

LIUSHA ZAHIR  
MALDIVES  
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Mr. President,

The Maldives takes note of concerns in the report relating to the Constitution of the Maldives and in particular its provisions on citizenship.

The Maldives delegation would like to point out that the aforementioned provisions are not designed to discriminate against religions other than Islam or to incite intolerance. Rather they are a reflection of a historical and societal reality in the Maldives – a country which has a 100% Muslim population and a country in which religious and national identity are closely interrelated and in which Islam plays a crucial role in national unity.

It is also important to note that the Constitutional provision in question has so far not been contested or tested before the Maldives' independent courts of law, thus demonstrating that the provision is not considered discriminatory by the citizens of the country.

Thank you Mr. President.

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The Maldives welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism and Related Intolerance which deals with one of the most important challenges in the contemporary world: namely the scourge of Islamophobia and other forms of religious intolerance.

As a Muslim country, we lament over the rising tide of Islamophobia in non-Muslim States. The people of the Maldives certainly qualify the differences between government-sanctioned incidents, and those anti-Muslim activities that can be attributed to marginal segments of non-Muslim societies. However, we believe that religious intolerance, negative stereotyping, racial-profiling, and discrimination thwarts this institution's mission for peace and prosperity among all societies. Therefore, we must intensify our efforts to promote a culture of tolerance and understanding, and continue an effective dialogue to expand the scope of rational discourse between the Islamic world and other civilizations.