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A. ROBINATHAN

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UPR of MALDIVES- INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

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INTERVENTION BY INDIA

Mr. President,

We warmly welcome the delegation of Maldives led by H.E. _____ and thank the delegation for its informative presentation. Two years ago, Maldives ushered in a new era of democracy and political reform in the country. Since then, the country has sought to strengthen its normative and institutional framework on human rights, despite several odds. The national report of Maldives provides a useful overview of these progressive steps, as also of the challenges that remain. Indeed, we commend the conscious decision made by the authorities to make the report self-critical while highlighting the achievements.

2. We take positive note of the socio-economic progress attained by Maldives, especially in the areas of health and education. It has attained Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 and is on track for achieving Goal 6. Its vibrant and open private sector-led economy has enjoyed considerable growth in recent years. We note the strengthening of the freedoms of opinion and expression, assembly and association in the country; the establishment of an autonomous national human rights commission, as also several other oversight mechanisms like the Judicial Service Commission. Maldives has acceded to virtually all core international human rights instruments in recent years.

3. The national report has mentioned the high unemployment rate and drug addiction as two major problems in the society. We would request the delegation to share more information with us about the causes of these phenomena, the steps taken and challenges in the process.

4. The national report acknowledges that there is *de facto* discrimination against women in most walks of life. It notes that Maldives needs urgent support in areas of judicial reforms and prison reforms. We request the delegation to share details about the nature of assistance required.

5. We would like to make a specific mention of the concerns expressed by Maldives regarding the threat posed to it by climate change and its broad impact on a variety of human rights.

6. In the light of the concerns raised about the independence of the Human Rights Commission, regarding interference in the appointment of its members and budget allocations, we recommend that Maldives ensure that the Human Rights Commission is made fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

7. To conclude, India and Maldives share deep historical bonds that have only become stronger over the last few decades. As the country charts out a new path through a peaceful transition to greater democracy, we remain committed to greater cooperation in its development and wish it all the best.

Thank you, Mr. President.
