

MALDIVES

Statement by H.E. Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed

To 7th Special Session of the Human Rights Council

Thank you Mr. President,

The Maldives delegation warmly welcomes this Special Session both as the first to deal with a thematic issue, and as a timely opportunity to provide a human rights perspective to an issue of global importance. The Maldives would like to thank the delegation of Cuba for its efforts to convene the Session.

Mr. President,

As the country's geography is characterized by very small dispersed coral islands, the Maldives is heavily reliant on food imports, with the exception of fishery products. This situation means that the Maldives is especially vulnerable to, and therefore concerned by, the shortages of food supplies and the related rise in world food prices.

There is no doubt that these price increases have significant implications for the right of everyone to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself or herself and his or her family, including food; and also the right of every person to be free from hunger. The increases will also hinder the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially MDG one, of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

Mr. President,

The reasons for soaring food prices are many and complex. Like many other major global challenges including the related problem of climate change, the Human Rights Council alone cannot solve the problem of food supply and demand. Yet, that does not mean that the Council should remain silent. Rather, the Council must play its ascribed role to raise awareness of the human rights dimension to the problem as a vital way of increasing the moral and ethical imperative for the world to act decisively. Indeed, the Human Rights Council is uniquely well-placed within the UN system to

highlight the human face of an issue such as the one we are deliberating today.

Mr. President,

It is for this reason that the Maldives supported the convening of this Special Session, and also explains why we are one of the initial cosponsors of the outcome Resolution. The Maldives strongly supports the Resolution text as it stands, especially the clear reference to the complex range of factors that are causing the problem, including environmental degradation and climate change, and the particular vulnerability of LDCs and other vulnerable economies. We therefore urge the Council to adopt the Resolution by consensus.

Thank you Mr. President.