



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES

ON THE UPDATE BY THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
MS. NAVANETHAM PILLAY,

AT THE
15TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva
13th September 2010

Mr. President,

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

At the outset, the OIC congratulates the High Commissioner for assuming the Chair of the Global Migration Group and expect that her assumption will bring renewed energy and commitment to the international dialogue on migration and development. We are also pleased to note that Ivan Simonovic has assumed office as Assistant Secretary General in New York.

We thank the High Commissioner for her introductory statement that provides details pertaining to a number of critical human rights situations and issues around the world, the activities being undertaken by OHCHR as well as her views on the upcoming review of the Human Rights Council.

The OIC looks forward to continue cooperating with the team of OHCHR both in Geneva and in the field that is performing its duties under the leadership of the High Commissioner. The OIC believes that streamlining of the relationship between the Council and OHCHR, through dialogue and with full respect for relevant mandates will contribute to enhanced performance.

We fully share the assessment of the High Commissioner that situations of concern either natural or man-made remind us of the pressing need for protection both in emergencies and chronic human rights situations.

Mr. President

The High Commissioner has aptly pointed out that the reports commissioned by OHCHR even on the request of the Council are not always discussed and followed-up. All these reports consume human and financial resources and should not disappear unnoticed. Therefore, there is need to devise a mechanism on commissioning these reports and then making optimal use of these reports in the work of the Council. We expect that this issue will also come under discussion during the review exercise.

The High Commissioner in her statement has also highlighted an important and central issue relating to review of the Human Rights Council.

We understand that there is a general agreement that this exercise must lead to the strengthening the work and functioning of the Council. The OIC, however, has always stressed that this is a 'review' and not a 'reform' exercise. It is our considered view that this intergovernmental process must strictly conform to its mandate emanating from OP16 of the GA Resolution 60/251 and should not reopen the IB package, which has a very delicate balance. The Council is mandated to review its work and functioning, which is nothing more but to fine-tune where required.

Mr. President

The OIC believes that the UPR mechanism has done well so far. Introspection and peer pressure instead of inquisition have led to a number of positive developments in

the reviewed countries, and we agree with the High Commissioner to streamline the UPR procedures to improve its effectiveness.

The OIC attaches importance to the independence and impartiality of the Treaty bodies and appreciates the continued support given by the OHCHR to strengthen the treaty body system.

We agree with the High Commissioner that Special Procedures are playing an important role in the work of the Council. The OIC believes that States can better demonstrate the recognition of Special Procedures by the latter giving priority to reports, which comply with mandates given to them as well as following the Code of Conduct and not letting themselves follow their own personal inclinations.

The High Commissioner in her statement has drawn attention towards the need to act on the right to development. The OIC appreciates the support OHCHR is extending to make the right to development a reality. The OIC, in this regards, takes note with interest the proposal of the High Commissioner to invite the heads of the UN system agencies to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, and is awaiting consultations between the OHCHR and the NAM in this regard. It is high time for the UN system to primarily focus on operationalization of the right to development by creating an enabling environment for people to realize this fundamental right. This exercise will also provide an opportunity to the Council to streamline its work.

Mr. President

The OIC deeply regrets that the High Commissioner's statement contains no reference to the recent events such as 'Burn a Koran Day', 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.

We also regret singling out a number of OIC countries while expressing her concerns over limitations on the activities of Human Rights Defenders. Contrary to what we heard from the High Commissioner, the OIC countries have been working hard to adhere to their international obligations regarding Human Rights issues, especially in the difficult economic and political hardships faced by a number of them. We would have preferred that the High Commissioner highlight the efforts of OIC countries instead of making a specific reference based on unsubstantiated information.

Finally, we are concerned that while the High Commissioner's statement refers to regrettable human rights situations in some parts of the world, it ignores some other significant situations of grave and consistent human rights violations. This gives rise to the impression that there exist double standards in the consideration of specific situations. This is deplorable and regrettable.

I thank you.

