



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

### **Geneva**

### **National statement, delivered by Mr. Junaid Suleman, Second Secretary, at the 2020 Human Rights Council Social Forum**

### **Theme: “Good Practices, Success Stories, Lessons Learned and Current Challenges in Combating Poverty and Inequalities”**

**(08 October 2020)**

Co-Chairs, we commend your able stewardship of this year’s Social Forum and also thank the panellists for their insightful remarks.

The theme chosen for the Forum resonates with the multiple challenges we face today on the socio-economic front.

The COVID pandemic has further aggravated those challenges as the deadly infection has reinforced the vicious and inter-connected cycles of poverty and inequalities within as well as among States.

While the virus has struck us indiscriminately, its immediate and long-term socio-economic shocks have disproportionately affected the marginalized individuals and communities, as well as developing countries.

Today, developing countries are beset with cascading and multi-sectoral challenges: from fighting against the acute surge in COVID cases to mitigating real risks of hunger, poverty and unemployment, and from plugging gaps in social protection and healthcare systems to building back better and stronger.

Indeed, the task at hand for these countries is Herculean in nature and scale, when contextualized against the fact that many of these countries continue to bear the brunt of effects of climate change which is not of their own making, and face liquidity crisis due to long-standing debt burdens.

Co-chairs,

Amidst the devastating global public health emergency, Pakistan has further expanded its people-centric approach when strategizing its anti-COVID responses.

Through a smart lockdown and deployment of trained health workers, we have protected lives, sustained livelihoods and managed to flatten the curve of pandemics even as risks exist.

Despite financial constraints, an economic relief package of USD 8 billion was launched in March 2020 for extending social protection and injecting financial stimulus, especially targeting women, minority, transgender communities and informal workers.



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Administered through the platform of “Ehsaas” (Compassion) Programme, more than 15 million families have been given emergency cash transfer for four months. SMEs have also been provided financial support to keep workers on payroll.

We have also created thousands of new jobs through tree plantation campaigns, mostly in rural settings, to help the unemployed informal workers, especially women and youth.

Mr. Co-chairs,

The COVID pandemic has made us realize that a fundamental shift in focus, approaches and priorities is vital if we want to anchor the global human rights agenda on a solid and sound foundation.

At the global level, debt relief and greater mobilization of finance for cash-strapped developing countries is required so as to mitigate the impending resurgence in poverty, hunger and disease.

On the public health front, affordable, and equitable access to and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine for everyone, everywhere is necessary.

Pakistan sincerely hopes that the two-days discussions at this august Forum will further contribute towards reinvigorating and concretizing the spirit of ‘leaving no one behind’ amidst these challenging times.

I thank you.