



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Maldives  
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

**19th Session of Universal Periodic Review Working Group  
Geneva, 28 April – 09 May 2014**

**Review of Bhutan 30 April 2014**

**Statement by HE Ms. Iruthisham Adam,  
Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations Offices in Geneva**

*Check Against Delivery*

Thank you Mr. President,

The Maldives extends a warm welcome to the distinguished delegation of Bhutan, a close partner and fellow member of SAARC.

My delegation commends Bhutan for its positive engagement with the Human Rights Council.

The Maldives is pleased to note the progress the Government of Bhutan has made towards the goal of achieving education for all, especially children with disabilities. We also commend Bhutan for hosting its first regional seminar on inclusive education for children with special needs in December 2013. We appreciate the development of special education programs for the disabled that is receiving greater priority in the national development. However, the Maldives fully understands that inclusive education is a huge task and a challenge with multiple barriers and Bhutan require the support from the international community. Maldives also notes the positive improvements in improving the legislative framework for human rights protection, the first critical step towards cultivating a culture of respect for human rights.

The Maldives would like to make the following two recommendations:

- To work closely with the international community towards the priority goal of education for all, especially children with disabilities; and

- To continue to avail technical assistance and international cooperation in its efforts on disaster management and preparedness, as well as climate change mitigation.

Mr. President,

While noting the Bhutanese government's efforts to improve the social sector and the achievements of MDG targets, the Maldives congratulates Bhutan for its successful initiative of the Gross National Happiness (GNH), an inclusive and holistic approach to development. This concept has yielded a significant rise in the standard of living and improvement in development indices.

Based on its own experience, the Maldives is fully aware of the challenges faced by a small country like Bhutan in implementing its international obligations, due to constraints of financial and technical capacity. The Maldives therefore, calls on OHCHR and international partners to provide technical assistance to small countries such as Bhutan to improve the situation in the country.

We wish the delegation of the Bhutan all the success in this review.

I thank you Mr. President.