



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

UNITED NATIONS

18 June 2019

Informal Briefing by UN Secretary-General on the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech

Intervention by Australia

Thank you Secretary-General

We are grateful for the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and for your leadership on this matter.

Hate speech is tremendously harmful, not only for the personal damage it inflicts, but also for its role in fomenting a social environment focused on differences instead of mutual respect for shared values.

There should be no place in society for those who attempt to diminish freedoms and incite violence and hatred within the community.

All too often, hate speech can lead to radicalisation and violence, disproportionately directed towards minorities and vulnerable groups.

There is no simple answer to the problem of hate speech.

Tackling hate speech effectively can only be achieved if governments, communities and the private sector work together and in partnership.

We are pleased to see this focus prominently featured in the UN Strategy and Plan of Action.

As others have observed, we particularly need to work together to ensure social media companies implement better strategies to ensure their platforms cannot be exploited to spread hate speech.

For our part, Australia is working to address the root causes of hate speech by investing in education and community support programs to foster a more inclusive society.

This includes the Australian Government's "Living Safe Together" program is aimed at building community resilience to violent extremism by celebrating shared community values, building respect for the rule of law and challenging ideologies of hate and violence.

And our "Racism. It Stops With Me" campaign has been helping Australian communities respond to prejudice since 2012, for which more than 400 organisations – from government, civil society and the private sector – have pledged their support for the campaign.

Reducing hate speech is a global imperative.

Australia welcomes this important strategy and plan of action, and looks forward to engaging in its implementation.

Thank you.

[255 words]