

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND OCEAN RESOURCES

MINISTER' SPEECH

Date and Time: 16th December 2024 – 10:30 hrs, Wyndham Grand Plaza Royale Colorful Yunnan Kunming Hotel

Theme: Third China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Blue Economy Development Cooperation

Distinguished attendees, esteemed representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

Assalaam Alaikum and a very good morning to you all.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to the Vice President, me and the entire delegation of Maldives. It is an honour to be in the colourful city of Kunming and most importantly attending the Third China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Blue Economy Development Cooperation. I congratulate excellency you and your team for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and thank you for leadership.

I am deeply honoured to address this distinguished gathering on the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and its relevance to the principles driving the Global Development Initiative (GDI).

Just like most of the people of the Maldives, I come from a family of fishermen. My childhood memories are of our small fishing vessel, and the stories shared by father and grandfather. These were not just stories of how



much they caught, nor the tales of stormy weather; they were narratives of resilience, stewardship, and a love and deep respect for the ocean. We have celebrated its gifts, respected its power and understood its fragility in our life.

Just like how I said previously in other forums, this legacy of tradition and cultural values has been passed down to me by my forefathers, and it is a baton I must pass on to future generations. However, to do so, we require facts, we need data, and we need science to guide us in our decision-making. The oceans are more than mere resources; they shape our identity, sustain our people, and anchor our very existence. Positioned at the frontline of climate change, the ocean is both our greatest blessing and our gravest vulnerability.

As such, the theme of the Ocean Decade, 'the science we need for the ocean we want,' resonates deeply with us. It is not merely an aspiration; but rather, an urgent necessity. Our survival depends on understanding and safeguarding the delicate balance of the marine ecosystems that sustain us.

The Ocean Decade represents a clarion call to unite our scientific ingenuity, policy ambitions, and collective action to address the unprecedented challenges facing our oceans. It embodies the critical need to leverage ocean



science in decision-making, underscoring humanity’s shared responsibility to protect, restore, and sustain the blue heart of our planet.

As we reflect on the milestones of this Decade and set our sights on its ambitious goals, it is crucial to recognize the synergy between the UN Ocean Decade and the core principles of Global Development Initiative. Both frameworks are rooted in inclusivity, innovation, and action-oriented strategies to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For the Maldives, GDI provide unique opportunities to advocate for equitable ocean research policies that empower our fishing communities and protect our biodiversity. The principles of the Global Development Initiative—with its focus on innovation, inclusivity, and results-oriented actions—offer a complementary framework for achieving the goals of the Ocean Decade. As the GDI champions global partnerships, mobilizes resources, and bridges the North-South divide, it provides the support necessary to implement key Decade Programmes in areas such as early-warning systems, advancing ocean literacy and promoting innovations in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. Together, these frameworks represent a roadmap to navigate the most urgent challenges rooted in our ocean.

Ladies and gentlemen.



As such, President Mohamed Muizzu's visit to China on January this year is a perfect example of this initiative in practice. During his State visit, President Xi Jinping stressed the special friendship between the people of Maldives and China and both sides committed to strengthening cooperation on blue economy, and marine ecological and environmental protection. This visit has led us taking significant strides in the development of our ocean related activities, in particular in the area of fisheries and aquaculture.

As we stand at this critical juncture, I am reminded of the proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." The challenges we face require us to go far, and we can only do so by coming together, by pooling our resources, our expertise, and our commitment. We must embrace collaboration—across nations, sectors, and disciplines—to realise the ambitions of the Ocean Decade and the GDI. This collaboration must honour traditional knowledge, foster equitable partnerships, and enable the transfer of technology and resources. Let us ensure that science is translated into action, that knowledge is shared inclusively, and that solutions are implemented with urgency and fairness for all.



The Maldives is committed to being an active partner in this journey, leveraging our unique insights as a small island nation to contribute to global solutions. Together, we can transform this Decade of Ocean Science into a Decade of decisive action, empowering communities, preserving biodiversity, and securing a sustainable future for generations to come.

Thank you.