

**Statement by**

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**Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Maldives to the United Nations and other International Organisations at Geneva**

**Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Torture**

**49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

**15 March 2022**

Thank you, Mr. President,

The Maldives would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children for her comprehensive report. The Maldives is concerned about the report by the Special Representative on how the pandemic has exacerbated trafficking and smuggling of children in some regions, with children increasingly being targeted by traffickers at the local level and online.

Mr. President,

To combat trafficking of children, the Government of Maldives ratified the second amendment to the Maldives Anti-Human Trafficking Act last year. The amendment expands the definition of trafficking of children to include transporting a child in and out of the country with the intent of exploiting them, and moving a child within the country to recruit them to a workforce, even while under guardianship.

The restrictive measures of the pandemic have also resulted in an increase in the number of cases of violence against children being reported to the authorities. In

response, the Maldives has strengthened the capacities of its social sector institutions to monitor and respond to child abuse. This includes creating a dedicated hotline for the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, equipping Social Protection Officers with further tools to work efficiently, and offering continuous psychosocial support to victims during lockdown.

Mr. President,

We take note of the Special Representative's call for investment in integrated preventative services, and would like to ask the Special Representative, what are the best practices for States making an effort to invest in strengthened and integrated services?

Thank you, Mr. President.