

Statement by
His Excellency Dr Asim Ahmed
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Maldives to the
United Nations and other International Organizations at Geneva
Annual Discussion on the Integration of a Gender Perspective
Theme: *Overcoming gender-based barriers to freedom of opinion and*
expression
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Thank you, Mr. President,

The Maldives thanks the panellists for their participation and valuable contribution today.

The Constitution of the Maldives explicitly recognises and guarantees the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly. We are committed to the protection of the rights and safety of all persons, regardless of age, gender or nationality. We recognize that freedom of expression is essential to the full enjoyment of civil, political and cultural rights. In this regard, the Maldives Police Service continues to be vigilant in countering threats of harm, both in person and on online platforms, towards human rights advocates and journalists.

Mr. President,

The Government of Maldives has undertaken substantial steps in ensuring gender equality in all spheres of life and is committed to providing equal opportunities for men and women in senior decision-making positions. The Maldives has fully withdrawn its reservations to paragraphs 1 (b), (e), (g) and

(h), and paragraph 2 of Article 16 of CEDAW. We have amended our Decentralisation Act to allocate one-third of all local council seats for women. The Gender Equality Act of 2016 enshrines into law, the principle of equal opportunities and equal outcomes, ensuring non-discrimination in employment and encouraging women's economic empowerment.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, we would also like to highlight that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change and its catastrophic effects on so many levels. We need to ensure greater access to climate-related education, training and occupations for women and girls, and actively involve them in climate change adaptation and decision-making. It is imperative that we take the gender dimension into account in conducting our work at the Council and its mechanisms.

I thank you.