



**UNITED NATIONS
MALDIVES**



UN MALDIVES ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2021



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Foreword by the Resident Coordinator

Amongst countries hardest hit by COVID-19, Maldives continued to battle the multi-dimensional impact of the pandemic. At the heart of all UN efforts in 2021, was supporting Maldives to adapt to the consequences and recover from the crisis with a focus on social, economic, and environmental sustainability. In the context of this challenging background, I am pleased to present the UN Maldives Annual Results Report for 2021.

The UN team delivered strong and consistent support for the people of Maldives, under the five pillars of the UN Socioeconomic Response Framework (UNSERF) 2020 – 2021. The Framework was developed in line with the Government's response and recovery plans, aiming to address the gaps and capitalize on opportunities and challenges for a healthy and sustainable recovery.

The UN team contributed to protecting health systems and services amid the crisis, by providing essential equipment and supplies, technical expertise and support to the Government to vaccinate over 80% of the eligible population. Our efforts supported continuity of essential services and social protection, with a special focus on leaving no one behind. Children remained front and centre to our response, focusing on strengthening quality education, and providing support to the continuity of learning for children across the country, and joint efforts to provide frontline psychosocial support.

Taking into consideration the significant representation of international tourism for the economy, the UN partnered with the Government of Maldives to diversify the economy and to expand tourism opportunities to provide more direct economic benefits for Maldivians across the country. Partnership and expertise were provided throughout the year on shifting towards sustainable tourism practices which takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts and result in direct benefits to visitors, the environment and the Maldivian communities.

The UN team's support to risk communications with expert, timely, and accessible information is available provided critical information to those left furthest behind with a specific focus on of persons with disabilities and migrant workers.

The success of our efforts throughout 2021 are the result of newly fostered partnerships with Government institutions, national and international partners, private sector, academia, civil society organizations and most importantly, communities. On behalf of the whole UN team, I express our sincere appreciation to our partners and the people of Maldives for cooperation during an exceptional year.

As we highlight our progress and achievements, we recognize that more needs to be done to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The UN Maldives team will continue to support the Maldives, in our common road to creating more sustainable, peaceful and happier communities across the country. Only together, can we ensure a future that leaves no one behind!



Ms. Catherine Haswell

*United Nations
Resident Coordinator in Maldives*



UN Country Team



Key Development Partners of UN Maldives

Chapter 1: Key developments in the country and regional context

Whilst Maldives was one of the worst-hit economies in the Asia-Pacific region in 2020, its recovery prospects improved during 2021. With the full reopening of borders, Maldives welcomed more than 1.3 million tourists in 2021, double the amount recorded in 2020. Real GDP is projected to grow by more than 20% in 2021 and expected to recover to 2019 levels by 2023. The poverty rate is expected to decline to 9.1% in 2021, and to 4.3% by 2023.

The current relative political stability creates an opportunity for democratic consolidation. Local elections in April 2021 saw predictably mixed results and a low turnout. Presidential elections scheduled for 2023 are anticipated to see vigorous political competition and may be an opportunity for the gains of democratization to be reinforced, despite potential policy shifts or reversals. The polarized nature of politics in the Maldives has created instability as borne out in competing national (albeit short-term) visions for the country, with increased tensions, conflictual language, xenophobia and hate speech across social and political landscapes.

A successful COVID-19 vaccination campaign in the Maldives took place in 2021, making the Maldives one of the top five countries globally with population-wide coverage. 2021 also saw the Minister of Foreign Affairs elected as President of the 76th UN General Assembly, and an increase in the attention to the special situation SIDS countries face for recovering from COVID-19.

There remain significant challenges ahead. Currently within and between waves of COVID-19 transmission, the development and economic realities of the Maldives are more fragile and uneven than they have been in more than a decade, with the country under high risk of debt distress. Additionally, there has been a major spike in unemployment among Maldivians and migrant workers, with women and the youth especially affected¹. This is coupled with increasing environmental vulnerabilities and social inequalities, gender inequality, and significant gaps between the rich and poor, the capital and the Atolls².

Tourism and related service sectors contribute to two thirds of the GDP. The country is now extremely susceptible to global travel market conditions and trends over which Maldives has no control. Going forward, the Maldives needs to lay the foundations for a more resilient economy that can withstand external shocks. It thus needs to steer away from an economy dominated by a single sector to a diversified broad-based economy.

While the one-island-one-resort model has generated large revenues, it has not created enough good quality jobs for Maldivians. The model is also dependent on imports, foreign capital and labour.

¹Over a quarter of women are either unemployed or not looking for a job. Youth unemployment is at 8 per cent.

²The Gini coefficient reveals inequality between Malé and the atolls, with almost 1 in 5 Maldivians in the southern atolls being poor (40 per cent using the MPI).

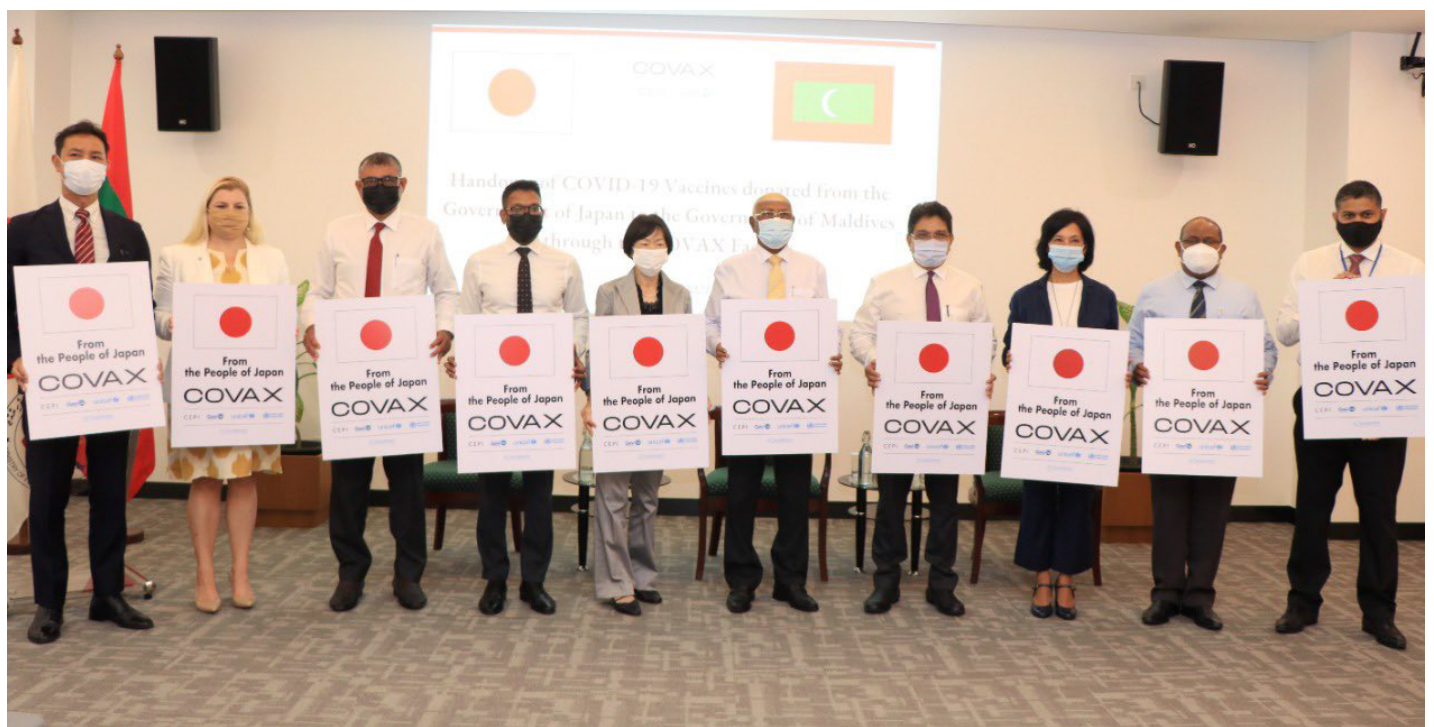
Maldives' rapid economic growth fueled by growing numbers of tourists, urbanization and population growth have a long-term negative impact on the environment and the fragile ecosystem of the Maldives, which draws international tourists every year. Going forward, the Maldives needs to transition to a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy, building on its marine resources.

To achieve this, the country needs to support sustainable economic diversification, articulating a harmonized strategy which integrates economic, environment and social objectives.

The Government has set the objective of greater private sector participation in the economy. The Government's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) contains 'increasing the contribution of the private sector and FDI in strategic development initiatives and overall economic growth' as a policy priority. Many initiatives are underway to make the Maldives an easier place to do business. In the SAP, several targets have been identified to facilitate a conducive business environment, including targets to make 80% of business services by Government to be provided online by 2023, a 25% reduction in time spent for processing import and export transactions in 2022 as compared to 2018, and a 10% reduction in trade transaction costs by 2022 as compared to 2018.

Several connective infrastructure projects are also underway that will improve trade costs for business, for instance, completion of the Gulhifalhu Port by 2022 and improving Velana International Airport to become a top ranked airport in South Asia.

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Maldives is highly vulnerable to climate change and environmental hazards. The resilience of its economy and society depend to a large extent on effective management of natural resources. Weaknesses in the systems for environmental assessment, planning, and enforcement put at risk the sustainable balance of development in the future. Moreover, climate change and other environmental impacts disproportionately affect the poor, and those in outlying islands, because they have less resources, and social and financial support for their survival. The Maldives will benefit from a rapid acceleration in the circular economy model to better make use of limited resources, and ensure effective management of waste, production, and food security.



Chapter 2: UN Development System support to national development priorities

2.1. Overview of SERF Results

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent global recession led to devastating health and socioeconomic impacts on the Maldives. The sudden halt of international tourism brought an unprecedented economic shock, severely weakening the country's fiscal situation, and threatening economic and developmental gains. The adverse consequences on the social sector and livelihoods have resulted in prolonged learning disruptions for children and large-scale job loss.

The UN Maldives has been at the forefront of supporting the government's efforts to recover. The UN Socioeconomic Response and Recovery Framework 2020-2021 (hereafter the SERF) was developed in alignment with the Government's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2019-2023. The SERF is based on the outcomes and recommendations of sectoral and target group assessments and national priorities defined by the Government, as articulated in the National Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020-2023, which prioritizes the goals of the SAP for the remaining period of the administration in light of the pandemic's impact.

COVID-19 has highlighted the underlying vulnerabilities of a tourism-led economic model, which has increased economic growth in the Maldives over the past three decades against the backdrop of a growing migrant population that faces widening inequalities and vulnerabilities, both in terms of income and access to basic services. Climate vulnerability, such as water insecurity, became an immediate health risk in the atolls has already and forced some islands to depend on emergency water supplies.

The SERF addresses the vulnerabilities of the Maldives as a Small Island Development State (SIDS) with a narrow economic base and a high dependency on tourism, heavy reliance on the importation of food, medicine and health equipment and oil. limited local food production; limited fiscal space, reserves, and risk in debt sustainability; climate vulnerabilities and stress on natural resources such as land, water and biodiversity; risks of climate change and disaster induced internal and potential cross-border displacement; a small national workforce with limited skill sets; a heavy reliance on migrant workforce and; geographical dispersion with high costs for service delivery, a high population density, and limited housing, particular in large urban centres.

The SERF delivered a consolidated response to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Maldives through 31 December 2021. The SERF replaced the final year of the UNDAF (2016-2020), with an extension of one year requested by the Government due to the pandemic. The SERF Joint Work Plan (JWP) became the single overall UN programming framework in the country. The SERF is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and delivers an integrated support package to protect the needs and rights of those most effected by the pandemic, with particular focus on the most vulnerable groups in the Maldives. The immediate and medium-term strategies are inclusive, transparent, and accountable for human rights compliance.



The SERF leverages the UN's value with a focus on:

- Promoting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, using the UN's convening role to consolidate recovery efforts by the government, bilateral and multilateral development partners, CSOs, private sector, academic and media actors.
- Ensuring a human rights-based and gender-sensitive recovery to promote equality, non-discrimination, and justice, as well as to address capacity gaps of rights-holders and duty bearers.
- De-coupling growth from carbon emissions and unsustainable consumption, while accelerating commitments to environmental sustainability, nature-based solutions, climate action, and low carbon development, by utilizing UN and other international mechanisms, climate financing and multilateral platforms.
- Supporting adaptation, and digital disruption, by creating a new social contract, an increase in tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and generating more inclusive and sustainable social and economic ecosystems.
- Supporting national level planning, prioritization, and monitoring the progress and impact of recovery measures by strengthening future national planning and SDG alignment; and
- Delivering an integrated UN response, maximizing the resources and expertise of the whole UN development system in support of Maldives' development agenda. The Maldives' SERF is aligned with the five pillars of the Secretary-General's global UNSERF for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19.



2.2. SERF priorities, outcomes, and outputs



HEALTH FIRST:

Protecting Health Services and Systems During the Crisis

The UN supported the Government of Maldives during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which peaked during the first quarter of 2021. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were sourced which included face shields, medical masks, surgical masks, N95 respirators, goggles, isolation gowns, coveralls, gloves etc. The total number of PPE's distributed by UN during 2021 was 536,450. The PPEs were distributed to the Ministry of Health, Indhira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH), Hulhumale' Hospital, and Kulhudhufushi Regional Hospital. In addition to PPE, over 550 dignity kits and sanitary products were provided to the Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services (MoGFSS) and Society for Health Education (SHE), which were distributed to families in need across the country.

The UN Maldives was an active partner in the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) task force for mental health and was engaged in advocacy initiatives to ensure that sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence were integrated into the pandemic planning and response, particularly to ensure that essential health services for children and women continued during periods of lockdown in 2021. With the timely supply delivery and technical support, the UN contributed to the successful introduction and roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines in the country, with over 80% of the population fully vaccinated by the end of December 2021. For the year 2021, 396,802 people were vaccinated with the first dose, 367,600 people vaccinated with the second dose and 26,201 people vaccinated with the booster dose. The COVID-19 vaccination programme was rolled out to all students aged over 12 years (approximately 32,000 students) and all school staff and parents which enabled safe reopening of schools in August 2021.

The UN played a key role in the procurement of vaccines with a total of 581,770 vaccines were provided to Maldives through the COVAX facility to date strengthening the cold chain system (with financial contribution from donors), as well as capacity-building, communicating, planning and coordination of the vaccine-roll-out.



The UN team continued its close engagement with the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and other partners in the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) cluster to strategize communication and engagement throughout the year. When the country experienced the third and worst surge during May and June 2021, the UN team worked with the President's Office to strategize the RCCE plan, to include fact-based messaging as well as to ensure people with special needs receive and act on the life-saving messages produced and disseminated by the RCCE cluster. More than 200,000 people were reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services. A total of 178,339 people responded to the feedback mechanism, supported by the UN, sharing their questions and concerns on various issues related to COVID-19. A total of 428 messages on COVID-19 appropriate behavior were produced during the year.



Later in the year, with completion of vaccination in areas of Greater Malé Region and islands, programmes and events resumed physically. The UN team supported capacity-building programmes to improve the skills and knowledge of health-care providers on maternal nutrition, breastfeeding and infant feeding. As a result, 32 nurses in Greater Malé now have skills to deliver breastfeeding counselling and gestational diabetes counselling to pregnant women. The UN supported Dhamanaveshi, an urban health centre to provide virtual nutrition counselling to over 440 parents and caregivers of children aged under 5 during lockdown in the capital. Additionally, information packs to promote safe breastfeeding practices during times of COVID were disseminated to over 190 facilities all over the country.

The UN team advocated for continuation of essential health services during the pandemic, supporting the national maternal and child health programme to continue remote monitoring of high-risk pregnant women, and ensuring they had access to health services. The UN's support helped 80 high-risk pregnancy cases in islands without hospitals to develop birth plans and facilitated diversion and referral to alternative health-care facilities, when access to tertiary hospitals was curtailed during the lockdown period. The UN assisted the government to remotely follow-up and monitor the health situation of every pregnant woman who was COVID-19 positive in 2021 (over 1,000 women). The coordination support ensured that 500 pregnant women received obstetric care while being treated for COVID-19. Through a series of consultative processes, the national Ante-natal care (ANC) and pre-natal care (PNC) package for pregnant women was updated and is ready for pretesting.

In view of the high premature birth rate in the Maldives, UN supported the health sector to develop a resource on early screening of growth and development of preterm babies. The tool is being utilized in 80% of birth facilities in the country.

It is helping early detection and enabling doctors to provide intervention in a timely manner, as well as counsel and educate the parents on care needed. Capacity-building initiatives for health-care providers continued in 2021. With UN support, 60 health-care providers were trained to deliver high-quality health-care services for preterm babies.

The UN team continued its partnership with the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC), other NGOs, and health sector to improve access to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to those in need. In this regard, the PSS (psychosocial support) helpline managed by MRC continued to provide support to PSS services to callers throughout the country, funded through the SDG Fund. During 2021, the PSS Hotline received a total of 2880 calls, out of which 1165 were for the PSS helpline and 1715 calls were telephone counselling sessions. A total of 27 training sessions on various aspects of PSS modules led to improved capacity and sensitization of MRC volunteers in the community and frontline workers in the health, protection and education sectors.



To improve the quality of Primary Health Care (PHC) services and resource efficiency, the UN supported the Ministry of Health to undertake a PHC costing exercise, which will renew and strengthen PHC, improving access, quality, accountability and health outcomes of women, children and their families in Maldives. The process contributes to strengthening PHC by mapping and identification of resource needs to sustain the delivery of integrated front-line services through existing platforms, with a focus on preventive health care at the community level. It has also identified opportunities for digital health platforms.

The UN supported the Ministry of Health in serial tracking of National Health Accounts (NHA) for 2018 – 2020 and continued to advocate for efficiency, equity and sustainability of health financing scheme.

Highlighting the need to divert the focus from curative care to inclusive and integrated primary healthcare model for Universal Health Care (UHC).

In partnership with Male' City Council and the Maldivian Red Crescent, a hand-hygiene campaign was initiated to ensure proper hygiene practices amid recovery from COVID-19. A special focus was given to promoting hand hygiene amongst the most vulnerable, specifically targeting migrant workers.





PROTECTING PEOPLE:

Social Protection and Basic Services

Hygiene supplies were provided to the Ministry of Education contributing to the safe reopening of schools reaching 76,414 students and 9,000 teachers in Government schools. There were no reports of COVID-19 outbreaks in any schools across the country during 2021. In partnership with USAID, infection prevention and control supplies were provided to care development centres managed by non-profit organizations, reaching 196 children. Hygiene equipment was supplied to the Ministry of Health for use in COVID-19 facilities, testing centers and other health-care facilities.

The pandemic severely affected pre-primary and primary grades with schools remaining closed till July 2021. A second school survey was conducted in February 2021 to monitor access to and engagement via online learning, which suggested that while close to 75% had access to online learning, internet connectivity, affordability and teacher capacity for online teaching required improvement. The UN continued to support the Government to ensure continuity of learning, supporting safe reopening of schools and remediation of learning loss caused by school closures. An additional 1355 teachers were trained and certified in G-Suite for Learning by the end of 2021. Upon return of students to school, support was provided to assess the gaps in learning and performance levels and technical support was provided to revise the national literacy and numeration strategy, along with development of a remediation plan.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Disability Inclusive Education Policy was updated with technical assistance from the UN and was launched in 2021. To complement the efforts, ICT equipment were donated to two hub-schools to facilitate inclusive education.

Engagement continues with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services to undertake an analysis of the social service sector for development of a long-term plan. Funded through the SDG Fund, the UN support will see enhanced plan, budget and implement a more holistic and rights-based social service system that promotes the well-being of all vulnerable groups in an inclusive, non-discriminatory, and equity-based manner. While the inception report was completed in 2021, the plan will be completed by March 2022.

The UN continued strategic support to the Government in the roll out the Child Protection Act and Juvenile Justice Act launched in 2019. Over 825 sessions were conducted, with capacity support provided to social workers in the child protection system. Additionally, 363 police officers were provided sensitization trainings on child rights and child protection issues. Child-friendly interview rooms were established in 3 different regions (Ha. Alif Atoll, Addu Atoll and Laamu Atoll) of the country. Financial support was provided to the Children's Ombudsperson's Office to support their monitoring mandate of care institutions across Maldives.



UN partnership with the Government resulted in a National Campaign on Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children and Women, including strengthening the capacity of Civil Society Organizations for service provision. Support was provided to Hope for Women for pro-bono legal services and peer support group sessions for victims of violence. Over 1386 children and 43 parents were reached in partnership with non-profit organization Advocating the Rights of Children (ARC) through mental health and psychosocial support awareness sessions. Focusing on promoting strategic results for children by prioritizing financing, training was provided to staff in Government, civil society and some parliamentarians on budget analysis and public finance, specifically for children.

With the pandemic exposing the gaps in the mental health sector, the UN supported the Ministry of Health to develop a mental health plan, outlining rollout of services to the regions outside of Male' area. Technical assistance was provided to develop training packages to enhance capacity and in the formulation of the Mental Health Act and the new National Strategic Action Plan.



The UN also conducted a rapid assessment and a mapping of relevant sectors, as well as existing treatment facilities to identify gaps and capacity needs to support Maldives to establish effective drug treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention services. A total of 23 local experts were trained in prevention and early identification in partnership with the University of Adelaide, with plans to roll out training to those who would come first into contact with potential patients, including healthcare workers, social workers, and teachers.

The UN supported the Ministry of Health to conduct an exercise to estimate the cost of implementing the 5-year strategy and action plan on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) which was finalized in 2021. Currently, US\$ 140.91 million (MVR 2,179 million) is spent for RMNCAH care routed through different sources, including Government, households, and insurance. To achieve the annual target for priority interventions for 2021, the additional cost required to meet the annual financial target would be approximately US\$ 19.54 million (MVR 302 million), demonstrating a financing gap of 12%. The results of this work will feed into the Integrated National Financing Framework project undertaken jointly implemented by four UN agencies from 2020 – 2022, funded through the SDG Fund.



In order to ensure continuity of care for maternal health, reproductive health services including family planning, survivor centered care for GBV survivors, and youth friendly health services under one roof, the UN supported the establishment of two Sexual Reproductive Health Centres, one in Hulhumale' Hospital and one in Kulhudhufushi Regional Hospital. Alignment of the facilities' operating procedures to international standards is underway.

In partnership with NGO Zero Waste Maldives, over 270 young girls and women across the country were reached to increase awareness on menstrual health and environmentally friendly menstrual management options. In line with these efforts, 200 menstrual cups and 332 reusable pads were distributed, and over 2800 people were reached with information disseminated via social media.



The mobile application Siththaa which was developed in partnership with Society for Health Education (SHE) in 2018 was further updated with UN support in 2021, enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health information for young people. Over 6900 people have downloaded the application since its launch. Additional efforts with SHE in 2021 include supporting the development of a 6-module curriculum for the premarital information package to address existing gaps in the current information package.

Work commenced in 2021 to establish a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) for enhanced protection services to migrants and access to safe migration. The Centre will be a one-stop source for provision of independent and impartial information and advice and is expected to be operational by October 2022. Capacity building support was provided to 20 representatives of law enforcement institutions, prosecutors, and other relevant criminal justice practitioners to strengthen action and responses against smuggling of migrants.

UN Maldives supported the Ministry of Gender and Family Support Services (MoGFSS) to update the Gender Equality Action Plan and Monitoring Framework to align with the current national priorities and the SDGs.

The framework was revised following consultations with relevant government agencies and was validated in June 2021 with inputs from a wide range of stakeholders.

From UN Maldives the following contributions were made to improve the legislative and policy frameworks in the areas of water, waste and climate education.

On water resource management, five key regulations were developed for the sustainable management and protection of water resources in Maldives. These included the formulation of the Water and Sewerage Masterplan set for the next 10 years, which will contribute to implementation of the regulations at national level.



These build on the Water and Sewerage Act, developed with the support from the UN Maldives in 2020, under which groundwater was declared as a protected natural resource across the country. This year, the Utility Regulatory Authority was newly established with the national mandate of sustainable water and sewerage service provision and regulation.

On waste, the legislative landscape was assessed that identified the existing overlaps of mandate among sectors regarding chemical waste management. This finding informed the formulation of the overarching chemical waste management, which will define roles and streamline coordination across sectors in managing hazardous chemicals and wastes.

On climate education, the National curriculum is being reviewed in order to identify existing gaps in delivering environmentally conscious material within the education sector. As an institutional level action, climate change and environment are being incorporated into the curriculum and grades 1-8 General Science and Social Studies textbooks are under review to further identify gaps and augment areas where climate change and environment related information can be synthesized. This has contributed to developing advocacy materials for schools and youth to mainstream climate change and environment. The knowledge products produced would enable the NIE to consolidate the information for these climate change and environment, enabling for the further development of the National Curriculum.

The UN contributed to developing advocacy materials for schools and youth to mainstream climate change and environment in the curriculum. The knowledge products produced will enable the National Institute for Education to consolidate information for these two subjects, enabling for the further development of the National Curriculum.

Building on the Water and Sanitation Act supported by the GCF project, the UN supported the formulation of the National Water and Sewerage Strategic Plan 2020 –2025, in which increasing women’s involvement in development of water and sewerage sector is a key strategy. The project’s gender action plan contributes to these sectoral plans by focusing on achieving gender mainstreaming within the utilities and the Ministry, promoting gender positive human resources practices and aiming to increase women participation in water management decisions.





ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY:

Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Informal Sector Workers

The UN Maldives supported the Ministry of Economic Development with technical assistance and a methodology for setting a national minimum wage in Maldives. The minimum wage was announced in November 2019 and came to effect in January 2022. The minimum wages of the different sectors are as follows.

Private Sector

- Small businesses:
USD 1.40 (MVR 21.63) hourly rate, USD 291.26 (MVR 4,500) monthly wage
- Medium businesses:
USD 2.18 (MVR 33.65) hourly rate, USD 453.07 (MVR 7,000) monthly wage
- Large businesses:
USD 2.49 (MVR 38.46) hourly rate, USD 517.80 (MVR 8,000) monthly wage

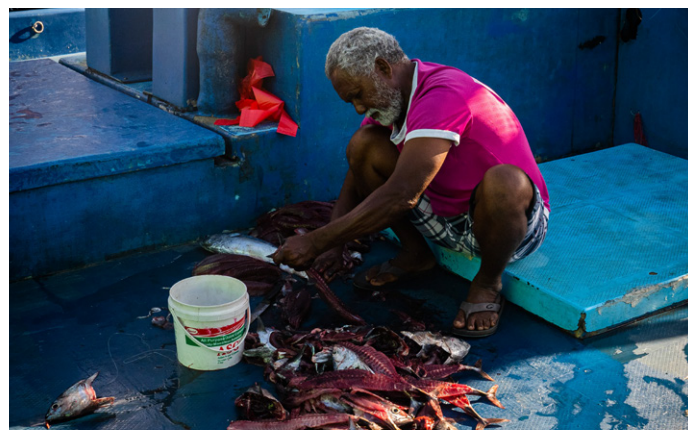
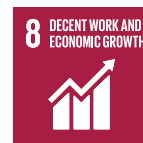
Public Sector

- USD 2.18 (MVR 33.65) hourly rate, USD 453.07 (MVR 7,000) monthly rate for employees who work a minimum of 30 hours per week.

To streamline local development planning with government policies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a methodology focusing on gender-responsive and inclusive planning was developed. All newly elected local councils and women's development committees received trainings and the handbook served as the primary guide during the formulation process of development plans for their communities following local council elections in April 2021. A total of 155 councils out of 200 councils submitted five-year development plans for their islands based on this methodology.

To support efforts to reduce the negative impacts of global shocks due to Maldives high dependence on food imports, the UN supported a contract farming scheme, which aims to help the food security and support the empowerment of women. During 2021, 213 (100 women and 113 men) farmers were awarded contracts under the Sustainable Economic Empowerment and Development for SMEs (SEEDS) project developed in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development and Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources.

UN also worked on strengthening the national capacity in agriculture extension services to increase the production and income of farmers in some of the outer atolls of Maldives. Under this initiative, one of the milestones was to create a mobile phone or mobile-compatible web application that can facilitate easy dissemination of agriculture advisory information to farmers. This will help to enable 25 field officers as agriculture advisory personnel at different atolls. Moreover, traditional skills of 100 farmers and 5 farmer organizations were also upgraded, for the appropriate utilization of locally available horticulture produces through MoFMRA approved practices.





MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

The UN Maldives conducted a series of Financing Dialogues with several line ministries on development financing needs of Maldives as part of the Integrated National Financing Framework joint programme. Line ministries completed questionnaires to understand the scope of public and private financing policies, the governance and coordination mechanisms in place for effective monitoring and evaluation of financing frameworks in the Maldives.

Partnership was renewed with the NGO Women in Tech this year to scale up the intervention to more islands across Maldives, targeting both students and parents to demystify STEM education and careers. During 2021, 206 young girls and 130 parents from 9 islands participated in the sessions facilitated by Maldivian women working in the STEM fields.

Regulations on sustainable management and protection of water resources and policy on chemical waste management under the UN's GCF and GEF-6 projects were developed. National resilience to climate change and disasters was increased with operationalization of six Automatic Weather Stations (AWSs) provided to Maldives Meteorological Service (MMS) under the GCF project. These stations improve MMS's capacity for early warning and weather prediction, enhancing climate and disaster preparedness and resource management (water) for islands.





SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

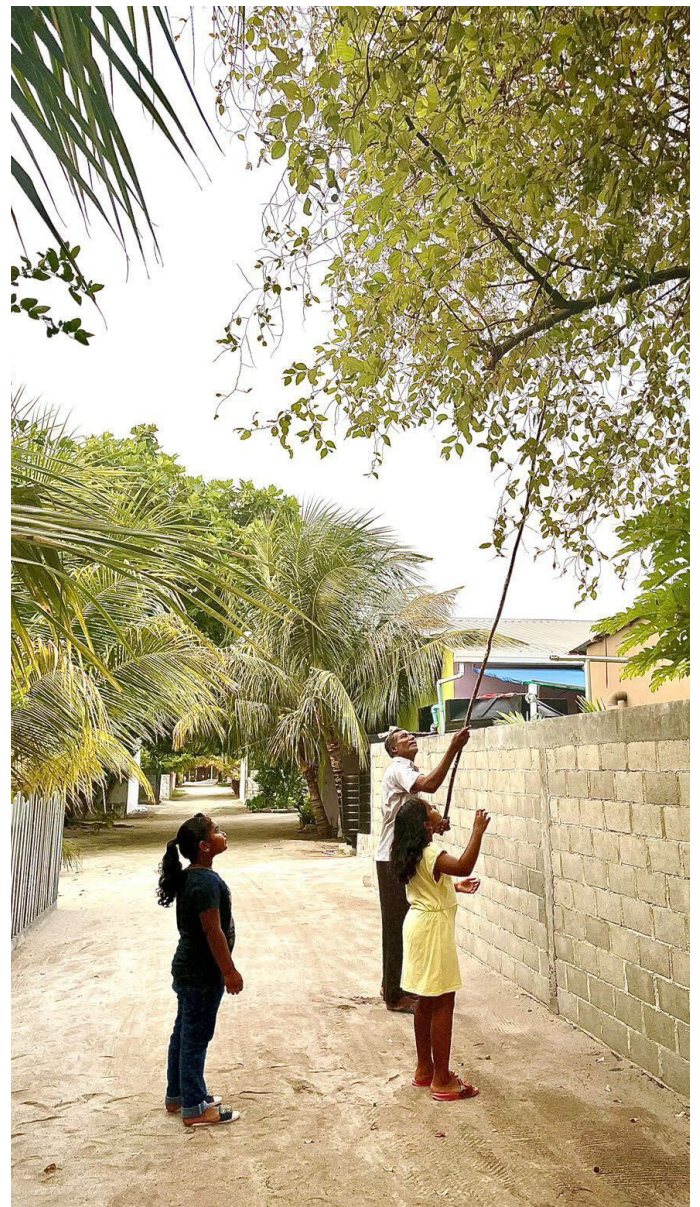
The UN Maldives provided technical support to draft the Civil Procedure Code which was passed by the Parliament and ratified by the President in December 2021. This code will pave the way for harmonizing the rules and standards that courts follow when adjudicating civil lawsuits and will guarantee fair and equal justice for all. The UN provided technical assistance to develop an effective process for Judicial Performance Evaluation. The system has for the first time established a mechanism to evaluate the Judges Performance. This system will ensure transparency in the assessment of Judges Performance and build public trust and confidence in the judicial system.

In 2021, the UN supported the Bar Council to develop of the first Legal Education Regulation of the Maldives. This regulation will strengthen legal education in the Maldives by ensuring that there is a system in place for accreditation of law schools and its programs.

As part of the UN's efforts to strengthen continuous judicial education, the UN supported the Department of Judicial Administration (DJA) to provide 200 users (including Judges) with access to case reports and documents from other jurisdictions for their learning and research to support them in delivering quality judgments. Since 2020, the UN has been supporting online court hearings through the establishment of virtual and digital platforms. The UN continued its support to strengthen the infrastructure of the courts by providing ICT equipment to facilitate the move to digital platforms. In 2021 over 28,325 online hearings have been facilitated by the Judiciary with the UN's support.

Through UN efforts to empower civil society and promote advocacy on human rights issues to foster citizen participation for human rights, the UN supported the

Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM). Trainers and advocacy officers of HRCM used UN support for targeted trainings on the role of CSOs in protecting human rights, and the role of CSOs as Human Rights Defenders. This was done as part of the NGO Forums organized by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment (MoYSCE). A total of 60 CSOs from Haa Alif, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani, Noonu, Raa, Baa and Lhaviyani Atolls were trained.



A training package on the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and Sexual Offences Act was developed for judges in partnership with the Judicial Academy. This intervention was targeted at sensitizing and building the capacity of judges and magistrates to understand the gender inequities between women and men and to understand why women are disproportionately affected by violence in comparison to men. The training package was developed in partnership with stakeholders working on domestic violence and gender-based violence. A total of 24 Judges including Judges of Supreme Court of Maldives, Higher Court, Supreme Courts and Magistrate Courts received training. The intervention also included a sensitization session for judicial personnel on GBV, reaching 50 people.

In 2021, the UN and Witness and Victim Support Unit (WVSU) based in the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) developed handbooks to enhance the quality of services rendered by WVSU and to increase awareness of the victims and witnesses regarding their role in criminal trials. These handbooks help to improve transparency of the systems in place and increase awareness of victims of their rights to justice.



2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

The UN in the Maldives prioritized the development of new and non-traditional partnerships during the year.

Since the launch of Maldives Partnership Landscape Assessment, “2030 Partnership Accelerator”, more than 10 partnerships were forged in areas such as Mental Health and Waste Management, to create enabling environment for multistakeholder engagement in these key prioritized thematic areas identified by the Government.

Through the Disability Advocate Network launched in line with 2021 International Day of Persons with Disabilities theme “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world”, the UN in the Maldives forged partnerships with the largest State-Owned Enterprises namely MACL, MTCC and WAMCO. With proper coaching and mentoring of the Disability Advocates it is expected to build the next generation of agents of change who have lived the realities as a Person with Disability, to promote rights of Persons with Disabilities through the provision of advice to their organization on strategic and systemic issues that impact and hinder participation of PWDs in community life and advocate within and outside the organization.

With enhanced partnership with Civil Service Commission (CSC) of the Maldives, it is anticipated to create pathways for inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in civil service employment. This includes a competency assessment tool for PWDs who do not have formal education and training qualifications. This tool will help to formulate a competency profile of PWDs for application in the minimum entry requirements for Civil Service posts.

To strengthen partnership with civil society organizations, a review was conducted for the UN Maldives Civil Society Forum (2020). With support from the UN, the Maldives NGO portal has been launched by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Engagement. This portal will be an online resource centre to promote collaboration between multi-stakeholders. A total of 60 CSOs from Northern Atolls of Maldives (Haa Alif, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani, Noonu, Raa, Baa and Lhaviyani atolls) were provided targeted trainings on the role of CSOs in protecting human rights, and the role of CSOs as Human Rights Defenders.

A number of global and regional platforms for engaging with the Government of Maldives to advocate for the importance of addressing the impacts of climate change



on children. This included the “Children and Climate Change are Everyone’s Business”, a COP26 event, co-hosted by the UN and the International Chambers of Commerce, and the Children and Youth Forum (CY21) - Climate Change spotlight session titled “COP26 – What Now?” where there was engagement with global partners on climate financing. In partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Maldives Climate Envoy, the United Nations, a pre-COP 26 hybrid event was held in Maldives engaging young people from across Maldives as well as young people from other SIDS, CSOs, and private sector for a dialogue with young people on the climate agenda.

The establishment of national benchmarks for the education sector (as part of the Global Education Monitoring Report) has further strengthened the country’s commitment and to rally action behind the education agenda and focus its monitoring of progress towards the SDG 4 targets, linking the national agenda

with those at the regional and global levels. The findings from this joint exercise by the UN and Ministry of Education will be promoted during the SDG 4 review at the High-level Political Forum in July 2022 and the UN Secretary General’s Transforming Education Summit, September 2022.

With funding from the Islamic Development Bank and in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Government of Republic of Maldives, UN is assisting the Government of Republic of Maldives in procuring emergency medical supplies, laboratory equipment and consumables to reduce the spread COVID-19 in the country. This helped the government with the procurement of urgently needed medical items for the country.



2.4. Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency

The year began with a series of consultations to set a vision for the design of the UN Maldives Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022 – 2026. The Framework will be the blueprint for all UN efforts in the next 5 years, following wide ranging discussions convened including organizations for persons with disabilities, civil society, the Government, private sector partners, development partners, young people and more.

Following the consultation and design process, the UNSDCF was signed in September 2021, and will come into effect on 1 January 2022. Through the UNSDCF Outcome Groups, a Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) and Joint Work Plan (JWP) were agreed for 2022. In line with the UNSDCF, the UN Maldives Communications Strategy for the UNSDCF was endorsed, together with a Joint Communications Plan for 2022. This is the first such Communications Strategy developed globally in line with the new transformative UNSDCF framework. The website of the UN Development System in Maldives underwent a complete revamp, and regular reporting and communications in relation to the COVID-19 crisis kept national and international partners regularly abreast of developments.

A Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) engagement was conducted during the year. Convening a team of 15 UN entities from the region and UNHQ, the MAPS engagement worked with partners to identify three main priorities of the Government including, economic diversification, building resilience, and decentralization. Focus was placed on an inclusive and participatory approach in terms of thematic workshops and stakeholder surveys. Based on finalization in early 2022, the Maldives will have an SDG roadmap identifying key entry points and areas to further accelerate achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Through the implementation of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS), efforts to promote UN common business operations, efforts were initiated to enable joint work and generate greater efficiencies, synergies and coherence

and compliance. Some milestones include capacity building of partners on common financial services, and developing and endorsing the PSEA 'Survivor Support Framework' and annual workplan.






Under the COVID-19 MPTF Joint Programme, UN Maldives is strengthening the social protection system in Maldives. In 2021, over 5000 beneficiaries were provided with information on how to access social protection services online and over 20 participants were trained on data sharing protocols and remote service delivery for survivors of gender-based violence. A social and gender norm strategy in development through this project is expected to serve as a critical tool to develop future interventions to end violence against women and girls.

The UN team undertook the second of its kind Joint Scoping Exercise under the UN Global Framework on Support to Member States on Individuals Returning from Syria and Iraq, as Maldives prepares to bring supporting returning families. UN Maldives further forged new partnerships and provided technical assistance to the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) and the newly formed Office of the Ombudsperson for Transitional Justice, to support their efforts to create a more peaceful future for all.



2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

Agencies Financial Contribution for the year 2021 - Socio Economic Response Framework

	 HEALTH FIRST: Protecting Health Services and Systems During the Crisis	 PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social Protection and Basic Services	 ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Informal Sector Workers	 MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION	 SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE	Total for SERF
Agency						
FAO		154,627.00				154,627.00
IFAD			181,000			
IOM	24,654.00	132,316.00	19,234.00			176,204.00
UNDP	308,003.98	613,949.15	1,436,420.90	500,363.80	5,500,158.09	8,358,895.93
UNESCO		48,000.00				48,000.00
UNFPA	396,104.05	80,076.96	97,865.33		32,756.65	606,802.99
UNICEF	1,343,815.49	2,210,465.06			425,084.35	3,979,364.90
UNHCR						
UNODC		10,000.00			890,000.00	900,000.00
UNOPS	27,750,305.00					27,750,305.00
WHO	3,273,170.00	201,373.00		23,228.00	163,904.00	3,661,675.00
GRAND TOTAL						45,635,874.82

Chapter 3: UNCT key focus for next year

2022 marks the year that the UN Maldives in partnership with the Government of Maldives commence implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022 – 2026. The Framework is the blueprint for the UN Development System’s support to the Maldives to address national priorities and challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while recovering from the multi-dimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The collective results expected from the UNSDCF will contribute to a vision where Maldives is an inclusive, resilient, healthy, caring, tolerant, transparent, and skilled society where all people meaningfully participate in, contribute to, and benefit equitably from sustainable cultural, economic, and social development and environmental protection, leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. At the centre of the Cooperation Framework is a focus on investing in people and upholding the principles of human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment, sustainable development and resilience, and accountability, ensuring that no one is left behind.

In response to the new development opportunities and challenges in the country, and driven from widespread analytical and consultative processes, the UN will be working towards three overarching strategic priorities and outcomes, namely:

Strategic Priority 1: Shared prosperity and inclusive human development for all

- **Outcome 1:** By 2026, youth, women and others at risk of being left behind, contribute to and benefit from inclusive, resilient, sustainable economic and human capital development, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and decent work
- **Outcome 2:** By 2026, people in the Maldives, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, inclusive and resilient social and protection services, and have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with wellbeing and dignity.

Strategic Priority 2: Sustainable and climate-resilient environment

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

Strategic Priority 3: Gender-responsive, rights-based and accountable governance and justice

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



The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2019 – 2023 developed by the Government of Maldives is a central policy framework and planning document that guides the overall development direction of the Maldives for the next five years. The SAP consolidates the current Government’s manifesto pledges with existing sectoral priorities and is based on five main priority areas including Blue Economy, Caring State, Dignified Families, Jazeera Dhiriulhun and Good Governance. The SAP serves as the main implementation and monitoring tool to track the progress of the delivery of the Government’s policies and development priorities.



CORPORATION FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES	Strategic Priority 1: Shared Prosperity and Inclusive Human Development for all	Strategic Priority 2: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Environment	Strategic Priority 3: Gender-Responsive, Rights-Based and Accountable Governance and Justice
SAP THEME			
AGENDA 2030 PILLAR	PEOPLE PROSPERITY	PLANET	PEACE
SDGs	1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 10	7 11 12 13 14 15	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 15 16 17

The UNSCDF implementation will be guided by the SDG Roadmap as outlined in the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) engagement report due in the first quarter of 2022. The UN team will streamline collective efforts towards supporting the Maldives accelerate SDG progress with the support of these key strategic policy products. The UN will work closely with the Government to prepare the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDG progress to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2023. This work will require a stocktake of the data framework and reporting, the coordination architecture and results achieved which will be supported by the UN team at national, regional and global levels.



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ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT
2021**



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