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41st SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Remarks by Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

Agenda Item-5: Human rights bodies and mechanisms

3 July 2019

Mr. President,

Pakistan takes its engagement with Special Procedures mandate holders and other human rights mechanisms very seriously and have been diligently responding to communications received from them. 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 believe 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.

2. The Gender dimension of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights is very important for women empowerment. The “protect, respect and remedy” framework can help in the protection of the rights of women from business-related human rights abuses. The Working Group has rightly pointed out that many businesses are exploiting women by perpetuating gender stereotypes, normalizing discriminatory social norms and objectifying women’s bodies, resulting in the commodification of women. Such negative practices must be discouraged.

3. The cyber space has provided opportunities as well as challenges in the domain of business and human rights especially in the context of rights of women. On the positive end, e-commerce and internet is acting as an equalizer of opportunities by helping women to overcome traditional challenges like finance, travel, office space etc, this enabling them to exhibit their skills and innovative capabilities. On the other hand, issues like harassment, sexual exploitation, identity theft, hate speech and disinformation etc. disproportionately and adversely impact the rights of women online. A comprehensive and integrated approach is needed to make the cyber space safe for women resulting in their economic empowerment and gender equality.

4. At the end, we would urge the human rights bodies and mechanisms to closely monitor the situation of human rights of women and girls in conflict areas especially the disputed territories due to their increased vulnerability.

I thank you Mr. President.