**Fifth intersessional meeting of the Human Rights Council on Human Rights**

**and the 2030 Agenda**

**19 January 2023**

Remarks by:

H.E. Dr. Asim Ahmed

Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations Office at Geneva

*Check against delivery*

Thank you Chair,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be our guiding framework to end poverty, to protect the planet, and to ensure peace and security for all. The Agenda is rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties and declarations. It recognises that human rights are universal and indivisible. Rights such as the right to life, liberty, and security of person; the right to education, work, and health; the right to participate in cultural and political life; and, as established most recently, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, are inherent to all human beings. And that their realization is essential for the achievement of sustainable development.

Mr. Chair,

The promotion and protection of human rights is one of the integral pillars of the Maldivian foreign policy. As a member of the Human Rights Council, we will continue to advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights at home and abroad. We will continue to work towards achievements of the SDGs to ensure human rights are protected. President Solih’s administration has guaranteed safe drinking water and sanitation across all the islands. We are ensuring better connectivity across the archipelago, to facilitate better access to quality healthcare. We have ensured access to education, regardless of the size of the island. And we are proud of the advancements we have made in promoting gender equality, including allocating a third of all seats in local council for women.

The Maldives continues to press on the importance of tackling the climate crisis, sustainably using, and managing our ocean resources, and calling for greater environmental protection as outlined in multiple SDGs. The impacts of climate change are becoming more frequent and intense. We remain on the front lines, facing higher tidal waves, stronger winds, greater coral bleaching, increased sea swells and frequent flooding. Unless we can reverse the current global trajectory of climate change, the attainment of SDGs will be seriously compromised by disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable among us. This is why the Maldives had brought to the attention of this Council the human rights dimensions of climate change.

Therefore, it is vital to empower communities to act as agents of change and work with the international community to realize a world that respects human rights, fully guided by the overarching principles of the Sustainable Development Agenda to facilitate a more sustainable, more resilient transition towards equitable and safer world, leaving no one behind.

I thank you.