



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

**Statement by Ms. Rishfa Rasheed,  
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Maldives  
to the United Nations Offices in Geneva**

**At the Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the  
Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and  
Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidary**

**At the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of United Nations Human Rights Council  
Geneva, 31 May 2013**

Thank you, Mr. President.

First of all I would like to thank both the Special Rapporteurs for their reports and the interactive dialogue this morning.

The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Mr. Kishore Singh, focusing on the “Justiciability of the right to education” is of special interest to my delegation. Although the right to education is one of the most universally stipulated rights in national constitutions, access to education, awareness on the rights it entails, and implementation of legislations remains a challenge in many countries.

I am pleased to note that Maldives has a near-universal, 98% rate of enrolment in schools, in a population that has about 30% of school- aged children, reaching our MDG ahead of time. Gender equality at educational institutions is commendable, and more tertiary education institutes have opened recently, allowing better access to education in the country.

However, as the Special Rapporteur has emphasized on many occasions, the States’ obligations are not just to provide education, but to provide quality education.



Although all inhabited islands of the Maldives has primary education facilities, the quality is low. Due to lack of availabilities for higher secondary and tertiary education facilities in the islands, many youngsters opt to ignore education and seek to join the work force. Hence, we believe it is important to ensure curriculum meets essential objectives of education, and where appropriate, vocational and other means of education must be provided.

Mr. President.

It is the responsibility of the State to ensure mechanisms are in place to encourage people to get an education. This can include promotional measures, including introduction of schemes for financial support, creating awareness on importance of education. In March 2013, the Government of Maldives launched “Maldives Enhancing Education Development Project” (MEADP) to enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access and quality in the country. We have also adopted an “Inclusive Education Policy” in January 2013, to grant access and availability of education to people with disabilities. We are also grateful to the United Nations, for its assistance in providing child-friendly learning methodologies, by a self-sustaining and participatory network that brings together educational collaboration and capacity building.

We still need to go a long way in providing education, as well as protecting and promoting the right to education in the Maldives. Legislations that define the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders for the right to education are yet to be drafted. More efforts, in terms of financial, human resource and technology, are needed for institutional strengthening and training of legal professionals. The Parliament and NHRI need to play a more active role in ensuring legislations are in place, and monitoring implementation of national policies and international obligations. The Civil Society and Media need to play a bigger role in promoting public interest on accessing the right to education and creating awareness on importance of education for the progress of the societies.



To conclude, I would like to note that the right to accessible and quality education remains a priority of the Government, and together with all state and non-state actors, endeavors to strengthen the laws, institutions and procedures surrounding the justiciability of the right to education, to ensure enjoyment and promotion of all human rights.

Thank you Mr. President