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MALDIVES

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[Check Against Delivery]

Remarks by

Aminath Shauna

Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology

at the Interactive Dialogue Session 1: Addressing Marine Pollution.

27 June 2022

Thank you!

I thank the panellists for their valuable inputs thus far.

The Maldives enjoys **outstandingly rich marine and coral reef biodiversity** and is blessed with globally significant populations of marine megafauna. **The lives and livelihoods of our people**, are all completely dependent on the health of our marine and coral reef systems.

Our National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023, pledges to **protect at least 10% of our coral reef area, 20% of our wetlands** and mangroves and other representative reef habitats from each atoll by 2023.

We are proud of our achievements with **79 protected areas already legally protected**, including almost 14% of our coral reefs. We have plans to protect more areas.

Plastic production has risen exponentially in the last decades - amounting to approximately **400 million tonnes per year**. Yet only an estimated 9% have been recycled. The rest has either been disposed of in landfills or released into the environment, including into the ocean.

Micro-plastics have been detected from marine species and even in our blood. Vulnerable natural systems such as ours are affected by plastic pollution leading to loss of species and habitats.



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Domestically, the Maldives has taken strong action to combat marine plastic pollution, by enacting a **ban on the import, production, and sales of 13 types of single use plastic**. Alongside a renewed focus on alternatives, and waste segregation, to promote recycling and a reduction in the generation of waste, we hope to see a significant change in the amount of single use plastics in the Maldives.

We know that we cannot address this challenge alone.

For instance, a large amount of the plastic waste that ends up in our waters and on our beaches are generated outside of the Maldives. **Marine plastic pollution is a global hazard**, and requires global action.

We fully support more multilateral action and welcome the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly call for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

I look forward to the constructive and innovative discussions ahead and to taking effective action to protect our ocean.

I thank you