Report on disinformation

1. **What do you believe are the key challenges raised by disinformation? What measures would you recommend to address them?**

We must first distinguish between challenges of disinformation in developing and developed countries. In developed countries, where there is high education levels, people can evaluate information and reach an educated opinion and, to some extent, know if this information is true or not. However, this does not mean there are no challenges of disinformation in developed countries, the challenges can range from competition between political parties where disinformation against other parties is a tool to attract more votes, this may result in violence between the two extreme views. Also, some parties may use disinformation against migrant workers, minorities and other faiths for political reasons. On the other hand, in developing countries, especially least developed and poor communities, most people tend to believe most of what they read or watch especially on social media, this is evident if the disinformation was accompanied by religious verse or a preacher quote. This disinformation ranges from religious lectures which, in some cases, range from hate speech to conspiracy theories about other countries and religions intentions. Disinformation can also be very destructive in the area of health if the disinformation on health matters are shared on social media amongst people with low literacy rate and from non-accredited sources.

* 1. **What legislative, administrative, policy, regulatory or other measures have Governments taken to counter disinformation online and offline?**

Many Governments, especially in developing countries, implemented satisfactory measures to counter disinformation especially in the areas of raising awareness, and by the help of public figures, to inform the public about the dangers of disinformation. But at the same time, many Governments in developing countries took many legislative measures which are broad and included many broad clauses such as countering terrorism, or harming the general order or affecting the harmony and peace in the community or the State. And this is mainly taking advantage of this phenomenon to introduced more restrictions and restrictive measures on the freedom of speech.

* 1. **What has been the impact of such measures on:** 
     1. **disinformation;**

In many developing countries, the impact on disinformation is minimum but these measures may have adverse impact on freedom of speech.

* + 1. **freedom of opinion and expression;**

There is a major impact on freedom of opinion and expression in many developing countries since many Governments use the phenomena of disinformation on more restrictions.

* + 1. **and other human rights?**

Because of disinformation many countries, especially in developing ones, have developed its tools of surveillance and monitoring of social media platforms and communication outlets such as telephones and the internet.

* 1. **What measures have been taken to address any negative impact on human rights?**

In developed countries, parliaments, NGOs and civil society activists raised the issue. Also, the management of these portals such as twitter, fakebook, YouTube and WhatsApp etc. took some measures to address the issue by alarming people of the dangers of the information posted and advise, alert or warn people to be careful with this information.

* 1. **What policies, procedures or other measure have digital tech companies introduced to address the problem of disinformation?**

Digital tech companies took some satisfactory steps to counter disinformation such as deleting many fake accounts, warning about suspicious accounts and disinformation and deleting accounts that encourage violence, terrorism or hate speech. Most of these digital tech companies also took very effective steps on warning on suspicious emails. Yet, a lot is still needed to be done especially in the areas of encouragement of violence, hate speech, hostility against migrants and minorities and inaccurate information on the areas of health, investments and economies.

* 1. **To what extent do you find these measures to be fair, transparent and effective in protecting human rights, particularly freedom of opinion and expression?**

Most of these steps are fair and on the right direction, but although these social media platforms and digital tech companies warned, and in some cases, deleted some accounts in developed and developing countries, some of these social media platforms and digital companies ignored, for one reason or another, the accounts of people with influence in some developing countries who post threats and hate speech to other religions, faiths and minorities.

It is also really interesting that these social media platforms allowed some politicians and people in decision making posts, especially in developing countries, to use their platforms while at the same time these politicians censored, and in many cases, prevented their people from using these same platforms.

* 1. **What procedures exist to address grievances and provide remedies for users, monitor the action of the companies, and how effective are they?**

This is one of the most important questions, there has to be strict and clear rules to address these issues, people’s voices must be heard by these outlets and Governments. Governments, the UN and social media platforms and digital tech companies must meet and discuss these issues and embark on certain rules and clear guidelines in that regard.

1. **Please share information on measures that you believe have been especially effective to protect the right to freedom of opinion and expression while addressing disinformation on social media platforms.**

The social media platforms must do a lot in this regard, also highlighting and placing a warning on information on social media is helping, although there is a large amount of information from leaders and famous personalities are not treated the same. Encryption from social media platforms and digital tech companies is an important tool and contributed to some protection.

1. **Please share information on measures to address disinformation that you believe have aggravated or led to human rights violations, in particular the right to freedom of opinion and expression.**

The increase use of social media increased in turn the monitoring of these social media by States. People are expressing themselves more on social media and this led to increased monitoring from States.

1. **Please share any suggestions or recommendation you may have for the Special Rapporteur on how to protect and promote the right to freedom of opinion and expression while addressing disinformation.**

This issue is of paramount importance and it must be first addressed through the international conventions that States ratified. There have to be strong and close collaboration and cooperation between States, the UN and these social media platforms and tech companies, this collaboration must be in an organised manner and permanently. There must also be some accountability of social media platforms and digital tech companies.