Ambassador Harald Neple, Tirana
22 May 2013

Session 6 - The role of political leadership, legislation, law enforcement, data collection, and civil society in combating and preventing intolerance and discrimination, including hate crimes

- First of all, let me thank the organizers for inviting me to speak at this session. Combating and preventing intolerance and discrimination, including hate crimes, is a top priority for Norway, and I therefore welcome this opportunity. As I mentioned yesterday, due to the importance of this subject:
- Last week the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a conference entitled “Right-wing Extremism and Hate Crime: Minorities under Pressure in Europe and Beyond”, which brought together more than 150 experts and academics from over 25 European countries and 70 organisations, including the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.
- On our agenda in Oslo were many of the themes to be discussed during this session. I will therefore refer from the Chair’s Conclusions from the conference, as I think these will be important inputs into our discussions here today.
- The participants discussed challenges and possible solutions related to the rise of right-

wing extremism and hate crime directed towards minorities in Europe and beyond, including a focus on the legal and policy framework, how to mobilize through social media, trust-building and identity in multicultural societies, as well as the role of the media and civil society.

- Some of the main recommendations of the Conference were the following:
 - o States, international organisations and other stakeholders should take effective measures to address and combat hate crime, hate speech and other forms of intolerance.
 - o States should allocate adequate resources, as well as swiftly investigate and effectively sanction incidents of hate crime, hate speech and other forms of intolerance, and they should provide access to justice and the right to remedy when appropriate.
 - o States should in a coherent manner enact legislation to combat and prevent intolerance, discrimination and violence against minorities, including through the Internet and social media, while at the same time safeguarding other fundamental rights, particularly the freedom of expression and opinion.
 - o Any related legislation should be complemented by sustained and wide-ranging efforts to tackle the root causes and various facets of intolerance, especially in the educational field, as the problems of extremism, discrimination and negative stereotyping of minorities are deeply rooted in socio-economic and political factors. It is therefore important for states, in cooperation with civil society actors and representatives of various minority groups, to develop educational and awareness-raising programmes to inform the population at large about the situation of different minorities and their human rights, while at the same time strengthening the voice of minority groups.
 - o States should provide the mechanisms and institutions needed to guarantee the systematic and recurrent collection and analysis of standardised, comparable and comprehensive data on the nature, extent and trends, as well as challenges and opportunities pertaining to hate crime, hate speech and other forms of

intolerance, in order to ensure informed public debates as well as decision- and policy-making based on sufficient and reliable information. This important point was underlined by many, but in particular by the OSCE and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency.

- Civil society organisations should contribute to the monitoring and reporting of incidents of discrimination and hate crime against minority groups, and to make use of their position to stand up and act as a voice for victims of hate crimes, through serving as intermediaries with the authorities, and providing practical assistance, such as legal advice, counselling and other services, while at the same time invite and meet opponents with tolerance and respect for democratic principles. States should provide the legal and political framework conducive for civil society organisations to carry out these activities.
 - States and political leaders should demonstrate consistent and inclusive leadership, and develop and implement national action plans to combat discrimination, hate crime and related forms of intolerance targeting minorities. It is of particular concern when negative stereotypes of minorities are ignored, or even condoned by governments or political leaders.
 - Governments, politicians, national human rights institutions, civil society organisations and other stakeholders should engage in debate on these issues through all possible channels, and in a clear and consistent manner publicly condemn manifestations of hate in public discourse and acts of violence based on bias, as well as to refrain from making discriminatory statements.
- In order to avoid duplication of efforts and secure the sharing of best practices and lessons learnt, the Conference further recommended regional and international coordination and cooperation in the search for new and more effective measures to counter right-wing extremism, hate crime, hate speech and other forms of intolerance, especially by;

- Building on the good work of the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the European Union, and ensuring continued and enhanced engagement in this field through coordination and collaboration both between these regional organisations and with the United Nations;
- These were only some of the main recommendations from the Conference, which I particularly wanted to emphasise. The complete version of the conference outcome document will be made available for you, and I hope that the findings from the Oslo Conference may contribute to the discussions here today.