Mr. Chairman,

We wish to express our thanks to the Chairman of the Working Group on the Scope of Legal Protection for the United Nations and Associated Personnel and to the Mission of Liechtenstein for their efforts to expand the scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety and Protection of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

2. We have noted the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Scope of Legal Protection contained in document A/60/52 on its meeting from 11-15 April 2005. We have also taken note of the report of the Working Group on its proceedings in the past weeks contained in document A/C.6/60/L.4.

3. The safety and protection of UN and associated personnel has assumed added significance in recent years. The number and intensity of attacks against such personnel has raised concerns about their safety and security which is closely interlinked with their ability to discharge their duties.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Pakistan has been at the forefront of peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. We remain an important troop contributing country. Our troops have served more than 30 United Nations peacekeeping missions including some of the most difficult and dangerous ones. The role of our peacekeepers has often been pivotal. Our peacekeepers have often worked in dangerous and life threatening situations: they have been involved in the prevention of outbreak of hostilities between States, preserving and maintaining delicate peace processes, delivering humanitarian assistance, and protection of threatened populations against the onslaught of genocidal forces. They have often worked in dangerous and precarious situations exposing themselves to risks only for the cause of UN peacekeeping and for stabilizing societies and building peace.

5. Thanks to these efforts of our peacekeepers, they form a part of the “thin blue lines” that protect the peace, provide security, bolster stability and protect vulnerable populations in war-torn countries across the globe. To date, 93 Pakistani peacekeepers have paid the ultimate price for the cause of peace. Pakistan is proud of the performance of its peacekeepers who still continue to do excellent work, alongside others, under very difficult and trying conditions.
Pakistan has remained one of the oldest, largest, and most consistent participants in UN peacekeeping operations. We, therefore, speak from the perspective of a major stakeholder with long-standing experience. Indeed, along with others, we have played a significant part in forging UN peacekeeping as an instrument to promote international peace and security.

We have also recently been a recipient of international assistance in the wake of earthquake in the northern part of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. More than 40 thousand people, mostly children have lost their lives in this disaster and more than 60 thousand have been injured. The number of those displaced or rendered homeless is about 3 million. For us, the adoption of the optional protocol holds special significance.

Mr. Chairman,

We condemn all acts of violence against UN and associated personnel. We share the view that such personnel should have better protection and that there should be no impunity for crimes against them.

We recognize the difficulties in trying to expand the scope of legal protection under the UN Convention. The scope of this protection, the circumstances under which it could be available, the responsibilities it would entail, and its legal and political ramifications are issues we must address in order to reach a consensus solution on the draft optional protocol.

We believe that the scope of such protection under the additional protocol should extend to conflict and post conflict situations including transitional reconstruction phases. However, it should not extend to pre-conflict situations.

In cases of natural disasters, operations for emergency humanitarian assistance should be carried out only with the consent of the host States. In this context, we find the proposal by United Kingdom a good basis for compromise which provides a procedure by which a host State could declare the non applicability of the optional protocol with respect to an operation for responding to a natural disaster under article II paragraph 1 (b). The host State could make such a declaration subsequent to the natural disaster and prior to the deployment of the operation.

We are hopeful that the Committee would be able to resolve the outstanding issues at the earliest and conclude the additional Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.