



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General  
23 September 2025

Original: English

---

## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Thirty-third session

### Summary record of the 802nd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 20 August 2025, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Gamio Ríos (Vice-Chair)

## Contents

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

*Initial report of Maldives (continued)*

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section ([DMS-DCM@un.org](mailto:DMS-DCM@un.org)).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



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

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

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

*Initial report of Maldives (continued)* (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.*

*Articles 1–9 and 10–20*

2. **A representative of Maldives**, responding to questions put at the previous meeting (CRPD/C/SR.801), said that the National Emergency Operations Plan and the Relief Guidelines of the National Disaster Management Authority adhered to internationally recognized humanitarian standards, ensuring that emergency response and evacuation were consistent with global best practices. The National Emergency Operations Plan recognized that persons with disabilities should receive special attention during emergency operations, while specific steps for the support of persons with disabilities were detailed in sectoral plans, which outlined practical measures to ensure inclusivity. Efforts had been made to identify persons who would be vulnerable in emergency situations. In the event of a disaster, persons with disabilities would be given priority for relocation and placement in accessible premises and during the distribution of food and medicine.

3. In the context of disaster risk reduction, the Government recognized that the involvement of persons with disabilities was crucial for the design of early warning mechanisms. Persons with disabilities had participated in multiple consultations in which they had expressed concerns and ideas on how plans should accommodate them and on the most appropriate communication formats and methods for the issuance of warnings. The Government was participating in the Early Warnings for All initiative. A climate risk awareness campaign known as Hushiyaaru, with accessible content, had been developed in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities and communities.

4. **A representative of Maldives** said that, every year, the Government engaged with stakeholders, including prominent persons and organizations of persons with disabilities, in the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The activities carried out to mark that occasion reflected the suggestions of the various stakeholders.

5. The Government had invested significant effort in the positive portrayal of persons with disabilities, including through the dissemination of success stories in the mainstream media, social media and other platforms. Success stories focused on persons with disabilities who had overcome adversity or assumed a leadership role; it was hoped that such stories would contribute to reducing stigma and negative stereotypes. The Government had also sought to sensitize media professionals to appropriate language. Some media professionals were now exercising greater caution in how they reported on persons with disabilities, although further progress was needed.

6. The lack of sign language interpreters was a serious barrier for deaf persons. Therefore, the Government supported a basic sign language programme that was offered to all stakeholders, including public officials and persons with disabilities, and the Maldives Qualification Authority was working towards the accreditation of a new course on Maldivian Sign Language.

7. For the past decade, the Government had been working to develop its model of community-based rehabilitation. Since 2023, it had worked with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to revise its training model and to provide training of trainers for the implementation of community-based rehabilitation at the atoll level. Community groups in the islands were empowered to implement community-based rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities through the Ijthimaee Badhahi Madhadhuverin (IBAMA) mechanism.

8. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** (Country Task Force) said that she would appreciate up-to-date information on the number of complaints of torture and ill-treatment of persons with disabilities that had been submitted to the Maldives Human Rights Commission. She wondered whether support mechanisms or reasonable accommodation were provided to persons with disabilities who wished to lodge complaints. Given that four of the five complaints of torture received between 2018 and 2022 had concerned the Home for Persons with Special Needs, she wished to know what measures had been taken to prevent the torture or ill-treatment of persons with disabilities in that institution.

9. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Ministry of Health had published a handbook containing information on procedures and guidelines for the protection of persons with disabilities and mental health patients. Courses had been developed on the care of specific groups, including older persons and persons with disabilities, in residential settings, as newly recruited staff often lacked experience in that regard. Staff were sensitized to and educated about different aspects of disability. Closed circuit television cameras had been installed and standard protocols introduced for staff to follow in the event of any incident that violated the rights of persons with disabilities or any other patients. The Ministry of Health had put in place robust reporting and monitoring mechanisms.

10. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know whether police officers received any training on how to handle complaints by persons with disabilities and, if so, what proportion of officers had received such training. She would be interested to know what challenges the State Party had encountered when introducing measures of accessibility, reasonable accommodation and support for persons with disabilities who wished to lodge complaints. She would also like to know whether the State Party's strategies, programmes and guidelines for combating gender-based violence envisaged the provision of sign language interpretation or augmentative and alternative communication to ensure that women and girls with disabilities could independently report situations of gender-based violence.

11. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Maldives Police Service Act (Law No. 34/2020) had been amended in order to introduce a rights-based approach to policing. As a result, the police force now received regular training on general human rights aspects, although not necessarily on how to assist vulnerable persons in making complaints. The training covered ethical conduct and prison management aligned with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). In-person training on the prevention of torture, held in Addu City, had been attended by 189 police officers. Other human rights training, covering, inter alia, constitutional rights, vulnerable groups, human rights and policing, detention and the use of force, had been provided to 211 officers, also in Addu City. In 2024, 524 police officers had completed a specially designed online course on the prevention of torture. Police officers received a basic grounding in the human rights principles enshrined in the treaties to which Maldives was a party, including the Convention.

12. **A representative of Maldives** said that all judicial actors, including court officers, underwent an extensive induction programme that included human rights and gender. The Government faced persistent challenges in ensuring the accessibility of complaints mechanisms. One positive development had been the establishment by the Family Court of a mechanism to assist court users – not necessarily persons with disabilities – with their applications, for example, in divorce, custody and child support proceedings. An accessible hotline was being developed to allow persons with disabilities to lodge complaints of rights infringements.

13. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would be grateful if the delegation could specify what percentage of police officers had received human rights training, or how many police officers there were in total in Maldives, in order to put the numbers just provided into context. She wondered whether the Government had any plans to expand the geographical coverage of in-person training, which seemed to have taken place on only a few islands.

14. In addition, she wished to know what had been done to ensure that, in cases where substitute decision-making arrangements had been put in place, persons with disabilities – especially persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities or deafblind persons – were not subjected to treatment without their informed consent.

15. **A representative of Maldives** said that the basic human rights training to which she had previously referred, which covered the principles enshrined in human rights treaties, formed part of the initial training that all police officers received upon recruitment. The Human Rights Commission provided other, more specialized training, including the online anti-torture course and in-person training on various islands. Information on the percentage of police officers that had received such training would be provided in writing.

16. **A representative of Maldives** said that consent was required in order to admit a patient to a mental health institution. If the patient was unable to give consent, it had to be obtained from his or her family. Mental health focal points, present in all hospitals, provided assistance with the relevant procedures. The Government acknowledged that it lacked expertise in dealing with mental health patients; however, over the previous 18 months, it had engaged in an immense capacity-building effort. In addition, the Ministry of Health had a team of experts that monitored patients' progress and accompanied the family reintegration process. There was a mutual understanding that family members and community stakeholders would be kept informed about patients and their condition. Consent was also required for reintegration.

17. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know whether any measures had been taken in the public health sphere so that persons with disabilities or their relatives could lodge complaints about non-consensual treatment. She would like to know whether the State Party had any mechanisms for identifying and preventing non-consensual treatment, in particular forced sterilization.

18. **A representative of Maldives** said that the health system had a complaints mechanism that patients could use to report service disruptions or breaches of the duty of care by health professionals, and disciplinary action would be taken if the complaint was upheld. Complaints could be submitted regarding any healthcare services, including those provided by the private sector.

19. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she was particularly interested to know how the State Party ensured that health service providers did not administer treatments to persons with disabilities without their consent.

20. **A representative of Maldives** said that a complaints mechanism had been set up for use by persons with disabilities in residential care settings, and staff had been familiarized with it. Complaints could be investigated by the police, the Human Rights Commission or a social investigation team within the Ministry of Health. The measures taken to set up the mechanism and raise awareness of it had had a positive impact on the number of cases of ill-treatment and discrimination that occurred.

21. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know what oversight mechanisms the State Party had set up to monitor the quality of healthcare services provided by private companies and ensure their compliance with the principles of the Convention.

22. **A representative of Maldives** said that, while the Government monitored complaints lodged by recipients of private healthcare services, it did not routinely monitor the services provided. Services provided at public healthcare facilities and the competence of their staff were monitored intermittently by a division of the Ministry of Health responsible for quality assurance.

23. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would welcome clarification as to whether all children born in Maldives were granted Maldivian citizenship, whether or not their parents were citizens of the country. She would be glad to know whether the national registry of births had been designed in such a way that persons with disabilities could register the births of their children independently.

24. **A representative of Maldives** said that, under the Constitution, children born to foreign citizens could acquire Maldivian citizenship at a later stage by following the procedures provided for in law.

25. Pursuant to a law on the registration of births adopted in 2022, registration of all children born in Maldives was mandatory. While persons wishing to register births currently needed to do so by completing a form, which could present difficulties for persons with

disabilities, there were plans to make the registration system more accessible. The Department of National Registration already had some special operating procedures and regulations on accessibility. It was currently considering including Braille text on the new smart identity card. Ad hoc arrangements could be made to ensure that documents were issued to persons with disabilities at locations that were physically accessible to them or, in the case of passports, at streamlined service desks – available throughout normal working hours – if so required.

26. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would appreciate details of the migration policies in force in the State Party and any mechanisms that it had established for registering migrants who had arrived in the country with disabilities or acquired them after their arrival. She wondered whether the State Party had any disaggregated statistics on migrants with disabilities and whether such persons enjoyed the right to work and receive social services, education and other support on an equal footing with Maldivian citizens with disabilities. She was particularly interested to learn about any restrictions that such persons faced.

27. **A representative of Maldives** said that a national policy to improve the health and well-being of all foreign citizens in Maldives had been launched in July 2025. Under the policy, the Government would seek to ensure that migrants had access to healthcare services at all stages of the migration cycle and promote multisectoral coordination with the aim of enhancing disease prevention, providing timely treatment and addressing barriers to healthcare provision within a sustainable and inclusive healthcare system. Information on reasonable accommodation for migrants with disabilities, as envisaged under the policy, would be provided in writing.

28. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would welcome more information on the policy, including details of how migrants benefited from it. She wondered whether the State Party had gathered any data on the impact of the IBAMA mechanism thus far on the lives of persons with disabilities and, if so, what measures it intended to adopt on the basis of those data.

29. **A representative of Maldives** said that, although there had not yet been a thorough study on the impact of the IBAMA mechanism, which had been developed in consultation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), anecdotal evidence indicated that it had empowered island communities to register, provide for the basic needs and uphold the rights of vulnerable groups, particularly persons with disabilities, and given them a greater sense of ownership of such processes. The Government had recently supplemented the training provided under the mechanism with a module on community-based rehabilitation that had increased the confidence of recipients in assisting persons with disabilities. In addition, the mechanism had enabled the Government, with the assistance of local communities, to enhance its local monitoring of the living conditions and treatment of persons with disabilities, the status of social protection mechanisms and the need for assistive devices. The newly developed National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion included measures to study the functioning of social protection mechanisms.

30. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she would welcome details of the implementation of the policy providing that between 3 and 5 per cent of social housing must be set aside for persons with disabilities. She wondered what procedure persons with disabilities must follow to obtain such housing, whether the policy would be expanded to cover all atolls and what plans the State Party had to assist persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, to live independently in their own communities.

31. **A representative of Maldives** said that, at a time when the population was facing a housing crisis, the Government was committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities had access to housing. Under the Hiya Project, up to 200 housing units had been made available specifically for persons with disabilities. Social housing applicants who had a disability or were caring for a person with a disability were awarded an additional 10 points in the assessment process. The housing bill that was currently being reviewed by the parliament would codify the requirement for a share of social housing to be set aside for persons with disabilities and set out measures to ensure that housing provided to them was accessible. The Government had allocated 1.5 billion rufiyaa (Rf) – the largest housing-related allocation in the country's history – for the construction of almost 13,000 housing units throughout the country, and major land reclamation projects were under way with a view to increasing the

amount of housing in the Greater Male' Region, where the majority of the country's population was concentrated. Significant funding had been allocated for sharia-compliant loans for the construction or improvement of housing on private land.

32. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Ministry of Social and Family Development had worked with local councils to improve the accessibility of housing allocated to persons with disabilities. Additional arrangements had been made to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities in the capital, Male', which was one of the most congested cities in the world, for example by adjusting the dimensions of pavements and kerbs. All new infrastructure was built to be highly accessible. Despite limited resources, efforts had been made to adapt housing to enable persons with intellectual disabilities to live in it independently, and the Ministry provided further assistance where needed.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.05 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.*

33. **Ms. Fefoame** said that she wished to know what steps the State Party was taking to protect persons with disabilities, in particular older persons, from financial exploitation, including misappropriation of their pensions. She wondered how the State Party would improve coordination between enforcement bodies, including the police and the Family Protection Authority, in responding to cases of exploitation or abuse of persons with disabilities. It would be interesting to hear what measures the State Party was taking to monitor and prevent cases of abuse committed under the guise of spiritual healing practices such as *ruqya*, particularly against persons with disabilities, including women and children.

34. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Decentralization Act (Law No: 7/2010) provided that island councils must conduct visits to the homes of members of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, on a quarterly basis. Home visits were regularly carried out under the IBAMA mechanism by leading members of the health and education sectors, among others, who assessed occupants using the vulnerability index employed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development. Any cases of exploitation or abuse discovered were dealt with at the local level but could be referred to the central authorities for investigation, if necessary. Citizens were also visited at their homes under a larger-scale initiative, the "Haaluh Kihineh?" programme, to identify persons who were in need of protection or assistance.

35. **A representative of Maldives** said that, in 2020, two people had committed abusive acts under the guise of practising *ruqya* and had been charged with multiple criminal offences. Their cases were before the courts. The police investigated such cases in the same way they investigated others.

36. **A representative of Maldives** said that under the national school attendance policy, any child who went more than five days without attending school or who kept missing school without a valid reason received a home visit from the authorities to ensure that he or she was not being subjected to abuse or exploitation. Any cases of mistreatment identified were referred to the social protection services.

37. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that the delegation might comment on the constitutional provision that required persons holding high political office in Maldives to be "of sound mind". He wondered what measures the State Party had taken to establish supported decision-making arrangements for persons with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, as an alternative to guardianship, so that they could fully exercise their legal capacity.

38. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Government would seek to use the opportunity presented by the ongoing review of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Provision of Financial Assistance (Law No. 8/2010), the Disability Act, to review all national legislation with a view to bringing it into line with the Convention.

39. **Ms. Jacobs** said that she wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in custodial settings and to develop accessible grievance mechanisms at all levels of the justice system and in detention facilities. It would be helpful to hear how requirements in relation to reasonable accommodation and accessibility were enforced.

40. **A representative of Maldives** said that significant accessibility measures were currently in place at a single prison in Maldives to which all prisoners with disabilities were transferred. Accessibility considerations would be reflected in the design of a new prison complex that the Government was planning to build. Steps were currently being taken to ensure that courts were physically accessible and to provide support to persons with disabilities filing documentation at the Family Court. While there were no specific mechanisms in place in the criminal justice system that persons with disabilities could use to lodge complaints, corrections officers usually assisted prisoners with disabilities in doing so. The Government was committed to improving that situation to the extent that its capacity allowed. It should be noted that all communications submitted to the Human Rights Commission regarding acts of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or to the inspector of corrections regarding conditions of detention remained confidential.

41. **Ms. Dondovdorj** (Country Task Force), noting that the National Social Protection Agency covered only part of the cost of a limited range of assistive devices, said that she wished to know what steps the State Party was taking to ensure that persons with disabilities had access to the assistive devices of their choice, at affordable prices, and that sufficient numbers of experts were available at the local level to train them in the use of such devices. She wondered what measures it had taken to introduce and enforce reasonable accommodation in driver testing and licensing processes with a view to ensuring that persons with disabilities were able to obtain driving licences on an equal footing with others. It would be helpful to hear whether any legislation had been put in place to exempt persons with disabilities from having to pay customs duties and other additional fees when purchasing assistive devices from abroad. She wondered how the State Party ensured that services for the maintenance of such devices were available at the local level.

42. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Agency provided assistive devices to persons with disabilities upon request, subject to budget availability and a needs assessment. Efforts were under way to strengthen the system through the revision of a national priority assistive products list, developed in consultation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other stakeholders, which took into account geographical challenges and user requirements. With regard to driving licences, the Government handled requests for reasonable accommodation on a case-by-case basis, and the transport authority worked with technical experts to adapt driving tests where needed. Tariff waivers for imported assistive devices were considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly when the import benefited the broader disability community. The revised priority assistive products list would help guide future decisions on such imports.

#### *Articles 21–30*

43. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that, while articles 27–29 of the Constitution guaranteed the right to freedom of expression and opinion and access to information, those rights were reportedly not effectively enforced for persons with disabilities, who faced barriers in accessing public information and different forms of communication, including television, websites and other media services. They also struggled to access the recently launched national digital identity platform (eFaas). There were reportedly only two sign language interpreters and only two accessible websites in the State Party.

44. She wished to know how the State Party planned to address the gaps in access to information and communication in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, particularly for persons who were deafblind, persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, persons who were blind and persons who were deaf, and whether it would introduce a comprehensive regulatory framework in that regard. She wondered whether the State Party envisaged amending current legislation to bring it into line with article 21 of the Convention in order to ensure access to public information in a variety of accessible formats, including sign language and audio description. She would appreciate information on any plans to conduct awareness-raising campaigns and training programmes for public officials on accessible information. Lastly, she wondered whether the State Party intended to officially recognize Maldivian Sign Language in legislation and take measures to train more sign language interpreters.

45. **A representative of Maldives** said that access to information remained a major challenge. The gaps identified would be addressed in the five-year National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion, which was expected to be rolled out in January 2026. Efforts were under way, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to provide screen readers in both English and Dhivehi for persons with visual impairments. Although there was indeed a limited number of sign language interpreters, the Government was committed to expanding sign language training programmes. Some 135 persons had received such training.

46. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that persons with disabilities, particularly persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, continued to face barriers in exercising their right to marry, start a family, raise children and form relationships, owing to the stigma and stereotypes surrounding them. The Committee had received reports that parents and family members of persons with disabilities made important decisions on their behalf, in particular in areas such as healthcare, adoption and family planning, without ensuring their meaningful participation. Women who were deaf and women with physical disabilities had reportedly been subjected to forced sterilization because of family pressure and assumptions that they were incapable of raising children. There were also reports of families that confined persons with disabilities to the home, believing it to be a safer environment, thereby isolating them from the community.

47. She would like to know whether the State Party had a comprehensive plan to counter the stigmatizing and stereotyping of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, to ensure that they enjoyed their rights in all matters relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships, on an equal basis with others. She also wished to know what measures were in place to ensure that families with persons with disabilities, especially parents of children with disabilities, received adequate support and services to raise children at home.

48. **A representative of Maldives** said that the family was central to all social interventions in the country. Key support mechanisms included financial assistance. Social protection allowances, ranging from Rf 3,000 to Rf 7,000, were based on household size, vulnerability and the needs of the family.

49. Families also received guidance and assistance to help them understand and manage disability-related challenges. The Government provided tailored support to families, addressing needs related to employment, housing and accessibility, with the goal of lifting families out of poverty.

50. **A representative of Maldives** said that family planning services were available at all levels of healthcare and were provided without discrimination, including to couples with disabilities. With regard to forced sterilization, health professionals must adhere to national family planning guidelines, which clearly outlined the circumstances under which sterilization services could be performed or offered, which included medical conditions or risks to health. Requests for sterilization services based on a person's disability were not considered.

51. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that, while the revised inclusive education policy of 2021 was a step forward in the implementation of inclusive education, it did not explicitly recognize reasonable accommodation or address the needs of students with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. She therefore wondered whether the State Party planned to further revise its inclusive education policy to ensure full compliance with the Convention, particularly article 24. She would welcome data on children with disabilities currently out of education. She would like to know whether there was a concrete plan to ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation based on individual needs, teacher training in inclusive education, sign language and other alternative communication methods, and accessible school environments.

52. **A representative of Maldives** said that individualized curriculum plans had been introduced under the new inclusive education policy to replace behaviour-based plans. The individualized curriculum plans would specify adaptations for each student and would be developed by expert committees in consultation with parents, students and teachers. The delegation would ensure that the recommendation to make an explicit reference to reasonable



accommodation in the policy was duly considered. With regard to children with disabilities who were out of school, schools monitored attendance daily and the education authorities reviewed attendance records on a quarterly basis. An education information system was being developed to track children who were out of school and facilitate interventions to bring them into the system.

53. Approximately 5,000 teachers and principals had received inclusive education training, including at the atoll level. Efforts were being made to build the capacity of secondary English language teachers of children with complex learning profiles; 380 teachers had participated in capacity-building in the use of assistive technology.

54. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that she would like to know to what extent the State Party monitored the implementation of inclusive education, specifically to ensure that children with disabilities received the necessary support and quality education. She was concerned about reports of bullying and harassment of students with disabilities by peers and even teachers, noting that no action had been taken by school staff in some cases. She wished to know what measures the State Party had taken to ensure that children with disabilities were protected from such treatment. Lastly, she wondered whether the State Party had plans or measures to ensure that persons with disabilities had equal access to higher education, including university enrolment.

55. **A representative of Maldives** said that the Department of Inclusive Education was primarily responsible for monitoring the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Additional mechanisms existed to oversee the safety and security of children with disabilities in schools, including complaints and review procedures. With regard to bullying and harassment, the Ministry of Education had a zero tolerance policy on all forms of violence against children. Reports of bullying or harassment were taken very seriously, and interventions were made to prevent incidents from recurring. The Ministry also provided psychosocial support to affected students.

56. **A representative of Maldives** said that accessibility in higher education for persons with disabilities required further development. Although there was no formal policy on reasonable accommodation in higher education, the Higher Education Act required institutions to provide reasonable accommodation when so requested by students with disabilities. Registration criteria for higher education institutions now included physical accessibility requirements, such as availability of ramps, accessible toilets and wheelchair-friendly infrastructure. Adjustments to the curriculum would be made on a case-by-case basis to support students with visual or hearing impairments, in line with the Government's commitment to inclusive education. A new framework offered higher education loan schemes and allocated quotas for students with disabilities and non-competitive access to State-sponsored scholarships. That did not preclude students with disabilities from applying for other scholarships alongside mainstream applicants on a competitive basis. Under the new funding model, which sought to promote equity, support was provided for caregivers and reasonable accommodation, which would be factored in in higher education loan schemes.

57. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know what steps had been taken to improve the training of healthcare staff over the past two years. She wondered what percentage of healthcare staff were trained in the social model of disability and whether healthcare staff were evenly distributed across all the atolls and islands. It would be interesting to know what forms of support were provided to children with disabilities who needed to travel to the Disability Management and Rehabilitation Centre in Male' for treatment and whether any plans were in place to make comprehensive rehabilitation services available in all parts of the State Party.

58. **A representative of Maldives** said that the geography of Maldives made it difficult to provide the same level of care in all parts of the country. Steps had been taken to identify strategic locations where healthcare services could be provided in close proximity to local populations. Under the three-tier referral system, service users were referred from one tier to another, depending on their requirements and the availability of services.

59. Not all healthcare workers were trained to provide care to persons with disabilities. However, staff attached to mental health and psychosocial support services had undergone a significant amount of training. Service users were referred to the Disability Management and

Rehabilitation Centre in Male' from different parts of the country. Efforts would be made to increase the availability of healthcare services at the local level. In that connection, plans were in place to establish additional tertiary-level services, including five hospitals, in the atolls.

60. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know whether any efforts had been made to gather data on the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market and to promote their recruitment in the public and private sectors. Details of any steps taken to encourage persons with disabilities to enter the workforce would be welcome.

61. **A representative of Maldives** said that the transition from education to employment had been identified as an important stage and a number of measures had been taken to facilitate it, including the development of a register of school-leavers. As part of the process of compiling the register, school-leavers were assessed to determine their suitability for employment and to identify any training requirements that they might have. School-leavers could participate in training programmes to enhance their skills. The functional requirements of persons of disabilities were assessed as part of the process of matching jobseekers with employers. In workplaces, various types of reasonable accommodation were made for employees with disabilities. Plans were in place to establish an empowerment hub that would help to prepare jobseekers to enter the workplace. The Government worked with non-governmental organizations to empower persons with disabilities and promote their access to employment.

62. **Ms. Guala Beathyate** said that she wished to know what percentage of persons with disabilities were in employment or seeking employment. It would also be useful to know what percentage of registered persons with disabilities received social benefits, what the average cost of living was for a family and how the Government determined the amount of benefit to which a person or family was entitled. She would welcome details of the requirements that persons with disabilities must meet in order to obtain the disability allowance. She wondered whether persons with disabilities who were in employment continued to receive the allowance. She also wished to know whether any study had been conducted to determine the proportion of tax revenues allocated to contributory or non-contributory social benefits for persons with disabilities.

63. It would be interesting to hear what was being done to ensure that persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities could vote independently. She would welcome further information on the practical measures taken to guarantee the right to vote for blind persons and the participation of persons with disabilities in political life, either as voters or as candidates for election. It would be useful to learn why the State Party had not yet ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. Lastly, she wondered what further measures would be taken to ensure the participation of children with disabilities in leisure, sports and cultural activities.

64. **A representative of Maldives** said that social protection allowances were not index-linked but were adjusted to reflect the cost of living as needed. The basic disability allowance amounted to Rf 3,000 and was paid to all persons listed on the registry of persons with disabilities. Additional allowances worth up to Rf 7,000 were payable, depending on claimants' disability-related expenses and the number of dependants they had.

65. **A representative of Maldives** said that, in the 2023 presidential election, voters with visual impairments had been able, for the first time, to cast their ballots independently and confidentially using a tactile template. While that was a significant achievement, the Government recognized that more needed to be done to expand access to electoral information and to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the democratic process and worked closely with stakeholders and organizations of persons with disabilities to that end. The Elections Commission collaborated with the Human Rights Commission and with disability rights stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the barriers facing voters with different types of disability. Currently, ad hoc arrangements were made in polling stations to overcome such barriers.

66. The Government had no plans to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty. However, the objectives of the Treaty were met by the amendment made in 2024 to the Copyright and Related Rights

Act, under which materials could be reproduced in accessible formats and distributed to persons with disabilities.

67. **Mr. Tamon** said that he wished to know on what date the Government would grant official recognition to sign language.

68. **Ms. Fefoame** said that she wished to know how many deafblind learners were enrolled in school, whether they were in special needs or mainstream schools and what services were made available to them. She would like to know what was being done to ensure that persons with disabilities had access to information on marriage procedures and family law processes. She wondered what measures were taken to protect women with disabilities against forced or arranged marriages and to ensure that men with disabilities were not paid to enter into temporary marriages.

69. **Ms. Gabrilli** said that she wished to know whether the Government would make it mandatory for all employers, in all sectors, to make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and to comply with accessibility standards.

70. **Ms. Boresli** said that she wished to know how many women and girls with disabilities had been subjected to forced sterilization and what was being done to eradicate that practice. She wondered whether carers, service providers and all other stakeholders working with persons with disabilities were fully aware of their rights in that regard. She would be grateful for information on the complaints mechanisms available to persons with disabilities whose right to privacy had been violated. Further information on measures being taken to ensure access to education for all persons with disabilities, including those with visual impairments, hearing impairments or intellectual disabilities, would be welcome.

71. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that she would like to know how the State Party saw to it that persons with disabilities, including those who had filed complaints against the authorities, enjoyed the right to the protection of the law against interference with their privacy.

72. **Mr. Makni** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he wished to know what forms of support were provided for children with multiple disabilities and what resources were made available to promote their right to education.

73. **A representative of Maldives** said that answers to the remaining questions would be provided in writing. He was grateful to the members of the Committee for their invaluable observations and guidance. Although there were still challenges, the Government remained firmly committed to removing barriers, building inclusive systems and ensuring that persons with disabilities could live their lives with dignity and autonomy and participate fully in every aspect of life.

74. **Mr. Makni** said that he wished to commend the State Party on its efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthen the mainstreaming of disability in national strategies and programmes.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*