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Statement by Pakistan, on behalf of the OIC Member States, during an Interactive Dialogue with a) the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and b) the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living under Agenda Item 3 (19th session of the Human Rights Council, 6 March 2012, Geneva)

Madam President

I am making these comments on behalf of the Member States of the OIC.

We thank the Special Rapporteurs for presenting their annual reports.

Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

The Special Rapporteur on the right to food has reflected interesting ideas in the report that need careful examination. At the same time, we believe that food insecurity and issues like hunger should remain a priority of the Special Rapporteur in discharge of his mandate. Today food insecurity continues to threaten the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world.

It is a matter of deep concern that the food, energy, economic and financial crises of recent years continue to challenge efforts of the international community to reduce the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by half by 2015. We share the assessment of the Special Rapporteur that existing food systems are deeply dysfunctional and have failed to address the issue of hunger. We would appreciate if the Special Rapporteur could share his views on making these systems functional internationally to address the issue of increasing hunger.

The FAO's recent report entitled "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2011" has highlighted the differential impacts that the world food crisis of 2006-08 had on different countries, with the poorest being most affected. The report also concluded that while some large countries were able to deal with the worst of the crisis, people in many small import-dependent countries experienced large price increases that can have permanent effects on their future earnings capacity and ability to escape poverty.

Madam President

It is predicted that high and volatile prices are likely to affect vulnerable communities in the wake of continuous rise in demand and persistent challenges on the supply side. Since the food insecurity has a global dimension, there is a need for global strategy. Building the resilience of countries against external shocks and ensuring that the households which are most vulnerable to food security are shielded from the impact of increases in prices should form basis of any future global food security strategy.

We believe that international cooperation through building global partnerships on agriculture and food; optimizing the allocation and utilization of technical and financial resources, including external debt relief for developing countries, and reinforcing national

actions to implement sustainable food security policies can be instrumental for the realization of the right to food.

Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing

The Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, in his report, has addressed the question of women and their right to adequate housing. We believe that this right for the women needs to be discussed in a holistic way i.e. how the society deals with the rights of women in general.

The OIC believes that this right can be fully realized by women if the institution of a family and neighborhood is functional. Islam has specifically enjoined upon its adherents to remain vigilant to the needs of women including their need for adequate housing, in particular those women without support of their family members such as orphans, widows, older women, etc.

We agree that challenges persist for the realization of this right as for women are concerned. However, a large number of OIC countries have established purpose-built institutions/bodies that provide shelter to the women in need. Some institutions are funded by the governments while a sizeable number of such institutions are being run with the support of the local communities.

The Special Rapporteur, in paragraph 26 of his report, has asserted that the Sharia law discriminates women in matters of inheritance. It is important to mention that Sharia has devised a set of rules based on particular situations. Most significantly, the determination of share in an inheritance takes into account the factors of kindred, generation and responsibility. Accordingly, there are different set of rules for inheritance in Islam. There are cases where the woman's share in an inheritance is equal to that of the man. There are also cases where a woman inherits more than a man. At the same time, there are cases when the woman is entitled to inherit while the man is not.

We would like to underscore that comments on the issue require an in-depth understanding of Shaira law, which we understand is not the area of expertise of the Special Rapporteur.

We have also noted that the report lacks any reference to need for international cooperation in the realization of the adequate housing. We expect that the aspect of international cooperation would remain priority in his future work.

I thank you.