



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MALDIVES  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

30 April 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to forward herewith, a letter dated 30 April 2021, from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, candidate for the Presidency of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, conveying his vision statement titled "A Presidency of Hope: Delivering for People, Planet and Prosperity", in response to your letter dated 19 February 2021.

I kindly request that Minister Shahid's vision statement be circulated to the membership ahead of the informal interactive dialogue on 6 May 2021, and be made available on the website of the President of the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Thilmeeza Hussain  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative

His Excellency Volkan Bozkir  
President of the United Nations General Assembly  
New York

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**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

30 April 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Maldives has decided to present my candidature for President of the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly.

This is the first time the Maldives has presented a candidate for the Presidency of the General Assembly. We did so, because of our firm belief in multilateralism, and in the United Nations, as the ultimate forum for multilateral cooperation. The Maldives is a firm believer in the ability, and responsibility of each member of the international community to contribute to global peace, development, and prosperity, no matter its size.

We approach the 76<sup>th</sup> session during challenging times. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated challenges to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the threat of climate change and environmental degradation, and the need to ensure that the rights of all are protected, are issues of concern, demanding the General Assembly's attention. Ensuring an efficient and effective United Nations, that responds to the needs and priorities of the membership, is also a key priority.

While this is a moment of crisis, it is also an opportunity to restart, and do better. We must use this chance to deliver for people, for planet, and for prosperity. In this regard, I am pleased to share with you, my vision for realizing these objectives, and deliver a Presidency of Hope.

I look forward to participating in the informal interactive dialogue on 6 May 2021.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Abdulla Shahid

His Excellency Volkan Bozkir  
President of the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly  
**New York**



# A PRESIDENCY OF HOPE

**H.E. MR. ABDULLA SHAHID**

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE 76TH  
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

**VISION STATEMENT**



# A PRESIDENCY OF HOPE

DELIVERING FOR PEOPLE, FOR PLANET & FOR PROSPERITY

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**ABDULLA SHAHID**

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES**

**CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE 76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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## VISION STATEMENT

This is a world in need of unity and solidarity. This is a world reeling in the wake of a pandemic that has devastated lives, destroyed economies and deprived communities. This is a world ripe with inaction, inequality and injustice: one that ignores the pleas of our planet, and the most vulnerable.

This is a world that needs a stronger and more effective United Nations, to bring together the best of humanity, to rebuild communities, rescue the planet, recover economies, and restore hope.

The Maldives has always regarded the United Nations, as the pinnacle of multilateral cooperation. We have always believed that every country can, and should, contribute to global cooperation, regardless of size. We have always worked to demand global attention to global challenges. We have always worked to build bridges between nations, seeking consensus and promoting dialogue especially in discussions on climate change, Small Island Developing States, and issues relating to Small States.

This is what led the Government of Maldives to seek the opportunity to serve as the President of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly—for the very first time. This belief in multilateralism, and in the United Nations, is what inspires and drives me.

I am aware of the challenging times in which we approach the 76th session. Over the past year, we have witnessed the good of humankind. Our faith in humanity has been renewed. I sincerely believe that it is in times of crises that we see the best the world has to offer. I also believe that this is a watershed moment for this organisation, and the entire international community. An opportunity we must seize.

This is why, my Presidency will be a Presidency of Hope. One that looks to deliver for people, for planet and for prosperity. While the United Nations has a robust, wide-ranging programme of work, I will pay particular attention to the following priority themes—or as I call them, “Five Rays of Hope”.

## **1.RECOVERING FROM COVID-19**

The international response to COVID-19 will be a crucial discussion for the next session of the General Assembly, and well beyond. First, in continuing a coordinated health response to manage transmission and end the pandemic, especially in the wake of new strains. Second, in ensuring equitable access to vaccines. Third, in supporting countries overcome the socio-economic impacts, and the economic devastation, caused by the pandemic.

COVID-19 has devastated health systems, exposed and exacerbated vulnerabilities and inequalities within and among countries. It has also brought to the forefront issues of connectivity—both digital and physical—and cast uncertainty on the sustainability and security of food networks, trade, health, education, and climate systems, travel, and tourism.

## **2.REBUILDING SUSTAINABLY**

While the pandemic has threatened to revert decades of development gains and impeded the “Decade of Action,” it has also given us a unique opportunity to reset the clock—to build back better, build back stronger, and build back greener and bluer.

Ideally, a post-COVID-19 world is a more sustainable one—adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as its guiding framework. It is a world where the means for implementation such as financing, trade, technology, and debt sustainability are realised, as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other discussions on financing sustainable development. It is a world at peace—where terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalisation, the proliferation of crime and arms, and trafficking of people and drugs, are kept at bay. To realise this world, the international community must work together, towards eradication of poverty and to ensure that no country is left behind, by delivering targeted interventions, especially for countries in special situations. The upcoming Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries taking place in Doha, in January 2022, will be an important such opportunity.

## **3.RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE PLANET**

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time: a game changer, a threat multiplier, crosscutting, and all encompassing. The ocean continues to be impacted by harmful consumption and production processes, including the increasingly problematic issue of marine plastic pollution. Biodiversity loss, desertification, sustainable fisheries management, and access to sustainable energy—these are among the key issues of our generation, requiring global responses.

The General Assembly can boost efforts towards greater climate action, especially in the lead up to, and after the 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Renewed momentum can also be garnered with events such as the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Energy in September 2021, fifteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in October 2021, the fifteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 2021, and the United Nations Ocean Conference to be held in 2022.

#### **4. RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF ALL**

Humanity must be at the centre of all our efforts. Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international human rights treaties and instruments, the General Assembly must address inequalities and injustices. It must raise the international community's collective conscience to counter the rising tide of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, and all forms of discrimination.

Violence against women and girls, discrimination, and inequality persists, and have worsened during the pandemic. As a life-long supporter of gender equality, I will focus on the empowerment of women, in the spirit of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, building on good initiatives such as the current President's Advisory Group on Gender Equality. I strongly believe that young people should have a say in the decisions that will shape their destinies, and I will work to ensure they are represented, and their voices are heard.

#### **5. REVITALISING THE UNITED NATIONS**

A stronger United Nations is necessary to build a resilient world. Efforts to make the United Nations efficient, effective and accountable must continue, together with efforts to reform the Security Council, revitalise the General Assembly, and strengthen the Economic and Social Council.

Regular consultations with Member States –formal and informal will continue as will regular interaction between the Presidents of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the Secretary General.

A stronger United Nations is approachable and relevant. The Charter's first three words are "We, the Peoples". We need to bring the United Nations closer to the people of the world, while also recognizing cultural diversity. I intend to facilitate these interactions.

I will not overburden the already substantial agenda of the General Assembly. I will focus on delivering results through effective implementation.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

I will adopt the principles of inclusivity, equity, representation and transparency in delivering my priorities. I will work diligently to consider the views and interests of all Member States and serve the interests of the whole membership.

I will work on building trust and cohesion within Member States, the Secretariat, United Nations Major Groups, and International Organisations. I will engage with civil society, businesses, philanthropic organisations, academia, the scientific community and other partners on the key issues under discussion at the General Assembly. This will enable the United Nations to be more responsive and effective.

In true spirit of representation, my team will be gender balanced, multi-national, with geographical diversity, including developed and developing countries. My team will be chosen on merit and uphold the highest levels of professionalism.

I will be guided by the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. I will fully abide by the code of ethics of the President of the General Assembly. My team and I will prioritise consensus building above all, using, as required and to the extent possible, the soft power of diplomacy, and the moral authority of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

## **COMMITMENT**

The Maldives is one of the smallest countries in the world. Yet, despite its size, despite being continuously exposed to development challenges, climate change impacts, and natural disasters, it is a country that perseveres, dares to dream, and dares to hope.

As a Maldivian, it is in my ethos to persevere—to both hope and work for a better tomorrow. Hope lets us stand up, dust ourselves off, and once again, work on rebuilding this world. Hope is what can bring us together.

A Presidency of Hope—one that keeps working, to deliver for people, for the planet, and, for prosperity—that is my commitment. I hope you will join me in this endeavour.

# A PRESIDENCY OF HOPE

DELIVERING FOR PEOPLE, FOR PLANET & FOR PROSPERITY

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## ABDULLA SHAHID

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE 76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Abdulla Shahid is widely recognised as a well-seasoned diplomat, and an exceptional politician, with a career spanning over 35 years, serving with distinction in both the Executive and Legislature. He is currently serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, having been appointed for a second time as the Minister, in November 2018.

Since his second appointment, Minister Shahid has led efforts to re-position the Maldives as a responsible, responsive, and respected member of the international community. Under his leadership, the Maldives has adopted a principled foreign policy, reinvigorating previously fractured relationships, and cultivating new partnerships. Since November 2018, the Maldives has expanded its membership in regional and international organisations, including re-joining the Commonwealth which the Maldives left in 2016, and reiterated the standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders.

Minister Shahid began his service in 1983, as a Foreign Service Officer, quickly being promoted on merit, to head the International Affairs Department. In recognition of his exceptional skill and aptitude, Minister Shahid was appointed as the Executive Secretary (Chief of Staff) to the President of the Maldives in 1995. During his ten years as Executive Secretary, Minister Shahid coordinated and crafted policy at the highest levels of Government, during a period of rapid national development.

Minister Shahid returned to the Foreign Service, first as Minister of State in 2005, and later as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2007. During his first stint as Foreign Minister, he expanded the Maldivian diplomatic network, with four new Missions, and developed a more professional service. He championed a rights-based approach to climate change, resulting in Human Rights Council Resolution 7/23 on "Human Rights and Climate Change".

Minister Shahid also had an illustrious career spanning 25 years in the Parliament of the Maldives. Following the adoption of the first democratic Constitution in 2008 and the first multi-party parliamentary elections in 2009, Minister Shahid became the first democratically elected Speaker of the People's Majlis (Parliament). During some of the most challenging times in the country's democratisation journey, Minister Shahid successfully crafted consensus among divergent sets of views, in an increasingly polarised political environment, diligently steering the work of the Parliament between 2009 and 2014.

As a leading voice of the Maldivian Democratic Party, Minister Shahid has continuously advocated for political and judicial reform. In his capacity as Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Party, and the Joint Opposition Coalition, Minister Shahid played a pivotal role in mobilising international action against injustice, corruption, and human rights violations in the Maldives.

Minister Shahid is a strong advocate for gender equality. He has successfully achieved gender parity, for the first time, among the Maldivian Heads of Missions.