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Update on the Global Coalition for Social Justice

**Statement delivered by Mr. Muhammad Wishaq, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
(15 March 2023)**

Honorable Chairperson,

Pakistan shares the vision of the ILO Director General regarding the necessity of a Global Coalition on Social Justice. Pakistan's social development has faced setbacks due to a combination of issues including the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis, and recent floods. As a result, nine million people who had escaped working poverty to join the middle class have been pushed back below the poverty line, eight million are left furthest behind, and 4.3 million have been impacted by loss and/or disruption in employment and livelihood. These challenges have exacerbated disparities and underscore the pressing need for social justice.

We believe that social justice and decent work is central to human-centred recovery, as well as promoting increased investment in social policies and institutions built on social dialogue.

The Government of Pakistan has taken significant measures to support households, workers, and enterprises through labor market institutions, wage subsidies, tax levies, and social protection mechanisms to counteract the damages caused by these cascading crises.

Pakistan is committed to a human-centered approach to development, which emphasizes equity and dignity, and prioritizes people's well-being. We believe that social justice is an essential prerequisite for achieving sustainable development goals and building resilient societies. To this end, Pakistan has embarked on various initiatives aimed at promoting social justice, such as the Ehsaas program, which is the largest social protection program in the country's history. The program aims to provide financial assistance, healthcare, education, and other support to the most vulnerable segments of society.

Moreover, Pakistan is actively promoting social dialogue and tripartite consultations between the government, workers, and employers'

organizations to inform policies that govern working conditions and environment. We believe that strong social consensus is necessary to promote sustainable development, and that tripartite social dialogue should be an integral part of the institutional framework for policymaking and implementation at all levels.

Beyond individual human tragedies and their impact on the world of work, these converging crises have demonstrated the critical need for concerted, coordinated action at all levels. Pakistan is committed to initiating a national coalition for social justice and has garnered the support of all stakeholders towards realizing this vision. This coalition will serve as a platform for collective action and facilitate the attainment of social justice for all.

We note that each member state will have its own milestones, benchmarks, and ways to achieve them, but the Coalition should also emphasize how it can inspire innovation, exchange best practices, and utilize indigenous knowledge to accelerate progress towards the SDGs across countries.

I thank you.

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