



**National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate - Agenda Item 5: “Human Rights bodies and mechanism” at the 46<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**(17 March 2021)**

Madam President,

Pakistan recognizes the valuable contributions made by the Council’s allied mechanisms and has always engaged with them in a spirit of dialogue and engagement.

This is manifest from our recent invitation to four Special Procedures for country visits, submission of responses to communications sent by mandate-holders, and regular reporting to the treaty bodies.

Pakistan underscores that full adherence to the highest standards of objectivity, transparency, impartiality and professionalism is essential for preserving the independent status of the Special Procedures system. To avoid breach of these standards, we urge deployment of appropriate safeguards to ensure due compliance with the Code of Conduct.

Madam President,

Pakistan takes note of the recommendations, contained in the reports on the 2020 Social Forum and Forum on Minority Issues.

The Forums have rightly spotlighted that the COVID pandemic has underlined the need to alleviate poverty and address drivers of online hate speech against minorities.

Events of last year have once again demonstrated that Muslim communities and individuals continue to bear the brunt of willful incitement to discrimination, contempt, and violence on social media platforms.

State sponsorship of such online hatred and hostility has bred a culture of impunity. Online derogatory tropes such as #BioJihad, #CoronaJihad and #COVID-786 continue to spark socio-economic boycott and even denial of medical attention to Muslims in one country of our region.

Sadly, social media companies have prioritized business interests over respect for human rights. The Special Procedures’ advocacy for combating hate speech through a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach is essential.

Madam President,

Pakistan welcomes Special Procedures’ close monitoring of and continued public expression of concerns over the human rights crisis in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. We echo the early warning, issued last month by UN experts, about demographic engineering of the disputed territory and its devastating human rights consequences. We encourage all mandate-holders to remain actively seized of the alarming situation in occupied Kashmir with respect to violations of wide-range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and continue to call on country concerned to halt its atrocities, in compliance with obligations under international law. I thank you.