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Chairman speaking: Good afternoon honorable members and our invited guests. Today we have with us the deputy minister of health and family Miss Maria Ali and the Barnardos UK lead consultant Miss Michel Le Izu. On behalf of the social affairs committee, I would like to offer you a very warm welcome to this committee. Now we have received indication from the Department of Gender and Family Protection services, that the purpose of this exercise is for you to give us a presentation on the importance of minimum standards. Before I give floor to our invited guests, I would like to introduce our members to you. Now here we have Dr. Afrashim Ali, he is the honorable member for Ugoofaaruu constituency. And then we have honorable member Mohmamed Zubair, he is representing Dhuvaafaru constituency. And then we have honorable member Ahmed Amir. He is representing kudahuvadhoo Constituency. And then we have here honorable member Ahmed Mahloof . He is representing Galolhu South constituency. That is male' and I am here as the Chair of comity, I represent Fuvahmulah South constancy. For you Michel, this

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may not be anything. But I mean for recording purposes I anyway wanted to give this introduction so know I give floor to our invited guests.

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Deputy Minister of
Health and Family
Miss Maria Ali
40 speaking:

Thank you, Honorable Chair. The reason we have to met with you is because of that we did an assessment about four years ago now of the residential institutions for children's so, Maafushi, ETCC, Villingili Kudakudhinge Hiyaa and than quite recently the juvenile training facility in feydhoo finolhu. So, based on the assessment that we did about in 2006 I assume, we, than ministry of gender developed a sat of minimum stranded. So, any sort of facility while children plays should have some form of minimum standards that they have to reach. So, type of care, type of the standard of toilet etc... and requirements. And staffing levels some etc... and we have at Communicating with an order. For that number of years as well and finally we have actually managed to bring...to the Maldives to conduct further assessments. And also have gone through the minimum standard the minimum standards has been going back and forth the attorney general's office at least four times in the last four years or probably more. In may we actually did sent it again and we got a reply saying that we would have to submitted to the finance ministry to see there would be in the financial implication for implementing the standards. So, the minimum standards are currently with the finance ministry. But after that we would be submitting to the regulation comity, the gavaidhu comity, and we were told that in the regulations comity you would probably take a part two weeks if they want any further questions it would be endorsed. So, we really would like to have these minimum standards endorsed ASAP, because we all the staff have been trained on the minimum standards back in 2006, but they need obviously re-trained now. Because time has passed. So much that they probably they have forgotten some. And Michel would give you a just a brief introduction to the assessment that she is done just. It is very brief findings of what they found and then also the recent why these minimum standards need to be endorsed. But these findings are currently very confidential information because the government actually need, we need to address

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the situation and have a plan for the next 6 months to rectify to attend this situation. So, 6 months probably would enough time to attend to all of them. Not fully but that would be a good finder actually force them release finding that stage.....

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Barnardos UK lead
consultant Miss
75 Michel Le Izu
speaking:

Thank you very much for begin prepare to meet with us. I would like to say we know it's not easy to implement minimum standards. We have to do that in England few years ago now and we know it takes a lot of to do that. So, along with everything else per year I've introduce the moment, I have been to do at the moment I did that's so much to do. And a lot of work happening and it's very interesting to see that. So the information I am going to give about an issues assessment that we made. I am presenting that wide socially and economically where the country access as well. So when we assessed the three center, we were only be able to not shot the juvenile detention center there we spend much longer at the Villingili Children Center and ETCC. Our biggest concern was Villingili Children Center, with or without the minimum standards there are real concerns there, and the biggest concern is that the likely about the child death Villingili children centre is very high. And that's not the because of is renewed building. it's a four story building. I wasn't originally build for the purpose to the children. So, basically been adopted the best way good for the purpose. There is balcony which was which the children likely fall off. And that's three stories, which would do in a very severely injury. There is also two stare cases their very difficult for the children to manage, because we are talking about small children here. All under 9, but many on the age of 6. So actually they are ability to manage the step if limited, down the step is quite dangerous. Quit dangerous. The other thing is the internal stare case again... children could fall down from the top to bottom so, the staff so wisely they only use the lift to travel though the building while everything is well, the problem is if there were fire or any other issue where they need to be an emergency backward from the building than it would not be possible. And we were going to do an evacuation to see how long it took to get the children out. That we were so worried that we made this decision not to do it. Because they were disable to on the third floor they would be dropped and there is

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also 10 very small baby on the third floor and on the first floor. There were no enough staffs. The staffs are limited and in number and we said the baby would to get the courage of other children to get them out of the building so, we didn't do that. We felt that.... well there were major issues about structure. Across the institution that there are some problems about structure to do anyway. So that's being about the change of policy. So that's being about resourcing issues. There is a lack of manager and management direction, particularly specialized knowledge about residential child care. Especially for young children are really given which we believe this is having really impact of quality of provisory, so the ETTC for instance there are some resource I mean dedications within ETTC is changing, that there is a very strong leader of manager there in the principle and that means that the risks on the concern there are limited. So we really feel that the lack of the manager is really giving is that quiet impact. Again said the there are 10 small babies there likely more small babies. There babies they are referred where the family, the extended family are unable to look at them, that would be the first resource that would be used. These are children that can only be care for in the institution, they are usually babies of drug abusing mothers so they else's extremely vulnerable. Two of the babies, well three of them actually premature babies, two of them are only 3 months old now and they were born at 6 months duration, so there are only just at the age they would be when they were fall through at very very born vulnerable and deal with a lot of health problems the staff of not got the skill and expertise to deal with the all health problem and easier is the amount of staff to deal with the hygiene and the feeding and every thing that needs to occur. On administrate a medication while we were there. One of the baby became very ill and stopped breathing and the staff just did not have the ability or knowledge to deal with the emergency all the procedures in play to know what level they are to act in an emergency such as that. We have also being concerned to lie across the board around the awareness about the child protection and almost a deny that children are a raised or are being abused, and we feel that there is a real need for awareness raising and some training and some training for the staff around how they protect themselves from allegations of abuse, for also

140 have children all protected, incase...Would you turn any evidence just
like some day of abusing children while working on your sector that's
just that some body does go to work that then there is no safe guard in
place. Even when there is a good quality, safe guards in place there
145 were about over issues so stopping children going into staffroom
because they might steal something not because somebody may abuse
them in the privities of their room. We also wanted to raise the issue
around the children in the institution are obviously the most venerable.
If they don't get the appropriate care now then there might lead to be a
real drain of society in the future, so there is a need obviously for them
150 a good quality care now because they deserve that as children and they
have no parent to care from, hopefully they will be reunited with their
family at latest stage, but right now the government and the
government departments are parent to this children. So it's really a call
really for the children to be seen in that way and for the development
155 departments to see these call for parents to these children until they
return to their own parents, my last point I really want to make is really
probably not surprise to any of you, that is about work force
management and development, as I said when there is a very able
manager in places as we saw at ETTC and the juvenile detention centre,
160 even when there were other issues then that management was actually
made the difference because with the decision the staff got the
leadership and direction and there were good quality sanctions and
boundaries in place for the children. The staff clearly needs skill you
know, needs appropriate qualifications and we come across some
165 recent information where there is some concerning terms of the
employment like just slashing the label law around the youths of
volunteers which may mean that volunteers cannot be used but we
would say giving the present position that they are advised to
resourcing the motor change for you as a contract and definitely our
170 organization couldn't deliver the service which good deliver without
tendency spotted volunteers and also a good recruitment and selection
policy. There was there was a particular issue in at least two of the
institution around Walter and children not are being weltered that was
own contaminate for bathing and that now our service from
175 implications for some of the children. So those were these there is

many more things and we will provide very detailed operational action planes for each of the institutions to assist them to move forward's I just wanted to tell a big picture concept that we have identified so far, the staff in particular were really trying out for a minimum standard of work what work should you be working to, how should, what the base line, how many students they pay to this amount of children. And where some people are just some of the man...,at least one of the manager is that access to the and you could see that the law it really and how it is to leave this stage, so my view is that the, the minimum standard would really assist you in developing the quality of the institution and also give a base line for any new institution that maybe developed. And it's the role of the ministry for gender and family protection to even when there are not the particular department for the institution to monitor and inspect the producer. I think we have a basic minimum standard that would be difficult for the institutions to prepare for those inspections. And for the ministry after the department to actually inspect the actual privilege. So I feel in terms of the ministerial departments the minimum standard which could make the real difference, they would assist the department of gender child and family protection and their monitoring role, they just assist those who providing the managing the institutes to do so in a safe way and they would also assist if in the future you get to a point where you decide that you want commissioner out the institution to NGO's or aspect to the service that you might face of. Then adult to a minimum funded that you would aspect any external provider to provide the probation for on behalf of the group of them. I feel strongly in terms of the ministerial departments it will give you the guide lines of quality of performance, they will also help you to measure efficiencies things can be made and resourcing from the best allocate to those institution so there maybe way to save on some resources or use the resources slightly difficult to include all of them. I think all I finally say is the document is a long document which would do and what I., I., I think is that I told that the minimum standard would be endorsed unaccepted. The long sign that would be an operational plan which said what aspect to the minimum standard after the in place within which time frame, and so something which we type in media and something will

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be in medium and some things belong to well with resourcing and implementation. Thank you

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Deputy Minister of
Health and Family
Miss Maria Ali
speaking:

What Michel say that the protection was not specifically relating to the ministry of education or the department.., but Michel has met with the human rights commission, the prosecutor general and quiet a number of agencies are relating to child protection issues and across the board all agencies have a almost denial almost denial that there are child protection issues or lack of awareness, also we at the department of gender are signing a 5 year memorandum of understanding Fernandez UK would be probably providing technical assistants to of our also staffs training in UK. We have secured corporate funding for the staff from the institutions to go to the UK and be placed in a residential institution, so that is covered and we, one as soon as the CEO of bernados, that will be taken place. So I just want that.

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Chairman speaking:

Thank you very much Maria and Michel for that excellent briefing and now I open the floor for honorable members, now I give the floor to honorable Mahloof,

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Galolhu South Member
Ahmed Mahloof
Speaking:

Thank you very much for the presentation and for your work here in Maldives I would like to note that we, the MPs also played a fund raising football game for the villingili orphanage. I think we raised about 1.3 million for that and also we did a visit to the centre and we found lot of these issues that you have mentioned, specially about the fire and about the child's death, etc... and I am not very clear if a minimum standard is in the law currently but no, so representing the majority party in the parliament I am assure you that our support is with you and we are very happy and this is very important to be done. And I think all other members even the independence member's here would support this. So I just want guarantee that we are very happy to help you this. Thank you very much.

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Chairman Speaking: Thank you honorable mahloof. I was wondering now you talk to about minimum standard and staff. So do you now have a minimum standard as far as staff is concern the, in relations to the population of that particular place? What kind of numbers are we talking about?

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Barnardos UK lead For children under the age of 15 and the minimum standard propose is
Consultant Miss Michel whom members of staff to two children and then under the age 15
Le Izu speaking: would be four children per members of staff.

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(after sometime)

Deputy Minister of With implementing this standard that would be one of the biggest
Healh and Family Miss financial implications that come to... But staff and staff qualifications,
260 Maria Ali speaking: their behavior all are in minimum standards. When I was working is a
consultant in ministry of gender and family. As we did talking about
our culture and other traditional.

Galolhu South Member The budget is I think it would be floor in the coming months. I believe
265 Ahmed Makhloof that funding for all these programs it will be included in your budget
speaking: right, about the program that you mention for the training and for other
things as well.

Deputy Minister of They would be included in the budget but not specifically for the
270 Healh and Family Miss implementation of minimum standard, because this was send from the
Maria Ali speaking: Attorney General's office after we have from the budget. So it will be
additional budget in that does now in a finical history. And once we
heard appose from the ends of the week. Than we would be for the
documents to the regulations comity. So probably is not included in
275 our budget.

Galolhu South Member One thing I noted on our visit was that, I think there is fifteen year old
280 Ahmed Makhloof girl in villigili centre and a some of the staff they said that their
speaking: families and ready to welcome or take back to them. So what's your
opinion on this issue? Are they going to stay there for life time or till
they get married.

Barnardos UK lead
consultant Miss Michel
285 Le Izu speaking: May be marry than after what I say. it's going to be concern we age
that term that presently not enough permanent returning children. That
case of children we liked all three institutions. So whether if they are
young there is a kid. What it will be next. The eventually of detention
center than we say who will present even if they really. So far all the
children they permanent return is essential. On where they go to the
290 girl's next perfect me and risk assessment. So when we are a best for
fill than. I think we all a great the family is the hopefully the best
resources to turn of them back. So if the family poses of risk to the
child of than an alternative to the family would need to be so. But, I
mean we all totally agree with that there is a real needs to for those
295 children's way coming not be found. So children are not moved
quickly no one going to take them preferably have a saying them as
well.

Deputy Minister of
Health and Family Miss
300 Maria Ali speaking: We don't need a having sea planning. At the moment these children
have been removed from families because there were abused. For the
risk of abused and we do not have staff, enough staff. Actually work
with them families to get them to are to have the capacity to parent and
if they don't have the capacity to parent even if they are fifteen to let
them loose on the world is not we want and they would paused more
305 rest because if they did get pregnant again then we would have to take
care of that child as well. And so we don't wonder be in situation
where we were peeking the cycle. And I dearly we don't want to be
institution alive everything go child. We want them to be careful by
family and so there are three children of one mother that I work with
back in 1992 and she is now addicted to drug and but back then we
310 didn't have educate know that she has been abused. She came to my
house every night around 11:30, and said 'Dhatha I am going to
sleep..' and I didn't know whether she was been abused by her father.
Because I don't have education then. But now I know that her eldest
315 child who is in here is actually her father's child. So I don't want these
children or we don't from the ministry want send these children back
to in to a family situation that is always skin. So we want strength what
we can give a as well as developing a team who can strengthen the
families. Because these families they need to be taking care of their

own children not the state. But obviously the state is there as they denied. And we want to we want to make these facilities a home product and to be re integrate back in the society. And the minimum standards actually does provide assumption how the child should be re integrated by into the family. And the staff not only institutions we need staff numbers in our department as well that can work long side institutions to help these children's in a good way.

Chairman speaking: Yes now through budget exercise within the government you would know in advance if you have any difficulties, specially I am addressing this to Maria. Now if you have any concern about that issue you may wish to meet with the Social Affairs comity. That you need to assistance getting through the required budget for that area, than as the honorable Makhloof said we would work together with other members to see that you get the, what we called the minimum standard required budget for 2010. So I would like to urge you Maria to feel free to consult us on that issue, so that we can raise the issue in Majlis. Now I would also like to touch on the Michal's presentation, specifically you mansion that there is a risk of accidental death in Villigili children's center. Now that it has been identified the precaution that has been taken now. It is the sufficient for the time been. Because you also mentioned about it case of emergency evacuation that there must be some problems. So I would like to clear you expert opinion on that.

Deputy Minister of: We met the president as well, and did the similar presentation with him
Health and Family Miss and we will be getting the architect ASP as well as possible to look at
Maria Ali speaking: the government and we also going to look how in the mean time we can help the babies. How we can look after the babies on the down stairs. How the babies would be easier look after the building.

Chairman speaking: Ok. Thank you very much. As you would know that our session is a still profession mod and some of us have requested for intervention in Majlis. So I think we had a very good exchange for the last half an hour. And we thank you for this initiative and trying to meet us, and we have obtained very valuable information from you in this field and we would like assure you that on our part there is anything that is need

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from us from the Majlis side, that will be happy to assist to you, as honorable makhloof said due some footballs match also, and there is an contribution so there is a from extracurricular activities also. Thanks once aging Maria and Michel for this exchange and we hope that one of the this are report would be forth coming very soon and this recommendation as would be implement. So that you know Maldives would be are better place in future. Thank you very much.

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