

Statement by
Mr. Hassan Hussain Shihab
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Maldives to the United Nations and
other International Organizations at Geneva
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Freedom of
Expression
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Thank you, Mr. President,

The Government of Maldives thanks the Special Rapporteur for her report today.

As reflected in the report, the Maldives acknowledges that the implications correlating with freedom of expression and sustainable development are significant and must be addressed urgently.

We are of the view that freedom of expression and opinion is an essential cornerstone of an effective democracy.

Mr. President,

The Maldives has made notable strides in promoting and protecting freedom of expression as a crucial element in advancing democracy and development. Through various legal frameworks and policies, the Maldives has ensured that individuals can freely express their opinions, access information, and actively participate in decision-making processes. These efforts have created an enabling environment that fosters transparency, accountability, and inclusive development. One such notable initiative is the ratification of the Act on Repealing the Anti-Defamation Act of 2016 which curtailed freedom of expression across the

country. This was the first Bill ratified by President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih after assuming office and demonstrates the commitment of the Government to create a safe space for individuals and the Civil Society to prosper, and to exercise their rights and freedoms without fear of reprisals. We are pleased to note that additional efforts are underway to enact legislation on press freedom, bearing in mind the crucial role played by free and independent media in building a just and democratic society.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the Special Rapporteur how can the international community support developing countries in strengthening freedom of expression as a tool for sustainable development?

Thank you.