

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Khaleel, State Minister for Foreign Affairs

24 November 2021

- His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, President of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
- Her Excellency Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan, President of the Human Rights Council,
- Mr. Mahamane Cissé-Gouro, Director, Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,
- Officials from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the participants of this workshop.

Excellencies and ladies and Gentlemen!

A very good morning to you all. It is a great pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to the LDC/SIDS Trust Fund Workshop for the Asia Region. The Maldives is honoured to host this very important workshop, although it is unfortunate that we are unable to welcome you all in person here in the Maldives today due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, I'm happy to meet you all on this virtual platform.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Maldives has always taken an active role in promoting inclusivity and diversity at the Human Rights Council. We firmly believe that LDCs and SIDS can significantly contribute to the work of the Council. Our unique and collective experiences, perspectives, and belief in the rules-based multilateral system continues to play an important role in shaping key decisions of the United Nations, particularly in relation to issues that have an impact on SIDS and LDCs. We need the voice of SIDS and LDCs to be heard at the Human Rights Council. This is why the Maldives

was one of the main sponsors of the resolution that led to the establishment of the LDC/SIDS Trust Fund back in 2012. Since then, this Fund has continued to assist Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States to participate in Human Rights Council and its work. The Maldives had the privilege of having four beneficiaries who travelled to Geneva for the Human Rights Council with the help of the trust fund. This has broadened the exposure of our staff to the work of the Council and enabled them to gain valuable experience in working alongside our colleagues and partners during the Council sessions. The orientation programmes and the trainings provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have no doubt added value to the participation and contribution of beneficiaries from the Maldives and other countries. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the donors of the voluntary trust fund for continuously supporting the participation of SIDS and LDC's in the important work of the Council.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

The upcoming 49th Session of the Human Rights Council will be an important session for all of us as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of LDC/SIDS Trust Fund at the Human Rights Council. I urge the participants of this Asia Region Workshop to use this opportunity to identify areas of further improvements and assess the value of the activities conducted by the trust fund to better support the engagement of LDCs/SIDS in the work of the Council and its mechanisms in future. The Maldives has always played an active role in the work of Human Rights Council and I can give my full assurance that we will continue to provide our full support towards increasing the engagement of LDCs and SIDS in the work of the Council and its mechanisms.

Before I conclude, may I once again extend a warm welcome to all the participants and wish you a successful workshop.

I thank you