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Now I will continue the meeting. This is a second meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Committee in this session of the parliament. And I would like to thank and welcome the ambassador and the ambassador's team for accepting our invitation to have a meeting with us on discussing the ways and collaboration we this committee and the Indian High Commission could have. Before I start, I would like to introduce my committee members. Myself, Abdulla Rifau from South Maafannu. To my left is Mohamed Musthafa Ibrahim, West Maafannu constituency. And next is Ahmed Abdulla Shazeem, Hulhumale' Central. And Hassan Waheed, Vilufushi constituency. Mohammed Alsan Ahmed, South Thinadhoo constituency. Mohamed Niushad, Keyodhoo constituency and he is representing MDP. And Mohamed Mamdhoo, Funadhoo constituency. We have total 11 members in this committee and 10 is from the ruling party PNC and one is from MDP. And I'll give a small brief on the Environmental Committee the works we do. General introduction establish on 11th of June during the last session of the parliament this committee was established. This is now one of the standing committee in the People's Majlis, consisting of 11 members. And this committee is mainly responsible for exclusively on environmental and climate change issues. Our mandate is written in article 130 of Standing Order of the Parliament mainly to examine and study all matters related to environment and climate change and take necessary measures, oversee the work of the Ministry of Climate Change Environment and Energy, Environmental Regulatory Authority, Maldives Meteorological Service, Utility Regulation Authority and other government-related offices regarding climate change and environment. Advise these institutions regarding their functions and scrutinize their work as well. We have undergone these works



during the last sessions Climate Emergency Bill, Water and Sewerage bill, Energy bill, Utility Regulatory Authority bill, Waste Management bill. We have also reviewed climate-related resolutions, address environment concerns raised by the public and we have also done a post-legislative scrutiny on Climate Emergency Act. The report is about to release. And we have other on-going issues in our committee. Recently we have been discussing on one time use plastic below 500ml, which is raised by some of the businesses that it is difficult for them to get some related products for sports use, medical use that is over 500ml. It is not manufactured in that. And if they want to manufacture our population is too small for a number to, yeah. So, this is under discussion. And also, we get a lot of issues from different councils regarding their waste management system, water sewerage systems and we do bring the relevant authorities to this committee and discuss on these issues. And I was given opportunity to participate the last COP summit as well and this was one of the first time a parliament member has been given the opportunity, and it is through special envoys invitation and supported by the parliament's finance. And we had met before the UN secretariat, and we have requested same as what we can do together, and we requested for assistance on our committee members training opportunities. And we were given a training was organized recently in Paradise Island Resort, and we were all participating together with other parliament members as well. Because the climate, this topic is very wide, and it is there are a lot of new areas to be discussed. Because we none of us is especially from this area, climate and environment area. So, it's all about how we get to know the topic as well. So, now I will pass the mic to the high commissioner to give any brief. Thank you.

Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Morning Excellency and excellencies. It's a pleasure meeting all of you. Environment and Climate committee is a very important committee given that in today's world it is one of the most sort after because of the problems that environmental change and climate change can bring in. The whole world is affected because of the environmental change and there are no boundaries as far as environment is concerned. What can happen in Maldives can be seen, the effect of it can be seen in Sri Lanka and in India vice versa. What happens in India comes over here. And obviously we will have to come together, join hands together to see how we would be effectively managing the problems that the environment and climate change things happen. How we can mitigate those issues. And since air and water don't seem to understand any political boundaries,



they will cross across and it is important for us to cooperate in that manner. We are more than happy to be of that kind of a partner with Maldives to address the issues pertaining to the environment and climate change. We have been having some of the areas where we have already started cooperation. There are some training courses which for the people, it is not necessarily for the committee members per se, but for employees in the government of Maldives, people who are working in the other committees, in ministries and URA and other places. We do have standard ITECH courses on which we have been sending people from Maldives on a regular basis. Just to give you a figure, Excellency, we issue, we give about 300 scholarships every year under the civilian site for nearly 250 different courses that are available. And in the past few years, I would say, I mean, it just started with 1978, after we signed an MOU with Maldives. And since then, we have trained thousands of our Maldivian friends, both under the ITECH module and also under specialized courses. For example, we have specialized courses for the Judicial Service Commission, for the Civil Service Commission, for the Police Services, for MNDF, so on and so forth. We have specialized courses and we will be happy to organize any specialized course that you would be looking at to improve the skills of your people. We have wonderful institutions and we also face a lot of climate change issues. Our country has all kinds of climatic conditions, from a desert to an active volcano. We have an active volcano in India called the Barren Island. Similarly, we have deserts, we have peaks, Himalayas, the coastal areas. Recently when I joined service, we used to say that, that was about 30 years back. We used to say that 7,500 km of coastline. But now we have revised it because we have taken all our islands in Lakshadweep, Minicoy, Andaman, Nicobar and also other places. And it is now 11,500 km. So, with 11,500 km and the erosion and the increase in temperature of the sea, there's a lot of activity that takes place which affects the climate in a bad way. We have specialized institutes like INCOIS and others who have been working on the climate change issues to ensure that our experience can be shared with the Global South. We recently had a team from NPOL which is part of Government of India's Climate Action issues, particularly on the sea, the climatic changes that takes place because of the temperature variation and the salinity of the water that gets affected. We recently had a visit from the experts about 7 or 8 scientists had come along with a survey ship. And we had a seminar with MNU on how we can collaborate between our two countries. So, we have been actively working with Maldives to ensure that we have good collaboration. Apart from that, it's not only mitigation but also when there is a disaster the NDMA between India and Maldives



have been cooperating very well. We have been working together. There are many visits that have taken place from the NDMA authorities of Maldives to India. And training again part of it. I can give a list of training that are available even now. I will share it with your Excellencies. So, under NDMA we have this good collaboration for ensuring that whenever disaster takes place, how to address it. We have the, with the MNDF also we have the HADR exercise here. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster relief exercise we have started last year. We had it in the exercise was held in Maafilaafushi where in how the desalination plants can be brought in immediately, so on and so forth. Excellency, during the visit of our Prime Minister, we have also donated two trauma centers, mobile trauma centers along with the water drone, which can carry them. It has got capacity of treating three hundred at a time with an operating table and everything under all the medicines, everything we have handed it over to the Ministry of Health. We also trained about eight of the technicians to use those skills by sending specialists over here. So, we have been with Maldives and we will more than happy to look at any other requirements of Maldives also in terms of climate change. Its mitigation, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Excellency, you're also overseen URA (Utilization Regulatory Authority). We also have something called as BIS, which is known as Baarath Institute of Standards. So, we could consider some kind of an MOU between the two agency's also for collaboration as well as sharing of experience both from your side and from our side. Because it's always a two-way process. You are a country with 99% ocean. And the kind of experiences that you would be gaining would be very important for us to address our issues particularly when we have 11500 kilometers of cost line. So, it would be a good opportunity and standardization, BIS standards are, Baarath standards as we called as Indian Standard. It used to be called as ISA (Indian Standard Institute). But we have changed it to BIS recently. So, collaboration between BIS and URA, we have been, I mean that's a very promising area I would say. Because I have been watching the URA regulatory mechanisms and the orders that have been issued since we do a lot of projects in Maldives. So, the standards that are given by URA, whether it is has to be copper cable, it has to be this particular strength of material that will have to be put in the kind of cement that has to be brought in. We follow all those things. And in India we under the BIS standards we also have a lot of issues which can be easily adopted where presently you don't have that particular expertise. So, that is another area where I think we can in for corporation for between BISM and URA. And as a member of parliament, Majlis parliament, we do have training session under PRIDE. We call it as the Lok Sabha. We recently had a



group of you people also come over there. But that was mostly for your secretariat people. We can also organize exclusively for the members of Majlis to attend certain things. But if it is particularly on one particular committee area alone, we will have to draw that up. We'll have to tailor that program that can suit your requirements. So, if there is a proposal in a particular manner, our PRIDE institution, which has been training about 160 parliaments around the world it would be possible for us to look at that also. We look forward to getting such kind of a proposal from you, where we can work out. You would have to please give us three, four months lead time on that. Because, pride will have to coordinate amongst themselves and do that. We can also expose you to various other private and government institutes which work on climate change issues, both around the country. There are specialized institutes which take care of oceanography, specialized institute which take care of hydrography, on desalination like NPOL, Fisheries also. How the climate change affects the fisheries catch and how they move. For example, the decrease in temperature, the tuna actually dives farther down below. So, your line and pole fishing is getting difficult. Because you are mandated only to do a line and pole fishing. Now the pole can't reach the depths under which the, to which the tuna is now diving. So those kind of how to address that and how to mitigate that particular problem, we have work down some solutions on that. So, we are happy to share. This was actually shared during our seminar in MNU. So, we have lot of opportunities to look at the possibility of collaborating in the specialized area that you have said, and we look forward to your proposal, Excellency. And you can, I can assure you from that Government of India has always been a friend to Maldives and will continue to be so.

Chairperson:

Thank you so much, sir. for the record, I forgot to mention the team of Indian High Commission. I would just address Shri G. Balasubramanian, the High Commissioner to the Maldives. Mr. Kumar Gaurav, Deputy High Commissioner, and Mr. Nandheshwar, the Secretary on Political Affairs, Indian High Commission. And also I would, Mr. Abdul Asadulla Shihab from Gemanafushi dhaairaa has joined us. And now I will open the floor to any of the members for any question or any discussion. Thank you. Actually, if there is any opportunity for specialist in environment and climate change, if there's anything we can draw out, a training would be great for the members and also the secretariat of this committee.



Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Excellencies, let me repeat that we have two particular courses which are very relevant to the area that we have been discussing presently. One is Environmental and Social Impact Assessment of Development Projects. That happens in June. And Geoinformatics, Disaster Reduction, and National Security, which again is of the caliber of the Majlis members who can also attend. Although this is open for, this is basically for people who are working in the secretariat in this particular field in a, on a daily basis. Since you are the regulatory authority who would be forming bills and rules and regulations in this regard. Perhaps, these two if any of you would like to participate. My only request is by the end of this month if you can send the nomination. Because we would need two months of lead time on that. These courses are open to all 160 countries around the world. And it's on a first come first serve basis. So, we would be happy to get nominations from your side. 2 or 3 or 4 people from your side, which we can block immediately and get the slot allocated for Maldives. I'll leave this list of trainings that are there, what had happened last year. Where people from Maldives have participated and what are coming from this year onwards that relate I have; we have selected courses from June onwards still June/July we have selected some courses per training to environment. So, please fill it up and Dash would be in a position to work with your secretariat to get how it has to be filled and so on and so for. We would be happy to look at it. May I give this to you?

First Secretary (Pol) Nandeshwar Dashdikpal Kishor:

And this is only till June/July. We have the yearlong process whereby you can have different training courses and you can all apply for those training courses. We would be happy to accommodate that.

Chairperson:

And also, if there are any conferences related to environment and climate change which you are, you will of course be submitting it to the Foreign Ministry. If there is any opportunity that you could extend the invitation to the committee as well through the Foreign Ministry of course. Say if there are like 3 chances just if we can get one for the Parliament, this committee that would be great. And also, there is a department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science, Technology, Environment, Forest and Climate Change in Parliament as well. And if we would get an opportunity to share the knowledge of them or like a study tour it would be a great opportunity.



Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Certainly Excellency. We are also, I mean I can say now we are also looking at the possibility of a visit from our speaker this year. This is the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. Speaker of Majlis has been to India twice, since 2025 and 2026 to attend various conferences and on the invitation of our speaker. So, we are working on a return visit. So, that would be a great opportunity to look at the possibility of closer collaboration between Majlis and Parliament and the different committees. I am also happy to announce that we have shared it with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of course that there is a Parliamentary Friendship Group as you have on India, we have also created one on Maldives. And that has been shared the list of members has been shared. So, more collaboration between Majlis is something which is very very important. And we look forward to continuing this cooperation. With the visit of, whenever it is convenient for both sides, we will try to organize this visit to sometime in May/June, whenever it is possible. And of our speaker there is an in-principle agreement of return visit by our speaker. So, in the next two month if we can work closely with each other, identify areas of getting more strong more cooperation, stronger strengthening our cooperation in different areas whether it is friendship group, whether it is different committees which would like to have extended cooperation, collaboration and exchange of information. We would, we can draw it up as a MOU which can be signed during the visit of our speaker. And the speaker visit not finalized yet. But we are working towards it. So, once that happens during that visit it would be a good deliverable. I would request Ministry of Foreign Affairs also the additional secretary who's present here to request him also to help us in this.

Chairperson:

Mr. Mohamed Musthafa wants to share something from Maafannu west.

West Maafannu constituency member Mohamed Musthafa Ibrahim:

Thank you very much. Actually, we got very good information about what we are, we can do together in India and Maldives as well. So, I think this is a very good meeting and I'm very happy to see the ambassador and it's very good information to us. And hopefully we can do together to sustain and develop in this environment Maldives government, India as well. Thank you very much.



Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Thank you, sir.

Chairperson:

Mr. Asadulla Shihab.

Gemanafushi constituency member Asadhulla Shihab:

Thank you High Commissioner. Actually, the biggest challenge we have now in Maldives on environment aspect we really don't have a way of hazardous waste management so far. And this issue has been found mostly in the islands. Because, they have no way of disposing these waste oils and so far, what we have seen is, it is been buried. So, there are some households still using well water. So, if we talk on environment aspect, a challenge we have. This is the challenge we have now this hazardous waste management and so on. As I mentioned we still don't have a solution for that. Right now, I think there are some exporters who is exporting this hazardous waste. But considering the volume of waste we get I believe that we should have a solution in Maldives. And earlier we, the government of Maldives chose to do some reclamation, landfilling with the waste. But now, since there are so self-grown environmentalists now we cannot do that. We cannot do that. And that challenge has opposed to dispose this hazardous waste in a way the industry and stakeholders can agree actually. So, this is an area which I believe we can get help from India.

Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Thank you, Excellency. That's, actually a very important area in which India is also seized of this issue. When you say hazardous waste, what kind of hazardous waste? Because each has a different way of addressing things. Some can be incinerated and the gas can be captured to be worked out. Some will have to be treated with water. So, each of those hazardous material have a different methodology of addressing them. So, if we can get to know a little more about what kinds of hazardous waste. Because which kind of chemical, which kind of issue that actually is creeping into the thing. Or is it just fertilizer that is being used which is seeping into the well water. A little more information would help us in identifying the right agency that can provide the assistance. Need to know what kind of chemicals, what is the hazardous ways that you are addressing.



Gemanafushi Constituency member Asadhulla Shihab:

Mostly, it is used oil actually.

Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

The scrap oil?

Gemanafushi Constituency member Asadhulla Shihab:

The scrap oil. Yeah!

Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Just for, I mean scrap oil is one of the largest exports from Maldives to India. We have been actually taking away many of the scrap oils, scrap iron, scrap material from Maldives for recycling and working back in India. So, it is basically the oil. The Motor MGO.

Gemanafushi Constituency member Asadhulla Shihab:

Yeah! Yeah!

Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Sure, Excellency. We will look at it again. But as I told you, nearly 50 million dollars' worth of scrap material is being taken out of Maldives every year by India.

Gemanafushi Constituency member Asadhulla Shihab:

What really happening is from the local islands they don't get a volume. They don't get this kind of volume to export. So, what they do is, they try to find the easiest solution. That is dumping those to the ground. That is the challenge we are facing, because to send, let's say they are getting about 5 or 6 barrels per month. And sending this to Male' is a challenge for them just for the purpose of exporting. So, the islanders they choose to dump this oil to the ground. And it has been a big issue. And I think, because recently some friends from MNU, they also discuss regarding this issue. They are making a research on this. How the islanders are being affected with this issue.

Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

I understood Excellency. We will try to identify and get back to you on that.



Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Since there is no more question or discussion from the members, I would like to thank once again to the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner and the First Secretary for participating and accepting our invitation. And it is a great pleasure to have you all with us today. And we had a very good discussion, and we have got very good information that we can use for our work in the future. And we are delighted to know that we can work together as discussed and we will be waiting for more information on how we could go ahead. And once again thank you very much for being with us.

Indian High commissioner Mr. Shri G. Balasubramanian:

Excellency, thank you for inviting the High Commission of India to collaborate with the Committee on Environment and Climate change. It's a vast area in which there is a lot of possibilities for collaboration. What we will also do is that, we will send an outcome thing kind of a thing through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs particularly on whether it would be possible or rather stating that we would be looking at the possibilities of URA and BIS collaborating between the NDMA and the kinds of training that can happen. We will just summarize the whole meeting thing and we will pass it through Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that it can be taken up in due course. And particularly so if and when Speaker also visits that would be a good outcome document. Thank you, sir.

Chairperson:

Thank you. And now we will conclude the meeting. Thank you.

