



British High
Commission Maldives



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CLIMATE INDUCED MIGRATION IN MALDIVES

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Climate Induced Migration in Maldives

Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations



British High
Commission Malé





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Commission Malé'



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBOs	Community-Based Organization
EPPA	Environmental Protection and Preservation Act
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LGA	Local Government Authority
LUP	Land Use Plans
MCCPF	Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MEE	Ministry of Environment and Energy
MEEW	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Water
MHAHE	Ministry of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment
MNPHI	Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
MNU	The Maldives National University
MSLA	Maldives Land and Survey Authority
MoEnv	Ministry of Environment
MRC	Maldivian Red Crescent
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDF	National Development Framework
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SAP	Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
GCM	Global Compact for Migration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is known that climate change is both a threat and risk multiplier. The scientific community has argued that the increase in severity and frequency of climate-induced events will lead to mass climate-induced migration on a global scale. This is a result of several push and pull factors. Although no country is immune to the consequences of climate change, it is low-lying Small-Island Developing States (SIDS) that are on the front lines of this emerging crisis. The Maldives, being a SIDS, must prepare itself to mitigate the risks associated with climate-induced migration.

CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

The incidence of climate change-induced migration has thus far been limited in the Maldives; however, migration in the Maldives can be traced back to as early as 1912. In reference to migration-related studies, it is evident that common form migration (from outer islands to capital city) or internal migration, was associated with economic drivers such as education, health and employment opportunities. It is estimated that approximately 2,200 residents migrate on an annual basis from the outer islands to the capital city. This number is expected to grow in the coming years. Given the lack of research on climate-induced migration in the Maldives, and the potential challenges and risk such a phenomenon might pose in the future, this preliminary paper aims to analyse and make policy recommendations for climate-induced migration in the Maldives.

CLIMATE RISKS AND TRENDS

The Climate Risk Country Profile – With climate change reaching crisis point, the Maldives is set to experience extreme rainfall events, drought, higher sea levels, damaging winds and high air temperature. Given that these climate risks continue to trend upwards, the country must prepare to face an increased number of wet days, prolonged dry spells, higher temperatures and frequent storm surges in the near future. Further, projections also place northern islands as being the most exposed to various climate hazards when compared to other parts of the country.

Traditionally, climate-induced migration was caused by either physical impact, livelihood impact, or deteriorating habitats. Climate risks such as sea-level rise and storm surges may cause significant damage to the physical infrastructure, resulting in the forced relocation of communities. Many islands may be rendered uninhabitable, before any permanent inundation occurs, due to a lack of potable water.

In a similar manner, climate risks may also impact the livelihoods of communities and lead to migration prompted by the need to seek further opportunities. Communities that live in relatively stable areas with sustainable livelihoods may also migrate due to the destruction of their natural environment. For example, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami resulted in the contamination of most underground aquifers and caused voluntary and involuntary migrations across a large number of the impacted communities.

EXISTING POLICIES AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

At present, matters related to climate change are governed by the Ministry of Environment. Hence, the main responsibility towards the formulation of policy and undertaking climate action is vested in the Ministry of Environment. In this regard, the main policies that govern climate action are demonstrated in the Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023, Nationally Determined Contribution and Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework (MCCPF) as well as the Sendai Framework. The notion of climate-induced migration is not referenced directly in the SAP. However, implementation of the SAP as it stands would result in the improvement of environmental conditions, enhancement of livelihood opportunities and reduction of habitat destruction. Therefore, the problems associated with climate-induced migration can be addressed through the implementation of the SAP. Similar to the SAP and NDC as discussed above, the MCCPF does not have a strong reference to climate-induced migration and how to effectively address it. However, the MCCPF stresses the importance of addressing adaptation challenges as opportunities, allowing islands to reduce their exposure to climate hazards.

There are no specific climate-change laws or regulations in the country. At the time of writing this report, the People's Majlis (Parliament of Maldives) is debating the Climate Change Act of the Maldives. Climate change is largely operated under the Environmental Protection and Preservation Act 4/93 (EPPA 4/93). In addition, the National Disasters Management Act (NDMA 28/2015), Decentralization Act (D Act 7/2010) and Maldivian Red Crescent Act (MRC Act 7/2009) have some impact on the management of climate change and related disasters.

POLICY AND STRATEGIC GAPS

There are several strategic gaps within the current climate change legislation and policies in terms of addressing climate-induced migration in the Maldives. Including:



1

LIMITED SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL ON CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

There is a lack of empirical findings related to climate-induced migration, and specific to the context of the Maldives. While a number of studies were conducted across the archipelago aimed at identifying possible climate-induced migration, these reports do not present conclusive statements based on cases of relocation or migration, that can be directly or indirectly linked to climate or environmental reasons.¹

¹ Kelman, Ilan, Justyna Orłowska, Himani Upadhyay, Robert Stojanov, Christian Webersik and Andrea C. Simonell, David Procházka and Daniel Nemeč. 'Does Climate Change Influence People's Migration Decisions in the Maldives?' 153 (2019): 285–99.

2

LACK OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND WEAK GOVERNING MECHANISM FOR CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION (LAWS, POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION SYSTEM)

As mentioned above, currently there is no climate change act, or any other legal instrument, geared at fighting climate change impacts in effect. Moreover, the few legislations that are presently in place only offer an indirect response to matters related to climate-related disasters and climate-induced migration.

3

LACK OF EFFORT TO BRING CLIMATE CHANGE INTO THE MAINSTREAM AND/OR TO ADAPT NATIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORKS ACCORDINGLY

The lack of established coordination mechanisms, especially with regards to addressing relocation or migration matters in the country, has led to a situation where relocation will exasperate the vulnerability of communities. As climate-change and migration are multi-dimensional issues with numerous interactions between economic, political, social, demographic and environmental sectors, establishing proper governance has proven difficult.

4

LACK OF GUIDELINES FOR PLANNED RELOCATION RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE (MINIMUM STANDARDS ON THE COMPENSATION PACKAGE, HOUSING GUIDELINES, LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT, ETC. AND MANAGEMENT PROCESS)

Though the reasons for relocation vary widely, from environmental to economic or political, a general operational mechanism is yet to be established. The lack of adequate planning around relocations has paved the way for unregulated, poorly aligned compensation packages which further burden communities, migrant ones in particular.

5

LACK OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND RETENTION

The capacities of various institutions of the Maldives institutions are weakened by inadequate policies, a lack of sustained training and development, and inadequate financial compensations. To be more specific, finance and resourcing are historically found responsible for constraining the response to climate-induced migration. Furthermore, a typically high turnover rate also gives rise to a lack of institutional memory within these establishments, ushering in a throng of additional challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were formulated based on the existing gaps outlined above:

Enhance the institutional understanding of climate-induced migration;

- 1 Identify and examine possible geographical locations within the country which may be prone to climate-induced migration in the future.
- 2 Undertake rapid assessment on the status of social and economic wellbeing within relocated communities; across both sending and receiving areas.
- 3 Implement nation-wide targeted awareness campaigns on climate-induced migration whilst also drawing attention to other issues related to climate change.
- 4 Promote academic research on climate-induced migration, and gather robust evidence on the effects of climate change on migration.

Bringing climate change into the mainstream with development planning efforts

- 5 Elements of climate-induced migration need to be integrated into strategies for adaptation, resilience and coping across all relevant national policy frameworks.
- 6 Incorporate elements of climate-change risk mapping into Land Use Planning (LUP) guidelines.

Provide legal impetus to climate-induced migration

- 7 Mandate the climate change council to monitor climate-induced migration and its security implications.
- 8 Develop a Migration Act that covers all migration-related activities including climate-induced migration.

Boost synergies between climate change policies and other policies

- 9 Establish a national climate change task force or council that would review, plan and update existing climate change policies.
- 10 Establish a dynamic avenue that would ensure collaboration among government agencies with NGOs or CBOs.
- 11 Develop a housing scheme for migrant communities.
- 12 Mainstream climate risk profiling into the Land Use Planning.

Safeguard and Social protections

- 13 Harmonize compensation packages to ensure that every relocation is treated with equity.
- 14 Establish a close working relationship with NGOs and other CBOs.
- 15 Cooperate on economic incentives regarding the loss of livelihood during the relocation process.

Foster capacity-building and training initiatives

- 16 Develop training and civic education programmes throughout the relocation process.

1. INTRODUCTION

For small and less-developed countries, climate change heralds the greatest developmental challenge of the modern era. Despite lags in global movement on the issue, the urgent call for climate action can be traced back to 1979, at the First World Climate Conference and the birth of The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The scientific undertaking and research rang alarm bells over the significant impact on ecosystems and service provision due to climate change. The IPCC has continually stressed, with high confidence that human interventions have resulted in changes to climate patterns². Subsequently, the impacts associated with climate change has forced vulnerable communities to continually adapt to extreme measures, leading to in-situ adaptation, and in some circumstances migration or relocation³.

The IPCC AR5 concluded with significant evidence that the consequences of climate change will vary in magnitude across different regions around the globe. It is clear, however, that those impacts are likely to be more severe for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)⁴. Even though island communities are known to be resilient, the intensity of climate change trends observed over the past decades have placed communities such as those in the Maldives in a losing battle.

The IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C warming projected that, if global mean sea-level continues to rise in the current trend, as many as 10 million people across the globe will be exposed to coastal hazards such as storm surges, sea-level rise and typhoons⁵. Due to their geography, SIDS will be the first countries exposed to the challenges of climate change.

2 IPCC, 'Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change', in Climate Change 2014 Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, ed. C.B Field et al. (United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1–32.

3 Ilan Kelman et al., 'Does Climate Change Influence People's Migration Decisions in Maldives?' 153 (2019): 285–99.

4 IPCC, 'Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change'.

5 IPCC, 'Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above Pre Industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways, in the Context of Strengthening the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change, Sustainable Development and Efforts to Eradicate Poverty', in Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above Pre-Industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways, in the Context of Strengthening the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change, Sustainable Development and Efforts to Eradicate Poverty, ed. V Masson-Delmotte et al. (Press, 2018), https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_LR.pdf.

Therefore, these communities need to be adequately prepared for worst-case scenarios in order to preserve island communities, and their respective cultures, for the benefit of future generations. In the worst-case scenario, such extreme events would spell the complete relocation of surviving communities.

Given that most movements induced by climate change repercussions are predicted to occur within the country, present-day research appears to contradict ‘climate change refugee’ narratives, indicating instead that these internal migrations will be shaped by broader social, economic, demographic and political conditions.

In consideration of the above, governments must pursue planned relocation as a response to climate-induced displacement or even as an adaptation strategy.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MALDIVES

From ancestral times, Maldivians have demonstrated a highly mobile way of life, recording numerous migratory movements every year.⁶ Hence, there is great historical precedent for the nation’s governing body towards creating avenues for communities to relocate through either direct or indirect means. The country’s first recorded planned relocation took place in 1912, when the people of S. Gan were moved to S. Feydhoo to make way for the establishment of the British Royal Air Force base in the former location.

According to the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (MNPHI), the policy for involuntary migration was halted after the new Constitution of Maldives was ratified in 2008. Relocations took place post-2008 as voluntary action from the whole community, through a consultative process; the entire migrant community unan- imously agreed to move. For example, the island community from HA. Hathifushi, was relocated due to impacts associated with storm-water flooding.

⁶ U Kothari, ‘Political Discourses of Climate Change and Migration: Resettlement Policies in the Maldives’ 180, no. 2 (June 2014): 130–40.

1.2 MAJOR TYPES OF OBSERVED MIGRATION

At the global level, observations suggest that communities either migrate internally or across borders.⁷ Both of the aforementioned displacement patterns are common in the Maldives.

1.2.1 INTERNAL MOVEMENT

Capital city Malé hosts approximately a third of the country's total population. The main reasons for the natural flow of people from the outer islands to Malé can be attributed to the availability of better services, increased economic opportunities, education or skill acquisition and enhanced healthcare facilities.⁸

Such migrations are usually permanent and further, represent the most common type of migration occurring in the Maldives. Interestingly, southern atolls contribute a larger share of internal migration from atolls to Malé even though communities there have a better standard of living in contrast to other parts of the country.⁹

1.2.2 TRANSBOUNDARY MOVEMENT

Improved air connectivity and cross-border migration, coupled with an increase in the number of Maldivian development projects, have attracted migrant workers seeking employment opportunities, largely originating from South and South-East Asian countries. However, most of these migrant workers have been reported to be victims of human trafficking and forced labour networks based in the Maldives and their home nations.¹⁰ The resultant undocumented status of these workers makes it difficult to obtain exact numbers of migrant populations. Migrants often find unspecialized work in the construction industry, the tourism industry and other service sectors.¹¹

⁷ L.H. Speelman, 'Empirical Analyses of Migration in Small Islands: The Role of Environment and Social Factors.' (United Kingdom, University of Southampton, 2015), <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/397375>; Robert Stojanov et al., 'Local Perceptions of Climate Change Impacts and Migration Patterns in Malé, Maldives' 183, no. 4 (2017): 370–85; Johannes Luetz, 'Climate Change and Migration in the Maldives: Some Lessons for Policy Makers', in *Climate Change Adaptation in Pacific Countries*, ed. Walter Leal Filho, Climate Change Management (Cham: Springer, 2017), 35–69.

⁸ Kelman et al., 'Does Climate Change Influence People's Migration Decisions in Maldives?'

⁹ UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2013, The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World', 2014, <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MDV.pdf>.

¹⁰ Piotr Plewa, 'Migration in Maldives: A Country Profile 2018' (Malé, Maldives: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2018); Gol- am Rabbani, Fathimath Shafeega and Sanjay Sharma, 'Assessing the Climate Change Environmental Degradation and Migration Nexus in South Asia' (Bangladesh: International Organization for Migration (IOM) Bangladesh, 2016).

¹¹ Plewa, 'Migration in Maldives: A Country Profile 2018'.

There is also an outflow of Maldivians to other countries. Though the movements amount to a much smaller percentage, there is a definite upward trend of nationals finding employment opportunities overseas.¹² In a survey conducted across the greater Malé area, over 50% of 347 respondents stated that their main motive for transboundary migration was increased chances to attain a higher standard of living.¹³ Additionally, approximately 6% of the respondents indicated their reason for migrating across borders as being due to climate change or environmental consequences, with some identifying sea-level rise as a factor.

These survey results indicate that there may already be a minority of people migrating across the borders due to environment-related reasons. Preferred migration destinations range from neighbouring countries (Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and Indonesia), developed countries in the Pacific (Australia and New Zealand) as well as developed countries in the west (European countries and the United States).

For SIDS, the relationship between climate change and migration is a multifaceted problem best addressed by adopting a holistic approach.¹⁴ It is a challenge that impresses upon all sustainable development pillars (environment, economic and social) of affected communities. Urgent attention is required by policymakers to avoid future catastrophes.

Although climate-induced migration is a fairly new research area, with growing attention among SIDS such as Fiji, Vanuatu and Kiribati, addressing climate-induced migration is an important step in the planning process towards creating climate-resilient adaptation pathways. Policies of climate-induced migration intersect with effective risk reduction, humanitarian response and sustainable development.

¹² Kelman et al., 'Does Climate Change Influence People's Migration Decisions in Maldives?'

¹³ Stojanov, Robert, Barbora Duzí, Ilan Kelman, Daniel Nemeč and David Procházka. 'Local Perceptions of Climate Change Impacts and Migration Patterns in Malé', *Maldives* 183, no. 4 (2017): 370–85

¹⁴ Thomas Adelle and Benjamin Lisa, 'Policies and Mechanisms to Address Climate-Induced Migration and Displacement in Pacific and Caribbean Small Island Developing States', *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management* 10, no. 1 (1 January 2018): 86–104, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCCSM-03-2017-0055>.

It was against this background that the UNDP in the Maldives commissioned a policy document with technical support from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office to assess climate-induced migration in the Maldives. The report was tasked with reviewing existing evidence and knowledge on climate-induced migration in the country, as well as a description of options or recommendations to address climate-induced migration in the country.

1.3 AIM OF THE REPORT

This report was prepared in the interest of formulating a comprehensive policy document on climate-induced migration for the Maldives. The document aims to deliver a detailed review of the existing gaps in policies, legislation, mechanisms and challenges faced by the Maldives in developing strategies to address potential climate-induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, as well as best practices and recommendations for strategies that the Maldives could adopt to address potential migration and displacement as a result of climate change.

1.4 TECHNICAL APPROACH

A literature review supported by stakeholder consultations was conducted in the process of developing this report and adding contextual depth to the findings. A two-stage approach was adopted to ensure that the recommendations were effective and meaningful in addressing the identified policy gaps. Details pertaining to the technical approach undertaken in the report is outlined in Annex A.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is divided into five sections or areas of focus. The introduction is followed by Section 2, which discusses the climate trends and future climate scenarios, causes for climate-induced migration and the likely climate-affected geographical hotspots in the country. Furthermore, this portion sheds light on the impacts of climate-induced migration, mobility and displacement on culture, socio-economic status and the environment.

Section 3 discusses the existing climate policies and legislation in the country, providing an overview of the existing policy responses to climate change impacts as it looks into the legal framework that governs climate action in the country.

Section 4 analyses the potential policy and strategic gaps associated with climate-induced migration. In this regard, the section identifies specific policy areas that need to be addressed in order to ensure that there is a holistic approach towards addressing climate-induced migration in the Maldives.

Finally, Section 5 provides strategic recommendations to fill the gaps associated with climate-induced migration in the Maldives. These recommendations are time-bound to the short, medium and long term.

2. IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MIGRATION, MOBILITY AND DISPLACEMENT

The Maldives is located southwest of India in the Indian Ocean where it takes up 90,000 km², though merely 298 km² speaks to the country's land area. In the chain of 2,000 low-lying islands, all of which are naturally grouped into 22 geographical atolls, only about 200 are inhabited.

It is easy to decipher from the description alone, that this archipelagic nation lies exposed to a myriad of climate risks and hazards. Consider for instance, the high frequency of low impact hydro-meteorological disasters which give rise to storm surges and coastal flooding, experienced in the Maldives during recent times. This section introduces discourse on climate trends and attempts to identify possible climate-induced migration hotspots in the country, as follows;

1. Climate trends and their future projection and climate-induced migration risks
2. Potential causes for climate-induced migration
3. Climate affected geographical hotspots in the country
4. Impacts of climate-induced migration
5. Planning, preparedness and response (solutions that have led to good results in the past, and solutions to consider)

2.1 CLIMATE TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

As mentioned earlier, according to the 2006 Climate Risk Profile, potential sources of climate-change risk for the Maldives include extreme rainfall events, drought, higher sea levels, damaging winds and extreme air temperatures and sea surface temperature, which act as primary indicators for the changing climate.¹⁵ Recent observations, made based on data collected pertaining weather (such as rainfall, temperature, sea-level rise) have pointed towards cyclones and thunderstorms, flooding (due to rain), droughts (prolonged dry periods), storm surges and strong winds or tornadoes, as being the most frequent and common hazards to burden the Maldives.

¹⁵ Hay (2006)

2.1.1 RAINFALL

The country records an average rainfall of 1,948 mm per annum. Since¹⁶ 1969, data indicates an overall reduction in yearly rainfall by 0.02 mm, 2.21 mm and 9.5 mm across the central, southern and northern parts of the country, respectively.

The information also revealed that the northern part of the Maldives experiences less rain in contrast to other parts of the country. In addition to the anomaly in rainfall, the region receives a greater amount of rain within a shorter duration. Furthermore, due to the late onset of the southwest monsoons, there is a prolonged dry period in the north. The current level of the changing rainfall patterns thus expresses a bleak outlook for rainfall projections in the near and distant future.¹⁷

It is estimated that the Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 4.5 (moderate greenhouse scenario) for northern atolls (Haa Alifu, Shaviyani, Baa and Lhaviyani atolls) will receive a high amount of rain over the coming decades. At the same time, the central and southern regions, which receive rainfall at rates between 1.3 – 4 mm per day, are projected to see a reduction despite an overall increase in the rate for the country at large.

Projections also suggest that rainfall is set to increase in the southern region (Addu Atoll) of the country over the next few decades (Figure 2).¹⁸ A similar pattern can be observed under the RCP 8.5 scenario (higher greenhouse gas scenario) (see Figure 1.), which would result in a significantly wetter northern region.

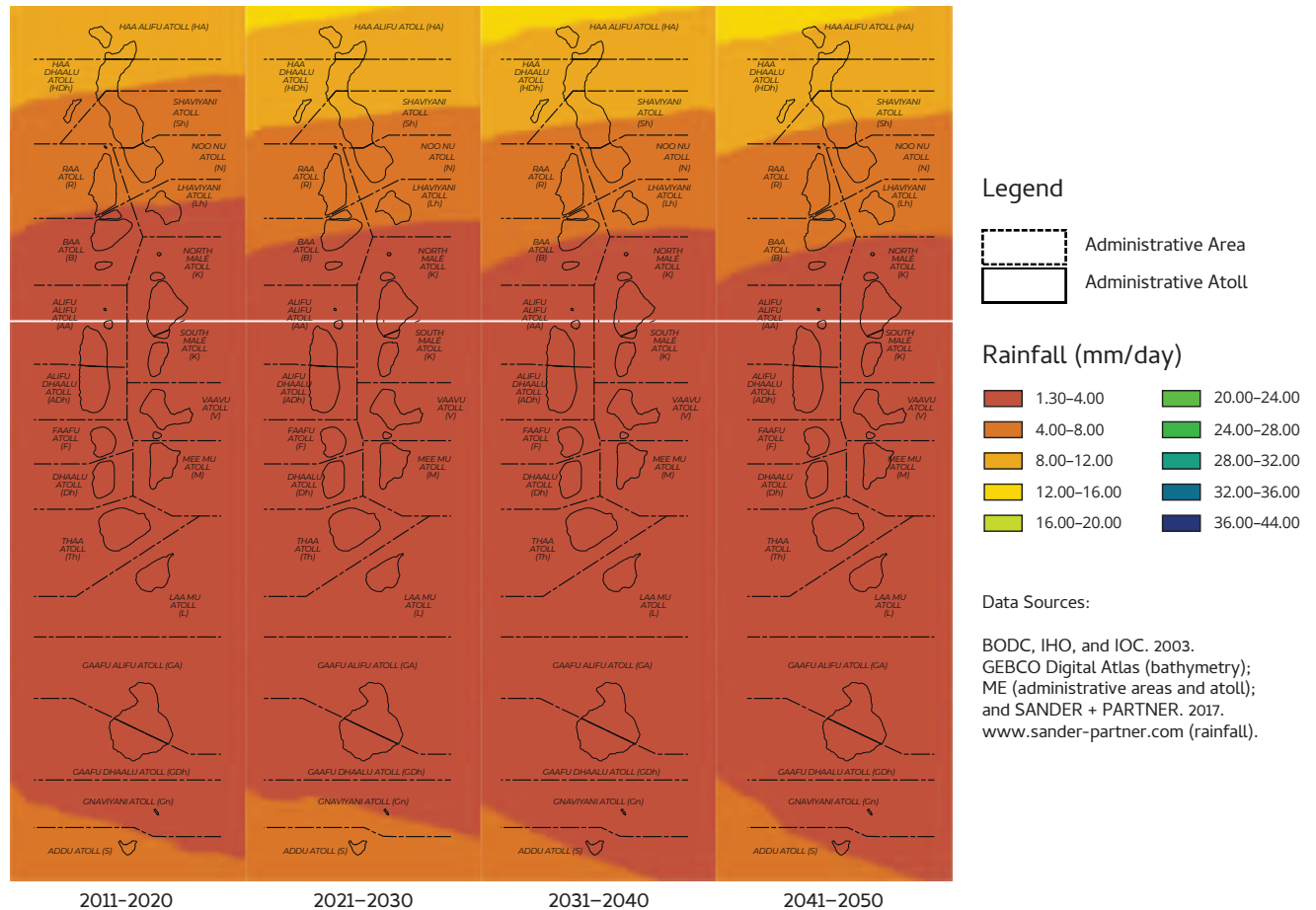
¹⁶ MHAHE, 'First National Communication of Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change' (Ministry of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment, 2001).

¹⁷ MEE, 'Second National Communication of Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change' (Malé, Maldives: Ministry of Environment and Energy, 2016).

¹⁸ ADB, 'Multihazard Risk Atlas of Maldives Geography—Volume I' (Malé, Maldives: Asian Development Bank, 2020).

These changes in precipitation patterns in the near future, suggest an increase in the frequency and intensity of rainfall-related events such as flash-floods and tropical cyclones.¹⁹ At present, stormwater flash-flooding is reported to be in high occurrence across the northernmost atolls.

Populations such as these, which are exposed to frequent flooding events, may be forced to relocate to low-risk areas within the islands or elsewhere in the country in the future, as viable land for settlement and key economic activity becomes limited and less accessible.



¹⁹ J.H. Christensen et al., Regional Climate Projections. Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, S. Solomon, D. Qin, M. Manning, Z. Chen, M. Marquis, K.B. Averyt, M. Tignor and H.L. Miller, Eds., (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007).

Impacts of Climate Change on Migration, Mobility and Displacement

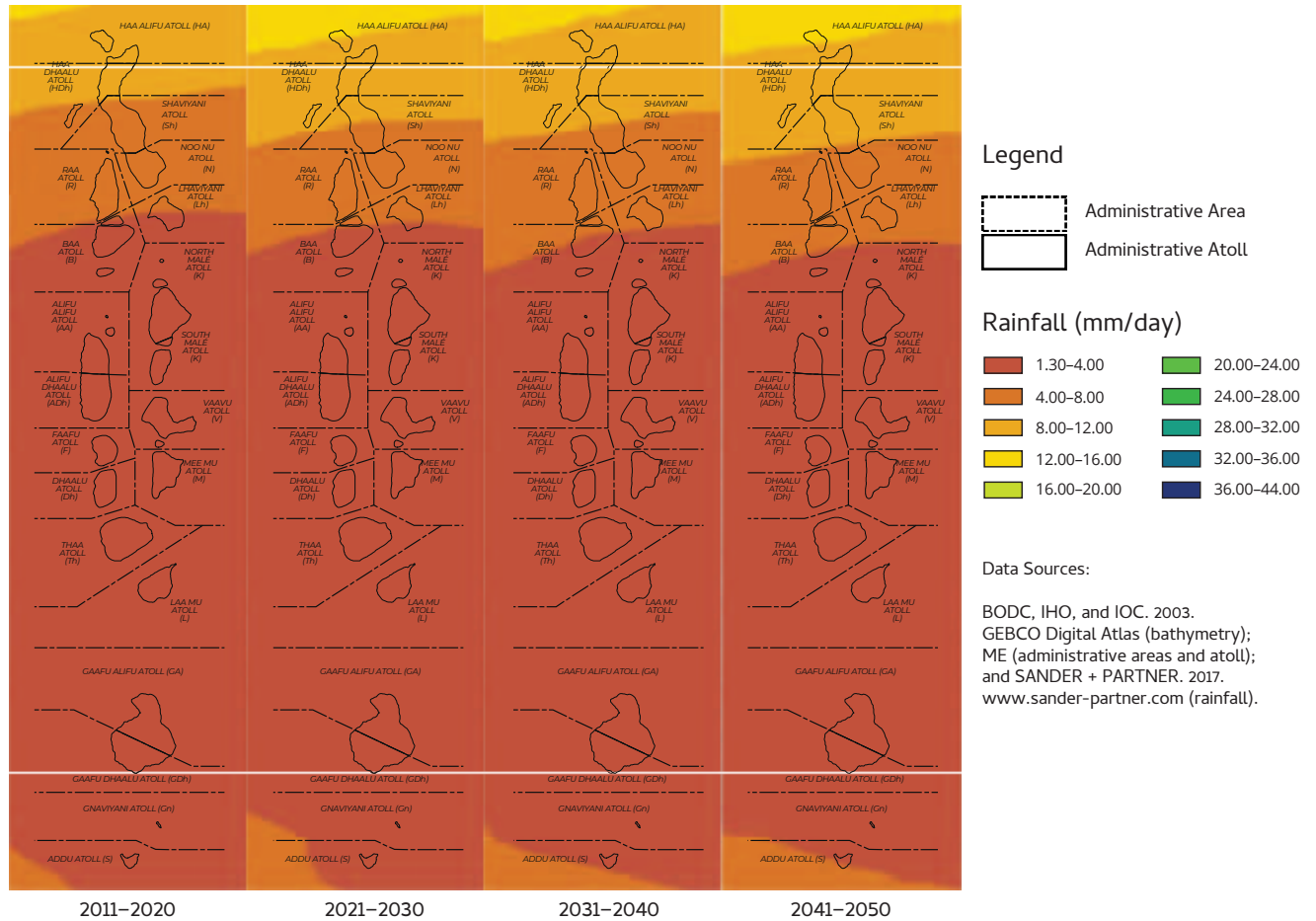


Figure 1: Average annual rainfall projections from 2011 – 2050, RCP 4.5 (left) and RCP 8.5 (right)

2.1.2 TEMPERATURE

Annual temperatures in the Maldives range between 28.4°C to 28.8°C, on average.²¹ Meteorological data assessment clearly shows a rising trend in the annual temperature across the archipelago. The country's maximum and minimum temperatures are on the rise, making it evident that the country is becoming warmer in general with the passage of time.²²

In addition to highlighting an upward trend in overall temperature, projections also indicate warmer days (29.05°C –30.15°C) in the 2030s and 2040s, particularly for the north, where the average annual temperature will range from 29.60°C to 30.15°C under the RCP 4.5 Scenario (see Figure 2). Under the RCP 8.5, the trend is projected as of RCP 4.5 with much higher temperatures in the north ranging from 29.05°C – 29.60°C in the 2020s and 2030s to 29.60°C –30.15°C in the 2040s.²³

With the increase in temperature as projected below, a warmer climate and longer dry spells in the northern Maldives will turn the region arid; inhospitable for most vegetation. This would cause more water shortages and a considerable decrease in agricultural productivity. Since some northern communities are highly dependent on the productivity of their land,²⁴ it is likely that they may be forced to move islands in order to regain their livelihoods. They also face a serious risk of losing their present-day livelihoods altogether.

²¹ MHAHE, 'First National Communication of Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change'.

²² MEE.



²³ ADB, 'Multihazard Risk Atlas of Maldives Geography—Volume I'.

²⁴ FAO, 'Food and Agriculture Organization: Maldives Country Programming Framework' (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Office of the FAO Representative for Sri Lanka and Maldives, 2012).











Impacts of Climate Change on Migration, Mobility and Displacement



Legend

-  Administrative Area
-  Administrative Atoll

Temperature (°C)

- | | |
|---|---|
|  27.40-27.95 |  30.15-30.70 |
|  27.95-28.50 |  30.70-31.25 |
|  28.50-29.05 |  31.25-31.80 |
|  29.05-29.60 |  31.80-32.35 |
|  29.60-30.15 |  32.35-32.95 |

Data Sources:

BODC, IHO, and IOC. 2003.
 GEBCO Digital Atlas (bathymetry);
 ME (administrative areas and atoll);
 and SANDER + PARTNER. 2017.
www.sander-partner.com (temperature).

Impacts of Climate Change on Migration, Mobility and Displacement

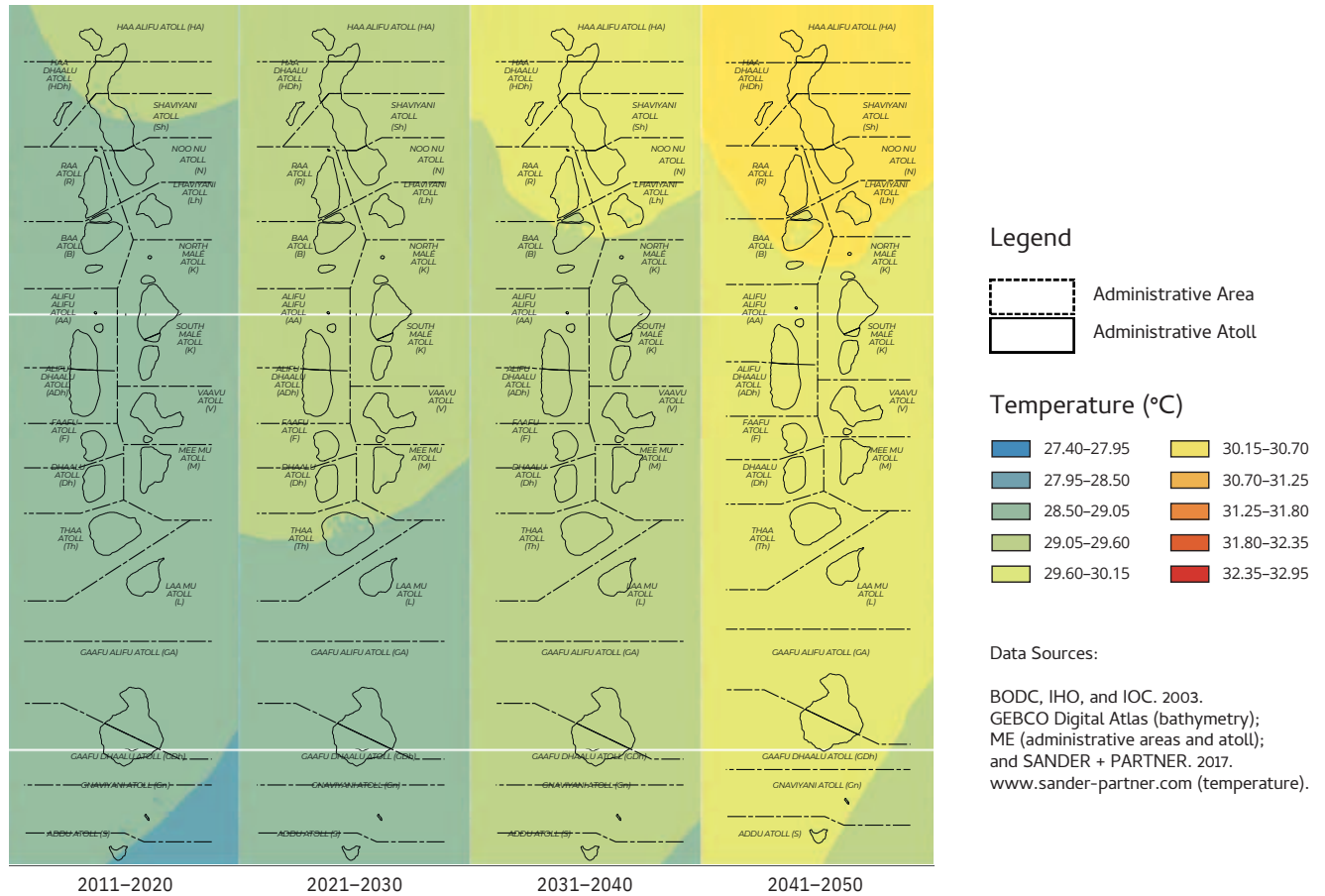


Figure 2: Average annual temperature projections from 2011 – 2050 RCP 4.5 (up) and RCP 8.5 (bottom)

2.1.3 SEA-LEVEL CHANGE

In the vast discourse raised over climate change and its repercussions, sea-level rise is arguably the most frequently discussed pertinent concern shared amongst all SIDS.²⁶ Although no country is immune to the ill effects, it is understood that different parts of the globe are affected by varying rates of sea level change.²⁷

Similarly, across the island stretch of the Maldives, changes observed in sea-levels fluctuate between increases of 0.82 mm - 0.95 mm.²⁸ The changes in sea levels recorded in capital city Malé and S. Gan under maximum and minimum scenarios, however, indicate a rising trend (see Figure 3).

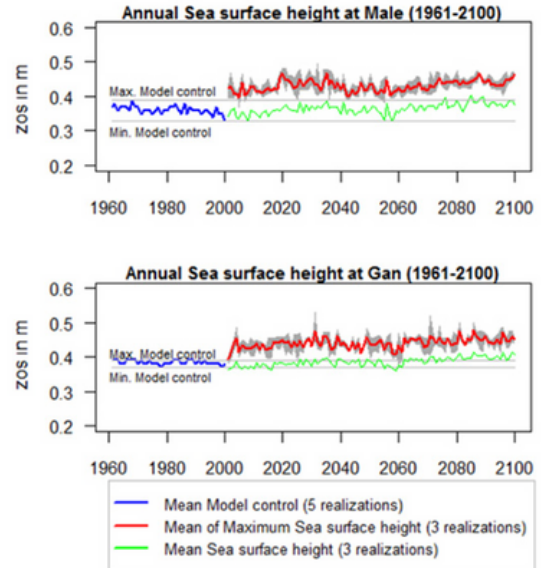


Figure 3: Project sea-level changes for Male' and Gan²⁹

Models that depict maximum sea surface heights and reflect climate change scenarios demonstrate increases starting from 8.2 cm up to 9.5 cm, across the various atolls by the year 2080. For the 2030 and 2050 decades, data ranges have been omitted due to uncertainties and inconsistencies noted in the model's performance. Whilst sea-level change may displace communities, it is certainly a slow onset event where consequences will likely be felt only in the long-term.³⁰

²⁶ IPCC, 'Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change'.

²⁷ IPCC.

²⁸ MHE, 'Development of High-Resolution Regional Climate Models for the Maldives through Statistical and Dynamical Downscaling of Global Climate Models to Provide Projections for Use in National and Local Planning. Ministry of Housing and Environment.' (Ministry of Environment and Energy, 2012).

²⁹ MHE.

³⁰ MHE.

2.1.4 EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Six Natural Disaster Risks identified within the Disaster Risk Profile compiled for the Maldives were earthquakes and tsunamis, cyclones and thunderstorms, flooding (due to rain), droughts (prolonged dry periods), storm surges” and finally, “strong winds or tornadoes”³¹. Most of these extreme weather events are considered short-lived events like, for example, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami or recent swells observed in the country. The vulnerability assessment also shows that flooding due to excessive rain is most common across the northern and central zones of the country.³²

The future projections of rainfall, temperature and sea-level change discussed above will have a significant impact on the frequency of disaster-level events. To illustrate, both RCP 4.5 and 8.5 noted an increase in rainfall across the country, which would in turn exacerbate flooding events in the northern part of the country. Similarly, in June and July 2020, almost all the islands experienced significant storm surges and reported varying degrees of resultant damage. If the climate continues to change in the same manner, events like these are set to become more frequent, as well as increase in severity.³³

In 2007, the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) conducted a Rapid Assessment that described sea swells as disrupting several sectors; from the islands’ natural ecosystems to infrastructure that is critical to human survival. Critically impacted islands within Dhaalu Atoll have reported substantial erosion as well as damage to several household equipment. Although these communities have not yet sought relocation, the flooding has ignited a significant level of fear within the community.

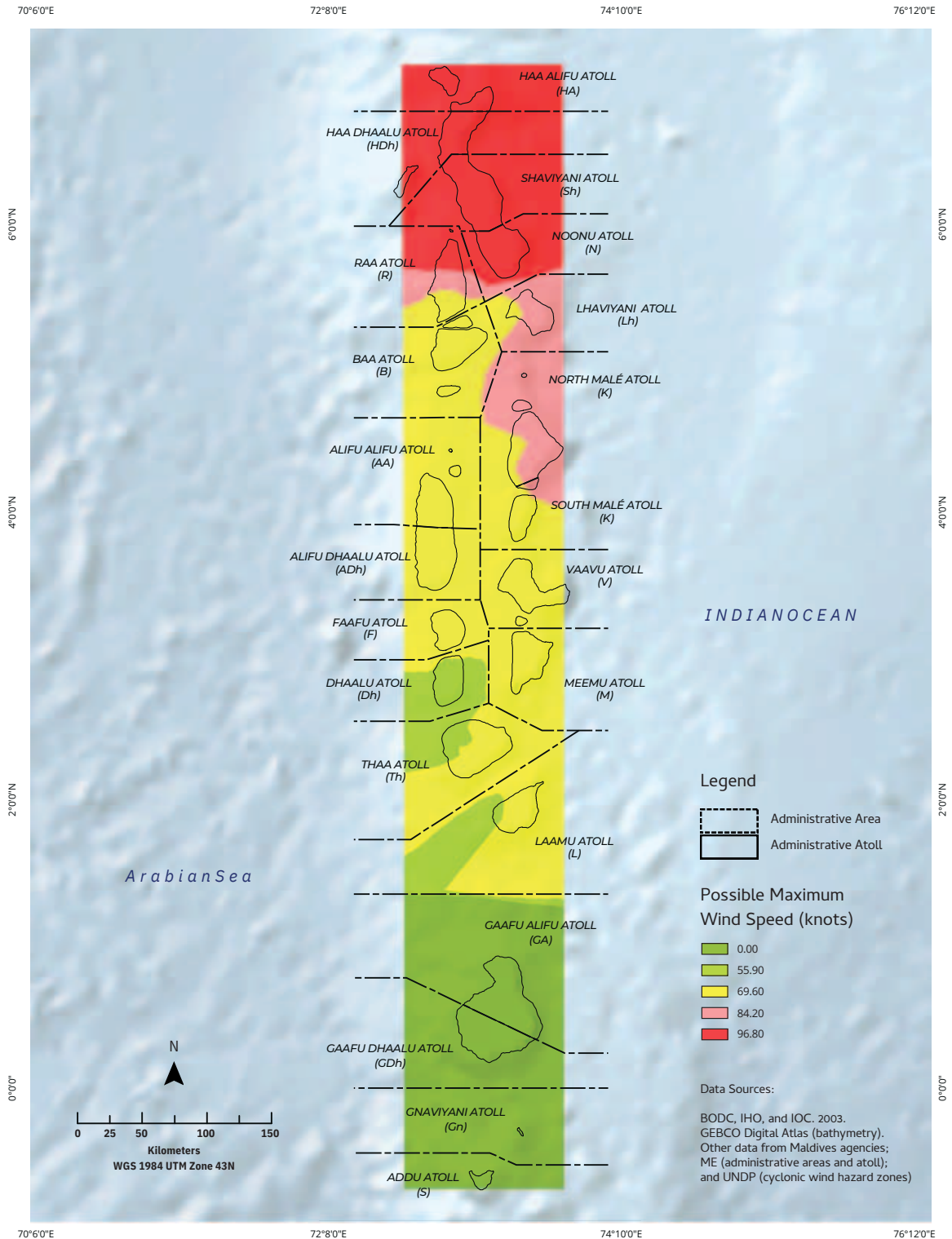
These threats act as a reminder of harrowing events such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami, which displaced a number of Maldivians and in some cases, led to the abrupt relocation of entire communities amid trauma. Building on earlier statements, the geological hazard distribution for the Maldives revealed that the northern islands face added risks of storm surges, tsunamis and high winds or cyclones. Hence, it is likely that the displacement of communities within the northern zone will be more prominent as a result of climate change.

³¹ UNDP, ‘Disaster Risk Profile of the Maldives’ (United Nation Development Programme, 2006).

³² MEE, ‘Second National Communication of Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’.

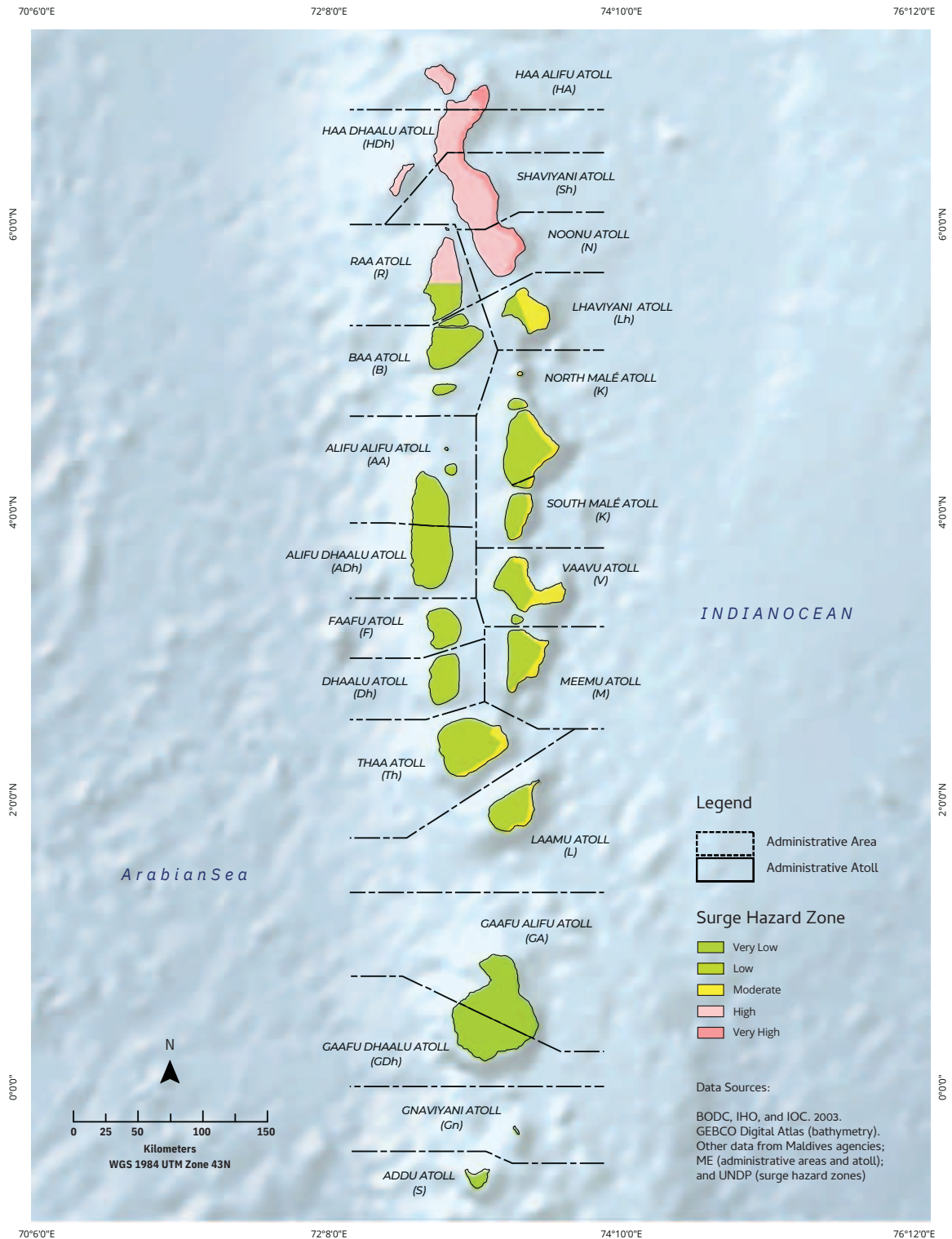
³³ MEE, 2016

Map V.29: Maldives, Cyclonic Wind Hazard Zone

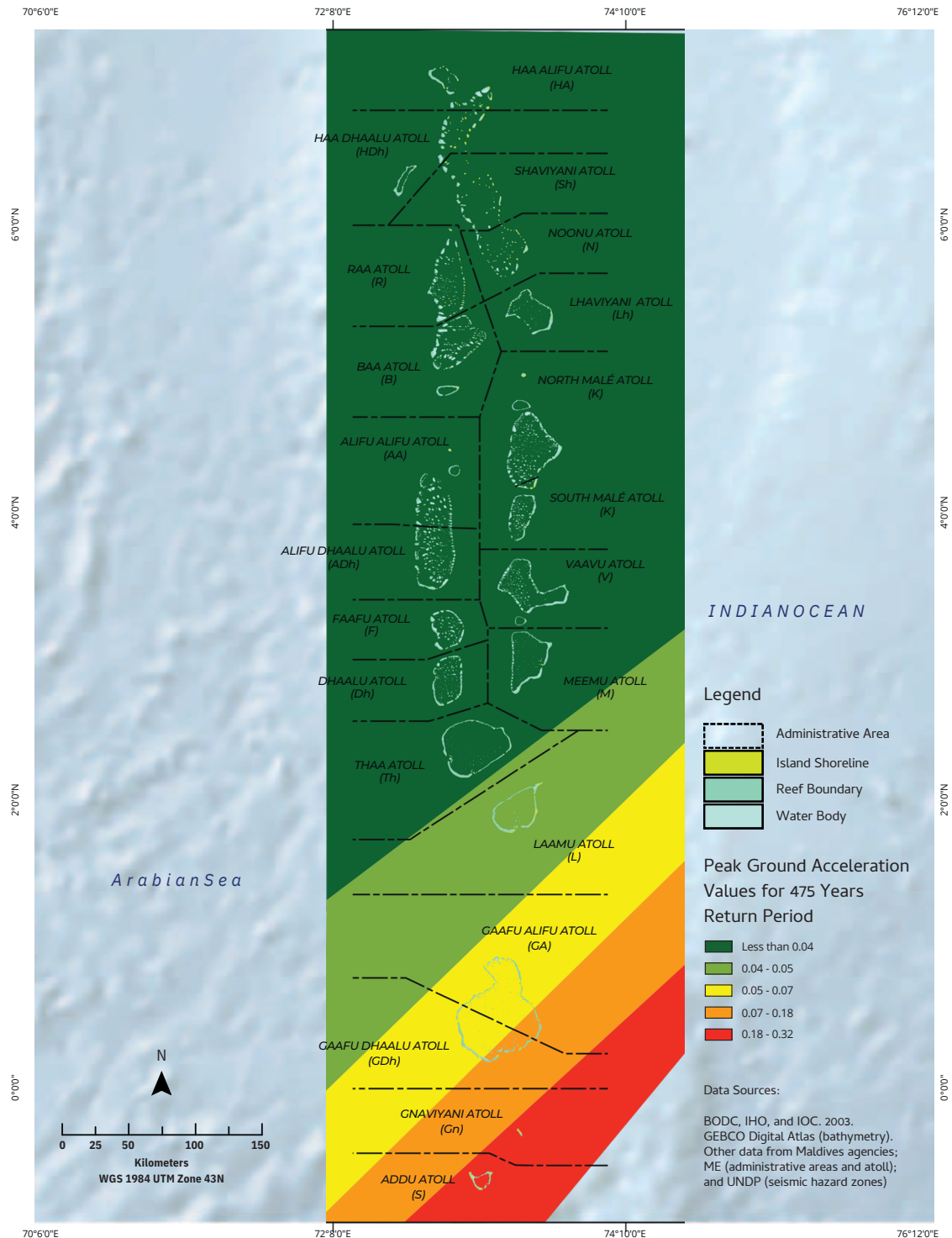


Impacts of Climate Change on Migration, Mobility and Displacement

Map V.30: Maldives, Surge Hazard Zone



Map V.31: Maldives, Seismic Hazard Zone



Impacts of Climate Change on Migration, Mobility and Displacement

Map V.32: Maldives, Tsunami Hazard Zone

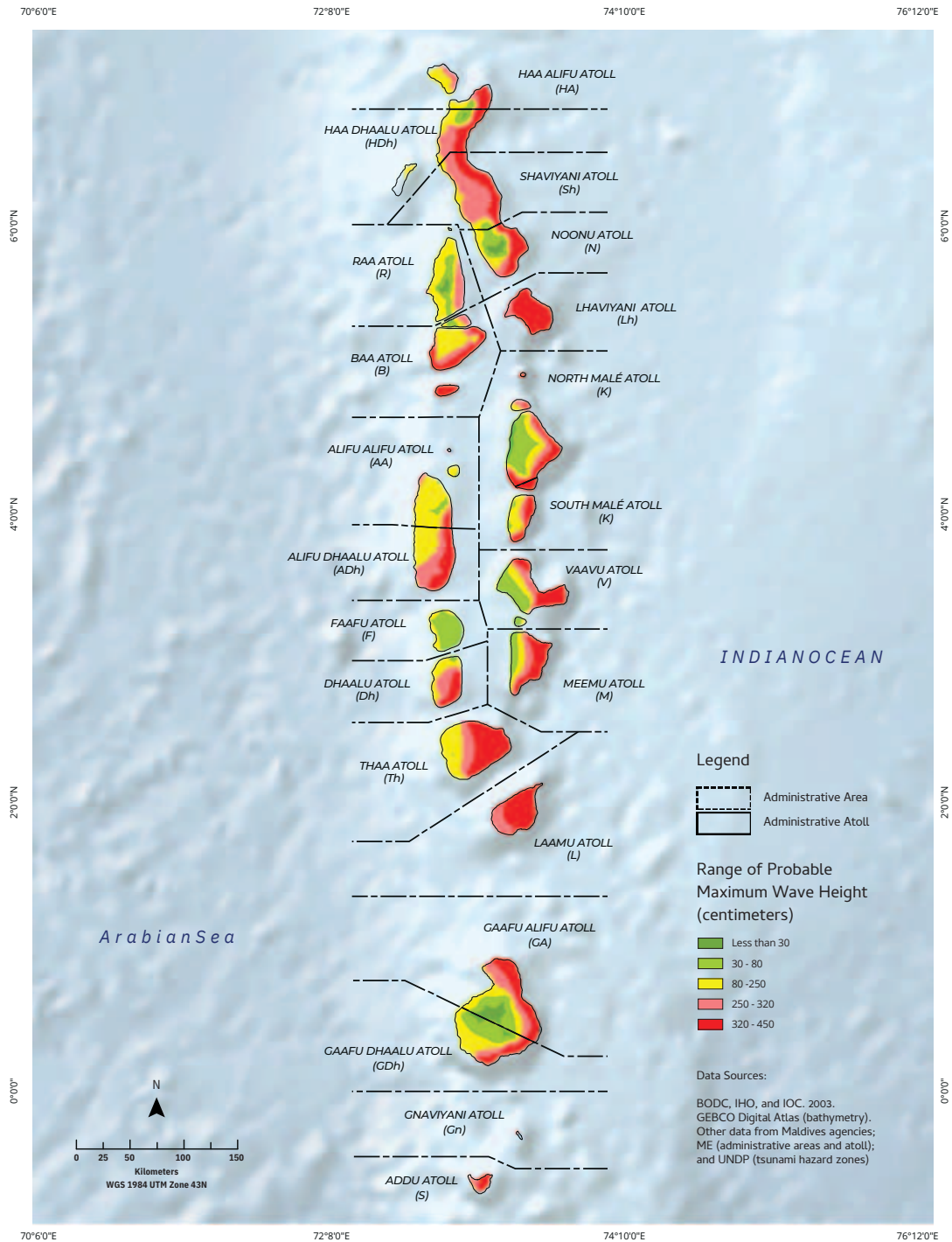


Figure 4: Hazard distributions, storm surge (up right), cyclonic events (up left), tsunami (bottom right) and seismic (bottom left).³³

2.2 CAUSES FOR CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

Climate-induced migration is a complex issue involving the voluntary or forced movement of people driven by sudden or progressive changes to the environment, caused or compounded by climate change. In the past, social and economic conditions were identified as the primary grounds for migration. It is now understood that climate change can and will exacerbate these conditions.

Migratory movement related to the impact of climate change, particularly in the Maldives, can be grouped into three main categories. The first are the physical impacts associated with climate change; livelihood ramifications and other effects caused by the deterioration of island habitats such as significant erosion and damage to infrastructure like sea walls and community housing. Impacts can range from minor obstacles to significant damage forcing communities to relocate with immediate effect. An example that illustrates the above took place in 2007, when a strong storm surge in HA. Hathifushi resulted in devastating damage to the physical environment, including critical community infrastructures. Eventually, sea swells rendered the island uninhabitable, and as a result, the Government of Maldives relocated the entire population to HDh. Hanimadhoo within the same year.

In addition to stormwater flooding, erosion has become a huge national environmental issue, with such references dating back to the late 1980s. Erosion causes a significant reduction in the size of the islands, making available land even scarcer. According to the vulnerability assessment, the islands included in the case study shrunk in general, by approximately 0.81 to 2.66 ha depending on the island's original size, between the years 1969-2008. Recent flooding in the Maldives has also increased the level of erosion scraps, which has caused certain communities to retreat to other unaffected or less affected parts of the island.

The meagre size of Maldivian islands makes it extremely difficult to build critical infrastructure, such as water storage and other utilities, at a reasonable or safe distance from the shoreline. As it is, for most islands, critical infrastructure lies in close proximity to the coastline. Nonetheless, the resilience of an island is measured by the ability of its infrastructure to respond to climate hazards such as a sudden onset of flooding.

Given that Maldivian islands are characteristically flat, shifting to a higher elevation is usually not an option. Nonetheless, the location of infrastructure in the country, even that which pertains to national interest, is rarely determined based on exposure to climate risks. For example, a digital evaluation of B. Hithaadhoo under the scenarios laid out in the IPCC report, leaves most of the critical infrastructure in danger, as utilities and hospitals are located on lower elevations (see Figure 5). Such construction decisions not only place critical infrastructure at a much higher risk, it may also potentially amplify the plight of communities during, and in the aftermath of, such flooding events.

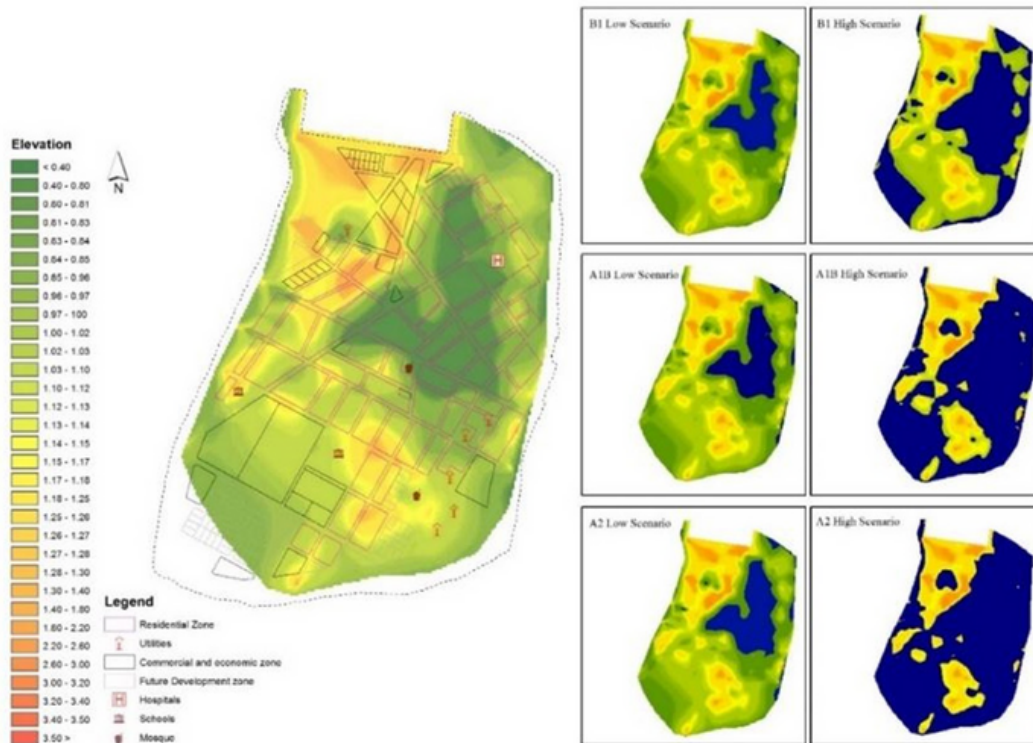


Figure 5: Inundation model for B. Hithaadhoo MEE, 'Second National Communication of the Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change' (Malé, Maldives: Ministry of Environment and Energy, 2016).

2.2.1 LIVELIHOOD LOSS

History is flush with evidence of the lasting influence climate can exert over livelihood opportunities present in a particular location. Flash flooding, inundation of land, or a sudden increase in Sea Surface Temperature (SST), all affect the livelihoods and the level of employment in the surrounding communities. Over the last few years, major agricultural farming lands in the northern islands of the Maldives have reported damages to their crop fields due to cyclones, heavy rains, storm surges and so on. Similarly, some of the islands in the south also documented significant impacts to their agricultural lands, following such climate events.³⁵

The repercussions, however, are hardly exclusive to agricultural islands. The majority of economic activity in the country, specifically tourism and fisheries, harbor higher levels of dependence on the climate, as their success hinges on the continued existence of healthy, biodiverse coral reefs. Frequent increases in SST have caused bleaching of corals. SST is often associated with the global phenomenon (seen across El Niño and La Niña years) which occurs within a set period and allows corals to grow back and recover. As climate change has disrupted the pattern of recurrence, these bleaching events have become prolonged, difficult to predict, and far more severe.

The health of corals impacts the availability of live bait fisheries used by local fishermen to harvest their catch. Furthermore, the country's largest export is tuna, which is a highly temperature-sensitive, migratory species. During the El Niño (warmer) years, the total catch of skipjack tuna decreased, allowing for increase in yellowfin tuna catch and that of other fish. In contrast, the La Niña (cooler) years saw a decrease in yellowfin tuna catch whereas skipjack catch increased. However, given the now-hastened return of El Niño (warmer) years, it has become difficult to predict the fishing yield.

The year 1998 brought with it the worst incidence of coral bleaching ever recorded in the Maldives, which was associated with a reduction of US\$3 million in revenue for the tourism industry.³⁶ Although the current price tag hardly measures up to the industry's billion-dollar value, with the increase in severity and magnitude predicted for years ahead, there is a high probability of severe future implications for the livelihoods of those employed in the travel sector.

³⁵ NDMA.

³⁶ MEE, 'Second National Communication of Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change'.

In addition, peripheral economic avenues in the industry are also likely to be affected by climate change. One example would be diving with sharks and manta-watching, estimated to rake in a direct annual revenue of approximately \$38.6 and \$8.1 million respectively, and for which the cost of damaging impact scales much higher.³⁷

2.2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Among other reasons, individuals living in stable areas, supported by a sustainable livelihood, may seek to migrate due to the destruction of the natural environment. For example, during the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, most of the underground aquifers were found to be contaminated, and as a result, contributed to both voluntary and involuntary migrations among a large number of impacted communities.³⁸

The commonly used modes of potable water in the country are groundwater and rainwater. An increase in population pressure, coupled with the overdrawn of fragile and limited groundwater, resulted in the salinization of groundwater aquifers in several islands. These conditions are further aggravated by climate change, particularly the reduction of rainfall and elongated rainfall patterns observed in the northern parts of the Maldives. Consider the issue of contamination that was further exacerbated following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. With increased levels of contamination discovered in the groundwater and a lack of means to safely harvest rainwater in the island nation, communities sought a more reliable source, with many turning to desalinated water. Over the period of 2001 to 2012, the usage of desalination plants in the Maldives rose by 23%.³⁹

³⁷ R Charles Anderson et al., 'Extent and Economic Value of Manta Ray Watching in Maldives', *Tourism in Marine Environments* 7, no. 1 (2011): 15–27.

³⁸ WB, ADB, 'Maldives Tsunami: Impact and Recovery. Joint Needs Assessment by World Bank-ADB-UN System', 2005.

³⁹ MEE, 'Second National Communication of Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change'.

Moreover, climate change brings with it direct as well as indirect impacts on human health. Unforeseen climatic events may create an enabling environment for the spread of vector-borne diseases. Examples depicting the above scenario have become particularly frequent over the last few years. During the transition-period between NE and SW monsoons, the Maldives has observed an increase in cases of dengue and chikungunya. Due to weak healthcare systems, the country struggles to control outbreaks, despite being a sporadic occurrence.

The loss of land due to increased erosion, coral bleaching and depleted marine biodiversity, all link to livelihood aspects as well. Given the changes that are then wrought on human-environment relations, in the form of altered cultural practices and rituals, an unwarranted disruption in the sense of home and belonging shared amongst the people of that land, may cause them to migrate or relocate.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ MEEW, 'National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA)' (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Water, 2007); MEE, 'Second National Communication of Maldives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change'; UNDP, 'Cost Benefit Study of Disaster Risk Mitigation Measures in Three Islands in the Maldives' (United Nation Development Programme, September 2009).

2.3 GEOGRAPHICAL HOTSPOTS FOR CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

Based on the twin issues of climate projections and increased environmental vulnerability of the Maldives, there may be a potential internal displacement of people in the future, induced entirely by the changing climate. Certain populations may be exposed to different climate factors ranging from heavy rainfall associated with flooding, to drought (prolonged dry spell) or cyclones, sea swells locally referred to as *Udha* and extreme weather events (tsunamis or earthquakes).

Climate Hazard	Climate Projections	Impacted Zones	2014 Population	2054 Population ⁴¹
Stormwater Flooding	Heavy rainfall is projected throughout the Maldives. The amount of rainfall is higher in northern and southern atolls while central atolls receive a low amount of rainfall in comparison to the other two zones.	Northern Atolls (Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani, Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani)	107,519	164,841
		Southern Atolls (Addu City)	23,311	30,029
Drought	Temperature is following an increasing trend across the entire archipelago. Northern atolls show higher temperatures which may lead to a prolonged dry season.	Northern Atolls (Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani, Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani)	107,519	164,841
Heavy Winds	Northern atolls of the country are subjected to strong winds in contrast to the southern islands which experiences lower wind speed. Central atolls are projected to have moderate levels of wind	Northern Atolls (Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani, Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani)	107,519	164,841
		Central Atolls (Kaafu)	29,643	79,875
<i>Udha</i> or Sea Swells	Northern atolls are exposed to higher storm surges. Some of the islands in the central atolls also experience a moderate level of sea swells. But it is projected that a low level of sea swells will affect southern atolls.	Northern Atolls (Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Shaviyani, Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani)	107,519	164,841
		Central Atolls	62,368	121,635

Table 1: Geographical hot spots for future climate-induced migration in the country.

⁴¹ UNFPA and NBS, 'Maldives Population Projections 2014 - 2054' (Malé, Maldives: National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Treasury, 2018).

Climate Hazard	Climate Projections	Impacted Zones	2014 Population	2054 Population
Stress on Corals	Central atolls are exposed to warmer waters, hence coral bleaching is expected to occur in central atolls and southern atolls	Central Atolls (Kaafu, Alifu Alifu, Alifu Dhaalu, Vaavu, Meemu, Dhaalu)	14,160	23,903
		Southern Atolls (Gaafu Alifu, Seenu)	35,342	47,884

Based on the analysis, (see Table 1), the northern atolls of the country are exposed to most of the climate hazards. According to the rapid assessment, approximately 164,841 citizens from the northern atolls might have to consider migration due to climate change, if adaptation measures are not put in place in due time to safeguard these vulnerable communities.

In the Maldives, akin to many SIDS and particularly the Coral Atoll Nations (CANs), internal migration occurs frequently in considerable numbers. It is estimated that approximately 2,200 Maldivian residents migrate voluntarily from outlying atolls to the capital city Malé, every year.⁴² Nevertheless, future climate-change scenarios are poised to increase the complexity of migration, and as the number of people exposed to climatic events grows, it will cause increased incidence of climate-induced migration across the archipelago.

⁴² UNFPA and NBS, 'Maldives Population Projections 2014 - 2054' (Malé, Maldives: National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Treasury, 2018).

2.4 KEY IMPACTS FROM CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

2.4.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The changes to demographics brought about by migration and relocation of communities are often associated with social disruptions, tensions and grievances that may effectively restructure the economic makeup of the landing islands. As was observed with the re-locations following the 2004 tsunami, the arrival of new people to the islands can pique existing political, social and economic differences, shifting the balance of power in communities as well as impacting the level of tolerance and social cohesion in the islands. The protracted nature of relocation and resettlement processes can make long-term integration into the host community a challenge. It can also cause trauma, loss of identity and lacking sense of belonging, in addition to a shortage in economic opportunities for the migrating communities. Movements from more rural islands towards urban centres would lead to social problems such as congestion, development of anxiety and other challenges.

Gender also plays a crucial factor in shaping vulnerabilities to climate-induced migration. From a gendered perspective, the social structure in island communities, including historical and social gender roles assigned to women, can make them more vulnerable to the risks associated with climate change and related migratory movements. Women tend to have unequal access to resources and are disproportionately engaged in the informal sector where their livelihoods are largely dependent on natural resources.⁴³ It is known that the emerging effects of climate change have profound effects on natural-resource-based livelihood activities. The loss of access to natural environments they rely on can limit people's adaptive and coping capacities during migration and resettlement. Furthermore, with finite natural resources to compete for in the host islands, tensions can arise over accessibility to these assets. One such example would be the Maldivian tradition of harvesting wild sea almonds (Kanamadhu) from Midhili trees and the fierce competition between women's groups that can be spurred by new arrivals. The harmful effects of conforming to patriarchal norms can have negative consequences on men as well, as they may find themselves unable to cope with the psychological impact of cultural changes. Experiences of powerlessness in dealing with the climate crisis can affect social relations between men, disrupting social harmony and giving rise to conditions that drive societal tensions.

⁴³ Rabbani, Golam, Fathimath Shafeega and Sanjay Sharma. 'Assessing the Climate Change Environmental Degradation and Migration Nexus in South Asia'. Bangladesh: International Organization for Migration (IOM) Bangladesh, 2016.

Moreover, the lack of quality services and opportunities for employment for both men and women in host communities can have adverse effects on livelihoods. For young men, the resulting lack of purpose and productivity often leads to psychological distress that influences antisocial or regressive behaviour, which are known drivers towards criminal activity. On the other hand, the lack of economic activity to partake in and likely social exclusion places young women in an even more vulnerable position, with an increased dependency on the men in their lives, whilst receiving fewer opportunities to meet their potential.

2.4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

In the absence of proper planning and adaptation measures at the host location, it is plausible to assume that the island will experience significant environmental impacts. One of many concerning outcomes prompted by the high volumes of voluntary migration from atolls to Malé city was an increase in reclamation efforts in and around the area. This artificial cultivation of land wreaks irreversible damage on natural habitats on land as well as the surrounding marine environment.

With larger populations comes increased consumption, especially in urban centres, which has resulted in overall higher rates of pollution and diminishing green spaces. In a country that already struggles to manage trash, these shortcomings are further intensified as waste is produced at a greater rate and poses a number of health and environment dangers. Looking once more at the capital city of Maldives', it has also come to face increased disaster risks; demonstrated by the impact of fires, flooding and most recently, the COVID19 pandemic.

3. EXISTING POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

3.1 POLICY RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The issue of climate change is identified as a cross-cutting element within the broader development framework. Therefore, this section aims to discuss the existing national climate change policies and legislation in the country. In this regard, the section will deliberate on;

- Identify the existing policy documents that govern climate actions (Strategic Action Plan, the Nationally Determined Contribution, National Strategic Framework to Mobilize International Climate Finance to Address Climate Change in the Maldives 2020-2024 and the Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework);
- Institutional arrangement for climate action in the country; and
- Legal framework for climate governance.

3.1.1 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The incumbent Solih administration has applied the notions outlined in the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party's 'Jazeera Raajje' (Island Nation) manifesto and developed a comprehensive Strategic Action Plan (2019 – 2023) (SAP). The document is referred to as the Government's official 5-year national development plan⁴⁴ and features five areas of focus; Blue Economy, Caring State, Dignified Families, Jazeera Dhiriulhun (loosely translated to 'island way of life') and Good Governance.

Each sector is split into subsectors, bringing the total number of categories to 33. The relevant subsectors for this policy document are spread across all the areas of focus outlined in the SAP (see Table 2).

⁴⁴ Government of Maldives, 'Strategic Action Plan 2019 – 2023' (President's Office of Maldives, 2019).

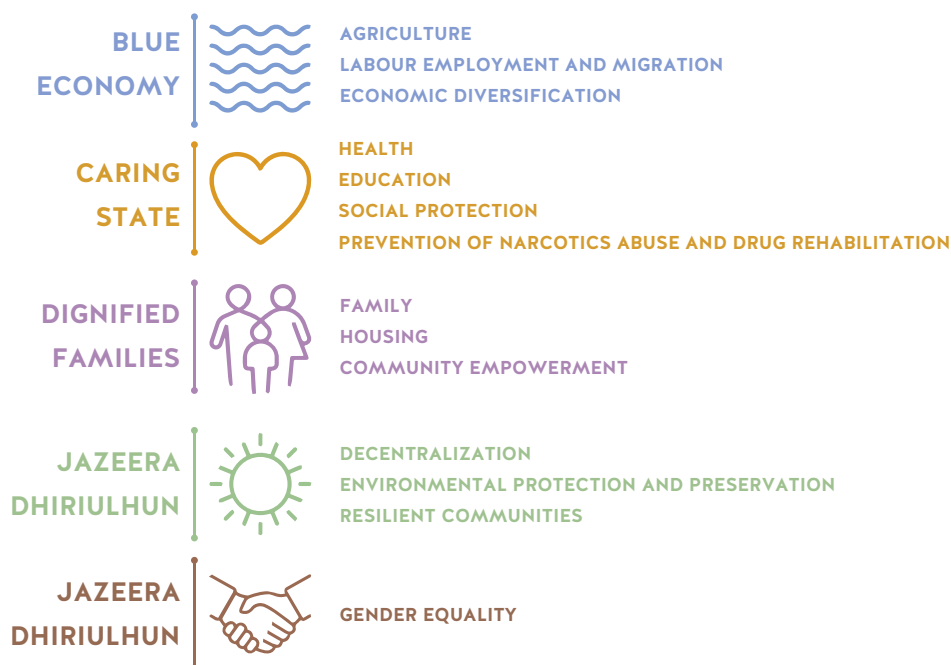


Table 2: Climate Change and Migration relevant Sector and Sub sectors identified in the SAP

Climate change is addressed as an interdisciplinary element throughout the SAP. The main climate action areas that are covered in the SAP are financing for climate actions, developing adaptation pathways and achieving energy independence through energy security. However, migration is only addressed through a labour-management lens, creating a gap in terms of financing for climate-change induced migration.

In general, the implementation of the SAP as is would likely result in positive improvements in environmental conditions, an increase in livelihood opportunities and a reduction in habitat degradation. Nonetheless, since the SAP does not directly refer to climate-induced migration, it does not take into account the significant price tag associated with a preventative humanitarian response strategy to address climate-induced displacement and planned relocation. Therefore, although solutions to the problems associated with climate-induced migration can be solved through the implementation of the SAP, and effectively implement the plan being an overarching development goal for the country, it is critical that the state formulates issue-based policy interventions that meet the requirements of specific sectors. In this regard, there is a need to prioritize policy interventions for climate-induced migration across the national agenda.

3.1.2 NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION OF THE MALDIVES

The Maldives submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) in 2015. Following the ratification of the Paris Agreement by the country in 2016, the INDC became the Maldives' first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)⁴⁵. Since then, the country has developed strategies, bound to getting access to adequate financial means, with respect to mitigation and adaptation actions alike;

- Overall, the Maldives proposed a 10% unconditional reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 and up to 26% under conditional reductions under business-as-usual scenarios. The most impactful way for the country to reduce its GHG emissions is to focus on its production of energy that needs to be switched from fuel-based energy production to the production of electricity based on renewables.
- On the adaptation side, the Maldives have considered all the vulnerable sectors highlighted in the above section including, but not limited to, the agriculture sector, and water resources.

It should be noted that within the NDC of the Maldives there is no direct reference to climate-induced migration, nor does it state any means to address the related challenges.

3.1.2 NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION OF THE MALDIVES

Launched in 2015, the Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework (MCCPF) was the first climate policy curated to the context of the archipelagic nation. The framework was produced as a way to share government priorities for the sector and ensure the establishment of a proper governance mechanism. The MCCPF rests on five policy goals which, in turn, focus on climate financing, mitigation actions, adaptation opportunities, advocacy and capacity building as well as fostering sustainable development. The main policy elements of the MCCPF are outlined below.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ MEE, 'Nationally Determined Contribution', 2015.

⁴⁶ MEE, 'Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework', Climate Change Policy (Malé, Maldives: Ministry of Environment and Energy, 2015).

VISION

To recognize the status of the Maldives as a nation suffering from the adverse impacts of climate change and built its capacity to ensure a safe, sustainable, resilient and prosperous future.

POLICY

1

ENSURE AND INTEGRATE SUSTAINABLE FINANCING INTO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION OPPORTUNITIES AND LOW EMISSION DEVELOPMENT MEASURES

POLICY

2

STRENGTHEN A LOW EMISSION DEVELOPMENT FUTURE AND ENSURE ENERGY SECURITY FOR THE MALDIVES

POLICY

3

STRENGTHEN ADAPTATION ACTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILD CLIMATE-RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS CURRENT AND FUTURE VULNERABILITIES

POLICY

4

INCULCATE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY ROLE IN LEADING INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND AWARENESS IN CROSS-SECTORAL AREAS IN FAVOUR OF THE MOST VULNERABLE AND SIDS

POLICY

5

INTEGRATE POPULATION POLICY AND POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES AND EQUITABLE SERVICES

Similar to the SAP and NDC discussed above, the MCCPF does not contain a strong reference to climate-induced migration or a plan for effectively addressing the issue. However, the MCCPF does stress on the importance of transforming adaptation challenges into opportunities that allow islands to reduce exposure to climate hazards. For example, the MCCPF has outlined the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which enhance the resilience of islands and thus reduces overall vulnerability, which may help avoid the conditions associated with climate-induced migration or displacement in the future.

Additional frameworks that argue for the prioritization of climate resilience are the Local Development Guideline, the Land-Use Plan Guideline, Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, and the IDP Relief Guideline.

3.2 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

The primary agency mandated to govern climate change matters in the Maldives is the Ministry of Environment (MoEnv). As mentioned earlier, climate change is identified as a multisectoral issue. Hence, shifting climate change concerns into the mainstream, and adopting development programmes and plans that reflect this is essential.

In this way, MoEnv provides policy guidance to other implementing agencies such as the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (MNPHI). The institutional arrangements for climate governance in the Maldives are at present, sectoral in nature. For example, the preparation of climate vulnerability assessment and formulation of climate change projects requires a multi-sectoral approach that includes various development partners.

According to present laws ((Decentralization Act, DM Act, NEOP), it is the local councils and the NDMA that are mandated to respond to the needs of displaced communities in any crisis, including the sudden-onset of climate hazards. Below, figure 6 shows a possible group of stakeholders involved during climate programmes or projects.

During previous relocation efforts, different ministries were assigned the leading role though in most cases, the task fell to the ministry responsible for housing or infrastructure.⁴⁷ Table 3 summarizes the Government's role in the migration process.

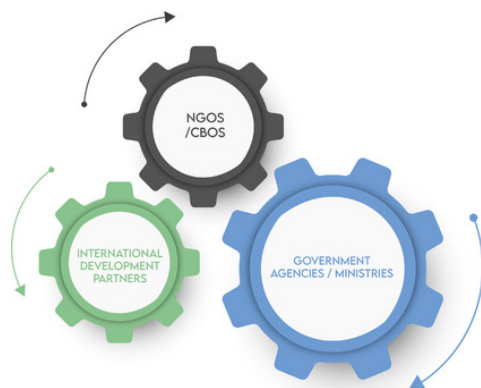


Figure 6: Climate governance mechanism in the Maldives

Table 3: Roles and Responsibilities of institutions during the relocation process

Institution/Agency/Organization	Roles and Responsibility
Government Agencies or Ministries	
President's Office	The leadership's headquarters provides overall guidance to execute all the programmes in the Maldives
Ministry of Environment (MoEnv)	The lead agency within the government responsible for all environment related action, including that which pertains to climate change.
Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (MNPHI)	The lead agency for the implementation of housing, water, sanitation, coastal ventures and the development of all other major infrastructure(s)
Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF)	The lead agency that provides all logistical support and other related concerns, throughout the relocation process
Ministry of Economic Development	The government agency responsible for economic diversification, and tasked with managing the country's foreign/migrant labour force

⁴⁷ Aishath Azfa et al., "'We Didn't Want to Leave Our Island': Stories of Involuntary Resettlement from Gaadhoo Island, Maldives', Territory, Politics, Governance, 11 June 2020, 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1768139>; Luetz, 'Climate Change and Migration in the Maldives: Some Lessons for Policy Makers'; Kelman et al., 'Does Climate Change Influence People's Migration Decisions in Maldives?'; Stojanov et al., 'Local Perceptions of Climate Change Impacts and Migration Patterns in Malé, Maldives'.

Local Government Authority	Main state institution established under the Decentralisation Act to regulate, oversee and develop the local governance system of Maldives as envisioned in the Constitution.
Island/Atoll/City Council	Elected body responsible for governing all the activities that are carried out across the islands/atolls/cities, in close collaboration with the related government agency and the LGA.
International Development Partners	
United Nations Offices	Main UN organizations that are based in the Maldives; UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and IOM, which facilitate multilateral funding to implement projects in the country.
International Banks	Operating in similar fashion to the UN offices, the main international banks that implement their work in the Maldives are the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank (WB).
Donor Countries	In addition to the financing received through multilateral funding, a number of countries provide direct assistance and undertake bilateral projects. Major countries that have aided the Maldives, in terms of climate change funding, include Japan, the United States of America and the European Union.
Community-Based Organizations	
Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC)	MRC is the Maldivian chapter for the Red Cross Red Crescent National Society, which is auxiliary to the State and provides humanitarian services in times of crisis, with a focus on building community resilience.
Local NGOs	These organizations are integral in efforts to advocate and provide civic education to local communities especially in addressing community- based problems.

3.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Till date, the Maldives has not ratified any law or regulation that directly references climate change. However, all Maldivian laws concerning the environment are pursuant to Article 27 in the Constitution of Maldives (2008), which relates to the Protection of the Environment, and has defined the role of the state in such matters as “a fundamental duty to protect and preserve the natural environment, biodiversity, resources and beauty of the country for the benefit of present and future generations”. It also stipulates that the state “shall undertake and promote desirable economic and social goals through ecologically balanced sustainable development and shall take measures necessary to foster conservation, prevent pollution, the extinction of any species and ecological degradation from any such goals.”

At the time of writing this report, the People’s Majlis (Parliament of Maldives) had held several debates regarding the proposed Climate Emergency Act of Maldives, but are yet to move forward. Therefore, at present, actions to address the repercussions of climate change continue to operate largely under the Environmental Protection and Preservation Act 4/93 (EPPA 4/93).

In addition to the EPPA 4/93, the recently ratified National Disasters Management Act (NDMA 28/2015), holds some linkage to climate change and related disaster events, as does the Decentralization Act (Decentralization Act 7/2010) and Maldivian Red Crescent Act (MRC Act 7/2009).

3.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION ACT

EPPA is the umbrella law that governs the protection and management of the environment. After the EPPA was ratified, several regulations were successfully formulated under the Act. The key elements covered in the Act include provisions that govern government agencies responsible for the formulation of environment-related regulations, various policies and guidelines, the procedural guidelines and mandatory circumstance for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), regulations for the management of waste including hazardous materials and in particular, outlined liability and compensation procedure in the event that a person or group or entity is found in breach of any element mentioned in the Act. Despite its comprehensive scope, there are no direct links to climate change in the EPPA.

However, given that the purpose of the Act stated in Article 1 directly references “the protection and preservation of the natural ecosystem for future generations”, *and* “shall achieve sustainable development”, it can be inferred that, under the context of this Act, the state shall take the notion of climate change into consideration when planning for sustainable development.

3.3.2 MALDIVIAN RED CRESCENT ACT

The purpose of the ‘Maldivian Red Crescent Act 7/2009’ (MRC Act 7/2009) is to provide a legal mechanism that facilitates the operation of the international NGO known as the ‘International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society’ in the Maldives. The work of the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) is conducted across the country through a vast pool of volunteers. This enables MRC to effectively mobilize human resources at the site of operation, and assist the government during any disaster-related events or movements.

There is no direct reference dictating MRC’s operate during a climate-induced migration event. However, as the Act makes a broad reference to assisting the government during disasters or natural calamities, it can be inferred that MRC would offer its services if the situation or need arose.

3.3.3 ACT ON DECENTRALIZATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF THE MALDIVES

The ‘Act on Decentralization of the Administrative Divisions of the Maldives’ (D Act 7/2010), was delivered as part of an electoral pledge made by the Solih administration, to provide a level of independence to island communities and improve their overall well-being in a meaningful way. It aims to empower all islanders through enhanced economic, environment and social resilience, and by restoring a sense of peace and prosperity across individual communities.

There is no direct reference in this Act on ways to deal with climate-induced migration. However, it is understood that if such a process were put to action, these councils would be tasked with the overall management of the process that takes place in their respective jurisdictions.

3.3.4 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT

The National Disaster Management Act (NDM Act 28/2015) lays out a legal framework that allows for the establishment of a national coordination mechanism. The main aim of this legal instrument is to enable the smooth operation of relief efforts via the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in response to human-made and natural disasters alike.

It does not contain any national policies or guidelines on planned relocation, whether under the context of post-disaster displacement caused by climatic or non-climatic hazards or to denote the use of planned-relocation as a risk reduction/adaptation strategy. In addition, the existing DM framework does not identify slow-onset climatic hazards (SLR). These incidents are fragmented between the environment ministry's mandate and that of NDMA. One example follows the provision of water during the dry seasons which was previously managed under NDMC as an emergency response, but was later shifted to the environment ministry.

As with all the other aforementioned Acts, this text does not feature direct links to the subject of climate-induced migration or a directive under which the NDMA and other such authorities would operate during a migration event. However, it is understood that the NDMA shoulders responsibility for overall coordination during any emergency operation conducted in the Maldives. Further, the NDMA is also under the purview of the Ministry of Defence, which would enable easy access to the military force as means of labour during such work.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Azfa et al., "We Didn't Want to Leave Our Island": Stories of Involuntary Resettlement from Gaadhoo Island, Maldives'.

3.3.5 DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE ACT

During the formation of this report, a draft climate emergency act was under debate in the Maldivian Parliament. The main points raised in the proposed draft ranged from the establishment of a national advisory council on climate change matters, the preparation of national plans for climate actions, the establishment of a national climate change trust fund and broadened definitions of the roles and responsibilities held by the Ministry of Environment.

Once again, this draft does not specifically address the issue of climate-induced migration in the Maldives. However, in its present form, it does mandate the ministry to prepare a plan that encompasses ways to address the future consequences of climate change. Since this act is not yet finalized, the implication for such a legal precedent remains uncertain.

4. POLICY AND STRATEGIC GAPS

The policy instruments should be regarded as ‘living’ or continuously evolving concepts, since there is always an avenue for further improvements. While most policy instruments recognize and attempt to embody such fluidity, more often than not, opportunities to make interventions in due time are scarce. Nonetheless, policies such as the SAP, NDC and MCCPF have provided opportunities to revisit and revise these priorities. Such opportunities can be viewed as occasions for reflecting on the policy and to include other sectoral areas, which are often overlooked or missed during the initial formulation. Therefore, this section aims to identify the strategic gaps that exist within the current climate change policies and legislations in terms of addressing climate-induced migration in the Maldives.

The lacking areas are as follows;

- Limited scientific evidence at the local level on climate-induced migration
- Gaps in mainstreaming climate change into development planning
- Lack of legal framework and governance mechanisms for climate-induced migration and weak institutional arrangement for climate governance
- Lack of safeguards and social protection
- Lack of capacity building and retention

4.1 LIMITED SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL ON CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

Strong scientific evidence of climate-induced migration in the context of the Maldives is limited. Additionally, the main reasons for migration (voluntary) are usually associated with efforts to pursue higher education, employment opportunities or better health facilities.

Nonetheless, while many studies are conducted in the Maldives in the context of identifying a possible climate-induced migration,⁴⁹ these reports do not present a conclusive statement about the case of relocation or migration that can be indirectly linked to climate or environmental reasons.

Since most of the policies in the Maldives often come to fruition in the aftermath of an event that has a direct impact on communities, the limited evidence on the link between climate and migration has resulted in climate-induced migration being overlooked throughout the national planning process. Thus, there is a need to enhance the level of knowledge on climate-induced migration in the Maldives, so that policymakers are better informed and have the tools necessary to ensure the safety of all communities.

4.2 GAPS IN MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE CHANGE INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Climate change has always been an important thematic area that is not adequately mainstreamed into development planning. One of the main reasons for this gap is the absence of a national development plan, as well as gaps in policy planning over the last decade. Additionally, the failure to appropriate climate change and the associated risks into the mainstream, could be attributed to fears of incurring high initial capital costs for development projects in the planning stage.

For example, the difference in the initial capital costs estimated for implementing a coastal infrastructure project including climate risk factors would be significantly higher than doing so without taking said threats into account. Thus, if weighing options by the short-term benefits, in most circumstances, mainstreaming climate change risks into the development and planning process would not serve as the most economically feasible option.

Moreover, adaptation remains a central pathway for SIDS, - particularly in terms of addressing climate change. Even as adaptation priorities are beginning to be identified and a small number of adaptation-related projects are being implemented, broader adaptation planning is lacking in the country.

⁴⁹ Azfa et al., “We Didn’t Want to Leave Our Island”: Stories of Involuntary Resettlement from Gaadhoo Island, Maldives’.

Since the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) was formulated a decade ago, as of yet, there is no nation-wide adaptation planning act. This has resulted in the selection of limited thematic areas such as water, coastal and sanitation as a means of adaptation activities. Thus, much of the climate finance for the Maldives ends up being spent mainly across these areas.

This further strengthens the argument for formulating new adaptation pathways that acknowledge the limits of adaptation measures, and can thereby account for the losses and damages caused by maladaptation or lack of adaptation. It also clearly demonstrates an urgent need to formulate a better adaptation strategy that mainstreams climate change into development planning. The National Planning Act that is currently in discussion may present an effective entry point for such initiatives.

4.3 LACK OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS FOR CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION AND WEAK INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

Currently, there is no single legislation or other instrument that addresses the notion of climate-induced migration. However, there are a few laws in place with indirect references that may be applied as guidelines for taking appropriate action following a natural disaster that leads to climate-induced migration.

A weak institutional setup has made it difficult to access information pertaining to climate change and projections for future scenarios, thus hindering the entry of climate change considerations into mainstream applications. The absence of a proper coordination mechanism that addresses relocation or migration matters in the Maldives has led to circumstances in which relocated communities were marginalized and made more vulnerable.

However, as both issues are cross-sectoral and have myriad interactions within economic, political, social, demographic and environmental sectors, establishing proper climate change and migration governance continues to prove challenging.

It is accurate to describe the country's efforts to plan for displacement driven by either environmental, political, economic reasons as overall 'deficient'⁵⁰. There is no standard institutional arrangement that serves relocation or migration-related activities. Given the nature of migratory movement, institutional arrangements are usually approached case-by-case. Moreover, numerous relocation processes have highlighted obstacles around housing, land and planning issues, underscoring the importance of formulating policies that are sensitive to climate-induced migration.

Migration matters often require a holistic approach from planning to execution. Hence, there is a great need to identify specific roles and responsibilities among the various stakeholders involved to assure good governance.

In most migration events, however, stakeholders were not consulted or kept informed. For example, engagements with communities in HDh. Hanimaadhoo during the relocation of HA. Hathifushi community demonstrated a lack of transparency and poor delivery of information. Most of the relocations or voluntary migrations are operated with silo governance. In other words, these relocations operate within the purview of the lead agency as seen in the case of L. Gaadhoo as well as that of HDh. Nohivaranfaru.

The climate financing actions detailed in the SAP, and the National Strategic Framework to Mobilize International Climate Finance to Address Climate Change in the Maldives 2020- 2024, hold no reference to climate-induced migration. The lack of acknowledgement on this subject is a major concern, since humanitarian response in the context of displacement and planned relocation efforts is costly and represents a high burden on the state, whether undertaken as an adaptation strategy or in response to climate hazards.

⁵⁰ Luetz, 'Climate Change and Migration in the Maldives: Some Lessons for Policy Makers'

4.4 LACK OF SAFEGUARDS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Though this document discusses reasons fueling relocation that vary largely from the environmental to economic and even political, it remains a timely occurrence for which the country has failed to establish a proper operational mechanism. Inadequate planning paved the way for unregulated, poorly balanced compensation packages, which amplify the burdens shouldered by migrant communities and have made relocation a painful exercise. For instance, despite each incidence being attended to on a case-by-case basis, the lessons learnt were not carried forward or utilized in the evaluations that followed.

In addition to the lack of protective measures, the consultations that were conducted prior to the relocation process were often not comprehensive or inclusive. In practice, such consultative processes chiefly involve the power brokers of the respective communities, which can lead to elite capture or diversion of the whole process, while the concerns of groups lower down the social hierarchy pass by unaddressed. The result of pivoting engagements around community leaders typically serves to draw out the reintegration process and intensify challenges, as the process marginalizes the most vulnerable in favour of the former, more privileged group.⁵¹

Economic diversification is another related challenge that requires urgent attention at a national level. High dependence on one sector places any country in a very precarious position of economic fragility. The same vulnerability is reflected in the case of communities that have an asset or skill-based dependence on a singular form of livelihood. Even across a small Maldivian atoll, different communities tend to embrace different livelihood activities, the deciding factor for which is typically the prevailing environmental conditions. It is not unusual for an island with good, fertile soil to structure its economy around agriculture. Others may view fisheries as their preferred route to earnings. Overlooking these factors during the relocation process can easily pave the way to situations where communities are forced to start from scratch, having lost their entire livelihood.

Consider a fishing community that was relocated to an island not conducive to the activity, which then forced the former fishermen to acquire a completely new set of skills. Such difficulties can give rise to issues such as social exclusion, economic hardships, decreased standards of living, mental health issues and the festering of domestic disputes.

⁵¹ Azfa et al., “‘We Didn’t Want to Leave Our Island’: Stories of Involuntary Resettlement from Gaadhoo Island, Maldives”. 46

4.5 LACK OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND RETENTION

In addition to the poor coordination among key agencies, institutional capacity in the Maldives is fairly weak. It was found that inadequate policies, including but not limited to financial and other social benefits, have caused a ‘brain drain’ across several important sectors.

Furthermore, the country has not made a sufficient investment towards building the skills, knowledge and capacities necessary for the effective function of its various agencies. For example, although island councils are tasked with formulating Land Use Plans (LUPs) under the new amendment to the Decentralization Act, consulted communities indicated that they do not have the technical capacity to monitor or implement quality controls for the formulated LUPs. The issue of capacity building, and the retention of developed resources, remains a serious challenge for all government agencies across the board.

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION: OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN ADAPTATION PATHWAYS

Migration outcomes in the Maldives have resulted in increased inequalities, disproportionate distribution and utilization of resources, and augmented social issues. The voluntary migration to the capital city also carries implications such as increased population density and soaring levels of pollution.

The future climate scenario for the Maldives indicates that numerous islands will experience serious changes to the physical environment that impacts the livelihood of its communities, while others may be rendered utterly uninhabitable. If the likelihood of climate-induced migration is not acknowledged in due time, there is risk that the number of people displaced by climate change may quickly shoot upwards. Not only would these circumstances further marginalize communities, it would negatively impact the overall development of the country.

The weak legal framework, coupled with the lack of coordinated efforts to tackle climate change, are set to exacerbate these situations in the future by levying additional weight on the policy makers and communities. Hence, there is an absolute need to strategically plan for the best possible scenario, which allows for the successful management of climate-induced migration or displacement across the archipelago, in a proactive and holistic manner.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS



5.2.1 ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

To create policies that are evidence-based and effective, it is essential to understand climate-induced migration from a local perspective. However, this process would also benefit from collaborations with international development partners.

The following strategic actions are suggested with the above in mind, aimed at enhancing the scientific understanding, communal knowledge and general awareness on the subject of climate-induced migration.

#	Strategic Actions	Indicative Stakeholders
1	Examine the possible geographical areas in the country that might be prone to climate-induced migration in the future. One way to serve this goal could be via curating hazard maps for atolls or islands, pitting them against future climate scenarios. This exercise can build on the country's existing risk profile, scientific findings, and historical evidence.	International Development Partners, MoEnv, LGA, Island Councils, MNPFI, NDMA
2	Assess the impacts of relocation on the host and relocated communities. This would assist the Government in better orienting the social protection support afforded to communities during migration or relocation.	International Development Partners, MoEnv, LGA, Island Councils, MNPFI
3	Promote ethical and evidence-based media reporting on climate change-induced displacement, migration and planned relocation.	Maldives Media Council, MNU, MMS

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5.2.2 MAINSTREAM CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION INTO THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

To adequately adapt to a changing climate, the elements of future migration need to be taken into consideration.

#	Strategic Actions	Indicative Stakeholders
5	Integrate climate-induced migration into the adaptation, resilience, or coping strategies within relevant national policy frameworks: These may include climate adaptation and mitigation plans, development plans, land and housing planning systems, urban planning, disaster risk management and disaster response. E.g., Land Use Plan, Strategic Action Plan, National Development Plan, Spatial Plan, Planning Act, Island/Atoll and City Development Plan.	International Development Partners, MoEnv, MNPFI, NDMA, NGOs
6	Incorporate elements of climate change risk mapping into Land Use Planning (LUP) guidelines: This refers to the integration of climate change risk mapping as part of the existing land use plans. Mainstreaming climate risk profiling into the Land Use Planning will help ensure that safe zones within the islands are identified and allocated.	MoEnv, LGA, Island Council, MNPFI, Maldives Land and Survey Authority (MSLA), International Development Partners
7	Incorporate sustainable financing for climate-induced migration: This can be achieved through the allocation of dedicated funding in the national budget (e.g., for the National Climate Council under CC Act to implement programmes) and by updating the existing climate finance strategy to include such provisions.	MoEnv, MFA, MoF

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5.2.3 PROVIDE LEGAL IMPETUS TO CLIMATE-INDUCED
MIGRATION

Matters related to climate change are currently addressed through EPPA 4/93. The legal framework for the environmental sector would be further strengthened with the introduction of the proposed Climate Change Act. However, to address the problem associated with climate-induced migration, a specific Migration Act needs to be formulated and enacted. Therefore, the following strategic actions are suggested:

#	Strategic Actions	Indicative Stakeholders
8	Mandate the Climate Change Council to monitor climate-induced migration and its security implications. The climate change council is proposed in the draft Climate Emergency Act. This council provides advice on formulating climate change policies to the minister mandated with the climate change portfolio.	MoEnv, President's Office, Attorney General Office, Parliament
9	Develop a Migration Act that covers all migration-related activities including climate-induced migration. This should encompass establishing mechanisms for addressing internally displaced people from both slow-onset and sudden-onset events.	MoEnv, MED, President's Office, Parliament

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5.2.4 ESTABLISH MECHANISMS TO ENSURE SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The following strategic actions can be undertaken to boost the synergies between climate change policies and other policies, policy-making institutions within the government and stakeholders in civil society.

#	Strategic Actions	Indicative Stakeholders
10	Mandate the creation of a national climate task force established under the proposed Climate Emergency Act to draft, review, implement and monitor national climate-induced displacement, migration, and planned relocation policies. The proposed Climate Change Council, under the draft Climate Emergency Act, can also act as this task force. If the ratified Act does not constitute the formation of Climate Change Council, the government ministry mandated with the portfolio of climate change can take the lead in establishing this national taskforce (The above should be implemented alongside recommendation 7).	MoEnv, President's Office, Attorney General Office, Parliament, Civil Society
11	Establish or use an existing networking platform to enable collaboration between government agencies and civil society actors in response to climate change-induced migration. Through this mechanism, the comments and feedback received from NGOs can be addressed within the planning process. This platform should be administered by the ministry mandated to address climate change issues.	MoEnv, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Ministry of Home Affairs, International Development Partners

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5.2.5 ENSURE SOCIAL PROTECTION & PROMOTION OF SOCIAL COHESION

Safeguarding relocation would enable the successful integration of communities. Therefore, SOPs need to be discussed, planned and adopted by relevant institutions. These guidelines may be prepared as the country prepares its National Action Plan (which is about to be released soon). These SOPs should be approached from humanitarian, gender and human rights-based, livelihood and environmental angles to ensure sustainability.

#	Strategic Actions	Indicative Stakeholders
12	Develop a comprehensive national policy on the planned relocation of communities. Identify barriers for communities that are in the process of being resettled and for those that have been resettled due to slow-onset and sudden-onset events. This includes the creation of a standardised housing scheme, plans for different stages of the relocation process, minimum standards of housing, livelihood support, compensation mechanisms and monitoring protocols. Provide access to housing schemes developed with affordability and climate-resilience in mind. Efforts must be taken to ensure that these policies are gender sensitive and PWD inclusive.	MNPFI, President's Office, MoEnv
13	Develop standardized criteria and operating procedures for the development of the compensation packages for every relocation. This would also enable greater transparency and accountability of government agencies as well as local communities. The packages provided thus far include a provision on relocation benefits, housing plots or units and access to agricultural land.	MNPFI, President's Office, International Development Partners
14	Establish close working relationships with NGOs and CBOs during the relocation process. NGOs would be a particularly effective mechanism to enhance social cohesion and community empowerment. Utilizing civil society connections to hold regular dialogue and consultations with relocated and host communities will greatly aid in monitoring the progress of integration as well as the needs of communities as they shift and grow.	MoEnv, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Ministry of Home Affairs, International Development Partners

#	Strategic Actions	Indicative Stakeholders
15	<p>Vulnerable community needs should be addressed at every stage. Integrate mechanisms for the identification, protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups such as children, women, PWDs, migrant workers and at-risk youth, both during and after the relocation process. These can include enacting policies (as per previous SAs) and crafting institutional arrangements that can guide, coordinate, and manage support for vulnerable communities, such as including them in assessments/applying their indigenous knowledge, creating funds to address their needs and build their resilience through established social protection systems.</p>	Civil society, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Ministry of Economic Development
16	<p>Establish mechanisms for regular dialogue and consultations with relocated and host communities to understand evolving needs and the extent of community integration. This can be achieved through formal monitoring and regular data collection mechanisms, in addition to the civil society-led informal dialogue interventions outlined in recommendation 14.</p>	Local Councils, MOPNHI, Civil Society
17	<p>Identify drivers of social tension and risks to social cohesion in host islands. Assess islands with existing resettled communities to identify the drivers of social tensions and analyse risks to social cohesion. This allows for a better understanding to design specific policies for potential future migration and displacement in a way that does not exaggerate social tensions.</p>	Ministry of Home Affairs, International Development Partners
18	<p>Adopt gender-sensitive notions into policies related to migration, relocation, and climate change. These include informing policymakers on gender roles, gendered relations, and gender inequality, to prevent the formation of regulations, SOPs and policies that are gender blind.</p>	MNPHI, MoGFSS, International Development partners

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5.2.6 IMPLEMENT TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

The limited extent of institutional capacity in general is one of the significant challenges that needs to be overcome. Equipping institutions with enhanced capacity and retaining them is pivotal to the success of any programme. Therefore, enhancing capacity building and retention should be undertaken in both central as well as in local councils and civil society, to holistically address issues arising from climate change displacement.

#	Strategic Actions	Indicative Stakeholders
19	<p>Develop inclusive training and civic education programmes that are relevant to the present situation and can be implemented throughout the relocation process. This can be conducted in partnership with NGOs/CBOs and international development partners.</p> <p>Such trainings can include climate change and migration nexus, governance and climate-induced migration roles and responsibilities as per legal and regulatory mandates, and relocation guidelines (management cycle, stakeholders, minimum standards, gender and diversity)</p>	<p>MoEnv, Ministry of Youth Sports and Community Empowerment, Ministry of Home Affairs, International Development Partners</p>

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ANNEX A: GLOSSARY

ADAPTATION

In human systems, it is the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, it refers to the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects.

DISPLACEMENT

Displacement is a particular form of migration, in which individuals are forced to move against their will. In the event that people are forced to move within their country of origin, the term of reference is internal displacement. If referring to people moving to another country, they may become refugees, though in international law this term is reserved for people who meet the definition of a refugee as per the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol, and must also be recognized as such either by their host state or the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

CLIMATE CHANGE

In broad terms, climate change is understood as a change in average or mean climate variables that have remained unchanged over an extended period of time (such as decades).

CLIMATE EXTREME (EXTREME WEATHER OR CLIMATE EVENT)

The occurrence of a value of a weather or climate variable above (or below) a threshold value near the upper (or lower) ends of the range of observed values of the variable. In the interest of simplicity, both extreme weather events and extreme climate events are referred to collectively as 'climate extremes.'

CLIMATE RESILIENT PATHWAYS

Iterative processes for managing change within complex systems to reduce disruptions and enhance opportunities associated with climate change.

DROUGHT

A period of abnormally dry weather long enough to cause a serious hydrological imbalance. Drought is a relative term, therefore any discussion in terms of precipitation deficit must refer to the particular precipitation-related activity that is under discussion. For example, shortage of precipitation during the growing season impinges on crop production or ecosystem function in general (due to soil moisture drought, also termed agricultural drought) and during the runoff and percolation season primarily affects water supplies (hydrological drought). Storage changes in soil moisture and groundwater are also affected by increases in actual evapotranspiration, in addition to reductions in precipitation. A period with an abnormal precipitation deficit is defined as a meteorological drought.

DISASTER

Severe alterations in the normal functioning of a community, or a society, due to hazardous physical events interacting with vulnerable social conditions, which may lead to widespread adverse human, material, economic or environmental effects that require immediate emergency response to satisfy critical human needs and that may require external support for recovery.

EXTREME WEATHER EVENT

An extreme weather event is an event that is rare at a particular place and time of year. Definitions of rare vary, but an extreme weather event would normally be as rare as or rarer than the 10th or 90th percentile of a probability density function estimated from observations. By definition, characteristics used to categorize extreme weather may vary from place to place in an absolute sense. When a pattern of extreme weather persists for some time, such as a season, it may be classed as an extreme climate event, especially if it yields an average or total that is in itself extreme (for example, drought or heavy rainfall over a season).

HAZARD

The potential occurrence of a natural or human-induced physical event or trend that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, as well as damage and loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, ecosystems and environmental resources.

IMPACTS (CONSEQUENCES, OUTCOMES)

The consequences of realized risks on natural and human systems, where risks result from the interactions of climate-related hazards (including extreme weather and climate events), exposure and vulnerability. Impacts generally refer to effects on lives, livelihoods, health and wellbeing, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services (including ecosystem services) and infrastructure. Impacts may be referred to as consequences or outcomes and can be adverse or beneficial.

LIVELIHOOD

The resources used and the activities undertaken to live. Livelihoods are usually determined by the entitlements and assets to which people have access. Such assets can be categorised as human, social, natural, physical, or financial.

MIGRATION

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines migration as the “movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.” (IOM, 2018).

MIGRANT

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines a migrant as “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.” (IOM, 2018).

ADAPTATION PATHWAYS

A series of adaptation choices involving trade-offs between short-term and long-term goals and values. These are processes of deliberation to identify solutions that are meaningful to people in the context of their daily lives and to avoid potential maladaptation.

RESILIENCE

The capacity of social, economic and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation. [Footnote: This definition builds from the definition used by Arctic Council (2013).]

ANNEX B: METHODOLOGY

As climate change impacts are increasingly felt on the local level, a longer-term strategy needs to be developed to address the larger-scale implications of future migrations. Our literature/desk review along with stakeholder consultations and public forums was critical to developing this report and its findings. A two-stage approach was adopted in a sequential manner to ensure that the recommendations are effective and meaningful in addressing the identified policy gaps in the report.

DESK REVIEW

The desk review analysed relevant reports, books, case studies, projects and other literature to gather in-depth knowledge on the area of the report. This process provided structured and up-to-date information on the subject matter and helped to identify gaps in policy and legislature.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

During the desk review process, we identified several stakeholders from within the Maldivian Government as well as from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and proceeded to consult with them across two phases. The first involved bilateral consultations with the stakeholders while the second phase consisted of a public consultation via conference call.

BILATERAL CONSULTATION

Bilateral consultations were undertaken with targeted questions to enhance the understanding of the stakeholders' role surrounding the issue, challenges in addressing the issue and recommendations for future migration planning for the country.

'VIRTUAL' FORUM/PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Public perception on the topic is a key focus of the work. Hence, we carefully considered the perspectives held by the general public via public virtual forums. The team included a strategic discussion with the public to address how migration and climate would affect the issue nexus, in their view.

Climate Induced Migration in Maldives
Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations

April 2021

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