



## **Launching of Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) at the International Women's Day Event**

*Monday, 22 March, 2030 - 2330hrs, Meeruma Events*

**Speech by Enrico Gaveglia, UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives  
Approx: 5 minutes**

Assalaam Alaikum, a very Good Evening to you all,

- Your Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and Her Excellency Fazna Ahmed
- Your Excellency Vice President Faisal Naseem
- Honourable Aishath Mohamed Didi - Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services
- Honourable Ministers of The Cabinet
- Honourable State Ministers and Senior Officials
- Excellencies from the Diplomatic Corps
- UN colleagues
- Recipients of the Rehendi Awards
- Special invitees gracing this evening ceremony

I am very honored to be here with you today as we witness the launch of an important landmark for Maldives the National Gender Equality Action Plan (2022-2026) - such a significant milestone in our collective effort to promote gender equality and to ensure a meaningful empowerment of women across the nation.

I am very pleased to share that this multi-sectoral Action Plan was developed in complete fulfilment of the requirements under Article 42 of the Gender Equality Act Law No. 18 of 2016. It was also developed in compliance with the National Gender Equality Policy formulated the same year and aligned to the Gender Equality Law.

Let me convey our most sincere congratulations from all of us at the United Nations and our personal recognition from the United Nations Development Programme. We commend the Government of Maldives especially the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, her Honorable Minister Aishath Mohamed Didi for the exceptional leadership demonstrated throughout the process. Let me also congratulate the entire Cabinet and the President's Office for the strategic undertaking and concrete steps taken to endorse the Gender Equality Action Plan. My most sincere appreciation to the leadership and vision of His Excellency the President who will be Chairing the Steering Committee of the Gender Equality Action Plan.

The journey to get here has not been without challenges, and UNDP is proud to have been a trustworthy and accompanying partner, step-by-step throughout the process.

Five years ago in 2017, when it all started within the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services we were just in the aftermath of the National Gender Equality Policy of 2016, which we have been humbled to contribute to.

Along the way we have convened partners and created strong coalitions of support. And please let me acknowledge at the core of this group, **The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia**, with whom we share an equal agenda in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Australia is a champion across the region and beyond in our collective strive towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Gender Equality Action Plan is complete with a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. One that is aligned to the Government's Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023 which is now in full acceleration to respond to the state obligations under international human rights instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, where Maldives has indicated its commitment.

This Action Plan is also a framework which will go beyond state actors to capture the commitment of private sector organizations, CSOs and gender advocates. This will translate policy into concrete actions and ensure that gender equality is a connecting thread that will run through all sectors across the Government and non-government entities.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a core mandate of the UN and in strong focus more than ever for UNDP. I am pleased to highlight the efforts and solidarity of all - starting from our UN Resident Coordinator and UN Agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO with the entire UN family of non-resident agencies): a collective effort to center and mainstream human rights and gender equality, in an inclusive development offer that goes beyond the tag-line of 'leaving no one behind'. This is critical to achieving a development ambition which is sustainable and future-proof.

Together, with the actions ingrained in the Gender Equality Action Plan:

- Let's reach all disadvantaged groups,
- Let's strengthen the voice and agency of women and girls,
- Let's create change for and around women,
- Let's promote avenues that pave gender equality and challenge stereotypes.

You can count on the continued support of the UN system, and the passion and the renewed commitment of UNDP as we start this new phase of our journey for equality.

Once again, many congratulations!

I thank you all for your kind attention. Shukriya.