STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

AGENDA ITEM 68:
RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

AND

AGENDA ITEM 67:
ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION,
XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

THIRD COMMITTEE 68TH UNGA SESSION

New York,
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Mr. Chairman,

The right to self-determination is a peremptory norm of international law. It has been enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and made an overarching right in the two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights declared that the denial of the right of self-determination is a violation of human rights and underlined the importance of its effective realization. Since then, all international human rights conferences and UN summits of world leaders have reaffirmed the validity and significance of this right.

Mr. Chairman,

The exercise of the right to self-determination is firmly grounded in the following principles:

i. The right must be exercised freely without coercion or repression used, for instance, under foreign occupation.

ii. The right does not lapse with the passage of time.

iii. The legitimate struggle of peoples for self-determination cannot be set aside by equating it with terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

The realization of the right to self-determination continues to be denied to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, which enjoyed the support of Pakistan, India and international community, clearly pronounced that "the future status of Jammu and Kashmir would be decided through the democratic means of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations".

It is regrettable that decades after adoption of these resolutions, the people of Jammu and Kashmir remain deprived of their fundamental rights. They continue to face widespread repression and gross and consistent violations of human rights, which have been documented by independent international human rights organizations.

The territory of Jammu and Kashmir is disputed. Legally and constitutionally, it never became part of India, let alone its integral part, because the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir have still not exercised their will, according to an agreed method prescribed by the United Nations, with the consent of India and Pakistan. That is why this issue is on the UN Security Council agenda as well as the bilateral agenda between India and Pakistan.
Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan supports the realization of the right to self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir through dialogue and peaceful means.

In his statement to the General Assembly in September this year, the Prime Minister of Pakistan urged the United Nations to remain attentive to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and to take steps for the full realization of the right to self-determination of its people. The suffering of the people of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be swept under the carpet because of power politics.

Shortly after assuming his office early this year, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif offered talks and dialogue to India to address all outstanding issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. India's initial response was positive. Later, here in New York, the two Prime Ministers had a meeting in which they decided to engage on this longstanding issue.

The struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be characterized as terrorism. Nor can "epicenter of terrorism" be wrongly located by India to Pakistan, simply because it raises the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in the United Nations. Pakistan is the worst victim of terrorism, whose sources, strategies and execution emanate from our immediate neighborhood. We demand that all networks to destabilize Pakistan through terror be dismantled forthwith.

Imperatives of diplomacy dictate that nations of South Asia make collective efforts to defeat terrorism. As for the exercise of the right to self-determination, Pakistan, the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the United Nations agree to hold a plebiscite. Only India has to say yes; and engage with Pakistan and resolve this issue for all times to come.

The two countries owe this to their current and future generations, and to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We should find a solution based on justice and international legality. Such a historic and bold step would usher in an era of peace, security and harmony in South Asia and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the Agenda item on the Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance, Pakistan associates itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Pakistan rejects racism in all its forms and manifestations. Racism has no place in any religion and culture. We believe that racism is against the dignity and equality of humankind and poses a serious challenge to social stability of member states as well as international peace and security. Pakistan continues to play its role in the promotion of anti-racism agenda at the United Nations and at other international fora.

The international community expressed its collective and firm commitment to tackle racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international levels by adopting the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) in 2001. This commitment was reaffirmed in 2009 and 2011 by the international community. The UN Declaration of 2011 is aimed at mobilizing political support to expedite the implementation of this commitment and to place victims of racism at the centre of the measures to promote equal opportunity, openness and inclusion.
Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably, the scourge of racism continues to manifest itself in many forms. Discrimination on the basis of religion is one of the contemporary forms of racism. Because of the condemnable terrorist acts by some individuals and entities, Muslims around the world have become a target of intolerance and discrimination. Misperceptions have been spread about Islam, a religion that rejects racism and preaches tolerance.

In order to stem this new trend of racism, Member States must consider effective legal and administrative measures, in accordance with UN GA Resolution 66/167, against acts of religious intolerance, discrimination and incitement to religious hatred.

Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, promoting tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity are essential for combating racial discrimination and related intolerance. Pakistan fully supports the various international initiatives for promoting dialogue, understanding and peaceful co-existence among all religions and civilizations.

I thank you.