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**Statement by the Delegation of Nepal at the interactive dialogue with the Delegation of the Republic of Maldives during the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 6 May 2015**

Mr. Président,

Nepal warmly welcomes the high-level delegation of the Republic of Maldives and appreciates the comprehensive presentation of its national report.

Despite myriad of challenges such as those emanating from climate change and adverse geographical setup, progress on economic and human development in the Maldives in recent decades has been remarkable, resulting in its graduation from the LDC status in 2011. Provision of free education up to higher secondary level, introduction of universal health care, and impressive achievement in curbing infant and maternal mortality are some notable examples. We note with appreciation various laws enacted after its first UPR, including the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 2012, the Anti-Trafficking Act of 2013, the Sexual Offences Act of 2014, and the Sexual Harassment and Abuse Prevention Act of 2014, among others. There are, however, several challenges facing the Maldivian authorities, such as addressing the emerging issues related to the religious extremism and high prevalence of drug abuse among its nationals.

While wishing the Maldives a successful UPR, my delegation would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Give continuity to strengthening of national human rights institutions and mechanisms.
2. Continue the longstanding de facto moratorium on death penalty and further consider towards its legal abolition.

I thank you.