**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations**

**Pakistan's national statement delivered by Mr. Ali Khan Jadoon, Member National Assembly**

**Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law**

**Parliaments working with others: is there room for more engagement**

**23 November 2018**

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me start by saying that Pakistan strongly believes in Human Rights mechanisms and the work done by the International Human Rights machinery. We referred to the OHCHR Kashmir Report and the UK All Parties Parliamentary Group on Kashmir due the relevance of these reports to the discussions here. We urge everyone to read these reports and make their own judgment.

2. Parliaments in a democracy represent the will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives through dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation. The very nature of a parliamentary institution is based on multi stakeholder engagement to address the issues and concerns of different segments of the society are properly addressed.

3. Whilst democracies share common features, the fact remains that there is no single model of democracy and that democracy does not belong to any country or region. The respect of democratic systems as well as UN Charter principles is paramount in undertaking international engagements and building partnerships. The parliaments around the world can be play an important role in providing necessary legislative and financial support for the realization of the 2030 agenda. While focusing on SDG 17 related to means of implementation, the cardinal principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' must be borne in mind. The parliaments of developed countries can help in enhancing the financial and technical support of their countries to the developing world in combating climate change, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

4. Pakistan's Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies have adequate representation from all segments of the society and interest groups. At the same time, through specific parliamentary committees, engagement with relevant institutions and organizations is maintained for ensuring necessary parliamentary oversight. There are specialized Committees for human rights, marginalized segment of the society and accountability in our Parliament. Our Parliament's role and powers as defined in our Constitution are very diverse and it can investigate any matter of public importance. A SDGs Secretariat is also working in our National Assembly which keeps a liaison with all relevant stakeholders.

5. We consider national human rights institutions, media and civil society as our partners in our efforts for the realization, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Our Parliament through various formal and informal means keeps active engagement with all of them. Landmark legislation has been done in the past few years by our Parliament on a number of issues with the participation of all relevant actors. For example: 'The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) act was passed through broad based consultations with all stakeholders especially the Transgender community. Now, there is 2% quota for transgender community in government jobs, right to vote and transgender passports have been issued. Similarly extensive legislation has been done for the protection of rights of women, children and minorities. Necessary engagements and discussion are regularly held with the national human rights institutions, civil society and concerned departments for the advancement of the cause of promotion and protection of all human rights.

6. Through our collective efforts, we can bring real and positive change at the grass root level and ensure human dignity for all.

I thankyou Mr. Chairperson.