

19th session of the Human Rights Council
Panel discussion on the right to freedom of expression on the Internet
29 February 2012
Remarks by Azerbaijan

Mr. President,

We thank the panelists for sharing their valuable views on the various aspects of the right to freedom of expression on the Internet. Our delegation would like to express its own remarks and the positive experience on the very matter.

The speed of the internet and the number of internet users are on the constant rise in our country and more than 50 percent of the population. The internet sites with .az domain have already exceeded 12.000. The much closer engagement of the internet resources into the population is deemed as an important direction of the development of information society. The internet is totally free in Azerbaijan and there are no restrictions on the ground. We believe that free use of internet is an important indicator of freedom of media and expression in the country.

Dynamic development of the internet services market is also positively influencing the free use internet as well. The lack of requirement of license for internet services has had an enormous impact on the enlargement of essential platforms and services for disseminating information online.

The provision of electronic services by government agencies opens up new avenues for individuals to facilitate their enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression through the Internet. As it ensures a modern and flexible management, increases transparency of government activities. In Azerbaijan State's measures and best practices to facilitate universal access to the Internet include ensuring the provision of electronic services and encouraging people to use them, introduction of e-government portal, creation and development of modern web-sites of government agencies.

The reduction of purchase price of internet services not only contributes to the sharp increase in the actual number of internet users but also ensures much more favourable climate for facilitating the spread and promotion of information online. Effective fiscal policy and the update of infrastructure are both positively affecting the quality of internet services.

In conclusion, we would like to address a question to the distinguished panelists, especially Mr. Frank La Rue about what measures can be undertaken to prevent the propaganda of inter-ethnic, inter-religious hatred and violence through internet without undermining the right to freedom of opinion and expression?

Thank you very much for your attention.