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Statement by the Prime Minister of Pakistan

**General debate of the 78th Session of UN General Assembly
(22 September 2023, 0900-1400 hours)**

BISMILLAHI AR-RAHMAN AR-RAHIM

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Heads of State, Government and Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, I convey to you, Mr. President, our warm congratulations on your election to guide the work of this historic Session of the UN General Assembly. I am confident that your vast diplomatic experience, and the sunny disposition of your beautiful Island country, will enable you to steer this Assembly to a most successful conclusion.

Mr. President,

2. We are meeting at a tense and pivotal moment in modern history. Conflicts rage in Ukraine and in 50 other places around the world. Tensions between **the global powers** have continued to escalate. We see the rise of new and old military and political blocs. **Geo-politics is resurging when geo-economics should have primacy in the world. The world cannot afford Cold**

War 2.0. There are far greater challenges confronting humankind which demand global cooperation and collective action.

3. The world's economic prospects also appear gloomy. Global growth is slow. High interest rates could trigger a recession. A succession of exogenous "shocks" - Covid, conflict and climate change - have devastated the economies of many developing countries; **many countries of the global South have barely managed to stave off defaults.** Poverty and hunger have grown, reversing the development gains of three decades.

4. At yesterday's SDG Summit, far-reaching commitments were made to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. We must ensure implementation of the "SDG Stimulus"; the re-channelling of unused Special Drawing Rights for development; the expansion of concessional lending by the Multilateral Development Banks; and the resolution of the debt problems of the 59 countries in debt distress.

5. Pakistan also looks forward to the **fulfillment** of the climate change commitments made **at COP28 by the developed world:** to provide over \$100 billion in annual climate finance; allocate at least half of such finance for adaptation in developing countries; operationalise the Fund and funding arrangements for Loss and Damage; and accelerate their carbon emission mitigation targets to "keep alive" the goal of restricting global warming to 1.5 degrees centigrade. **Attempts to selectively provide these funds on the basis of geo-political considerations should be resisted.**

Mr. President,

6. Pakistan's triple food, fuel & finance challenge, is a prime illustration of the impacts of Covid, conflicts and climate on developing countries. **Pakistan is one of the worst affected countries from the impacts of climate change. The epic floods of last summer submerged** a third of our country, killed 1700 and displaced over 8 million people, destroyed vital infrastructure and caused over \$30 billion in damage to Pakistan's economy.

7. **Pakistan is gratified** by the commitments of over \$10.5 billion for Pakistan's comprehensive plan for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction with resilience – the 4RF Plan – at the Geneva Conference last January. Specific projects are being submitted to ensure timely funding and execution of the 4RF Plan. I hope our development partners **will accord priority to allocation (release) of funds for** our “resilient” recovery Plan which has been costed at \$13 billion.

Mr. President,

8. **Pakistan's government is committed to** rapid economic recovery. We will stabilize our foreign exchange reserves and our currency; expand domestic revenues and, most importantly, mobilize significant domestic and external investment. To this end, we have established a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to expedite investment decisions. Twenty-eight projects have been identified in priority sectors – agriculture, mining, energy and IT – for implementation in collaboration with Pakistan's partners.

9. Pakistan's long-term shift to geoeconomics is well underway. The second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) has been initiated covering railway, infrastructure, and manufacturing projects.

10. Pakistan also looks forward to the early implementation of the “Connectivity” projects with Central Asia.

Mr. President,

11. Development depends on peace. **Pakistan is situated in one of the least economically integrated regions in the world. Pakistan believes that regions develop together. Therefore,** Pakistan desires peaceful and productive relations with all our neighbours, including India. Kashmir is the key to peace between Pakistan and India.

12. The Jammu and Kashmir dispute is one of the oldest issues on the agenda of the Security Council. India has evaded implementation of the Security Council’s resolutions which call for the “final disposition” of Jammu and Kashmir to be decided by its people through UN-supervised plebiscite.

13. Since 5 August 2019, India has deployed 900,000 troops in Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to impose the “Final Solution” for Kashmir. To this end, India has imposed extended lockdowns and curfews; jailed all the genuine Kashmir leaders; violently suppressed peaceful protests; resorted to extra-judicial killings of innocent Kashmiris in fake “encounters” and so-called “cordon and search operations”, and imposed collective punishments, destroying entire villages. Access to occupied Kashmir, demanded by the UN High Commission for Human Rights and over a dozen Special Rapporteurs, has been denied by

New Delhi.

Mr. President,

14. The UN Security Council must secure the implementation of its resolutions on Kashmir. The UN Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) should be reinforced. **Global powers** should convince New Delhi to accept Pakistan's offer of mutual restraint on strategic and conventional weapons.

Mr. President,

15. Peace in Afghanistan is a strategic **imperative** for Pakistan. **Pakistan shares the concerns of international community with respect to Afghanistan particularly the rights of women and girls. Yet, we advocate continued humanitarian assistance to a destitute Afghan population in which Afghan girls and women are the most vulnerable; as well as revival of the Afghan economy and implementation of the connectivity projects with Central Asia.**

16. Pakistan's first priority is to prevent and counter all terrorism from and within Afghanistan. Pakistan condemns the cross-border terrorist attacks against Pakistan by the TTP, Daesh and other groups operating from Afghanistan. We have sought Kabul's support and cooperation to prevent these attacks. However, **we are also taking necessary measures to** end this externally encouraged terrorism.

Mr. President,

17. Pakistan welcomes the progress made towards ending the

conflicts in Syria and Yemen. In particular, we warmly welcome the normalization of relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Unfortunately, the tragedy of Palestine continues, with Israeli military raids, airstrikes, expansion of settlements and evictions of Palestinians. **Durable peace can be established only through a two state solution and the establishment of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State within the pre June 1967 borders, with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital.**

Mr. President,

18. UN peacekeeping has been a success story. Over more than 6 decades, Pakistan has contributed 230,000 peacekeepers in 47 Missions across the world. Today, UN peacekeepers face complex and unprecedented challenges especially from criminal and terrorist groups, as in the Sahel. We must ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. Pakistan **shall continue** to work with the UN to develop the capabilities and more robust mandates required for successful enforcement actions by UN and international forces where needed.

Mr. President,

19. We must counter all terrorists without discrimination, including the rising threat posed by **far-right** extremist and fascist groups, such as Hindutva-inspired extremists threatening genocide against India's Muslims and Christians. We also need to oppose "state terrorism"; address the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, injustice and foreign occupation; and distinguish genuine **freedom** struggles from terrorism. Pakistan proposes the creation of a Committee of the General Assembly to oversee the

balanced implementation of all four pillars of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

Mr. President,

20. Our progress based on rich history of cooperation, understanding, exchange and synthesis of ideas among (the) civilisations **is imperilled today. The narratives advocating a clash of civilizations have done considerable harm to humanity's progress. Such ideas have bred** extremism, hatred and religious intolerance, including Islamophobia. Make no mistake; it is a latent threat that undermines millennia of progress. We need to cherish and celebrate our diversity and different ways of life. Mutual respect, sanctity of religious symbols, scriptures and personages should be ensured.

21. While Islamophobia is an age-old phenomenon; however, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it has assumed epidemic proportions, as manifested in the negative profiling of Muslims; and attacks on Islamic sites and symbols, such as the recent public burnings of the Holy Quran.

22. Last year, this Assembly adopted a Resolution, proposed by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC, declaring 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Earlier this year, the Human Rights Council adopted an OIC resolution submitted by Pakistan, urging States to outlaw the burning of the Holy Quran and similar provocations. We welcome the legislation initiated by Denmark **and contemplated by Sweden** towards this end. Pakistan and the OIC countries will propose further steps to combat Islamophobia, including the appointment of a Special Envoy, creation of an Islamophobia data Centre, legal assistance

to victims and an accountability process to punish Islamophobic crimes.

Mr. President,

23. The complex global and regional challenges that the world faces today can be best addressed through effective multilateralism within the framework of the United Nations. **However, multilateralism is being eschewed due to the unilateral policies of and strategic rivalry and tensions between global powers. Pakistan will continue to work actively to strengthen multilateral institutions and enhance global cooperation.**

24. Pakistan looks forward to continuing negotiations on the scope and elements of the Summit of the Future and the Pact for the Future, building on the convergences that emerged in earlier consultations.

25. The Summit's preparatory process must not disrupt existing negotiating processes such as the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

26. **Pakistan does not believe in elitism within the comity of nations. The UN Charter principles of equality and sovereignty must be preserved in the interest of global peace and prosperity.** Pakistan believes that adding additional permanent members to the Security Council will further erode its

credibility and legitimacy. The widest possible agreement can be best achieved on the basis of the Uniting for Consensus Group's proposal for expansion of the Council only in the non-permanent category with provision for a limited number of longer-term seats.

Mr. President,

27. Pakistan believes that to build, preserve and promote peace and prosperity today, and in the future, it is vital to reduce great power rivalry and tensions; ensure strict adherence to the UN Charter; consistently implement Security Council resolutions; eliminate the root causes of conflicts; and **respect the principles of non use of force; self determination; sovereignty and territorial integrity; non interference in the internal affairs of States and peaceful co- existence.**

28. Pakistan will work diligently and actively with all Member States to realize these vital elements of a new, equitable and peaceful world order.

I thank you.
