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MALDIVES

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Statement by

H.E. Ms. Ifham Hussain

Minister of State for Gender, Family and Social Services of the Republic of the Maldives at the General Debate of the 16th Session of the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

(CRPD)

13 June 2023

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the State Parties, representatives from Government and Civil Society, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam Alaikum

Warm greetings from the Republic of Maldives

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you and your bureau on your election.

It is an honour to share the progress we have made in safeguarding and advancing the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), as well as the challenges faced in implementing the agenda, which is a primary objective of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's administration. Prioritizing inclusivity for underrepresented demographics, particularly those with disabilities, continues to be a priority of our government.



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The Special Rapporteur in his latest study noted that conventional support models conflict with the CRPD. Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight several initiatives we have embarked upon that are rooted in personhood and community inclusion.

First, the publication of the Regulation on the Identification and Classification of Persons with Disabilities is one noteworthy accomplishment. Additionally, on January 5th, 2023, the National Disability Registry (NDR) was established, a milestone in the proper identification and categorization of the diverse needs of persons with disabilities, including those who have psychological and intellectual difficulties.

These accomplishments represent an important advancement in the provision of greater resources and support for persons with disabilities. Standard Operation Procedures and dedicated procedure guides have been designed to safeguard the security and wellness of PWDs. Additionally, rehabilitation programs have been created to help them reintegrate into society.

On March 22nd, 2022, we unveiled the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) to promote gender equality. This multisectoral plan is made up of government initiatives designed to address the unique needs of women including those of women with disabilities.



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Mr. President,

Another notable achievement that marked a substantial improvement in the protection of children and the recognition of their rights is the historic Child Rights Protection Act (CRPA) of 2019. This legislation reinforced the entire child protection system by replacing the Child Rights Protection Act of 1991. However, it is more crucial to expressly recognize the rights of children with disabilities.

The National Elderly Action Plan, implemented from 2019 through 2021, was initiated in 2017, following the establishment of the National Elderly Policy. A comprehensive revision took place in April 2023 to align this plan with the recently established Elderly Bill and other international commitments. We are thrilled to announce the inauguration of Elderly Community Centers across the country, demonstrating our steadfast dedication to promoting healthy aging and supporting our senior citizens.

Mr. President,

The geographical dispersion of the Maldives poses significant challenges to the effective delivery of services. Technical expertise is predominantly concentrated in the capital, while there remains a deficiency in the efficient infrastructure required to facilitate the seamless delivery of these services. To address this issue, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services (MoGFSS) is



partnering with UNICEF to train island-level teams and enhance local capabilities. As such Community Social Groups (IBAMA) and Community-Based Rehabilitation programs are multi-sectoral, employing social protection approaches to enhance the quality of life of PWDs. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to improving and promoting sustainable development.

The engagement of PWDs in any effort that is directed toward or has an impact on them is highly valued by the government. The National Disability Council, which was founded in accordance with the Disability Act, is composed of a member elected by PWDs, by their parents, and by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Any laws, regulations, or other issues pertaining to PWDs must be discussed with this Council.

One of the social protection initiatives created to assist those with disabilities aims to provide monthly financial assistance on an individual basis. The increments to the ongoing monthly funding will be enacted in June 2023. Other social protection programs include financial assistance for therapy, medical care, assistive technology, prescription drugs and psychological profiling.

President Solih's administration prioritizes jobs and employment, social protection, high-quality education, disability statistics, and disability rights activism to make the rights real for PWDs. Furthermore, these projects are



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directly tied to the fundamental goal of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.