

② Maldives

Statement by H.E. Ms. Iruthisham Adam
Permanent Representative of the Maldives

Thank you Mr. President,

The Maldives would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Rashida Manjoo, the new mandate-holder, on her appointment and to welcome her to the Council.

The Maldives fully recognises that tackling violence against women is a major challenge in the country and it is for that reason that the Maldives repeatedly invited the former mandate-holder to undertake a mission to the country to help the authorities and civil society better address the problem. The Maldives takes this opportunity to renew that invitation to the new mandate-holder. We hope she will be able to accept this invitation at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. President,

Violence against women is a major problem in the Maldives. A 2005 baseline survey found that many people believe that men should be permitted to hit their wives under certain circumstances. A 2007 report by the then Ministry of Gender and Family found that 1 in 3 women between the ages of 15-45 reported some form of physical or sexual violence at least once in their lives.

The Maldives is determined to confront this problem through a combination of legal remedy and awareness-raising/education.

One or more Bills on Domestic Violence are currently being finalised and will be shortly submitted to the People's Majlis. We hope that such legislation will help disseminate and codify the message that violence against women is totally unacceptable in all cases, and we would certainly welcome the Special Rapporteur's input either now, at the drafting stage, or as the Bill passes through parliament.

Mr. President, the Maldives would like to ask two questions:

1. Could the Special Rapporteur comment on the importance of making domestic violence a criminal rather than civil offence in relevant legislation? And,
2. What are other key elements that should be included in domestic violence legislation in order to ensure that it effectively protects the rights of women?

Thank you.