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**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN  
Geneva**

**Statement**

**347<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Body of ILO**

**Statement by the Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative  
on behalf of OIC Group of countries  
on OIC Amendments Moved by Pakistan in ILO Budget GB.347/PFA/1  
(22 March 2023)**

**Madam Chairperson**

We represent a group of countries that claim to know a thing or two about discrimination. Our countries have braved a century of colonialism and we believe many of the people facing discrimination on several grounds including race, language, religion and sex have their origins in our countries.

So, we have reasonably sound credentials for speaking on the issue of discrimination.

**Madam Chairperson**

In view of the lack of consensus on using controversial concept of SOGI, and objections by members of the Governing Body to this term, we had proposed these amendments as a constructive path forward to facilitate this Governing Body towards a consensus.

These amendments are not aimed at imposing our view on the governing body. These amendments are not aimed at leaving a certain group of people perceived to be vulnerable open to abuse or discrimination. These amendments only propose to achieve consensus by demonstrating flexibility and seeking this Governing Body's endorsement to two minimum necessary principles.

*First*, we use a language that is agreeable with the legal systems of all member states.

*Second*, we ask to the ILC, through this decision, to recognize the lack of consensus on this matter, which is neither perceived, nor manufactured and certainly not surprising.

In addressing the first, we do not need to invent any new language. We only need to revert to what has been an international consensus on the matter of discrimination.

We propose in the first amendment to replace the contentious term of SOGI, which is a concept that is neither universally defined nor accepted, with an alternative language that has stood the test of time and is universally agreed. The suggested language from Article 2 of the UDHR encompassed internationally recognized grounds of discrimination.

In suggesting this agreed language, we recognize that Article 2 sits on the foundation of Article 1 which states all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. As a result, Article 2 begins with this unprecedented human consensus that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms enshrined in the declaration.

So, in adherence to his commitment, the OIC has repeatedly reaffirmed in this house that we are opposed to discrimination against anybody, anywhere, on any grounds under international law.

Using this language leaves no one vulnerable to discrimination and yet it opens the path to addressing potential discrimination in ways that are compatible with domestic legal jurisdictions and local social norms of member states.

With this margin of flexibility, we are puzzled at attempts to impose the contentious term of SOGI on this Governing Body.

The second and third amendments state the obvious and call for recording it as part of the decision. That there is lack of consensus on SOGI is known to all. It has been expressed abundantly in this Governing Body in words – spoken, written and recorded. Our expectation to accurately record an absence of consensus on this matter is a reasonable one.

We believe accepting these amendments could provide unambiguous ownership of all members to this document and ensuing implementation of programs.

Sadly, we noted objections to these amendments when these were presented. It is even more disappointing that we have not received any constructive suggestions from those who reflexively rejected these amendments.

### **Madam Chairperson**

In the absence of any demonstration of interest in consensus, we have no option but to call on the Governing Body members to record where they stand on these amendments.

While rejecting a language from the UDHR, let us remind the governing body that UDHR is perhaps the first “egalitarian” internationally endorsed document on non-discrimination that changed the language from ‘Rights of Man’ to “Rights of human being”, and which clearly brought in ‘sex’ and ‘other status’ on grounds of discrimination in anticipation of its evolving nature and to ensure equal right to all under it.

This was in part achieved by the grand predecessors of those in this room who are most eager today to tear apart the foundations of this seminal human agreement – all in an enthusiasm to normalize and legalize certain private sexual preferences.

This must not go without being recorded **Madam Chairperson** and hence we call for a vote.

**Thank you**