Remarks by Dr. Diyar Khan, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations on Agenda Item 64: Report of the Human Rights Council at the Third Committee of 68th Session of the UNGA
(New York 13 November 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

We appreciate the President of Human Rights Council for having submitted a detailed and comprehensive report on its 22nd and 23rd sessions held respectively on 25 February-2nd March and 27 May – 14 June 2013. The report will undoubtedly help to further guide our deliberations here at the 3rd Committee in New York.

The report, interalia, indicates that the Human Right Council conducted Universal Periodic review of Pakistan on 30th October 2012 in conformity with all relevant provisions contained in Council resolution 5/1 and took into account the replies submitted by Pakistan including our voluntary commitments. We are glad that the Review of Pakistan was adopted without a vote.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan was one of the founding members of Human Rights Council. Our membership of the Council and its predecessor Commission on Human Rights has served as a catalyst for promotion of human rights in Pakistan. Pakistan attaches importance to the work of the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as mandates of all Special Procedures. Our engagement with these mechanisms is evident from our regular interaction with them in Geneva as well as country visits by the High Commissioner, Special Rapporteur on Independence on Judges and lawyers, WG on Arbitrary Detentions and the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances.
Pakistan believes that constructive and useful engagement with UN human rights mechanisms should be based on mutually respectable and cooperative approach. Special Procedures are entrusted specific responsibilities to report under carefully crafted inter-governmentally agreed mandates. They must discharge their duties within the given mandates with full independence, impartiality and transparency while avoiding politically-motivated country-specific measures.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is a State party to seven core international human rights instruments. In June 2011, Pakistan ratified the optional protocol on sale, prostitution and pornography of children and the optional protocol to Convention on Torture. Pakistan has also withdrawn a number of its reservations to ICCPR and CAT. Remaining instruments are also under active consideration of relevant authorities.

Earlier this year, Pakistan held free and fair elections to elect a new democratic government. We appreciate the UN technical assistance in successful holding of these elections.

Mr. Chairman,

One immediate issue of deep concern to Pakistan is the use of drones for surveillance and combat operations in the territories of other member states. The 68th UNGA has witnessed the beginning of a serious debate on the legality and human right implications of drone operations. Pakistan welcomes this debate and appreciates the reports submitted in this regard by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism and the Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary killings. Pakistan hopes that the special rapporteurs will further study the matter and submit stronger recommendations in their final reports to the Human Right Council. Pakistan is ready to contribute constructively to building international consensus on legality of use of drones. In the meanwhile, Pakistan calls for immediate cessation of drone-strikes till the finalization of an agreed legal framework on the use of drones.

I thank you.