

**STATEMENT BY
H. E. DR AHMED ZIYAD
IDB GOVERNOR FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES**

(Original : English)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ، خَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ،
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

**President of Islamic Development Bank Group, Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali,
Your excellences, Mr. Chairman, Governors and Alterative Governors,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ،

It is a great honor and a privilege for me to address the 41th Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank Group on behalf of our Governor H.E. Ahmed Ziyad, held in Jakarta, the ‘Wonderful Indonesia’. Being the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has the potential to become a center for Muslim civilization and to lead Muslim civilization into another gold era.

On behalf of our delegation, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the government of Indonesia for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements for this meeting. On the same note, let me also congratulate the IDB group and leadership of H.E. Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali, for guiding the bank to be one of the most modern and efficient MDB. At this juncture, it is with heavy heart that we say farewell to Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali, and we wholeheartedly appreciate his invaluable contribution for the Bank’s success, especially in giving equal importance for all countries of IDB irrespective of their size. At the same time, we also welcome and fully support the nomination of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Dr. Bandar bin Mohamed bin Hamza Asad Hajjar as the President of IDB and we are confident that he would be able to guide IDB into the next era.

Excellencies,

The government of Maldives, under the stewardship of President Abdullah Yameen, has put the economic agenda on the front line, to make Maldives a resilient, diversified, high income economy in the next decade. Government is targeting to double the GDP per capita of Maldives during his presidency using transformational infrastructure development projects. This is in line with this year’s IDB Annual Meeting’s theme, ‘*Enhancing growth and poverty reduction through infrastructure development and financial inclusion*’.

In this regard, government has already kicked started key mega projects, including the development of the Second Phase of Hulhumale’ Youth City, a bridge connectivity between the capital island Male’ and the Airport island, and expanding six-fold the handling capacity of the International Airport. All of these mega project have already begun, especially the works on the bridge connectivity, the first bridge to be built in Maldives, linking the Youth City and Male’. The Bridge will enable greater Male’ region to cater 2/3 of population of Maldives and would become a magnet that pulls rural populations dispersed over 183 islands to the medina of Youth City.

These are bold economic transformation policies towards creation of urban centres focused on the youths, for providing them with education and training, as well as improved housing and job prospects. In this regard, government has started the development of more than 15,000 housing units in the Youth City with the aim of providing affordable housing to the people since it is a severe constraint faced for majority of Maldivians. This shows the importance of focusing on multidimensional poverty analysis for small island economies such as Maldives which are also very vulnerable to external shocks and environmental fragilities.

Distinguished delegates,

Since mobilizing financing for many of these mega projects are very challenging, government is using various mode of financing, especially the generous development financing from bilateral and multilateral institutions including IDB group. Moreover, the domestic tax revenues which accounts for closed to 25% of GDP is also being utilized. In addition, government is also keen in the development Islamic Finance with the vision of becoming a self-sustained partner in promoting Islamic Finance in the South Asia region. In this effort, the government has recently established two SPVs, Maldives Islamic Finance Center and Khazana Maldives. In the development of this sector, government is seeking assistance and guidance from market leaders. Already government has approached Malaysian government and IDB Group and we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the support they have already rendered and we are confident of their continuous support. Likewise, in order to develop an investor-friendly environment for FDIs, a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Act has been enacted in 2014, giving special incentives to attract FDIs including for the establishment of an Islamic Financial Centre and we welcome all partners.

Excellencies,

In the development of Maldives, continuous support of the IDB group is highly appreciative including the ongoing infrastructures projects such as Sanitation and Reconstruction of Harbor projects and more importantly the keen interest shown via syndicated financing together with Arab Coordination Group members, of closed to \$400 million, for the development of International Airport. In addition, government has also been getting continuous support in the form of technical assistance especially in the development of Islamic legislative framework. Even now, with the assistance of IDB group, legislations on Zakat and Awqaf has been developed and these laws would be passed this year by the Parliament and we are very keen also to work with IDB Group in the development of Wakf for investment in infrastructure projects.

Distinguished delegates, in conclusion,

Even though Maldives is a small island economy, our aspirations is high and being a 100% Muslim country, we believe, we could play an active role in being a model economy and in achieving IDB's visions. In this respect, we are deeply appreciative for IDB's management and countries in our constitution for giving, for the first time, an opportunity to Maldives to represent in IDB's Board of Executive Directors. We are sure that our experience, knowledge and perspective in the economic development would assist IDB to have a broader and a unique view. May the Almighty grant us the wisdom to remain steadfast in our Faith! May Allah bless the work being done towards development of our Ummah! Ameen.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته