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

**Pakistan's national statement delivered by Mr. Qazi Saleem, Second Secretary**

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

**Enhancing the involvement of parliaments in international human rights mechanisms**

**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 want to make a historical and legal fact straight which was misrepresented by one of the delegation in the last discussion. Kashmir is an internationally recognized dispute according to the UN Security Council resolutions. We had referred to the OHCHR Kashmir Report and the recent UK All Parties Parliamentary Group on Kashmir due the relevance of these reports to the discussions here i.e. how parliaments and OHCHR can mutually benefit and work together for the promotion and protection of all human rights. We urge everyone to read these reports and make their own judgment.

2. The States have the primary responsibility for safeguarding and strengthening democracy and the rule of law. The States execute this responsibility by collective will of the people whose aspirations are represented by the Parliament.

3. Parliaments can play their role in translating State's international commitments into national policies and laws. Moreover, they can ensure that local solutions are applied to issues of global concern. In this way, national ownership can be achieved and real progress can be made in the realization of all human rights.

4. We can provide greater legitimacy to international efforts for promotion and protection of all human rights by addressing the basic human needs and enhancing international cooperation on the 2030 development agenda. Through integrated and coordinated efforts amongst all stakeholders including parliamentarians, we can achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGSs) and create a difference in the lives of common people.

5. In the human rights mechanisms, parliaments can address the legislative gaps between a country's legal system and its international obligations. At the same time, they actively monitor the proper implementation of laws. The parliaments can play an important role in the implementation of recommendations enjoying support of the concerned State in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council.

6. Pakistan has been actively engaging in the international human rights mechanisms. During last year, Pakistan went through three Treaty Body Report reviews and the Universal Periodic Review as well. In each of these reviews, the relevant Ministers along with active parliamentarians in the specific field were part of the national delegation. The recommendations of the report reviews are being pursued earnestly by all the stakeholders including the parliamentarians.

7. Our Senate and the National Assembly through their Standing and Functional Committees, are providing oversight on public policy, closely monitoring the human rights situation of vulnerable segments of the society and playing a critical role in adoption of various laws relating to Human Rights. The Senate has also connected with the masses through its mechanism of public petitions through which human rights violations and complaints are redressed. Our Parliament has enacted a number of laws in the last few years to curb any discriminatory practices and empowerment of vulnerable segments of the society.

8. The National Assembly of Pakistan established an SDGs Secretariat in February 2016 that became the first ever Parliamentary Secretariat of its kind in the world. It has developed a structured framework articulating annual targets, focused work plans with clear goals with focus on human rights issues and priorities such as Health, Education, Climate Change, Human Rights, urban planning and with the passage of time the list is sure to grow.

9. Our Parliament will continue to play its role in the promotion and protection of all human rights of our people.

I thankyou Mr. President.