

**Groundbreaking ceremony to strengthen IES Units at HA. AEC
(HA.Dhidhdhoo),
Aboobakuru School (GDh.Thinadhoo) & Ihadhdhoo School (L.Gan)
2 June, 2022**

Speech

H.E. Dr. Abdulla Rasheed Ahmed, MoS for Education

H.E. Dr. Hala Hameed, Secretary Multilateral, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

President & officials of the Dhidhdhoo Local Council,

Officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education and Local Council

Friends, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am deeply touched by the warm and traditional welcome accorded to me by the people from this beautiful island of Dhidhdhoo. I am glad that, with the pandemic-related restrictions behind us, we are able to resume project-related events in outer islands. India's grant projects in Maldives support the socio-economic development goals of the local island communities. It is only fitting that project milestones are celebrated with the involvement of the people who will be the end-users and beneficiaries.

2. In this context, it gives me immense pleasure to attend today's groundbreaking ceremony to mark the development of Inclusive Education Support Units at Haa Alif Atoll Education Centre (Dhidhdhoo), Aboobakuru School (Gaaf Dhaalu Thinadhoo) & Ihadhdhoo School (Laamu Gan).

3. The former Indian President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has said, and I quote 'While children are struggling to be unique, the world around them is trying all means to make them look like everybody else.' We commend the excellent work being carried out by the Department of Inclusive Education that identifies and appreciates this uniqueness of every child and tailors educational requirements as per their specific needs.

4. It is a distinct honour for India to be associated with a project that fosters learner-centered approaches that value and celebrate student diversity. We have earlier supported inclusive education projects in the Hafiz Ahmed School in Fuvahmulah and Afeefuddin School in Kulhudhuffushi.

5. I am happy to note that the grant support will be utilized to build teaching capacities, develop necessary infrastructure, procure resource material and assistive technologies and purchase electronic equipment. We hope that with the enhancement of IES Units at these 3 schools, the special

educational needs of Students with Complex Learning Profile (SCLP) will be adequately met.

6. Projects that support educational development and bring about a qualitative change in the lives of children are a focus area of India's Developmental Assistance to the Maldives. Some of these projects include the gifting of Fehendhoo-Goidhoo Student Ferry, equipment for setting up Children's Parks across 67 islands, renovation of 'Fiyavathi - Home for vulnerable children', strengthening IES support units in Fuvahmulah and Kulhudhuffushi and construction of classrooms at Lhohi and Kinolhas schools. I am happy to share that all of these children-centric projects have been inaugurated.

7. High-impact projects are at the heart of the dynamic development partnership between India and the Maldives. They are tailored to meet requirements of local communities. India is supporting over 45 High-Impact community development projects under a grant assistance of MVR 260 million to the Maldives. I am happy to share that around 20 of these projects have been completed and inaugurated.

8. I deeply appreciate Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid and the efficient India-desk team at the Foreign Ministry for facilitating the timely implementation of these grant projects in conjunction with line ministries and local authorities.

9. I am confident that the revamped Inclusive Education Units at Ha Alif Atoll Education Centre (AEC), Aboobakuru & Ihadhdhoo schools will help nurture the special talents and bring out the best in each of these students.