



# MALDIVES

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## Sixth Committee Agenda Item 85: Rule of Law

Statement by Mr Jeffrey Salim Waheed,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations

*United Nations, New York, 15 October 2015*

Thank you Mr Chair,

It is an honour to speak on behalf of the Republic of the Maldives on the Rule of Law and its implications at the national and international levels. I wish to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities.

As we mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations, it is important to highlight that the rule of law is the foundation upon which the principles and objectives of this organization is based. At the time of the Maldives application for UN membership, questions were raised as to whether a small state like ours could effectively contribute and be a viable member of the United Nations. It has been 50 years since then, and indeed, we have come a long way. As the Maldives celebrates 50 years of UN Membership this year, the nation has demonstrated its significance and relevance in the community of nations, having been established on a foundation of equality, justice and respect for the Rule of Law.

The Maldives places unmistakable faith in the notion that all Member States have a valuable role to play in the international community. Today, the Maldives sits as an active member on the Human Rights Council, having attained the seat in 2010. As the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, the Maldives has had the honour of leading the voice of the SIDS in key development negotiations that chart out the global development framework for a sustainable future. But nowhere has our efforts been more prominent, than in our advocacy on climate change; having raised the alarm bells of global warming way back in 1987, and having led the change in the global mind-set on this crucial subject.

Mr Chair,

Our commitment to equitable representation, fundamental rights, and unqualified justice begins at home. The Maldives Constitution of 2008, stipulates the separation of the three powers of the State, and the establishment of independent institutions to ensure accountability, and guarantees basic fundamental rights freedoms and rights for its citizens.

One of the most comprehensive documents of its kind, our Constitution explicitly guarantees basic public services; such as education, healthcare, water, sanitation, communication, electricity, and a healthy, ecologically balanced environment. It guarantees these rights to a population dispersed across 197 islands in an area of 90,000 square kilometres. However, the cost of implementing these constitutional rights have placed an immense burden on the financial resources of a nation only barely into its middle income status, having graduated from the list of Least Developed Countries in 2011. The challenge for the country's bureaucracy is to ensure that the provision of these services is effectively coupled with the need to build resilience to the inherent vulnerabilities flowing from being the lowest lying State in the world. And yet, the Government is committed to the provision and expanding upon these rights so that opportunity and social advancement becomes the birth right of every Maldivian citizen.

Economic empowerment is a key contributor to national stability and the promotion of the rule of law. President Yameen's economic diversification program seeks to dramatically enhance the country's fragile economic base so that, along with improving investor confidence, it is designed to create employment, empower youth, and instil in people their conviction in limitless opportunity.

Mr Chair,

My delegation is of the view, that the only way for the Maldives to progress in its development path is through an uncompromising adherence to the rule of law, through ensuring that its institutions are strengthened and democratic values are upheld through continuous consolidation efforts.

These efforts, through the help of UN entities and programmes, currently focus on judicial strengthening, legislative transparency, and institutional capacity building. We have always welcomed efforts to build upon our democratic reform program, cultivating a shared vision for an empowered society, building resilience to the challenges we face as a young democracy.

Mr Chair,

This resilience must be built through a legislative framework, exemplified by the Government's recent ratification of a new Penal Code, the Right to Information Act, the Social Protection Act, and the recent amendments to the Maldives Employment Act. These, among others, provide the basis for a stable, strong, democratic state promoting the Rule of Law.

Mr Chair,

We know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that economic progress goes hand in hand with stable, established democratic institutions. Though only time prove the truth of our efforts, we will not falter in the continued, unhindered implementation of the Rule of Law. Further, the Maldives will continue to welcome UN support in strengthening our democratic institutions. Nonetheless, we reiterate that non-interference in internal affairs of States must be observed by the United Nations. The Maldives has proven, time and time again, that we are willing to go the distance. That with each passing moment, we strive for a nation committed to achievement of this ideal prosperous future for all Maldivians.