



**Statement by Mr Ibrahim Thoriq**  
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**Republic of Maldives**

10<sup>th</sup> Joint Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and  
the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol

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President of the Joint 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamalaikum and a very good [morning/evening]

Let me first take this opportunity to congratulate you [Mr/Madam] President on your election to guide our deliberations here. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full co-operation and commitment to the work ahead. Let me also thank the people and Government of the French Republic and the Secretariat for the excellent organisation and hospitality.

The Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol is rightly heralded as amongst the most successful instruments of international co-operation. It epitomises how collective action can come together to address global problems. Over the past few decades, Parties have shown immense commitment and flexibility, worked in good faith and in a spirit of co-operation and collaboration. As we look towards the future, we must continue to call upon and tap into the same creed and spirit.

The health of our ozone layer is inextricably linked to the well being of our peoples, ecosystems and our future development trajectories. It was this recognition that led to countries to come together to agree on the Vienna Convention and subsequently, the Montreal Protocol.

The Maldives is committed to ensure the effective and substantive realisation of the spirit and the provisions as set within the Convention and the Protocol. It is with this view that we have sought the acceleration of the targets as set out within the Protocol. In this regard, we were the first country to phase out chlorofluorocarbons. We did so two years ahead of the schedule as stipulated by the Protocol. We have now set our sights on phasing out hydrochlorofluorocarbons by 2020, ten years ahead of the schedule. To this end, the Government of the Maldives will impose an import ban on all HCFC based equipment early next year.

However, this is not an easy task. As a small island developing state, and with limited access to necessary resources and appropriate technology, we have a bumpy road ahead of us. We remain, however, committed and shall continue to move forward inspite of such challenges.

I wish to bring to the attention of the Parties an issue that we are facing in the Maldives. It is an issue, which I believe, also holds true in many other SIDS. It is the issue of the HCFC use in the fisheries sector. This sector not only constitutes an important component of our national economy and livelihoods, but as a relatively large user of HCFCs in the country, is also an important determinant of our compliance under the Protocol. Whilst we have accelerated the phase out of HCFCs, this has been associated with an alarming increase in the use of HFCs, a chemical that has a high global warming potential. The Maldives has always been concerned of the potential impacts of climate change and have consistently called for collective action to this regard and have geared our national policy towards a low emissions development strategy. There is a tension here then. Compliance

under Montreal Protocol has become a trade off between our climate change concerns. SIDS remain the canary in the coal mine. We do not believe this is right. We do not believe that there is no other alternative to this. Addressing the question of the fisheries sector is the key here. If we do not act now, we risk pushing countries such as the Maldives towards non-compliance. We request this body to consider the matter and take proactive measures as necessary to this regard.

Small island developing states remain at the forefront to be impacted from future climate change. This was reiterated at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States held in Samoa this September. Our unique vulnerabilities and ecological fragility compounded by limited resources mean that changes to the global climate will impact us significantly.

Eighty percent of the islands of the Maldives lie less than 1 meter above the sea level, and the vast majority of our settlements are less than 100 meter inland. Climate change then presents significant challenges, not only in terms of securing sustainable development, but potentially an existential threat as well. Given this, the Maldives is particularly concerned of how we respond to the increase of HFCs. It is indeed easy to dismiss the issue of increased HFCs by holding to the view that HFCs fall beyond the concern of the Montreal Protocol.

This Convention and Protocol has always shown foresight. It has never lacked the courage for bold action. It has responded to the needs of the times. During the First Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, we acknowledged that some of the alternatives to ozone depleting substances have a high global

warming potential and that this should be taken into account when their suitability as substitutes is considered.

The Montreal Protocol has the necessary infrastructure and experience and in this manner is a competent body to take on this task. Addressing the issue of HFC through the framework of the Protocol is not only suitable, but will allow us to consolidate the gains the Protocol has contributed to protecting the environment. In this regard, the proposals submitted by the Federated States of Micronesia and the North America underscore a critical need to address the disconcerting increase of the use of HFCs. As such, the Maldives lends our support to the amending the Montreal Protocol to holistically and effectively taking into account the issue of HFCs. We urge all Parties to consider the amendments and seek to find common ground in a manner that we can preserve and advance the good work done by the Convention and the Protocol.

I do not intend to take much of your time. Before I conclude, let me once again thank you, the Ozone Secretariat and the Government and peoples of the French Republic. I look forward to working constructively with all colleagues...

I thank you.

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