Final Evaluation Report of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016 2020 for Republic of Maldives

11 July 2019

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CSG	Community Support Groups
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAO	Delivering as One
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GNI	Gross National Income
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HACT	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer
HDI	Human Development Index
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JUNTA	Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS
LECReD	Low Emissions Climate Resilient Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDP	Maldivian Democratic Party
MGFSS	Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services
NDA	National Drug Agency
NRA	Non-resident agencies
OMT	Operations Management Team
OOSC	Out of school children
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOE	State of Emergency
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TOC	Theory of Change
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNTT	UNDAF Technical Team
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

As the narrative which describes the common response of the UN system to the national development priorities, the UNDAF is the key programming tool for UN agencies working for the Maldives. In addition to aligning interventions with the country's needs and systems, the UN is also required to advocate for mainstreaming of four programming principles of UN; reach out to the most vulnerable/marginalised groups, address human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, ensure sustainability and resilience and increase accountability. UN is also obligated to assist the country to meet the targets of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, although the SDGs were articulated after the launch of the current UNDAF.

An UNDAF is currently in place for the Maldives for the period of 2016-2020. The UNDAF is outcome based with four outcomes, 16 outputs and multiple five-year indicators at both levels. Eleven UN agencies were signatory to UNDAF, of which four are resident members. Ten of these agencies sign joint workplans which are prepared for biennial intervals. Annual reporting was carried out between 2016 and 2018 with a mid-term review in late 2018. Monitoring was initially done on two-year targets which were devised later, however this has now been dropped in favour of maintaining focus on the five-year targets. An internal mid-term evaluation exercise was carried out by the UNCT.

This final evaluation for the UNDAF was undertaken from March to June 2019. The evaluation was guided by the RCO and UNCT and is based on desk reviews and interviews with 15 UN agencies, 6 civil society organisations and 13 government offices. The evaluation was impacted by the lack of government counterparts who have been involved in the UNDAF process since its formulation.

The primary audiences of this evaluation are the UNCT in the Maldives, the government of Maldives, as well as other development partners, such as donors and civil society organisations

General challenges that were highlighted during the evaluation included low resource mobilisation and weak coordination between UN agencies. Forty four percent of the initially estimated total for UNDAF were delivered by end of 2018. Apart from a significant project for Environment, all other outcome groups have reported estimated fund levels for the next two years that will push up total fund mobilisation to only 50-60% of initial target (for that respective outcome).

Major findings of the final evaluation of UNDAF for Maldives 2016-2020

Relevance: The 2016-2020 UNDAF is highly relevant to the development priorities of the Maldives. The UNDAF showed flexibility to incorporate emerging issues and new priorities of the government elected in 2018. The UNDAF had partial links to the SDGs, which can be improved in the next UNDAF. Focus on underlying causes of some social issues also needs to be better targeted.

Effectiveness: The final evaluation notes the particularly challenging political environment within which the UNDAF was implemented. Resource mobilisation was also clearly difficult. A national development plan was not in place, and the UNDAF was aligned to manifesto pledges instead. While these factors impacted the delivery of some activities, many activities were successfully completed with various stakeholders. Reported data for the five-year indicators showed that half of the 28 indicators were on track, 27 were delayed and the status of 42 indicators were not available. 3 indicators were reported as completed. As examples of achievements, the work on child protection and health sector developments are positive and impactful. Challenging areas of work under the UNDAF include political empowerment of women and adolescent health services.

Efficiency: There is little demonstrated evidence that UNDAF directly reduced transaction costs. While joint resource mobilisation efforts have taken place, this was not the norm. Inter-outcome duplication for common goals are evident and in part this is due to the design of the UNDAF itself.

Sustainability: Very few indicators are reported to be completed and one third are reported to be on track. While the impact of some interventions is not evident during the lifetime of the UNDAF, some activities show successful completion with immediate benefits to beneficiaries. New partnerships were created under innovative approaches and positive impacts of some interventions are already evident. Activities which included CSOs showed good results particularly in the communities. However, scaling up of these lessons and other pilot projects to national level is still limited. Acceptance and readiness for new planning tools do not seem to be well analysed prior to development of the tools.

Delivering as one: Effort was made to implement the SOPs of DAO, however room for improvement remain. Coordination of agencies and stakeholders for the UNDAF proved to be challenging. The annual meeting of the high-level steering committee was convened only once between January 2016- May 2019. Annual reporting is not comprehensive of non-resident agencies efforts. Joint resource mobilisation efforts were made, some with successful outcomes.

Recommendations for implementation during 2019 and 2020

1. **Increase coordination at both technical and decision-making levels between UN agencies:** A need for greater coordination was strongly expressed within outcome groups and between outcome groups. A closer and critical inspection on the role of UNDAF Technical Team in fulfilling this gap could be undertaken as establishing new coordinating committees at this stage of UNDAF implementation is not ideal.

2. **Conduct a detailed exercise to ascertain the sustainability of all institutional building efforts carried out under UNDAF**. This would help in identifying areas where the capacity building efforts were not effective. Addressing any gaps in the capacity building efforts undertaken can minimise repetitive capacity building efforts in the next UNDAF.

3. **Identify and address activities for which no intervention has been carried out to date**. Undertake an analysis of why these activities were not addressed.

4. **Conduct periodic monitoring of the indicators of the results matrix:** Through this exercise, identify indicators which need to be redefined.

5. **Greater transparency of planned annual activities** may lead to more synergies with other implementing partners, such as government institutions or CSOs. Sharing annual plans with potential partners or publishing online may achieve greater coherence of joint efforts to the intended outcomes.

6. **Adopt a joint resource mobilisation approach and continue the efforts to strengthen partnerships**: The UNDAF currently faces a risk of not being able to achieve meaningful impact in some key areas, given the challenging environment of the first three years and low fund mobilisation rates. The remainder of the UNDAF period needs to be utilised for realising more financial and technical support, under a joint approach for efficiency and greater synergy.

7. **Include all contributions by UN agencies working with Maldives in annual reporting:** Given the small and varying levels of presence of UN agencies, different operating strategies are currently adopted by members, particularly non-resident agencies. The interlinkages between all efforts and the contribution to overall goals needs to be well-captured in the annual reviews.

8. **Associate unexpected benefits of activities with all relevant outcomes**. New activities and interventions that are designed during the UNDAF implementation period have better linkages to results in different outcome areas. These links need to be reported so that these gains can be capitalised further. This could be achieved by cross-referencing the impacts of interventions under one outcome area with those of other outcome areas during the annual reporting process.

9. **Address ways to mitigate risk to sustainability due to high turnover in government institutions**: High turnover has impacted delivery of some outputs and impacts the sustainability of interventions. UN agencies can account for this risk and design activities to minimise the impact from high turnover.

10. **Enhance coverage in local media of success stories and report periodically to the public under a joint communications plan.** This may bring multiple advantages; facilitating more partnerships with local private sector, increase accountability of UN agencies, and give greater sense of responsibility to national and sub-national institutions who partner with UN agencies.

11. **Identify local champions** to advocate as agents of change, particularly for interventions which require behaviour change in communities or amongst specific demographic cohorts.

Recommendations for next UNSDCF Cycle

1. **Apply the Theory of Change for all outcome areas** to identify clear linkages between activities and desired outcomes. This can establish increased accountability between government and UN agencies. This can be an annex in the UNDAF document. This exercise will also assist in ensuring **outputs and targets are achievable by UN agencies.**

2. **Apply new perspectives and approaches when identifying most marginalised or vulnerable sub-groups within the targeted broader groups.** Such as the most marginalised within women or youth.

3. **Conduct a separate exercise for SDG linkages and progress jointly with the government prior to UNDAF formulation.** This will also help identify areas for strengthening the monitoring framework for SDGs.

4. **Continue with preparation of joint rolling work plans** and increase efforts to be as collaborative, comprehensive and representative of all UN work as possible.

5. **Give greater focus to analyse all underlying causes of issues.** This can be achieved by increasing engagement and collaboration of non-resident agencies whose expertise and knowledge have direct links to the needs of the country. This collaboration is needed at UNDAF formulation, joint planning and annual reporting.

6. **Define smart, time-bound results that are focused on the desired change rather than committing to support specific policies of the government.** This will also give flexibility to seek alternative ways to achieve desired outcomes, if needed.

7. **Maintain greater transparency of annual plans of UN agencies,** particularly with strategic partners such as CSOs and local governments (in locations where potential partnerships are intended during the year).

8. **Develop a robust UNSDCF monitoring and evaluation plan with meta data and means of verification.** Align indicators to nationally used definitions for easier monitoring and reporting.

9. **Conduct a risk assessment for each outcome and identify assumptions.** This can include identifying the legal changes that are necessary for UNDAF outcomes and noting the areas where UN support is available. This can be part of the Theory of Change.

10. **Undertake more rigorous socio-political analysis during the preparatory phase, particularly on the analysis of the trend of increasing conservatism and gender equality.**

Chapter 1: Context of Evaluation

1.1 Background on the UNDAF

The United National Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is the strategic programme to describe the collective response of the UN system to a country, over a medium term. The UNDAF represents the UN system's intended areas of collaboration with state and civil society partners for the given period and is aligned with its national development priorities. The frameworks are a result of a collaborative and consultative process involving numerous stakeholders. Thematic areas of support and intervention are prioritised, responding to national needs with consideration to UN's comparative advantages.

UNDAF frameworks are also intended to ensure that UN agencies are committed to the four programming principles of the UN, of which the overarching principle is to 'leave no one behind'. This principle aims to reach out to the most vulnerable or marginalised groups. Other programming principles include:

- human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment
- sustainability and resilience
- accountability

In Maldives the first UNDAF was adopted for the period of 2008-2010 with an estimated budget of US$ 16 million. The second UNDAF was implemented from 2010 to 2015, with a total estimated budget of US$ 40.7 million with USD 15 million as core funds. The second UNDAF was implemented via a joint Action Plan which served as a common operational document to replace the Country Programmes Action Plans for agencies that are Executive Committee members. This UNDAF had 15 outcomes (under 8 focus areas), 52 outputs and 157 indicators.

The third UNDAF, which is the subject of this evaluation report, was signed in 2015 and focuses on the period 2016 to 2020. The third UNDAF is more prioritised than its preceding plan, by prioritising fewer focus areas (four outcomes compared to the previous fifteen outcomes), while continuing to include interventions and support in many sectors. A Common Country Analysis (CCA) was conducted, as required, for the Maldives in 2014, which aimed to identify development problems and priorities as well as national capacities and gaps in current development strategies. Four priority areas were determined in the UNDAF after consultations with government and civil society organisations, as well as based on the comparative advantage of the participating UN agencies. As in the previous UNDAF, implementation was designed to be overseen by a high-level steering committee and multi-sectoral thematic groups for each outcome area. The total budget was estimated at US$ 53.8 million, of which core resources amounted to US$ 11 million.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September 2015 and hence, after the formulation of the UNDAF for Maldives. However, the UNDAF does refer to the broad goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and states the intention of UNCT Maldives and the government to work closely together to fulfil the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

The next section explores the pressing development challenges faced by the country, as well as the economic and social achievements in recent years.

1.2 Overview of Maldives

Maldives has seen strong economic growth in recent decades, fuelled mainly by high-end tourism. Annual growth rate for real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 7.3 in 2016, 6.9 in 2017 and 7.6 in 2018.[1] Rates of 6.5 and 6.0 are expected for 2019 and 2020.[2] The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased from US$5,390 in 2008 to US$9,760 in 2017.

Based on these economic attainments, Maldives is now categorised as an Upper Middle-Income Country. Some social factors also indicate improvements such as achieving the lowest Infant Mortality Rate in South Asia (7 deaths per 1000 births)[3], 94 percent attendance rate for primary education, literacy rate of 98.4 percent and life expectancy of 73.9 years. [4]

The Human Development Index (HDI) value for Maldives has improved from 0.671 in 2010 to 0.717 in 2017, just above the global average of 0.702 and higher than the average of 0.588 of South Asia. This placed Maldives in the medium human development group, ranking as 101st country on the index covering 189 countries.

When the HDI is adjusted for inequality, the 2017 Index for Maldives falls to 0.549, a loss of 23.4 percent in HDI value.[5] This indicates that there is significant inequality in the Maldives. As a comparison, the lost in HDI value when accounting for inequality within ranges from 34 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa to 13 percent in Europe. [6]

Maldives had achieved five out of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2010. The goals that were achieved were; MDG1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, MDG2: Universal access to primary Education, MDG4: Reduce child mortality, MDG5: Improve maternal health and MDG6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other infectious diseases. MDGs that were not achieved were MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women, MDG7: Ensuring environmental sustainability and MDG8: Develop a global partnership for development.[7] The third report on MDGs status of the Maldives reported that while the gender gap was closing, significant obstacles remained for economic and political empowerment for women. The report also noted that the country does face the challenge of maintaining achievements and progress made, as there was unevenness in quality and coverage even for MDGs achieved at national levels.

Recent Gender Development Index (GDI) values for Maldives shows continued trend of disparity between female and male achievements in health, education and estimated income. The HDI is calculated separately for females and males, and the GDI is the ratio of female HDI to male HDI. Maldives has a GDI value of 0.919, indicating a lower HDI for females than males.

These persistent challenges in gender parity was a determining factor for keeping a strong focus on gender for UNDAF 2016-2020 as well.

The future for Maldives also includes adverse impacts from climate change. Gradual sea level rise will aggravate erosion of the low-lying islands. Saltwater intrusion also impacts groundwater, the already scarce freshwater resources and arable lands. Changes in temperature of water weakens the coral reefs, which threaten fisheries and tourism. Climate change and environmental degradation will impact all regions of the Maldives fairly equally, but some communities may be more at risk than others given

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[1] Monthly statistics – February 2019, Maldives Monetary Authority

[2] Press Release of 2019 Article IV mission to Maldives by IMF, March 5 2019

[3] https://data.unicef.org/country/mdv/

[4] http://projects-beta.worldbank.org/en/results/2013/04/10/maldives-development-success-story

[5] Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Updates; Briefing note for countries on the 2018 Statistical Update – Maldives, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MDV.pdf

[6] http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf

[7] Millennium Development Goals: Maldives Country Report 2010, Department of National Planning, 2010

variables such as the risk factors including likelihood of severe flooding, erosion, size of island or principal economic sectors of the island.[8] UNDAF 2016-2020 also included environment as a priority area of collaboration.

Being a small island state and a low-lying archipelago, the country's physical characteristics are dominated by the ocean. Of the 1,192 islands in the country, 188 are inhabited,[9] an additional 136 islands are used for resort development (currently in operation)[10] and a smaller number of islands are used for other industrial purposes. Resident population of the country is now estimated to be 437,535 in 2014, of which 22 percent are foreigners.[11]

The population distribution of the country is extremely uneven with more than one third living in the Greater Male' region (Male', Villingili and Hulhumale'). High internal migration flows have created congestion and urbanisation issues particularly in Male'. It is estimated that about 2,200 net migrants moved from the atolls to Male' annually between 2006 and 2014.[12] The Census 2014 reported that 60 percent of islands had less than 1000 persons of which at least 7 islands had less than 200 residents.

The vast dispersion of inhabited islands over a wide geographical area creates high costs on service delivery to all communities.

Maldives also has a significant number of expatriates living and working in the country. The total number of expatriates in the country were estimated at over 144,000 of which 63,000 were estimated to be undocumented.[13] While these workers contribute significantly to the economy of the country in formal and informal job sectors, challenges to planning arise due to lack of data on numbers, status of employment and location. Migrants are also a vulnerable group with many of their basic rights being infringed. Institutional failure to cater to this diverse group adequately is evident.

The increase in migrant worker population was created by a need for labour to service the boom in construction and other service industries associated with the strong economic growth the country experienced. This is potentially an excellent opportunity for employment for locals as well. Given the demographic trends of smaller families, youth have emerged as a significant population group in the last census. Persons aged 15-64 (termed as working age population) was 68%, more than the number of young and old dependents combined. The trend of an ageing demography is expected to continue as the median age of the population is expected to increase from 26 in 2014 to 37 by 2054.

However, not all the job opportunities described above have translated to employment for locals. The Census of 2014 indicated youth unemployment increased between 2006 and 2014. The census uses ILO definition of any person who is above 15 years, who is not working but has looked for work in the last month and is ready to start within two weeks. Using the international definition of youth as those aged between 15 and 24 years, youth unemployment rate increased from 9.3 percent in 2006 to 12.4 percent in 2014.[14] Overall, the female unemployment rate was higher nationally at 5.9 percent, compared to 4.8 percent for males. The most commonly cited reason is lack of opportunities or unable to find a suitable job. More significant gender disparities arise when analysing the working-age population outside labour force (i.e. not working and not seeking employment). Of this 75 percent was female who said they were

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[8] See https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/maldives and
http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2010/04/06/climate-change-in-the-maldives
[9] http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/yearbook/2018/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/04/3.4.pdf
[10] www.tourism.gov.mv , Forth Quarter Report 2019, Ministry of Tourism
[11] http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/nbs/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/UNFPA-Report-Maldives-Population-Projections-2014-2054.pdf
[12] http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/nbs/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ThematicAnalysis-OnYouthInTheMaldives.pdf, page 43
[13] https://maldivesindependent.com/society/number-of-illegal-migrants-estimated-at-63000-143502
[14] http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/nbs/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/StatisticalReleaseIV-Employment.pdf, page 36

available but not seeking employment, a significant reason being pre-occupied with household chores and looking after children.[15]

Only 45 percent of adolescents continue education to higher secondary levels (grades 11 and 12). These grades are only offered in 59 schools in the country out of the total 212, necessitating migration to another island in some cases, or highly competitive qualifications for entry.[16] Also differences are evident in teaching quality, particularly between Male' and the administrative islands.

Dropping out of school at secondary levels creates a risk of being unable to secure a job, pay for vocational or private education or start their own businesses. Almost one in four Maldivian youth were reported to be not in education, employment or training. The skills training programs in the country are limited in variety and are mainly offered in Male'. The resulting skills mismatch of the employable youth and the demands of the economy has been long identified and documented.[17]

Such structural deficiencies often lead to unwanted social outcomes. Youth are more vulnerable to be involved in gangs, crimes or drug abuse. Studies on these issues reveal that gangs have increased in size, number and become more organised, particularly in Male'. Almost 95 percent of adolescents in conflict with the law are not in school.[18]

Stakeholders consulted for this evaluation highlighted the prioritisation of government on infrastructure projects over social development. Fiscal debt widened considerably in 2016 before lessening moderately by 2019. This trend was a combination of a large portion of new revenue measure not materializing and the surge in capital expenditure on large infrastructure projects.[19] The IMF determined that Maldives faced a 'high risk' of external debt distress by end 2017, while the government maintained that it has been invested mainly in growth-enhancing infrastructure.[20]

In addition to fiscal stresses, the political climate of the Maldives was extremely turbulent during 2015 to 2018. UN agencies noted this period to be a difficult environment, given the civil disturbances and external pressures.[21] Some other key events during this period include the exit of Maldives from the Commonwealth in 2016, after it was warned of a suspension on grounds of regression from democratic values. A petition was submitted by opposition members to remove the pro-government speaker of majlis in August 2017. The government sanctioned the army to block this no-confidence vote. A State of Emergency (SOE) was placed for 45 days, for national security in the escalation of friction between the executive and the supreme court. In July 2018 the European Union approved a framework for targeted sanctions against selected government officials who were "undermining the rule of law or obstructing an inclusive political solution and serious human rights violations,"[22] These examples indicate the political climate of the country during the first years of UNDAF implementation.

The presidential election of 2018 was competitive but peaceful. The winning candidate represented a coalition of three political parties and a faction of the party of the incumbent president. The lead party of the winning coalition, Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) also went on to secure 74% of the seats in the Parliamentary elections of April 2019.

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[15] http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/nbs/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/StatisticalReleaseIV-Employment.pdf
[16] https://www.unicef.org/maldives/what-we-do/education
[17] See for example studies by ILO and ADB on this issue (https://www.adb.org/documents/maldives-employment-skills-training-project, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-colombo/documents/publication/wcms_232216.pdf)
[18] www.unicef.org/maldives/what-we-do/education and https://asiafoundation.org/2012/11/07/unemployed-youth-in-maldives-turn-to-gangs-reveals-new-report/
[19] Annual Report 2016, Maldives Monetary Authority, Page 13
[20] 2017 Article IV consultation by IMF – Press Release Staff repo (country report no.17/357), December 2017
[21] Interviews with UN senior official conducted for this evaluation.
[22] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/07/16/maldives-eu-adopts-a-framework-for-targeted-sanctions/

The representation of women in politics and the government is limited at senior decision-making levels. A report in 2014 noted that the Maldives ranked 136th out of 154 countries in terms of the number of female Members of Parliament.[23] At the time women occupied 5 out of 85 seats. The most recent parliament elections saw this drop to four seats out of 88 seats. Barriers for economic and political participation of women clearly continue to persist.

1.3 National planning process and development priorities

The national planning process of the government has been unstable in the past decade. Until 2008, the government had developed and implemented five-year national development plans under a designated ministry for national planning. The seventh and most recent National Development Plan was implemented for the period of 2006-2010. The government that took office in 2008 developed a Strategic Action Plan to implement the party manifesto although a detailed medium-term national development plan was not developed. Nor was there a designated central planning institution and this function was served by the President's Office.

Similarly, the government elected in 2013, based their policies and strategies on the party manifesto launched during the campaign period for the presidential elections, Yageen Manifesto. This manifesto consisted of three parts; (i) sports, (ii) youth and (iii) a general development plan which included all other sectors. Thus, when the UNDAF 2016-2020 was developed in 2015, the guiding document outlining government priorities was the Yageen manifesto. According to this manifesto, 'a significant emphasis' was placed on youth issues, using strategies of sports development, youth empowerment, vocational training and education scholarships. Under its youth strategies, the government strongly encouraged migration to the capital island and its satellite islands. As encouragement, the newly reclaimed area in Hulhumale' was rebranded as "Youth City". A bold commitment of providing complete rehabilitation for 500 drug users per year was also made. The strong focus of the government on youth at the time was a deciding factor in selecting 'Youth and Children' as one priority area under the UNDAF 2016-2020. Support for drug rehabilitation and skills development was included under youth.

Strategies targeting women's empowerment included a subsidised childcare system, increasing access to finance, gender quotas in the political arena and leadership skills training. The significant disparity in gender in the Maldives and the commitment by the government were key to determining Gender as a priority area under UNDAF. Targets for this area of interventions included greater political representation of women, enhanced social and economic opportunities and strengthening institutions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Economic development goals included the traditional sectors of agriculture, fisheries and housing. Health schemes included having designated general practitioners for different neighbourhoods for better service. There also was a focus on providing housing and facilitating funds for home renovation or construction. Public transport services were committed to, including school bus services.

In addition to the government manifesto, other documents that guided the discussions for the UNDAF included international obligations and the sectoral master plans, where such plans were in place such as the Health Sector Master Plan 2016-2025. Some other key policies were drafted but not endorsed, including the National Gender Equality Policy and the National Youth Health Strategy.

The government elected in 2018 launched a manifesto which concentrated on five priorities; (1) financially empowered local councils, (2) environmentally friendly economic growth, (3) education, security and

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[23] https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_womens_empowerment_in_political_processes_final_0.pdf, page 15

employment for Maldivian families (4) social services and (5) justice. A hundred-day plan with targets was announced and by the end of this period 83 per cent was declared to be achieved.[24] The ruling MDP party (as a coalition with other parties) then announced an 'Agenda 19' as the campaign strategy for all its parliamentary candidates collectively. This included a list of 19 pledges which the party committed to deliver should they be given the opportunity through favourable outcomes in the election. Both the 100-day plan and the Agenda 19 now serve as key policy documents outlining government priorities and guiding the discourse of the 2019 and 2020 workplans for the UNDAF.

Currently the government is in the process of formulating a medium-term National Development Plan, a process led by the newly created Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure. Resident UN agencies are involved in the process and the resulting national plan will be the main guiding document for discussions for the next UNDAF.

1.4 Key Features and Implementation Structure of UNDAF

In alignment with the government priorities, international commitments, the findings of the CCA and stakeholder discussions, four strategic focus areas were identified for the 2016-2020 UNDAF.

These are:

- Youth and Children
- Gender
- Governance
- Environment and Climate Change

A results matrix was prepared for these four priority areas, specifying one outcome per priority area with a total of 16 outputs. Twenty-two outcome-level indicators and seventy-seven output-level indicators were determined to assess achievements and progress. Baseline information for these indicators was specified as well as targets for 2020.

The required financial resources for the achievement of all outcomes and outputs of the UNDAF were estimated at US$ 53.8 million, which included US$ 11.0 million core funds. The largest portion of this was allocated to the Environment group at $30.8 million.

UNDAF 2016-2020 was signed in 2015 and commenced in January 2016. Eleven UN agencies (four Ex-Com and seven specialised agencies) were signatory to the UNDAF. There are currently four resident UN agencies in the Maldives; UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA. The non-resident agencies (NRA) are UNOPS, UN Women, IOM, FAO, UNODC, UNESCO, ILO and UNEP. The NRAs are based in Colombo, New Delhi or Bangkok. The IOM has one staff based in the Maldives, sharing the Mission based in Sri Lanka. UN Women has one staff working in Maldives and FAO has a representative assigned within the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture.

With the exemption of UNEP, the remaining ten agencies who were signatory to the UNDAF, agreed to develop joint work plans for implementation.[25] As such joint work plans for 2016 and 2017 were signed within the first quarter of 2016. The IOM also merged their ongoing and planned activities for Maldives to the UNDAF after they joined the UN in 2016.These plans were reviewed in early 2017 and rolling joint work plans for 2017-2018 were updated and agreed by the outcome groups. However, only three of these workplans were signed and the workplan for Governance was not signed. It was decided to have the third round of joint workplans for 2019 and 2020. The work plans for Youth and Children, Gender and

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[24] https://presidency.gov.mv/
[25] UNEP being the exemption

Governance have been signed in April 2019 and Environment Outcome group was signed on 23rd June 2019.

Implementation Arrangements

The implementation structure for the UNDAF for the Maldives consisted of several inter-agency coordination bodies, some to meet on a regular basis and some to be convened when required.

A high-level Steering Committee (SC) was selected to provide formal oversight and management direction throughout the UNDAF cycle. The Steering Committee's mandate includes ensuring the smooth coordination of all outcome groups, to make substantive decisions for optimal implementation of UNDAF and to organise UNDAF reviews and evaluations. The SC is co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The SC is scheduled to meet once a year in January. Two meetings were held in 2015 to formulate and approve the UNDAF. Attempts were made by the UN to convene the committee during 2016 and 2017. However, after implementation commenced, only one Steering Committee meeting was held which took place in 2018.

Working groups were established for each of the four priority areas, known as Outcome Groups. These four outcome groups were responsible for formulating the annual/biennial work plans and implementation. Each Outcome group had a chair from a UN agency and a co-chair selected from the Government. The number of meetings of each of these groups are given below:

	2016	**2017**	**2018**
Youth and Children Outcome Group	2	2	3
Gender Outcome Group	5	5	3
Governance Outcome Group	2	2	2
Environment and Climate Change Outcome Group	2	1	2

In addition, seven additional working groups were set up to oversee specific functions of implementation. These groups are depicted in the chart below.
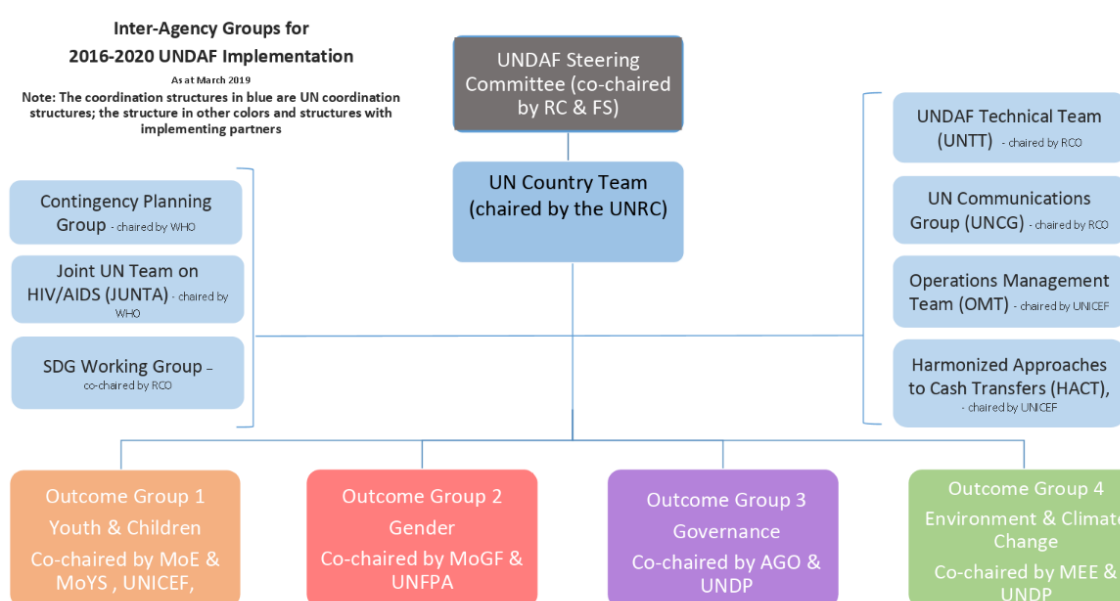

Figure 1: Inter-Agency Groups for 2016-2020 UNDAF implementation

This implementation structure for the UNDAF is similar to the typical implementation arrangement, as given in the UNDAF Guidance Notes. The Monitoring and Evaluation group that was formed, evolved to the broader UNDF Technical Team.

The mandates of the remaining groups in the chart above are as follows:

- **UNDAF Technical Team (UNTT)**: Develop overall monitoring and evaluation guidance for UNDAF cycle. Provide technical input and strategic oversight to UNDAF, as guided by UNCT. Follow-up on decisions of UNCT meetings and retreats.
- **Operations Management Team (OMT)**: This team was envisioned to meet at least once a month to guide implementation in a coordinated, efficient and effective manner. The team met a total of 8 times during 2016-2018, with only one meeting in 2017.
- **Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) group**: this is a sub-group of the OMT and comprises of the three UN agencies that had adopted the 2014 UNDG HACT Framework. The purpose of the sub-group is to streamline practices and improve efficiency. This group met 6 times during 2016-2018.
- **UN Communications Group**: this is established to raise awareness of contribution of UN to national development processes. The objective of the group is to promote visibility of UN work in the Maldives. The frequency of meetings of this group is decided by the UNCT, to be convened when needed. This group was convened a total of nine times from 2016-2018.
- **Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS**: This group has a focused mandate to coordinate the work of agencies supporting the government in HIV/AIDS related work. It was to be convened when needed, and during 2016-2018, the JUNTA had one meeting.
- **SDGs Working Group**: This group was one of the more active groups, with a total of 11 meetings during the same period, albeit less than the intended frequency of once a month. It was established to provide a coherent support to GOM in the implementation of SDGs.
- **Contingency Planning Group:** this group is entrusted to deliver on the UNCTs responsibility to provide support to the contingency planning activities of the country. Meetings were convened in relation to flu outbreaks and for disaster risk reduction work.

1.5 Purpose, Methodology and Limitations of Final Evaluation

Purpose

An independent final evaluation of the UNDAF is conducted once in the lifetime of the UNDAF, in the penultimate year of its implementation. The evaluation assesses whether planned UNDAF results were achieved, whether a worthwhile and durable contribution to national development processes were made, and whether this was done in a cost-effective manner. The evaluation also looks at whether the UNDAF implementation was conducted to deliver on the commitment to leave no one behind. It is expected that the evaluation will be used by the agencies to support in institutional learning on what works and what does not work. It will also be used as the foundation for planning the next UNDAF for the country.

This final evaluation for UNDAF 2016-2020 for Maldives is aimed to achieve the following:

- Evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of UNDAF implementation and the contributions towards achievements of UNDAF results from 2016 to 2018.
- Review the strategies and interventions used and the contributions towards national development through the UNDAF results.
- Assess effectiveness of Gender Mainstreaming, Human Rights Based Approaches, Results Based Management and Environmental Sustainability in UNDAF implementation, including support to the recommendations of Universal Periodic Review for the Maldives.
- Gauge the added value of UNDAF for cooperation among individual UN agencies.
- Assess the extent to which the UNDAF was able to create national ownership in the UNDAF process.
- Assess the contributions towards SDGs.
- Elaborate on the factors that have affected the UN's contribution (the challenges and how they were overcome or why they were not overcome); and
- Account the lessons learnt from the experiences of the current programming cycle, and identify issues and opportunities emerging from the implementation of the current UNDAF.

Methodology

The evaluation was carried out by an independent local consultant and was conducted between March 2019 and June 2019. Sources of information for the exercise were desk review of relevant published reports, annual reviews, programming documents and interviews. It is based on mainly qualitative data from these documents, which were provided by the UN agencies, with a brief quantitative analysis of the limited monitoring information that was available. Triangulation of perspectives and information collected was employed during evaluation through the discussions.

A total of 68 persons were consulted, from 15 UN agencies, 6 civil society organisations (CSO) and 13 government offices. A list of all stakeholders and persons consulted is given in Annex 1. The selection of institutes was based on the stakeholder identification undertaken during the inception phase of the evaluation by the UN RCO. This selection was further refined during the evaluation, depending upon recommendations of UN agencies. Some key stakeholders who were not consulted for the evaluation included donors and local government authorities.

Preliminary findings and a summary of the first draft were presented to the UNCT on two occasions, and a first draft was circulated for comments from UN agencies. The final evaluation report takes into account these comments. The findings from the evaluation are presented in the next Chapter of this report, and are categorised into relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, as the key criteria for evaluation.

Scope and Limitations

Determining the relevance to national priorities and strategies was challenging given the lack of a clear national development plan to supplement the brief manifesto that was adopted in 2013. The opinions of the stakeholders, alignment to other similar projects, alignment to strategies and policies where existent was used to measure relevance. At the same time, detailed evaluation of cost efficiencies is also challenging given the vast number of activities carried out with multiple agencies. This criterion was applied through discussions of particularly significant or long-term activities through explorations of alternative strategies that could have been used to achieve the desired outputs and outcomes.

The timing of this final evaluation is three months after the election of a new government and during a time of transition between parliaments. A continued commitment to UNDAF and its priorities by the new government is an assumption of this evaluation. There are 18 months remaining before the end of the UNDAF period, during which it is still possible to carry out meaningful work to increase impact and reach in a conducive environment. However, it is pre-emptive to gauge whether the challenges that were faced in the initial years of UNDAF implementation (notably areas where government support was retracted or donor hesitancy to provide support for Maldives) will persist or not.

The high turnover of staff particularly within government meant that some of those who were involved with the work of UNDAF during formulation or since start of implementation of UNDAF were no longer employed in the institutions. In many cases the staff who were interviewed did not have complete knowledge of UNDAF implementation since the beginning. This particularly created difficulties in understanding issues where results were not achieved.

Chapter 2: Findings

2.1 Relevance

- **What is the role and relevance of the UNDAF in addressing key issues, their underlying causes and challenges as identified by the CCA? How well is the UNDAF aligned to the National Development Priorities, international goals and treaties? Has the UNDAF results matrix been sufficiently flexible to adjust to evolving national policies and strategies during the current programme cycle.**
- **Was there adequate focus on human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment? Was the commitment to 'leave no one behind' addressed? Was there effort to identify and reach out to these groups?**

2.1.1: The UNDAF design and its alignment with national priorities

The results framework for the current UNDAF is outcome-based, featuring four outcome statements and sixteen outputs. Various agencies contribute to each of the four outcome areas, from both UN agencies and Government institutions. Areas of potential partnerships with Civil Society Organisations are noted in all outcome areas. Two independent institutions were also specified as partners.

However, the UNDAF was inconsistent in the level of articulation of outputs from outcome group to outcome group. For instance, the outputs under Youth and Children and Gender, are very specific and direct, while some outputs under Governance and Environment can only be evaluated in a subjective manner which could be problematic in assessing achievements.

Another difficulty in implementation arises in tying some outputs closely to specific strategies or policies of the government, rather than emphasizing the desired change. For example, as an indicator of enhancing employment opportunities for youth, Output indicator 3.3.2 was set as "Number of new business start-ups under government's GetSet initiative that are successful". The UN later decided to cease support for this activity, given the challenges of this particular initiative. Alternative strategies of funding business start-ups were not explored, and this indicator is now frozen. Future UNDAF frameworks should consider maintaining a strong focus on the intended change, rather than committing to a political strategy. However, effort has been made to formulate a comprehensive and realistic results matrix. Only two indicators lack baselines or clear targets, which are yet to be clarified.

The **lack of a national development plan** during the UNDAF formulation and implementation period creates an uncertain environment to develop medium-term work plans. Nevertheless, the UNDAF is strongly aligned to the government priorities as per manifesto of 2013. The national stakeholders who were interviewed for the evaluation also felt that the UNDAF was aligned to government policies and priorities.

In the absence of a clear national framework, the **Common Country Analysis** (CCA) becomes even more crucial to determining priority areas of intervention. The CCA is the UN's independent assessment of what are the main development challenges in the country. It is also an analysis of why these issues are persisting. It is prepared in a consultative manner and also identifies national capacity gaps that can be addressed by UN support, through the UNDAF.

The CCA that was done for the Maldives in 2015 suggested to address the following areas:

- Reform of education system to improve quality, particularly in atolls,

- Address the current barriers to female unemployment (day-care facilities, school transportation, stigma of working in resorts,
- Unemployment of youth as a core issue, with drugs and crime as unfavourable consequential issues,
- Strengthen decentralisation of health services, awareness on nutrition and family planning, health services for children with disabilities and youth in general,
- Violence against women and children (addressing social norms, cultural and religious practices leading to this in particular),
- Support for a transparent and independent judiciary system and rule of law,
- Strengthen sector policies and frameworks,
- Support civil society,
- Improve data systems for monitoring and evaluation,
- Capacity building and training,
- Institutional support for the environment sector to increase internal efficiencies, tools for environment management and contribution to solid waste management efforts.

All issues listed above are directly addressed by the UNDAF, however the following observations are made:

- Focus on the areas highlighted in the CCA are addressed to varying degrees at output level, for instance targets for the judiciary reform is limited.
- Core and underlying causes of some significant issues are not addressed in a meaningful manner:
  - For instance, youth unemployment was analysed to be the cause of a multitude of reasons, of which the only area of focus identified in the workplan was enhancing skills development opportunities. Based on the discussions for the evaluation, it is evident that improving youth employment rates is a multi-sectoral issue with failings on both the supply and demand of youth to realise their economic potential. A reluctance to undertake unskilled jobs now dominated by expatriates also exists and is exacerbated as more and more jobs are taken over by migrant workers. Stakeholders noted that the government did not have meaningful engagement with the youth in identifying policies and strategies. The contribution to the Youth and Children outcome group by the Ministry of Youth and Sports was reported as inadequate. However, the workplan for 2019/2020 includes a wider range of interventions to create opportunities for youth. (Detailed analysis of interventions and results by outcome areas is given in section *2.2 Effectiveness*).
  - Similarly, institutional weaknesses in addressing supply-side interventions for illegal drugs or for eliminating labour trafficking in the country is not addressed. At the same time, it must be noted that very few UN agencies have permanent presence in the Maldives and the UN agencies specialising in these issues do not have a continuous plan of support. However, joint interventions with the appropriate specialised UN agencies may lead to more meaningful impacts on underlying causes of complex issues such as drug abuse.
- The distribution of similar interventions across outcome groups raises the risk of fragmented work for common goals. For instance, child protection interventions are in both Outcome 1 and Outcome 2. Similarly, improvements of health care facilities are covered in both Output 1.1 and Output 3.5. Development of Health Management Information System was first linked with Youth and Children outcome, to be implemented as a joint collaboration. By the third year, this activity had evolved to a different system and was reported under Governance as improvements to health sector management.

Changes in government priorities also did arise during the programme implementation period of 2016-2018. Commitment to some previously agreed and prioritised UNDAF outputs did digress. This included developing the Health Management Information System within the health sector and the introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting in selected sectors.

Another example of deviance is the fact that the joint workplan for Governance Outcome for 2017/2018 was not signed. Stated reasons for not signing were relevant UN and government agencies not being able to fully agree on the focus of activities for that period and consequent political developments creating difficulties to continue the needed dialogue for agreement.

At least six indicators under the UNDAF were decided to be 'frozen', i.e. the decision was taken to cease working to achieve that target. Reasons for this decision included the low commitment of state authorities to implement the proposed strategy.

 Requests for collaborations outside of the annual workplans are frequently put forward to UN agencies from government offices (including non-resident agencies) and in some cases proposals for collaboration have been initiated by the UN agencies as well. All agencies, including non-resident agencies, maintain direct lines of communications with the implementing state counterparts and any partnering CSOs. Some emerging issues have been highly relevant to the country, and the flexibility in the UNDAF to cater to these requests have produced successful partnerships, such as vaccination programs, health campaigns or work done on preventing violent extremism in the country.

While these activities may be fully aligned with UNDAF broader outcomes and national priorities, not all interventions and areas of collaboration are captured in the annual workplans or in the end of year reporting.

In 2018, a new government was elected and a plan of activities for the first 100 days was launched. The Agenda 19 (which was the campaign strategy of MDP for the parliamentary elections of 2019) outlines the legislative agenda of the government. Both outline the government's current priorities and strategies. There was enough flexibility in the UNDAF to incorporate new areas of work initiated by the government. Priority was given by the government to strengthen democratic governance such as to undertake a review of the Decentralisation Act 2010, interventions for justice reform and formulation of a ten-year national development plan.

All of the agencies of UNCT have their own guiding programme documents, detailing the work intended to be carried out. Resident Agencies have dedicated plans for the Maldives while non-resident agencies have broader programs for the region. The timeframe of these plans is largely in line with UNDAF time period as indicated in the table below. For most agencies, UNDAF is the overarching framework on which the country programmes are developed on.

Country programmes of selected UN agencies:

- UN Women has a Strategic Plan which outlines the organisation's strategic direction, objectives and approaches to support the efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. This is used as a guiding document for the development of a Strategic Note covering the Multi-country Office to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka with country specific interventions developed based on the respective UNDAF priorities and strategic directions. The period of the current Strategic Note is from 2018 to 2021.
- UNESCO has a Country Programme document for 2014 to 2017, which outlines the broad areas of work under the five different sectors of its mandate. A revised document is now needed.
- UNICEF has a Country Programme for 2016 to 2020. The time period and programme areas are similar to UNDAF, and UNDAF is reported as the overriding guiding document.
- FAO has a Country Programming Document for the Maldives, covering 2015 to 2019.

- The WHO has a Country Cooperation Strategy for Maldives covering 2018-2022. The Strategy acknowledges the UNDAF and the work of WHO as stipulated in the UNDAF is included in the five priority areas of the Strategy. However, the Strategy includes additional areas of support such as mental health, migrant health and road safety.
- Both the UNFPA and UNDP have a Country Programme for 2016 to 2020. The focus of the UNFPA programme is only adolescents and youth and is linked to Outcome 1 and 2 of the UNDAF. UNDP country programme also aligns itself to two outcomes of the UNDAF and has a mapping of the indicators of both results frameworks identifying the linkages.
- ILO has a Decent Work Country Programme in place for Maldives for 2016-2020.
- Maldives became a member state of IOM in 2011, five years before IOM became a Related Agency of UN in 2016. The work of IOM in the Maldives is guided by a Programme Document of 2017, which describes various aspects of migration, such as research, migrant health, climate change and migration, border management and counter-trafficking.

2.1.2 Focus on human rights, gender equality and vulnerable groups

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to Development Cooperation was adopted by the UNDG in 2003, and guides UN agencies through all phases of development programming. Consequent treaties and resolutions have enforced accountability and equality, with the goal of protection of human rights and freedoms for all. The CCA for the Maldives in 2015, lacked a detailed analysis of the status of protection of rights. However, the UNDAF 2016-2020 did include in its design some aspects which show that a human rights-based approach was taken in the formulation phase.

The UNDAF 2016-2020 for the Maldives was designed with a focus on gender. Attention was given to gender mainstreaming during the formulation phase to ensure gender aspects are integrated in all outcome areas. The inclusion of Gender as a specific outcome area enhanced the focus on gender issues and reinforces the priority given by UN to this, particularly in dialogue with the government. Some indicators in other outcome groups also included gender specific targets. Awareness was carried out regarding perceptions against violence against women. Impact of these campaigns will be gauged through national studies that are planned to be conducted in 2020. Any improvements in the gender wage gap will be also revealed in future nationwide studies, however no specific activity was undertaken to address this.

However, this was one of the areas that was the most difficult to implement during 2016 to 2018. At least two major interventions were halted after preparatory work was completed, the introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting in selected sectors and the Knowledge Exchange Forum, to share the findings of research on women's issues. However, it was noted by the relevant agencies that the information and research gathered for the Forum is currently used for policy advocacy purposes.

In addition to women, the vulnerable groups that are identified in the UNDAF include out-of-school children (OOSC), persons with disabilities, victims of violence, and those with substance abuse problems. As there are various categories of OOSC, data collection on OOSC was strengthened and incarcerated adolescents were directly targeted under UN support. PWDs are particularly vulnerable given the lack of data and weakness in education systems to fully cater to this group. The prevalence of drug use is not uniform within the country and in this aspect more problematic communities were not targeted. Efforts are made for awareness on substance abuse by training selected teachers however the dissemination of this information to students is not clearly planned out. A common challenge in addressing these vulnerable groups appears to be the lack of reliable national data, however data collection on these vulnerable groups was also initiated during UNDAF, via the Education Management Information System.

Youth was another broad group identified as a vulnerable group in this UNDAF. Closer attention to the sub-groups within this broad cohort can be considered in future UNDAF cycles, such as youth in remote areas with minimum opportunities to skills development, trainings or job opportunities. Similarly, sub-groups within women are also not strongly identified in the UNDAF. The geographical dispersion of small pockets of population in the Maldives has created persistent challenges for provision of social services and creations of economic opportunities for the remotest communities. Identification of such marginalised groups from other perspectives can be considered during the next UNDAF formulation stage.

A successful initiative has been implemented to cater to the most vulnerable or at-risk populations. Community support groups (CSGs) were set up to strengthen community response to violence against four vulnerable groups; children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities. This multi sectoral committee is entrusted with identifying the most vulnerable persons within their communities, providing support and intervention if needed. Various stakeholders commented that the committees are functioning well in some locations, notably in areas where significant training efforts were delivered.[26]

UNDAF included various interventions to address protection of children's rights including focus on relatively more vulnerable groups of children. Effort was made to identify out of school children, and life skills trainings were conducted for juveniles in detention facilities. A civil society organisation was supported to reach out to children with disabilities and to strengthen the schools in selected communities. This program was overall effective in that improvements were noticed in the school management practices and children who were previously not attending school due to their disabilities were noted to be enrolled in school.

A core strategy of the HRBA is to assess the capacities of 'duty bearers' to meet their obligations and/or of 'rights-holders' to claim their rights. In this regard the National Human Rights Action Plan, the Child Rights Bill and the Juvenile Justice Bill can have meaningful impact when passed and implemented. Similarly, the CSGs were set up after trainings to various stakeholders. The National Strategy for Drug Abuse Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children and Adolescents was developed and passed and filled an important void in guiding state support for this group.

In 2018, a mapping exercise was carried out to identify activities in both UNDAF 2010-2015 and UNDAF 2016-2020 that were related to UPR recommendations. The 258 recommendations of the UPR for the Maldives was clustered into 35 thematic groups. The Mapping exercise determines that 21 of these 35 thematic areas of recommendations were addressed in the UNDAF 2016-2020 to varying degrees. A significant component of the UNDAF which is expected to contribute to many of these recommendations is the National Human Rights Action Plan. The plan is yet to be endorsed by the government. Close attention to its implementation by the UN is critical for the realisation of many of UPR recommendations.

One area of rights protection where programming and impact is weak is migrant worker rights. Nearly 30 percent of country's residents are expatriates and there is indication of high numbers of forced labour. Maldives has been on the Tier 2 watchlist for human trafficking for 6 of the last 8 years. Migrant workers face additional risks of not being able to access justice or health care. Some migrant targeted activities that were carried out by UN agencies faced challenges from the government and successful impact of these activities are yet to be seen. It was reported that there were insufficient resources committed to this issue when the UNDAF was formulated in order to bring meaningful and direct impact to the most vulnerable migrant worker groups. It is also noted that there is no current plan to expand the mandate of the CSGs to include migrant workers yet.

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[26] The analysis of activities are given in more detail under Section 2.2

2.1.3 Integration of SDGs and other international obligations in the UNDAF

The Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) was introduced at the beginning of the current UNDAF timeframe of implementation and contained 17 specific goals, the SDGs, for the world to achieve collectively by 2030.

In 2017, the government of Maldives released the 'Voluntary National Review for the High-Level Political Forum on SDGs' which outlined the status of each indicator in the context of Maldives. A status update was also published in 2018. Both these reports stressed the challenges in data management for SDG monitoring in Maldives.[27]

 Although the 2016-2020 UNDAF falls within the official timeframe of when member countries are expected to act to achieve the SDGs, there was no opportunity to include SDG specific goals in the results matrix for UNDAF Maldives in the form of overarching outputs or outcomes. However, biennial workplans have been prepared on three occasions since then, and attempts are made to link SDGs to workplans.

The UN undertook a desk review of 27 UNDAFs that started implementation in 2016, including the UNDAF for Maldives. This report concluded that SDGs were adequately referred to in the UNDAF Maldives, particularly in the narratives on implementation, management and coordination. Nine of the SDGs were found to be linked to the four outcome groups of UNDAF for Maldives. This is largely similar to the separate analysis undertaken for this final evaluation as well. The table below shows a comparison of all attempts to identify which of the SDGs have relevant outputs in the UNDAF.

	UNDAF FINAL EVALUATION				2016 UN Desk Review				JOINT WORKPLANS			
	Youth and Children	Gender	Governance	Environment	Youth and Children	Gender	Governance	Environment	Youth and Children	Gender	Governance	Environment
Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere												
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	√		√		√				√			
Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	√	√			√				√			√
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	√				√				√			
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	√	√			√	√			√	√		√
Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all			√						√			√
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and									√			√

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[27] http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/nbs/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SDG-Report-2018.pdf and
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15891Maldives.pdf

modern energy for all							
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	√	√				√	
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation							
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries					√	√	
Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable							
Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns							√
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*			√	√			√
Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development							
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss							
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	√			√	√	√	
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development					√		

Of the goals that are linked to UNDAF, concentrated efforts are in place for some goals and a weaker focus for other goals is observed.

In future assessments of contributions to SDGs it will be important to account for the contributions of non-resident UN agencies that implement programmes in the Maldives and hence contribute towards the SDG achievements for Maldives. These maybe underestimated or not measured when the non-resident UN agencies do not participate in the UNDAF Joint Work Plan implementation and its reviews. It is also worthy to consider the work of UN agencies that are not included in the UNDAF joint workplans. More importantly, it must be noted that Agenda 2030 and SDGs are universal goals, and it is acknowledged that this ambitious agenda is achievable through joint efforts from government, multi-agencies, civil society, private sector and funding facilities. Enhanced collaboration across government and development partner

agencies is required to develop complementary data managements systems in order to effectively track and monitor progress on SDGs.

The UNDAF is supportive of Maldives' obligations under the international human rights conventions. Maldives is signatory to 8 of the 9 core UN conventions, and has ratified 8 of these. The table below lists the conventions and the current status for Maldives.
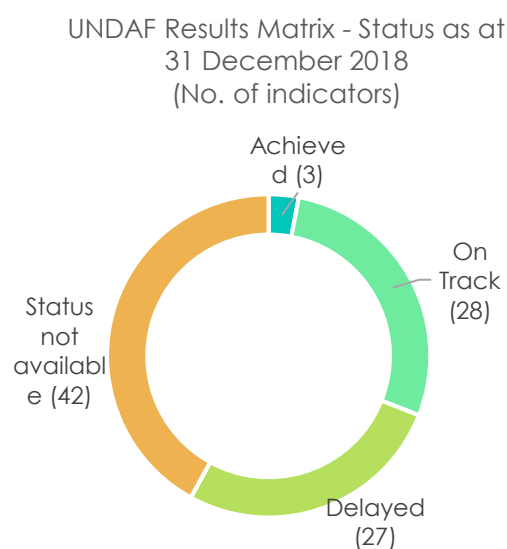
		Date of Adoption	Date of signing by Maldives	Date of ratification by Maldives
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination	Dec-65		Apr-84
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Dec-66		Sep-06
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Dec-66		Sep-06
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women	Dec-79		Jul-93
CAT	Convention against Torture and other Cruel, inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Dec-84		Apr-04
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	Nov-89		Feb-91
ICMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and members of their Families	Dec-90	Not Signed	
CPED	International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Dec-06	06-Feb-07	not ratified
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Dec-08		Apr-10
Source: OHCHR website				

The UNDAF is relevant to international treaties and conventions. A strong focus is placed on preparation of all institutions to participate in CEDAW monitoring and reporting process in particular. The UNDAF commits to supporting 2 state reports and 2 shadow reports during this period, and this is expected to be completed by end of the UNDAF period. Setting up of a tracking and reporting system of all recommendations under CEDAW and also the UPR is included as an output indicator, although the progress on this is reported as delayed. A National Human Rights Framework was developed and launched by the Attorney General's Office with support from UN. An action plan for this framework is also prepared but has not been launched yet. The UNDAF is also in alignment with the CRC through its activities such as the multi-agency work on child protection and adolescent health.

2.2 Effectiveness

- **What is the degree of achievement of outputs as specified by the UNDAF?**
  What are the main factors that contributed to the realisation or non-realisation of the outcome? How were risks and challenges addressed during implementation?

As described in previous sections, the UNDAF 2016-2020 for Maldives was designed to achieve four outcomes, which is further described by sixteen outputs. Twenty-two outcome indicators and seventy-seven output indicators were selected to measure achievements of these outcomes and outputs. Status of these indicators as of 31 December 2018 was collected for evaluation purposes and is depicted in the graph below.

UNDAF Results Matrix - Status as at
31 December 2018
(No. of indicators)

Achieved (3)

On Track (28)

Status not available (42)

Delayed (27)

The reported data shows that 28 indicators were on track, 27 indicators were delayed (This figure includes some indicators which were stopped completely). 3 indicators were reported as achieved. The status of a significant number of indicators, 42 indicators, was not available. Monitoring during the first three years was focused on developing two-year indicators against which reporting was carried out in annual reviews. The mid-term review exercise conducted in November 2018 highlighted the concerns by agencies that monitoring against 2-year targets had taken away the focus on the five-year indicators and targets specified in the UNDAF. It was decided to drop the two-year indicators and maintain focus on the five-year indicators. A detailed analysis of the five-year indicators has not been conducted at time of reporting for this final evaluation.

Qualitative analysis based on discussions show that the degree of achievements vary significantly between different outcomes and outputs, as can be expected. The sections below describe the achievements and non-achievement by outcome areas separately. Common challenges faced by the implementing UN agencies include difficult political environment[28], high turnover of senior staff in government and changing government priorities or strategies. The frequent change of key government personnel particularly affected smooth implementation when these were members of the outcome groups. For example, both gender and youth portfolios were assigned to three different ministers between 2013 and 2018. However parliamentary disruptions caused a two-fold impact of stakeholders being occupied with dealing with partisan conflicts and also the delays in passage of UN supported legislature.

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[28] During the period of 2016-2018, Maldives held two elections, local elections in 2017 and presidential elections of 2018, followed by the parliamentary election held in 2019. In addition, the functioning of parliament was difficult and at times at a halt for most of 2017. A state of emergency was declared for 45 days in 2018. There was also shrinking democratic space to raise issues such as human rights or taboo cultural issues.

UNDAF activities were impacted to a significant level by the presidential elections of 2018 and also the 45-day SOE earlier that year. Activities involving communities or the local councils were difficult to implement given the pre-occupation with the campaigns. For instance, the disaster risk reduction work planned for eight communities in 2018 was not conducted. The political tension created heightened sensitivity which resulted in the UN being asked to delay certain activities such as migration data managements, or to delay release of some research findings such as the Migration Profile and other social issues. Other activities that were halted completely included the capacity development under women's political empowerment and the public outreach program of the criminal procedure code. In both cases preparatory work had been done although the unexpected SOE created an unconducive environment to work with political parties and judiciary.

Also, efforts for resource mobilisation during 2016-2018 were not as successful as expected. The most widely acknowledged reasons for low resource mobilisation included Maldives being an upper middle-income country of a small population and therefore not being high on donor priority lists. In addition, some donors expressed hesitance to fund programmes during 2013-2018, citing reasons of political turmoil and governance issues.

Innovative funding options were sought, including approaching local private sector in the country for the first time. These efforts proved successful in terms of the number of partnerships developed (fifteen different partners), although the volume of funds raised was small. It is important to note that the local private sector is often a key funding source for civil society organisations as well. UN agencies should be mindful of continuing to strengthen civil society organisations, in expanding private sector partnerships.

The remaining of 2019 and 2020 is an opportunity for donors and for UN to work with a new government, particularly with efforts for democratic reform and strategic national planning underway. Also, the flexibility of UNDAF implementation has proved to be useful in some cases in adapting to emerging needs or changing political environment. Nevertheless a few activities were stopped or remain at a standstill. The case by case analysis of outcome groups given below cite examples of these situations.

An explanation of how the expected outcomes will be achieved based on the interventions is missing in general. This can be improved by applying the Theory of Change (ToC) reasoning for each of the four outcomes. The lack of a clear ToC can affect the quality of the Results Matrix (in selection of indicators), the monitoring by outcome groups and the identification of alternatives when initial strategies are not delivering. It also identifies cross linkages between outputs. More importantly accountability for results can be seen as a shared responsibility between the Government and the UN through an agreed TOC framework.

The overall evaluation analysis reveals that some interventions blend into different outcome areas and are not strictly under one thematic area. Several interventions are reported in duplication across outcome areas. This includes education management information system and health management information system which are referred to under both Youth and Children and under Governance. Another observation is that the works of all UN agencies are not clearly captured in the current reporting documents for UNDAF, such as the programmes implemented by UNODC. Thirdly, some outputs are defined by vague targets and indicators, particularly in governance and environment for example measurement of tools related to sustainable development in Output 4.2 or Output 3.2 to measure degree of effectiveness of mechanisms to engage women or youth groups.

2.2.1 Analysis by priority outcome areas

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Outcome 1: Youth and Children access equitable, inclusive and quality social services and have increased opportunities for skills development

Outputs:

1.1 By 2020 National and sub-national authorities have enhanced institutional and human capacity to offer **equitable and quality child and youth friendly health services**, including nutrition, child health, A/YSRH, HIV/AIDS

1.2 By 2020 national and sub-national systems to deliver **quality inclusive education**, including enhanced coordination and efficient monitoring mechanisms for adherence to quality standards

1.3 By 2020 institutions and communities have enhanced capacities and well-coordinated systems to prevent protect and respond to **violence against children, adolescents and children in conflict with law**.

1.4 By 2020, enhanced systems are in place to deliver services for prevention of **substance abuse** and to provide rehabilitation, reintegration and after-care for youth and children

1.5 By 2020 increased opportunities for **skills development** to prepare young people for the labour market and for sport and recreation are in place.

Assessment:

Youth development and reducing youth unemployment was a priority of the election campaign of the government elected in 2013. Studies had shown unemployed youth being linked to drugs and violence. At the same time, the country has seen a trend of more and more types of jobs being dominated by expatriate workers. One causal effect of this has been the emergence of a social stigma towards locals performing manual work that is now usually undertaken by unskilled migrant workers for little pay. The 2015 CCA notes that the reasons for high youth unemployment include school leavers not having enough/relevant skills for employment; having a preference for white collar jobs only; lack of job ethics or low interest in employment in general (supported by family).

Similarly, the CCA also noted various issues in the education system such as differences in quality of education between Male' and atolls and not enough opportunities for tertiary education in general. Improving quality of education is addressed in the UNDAF results matrix and emphasised in all the annual plans during 2016-2018. Children in conflict with law, children with disabilities and children out of school were identified and targeted as vulnerable groups under this Outcome Area and had corresponding activities in annual plans. Out of school children across the country were better identified through an Education Management Information System set up in all schools.

Targeted activities were carried out for each of these groups. Life skills trainings were carried out for incarcerated children. Children with disabilities in selected communities benefited from a project implemented through a CSO, which strategized to create public awareness and strengthen school's overall capacity to cater to them.   A project was carried out through another CSO to identify Out of school children in Addu atoll and work with them. While these activities were successful within the intended scope, scaling up of these pilot projects to national level is limited, mainly because of the limited engagement of the key national institutions in the work carried out by the implementing CSOs.

Under the UNDAF program, there is evidence of relevant and extensive work done to improve quality of education and health of children during 2016-2018. Standards and guidelines that were developed included (i) a national standard for nutrition for young children (ii) school nutrition policies and guidelines, (iii) Social and Behaviour strategy, (iv) Food based dietary guidelines. The booster dose for IPV, MR, DPT were included in the national immunization schedules and the HPV vaccine was

introduced in 2019. Trainings were provided to health staff in selected atolls/islands in multiple disciplines like vaccination, mental health, treatment of childhood diseases and the specific target groups are now benefiting from these interventions. However, agencies reported that a stronger focus is now needed to address the drop-in immunization rates due to growing conservatism.

UN also supported the revision of school curriculum however this is currently not being used as planned. The curriculum was successfully revised as intended by the UNDAF. As requested later by the government a teacher training module was then developed to familiarise teachers with the new content. However, the new module is currently not taught by schools citing teachers' unpreparedness to teach the new material.

This outcome area also included interventions to improve health and education of children and to prevent and respond better to violence against children. Multi-sectoral community level voluntary groups, CSGs, were set up to identify and support any individuals at risk of abuse or neglect, with focus on children, women, elderly or disabled. The initial results of the CSGs are promising. The UNDAF target of establishing these CSGs in 4 atolls was reported to be achieved by 2018, as 26 islands in 4 atolls receiving training and support for formation of group. These CSGs are currently at varying levels of functioning, however at least 7 CSGs are already working with identified families in their respective communities. The sustainability of CSGs depends on the smooth functioning of a National Coordinating Body in place, which was envisioned to support the CSGs and assist the victims identified. A technical working group has been set up within Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services. The government currently has plans to expand the CSGs across the nation.

The effort and impact on youth issues through the UNDAF was less compared to the focus on children. The commitment of the UNDAF for youth included reducing adolescent birth rate, improving access to health services and increasing number of people in skills development programmes. Research on child marriages is being carried out. Under access to health, attempts were made to reach to youth in communities, through discussions in cafés and restaurants. This was carried out by a civil society organisation, adopting a 'safe space' model with peer educators. The discussions were reported as successful with a total reach of about 500 individuals of both genders, considering that this was a particularly hard population group to reach out to. Sensitive issues such as safe sexual practices were discussed. A mobile application was also developed and launched, containing information on sexual and reproductive health in Dhivehi as well.

With regards to skills development, no activities were carried out in 2016. In 2017 and 2018, direct trainings were supported for out of school children including incarcerated juveniles. While nearly half of those detained under Juvenile Justice Unit were trained, other groups of youth were not impacted. In 2018, work was done to enhance the courses offered at Maldives Polytechnic, which will benefit youth in general, however it is too early to assess any direct improvements to youth employment.

World AIDS day has been celebrated every year and focuses on promoting behaviour to prevent HIV infection, reduce stigma due to the disease and has been targeting people including youths at risk. A study was done in 2016 to identify young persons affected by HIV/AIDS. Integrated bio-behavioural survey to better understand HIV situation is underway but with delays.

Other than this, identification of and focus on the most vulnerable youth groups across the nation was limited. Opportunities for youth vary significantly depending on the location, as the opportunities for higher education, skills trainings or variety of jobs are concentrated in the more populous communities. Youth empowerment activities were carried out during this time; however, these interventions are reported under Governance Outcome.

Activities that were challenging to implement included the development of the integrated health management information system. The main reported reason for completion of this is the governments priority on general practitioner system. UN then initiated the adoption of District Health Information 2 and progress has been made on this. The system was piloted in Baa atoll in May 2019.

One output under UNDAF is to create awareness for prevention of substance abuse and to provide rehabilitation and reintegration for adolescent and child drug users. UN contributed to the drafting of a National Strategy for Prevention, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children and Adolescents, which has been launched. Technical support was also provided to the development of programmes for treatment and rehabilitation of children and adolescents using drugs. Approval of this treatment programme was delayed given the delays in formulation of the National Drug Agency Board. No interventions were carried out to create awareness about substance abuse amongst girls and boys, even though NDA was actively involved in raising awareness for school children in partnership with education ministry during this time. Technical support was also provided to align the prevailing drug treatment strategies to the change in government policy and was completed in 2019.

Overall, there is limited possibility of meaningful success for output 1.1, 1.4 and 1.5. Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 are likely to see stronger achievements.

GENDER

Outcome 2: Gender equality advanced and women empowered to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in access to social, economic and political opportunities

Outputs:
2.1: By 2020, gender responsive budgeting frameworks and mechanisms at national and subnational levels have strengthened capacity to advance women's rights, gender equality and economic empowerment.
2.2: By 2020 state institutions, civil society organisations and private sector are able to participate fully in CEDAW and other gender relevant intergovernmental processes, monitor and report progress and domesticate international obligations and commitments in national policy framework
2.3: By 2020 institutions strengthened and legislations implemented to effectively prevent and respond to GBV

Assessment:

Gender equality was one of the indicators where Maldives did not meet the targets in MDGs. The CCA also highlighted persistent cultural and social barriers for economic and political empowerment of women. Violence against women was also emphasized as was access to health care for women. The government manifesto of 2013 addressed these issues and also included protection of women's rights in the event of a divorce. The Domestic Violence Prevention Law was passed in 2012 and the Gender Equality Law was passed in 2016. These laws strengthened the already existing legislation on sexual harassment. However, the inadequate implementation of laws is an issue raised in official reports and by media.

The gender outcome area in the UNDAF specified targets for economic and political participation of women as well as reducing wage disparity and strengthening response to gender-based violence (GBV). No activities were reported to have been impacted by lack of resources. Activities for political empowerment are also included and reported under Gender Outcome. During the UNDAF period, share of women in appointed political positions increased with the change of government in 2018, while there

was a slight fall in the share of elected positions. Another opportunity arises in 2020 with the local elections which is also held within the UNDAF period. Activities for women's economic empowerment are in general distributed in the UNDAF, being implemented under environment as well as governance. Small grants schemes were conducted under both LECReD and GEF.

Notable achievements in this outcome area included the preparation of the National Human Rights Action Plan and drafting policies for the Gender Equality Law. Significant efforts were made to strengthen the national systems in place to deal with women and child abuse. This included setting up Community Social Groups and also providing refresher trainings on supporting victims to nearly all staff of MGFSS.

The most significant area of non-achievement was implementing gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in state budget preparation process. After preparation and trainings for this (which commenced in the previous UNDAF period), the support from UN for this policy change was halted given the decision from government to not implement these changes yet. UN has been advocating for and supporting the capacity building for GRB in previous UNDAF periods as well. Government stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation reported lack of readiness to start implementation, also citing that the changes that were needed to the budget preparation portals were also not attended to in the preparation work for GRB. A strategy for GRB that aligns with general improvements in budgeting process may be crucial to agree on if GRB is an area of continued partnership. Therefore Output 2.1 will no longer be achieved.

Another activity for which government retracted support was to convene a Knowledge Exchange Forum to discuss particular aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment. Some of the research findings were regarded as sensitive information and public discussions on the issues were not encouraged. However, the research carried out for the forum is currently used in policy advocacy and planning.

A key challenge in working on gender issues during 2016-2018 was the high turnover of senior officers in the government. The responsibility of gender related affairs was shuffled between institutions at least three times between 2013 and 2018. New ministries were created, and each change accompanied by a nomination of a new minister to oversee gender affairs. This inevitably would result in some delays in the smooth functioning of the work of Gender Outcome group, as new ministers would be informed of goals and activities each time.

GOVERNANCE

Outcome 3: By 2020 citizens expectations for voice, sustainable development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance.
Output 3.1: By 2020, institutional capacities strengthened for implementation of legislative reform, oversight and local and national level evidenced based inclusive equitable sustainable policies and planning.
Output 3.2: By 2020, civil society and vulnerable groups have enhanced capacities to engage, contribute and participate in national development processes.
Output 3.3: By 2020, mechanisms and frameworks developed to promote inclusive and sustainable growth, economic diversification, social protection and improved employment conditions for vulnerable groups.
Assessment:
The main sectors under this outcome area included improving health governance, women empowerment, youth empowerment, legal reform, strengthening local and national level planning, and

improving economic conditions for vulnerable groups.

This outcome area was one of the areas where non-core funds constituted a significant share of total resource requirement (70%), therefore the challenges in raising funds (as described previously) would have impacted this outcome area significantly. Some agencies working on this outcome did report funding shortfalls as a significant barrier. The funding received was stated to be spread out across as many activities as possible as opposed to being allocated to fewer activities. Having a clear Theory of Change would assist agencies in making the decision to reallocate available resources. The mid-term evaluation exercise review conducted internally concluded that the resource requirements targets were unrealistic predictions. At the same time, resource mobilisation was also reported as challenging due to the political situation in the country. In fact, agencies reported that since the elections new donors had already expressed interest in providing funds. Whether the low resource mobilisation was due to political situation or the context of Maldives in general will be better determined in the remaining months of UNDAF implementation.

Nevertheless, activities have commenced / completed and some of these have had meaningful impact on the targeted populations.

Policy achievements in the health sector included the preparation of "Every New-born Action Plan", a "Multi-sectoral National Action Plan" (for non-communicable diseases), and "Health emergency operation plan". Other successful activities included starting a campaign to increase awareness on non-communicable diseases and strengthening quality of medical services in hospitals.

A focus on vulnerable groups is evident during this period such as support to a rapid assessment of child marriages in the country and support for monitoring trips to communities to identify the beneficiaries of different allowances under the existing national social protection schemes. An action plan was developed for implementation of Gender Equality Law.

Tools for improved national planning were developed such as a multi-dimensional poverty index, equity profiles, technical support for surveys and analysis of collected data and updating of the existing MaldivInfo database (developed previously by UN). The efforts to roll-out implementation and awareness of the new Criminal Procedure Code was reported as particularly successful and useful. Successful partnership by the UN is noted in this case, as members of judiciary participated in the UN training programs for the criminal procedure code, after challenges faced by the executive.

Addressing the growing fundamentalism in the country was included in the UNDAF workplans at a later date, as this was not flagged as an urgent issue at the time of UNDAF formulation. Interventions in this sector therefore do not have an associated clear output in the UNDAF, however the delivery of these activities was efficient and appear to be on track. The holistic approach taken under this thematic issue needs to be integrated into the similar work existing within UNDAF, such as youth empowerment and national curriculum revision. The government agency working on PVE issues noted that their partnership with UN facilitated dialogue with the community on this sensitive issue which otherwise may have been challenging given that they are a state department and also given the political situation at the time.

Political empowerment of women is a strong target of the UNDAF, and this was targeted mainly by training for the women's wings of the political parties and aspiring female leaders. However, these trainings were not completed in 2018 as initially planned given unexpected political developments, although this work is continued for 2019.

Alternative election-related activities were devised in 2018, namely funding NGOs in their awareness programs for the voting rights of persons with disabilities. Achievements of these efforts included the ruling party changing their disability related policies after consultations with disabled persons' organisations and the inclusion of a representative in the national advisory committee for elections.

A nationwide study on youth vulnerability was carried out, exploring previously undocumented links with radicalisation.

Funding was made available to three best proposals submitted from the general youth population for innovative solutions to common social issues. While these three proposals were successfully carried out, the overall impact on youth empowerment on a national scale is limited.

Targeted work for migrant worker issues were led mainly by IOM and ILO. Achievements during this period included the development of a national curriculum for law enforcement and other related agencies, capacity buildings and specialised trainings for officers in communities and distribution of information cards to migrants on arrival. ILO supported the National Bureau of Statistics in improving their capacity to collect labour supply statistics. IOM supported the research on a migration profile and also initiated trainings on how to address migrants' rights in times of national crises. The support from key national authorities to the work on migrant issues is reported as inconsistent and at times nil. ILO supported the development of an employment strategy for the government to study avenues for reducing dependency on migrant labour, but this is not captured in UNDAF reporting.

External factors during the implementation period such as heightened political tensions and donor hesitancy seems to have impacted this outcome area the most, given the nature of strategies included. The competitive campaigning leading up to the presidential elections of 2018 created a more cautious environment for the government, which impacted work of some UN agencies such as requests to remove sensitive information contained in studies and to postpone or cancel certain activities (examples are given under *Section 2.2. Effectiveness*).

The impact of some completed interventions is anticipated to be weak at the time of evaluation, as the government adoption of all completed activities are not evident so far. In some cases, activities have been implemented without addressing risks that were present from the beginning. For example, a data management portal known as Laamu Koshaaru was developed for local councils to maintain data and to use for policy planning. Data is not entered by the local councils citing lack of human resources. Given that island councils have usually 3-5 staff and are usually weak in overall competency, the National bureau of Statistics maintained an officer in the Atoll capital to visit all islands, collect and enter data. However, funds for travel expenses were not allocated and now the staff is no longer in the atoll. Therefore, a realistic and long-term strategy for use of the planning tool was not developed by either UN or the partnering agencies, although there is still potential for the tool to be used in future.

ENVIRONMENT

Outcome 4: By 2020, growth and development are inclusive, sustainable, increase resilience to climate change and disasters and contribute to enhanced food, energy and water security and national resource management.

Output 4.1: By 2020 national and sub-national authorities have strengthened, effective knowledge-based mechanisms that incorporate relevant sector data related to climate change, national and human-induced disasters and sustainable environmental management, and that are accessible for evidence-based gender sensitive decision making. Output 4.2: By 2020, key tools are introduced so that development issues related to water, sanitation, waste management, energy, food security and national

resource management are more widely mainstreamed, effectively coordinated, and promote eco-system based environmental and economic sustainability.
Output 4.3: National and local level systems are enhanced to prepare for, respond and be resilient to natural and human-induced disasters, including climate change and benefit from enhanced dialogue among relevant stakeholders in all sectors, with a special focus on vulnerable groups and women.

Assessment:

The three outcomes for this priority area focused on strengthening national and sub-national planning taking into account environment management and disaster risk management. The activities mainly build on the objectives and activities of the LECReD project, as this project was due to run till March 2018.

The final evaluation of LECReD was conducted in December 2017. The report concluded that while the objectives of LECReD was highly relevant to the country, the impact of the activities were gauged as medium to low, while sustainability of any positive benefits were evaluated as 'low'.

One key rationale of the LECReD program was that the achievements of the program would be then replicated to a nationwide level. Effort to scale up all activities of LECRED has been weak and the UNDAF itself did not include a clear strategy for doing all that would be needed to achieve that. At the same time, it must be noted that the period during which LECRED was operating in saw a shift in governance to increasing centralisation of powers and removal of some responsibilities of local councils. The UNDAF was also developed in this political context. More linkages with governance and national planning would have been needed including greater authorities to be given to local government. Scaling up of pilot projects to national policies is understandably beyond the mandate of UN but policy dialogue can be initiated.

By December 2018, two of the three main outcomes under environment outcome is reported as delayed. While many of the activities under LECReD were delivered, the mechanisms through which the results of this programme would be scaled up to a national level do not seem to have been thoroughly explored when determining the complementary activities under UNDAF. A clear theory of change analysis for this is not evident. Substantial efforts were made to work with NDMA to strengthen disaster resilience and preparedness but again these were interventions targeting individual communities. Nationwide impact of improved disaster risk resilience is not expected to realise as a direct consequence of the activity.

Tools were introduced for better environmental management but there was a lack of ownership of these tools both at national and sub-national levels. Cited reasons for this included limited understanding of the stakeholders on the use and benefits of these tools.

The Common Country Analysis prepared for the UNDAF highlighted the institutional weakness and inter-agency relations of the state institutions working on environment. Potentially this creates a risky situation to absorb new planning tools and methods without addressing these governance issues in the environment sector. The relevant national stakeholder agency raised concerns that when implementation of large projects such as LECReD are overseen by UN, institutional growth from the experience and lessons learnt is limited, compared to being implemented by the government agency. The GCF project is now designed to be implemented by a PMU within the Ministry of Environment and is regarded an opportunity for these experiences to be retained in the government. Similar loss of capacity is possible when the tenure of local consultants in NDMA expires. Efforts to build the permanent staff of agencies need to be prioritised wherever possible.

One third of the indicators for this group are not defined in a clear measurable way and need to be evaluated subjectively.

2.3 Efficiency

- **What was the experience of implementing under the concept of Delivering as One?**
- **To what extent and in what ways did UN support and promote national execution of programmes and/or use of national expertise and technologies?**

The approach of Delivering as One (DAO) was initially discussed in the General Assembly in 2005 and piloted in 8 countries in 2006. Since then many more countries have requested UN to adopt this approach in their countries. Maldives adopted this approach in 2010, therefore the current UNDAF is the second to be implemented under this approach.

The standard operating procedures for 'Delivering as One' was launched in 2014 and consist of five pillars that aim to harmonise the UN at a country level. These pillars and a review of the situation in the Maldives based on evaluation findings are given in the table below:

PILLAR	REVIEW FOR MALDIVES 2016-2018
One programme	The UNDAF serves as the key national development strategy for the country, however all support extended by the UN system is not included. A significant reason for this is the limited presence of UN agencies in the Maldives and irregular funding commitments by non-resident agencies.
Common budgetary Framework	The costing and funding for agencies who undertake extensive number of activities are captured in UNDAF. Significant effort was made for joint resource mobilisation efforts on several occasions, while not all were successful. Examples of joint efforts include proposal submitted for SDG Fund and for the SDG Innovation Fund. The optional One UN Fund was adopted by the Maldives and a large project of US$ 9.2 million, LECReD, has been completed through the support of 7 UN agencies.
One Leader	The UNCT is led by the Resident Coordinator who plays a pivotal role in strategically positioning UN's support to national priorities. Regular UNCT meetings were held during the UNDAF period.
Operating as One	Various sub-groups were formed to implement the UNDAF to increase collaboration and coordination between agencies and between Outcome areas of the UNDAF. Joint annual work plans were signed and implemented and reported on. However increased need for collaboration was noted during the evaluation. Recommendations for increased harmonisation as envisioned under HACT was also noted. One agency who is signatory to the UNDAF is not part of the joint plans given a decision taken based on the lack of permanent representation of the agency in the country.
Communicating as One	One UN reports were prepared for 2016 and 2017 and have been published, while data is being collected for 2018 report. These reports enforce the united approach by UN agencies for interventions, however some areas of support by non-resident agencies are not included.

Overall, the evaluation analysis shows effort by UNCT Maldives to follow the SOPs, although some areas could have been more harmonised.

A key element of DAO is to have joint programming whereby a combined work plan for each of the different results groups is prepared. Successful joint programming can be measured by the process of preparation (how participatory it was) and the comprehensiveness of the final document (if all activities are included). At the same time the DAO SOPs recognise that some activities may not be included in the workplan such as normative work. However, initial years of UNDAF reporting indicated that programmatic work was also not comprehensively covered for some agencies. Efforts were made to include more of the ongoing activities in the UNDAF annual plans and reporting.

A common budgetary framework aligned to the UNDAF results is another core element of DAO SOPs. The framework is to be updated annually with data on all financial resources required, available, expected and mobilised. For Maldives a brief summary of annual budget received and utilised for that year is included for ten of the 11 signatories. Operating a One UN Fund is an option, and the Maldives established a One UN Fund in 2010. A five-year project, LECReD, was carried out under this fund (November 2013 to March 2018), with a donation from Government of Denmark of US$ 9.2 million. With regards to resource mobilisation, concerns were raised by some agencies that the discussions with donors for fund raising were not always transparent to all, and agencies worked for fund raising separately. However, examples were given of joint resource mobilisation efforts, some of which were successful.

Successful implementation of UNDAF requires strategic guidance, coordination and oversight. The SOP envisages a steering committee to oversee implementation of UNDAF and for the committee to meet one to three times a year. A steering committee was appointed, co-chaired by Ministry of Foreign Affairs to supervise and ensure optimal implementation. In the case of Maldives, the involvement and coordination role of the Steering Committee set up at the start of the UNDAF cycle was strong during the preparation of the document, but it diminished until it was non-functional for most part of the implementation period. Between 2016 and 2018 only one meeting was held to oversee progress.

Coordination between UN agencies has been regarded by various interviewees as insufficient, even amongst resident agencies. This was especially noted as weak between outcome groups. Rolling joint work plans were prepared for each outcome area at three different intervals spanning activities for 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and then 2019-2020. These joint work plans were signed by implementing agencies (all signatories for the UNDAF were signatory to the joint work plans except for UNEP). Government stakeholders were of the common view that the most recent exercise was thorough, participatory and a fair opportunity was given to include activities. However, some UN agencies mentioned that more discussions are needed prior to deciding the annual workplans.   Some decisions of these annual plans per outcome group was reported to be the product of a compilation of activities that were decided upon by each UN agency individually, rather than a collaborative decision-making process. Agencies also reported not being fully aware of the activities and challenges faced by other UN agencies, except the ones they closely work with.

The table below gives the number of meetings held per group.

	Meetings	2016	2017	2018
1	UNCT Retreat	1	1	1
2	UNCT Meetings	16	10	13
3	Security Management Team Meetings	4	3	4
4	Steering Committee Meetings	0	0	1
5	UNDAF Technical Team Meetings (UNTT)	2	2	8
6	Operations Management Team (OMT) Meetings	4	1	3
7	UN Communications Group	2	5	2
8	Harmonizing Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Meetings	2	1	3

9	SDG Working Group Meetings	2	5	4
10	Outcome Group Meetings: Youth and Children	2	2	3
11	Outcome Group Meetings: Gender	5	5	3
12	Outcome Group Meetings: Governance	2	2	2
13	Outcome Group Meetings: Environment and Climate Change	2	1	2

The four outcome groups met together only once, for the mid-term review in 2018. Outcome group meetings are held more often with respective UN agencies only. At a higher level, the UNCT convened at least once a month and a UNCT retreat was organised annually. The UNCT retreats were regarded as highly useful and necessary.

Coordination at both technical and decision-making levels was noted to have room for improvement, not just in terms of frequency but also in terms of quality. A closer and critical inspection on the role of UNDAF Technical Team in fulfilling this gap needs to be undertaken as establishing new coordinating committees at this stage of UNDAF implementation is not ideal.

The Civil Society Organisations who were consulted for the evaluation noted they would benefit from knowing the annual plans of UN agencies in advance, particular on areas where there is collaboration with CSOs. Wider circulation/publication of annual plans (sans costing if necessary), would be useful for CSOs to streamline for the common goals.

It was observed by government offices that UN agencies were having a greater role in implementation. Most of the interviewed Government representatives preferred if the UN practice was to use national implementing agencies as much as possible, thus securing national ownership and capacity development. At least two separate examples were given when strategies proposed by the state agencies were not taken on board, and the results of activity were below expectations. Some interventions included under UNDAF built upon existing activities of the government however, a few examples were cited where relevant organisations felt they were not consulted, partnered with or their experiences sought.

Utilisation of funds

The UNDAF has a total planned budget of around USD 53.8 million, USD 23.8 million was reported as spent in 2016-2018. For 2019 and 2020, funding for the environment outcome was expected to exceed the total anticipated amount. However, funding for other three outcome areas is expected to be low and in fact less than the amount raised to date.

Table xx: Resources utilised and expected, by outcome area 2016 – 2020

	Estimated resource requirement	*Resources utilised 2016-2018*	*Estimated resource mobilisation 2019-2020*
Outcome 1: Youth and Children	8,476,840	3,870,471	2,086,176
Outcome 2: Gender	1,978,488	929,525	181,564
Outcome 3: Governance	12,894,394	3,550,621	2,861,201
Outcome 4: Environment and Climate Change	30,446,529	15,435,375	23,316,210
TOTAL	**53,796,251**	**23,785,993**	**28,445,151**

The chart below shows these values as a percentage of the initially estimated resource requirement.
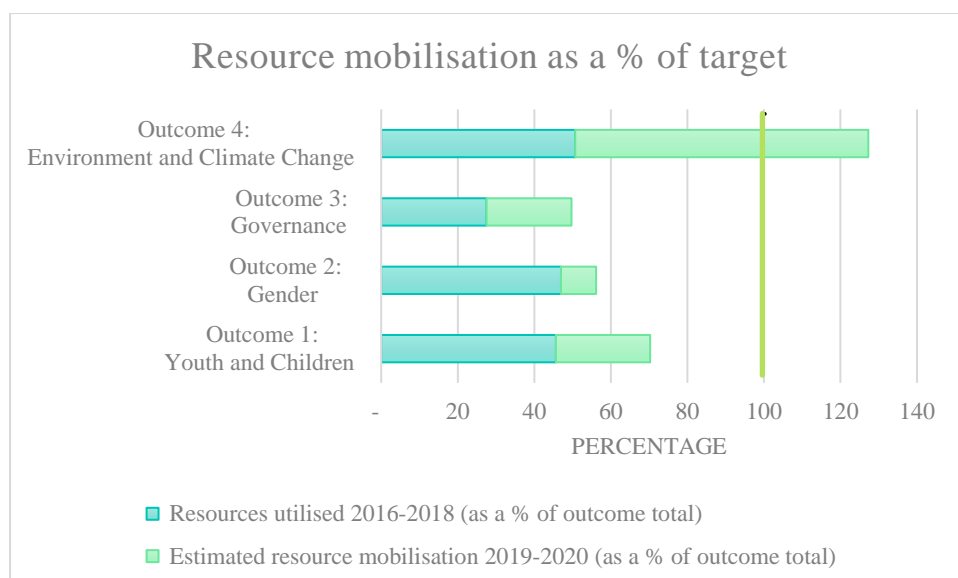
In general, the Outcome groups 1, 2, and 3 are expected to deliver between 50% and 70% of the initially anticipated amount. This may improve if more partnerships are developed with new or existing donors. The biggest funding shortfall is noted for the governance outcome.

An exception was the Environment and Climate Change outcome where a significant amount in excess of the funding gap is expected to be mobilised, mainly from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The GCF project is aimed at ensuring sustainable and safe drinking water for 49 islands. The project is valued at a total of 28.2 million USD, of which 23.6 million USD is channelled through UNDP from the Green Climate Fund. The project will run from 2017 to end of 2021, one year after the current UNDAF period.

One issue that was raised during the discussions for the evaluation was the different funding modalities adopted. The following differences and associated challenges were noted by many stakeholders:

- One method used was to transfer funds in advance as a lump sum amount to be disbursed within six months. In the case of government agencies these funds are transferred to the Ministry of Finance and Treasury for processing payments. Institutions noted that this method provides some flexibility in bringing some changes to the estimated costs but at the same time any unused funds within the six-month period need to be returned to the UN agency and cannot be utilised thereafter. Institutions noted factors beyond their control also impacted timely disbursements and that this funding window was too short.
- Alternative funding methods included direct payment to vendors by UN agencies. This was a preferred method of payment, although one agency noted that in this case UN agencies have the prerogative to allocate funds to other activities without discussion with implementing agencies.

Both these methods are part of the HACT framework that UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women are signatory to. Prior to commencing UNDAF implementation, assessments are conducted on the macro and fiscal situation of a country and a rating is given. Further assessments are conducted on the specific implementing institution and exact funding modalities are decided based on experiences with that institution. There is a recognised need for increased harmonisation under HACT. All of the agencies with which this issue was discussed with during the evaluation noted that a funding window of more than 6 months was preferred.

2.4 Sustainability and Impact

- **In terms of contribution to national development programmes, how *sustainable* are the results achieved and the strategies used?**
- **In what ways has the national capacities been enhanced in government, civil society and NGOs?**

UNDAF results could be sustained where they align with national priorities and policies, and where the relevant organizations have the staff and institutional capacities required to maintain or continue activities. Significant achievements were made in drafting national policies, strategies and action plans.

Capacity building initiatives have also been carried out, but to varying degrees between sectors. Health sector, protection of vulnerable groups in communities and work on extremism are examples of areas where capacity building activities were well received and reported to show results already.

New collaborations have been formed directly through UN activities such as between private businesses and youth, the involvement of organisations working with disabled persons in election affairs, or community-based entrepreneurs reporting data directly to local councils. These collaborations are commendable and there is potential for benefit.

However, for some interventions, long term sustainability is viewed as risky given the current status of work and challenges. One example is the objective to increase health services to adolescents. This particular age group is viewed as hard to reach (both to inform about the service and to encourage to seek services). Different strategies for achieving this are being tested and a clear successful model for the local context is not evident yet. It is important for all relevant institutes to pool resources and share experiences to design a sustainable and effective solution by the end of UNDAF period.

Another achievement which needs close attention yet for sustainability is the formation of the CSGs. The objective within UNDAF was to have minimum 4 atolls with functioning CSGs. However, the government has convened CSGs in all islands as part of its 100-day pledge. This creates a high burden in terms of training and monitoring on the government, especially in consideration of the close guidance given to the initial CSGs to be at a functional level. As the CSGs set up by the UN will also function as part of this expansive national network, some guidance may be needed to ensure success.

 Interventions which were carried out by the request of the government are naturally in alignment with sector priorities; however, guidance may be needed to design the project for longer term impacts. For instance, trainings need to be designed in a way to avoid frequent re-trainings. Local champions need to be identified and given the opportunity to share experiences. Local media coverage of success stories can be enhanced to increase the sense of responsibility of relevant institutions.

A significant risk to sustainability emerges given the reality of high turnover in the government. Project designs need to account for this reality and work to reduce the impact of this as much as possible. Some institutions seem to be more prone to this than others. Long delay in endorsement of national plans, policies or bills places the success of these efforts also on uncertain grounds. Ways of mitigating the impact of high turnover needs to be considered more, especially in interventions that take longer to complete/achieve. For examples trainings that are conducted can be accompanied by supporting documents on contents for the institution.

Considerable effort has gone into strengthening data management and the experience has not been positive in all cases. Greater ownership of these systems is needed as well as harmonisation for most effective maintenance and use.

The UNDAF results matrix has a range of social and economic issues, some of which are difficult to measure. It is also difficult to gauge the sustainability of all outputs and outcomes, as some require long term change or need a multi-prong approach to truly address all underlying causes which may be beyond UN mandate.

Chapter 3: Conclusions

This final evaluation of the UNDAF is a qualitative analysis and based on discussions with 56 interviewees from 28 offices. Overall the analysis found that the outcomes and outputs of UNDAF were highly relevant and in line with national priorities. Significant number of activities were efficiently carried out with multiple stakeholders, although the external environment impacted completion of initial plans in many cases.

Attention was given in design to vulnerable groups of women, children and adolescents, although the focus on the most marginalised within these groups is narrow, particularly in the case of women. Vulnerable groups that are minimally targeted in this UNDAF are persons with disabilities and migrant populations. In terms of achievements, the work on child protection and betterment is positive and impactful. Gender continues to be a challenging area of work in the Maldives although legislative and policy frameworks are being strengthened.

The first years of implementation of UNDAF 2016-2020 Maldives was carried out under challenging political conditions which remained unpredictable and directly impacted development work. Political rivalries and breach of democratic principles led to a halt of functioning of the parliament and also lessened the flow of funds from donors. Forty four percent of the initially estimated total for UNDAF were delivered by end of 2018. Apart from a significant project for Environment, all other outcome groups report estimated fund levels for the next two years that will push up total fund mobilisation to only 50-60% of initial target (for that respective outcome).

In addition to funding challenges, government support for UNDAF was inconsistent. This is evident by the challenges in convening the steering committee and wavering commitment for some targets. A lack of national development plan coupled with frequent shuffles in senior management resulted in changing sectoral priorities in some cases.

Positive efforts were made to implement the SOPs of Delivering as One, however, areas for improvement were noted. Not all activities being carried out in the Maldives by UN agencies were consistently merged into the annual plans and reports, such as those of non-resident agencies. The varying levels of presence and the dispersed offices of the different UN agencies create greater challenge in coordination. Nevertheless, the need for greater coordination was stressed by all UN agencies consulted with during the evaluation. Opportunities for all outcome groups to meet regularly at a technical level were clearly needed. Regular monitoring of the results framework also needs more attention.

The mid-term review that was carried out was an opportunity to discuss challenges in implementation and come to a decision about difficult indicators. About seven indicators were identified to cease implementation, mainly due to lack of government support. Delays in achieving target or indicators that were currently not on track amounted to 42% of total indicators, as at December 2018. Significant effort needs to be put into identifying the underlying causes of these delays over the next 20 months. At the same time, new opportunities are created with the reform policies of the current government and the preparation of a strategic national development plan.

Chapter 4: Recommendations

Recommendations for implementation during 2019 and 2020

1. **Increase coordination at both technical and decision-making levels between UN agencies:** A need for greater coordination was strongly expressed within outcome groups and between outcome groups. A closer and critical inspection on the role of UNDAF Technical Team in fulfilling this gap could be undertaken as establishing new coordinating committees at this stage of UNDAF implementation is not ideal.

2. **Conduct a detailed exercise to ascertain the sustainability of all institutional building efforts carried out under UNDAF**. This would help in identifying areas where the capacity building efforts were not effective. Addressing any gaps in the capacity building efforts undertaken can minimise repetitive capacity building efforts in the next UNDAF.

3. **Identify and address activities for which no intervention has been carried out to date**. Undertake an analysis of why these activities were not addressed.

4. **Conduct periodic monitoring of the indicators of the results matrix:** Through this exercise, identify indicators which need to be redefined.

5. **Greater transparency of planned annual activities** may lead to more synergies with other implementing partners, such as government institutions or CSOs. Sharing annual plans with potential partners or publishing online may achieve greater coherence of joint efforts to the intended outcomes.

6. **Adopt a joint resource mobilisation approach and continue the efforts to strengthen partnerships**: The UNDAF currently faces a risk of not being able to achieve meaningful impact in some key areas, given the challenging environment of the first three years and low fund mobilisation rates. The remainder of the UNDAF period needs to be utilised for realising more financial and technical support, under a joint approach for efficiency and greater synergy.

7. **Include all contributions by UN agencies working with Maldives in annual reporting:** Given the small and varying levels of presence of UN agencies, different operating strategies are currently adopted by members, particularly non-resident agencies. The interlinkages between all efforts and the contribution to overall goals needs to be well-captured in the annual reviews.

8. **Associate unexpected benefits of activities with all relevant outcomes**. New activities and interventions that are designed during the UNDAF implementation period have better linkages to results in different outcome areas. These links need to be reported so that these gains can be capitalised further. This could be achieved by cross-referencing the impacts of interventions under one outcome area with those of other outcome areas during the annual reporting process.

9. **Address ways to mitigate risk to sustainability due to high turnover in government institutions**: High turnover has impacted delivery of some outputs and impacts the sustainability of interventions. UN agencies can account for this risk and design activities to minimise the impact from high turnover.

10. **Enhance coverage in local media of success stories and report periodically to the public under a joint communications plan.** This may bring multiple advantages; facilitating more partnerships with local private sector, increase accountability of UN agencies, and give greater sense of responsibility to national and sub-national institutions who partner with UN agencies.

11. **Identify local champions** to advocate as agents of change, particularly for interventions which require behaviour change in communities or amongst specific demographic cohorts.

Recommendations for next UNSDCF Cycle

1. **Apply the Theory of Change for all outcome areas** to identify clear linkages between activities and desired outcomes. This can establish increased accountability between government and UN agencies. This can be an annex in the UNDAF document. This exercise will also assist in ensuring **outputs and targets are achievable by UN agencies.**

2. **Apply new perspectives and approaches when identifying most marginalised or vulnerable sub-groups within the targeted broader groups.** Such as the most marginalised within women or youth.

3. **Conduct a separate exercise for SDG linkages and progress jointly with the government prior to UNDAF formulation.** This will also help identify areas for strengthening the monitoring framework for SDGs.

4. **Continue with preparation of joint rolling work plans** and increase efforts to be as collaborative, comprehensive and representative of all UN work as possible.

5. **Give greater focus to analyse all underlying causes of issues.** This can be achieved by increasing engagement and collaboration of non-resident agencies whose expertise and knowledge have direct links to the needs of the country. This collaboration is needed at UNDAF formulation, joint planning and annual reporting.

6. **Define smart, time-bound results that are focused on the desired change rather than committing to support specific policies of the government.** This will also give flexibility to seek alternative ways to achieve desired outcomes, if needed.

7. **Maintain greater transparency of annual plans of UN agencies,** particularly with strategic partners such as CSOs and local governments (in locations where potential partnerships are intended during the year).

8. **Develop a robust UNSDCF monitoring and evaluation plan with meta data and means of verification.** Align indicators to nationally used definitions for easier monitoring and reporting

9. **Conduct a risk assessment for each outcome and identify assumptions.** This can include identifying the legal changes that are necessary for UNDAF outcomes and noting the areas where UN support is available. This can be part of the Theory of Change.

10. **Undertake more rigorous socio-political analysis during the preparatory phase, particularly on the analysis of the trend of increasing conservatism and gender equality.**

Annex

Annex 1

List of Institutions Consulted

UN Agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization	Ms. Aminath Shafia, Permanent Secretary / National Coordinator
International Labour Organization	Dr. Simrin Singh, Country Director, ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives Ms. Pramodini Weerasekera, Programme Officer, ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives
International Organisation for Migration	Ms. Shahidha Abdul Rahman, Project Coordinator
Resident Coordinator's Office	Ms. Shoko Noda, UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Huda Adam, Head of Resident Coordinator's Office Ms. Shaha Shakeeb, UN Coordination Officer Mr. Nasheeth Thoha, Social Cohesion Officer Ms. Faathimath Ibrahim Didi, National Human Rights Officer
United Nations Development Programme	Ms. Shoko Noda, UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Aishath Rizna, Assistant Resident Representative Mr. Ahmed Shifaz, Assistant Resident Representative
United Nations Environment Programme	Mr. Subrato Sinha, Regional Environmental Affairs Officer
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Mr. Eric Falt, Director and UNESCO Representative Mr. Al Amin Yusuf, Regional Advisor for Communication and Information
United Nations Population Fund	Ms. Shadiya Ibrahim, Assistant Representative
United Nations Children's Fund	Mr. M. Munir A. Safieldin, Representative Ms. Shahula Adam, Programme Specialist Ms. Mazeena Jamleel, Programme Specialist Mr. Mohamed Naeem, Programme Specialist Mr. Mohamed Yasir, Communications Officer
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Mr. Sergey Kapinos, Representative for South Asia, UNODC Regional Office for South Asia Dr. Suruchi Pant, Deputy Representative, UNODC Regional Office for South Asia
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	Ms. Fathimath Zuhana, Programme Analyst
World Health Organization	Dr. Arvind Mathur, Representative Dr. Shushil Dev Pant, Medical Officer - Public Health Ms. Fathmath Hudha, National Professional Officer / Planning and Programme Management

Government Agencies

Attorney General's Office	Ms. Maziya Abdul Sattar, State Attorney
Family Protection Authority	Ms. Zeenath Shakir, Director Ms. Rimaha Ahmed Shareef, Project Officer
Health Protection Authority	Ms. Maimoona Aboobakuru, Director General of Public Health Ms. Mariyam Jenyfa, Senior Medical Officer
Maldives Police Services	Mr. Hassan Haneef, Chief Superintendent of Police, Serious and Organised Crime Department Mr. Mohamed Basheer, Superintendent of Police, Family and Child Protection Department
Ministry of Education	Ms. Fathimath Azza, Director General Mr. Ahmed Mausoom, Education Officer
Ministry of Environment	Ms. Khadeeja Naseem, Environment Climate Specialist Ms. Mariyam Samha, Project Officer, Waste Management and Pollution Control Department Mr. Ahmed Muruthaz, Director General, Waste Management and Pollution Control Department Mr. Midhath Rasheed, Assistant Director, Environment Department Mr. Fazleena Musthafa, Assistant Director, Energy Department Mr. Ahmed Waheed, Director, Climate Change Department Mr. Afsal Hussein, Director, Water and Sanitation Department
Ministry of Finance and Treasury	Mr. Saruvash, Chief Financial Budget Executive Ms. Aminath Nashia, Director
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Mr. Javed Faizal, Additional Secretary Ms. Mariyam Reesha, Director, International Affairs Department
Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services	Ms. Fathmath Ibrath, Policy Officer, Policy Planning and International Health Division Ms. Aishath Ashiya Shathir, Policy Officer, Child Rights Department Ms. Aishath Shooza, Assistant Director, Disability Rights and Well-Being Department Ms. Aminath Shirani Naeem, Deputy Director General, Social Services Department
Ministry of Health	Ms. Shifza Mohamed, Senior Admin Officer, Policy Planning and International Health Division Mr. Ali Ahmed Manik, Assistant Director, Policy, Planning and International Health
Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment	Ms. Saudath Hilmy, Assistant Director
Ministry of Education	Mr. Ibrahim Asif Rasheed, Education Officer
National Bureau of Statistics	Ms. Ashiyath Shazna, Statistician Ms. Fathimath Riyaza, Deputy Statistician

National Counter Terrorism Centre	Captain Ibrahim Thoufeeq, Head of Research and Publications Major Ibrahim Naeem, Head of Intelligence and Analysis Department
National Drug Agency	Mr. Hassan Shaheel, Chief Executive Officer

Civil Society Organisations

Advocating for Children's Rights	Mr. Muruthala Moosa, Managing Director Ms. Jala Zuhury, Programme Specialist
Care Society of Maldives	Ms. Aishath Sufana, (previous) Assistant Programs Director
Hope for Women	Ms. Aishath Nuzha Ali Shareef, Executive Coordinator Ms. Saeeda Hassan, Advocacy Officer
Maldivian Red Crescent	Ms. Aishath Noora Mohamed, Secretary General
Society for Health Education	Mr. Ahmed Shafeeu, Chief Executive Officer Ms. Fathimath Ana, Programme Officer
Transparency Maldives	Mr. Aiman Rasheed, Advocacy and Communications Manager