

UN Maldives Annual Results Report

2023



UNITED NATIONS
MALDIVES



Women and children enjoying the evening
hour on the sandy roads in the islands
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Foreword

Resident Coordinator (*Interim*) Mr. Bradley J. Busetto

Two years ago, the UN in Maldives embarked on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026 in line with the visionary global reform of the UN development system. This new blueprint of development cooperation reflects the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. It is my pleasure to share the achievements of the UN in Maldives in 2023 aimed at paving pathways towards an inclusive and equitable society and improving the quality of life for the people of Maldives.

A key highlight of joint results during the year is the demonstration of Maldives' commitment to climate resilience, by becoming the first country in Asia and the first Small Island Developing State (SIDS) to embrace UN Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative and then globally the first country to endorse a national EW4All road map, at the presidential level, to ensure multi-hazard early warnings for all by 2027. This illustrates the strong convening role of the UN Maldives and the comparative advantage that the UN can bring in the Middle-Income Countries to enable global and local multistakeholder partnerships for sustainable development.

With a view to identify both public and private SDG financing options as well as policy constraints, synergies and trade-offs that need to be addressed to unleash these, the Government, the UN, and the private sector created an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) that will enable financing for climate action from private and public actors and will deliver quality social services. This directly enabled dramatic savings in medical and other critical international procurement for essential goods.

Through its convening role the UN in Maldives brought financial and technical support from the region and south-south exchanges beyond the region to bolster the leadership of the Government of Maldives to develop Maldives' second Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report which was presented at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2023. The VNR process showcased economic integration through digital and transport connectivity as an accelerator for achieving the SDGs in the Maldives.

The UN in Maldives has also made progress towards enhancing climate-resilient agricultural sustainability in the Maldives, marked by the deployment of solar-backed cold storage units in Laamu Atoll and the introduction of fuel-efficient hybrid marine vessels and solar-powered irrigation systems across various locations. Collaborating with the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources, and Agriculture, as well as the Agro National Corporation, the agriculture and livelihood project successfully implemented the delivery of these essential infrastructure components, bolstering the resilience of local farming communities.

Concurrently, a flagship program, supported by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the UN, has concluded after seven years, delivering safe water access to 105,000 individuals in the Maldives. Through the installation of rainwater harvesting and reverse osmosis systems across 29 islands, alongside the establishment of additional water storage capacity and groundwater quality enhancement measures, the initiative has ensured uninterrupted water supply, particularly during dry periods. This decentralized approach has not only reduced the cost-burden associated with water provision but has also extended safe water access to marginalized households, fostering long-term resilience and sustainability while benefiting over 73,000 people across multiple atolls.

As I note these achievements in 2023, I convey sincere appreciation to the UN Country Team and the UN staff for their hard work and effort to achieve these developmental gains for the people of Maldives. Concurrently, I thank all our partners, especially the Government of Maldives, for the developmental cooperation and support during the period. UN in Maldives remain committed to support the people of Maldives, especially to those left furthest behind to ensure they enjoy an inclusive and resilient future through accelerated achievement of the Agenda 2030.



UN Country Team in Maldives

  Mr. Vimlendra Sharan Representative, Sri Lanka & Maldives	  Ms. Sherina Tabassum Country Director, Sri Lanka & Maldives	 International Labour Organization  Ms. Joni Simpson Country Director, Sri Lanka & Maldives	 IOM UN MIGRATION  Mr. Sarat Dash Chief of Mission, Sri Lanka & Maldives	 UN DP  Mr. Enrico Gaveglia Resident Representative
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 UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency  Ms. Areti Sianni Chief of Mission, India & Maldives	 unicef for every child  Dr. Edward Addai Representative	 UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  Mr. Enrico Boninsegna Head of Office a.i.	 UNOPS  Mr. Charles Rochford Callanan Director, South Asia	 World Health Organization  Dr. Nazneen Anwar Representative



Key Development Partners of the UN Development System in Maldives



Government and Public Institutions

- Attorney General's Office
- Centre for Mental Health (CMH)
- Department of Judicial Administration
- Environment Protection Agency
- Health Protection Agency (HPA)
- Home for People with Special Needs
- Human Rights Commission
- Juvenile Court
- Local Councils
- Local Government Authority
- Maldives Coast Guard
- Maldivian Correctional Service
- Maldives Customs Services
- Maldives Food and Drug Authority
- Maldives Immigration
- Maldives Marine Research Institute
- Maldivian Maritime Law Enforcement Activities
- Maldives Police Services
- Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture
- Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of Islamic Affairs
- Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- Ministry of Transport
- Ministry of Tourism
- Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment
- National Bureau of Statistics
- National Centre for Information Technology

- National Counter Terrorism Centre
- National Drug Agency
- National Institute of Education
- National Social Protection Agency
- Parliament
- Presidential Commission to inquire into Childs Rights Violation
- President Office
- Public Hospitals and Health Centers



Civil Society

- Advocating the Rights of Children (ARC)
- Blind and Visually Impaired Society of Maldives (BVISM)
- Care Society
- Maldives Association of Persons with Disabilities (MAPD)
- Maldives Autism Association (MAA)
- Maldives Deaf Association
- Hope for Women
- Maldives Red Crescent
- Society of Health Education
- Zero waste
- Parley
- Soneva Namoonaa



Private Sector and Media

- Dhiraagu
- Ooredoo
- Pharmacies
- Journalists and Media



State Owned Enterprises

- FENAKA
- Housing Development Corporation
- MTCC
- State Trading Organization
- STELCO
- WAMCO



Academia

- Colleges
- Schools
- Universities



Chapter 1

Key Developments in the Country and Regional Context



The Maldives' Presidential Elections were held in September 2023 saw a change in administration with H.E. President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu succeeding H.E. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih following a peaceful election cycle and transition of power. Dr. Muizzu's election was followed by the ushering in of a new government which took up office on 17 November 2023.

In a year of political transition, the economy too faced challenges. After the boost in the economy following the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic, Maldives economic growth is expected to decrease from 8.7% in 2023 to 5.5% in 2024 owing to challenges in tourism sector with falling average stays despite higher arrivals. The country is experiencing high budget deficit of USD 919 million and public debt reaching USD 7.7 billion (111% of GDP by Q2-2023), due to rising global commodity prices, especially in oil, impacting fuel imports (USD 831 million, 24% of all imports) and straining US dollar available reserve. The global inflation rates and multiple crises twinned with low credit rating (Fitch: B-rating) is limiting the new government's borrowing to serve the debt while simultaneously investing in extensive infrastructure as per election pledges.

According to the latest census results published in 2023, the resident population of the Maldives stands at 515,132, with 132,493 being foreign national. Approximately 41% of the population resides in the Greater Male' area. Of the total population, 10% comprises young individuals aged between 15 and 24, while 5% are over the age of 65. A significant proportion, amounting to 68%, falls within the working-age group of 15 to 64. The nation is currently experiencing the final years of the demographic dividend, signalling an impending shift towards an ageing population. Therefore, development interventions by all stakeholders in the next decades will need to be fashioned around this change in the demographics of the island nation.

The Maldives administers a generous health insurance scheme, providing free healthcare services to Maldivian nationals in public health facilities and contributing to private health facilities. This initiative also extends to selected health institutions overseas for acquiring health services unavailable in-country. Since its introduction, there has been a shift in health expenditure from inpatient to outpatient care, with

over 40% of the expenditure directed towards human resources, mostly curative care. However, only 0.4% of the health expenditure is allocated to preventive care services. Therefore, UN Maldives is now working towards supporting the expansion of primary health care in the country.

Tourism is the largest economic sector with other key sectors including fisheries, transport, communication and construction. GDP per capita is USD 10,366 places Maldives as an Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC), driven in part by its strong brand as an international tourism destination. As per the latest census, 15,000 Maldivians are employed in the tourism sector, constituting less than 6% of the working-age population. Furthermore, women make up just 3% of the workforce in the tourism sector. In contrast, the rate of international migration is increasing at approximately 10% per annum. A concerning statistic is that about 1 in 5 young people in the Maldives are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET). The mismatch between education and economic transition is a persistent concern for the country.

Maldives has made significant progress in poverty reduction, universal primary education, reduction in child and maternal mortality, and reduction in gender inequalities in health, education, and income. Challenges remain in micronutrient deficiency, stunting and obesity, rising noncommunicable diseases including mental health, low transition between lower and upper secondary school, a high NEET rate among young people including 'voluntary unemployment', drug use, the prevalence of gangs and organized crime. Major child protection concerns still exist and encompass a range of issues such as violence against children (VAC), children in contact and conflict with the law and children deprived of family care.

Women's involvement in decision making has increased but needs further attention. The first women justices to the Supreme Court were appointed in 2019 while one third local council seats are now allocated to women. However, women's representation at central government, parliament, and formal employment remains lower overall. Violence against women and discriminatory social norms impact their agency and their ability to fully participate in economic development.

As the lowest and flattest country in the world, climate change presents an existential threat with the combined effects of rising sea levels, increase in temperature, erosion, and flooding. In addition to these obstacles common to other SIDS including the impact of climate change, Maldives' major challenges centre on the issues of inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainability. The economy is dependent on the state and state-owned enterprises for employment and most services.

Regulatory barriers, inefficiencies, skills shortage, and competition for credit add to the disadvantages caused by a small market and dispersed population, slowing the development of a diversified private sector economy that is more resilient to external shocks. Government is embarking on ambitious targets to improve solid waste management, harbour construction and water systems that integrate adaptation measures with the view to improve the quality of island life and the integrity of the marine resources on which Maldives' tourism success depends. Despite challenges, the Government has planned to increase its renewable energy share from 15% to 33% by 2030, reform fossil fuel subsidies, and enhance efficiency in public spending particularly in the health sector while rethink investment in social sector programs.



Chapter 2

UN Development System Support to National Development Priorities through the Cooperation Framework

2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the Maldives outlines the strategic collaboration between the Government of Maldives and the United Nations (UN) system and helps power the nation's pursuit of sustainable development.

Serving as the cornerstone operationalization tool for the UNSDCF, the Joint Work Plan (JWP) 2023 of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) works towards four strategic outcomes, and these are underpinned by a comprehensive system for tracking progress and results towards these outcomes.

Throughout the year, the UN in the Maldives attained significant milestones in executing the plan across all designated outcomes and outputs. These included enhancing partner capacities, furnishing upstream policy guidance and intellectual leadership, in alignment with the Upper Middle-Income status of the country and its national priorities.

This report details the accomplishments of the United Nations in the Maldives within each priority area of the Cooperation Framework, including a financial overview. It also describes the progress achieved by the UNCT in strengthening its coordination, coherence, and efficiencies, while also reflecting on challenges encountered and lessons gleaned during the period. Lastly, it outlines the priorities slated for 2024.

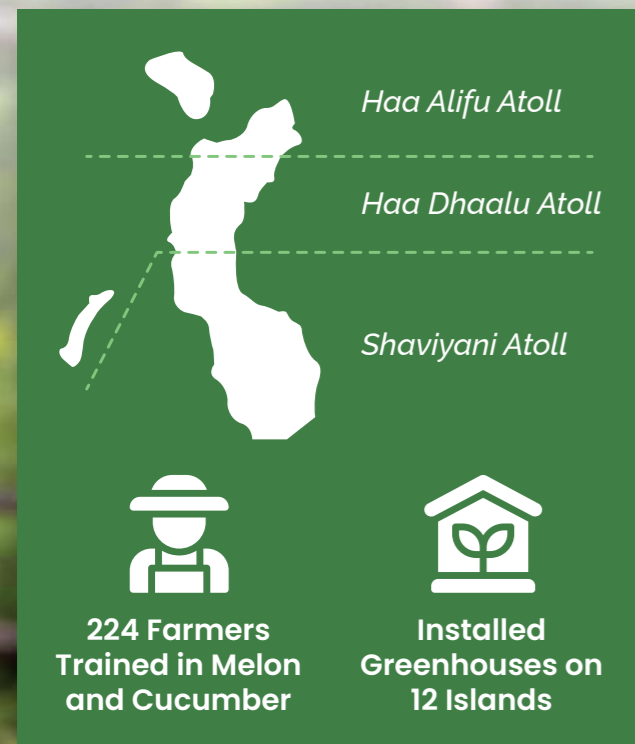


2.2. Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs

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

Maldives has very little arable land, so any agriculture must be smart, focused and sustainable. In 2023, the **“Maldives Agribusiness Programme (MAP)”**, funded by UN Maldives achieved notable milestones in the most northern 3 atolls of Maldives (Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani) through the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture. The programme **provided technical training to 224 farmers in melon and cucumber cultivation and installed greenhouses on 12 islands**. The project prioritized youth and women in these islands. In this greenhouse farming training, out of 224 farmers trained, 41% of farmers are women. The programme also conducted Extension Services Training for 235 farmers in 8 project islands which focused on seasonal farming, aligning with the Ramazan production cycle. MAP’s achievements underscore its commitment to sustainable agriculture, income enhancement, and food security for small farmers in the targeted atolls.

Progress in agricultural sustainability was enhanced with the delivery of **two solar-backed cold storage units in Laamu Atoll**, alongside significant advancements in constructing the **country’s first fuel-efficient hybrid marine vessel** and **installing solar-backed irrigation systems** in three locations.



A woman harvesting chillie from the farm
© Zuvaan Masveriya



Mother and child taking the bus to school
© UNICEF Maldives / 2024 / Shaari

Maldives Advancing Clean Energy Solutions Through Partnership

Students of major schools in Male’ including Majeedhiya School, Arabiyya School, Ameeniyaa School and Iskandhar School have the opportunity to utilize the environment-friendly electric buses. In partnership with Government of Japan, UNDP is striving to expand clean energy solutions to multiple sectors. With a focus on energy security and sustainability, efforts extend beyond power generation to include initiatives in transportation, agriculture, marine transport, and healthcare. These efforts include the introduction of solar-backed electric vehicle minibuses and community-built solar charging stations to revolutionize post-harvest practices with solar-backed cold storage units. Additionally, the construction of two fiberglass boats of fuel-efficient hybrid marine vessels and the procurement of 65 electric vehicles for healthcare waste transport signify strides towards sustainability. Through strategic partnerships and innovative solutions, UNDP aims to foster resilience and achieve climate goals, fostering resilience and advancing sustainability for a prosperous future in the Maldives.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, UN Maldives strengthened the **quarantine capabilities for imported plants and animals at Velana International Airport**. The initiative focused on fortifying the legislative framework, training staff and upgrading facility infrastructure with essential equipment. These efforts have empowered the government to oversee and enforce plant and animal quarantine regulations, ensuring a robust system for safeguarding agricultural and animal health at the airport more effectively.

The Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS), with technical assistance from the UN Maldives, advanced gender equality through the improvement of the labour force indicators. This initiative enhanced understanding of gender equality in the women labour force in the Maldives. In collaboration with UN Maldives, MBS initiated a regular Labour Force Survey (LFS) to obtain crucial labour force and employment indicators. The survey, set to begin in 2024, incorporates effective sampling methods with ongoing evaluations for future feasibility.



Migrant workers make up a huge proportion of the population and workforce in Maldives. Recognizing the significance of safe, orderly, and regular migration, UN Maldives supported **streamlining safe travel and strengthening borders**. As part of this collaboration, specialized training programs were conducted for border officials, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to manage migration processes effectively. These initiatives contribute to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and decent work, aligning with the objective of empowering officials to create an environment that actively promotes inclusion in the economic and human capital development of the nation.

UN Maldives also introduced the first policy roadmaps for more agile and effective SDG financing in the country – that includes both public and private actors. This included the **“Maldives Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)”** and endorsement of a

Gender-responsive Climate Finance Strategy developed under the INFF. The INFF facility also established a **Sustainable Finance Hub** within the Ministry of Finance and **catalyse efficient funding and finance management for the SDGs**. The operationalization of the **Tax for SDGs program** of UN Maldives led to the onboarding of consultants and the initiation of vital activities such as **developing a risk management framework, conducting a study on tax code reforms, and providing support for tax incidence analysis** by the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, UN's assistance empowered the Local Government Authority (LGA) to create tools for establishing Local Authority Companies, fostering fiscal diversification in alignment with the Decentralization Act. We expect all this work to greatly facilitate the flow of both public finance and entrepreneurial capital, towards bankable SDG-focused initiatives.

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 service and have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with wellbeing and dignity.

The UN and the Ministry of Health collaborated on an initiative to **revitalize Primary Health Care (PHC) in the more remote atolls** – this work included conducting assessments, identifying gaps, developing implementation plans, establishing referral pathways, and implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to integrate Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), early identification and referral for common cancers, and certain mental health conditions.



Collaborating with the Ministry of Health, UN Maldives also conducted a PHC costing exercise, revealing the need for increased investment in PHC. The findings will guide advocacy for health system reform, emphasizing PHC system strengthening, health financing, and innovations in service delivery.

In parallel, the UN undertook multiple training initiatives to bolster human resources in **mental health** across the Maldives, showcasing a strong commitment from Ministry of Health (MOH) to enhance mental health (MH) services nationally. These efforts included a master training on the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) in 2022, followed by mhGAP trainings in three regions in 2023, notably in Faafu Atoll as part of the UN Maldives' pilot project **integrating MH services into PHC**. Supporting these endeavors, the recruitment of a full-time international consultant has been instrumental. Moreover, clinical supervision training has been provided to strengthen local capacity in conducting clinical supervision for MH service providers, marking tangible progress towards bolstering MH services in the Maldives.

Through ongoing collaboration with MOH, UN implemented initiatives to enhance the quality-of-care provision in the Maldives, including the development of Mental Health Quality Standards (MHQS), frameworks, guidelines, and critical care training.

Facilitated by experts from the National Quality and Outcomes Coordination Network (NQOCN), Point of Care Quality Improvement Training significantly advanced healthcare quality standards and practices across the Maldives.

Additionally, UN Maldives has addressed the growing mental health burden in the country by launching the **"Kihineh?"** (translation: How are you?) flagship initiative. Multi-prong approaches of **mental health awareness campaigns, resilience-building sessions in schools, innovative partnerships with cafés for youth-led discussions**, and the **establishment of the national Mental Health Helpline 1484** were applied to address the taboo of mental health and increased awareness of mental health issues amongst young people.

Under the framework of "Leaving No Child Behind," the UN launched the **"Kudhinnaa Gaathun – Aharumen Beynunvaa Rah"** initiative, meaning "Close to Children – the Island We Want." This initiative aimed to integrate UN's flagship programs and interventions and places a priority on children's rights at the local level with an equity focus, drawing from experiences of the IBAMA program to identify and support vulnerable children and families. Its goal is to ensure that these **communities reside in child-friendly and climate-resilient environments, fostering holistic development and well-being.**

With technical support from UN for coordinating the Harmonized Health Facility Assessment (HHFA), and under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, a local team of experts conducted a health facility assessment for the Maldives. This assessment adapted and implemented the resource package available for Harmonized Health Facility Assessment (HHFA). Data collection was completed in 2022, and the report was published in 2023 with its findings and recommendations to be used for improving the health care facilities in the future.

The Maldives Ministry of Health, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, UN Maldives, and international experts conducted the **first training on patient safety incident reporting and learning systems**. This virtual

three-day training attracted over 200 participants, providing invaluable knowledge and skills in enhancing patient safety practices within Maldives' healthcare system.

A **Patient Safety Symposium** was held to train health professionals and establish a mechanism for **safe medication administration** and continuous **surveillance through periodic audits**. Each atoll was represented by two trained participants tasked with conducting audits using a specialized patient safety audit tool. This symposium significantly contributed to strengthening patient safety protocols and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within healthcare facilities across the Maldives.

Stakeholders of the "Kudhinnaa Gaathun – Aharumen Beynunvaa Rah" (translation "Close to Children – the Island We Want") initiative.





Medicine safety assures healthy childhood
© Huda Adam

Health Capacity Building Ensuring Public Health Safety

Children like Almira are assured their medicines are safe as a result of the stringent monitoring, public interest announcements and media information by Maldives Food and Drug Authority (MFDA) on contaminated foods and medicines. The MFDA in partnership with the WHO, has made significant strides in global health protection by identifying harmful contaminants, diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol, in syrups. Both compounds are toxic to humans and could be fatal on consumption. Following the attendance of capacity building initiatives, MFDA commenced application of innovative screening methods pioneered by the National Quality Control Laboratory (NQCL), and proactively detected contaminants in children's cough syrup in late 2023. This prompted the recall of 23 batches of the products, alerting the region, and prompting comprehensive regulatory actions to safeguard public health within the region. Collaborating with WHO, thorough laboratory testing confirmed the contamination, leading to product recalls in multiple countries. This success underscores the importance of capacity building of technical staff on state-of-the-art technologies, strengthening regional collaboration and communication and stringent regulatory measures in protecting vulnerable populations from tainted medicines.

In an important milestone, Maldives **has halted the transmission of leprosy**, achieving zero child case detection for over five consecutive years, and becoming the **first country in the world to officially verify the interruption of leprosy transmission**. This significant achievement was sparked by launch of the 'Framework for Zero Leprosy' in 2019, in partnership with UN, setting clear goals for leprosy elimination by 2030 and demonstrating Maldives' leadership in the global fight against leprosy. The success was driven by strong governmental commitment, minimal stigma, robust healthcare systems, and community engagement. Following an internal verification process across all islands and the Greater Male' Area,

178 islands were declared leprosy-free, marking the interruption of leprosy transmission nationwide. Collaboration between Ministry of Health and UN Maldives was integral to this achievement, including training programs for healthcare professionals and extensive screening and awareness campaigns. This accomplishment not only signifies a public health triumph but also embodies resilience, hope, and excellence in global health. UN reaffirms its commitment to collaborating with Maldives in the ongoing journey towards a leprosy-free nation.



Maldives is the first country to stop leprosy transmission, providing this assurance to the mothers
© Rishfa Naseem

Maldives First in the World to Achieve Zero Child Leprosy Transmission

Rishfa Naseem gave birth in 2021 assured that her child will be free of leprosy. This is attributable to Maldives becoming the first country globally to halt the transmission of leprosy, recognized by the WHO. This milestone highlights over five consecutive years without any child cases detected based on collaboration of Government with WHO and partners. The journey began with the implementation of the 'Framework for Zero Leprosy' in 2019, developed by Government and WHO emphasizing government commitment, robust healthcare systems, and a compassionate approach towards affected individuals. Through meticulous internal verification across its islands, Maldives declared 178 locations leprosy-free. The training of healthcare professionals, supported by WHO, and collaboration with research institutes enhanced diagnosis and care standards. Spearheading screening and awareness campaigns, the Health Protection Agency played a vital role. This achievement symbolizes collaborative and long-term planned health interventions impacting positively on the lives of the people of Maldives.

UN Maldives delivered technical assistance to the National Drug Agency (NDA) to conceptualize and draft standards for a **comprehensive drug treatment facility**. Additionally, the UN conducted trainings on substance withdrawal management, aiming to seamlessly integrate drug treatment services into the existing healthcare system. This tangible progress towards establishing effective drug treatment services and addressing substance abuse challenges within the health framework of the Maldives.

A comprehensive mapping of the policy and programmatic uptake and status of implementation of the newborn and child health recommendations within the Birth Defects and Stillbirths Surveillance and Management and Facility-Based Newborn and Paediatric Care in Maldives was also conducted to contribute towards maintaining the good status of newborn indicators for the country.

A training program on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) was successfully conducted for healthcare workers from five atolls, resulting in the training of 50 individuals. The training sessions were facilitated by local experts and the Nutrition (NUT) programme. Additionally, technical support was provided through the sharing of UN tools and guidance on IYCF, further enhancing the knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals in promoting optimal nutrition for infants and young children in the Maldives.

UN Maldives has successfully ensured at least **95% coverage for key childhood immunizations** through strategic collaboration with the Ministry of Health and partners. This included prioritizing vaccine procurement, enhancing cold chain management, conducting social behaviour change campaigns, and providing capacity building for healthcare workers.





Testing on medical samples for contaminants
© WHO Maldives

Maldives successfully conducted **COVID-19 Genomic Sequencing on the MiSeq Machine for the first time**, with crucial technical support from UN Maldives, which will be crucial to **identify future variants and predict caseloads**. This accomplishment was realized during a specialized training on sequencing and bioinformatics at the National Health Laboratory (MFDA), in collaboration with UN Maldives and the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB). The training, which included participants from various health institutions such as the National Health Laboratory, Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital Laboratory, Maldives Food and Drug Authority, and Maldives National University, aimed to expand the country's genomic sequencing capacity.

Previously, the lack of in-country sequencing capacity necessitated the transportation of specimens to overseas laboratories, a process that was both time-consuming and logistically challenging. With the establishment of local sequencing capabilities, the Maldives can now efficiently manage specimens and adapt measures to emerging variants, thereby enhancing its response to the pandemic. The procurement of a state-of-the-art sequencing machine, with consultation from WHO experts, and initial support for reagents and equipment further solidifies the country's capacity in this domain. Additionally, support from donors has been instrumental in setting up the first quality-assured

Genomic Sequencing laboratory in the Maldives. This achievement not only enhances diagnostics and laboratory capacity but also strengthens partnerships between UN Maldives, IGIB, and the Government of Maldives. Looking ahead, the strengthened capacity will empower medical teams, laboratories, and public health experts to provide scientifically accurate, life-saving interventions, further bolstering the country's response to pandemics and future health challenges.

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To tackle the epidemiologic and nutritional transition, UN Maldives initiated the **"Kaigen Hingamaa"** (translation: Let's eat and walk) flagship, focusing on promoting healthy eating, physical activity, exclusive breastfeeding, school-based deworming, and distribution of Vitamin A. The establishment of a multistakeholder group on nutrition, featuring the

participation of the former First Lady of Maldives, reinforced collective efforts.

In response to government needs, UN also launched Technical Cooperation Programme aimed at enhancing the Government's capacity to detect pesticide residues in locally produced and imported food. This initiative, once completed, will facilitate the implementation of the Maldives Good Agricultural Practices certification scheme, ensuring the availability of nutritious and safe food for all.

Addressing an urgent government request, UN Maldives also provided **emergency assistance to address a pest and disease outbreak affecting coconut palms and other perennial crops in the Maldives**. Through laboratory testing, UN Maldives identified the specific pest responsible for the outbreak, marking the first occurrence of this pest in the Maldives. UN supported the implementation of pest management interventions and provided training to Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture officials to enhance their capacity for future pest mitigation efforts. The project also identified necessary agronomic interventions to optimize coconut palm cultivation, ensuring high productivity, and identified supply chain bottlenecks that require attention to bolster the profitability of the coconut palm industry in the Maldives.



The dedicated team of Maldives Food and Drug Authority
© WHO Maldives



In 2023, the UN Maldives collaborated closely with the government to **advance migrants' health** through the development of a comprehensive Migration Health Policy. Notable achievements included a successful outreach event for the migrant community at Central Park, Hulhumale', offering health services and legal information while celebrating cultural diversity through music and karaoke. Additionally, a Rapid Needs Assessment was conducted to inform the establishment of the Migrant Resource Centre, ensuring effective service delivery based on community needs on a continual basis.



A large number of female migrants work as domestic helpers
© Mission for Migrant Workers Maldives

In media engagement, UN Maldives also organized a workshop to **enhance journalists' understanding of migrant rights and ethical reporting on migrant-related issues, including human trafficking**. These efforts contributed to promoting migrants' right to health, particularly focusing on migrant women, through the development of knowledge, expertise, and awareness campaigns in multiple languages. Furthermore, international exposure visits, stakeholder meetings, and workshops were conducted to advance migration health policy. A national-level roadmap for adopting and implementing the National Migration Health Policy was agreed upon during an experience-sharing workshop, emphasizing the commitment to enhancing access to quality social and protection services for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the Maldives.

In partnership with the Ministry of Finance, UN Maldives launched the bulk medicine procurement programme, utilizing UN's global health procurement services. **This initiative has significantly reduced the cost of essential medicines in the Maldives**, resulting in a 62% reduction in government expenditure on related items. This partnership underscores UN's dedication to improve the sustainability of Maldives' universal health insurance scheme, 'Aasandha,' and advancing the achievement of SDG 3. The regional Healthcare Waste Management Project (HCWM) has made substantial progress, including the delivery of 2 autoclaves and necessary IT equipment for 18 locations.

In 2023, UN Maldives supported strengthening national capacity for planning, implementing, and **monitoring evidence-based sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services**, with a focus on reducing unmet family planning needs. By engaging with the Ministry of Health, UN Maldives achieved results through two strategies. Firstly, UN Maldives secured seats at the multistakeholder Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH) Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG endorsed the integration of the RMNCAH Strategy into the District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2) platform, the national health information system. Results include the development of a comprehensive RMNCAH tracker module with M&E features, enhanced capacity of Ministry of Health members on data usage, and advocacy for the inclusion of the National Drug Agency in TAG to



Regular health checkups during pregnancy are important for both mother and child
© UNFPA Maldives / Shaari

prioritize the sexual and reproductive health of female drug users. Secondly, UN Maldives collaborated with media outlets to broadcast rights-based, culturally sensitive communications promoting SRH and rights, including family planning. Activities included the development and broadcast of a 13-episode radio drama and an advocacy video song, 'Neyngifaa,' (translation: not aware) emphasizing the importance of Comprehensive Sexuality Education for young people. These initiatives reached diverse audiences and will be used to spark discussions on social norms in the future.

UN Maldives focused on transforming systemic and social norm issues by building the capacity of young people for policy advocacy through dialogue and institutionalizing Life Skills Based Reproductive Health Education (LSBRHE) in which key strategies were employed. **A tailored curriculum was developed for out-of-school young people**, featuring innovative materials such as 6 animated videos disseminated through UN's social media channels. Additionally, a Dhivehi adaptation of **Menstrupedia, a comic book on puberty and menstrual health** was developed in partnership with Zero Waste Maldives. The book was first disseminated at N. Lhohi School in the form of a

book reading session and is planned for further dissemination.

Through collaborative partnerships with non-traditional partners, UN Maldives reached women and girls in remote islands, addressing identified furthest-behind groups. Partnerships with the hotel group Soneva Namoonaa and Zero Waste Maldives educated women on **sustainable menstrual and reproductive health practices**, empowering them with knowledge while eliminating single-use plastics. UN Maldives, in collaboration with the CSO Society for Health Education (SHE), organized reproductive health camps for Female Drug Users, providing essential health services and family planning. Furthermore, UN Maldives also facilitated a safe space for dialogue between adolescent girls and influential young women, fostering discussions on rights, leadership, and well-being to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child.

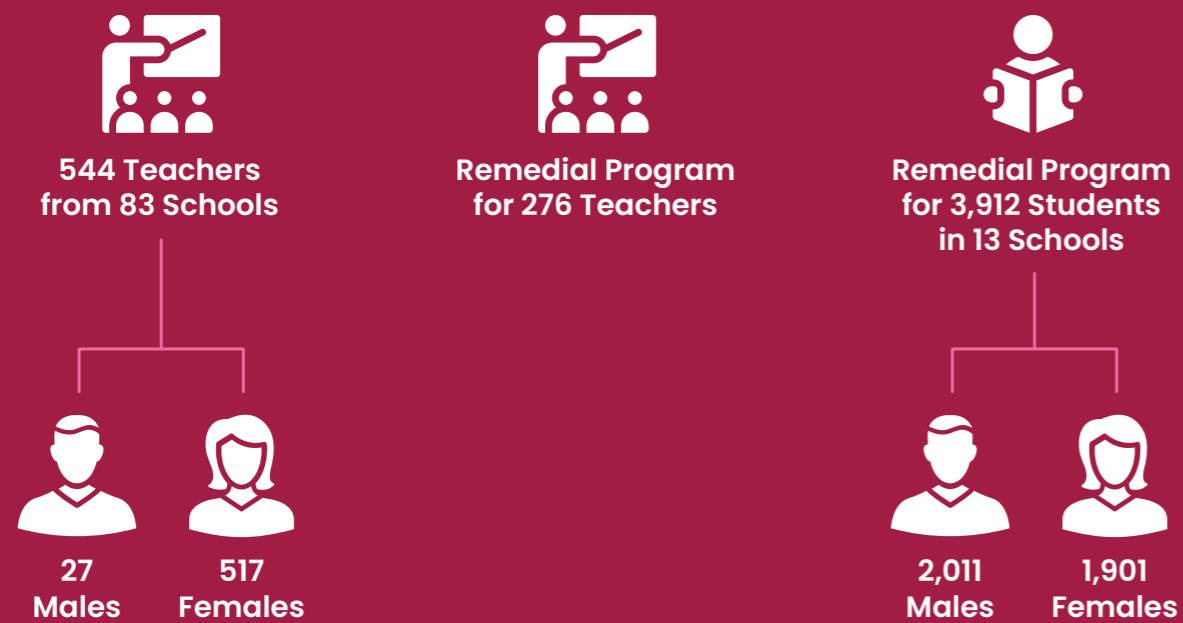


UN Maldives prioritized ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and harmful practices through two key strategies. Firstly, technical contributions from UN Maldives improved the national GBV referral mechanism and provided policy guidance for the legislative framework aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence. This included updating the national GBV case management guidelines to a survivor-centred approach aligned with global best practices. Additionally, a gender and human rights review of gender-related laws identified contradictions, overlaps, and gaps, serving as a tool for advocating transformative changes to legislation to ensure justice and equitable access to vital services for women and survivors. Secondly, community mobilization interventions were initiated to address harmful social and gender norms, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices. These efforts included the development of a short film as an advocacy tool for engaging young people in dialogues on changing harmful norms, a partnership with the Women's Football Club to leverage sports for women's

empowerment and awareness about violence against women, and the launch of the "Women in Sports" advocacy campaign. With continued support in 2024, these interventions are poised to gain momentum and contribute to achieving the targeted country results.

In the area of education and youth engagement, UN Maldives contributed to **maintaining universal coverage and gender parity in primary and lower secondary education**. The focus on education transformation towards 21st-century skills development included initiatives such as digital learning, innovative pedagogy, and the meaningful engagement of young people. Efforts to address learning loss from COVID-19 and strengthening foundational literacy at pre-primary and primary level by conducting capacity development for 544 teachers (517 female; 27 male) from 83 schools and running a successful remedial program in 13 schools, benefiting 3912 students (2011 male; 1901 female). 276 teachers were trained on this remedial program.

Beneficiaries of capacity development on learning loss following pandemic and strengthening foundational literacy



The UN established an innovative new platform for youth development and engagement, including the Youth Reference Group (YRG), comprising of 18 young people (more than 50% female) from across the country, for youth cohort, and internship opportunities. YRG members played a crucial role in advocating for child-related issues and advising UN programs. The selection of UN Maldives as the Grant Agent for two Global Partnership for Education Grants, totalling USD 6.5 million, further fuelled education transformation, focusing on inclusive education for children with disabilities and those out of school.

The government's willingness and commitment to driving education transformation played a pivotal role in the achieved results. UN Maldives collaborated effectively with education partners, nurturing strong relationships with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). Recognized as a reliable and trusted partner, UN Maldives benefited from technical support and funding from the UN Regional Offices for digital learning, learning recovery, and adolescent skills development.

Notable progress has been made in establishing a **comprehensive child protection system**, with key milestones achieved through the implementation of the Child Rights Protection Act and Juvenile Justice Act of 2019. The government's commitment to

vulnerable children is demonstrated through initiatives like the "Family for Every Child" program, which aims to provide care for every child under State guardianship. UN's support in developing standard operational procedures, guidelines, and training modules has enhanced the skills of the social service workforce and improved service standards.

Efforts to identify and support vulnerable children were bolstered by the **nationwide rollout of IBAMA**, the multi-sectoral platform reaching over 80% of inhabited islands in the Maldives. Through collaboration with various stakeholders, including representatives from social services, health, education, law enforcement, and local governance sectors, as well as Women's Development Committees, **vulnerable children and families were connected with essential social services.**

On the front of child rights promotion, a Regional Action Plan was developed during the first Regional Conference of National Human Rights Institutions in South Asia, co-organized with the Children's Ombudsperson's Office. This strategic document, endorsed by high-level officials from regional child rights institutions, provides a framework for UN to advance the child rights agenda both in the Maldives and across the region. Additionally, in partnership with the CSO Advocating the Rights of Children (ARC),



UN Maldives advocates for the rights of the children
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child-friendly videos on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) were disseminated to raise awareness among children and caregivers.

A study conducted in partnership with Villa College revealed concerning parenting practices, with 25% of parents supporting physical punishment as a disciplinary measure. These findings are informing the design and implementation of the **positive parenting flagship program "Beleniveriyaa"** (translation: the parent). Furthermore, adolescent girls in Kulhudhuffushi City enhanced their digital and problem-solving skills through a hackathon organized in collaboration with Kulhudhuffushi City Council, Women in Tech, telecom company Ooredoo, and the Ministry of Education (MoE). This event exemplifies UN's commitment to innovation and gender-transformative action, emphasizing the importance of partnerships between government, private sector, and civil society in driving impactful outcomes.

In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maldives government collaborated with

key partners, including the World Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and UN Maldives, to address gaps in healthcare provision. A priority project, the Emergency Construction of Patient Wards at Kulhudhuffushi Island, focused on filling critical deficiencies for handling highly transmissible diseases. The completion of a two-story patient ward building within the Kulhudhuffushi regional hospital was a key achievement, with the design finalized in 2023. In parallel, UN Maldives, with funding from the World Bank Group, partnered with the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Emergency COVID-19-related procurement. This initiative aimed to swiftly procure personal protection equipment, emergency medical supplies, laboratory equipment, and consumables to curb the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Additionally, with funds from the Islamic Development Bank, UN Maldives collaborated with the Ministry of Health in the "Phase II of Emergency Procurement of Critical Care Equipment and Supplies". This effort addressed challenges faced during the pandemic, enhancing the country's capacity to handle a potential coronavirus outbreak through the procurement of emergency medical supplies, laboratory equipment, and consumables.



Violence against children is a key social issue being addressed by UN and partners
© Zuvaan Masveriya



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.

UN Maldives support in climate action ranged across many sectors including early warning, climate-smart agriculture, energy transition and adaptation. By implementing the UN Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, UN Maldives initiated the **Climate Guardians Initiative** as part of the flagship Climate Action for Children program. Over 50 young individuals were trained as **climate advocates**, culminating in their **active participation in pre-COP28** activities. These activities included a youth conference, mock negotiations, and the development of a youth statement presented to local and global leaders. Key partnerships with the Climate Department of the Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy, and the President's Special Envoy for Climate Change, alongside engaging youth activities, were instrumental in achieving these milestones.



Women on the way to dispose organic waste
© Zuvaan Masveriya

The UN system also spearheaded the establishment of the Emergency Preparedness for All plan, focusing on disaster risk reduction (DRR). Collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority resulted in the revision of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) guidelines to incorporate principles of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAPs). Through technical support, capacity building, and financial assistance, UN Maldives empowered local stakeholders and youth, ensuring their active engagement in climate action and safeguarding children's rights.

UN Maldives through the Maldives Agribusiness Programme (MAP) has made progress in **agricultural research** at the Hanimaadhoo Agriculture Centre, **focusing on adaptive techniques across seven demo plots**. Through the promotion of organic fertilizers and the proper use of chemicals, farmers have already begun reducing their fertilizer and chemical usage during production cycles, resulting in a decrease in pollution to the environment. Additionally, MAP has conducted an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) in Vaikaradhoo, one of the greenhouse demo islands, to assess environmental and climate risks and impacts. Recommendations for cost-effective

mitigation and adaptation measures are underway based on the analysis conducted. Furthermore, MAP is in the process of developing Land and Water Use plans for one island in each atoll, with procurement activities currently ongoing. These initiatives demonstrate MAP's commitment to sustainable agricultural practices and environmental stewardship in the Maldives.

Maldivian agriculture sector faces significant challenges, including limited cultivable land, inadequate technology, logistical hurdles, and market access issues. This sector is further hindered by unorganized farming practices and limited investment, resulting in heavy reliance on imported agricultural products and vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty, especially among small farmers in outer atolls. The implementation of the national Agricultural Development Master Plan has been constrained due to these challenges and a lack of systematic investment in agriculture. To address these issues, MAP collaborated with the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources, and Agriculture to refine the sector's vision and implement a structured policy and incentive framework. MAP provided investment **resources to capitalize on growth opportunities and**



UNDP's Agro Net program site visit by UN, donors and stakeholders
© UNDP Maldives / Ashwa Faheem



introduced climate-smart technological solutions tailored to the Maldives context, addressing land and soil constraints and mitigating climate change impacts. UN served as the Programme Management Agency under the Financial Agreement signed between UN and the Government of Maldives, with the Chief Technical Advisor supporting project implementation and enhancing capacity within the project team. These efforts aimed to drive sustainable growth and resilience in the agriculture sector, contributing to the overall economic development of the Maldives.

UN Maldives has successfully implemented **an e-agriculture solution** through the launch of a website (<https://dhanduveriya.gov.mv/>) aimed at providing valuable information to farmers in the Maldives. This platform disseminates crucial data on crop production, pest and disease outbreaks, weather patterns, and market prices, facilitating informed decision-making. Moreover, the website serves as a two-way communication channel, enabling farmers to raise inquiries to government entities and industry experts, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the agricultural community. UN Maldives also collaborated with the government to develop a methodology for measuring food loss and waste in Maldives' resorts. This user-friendly approach was piloted in two resorts and subsequently presented to government officials and industry stakeholders. The methodology not only helps resorts understand the extent and composition of waste but also identifies trends in wastage, providing insights into resource consumption for food production and its environmental impact. This initiative underscores UN's commitment to enhancing food security and promoting sustainable practices in the Maldives.

Recognizing the pivotal **role of data in addressing climate-induced migration**, UN Maldives collaborated closely with the government to initiate new research. A notable achievement was the establishment of a technical committee led by the Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy. With representation from key stakeholders, this committee played a pivotal role in shaping the research agenda and methodology. Their collective efforts have laid a strong foundation for understanding the climate-induced migration nexus in the Maldives. The initial research methodology developed in 2023, provides a robust framework for further investigations. Through active

engagement with national and sub-national institutions, as well as vulnerable populations, UN Maldives is committed to ensuring communities are better prepared to manage natural resources inclusively and sustainably. These initiatives significantly contribute to enhancing resilience to climate-related challenges, thereby fostering a more sustainable and resilient future for the Maldives.

Under the Natural Science Programme, the Maldives government actively participated in the "Ridge to Reef" event held in Chennai, India. This event facilitated knowledge exchange among Biosphere Reserves in South and Central Asia. UN Maldives provided financial support to fund the government's participation. Additionally, support was extended to the Ministry of Environment, Government of Maldives, for the development of a proposal on "Ecosystem-based Adaptation through Nature-based Solutions" intended for submission to the Adaptation Fund.

Under the Early Warning For All (EW4All) initiative, UN Maldives made significant strides in supporting the government of Maldives. Efforts focused on **assessing the existing Early Warning System (EWS)** and crafting a **nationally endorsed roadmap** aimed at ensuring comprehensive coverage for all Maldivian citizens with a multi-hazard, end-to-end, and people centered early warning systems. Moreover, UN Maldives aided in enhancing reporting mechanisms for loss and damages resulting from disaster events, aiming to inform future planning and mitigate risks associated with future hazards across the island nation. This marks tangible progress towards building resilience and safeguarding the Maldivian population from the impacts of disasters.





Early warnings are crucial to minimize the impact of climate-induced natural hazards
© National Disaster Management Authority

Maldives Pioneers Climate Resilience with Early Warning Systems

Capitalizing on the selection of Maldives as the 30 countries to roll-out the SG's Early Warnings For All initiative (EW4ALL) and assessing the country's unique needs and the fragmented nature of early warning systems, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in Maldives spearheaded the collaborative initiative EW4All bringing on board the leadership of the Government of Maldives, partnership of the relevant UN entities in-country and abroad, NGOs, and technical experts to establish a unified strategy. A national consultation was co-convened by the UN and the Government facilitated collaboration and identified critical gaps. This was the first of such consultations within the EW4ALL umbrella for SIDS and South Asia. Following that, a task force, guided by leading regional experts, was formed to oversee the formulation of the EW4All roadmap, leveraging the expertise of global UN leads UNDRR, WMO, ITU, and IFRC, and local leads (insert the names) along with support from UNDP, ESCAP, UNEP, GEO and many other stakeholders. Maldives is the first country among the 30 focus countries of EW4AI initiative to develop and endorse at the presidential level a national EW4All road map to ensure multi-hazard early warnings for all by 2027.

Enhancing National Development through Environmentally Resilient Islands (ENDHERI) project under the UN umbrella also made significant strides in strengthening reef protection, resilience, and ecosystem recovery in the Laamu Atoll, while integrating natural capital accounting into development planning. Throughout 2023 the project conducted baseline surveys on fisheries management, waste management, agricultural

practices, and environmental awareness. The project organized a training program on coral reef monitoring and a workshop on ecosystem conservation and management, covering topics such as ecosystem services, community benefits, legal frameworks, capacity development, and financing. A validation workshop for ecologically important areas in Laamu Atoll was conducted, engaging representatives from 10 islands to verify identified hotspots, propose new

areas, and agree on priority areas for ecological assessments. This initiative enhances conservation and sustainable management of coral reef-atoll seascapes in the Maldives, with implications for scaling up from local experiences to national change across its three components. Integration of natural capital concepts into business models and decision-making processes is expected to align governance with the enhanced planning needs outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

The "Capacity Strengthening for improved Transparency of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Actions in the Maldives (CBIT)" project has made significant progress towards its key objective. The project aims to bolster institutional arrangements

and individual capacities to collect data and track national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) actions. This effort is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of climate actions and designing ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures. Throughout 2023, the project achieved several key results: initiating work on the GHG Inventory Database preparation, developing a gender strategy and integrating gender considerations into data collection, assessing institutional arrangements to streamline the GHG inventory reporting process, and initiating the development of country-specific emissions factors. These achievements represent substantial strides towards enhancing transparency and effectiveness in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in the Maldives.



Men navigating the stormy waters for a day's catch
© Zuvaan Masveriyaa





A father driving his family in an environment-friendly local electric pick-up
© Zuvaan Masveriya

The Integrated, Sustainable, and Low Emissions Transport in the Maldives (**E-Mobility**) project has made significant strides towards its key objective in 2023. The project aims to enhance enabling conditions and undertake pilots to promote the **use of electric vehicles (EVs) in the country, with an additional focus on reducing air pollution.** Pilot initiatives include the introduction of e-buses and an e-bike sharing scheme, while a pre-feasibility study of e-boats is also underway to address the importance of sea-based transport for the nation. Achievements in 2023 include the initiation of a framework for Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan development, the finalization of a policy gap assessment for promoting sustainable transport, and participation in a Regional EM training workshop. These accomplishments signify progress towards promoting sustainable and low-emission transportation in the Maldives.

In the pursuit of building capacity to advance the National Adaptation Planning process in the Maldives, significant progress has been made towards reducing the vulnerability of the population to climate change impacts. Funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with USD 2.85 million, the project aims to enhance capacity for planning, implementing, and monitoring adaptation interventions. By supporting the Maldivian government in formulating and implementing its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in alignment with national priorities and GCF Country Programme objectives, the project targets four participatory, gender-responsive, and socially inclusive outcomes. These outcomes focus on strengthening institutional arrangements, analyzing climate change impacts, developing a funding strategy for adaptation, and enhancing monitoring and reporting capacities. As of 2023, the project has entered the preparatory phase of implementation, with further progress anticipated in 2024. This initiative contributes to the overarching goal of enabling all levels of government, communities, and stakeholders in the Maldives to develop and implement environmentally sustainable and risk-informed practices, thereby protecting the planet and promoting human health and well-being.

The “OzonAction Institutional Strengthening” project, spanning phases XI to XIII (2021-2026), focuses on enhancing the operation of the National Ozone Unit (NOU) in the Maldives, preparing the Kigali Implementation Plan, and implementing additional activities on energy efficiency to sustain the phaseout

of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). The key objective includes enforcing quota and import licensing systems, conducting data collection on ozone-depleting substances and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), organizing outreach workshops, and celebrating World Ozone Days. Notably, in 2023, the project contributed to SDG Goal 13 on Climate Action by eliminating ozone-depleting substances and reducing potent greenhouse gases like HFCs. Efforts were made towards achieving SDG Goal 5 on gender equality by collecting gender-disaggregated data for training and workshops. Achievements under Phase XII funding encompassed various aspects: hiring staff for NOU management, operating licensing and quota systems for HCFCs and HFCs, enforcing control measures, monitoring illegal trade, submitting reports, engaging industry associations, preparing for HFC phasedown, and commemorating World Ozone Day. Despite challenges arising from changes in government administration, progress continues with ongoing regional cooperation and participation in international meetings, albeit with some delays in administrative processes such as the approval of the cabinet paper for HFC phasedown.

In 2023, progress was made towards the preparation and implementation of the Kigali Implementation Plan (KIP) in the Maldives, focusing on conducting national surveys and developing an overarching strategy for the phasedown of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) from 2024 to 2045. This initiative aligns with SDG Goal 13 on climate action by reducing the use of high Global Warming Potential (GWP) refrigerants and promotes responsible consumption and production (SDG Goal 12). Furthermore, it contributes to SDG Goal 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure by identifying priority sectors for HFC phasedown and encouraging the adoption of alternative refrigerants and new technologies. Activities conducted in preparation for KIP included hiring a local consultant to conduct national surveys and develop the strategy, as well as organizing stakeholder workshops to address challenges such as understanding HFCs and their alternatives, and controlling illegal sales of refrigerants. However, challenges were encountered in the hiring process due to procurement issues and difficulties in finding a consultant with specialized expertise. Despite these challenges, the project remains on track for further implementation in 2024.



A persistent challenge is the lack of drinkable water on many outlying islands. To address this, a flagship program, funded by GCF (USD 23 million) and supported by UN, has successfully concluded providing safe water to 105,000 people in the Maldives through 25 rainwater harvesting and 4 reverse osmosis systems across 29 islands. UN facilitated the provision of an additional 3,780 m³ of water storage in 25 islands through the rainwater harvesting systems, resulting in an annual cost reduction of USD 96,563 (MVR 1.5 million) for dry period water provision. **This initiative has empowered the Government of Maldives (GoM) to ensure uninterrupted water supply and secure freshwater reserves by enhancing groundwater quality on 37 islands**, establishing mechanisms for long-term resilience, sustainability, and protection of water resources. Implemented as a

decentralized and cost-effective solution, the program has introduced a dry season water supply system benefitting over 73,000 people across 7 Northern atolls. Access to safe water has been extended to households most in need, benefitting 19,871 residents across 29 islands, with a gender-inclusive distribution of 9,432 females and 10,439 males.

UN Maldives also supported **climate and disaster data collection** through GIS-based map of islands, promoted energy transition with 5 solar-backed EV charging stations, expanded renewable cold storage for agriculture, and introduced an energy-efficient agri-boat which would service 500 contract farmers in the south of Maldives.

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.

UN Maldives has made significant strides in strengthening national capacity for the formulation of inclusive, gender-transformative, resilient, and adaptive development policies addressing Maldives' demographic transition and climate threats. Two primary strategies were employed to achieve these objectives. Firstly, through the utilization of Census 2022 data, supported by UN Maldives, essential groundwork was laid for monitoring national and international commitments. This involved the integration of **International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)** results into the Voluntary National Report 2023 (VNR), facilitated by census data. Additionally, the development of the **Voluntary National Survey** provided a platform for assessing national progress and engaging stakeholders. Advocacy videos and Island and Atoll cards, based on Census 2022 data, were produced as effective tools for dissemination in 2024.

Summary of Integrated Water Resource Management Project

KEY STATISTICS	 <p>Safe Water Provided to 105,000 People</p>	 <p>Fund of USD 23 Million from GCF</p>	 <p>Invested Across 29 Islands</p>	 <p>25 Rainwater Harvesting & 4 Reverse Osmosis Systems</p>
ACHIEVEMENTS	 <p>Extended Direct Safe Water Access to 19,871 Residents: 9,432 Females & 10,439 Males</p>	 <p>3,780 m³ of Additional Water Storage in 25 Islands</p>	 <p>Cost Reduction of USD 96,563 Per Annum</p>	 <p>Over 73,000 People Benefit During Dry Season</p>
IMPACT	 <p>Secure Freshwater Reserves</p>	 <p>Uninterrupted Water Supply</p>	 <p>Empowerment of Government of Maldives</p>	 <p>Enhanced Groundwater Quality on 37 Islands</p>



A young boy sharing a coconut leaf handicraft © Zuvaan Masveriyaa



UN Maldives collaborated with the Maldives Bureau of Statistics to conduct a **disability analysis of Census 2022**, yielding valuable insights into disability demographics. Additionally, partnerships with the Prosecutor General Office led to the establishment of an Integrated Criminal Justice Information Management System, enhancing efficiency in criminal justice administration.

Advocacy efforts were directed towards promoting inclusive policies that address the implications of low fertility and population aging. The publication of the Policy Brief: "Addressing Low Fertility in the Maldives" facilitated strategic partnerships during government transitions. Further advocacy initiatives included the exhibition of a lifecycle approach photo story at the national event on World Population Day and the dissemination of a podcast series planned for 2024. Panel discussions on low fertility and population aging were organized, engaging high-level audiences, including the Vice President and the annual research

forum of the Maldives National University. Overall, these initiatives have positioned the lifecycle approach prominently in the policy development arena, fostering the development of **people-centered policies**. Notably, the inclusion of fertility issues and reproductive health services in the new government's manifesto demonstrates the tangible impact of these efforts, providing opportunities for UN Maldives to offer ongoing policy advice and support continued progress towards inclusive and equitable development.

UN Maldives provided initial technical feedback and comments on the draft Industrial Relations (IR) Bill and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Bill, awaiting formal communication from the government upon the translation of drafts into English. UN Maldives looks forward to the ratification of these bills so that they provide safer and decent occupational opportunities and interventions for employees and employers.



A migrant worker selling smoked fish at the local market in Male', Maldives
© Mission for Migrant Workers Maldives



Siblings trailing behind their sister and brother
© Zuvaan Masveriya

Additionally, the UN Maldives supported the Government of Maldives and Ministry of Economic Development in **enhancing labour migration governance**. A rights-based diagnostic assessment of labour migration and existing governance systems was conducted to develop a long-term framework, including migration and labour policies, integrated border management, and labour market information systems. Recommendations focused on fair recruitment, fundamental rights at work, legal status of foreign workers, contractual standards, labour inspection, complaint mechanisms, and migrant housing and health.

In 2023, UN Maldives continued making available its technical expertise to the Government of Maldives to ensure that asylum seekers and refugees, one of the most marginalized groups, are not left behind in the realisation of the SDGs. Counselling and appropriate support was provided to few individuals who claimed to have international protection needs.

In 2023 the Regional Meeting on the Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations was hosted by Maldives, organized in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This event underscored the government's dedication and shared commitment to safeguarding the rights of all migrants in the Maldives.

UN Maldives continues to promote participatory and non-discriminatory practices, emphasizing meaningful engagement from all segments of society. Gender perspectives have been seamlessly integrated into project activities, ensuring representation across technical committees, stakeholder consultations, and workshops. Efforts are focused on understanding and addressing the unique needs, roles, and vulnerabilities of women, men, and gender-diverse individuals, advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. These collective endeavors contribute to the overarching vision of a tolerant and peaceful society in the Maldives. UN's initiatives empower individuals, facilitating their meaningful participation in transparent processes and ensuring equitable access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment.

Throughout 2023, UN Maldives continued its assistance to Maldivian national authorities in preventing and countering criminal activities. Specialized support was provided in addressing terrorism-related issues, including Foreign Terrorist Fighters, violent extremism (especially within prison settings), and the use of improvised explosive devices. Technical skills, knowledge, and specialized equipment were deployed to enhance capabilities in collecting electronic evidence from abroad jurisdictions in relation to terrorist cases.



In the realm of maritime crime prevention and maritime safety and security, UN Maldives bolstered the capabilities of maritime law enforcement agencies and officers, including through the provision of specialized equipment. Training programs, such as Visit, Board, Search and Seizure, and Pier side Vessel Search Techniques courses, were delivered to improve operational effectiveness. Additionally, navigational courses, such as seamanship courses, were conducted to enhance the skills of coxswains and boat crews in manoeuvring patrol boats. Substantial and specialized equipment and resources, including communications, navigational, and IT equipment, were provided to support maritime law enforcement operations.

UN Maldives has become a strategic partner in strengthening the Parliament of Maldives, resulting in the Parliament's commitment to institutionalize and co-finance the UN initiated "Practice Parliament" program from 2023 onwards. Moreover, the Parliament has initiated a "Disability and Inclusion Review" of the institution with UN's technical support.

During the September 2023 Presidential Election, UN Maldives played a critical role as a key partner of Elections Commission of Maldives (ECM). One notable initiative involved **pioneering unassisted voting for blind and visually impaired individuals** during the Maldives Presidential Election. This innovative approach enabled 45 voters across four atolls to cast their votes using a specially designed template. Moreover, various civic and voter education interventions conducted through social media and structured programs involving young people, all leading up to the Presidential Elections.

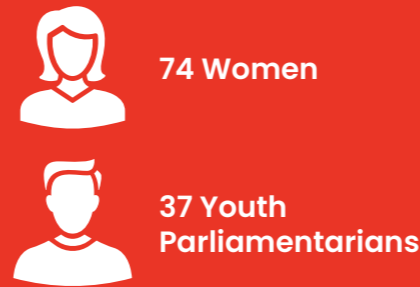


Tactile Voting Empowers Visually Impaired in Maldives Democracy

Mohamed Hamid for this first time in his life voted in an election without assistance. He expressed satisfaction at being empowered to exercise this right individually and having sense of inclusion in the democratic process. For the 2023 Maldives Presidential Elections, UNDP and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australia in partnership with the Elections Commission of Maldives, successfully introduced tactile voting template allowing people voting in the first round of presidential elections to vote without assistance. Using a template, 45 visually impaired people of the Maldives were able to vote independently with confidence in the last presidential election. This advancement reflects the commitment of the Maldives towards inclusivity in the Maldivian democracy. Through innovative solutions like the tactile voting template, the electoral process becomes more accessible, ensuring every citizen's voice is heard, felt, and counted.

The UN also facilitated three **Practice Parliament sessions**, benefiting 74 women and 37 youth parliamentarians, fostering engagement between the judiciary and youth through initiatives like "Judiciary for Junior (J4J)", which involved 35 participants and aimed to address youth unemployment and disenfranchisement.

3 Sessions of Practice Parliament Benefited:



UN Maldives has expanded its collaboration with the Parliament of Maldives, launching a joint initiative this year to modernize and **improve the public petitioning system**. This effort aims to create a more accessible and interactive platform, with the blueprint expected to be finalized by year-end. Concurrently, UN's support for the **digitalization of the judiciary** has led to the completion and piloting of the internal workflow of the integrated court management system in the Civil Court since November 2023. Additionally, the **marriage registration portal**, serving as a central data repository for marriage and divorce statistics in the Maldives, has been finalized with support from UN Maldives and is operational at the Magistrate Courts.

In the domain of digital and anticipatory governance, UN Maldives, in collaboration with the Attorney General's Office, facilitated the development of the **first accessible website** (Legal Repository: <https://mvlaw.gov.mv/>) serving as a **comprehensive repository for all laws and regulations in the Maldives**. Notably, this website incorporates text-to-speech functionality for enhanced accessibility, marking a significant milestone in Maldives. Since its launch in November 2023, the platform has attracted over 12,000 users, with a total of 31,305 visits to the website.

Usage of Legal Repository with text-to-speech functions:



The Family Legal Clinic provided crucial pro bono legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence, gender-based violence, and sexual harassment, conducting 120 consultations for 86 mainly women clients between July and December 2023.

The Judicial Service Commission conducted **evaluations of 102 Judges, enhancing transparency and public trust**. Additionally, the inaugural "Maldives Women Judges Conference" convened 22 women judges to discuss gender equality and diversity in the judiciary, inspiring more women to pursue legal careers. In partnership with Human Rights Commission of Maldives (HRCM), UN launched the National Human Rights Defenders Programme, endorsed the Human Rights Investigation Regulation, and developed the Communications Strategy for the HRCM. UN supported HRCM in revising the manual for Human Rights Defenders (HRD) and establishing the HRD network, contributing to transparent investigations of human rights violations.

UN Maldives facilitated a training on monitoring human rights in context of elections for the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) and other stakeholders in June 2023, focusing on identifying the role of HRCM and CSOs in human rights monitoring in electoral contexts and capacity-building in planning and conducting related human rights monitoring.

The Maldives **ratified the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (CED)** on 31 July 2023. This followed engagement by the United Nations with the Ministry

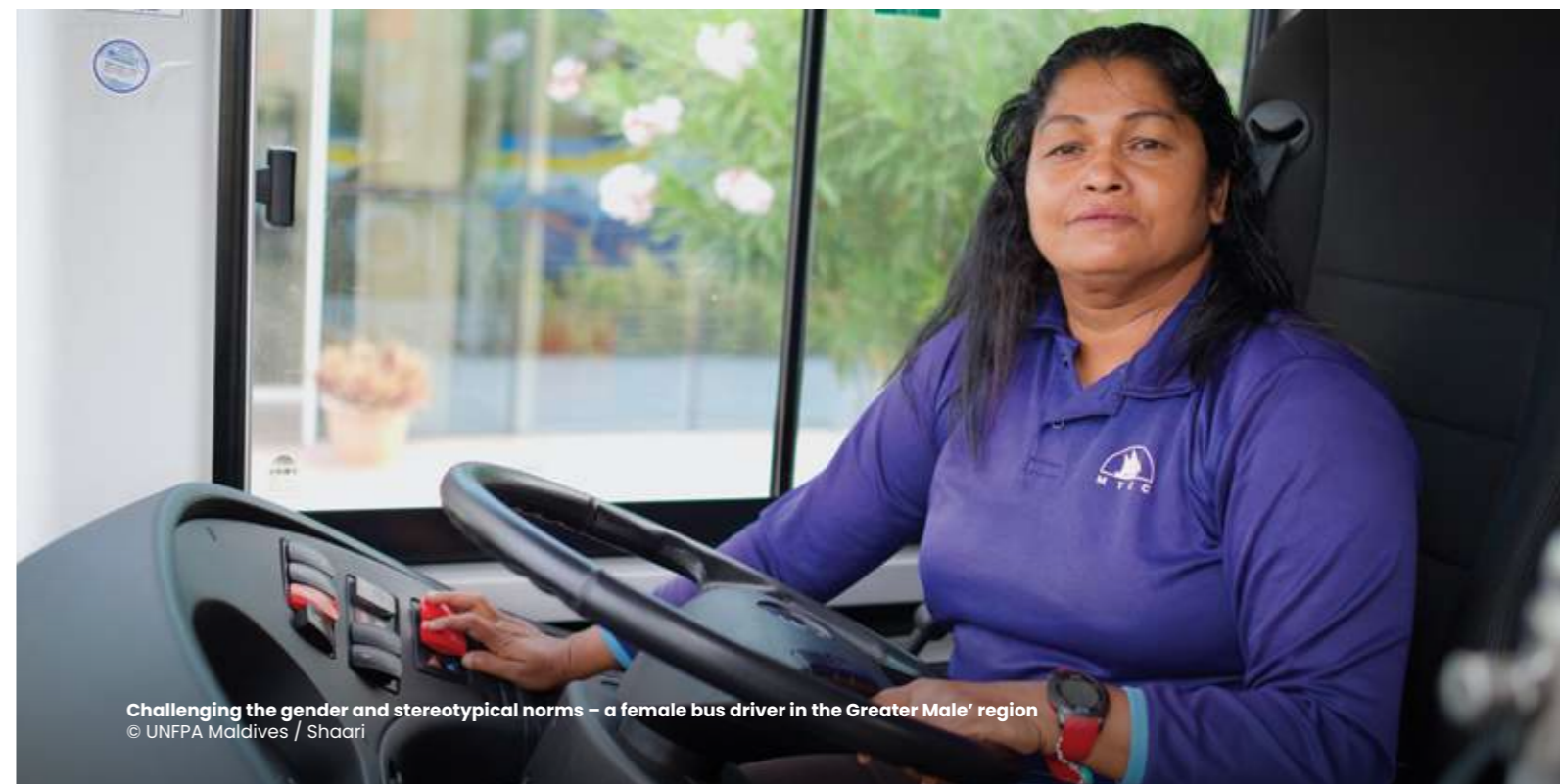
for Foreign Affairs especially within the context of 75 years' commemoration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "Push for Pledges" Campaign. The "Push for Pledges" was a campaign to encourage meaningful actions by Member States, with the dedicated aim to show commitment towards improving communities, nations, everyone's human rights under the "Human Rights 75" global initiative.

UN Maldives partnered with HRCM in commemorating **75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2023. A photo exhibition entitled 'Lens on humanity's journey' was organised, aimed at visually representing the various human rights from the UDHR, with participation of both amateur and professional local photographers. The exhibited photos depicted human rights issues through the lens of the photographers of everyday life in the Maldives. A formal event was also held on 10 December 2023 additionally marking the **20th anniversary of the HRCM and 15 years of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)**, attended by representatives from Government and civil society alike, with the Homeland Security Minister as the chief guest and where the NPM Portal was launched.

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In 2023, UN Maldives significantly enhanced the capabilities of Maldivian institutions to combat migrant smuggling, including labour migration, by fostering exchange of experiences and international cooperation among key agencies such as the Maldives Police Service, Maldives Immigration, Coast Guard, and the Prosecutor General's Office, both regionally and internationally. This work reflects UN's commitment to strengthening global efforts against migrant smuggling and promoting international cooperation in law enforcement.

2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda



Challenging the gender and stereotypical norms – a female bus driver in the Greater Male' region
© UNFPA Maldives / Shaari

In July 2023, a national consultation and the **launch of Early Warnings for All (EW4All)** took place in the Maldives, organized by then, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Technology, in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team in the Maldives. The event was led by the UN Resident Coordinator, with support from UNDRR and WMO as global co-leads for EW4All. The EW4All national consultation and launch were chaired by former Minister of Environment, Climate Change, and Technology, along with former State Minister, and the former UN Resident Coordinator.

This initiative builds upon existing regulations and operationalization of Early Warning Systems (EWS) in the Maldives. With UN support, technical expertise has been swiftly gathered from various sectors to accelerate progress towards the EW4All Action Plan by 2027. The effort draws upon decades of work in disaster risk reduction and management by UNDP and UNDRR, with additional support from ESCAP, UNEP,

and GEO. National partners include National Centre for Information Technology (NCIT), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Maldives Meteorological Service (MMS), and Maldives Red Crescent (MRC). The **Maldives is the first Asian country and the first Small Island Developing State (SIDS) to embark on the UN Secretary-General's Early Warnings For All program.** Given the country's vulnerability to the climate crisis, enhancing national capacity in early warning and preparedness is paramount and forms a crucial aspect of the adaptation strategy. Early warning systems are recognized as cost-effective measures, saving lives, reducing economic losses, and providing significant returns on investment. The diverse island landscape of the Maldives underscores the importance of ensuring **comprehensive multi-hazard early warning systems** to protect all Maldivians. Through this program, it is hoped that the necessary support and actions will be mobilized to achieve this goal.



Violence against children is a key social issue being addressed by UN and partners
© Zuvaan Masveriya



The Maldives has completed and presented its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, evaluating national progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This report was compiled with financial and technical support from UN locally and regionally. The VNR findings showed that despite being a small island nation with limited resources, the Maldives has achieved strong economic growth, poverty reduction, and advancements in human development. However, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of the economy, heavily reliant on tourism. The **report centers on the theme "Socio-economic integration through connectivity as an accelerator to achieving SDGs in the Maldives"** within the context of COVID-19 impact and recovery. Challenges in providing equal access to services across dispersed islands are addressed, with a focus on improving overall wellbeing through access to services and economic opportunities. Progress and challenges in social wellbeing, economic inclusion, resilience, environment, and climate action are discussed in the review.

In 2023, the UN Maldives maintained its active collaboration with the academic community, focusing on the imperative theme of **"Bridging the SDG Data Gap – What is the Role of Academia?"**. During this event, Maldives National University, Villa College, and the Islamic University of Maldives elucidated their respective priority areas and proposed strategies for addressing the data gap within the SDGs.

Additionally, the UN Maldives forged partnerships with the National Statistic Division, which facilitated and presented the findings of the 2023 Voluntary National Review, and the Maldives Bureau of Statistics, which provided insights during a session on SDG Data Updates specific to Maldives. The culmination of this year's event witnessed a significant milestone with the establishment of a substantive collaboration between the UN Maldives and the aforementioned academic institutions. This milestone was marked by the signing of a commitment for future engagement, underscoring a collective dedication to advancing SDG-related research and initiatives. This achievement signifies a notable step forward for the UN's efforts in the Maldives.

2.4. Results of the UN Working More and Better Together: UN Coherence, Effectiveness, and Efficiency

The partnership between UNDP and ESCAP within the SIDS Joint Programme has significantly bolstered the evidence base for policymaking and empowered local councils to make well-informed decisions regarding climate adaptation strategies and disaster risk reduction. Utilizing localized climate risk and disaster-related data spanning from 2006 to 2021, the program has yielded tangible results by identifying the risk hotspots of multi-hazards and exposure of social and economic sectors to climate hazards in future. The introduction of participatory mapping facilitated by the Accelerator Lab has enabled the **collection of citizen-generated GIS data, enhancing disaster risk reduction efforts and local planning**. Notably, the collected data seamlessly integrates with ESCAP's Risk and Resilience portal, further amplifying its utility. Through hosting the full data in the national partner agencies (Maldives Meteorological Services, National Disaster Management Authority, and Maldives National University) for technical use as well as providing access to the data and the decision-making tools through the ESCAP's Risk and Resilience portal Maldives page, all stakeholders can access the information in national and subnational level, ensuring a more comprehensive approach in all levels to DRR and CCA.

In December 2023, a collaboration was forged between UNDP and WHO, focusing on providing healthcare waste management training to all health facilities and constructing five additional waste management facilities. This initiative marks a crucial step towards enhancing healthcare infrastructure and ensuring sustainable waste management practices.

Under the joint SDG Funded programme implemented by ESCAP and UNDP Maldives on "Strengthening National and Subnational Capacity for Sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Maldives", various capacity buildings were held, including two technical capacity buildings by ESCAP to enhance the technical capacity of stakeholders in all levels in using Geospatial tools and techniques. This knowledge, in addition to the hazard risk projections, land use/ land cover, and population data, enables stakeholders to integrate

DRR and CCA in their policymaking and planning. The relevant manuals on the workshop topics were prepared in addition to ensure a more sustainable result.

The formulation of the Maldives National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion, with inputs from the UN Maldives Gender Equality Human Rights Thematic Group comprising RCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and WHO, underscores the collaborative efforts towards promoting inclusivity. These partnerships have notably contributed to achieving Outcomes 3 and 4 outlined in the UNSDCF.

UNICEF and WHO also continued their engagement which contributed to the mental health efforts under the Joint WHO-UNICEF Programme on Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing and Development of Children and Adolescents and to the strengthening of the BMS Code implementation at national level.



Early childhood interventions are key for growth and development
© UNICEF Maldives / 2024 / Shaari



Grandfather and grandchildren strolling on the harbour
© Zuvaan Masveriya



2.5. Evaluations and Lessons Learned

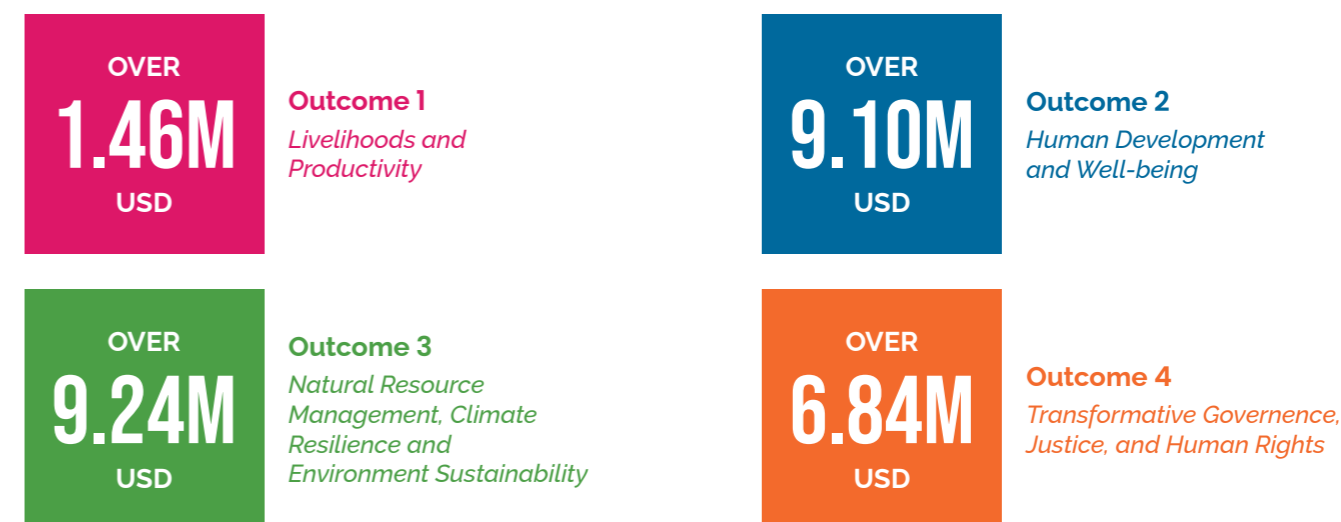
Several challenges persist in the Maldives despite notable progress in various initiatives aimed at sustainable development and community empowerment:

- Fragmentation and Silos:** The initiatives focusing on specific islands faces challenges in breaking down sectoral silos and ensuring seamless coordination between macro-level policies and micro-level community engagement.
- Stakeholder Capacity Constraints:** Limited capacity among stakeholders posed challenges in implementing initiatives effectively. Moreover, engaging civil society organizations (CSOs) remains a challenge, with limited formal partnerships established with the CSOs. Advocacy efforts are needed to broaden the engagement of CSOs for effective program implementation.
- Mental Health Stigma:** Despite innovative awareness approaches, stigma surrounding mental health persists. More concerted efforts are required to combat stigma and promote mental wellbeing effectively.
- Resource Mobilization:** While significant strides have been made in communication and resource mobilization, challenges remain in maintaining regular communication with multiple partners and ensuring broader participation, particularly among those interested in smaller-scale donations. While seed funding facilitated initial conversations and addressed some needs, sustained support and core funding are essential for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable population effectively.
- Functional Implementation:** Scaling up successful initiatives poses challenges in ensuring functional implementation at the city/island level. Leadership from island councils, accountability of line ministries, and effective monitoring mechanisms are crucial for sustained success.
- Community Engagement:** While efforts have been made to expedite community engagement through
 - purposeful partnerships, further strategies are needed to ensure meaningful involvement of communities, particularly in addressing challenges like unequal access to services across dispersed islands.
- Coordination:** Despite engagement in various areas, ensuring effective coordination among government, civil society, and youth remains a challenge. Strengthening partnerships and enhancing coordination mechanisms are essential for advancing the work of the UN effectively.
- Inclusive Communication:** The aspiration to make communication more inclusive, addressing issues of disabilities and incorporating the local language, requires concerted efforts and strategic planning to ensure broader accessibility and cultural relevance.
- Monitoring and Evaluation:** Strengthening planning, monitoring, and evaluation functions is essential for tracking progress effectively and achieving desired results. Developing integrated implementation and monitoring plans can help shift focus from compliance to result-oriented monitoring.
- Lack of Desegregated Data:** The absence of detailed data on various crucial areas such as migrants etc impeded accurate planning and targeted interventions.
- Influence of Political Elections:** Political elections exerted influence, causing disruptions and uncertainties in project implementation. After a transition of a new government significant amount of time is needed for the new government to settle in and to communicate the priorities for the next 5 years and the mandates of the newly set up entities.

Addressing these challenges will be crucial for sustaining and scaling up the progress achieved in various initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable development and community empowerment in the Maldives.

2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

UN Maldives Financial Contribution for the Year 2023



AGENCY	OUTCOME 1	OUTCOME 2	OUTCOME 3	OUTCOME 4
FAO	50,094.00	72,016.00	85,858.00	-
IFAD	-	-	1,233,499.00	-
ILO	11,954.00	-	-	17,393.00
IOM	200,839.67	156,052.49	29,814.76	209,198.04
UNDP	1,070,477.94	-	4,559,532.79	2,155,752.48
UNDRR	-	-	25,000.00	-
UNEP	-	-	2,527,379.00	-
UNESCAP	-	-	-	-
UNESCO	-	24,000.00	43,000.00	-
UNFPA	-	290,291.43	-	400,112.42
UNHCR	-	-	39,448.00	39,448.00
UNICEF	120,524.60	2,289,596.20	214,656.60	792,278.60
UNODC	9,967.00	-	-	3,229,757.00
UNOPS	-	3,817,817.00	158,305.00	-
WHO	-	2,444,209.00	333,153.00	-
Total Per Outcome Area (USD)	1,463,857.21	9,102,982.12	9,249,596.15	6,843,939.54

Chapter 3

UNCT Key Focus for Next Year



Thatching with coconut leaves is a traditional art in Maldives
© Zuvaan Masveriya

A priority for the United Nations in 2024 will be the **Mid-Term Review of the UNSDCF 2022-2024**. While not mandatory as per the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), the UNCT jointly with the Government of Maldives will embark on this process to align the priorities of the new government with the implementation of the UNSDCF through its Joint Work Plans. The MTR will be capitalized as an opportunity to address the structural inefficiencies within the governance structure of the UNSDCF through extensive internal consultations and brainstorming and application of out-of-the-box solutions for the unique capacities and resources of the UN Country Team. The UNCT plans to use the MTR to conduct a foresight exercise and brainstorm future scenarios for the country and the best set of strategies and tools that UN can provide to bring in unique value offer for the country. This process will drill down and prioritize for the UN Maldives from the 6 transitions and 4 engine room actions for , those that match the competitive advantages of the UNCT.

In its catalyzing role, UNDP on behalf of the UNCT, is supporting the Government to **formulate the medium-term Strategic Action Plan based on the election-manifesto**. This demonstrates UN's role as a trusted partner and provides entry point to the normative frameworks of human rights mainstreaming, gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental sustainability that can link to the targets for achieving the Agenda 2030. The SAP formulation process will foster participatory development processes and inclusion and consultation of wide range of stakeholders from the government, state institutions, Civil Society Organizations, State Owned Enterprises development partners, private sector and the public.

The lead up to the **SIDS4 Conference** and the follow-up of it provide a multilateral platform for Maldives to chart the **course toward resilient prosperity for all islands**. UNCT intends to support the Government to demonstrate leadership and forge partnerships that can catalyze greater developmental funding, finance and South-South learnings for the country. The UNCT is coordinating this effort amongst the participating UN entities in-country, regionally and globally so that more cohesive and result oriented initiatives are planned with greater accountability and transparency.

Parliamentary Elections are scheduled to be held in April 2024. Similar to Presidential Elections, UN in Maldives will be **supporting to enhance the civic education, strengthen women's participation in the public sphere and ensure participation of vulnerable groups in the elections**. While UNCT will not be observing the Parliamentary Elections, it will stand strong as the largest and long-remaining multilateral partner on the ground to provide the needed political economy analysis and evidence-based information to the diplomatic community and partners based outside of the Maldives.

In 2024, drawing from the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), the focus will be on **mobilizing funds for proofing of concepts and galvanizing large scale private sector partnerships and funding for the climate financing strategy**. In terms of the alleviating the delivery of social sector services, the UNCT aims to demonstrate an integrated approach to service delivery, conduct population-level screenings for noncommunicable diseases, strengthen healthy lifestyle counselling, and identify and refer patients for treatment for common noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), cancers and mental health conditions, all within one geographic area that can demonstrate results for replication in other areas.





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