



**Statement, delivered on behalf of OIC by Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under agenda item 10 at the 46<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**22 March 2021**

Madam President,

The OIC believes that the Council's technical assistance is an important tool to advance the global human rights agenda. In order reap to its dividends, this mandate should be exercised in accordance with the parameters and principles, laid out in the UNGA resolution 60/251.

Technical assistance should be provided in consultation with and with the consent of concerned States. The principles of non-selectivity, universality, and objectivity should be fully adhered to. In no case, technical cooperation should be leveraged for advancing political agenda and used as a pretext for interference in domestic affairs of sovereign States.

Regrettably, there is an emerging pattern of deviation from these well-established principles. In certain cases, countries have been coerced to accept technical assistance. Such an approach risks undermining the imperative of dialogue and cooperation at the Council.

Madam President,

The COVID pandemic has exposed gaps in our human rights efforts at the global, regional and national levels. The devastating fall-out of the pandemic is another reminder that all human rights are universal, inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing, and should be treated with equal emphasis.

The pandemic has also made us realize that we are not safe unless all of us are safe. It is through reducing structural inequalities within and among States that we can truly advance the global human rights agenda.

The OIC hopes that these hard-learned lessons of the global public health crisis would help us in re-orienting the focus of Council's technical cooperation mandate. In order to anchor our recovery efforts on a sustainable footing, it is imperative that the Council should support States, especially developing countries, in their domestic efforts to safeguard and advance basic rights, including rights to life, livelihood, health, food, and sustainable development.

Such a human rights-centric approach will go a long way in building back better and resilient societies, which are well-equipped to counter devastation caused by future pandemics and shocks. The OIC reaffirms its strong commitment to work closely with the Council in this area. I thank you, Madam President.