

Mr. Enrico Gaveglia, UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives
Closing Remarks for the Event “Our Climate, Our Present, Our Future”

Wednesday, 20 October 2021

09:00 – 14:00

Malé, the Maldives

Honourable Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Ms. Aminath Shauna;

Honorable Climate Envoy Ms. Sabra Noordeen

UNICEF Representative to the Maldives, Ms. Marjan Montazemi;

Esteemed panellists, Government and diplomatic communities, private sector partners, university students, young people, colleagues from the UN and everyone in attendance online and in presence from near and far;

Assalaam Alaikum, Good Afternoon, and a very warm thank you for your participation in this exciting event!

First of all, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, UNICEF that brought us together in this beautiful event.

My sincere appreciation to all the panellists and contributors for sharing your expertise, ideas and hopes with all of us! Shukriya.

During COVID we often complained about the intrusion into our private sphere because of all the tracing and digital tools deployed in the fight of the pandemic.

One thing we have gained though is a wider public space for digital dialogue, and today we have a sample of it in our discussion around “Our Climate, Our Present, Our Future”.

This has been a unique opportunity to explore the issue of climate change from some very unique and thought-provoking perspective.

The conversations that have emerged from this platform today have connected us here today in this beautiful room offered to us by the Islamic Centre, where we heard about the realities and challenges of like-minded young people towards our collective climate action and advocacy.

You feel home when you share a sense of belonging, and I felt much at home today with you all.

I am heartened to see the commitment and passion of young people on climate advocacy.

Which as one of our advocates from Seychelles mentioned 'won't remain young' age wise but I sincerely hope they will preserve that clear articulation of thoughts we saw today. UNPOLLUTED by the world in crisis with itself.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change remains the defining challenge of our generations...

WE are called to take action today so as to shape our children and future generations.

How many more calls does the global community, us all, need to hear, before commitments under the Paris Agreement will be met? I am paraphrasing here as you may recall one of the most inspiring speeches at the recent General Assembly from Barbados – “We urge all nations to join Maldives with bolder, urgent action to reduce global emissions and increase funding for developing countries.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I just landed in beautiful Maldives - it's been four weekends in total, and I made a statement to be out there as much as I can to connect with realities so that UNDP is closely aligning with the Government's Strategic Action Plan priorities of 'Island Life' and 'Blue Economy', the UN Cooperation Framework on sustainable natural resource management and climate resilience – first and foremost by connecting with the people of Maldives. I commit UNDP to see live the struggles and join the fight to climate change.

Over the weekend for example - I was in the island of Thaa Kandoodhoo joining World Food Day celebrations - a beautiful island known for its spicy chillis.

It is also home to resourceful young people, much as you all here, as well as an amazing group of women who held the social fabric and contributed to the economic makeup - all trying to make a positive impact within their community.

The visit to the island was also an opportunity to witness first-hand the deep connection between people and their natural environment. How each thrive off each other. It is a delicate balance.

I'll be very honest, the panels today opened a window into the public space filled by 2 generations (if not more) giving meaning to all that we do. I'd like to think the foundations we lay today, with the equal participation of youth across Maldives, will shape the future we all wish to see.

A future of resiliency, a future of growth, of reduced inequalities and greater prosperity.

A future of ecological balance, and most importantly a future of hope!

Although your words today reconfirm the immensity of the challenges that we face, it also has filled my heart with immense motivation to which I commit the institution I represent, knowing that there are individuals and organizations out there who refuse to give up.

And when I talk to my son (who is seven years) I tell him 3 things:

Enjoy what you do always

Give it your best shot at anytime

Never ever give up.

I am sure that I am not the only one leaving this auditorium today inspired to redouble our efforts on climate advocacy and action.

We are all in this together. And we will continue to work together. Count on UNDP. Count on the United Nations.

Shukriya.