



National Statement delivered by Mr. Umair Shakoor, Assistant Director, during the Interactive Dialogue with the SR on Leprosy
53rd HRC Session
23 June 2023

Mr. President,

We thank the SR for his report and appreciate the approach in drafting the report by prioritizing inputs from people suffering from leprosy. This person-centered approach is critical both for elimination of the disease and the stigma associated with it.

As rightly noted in the report, some of the grounds of discrimination against people suffering leprosy are rooted in cultural myths and traditions. It is therefore important that a more concerted effort is carried out in creating more awareness around the disease.

It is equally important that persons suffering from leprosy are economically empowered and adequate steps are taken for their mental health.

Pakistan remains committed to end discrimination against leprosy patients. Government is continuously engaged in developing and strengthening the healthcare infrastructure and creating an enabling environment for everyone.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Pakistan wishes to recognize and pay tribute to Dr Ruth Pfau, for her selfless services of 57 years to both fighting against the disease as well as for promoting dignity of the leprosy patients in Pakistan. Marie Adelaide Leprosy Center in Karachi continues her important work to provide essential care for the patients suffering from this disease.

Finally, we invite SR views on specific steps to promote economic empowerment of patients suffering from leprosy so that they can also become active stakeholders in the society?

I thank you.

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