

**HIGH LEVEL OPENING STATEMENT | MALDIVES**  
*Delivered by Minister of Environment H.E Dr. Hussain Rasheed Hassan*  
*Madrid, Spain*  
*10<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – 15:00 – 16:30*

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Assalaam Alaikum.

**Madam President, Excellencies and Colleagues,**

1. At the outset, allow me to thank our host, the Kingdom of Spain and the COP 25 Presidency, Chile, for the marvelous arrangements.
2. We align ourselves with the remarks made by the State of Palestine on behalf of the G77 and China, and Belize on behalf of the AOSIS.

Madam President,

3. The Maldives is an Atoll Nation. Our dry land is less than 2% of the territory and 80% of our dry land is just less than 1 meter above average sea level.
4. If the science-based IPCC 1.5 Special report is accurate, and if we, the world leaders, collectively failed to take appropriate action to mitigate against global warming, in less than 10 years from now, as much as 70-90% or 99% of our coral reefs will be destroyed.

5. A devastating effect of this will be the catastrophic erosion and flooding of our islands and irreversible negative impacts on our tourism and fisheries industries.

Madam President,

6. We are living through a climate emergency. It is without a doubt, the “Time For Action”.
7. One of the key insights of the IPCC Special Reports and other scientific findings is, not only the growing emissions gap, but also a huge finance gap.
8. If we collectively failed to increase our investments in renewable energy and support for those most vulnerable to climate impacts, we may never be able to recover from this climate catastrophe at all. Yes, we are all concerned. But that’s not enough. We need action too. If we honour our commitments and be honest with ourselves, staying within the 1.5°C limit of global warming is still possible.
9. Effective implementation of the Paris Agreement is contingent upon availability of additional, new and predictable financing. Increased ambitions, in terms of NDC’s are meaningless, if it is not backed by financing. Not only is the finance gap still wide, but access to

whatever little funds that are available is still too tedious. Asking frontline nations to submit bankable proposals if we are to get any money is not acceptable!

10. We are on the eve of 2020. Next year, we must take stock of our achievements in reaching the goal of US\$ 100 billion a year by 2020. Small Islands like us are already paying immense resources of our own towards the implementation of our NDCs, in order to achieve our mitigation and adaptation targets. In the Maldives, as much as 20% of our public sector investment programme for next year is on climate adaptation and mitigation. This shows our high level of commitment.
11. A third of our climate financing over the past four years has been loans. Only a third of our climate financing is from donor support. To invest in our renewable energy, to provide adequate water and sanitation for our people, to protect our shorelines against coastal erosion and tidal waves, and to implement other transformational changes, Maldives needs at least another 0.5 billion US Dollars in the next five years. This is truly an unavoidable cost our people have to bear, for being climate victims.
12. As 2020 draws closer, it is crucial to maintain the momentum towards fulfilling the climate finance pledge of US\$100 billion.

13. Loss and Damage cannot be a mere conceptual phrase in the convention and the agreement. As political leaders, it is our obligation to the people of the world, to ensure that we agree on concrete implementable actions that will overcome the climate catastrophe we are facing today. Given the circumstances that we are in, we cannot simply ignore the reality of today, and hope that time will solve this problem for us.
14. It is important to resolve the issues relating to markets at this session. We cannot simply afford to delay this any further. We trust that we can do this, and together we can achieve this.
15. As we celebrate the 25 years of the convention, it is important to maintain the multilateral framework that we have all embarked on. We believe that the UNFCCC is the primary avenue for the international climate change regime. On this endeavor, our success depends on an open, transparent and inclusive process and ensuring that no one is left behind.

**Madam President,**

16. To respond to the UN Secretary General's decade of climate action and to reduce our vulnerability and increase our resiliency, our

President, His Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, at the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit launched a Climate Smart Resilient Islands initiative. This initiative is achievable and would bring a transformational change to the life and livelihoods of our island communities.

17. Maldives extends its full support to the President of the COP, to deliver a bold, ambitious and focused outcome at COP 25.

18. Thank you!

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