



Check Against Delivery

Statement by

His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid

**Minister of State for Foreign Affairs,
Republic of Maldives**

at the

Fourth Session

of the

**Human Rights Council of the
United Nations**

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Mr. President,

It's a great pleasure and a privilege to address the 4th Session of the Human Rights Council, and I thank you for this opportunity.

I would like to start by congratulating you on the manner in which you continue to steer the work of the Human Rights Council in this, its first crucial year. Although a significant amount remains to be done if the year is to reach a successful conclusion, the Government of the Maldives has no doubt that under your skilled and astute leadership we will be able to meet the great expectations placed upon the Council by the United Nations General Assembly and by people all over the world.

Mr. President,

As you are aware the Maldives is embarked on a sweeping programme of constitutional, democratic and human rights reform. When completed, it will engineer a political transformation to match the economic and social developments achieved by the country over the past thirty years.

Our objective with the political reform programme is clear: to create a model democracy in the Maldives founded upon the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Maldives Government sees the Universal Periodic Review mechanism as an extremely important tool to help us realise this ambition. This is the case for two main reasons.

Firstly, a key tenet of the reform agenda is that it should take place in full *cooperation with* rather than in *isolation from* the international community. For that reason, the opportunity to have our efforts reviewed on a regular basis by our peers is extremely important and welcome. Linked to this, the Maldives also sees the UPR process as an important opportunity to identify areas where the international community can assist us through, for example, capacity-building and technical assistance.

Secondly, the Maldives is fully aware that producing a new constitution and adopting new legislative bills strengthening human rights protection are only the first steps. Equally important will be to ensure that these new provisions are fully and effectively implemented. Thus a regular opportunity to publicly