



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Maldives
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

Statement by HE Ms. Iruthisham Adam,
Ambassador / Permanent Representative of Maldives
to the United Nations Offices in Geneva

At the Annual Day Discussions on Women's Rights
Panel 2: Setting Priorities for the Future: Strengthening the Work of the
Human Rights Council and other Inter-governmental Bodies and Processes
in the area of violence against women

At the 23rd Session of United Nations Human Rights Council
Geneva, 5 June 2013

Thank you, Mr. President.

Allow me to thank the Deputy High Commissioner and the panelists for the informative session this afternoon.

Protecting and promoting the rights of women are protected under domestic legislation in the Maldives. The Maldives would like to utilize this opportunity to update the Council on some of the challenges we have faced in implementing and strengthening human rights legislations to address violence against women in our own country.

A juvenile court's verdict on flogging a 15-year old this February, has brought home the critical and severe need to review existing mechanisms, especially legal framework, available for protecting the rights of the women and children in the Maldives. Although existing resources address violence against women, legislative mechanisms need to be strengthened to implement such rights.

I would like to inform you that the 15-year old girl is now under State care and the Government has ensured that the girl's legal team has the resources to appeal the case.



Two hearings on the case have already been held. The Government is adamant in its belief that the young girl is the victim of sexual abuse and the case should not have gone to the court in the first place. However, our systems need to be reformed and strengthened. The Government has called upon Parliament to immediately pass pending Bills essential to reforming the justice systems, ensuring our legislation is in accordance with universally accepted norms and principles. The Government has established a committee, comprising various State Ministries including the Ministry of Gender, Family, and Human Rights and the Family Protection Authority of Maldives to review existing child protection mechanisms. The Committee has commenced its review and is currently taking its lead from a previous Child Abuse Prevention study conducted by UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender in identifying areas of serious concern.

Hence, we request the HRC to set priorities focusing on strengthening the justice system in states and ways to address and strengthen the accountability mechanisms on States' obligations.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that the Maldives will continue to remain engaged with UN System and the Human Rights Council to uphold the highest standards of human rights.

Thank you Mr President