



National statement delivered by Mr. Umair Khalid, Second Secretary during the Interactive Dialogue with UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons at the 50th session of Human Rights Council

21 June 2022

Mr. President,

We thank the Rapporteur for spotlighting the growing problem of human trafficking in the agriculture sector in the report.

We agree that exploitative economic practices of large business enterprises, restrictive migration policies, and informal nature of the agriculture sector are among the key drivers of this disturbing trend.

As a result, persons in vulnerable situations, such as migrants, refugees, minorities, women, children and people of African descent, are the primary victims of these deeply disturbing practices.

We are particularly alarmed by the dramatic increase in child labor in the agriculture sector in the post-COVID times. An estimated 108 million children are working in farms and plantations in utterly deplorable conditions.

Equally disturbing is the increasing evidence that many of agribusinesses, manned by forced labor, are contributing to environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and climate change.

This overall grim situation calls for action by States, and business enterprises to prevent and eliminate human trafficking.

In the context of post-pandemic recovery challenges and concerns on emerging food security, we refresh our call for a global approach towards development based on equity and support to vulnerable states. This is essential to stem any further rise in human rights violations in economic sector.

Governments should act rapidly to enforce labour rights, prosecute human traffickers, and provide remedy to the victims.

Business enterprises should fully apply human rights due diligence across the supply chain, and prioritize their human rights responsibilities over profits. Thank you.