



Statement by

The Republic of Maldives

at the

Third Session

of the

Universal Periodic Review Working Group

under

Consideration of the UPR Report of the Cape Verde

10th December 2008



Thank you Mr. President.

The Maldives delegation would like to warmly welcome our friends from Cape Verde to this Third Session of the UPR Working Group. It is a particular pleasure for the Maldives to have Cape Verde, a fellow Member of the Alliance of Small Island States and a country with which it shares many characteristics, here with us today. We express our hope that today's experience will be a rewarding one.

Despite sitting in different oceans, Cape Verde and the Maldives have much in common. Both have recently undergone great socio-economic and political changes. Both are faced with the many challenges that accompany graduation from Least Developed Country status. And both, as Small Island States, are vulnerable to external economic and environmental shocks, and face important human, financial and technical resource constraints.

Despite these challenges, Cape Verde has achieved an enormous amount since its Independence in 1975, including in the field of human rights. It is party to seven of the major international human rights instruments, together with a number of related optional protocols. What it more, Cape Verde has been active in integrating the principles contained in these treaties into national laws, practices and procedures; a point evidenced by, for example, the entry into force of the new Criminal Code in 2004, the new Code of Criminal Procedure in 2005, the establishment of legal aid in 2004, the creation of the Institute of Gender Equality and Equity in 1994, and the establishment of the National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship in 2004.



Notwithstanding these steps and in common will all States, important challenges remain.

With the extremely proactive and progressive policies of Cape Verde, including the ratification of so many human rights instruments, it is clear that the legal framework for tackling such challenges is in place. What is vital now therefore is responding to and overcoming the capacity constraints facing Cape Verde as a Small Island State.

To do so, it is vital that relevant international organizations and donor states engage positively and constructively to help Cape Verde undertake the reforms that it itself identifies as imperative. Human rights Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and the OHCHR offer an excellent means of accessing and mobilizing such assistance.

With this in mind, the Maldives would like to make the following recommendations to Cape Verde:

1. To consider working with the new OHCHR Regional Office in Dakar to develop a Common Core Document in order to simplify and streamline Treaty Body Reporting Procedures.
2. To invite selected UN human rights Special Rapporteurs with mandates of particular interest to Cape Verde, to visit the country and issue recommendations. This might also be a useful first step towards the extension of a Standing Invitation to Special Procedures.

Thank you Mr. President.