

40TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

A/HRC/40/L22 Rev1- ‘Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development’

Explanation of Vote before the Vote

21 March 2019

Mr. President,

We appreciate the efforts of Norway for working in a constructive and inclusive manner on this important initiative.

2. Pakistan has a vibrant civil society. From drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 70 years ago till present time, Pakistan’s civil society especially the human rights defenders have made invaluable contribution in domestic settings and enriched the global discourse on human rights. An open and inclusive civil society space protected by our Constitution is ensuring active engagement of human rights defenders.

3. Pakistan fully supports global efforts to counter climate change. Environment protection and sustainable inclusive development are a priority of our Government. Implementing the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan for a greener Pakistan, we planted a Billion trees in the last four years in Khyber Pukhtunkha (KPK) Province under the project “Billion Tree Tsunami”. This was applauded internationally as one of the most significant global efforts to mitigate Climate Change. After its successful completion, now the Government also launched the ‘Ten Billion Tree Tsunami’ project which envisages to plant ten billion trees in the country in next few years with specific focus on urban forestry. These projects are being implemented through the collaboration between the Government and other stakeholders including the active role of human rights defenders working in environmental matter.

4. Our delegation participated constructively in the discussions with a spirit to further balance and improve the text. We consider that discussion on important initiatives like this can be much more fruitful if those elements that enjoy universal support are part of the text from the very start. We believe that rights and responsibilities are interlinked. By showing responsibility, openness and transparency and respect of law, human rights defenders can optimize their role and participation at the national and international level. Adding these elements in future version of this resolution would make it more comprehensive.

5. Considering our support for the work of Human Rights Defenders and considering that penholder has been flexible and accommodative, Pakistan will join the consensus in favour of the resolution.

6. The adoption of this resolution on 21 March is also propitious as we celebrate the International Day of Forests today. Happy International Day of Forests to all.

I thank you Mr. President.
