



National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, during the Meeting on the Role of Poverty Alleviation in Promoting and Protecting Human Rights

(26 February 2021)

Madam President,

Pakistan commends the core-group for selecting an extremely relevant theme and thanks all the panelists for their contributions.

COVID-19 has further exacerbated the socio-economic challenges. While the virus has not discriminated between communities and countries, its impact has disproportionately been negative for the developing countries.

According to several estimates, more than 110 million people will be pushed back to extreme poverty because of the direct negative impacts of pandemic. This situation has especially undermined developing countries capacities to achieve progress on SDGs. As a result, our collective vision of “leaving no one behind” has received a serious setback.

To halt and reverse these devastating impacts, we need to give concrete shape to our expressions of support and solidarity. We need to empower people so that they are able to enjoy the right to development including economic, social and cultural rights more meaningfully. One of the significant ways to do this is to shore-up the required financing including for provision of affordable, universal and timely vaccines as well as for adequate debt relief and liquidity support.

Pakistan has been no exception to these COVID impacts. Our smart lockdown policy helped contain the transmission of virus and also saved lives and provided livelihoods.

Some of Pakistan’s key initiatives during the Pandemic included:

- Under the Ehsaas “Compassion” programme, more than 175 billion rupees were disbursed as emergency cash transfers, mostly to women, minorities, transgender citizens and daily wage earners.
- An economic relief package of 8 billion USD was launched for small and medium size businesses and enterprises as well as small farmers.
- Efforts are now underway to administer COVID vaccines to essential health workers and the elderly population.

Thank you