



MALDIVES

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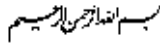
**His Excellency Mr. Fathulla Jameel,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives**

at the

**Fifty-ninth session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me, first of all, extend to you, Mr. President, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your election to preside over this august Session of the Assembly. My delegation has every confidence in your sagacity to guide this Session and its deliberations towards fruitful conclusions.

It is also my pleasure to pay tribute to your predecessor, H. E. Mr Julian Robert Hunte, for the commendable manner in which he discharged his responsibilities as the President of the 58th Session.

I wish to further take this opportunity to compliment the Secretary-General, H. E. Mr Kofi Annan, for his diligence in promoting peace and in pursuing the noble principles of this Organisation. My delegation sincerely wish him every success in his daunting task.

Mr. President,

The evolving international events bring to the fore the question of multilateralism, with due accent on the vital role the United Nations has to play in addressing global crises and problems, and in promoting a world order based on the rule of law, and collective responsibility of all nations and communities.

Global challenges that we face today are numerous. While goals are set and programmes launched for eradicating poverty; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing child mortality; fighting HIV/AIDS and protecting the environment, hundreds of innocent lives are lost every day as a result of conflict and civil war.

Terrorism has not been defeated. On the contrary, it is re-emerging with uglier manifestations in the most unexpected places, killing innocent people, including children. The disappointing impasse on global disarmament and the dreadful odds of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction make the world ill at ease, and lose hope for a peaceful world.

We, in the small states, feel more vulnerable to these challenges and threats, as our security is entirely dependent on the prevalence of global security and the observance of the rule of law by all states. Clearly the concerns of small states cannot only be confined to the issues of environment, climate change, sea-level rise and sustainable development. The ominous threats that are

emerging on the political and security fronts of the contemporary world have far reaching implications on us as well.

Not too infrequently we witness small states victimised by non-state actors, such as terrorists, mercenaries, insurrectionary gangs and organised crime networks, whose measured assaults disrupt socio-economic and political development of small states, endangering peace and security. It would be imprudent to relegate the wider implications of the presence and activities of such perilous actors on international peace and security. Solutions to them could only be sought through international co-operation, vigilance and action.

It is imperative that the international community takes on the crucial responsibility of protecting the security of small states, as stipulated by General Assembly resolutions 44/51 of 8 December 1989, 46/43 of 9 December 1991 and 49/31 of 9 December 1994. With its global spread and ability to work in collaboration with regional institutions, we see this Organisation as the most appropriate body to address such issues.

Mr. President,

Terrorism poses grave threats to regional as well as international peace and security. The train bombing in Madrid, car bombings and terrorist attacks in Iraq, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia and, most recently, the tragedy of the hostage taking in a Russian school, are all grim reminders of the particularly insidious nature of terrorism. I am sure that I echo the unanimity of the international community in reiterating that the war against terrorism should continue to remain a principal priority on the international agenda. My Government believes that early adoption of the proposed international convention on terrorism would be a crucial step in effectively combating this dreadful menace.

Mr. President,

Expanding globalisation and increasing trade liberalisation, contrary to the hopes for a healthier global market, have had a distressing price tag for small economies, especially for small island economies such as the Maldives. Limited natural resources and the narrow economic base of small island economies severely restrict their scope for diversification and their ability to attract foreign investment. These disadvantages call for special considerations including a level of preferential treatment on an exceptional basis to ensure sustainable development of small island developing states.

While the Maldives is beset by the entire range of economic problems inherent to small island developing states, the recommendation by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) to graduate us from the list of Least Developed Countries has compounded the challenges to our development.

We do take pride in our achievements in the social and economic sectors during the last two decades. However, we fear that graduation may cause enormous and irreparable damage to our economy in the absence of a suitable mechanism to ensure sustained socio-economic development. In this context, we welcome the recommendation of the CDP and the decision of the ECOSOC earlier this year indicating the need to formulate smooth transition strategies for LDCs prior to their graduation.

We support in particular the recommendation to decide post-graduation transition arrangements on a case-by-case basis, and to establish Ad Hoc Country Advisory Groups (ACAGs) to help formulate these arrangements. We strongly feel that it is important for the ECOSOC to formally endorse the arrangements proposed by the ACAGs, while mandating the CDP with the task of monitoring the progress of newly graduated countries for any disruptions to their development.

Mr. President, allow me at this juncture to register our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our development partners and the members of the G77, LDC group and the Bureau and the members of ECOSOC for the understanding and the care with which they are proceeding on this crucial and important issue.

Mr. President,

The state of the global environment is as depressing as ever. Statistical information and projections are alarming and disturbing, not only to small island developing states, but also to the entire international community. These figures and predictions reveal the severity of environmental problems and threats to human existence unless swift remedial measures are implemented.

The frequency with which we have been witnessing natural disasters such as hurricanes and cyclones around the world demonstrates the urgent need to tackle environmental issues on a global scale. Many small island developing states suffer disproportionately from such hazards, underscoring the vulnerability of small island developing states in this regard. As we have witnessed in Grenada recently a single hurricane could lay decade-long developmental progress to waste in the matter of a few hours.

Mr. President,

We will soon be meeting in Mauritius to review the progress of the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island States over the past decade. If we are to make the forthcoming meeting in Mauritius a success, we need to muster the necessary political will to channel resources and to ensure the comprehensive realisation of the objectives of the Barbados Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

The complexity and magnitude of ever-developing global challenges demand that a reformed United Nations be assigned with the central role in dealing with them. While these reforms should cover the entire UN system and its organs, the focus is once again drawn justifiably on the urgency of the need to restructure the Security Council; making the Council more reflective of the realities of the present day world, and more representative of the capacity, and the commitment of member states to contribute to international peace and security.

It is disappointing though that, no common view has emerged on the issue. We feel that we should go ahead with the enlargement of the Security Council, both in the permanent and non-permanent categories, and include in this enlargement, countries such as Japan, and other member states, that have the capacity, and the commitment to serve as permanent members, and would represent the wider membership of the present day United Nations.

Mr. President.

The international treaty regime has to be expanded and strengthened, so that emerging problems can be dealt with more effectively. We feel that this task should be a priority, in enforcing the principles for which the United Nations stand, and the values of peace, security, justice, equality, human rights, democracy and rule-based international order it has advocated. In this context, we applaud the remarks made by the Secretary-General at the opening Session of the General Assembly, and wish to express our support for his efforts to reform the UN system.

Mr. President,

The rapid socio-economic development gained by the Maldives in the past two and a half decades is in no small part grounded in the political stability that we have enjoyed during the period.

To emphasise further the need to promote and to sustain the values of democracy and respect for human rights, President Gayoom had proposed a sweeping agenda for political reform early in June this year. The Government remains firmly committed to carrying out the reform agenda, which has been welcomed and supported both by the people of the country and its friends in the international community. A Special Peoples' Assembly had been convened, as required by the Constitution, and charged with the task of debating reforms to the current constitution proposed by the Government and by the civil society.

We seek the support and assistance of our friends in the international community in our pursuit of this unprecedented reform agenda. The solidarity of the international community at this crucial hour of need would reinforce our resolve and help us move ahead with the reform agenda with increased veracity and diligence.

The Government is also committed to respecting and observing human rights through adherence to relevant international conventions. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the Maldives will sign this week a framework agreement with the International Committee for the Red Cross, and keeping under consideration signing of some other important instruments such as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Before I conclude, allow me, Mr. President, to re-affirm our commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. My country believes this Organisation to be the most appropriate body to work for the betterment of humanity and for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates, I thank you for your attention.