



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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PAKISTAN'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANIZATION  
OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE**

**AT THE SECOND SESSION OF  
THE OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**GENEVA  
18 September 2006**

Mr. President,

I am making this statement on behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

We thank you for your efforts to give a new character and personality to the Council through intense consultations. We are also grateful to High Commissioner Louise Arbour for her statement that requires careful consideration.

The Council is in a formative and transitional phase. We are laying down the foundation of the new Council and map out its future course. Keeping this in view, the OIC with the help of its partners has been trying to create a collegial and constructive atmosphere so that the Council does not slide back to the practices of double standards and politicisation that brought down the Commission on Human Rights. We would continue to strive to move the Council to a higher plane of dialogue, cooperation, and capacity building for the promotion and protection of human rights.

It is against this backdrop that we are participating in the second session of the Council which will consider reports of the Special Procedures and their recommendations. The OIC member countries will participate in the interactive dialogue. These reports and their operative part have to be handled very carefully so that we do not instantly politicise the Council or prejudice the work of the Working Group on the Review of Mandates.

Mr. President,

You have suggested omnibus texts to deal with the subjects covered by the Special Procedures. Since their range is so broad, we should keep these texts concise and general. Omnibus resolutions are notorious for being deficient in operational follow-up. The recommendations would have to be *ad hoc* because only at the end of the ongoing reform we would know which special procedures will be retained with what mandates. The review of mandates we hope will reinforce, not weaken, the system by streamlining it and ensuring its impartiality.

After the first session, the Council has already encountered two problems. First, some resolutions adopted by the Council are not being faithfully implemented. Second, some Council members publicly call resolutions adopted by the majority "one-sided". A resolution or a decision adopted by the Council should become operational, notwithstanding reservations of a minority.

The OIC welcomes the work started by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. This review will ensure that all nations irrespective of their size or wealth or power are observed by their peers with a view to improving human rights situations world wide. An elected expert body should succeed the Sub-Commission; and the current complaint system should be reformed to make it effective. Most importantly, all reform processes should move in tandem.

The OIC is not keen to table and steer resolutions in this session because of the focus on the reports of the special procedures. If resolutions are tabled, the OIC would consider introducing its texts on pressing issues. Two issues are pending from the first session – (a) substantive consideration of the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories; and (b) reports by the relevant Special Rapporteurs and the High Commissioner on the defamation of religions and incitement to religious hatred and its recent manifestations, particularly its implications for Article 20, paragraph 2, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Mr. President,

The statement of Pope Benedict XVI referring to the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) has hurt the sensibilities of the Muslims all over the world. We are reassured that the Pope has expressed regrets, distanced himself from the text that caused offence, and renewed his invitation for a frank and sincere dialogue with mutual respect.

Still the statement was regrettable as it showed lack of understanding, albeit inadvertent, about Islam and its Prophet. Islam abjures, renounces and condemns violence. Islam calls for peace, not war; love, not hatred; tolerance, not bigotry. To associate Islam with violence is to negate the basic tenets of a faith practiced for 15 centuries and which now has more than one billion followers – who are one-fifth of humanity. Such a tendency also threatens to deepen alienation between the West and the world of Islam and hurts the ongoing efforts to promote dialogue and harmony amongst religions. We hope that any attempts to revive Medievalism would be replaced with the enlightened and reformed approach to forge strong relationships between Christianity and Islam.

Mr. President,

We would request you to set aside some time as early as this week to discuss religious tolerance and related issues.

I thank you Mr. President