

Statement by Ambassador Zamir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, on behalf of the OIC, on the High Commissioner's Annual report on OHCHR activities, under agenda item 2, during 13th Session of HRC, Geneva, 4 March 2010

Mr. President,

I am making these comments on behalf of the member states of the OIC.

We welcome the High Commissioner's annual report and her introductory statement today that provide details of the activities undertaken by the OHCHR. One fact that stands out is the clear expansion of work both in terms of quality and quantity. And in this regard we fully support her call for additional budgetary allocations from the regular budget that would lessen her dependence on voluntary contributions or earmarked funding and hence, function in a truly independent manner.

The OIC also commends the very professional and hardworking team of OHCHR both in Geneva and in the field that continues to perform its duties under the able guidance of the High Commissioner. The range of activities carried out by the OHCHR in diverse and important fields such as women's rights, combating impunity, active participation in the Global Migration Group, servicing treaty bodies and special procedures, providing technical assistance and training to the government officials as well as support to the Council in its multifaceted tasks are all reflective of their dedication.

We are particularly appreciative of the support OHCHR has extended to the promotion and realization of the right to development and echo the High Commissioner's call that work on this important right must enjoy everyone's support. The OIC hopes that the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development will provide an opportunity for greater support and lead to effective realization of this important right. Similarly, the support to the successful holding of Durban Review Conference and subsequent strengthening of the Anti Discrimination Unit are steps in the right direction.

Madam High Commissioner,

You made a reference to the independence and latitude of the Special Procedures. We concur that they are independent. However, their independence is not an absolute right. All of them have been appointed to perform specifically mandated tasks by the Human Rights Council, in full

accordance with the Code of Conduct. They do not have a stature above this Council of sovereign States. Full respect for mandate and Code of Conduct will not only improve mutual trust but will also raise their stature. The OHCHR must also play its role in highlighting this to the Special Procedures while facilitating them in their work.

With increased number of state parties, work of the treaty bodies has indeed increased manifolds. It also has its toll on member states that have to present regular reports. A process to streamline the process must involve all stake holders and most importantly, state parties.

The OIC has given its detailed comments on the six priority areas of activity identified by you for the next biennium. We do hope that these comments will be duly taken into account. As rightly pointed out by you, the Strategic Management Plan must strictly follow the Strategic Framework approved by the General Assembly. While welcoming the open discussions arranged by your office on the SMP, we reiterate our view that it must be held in a formal setting. Streamlining of the relationship between the Council and OHCHR, through dialogue and with full respect for relevant mandates will contribute to enhanced performance.

We have also taken note of the increased field activities and engagements. The OIC believes that the Council must have an oversight role on the need and content of the OHCHR's country engagements. Field presences should also be balanced and time bound.

The OIC regrets that High Commissioner's statement has no reference to the recent incidents of defamation of religions and discrimination based on religions. We do, however, hope that it remains an important priority in her work.

I thank you Mr. President.