

**GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

FIRST SESSION – 5-7 JUNE 2007

STATEMENT BY
THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

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STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE AND CO-ORDINATOR OF
THE NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTER MR. ISMAIL SHAFEEU

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

It is an honour for me to be here today, both to share with you some of the measures we are taking in the Maldives to mitigate the accelerating impacts of climate change, and to learn from the experiences of other nations represented in this room.

In my brief, I would like to highlight the significant activities in disaster risk reduction that my country has undertaken in the past two years. While not located directly in a cyclone or earthquake zone, the Maldives, as a small island state, has long suffered from its extreme vulnerability to even minimal impacts of climate change and sea level rise. The Asian tsunami demonstrated the scale of devastation that could take place in a matter of minutes. The Government of Maldives has since then accelerated efforts to manage the impacts of large scale natural disasters with special emphasis on mitigation measures and adaptation to climate change and sea level rise.

Within days following the 2004 tsunami, the country set up a national coordination mechanism: the National Disaster Management Centre, to respond to and coordinate recovery and reconstruction efforts. Since then, NDMC has become a permanent body mandated to lead preparedness efforts and to ensure that risk reduction is mainstreamed into the development plans of the country. This initiative will be further strengthened by a draft Disaster Management Act which is expected to be submitted for Parliamentary approval by the end of the year. This lays the legal foundation and establishes the institutional and administrative basis through which to address all aspects of hazards and disasters.

In keeping with the priorities for action outlined in the Hyogo Framework, the Maldives has matched development of policies and the legislative and institutional framework with concrete plans for implementation by incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction concerns into the new National Development Plan.

The five year National Development Plan states measures that will be taken at national and local level, to make the island communities less vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters. The Plan builds on the lessons learned following the tsunami. Strategies include development of sectoral disaster management plans, protection of critical infrastructure, incorporating DRR in land use plans and building codes, building capacity for prediction and early warning, and establishing community-based disaster planning and mitigation.

Several DRR activities have already been undertaken in the Maldives in the last two years. These include preparation of a disaster risk profile and a climate risk profile for the country, improvement of monitoring services at the Department of Meteorology, and

establishment of a multi-departmental committee on early warning and emergency communications. Additionally much work is underway on strengthening community based disaster preparedness, including developing community-based plans, early warning systems and awareness programmes. These activities are being developed with the communities themselves, ensuring their concurrence and participation.

The Maldives National Adaptation Programme of Action, which identifies urgent and immediate actions for adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change, is a critical element of DRR strategy. Adaptation needs and options were identified for communities, economic sectors as well as natural resources.

The progress that has been made in these areas has political will and backing. The Government of the Maldives has made allocations within the national budget to ensure continuity and sustainability of disaster risk reduction activities.

My country acknowledges with gratitude the support of the UN and other international agencies, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and various country Red Cross and Red Crescent Organizations, donor countries and Maldivian NGOs in assisting our recovery from the tsunami and subsequent crises, and supporting the country in DRR activities.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing the need for continued technical and financial assistance from the international community to support the Maldives in sustaining DRR strategies, particularly in dealing with the impacts of climate change.

Thank you