Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to extend, on behalf of my delegation, our warmest felicitations on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Commission on Social Development. We appreciate the extensive consultations with the Member States that you undertook prior to the convening of this session. We also felicitate other members of the Bureau on their election and look forward to working constructively with them for a successful outcome of this session.

2. I would like to associate my delegation with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The UN Charter had envisioned employment of international machinery for the promotion of economic and social advancement. The World Summit for Social Development had underscored the synthesis between economic prosperity and social development by acknowledging the interrelation and interdependence between economic and social development. In order to be effective, social development has to be sustained, equitable and inclusive, reaching all stratum of the society – nationally as well as internationally. Social development therefore, is not solely contingent upon national settings but to a large extent is dependent on enabling international environment. It is against this backdrop that this august Commission ought to deliberate upon the issues before it.

4. We thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive reports presented to the Commission. In particular, the report on “Improving public sector effectiveness” contained in document E/CN.5/2004/5 is important. It analyses efficacy of the public sector as a vehicle for delivery of social services without losing sight of its equally important role as a policy formulating entity. This juxtaposition of public sector’s capacity with its commitment necessitates a careful assessment of its effectiveness and as needed, its improvement. The report does that in a succinct way. The recommendations contained in the report merit astute consideration. The Commission would pronounce upon these recommendations through its Agreed Conclusions – providing a blue print for enhancing the contribution of public sector nationally and internationally.

Mr. Chairman,
5. The Secretary General has observed that in developing countries the resources available for financing of public social services are low. “These countries do not have the critical mass of resources necessary for delivering quality and effective services”, the report contends. These countries, the Secretary General suggests, beside other things “need to develop their economic base”.

6. While fully agreeing with the Secretary General, we would add that lack of enabling economic environment including inequitable international trade regime, unsustainable debt burden and dwindling Official Development Assistance have aggravated the predicament of developing countries. Abject poverty, growing hunger, rampant disease, intensifying discrimination, environmental degradation and widening digital divide have drastically curtailed the capacity of the public sector in these countries to sustain the quality and quantity of social services delivered. In order to reverse this retardation, commitments made at Copenhagen and its five-year review, Millennium summit, Monterrey and Johannesburg must be fulfilled in an integrated and coherent way.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Social development, being a global challenge would remain elusive without collective efforts of the international community. The President of Pakistan in his address to the 58th session of the General Assembly has outlined the strategy of ‘enlightened moderation’. The two-pronged strategy involves socio-economic and human development by the developing countries through indigenous reforms, and simultaneous action by international community, including the UN, to enhance economic opportunities and to promote conflicts resolutions on the basis of justice and international legality.

8. The link between social development and prevention of conflict is widely acknowledged now. Conflicts inflict heavy burden on public sector; they slow down advancement and roll back development. The Secretary General was right when he said that conflict prevention was an integral part of the quest for social progress, development and reduction of poverty. Nowhere is this analysis more vivid than in South Asia, where one-fifth of the humanity suffers from backwardness and under development, with over 30% of the population living below poverty line. Resources at the disposal of the public sector could be better utilized for the welfare of people and for giving them a dignified life. It was with this objective that Pakistan had been seeking meaningful dialogue with India for peaceful settlement of all long-standing disputes. We hope that the process of composite dialogue, initiated following the meeting between the leaders of the two countries in Islamabad, would bear fruit. At this stage, reinvigoration of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is timely and augurs well. It would provide regional impetus to enhance the capacity of the public sector of the member countries.
Mr. Chairman,

9. Efficient public sector and human rights go in tandem. In this regard, we acknowledge the need to strengthen the universal values and common goals: participatory democracy, social justice, good governance, transparency and accountability – create supportive environment to reinforce the public sector. Pakistan’s devolution of power programme, put into practice in 2001 was a quantum stride in this direction. It has empowered people, including women by devolving decision making to the grassroots level. Its most significant aspect is that instead of a government functionary, an elected representative, supported by an administrative system answerable to him directly, now heads the district. Women have been empowered to play a prominent role in national decision-making at all levels, through greater participation in local bodies and provincial and federal legislatures. Foundations have been laid for good governance through transparent and accountable public sector.

10. While primary responsibility for delivering social services rests with the public sector, supplementary role of other segments of the society cannot be overemphasized. For creating greater efficiency, alternate organizational arrangements are crucial. It is against this backdrop that factoring civil society participation into policy formulation and implementation of plans attains greater relevance. The traditional resources are not sufficient to meet the needs in Pakistan. We are conscious that volunteerism can play a key role in supporting delivery of social services. Accordingly, a number of initiatives have been taken by the Government, including the establishment of the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD). Drawing on the skills and motivation of volunteers at the grassroots level, the Commission has created a National Volunteer Corps (NVC), to help meet development objectives in education, health and poverty alleviation.

11. Improving public sector effectiveness raises a range of issues, which are broader and more complex in developing countries as compared to developed countries. Improving public sector effectiveness may not lie in privatizing everything. Instead revitalizing it, building alliances and human development may be the answer. Universal best practices may be found, but considerable room should be left for local variation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.