

3

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**Statement by Ambassador Zamir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan,
on behalf of the OIC, on the High Commissioner's Update, under agenda item 2,
during 17th Session of the Human Rights Council,
(Geneva, 30 May 2011)**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to make these comments on behalf of the Member States of the OIC.

We thank High Commissioner for her comprehensive introductory statement that provides an update on specific situations and reflects on important issues of human rights concern and advocacy.

We appreciate the fact that the High Commissioner has acknowledged a number of steps and initiatives that are being taken by several OIC States to promote and protect human rights of their citizens in the wake of recent developments. It would have been appropriate if the High Commissioner could have recognized important steps also taken by other countries in the region.

The international community must give time and a chance to these domestic initiatives to deliver dividends. We believe that it is extremely important for states to undergo these processes of change and adjustment without undue external interference. In this context we believe it is of utmost importance to seek the truth from all sides and not make judgments based on information emanating from unverified sources.

The current Muslim awakening has emphatically stated that the Islamic world will no longer accept double standards and hypocrisy in the international sphere either. Democracy, freedom and justice are immutable rights that cannot be promoted and protected selectively to serve the interests of some and not all.

We also believe that advancing economic and social rights of people is a way forward in realizing their human rights. Realization of economic and social rights is possible through embracing pro-development policies at the national and international level.

This year, the international community is commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development. This event provides us the opportunity for the realization of this right, which reiterates the centrality of attaining equality of opportunity for all. The international community cannot overlook its responsibility to cooperate with States in providing an enabling environment for people to realize their fundamental right to development.

Mr. President

The High Commissioner has been on forefront in highlighting human rights violations and abuses around the globe through issuing press statements and making references in her regular updates to the Council. However, the OIC Member States deeply regret that the High Commissioner's statement contains no reference to a despicable act of burring a Koran in Florida in March 2011. While the international

community condemned this act unequivocally, the OHCHR, the primary agency of the United Nations on human rights, did not condemn this appalling act publicly.

This event, among a number of other discriminatory measures that are deliberately meant to defame and stigmatize religions as well incite hatred, xenophobia, discrimination and violence against religions, in particular Islam. The increasing incidents of violence and discrimination on the basis of religion must not be ignored. We hope that this issue remains an important priority in her work both in advocacy as well as in practice.

Mr. President

The High Commissioner, in her statement, also referred to the report of the Secretary General's Panel of Experts on accountability in Sri Lanka. The OIC Member States are of the view that the report was an internal document of the Office of the UN Secretary General. It is primarily based on the second-hand information that was never verified. We appreciate the ongoing independent and comprehensive domestic process of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC). The international community must support national efforts to win peace in Sri Lanka.

The OIC Member States are following the process of strengthening the treaty body system very closely. We thank the OHCHR for providing the States an opportunity to convey their positions in the last meeting held in Sion. We are of the view that the essence of strengthening the treaty body system depends on effective and robust cooperation between the State parties and the treaty bodies. We expect that all the stakeholders, in particular the States being the primary entity responsible for implementing treaty provisions, will be provided an opportunity to discuss the proposals coming out of the process in an inter-governmental setting.

Mr. President

We fully agree with the High Commissioner's submission that while asking questions and making recommendations under the UPR mechanism, the States making recommendations should match the reality of people on the ground.

The High Commissioner has also raised an important issue – the vulnerable situation of migrants reaching on the European soil in the context of recent developments in some countries of North Africa. The OIC joins High Commissioner in her call on the European countries to support these migrants in full respect of their international obligations and not to outsource the problem. It is important to bridge the gap between the rhetoric on promotion and protection of human rights emanating from many of these societies, and the realities on the ground.

The OIC is deeply concerned over the increasing anti-migrant feelings in western societies. These feelings, at times, result in violence and discrimination against migrants living in the host communities since generations. The international community has an important role to play in protecting the rights of the migrants, including the most important right – the right to life.

I thank you.
