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Vision statement

A presidency of hope: delivering for people, for the planet and for prosperity

Introduction

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, rebuild communities, rescue the planet, recover economies and restore hope.

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.

That is what led the Government of Maldives to seek the opportunity to serve as President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly – for the very first time. That 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 seventy-sixth session. Over the past year, we have witnessed the good in 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 organization, and for the entire international community – an opportunity we must seize.

That is why my presidency will be a presidency of hope. One that looks to deliver for people, for the 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 the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

The international response to COVID-19 will be the focus of 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 helping countries to overcome the socioeconomic impacts of, and economic devastation caused by, the pandemic.

COVID-19 has devastated health systems and 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, of trade, health, education and climate systems and of travel and tourism.

2. Rebuilding sustainably

While the pandemic has threatened to reverse decades of development gains and impeded the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, 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 realized as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other outcomes of discussions on financing sustainable development. It is a world at peace, where terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, the proliferation of crime and arms and the trafficking of people and drugs are kept at bay. To realize that world, the international community must work together towards the 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 the Least Developed Countries, to be held 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: across-cutting and all-encompassing game changer and threat multiplier. The ocean continues to be affected 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 and follow-up to the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Renewed momentum can also be garnered through events such as the high-level dialogue on energy, to be held in September 2021; the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in October 2021; the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be held 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 other international human rights treaties and instruments, the General Assembly must address inequalities and injustices. It must raise the collective conscience of the international community to counter the rising tide of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as all other forms of discrimination.

Violence against women and girls, discrimination and inequality persists – and have worsened during the pandemic. As a lifelong 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 Gender Advisory Group. I strongly believe that young people should have a say in

the decisions that will shape their destinies, and I will work to ensure that they are represented and that their voices are heard.

5. Revitalizing 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, revitalize the General Assembly and strengthen the Economic and Social Council.

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

A stronger United Nations is approachable and relevant. The first three words of the Charter of the United Nations 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 those 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 on 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 organizations. I will engage with civil society, businesses, philanthropic organizations, academia, the scientific community and other partners on the key issues under discussion in the General Assembly. This will enable the United Nations to be more responsive and effective.

In the true spirit of representation, my team will be gender-balanced, multinational and geographically diverse, including members from both 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 prioritize 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

Maldives is one of the smallest countries in the world. Yet, despite its size, and 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.