**43rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group**

**TONGA**

**1st May 2023**

Statement by:

Hawla Ahmed Didi

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*Check against delivery*

Thank you, Mr. President,

The Maldives warmly welcomes the distinguished delegation from Tonga to this fourth cycle review and thanks them for their presentation today.

As a fellow Small Island Developing State, Maldives takes positive note of Tonga’s work in the promotion and protection of human rights since the third cycle of the UPR, especially the Government’s initiatives to protect and safeguard the vulnerable groups by assisting them to become more resilient to the impact of climate change and natural disasters. In this regard, we welcome the formulation of the Tonga Climate Change Policy – A Resilient Tonga by 2035 and Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2018-2028 to build resilience and address the ongoing climate change challenges.

In constructive spirit, the Maldives makes the following two recommendations:

* Increase the participation of women at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making processes in the Government.
* Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

We wish Tonga a successful review.

Thank you, Mr. President.