



**National Statement by Mr. Afaq Ahmad, Counsellor, during
Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe
Drinking Water and Sanitation at the 48th session of Human Rights Council**

15 September 2021

Madam President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur (SR) for his report to the Council focused on global water crisis.

We appreciate SR's approach aimed at ensuring effective realization of human rights to safe drinking water through restoration of aquatic ecosystems and democratic water governance.

We agree with the SR that water is a common good. We echo his call for addressing unsustainability of the aquatic ecosystems as well as poverty, inequality and discrimination. However, providing clean water which is only 0.5 percent of the available water to the entire population and addressing a gap between water supply and demand remains a major challenge. It also raises questions related to alternate model or mechanism to ensure universal access to fresh water without discrimination especially in view of SR's concerns over commodification and financialization of water. In this regard, we would appreciate SR's comments and recommendations on alternate options to commodification of water.

Availability of clean water has special significance for developing countries including Pakistan due to heavy dependence on water in agriculture, energy-generation as well as other economic activities. Additionally, COVID pandemic has eroded fiscal space of developing countries to achieve key SDGs including SDG six related to water and sanitation.

We request the SR to highlight areas and innovative means of scaling up international cooperation especially the financing frameworks that can be tapped to cope with global water crisis, thereby mitigating risks to water related disputes and conflicts.

I thank you.