

**40<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**General Debate - Agenda Item 5 - “Human Rights bodies and mechanism”**

Remarks by Pakistan

(13 March 2019)

Mr. President,

The theme of the eleventh session of the Forum on Minorities relating to Statelessness was very pertinent considering contemporary challenges emanating from conflicts, forced population movements and migration. Statelessness can have significant negative impact on a person’s ability to fully enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms and to have access to a remedy for human rights violations. We urge the Special Procedure mandate holders and the OHCHR to prioritize the issues of Stateless people in their work and urge those States who are following discriminatory policies and stripping people off citizenship to revisit their policies and find durable solutions to long lasting problems.

2. The High Commissioner drew attention in our update to the Council on the negative impacts of growing inequalities within and amongst States resulting in marginalization of affected groups including rights of peasants. We would urge the Special Procedures to look into this aspect as well.

3. Pakistan has always opened up its doors for the people fleeing war and persecution especially refugees. We had hosted around 5 million Afghan refugees at the peak of crises and are still hosting more than 1.5 million. We are also hosting 0.4 million Rohingya Muslims as well. The international community must live up to its commitments in supporting the efforts of the host countries in providing basic human needs and services to the refugee population.

Mr. President,

4. Pakistan takes its engagement with Special Procedures mandate holders and other human rights mechanisms very seriously. We have been diligently responding to communications from the Special Procedures. A part of our engagement, we have also invited Special Procedure mandate holders to conduct a visit to Pakistan. Pakistan has also been reporting to Treaty bodies in a timely manner. We consider that special mechanisms must be developed for the people living under occupation to save them from reprisals by occupation forces that are aimed at stopping them from engaging with Human Rights bodies and mechanisms.

5. We would reiterate that the working of Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms must be guided by the principles of transparency, accountability, objectivity, impartiality, constructive dialogue and non politicization. These principles must mean something and should be translated into quantifiable indicators.

I thank you Mr. President.