Statement by
the Republic of Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States
Agenda Item 22: Countries in Special Situations
19 October 2016

Distinguished Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. Let me begin by aligning ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. I also wish to thank the Secretary General for his reports on this agenda item and his work, along with Secretariat, in continued support of all countries in special situations, including the SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

3. We, as a group of countries who face significant challenges due to specific circumstances, express our full solidarity with, and support to, Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). Eight of our members are LDCs, and while none of them is land-locked, they instead are “sea-locked”. As island and coastal states, we understand the unique challenges faced by remoteness, and limited connectivity and transport related challenges.

4. We reiterate the importance of fully integrating the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs, and the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs, into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through establishing effective linkages between the follow-up and review processes. While the 2030 Agenda provides an overarching framework for the realisation of sustainable development, the Programmes of Action for specific groups provide targeted approaches to realizing sustainable development, in specific circumstances.

5. Targeted approaches are necessary to support the efforts of countries in special situations to achieve sustainable development and economic growth. This includes SIDS-LDCs as they face structural challenges on two sides – both in terms of the structural challenges as SIDS from which they will never graduate including limited
access to resources, exposure and vulnerability in the face of climate change and extreme weather events, and remoteness to name a few, as well as the economic and social challenges inherent to existing within the LDC classification.

Mr Chairman,

6. In order to move forward, it is key that UN System Support for all countries in special situations be continually strengthened and for it to be coherent across the board with other efforts. We look forward to the discussions on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, as well as other ongoing efforts to continually reflect upon the support that countries are receiving at the ground level, and to listen to feedback from governments to ensure that national ownership of sustainable development activities is enabled.

7. For this purpose, it is important for the international organisations, including the international financial institutions, to align their support programmes with the 2030 Agenda. Without alignment, all the processes that the international community has negotiated within the past two years, in particular the 2030 Agenda, cannot be successfully implemented.

8. In addition, as key for all countries in special situations, especially those that are LDCs, is the need to consider transparent measurements of progress on sustainable development that go beyond per capita income. Income-based indicators do not reflect holistically the advancement or the vulnerabilities of a society. It doesn’t reflect how resilient the country is to shocks. It doesn’t address unique circumstances of each country, and their specific challenges.

9. This distinction becomes important when assessing countries for graduation. Many LDCs on track for graduation are extremely vulnerable to shocks: including large-scale disasters. It takes one big storm wipe years of hard-earned development gains in many of these countries. With more countries being assessed for graduation, sustaining the development gains being made by these countries must also be a priority.

10. In conclusion Mr Chair, we reiterate our full support to the LDCs and LLDCs in their quest to realize the sustainable development priorities identified in their respective Programmes of Action, and further elaborated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thank you.