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MALDIVES

Statement

by

Her Excellency Dunya Maumoon
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at the
UN Secretary General's Climate Summit 2014

New York, 23 September 2014

Mr Secretary General, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentleman

Assalaamu alaikum and good afternoon

Our world, the planet earth, is pleading for action. It is headed towards irreversible damage caused by climate change: soaring temperatures, unpredictable and more extreme weather patterns, droughts, damage to coral reefs, increase in disease, and food shortages.

But then again, these facts have been clear for a long time. It was the political will and leadership that needed to catch up and face the reality.

Today's gathering of world leaders to address these critical issues is an important continuation of keeping the momentum going in the right direction. The Maldives delegation commends the Secretary General for this timely Summit.

The Maldives associates itself with the statement delivered by Bolivia on behalf of G77 and China, as well as the statement delivered by Nauru on behalf of AOSIS on the issue.

The Maldives' position on the issues before us has been consistent since 1987. We continue to follow the example set by Former President His Excellency Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. We continue to raise our voice loud and clear, at various fora, including here at the United Nations.

The Maldives is geared towards a pathway, which would abide by the decisions of the UNFCCC. This pathway is in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Prudent policy measures to combat climate change are being put into place. They include sustainable financing modalities, low emission development, adaptation opportunities and capacity building. At the same time we are fostering sustainability in our low-lying islands. Climate financing is not only crucial for making a deal in Paris in 2015; it is indispensable for reducing emissions and helping the countries to adapt.

The effects of climate change have no boundaries. It does not differentiate between small or big, rich or poor. The assumption that some countries are safe from climate change because of their geography or their economic power, is a dangerous myth.

The Maldives will continue to sound the alarm bell often and loud. We came here to this respected assembly, ready to take the pledge, ready to make commitments, ready to take bold action. The Maldives pledges to be part of the global solution by committing to a low-emission development future. We pledge to continue to remind emitting countries about their responsibility towards the future of the planet, our children, and the generations to come.

Mr Secretary General:

Today, I ask the leaders represented here: what have you been doing? What happened to the pledges made in Rio and Kyoto? Have you kept your promises?

Is it not ironic that nations like the Maldives, which are already taking steps to cut their emissions and protect our common environment, are made helpless bystanders, while others who ignore the threat they impose on us, decide our fate?

Is it not ironic that countries like the Maldives, whose contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, is just 0.00003 percent, face an existential threat because of these emissions?

The Maldives refuses to be helpless victims, but rather we will be the agents of change. We call on the emitting countries to do more, not just for Maldives, but also for the sake of the whole world. What we are witnessing today will undoubtedly be the fate of everyone tomorrow.

Mr Secretary General:

The Maldives, as the whole world is now aware, is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. With our limited resources, we are nevertheless committed to respond and adapt to climate change. Though the challenge seems insurmountable, the Government is striving to make the Maldives resilient. Looking at a short to medium term plan, The Maldives would require 1.5 billion US dollars to be invested on adaptation and mitigation.

For the corporate leaders here today, this may seem tiny, but for us in the Maldives, it may represent the difference between life and death. We urge that promises for financial contributions be met in full for the realisation of the pledges that have been made.

Mr Secretary General:

Just last Sunday, we witnessed over 400,000 people marching on the streets of New York asking the leaders of the world to take action on climate change. No more fear, no more hesitation, no more stepping back. It is clearly time for action.

The battle to protect people against the adverse effects of climate change cannot be won unless everyone works together. We need strong leadership, real political commitment, and the courage of all of us to make difficult choices.

Mr Secretary General, make a pledge to hold the emitting countries accountable.

Thank you.