

news in

# BRIEF

Integrated Governance Programme (IGP)  
UNDP Maldives . Quarter 1, 2013 .



## The will of the people

### Working together for democratic elections

Holding free and fair elections is the founding principle that makes any country a true democracy. It places the power with the people, and allows people to play a part in deciding how and by whom they are governed.

Genuine, free and fair electoral processes require an open pre-election environment in which citizens can participate fully. It would present the way for political parties to operate freely, independent media to flourish, and the judicial system and independent institutions to operate effectively, which will in turn build an informed and active electorate. This constitutes a healthy democracy.

Rooted in this belief, UNDP with its long time presence in the Maldives has been working with the international and national partners to consolidate the foundations for democracy in the country through extensive support to the democratic reform process. UNDP provided technical support to drafting the new Constitution, establishing the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives and other key independent institutions, rolling out the local governance system as well as technical assistance to the drafting of key pieces of legislation. UNDP has also engaged civil society and media participation in governance in order to increase confidence in public officials and institutions.

Assistance continues through our Integrated Governance Programme (IGP). A key component of the IGP this year is include efforts aimed at strengthening electoral processes, especially in the lead up to the September 2013 presidential elections. An important ingredient for safeguarding good governance is to have robust institutions such as electoral commissions functioning well. UNDP has supported the Maldives Elections Commission - a key partner of

UNDP's IGP, since its inception. Furthermore, UNDP has been in a unique position to act as a catalyst and coordinator of multi-stakeholder forums which have brought together, for the first time, a wide variety of stakeholders to discuss democracy and governance related issues. A key priority this year is to support the election process through capacity building of national and local institutions and the facilitation of inclusive dialogue through working with the Elections Commission, civil society and media.

The role of these institutions and other key players will be critical this election year. Indeed, free, fair and inclusive elections are vital to meet the aspirations of the Maldivian people, strengthen democratic processes and in the process secure the space required to take forward the country's vision for its development and future prosperity. Good governance requires all actors to work together to realize this aim including through the election process.

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "Democracies are not born overnight, nor built in a year, or by holding one or two elections. They require sustained and painstaking work." As the Maldivian people write their story, we remain steadfast as partners this journey, to further build and consolidate a strong and resilient democratic tradition.



**Tony E. Lisle**  
UN Resident Coordinator  
and UNDP Resident Representative  
in the Maldives

## about IGP

UNDP Maldives developed the Integrated Governance Programme (2012 – 2015) to consolidate its ongoing support to democratic governance and maintain its relevance in a rapidly evolving political context.

It seeks to achieve the following three coordinated programme results:

**Result 1:** National and local level institutional capacities strengthened to ensure transparency and accountability and for supporting democratic consolidation and processes.

**Result 2:** Equitable access to justice increased and rule of law strengthened through support to the justice and security sector and promotion of human rights.

**Result 3:** Enabling environment created and strengthened for enhanced social cohesion through inclusive and participatory

### IGP's work is possible thanks to the generous assistance from;

Government of Federal Republic of Germany, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF), UNDP Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF), US Department of State, UNDP Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and European Union

# GRANTS AWARDED TO 11 NGOs

## under the 3rd round of the Small Grants Facility of the IGP

Eleven NGOs were awarded grants under the 3rd round of the AusAid / UNDP project – Civil Society Development Small Grants Facility, overseen by the Integrated Governance Programme (IGP) of UNDP Maldives. The grants amounted to over USD 74,000 with a maximum of USD 7,000 for each grant.

Following the Call for Proposals, UNDP conducted a workshop for civil society organizations that included sessions on proposal writing and project cycle management as well as on topics such as youth development, decentralization, and women's empowerment. Of the 33 proposals received, 11 proposals were selected for the 3rd round.

*This round of projects focuses on the areas of women's empowerment in politics, promotion of human rights, strengthening local governance capacity and youth development.*

The aim of the grants project is to help strengthen civil society through targeted support to NGOs and capacity building initiatives.

It focuses on supporting the empowerment of civil society - particularly the smaller, remote island based organizations, to effectively organize themselves and advocate on issues of importance, particularly in the areas of good governance, human rights, development of women's rights, NGOs development, and to strengthen civil society engagement in the democratic process.

Specialized training through workshops and provision of grants for projects in these areas have enabled the concept of human rights and good governance to be taken to the forefront, both at a local and national level.

Additional support to the Civil Society Development project has been provided by the US Department of State. These funds will be utilized in the 4th Round of Grants, now being announced.

## Grants helping civil society groups to empower communities

With a grant from UNDP, NGO Jamiyyathul Birri of Naifaru Island undertook a project to strengthen awareness of human rights among the people of the island. The NGO was one of the 13 successful grantees who received the small grants disbursed in the 2nd round of the 'Support to Civil Society Development' project under UNDP's Integrated Governance Programme (IGP).

The Small Grants Facility of the IGP focuses on human rights, good governance, women's empowerment, youth development and civil society development. Under this umbrella, the 'Support to Civil Society Development' project specifically aims to strengthen civil society, particularly the smaller, remote island based organizations, through targeted support to build capacity and empower them to advocate on issues of importance. Read their stories below...

## The Help Desk

Abdul Rafiu, 53, a fisherman from Naifaru Island, received assistance from the help desk established by Jamiyyathul Birri. Through the IGP grant, the NGO set up the help desk to provide support and guidance to vulnerable groups in the community to claim their rights.

*The desk helps link individuals to proper channels such as the island councils, provides guidance in administrative processes such as writing letters, arranges meetings with relevant authorities, and helps individuals to file for court cases.*

Abdul Rafiu had been trying to get a loan to build his old and worn out house. However, the house needed to be registered in order to be eligible for a bank loan. Registration could only be done after building the house to an acceptable living standard. Caught in the frustration of this dilemma and running back and forth to the Island Council, Rafiu sought assistance of the help desk of Jamiyyathul Birri. Badhuru and Mohamed from the desk helped to register Rafiu's house, facilitating application for the loan.

Rafiu was also having trouble installing electricity in his house. He was unsure of whom to approach or how to go about it. Jamiyyathul Birri's desk helped him understand the process, pointed him in the right direction, and even assisted him with submitting forms to the relevant authorities. Thanks to the help desk, Rafiu was able to get electricity in less than 2 weeks.



Abdul Rafiu at the help desk



Participants at the human rights workshop

## The Human Rights Workshop

Jamiyyathul Birri also conducted a series of workshops, facilitated by national level experts. The themes centered around reducing prejudice and building tolerance, decentralization and local governance and the roles and responsibilities of local councils. Sessions also focused on working in complex political environments, human rights and constitutional rights. *These awareness sessions targeted established leaders, and driven community members of Naifaru Island, including youth and women leaders.*

Aishath Mohamed, 20, and Najmu Nisa, 42, are two participants of these workshops. Aishath, an active member of a political party, and Najma, an Administrative Officer working in the government cannery, participated in a workshop on human rights, facilitated by advocacy officers from the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives.

Although Aishath has gained significant experience working with the community through the various activities and rallies organized by her political party, the workshop was the first time she gained a comprehensive understanding of human rights, particularly the rights underlined in the Constitution. "I can apply this information to my work and explain to the people I meet what their rights are being met according to the law," says Aishath.

Najma, who had little awareness of human rights issues previously, had always thought of it as a fancy word used on paper, and had not realized that human rights had a legal standing. She did not know that human rights exploitations could be officially reported. "This workshop has inspired me to help so many people I meet on a regular basis. It has opened up my eyes to the abuses faced by migrant workers," says Najma. Armed with the information received, Najma says she is inclined to take action against the sorts of exploitation migrant workers are subjected to. "They also have rights! Employers cannot exploit them just because they are foreigners," she lamented.

The work of Jamiyyathul Birri, supported by UNDP's small grants, is assisting to provide new perspectives for the people of Naifaru Island, and helping strengthen awareness of, and demand for better human rights.

## Training of Elections Polling Officials

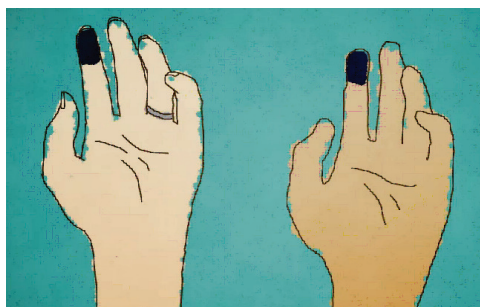
The training modules of polling officials for the upcoming presidential elections were developed by the Elections Commission (EC) with financial support from UK Foreign Office through the IGP.

*This is expected to lead to enhanced knowledge and elections organizing skills among the polling officials.*

With the assistance of an international expert, an action plan was also developed, which will serve as a guide for the development of the internationally recognized BRIDGE accredited training program in the Maldives.

This will contribute to the long term objective of developing a BRIDGE accredited training curriculum, which will be hosted in a training institute.

IGP will continue to support the EC to develop other BRIDGE modules under the training curriculum and will also support the upcoming polling official training for the 2013 presidential elections.



### Voter Education Materials Developed

UNDP supported the Elections Commission (EC) to develop voter education materials for the upcoming 2013 Presidential elections.

Voter education themed video spots were developed in close consultation with EC. The video spots were developed based on the following themes:

1. Having Proper Identification on Voting Day
2. Making an Informed Decision when Voting
3. No to Vote Buying
4. Your Vote Counts
5. Respecting Difference in Opinion
6. Encouraging more Women Leaders in the public sphere

## Training of Elections Commission Officials in electoral administration



*Participants from different countries at the Maputo workshop*

Two senior officials from the Elections Commission (EC) went on an exposure trip to Maputo, Mozambique from March 4th to March 8th, 2013, to attend a workshop on 'Sustainability in Electoral Administration'. The activity was undertaken by the Integrated Governance Programme (IGP) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under its result area on "Deepening democracy for a resilient and peaceful society in the Maldives", supported by the UK Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Office.

The discussions focused mainly on two core issues: the costs and funding of electoral processes, and the extent to which costs affect the wider grounding of electoral administration in a state commitment to electoral integrity.

*The workshop aimed to elicit best practices that can assist countries in critically assessing methods of electoral administration that can lead to long-term sustainability of electoral processes.*

It also provided electoral management bodies and other stakeholders with comparative information, data, experience and models on the long-term sustainability of electoral administration.

In light of the upcoming elections in the country, this exposure trip reinforces the Government's and UNDP's efforts to improve institutional and human resource capacity of the Elections Commission in election management. In addition to this, UNDP under IGP has committed to develop training modules for elections polling officials and provide advisory support to the EC.

Upon their return, an experience sharing session was held by the participants with the EC staff on 20th March. The presentation highlighted key learning points and possible ways of incorporating findings in future elections in the Maldives. Participants stated that the conference has enhanced knowledge and skill of the ECM and their networking ability with other EMBs in Asia Pacific and other regions.

# Support to the Maldives Police Services for better service delivery

The IGP was able to contribute meaningfully in the areas of strengthening the institutional capacity of the Maldives Police Service and towards enhancing police accountability and transparency. Interventions were conducted in consultation and coordination with three key 'rule of law' actors in the country; Maldives Police Service (MPS), Elections Commission of the Maldives, and Human Rights Commission of the Maldives. As a result, substantial groundwork has been laid in a short period of time with great potential for long-term sustained results.



*ToT on Community Engagement Policing*



*ToT on human rights and elections security, with Dr. Arie Bloed*



*Participants at the 'Thursday Forum'*



*Peter Viner speaking at the 'Thursday Forum'*

## Roundtable discussions on Complaints Mechanism

Under the guidance and expertise of Mr. Peter Viner, former Assistant Chief Constable of the UK, highly effective roundtable discussions were facilitated between Maldives Police Service, Police Integrity Commission and Human Rights Commission in March. The objectives of these discussions were to build consensus around establishing coordination mechanisms for complaints filed against the police. This is seen as a major step towards facilitating coordination and maximisation of resources between these three key complaints recipient organisations.

## Review of the Police Professional Standards Command

The Professional Standards Command (PSC) within the Maldives Police Service seeks to uphold professional values in the Police Service and aims to instill integrity in all spheres of the Service.

In order to support this fairly new unit to develop mechanisms, internal procedures and guidelines, IGP made available the expert services of Mr. Peter Viner earlier this year. Following the initial roundtable discussions held in March, Mr. Viner reviewed the PSC and shared his expert views and recommendations with the Police Commissioner. Also, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the PSC is being drafted and key senior police officers have been trained in internal investigations.

Additionally, Mr. Viner presented a paper on 'Discipline in the Maldives Police Service' at a session of the MPS 'Thursday Forum', attended by over 500 Police Officers, focusing on the important elements of MPS' work in providing services to the people of Maldives.

## ToT on Human Rights and Elections Security

Electoral security was an important component covered during the interventions. Under the expertise of international consultant Dr. Arie Bloed, a training programme on Human Rights and Elections (ToT) was developed and a Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted for 11 police officials. This training program will be incorporated into Standard Frontline Police Service Training. This training will enable the police officers to be better equipped in terms of elections security and in ensuring a peaceful election.

## ToT on Community Engagement Policing

Mr. Neale Fursdon, international consultant, developed a training manual on Community Policing and subsequently, a four day training of trainers was conducted in March, targeted at 14 senior police officers. Utilizing the technical knowledge and skills gained from this ToT, the 'Master Trainers' will be facilitating a series of further trainings for their fellow officers. The training is seen as step towards building bridges between the police and the community.

# Right to Information

## advocacy radio shows and podcasts

National level discussions and dialogues on Right to Information (RTI) have been increased through a series of radio shows and podcasts organized by NGO Transparency Maldives with support from IGP and the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF).

Under the RTI campaign, six advocacy radio shows have been conducted since February 2013, in collaboration with the national radio channel, featuring prominent local figures.

With the Right to Information Bill pending passage in Parliament, the aim of the activity is to increase public awareness on right to information and how to access information held by public institutions and private institutions working on public services.

The radio programme covered topics such as introduction to RTI, importance of RTI for democratic countries, role of RTI for good governance, transparency and accountability, and RTI as a tool for addressing corruption.

The radio shows are also being uploaded as podcasts, an innovative method to utilize social media to reach and engage youth on this important issue.



## Human Rights-based Budgeting

UNDP is supporting the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) to launch the first-ever human rights based analysis of the state budget.

Towards this end, training modules were developed, and 20 staff from the HRCM was trained in human rights-based budget analysis, with technical support from an international expert, Dr. Jeremy Sarkins.

This one-week long training was the first training of its kind and contributes to strengthening HRCM's capacity to monitor and analyze the national budget.

The training will further support HRCM's efforts in monitoring of the country's compliance of human rights obligations and in making appropriate recommendations to the Government.

One of the training sessions on human rights-based budgeting

## Arrival of new staff



**Mr. Sharad Neupane** joined the team in March as the Programme Manager and Chief Technical Advisor for the Integrated Governance Program.

Mr. Neupane has extensive experience in the areas of governance reform, rule of law and access to justice, civil society empowerment and capacity development of democratic institutions. Mr Neupane was based in UNDP Zimbabwe as Project Coordinator for Capacity Development of Zimbabwe Electoral Commission prior to this assignment and was heading Governance Unit of UNDP Nepal between 2003 and 2011. Mr. Neupane leads the national team under the IGP and provides overall guidance and technical support in implementation of the three result areas.



**Ms. Yasmeen Rasheed** joined UNDP during late February as the Monitoring and Evaluation Associate for the Governance Unit.

Ms. Yasmeen previously worked as a Senior Planning Officer at the Department of National Planning. Since joining, she has taken the lead in coordinating quarterly reporting (internal and external), implementing resource mobilization strategies, developing and implementing the M&E plan for IGP, developing a field monitoring plan and also in facilitating knowledge building and sharing.

For more information on the **Integrated Governance Programme** of UNDP Maldives, visit:

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