



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN **Geneva**

Statement

43RD SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

General Debate under Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Statement on behalf of the OIC

(16 June 2020)

Madam President,

The landmark Vienna Declaration provides us with important guidance for steering our collective efforts in the human rights domain.

The Declaration's salient focus on socio-economic advancement, as necessary for enjoying other basic rights, stands validated by contemporary human rights challenges.

The unfolding COVID pandemic signifies one such pressing challenge.

As we fight back against the lethal virus, the world community should not lose sight of supporting developing and least developed countries in their national efforts to mitigate the pandemic's adverse impact on health, lives, and livelihoods of people.

In this context, OIC strongly echoes VDPA's call on international community to help these countries in their efforts to alleviate poverty; promote social inclusion; ease their debt burden; and remove structural barriers to development.

Madam President,

OIC is seriously concerned that amidst the COVID contagion, discrimination, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, intolerance and violence against individuals and groups, on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity and nationality, has continued unabated and in fact, scaled new heights.

We are particularly alarmed at the disturbing global surge in Islamophobia. Under the garb of COVID responses, Muslim minorities, living in different parts of the world, are being stigmatized, discriminated against and persecuted.

In keeping with spirit of VDPA, the OIC calls on the Council to redouble its efforts to eliminate the hate pandemic, and promote respect for rights of minority communities during these challenging times.

The OIC stands ready to work with the Council and the international community in this regard.

Thank you, Madam President.