

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

**Interactive Dialogue on High Commissioner's Annual Report
(28 February 2013)**

Statement by India

Mr. President,

We thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, for her annual report containing an informative overview of the activities undertaken in 2012 by the OHCHR.

We appreciate the High Commissioner's continued focus on racial discrimination, gender equality and women's rights. There has been a recent surge in the discourse on the security of women, particularly in India. The High Commissioner mentioned the horrific rape incident that was witnessed in my capital and the action that the Government has taken in its aftermath. I would like to add that just yesterday, our Finance Minister during presentation of the National Budget, announced the setting up of a Rs 1000 crore (US \$ 2 million) fund for the empowerment and safety of women to be aptly called 'Nirbhaya Fund', meaning Fearless. Being home to 500 million women, the Government of India places high importance on the economic empowerment of Indian women and their safety and security. In addition to Nirbhaya Fund, the announcement of the setting up of a first 'All Women Bank' in India as a Public Sector Bank with an initial capital of Rs. 1000 crore (US \$ 2 million) reflects this commitment.

Mr. President,

We thank the High Commissioner for the attention paid to protection of civilians affected by conflict and the publication of the Annual Report on the Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan. We would encourage the OHCHR to publish more such reports on civilian casualties in other countries affected by similar conflict situations as well.

We thank the High Commissioner for her report on strengthening the United Nations treaty body system which will serve as a useful resource for the intergovernmental process under Resolution GA 66/254. We would like to emphasize that treaty body strengthening must first and foremost focus on the core problematic issues relating to the treaty body system such as resourcing and coherence in working methods. It would also be useful to carefully reflect on the need for rationalizing the reporting obligations of States so that the quality and timeliness of the reports are not affected and that States are not overburdened by their reporting obligations. We believe that the discourse should also focus on providing assistance to States and helping them meet their reporting obligations.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we would like to express our appreciation for the work being done by the High Commissioner and her office.

Thank you, Mr. President.
