

Thank you Mr. President,

The Maldives would like to congratulate Dr. Despouy on his sixth and final annual report which offers extremely helpful and practical recommendations to States on how they might strengthen the independence of the judiciary.

The Maldives would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the mandate-holder on the extraordinary success he has enjoyed during his term. The Maldives had the honour of receiving Dr. Despouy during a country mission in 2007 and of working closely with him thereafter to implement his recommendations. During that interaction, Dr. Despouy time and again demonstrated not only his grasp of law and policy, but also of his determination to offer very practical advice and help, and to see real results on the ground.

The Maldives therefore attaches great value to Dr. Despouy's attempt, in the current report, to define the parameters of an independent judiciary. The Maldives has no doubt that this will come to be seen as a seminal document for all States determined to create a fair, independent and trusted judicial sector.

For our part, the Maldives is pleased to note that, in cooperation with Dr. Despouy, we have taken significant strides across all the elements identified by the mandate-holder, including: independence from other branches of

government; guarantees at constitutional-level; selection of judges by integrity and ability by the relatively new Judicial Services Commission, freedom of association and expression; and clearly and independently defined conditions of service.

Notwithstanding, the Maldives recognizes that there remains room for improvement and thus we are committed to studying carefully the concluding recommendations.

The Maldives is currently in the process of implementing numerous reforms, both legally and politically under an innovative framework. Therefore there are many challenges ahead as this work continues and the Maldives values the support and assistance of the international community.

The Maldives wishes Dr. Despouy well in his future endeavors and thanks him for the important role he has played in the country's democratic transition.

Thank you Mr. President.