

Excellencies,

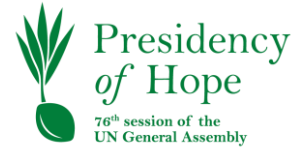
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join today's opening ceremony of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Workshop for the Asia Region.

I wish to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Secretariat of the Trust Fund, as well as the Government of the Republic of the Maldives, for organizing this timely and relevant workshop.

Dear friends,

As President of the General Assembly, I represent 193 Member States, but in my heart and spirit, I will always be a small islander.



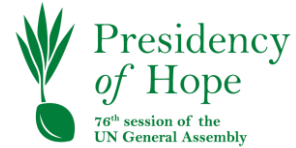
I am proud that the Maldives, as host country, played an instrumental role in the creation of the Trust Fund, in 2012.

From training on human rights and engagement with the Human Rights Council, to fellowship programmes and regional workshops, the Fund has proved to be effective in ensuring the active participation of LDCs and SIDS in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are a world of many, not a few.

Recognition of the inalienable rights of all individuals is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.



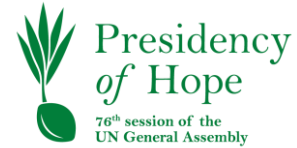
Under my Presidency of Hope, I am proud to say that *Respecting the rights of all* is one of my top priorities, the fourth Ray of Hope.

I will use every means available to me, as President, to ensure that the General Assembly strengthens the work of the Council and of tools such as the Trust Fund.

Because we have a responsibility to ensure that all voices are heard before the Human Rights Council and that all Member States have equal opportunities to be represented.

A strong case in point is the adoption this year by the HRC of two landmark resolutions on human rights and climate change.

I have no doubt that these resolutions benefited from the voices of LDCs and SIDS on the Council.



Excellencies,

Since January 2014, the Trust Fund has supported 172 delegates and fellows – 104 women and 68 men – coming from 71 LDCs and SIDS.

As an advocate for gender equality, I commend the Trust Fund for emphasizing support for women delegates and fellows.

I hope that my own initiative – the President of the General Assembly’s HOPE Fellowship, or Harnessing Opportunities for Promoting Empowerment of Youth, which began accepting applications just last week, will be equally as successful in reaching LDCs and SIDS, as well as empowering young women diplomats.

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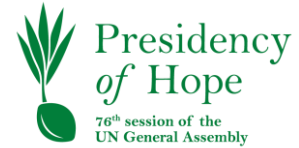


While you have every reason to be proud of the Fund's accomplishments, we must always strive for excellence.

As we go forward, I encourage participants to ensure an in-depth evaluation of the activities related to the mandate of the Trust Fund.

The recommendations of participants in this workshop are key to further strengthening the Fund, including enriching the text of the “Declaration of Malé towards 2022.”

I look forward to both celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Trust Fund, and welcoming the *High-level panel discussion on the benefits of universal and meaningful participation of all UN Member States in the work of the Human Rights Council*, to be held in March 2022.



Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me also thank the donor countries for their continued support and confidence in the Fund's programmes and activities. And let me commend each of you for your work and unwavering support.

I wish this workshop every success.

I thank you.