



# Millennium Development Goals

Maldives Country Report 2007



Government of Maldives

Ministry of Planning and National Development



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*Publisher:*

Ministry of Planning and National Development

Male', Maldives

Tel : +960 334 8383

email: [info@planning.gov.mv](mailto:info@planning.gov.mv)

Internet: <http://www.planning.gov.mv>

*Design and layout by:*

Ahmed Shaig

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# Foreword by the Minister of Planning and National Development

This report updates and extends the analysis presented in the first Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report of the Maldives and identifies the present areas of high concern. Using the latest data from Census 2006 and other reliable sources, the report tracks the progress of Maldives on 13 MDG targets and assesses whether the Maldives will achieve the targets by 2015. The results are highly promising. Rapid progress has been made on poverty, education and health targets. Significant improvement is seen on empowerment of women as well. The tough challenges are in sustaining the achievements, and in reaching the nutrition target and environment targets.

I am confident that this update provides useful information for policy debate on priorities for achieving the MDGs. I trust this report will also help policy makers to sustain the momentum in pursuit of goals.

This report places emphasis on Population and Development Consolidation as the way forward. Substantial investments are needed to bring further reductions in neo-natal mortality and address high risk pregnancies. To improve the quality of education the shift system in schools needs to be phased out and requires significant human as well as physical resources. To eradicate extreme poverty we have to create new job opportunities and build human resources to embrace those opportunities. Sustained investments at such magnitude will not be feasible and effective unless population is consolidated in larger and safer islands where economies of scale exist.

On the nutrition front, transaction costs are making fruits and vegetables highly expensive. The high cost of nutritious food coupled with present dietary habits makes addressing child malnutrition a particular challenge. However, the experience we have gained through achieving progress in other areas makes us confident that with careful policy analysis and diligent commitment we can overcome the nutrition challenge by 2015.

The environmental sustainability goal presents us an entirely different set of issues. The causes of the significant environmental threats we face are beyond our control and occur outside our national boundaries. The option for us to tackle global climate change and sea level rise is adaptation. I believe that Population and Development Consolidation is a key avenue to make our islands safe and resilient against climate change. As highlighted in the Maldives Partnership Forum held in June 2007, the Government of Maldives needs substantial additional assistance to make the islands of the Maldives safe against future sea level rise.

This report presents a comprehensive national picture of where we stand now in achieving MDGs. I extend appreciation and special thanks to Mr. Partice Coeur Bizot, the UN Resident Coordinator and the members of the United Nations System in the Maldives for their continuing support to make the policy makers and the public informed and inspired about MDGs. I hope this report will be an important resource to mobilize further support and efforts for MDG achievement.

I call upon all to reenergise the successful strategies, realign policies, and build up synergy in the implementation of development programmes. As we enter the second half of our journey towards Millennium Development Goals, let us work together to revive the spirit of optimism, commitment and national unity in achieving these goals.



Hamdun Hameed

# Message from the United Nations Resident Coordinator to the Maldives

The Second MDG Progress Report is significant as it comes after the country has experienced the devastation of the tsunami and it is mid-point into the global target of achieving the goals by 2015.

The Report shows that while the country was able to recover quickly from the impacts of the disaster, the tsunami exposed the extreme vulnerability of the country. There is, therefore, the need to build the capacity of the country to cope and manage emergencies so as to be able to achieve the MDGs by the target date.

Mid-point to the target date, the country is generally on track in achieving the MDGs, although challenges remain to achieve the goals on gender and environment. According to the Report, the poorer are now less poor, but income inequality is rising and, alarmingly, one out of four children is still malnourished. Universal primary school enrolment has been met, but achievement levels fall short of expectation. While gender parity has been achieved in education and proportion of women in paying jobs is increasing, men still dominate decision-making.

The challenge is also to sustain the goals that have been met, such as child mortality, since data shows slipping from the target; or in reducing maternal mortality, since focus on adolescent reproductive health needs is required. Further, the country is on track in the eradication of communicable diseases such as malaria and TB, but there are emerging diseases that have to be addressed.

Meeting the environment goals is especially critical to the country, considering the heavy reliance of the Maldivian economy to its environmental resources. Vulnerability of the country to the effects of climate change is becoming more pronounced. The rapid urbanization of the capital Male' surely poses another challenge for the future.

The Second MDG Report emphasizes the urgent attention needed to improving global partnerships for development. The country's graduation from LDC to middle-income country status, debt sustainability, and expansionary budget policies have to be seriously considered.

The Report is also commendable for attempting to identify other relevant local indicators to make a more thorough analysis of the country's MDG progress, and for recognizing that adequate monitoring systems for key indicators, such as tracking contraceptive prevalence rate for unmarried women, need to be in place.

Finally, UN Maldives congratulates the MPND for drafting the second MDG report in collaboration with stakeholders. The Ministry should be commended for its continuing MDG monitoring, especially with the use of the MaldivInfo.

The 7th National Development Plan containing the country's roadmap to meeting the MDGs, confirms the Government's commitment to achieving the MDGs. The Report highlights NDP implementation, particularly the Population Consolidation policy and development of regional centers, to meet the goals.

The Report launching also coincides with the new harmonized programming cycle for the UN system in the Maldives. The Millennium Declaration/MDGs is the fundamental framework of our programming documents - the UN Development Assistance Framework 2008-2010, Country Programme Documents, and Country Programme Action Plans/ Assistance Strategies.

We hope that this Report will stir debate, dialogue and, importantly, inform decision-making and action among all sectors. Meeting the goals requires multi-sectoral commitment –

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