

Daniel Ulmer (Canada)

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur Mr. Doudou Diene for his report to the Human Rights Council.

Religious intolerance is a matter of great concern to all. There is no doubt that our world would benefit from increased understanding, ~~respect~~ and sensitivity to adherents of all religions, and members of all cultures, as well as ~~for~~ diverging views, opinions and ideas.

Respect for cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity is a critical element of Canada's work to promote and protect human rights both at home and abroad. Canada consistently works to combat all forms of religious intolerance.

<sup>Canada's</sup> In ~~our~~ view, the promotion and protection of the rights of the adherents of religions, ~~including~~ <sup>the Council's</sup> persons belonging to religious minorities, should be the focus of ~~our~~ <sup>work</sup> ~~in this regard~~ <sup>in this area</sup>. Canada calls on all States to respect an individual's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion as guaranteed in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The issue of "defamation of religions" is ~~therefore~~ part of the broader issue of the right to freedom of religion and belief and should be dealt with under that mandate.

~~including the freedom to also~~  
The issue of 'defamation of religions' also involves issues of free speech. All States should also respect the right to freedom of expression, as guaranteed by Article 19 of the ICCPR. Any discussion of this issue should therefore also include the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

Thank you Mr. President.