

40TH SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

**Remarks by Pakistan during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special
Rapporteur on the minority issues**

13 March 2019

Mr. President,

We support the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and consider his recent report on Statelessness very important in the current scenario where the rhetoric of 'us' against 'them' is gaining ground in different parts of the world. We would urge the Special Rapporteur to share instances where minorities have been stripped of their citizenship by populist regimes in the recent history especially on ethno-religious grounds and its negative consequences on the enjoyment of human rights. We would also request the Special Rapporteur to address contemporary forms of discrimination and hate crimes against minorities such as attacks on hijab wearing women, murders by cow vigilantes, closing of borders to migrants etc. in his next report.

Mr. President,

2. Pakistan is a multi-religious, multi-cultural, pluralistic society where people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds are living together.

3. Minorities constitute about 3.5 per cent of our total population and consist of Christians, Hindus, Ahmadi, Parsis, Buddhists and Sikhs etc. The contributions of minorities in Pakistan have been substantive and they have excelled in most spheres of professions. Under Articles 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28 and 34 of the Constitution of Pakistan, minorities are equal citizens of Pakistan and are free to profess their religion and visit their places of worship. Pakistan has a National Commission for Minorities (NCM) working for the protection of minorities' rights. The Commission has drafted "National Policy on Inter-faith Harmony" with special emphasis for safeguarding and protecting minorities'

rights in the country. The Government is showing zero tolerance to hate speech against minorities. Recently, a sitting minister was forced to resign for making distasteful remarks on Hindu community.

4. Both Federal and Provincial Government are making arrangements to protect Churches, Gurdwaras, Temples and Bait-ul-Zikars. 5% quota is fixed for minorities in all federal and provincial departments with a view to improve their representation in the civil service, which is being strictly observed. This quota is in addition to the general seats on which the candidate belonging to minority group can be selected on merit.

5. Pakistan will continue to work domestically and internationally for the promotion and protection of rights of all especially the minorities and vulnerable groups.

I thank you Mr. President.