



**National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Working Group on the Right to Development**

**17 May 2021**

**Mr. Chairman,**

Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Zamir Akram for his re-election as Chair-Rapporteur of this important Working Group. We commend him for ably steering the wide ranging consultations over the past two years that have shaped the text of the draft Convention on the Right to Development.

We also thank members of the drafting group as well as the scholars for their very useful inputs and the valuable support provided by the OHCHR. We assure the Chair-Rapporteur of our full cooperation.

We align our position with NAM and OIC statements.

**Mr. Chairman,**

This session represents an important milestone since the UN General Assembly's adoption of the landmark Declaration on the Right to Development three and half decades ago. The Working Group has come a long way since 1998 in preparing the ground for meaningful realization and operationalization of the right to development through a legal instrument.

We are happy to note the progress that has been made. We look forward to working with members of the Working Group and contributing to the negotiating process.

The draft text before us is a product of extensive engagement across regions, expertise and perspectives. In many ways, it signifies the essence of multilateralism. As we begin consideration of the draft text, it is our hope that all members of the Group will demonstrate their will to codify the inalienable right to development at an early date as a means to shape and strengthen a rules-based international economic order.



**Mr. Chairman,**

Our deliberations begin in the backdrop of unprecedented socio-economic impacts of a global pandemic. The economic, social and public health effects of this pandemic have ravaged individuals, communities and countries across the globe. Yet, the effects of the wide ranging devastation caused by the virus have been disproportionately been severe on developing countries.

Several reports by global institutions have highlighted the erasing of development gains achieved over decades as a result of the pandemic effects. Unless these negative trends are halted and reversed, there are real risks of further social and economic inequalities and marginalization.

According to the World Bank, 115 million people would be pushed back to extreme poverty due to the impacts of COVID pandemic. Similarly, over 100 million people face undernourishment. The ILO has estimated that due to unparalleled disruption in labour markets around the world, more than 250 million full-time jobs have been lost.

Vaccine inequity has emerged as a major international theme and heightened concern, underscoring once again the continued existence of systemic challenges in the global economic system that hinder equitable participation of everyone in and benefit from it.

Many of the pre-pandemic challenges such as growing debt liabilities, domestic and international challenges of resources mobilization, the lack of international tax cooperation, absence of effective redress mechanisms on tax avoidance and evasion, and dearth of legal remedies to stem the outflow of corruption, bribery, money laundering proceeds, have only aggravated.

Even as economic recovery efforts are underway, further erosion of development gains and corresponding compounding of economic and social challenges, especially for developing countries, requires major shifts in approaches to realizing the right to development.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The devastating impacts of COVID 19 pandemic are therefore another reminder to reflect and work towards a rights-centred and rights-respecting sustainable foundation to



make the right to development work for individuals, communities, businesses and countries.

The UN Declaration on the Right to Development Declaration, the 2030 Sustainable Agenda and its SDGs as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development provide an internationally agreed framework to pursue the realization and operationalization of the right to development. It is in this context that the draft text of the Convention captures many of the principles enshrined in these documents.

We hope that COVID 19 serves as an accelerator of commitments and efforts to not only mitigate its effects but also to remove structural impediments that prevent the right to development benefiting everyone, everywhere meaningfully and as early as possible. Given the common economic, social and environmental challenges facing our interconnected communities and countries, it is vital to create equal opportunities, overcome obstacles and intensify international cooperation for realizing the vision of inclusive, peaceful and prosperous societies.

Pakistan delegation will work with other members of the Working Group with a constructive spirit of engagement, consensus building and an early finalization of the Convention.

**I thank you.**