



SDG 16 CONFERENCE

Peace, Justice & Inclusive Societies



People-Centered Governance in a Post-Pandemic World
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SPEAKER BIO

H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the United Nations General Assembly



Honourable Abdulla Shahid is widely recognised as an exceptional politician and a seasoned diplomat, with a long and distinguished career serving in both the Government and Legislature of the Maldives.

Since his appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for a second time, in 2018, Hon. Shahid has worked incessantly to re-position the Maldives as a responsible and respected member of the international community, by renewing previously-strained relationships and building new ones, both in the bilateral and the multilateral domains. He has re-invigorated Maldives' efforts in the multilateral arena and led the national efforts to re-join the Commonwealth after a four-year hiatus. The Maldives also won the bid to host the 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games after tireless lobbying efforts under the leadership of Hon. Shahid. The Games will be the first ever international multi-sport competition held in the Maldives.

During his first stint as Foreign Minister, Hon. Shahid advocated for a rights-based approach to climate change by making a submission to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, under the resolution HRC 7/23 "Human Rights and Climate Change". He drew attention to the direct and indirect effects of climate change on the enjoyment of a wide-range of human rights which re-invigorated the discourse on climate change and brought to light, the multidimensional impacts of climate change. He also successfully steered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through a period of sweeping political change in the Maldives, skilfully displaying a willingness to engage more widely with the international community and international human rights mechanisms.

Hon. Shahid's illustrious parliamentary career spanned 25 years, during which time, he participated in and oversaw major legislative progress and reform. He was a Member of Parliament for five consecutive terms from 1994 to 2018. Following the adoption of the newly promulgated democratic Constitution in 2008, and the first multi-party parliamentary elections in 2009, Hon. Shahid historically became the first democratically elected Speaker of the People's Majlis, in his fourth term as MP. As Speaker, he energetically steered the work of the People's Majlis and managed to build consensus at a time when the Maldives was undergoing a tumultuous period of democratic transition in an exceedingly polarised political environment. During his tenure as Speaker, Hon. Shahid served as the President of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians Conference, and in the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association from 2012 to 2015. He also actively engaged with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

As a leading voice of the Maldives Democratic Party, Hon. Shahid adamantly advocated for political and judicial reform, and was incarcerated for a short period for his relentless activism. As the Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Maldivian Democratic Party, as well as the Joint Opposition coalition, he played a pivotal role in mobilising international action against injustice, corruption and human rights violations in the Maldives.