



**PERMANENT MISSION OF REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES TO UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

**Tenth Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
General Debate**

H.E. Mr Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives

14 December 2011

(Check against delivery)

Madam President

Let me begin by congratulating you, on your election to preside over the Tenth Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute. We are certain that under your guidance, the deliberations of this Assembly will be productive and successful. We would also like to thank Ambassador Wenaweser for his leadership of the Assembly's work, and his commitment to strengthen the Court in the past three years.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Fatou Bensouda on her election to the post of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. We would further like to extend our deepest gratitude to Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the first Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for his hard work, and the crucial role he has played in combating impunity and strengthening the role of the Court.

The Maldives would like to assure the Assembly of its full cooperation in its deliberation, our commitment to strengthen the rule of law, both at the national and international levels.

Madam President,

The Republic of Maldives ratified the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court on 21 September 2011, becoming its 118th state party. With Philippines, Vanuatu and Cape Verde becoming new members, the total number of countries that have ratified the Rome Statute has now increased to 120. Maldives welcomes this development and congratulates all the new

States Parties that join us here today. Indeed, today we are proud to be among those group of countries, who have committed themselves to combat impunity, in respect of international law and to provide justice to those victims who have often been forgotten in the labyrinths of diplomacy.

We strongly believe that the rule of law in societies, at all levels is a crucial ingredient to the realization of socio-economic objectives, and a reinforcement of core democratic principles. We are a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court and its conformity with the United Nations Charter in strengthening the rule of law and the respect for human rights. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the States Parties, the Secretariat of the Assembly and the civil society, especially the Coalition of the International Criminal Court for their extensive support during the Maldives' ratification process.

Madam President,

The Maldives has been constantly reforming and revising its domestic legal and judicial systems to ensure that they are in full conformity with our obligations under international law. Our recent transitions to democracy, including agreement on a new constitution, were secured on a human rights platform. Human rights, rule of law and justice are the bedrock of the new democratic Maldives and this national conviction is increasingly translated to the international stage where the Maldives has moved to sign eight of the nine core international human rights conventions and the Geneva Conventions. As part of this process, in June this year, the People's Majlis, the Maldivian Parliament, gave its approval for the Maldives to ratify the Rome Statute.

I would also like to reiterate that our Government remains fully committed to promote the universality and full implementation of the Rome Statute, and looks forward to working with the Court, and with other international organizations and civil society.

Madam President,

As we watch events unfold in the Middle East and North Africa, it is evidently clear that combating impunity and the prevention of the most serious crimes against humanity has become a priority for the international community and the Court. The Maldives has actively advocated for democratic reform in the Middle East and North Africa, by doing so the



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Maldives has consistently made it clear, that the right response of governments to popular protest is to listen to the genuine aspiration of the people for the administration of justice, and to work through a process of dialogue to address their concerns.

The Maldives believes that despite the difficulties faced by the court, the ICC has made significant progress in trying to meet the hopes placed on state parties by the victims of serious crimes. The Maldives further believes that the Court needs to have access to adequate resources to fulfill its important mandate, as the ICC is an indispensable part of the international legal system.

The Maldives particularly would like to commend the work of the Court in advancing the protection the Statute affords to women as well as the gender sensitive approach adopted by the Court in its workings. Gender crimes are one of most heinous forms of crimes against humanity and it is imperative that the Court continues its case law and jurisprudential work. Inclusion of rape as an element of genocide as well as a crime of war is important steps in this regard. Nevertheless, much of the reported cases of gender crimes are an under representation of the actual situation on the ground. The Court should, therefore, encourage and urge victims of sexual violence to come forward to ensure that the international criminal legal system gives true and universal protection to women.

Madam President,

The international community needs to reinforce its collective and individual efforts to ensure that the international arrest warrants issued by the ICC are enforced. There is a need for all the States Parties to fully meet their obligations under the Rome Statute. The Maldives welcomes the support that the court receives from the United Nations and calls on other international organizations to formalize their cooperation.

In conclusion Madam President, the Maldives will give its full support to the International Criminal Court, to continue its fight against impunity and injustice. All States must fully carry out their legal obligations to cooperate with the Court.

Then only will the ICC truly be an effective tool, transcending boundaries in protecting humanity.

Thank you Madam President.