



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY
Male', Republic of Maldives

**Statement made by Minister of Defence and National Security COL (Ret.) Mohamed Nazim
At the 4th Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me first acknowledge and thank UNISDR for arranging this global event. I am honored to be present here with all of you to learn from your experiences and to share perspectives from the people and the government of the Maldives in implementing disaster risk reduction actions.

Let me begin with a brief background of the Maldives.

The Maldives is a low lying island state at the heart of the Indian Ocean and consists of 1200 small islands sparsely distributed across the ocean. We are just 1 meter above sea level and depend heavily on tourism for our sustenance. Therefore, the country is highly susceptible to effects of global climate change and natural and man made disasters.

The Maldives is extremely vulnerable to earthquakes, tropical cyclones, storms, thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, and drought. Floods induced by heavy rainfall or storm surges have become everyday occurrences. The frequency and severity of extreme weather events experienced by our people have dramatically increased in the past few years and is expected to increase as atmospheric carbon di oxide surpasses 400 parts per million. This can threaten the very existence of the Maldives.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Little has been done so far at the global level to address the issues faced by the Maldives and other small island states. Maintaining the status quo is not good enough for us and as we meet here today in the global platform, I would like to request your assistance to break this cycle of "business as usual". The dangers faced by vulnerable countries like the Maldives today will be faced by everybody tomorrow. Therefore, I urge you to make climate change and disaster risk reduction a priority.

As we have come together to agree upon a common set of actions, I strongly believe that countries such as the Maldives should be given an equal voice on the international platform. I believe that the international community has an obligation to ensure that small island states are not left behind in the climate change and disaster risk reduction debate. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves what options and opportunities are available for small island states such as the Maldives for their survival and in the fight against adverse impacts of climate change and natural and man-made disasters.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Disaster risk reduction and the mitigation of climate change cannot be addressed separately. Most of the disaster risks that we face today are also adverse impacts of climate change. Therefore, in order to create safer, more resilient communities we need to make disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation mandatory elements of development synergized to achieve results. We need to strategize to place these elements on the fore front of our developmental policies and plans. Therefore, it is paramount that we explore options to make the next disaster risk reduction framework a binding agreement among nations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As we all know, disasters do not discriminate. To Maldives, this poses the challenge of uniformly building resilience in our dispersed and diverse communities. We commit to invest at the grass roots to build the capacity of Maldivian communities to understand risks and hazards, to implement risk reduction measures and to respond and prepare for possible contingencies.

I urge the international community and the governments of the world to invest in the disaster risk reduction efforts by small island states like the Maldives. We are extremely vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters and we believe that uniform and sustained investment in disaster risk reduction is critical regardless of the size of the country.

While we appreciate the strong donor support received by the Maldives for post tsunami relief and recovery efforts, I would like to highlight the importance of continued assistance in transitioning from recovery to risk reduction and building resilience. I ask for donor support in the application of resilience models for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. In this context, I would like to propose to the international community to explore opportunities in facilitating the process of translating the next disaster risk reduction platform into action. As we advocate making the next framework a binding agreement, we also believe we should all join hands in providing support to one another in successful integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into development.

Thank you