

REMARKS BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CAPTAIN ABDUL LATHEEF
MOHAMED, GOVERNMENT OF MALDIVES AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE 107TH
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

- Mr. Chair, I congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the 107th International Labor Conference.
- Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.
- It is an honour for me to address this august gathering and I would like to send well wishes to all the delegates present here.
- The Government of Maldives welcomes the Director General's report on Women at Work Initiative and would like to take this opportunity to share our views to the report. We believe that this is an important topic to be addressed and deliberated in a full house as this august body is gearing to mark its Centenary next year.
- Mr. Chair, the Government of Maldives place very high importance to empower women economically and socially. Towards this end, the Government has taken a number of positive steps and measures to create a more conducive environment to address the gender gaps in the country and to enable more women participation in all the sectors of the workforce. Hence, I would like to proudly announce that about 60.7% of the civil service staff is women.
- Honourable Chair, Allow me to share with you some of the key important steps that the administration of President Abdulla Yameen has undertaken in this regard.
- On the legislative front, in 2017 the Government, for the first time introduced the Gender Equality Act. This Act establish a framework to ensure

gender equality and eliminate gender based discrimination, gender-based violence, as well as sexual harassment in the workplace within the country. The Act further outlines the role of the Government and other agencies to help ensure successful implementation of the Act. The Government of Maldives under the auspices of the Ministry of Gender and Family has been spearheading the implementation of the Act.

- Apart from the Gender Equity Law, in 2014 the Government has enacted a Sexual harassment Act and Sexual Offence Act. Further the Government enacted a Law on Domestic Violence.
- Introduction of these important pieces of legislation in the early part of the administration of President Yameen, is a clear testament to the importance that the Government places on promoting women in the work place, ensuring their rights are protected and that enabling framework is put in place to bridge gender gaps and promote gender equity.
- Mr. Chair, to effectively implement these important pieces of legislation, the Government of Maldives has been taking a number of initiative to ensure benefits flow to women in the workforce. Let me list some of these initiatives now.
- To recognize women for their valuable contributions to the development of Maldives, the Ministry of Gender and Family in 2014 has introduced a special annual award by the name of “Rhendhi Award” award. This has been an initiative to further encourage women to engage and contribute to the society and overall growth of the country and added impetus to bring positive changes in the lives of women.
- In addition, the Government has on going developmental projects aimed at promoting and strengthening the livelihoods of homebased women workers. The objective of these ongoing development initiatives is to facilitate women entrepreneurs of small businesses to market their commodities.

- Further, to targeting women working in the informal economy, under the Government's SME initiatives, dedicated loan facilities are provided to foster women to take up entrepreneurial activities and assist them in setting up their own businesses. Infact, 40% of all Government run SME loan facilities are earmarked for women and youth.
- The Government also places importance in assisting women to eliminate the gender gaps in the corporate sector. To this end in corporate boards of state owned enterprise, women representation are on the rise.
- On the social front, Maldives ensures equal opportunities for the Girl child to get proper education. Education is free for both Gender up to 12th grade. Most recent university statistics reveals that more women are graduating from the education system. Universal health care is provided to all Maldivian irrespective of Gender. Pension benefits are available to both Gender and old age retirement pension is made available for 65 and above irrespective of gender.
- Mr. Chair. To promote gender diversity and increase role of women in the workplace, the Government has been undertaking a number of initiatives.
- Mr. Chair the Government of Maldives is fully committed to promote gender diversity and equity in the workplace.
- Finally, to witness all of the above you are welcome to Maldives on your honeymoon or next anniversary.
- Thank you.