**Official Statement for Global Platform – Maldives**

Greetings!

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.

Immediately after 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 the Disaster Management Bill which is expected to be approved by the Parliament. 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.

Several DRR activities have been undertaken place in the Maldives during the last two to three 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. The Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, derived from the NAPA is designed to promote collaboration among policy makers, experts, and practitioners of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the country for the development of a comprehensive risk management approach. It aims to build resilience of the nation and the island communities to disasters by sustaining the progress made, by consolidating learned best practices, and by incorporating risk reduction into the strategy for decentralization. Harmonized with the policies, plans, and sustainable development strategy, it has identify a consolidated set of programs and projects that can be undertaken with the 2011 Government budget and those that may be considered for donor assistance. At this moment it is a pleasure to inform you that the government of Maldives has included these programs in 2011 budget which is a major accomplishment in disaster risk reduction.

Unsafe infrastructure can turn poverty into disaster risks; lack of access to social protection and risk transfer mechanisms can turn disasters into poverty. In advancing local action, the private sector is a sorely under-utilized stakeholder group. It also can offer knowledge and information to help build resilience. Their expertise lies in balancing complex financial flows with multiple stakeholder demands that require constant risk assessment, innovation and solutions, which has clear relevance in disaster risk reduction. For this reason, innovation partnerships between public and private sector institutions are increasingly being sought out and strengthened. The need for integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is recognized, however, functional links in policy and practice remain inadequate at the local and national levels.

Thank you.