

**Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid  
International Plan of Action on Ageing  
Bangkok, 12-14 September 2017**

Name of speaker: (Mr.) (Ms.) Fathmatha Artsha Hussain

Country/Organization: Ministry of Gender and Family, Maldives

Please indicate the agenda item on which you wish to speak:

Agenda Item No: 3

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Thank you. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Government of Maldives is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of Elderly. The Ministry of Gender and Family was established as a separate entity in March 2016 and is mandated to protect and promote the rights of all vulnerable groups in the Maldives, including children, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly population.

The demographic of Maldives Population indicates that 5% of our total population accounts to age 65 and above. This is expected to increase to 12.7 % by the year 2045.

The Government of Maldives gives high priority to improving the welfare of senior citizens. Elderly population is entitled to universal health coverage and old-age pension. In March 2014, the monthly social protection allowance <sup>for every citizen above 65</sup> was increased from MVR 2300 (USD 150) to MVR 5000 (USD 325) ~~to every citizen above the age of 65.~~

1

As part of Government efforts to make the Maldives an inclusive society for all ages, we have launched a nation-wide awareness campaign by the name of “Ranveylaa”, which translates to “Golden Age” and targets the well-being of senior citizens. Through this campaign, awareness sessions are conducted for senior citizens on protection measures, and how to report all forms of abuse, as well as information to maintain an independent, healthy and active lifestyle.

Health screening programmes are also conducted for senior citizens at community level, to detect issues requiring further medical interventions. Through the campaign, the Ministry also conducts training programmes targeted for all health workers and social service workers at island level, to build their capacity in catering to the needs of senior citizens that require assistance and support. Furthermore, special interactive sessions are conducted for youth, to bridge the inter-generational gap between the elderly population and youth. These sessions promote interaction between youth and senior citizens, encourage youth to treat older people with respect, and help create conditions for senior citizens to participate in and contribute to societal development. The Ministry’s aim is to conduct programmes of this campaign in all islands of the 19 atolls in Maldives. We have received very positive response from the communities and hope to expand outreach.

2

We recognize that senior citizens around the world are often vulnerable to exploitation, mistreatment and abuse. They also continue to face a number of challenges in their daily lives, including stereotyping and discrimination based on their age. The Ministry received & attended to 32 cases regarding care and support for the elderly during the first six months of 2017. Majority of these cases are of neglect of care and there is a consistent pattern in the number of cases reported and population density.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentleman.

We acknowledge the crucial role of inter-agency collaboration as such the Ministry in partnership with Ministry of Health have implemented a bedridden program, where senior citizens of 65 and above who are bedridden are entitled to home visits by health professionals when necessary to provide basic health services. Furthermore, we have signed partnership MoUs with civil society organizations that work for the well-being of senior citizens in Maldives.

3

The Ministry, in partnership with other agencies, is also working on establishing Community Social Group (CSGs) in all islands. The groups will be composed of representatives from island councils, health and education sector, law enforcements agencies and NGOs active at island level. It is envisioned that through CSGs, we will be able to identify senior citizens who are most vulnerable and may not be officially registered but still require additional support from the Government.

The Ministry held a multi-stakeholder validation workshop last month to develop the first ever National Elderly Policy to cater to the growing ageing population. The key focus areas of our Policy will include:

- Protection from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect
- Inclusion and participation both within the family and the community
- Promotion of active and healthy lifestyles; and
- Preparation for active ageing and retirement

4

This policy, while recognizing the different impact of ageing on women and men, will seek to ensure gender equality in its implementation. We hope to launch the elderly policy on the upcoming International Day of older persons next month.

We are pleased to share our experience and learn about the best practices from other countries. I am confident that this platform will pave way to improve our existing knowledge and enhance both our national and international agendas on this important issue. The government of the Maldives would like to reiterate our commitment in the implementation of Madrid International Plan on Action on Ageing ~~nationally~~ and Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Thank you

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