Statement, delivered on behalf of OIC by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under agenda item No.4 at the49th Human Rights Council session

21 March 2022

Mr. President,

The OIC reiterates that the principles of universality, objectivity, and impartiality, as enshrined in the founding UNGA resolution 60/251, should guide the Council's work under this agenda item.

In consideration of human rights situations, all basic civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, especially the right to development, should be treated equally. Local context, circumstances and challenges should also be given due weight-age in considering such situations.

The Council's actions should be geared towards fostering constructive engagement, cooperation and genuine dialogue with concerned States. Accordingly, interference into domestic affairs of sovereign States must be avoided.

We remain concerned over the selective application of Agenda Item 4. Each situation should be dealt on its human rights merit and not on the basis of political considerations. Regrettably, many situations, which are on the agenda of both the UN and the OIC, have become blind-spots for many members and observers of this Council in deference to their bilateral interests.

Mr. President,

We remind the Council of its responsibility to protect and promote fundamental rights and freedoms of Muslims individuals and communities against the steady uptick in State-sponsored Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred worldwide.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of increasing acts of organized violence against Muslims, hijab bans, vandalization of mosques, and deliberate ridicule of revered religious personalities under the garb of freedom of expression. The Council has a duty to address the underlying drivers and incubators of these growing incidents, such as hate-based ideologies, populist rhetoric, securitization of State policies, and misuse of social media platforms, through taking meaningful actions. The OIC welcomes the consensual adoption of UNGA resolution, designating 15 March as International Day to combat Islamophobia.

Mr. President,

The OIC draws Council's urgent attention toward gross and systematic human rights violations and the deeply entrenched pattern of impunity in situations of foreign occupation, unresolved conflicts and simmering disputes. The escalating violence, forced displacement and

illegal attempts to obliterate distinct religious, cultural and demographic identity of Muslims in these situations are a matter of grave concern for the OIC.

We, therefore, urge the Council to actively monitor and report on the human rights conditions in situations of foreign occupation, disputes and conflicts, which are on the agenda of the United Nations and the OIC and on which both organizations have passed numerous resolutions and communiqués.

I thank you.