

MALDIVES

SECOND VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) 2023



Ministry of National Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure





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This report was prepared with invaluable contributions from key national agencies, local councils, women's development committees, civil society organizations, individuals from different sectors and with extensive support from UN agencies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARISE	Accelerating Renewable Energy Integration and Sustainable Energy
ASPIRE	Accelerating Sustainable Private Investment in Renewable Energy
BAU	Business as Usual
BCC	Business Centre Corporation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DC	Defined Contributions
DV	Domestic Violence
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicles
FDC	Fahi Dhiriulhun Corporation
FTTH	Fiber-To-The-Home
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GHG	Green House Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
HALE	Health Adjusted Life Expectancy
HDC	Housing Development Corporation
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HLPF	High-level Political Forum
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
INPFN	Integrated National Public Ferry Network
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
MBS	Maldives Bureau of Statistics
MEERY	Maldives: Enhancing Employability and Resilience of Youth
MFMC	Maldives Fund Management Corporation
MGEM	Maldives Gender Equality Model
MIFCO	Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company
MNPHI	Ministry of National Planning Housing and Infrastructure
MNU	Maldives National University
MoGFSS	Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services

MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MVR	Maldivian Rufiyaa
MW	Megawatts
MWH	Megawatt Hours
MWSC	Male' Water & Sewerage Company Pvt. Ltd.
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NRPP	National Resilience and Recovery Plan
NSP	National Spatial Plan
OABPS	Old Age Basic Pensions Scheme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PM	Particulate Matter
PPG	Public and Publicly Guaranteed
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Program
PSPH	Public Sector Pay Harmonization Policy
PV	Photovoltaic
PWD	People with Disabilities
RTL	Raajje Transport Link
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SDFC	SME Development Finance Corporation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEN	Special Education Needs
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPI	Statistical Performance Indicators
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SUP	Single Use Plastic
TRC	Teacher Resource Centers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UMIC	Upper Middle-Income Countries
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
URA	Utility Regulatory Authority
USP	Unsolicited Proposals
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WAMCO	Waste Management Corporation Limited
WDC	Women's Development committee
WHO	World Health Organization



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FOREWORD



Maldives proudly presents the second Voluntary National Review (VNR). The report highlights the progress achieved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlights our journey, showcasing our determination to overcome challenges and create a sustainable future for our nation.

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Maldives faces unique challenges, including climate change and the recent global pandemic. However, we have transformed these challenges into opportunities for resilience and innovation. Through strategic planning and collaborative efforts, we have made significant strides in addressing these issues head-on.

Our VNR focuses on the theme of "Socio-economic integration through connectivity as an accelerator to achieving the SDGs." Owing to the distinctive distribution of our islands, we have been compelled to devise innovative approaches to surmount challenges related to physical and digital connectivity.

We have made significant investments in digital infrastructure and services, expanding access and opportunities for our people. By leveraging digital connectivity, we have opened avenues for service provision and economic activities, promoting inclusivity and sustainable development. Additionally, the establishment of the Integrated National Public Ferry Network stands as a testament to our commitment to physical connectivity. This transformative initiative has bridged geographical barriers, ensuring that all communities, regardless of their location, have facilitated access to essential services, opportunities, and resources. The lessons learned from our connectivity endeavors can serve as valuable insights for other countries, particularly fellow SIDS, in their pursuit of sustainable development.

The report explores key sectors such as healthcare, education, gender equality, economic diversification, human capital development, sustainable cities and communities, environment, climate action, peace, justice, and partnerships. It underscores the critical importance of good governance, informed decision-making, and capacity building within institutions to effectively implement, monitor, and evaluate the SDGs. We remain resolute in our commitment to making progress towards the attainment of the SDGs, ensuring that no individual or group is left behind.

We acknowledge that our work is far from complete. We remain steadfast in our dedication to the SDGs and are committed to leaving no one behind. As we move forward, we will continue to strengthen our partnerships, enhance governance mechanisms, and mobilize resources to ensure the sustained implementation of the SDGs.

We extend our deepest appreciation to all stakeholders who have contributed to this VNR report. The valuable input and collaboration from government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and development partners have been instrumental in our success. We express our gratitude to the United Nations for their support and guidance in this endeavor.

Together, we can build a sustainable future, ensuring a brighter tomorrow for all.

Mr. Mohamed Aslam
Minister of National Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all individuals and organizations who played a significant role in the formulation of the Second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Maldives. Through your collective efforts, expertise, and valuable input, this report has been enriched and made possible.

We express our sincere gratitude to the diverse stakeholders who have actively participated in the formulation of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Maldives. Your insightful contributions, commitment to sustainable development, and expertise have significantly influenced the content and direction of the VNR.

Furthermore, we would like to acknowledge and emphasize the crucial role played by government and state agencies in the preparation of the VNR. Their deep understanding of national priorities, policies, and strategies has been invaluable in shaping the content and direction of the report. The commitment and dedication demonstrated by government agencies in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Maldives are commendable. They have undertaken numerous initiatives and interventions to address various aspects of the Agenda 2030, aligning national development plans with the SDGs and ensuring sectoral coherence and integration.

Our deepest appreciation goes to the local governments for their valuable input and cooperation throughout the preparation of the VNR. Your engagement and dedication in aligning local priorities with national development goals have been crucial in ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive review.

We would also like to acknowledge and commend the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the private sector for their invaluable contributions. Your perspectives, experiences, and innovative solutions have significantly enriched the report, enhancing its relevance and impact.

A special recognition goes to the Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS) for their profound input. The meticulous identification of data gaps and provision of updated and reliable data have ensured the accuracy and credibility of the report. Your expertise has been indispensable in this process.

We express our gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance and support in facilitating coordination throughout the VNR preparation. Your commitment to sustainable development and effective collaboration has been pivotal in the successful completion of this endeavor.

We would also like to acknowledge the United Nations, especially UNESCAP for their funding and assistance, which has been instrumental in enabling us to carry out this comprehensive review. Your continued support and partnership are deeply appreciated.

The unwavering determination, tireless dedication, and seamless coordination of the National Planning and SDGs Coordination Division have played a vital role in the successful execution of this significant endeavor. We also extend our special appreciation to the consultant, Ms. Nashiya Saeed, whose remarkable expertise and unwavering commitment have been invaluable in the development and finalization of the VNR.

Once again, we express our deepest gratitude to all individuals and entities who have contributed to the formulation of the Second VNR of the Maldives. Through the continued collaboration and synergy between government agencies and other stakeholders, we are confident in our ability to overcome challenges, accelerate progress, and build a more sustainable and inclusive future for the Maldives.

KEY MESSAGES

Sustainable Growth

The Maldives is one of the most uniquely dispersed and geographically fragmented countries in the world.

The island nation is dispersed across 1,192 low lying small islands, of which only approximately one percent is land. The geographic distribution of the population of 515,122 people dispersed across small islands presents a major challenge for equitable development and shared prosperity across all islands which make up the Maldives. The Maldives is an upper middle-income country with a robust economic growth trajectory.

As a country heavily dependent on tourism, the Maldives was one of the worst-hit countries by the unprecedented coronavirus disease (COVID-19) shock.

When the country's border closed and tourism stopped during early 2020, a large percentage of the population experienced devastating consequences from loss of

income and livelihood. Women in informal sectors and youth were disproportionately affected. Income and business support programs, a successful nationwide information and vaccination campaign prioritizing tourism sector workers, the vulnerable population, and foreign migrants, with over 80 percent vaccination coverage helped the Maldives overcome the impact of COVID-19 and reboot the economy. The dispersed nature of the islands helped slow down the transmission of the virus, and the country responded by implementing strong health and safety measures, and it leveraged "one island one resort" tourist accommodation facilities to promote the Maldives as a safe destination for international visitors. Thus, the Maldives was one of the first countries to have re-opened its borders for international arrivals, which enabled the acceleration of the economic recovery of the country.

Vulnerabilities

The country's fiscal and climate vulnerabilities have magnified.

Climate change poses an existential threat to the Maldives, while threat from pandemics, climatic disasters, and other external shocks pose significant risks to the economy, income and livelihoods, and food security. Risks to safety and stability, because of climate change, are emerging concerns for the Maldives. Growing fiscal deficit is also a serious concern for the country with its heavy dependence on food and fuel imports and extensive social welfare spending. Thus, fiscal adjustments are needed to sustainably manage

high capital expenditure, subsidies, and welfare spending. Resilience of the economy and society depend heavily on our natural resources and speedy climate adaptation, and mitigation is crucial for the existence of the small islands and their biodiversity, which is the backbone of the economy and home to the people. The country is increasing investment in adaptation and mitigation measures, and it has set an ambitious commitment to achieve net zero Carbon emissions by 2030, given financial support from the international community.

Poverty

The Maldives has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty.

The national monetary poverty rate is low and economic opportunities and social protection programs have improved the quality of life for the most vulnerable. However, income inequality persists, and 59 percent of the population reside in the atolls, where monetary and multidimensional poverty are more prevalent. At the national poverty line of MVR 71.4 per person per day, the national poverty rate was 5.4 percent in 2019. At this poverty rate, poverty was heavily concentrated in atolls (9.5 percent) and was 10 times as high as in Male' City (0.9 percent).¹ In 2019, the poverty rate of the Maldives considered against the

international poverty line of (US\$ 5.5 PPP) for Upper Middle-Income Countries (UMIC) was 1.7 percent, driven entirely by the atolls, where the poverty rate was 3.2 percent.² The first ever multidimensional poverty report showed that 87 percent of the multidimensionally poor are resident in the atolls compared to 13 percent in Male' City.³ Disparities in access to health care, years of schooling, sewerage systems for sanitation, and clean water are the biggest multidimensional poverty in the atolls and quality education, access to health care and disparities in living standards are barriers for equal socioeconomic progress for people resident in the atolls.

¹ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives

² Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives

³ National Multidimensional Poverty in Maldives

Accelerator

Physical and digital connectivity can accelerate socioeconomic progress in the Maldives. The Integrated National Public Ferry Network (INPFN) project has been initiated to connect the Maldives through an affordable, regular, and high-speed public ferry network. This network aims to improve access to services, reduce inequalities and improve opportunities for people in the atolls. The network operates in the northern region of the Maldives by connecting people in 41 islands to

atoll and regional hubs. Most people use it to access health care services. Likewise, rapid transformation towards digitization is ongoing. The pandemic necessitated digital acceleration through online education, telemedicine, e-payment systems, and other digital uses. Expansion of digital connectivity across the country, combined with an affordable, efficient, and sustainable public ferry network can improve access and opportunities and enable SDG acceleration.

Health and Wellbeing

The Maldives has achieved significant strides in the health and wellbeing of its people. Maternal, neonatal and child mortality have decreased, and life expectancy has improved to 80 years. The national universal health insurance scheme, "Aasandha", which is freely accessible to all Maldivian citizens, has improved health outcomes significantly. There still needs to be effort made to improve nutrition and address obesity. Currently, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are

a major disease burden, and mental health and cancers are growing concerns of the country, requiring further preventive measures and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, the Maldives is moving towards low fertility and an aging population, and therefore needs improved and sustainable social protection planning and targeting. Social welfare spending as a share of GDP is estimated to double by 2050, due to population aging.

Human Capital

Progressive changes in the education sector have enabled the Maldives to build human capital and reduce poverty. Access to education and the quality of teachers is being improved. Gender parity in primary and secondary education has been achieved in the Maldives, with girls and boys having equal access to education. However, inclusive education and

access to quality higher secondary and tertiary education across the atolls remains a challenge. To empower youth and provide them with the skills needed for the workforce and entrepreneurship, skills development programs are being planned in targeted locations across the country.

Gender Equality

Women's involvement in decision making has increased. One third of local council seats and 33 percent of current Ministers are women. Likewise, the Supreme Court appointed its first women justices in 2019. Women, however, are still underrepresented in politics, leadership and the Parliament,

and women's participation in the formal economy is low. Violence against women continues to be prevalent and this impacts upon their agency to participate in economic development. Women's empowerment, engagement, and participation are crucial for SDG progress.

Means of Implementation

Continued political commitment, long term strategy, social dialogue and partnerships are critical to drive the Sustainable Development Agenda forward. Maximizing decentralization, building economic and climate resilience, regional development, improving human wellbeing, ensuring social inclusion, gender equality, and expansion of physical and digital connectivity for improved access to services can enable SDG acceleration in the Maldives.

Access to international finance mechanisms and concessional financing terms are major development needs for the Maldives. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires speedy international support in areas of climate adaptation, mitigation, and conservation, support for diversifying the economic base, and building human capital and skills for the Maldives to accelerate SDG progress.

BOX 1 | SNAPSHOT OF THE MALDIVES

Figure 1: location of the Maldives in the Indian Ocean

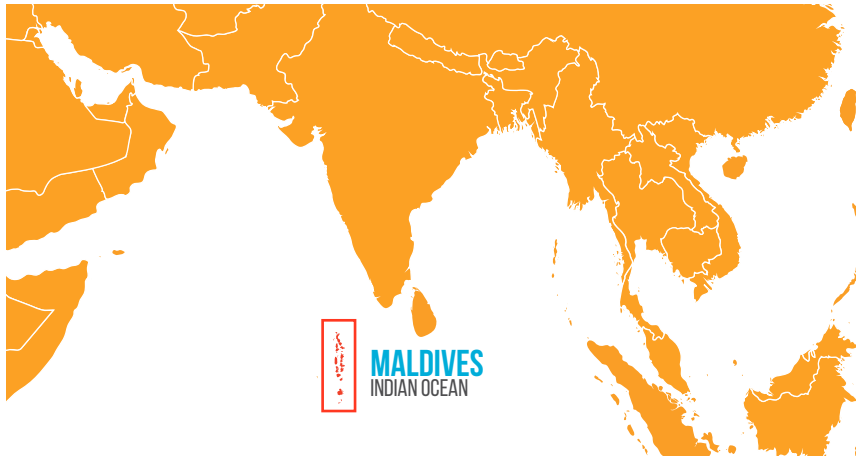


Figure 2: The Maldives archipelago

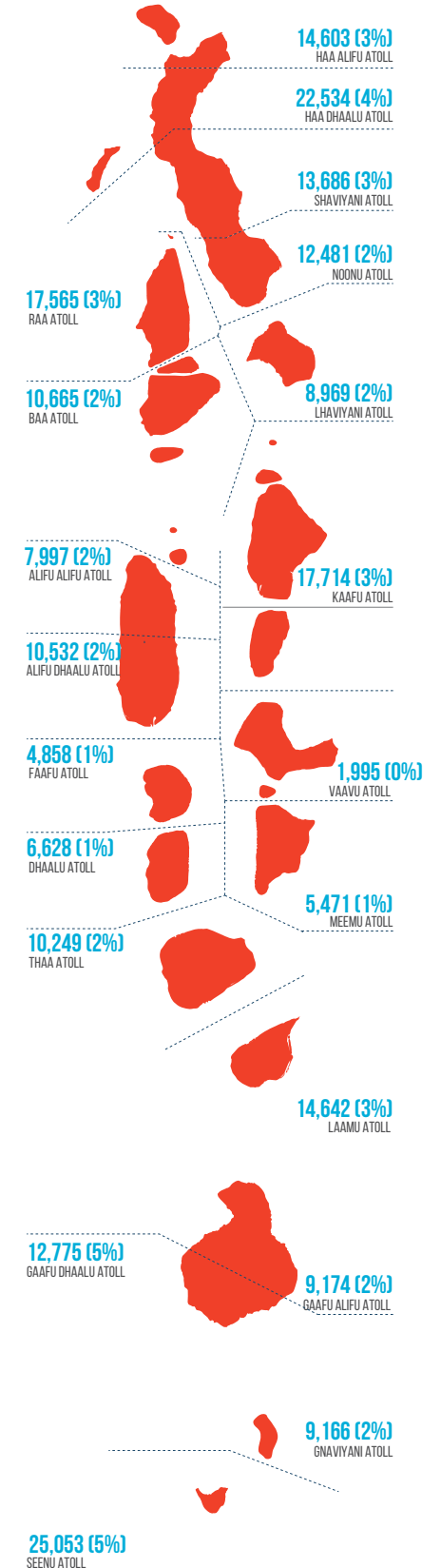


Figure 3: Resident population

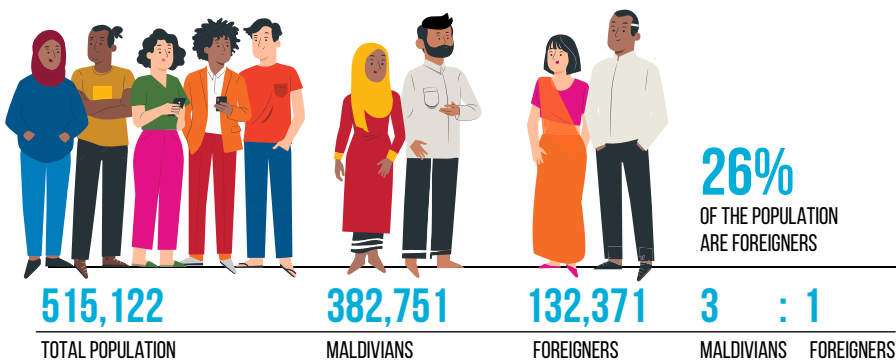


Figure 4: Distribution of residential population

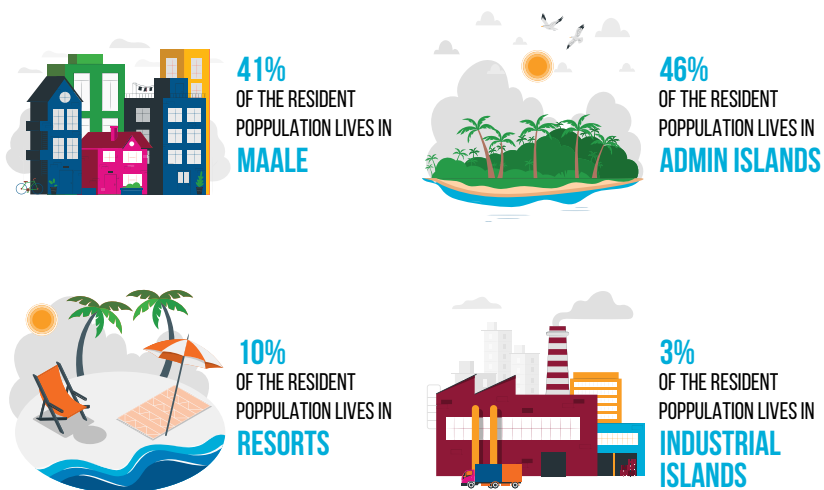




Figure 5: Resident Maldivian population age group

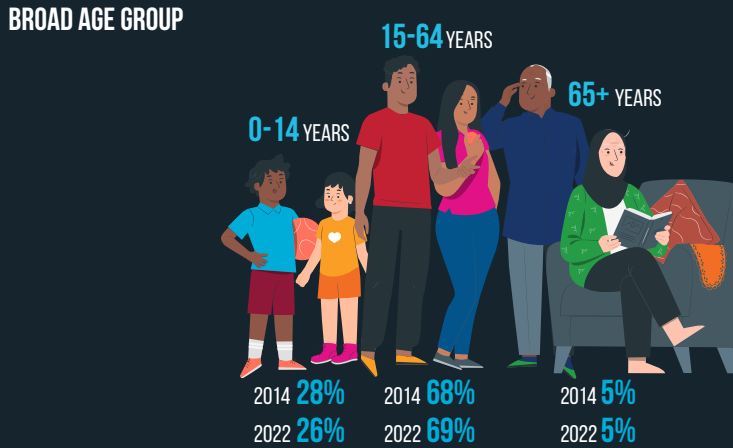


Figure 6: Resident Maldivian population by age group Male' vs Atolls

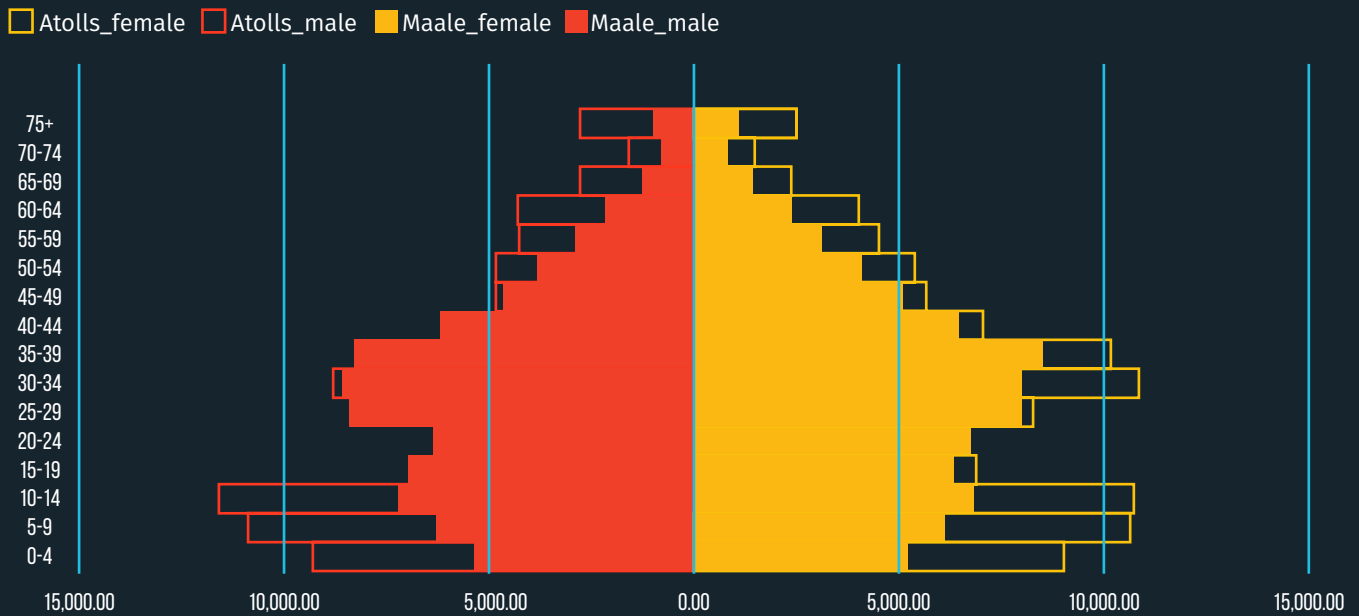


Figure 7: Sex ratio of resident population

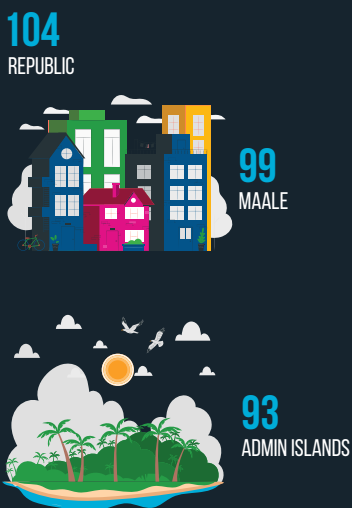
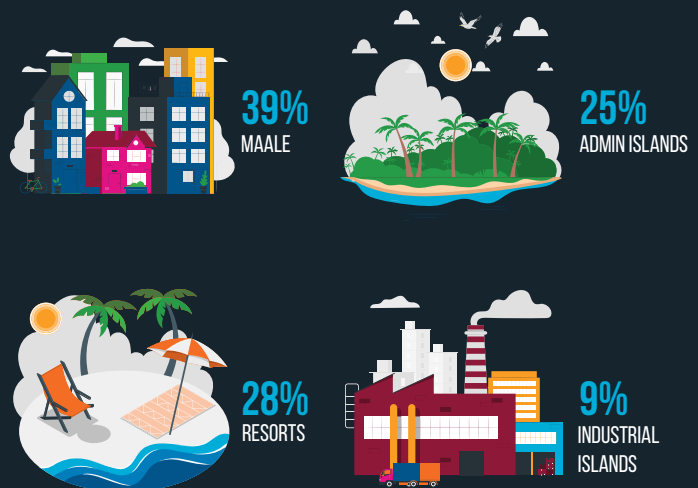


Figure 8: Distribution of foreign resident population



INTRODUCTION

This is the second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Maldives. The Maldives submitted its first VNR in 2017. The VNR is an assessment of the national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with presenting progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The mandate for SDG coordination in the Maldives is integrated into the Ministry of National Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure (MNPHI), and it is officially within the National Planning and SDG Coordination Division of the Ministry. Thus, this report is prepared by the SDG Coordination Division of the MNPHI. The SDGs set direction for improving the overall economic and social wellbeing of the people and taking climate action. As a small island developing nation with limited resources, the Maldives faces several challenges for social, economic, and environmental development. Amidst the challenges, the Maldives has demonstrated strong economic growth, reduced poverty, and it has made progress in human development. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, exposed the extreme vulnerability of the Maldives’ economy to external shocks, extent of income and livelihood loss and the risk of a large population sliding back into poverty in a short period of time. With over reliance of the economy on tourism, the Maldives’ economy is extremely vulnerable to external shocks.

The second VNR of the Maldives focuses on the theme “Socio-economic integration through connectivity as an accelerator to achieving SDGs in the Maldives” and reflects upon the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the pathway to recovery. The distribution of the small islands of the Maldives poses several challenges for equal access to services for the people resident in the 187 inhabited islands. The second VNR of the Maldives aims to emphasize the importance of access to services and economic opportunities to improve the overall wellbeing of the people. The report then discusses the progress and challenges with goals related to social wellbeing, economic inclusion and resilience, and environment and climate action. The main themes and SDG progress is discussed as follows:

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AS AN ACCELERATOR TO ACHIEVING SDGs IN THE MALDIVES



Figure 9: The second VNR reporting framework

THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

The objective of the second VNR of the Maldives is to share progress of the SDGs, challenges, the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and the means of implementation for progress. Having arrived at the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and at a critical juncture in the development trajectory of the country, the need for sustainable and inclusive development is even more pertinent for the Maldives. Equal access to services and inclusive development for the people resident across the Maldives is limited by the geographic fragmentation, smallness and dispersed nature, and physical and digital connectivity have been identified as the most crucial enablers for accelerating the SDGs in the Maldives. Thus, the second VNR of the Maldives discusses the importance of physical and digital connectivity across the dispersed islands of the Maldives as a key enabler for SDG acceleration in the Maldives.

THE REPORT WAS FORMULATED IN FOUR STAGES:

Stage 1: Scope setting, literature review and formulation of focus SDGs.

Stage 2: Data collection and analysis of the focus SDGs and lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stage 3: Stakeholder consultations, drafting of key messages, report preparation.

Stage 4: Validation of the findings.

Stage 1: Setting the Scope and Defining the Focus SDGs

The scope for the report was guided early on by the SDG Coordination Division. The Maldives' Second VNR explores the theme "Socio-economic integration through connectivity as an accelerator to achieving SDGs in the Maldives", for the relevance and importance of connectivity as an enabler for access to services and inclusive development. Furthermore, it also addresses the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) theme of "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels" throughout its chapters. The report reflects on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SDGs and measures undertaken in the Maldives by the public and private sectors for a sustainable and greener recovery. The existing literature guided the status of SDG integration into national development strategy, sectoral and local government planning, the level of policy alignment, the existing institutional mechanisms, human resource capacity, data, monitoring and capacity challenges, and identifying gaps in multi stakeholder partnerships. This process also led to the discussion and formulation of thematic topics, providing a focus on the SDGs for reporting. The thematic topics identified for reporting are social wellbeing, economic inclusion and resilience, and environment and climate action. Goals that relate to poverty, health, education, gender, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, water and sanitation, energy, life below water and climate action, formed the key focus SDGs for reporting.

Stage 2: Data Analysis

Concerted effort was made to incorporate quality and reliable disaggregated data by gender, sex, and geographic location where possible in interpreting the achievement of SDG progress for the Maldives. The report relied on the Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS) to provide the most recent Census data (2022) where it existed, to communicate the most up to date information on population and gender, and the status of the SDG targets which is annexed in this report. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) team prepared the infographic and analysis for the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) analysis used in the report, which used the most recent data available from the 2016-2017 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the 2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). In writing the report, there was an attempt to use the 2022 Census data throughout, however, most data were incomplete at the time of reporting, thus the 2022 Census data is used where available, and the most recent administrative data and data from the 2019 HIES is used where required. The report leveraged any data segregated by gender and the vulnerable groups where possible to recognize the efforts of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of girls and women and to ensure inclusivity.

Stage 3: Stakeholder Consultations

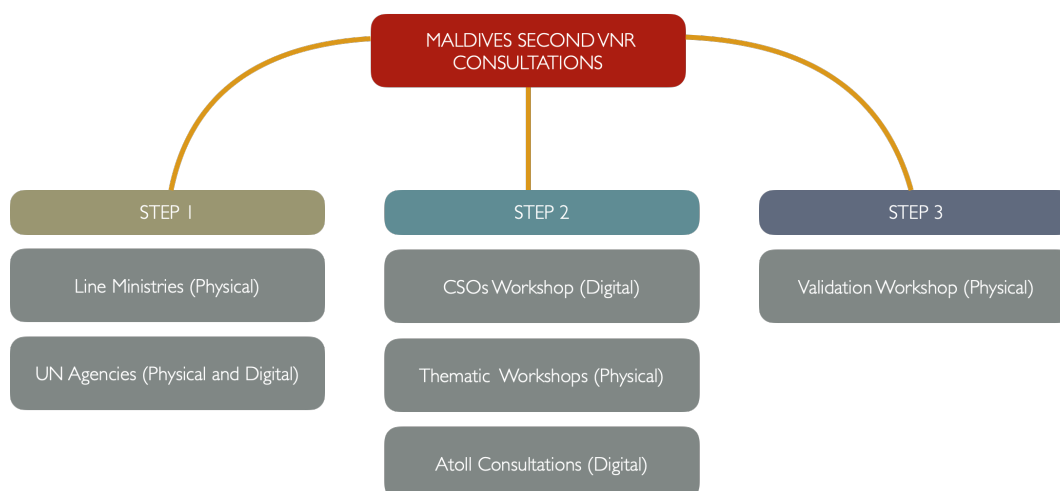


Figure 10: Second VNR consultations framework and method of engagement

A wide range of stakeholder consultations were undertaken for the formulation of the second VNR of the Maldives. These consultations focused on the thematic topics and the focus goals identified for reporting. Stakeholder consultations were held as flexibly as possible to make them inclusive, participatory, transparent, and to support reporting from all relevant stakeholders. Consultation with the SDG Technical Committees, which have been in place since the first VNR, was undertaken to ensure they contributed fully to the VNR Report. The Technical Committees operate under five thematic clusters: economic, social, environment, infrastructure, and partnerships. The report utilized progress updates, outlining the impact of interventions and challenges from key government agencies responsible for implementation of the SDGs, guidance from the SDG Technical Committees, UN organizations, lessons, and on the ground information from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and private sector, through physical and virtual engagements.

The line ministries, state institutions, local councils, CSOs and other stakeholders were consulted to formulate the VNR. Face to face meetings were held with stakeholders in Male' City while virtual meetings were held with CSOs and other key participants in the outer atolls. These meetings were held to provide a briefing about the VNR report, discuss progress on focus goals and gather updates on policies and the enabling environment, existing literature, and data on progress towards the goals. Stakeholder consultations also explored the importance and lessons of physical and digital connectivity, impacts and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, preparedness for a future disaster/ pandemic, actions to be undertaken and identification of those at most risk of being left behind. The stakeholders in the atolls included (i) institutions: the city/atoll/island councils, school, and hospitals/health centers, (ii) women and economic group: Women's Development Committees (WDCs), farmers, fishers, tourism stakeholders, and CSOs. Representatives from Haa Alif, Haa Dhaal, Shaviyani, Noonu, Raa, Alif Alif, Alif Dhaalu, Vaavu, Faafu, Gaafu Dhaal, Gnaviyani and Seenu Atolls participated in the meetings for the stakeholder consultation with the atolls, which led to meaningful discussions on sustainable development progress and identification of challenges in the atolls. The stakeholders consulted for the second VNR formulation are outlined in annex 1 of this report.

Stage 4: Validation

The information from the stakeholder consultations, literature review and data analysis informed the content of the key messages and the second VNR report. Following development of the key messages and the draft report formulation, the report was circulated to all government institutions and other agencies in the Technical Committees, UN agencies and CSOs for comment and feedback. The findings were also presented to the Minister of National Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure. A Validation Workshop was undertaken to further discuss and agree on the way forward to accelerate and implement the SDGs in the Maldives. The following chapters describe the enabling environment, the key thematic topic of the report, SDG progress, means of implementation, conclusions, and next steps, followed by the annexes.

POLICY AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Since the first VNR, the Maldives has mapped out the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) of the government against the SDGs, which shows strong alignment with the SDGs. The SAP is a medium-term plan of five years from 2019 to 2023 and is grouped into five broad themes: the Blue Economy, Caring State, Dignified Families, Jazeera

Dhiriulhun (Island Life) and Good Governance. Nine of the 17 SDGs have 100 percent coverage of their respective targets with the SAP whereby at least one action in the SAP aligns with the individual targets under the goals. The mapping results showed 88 percent alignment between the SAP and the SDG coverage of targets.⁴

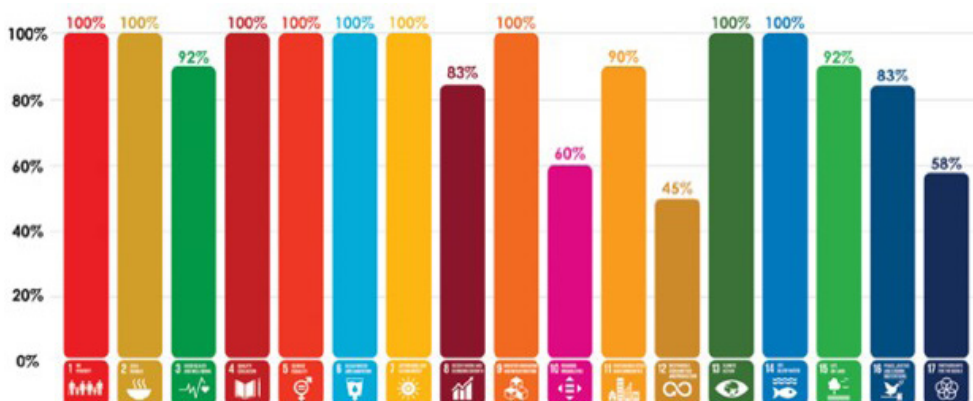


Figure 11: Coverage of SDGs in the SAP

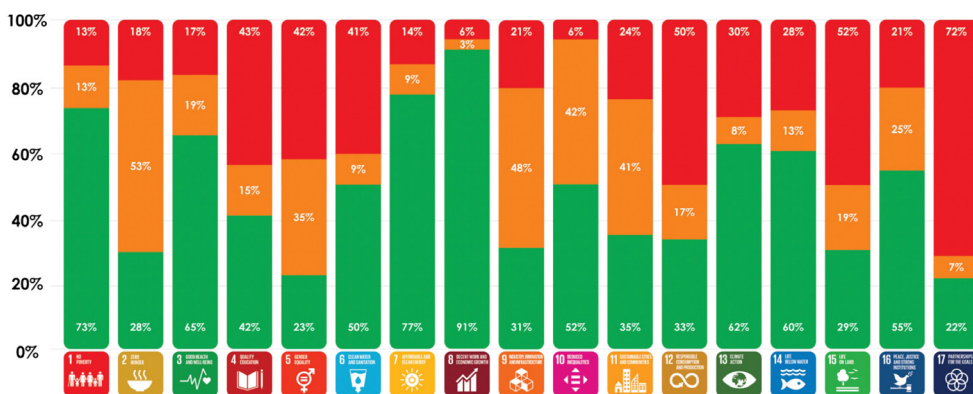


Figure 12: SDGs and SAP alignment

Legend: Fully Aligned (green), Partially Aligned (orange), No Alignment (red)

The “Jazeera Dhiriulhun” (Island Life) theme forms linkages between all 17 SDGs. The mapping showed the greatest concentration of linkages across SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). This suggests the substantial focus of the SAP on creating employment, investing in essential social and economic infrastructure, addressing inequalities, and developing cities and communities that are equitable, safe, sustainable, and thriving on social and economic fronts.⁵

The MNPHI has been serving as the national SDG coordinator since 2018. The government elected in 2018 formulated a ministry for national planning and assigned the overall mandate for SDG coordination, monitoring, and reporting to the SDG Division incorporated in the planning arm of the MNPHI. The Technical Committees grouped into the following areas: social, economic, environmental, institutional, and partnerships, continue to form the implementing partners, which comprise of line ministries, independent institutions, and the judiciary. A National Ministerial Coordination Committee was formulated during the first VNR as the overarching body responsible for providing policy guidance on key decisions that are to be made during the process of implementing the SDGs. However, with the change in government in 2018, this Committee has not been active.

⁴ Maldives SDG Roadmap, United Nations Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Engagement 2022

⁵ Maldives SDG Roadmap, United Nations Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Engagement 2022

The formulation of the second VNR brought together stakeholders and discussed the progress and challenges for SDG implementation. These discussions also highlighted that the mandate for SDG prioritization needs to be strengthened, and the function of the SDG Coordination Division also needs strengthening with clear direction and resources for SDG prioritization, monitoring, and oversight. The Office has been actively engaging in providing training and workshops to enhance knowledge, build capacity, and exchange information on SDG progress. Human resource is a critical challenge for the SDG Coordination Division to function fully, and the limited human resource capacity hinders the facilitation of regular engagements with the agencies to track progress and continue engagement with the CSOs and the private sector, to facilitate partnerships for SDG implementation.

A National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) which articulates an SDG financing strategy on climate change and the social sector have been formulated. Efforts are also ongoing to tag the national budget against the SDGs, which would enable measurement of the impact of finance on SDG progress.



Photo : Abdulla Abeeidh



Photo : Abdulla Abeedh

The MBS has undertaken the exercise on national prioritization of SDG indicators and continues to engage with the UNESCAP team working on the SDG tracker to improve data and tracking for SDGs. Upcoming work including the national target setting activity and updating the SDG tracker, will form part of the continuation work. Data continues to be a major challenge to support informed decision making and data driven decision making for improved planning. Capacity building in data administration, data storage and data analysis are identified as critical needs of the implementing partners. Organizations can benefit greatly from avoiding data duplication and by having data sharing mechanisms. Maximizing the digitization policy, using technology for data collection, ensuring quality of data, and having data sharing mechanisms are important for the 2030 Agenda implementation.

Although a National Planning Bill and a National Development Plan have been drafted, these documents have not been officially adopted. The National Spatial Plan (NSP) formulated by the MNPHI in 2021 is a forward-looking national document that sets out the strategic direction for regional development and decentralization, which is achieved through interconnectivity and integration of people and resources. The NSP identifies regions, zones and clusters for major service allocations, and strategic distribution for effective connectivity. An efficient multi-modal transport network is intended as the backbone of the NSP. Furthermore, the eighth National Development Plan was drafted with a 10-year (2019- 2028) vision for sustainable development to transform the Maldives into a vibrant, inclusive, and just society. However, both documents have not been formally adopted to shape the development trajectory of the Maldives.

Therefore, SDG alignment is lacking alongside a long-term development vision for the country. Although coverage of SDGs in the SAP (2019-2023) and the National Resilience and Recovery Plan (NRRP) are strong, the SAP is a five-year plan. The year 2023 marks a new presidential election cycle in the country and having arrived at a mid-point to SDG implementation, a cross party accepted long-term national vision is even more critical for SDG prioritization and implementation. The SAP and NRRP have given an SDG focus to issues and created importance and momentum within the implementing organizations to consider alongside the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Hence, continuation of the policy prioritization with SDG focus is critical for the country.

In the meantime, new policies and legislation continue to demonstrate the commitment to drive the 2030 Agenda forward. Several policies and legal changes have been made, improving the policy and regulatory landscape for SDG achievement. Likewise, well-planned, and sustainable implementation of the ongoing Integrated National Public Ferry Network (INPFN) project and improvements in digital connectivity across the 20 atolls of the Maldives can accelerate SDG progress by improving access to services and thus, socio-economic wellbeing across the country. Key challenges which need to be addressed include organizations working in silos, lack of institutional partnerships, and resource duplication. National partnerships for SDG implementation also need strengthening, while CSOs and private sector organizations can be better leveraged to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. Similarly, a more intensive effort is needed to ensure that no one is left behind with a special focus on marginalized groups in education delivery, health care services, minimum wage setting, and other key public policy initiatives.

Access to international finance mechanisms and concessional financing terms are major development needs for the Maldives. International support and partnerships will benefit the country in overcoming its development challenges and barriers. The climate vulnerability of the country is increasing, threatening people's income and livelihoods the country's existence. Investments for addressing global warming are even more urgent and critical for the existence of small island countries like the Maldives. The INFF that supports consolidation and coordination of the funding support for SDGs is a critical document that sets the right direction in this area. The economy and society depend on natural resources for its wellbeing. Climate adaptation is crucial for the Maldives. Meanwhile, high capital costs for development and high public spending on subsidies and welfare to improve the lives of people are resulting in high fiscal vulnerability for the country. Therefore, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires immediate international support in areas of climate adaptation, mitigation, and conservation, support for diversifying the economic base, and building human capital and skills for the Maldives to accelerate SDG progress.

⁶ National Spatial Plan 2021

⁷ National Development Plan, Third Draft 2019

⁸ Maldives SDG Roadmap, United Nations Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Engagement 2022

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AS AN ACCELERATOR TO ACHIEVING SDGs IN THE MALDIVES



The Republic of the Maldives is a small island nation of coral atolls located in the Indian Ocean. The archipelago comprises 1,192 islands, 860 km in length and between 80 and 120 km in width, distributed along a narrow stretch. For administrative purposes, the country is divided into 20 atolls and the capital is Male' City. 515,122 people were resident in the Maldives in 2022 across 187 inhabited islands (87 percent), 168 resorts (10 percent) and 107 industrial islands (3 percent).⁹ The Maldives is an upper middle-income country with a robust economic growth trajectory. Tourism is the main economic activity with heavy dependence on international tourism.

The geography of the small islands makes the Maldives one of the most uniquely dispersed and fragmented countries in the world. Due to the dispersed nature, most islands are accessible via sea transport. The resident male population (312,513) is 1.5 times higher than the female population (202,609) because of a high foreign migrant population. The total Maldivian to foreign resident population ratio is 3:1 and of the total foreign population of 117,460 people recorded in the 2022 Census, overwhelming majority of 88 percent are males. The high percentage of the foreign male population is driven mainly by the human capital requirements of the construction and tourism sectors.

Table 1:
Resident population distribution across different types of islands

	No of islands	Population	Foreign
Male' City (capital city)	1	212,138	51,030
Admin islands (excluding capital city)	186	236,747	32,470
Resort islands	168	52,396	36,707
Industrial and other islands	107	13,841	12,164

Source: Census 2022

41 percent of the population are resident in Male' City. Approximately nine percent of the population are resident in the other three cities (Addu, Fuvahmulah and Kulhudhuffushi), resulting in very low population densities across the remaining inhabited islands. The other 50 percent of the population live on the remaining 178 inhabited islands. This wide dispersion of the population makes it difficult to achieve economies of scale, provide equal services and sustain socio-economic infrastructure across all the islands. Furthermore, rapid urbanization and population concentration towards Male' City pushes people into high cost of living and severe overcrowding.

Table 2:
Resident population by administrative islands

	Number of administrative islands	Total population (percentage)
Male'	1	212,138 (47 Percent)
10,000 and more	2	23,996 (5 percent)
5,000 - 9,999	2	15,399 (3 percent)
1,000 - 4,999	70	131,623 (29 percent)
500 - 999	72	51,323 (11 percent)
< 500	40	14,406 (3 percent)

Source: Census 2022

Infrastructure and services are heavily concentrated in Male' City where the population density is the highest. This unequal distribution of infrastructure and services has resulted in vast socio-economic disparities between Male' City and the rest of the islands in the country. While overall national monetary poverty has decreased resulting from improved education and better income opportunities, income inequality persists, and income poverty and multidimensional poverty are more prevalent in the atolls, with significantly vast differences across Male' City and the atolls. At the national poverty line of MVR 71.4 and international UMIC poverty line of US\$ 5.5 PPP in 2019, national monetary poverty was 5.4 percent and 1.7 percent respectively.

⁹ Maldives Census 2022

The national and international poverty rate when compared between Male' City and the atolls was 0.9 percent and zero percent respectively in Male' City, whereas it was 9.5 percent and 3.2 percent respectively in the atolls¹⁰

Access to essential services is a major barrier for equitable development across the islands of the Maldives. 87 percent of the multidimensionally poor are resident in the atolls compared to 13 percent in Male' City, accounting for disparities in access to education, health care, information and living standards related to sewerage systems for sanitation, clean water in the atolls, and overcrowding in Male' City. This has resulted in a vicious cycle of migration to Male' City in search of better education, employment, and health care, contributing to degradation of quality of life in Male' City driven mainly by overcrowding and congestion. At the same time, this disincentivizes equal development across the atolls.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the inequalities in development and the vulnerabilities of the island communities. Although the geographically dispersed nature of the small islands acted as a natural barrier to prevent the spread of the virus, when connectivity services between Male' City and other islands were suspended to control the spread of the virus, people who were otherwise dependent on Male' City for access to essential services and transport of goods were severely affected. Thus, island communities, especially women, had to find alternative hospitals across different atolls for their urgent health care needs such as obstetrics services. The pandemic also exposed a greater risk and vulnerability of tourism sector workers, informal workers, those in rental accommodation in Male' City, and islands dependent for essential services from Male' City to fall to poverty, food insecurity, access to services and safe drinking water access for remote islands with risk of water shortages. Although communities quickly adjusted to the new circumstances and found alternative means, without the pandemic relief measures, the World Bank reported that the income poverty rate would have risen to 19.8 percent in 2020.¹¹

Comprehensive and meaningful regional development and decentralization of services is needed to overcome the current development challenges. The INPFN was formulated under the strategic direction set forth in the NSP. The government's commitment to improve domestic marine transport services is reflected under the "Jazeera Dhiriulhun" theme in the SAP.¹² The ferry network has been designed to be an efficient, reliable, and affordable sea transport system connecting the islands and people, enabling the movement of goods and services.

The planned public ferry network spans across three regions of the Maldives and covers all 187 inhabited islands. The ferry network is designed to operate between strategically clustered groups of islands within each of the six zones identified in the NSP. The ferry network is currently operational across zone-one consisting of three atolls (Haa Alif, Haa Dhaal and Shaviyani Atolls) and Lhaviyani Atoll in zone-two. When this network is fully operationalized across all the islands of the country, it will facilitate inclusive and regional development by connecting people and services, accelerate socio-economic growth, improve efficiency in the delivery of public services and improve mobility and accessibility for everyone across the country. The lessons from the currently operational zones have demonstrated a positive impact on people's access to services, especially health care for people with special needs, such as those with comorbidities. Improvement in access to services and economic opportunities will improve the overall wellbeing of the people.

¹⁰ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022

¹¹ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022

¹² Integrated National Public Ferry Network 2020



Table 3:
Zone classification &
resident population
distribution

Region	Zone	Cluster	Number of atolls & islands	Total population size
Region 1	Zone 1	Upper North	3 Administrative Atolls Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani (41 inhabited islands)	50,823
	Zone 2	Lower North	4 Administrative Atolls Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani (45 inhabited islands)	49,670
Region 2	Zone 3	Upper Central	4 Administrative Atolls Kaafu, Alifu Alifu, Alifu Dhaalu, Vaavu (32 inhabited islands)	38,238
	Zone 4	Lower Central	5 Administrative Atolls Meemu, Faafu, Dhaalu, Thaa, Laamu (43 inhabited islands)	41,848
Region 3	Zone 5	Upper South	2 Administrative Atolls Gaaf Alifu, Gaafu Dhaalu (18 inhabited islands)	21,949
	Zone 6	Lower South	2 Administrative Atolls Gnaviyani, Seenu (7 inhabited islands)	34,219

The planned ferry network consists of two main components: a passenger ferry network and a cargo ferry network.

The focus is currently on establishing the passenger ferry network, which strongly aligns with the principles of SDG 1–No Poverty and SDG 11–Sustainable Cities, and Communities. It will also contribute to the achievement of several other SDGs through its interlinkages to other goals and a broad range of socio-economic impacts, such as access to; health care facilities, university campuses in the region, job opportunities within the region, markets encouraging local production and enabling a strong supply chain, safety and security for girls and women to travel, and transport of safe drinking water for islands during the dry season.¹³ It is equally important to empower island communities to work towards gender equality and empowerment (SDG5), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and the mitigation of climate impacts (SDG 13).

The transport network will improve people’s access to services and economic opportunities, contributing to an overall improvement of quality of life, especially for the physically and socially marginalized populations.

Improved connectivity within regions and across the country will have a significant positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of people at the local and national level through acceleration of the SDGs, catalytic socio-economic growth, and inclusive regional development. Improved inter-island connectivity and mobility of people will lead to reduced socio-economic disparities through improved access to services, reduced cost of transportation and improved viability of small businesses, efficient delivery of public services and optimization of resources. Likewise, it will enable wider scope of job choices and lifestyles with a better spread of job opportunities leading to diverse and empowered settlements, as well as improving disaster preparedness and response and lead to improved wellbeing for people.¹⁴

¹³ Integrated National Public Ferry Network 2020

¹⁴ Integrated National Public Ferry Network 2020

Similarly, digital connectivity can be a driver for bridging the gap in access to services and enabling socioeconomic progress. The Maldives has made substantial progress in digital connectivity by expansion of internet coverage and high internet penetration across the country. The Maldives is the first country in the region to launch 5G connectivity services. Meanwhile, internet fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) coverage is 85.8 percent and mobile market penetration is at 155.4 percent. Digital connectivity was a major advantage during the COVID-19 lockdowns, and it was used to increase awareness of COVID-19 and it facilitated information sharing between health facilities. Digital connectivity also enabled telemedicine across the country, especially improving access to health care for people on remote islands.

Technology and innovation have been prioritized as essential catalysts for national development. The SAP laid the groundwork with five key policies aimed at leveraging Information, and Communication Technology (ICT) focusing on modernizing the governance of the ICT sector, establishing secure digital infrastructure, encouraging digital innovation, modernizing government services, and creating a digital-ready workforce. The NRRP further underscored the importance of a robust digital framework. This reformulation included the establishment of a government technology agency, government digital service, optimization of internet service delivery, and digital transformation of government services. Emphasizing the importance of global connectivity, internet regulation, and data security, enhancing the digital accessibility of public services are also being planned. Furthermore, measures to support remote working and decentralization of the workforce, establishing technology-driven policies that ensure secure, and efficient online government operations from any location forms part of the plan. Digital connectivity will be an enabler for activities against poverty and in subsidy targeting, enabling efficient and equitable services across the population, thus supporting SDG progress.

There is however significant room for improving the quality, reliability, and affordability of the internet services to take the best advantage of internet technology and innovation in service delivery. Internet prices in the Maldives are higher than the rest of the region, mainly due to the high network cost across the geographically fragmented island nation. The government and the technology providers in the private domain are investing in technological infrastructure to enable cheaper internet and better connectivity, while the government has also planned internet service provider expansion. High cost of internet and internet quality issues were the main challenges identified for online education during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for students in the atolls. In this digital transformation journey, older generations and unskilled foreign migrants who are less digitally literate are at most risk of being left behind without timely interventions. Hence, investing in lifelong learning is important for these groups to increase their digital literacy, especially with respect to protection within banking services and to protect them from digital fraud and reduce the digital divide. Equally important in this transformation journey are data privacy, maintenance of data integrity and confidentiality and the prevention of cyber-attacks.

Therefore, digital, and physical connectivity combined can accelerate attainment of the SDGs and socioeconomic growth in the Maldives. Improving regional connectivity between the hubs and the islands through an affordable, efficient, and sustainable ferry network can benefit students, health care service providers and populations within each zone to access services from the respective hubs, subsequently improving viability of services and enhancing efficiency whilst providing increased opportunities for people living in the atolls. Digital services can integrate the self-employed into financial and social protection systems. They can also provide education and counseling for youth who risk dropping out of education, as well as those who graduate, to enable the identification and understanding of reasons for dropping out and the consequences this has on the labor market, facilitating the development of mitigating interventions.¹⁵ Similarly, digital services can enable improved trade and financial services. The COVID-19 pandemic drove digital acceleration in the country through online education, telemedicine, e-payment systems, online banking, and other digital uses, demonstrating a rapid transition to digital services across the government, businesses, and the public, enabling ease and access to services and transactions for people across the country. Combining inclusive physical and digital connectivity can achieve sustainable development across the Maldives through a balanced distribution of resources for integrated, smart, and resilient development and bring about inclusive development.

¹⁵ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives 2022

BOX 2 | RAAJJE TRANSPORT LINK (RTL)

The Raajje Transport Link (RTL) high speed ferry service commenced in the three atolls in zone 1 and one atoll from zone 2 of the Integrated National Public Ferry Network in June 2022. The service was launched with 12 high-speed ferries connecting the three northernmost atolls of the Maldives, Haa Alif, Haa Dhaal, and Shaviyani (zone 1) and Lhaviyani Atoll (zone 2). Zone 1 covers 41 inhabited islands with a population of 50,823 people in 2022. This region comprises the second largest population cohort amongst the planned six zones. The RTL in this zone connects the people in all islands within the three atolls.

People in this region describe the ferry network as a game changer for their essential service needs. The ferries are air conditioned, each with a capacity of 50 seats, including two seats dedicated for wheelchair access and stretchers/ beds. The ferries are also equipped with USB charging ports at every seat, a restroom, and a luggage storage area. A dedicated website and mobile application were developed for ferry ticketing and route scheduling. The ferry service is free for children under three years old and people with special needs registered with the National Social Protection Agency (NSPA). The fare is between MVR 50 (US\$3.2) and MVR 200 (US\$ 13) one way for trips within the zone, depending upon distance. The availability of the speedboat ferry has benefitted several people, by enabling them to undertake essential commuting between their island and islands with key services such as the hospitals. The prices are extremely low compared to private boat hire, which was the only choice in the past for people resident in these islands.

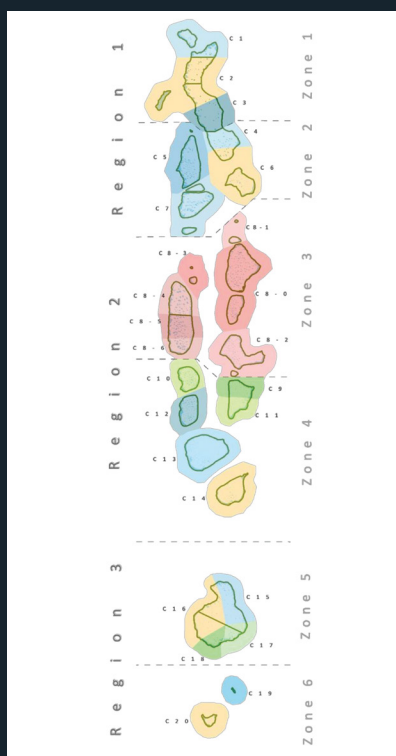


Image 1: Spatial Map



Image 2: RTL Ferry

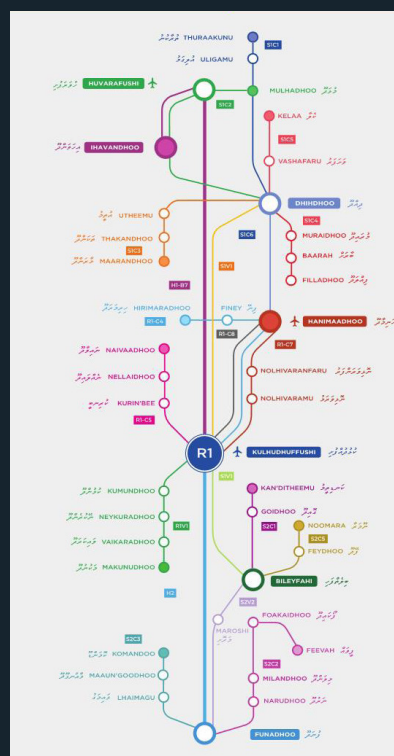


Image 3: Zone 1 Ferry Route

The ferry service is designed to improve mobility of people and improve access to services, allowing them to return to their home island on the same day. The most popular use of the ferry has been for health services. Anecdotal evidence suggests over 60 percent use the ferry for health care services. In Dhidhdhoo, Haa Alif Atoll, and Funadhoo, Shaviyani Atoll, the number of people who visit the hospital has doubled since the inception of the ferry. This demand has necessitated expansion of health infrastructure and services in these hospitals, which in turn will improve the services for people resident in the zone.

An elderly woman who looks after her disabled sister and mother explained how the ferry service has enabled her to

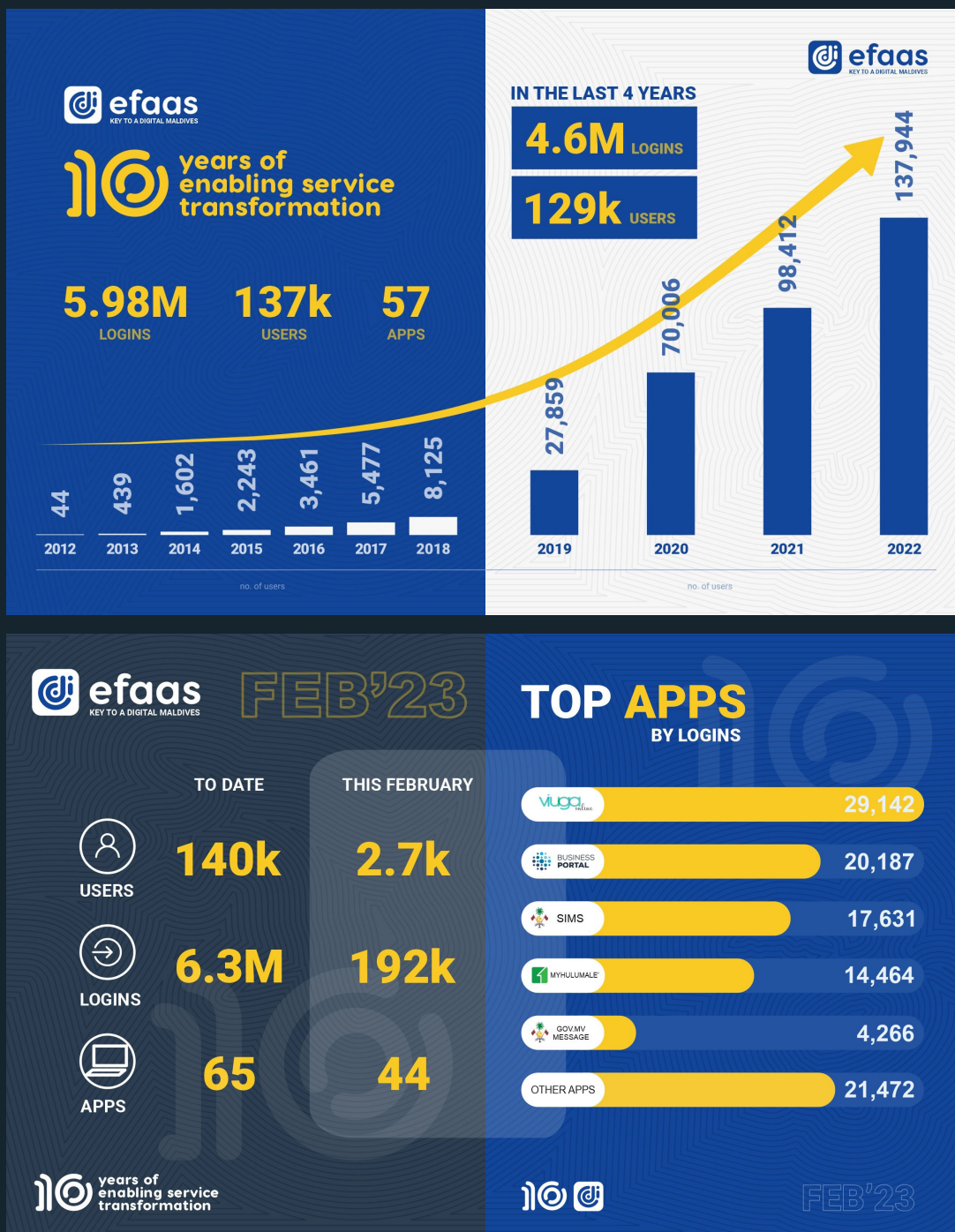
take them both to access health care services from their home island to the regional hospital in Kulhudhuffushi. Previously if she were to seek health care, she had to prepare in advance to seek people who would assist in physically carrying her disabled mother and sister on to the ferries, which was a painful and humiliating experience for her. She is, however, now very satisfied with wheelchair access on the ferry and the ease of the commute.

The ferry network also has enabled efficient and safe transfer of laboratory samples, medical supplies and improved access and affordability for health care workers to travel for outreach programmes to other islands.

BOX 3 | NATIONAL ELECTRONIC IDENTITY SYSTEM “eFaas”

The national electronic identity system of the Maldives, “eFaas”, has established itself as a cornerstone of digital public infrastructure, fostering access to services and resilience. Initially utilized for online services across government organizations, the platform's utility grew during the COVID-19 pandemic. “eFaas” grew exponentially from 8,125 users in 2018 to nearly 138,000 users by 2022 and in-excess of 140,000 “eFaas” users tapped into more than 440 electronic services via 65

service portals as of March 2023. Notably, February 2023 saw an additional 2,700 registrations and more than 192,000 uses of service portals. The government has decided to use “eFaas” as the National Digital Identification System. Currently, the National Centre for Information Technology (NCIT) is fine-tuning the upcoming “eFaas” mobile application, the country's National Digital ID, with nearly 1,000 users participating in its testing phase.



SDG PROGRESS



Photo : Unsplash



Social Wellbeing

Good Health & Wellbeing

Quality Education

Gender Equality, Empowerment of Women, Child Protection & Access to Justice



Good Health and Wellbeing

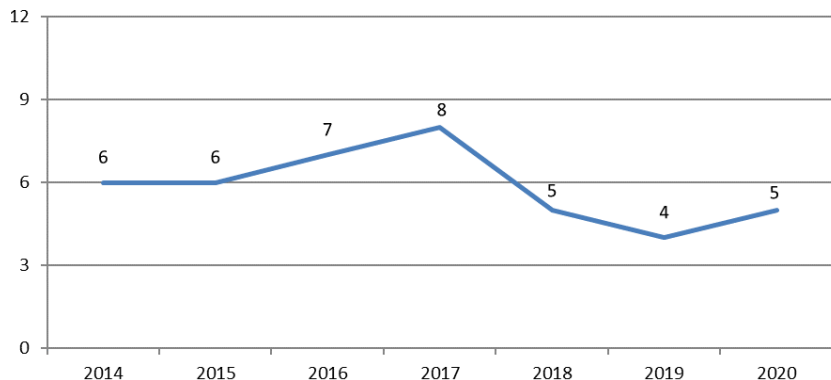


Figure 13: Neonatal mortality rate 2014-2020

— Neonatal Mortality Rate

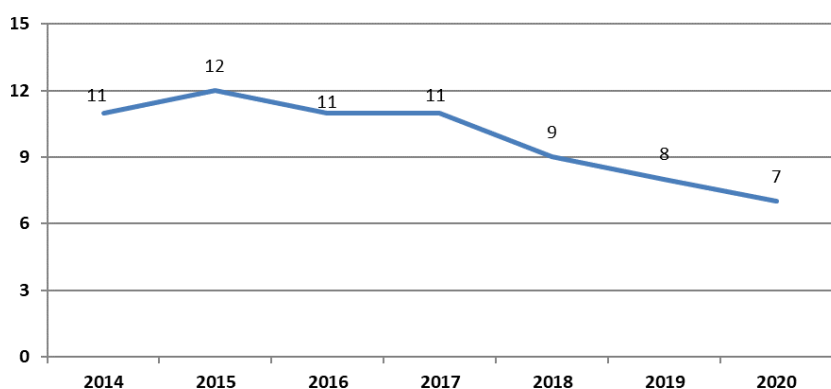


Figure 14: Under 5 mortality rate 2014-2020

— Under 5 Mortality Rate

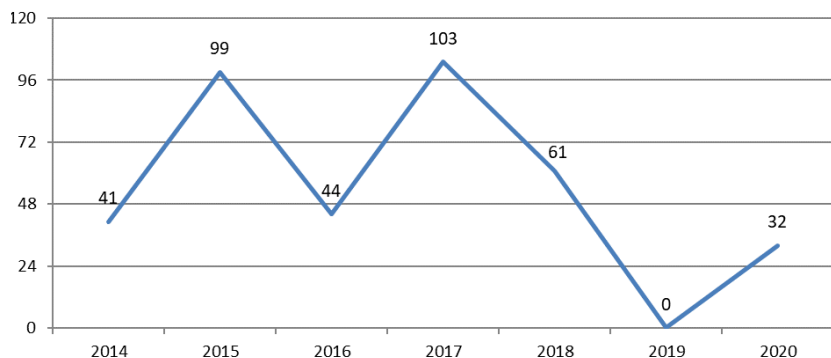


Figure 15: Maternal mortality 2014-2020

— Maternal Mortality

The Maldives has made significant strides in improving maternal and infant health and reducing maternal, infant and child mortality. The maternal mortality rate has been decreasing and stood at 103 per 100,000 live births in 2017 and 32 per 100,000 live births in 2020. The government has introduced a range of interventions, including improving access to maternal and child healthcare services, and promoting family planning. Nearly all births are attended by skilled health personnel. The percentage of birth attendants trained in midwifery has been above 99 percent for all types of birth outcomes in the past four years between 2017 and 2020. Of the birth attendants, 84 percent of the trained birth attendants were doctors and gynecologists in 2020, an increase of 10 percent from 2018. Death of infants remained low between 2016 and 2020 at 10 and below per 1,000 live births and continues to remain low. The infant mortality rate was at 10 per 1,000 live births in 2017 and 6 per 1,000 live births in 2019 and in 2020, (40 percent decrease), a significant decrease compared to the global target. Mortality of children under five years of age has decreased from 11 children per live birth to seven children per live birth during the same period.¹⁶ Neonatal mortality was at eight per 1,000 live births in 2017 and five per 1,000 live births in 2020 respectively. The target has maintained at a low rate of five which is a 37.5 percent decrease in the four years' time frame.

¹⁶ Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

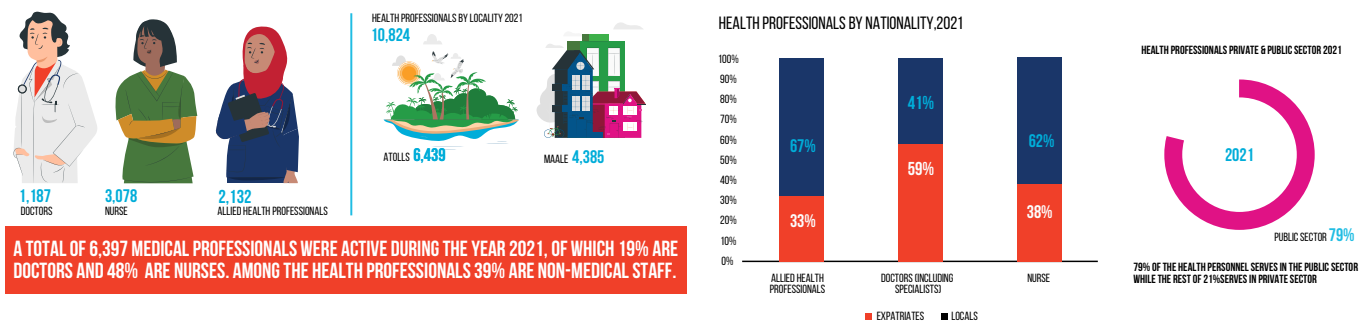


Figure 16: Health professionals by locality, nationality, and private and public sectors

The number of healthcare facilities and professionals in the Maldives have increased significantly, but access to higher levels of health care services for people in the islands remains a gap. As of 2020, the country had 199 health care facilities, including three tertiary hospitals and five hospitals in the capital, Male' City, six regional hospitals, 13 atoll hospitals, and 164 health centers. In addition, the number of health care professionals per 1,000 population increased from 2.8 in 2017 to 3.3 in 2022. Additional facilities are being built nationwide, and urgent referral to higher health care levels is facilitated in medical emergencies through the government health insurance scheme "Aasandha". Although the number of health care professionals has increased, reliance on foreign health care workers remains a major challenge for the Maldives. As health care expands across the country, there is a growing need for increasing health care professionals in various fields and expertise. In 2021, the ratio of total local to foreign doctors was 41:59, while the ratio of local to foreign nurses in the Maldives was 62:38. High turnover in foreign migrant healthcare personnel adds to the health service provider's burden of maintaining professionals for the growing demand for health services.

Geographic dispersion of the islands is a challenge in accessing health care services. Distance of healthcare facilities with the required health services, and emergency obstetrics services only being available at secondary hospitals and above, and their limited availability across the country requiring travel to Male' City are constraints for access to healthcare for the people living in the atolls. This is particularly pertinent for sexual and reproductive health services for unmarried women and girls.¹⁷ As highlighted in the 2016/17 Demographic Health Survey (DHS), the relatively high rate of cesarean births due to limited access to obstetrics services is a concern.¹⁸ Cesarean births in the Maldives increased from 46 percent in 2016 to 52 percent in 2020. Of this 52 percent, about half (23 percent in 2020) of the women underwent elective cesarean.¹⁹ Furthermore, the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) in the Maldives was decreasing and did not achieve its contraceptive prevalence target of 39 percent in 2018 amongst married women.²⁰ Modern contraceptive methods and demand for contraception also decreased between 2009 and 2016/17 and unmet needs increased from 28.1 to 31.4 percent in 2016/17 respectively and were highest amongst a small number of sexually active unmarried women compared to married women.²¹ The total fertility rate in the Maldives decreased from 2.5 in 2009 to 2.1 in 2016/17. The 2017 VNR highlighted that special attention was needed on reproductive health and adolescent friendly health services. Since then, the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025 has been formulated and it aligns with, and supports, achieving and reporting SDG progress.

The health expenditure as a share of GDP is highest for the Maldives compared to countries in the South-East Asia region. The government of Maldives on average spent MVR 3.4 billion (US\$220.5 million) per year on health between 2017-2022, an average of 12.2 percent of the budget on health during the same period.²² "Aasandha", the universal health scheme accessible to all Maldivian citizens accounts for a significant portion of health care spending.²³ The COVID-19 pandemic increased health care costs exponentially including an increase in "Aasandha" spending, social protection support and expenditure on additional infrastructure and services expansion.

¹⁷ CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/6: Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Maldives, 23 November 2021

¹⁸ CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/6: Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Maldives, 23 November 2021

¹⁹ Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

²⁰ Maldives National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025

²¹ Maldives National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025

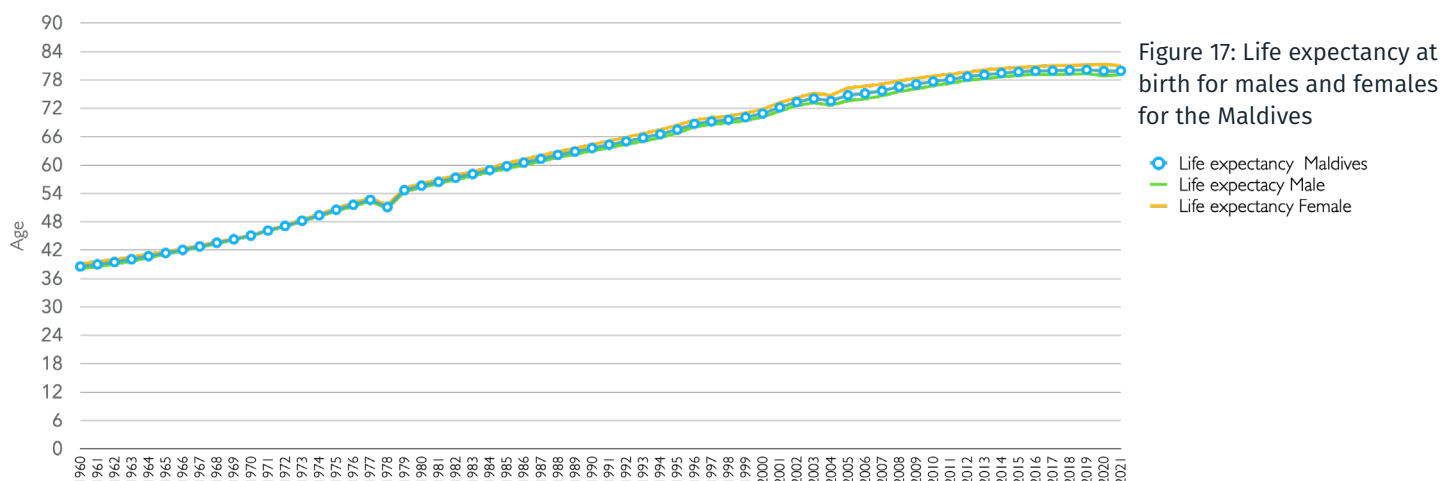
²² Ministry of Finance. 2019-2021. Budget in Statistics.

²³ World Bank 2022. Telemedicine Readiness in Maldives for Pandemic Preparedness and Health Care Delivery in Atolls

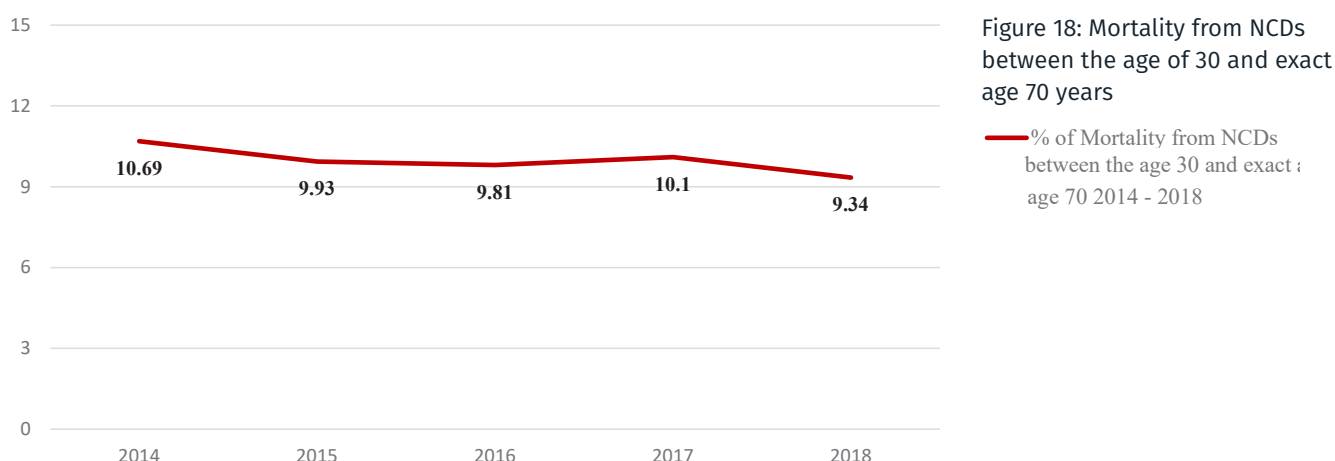
Table 4: Government total budget, health care budget and “Aasandha” budget

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Budget (Millions MVR)	24,951.1	28,165.3	38,397.8	30,156.5	37,145.0	42,847.2
Health Budget (Millions MVR)	3,750.4 (15.0%)	3,408.0 (12.1%)	3,372.3 (8.8%)	4,305.4 (14.3%)	4,752.3 (12.8%)	4,490.3 (10.5%)
“Aasandha” Budget (Millions MVR)	–	1,591.0	1,313.5	1,206.4	1,562.4	1,637.6

Source: Ministry of Finance Budget 2023



Life expectancy at birth has increased to 80 years in the Maldives in 2021.²⁴ The total life expectancy of Maldivians is significantly higher than the South Asian average of 70 years.²⁵ A Maldivian girl born in a particular year can expect to live six to seven years longer than a Maldivian boy born in the same year.²⁶ The increase in life expectancy is attributed to improved accessibility to health care, improved levels of education and economic standard of living, access to safe water and hygiene, and increased awareness within the population, leading to increased healthcare-seeking behavior and healthy practices at household levels.²⁷ Although the healthy life expectancy (HALE) of 70 years in 2020²⁸ in the Maldives is higher than the regional average, efforts are needed to improve healthy life expectancy.



NCD deaths are on the rise and accounted for 65.5 percent of the total deaths in 2020.²⁹ NCDs are a major disease burden of the country and with an expected shift in demographics towards an increase in the adult and elderly population by 2050, NCD trends are also likely to rise and harshly and affect these populations.

²⁴ Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

²⁵ WHO Maldives Health Data Overview. <https://data.who.int/countries/462>

²⁶ Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

²⁷ Health Masterplan 2016-2025

²⁸ WHO Maldives Health Data Overview. <https://data.who.int/countries/462>

²⁹ Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

The need for preventive services and reinforcing health promotion is important as highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020, as government expenditure will increase when more people need high-end curative care. The top five leading causes of death for both genders in the Maldives are other cardiovascular diseases (13 percent), cerebrovascular diseases (8 percent), ischemic heart disease (8 percent), other respiratory diseases (6 percent) and lower respiratory infections (5 percent).³⁰ Following the WHO 2020-2021 STEPS survey, a pilot project is being planned to integrate NCD services into primary health care service delivery and a National Multi-Sectoral Action Plan to control NCDs has been formulated.

It is worrying that cancer was the third most common cause of death amongst NCDs in the Maldives resulting in 125 deaths in 2020.³¹ More male deaths (60 percent) resulting from cancer occurred compared to 40 percent of women.³² Cancer is a leading cause of death globally and likewise; the epidemiological transition has been observed in the Maldives. The disease burden of the Maldives from cancer is likely to increase, considering the increase in demographic changes towards an ageing population³³ and lifestyle changes associated with development, the prevalence of risk factors such as tobacco use, consumption of sugary and fatty foods and drinks, and sedentary lifestyle engrained within the society.³⁴ A more holistic approach is needed with an emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion to minimize the dependency on high-end curative care in the long run for NCDs. With a focus primarily on prevention, changes to other sectors such as spatial planning to enable physical activity and increasing access and affordability to healthy foods etc. need to be implemented. Not enough research is undertaken locally to understand changes in disease patterns and related social trends. Similarly, health information for preventive health measures is lacking in society, and the existing health data on surveillance systems are not utilized effectively. Top prioritization and urgent efforts are needed in implementing preventive measures and ensuring early detection and care, health monitoring and evaluation, promoting healthy lifestyles, improving access to screening and treatment services, and implementing policies for healthy lifestyles. A National Cancer Control Plan 2022-2026, the blueprint to advance cancer prevention, management and monitoring in the country, has been formulated.

The country is heading towards an ageing population. According to the 2022 Census, five percent of the resident Maldivian population is 65 years or older and is projected to grow to seven percent by 2030 and to 14 percent by 2050, increasing the elderly dependency population ratio.³⁵ Given the continuation of the current trends, the burden on the health care system, health expenditure, and fiscal vulnerability will worsen with the increase in the aging population. High immobility and isolation of the elderly population in Male' City due to the compact, small, multi-story accommodation in Male' City is a growing concern. If the focus on healthy aging starts through a lifecycle approach, people can live a healthy and independent life in their older ages. The "Ranveylaa campaign" is designed to create community awareness of healthy aging, nutrition, and exercise. "Naadhee Thamaddhun", is an intergenerational social program that is a first-of-its-kind, one-stop service center being developed for the elderly and a venue to enrich their participation in social activities and engage in programs that promote active and healthy lifestyles. Similar centers, "Israhvehinge Ijuthimaaee Marukaz" is planned to be opened throughout the country. Work is also ongoing on drafting a law for the rights of the elderly and outreach through primary health care programs is being revamped. From 2015 onwards, home visits and basic healthcare services have been delivered to the bedridden elderly throughout the country.

³⁰ Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

³¹ Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

³² Health Statistics 2020, Ministry of Health

³³ WHO 2023. <https://www.who.int/maldives/news/detail/15-02-2023-who-collaborates-with-ministry-of-health-to-develop-and-launch-the-national-cancer-control-plan-of-maldives-2022-2026-to-reduce-the-growing-burden-of-cancer-in-maldives>

³⁴ WHO STEP survey on Risk Factors for NCDs Maldives, 2020-2021

³⁵ National Transfer Accounts 2020



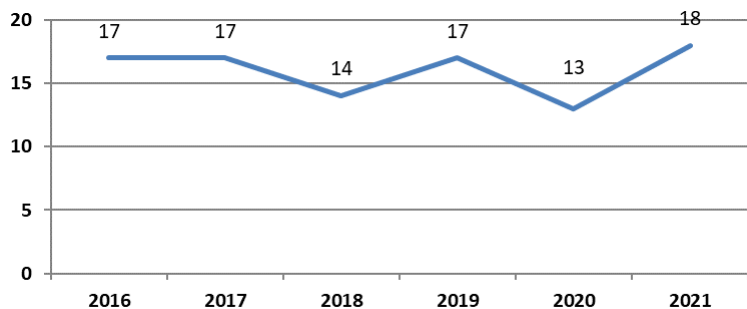


Figure 19: Suicide deaths in the Maldives 2016-2021

— Suicide deaths

Mental health is a growing concern in the country and one in every five people experience different aspects of depression.³⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation for those experiencing mental health issues, which was an emerging concern in the country prior to the pandemic. The lockdown to manage the virus spread created a high degree of fear, anxiety, and worry concerning the health and well-being of the people in quarantine, isolation, or in relocated temporary shelters. Likewise, People with Disabilities (PWDs) with difficulties accessing public information (such as the blind, hearing impaired etc.), experienced social isolation and faced challenges in meeting the needs of their physical and mental health during the pandemic.³⁷ SDG 3.4 is about preventing premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment and promoting mental health and well-being.³⁸ 13 deaths due to suicide occurred in 2020.³⁸ Although improving mental health facilities and care has been given high priority recently, the lack of disaggregated data on mental health poses challenges for policy and targeted program development. This is worsened by the scarcity of adequate health care professionals to cater to the demand for services. The Maldives National Centre for Mental Health was established in 2019 and budgetary support has been allocated for mental health care. “Aasandha” coverage has been expanded to include treatment and medicine for mental health patients for both the public and private sectors. A Mental Health Communications Strategy and Campaign has also been launched with the aim to promote social and behavioral change around the current perceptions and attitudes towards mental health.

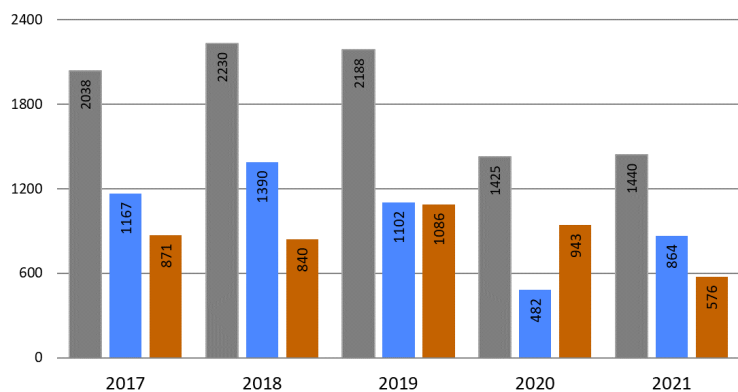


Figure 20: Number of logged drugs cases by Male' and atolls

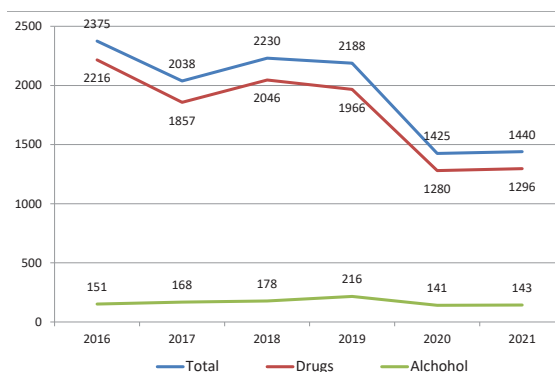


Figure 21: Number of logged drugs and alcohol cases

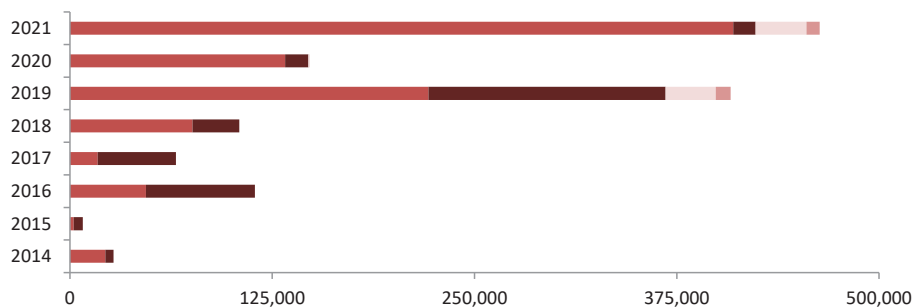


Figure 22: Drugs seized by police, 2014 – 2021

■ Heroin ■ Cannabis ■ Cocaine ■ Others

Substance abuse remains to be a major social issue in the country and needs prioritization. SDG target 3.5 is about strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol. Substance abuse was identified as the main cause of the increase in crimes and the most influential factor for domestic violence in the 2020 “Rights Side of Life” survey and in the same survey, prevention of substance abuse was identified as the third most significant protection to provide for children.³⁹

³⁶ UNICEF 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/maldives/press-releases/government-maldives-and-unicef-launch-national-mental-health-communications-strategy>

³⁷ United Nations 2020. Strengthening Resilience of the Most Vulnerable to Future Shocks in the Maldives

³⁸ Maldives SDG updates 2021, Maldives Bureau of Statistics

³⁹ Rights Side of Life Survey 2020

The 2019 “Youth Vulnerability Study” highlighted the low treatment reach and lack of aftercare support to help people stay off drugs as serious problems in the community.⁴⁰ As highlighted in the 2017 VNR, the prevalence of substance abuse in the country was last studied in 2011-2012 and needs to be examined to understand the current prevalence and trends for improving policy, treatment, and care. Currently, medication for opioid use disorders is being provided in the major urban areas, Male’, Addu and Kulhudhuffushi cities. Data from the Maldives Police Service shows that 1,490 people were detained on drugs-related offenses in 2019, of whom 97 percent were males and 69 percent were between the ages of 18 to 34 years. Drug seizures increased by four-fold within a year between 2018 and 2019, from 104.7kg to 408.3 kg respectively and increased to 463.4kg in 2021, with heroin accounting for 88 percent in 2021. It is also worrying that two babies are taken to state care per month, born from drug-using mothers. At any given time, neonatal ICU has more than 10 babies born for drug-using mothers.⁴¹ Addressing substance abuse needs priority focus with additional financial, human, and technological resources. Substance abuse needs to be integrated into primary health care response. Multi-sectoral approaches need to be adopted to tackle the issue of substance abuse from both supply and demand sides and improve and enhance treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration, as well as increase human resource capacities in technical sectors.

BOX 4 | SUBSTANCE ABUSE & SAFETY RISKS

Substance abuse also constitutes an increased safety and security threat to the country due to its connection to other organized crimes, including transnational crimes such as terrorism and money laundering.

The involvement of foreigners in drug-related

crime has increased. About 8 to 10 percent of the detainees in drug-related cases were foreigners in the past 5 years.

A National Strategic Plan to control drug abuse has been formulated.

	Health Insurance Scheme	Single Parent Allowance	Foster Parent Allowance	Emergency Medical Welfare	Disability Allowance	Food Subsidy		
	Aasandha	Parent	Children	Parent	Children			
Republic	349,727	3,067	5,290	109	144	6,590	9,646	623
Male’	63,123	855	1,322	17	18	1,624	3,056	236
Atolls	286,604	2,212	3,968	92	126	4,966	6,590	387

Table 5: Number of people covered through different social protection schemes by locality

Source: National Social Protection Agency

To better target the most vulnerable people and ensure the fiscal sustainability of the programs, there is a need to restructure the social protection system. The current social protection program is a combination of social assistance, social insurance, and labour market programs and has cash benefits for targeted vulnerable groups including single parent, foster, disability allowances and old age and retirement pensions. However, these programs need a holistic review to provide an effective guarantee of basic income security to all Maldivians. A social protection framework has been developed recently and needs to be supported with revisions to the relevant legislation on social protection.⁴² As part of ongoing works, minimum standards for disability recognition have been established and the type of disability can be assessed by degree and level, while disability allowance is under review. In the absence of a policy on social protection in the country, the SAP has a target on implementing a nationally appropriate social protection system and floors. Under the current definition of social protection, the budgeted social protection expenditure is over MVR 4.7 billion amounting to 5.6 percent of GDP, but the ratio drops to 2.9 percent of GDP when revised against the technical definition in the new framework. The social protection system and programs thus need effective revision to best support the most vulnerable people.

⁴⁰ Youth Vulnerability in the Maldives 2019

⁴¹ UNFPA for 2023 VNR

⁴² Government of Maldives 2023 Social Protection Framework Draft

Furthermore, health care data management and digitization of health care services is a growing need. The government health insurance system “Aasandha” is currently integrated across most hospitals and private clinics in Male’ City and major hospitals in other cities but focuses on healthcare transactions. Medical records’ digitalization is yet to be implemented and made available across all health facilities. A digital vaccination register for electronic immunization tracking has been recently completed and is being used to monitor vaccination across the Maldives. Digital connectivity for healthcare will benefit the people on the remotest islands with reduced financial burden and improved access to health services. Building on the lessons from the use of online services for health care during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health is currently working towards piloting a telemedicine facility in Faafu Atoll with high-quality equipment and services, to be launched in July 2023. Telemedicine when fully operational would ease the financial burden on patients who require travelling for medical treatments for services not available on their native or residential islands. There is also a need for the digitalization of public health surveillance data to enable more efficient data collection for public health action and to strengthen the monitoring of progress towards SDG indicators.

BOX 5 | RTL CONNECTIVITY AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The RTL connectivity in the northern region of Haa Alif, Haa Dhaal and Shaviyani Atolls has boosted demand for health services in the Atoll Hospitals and the Regional Hospital. Both Dhidhdhoo and Funadhoo Hospitals have experienced a doubling of patient rates. The main lesson is to expand health care services and infrastructure in these hospitals.

The connectivity also has enabled health care workers to travel between islands for health awareness programs. They are now able to travel and return on the same day or travel on Thursday and return the following morning. This is a much more affordable and efficient alternative to previous options of private boat hire.

BOX 6 | DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Shaviyani Atoll Hospital has been using social media for encouraging health promotion works. They have increased social media reach to 200,000, a significant reach for a hospital in a remote island and has good engagement with the public on health awareness posts. Their “Ehee” page followers also increased significantly.

They are further planning to expand health awareness through other popular social mediums such as TikTok and through a community Viber group channel.

Improved digital connectivity with affordable prices would enable to promote health and wellbeing in remote and small islands of the Maldives.

BOX 7 | COVID-19 IMPACTS ON HEALTH CARE & ITS MANAGEMENT

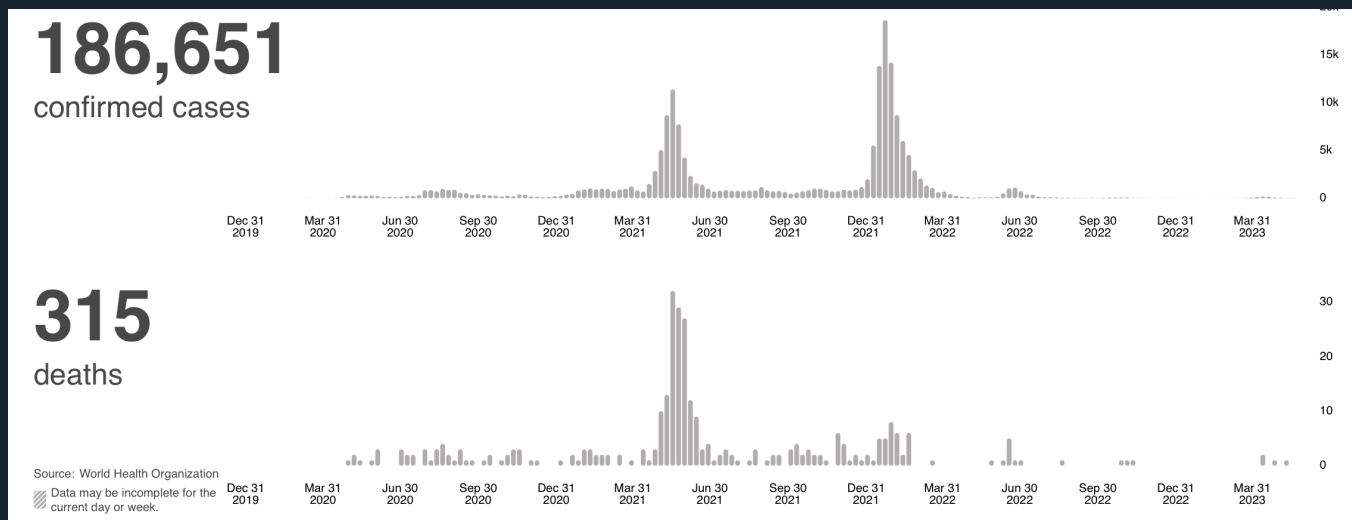


Figure 23: The Maldives situation – COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths

The direct health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Maldives have been modest compared to the rest of the countries in the region. However, it had a significant impact on the country when its relatively small health care system experienced multiple waves and surge in cases in late 2020 and early 2021. Between 3 January 2020 and 31 March 2023, 186,651 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 311 deaths were recorded in the Maldives. As of March 2023, a total of 951,645 vaccine doses had been administered. The fully vaccination rate of 71.25 persons per 100 people in the Maldives is higher than global average of 65.55. In the Maldives, 31.93 out of every 100 people were boosted. Nonetheless, the pandemic affected the health and well-being of people in several ways, resulting in disruptions to healthcare services, social isolation, and impacted on mental health, with increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression reported.

Although the dispersed nature of the islands helped in slowing down the transmission of the virus, the health care system was overburdened in responding to the pandemic. Most cases were recorded in the densely populated capital city Male'. The Maldives had no testing laboratories for the virus when the first case was confirmed on 8 March 2020 and at the time there were a total of 97 ventilators nationwide. Although these ratios compare favorably to the rest of the region, the country was not well equipped to respond to the pandemic. A range of measures were implemented by the government to contain the spread of the virus.

The Maldives also implemented several measures to ensure that no one was left behind in the vaccination campaigns. Vaccination outreach programmes with mobile teams travelling to remote locations, vaccination education campaigns, prioritization of the vulnerable groups and tourism sector workers, and ensuring enough vaccination was available for the entire population were some of the key measures

implemented to ensure equitable access to vaccines. Foreign migrants being one third of the population, the government and CSOs undertook programmes to ensure their wellbeing and inclusion in the national vaccination rollout plan. Mobile teams travelled to worksites and densely populated foreign migrant living quarters for vaccine outreach programmes to target regular and irregular workers. Vaccine information was provided in multiple languages, to ensure that migrant workers had access to information about the vaccine. Partnerships were formed with employers especially in the construction sector to ensure workers were informed about vaccination. Most importantly, to ensure no migrant worker was left behind, no negative consequences for workers without legal status was ensured.

Meanwhile, the communities in different islands, who were otherwise reliant on Male' City for health services, accessed services from different hospitals across the country. For instance, Raa Atoll Ungoofaaruu Regional Hospital experienced a surge in patients since people from Alif Alif, Alif Dhaalu, Baa, Haa Alif and Haa Dhaalu Atolls travelled for medical care during the pandemic. People from Alif Alif and Alif Dhaalu Atolls also had to travel to Laamu Atoll for even basic services and the health care cost burden on transportation was very high. Special transport arrangements by the private sector enabled the mobility of people for these health care visits, while currently these linkages are no longer operational. In the remote island Shaviyani Atoll Narudhoo, 11 cases of COVID-19 were reported. To manage the mental health aspects of the pandemic, teachers were trained as support groups. A critical lesson from the pandemic was for atolls like Alif Alif and Alif Dhaalu, the second most prominent tourism zone, where health care access is not limited to their resident population but also to the working population resident in the resorts and the floating tourist population. These are important lessons for future health sector planning.

Leave No One Behind

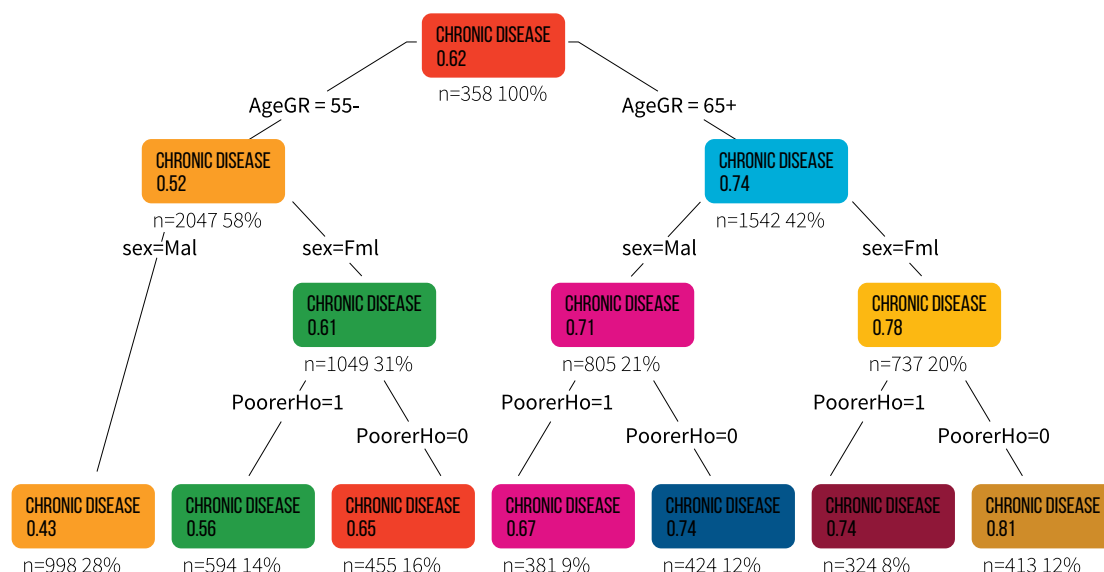


Figure 24: Prevalence of chronic diseases

Source: UNESCAP illustration using DHS 2016/2017 HIES 2019 data

- In 2019, about 16 percent of the population in the Maldives had at least one chronic disease. Among people aged 55 and above, the prevalence reached 62 percent (see light green box on top of Figure 24). Farthest behind group is comprised of women aged 65+ years living in relatively higher-income households (in red at the bottom right) among whom 81 percent have at least one type of chronic disease. The farthest ahead group is 55–64-year-old men (in green at bottom-left) among whom 43 percent have at least one type of chronic disease. Overall, there is a gender gap among women within each age group which should be tackled, given the aging society and particularly female longevity.
- People at the bottom of the poverty line, those multidimensionally poor from lack of access to higher levels of health and education services and with disadvantaged living standards, PWDs, children in poor and vulnerable households and women in informal economies, poor households and abusive environments are most at risk of being left behind. They need targeted policies with better social protection to improve their lives. Similarly, women with children born out of wedlock face multiple challenges to access services.

Actions for progress

In the immediate term within the next 1 to 2 years

- Strengthen focus on preventive healthcare and early detection to reduce NCDs and premature mortality from NCDs.
- Revitalize the primary health care program and strengthen support for mobile health care service expansion to improve services for people in the islands, including support for mental health, victims of substance abuse, victims of sexual and physical abuse, and foreign migrant health.
- Strengthen implementation of the policies for reducing substance abuse and establish effective and modern rehabilitation and aftercare.
- Increase accountability and responsibility of the health system and services and enhance the elderly, women, and girls' access to health care services, including unmarried women.

- Adapt the legislative framework for social protection harmonization and ensure targeting is aligned with social protection principles by identification of vulnerable groups, including PWDs.
- Partner with academia and international organizations for health research to identify and understand the growing concerns related to NCDs for evidence-based policies and decision-making.
- Introduce foreign migrant health policy and strengthen access to health care and services for all foreign migrants to ensure their well-being and public health safety.
- Increase health awareness and outreach by targeting those at risk of being left behind from accessing health care services and ensuring early detection of diseases and improved well-being.
- Strengthen partnerships across the islands for promoting healthy lifestyles and improving access to screening and treatment services.
- Increase the density of health care workers and strengthen training and retention of health care workers and ensure the establishment of improved wages and working conditions for health care workers.
- Strengthen psychosocial and mental health support and capacity building for local communities in addressing violence related to mental health.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Strengthen and implement policies for promoting health and healthy lifestyles and improving nutrition, diet, and active lifestyle.
- Strengthen psychosocial and mental health support and capacity building for local communities in addressing violence related to mental health.
- Enhance access to health information and awareness amongst the community across all age groups, gender, and locality.
- Establish institutional support and facilities for mental health patients needing inpatient services and care.
- Strengthen the monitoring of the impact of public health interventions.
- Strengthen data-driven decision-making for the health sector.

Quality Education

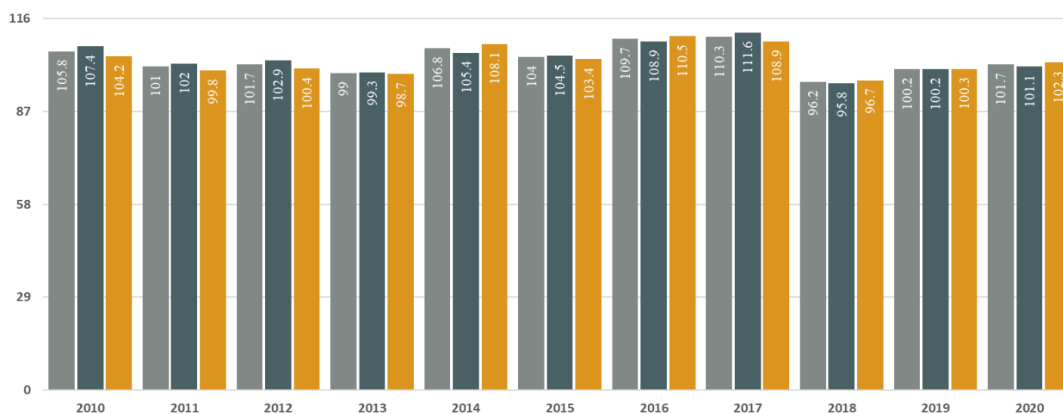


Figure 25: Net enrollment ratio in primary 2010-2020

■ Total (1-7) ■ Male (1-7)
■ Female (1-7)

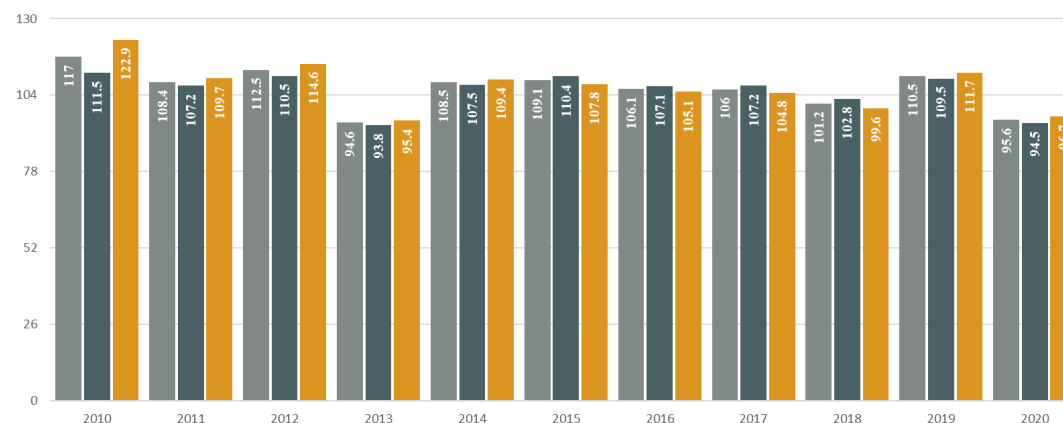


Figure 26: Net enrollment ratio in lower secondary 2010-2020

■ Total (11-12)
■ Male (11-12)
■ Female (11-12)

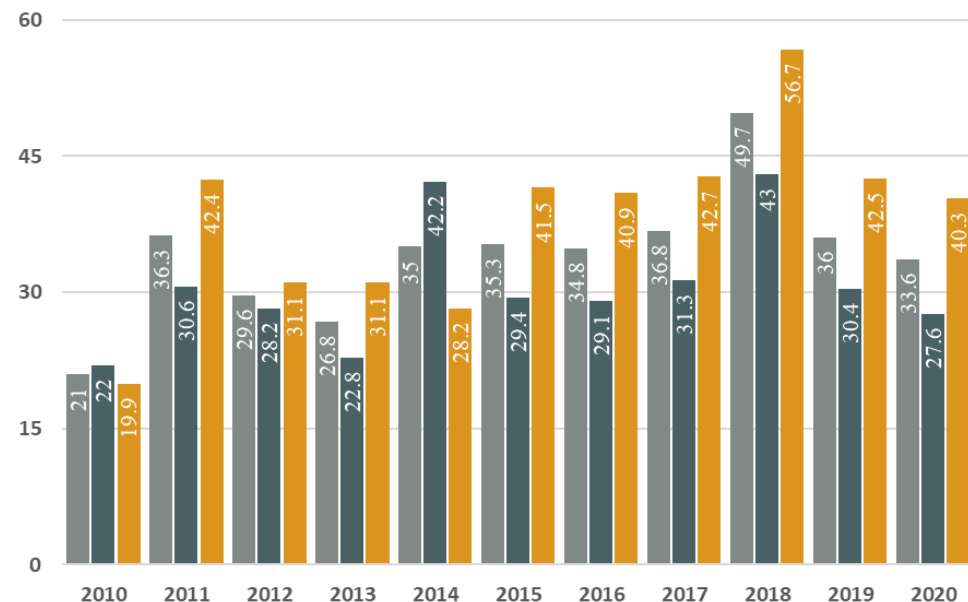


Figure 27: Net enrollment ratio in higher secondary 2010-2020

■ Total (11-12)
■ Male (11-12)
■ Female (11-12)

The Maldives has made good progress in primary and secondary education, having achieved gender parity in these levels of education. The net enrollment rate (NER) in primary grades (1-7) in the Maldives has been on average 103.7 between 2015 and 2020 and NER in lower secondary grades (8-10) declined from 109.1 to 95.6 during the same period. Gender parity in primary and secondary education has been achieved, with girls and boys having equal access to education and participation at all levels. The pass percentage of students sitting for O’level examination following year 10 completion was 52 percent and 67 percent respectively in 2018 and 2019, with a significantly higher ratio of girls passing compared to boys. Students who do not have the required O’level passes to continue to A’levels have the option of continuing education by enrolling in vocational and technical training with a national level-3 certification, and the trend in enrollment for this course level has been increasing between 2019 and 2021.

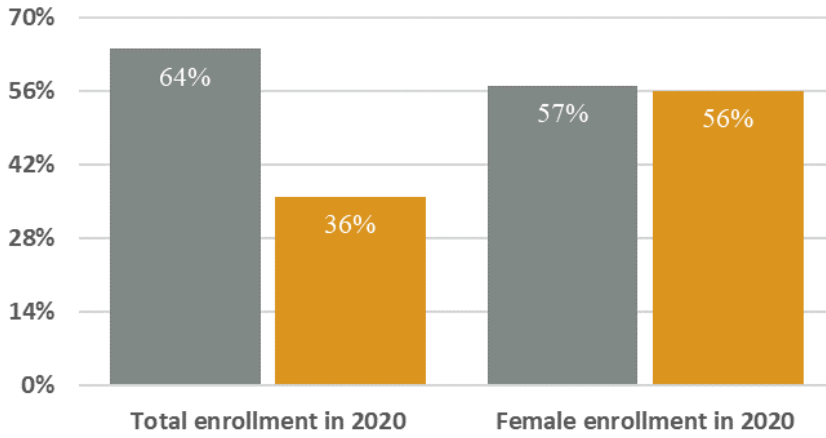


Figure 28: Higher secondary enrollment Male' and atolls

■ Male' ■ Atolls

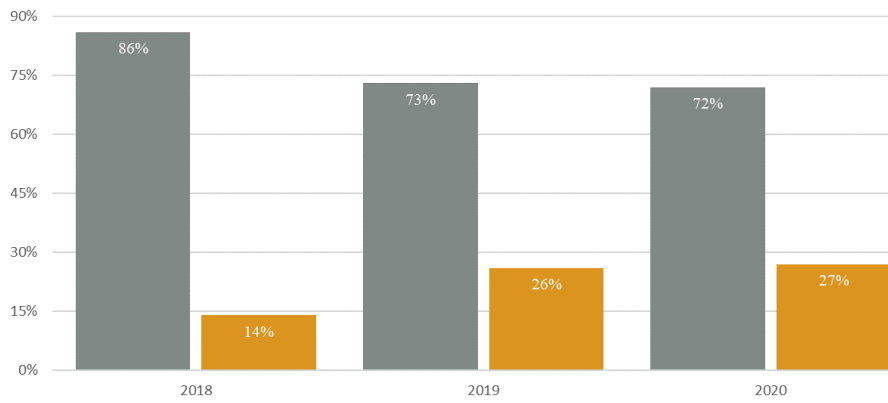


Figure 29: Student enrollment in technical education

■ Male ■ Female



Access to higher secondary education and higher education in the atolls, however, is a key challenge to continuing education. Currently, only about 20 percent of the total lower secondary graduates enroll in higher secondary education, and the total NER for higher secondary education has decreased from 35.3 in 2015 to 33.6 in 2020. NER in higher secondary education for boys changed from 29.4 to 27.6 while for girls it changed from 41.5 to 40.3 during the same period. NER trends for the past eight years show a gender disparity in favor of girls in higher secondary education. Reduction in gross enrollment rate (GER) in higher secondary education across the atolls compared to Male' City is a key issue for the participation of youth in formal education and training contributing to SDG 4.3. There were in total 46 schools across the country in 2020 offering higher secondary education, in comparison to 207 schools offering lower secondary education. Of the 46 higher secondary schools, six were in Male' City while 40 were across the 20 administrative atolls and they are disproportional against the pipeline of students in different atolls.⁴³ There are no higher secondary schools in Kaafu, Alif Dhaalu, and Vaavu Atolls. Meanwhile, the high ratio of A'level dropouts reduces the available pool of students with the required entry criteria for scholarships, especially in the technical fields. However, A'level dropouts can continue their education by enrolling in a foundation-level program that is offered by several local higher education institutes. The ratio of females completing A'level is significantly higher than that of boys and reached a 61:49 female-to-male ratio in 2019.



Photo : Abdulla Abeerh

⁴³ Poverty and inequality in the Maldives

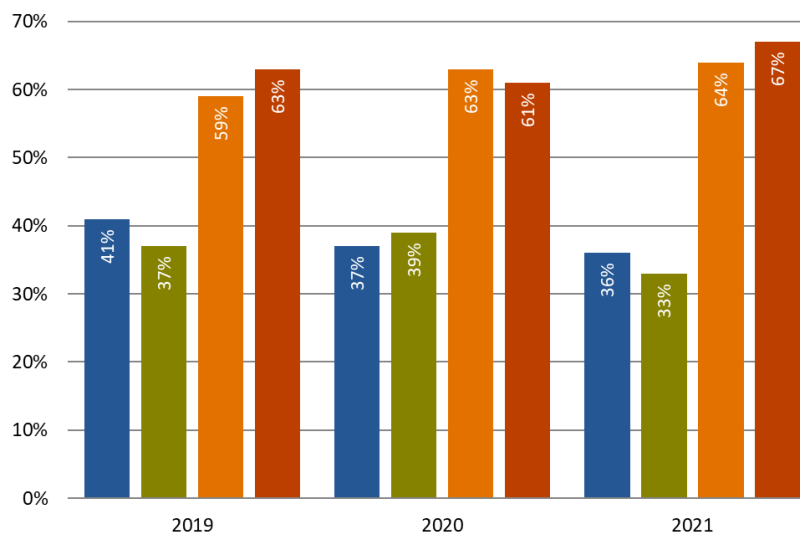


Figure 30: Percentage of student enrollment and graduate outputs

■ Male Enrollment ■ Male Graduate Output
 ■ Female Enrollment ■ Female Graduate Output

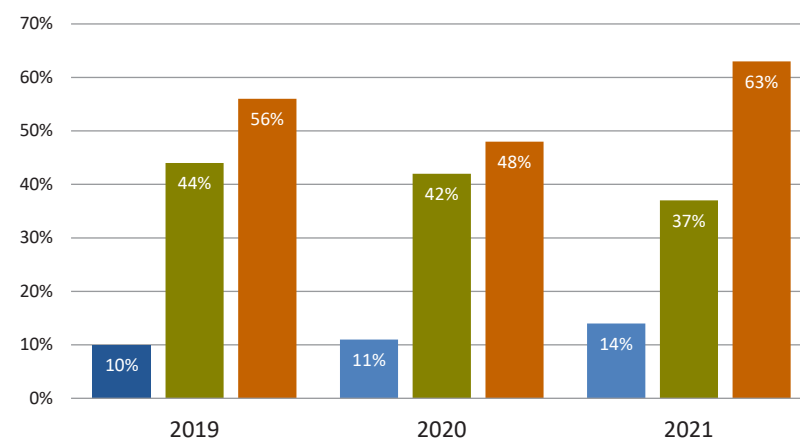


Figure 31: Percentage of dropouts by gender in higher education institutions

■ Total Dropouts ■ Male ■ Female

Higher education enrollment in the Maldives has increased from 13,999 to 23,011 between 2019 and 2021. There are two government universities, three government colleges, and nine private colleges offering higher education in the Maldives. Although in 2019 the government introduced the “Bachelor’s Degree Grant Scheme”, higher education opportunities across the atolls remain limited. Many of the young people who want to continue their education are discouraged to do so by the high costs of moving to Male’ City. Although opportunities remain limited in the atolls, since 2022, students who are studying under the “Bachelor’s Degree Grant Scheme” who reside on an island other than their native or usual resident island can apply for the student loan scheme, which covers stipend, book allowance and program fees where full program coverage is not allowed. Although higher education enrolment is increasing, the rate of dropouts also increased between 2019 and 2021 and the ratio of female dropouts was higher compared to males. The availability of jobs and no incentive for higher education completion may be a contributing factor to the trend, especially in the atolls, whereas the job competition in Male’ City may incentivize them to complete their education.⁴⁴

The country has a high functional literacy rate. The functional literacy rate for individuals aged 15-24 years in the Maldives was 98.5 percent in 2019. There is no difference in functional literacy between males and females, with functional literacy of 98.4 percent among males and 98.5 percent among females respectively. Functional literacy for the 15+ population was 97.8 percent in 2019. High functional literacy is a key enabler for lifelong learning.

The Maldives has made concerted efforts to improve the quality of education and increase access to education for all. In 2019, the country adopted the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2019-2023, which outlines the country’s vision for education. The plan sets out several targets related to SDG 4, including increasing access to education, and ensuring all students receive a relevant and high-quality education. In 2020, the country adopted an Education Act which makes education a right and attending schools mandatory and covers education between the ages of four and 18 years. Furthermore, in 2021, the country adopted a Higher Education Act which ensures the establishment of a higher education system with equal opportunities for all Maldivians and promotes longevity of the educational services.

⁴⁴ Poverty and inequality in the Maldives

BOX 8 | SATELLITE EDUCATION FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION ACCESS

Satellite education was launched in the Maldives in 2022 with the Satellite Hub Centre in Huravee School in Malé City. The Hub connects to satellite schools in three islands: Baa Atoll Fehendhoo, Vaavu Atoll Thinadhoo and Vaavu Atoll Rakeedhoo. The satellite schooling concept incorporates online schooling for students in islands where there are less than 30 students in the whole island, across all grades.

Students are provided with the latest technology including chrome books and high-speed internet through the satellite schools. While the students will physically attend schools in their respective islands, education will be delivered by teachers stationed in the Hub. Although classes are held online, two on-site teacher facilitators will be present with the students in their respective schools.

Each satellite school is assigned to a parent school that will oversee the administrative functions of the satellite school, provide assistance and teaching materials as required and provide opportunities for the students to participate in the co-curricular activities and sports activities of the parent school. Baa Atoll Goidhoo School, Vaavu Atoll Education Centre (Vaavu A.E.C) and Vaavu Atoll Keyodhoo School are set as the parent schools. Students from satellite schools will travel to their parent schools to participate in extra-curricular activities as scheduled.

The satellite schooling concept is currently being explored to cater to students who are unable to physically attend school due to an illness and for students in a detention facility.

Source: Extracted from Ministry of Education website

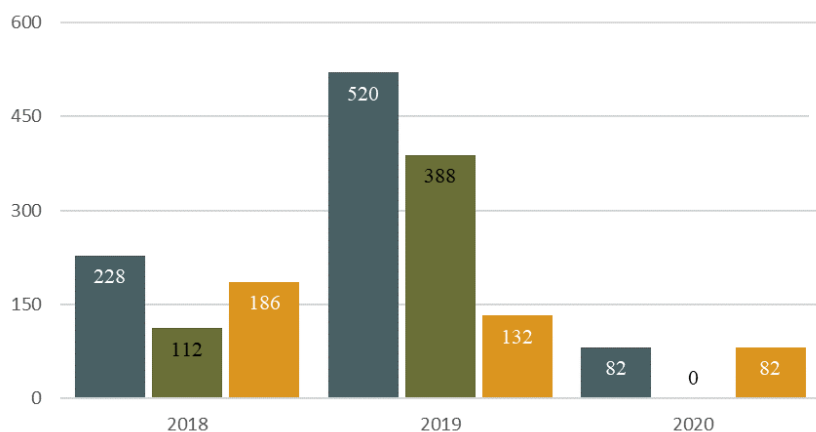


Figure 32: Student enrollment to special classes with SEN

■ Total Sen Enrollment ■ Male' ■ Atolls

Although progress has been made in ensuring marginalized children including those with Special Education Needs (SEN) have access to education, challenges remain in providing access and quality education to children in these groups.

The lack of equality in access to education across the country is a barrier to equal opportunities for education, including higher education and technical and vocational skills development. Although all public schools are mandated by law to cater to children with disabilities, only 89 (42 percent) of the total 213 schools catered to children with disabilities in 2019.⁴⁵ Physical accessibility in schools remains a barrier. In 2019 a new school was opened in Male' City with physical access enabled for PWDs. Inadequate SEN-trained teachers remain a gap resulting in a high student-to-SEN teacher ratio and thus preventing the fulfillment of the educational needs of children with different forms of disabilities.⁴⁶ The Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) adopted in 2013 was revised in 2021 to align with the Education Act that came into effect in 2020. Under the IEP, children with SEN are to be enrolled in mainstream schools and the assessment policy for the 2015 new curriculum allows for educational adaptations for these children. In 2018, the Special Education Unit was upgraded to the Department of Inclusive Education under the Ministry of Education.⁴⁷ Early identification of certain disabilities initiated through schools can prevent lifelong disability and help those children integrate with other students. Currently, for early identification purposes, developmental screening of students entering formal learning at age four into kindergarten is carried out, and digital data collection has been enabled. However, the lack of availability of analyzed, reliable, comprehensive, and disaggregated data on children with disabilities and children with complex learning profiles and capacity constraints remains a challenge.

⁴⁵ UNICEF 2021. Disability Inclusive Education Practices in Maldives

⁴⁶ UNICEF 2021. Disability Inclusive Education Practices in Maldives

⁴⁷ UNICEF 2021. Disability Inclusive Education Practices in Maldives

Knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development are an important part of achieving the SDGs. Thus, global citizenship education, mainstreaming of education for sustainable development in national education policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessment are part of SDG 4.7. Currently in the Maldives, a Green School program is being piloted in seven schools to match the existing curriculum to the SDGs. The curriculum includes modules such as green economy, blue economy, and healthy living. The program is planned to be rolled out to 28 schools across the country. Teacher trainings are yet to be undertaken to complement the execution of the curriculum.

BOX 9 | VAAVU A.E.C SKILLS PROGRAMMES

Vaavu Atoll Education Centre (Vaavu A.E.C) is based in Vaavu Atoll Felidhoo, the capital island. The school provides primary and secondary education. The school has a low student population due to the small population size. Vaavu Atoll has the smallest population across all atolls but has a good overall performance in school education.

The national priority for vocational programs for Vaavu A.E.C is low. Hence, the school in partnership with the parents raised funds to establish skills programs such as graphic design, electrical wiring, and carpentry for students in grades six to nine. Students are required to choose their preferred skills program at the start of the academic year. Similarly, delayed delivery of financial literacy within education is a concern of the school. The school is working on bridging the gap by teaching students to open a bank account and practice saving behavior.

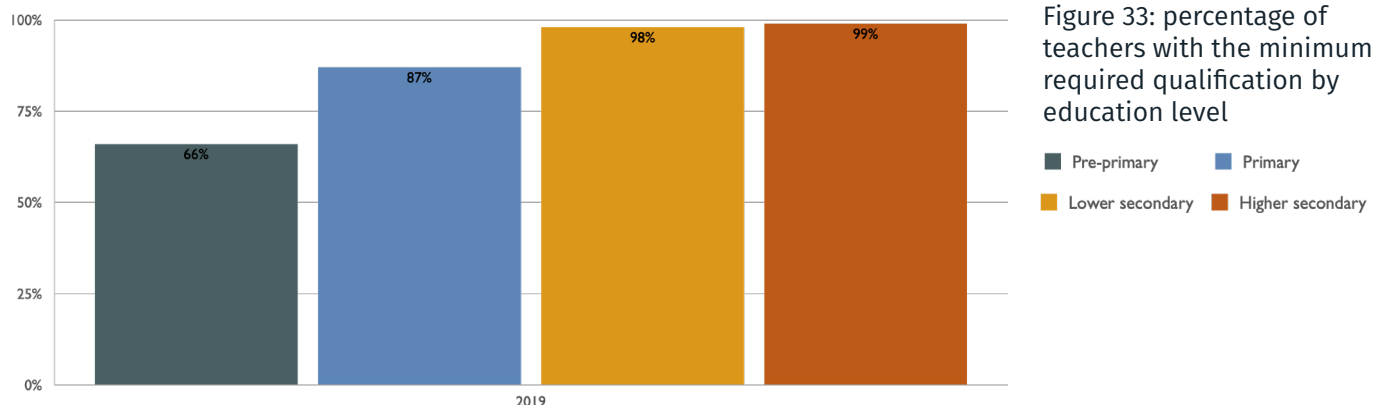


Figure 33: percentage of teachers with the minimum required qualification by education level

The Maldives continues to make efforts to improve the quality of education by focusing on teacher training, however unavailability of trained teachers to fully execute the curriculum across all islands remains a challenge.

72 percent of the total share of teachers in the Maldives is female. 24 percent of the teachers are foreign, with 43 percent and 45 percent of secondary and higher secondary teachers respectively being foreign. The ratio of teachers with the minimum required qualification is highest in lower and higher secondary levels. The student-teacher ratio is also the lowest among these levels. The country faces challenges in improving the quality of education, particularly in remote islands. The quality of education is affected by teacher shortages, insufficient training, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient learning resources.⁴⁸ However, teacher training is being revamped through innovative means, such as virtual learning, video conferencing and the Teacher Resource Centers (TRC) adapted to overcome the challenges particularly limited by remoteness.⁴⁹ Continuous professional development and training programs for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge, particularly in areas such as special education and language instruction, have increased the number of teachers resulting in a higher teacher-to-student ratio and improved learning outcomes. COVID-19 necessitated online delivery of education resulting in all teachers being Google certified, enhancing their digital skills for education delivery. A teacher license is planned to be introduced soon and is expected to bring about positive changes to the quality of teachers in education delivery. Furthermore, with the salary increments for teachers, it is expected that the pool of qualified teachers will increase. The challenge of teacher shortages however remains, with about 2,500 teachers still needed for the system.

⁴⁸ Maldives education sector analysis 2019

⁴⁹ Maldives education sector analysis 2019

BOX 10 | “TELIKILAAS” FOR EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

Extracted from UNICEF Maldives Case Study: Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education at all levels and affected the learning outcomes of the students. To minimize the negative impact to learning, the Ministry of Education (MOE) undertook several efforts to continue education during the pandemic. In the Maldives, schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, which coincided with the period right after the mid-term school break. In May 2020, the MOE developed an Education Response Plan (ERP) for COVID-19. School education was continued through a condensed curriculum, reduced daily hours, and a shortened four-day school week, with one day for lesson preparation. Schools continued to be closed until July and began to reopen from 5 July 2020 onwards, first in islands free from COVID-19, followed by schools in the greater Male’ region, from 4 October 2020 onwards. For education delivery during the school closure period, the MOE adopted remote learning in various forms that included pre-recorded lessons broadcasted on television (‘Telikilaas’), live internet-mediated classes, voice calls, video calls, and document-sharing and messaging (one-to-one or in groups) using the popular mobile phone application, Viber. The Maldives was first in the region to commence education during the pandemic lockdowns.

The online education platform, “Filaa”, a resource repository that includes digital textbooks and lessons was made available for students. Google Classroom and other G-suite education apps allowed students, teachers, school administrators, and government staff to create personal accounts and share notes, assignments, and worksheets. To boost the confidence of the teachers to use the G-suite effectively, all teachers were trained to become Google-certified teachers. The prompt and timely response to continuing education virtually was largely made possible due to the pre-

preparedness. Prior to the pandemic, the MOE had distributed digital tablets to all school students of Grades three and above, which became an important tool for the continuity of learning across the country. Therefore, all schools managed to shift teaching entirely online, using various applications approved by the MOE, and teachers were given intensive training on the use of the new technology. However, this was not without constraints, with the main challenges being internet connectivity barriers, the high cost of the internet, and the quality of online learning materials. Other challenges included limitations in providing support to remote learners, inexperience, and low technical expertise in online teaching, as well as difficulties in monitoring and assessing students’ work and providing them with psychosocial support.

Meanwhile, efforts were undertaken by the Department of Inclusive Education (DoIE) to ensure the inclusion of students with Special Education Needs (SEN). However, several challenges faced in education delivery included the broad range of Individualized Education Plans (IEP) to serve a limited amount of input suited to individual students with SEN, challenges such as lack of adequate data on vulnerable groups, children in poverty, and the inclusion of situational vulnerable groups such as those with limited internet access and those who temporarily moved to their home islands from Male’ City.

The “Telikilaas” was recognized and awarded the UNESCO Wenhui Award for Educational Innovation. To implement online learning through Telikilaas, teachers broadcasted lessons nationwide to students through partnerships with three public television channels. Telikilaas materials included videos developed especially for learners with an IEP or SEN.



Photo : PSM

BOX 11 | CONTINUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION & LIFELONG EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered nearly every aspect of tertiary education, including the operation of universities, colleges and higher education institutes, their teaching and learning, admissions, and enrolment to student support service, raising concerns over the quality of higher education provided during the emergency teaching period.

Prompt and timely policy changes made to higher education enabled the online delivery of education for higher education institutions. While this enabled higher education to continue and opened opportunities for students from across the Maldives to enroll, it also exposed the digital divide in the country faced primarily by students in the outer atolls, with slow internet speed and high internet costs. Meanwhile, online programs targeting those not enrolled in universities or schools flourished, encouraging lifelong learning, and benefitting older groups of people in remote islands.

Leave No One Behind

Secondary edu 20-35 yrs, LNOB Tree
Maldives, 2019



Figure 34: Secondary education completion 20-35 year age group

Source: UNESCAP illustration using HIES 2019 data

Data legend

- Furthest ahead
- Other terminal nodes
- Furthest behind

- At the national level, the completion rate of secondary education for 20–35-year-olds stood at 40 percent in 2019. The furthest behind group is comprised of men living in poorer households outside Male’ City (orange node in Figure 34). Only 18 percent completed secondary education among them. The furthest ahead group is comprised of individuals living in Male’ City among whom over half completed secondary education. There is a threefold gap between those furthest ahead and furthest behind.

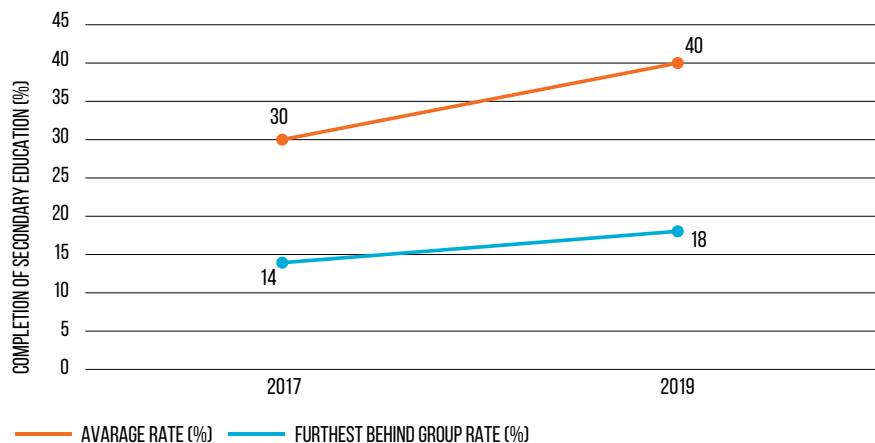


Figure 35: Secondary education 20-35-year-olds

Source: UNESCAP illustration using HIES 2019 data

- Over time, there has been significant progress in the completion of secondary education in the Maldives. The completion rate among the furthest behind group increased from 14 percent in 2017 to 18 percent in 2019 while average national completion rate increased from 30 percent to 40 percent. More importantly, the size of the furthest behind group shrunk from 29 percent of the 20–35-year-olds in 2017 to 9 percent of the same reference group in 2019.

Tertiary edu 25-35 yrs, LNOB Tree
Maldives, 2019

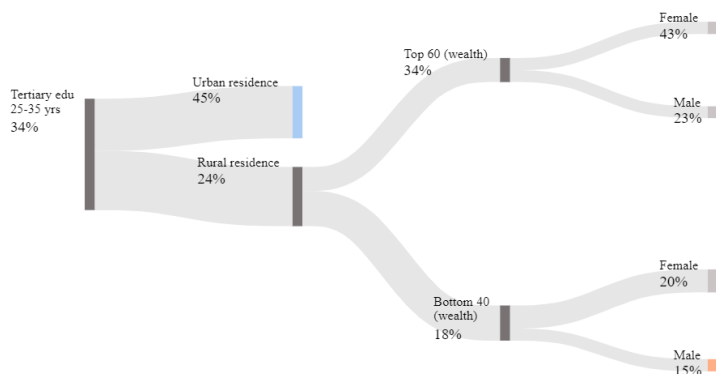


Figure 36: Tertiary education attendance

Source: UNESCAP illustration using HIES 2019 data

Data legend

- Furthest ahead
- Other terminal nodes
- Furthest behind

- The attendance rate of tertiary education among men and women aged 25-35 years stood at 34 percent in 2019. Furthest behind the group comprised of men living in poorer households outside Male’ City. Furthest ahead group comprised of individuals living in Male’ City. There is a threefold gap between the attendance rates of those furthest ahead and the furthest behind.

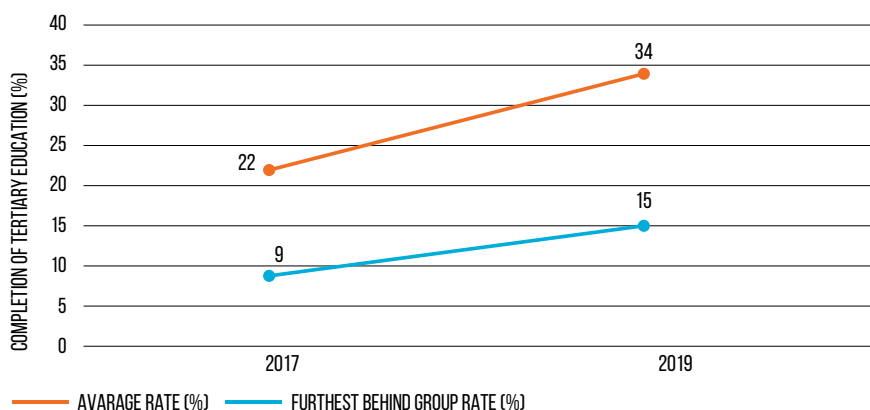


Figure 37: Attendance of tertiary education 25-35-year-olds

Source: UNESCAP illustration using HIES 2019 data

- Attendance of tertiary education also increased significantly from 2017 to 2019 in the Maldives. While on average this figure jumped from 22 percent to 34 percent among 25-35-year-olds, attendance among the furthest behind group increased from 9 percent in 2017 to 15 percent in 2019. While the gap between furthest behind and average widened, the size of the furthest behind group shrunk significantly from 30 percent of the reference population in 2017 to 11 percent in 2019. Consequently, the Maldives progressed significantly in both secondary education completion and tertiary education attendance.
- Children in conflict with the law, state care, and violent environments, who drop out of school or do not continue education, are at higher risk of being left behind. They are at a bigger loss in attaining better education and income opportunities and are at higher risk of being faced with future health impacts. Children in conflict with the law are provided with alternative learning provisions; however, challenges remain due to limitations in the enabling environment.
- PWDs are disadvantaged with equal opportunities and access, quality education and health care. Where services exist too, PWDs face several challenges.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate term within the next 1 to 2 years

- Strengthen early childhood development through quality education delivery across all islands by targeting children in remote islands and children in socioeconomically vulnerable households.
- Expand implementation of education for children with SEN across the schools and ensure SEN monitoring data is used for effective decision-making for improving the quality of SEN provision in all schools.
- Improve access to higher secondary education including improving physical access and access to special needs of PWDs to engage in and continue education including higher education.
- Provide access to training and continuation of education opportunities by targeting secondary education dropouts and intensifying enrolment, retention, and completion of higher secondary education.
- Establish career guidance, mentoring, and counseling support for secondary school students and youth about higher education and employment opportunities to improve choice of study and enable decent job creation matching labor market trends and needs.
- Accelerate the implementation of ICT education across all schools and improve STEM education access and delivery across the country.
- Diversify TVET and skills programs and higher education training across all atolls of the Maldives for enhanced opportunities for skill building.
- Leverage virtual education and satellite schooling to improve the access to quality education provision for children in remote islands.
- Review and revise teacher training programs including basic pedagogy in inclusivity to all educators and accelerate quality teacher training and licensing for the full implementation of the curriculum across all schools and grades.
- Mainstream and fast-track implementation of sustainable development knowledge and skills through knowledge dissemination and demonstration of sustainable pathways and lifestyles across all schools.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Strengthen multistakeholder partnerships to create safe and effective learning environments in schools to improve the quality of schooling for all groups by preventing issues such as bullying, substance abuse, gangs, and radicalism within the school and higher education environment.
- Fully implement the national curriculum and ensure knowledge of sustainable development and twenty-first-century skills, including digital literacy, is achieved for all students across all schools.
- Strengthen alternative education options such as vocational qualifications across the country with knowledge of pathways and career options and introduce alternative solutions to improve inclusivity and encourage continuing education for all.
- Enhance lifelong learning for all by leveraging digital education delivery and targeting women, men, the elderly, and school dropouts to continue learning and skills building.

Gender Equality, Empowerment of Women & Child Protection

Women's involvement in decision-making in the Maldives has increased, however, the country has a stagnant score in SDG 5, largely due to gender gaps with women's economic empowerment and political participation.

33 percent quota for women in local councils has resulted in the election of 388 women to local councils (with 39.5 percent of local council seats held by women in 2020). Female ministers account for 33 percent of the current cabinet and include some non-stereotypical portfolios such as transport, environment, climate change, technology, and defense. The first ever women justices to the Supreme Court were appointed in 2019 and the first woman judge to the Criminal Court was appointed in 2020. Furthermore, the male-female ratio of ambassadors in the Maldives is 50-50 according to Presidency Maldives. In 2019, Women's Development Committees (WDCs) gained legal recognition as key partners in community development with their responsibilities and powers being defined and a specific budget of five percent of each island council's budget allocated for WDCs. However, women still do not have the space to set the political agenda and are underrepresented in leadership positions within political parties, in the Parliament, the Government, the judiciary, and at the decision-making level in the civil service.⁵⁰ Only 11 percent of the total judges/magistrates are women, while only 4.6 percent of the seats are held by women in the Parliament.

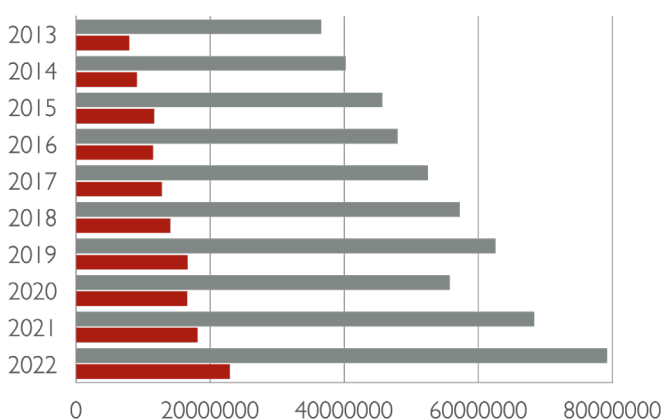


Figure 38: Pensions contributions by the private sector by gender

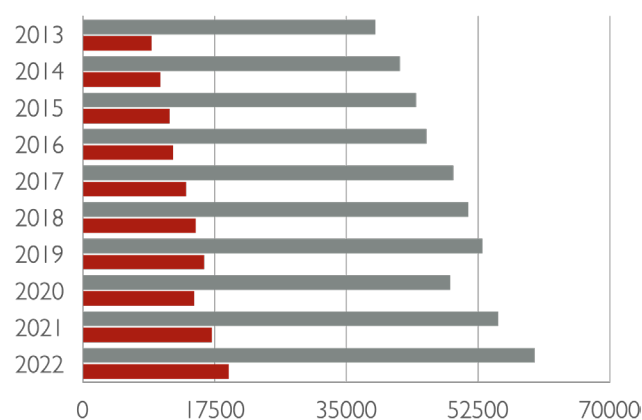


Figure 39: Private sector pensions participation by gender

Women are underrepresented in the economy with just 45.6 percent participation in the labor force compared to 77 percent of men. This is comparatively lower for women resident in the atolls.⁵¹ Women in the informal sector are nearly three times higher compared to men and higher in the atolls, resulting in being left out of contributory pensions and paid sick leave. Women's participation in the Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme (MRPS) has however increased over the past eight years, indicating an increase in women in formal employment. In 2022, women constituted 65 percent of the civil service according to Census 2022, and only about 24 percent of the formal private sector as seen from the pension data. These data suggest the growth of females in the formal economy has been minimal compared to males and the average monthly contributions by females are lower than male counterparts. Women also take three times the burden of unpaid domestic and care work compared to men, and this is higher for women in the atolls compared to Male' City.⁵²

Nonetheless, the penetration of ICT amongst women in the Maldives is equally as high as men, with 94 percent ownership of mobile telephones. However, women's ownership of bank accounts is significantly lower (86 percent) compared to men's (95 percent), with unemployment or low participation in formal sectors being factors.⁵³ Similarly, women who have never used the internet or mobile banking are much higher (30 percent) compared to men (17 percent) and are more prevalent amongst the 65 plus and higher age groups in the atolls.⁵⁴ More women on the other hand are completing higher secondary and tertiary education and performing better in education. Therefore, consolidated effort and modern solutions are needed to increase women's participation in the economy, ensure better social protection and empower women and improve gender equality.

⁵⁰ CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/6: Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Maldives, 23 November 2021

⁵¹ Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2019

⁵² Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2019

⁵³ National Financial Inclusion Survey 2022

⁵⁴ National Financial Inclusion Survey 2022

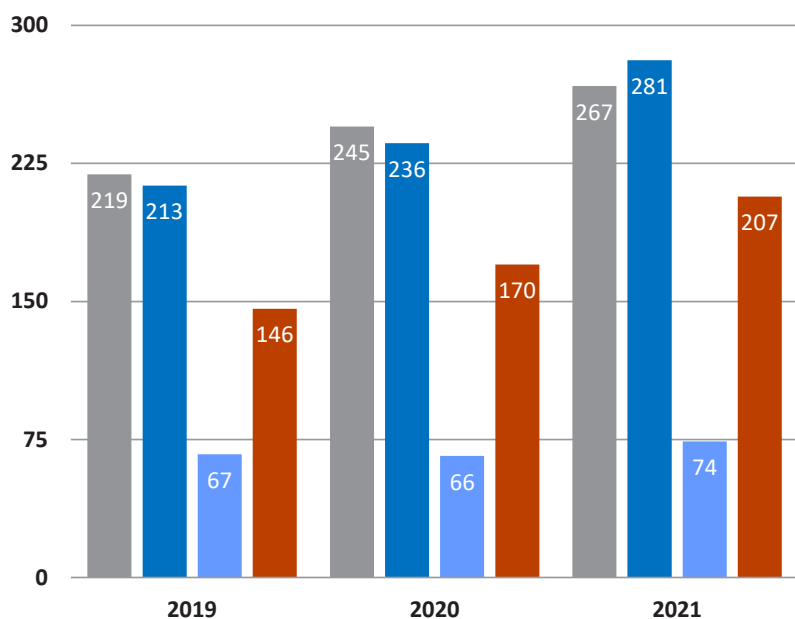


Figure 40: Number of logged cases and number of victims of domestic violence

■ Reported Cases ■ Total No. of Victims
 ■ Male Victims ■ Female Victims

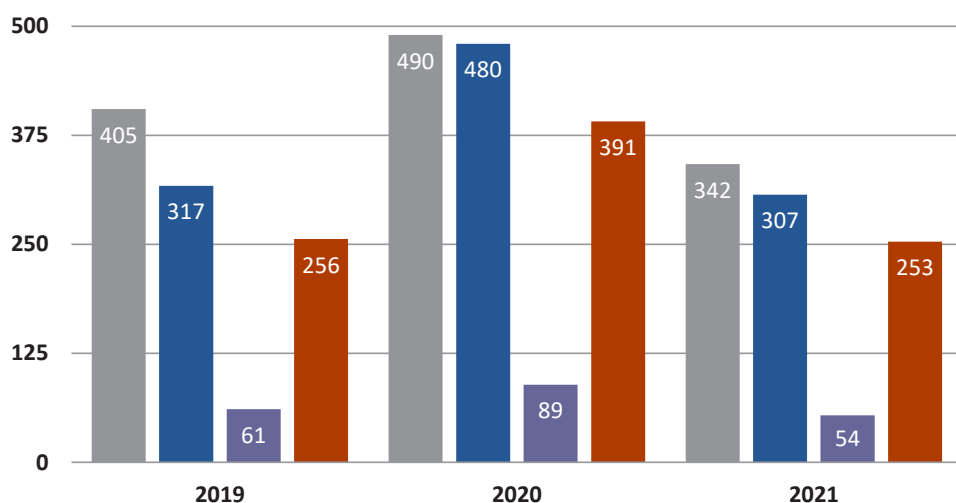


Figure 41: Number of logged cases and number of victims of sexual offenses

■ Reported Cases ■ Total No. of Victims
 ■ Male Victims ■ Female Victims

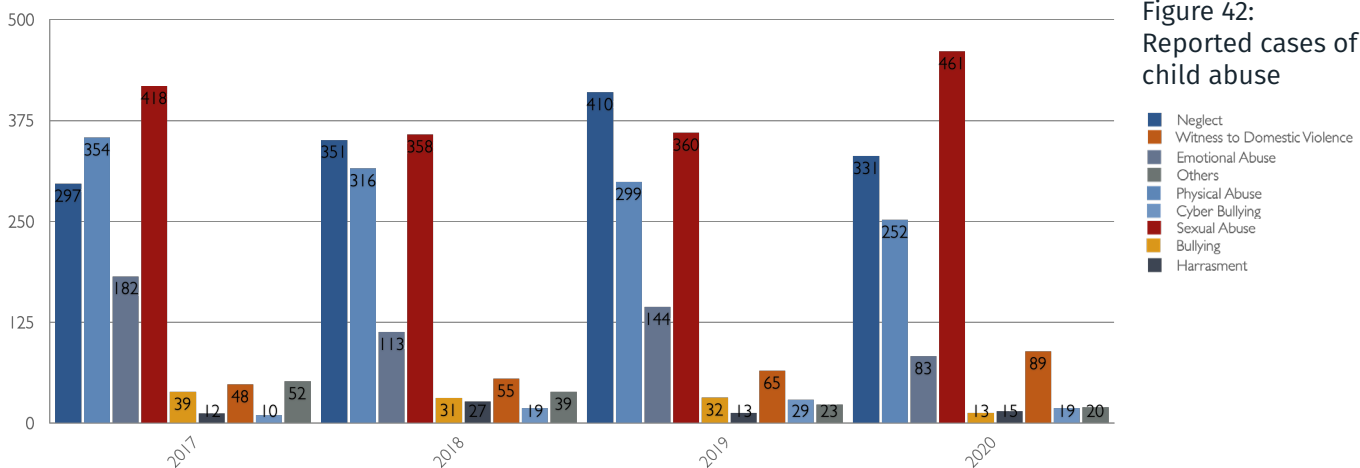
Policies towards gender equality have progressed, however, progress in implementation is a challenge. Violence against women is on the rise. Over 80 percent of the victims of sexual violence cases are females, and females are also the main victims of domestic violence and have increased from 69 to 74 percent between 2019 and 2021. Reported cases of violence increased in Q3 of 2020 following the COVID-19 lockdown ease. The Gender Equality Act promoting equality and women’s rights came into effect in 2016 but is lagging in implementation. The Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2022-2026 was formulated to speed up the implementation of laws and regulations, establish a reporting mechanism, appoint gender advocates in all government entities, and enable the Maldives to stay on track to achieving SDG 5. The Plan also includes outcomes such as increasing women’s representation in the Parliament, women’s labor force participation, and access to sexual reproductive health services. Gender mainstreaming has not been effectively implemented nationally and thus, the Maldives Gender Equality Model (MGEM) was formulated in 2022 and endorsed at the highest level nationally to measure the extent institutions address gender issues, policies, guidelines, and works. MGEM includes an award certification and a review every two years. Furthermore, a gender module has been introduced into the civil service induction program to mainstream gender. A gender audit is also planned for the judiciary and health sector as it is the first respondent in gender-based violence and in violence against children, which are primary health issues.

BOX 12 | “RIGHTS SIDE OF LIFE” SURVEY

Amidst progress in women’s participation in governance and education, declining support for women perceived by the respondents of the 2020 “Rights Side of Life” survey is a serious concern. Findings reveal that support for gender equality has diminished since its previous survey was undertaken six years back, and women’s rights have suffered. It also highlighted the emergence of a religious extremist narrative to diminish support for gender equality and women’s rights and the acceptance by both men and women that marriage is not an equal relationship and women are considered subordinate, more so by women than men.

According to the findings, efforts to address violence against women are also at risk, since more women have begun to accept and justify violence. Relationships outside of marriage are not considered domestic relationships and therefore violence in these relationships will go unreported, while victims of violence perceive the system to be ineffective in providing a remedy. It is also worrying that women victims of violence reported that the biggest abuse suffered by them being forcefully impregnated while trying to end harmful marriages.

Furthermore, child sexual abuse remained to be a serious concern among the respondents, indicating the ineffective response to remedy the issue. The survey also highlighted that protection ensured for PWDs are not satisfactory and access to education and elimination of discrimination against PWDs were identified as the most important area to be strengthened for better protection. The respondents perceived that substance abuse, financial stress and lack of adequate housing were root causes for domestic violence, signaling key areas of focus for improving social well-being.



Adoption of the Children’s Rights Protection Act in 2019 is a big achievement towards creating a secure environment and landscape for the right of the child and their voice. It recognizes the right of children to be protected from all traditional and cultural practices affecting their well-being and sets the legal minimum age of marriage at 18 years for women and men.⁵⁵ Violence, substance abuse, and mental health are serious concerns affecting the well-being of children. As the society and economy transform, the risks to child safety remain serious concerns. Safety risks in the school environment are evolving and exposure of children to sexual violence and crimes is increasing. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the risks to child safety and security, including the increase in incidences of sexual abuse, cyber-bullying, and online grooming. As the country transforms towards digitization for service delivery, carefully designed additional safety strategies and interventions are needed to ensure child safety in schools, homes, communities, and the digital space.

⁵⁵ CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/6: Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Maldives, 23 November 2021

BOX 13 | CHILDREN IN STATE CARE

Although state care is the least preferred option for child protection, about 150 children of different age groups are under state care. These children of different age groups were all in one facility in the greater Male' region and lately, incidences of misbehavior and violence were on the rise. A policy shift towards community-based rehabilitation was introduced in 2021 and separate facilities have been created in seven islands with a maximum capacity of 18-20 children. This has shown improvement in the well-being of these children. Although resistance from the communities was a concern initially, the reintegration with them is now improving. It is however worrying that children in these facilities have experienced a lot of traumas and there is not enough capacity for providing trauma-based healing and psychosocial support for them.

Although policies and legal frameworks exist, justice remains a challenge, particularly for the well-being of women and girls. The small size of the community and sociocultural factors are key challenges for the social system to work effectively. Police and judiciary have key responsibilities in ensuring access to justice through effective remedies, and service delivery needs to be strengthened to address gender-based violence. Currently, only less than five percent of the reported cases lead to prosecution. Evidence is the biggest challenge and delayed reporting timeframe is a critical factor that affects evidence. Cybercrimes, online grooming, and blackmailing are among emerging issues, exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The Maldives CEDAW report highlighted that despite measures to prevent and investigate online abuse being announced, no perpetrators have yet been held accountable.⁵⁶ Highlighted in the consultations of the second VNR and also discussed in the CEDAW report, “discriminatory gender stereotypes among police officers, gender-insensitive investigation methods, lack of protection for women who report rape, fear of revictimization and retaliation, women’s underrepresentation in frontline policing and in the judiciary, lack of lawyers, particularly in remote islands, and the fact that legal aid is available to victims only in relation to ‘major criminal offenses’ constitute barriers to women’s access to justice”.⁵⁷ Only 15 percent of the police personnel are women. Under the police reform process, the institution’s strategic plan for 2019-2024 prioritizes redefining investigations towards a victim-centered approach and developing specialized child abuse and victim-centered investigation capacity in the atolls.

Community-focused policing and developing multi-skilled and competent first respondents are also identified as strategic priorities and special considerations are given to increasing the number of female officers in police basic recruitment and training female officers in investigation areas and other frontline areas.

The absence of land for social infrastructure and services is a key challenge for service delivery. The absence of land for social infrastructure in land use plans and the high cost of land acquisition or leasing for social services such as domestic violence (DV) shelters is a key challenge in the greater Male' areas where service demand and land rent are high. With support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), three DV shelters have recently been planned and will be operationalized. These centers are planned to be in Hulhumale', Addu City, and Raa Atoll. The main outcome is to increase access to sustainable social services to reduce women’s unpaid care burden and minimize domestic violence and gender-based violence.

To promote the role of women in the economy, society, and leadership, efforts need to be stepped up with the capacity, resources, and empowerment of women. Women’s participation in the formal economy remains low and the lack of protection for women in unpaid care work is a concern, particularly for the well-being of single mothers. Unpaid care and household services are most often provided by women. Unpaid services such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for the children and the elderly add considerable value both to family welfare and to national economic output.⁵⁸ Although trends show that education completion and performance of women in the Maldives are higher, women still face barriers to entry in certain jobs, and lack of equality in some professions remains a concern. Consultations undertaken for the second VNR highlighted the challenge for women highly skilled and educated in ICT field facing barriers to entry in the job market and the wage gap. Women’s participation in the largest economic sector of the country, tourism, continues to be very low. Public perception and media representation of women needs positive change in a pro-female direction to improve gender equality and support for women. While many women are engaged in the informal economy, it fails to provide adequate income, protections, and safeguards for women.

⁵⁶ CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/6: Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Maldives, 23 November 2021

⁵⁷ CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/6: Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Maldives, 23 November 2021

⁵⁸ National Transfer Accounts Maldives 2020

Furthermore, women's share of ownership of land and assets is not known, to address policy gaps for economic opportunities. The Maldives is a country with a high divorce rate and the lack of adequate legal protection in divorce cases in land and property ownership for women, especially those who acquire joint assets, is a concern.

BOX 14 | "IBAMA" FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

IBAMA is a multi-sectoral support mechanism formed at community level in all inhabited islands for prevention and respond to violence against children, and other vulnerable groups. IBAMA focuses on providing protection for vulnerable children, the elderly, PWDs, women, and men in the community. In addition, relevant sector-related government authorities with an official mandate for the social protection of the communities work together holistically, as a cohesive group, to ensure the functioning of IBAMA. These government authorities include the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, local councils, the Local Government Authority, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Maldives Police Service, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and Women's Development Committees.

Furthermore, IBAMA ensures that the most vulnerable and at-risk individuals and families are identified, assisted, and provided with the necessary services to uplift their life and living standards to reflect the standards of the community. Supporting the identified individuals and families would include referral to and assistance with the existing social protection schemes.

Overall, IBAMA works for the promotion, protection, and fulfillment of the human rights of each individual in the community, and in doing so, ensures a safe society that embraces full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Maldivian Constitution and the international conventions and treaties.

To ensure a safe community for all, especially for the vulnerable population, IBAMA members undergo relevant training. As such, IBAMA members receive an initial training before the establishment of IBAMA in their respective islands. In addition, the IBAMA members also carry out vulnerability mapping of the island once they complete the initial training. Initial training of IBAMA has been conducted and IBAMA has been established in 3 cities and 96 islands from 11 atolls and 658 people have been trained to date.

Source: Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services

Leave No One Behind

- Women in vulnerable social and economic situations were identified as key groups who are at higher risk of being left behind in equal development attainments. These include women in poorer households, single mothers, women in violent relationships, women not economically active and women in the informal economy. More women are in the informal economy, and they lack adequate social protection. The findings of the impact of COVID-19 also show that women were disproportionately affected during the pandemic in economic and social aspects such as increased unpaid care work, higher stress, and greater income loss for informal workers. Data suggests there was a surge in reported cases of DV once the first lockdown was eased. As the Maldives is moving towards an ageing population, women who are not in employment and do not contribute to pensions risk equal future opportunities and attainments.
- Children in poorer households, violent households and without adequate supervision are at higher risk of being left behind. Early exposure to violence in the family and families with low socio-economic status inhibit the normal course of adolescent development, leading to other socio-economic and mental health outcomes. The presence of gangs and illegal markets is a risk to the well-being of vulnerable children, who are often targeted for recruitment. Similarly, the youth population (18 – 25 and 26– 30 years old) requires strategies to prevent them from entering criminal activities. Protection and reintegration strategies are also needed for those already subjected to criminal activities. Records from criminal activities and domestic violence-related cases show that the number of male perpetrators is significantly higher than the number of females.

- To understand the magnitude and a better LNOB analysis, quality data disaggregated by gender and other key indicators and information needs to be collected, analyzed, and reported.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate term within the next 1-2 years

- Develop a whole of government strategy and policies to increase women's engagement in the public and private sector, in leadership positions and in entrepreneurship.
- Implement policies and support mechanisms to promote shared domestic responsibility.
- Reinforce the performance of key agencies in policy, investigation, justice, and social services to better respond to violence against women and children and promote gender equality.
- Strengthen accountability of reported cases of violence against women and children through improved tracking and auditing from the stage of reporting to delivery of justice.
- Provide systematic training to police, lawyers, judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers on women's rights and ensure speedy and improved justice to women and children.
- Introduce a quota to ensure fair and equal representation of women in the Parliament.
- Enhance awareness amongst the population targeting women, men, girls, and boys on their rights.
- Promote knowledge and information on governance and leadership for women in leadership in civil service, island councils, WDCs, and public and private companies to enhance their capacity and empower women with managerial and leadership skills through practical training.
- Introduce positive discrimination to increase women in leadership in civil service, public companies, and the private sector.
- Strengthen laws to protect women in the workplace.
- Develop safe spaces for social dialogue for both genders in vulnerable situations, particularly women and children, and take advantage of public libraries mandated to be developed by the councils to operate as one-stop centers for social service delivery, social dialogue, and to conduct support programs.
- Ensure the participation of "IBAMA" in the prevention and response to violence against children and women and other vulnerable groups at the island and atoll levels.
- Develop effective implementation mechanisms and timely monitoring of policies, laws, and action plans promoting gender equality.

- Implement strategies and effective responses to boys in vulnerable situations, low socioeconomic backgrounds, and those dropping out of school to prevent them from falling victim to violence and being perpetrators of violence.
- Strengthen Family law and other related laws to ensure women's rights to land, property, and assets build are shared in cases of divorce.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Establish multi-agency coordination and partnership for effective promotion of gender equality with support from the highest level.
- Promote the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary to improve access to justice for children and women.
- Strengthen the human resource capacity including by increasing social service workers and their capacity to respond better to gender equality and service delivery across all islands.
- Reinforce gender data across the agencies and report on gender parameters to promote equality and justice.





Photo : Abdulla Abeedh



Economic Inclusion and Resilience

Inclusive and Sustained Economic Growth and Fiscal Sustainability

Human Capital and Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Cities and Communities and Resilient Infrastructure



Inclusive and Sustained Economic Growth and Fiscal Sustainability

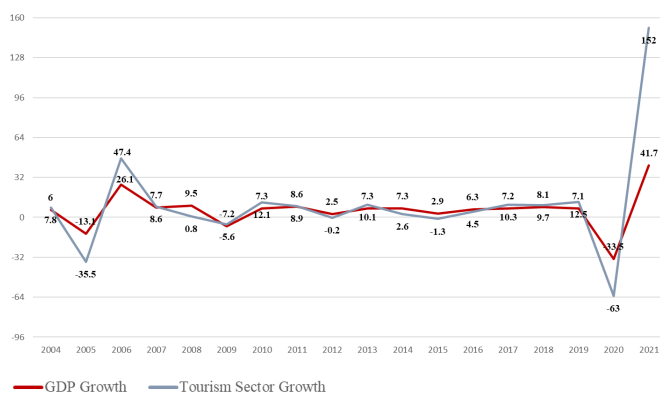


Figure 43: GDP growth rate and tourism growth rate

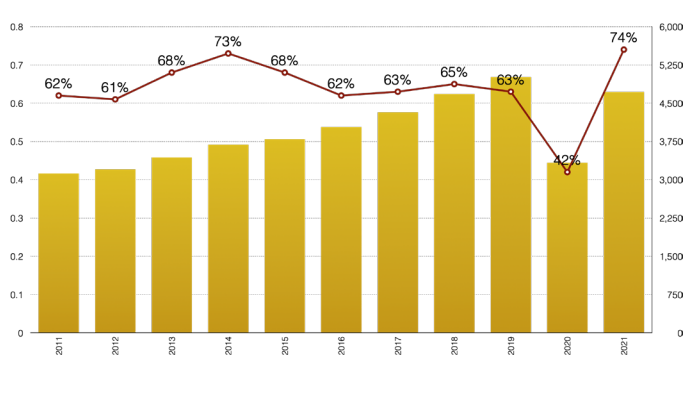


Figure 44: Tourism receipts as a share of GDP

Successful tourism has advanced the Maldives economy from a least developed to an upper middle-income country. Tourism continues to be the main base of the economy and one fourth of the direct contribution to the GDP, while it indirectly contributes much higher to GDP, with strong sectoral interlinkages to construction, transport, trade, and information and communications technology. Robust economic growth trajectory in the past has resulted in an increase in GDP per capita and reached US\$ 11,119 in 2019. The real GDP growth rate was seven percent in 2019. The Maldives was on the path to becoming a high-income country when the unprecedented shock from the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the course of economic growth. The over-dependence on tourism, however, poses a significant risk to the economy.

Tourism continues to be the key focus of economic growth. The Maldives is amongst the most tourism-reliant countries in the world and the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the economy unprecedentedly with a 66 percent decline in tourism growth rate and, consequently, a decline of 33 percent in GDP growth rate in 2020, affecting income and livelihood loss for several thousand people.

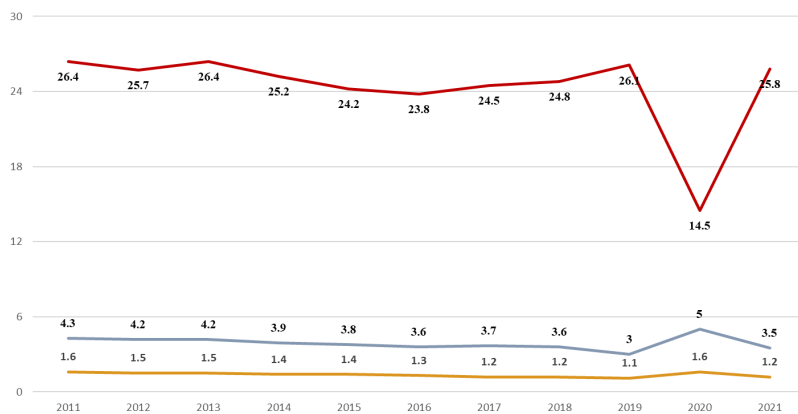


Figure 45: Tourism, fisheries, and agriculture sector growth 2011-2021

Fisheries and agriculture sectors have been crucial for the livelihoods of people, especially for those living in the outer atolls. Fisheries and agriculture sectors have been contributing on average 3.8 and 1.3 percent to GDP between 2015 and 2021 respectively. Fish is an important staple for the population and fishing is a key livelihood activity for people resident in the atolls. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of fisheries to the economy and both agriculture and fisheries to food security. The NRRP prioritized the expansion of both sectors. Farming activities and land allocation for farming increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were approximately 17,589 fishers and 7,568 farmers employed in the fisheries and agriculture sectors in 2020. These two sectors contributed to 7.4 of total employment in 2019. The fisheries sector, however, is highly reliant on government subsidies and needs commercial viability to support larger contributions to the economy. The ongoing fisheries sector development works include the expansion of fish storage and fish processing capacity, fish buying, and ice plant expansions planned in multiple strategic locations across the country. Both the fisheries and agriculture sectors are highly vulnerable to the growing effects of climate change.

BOX 15 | SHARED BENEFITS FROM TOURISM

Accommodation in tourist resorts generates over 90 percent of the tourism share of GDP. However, tourism development is uneven across the country. Although the one-island-one-resort tourism has matured into a 50-year industry and the guesthouse segment of beds development in inhabited islands has been in effect for over a decade now, centralization of tourism development continues to increase. More than one third of resort beds are in Kaafu Atoll, and the zone-three inclusive of Kaafu Atoll comprises more than half of the tourist resort beds and over 80 percent of the guesthouse beds. As tourism expands, the inadequate development of resort beds across different regions of the Maldives does not guarantee equally shared benefits from tourism to people living in outer atolls further from the greater Male' region. Meanwhile, the long-term lease of islands for tourist resorts and related activities lacks adequate measures to ensure the rights and livelihoods of island communities, especially women, affecting their traditional lifestyles and livelihoods, conflict with resources for tourism operations in inhabited islands, and resource conflicts with the fisheries sector.

Table 6:
Tourism bed distribution
by zones by end of 2020

Region	Zone	No of resort beds	No of guesthouse beds
Region 1	Zone 1 Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani	2.6 percent 5 resorts	2.4 percent 41 inhabited islands
	Zone 2 Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani	27.8 percent 46 resorts	7.7 percent 45 inhabited islands
Region 2	Zone 3 Kaafu, Alifu Alifu, Alifu Dhaalu, Vaavu	51.8 percent 81 resorts	82.7 percent 35 inhabited islands
	Zone 4 Meemu, Faafu, Dhaalu, Thaa, Laamu	10.6 percent 15 resorts	2.7 percent 43 inhabited islands
Region 3	Zone 5 Gaaf Alifu, Gaafu Dhaalu	4.9 percent 9 resorts	1.3 percent 18 inhabited islands
	Zone 6 Gnaviyani, Seenu	2.5 percent 3 resorts	2.9 percent 7 inhabited islands

The National Fisheries and Agricultural Policy (2019-2029) has been formulated for the first time. It highlights the commitment to the development of these sectors by the renewal of 21-year leases for 15 uninhabited islands dedicated for commercial fisheries, 50 uninhabited islands for commercial agriculture and eight additional uninhabited islands for both commercial fisheries and agriculture. The pillars of the Policy are aligned with all 17 SDGs.

AgroNat has been formulated for the development and expansion of the agriculture sector. Soon after the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the economy, AgroNat was launched as a 100 percent subsidiary of the state-owned enterprise, Maldives Fund Management Corporation (MFMC), as a priority resilience initiative for diversification of the economy and to reduce dependency on food imports. 17 crops of importance for food security have been identified and supported for the expansion of agricultural output. AgroNat adopted a contract farming approach by facilitating farming across inhabited islands, enabling resources for farmers, and delivering quality and affordable products to the market. By the end of 2022, more than 700 contracts were signed between farmers from over 20 islands and over MVR 2 million was paid to farmers for harvests received. The agricultural sector however needs to modernize and ensure safe and good quality products are available.

BOX 16 | CHALLENGES FOR FISHERIES SECTOR

The stakeholder consultations undertaken for the second VNR learned that the growth of tourism on inhabited islands and the increase in wage jobs across the islands have completely transformed some islands that were previously engaged in fishing to shift to the tourism sector and shift to other wage jobs. This has affected fisheries sector employment, where some vessels have had to stop fishing completely due to a shortage of fishers available to join fishing trips. Income from the fisheries sector is seasonal, disincentivizing especially young people, whereas employment in fixed monthly wage jobs and an increase in the minimum wage has created a demand for these jobs.

Furthermore, fishers in the south of the Maldives, Huvadhu Atoll, a popular fishery zone, are concerned that they have to wait for over a week to be able to sell their fish due to the low capacity of the fish-buying companies. Fishers thus experience lost income opportunities, lost catch, and have to sell fish at lower prices. Although policies are in place for fisheries sector expansion, timely implementation delays have affected fisheries sector growth.

Fishermen engaged in the prime tourism zone, Alif Dhaalu Atoll, highlighted the growing natural resource competition between the tourism and fisheries sectors and the importance of mariculture for consumption and for aquarium fisheries export. They expressed concern about the impact of reclamation for land creation on the fisheries sector and the detrimental losses on fish habitat and fish life. Reclamation for tourism was expressed as a serious concern, and the concentration of tourism in already busy tourism zones impacting carrying capacity, and the importance of expansion of tourism to other atolls were expressed as a critical consideration for sustainable economic growth.

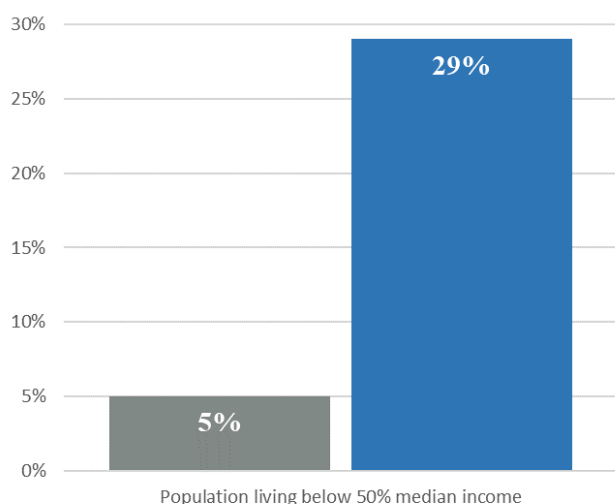


Figure 46: Proportion of population living below 50 percent median poverty line

■ Male' ■ Atolls

The Maldives has a low poverty rate resulting from strong economic growth in the past, but inequality persists.

At the national poverty line of MVR 71.4 per person per day, poverty was at 5.4 percent in 2019. At this poverty rate, poverty was heavily concentrated in atolls and was 10 times as high as in Male' City.⁵⁹ In 2019, the poverty rate of the Maldives against the international poverty line of (US\$ 5.5 PPP) for UMIC was estimated to be 1.7 percent, driven entirely by the atolls, where the poverty rate was 3.2 percent.⁶⁰ Furthermore, variations in poverty exist within atolls, with atolls better off and worse off within the same zone. With growing global economic uncertainties, climate change risks, extreme vulnerability to external shocks, and over-dependence on tourism, any negative impact on tourism poses significant risks to the poverty of the country and would disproportionately impact on the poor. The World Bank October 2022 country update highlighted that poverty rose to 19.8 percent in 2020 due to the pandemic demonstrating the risk of a large population group sliding back to poverty. However, this ratio was expected to reduce sharply to 3.8 percent by the end of 2022 due to strong economic recovery.⁶¹ Furthermore, the consultations for the second VNR highlighted the challenge of urban poverty in the Maldives, which is currently cushioned by the high subsidies and welfare assistance by the government.

⁵⁹ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022

⁶⁰ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022

⁶¹ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022

The recent positive development in income for the formal sector will lead to a rise in household income. 113,721 people contribute to the MRPS, roughly the size of formal employment. According to the 2022 Census, 28,294 people are employed in the civil service, with 65 percent of the civil service workforce being women. 94 percent of the civil service earned less than MVR 10,000 (US\$ 649) per month in 2021.⁶² Minimum Wage Order introduced in late 2021 is a first-of-its-kind initiative applicable to all Maldivian workers in the public and private sectors. The ongoing Public Sector Pay Harmonization Policy (PSPH) for the civil service will also lead to a rise in household income. Pay harmonization has been completed for teachers in the education sector and has been planned for the health sector. Furthermore, a service charge of 10 percent was made mandatory for tourism sector workers, impacting positively on household income. Pay harmonization needs to be prioritized and implemented rapidly to ensure that the high pay disparity is removed.

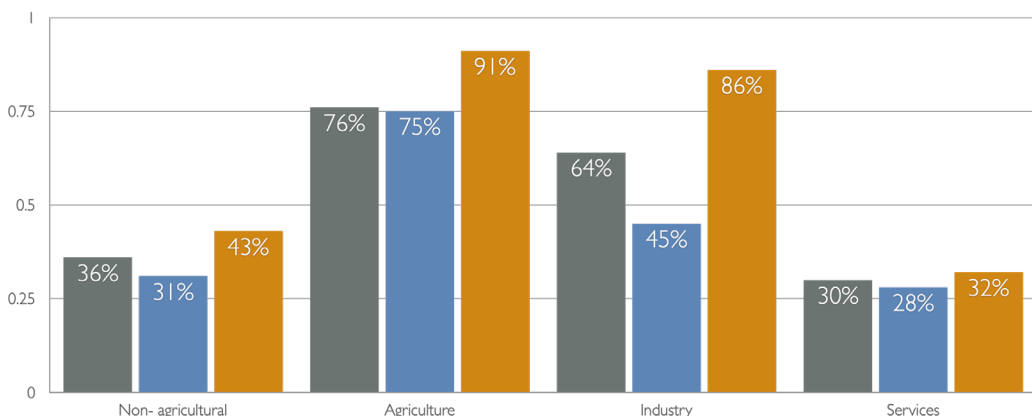


Figure 47: Informal employment by sex

■ Total ■ Male ■ Female

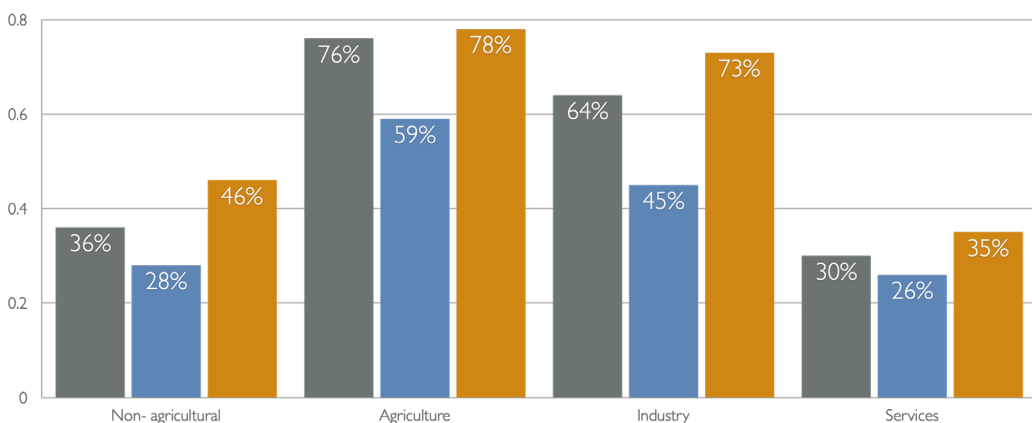


Figure 48: Informal employment by Male and atolls

■ Total ■ Male' ■ Atolls

Informal employment remains a concern for equality, especially in the atolls. Women’s informal employment remains high and informality in the atolls remains high, increasing inequality especially for women and people resident in the atolls. Inflationary pressure further impacts the vulnerable households. The COVID-19 impact on income and livelihood loss affected the informal sector, and thus women, disproportionately. While subsidy reforms are being discussed, improving them with a well-designed targeting mechanism to identify the poor and those in real need and implementing tax and transfer instruments would help mitigate the negative impacts of subsidy reforms on the poor.⁶³

⁶² Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 2022

⁶³ World Bank Maldives Development Update. Navigating a Tight Line. April 2023

BOX 17 | MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY

Nearly one in three people across the Maldives were multidimensionally poor in 2016/2017 according to the first Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of the Maldives published in 2020. A non-monetary metric consisting of eight indicators was identified for the classification of poor and non-poor, and while only about 10 percent of the population in Male' City was multidimensionally poor, 40 percent in the atolls was multidimensionally poor.

At the time of reporting, 61 percent of the population was resident in the atolls and 87 percent of the poor were in the atolls. Access to healthcare is the biggest deprivation across the country. The multidimensional poverty in atolls is driven by a lack of access to health care, low years of schooling, and lack of access to safe drinking water and sewer system connection for sanitation. In contrast, multidimensional poverty in Male' is driven by overcrowding and access to health care. Male' is the third most congested city in the world, and the region, slightly behind Dhaka and Islamabad. Furthermore, policies to expand Male' region risks driving further overcrowding, congestion and public health risks. Meanwhile, access to infrastructure and services in the atolls remains limited.

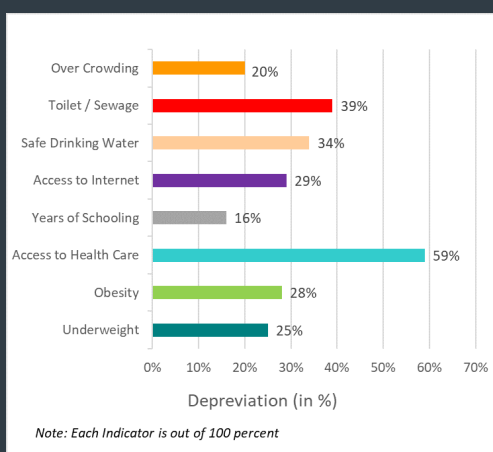


Figure 49: National uncensored headcount ratios (in percent), 2016/17

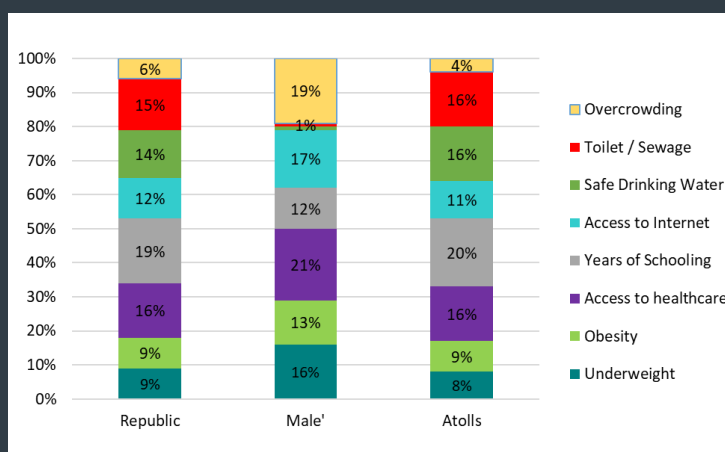


Figure 50: Percentage contribution of each indicator to MPI for National, Male' and Atolls, 2016/17

Multidimensional poverty is more preventable in children and people with disabilities further exposing the risk of these groups to fall into poverty.

Secondary and higher education is associated with reduced poverty and wage employment is associated with a low incidence of poverty. Similarly, employment in the tertiary sectors such as services and trade are associated with a low incidence of poverty. In contrast, informal employment risks twice higher poverty rate compared to formal employment. Self-employment is three times more likely than wage earners to report income loss.

Extracted from the report "Multidimensional Poverty in the Maldives 2020", published by the Maldives Bureau of Statistics and Poverty Report 2022

The benefits program "Zakaat Nafaa" introduced to support the poor people will improve their household income and well-being. The program targets people who have declared themselves as poor in the "Zakaat" poverty ledger at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. Over 7,778 people were registered in the poverty ledger in 2021 and the program was launched with a vision to eliminate poverty and empower financial independence. The program entails asset pricing up to MVR 150,000 (US\$ 9,727) to each family to earn a sustainable income. Housing, poultry farming, hydroponic farming, reef fishing, tailoring, and training/ on-the-job training/apprenticeships have been identified as areas of assistance under the program. Under phase one of the program, 98 islands were identified for assessment targeting 1,071 people from 346 households. To date, the program has assigned assets for business activities to 97 households totaling MVR 7.5 million in allocations.

Opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) financing and entrepreneurship have been expanding. The SME Development Finance Cooperation (SDFC) launched in 2019 has enabled low-interest loans to more than 1,300 SMEs. SDFC was initiated to provide low-cost and easy access to finance the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). With a loan portfolio of MVR 1.6 billion, one-third was provided for tourism businesses.

SDFC loans prioritize women, youth, and PWDs, and can help increase recipients’ credit rating scores. This can support these groups to access additional loans at a lower interest rate and at a lower equity investment. About 25 percent of the loan portfolio is held by women-owned and women-inclusive businesses. Soon after SDFC was launched, COVID-19 impacted several businesses, especially new startups and MSMEs. In 2020 the government launched the COVID-19 recovery scheme “Viyafaari Ehee” – an economic relief package administered through SDFC. More than 4,000 MSMEs applied, and the scheme was able to supply more than half of the applicants with over MVR 300 million in loans. Approximately 15 percent of recipients were women, receiving over MVR 44 million (12 percent) in loans. Furthermore, online applications for SDFC services have enabled businesses from across the Maldives to access the service. A dedicated loan scheme for agriculture sector called “Danduveri Nafaa” is also administered by SDFC.

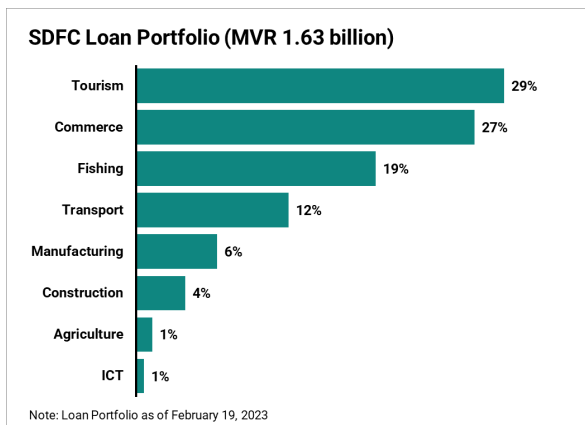


Figure 51: SDFC loan portfolio 2023

Source: SDFC



Figure 52: SDFC loan portfolio by a number of beneficiaries

Source: SDFC

The “Authentic Maldives” initiative to nurture creativity, talent, and entrepreneurship has enabled over 200 MSME suppliers to showcase their products. The first Authentic Maldives shop operationalized under the Business Centre Corporation (BCC), was launched in January 2020. Nearly 60 percent of the suppliers are females, and the shops have generated year-on-year increases in disbursements between 2020 and 2022. For the fiscal year 2022, a total value of more than MVR 19 million was disbursed to suppliers benefitting several small and medium female suppliers across the Maldives. Expansion of such market space coupled with training, and low-cost finance could enable women to participate in the formal economy, creating benefits from pensions and incentivized economic policies.

2020: MVR 4,377,436.63
2021: MVR 14,511,633.96
2022: MVR 19,061,357.30

Figure 53: Year-on-year disbursements to Authentic Maldives suppliers

Source: Business Centre Corporation

Tourism Revenue²(Million Rufiyya)

year	Total Government Revenue ¹	Land Rent	Tourist Bed-night Tax	Green Tax	Tourism Goods & Service Tax (T-GST)	Lease Period Extention Fee	Total Tourism Revenue	% Share of Tourism Revenue in Total Government Revenue
2016	18,578.06	1,449.68	0.15	633.55	3,964.86	569.10	6,617.34	34.8
2017	20,258.67	1,401.64	-	693.97	4,182.93	117.41	6,395.96	32.6
2018	21,322.69	1,535.32	-	810.35	4,783.34	76.70	7,203.34	34.4
2019	21,161.34	1,646.55	-	851.18	4,903.59	306.80	7,708.12	34.9
2020	12,550.23	702.18	-	351.90	2,220.26	153.50	3,427.83	23.0

Table 7: Tourism revenue 2016 – 2020

Ministry of Tourism

Data provided by Ministry of Finance , Maldives inland revenue authority

The growing fiscal vulnerability, however, is a serious concern for the Maldives. The main revenue source is from tourism and with heavy dependency on food and fuel imports, the economy is highly vulnerable to external shocks. The rising global commodity prices following the COVID-19 pandemic impacted domestic inflation, putting further pressure on the government to manage the high capital expenditure, subsidies, and welfare spending. This, amplified by the need for finance to support the Public Sector Infrastructure Programs (PSIP), puts added pressure on the current account balance.⁶⁴ Although PSIP in infrastructure projects, such as housing and renewable energy, will contribute to economic growth in the long term, the short and medium-term fiscal risks are high. As highlighted by the World Bank October 2022 country update, the cost of debt service for housing sector loans is a major financial risk that will likely have to be borne by the public sector.⁶⁵ Although spending on welfare and social insurance continues to increase, policies shaped without key principles of social protection, risk leaving the vulnerable, unemployed, self-employed and those working in the informal sector behind. Meanwhile, “Aasandha” lacks proper monitoring to prevent leakages and fraud. Strengthening welfare policies to better target subsidies for the vulnerable and to contain expenditure is important for sustainable economic development in the Maldives.

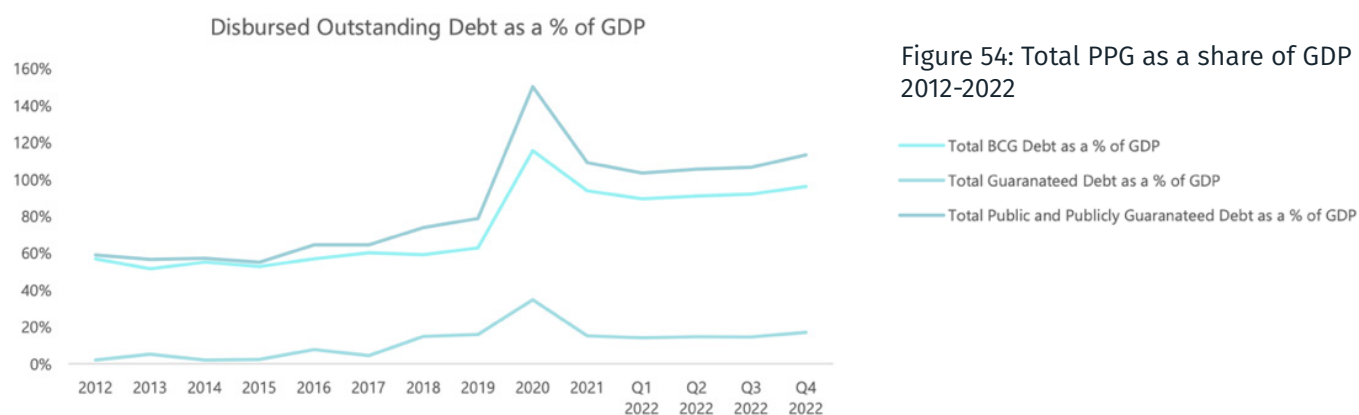


Figure 54: Total PPG as a share of GDP 2012-2022

High public debt exceeds the size of the Maldives economy. Continued public expenditure on PSIP projects contributes to high levels of debt. Public and publicly guaranteed (PPG) debt rose to 114 percent of GDP in 2021 before dropping to 103 percent of GDP in Q1 of 2022 and increased to 113 percent of GDP in Q4 of 2022.⁶⁶ Of the PPG debt, domestic debt accounts for 62 percent while external debt accounts for 51 percent. High fiscal vulnerability combined with high debt leaves no fiscal space to divert finance for sustainable development initiatives or important sustainability services and initiatives in the short term.



Photo : Mihaaru

⁶⁴ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022
⁶⁵ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022
⁶⁶ <https://www.finance.gov.mv/public/attachments/N9rqFoLaFin2xeqTXkZbsNGkY30BWxEFUbwf8px.pdf>

BOX 18 | IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE MALDIVES ECONOMY

The Maldives economy was progressing well until the unprecedented shock from the COVID-19 pandemic. The country's border closed during early 2020 and tourism stopped, with devastating consequences for livelihoods where many businesses were forced to permanently shut down. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the vulnerability of the Maldives economy, with its over-dependence on tourism and the interconnectedness of other industries to tourism. In 2020, GDP declined by 33.5 percent, there was record high level of layoffs, complete and partial income loss, and livelihood loss. The income impact was mitigated to some extent through stimulus packages introduced by the government. New policy initiatives and multi-stakeholder partnerships rebounded tourism and rebooted the economy. The economy continued to recover strongly by the end of 2022.

Employees in the accommodation and food services took the brunt of the impact, with around 61 percent of the employees being affected. While the highest number of job terminations and salary reductions were associated with the struggling tourism sector, prolonged closure of workplaces and ceased business activities magnified the negative impact on employment. Additionally, SMEs and self-employed people were severely impacted and unable to continue with their startup or high cost of operations. However, with the gradual relaxation of containment measures from June 2020 onwards, business resumed, resulting in an improvement on the employment and business operations. To minimize the economic impact of the pandemic, the government introduced an Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) of USD 162 million (equivalent to 3.4 percent of GDP) in March 2020. This mainly consisted of a loan scheme to support resorts, large businesses and SMEs, and an income support allowance scheme to support individuals who lost their jobs and faced salary reductions. The loan scheme provision was conditional on retainment of employees in those businesses. Tourism rebound has led to strong economic recovery in 2021 and 2022.

Extracted from the report "Impact of COVID-19 impact on employment in the Maldives", published by the Ministry of Economic Development.

Leave No One Behind

- The share of women in the labor force is significantly low and women in the informal sector lack social protection and other labour benefits. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected women, as those out of the labor force or in informal sectors were likely to miss out on income recovery benefits. Likewise, women's low ownership levels of assets hinder their financial independence and economic development opportunities.
- Households with income levels at the bottom of the poverty line are at greater risk of being left behind without targeted policies to improve their wellbeing. Children and adults living in atolls with low-income households and low economic activities are also at greater risk of being left behind.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate term within the next 1-2 years

- Accelerate fiscal adjustments through reforms to pensions, welfare and subsidies, and harmonization of the national social protection system to better target the vulnerable and people at the bottom of the poverty line.
- Strengthen the capacity of MSMEs through mentorship, knowledge exchange, access to finance, and data driven decision-making to enhance their access to markets.
- Create opportunities for women and youth entrepreneurship through empowerment, capacity building, knowledge sharing and demonstration, access to finance, and development of managerial skills.

- Complete tagging of the government's program budget with SDGs and ensure monitoring of the budget for SDG implementation.
- Accelerate the adoption of digital technologies across the country to improve services for trade expansion, service provision and efficiency.
- Extend support for hybrid working and remote working, targeting youth and skilled women (eg: in areas such as graphic design, web design, and digital marketing) to enhance their employability and entrepreneurship.
- Complete the pay harmonization for all public sector employees to reduce the wage gap and increase the average hourly earnings of the public sector labor force.
- Reduce informal employment by incentivizing micro and small businesses (especially women in the informal economy) to formalize, increase income, and ensure better social and income protection.

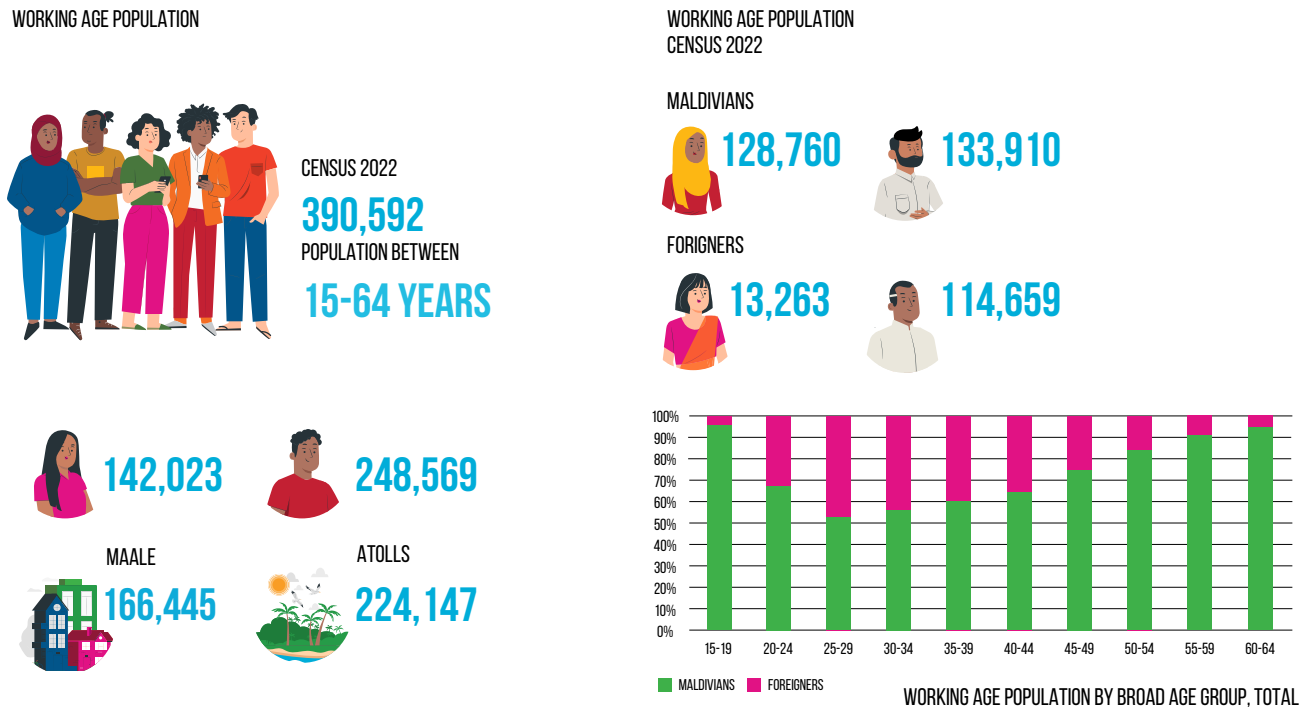
In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Enhance access to trade and establish market linkages across atolls by leveraging the national public ferry network and ensuring sustainability, reliability, and quality of service provision.
- Reduce over-dependence on tourism and promote sustained economic growth by diversifying other sectors such as education, health care, renewable energy, and digital economy, strengthening delivery of the blue economy strategy and enhancing fisheries and agricultural production.
- Recognize gig-economy trends across the local community and ensure income and social protection for people in the gig-economy.
- Enable ongoing tourism sector expansion to benefit people living in zones with low tourism and increase their employment and participation in the tourism sector.
- Increase women's participation in employment and entrepreneurship in tourism for more opportunities for women from the tourism sector.
- Enhance the agriculture sector to ensure safe food production and accelerate the use of technology and improved market access within the domestic market.
- Accelerate the shift of the tourism sector towards more inclusive and sustainable development models that promote sustainable production and consumption.
- Ensure advancement of technology and infrastructure at workplaces for institutional modernization.
- Formulate a national financial inclusion strategy.

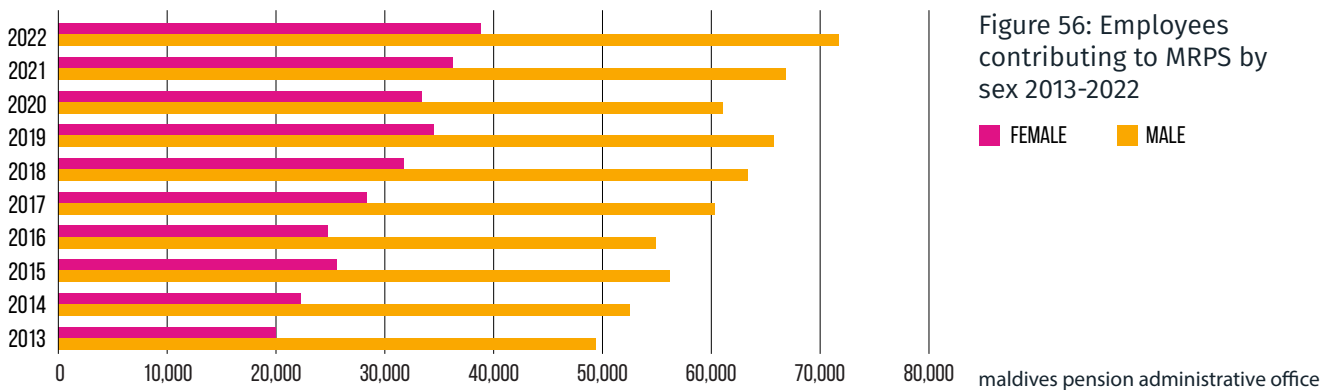


Human Capital and Reduced Inequalities

Figure 55: Working age population Census 2022



The labor force participation rate (LFPR) of the Maldives in 2019 was 60.2 percent. The working-age population of the Maldives was 390,592 persons according to Census 2022, an increase of 23 percent compared with HIES 2019 estimates. The LFPR of women (46 percent) is comparatively lower than that of men (77 percent) in 2019. The unemployment rate was 4.8 percent for females and 5.6 percent for males in 2019. The low economic participation of women is a serious concern for the country. High participation and completion of higher secondary and higher education by women indicates that domestic and childcare responsibilities are key barriers to their participation in the economy.



At the end of 2021, the MRPS had 119,062 contributors, with men making up a significant majority. This indicates a large proportion of women who are not economically active or are not participating in formal economic activities. According to HIES 2019, approximately 40 percent of the working-age population is not part of the labor force and nearly 73 percent are women. Furthermore, about 40 percent of the informal employment sector is women, posing challenges for women’s social protection. Moreover, their access to loans, financial assistance, and credit is often restricted or limited. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the disproportionate impact on women working in the informal economy. Despite accommodation and food services being the largest employment generating sector in the private sector, only around three percent of Maldivian women are involved in the sector, leading to missed opportunities for achieving wealth equality. Although the introduction of the Old Age Basic Pensions Scheme (OABPS) aimed to provide a basic pension for all Maldivians aged 65 and above, the absence of women in the MRPS poses risks to their future well-being. This situation also places a significant fiscal burden on the government due to the increasing aging population and higher life expectancy among women.

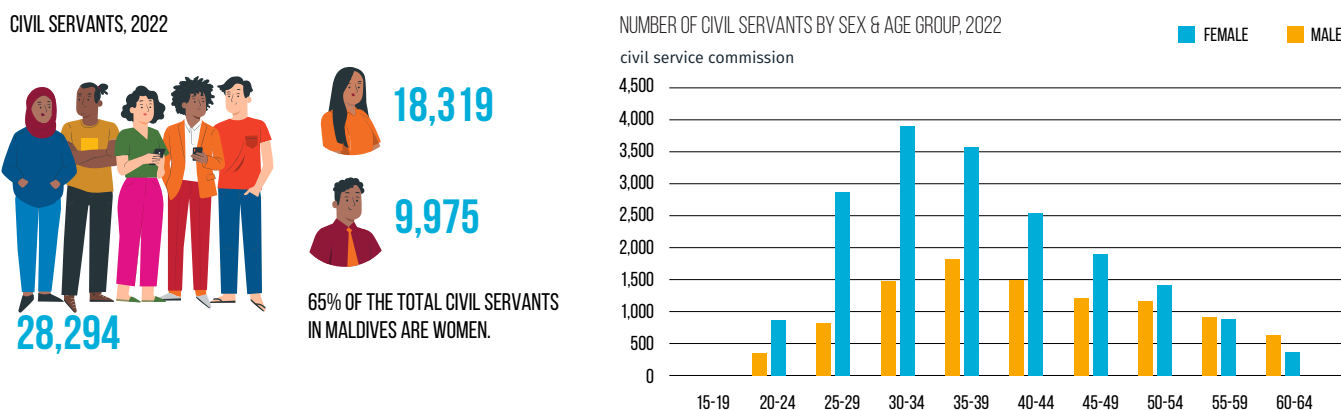


Figure 57: Civil servants by sex and age group 2022

Extension of the paid maternity leave of six months for government employees benefits many women in the government civil services. The extension of six months paid maternity leave and one month paid paternity leave for government employees was introduced from March 2019. Maternity leave by law is 60 days while paternity leave is limited to three days. The extension of maternity and paternity leave is beneficial but limited to government employees and those employed by organizations that have voluntarily adopted it. The universal adoption of a similar policy by public and private sector employers would support women to take up and continue work. Likewise, policies encouraging equitable sharing of domestic work would encourage and enable women to be equal partners in development. It is noted that the high number of women in the civil service cushioned the impact of household income for those families with a working woman in the civil service, as they did not experience complete loss of income during the COVID-19 pandemic.

EMPLOYMENT IN RESORTS, 2020

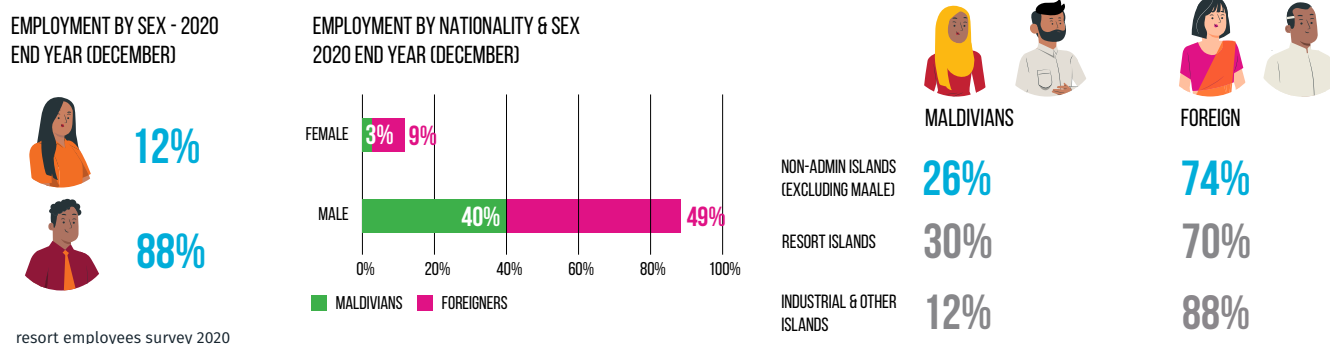


Figure 58: Employment in resorts by locality and gender

Although the Maldives has made significant strides in building the human capital of the country through investments in education, there is a gap in technical and vocational skills for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship. Skills mismatch with the job market is a concern for school leavers seeking jobs. While the Maldives is heavily dependent on the tourism industry, Census 2022 data shows a ratio of 30:70 Maldivian to foreign workers in the tourist resorts of the Maldives. Meanwhile, more than 6,000 students complete secondary education every year and there remains a significant gap in skills and knowledge to join the tourism industry and the job market. Skills development opportunities for PWDs is also a concern– with gaps in providing support for PWDs in access to services, providing support during academic examination and ensuring productivity and participation of PWDs in the job market. Competency of PWDs has been assessed through a merit-based system to date, however a tool is currently being set up to improve competency-based assessments. Similarly, women’s participation in STEM education remains low and those who have completed and are highly qualified in STEM fields (for example in skilled digital areas) face discrimination in a male dominated workforce. The biggest challenge for the expansion of vocational and skills development are the availability of qualified teachers and lecturers as well as the capacity to design and implement the programs across the atolls of the Maldives. Reskilling, upskilling, and improving ICT skills across the population are priority needs for achieving SDG 4.

WORKING AGE POPULATION IN ADMINISTRATIVE ISLANDS OF ATOLLS

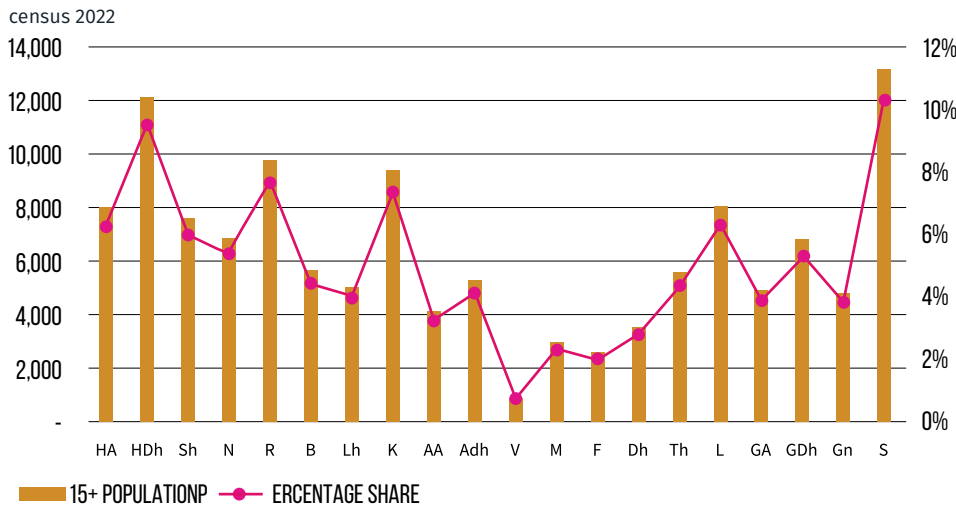
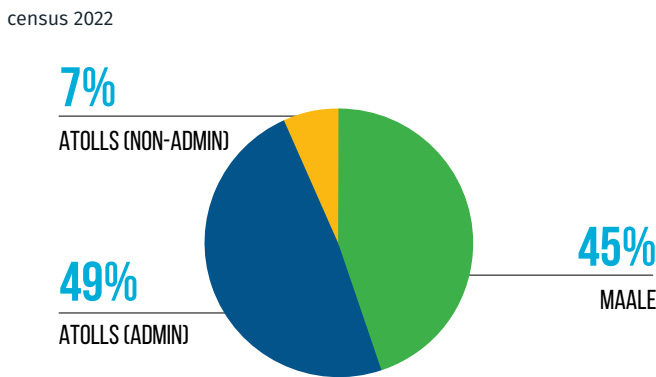


Figure 59: Working age population by locality Census 2022

WORKING AGE POPULATION BY LOCALITY



The percentage of youth who left the labor market increased between 2016 and 2019.⁶⁷ Amongst the labor market entrant age group 16 to 25 years, ‘discouragement’ as the stated reason for not participating in the labor market rose from 8.2 percent to 12.2 percent in atolls while non-participation due to enrollment in education fell from 40.7 percent to 34 percent between 2016 and 2019. The wide availability of jobs compared with the opportunity cost of staying in school led to an increase in those looking for work—in 2019 youth between 16 to 25 years both in Male’ City and atolls were likely to look for a job, however, the success rate was higher for those in Male’ City compared with those in atolls, who often lost out to older cohorts.⁶⁸ Although youth labor force participation increased in both Male’ City and the atolls between 2016 and 2019, youth unemployment also increased in the atolls.⁶⁹ The employment rate among 16 to 25 year olds in the atolls was about 17 percentage points lower than for young professionals (26 to 35 years) and for older adults between 37 to 64 years.⁷⁰ The COVID-19 pandemic also affected youth in the labor market entrant age group disproportionately compared to other age groups in formal employment.

The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has partnered with the World Bank to implement the “Maldives: Enhancing Employability and Resilience of Youth” (MEERY) scheme for skill development and entrepreneurship training. The MEERY project is designed to empower youth with skill sets and entrepreneurship training. The project is a collaboration between the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Economic Development, funded by the World Bank, and will focus on developing the skills relevant to the job market to foster livelihoods. It has provided the equipment, furniture and machineries required for one junior college targeting youth between the ages of 17 to 24 years in Haa Alif Atoll Dhidhoo and one technical, vocational and education training (TVET) center in Raa Atoll Alifushi.

⁶⁷ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022
⁶⁸ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022
⁶⁹ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022
⁷⁰ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022

BOX 19 | FOREIGN MIGRANTS

The reliance on foreign migrants for employment is increasing. Census 2022 showed that there is one foreign migrant for every three Maldivian residents and most of the working age population between 30 to 39 years are foreign workers. Foreign migrants are mostly concentrated in Male' City (39 percent) followed by 28 percent in resorts, 25 percent in administrative islands and 9 percent in industrial islands. The main sectors of engagement are construction, tourism, wholesale and retail trade, hotels, and restaurants. Furthermore, labor shortages in traditionally protected sectors like fisheries are occurring, opening up the sector for foreign migrant labor recruitment. The dependency on foreign migrant workforce is projected to grow with the increase in labor demand for economic activities, while Maldivian population growth shows declining trends.

According to the National Transfer Accounts, the share of the resident foreign population between 2019 and 2050 is expected to grow from 30 to 41 percent. The consultations undertaken for the VNR highlighted the risk of exploitation and the need for policies to ensure sustainable development and human rights protections for the foreign population in the Maldives, especially for unskilled migrants. Increase in exploitations related to recruitment and employment of unskilled migrants, and justice and health protection of undocumented foreign migrants in the country are serious concerns. These issues and exploitation of the free visa policy by some a few people also pose security risks for the country.

Gaps exist in national policies for equal treatment of migrant workers. Although minimum wage was initially introduced with a two-year moratorium for foreign migrant inclusion, there are concerns that minimum wage not being fully expanded to foreign workers during the timeframe. Alongside potential for exploitation of foreign workers, this also has implications for local workers as cheap foreign labor could dominate the unskilled work market and incentivize migrant recruitment. Additionally, as the Maldives moves towards accelerating digitization in service delivery, the digital divide amongst unskilled illiterate foreign migrants in the country will increase. Unskilled foreign migrants are also amongst the most at risk of being left behind in health care access, and lack of policies especially for health management of migrant workers remains a public health risk for the country. Domestic workers are most at risk of missing out on occupational health and safety safeguards as they are not included in the upcoming occupational health and safety legislation.

For long-term sustainability of foreign migrants within the community, it is important to undertake pre-departure and on arrival orientation for first-time foreign migrants to the Maldives about the Maldives culture, religion, lifestyle, and society. Targeting the right skilled workers for recruitment and upskilling workers who are in different sectors is also important.

Leave No One Behind

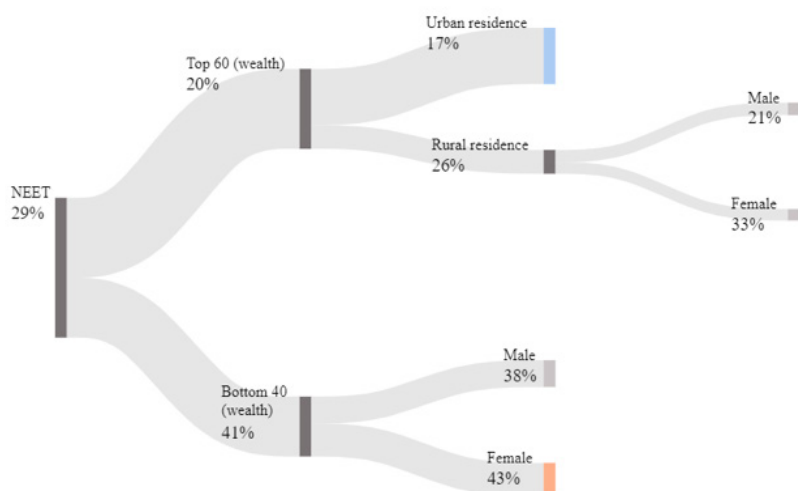


Figure 60: Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training

Source: UNESCAP illustration using HIES 2019 data

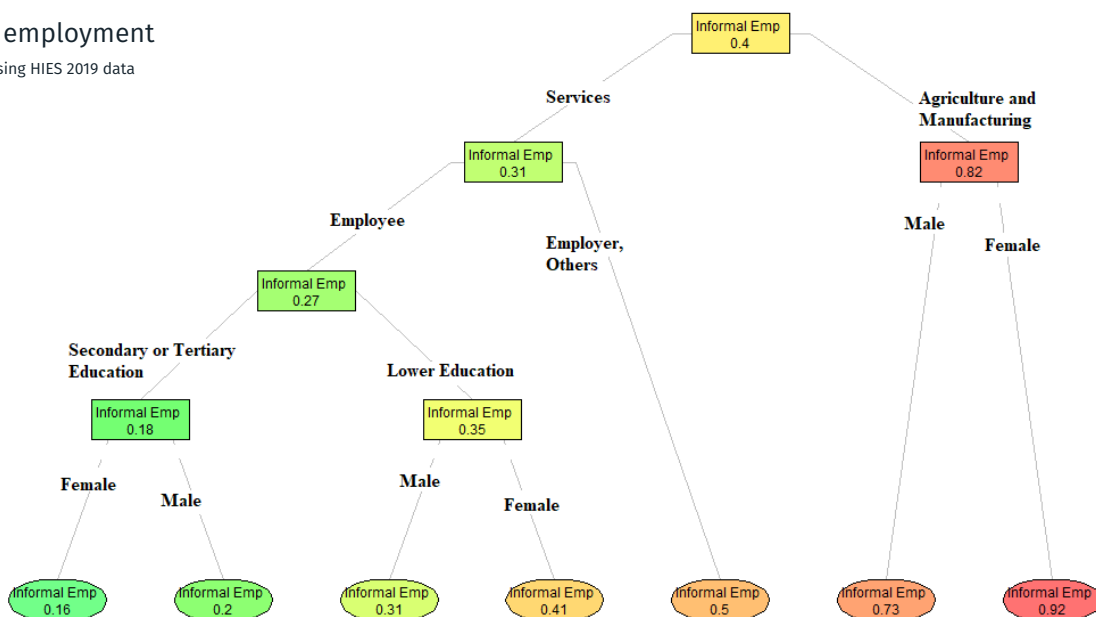
Data legend

- Furthest ahead
- Other terminal nodes
- Furthest behind

- In 2019, across the Maldives 29 percent of men and women aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Of particular concern are poorer women aged 15-24 years among whom 43 percent are NEET (orange node in Figure 60). They represent 24 percent of the 15–24-year-old individuals in the Maldives. Youth living in richer households in Male’ City are much less likely to be NEET with only 17 percent in this category (blue node in Figure 60).

Figure 61: Informal employment

Source: UNESCAP illustration using HIES 2019 data



- On average, 40 percent of employed people in 2019 were in informal employment (yellow box in Figure 61). Informality was very prevalent in agriculture and manufacturing at 82 percent, compared with 31 percent in the services sector. The group with the highest proportion in informal employment was women in the agricultural and manufacturing sector (red box in Figure 61 bottom-right), with a total of 92 percent.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate term within the next 1-2 years

- Implement vocational and skills training to match the needs of the school leavers and youth in the labor force and match the “Bachelor’s Degree Grant Scheme” program to prioritize according to national skills and industry gaps.
- Undertake targeted programs for youth aged 15-24 years and other vulnerable groups for continuation of education and participation in the economy.
- Enhance the employability of youth through skills development and enabling transitions from education to work.
- Enact the Industrial Relations Bill and the Occupational Safety and Health Bill to ensure health and safety for all, including domestic workers.
- Establish policies for alternative working arrangements such as working from home and flexible working.

- Improve services and assistance for migrants by increasing access to information and strengthening referral mechanisms and pathways.
- Ensure full implementation of minimum wage for all workers, including foreign migrants.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Accelerate digitalization through skills enhancement in the workforce to enable more people, especially women to take part in the economy, including from remote locations.
- Increase the number of affordable childcare facilities across strategic locations to support women and single parents to engage in the economy.
- Amend laws to extend the coverage of social protection (including minimum wages, paid leave, and maternity leave) to parents in the private sector and informal economy.
- Enhance skills development and training for all, including unskilled migrants in the workforce.
- Strengthen labour migration to reduce exploitation of migrants by increasing access to safe, orderly, and regular migration through interventions to support ethical recruitment and improved monitoring.



Photo : Sun Online

Sustainable Cities and Communities and Resilient Infrastructure

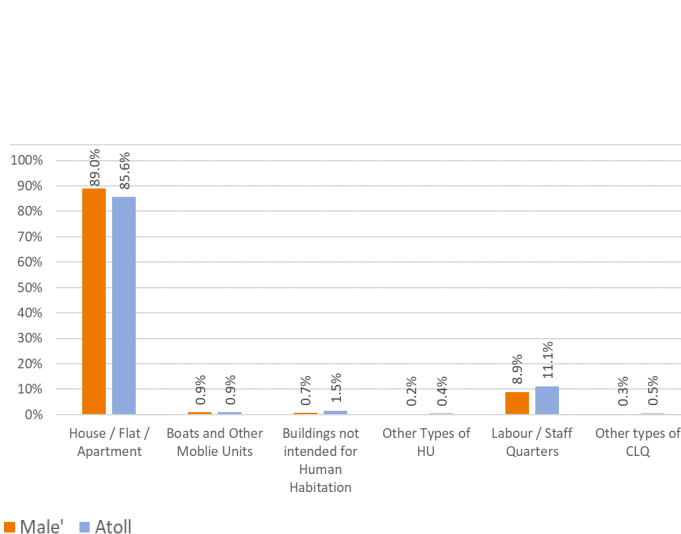


Figure 62: Households by type of living quarter Male' and atolls 2022

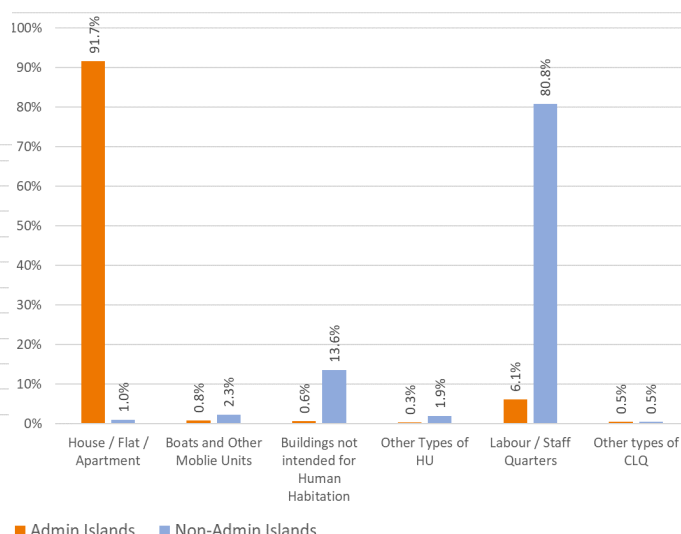


Figure 63: Households by type of living quarter admin and non-admin islands 2022

The average national household size has decreased from 5.24 to 4.7 between 2014 and 2022. This represents a decrease from 5.4 to 4.5 in Male' City and from 5.14 to 4.8 in the atolls. Total households in the Maldives increased by 38 percent to 93,000 during the same period. In Male' City, 0.7 percent of households lived in buildings not intended for human habitation. In the atolls, 1.7 percent of the total households lived in buildings not intended for human habitation—0.6 percent in the administrative islands and significantly higher (13.6 percent) in the non-administrative islands.⁷¹

Housing shortages throughout the nation have been a long-standing concern. Public investment in housing was ramped up between 2010 and 2021 to address the lack of affordable housing. Although housing investments are high, housing is still falling short of the SDG target of safe, adequate, and affordable housing.⁷² The government driven housing sector expansion is a key source of fiscal risk and accounts for about one third of total external PPG debt. US\$ 1.1 billion has been spent to finance the construction of housing over the last decade.⁷³ The latest social housing opportunities in greater Male' region in Hulhumale' phase two was extended to civil servants, married people between the ages of 18 and 35 years, and Male' City residents who had previously experienced issues with public housing projects. Other priority categories included teachers, single parents, doctors, and nurses. While housing would contribute to the wellbeing of the beneficiaries, the practice of prioritizing employment type, with several in the highest income segment, countered the social housing targeting principle to serve those most in need of government support.⁷⁴ As a result, the rental rate for the latest government social housing project, "Hiyaa" flats in phase two of Hulhumale' is the same across all employment categories, regardless of income of the household and their capacity to pay. Meanwhile, the government has capped "Rent to Own" program beneficiaries, tolerated high delinquency on rent payments and provided lengthy repayment periods. One size fits all housing strategy, overlapping and weak institutional arrangements, multiple government agencies planning housing and the lack of an integrated housing project data system are critical risks.⁷⁵

The "Gedhoruveriyaa Loan" scheme was introduced for residents living outside of the main urban areas to allow easier access to housing finance. The loan was introduced with low interest of six percent and a 20-year repayment period and implemented by the Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC). The main purpose of the loan is for completion of unfinished houses in the atolls and to provide finance for the reconstruction of houses.

⁷¹ Census 2022

⁷² World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022 Part B Housing

⁷³ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022 Part B Housing

⁷⁴ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022 Part B Housing

⁷⁵ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022 Part B Housing

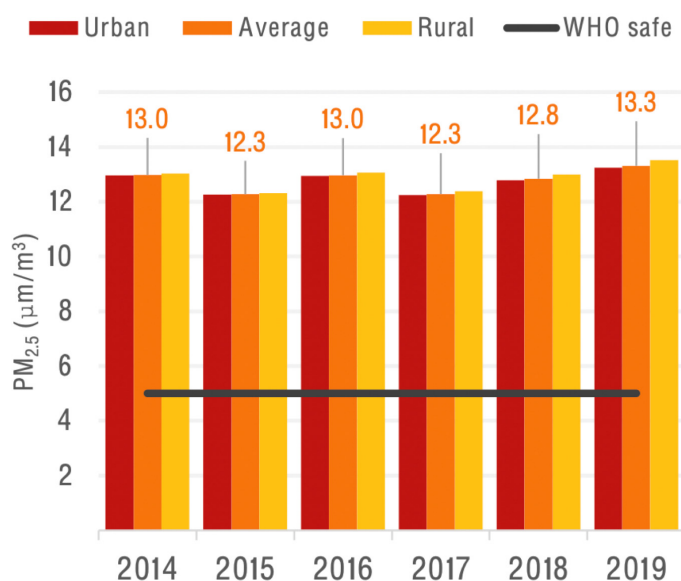


Figure 64: Air particulate matter PM2.5 2014-2019

Source: IRENA

Overcrowding and health risks such as air pollution are increasing concerns especially in the greater Male' region. Uncontrolled internal migration to Male' City has led to overcrowding and overdevelopment of Male' City, which continues to grow. Over the past three decades, Male' City has transformed to greater Male' region with its satellite islands/wards. Unplanned population growth in the region has resulted in traffic congestion, air pollution, poor waste management, high crime rates, and increase in road accidents and fatalities. A bridge and linking road, connecting more than 200,000 residents in Male' and Hulhumale' became operational in 2018. Meanwhile, another bridge is planned to connect the rest of the greater Male' region—Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi. There has been a 65 percent increase in vehicles across the Maldives between 2017 and 2022 and thus, more than 160,000 vehicles are on the roads, of which 80 percent are motorbikes. The highest ratio of vehicles is concentrated in Male' City, where traffic congestion and overcrowding are serious concerns for the population's wellbeing and quality of life. As reported by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in its SDG updates for the Maldives, the annual level of PM2.5 exceeds WHO safe levels. Thirty percent of the air pollution is from local sources while 70 percent is from distant sources. A National Air Pollution Action Plan published in 2019 outlines the actions required to reduce air pollution and emission. It also includes a roadmap for air quality management in the Maldives.

The lifestyle in the greater Male' region due to overcrowding and multistorey buildings has led to cramped living, isolation, and immobility of the aging population. The consultation for the second VNR highlighted that loss of active lifestyle due to the lack of backyards and open green spaces, unsafe roads, and loss of neighborhood concept in Male' City has led to socioeconomic and psychosocial issues. This includes children and youth inactivity, isolation, loss of daily neighborhood socializing and wellbeing checks, alienation, and urban stress. A common vision for sustainable city development is lacking and while the Maldives has announced net zero Carbon ambition, there has been no clear direction on sustainable vehicle use for individuals and the private sector in Male' City and across the country.

Investments in infrastructure in outer atolls have been ramped up to enhance development for the residents in the atolls. The SAP has a specific focus on the Jazeera Dhiriulhun (Island life) theme. The government PSIP programs includes roads, harbors, bridges, ferry networks, ports, airports, sewerage, water, and internet network infrastructure development across the atolls. Currently, 19 domestic airports are operational across the Maldives. The INPFN ferry network is in operation in the northern region and Lhaviyani atoll and expansion to the southern atolls is planned. The efficient use of these infrastructure and the availability of sustainable finance and technical capacity with knowledge of infrastructure maintenance and upkeep are critical aspects impacting development. Similarly, the climate resilience of the infrastructure and other aspects for net zero Carbon emissions attainment such as renewable energy acceleration, energy efficiency and e-vehicles for transport are key considerations for the sustainability of the infrastructure development in the atolls.

The ongoing INPFN program can be an enabler for overcoming disparities and enhancing services in the atolls.

By 2022, the resident population distribution across Male' City and inhabited islands was 49:51. In 2019, 61 percent of the population were resident in the atolls and 85 percent of the multidimensionally poor were in the atolls. The INPFN was designed with the aim of bridging the gap in access to services through regionalization and decentralization with frequent and affordable ferry connections. This would enable better opportunities for people resident in the atolls by improving access to health services, school education, higher education, and market opportunities between the islands in the zones, creating opportunities for improved income and decrease poverty. However, the fiscal burden of the program is huge as it is heavily subsidized by the government.

Investments geared towards enhancing public digital infrastructure are crucial for the improvement of services driven by digital technology, while also paving the way for the emergence of innovative services.

The Digital Action Plan for 2021 - 2023 assigns priority to the establishment of robust institutional and regulatory leadership for digital transformation and the development of digital public infrastructure. The dispersed nature of the island is a major challenge in creating robust digital infrastructure, requiring substantial resources and intricate logistics. The geographical dispersion also hampers the uniform distribution of ICT services and the provision of stable and high-speed internet connectivity to everyone—an essential requirement for successful digitalization. Additional challenges to modernize the digital services include the integration of various data centers and public services into a single, cohesive, and efficient system.

BOX 20 | INTERNET USE IN THE MALDIVES

The Maldives had a noteworthy increase in internet growth rate of 12.1 percent between January 2020 and January 2021. As of January 2023, there were over 448,000 internet users in the Maldives, representing an 85.8 percent internet penetration rate. However, this trend began to plateau with a more modest growth of 1.3 percent from 2021 to 2022, followed by a slight contraction of 0.4 percent by January 2023.

The country also has a remarkably high mobile service penetration. Early 2023 statistics showed 812,300 mobile subscriptions, equating a penetration rate of 155.4 percent. Nonetheless, at the beginning of 2023 an estimated 74,200 individuals in the Maldives were not utilizing the internet. These patterns signify the continuing need for proactive measures to promote digital inclusivity within the country, especially considering the transformative potential of digital tools for socio-economic development.

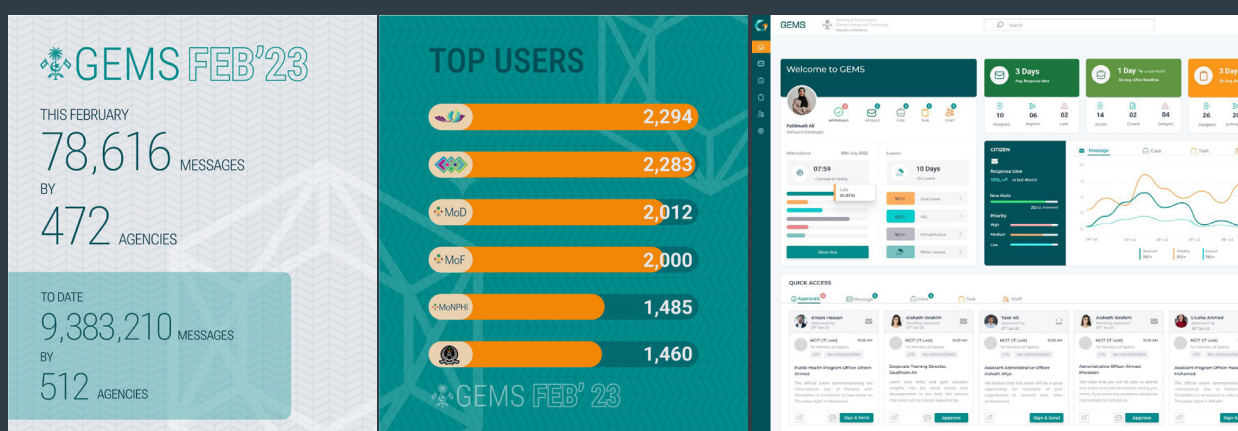
Source: Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology



Photo : Unicef

BOX 21 | THE GOVERNMENT E-LETTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GEMS)

The Government e-Letter Management System (GEMS), established in 2010, has become a vital conduit for official communications among government entities. By February 2023, it had facilitated over 9.3 million official messages across 512 public sector organizations, enabling nearly 80 thousand electronic exchanges monthly among approximately 500 agencies. The necessity of this platform was underscored during the COVID-19 pandemic, as its VPN technology facilitated work-from-home setups for several government officials. The temporary closure of face-to-face public services led to the rollout of an alternative digital communication service, GOV.MV Message, in September 2021. This service provides the public with a standardized means to send and track letters to government offices. Leveraging insights from the usage of GEMS and GOV.MV Message, the NRRP prioritized the development of GEMS Workspace. This modern app, with a 'digital first' focus, is designed to enable transformative, seamless, and hybrid work through integrated Message, Case, Task, and Staff management. It allows completely digital communication, including electronic signatures, removing the need for third-party apps or traditional signatures, and propelling a new era of internet-based hybrid work environments.



Source: Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology

Exacerbated by development, increase in waste generation is a serious concern for the Maldives. Increase in single use plastics is a major challenge for the Maldives. Tourism is centered on the pristine natural beauty of the Maldives, and with a heavy economic dependence on tourism, plastic waste in the ocean, on coral reefs and untouched islands is a serious concern.⁷⁷ The dispersed nature of the small islands, growing waste on the islands, difficulties in managing waste on each island and the challenges for transport of waste to a waste management site are serious impediments for proper waste management. For example, owing to a lack of management facilities, waste had been collected and openly dumped on Thilafushi island in the greater Male' region until open burning was stopped in late 2021. Over 800 metric tons of municipal solid waste is generated every day from the Greater Malé region, 32 inhabited outer islands and 86 tourist resorts.⁷⁸ It is estimated that solid waste generated per person per day is at a rate of 1.8 kg in Malé City, 0.8 kg in the other inhabited islands, and 3.5 kg in tourist resorts.⁷⁹ In 2021, the country declared a list of Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) banned for import into the Maldives. Although the Maldives enacted the Waste Management Act in late 2022, importation of waste into the country was made legal. This is currently being revised. The Maldives is planning to establish three regional waste management facilities which facilitate energy recovery (waste to energy). These include Thilafushi Regional Solid Waste Management Facility in the greater Male' region, Raa Atoll Vandhoo and the Addu City Facility. The Thilafushi facility is being established with support from the Asian Development Bank and other financing partners, and with the installation of 8 MV solar it will be equipped with waste-to-energy technology. Adopting sustainable waste management is imperative for the Maldives and would need to be a key area of focus for sustainable development in the short and medium term.

⁷⁷ Maldives Visitor Survey

⁷⁸ Asian Development Bank. Tackling the Solid Waste Management Challenge in Maldives, 2021

⁷⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/06/23/maldives-improve-solid-waste-management>

Leave No One behind

- People in remote islands, poor households and congested households are most at risk of being left behind in their human wellbeing and development outcomes.
- In the rapid digital transformation across the country, people without the required digital skills and digital literacy are at risk of being left behind. These include the elderly, people in the atolls and unskilled foreign migrants.
- Women who dropped out or never joined the formal workforce are also particularly at risk of being left behind with historically low participation rate in the economy and fewer opportunities for formal development.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate term within the next 1-2 years

- Communicate the vision and strategy for affordable and sustainable housing for the Maldives and ensure public spaces and housing are designed to ensure safety for all including women, children, the elderly and PWDs.
- Improve public funds utilization for the housing sector by prioritizing resources based on the specific needs of Male' City and the atolls.
- Strengthen neighborhood concept and urban development and promote active lifestyle through infrastructure development and increased awareness.
- Strengthen the building codes targeted at safety and sustainable consumption for better implementation in Male' City and across other islands.
- Improve ambient air quality through increased green spaces and vegetation cover especially in Male' City and ensure adequate coverage of green belt and vegetation in land use plans for island development.
- Accelerate digital literacy amongst the workforce and wider society by targeting those with the highest digital divide including the elderly, PWDs, women and unskilled foreign migrants.
- Develop cross-sectoral linkages for the full and effective utilization of the public transport network for improved access to healthcare, education, and social services. This will drive entrepreneurship and establish economic connections across the atolls.
- Strengthen preparedness for digital economy acceleration with legislation to prevent cybercrimes, enhance cybersecurity and ensure confidentiality and privacy of data.
- Ensure responsible consumption of waste across households and industries and enable sustainable waste management across the country.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Strengthen resilience and climate proofing of critical infrastructure through green building codes and standards.
- Increase green spaces and recreational spaces especially in the greater Male' region.
- Build atoll and island council and community capacity by providing better information on the critical water, sanitation, and energy infrastructure developments, enabling effective monitoring and sustainable consumption.
- Ensure responsible consumption of waste by developing a sustainable waste management solution for all inhabited islands, tourist resorts, industrial islands, floating vessels, and uninhabited islands.
- Enhance mechanisms for collection of information on losses and damages from natural and economic disasters and pandemics.
- Strengthen the preservation of cultural and natural heritage for sustainable development of islands through enhanced capacity and resources.
- Strengthen policies to enable vehicle reduction and safe pedestrian spaces.
- Increase the use of sustainable e-vehicles for public transport in all cities.





Environment & Climate Action

Clean Water and Sanitation, Clean Energy

Conservation and Sustainable Marine Resource Use

Sustainable Consumption and Use of Terrestrial Ecosystem

Climate Action



Photo : Abdulla Abeerh

Clean Water and Sanitation

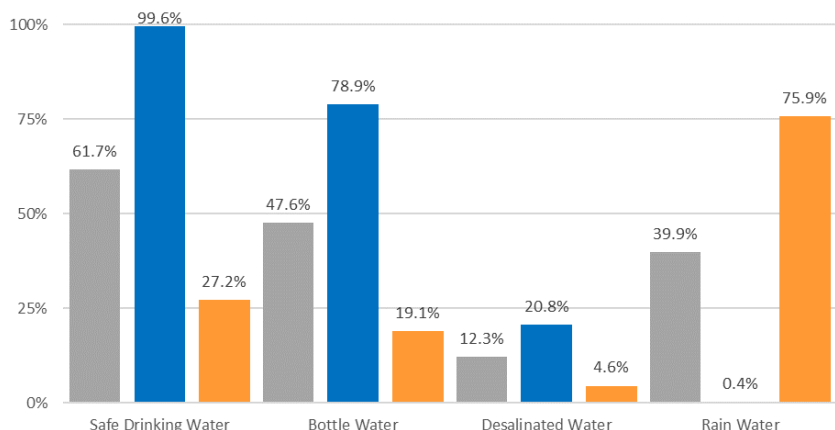


Figure 65: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services in 2019

■ Total ■ Male ■ Atolls

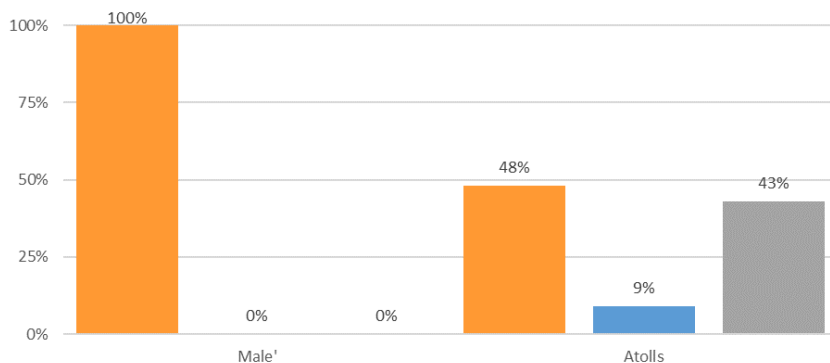


Figure 66: Percentage of households by type of sewerage facilities used in 2019

■ Toilet Connected to Sewerage Network ■ Toilet Connected to Sea ■ Toilet Connected to Septic Tank

78 percent of the population has access to pipe-water supply and 85.5 percent of population has access to a sewerage system as of March 2023. The water and sewerage sector of the Maldives is closely aligned with SDG 6, and over the years, provision of safe water supply and adequate sanitation for all is recognized as a high priority for development. Access to fresh water is limited in the country and groundwater and rainwater are the main sources of freshwater. Degradation of the water from climatic and non-climatic factors such as population growth and pollution impact freshwater resources in the Maldives. In particular, the risk of salinization of the groundwater is a serious concern for people living in the low-lying small islands.⁸⁰ The existing water reserve is facing increased pressure from overuse and pollution. Increased rainfall and rising sea levels polluting the groundwater is a persisting risk to the communities. Pipe-water has been available in Male' City since 1992.

Pipe-water is currently available in 66 islands of the Maldives and sewerage connections are available in 97 islands. According to HIES 2019, only 27.2 percent of the population in the atolls used safe drinking water and most of the islands used rainwater. While 100 percent of the households in Male' City are connected to a piped sewerage network, in 2019, only about 48 percent of the households in the atolls were connected to a sewerage network, with the remaining households having toilets connected to a septic tank. The proportion of households using safely managed sanitation services (including a hand washing facility with soap and water) was 98.9 percent in Male' City and 97.9 percent in the atolls according to the 2016/2017 DHS. To improve the quality of drinking water in the islands, the government launched an ambitious target of installing pipe-water facilities across all 187 islands of the Maldives by the end of 2023. The initiative was affected by the unprecedented financial impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Pipe water and sewer network connections in several islands have been contracted out for installation and are at different phases of implementation. Nonetheless, current sewerage networks designed to pump raw sewage into the ocean without proper treatments pose health and environmental risks, while the sustainability of treatment is at question with high energy requirements associated with treatment.

⁸⁰ Second National Communications of the Maldives to UNFCCC9

Drinking water shortages during the dry season have become common which pose risks to health and safety of the community.

A total of 1,460 tons of water was shipped out of Male' City in 2018 to 48 islands, with a total population 45,798 people (10 percent) and increased nearly three times in 2019 to 3,887 tons of water to 82 islands with a population of 73,622 people (16 percent). The government spent MVR 3.3 million in 2018 and MVR 11 million in 2019 to provide desalinated water to these islands. To combat this issue, the government has conducted several projects in the past such as; provision of individual⁸¹ rainwater harvesting systems to all households across the inhabited islands, development and rehabilitation of community rainwater harvesting systems in the islands, installation of stand-alone reverse osmosis (RO) plant systems, development of improved rainwater harvesting systems, and is developing a water supply network with household connections in all the inhabited islands, irrespective of island size or population. The legal framework for water and sanitation – the Water and Sewerage Act was enacted in 2020 with a Utility Regulatory Authority to enforce it. The Act mandates water production within the country to be fully powered via renewable sources to address dependency on fuel imports for water security and the net zero Carbon ambition of the country. The National Water and Sewerage Action Plan (2020-2025) developed in line with the Act outlines the strategic implementation and monitoring framework to implement the Act. Renewable energy has been integrated in 32 islands for water production.

Leave No One behind

- Multidimensional poverty is higher in households and populations without clean water and improved sanitation as they are at higher risk of health impacts from consequences of poor quality and unhygienic water and sanitation.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate term within the next 1-2 years

- Ensure water security particularly for those at risk of water shortage.
- Increase public awareness and implement water efficiency measures with focus on safe drinking water through knowledge-based water resources management and nature-based solutions.
- Strengthen the systems for water use management and improve efficiency.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Strengthen partnerships between the enforcement agencies and councils to enhance information on critical water and sanitation infrastructure management, water resource management and maintenance, and problem solving.
- Promote the participation of civil society and local communities in improving water and sanitation management.
- Reduce pollution and improve water quality through sustainable methods of treatment of sewage across all islands and increase recycling.
- Ensure the use of integrated water resource management across the islands for sustainable consumption of water.

⁸¹ Maldives National Water Accounts 2018 and 2019

Clean Energy

The Maldives has achieved 100 percent electricity connectivity across all islands, including the most remote islands since 2008. However, high reliance on imported diesel for power generation, lack of economies of scale and poor infrastructure has resulted in one of the highest tariffs in the region – as high as MVR 4.5 (US\$ 0.29 cents) for domestic users and MVR 7.5 (US\$ 0.49 cents) for institutions⁸² Equity and adequacy of electricity capacity on some islands are concerns. In 2022, the country imported more than 804,495.52 metric tons of oil,⁸³with diesel accounting for 80 percent of the total fuel imports. The bulk of the imported fuel is used to generate electricity as power production is near-completely reliant on diesel to run generators. Moving from a fossil-based to a renewable-based energy model is the best way to make electricity cheaper for everyone, reduce the fuel subsidy and Carbon emissions, and improve the fiscal and climate vulnerability of the country.

The Maldives is increasing the renewable energy mix in the total energy production. Investment from the public and private sectors (mostly in tourist resorts) means solar powered renewable energy has been increasing in the Maldives. The renewable energy projects funded by the World Bank—Accelerating Sustainable Private Investment in Renewable Energy (ASPIRE) and Accelerating Renewable Energy Integration and Sustainable Energy (ARISE)—combined are expected to install more than 53.5 megawatts (MW) of solar capacity and 50 megawatt hours (MWH) of battery storage⁸⁴. This would result in a reduction in diesel consumption of approximately 30 million liters per annum, reducing the fuel import bill by approximately 23 million liters per annum (approximately US\$ 12 million annually) with a projected lifetime saving of US\$ 300 million over 25 years. The two projects have supported the gradual increase of renewable energy capacity in the country from 1.5 MW to 17.5 MW.⁸⁵ Similarly, the Preparing Outer Island for Sustainable Energy Development project ‘POISED’, undertaken in collaboration with the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and the Asian Development Bank, is designed to install solar hybrid systems in 160 islands across the Maldives. The project supported 1,794 businesses to increase their access to renewable energy. The improved energy systems benefitted 39,939 people in 2020 and increased to 117,692 in 2021. The annual electricity production surpassed its target of 9.7 MW per year to over 17.5 MW. The annual greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions were reduced by 34,166 tons⁸⁶. In 2019, six percent of energy generation was from renewable sources, with solar PV being the main source of renewable energy. Renewable energy share in the total final electricity consumption was however just one percent in 2019 as reported by IRENA. International support and partnerships demonstrate the importance of clean, renewable, and cost-efficient energy solutions for the Maldives to shift to low Carbon and climate resilient development, and to accelerate climate action.

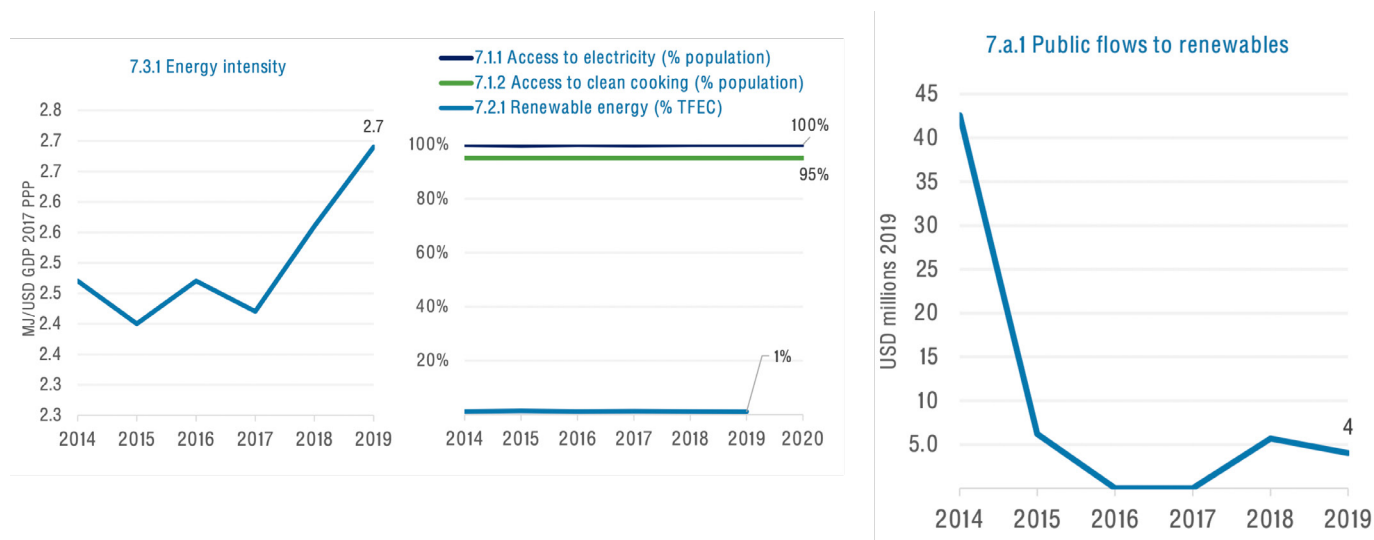


Figure 67: SDG 7 progress update for Maldives by IRENA 2014-2019

Source: IRENA

⁸² World Bank 2022. De-risking Investments to Build a Green Maldives, April 2022
⁸³ Maldives Customs Service, 2023
⁸⁴ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/why-maldives-5-mw-solar-project-game-changer>
⁸⁵ Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology
⁸⁶ <https://www.cif.org/news/project-spotlight-preparing-outer-island-sustainable-electricity-development-project-poised>

Generation in 2020	GWh	%
Non-renewable	719	94
Renewable	43	6
Hydro and marine	0	0
Solar	40	5
Wind	2	0
Bioenergy	0	0
Geothermal	0	0
Total	762	100

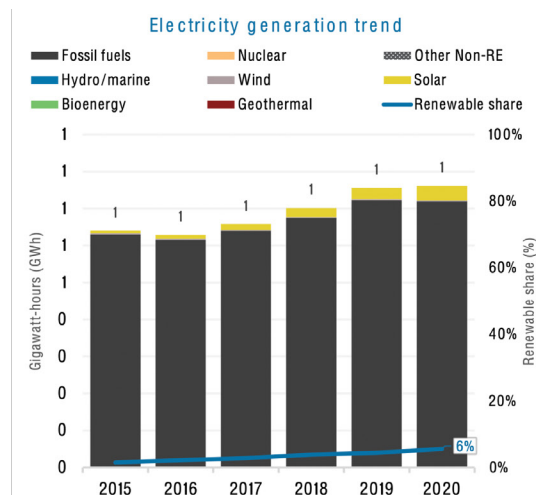


Figure 67: SDG 7 progress update for Maldives by IRENA 2014-2019

Source: IRENA

Renewable energy investment opportunities have been increasing in the Maldives. These have come in the form of unsolicited proposals (USPs), competitive bidding–Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC), Independent Power Producer (IPP), and Power Purchasing Agreements (PPAs). The ASPIRE project mobilized US\$ 28.3 million for 17.5 MW PV installations by the government, resulting in an increase in investment volume in renewable energy.⁸⁷ In 2014, the first 1.5 MW solar project under ASPIRE had only four investor bids and resulted in a high-power purchase price (PPA) of 21 US cents per unit of electricity. In 2020 however, the number of bids for the 5 MW project in Male’ City increased to 15 and resulted in a PPA price of 10.9 US cents. Furthermore in 2022, 58 investors expressed interest in the third 11 MW solar project in the remote outer islands at a record low price of 9.8 US cents. This is one of the lowest tariffs for any small island developing state (SIDS).⁸⁸

Energy efficiency standards and labeling program “Hakathari” has been introduced with a financing scheme.

The program is a demand side measure to promote energy efficiency and reduce GHG emissions. It is currently voluntary and includes air conditioners (up to 24,226Btu/Hr.), refrigerators (100-650 liters) and washing machines (up to 14 kg). The program provides consumers at the time of purchase with a simple and clear indication of the energy saving potential of the electrical appliances. A label on the appliances showcases a five-star rating system, indicating level of energy efficiency and energy savings.⁸⁹

A Road Map for the Energy Sector 2020–2030 has been developed. Two scenarios conducive to the Maldives’ national energy sector vision of “provision of sufficient, reliable, sustainable, secure and affordable energy for a prosperous Maldives” are presented in the Road Map. It includes the best-case scenario—achieving unconditional and conditional greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets as established in NDC. This scenario forecasts a continuous and sustained moderate transformation of the energy matrix that will result in 29 percent of fossil fuels reduced compared to a BAU situation. Alternatively, the paradigm shift scenario represents a fundamental transformational change for the country beyond the target established in the Maldives’ NDC, with a profound impact on the energy matrix (52 percent of fossil fuels reduced compared to a BAU situation). The paradigm shift scenario requires a strengthened policy framework and a well-functioning financial scheme duly considering the challenges and risks associated with the nationwide transformation.⁹⁰ The Road Map is currently being updated to incorporate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁸⁷ World Bank 2023. Powered by the Sunshine: Achieving Cheaper, Cleaner and Sustainable Energy in the Maldives

⁸⁸ World Bank 2023. Why the Maldives 5 MW Solar Project is a Game Changer

⁸⁹ <https://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/hakathari-program>

⁹⁰ Asian Development Bank. A Brighter Future for Maldives Powered by Renewables: Road Map for the Energy Sector 2020–2030

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- Islands and households without adequate electricity face challenges compounded by high electricity costs, especially with growing demand for energy for cooling, lighting, and the need for digital devices and services in the shift towards digitization.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate term within the next 1-2 years

- Increase awareness and support for households to promote sustainable energy utilization and consumption.
- Promote the energy efficiency program to all consumers and lead to behavioral change from suppliers and consumers.
- Enable the increase of household uptake of renewable energy in islands to increase national clean energy uptake, reduce fiscal vulnerability and decrease household cost for electricity to empower households to become prosumers.
- Develop and strengthen policies for sustainable land transport use in Male' City and other atolls of the Maldives with focus on reducing congestion and emissions.
- Develop policies for sustainable maritime transport.
- Strengthen the financial landscape and availability of diverse financial instruments and innovative finance to increase benefits from the energy industry and enhance the engagement of households and SMEs in the implementation of renewable energy.
- Strengthen partnerships with the private sector, especially the tourism, fisheries, and agriculture sectors to increase renewable energy output and enhance energy efficiency and energy security

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Increase public and private sector participation including tourism sector uptake of renewable energy integration into energy systems to expand national clean energy uptake.
- Enhance knowledge of local councils, WDCs, CSOs and community members on critical energy infrastructure management, maintenance and problem solving.
- Strengthen partnerships between the utilities, councils, and local communities to enhance information on sustainable energy consumption, energy infrastructure management, maintenance and problem solving.
- Facilitate clean energy research and testing in the Maldives in the context of small island energy needs and utilization.

Conservation and Sustainable Marine Resource Use

Corals are a vital resource for the Maldives economy and human settlements. The economy of the Maldives is based on its rich biodiversity, and tourism and fisheries are critical economic sectors for livelihood, employment, and food security. Coral reefs of the Maldives constitute 3.14 percent of the world's coral reef area, making it the seventh largest coral reef system in the world.⁹¹ These reefs are a shelter to more than 700 diverse marine lives, globally significant populations of whale sharks, manta rays, reef sharks, and more than 21 species of whales and dolphins and significant coral reef species (such as the Napoleon wrasse, giant grouper, giant clam, and black coral).⁹² The impacts of climate change on the coral reefs of the Maldives are very high—approximately 70 percent of the coral reefs in the Maldives were affected from the 2016 global bleaching event.⁹³ Ocean acidification is also a growing threat to the coral reef ecosystem. Estimates are that by the end of the 21st century, calcification rates may decrease by up to 60 percent with a doubling of atmospheric CO₂ concentrations.⁹⁴ A future decline in fisheries poses serious risk for food security as tuna is the primary source of protein for the people of the Maldives. When COVID-19 impacted the tourism industry and threatened income and food security for many people, fisheries was an important buffer for the people in remote islands who were cut off from Male' City's supply of food and necessities. Similarly, the reefs provide ecosystem services such as climate regulation, storm buffering and coastal protection to the people resident in the low-lying small islands of the Maldives. The National Fisheries and Agriculture Policy 2019–2029 was formulated with a mission to sustainably manage all marine living resources in the maritime zones of the Maldives.

The country has leveraged the natural ecosystem and biodiversity of the island nation to develop a successful tourism sector. The Maldives has enjoyed robust tourism growth while having gone through negative impacts from external shocks related to global events, the largest of which being the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 1.6 million tourists visited the Maldives in 2021 and the reef systems and fish life are the basis for the key tourism activities such as snorkeling, diving and fishing. The most popular motivations for visitors to choose the Maldives as their holiday destination are the pristine beaches and the underwater beauty of the Maldives.⁹⁵ While climate change impacts on the reefs are detrimental, development related to expansion of tourist beds, reclamation, beach replenishment, solid waste and wastewater disposal, and high visitor numbers in popular dive sites impact coral reef ecosystems and tourism. As tourism keeps expanding, the arrival target has been increased, and tourism bed expansion continues. The implications of these changes on the environment from emissions, biodiversity impacts, consumption patterns such as chemical discharge from laundry, untreated wastewater discharge and poor waste disposal practices are ongoing threats to marine life and coral reefs.

The first ever Maldives Red List of threatened species showed that 92 percent of the coral species are among threatened with extinction categories.⁹⁶ The three priority taxa identified for initial assessments included marine reptiles, corals, and mangroves. Of the 39 coral species assessed, 23 (59 percent) are critically endangered, six (15 percent) endangered, seven (18 percent) vulnerable and three (eight percent) near threatened. Under the Maldives Red List, five marine reptiles were assessed. Two turtle varieties were classified as critically endangered while data was insufficient for classification of the other three turtle varieties.⁹⁷

The Maldives joined the worldwide aim of protecting 30 percent of the global ocean by 2030. A total of 79 areas with 54,314.67 hectares have been designated as protected sites in the Maldives. This includes 14 percent of the coral reefs.⁹⁸ The percentage of terrestrial protected areas was 2.3 percent in 2020.⁹⁹ Baa Atoll was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2011 and Addu Atoll and Fuvahmulah were declared UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in 2020. Education and awareness of the society are key to valuing biodiversity at all levels.

⁹¹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/mv/mv-nr-05-en.pdf>

⁹² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/mv/mv-nr-05-en.pdf>

⁹³ Rapid Assessment of Natural Environments in the Maldives

⁹⁴ Second National Communications of the Maldives to UNFCCC

⁹⁵ Maldives Visitor Survey

⁹⁶ <https://www.iucn.org/story/202211/maldives-launches-assessments-39-coral-species>

⁹⁷ <http://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/maldives-red-list>

⁹⁸ <https://presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/26871>

⁹⁹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.LND.PTLD.ZS?locations=MV>

There is growing pressure on reef-based fish stocks due to increasing local demand and from tourism driven demand. Fish stock assessments for local species have never been conducted in the Maldives to date due to capacity constraints and a lack of suitable data. Anecdotal evidence shows an increase in reef fish consumption by local communities and for tourism. The increased tourist arrivals have potentially increased the pressure on the reef resources, both from marine activities and consumption. The loosely regulated reef fish catch is a risk for a country with heavy reliance on marine activities for its tourism revenue. The bulk of the recorded total annual fish catch comprises tuna species, namely, skipjack and yellowfin tuna. A large portion of the skipjack caught is used for consumption, but some are also exported as frozen and canned products, while large yellowfin tuna is mostly exported to countries in the European Union (EU) as fresh or chilled products. A catch documentation and verification scheme are in place for all tuna (bar Maldivian fish) and groupers. Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing by foreign vessels from the Maldives' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a concern for the country. However, the number of infringements appears to have decreased since the adoption of the new Fisheries Act and regulations implemented in 2019. It is estimated that annually 10,000-15,000 tonnes of tuna are caught illegally by foreign vessels.¹⁰⁰ The Maldives National Plan of Action to Prevent Deter and Eliminate Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing was formulated in 2019. It identifies action points to reduce the negative social, economic, and environmental impacts of IUU fishing in the Maldives, and of Maldivian vessels operating outside of the Maldives' EEZ. The Plan also contributes towards the SDG Goal 14 on life below water.

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- Populations entirely dependent on the natural resources for income and livelihood are at higher risk of being left behind. Women in the informal economy in the agriculture sector, fishermen, and youth in the tourism sector are at higher risk of being left behind given loss of resources and resource driven income generation. People in the atolls in the informal economy are also at a greater loss of being left behind.
- Girls and women with low connection and engagement with the ocean and marine environment are further at risk of being left behind from the increase in opportunities in the tourism and other sectors with required marine skills.

Actions for Progress

In the immediate to short term within the next 1-2 years

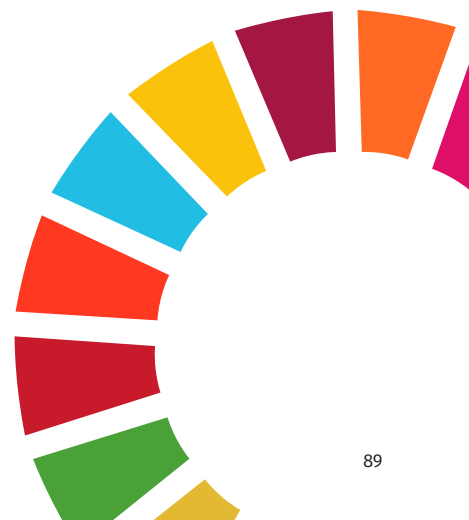
- Incorporate and take into account the threats (e.g, predicted El Nino events) and vulnerabilities and available data and information (e.g. and sea surface temperature forecasts) of the marine environment in policy decisions and development projects.
- Strengthen management of protected and conserved areas to maximize benefits from the conservation measures.
- Strengthen the capacity for environmental monitoring and surveillance through management solutions, improved resources, and technology solutions across all islands.
- Strengthen policies for sustainable consumption of natural resources by all economic sectors and balance of natural resources for consumption by communities and businesses.

¹⁰⁰
<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mdv195981.pdf>

- Increase awareness and empower island communities with digital technologies, skills, and reporting tools for increased management of natural resources through technology use.
- Strengthen the implementation of the policies and legal framework for marine pollution reduction.
- Increase awareness of the population, including children in schools, about the natural habitat and biodiversity of the Maldives, including how to care for vulnerable and threatened species.
- Strengthen the role of CSOs in conservation and promotion of sustainable resource use.
- Introduce 'renewable energy industrial precincts' where businesses can exchange information on resources and technology.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Develop policies and implementation measures for facilitating research on fish stock management.
- Enforce management of protected areas by ensuring adequate resources.
- Empower island communities, including girls, with the knowledge and skills to identify threats and manage their marine ecosystems and fish life, and encourage regular monitoring of these ecosystems.
- Strengthen disaster preparedness through increased awareness, human resources, technology and data and information use.
- Increase technology use for surveillance, monitoring, and management of oceans and biodiversity.



Climate Action

The Maldives is one of the lowest and flattest countries in the world, with over 80 percent of the total land area less than one meter above mean sea level. The double chain of islets that form the Maldives archipelago of small islands is around 860 kilometers (km) from north to south and varies from 80 to 120 km from east to west. The total land area of the entire nation is estimated to be approximately 298 km², making it the sixth smallest country in terms of land area, as well as one of the world's most geographically dispersed sovereign states. The country's reef system is seventh largest in the world with 4,513 km², and the largest in the Indian Ocean. About 99 percent of the Maldives geography is ocean. Due to its location over the equator in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives experiences a typical equatorial monsoonal climate with a warm and humid tropical climate throughout the year and seasonal fluctuations in temperature and rainfall due to the monsoon. The weather is dominated by two monsoons: the southwest monsoon and the northeast monsoon.¹⁰¹

Climate change poses an existential threat to the low-lying islands of the Maldives. The vulnerability of the Maldives to natural disasters is exacerbated by climate change and the islands of the Maldives are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise. Climate projections for the Maldives show that the temperature is expected to increase by 1.8oC by 2021-2050 from the baseline, while mean sea surface height is projected to increase between 0.40 to 0.48 meters by 2100 and sea surface temperature is predicted to rise. Rainfall is expected to increase across the country from 2028-2100. Disaster impacts are highest from flooding due to rainfall and swell and tidal waves, while earthquakes and tsunamis, cyclones/thunderstorms, floods, droughts, storm surges and strong winds and tornadoes are risks to the Maldives. Extreme flooding resulting from climate change is likely to become more frequent caused by increased rainfall and increase in swell and tidal waves, threatening livelihoods with significant damage to human settlements and infrastructure on many islands.¹⁰²

The country's economy and society are particularly sensitive to sea level rise, coastal storms, and flooding. The Maldives economy's heavy reliance on tourism represents a major vulnerability, and the sector is likely to come under pressure from sea-level rise, temperature extremes, and changes to global tourism behavior and preferences.¹⁰³ A vast portion of the tourism industry's infrastructure, fisheries sector, population, and housing structures, and critical infrastructure are primarily located in regions that are within 100 meters of the coastline.¹⁰⁴ Thus the utility services, hospitals, transport, communication infrastructures and waste management centers are exposed to coastal hazards such as sea swells, storm surges and related coastal flooding. The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami demonstrated the extreme vulnerability of the country with significant impacts to the country's critical infrastructure – including the only international airport of the country being shut down for several days. Climate change also impacts on people's health from heat and extreme weather events, especially floods due to heavy rainfall. These have direct health impacts such as vector borne diseases. With access to secondary and tertiary healthcare being a concern for the dispersed islands of the Maldives, access to higher tiered health care facilities following extreme weather events is a challenge and a risk to human wellbeing.¹⁰⁵

Adaptation measures in the Maldives are limited and hindered by constrained financial and human capacity. Adaptation measures and actions range from "soft" and "hard" engineered coastal protection measures, enhanced water security, improved access to health care, strengthened public health response, population consolidation and development of larger islands where the necessary facilities could be provided and adapted in different sectors and through community initiatives.¹⁰⁶ The National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) adopted in 2006 identified eight areas vulnerable to human induced climate change: land loss and human settlements, critical infrastructure, water resources, agriculture, human health, coral reef biodiversity, fisheries, and tourism, which was further reiterated in the Second National Communications.

¹⁰¹ Second National Communications of the Maldives to UNFCCC

¹⁰² Second National Communications of the Maldives to UNFCCC

¹⁰³ Asian Development Bank 2021. Maldives Climate Risk Country Profile

¹⁰⁴ Asian Development Bank 2021. Maldives Climate Risk Country Profile

¹⁰⁵ Second National Communications of the Maldives to UNFCCC

¹⁰⁶ Second National Communications of the Maldives to UNFCCC

Following the 2004 Tsunami, the Safer Island Development Program (SIDP) was initiated and in 2012 the Tourism Adaptation Project (TAP) was launched. In 2021, Building Climate Resilient Safer Islands in the Maldives was initiated to utilize Green Climate Fund's funding, co-financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the government of the Maldives. The scheme aims to reduce vulnerability of the Maldives to climate change from increase in coastal disaster risk and land loss due to acceleration of coastal erosion.¹⁰⁷ Observed erosion across the country has increased and in 2016 was reported to have caused an overall land loss between 0.81 to 3.66 ha during the observation periods.¹⁰⁸ The adaptation component of the revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) includes disaster risk reduction and management, involving improving the country's preparedness for possible future extreme weather events and strengthening collaboration with other island communities.

Table 8:
GHG emissions inventory
comparison 1994 and 2011

Indicators	1994	2011	Annual Growth
Total GHG emission (Gg CO ₂ e)	152.977	1225.598	13.05%
Energy	128.995	1152.869	13.05%
Waste	23.982	72.729	6.75%
Emission per Capita (kg CO ₂ e/ capita)	624.692	3696.604	11.025%

The total GHG emission for the Maldives for the year 2011 was 1,225.598 Gg CO₂e—less than 0.0035 percent of the global GHG emissions. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the main greenhouse gas (GHG) emission for the Maldives. Total CO₂ emissions in 2011 was 1,225.598 Gg CO₂ and accounts for 94.8 percent of total emissions, with emissions from the energy sector being the highest at 1152.869 Gg CO₂ (94 percent). Within the energy sector, electricity generation accounts for the highest GHG emission. The tourism sector constituted over 51 percent of the electricity use in the country, followed by transportation. The GHG emissions of the country have grown at an average rate of 13 percent per year in the past 16 years, an increase from 625 kg CO₂e per capita in 1994 to 3,697 kg CO₂e per capita in 2011, from 170 g CO₂e per GDP (PPP) US\$ to 291 g CO₂e per GDP (PPP) US\$. GHG emission from the energy sector increased approximately at seven percent per year over the last 10 years. According to various government estimates for the GHG emissions, it is projected to have increased between 2,000 and 2,500 Gg CO₂e by 2020.

The Maldives announced the country's ambition to become net zero Carbon emissions by 2030 at the UN Climate Ambition Summit in December 2020. This strengthened the country's commitment towards climate change and renewable energy targets following the projections to lose 80 percent of its land over the next few decades. A Climate Emergency Act was enacted in 2021, which mandates Carbon budgeting and an ambitious target to achieve Carbon neutrality by 2030. The Maldives reported its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) targets to reduce its emissions by 10 percent from business as usual (BAU) and reduce emissions to 24 percent by 2030 subject to availability of donor assistance.¹⁰⁹ An update to the NDC in 2020 reported the country's aim to reduce emissions by 26 percent and strive to reach net zero Carbon emissions by 2030 with adequate international support and assistance. The updated NDC also included the vision towards a 'Blue Economy' – promoting sustainable economic growth while safeguarding the oceans, plans to phase out single use plastic, and initiatives to protect and preserve the environment such as the commitment to protect at least one island, one reef and one wetland from each atoll in the country.¹¹⁰ However, both mitigation and adaptation measures require transformative levels of technology transfer, currently impeded by the lack of necessary financial resources, human and technical capacity in the country.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/news/19423>

¹⁰⁸ Second National Communications of the Maldives to UNFCCC

¹⁰⁹ Maldives Nationally Determined Contributions Implementation Plan

¹¹⁰ Update of Nationally Determined Contributions of Maldives

BOX 22 | ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is an important sector for food security and livelihoods of farmers. As current agriculture systems cannot sufficiently cater to the local demand, 17 crops of national significance have been identified for prioritization for farming. Introduced species are a major risk for agriculture, along with climate and disaster risk. A coconut rehabilitation programme has commenced recently with 11 islands in seven atolls identified for rehabilitation of 5,000 coconut palms.

In the stakeholder consultations with farmers undertaken for the VNR, farmers from popular farming islands in Shaviyani Atoll explained the climate change impact on farming. They highlighted decreased natural pollination, severe economic losses resulting from increase in climatic events such as flooding, and a lack of insurance mechanisms to account for losses. The introduction of new pests and diseases are also a threat to farming. Adequate quarantine periods are necessary for imported plants to prevent the spread of diseases to ensure economic and environmental cost to farming and especially the threat to coconut palms is minimized.

These stakeholder consultations also demonstrated a concern about increase in pesticide use. The fertilizers and pesticides used are often dangerous and are affecting the soil quality and composition. This is also affecting the water lens detrimentally and ultimately affecting the health of the people. The increase in unskilled foreign migrants in the agriculture sector and lack of knowledge and easy availability of these products without the right information is worsening the situation. Farmers need more than information, but demonstration centres and technology investments for transforming the industry to move towards improved farming practices and attract the next generation of farmers. Some critical challenges to farmers are timely transport of crops, storage facilities in strategic locations, low market access to the tourism industry and price competition with imported products.

Leave No One behind

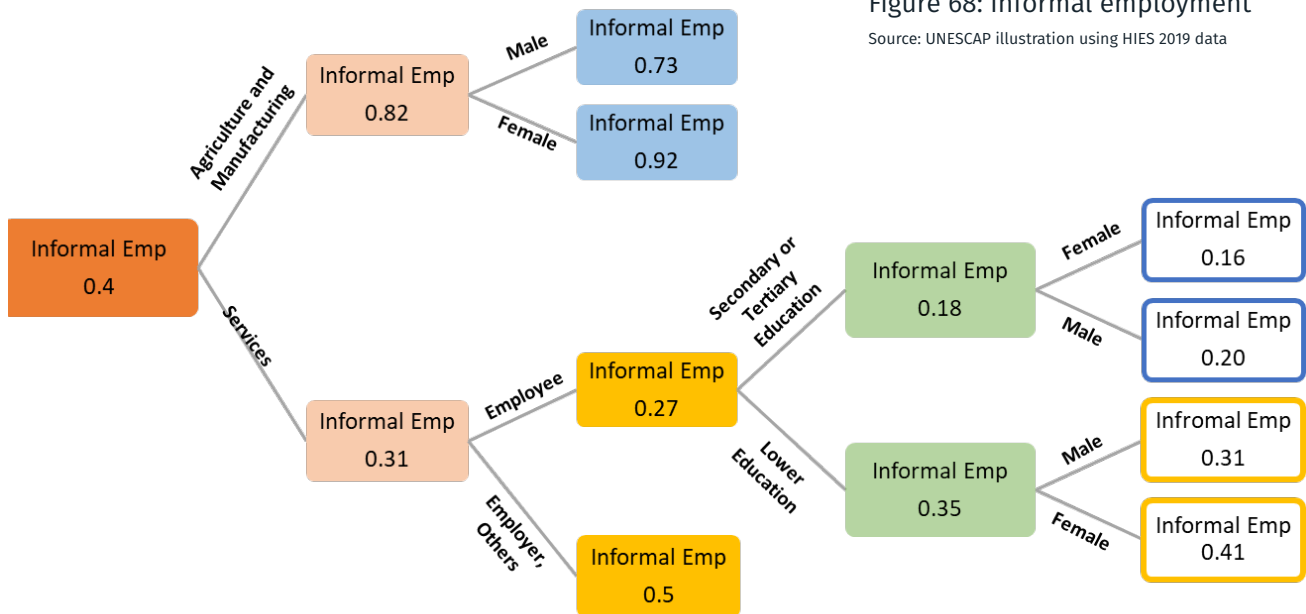


Figure 68: Informal employment

Source: UNESCAP illustration using HIES 2019 data

- On average, 11 percent of households in the Maldives have been exposed to at least one type of disaster in 2019. However, some households are much more vulnerable than others. The furthest behind group (red box at the bottom-right for Figure 68) is composed of poorer households headed by men with lower education living outside of Male' City. Among such households, 17 percent have been exposed to at least one type of disaster. The furthest ahead group is households living in Male' City among whom 5 percent have been exposed to disasters. Overall, being a resident in Male' City significantly decreases risk of exposure to a disaster.

- People resident in low lying remote small islands with increased climate vulnerability to disasters and incidents as well as people in the agriculture and fisheries sector are at higher risk of being left behind with loss to income, assets, property, impact to culture, and lifestyle.

Actions for Progress

In the short term within the next 1-2 years

- Increase investment volume for disaster preparedness tools and technology.
- Increase investment volume for climate proofing critical infrastructure and implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Increase knowledge and awareness amongst people on resilience and climate adaptation and mitigation.
- Empower communities with knowledge and tools for climate resilient infrastructure development.
- Strengthen early warning systems and risk management tools for natural and climatic disasters.
- Introduce demonstration hubs for improved agriculture practices for safe food production.
- Increase awareness and demonstration of climate resilient smart islands and increase investments in developing climate resilient islands.

In the medium to long term within the next 5-7 years

- Increase participation of women in disaster and post-disaster recovery decision-making.
- Strengthen the capacity of women in women-headed households in islands to best respond to disasters and participate in disaster recovery.
- Strengthen island councils with information and tools for disaster and pandemic preparedness, response, and management.
- Strengthen climate risk insurance mechanisms for building resilience against the loss of assets and livelihoods due to extreme events, particularly for farmers.
- Enhance the climate and weather forecasting tools for decision making and increase public awareness on climate change.
- Strengthen coordination among finance industry, economic sectors, community, and all government agencies to increase investments in adaptation measures and achieve emissions reduction goals.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Planning System

A long-term sustainable development agenda and planning system is essential for the Maldives to mainstream and implement the SDGs. While the SAP (2019-2023) and its alignment to SDGs and the NRRP are progressive steps for the 2030 Agenda implementation in the Maldives, they are medium-term documents and lack continuity to give people ambition and hope in long-term sustainable development. The Maldives is at a critical juncture in its governance cycle, with five-year election pledges shaping the development trajectory and risks policy changes and policy U-turns¹¹¹, especially affecting regional and island development, decentralization, economic policy, and priority sectoral development when governments change. The country is preparing for a new Presidential election in 2023, followed by a Parliamentary election in 2024, the outcomes of which will inform public policy, development agenda, fiscal priorities for the next five years. Such policies transform people's lives and livelihoods, lately in unimaginable ways over a very short period. Meanwhile, the cost of such changes on people's wellbeing, the resilience of the economy, fiscal sustainability, disaster resilience and impact on biodiversity and nature are not fully accounted.

The prioritization of national planning through a ministerial function by the incumbent government since late 2018 was seen as a step forward for the planning system. The SDG coordination function was thus transferred to the MNPHI. Although the MNPHI formulated a NSP and undertook work on drafting a long-term National Development Plan, these documents failed to be adopted. A Bill on National Planning was also drafted but has not yet been successfully passed into law. Nonetheless, important policies and laws continue to be shaped by the government and the Parliament. The SAP, NRRP the changes to the Decentralization Act, GEAP, the NDCs, and the Climate Emergency Act are some key policies and laws that can contribute to social and economic progress, gender equality and preservation of biodiversity and natural ecosystems and address climate vulnerabilities, which in turn can drive wellbeing and sustainability. However, the absence of a planned long term sustainable development strategy risks important policies and legal framework never being realized, resulting in disproportionate impact on the vulnerable population with risk of these groups being left behind.

Shaping development through long term strategy with focus on human wellbeing, and fiscal and climate resilience for sustainable development is pertinent to the Maldives. Having arrived at mid-point to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation, a long-term vision and strategy would benefit the country in shaping its direction of socioeconomic development, ensure continuous support for advancement of regional development and enhanced decentralized governance, gender equality, promote environmental protection, take urgent climate action, and achieve sustainable development.

Financing for SDGs

Fiscal vulnerability and mounting public debt are serious concerns for continuous sustainable development in the Maldives. The main revenue stream continues to be from the tourism sector. Fiscal vulnerability has been worsening in the recent past due to high capital expenditure, blanket subsidies, and welfare spending¹¹². The shock from the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the revenue and income stream in unprecedented ways with devastating consequences to people's income, livelihoods, and businesses. Several MSMEs were forced to shut down and youth in formal economy and women in informal economy were disproportionately affected. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic risked nearly 20 percent of the population falling to income poverty¹¹³. Furthermore, with high vulnerability to external shocks, the global inflation and the Russia-Ukraine war further worsened the fiscal position. The vulnerability of the Maldives economy to external shocks poses significant risk to the continuity of the development programs and wellbeing of people.

¹¹¹ Maldives SDG Roadmap, United Nations Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Engagement, 2022

¹¹² World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022

¹¹³ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022

The available finance and investment flows are unmatched with the national development requirements.¹¹⁴ The growing recurrent and capital expenditures are key drivers for widening fiscal deficit and growing debt. By the end of 2021, the total PPG was 120 percent of GDP with new debt of US\$1 billion drawn by the government to finance government expenditure, support budget deficit, rollover maturing debt, and finance PSIP projects.¹¹⁵ While the government spent more than US\$ 300 million for its PSIP in 2021, the largest chunk was for water and sewerage systems (US\$ 82 million), transport (US\$ 76.4 million), and housing and infrastructure such as land and roads (US\$ 48 million) compared to US\$ 40 million spent for environmental protection, climate mitigation and climate adaptation.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the second VNR presents the importance of expansion of physical and digital connectivity across the islands of the Maldives to accelerate the SDGs. However, this requires massive investments in transport and ICT services and would require ongoing recurrent expenditure, especially to continue the ferry services.

The recently formulated INFF articulates an SDG financing strategy. The document published in March 2023 discusses two priorities: financing for climate action and the delivery of quality social services and proposes a coordination, monitoring, and evaluation framework. The INFF is also structured to be gender responsive in that gender considerations are integrated into climate adaptation and mitigation measures in all forms of development projects across all sectors of the economy. The framework also outlines the actions for laying the foundations for implementing decentralized fiscal policies. The financing strategy proposed in the INFF reinforces the proposition that all forms of future finance flows are climate-consistent finance flows and to re-orient and leverage new climate finance opportunities for the Maldives to channel required investments from domestic and international sources.¹¹⁷

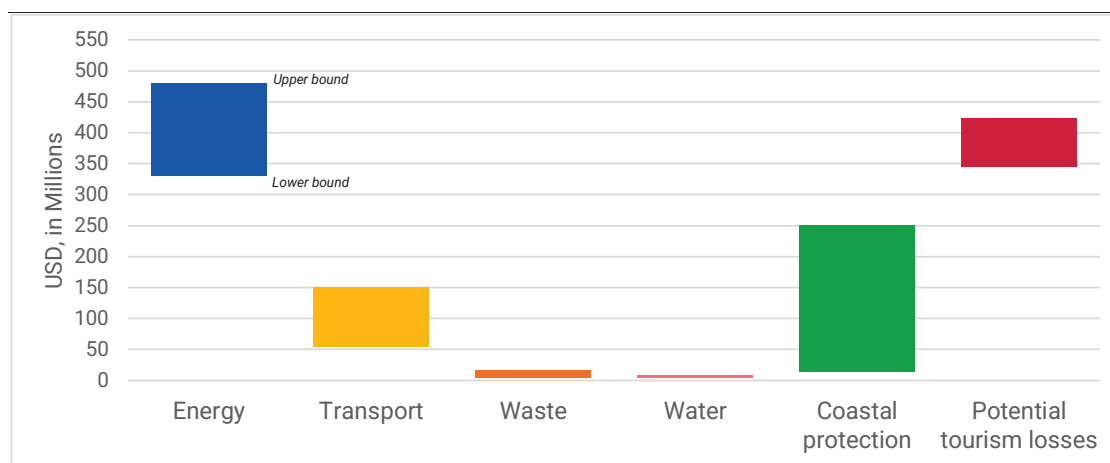


Figure 69: Lower and upper bound quantitative investment requirements per sector and per year

Source: INFF report

Note: Bars are representing lower and upper bounds. For coastal protection, the timeframe is assumed at 35 years considering the type of activity and its long-term effect. For mitigation sectors, timeframe is considered until 2030. Rescaled to yearly investments needs in USD millions. Source: Based on UNDP calculations, including the Second National Communications of the Maldives to the United Nations Framework (2016); Maldives Investment Plan for Net Zero Final Maldives' 2030 Net-Zero Roadmap Document. ARISE Maldives; UNFCCC (2022): Needs-based climate finance project. Technical Assessment of Climate Finance for Island States in the Indian Ocean; ADB (2020): A Brighter Future for Maldives Powered by Renewables: Road Map for the Energy Sector 2020–2030; GoM (2010): National Economic Environment Development Studies. Ministry of Housing and Environment. "Potential tourism losses" are calculated based on Bigano et al. (2007) in the Tourism Adaptation Project (TAP, 2015). Calculation: Deducting potential % loss in tourism revenue under climate change scenario multiplied (lower and upper bound) with average tourism recipients in 2030, by projecting average 2014-19 numbers with 4% growth of receipts per year. Investments to protect coral reefs, other biodiversity related services as well as other adaptation areas such as water, agriculture and fishery are not shown in this figure.

Efficiency and effectiveness of public spending needs to be improved and prioritized to enhance sustainability and promote better development outcomes. As such the targets to implement the clean energy technologies and clean transport to achieve the NDCs and pursue the ambitious net zero Carbon emissions target by 2030, as well as the massive finance need for adaptation measures such as coastal protection becomes critical alongside other development finance needs.

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Finance Integrated National Financing Framework, March 2023

¹¹⁵ World Bank Maldives Development Update: Towards Resilient and Affordable Housing, October 2022

¹¹⁶ Ministry of Finance Integrated National Financing Framework, March 2023

¹¹⁷ Ministry of Finance Integrated National Financing Framework, March 2023

The low-lying islands of the Maldives faces an existential threat from the rising climate risks. The effects of climate change pose serious threat to coral reefs of the Maldives harboring the islands and contributing to the livelihoods of people and risks impact to tourism and fisheries sectors. Therefore, efforts being undertaken by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to tag the government budget against the SDGs which would enable monitoring of the impact of finance on SDG progress needs speedy implementation.

Furthermore, effective international commitments and partnerships are needed for small island countries like the Maldives to overcome its finance challenges. Access to international finance mechanisms and concessional financing terms are major development challenges for the Maldives. Given the budgetary focus on infrastructure development needs and inadequate funds allocated for climate adaptation and mitigation coupled with growing climate vulnerabilities, urgent international finance is even more crucial for the Maldives to address climate adaptation, mitigation and ensure sustainable development.

Human Resource Capacity

The capacity and knowledge of sustainable development, sustainable socio-economic planning, oversight, and good governance across the leadership and executives are pertinent to prioritize and drive the 2030 Agenda forward for the Maldives. Leadership capacity across the public sector organizations including the local councils on sustainability knowledge can contribute to changing public mindsets and bringing about transformational change. It would also enable priority focus across institutions and levels of governance to strengthen capacities for SDG implementation, improving service delivery, and monitoring for effectiveness of the policies and programs.

Likewise, strengthening the capacity for SDG coordination would enable better oversight in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The SDG targets have been effectively integrated into health and education functions only. Although SDGs are somewhat reflected in the program implementation of some government agencies, it is not effectively embedded within the core mandates of the government agencies and the private sector. The commitment to carry forward and implement the SDGs needs better prioritization and capacity for coordination, oversight, monitoring, and to ensure engagement with stakeholders for partnerships. The SDG Coordination Division is understaffed, and the role of the SDG Coordination Division needs to be reviewed and enhanced with capacity to fulfill their mandate.

Strengthening the institutional capacity across implementing partners including the state and government organisations and the local councils will improve implementation of the SDGs. The implementing agencies have a key responsibility to ensure budgeting is aligned with SDGs and report on data and progress. Although MBS has a team of well-trained statisticians, statistical capacity of the agencies responsible for administrative data and SDG implementation needs strengthening to effectively execute their functions. Similarly, the research capacity of the country and technological capacity across all sectors needs strengthening. The Maldives could gain from improving research capacity in the academia to enable informed planning and decision making for sustainable development. There is also a renewed drive for decentralization through mandatory legal requirements and responsibilities assigned to the councils. Only through effective decentralization, the massive infrastructure projects planned across the islands can be effectively monitored and maintained. Decentralization also needs to be supported with rigorous capacity building of the councils. This should include the capacity to identify, consider and accommodate the needs of the population, especially the segments that maybe marginalized. Additionally, the capacity of the councils needs to be strengthened for the execution of sustainability planning functions to locally manage their marine, terrestrial and land resources and be able to make policies to ensure sustainable use for the benefit of the future generations. Furthermore, the capacity of councils needs to be enhanced for effective partnership building, oversight and monitoring of the large-scale projects being implemented to drive the wellbeing of people.

Development and enhancement of a nationwide physical and digital library network to operate as one stop centers can provide information resources across a range of SDGs. Thus, the National Library, university and college libraries, and special libraries such as the Parliament, school libraries and the public libraries mandated to be developed by the island councils could create the space for effective capacity building, social dialogue, and partnerships and improve social service delivery, social dialogue conduct and support training programs in digital and related skills

Statistical Capacity

Data continues to be a major barrier for informed decision making and data driven decision making in the Maldives. Reliable, quality, and timely statistics are essential for evidence-based policymaking and decision-making. According to the Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) Framework compiled by the World Bank, the Maldives' statistical system performs below its potential. The overall country score for the Maldives on a scale of 100 increased from 49.5 in 2017 to 52.9 in 2019, yet, signaling relatively poor performance and is below the average for South Asia and UMIC.¹¹⁸ Data services score especially low (29.9), and significantly below the performance of the region. Indicators behind the data services pillar relate to the quality of data releases, the richness and openness of online access and the availability and use of data access services, such as secure microdata. The Maldives scores better in data use score, and data infrastructure and data sources, on par with the average performance of UMICs and has steadily improved its overall score since 2017.¹¹⁹

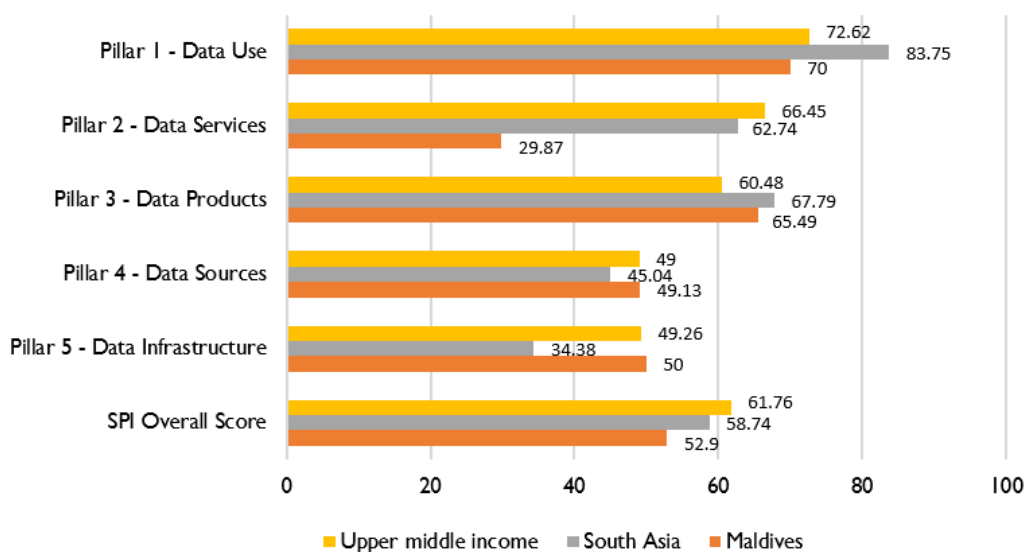


Figure 70: Statistical Performance Indicators overall scores for the Maldives in 2019

A National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2021-2030) has defined the vision for the national statistical system for monitoring and reporting the SDGs. The NSDS sets out the strategy for strengthening and further developing the Maldives Statistical System (MSS). The MBS is the lead agency of the MSS and is responsible for data standardization and access, production of key statistical data series, leadership and coordination of official statistics, and capacity development and strengthening of official statistics. The government and the public sector provide the administrative data, and the councils are also mandated with essential data at local island level. Development of localized SDGs and targets, including a national monitoring framework are part of the NSDS.

The commitment to implement the SDGs demands that the government takes measures to step up efforts for implementation through improved capacity. To track SDG progress, target values for 2030 need to be set for all goals and timeseries data and minimum two data points need to be maintained. The SDG tracker developed by the UNESCAP is a useful tool to demonstrate progress against the SDGs and for easy comparison across peers, and the tool for LNOB analysis can generate meaningful results to generate information to ensure no one is left behind. Although useful data is collected nationally, two data points to demonstrate progress is lacking. Capacity building in data administration, data storage and data analysis are identified as critical needs of the organisations. Organisations can benefit greatly from avoiding data duplication and by having data sharing mechanisms. Strengthening the statistical system through quality administrative data collection within the local councils, line ministries and state institutions, ensuring data collected gets reported and using technology for data sharing and analysis are important. Similarly strengthening the capacity of CSOs and the community to contribute to data collection and ensure participation in data needs and dissemination will benefit SDG implementation. Maximizing on the digitization policy, using technology for data collection, ensuring high quality, reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, migratory status, disabilities, geographic locations, and other nationally relevant context, and having data sharing mechanisms are needed in the Maldives for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

¹¹⁸ Maldives SDG Roadmap, United Nations Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Engagement, 2022

¹¹⁹ Maldives SDG Roadmap, United Nations Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Engagement, 2022

Technology and Innovation

The Maldives is well positioned to leverage digital technologies for sustainable development. Internet coverage and mobile market penetration in the Maldives is very high. The COVID-19 pandemic transformed digital acceleration in the country through online education, telemedicine, e-payment systems, and other digital uses, demonstrating the rapid transition to digital services across government services and businesses enabling ease of access to services for people across the country. Leveraging technology for hybrid working and remote working could enable young people and women in remote locations to engage in the economy empowering them with financial independence and digital literacy.¹²⁰ However, there is significant room for improving the quality, reliability, and affordability of the internet services to take the best advantage of internet technology and innovation in service delivery. Internet prices in the Maldives are higher than the region, mainly due to the high network cost across the geographically fragmented island nation. The government and the technology providers in the private domain are investing in massive technological infrastructure to enable cheaper internet and better connectivity, while the government has also planned internet service provider expansion.

Investments in digital infrastructure will enable digital technology-based services to flourish and enable availability of new services. The introduction of the government's single digital identity will be a step forward to enable digital services through a secure and private domain. Digital services have been expanded for several public services and for MSME business support, including the SDFC online portal. Digital connectivity will be an enabler for activities against poverty and in subsidy targeting enabling efficient and equitable services across the population, thus enabling SDG progress. Digital services also can integrate the self-employed into financial and social protection systems, provide education and counselling for youth who risk dropping out of education, track cohorts who drop out of high school or colleges, and those who graduate, as well as the consequences on the labor market, enabling mitigation interventions.¹²¹ Similarly, digital services can enable improved trade and financial services. However, the rapid digital transformation also risks certain groups, particularly women, elderly, and unskilled foreign migrants from being left behind in the transition to the digital economy due to barriers in digital literacy. Likewise, if not monitored well, digital transformation also risks impacting children and young people falling victim to cyber bullying and cybercrimes and elderly being victims of electronic financial crimes. Hence, speedy enhancement of digital skills and digital literacy amongst the public and the workforce which involves retraining and upskilling efforts at a national scale, ensuring a legal framework that can keep pace with the rapidly evolving digital landscape for cybersecurity, data protection and data privacy and ethics are essential for the Maldives.

Meanwhile, technology can enhance improved sectoral development planning, monitoring, and implement climate measures and better manage the marine resources. Innovative technologies and software need to be adopted for modelling and infrastructure design, and in conservation management and measuring sustainable use of marine resources with technologies for data collection and monitoring to fulfill the role of the custodians of oceans and seas. Technology also could enhance progress across sectors such as the fisheries, agriculture, and tourism, and enhance access to markets for the fisheries and agricultural products. An application has been developed with assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for disseminating information and as a two-way communication platform for the agriculture sector, to be launched this year. The Maldives is also implementing massive infrastructure such as renewable energy systems, water and sewerage systems and adaptation infrastructure across the country that would require regular and timely maintenance, upkeep, and monitoring. With limited human resource capacity across the islands of the Maldives and given the vast spatial element of marine biodiversity management of the Maldives, technology and innovation are prerequisites for SDG acceleration across the Maldives.

¹²⁰ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022

¹²¹ Poverty and Inequality in the Maldives, 2022

Partnership for progress

The implementation of the SDGs requires a whole of government approach and strong multi-stakeholder partnerships across agencies and stakeholders. Continuous political commitment and support and strong multistakeholder support is critical to drive the SDGs. The SAP mapping exercise for SDG alignment highlighted the sectors and agencies working in silos missing out on linkages to the economy, social institutions, and governance mechanism. The consultation exercise undertaken for the second VNR formulation informed about duplication of programs and resource such as duplicate transport systems for different service delivery that could be avoided for better fiscal management and improved benefits to the communities. The participants also highlighted the partnership opportunities that could result in better achievement of goals such as the net zero Carbon emissions ambition of the government. In 2019 The Auditor General's Office (AGO) undertook an audit on the preparedness for the implementation of the SDGs by providing independent oversight on government's effort in the implementation of the SDGs. The AGO is also working on undertaking performance audits related to all SDGs and a specific audit on the implementation SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation. Similarly, some sectors like education could play a larger role such as in enhancing sustainability knowledge and strengthening interlinkages with health and wellbeing, gender equality and civic engagement. Institutions working in silos are identified as a major issue for effective implementation of the SDGs. Given the geographical dispersion of the islands of the Maldives and the vast marine spatial element, stakeholders are dispersed across the country.

Effective partnerships are also needed between local councils and communities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Maximizing the benefits of decentralization to yield more from the governance function can only be achieved by strengthening partnerships with local councils and communities for effective check and balance mechanism. The WDCs can be leveraged better for development issues and in services delivery. Likewise, strengthening civil society partnerships, community engagement and private sector engagement is critical to increase the impact of SDG implementation and results achievement. SDGs acceptance by the whole society is needed to transform and accelerate SDG implementation. Currently, the space for public dialogue on societal issues is limited, overpowered by politicization of issues and political agenda driving issues of the country. It is important for the Maldives to create safe public spaces for social dialogue with meaningful impact to address public problems and strengthen accountability in governance and ensure senior citizens are involved in understanding and passing on the traditional knowledge. The implementation of the SDGs and programs for sustainability and wellbeing across the Maldives needs social dialogue amongst the public and a platform for regular and coordinated multi sectoral engagement and partnerships.

Partnerships with the private sector need to be strengthened. Private sector plays a critical role in shaping and driving the Maldives economy. The economic engine of the Maldives, tourism, is run by the private sector. Tourism has several interlinkages with the SDGs—socioeconomic wellbeing, prosperity, and environmental impact in its business operations. About half of the electricity generated by the country is for the needs of the tourism sector, and its business operations have impacts on sustainable consumption, waste generation, impacts to marine life and biodiversity both positively and negatively. Likewise, the one-island-one-resort model of tourism operation has lasting impacts on families with workers spending long durations away from families on islands far from their home island. The tourism industry in the Maldives has played a major role in reducing poverty and is also currently increasing investments in renewables. Partnership with the tourism industry is key to strengthen and improve the efforts and account for national progress. Similarly private sector engagement in fisheries, agriculture, construction, ICT, and transport sectors is high and needs better coordination and partnerships to drive the SDGs forward.



CONCLUSIONS

Successful tourism has advanced the Maldives economy, improved prosperity for all and reduced poverty. Robust economic growth in the past has enabled the Maldives to maintain high GDP growth, with a GDP per capita income of US\$ 11,119 in 2019. The country is on track to becoming a high-income country. The unprecedented shock from the COVID-19 pandemic however, had a devastating impact on people's lives, livelihoods, and businesses. Like most other countries, the pandemic slowed down the pace of economic growth, implementation of important work, reprioritized areas and impacted the accomplishment of the SDGs. The pandemic also exposed the vulnerability of the Maldives' economy and the risk of a large population sliding to poverty. The first ever multidimensional poverty index of the Maldives demonstrated the vast differences in poverty and inequality across Male' City and the atolls.

The country's economic growth is tied to tourism sector growth and growing economic vulnerabilities is highly concerning. Although tourism has been the driver of economic growth, tourism growth across the atolls has been disproportional, and therefore equal wealth distribution from tourism across the atolls of the Maldives remains a gap. Furthermore, the narrow base of the economy with entire dependency on tourism is a macroeconomic risk. Likewise, heavy reliance on import of fossil fuels for electricity generation is both a fiscal and climate concern. Reducing the overdependence of the economy on tourism and diversifying the economy is needed to minimize economic shocks from external factors, reduce impacts from climate and other risks and to ensure sustainable growth. Similarly, increasing local investments to swiftly shift to renewables for electricity generation is needed to minimize fiscal and climate risks. The improvement of the fisheries and agriculture sectors for increased value addition and to enhance food security of the local community and improve better market access to cater to the needs of the tourism industry has not been fully utilized.

The second VNR of the Maldives articulates the importance of regional development and the need to expand physical and digital connectivity across the islands to improve access to services, opportunities and reduce inequalities. It is considered that the expansion of digital connectivity across the country, combined with a sustainable public transport network can enable SDG acceleration and improve the overall wellbeing of the people. The report also discusses the progress and challenges in human development and wellbeing and the critical challenges imminent with the growing fiscal vulnerability and mounting debt of the country. Likewise, climate vulnerabilities of the country are an emerging concern with significant risk to livelihood, income, and habitat. Large scale investments in transport, and ICT infrastructure and services are needed to improve access to services across the atolls and would require ongoing recurrent expenditure especially to sustainably continue the public transport network.

Immense challenges lay ahead for the country to improve the overall wellbeing of the people, build quality human capital, and ensure social justice. The fertility rate of the country is decreasing, and the ageing population is increasing. The main health concerns relate to NCDs prevention. Substance abuse remains a key challenge and a root cause for other social ills in the country. Overcrowding, congestion, air pollution, fire safety, deteriorating mental health, isolation and immobility of the elderly, children and PWDs are growing concerns in Male' City. Although we have achieved high NER and completion in primary and secondary education, NER in higher secondary education remains low and gap in higher secondary and higher education between Male' City and other atolls remain a challenge. Meanwhile, increasing dropouts is a concern. The demand for labour in professional, skilled, and unskilled sectors is unmet by the available labour force of the country. The local to foreign migrant ratio in the country is 3:1 and the need for foreign labour force is expected to grow to cater to the growing sectoral development. Decent work, income prosperity for all, minimum wage benefits to everyone, and SME growth are important for an inclusive and just society.

As the country is headed towards a high-income country, shaping an inclusive economy with gender equality, presence of a highly qualified educated community, ensuring high employment levels, and an advanced social security system is pertinent. The low participation of women in the economy is a key concern in the Maldives. More women are completing and performing better in higher secondary and tertiary education. However, additional effort is needed to increase women's participation in the labour market, in entrepreneurship and leadership. Although women's involvement in decision making has increased, women are still underrepresented in leadership and the Parliament. At the same time, boys' disengagement in higher secondary and tertiary education needs to be evaluated and timely action taken to ensure they are not left behind. Furthermore, the social protection system of the country needs a holistic review to provide an effective guarantee of basic income security to all the Maldivians and support the vulnerable people in a more equitable manner.

Having arrived at midpoint to achieving the 2030 Agenda, the Maldives is at a critical juncture in its national development. Medium term political agenda shape the development trajectory of the country, and a long-term development vision and direction is lacking for the country. To improve human wellbeing and sustainable development, ending all forms of violence and ensuring peace and justice are important for the Maldives. Gender based violence and violence against children remain serious concerns and effective implementation of rule of law to ensure equal access to justice to all and reduce discrimination and empower women are important for attaining human wellbeing, peace, and justice. Equally important for the 2030 Agenda achievement is ensuring good governance and accountability of institutions to reduce disparities and enable shared benefits to all. Similarly, inclusivity principles including gender equality in governance, leadership and in access to opportunities and the full development of PWDs are critical. Likewise, enforcing non-discriminatory laws and having effective mechanisms to ending abuse, exploitation and trafficking are important development issues for the Maldives.

The unique small island geography, rich biodiversity and natural beauty are the backbone of the economy, habitat for the people and contribute to their livelihoods. Only about one percent of the country is land, and climate change and threat of natural disasters pose a significant risk and an existential threat to the low-lying small islands of the Maldives. Fresh water is limited on the islands and pollution of ground water is a concern. Marine conservation related risks include fish depletion, risk to coral reefs from global warming threatening the loss of important biodiversity. At the same time, risks to the environment and biodiversity from human and business activities and poor agricultural practices are increasing. Sustainable consumption is at risk with increase in pressure on the land in Male' City and land creation activities undertaken across the country. Meanwhile, disaster risk resilience of critical public and industry infrastructure across the Maldives is a serious risk to the country. Furthermore, growing waste, and its sustainable management are concerns. With increase in climatic events affecting the low-lying islands, climate action is urgent for the country and investment focus on climate adaptation and mitigation has never been more pertinent for the Maldives.

The available finance and investment flows are unmatched with the national development requirements. High fiscal vulnerability combined with high debt leaves no fiscal space to divert finance for sustainable development initiatives for important health and education services and climate adaptation in the short term. International support and partnerships will benefit the country in overcoming its development challenges and barriers. Access to international finance mechanisms and concessional financing terms are major development needs for the Maldives. The INFF that supports to consolidate and coordinate the funding support for SDGs is a critical document that sets the right direction in this area. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires speedy and effective international commitments and partnerships for small island countries like the Maldives to overcome its financial challenges to address climate adaptation, mitigation and ensure sustainable development initiatives are continued.



Photo : Unsplash

NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY FORWARD

Long term sustainable development vision: Shaping development through a long-term sustainable development vision with focus on socio-economic wellbeing, and fiscal and climate resilience is pertinent to the Maldives. Having arrived at mid-point to 2030 Agenda implementation, a sustainable development strategy encompassing inclusive social wellbeing, just economic development and circular economy can enable equitable growth supporting decentralization and regional development and enable efficient and effective public spending to enhance sustainability resulting in better development outcomes. The SAP has prioritized the development of the blue economy. Thus, the blue economy needs a clear definition and expansion of the scope of its development as a source of innovation and growth. Likewise, increased investments in the growth of digital economy, net zero achievement, health and education sector expansion will create professional and technical skilled people in these areas which needs to be leveraged in shaping the sectors for economic diversification.

Reducing poverty and improving social protection: The country's social protection system needs strengthening, harmonization, and advancement to effectively protect people from deprivations and address inequalities. This needs to be done by identification of the vulnerable groups through a single registry of beneficiaries with clearly set criteria and accessible at national and local level with real time updates on the status of benefits. A single registry and a defined standard criterion can help target national subsidies, welfare programs and income protection to improve the lives of the people with deprivations, reduce income disparities within the society and ensure adequate labour rights and social protection for the vulnerable. Building on the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, young people, informal workers, situational vulnerabilities and the risk of urban poverty, vulnerable groups need to be clearly defined to ensure social protection and welfare to mitigate future impacts. Likewise, strengthening the social protection system to address the evolving labour market trends, such as the growing gig-economy and gig-workers would need to be supported with better labour and social protection policies.

Quality education and human capital development: Identification of the human resource requirement of the country needs prioritization to meet the existing and emerging sustainable development needs. In the current dynamics of labour and industry growth, a separate policy agency and a strategy that solely focuses on the human resource development needs of the country and ensures decent work for all is needed. Investments aimed at climate adaptation, net zero attainment, digital economy growth, and achieving SDG 3 and SDG 4 alone is expected to grow human capital and employment in these sectors. There is a need to fast track vocational, technical and ICT skills to improve quality and cater to twenty first century education and the needs of the existing and emerging occupations. The rapid digital transformation also requires speedy enhancement of digital skills and digital literacy amongst the public and the workforce through retraining and upskilling efforts at a national scale. This includes the vulnerable groups, particularly women, elderly, and unskilled foreign migrants to ensure they are not left behind. Equally important is to shape policies to ensure boys continue to maintain progress in education and in labour force participation.

Inclusivity and decent work: The labour force being traditionally male dominated, a cultural shift is needed in advancing economic opportunities for women to reduce economic vulnerabilities and in ensuring women engage in traditionally male dominated technical sectors as equal partners of development. Reducing gender-based discrimination and enabling the full potential of the society including women in governance, leadership and economy is crucial for the Maldives to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. This includes proactive measures such as positive discrimination to increase women's engagement in leadership and economy. Policymakers would therefore need to urgently address labour market barriers faced by women. Childcare services and care services for the sick and elderly need prioritization to enable full potential of both genders to contribute to the economy. Policies are also needed to support modern work, work from home and the evolving labour market trends amongst young people such as gig-economy trends. Similarly, integration of the vulnerable and marginalized groups such as PWDs into the economy is needed. Guaranteeing freedom of association, occupational health and safety, the right to collective bargaining and equal pay for work of equal value and preventing and eliminating violence and harassment need to be ensured for all workers in the economy through improved policies, legislation, and strong implementation.

Food security, health, and wellbeing of the people: A more holistic approach for health is needed with emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion. Building a healthy society needs special focus to address the concerns of growing NCDs including cancer and mental health issues. Availability and consumption of fresh foods needs strategizing to promote healthy living, ensure food security and responsible consumption to minimize waste generation. Allocating resources to ensure locally grown and imported food meets the quality standards

and creating awareness amongst the society for healthy and active lifestyles is a growing need of the country. The focus on prevention needs strengthening through changes to spatial planning to enable physical activity and active lifestyles for everyone including women, children, elderly and PWDs as well as increased investments for organic and sustainable agricultural practices. With increase in marine pollution, the fish consumed also needs quality assurance. The availability of affordable, quality, nutritious and safe food needs to be ensured immediately to accelerate human wellbeing for SDG achievement. Similarly, health surveillance data systems need to be revamped and utilized effectively for early detection and monitoring to prevent public health risks.

Sustainable cities and communities through regional development: A regional development strategy and model suitable for small island economic development would drive sustainable development. This can be achieved through an improved model for allocation and distribution of national resources and by reprioritizing the development needs across the country. Demonstration of sustainable cities and islands would benefit the country to fast-track sustainable development models for cities and communities commensurate with small island development. A sustainable Male' City strategy communicating the vision for improving the quality of life and wellbeing that supports decongestion, use e-vehicles and sustainable public transport, reduces overcrowding, and ensures inclusivity by improving mobility and safety for all including women, children, elderly and PWDs would be beneficial for the development of all islands. Furthermore, the national housing policy needs a clearly communicated vision that supports home ownership for everyone and empowers more people with low-cost finance and housing development on the islands. Such a strategy supported with schools providing high quality education and connectivity with efficient public transport and digital services in selected demonstration islands can enable the development of other cities and islands with higher population that could attract better population growth, improve services and quality of life, and drive regional development.

Biodiversity management and circular economy: As the fragile natural ecosystem and biodiversity of the Maldives is under threat from climate change and human activities, minimizing the impacts on the biodiversity and the ecosystems with sustainable development measures is a priority. Land creation for development needs to be reevaluated at a national level to ensure sustainable use of natural resources and maximization of these resources for effective and efficient national growth. Similarly, the tourism industry relies on the natural resources for its business operations and the industry's sustainability can be ensured only through sustainable resource use. Unplanned land creation for tourism development across the country needs reevaluation and policy alignment for an improved tourism development model that ensure regional spread of tourism activities is a growing need. Likewise, the impact of solid waste, particularly plastic waste, the release of untreated wastewater and chemicals from inhabited islands, tourism and industrial islands and the impact of the poor agriculture practices to the ocean needs to be evaluated to understand the impacts on marine life and ensure threat to biodiversity and any negative impacts on human health is prevented.

Building resilience through renewable energy, sustainable transport, and water security: The net zero Carbon emissions vision of the country needs to be supported with a whole of industry strategy. Sectoral growth, housing growth and increased consumptions is expected to increase demand for energy, while the shift towards RO for production of water will further increase the demand for energy. The dependency on fossil fuel-based electricity generation is a fiscal and climate concern of the country. Adoption of renewable energy needs to be accelerated through innovative financing schemes, increasing the adoption of renewable energy technologies by households and empowering households to be prosumers of energy. Similarly, private sector partnerships, especially with the tourism sector is needed to ensure their rapid transition towards renewables. It is also imperative that speedy action is taken to adopt sustainable e-vehicles powered by solar PV for public transport to be used in the cities, islands with large populations and with road infrastructure. Furthermore, a complete shift in water production by RO in all islands needs to be reevaluated and implementation of hybrid and sustainable measures need to be strengthened with knowledge and awareness and resources to ensure water security and safety for all.

Innovation, industry, and infrastructure management: As the country increases investments in public infrastructure development, including the development of airports, harbors, roads, housing, transport, energy and water and sanitation systems that would require regular maintenance and upkeep, it is important to ensure sustainable consumption, minimize wastage and deterioration from ineffective utilization. Adequate human resource capacity, technological resources and financial resources would need to be assigned for the upkeep and maintenance of these critical infrastructures. At the same time, reducing the climate vulnerability of these infrastructures is important when allocating finance for infrastructure development and operations. Maximizing decentralization, empowerment of communities in the island and enabling the councils, communities and

CSOs with digital technologies, financial resources, knowledge on climate impact and efficient and effective infrastructure use, maintenance, and upkeep will be crucial for the Maldives to ensure sustainable use and management of public infrastructure. The country is investing heavily in ICT, and technology can enhance improved sectoral development planning, monitoring, and implement climate measures and better manage the critical infrastructure and resources across the country.

Access to justice and good governance: Justice, transparency and good governance are essential for the wellbeing of the society. Building capacity of institutions administering services and ensuring justice across the country needs strengthening to fast track access to justice. Similarly, as the country is making transformational digital changes, modern systems, tools, and methods need to be leveraged by the institutions to reduce inefficiencies and ensure transparency and accelerate peace and justice. Ensuring inclusivity in society and economy requires decision making through clear identification of the systematic biases and elimination of those for the full development of everyone including children, women, elderly, PWDs, migrants and the vulnerable. Social justice, ending abuse and exploitation needs strengthening through policies and laws and speedy implementation of the existing laws, enhancing capacity and knowledge, and increasing use of technology for improving justice. Likewise, ensuring that the legal framework keeps pace with the rapidly evolving digital landscape for cybersecurity, data protection and data privacy and ethics are essential for the Maldives.

SDG prioritization and coordination mechanism: SDG coordination function needs strengthening to administer the functions fully and to enable strong partnerships between public sector organisations, private sector, and the civil society for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Through the second VNR, the importance of the planning system, finance for SDG implementation, statistical and human resource capacity improvements, technology and innovations, diverse stakeholder engagement and strong partnerships for goals for the enabling environment were identified. As the country is advancing towards a high-income country, capacity building in data administration, data storage and analysis is a critical need of the country. The statistical system needs strengthening with human and financial resources to enable critical data collection, using advanced data analytics tools and to ensure the data collected gets reported. Maximizing on the digitization policy, using technology for data collection, ensuring high quality, reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, migratory status, disabilities, geographic locations, and other nationally relevant context, and having data sharing mechanisms are needed in the Maldives for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Building strong partnerships: A whole of government approach and collaboration is needed to improve efficiency, effectiveness, coordination, and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Strong partnerships are needed for strengthening domestic resource mobilization, increasing official development assistance, investment promotion, and enable local and foreign direct investments for the development of industries. Access to science, technology and innovation and enhancing knowledge amongst local and global partners on mutually agreed terms through effective dialogue would enable the progress of SDGs. Due to its dispersed nature, equally pertinent to the Maldives is the partnerships between the government agencies, councils, WDCs and CSOs in inhabited islands to establish the linkages for effective implementation of the SDGs. Private sector plays a key role in national development and has strong linkages to SDGs. Therefore, to achieve the 2030 Agenda, strong partnerships with the private sector is equally pertinent. To enable these partnerships, facilitating regular dialogue, exchange of information and communication through systematic channels such as conferences, consultation, engagement meetings and information and data exchanging platforms is important for the Maldives to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the available finance is unmatched with the development needs of the country and strong international partnerships with development agencies for innovative finance schemes is crucial for SDG acceleration.

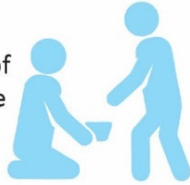
ANNEXES

A1: Data

Goal 1 proposes ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. All people nationwide, including the poorest and most vulnerable, should enjoy a basic standard of living and social protection benefits.

Using the international benchmark for extreme poverty of an income of US\$ 1.25 per day, 6.6 percent of the population is living below this line

HIES, 2016



1.5 percent of population in Male' lives below the \$1.25 poverty line

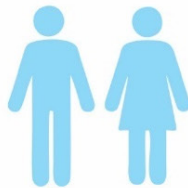
HIES, 2016



10.4 percent of population in Atoll lives below the \$1.25 poverty line

HIES, 2016

Among the male population in Maldives, 6.5 percent of Men lives below the \$1.25 poverty line



Among the female population in Maldives, 6.7 percent of women lives below the \$1.25 poverty line

HIES, 2016

The National Poverty line is attached at half the median of expenditure at MVR 74.

8.2 percent of population in Maldives lives below the national poverty line (MVR74)



Nationally implemented social protection schemes

SYB 2020

Single parents receiving single parent allowance (Parent)

2501

2019



Number of persons receiving Emergency medical welfare

2019

3943

Number of persons with disabilities receiving Disability Allowance

8476

2019



Number of older persons receiving 65 + years allowance

2019

17676

Data Updates by Targets

Target 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day

Proportion of the total population below international poverty line (\$1.25):				
	Data	Year	Source	
	Both sexes	6.6%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Male:	6.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Female:	6.7%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Proportion of the total population below international poverty line (\$1.25):				
	Male'	1.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Atolls	10.4%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Proportion of 15+ population below international poverty line by economic activity status:				
	Proportion of the employed population:	4.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Proportion of the unemployed population:	6.2%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Proportion of the population outside the labour force:	7.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Proportion of population below international poverty line by age group:				
	Population less than 15 years (age group: 0-14 yrs)	8.3%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	working age population (age group: 15-64 yrs)	6.0%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Elderly - age group: 65+	5.1%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Children (0-17 years)	8.3%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	International Youth (15-24 years)	7.7%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	National Youth (18-35 years)	6.0%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Proportion of employed population (15+ population) below the international poverty line (US \$ 5.5) by sex and locality:				
Proportion of employed population in the Maldives:				
	Both sexes	4.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Male:	4.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Female:	4.4%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Proportion of employed population in the Maldives:				
	Male'	1.3%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Atolls	7.2%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Proportion of 15+ population below international poverty line by employment status by sex:				
Proportion of poor by employment status by both sexes:				
	Employee	4.3%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Employer or owner (with employees)	2.1%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Own account worker	4.1%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	own account worker(with family members)	3.6%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Contributing family worker	6.4%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
	Group worker	8.8%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

Target I.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

Proportion of the total population below national poverty line (MVR 74):				
Proportion of the Maldives:				
Both sexes	8.2%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Male:	8.1%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Female:	8.2%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Proportion of total population below national poverty line (MVR 74) by geographical location and sex:				
Proportion of the Male:				
Both sexes	1.7%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Male:	1.7%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Female:	1.7%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Proportion of the Atolls:				
Both sexes	12.8%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Male:	13.1%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Female:	12.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Proportion of population below national poverty line (MVR 74) by age group:				
Children (age group: 0-14 yrs)	10.1%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
working age population (age group: 15-64 yrs)	7.5%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Elderly - age group: 65+	6.2%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
Children (0-17 years)	10.1%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
International Youth (15-24 years)	9.2%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	
National Youth (18-35 years)	7.4%	2016	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS	

Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

Population living below Multidimensional Poverty	28.4%	2016	NBS
Children living below multidimensional Poverty	33.9%	2016	NBS
Households by disability status:	26.7%	2016	NBS
With disability			
Without disability	34.2%	2016	NBS

Target I.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems

Number of Single Parents receiving single parent allowance (Parent)	3067	2021	National Social Protection Authority
Number of Single Parents receiving single parent allowance (children)	5290	2021	National Social Protection Authority
Number of Foster Parent receiving Foster Parent allowance (Parent)	109	2021	National Social Protection Authority
Number of Foster Parent receiving Foster Parent allowance (Children)	144	2021	National Social Protection Authority
Number of persons receiving Emergency medical welfare	6590	2021	National Social Protection Authority
Number of persons with disabilities receiving Disability Allowance	9646	2021	National Social Protection Authority
Number of older persons receiving 65 + years allowance	19331	2021	Maldives Pension Administration

Target I.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services To set basic services at national level

1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people

Tsunami			
Number of people dead:	82	2004	National Disaster Management Authority
Number of people missing:	26	2004	National Disaster Management Authority

1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

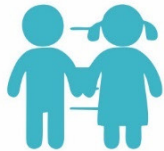
Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, (In million Rufiyaa)	Data	Year	Source
Education	4,362.9	2022	Ministry of Finance & Treasury
Health	4,490.3	2022	Ministry of Finance & Treasury
Social Protection	4,103.0	2022	Ministry of Finance & Treasury

1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

15 percent of children under age 5 in Maldives are short for his/her age.



14 percent of female children under age 5 are short for his/her age.

16 percent of male children under age 5 are short for his/her age.



13 percent of children under age 5 in Male' are stunted (too short for the age)



16 percent of children under age 5 in Atolls are stunted (too short for the age)



9 percent of children under age 5 in Maldives are too low for their height.



10 percent of male children under age 5 are too low for their height.

8 percent of female children under age 5 are too low for their height.

DHS, 2016/17

Agricultural Orientation Index : 0.17

2014, Ministry of Finance/NBS



Agriculture Share of Government Expenditures divided by Agriculture Share of GDP = AOI



Number of Farmers, 2018

7,568

Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture

Number of Fisherman, 2018

17,589

Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture



Data Updates by Targets

Target 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

No Data Available

Target 2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age				
	<i>Data</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Source</i>	
<6 months	22.4	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
6 - 8 months	18	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
9 - 11 months	20.4	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
12 - 17 months	24.2	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
18 - 23 months	18	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
24 - 35 months	14.7	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
36 - 47 months	10.7	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
48 - 59 months	10.7	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
Male	16.3	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
Female	14.2	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
Maldives	15.3	2016 / 17		
Male'	13.2	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
Atolls	16.1	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey	
Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)				
	<i>(percentage below - (percentage above 2 SD) +2 SD)</i>		<i>Year</i>	<i>Source</i>
<6 months	11.3	6.8	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
6 - 8 months	6	2.9	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
9 - 11 months	7.3	2.9	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
12 - 17 months	4.6	3.8	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
18 - 23 months	5.6	4.9	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
24 - 35 months	9.4	3.3	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
36 - 47 months	10.6	4.3	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
48 - 59 months	11.5	7.7	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
Male	10.1	6.7	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
Female	8.1	6	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
Maldives	9.1	4.9	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
Male'	10.3	4.2	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
Atolls	8.7	5.2	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey

Target 2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other

productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

No data Available

Target 2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems 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.

No data Available

Target 2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed

No data Available

2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries

The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures		
0.17	2014	Ministry of Finance/NBS

- ✓ The Agriculture share of GDP includes agricultural and mining & fisheries share where the AOI showing 0.17 reflects a lower orientation to agriculture which receives lower share of government spending relative to its contribution to economic value added.

2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round

No data Available

2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

No data Available

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

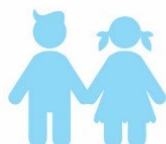


68 deaths per 100,00-2021 (MoH)
For every 100,000 live births, 104 maternal deaths occur



99.5 percent of the births has been attended by skilled personnel.

for every 1000 live births in 2015, 8 infants (of the age 0-28 days) die



for every 1000 live births in 2015, 10 children (of the age 0-4 yrs) die
10 deaths per 100,00-2021 (MoH)

DHS 2016/17



Number of new HIV infections.2015, Health Protection Agency

- 23 local infected cases
- 9 Newly Infected persons
- 352 Screened as positive for HIV



Death due to road traffic injuries 5 Deaths
2019 Maldives Police Services

Suicide mortality 17 Deaths
2019 Maldives Police Services



Adolescent fertility rate
(15-19) per 1,000 women:
2 per 1000 women
DHS 2016/17

Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
among married women (CPR) (%)
0.28
2016/17 DHS



Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines
included in their national programme



73 %
2016 / 17
DHS

Data Updates by Targets
3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births

Maternal Mortality Ratio			
68/100,000 Live Births	2021		Ministry of Health
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)			
99.5%	2016 / 17		Demographic Health Survey

3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births

Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)/'000 live births			
6 / '000 live births	2021		Ministry of Health
Infant Mortality Rate (under 1) / '000 Live Births			
10 / '000 live births	2021		Ministry of Health

3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases

Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population (by age, sex, and key populations)			
HIV incidence rate			
23 local infected cases	2015		Health Protection Agency
9 Newly Infected persons	2015		Health Protection Agency
352 Screened as positive for HIV	2015		Health Protection Agency

3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

Suicide mortality rate			
Suicide mortality rate	18 Deaths	2021	Maldives Police Services
Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease			
0.03	2018		VRS, Ministry of Health
Harmful use of alcohol defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita (15+ years old) consumption within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol			
Drug prevalence in the Maldives	0.07	2011/2012	National Drug Survey

3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

Harmful use of alcohol defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita (15+ years old) consumption within a calendar year in liters of pure alcohol			
Drug prevalence in the Maldives	0.07	2011/2012	National Drug Survey

3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

Death rate due to road traffic injuries			
6	2021		Maldives Police Services

3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs

Proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods.

Contraceptive Prevalence Rate among married women (CPR) (%)	0.28	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
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Adolescent fertility rate (15-19) per 1,000 women in that age group

per 1000 women at 15-19 age group	2	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
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3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

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, noncommunicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)

100%	2021	National Social Protection Agency
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3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

No Data Available

3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate

Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older

3.a.1 Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older	22.5	2016/17	DHS
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3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all

Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors

Number of pharmacies (ALL inhabited islands have at least one pharmacy)	339	2017	Maldives Food and Drug Authority
Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme ⁶	73 %	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
a) Coverage of DPT containing vaccine (3rd dose)	85 %	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
b) Coverage of measles containing vaccine (2nd dose)	75 %	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey

3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States

Health worker density and distribution

1.04	2017	Health Information & Research
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Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



Population 15+ years literacy: Both Sexes: 97.8% HIES 2019

ABC

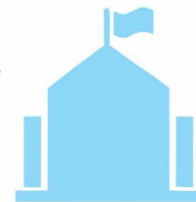
Youth international (15-24) years literacy: Both Sexes: 98.5 % HIES 2019

STUDENT ENROLMENT AND SCHOOLS, 2020

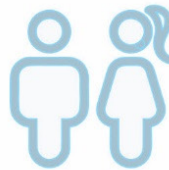
Republic: 90,496
Male': 33815
Atolls: 56681



Government: 75,128
Private: 11603
Community: 3762



Male: 46340



Female: 44156



Male': 33815



Atolls: 56681

Ministry of Education

Schools with access to Electricity: 100%



Proportion of youth and adults with ICT skills by type of skill

Schools with access to basic drinking water: 100%



69%
HIES 2009/10



Schools with access to single-sex basic sanitation facilities: 100%



Ministry of Education

Proportion of trained teachers, 2019
Ministry of Education

- i) pre-primary 66%
- ii) primary 87%
- iii) lower secondary 98%
- iv) upper secondary 98%



% of female teachers
2019
49 percent

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

No Data Available

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Percentage of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex

All CHILDREN in preschool under 5 yrs of age	90	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
BOYS in preschool under 5 yrs of age	90	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey
GIRLS in preschool under 5 yrs of age	94	2016 / 17	Demographic Health Survey

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Participation rate of adults in formal and non- formal education and training in the last 12 months by sex

Youth international (15-24) years

Both Sexes	40	2014	Census 2014
Male	36	2014	Census 2014
Female	44	2014	Census 2014
Adults(25-64) years			
Both Sexes	7	2014	Census 2014
Male	6	2014	Census 2014
Female	9	2014	Census 2014

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

Proportion of youth and adults with ICT skills by type of skill

Youth international (15-24) years	69	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used a computer (Both Sex)	51	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used internet (Both Sex)	70	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used a computer (Male)	55	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used internet (Male)	68	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used internet (Female)	47	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Adults 15+ years			

Who have used a computer (Both Sex)	46	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used internet (Both Sex)	33	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used a computer (Male)	55	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used internet (Male)	38	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Who have used a computer (Female)	42	2009/10	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

No Available data

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

Percentage of the population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills.

Youth international (15-24) years

<u>Proxy indicator calculated (for literacy):</u>	98.5%		Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Both Sexes:		2019	
Males	98.4%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Female	98.5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

Population 15+ years

<u>Proxy indicator calculated (for literacy):</u>	97.8%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Both Sexes			
Males:	97.6%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Female:	97.9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

No Available data

4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single- sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) indicator definitions)

a) schools with access to Electricity:	100%	2019	Ministry of Education
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e) Schools with access to basic drinking water:	100%	2019	Ministry of Education
f) Schools with access to single-sex basic sanitation facilities:	100%	2019	Ministry of Education

4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

No Available data

4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

Proportion of teachers in (i) pre-primary (ii) primary, (iii) lower secondary and (iv) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher (i.e. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country. Disaggregation's: sex (and others where data are available)

i) pre-primary	66%	2019	Ministry of Education
ii) primary	87%	2019	Ministry of Education
iii) lower secondary	98%	2019	Ministry of Education
iv) upper secondary	99%	2019	Ministry of Education

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



60,172
Total girl population, 2020



201,277
women in Maldives, 2020



4.6%, SYB 2019
Proportion of women
in the parliament



22.3%
HIES 2019
Proportion of women
in managerial positions

Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location, 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey



Male' 9%



Both sex 10%
Female 15%
Male 5%



Atolls 11%



15-24
5%



25-44
12%



45-54
13%



55-64
11%



65+
5%

2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, 2019 HIES

Both Sexes 94%
Male 94%
Female 93%



Male 96%
Atolls 91%



Proportion of women
aged 20-24 years
who were married or
in a union before age
15 and before age 18
2.2%
DHS, 2016/17

Data updates by Targets

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

No Available data

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 who have experienced various forms of violence ever or in the 12 months preceding the survey, committed by their current or most recent husbands/partners			
Physical violence	5.4	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
Sexual violence	0.7	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
Emotional violence	14.1	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
Any form of physical and/or sexual violence	5.5	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
Any form of emotional and/or physical and/or sexual violence	16.7	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Prevalence of circumcision among girls/women			
Girls age 0-14	1%	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
Women 15-49	13%		
Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (%)			
	2.2%	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location			
Both sex	10%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Female	15%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Male	5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Male'	9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Atolls	11%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
15-24	5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
25-44	12%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey

45-54	13%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
55-64	11%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
65+	5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments

Total seats occupied by women in the parliament	4.6%	2019	SYB/NBS
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Proportion of women in managerial positions

Proportion of women in managerial positions	22.3%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
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5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

Proportion of women (aged 15-49) who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

Women (aged 15-49)	53.9%	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
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5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

No Available data

5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex

Both Sexes	94%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Male	94%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Female	93%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Male'	96%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Atolls	91%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey

5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

No Available data

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



Population classified by type of water used for drinking water,

Safe drinking water 61.7% Republic



Male' 99.6%



Atolls 27.2%

*Rainwater in itself is not considered as a safe drinking water. Use of any method of purification such as boiling, chlorinating or filtering makes the rainwater a safe drinking water.



47.6% Household who use bottle water as the main source of drinking water



12.3% Household who use desalinated water as the main source of drinking water



39.9% Household who use rain water as the main source of drinking water

2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey



“The limited freshwater resources make Maldives highly water insecure. Over extraction has resulted in salt water ingress and depletion of the shallow freshwater lens in most islands.”
SOE, 2016



75.9% Household who use rain water as the main source of drinking water



“Majority of atoll population use rainwater for drinking. Decrease in rainfall days and lack of sufficient rainwater harvesting capacity result in water security issues in the islands.” SOE, 2016



Percentage of households classified by type of sewerage facilities used



Atolls:



Male'

Data Updates by Targets

6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services			
Population classified by type of water used for drinking water			
Republic			
Safe drinking water	61.7%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use bottle water as the main source of drinking water	47.6%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use desalinated water as the main source of drinking water	12.3%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use rain water as the main source of drinking water	39.9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Male'			
Safe drinking water	99.6%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use bottle water as the main source of drinking water	78.9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use desalinated water as the main source of drinking water	20.8%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use rain water as the main source of drinking water	0.4%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Atoll			
Safe drinking water	27.2%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use bottle water as the main source of drinking water	19.1%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use desalinated water as the main source of drinking water	4.6%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Household who use rain water as the main source of drinking water	75.9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
*Rainwater in itself is not considered as a safe drinking water. Use of any method of purification such as boiling, chlorinating or filtering makes the rainwater a safe drinking water.			

6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

Percentage of households classified by type of sewerage facilities used and locality			
Atolls:			
Toilet connected to sewerage network	48%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Toilet connected to sea	9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Toilet connected to septic tank	43%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Male'			
	100%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services, including a handwashing facility with soap and water			
Male'			
	98.9%	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey
Atolls			
	97.9%	2016/17	Demographic Health Survey

6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

No Available data

6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

No Available data

6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

No Available data

6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

No Available data

6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

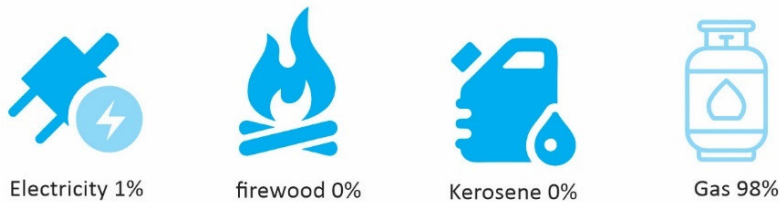
No Available data

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology

Households by type fuel used for cooking (National level)



2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

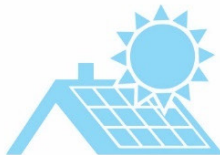


Percentage distribution of installed capacity for electricity generation

Renewable
7% 2016
SOE/MEE



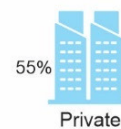
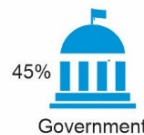
“Due to lack of conventional energy sources such as coal, oil and natural gas, the Maldives depends entirely on imported petroleum products to meet all energy demands, making Maldives among the most energy insecure countries in the world”.



4,065kWp solar capacity installed
SOE, 2016

Percentage share of installed solar PV system

(Data source: Energy Department, Ministry of Environment and Energy, 2016)



“The National Energy Policy and Strategy include provisions, to provide all citizens with access to reliable and sustainable energy services at lowest possible cost, enhancing energy security, promoting energy efficiency and conservation, and moving towards the target of renewable energy based electricity supply.”
SOE, 2016

Data Updates by Targets

7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology			
Households by type fuel used for cooking (National level)			
Electricity	1%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
firewood	0%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Kerosene	0%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
Gas	98%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey

7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption			
Percentage distribution of installed capacity for electricity generation - Renewable	7%	2016	SOE/MEE

7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

No Data Available

7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology

No Data Available

7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support

No Data Available

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



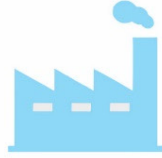
Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment,



Non- agricultural 36%



Agriculture 76%



Industry 64%



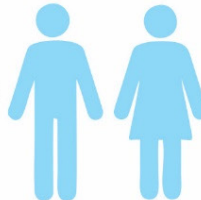
Services 30%

2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Proportion of youth (aged 15-24) not in education, employment or training

Both sexes 28%

Male 25%



Female 30%

2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Unemployment rate, by sex, age

Both sex 5.3%



Male 5.6%



Female 4.8%

Male' 6.1%



Atolls 4.4%

Number of children aged 15-17 years engaged in employment, by sex and age

Both Sexes 2,368



Male 1,226



Female 1,142

Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults 12.13



Number of commercial bank ATMs per 100,000 adult 27.97



2015 MMA

2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Percentage share of GDP Tourism 26.3% 2019



Government expenditure on different social protection schemes (MVR) 349,913,785.56 2019



Data Updates by Targets

8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries

Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita

Annual growth rate of real GDP ¹	6.1	2018	National Bureau of Statistics
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8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex

<u>Both sex</u>			
Non- agricultural	36%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Agriculture	76%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Industry	64%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Services	30%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
<u>Female</u>			
Non- agricultural	43%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Agriculture	91%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Industry	86%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Services	32%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
<u>Male</u>			
Non- agricultural	31%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Agriculture	75%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Industry	45%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Services	28%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
<u>Male¹</u>			
Non- agricultural	28%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Agriculture	59%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Industry	45%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Services	26%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
<u>Atolls</u>			
Non- agricultural	46%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Agriculture	78%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Industry	73%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Services	35%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable

Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead

No Data Available

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

Average hourly earnings of female and male employees by occupations , age and persons with disabilities

Locality

Maldives	17%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male'	20%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Atolls	12%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

Occupation

0. Armed forces occupations	-8%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
1. Managers	-7%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
2. Professionals	11%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
3. Technicians and associate professionals	15%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
4. Clerical support workers	22%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
5. Service and sales workers	5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
6. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	41%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
7. Craft and related trades workers	58%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers	52%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
9. Elementary occupations	18%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

Age group

15-17	12%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
18-19	52%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
20-24	9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
25-29	8%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
30-34	24%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
35-39	11%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
40-44	20%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
45-49	-2%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
50-54	19%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
55-59	37%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
60-64	40%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
65+	38%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

Unemployment rate, by sex, age

Sex

Both sex	5.3%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Female	4.8%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male	5.6%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

Locality

Male'	6.1%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Atolls	4.4%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

Age group

15-17	22.2%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
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18-19	28.8%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
20-24	10.9%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
25-29	5.4%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
30-34	3.5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
35-39	2.6%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
40-44	2.2%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
45-49	2.1%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
50-54	4.4%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
55-59	1.8%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
60-64	2.2%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
65+	2.0%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Proportion of youth (aged 15-24) not in education, employment or training			
Both sex	28%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Female	30%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male	25%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

Number of children aged 15-17 years engaged in employment, by sex and age			
Both Sex	2,368	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male	1,226	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Female	1,142	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

No Data Available

8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

Percentage share of GDP Tourism	26.3%	2019	NBS
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8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

Number of commercial bank branches and ATMs per 100,000 adults			
Number of commercial bank branches 100,000 adults	12.13	2015	Maldives Monetary Authority
Number of commercial bank ATMs per 100,000 adult	27.97	2015	Maldives Monetary Authority

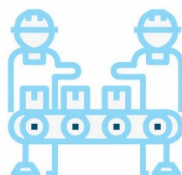
8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries

No Data Available

8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization

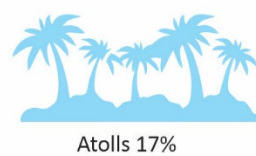
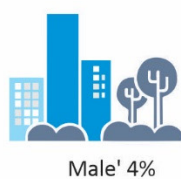
Government expenditure on different social protection schemes (MVR)	349,913,785.56	2019	NSPA/NBS
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Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP
2.2%
2019, NBS

Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment
Both sexes
10%



2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

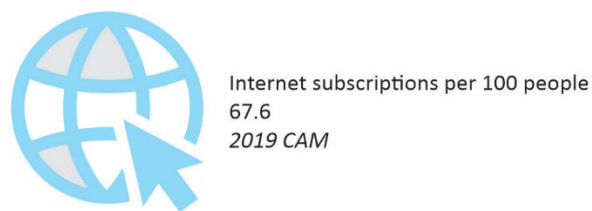
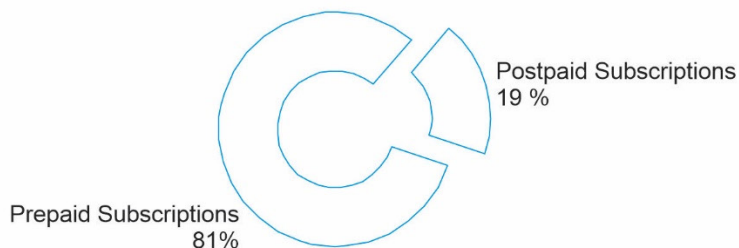


GgCO2e emission
1.226
SOE, 2011



Per capita emission KgCO2e
3,697
SOE, 2011

Mobile subscriptions 2019



Data Updates by Targets

9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
No Data Available

9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries

Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP	2.2%	2019	NBS
Manufacturing value added per capita (MVR)	3157.6	2019	NBS
Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment			
Both sex	10%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Female	18%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male	5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male'	4%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Atolls	17%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets

No Data Available

9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities

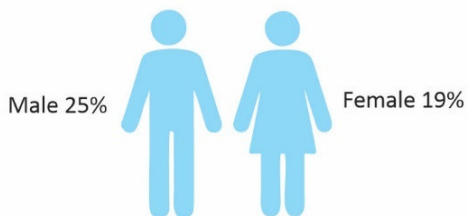
GgCO ₂ e emission		2011	SOE/Ministry of Environment and Energy
Per capita emission KgCO ₂ e	3,697	2011	SOE/Ministry of Environment and Energy

9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020

Mobile subscriptions per 100 people	155	2019	Communication Authority of Madives
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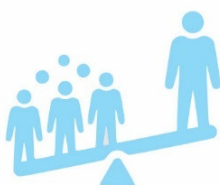
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income
Both sexes 17%



2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Welfare is unevenly distributed in Maldives. The per capita expenditure in the top quintile is four times higher than in the bottom



The Gini-coefficient for Maldives is 0.313.
The Ginicoefficient for Male' is slightly higher than in the Atolls showing inequality is high in Male' compared to Atolls.

2020Household Income and Expenditure Survey

GDP at Market price (In Million MVR , AT CONSTANT PRICES) 77161.9
2019



Data Updates by Targets

10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

No Data Available

10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity origin, religion or economic or other status

Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income			
Both sex	17%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Female	19%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male	25%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Male'	5%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Atolls	29%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Age: Less than 15 years	22%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Age: 15-17 years	25%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Age: 18-35 years	14%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Age: 36-64 years	16%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS
Age: 65+ years	13%	2019	Household Income and Expenditure Survey/NBS

10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

No Data Available

10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

GDP at Market price (In Million MVR , AT CONSTANT PRICES)	77161.9	2019	NBS
Staff Salary (In Million MVR)	4597.29	2019	SYB
Staff Allowance (In Million MVR)	3669.72	2019	SYB
Social Protection Schemes (MVR)	349,913,785.6	2019	SYB
Basic Pension (MVR)	903,984,286	2019	SYB
Retirement Pension (MVR)	90,949,201	2019	SYB
Aasandha (MVR)	2,164,672,441	2019	SYB

10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations

No Data Available

10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions

Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations	Membership	Voting right	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
United Nations General Assembly	yes	yes	

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



Households by type of living quarters and locality, In buildings not intended for human habitation

Republic 0.40%
2014CENSUS



Percentage of households classified by type of sewerage facilities , Atolls



Toilet connected to sewerage network 25.97%



toilet connected to sea 11.19%



Toilet connected to septic tank 63.84%

Households using well water for showering by cleanliness of water

Atolls:

Contaminated well water 23.00%



Clean well water 76.00%

Percentage of total waste generated by locality



Waste generated - Waste transported to Thilafushi,
431,871MT
2017 WAMCO



Waste generated - Atolls
67,096 MT
2015 MEE

Data Updates by Targets

11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

Households by type of living quarters and locality, In buildings not intended for human habitation			
Republic	0.40%	2014	CENSUS
Male'	0.40%	2014	CENSUS
Administrative Islands	0.30%	2014	CENSUS
Non Administrative Islands	1.00%	2014	CENSUS
Percentage of households classified by type of sewerage facilities used and locality, census 2014			
Atolls:			
Toilet connected to sewerage network	25.97%	2014	CENSUS
Toilet connected to sea	11.19%	2014	CENSUS
Toilet connected to septic tank	63.84%	2014	CENSUS
Male'			
Toilet connected to sewerage network	100.00%	2014	CENSUS
Households using well water for showering by cleanliness of water			
Atolls:			
Not-stated	1.00%	2014	CENSUS
Contaminated well water	23.00%	2014	CENSUS
Clean well water	76.00%	2014	CENSUS

11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

No Data Available

11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

No Data Available

11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

No Data Available

11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

Number of Deaths and missing due to disaster , Tsunami			
Number of people dead:	82	2004	National Disaster Management Authority
Number of people missing:	26	2004	National Disaster Management Authority

11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

Percentage of total waste generated by locality			
Waste generated - Atolls	67,096 MT	2015	MEE
Waste generated - Waste transported to Thilafushi,	431,871MT	2017	WAMCO

11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

No Data Available

11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

No Data Available

11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

No Data Available

11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

No Data Available

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Data Updates by Targets

12.1 Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries

No Data Available

12.2 By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources

No Data Available

12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses

No Data Available

12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment

No Data Available

12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse

No Data Available

12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle

No Data Available

12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities

No Data Available

12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

No Data Available

12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production

No Data Available

12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

No Data Available

12.c Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities

No Data Available

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts[b]

Data Updates by Targets

13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Number of Deaths and missing due to disaster

Number of people dead:	82	2004	National Disaster Management Authority
Number of people missing:	26	2004	National Disaster Management Authority
No of people relocated or evacuated due to disasters	175	2015	National Disaster Management Authority

13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

No Data Available

13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

No Data Available

13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible

No Data Available

13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

No Data Available

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Data Updates by Targets

14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

No Data Available

14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

No Data Available

14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

No Data Available

14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics

No Data Available

14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

No Data Available

14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation[c]

No Data Available

14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

Percentage share of GDP _ fisheries	3.6%	2019	NBS
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14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries

No Data Available

14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

No Data Available

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Data Updates by Targets

15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

No Data Available

15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

No Data Available

15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world

No Data Available

15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development

No Data Available

15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

No Data Available

15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed

No Data Available

15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products

No Data Available

15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species

No Data Available

15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

No Data Available

15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems

No Data Available

15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

No Data Available

15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

No Data Available

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Data Updates by Targets

16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

Number of logged cases by locality & type of cases,			
Assault	631	2019	SYB 2020
Sexual Offences	405	2019	SYB 2020
Domestic violence	219	2019	SYB 2020
Threatening	492	2019	SYB 2020

16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Number of cases sent to court trial, 2015			
Sexual abuse of children by a trusted person	9	2019	SYB 2020
Sexual conduct with a Minor/ Child sexual abuse	1	2019	SYB 2020

16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

Number of logged cases by type of case			
Domestic violence	219	2019	SYB 2020

16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime

Number of logged cases by type of case			
Use of a Dangerous Weapon During an Offense	15	2019	SYB 2020

16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

No Data Available

16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

No Data Available

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

No Data Available

16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

No Data Available

16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

Registered Births at Department of National registration	99%	2018	DNR
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16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

No Data Available

16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

Existence of independent National Human Rights Institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles	HRCM	2014
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16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

No Data Available

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Data Updates by Targets

Finance

17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection

No Data Available

17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries

No Data Available

17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources

No Data Available

17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress

SUMMARY OF PUBLICLY GUARANTEED EXTERNAL DEBT

Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)	66.3 %	2019	WorldBankdata
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17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries

No Data Available

Technology

17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism

Mobile subscriptions per 100 people	155	2019	SYB 2020
Landlines per 100 people	3	2019	SYB 2020
Internet subscriptions per 100 people	68	2019	SYB 2020

17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed

No Data Available

17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology

Households by the ownership of selected assets and locality (Atolls), 2014

Internet available at home	42,012	2014	CENSUS 2014
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17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

No Data Available

17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda

No Data Available

17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020

Exports by country of destination

Total value in USD	157,591,369.19	2019	SYB 2020
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17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access

No Data Available

17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence

No Data Available

17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

No Data Available

17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development

No Data Available

17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

No Data Available

17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

No Data Available

17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	Statistical Regulation Endorsed during the year 2012	No Statistical legislation
Number of countries with a National Statistical Plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2010-2019)	Endorsed during the year 2010 (NOT funded adequately)

17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years, and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration	Latest census was conducted during the year 2014, Births are registered within 7 days of delivery.
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A2: Stakeholders

Stakeholder Consultations		
Group	Institutions/Organisations	Purpose
Advisory Group	Ministry of National Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure (SDG Division) Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS) UNRCO UNESCAP	Provide timely feedback on the findings and advise on key messages, analysis, and discuss solutions to complex problems
Focus Goals Key Informant Group	Ministry of Education Ministry of Higher Education Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture Ministry of Tourism Ministry of Economic Development Ministry of Finance Ministry of Transport Ministry of National Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Local Government Authority (LGA) National Social Protection Agency (NSPA)	Inform on the progress of the goals, policies, data interpretation and advise on existing literature and data on the envisaged focus goals to be reported in the 2023 VNR
UN Agencies	UNRCO UNDP UNICEF UNFPA UNESCAP UNCT	Inform on key issues, share existing literature and data, and provide support for consultations and feedback to report and provide facilitation support during workshops
Community Based Organisations (CSOs)	CSOs working in education, health gender, disability, child rights, migrant worker rights, economic and social empowerment, SME development, environmental rights	To update on SDG progress on economic development, social development, environment, infrastructure, and partnerships. To discuss enabling environment, emerging issues, challenges, Covid-19 lessons, how connectivity can accelerate the goals achievement, preparedness for a pandemic/disaster
Technical Committee	Technical Committees (Social, Economic Development, Environmental, and Infrastructure Development, Partnerships) CSOs (youth, women, disability, social and economic, health, education, child rights, environmental groups) Academia (public & private) Private sector (tourism, fisheries, agriculture, SMEs)	To update on SDG progress on economic development, social development, environment, infrastructure, and partnerships. To discuss enabling environment, emerging issues, Covid-19 lessons, how connectivity can accelerate the goals achievement, preparedness for a pandemic/disaster
Regional/ Outer Atolls	City Councils, Hospitals and Health Centres, Schools, NGOs, Farmers, Fishers, Tourism: Haa Alif, Haa Dhaal, Shaviyani, Raa, Alif Alif, Alif Dhaal, Vaavu, Faafu, Addu, Fuvahmulah Economic Groups, WDC: Haa Alif, Haa Dhaal, Shaviyani, Raa, Alif Alif, Alif Dhaal, Vaavu, Faafu, Gaaf Dhaal, Fuvahmulah, Addu	Share lesson on connectivity. To update on progress, and update of critical issues in on economic development, social development, environment, governance, implementation challenges based on lessons from Covid-19
Validation		

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