



Explanation of Vote before the Vote, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during adoption of draft resolution A/HRC/47/L.1 titled “Civil society space: COVID: 19 - The road to recovery and the essential role of civil society”

12 July 2021

Madam President,

We thank the core group for putting together a concise text and appreciate its efforts to forge consensus on this important initiative.

The contributions made by civil society actors in promoting and protecting human rights around the world are commendable.

As a progressive democracy, Pakistan is proud of its vibrant civil society. From drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights till present time, Pakistan’s human rights activists have made valuable contributions to the global human rights framework.

Our Constitution guarantees basic rights of everyone to peacefully assemble, associate and express opinion. As a result, Pakistan’s domestic civil society landscape today presents a rich tapestry of actors, actively engaged at different levels of governance and in diverse range of sectors.

Madam President,

The global discourse on civil society must respect the organic relationship between rights and responsibilities. The work of the civil society and their engagement with countries must adhere to rule of law, which is the cornerstone in the promotion and protection of all human rights. Similarly, engagement of civil society at multilateral fora must be guided by the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, and within the framework elaborated by the ECOSOC resolution 1996/31. By demonstrating responsibility, openness and transparency, civil society can strengthen their role, credibility and participation at the national and international levels. At the same time, States should take all possible steps to protect civic space domestically as well as at this august Council, as we aim to build better from the COVID pandemic. States should not abuse civil society space by sponsoring GONGOs to target other States. The EU Disinfo Lab reports highlight such abuse against Pakistan, which must be stopped forthwith.

As a staunch supporter of the civil society and its vital role in global human rights agenda, Pakistan will join consensus. I thank you, Madam President.