



**National statement delivered by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, during the Interactive Dialogue with Working Group on African Descent at the 48th session of Human Rights Council**

**04 October 2021**

Madam President,

We thank the Working Group for spotlighting in its Report the various forms and manifestations of ‘environmental racism’.

We concur that its root causes lie in decades of structural discrimination against people of African descent, exploitative economic practices, and inter-generational legacy of colonialism and slave trade.

In the contemporary context, increasing export of hazardous wastes to the global South, runaway climate change, and human rights-incompatible business models of TNCs continue to unevenly and negatively impact a wide-range of individual and collective rights of African people.

We, therefore, fully endorse the Working Group’s call that the global community should take transformative actions to stamp out systematic racism, and protect environment and human rights of people of African descent.

The inter-locking crises of climate change, environmental degradation and racism is another sober reminder of the need to tailor global actions to effectively address the special needs of developing countries and affected communities.

This requires enhanced international cooperation, especially mobilization of financial support and technology transfer for developing countries, on the basis of the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’, as enshrined in the international framework on climate change and environment.

From a human rights lens, the right to development provides a firm anchor point on which the Council should build its work in this cross-sectoral area. We, therefore, urge the Council to use its technical assistance mandate in support of developing countries’ efforts to safeguard and advance the right to development of its citizens. I thank you.