



**PERMANENT MISSION OF REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES TO UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

General Debate of the Second Committee.

**By
Mr. Hassan Hussain Shihab
First Secretary**

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(Check against delivery)

Distinguished Chairperson,

Please allow me to begin by offering you and the members of the Bureau my heartfelt congratulations on your election to guide this committee and its work during the 67th session of the General Assembly. Let me also express our profound appreciation to the outgoing Bureau headed by Ambassador Abdul Kalam Abdul Momen of Bangladesh for successfully overseeing the work of the Second Committee during the 66th session.

May I take this opportunity to assure you of my Delegation's fullest support and cooperation throughout the session.

Mr. Chairperson,

For the past few decades, the Maldives has been stressing the importance of addressing the issue of climate change. Maldives has been voicing concerns of frequent storms and rising sea levels way before the issues of climate change captured the centre stage of the world. For the Maldives, with the highest point lying just 1.5 meters above sea level, tackling climate change is not only an option that derives the country's foreign and security policy, it is a mere necessity for the country's security and survival. With greenhouse gas emission at 0.003%, the Maldives remain amongst the least contributors to the causes of climate change, yet bitterly victimized, least defensible and on the frontline of climate change impacts. More than 50% of all islands, in an archipelago of 1190 islands, are experiencing severe coastal erosion. These in turn, together with coral bleaching, flooding and water salinity problems, constantly threaten human health and security, causing severe attacks on its biodiversity levels. As a country that relies heavily on tourism and fisheries as key productive sectors, both sectors contributing to over 80% to its GDP, the economic consequences of any deterioration in the natural ecosystems can be enormous.

Maldives is doing whatever it can to build its resilience to combat the effects of climate change. The Government of Maldives is currently spending more than 27% of its national budget for this purpose.

The country has committed to become solely reliant upon renewable sources of energy as evidenced by its target to become carbon neutral by 2020. We have already begun implementation of an investment plan that converts energy sector to solar or hybrid sources. In at least 20 islands, we aim to switch to renewable energy sources by the end of next year. But how much can a small island country, with fewer resources and many constraints achieve on its own? Is it not time that the larger states with more resources commit themselves towards more programs for utilizing clean and renewable energy in order to reduce the world's carbon footprint? Is it also not time for us to work towards a binding agreement to reduce global carbon emissions?

Mr. Chairperson,

Maldives attended the Rio+20 conference with its firm commitment on achieving ambitious targets on sustainable development. My Delegation was delighted with the Secretary-General's initiative on Sustainable Energy for All which supported clean energy goals for SIDS. If the initiative were to reach its intended destination, Maldives believes that it must be fully implemented with the aim of providing universal access to energy, switching to renewable energy and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. We need more countries to take the lead, more multilateral development banks commit to these targets, more public-private partnerships formed.

My Delegation is keen to see the early implementation of commitments made in Rio+20 that are relevant to the small island developing states (SIDS), in particular the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the oceans. It is important that the Second Committee deliberate on these commitments with a view to achieving progress during the current session.

My Delegation would also like to call for the early implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation in order to address the challenges faced by SIDS in achieving sustainable development.

Another decision that emerged from Rio+20 that is of significance for my Delegation is the forthcoming conference on SIDS. I am particularly pleased that Samoa will be hosting the conference in 2014, and Maldives wishes to offer its full support behind this initiative. In order to raise awareness on the unique and particular vulnerabilities of SIDS and mobilize international support for their sustainable development, my Delegation believes designation of 2014 as the International Year of SIDS by the United Nations General Assembly would be crucial, and in this regard appeals on all Member States to support this initiative.

Thank you.