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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights on her visit to the Republic of Maldives

Comments by the State*

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Comments of the Republic of Maldives to the Report of the Special Rapporteur

1. The Government of Maldives appreciates the comprehensive report to be submitted by the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights (A/HRC/43/50/add.2) to the 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council.
2. The Government would like to emphasize its commitment towards upholding democratic norms and human rights in accordance with the UN Charter and the Constitution of the Republic of Maldives. The promotion and protection of human rights is integral to the reform agenda set by the administration of His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. We also seek to enhance our engagements with core human rights mechanisms to ensure the alignment of national laws and policies with international standards.
3. The Maldives is a multiparty democracy where Islamic identity and unity of faith are intrinsic to its culture and heritage. The Constitution of the Republic of Maldives stipulates that the religion of the State of the Maldives shall be Islam and that Islam shall be the basis of all the laws of the Maldives. The Constitution also states that no law contrary to the tenets of Islam shall be enacted in the Maldives. While each democratic society is unique in its values and core beliefs, it must be noted that the aforementioned provisions enshrined in the Constitution further illustrates the significance of Islam to the Maldivian identity.
4. While the Government welcomes the report by the Rapporteur and the recommendations outlined, it notes that the implementation of those recommendations will be in accordance with the Constitution and national laws. In this regard, the Government notes that the Maldives will be unable to accept the references to freedom of religion which is in contravention to the Constitution of the Republic of Maldives.
5. The Government of the Maldives would sincerely like to thank the Rapporteur for her visit to the Maldives in June 2019, and for the comprehensive report and active engagement in the Maldives. The State will consider implementing the relevant recommendations at the highest policy levels, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Maldives, its relevant national laws and policies.
