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**Permanent Mission of Pakistan  
to the United Nations and  
other International Organizations, Geneva**

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EOSG/CENTRAL

*Permanent Representative*

No.HR/SOGI/1/2023

Excellency,

On behalf of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Group in Geneva<sup>1</sup> on human rights and humanitarian matters, I have the honour to bring to your attention our deep concerns over consistent attempts to legitimize and normalize the personal sexual behaviours at the United Nations system in the guise of seeking protection from discrimination and violence against persons due to their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

2. These endeavours are afoot within different forms with the support of some States, civil society organizations and international civil servants working at various organizations that are part of the UN common system.
3. Some of these endeavours include insertion of the controversial concept of SOGI, which has no basis in international law including human rights law, in the official reports of some UN entities as well as programme and budget documents of UNHCR, WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, ILO, among others, without any inter-governmentally agreed mandate.
4. In addition, the premises of UN Offices at Geneva (UNOG), ILO and IOM have been used to project the controversial rainbow flag. For example, the rainbow flag was waved by several unauthorized individuals inside Conference Room XX of Palais des Nations on 30 June 2022 who also took photos with these flags and then posted them on social media. In another instance, this controversial flag was embedded in the official social media handles of UN Offices at Geneva (UNOG). During this year's so-called pride month, the rainbow flag was hoisted on the Secretariat buildings of the ILO and UNHCR.
5. The OIC Group's serious concerns over the use and promotion of this controversial flag at or by UNOG were relayed on each occasion with proposals to prevent their recurrence and disciplinary action, where applicable. Our Group has also registered its serious reservations over the use of controversial concept of SOGI in the programme and budget documents of ILO, WHO and UNHCR.
6. The use of controversial notions or symbols as well as attempts to seek legitimacy of individual sexual behaviours through the UN system is not only fraught with risks but also constitutes violation of standards of conduct for international civil servants in employment of UN common system. The surreptitious inclusion of these non-agreed terminologies and concepts in the official reports or documents is clearly designed to create the veneer of its universal legitimacy. Such attempts can also result in avoidable misunderstanding and confusion when they are reflected downstream in programmes and activities of UN country teams and other nongovernmental partners.
7. As you are aware, there is no consensus among member states at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and the Human Rights Council (HRC) or any other universal inter-governmental platform on either the terminology or concept of protection from discrimination and violence against persons owing to their SOGI. Several UN member states have constitutional provisions and laws that specifically prohibit same-sex marriages, wed-locks or families and by extension the controversial concept of

<sup>1</sup> Except Albania

SOGI. Therefore, any programmes or activities undertaken by UN country teams on the basis of SOGI can create political, social and legal complications in many jurisdictions.

8. For these considerations and given the resistance that the OIC Group in Geneva has faced from some of the Secretariats of the international organizations that are part of the UN common system to avoid using this non-consensual terminology of questionable legality, we are constrained to bring this matter to your attention. In several cases, there is reluctance among Secretariat officials to even reflect in the relevant documents that many member states have divergent positions on this subject.

9. It is deeply troubling for the OIC Group that a concerted push is underway by some member states in collaboration with some international civil servants to link the concept of SOGI with discrimination framework and push its insertion relentlessly in the UN documents. These efforts are further exacerbating the already deeply polarized environment. Unfortunately, these attempts are creating avoidable divisions among member states at a time when collective efforts are ever more necessary to overcome several inter-locking challenges such as climate change, extreme poverty, religious hatred and inequality.

10. It is a well-known fact that SOGI is a highly contentious concept, even among member states that are pushing for its universalization, legitimacy and normalization. The adherents of this concept continue to add new and diverse meaning to it. Bringing such a divisive concept with controversial legality in the UN documents and reports needs to be avoided.

11. The OIC Group remains committed to combating discrimination and violence against anyone, anywhere, pursuant to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, international law and conventions as well as respective constitutional and legal provisions. We are also resolved to do our part in faithfully implementing Article-1 of the UN Charter which encourages member states to achieve international cooperation in solving problems of a economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. We trust all member states as well as international civil servants will also demonstrate this commitment.

12. The OIC Group urges you to examine these issues in earnest and issue necessary advisory to heads and staff of UN offices, funds, programmes as well as specialized agencies and international organizations that are part of the UN common system to act in full conformity with the provisions of the UN Charter and the standards of conduct for international civil service. We also request you to advise them to be mindful of national laws; perform their duties without according preference for social and cultural practices of a particular region; and avoid using and defending controversial SOGI terminology.

13. The OIC member states repose a strong faith in the UN system and consider it an indispensable platform to advance international cooperation and develop international treaties and norms that are universally agreed and implemented in ways that our collective aspirations to shape peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies are fulfilled.

14. Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

*With best wishes!*



(Khalil Hashmi)

**H.E. Mr. António Guterres,**  
UN Secretary General,  
New York