



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN

Geneva

National statement, delivered by Mr. Salman Khalid Chaudhary, Third Secretary, during Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Right to Health at the 44th session of the Human Rights Council

(3 July 2020)

Madam President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for his report.

We agree with his observation that systemic violations of human rights and structural discrimination and violence against different communities can cause debilitating mental ailments.

Amidst COVID-19 pandemic, assault on basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of people is more pronounced in situations of illegal foreign occupation. COVID related lockdown has been used by some as a tool to curtail fundamental freedoms and rights, including right to health. When civilians, women, girls and children are subjected to a life of fear and prolonged occupation, they become more vulnerable to mental health problems.

Would in the Special Rapporteur's view the COVID-19 related mental health issues exacerbate for people living under illegal foreign occupation, considering their existing vulnerabilities?

We encourage the Special Rapporteur to pay special attention, in his future reports, to the situation of people living under illegal foreign occupation, that are at high risk of poor mental health because of the conditions they are forced to endure, in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

Finally, we request the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on the concrete steps to ensure equitable and affordable access to health technologies, including medicines and vaccines, to all countries, particularly, developing countries. How in his view monetary and fiscal space, including through debt relief, can be enhanced through international cooperation to assist these countries to improve healthcare and build resilient socio-economic infrastructures.

I thank you.