**Statement by India during Intersessional Seminar on Youth and Human Rights (12th April 2021) delivered by Ms. Seema Pujani, Second Secretary,**

**Permanent Mission of India (Geneva, 12 April, 2021)**

As a country with the world’s largest youth population, India welcomes this seminar and thanks the panelists for their useful insights.

2. The Government of India is cognizant that the youth form a very important segment of its population and is fully committed to enabling them to realize their full potential. Youth empowerment and inclusive social development are at the heart of our flagship programmes that seek to achieve gender equality, increased access to financial services, digital connectivity, skill development, universal health coverage, sanitation and housing for all.

3. India is among one of the first countries to launch a comprehensive programme for its nearly 250 million adolescent population focusing on reproductive and menstrual health, nutrition, mental health and substance misuse. The National Youth Policy 2014 provides a holistic vision for the youth and identifies 11 priority areas of relevance for action. The National Education Policy 2020 has put youth at the centre of its recommendations. The Fit India Movement endeavours to harness the power of youth to raise public awareness about the importance of fitness. With a vision to make India one of the top 10 countries in 2028 Olympics, more than 1000 Play India State Centres of Excellence are being set up to provide sports facilities throughout the country.

4. Flagship initiatives such as ‘Skill India’ to improve employability, ‘Start-Up India’ to promote entrepreneurship and ‘Stand-Up India’ for increased access to credit are all geared to empower youth and create a productive workforce. India is working towards a startup ecosystem based on the mantra, ‘Of the Youth, By the Youth, For the Youth’. Most recently, Prime Minister Modi launched the Startup India seed fund with one thousand crore rupees for ensuring financial assistance to up-and-coming startups.

5. Despite our many challenges, India’s youth is scripting remarkable success stories and making confident strides into the future. We wish to know from the panelists how the Council can draw further attention to the human rights of youth.

I thank you.