



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Maldives
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

**Statement to be delivered by
H.E. Ms. Iruthisham Adam, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Maldives to the 103rd Session of the IOM Council
26 to 29 November 2012**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

The Government of Maldives is pleased to participate in the General Debate of the IOM for the country's third year of its membership in this esteemed organization.

We note with admiration the continuous growth of the IOM membership to 151 members. This growth highlights the relevance and acceptance of the IOM as a credible and global organisation that tackles the intricate challenges of migration worldwide. The Maldives would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new member states and assure them of the Maldives' readiness to work and collaborate with them.

Mr. Chairperson,

Migration is a significant issue for all member states especially in the south-south context where approximately 90% of human mobility is centred on labour and employment purposes. The Maldives, in particular heavily relies on migrants from around the world and especially from our neighbouring countries, in key industries such as tourism and construction.

There are an estimated 150,000 migrant workers currently residing in the Maldives, out of a population of 350,000 people and the focus of their rights and well-being have been a priority focus for the Government for a number of years.

Migration has been a source of economic growth and new opportunities for the Maldives, but it also presents its own challenges as well to the industry and also the society in general. While this may not be unique to the Maldives alone, it has nevertheless encouraged the Government and its relevant authorities to undertake a holistic approach towards addressing the core issues faced by migrant workers in the country.

Mr Chairperson,

The Maldives believes that a comprehensive legislative framework is crucial for combatting trafficking and implementing equal and just treatment of foreign workers. In light of the commitment of the Maldives' to migration issues, our government have ratified the eight ILO



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fundamental Conventions on 4 January 2013, dealing with four categories of fundamental principles and rights at work: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

The Government also remains committed to signing the Migrant Workers Convention by 2014, so that the rights of these workers could be better protected domestically. We also welcome the important role played by trade unions, workers groups and also civil society in their own efforts to help shape up a comprehensive and viable domestic framework that addresses the concerns of migrant workers while also promoting public perceptions of migrants and migration.

Mr. Chairperson,

Trafficking in persons has been a major obstacle to the Maldives in recent years in harmonizing and improving the rights of migrant workers in the country. In 2012, the Maldives was listed as a Tier 2 Watch-List country in the United States Report on Trafficking in Persons. Since then, the Maldives has acceded to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, and are working towards acceding to its Optional Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. The Government has also formulated a multi-sectoral action plan to combat trafficking in persons and is currently working with relevant national agencies to oversee its effective implementation. We are grateful for the efforts of donor countries and the IOM for providing the necessary technical support and expertise to enhance Maldives' national counter-trafficking efforts in cross-border and transit areas.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Maldives believes that migration protection is an integral part of migration management, and that greater emphasis should be placed to optimize the and reap the benefits of regular and lawful migration, while preventing irregular migration through increased coordination and cooperation among origin and destination countries.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Maldives to maintain and further strengthen the channels of close cooperation and constructive engagements with the IOM and its Member States to further enhance and strengthen international cooperation on migration, and to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers.

I thank you