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**Pakistan's statement delivered by Mr. Tahir Andrabi, Acting  
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN in Geneva**

**General Debate - Agenda Item 8**

**Vienna Declaration and Program of Action**

**40<sup>th</sup> HRC Session**

**(18 March 2018)**

Mr. President,

The VDPA reaffirmed the principles of UN Charter and global commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights. All human rights must be treated equally to be realized through addressing basic needs of food, health and education. The 2030 sustainable development agenda provides us with a framework to work together for inclusive development and also promotion and protection of all human rights. SDG 17 related to international cooperation is important in this regard.

2. Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Without achieving inclusive and equitable development both nationally and internationally, we cannot achieve our objective of "Leaving no one behind". Pakistan has made a number of policies and taken concrete steps for the poverty alleviation, inclusive and sustainable development and regional connectivity. Moreover, our democratic system with strong institutions protecting fundamental freedoms is providing necessary space for the uplift of all our citizens without discrimination.

3. VDPA pronounced our collective resolve to act against racism and xenophobia. Earnest implementation of VDPA warrants that we rise above racism, discrimination, intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization and defamation of religions. The hateful rhetoric by populist political parties and propagandist media groups leads to sufferings and marginalization of minorities and vulnerable groups. There is a dire need to push back against hate speech and disinformation.

4. The VDPA has a clear focus on grant of right to self determination to the people under foreign occupation. This right is the basic inalienable right which guarantees of all other rights. The international community must support the freedom of all people braving illegal occupation. Surely, we cannot let this century be a century of servitude and slavery.

I thankyou Mr. President.