

**Statement by Ambassador Hassan Sobir, Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations Office at Geneva on the
issue of Universal Peer Review (UPR)**

Mr. President,

I have the honour of delivering the following statement reflecting the views of the Republic of Maldives on the issue of Universal Periodic Review.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the facilitator of the Working Group for his report on progress achieved thus far.

Mr. President, turning to the views of the Maldives on the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, we would make the following main points.

1. Principles

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) must aim to improve the on-the-ground implementation of human rights commitments by all Member States.

The UPR must be based on objective and reliable information and should be conducted in a frank yet constructive, cooperative and non-condemnatory manner. The process should place particular emphasis on helping States to enhance their capacity to promote and protect human rights. A key outcome of the UPR should therefore be the identification of needs and opportunities to support interested States with technical assistance and capacity development.

The Maldives, as a Least Developed Country, supports calls for the UPR regime to take account of the difficulties faced by small developing States which often struggle to comply with existing reporting obligations.

The Maldives' preferred solution to this challenge is to ensure that the UPR does not create significant new reporting requirements, but rather complements the information provided by existing mechanisms such as treaty bodies and Special Procedures.

The Maldives holds that the UPR, in line with Resolution 60/251, must be based on the principle of equality of treatment. The Maldives therefore looks forward to being reviewed with the same regularity as all other States.

2. Framework

The Maldives can join any eventual consensus on the question of whether the UPR should take place in inter-sessional working groups or solely in the Council plenary. Notwithstanding, the Maldives considers that a system of working groups might allow for a more detailed and interactive discussion with concerned States, especially regarding technical assistance and capacity-building needs.

The final outcome of the process must in-any-case be dealt with by the Council plenary.

3. Periodicity

The periodicity of the UPR should strike a realistic balance between practicability (especially for Least Developed Countries) and the maintenance of legitimacy.

The Maldives considers a periodicity of five years to be appropriate.

All members of the Council should be reviewed during their term of membership.

4. Preparation

The Maldives supports the suggestion, made by a number of delegations, that the Universal Periodic Review should be conducted on the basis of the reviewed country's response to a questionnaire.

The questionnaire, which would be prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, would comprise two parts: the first part standard for all countries and the second part country-specific. Shorter versions of the questionnaire might be considered for Least Developed Countries.

States under review would have the opportunity to adjoin a statement to the completed questionnaire.

Finally, in order to ensure that the Universal Periodic Review complements rather than duplicates the work of treaty bodies (as per Resolution 60/251), participants in the interactive dialogue should have ready access of existing sources of information such as treaty body concluding observations and recommendations, and reports by Special Procedures.

5. Interactive dialogue

The interactive dialogue should aim to recognize achievements as well as identify challenges. It should be orientated towards reaching a positive consensus on how States can improve the on-the-ground implementation of their human rights commitments and how they can be assisted in this regard through capacity-building and technical cooperation.

Human Rights Council members and other States should be the principal actors in the interactive dialogue process.

The sessions should be open to the public.

The Maldives supports the Indian proposal that the outcome of the interactive dialogue should contain:

- a summary of deliberations in the interactive dialogue;
- voluntary pledges/commitments announced by the country under review; and
- concrete recommendations to address technical assistance and capacity-building needs, if any, to be adopted by the Council with the full consent of the country concerned.

6. Outcomes and follow-up

The outcomes and recommendations from the UPR process should be practical, realistic, and achievable.

Implementation of recommendations for capacity-building and technical assistance should be incorporated into mainstream OHCHR activity.

The Maldives would advocate using the subsequent review of a State as the main forum in which to assess progress and follow-up in areas identified during the previous review.

7. Other points

The Maldives supports the Sri Lankan proposal to establish a fund to assist capital-based experts from Least Developed Countries to travel to and stay in Geneva for the interactive dialogue. The Maldives furthermore supports the suggestion that this fund could also be used to finance orientation programmes and training in Geneva for States that are unfamiliar with the UPR mechanism.

In conclusion Mr. President, I would like to reiterate that the Maldives' continued commitment to play a full and constructive role in ongoing deliberations on the modalities of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism.

Thank you, Mr. President.