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Syria UPR

Thank you Madame President,

The Maldives would like to welcome the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UPR working group and to thank them for their national report, although unfortunately we note that the report has only been made available in Arabic.

The reports show that Syria has, over the years, secured important achievements in the field of human rights, for example with regard to the right to food and the right to health. They are also party to nearly all the core human rights conventions.

Notwithstanding, recent events point to an underlying problem of a lack of political pluralism in the country. This has allowed frustrations to build up and has led, sadly, to the current troubles. The Maldives is gravely concerned by reports from the UN that more than 2,700 protestors, including many children, have been killed since March 2011.

While we welcome the lifting of the state of emergency, and note and appreciate the government's stated commitment to undertake political and human rights reforms, we also note a lack of progress in implementation, and the continuation of violence across the country.

We call for an end to all violence against civilians, and urge the authorities to allow people to protest peacefully and to work with them to address demands for reform. We also call on everyone in the country to disavow violence and to work through dialogue.

Madame President,

The Maldives would like to make 5 recommendations. We recommend that Syria:

1. Allow the international Commission of Inquiry to visit the country to better understand the situation on the ground, and to work with the government and other stakeholders to ensure accountability and to promote human rights reform.
2. Publish a detailed roadmap of planned human rights and political reforms.
3. Bring national laws fully into line with Syria's obligations under ICCPR, CEDAW, CAT and CRC.
4. Sign and ratify OPCAT and establish a national preventative mechanism.
5. Establish an inclusive national dialogue leading to free and fair multi-party elections as soon as possible.