



Written Statement of the Republic of Maldives

by

Mr. Ahmed Saleem

Member of Parliament

Chair, Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environment

18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of  
the International Criminal Court

3 December 2019, The Hague

Mr. President,

Maldives accords highest priority to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in its efforts to put an end to impunity for perpetrators of the most heinous crimes. The Government of Maldives remains committed to promoting respect for human rights, rule of law, peace and security at national and global level. We reaffirm the importance of the role of the ICC in maintaining international rule of law across jurisdictions, and its complementarity to domestic criminal justice systems. Since acceding to the Rome Statute in 2011, we have remained an ardent supporter of the work of the ICC in bringing justice to the victims of grave crimes and to alleviate their suffering.

Mr. President,

It is undeniable that the gravest threat to our island nation - the Maldives, and indeed to humanity at large is climate change. Climate change is eroding our way of life, livelihood, economy and our aspirations for a better future. It is destroying the very foundations of our economy and our natural defence system.

A decade has passed since we reminded the Security Council that a mean sea-level rise of two metres would suffice to virtually submerge the entire Maldives under water. Yet, we see no serious efforts on the part of large emitting countries to save humanity from the impending climate change catastrophe. We see little or no concrete action at multilateral level to bring about transformative changes necessary to prevent the repercussions of climate change. We are gravely concerned that this inaction will ultimately lead to the death of nations such as ours.

Study after study, scientists have been warning that climate change is killing an increasing number of people every year, depriving tens of millions of people of freshwater, displacing populations and as a result, leading to conflicts and potentially largescale involuntary migration.

Mr. President,

We support the Paris Agreement and call on the international community to increase ambition so as to keep global warming well below 1.5 degree Celsius. At the same time, we believe the international justice system has a role to play in preventing climate catastrophe. The ICC has the capacity to contribute to the drastic changes in behaviour that are needed to meet the Paris Agreement goals.

Countries at the frontline of climate change, such as the Maldives, do not have the luxury of time to negotiate for another international legal instrument to fight against environmental crimes. We believe the time is ripe to consider an amendment to the Rome Statute that would criminalise acts that amount to Ecocide.

It is time justice for climate change victims be recognised as part and parcel of the international criminal justice system.

I thank you Mr President.

Ends