

**74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Third Committee**

**Agenda Item: 70**

**Promotion and protection of human rights**

**INDIA STATEMENT**

**By**

**Ms. Paulomi Tripathi, First Secretary**

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Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary-General and the special procedure mandate holders for informing our discussion.

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, seventy years ago, proclaimed global recognition of fundamental human rights, representatives from Global South, especially women, contributed significantly, making it a universally-applicable charter to guide humanity's pursuit for just societies.

One such example was Dr. Hansa Mehta from India. She played a pioneering role in changing the first Article of the UDHR to speak of 'all human beings' rather than 'all men' being 'free and equal'.

This was well before equal rights for women and men were recognized in most legal systems.

Many challenges still remain in universal implementation of human rights.

Nothing damages the credibility of the cause of human rights more severely, than its misuse as a decoy, to divert attention from the real issues.

Unfortunately, one delegation, in yet another such attempt, has referred to an internal matter of my country. The truth is - as far too many victims of terrorism all over the world languish in trauma, the linchpins of terror networks enjoy patronage and safe havens in this country.

The international community is too familiar with this deceitful tactic and has rejected these attempts for what these are – desperate attempts to mask territorial ambition.

We do not wish to dwell upon this issue any further.

Mr. Chairman,

The principles of UDHR have been enshrined in the Constitution of India to provide guarantees for protection and promotion of human rights.

India's actions to realization of human rights continues to evolve with emerging aspects - more rights becoming justiciable and through progressive interpretation of laws by the judiciary.

A range of national and state level commissions, free press and civil society monitor compliance with human rights standards.

The National Human Rights Commission of India enjoys 'A' status of accreditation with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

During the General Election held this year, with about 900 million voters, a range of facilities were provided to make the polling stations more inclusive and accessible, to ensure that all can exercise their right to vote.

India has taken several innovative rights-based social protection measures in pursuit of inclusive growth that has lifted millions out of multidimensional poverty.

More than 1.3 million elected women representatives lead in formulation and implementation of public policies at grassroots level.

370 million people, who previously did not have access to financial services, today have bank accounts through the Financial Inclusion Initiative. The world's largest healthcare assurance programme "National Health Protection Scheme" covers 100 million families, providing free treatment to 500 million people. World's largest sanitation campaign has led to building of 110 million toilets in last five years.

Women in India enjoy paid Maternity Leave for 26 weeks.

There are legal and other institutional safeguards to protect women from child marriage, domestic violence and sexual harassment at workplace. Free elementary education is a fundamental right. India has a robust legal framework for the protection of children from sexual assault, pornography and trafficking in person.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights in India ensures that laws and policies are in consonance with child rights.

Mr. Chairman,

We have following observations regarding the international human rights framework:

First, State's human rights obligations extend to all branches. States need to build the capacity of multiple actors and enable coordination among them. Capacity building and technical cooperation, therefore, have crucial role in this matrix.

Second, Right to Development remains important and its operationalization needs to be prioritized.

Third, The Universal Periodic Review is a platform for dialogue and cooperation on human rights situations in all countries. We should avoid turning UPR into a platform for pushing selective human rights issues.

Fourth, we need to envision human rights protection measures for the digital age, keeping in view emerging issues such as right to non-discrimination in the age of algorithm; freedom of expression online controlled by private platforms; right to privacy in the era of data collection and, most importantly how to counter misuse of these technologies that lead to human rights abuses.

We stand ready to constructively engage with the international community on a range of issues in promoting respect for and realization of all human rights globally.

I thank you.