



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

---

56 Rue de Moillebeau, 1211 Geneva Tel: (4122) 749.1930 Fax: (4122) 734.8085

---

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**AMBASSADOR MASOOD KHAN  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN  
ON BEHALF OF THE OIC**

**ON THE**

**COMMEMORATION OF 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Geneva,  
10 December 2007**

**Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

**Geneva, 10 December 2007**

Mr. President,

Today is an important day in the history of the United Nations. Collectively, we are launching a year-long celebration that would culminate in the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this context, we welcome the statement of Ms. Louise Arbour, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and her initiatives to celebrate the Universal Declaration in a fitting manner.

The OIC would like to echo UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call that the Universal Declaration should be an integral part of everyone's life to promote the dignity and equality of all human beings. We also share his concern that international norms accepted willingly are not implemented faithfully.

The Universal Declaration is not a treaty; but it is more than a treaty. It is a powerful statement of common standards; an extension of the UN Charter; the basis for the International Bill of Human Rights; and part of the international customary law. It is remarkable that the Declaration constitutes a political consensus, despite the ideological, religious, intellectual and cultural diversity in the international community. It can thus be safely called the collective expression of human conscience. What is more, the Declaration has released creative energy which has moved the spotlight on the dignity of the human person and placed human rights higher on the agenda of the international politics.

The Universal Declaration is idealistic; yet it is not "a letter to Santa Claus". It is a charter of individual rights and collective obligations.

Muslim countries made substantial contributions to the development of the Universal Declaration and the two International Covenants. The *travaux preparatoire* of these documents records inputs given by Muslim countries on religious freedom, social justice, the indivisibility of human rights and the right to self-determination.

In 2000, the OIC adopted the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI). This Declaration is not an alternative, competing worldview on human rights. It complements the Universal Declaration as it addresses

religious and cultural specificity of the Muslim countries. The CDHRI forbids "any discrimination on the basis of colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations". It upholds the sanctity of life and the preservation of human life.

We see the Universal Declaration as a global civilizational metaphor connecting all humanity. It is a living document. Its full import needs to be invoked to face contemporary challenges. The rising tide of defamation of religions and Islamophobia needs to be stemmed. Attempts to equate Islam with terrorism in many polities around the world should be discouraged. Stereotyping and demonization of Muslims should cease lest it should plunge us into the darkness of spirit.

For its part, the OIC is going through a phase of introspection and soul searching on human rights. In December 2005, OIC leaders at their third extraordinary summit meeting declared that contemporary reform and development must be anchored in the principles of consultation, justice, good governance, protection of human rights, social justice, transparency and accountability. The Summit outlined a ten-year road map for human rights, underlining that the OIC would strive for enlargement of political participation within its member states and promote equality, civil liberties and social justice in their societies.

The OIC is considering the establishment of an independent permanent body to promote human rights in the member states in accordance with the provisions of the Cairo Declaration. The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Islamabad in May 2007 decided to work on (a) an Islamic Charter on Human Rights; (b) a Convention on Women's Rights in Islam; and (c) an Islamic Covenant Against Racial Discrimination. The Conference is also considering how to associate interested NGOs with its work by granting observer status to them.

As the year proceeds, the OIC would step up its own efforts to create greater awareness about the Universal Declaration and its sincere and faithful application.

I thank you Mr. President.