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Statement

By

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Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

on Behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

On the

Statement of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

at the Sixth Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva

13 September 2007

**Remarks by Ambassador Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of
Pakistan, on behalf of the OIC, on the Statement of the High Commissioner
for Human Rights - 13 September 2007**

Mr. President,

I am making this statement on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

We appreciate the High Commissioner's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. We thank her for the OHCHR's continued support for the work of the Human Rights Council in its transitional phase.

We are grateful to the High Commissioner for her statement and the update she has give to the Council members.

Prior to the High Commissioner's address to the Council there was uncertainty regarding the availability of space for an interactive dialogue following her statement. The OIC thinks that such uncertainty should be removed. Clarity in this regard would make the High Commissioner's engagements with the Council more productive. The High Commissioner's report or statement may be provided to the member states in advance so that Groups and individual members can coordinate their responses.

We have noted that the High Commissioner has emphasized the need for the commencement of the Universal Periodic Review at the earliest possible stage. The OIC has proposed that such a date should fall in April following the March session. This will enable all states to prepare adequately and comprehensively by consulting within their governments and with all actors of civil society. We appreciate the offer of the High Commissioner that her Office will extend all possible assistance to those delegations that need support. We would like to look into the modalities of such support. We understand that the Office is planning to recruit a large number of high-ranking professionals to handle the workload created by the UPR. The Council would appreciate knowing some of the details about these recruitments.

The Review of Mandates is unfinished business. A great deal of ground was covered by this June. Now we have to take all necessary steps to review, rationalize and improve the entire system of Special Procedures.

We thank the High Commissioner for giving us the update on her recent visits to Indonesia, Iran and Colombia. We are especially pleased to know that she witnessed progress in Aceh, Indonesia, in terms of transition from the conflict and in the recovery from the terrible consequences of the Tsunami.

We would suggest that the Office of the High Commissioner before taking decisions on the establishment of regional Offices may closely consult member states so that they have a sense of ownership and no complications arise later.

The High Commissioner has noted Council members' desire to discuss the relationship between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Council. We welcome her response to discuss this issue. The present interaction is good as it is currently supported by Ms. Arbour. However, we need to define institutional checks and balances to turn this cooperation into a predictable relationship.

The OIC has proposed that we should try to streamline and strengthen the relationship between the Council and the Office to redress any deficits or gaps, if they exist.

It goes without saying that HRC must have regular dialogue with the Office and greater say in managing the work of the OHCHR. Enhanced HRC role in the planning, management and execution phases of OHCHR's work will make the UN human rights machinery more effective.

Mr. President,

There is some confusion as regards to the desirability of discussing the reports of the Office of the High Commissioner, although the High Commissioner's annual report of 2006 has already been circulated and we are hearing, we presume, the High Commissioner's statement under Agenda Item-2 which is entitled "Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other reports". This ambiguity notwithstanding, we would like to offer the following comments:

- The OIC welcomes the establishment of Women's Human Rights and Gender Unit and supports its mandate to reflect in all OHCHR programmes a gender perspective.
- During the discussions on the Strategic Management Plan, the OIC had made some observations about the emphasis by the OHCHR on country engagement. This emphasis continues in the Annual Report 2006. Country and regional offices and human rights advisers require prior consent of the concerned country before being established/stationed. In opening regional offices, for example, the consent of the host country is not the only requirement. The countries of the region should also be consulted on the venue and mandate. Again country engagement is not a question of budget only. The Council should have a clear view of this activity and should approve OHCHR's work in the area.
- The OIC would appreciate a briefing on the role and functions of the Unit on Legal Advocacy and Advice.

I thank you Mr. President,