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Statement delivered by

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Excellencies,

I am from the Maldives. The Maldives with over 90 000 square kilometers of sovereign territory and nearly 1 million square kilometers of sea is a large Ocean State in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Over 99.6 percent of our territory is in fact seawater. Our total land area in over 1 100 small islands is less than 298 square kilometres so we are a large ocean state with small land mass. Furthermore, we are the lowest-line nation in the world. Sea level rise caused by global Climate Change is an existing threat to us. Global temperature is increasing unbated.

The seas are becoming warmer and warmer, slowly decimating coral reefs and associate biodiversity. In the Maldives, we are living through a climate emergency already. We are experiencing a consistently warm climate and enduring warming trends during the last four decades with increases of 0.8 degrees-Celsius between 1978 and 2018.

Excellencies, at the current level of global warming, almost 80 percent of our country could become inhabitable by 2050 as our president, His Excellency, Ibrahim Mohamed Sohil declared at the COP26. Our islands are slowly being inundated by sea, one by one. If we do not reverse this trend, the Maldives will cease to exist by the end of this century.

The intergovernmental panel on Climate Change predicts that by 2050, if the temperatures rises more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, as much as between 70 to 90 percent of the coral reefs in the Maldives and other coral Atoll Nations will be degraded. And consequently, a huge amount of biodiversity will be lost forever.

With increased and frequent weather events, sea swells, storm surges and flooding, inundate dry land with seawater, making groundwater saline and causing devastated coastal erosion and land loss. With coral reefs gone there is nothing to protect the islands from the perils of the sea anymore. Without coral reefs, raising sea levels, pushing coast-dwelling communities out of their homes. Healthy coral reefs can absorb 97 percent of the wave's energy dramatically reducing erosion. We cannot afford to build rock boarder sea walls around our islands.

It costs something like USD 3 000 to build a linear meter of seawall. Low-line Atoll in the Maldives face a very significant threat from the rising sea level. The economic and human impact of wave flooding are likely to grow in significance and threaten the viability of livelihoods in many island communities. Excellencies, the dependence of the Maldives' economy on tourism represents a major vulnerability.

Climate Change is badly impacting the fisheries and agriculture. Fish is not only 98 percent of our physical export, it is also the main source of our protein for us. Without income from tourism, fisheries and agriculture, food imports and desalinationdecellularization of water may become less viable. The natural ecosystem for Maldives and most notably its coral reefs, are at great risk from climate change. Climate change represents a major threat to way of life of Maldivians.

This can still be averted. Humanity should be more responsible, seriously invest in greener technology, and implement measures to reduce and stop emitting greenhouse cases, making good the treasures made by the developed world to provide assistance and finance to the most

climate-vulnerable states, LDCs and LDTs for mitigation and adaptation.

Excellencies, to adapt to the new climate conditions we need to first invest to protect our islands. In terms of food security and livelihood security, we need to ensure our tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean remain

sustainable. European stocks are already over-exploited. We need to reduce our catches by 22 percent. We fish sustainably. We practice the most sustainable fishing method in the world. We catch tuna one by one using pole and line. Our fisheries is MSC-certified and we do not have any commercial net fishing.

We call upon all the coastal states in the Indian Ocean and distant water fishing Nations taking part in the IOTC to ensure stock sustainability of Indian Ocean tuna stocks. Looking up at agriculture, we have very little land, less than 298 square kilometers. The groundwater in the islands have become saline as I explained it before. We have to transform our agriculture. It will be a huge challenge, but I think we can still do it. For instance, we have to use reverse osmosis technology to produce water.

We have no fresh water, no reverse or no mountains. So even for agriculture, we have to produce reverse osmosis technology and produce fresh water. We need to transform. We need financial resources to invest in modern agriculture, vertical agriculture systems, and modern efficient growing systems. We can transform our agriculture and only we can do this with your help. I hope that the world realize that this is not going to be a life sentence for a small country like Maldives.

Thank you.