



**National Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan during Panel Discussion on the Deepening Inequalities Exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic and their Implications for the Realization of Human Rights**

**28 September 2021**

**Madam President,**

We thank the panelists for their contributions. We hope today's discussions provide fresh impetus to efforts in overcoming the negative socio-economic and public health impacts arising from and exacerbated by the COVID pandemic.

Inequality has become the hallmark of the modern era. We share UN Secretary General's concerns that "pandemic has supersized glaring inequalities" and "economic lifelines for the most vulnerable are coming too little and too late". The human rights impacts of these negative developments are grave.

The falling into extreme poverty of 150 million people, the glaring vaccine inequity evident in just over 2 per cent doses to low-income countries and the loss of 250 million jobs as a result of the pandemic are just a few stark examples of the deepening inequalities.

Countering these devastating impacts will test the resilience of the global human rights norms, political commitment of member states and quality of support from the global health and financial and human rights institutions.

While the virus has not discriminated among people and countries, the poorest and most vulnerable have been disproportionately affected by it. Many countries with low incomes have and continue to face growing debt burdens, liquidity crunch and a reduced fiscal space. These factors have eroded their capacities to overcome these inequalities, achieve meaningful progress towards SDGs and climate goals.

Given these unprecedented impacts, the vision of "leaving no one behind" and "prosperity for all" has received a serious setback. We echo Secretary General and High Commissioner's calls for vaccine equity and universal, timely and affordable access to vaccines as a public good.

A human-centred recovery from the COVID effects and building a better and fairer future requires integrated treatment of the development and human rights-based responses, mobilization of international development finance, meaningful and early debt relief, fulfilment of climate finance commitments, timely and equitable supply of vaccines and swift waiver of undue vaccine patents in line with the TRIPS Agreement. I thank you.