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Madame President

New Zealand welcomes the participation of Maldives in this process.

New Zealand **commends** Maldives for successfully hosting free and fair democratic elections in 2019 and for its progress strengthening its judiciary.

Noting Maldives’ moratorium on executions, New Zealand **recommends** that the Maldives take further steps towards the formal abolition of the death penalty.

New Zealand **recommends** Maldives make further efforts to protect and promote the rights of women and girls and eliminate gender-based discrimination. In particular, New Zealand **recommends** that Maldives take further steps to increase the representation of women in Parliament.

New Zealand **recommends** Maldives decriminalises consensual same-sex relationships between adults, and takes action to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

New Zealand also **recommends** Maldives takes concrete measuresto protect and promote the right to freedom of expression.

Thank you Madame President.