



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

MALDIVES

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Statement by

H.E. Ms. Thilmeeza Hussain

**Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations
at the International Migration Review Forum 2022**

19-20 May 2022

3 minutes

1. Thank you Mr. President, for convening this first iteration of the quadrennial International Migration Review Forum. I would also like to thank Her Excellency Rabab Fatima and His Excellency Olivier Maes, the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Luxembourg, respectively, for their commitment and diligent efforts in finalising the Progress Declaration that will be adopted at this Forum.

Mr. President,

2. As noted in General Assembly resolution 74/195 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, migration is a defining feature of our globalized world, which may be particularly relevant in the context of Small Island Developing States. To give a sense of the scale of migration in Maldives, about one-fourth of our total population consists of migrant workers. They play a vital role in driving our economy and fill the gaps in requisite skills, expertise and experience for key sectors of our economy.

3. The ongoing pandemic has proven the importance of leaving no one behind, particularly those who are most vulnerable – a category that also includes migrant workers. We have learnt greatly from our experience that our pandemic response needs to be cohesive in nature, in order to ensure the safety of all. This principle of equality underpinned Maldives' COVID-19 immunization programme in which vaccines were administered for all our residents, irrespective of their legal status or nationality. The implementation of this policy allowed for Maldives to safely re-open our borders for tourists and visitors. The lessons we learnt from this experience is defining – that is no one is safe unless we are all protected; it is vital that the circumstances and needs of all, including migrants are fully considered and addressed in policy making.



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Mr. President,

4. We recognize the role that migrant workers play in our efforts towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Migrants and migration, as the Global Compact notes, is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for sustainable development and requires comprehensive responses from all countries. Maldives is no exception. Migrant workers are a key driver of our economy, playing crucial roles in key industries that drive our sustainable development. We have over 50,000 migrant workers in our construction industry alone and more than 20,000 foreign nationals working in our tourism industry.

5. The Government of Maldives recognises the need to protect the rights of migrant workers in Maldives. With this in mind, the Government is working to further strengthen our existing labour laws and regulations, as well as working with our development partners to bolster both, the monitoring and enforcement of existing policies. In this regard, a National Task Force on Issues Related to Migrant Workers was established in 2019 to formulate policy on all issues relating to migrant workers, with representation from key stakeholders at the policy level. A nationwide regularization programme was initiated in early 2019 to provide a pathway for undocumented workers to register within the system and transition to legal work. During this period, over 40,000 undocumented workers were registered during the first phase - which amounts to around two-thirds of the estimated undocumented workforce. In addition, the Government assisted those migrant workers who approached for regularization, through job matching facilities with potential employers and aided their re-entry to the labour market as smoothly as possible.

Mr. President,

6. Maldives is proud of the progress we have achieved in meeting the objectives of the Global Compact. However, we acknowledge that more work remains to be done both nationally and internationally. International cooperation is vital to overcome the challenges in meeting our objectives. It is of utmost importance to enhance global cooperation and to identify areas of assistance required, in order to address the gaps identified in this year's Progress Declaration. Moreover, we must strive to ensure that the progress we have achieved over years is not lost. Maldives and other Small Island Developing States require cooperation



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and support to fulfill our objectives of the Global Compact and in this regard, we are ready to work with our partners, our neighbours and with our friends.

I thank you.