



Statement, delivered on behalf of OIC by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at the 46th session of Human Rights Council

(18 March 2021)

Madam President,

VDPA embodies our collective aspirations to uphold and promote universal respect for human rights, and dignity of all, without any distinction.

Even though it was adopted 28 years ago, VDPA's role in setting global human rights priorities has been forward-looking.

Many of the weak areas identified in this landmark document resonate with contemporary human rights challenges: from widespread poverty to rising intolerance, and discrimination; from protection of fundamental rights of refugees and migrants to those suffering in situations of foreign occupation.

The devastating COVID pandemic has illustrated that in our inter-connected world, no one is safe unless everyone is safe.

Regrettably, our collective response to the rapidly mutating virus falls short of the 'Vienna Spirit', which calls for enhanced multilateral cooperation to secure rights of everyone everywhere. The rising 'vaccine nationalism' is a cause of grave concern for OIC.

Similarly, support for developing countries to mitigate socio-economic consequences of the pandemic is not commensurate with the enormity of the challenge. The OIC, therefore, echoes VDPA's call to help these countries in their recovery efforts through easing debt burden and removing global barriers to equitable development.

The OIC remains deeply concerned over the outrageous rise in Islamophobia. Populist regimes around the world have fanned hatred and violence, including through social media platforms, against Muslim minorities, and their sacred religious personalities, and symbols for electoral gains. The COVID pandemic has further accentuated these trends.

The new wave of 'burqa ban' has further exposed the deep-seated bigotry in many countries against Muslim women.

VDPA considers the denial of the right to self-determination as a violation of human rights and recognizes the right of the peoples, living under foreign occupation, to take any legitimate action, in accordance with the UN Charter, to realize this inalienable right.



As endorsed by VDPA, effective international measures should be taken to guarantee and monitor the implementation of human rights in respect of people under foreign occupation. Furthermore, effective legal protection should be provided to such people against human rights violations, in accordance with human rights norms and international law.

Thank you, Madam President.