Good afternoon to all of you

I did not come prepared with a power point presentation!

The organizer of this thematic session during lunch time offered me this opportunity with a short notice! Thank you

The Maldives archipelago consists of 1,190 small, low-lying coral islands clustered in 26 atolls. These islands are scattered into North-South direction. The total land area of the country is 298sq.km with a population of about 394,000 spread over 198 islands. These islands are naturally formed into groups of coral islands that do not have surface fresh water resources. These islands are at an average elevation of 1.5m from mean sea level surround by crystal clear seawater.

The smallness and low lying nature of the islands in Maldives happens water management and water supply services expensive and complex. Being a small low lying coral island country, Maldivians had been using groundwater and roof top harvested rainwater resources to meet their daily potable water needs.

The rain fed groundwater in these small islands occur as a freshwater lenses in the highly porous and permeable coral sands which lie at an average depth of 1.5m below the ground surface. Groundwater in many islands is not fit for human consumption due to various reasons that include increased salinity due to climate change and domestic contamination from household discharge.

The roof top harvested rainwater resource also fell short due to prolonged dry seasons experienced over the Maldives in recent past resulting lack of potable water. The low-lying land areas of the Maldives make it highly vulnerable to rising sea-levels with associated saltwater ingress, flooding from sea surges and heavy short rainfalls due to change in environmental conditions. The salinization of groundwater and less rainfall gave a signal on finding alternative means for improving water security in the country.

Seawater desalination as an alternative source, for the first time in Maldives began in late 1970,s within the tourism sector and for public use in 1985 in Male' (the capital of Maldives) with the capacity of 200cbm/day. Seawater desalination in outer islands in Maldives for the first time began in 1999 in *R. Kandholhudhoo* Island with production capacity of 50cbm/day.

Sudden increased salinity of freshwater lenses and damages caused to household water tanks followed by the 2004 tsunami has been the bench mark of the development that is happening today. Today island wide water supply systems are being developed on integrated water resource management approach.

The climate change adaptation/mitigation cost happens to be very high in Maldives in all such development projects including water supply infrastructures.

In order for better governance of water sector we have already launched *Water and Sewerage Policy*, the same time *Water and Sewerage Act* has been drafted which is at its final stage. We have also recently launched our climate change policy.

With these tools in hand we hope we will be able to bring better water governance while improving water security and in water supply service delivery

With that brief talk, I conclude

Thank you

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