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The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan accredited to United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and with reference to the High Commissioner's letter No.GVA-0713-ENG dated 14 November 2011, has the honour to share the preliminary observations of the delegation of Pakistan on the subject.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Geneva



OHCHR REGISTRY

16 DEC 2011

Recipients H.R.T.B.

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Pakistan considers treaty bodies as the backbone of the international human rights system. It is extremely conscious and appreciative of the important work being done by treaty bodies for the promotion and protection of human rights. In this context, Pakistan is aware of and sensitive to, the problems that treaty bodies face due to the exponential increase in their work load over the past years and the scarcity of resources to cope with this increased workload. Pakistan would be willing to extend its full support and cooperation to any efforts to provide treaty bodies the resources and meeting time they need to do their work efficiently and effectively.

While the exercise launched by the OHCHR under the guidance of the High Commissioner to strengthen and harmonize the treaty body system has great merit, we are of the view that its utility and effectiveness will remain in doubt unless there is greater clarity on the legal status of this process and on the nature of its end result.

While we appreciate greatly, the High Commissioner and the OHCHR's efforts to reach out to all stakeholders to get their views and opinions in the process that they have launched, we believe that the essence of strengthening of the treaty body system depends on effective and robust cooperation between the states parties and the treaty bodies. It is, in the end, the states parties who are responsible for implanting the treaty, abiding by its provisions and reporting on compliance. While all stakeholders have a role to play, the state parties are clearly the most important and cannot be placed on par with civil society organizations or NHRIs.

We, therefore, support the idea of more extensive and in depth consultations with States in the treaty body strengthening process that what has taken place so far. We greatly benefited from the informal consultations held in Sion in May of this year and from the subsequent briefings arranged by the OHCHR for the regional groups. As useful as all these interactions have been, we do believe that they are not a substitute for a formal intergovernmental process based on a legal mandate.

We also believe that the process of strengthening treaty bodies is linked merely with reviewing and refining, where appropriate, procedural issues pertaining to the work of treaty bodies and would no way impinge on the provisions of any Treaty and the States' parties obligations thereof.

From the High Commissioner's letter dated 14 November 2011, we understand that this process will culminate with a compilation of proposals to be presented by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in early 2012. We expect an opportunity will be provided to all stakeholders, particularly States Parties, to discuss and comment on this subject in a formal setting to identify the best ways and means to take the process forward.