



Statement by

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(Round-Table Discussions
*Assessment of Progress at the National, Regional and
International Levels to fulfil the Promise and Objective
Enshrined in the Climate Change Agreements*)

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Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the outset allow me to begin by congratulating you Mr. President, on your election to preside over this important conference. The task ahead of you has not been an easy one, but I am confident that your experience and wisdom has guided many of the deliberations to a successful conclusion. Mr President, let me express our appreciation to you for allowing to two distinguished guest to co-chair this important round table discussion on *Assessment of Progress at the National, Regional and International Levels to fulfil the Promise and Objective Enshrined in the Climate Change Agreements*

Mr. President, Your Excellencies

On behalf of the Government of Maldives, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Italy for the warm welcome extended to me and my delegation and for the excellent arrangements made for the conference.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies

The Maldives is an archipelago consists of tiny islands scattered in a vast expanse of the Indian Ocean. Over 80% of the land area have less than one metre above mean sea level, climate change and its associated sea level rise would undoubtedly be a catastrophe and threaten the livelihoods of the islanders in the Maldives alike many thousands of others in low-lying island states.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies

16 years ago in April 1987, Maldives experienced unusual high waves causing extensive damage to the islands. The two thirds of the whole Maldives, including the capital island, Malé, was inundated for two days causing extensive damage to the infrastructure. Male' International Airport, the only gateway to the Maldives, was closed for two days, causing delays in receiving the relief assistance from the international community, cancellation of tourist arrivals and lot more.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies

Following the horrendous event of 1987, we realised the importance of protecting the important infrastructure of the Maldives located in the capital island. An ambitious and expensive project was initiated with the generous assistance from Government of Japan in early 1990s. With a total project cost of more than US\$ 62 million. A 6.2 km of sea wall and breakwaters was constructed to protect the island using the technologies of Japan. The project has demonstrated that the technology could be applied for adaptation. However at the same time it has shown that these could not be applied because of the exorbitant cost .

Mr. President, Your Excellencies

The Maldives is particularly vulnerable to the predicted climate change and its associated impacts. Though science has indicated that we are a victim of the actions of others afar from our shores, we are excising our part of the common but differential responsibilities in trying to address impacts of climate change by integrating the issue into our sustainable development strategies. The Maldives developed *National Implementation Strategy for Addressing Climate Change* in 2001 to address the impacts of climate change in a context of sustainable development.

The vulnerabilities that were identified in our National Communication are terrifying. The extraordinary challenge that the Maldives presented to the global community through its First National Communication is to make the Maldives resilient and adaptable, and ensuring the country's survival. These could be possible with the utilisation of technology. Technology exist, we don't have to re-invent the wheel. It is to make it available to us, to our children and the future.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies

Science has shown that climate has changed due to the human activity. Six years ago, on this day of December we adopted the Kyoto Protocol to mitigate the climate change in the spirit that we have common but differentiated responsibilities. COP after a COP we are waiting to initiate the modalities as to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. President, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

To conclude, Mr. President, we would like to express our hope that this conference would provide the necessary motivation to those parties who have not yet ratified the Protocol to act more decisively. We must recognise time is running out awaiting for fool proof instruments or science. Through you, Mr President I appeal to this distinguished gathering to listen the voice of those who stand to lose everything owing to the negative consequence of climate change not to pend this crucial issue for ever.

I thank you.