Checked against delivery

National statement delivered by Ambassador Bilal Ahmad, Permanent Representative, during Panel discussion on the realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

59th session of the UN Human Rights Council

(Geneva, 26 June 2025)

Mr. Vice President,

Pakistan warmly welcomes the distinguished panellists.

We are pleased to note growing normative mainstreaming of right to water and sanitation.

Increasing water stress around the world under the impacts of climate change, and growing demand requires close attention of the council.

Cooperative and sustainable management of shared water resources remains integral to our search for solutions.

In pursuing this Council's mission to strengthen the international human rights legal framework and norms, the risks and opportunities presented by shared water sources must not be overlooked.

In his July 2023 report[1], the distinguished Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation cited the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 as a "Promising practice to address human rights in transboundary basins".

The Treaty has complemented the development of international norms such as equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary watercourses, avoiding significant harm, and exchanging information among riparian states.

These norms constitute effective human rights guardrails.

[1] A/78/253 to the UN General Assembly

It should continue to serve as an example and inspiration to the world at a time of crisis.

This Council should be alarmed to see it recklessly jeopardised through unilateral acts that lack any legal standing.

Mr. Vice President,

Failure to adhere to legal obligations under bilateral water treaties and international law carries grave human rights risks for the rights of riparian people to water, sanitation, food, health, environment, and development – to name only a few.

It disproportionately impacts women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and peasants.

Impunity on violations of Human Rights and IHL must not extend to undermining hard earned international norms on use of shared waters.

Weaponising water for geopolitics is a grave risk and a potential crime and entails far-reaching adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights.

Unilateral and illegal moves to weaponise water should therefore be firmly rejected.

I thank you.

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