



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Summary record of the 801st meeting*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 20 August 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Gamio Ríos (Vice-Chair)

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* No summary record was issued for the 800th meeting.

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Ms. Gamio Ríos (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 35 of the Convention (*continued*)

Initial report of Maldives ([CRPD/C/MDV/1](#); [CRPD/C/MDV/Q/1](#); [CRPD/C/MDV/RQ/1](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Maldives joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Maldives**, introducing his country's initial report ([CRPD/C/MDV/1](#)), said that his Government recognized the transformative promise of the Convention and was committed to safeguarding and advancing the rights of all persons with disabilities. Work was under way on accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.
3. Since ratifying the Convention in 2010, his country had undergone a democratic journey marked by historic achievements and periods of political turmoil and instability. As a result, governance structures, legislative frameworks and policy-making processes were still evolving. The Government was focused on enacting policies designed to create a democratic, inclusive and rights-based society, with priority given to building accountable institutions and ensuring that young people were fully equipped to uphold human rights. The President had launched public consultations on the 20-Year National Development Master Plan and, within the first 100 days of its mandate, the Government had made rapid progress in the areas of social welfare, economic stability, education and legislative reform. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the severe fiscal difficulties inherited from the previous administration had impacted the pace of reforms, and capacity limitations sometimes affected the timely implementation of certain obligations.
4. In January 2025, the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had issued a situational analysis of the rights of persons with disabilities in Maldives, which provided a baseline from which the Government could shape its next steps. A comprehensive review of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Provision of Financial Assistance (Law No. 8/2010), known as the Disability Act, was being conducted using a participatory approach. New regulations had been enacted, including those pertaining to the identification and registration of persons with disabilities, in 2021, and those pertaining to the provision of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, in 2024. The Disability Council served as the central coordinating body for disability-related policies and initiatives.
5. In the national census conducted in 2022, the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning had been used for the first time. The data collected had revealed that 7 per cent of the population had some form of disability, providing a foundation for evidence-based policymaking and inclusive programme development. The National Disability Registry Online Portal had been launched in January 2023; as of July 2025, more than 14,000 individuals had been registered.
6. Disability was now integrated into all major strategies, including the National Plan on Violence against Children, the National Gender Equality Action Plan and the Health Master Plan, which sat alongside disability-specific frameworks such as the policy on the disability allowance and the policy on inclusive education. Following a participatory workshop in April 2025, the first National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion, which was designed to remove barriers and ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, had been endorsed.
7. The Maldives Human Rights Commission was central to the framework that had been established to uphold the constitutional rights to equality and non-discrimination. The Office for Civil Rights had a mandate to address complaints of discrimination and violations of civil and political rights.
8. The Child Rights Protection Act (Law No. 9/91) and the Juvenile Justice Act (Law No. 18/2019) had transformed the child protection system, and the Education Act (Law No. 24/2020) had introduced compulsory education for all children up to the age of 18 years. Under the updated Inclusive Education Policy, children with disabilities were no longer

segregated, and steps were being taken to ensure that all new and existing schools were fully accessible.

9. Physical accessibility remained a challenge for persons with disabilities owing to budgetary constraints and the dispersed geography of the country, which comprised many islands and atolls. A lack of compliance documents and an insufficient inspection regime hindered the effective implementation of accessibility-related legislation. Guidelines would soon be rolled out with the aim of making all government buildings fully accessible by 2026. The new passenger terminal at Velana International Airport was fully accessible.

10. The newly launched Maldives 2.0 digital transformation initiative was designed to overhaul public service delivery, using accessible technology to ensure that information about government services was available to everyone.

11. All citizens, including persons with disabilities, had access to the universal health insurance scheme, which now covered certain treatments for mental illness. In 2023, the disability allowance had been expanded, and the carer allowance and the self-care allowance had been introduced. While government funding was available for assistive devices, there was no standardized list of devices, and repair and maintenance services were limited.

12. The first Disability Management and Rehabilitation Centre had opened in 2023 to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services to persons with temporary impairments or permanent disabilities. There were plans to build a national centre for disability services.

13. The Government was making efforts to foster job creation initiatives for persons with disabilities. As part of a scheme to support female entrepreneurs, 25 per cent of the 100 million rufiyaa (Rf) provided in funding was reserved for women with disabilities. Persons with disabilities continued to be prioritized in the allocation of social housing.

14. The Criminal Procedure Act (Law No. 12/2016) and the Evidence Act (Law No. 11/2022) contained special provisions for persons with disabilities. Family-related legislation was being reviewed to remove barriers for all women, including those with disabilities. The online repository of national legislation was equipped with a text-to-speech function, and an audio version of the Disability Act was available. The Government nevertheless recognized that more work was needed to achieve inclusive access to justice.

15. Since the submission of the report, the Government had launched the Ijthimaee Badhahi Madhadhuverin (IBAMA) mechanism, which was designed to prevent and respond to violence against vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. The mechanism, which incorporated community-based rehabilitation, would cover all households by 2026.

16. The needs of persons with disabilities were being integrated into laws, policies and programmes to address climate adaptation and disaster resilience. Persons with disabilities were consulted in the development of related awareness-raising campaigns and were participating in the review of the Disaster Management Act (Law No. 28/2015).

17. The Government was seeking to drive a transformational shift in societal attitudes to disability by engaging communities and tackling gaps in human resources. The National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion would be a game changer in advancing meaningful inclusion within a comprehensive and coordinated framework.

18. Islam was an inalienable tenet of Maldivian society and laws. The Government was fully committed to upholding, in a manner that did not contradict the Constitution, its obligations under the international human rights instruments to which Maldives was a party.

Articles 1–9 and 31–33

19. **Mr. Makni** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he would like to receive an update on the State Party's progress towards accession to the Optional Protocol. He would be interested to know about any measures that were being taken to ensure that all legislation was fully aligned with the Convention and to address the restrictions on the rights of persons with disabilities resulting from the prevalence of the medical model of disability. Details of efforts to enhance coordination between the Government and State bodies located on the different islands and atolls would be appreciated. The delegation might comment on how the authorities intended to improve awareness of the National Disability Registry Online Portal

and ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities were properly identified and addressed. It might comment, too, on the apparently limited participation of persons with disabilities in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives and the small number of representative organizations, most of which were based in the capital, Male'.

20. **A representative of Maldives** said that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations had been consulted during the drafting of the National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion, the final version of which had been endorsed by a technical working group made up solely of such persons.

21. Following the adoption of the Disability Act, various steps had been taken to increase the number of persons with disabilities who were registered and provide them with adequate financial support. Social workers carried out home visits to identify any persons with disabilities who had not been registered and determine what support they needed in order to proceed with the registration process. The National Social Protection Agency had trained one member of each island council in supporting persons with disabilities who required additional assistance during that process.

22. One example of decentralized service provision was the IBAMA mechanism, under which persons with disabilities and other vulnerable individuals on some islands were regularly visited by teams of healthcare workers and other professionals.

23. **A representative of Maldives** said that, as part of the review of the Disability Act, steps were being taken to ensure that it was aligned with evolving national priorities and international human rights standards. Areas of focus would include higher education, scholarships, employment quotas for persons with disabilities and other measures that would boost their participation in economic and social life. The views of persons with disabilities would be taken into account during the process.

24. **A representative of Maldives** said that, while services for persons with disabilities were currently based on a medical model of disability, the transition to a more holistic model was due to begin by the end of 2026. As part of that process, a variety of forms of medical and psychosocial support would be integrated into the regional care services offered to persons with disabilities.

25. **Mr. Makni** said that the prevalence of the medical model of disability had led to the marginalization of individuals with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities and prevented the few organizations that represented them from effectively participating in relevant decision-making processes; he would like to know what was being done to address that situation. The delegation might also comment on the fact that women with disabilities remained underrepresented in such processes owing to the restrictions placed by their families on their participation in society. He wondered what steps the State Party was taking to raise awareness of the rights-based model of disability set out in the Convention.

26. It was the Committee's understanding that the new regulation on employment opportunities for persons with disabilities provided for the establishment of a technical committee responsible for enhancing the inclusion of such persons. He was keen to know whether that committee had already been established and, if so, what it was doing to promote the provision of reasonable accommodation and the implementation of other measures to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. It would be interesting to learn whether the Human Rights Commission was compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), in particular in terms of its financial and human resources and independence, and whether the State Party would be willing to empower that body to act as the independent monitoring mechanism provided for under the Convention.

27. **A representative of Maldives** said that various ministries had appointed focal points for disability issues, who came together to examine proposed programmes and policies and hold meetings with organizations of persons with disabilities. Certain ministries had also established working groups responsible for consulting such persons. The technical committee provided for under the new employment regulation had already been established and was working to promote compliance with the standards set out in the regulation, in particular those relating to reasonable accommodation and the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

28. The Disability Council was a monitoring and regulatory body that worked closely with the Ministry of Social and Family Development to address disability-related matters. The Council had established awards for persons with disabilities and developed key standards to be met by service providers and health and educational establishments. It was hoped that the revised policy governing the Council's work would soon come into effect and that further steps would be taken to strengthen the body and the implementation of a rights-based model of disability more generally. Progress towards the fulfilment of the goals set under the National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion would be monitored by independent technical groups set up to that end.

29. **A representative of Maldives** said that steps were being taken under the National Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2026 to promote the inclusion of women with disabilities and tackle the stigmatization and discrimination they faced. Five women with disabilities and two young persons with disabilities had participated in mock parliament sessions run since 2021. The specific rights and needs of women with disabilities had been taken into account in the laws designed to prevent domestic violence and sexual harassment and abuse. Measures had been taken to ensure that women with disabilities could actively participate in educational programmes on topics such as domestic violence, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. Training manuals on gender-based violence, which were due to be developed in 2026 in order to help government institutions formulate more inclusive policies, would contain specific guidelines on addressing the challenges faced by women with disabilities.

30. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Human Rights Commission operated independently from the Government. Pursuant to the Constitution, the Commission was responsible for monitoring compliance with the country's human rights obligations, including those established under the Convention, and issuing recommendations to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in Maldives. In 2020, the Human Rights Commission Act (Law No. 6/2006) had been amended to grant the Commission full authority to engage with national and international institutions, report to the human rights treaty bodies and monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by those bodies and those received in the context of the universal periodic review. While there had been small annual increases in the budget allocated to the Commission, the Government acknowledged that challenges remained in that area. It would continue to work with the Commission to address those challenges, with a view to bringing the body into compliance with the Paris Principles.

31. **Mr. Makni** said that he wished to know what the State Party was doing to strengthen its international cooperation in the area of disability and enhance the inclusion of organizations of persons with disabilities, in particular those representing women, in development efforts.

32. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** (Country Task Force) said that she would welcome more information on the laws that prohibited discrimination against persons with disabilities; in particular, she wondered what forms of discrimination they covered and what was being done to enforce them. It would also be useful to know whether those laws provided for reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, how such persons could apply for reasonable accommodation and what channels were available for them to report discrimination and obtain redress.

33. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Government was committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities would be routinely involved in all international cooperation efforts in the future. It would seek to build on a number of projects that had already been facilitated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notably in the area of inclusive education. The overarching goal was to guarantee that accessibility and inclusion were at the centre of all future bilateral and multilateral programmes. The consideration of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities would not be a one-time effort; it would be made an ongoing priority across all international cooperation frameworks.

34. **A representative of Maldives** said that information on the key legal instruments aimed at tackling all forms of discrimination, including against persons with disabilities, was set out in paragraphs 22–24 of the report. Provisions designed to guarantee equal opportunities for persons with disabilities were contained in laws on matters including

education, health and employment. Under the Criminal Procedure Act, courts were required to make any adjustments necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to participate in all stages of investigations and trials. The Constitution established that any individual whose rights or freedoms had been violated or denied was entitled to seek redress from the courts. Persons with disabilities could also submit complaints to the Human Rights Commission and the Disability Council, which were both mandated to address human rights violations. The Office for Civil Rights had been established in 2023 to coordinate civil rights policies, handle complaints, carry out monitoring work, issue recommendations and work with civil society organizations to empower groups such as persons with disabilities and advocate on their behalf. Specific mechanisms were in place to handle cases of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

35. **A representative of Maldives** said that information on reasonable accommodation would be provided in writing.

36. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wished to know how the rights of women and girls with disabilities were being mainstreamed in public programmes and policies and what concrete plans existed to remove barriers faced by girls with disabilities in gaining access to education. She also wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure that women with disabilities could have access, on an equal basis with others, to sexual and reproductive health services and what mechanisms were in place to guarantee equal access to support, including shelters and helplines, for women with disabilities who were victims of violence and abuse. She also wished to know whether awareness-raising measures were reaching women and girls with disabilities and whether remedies were accessible to them.

37. **A representative of Maldives** said that education was a right of all children, regardless of their sex or ability, and that girls with disabilities were no exception. There were policies, strategies and implementation measures in place to bring every child into the education system, along with mechanisms for registering children with disabilities and for ensuring that all children attended school.

38. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Ministry of Social and Family Development had incorporated disability awareness-raising components into its programmes and policies. Various programmes on the empowerment of women had been conducted. The Ministry ran dedicated helplines and was making efforts to improve their accessibility. The accessibility needs of persons with disabilities, including women, were assessed on a case-by-case basis. In addition, measures were being taken to make government websites and reporting mechanisms more accessible, including through screen-reading technology and audio-based systems. There was a national priority list for assistive devices.

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

39. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she would appreciate information on specific measures and policies in place to protect the rights of children with disabilities. In particular, she would welcome detailed information on efforts to ensure early identification of disabilities and timely intervention, as well as on practical steps taken to remove barriers to inclusive, quality education, with a focus on implementation rather than legal frameworks. She wondered what support was provided to the families of children with disabilities, in terms of both human resources and financial assistance, and how that financial assistance compared to the average salary. She also wished to know how it was ensured that children could remain with their families while receiving the support they needed, how support and needs were assessed and how the academic attainment of each child with a disability was tracked over time.

40. **A representative of Maldives** said that, in recent years, the Ministry of Education had been working on the development of tools to assess the achievement of developmental milestones by all children, including children with disabilities. Mechanisms had been put in place to monitor children's development up to the age of 9 years in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social and Family Development. Significant progress had been made through that multisectoral approach. The Ministry of Education was also developing early identification and intervention tools to be deployed within the education system.

41. **A representative of Maldives** said that, in the health sector, early identification had long been part of growth monitoring and promotion services. The system now included monitoring of the achievement of developmental milestones in order to identify developmental delays or other deficiencies. Monitoring took place from birth until the age of 5 years and had recently been strengthened to detect a wider range of deficiencies, including at the point of school entry, so that appropriate interventions could be initiated.

42. **A representative of Maldives** said that, under article 10 of the Child Rights Protection Act, every child had the right to the protection and care needed for their growth from their guardians, family, community and the State. Article 10 (b) provided that, although the primary duty to provide protection and care rested with guardians, it was the State's duty to provide direct protection in cases where guardians failed to do so. The article also provided that the State must offer special assistance to children removed from the home environment, whether temporarily or permanently, always considering their best interests.

43. Article 18 recognized that every child with a disability had the right to lead a full and dignified life, with equal opportunities to participate in the community and to make decisions for themselves to the best of their capacity in a way that did not prejudice their dignity. Every child with a disability had the right to special protection and care from their family, community and the State. A child's disability was not a valid reason for removing him or her from parental care, nor was a parent's disability a valid reason for removing a child from parental care, except where that was in the child's best interests.

44. Under article 47, where the police or the child protection service had sufficient reason to believe that a child was in need of State care and protection, the child's situation was assessed. Under article 88, immediate action could be taken if it was determined that remaining in his or her current place of residence put the child at risk. Immediate protective measures included placing the child under State care or appointing someone else to take care of him or her. After such a removal from parental care, the State was required to issue a protection order.

45. The National Plan on Violence against Children had been launched in 2024 to create safer homes, communities, educational settings and online spaces while strengthening the overall child protection system. A guiding principle of the Plan was that no child should face discrimination on any basis, including disability. The Plan comprised targeted activities across several strategic areas. Under the strategic area of safer homes, it prioritized early identification and registration of children with disabilities and families at risk and monitoring the implementation of primary-level services, such as psychosocial support and home healthcare visits for families, including those with children with disabilities.

46. At the community level, the Plan promoted inclusive urban planning to ensure accessibility for children with disabilities and supported island and local councils in implementing child-safe, gender-equal and inclusive programmes. The Plan called for collaboration with civil society to develop strategies for mobilizing resources for essential services, including respite care for children with disabilities. Through integrated and targeted actions, the Plan aimed to ensure that children with disabilities were not left behind and were fully included in national child protection efforts.

47. **Ms. Fefoame** said that she wished to know what mechanisms were in place to assess the effectiveness of the State Party's gender and disability policies, what percentage of the total population of women and girls in the country had disabilities and what percentage of them were receiving State support. She also wondered what measures were in place to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and plans of action aimed at supporting children with disabilities, so that it could be determined what percentage of children with disabilities were receiving the attention they required.

48. **A representative of Maldives** said that the measures taken to support women with disabilities included initiatives to support the transition from school to adult life, with a focus on empowerment, employment and training according to individual needs. Training institutes had conducted a range of programmes specifically for the empowerment of women. Needs were identified on the basis of women's educational background and level of participation in society, which helped to shape the design of training initiatives. The support provided to families with children with disabilities was intended to be preventive in nature and included

measures to promote well-being, as well as additional financial assistance and other social protection measures. Detailed information on the proportion of women who had disabilities would be provided in writing.

49. **A representative of Maldives** said that, while there was no overarching plan specifically for children with disabilities, there was the National Plan on Violence against Children, which was supported by robust monitoring mechanisms established under the Child Rights Protection Act, including the Children's Ombudsperson's Office. That institution had been set up to monitor compliance with human rights obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but its role incorporated actions relating to children with disabilities.

50. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that the suicide and attempted suicide rates were significant in the State Party, according to several reports. He wondered whether consideration was being given to decriminalizing attempted suicide, in the context of efforts to improve support for persons with psychosocial disabilities. It would also be useful to receive any available information regarding the practice of female genital mutilation and its impact on women with disabilities.

51. **A representative of Maldives** said that Islam was the basis of the law in Maldives and no law could be enacted contrary to its tenets. The decriminalization of attempted suicide was therefore not being considered. While anecdotal evidence on female genital mutilation had been collected in a 2016 survey, no further evidence was available, so the current prevalence of the practice was unknown. Currently, female genital mutilation could be prosecuted under the laws on assault, for example; its establishment as a specific criminal offence was under discussion at the policy level.

52. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wished to know how the State Party evaluated changes in public attitudes towards persons with disabilities. She would also welcome more details about any steps, including legislative measures, planned to improve digital accessibility.

53. **A representative of Maldives** said that replies to the questions on article 8 would be provided in writing.

54. **A representative of Maldives** said that, although no new legislation on digital accessibility was in the pipeline, a number of measures were being taken to ensure that persons with disabilities had access to digital services. For example, accessibility had been made the cornerstone of eFaas 2.0, the newly designed platform through which public services were provided.

Articles 10–20

55. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that she wished to know how the authorities reconciled the continued existence of the death penalty and the constitutional guarantee of an equal right to life for all. She wished to know, too, whether there were any plans to abolish the death penalty or, in the meantime, to declare an official moratorium on executions. In addition, she wondered what accommodations, including gender-specific accommodations, were made for persons with disabilities who had been given the death penalty, whether anything was done to monitor the mental health of persons who had been sentenced to death and what efforts were made to ensure that such persons were not subjected to degrading, inhumane or discriminatory treatment.

56. **A representative of Maldives** said that there were no plans to declare an official moratorium on executions. In any event, in Maldives, where Islam was the basis of all laws, no one had been executed since the 1950s, and death sentences, which were imposed only in limited circumstances, were automatically appealed and were subject to review by the Supreme Court. Psychotherapeutic support was provided to prisoners on death row.

57. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** (Country Task Force) said that she wondered which public agencies were responsible for monitoring compliance with the Disability Act as it pertained to disaster risk reduction. In connection with natural disasters and other emergencies, she would welcome a description of the plans that had been made for the evacuation of persons with disabilities. She wondered, too, whether emergency helplines had been set up and were operational on every atoll in the State Party, and whether they were accessible to persons

with persons who were deaf or hard of hearing. She would also like to know what percentage of emergency response personnel had the training needed to assist persons with disabilities.

58. **A representative of Maldives** said that, in the light of the Disability Act, the National Disaster Management Authority had developed a national strategy for disaster risk reduction that would be in place until 2030. Since 2014, the Authority, which had engaged with relevant stakeholders, including the Disability Council, to ensure that the development of the strategy had been inclusive, had organized community-based programmes, some with slots reserved for women and persons with disabilities, on disaster risk reduction. The development of the Authority's projects and programmes was informed by gender-equality and disability-inclusion guidelines.

59. There was a shortage of personnel with the technical training, in sign language in particular, to assist persons with disabilities in emergencies. Plans to provide the necessary training had nonetheless been made, and steps were being taken to ensure that persons with disabilities were aware of and benefited from early warning mechanisms.

60. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would welcome specific examples of the steps the State Party had taken to familiarize persons with disabilities with its emergency response plans. She wished to know, too, whether there were official mechanisms to involve organizations of persons with disabilities in the design and dissemination of those plans.

61. It was recognized in the State Party's Constitution that persons with disabilities enjoyed legal capacity on an equal basis with others. She wondered, however, how that constitutionally guaranteed right squared with the existence of a legally established system for the appointment of guardians for persons considered incapable of making decisions autonomously. She wondered, too, how the process of appointing a guardian unfolded and whether any plans had been made to move towards a system that facilitated supported decision-making.

62. **A representative of Maldives** said that community-based programmes in which persons with disabilities took part were one way that the National Disaster Management Authority raised awareness of disaster risk reduction plans.

63. **A representative of Maldives** said that replies to the questions on equal recognition before the law would be provided in writing.

64. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know how many persons with disabilities had submitted complaints to the courts on being denied access to justice, what percentage of the State Party's courts offered sign language interpretation and what plans had been made not only to expand access to sign language interpretation but also to provide other procedural accommodations.

65. **A representative of Maldives** said that the courts were required by law, including the Civil Procedure Act (Law No. 32/2021), the Criminal Procedure Act and the Evidence Act, to make the adjustments necessary to give persons with disabilities access to justice. No records of the number of complaints brought by such persons were kept, however.

66. The shortage of sign language interpreters was not specific to the justice system; it affected the country as a whole. Nor was it the sole obstacle to access to justice. In fact, the physical accessibility of courthouses and other judicial facilities was also often limited. The new court complex, on which work was nearly complete would, however, be accessible to persons with disabilities, and a policy on inclusive court processes was being drawn up. What was more, a new standard adopted in 2021 would ensure that all new court buildings adhered to accessibility standards. Several buildings had already been built to those standards or were planned.

67. The Maldives Judicial Academy organized programmes to raise public awareness of judicial processes, particularly in relation to domestic violence protection orders, divorce, custody and maintenance. Those issues were of relevance to persons with disabilities.

68. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would welcome an indication, in writing if necessary, of the planned date of adoption of the policy on inclusive court processes. She would also welcome a description of the steps that the State Party was taking to eliminate the obstacles to the pursuit of careers in the justice system or the law by persons with disabilities.

It would be interesting, in that connection, to receive data, broken down by type of disability if available, on the number of such persons currently working in the justice system.

69. **A representative of Maldives** said that, although on paper there were no obstacles to the pursuit of legal careers by persons with disabilities, such persons might, in practice, face problems. The system was not designed to give persons with disabilities – a judge, say – the support they needed. The number of persons with disabilities working in the legal professions was not currently known.

70. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wondered exactly how decisions to appoint guardians for persons with disabilities, to institutionalize them in the Home for Persons with Special Needs and to allow them to return to their communities were made. It would be helpful to learn, too, whether any plans had been made to transition towards a system that enabled persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in their communities.

71. **A representative of Maldives** said that, although the institutionalization of mental health patients had formerly taken place with little thought for their individual situations, practices had since evolved. No one now was institutionalized without a comprehensive psychological, medical and social assessment of his or her situation. The authorities also worked with the families of persons who might once have been institutionalized. As a result of such efforts, including the creation of support groups, the number of people who had been taken into the country's single facility for mental health patients had fallen.

72. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know whether organizations of persons with disabilities had been consulted on the design and adoption of the new law on mental health and, if so, which organizations had been consulted and what accessibility measures had been taken to ensure that they engaged effectively.

73. **A representative of Maldives** said that the relevant agencies, as well as support groups, family members of persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities themselves, including their representative organizations, had been consulted on the Mental Health Bill, which was currently in draft form.

74. **A representative of Maldives** said that work on the Bill, which had involved extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, had been ongoing for two years. He expected the Bill to be submitted to lawmakers by the end of the year.

75. **Ms. Boresli** said that she wondered to what extent persons with disabilities and their representative organizations were involved in designing, monitoring and evaluating awareness campaigns and strategies in the areas of education and health. She wondered, too, whether State media had taken part in campaigns to raise awareness of disability and combat stigmatization, stereotypes, negative cultural beliefs and discriminatory rhetoric. In particular, she wished to know what measures had been taken to encourage the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with a rights-based approach to disability.

76. With regard to disaster risk management, she wished to know what had been done to ensure that emergency evacuation procedures, multi-hazard strategies, early warning systems and reconstruction and rehabilitation strategies reached all persons with disabilities, including those living on remote atolls. Lastly, what steps were taken to ensure that disaster planning was informed by the needs and rights of persons with disabilities?

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.