

Annual UN Country Results Report 2017

United Nations in the Maldives



Photo: Abdulla Adam

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Foreword

I am pleased to present the 2017 annual progress report of the United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2020. The United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2020 is centered on making a difference in the key areas of: Youth and Children, Gender, Governance, and Environment and Climate Change. I am pleased to share with you the Annual Progress Report for UNDAF year 2017. The report outlines the results and achievements of UNDAF implementation during the past year.

Along with the start of the new UNDAF in 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a pledge to transform lives and protect our planet, came into life. In 2017, the Government of Maldives's efforts to embrace the SDGs were accelerated. For example, the Voluntary National Review Report of the Maldives was presented at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on SDGs in July 2017. The UN Country Team in the Maldives worked closely with the government, CSOs and other stakeholders and provided tailored support to localize these goals to reach the furthest behind first and transform the lives of all Maldivians and the environment in which they live in.

Through our joint support, most vulnerable children gained access to alternative education system, Gender Action Plan was adopted, campaigns to combat the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) were launched, and Community Emergency Response Team (CERTs) were formed, to name just a few examples of our achievements. As the country context evolved, our approaches were also regular adjusted, ensuring a human-rights based approach and a firm commitment to gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Our successes and lessons highlighted in this report belong to many contributors. On behalf of the UN County Team in Maldives, I would like to thank our Government counterparts, civil society organizations, development partners and most of all, the people of the Maldives. As we celebrate our achievements, we recognize the work that lies ahead. We must continue to work together, placing the concept of “leaving no one behind” at the heart of our work towards sustainable development. As a valued and trusted development partner of the Maldives, the United Nations stand with the people of the Maldives as we work towards a brighter future.

Shoko Noda

United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Maldives

1. Development trend in 2017

Recovery in tourism, continued strength in the construction industry and low inflation, contributed to an increase in the Maldivian economy from 3.9% in 2016 to 4.6% in 2017. Maldives' HDI value of 0.701 in 2015 put the country in the high human development category, positioning it at 105 out of 188 countries and territories. Despite the Upper Middle Income Country (UMIC) status, with GNI per capita of US\$ 10,630 in 2016, the economy is still considered highly volatile, and continues to face large and growing imbalances. Overall budget deficit is estimated to be 8% in 2017 with public debt rising up to 69.4% in 2017. Debt accumulation is largely on account of ambitious infrastructure scale-up (20% of GDP). Despite the economic growth, inequalities persist, which the government is attempting to address through population consolidation in the greater Male' region.

The Government of the Republic of Maldives spends 9% of its GDP on health, the highest in the South East Asia Region. The people of the Maldives enjoy universal health coverage, and the government is fully committed to sustaining the benefits. Healthcare facilities available in almost every inhabited islands offer health care from qualified doctors and nurses. State-run pharmacies at all hospitals dispense 432 medicines on the national essential drugs list for free. Sea and land ambulances are available in every atoll for emergency and referral services. As per the estimates from National Health Accounts 2014, Maldives spent USD 810 per capita in health care. As a result, an impressive record of health outcomes has been achieved and rising life expectancy and rapid deceleration of infant, child and maternal mortality is recorded. Life expectancy at birth improved to 23 years for Male and 24 years for female, and under-five mortality decreased to 11 per 1,000 births in 2016. Against these successes of the health sector, the country faces significant challenges to control non-communicable diseases and protect health from the effects of climate change.

Climate change is the real in the Maldives. The sea level rise is an imminent threat. 80% of land is less than 1 meter above sea level with 42% of its population and more than 70% of its critical infrastructure within 100 meters of the shorelines. Over 45 islands faced water shortages due to significant changes to weather patterns, including the hottest dry season recorded in the past 18 years. More than 60% of coral reef bleaching caused by the 2016 El Nino continues to adversely impact underwater life and natural resources vital for livelihood. Like the past years, an increasing number of storms during the monsoon season caused floods.

Being a young democracy with its democratic transition in 2009, the political situation in the Maldives continues to remain fluid. The country will undertake presidential elections in the third quarter of 2018 and parliamentary elections in 2019. At the multilateral front, the country is taking an active role, especially as a chair of AOSIS facilitating a unified voice for the small island developing states (SIDS) within the United Nations system.

The turbulent political landscape coupled with fragile environmental and climate change realities make Maldives uniquely challenging for the UN development system. Lack of a long-term developmental vision and centralized planning has posed challenges to institutionalize the SDG implementation and monitoring. The current development path and the bilateral alliances forged with non-traditional partners will significantly impact the political and developmental future of the country.

2. The UN Delivering as One in Maldives



As a self-starter of the “Delivering as One (DaO)” initiative of the United Nations, the UN Ex-com agencies, funds and specialized agencies working for Maldives endeavored to further enhance efficiency, effectiveness and coherence in 2017.

UN Agencies working for Maldives operate under 5 pillars of DaO: 1) One Programme, 2) One Leader, 3) One Fund, 4) Communicating as One and 5) Operating as One. DaO enables the UN agencies to work more cohesively

together and coordinate joint efforts to ensure that the resources are used most efficiently, and UN and our partners can work together more effectively to support sustainable development for all Maldivians.

An audit of Delivering as One (One Leader and One Programme) along with the UNDP Maldives, was conducted by UNDP Regional Audit Centre for Asia and the Pacific from 12 to 23 March 2017. The overall assessment of the report was “satisfactory” and put forward two medium-priority recommendations for Delivering as One. The full audit document is available via: <http://audit-public-disclosure.undp.org/>

(2a) One Leader

Shoko Noda is the UN Resident Coordinator for the Republic of Maldives since October 2014. UN Country Team (UNCT) in Maldives consists of resident and non-resident members. There are officially four resident agencies in the UNCT: UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA. All the other members of UNCT are non-resident agencies (NRAs) including UN Women, IOM, FAO, UNODC, UNESCO, ILO, World Bank and UNEP, based (primarily) in Colombo, New Delhi and Bangkok. UN Women, IOM and World Bank have staff working in Maldives. UNOPS completed their final project and closed their office in Maldives in June 2017.

Monthly UNCT meetings are held with the attendance of heads of UN Agencies and is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator. The UNCT meetings function as primary coordination meeting for the UN system in the Maldives and ensures inter-agency coordination and decision-making at the country-level. Similarly, Security Management Team (SMT) meetings are held quarterly with the heads of agencies to enhance the safety and security of UN personnel, assets and operations in the country.

(2b) One Programme & Common Budgetary Framework

To jointly deliver development results, the UNCT continued the implementation of UNDAF 2016-2020. In early 2017 the four rolling joint work plans for 2016-2017 were reviewed to gauge the results attained and resource utilization, accounting for the gender and human rights mainstreaming and the contributions towards achieving SDGs. For the first time in UN Maldives, a One UN Results Report was compiled and presented to the Government of Maldives and published in the UN Maldives website. This report highlights the annual achievements as per the Delivering as One (DaO) pillars of One programme, Communicating as One, Operating as One, One leader and One Fund. Moreover, it captures the

programmatic results and financial utilization UNDAF areas of (1) youth and children, (2) gender, (3) governance and (4) environment and climate change.

Subsequently, ten out of the eleven UN agencies (three Ex-Com and seven specialized agencies) signatory to the UNDAF updated the four rolling joint work plans for 2017-2018 based on first JWPs for 2016-2017. This process was led by four co-chairs of UN and Government agencies through the respective outcome groups. The work planning and process was based on the Delivering as One Standard Operating Procedures (DaO SOP) and Maldives is one of the first countries to adopt the One UN joint work planning process. As per the DaO SOP inter-agency groups have been set-up and functioned throughout the year.

In four years since the start of implementation, within the One UN programme, Low Emission Climate Resilient Development (LECRd), 7 UN agencies in partnership with local and national authorities and local communities, have provided holistic support to build capacities at national and local levels to encourage low carbon life-styles, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction. In 2017, the construction/rehabilitation of waste management centres in 11 islands of Laamu Atoll was commenced.

The health care waste management pilot project was completed with autoclaves now being used to disinfect health waste. Capacity on climate friendly sustainable agricultural practices was strengthened in Laamu Atoll through the LECReD programme. The awareness of the 542 farmers (53% women) was increased on climate smart agriculture (CSA) and practices that would lead improved production and productivity in a context of climate change.

In partnership with the Women's Development Committee (WDC) in Laamu Fonadhoo, a model farm showcasing innovating methods, Autopot Farming, has been set up and 18 women farmers have been trained in this environmental friendly agricultural methodology. This has led to enhanced capacity of women in Laamu to deal with the impacts of climate change in their livelihoods and help them to generate longer term incomes. Additionally, the experience of LECReD programme was shared amongst 25 women from 12 islands. This networking opportunity and sharing of lessons learned have led to some of the women successfully securing funding to pilot and start a model farm. To increase the disaster risk capacities of the islands, CBDRM (Community Based Disaster Risk Management) Programme was conducted across the Atoll and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) were established on 4 islands.

Water quality testing equipment was provided to the community together with water testing kits to be used to train representatives on rain and ground water quality testing. A total of 14 Small Grants were also implemented to promote practical local experience interventions to the developmental challenges on the ground. The grant facility funded the Laamu Atoll Council, Laamu Island Councils, Women's Development Committees, Community Based Organizations, Small-Medium Enterprises, female entrepreneurs, farmers and fishermen to undertake locally led initiatives.

(2c) Communicating as One



Photo: UN Maldives

UN visibility and strategic partnerships were enhanced through engagement of UNRC and UNCT. Through continued leadership and dialogue by UNRC, engagement with Government and key stakeholders were improved. Notably, a public event of UN Day 2017 planned and executed in partnership with the diplomatic community based in Maldives and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a resounding success. This event, co-hosted by UNRC and the Foreign Secretary, featured the Member State Corners of Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Maldives to showcase their respective cultures and activities in the country and to strengthen partnership and solidarity. At the event, the UN Communications Group featured Sustainable Development Goals for awareness raising. The event was participated by dignitaries from embassies, government officials, civil society organizations, UN staff, tourists and the general public. It is estimated that more than 800 people participated in the event.

UN Maldives social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) continued its SDG social media campaign where every Thursday a UN staff, government partner, CSO partner or other stakeholders is featured with their favorite SDGs. Similarly, World Health Day 2017 was observed with the theme “Depression: Let’s talk”. The commemorative event was attained by the Vice President of the Maldives along with ministers, parliament members, secretaries, UN team and media partners amongst others. The event was covered and disseminated by all mass and social media.

(2d) Operating as One

The UN Operations Management Team (OMT) in Maldives contributes in an effective manner in jointly resolving many common issues. OMT meeting is normally held once in a quarter and is chaired by different UN Agencies in the country on a yearly basis. The aim of the OMT is to ensure programme delivery is supported in an effective and efficient manner, ensuring high quality, timely operational support to participating agencies. This was achieved through coordinated efforts in the area of business operations amongst different UN agencies. Some of the main areas of collaboration was the updating of the daily subsistent rates for Maldives which was revised in 2017 in a manner more befitting the context of the country. Moreover, information sharing and knowledge exchange was enhanced within procurement processes and the processing of visas for the visiting missions of UN.

(2e) One Fund

The Maldives One UN Fund was established in December 2010 with the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between 7 Participating Organisations and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) in its capacity as the Administrative Agent (AA) of the Maldives One UN Fund. The Maldives One UN Fund became operational on 1 July 2011 with the first contribution from the Government of Denmark. The current end date for the One UN Fund is 30 November 2018. Key documents regarding the Maldives One UN funds, including annual reports, are found [here](#).

(2f) Common Premises

The old UN Building (Block 152, North West corner plot on Buruzu Magu, Male') which housed most of the UN agencies based was evacuated on 30 April 2014. After discussions and the due process, the building was surrendered and handed over to the Government of Maldives on 29 November 2017. As of April 2018, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, WB and IOM continue to be located in commercial buildings in Male' with WHO based in the premises of Ministry of Health.

3. Results of UNDAF implementation in 2017

UNDAF Outcome Area 1: Youth and Children



Photo: Ashwa Faheem/ UNDP Maldives 2017

Inter-agency UNDAF Outcome 1: By 2020, Youth and Children access equitable, inclusive and quality social services, and have increased opportunities for skills development.

Systems strengthening efforts continued in key sectors to promote inclusive and quality social services. As such, key results include establishment of the Education Management Information System, making data available for decision making. Capacity building on critical areas continued in social sectors. Health sector capacity was built on providing Infant Young Child Feeding, Essential New Born Care, Immunization supply chain, Advance pediatric life support among others. These are contributing to improved child health services, and promote, protect and support exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life improved skills on feeding in the early years, to ensure that mothers are empowered to provide nutritionally adequate and safe complementary feeding from 6 months of life onwards.

National Early Literacy and Mathematics Strategy and standards launched. Action plans to address Violence against Children, and to strengthen Juvenile Justice developed and endorsed. Early childhood development components were incorporated into the Growth-Monitoring Promotion protocols, and the National Child health Strategy was launched. Efforts continue through support to key sectors such as Health, Education, Gender Family and Child Protection to contribute towards the outcome result.

Accountability and responsiveness of duty bearers to young people's rights to reproductive health information and services was strengthened through alternative approach of reaching young people at café settings. These events provide sexual and reproductive health information and services by bringing the information and services directly to the youth. These sessions were conducted with use of a newly launched mobile application "Siththaa". Support was continued to integrate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into the education system. Recommendations to incorporate CSE to the national curriculum of key stages of 4 and 5 were provided and a review was undertaken for the level of CSE integration into the key stages 1 and 3 showing that 47% of the recommendations were incorporated. Furthermore, teacher training module was developed and is awaiting accreditation from the Maldives Qualification Authority.

UN contributed to strengthening the comprehensive mechanism for child and adolescent nutrition interventions, especially in the regions with high malnutrition rates, with the continued effort to build institutional capacity for nutrition services in health sector. The Growth Monitoring Standards and protocols was integrated with early childhood components. Enhanced Implementation and monitoring of inclusive, child and gender sensitive education, including learning achievements, were developed to monitor curriculum implementation and learning, and data made available through EMIS for tracking learning achievements and informing policy/programs and strengthening accountability.

Alternative education system for the most vulnerable children were established and operationalized. Alternative education programmes and skills development programs for children and adolescents who are at the risk of dropping out of school, and /or are out of school are being provided through existing mechanisms in the country. Community Social Groups (CSG), a community-level first-line response mechanism for violence against children, were established in islands for early identification of children at-risk and timely responses in liaison with social workers at the national level. A community-based juvenile crime prevention and diversion programme was established with an aim of reintegration back into society.

Policies and strategies for implementation and monitoring of inclusive and equitable child health programmes were developed and implemented. 70 health care providers were trained for Essential Newborn Care (ENCC) from Shaviyani, Laamu and Addu Atoll. The training is instrumental to provide appropriate and timely emergency newborn care to newborns in need of resuscitation. It is helping to reduce deaths and illness from common causes of newborn conditions. The UN, in partnership with APLS Australia and Pediatric Association of Sri Lanka, supported the APLS trainings in Maldives, resulting in training of 14 doctors in advance pediatric lifesaving skills. The doctors, working in four tertiary hospitals in the Maldives, now have strengthened skills in the area, and are able to manage and treat pediatric emergency cases. These are crucial skills to manage infants and children in critical condition and save their lives.

1. Enhanced capacity for equitable and quality child & youth-friendly health services, including nutrition, child health & ASRH (UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO) (Output 1)

As part of the capacity building of health staff on child nutrition services, with support from UN, the Growth Monitoring Standards with early childhood development was developed. Maldives participated in the regional nutrition conference on wasting - a critical advocacy platform to increase the political commitment to improve maternal and child nutrition.

Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) trainings targeting health service providers were conducted with support from multiple UN agencies. The main objective of the trainings was to promote, protect and

support exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life with continued breastfeeding up two years and to ensure that mothers are empowered to provide nutritionally adequate and safe complementary feeding from 6 months of life onwards. The trainings also include a component on advocacy and awareness on BMS regulation. Mothers and caregivers in Gaafu Alifu Atolls benefitted from Breast feeding and Complementary feeding education, helping to make informed choices on providing nutritious food to infants. This is a part of the series of IYCF trainings that are being conducted throughout the country and more such trainings are planned for 2018 as well.

With the achievements in child health for Maldives, a greater challenge now remains in ensuring quality health services. The Child Health Strategy finalized in 2016 identified the new-borns as a vulnerable group that requires specialized care. In 2017, With UN's support, the National Child Health Strategy (CHS) was launched. The CHS integrates the country commitments to Every New-born Action Plan, providing strategic actions for ending preventable new-born deaths. Further, capacity of healthcare providers from three atolls were built on Essential New-born Care (ENBC), which will contribute to enhanced quality of new-born care services. The trainings promote a continuum of care, starting from preconception care, further minimizing the risks of premature births and new-born deaths.

As part of work of reinstating Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in hospitals, support was provided for the BFHI focal point of Health Protection Agency (HPA) to attend regional consultation to protect, promote and support breastfeeding with a focus on Baby Friendly Hospital practices. During this meeting short-term and long-term actions were identified with responsible bodies for each action, which will be supported in its implementation in 2018.

The Child Health Strategy has been finalized and launched, providing strategic directions on comprehensive services that contribute to health and well-being of children. Capacity building in different areas has contributed to increased skills and knowledge of health workers, especially in selected atolls, in areas such as Essential New Born Care, Vaccine management and preconception care. Further, doctors have been trained in Advance Pediatric Life Support, and are now better equipped to save young lives in critical situations.

The planned activities to integrate Adolescent and Youth Friendly Health Services (AYFHS) standards in the health settings did not progress in 2017. Hence, alternative approach to reach young people at café settings was piloted. This Safe Space events provide sexual and reproductive health information and services reaching young people bringing the information and services to youth instead of waiting for their visit. The first ever mobile application, Siththaa is used as the tool at the Safe Space events. The application is a user-friendly tool that aims to initiate demand for education and information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, raising awareness on the importance of being healthy. A key feature of the application is an anonymous messaging function to reach the professionals at the NGO, Society for Health Education (SHE).

Joint UN support was provided to the Measles Catch up national campaign and the H1N1 outbreak response activities. The UN validated the elimination of endemic measles. The country also experienced an influenza outbreak that was controlled through our concerted effort in 6 weeks. Further, multiple agencies provided support to conduct the second Integrated Biological and Behavioral Survey (IBBS) of the Maldives. With UN's support, the health sector is undertaking data validation to work towards elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis. Based on the assessment and

current situation, Maldives is in a good position to attempt the validation process. The validation document has been compiled and data validation process is ongoing.

2. Enhanced capacity to deliver quality inclusive education (UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, WB) (Output 2)

The Maldives Education Information System (MEMIS), supported by UN was developed with the ability to track student's attendance and raise notifications to the authorities. MEMIS can monitor the interventions put by the schools to address issues of attendance and behavior that predispose students to drop out of school. Further, when children are identified as an out-of-school child, the Ministry of Education re-enrolls them in schools and are provided with a condensed learning programs which was formulated with UN's support. The development of Behaviour Management Policy for Schools was supported that requires schools to ban suspension of children from school for behavioral issues and introduce restorative justice approaches as an alternative to dealing with disruptive behaviors of students.

Recommendations have been provided to integrate comprehensive sexual education components to the Key stages 4 and 5 of the national curriculum roll out process. Materials developed for key Stages 1 to 3 were reviewed against level of integration based on recommendations provided through 2015 to 2017. In addition, teacher training module has been developed and is awaiting accreditation from the Maldives Qualification Authority. With UN's support, 47.7% of the international comprehensive sexual education components have already been integrated in the resource materials of key stages 1 to 3.

3. Enhanced capacities to prevent violence against children & adolescents (UNICEF) (Output 3)

UN supported consultations with stakeholders including NGOs and children, at the National Conference on Violence Against Children; National Symposium on Child Rights and Juvenile Justice Systems; and National Seminar on Prevention of Juvenile Crimes, provided a platform to discuss the issues, gaps and ways to address them. These consultations resulted in three action plans that provides a stronger basis for strengthening of the Child Protection System.

Institutional capacity for responding to reported cases of Violence Against Children (VaC) was improved through support to training of Police Investigating Officers, resulting in improved investigation of challenging cases of VaC. Capacity building of social workers had improved case management. Key stakeholders in travel and tourism sector was sensitized on child sexual exploitation, an area of high risk, which led to commitments from the Ministry of Tourism, and relevant associations to change their staff training programmes.

UN continued its support to strengthen the Community Social Groups (CSGs), as a community-level first-line response mechanism. Currently, 8 out of the 30 CSGs in 4 atolls are directly working with identified families. Children from these families were brought back to school.

The mobile application "Ahan" and the 24-hour hotline "1412 Child-helpline" was launched in 2017, making reporting cases of VaC more accessible.

4. Enhanced systems for prevention of substance abuse and rehabilitation for youth and children (UNICEF) (Output 4)

UN continued its advocacy with the National Drug Authority (NDA) for approval of the draft National Strategy for Prevention and Rehabilitation of children and Adolescents abusing drugs. Work also initiated to establish services for children abusing drugs. However, the limitations in technical expertise delayed the work on setting up services.

5. Increased opportunities for skills development (UNICEF, UNESCO) (Output 5)

Children Out-of-School (OOSC) and in conflict with the law who previously did not have access to any form of learning were identified and reached with alternative learning programs, including vocational skills development programs. Currently, 43 OOSC adolescent boys are enrolled. Further, trainings provided to social workers on working with these adolescents have given them enhanced skills to conduct life-skills with the adolescents enrolled in these.

The implementation of these programs are overseen by a multi-sectoral steering committee co-facilitated by UN. The committee has mobilized technical and financial resources within the relevant agencies and contributed to the programmes. This has strengthened communication among agencies involved and has shown to be a good example of cost effective, and well-coordinated multi-sectoral response to improve services for the most disadvantaged children. Now, there is increased recognition of OOSC and the need to identify them and track them in the National Data Systems. Additionally, increased measures are being instituted to address issues that push children out-of school and keep them out-of school.

UNDAF Outcome Area 2: Gender



Photo: Ashwa Faheem/ UNDP Maldives 2017

Inter-agency Outcome 2: By 2020, gender equality is advanced and women are empowered to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in access to social, economic and political opportunities.

Gender Equality Law and a National Gender Policy were adopted in 2016 by the Ministry of Gender and Family. Following this, in 2017, a Gender Action Plan was developed with technical input from UN Agencies. The first Women's Forum was convened with Women's Development Committees (WDC's) from all areas of the Maldives, in partnership with Ministry of Gender and Family. This forum provided an opportunity to share experiences, voice grievances and highlight the structural difficulties faced by WDC's to implement their duties.

To enhance the positioning of the lead Government agency on gender issues, support was provided for the participation of the Minister of Gender and Family in the Commission on Status of Women (CSW) in 2017. Dialogues were facilitated with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on gender-based violence bringing together 45 leading women from communities to discuss ways forward. Sex disaggregated high quality data was collected continuously to facilitate the monitoring of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), CEDAW, SDGs and other relevant development and human rights frameworks.

A population projection was undertaken to enhance evidence-based planning for the changing population. Similarly a joint Labor Force Survey was piloted to increase the understanding of the labor force. The Youth Analysis based on Census 2014 was completed and will be ready for dissemination in 2018. Evidence

base on Gender and Climate Change was enhanced through trainings and capacity building conducted based on the manual on gender and climate change. The information collected shed a light on the climate impact on women's livelihood and enables policy makers and stakeholders to prioritize issues related to climate change and build capacity of women to mitigate and adapt to the changing context.

UN has been working to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming. In 2016, gender responsive recommendations for Gender Equality Law (GEL) and National Gender Policy was provided jointly by UN agencies in partnership with civil society organizations. The GEL was passed by the parliament and ratified in 2016 but came to effect on 23 February 2017. In 2017, UN worked on a Gender Equality Action Plan that can operationalize the GEL.

In 2017, Maldives moved up in the Global Gender Gap Rating Report from 115 to 106 (out of 114). UN launched a campaign during the Local Council Elections period to advocate and lobby for greater representation of women in the public and political sphere. The hands-on training was conducted to selected 10 female candidates in one atoll to improve their campaign strategy. UN supported leadership trainings for women and youth to provide safe space to discuss current political challenges and way forward. As an outcome of this, one of the parties decided to include women for the first time in their party council. Additionally, one party pledged to secure separate financing for women candidates as a result of UN's advocacy and trainings.

Though efforts have been made, there are significant challenges in this area which has culminated in slow progress in the overall implementation. Women's participation in political posts (27 out of 155) and women in economic sector (female labor participation rate of 47.6%) is low. Data collection on Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) are underway. Although the Gender Equality Law was ratified in 2016, the Government needs to formally adopt of the Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. Similarly, the National Human Rights Action Plan formulated for mainstreaming and implementing CEDAW and recommendations from other human rights mechanisms on gender equality is pending approval.

1. Strengthened capacity of gender responsive frameworks and mechanisms (Output 1: WHO, UNWomen)

UN continued to hold dialogue and knowledge exchange following the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) training held in late 2016 to all newly assigned Gender Focal Points (GFPs) as well as staff of the Ministry of Gender and Family. This training ensured that the GFP's are able to mainstream gender in their sectoral projects and plans as well as indicate required budgetary resources for its implementation. However, due to a number of reasons, the work on GRPB came to a halt in mid-2017 and further work planned for the year was cancelled.

2. Full stakeholder participation and monitoring of CEDAW and other gender relevant intergovernmental processes (Output 2: UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women, RCO)

UN continued to collect sex disaggregated high quality data to facilitate the monitoring of CEDAW, SDGs and other relevant development and human rights frameworks. To this effect, a population projection was undertaken to enhance evidence-based planning for the changing population. Similarly, to overcome

the challenge of understanding the trends in labour force, the Labour Force Survey was piloted. An analysis done with a special focus on Youth using the Census 2014 was also completed. This analysis highlights the situation of young people in the areas of education, employment and youth population distribution. In order to strengthen the civil registration, vital statistics were reviewed and a set of recommendations were provided to improve the current systems. Additionally alternate data use for SDG monitoring was also assessed.

UN supported the Attorney General's Office in developing the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) which is aimed at establishing an effective national human rights mechanism that can coordinate and implement treaty body and Universal Period Review (UPR) recommendations. Through the NHRAP, a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism will be established, allowing for stronger coordination and collaboration on issues related to human rights. In 2017, the NHRAP was finalized and awaits endorsement by the Government and key stakeholders.

3. Strengthened Institutions and legislations implemented to effectively prevent and respond to GBV (Output 3, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP)

UN facilitated population dialogues on relevant themes including the Youth to Leaders Forum on World Population day under the theme sexual and reproductive health and youth, reproductive health and rights in equalities in the Maldives. Additionally, youth, peace and security consultations were held with policy makers and young people acknowledging the gaps in providing sexual and reproductive health information and services to young people.

UN in partnership with the Attorney General's Office developed a roll out plan for Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in 2016. As a follow up from this, customized trainings were provided to key stakeholders on the new Code. Furthermore, based on the rollout plan, further support was provided to the judiciary to strengthen their knowledge and understanding on CrPC. Additionally, UN conducted an assessment on establishing a community-based paralegals programme in the Maldives which helped to identify the most pressing and unmet access to justice issues in the community. The assessment will contribute towards enhancing access to justice, especially to the vulnerable groups such as women and youth, and the promotion of human rights.

In partnership with Family Protection Authority (FPA), UN developed and conducted a Training of Trainers for First Responders in Maldives working with survivors of domestic violence. The training focused on effective client centered services and in addition provided participants with the opportunity to engage in discussion of issues related to domestic violence and its impact on society, family and the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the training contributed to establish informal relationships necessary to strengthen survivor services.

UN continued to support the Ministry of Gender and Family to strengthen the social workers, as such refresher training on managing cases of Gender Based Violence and violence against children was provided in 2017. Furthermore, UN provided support to strengthen the schools' response to Violence Against Children (VaC) by developing a psychosocial intervention package, that will support in responding to the cases identified through the early grade risk assessment initiative. The Roll-out of these interventions is planned for 2018. The mobile application "Ahan" and the 24-hour hotline "1412 Child-helpline" was launched in 2017, making reporting cases of VaC more accessible and effective.

Maldives Child Protection Database (MCPD) expansion continued in 2017, linking up with other key databases in the sectors. The MCPD was linked-up with the Call Centre at the Ministry of Gender and Family to ensure that cases reported are captured in the database, which is essential to identify trends and scope of the VaC problem. UN supported to hold the National Conference on Violence against Children, which brought together different sectors and NGOs working in the area to deliberate on the issues and ways to address this. During the conference, an Action Plan for Prevention and Responding to Violence against Children was drafted, and following consultations with children, this has been finalized. To address the emerging risks for child sexual exploitation in the travel and tourism sector, capacity of key stakeholders was developed. Through the training a cohort of trainers to lead further orientation for the tourism sector was developed.

UNDAF Outcome Area 3: Governance



Photo: Shan Ahmed/UNDP Maldives 2016

Inter-agency Outcome: By 2020, citizen expectation for voice, sustainable development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance.

As year 2 of UNDAF, most UN agencies were able to implement the programmes as planned, despite challenges in the external environment. Under this outcome, key focus was to establish mechanisms and dialogue processes for civil society engagement and youth voices to be further strengthened by providing different tools to them. Increasing women's participation and representation is a key outcome area for UN where in different types of programmes for aspiring female leaders were conducted. Relations with political parties were established to ensure sustainability of these efforts ahead of the election cycle. Key

legislative reforms also took place for which UN provided support which included the successful roll out of the new Criminal Procedure Code and drafting of the legal aid bill and the Associations Act. Additionally, to strengthen gender architecture, national gender equality action plan was formulated. For the first time a national human rights action plan was also finalized with key stakeholders.

Male' Declaration on building health system resilience to climate change was adopted during the 70th session of the Regional Committee of WHO South East Asia Region held in September 2017. Attended by high level delegates from WHO member states, this meeting also witnessed the Government of Maldives receiving Public Health Excellence award. Maldives achieved the award for attaining elimination of endemic measles virus transmission, well before the regional target of 2020. This initiative was contributed by the support to measles and rubella (MR) catch up mass vaccine campaign targeting 70,000 people. The country also introduced MR Vaccine at nine month of age in routine immunization. This ensures all new born children will receive two doses of measles and rubella containing vaccines.

Efforts to control Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) were rejuvenated through successful advocacy to increase import duties on energy drinks by 58% and tobacco taxes by 60%. This supplemented by ban on the sale of energy and fizzy drinks in public facilities such as schools and health centers and prohibited the marketing of energy drinks within any education institution premises. The Minister of Health received the World No Tobacco Award for 2017 in recognition of the efforts by the Government to control tobacco in the country. A goal of reducing the NCD burden by 25% by 2025 was set through a joint campaign '25by25' with Government partners. To contribute to the campaign, UN supported to pilot package of essential non-communicable disease interventions (PEN) and provision of outdoor gym equipment to promote regular exercising.

Support was provided to the Government to review and update the National Standards and Guidelines for Family Planning Services and the mobile application for the Medical Eligibility Criteria (MEC) wheel was developed with an aim to improve accessibility of health professionals to the recommended global guidelines. The National Healthcare Waste Management Policy and strategy was endorsed and the waste management pilot project is ongoing in Laamu Atoll with autoclaves being used to disinfect health waste.

Continued support is provided to the rollout of Criminal Procedure Code by training key stakeholders in order to tackle, in a long run, irregularities in the judicial process and increase public trust in the judiciary. Key steps were taken to enhance access to justice to vulnerable populations by completion of a preliminary assessment on needs for community-based paralegals planned to be commenced in 2018.

Technical support was provided to the policy preparatory processes for the national multi stakeholder consultation on the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) held in October 2017. The consultation participated by the Government, national agencies, civil society and UN agencies prioritized the main focus areas of the Government of Maldives: international cooperation and governance of migration in all its dimensions, addressing drivers of migration and identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims. Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative was continued in 2017 to build the capacity of migrants considering their unique vulnerabilities, needs and capacities during crisis preparedness, emergency response and recovery. In order to integrate the health needs of migrants into national plans, policies and strategies; a migration health situational assessment was conducted with the recommendations conveyed to the stakeholders including to the Ministry of Health.

Along with the advancements made in this outcome, notable challenges and concerns exists in achieving the targets. With the increasing political volatility, the human rights situation continued to deteriorate,

with restrictions placed on fundamental freedoms such as the restrictions imposed on the freedom of assembly, expression and media. The judiciary, independent institutions, and law enforcement authorities continued to be perceived as biased. The external political environment remains fluid with strides made towards democratic consolidation being regressed. Therefore, results in the form of measurable change were less evident. Against this backdrop, the interventions contributed towards creating safe spaces for youth to discuss shared development challenges and steps towards strengthening the legal aid framework to cater for the most vulnerable groups.

1. Institutional capacities strengthened for implementation of legislative reform, oversight and local and national level evidenced based inclusive equitable and sustainable policies and planning (UNDP, ILO, UNICEF, WHO) (Output 1)

The Legal Aid Bill was drafted in partnership with the Attorney General's Office and is ready to be submitted to the Parliament. However, the bill was not submitted in 2017 due to the government priorities as well as limited political commitment towards the output. In addition to this, the parliament has been in a lock down and passing of legislature has come to a halt. As limited efforts can be made in partnership with the government on this area presently, UN is currently in working in partnership with the Maldives National University to establish components of clinical legal education which will contribute to pro bono legal services. Under the same outcome UN is also working towards implementing a paralegal system in the country based on the paralegal study recommendations to strengthen the legal aid framework.

Data on children supporting related to SDG indicators and sectoral needs are made available through updating of MaldivInfo database (LaamuInfo and AdduInfo developed), expansion of Maldives Child Protection database to additional Family and Children's Service Centers (FCSC) and making Maldives Education Management Information System functional providing real-time data on student teachers and parents. Furthermore, updated of equity profiles on child demography, education and child protection are used for policy advocacy, planning and shaping programme interventions. Further analysis of data was carried out using census 2014 data on children providing crucial information that will be used to inform the mid-term review of the UNDAF and agency programme documents. Technical support was provided to complete ongoing Demographic Health Survey and data analysis of Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Data from these sources together with data from administrative data will provide a good basis to report on SDG for children and women.

Following the decision of the government to work on the General Practitioner (GP) system in place of the Maldives Health Information System (MIHIS), UN has supported in trainings and piloting of the GP system in Laamu Atoll. Furthermore, since GP system is not a health information system but rather a referral system, UN advocated with Ministry of Health to start use of District Health Information System (DHIS II). Preliminary work is underway to start implementing DHIS II and the system will be piloted in 2018. Furthermore, support is being provided to strengthen the National Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) conditions in the port sector. Ministry of Health is working on establishing Health Workforce Registry by the end of 2018. This Registry will include workforce density of both public and private health sector workforce in one platform.

2. Civil society and vulnerable groups have enhanced capacities to engage, contribute & participate in national development processes (UNDP) (Output 2)

UN further strengthened the dialogue processes particularly for youth engagement through initiatives such as Film for Change where youth were encouraged to explore and engage in discussions about social issues through the medium of film, the social innovation camp-Miyaheli which provided a platform for youth from across the country to engage in the development process by developing 'untraditional solutions' to their everyday development challenges.

Similarly, Youth Leadership Programme was conducted which provided education and skill building opportunities for youth to help them become active citizens in their communities who lobby for issues that concerns them and works with the local authorities for inclusive development in their island. Additionally, a Community Champions Program was also piloted that empowered local actors to become responsible citizens and agents of change. This is evident through the participants' initiative to conduct a resource assessment following the community champions trainings.

As a follow up of the 2016, women leaders training a second training focused on the atoll of H.Dh. was conducted for potential candidates for the council elections of this year. While only one candidate was elected for a council seat, the trainings received positive feedback which has paved way for future interventions by UN focusing on capacity building of women to contest for councils and the parliament.

3. Mechanisms and frameworks developed to promote inclusive and sustainable growth, economic diversification, social protection and improved employment conditions for vulnerable groups (UNDP, IOM, ILO, UNICEF) (Output 3)

UN continued its support to National Social Protection Agency (NSPA) to strengthen the monitoring framework of social protection programme in order to increase efficiency and better targeting of vulnerable children. In this regards, monitoring trips were supported to Shaviyani and Addu City where 1,352 beneficiaries (including 687 children, 456 single parent's children and 809 persons with disability) received cash transfers from the 3 main schemes and were assessed (foster parents, single parents and disability allowance). Monitoring trips were instrumental in assessing the effects of cash transfer on vulnerable children benefitting cash transfers from Government. The assessment showed improvement in children's life in terms of accessing to basic social services. And in addition, the monitoring visit resulted in enhancement of the effectiveness of the targeting and a greater involvement of local councils in the coordination and implementation of inclusive social protection programme.

National Curriculum for Law Enforcement Agencies (Police, Immigration and Labour Relations Authority) was developed and finalized. A ToT was conducted on the curriculum and it is envisaged this curriculum will be incorporated into the formal training mechanisms of each agency, i.e., Institute for Law Enforcement Studies -ISLES. 8 Trainings out of 13 were completed for multi stakeholders in the islands. Due to time constraints prior to project closure all islands were not completed. Migration Profile, Situational Analysis on Migrant Health and Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Development Strategy were drafted and developed to strengthen national policies. Support was provided to enhance the capacity of Government on collection and understanding of Migration statistics.

4. State institutions and civil society have enhanced capacities to participate in intergovernmental & intragovernmental processes, harmonize international obligations into national policy framework and monitor and report progress (UNICEF) (Output 4)

There was limited progress in the planned activities of this area. The capacity needs assessment of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) will be conducted in 2018.

5. Governance systems enhanced for improved performance in health care delivery (WHO) (Output 5)

Renewed efforts are being applied to reinvigorate the cancer registry in the country.. Implementation of National Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) action plan is underway. As part of the implementation of the action plan a multi sectoral high-level steering committee for NCDs have been formed with the Minister of Health as Chair of the committee, with UN being a member of this steering committee. Package of essential non-communicable (PEN) diseases was adapted to Maldives with the support from UN. Trainings have been conducted and the PEN package rolled out in three different regions; Male', Addu and HaaAlif. Center for Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) has been engaged to develop a mobile PEN application that can be used country wide.

A multi-stakeholder, year-long NCD campaign has been launched called '25by25' that aims to reduce 25% of NCDs by 2025. The major NCD risk factors will be targeted with support from different stakeholders including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). As part of the NCD campaign, UN has supported procurement of outdoor gym equipment to promote regular physical activity.

Birth defects surveillance is strengthened in the country. Training of Trainers (ToT) on facility based newborn nursing was conducted and capacity building workshop on improvement of quality of care was supported. After the ToT the training has been conducted in five different regions with financial support from multiple UN agencies. For the first time in Maldives, World Prematurity Day was celebrated in November 2017. Every New Born Action Plan (ENAP) was launched during this event and data from birth defects database was also publicized.

Dengue is and the Aedes mosquito transmitting the disease is observed throughout the year. Partnership with Ministry of Environment and Energy and Ministry of Housing has been enhanced to better manage wastes to improve hygiene and reduce the number of dengue, diarrhea and other water borne diseases. The autoclave based medical waste management is under pilot study at the Laamu Atoll. Infrastructure to install and use autoclaves have been supported in all islands and health facility focal points were trained on use of autoclave and medical waste management. Maldives is a signatory to and committed to attaining the International Health Regulations 2005 proficiencies. A joint External Evaluation of the International Health Regulations 2005 was held in the Maldives in March 2017 and the recommendations are being implemented. Anti-microbial resistance (AMR) in Maldives is on the rise and an action plan to contain AMR has been launched. Another important document launched this year is the Food Safety Policy for 2017-2026, which is very important in a country highly dependent on imported food for daily consumptions. All health plans are implemented through a “One Health” approach.

UNDAF Outcome Area 4: Environment and Climate Change



Photo: Ashwa Faheem/ UNDP Maldives 2017

Inter-agency Outcome: 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 natural resource management.

In 2017 UN continued its partnership with the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) to promote climate resilience and disaster risk reduction (DRR) through adaptation and mitigation projects. The main reason for low delivery on proposed expenditure for 2017 was due to the delay in the start of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) project, aiming to provide climate resilient water resources to 49 islands. Originally planned to commence implementation in January 2017, the project document was only signed in May 2017 due to delays from GCF in finalizing the project's legal documents. The inception workshop was held in August and the implementation formally commenced in the last quarter of 2017. This was not sufficient time to move the larger infrastructure components that would account for the delivery projection.

Under the One UN joint programme Low Emission Climate Resilient Development (LECRd) small grants programme was completed and new solid waste management facilities construction was commenced. Some of the key highlights of the disaster risk reduction interventions for 2017 include the convening of first DRR national platform meeting in Maldives, reviving of the loss and damage database and establishment of emergency communication network across the country.

UN together with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), developed the LaamuInfo database, an indicator based database adopted from the DevInfo technology. This database provides data for the development

of Island Development Plan and other planning process within the councils and other institutions. The user-friendly interface, powerful presentation function and report formulation tool enables easy data analyzing. More than 112 indicators and more than 2,707 data values are available in LaamuInfo from: 5 National Censuses, 25 years of Statistics, 8 National Surveys and Tsunami four years' report.

The online platform - Laamu Kosharu - to enter island level administrative data is now available for managing data. The system allows island and atoll councils to compile administrative data from different sectors such as population, health, energy, agriculture, and food security. The database facilitates analyses, ensure safe and secure storage of data, and renders data accessible to all. The tool once populated with data will support evidence-based decision-making process and should feed data into the Island and Atoll Development Plans.

Extensive support was provided to implement the environment health and climate change and health agenda in Maldives. This included undertaking a Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment (V&A) to health impacts of climate change in the Maldives in Laamu Atoll based on which Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment and Energy have devised and implemented mitigation measures. Technical support was provided for resilience strengthening interventions in the hospital sectors. This was carried out through technical support to conduct a survey of health facilities vulnerability to disasters. In partnership with Maldives Red Crescent (MRC), the UN supported first aid training was conducted for 36 participants from Laamu Atoll and first aid kits were procured. Guidelines for health facilities on mass casualty management, disaster preparedness and response capacity was developed along with simulation exercise for disaster risk reduction. Epidemiological analysis, utilization and dissemination of disease data training workshop was conducted for 30 health care professionals from all atolls.

Water quality monitoring and surveillance guidelines were developed, appropriate water testing kits were identified for procurement and train health workers to use the kits, and training was conducted for implementation of the water quality surveillance system. This initiative was undertaken in close coordination with Laamu Atoll island councils, health centers, schools, hospitals, Ministry of Environment and Energy and Ministry of Health. Relatedly, a guide to safe and secure rainwater harvesting in the Maldives has been developed as a reference and training resource for health personnel, Island Council's, schools and communities to enable proper water quality management and resilience of rainwater supply management during low rainfall periods.

To reduce the risk of improper handling of healthcare waste in Maldives, Health Protection Agency was supported to develop the Healthcare Waste Management (HCWM) Policy and Strategy for the country. Health Care waste management site was inaugurated in Laamu Atoll Hospital as the first pilot.

All facets of a public health response to a dengue outbreak have been addressed in Laamu Atoll including community outreach, surveillance, diagnostic testing, medical care and vector control. Given the climatic vulnerability of the nation and abundance of vector, a vector control nationwide campaign was launched jointly with Ministry of Health to create more awareness.

Solar Power feasibility assessment for the health facilities in Laamu atoll was conducted. The information obtained has been evaluated and analyzed, and proposals for energy saving measures have been identified and proposed.

1. Strengthened, effective and accessible knowledge-based mechanisms that incorporate relevant sector data (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, UNOPS, UN Women, WHO) (Output 1)

Tools were provided for data collection to strengthen agriculture statistics in Laamu atoll. Through this initiative 170 people from 6 islands of Laamu atoll were trained, including farmers and local councils staff. However, the use of the tools by the community needs to be further improved. In addition, UN through the Global Strategy to Improve Agriculture and Rural Statistics initiative has developed a Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Statistics (SPARS) which aims to assist the country to improve the data collection process, analysis as well as use of the data.

2. Key tools are introduced so that development issues are effectively coordinated, and promote ecosystem-based environmental and economic sustainability (UNDP, WHO, UN Women, FAO, UNOPS) (Output 2)

Small grants project awarded and monitored to support solutions for natural resources, ecosystems services, chemicals and waste. All 15 small grants have been completed and closed. Some of the learning of the small grants projects are that there is a need to increase capacities especially in women led projects especially in reporting and documentation processes. Additionally, the sustainability of small grants projects needs to be identified and addressed at the outset.

Preparation was done for the Project Document for Eliminating Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) through Sound Management of Chemicals. Local development planning methodology was revised with tools to include low carbon, climate resiliency and gender equality elements. Eight out of eleven development plans in Laamu Atoll have been prepared using evidence and participatory processes. All planning methodologies were revised to include principles of climate change, disaster risk reduction and gender equality and relevant trainings and tools were provided to councils from all atolls of the country.

A tariff evaluation criteria and tariff setting guidelines have been designed and introduced. The Green Climate Fund project commenced in the last quarter of 2017. Institutional coordination and accountability mechanisms between the utility companies, National Disaster Management Center (NDMC), Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE), Local Government Authority (LGA) and councils was strengthened to facilitate cost-effective and timely water supply during dry season.

Detailed survey maps, data sets and reports have been completed for the entire Laamu atoll. These maps make up 90% of the work required to formulate land use plans for all islands. The information has been verified and shared with Maldives Land Survey Authority (MLSA), MEE and Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure along with all local councils for further action.

Solar panels were installed and trainings conducted in late 2016. However, the required approvals from Maldives Energy Authority and Fenaka is still not in place and hence the systems have been handed over to MEE for further action. Green medical waste technology has been piloted in Laamu atoll under LECReD programme. This is a huge step in ensuring that health care wastes are disposed properly in an environment friendly and sustainable manner.

532 farmers were trained on climate smart agriculture in 7 islands of Laamu Atoll of which 54% are women farmers. This support will be continued through extension and assisting farmers to adopt good agriculture practices to promote environment sustainability in farming. Investment has also been made for training

Maldivian farmers and service providers on Integrated Pest Management which gives a key focus on eco-friendly management of key pests and diseases in horticultural crops. The current pest control measures adopted by the farmers are risky both to the environment and farmers' health due to excessive use of chemical pesticides.

3. Output 4.3: National and local-level systems are enhanced to prepare for, respond to 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 (UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, IOM, FAO) (Output 3)

During 2017, support was provided to National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) to strengthen national and local capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies and natural hazards exacerbated by climate change.

In this regard, UN provided technical assistance to NDMC through a national consultant, which improved its capacity to better plan, coordinate, implement and monitor activities under the joint annual work plan (2017/2018). With UN's support, NDMC was able to develop the conceptual framework required to establish Community Emergency Response Team (CERTs), as the primary responders to address climate hazards and emergencies locally. The conceptual framework which has been nationally validated and endorsed includes the training needs of CERTs including emergency preparedness planning, first aid and flood mitigation.

UN Maldives provided support to NDMC to review national guidelines on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) planning continuing its support from 2016, to carry out CBDRM exercises in all 11 inhabited islands in the Laamu Atoll, under the One UN joint programme Low Emission Climate Resilient Development (LECRD). From the disaster management (DM) plans and the vulnerability and capacity assessments done in each island, NDMC will develop the atoll DM plan and Atoll Disaster Outlook (report) which is a first for an atoll in the Maldives. These 2 documents would provide extensive information on the capacities and challenges within the atoll, including the capacities built through LECReD programme, island-hazard profiles and how DM, emergency preparedness/response planning for climate-induced and man-made hazards have been incorporated into the island development planning process through policy change efforts carried out by UN agencies party to the joint programme.

Additionally, with support from regional emergency funds, UN is working with the NDMC, the Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF), Faafu Atoll Council and the Island Council of Nilandhoo island to establish a Regional Emergency Response Centre (RERC) in Nilandhoo, which would become the central hub for atoll-level emergency preparedness and response (for man-made and natural hazards). The center would house a well-trained, 19-member (young men and women) Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and be equipped with fire/emergency response gear to address emergencies within the atoll without requiring central government support. The RERC is expected to provide support to all 5 islands in Faafu atoll and nearby islands from neighboring Dhaalu atoll, making the RERC pivotal in the work supported by the UN to institutionalise national emergency planning/response. The Nilandhu Island Council is currently developing plans to engage schools and youth within the atoll through the RERC to carry out resilience building activities including child-led hazard mapping and response actions so facilitate children to become agents of change on disaster risk reduction.

Preparedness and response capacities to emergencies have been strengthened through set up of Health Emergency Operations Center at Ministry of Health. Four sets of Interagency Emergency Health Kits (IEHK) have been prepositioned in strategic locations in the country. Each kit can support health care to 10,000 people for 3 months during emergencies. Health Emergency Operation Plan (HEOP) has been developed to guide emergency operations of the health sector. Health teams of 7 Atolls have been trained to respond to emergencies and 7 Hospital Emergency Response Plans have been developed and drills were completed.

Through the LECReD programme, capacity of Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) was strengthened to carry out water safety planning. Water, sanitation and hygiene awareness in Laamu atoll was enhanced and water-testing equipment (H2S testing kits) were prepositioned in all 11 islands in Laamu atoll allowing the communities to carry out water testing prior to household rainwater harvesting. This adaptation measure would allow communities to overcome the challenges in water harvesting to prepare for the lengthened dry period.

A Geographic Information System (GIS) was piloted to generate island and atoll level maps for informed decision making and to incorporate crowd sourced data for informed decision making. Disaster management resource toolkit was developed, printed and disseminated for island councils. Back-up early warning and emergency communication system was established for the dissemination of early warning to atoll councils. Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) were strengthened through provision of disaster response equipment (flood drainage pump equipment). Early warning system was established on the basis of forecasted meteorological information for water emergency alerts and effective operation of integrated water systems. Disaster loss database to Maldives was revived and customized to collect and analyze disaster loss data. National forum was continued for disaster management key stakeholders and atoll and island level focal points. Hospital Emergency Readiness Training and Rapid Response trainings continued to be conducted at different atoll hospitals to strengthen community and hospital response to emergencies and disasters.

4. Results in cross-cutting areas

1. Gender Equality

The aspects of gender equality were mainstreamed within the different initiatives of the UNDAF outcome areas of Youth and Children, Gender, Governance and Environment and Climate Change. Some of these initiatives and their results are summarized below:

Young girls and respective communities were inspired through the support to the “Girls Lead Initiative” of the Ministry of Gender and Family. In this programme thirty girls from high schools and colleges were paired with leading female professionals from both public and private institutions. This paved way to provide information to the girls and their communities on the non-traditional leadership roles and decision making of women in the society.

Young women are given special focus on interventions related to sexual and reproductive health. This is highlighted in advocacy efforts to ensure their potential is fulfilled through increased access to education and services. The incorporation of these issues within some of the school curriculum as well as the mobile application, Siththaa, promote gender equality and raise awareness on gender-based violence prevention.

To strengthen the policy framework for Gender Equality, Ministry of Gender & Family was supported to develop the National Gender Policy and the Gender Equality Action Plan in line with the Gender Equality Law. In addition, the capacity of agencies working towards addressing sexual and gender-based violence and supporting women in accessing justice particularly in domestic violence matters were strengthened. The #anhenVERIN campaign was launched to advocate and lobby for greater representation of women in the public and political sphere. The campaign was rolled out during the Local Council Elections and messages were disseminated on social media promoting more women role models as decision makers.

Data and analysis was utilized to highlight the gender disparities through evidence and data generated to monitor SDGs. In addition, advocacy with relevant stakeholders was initiated to bring the attention to change social norms on women's right and Islam.

The community-based disaster risk management exercises were supported through the Low Emission Climate Resilient Development (LECRd) programme. This initiative was geared towards the participation of women and youth, as they are more vulnerable (including children) to climate hazards. The consultative training regime of the exercises allowed for women and youth to understand the risks they were posed with in an island context and allowed them to build their capacity to address those, based on available resources. Efforts were put to target and promote the participation of women in the outreach capacity building activities and therefore 54% of the participants in the training program was women.

2. Human Rights

The Human Rights Up Front initiative continued to be a key area of intervention for the UNCT Maldives in 2017. Continuing from 2016, the four Joint Work Plans formulated under UNDAF 2016-2020 reflected the key recommendations from UPR and other human rights mechanisms that the UN agencies were supporting to implement.

On the basis of the Human Rights Framework launched by the Government in December 2016, the formulation of the National Human Rights Action Plan was carried out in 2017. Technical and financial support was provided by the UN to draft the NHRAP. UN agencies fully engaged within the national steering committee for NHRAP with input sought from OHCHR Regional Office in Bangkok and the UNDG Senior Regional Human Rights Adviser. The final NHRAP that reflects recommendations from international human rights mechanisms was validated in July 2017 and awaits endorsement of the Cabinet.

Advocacy efforts were made internationally and locally, regarding the government's decision to implement the death penalty in 2017 after 62 years of moratorium. Lines of communication through the Secretary General, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights appealed Maldives to abide by international law and to uphold the right of every person. Locally, starting from August 2017, the social media messaging regarding death penalty was recommenced. Alongside, efforts were made to conduct meetings government counterparts in order to raise concerns.

Child rights as enshrined in the Conventions of the Rights of the Child (CRC) was at the core of the sustained advocacy to expedite the passage of the two key legislations – the Juvenile Justice Bill, and Child Rights, Child Care and Protection Bill. The education sector brought equity in access to education by creating new learning opportunities for adolescents who are out of school including those in conflict with the law. The new alternative learning program initiated by national partners with support from UN in 2017 has so far benefited 43 incarcerated adolescents.

The health sector identified malnourished children and newborn who loses their lives within the first 28 days of their birth as most vulnerable groups of children. UN's new partnership with the Care Society resulted in the production of behavioral change communication materials for the inclusion of children with disabilities. Violence against Children (VaC) is one of the key issues contributing to the vulnerabilities of children. Victims of violence, more specifically victims of sexual abuse, are among the most vulnerable children as they are often further subjected to stigma and left without adequate care and remedy. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health information and services is now mandated by the Gender Equality Law, gender policy as well as the National Human Rights Framework and is used widely in UN's advocacy efforts to promote reproductive health and rights.

3. Sustainable Development Goals

Maldives is still in the initial stages of localizing the SDGs. Continuing the strong partnership in 2016, the UN SDG Working Group worked closely with the main Government coordinating body, the SDG Division of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, for the Agenda 2030 and SDGs. In 2017, with support from UN agencies in New York, the Government of Maldives presented a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. To enhance the awareness of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) of Agenda 2030 and SDGs, information sessions were held in different locations in Maldives, covering multiple atolls and more than 100 CSOs. In October 2017, a national CSO Forum was convened by UN in partnership with the Government with participation from CSOs that are based in different islands of the country. During this forum an action plan was developed by the CSOs incorporating their commitments for SDG awareness raising and implementation. As a result of this engagement, now civil society is included in the national SDGs technical committee. This contributed to creating an effective and transparent mechanism for civil society in national development.

During October, the SDG Division together with the UN Foundation and UN conducted a 3-day media training program to further increase the understanding of journalists on climate issues and sustainability priorities in the Maldives. During the last quarter of 2017, a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) of SDGs in Maldives was carried out to gauge the challenges in place for SDG implementation in Maldives. In this analysis, some identified challenges include the lack of proper systems in place, lack of coordination between government entities and unwillingness of government agencies to share information. This analysis has been presented to the Government and awaits endorsement.

Following the trend in 2016, the activities of the new two-year rolling Joint Work Plans 2017-2018 were aligned to the SDGs so that progress/contributions can be monitored. A social media campaign around the favorite SDGs of the UNCT, staff, partners are ongoing every Thursday.

SDGs for children, launched in 2016, with child-focused targets instrumental to ensure children remained in the national development agenda continued to be at the core of child-focused interventions. Sensitization of the general public was enhanced through the Nirakun campaign which came out with the vision of young girls for 2030, in particular on SDGs 3, 5, 10, 16 and 17. Partnership with JCI Kaafu was initiated on youth peace and security. The child-focused programmes promoted the respective SDG targets within SDGs 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, such as those related to breast feeding, early childhood development, tackling malnutrition, neonatal mortality reduction, immunization, child protection and safety. Several interventions to raise awareness on SDGs, particular girls were held starting from handing over letters to

the Minister of Education on aspiration of 10-year old girls and quizzes on SDGs in three schools. These interventions help the younger generation to understand what SDGs mean to their lives.

The first sectoral workshop “Sustainable Development Goals-Core Health Indicators” was convened in partnership with the Ministry of Health and participated by relevant stakeholders from 28 organizations. The workshop proposed the monitoring and evaluation framework to implement the SDGs with focus on health at the core of these goals and through a multi-sectoral one health approach. SDG monitoring is well incorporated into the Health Master Plan for 2016-2025.

The UN also supported the Government to develop capacities in data management and evidence-based planning and on a joint project on data innovation, where we have started to assess and pilot monitoring of SDG indicators using alternative sources of data. The projects are underway to explore avenues to work in this area with the telecom partners and utility companies in the Maldives. Moreover, support was provided to strengthen island level availability of administrative records which will help to support the SDG monitoring in the future.

5. Financial Performance in 2017

Outcome Area	UN Agency	Budget for 2017 (in USD)	Fund Utilization (Jan-Dec 2017) (in USD)	Implementation Rate (100*Utilization/Budget)
Outcome 1: Youth & Children	UNICEF*	\$891,703	\$1,184,824	132.87%
	UNFPA	\$284,100	\$242,361	85.31%
	WHO	\$44,436	\$44,436	100%
	UNESCO	-	-	-
Outcome 2: Gender	UN Women	\$34,077	\$30,412	89%
	UNICEF	\$10,000	\$10,000	100%
	UNFPA	\$213,033	\$157,405	74%
	UNDP	\$80,500	\$58,500	73%
	WHO	-	-	-
Outcome 3: Governance	UNDP	\$714,567	\$669,806	94%
	UNICEF	\$194,142	\$152,904	79%
	WHO*	\$81,125	\$270,162	333%
	IOM	\$76,350	\$50,600	66%
	ILO	\$40,000	\$21,377	53%
Outcome 4: Environment & Climate Change	UNDP	\$8,304,790.00	\$2,791,771.02	33.62%
	UNFPA	\$62,231.50	\$41,532.59	66.74%
	UN Women	\$88,680	\$88,661.09	99.98%
	UNICEF	\$143,000	\$85,290	59.64%
	WHO	\$173,150	\$173,150.00	100.00%
	FAO*	\$75,000	\$130,332	173.78%
Total		\$10,010,740	\$10,301,469	82%

*Note: The implementation rates of these agencies are more than 100% because more funds were received or mobilized within 2017 compared to the initially estimated budgets.

6. Review of the UN Inter-Agency Groups

In absence of the comprehensive requirement for UNDAF Midterm Review, UN Country Team convened an internal workshop to review two years of UNDAF implementation. A one-day workshop was held on 11 April 2018, to critically review the results and resources framework, financing and monitoring of the UNDAF. All UN Inter-Agency groups identified strength and weaknesses and agreed on the action points for the improvement of each groups for better coordination and functioning. The results were presented at a UN County team convened on 30 April, which will subsequently be presented to the UNDAF Steering committee for discussion and agreement of way forward.

7. Challenges in 2017, Lessons learned and way forward

The UN in Maldives in partnership with Government, civil society, private sector and other development partners implemented diverse programmes by utilizing expertise of the UN agencies in 2017. Below are some of the challenges faced in 2017 and the proposed strategies to overcome and recommended ways forward.

Coordination & joint efforts

Internal coordination between the UN agencies can be improved to enforce our joint efforts towards UNDAF outcome. Similarly, coordination with other partners, especially the Government and CSOs needs to be reviewed for better coordination and results.

Data management & monitoring systems

Lack of data, research and capacity to undertake data analysis remained a challenge. More advocacy to ensure that evidence-based decision making is instituted within the local councils is important. The culture of using evidence to inform planning needs to be cultivated using the existing databases. Concurrently, more resources need to be allocated to monitor service delivery and its effectiveness. This supplemented by strengthened processes will help to increase accountability of institutions.

Changing political environment

Numerous developments in the political situation impacts the planned interventions with some of the state institutions within the governance and gender outcomes. Hence, grass-root level interventions are being increased, civil society capacity is being strengthened and new initiatives are being planned with private sector institutions.

Capacity gaps and sustainability of interventions

Frequent changes in the public institutions, especially at the senior management levels, effects the sustainability of the work and institutional memory. Capacity gaps beyond the scope of interventions also affect the effective application of knowledge, in some areas. This can be addressed by supporting the Government to institutionalizing the programme outcomes to enhance institutional memory.

Alternatively, innovative mechanisms, such as forming civil society advisory groups to strengthen the sectoral ministries can address some of these challenges.

Addressing sensitive issues

Sensitivity on sexual and reproductive health and gender issues remains a challenge and requires a progressive discourse to support the issues from a religious perspective. Concerted effort from all UN agencies is needed to support Government and civil society in this issue to ensure the space for the dialogue remain open. There is also a need to invest time to develop evidence-based positive messages using sociocultural examples and use them in advocacy efforts. An alternative approach to reach young people on sensitive issues would be to integrate such issues within other broader but related thematic interventions.

Implementation of laws and policies

Further resources need to be allocated and capacity and accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened for the proper implementation of some of the laws and policies to benefit rights holders, especially the most marginalized populations. This will enable rights holders to benefit meaningfully from implementation laws and policies. Furthermore, awareness needs to be increased amongst public on laws and policies so that they can have a greater voice and participation.

Enhanced partnership with civil society

More platforms need to be established for civil society, young people, women, communities residing outside of Male' and migrant workers to take part in an inclusive, participatory and transparent development. There is need to establish more permanent mechanisms for ensuring engagement, participation and contribution of these important and vulnerable groups.