

Draft Statement to be delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Maldives at the review of Sri Lanka during the Second Session of the UPR on 13 May 2008

Thank you Mr. President,

The Maldives delegation extends a very warm welcome to the high level delegation of Sri Lanka to the Second Session of the UPR to participate in the country's first review by the Human Rights Council.

It is a manifest indication of the importance and seriousness to this review by the Government of Sri Lanka.

My delegation congratulates the Honourable Minister for his excellent presentation today.

I would also like to commend the Government of Sri Lanka for the very comprehensive report submitted to the Council for its review.

Maldives notes with appreciation the extensive efforts made by the Government of Sri Lanka to consult the various stakeholders, including civil society members and NGOs in compiling its national report submitted to the Council.

My delegation appreciates and applauds the very active and constructive role played by Sri Lanka in ensuring the successful realization of the Human Rights Council set up, and applaud its continued active involvement in, and valuable contributions towards further strengthening the newly established Council as Member and Vice President of the institution.

As a close neighbour and friend, having extensively rich and varied historical cultural and social ties that extend over centuries past, Maldives is only too aware of the many challenges faced by the Government of Sri Lanka as it tries to balance its national security needs and ensuring the protection and promotion of its human rights obligations to all its citizen, while combating one of the most ruthless and deadliest terrorist organizations in the world. This further exacerbated when the country had to battle the terrible devastation and destruction caused by the tsunami of December 2004, from which the country is still recovering.

Maldives takes note of the many commitments made, and efforts underway, by the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure the continued protection and promotion of human rights of its people. Sri Lanka has taken a number of important steps to better guarantee its human rights obligations, and identified key priority areas of action for the future. It is evident that Sri Lanka will need the continued understanding, empathy, support and assistance of the international community as it tries to achieve the goals it has set forth for itself. My delegation hopes and it confident that the international community will be forthcoming in its response.

Maldives welcomes the Sri Lankan Government's commitment to pluralism and notes the recently initiated targeted recruitment of policemen and women from a minority community. We recommend that Sri Lanka pursue this initiative and move to greater integration of all communities in the public and security services.

Maldives would like to take this opportunity to wish the Government and people of Sri Lanka an early and everlasting peaceful solution to the deadly conflict that has brought so much misery and suffering to its people, and hindered the realization of the country's full developmental potential for many years.

Thank you.