

Gender Equality Strategy

UNDP Maldives

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acclab	Accelerator Lab
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CO	Country Office
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FLC	Family Legal Clinic
FPA	Family Protection Authority
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GES	Gender Equality Strategy
GFT	Gender Focal Team
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IGP	Integrated Governance Portfolio
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRRF	Integrated Results and Resources Framework
LPAC	Limited Project Appraisal Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoGFSS	Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services
NEET	Neither in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RCC	Resilience and Climate Change
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SES	Social and Environmental Screening
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for the Advancement of Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WDCs	Women Development Committees

1. Introduction

The Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2023 – 2026 of UNDP Maldives is futuristic and looking to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in a digital era that is fast advancing. Though living amidst uncertain times of the post pandemic era of COVID-19, Maldives has moved beyond along a more strategic path of recovery. Though the development context has changed, with a few steps in advancing gender equality, key gender inequalities that confronted Maldives 8 years ago during the formulation of UNDP Maldives first Gender Equality Strategy 2016 -2018 still remain to a large extent today with women in Parliament at 4.6%, labour force participation rate of women at 45.6% and for men is 77.1% and with more women in tertiary education, but not entering the labour force. Despite more women being educated at tertiary level, women still earn less than men by 34% (HIES survey 2019) across the nation. The same survey also show that percentage of NEET (18 –35) is also higher for women at 31% compared to 12%% for men in the capital city of Male, while the same parameter is particularly higher in the Atolls of Maldives (50% for women compared to 19% for men) highlighting the particularly challenging circumstances faced by the remote communities.

The Global Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 recognizes the lethargy and scattered nature of progress made on gender equality and is challenging UNDP programmes and projects worldwide to change our paradigms and shift our stand on business as usual on gender equality and empowerment of women. At the global level, in many countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a regression/backlash and the widening of the gender gap largely in relation to the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women, increase in unemployment of women including the feminization of poverty and the prevalence of GBV. Maldives too is confronted with the rise of fundamental extremist conservative attitudes that sees gender equality as the central aspects for the incompatibility of human rights with Islam.¹ This has triggered a backlash on gender equality, signalling a dangerous trend where equal rights of women within the family have declined.²

UNDP Maldives recognizes that **bold strides** need to be taken to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women if Maldives is to advocate to dismantle the strong negative narrative on gender equality and the rights of women - to achieve the sustainable development goals and the 2030 Agenda in the next 7 years. Programmatically UNDP Maldives has already set in motion several bold measures, which in the next four years, as visioned in the new global GES will “help governments shift systems and power structures that generate gender inequalities and women’s disempowerment (UNDP,2022).” The institutional transformation that would support these bold measures have already begun at UNDP Maldives and is strengthened through the gender seal journey of the CO including its programmatic directions visioning transformative gender results.

The second Gender Equality Strategy of UNDP Maldives is aligned to the fourth global Gender Equality Strategy of UNDP (2022 – 2025)³, UNDP Strategic Plan (2022 - 2025)⁴ the Country Programme

¹ Human Rights Commission of Maldives, 2021. Reflecting 15 years: The Rights Side of Life Survey 2020, UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/maldives/publications/reflecting-15-years-rights-side-life-survey-2020>. Country Programme Document for Maldives (2022–2026) | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

² According to the 2019 Right side of life study a decline is observed in responses relating to the “equal rights in the family” to a low 7.4% in comparison to 74.1% in 2011 and an even high level of 85.4% in 2005. This decline is more adverse by gender where only 3.1% of women in 2019 considered women should have equal rights in the family in comparison to 80.7% of women in 2011. Human Rights Commission of Maldives, 2021. Reflecting 15 years: The Rights Side of Life Survey 2020, UNDP.

<https://www.undp.org/maldives/publications/reflecting-15-years-rights-side-life-survey-2020>

³ [UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 EN 0 \(1\).pdf](#)

⁴ [UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 | United Nations Development Programme](#)

Document of UNDP Maldives 2022-2026,⁵ the National Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2019-2023 for Maldives, the National Gender Equality Action Plan,⁶ the Common Country Analysis (CCA)⁷ and the United Nations Sustainable Development Contribution Framework (UNSDCF)⁸ for Maldives which recognizes the importance of partnering with UN agencies to address gender inequalities and to strengthen the empowerment of women and girls.

UNDP's approach to gender mainstreaming is two-fold: where it supports the empowerment of women and girls through targeted gender-specific interventions, and where it addresses gender concerns in planning, implementing and evaluating all policies and programmes. UNDP's gender mainstreaming approach is articulated in the global Gender Equality Strategy which is spread across the 5 Signature Solutions of the Strategic Plan on poverty and inequality; governance; resilience; environment; energy; and the 6th Signature Solution which is a standalone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women. UNDP will be led by the *three directions of systemic change* (contained in UNDP's Strategic Plan as well as global Gender Equality Strategy), namely *structural transformations, leave no one behind and building resilience* which are fundamental for gender equality. Aligned with UNDP's Strategic Plan, *enablers* are capacities and approaches to scale up development impact for country partners and within UNDP. To achieve this Gender Equality Strategy, UNDP Maldives will pursue three enablers: finance, digitalization and innovation as per the global Gender Equality Strategy and UNDP Strategic Plan.

UNDP Maldives with 45 years of experience working with the Government of Maldives, Civil Society Organizations including women's groups and private sector is looking to further strengthen, strategize and consolidate its efforts on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as well as engaging with men and boys as agents of transformative change. The formulation of a second Gender Equality Strategy cements the commitment of the country office to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in a challenging context.

⁵ [Country Programme Document for Maldives \(2022–2026\) | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

⁶ [GEAPFinal.pdf \(gender.gov.mv\)](#)

⁷ [CCA Maldives 2022.DOC](#)

⁸ [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Maldives \(UNSDCF\) 2022 - 2026 | United Nations in Maldives](#)

2. Context Analysis

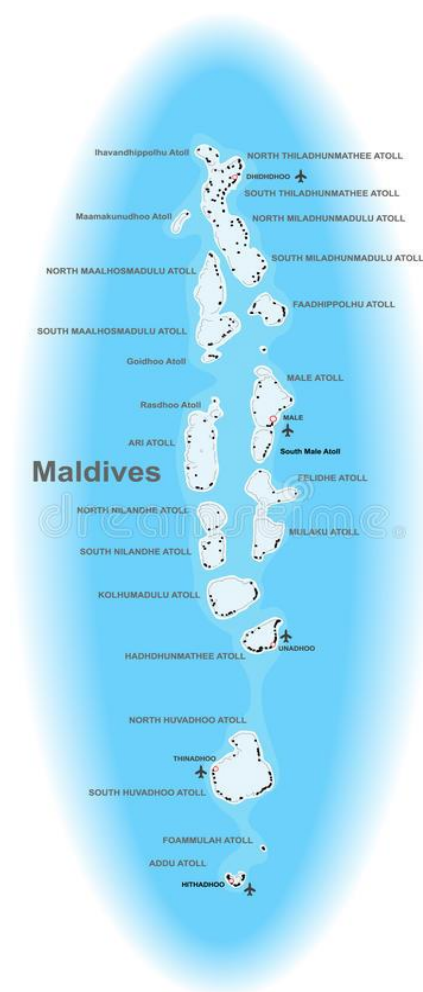


Figure 1 Map of Maldives

The Maldives a South Asian nation of 1,192 small islands, of which 187 are inhabited islands with 155 tourist resort islands, is categorized into 20 atolls spread over 90,000 km² in the Indian Ocean. The country is categorized as an Upper Middle-Income country with a GDP per capita of (current US\$) 10,366 (2021) with flourishing tourist industry (contributing 23% of GDP) being the key driver of economic growth, followed by the fishing industry and to a lesser extent by the services sector.⁹ The resident population of Maldives in 2022 was 579,330 of which 64% (371,491) are male and 36% (207,911) female.¹⁰ The gender imbalance is largely due to the resident migrant population being largely male. The resident Maldivian population in 2022 has a greater gender balance and stood at 392,039 of which 51% (200,892) are male and 49% (191,147) are female. Maldives being a small island developing state (SIDS) is challenged with the rise in ocean levels, land issues and is among the highest densely populated nations with population density of 1,736.74 per square kilometre.¹¹ People in Maldives enjoy a relatively high life expectancy rate with more women living longer (81 years) than men (79 years).

Maldives ranks 90 with a value of 0.747 in the Human Development Index 2021-22 (HDI) and is categorized as a high human development country. As per the Gender Development Index 2021 which measures female to male HDI values, Maldives has a value of 0.925 and is placed in Group 3 (out of five groups) which indicates medium equality in HDI achievement between women and men. When considering the Gender Inequality Index (GII) 2021, based on three dimensions of gender-based inequalities – reproductive health,

empowerment, and economic activity/ labour market Maldives ranks 83 (with a value of 0.348) out of 191 countries.¹²

In the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) 2022 developed by the World Economic Forum, looking at economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment Maldives has risen to the 117th rank (score 0.648) in 2022 from 128th rank (score 0.642) in 2021 out of 146 countries. When analysing the 2020 score and 2021 score there is a slight improvement in the economic participation and opportunity levels which has led to the overall narrowing of the gender gap, while the other sub-categories reflect a similar score as last year.¹³ The data in 2020 and 2021 presents a mixed picture of the status of gender equality in Maldives, in which while women have basic capabilities with access to education and health, they continue to face structural barriers and inequalities, grounded in cultural, religious and attitudinal biases that limit their full engagement in the political and economic spheres.

⁹ National Bureau of Statistics Maldives, 2020. National Multidimensional Poverty in the Maldives 2020.

https://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/nbs/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Multidimensional-Poverty-in-Maldives-2020_4th-june.pdf

¹⁰ Maldives Bureau of Statistics > International Women's Day 2022 (statisticsmaldives.gov.mv)

¹¹ Maldives Population Density 1950-2023 | MacroTrends

¹² UNDP, 2022. Human Development Report 2021-22 [hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf](https://hdr2021-22pdf.1.pdf) (undp.org)

¹³ World Economic Forum, 2022. The Global Gender Gap Report 2022. [WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf](https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022) (weforum.org)

A significant drawback to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Maldives was highlighted by the third ‘Right Side of Life Survey’¹⁴ carried out in 2019, where a decline of the rights of women and gender equality has been observed due to the large non-response rate (87.8%) (mostly by women) to questions posed on, if they believed women should have equal rights in the family. Most respondents refused to answer this question or said they did not understand it. This is indeed worrying and indicated a decline over the years in support for equal rights of women within the family. A key aspect linked to this decline is that religious extremist standpoint is associated with the rejection/ moving away from gender equality and the rights of women as the survey notes gender equality as the most cited cause for incompatibility of human rights with Islam.

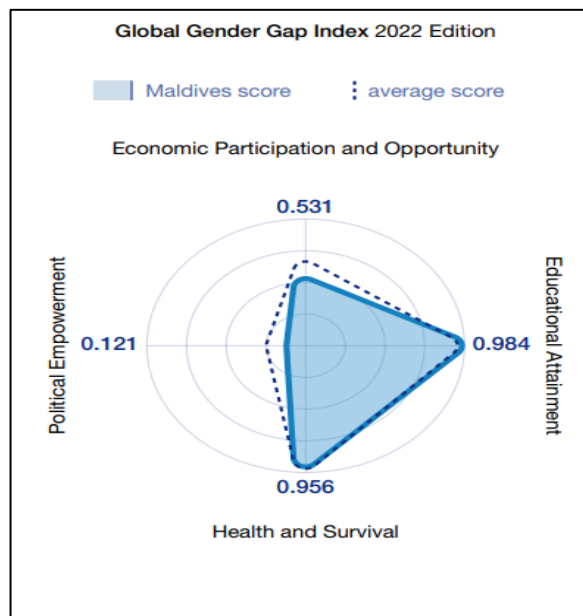


Figure 2 - Global Gender Gap Index 2022, World Economic Forum

2.1 Gender Equality Standards adopted by Maldives

The Constitution of the Republic of Maldives, which was ratified in 2008 is the supreme law of the country. The Maldives is a “sovereign, independent, democratic Republic based on the principles of Islam, with citizens being exclusively Muslim. Under the 2008 Constitution, executive power is vested with the President, all legislative power with the People’s Majlis (the Parliament) and Judicial power with the Courts in the Maldives.¹⁵

Gender equality is engraved into the Constitution under Article 17(a) which stipulates non-discrimination of any kind, “including race, national origin, colour, sex, age, mental or physical disability, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status, or native island;” and Article 17 (b) legitimizes Temporary Special Measures or Affirmative Action to redress inequalities. Article 20 on Equality stipulates “every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law.”¹⁶

Key legislations promoting gender equality and human rights in the Maldives include: the Domestic Violence Prevention (DVP) Act (3/2012), Prevention of Human Trafficking Act in 2013, the Sexual Offences Act in 2014, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse Act in 2014 (17/2014) and the Penal Code entered into force in 2015, establishing a definition of rape. Institutional and policy strengthening was further enhanced through the establishment of the Family Protection Authority in 2012 and the adoption of the Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy (2014-2016).¹⁷

Maldives also enacted the Decentralization Act (7/2010) and made Amendments where electoral quotas for women were introduced, reserving 33% of seats in local councils for women, and in 2019

¹⁴ Human Rights Commission of Maldives, 2021. Reflecting 15 years: The Rights Side of Life Survey 2020, UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/maldives/publications/reflecting-15-years-rights-side-life-survey-2020>

¹⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives, 2008. [ConstitutionOfMaldives.pdf \(storage.googleapis.com\)](https://www.constitutionofmaldives.com/ConstitutionOfMaldives.pdf)

¹⁶ [ConstitutionOfMaldives.pdf \(storage.googleapis.com\)](https://www.constitutionofmaldives.com/ConstitutionOfMaldives.pdf)

¹⁷ Uthema and Musawah, 2021. Joint Report on Article 16 , Muslim Family Law and Muslim Women’s Rights in the Maldives [CEDAW-Joint-Sub-Uthema-Musawah-2021.pdf](https://www.uthema.org/CEDAW-Joint-Sub-Uthema-Musawah-2021.pdf)

legally recognizing Women’s Development Committees (WDCs) as main partners in community development.

Another key legislation that has enabled the prioritization of gender equality is the enactment of the Gender Equality Act (18/2016). To meet the timely obligations under Article 42 of the Gender Equality Act that mandated gender support measures as part of the National Gender Policy, the Government of Maldives led by the MoGFSS endorsed and launched in March 2022 the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2022- 2026. The GEAP is a ground-breaking, positive framework that has put in motion a shift in power and advancement of gender equality. The National Steering Committee of the GEAP is Chaired by President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. GEAP includes five policy goals including leadership and governance, economic empowerment, institutional gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence and access to justice. The GEAP has set bold gender equality goals for the country, some of which include women’s representation in Parliament to increase from 4.6% to 33% by 2026; increase in representation of women in local governments managerial positions and judicial positions; labour force participation rate for women to increase from 45% to 60% by 2026. The GEAP is aligned to the SDGs, to ensure meaningful representation and participation, particularly at the decision-making levels and in sectors dominated by men.

Maldives has ratified key international conventions that uphold human rights and gender equality which include ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993 with reservations to Article 7 and 16. Consequently with adoption of the 2008 Constitution where existing restrictions for women to occupy the highest position of head of State was removed in the Constitution, the Government in 2010 withdrew the reservation for Article 7. Furthermore, in February 2020 the Government officially removed the reservations to Part1 (b) (e) (g)(h) and Part 2 of Article 16. However, reservations to sections (a) (c), (d) and (f) of Part 1, Article 16 on discriminatory practices in entering into marriage, divorce, parental rights applicable to Maldivian women remain and has not been lifted.¹⁸ Women’s groups in Maldives continue to advocate for the removal of all reservations to Article 16 which have been lifted in other majority Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Morocco and Tunisia.¹⁹ Further to this Maldives ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol in 2006 and is a signatory to the Beijing Platform for Action,

Maldives ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 and more recently in 2019 ratified the Third Optional Protocol to the CRC (which was initially signed in 2012 but never ratified) which allows individual children to submit complaints about specific violations of their human rights and fundamental freedoms under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols.²⁰

Though Maldives has progressed on several fronts to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment, there remains many gender inequalities across sectors as well as gaps in the implementation of the law. A more in-depth analysis of these gender inequalities is found in the sections below.

¹⁸ Reservations on Part 1 (a)(c)(d)(f) of Article 16 are detailed below:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount

¹⁹ Uthema and Musawah, 2021. Joint Report on Article 16 , Muslim Family Law and Muslim Women’s Rights in the Maldives [CEDAW-Joint-Sub-Uthema-Musawah-2021.pdf](#)

²⁰ [Maldives ratifies three international conventions at the United Nations - GOV.MV \(www.gov.mv\)](#)

2.2 The gendered nature of COVID-19 Pandemic:

During 2020, Maldives imposed curfews/restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19, limiting mobility, disrupting food supply chains, loss of employment and wages especially for daily labourers, informal workers and migrant workers. Economic shocks affected households in Malé and the Atolls as well as the tourist industry. By April 2021 due to the reduction in incomes, more than half the households reduced consumption patterns to cope with the economic blows of the pandemic.²¹

These unprecedented restrictions, lockdowns, loss of employment due to the pandemic highlighted inherent and systemic gender inequalities and aggravated underlying toxic social norms that led to the rise in GBV as well as deepened other inequalities faced by women and girls in the area of unpaid care work.

Globally the rise in gender-based violence was acknowledged as a *shadow pandemic* which saw an increase in domestic violence and child abuse. In Maldives too between January – September 2020, there was a rise in the reported cases of GBV/ DV amounting to 569 (excluding repeated cases),²² with February and September 2020 accounting for the most reported cases of domestic violence according to Family Protection Authority (FPA). Moreover, as per the data from FPA and Ministry of Gender Family Social Services (MoGFSS) most cases of domestic violence were reported by women and girls with men and boys too reporting cases of domestic violence over and above that was done in pre-pandemic times. According to data reported to FPA, DV survivors were reported from all age categories. It is interesting to note that for age categories below 18 years of age, the number of boys who experienced DV exceeded the number of girls. While for age categories above 18 years of age, women reported experiencing DV more than men (UNFPA Maldives, 2021).

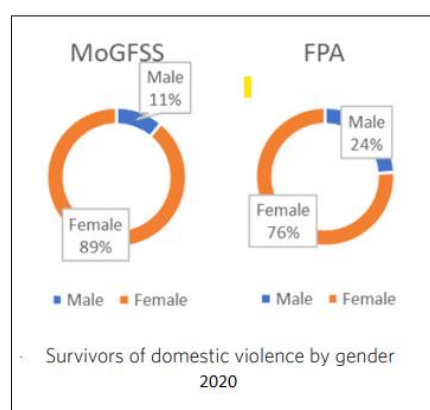


Figure 3- Survivors of domestic violence by gender 2020 (UNFPA, 2021)

COVID-19 also introduced at a rapid pace digitalization and innovative practices of running business processes, and to ensure business continuity to support state institutions and service providers to maintain critical functions by institutions. Learning from this experience, digitalization has become a key national priority .in Maldives to bridge the gap between the government/service providers and communities given the geographical and accessibility challenges unique to the Maldives similar to other small island nation states.

2.3 Snapshot of gender dimensions and existing gender inequalities in the Maldives

Women in the Labour Force and gendered dimensions

Maldives too like many countries in the region have a significant gender gap in the labour force. The labour force participation (LFP) rate as per the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2019 for men is 77.1% with a bit more than half that amount for women at 45.6%. The unemployment rate for men is higher at 5.6%, compared to 4.8% for women (HIES, 2019).²³ However LFP rate post-pandemic (2021) as per UNDP HDR 2022-23 indicate 67.5% for men and 34.3% for women, which presents overall lower numbers of women and men in the labour force, but a continued gender gap.

²¹ [Rapid-Assessment-Of-The-Impact-Of-Covid-19.pdf \(statisticsmaldives.gov.mv\)](#)

²² [UNFPA Maldives | GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE MALDIVES: AN ANALYSIS OF REPORTED CASES](#)

²³ [Maldives Bureau of Statistics > Special Occasions \(statisticsmaldives.gov.mv\)](#); [Maldives Bureau of Statistics > HIES 2019 \(statisticsmaldives.gov.mv\)](#)

Interesting facts are noted when considering the LFP and school/higher education data. Total school enrolment in 2020, for boys (51%) exceed that of girls (49%) by a narrow margin, however when considering school enrolment for Grades 11 and 12, girls exceed boys by a small margin. Yet the gains in secondary education, where gender parity is achieved to significant level, do not trickle to high education enrolment. The gender gap widens at higher education enrolment levels, with men (59%) exceeding the number of women (41%), and the gap widens further when considering graduate output in higher education with 63% men and 37% for women (HIES, 2019). These numbers which mirror to a certain extent the LFP rate, highlights the gendered dimension of the diminishing number of women that finally enter the formal labour force. In keeping with this gender gap, the indicator on Neither in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is higher for women than for men (HIES, 2019). Men also put in more hours of work on a daily basis on the main job (9 hours) as opposed to household work (2 hours), while women put in in less hours on the main job (7 hours) and more hours on household work (4 hours) (HIES, 2019). Inequality in employment, pay gap and loss of employment due to the absence of a safety net given women’s reproductive and care role have sustained the gap in the formal labour force.

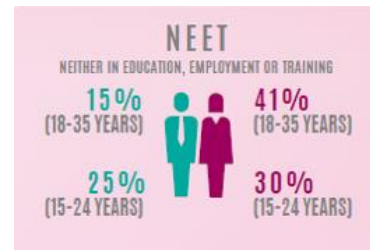


Figure 4- NEET data 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics,)

Women are dominant in a few key sectors such as the civil service with 62% (2020) being women, teaching where 75% (2021) are women, nursing 87% (2019) women and in the legal field where 53% (2020) are women prosecutors. While women remain at low levels in the judiciary with 8% (2020), police service 14% (2020) and doctors 35% (2019). Women are also at low levels in the key economic sectors of the Maldives such as tourism and fishing. Overall women are at a lower level at decision making level, with only 22% of women in management positions (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020 and 2021).



Figure 5-Civil service classification by gender 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics Maldives)

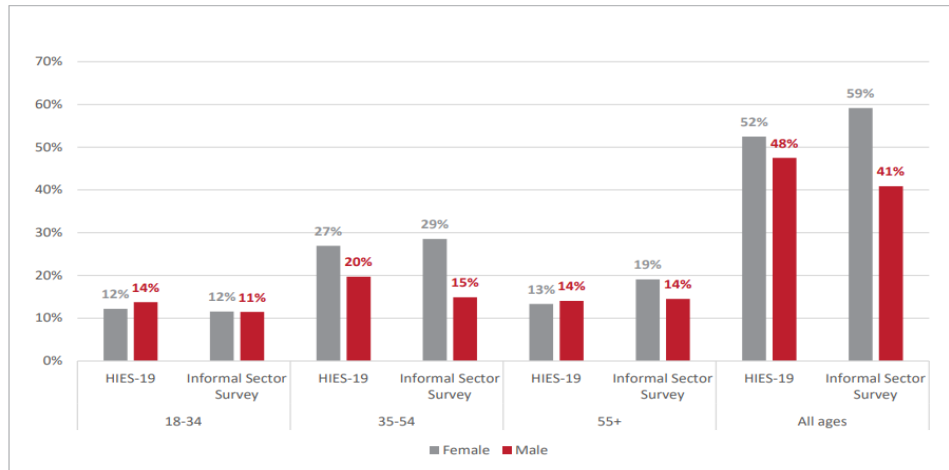
Online work/work from home is a key reality that changed the nature of work during COVID-19 and post pandemic context, allowing women more choices to remain in the workforce, despite disruptions of pregnancy and childcare which usually see a percentage of women existing the labour force. However, post pandemic, these changes have not increased the participation of women in the formal labour force or narrowed the gender gap in this sector. A post pandemic study on Labour Market Dynamics has revealed that most women workers are in risk-resistance sectors such as in education, public administration, health and social work – this maybe a reason for women’s unemployment rate to be low.²⁴ It further notes that a decline in job growth for women have been observed in food and beverage services, information and communication sectors. Moreover, returning back to work for many women has been difficult in a post pandemic, which has also seen a reduction in income for women as well as job growth in 2021 which stood at 11% for women and 17% for men (Economic Research Centre, 2022).

The informal sector labour force has in the past and is to date dominated by women in comparison to men (HIES, 2019). However according to a recent Informal Sector Survey (2022),²⁵ the informal sector

²⁴ [Labour Market Dynamics in Post Pandemic Times | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://www.undp.org/publications/labour-market-dynamics-in-post-pandemic-times)

²⁵ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, 2022. [Informal Sector Survey 2021 | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://www.mbs.gov.mv/publications/informal-sector-survey-2021)

is estimated to be 19% of employed population and has seen a rise in both women (59%) and men (41%) engaged in informal sector work, post-pandemic when compared to data collected in 2019 HIES. The increase as evident in the figure below is significant for women workers, with number of men declining in all age categories in comparison to the HIES, except for the above 55 age group which is the same for men under HIES and Informal sector survey.



Source: Informal Sector Survey, 2021 & Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2019

Figure 6-Women and Men employed in the Informal Sector in the Maldives 2022

As per the Informal Sector Survey (2022) self-employment women are estimated at 43%, engaged largely in weaving, making short eats, teaching, and tailoring. When comparing the different sectors in informal work such as employees, employer/owner, own account holder, contributing family worker and group worker; the most significant category is the own account holder amounting to 72% of workers with women occupying 52% while men are at 20%. This category is dominated by women, while all other categories (though lesser in number) are dominated by men. The Survey further noted that though women, dominated the informal sector, women-led businesses faced greater social barriers to formalize and register their operations under the formal mechanism. The absence of informal social protection system is also noted by this survey. Hence, given the prevalence of women in the informal sector their vulnerabilities are also likely to increase, as a result of not having access to social protection mechanisms that other segments of the workforce are entitled to. Similar gender gaps occur when looking at the average hours both genders spent at their main job, household work, and unpaid domestic and care work. Although women and men spend almost the same number of hours at main jobs (7 hours, for women and 9 hours, for men), the Survey shows that women spent twice more time on daily household work, and three times more on unpaid domestic and care work when compared to men.²⁶

These limitations and barriers make women more vulnerable (especially during times of crisis), as the informal sector is characterized by irregular labour patterns, informal contracts, poor minimum wage enforcement and limited to social security (Maldives Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Access to resources, poverty and indebtedness

In terms of access to and control of resources (such as credit, land, technology, investment capital) women experience a significant gender gap. The rapid economic growth has seen a reduction in overall poverty rate from 19.6% in 2002 to 5.2% in 2021. According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020 one third of the population or 28% experience multidimensional poverty, which is noted as being higher than monetary poverty. While the report does not find a significant difference in multidimensional poverty levels between women-headed households (which is at a high number of

²⁶ <https://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/hies-2019-employment/>

44% of all households) and male-headed households it finds geographic disparities. Accordingly, 87% of people who are multidimensionally poor live in Atolls (where 61% of the population live), while only 13% in Male' (where 39% of population live).²⁷ However gender disparities exist in income.

The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2019) notes that women in the capital city of Maldives earn 32% lower compared to men, while in the atolls of Maldives this indicator remains at 36%, indicating the challenges women face in achieving parity in pay gap, despite having a higher percentage of school completion rate at higher secondary level than men (39% women vs 27% for 19 years below population). The same survey suggests that, in terms of individual asset ownership (e.g. vehicle, tablets, phone, etc.), women, both in Male and Atolls have lower rate of ownership than their male peers²⁸. Looking into access of women into mainstream financing systems, according to the World Bank Financial Inclusion In the Maldives FINDEX Survey, women and the poor lag behind in terms of account ownership. Although Maldives is comparatively in a better position compared to its South Asian neighbours, women have lesser percentage (a little over 70%) of account ownership when compared to men (85%)²⁹.

Political Participation of Women

Maldives ranks the lowest in female representation in politics in South Asia, with 4 members of Parliament being women out of a total of 87. In the Cabinet appointed by the President of Maldives, 6 of 18 are women, bringing a more equal balance. The country is ranked 181 (out of 193 countries) in the Inter Parliamentary Union ranking of female representation in Parliament.³⁰

The low representation of women in Parliament continues due to structural barriers of patronage and patriarchy (where men are the gate keepers) entrenched in stereotypical negative norms and attitudes that do not promote the entry of women into the highest political arena. However, gains in the participation of women have been made at the decentralized level. The local councils' elections in 2021 were historic, as women were allocated 33% quota in local councils for the first time, with the Government taking affirmative action to increase women's political participation in public service. The election resulted in the election of 982 representative of which 370 were women giving women a 38% of the seats, 5% more than the quota.

However, when reflecting on the findings of the third Right Side of Life Survey³¹ undertaken in 2019, a perspective shift against women's representation is observed when comparing with the previous surveys undertaken in 2005 and 2011. For the question on "how they felt about the right to equal representation of women in public office" in 2005 (79.9%) and 2011 (80.5%) responded positively. In comparison the 2019 survey indicates that only 8.4% (of those that responded) agreed with this statement. Also, the number of women (5.01%) who agree with statement is less than that of men (14.75%). The survey also asked the reasons for lack of women Parliamentarian, to which many answered that there was a lack in women candidates on the lists. This is true, during the last election in 2018 only 35 candidates out of 386 candidates that stood for election were women. Women continue to face many limitations in seeking representation at the highest level; from being filtered by party primaries, lack of political connections, economic and financial limitations, social and cultural negative attitudes from the family and lack of family support as highlighted in the survey as well as

²⁷ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, 2022. [Informal Sector Survey 2021 | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

²⁸ Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES): <https://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/hies-2019-population/>

²⁹ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/570891571303596376/pdf/Financial-Inclusion-in-the-Maldives-Findex-2018-Survey.pdf>

³⁰ [Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments | Parline: the IPU's Open Data Platform](#)

³¹ [Reflecting 15 Years: The Rights Side of Life Survey 2020 | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

lack of belief among women and men that women need to be equally represented in Parliament are among some key reasons.³² Given that Parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held in 2024, increasing representation of women in the Parliament and ensuring they get nominated to the lists and finally elected at all levels is essential for Maldives to ensure an inclusive, transparent, gender equal state as it progresses on a high-medium development trajectory.

Climate Change and Gender Nexus

The Maldives, a small island nation in the Indian Ocean, is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and coral bleaching pose significant threats to the country's economy, environment, and population. Women in the Maldives are particularly vulnerable to these impacts, as they are often responsible for the majority of domestic and caregiving work, which becomes even more challenging during climate-related disasters. Climate change, exploitation, pollution, pandemics and disasters also affect women and men differently, and aggravates inequalities with many women being furthest left behind and adversely affected and discriminated. Health of women and young women are more adversely affected (than men), because of pollutants and lack of proper sustainable waste disposal methods, given women remain the primary handlers of waste and pollutants in the household.

Women are also underrepresented in decision-making processes related to climate change in the Maldives. However, women in the Maldives are playing a critical role in responding to climate change, such as through their participation in community-based adaptation projects, improved sustainable livelihoods through creation of green/ blue jobs and their involvement in eco-tourism initiatives that promote sustainable practices. Addressing the gender dimensions of climate change and related gender inequalities is thus critical for ensuring the effectiveness and equity of climate action, contributing to advance gender equality in the Maldives.

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Another significant area of discrimination and inequality that manifests due to the unequal power relations and the perceived notion of 'entitlement' is gender-based violence (GBV) where victims are largely women and children. The Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences conducted in 2007 indicates that in the Maldives too (in line with global data), 1 in 3 women (34.6%) aged 15-49 years have experienced at least one form of physical or sexual violence, or both, during their lifetime.³³ The research further noted women who have experienced physical or sexual violence are more likely to suffer significantly from psychological distress than for women who have not experienced violence. Furthermore a 2016-17 study³⁴ indicated that 16.7% of women aged 15-19 experienced physical, sexual, or psychological violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months with 13% experiencing female genital cutting.

During COVID-19 pandemic there was a spike in GBV as mentioned in the section above on the pandemic, especially limiting victim-survivors movement, restricting them to be in the same space as the perpetrator and limiting service provision for women experiencing GBV. From 2011 to 2020 there has been a steady increase of GBV in the Maldives as apparent below.

³² [CCA Maldives 2022.DOC](#)

³³ Fulu E. 2006. The Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences. Malé: Ministry of Health and Gender. It is important to note that since this study was done in 2007 no other study primarily focusing on GBV has been done in the Maldives. The data from this study has been cited in the 2019 Right Side of Life3 and in the Demographic and Health Survey 2016-2017

³⁴ Ministry of Health and ICF, 2019. Maldives Demographic Health Survey 2016/2017. Ministry of Health, Maldives

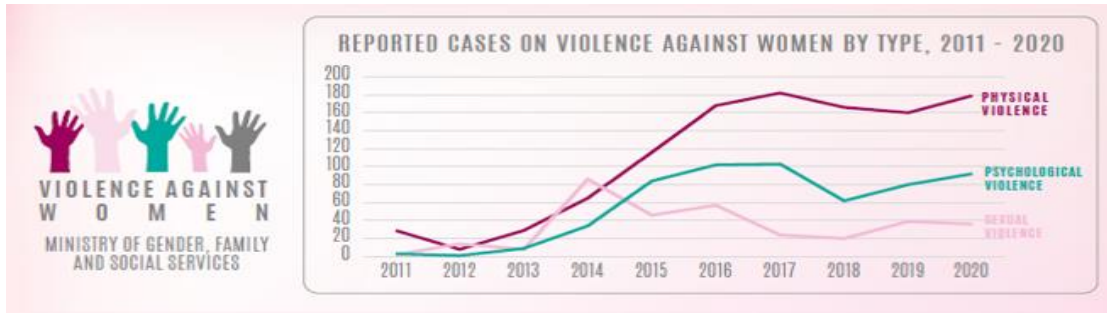


Figure 7-Reported cases on VAW by 2011-2020 (National Bureau of Statistics Maldives)

In 2020 the as per the reported cases of violence against women (VAW), physical violence is the highest with 179 cases, psychological violence amount to 92 cases with 36 cases of sexual violence. When comparing the gendered aspects of GBV and domestic violence, women victim-survivors outnumber men in every category as indicated in the Figure below.



Figure 8-Different types of GBV and DV cases 2020

According to data reported in December 2022 by the MoGFSS, 245 cases of GBV including violence against children were attended by them. Of these 109 cases were violence against children³⁵ in the categories of sexual abuse (19 cases), physical abuse (13 cases), emotional abuse (12 cases), neglect (29 cases), witness to domestic violence (30 cases) and lesser number of cyber bullying among others (Figure 9).

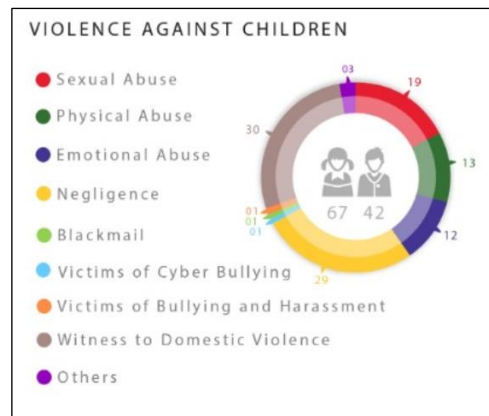


Figure 9-Types of violence against children 2020 (MoGFSS)

The Right Side of Life Survey 2019 indicated that most people believed that there is no justification for a husband to hit his wife, with a smaller number 12.5% agreeing that a man has the right to hit his wife if she does not obey him. This trend is declining when compared to the surveys conducted in 2005 and 2011.³⁶ Addressing gender-based violence requires changes in attitudes and the dismantling of stereotypical norms that sustain violence against women. GBV reported cases are the tip of the iceberg with many unreported cases unaccounted - shrouded by the 'culture of silence,' stigma and shame which surrounds women and children in the Maldives. Further challenges exist in implementing protection orders and other services such as counselling, shelters for women that are lacking for survivors of GBV in the Maldives. Investment by the State in this direction as proposed in the National Gender Equality Action Plan is indeed essential for the Maldives.

³⁵ [Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services | SunOnline International](#)

³⁶ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, 2022. [Informal Sector Survey 2021 | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

Elderly and Disability – Gender analysis:

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2021) there are more men (10,084) than women (9,447) in the elderly category, with women increasing slightly in the ages 75–79 category. In the Maldives persons with disabilities, account 9.2% of the population (HIES,2019) with 34% of the disabled population living with two or more disabilities. Accordingly, more women (10.5%) live with disabilities than men (7.8%), with a higher prevalence in Atolls (10.8%) than Male' (7.5%). The gender gap in disability widens among the older persons (age 45+) with 33.8% women and 23.9% men.³⁷

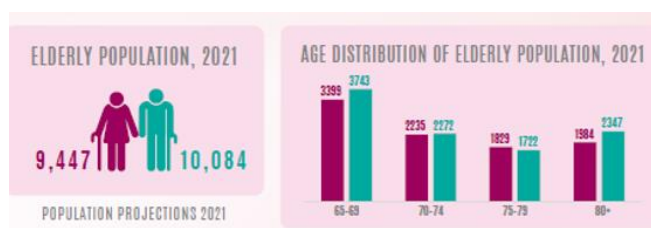


Figure 10-Elderly population disaggregated by age and gender 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics Maldives)

As per data by MoGFSS with reference to care and support for elderly and persons with disabilities (April 2022) a total of 11 cases were reported and action taken. Of these 9 cases were on care and support for persons with disabilities and 2 cases on care and support to the elderly.

When considering pensions there is also gender gap in all types of pensions, where pensions of men exceed that of women. The lower levels of women's participation in the labour force may account for this gap.

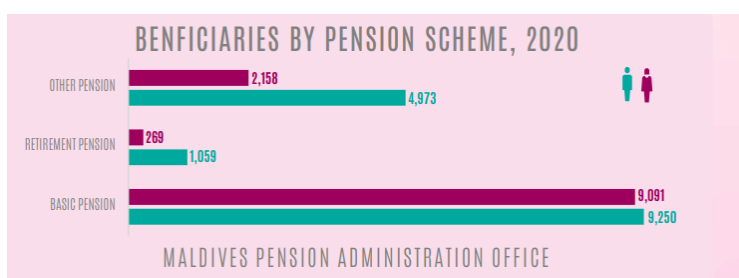


Figure 11-Pensions beneficiaries by gender & pension category 2020

Family and gender inequalities

Most women in the Maldives have a more egalitarian outlook to life and are well educated with more relaxed cultural ideologies especially in relation to marriage and divorce practices. Maldives also has the highest divorce rates in the world (given the resident Maldivian population in 2022 was just over 392,000), which creates societal issues for children and women. Yet surveys have revealed that in practice, relations between men and women are not equal, with more women facing greater discriminations than men. Some key aspects of these inequalities within the family include the following:

- When applying for divorce, women have greater conditions to fulfil while these conditions do not apply for men – hence women are being discriminated.³⁸ Furthermore, many challenges are faced by women applying for divorce in cases where she is experiencing domestic violence/ GBV with judges referring her for either counselling or reconciliation
- Many social issues in the Maldives also stem from broken families due to the high rate of divorce. The Right side of Life survey³⁹ also noted a high no response rate (80.1%) for the question regarding 'equal rights for women during the dissolution of a marriage' – this data is a strong statement of the context of Maldives in relation to the decline of women's rights.
- Both women and men have noted in the same survey that women need to obey their husbands.
- Women also have a greater care burden and as per the Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2021) spend more time than men on housework.

³⁷ UNDP Maldives, 2022. [UNDP Disability Strategy](#)

³⁸ Uthema and Musawah, 2021. Joint Report on Article 16 , Muslim Family Law and Muslim Women's Rights in the Maldives [CEDAW-Joint-Sub-Uthema-Musawah-2021.pdf](#)

³⁹ [Reflecting 15 Years: The Rights Side of Life Survey 2020 | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

3. Priorities: Gender Equality in UNDP Maldives Programme and Projects

3.1. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), Country Programme Document (CPD) and Results Resources Framework (RRF) of UNDP Maldives

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022 – 2026⁴⁰ will guide and provide the overarching framework for the work of the United Nations in the Maldives in line with national priorities of the Government of the Republic of Maldives (Strategic Action Plan [SAP] 2019-2023 along 5 thematic areas and Gender Equality Action Plan [GEAP] 2022 – 2025),⁴¹ the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNDP Maldives’ Country Programme Document (CPD) 2022- 2026⁴² takes a rights-based approach to promoting gender equality by engaging duty-bearers and rights-holders, and the increasing use of gender analysis to bring about transformative changes in social, economic and political structures. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is embedded in the CPD of UNDP Maldives along the following lines:

- *Gender*: In everything we do, we work to promote gender equality, so that women and girls can exercise their rights to the full and have equal opportunity.
- Gender will be mainstreamed across all programmes and will be monitored.
- At least 15 per cent of the budget will be allocated for gender-specific results across the programme.
- The gender marker will be used for integration of gender equality, with 70% of active projects having gender markers

The current country programme of UNDP Maldives comprises of three Priority areas aligned to CPD Outcomes and three streams of work.

- 1) **PRIORITY AREA 1:** Inclusive sustainable and thriving livelihoods – Economic Programme (Econ) and Innovation and Accelerator lab (AccLab) [CPD Outcome 1].
- 2) **PRIORITY AREA 2:** Sustainable natural resource management and climate resilience - Resilient Climate Change (RCC) Programme [CPD Outcome 2],
- 3) **PRIORITY AREA 3:** Anticipatory and accountable governance - Inclusive Governance Programme (IGP) [CPD Outcome 3]



Gender is a cross cutting theme across all 3 priorities and has been strengthened given the overall guidance on gender integration which began with the first Gender Equality Strategy (2016 – 2018)⁴³ of UNDP Maldives and is more strategically placed now as a whole of office approach with the gender seal journey the CO began in 2021.



Figure 12-Consultation Oct 2022 on the formulation of the new CO Gender Equality Strategy

In leading to the formulation of the new Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2026 (which is aligned to the CO CPD including timeline), consultations were held with UNDP CO teams and also a [half-day dedicated session](#) where teams identified gender inequalities that

⁴⁰ [UNSDCF Final for Website \(111021\).pdf](#)

⁴¹ [Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023 - The President's Office \(presidency.gov.mv\)](#)

⁴² UNDP Maldives, Country Program Document 2022 -2026 [Country Programme Document for Maldives \(2022–2026\) | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

⁴³ [Gender Equality Strategy \(2016 – 2018\) UNDP Maldives](#)

confront them programmatically and under each Outcome and aligned the work of UNDP Maldives to the CPD, UNSDCF and the signature solutions. A culmination of these discussions enabled the positioning of UNDP Maldives GES 2023 – 2026 to address key gender responsive and transformative results.

Key gender inequalities identified under each CPD Outcome of UNDP Maldives as related to programmatic areas (GES consultation, UNDP Maldives October 2022)	
CPD Outcome 1 (identified by Econ & Acc Lab teams)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SDG financing: women’s participation in the financial decision making sector is low ▪ Addressing data gaps: particularly gender disaggregated data for policy making, including sub-categories such as WHH ▪ Low participation of women in the Labour market/ economy though more girls complete secondary school ▪ Future of work: lack of skilling, re-skilling, career development particularly for women/ young women in new and emerging areas ▪ disproportionate distribution of unpaid care work ▪ Low ownership of resources by women ▪ Low/limited representation of women in decision making roles ▪ Addressing digital literacy gaps ▪ Difficulties in accessing financial resources ▪ Low/limited representation of women in traditionally male dominated sectors such as tourism
CPD Outcome 2 (Identified by RCC team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disparity in access to the benefits of natural resources to women/ Women Headed Households, PWDs. ▪ Gender disparity in inclusion in decision-making around climate, DRR and natural resources. ▪ Reducing disproportionate impact of climate and disasters on women, migrant populations, PWDs, disenfranchised youth in rural communities ▪ Low/limited representation of women in decision making roles
CPD Outcome 3 (Identified by IGP team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low participation, nomination and election of women in the Parliament and LG level ▪ Unequal gender representation in the judiciary ▪ increase number of women and girls as victim-survivors of GBV ▪ insufficient and ineffective services for survivors of violence ▪ Unequal representation of women in peace building and as advocates ▪ Low/limited representation of women in decision making roles ▪ increase in conservative thinking ▪ Adverse effects of corruption on women ▪ Limited access to justice for women ▪ Barriers to access for information for women

Key Gender results achieved under present CPD Outcome with alignment of results from previous CP	
Outcome 1 Inclusive Sustainable and Thriving Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulated and operationalizing Integrated National Financing Framework for Maldives and the Gender-responsive Climate Financing Strategy - Costing exercises undertaken with in-depth gender responsiveness consisting of the social sector reforms to achieve quality, equity, and sustainability in service including the impact on women and men. - Future of Work – Social Innovation Platform (SIP) strengthened through identification of key issues / barriers related to women and young women.
	<p>Knowledge Product on Gender Equality and related issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal Sector Survey (2022), - Integrated National Financing Framework for Maldives and the Gender-responsive Climate Financing Strategy (2023)
Outcome 2 Sustainable Natural Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 250 contract small-holder farmers in Laamu Atoll 40% women and 20% youth strengthened economic livelihoods. - Youth and women encouraged (through advocacy) to enter the agriculture industry with SMART methods - Capacity Development of 28 women and 11 men on the Gender Action Plan of the project as part of the Capacity Development workshop on Gender (TOT) under the GEF-6 POPs project

<p>and Climate Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water awareness programs completed on 17 project islands engaging with key stakeholder groups that include Island Councils, School Management, Women’s Development Committees (WDCs), health institutes and utilities. A total of 51 participants (26 female: 25 male) were trained under the program. - Capacity development for the sector was carried out for groundwater resource assessment, project management and national certificate level 3 training program for utility laboratory technician service. A total of 66 participants (14 female: 52 male) were trained under the various trainings conducted in 2022. <p>Knowledge Product on Gender Equality and related issues: Women’s engagement in addressing hazardous waste Women in Leadership in Climate Change</p>
<p>Outcome 3 Anticipatory and Accountable Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical support to formulate and operationalizing the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 - Advocacy and lobby on enhancing political participation of women led to 33% quota for women at Local Councils level in 2019. - Advocacy and capacity building efforts of Women’s Development Committees and women counsellors included: Kiyeveni virtual learning portal and Practice Parliament for women. The Practice Parliament series is open for all interested women (to date 216 women and girls, including over 18 women with disabilities have been trained). the “Practice Parliament” series in partnership with People’s Majlis aimed to provide the opportunity for women to build their capacity and confidence to participate in democratic processes, become change makers in their communities and eventually contest for elected positions. It built on the concept of experiential learning to provide the opportunity for aspiring women to learn by doing, build new network and allies through shared understanding, engage in dialogue with other individuals of the same cohort to further inform their values and perspectives, and enable them to acquire new skills at a practical setting. The learning portal is now accessible to all interested women as well. - Vaane Web Series: A camp-turned-web series that aimed to empower young girls and break gender stereotypes to engage in public life and community development. - Transforming Future of Work for Gender Equality (girls in STEM): sessions for young girls in secondary school and their parents, to demystify STEM education and careers. <p>- Interventions that focus on equipping judges with adequate training and knowledge on gender equality and gender-based violence were implemented in order to push for a change regarding patriarchal and discriminatory attitudes and practices towards women in the Judiciary and make access to justice a reality for women in the Maldives. Trainings were held for judges and magistrates to enhance understanding on gender inequalities between women and men and why women are disproportionately affected by violence in comparison to men. A total of 79 Judges including Justices of Supreme Court of Maldives, Higher Court were trained as part of the trainings. A significant result was enhanced capacity of judges and magistrates regarding domestic violence and sexual offences. This was visible in the discussions among judges and with the trainers following these trainings. Judges were more forth coming to inquire and learn more about the issues. This has not been a pattern we have observed previously. Additionally, post training evaluation indicated that majority of the participants found the trainings useful and planned to apply the knowledge they attained in practice.</p> <p>- UNDP, in partnership with Ministry of Economic Development (MED) and Local Government Authority (LGA) developed a training for Women’s Development Committee’s economic empowerment. The program was developed based on the theory that if the business literacy of WDC members can be improved, and their confidence to access and compete equitably in markets can be increased, then they are more likely to succeed at running businesses and becoming economically empowered actors capable of fully funding their operations and fulfilling their mandates to ensure the well-being and empowerment of women and girls in their communities. Hence the training program focused on two objectives; Objective 1: To increase business knowledge of WDC members and boost their confidence to engage in entrepreneurial activities at the island level and Objective 2: To equip WDC members with business knowledge and skills needed to support women entrepreneurs in their communities and play an active role in promoting and facilitating women’s economic empowerment. As part of the programme a training manual was developed, 13 Trainers were trained, and a pilot programme was held. The training program was piloted in three atolls—Dhaalu, Kaafu (including the capital), and Shaviyani - between November and December 2022. While most participants were WDC members, a few women councillors also joined the training. A total of 64 women (20 participants from Dhaalu Atoll, 20 participants from Kaafu Atoll and 23 participants from Shaviyani Atoll) participated in the pilot training program. An analysis of the pre- and post-training data revealed that 61 participants (95%) reported improved business knowledge after the training. Out of 56 participants, 40 participants (71%) reported increased confidence to start a successful</p>

	<p>business after the training. And out of 53 participants, 44 participants (83%) reported increased confidence to share the knowledge and skills learned at the training with other people.</p> <p>-As part of government commitment towards strengthening local governance, UNDP supported Local Government Authority (LGA) to implement and carry out the functions of the recently passed Decentralisation Act. As part of fulfilling LGA's mandate of conducting training programs and capacity building of local councils, it was planned to train local councillors and WDCs. However, due to the impacts of COVID-19, this was reprogrammed and support was given to develop councillors and WDC handbooks to integrate gender responsive planning and to develop skills and knowledge of councillors and WDCs to perform their responsibilities.</p> <p>As a supplement to aforementioned initiatives focusing on building the capacity of women to contest in elected positions, UNDP has also been working with political parties to more effectively engage with women at decision making levels within the party. The initial consultations with a diverse group of stakeholders helped formulate a paper that provided an analysis of the current state of women's representation in Maldives politics, reflected on a range of challenges to women's participation and proposed a range of options and entry-point for development agencies, government partners, CSOs and political parties towards supporting women's participation in politics and public life. These consultations then also helped inform the drafting of gender action plans/policies specific to individual political parties and till date one party has completed and endorsed their gender action plan. A guide to assist the remaining political parties to formulate their own gender action plans has been drafted and is expected to be published in January 2022.</p> <p>- Following the consultations and the development of the gender action plan, UNDP also worked towards implementing specific actions that can be undertaken at a multi-party level. As such, skill building trainings were conducted for Youth Wings and Women's Wings for all political parties in February and March 2021 respectively, where 24 youth (4 girls and 20 boys) and 31 women participated. The training built their capacities to more effectively engage in political institutions and processes, and key government stakeholders to promote issues relevant to young people/women. It also developed their knowledge and skills to strengthen their Youth/Women's Wings, raise their profile and increase membership using different media channels, and identify potential fundraising opportunities to boost the work of the Youth/Women's Wings.</p> <p>Knowledge Product on Gender Equality and related issues: Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handbook for Women Development Committees (published and distributed. To be uploaded on the Local Government Authority Website) - Women's Development Committees Economic Empowerment Training Manual -
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3.2 Strategic entry points under the second Gender Equality Strategy of UNDP Maldives (2023 – 2026)

The country office Gender Equality Strategy (2023 – 2026) is aligned to the UNDP Maldives CPD, UNSDCF and to the Six Signature Solutions contained in the Global Gender Equality Strategy and UNDP Strategic Plan. Accordingly key objectives of UNDP Maldives Gender Equality Strategy are:

1. Leadership for Gender Equality: Drive change to advance gender equality

2. Integration and Specialization – Programming on advancing Gender

- Mainstream gender equality at all levels (planning and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) in UNDP Maldives from programmes to operations and setting gender equality standards in all processes as a priority (e.g.: following gender checklists at project approval stage, annual workplan review, gender reviews)
- Identifying and documenting gender responsive and transformative results along the six Signature Solutions across programmes / projects of UNDP Maldives addressing structural barriers to gender inequality and ensuring gender responsive indicators, gender responsive evaluation scale informs all TORs of evaluations.

- 3. Continuous learning/ strengthened Capacities on Gender and Innovation:** Gender perspective building and learning (advanced / introductory) to be integrated as a whole of office approach focusing also on individual targeted training.
- 4. An Equal and Inclusive culture:** Setting standards for an inclusive, respectful, disability-friendly gender equal workplace environment and operationalizing these measures as well as mobilizing men for gender equality.
- 5. Partnerships for gender equality:** Building and strengthening partnerships (including strengthening UNDPs convening role) that advance gender equality and women's empowerment with Government Institutions, Judiciary, political parties, private sector, CSOs including women's groups, men's associations, youth movement's/ clubs (young women and young men), political parties (women's and youth wings), media organizations that support PWD & inclusivity
- 6. Matching Resource with Ambition on advancing gender:** Resource mobilization for gender equality (GEN3 and GEN2) from traditional as well as non- traditional sources including Government Cost sharing
- 7. Accountability on GE:** PMDs of Senior management/ team leads to include gender goals, regional GEN 2 spot checks, ROAR among others will ensure this process.
- 8. Communication on Gender for Advocacy:** Key /branding messages on gender to be used to advance gender through communication for advocacy across portfolios, engaging with media (feminist) networks, developing change stories and strengthening advocacy through annual gender-focused campaign

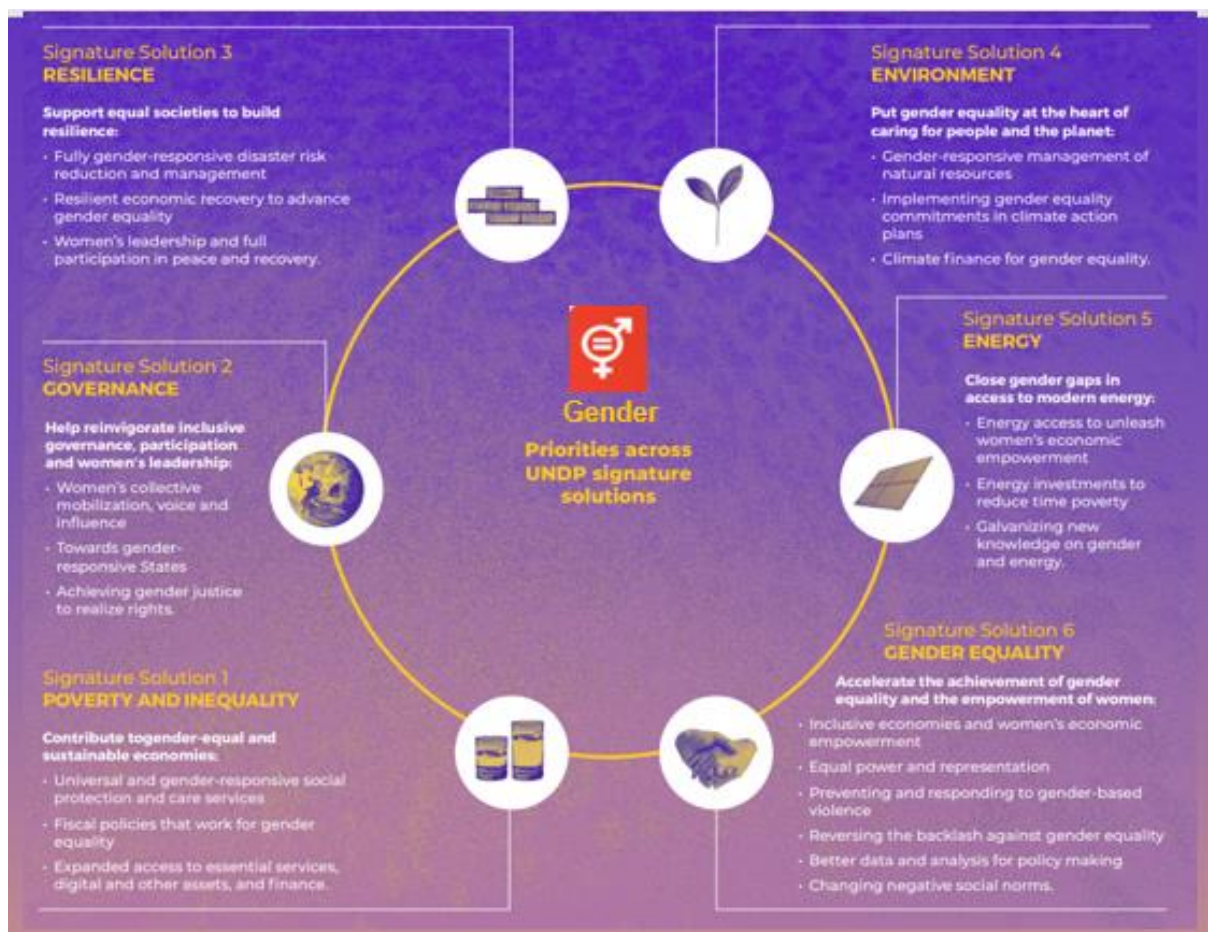


Figure 13-Gender priorities across UNDP's Six Signature solutions (GES, 2022)

Programmatic Framework for the implementation of UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2026

UNDP Maldives CPD	Outputs	Key Gender Actions/ Entry Points	Programmatic Indicators of CO GES	Link to UNDP GES 2022-25
National Priority: SAP sector – Blue economy				
Key SDG Goals: 1, 9, 14				
UNSDCF Strategic Priority 1: Shared Prosperity and Inclusive Human Development for All				
Related UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 1 – Structural transformation accelerated, particularly green, inclusive and digital transitions				
UNDP Maldives CPD Outcome 1 (UNSDCF Outcome1):				
By 2026 youth, women and others at risk of being left behind, contribute to and benefit from inclusive, resilient, sustainable economic and human capital development, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and decent work				
UNDP Maldives CPD Programme Priority 1: Inclusive, Sustainable and Thriving Livelihoods and Productivity	Output 1.1. Government capacities are strengthened to formulate and implement policies that promote economic diversification and facilitate private sector engagement and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal and gender-responsive social protection and care services established • Fiscal policies that work for gender equality formulated and implemented 	-# of gender-responsive social protection & care services setup -% of persons accessing these services disaggregated by gender, PWD, youth (w/m) -# of gender responsive fiscal policies formulated and of these # implemented	Signature Solution 1 - Poverty Enabler: 1. Finance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal power and representation promoted. • Support to government to Institutionalise women’s participation in decision making. • Better data and analysis for policy making established • Initiate data and research on gender gap in the employment market and entrepreneurship space. • Advocate for gender responsive policy making within government powered by data informed research • Address data gaps on under-represented groups especially women/ WHH, PWDs, school dropouts(?), disenfranchised youth (m/w) 	-# of women and men at decision making level in key related Gov institutions (institutions to be determined) -action taken on institutionalizing women’s participation at decision making levels -Data and policy unit established at MoED -# of research/ data briefs produced on gender gap in employment & entrepreneurship -# of policies that are informed by gender-responsive data/ research - action taken to address data gaps (disaggregated by each category women/ WHH/ PWD/ youth etc.)	Signature Solution 6 - Gender Equality Enabler: 2. Digitalization & 3.Innovation
	Output 1.2. Innovative development solutions ensure inclusive and meaningful livelihoods, contributing to blue, green and digital value chains for sustainable economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened climate finance for gender equality • Formulate investment proposals that Government can channel to mobilize climate finance which have a positive impact on gender equality, poverty and human rights. 	-# of climate finance mechanisms integrating GE setup # of investment proposals on gender-responsive climate finance formulated / channelled.	Signature Solution 4 - Energy Enabler: Finance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive economies and women’s economic empowerment enhanced. 	-# of initiatives setup that promote women’s economic development	Signature Solution 6 - Gender Equality

UNDP Maldives CPD	Outputs	Key Gender Actions/ Entry Points	Programmatic Indicators of CO GES	Link to UNDP GES 2022-25
				Enabler: 3.Innovation
<p>RRF Gender Focused Indicators: Indicator 1.2.2: Number of new enterprises contributing to lucrative value chains in blue, green and digital economies. [SPIRRF 4.1.1] Baseline: 0 Target: 2,000 (70% led by women, youth, recovering addicts, persons with disability) Source: United Nations, MoT, AGRONat, polytechnic, MED and schools; Frequency: Midterm evaluation</p>				
<p>National Priority: SAP sectors – Jazeera Dhiriulhun (Island life) and Blue economy Key SDG Goals: 1, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14</p>				
<p>UNSDCF Strategic Priority 2: Sustainable and climate resilience environment (supporting UNSDCF outcome 3)</p>				
<p>Related UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 3 – Resilience built to respond to systemic uncertainty and risk</p>				
<p>UNDP Maldives CPD Outcome 2 (UNSDCF Outcome 3) By 2026, national and subnational institutions and communities in Maldives, particularly at-risk populations, are better able to manage natural resources and achieve enhanced resilience to climate change and disaster impacts, natural and human-induced hazards, and environmental degradation, inclusively and in a sustainable manner</p>				
<p>UNDP Maldives CPD Programme Priority 2: Sustainable natural resource management and climate resilience</p>	<p>Output 2.1. Enabling environment and multisector engagement for carbon footprint reduction in priority sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop gender-responsive DRR and CCA implements at the national and subnational level (for local councils and Women's Development Committees [WDCs]) 	<p># of gender responsive DRR and CCA measures developed at National level / sub-national level (For local councils/ for WDCs)</p>	<p>Signature Solution 3 – Resilience</p> <p>Enabler: 3.Innovation</p>
	<p>Output 2.2. Government institutions at national/ subnational levels have enhanced capacities to integrate DRM and climate adaptation and mitigation into development planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving women's involvement in decision making in management of natural resource Establishing water management committees with women participation and support government to have gender affirmative capacity development through affirmative quota allocation (at least 30%) for women in sector related capacity development plan 	<p># of women at decision making level engaged in management of natural resources</p> <p># of water management committees setup with women's participation (% of w from total members) # of Government Capacity Development Plans that have allocated a quota for women/ indicate % of quota in each plan</p>	<p>Signature Solution 4 – Environment</p> <p>Enabler: 3.Innovation</p>
	<p>Output 2.3. Policies, regulatory frameworks and capacities at national/ subnational levels strengthened for sustainable management of water and waste resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing access to cold storage facilities for women farmers using renewable energy (RE) sources. Link the solar-powered cold storage systems with AgroNat's contract farming model and ensured 40% contract farmers are women. 	<p># of women farmers that have access to cold storage facilities</p> <p>% of women contract farmers registered with AgroNat</p>	<p>Signature Solution 5 – Energy Signature Solution 6 - Gender Equality</p> <p>Enabler: 3.Innovation</p>
	<p>Output 2.4. Increased engagement of civil society organizations and individuals on climate action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower women and girls with leadership opportunities and training programmes on climate action to enhance their involvement in the movement. Through education and awareness increase women and girl's engagement in climate action and provide information taking action to reduce their carbon footprint. Targeted outreach tailored to reach women and girls specifically. Include working with community organizations that have a strong presence among 	<p># of policy dialogues held</p> <p># of participants disaggregated by women/ men / PWDs/ youth (m/w), associations by type.</p> <p>#/% of recommendations made by women's groups</p> <p># of education and awareness programmes held on climate action engaging women and girls</p>	<p>Signature Solution 4 – Energy</p> <p>Signature Solution 4 – Environment</p> <p>Enabler: 3.Innovation</p>

UNDP Maldives CPD	Outputs	Key Gender Actions/ Entry Points	Programmatic Indicators of CO GES	Link to UNDP GES 2022-25
		<p>women, using social media and other online platforms that are popular among women, and hosting events that are designed to be inclusive and welcoming to women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations and partnerships: with women's rights groups/ feminist groups/ other advocacy gender focused groups to increase women's engagement in climate action. • Policy advocacy to increase women's engagement in climate action (DRR/ clean energy/climate adaptation) through provision of platforms to advocate for policies that address the unique impacts of climate change on women and girls • Mentoring and networking to ensure increased women's engagement in climate action by connecting them with other women who are working in the field, building a sense of community and provide support for women who are new to the movement. • Recognition and visibility of the contributions of women (in media/ public forums/ opportunities to speak at events) in climate action to increase their engagement in the movement. 	<p># of community organizations engaged and type and intensity of social platforms used that are accessed by women on climate action</p> <p># and type of women's groups engaged on climate action</p> <p># of policy advocacy sessions/ initiative undertaken on climate action engaging with women</p> <p># of women mentoring networks established</p> <p># of women that have emerged / recognized as game changes in climate action and gender.</p>	<p>Signature Solution 4 – Energy</p> <p>Signature Solution 4 – Environment</p> <p>Signature Solution 3 – Resilience</p> <p>Signature Solution 6 – Gender Equality</p> <p>Enabler: 3. Innovation 4. Digital</p>
<p>RRF Gender Focused Indicators: RRF: Indicator 2.1.1: Number of sectors integrating and implementing gender-sensitive sustainable practices, policies and strategies [SPIRRF 1.1.2] Baseline: 0 Target: 7 Source: MoECCT Frequency: Annually RRF: Indicator 2.2.1: Number of councils with island development plans incorporating evidenced-based, gender-sensitive, climate-resilient disaster risk reduction strategies and enhanced protection, governance and management of terrestrial and marine ecosystems [SPIRRF 1.1.1] Baseline: 10 Target: 60 Source: LGAs Frequency: Annually RRF Indicator 2.3.2: Number of islands supported by UNDP practicing gender responsive, decentralized, sustainable waste and water management [SPIRRF 4.1.2] Baseline: 12 Target: 52 Source: GEF-SGP, LGAs Frequency: Annually</p>				
<p>National Priority: SAP sectors: <i>Jazeera Dhiriulhun</i>, caring state, dignified families and good governance Key SDGs: 5, 17</p>				
<p>UNSDCF Strategic Priority 3: Gender-responsive, rights-based and accountable governance and justice (supporting UNSDCF outcome 4)</p>				
<p>Related UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 2 – No one left behind, centring on equitable access to opportunities and a rights-based approach to human agency and human development</p>				
<p>UNDP Maldives CPD Outcome 3 (UNSDCF Outcome 4): By 2026, Maldives has strengthened decentralized and accountable governance under the rule of law so people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy, and fully enjoy access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society</p>				
<p>UNDP Maldives CPD Programme priority 3: Anticipatory and</p>	<p>Output 3.1. Government capacities at national/ subnational levels are strengthened to effectively plan, finance and implement</p>	<p>(Activity 1.1) Enhancing institutional capacities and systems of governance through digital transformation and people-centred development.</p>	<p>Number of interventions developed and rolled out on gender equality in line with GEAP</p>	<p>Signature Solution.2 – Governance</p>

UNDP Maldives CPD	Outputs	Key Gender Actions/ Entry Points	Programmatic Indicators of CO GES	Link to UNDP GES 2022-25
accountable governance for and by the people	development policies and strategies	(Activity 1.2) Empowering women's leadership in local councils, governance and decision making.	Proportion of women contesting in local and parliamentary elections	
	Output 3.2. State capacities are enhanced to digitalize public administration and service provision in an efficient and equitable manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery and monitoring of public services ▪ Citizen engagement for monitoring 3. Access to and protection of information ▪ Legal identity and civil registration 	Number of digital solutions that are gender responsive	Signature Solution. 2 – Governance Enabler: 2.Digitalization
	Output 3.3. Strengthened rule of law, human rights and access to protection and justice	<p>(Activity 2.1) Enabling efficient access to quality legal and justice sector services, especially for women.</p> <p>(Activity 2.3) Support towards strengthening national human rights frameworks, institutions, and advocacy.</p>	<p>Number of people receiving legal aid including vulnerable groups</p> <p>Number of frameworks on rule of law, business and human rights and justice developed and/or rolled out that are gender responsive</p>	Signature Solution. 2 - Governance
	Output 3.4. Inclusive civic space and effective participation of citizens, especially vulnerable groups, in decision-making, and enhanced social cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote women's political participation and strengthen women's wings (in political parties) including addressing structural and cultural barriers preventing women from contesting elections and achieving political leadership. <p>(Activity 3.1) Empower civil society and foster safe, learning spaces for civic engagement of young people and women.</p> <p>(Activity 3.3) Promote social entrepreneurship, innovation among women/WDC</p>	<p>Number of participants trained on leadership and political participation trainings</p> <p>Proportion of women contesting in local and parliamentary elections</p> <p>Adoption of voluntary party quota</p> <p>Number of at-risk individuals young people and women reached through social cohesion and PVE interventions annually</p> <p>Number of WDC members, and women participants trained on women's economic empowerment</p>	Signature Solution 3 – Resilience Enabler: 3.Innovation
<p>RRF Gender Focused Indicators:</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.1. Extent of alignment of local development plans with long-term national development vision (NDP) and extent to which they are gender sensitive and results based [SPIRRF-1.1.1] Baseline: Long-term NDP and mechanism not in place Target: Long-term NDP in place and local development plans are fully aligned, gender-responsive and results-based Source: MNHPI and LGAs Frequency: Annually</p> <p>Indicator 3.3.1. Number of gender-sensitive policy, legal and regulatory frameworks on rule of law, business, and human rights and justice developed and rolled out [SPIRRF 2.2.1] Baseline: 0 Target: 4 Source: DJA, BCM, AGO Frequency: Annually</p> <p>Indicator 3.3.2. Number of people receiving legal aid including vulnerable groups [SPIRRF 2.2.3] Baseline: 150 (2020) Target: 10,000 Source: UNDP Frequency: Quarterly</p> <p>Indicator 3.4.1. Proportion of women contesting in local and parliamentary elections [SPIRRF 6.2.1] Baseline: To be determined Target: 40% each Source: Election Commission Frequency: Per election cycle</p>				

4. Partnerships for Gender Equality

UNDP believes that partnerships are key to reaching the furthest behind, as well as ensuring that our work is influencing a development agenda that promotes gender equality as essential to achieving sustainable human development.

4.1 Co-ordination and Partnership with UN System and other development partners

UNDP Maldives works systematically with the UN System on advancing gender equality through the UN Gender Equality and Human Rights Theme Group (GEHRTG) which was previously known as the UN GTG (until mid-2022) and chaired by UNFPA. The GEHRTG meets approximately once in two months (or as required). The GEHRTG initiated the UNCT-SWAP gender equality score card in 2020 engaging with all UN gender focal teams and in 2022 some key actions were revisited and reviewed. UNDP is also part of the UN PSEA working group and support to implement the ON UN Action Plan. Joint initiatives are planned around 16 Days of Activism against GBV, International Women’s Day and UN Day among others.

4.2 Partnership with Government

Given the wide scope of work at UNDP, the Country Office works in close partnership with several Government ministries with programmes directed through the different government institutions/ departments at national and sub-national levels. At local level UNDP engages with WDCs through many of its programmes to ensure women’s voices are part of key development initiatives. Some key ministries and institution UNDP has partnered to advance gender equality include:

- The Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services (MoGFSS) especially in the formulation of the Gender Equality Policy and Act and now is operationalizing the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). Furthermore TORs were developed for Gender Focal Points at Utility Companies (GFPs have been appointed in some of the utilities) with training provided on the gender action plan for GCF project (Mar 2019)
- The Ministry of Finance support to develop (as part of the Joint Program) Maldives Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) inclusive of a Gender-Responsive Climate Financing Strategy
- Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology through implementation of projects and formulation and implementation of Gender Action Plans for projects in sectors such as chemicals management, water and sanitation and waste management.
- Parliament of the Republic of Maldives on taking forward Practice Parliament for Women
- Women Development Councils (WDC)
- Judiciary through the Department of Judicial Administration on the unequal gender representation in the judiciary and to increase access to justice for women
-



4.3 Partnership with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), academia, think tanks and the media

UNDP has partnered with several leading CSOs, especially in addressing GBV. UNDP will strategically seek to enhance partnership with women's organizations/women-led CSOs across all teams, research organizations and think tanks in a consultative manner to advance gender equality and empowerment of women. In this respect UNDP has engaged with

UNDP will further seek to engage with male gender equality champions to ensure that UNDP's projects are informed by men who see themselves as being 'change agents' in this process. Young women and young men, girls and boys who are the future of Maldives will be also engaged as a key group to influence attitudinal change and promote gender equality. In this respect youth groups, CSOs led by persons with disabilities, associations of women headed households, and others will be consulted to ensure UNDP projects leave no one behind.

The media remains an important player of reporting on gender equality work of UNDP and other UN agencies. Close links are established between UNDP and media groups through the Communications team. UNDP will seek to partner with key strategic media groups to leverage its initiatives and use innovative tools of communication to reach the furthest behind.

Partnerships that have been established/seek to be strengthened on advancing gender equality include:

We currently have partnerships with media outlets including Corporate Maldives, MV+ and Coral Glass media and Sosal, who carry our gender advocacy messages, and help promote campaigns.

4.4 Partnership with Private Sector

UNDP Maldives has several partnerships with the private sector and is looking to strengthen its work on advancing gender equality further. The private sector, as the engine of growth, presents many key possibilities for engagement. Already UNDP has partnered with the Coca-Cola Company and Ooredoo and is looking to enhance these initiatives to be gender sensitive/responsive. Key aspects that UNDP Maldives is seeking to engage on are addressing sexual harassment at the workplace, engaging men as change agents on gender equality and promoting women at decision making level.

Taking into consideration the range of corporate tools UNDP has for achieving gender equality, UNDP Maldives will explore promoting the Gender Equality Seal for Private sector (linking with BRH Gender Team) and Public Enterprises (linking with HQ Gender Team & BRH Gender Team), to strengthen gender equality, women's empowerment and leadership in the workplace and the decision-making sphere.

5. Institutional Transformation for Gender Equality

UNDP Maldives prioritizes the following areas to systematically help achieve gender equality. These include leadership; institutional arrangements and business practices for gender mainstreaming, accountability mechanisms and oversight; gender-transformative policy, planning and programming; gender architecture; capacity development; knowledge and communication; and operations, management and human resources.

5.1 Leadership for gender equality

Senior Management led by the Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative, supported by the Management Team of UNDP Maldives will lead by example and ensure that achieving gender equality will remain a core priority area of UNDP Maldives. Reporting on gender equality in the ROAR and annual programme reviews as well as identifying gender responsive and transformative results will be ensured by the leadership team during Annual Work Plan formulation. Ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women is integrated in all speeches, statements and advocacy efforts, while ensuring 'gender balanced panels' will be promoted in all UNDP hosted panels, events and delegation.

5.2. Institutional arrangements and business practices for gender mainstreaming

5.2.1 Gender Focal Team of UNDP Maldives

UNDP Maldives initially had two gender focal points to support gender integration at CO level. In 2016 UNDP Maldives appointed its first Gender Focal Team (GFT) with a focus of leading gender mainstreaming at the CO. UNDP also formulated its first Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2018.⁴⁴ However, the CO did not follow through actively on its commitments in the CO Gender Strategy and no follow-up or review was undertaken of the Gender Equality Action Plan to operationalize the CO GES.

In 2021 UNDP Maldives also applied to participate in the UNDP Gender Seal Certification process as a measure to strengthen, inspire and support integration of gender equality at all levels of work. To get more reorganized a multidisciplinary Gender Focal Team (GFT) was appointed to facilitate the process and to ensure effective gender mainstreaming mechanisms are in place. The Deputy Resident Representative Chairs the GFT, while meetings are convened by the Gender Focal Point or alternate. The GFT puts into practice collective ownership of work towards gender equality, promoting office-wide participation, organizational learning to effectively mainstream gender into policies, programmes and operations, to ensure systematic tracking of results, while fostering a harassment-free workplace. Gender capacity building of the GFT to be change makers and advocate to advance gender equality is also a strategic direction going forward as part of this strategy. The GFT meets once in two weeks or as required, ensuring that gender equality remains a high priority at country level. Please refer Annex 2 for Terms of Reference of the GFT.

5.2.2 Gender Equality Action Plan

Under the leadership of the Gender Focal Team of UNDP Maldives, annually formulates a Country Office Action Plan has been developed for 2022-23 along the benchmarks proposed by the Gender Equality Seal. The gender equality seal, from the stage of self-assessment has served as an internal learning process for UNDP Maldives, which led to identifying of key strengths and weaknesses. These aspects were operationalized under 7 areas in the Gender Equality Seal Action Plan.

5.3 Gender-transformative Policy, Planning and Programming

To ensure effective integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment in all stages of programming at UNDP Maldives, the following measures are integrated at the CO level:

- Gender analysis will inform all projects of UNDP Maldives using the corporate gender analysis guideline led by relevant program teams supported by gender focal points of each team/ external gender specialist and by sub-regional gender specialist/ BRH Gender Team where relevant (refer to [UNDP Guidance Note on how to conduct a Gender Analysis](#)).
- The rationale/theory of change of the portfolio/programme/project will attempt to address structural barriers and historical biases of gender inequality, while putting in place transformative changes/results to advance gender equality through equity measures and gender responsive steps at outcome and output level.
- The Project/Programme RRFs will include gender-specific outputs and related indicators, that are monitored and linked to RRF in the CPD
- The CO has made a concerted effort and seek to formulate as a standard where the intent of the project is at GEN2 or GEN3 levels. The gender marker (on utilization of budget) for the CO in December 2022 was where both GEN 2 and GEN 3 accounted for 81% and GEN0 and GEN1 amounted to 19%. UNDP Maldives seeks to align its gender marker as per the UNDP Gender Marker Guidance Note.
- The CO will systematically address gender inequality issues in ongoing and new project development through inputs from the CO gender focal team/gender focal point, external gender consultants, sub-regional gender specialist, as well as other team members at various junctures of the project development and implementation process. Where possible UNDP will also consultant with relevant CSO’s and women led groups. Tool have been formulated to guide teams to accomplish strong gender equality results. To quality assure on gender all new projects at finalization of the Project Document a [Gender Checklist](#) has been formulated as well as a [Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Gender](#) at different levels of the project.
- [Project gender scan of all CO projects](#) was completed in 2022 for 2022/23 period with gender focus initiatives of each project/ portfolio mapped out. The gender scan also identified projects that need to be reviewed to ensure stronger gender results as projects are categorized GEN2. Project reviews are undertaken using the Project Review format of UNDP Maldives (Annex 4).
- Portfolio/ programme (as per CPD Outcome) review has been initiated and will be undertaken at least once during the current Country Programme. The Portfolio review is being undertaken to understand greater synergies across programmes and portfolio. A sensemaking exercise was undertaken in June 2022, where gender focus of projects was sought, and considered at a preliminary level. The Portfolio review will undertake a more in-depth analysis in line with the three domains of gender equality as contained in RBAP gender

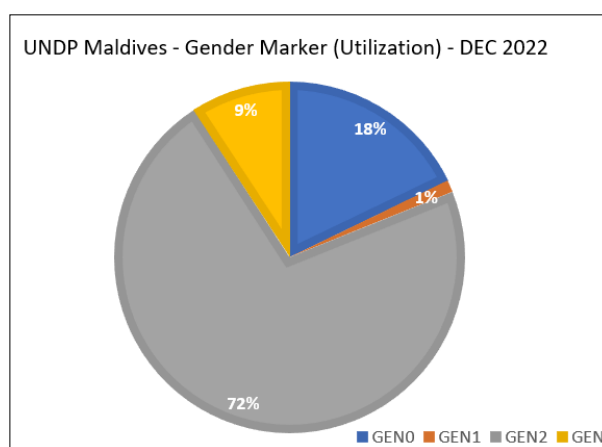


Figure 14-Gender Marker(utilization) UNDP Maldives

materials. The Portfolio review will strengthen gender integration and results at a more transformative level, to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

- Annual Work plan formulation will be quality assured by a AWP Review Committee as per the [AWP Review Checklist](#) that has been formulated at CO level with feedback provided to all teams on several areas including gender.

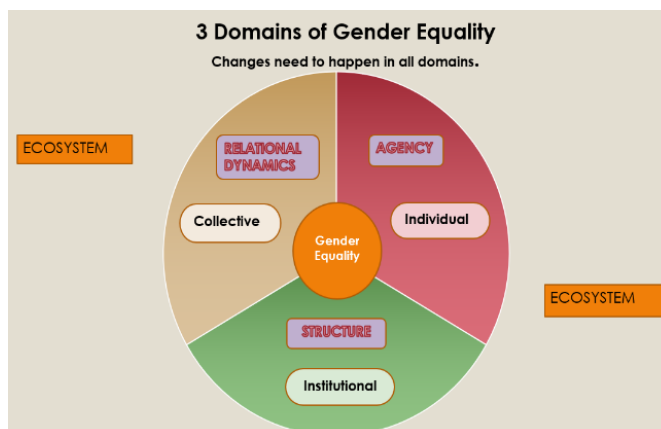


Figure 15-RBAP Model 3 Domains of Gender Equality

- TORs and RFPs submitted to Procurement Unit/HR will, to the best extent possible, include gender criteria which will be weighted at the point of technical evaluation where applicable. Procurement unit also requires that Evaluation Committee members for ongoing procurements must be gender balanced, with at least one female member in every evaluation team.
- Starting from 2023, 80% of all project budgets will seek to ensure that a minimum of 15% is allocated for gender equality related initiatives, putting in place a dedicated budget for gender-related activities.

5.4 Accountability mechanism to achieve gender results

UNDP Maldives has strengthened its focus and put in place a core gender institutional framework for ensuring gender mainstreaming into all areas of our work. In this respect the following have been undertaken/in-process to ensure organizational effectiveness for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

- Gender Equality Strategy of UNDP Maldives (2023 -2026) [which is the second GES of the CO] will be reviewed annually against the GES action plan by the Gender Focal Team led by the DRR.
- Progress of the implementation of the Gender Equality Seal Action Plan 2022/23 of UNDP Maldives will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Gender Focal Team led by the DRR with all staff informed through all staff meeting.
- The corporate [Gender Marker](#) is a key instrument used to ensure that gender results are reported which are visible at global level. Going forward UNDP Maldives will move away from GEN 0 and GEN 1 projects and will strive to ensure that all projects receive a GEN 2 or GEN 3 score, through a process of gender review (Please refer Annex 3 and 4 for the UNDP Gender Marker Code and the Programmatic Gender Review).
- All Annual Reports/ all reports (progress reports etc.) to include gender results, as a practice to ensure gender responsive and transformative results are disseminated to key stakeholders including donors and partners.
- Annual results (reported through ROAR) will capture the key annual results of the CO with special focus on GEN2 and GEN3 results in projects, highlighting transformative change.
- Project documents' results and resources frameworks (RRF) contain gender-disaggregated indicators and targets which are monitored and reported in project progress reports and in ROAR.
- A keen effort is undertaken to ensure all staff Performance Management Goals to be gender responsive. The implementation of the gender equality strategy / action plan and the gender parity pledge will be recognized as a key benchmark of good performance for all middle and senior managers. All managers will identify key criteria from the CO gender equality strategy

2023- 2026/action plan relevant to their team and assess performance based on progress achieved.

- Auditing and evaluation. UNDP evaluations are guided by the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system⁴⁵, with gender criteria mainstreamed in assessing results and impact. UNDP Maldives has also adopted the [Gender Responsive Evaluation Scale](#) in all its evaluations from 2022.

5.5 Gender capacities

UNDP Maldives has undertaken *ad hoc* learning session on gender previously. Commencement of the gender seal process in 2021 inspired the CO to integrate many good practices on streamlining gender training for all staff. The following tools and actions have been used to strengthen internal capacities on gender equality:

- A [whole of office learning plan](#) with gender targeted training as well as perspective building training is developed and approved annually by management to cover the period June of current year -to June of next year . A Learning Committee has been appointed to implement the learning plan. eGender training will be provided as introductory and advanced to ensure all staff continue to be well oriented and skilled on advancing gender equality at UNDP.
- Gender training is categorized into recurring activities and one-off thematic sessions. Special attention will be given to ensure that there is gender balance among trainers who lead training sessions on core gender training areas as well as perspective building areas for all/ select CO staff.
- Annually/as relevant a gender capacity assessment will be undertaken to ensure that specific requirements of staff are included in the country office learning plan under gender as well as the Gender Action Plan of the CO.
- GFT/regional Gender Specialist supported by external gender experts as relevant and programme gender focal points will lead gender training (also as resource persons) as an ongoing capacity building programme for all UNDP Maldives staff.
- The Induction Package of UNDP Maldives has integrated introductory gender training and introductory training on prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace/PSEA for newcomers.
- All staff are required to complete all mandatory learning courses, including mandatory course on gender journey and sexual harassment in the workplace. (Refer Annex 6 for a glossary of gender terms).
- CO will seek to invest in strengthening gender capacities at a more advanced level through channelling at least two staff member for advanced gender training (e.g.: at ILO Turin Centre, UN Women courses etc.)

5.6 Promoting an inclusive, diverse and safe environment

Diversity, inclusion, leaving no one behind are core values of UNDP and is part of the Global GES 2022 – 2025, [UN Disability and Inclusion Strategy](#) and UNDP Maldives Disability Inclusion Guidelines⁴⁶ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises to “leave no one behind” and “reach the furthest behind,” this extends to UNDP employees in the Maldives. UNDP will also align to the People for 2030 (Phase 2) 2022-2025⁴⁷ in ensuring inclusivity and diversity. UNDP Maldives

⁴⁵ United Nations Evaluation Group, 2005. *Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System and Norms for Evaluation in the United Nations System*

⁴⁶ [UNDP Disability Inclusive Development .PDF](#)

⁴⁷ [People for 2030 Phase 2 Strategy.pdf \(undp.org\)](#)

upholds a gender-balanced, inclusive, diverse workforce where the dignity of each individual from different backgrounds, abilities, cultures is respected without any form of discrimination or abuse.

UNDP Maldives Disability inclusion Guideline will ensure that all programming and operations conform to being inclusive to PWD and integrate the diverse requirements including accessibility. Gender inclusive communications guidance is also contained in this Guideline. Awareness raising to all staff on the Guideline is ongoing with follow-up on ensuring it is operationalized at the highest level.

5.6.1 Zero tolerance of Sexual Harassment, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Abuse of Authority:

UNDP Maldives remains committed to promoting safe environment where there is **zero tolerance** of sexual harassment in the workplace and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). UNDP Maldives has appointed 5 focal points to follow-up on issues of sexual harassment and abuse and an annual workplan is formulated and monitored by the team. The team has a TOR and is chaired by the DRR and convened by the Operations Manager. The team is trained by the regional gender team and leads awareness programmes for the CO and intends to also engage with partners to ensure they are informed of policies of the UN/UNDP in this regard. The following materials published by UNDP and also as One UN Maldives PSEA team effort are available on the UNDP Maldives website.

- Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority
- UN Secretary General’s Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.
- Policy for Protection against Retaliation
- IEC Materials developed by UN PSEA team

5.6.2 Promoting inclusive, diverse and disability friendly environment and policies.

Diversity and inclusion are UNDP’s core values and is at the heart of the UNDP’s mandate and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which seeks to “leave no one behind”. UNDP Maldives is committed to foster a gender-balanced, diverse and inclusive workforce where the dignity of each individual is respected free from any form of discrimination or exclusion. UNDP Maldives programmes has also aligned its work to global standards on disability and inclusion namely the [UN Disability and Inclusion Strategy](#) and the [UNDP Guidance on Disability Inclusive Development](#) and projects will be also informed by the CO [UNDP Disability Strategy](#) which is indeed a key area of progress to reach the furthest behind. In this respect UNDP Maldives has taken the following steps:

- Taken steps towards making the CO accessible to persons with disabilities e.g.: re-modelling the washroom
- Mainstreaming disability and inclusion in programmes and projects
- Enabling comms materials to reach PWD e.g.: sign language interpretation



5.6.3 Gendered aspects of Team building:

UNDP Maldives fosters an environment of 'team building' to cultivate and build a strong team in a gender balanced and inclusive manner so that 'as a team' the CO is able to respond to aspirations and choices, overcoming inequalities and limitations in balance with people and planet. Leadership for these initiatives is provided by the Senior Management and the Management team as well as the different committees – that lead by example. The retreat in 2022 provided space and freedom to speak and lead on any subject. Some subjects included; 'what should be the focus of learning,' 'procurement bottlenecks', 'gender and power' among others. While annual events such as the secret buddy, cook-off and games night which take place during Ramadan, where both men and women participate including senior management strengthens the team spirit and is also a time of bonding and fun after hours. There are also *ad hoc* events led by CO colleagues (both men and women) exercising their choices, with participation from the whole office (if available) including senior management. These include fishing trip (on off days), tea on rainy days, birthday celebrations of everyone's birthday, appreciation of years of service no matter the contract modality and coffee making demonstrations. UNDP Maldives is committed to ensure an inclusive, strong team walks the talk and leads sustainable development initiatives.



Figure 16-Cookoff during Ramadan UNDP Maldives

5.6.4 Gender-responsive Communication:

The communication guidelines for UNDP Maldives will be guided by the corporate gender-responsive communication guideline and the [CO Communications Strategy 2022-2026](#) developed by the Communications Unit for the CO with the new Country Programme Document 2022-2026. CO communications is also aligned to the [Gender Inclusive Communications](#) guidelines which is contained in the UNDP Maldives Disability Inclusion Strategy, under Part 2 - Accessible Communications Guidelines of UNDP Maldives. All UNDP Maldives teams to be guided by the [10 principles of gender responsive communication](#) toolkit which is part of the CO gender guidelines.

In line with these guidelines, CO communications is based on our identity as an innovative and trusted development partner of choice in the Maldives, with the primary mandate of designing solutions towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable future – one that leverages a human rights-based approach and prioritizes gender equality, and one that is resilient to shocks. Communications objectives aligned to the CPD will be based on a three-pronged approach to enhance our brand, demonstrate our value, foster support, build new partnerships, as well as create new opportunities. Strategic points to integrate gender equality aligned with the GES under each approach are:

a) Position UNDP as a Policy-Focused Development Partner, Knowledge Broker and Thought Leader on gender equality and the empowerment of women

- All RR's/DRRs speeches to capture the strengthened RR/ DRR position, UNDP SDG integrator role and UNDP's commitment to gender equality
- Messages by the RR/ DRR on observance of days such as Women's Day / 16 days / other products.
- Position UNDP: Create more knowledge and communication products and highlight UNDP's service offer, role, and impact amongst key partners on advancing gender equality.

- Promoting respective expertise focusing on a key issues/topics relating to gender, aligning with CO and global Gender Equality Strategy.
 - Support continued advocacy campaign(s) on a key gender priority for UNDP Maldives.
- b) *Highlight our Impact on Gender Equality and Empowerment of women and young women*
- More strategic and compelling storytelling: Work more closely with the project teams to capture gender transformative/ gender responsive success stories including other gender focused stories. All content produced will ensure a gender balance at all times.
 - Newsletter with gender-transformative and gender responsive stories.
 - Digital Strategy: Gender page has been developed on the UNDP Maldives website and will be updated as regularly with key gender related information and gender transformative/ responsive stories from each cluster. The development of social media messages (at least 15% of all messages) on gender equality.
 - To ensure strategic visibility on gender, disability, reaching the furthest behind from a *Do No Harm* approach all communication materials of CO to be cleared by the UNDP Communications team. Besides this, to obtain feedback/ quality assure on gender related communications materials of CO, all teams are encouraged to engage with the Communications Reference Group, GFT/ team gender focal points and regional gender specialist as required.
- c) *Support Strategic Partnership Building and Increased Engagement:*
- Core messages based on our CPD: In everything we do, we work to promote gender equality, so that women and girls can exercise their rights to the full and have equal opportunity. UNDP promotes gender equality, equal opportunities and empower women to make decisions, have full access to their rights in both public and private spheres.
 - Online presence: Utilizing social media to do targeted messaging on gender to mobilize attention and accountability to ensure women’s rights, equal gender representation and maintain gender-sensitive communication.
 - Mediums and Distribution: In every activity and in each communication and visibility material, the communications team will ensure equal gender representation and will maintain gender-sensitive communication.

Key messages/branding developed around Gender Equality under each portfolio aligned to CPD Outcome:

- **Anticipatory and accountable governance for and by the people and broadly all areas:** In everything we do, we work to promote gender equality, so that women and girls can exercise their rights to the full, and have equal opportunity
- **Anticipatory and accountable governance for and by the people and broadly all areas:** UNDP promotes gender equality, equal opportunities and empower women to make decisions, have full access to their rights in both public and private spheres.
- **Inclusive, sustainable and thriving livelihoods:** Advancing climate action and gender equality for inclusive growth
- **Sustainable natural resource management and climate resilience:** Effective Climate Action through Gender Representation
- **Sustainable natural resource management and climate resilience:** Equal Voices, Equal Solutions for Climate Action

5.6.5 Work-life balance/ flexi hours policy, Inclusion and disability and family responsibilities on childcare and the elderly

UNDP Maldives has issued a standard operating procedures on managing work life balance known as Viavathi Dhiriulhun on flexible working arrangements which has provided guidelines and workflows on how to attain flexi hours and manage work life balance. Work from home arrangements were introduced during the pandemic and the management has given utmost attention to become more flexible in a post Covid-19 context. Staff keep supervisors' and the head of office informed when availing themselves to access these arrangements with long term work from home/ other flexibility considerations such as due to child support and family responsibilities, inclusive and disability arrangements/elderly care clearance from the supervisor as well as cover arrangements are agreed.

5.7 Gender Equality in Operations, Management and Human Resources

UNDP Maldives is guided by the one [UNCT Business Operations Strategy](#) (BOS) which ensures that common services of all UN agencies are aligned. Furthermore, the UN-led PSEA network, disability inclusion is also part of the UNCT BOS. UNDP while supporting One UN initiatives is committed to ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in all areas and will take the following measures:

- Operations Unit has 5 female staff members and 3 male staff members and gives high consideration in sustaining gender parity
- Operations and HR staff will undergo gender training on an annual basis.
- In Human Resources, gender component is included in the recruitment and selection process; longlisting and shortlisting, technical evaluation, interviews and onboarding and induction. Gender parity of the country office is considered during the recruitment process to maintain the target of at least 45% women active in the office. Gender is also included in annual goal planning and performance review by all staff members and PSA personnel. PSEA and SH trainings are given to all new hires during their induction and to all staff members biannually every year. Gender training and mandatory Gender Journey course is completed by all staff members and personnel and the list is monitored to ensure 100% completion of the course every year. Work life balance survey is conducted annually to analyse whether the work life balance targets are achieved every year Human Resources will be trained on Inclusive HR Practices on recruitment and onboarding launched by BMS/OHR. This would ensure recruitment and onboarding practices are inclusive of persons with disabilities and how to create supporting and enabling work environment. In Procurement, training will be given to all procurement staff members on how gender can be mainstreamed in procurement related areas.
- Procurement processes to reach out to women-led organizations/CSOs and build a list of possible vendors in different categories to ensure gender balance.
- Gender to be mainstreamed in all procurement processes and all procurements also to have gender considerations in the TOR and solicitation processes.

5.7.1 Gender parity.

According to the UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity launched by the Secretary-General and as per the UNDP Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2021 UNDP Maldives has gone beyond the gender parity marker of at least 45% women among all staff and senior management. Presently at UNDP Maldives, gender parity is skewed to more women 66.7% in comparison to men at 33.3%. Women exceed men in all categories and at all levels. UNDP Maldives will also align to the vision and approach of the new [UNDP Gender Parity Strategy 2023-2025](#) which identifies 3 key objectives, of which 2 are applicable to UNDP Maldives⁴⁸; namely to maintain equal representation of women and men and strengthen UNDP as gender inclusive workplace. CO will continue to maintain gender balance in other key areas mentioned below and will advocate for meaningful change especially on gender balanced panels at events.

- [Gender balanced panels at all UNDP CO supported events](#) and delegations. UNDP focal point should not be the only female member on the panel/delegation.

- Gender sensitive recruitment processes are followed at all times through the developed gender sensitive interview guidelines (including gender balance in the interview panel, shortlist candidates, and assessment/ evaluation criterion)
- The country office ensures gender balanced committees in the country office.
- Advertisements that are placed including individual consultants to include a phrase “UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, disability, ethnicity and culture. Individuals from different geographic locations, minority groups and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.”

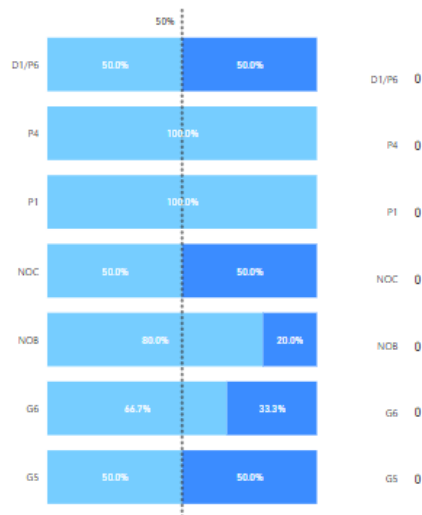


Figure 18- Gender distribution of staff at each level, UNDP Maldives 2023

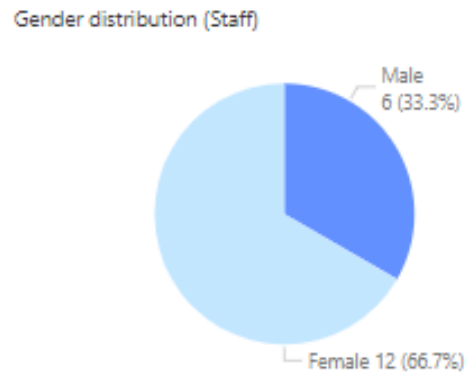


Figure 17- Gender distribution of staff overall, UNDP Maldives 2023f

5.8 Resources for Gender Equality – a priority

To advance gender equality and empowerment of women, sustained financing and resource mobilization is essential. Government cost sharing for gender equality will be pursued under all portfolios/ programmes. Budget and expenditures will continue to be tracked by the Gender Marker which remains the main tool. UNDP Maldives while strengthening existing / traditional donors and partnerships, will seek to expand its resource support to non-traditional donors and cultivate new partnership to strengthen its work on gender equality.

In line with the global Gender Equality Strategy 2022 - 2025, UNDP Maldives will seek to prioritize the following:

- All project budgets and expenditures to maintain over 70% allocations on GEN2 (gender as a significant objective) and GEN3 (gender as a principal objective) combined. (Source: Global GES 2022-25)
- Funding under UNDP Track 2 and Track 3 resources need to progressively achieve 15% allocations to advancing gender equality and/or empowering women (gender marker attribute GEN3) (source global GES 2022-25).
- Country office programmes (as well as global and regional programmes) and projects are called on to identify (at design stage), at least one stand-alone gender specific output (in the project document) with at least 15% of total resources of the initiative allocated to this output (source global GES 2022-25).

UNDP Maldives will align the CO GES and related actions in the current Country Programme as per the ambitions outlined in the global GES 2022-25.

⁴⁸ The third focuses on gender parity in crisis and post crisis context.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Workplan 2023-2026 to operationalize UNDP Maldives Gender Equality Strategy (GES)

GES Strategic Objectives	Key Activities	Indicators	Timeline				Responsibility	Budget	Status
			2023	2024	2025	2026			
GES Strategic Objective: 1. Leadership for Gender Equality									
1.1 GFT led by senior management meets monthly		# of meetings held	x	x	x	X	Senior Management, GFT/ Comms Team	NA	
1.2. SM/ Team leads speak out on GE in public and at CO		# of Speeches that include GE (traditional gender area and non-traditional)	X	x	x	x		NA	
1.3. SM/ Team leads engage with Women’s Groups and support initiatives through participation		# of women’s groups engaged & how	x	x	x	X		TBD	
1.4. SM drives innovative / out of the box action & thinking on GE at CO level and externally		Type of innovative actions undertaken (CO level/ external)	x	x	x	x		TBD	
2. Integration and Specialization – Programming on advancing Gender									
2.1. Mainstream gender equality at all levels									
2.1.1 CO invest in a Gender Specialist position		Gender specialist in place		x	x	X	Senior Management/ Program Leads & Teams/ GFT/ M& E focal/ RBAP Gender Specialist		
2.1.2 Annual work planning/ review integrates gender		Held annually with Committee convened	x	x	x	x			
2.1.3 Gender project reviews undertaken annually of selected programmes /Portfolio		# of projects reviewed using gender marker levels	x	x	x	x			
2.1.4. Gender project scan updated with input from program teams & key action noted (refer also to 3 domains of GE)		Team discussions held, Gender project scan updated annually	x	x	x	x			
2.1.5. Undertake a Gender Portfolio Review to identify and address structural barriers to gender inequality and key gaps and opportunities for gender mainstreaming, as well as targeted gender programming		Gender portfolio Review document and discussions held	x		X				
2.1.6 Gender mainstreaming tools (checklist, GAP, Guidelines etc.) utilized to mainstream gender in programmes		# and type of tools adopted utilized by teams annually	x	x	x	x	Senior Management/ Program	NA	

GES Strategic Objectives	Key Activities	Indicators	Timeline				Responsibility	Budget	Status
			2023	2024	2025	2026			
2.1.7. Ensure collection and use of sex-disaggregated data documented in all reporting mechanisms (progress reports, donor reports)/ RRF re-visited		Type of documents with sex disaggregated data by team/ portfolio	x	x	x	x	Leads & Teams/ GFT/ M& E focal/	TBD	
2.1.8. All new projects include gender analysis and sign off on gender checklist		# of Signed checklists from program/ project teams	x		x		RBAP Gen Specialsit	TBD	
2.2. Identifying and documenting gender responsive and transformative results along the six Signature Solutions									
2.2.1. Ensure strong gender responsive/ transformative indicators are included in RRFs of all prodocs/ PIP etc.		# of RRFs reviewed with strong gender indicators	x	x	x	x	Senior Management/ Program	NA	
2.2.2. Gender Responsive Evaluation Scale (GRES) informs all TORs of evaluations and is used to measure evaluation results.		# of evaluations where GRES is included	x	x	x	x	Leads & Teams/ GFT/ M& E focal/	NA	
2.2.3. CO strong gender results (responsive/ transformative) reported in evaluations and corporate systems		# of evaluations (annually) that highlight gender responsive / gender transformative results	x	x	x	x	Comms Team/ RBAP Gender Specialist	NA	
2.2.3 Identifying at least 2 change stories on GE aligned to the 6 signature solutions		# of change stories developed	x	x	x	x		NA	
2.2.3 Identifying and supporting knowledge products that advance gender responsive and transformative results across the 6 signature solutions		# of gender focused/ integrated knowledge products	x	x	x	x		NA	
3. Continuous learning/ strengthened Capacities on Gender and Innovation									
3.1 Whole of office learning plan formulated annually with at least 20% of the budget for gender activities		Learning plan inclusive of gender focused sessions in place	x	x	x	x	Learning Committee/ GFT	TBD	
3.2. At least 3 gender perspective building learning session held annually including IWD and 16 Days		# of learning session held Type of key gender perspectives discussed	x	x	x	x		TBD	
3.3. Introductory Gender Training refresher session to be held for all staff annually with dedicated		# and type of trainings held and # of staff (W/ M) that participated.	x	x	x	x	GFT/ Gender Specialist	TBD	

GES Strategic Objectives	Key Activities	Indicators	Timeline				Responsibility	Budget	Status
			2023	2024	2025	2026			
sessions on Gender Marker, Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming									
3.4 Gender training to be held for Operations, procurement, HR teams annually	<i>Training session held for operations, HR teams</i>		x	x	x	x		TBD	
3.5. Advanced gender training to be held for select teams (program / operations if interested) as required	<i># of advanced gender training held and # of staff that participated (W/ M)</i>		x	x	x	x		TBD	
3.6. Targeted in-depth gender training to be provided for 2 CO colleagues annually	<i># of GE actions led/ initiated by trained CO colleagues</i>		x	x	x	x		TBD	
4. An Equal and Inclusive culture									
4.1. CO SH/ PSEA workplan developed and operationalized by SH/ PSEA task team	<i>Workplan in place</i>		x	x	x	x	PSEA task team/ GFT	NA	
4.2. SH/ PSEA/ Disability awareness/ discrimination focused sessions held for all CO staff	<i># and type of sessions held</i>		x	x	x	x		TBD	
4.3. Innovative steps taken by CO to ensure equal and inclusive culture	<i># of initiative/ measures</i>		x	x	x	x		TBD	
4.4 Men (CO linking with associations) mobilized as champions for gender equality/ address VAW	<i># of male champions mobilized</i>			x	x	x		NA	
5. Partnerships for gender equality and convening role on GE									
5.1 Partnerships established with Women's groups/ movements/ feminist associations/ Women Heads of Households on GE	<i># of new and existing partnerships with women's groups</i>		x	x	x	X	Senior Management/ Team Leads & Program Teams / GFT	Project budget	
5.2. Partnerships with Government (MoGFSS and Other Ministries) on advancing GE	<i># of Ministries with agreements signed where gender is integrated</i>		x	x	x	x		Project budgets	
5.3. Partnerships with CSOs and other associations (youth groups, political parties/ youth & women's political wings, men's associations, PWDs, religious leaders, youth clubs, judiciary, law enforcement authorities, transport authorities etc)	<i># of new and existing partnerships forged for GE</i>		x	x	x	x		TBD	

GES Strategic Objectives	Key Activities	Indicators	Timeline				Responsibility	Budget	Status
			2023	2024	2025	2026			
6. Matching Resource with Ambition on advancing gender									
6.1. Develop a pipeline of standalone/ mainstreamed gender projects (GEN 2 & GEN 3) in the form of concept notes and proposals	<i># of Concept Notes developed by program teams</i>	x	x	x	x	Senior Management/ Program	TBD		
6.2. Resources mobilized for at least one GEN 3 project with donor funding	<i>Type of GEN 3 projects mobilized</i>	x	x	x	x	Team Leads/ Program	NA		
6.3 Initiate discussions with Governemnt on Gov Cost sharing/ private sector engagement on GE	<i># of discussions initiated and # of agreements signed</i>	x	x	x	x	Teams/ RBAP Gender Sp.	NA		
7. Accountability on GE									
7.1. CO Gender Equality Strategy based discussion held and action plan updated	<i># GES discussions held GES Action Plan updated annually</i>	x	x	x	x	Senior management/ HR/ GFT/ M&	TBD		
7.2. ROAR includes gender results across all areas	<i>Gender integrated ROAR</i>	x	x	x	x	E focal point/ operations	NA		
7.3. CO/ RBAP to undertake GEN 2 spot checks	<i># of projects review for spot checks</i>	x	x	x	x	/RBAP Gender Specialist	NA		
7.4. PMDs of Senior management/ team leads/ managers to include goals on advancing GE	<i>PMDs of Senior managers/ team leads</i>	x	x	x	X				
7.5. All HR processors(recruitment, interviews, TORs etc) to ensure gender is mainstreamed									
7.6. All procurement processors (CFP, TOR, RFI, evaluation panels etc) to ensure gender is mainstreamed									
8. Communication on Gender for Advocacy:									
8.1 CO uses its annual branding messages per portfolio / team to advocate on GE	<i>% of messages with GE branding annually</i>	x	x	x	x	Comms team/ program team leads and teams	NA		
8.2 CO develops annual gender focused campaign linking with program teams & Coms team	<i>Type and nature of annual gender focused campaign of CO</i>	x	x	x	x		NA		
8.3 CO website carries gender transformative change stories	<i># of stories uploaded on website annually</i>	x	x	x	x		NA		

*NA – Not Applicable TBD- To Be Determined



UNDP Maldives

Term of Reference (ToR) of the Gender Focal Team (GFT)

Updated June 2022

I. Organization in CO

Under the guidance and leadership of the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative and with the facilitation of Gender Focal Points, the Gender Focal Team (GFT) acts as a cross cutting group from all thematic/functional teams to catalyse and support the process of gender mainstreaming throughout programmes and work areas in UNDP Maldives Country Office. In the absence of the DRR the GFT will be Chaired by the Resident Representative or nominee.

The GFT is appointed in line with UNDPs Gender Equality Strategies of the past as well as its present Gender Equality Strategy 2022 – 2025 where all UNDP Country Offices are required to put in place a multidisciplinary Gender Focal Team led by senior management (Deputy Resident Representative/Resident Representative). The GFT brings together programme and operations staff to ensure gender mainstreaming in the programme portfolio; focus on institutional issues while seeking to ensure gender parity at all levels, upholds an enabling environment with high gender equality standards, ensures gender-sensitive communications, monitor and evaluate gender equality results. The UNDP Maldives GFT is complimented with the technical support of an assigned Sub-regional Gender Specialist appointed by BRH and is supported by the BRH gender team as relevant.

- Title: Gender Focal Team (GFT)
- Chair: UNDP Deputy Resident Representative or Resident Representative in the absence of the DRR
- Secretary and advisor: UNDP Gender Focal Point (and alternate)
- Members:
 - At least one representative from all units and team, including Programme units, Intersectoral units and the Operations unit.
 - Human Resources representative from Operations unit.

II. Key Results/Functions Expected

Through operation of the GFT, the team will be responsible for developing the Gender Equality Strategy of UNDP Maldives. The GFT team will ensure its implementation and regularly monitor progress and report accordingly, identify bottleneck and provide solutions.

Summary of GFT's key functions are:

- E. CO Gender Equality Strategy (GES)
 - Undertake the Gender Equality Seal and self-assessment of the Country office.
 - Develop the UNDP Maldives Gender Equality strategy, which is in line with the UNSDCF and UNDP global Gender Equality Strategy but specifically applied to UNDP's areas of support and capacity.
 - Coordinate the implementation, monitoring and progress review of the GES collectively as a Gender Focal Team;

- Support the implementation of the GES in respective units; and
- Report on a quarterly basis the progress of the GES implementation.

2. Technical Support

- Support the inclusion of gender issues in programme/project cycle from project identification, formulation, appraisal, implementation and M&E stages;
- Support the development and implementation of AWP through a gender lens;
- Ensure that all projects review their gender markers annually and report;
- Ensure/promote a gender responsive budget monitoring system is in place; and
- Jointly review the progress of implementation of GES.

3. Capacity Development

- To ensure relevant workplace policies such as SH/SEA policy are implemented, and staff members are aware of these policies.
- Through facilitating formulation of GES, assess the training needs for gender mainstreaming of UNDP Programme staff, project staff and partners.
- Contribute to planning and designing of the gender training sessions by CO with insights on practical needs in collaboration with the learning committee.
- Establish a monitoring mechanism to measure the impact of trainings; and
- Regularly improve knowledge and skills on gender mainstreaming and share best practices by other COs through self-learning, webinars, trainings, and discussion sessions.

4. Interaction in and out of the Workplace

- Lead on addressing gender issues within the working environment and support gender sensitive Human Resources Policies and UNDP Gender Parity Policy;
- Ensure gender is reflected in all external communication i.e. speeches, knowledge products etc.
- Serve as a repository for gender information within the relevant unit/section and encouraged to organize brown bag sessions in the relevant teams.

5. Reporting

- Prepare a short annual report of activities for the UNDP Resident Representative, with a copy to the Gender Unit/BRH, to indicate achievements, challenges and areas of support needed; and
- Conduct a mid-term review of the GFT key results with the DRR and present a brief overview to staff highlighting key results on GES, challenges and priorities for rest of the year.
- Prepare gender inputs into corporate reporting including ROAR and UNSDCF Progress Report and UNCT Gender Scorecard update, as required.

III. Method of Operation

- Chairs meetings once every month to discuss and review progress against the CO Gender Work Plan, lead its delivery and monitor its implementation on a quarterly basis;
- Decisions and updates from the Gender Focal Team will be reported as a standing agenda of all staff meeting;
- The Gender Focal Point will be responsible for the Minutes (with the GFT supporting the compilation of minutes on a rotational basis) of the Gender Focal Team, pre circulating the agenda, carefully record the minutes of the meetings and duly shared with senior management and heads of units;
- Maintain a repository of gender related information for all staff to access, generate knowledge management products for circulation internally and externally which would be updated on POCOMAS; and

- Implementation of individual unit teams under the GES ensured by respective focal points to each unit.

IV. Specific Roles and responsibilities of each member of the Gender Focal Team:

Chair of GFT – DRR (RR as alternative)	Chairs and leads the Gender Focal Team to ensure that UNDP Maldives strengthens its focus on gender equality /puts in place all aspects that would give the highest priority to ensure gender equality at all levels. Chairs the GFT meetings and considers overall country office compliance towards reaching all benchmarks as well as action that needs to be taken at Senior Management level in terms of integrating gender equality at CO level and supporting the Gender Seal certification process.
Gender Focal Point (Alternate GFP)	Convener of the GFT. Responsible for coordinating the GFT and provide support leading to the completion of the gender seal process and the integration of gender equality at all areas of the CO. Links with GFT and sub-regional gender specialist and other CO staff as relevant to ensure that country office wide adoption of gender equality standards ingrained in the Gender Equality Strategy and other relevant policies are incorporated. Leads the GFT in the formulation /implementation of the country office action plan on gender equality. Supports the implementation of the prevention of SH and SEA CO action plan. Links with other UN agencies/ Government institutions CSOs and Women’s Rights organizations (including the Ministry of Gender / GTG on UNDP’s response to gender equality programming. Gender Focal point will be the Secretary of the GFT and advisor to Senior Management on the progress to Gender Seal implementation and GES.
Representative from RCC Unit	Provide overall feedback to the GFT on gender equality standards under the environment programme and functions as the GFT programmatic/ project focal on environment. Considers compliance of and recommends alignment/ quality assurance of environment programmes in line with gender equality standards.
Representative from Operations Unit	GFT lead on ensuring gender standards are integrated in procurement and finance processors and looks to integrating global gender standards as applicable, are incorporated at all levels while providing feedback to the GFT.
Representative from Accelerator Lab	GFT lead on experimentation and innovation with special attention to ensure women are included as active actors in the Future of Work and at policy dialogues.
Representative from Economics Unit	Provides guidance to the GFT on ensuring gender equality is maintained through UNDPs engagement in promoting economic empowerment on an overall basis and through innovation and related eco-system building linking with the Acc Lab– especially promoting women social

	entrepreneurs and women in STEM among others promoting 'gender equality' and 'leaving no one behind'.
Representative from Communications Unit	Leads the Communications team and provides feedback to the GFT on gender integration in all aspects of CO communications, while seeking to ensure gender equality standards in all communication materials, tools, platforms, events etc.
Representative from Governance Unit	Considers compliance of and recommends alignment/ quality assurance of programmes in line with gender equality standards, while drawing from lessons of the GFT under the previous country programmes. GFT programmatic/ project focal on governance and peacebuilding programming and provides feedback to the GFT in ensuring the highest gender equality standards / benchmarks are realized within this portfolio.
Human Resources Representative from Operations Team	Integrates gender to all HR and procurement processes and gathers information as relevant to reaching HR benchmarks and reports to GFT. Supports the implementation of the prevention of SH and SEA CO action plan with the SH & SEA focal points and reports to GFT. Links with the Sub-regional gender Specialist to ensure that all gaps are addressed in all HR and procurement related systems, functions and processes. Integrates innovative country office learning sessions on reaching gender equality as a priority with the Learning Committee.

Annex 3: Gender Marker Code

(For further details please refer the full UNDP Gender Marker Guidance Note)

Gender Marker Code	Description
GEN3	<p>The achievement of gender equality and/or the empowerment of women are an explicit objective¹¹ of the output and the main reason that this output was planned. Narrowing gender inequalities or empower women is the main reason this initiative is being undertaken.</p> <p>E.g., A gender-based violence resource centre is established. [Motivation for rating: Provides support to survivors of gender-based violence; increased awareness, advocacy for reduction of gender-based violence.]</p>
GEN2	<p>Gender equality is not the <i>main</i> objective of the expected output, but the output promotes gender equality in a significant and consistent way. Must be evidence that a gender analysis has been done, that there will be change related to gender equality/women’s empowerment and there are indicators to measure/track this change. Sometimes called “gender mainstreamed¹²” initiatives, where gender equality is adequately integrated as a cross-cutting issue by the rationale, activities, indicators and budget associated with the output.</p> <p>E.g., Post-crisis community security and cohesion is restored. [Motivation for rating: Restoring security and cohesion for the whole community is the principal objective of the project. The project ensures that that women make decisions and benefit from the project, survivors of gender-based violence are reintegrated into their families and communities, etc.]</p>
GEN1	<p>Output at the project level contributes in a limited way to gender equality, but not significantly. Gender equality is not consistently mainstreamed and has not been critical in the project design. Nevertheless, some aspect(s) of the output at the project level (i.e. one or more of its activities) are expected to promote gender equality but not in a consistent way.</p> <p>E.g., New systems and procedures are established to enhance efficiency and transparency in public service. [Motivation for rating: The main objective of most of the activities that constitute this output is to promote government accountability and transparency in public service. One or two of the activities includes some punctual activities that will focus on promoting gender equality, for example, by organizing a training to share information with women organizations.]</p>
GEN0	<p>Outputs at the project level are not contributing to gender equality. No activities or components of the output contribute to the promotion of gender equality. GEN0 output at the project levels are “gender blind” and it is therefore recommended to reduce as much the GEN0 rated outputs.</p> <p>AIDS responses are integrated into poverty reduction strategies. [Motivation for rating: The planned activities that make up this output do not take the different needs and interests of women and men into account. Activities are planned in a way that assumes that services “for people” will meet the needs of everyone.]</p>



Project / Programme Review ⁴⁹

Development of a Gender Action Plan – UNDP Maldives

*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Project Name:

Project Number:

Output Number:

1. **Background of Project:** *(write 1 -2 paragraph)*

2. **Existing gender inequalities of Project focused area:** *(write 1 -2 paragraph)*

3. **Proposed actions to address gender equality dimensions in the project:** *(write 1 -2 paragraph)*

4. **Atlas Marker Score - review of Programs/ projects**
 - What score has the CO assigned to this project on the Atlas Gender Marker?
 - Does this score match your own assessment?

Cluster/ Programme	Project title	CO Gender Marker score (present)	Assessment					Suggested Gender Marker Score
			Women- focused	Gender- focused	Gender responsive	Gender blind	Gender- adverse	

Guide:

- a) *Women focused:* women are the main stakeholders/beneficiaries of the project and/or women's empowerment is specified as an objective,
- b) *Gender Focused:* Project specifically addresses a gender issue and/or gender equality is specified as an objective.
- c) *Gender Responsive:* Project recognises gender inequality and incorporates specific actions to ensure women's participation and/or access to benefits, although women are not primary stakeholders and gender equality is not a stated objective.
- d) *Gender Blind:* Project does not recognise or respond to gender inequality in any way.
- e) *Gender Adverse:* Project is likely to have an adverse effect on gender equality and/or women's situation.

5. Please fill the relevant information in the table below:

Activities (as per the present workplan)	Updated new actions incorporating gender equality	Updated / New indicators incorporating gender	Responsible Institutions	Budget
Outcome XXXX				
Output XXX				
Activity 1.1				
Outcome XXXX				
Output XXX				
Activity 1.1				

Please add rows as required.

Checklist for project reviews when mainstreaming gender

Situation analysis

- Does the situation analysis consider the different social, economic, cultural and political situations of men and women?
- Does the analysis reflect an awareness of the gender-differentiated impacts of socio-economic and development processes, particularly in the context of the proposed project?

Data and statistics

- Have data and statistics provided as background and/or justification for the project been disaggregated by sex? If not, has a reason (e.g. non-availability of such data, inappropriateness of disaggregation against a particular indicator) been given for the omission?
- Is it proposed to address gender gaps in data as one of the activities under the project? For instance, has collection of sex-disaggregated data been specified in the proposal for baseline survey?

Strategy

- Does the proposed strategy specify how it will address the dimensions of gender inequality described

⁴⁹ The tool is based on and adapted from the screening document developed by the UNDP Country Office in Turkey, and as shared in the Gender Seal Community of Practice as well as utilizing the format used under GEF projects to develop Gender Action Plans for projects.

in the analysis? If not, is there an explanation given of why this aspect has not been considered?

- Does the strategy include any measures to mitigate any possible negative gender impacts of the project?

Monitoring indicators

- Does the monitoring framework include measurable gender indicators appropriate to the intervention?

Implementation

- Have specific actions for gender equality been mandated (e.g. specified percentage of seats reserved for women in decision-making bodies set up under the project, training programmes, study tours and other learning opportunities, job opportunities, equal wages)?

Stakeholders and partners

- Are women's organisations or women/gender units within larger institutions included among the stakeholders?
- Who are the implementing partners? Do they have experience/competence in implementing gender-responsive programmes? If not, then how is the capacity gap going to be addressed?

Budget

- Have adequate resources been provided for the proposed gender activities?
- Will it be possible to track the flow of these resources?

Atlas Marker Score

- What score has the CO assigned to this project on the Atlas Gender Marker
- Does this score match your own assessment?

Sex describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth.

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because, applied to social analysis, it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever.

Gender Equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society.

Gender equality (Equality between women and men)

This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

Source: UN Women, OSAGI Gender Mainstreaming - Concepts and definitions

Gender Equity is the process of being fair to men and women. To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. **Equity is a means. Equality is the result.**

Gender-mainstreaming is a process rather than a goal. Efforts to integrate gender into existing institutions of the mainstream have little value for their own sake. We mainstream gender concerns to achieve gender equality and improve the relevance of development agendas. Such an approach shows that the costs of women's marginalization and gender inequalities are born by all. UN ECOSOC describes gender mainstreaming as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality". (ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2)

Gender inequality index (GII) In 2010, the UNDP developed a new index for measuring gender disparity, called the Gender Inequality Index (GII). This index is a composite measure which shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in three dimensions: (1) reproductive health, (2) empowerment, and (3) the labor market. The index ranges from zero, which indicates that women and men fare equally, to one, which indicates that women fare as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions. The new index was introduced in the 2010 Human Development Report as an experimental measure to remedy the shortcomings of the previous, and no longer used, indicators, the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), both of which were introduced in the 1995 Human Development Report. According to the index, there is no country in the world where women are equal to their men. In other words, gender equality remains a distant reality still.

Source: UNDP, [Gender Inequality Index](#)

Gender gap

The term gender gap refers to any disparity between women and men's condition or position in society. It is often used to refer to a difference in average earnings between women and men, e.g. "gender pay gap." However, gender gaps can be found in many areas, such as the four pillars that the World Economic Forum uses to calculate its Gender Gap Index, namely: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment.

Source: See Hausmann, Ricardo, Laura D. Tyson, Saadia Zahidi, Editors (2012). "[The Global Gender Gap Report 2012](#)". World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland.

Gender parity

Gender parity is another term for equal representation of women and men in a given area, for example, gender parity in organizational leadership or higher education. Working toward gender parity (equal representation) is a key part of achieving gender equality, and one of the twin strategies, alongside gender mainstreaming.





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