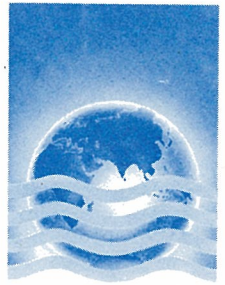


MDV/SLR/ST/6



**SMALL STATES
CONFERENCE ON
SEA LEVEL RISE**
MALE, 14 - 18 NOVEMBER 1989

CONCLUDING ADDRESS

by

**Hon. Abbas Ibrahim
Chairman of the Conference
and Leader of the Maldives Delegation**

**Concluding Session
Ministerial Meeting**

**Male', Republic of Maldives
18 November 1989**

Excellencies, Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We have now come to the close of a momentous meeting - a meeting which concerns the health of the planet Earth and indeed the very survival of the small states of the world. When we consider the enormity of the problems we have addressed here, with a unified stand, we can be justifiably proud of our accomplishments.

The small states of the world are the most vulnerable of nations to global warming, climate change and sea level rise. We are faced with the prospect of gradual destruction in any scenario of sea level rise. We are acutely aware that there has been little movement towards controlling the emission of greenhouse gases. Nor have there been adequate alternatives or viable options developed for the small states of the world to address the problem of sea level rise.

It is in this context that the Maldives took the initiative of convening the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise to consider the issues before us, to make a beginning of a joint endeavour towards the threat of sea level rise.

Our presence here is a tangible testimony to our commitment to that goal. It is a manifestation of our joint conviction, will and commitment to work together towards a viable future.

For the Government and the people of the Maldives, this is a memorable meeting. A unique landmark. It is the first time in our history that small states from all over the world have gathered

on our soil. We are privileged by your presence and we are proud of this occasion.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We have done more than simply meet here. The core of our task has been to explore ways and means of facing the challenges that lie ahead.

I am happy to state that we have achieved reasonable progress in formulating an initial strategy for the small states of the world and we have been able to make a unified stand on this critical issue which is reflected in the Male'

Declaration on Global Warming and Sea Level Rise adopted here today. We have also formulated A Programme of Action for the small states of the world. We have decided to establish an Action Group comprising representatives from the Carribean, South Pacific, Mediterranean and the Indian ocean Regions. We have also agreed to adopt other wide ranging measures to help ameliorate the consequences of environmental degradation facing the world today. As I mentioned before, we have envisaged this as a beginning and we are firm in our determination to sustain the momentum achieved at this Conference.

At this meeting, we have heard very constructive and enlightening presentations by various resource persons of international repute. We have also had most thought provoking country presentations from eminent ministers and distinguished delegates present here. The discussions and comments on the papers

presented have shed further light on the issues before us. These have contributed immensely to the success of this Conference. May I, therefore, express my heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The success of this Conference is largely due to the delegates and the observers and others who have been present here throughout the Conference. By virtue of your stature alone as eminent policy makers and scientists and managers, by your constructive interventions, speeches and presentations and not the least by your patience and understanding, my work as Chairman has been a most satisfying and enjoyable experience. In this context, I would like to make special mention of the three Vice Chairmen and the Rapporteur. It is their guidance and cooperation in steering this meeting which made the Conference a success. Their contributions have been invaluable.

Allow me also to extend my very warm and sincere thanks to the Secretariat including those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help keep the Conference running smoothly and efficiently. I should not forget the many Protocol and Security Officers who have worked hard to make your stay comfortable. Nor would it be fitting to forget the officers of the transport service who have ensured prompt movements between Kurumba Village and other islands.

I should thank the management and staff of Kurumba Village Resort for their excellent hospitality and efficient services rendered

at all times and for the excellent support services and facilities provided for the Conference.

I must also convey my sincere thanks to the local and international media who have given wide and extensive coverage to our deliberations here and carried our message throughout the world. The role of the media is indeed a very important element in the struggle for a brighter future for all of us. I congratulate them for the excellent coverage of the Conference and extend them once again our sincere thanks.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that you have all had a pleasant and memorable stay in the Maldives. I know that we have kept you extremely busy during the course of this Conference, but I trust sincerely that it has not been all work and that you have had some time to relax and enjoy the peace and tranquility of the Maldives.

I now have the honour to convey, on behalf of His Excellency, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, his deep appreciation for your participation at this Conference. His Excellency is honoured by the esteemed presence of many Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates and a number of internationally renowned experts. The deliberations of this conference have been guided by your wisdom, and indeed your cooperation has been vital in making this conference a success. The President also extends his very warm and heartfelt gratitude to all those who have travelled to the Maldives including those from far corners of the world..

And finally, as we are about to bid each other farewell, may I express the hope that you will have many more opportunities to visit us in the future.

With these remarks I conclude the Ministerial Meeting of the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise.

Thank you.