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40TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Agenda Item 7 - Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on OPT

Remarks by Pakistan

18 March 2019

Mr. President.

We thank the Special Rapporteur for presentation of his report. The findings of his report are alarming, in particular regarding prevalence of poverty and lack of access to food. Although residents of Gaza have rich farmland and 40 km of coastline, the Israeli blockade has severely restricted their ability to properly exploit domestic food sources through agriculture and fishing and therefore 68% of the households are severely or moderately food insecure.

The report also highlights that Israel's approach towards the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been to use them as a sovereign country would use its own assets. Rather than listening to the repeated entreaties of the international community to respect and apply international law during its occupation, Israel deliberately and openly continues this use and exploitation of the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Mr. President,

An occupying power has responsibilities under international law and it must rule in the best interests of the population under occupation, and aim to end its alien rule as soon as reasonably possible. It must recognize that the territory's natural wealth, environment and resources belongs to the protected people. Israel has strayed extremely far from these legal responsibilities and during its decades of occupation, it has regarded the Palestinian territory as its own for acquisitive purposes. We share Special Rapporteur's concern that in this

situation, the ‘right to development in Palestine has become a dead letter’ and these realities belie any visible path to Palestinian self-determination.

We request the Special Rapporteur to share his views regarding the role of the international community in ensuring that Palestinians can exploit and use these natural resources that legitimately belong to them to fully realize their right to development?

I thank you.