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42nd Session of Human Rights Council
General Debate under Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and
Implementation of Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

National Statement
(23 September 2019)

Mr. President,

Pakistan considers the Vienna Declaration to be a landmark in our ongoing global endeavours to promote and protect all human rights on an equal footing with equal emphasis.

Since its adoption in 1993, there has been some progress in following up on the collective commitments we made in VDPA. However, it is unfortunate to note that multiple challenges persist in its effective implementation.

Ethno-nationalism, populism and unilateralism have dimmed prospects for achieving a rules-based and fair international order. The rising global socio-economic inequalities are a sober reminder that inclusive and sustainable development for all is still a distant goal-post. Continuing intolerance, discrimination and violence on basis of colour, race, religion and ethnicity underscore that the message of VDPA has yet to sink in some of our societies.

Mr. President,

VDPA clearly recognizes foreign occupation as a situation which constitutes serious obstacles for the full enjoyment of all human rights, including the inalienable and fundamental right of self-determination. It, therefore, calls for effective implementation of international measures to protect, guarantee and monitor human rights of people under foreign occupation.

One such regrettable situation has assumed an acute magnitude in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir since 05 August 2019, where a human rights and humanitarian crisis is woefully unfolding.

It has been 50 days of a highly militarized siege in IO J& K. Painful stories of torture, beatings, large-scale arbitrary detention, abductions, mass blinding and violent repression of peaceful protests continue to shake our collective conscience.

Mr. President,

In the spirit of VDPA, the UN Charter and international law, Pakistan calls on the Human Rights Council to continue to press on India to immediately lift the curfew, ease restrictions and allow OHCHR and mandate-holders' full access to IOJ&K for monitoring and reporting the human rights situation.

I thank you.