Mr President, Excellencies and Distinguished Colleagues,

Currently in the Maldives’ second year on this Executive Board, I am honored to speak on behalf of the Maldives at this annual session for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women.

The Maldives wishes to thank the secretariat for the reports created in preparation for this session. It is with enthusiasm that we congratulate the Entity for having 2013 see the highest program delivery since UN Women was established. The Maldives congratulates the entity for an 88% implementation rate for all budgeted activities.

Mr President,

The Maldives is pleased that one of UN Women’s chief priorities for 2011-2013 was to end violence against women and girls. The Maldives is further pleased to see the part UN Women has played and the amount of progress nations have made with regards to legislation, policies and strategies to end such violence.

It is unfortunate that this target was not wholly accomplished and that the adoption of National Action Plans on ending such violence is off track. However, we understand that the process of translating legislation into tangible results are often time and resources consuming.

Mr President,

I am pleased to report that the Maldives has been able to take important steps to further protect women and girls from violence, including operationalizing the facilities for victims of violence and integrating services through our Ministry of Health and Gender. Landmark bills on sexual abuse and harassment, and on sexual offences have been signed into law and are important instruments in the fight towards eliminating gender-based violence.
The Maldives welcomes the work of UN Women and would also welcome greater involvement on the ground in Maldives. While the Maldives commends UN Women’s targets and work on National Planning and Budgeting as well as other program areas, it notes that many of the programs originally planned for implementation in Maldives in 2013, have not yet been able to fully actualized.

Mr President,

The Maldives supports UN Women’s approach to regional, multi-regional and country offices aimed at implementing programs in UN Women’s key focus areas. However, the Maldives also sees the need to strengthen this framework so that national programs do not lag behind and that ground realities are taken into account.

Mr President,

The Maldives continues to stand ready to work with UN Women both nationally and internationally. National policies should adequately reflect the focus areas of UN Women, and the Maldives will continue to give them the highest priority. Here at the United Nations, we are resolute in the need for a standalone goal on gender and in our continued support for this entity and its key focus areas.

Thank you