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Marine Science Symposium – Maldives Marine Research Institute

Date and time: 24TH July 2024, 8:30 am

Venue/Format: Maldives National University

Event: The opening ceremony of the Fifth Maldives Marine Science Symposium

Honourable Ministers, Special Envoy for Climate Change, Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of the Maldives National University, distinguished guests, Participants of the Fifth Maldives Marine Science Symposium and dear colleagues, Assalaam Alaikum and a very good morning.

Let me first extend a very warm welcome to the Fifth Maldives Marine Science Symposium. It is an honor to stand before you today as we celebrate not only the remarkable achievements in marine science but also the 40th anniversary of the Maldives Marine Research Institute (MMRI).

MMRI started out as the Marine Research Section under the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture in 1984. And in 1999, with a stronger mandate Marine Research Centre was established. Since its establishment, MMRI has pioneered marine sciences in the Maldives. Recognizing the critical role of science in ocean resource management, MMRI was founded at a time when the Maldivian waters were largely uncharted. Much of what we knew then came from regional expeditions that included the Maldives.

Over the past four decades, MMRI has produced significant research on fisheries, marine ecosystems, and more recently, mariculture. The institute's scientific outputs have been instrumental in shaping national policies and the Maldives' engagements with regional bodies that manage



various fisheries and ocean resources. MMRI has also been pivotal in developing research capacity within the Maldives, fostering collaborations with renowned research organizations worldwide.

We have witnessed the growth of numerous experts in marine science, many of whom began their journeys at the Institute, back then Marine Research Centre. They have since made significant contributions both within and outside the institute. Today, we see a vibrant community of NGOs , private organizations and independent researchers actively engaging in marine scientific research in the Maldives. Their collective effort contributes to enhancing our understanding of the oceans that forms the basis of our economy, livelihoods, and existence.

Dear esteemed researchers, it is my pleasure to emphasize that the present administration brings forth an ambitious ocean agenda. As we look ahead, I eagerly anticipate increased focused research on our ocean resources – a commitment to their sustainable development that will yield benefits for generations to come!

The Maldives Marine Science Symposia have become a cornerstone for the marine science community in the Maldives. These symposia provide an invaluable platform for marine scientists to share their work, form collaborations, and drive forward the frontiers of marine science. While it's encouraging to see growing body of research on Maldivian marine



ecosystems, it is crucial that these efforts are well regulated. Given the vast ocean surrounding the Maldives, local engagement in marine research is essential to deepen our understanding of our marine environment and its processes.

I urge the active research community in the Maldives to adhere to the regulations governing marine scientific research. This will ensure that our research outputs are coordinated and comprehensive, contributing to the strategic goals of enhancing ocean-based commerce, rehabilitating fisheries resources, and sustainably utilizing marine ecosystems. Let's work together to protect and sustainably manage our marine resources for the benefit of future generations

As we gather here today, let us celebrate the legacy of MMRI and the collective efforts of all those who have contributed to marine science in the Maldives. I would like to acknowledge the dedicated staff of MMRI, both past and present, for their outstanding work in increasing our understanding of the Maldivian marine environment. Your contributions have been invaluable. I wish to see MMRI expand its research capacities further and develop robust networks with local research communities active across the country. Together, we can ensure that our marine resources are managed sustainably for the benefit of future generations

Let us also look forward to the future, where continued research and collaboration will lead to sustainable management and conservation of our precious marine resources. I am particularly hopeful to see increased local



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engagement in marine science, as our community's involvement is crucial for the continued success and sustainability of our marine ecosystems.

Thank you, and I wish you all a productive and inspiring symposium.
