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Statement during the Consideration of Report of Tonga

Consideration of UPR Reports

Human Rights Council 8th Session

13 June 2008

Thank you Mr. President,

The Maldives welcomes the Report of the UPR Working Group and once again would like to congratulate Tonga on being the first Small Island State to undergo a review and for conducting itself throughout proceedings in such an exemplary manner.

The Working Group's Report on Tonga amply demonstrates both the proud cultural heritage of Tonga which includes a deep-seated and long-held belief in the importance of individual rights and freedoms. The Report also reflects the forward-looking nature of Tonga's national report, which while rooted in the country's traditions, nevertheless clearly identified a number of importance challenges facing the country. The Report is also noteworthy in that it contains many useful recommendations to help Tonga meet these challenges and to strengthen human rights protection for all its citizens.

As we noted during the Working Group dialogue, the determination of Small Island States to improve human rights promotion and protection, in line with the core international conventions, is unfortunately not always matched by the resources necessary to achieve that improvement. Indeed, capacity-constraints are perhaps the biggest factor preventing Small Island States from cooperating more fully with this Council and with the variety of human rights mechanisms established to further the cause of human rights around the world.

and the OHCHR

The Maldives therefore takes this opportunity to request the international community, including donor agencies, to open a dialogue with Tonga and, based on the country's needs and wishes, to work with it to help in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the final Working Group Report.

Thank you Mr. President.