



MALDIVES

[Check Against Delivery]

United Nations Sustainable Development Summit
H.E. Ms Dunya Maumoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs
New York, 27 September 2015

Bismillah-ah-rahman-ah-raheem

Mr President, [Mr Secretary-General], Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a watershed moment in human history. The hallowed rooms of this building have been abuzz with hope. The air is filled with excitement. **This** Agenda has captured the imagination of **every** child, **every** woman and **every** man, from **every** corner of the world. **This** Agenda has the potential to truly transform our world.

There **has** never been a time more auspicious; there **may** never have been a time where more leaders would have gathered here. And we **must not** let this moment go by.

It was **fifteen** years ago, that we made the solemn pledge to free the world from poverty, from disease, discrimination and environmental degradation. **Fifteen** years later, while our successes are many, so are our challenges.

We **may** have reduced maternal mortality, but women still get paid 24% less than men. We **may** have reduced the rate of absolute poverty, yet people living in slum like conditions are plenty. We **may** have protected and safeguarded some of our natural environment, but the carbon emissions keep on increasing.

There **may** still be a long way to go, but **we have** the potential to realise more.

Excellencies,

The Maldives is **fully** committed to the realisation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets.

The Maldives is an MDG success story and we are proud of it. We are fortunate that the MDGs were formulated at a time, when the Maldives experienced **phenomenal** growth in the economic and social sectors. We incorporated the Goals in our development planning, aimed at achieving **unprecedented** development gains.

To sustain the same trajectory of growth, the Maldives has to overcome **several** challenges: a task that will test our perseverance. Adjusting to the **unique vulnerabilities** of a small island developing state, and the **different structural conditions** of a middle-income country are challenges of unprecedented magnitude for a country as small as the Maldives.

In spite of these challenges, we aim high and dream big. Our vision of development is **inclusive and holistic**. A key strategy of President Yameen's Government is investing in the youth, **including** young women, through skills development and job creation. An **ambitious** new set of policies has been launched to enable women, one half of our population, to become **productive partners** in national development, in **whatever** capacity they choose for themselves, free from coercion or social pressure.

Our vision of development aim to make the Maldives a resilient, economically diverse, high-income economy. We aim for an economic transformation, more investment, and private sector led-growth. We have **intensified** our efforts to develop an investor-friendly environment through key legislation, and improving macroeconomic stability.

The sustainable development of small island developing states like the Maldives, would **never** be realised unless we make **meaningful** progress in the fight against climate change. Climate change **threatens** modern civilisation, as we know it. It **threatens** the very existence of many SIDS. This is why we call on emitting countries to **reduce** emission; this is why we ask to match **bold statements** with legally binding commitments and actions in Paris later this year.

Excellencies,

The 2030 Agenda is a **beautifully** drafted document. It is an agenda of hope for the hopeless; an agenda to fight poverty and injustice; an agenda that we hope will narrow the gap between the few millions that live in prosperity and the billions that live in poverty. It is an agenda that promises to save my country and that of more than forty other low-lying coastal nations from climate calamity; a calamity, if allowed, will undoubtedly result in a painful death of these nations.

Yet, this Agenda is **still** words on paper. It is up to **us** to give meaning to those words: to realise the **true intention** behind every goal, and behind every target. And we can only do it through commitment to implementation; backing words with support. Not only financial, but also capacity building, technology transfer, a data revolution, and meaningful trade liberation. Above all an institutional framework that not only bolsters the capacity, but understands the particularities of all.

Excellencies, it is now up to **us** to make this Agenda a reality, for the future of our people, and our common home.

Thank you.