

**REMARKS BY PERMANENT SECRETARY, MR. YUSUF RIZA, GOVERNMENT OF
MALDIVES AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE 110TH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR
CONFERENCE**

‘Draft for review’

- Conference Chair, Director-General, distinguished delegates
- Asalaamu Alikum and very warm greetings from the Maldives.
- Maldives stands in solidarity with all LDC member countries experiencing socio-economic conditions due to the current challenges facing the world of work.
- We are aware that global pandemics and conflicts, can undermine and potentially nullify, years of development, unless the right set of policies are implemented.
- The looming global triple crisis of food, energy and finance, stated in the DG’s report are very relevant to the future development prospects of LDCs.
- We believe that the collective will of Governments, a renewed focus on tri-partism and the right combination of support and co-ordination within the international community, can aid to even out the recovery process for member states.

Excellencies

- In the past 2 years, the Government of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has implemented a number of initiatives, to cushion the impacts of the pandemic on our labour market.
- As with many other countries, Maldivian economy was challenged during the midst of the Pandemic, when our borders had to be closed and our tourism sector, which is the only source of foreign exchange, was essentially shutdown.
- Permanent closures of a number of small businesses, lead to significant lay-offs and an increase in unemployment.
- To address these challenges, the government successfully implemented a number of initiatives.
- As one of the immediate interventions, the government initiated an income support programme to financially support workers who were laid-off, due to business closures.

- To support SME's impacted by the pandemic, the government initiated low-cost financing schemes
- Despite the challenges, the government continued its free bachelor's degree, and the student loan schemes, enabling access to learning opportunities for our youth.
- Further, the government launched fully funded professional training and apprenticeship opportunities, with monthly stipends, for those enrolled. |
- While these timely interventions contributed to a speedy economic recovery, the road ahead is definitely not an easy one.
- The new challenges arising from the ongoing global conflicts including the rising fuel prices has created a further dent in our recovery process.
- Yet the Government of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is committed to ensure that our recovery efforts are human centered and contributes to creating decent jobs for all.
- We strongly believe that prudent fiscal injections to revive enterprises, commerce and consumption is essential to re-invigorate productive activities in the economy, and thereby create employment and income opportunities, for many who were forced out of their job, during the pandemic.

Excellencies

- Guided by the ILO's Centenary Declaration and in line with calls to achieve a human centered recovery, the government has taken a number of measures to enhance the legal framework governing the labour market.
- I would like to shed light on some of the significant changes.
- For the first-time in the history of Maldives, the government issued a minimum wage order on 1st January 2022, following amendments to our Employment Act.
- We also introduced regulations relating to redundancy, record keeping with respect to working hours, overtime and salary disbursement, which were hitherto unclear.
- We have also introduced employee accommodation standards, preventing exploitation, safety and security especially for, migrant workers.
- More importantly, work on submitting a very comprehensive Industrial Relations Bill and the Occupational Health & Safety Bill to the Parliament are underway.

- Both bills are now open for public consultations and we hope to have these bills presented to Parliament at the earliest.
- Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to thank and send my well wishes to the outgoing and incoming DG's of this esteemed institution.
- Thank you for your attention.

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