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MALDIVES

UNOC-ID/02

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Remarks by

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at the **Interactive Dialogue Session 2: Promoting and Strengthening Sustainable Ocean-based Economies, in Particular for Small Island developing States and Least Developed Countries**

28 June 2022

Thank you Co-Chairs for allowing me to take the floor.

I would like to begin by thanking the panellists for their valuable inputs thus far. Today's dialogue is of utmost importance for small island developing states like the Maldives.

The Maldives derives over 60% of our gross domestic product from the ocean. With tuna fisheries and coral reef based tourism industries, the ocean provides us with **sustenance, livelihoods, and a means of income**.

Culturally, and traditionally, Maldivians have always treated our ocean with deep respect and reverence.

For centuries, we have practiced **pole and line fishing**, which ensures virtually zero bycatch, protects vulnerable marine species and maintains a sustainable tuna stock.

This method of tuna fishing has been passed down through generations of Maldivian fishers, and it is a tradition that we take immense pride in.

The **protection, conservation and sustainable use of our marine resources** is key to ensuring the sustainable development of our ocean-based economies.



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We have **established 79 protected areas** to date, including almost 14% of our coral reefs, and continue to work towards expanding our protected area network into all natural atolls in the country.

We remain confident that these ambitious conservation policies **will ensure the sustainability of our ocean-based economies** and ensure that all Maldivians will be able to enjoy and benefit from the diverse and wonders of our ocean.

We cannot strengthen the sustainability of ocean based economies in island nations without the **support of our partners across the globe.**

The Maldives alone practicing sustainable pole and line fishing cannot protect Indian Ocean stocks.

We must urgently take steps to **abolish tariffs** on sustainable ocean-based economies and ensure that our rhetoric to support sustainability matches our actions.

To achieve this, we must finalise work on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index that will take into account the multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities faced by SIDS, large ocean states and LDCs.

We must also take steps to strengthen the ability of these states to establish **policies to promote and strengthen sustainable ocean-based economies** over the long term.

It is our responsibility as leaders to protect our natural endowment and to pass on to our children and our children's children a world where they can enjoy these beautiful oceans.

Let us today pledge to ensure that we will spare no effort to ensure that our ocean-based economies are protected, promoted, and strengthened and that the world we leave behind is bluer and greener than the one we have inherited.



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I thank you