



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Maldives
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

**Statement to be delivered by Ms. Khadeeja Najeeha, Assistant Director, Ministry
of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives
on the interactive dialogue with SR on Water and Sanitation
Under Agenda Item 3 on 12 September 2012**

Thank you Madam President,

The Maldives delegation would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on Water and Sanitation and her impressive report focusing on stigmatization and discrimination and its human rights framework which relates to water and sanitation.

This subject on water and sanitation is very relevant to the Maldives given its unique geography and environmental vulnerability of a small, low-lying island facing difficulties in providing clean drinking water to its people. The demand for water resources is continuously increasing. This increase is being driven not only by a growing population but also by the demands of a rising standard of living.

Providing access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation to all Maldivians has remained a key national priority. Indeed, the Constitution of the Maldives, recognises that every citizen has the right to safe drinking water and sanitation services of an adequate standard without discrimination.

The Maldives is constrained by the lack of strong human rights-based regulatory frameworks to govern the provision of safe drinking water and sewerage facilities. For this reason the sector faces a huge challenge in the enforcement and monitoring of the service providers of safe drinking water and sanitation. Currently, the water and sanitation Act is being drafted and is in the process of finalisation.

While the Maldives agrees with the Independent Expert's analysis to address the issue of stigmatization to fully realize a strong human rights-based approach to water and sanitation, we would like to ask the Independent Expert's views on strategies a small state lacking legislative framework on water services can adopt to tackle the issue of stigmatization.

On a final note, the Maldives as a member of the Blue Group (cross-regional initiative supporting the implementation of human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation) cosponsoring the Council resolution in March this year reiterates the call on the international



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community to integrate human rights standards and principles when finding solutions to support the aim of universal access to water and sanitation.

Thank you.
