**Statement by Barbados on the Occasion of the Universal Periodic**

**Review (UPR) of the Republic of the Maldives**

**Wednesday, May 6, 2015**

Thank you Chairman

On behalf of the Government of Barbados I wish to extend a very warm welcome to the delegation of the Republic of the Maldives and in particular the Head of Delegation the Honourable Ms. Dunya Maumoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We also wish to take this opportunity to commend the Maldives for the effort which they made in producing their national report and for the presentation made today. The Report highlights the ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening the legal framework and administrative measures for the protection and enhancement human rights in the country.

Barbados notes positively the significant gains made in protecting the rights of vulnerable groups in the country through the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, the Sexual Offences Act and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse Act which strengthens the framework on protection for women, children and migrants from violence and sexual exploitation. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act is timely as it seeks to combat that scourge and affront to human dignity that is now prevalent in many regions of the world.

Another significant piece of legislation that also should be commended is the Disability Act whose aim is to advance the rights of persons with disabilities through affirmative action, provision for financial assistance and the regulation of minimum standards. It is axiomatic that any society is only as good as how it provides for, and meets the needs of its most vulnerable.

Barbados also takes note of the progress made since the Maldives first review with the full implementation of 58, and the partial implementation of 32 of the 126 recommendations made by the Human Rights Council. Barbados encourages the Maldives to continue its efforts in moving towards the full implementation of those recommendations accepted.

Barbados identifies with the challenges of Small Island Developing States and especially with the existential threat posed by climate change. This, along with the Maldives geographical spread, presents significant capacity and administrative challenges. We however believe that the strongest foundation for any country rests in upholding the dignity of its citizens and the protection of their human rights. These rights must be articulated through discussion at all levels of the society and embedded in a legal and administrative framework that transcends political differences. As such, Barbados encourages the Maldives to continue its cooperation with this Human Rights body in the consolidation of its democratic institutions and in developing a strong democratic tradition.

In concluding, Barbados takes this opportunity to wish the Maldives a successful UPR.

Thank you.