



Statement by Ms. Rishfa Rasheed,
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Maldives
to the United Nations Offices in Geneva

At the Annual Full Day Discussion on Women's Human Rights

At the 23rd Session of United Nations Human Rights Council
Geneva, 5 June 2013

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you Madam President.

I would like to thank the High Commissioner and the panelists for the statements this morning. The Maldives welcomes the efforts made by the UN WOMEN as noted in the report on the activities of the UN Trust Fund.

On 13 February 2013, women and girls in the Maldives came together in the largest gathering, joining the call worldwide, to end violence against women, in the campaign "One Billion Rising". It has been the biggest achievement so far in bringing into the forefront the issue of violence that is suffered by 1 in 3 women, in our small country. Although majority of the women, take a share of the responsibility as breadwinners in the families, it is often not enough, and the dependency of women for economic purposes put them in vulnerable situations which expose them to violence.

In 2012, the Parliament of Maldives passed the long awaited bill on ending domestic violence. A Family Protection Authority, which has a mandate to take necessary measures to prevent domestic violence, arrange flexible reporting mechanism was also established under this act. A draft Sexual Harassment Bill and Sexual Offenses Bill is already at the Parliament pending approval. A Gender Equality Bill is currently at the drafting stage.

The Maldives agrees that exposure to violence at a young age has devastating consequences. Ensuring that adolescents are protected must be at the core of our efforts. It is important to note that these efforts are not limited to young girls alone.



Ensuring young boys are protected, and teaching them to protect and respect human rights must be astringed into the curriculum of their development. NGOs and non-state actors can play an important role in empowering women. Executive and Parliamentarians need to put in place mechanisms for women to be self-sufficient and contribute more to the economic progress of the nation, thereby empowering women.

Madam President,

To ensure that States' comply with women's' rights frameworks that are in place, the Human Rights Council needs to continue its efforts to encourage Governments to strengthen its legislative frameworks and put in place mechanisms to end impunity and hold accountable all perpetrators of violence against women. In this regard, the Maldives would like to welcome the recommendations made in the Special Rapporteur's report.

Before concluding, I would like to note that promoting, protecting and enhancing women's rights and ending all forms of violence against women remain a priority of the Government of Maldives. we remain committed to modernizing our institutions to meet the demands of an ever-evolving society.

I thank you Madam President