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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Asim AHMED,**

**Vice-President of the Human Rights Council**

At the opening of the thirtieth session

of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee

Monday, 7 August 2023, 11 a.m.

Palais des Nations, Salle XX

Chairperson,

Distinguished Members of the Advisory Committee,

Excellencies,

Dear participants,

On behalf of the President of the Human Rights Council, it is my great pleasure to warmly welcome you to the thirtieth session of the Advisory Committee.

As is customary, I would like to share with you an overview of the Council’s work since you last met in February, particularly on matters of relevance to your work.

The **52nd session** of the Council, which took place from 27 February to 4 April, was a very busy and productive one. Not only was it the longest session in the Council’s history, but it was address by a record number of 141 dignitaries during the high-level segment. Over the course of the session, the Council held 7 panel discussions and 41 interactive dialogues with special procedure mandate holders, investigative mechanisms and the High Commissioner or his representatives. The Council concluded its session by adopting a total of 43 resolutions and appointing 10 new special procedure mandate holders.

Of particular relevance to your work was the Council’s discussion on the rights of persons with disabilities that focused on the theme: *support systems to ensure community inclusion of persons with disabilities, including as a means of building forward better after the COVID-19 pandemic*. This panel addressed the development of care and support systems to achieve community inclusion under the obligations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I would like to also highlight the Council’s interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Mr. Gerard Quinn. The discussion was based on his report on reimagining services in the twenty-first century to give effect to the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community.

Subsequently, the **53rd session** of the Council took place from 19 June to 14 July. Over those four weeks, the Council held 5 panel discussions and engaged in 37 interactive dialogues with special procedure mandate holders, investigative mechanisms, the High Commissioner or his representatives and a Special Adviser of the Secretary General. The Council concluded its session by adopting 30 resolutions.

Of interest for your current mandates, I would like to highlight the interactive dialogue with the Working Group on Discrimination against women and girls, which focused on the Working Group’s recent report on poverty and socioeconomic inequality. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, Ms. Reem Alsalem, addressed custody and guardianship cases and the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women focused on gender-based violence against women and girls in public and political life, as well as on women’s participation and leadership.

Additionally, during the 53rd session, the Council’s **Gender Focal Point,** H.E. Mrs. Usha Dwarka-Canabady of Mauritius, organized a side event on the theme: *Creating Equal Opportunities for women - Advancing SDG 5.5 in Intergovernmental bodies*. During the event, heads of United Nations Agencies and other stakeholders including State and civil society representatives, shared information on actions being taken by their respective organisations to advance the participation of women at all levels in decision-making positions and ensure a better representation of women in intergovernmental bodies. As you may already know, the Council’s Gender Focal Point was established in 2020 to explore ways to increase the participation of women in all Council-related activities and to act as focal point for cases of sexual and gender-based harassment in the Council.

Also, of interest during the 53rd session was the joint statement on neurotechnology that was delivered by the Core Group during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to health. The Core Group welcomed the study by the Advisory Committee on the linkages between neurotechnology and human rights protection.

Distinguished experts,

Excellencies,

Allow me now to turn to the **upcoming 54th session** of the Council, which will take place from 11 September to 13 October. The Council is scheduled to hold five panel discussions and 39 interactive dialogues, including the interactive dialogue with the Chair of this Committee.

Of particular interest for your work will be the consideration of the report of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to elaborate the content of an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies. The Council will also holdthe annual discussion on the **integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms.**

At the end of the 54th session, the Council is expected to proceed with the election of seven members of the Advisory Committee and appoint twelve special procedure mandate holders.

I am pleased to note that the Advisory Committee has already submitted to the Human Rights Council, for consideration at its 54th session, its reports on **the impact of new technologies for climate protection on the enjoyment of human rights** (mandated by Council resolution 48/14) and on **the advancement of racial justice and equality** (mandated by Council resolution 48/18). It is my hope that these reports will contribute to further discussions on these very important topics.

Distinguished Members,

The work of this Committee is of vital importance to the Human Rights Council. The recommendations that you have provided have been recalled in various Council initiatives and related resolutions. One recent example is the resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights, adopted by the Council in July during its 53rd session. This is a topic that has been extensively discussed by this Committee, which led to the report on possible impacts, opportunities and challenges of new and emerging digital technologies with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights in 2021.

The annual interactive dialogue with the Chair of your Committee at the September sessions of the Council is an important opportunity to give greater visibility to your work. Since its inception, the Committee has acted as the Council’s think-thank. The research-based advice that you provide allows the Council to consider innovative views and perspectives about important human rights issues, including emerging topical themes. We count on you and your independent expertise to bring to the Council’s attention a wide range of human rights issues relevant to our modern era.

Before closing, I would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions to the work of this Committee of the **two** Committee members who have completed their two consecutive terms, namely, Ajai Malhotra and Dheerujlall Seetulsingh. Your engagement and expertise have been greatly appreciated, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours. I also would like to acknowledge the contributions of the other **five** Committee members who are completing their first terms, and whom I understand are now being presented for re-election, Buhm-Suk Baek, Nadia Amal Bernoussi, Jewel Major, Patrycja Sasnal, and Catherine Van de Heyning. Your contributions in the past years have been key to the work of this Committee, and I wish you all the best for your re-elections and your future endeavours.

As I conclude my remarks, let me reiterate my appreciation for the Committee’s work and thank you all for your efforts in fulfilling the mandate of the Committee. Your commitment towards the promotion and protection of human rights is highly valued.

I wish you a fruitful session.

Thank you.

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