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Statement by Pakistan on Behalf of the OIC
at the Ninth Forum on Minority Issues
"Minorities in situations of humanitarian crises"
24 and 25 September 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

Pakistan makes this statement on behalf of the OIC. We acknowledge the efforts by the organizers to bring different stakeholders at one place in order to promote dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to minorities in situations of humanitarian crises. It is a good platform to identify and analyze best practices, challenges, and prospective solutions to the issues that are faced by the minorities in the situations of humanitarian crises.

Respect for humanity for us is one of the fundamentals of Islam. Islam is a religion of peace and advocates the unity of mankind. The Holy Quran says: *'O mankind. We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another.'* Respect of pluralism and diversity are therefore central to our belief system.

OIC continues to promote initiatives for peace and unity and also for safeguarding the rights of minorities including the right to identity. OIC strongly condemns violence against all minorities, particularly human rights violations against displaced and vulnerable people targeted because of their racial, ethnic and religious belonging.

Today the world is confronted with many humanitarian crises. Affected communities bear hardships and tremendous trauma in such crises. The anguish is often multiplied in case of vulnerable segments of the society such as minorities.

Racial and structural discrimination, xenophobia, hate speech, absence of access to justice, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization, incitement to hatred which leads to violence are issues that are faced by minorities in situations of humanitarian crises. The intensity of such violence is magnified for people under occupation.

Mr. Chairman,

It is important to create conditions for the effective participation of minorities in the political, social, economic and cultural sphere on the basis of equality and non-discrimination.

The societies that are based on mutual trust and respect have the potential to overcome the forces of hatred which try to divide on the basis of ethnicity, religion, language or nationality.

Good quality education can also help to raise the level of awareness of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Moreover, the need to empower women belonging to minorities cannot be overemphasized.

The OIC is of the view that the predicament of minorities in situations of humanitarian crises can be addressed by adhering to the principles of humanity, justice and non-violence, which are central to the teaching of Islam and all great religions. In this regard, it is important to call for the compliance with rule of law and humanitarian principles and to allow access of humanitarian aid agencies to affected people, victims of natural disasters or conflicts. Managing diversity by recognising plural identities, and their specific needs is a sine qua non for any stable society.

Our main objective should be that no one should be left behind in the access of humanitarian assistance and development process. This can be achieved by greater inclusivity of all segments of society in decision making, developing norms that promote judicious and equitable societies, abiding by international law and respecting basic human rights.

Access to humanitarian assistance by the vulnerable groups like minorities becomes an even greater challenge in situations of humanitarian crises. We request the presenters to put some light on the practical strategies to address this issue.

We believe that sharing of best practices, promotion of understanding, and strengthening of dialogue can address many of the issues related to minorities in situations of humanitarian crises.
