

**Statement by**

**His Excellency Dr. Asim Ahmed**

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

**Item 9: General Debate**

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Thank you, Mr. President,

The Maldives stands firmly against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and all other forms of intolerance. The Maldivian constitution explicitly prohibits discrimination of any kind, including race, sex, national origins, colour, and we are committed to fostering a society where every person is treated with dignity and respect.

Mr. President,

The Maldives has taken decisive legal measures to address xenophobia, hate crimes and online abuse. In this regard, the Penal Code of the Maldives has been amended to combat hate speech, and incitement of violence based on ethnicity, political ideologies, and place of birth. To protect migrant workers from exploitation and safeguard their rights, the government introduced the “*Expatriate Employment Regulation*”. Further, the government, in collaboration with civil society

organisations initiated a social media campaign “*Migrant Workers of Maldives*” series aimed to reduce stigma and prejudice towards migrant workers.

Mr. President,

The Maldives expresses grave concern over the growing incidences of Islamophobia, xenophobia, religious intolerance and hate speech. We strongly condemn the recent acts of the desecration of the Holy Quran which hurts the religious sentiments of millions of Muslims across the world. These acts cannot be conflated with freedom of speech. We urge everyone to uphold the values of tolerance and coexistence to foster respect, unity, and peace within societies.

Mr. President,

We believe that climate change poses a threat to our sense of solidarity, potentially leading to intolerance as inequality and instability create conditions that can foster negativity. Hence, it is imperative we take decisive steps to promote social justice, prevent the spread of hate speech and cultivate a more inclusive society.

Mr. President,

To conclude, the Maldives believes that it is our collective responsibility to combat intolerance including islamophobia, xenophobia, racism, and discrimination, to foster equitable and inclusive societies, where no one is left behind.

I thank you.