



MALDIVES

Tenth Session of the General Assembly
Open Working-Group on Sustainable Development Goals
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment/ Water and Sanitation

Intervention by:

His Excellency Mr Ahmed Sareer, Permanent Representative to the United Nations,
New York, 31 March – 4 April 2014

Thank you Co-Chair,

Maldives aligns itself with both the statements made by Bolivia on behalf of G77 and China and the statement delivered by Nauru on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

Mr. Co-Chair,

In our view, what we are engaging is an exercise to build upon from the inadequacies of the MDGs. In developing SDGs we must learn from these inadequacies. Poverty eradication, education, health, nutrition, water, energy, economy and environment all present challenges that demand gender parity. In the Sustainable Development discourse, achieving gender parity through concrete targets and clear indicators of success must be given the foremost consideration.

A stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment can only be efficient if it is a transformative goal. It must be universal, while taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It must ensure women the same rights, same access and same opportunities, while ending all forms of discrimination against women of all ages.

The benefit of education is the anchor that will allow the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. Violence against women, as a social dimension, is a manifestation of gender-based discrimination. Therefore, we must tackle discrimination if we are to ensure an end to violence against girls and women in all its forms.

While equity, equality and empowerment for women is a cross cutting issue, the sad reality is that its realization is not guaranteed through development. No matter how closely we tie it to other issues, we will not achieve the transformative change in social norms, institutions and policies which are required for global long-

term progress. We have seen that democracy, stability, and prosperity, while harder to achieve, is still possible without true gender-equity.

The Maldives believes that gender equality is part of a broader context for holistic development. We believe that every goal for Sustainable Development should be interdependent, cohesive, and aspirational. And Maldives believes that equity, equality and empowerment for women can only be achieved through a stand-alone goal on gender parity. Now is the time for concrete action. We must focus on actionable targets and measures, and ensure the appropriate means of implementation is allocated in order to make gender parity a reality.

Mr. Co-Chair let me make few remarks on the issue of Water and sanitation

For the Maldives the adverse impacts of climate change such as changing weather patterns and sea level rise has a direct impact on fresh and potable water. Moreover it has directly affected the development path of our countries. For the Maldives, change in rainfall patterns already impacts the availability and quality of rainwater on which more than 90% of our island communities rely. The rainwater is polluted due to trans-boundary pollution and ground water is contaminated due to inundation, saltwater intrusion and contaminants from sewerage.

With water challenges rapidly increasing, hindering future development and threatening current advances, complacency is not an option. We therefore call for a standalone Sustainable Development Goal on water and sanitation that will take into account emerging and future challenges that will progress from the ongoing work of the MDGs. This SDG must be ambitious and take into consideration the vulnerable and particular situations of SIDS. It must be balanced with the need for ecosystem conservation and preservation of biodiversity, while taking into account the strong inter-linkage between costal marine ecosystems and water security. The Sustainable Development Goal on water and sanitation must address climate change and disaster risk management. In order for these goals to be relevant, let alone achieved, the means of implementation must be elaborated for every goal, and especially in the water and sanitation goal.

I thank you Co-Chair.