

Oral Statement
For the 22nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6 of the agenda: Consideration of the UPR report for Pakistan

Mr. President,

Many children in Pakistan are deprived of their right to education, due to insufficient funds to provide compulsory primary education, the gender imbalance against girls and discrimination against children from religious, ethnic and scheduled caste minorities. We also note our concern that corporal punishment still remains rampant in schools throughout the country.

On child labour, Pakistan's Constitution stipulates prohibiting the employment of children below 14 years of age in any factory or mine or in any hazardous work. However, there are still no effective legislations in place that targets reducing the number of children working on the streets or in the factories in Pakistan. Each year hundreds of children become victims of abuse, exploitation and torture as domestic servitude by their employers and the government of Pakistan neither considers it slavery nor worst form of child labour.¹ From January 2010 to December 2011, newspapers reported 18 cases of severe torture and abuse of child domestic workers. Out of these, 13 children died as a direct result of violence inflicted on them by their employers.

We also express our deep concern on the involvement of children in armed conflict in Pakistan which undermines the Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC), in which Pakistan is a state party.

On women's human rights, despite Pakistan's efforts to protect the rights of women via the implementation of several national legislations, such as the National Commission on the Status of Women Act 2012 and the Domestic Violence Act 2012, women continue to face many challenges in the protection or enjoyment of their rights. This is especially so for women from religious, ethnic and scheduled caste minorities.

Therefore, we urge the Government of Pakistan to:

- Increase its funding for education in order to provide free, accessible and quality education for all the children in Pakistan and ensure that these funds are used fairly and transparently.
- Implement a new curriculum that ensures that children, especially girls and children from religious and ethnic minorities, are not discriminated against; and one that provides an accurate account of the past so as to eliminate prejudice on religious, ethnic and schedule caste minorities; put an end to corporal punishment in the home and in the schools;
- Recognize child domestic labour as slavery and ensure that it is added to the list of banned occupation given in the Employment of Children Act 1991.
- Ratify without delay the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and ensure protection and advancement of the rights of women, especially those from minority groups, so that they are able to enjoy the full extent of their rights, including freedom of religion, education and movement with security.

Thank you.

¹ The Government of Pakistan did not make its position clear with regard to recommendation 122.24 "to expedite the adoption of the Charter of Child Rights Bill".