



Statement, delivered by Amb. Zaman Mehdi, Acting Permanent Representative, during the Workshop on Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the Context of Addressing Inequalities in the Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Session 2: 6th February 2023

Distinguished Panellists and Delegates,

We welcome the organization of this workshop on one of the most pressing and urgent issues facing the global economic and political system, in general, and the human rights machinery, in particular.

Pakistan has been an ardent supporter of promotion and protection of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed several gaps in the global economic, social and medical health architecture. The pandemic has impacted every country. However, the poorest and most vulnerable have been hit the hardest.

The economic crisis brought upon by the pandemic, combined with the existing debt distress, has significantly reduced the fiscal space of governments, to provide relief and rehabilitation of their people and to protect their social and economic rights.

We heard today about the capital flowing from developing countries to global north. Developing countries paid \$400 billion in debt payment in 2021. Total public debt owed by developing countries reached \$11.5 trillion in 2021.

In this context developing countries that are recovering from pandemic and dealing with global inflation while in a debt stress situation have no space to make investments in achieving SDGs and protecting social and economic right.

Keeping in view the indivisibility of all human rights, the ability to better protect social and economic rights will have an enabling impact in other areas as well.

Distinguished Panellists and Delegates,

We believe that the Council has a substantial role in assisting states in protecting and furthering human rights – especially the social, economic and cultural rights - and right to development of the people by providing states with tailored help in specific areas.

I thank you!