



International
Labour
Organization



Republic of Maldives

Decent Work Country Programme 2025–2031 Republic of Maldives



**Decent Work Country Programme
2025–2031
Republic of Maldives**

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Abbreviations

CSR	corporate social responsibility
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
GDP	gross domestic product
ICT	information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OSH	occupational safety and health
P&B	programme and budget (ILO)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMME

2025–2031

REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

Between

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

Represented by

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, LABOUR AND
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

And

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

And

EMPLOYERS' AND WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS

19 November 2025

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as the “MOU”) is made on this 19 November 2025 by and between:

The Government of the Republic of Maldives represented by the **Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development** (hereinafter referred to as “Government”);

The **undersigned workers’ and employers’ organizations**; and

The **International Labour Organization**, represented by the International Labour Office (hereinafter referred to as “ILO”).

WHEREAS the Government of the Republic of Maldives (Government), the undersigned workers’ and employers’ organizations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) (referred collectively as the Parties), wish to collaborate in order to promote and advance decent work in the Maldives.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above premises and mutual understanding, the Parties hereby agree as follows:

1. The Parties affirm their commitment to collaborate in the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2025–2031 for the Republic of Maldives. The following are agreed as priorities of the DWCP:

Strategic Priority 1: Promoting shared prosperity and inclusive human development for all.

Strategic Priority 2: Increasing ratification of international labour standards and their implementation through gender-responsive national policies and legislation.

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthening gender-responsive tripartism and social dialogue mechanisms, processes and capacities.

2. The ILO agrees to assist in the mobilization of resources and to provide development cooperation in the implementation of the DWCP, subject to its rules, regulations, directives and procedures, the availability of funds and conditions to be agreed upon in writing.

CONFLICTS OR INCONSISTENCY

The DWCP document is attached to this MOU. In the event that the terms contained in the DWCP document are incompatible with the terms of this MOU, then the latter shall govern and prevail. The original of the MOU has been written and signed in English. If this MOU is translated into another language, the English version shall govern and prevail.

Any dispute or disagreement arising between the Parties concerning the interpretation, implementation or application of any provision of this MOU shall be resolved amicably through mutual consultation and negotiations between the Parties.

VARIATION AND MODIFICATION

This MOU may be varied or modified at any time by mutual written agreement between the Parties.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This MOU shall enter into force upon its signature by the authorized representatives of all Parties and shall remain in effect until the completion of the DWCP period, unless terminated earlier as provided herein.

A Party may terminate this MOU with 90 days prior written notice to the other Parties. Such termination shall not affect the continuation or completion of any ongoing projects or obligations that have already been initiated prior to the termination date.

WAIVER

Nothing in or relating to this MOU shall be construed as constituting a waiver of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the ILO.

For and on behalf of the Government



Dr. Ali Haidar Ahmed

Minister of Higher Education,
Labour and Skills Development

Malé

On 19 November 2025

For and on behalf of the International Labour Office



Joni Simpson

ILO Country Director for Sri Lanka and the
Maldives

Malé

On 19 November 2025

For and on behalf of National Federation of
Maldivian Employers



Mohamed Ali Janah

President

Malé

On 19 November 2025

For and on behalf of Maldives Trade Union
Congress



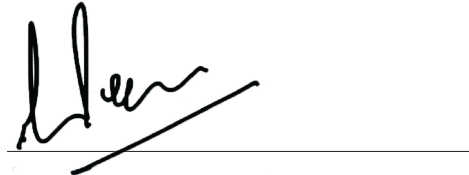
Mauroof Zakir

President

Malé

On 19 November 2025

For and on behalf of Maldives Association
of Tourism Industry



Ibrahim Noordeen

Executive Board Member

Malé

On 19 November 2025

Decent Work Country Programme 2025–2031 at a glance

Decent Work Country Programme goal: Decent, productive, inclusive and sustainable work for all in the Maldives

Strategic Priority 1: Promoting shared prosperity and inclusive human development for all.¹

Links with SDG targets:

SDG 1.3 (social protection for all); **SDG 4.3 and 4.5** (equitable and equal access to technical and vocational education and training); **SDG 4.4** (skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship); **SDG 5.1** (ending discrimination against women and girls) **SDG 5.4** (recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work, including through the provision of public services); **SDG 8.3** (policies to support job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation and formalization of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises); **SDG 8.5** (full and productive employment and decent work for all and equal pay for work of equal value); **SDG 8.6** (reduction in proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)

National partners: The Tripartite Labour Advisory Board and members of the DWCP Task Force, which consists of the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development; the Maldives Trade Union Congress; the National Federation of Maldivian Employers; the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry; the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Infrastructure; the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation; the Labour Relations Authority; and the Maldives Bureau of Statistics. In addition, the ILO will engage with the Maldives Ministry of Homeland Security and Technology on labour migration matters.

Outcome 1.1: Youth, women and others at risk of being left behind contribute to and benefit from inclusive, gender-responsive, resilient and sustainable economic and human capital development that fosters entrepreneurship and decent work (adapted from UNSDCF 2022–2026 Outcome 1).

Links with ILO P&B 2024–25:²

Outcome 3: Full and productive employment for just transitions

Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all

Outcome 6: Protection at work for all

Outcome 8: Integrated policy and institutional responses for social justice through decent work

Enabler A: Enhanced knowledge, innovation, cooperation and communication to advance social justice

Output 1.1.1: Gender-responsive national comprehensive employment policy developed, adopted and implemented, with emphasis on women, youth, persons with disabilities; addressing the impacts of climate change; enhancing technical and vocational skills; entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprise promotion; a just transition; economic formalization; and sectoral policies, including in new green sectors (linked to UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 1.2., indicator 1.2.1).

Output 1.1.2: Multi-stakeholder gender-responsive governance structure operationalized and action plan developed and implemented for the national comprehensive employment policy.

Output 1.1.3: Strengthened gender-responsive policy and programmatic framework in place and implemented to promote formalization and sustainable and green enterprise and entrepreneurship development, including through increased provision of business development services.

¹ All three Strategic Priorities are adapted from the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

² ILO Programme and Budget for 2024–25.

Links with ILO P&B 2026–27:³ Outcome 3: Full and productive employment as a pathway for social justice Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises, competitiveness and productivity growth for decent work Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all Outcome 6: Protection at work for all Outcome 9: Enhanced policy coherence and amplified action for social justice through decent work Enabler A: Enhanced knowledge, communication, partnership and platforms for innovation and capacity development	Output 1.1.4: National gender-responsive Just Transition Strategy developed, adopted and implemented to facilitate the transition to a more sustainable economy and decent employment, including through employment-intensive nature-based solutions and green works for climate-resilient infrastructure to address the current and future impacts of climate change. Output 1.1.5: Agreement achieved among tripartite constituents and other relevant stakeholders on a gender-responsive national action plan and road map, based on a national assessment, to provide quality and affordable childcare services through public, private and cooperative entities to increase women's labour force participation and to provide decent work opportunities (adapted from UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 1.2, indicator 1.2.2).
Links with ILO P&B 2028–29 and ILO P&B 2030–31:⁴ As detailed in the results framework, a sequenced approach in collaboration between the ILO and its tripartite constituents will be put in place to implement the following policy-related workstreams under this priority: (1) National comprehensive employment policy (2) Policy and measures to promote formalization and sustainable and green enterprise and entrepreneurship development (3) Just transition strategy (4) National labour migration policy and action plan (5) Policy and implementation measures to expand social protection coverage and comprehensiveness The priority focus of DWCP implementation in the first two years (2025–2026) will be on (i) the national comprehensive employment policy, which will include all the above-mentioned policy areas (to be further elaborated in separate policies and strategies); and (ii) the labour migration policy and action plan.	Output 1.1.6: Gender-responsive national labour migration policy and action plan developed and adopted, based on findings of a diagnostic study (adapted from UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 4.1, indicator 4.1.3). Output 1.1.7: Labour market information system developed and responsive to SDG disaggregation requirements (sex, migrants, disability and other vulnerable groups). Output 1.1.8: Gender-responsive labour statistics survey programme developed that includes a regular Labour Force Survey and modules of other forms of work (own-use production work, own-use provision of services, volunteer work, etc.) according to latest International Conference of Labour Statisticians standards.

³ The ILO Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27.

⁴ The P&B linkages for 2028–29 and 2030–31 may alter in subsequent biennia.

Outcome 1.2: People in the Maldives, especially from the most vulnerable and marginalized households, benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, gender-responsive, inclusive and resilient social and protection services, have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with well-being and dignity (UNSDCF 2022–2026, Outcome 2). Links with ILO P&B 2024–25: Outcome 3: Full and productive employment for just transitions Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all Outcome 6: Protection at work for all Links with ILO P&B 2026–27: Outcome 3: Full and productive employment as a pathway for social justice Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all Outcome 6: Protection at work for all Links with ILO P&B 2028–29 and ILO P&B 2030–31:⁵	Output 1.2.1: Gender-responsive policy and implementation measures in place to expand social protection coverage and comprehensiveness, including in the context of economic, health and natural disaster shocks, with a focus on migrant workers, workers in non-standard forms of employment and persons with disabilities (linked to UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 2.4). Output 1.2.2: Enhanced capacities within the public and private sectors to design and deliver inclusive, gender-responsive, adaptive and market-relevant lifelong learning and skills development opportunities that meet real market needs and prospects (UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 1.3). Output 1.2.3: Enhanced gender-responsive skills development planning as a result of national mapping of long-term workforce skills requirements, based on analysis of sectoral needs and economic trends, particularly digitalization, artificial intelligence and new forms of work, with participation of Maldives social partners.
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Strategic Priority 2: Increasing ratification of international labour standards and their implementation through gender-responsive national policies and legislation.

Links with SDG targets:

SDG 5.1 (ending discrimination against women and girls); **SDG 5.2** (eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls); **SDG 8.7** (eradicate forced labour and end child labour in all forms); **SDG 8.8** (labour rights and secure working environments for all, including migrant workers, especially women and those in precarious employment); **SDG 10.4** (adopt fiscal and social policies that promote equality, including wage and social protection policies).

National partners: The Tripartite Labour Advisory Board and members of the DWCP Task Force, which consists of the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development; the Maldives Trade Union Congress; the National Federation of Maldivian Employers; the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry; the Ministry of Tourism; the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Infrastructure; the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation; the Labour Relations Authority; and the Maldives Bureau of Statistics.

⁵ The P&B linkages for 2028–29 and 2030–31 may alter in subsequent biennia.

Outcome 2.1: Improved gender-responsive enabling environment for the promotion and implementation of international labour standards.	Output 2.1.1: Gender-responsive regulations and improved institutional capacities of constituents in place to implement the Industrial Relations Act (2024) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2024), with attention to gender and migrant worker aspects.
Links with ILO P&B 2024–25: Outcome 1: Strong, modernized normative action for social justice Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all Outcome 6: Protection at work for all Outcome 8: Integrated policy and institutional responses for social justice through decent work	Output 2.1.2: Mechanisms established under the Industrial Relations Act (2024) to ensure effective implementation, including with respect to collective bargaining agreements, conciliation concerning labour disputes and relations with trade unions. Output 2.1.3: Increased capacities of the Government and employers to implement labour management procedures, including with respect to strategic compliance planning and occupational safety and health.
Links with ILO P&B 2026–27: Outcome 1: Strong, modernized normative action for social justice Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all Outcome 6: Protection at work for all Outcome 9: Enhanced policy coherence and amplified action for social justice through decent work	Output 2.1.4: Gender-responsive national occupational safety and health profile and implementation plan developed and adopted. Output 2.1.5: Increased constituent capacities for ratification and implementation of international labour standards and promoting responsible business conduct, including addressing recommendations of ILO supervisory bodies. Output 2.1.6: Improved quality and timeliness of reporting on implementation of ratified international labour standards.
Links with ILO P&B 2028–29 and ILO P&B 2030–31:⁶	Output 2.1.7: Gender-responsive labour rights and just transition measures mainstreamed into the Maldives' Climate Prosperity Plan and Nationally Determined Contributions on climate change, as well as industrial, small and medium-sized enterprises and other relevant policies and programmes. Output 2.1.8: Strengthened policies and measures to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, in line with ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment. Output 2.1.9: Gender-responsive policies and measures strengthened or developed to eliminate forced labour, human trafficking and the worst forms of child labour. Output 2.1.10: Gender-responsive corporate social responsibility initiatives promoted and implemented to improve labour conditions, foster exploitation-free supply chains and eliminate modern slavery at work.

⁶ The P&B linkages for 2028–29 and 2030–31 may alter in subsequent biennia.

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthening gender-responsive tripartism and social dialogue mechanisms, processes and capacities.

Links with SDG targets:

SDG 10.1 (reduce income inequalities); **SDG 10.4** (adopt fiscal and social policies that promote equality, including wage and social protection policies).

National partners: The Tripartite Labour Advisory Board and members of the DWCP Task Force, which consists of the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development; the Maldives Trade Union Congress; the National Federation of Maldivian Employers; the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry; the Ministry of Tourism; the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Infrastructure; the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation; the Labour Relations Authority; and Maldives Bureau of Statistics. In addition, the following will be partners in relevant areas: the Tripartite Industrial Dispute Resolution Division at the Employment Tribunal and the Salary and Wage Advisory Board.

Outcome 3.1: Improvement in the quality and effectiveness of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue due to effectively functioning and gender-responsive tripartite cooperation mechanisms and processes.

Links with ILO P&B 2024–25:

Outcome 2: Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue

Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all

Links with ILO P&B 2026–27:

Outcome 2: Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents, effective social dialogue and good governance of labour market

Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all

Links with ILO P&B 2028–29 and ILO P&B 2030–31:⁷

Output 3.1.1: Strengthened capacities of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board and DWCP Task Force to effectively perform the roles set out in their respective terms of reference.

Output 3.1.2: Gender-responsive and non-discriminatory minimum wage-setting and adjustment systems developed and adopted through the tripartite Salary and Wage Advisory Board.

Output 3.1.3: Gender-responsive measures developed, adopted and implemented to reduce wage discrimination (particularly based on gender and migrant status), including with respect to achieving equal remuneration for work of equal value and extension of minimum wage coverage and wage protection to all migrant workers.

Output 3.1.4: Increased capacities of the Tripartite Industrial Dispute Resolution Division at the Employment Tribunal to carry out its mandate.

Output 3.1.5: Gender-responsive research agenda developed and implemented, focusing on issues affecting unions and labour relations (with the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme).

⁷ The P&B linkages for 2028–29 and 2030–31 may alter in subsequent biennia.

Outcome 3.2: Maldives social partners have enhanced voice and achieve effective engagement in contributing to the development of national policies, strategies and plans on gender equality, a just transition and collective bargaining. Links with ILO P&B 2024–25: Outcome 2: <i>Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue</i> Outcome 5: <i>Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all</i> Links with ILO P&B 2026–27: Outcome 2: <i>Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents, effective social dialogue and good governance of labour market</i> Outcome 5: <i>Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all</i> Links with ILO P&B 2028–29 and ILO P&B 2030–31:⁸	Output 3.2.1: Strengthened institutional capacities and coordination of national employers' organizations on tripartite and bipartite social dialogue (collective bargaining, grievance handling and workplace cooperation) and delivery of core representation and service mandates, with attention to gender considerations. Output 3.2.2: Strengthened institutional capacities of workers' organizations on tripartite and bipartite social dialogue (collective bargaining, grievance handling and workplace cooperation) and delivery of core representation and service mandates, with attention to gender considerations.
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⁸ The P&B linkages for 2028–29 and 2030–31 may alter in subsequent biennia.

1. Introduction

The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2025–2031 follows a memorandum of understanding signed between the Government of the Maldives and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2019. It aligns with and supports implementation of the broader United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026 for the Maldives, for working towards achievement of national development objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The DWCP fully aligns with and is designed to support implementation of the national development priorities articulated in relevant policies and strategies, particularly the decent work promotion elements of the Maldives Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028.⁹

As a time-bound document for the ILO Country Office and its tripartite constituents in the Maldives, as well as other government and national stakeholders, the DWCP provides the primary basis of accountability and guidance for ILO cooperation to achieve the shared goal of decent work for all. In particular, the DWCP reflects the shared priorities of the tripartite constituents: the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development; the Maldives Trade Union Congress; the National Federation of Maldivian Employers; and the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry.

The DWCP entails two phases to ensure alignment with the UNSDCF: The first phase covers 2025–2026, in alignment with the UNSDCF 2022–2026. Following an internal review of the progress, challenges and lessons, the DWCP will be adjusted as required and agreed by constituents to align with the UNSDCF for the second phase, 2027–2031.

In implementing the DWCP, the ILO will draw on its distinctive global Decent Work Agenda, which is underpinned by international labour standards and its extensive technical expertise. The ILO's four pillars of its Decent Work Agenda form the DWCP: promoting decent jobs and enterprise, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue, with gender equality, leaving no one behind and environmental stewardship as cross-cutting commitments. These

pillars are crucial for advancing the country's adapted Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With respect to the ILO's global policy frameworks, the DWCP aligns with the three pillars of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019);¹⁰ the ILO global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient (2021); the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008);¹¹ the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) and its amendments (2022); the ILO Strategic Plan 2022–25; and the Singapore Statement adopted by the 17th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting (in Singapore, 6–9 December 2022). The latter includes agreement by governments and social partners across the region to engage in consultations towards the development of the Global Coalition on Social Justice, both as a contribution to the United Nations Common Agenda¹² for a new global social contract and to promote decent work, in line with the international labour standards. The Maldives is a member of this Coalition. The DWCP also reflects the biennial ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) statements covering the DWCP's duration, beginning with those for 2024–25 and 2026–27. Subsequent P&Bs will be reflected in phase 2 of the DWCP.

As an integral part of the Maldives UNSDCF 2022–2026, the DWCP aligns with and contributes to achievement of its three strategic priorities: (i) Shared prosperity and inclusive human development for all; (ii) Sustainable and climate resilient environment; and (iii) Gender-responsive, rights-based and accountable governance and justice. The ILO and its constituents contributed to the development of the UNSDCF, including the UN Common Country Analysis that informed it. Facilitating ongoing and increased constituent engagement with wider United Nations activities under the UNSDCF is a priority of the DWCP.

Formulation of the country's first DWCP involved extensive engagement with ILO constituents and other stakeholders. This included individual constituent and tripartite consultations in Malé (19–23 January 2025). Consultations were also

⁹ The Maldives Strategic Action Plan had yet to be made publicly available at the time of this draft of the DWCP.

¹⁰ The three pillars are increasing investment in people's capabilities; increasing investment in the institutions of work; increasing investment in decent and sustainable work.

¹¹ Updated in 2022 to reflect the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO framework of fundamental principles and rights at work).

¹² United Nations, *Our Common Agenda* (2021).

conducted within the ILO with the Decent Work Technical Support Team, New Delhi and with the UN Resident Coordinator and Office and other members of the Maldives United Nations Country Team (UNCT).

The DWCP will be implemented in the context of accelerating climate change, the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapidly evolving impacts of the digital revolution on the future of work. The DWCP thus mainstreams a focus on climate change resilience and a just transition towards an environmentally sustainable economy; ensuring a human-centred economic recovery; and ensuring that the Maldives can maximize the benefits of a rapidly digitalizing economy for its people.

Tripartite governance is a cornerstone of the DWCP concept and operationalization. The DWCP will thus be overseen, implemented and monitored in close partnership between the ILO and its tripartite

constituents. A tripartite DWCP Task Force has been established under the auspices of the Maldives Tripartite Labour Advisory Board for this purpose.

Implementation of the DWCP will be supported by a mix of financial and human resources from the Government, development cooperation projects supported by international partners, ILO internal sources and relevant special United Nations global funds. Tripartite constituents will work together to strengthen and expand national ownership of the DWCP and ensure its long-term impact and sustainability.

This DWCP 2025–2031 for the Maldives was endorsed by the Resident Coordinator on 8 October 2025 and was formally endorsed by the tripartite constituents on 29 October 2025. It was approved by the ILO Regional Director on 14 November 2025 and officially signed by the ILO and its tripartite constituents in Malé on 19 November 2025.

2. Alignment of the Decent Work Country Programme 2025–2031 with national policies

Overarching strategic and policy frameworks	1) MALDIVES STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2024–2028¹³ The Labour and Employment section of the Maldives Strategic Action Plan (2024–2028) specifies strategies and actions for the period concerned. Following are the strategies and actions for which the ILO is designated as the lead or “supporting stakeholder”. For each Action Plan action, the relevant DWCP Output is listed. Strategy 1.1: Develop a comprehensive, real-time labour market information system that delivers accurate labour market data to policymakers, employers, jobseekers and training providers for improved employment outcomes and economic growth. <i>Action 1.1.a: Develop a national labour market information system (for real-time data collection and analysis on employment trends, skill demands and labour market needs. Relates to DWCP Output 1.1.7.</i> Strategy 1.3: Develop targeted upskilling and reskilling programmes in partnership with industries to close the skills gaps. <i>Action 1.3.b: Develop training modules tailored to industry requirements, focusing on critical technical and soft skills. Relates to DWCP Output 1.2.2.</i> Strategy 1.4: Develop measures to ensure optimal utilization of Maldivian human resources and eradicate involuntary unemployment in the Maldives within five years. <i>Action 1.4.b: Develop training modules tailored to industry requirements, focusing on critical technical and soft skills. Relates to DWCP Output 1.2.2.</i>
	Strategy 5.1: Uphold and promote workers’ rights and strengthen workers’ organizations and unions. <i>Action 5.1.a: Ensure all workers are aware of their rights and how to exercise them. Relates to DWCP Output 2.1.5.</i> <i>Action 5.1.c: Strengthen the role and capacity of workers’ trade unions and employers’ unions. Relates to DWCP Outputs 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.</i> Strategy 5.2: Foster a safe and healthy work environment with appropriate occupational safety standards. <i>Action 5.2.b: Provide training and resources for workplace safety. Relates to DWCP Outputs 2.1.3 and 2.1.4.</i> Strategy 5.3: Encourage corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to improve labour conditions. <i>Action 5.3.a: Promote CSR initiatives that focus on improving labour conditions, [fostering] exploitation-free supply chains and [eliminating] modern slavery at work. Relates to DWCP Output 2.1.10.</i>

¹³ This had yet to be made publicly available at the time of this draft.

	Strategy 6.1: Ensure all trade unions are registered and comply with statutory requirements to promote transparency and accountability. Action 6.1.a: <i>Develop a comprehensive regulation on a union registration framework. Relates to DWCP Output 2.1.2.</i> Strategy 6.3: Enhance the capacity of union leaders and members through continuous training and development programmes. Action 6.3.a: <i>Develop a comprehensive training curriculum with technical assistance from the ILO. Relates to DWCP Output 3.2.2.</i> Strategy 6.5: Engage in policy advocacy and research to inform evidence-based decision-making and improve labour relations. Action 6.5.a: <i>Develop a research agenda focusing on key issues affecting unions and labour relations. Relates to DWCP Output 3.1.5.</i> 2) 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MALDIVES (SDG MALDIVES) This national set of SDG-related goals and targets includes a national monitoring framework. 3) NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE The DWCP further links to the Maldives climate change process, including through the development and implementation of its Nationally Determined Contributions, particularly with respect to impacts on the labour force and employment generation.
Relevant national policies, strategies and plans	• Industrial Relations Act (January 2024, updated from 2008 version) • Occupational Safety and Health Act (January 2024) • Employment Act (2022) • Gender Equality Act (2016) • Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework - <i>Maldives Tourism Climate Action Plan</i> - <i>Low Carbon Strategy for Transport (2014)</i> - <i>National Action Plan on Air Pollutants (2019)</i> - <i>Strategic National Action Plan</i> - <i>Climate Emergency Act</i> - <i>Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation</i> • National Social Protection framework • Public Sector Pay Harmonization Policy • National Fisheries and Agricultural Policy 2019–2029 • Labour Management Procedures • National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2025–2030 • Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2026 • National Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan 2020–2022 • Maldives Gender Equality Model • National Spatial Plan (infrastructure – being updated) • Education Sector Plan 2019–2023 • Economic sector development strategies and plans, including the Fifth Tourism Master Plan 2023–2027

3. Country overview – Decent work progress, challenges and opportunities

The following country overview summarizes the decent work progress, trends, challenges and opportunities in the Maldives. The summary is structured in line with the three pillars of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work: (i) peoples’ – both women’s and men’s – capacities to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work, including persons with disabilities; (ii) institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers; and (iii) sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The overview draws extensively on the **UN Common Country Analysis**, which informed the drafting (with the Government) of the UNSDCF 2022–2026. These documents were also informed by other sources, as indicated in the footnotes and the reference list.

An overarching challenge that touches all aspects of the country analysis is the **accelerating impact of climate change**. In 2022, the Maldives ranked 113th of 180 countries in the Environmental Performance Index, which rates national efforts to enhance ecosystem vitality and mitigate climate change. Addressing the accelerating impacts of climate change in the Maldives, including the impacts on the labour market, is a critical challenge and priority. The Government has incorporated climate change adaptation and mitigation into its sectoral planning and development, with the Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework a major policy document.

The Maldives aims to undertake adaptation actions and opportunities and build climate resilient infrastructure to address the current and future

impacts of climate change. The Government also recognizes that the growing climate crisis holds employment creation potential. Key to the realization of such opportunities is a national commitment to transitioning to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy, as well as the generation of better data on green and blue decent jobs to guide policy on a just transition to environmental sustainability.

In addition to the threats posed by rising sea levels and the increased likelihood of extreme and economically disruptive weather events, heat stress caused by increasing temperatures is creating challenges, including reductions in gross domestic product, loss of productivity and loss of jobs (see the detailed analysis further on).

Data considerations: Although data gaps regarding gender and the informal economy are reflected in the following country overview, foundations are in place for strengthening the country’s statistical capacities and coverage through the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2021–2030 and the country’s first Labour Force Survey (2024–25), conducted with ILO technical and financial support. A driver of the strategy is the need for robust statistical support and monitoring of the Maldives Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028; the 2030 Agenda for Development of the Maldives; sector development plans; and the Gender Equality Action Plan, with the latter encompassing economic empowerment and institutional gender mainstreaming. The ILO and the Maldives Bureau of Statistics signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in strengthening statistical capacities in January 2025.

ILO Centenary Declaration pillar 1: Strengthen the capacities of all people [women and men] to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work [including persons with disabilities and other persons in vulnerable situations].

3.1 Enhancing and expanding social protection

The Government adopted a minimum social protection floor in 2009 and established the National Social Protection Agency to coordinate and implement national social protection programmes. The Social Protection Law (2014) allows for 11 social protection schemes of benefits, including the universal pension scheme; allowances for single parents, foster parents and persons with disabilities; a fishers' income assurance scheme; the Aasandha health care financing scheme; and medical welfare for services not covered by Aasandha.

The country's pension system has experienced significant reform since 2008. The Maldives Pension Act (2009) established a two-pillar pension system: (i) a contributory pension scheme based on a defined contribution model with centralized recordkeeping – the Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme and (ii) a non-contributory citizens' pension – the Old Age Basic Pension, aimed at providing an income floor for all Maldivians aged 65 and older. Presently, 5 per cent of the population is aged 65 or older, but this group is expected to more than double by 2030.¹⁴

However, many eligible people miss out on assistance due to the complex and costly application process and lack of awareness of the schemes. An impact evaluation of the disability benefit, for example, found limited reach, with only 25.5 per cent of the eligible population receiving the benefit.¹⁵ This was driven largely by the non-availability of assessment services in the atolls and its limitation to only one facility in Malé. A disconnect between the financial benefit schemes and social services related to the benefit schemes was also observed, such as those receiving the disability benefit needing to reapply for an assistive device or vice versa.

The core systemic gap in coverage of social protection relates to the absence of a unified and universal system and the inefficiencies of separate data systems and processes for each scheme. Hence, an integrated data system that draws

on population statistics data and links to health and education services is critical to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the schemes in terms of coverage and impact.

3.2 Gender equality

The Maldives has a history of relative gender equality, influenced by a strong tradition of women's self-employment and egalitarian cultural ideologies. A national legal and policy framework provides protections for women's rights through the Gender Equality Act (2016), which guarantees equal rights and opportunities in economic, political, civil, social and cultural life; the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Prevention Act (2014), which aims to ensure a violence- and harassment-free work environment; and the National Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2026 to strengthen the equal participation of women and men in economic development. Recent initiatives have included engagement by the Ministry of Social and Family Development with the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development to promote the empowerment of women entrepreneurs through digital transformation. As well, the Ministry of Economic Development launched the Women in Sustainable Entrepreneurship programme in 2022 to expand women's entrepreneurship on every island.

Yet, many gender equality challenges remain. The Maldives performs poorly when compared with similar countries in terms of political and socio-economic empowerment. Most labour market indicators suggest that women have unfavourable labour outcomes overall: The labour force participation rate of women is 31.4 percentage points lower than what it is for men; the employment-to-population ratio of women is 29.3 percentage points lower than what it is for men; and the share of women in managerial positions is only 18.7 per cent.¹⁶ Women earn 20 per cent less than men and have significantly fewer assets and financial capacity than

¹⁴ Maldives Bureau of Statistics and UNFPA, *Maldives Population Projections 2014–2054: Assumptions and Results Analysis* (2014).

¹⁵ Cited in United Nations, *Common Country Assessment for the Maldives* (2023).

¹⁶ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, *Maldives Labour Force Survey 2025* (2025).

men that can be used as collateral to obtain bank loans for small and medium-sized enterprises.¹⁷

Women are also concentrated in low-paying jobs and mainly engage in informal and small enterprises. Additionally, unpaid care work by women is not considered in national policymaking and planning, and its contribution to the economy is currently unaccounted.

Although many Maldivian women are well-educated and proficient to take on leadership roles, they are not well-represented in the top levels of society, business or Parliament. Structural barriers to women's participation and stereotypical attitudes are also evident in women's political participation at the national level. Women sit in only three of the 87 seats in Parliament (2025).¹⁸

Despite the adoption of the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Prevention Act, harassment against women, particularly against migrant women, in the workplace is common. Complaints are not taken seriously, and redress for victims remains elusive. Specific groups, such as women migrant workers and domestic workers, are particularly vulnerable to forced labour, exploitation and abuse due to their isolation. This contributes to a hostile work environment, undermines workplace safety and security for women and hinders their greater participation in the workforce.¹⁹

There are several factors behind the persistent gender gaps in the world of work:

- cultural norms and the higher burden of unpaid care work for family members, which restrict women's time to engage in formal and high-paying economic activities, to enhance their education and training or to participate in the public sphere;
- the absence of care-economy policies and measures, including the lack of childcare services;
- the disconnect between women's relatively high levels of education and their limited economic and political representation and empowerment; and

- data gaps in areas related to women and the informal economy, violence and harassment in the world of work, women's unpaid care burdens, occupational segregation by field of study, restrictive gender norms and structural barriers in hiring practices and flexible work arrangements.

3.3 Youth and the labour market

An estimated 25 per cent of young men (aged 15–24 years) and 30 per cent of young women are not in employment, education or training, with an even larger number of youths discouraged from participating in the labour market at all. Unemployment stood at 5.2 per cent, according to the 2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, but the youth unemployment rate was 10.5 percentage points higher than the national average. Also in 2019, youth aged 15–24 years represented 48 per cent of unemployed workers, even though they only accounted for 14 per cent of the total population. Although statistics shifted during the COVID-19 period and subsequent evolving recovery, the same basic trend continues. The United Nations reported in the Common Country Analysis 2023 that youth unemployment was on the rise and that low wages and working conditions were not attracting young Maldivians to many job categories. Young Maldivians also typically lack the skills required to access the high-paying jobs.

Many young people are unwilling to take “non-white collar jobs” due to parental aspirations for office jobs for their children once they complete high school. Others are poorly prepared for work. Many drop out after lower-secondary school. A study of root causes and drivers of the marginalization of young people highlighted a lack of opportunities for higher education, specialized training and employment available for youth in the Maldives.²⁰ As well as contributing to unemployment, these factors have led to drug use, gang violence and violent extremism, which were cited in that root cause study as contributors to social exclusion and dissatisfaction among young people, but affecting women and men differently.²¹ Engagement of youths in training and decent employment is thus a core focus of this DWCP (see the elaboration in section 3.5 on technical and vocational education and training, or TVET). There

¹⁷ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, *“I Am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights”*, 2020.

¹⁸ See the *Inter-Parliamentary Union*.

¹⁹ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, *“I Am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights”*, 2020.

²⁰ UNDP and NCTC, *Youth Vulnerability Assessment* (2019).

²¹ *ibid.*

is an urgency to take account of long-term sector and economic trends beyond the economic status quo and to design the TVET system in this context. The DWCP's planned assessment of long-term employment trends and related skill needs aims at providing a building block for this purpose.

3.4 Disability inclusion

There are no official statistics on the number of persons with disabilities in the Maldives, nor is it possible to determine the prevalence of different types of disability, which thus contributes to difficulties in formulating appropriate policies and providing services. Disability prevalence generally is an estimated 6.7 per cent.²² This figure is well below the global and regional averages, presumably because disability in the Maldives is identified based on a medical model rather than a social model (which is in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). This approach impacts persons with disabilities in the Maldives, including the enjoyment of their human rights.

Many persons with disabilities experience discrimination in access to employment, education, training and services.²³ Some require reasonable accommodation in the workplace for them to be effective and to work to their full capacity or to retain a job following an accident. However, such provision is not widely available. Accessible transport to and from work and accessible workplaces are also critical factors for ensuring people can work. In January 2023, the president of Maldives announced the establishment of a National Disability Registry²⁴ to ensure that the Government would be better equipped to meet the specific needs and requirements of persons with disabilities.

A challenge facing young people with disabilities and their parents is the lack of a planned transition from school to work, vocational training, tertiary education or other meaningful day-time activities. This challenge is amplified by the lack of employment services provided to persons with disabilities.

Under the Law on Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a monthly disability allowance is guaranteed. Eligibility for the scheme is solely determined by an assessment conducted by a medical professional, without a means test.

However, access to the disability assessment is limited to only one centre in Malé, thus it excludes the most vulnerable persons living on the atolls and outer islands. Only 25.5 per cent of the estimated number of people with disabilities receive this benefit.²⁵

Looking ahead, tools for promoting diversity and disability inclusion are the ILO's Inclusive Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Approach and promotion of good workplace practices through responsible business conduct initiatives.

3.5 Technical and vocational education and training

In 2021, the Higher Education and Training Act (7/2021) established the Maldives National Skills Development Authority, which sits under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development. The Authority is responsible for the development and management of a comprehensive TVET system, which includes the Maldives Polytechnic and the Technical and Vocational Education Center. The Maldives Polytechnic was established as a national government institution to develop, manage and provide training facilities for TVET. Training is offered by both institutions in various sectors, including tourism, transport, construction, ICT, fisheries and agriculture, with institution-based, employer-based and prior recognition of skills options. The National Apprenticeship Programme provides practitioners of a trade or occupation with on-the-job training.

The Maldives National Qualifications Framework is the standardized and quality-assured framework that outlines qualifications. It links to the South Asian Qualification Reference Framework (2023), which is a mechanism that enables comparisons of qualifications across member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. It also facilitates enhanced recognition of skills of migrant workers from South Asia. The TVET programmes are typically implemented through partnerships with industry and community organizations, with financing provided by the Ministry of Education, the Asian Development Bank and the Government.

Although data on participation in TVET and current and future skills development needs are limited, both the UNSDCF 2022–2026 and feedback

²² London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Eskey, *Maldives social protection and disability study 2017–2019. Preliminary results* (2020).

²³ See the *National Disability Registry* online portal.

²⁴ Now available at the *online portal*.

²⁵ Global Disability Fund, *Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Maldives: Country Brief*, 2025.

provided by ILO social partners during the DWCP consultations indicated necessity for strengthening as well as expanding the TVET system, including at the policy and strategy levels, to engage youths who are outside the education system and the labour market. This points to an urgency to identify long-

term pathways and incentives for engaging youth. Additionally, ILO social partners highlighted the need to underpin such initiatives with a mapping of long-term skill development needs and by promoting the prior recognition of skills option.

ILO Centenary Declaration pillar 2: Strengthening institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers.

3.6 Laws underpinning industrial relations

Three principal laws pertinent to industrial relations are the Industrial Relations Action (2024), the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2024) and the Employment Act (2022). The first two, however, still lack the necessary rules and procedures to implement regulations for implementation, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development struggles with capacity challenges to ensure full implementation.

3.7 International labour standards

The Maldives has ratified ten international labour Conventions – eight of the 11 fundamental instruments and two of the 177 technical Conventions, all of which remain in force (refer to **Annex II** for the detailed listing).

Comments, including concerns, questions and recommendations, of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations for 2020–24 covered implementation of the following Conventions that the Maldives has ratified: (i) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); (ii) Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); (iii) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); (iv) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); (v) Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); (vi) Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); (vii) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); (viii) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006; (ix) the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention

(Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185); and (x) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

3.8 National tripartite architecture and social dialogue

A culture of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue is still in a relatively early stage of development in the Maldives in institutional, capacity and cultural terms. The social tripartite dialogue mechanisms in place encompass the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board, established under the Industrial Relations Act (August 2024), the DWCP Task Force, established under the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board (November 2024), the tripartite Salary and Wage Advisory Board and the recently established Industrial Dispute Resolution Division and Industrial Dispute Resolution Panel, under the Employment Tribunal. Collective bargaining at the bipartite employer and worker level is relatively undeveloped. The national entities in tripartite social dialogue, with respect to the Decent Work Agenda and labour matters, are the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development; the Maldives Trade Union Congress; the National Federation of Maldivian Employers; and the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry.

The capacities of ILO constituents (the Government as well as social partners) to engage effectively in social dialogue and advocate for progression of the Decent Work Agenda in the Maldives remains relatively limited. Hence, a major focus of the DWCP is to strengthen relevant core capacities in prioritized areas, such as social dialogue (including policy advocacy and collective bargaining) and the delivery of core representation and service mandates.

3.9 Labour inspection

Although labour inspection in the Maldives traditionally has focused activities on the organized sectors of the economy, the national Labour Inspection Strategy highlights the need to expand services to cover workers in the informal economy due to its increasing size and nature and the need to eliminate child labour, forced labour and human trafficking related to the rapid increase of expatriate workers.

Objectives under the strategy to expand and strengthen the labour inspection service include: (i) the establishment of a national labour inspectorate under the Labour Relations Authority, which reports to the Minister of Homeland Security and Technology and is responsible for migrant worker labour affairs; (ii) improving inspectors' productivity in terms of quantity and quality through proper planning, continuous training, more efficient use of resources and the use of modern technology in labour inspection; (iii) separating the functions of labour inspections from those of the collective dispute settlement and conciliation functions of the Labour Relations Authority; and (iv) encouraging greater cooperation between employers and employees in the workplace and at the industry, regional and national levels on all matters relating to labour inspection and protection.

3.10 Dispute resolution

The first recourse in the event of a labour dispute is resolution between the parties in the workplace. In this context, ensuring the necessary capacities for negotiation and dispute resolution among employers and workers' organizations is a critical priority, including awareness and application of existing guidelines for workplace-level grievance handling. Providing training of trainers is an important element of expanding the pool of employer and worker representatives with the requisite legislative and procedural knowledge and skills.

A recent addition to the dispute resolution machinery is the Industrial Dispute Resolution Division at the Employment Tribunal, under the auspices of the Industrial Relations Act (2014). This Division has the authority to hear and determine matters related

to industrial disputes that are referred to it, in accordance with the Industrial Relations Act as well as the Employment Act.

The Division consists of a 14-member panel, with two members appointed by the president and 12 representing workers and employers appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development. It works in association with the services of the Maldives International Arbitration Centre. The Division and the labour dispute function both require ongoing capacity development support, including the training of conciliators and arbitrators and the establishment of necessary procedures and processes.

3.11 Occupational safety and health

Although comprehensive and up-to-date data are limited, the UNSDCF 2022–2026 and social partners' inputs during the DWCP consultations indicated that occupational safety and health (OSH) is a widespread issue in the economy. This was recognized in the 2024 adoption of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2024). The implementation of that legislation would be strengthened through the development of a national OSH profile and a national OSH programme (with a strategic time-bound action plan in OSH) that are in line with the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

An increasingly important element of OSH is the level of heat stress in the workplace arising from the accelerating impacts of climate change. According to ILO research,²⁶ due to heat stress, the Maldives lost near US\$500 million in GDP in 2023 because of reduced work hours, the loss of nearly 20,000, or 7.9 per cent, of full-time jobs and a decline in productivity in agriculture and construction. Heat stress is thus an important consideration for implementing the new OSH law. The imperative has increased for regulated work-rest cycles, access to cooling measures and the integration of heat mitigation into occupational safety standards to safeguard workers' productivity and health. The effective implementation of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, with the active participation of the ILO's social partners, thus also has taken on an even greater imperative.

²⁶ Flouris, Andreas, Leonida LIoannou and Konstantinos Mantzios, *Maldives 2024: Country Report with Just Transition Input Into Climate Prosperity Plans* (ILO, 2024).

ILO Centenary Declaration pillar 3: Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

3.12 The economy

Driven by international tourism and, more recently, construction, the Maldives has achieved strong economic growth, averaging 5.1 per cent annually between 2000 and 2024.²⁷ The country has made significant progress towards reducing poverty and child mortality and diseases, achieving universal primary education, narrowing the gender gap in health care, education and income and addressing the threats associated with climate change.²⁸

The economy has transitioned considerably from a subsistence economy dependent on basic fisheries (approximately 35 per cent of GDP in 1980) to an upper-middle-income country with per capita income of more US\$9,300 and a growing services sector (mainly tourism) that contributed 66 per cent of GDP in 2023.²⁹ The improving business environment for tourism development has generated fiscal resources that have enabled government financing of extensive welfare and social services.

Due to the robust tourism activity, the economy is expected to grow by 5 per cent in 2025 as it continues to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission in February 2025 reported that macroeconomic imbalances continue to widen and risks are “tilted to the downside”, which also indicates potential challenges to the labour market. The IMF mission report also cited an immediate policy priority to restore sustainable public finance and debt. Broad-based fiscal reforms and a comprehensive debt strategy, alongside well-calibrated monetary and macro-financial policies, are urgently needed. The IMF further advised that reforms are needed to strengthen climate resilience, improve the business climate and governance and enhance skills development, all of which will support stronger external competitiveness and strong, sustainable and inclusive growth. These

are reforms with important implications for the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda.³⁰

The Maldives has nearly completed its demographic transition, with the bulk of the population now of working age. However, increased attention to decent employment and market-led skills development for youth remains critical to maximize the benefits of the democratic transition. Furthermore, addressing poverty remains a priority, with 28 per cent of the population still living in multidimensional poverty – accounting for 10 per cent of the population in Malé and 40 per cent of people in the atolls.³¹

The benefits of growth have not spread evenly across sectors, across segments of the population and across regions. Many remote atolls continue to be marginalized and cut-off from the mainstream growth trajectory. The current pattern of reliance on foreign direct investment in tourism and foreign labour for services and other professional activities has not spread the gains of growth to the less-skilled and less-educated population, to women, to people living in the more remote atolls and to young people with new job aspirations. As with the construction sector, tourism is highly dependent on international migrant workers. Until recently, tourism generated limited local employment and economic linkages.³² Overall, as elaborated further on, progress on decent work has been slower than expected, with reductions in unemployment not in line with the potential for new jobs created by economic growth; for example, unemployment should be dropping more than it is as the economy grows. This is referred to as a “paradox”.

The economy overall is dependent on the State and State-owned enterprises for employment and most services. Regulatory barriers, inefficiencies, skills shortage and competition for credit add to the disadvantages caused by a small market and dispersed population, thus slowing the development of a diversified private sector economy that is more resilient to external shocks.

²⁷ World Bank Group, “GDP Growth (annual %) – Maldives”, 2024.

²⁸ United Nations, *Common Country Analysis* (2024).

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ IMF, “IMF Staff Completes 2025 Article IV Mission to the Maldives”, February 2025.

³¹ Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, *National Multidimensional Poverty in Maldives* (2020); Ministry of Environment and Energy, *Voluntary National Review for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development* (2017).

³² United Nations, *Common Country Analysis* (2023).

Priorities in this context include accelerating economic transformation by (i) laying the foundation for a more resilient and diversified economy that can withstand external shocks; (ii) leveraging diversification in the green and blue economies to accelerate sustainable, inclusive and gender-responsive economic growth and create decent job opportunities for youth in natural resource management, renewable energy and environmental services; (iii) creating added value in the services sector while exploring environmentally sustainable production and consumption patterns; and (i) addressing inequalities that put certain groups at risk of being left behind in socio-economic progress.

An emphasis of the Government at the time of the DWCP finalization was the development of the digital economy, particularly through the Maldives Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028. The Maldives is also beginning to look towards developing a circular economy to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits. The greening of small and medium-sized enterprises is an important consideration. These factors highlight the importance of developing a national climate resilient and inclusive economic diversification strategy that will aim to create new job opportunities that match the aspirations, skills and interests of Maldivian youth.

3.13 Sector structure of the economy

The Maldives' economy is shaped by its unique geographic and environmental context, thus combining traditional sectors like fisheries with a rapidly expanding tourism industry. Despite being a small island developing State with limited resources, the Maldives has achieved significant economic growth, driven by strategic investments and emphasis on sustainable development. The following overviews the important sectors of the economy.³³

Tourism: Tourism is the backbone of the economy, contributing approximately 30 per cent of GDP, 60 per cent of foreign exchange earnings and 50 per cent of public revenue as of 2023.³⁴ It also has substantial indirect contributions to related sectors, such as transportation and retail. The Maldives is a world-renowned destination for

luxury and ecological tourism, attracting visitors to its beaches, coral reefs and resorts. Tourism directly and indirectly employs a significant portion of the workforce, with 25 per cent of women and 33 per cent of men in the workforce engaged in tourism-related activities. Employment in resorts is predominantly dominated by men and foreign workers: In 2019, resorts employed approximately 45,000 individuals, with foreign men and local men employees each comprising 45 per cent, foreign women amounting to 7 per cent and local women representing only 3 per cent.³⁵ Tourism has been instrumental in driving economic growth and improving infrastructure, although it also underscores the country's vulnerability to external shocks and environmental challenges.³⁶

Climate change impacts: *Tourism is highly susceptible to climate change, with rising sea levels and coral bleaching threatening infrastructure and the natural attractions vital for tourism. The Maldives plans to implement climate-resilient infrastructure, and for this purpose, it is important to include skills (especially green skills) development for workers as well as business development services for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, taking into account the Maldives Tourism Climate Action Plan and the Fifth Tourism Master Plan (2023–2027).*

Fisheries: Fisheries is the country's second-largest economic sector, accounting for 4.5 per cent of GDP and contributing 50 per cent of the country's merchandise exports. The sector provides direct or indirect income to more than 20 per cent of the population and has a crucial role in food security. Sustainable fishing practices, including pole-and-line tuna fishing, have bolstered the country's reputation for environmentally responsible fisheries and thus opened access to premium international markets. However, the sector faces challenges from overfishing, rising sea temperatures and climate change impacts on marine ecosystems.

Climate change impacts: *Fisheries have a vital role in livelihoods and exports, yet the sector is increasingly affected by rising sea temperatures and the degradation of marine ecosystems. These environmental changes threaten fish stocks and the sustainability of income for workers and small-scale enterprises in the sector. A Fisheries Act to provide a legal framework for the sector was being developed (supported by the World*

³³ Flouris, Andreas, Leonidas LIoannou and Konstantinos Mantzios, *Maldives 2024: Country Report with Just Transition Input Into Climate Prosperity Plans* (ILO, 2024).

³⁴ World Bank Group, *Maldives Country Partnership Framework* (2023).

³⁵ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, *Employment in Tourist Resorts 2019* (2019).

³⁶ Flouris, Andreas, Leonidas LIoannou and Konstantinos Mantzios, *Maldives 2024: Country Report with Just Transition Input Into Climate Prosperity Plans* (ILO, 2024).

Bank Transforming Fisheries Sector Management Project) as this DWCP was being finalized. It is important to complement these efforts by investing in skills development, particularly in sustainable and adaptive fishing practices. In addition, measures to strengthen OSH, extend social protection for small-scale fishers and provide business development services and financial support to fishing cooperatives and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises will be essential to improve working conditions and ensure that the sector remains both resilient and inclusive in the face of climate change.

Transportation and communication: The transportation and communication sectors are critical to supporting economic growth on the dispersed island geography of the Maldives and facilitating connectivity for residents and tourists. Investments in inter-island transport, ports and telecommunication infrastructure have enhanced access to services and economic opportunities. These sectors also provide employment and contribute to the development of other industries, including tourism and fisheries.

Climate change impacts: This sector is crucial for connecting dispersed islands and faces major challenges from climate change, including coastal erosion and extreme weather events. The **Low Carbon Strategy for Transport (2014)** and the **National Action Plan on Air Pollutants (2019)** are both important for ensuring a just transition in areas related to retraining and upskilling transport workers for greener technologies and practices, improving OSH in climate-vulnerable transport infrastructure and integrating social protection for affected workers.

Construction: The construction sector is a vital driver of economic activity, accounting for 12 per cent of GDP. Investments in resort development and urban infrastructure, including climate-resilient housing and public facilities, have boosted economic activity. However, these projects rely heavily on expatriate labour, further emphasizing the importance of developing local expertise in technical fields.³⁷

Climate change impacts: As climate resilience becomes central to infrastructure planning, it will be crucial to strengthen the local workforce through TVET that is focused on green construction techniques and climate-resilient design. Given the sector's reliance on expatriate labour, promoting local skills development will be critical for long-term sustainability. Policy

frameworks, such as the **Strategic National Action Plan** and the **Climate Emergency Act**, provide a foundation for this. Both promote the development of climate-resilient infrastructure and promote renewable energy sources, which could potentially (with the right policies and measures) lead to the creation of green jobs and workforce upskilling. Also important is the enforcement of OSH standards, social protection measures for construction workers and financial and technical support for local construction firms and for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in green-building initiatives and meet the evolving environmental standards.

3.14 Small enterprises in the economy

Small enterprises are an essential foundation of the country's economy. In the 2019 Household Integrated Economic Survey, small enterprises were defined as those with fewer than ten persons engaged without considering annual income or turnover. The survey identified 40,232 small enterprises across the country, in which 85 per cent of workers were self-employed and 10 per cent were employers. And of them, 38 per cent were located in Malé and 62 per cent were spread across the atolls.³⁸

Small enterprises represented 5.7 per cent of the 2019 gross value-added to GDP and contributed significantly to employment and revenue generation. They accounted for 26 per cent of total employment (55 per cent men, 45 per cent women). Significantly, 86 per cent of the workforce in small enterprises are locals, with the remaining 14 per cent being foreign workers. And 40 per cent of small enterprises engage in manufacturing, with 62 per cent operating year-round. A considerable portion, at 57 per cent, run their businesses from home, while 21 per cent do not have a fixed location. The demographic distribution of small entrepreneurs is varied. Youths constitute 28 per cent, adults 66 per cent and older persons per cent. Women own 52 per cent of these enterprises, highlighting an important presence of women in the business landscape.³⁹

Small enterprises face several additional challenges, including financing, scalability, achieving formal registration (with 74 per cent of small enterprises operating informally). There is a need for reforms within the sector and for the promotion and use of the opportunities provided by the Industrial Relations Act.

³⁷ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, "GDP Outlook Tables 1995–2017", 28 October 2018.

³⁸ Corporate SMEs Network News, "Celebrating International MSME Day: A Look at Small Businesses in the Maldives", 30 June 2024.

³⁹ Maldives Bureau of Statistics, *Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019* (2019).

The Government has streamlined the registration process through the Business Portal, managed by the Ministry of Economic Development. To provide increased financing and entrepreneurship opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, the Government established the SME Development Finance Corporation, which has provided low-interest loans to more than 1,300 small and medium-sized enterprises since 2019.

3.15 Labour force

Completion of the country's first Labour Force Survey was in progress as the DWCP was being finalized. Thus, limited data were available. As noted, the main concentration of workers in the economy is in tourism (at 72.6 per cent in 2019), with 76.9 per cent of the employed population in wage and salaried jobs in 2019 and the remaining 23 per cent of total employment consisting of self-employed individuals: employers, own-account workers and contributing family workers.⁴⁰

A significant portion of the workforce is employed in informal sectors or seasonal jobs tied to tourism – thus, often lacking labour, OSH and social protections.

The overall labour force participation rate was 56.2 per cent in 2021 (67.5 per cent for men and 34.3 per cent for women). Factors for the lower participation rate of women are deep-seated and persistent cultural norms, the disproportionate unpaid care burden carried by women and the pervasive lack of childcare facilities in communities or workplaces. Women's employment is highest in education, public administration and manufacturing.⁴¹

The unemployment rate in 2023 was 4.1 per cent, reaching its lowest value in recent years.⁴² Yet, although the available statistics show negligible unemployment among migrant workers, the unemployment rate among resident Maldivians stands at approximately 6 per cent. As noted previously, the employment rate for youth is considerably higher. This discrepancy between migrant workers and resident Maldivians is partly

due to a lack of skilled workers for high-end jobs and local cultural reluctance to accept roles perceived as “low status”. These challenges underscore the need for targeted workforce development initiatives and enhanced skills training programmes to ensure the long-term sustainability of the nation's development trajectory.

3.16 Labour migration

Given the country's small and dispersed population, international migrant workers are an essential mainstay of the economy. The Maldives has experienced an elevenfold increase in its total migrant population since 1990, which is projected to be around 33 per cent of the resident population by 2029.⁴³ The country has the largest proportion of migrant workers in South Asia. According to the 2022 Maldives Population and Housing Census, there were 132,371 foreigners in the country, accounting for approximately 26 per cent of the population. An estimated 63,000 undocumented migrants are also present in the country. Most migrants are men from Bangladesh and India who work in the construction and tourism sectors. Other major countries of origin include Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines.⁴⁴ Women account for an estimated 10 per cent of the migrant workers, although only 3 per cent of migrants working in tourism are women.⁴⁵

The inadequate labour migration governance frameworks enable risks and challenges. These include high levels of informality; a lack of labour protection, including in the context of workplace safety and health; a lack of access to social protection and minimum wage coverage; lack of access to birth registration and legal identity; and high risks of violence and exploitation, child labour, debt bondage and forced labour. Human rights risks outside the workplace also include lack of access to economic and social rights, including access to health care, education and housing;⁴⁶ lack of attention to the right to family life, including for migrants who want to live with their family in the Maldives; freedom of association and expression

⁴⁰ United Nations, *Common Country Analysis* (2023).

⁴¹ See https://census.gov.mv/2022/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/EC4_090423.xlsx.

⁴² O'Neill, Aaron, *Unemployment Rate in the Maldives 2023* (Statista, 2024).

⁴³ Data are based on official sources, which are believed to significantly undercount international migrants.

⁴⁴ United Nations, *UNCT Labour Migration Country Action Plan for Maldives*.

⁴⁵ Unless specified, this section draws on United Nations, *UNCT Labour Migration Country Action Plan for Maldives*, as requested by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

⁴⁶ The report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment who visited Maldives in April 2024 highlighted that many migrant workers live and work in poor conditions.

restrictions; and heightened vulnerability to trafficking, exploitation and smuggling. As previously highlighted, women migrant workers and domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to forced labour, exploitation and abuse due to their isolation.⁴⁷ Other issues include the need to address excessive recruitment fees and related costs, deception about working and living conditions and the lack of predeparture and post-arrival employment orientation and training.⁴⁸

Although the country has yet to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, it is party to eight other core human rights treaties, almost all of which have provisions with implications for the rights of workers, citizens and foreigners.

Given the strategic importance of labour migration to the economy, it is of critical importance that governance and management processes are in place to protect the rights of migrant workers and that they are effectively enforced. The United Nations' recognition of the importance of improving the position of migrant workers is reflected in the **UNCT Labour Migration Country Action Plan for Maldives**, the development and implementation of which the ILO is a lead agency. Priorities for the ILO cover: (i) strengthening labour migration governance and enhancing pathways for regular migration; (ii) building up awareness on the rights of migrant workers and discrimination issues; and (iii) strengthening migrant workers' access to decent work, justice and redress mechanisms.

3.17 Forced labour and human trafficking

The Maldives is a transit country for international migrants from the Middle East, South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. An increase in irregular migration movements has been recorded, as well as a surge in detected fraudulent travel and identity documents and a range of other fraudulent practices linked to recruitment, work contracts and visas for foreign workers. Such practices have also led to trafficking and situations of forced labour of international migrant workers. It has also created an environment in which migrant workers encounter challenges in reporting cases of exploitation or

potential cases of trafficking in persons, in seeking access to justice and redress mechanisms, in protection and with other assistance that may be needed.⁴⁹

In 2018, the US State Department downgraded the Maldives on its watch list for human trafficking, citing its failure to take steps to effectively investigate and combat human trafficking. The Maldives remained on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years (2019 and 2020). There are no formal shelter services available to victims of trafficking, creating challenges for protection and prosecution.

Women, children, youth, older persons and migrants are the most impacted. Their vulnerabilities are further increased by reduced access to education or training opportunities, limited access to income-generating opportunities and/or productive assets, having a disability, being poor, living in the atolls, coming from a broken home, having a different gender identity or sexual orientation or due to religious identity or minority status.

3.18 Child labour

The Maldives has no national policy or plan to combat child labour, particularly in its worst forms, although the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has encouraged the development of such (2021). The Government contends there are few cases of child labour, and UNICEF reports no current data are available. The Child Rights Protection Bill (2020) requires that no one involve children in any work that affects their education or well-being. The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations requested that section 6 of the Employment Act be amended so that children who have not reached the minimum age of 16 for admission to employment or work are prohibited from engaging in child labour, except in cases provided for in the Convention. Two avenues for identifying the existence of child labour in a workplace are the labour and OSH inspections, but they require that child labour is on their respective checklists.

⁴⁷ United Nations, *UNCT Labour Migration Country Action Plan for Maldives*.

⁴⁸ Flouris, Andreas, Leonidas LiIoannou and Konstantinos Mantzios, *Maldives 2024: Country Report with Just Transition Input Into Climate Prosperity Plans* (ILO, 2024).

⁴⁹ The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which visited the Maldives at the end of 2021, observed "that migrant workers in detention have limited rights, including in accessing justice" and that in practice, "migrants do not have a realistic opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention before a judge and no legal or interpretation assistance is provided". See also OHCHR, *Universal Periodic Review – Maldives* (2020).

Summary of the decent work challenges

Several challenges stand out for attention from the ILO Country Office and its constituents when implementing the DWCP for 2025–2031:

- Increasing the availability of **inclusive, sustainable and green, formalized and productive decent employment**, especially for women, youth and persons with disabilities, including by promoting responsible business conduct and strengthening access to business development services.
- Strengthening capacities to implement **labour-related laws** (Labour Relations Act, Employment Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act).
- Strengthening dispute resolution processes, procedures and capacities of the dispute resolution system and employers' and workers' organizations.
- Addressing the significant **workforce skills gaps and skills and market mismatches**, especially among youth, including by developing and strengthening relevant policies and strategies, expanding the TVET system and assessing long-term sector and economic trends and associated skills development requirements.
- Addressing gaps in the implementation of the **ratified international labour standards** and **expanding ratification coverage**.
- Expanding **social protection coverage** to all population groups, including (i) migrant workers and workers in non-standard forms of employment and (ii) persons with disabilities who are eligible for social protection support but not currently accessing it, and by scoping the establishment of an unemployment insurance scheme.
- Improving **working conditions**, including OSH and addressing the impacts of heat stress due to climate change, with the identification and elimination of child labour also a focus.
- Addressing **climate change impacts** on employment and working conditions, such as promoting a just transition to a more sustainable economy.
- Improving the **integration of migrant workers** and the comprehensive protection of their rights, including (i) promoting equal access to labour and social protection and services, justice and housing; and (ii) including migrant workers' voice and representation and issues in policy processes.
- Eliminating **forced labour, human trafficking and child labour**.
- **Diversifying the economy** to reduce dependency on tourism and migrant labour – and to reduce vulnerability, with the development of a national comprehensive employment policy an important contributor in this context.
- Improving **labour productivity growth** through improved skill levels.
- Strengthening **tripartite and bipartite social dialogue mechanisms**, processes, culture and capacities.
- Strengthening the **capacities of employers' and workers' organizations** in social dialogue (tripartite and bipartite and including policy engagement, collective bargaining and workplace cooperation) and through the delivery of core representation and service mandate.

4. Decent Work Country Programme theory of change and programme overview

4.1 ILO comparative advantage

As a longstanding part of the United Nations presence in the Maldives, the ILO contributes to the breadth and depth of contributions across all sectors to support the Government and its people to advance towards an increasingly inclusive, resilient and sustainable development future.

Social dialogue, tripartism and international labour standards are at the core of the ILO's comparative advantage in implementing the DWCP alongside other international actors within the socio-economic development processes at the national and provincial levels.

Social dialogue and tripartism are cornerstones for the engagement and cooperation of the ILO's constituents and other stakeholders around shared interests and priorities to promote and implement the Decent Work Agenda in the Maldives. Social dialogue can take tripartite forms at the national and sector levels, as well as bipartite forms through collective bargaining and other levels of workplace cooperation between employers and workers.

International labour standards provide the crucial basis and guidance for promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. They are an essential component of ensuring that economic growth provides benefits for all workers.

Together, social dialogue, tripartism and the international labour standards help to maximize the impact of constituents' joint contributions to the country's ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as achievement of its long-term development goals while ensuring that labour rights are respected, gender equality and environmental sustainability are enhanced and no one is left behind.

Its comparative advantage is reinforced by the **ILO's convening power** among the world of work stakeholders, including development of the DWCP; the longstanding engagement by the ILO with the Government and social partners as a member of the UNCT; the ILO's distinct decent work normative and technical expertise through its specialist teams at the global and regional levels; and its ability to draw on and apply global and regional expertise and experience to support the Maldives to meet its national development priorities and objectives, with emphasis on decent work for all.

4.2 Principles guiding the Decent Work Country Programme design and implementation

The DWCP reflects the guiding principles articulated in the ILO Singapore Statement Programme (December 2022) that was approved by governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations, as follows:

- a. Work collectively towards the promotion of social justice and the fundamental principles and rights at work through effective social dialogue and tripartite cooperation to advance the achievement of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.
- b. The 2019 Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the 2021 Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient provide critical foundations for decent work, economic recovery and future growth to ensure a just transition to a future of work that contributes to sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.
- c. Gender equality and diversity should underpin policy development and implementation to ensure no one is left behind.
- d. Social partners have an important role in preparing for the future of work, including policy design, analysis and implementation in areas of job transformation and the upskilling and reskilling of workers. It is vital for governments to undertake and promote genuine engagement and effective social dialogue.
- e. Sustainable enterprises take on an important role as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work.
- f. Promotion of workers' rights is a critical element for the attainment of inclusive and sustainable growth, including freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining as enabling rights.
- g. Recognize the impact of climate change and develop, through tripartite committees, national plans for a just transition that help build environmentally sustainable economies and societies, based on meaningful and effective

social dialogue, taking into account policies regarding the labour market, regulated labour migration, coordinated labour mobility and social protection.

In terms of principle (c), the ILO will ensure that programme and project documents include attention to and that review and evaluation terms of reference require experience in gender mainstreaming, disability inclusion and leaving no one behind. Every effort will be made in the DWCP governance process as well as in the design and implementation of activities to ensure increased participation by women, with a target of women accounting for 45–55 per cent of total participants in all areas.

4.3 Decent work and the UNSDCF theory of change

The high-level UNSDCF theory of change outlines the pathway for enabling the country to accelerate actions to the desired state, whereby **the Maldives becomes an inclusive, resilient, healthy, caring, tolerant and skilled society, in which all people meaningfully participate, contribute to and benefit equitably from sustainable cultural, economic and social development and environmental protection, leading to achievement of the adapted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.**

The theory of change prioritizes several elements of the Decent Work Agenda as critical to the realization of the vision. These are highlighted in the following summary of the overall theory of change for the UNSDCF 2022–2026.

1. There is shared prosperity and inclusive development for all. *For this to happen, a core set of changes are required, including:*⁵⁰

- The economy is more diversified, inclusive and resilient to external shocks.
- Meaningful linkages between tourism and other industries are in place that create opportunities for all.
- A conducive landscape is in place for communities to diversify their livelihoods and economic opportunities.
- Pro-poor and inclusive growth are promoted.
- Together with a reformed public sector and with gender parity promoted, more decent jobs

are created for all genders and ages, with an expanded and more resilient private sector.

- The country adopts a greater focus on the circular economy, and opportunities for a blue economy and inclusive growth are accelerated.
- Greater access to affordable finance is created to stimulate entrepreneurship.
- Education and skills training are oriented to the needs of the future economy.

2. Quality social services, including social protection, are available and accessible, allowing all people to develop to their full potential and lead healthy and resilient lives with dignity. *For this to happen, a core set of changes are required, including:*

- Infrastructure and social services are more inclusive and gender-responsive as well as responsive to crises and natural disasters.
- Quality, availability, affordability and accessibility of basic social services (health, education, nutrition, care and social welfare) are improved for all throughout the country and across the lifecycle.
- Digital technology-based approaches are adopted for delivery of social services.
- Social protection is comprehensive (aligned across sectors, long-term development), expanded and better targeted.
- Changes in gender-based attitudes and norms that perpetuate discrimination and inequality and drive violence and harassment are achieved.
- Labour and migration policies and mechanisms are strengthened, with more targeted interventions and prioritized skills to boost the economy, with a focus on people from the most vulnerable and marginalized households, including migrant workers.

3. There is a sustainable and climate-resilient environment. *For this to happen, a core set of changes are required, including:*

- Disaster risk reduction and resilience to hazards, natural and human-made, are factored into policy and development investments and are improved at the national, atoll and community levels.

⁵⁰ Only factors directly relevant to the Decent Work Agenda were selected.

- Incentives are available for businesses and industries to transition to more sustainable practices as well as to the blue economy.

4. Gender-responsive, rights-based and accountable governance and justice are in place. *For this to happen, a core set of changes are required, including:*

- Accountability is improved in the administration of public services, with all people treated with dignity and respect by public service providers.
- More meaningful and representative participation of rightsholders in policy processes is achieved.
- Laws, policies and programmes to address gender inequality, women's rights and violence against women and girls are strengthened and upheld.
- Women's opportunities are enhanced towards political and social and economic leadership.
- A stronger and more robust monitoring framework is in place for data collecting, analysing and disseminating, including reporting on global human rights frameworks and Conventions.
- Inclusivity is ensured in the implementation of laws and policies, particularly for people with disabilities, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups.
- Greater coordination across government agencies in delivering public services (including employment services) is achieved at all levels.
- Investment in human capital (staff) across all government institutions at the national and decentralized levels is increased considerably.
- Capacity of civil society to contribute to policy development and democratic discourse is enhanced.
- Greater efforts are made to promote a more cohesive and non-discriminatory society.

4.4 Decent Work Country Programme theory of change

The theory of change for the DWCP 2025–2031, illustrated in the following diagram, will directly contribute to the realization of the decent work-related aspects of the UNSDCF 2022–2026.

The DWCP theory of change places decent work at the core of national development priorities and processes and centres on the following outcomes, in line with the ILO's comparative advantage in the country (refer to section 4.2) and the ILO's four pillars of decent work: promoting jobs and enterprise, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue, with gender equality, leaving no one behind and environmental stewardship as cross-cutting commitments.

Outcome 1.1: Youth, women and others at risk of being left behind contribute to and benefit from inclusive, gender-responsive, resilient and sustainable economic and human capital development that fosters entrepreneurship and decent work (derived from the UNSDCF).

Outcome 1.2: People in the Maldives, especially from the most vulnerable and marginalized households, benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, inclusive and resilient social protection and social services, have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with well-being and dignity (derived from UNSDCF).

Outcome 2.1: Improvement in the enabling environment for the promotion and implementation of international labour standards.

Outcome 3.1: Improvement in the quality and effectiveness of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue due to effectively functioning tripartite cooperation mechanisms and processes.

Outcome 3.2: Maldives social partners have enhanced voice and achieve effective engagement in contributing to the development of national policies, strategies and plans on gender equality, a just transition and collective bargaining.

The outputs and targets supporting these outcomes are described in the DWCP results framework in **Annex I**. The following theory of change diagram includes the impact logic of the DWCP as well relevant enabling policy and normative frameworks, partners and cross-cutting themes. Implementation strategies under each outcome are detailed in section 4.5.



4.5 Decent Work Country Programme outcome implementation strategies

Outcome 1.1: Youth, women and others at risk of being left behind contribute to and benefit from inclusive, gender-responsive, resilient and sustainable economic and human capital development that fosters entrepreneurship and decent work.

Implementation strategy: In 2025–2031, the Maldives constituents, along with other relevant national and international partners, will work together to:

- develop, adopt and implement a national comprehensive employment policy, with a focus on women, youth, persons with disabilities, addressing the impacts of climate change, enhancing technical and vocational skills, entrepreneurship, sustainable enterprise promotion, a just transition, economic formalization and sectoral policies, including in new green sectors;
- operationalize a multi-stakeholder gender-responsive governance structure for the national comprehensive employment policy and develop and implement an associated action plan;
- develop and implement a gender-responsive policy and programmatic framework to promote formalization and sustainable and green enterprise and entrepreneurship development, including through increased provision of business development services;
- develop, adopt and implement a national gender-responsive just transition strategy to facilitate the shift to a more sustainable economy and decent employment, including through nature-based solutions and green works in the blue and green economies for climate resilient infrastructure to address the current and future impacts of climate change;
- facilitate a process of strategic research and tripartite social dialogue among constituents and other relevant stakeholders on a national road map and action plan to provide quality and affordable childcare services through public, private and cooperative entities to increase women's labour force participation and to provide decent work opportunities;
- develop, adopt and implement a national labour migration policy and action plan, based on findings of diagnostic study;

- develop a labour market information system that is responsive to SDG disaggregation requirements (sex, migrants, disability and other vulnerable groups); and
- develop a gender-responsive labour statistics survey programme that includes a regular Labour Force Survey and modules of other forms work (own-use production work, own-use provision of services, volunteer work, etc.) according to the latest International Conference of Labour Statisticians standards.

*NOTE a: Engagement on labour migration will be supported by the **UNCT Labour Migration Country Action Plan for Maldives**, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.*

NOTE b: The management, sequencing and coordination of the policy-related workstreams will prioritize completion of the national comprehensive employment policy and the national labour migration policy and action plan in the first two years of the DWCP.

Outcome 1.2: People in the Maldives, especially from the most vulnerable and marginalized households, benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, inclusive and resilient social and protection services, have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with well-being and dignity.

Implementation strategy: In 2025–2031, the Maldives constituents, along with other relevant national and international partners, will work together to:

- develop, promote adoption of and implement measures to expand social protection coverage for all, including in the context of natural disasters and health and economic shocks, with a focus on migrant workers, workers in non-standard forms of employment and persons with disabilities;
- develop and promote human-centred and employment-led approaches in national disaster risk management policies and strategies;
- strengthen the capacities of the Government as well as the private sector to design and deliver inclusive, adaptive and market-relevant lifelong learning and skills development opportunities that meet real current and future market needs and prospects; and

- enhance national planning for skills development through (i) the development of a national policy and strategic framework and (ii) the mapping of long-term workforce skills requirements, based on analysis of economic trends, particularly digitalization, artificial intelligence and new forms of work, with the participation of Maldives social partners.

Outcome 2.1: National and migrant workers, women and men, enjoy improved realization of their labour rights due to ratification and implementation of international labour standards.

Implementation strategy: In 2025–2031, the Maldives constituents, along with other relevant national and international partners, will work together to:

- implement the Industrial Relations Act (2024) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2024), including through the formulation of necessary regulations, with attention to gender and migrant worker aspects;
- implement the national Labour Management Procedures, including strategic compliance planning and OSH;
- ensure ratification of additional international labour standards, with the following prioritized: Conventions No. 144 (tripartite social dialogue), No. 155 and No. 187 (OSH), No. 160 (labour statistics), No. 188 (work in fishing) and No. 190 (violence and harassment in the world of work) and the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29);
- organize work to support implementation of recommendations of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations on the ratified fundamental and technical Conventions, including requiring legislative changes, paying specific attention to working with the ILO on Conventions identified by the Committee where ILO technical assistance would be particularly useful (No. 100 and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 in 2025 and other Conventions, as recommended in forthcoming Committee's annual reports);
- improve capacities for ensuring quality and timely reporting on the implementation of ratified international labour standards to the ILO supervisory bodies;
- develop, strengthen, promote adoption of and implement policies and measures to eliminate

violence and harassment in the world of work; and

- develop, promote adoption of and implement new or strengthened policies and measures to eliminate forced labour, human trafficking and child labour, with attention to the identification of child labour in the workplace through OSH and labour inspections, as well as the strengthening of learning and work pathways for youth.

Outcome 3.1: Improvement in the quality and effectiveness of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue due to effectively functioning tripartite cooperation mechanisms and processes.

Implementation strategy: In 2025–2031, the Maldives constituents, along with other relevant national and international partners, will work together to:

- strengthen capacities of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board and the DWCP Task Force to effectively perform the roles set out in their respective terms of reference;
- achieve wage adequacy and gender responsive and non-discriminatory improvement of minimum wage-setting and adjustment systems through the tripartite Salary and Wage Advisory Board;
- address pay discrimination (particularly based on gender and migrant status), including through the implementation of measures to achieve equal remuneration for work of equal value and extension of minimum wage coverage and wage protection to all migrant workers; and
- increase the capacities of the Tripartite Industrial Dispute Resolution Division at the Employment Tribunal to carry out its mandate.

Outcome 3.2: Maldives' social partners have enhanced voice and achieve effective engagement in contributing to the development of national policies, strategies and plans on gender equality, a just transition and collective bargaining.

Implementation strategy: In 2025–2031, the Maldives social partners, along with other relevant national and international partners, will work together to:

- strengthen the institutional capacities and coordination of national employers' and workers' organizations with respect to tripartite

and bipartite social dialogue (collective bargaining, grievance handling and workplace cooperation) and delivery of core representation and service mandates.

4.6 Risks and risk mitigation in the Decent Work Country Programme design and implementation

The UNSDCF identified the following three main overall risks to the successful implementation of the Cooperation Framework, which cut across all outcome results. These also apply to the DWCP (for a summary of assumptions underpinning the DWCP, refer to the results framework in **Annex I**).

- i. The possibility of a financial crisis caused by debt and economic costs associated with climate change and extreme events, such as a continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, which could reduce government revenues and result in retrogression in enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Such economic instability will also negatively impact on governance, social cohesion, access to services and migration.

DWCP mitigation measures: The DWCP includes a commitment to mainstreaming decent work concerns and priorities into climate-related national policies and measures. It prioritizes attention under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2024) to addressing heat stress related to climate change. The focus in the DWCP on expanding social protection coverage to encompass excluded or underserved population groups will help the country better prepare for the onset of future shocks. The DWCP tripartite governance structure enables DWCP stakeholders to review progress on a regular basis and make adjustments as necessary to planning and resourcing, particularly at the output and target levels. The ILO's Guidelines for a Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All provide a valuable tool in this context.

- ii. Continuation of or a return to political polarization poses significant risks to ensuring a shared vision for national development, to decentralized, accountable and participatory governance and to justice and the rule of law and increases the potential of insecurity, disenfranchisement of young people, potentially leading to heightened fundamentalism and extremism.

DWCP mitigation measures: The DWCP emphasis on social dialogue at the tripartite and bipartite

levels provides an important vehicle and approach for ensuring that stakeholders in the society are engaging with each other around shared priorities and concerns, thus enhancing social cohesion. The building of labour dispute resolution capacities also provides for a more effective resolution of disputes. The focus on decent work opportunities and technical and vocational skills development for youth will assist in strengthening the engagement of vulnerable youth with the wider society, including through the labour market, thus helping to address alienation and marginalization.

- iii. Governance-related risks call for improvement in intersectoral coordination, a more coherent and streamlined policy environment and the strengthening of compliance and law enforcement. Given the natural diversity of the country and challenges in attaining full decentralization, there could be a risk that reforms are not implemented at the pace needed to transform the public sector, including to significantly reduce corruption. Any of these risks and threats could slow or, under some scenarios, reverse the progress achieved towards the SDGs.

DWCP mitigation measures: DWCP implementation requires cooperation between various ministries and government agencies, thus contributing towards greater cohesion and coordination. Alongside other United Nations entities, the ILO will offer its independent convening authority as appropriate to contribute towards increased interaction, joint planning and cooperation to achieve the decent work objectives. The DWCP governing body will provide a platform for regular intersectoral dialogue.

To those risks, the following can be added:

- iv. A lack of the human, financial and technical results to implement DWCP outcomes and outputs will undermine its implementation.

DWCP mitigation measures: The DWCP tripartite governance structure enables DWCP stakeholders to review progress on a regular basis, including (i) cost-sharing and investment of national resources, as well as resource mobilization from other sources as necessary and (ii) to make adjustments to the results framework as required, particularly at the output and target levels. The embedding of the DWCP within the UNSDCF further enables the ILO to develop collaborative and resource-sharing approaches with other United Nations entities, thus providing access to wider United Nations resources and creating efficiencies in the use of them.

- v. “Left-behind” population groups are not reached by DWCP planning and activities, causing the DWCP to fall short of its objectives with respect to inclusion and universal social protection coverage.

DWCP mitigation measures: DWCP annual planning and activity design will highlight the situation of and implications for groups identified as at risk of being left behind. This will provide a basis for attention in meetings of the tripartite DWCP Task Force. The impact of the programmes on the most left-behind population groups will be a focus of any reviews or evaluations that are conducted on DWCP implementation. The Maldives Trade Union Congress represents vulnerable groups

and will provide an important voice with respect to their priorities and concerns.

- vi. Declining overseas development assistance and other international funding may hinder achievement of the goals.

DWCP mitigation measures. As indicated in section 7, the ILO and its constituents will develop a simple resource mobilization strategy within the first six months of the DWCP's commencement, in alignment with the resource mobilization approaches of the UNCT. The ILO Maldives strategy will be based on resourcing gap analysis and a funding source mapping to enable the setting of realistic targets, taking into account national and international financing trends and sources.

5. Decent Work Country Programme management and tripartite governance

5.1 The ILO within UNSDCF oversight and management arrangements

The DWCP 2025–2031 will be implemented, monitored and evaluated within the framework of two UNSDCFs, the 2022–2026 version and the 2027–2031 version. The ILO will contribute to the **Joint Government of Maldives – United Nations Steering Committee**, which is the highest governing body of the UNSDCF. It meets at least annually and is co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN Resident Coordinator and comprises representatives of government ministries and heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes with operational activities in the Maldives.

The ILO will also contribute as appropriate and possible to the four **Outcome Groups** that have been established under the Joint Steering Committee, co-chaired by a lead ministry and a lead UN head of agency. The ILO already co-chairs the Outcome Group on Employment and Skills. The ILO also will contribute, as appropriate and agreed, to the development and implementation of the rolling biennial **Joint Work Plans** of each Outcome Group. These provide a basis for interagency cooperation and ensure greater alignment with national priorities, support country capacities to deliver development results and ensure transparency and accountability in their implementation.

The ILO will also contribute, as possible and appropriate, to special working groups established by the UNCT for communications and monitoring and evaluation and will draw on resources and support available through such groups.

And the ILO will facilitate and promote opportunities to provide space and voice to tripartite constituents to relay their priorities in United Nations platforms and UNSDCF formulation, review and evaluation processes. This will include raising awareness within the UNCT of the unique tripartite structure and social dialogue focus of the ILO and the value it can bring to wider United Nations processes, projects and programmes.

5.2 Tripartite governance of the Decent Work Country Programme

Tripartite governance is a core part of the DWCP, as stated in the 2016 ILO Resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work. Effective governance of the DWCP by tripartite constituents is both vital for national ownership and is part of and contributes to wider tripartite and social dialogue processes.

The DWCP governance refers to “the practices and processes undertaken to ensure that programmes are managed effectively and efficiently. DWCP governance entails developing and operating systems and methods through agreed institutional arrangements with ILO constituents.”

Tripartite governance of the DWCP in the Maldives is centred in the **DWCP Task Force**, established for this purpose under the auspices of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board, which was established under the Industrial Relations Act (2024). The DWCP Task Force is chaired by the Minister of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development and meets regularly to review DWCP progress; make adjustments as necessary to DWCP plans and targets; identify lessons for promoting improved performance; ensure that the DWCP remains aligned with national priorities, strategies and plans; and advise on resource mobilization, among other tasks. The DWCP Task Force will provide regular updates to the Advisory Board and will also solicit advice from the Advisory Board.

Every effort will be made to ensure gender balance in the composition of the Advisory Board and the DWCP Task Force, with the target of achieving at least 40 per cent of the membership of each being women. In the case of ILO social partners, every effort will be made to achieve a target of 40 per cent of the leadership being women.

5.3 Decent Work Country Programme management and implementation

Overview: The DWCP will be implemented under the oversight of the ILO Regional Director based in the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok and the direction and supervision of the Director of the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, based in Colombo.

Technical support, including through country visits, will be provided by the ILO Country Office in Sri Lanka as well as the regional ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team, New Delhi and specialists at ILO headquarters in Geneva.

As well as participating in the DWCP governance structure and process outlined previously, the Maldives Government and social partners will actively participate in DWCP implementation at all levels and at all stages of the programming cycle.

The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development is the primary focal point role for the DWCP within the government system, including the convening and coordination of intergovernmental consultation meetings on DWCP matters, as necessary. The strengthening of coordination, knowledge-sharing and synergies between relevant government ministries and agencies on the one hand and between the tripartite constituents on the other will be actively promoted by the ILO and the tripartite constituents.

DWCP annual work plans: Within the first three months of the DWCP's commencement, the ILO and its tripartite constituents will jointly prepare a simple biennial work plan based on the DWCP results framework for the first two years of DWCP implementation. This plan will specify steps and milestones and will be reviewed and updated as required. It will further indicate areas at the output level where ILO constituents have a lead responsibility.

6. Decent Work Country Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning

DWCP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) fits within and contributes to the annual UNSDCF M&E process. The ILO will contribute to United Nations monitoring arrangements, based on the UNSDCF results matrix, which seeks to make maximum use of the existing national data and information systems.

The ILO will also contribute to the annual internal reviews of UNSDCF implementation and annual One Country Results Reports, including the identification of lessons to inform decisions and make adjustments in the evolving context of the Maldives and the world of work. In this context, the ILO will contribute to and utilize UN INFO – the United Nations online monitoring and reporting platform.

The ILO already has contributed to the independent evaluation of the UNSDCF conducted in March–June 2025, which will contribute to the formulation of the next UNSDCF (between February and July 2026). This in turn will provide the basis for updating the DWCP for 2027–2031.

In this context, the ILO and its tripartite constituents will:

- Use the DWCP results framework as the basis of regular joint monitoring of progress, challenges and lessons through the DWCP Task Force.
- Conduct an internal review of the DWCP at the appropriate time in light of the new UNSDCF 2027–2031 to identify adjustments that are required to the DWCP to ensure ongoing alignment and coherence with the UNSDCF.
- Conduct a midterm internal review during phase 2 of the DWCP and a full Country Programme Review by 2031.
- Participate in independent high-level evaluations as may be required as part of ILO EVAL's rolling work plan, should any involving the Maldives be approved by the Governing Body during the DWCP period.
- Ensure that development cooperation projects include plans and resourcing for internal or independent review or evaluation as appropriate and that new project designs link to both the UNSDCF and the DWCP results and indicators.

7. Decent Work Country Programme resource mobilization plan

The ILO's plans and initiatives for resource mobilization to support DWCP implementation fit within the UNSDCF financing plans and arrangements. To the degree possible, the ILO will be part of United Nations efforts to engage strategically with the Government and the country's development partners to support comprehensive and innovative financing for development, especially to maximize available resources to support SDG implementation, including those related to the Decent Work Agenda. The joint Maldives and UN Integrated National Financing Framework will be a cornerstone of such engagement.

The ILO Country Office and its tripartite constituents will work together to identify, mobilize and monitor resources to achieve the outcomes and outputs of the DWCP 2025–2031.

Key resourcing contributions will include:

Tripartite constituents' resources: These will include national budget allocations where appropriate and feasible as well as tripartite constituents' financial and in-kind contributions, in line with relevant policies, strategies and plans. In-kind contributions will include staff time, use of facilities and services and facilitating access to wider constituencies and networks, as appropriate.

Extra-budgetary development cooperation projects funded through various multilateral and bilateral development partners: These will be the primary source of funding for DWCP implementation. The DWCP will provide a tool for resource mobilization. At the time of the DWCP finalization, plans were under way for joint ILO and other United Nations agency proposals to implement particular sections of the Maldives UNCT Migration Action Plan, including potentially World Bank support, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development, to set up a labour market information system. Potential support through the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the European Union and overseas development assistance partners, such as Japan, Australia and India, will be explored. South–South and triangular cooperation opportunities will also be pursued with actors in the region in the fields of trade, tourism and infrastructure (such as China, India and the United Arab Emirates via the Abu Dhabi Fund).

For details of ILO-managed development cooperation projects that will contribute to DWCP implementation and its contribution to the UNSDCF (as confirmed at the time of DWCP signing), refer to ILO [Development Cooperation Dashboard](#).

ILO global and regional programmes: The ILO implements various programmes at the global and regional levels to address common issues by the countries covered. These are supported by various funding sources, including bilateral funding partners, multilateral agencies and private foundations. Central to the ILO global efforts and resourcing are the following flagship programmes: Better Work; Social Protection Floors for All; the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour (IPEC+); Safety + Health for All; and Jobs for Peace and Resilience.

ILO Regular Budget Supplementary Account: Programmes of strategic significance can be funded for specific periods by the Regular Budget Supplementary Account, which is based on unconditional funding to the ILO by various development partners.

Global United Nations funds and programmes: The ILO Country Office will explore options for DWCP financing, such as the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions that was launched in September 2021 by the UN Secretary-General. Other relevant global funds will also be explored as potential funding sources, including for promoting decent work in the care economy.

Building on these options, the ILO Country Office will develop a simple **resource mobilization strategy** within the first six months of the DWCP's commencement, in alignment with the resource mobilization approaches of the UNCT. The ILO Maldives strategy will be based on a national and international resourcing gap analysis as well as a funding source mapping to enable the setting of realistic targets. An important consideration will be current international funding trends, such as shrinking available resources due to global developments and emerging priorities.

8. Decent Work Country Programme advocacy and communications plan

Evidence-based and gender-responsive communications for decent work policies, legal frameworks, strategies, plans and resourcing are an important part of the ILO's role at the country level. This has three main aspects:

- i. policy engagement and support for strengthening the Government's decent work policy and the legal and programmatic priorities and plans;
- ii. outreach to partners and other stakeholders active in promoting the Decent Work Agenda in the Maldives; and
- iii. outreach to the broader Maldives public.

ILO communications will be conducted within the context of – and in support of – broader UNCT communications strategies and efforts. Wherever possible, success stories and examples from implementation of the DWCP will be featured in UNCT public outreach initiatives, as well as in those of the ILO Country Office.

An important message in ILO advocacy and communications will be that the advancement of the

Decent Work Agenda, including the implementation of international labour standards and effective social dialogue, is an essential contributor to:

- i. The Maldives achieving the national development priorities set out in the national Strategic Action Plan.
- ii. A sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that has decent work, social justice, expanded social protection, gender equality and inclusion at its core.
- iii. The creation of decent jobs for more women and men in the Maldives; social protection for all; and safe, healthy and gender-equitable workplaces.
- iv. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and disability inclusion and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Alongside the development of a resource mobilization strategy, an ILO communications strategy will be developed in the first year of the DWCP that aligns to and supports the UNSDCF initiatives.

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Annex I

Decent Work Country Programme results framework 2025–2031

Phase 1: 2025–2026 and Phase 2: 2027–2031

Decent Work Country Programme goal: Decent, productive, inclusive and sustainable work for all in the Maldives					
Contributing to SDGs: Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all Goal 10. Reduce inequality, within and among countries Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development					
Strategic Priority 1: Promoting shared prosperity and inclusive human development for all					
Results	Performance indicators (disaggregated)	Baseline (year)	Targets by end of 2031	Source or method of verification	Assumption statements
Outcome 1.1: Youth, women and others at risk of being left behind contribute to and benefit from inclusive, gender-responsive, resilient and sustainable economic and human capital development that fosters entrepreneurship and decent work (adapted from UNSDCF Outcome 1).	1.1.1: Unemployment rate, by sex and persons with disabilities (<i>UNSDCF Outcome 1(b)</i>).	Both sexes: 5.3% (2019) Malé: 5.6% Female: 4.8% Persons with disabilities, both sexes: 7.1% (2019) Malé: 4.2% Female: 10.2%	Under 5% overall and for each sex, including people with disabilities by 2026. To be revised for full duration of the DWCP, in line with the new UNSDCF. <i>The ILO will contribute along with other UNCT members to achievement of this target.</i>	Household Income and Expenditure Survey and Census	The Government and other relevant national bodies (particularly employers' and workers' organizations) have the necessary human and financial resources, supplemented by external support, to deliver in the areas specified.
	1.1.2: Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training by sex (SDG 8.6.1). (<i>UNSDCF Indicator 1(c)</i>).	Both sexes: 29% (2019) Malé: 15% Female: 41%	To be inserted for full duration of the DWCP, in line with new UNSDCF. <i>The ILO will contribute along with other UNCT members to achievement of this target.</i>	Census and Household Income and Expenditure Survey	

	1.1.3: Women's labour force participation rate (<i>UNSCDF Indicator 1(g)</i>).	45.6% (2019)	To be inserted for full duration of the DWCP, in line with new UNSDCF. <i>The ILO will contribute along with other UNCT members to achievement of this target.</i>	Household Income and Expenditure Survey	
Output 1.1.1: Gender-responsive national comprehensive employment policy (NCEP) developed, adopted and implemented, with emphasis on women, youth, persons with disabilities; addressing the impacts of climate change; enhancing technical and vocational skills; entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprise promotion; a just transition; economic formalization; and sectoral policies, including in new green sectors (<i>linked to UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 1.2., indicator 1.2.1</i>). (Adapted from the UNSDCF)	1.1.1 (a): Availability of adopted gender-responsive NCEP incorporating the specified areas.	Zero baseline	Gender-responsive NCEP developed and adopted. Ensuring 50% women's participation in training and skills development initiatives, in line with the target in Output 1.2.2. The skills development component to provide a basis for ILO input into the development of a national education and skills strategy (<i>UNSCDF Output 1.3</i>). Key tools include the ILO's Inclusive Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Approach and promotion of good workplace practices through responsible business conduct initiatives.	National Gazette National employment policy documents Government reports ILO project reports	The necessary policy commitments are made to move forward with NCEP development and implementation, supported by the necessary human and financial resources, supplemented as necessary by external technical, financial and capacity development support. ILO social partners and other relevant national entities are fully engaged at all stages of NCEP development and implementation.
Output 1.1.2: Multi-stakeholder gender-responsive governance structure operationalized and action plan developed and implemented for the NCEP.	1.1.2(a): Evidence of operational gender-responsive NCEP governance structure.	Zero baseline	Multi-stakeholder gender-responsive NCEP governance structure established and functioning. Capacity development support provided to governance structure participants.		
	1.1.2(b): Percentage of NCEP action plan targets met.	Zero baseline	At least 80% of NCEP targets met.	NCEP reporting ILO project reports	

Output 1.1.3: Gender-responsive policy and programmatic framework developed, adopted and implemented to promote formalization as well as sustainable and green enterprise and entrepreneurship development, including through increased provision of business development services.	1.1.3(a): Availability of gender-responsive policy and programmatic framework to promote formalization as well as sustainable and green enterprise and entrepreneurship development, including through increased provision of business development services.	No such framework in place	Gender-responsive strategic research conducted on issues related to formalization as well as sustainable and green enterprise and entrepreneurship development, including through increased provision of business development services. Tripartite dialogue process conducted to develop and adopt gender-responsive policy and programmatic framework.	Research reports Reports on tripartite social dialogue ILO project reports	The necessary policy commitments are made to move forward with development and implementation of the policy and programmatic framework, supported by the necessary human and financial resources, supplemented as necessary by external technical, financial and capacity development support. ILO social partners and other relevant national entities are fully engaged at all stages of the policy and programmatic framework, development and implementation.
	1.1.3(b): Availability of implementation plan for gender-responsive policy and programmatic framework.		Implementation plan for gender-responsive policy and programmatic framework developed, monitored and reported on.	Implementation plan ILO project reports	
Output 1.1.4: National gender-responsive just-transition strategy developed, adopted and implemented to facilitate a transition to a more sustainable economy and decent employment, including through employment-intensive nature-based solutions and green works for climate-resilient infrastructure to address the current and future impacts of climate change.	1.1.4(a): Availability of adopted national gender-responsive just-transition strategy, including employment-intensive nature-based solutions and green works for climate-resilient infrastructure to address the current and future impacts of climate change.	No such strategy available National Spatial Plan that addresses infrastructure development in process of being updated (April 2025).	Gender-responsive strategic research conducted into issues related to a just transition and development of climate-resilient infrastructure. Tripartite dialogue process conducted to develop and adopt a national gender-responsive just-transition strategy, including climate resilient infrastructure elements.	Research reports Reports on tripartite social dialogue ILO project reports	The necessary policy commitments are made to move forward with development and implementation of the national just transition strategy, including the specified infrastructure elements, supported by the necessary human and financial resources, supplemented as necessary by external technical, financial and capacity development support. ILO social partners and other relevant national entities are fully engaged at all stages of just-transition strategy development and implementation.
	1.1.4(b): Availability of implementation plan for national gender-responsive just-transition strategy.	No such plan available	Implementation plan for a national gender-responsive just-transition strategy developed, monitored and reported on.	Implementation plan ILO project reports	

Output 1.1.5: Agreement achieved among tripartite constituents and other relevant stakeholders on a gender-responsive national action plan and road map, based on a national assessment, to provide quality and affordable childcare services through public, private and cooperative entities to increase women's labour force participation and to provide decent work opportunities (<i>adapted from UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 1.2. indicator 1.2.2</i>).	1.1.5 (a). Number of initiatives to develop a gender-responsive national action plan and road map, based on a national assessment, to provide quality and affordable childcare services through public, private and cooperative entities.	Zero baseline	At least 3 gender-responsive initiatives completed: (i) strategic research on childcare needs, gaps and priorities conducted; (ii) tripartite and multi-stakeholder workshop to identify shared priorities for way forward in developing a national action plan and road map for the quality and affordable childcare services through public, private and cooperative entities; and (iii) national action plan and road map formulated.	Strategic research reports Multi-stakeholder tripartite workshop reports National action plan and road map ILO project reports	Tripartite constituents are committed to engagement and cooperation in this area, supported by external technical expertise and resourcing, as required.
Output 1.1.6: Gender-responsive national labour migration policy and action plan developed and adopted, based on findings of a diagnostic study (<i>adapted from UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 4.1.3</i>).	1.1.5 (a): Availability of gender-responsive national labour migration policy and action plan.	Zero baseline	Gender-responsive national labour migration policy and action plan developed and adopted. Diagnostic study on labour migration in the Maldives completed. Supported by the UNCT Labour Migration Country Action Plan for Maldives. Policy and action plan to incorporate: (i) strengthening labour migration governance and enhancing pathways for regular migration; (ii) building up awareness on rights of migrant workers and discrimination issues; and (iii) strengthening migrant workers' access to decent work, justice and redress mechanisms.	Government reports ILO project reports	National constituents have the necessary commitment and human and financial resources to contribute, supplemented by external technical, capacity-development and financial support as necessary.
Output 1.1.7: Labour market information system (LMIS) developed and responsive to SDG disaggregation requirements (sex, migrants, disability and other vulnerable groups).	1.1.7 (a): LMIS in place and responsive to SDG disaggregation requirements (sex, migrants, disability and other vulnerable groups).	Zero baseline. ILO support to establish the LMIS has been requested by the Maldives Bureau of Statistics.	LMIS developed and functioning, including status of migrant workers.	Reports of the Maldives Bureau of Statistics ILO project reports	Ongoing resourcing for the functioning of the LMIS is available once established.

Output 1.1.8: Gender-responsive labour statistics survey programme developed that includes a regular Labour Force Survey and modules of other forms of work (own-use production work, own-use provision of services, volunteer work, etc.) according to latest International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) standards.	1.1.8 (a): Gender-responsive labour statistics survey programme available that includes a regular Labour Force Survey and modules of other forms work according to latest ICLS standards.	The first stand-alone Labour Force Survey that complies with the 19th ICLS standards in the Maldives was conducted in 2024 in Malé.	Gender-responsive labour statistics survey programme developed that includes a regular Labour Force Survey and modules of other forms of work as specified. Plan developed for sequencing of Labour Force Survey and other modules.	Labour Force Survey reports Reports of the Maldives Bureau of Statistics ILO project reports	The necessary human and financial resources are available to conduct the Labour Force Survey, supplemented as required by external technical, capacity-development and financial support.
Outcome 1.2: People in the Maldives, especially from the most vulnerable and marginalized households, benefit from increased access to and use of quality, equitable, inclusive and resilient social and protection services, have enhanced relevant skills and live fulfilled lives with well-being and dignity (UNSDCF Outcome 2).	1.2.1: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors and systems (SDG indicator 1.3.1) (<i>UNSDCF Indicator 2(a)</i>).	32% of population covered (Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services and National Social Protection Agency).	50% coverage achieved by 2026. Target to be revised in line with the new UNSDCF, with gender component. <i>The ILO will contribute along with other UNCT members to achievement of this target.</i>	Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services and National Social Protection Agency ILO project reports	The Maldives Government and ILO social partners have the human and technical resources necessary to contribute to the priority areas specified, supplemented by external technical and financial support, as required.
	1.2.2: Existence of lifelong learning national policy framework developed (<i>UNSDCF Indicator 2.2.2</i>).	Not in place (as of March 2025)	Gender-responsive lifelong learning national policy framework developed by 2026, with clear technical and vocational training elements as a result of ILO engagement. <i>The ILO will contribute along with other UNCT members to achievement of this target.</i>	Ministry of Education reports ILO project reports	
	1.2.3: Availability of evidence-informed national strategic plan for education and labour force skills (<i>adapted from UNSDCF Indicator 1.3.1</i>).	Not in place (as of March 2025)	Approved plan based on analysis and fully operational by 2026. Inputs by ILO on the labour force skills elements of the plan. <i>The ILO will contribute along with other UNCT members to achievement of this target.</i>	Government plan and reports ILO project reports	

Output 1.2.1: Gender-responsive policy and implementation measures in place to expand social protection coverage and comprehensiveness, including in the context of economic, health and natural disaster shocks, with focus on migrant workers, workers in non-standard forms of employment and persons with disabilities (<i>linked to UNSDCF 2022–2026, Output 2.4</i>).	1.2.1(a): Evidence of ILO technical and constituent inputs into new or revised gender-responsive national social protection policies and measures to expand coverage and comprehensiveness, including in the context of economic, health and natural disaster shocks, with focus on migrant workers, workers in non-standard forms of employment and persons with disabilities (<i>adapted from UNSDCF Indicator 2.4.1</i>).	Existing social protection coverage has gaps in terms of coverage, particularly for migrant workers, workers in non-standard forms of employment and persons with disabilities.	ILO technical and tripartite constituent inputs provided in the development and implementation of new gender-responsive policies and/or measures in the areas of migrant workers, workers in non-standard forms of employment and persons with disabilities. Scoping study on the introduction of an unemployment insurance scheme completed. Unemployment insurance scheme developed and introduced.	Reports of Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services and the National Social Protection Agency ILO project reports	Tripartite constituents have the necessary human, technical and financial resources, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.
Output 1.2.2: Enhanced capacities within the public and private sectors to design and deliver inclusive, gender-responsive, adaptive and market-relevant lifelong learning and skills development opportunities that meet real market needs and prospects (<i>UNSCDF Output 1.3</i>).	1.2.2 (a): Number of ILO contributions to UN joint capacity development initiatives to enhance the relevant capacities of government and employers, with a focus on women and men and youth with upgraded, market-oriented skills and extension services skills (<i>adapted from UNSCDF Indicator 1.3.3</i>).	Zero baseline	At least 2 gender-responsive initiatives to enhance relevant capacities of ILO constituents to contribute to the design and delivery of inclusive, adaptive and market-relevant lifelong learning and skills development opportunities that meet real market needs and prospects. Ensuring 50% women's participation in training and skills development initiatives, in line with Output 1.1.1.	Reports from Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economic Development ILO project reports	Tripartite constituents have the necessary human, technical and financial capacities to contribute as specified, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.
			Focus on value chains supported by advanced agriculture and fishery technologies directly linked to private sector players, in line with UNSDCF Indicator 1.3.3.		
	1.2.2(b): Number of gender-responsive training modules developed with ILO support, tailored to industry requirements, focusing on critical technical and soft skills (<i>supports the Maldives Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028, Action 1.3.b</i>).	Zero baseline	At least 2 gender-responsive training modules developed with ILO support, tailored to industry requirements and focusing on critical technical and soft skills.	Training module documents Reports from Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development ILO project reports	The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development has the necessary human, technical and financial capacities, in collaboration with the ILO, to sustainably implement the new modules.

Output 1.2.3: Enhanced gender-responsive skills development planning as a result of a national mapping of long-term workforce skills requirements, based on analysis of sectoral needs and economic trends, particularly digitalization, artificial intelligence and new forms of work, with participation of Maldives social partners.	1.2.3(a): Availability of credible evidence-based gender-responsive analysis of long-term skills development needs and priorities in the Maldives, particularly digitalization, artificial intelligence and new forms of work.	Zero baseline	Gender-responsive national mapping conducted of long-term workforce skills requirements, based on analysis of economic trends, particularly digitalization, artificial intelligence and new forms of work, with participation of Maldives social partners.	Report on mapping findings and recommendations ILO reports	The Government and social partners have the necessary human, technical and financial capacities to conduct and follow-up the national skills mapping, supplemented as required by external technical, capacity-development and financial support.
	1.2.3(b): Evidence available on enhanced long-term gender-responsive national plans for skills development, including skills requirements of digitalization, artificial intelligence and new forms of work.	Zero baseline	Gender-responsive national plans formulated for longer-term skills development based on mapping findings, with participation by social partners.	Plans of the National Skills Development Authority ILO project reports	

Strategic Priority 2: Increasing ratification of international labour standards and their implementation through gender-responsive national policies and legislation

Results	Performance indicators (disaggregated)	Baseline (year)	Targets by end of 2031	Source or method of verification	Assumption statements
Outcome 2.1: Improved gender-responsive enabling environment for the promotion and implementation of international labour standards.	2.1.1: Number of gender-responsive policies, regulations and measures put in place to improve the enabling environment for the implementation of international labour standards.	Zero baseline	At least 10 gender-responsive policies, regulations and measures put in place.	Reports of the Ministry of Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development ILO NORMLEX website Relevant national policy and programme documents ILO project reports	The Government and ILO social partners have the necessary human, technical and financial capacities to contribute to the implementation of international labour standards and associated reporting to ILO supervisory bodies, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.

Output 2.1.1: Gender-responsive regulations and improved capacities of constituents to implement the Industrial Relations Act (2024) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2024), with attention to gender and migrant worker aspects.	2.1.1(a): Number of gender-responsive initiatives to improve relevant capacities of the national labour administration to implement both laws.	Zero baseline	At least 3 gender-responsive initiatives to improve national labour administration capacities, including: (i) assessment conducted of Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development capacity needs and gaps; (ii) capacity-development plan developed; and (iii) capacity-development plan implemented.	Reports of the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development ILO project reports	The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development has the necessary human, technical and financial capacities, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.
	2.1.1(b): Existence of new gender-responsive regulations to support implementation of the two specified laws.	Regulations to support the two laws not yet in place.	Areas of priority need for development of gender-responsive regulations identified. Gender-responsive regulations developed, adopted and implemented.	Adopted regulations ILO project reports	
Output 2.1.2: Gender-responsive mechanisms established under the Industrial Relations Act (2024) to ensure effective implementation, including with respect to collective bargaining agreements, conciliation concerning labour disputes and relations with trade unions.	2.1.2(a): Number of gender-responsive mechanisms established under the Industrial Relations Act.	Mechanisms under the Industrial Relations Act not yet in place.	At least 3 mechanisms with standard operating procedures as required established under the Industrial Relations Act, covering the areas of (i) collective bargaining agreements, (ii) conciliation concerning labour disputes and (iii) relations with trade unions.	Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development reports ILO project reports	The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development has the necessary human, technical and financial capacities, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.
Output 2.1.3: Increased capacities of the Government and employers to implement Labour Management Procedures, including strategic compliance planning and OSH.	2.1.3(a): Percentage of Labour Management Procedures in the strategy that are implemented with ILO Country Office training and other support.	Labour Management Procedures in place. Assessment to be conducted of degree of implementation.	30% of labour management procedures have been implemented by 2026 and 100% by 2031. OSH training and resources plan agreed and implemented.	Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development reports ILO project reports	The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development has the necessary human, technical and financial capacities, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.

Output 2.1.4: Gender-responsive national occupational safety and health profile (OSH) and OSH implementation plan developed and adopted.	2.1.4(a): Existence of gender-responsive national OSH profile and implementation plan.	No such documents yet in place	Gender-responsive national OSH profile and implementation plan developed through collaboration between tripartite partners.	National OSH profile National OSH implementation plan	The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development and social partners have the necessary human, technical and financial capacities, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.
Output 2.1.5: Increased constituent capacities for ratification and implementation of international labour standards and promoting responsible business conduct, including addressing the recommendations of ILO supervisory bodies.	2.1.5(a): Number of additional international labour standards ratifications.	Maldives has ratified 8 of 11 fundamental instruments (OSH Conventions and Protocol to Convention No. 29 not yet ratified); No. 185 on Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention; and Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.	At least 7 additional international labour standards ratified. Tripartite ratifications strategy agreed through social dialogue by 2025. Proposed priorities for ratification by 2031 are: Conventions No. 144 (tripartite social dialogue), No. 155 and No. 187 (OSH), No. 160 (labour statistics), No. 188 (work in fishing), No. 190 (violence and harassment in the world of work) and the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29).	Reports of ILO Country Office and international labour standards specialists	Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development commits to proceeding with prioritized ratifications, supported by active engagement of ILO social partners.
	2.1.5(b): Percentage of comments from the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations that are addressed.	On Convention No. 138, the ILO Committee of Experts noted with satisfaction in 2023 that compulsory education was established up to 16 years in the Education Act of 2020 and that the list of hazardous types of work was adopted in 2020.	The Government prioritizes addressing the comments of the ILO Committee of Experts on ratified Conventions.	Government action plans ILO NORMLEX website	The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development and social partners have the necessary human, technical and financial capacities, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.

Output 2.1.6: Improved quality and timeliness of reporting on implementation of ratified international labour standards, including addressing comments of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.	2.1.6(a): Percentage of reports submitted on a timely basis on implementation of ratified international labour standards that answer the comments of the ILO supervisory bodies.	Before 2024, not all reports were submitted on time with answers to the comments of the supervisory bodies.	100% of reports submitted by the Maldives, in line with expected time frames every year (before 1 September) and that respond to the comments of the ILO supervisory bodies.	ILO NORMLEX website	The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development has the necessary human, technical and financial capacities, supplemented as required by external technical and capacity-development support.
	2.1.6(b): Number of cases of progress in the application of ratified international labour standards noted with satisfaction by the ILO supervisory bodies.	Zero baseline	At least 1 case noted with satisfaction by ILO supervisory bodies	ILO NORMLEX website	
Output 2.1.7: Gender-responsive labour rights and just transition measures mainstreamed into the Maldives' Climate Prosperity Plan and Nationally Determined Contributions on climate change, as well as industrial, small and medium-sized enterprises and other relevant policies and programmes.	2.1.7(a): Evidence available on the mainstreaming of gender-responsive labour rights and just transition considerations into the Maldives Climate Prosperity Plan and Nationally Determined Contributions on climate change, as well as industrial, small and medium-sized enterprises and other relevant policies and programmes.	Zero baseline	Gender-responsive input provided by ILO Country Office and constituents into the drafting of the (i) Maldives Climate Prosperity Plan; (ii) Nationally Determined Contributions on climate change; and (iii) industrial, small and medium-sized enterprises and other relevant policies and programmes.	Relevant national policy and programme documents ILO project reports	Tripartite constituents contribute effectively to the areas specified, supplemented by the necessary external technical and capacity-development support.
Output 2.1.8: Strengthened policies and measures to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, in line with ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment.	2.1.8(a): Evidence of influence based on Convention No. 190 by ILO constituents on the development of a new national sexual harassment law and a strategy or plan for coordinated action to prevent and respond to violence against women (<i>adapted from UNSDCF Indicators 2.3.2 and 4.3.4</i>).	Convention No. 190 not yet ratified by the Maldives but is on the agenda for ratification (March 2025). The UNSDCF prioritizes the development of a new national sexual harassment law and a strategy or plan for coordinated action to prevent and respond to violence against women.	Inputs provided by ILO (headquarters or Country Office) and Maldives constituents into the drafting of the new national sexual harassment law and strategy or plan for coordinated action to prevent and respond to violence against women. Awareness-raising and capacity support based on Convention No. 190 provided to ILO constituents.	Analysis of the new national sexual harassment law and strategy or plan for coordinated action to prevent and respond to violence against women	Tripartite constituents have the necessary commitment and capacities to address violence and harassment in the world of work, supplemented by external support as required.

Output 2.1.9: Gender-responsive policies and measures strengthened or developed to eliminate forced labour, human trafficking and the worst forms of child labour.	2.1.9(a): Number of gender-responsive policies and measures strengthened or developed to eliminate forced labour, human trafficking and the worst forms of child labour.	No specific policies or measures (action plans) in place to eliminate forced labour, human trafficking and the worst forms of child labour.	At least 2 gender-responsive policies and/or measures strengthened or developed to eliminate forced labour, human trafficking and the worst forms of child labour.	Policies and/or measures development and adopted Maldives reporting to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations on implementation of Conventions No. 29 (forced labour) and No. 182 (worst forms of child labour). ILO project reports	Tripartite constituents have the necessary commitment and capacities to address forced labour, human trafficking and the worst forms of child labour, supplemented by external support as required.
Output 2.1.10: Gender-responsive and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives promoted and implemented to improve labour conditions, foster exploitation-free supply chains and eliminate modern slavery at work.	2.1.10: Number of gender-responsive CSR initiatives promoted to improve labour conditions, foster exploitation-free supply chains and eliminate modern slavery at work.	Zero baseline	At least 1 gender-responsive CSR initiative in the specified areas promoted and completed annually.	Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development reports Reports of Maldives employers' bodies ILO project reports	Relevant Maldives Government agencies and ILO social partners have the necessary commitment and capacities to promote and sustain gender-responsive CSR initiatives, supplemented by external support as required.

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthening gender-responsive tripartism and social dialogue mechanisms, processes and capacities

Results	Performance indicators (disaggregated)	Baseline (year)	Targets by: (i) end of 2026 (ii) end of 2031	Source or method of verification	Assumption statements
Outcome 3.1: Improvement in the quality and effectiveness of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue due to effectively functioning gender-responsive tripartite cooperation mechanisms and processes.	3.1.1: Number of tripartite social dialogue mechanisms demonstrating improved performance and gender-responsiveness.	Zero baseline	At least 4 mechanisms demonstrating improved performance and gender-responsiveness (Tripartite Labour Advisory Board, DWCP Task Force, Salary and Wage Advisory Board and disputes resolution mechanisms).	Findings of short performance stocktakes by (i) 2026 and (ii) 2031 Minutes and reports of the specified mechanisms ILO project reports	Tripartite constituents are committed to continuous improvement of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue and have the necessary human, technical and financial resources to this end, supplemented by external support as required.

Output 3.1.1: Strengthened capacities of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board (TLAB) and the DWCP Task Force.	3.1.1(a): Number of capacity-development initiatives conducted to enhance TLAB and DWCP Task Force capacity performance.	Zero baseline	At least 5 capacity-development initiatives conducted jointly for both bodies. A self-assessment of the effectiveness and sustainability of capacity development efforts to date conducted. On this basis, a longer-term capacity development plan formulated for the period.	Self-assessments of TLAB and DWCP Task Force members Minutes and reports of TLAB and DWCP Task Force ILO project reports	TLAB and DWCP Task Force members are committed to continuous improvement of performance and have the necessary human, technical and financial resources to this end, supplemented as required by external support.
Output 3.1.2: Gender-responsive and non-discriminatory minimum wage-setting and adjustment systems developed and adopted through the tripartite Salary and Wage Advisory Board (SAWAB).	3.1.2(a): Number of gender-responsive and non-discriminatory minimum wage rounds successfully concluded through the SAWAB.	One minimum wage adjustment round has been successfully conducted by the SAWAB.	At least 3 additional gender-responsive or non-discriminatory minimum wage adjustment processes completed.	SAWAB reports ILO project reports	SAWAB has the necessary capacities to effectively fulfil its mandate and role, supplemented by external expertise as required.
Output 3.1.3: Gender-responsive measures developed, adopted and implemented to reduce wage discrimination (particularly based on gender and migrant status), including with respect to achieving equal remuneration for work of equal value and extension of minimum wage coverage and wage protection to all migrant workers.	3.1.3(a): Percentage reduction in gender disparities related to equal remuneration for work of equal value.	Women's earnings are on average 25% less than men's (ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives, 2020).	Average gender pay gap reduced by at least 5%.	Maldives Bureau of Statistics ILO project reports	
	3.1.3(b): Evidence of agreement to extend minimum wage coverage and protection to all migrant workers.	Decision taken by the appropriate authority to extend minimum wage coverage and wage protection to women and men migrant workers, in consultation with ILO social partners.		ILO project reports SAWAB reports	

Output 3.1.4: Increased capacities of the tripartite Industrial Dispute Resolution Division at the Employment Tribunal to carry out its mandate.	3.1.4(a): Percentage of cases that come before the Dispute Resolution Division that are satisfactorily resolved.	The establishment of the tripartite Dispute Resolution Division at the Employment Tribunal was required under the Industrial Relations Action 2024, paragraphs 99–12.	100% of cases that come before the Dispute Resolution Division are satisfactorily resolved. Technical and capacity development, including training of trainers, provided to the Division as well as to ILO tripartite constituents. Implementation of existing guidelines for grievance handling to be part of capacity-development and training of trainers support to ILO tripartite constituents. Training of trainers conducted within constituent organizations.	Employment tribunal reports ILO project reports	The necessary technical, human and financial resources are available to the newly established Industrial Dispute Resolution Division, supplemented by external technical assistance as required. ILO social partners are fully committed to and engaged in the work of the Industrial Dispute Resolution Division.
Output 3.1.5: Gender-responsive research agenda developed on issues affecting unions and labour relations (with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)).	3.1.5(a): Availability of gender-responsive research agenda and plan for implementation.	No such agenda in place (as of June 2025) Request to ILO, IOM and UNDP for such a research agenda included in the Labour and Employment section of the Maldives Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028.	Gender-responsive research agenda available, along with plan for implementation, following (i) collaboration with IOM and UNDP, (ii) desk research on issues and (iii) consultations with stakeholders.	Finalized gender-responsive research agenda and implementation plan ILO project reports	ILO, IOM and UNDP prioritize and resource joint action on the agenda, including research, consultation, drafting, validation and finalization.
Outcome 3.2: Maldives social partners have enhanced voice and achieve effective engagement in contributing to the development of national policies, strategies and plans on gender equality, a just transition and collective bargaining.	3.2.1: Number of national policies, including in gender and a just transition, demonstrating influence and effectiveness of national employers' and workers' organizations.	Zero base-line	At least 4 national policies, strategies and plans demonstrate influence of national employers' and workers organizations, including gender-responsiveness.	Analysis of relevant national policies Analysis of inputs into national policy processes by employers' and workers' organizations ILO project reports	ILO social partners have the necessary human, technical and financial resources, supplemented as required by external support.

Output 3.2.1: Strengthened institutional capacities and coordination of national employers' organizations on tripartite and bipartite social dialogue (collective bargaining, grievance handling and workplace cooperation) and delivery of core representation and service mandates, with attention to gender considerations.	3.2.1(a): Number of gender-responsive institutional capacity-development initiatives developed and implemented.	Zero base-line	At least 1 gender-responsive capacity-development initiative competed, as follows: Drafting and implementation of capacity-development plan for employers' organizations, based on assessment of institutional capacity gaps. 40% representation achieved of women in leadership roles in employers' organizations.	Employers' organizations reports ILO project reports	Commitment of employers' organizations to institutional strengthening, supplemented as required by external support.
Output 3.2.2: Strengthened institutional capacities of workers' organizations on tripartite and bipartite social dialogue (collective bargaining, grievance handling and workplace cooperation) and delivery of core representation and service mandates, with attention to gender considerations.	3.2.2(a): Number of gender-responsive institutional capacity-development initiatives developed and implemented.	Zero base-line	At least 2 gender-responsive capacity-development initiatives completed: (i) drafting and implementation of capacity-development plan based on assessment of institutional capacity gaps; and (ii) as part of the above, development of comprehensive training curriculum for trade unions. 40% representation achieved of women in leadership roles in trade unions.	Workers' organizations reports ILO project reports	Commitment of workers' organizations to institutional strengthening, supplemented as required by external support.

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Annex II

Maldives's ratification of International Labour Conventions

Fundamental Conventions (8 of 11 instruments, including Protocol No. 29)		
Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) <i>NOTE: Protocol No. 29 - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, remains to be ratified.</i>	4 January 2013	In force
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)	4 January 2013	In force
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)	4 January 2013	In force
Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)	4 January 2013	In force
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)	4 January 2013	In force
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)	4 January 2013	In force
Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Minimum age specified: 14 years	23 August 1999	In force
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	4 January 2013	In force
Technical Conventions (4 of 177)		
Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185)	5 January 2015	In force
Amendments of 2016 to the Annexes of Convention No. 185	8 June 2017	In force
Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) In accordance with Standard A4.5 (2) and (10), the Government has specified the following branches of social security: medical care, sickness benefit and employment injury benefit.	7 October 2014	In force

Annex III

Glossary of terms and definitions

The following definitions are from the official glossary of the International Labour Organization.

Assumption: An assertion about some characteristics of the future that underlies the current operations or plans of a project. An assumption is important if its negation would lead to significant changes in those operations and plans.

Baseline: A measurement, calculation or location used as a basis for comparison; an analysis describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made or using a starting period as the baseline reference.

Care economy: The sum of all forms of care work, including both paid and unpaid forms. Care work is further defined as the set of activities and relations that are required to meet the physical, psychological and emotional needs of others.

Collective bargaining: Free and voluntary negotiations between the two independent parties concerned. Collective bargaining takes place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations on the one hand and one or more workers' organizations on the other, to determine working conditions and terms of employment or for regulating relations between employers and workers. It may take place at many different levels, with one level sometimes complementing the other; for example, a unit within an enterprise or at the enterprise, sectoral or regional or national level.

Contributing family workers: Workers who hold self-employment jobs in an establishment operated by a related person, with too-limited degree of involvement in its operation to be considered a partner.

Decent work: Opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity (according to the report of the 1999 International Labour Conference). Work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

Employment: The use of labour to produce goods for sale, exchange or own consumption and/or services for sale or exchange. Economic activities that are included in GDP and national accounts.

Employability: The term relates to portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available to secure and retain decent work.

Green jobs: Employment that contributes substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Jobs are green when they help reduce negative environmental impact, ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and economies. More precisely, green jobs are decent jobs that reduce consumption of energy and raw materials, limit greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution and protect and restore ecosystems.

Impact: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Indicator: A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect changes connected to an intervention or to help assess the performance of a development actor. It does not indicate the direction of change. Indicators should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).

Just transition: A just transition promotes environmentally sustainable economies in a way that is inclusive by creating decent work opportunities, reducing inequality and leaving no one behind. It involves maximizing the social and economic opportunities of climate and environmental action, including fostering an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, while minimizing and carefully managing associated challenges. A just transition should be based on effective social dialogue, respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and be in accordance with international labour standards. Stakeholder engagement is also important because it ensures that the perspectives and needs of all relevant actors are considered in the transition process, thus contributing to more equitable and effective outcomes.

Outcome: The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outcomes represent changes in the institutional and behavioural capacities for development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of goals.

Output: The products and services that result from a development intervention, which may also include changes resulting from the intervention that are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.

Own-account workers: Workers who hold self-employment jobs and do not engage 'employees' on a continuous basis.

Productive employment: Employment yielding sufficient returns to labour to permit workers and their dependants an adequate level of consumption or income that satisfies their basic needs.

Result: A broad term used to refer to the achievements of a programme or project and/or activities. The terms "outputs", "outcomes" and "impact" describe more precisely results at different levels of a hierarchy.

Social dialogue: This includes all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. The definition and concept of social dialogue varies from country to country and from region to region, and it is still evolving.

Social protection: The set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age or death of the main income earner), the provision of health care and the provision of benefits for families with children. This concept of social protection is also reflected in various ILO standards.

Target: A quantitative and measurable level that is expected to be achieved by a given date. The achievement of targets can be monitored through use of indicators.

Vulnerable employment: The sum of own-account workers and contributing family workers.

Working-age population: Persons aged 15 years or older, although this may vary slightly from country to country. The ILO standard for the lower age limit is 15 years.

The following terms are used in the DWCP. The definitions and explanations are drawn from the website of the International Labour Organization and other United Nations sources.

Gender equality: The ILO's mandate to promote equality in all respects between women and men in the world of work is enshrined in its Constitution and reflected in relevant international labour standards. The four ILO gender equality Conventions are the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183). Conventions No. 100 and No. 111 are also among the ten fundamental Conventions, and the principles and rights enshrined in those Conventions are found in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The ILO mandate on gender equality is reinforced by related resolutions adopted by its highest decision-making body, the International Labour Conference.

Gender mainstreaming: In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows: “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part 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 of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”

Formal employment: Employment of persons in their own business in a formal sector or who are employees, apprentices or interns of an employer who makes contributions to a national pension fund, health and/or unemployment insurance fund or who provides paid annual leave and sick leave in cases of illness and injury.

Informal economy: Activities and income that are partially or fully outside government regulation, taxation and observation. Informal employment involves work without formal contracts and protection of labour rights, in line with national legislation and international labour standards.

International labour standards: Legal instruments drawn up by the ILO’s constituents (governments, employers and workers) setting out basic principles and rights at work. They are either Conventions, which are legally binding international treaties that may be ratified by Member States, or Recommendations, which serve as non-binding guidelines. Standards are adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the ILO’s constituents and are therefore an expression of universally acknowledged principles. At the same time, they reflect the fact that countries have diverse cultural and historical backgrounds, legal systems and levels of economic development. Ratification is a formal procedure whereby a State accepts the Convention as a legally binding instrument. Once it has ratified a Convention, a country is subject to the ILO’s regular supervisory system responsible for ensuring that the Convention is applied.

Social partners: The employers’ and workers’ organizations that, along with governments, make up the tripartite national constituents that serve as the membership base of the ILO at all levels.

Sustainable development: Defined by the United Nations as development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Key elements include (i) concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet; (ii) harmonization of three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection; (iii) eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through the promotion of sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.⁵¹

Theory of change: A method that explains how a given intervention or a set of interventions are expected to lead to a specific development change, drawing on causal analysis based on available evidence. A theory of change for United Nations programmes must be driven by sound analyses, consultation with stakeholders and learning on what works and what does not in diverse contexts that is drawn from the experiences of the United Nations and its partners.

Vulnerable groups: In the context of the DWCP and the Maldives, these cover (i) women and girls, (ii) young women and men, (iii) migrant workers, (iv) people living in outer islands and (v) persons with disabilities.

⁵¹ United Nations, “Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals”.

Annex IV

Decent Work Country Programme Task Force Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

1. The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) is a medium-term planning framework that guides the activities of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in a country. The DWCP is developed in close collaboration with the national tripartite constituents of the ILO – the Government and workers' and employers' organizations. It is important that DWCPs are aligned with national priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. DWCPs are also a results-based management tool that articulates ILO policies and strategies.

The DWCP therefore also promotes the ILO's core mandate to advance opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in condition of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. In this respect, DWCP prioritizes the pillars of the Decent Work Agenda:

- i. Rights at work: Promote and realize international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work.
- ii. Employment: Create greater opportunities for women and men to decent employment and income.
- iii. Social protection: Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.
- iv. Social dialogue: Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.

Gender equality is promoted as a cross-cutting objective.

This document sets out the terms of reference of the Task Force that will be responsible for the drafting of the Maldives' first DWCP.

2. Functions of the Task Force

The DWCP Task Force will serve as a mechanism of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board. It will be responsible for undertaking the following activities:

- i. Working closely and guiding the consultants appointed to support the development of the DWCP.
- ii. Facilitating tripartite constituent consultations and input throughout the process of developing the DWCP.
- iii. Ensuring that women and other underrepresented groups are included in the DWCP consultation process.
- iv. Reviewing the draft DWCP at regular intervals and providing guidance to the consultants on its further development.
- v. Regularly briefing the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board on DWCP development and obtaining the Advisory Board's inputs.
- vi. Facilitate final consideration and approval of the DWCP, including by the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board.

3. Composition of the Task Force

3.2.1 The Task Force shall consist of the following representation of the Government, employers and workers.

- i. Four members who are nominated by a national employers' body and are representative of the sectors.
- ii. Four members who are nominated by a national trade union centre and are representative of the sectors.
- iii. Eight members who represent the Government, inclusive of relevant state enterprises.

3.2.2 The representatives of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Board shall be nominated by their respective constituencies.

3.2.3 Each constituent, in selecting its members and alternates, shall seek to ensure that diversity and inclusivity is ensured, especially through the selection of an equal number of women and men.

4. Proceedings at meetings

4.0.1 The Task Force shall meet at least once per month and additional meetings shall be convened as needed.

4.0.2 Meetings of the Task Force shall be convened by the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development.

4.0.3 All meeting of the Task Force shall be chaired by a representative of the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development.

5. Time frame for completion of activities

The Task Force shall complete its activities within one year of commencement.

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