

Statement by
His Excellency Dr Asim Ahmed
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Maldives to the United Nations and other International Organizations at Geneva
Item 2: General Debate
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Thank you, Mr. President,

The Maldives thanks the High Commissioner for his oral update.

As we begin our membership at the Human Rights Council for the third time, Maldives reaffirms our commitment to work with the High Commissioner, his good office and other UN member states to promote and protect human rights across the globe. We will be guided by the ideals of universality, inclusivity, diversity and equality.

Mr. President,

In the past year, the Maldives has undertaken several important legislative measures to strengthen democracy at the national level. This includes the passage of the Third Amendment to the Judicial Services Commission Act to strengthen accountability for the judiciary, the Evidence Act to protect the right to a fair trial and the Associations Act to secure the right to free association. To further advance women's development, the 10th amendment bill to the Decentralization Act also solidified

procedures for the Elections Commission to hold by-elections for positions on the Women's Development Committees. As part of the government's pledge to reform the judiciary, amendments to the Judicature Act have been proposed to the parliament to establish district courts in three regions of the country. The bill also grants the Judicial Service Commission the authority to allocate new judicial districts based on the population, average number of cases and available resources.

At the international front, the Maldives remains deeply concerned over the growing incidence of xenophobia, Islamophobia, and religious intolerance. In this regard, we strongly condemn the recent desecration of the Holy Quran. These vile and disrespectful acts, which hurt the religious sentiments of millions of Muslims across the world, 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.

Before concluding, let me also note that China has been an important development partner and our relationship is based on mutual respect of each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We, therefore, reiterate our firm commitment to the long-standing One-China policy. We are confident that, under the principle of One Country, Two Systems, the Chinese people will continue to prosper and enjoy economic benefits and universally accepted fundamental freedoms.

I thank you.