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**REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN  
THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION**

**PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF SMALL STATES**

Letter dated 9 August 1989 from the Permanent Representative  
of Maldives to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion on the agenda of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Protection and security of small States".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum concerning this request is attached hereto.

(Signed) Hussein MANIKFAN  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

1. The attempted invasion of the Republic of Maldives by mercenaries on 3 November 1988 dealt a hard blow to the country's efforts to develop peacefully as a small State with a strong tradition of non-alignment and of principled responsibility in international affairs. Despite the oft-reiterated intention of the United Nations to rid developing countries of the scourge of mercenarism, Maldives was faced with the desperate need to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against the onslaught by the armed terrorists.

2. The attempt to overthrow the legitimate Government of Maldives was thwarted by the armed forces of Maldives. The stalwart and invaluable assistance of Indian Government forces, which interceded at the request of the Maldivian Government, was crucial to the eventual routing of the invaders.

3. This blatant act of invasion was not only a violation of universally recognized norms and principles of international law, but a challenge to international order, since the invaders clearly assumed that if militarily successful in overthrowing the legitimate Government of Maldives, the puppet government that they intended to establish would be accepted internationally, opening the way to the purchasing of arms, the establishment of training camps and the launching of terrorist attacks on yet another country, having taken full advantage of the vulnerability of a small State.

4. The United Nations has long been involved in the process of drafting an international convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries, and it is perhaps in part because of a lack of expedition and the impression of a lack of seriousness that mercenaries feel free to challenge the sovereignty of small States. Obviously there is an urgent need for comprehensive and effective measures in order to convince mercenaries that such adventures and acts of invasion against small States will not be tolerated by the international community.

5. It is evident from the records over the past few decades that small island territories are particularly vulnerable to aggression by mercenaries or armed adventurers. There are clear and common features in the pattern: the victims are often small States, the attack is more often than not sea-borne and mercenaries are involved.

6. Small, vulnerable, non-aligned States that keep a low-key international posture should be able to depend on the international community to help protect their sovereignty. For small nations the best ultimate defence should be found in the Charter of the United Nations and the machinery established thereby. The function of the United Nations is to contribute to the establishment of a new, safe world order and to do this it is expected to have a role in regulating power relationships in the international system. In this connection, ensuring the long-term viability of small States in the international system should be a clearly acknowledged responsibility.

7. Small States face a cruel choice: either to put their trust in the hope for protection by the international community and the machinery that has been established for the maintenance of international peace and security (the Security Council, in particular), or to take steps to defend themselves against aggression mounted from outside by diverting to military purposes scarce resources sorely needed for economic and social development, and by making possibly encumbering defence agreements with larger Powers.

8. Small States may not necessarily stand alone in coping with their security problems. They do have friendly States that assist them in adversity, but would prefer that security arrangements be systematized and made international. The protection of their independence should depend upon a general acceptance of their being members of a community of common interest and therefore upon an acknowledgement of mutual responsibility as a prerequisite for international order.

9. In the steadily improving international climate, the Government of Maldives feels that the time is more than appropriate for co-operation to move forward in non-contentious areas. We suggest that consideration be given to the building and strengthening of norms conducive to good order, particularly in areas and issues that do not normally involve the competition of the great Powers or their alliances. Therefore:

(a) There is need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to act quickly, either by direct means or through the use of regional and/or bilateral assistance, in cases of aggression or threats against small States. This would be possible if there were an informal concordat between the permanent members of the Security Council, which would enable the Council to take action on such issues;

(b) The Secretary-General has already developed a "Global Watch" facility to monitor potentially dangerous international issues and to effect research into potential security problems. The Government of Maldives feels that this facility is particularly suited for monitoring the security issues of small States and urges that a specific allocation be made to this end;

(c) The Secretary-General might also be encouraged to meet on a regular basis with relevant regional agencies to exchange information regarding emerging disputes or trends that might threaten international peace and security and, where necessary, to initiate measures to alleviate a situation or provide for financial, logistical or political support;

(d) Within the ambit of Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Secretary-General could play a more active role in respect of the scope of his functions under the Charter and make full use of the framework provided under the Charter for promoting security. In this respect, where the security of small States is concerned, the Secretary-General should have the power to take immediate preventive action such as the dispatch of a mission or a personal representative to a country that considers itself under the threat of aggression;

(e) The highest priority should be given to finalizing the draft convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries and to its adoption;

(f) Quite apart from the draft convention, there is a clear need for the United Nations to reiterate its appeal to all countries to make appropriate domestic arrangements to outlaw the recruitment of mercenaries in their countries and to ensure effective means, legislative as well as administrative, domestic as well as regional, for the arrest, detention and extradition of terrorists;

(g) The United Nations should urge the international community to assist small States with their security needs and, in particular, to enhance the communication, information and surveillance facilities available to the Governments of small States;

(h) The United Nations should urge relevant agencies at the regional or intergovernmental level to give guarantees of international assistance in cases of blatant aggression against small States where the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those States are challenged and where the domestic legitimacy and international acceptability of the attacked régime are in no way in question.

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