



United Nations  
**Sustainable**  
Development  
Cooperation  
Framework  
**2022-2026**  
Republic Of Maldives









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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Islands States
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
FACE	Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
FOSS	Forum of Small States
GWP	Global Warming Potential
HACT	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JSC	Joint Government of Maldives – United Nations Steering Committee
LGA	Local Government Authority
MRPS	Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NEET	Not in employment, Education, or Training
NMRF	National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up
NRRP	National Resilience and Recovery Plan
NSP	National Spatial Plan 2020-2040
SAP	Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
ODP	Ozone Depletion Potential
OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WP	Work Plan

# DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

The Government of the Republic of the Maldives and the United Nations Country Team are committed to working together, with the people of and in the country, in line with national development priorities and towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) will guide the work of the UN system in the Maldives until 2026. The collective results expected from the Cooperation Framework will contribute to a vision where the Maldives is an inclusive, resilient, healthy, caring, tolerant, transparent and skilled society where all people meaningfully participate in, contribute to and benefit equitably from sustainable cultural, economic and social development and environmental protection, leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. At the centre of the Cooperation Framework, is a focus on investing in people. The Cooperation Framework upholds the principles of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, sustainable development and resilience, and accountability, ensuring that "no one is left behind", which will guide all United Nations development system programmes.

In pursuit of this vision, we will respect and adhere to the principles, ideals and normative frameworks of the United Nations, as well as the commitments of the Republic of Maldives as a member of the international community.

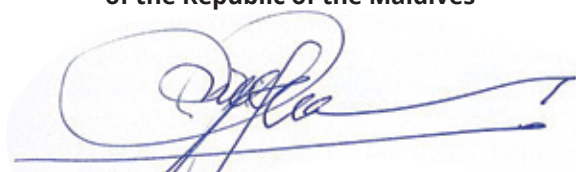
The Cooperation Framework was prepared by the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Maldives, led by the UN Resident Coordinator, and the Government, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/279, with an empowered UN Resident Coordinator and reinvigorated new generation UN Country Team, the Cooperation Framework will be implemented in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including State institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

To support the Maldives to achieve its national development priorities, recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and support progress of the SDGs in this Decade of Action, the Cooperation Framework has three Strategic Priorities: 1) Shared prosperity and inclusive human development for all; 2) Sustainable and climate-resilient environment; 3) Gender-responsive, rights-based, and accountable governance and justice.

The Cooperation Framework will guide the entire programme cycle, driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective UN support for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Cooperation Framework also reflects the UN development system's contributions in the country and shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country.

As a Cooperation Framework, it is a joint commitment of the UN and Government to collaborate to support Maldivian development priorities, which includes considerations of development partners, representatives from the private sector, civil society, academia, youth and the most vulnerable groups in the country in the spirit of partnership to achieve the SDGs whilst leaving no one behind.

On Behalf of the Government  
of the Republic of the Maldives



Ahmed Khaleel  
**Minister of State for Foreign Affairs**



On Behalf of the  
United Nations

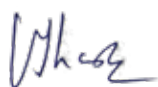


Catherine Haswell  
**UN Resident Coordinator**



## SIGNATORIES

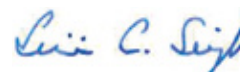
By signing hereunder, we, as members of the United Nations Country Team in Maldives endorse this Cooperation Framework (2022-2026) and underscore our joint commitment to coherently working together in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration towards supporting the collective achievement of the expected outcomes.



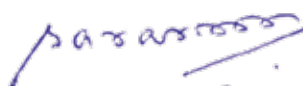
Vimlendra Sharan  
**FAO Representative**



Sherina Tabassum  
**IFAD Country Director**



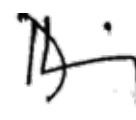
Simrin Singh  
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Sarat Dash  
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Dechen Tsering  
**UNEP Regional Director & Representative**



Adnan Hameed Aliani  
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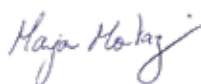
Eric Falt  
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Troels Vester  
**UNODC Head of Office a.i.**

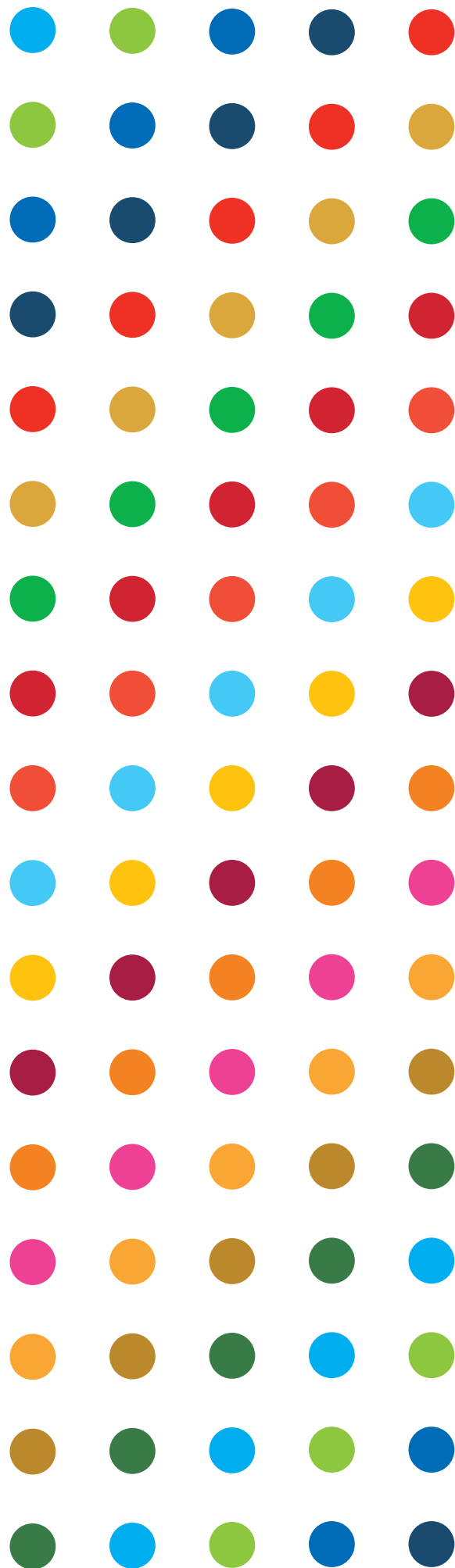


Sudhir Muralidharan  
**UNOPS Country Manager**



Nazneen Anwar  
**WHO Representative**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





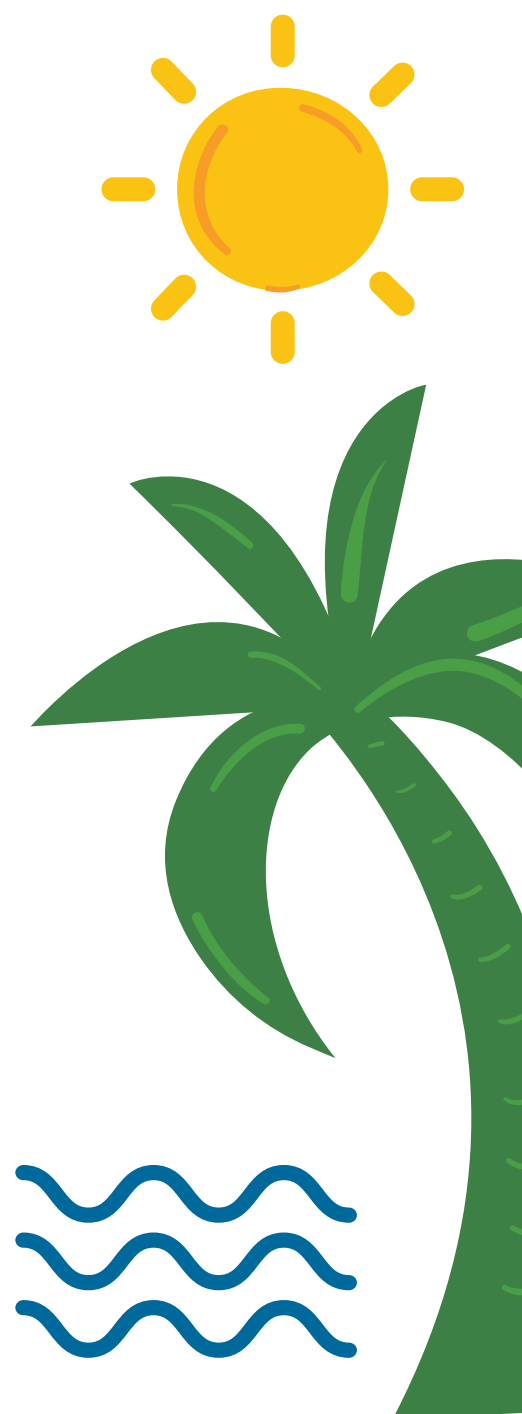
Until interrupted by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Maldives had experienced nearly 50 years of economic growth fuelled primarily by tourism. The country has made strong progress toward reducing poverty, achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality and diseases, narrowing the gender gap in health, education, and income, and focussed on addressing the threat of climate change. Maldives has almost completed its demographic transition with the bulk of the population being of working age. However, the nation's geography makes sustainable, equitable and inclusive development difficult and expensive, and the country faces challenges in providing equitable access to quality basic services across the islands, achieving gender equality, managing migration and urbanisation, maximising the current demographic dividend by expanded opportunities for young people, and managing and mitigating the impact of climate change. The country's narrow economic base makes the economy and society vulnerable to external shocks.

The current Government's development policy is laid out in the Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023 (SAP). A National Action Plan and an Act is currently being formulated and a National Resilience and Recovery Plan for 2020 - 2022 (NRRP) has been endorsed by the Office of the President to address the economic, environment and social challenges created by COVID-19.

At the start of the SDG Decade of Action, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (Cooperation Framework) has thus been formulated in a defining period for the future of the Maldives as its democratic governance matures and evolves, and the country re-establishes a pathway to achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Cooperation Framework outlines the United Nations Development System's collective response to support the Maldives address national priorities and the challenges towards meeting the SDGs, whilst recovering from the multi-dimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It transforms the way the United Nations in the Maldives undertakes coherent planning and programming cooperation, and is the basis for all agency activities, joint and individual, within the country.

The Cooperation Framework theory of change is based on the logic that sustaining transformative and inclusive governance is a requirement and enabler for promoting shared prosperity in a sustainable healthy environment, building human wellbeing and resilience, and ensuring the realisation of human rights for all across the nation. It outlines the pathway towards the vision where the Maldives is an inclusive, resilient, healthy, caring, tolerant, transparent and skilled society where all people meaningfully participate in, contribute to and benefit equitably from sustainable cultural, economic and social development and environmental protection, leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. It is based on a fundamental need – a long term investment in people.

In response to the new development opportunities and challenges in the country, and driven from widespread analytical and consultative processes, three overarching Strategic Priorities were identified for the 2022-2026 Cooperation Framework in the Maldives which respond to the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda towards social, environmental and economic sustainability. Under these Strategic Priorities, four Outcome results for which the United Nations Development System will focus its support have been defined. The United Nations will support the Government and the people in the Maldives to accelerate evidence-informed approaches to sustainable and equitable human, social, economic, and environmental development.



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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: SHARED PROSPERITY AND INCLUSIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

**OUTCOME 1:** By 2026, youth, women and others at risk of being left behind, contribute to and benefit from inclusive, resilient, sustainable economic and human capital development, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and decent work.

**OUTCOME 2:** By 2026, people in the Maldives, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, inclusive and resilient social and protection services, and have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with wellbeing and dignity.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT

**OUTCOME 3:** By 2026, national and sub-national institutions and communities in Maldives, particularly at-risk populations, are better able to manage natural resources and achieve enhanced resilience to climate change and disaster impacts, natural and human-induced hazards, and environmental degradation, inclusively and in a sustainable manner.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: GENDER-RESPONSIVE, RIGHTS-BASED AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE

**OUTCOME 4:** By 2026, Maldives has strengthened decentralised and accountable governance under the rule of law where people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy and fully enjoy access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society.

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The Cooperation Framework upholds the principles of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, sustainable development and resilience, and accountability, ensuring that "no one is left behind", which will guide all UN Development System programmes.

The implementation of the Cooperation Framework will be coordinated through a High Level Joint Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN Resident Coordinator, and comprised of representatives of Government Ministries and of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes with operational activities in the Maldives. During implementation of the Cooperation Framework, the Steering Committee will meet annually to review progress and recommend strategic adjustments or new opportunities to accelerate action.









# CHAPTER 1:

## COUNTRY PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2030 AGENDA



## 1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Driven by international tourism and more recently construction, Maldives has achieved strong economic growth, which averaged 5.1 per cent annually from 2000 to 2019. The country made tremendous progress toward reducing poverty, achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality and diseases, narrowing the gender gap in health, education, and income, and a focus on addressing the threat of climate change. Nearly 50 years of rapid growth fuelled by high-end tourism has brought the nation from least developed to upper-middle income status. Maldives has seen improvements in important socio-economic indicators and has almost completed its demographic transition with the bulk of the population being of working age.

Notwithstanding the significant progress, Maldives faces development challenges. The nation's geography makes sustainable, equitable and inclusive development difficult and expensive to ensure. As a low-lying nation, the Maldives is extremely vulnerable to the impact of climate change. The country faces challenges in building opportunities for young people, improving gender equality, improving health care, addressing internal migration and urbanisation issues, the development of basic infrastructure, and in providing equitable access to quality basic services across the islands.

In addition to obstacles common to other Small Island Developing states, Maldives' major challenges centre on the issues of inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainability. Until impacted by COVID-19, the tourism sector was a major source of income for the country. The economy is also dependent on the State and State-Owned Enterprises for employment and most services. Regulatory barriers, inefficiencies, skills shortage, and competition for credit add to the disadvantages caused by a small market and dispersed population, slowing the development of a diversified private sector economy that is more resilient to external shocks. Currently within and between waves of COVID-19 transmission, the development and economic realities of the Maldives are more fragile and uneven than they have been in more than a decade, with the country under high risk of debt distress for the medium term. As part of the economic relief to address the adverse social and economic impact of COVID-19, the Government rolled out short term stimulatory interventions such as financial support and subsidies/waivers for electricity and water bills to the households, income support/debt moratoriums to individuals and loans to businesses affected by the pandemic, exceeding US\$ 214 million (MVR 3.3 billion) as of April 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated socioeconomic impact could derail years of national efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In one year, the impact of COVID-19 has seen Maldives fall to among the lowest economies within the region, as a result of its disproportionate dependency on tourism.



Photo by Ashwa Faheem

Whilst the Government provided income support, new vulnerabilities were exposed with small businesses and resorts having either closed down or cut back on staff, impacting over 11,000 employees, and more severely on daily wage earners, a large number of whom are women running home-based businesses and migrant workers with little pre-existing social protection. These new vulnerabilities have been experienced during a period of increased tensions across social and political landscapes.

The Government has embarked on extensive reforms to restore democratic institutions and the freedom of the press, ensure rule of law and access to justice, and protect fundamental human rights. Its vision is to establish an independent judicial system that is free from undue influence and build a justice system that is accessible and protects human rights in accordance with the Constitution, Maldivian law and the international obligations of the state.

## 1.2 NATIONAL VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Successive governments have supported the development of social services, jobs, health centres and schools throughout the country, and the elaboration of a social safety net. The Decentralisation Act has empowered the local Councils to formulate their development plans ensuring participatory planning for land use and community development. This will enable a long-term vision for sustainable development for the nation complemented by medium-term national development plans. Most fundamentally, a long-term investment in people – education and skills for the future – is required to consolidate sustainable development for the future.

The Maldives' development agenda is currently guided by the Government's five-year Strategic Action Plan for 2019-2023 (SAP), which outlines its priorities and targets for its term as the executive, along with the National Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020-2022 which prioritizes key elements of the SAP in response to the impact of COVID-19.





Photo by Yassin Hameed

The SAP makes clear that it provides both a comprehensive and accessible outline of the administration's intended development agenda for the next five years, and also holds Government accountable to citizens by making clear what its deliverables are and when results can be expected.<sup>1</sup> As such, the SAP consolidates the manifesto pledges of the coalition political parties with existing priorities and presents a comprehensive description of the administration's goals. The SAP includes the priority actions for attainment of the SDGs to which Maldives is committed and is the key document that currently guides resource allocation from budget and development assistance. The Government has committed to broad public finance reforms to better monitor and track the impact of public service investments.

#### THE SAP IS FRAMED AROUND 5 THEMES:

- The Blue Economy consisting of six subsectors: fisheries and marine resources; agriculture; tourism; Small and Medium Enterprise development (SME); labour, employment and migration; and economic diversification.
- The Caring State with five subsectors: health; education; higher education; social protection; and prevention of narcotic abuse and drug rehabilitation.
- Dignified Families containing six subsectors: family; housing; youth; community empowerment; sports; and Islamic faith.
- Jazeeraa Dhiriulhun (Island Life) consisting of nine subsectors: decentralisation; a national transport network; environmental protection and preservation; clean energy; waste as a resource; water and sanitation, resilient communities; information, communication and technology; and arts, culture, and heritage.

- Good Governance with seven subsectors: rule of law & judicial reform; national security and public safety; eliminating corruption; an accountable state; independent institutions and public service reform; gender equality; and foreign affairs.

Expected to be soon approved, the long-term National Spatial Plan will outline the strategies for infrastructure development required for the country to achieve SAP goals. The NSP will be a spatial realization of the core SAP policy of decentralising development, creating growth poles and service centres in the regions, and shifting development pressures away from Greater Malé and enabling regional development.

In addition to these comprehensive national plans, there are several sector specific long-terms plans, including for education, health, energy, waste management, water and sanitation and fisheries. These have all integrated the principles and approaches of Agenda 2030 towards achievement of the SDGs.

The Voluntary National Review (VNR) report of the Maldives (2017) catalogued new policies and plans that directly incorporate SDGs, through a national exercise carried out to map the existing sectoral policies, plans and laws to SDG targets. The VNR indicated the existence of some form of sectoral policy or plan for most of the SDG targets. This includes (for instance) the National Food Safety Policy developed by the Ministry of Health in line with SDG 2. The Health Master Plan 2016-2025 and Education Sector Plan 2019-2023 are other plans aligned to the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 framework.<sup>2,3</sup> The Local Government Authority (LGA) has aligned its five-year Development Plan (2017-2021) with the SDGs, which will be implemented by Island Councils. Other SDG target areas include health, poverty, gender equality, water and sanitation, responsible consumption and production and climate action.<sup>4</sup>

During the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session on November 2020, Maldives' progress in protecting human rights within the past four and a half years were reviewed. The country received 259 recommendations from 95 Member States, mainly covering the areas of governance, and urging the Government to continue the efforts in the area of gender equality and child protection, and addressing climate change. The Government has convened a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) that will ensure follow-up and implementation of the accepted recommendations.

1 Government of Maldives (2019). Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023

2 Ministry of Health (2016). Health Master Plan 2016-2025.

3 Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education (2019). Education Sector Plan

4 Sobir R (2017). Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) to assess the Maldives readiness to implement the SDGs. Ministry of Environment and Energy and UNDP.

### 1.3 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SDGS

Progress towards Agenda 2030 and achievement of the SDGs must ultimately be tracked comprehensively using nationally prioritised goals and targets. As this work remains to be done in the Maldives, progress towards the SDGs is reported with currently available information based on the five “P’s” of the Agenda 2030.

Under ‘**Prosperity**’ targets, Maldives promotes an open economy, and the economy has continued to grow despite the political turbulence and governance challenges of the last decade. However, a dependence on high-end resort tourism remains. Construction, the other major growth area of the economy, is also a sector which largely employs international migrant workers. Thus, progress on decent work has been slower than expected, with reductions in unemployment not in line with the country’s economic growth.

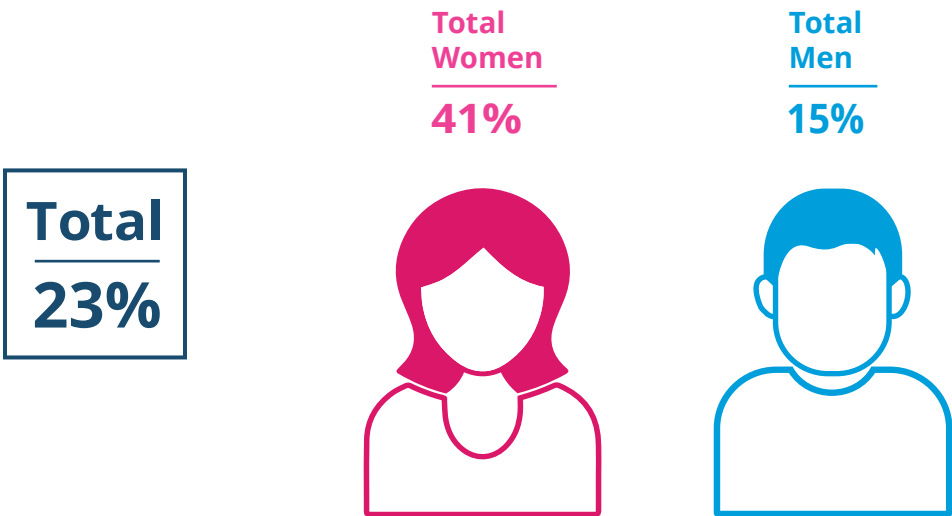
The proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) is high at 23 per cent (and much higher for women (41 per cent) than men (15 per cent)).<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile the migrant labour force has increased, with a high proportion of unskilled foreign labour used in the construction and tourism sectors. The challenge is to provide young people with necessary skills for the job market through revised curricula in the public education system and to redirect current expectations for white collar and government jobs, toward skilled trades and private sector work. Although unemployment is higher in Malé than the Atolls, poverty levels in the Atolls are higher. To address poverty and break the cycle of the migration of unskilled youth to Malé the Government’s central focus is on decentralisation, and the development of transport, services, self-government and increasing opportunities for economic activity in the Atolls.

However, the country is under significant debt and the growth trajectory of the economy is largely dependent on continued external financing and tourism numbers that are subject to shocks. Women, especially in the informal sector who were facing a number of vulnerabilities and inequalities, have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Photo by Ashwa Faheem

#### YOUTH NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (AGES 15-34)



5 National Bureau of Statistics (2019). Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)

An analysis across the indicators suggest that much progress has been achieved in the ‘People’ targets. These include targets on poverty, and major health and education targets. Income poverty levels stood at 6.6 per cent in 2016 using the internal poverty line of US\$ 1.25 (MVR 70)<sup>6</sup> while in 2009-10 (using a different methodology) poverty levels were assessed to be at 15 per cent.

INCOME POVERTY LEVELS



In Malé, 1.5 per cent of the population lives below the US\$ 1.25 poverty line while 10.4 per cent of the population in the atolls lives below that poverty line. In this regard, the focus needs to be on minimising the urban-rural gap in the quality of service provision and tracking poverty.<sup>7</sup>

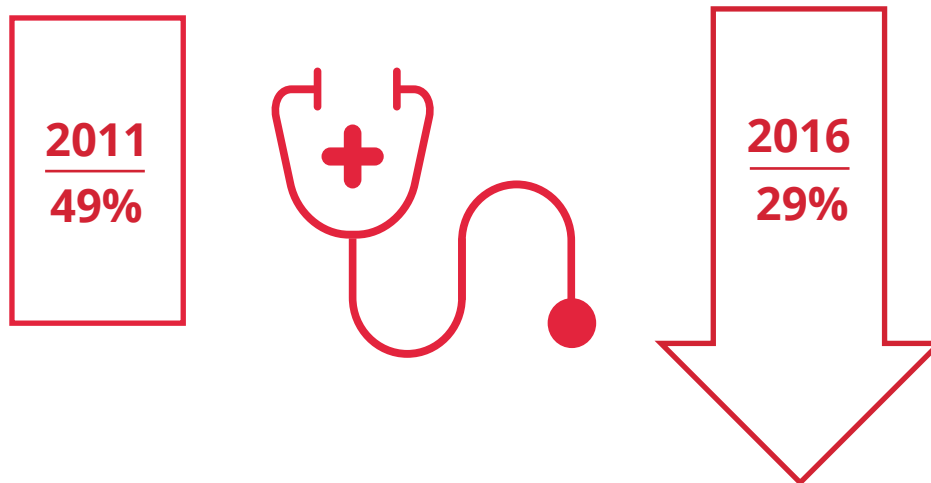
POPULATION % BELOW THE POVERTY LINE



6 National Bureau of Statistics (2016). Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) Analytical Report IV: Poverty & Inequality  
7 Ministry of Environment and Energy (2017). Voluntary National Review for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017

Maternal, child and neonatal mortality rates continued to decrease while childhood nutrition indicators<sup>8</sup> improved and out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure decreased from 49 per cent in 2011 to 29 per cent in 2016.<sup>9</sup> Further reductions in neonatal mortality and maternal mortality can be achieved only with further investments and capacity for caring for premature births and addressing birth defect prevention through early detection and management. Practices related to nutrition and dietary habits, tobacco and drug use, and sedentary lifestyles poses major challenges towards achieving health targets related to non-communicable diseases.

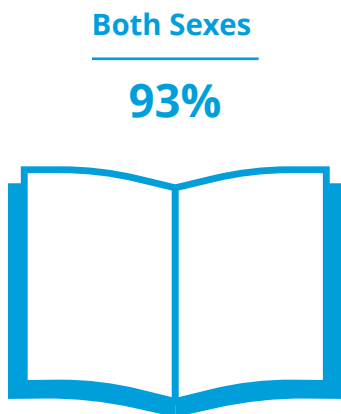
### OUT-OF-POCKET HEALTHCARE EXPENDITURE



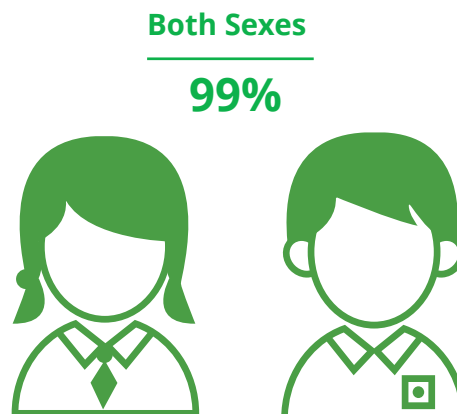
Education targets shows similar improvements; all children are now guaranteed 14 years of free education from pre-primary through first degree. This includes a 10-year compulsory cycle from grades 1 to 10. Ninety-three per cent of children (both sexes) are in pre-primary learning before official primary school age and the total net enrolment ratio in primary education stands at 99 per cent (both sexes).

The Government's "Free Education Scheme for Degree Students" which commenced in 2019, is a key strategy to encourage higher education and an investment in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills development in the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution for the Maldives.

### CHILDREN IN PRE-PRIMARY LEARNING BEFORE OFFICIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE



### TOTAL NET ENROLMENT RATIO IN PRIMARY EDUCATION



8 Ministry of Health (2017). Health SDG profile.  
 9 Ministry of Health (2019). National Health Accounts 2015-2017

Gender equality is low across all targets. The labour force participation rate is low among women, which is the result of cultural norms and the higher burden of unpaid care work for family members. Women in managerial positions are low (at 19.5 per cent)<sup>10</sup> and they earn 20 per cent less than men.

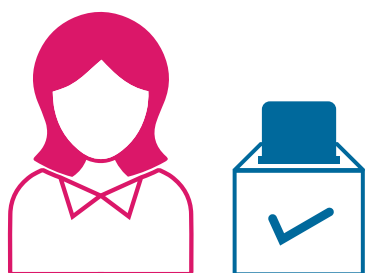
## WOMEN IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

19.5%



Across the country, women have significantly less assets and financial capacity than men, to be used as collateral to obtain bank loans for small and medium enterprises.<sup>12</sup> Women's engagement in politics and other leadership activities is limited but has been actively encouraged in the past few years. Amendments to the Decentralisation Act have mandated that one-third of local council seats have to go to women candidates, and women appointed as Supreme Court Justices, President and Vice-President of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chief Executive Officer of the Local Government Authority, and two of the three Human Rights Commissioners, amongst others. In the 2019 Parliamentary Election, while 33 women contested for parliament, only four women won, and the number of women in Parliament declined from five to four.

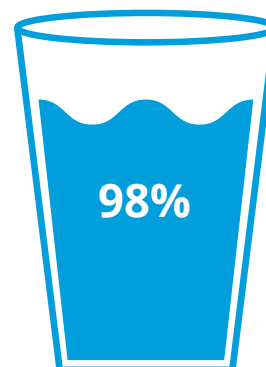
## WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICS - 2019 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION



4/33 Who contested

While some of the 'Planet' targets appear to be partially on track, data gaps limit the possibility of conducting a sound assessment of the progress that has been made. Maldives is an active member of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS) and Forum of Small States (FOSS), and has been an advocate in the fight against climate change in the international arena, with a pledge to reach net zero emissions by 2030. Access to water and sanitation has improved, with 98 per cent of the population with access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation facilities.<sup>13</sup>

## ACCESS TO SAFELY MANAGED DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES



However, waste management, energy and emission targets remain problematic, especially with the expansion of tourism and urbanisation. The single-use plastic phase-out plan, effective from June 2021 should contribute significantly to reduce marine litter. Efforts are underway to diversify the energy sector through introduction and promotion of renewable energy sources. Electricity, vehicles and waste management have been identified as the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions and while there are initiatives on energy production and waste management, there are no policy initiatives on reducing emissions from vehicles.<sup>14</sup>

Most of the islands are less than one square kilometre in area and therefore more than 70 per cent of critical infrastructure is within 100 metres of the shorelines. Furthermore, with 80 per cent of land being less than one metre above sea level, climate change and extreme weather events are a pressing and potentially existential threat.

10 National Bureau of Statistics (2016). Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) Analytical Report III: Employment

11 National Bureau of Statistics (2019). Population and Development in Maldives 2019. ICDP25+.

12 ADB (2014). Maldives Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors

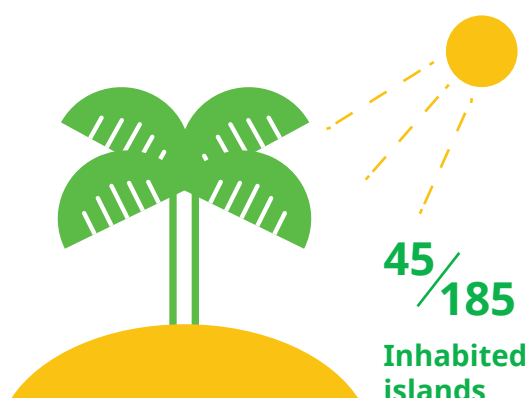
13 Ministry of Health & ICF (2019) Maldives Demographic Health Survey 2016/2017

14 Ministry of Environment and Energy (2017). State of the Environment 2016



In 2016 alone, over 45 islands faced water shortages due to significant changes to weather patterns, including the hottest dry season recorded in 18 years.

## ISLANDS THAT FACED WATER SHORTAGES DUE TO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN WEATHER PATTERNS



The warm temperature due to El Nino resulted in more than 60 per cent of coral reefs bleaching,<sup>15</sup> which along with waste management practices adversely impacts underwater life and natural resources vital for the economy and livelihoods.



Photo by Mitsuteru Yamanaka



Despite the clear commitment of Government to sustainable environmental development and addressing climate change, information is limited and data is not available on the indicators of SDGs 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land) making it difficult to assess progress made.

Progress on promoting peaceful and just societies related to the **'Peace'** targets is mixed, due to the country's political instability in the last decade. Over the last few years significant reforms have been made, including the drafting of the first Civil Procedure Code, amendment of the Decentralisation Act to facilitate increase in women's participation in local governance and decentralised fiscal management, enactment of the Child Rights Protection Act and appointment of the Child Rights Ombudsperson, Enactment of the Juvenile Justice Act and the enactment of the long awaited Transitional Justice Act and the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Transitional Justice.

Through enactment of legislation, some progress has been made in relation to domestic violence including violence against children and gender-based violence. The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions have triggered increased violence against women and children, in line with global trends. The Child Rights Protection Act which came into effect in February 2020, and replaces the Child Rights Protection Act of 1991, addresses many gaps and further strengthening the child protection system as well as prohibition of child marriage, setting the age of criminal responsibility to 15 and prohibiting death penalty for offenses committed as a minor.

Under **'Partnerships'** targets, some progress has been made, but further improvement is needed for adopting a 'whole-government' approach, building capacity within sectors on planning and strategising, data management and statistical capacity.<sup>16,17</sup> Sectors continue to work in silos and Government and its partners are not yet fully coordinated in a comprehensive manner. This is noted in the VNR with a commitment to continue work on integration of SDGs into the national plans, to help prioritise SDGs and build strong coordination and cross sectoral collaboration between the government agencies, statutory authorities and other independent legal entities, development partners, local governments, academia, the private sector, civil society and the media.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ibid

<sup>16</sup> Auditor General's Office (2019). Performance Audit of Preparedness for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

<sup>17</sup> Sobir R (2017). Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) to assess the Maldives readiness to implement the SDGs. Ministry of Environment Energy & UNDP

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Environment and Energy (2017). Voluntary National Review for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017

## 1.4 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the face of demographic, economic and environmental challenges highlighted above, there are a number of obstacles and opportunities that can potentially curtail or accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs targets. These cut across the three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda - social, economic, and environmental.

### DEFINING A COMMON LONG-TERM VISION AND INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND A SOCIALLY COHESIVE SOCIETY

The Maldives is in rapid transition and requires an inspiring vision of the nation's goals and identity. Building on the SAP and the forthcoming infrastructure-focussed NRRP, there is a unique opportunity to forge a long-term national development plan to anchor sectoral planning towards a common vision for Maldives' future that aligns with the SDGs through 2030. Such a vision and plan should be supported by a consistent policy and accelerated implementation of decentralisation and strengthened governance and the rule of law down to the local level, to achieve regional development and progress in areas of human development. An inclusive national dialogue is needed to build consensus on a common path that all can accept for the Maldives of the future. In the absence of such, the risks associated with increasing political polarisation for making significant and sustained headway towards SDG achievement will prevent Maldives' success. In order to make this shift, a long-term investment in people should be at the centre of the vision and subsequent plan.

As an emerging democracy, the concept of a social contract is in early stages of articulation. New strategies to address discrimination and exclusion, as well as the roots of extremism, are needed. Conservative approaches to influence policy making should be minimised, and efforts encouraged to address root causes of vulnerability, such as productive engagement of youth and women's empowerment. Opportunities must be sought through international partnerships, empowerment of community groups and professionals to shift the current narrative and address harmful gender and social norms; and a long-term national vision will provide the foundation for greater cohesiveness in society.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND STABILITY

Maldives promotes an open economy that has continued to grow. While it is rapidly diversifying its tourism base and expanding from high end to mid-range accommodation, dependence on high-end tourism remains. Ensuring economic growth requires diversification, particularly in the private sector, more systematic workforce planning and job creation for women, youth, and populations located in specific geographical areas, and for the country to grasp the current demographic dividend opportunity through an education system that provides the knowledge and skills the market requires in the context of a shift to the blue economy and the realities of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution.



Photo by Mohamed Naahee

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the national budget due to additional expenditure on the response and recovery. Consequentially, sustainability of current level of funding by Government for social, health and education sector in the coming years is at risk. It must contain recurrent spending and improve the efficiency of social spending through increased capital investments, while renewing efforts in economic and social inclusion of all regions across the country, fostering private sector job creation, building human capacities and skills and reducing vulnerability by enhancing disaster risk preparedness. This must be done whilst simultaneously improving public sector management and budget credibility.

## PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Over the past decades, Maldives has placed a high priority on the environment, and in particular on the impact of climate change. Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850.<sup>19</sup> Global mean sea levels are projected to increase between 0.43 metre and 0.84 metre by the year 2100, based on long term annual sea level data. Rising seas are the greatest threat to Maldives as this increases the possibility of land inundation and poses one of the most widely recognised climate change threats to low-lying coastal areas and critical marine ecosystems such as coral reefs.



*Photo by Masrah Naseem*

The balance of expanding economic activities and industry with the future sustainability of the island nation is a source of national debate. However, environment and climate change risks are high and numerous. These include potential loss of low-lying island land – including the limited arable land – from sea-level rise, a failure to cut oil and gas use, open waste burning, contamination of the human and natural environments by pollution and waste, a failure to adequately prepare to deal with floods or other disasters arising from extreme weather events, and exposure to flood, erosion, drought and hazards, and increasingly severe impacts of climate extremes. Rapid urbanisation and growth, as well as unsustainable and unchecked development practices across the islands, have led to serious overcrowding in Male', fresh water and waste treatment issues, as well as threatening the environment and future of the Maldives.

Management of natural resources in a sustainable manner which takes account of the highly fragile ecosystems of the country needs particular and sustained attention. The Maldives has laid out its vision for conservation through the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan<sup>20</sup> under the Convention on Biological Diversity which outlines priority courses of action in terms of protecting, conserving and ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity in the country. In order to fully materialise these plans, innovative and sustainable conservation financing opportunities are required at scale.

The country's per capita waste generation are expected to grow at an annual rate of 4 per cent. With international support the Maldives is striving to meet its commitments under international conventions such as the Montreal Protocol and Stockholm Convention. Despite having a multisectoral management approach to chemical management, its enforcement remains weak due to the lack of proper regulatory means. Local capacities and technologically sustainable solutions are issues as Maldives explores the creation of a circular economy. The single-use plastic phase-out plan<sup>21</sup> introduced by the Government will contribute to reducing marine litter however localised systemic and innovative solutions will need to be integrated across all the waste streams, and further phasing out of plastic produced in the countries is needed.

The ever-increasing use of imported fossil fuels is unsustainable. The largest national contribution to emissions was from fossil fuel-based energy production, which corresponds to 95.8 per cent of total emissions.<sup>22</sup> Efforts are underway to promote renewable energy sources, with the target to replace up to 30 per cent of daytime peak load of electricity with these sources but so far renewables are supplementing, not replacing fossil fuels. Maldives is party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and one of the first countries to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Significant and dedicated actions, together with high levels of climate financing, will be required to help the country achieve its commitments under its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)<sup>23</sup> and Paris Agreement.

Prevalence of extreme weather events have increased over the past decades, while some events have caused significant economic losses. Prolonged dry seasons and inadequate rainwater harvesting capacity has forced the islands to request emergency shipment of water from Male'.

Because of its particular vulnerability with respect to the impact of climate change, it is imperative that the Government embed sustainability and resilience considerations into the identification of infrastructure projects and priorities. This is possible through a systems-of-systems approach recognising the clear interdependencies between networked and non-networked infrastructure. For example, networked infrastructure systems like water, energy, transportation, and waste management are critical for the smooth functioning of non-networked systems – comprised of single assets, buildings or facilities that deliver a service to a community e.g. hospitals, schools, community centres.<sup>24</sup>

19 Ministry of Environment and Energy (2016), State of Environment Report

20 Ministry of Environment and Energy (2016), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016 - 2025

21 Ministry of Environment (2020), Single Use Plastic Phase-out policy for Maldives 2020-2023

22 Ministry of Environment (2020), Maldives First Biennial Update Report to the UNFCCC

23 Ministry of Environment (2020), Update of Nationally Determined Contribution of Maldives

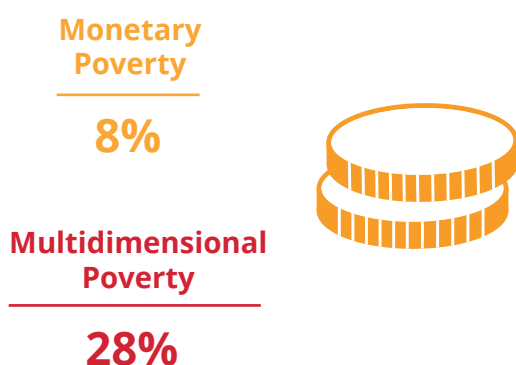


For the Maldives, this is even more important considering the high cost and long-term nature of mega infrastructure projects and that, unless diligently planned and prioritised based on evidence around the rapid urbanisation, generating an investment outcome, changes in demographics and climate change, can be to the detriment of the Maldivian people.

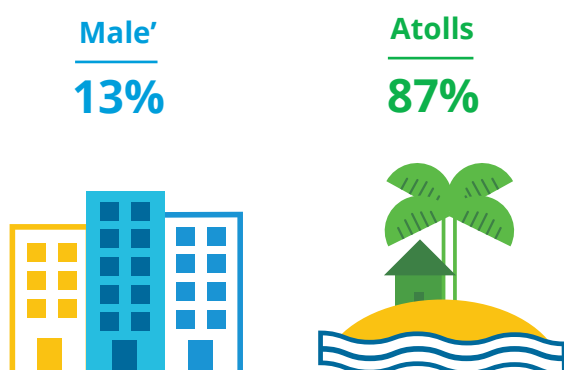
## LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Whilst poverty has been reduced in recent years, many remain clustered just above the poverty line and face the risk of falling back into poverty. The 2019 Multidimensional Poverty Index indicated that more people were living in multidimensional poverty (28 per cent) than monetary poverty (8 per cent) with the significant majority (87 per cent) of those multidimensionally poor living in the atolls with the remaining 13 per cent on the populous capital island of Male'.

## 2019 MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX



## MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY



Due to increased government spending on health, education and social protection, the financial burden of poverty is declining, and the focus now needs to shift towards minimising the urban-rural gap in the quality of service provision and tracking poverty.

Before additional mechanisms due to COVID-19 including an income support allowance dedicated to individuals laid off, forced to take unpaid leave or subjected to salary reductions, social protection in Maldives included the single parent allowance; foster parent allowance; disability allowance; universal non-contributory health insurance (Husnuvaa Aasandha); non-contributory social pension called Old Age Basic Pension and State Other Pension for those not receiving the Basic Pension, and the contributory Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme (MRPS). Employers are no longer required to enrol migrant workers in the MRPS and although migrant workers must enrol in mandatory health insurance, the undocumented workers (about 63,000) lack access to it. These mechanisms have assisted some, but far from all. Those at risk have been additionally negatively affected by the unravelling of traditional extended family support systems over the past decades. Specific groups, such as those highlighted below, are not benefitting equally from current patterns of development, and experience inequality, discrimination, and inequity and limited participation.



Photo by Ashwa Faheem

As most migrant workers are lower-skilled, they are vulnerable to unethical recruitment and labour practices. The pandemic has further exposed migrant workers to labour exploitation and employment and wage losses, overcrowded housing arrangements, leading to increased risk of contracting COVID-19. The absence of social protection for informal and migrant workers is a major concern, especially given the limited space and entry points to seek legal remedies or redress mechanisms. The pre-existing vulnerabilities of the migrant population in terms of health and socio-economic wellbeing, including the lack of equal access to basic rights to social protection and health services, and adequate housing, have worsened during COVID-19.

As part of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an opportunity for building a unified, single national social protection system that is available for all vulnerable people, including migrants and informal sector workers. At the same time, the potential of a universal child benefit should be prioritised to more effectively reduce inequalities and break the cycle of multi-generational poverty.

## ADDRESSING GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Growing gender inequality, increasing unemployment rates among women and signs of negative attitudes towards gender equality are serious areas of risk. Challenges faced by women are further compounded by traditional notions of the roles and responsibilities of women and increasing conservatism. While modernisation has opened new opportunities for women, it is important to address the root causes of discrimination and inequality to ensure women can also benefit. Largely self-employed, women were displaced from traditionally important economic roles by the advent of industrialised fish processing and commercial tailoring. The rate of female participation in the labour force is low, with women bearing a disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work. Violence against women and girls in all its forms, including harmful practices, threatens to undermine inclusive development. Youth extremism, gender inequality and violence against women are interconnecting due to inadequate housing and lack of productive engagement and social support for young people and families, along with the social stigma related to employment opportunities for females.

The Gender Equality Act (2016) established a framework to ensure gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence, as well as sexual harassment in the workplace, among others. Maldives ratified the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993 and its Optional Protocol in 2006, with some reservations. Whilst some have subsequently been removed, reservations on Part 1 (a)(c)(d)(f) of Article 16 remain.<sup>25</sup>

## INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Maldives youth (15-34) comprise the majority of the population, but on the whole benefit least from the opportunities available. Young people in the Maldives are well educated, and through technology are more connected to the world, despite their spatial isolation. Near universal access to internet has exposed young people to new ideas and values and have made them aspire to a lifestyle that is different from their parents.

Whilst a small number have been able to thrive economically and socially, the limits of the island economy, the lack of empowerment and strategic policy focus, coupled with cultural norms, has constrained the ability of young people, particularly young women to achieve their desired aspirations for a better life.

There are high rates of youth unemployment, continued growth in drug and substance use and abuse, a low uptake of higher education and skills development, marginalisation from decision-making, and a broad feeling of disillusionment with the needs of young people as the future policy makers not sufficiently prioritised. Growing levels of conservatism, a high divorce rate and the stresses on family, together with rapid urbanisation and inequality has exacerbated this. In search of belonging and identity, a number of young people have been drawn to the non-traditional family structure provided through street gangs or recruited into extremist entities, bringing them in to conflict with law. For those exposed to drug abuse at a young age or caught up in the criminal justice system there are limited avenues to reintegrate back into society and find decent work due to inadequate access to counselling and rehabilitation services. There is a need for a broader strategy and engagement that addresses the needs of young people and addresses structural challenges and offers necessary skills and agency to fully participate in society.



Photo by Aishath Nadhuha

25 The effect of remaining reservations are: (a) The same right to enter into marriage; (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; (d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount; and (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount.



**EFFICIENT AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

Decentralisation is enshrined in the 2008 Constitution, however, a lack of consistency on policy by successive governments has resulted in a more centralised form of governance. The present administration is committed to decentralisation and has amended the law to empower and give more autonomy to the local councils. Whether the opportunity will be taken for ensuring greater public engagement and participation in development planning and decision-making through decentralisation remains to be seen. Due to the COVID-19-related restrictions of movement between the Male’ and the islands, there has been a strengthening in the decentralised working of local councils. As a result, capacity gaps were highlighted throughout this period, for which digitalisation and strengthened e-governance measures could, in part, support the closing of these gaps. Disruptions to public services have also created an avenue for increased decentralisation, as councils were forced to take emergency measures to provide essential services, showing the importance of digitalisation, empowering councils, and strengthening decentralised public service provision.

To date, the Maldives has not had a programme-based or results-based budget. This has led to a lack of transparency, making it extremely challenging for Parliament or the public to oversee and scrutinise the budget and expenditure, establish accountability, and address corruption. An additional key challenge in achieving sustained development is related to the decade of polarised politics which has reduced trust and created a high turnover of staff in institutions and in the civil service. The loss of experienced senior staff is especially devastating in a small island nation. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive review of human resources capacity development, to improve effectiveness in delivery and availability of quality public services.

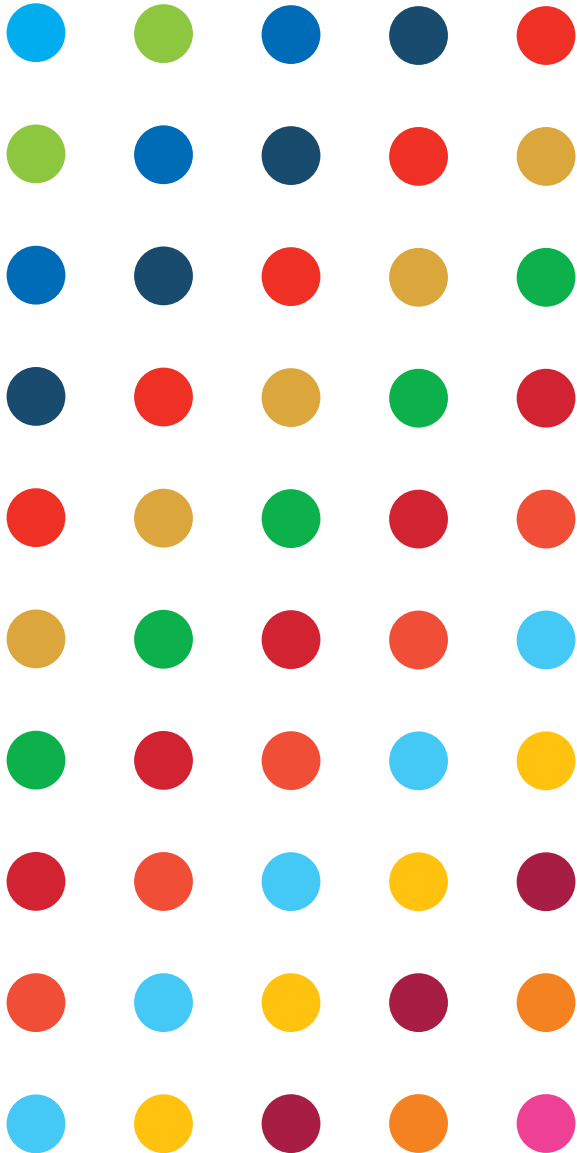
There is a considerable disconnect between State and society which needs to be bridged through linkages and participatory processes. Development of effective and inclusive governance institutions and processes, establishment of rule of law and the emergence of an informed and vocal civil society and an independent, professional media remain in their formative stages.

**ACCOUNTABLE JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Institutional instability and a limited culture of judicial independence, limited safeguards, a failure to demonstrate accountability for past abuses, the limitations of systems, and weak capacities are major risks for the justice sector. There is limited public confidence in the transparency and independence of the Judiciary due to lengthy periods for cases to be processed and a perception of limited fairness. However, extensive reform has commenced in terms of infrastructural, law reform, training and capacity building within the judiciary.

The Transitional Justice Act, ratified in December 2020, and the establishment of the Office of Ombudsperson for Transitional Justice have the potential to drive political and social reconciliation through much needed justice reform. Key goals laid out in the Transitional Justice Act include to end the culture of impunity and solidify the rule of law, in order to strengthen overall democratic governance. It sanctions investigations into past wrongdoings by State authorities, heads of agencies, or individuals in power, which resulted in human rights violations. Furthermore, the Act seeks to improve accountability mechanisms, provide a framework for redress and also reparations for victims of the abuse of power, by outlining measures to avoid such abuses of authority in the future.

The current Government has embarked on an ambitious agenda to ensure compliance with its international treaty obligations and is constructively engaged with human rights treaty bodies. However, several reports to treaty bodies are overdue, and as reported in State Reports in successive UPR cycles, the Government is faced with a number of challenges and limitations in fulfilling its reporting obligations under international conventions, due to capacity constraints.









# CHAPTER 2:

## UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO THE 2030 AGENDA

### 2.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

The high level Theory of Change outlines the pathway that will enable the country to accelerate actions to the desired state *where the Maldives is an inclusive, resilient, healthy, caring, tolerant, and skilled society where all people meaningfully participate in, contribute to and benefit equitably from sustainable cultural, economic and social development and environmental protection, leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.*

For this vision of change to be achieved, the Maldives will need to ensure that:

**1. THERE IS SHARED PROSPERITY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL.** For this to happen a core set of changes are required, including:

- The economy is more diversified, inclusive, and resilient to external shocks.
- Meaningful linkages between tourism and other industries are in place which create opportunities for all.
- The debt crisis is addressed, and legislative frameworks are in place to prevent/reduce outflows.
- A conducive landscape is in place for communities to diversify their livelihoods and economic opportunities.
- Pro-poor and inclusive growth is promoted.
- Together with a reformed public sector, with gender parity promoted, more decent jobs are created for all genders and ages, with an expanded and more resilient private sector.
- The country adopts a greater focus on the circular economy, and opportunities for blue and inclusive growth are accelerated.
- Greater access to affordable finance to stimulate entrepreneurship.
- Education and skills are relevant to the needs of the future economy.

**2. QUALITY SOCIAL SERVICES, INCLUDING SOCIAL PROTECTION, ARE AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE ALLOWING ALL PEOPLE TO DEVELOP TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND LEAD HEALTHY AND RESILIENT LIVES WITH DIGNITY.** For this to happen a core set of changes are required, including:

- Infrastructure and social services are more inclusive and gender responsive, and responsive to crises and natural disasters.
- Improved quality, availability, affordability and accessibility of basic social services (health, education, nutrition, social welfare) for all throughout the country and across the lifecycle.
- Digital, technology-based approaches are adopted for delivery of social services.
- Investments in basic public services increased to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend.
- Social protection is comprehensive (alignment across sectors, long term development), expanded and better targeted.
- Availability of opportunities and platforms for the practice and enjoyment of sports and the arts.
- Improved individual health and nutrition practices and behaviours.
- Parents and caregivers having strengthened positive parenting practices.
- Enhanced adolescent health and wellbeing - prevention of young people's exposure to crime and substance abuse issues and improved rehabilitation programmes.
- Strengthened services for victims of all forms of violence.
- Changes in gender-based attitudes and norms which perpetuate discrimination, inequality and are a key driver of violence.
- Strengthened existing labour and migration policies and mechanisms to more targeted interventions and prioritised skills needed to strengthen the economy, with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised.
- More integrated and linked systems bringing more efficiency to the system and minimise leakages and duplication.

**3. THERE IS A SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT.** For this to happen a core set of changes are required, including:

- Planning, and urban transition and infrastructure development is more risk-informed and climate resilient and considers the most vulnerable as well as environmental protection.
- Disaster risk reduction and resilience to hazards, natural and man-made are factored into policy and development investments, and are improved at the national, atoll, and community levels.
- More sustainable industrial production, tourism, agriculture and fishing.
- Better protection of biodiversity and natural habitats through improved ecosystem services, and natural resources management including water security.
- Less reliance on fossil fuels and more use of renewable resources.
- Attracting local and international support to aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.
- More sustainable means of waste management and enhanced focus on waste reduction.
- People adopt more environmentally friendly practices and lifestyles.
- Platforms are available to ensure participation and engagement of the population, especially the younger generation, in promoting solutions to address the impact of climate change
- Improved knowledge and data sharing across sectors.
- Incentives are available for businesses and industries to transition to more sustainable practices as well as the blue economy.
- Infrastructure and municipal service solutions that are nature based and integrated across the services.
- Sustainable climate/environment financing streams are sourced and established to achieve change at scale.

**4. GENDER-RESPONSIVE, RIGHTS-BASED, AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE IS IN PLACE.** For this to happen a core set of changes are required, including:

- A comprehensive national vision for long-term sustainable and inclusive development is in place, building on the SAP, NSP and forthcoming NRRP.
- Adequate financial and human resources are assured for ensuring access to non-discriminatory and accountable governance and justice.
- Accountability improved in the administration of public services, with all people treated with dignity and respect by public service providers.

- More meaningful and representative participation of rights holders in policy processes.
- Laws, policies, and programmes to address gender inequality, women's rights and violence against women and girls are strengthened and upheld.
- Women's opportunities enhanced towards political and social and economic leadership.
- Raised awareness about human rights related grievances and strengthened state capacity to tackle the grievances, allegations of human rights violations are followed-up.
- Integrated information system in place that transparently shares data with government and the public.
- A stronger and more robust monitoring framework in place – data collecting, analysing, disseminating, including reporting on global human rights frameworks and conventions.
- Stronger national institutions in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism as well as other crimes at land and sea are in place.
- Inclusivity ensured in the implementation of laws and policies, particularly for people with disabilities, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups.
- Greater coordination across government agencies in delivering public services at all levels.
- Investment in human capital across all government institutions at national and decentralised levels.
- Enhanced capacity of civil society to contribute to policy development and democratic discourse.
- Greater efforts made to promote a more cohesive and non-discriminatory society.

In the short-term, Maldives will also need to grasp the opportunity of a rapid, coordinated, and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 to build better basic social services, employment, income, and economic activities and enhance social cohesion, whilst simultaneously facilitating regional development across the country.

## 2.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

As a Small Island Developing state, the Maldives faces significant economic, social and environmental challenges. These are exacerbated by the impacts from climate change and vulnerability to both internal and external shocks. In addition to this, the geographic insularity coupled with a dispersed population and high transaction costs results in limited potential for economies of scale. Despite these challenges, the country has made significant progress in areas of eradicating extreme poverty, achieving universal education and health care and protecting terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

However, additional efforts have to be made in other area such as empowering women, strengthening mechanisms of governance and justice, minimising economic disparity and sustainable consumption and production in order to ensure that no one is left behind. As a framework to guide the UN's support and address existing development challenges including mitigating the medium and long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the achievement of the Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023 and ultimately the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, the 2022-2026 Cooperation Framework is structured around three Strategic Priorities.

These were identified from the analysis of the overarching Theory of Change and took into consideration the findings from a series of visioning consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including Government ministries and agencies, development partners, civil society organisations, young people, migrant representatives, organisations of people with disabilities, along with Local Government and Women's Development Committees.

**The three interrelated and mutually reinforcing Strategic Priorities will be the pillars through which the UN system will target its support to the Government and the people in the Maldives.**

### 1. SHARED PROSPERITY AND INCLUSIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

Focussing on promoting sustainable and more equitable economic growth through diversification and transformation, leading to increased opportunities for decent jobs and livelihood along with human capital and social development and improved wellbeing for all by addressing gaps in health, food security and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, skills development, and social protection mechanisms.

### 2. SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT

Focussing on the Maldives' accelerating actions to ensure a healthier and more resilient environment on land and in the ocean, including the transition to people-centred, low carbon and circular economy, risk-informed development and enhanced natural resources management, along with reducing vulnerabilities to natural hazards.

### 3. GENDER-RESPONSIVE, RIGHTS-BASED AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE

Aiming to ensure a more inclusive and accountable governance system, more efficient and evidence-informed public service delivery and that people are empowered, engaged, and enjoy human rights, peace, justice, and security.

Underpinning the Strategic Priorities are three fundamental strategies which together will promote a transformational and sustainable development trajectory for the Maldives:

- i. A focus on long-term investment in people in line with a multi-decade national development vision.
- ii. Addressing gender equality, women's rights and empowerment of women.
- iii. A holistic approach to address the challenges and bottlenecks for young people in participating in economic, political, social and cultural spheres.



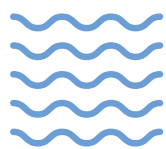
Photo by Ashwa Faheem



## 2.3 INTENDED DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

This Cooperation Framework is designed to contribute to the development priorities and agenda of the Government of the Republic of Maldives, as outlined in the 2019-2023 Strategic Action Plan (SAP), and towards the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the country.

THE FIVE THEMES OF THE SAP (AS OUTLINED IN SECTION 1.3) ARE:



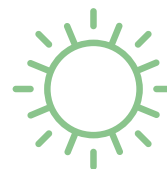
Blue Economy



Caring State



Dignified Families



Jazeera Dhiriulhun  
('Island Living')



Good Governance

CORPORATION FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES	Strategic Priority 1: Shared Prosperity and Inclusive Human Development for all		Strategic Priority 2: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Environment	Strategic Priority 3: Gender-Responsive, Rights-Based and Accountable Governance and Justice
SAP THEME				
AGENDA 2030 PILLAR	People 	Prosperity 	Planet 	Peace 
SDGs				

The Strategic Priorities and the major areas of the United Nations Development systems' contributions to them are guided by five overarching global core programming principles contextualised to the Maldives.

- 'Leave no-one behind':** to identify and reach those who may not have benefited from the significant human, social and economic progress in the country or who are at risk.
- Human rights and dignity for all:** equity, equality, dignity and non-discrimination, as normative principles of the United Nations.
- Gender equality and empowerment of women:** to put gender equality at the heart of programming, driving the active and meaningful participation of both women and men, and consistently empowering women and girls.
- Sustainability and resilience:** of systems, programmes, communities, individuals and the environment.
- Accountability:** to national development priorities and improving the lives of people in the Maldives.

The Cooperation Framework priorities and intended results are also aligned with recommendations within the Maldives' commitments under the Universal Periodic Review.

2.4 COOPERATION FRAMEWORK  
OUTCOMES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Under each of these Strategic Priority areas are a set of higher-level Outcomes, which are underpinned by a theory of change that articulates the pathway to overcome the key challenges and bottlenecks identified in the Common Country Analysis.

.....  
**Strategic Priority 1:**

**Shared prosperity and inclusive human development for all.**  
.....

**Outcome 1: By 2026, youth, women and others at risk of being left behind, contribute to and benefit from inclusive, resilient, sustainable economic and human capital development, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and decent work.**

Over the past decades the Maldivian economy has made substantial progress which has brought about significant improvement in the wellbeing for most in the country. However, there are insufficient highly skilled human resources needed for the economy. The education system has not yet fully prioritised the production of the specific variety of skills needed for industries such as information and communication technology, public health, science and finance to take advantage of the 4th Industrial Revolution. Highly dependent on the tourism industry, the country remains extremely susceptible to global travel market conditions and trends over which Maldives has no control. The Maldives needs to lay the foundations for a more diversified economy that can withstand external shocks, beyond an economy dominated by a single sector.

The development goal for a diversifying economic strategy would be to promote the creation of high-quality jobs by improving competitive export industries as well as those for local consumption. Diversification will help manage volatility and provide a more stable path for equitable growth and development, and reduce the flow of foreign currency, particularly in the area of food security. It needs to create the new skills to affect this shift, and to generate the industries needed to create job opportunities for the future Maldivian workers. A workforce with skills for future jobs in an emerging blue economy, in the service and digital industries and science, as well as those needed for care of the ageing population can create new sources of economic growth and provide a stable path for more sustainable development.

Removing barriers for women to contribute to and reap the benefits from the diversification of the economy will be an important strategy to ensure prosperity and opportunity for all the resident population of the Maldives.

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

*If* there is a more diversified and dynamic economy that delivers opportunities for all, where individual entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises have opportunities to innovate and grow and with better access to finance, **and**

*If* the economic development is decentralised, fully inclusive, minimises the urban-rural gap, fostering private sector job creation, with decent work and livelihoods all across the Maldives, with special attention to increased labour participation for women, young people and vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, **and**

*If* there is a more a conducive environment for economic development and local and foreign investment, through laws and regulations, trade and investment policies, incentive frameworks, streamlined bureaucratic processes, stronger logistical system and greater access to finance, **and**

*If* the Maldives has strengthened institutions and governance frameworks for the labour market that drives enterprise formalisation, responsible business practices, and promotes and protects dignity, rights, safety and equality at work for people of all genders, ages, and social background including migrant workers, **and**

*If* the Maldives invests in human resources development and that people, especially young women and men, benefit from soft and market-driven skills development and access to financial and non-financial services, including affordable information technology that enables them to benefit from and contribute to national and global employment and blue-green entrepreneurship opportunities, **and**

*If* unpaid care work is recognised and barriers for women's full inclusion are removed, and equal access of women is assured to participate in economic opportunities and drive economic transformation, inclusive and sustainable development,

**THEN**, by 2026, more people in the Maldives, especially women and young people and others at risk of being left behind, will contribute to and benefit from improved access to livelihoods, decent work and expanded opportunities generated by inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic development.

## UN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OUTCOME

The UN will support Maldives' efforts to develop a diversified economy that delivers prosperity and opportunities to all, and where individual entrepreneurs - especially women and youth - and small and medium enterprises have greater opportunities to innovate and grow with better access to finance. Promoting the development of the blue economy and relevant skills, employment and livelihood opportunities will be prioritised.

The UN will support the development of a plan for a long-term investment in people. This aims to generate a better educated, skilled, innovative and creative workforce and ensuring employment and employability of young Maldivians in the context of gradual move to a blue economy. The UN will support a systematic review of the quality and relevance of education – including soft skills and vocational training – for the future labour force. Policy advice and technical support will be provided for increasing financing and investment in continuous lifelong skills development for livelihoods and employment. The UN will support the generation of data needed for addressing the population changes to the labour force as the demographic dividend ends and the population grows older.

The UN will assist the Government to plan and coordinate development financing in the Maldives through the roll-out of an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), including innovative financing schemes to enhance fiscal space to invest in actions towards the SDGs. Technical advice and guidance towards diversification of economy will be provided to existing leading sectors such as tourism, fisheries, agriculture, transportation, and construction, and to emerging economic sectors including information and communication technology, renewable energy, the circular economy and recycling.

To ensure that economic development minimises the urban-rural gap, the UN will provide policy advisory services to the Government on initiatives for efficient and equitable inter-island transport and in developing investment efforts in decentralised economic hubs.

The UN will help Government and development partners to identify business development and market-based production options that will provide better incomes and develop commercially viable opportunities that provide decent work in the agriculture, fisheries, sustainable tourism, information technology and circular economy sectors, including support for the transition from informal to formal work. In particular, women and youth entrepreneurs will be encouraged to participate in business-oriented agriculture, fisheries, circular economy and technology-based activities with clear links to private sector partners, and for which the UN will promote incentive schemes and increased use of digital approaches in business operations and management.

This will include developing and promotion of SME capacities and their diversification to generate jobs and livelihoods. An emphasis will be placed on promoting decentralised business and commercial development opportunities for island communities particularly in the local sustainable tourism, agriculture and fisheries sectors, along with sustainable blue economic development. Initiatives will be supported for development of new innovative financing schemes in the agriculture sector, ensuring no one is left behind through promoting funds for organic agriculture, concessional loans to farmers, tax incentives, and developing systems for free technical and financial advice to farmers.

A macro-level analysis on the influence of population on economic sectors along with cost-benefit analyses on local production versus imports will be supported. With the Government and national stakeholders, systems changes needed in response to increasing urbanisation as well as female labour force participation as a means to economic empowerment will be identified. Opportunities for strengthening food security, safety and supply will be identified. The UN will support national and local level capacities for climate resilient agriculture through changing practices to build the resilience of communities in agriculture and fisheries operations.

Moving from a labour-intensive to knowledge-intensive economy is a necessary condition for economic development. Work will continue with Government agencies to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers and increase employer accountability for non-payment of wages or retention of travel documents, and to strengthen local government involvement in migration management. Support will be provided to improve skills matching through better labour market information system and analysis, updated training curricula and better coordination among industry, education providers and policy makers. Training programmes will be developed for Maldivians and migrants to find employment due to job losses due to the pandemic, facilitating their return to the workforce by matching their skills with job needs. Barriers to women's active engagement in the economy - such as unpaid work, stereotyped job opportunities - will be reduced through UN support for removing discriminatory policies and addressing harmful gender and social norms.

The UN will support strengthening of institutions and governance that drive enterprise formalisation, responsible business practices, and protects the rights and safety of workers. With the Government, trade unions and employee and employer associations, work will be undertaken to develop a more effective legal framework, business friendly policies and to create a conducive environment that ensures accountability of employers, and promotes freedom of association and collective bargaining leading to decent work for all. Special efforts will be paid to actions that eliminate all forms of discrimination and harassment at work and creating a more productive and empowering work environment.

The specific contribution of the UN to this outcome will be operationalised with a wide range of partners through three outputs, which are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

***Outcome 2: By 2026, people in the Maldives, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, inclusive and resilient social and protection services, and have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with wellbeing and dignity.***

The Maldives geography and dispersed population makes equitable and inclusive human development difficult and expensive to ensure. The country faces challenges in providing equitable access to quality social services, reducing risks and vulnerabilities faced by children and women including the migrant population, quality education for children and young people, addressing the ageing population, managing overcrowding in Male' and ensuring affordable housing. Maldives has an opportunity to build back stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a healthy, skilful and cohesive society which respects diversity and preserves the uniqueness of Maldivian culture.

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

***If*** the Government at national and subnational levels delivers improved and more equitable basic and specialised social services (health, nutrition, food security and safety, education, protection) which are age-appropriate and gender-sensitive and responsive, ***and***

***If*** individuals' practice and promote safe, healthy and protective behaviours, ***and***

***If*** social protection is more comprehensive, expanded and better targeted, shock-responsive and available to all in need, ***and***

***If*** there is more accessible and inclusive housing for all, including the migrant population, to allow them to have a decent standard of housing, ***and***

***If*** all people in the Maldives have access to quality and affordable digital infrastructure, ***and***

***If*** all people of all ages, including those with disabilities in the Maldives have improved opportunities and platforms to practice and enjoy the arts, culture, sport and recreation,

***THEN***, by 2026, more people in the Maldives, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, inclusive and resilient social and protection services, and are better able to live fulfilled lives with wellbeing and dignity.

**UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME**

The contributions of the UN will be framed around three interconnected thematic areas to enable people in the Maldives to lead healthy, fulfilling and productive lives with dignity and respect: quality health and nutrition; quality education; protection of the most vulnerable; and effective social protection.

Towards improving health and wellbeing, the UN will support decentralisation and revitalisation of Primary Health Care. National health services will be assisted to reorient and deliver evidence-based equitable, high-quality, and gender-responsive health, nutrition, and care services through a model that promotes physical, mental and social well-being throughout the life cycle. Evidence from the National Health Accounts will be used to guide Government delivery of affordable and sustainable health care. The UN will continue to facilitate strategic purchasing and improve access to essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and devices for primary health care. Immunisation will be promoted and supported as one of the most cost-effective health interventions with the UN supporting the introduction of new vaccines, modernising the cold chain system and addressing vaccine hesitancy. In addition, the control of non-communicable diseases will specifically be targeted to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment.

Technical and policy advice will be provided to the Government for its implementation of inclusive national policies, strategies, and action plans for more equitable access to health-care services, across the life course, along with support for data and analysis for decision-making. Assistance will be provided to integrate emergency preparedness and response into the health system to ensure continuation of essential services during emergencies, including sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence-related services and helping the Maldives attain International Health Regulation 2005 proficiency.

Towards Universal Health Care, the UN will support the Government's initiative to develop infrastructure to assure adequate access to medical care. The UN will promote integrated approaches to service delivery, including community-based approaches and use of technology to deliver quality maternal, reproductive health, newborn, child and adolescent health, development and nutrition services. Support will continue for behavioural change initiatives to promote healthy practices relating to immunisation, nutrition, hygiene practices, mental health, early childhood development, and positive parenting. Assistance will be also provided to the Government for strengthening comprehensive ageing policies covering health services, social protection, social cohesion, autonomy and care relevant for the ageing population along with non-communicable and increasing lifestyle diseases.



The UN will offer its global expertise on specialised health services to the Government and continue to invest in strengthening the human resource capacity of the health work force in different disciplines.

The UN will continue to support the Government to improve nutrition and food security. Technical assistance will be provided to increase the proportion of children who have adequate and appropriate nutrition and micronutrient intake, through adequate, timely and high-quality nutrition care and support, and improved maternal diet and infant and young child feeding practices. The strengthening of data to ensure evidence-based decision making to improve the contribution of food systems to food and nutrition security will be supported, including monitoring food security and safety, and sustainable agriculture.

Building on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN will support the increased availability and the quality of mental health and psychosocial services for all, with a focus on adolescents and youth. To help the Maldives build a stronger and more cohesive society, along with improving physical, mental and emotional health outcomes and preserving Maldivian cultural uniqueness, the UN will support partners to promote the benefits of enhanced creative, recreational and cultural activities, particularly at community level.

Enhancing the education system to provide more inclusive, equitable, affordable and quality education and skills development delivered through an effective decentralised education system will continue to be a UN priority. Rapid technological change, innovation and market developments are changing the nature of work. Transferable skills (such as digital literacy), are of growing importance, but still lacking in the Maldives education system. These skills help young people adapt to change, both in work and life, and thrive in a rapidly evolving economy and dynamic labour market. To complement the initiatives for expanding livelihoods and employment opportunities, the UN will support a Government review of the education system and ensure the relevance and quality of learning and skills of the future labour market.

Based on the findings, support will be provided to include functional, foundational and transferable skills in the curriculum. This will be supplemented by teacher training, new learning resources, and the use of digital education approaches. Future-focussed vocational skills, including expansion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) capacities and inclusion of 21st century competencies and social entrepreneurship will be explored, including for special education needs for children with disabilities to navigate decent jobs in the labour market. Recognising the cognitive benefits of early stimulation and learning, the UN will continue to promote nurturing care at household levels to facility-based early childhood education, ensuring school readiness.

Alternative learning pathways and education delivery in non-formal settings will also be promoted, such as the provision by local councils and civil society organisations of life-long learning programmes, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education strengthened, especially for the most vulnerable adolescents and young people, as well as digital and financial literacy.

Technical support will be made available to enhance the education system's capacity strengthened for data generation, planning and monitoring, including for ensuring schools to have a safe and clean environment and access to safe water, improved sanitation, and proper hygiene. The UN will continue to assist Government to embed disaster risk reduction approaches in the education system and for ensuring the continuity of learning during emergencies, using lessons learnt from the COVID-19 response.

Technical support will be provided for strengthening the capacity of institutions and services, policies and programmes to protect all Maldivians and residents, especially the most vulnerable, from violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse. A special emphasis will be made on the prevention of gender-based violence and violence against children and will include survivor-centred improved referral mechanisms, training, streamlining of regulations, and promoting outreach programmes, along with ensuring that survivors' access coordinated, timely, effective and confidential legal, physical and mental health services and safe accommodation and living.

Improving the overall quality of the social sector and the linkages between the protection service providers (social work and justice) and other social service systems including health and education with parents and caregivers who play a vital role in caring for and protecting their children will be prioritised. Recognising the special protection challenges faced by girls in Maldives in relation to gender-based violence, a strong focus will be on gender equality and adolescent-responsive programming. Social and behavioural change strategies - with a major emphasis on boys and men will be employed to ensure that more children, adolescents, parents, and communities support and practice behaviours that protect children and women from violence, abuse and harmful practices.

Preventing drug abuse among children, adolescents, and young people will be supported through technical support, knowledge exchange, and provision of resources to Government, civil society organisations and local communities. The UN will advocate for and promote drug rehabilitation programmes that demonstrate strong community reintegration mechanisms, and provide technical support for increased access, expansion and enhancement of capacity of institutions and services providing treatment to drug users.

The UN will advocate and provide policy guidance for the development of a unified, single national social protection system of services and support for all vulnerable groups, including informal sector workers and a universal child benefit to more effectively reduce inequalities and ease the barrier of having to apply for the most vulnerable families and migrants. Support will be given for establishing an integrated sectoral data management system, including a local/island data management, reporting and monitoring system, allowing for comprehensive documentation of all vulnerable households in need of protection across islands.

To ensure that those in need for social protection support, especially for the most vulnerable, benefit from national safety nets and have access to and full utilisation of well-resourced quality national social protection systems, services, policies, and programmes. The UN will convene Government, non-government and private sector stakeholders together to jointly identify social protection – including social security – overlaps, needs and resourcing requirements. Global expertise will be facilitated to support revising of the Social Protection Act, National Statistics Act, and the National Registration Act, and set the way towards a single comprehensive registry system for all social protection schemes, and improved targeting and eligibility criteria.

The specific contribution of the UN to this outcome will be operationalised with a wide range of partners through three outputs, which are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

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**Strategic Priority 2:**

**Sustainable and climate resilient environment.**

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**Outcome 3: By 2026, national and sub-national institutions and communities in Maldives, particularly at-risk populations, are better able to manage natural resources and achieve enhanced resilience to climate change and disaster impacts, natural and human-induced hazards, and environmental degradation, inclusively and in a sustainable manner.**

The Maldives has a rich biodiversity with a delicate and complex series of ecosystems that are unique to the tropical world. Further, the Maldives is uniquely vulnerable. The country is made up of low-lying islands – averaging only 1.5 metres above sea level - and the very small size and virtual isolation of the islands make their ecosystems, both on land and the sea, particularly fragile.

The rising sea level due to climate change and global warming along with the rapid socio-economic development, urbanisation, the lifestyles of a fast-growing population including heavy reliance on fossil fuels and infrastructure development, all contribute to the degradation of the environment and increase potential risks of climate-related disasters.

Changes in temperature, precipitation and the timing of extreme or critical threshold events are a few of the climatic events that will affect livelihoods in the Maldives, including agriculture. This includes heat stress on plants, reduction or loss in soil fertility through topsoil erosion, variations in soil moisture and temperature, inadequate water available for crop production, changes in the water table, salinisation of freshwater aquifer and loss of land through sea level rise. In addition to the limited availability of cultivable land, the agriculture sector is heavily impacted by poor quality of soil and a lack of fresh water. The hydrogeology of the Maldives makes water a very scarce resource, with 90 per cent of atoll households reliant on rainwater as their principal source of drinking water.

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

*If* the Maldives has a strengthened sustainable ecosystem management, promotes a blue economy, sustainable livelihoods, conservation and climate financing mechanisms, **and**

*If* there is enhanced protection of biodiversity and the spread of zoonotic and infectious diseases is prevented, **and**

*If* there is enhanced environmentally sustainable and climate resilient infrastructure development, **and**

*If* the health, food security, water and sanitation systems are more climate-resilient, **and**

*If* climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction are mainstreamed across all forms of development through initiatives such as achieving Net Zero emissions by 2030, **and**

*If* there is renewed investment in transitioning from fossil fuels towards clean and renewable energy sources across all development sectors, **and**

*If* there are improved policies and individual, community and industrial practices for circular economy, chemical and waste management systems, including phasing out single-use plastics by 2023, accelerated use of renewable resources, more sustainable production and consumption and workforce upskilling.

**Then**, by 2026, national and sub-national institutions and communities, particularly at-risk populations including women and children, will better manage natural resources and have enhanced resilience to climate change and disaster impacts, natural and human-induced hazards, and environmental degradation, inclusively and in a sustainable manner.

## UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

Promoting sustainable management of natural resources in a manner which takes account of the highly fragile ecosystems of the country will be a focus for the UN. Assistance will be provided to the Government to identify opportunities for enhanced protection, governance and management of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and resources, which factor in the sustained provision of goods and services. Support will be provided for the integration of sustainable biodiversity conservation practices in tourism, fisheries, transport, agriculture, waste management and water and sanitation sectors.

In support of Government actions to implement and finance its blue economy strategies, assisted by the UN under Outcome 1, expertise will be provided for more effective protected area conservation and marine spatial planning. The UN will facilitate access to sustainable financing to improve sustainable environmental practices, including recycling, the use of renewable energy, and which initiatives to protect natural resources and ecosystems across Maldives, including the development and rollout of a pipeline of investment projects. The UN will also assist the Government in accessing established global climate financing windows.

The UN will support the Government in transitioning key economic sectors including tourism, fisheries and agriculture towards market-oriented environmentally sustainable practices, through targeted interventions aimed at developing, upskilling and incubating a new generation of micro-, small- and medium-enterprises that integrate principles of environmental sustainability and conservation into their business models. This includes diversifying tourism through community-led conservation of natural ecosystems and cultural heritage, facilitating a greater role for local councils in tourism planning and enabling the establishment of cross-sector value-chain linkages with women entrepreneurs and those with informal livelihoods. The UN will support efforts to increase climate resilient food security and reduce reliance on imports by introducing a nationally coordinated approach to agricultural management through contract farming, technical capacity building for farmers, transport and supply chain linkages for decentralised sustainable markets.

Technical support and capacity building of Government institutions will be provided to ensure gender-responsive sustainable planning that uses valid and reliable data and analysis for evidence-based decision making and development planning for natural resource management, weather forecasting and land-use planning.

To promote localised, nature-based and innovative solutions for sustainable natural resource management, conservation and sustainable environmentally-friendly practices, technical assistance, knowledge-sharing and resources will be made available to (CSOs) along with adolescents, youth, women's groups and the migrant population as agents of change.

The UN will support actions to promote sustainable lifestyles, including enhancing public knowledge on the interrelationship between human behaviours and consumption patterns, the environment, disasters, climate change, and on risk awareness.

The UN will share global experience and provide support to Government to overcome Maldives' reliance on fossil fuels and achieve its NDC targets by 2030. This will include the introduction of Zero Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP) or low Global Warming Potential (GWP) alternatives to cooling and refrigeration in major contributing sectors such as tourism and fisheries. The UN system will promote the integration of renewable energy to infrastructure provided to the water, waste, tourism, fisheries and agriculture sectors. Support will be provided to advance more sustainable and low emissions transportation options in the Maldives. Attention will also be paid to promoting innovative approaches to use of renewable energy sources particularly amongst the private sector and at household levels, along with behavioural change initiatives related to energy production and consumption.

The UN will make available and synthesise global experience to the Maldives to achieve its Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction targets for 2030. The UN will provide guidance and technical support for emergency preparedness and response initiatives, including for natural disasters, disease outbreaks and health emergencies, along with coordination and material support as a provider of last resort. This will include strengthening national and local Government capacities for evidence-informed and gender-responsive development planning methods including land-use planning that integrate disaster risk management, climate adaptation and mitigation as core principles.

Maximising its global network of expertise, the UN will support the Government to advance its National Adaptation Planning process to identify and address its medium- and long-term priorities for adapting to climate change through analyses of current and future climate change and assessing vulnerability to its impacts. The UN will convene and encourage multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration for enhanced action on environment and climate change.



Through integrated water resource management, a systems-based approach to water security will be promoted, with support for coordination of efforts on water conservation and use, including through improved tourism, small industry, agricultural and waste management practices.

The UN will offer technical support for policy and strategy development and then accelerated action through local government leadership for more decentralised, community-level conservation and management of water resources including safe rainwater harvesting, storage and distribution, water quality testing, improving emergency water supply mechanisms and managed aquifer recharge.

The UN will promote and support the Government to develop and implement circular economy principles for integrated solid waste management programmes from collection to segregation to recycling, including the construction and commissioning of new facilities, capacity building and operational support. These initiatives will also complement actions under Outcome 1 on generation of new forms of employment and livelihood opportunities. The UN will bring the most relevant global best practices to assist the development of a policy and regulatory framework for the sound management and disposal of chemicals, persistent organic pollutants and waste, along with institutional capacity development for monitoring. This would include support for building a more environmentally friendly and climate-resilient health system including medical waste management, air quality campaigns, water quality assurance in health facilities and their use of renewable energy.

Support for policy planning will be provided to strengthen national policy frameworks on sustainable consumption and production through the development of a National Action Plan. State agencies will be enabled to identify potential private-public relationships that provide incentives and subsidies for environment-friendly and sustainable practices, particularly in the industrial production, infrastructure and construction, fisheries and agriculture sectors. Technical and financial assistance will be provided to formulate plans to address marine litter and micro-plastics through Extended Producer Responsibility. The UN will support the strengthening of the National Ozone Unit under the Montreal Protocol to phase out the use of ozone depleting substances.

The UN will assist strengthening of information systems to collect, monitor and analyse environmental data, and provide technical support for reporting on environmental international treaties and protocols.

The specific contribution of the UN to this outcome will be operationalised with a wide range of partners through three outputs, which are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

### Strategic Priority 3:

#### ***Gender-responsive, rights-based and accountable governance and justice.***

***Outcome 4: By 2026, Maldives has strengthened decentralised and accountable governance under the rule of law where people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy and fully enjoy access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society.***

Recent key achievements in the country's consolidation of democratic governance include a new commitment to decentralisation, establishment of mechanisms to eliminate corruption, and expansion of the human rights national protection systems. Acceleration of the decentralisation agenda, ensuring effective and accountable justice institutions, promoting engagement and participation in development planning and public life, and alignment of laws, policies and practices with national and international normative frameworks remain critical priorities for strengthened confidence in Government institutions. Overcoming gender-based discrimination and disempowerment of women and ensuring human rights for all, empowering the growing young population as agents of change, enhancing tolerance and peaceful coexistence for all in the Maldives are the social glue required for this shift to take hold. As an emerging democracy, the concept of a social contract is in early stages of articulation. Renewed commitment and actions are needed to address discrimination and exclusion. This is key to solidify the gains achieved towards inclusive sustainable development applying a zero tolerance for corruption and full access for all to public services.

The country is party to seven out of the nine core international human rights treaties. The Government has embarked on a very ambitious agenda to ensure compliance with all its international treaty obligations and is constructively engaged with all human rights mechanisms. Despite efforts to advance with its treaty body reporting obligations, a number of reports remain overdue due to limited technical capacities and the lack of a harmonised reporting and monitoring mechanism. The establishment of the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up and the commitment to develop a data sharing system is an important step to comply with its obligations. The outcome of the Universal Periodic Review and the accepted recommendations provide an important roadmap in support of the State efforts to address relevant challenges across all priority areas.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

*If* the current decentralisation model and governance is reinvigorated to make local governance effective with increased capacities, authority and autonomy of local councils in governing and providing services, **and**

*If* the effectiveness and capacity of the public sector at all levels is enhanced, informed by a comprehensive review of human resource capacities and functions, **and**

*If* national and local governments and their institutions, along with their policy frameworks and strategies, are gender-responsive, transparent, accountable, governed by the rule of law, and are more evidence-informed, **and**

*If* the people in the Maldives, especially women, young people and those most vulnerable, are empowered and benefit from an enabling environment to equally participate in; enjoy and claim their rights effectively in governance systems at all levels, **and**

*If* all national policy instruments recognise, promote, and protect the rights of all persons, including women and those vulnerable or marginalised, in compliance with international norms, and standards and are implemented, enforced, and monitored, **and**

*If* all sectors of society are engaged, including boys and men, to transform harmful and discriminatory gender norms, roles and practices that perpetuate and reinforce gender-based violence, **and**

*If* there is enhanced access to non-discriminatory justice, with strengthened state capacity for rule of law and transitional justice, **and**

*If* normative frameworks and policies for the protection of human rights for all - including groups facing vulnerabilities - and empowerment of Human Rights Defenders are institutionalised, **and**

*If* laws, policies, and practices are better informed by reliable and disaggregated rights-based data and evidence and reporting on the SDGs and international obligations is strengthened, **and**

*If* government, civil society, local and faith leaders, young people, and the media actively participate in and expand the civic space towards tolerance and peaceful coexistence, non-discrimination, and human rights for all,

**Then**, by 2026, Maldives will have strengthened decentralised and accountable governance under the rule of law where people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy and practice, fully enjoying access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society.

## UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

In response to the challenges faced by the Maldives in relation to the effectiveness and availability of quality public services, the UN will support the Government to undertake a comprehensive review of the public sector, including the public administration architecture, public service processes and human resource capacities at national and local levels. Based on the findings, localised, rights-based and sustainable interventions towards enhancing public sector administration and service delivery will be supported. Towards the national priority of more effective local governance through increased capacities, authority and autonomy of local councils in governing and providing services, the UN will provide technical assistance for the integration and development of the institutional structures and legal frameworks for participatory decentralisation and inclusive planning. Capacity building will be provided to local councils, women's development committees, community organisations and local stakeholders on gender sensitive, results-based participatory development planning, budgeting, management and monitoring.



Photo by Mohamed Naahee

Towards enhancing democratic governance by strengthening the rule of law and ending a culture of impunity, the UN will support the Government in its endeavours to implement transitional justice in line with international standards. A key area of UN expertise will be strengthening accountability mechanisms, providing technical expertise and exchange of global experience in relevant contexts, and ensuring a robust and credible framework for redress and reparations for victims of abuse of authority.

The UN will assist strengthening the capacity of oversight bodies for effective implementation of their mandates including support for establishing platforms, policies and mechanisms for greater transparency and accountability. Complementing this work, support will be provided for institutionalisation of mechanisms to eliminate corruption and establish accountability systems across all State agencies.

The UN will support the Government in its efforts for extensive reform of the justice sector, including the judicial infrastructure, judicial and law reform, alignment with international standards, training and capacity building within the judiciary, especially in adherence to the principles of human rights and gender equality. The use of digital technology to enhance the administration of justice will be promoted, including for virtual hearings, data collection, case management and monitoring as well as for skills development and learning. The UN will promote enhanced access to non-discriminatory justice and provide support to establish mechanisms for inclusive, representative, and participatory law making and an effective legal aid mechanism.

Legal and judicial education will be an area of focus for the UN. This will include supporting the judiciary, justice, law enforcement and legal sector institutions to strengthen professional capacities in judicial awareness and education for women and vulnerable groups from a rights perspective, such as those pertaining to persons with disabilities and migrant workers.

Support to enhance the capacity of Government including the law enforcement agencies and judiciary to administer the new child-related and gender legislation and associated regulations will be provided, along with knowledge exchange and technical support to design and rollout gender-sensitive and age-appropriate programmes to address juvenile crimes and violence against women and children.



*Photo by Maldives Correctional Service*

Support to strengthen data collection and management systems of the police service and capacity development in order to strengthen evidence-based policy making will be provided. To counter serious crimes including terrorism, drug trafficking and others on land or at sea, the UN will provide expertise to relevant national agencies to build their capacity to respond to such threats. Technical support will be addressed to law enforcement agencies and other criminal justice stakeholders, including by assisting in judicial and police reform and the improvement of detention and correctional facilities and their management, along with prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration.

The UN will facilitate an enabling environment for the empowerment of young men and women to participate, influence and lead as agents of social action change in governance and policy making. Partnerships will be fostered with the Government, the Parliament and relevant State bodies in facilitating safe and participatory mechanisms for civic education and engagement. Towards the vision of a tolerant and cohesive Maldives, the UN will convene all stakeholders including civil society, local-based, faith, women and youth leaders, the migrant community, disability groups, and other marginalised persons to actively expand the civic space towards tolerance, peaceful coexistence, non-discrimination and human rights for all.

The UN will foster partnerships along with providing technical assistance and support to State and non-state actors, including civil society and the private sector towards systemic changes that address root causes of gender inequality through social norm change interventions, and advocacy for policy and systemic change to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Advocacy will be undertaken for ensuring that national policy instruments recognise, promote, and protect the rights of women and girls in compliance with international norms, and standards and are implemented, enforced, and monitored.

Support will be provided to the Government towards establishing platforms, policies, and guidelines for greater engagement of women in public life, decision making and leadership positions at national and local levels.



This will also involve strengthening the commitment of political parties and relevant state institutions to develop, practice and advocate for gender inclusive internal structures and policies that result in greater representation and participation of women. These initiatives will be complemented by engagement with the media to promote ethical, gender-sensitive, human-rights and do-no-harm compliant, independent and responsible journalism.

The institutionalisation of normative frameworks and policies for the protection of human rights for all, including groups facing vulnerabilities along with the empowerment of Human Rights Defenders will be undertaken. The development of a case management system by the Human Rights Commission to collect and confidentially manage disaggregated data on human rights violations will be supported along with assistance to identify existing legislation which is not aligned with international human rights principles.

The UN will facilitate discussion and training with Government authorities, the judiciary and law enforcement agencies in relation to legal frameworks and policies for the protection of migrants. Special actions will be supported to assist the Government to address all forms of human trafficking and forced labour, and the conditions and practices that lead to it.

Partnerships at national and community level for systematic promotion of leadership for girls and boys will be supported, through south-south exchange and cooperation with other relevant countries.

Policy support and technical advice will be provided for more effective governance of internal and international migration covering de-concentration and decentralisation, including development of a comprehensive Migration Policy. This support will complement actions of the UN under Outcome 1 in relation to employment standards and Outcome 2 on migrant's access to social and protection services, a decent standard of living and wellbeing.

The UN will strengthen the capacity of Government institutions, including the National Bureau of Statistics to collect, manage and analyse disaggregated rights-based data for evidence-informed decision making, monitoring and reporting in line with Maldives' progress towards SDG achievement. The UN will promote collaboration across Government to effectively track and monitor progress, and advocate for adequate domestic funding required for the data collection. This will include support for better integration of data systems and the institutionalisation of a coherent mechanism for periodic and regular data collection, as well as strengthening administrative data. Technical assistance will continue to be provided for nationalisation of the SDGs and ensuring that data and evidence gaps in relation to the SDG indicators are filled.

The UN will provide technical support and policy advice for the conduction of the 2022 Census and analysis of its findings, with a focus on women and specific vulnerable groups in line with the commitment to leave no-one behind. The UN will support the Government to undertake National Transfer Accounts to integrate population dynamics such as population ageing into national planning processes.



Photo by Ashwa Faheem



As a core aspect of its normative function, the UN will promote the ratification of human rights treaties and conventions, including the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and associated legislations. The UN will support the Government and the National Human Rights Commission in the monitoring, reporting and implementing the recommendations from the UPR as well as CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, amongst others. Recent progress in establishing a national mechanism for human rights commitments reporting and follow-up will be further strengthened through the facilitation of an online platform to access all recommendations from international mechanisms.

The specific contribution of the UN to this outcome will be operationalised with a wide range of partners through three outputs, which are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

## 2.5 SYNERGIES BETWEEN COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

The three Strategic Priorities and four Outcomes are interdependent and take into consideration the interconnections among the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Progress towards the achievement of one Outcome will both contribute to and require progress in other Outcomes. The synergies between the Strategic Priorities and Outcomes are clearly aligned with the four interrelated dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – People, Prosperity, Planet and Peace – as well as the UN's programming principles. The four integrated UN programming principles of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment; sustainable development and resilience; leaving no one behind; and accountability are mainstreamed across the Cooperation Framework's four Outcome areas and applied to all phases of programme design and management, including monitoring and evaluation.

The three Strategic Priorities and four Outcomes represent a framework whereby focusing on one without sufficient attention to the others results in trade-offs and increases the multidimensional risks. By addressing issues of livelihoods, employment opportunities, and social services for all, Outcomes 1 and 2 aim to expand the social and economic nexus as well as promote environmental protection. Outcome 3 with its focus on resilience to climate change and disasters, and efficient use and management of natural resources, aims to address the social-environmental and environmental-economic nexus and will contribute to the country's prosperity through a sustainable blue economy. Outcome 4 targets the overarching and cross-cutting issues of accountable, transparent, inclusive governance systems and rule of law, as well as participatory, evidence-based and coherent policy making.

Each of the Outcomes include gender-based and gender-responsive strategies and objectives, further reinforcing the interdependence and synergies between the Outcomes. Realising gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all Strategic Priorities and Outcomes of this Cooperation Framework.

Embedded within each of the Outcomes is a focus on strategically supporting the Maldives to effectively monitor progress towards the SDGs, including strengthened systems and filling data and information gaps in key sectors.

## 2.6 SUSTAINABILITY

In line with the principles of the Agenda 2030, the Cooperation Framework recognises that sustainable development is owned and led by the Maldives in the spirit of transparency and mutual respect. The UN will coordinate its work with Government, national stakeholders, other multilateral institutions, and the international community, through the Government-led coordination architecture.

Sustainability is at the heart of all the Cooperation Framework's planned results, and all UN collaboration will be undertaken in a manner that increases the resilience of communities, strengthens governance and institutional capacities, and reduces risks and vulnerabilities. Complementing the Cooperation Framework's strategy of strengthening the capacities and accountabilities of Government institutions at national and sub-national levels, strategic partnerships will be forged with community-based organizations – including Civil Society Organizations, NGOs, and community leaders – towards inclusive, sustainable development and human rights. A key focus of this dual-track approach is to promote the commitment of all levels of government to enhance public participation and consultation.

The alignment of the Cooperation Framework with national priorities and the emphasis on development of national capacity for localisation of SDGs should contribute to the sustainability of results under the outcomes. The UN and partners will consolidate efforts to enhance the capacity of national institutions to integrate SDG indicators and targets into the national planning system and harmonise budgeting for SDGs. The successful operationalisation of the Integrated National Financing Framework will set the architecture for this approach. This should create favourable conditions also for sustainability of the Cooperation Framework results due to allocation of responsibilities for specific SDG targets within State institutions and agencies with the relevant budget. Expectations of greater accountability for achievement of results should have a positive impact on the national capacity to monitor achievements of the SDGs.

## 2.7 UN COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND UNCT CONFIGURATION

The strength of the UN is its comparative advantage as a trusted, impartial partner for development and humanitarian initiatives and convener for multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership at all levels. It offers access to and provision of world-class expertise and knowledge which is used to strengthen institutional capacities, particularly for quality data generation and analysis to more systematically understand patterns of inequalities and stimulate evidence-based policy development and systems change. The UN is able to respond to emergencies to deliver not only emergency life-saving assistance, but also to support countries to rebuild and revitalise systems so that the humanitarian response contributes to long-term development.

The UN has a unique strength in its distinct approach to development, including its people-centric programming principles that focus on leaving no one behind, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental sustainability, transparency and accountability.

Through its unique role as the custodian of international treaties and conventions, the UN brings value supporting the Maldives in internalising international norms and standards and for the fulfilment of its duties and obligations through recommendations arising from the respective treaties and conventions to which the country is party. The UN is able to draw on a global, regional and national expertise to support the State-wide spectrum of international standards, ranging from human rights, education, health, nutrition, justice and rule of law, labour practices, governance and the environment, among many others.

The Cooperation Framework Outcomes and Output areas are ambitious and span a broad range of development issues that are interrelated in nature. To deliver on these, the UN will draw on the capacities across the UN system and will be configured to include all agencies, both resident and non-resident, that have committed through signature to contributing towards at least one of the Cooperation Framework Outcomes.

While the main responsibility for the implementation of the Cooperation Framework will rest with the UN signatories, additional expertise from across the broader UN system, including its regional and global levels will be mobilised to support as necessary. This additional expertise will be essential for the UN to fulfil its role as a provider of cutting-edge advice. Resources from the broader UN system will be utilised on a needs basis, with the UN Resident Coordinator playing a key role in mobilising expertise.





# CHAPTER 3:

## COOPERATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 3.1 GOVERNANCE

The Joint Government of Maldives – United Nations Steering Committee (JSC) is the highest governing body of the Cooperation Framework. It is co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Maldives and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and comprised of representatives of Government Ministries and of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes with operational activities in the Maldives. The JSC will meet at least once a year, to review progress made in the previous year and review and endorse the Joint Work Plans, and identify additional indicators for monitoring progress where baselines and targets have been established to be included in the Cooperation Framework.

The Government and UNCT will establish four Outcome Groups, co-chaired by a lead line Ministry and a lead UN Head of Agency who report to the JSC and guide the Cooperation Framework annual joint planning, monitoring, and reporting. The UNCT, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, will be responsible for the overall effectiveness of the United Nations development contributions and results and will ensure that individual United Nations agency programming documents are derived from, aligned with and in support of the Strategic Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs of the Cooperation Framework 2022-2026.

In addition, the UNCT will establish UN inter-agency groups such as the UN Communications Group, Operations Management Team. Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Subgroup and others as deemed relevant for operationalising the Cooperation Framework and supporting of the implementation of the joint work plans.

### 3.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

**The Cooperation Framework will be nationally executed under the overall co-ordination of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Government Co-ordinating Authority) and will be operationalised through the development of joint work plans (see section 3.3).**

The centrepiece for the achievement of the SDGs in the Maldives is an enduring partnership between the Government and the UN. The UN will build on ongoing successful relationships and actively pursue a range of strategic, innovative and operational partnerships to advance the priorities identified in the Cooperation Framework and help drive transformational and systemic change toward sustainable development. The implementation strategy of the Cooperation Framework will take into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact through an inclusive, no one left behind and multisectoral approaches. The UN is committed to provide support required in addressing the needs of the Government and the most vulnerable and ensuring that the Outputs of the Cooperation Framework will continue to be aligned with the priorities of the Government.

The UN will contribute to the achievement of the Outcomes of the Cooperation Framework through a wide range of implementation strategies, including:

- ✓ Strategic policy advice, evidence-based analysis, research and technical inputs to address the development challenges and emerging issues facing the Maldives;
- ✓ Advocacy, technical assistance and capacity development to government agencies, and civil society organisations to assist with delivering on national and international commitments, informing legislation and policymaking, and for providing quality public services;

- ✓ Modelling of innovative solutions to development challenges with government at national and local levels and with the private sector;
- ✓ Leveraging global and regional networks and platforms to strengthen development cooperation and knowledge and experience sharing between the Maldives and other countries;
- ✓ Convening partners and relevant actors towards a greater development impact on the ground.

### 3.3 JOINT WORK PLANS

For effective implementation of the Cooperation Framework, the UN in collaboration with partners will develop, monitor, and report on rolling biennial joint work plans developed every two years by the respective Outcome Group. The joint work plans will ensure greater alignment with national priorities, support country capacities to deliver development results and ensure transparency and accountability in their implementation. The joint work plans will include all UN development contributions delivered jointly or by individual entities, with a view to maximising synergies, ensuring coherence and avoiding duplication. They will also indicate resources that are required and available as well as funding gaps. The joint work plans will demonstrate how the measurable outputs, for which UN entities will be accountable and responsible, contribute to the achievement of the Cooperation Framework Outcomes.

The Cooperation Framework will advance the harmonisation and simplification of UN operations while strengthening the inter-linkages between the UNSDCF and agency-specific planning frameworks. Developed using a results-based management framework with specific, measurable, attainable, results-based and time-bound indicators, the joint work plans will ensure a coordinated and consistent response, while aligning programming with global and regional frameworks. The joint work plans, along with agency-specific work plans and project documents will form an agreement between the UN and each implementing partner on the use of resources. To the extent possible the UN and partners will use the minimum documents necessary, namely the signed Cooperation Framework and signed joint or agency-specific work plans and project documents to implement programmatic initiatives. As necessary and appropriate, project documents can be prepared using, inter alia, the relevant text from the Cooperation Framework and joint or agency-specific work plans and/or project documents.

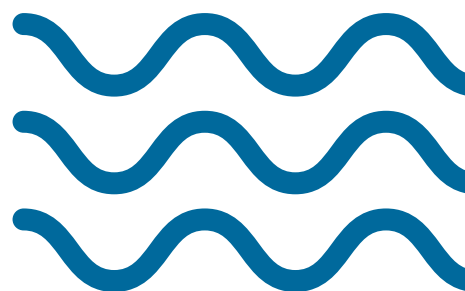
### 3.4 RESOURCE MOBILISATION

In consultation with the Government, the UN agencies will provide support to the development and implementation of activities within the Cooperation Framework, which may include technical support, cash assistance, supplies, commodities and equipment, procurement services, transport, funds for advocacy, research and studies, consultancies, programme development, monitoring and evaluation, training activities and staff support. In mutual agreement with the Government, part of the UN Development Systems support may be provided to non-governmental organizations as agreed within the framework of the individual work plans and project documents.

Additional support may include access to UN organisation-managed global information systems, the network of the UN agencies' country offices and specialised information systems, including rosters of consultants and providers of development services, and access to the support provided by the network of UN specialised agencies, funds and programmes. The UN agencies shall appoint staff and consultants for programme development, programme support, technical assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

Subject to annual reviews and progress in the implementation of the programme, the UN system agencies funds are distributed by calendar year and in accordance with the Cooperation Framework. These budgets will be reviewed and further detailed in the work plans and project documents. By mutual consent between the Government and the UN, funds not earmarked by donors to UN Development System for specific activities may be re-allocated to other programmatically equally worthwhile activities.

The Government will support the UN system agencies' efforts to raise the funds required to meet the needs of this Cooperation Framework and will cooperate with the UN system agencies. This will include encouraging potential donor governments to make available to the UN the funds needed to implement unfunded components of the programme; endorsing UN system agencies' efforts to raise funds for the programme from other sources, including the private sector both domestic and international; and permitting contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations in Maldives to support this programme, which will be tax exempt for the donor, to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.



# CHAPTER 4:

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

### 4.1 MONITORING PLAN

The Cooperation Framework Results Matrix is the main tool against which progress will be measured. The selection of indicators was informed by considerations of their prioritisation at the national level (SDG targets) and their mainstreaming into official statistics. In operationalising the monitoring plan, the UN will make maximum use of the existing national data and information systems. The UN will also support national capacity development for data collation, analysis and use and SDG monitoring, and propose additional indicators where baselines and targets have been established to the Joint Steering Committee for the inclusion in the Cooperation Framework.

Data collection instruments and sources expected to be used for measuring progress at Outcome and Output level will include the UN Common Country Analysis, Government-commissioned data generation activities (including surveys, census, the SDG Voluntary National Reviews), Government Ministries management information systems and administrative data, national reports to human rights mechanisms recommendations and concluding observations of the UN Treaty Bodies, UPR Working Group reports, and other assessments undertaken by UN agencies and partners.

#### FIELD LEVEL MONITORING

Joint monitoring visits will be one of the main tools for joint collection of field level monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) on results, processes and activities.

### MONITORING OF ACTIVITIES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**Implementing Partners agree to cooperate with the UN entities in monitoring of all activities supported by cash transfers and will facilitate access to relevant financial records and personnel responsible for the administration of cash provided by the UN entities. To that effect, Implementing Partners agree to the following:**

- 1. Periodic on-site reviews and spot checks of their financial records by the UN agencies or their representatives, as appropriate, and as described in specific clauses of their engagement documents/contracts with the UN entities;**
- 2. Programmatic monitoring of activities following the UN entities' standards and guidance for site visits and field monitoring; and**
- 3. Special or scheduled audits: Each UN entity, in collaboration with other UN entities (where so desired and in consultation with the respective coordinating ministry), will establish an annual audit plan, giving priority to audits of Implementing Partners to which UN entities provide large amounts of cash assistance, and those whose financial management capacity needs strengthening.**

#### 4.1.1 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are three main overall risks to the successful implementation of the Cooperation Framework, which cut across all the Outcome results.

The first major risk factor is the possibility of a financial crisis caused by debt and economic costs associated with climate change and extreme events such as a continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic which can reduce government revenue and result in retrogression in enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.



Such economic instability will also negatively impact on governance, social cohesion, access to services, and migration. Continuation of or a return to, political polarisation poses significant risks to ensuring a shared vision for national development, to decentralised, accountable and participatory governance, justice and rule of law, and increases the potential of insecurity, disenfranchisement of young people leading to heightened fundamentalism and extremism.

Governance related risks call for a need for improvements in inter-sectoral coordination, a more coherent and streamlined policy environment and the strengthening of compliance and law enforcement. Given the natural diversity of the country and challenges in attaining full decentralisation, there could be a risk that reforms are not implemented at the pace needed to transform the public sector, including to significantly reduce corruption. Any of these risks and threats could slow, or under some scenarios reverse, the progress achieved towards the SDGs.

Lastly, an effective SDGs financing strategy is needed in order to achieve the outcomes set in this document. The UN will work with the Government, international and national development partners, and the private sector to support the country's efforts in SDG financing, including innovative finance approaches such as the INFF to advance progress towards the 2030 Agenda in Maldives and implement this Cooperation Framework.

#### 4.1.2 COOPERATION FRAMEWORK REVIEW AND REPORTING

The Outcome Results Groups and Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force, on behalf of the Joint Steering Committee, will undertake annual reviews of the Cooperation Framework to measure overall progress towards planned results, monitor risks, identify key opportunities and challenges, and reflect on learning to inform decisions and course correction in the evolving context of the Maldives and the world.

UN INFO – the UN online planning, monitoring and reporting platform that digitises the Cooperation Framework and its corresponding joint work plans will be the main platform used to track progress and monitoring of the Cooperation Framework. This online platform will provide an overview of progress at country level and reflects the UN development system's efforts to improve transparency and accountability.

Based on the annual reviews, the One Country Results Report will be prepared annually and submitted to the Joint Steering Committee, which will provide evidence to explain to the Government and partners any necessary adaptations in UN programming for continued relevance. The report will also generate information to inform the periodic updating of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) as necessary and course-correcting the Joint Work Plans to make sure the implementation of the Cooperation Framework remains relevant and effective.

The Report describes the Outputs delivered for which the UN is directly responsible and also the Cooperation Framework Outcomes for which the UN is one of the contributors.

#### 4.2 EVALUATION PLAN

An evaluation of the Cooperation Framework will be conducted by an independent consultant(s) in the penultimate year of the cycle (2025). Prior to the commencement of implementation of the Cooperation Framework, an Evaluability Assessment will be conducted with the support of the Regional United Nations Development Coordination Office to determine that the Cooperation Framework's objectives are adequately defined and its results verifiable and therefore can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.

The evaluation Terms of Reference will ensure an inclusive and participatory approach involving all stakeholders as well as the independence and impartiality of the evaluation team. The Cooperation Framework evaluation will adhere to UN Evaluation Group norms and standards, follow OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, and utilise a gender equality and human rights-based approach.



## ANNEX 1: RESULTS MATRIX

UNSDCF STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: SHARED PROSPERITY AND INCLUSIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT			
INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
<b>OUTCOME 1: BY 2026, YOUTH, WOMEN AND OTHERS AT RISK OF BEING LEFT BEHIND, CONTRIBUTE TO AND BENEFIT FROM INCLUSIVE, RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT, FOSTERING INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DECENT WORK.</b>			
<b>Contributing to SDGs:</b> <b>Goal 1.</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere <b>Goal 2.</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture <b>Goal 4.</b> Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all <b>Goal 5.</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls <b>Goal 8.</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all <b>Goal 9.</b> Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation <b>Goal 10.</b> Reduce inequality, within and among countries <b>Goal 14.</b> Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development <b>Goal 17.</b> Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development			
1(a) Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age, employment status (SDG 1.2.1)	Male: 8.1% Female: 8.2% Children (0 -14 yrs) 10.1% Working age population (15 - 64 yrs): 7.5% Elderly (65+): 6.2%	Reduce by 50% across all	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
1(b) Unemployment rate, by sex and persons with disabilities (SDG 8.5.2)	Both sexes: 5.3 (2019) Male: 5.6 Female: 4.8  PWDs both sexes: 7.1% (2019) Male: 4.2% Female: 10.2%	Under 5% overall and for each sex, including people with disabilities	Household Income and Expenditure Survey and Census
1(c) Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training by sex (SDG 8.6.1)	Both Sexes: 29% (2019) Male: 15% Female: 41%	Below 10%	Census and Household Income and Expenditure Survey
1(d) Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP (SDG 9.2.1)	2.20 (2019)	4.4% by 2030	National Bureau of Statistics
1(e) Value of Fisheries to the GDP	MVR 2,779.1m (2019)	MVR 5,558.2m (double) by 2030	National Bureau of Statistics Maldives Monetary Authority
1(f) Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes (SDG17.1.2)	31.8% (2020)	Above 40%	Ministry of Finance

1(g) Women's labour force participation rate	45.6% (2019)	Above 60%	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
<b>OUTPUT 1.1: THE GOVERNMENT HAS STRENGTHENED CAPACITY TO ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND INITIATIVES WHICH PROMOTE A DYNAMIC, DIVERSIFIED AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY THAT DELIVERS PROSPERITY AND OPPORTUNITIES TO ALL, PARTICULARLY FOR WOMEN.</b>			
<i>Indicative contributing UN agencies:</i> FAO, IFAD, IOM, UNDP, UNEP			
<b>Key partners:</b> Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change & Technology, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, The President's Office			
1.1.1 Number of policies and regulations developed and implemented to support private sector growth and innovations with UN support	Not applicable	At least 6 (in areas of skills and employment, human resource management, labour migration management, occupational safety and health, social protection)	Published Government regulations and policies
1.1.2 Level of implementation of actions to improve the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises' creation and growth. including for women Level 1 - No strategy or action plan Level 2 - Strategy or action plan exists but yet to be implemented. Level 3 - Strategy or action plan partially operationalised Level 4 - Strategy or action plan fully operationalised	Level 3 (SAP)	Level 4	Independent analysis of SAP progress
1.1.3 Status of initiatives under the national fisheries and agriculture plans implemented as a result of strengthened institutional capacities provided through UN initiatives particularly for women	Partially operationalised	Initiatives fully operationalised	National Fisheries and Agriculture Plan



**OUTPUT 1.2 : THE GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS HAVE STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES TO PUT IN PLACE AND OPERATIONALISE ENABLING CONDITIONS AND INITIATIVES THAT ENSURE EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND DECENT EMPLOYMENT, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON INCREASED LABOUR PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, YOUTH, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THOSE LIVING ON OUTER ISLANDS.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN-WOMEN, WHO, UNICEF

**Key partners:** Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, Employers and Workers organizations, Labour Relations Authority, Trade Unions and Associations, Department of Judicial Administration, Local Government Authority, Civil Society Organizations

1.2.1	Existence of a developed and operationalised national strategy for youth employment, particularly for young women as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy (SDG 8.b.1) Level 0 - The country has not developed any national strategy for youth employment or taken steps to develop or adopt one. Level 1- The country is in the process of developing a national strategy for youth employment Level 2 - The country has developed and adopted a national strategy for youth employment Level 3 - The country has operationalised a national strategy for youth employment	Level 1	Level 3	Published national strategy/ Government report
1.2.2	Number of new interventions to enhance day care facilities and re-skilling of women to enhance their Labour Force Participation Rate, as a result of UN support	No baseline required	15	UN and partner workplan and implementation reports
1.2.3	Existence of a national policy for internal migration for enhancing sustainability of livelihoods at the island level	No	Yes	Ministry of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

**OUTPUT 1.3: THE GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITIES TO DESIGN AND DELIVER INCLUSIVE, ADAPTIVE, AND MARKET-RELEVANT, LIFELONG LEARNING, AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT MEET REAL MARKET NEEDS AND PROSPECTS.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF

**Key partners:** Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, private sector,

1.3.1	Level of implementation of evidence-informed national strategic plan for education and labour force skills. Level 1 – No new evidence or plan Level 2 – Analysis of education system and skills completed but no plan. Level 3 – Approved plan based on analysis but not operational Level 4 – Approved plan based on analysis and partly operational Level 5 – Approved plan based on analysis and fully operational	Level 1	Level 4	Government plan and reports
1.3.2	Number of TVET teachers and experts newly trained with UN support, by sex.	No baseline required	250	UN and partner reports
1.3.3	Number of women/men/youth with upgraded, market-oriented skills/extension services skills to deliver lucrative value chains supported by advanced agriculture and fishery technologies directly linked to private sector players, as a result of UN support	No baseline required	5,000	UN and partner reports from Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education & Universities, Ministry of Economic Development
1.3.4	Number of migrants who successfully complete re-skilling training with UN support	No baseline required	2000	Ministry of Economic Development, Labour Relations Authority, UN and partner reports

## UNSDCF STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: SHARED PROSPERITY AND INCLUSIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
<b>OUTCOME 2: BY 2026, PEOPLE IN THE MALDIVES, ESPECIALLY THE MOST VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED BENEFIT FROM INCREASED ACCESS TO AND USE OF QUALITY, EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT SOCIAL AND PROTECTION SERVICES, AND HAVE ENHANCED RELEVANT SKILLS AND LIVE FULFILLED LIVES WITH WELLBEING AND DIGNITY.</b>			
<b>Contributing to SDGs:</b> <b>Goal 1.</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere <b>Goal 2.</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture <b>Goal 4.</b> Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all <b>Goal 5.</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls <b>Goal 11.</b> Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable <b>Goal 16.</b> Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels			
2(a) Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems (SDG indicator 1.3.1)	32%	50%	Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services/ National Social Protection Agency
2(b) Prevalence of malnutrition (SDG indicator 2.1.1)	Under 5 children: i. Stunted U5: 15% ii. Wasted U5: 9% ii. Overweight / obese U5: 5% (DHS 2016-17)	i. 10%. ii. 5% iii. maintain at <5%.	Ministry of Health, Demographic & Health Survey
2(c) Prevalence of anaemia amongst women of reproductive age	63% (2016/17)	20.5%	Ministry of Health, Demographic & Health Survey
2(d) Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods (SDG indicator 3.7.1)	29.4% (2016/17)	32.3%	Ministry of Health, Demographic & Health Survey
2(e) The proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in national programme (SDG indicator 3.B.1)	76.4 % of children < 2yrs	90% by 2026	Ministry of Health, Demographic & Health Survey
2(f) Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex. (SDG 4.2.1)	92.0% (2016-17)	97%	Ministry of Health, Demographic & Health Survey



**OUTPUT 2.1: THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS HAVE IMPROVED CAPACITIES TO DELIVER EQUITABLE, HIGH-QUALITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE HEALTH, NUTRITION AND CARE SERVICES THAT PROMOTE PREVENTATIVE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING THROUGHOUT THE LIFE COURSE.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** FAO, IFAD, IOM, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO

**Key partners:** Ministry of Health, Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Sports and Community Empowerment, Health Protection Agency, Maldives Food and Drug Authority, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Heritage, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Ministry of Finance, Local Government Authority and Local Councils, sporting associations, Centre for Mental Health, Civil Society Organizations.

2.1.1	Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population, including migrants (SDG indicator 3.8.1)	No	Yes	Ministry of Health
2.1.2	Existence of new or revised policies to improve primary health care coverage and quality and enable health, nutrition and care services accessible to all across the lifecycle, especially the most vulnerable including migrants (Y/N)	No	Yes	Ministry of Health
2.1.3	Level of integration of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans/disaster risk reduction strategies into health system plans and PHC interventions Level 1 – Not integrated Level 2 – Partial integration Level 3 – Full integration in all education system plans/ programs	Level 2	Level 3	Ministry of Health
2.1.4	Proportion of health facilities assessing developmental milestones of under 5 children through growth monitoring platform (contributes to SDG 4.2.1)	5% (estimate)	50% by 2026	Health Administrative data/ Survey

**OUTPUT 2.2: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AT ALL LEVELS HAVE STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES TO DELIVER INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, ADAPTIVE, SAFE AND QUALITY LIFELONG EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AND RELEVANT FOR LIFE AND WORK.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** IOM, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO,

**Key partners:** Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Teacher Education and Tertiary Education Institutions, Local Councils, Civil Society Organizations, Research Institutes, Private Sector, State-owned Enterprises

2.2.1	Existence of Lifelong Learning national policy framework developed (Y/N)	No	Yes	Ministry of Health
2.2.2	Existence of skills development opportunities for the migrants (including the Maldivians looking forward to migrating abroad for work) (Y/N)	No	Yes	Ministry of Economic Development

2.2.3	Percentage of children with disabilities and children requiring alternative pathways enrolled in schools, meeting minimum learning requirements outlined in Individualised learning plans.	No % available. 520 students with special needs enrolled in special classes (2019)	100%	Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education
2.2.4	Existence of school-based comprehensive sexual and reproductive health curricula in accordance with international standards	No	Yes	Ministry of Education
2.1.5	Level of integration of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans/ disaster risk reduction strategies including protection into education system, plans and programmes plans and PHC interventions Level 1 – Not integrated Level 2 – Partial integration Level 3 – Full integration in all education system plans/ programs	Level 2	Level 3	Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education
<b>OUTPUT 2.3: THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AT ALL LEVELS HAVE STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES AND COORDINATION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND QUALITY SERVICES TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND NEGLECT.</b>				
<b>Indicative contributing UN agencies:</b> IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-WOMEN, WHO				
<b>Key partners:</b> Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services, Ministry of Health, Family Protection Authority, Ministry of Defence, Maldives Police Service, Maldives Immigration, Ministry of Economic Development, Labour Relations Authority, National Drug Agency, Ministry of Youth,, Sports and Community Empowerment, Sports & Community Empowerment, The President's Office, Department of Juvenile Justice, Ministry of Education, Local Government Authority, Local Councils, Civil Society Organizations, Media				
2.3.1	Quality of inter-operable information management system that supports and tracks case management, incident monitoring and programme monitoring by sex. Level 1 – No system or SoPs Level 2 – System and SoPs in place but not operational Level 3 - Quality system in place & operational in some areas Level 4 – Quality system in place and operational nationwide	Level 1	Level 3	Maldives Police Service, Maldives Immigration, Ministry of Economic Development Labour Relations Authority Ministry of Education
2.3.2	Existence of a national, multi-sectoral plan or strategy for coordinated action to prevent and respond to violence against women and children that meets key criteria for quality, according to status of plan. Level 1 –No plan exists Level 2- Plan and mechanisms developed Level 3- Partial implementation of the plan Level 4 – full implementation of the plan	Level 1	Level 4	Administrative data from Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services and/or Maldives Police Service
2.3.3	Number of women, girls and boys reached with risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions to address gender-based and other forms of violence through UN-supported programmes in the reporting year.	No baseline required	5,000 per year	Administrative data from Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services and/or Maldives Police Service

2.3.4	Percentage of human trafficking cases reported and resolved, with data disaggregated by gender	No baseline required	100%	Ministry of Defence, Maldives Police Service, Ministry of Economic Development, Labour Relations Authority
<b>OUTPUT 2.4: THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS HAS IMPROVED CAPACITY TO DELIVER ADEQUATE GENDER AND CHILD-SENSITIVE AND SHOCK-RESPONSIVE QUALITY SOCIAL PROTECTION MECHANISMS AND SERVICES AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES, SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES ACROSS THE LIFECYCLE, PARTICULARLY FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE.</b>				
<i>Indicative contributing UN agencies:</i> FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO				
<i>Key partners:</i> Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services, National Social Protection Agency, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Ministry of Finance, Local Government Authority and Local Councils, Department of National Registration, Ministry of Youth, Sports & Community Empowerment, Ministry of Economic Development				
2.4.1	Existence of new or revised national social protection policies to extend coverage, enhance comprehensiveness and/or increase adequacy of benefits	No	Yes	Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services, National Social Protection Agency
2.4.2	Level of development of social protection data management system (management information systems, social and beneficiary registries, M&E systems) Level 1 - None of the criteria are in place Level 2 - One or two of the criteria are in place Level 3 - All three are in place	Level 2	Level 3	Ministry of Economic Development
2.4.3	Integration / coordination mechanisms for social protection systems established countrywide (level of the existence and functioning of coordination mechanisms between social protection actors at central and local levels). Level 1 - System is fragmented with no functioning formal social protection coordination mechanisms at central or local levels Level 2 - Social protection coordination mechanism is established and functioning at the central level only with a clear mandate, responsibilities and operating modalities Level 3 - Social protection coordination mechanism is established and functioning at both central and local levels with clear mandates, responsibilities and operating modalities	Level 2	Level 3	Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services/ National Social Protection Agency



2.4.4	Level of operationalisation of a universal child grant scheme Level 1 – No universal child grant scheme Level 2 – Strategy and plan in place but not operationalised Level 3 – Strategy and plan in place and partly operational Level 4 – Child grant scheme fully operational and universal	Level 1	Level 3	Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services/ National Social Protection Agency
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UNSDCF STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT			
INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
<b>OUTCOME 3: BY 2026, NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES IN MALDIVES, PARTICULARLY AT-RISK POPULATIONS, ARE BETTER ABLE TO MANAGE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ACHIEVE ENHANCED RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER IMPACTS, NATURAL AND HUMAN-INDUCED HAZARDS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, INCLUSIVELY AND IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER.</b>			
<b>Contributing to SDGs:</b> <b>Goal 1.</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere. <b>Goal 2.</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. <b>Goal 5:</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. <b>Goal 6.</b> Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. <b>Goal 7:</b> Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. <b>Goal 8:</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. <b>Goal 11.</b> Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. <b>Goal 12.</b> Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. <b>Goal 13.</b> Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. <b>Goal 14.</b> Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. <b>Goal 15.</b> Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.			
3(a) Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services by sex (SDG indicator 6.1.1)	61.7% (2019)	85%	Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Progress Reports on National Water and Sewerage Strategic Plan
3(b) Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (SDG indicator 7.2.1)	4% (2018)	24% by 2023	SDG Data Update by National Bureau of Statistics State of the Environment Report by Ministry of Environment Biennial Update Reports under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

3(c) Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities (SDG Indicator 11.6.1)	0%	30%	SDG Data Update by National Bureau of Statistics, State of the Environment Report Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology and Waste Management Corporation
3(d) Existence of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) national action plan or SCP mainstreamed as a priority or a target into national policies (SDG indicator 12.1.1)	No	Yes	SDG Data Update by National Bureau of Statistics
3(e) Existence of a gender-sensitive and integrated policy/strategy /plan which increases the Maldives ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other) (SDG indicator 13.2.1)	Partially Established	Fully established and partially operationalised	SDG Data Update by National Bureau of Statistics
3(f) Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches (SDG Indicator 14.2.1)	0.0006%	20% of the Exclusive Economic Zones under Protected Area Management	SDG Data Update by National Bureau of Statistics Gazetted list of Protected Areas
3(g) Status towards phaseout of HCFC and HFC consumption	HCFC baseline: 4.60 ODPT HFC baseline: average HFC consumption of 2020-2022 plus 65% of HCFC baseline	Phaseout HCFC consumption to zero by 2025 Freeze HFC consumption at its baseline by 2024	UNEP: Article 7 report under the Montreal Protocol
3(h) Percentage reduction of GHG emissions across all sectors that contribute to the achievement of the NDC targets.	No baseline required	50% achievement of NDC target	Biennial Update Reports
3(i) Existence and implementation of National Disaster Risk Management Plan in line with the Sendai Framework (SDG Indicators 1.5.3 and 11.b.1)	No National Disaster Risk Management Plan in line with Sendai Framework	Plan adopted and being implemented	National Disaster Management Authority reporting under the Sendai Framework

**OUTPUT 3.1: THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS, COMMUNITIES, THE PEOPLE AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE MALDIVES ARE BETTER ABLE TO SUSTAINABLY MANAGE NATURAL RESOURCES AND PROTECT VITAL ECOSYSTEMS.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** FAO, ILO, IOM, UNEP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO

**Key partners:** Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Tourism, Local Government Authority (LGA), Local Councils and Women's Development Committees, Youth Groups & Civil Society Organisations

INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
3.1.1 Number of government institutions and local councils with strengthened skills on in areas of evidenced-based and gender-responsive local development planning, climate resilience, disaster risk reduction and enhanced protection, governance and management of terrestrial and marine ecosystems through UN-supported capacity development initiatives.	10 islands	60 islands	Local Development Plans
3.1.2 Number of CSOs and NGOs (including GEWE CSOs/NGOs) provided with support by the UN to develop localised innovative programmes on natural resource management, sustainable energy transitioning, conservation and related areas during CF period.	77 NGOs and CSOs	152 NGOs and CSOs	Small Grants Programme Annual Reports, UNDP
3.1.3 Level of integration of sustainable practices in major contributing sectors - tourism, fisheries, transport, agriculture, waste management and water and sanitation (by sector) Level 1 – Limited or no integration in policies, strategies or plans but no implementation. Level 2 - Partial integration in policies, strategies or plans and limited implementation. Level 3 – Institutionalised integration and full implementation in sectoral policies, strategies or plans	Level 1	Level 2	Implemented Policy Documents, Case Studies, Introduction of Industry Standards (e.g., ISO, Blue Seal etc)
3.1.4 Proportion of government sectors prioritised within NDCs reflecting climate change adaption and mitigation in planning and budgeting systems	Limited systematic mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in regular planning and budgeting systems	100%	Government reports, UNEP



**OUTPUT 3.2: THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS, COMMUNITIES, THE PEOPLE AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE MALDIVES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITIES TO MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISKS.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNICEF, WHO

**Key partners:** Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Local Government Authority, National Statistics Bureau, National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Health, Local Councils, Women's Development Committees, utility service providers

INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
3.2.1 Number of islands practising gender responsive, decentralised, sustainable Integrated Water Resource Management model with focus on clean energy through community-level management of water resources including safe rainwater harvesting, sustainable groundwater recharge, water quality testing and advocacy with UN support	3 islands	32 Islands	Green Climate Fund (GCF) Project Annual Reports Local Government Authority Reports
3.2.2 Percentage of local councils that adopt and implement participatory, gender-sensitive local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies. (SDG indicator 11.b.2 and 13.1.3; Sendai indicator E-2	5%	30%	Local Development Plans, Island Disaster Management Plans
3.2.3 Number of islands implementing integrated solid waste management with circular economy principles through UN support	9 islands	20 islands	Small Grants Programme Annual Reports) Local Government Authority Reports
3.2.4 Percentage of farmers engaged in sustainable food production and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	0	50% of registered farmers	AgroNat Annual Reports Farmers National Registry

**OUTPUT 3.3: THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS, COMMUNITIES, THE PEOPLE AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE MALDIVES HAVE STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AND RISK-INFORMED PRACTICES TO PROTECT THE PLANET AND PROMOTE HUMAN HEALTH AND WELLBEING.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** IOM, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNOPS

**Key partners:** Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Local Government Authority, Local Councils, Civil Society Organizations

INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
3.3.1 Level of implementation of gender-sensitive National Action Plans on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Level 1 – no plans Level 2 – plans approved but not operationalised Level 3 – plans exists, approved and partly operationalised Level 4 – plans exists, approved and fully operational nationwide	Level 2 – plans approved but not operationalised.	Level 3 – plans exist, approved, and partly operationalised.	Government reports
3.3.2 Existence of regulatory frameworks for the sound management and disposal of (a) chemicals, (b) persistent organic pollutants and (c) waste.	(a) - Yes (b) - No (c) - No	(a) – Yes (b) – Yes (c) – Yes	National reports to Stockholm and Minamata Conventions, and Montreal Protocol
3.3.3 Status of availability of climate change information for medium- and long-term adaptation planning.	Partly available	Fully available	UNEP
3.3.4 Percentage of local councils with programmes for community education, awareness and engagement for climate change action. Including focusing on women, youth and marginalised communities.	Not available	20%	Local Government Authority
3.3.5 Status of availability of multi-hazard early warning alerts and disaster preparedness information for all resident in Maldives	Partly available	Fully available	National Disaster Management Authority

## UNSDCF STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: GENDER-RESPONSIVE, RIGHTS-BASED AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE

INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
<b>OUTCOME 4: BY 2026, MALDIVES HAS STRENGTHENED DECENTRALISED AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE UNDER THE RULE OF LAW WHERE PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED, MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN TRANSPARENT AND TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESSES FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND FULLY ENJOY ACCESS TO JUSTICE, PUBLIC SERVICES, HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN A TOLERANT AND PEACEFUL SOCIETY.</b>			
<b>Contributing to SDGs:</b> <b>Goal 5.</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls <b>Goal 10.</b> Reduce inequality within and among countries <b>Goal 16.</b> Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels <b>Goal 17.</b> Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development			
4(a) Percentage of seats held by women in (a) national parliament and (b) local governments. (SDG 5.5.1)	4.3% (2019) 6% (2020)	(a) 33% (b) 33%	Parliament records, Election Commission of the Maldives, Local Government Authority records
4(b) Existence of a system/s to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. (SDG 5.c.1)	No	Yes	Ministry of Finance
4(c) Percentage of (i) women and (ii) men aged 15-49 years who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of the specified reasons	W: 25.8% M: 20.7% (Not 2016 - 17)	W: 15% M: 10%	Demographic & Health Survey
4(d) Whether the country (a) has conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) has achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration (SDG 17.19.2)	Yes	Yes	National Bureau of Statistics
4(e) Existence of a gender-responsive and inclusive mechanism to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development. (SDG 17.14.1)	No	Yes	Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
4(f) Percentage of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. (SDG 17.18.1)	26% (2018)	100%	National Bureau of Statistics
4(g) Percentage of accepted UPR recommendations implemented by the Government.	6% (11 out of 192 – accepted and partially accepted) for UPR	80% of the accepted and partially accepted recommendations	Attorney General's Office (NMRF and NRTD)



4(h) Score on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	43/100 (2020)	50/100	Transparency International
4(i) Number of new treaties ratified	No baseline required	1 Treaty	Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ OHCHR
4(j) Level of meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons	Tier 2 Watchlist	Tier 1	US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons

**OUTPUT 4.1: THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS DEMONSTRATES STRENGTHENED CAPACITY TO PLAN AND DELIVER DECENTRALISED DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION, AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE MANNER.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UNICEF

**Key partners:** The President's Office, Ministry of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Economic Development, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Prosecutor General's Office, Attorney-General's Office, Anti-Corruption Commission, Election Commission, Maldives Media Council, Maldives Broadcasting Commission, National Integrity Commission, Local Government Authority & Local Councils, Women's Development Committees, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Civil Service Commission, Maldives Police Service, Maldives Correctional Service, Ministry of Finance

INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	MOV/DATA SOURCE
4.1.1 Existence of gender-responsive long-term national development vision and strategy towards achievement of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs	No	Yes	Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
4.1.2 Proportion of Local Councils provided with administration capacity development support on participatory and gender-responsive development planning and public finance management standards through UN support.	Trained councils on new Gender based Planning Methodology 0 (2020), Councils trained in e-council software and public finance management 20 (2020)	All councils	Local Government Authority
4.1.3 Number of new or updated gender-responsive migration governance-related policies and strategies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration (SDG Indicator 10.7.2)	No baseline needed	Migration Policy, Integrated Border Management Strategy	Government reports

**OUTPUT 4.2: STATE INSTITUTIONS HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY AND DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO ENSURE ACCESS TO NON-DISCRIMINATORY JUSTICE, RULE OF LAW AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, UNODC, OHCHR, RCO

**Key partners:** Ministry of Home Affairs, Prosecutor General's Office, Attorney-General's Office, Department of Judicial Administration, Anti-Corruption Commission, Election Commission, National Integrity Commission, Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, Judicial Services Commission, Maldives Police Service, Maldives Bar Council, Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services, Office of the Ombudsperson for Transitional Justice, Office of the Ombudsperson for Child Rights

4.2.1	Proportion of targeted institutions with enhanced capacity after legal and judicial education initiatives supported by UN	No baseline required	50% of all magistrate courts, superior courts, High Courts and Supreme Court	Department Judicial Administration, Bar Council of Maldives
4.2.2	Level of implementation of legislation enabling the rights of groups facing vulnerabilities, in particular children, women and migrants - associated regulations. Level 1 – Laws and regulations not in place Level 2 – All required laws and regulations enacted. Level 3 – Level 2 + human and financial resource and mechanisms partially available and in place Level 3 – Level 3 + legislations fully operationalised	Level 2	Level 3	Attorney General's Office
4.2.3	Status of development of a comprehensive juvenile justice system. Level 1: Juvenile Justice Act enabled Level 2: Level 1+ juvenile detention and rehabilitation Facility established Level 3: Level 2 + specialised and adequately trained professionals (specialised judges, prosecutors, correctional officers and police officers) in place	Level 1	Level3	Department of Juvenile Justice
4.2.4	Status of implementation of sexual harassment and offences legislation Level 1: Sexual Harassment Act and Sexual Offences Act enacted Level 2: Mechanisms and regulations in place for implementation Level 3: Level 2 + specialised and adequately trained professionals for its implementation (specialised judges, prosecutors, correctional officers and police officers)	Level 1	Level 3	Department Judicial Administration

**OUTPUT 4.3: THE GOVERNMENT AND STATE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS AND OTHER DUTY BEARERS, ARE BETTER ABLE TO UPHOLD STANDARDS, PRACTICES AND NORMS THAT PROMOTE SOCIAL COHESION, HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-WOMEN, UNODC

**Key partners:** Academia, National Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, Faith Based Organisations, Civil Society Organisations, Community Based Organisations, Unions, Maldives Media Council, Maldives Broadcasting Commission, Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Fisheries Marine Resources and Agriculture, Family Protection Authority, Maldives Police Service, Prosecutor General's Office, Department of Judicial Administration, Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Sports and Community Empowerment, Local Government Authority, Local Councils, National Counter Terrorism Centre

4.3.1	Level of implementation of the National Action Plan on the Prevention of Violent Extremism (NAP-PVE) Level 1: No or very limited implementation Level 2: Evidence exists of partial implementation but not institutionalised Level 3: Evidence exists of systematic institutionalised implementation	Level 1	Level 3	National Counter Terrorism Centre
4.3.2	Extent of interest and participation in politics and governance affairs by young people	Among Maldivians aged 18 - 34, 41% express interest in politics and governance affairs (2015)	60%	Transparency Maldives
4.3.3	Level of implementation of Gender Equality Policy Level 1 – Gender Equality Law and Gender Equality policy exists Level 2 – national action plan exists, approved and partly operationalised Level 3 – national action plan exists, approved and fully operational	Level 1	Level3	Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services, Family Protection Authority
4.3.4	Level of implementation of national action plan to end violence against women/domestic violence and other vulnerable groups Level 1 – national action plan exists and approved but not operationalised Level 2 – national action plan exists, approved and partly operationalised Level 3 – national action plan exists, approved and fully operational	Draft National Action Plan pending approval	Level 3	Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services Family protection Authority

**OUTPUT 4.4: THE GOVERNMENT HAS ENHANCED CAPACITY TO COLLECT, MANAGE AND ANALYSE DISAGGREGATED DATA FOR MONITORING, DECISION-MAKING AND FOR REPORTING ON PROGRESS TOWARDS SDG ACHIEVEMENT AND ON HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES AND OTHER REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS.**

**Indicative contributing UN agencies:** FAO, IFAD, ILO, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF

**Key partners:** National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources & Agriculture, Ministry of Arts, Culture & Heritage, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Maldives Police Service, Family Protection Authority, Civil Society Organisations

4.4.1	Percentage (and number) of State party reports on international human rights treaties/ Conventions submitted within stipulated timeframes	40%, 3 reports submitted in the past 5 year out of the 7 Conventions signed	70% (7 including the common core document)	Treaty body database at OHCHR
4.4.2	Level of establishment of an integrated national database that identifies vulnerable population, including by age, nationality and sex, in real-time. Level 1: No database Level 2: Evidence that database exists and partly operational Level 3: Evidence that database exists and is institutionalised and systematically used by social sectors.	Level 1	Level 3	Government reports



## ANNEX 2: THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK LEGAL ANNEX

Whereas the Government of the Republic of Maldives (hereinafter referred to as the Government”) has entered into the following relationships:

a) With United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have entered into a basic agreement to govern UNDP’s assistance to the country (Standard Basic Assistance Agreement or SBAA), which was signed by both parties on 25 January 1978. Based on Article I, paragraph 2 of the SBAA, UNDP’s assistance to the Government shall be made available to the Government and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of the competent UNDP organs, and subject to the availability of the necessary funds to the UNDP. In particular, decision 2005/1 of 28 January 2005 of UNDP’s Executive Board approved the new Financial Regulations and Rules and along with them the new definitions of ‘execution’ and ‘implementation’ enabling UNDP to fully implement the new Common Country Programming Procedures resulting from the undg simplification and harmonisation initiative. In light of this decision this Cooperation Framework together with a work plan hereunder constitute together a project document as referred to in the SBAA.

b) With the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) the first official agreement signed between Government of Maldives on 6 April 1970 and a Basic Cooperation Agreement (BCA) concluded between the Government and UNICEF on 19 April 1994.

c) The Basic Agreement concluded between the Government and the United Nations Development Programme on 25 January 1978 (the “Basic Agreement”) mutatis mutandis applies to the activities and personnel of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in accordance with the agreement [concluded by an exchange of letters] between UNFPA and the Government which entered into force on 4 May 2014. This Cooperation Framework together with any work plan concluded hereunder, which shall form part of this UNSDCF, constitutes the Project Document as referred to in the Basic Agreement.

d) For non-resident and specialised Agencies: Assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of the competent governing structures of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office for Project Service (UNOPS), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and World Health Organization (WHO).

Additional agreements to be signed during the new Cooperation Framework cycle will be included when available.

The Cooperation Framework will, in respect of each of the United Nations system agencies signing, be read, interpreted, and implemented in accordance with and in a manner, that is consistent with the basic agreement between such United Nations system agency and the Host Government.

The Government will honour its commitments in accordance with the provisions of the cooperation and assistance agreements outlined in paragraph one the Basis of the Relationship.

Without prejudice to these agreements, the Government shall apply the respective provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (the “General Convention”) or the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialised Agencies (the “Specialised Agencies Convention”) to the Agencies’ property, funds, and assets and to their officials and experts on mission. The Government shall also accord to the Agencies and their officials and to other persons performing services on behalf of the Agencies, the privileges, immunities and facilities as set out in the cooperation and assistance agreements between the Agencies and the Government. In addition, it is understood that all United Nations Volunteers shall be assimilated to officials of the Agencies, entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to such officials under the General Convention or the Specialised Agencies Convention.

The Government will be responsible for dealing with any claims, which may be brought by third parties against any of the Agencies and their officials, experts on mission or other persons performing services on their behalf and shall hold them harmless in respect of any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is mutually agreed by Government and a particular Agency that such claims and liabilities arise from gross negligence or misconduct of that Agency, or its officials, advisors or persons performing services.

Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Government shall insure or indemnify the Agencies from civil liability under the law of the country in respect of vehicles provided by the Agencies but under the control of or use by the Government.

- (a) Nothing in this Agreement shall imply a waiver by the UN or any of its Agencies or Organisations of any privileges or immunities enjoyed by them or their acceptance of the jurisdiction of the courts of any country over disputes arising of this Agreement.

Nothing in or relating to this document will be deemed a waiver, expressed or implied, of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, including the World Food Programme (WFP), whether under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13th February 1946, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialised Agencies of 21st November 1947, as applicable, and no provisions of this document or any Institutional Contract or any Undertaking will be interpreted or applied in a manner, or to an extent, inconsistent with such privileges and immunities.

### ANNEX 3: HARMONISED APPROACH TO CASH TRANSFERS (HACT)

HACT is a common operational framework implemented by some UN Agencies to govern transferring cash to Government and non-government implementing partners. There are three agencies in the Maldives currently implementing HACT: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

The management of HACT subscribes to the following principles: (i) cost-effective management of risks; (ii) standardised and streamlined inter-agency practices; (iii) accountability and (iv) national ownership. It applies to all cash transferred to government and civil society partners.

#### I. CASH TRANSFERS

All cash transfers to an Implementing Partner are based on the Work Plans agreed between the Implementing Partner and the UN agencies.

Cash transfers for activities detailed in work plans can be made by the UN agencies using the following modalities:

1. Cash transferred directly to the Implementing Partner:
  - a. Prior to the start of activities (direct cash transfer), or
  - b. After activities have been completed (reimbursement).
2. Direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner.
3. Direct payments to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners.

Where cash transfers are made to the Maldives Monetary Authority, the Maldives Monetary Authority shall transfer such cash promptly to the Implementing Partner. Direct cash transfers shall be requested and released for programme implementation periods not exceeding three months. Reimbursements of previously authorised expenditures shall be requested and released quarterly or after the completion of activities. The UN agencies shall not be obligated to reimburse expenditure made by the Implementing Partner over and above the authorised amounts.

Following the completion of any activity, any balance of funds shall be refunded or programmed by mutual agreement between the Implementing Partner and the UN agencies. Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may depend on the findings of a review of the public financial management capacity in the case of a Government Implementing Partner, and of an assessment of the financial management capacity of the non-UN Implementing Partner.

A qualified consultant, such as a public accounting firm, selected by the UN agencies may conduct such an assessment, in which the Implementing Partner shall participate. The Implementing Partner may participate in the selection of the consultant. Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may be revised in the course of programme implementation based on the findings of programme monitoring, expenditure monitoring and reporting, and audits.

In case of direct cash transfer or reimbursement, the UN agencies shall notify the Implementing Partner of the amount approved by the UN agencies and shall disburse funds to the Implementing Partner within five to seven working days.

In case of direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner; or to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the UN agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners, the UN agencies shall proceed with the payment within five to seven working days.

The UN agencies shall not have any direct liability under the contractual arrangements concluded between the Implementing Partner and a third-party vendor.

Where one UN agency and other UN agencies provide cash to the same Implementing Partner, programme monitoring, financial monitoring and auditing will be undertaken jointly or coordinated with those UN agencies.

## II. AUDITS

The audits will be commissioned by the UN agencies and undertaken by private audit services.

A standard Fund Authorisation and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) report, reflecting the activity lines of the Work Plan (WP), will be used by Implementing Partners to request the release of funds, or to secure the agreement that the UN organisation will reimburse or directly pay for planned expenditure. The Implementing Partners will use the FACE to report on the utilisation of cash received. The Implementing Partner shall identify the designated official(s) authorised to provide the account details, request and certify the use of cash. The FACE will be certified by the designated official(s) of the Implementing Partner. Cash transferred to Implementing Partners should be spent for the purpose of activities and within the timeframe as agreed in the work plans only.

Cash received by the Government and national NGO Implementing Partners shall be used in accordance with established national regulations, policies and procedures consistent with international standards, in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the work plans and ensuring that reports on the utilisation of all received cash are submitted to the UN organisation within six months after receipt of the funds.

Where any of the national regulations, policies and procedures are not consistent with international standards, the UN system agency financial and other related rules and system agency regulations, policies and procedures will apply.

In the case of international non-government organisation/CSO and inter-governmental organisation Implementing Partners cash received shall be used in accordance with international standards in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the work plans, and ensuring that reports on the full utilisation of all received cash are submitted to the UN organisation within six months after receipt of the funds. To facilitate scheduled and special audits, each Implementing Partner receiving cash from a UN organisation will provide UN agencies or its representative with timely access to:

- (i) All financial records which establish the transactional record of the cash transfers provided by the UN system agency, together with relevant documentation.
- (ii) All relevant documentation and personnel associated with the functioning of the Implementing Partner's internal control structure through which the cash transfers have passed.

The findings of each audit will be reported to the Implementing Partner and UN organisation. Each Implementing Partner will furthermore:

- (i) Receive and review the audit report issued by the auditors.
- (ii) Provide a timely statement of the acceptance or rejection of any audit recommendation to the UN organisation that provided cash so that the auditors include these statements in their final audit report before submitting it to the UN organisation.
- (iii) Undertake timely actions to address the accepted audit recommendations. Report on the actions taken to implement accepted recommendations to the UN agencies on a quarterly basis (or as locally agreed).







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