

**Statement given by Minister of Defence and National Security honourable
Adam Shareef Umar, on the Maldives First International Seminar on Counter
Terrorism and Violent Extremism
25 October 2016**

The Maldivian Government has taken the initiative by holding a seminar from 25th to 26th October 2016 that has gathered together a group of like-minded states, international experts and global practitioners to discuss and collaborate on one of the world's most challenging and difficult issues: the threat of international terrorism and violent extremism.

The Republic of Maldives is a moderate and peace loving Muslim island nation at the crossroads of cultures, traditions and geography with cherished values built on rich traditions of historical international collaboration and cooperation. As a result, the Maldives occupies a unique space in this landscape. The Government of Maldives has a zero tolerance policy on terrorism and violent extremism.

Today, terrorism and violent extremism is a major issue being given special focus in the international community. The Government of Maldives recalls and commits to actively pursue its domestic and international obligations to combat terrorism of all kinds. It also recognises the need for the development of an effective framework to address these threats internationally. It is imperative that all international organisations and its member states work together to work towards achieving this mutual goal.

The Government of Maldives has hence worked tirelessly towards strengthening its domestic legal framework in order to increase its capacity and capability to combat terrorism and violent extremism. On 25th February 2016, His Excellency President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayyoom established the National Counter Terrorism Centre, which has been mandated as the national focal point on all counter terrorism efforts and the most senior government body with responsibility for coordinating the efforts of all agencies involved in combating terrorism.

Additionally, on 28th October 2015, the Anti-Terrorism Act was ratified. This Act meets the specific needs in the Maldives but mirrors and reflects the highest standards of best practice terrorist legislation from around the world. His Excellency President Yameen further reinforced the Government's commitment by submitting the State Policy on Terrorism and Violent Extremism to the People's Majlis, which lays the foundations for a determined countrywide campaign on de-radicalisation within vulnerable sectors of society. The Government's commitment is total and its contribution will, in partnership with its friends and allies, from all corners of the world, help to create an unassailable force to defeat this immense threat.

The Government of Maldives is determined to play a leading role – both in educating and developing best practice – and in building a much-needed focus on shared issues for countries with common challenges and concerns, which, by virtue of geography, religious choice and international partnerships, are linked by common needs.

The seminar on Counter Terrorism and Extremism has brought together representatives from the Middle East, the USA, Africa, Western Europe and Asia. The Government of Maldives acknowledges the great success of this seminar and is determined to develop a dynamic that will stand the test of time and offer the prospect of real progress through enhanced collaboration.

In the spirit of international collaboration, the Government has already started a full and thorough review of the country's capacity and capability to combat terrorism and violent extremism. The Government of Maldives sincerely hopes that the international community will share its determination and provide support in implementing key recommendations from the review.

The Maldives will continue its efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism with similar meetings and seminars in future.

Thank You.