



**Explanation of Vote before the Vote, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi,
Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN during adoption of draft resolution
L.23/Rev.1 titled “Right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”**

08 October 2021

Madam President,

We thank the core group for presenting the initiative as well as for its openness to listen and accommodate diverse perspectives.

We hope the political affirmation of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment by this Council would further galvanize our individual and collective efforts to effectively address the runaway environmental degradation and its negative impacts on the enjoyment and realization of basic human rights.

As the text went through different stages of deliberations, two aspects of the initiative stood out.

First: on process. We agree any new human right could only be legally recognized through negotiating a human rights treaty/convention at relevant inter-governmental forums. As of now, the right to environment and corresponding States’ obligations are not legally established by the existing international human rights instruments.

Even if the resolution aims to politically affirm the right to environment, we believe that the UN General Assembly is the most appropriate forum to do so given its universal membership.

Second: on substance. The qualifiers to the right to environment i.e. ‘safe’, ‘clean’, ‘healthy’ and ‘sustainable’ lack conceptual clarity and a universally agreed interpretation. While we recognize the importance of exercising fundamental freedoms in environment-related matters, we remain convinced that in its political affirmation, the Council should not lose sight of international and developmental aspects of environmental degradation, its scientific proven linkages with climate change, and the need to assist developing countries in this domain on the basis of principles, enshrined in international environment law.

With this broad approach, our delegation actively participated and made proposals to enrich the text.

We believe document L.23/Rev.1 [as orally revised] is still weak on elaborating the mutually reinforcing linkage between the right to environment and enjoyment and realization of socio-economic and cultural rights as well as spotlighting the peculiar situation of developing countries in this regard. As the Council and its relevant mandate normatively



unpack the right to environment in the future, we would continue to encourage them to mainstream these important dimensions in the global human rights discourse.

Madam President,

Pakistan's Constitution and our domestic framework recognize the protection and promotion of the right to environment as fundamental to the exercise of basic rights to life and health. We are also fully supportive of global efforts to protect environment and to safeguard and advance basic human rights of those vulnerable to its degradation. For the aforesaid reasons, Pakistan will vote 'Yes'.

I thank you.