

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



**TRANSLATION
OF THE
FAREWELL ADDRESS
BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. MAUMOON ABDUL GAYOOM,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES**

10 November 2008, Monday

Beloved and fraternal people of the Maldives;

At the onset, I wish to offer my thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for giving me the honour and privilege of filling the dutiful post of President of the Republic for 30 long years, and with it the opportunity to have served the Maldives and its people during the period.

On the 11th of November 1978, it was you, the beloved people of the Maldives, who elected me to serve as your President with an overwhelming majority. It was also the decision of the people to re-elect me with similarly high majorities to the post of President for six consecutive terms thereafter.

Therefore, as I now prepare to leave this portfolio and with it the President's Office, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the people for granting me the proud opportunity to have served you as President for so many years.

May I also thank you for giving me your wholehearted support and assistance in fulfilling the most important duties that were entrusted upon me as President.

Thank you very much for the love, respect and honour that you gave me throughout the past 30 years.

I leave the highest portfolio in the country with sentiments of gratitude to every Maldivian for the bonds of kinship that we had established, maintained and strengthened over the years.

I leave this post in happiness and in pride. I leave with all the fond memories etched in my heart. I will forever treasure the experiences that we had shared together in building the nation.

I could not have completed six consecutive presidential terms of office if not for the sincere support and assistance of many dedicated people. They remained by my side over the years in the service of their country and its people. I could always rely on them to sincerely and wholeheartedly undertake every responsibility that was entrusted upon them.

I thank every single dignitary who served as ministers at various periods of my presidency. May I also thank all other dignitaries and senior Government officials during the past 30 years.

I thank all the dedicated servicemen of the MNDF and Maldives Police Service who I had the privilege of serving as the Commander in Chief. To everyone who served in the Government throughout my tenure as President, I say a big thank you.

I wish to thank all the senior officials and staff of Government companies. I would also like to thank everyone who offered their wisdom, guidance and advice to me and my Government in various ways, over the years.

To those who are with us, I wish you every happiness and prosperity. To those who have passed away, I pray to the Almighty to grant them the eternal blessing of Heaven.

Beloved people of the Maldives;

Tomorrow, the responsibility of leading this country will rest on different shoulders. A new face, a new voice will greet you. The vision for the way forward for this country will from tomorrow be determined by a new President.

After securing a historic victory in the country's first multiparty presidential election, the new President assumes the highest office in the country from tomorrow.

I join all the people of the Maldives in offering Mr. Mohamed Nasheed, the new President, hearty congratulations and good wishes of prosperity and success.

I know that many of those who offered their support to me during the recent presidential election are still bitterly disappointed. I know that you have been crying tears of sadness. Your sentiments were clearly etched on your faces when you came to bid farewell to me over the past couple of days. During these and other meetings that I have had with thousands of Maldivian people, I have experienced your sorrow in my election defeat. To all of you, I have one very simple message.

Accepting the election result, congratulating the victor and offering our support to the incumbent in assuming the duties of presidency is the democratic way!

Our patriotic duties and adherence to democratic principles must take precedence over the results of an election.

The heat of the election campaign will lead to attacks and counter-attacks from both sides. As a peace-loving and patriotic people, our responsibility is to heal any wounds inflicted during the campaign as soon as possible, and to ensure that our country is not plunged into divisions and civil strife.

Maldivians must take pride in the Maldivian democracy that we have together created. The Maldives must be a model democracy where powers are transferred from one government to the next in an atmosphere of peace and cooperation.

Although political views may differ during an election period, we must learn to reorganize our ranks behind one leader once the election comes to a close.

The Maldives must remain as one, as must all Maldivians. Also, we must realign our focus from individuals to that of the entire nation.

Beloved people;

With the Grace of the Almighty Allah, the long and historic journey that I had the good fortune of undertaking with you, the beloved people, had culminated in many achievements, successes and victories.

In comparison to the Maldives that I was entrusted with to lead back in 1978, the country is today far more developed, more wealthy and more prosperous.

The Maldives for hundreds of years had been in near total isolation, with only a handful of people overseas having ever heard of the country. Today, though, the country is globally renowned and reputed, and it has earned the praise and respect of the international community.

There are many more national achievements of note that we had achieved together over the past 30 years.

Our independence and sovereignty were throughout protected and preserved.

Our Islamic identity was strengthened.

Building mosques and schools, establishing offices, providing functional literacy for all and opening up primary education for all. Widening opportunities for secondary and post-secondary education across the country. Laying a firm foundation for higher education for Maldivian youths.

Improving healthcare standards in the Maldives. Increasing and improving healthcare services across the country. Rejuvenating the economy. Encouraging the emergence of a new generation of fishermen in the Maldives. Expanding and developing the country's tourism sector. Providing growth incentives in the agriculture sector.

Empowering a new generation of Maldivians with heightened awareness, knowledge and intelligence. Opening up the Maldives to the world outside and earning the country's pride of place in the international community among its responsible members. Making the Maldives a destination of interest on the global stage. Proving the country's youth with the opportunity to realize their many dreams and aspirations.

With the Grace of the Almighty Allah and the industry of the Maldivian people, we have together overcome many of the developmental challenges that the country was faced with, and succeeded in taking the Maldives to previously unimagined heights of progress and prosperity.

The Maldives has experienced a sea change in recent years. We are today a more energetic and forward-looking nation. Our aspirations as a people are far higher than at any previous time in history. Many of our aspirations have surely been realized. So many more of our dreams too have become a reality.

It was the Grace of the Almighty Allah that I was able to fulfil many of the aspirations of the people. These achievements would never have been possible without the firm support, assistance and trust of the people.

The increase in people's needs and aspirations far outpaced the increase in the country's economic growth and income earning opportunities. The need to prioritise development activities was, therefore, of paramount importance at all times. I tried my utmost to fulfil the aspirations of the people by apportioning some part of every Rufiyaa of revenue that the country had earned. I always attached due priority to egalitarianism, and I sincerely hope that the people accept and acknowledge this fact.

Every decision that I had made as President, every document that I had signed as President, every piece of legislation that I had

ratified as President and every policy that I had implemented as President, was done with the unwavering objective of sustainably building our beloved nation.

I had always attached the highest priority to promoting and protecting the country's most cherished treasures; namely Islam, its independence and sovereignty. My aim had always been to increase the country's potential for growth and development. National development was always my intent. My commitment to promoting and protecting national unity and social harmony had never wavered.

I deeply regret any actions on my part – whether it be through an implemented policy, an executive decision or plain negligence on my part – had led to unfair treatment, difficulty or injustice for any Maldivian. From anyone who had had to face any such unfair treatment, difficulty or injustice, I sincerely seek forgiveness.

Beloved people;

I sincerely hope that the open liberal democracy that we have together ushered in will serve as a strong new national foundation upon which we can continue our path towards even more prosperity. After achieving unprecedented levels of national awareness, social progress and economic opportunities, as well as earning our right to graduation from LDC status, I tried my utmost to transform and reform our political landscape to accommodate for the needs of the day. I felt that such democratic reforms were indeed a necessity, a priority and a prerequisite for greater national development.

With the Grace of the Almighty Allah, much of the democratic reforms that I envisioned for the Maldives have already been successfully implemented. Although I will now not have the opportunity to be at the helm to oversee the completion of the democratic reform programme, my hope is that the people of the Maldives will experience the successful completion of the democratic reform programme under the new presidency.

Beloved people;

As I stand here and address you today, I too have many aspirations for the future of the Maldives.

The Maldives to adhere vehemently to the tenets and principles of the Islamic faith,

The Maldives to remain forever as a 100% Muslim country,

To steadfastly protect the independence and sovereignty of our great nation,

Our families to remain tightly bonded by kinship and love,

The Maldives to make further gains in the field of education and academia.

Our economy to flourish and our standards of living to increase further.

To avert all disruptions to the prevalent unity and fraternity among the Maldivian people,

To avoid all forms of violence and bloodshed in our country at all cost,

To have the patience, the awareness and the maturity to accept differences in political opinion in the true spirit of democracy, and to learn how to live in peace and harmony in spite of different views and opinions among each other,

To engrain the wisdom of welcoming new ideas and new people,

To learn to accept and respect senior generations and their ideas,

To reach the milestone of a full welfare state where all healthcare expenditure is sponsored by the government,

To have a Maldives National University in full operation,

To complete the journey to make the Maldives into a successful, wealthy nation, in spite of the limited natural resources and geographic disparity of the country, and to prove to the world that the people of the Maldives can live on these islands in prosperity, happiness and contentment,

To strengthen democratic principles in the Maldives and to protect human rights in the country,

To continue to earn the respect and admiration of the international community,

The Maldives to become a model democracy among all Muslim nations in the world, and to ensure that the repercussions of global market shocks do not adversely affect the country's economy,

To lead a life of dignity and respect, by voicing any and all concerns through political leaders, the legislative system and wholehearted hard work,

To be proud of the unique features that encompasses the very identity of the Maldives,

To refrain from all forms of intimidation and violence,

To become self sufficient as a nation,

To remain steadfast against unwarranted external influences,
and

To remember that there are far more things that bind us together than those that divide us.

Beloved people;

Although my tenure in office as President of the Republic is coming to a close, I do not believe that it is the end of all opportunities for me to serve the people of the Maldives.

I am leaving this post with much greater hopes and aspirations than when I first assumed office many years back. I firmly believe that the most prosperous times in Maldivian history is still to be realized.

I sincerely believe that the greatest gift is that of my Maldivian identity, my Maldivian roots and my Maldivian citizenship.

With the Grace of the Almighty Allah, I leave the office of President with the steadfast resolve of continuing my service to the people.

I wish to once again express my deep appreciation and gratitude to the Maldivian people for the years of love and respect that you have given me.

I remain for the rest of my days in the service of the Maldivian people, and with the utmost love and respect for my country.

I wish to remain here in the Maldives, on this land of my birth, and under the shade of our national flag.

If the people of the Maldives look towards me with affection, it would be my greatest satisfaction.

I reiterate my sincere congratulations to Mr. Mohamed Nasheed, as he assumes the high office of President of the Republic from tomorrow. I wish to include all members of his government in these sentiments.

My wish is for the Almighty to bless the new government with the fortitude to unite the nation and to bring further prosperity to the people.

I pray for happiness, good health and wellbeing for the beloved people of the Maldives.

May the Almighty Allah continue to bless our nation!

Thank you!