POSITION PAPER

Committee: *United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)*

Country: *Islamic Republic of Pakistan*

Agenda: *Addressing the Institutionalization of Gender-Based Discrimination in Afghanistan: Examining the Recognition of " Gender Apartheid" , Accountability Mechanisms and the International Community' s Responsibility to Protect Fundamental Rights.*

1. ***Background of the Issue***

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is deeply concerned about the restrictions imposed on women and girls in Afghanistan, particularly in the fields of education, employment, and public participation. Pakistan believes that every woman and girl deserves access to education, dignity, and equal opportunities. These rights should not be denied on the basis of gender.

2. ***Pakistan' s National Position***

Pakistan maintains that Islam guarantees women fundamental rights, including education, inheritance, participation in public life, and protection from violence. Pakistan has consistently stated that religion must not be misused to justify the denial of women's rights.

In its official statement on 5 September 2024, Pakistan reaffirmed that every man and woman has an inherent right to education in accordance with Islamic teachings. Pakistan also believes that women's empowerment is essential for the progress and development of society.

3. ***Pakistan’ s Diplomatic Approach Towards Afghanistan***

Pakistan supports continued diplomatic engagement with Afghanistan rather than complete isolation. It believes that constructive dialogue can encourage positive changes while respecting Afghanistan's sovereignty.

On 30 January 2025, Pakistan's Foreign Office reiterated its support for universally recognised norms regarding female education. Pakistan also highlighted its Allama Iqbal Scholarship Programme, under which one-third of 4,500 scholarships are reserved for female students.

4. ***International Legal Framework***

Pakistan encourages Afghanistan to fulfil its relevant international obligations and protect the fundamental rights of women and girls. Important international frameworks include:

- United Nations Charter: Promotes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): Addresses discrimination against women.

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26): Recognises the right to education.

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR): Recognises rights relating to education and other essential aspects of life.

5. ***Pakistan' s Position on Gender Apartheid***

Pakistan recognises the seriousness of systematic discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan. It supports international discussions on examining the legal implications of gender apartheid and strengthening accountability mechanisms. Pakistan believes that any international response must be based on international law, constructive engagement, and the protection of fundamental human rights.

6. ***Proposed Solutions and Initiatives***

Pakistan encourages the international community to consider the following measures:

- Promote diplomatic dialogue with Afghan authorities to restore educational opportunities for girls.

- Encourage the protection of women's rights to employment and public participation.

- Strengthen international cooperation to support Afghan women and girls.

- Support educational programmes and scholarships for Afghan female students.

- Examine appropriate international accountability mechanisms in accordance with international law.

- Ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches women and girls without discrimination.

7. Conclusion

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan firmly believes that the rights of women and girls must be protected and respected. Pakistan supports a balanced approach based on dialogue, cooperation, international law, and respect for national sovereignty. It calls upon the international community to work together towards ensuring that every Afghan woman and girl can live with dignity and access her fundamental rights.