



**Statement, delivered on behalf of OIC by Mr. Umair Khalid, Third Secretary, during General Debate under Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at the 49<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**25 March 2022**

Mr. President,

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

The international community has committed itself in this landmark document to alleviate rampant poverty, counter discrimination, and protect and promote basic rights of the vulnerable and marginalized, such as refugees, migrants, and those engaged in legitimate political struggle for their right to self-determination.

Yet after close to three decades, we are far from meaningful fulfillment of these commitments.

Global response to the COVID pandemic is illustrative of this widening gap between words and action. The growing vaccine inequity falls short of the 'Vienna Spirit', which calls for enhanced multilateral cooperation to secure rights of everyone everywhere.

The OIC is gravely concerned over the rising 'vaccine nationalism', which has deepened inequalities among countries, unevenly affecting recovery efforts of developing countries.

Similarly, international support for developing countries to mitigate socio-economic consequences of the pandemic has not been 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, providing liquidity stimulus, and removing global barriers to equitable development.

Mr. President,

We reiterate our strong condemnation of the alarming spread of Islamophobia worldwide. Populist leaders continue to deploy anti-Muslim hatred as an electoral strategy, and publicly incite discrimination, hatred and phobia against Islam and its adherents.

We are particularly concerned over impact of these disconcerting trends on the basic rights of Muslim women and girls. The so-called legal bans on hijabs have deprived Muslim women and girls of access to education, decent work, and participation in public life. We hope the UN designation of 15 March as International Day to Combat Islamophobia will help raise global awareness about this contemporary issue of concern.



Mr. President,

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, in accordance with human rights norms and international law. Thank you.