



The Launching of

'Reflecting 15 years, The "Rights" Side of Life 2020' - Third 'Rights Side of Life' Survey

On the occasion of celebrating Human Rights Day 2020

Speech by UNDP Resident Representative Akiko Fujii

Thursday, 10th December 2020

Commission Members of HRCM, Dr. Ahmed Adham Abdulla, Moomina Waheed, Shifaath Abdul Razzaq,
Mariyam Muna

Chairperson of Family Protection Authority, Mr. Ahmed Anwar

Secretary General of HRCM, Uz. Mohamed Yaamin Ibrahim

Colleagues from HRCM, FPA and the UN system

Dignitaries,

Assalaam Alaikum and Good Afternoon.

I'm delighted to be here, representing UNDP, at this launch of the joint flagship human rights baseline report, 'Rights Side of Life', which, happily, coincides with our celebration of Human Rights Day. I would like to thank our partners, the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives and the Family Protection Authority, for the tremendous effort which has been put into this survey. While its launch has been delayed because of the COVID pandemic, the report itself is extremely timely, as the current health crisis has drawn attention to many human rights challenges. This year's Human Rights Day theme is 'Recover better – Stand up for human rights'. And there can be no better time than now to discuss the report's findings and to use them in tackling systemic inequalities and exclusions, as we seek to build back better.

The 'Rights Side of Life 2020' survey provides an independent, robust and evidence-based description of where we are now, and what needs to be done to ensure human rights are better protected in the Maldives.

This is the third 'Rights Side of Life' survey since UNDP and HRCM issued the first report 15 years ago.

Since then, the Maldives has made significant strides as a nation embodying the universal values of human rights. At the same time, however, we must recognise the scale of the challenge which still lies ahead.

The findings of the survey are thought-provoking and intriguing: For instance, in comparison with the previous surveys, there is a worrying increase in the number of women who did not respond to the questions regarding equal rights in the family unit and child custody matters.

The findings reveal the need for both greater transparency and accountability in our governance institutions, and for greater awareness of human rights amongst ordinary citizens. The third 'Rights Side of Life' survey provides valuable data which can be used to initiate discussions concerning human rights, state obligations and citizen responsibilities.

It is our sincere hope that the survey findings will contribute to the development of policies which strengthen systems that promote and protect human rights and the rule of law in this country. At UNDP, we regard this day as a reminder that human rights are central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. And we renew our commitment to supporting the government and people of Maldives in building a more resilient and just society.

Shukriya. Thank you.