

THE ROLE OF THE WORLD BANK IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

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The World Bank, based in Washington D.C., U.S.A., finances development projects in its member countries. The Republic of Maldives joined the Bank in 1978 and in 1979 the Maldivian Government requested and received financing for its first Fishery Project. The project was designed to install 500 diesel engines in sailing dhonis, set up 29 lighttowers for navigation at night, built 5 repair centres for diesel engines and give technical assistance.

The project is now being implemented, engines and light towers are being installed and the repair centres being built.

The technical assistance of the project has been funded separately by the United Nations Development Program. The technical assistance comprised of design and construction of four "second generation" dhonis and a "long range" dhoni and training of fishermen. Technical Assistance has been largely completed; three "second generation" vessels are already operating with very good results.

The project was set up to allow for a rapid increase in the number of mechanised dhonis and at the same time design, construct and test two new types of vessels and introduce new fishing techniques which, if successful, would be the starting point for a more profitable and efficient fishery in the future.

Currently the World Bank is assisting the Government of Maldives with preparation of a second Fishery Project, which would aim at improving fuel distribution, collecting of fresh fish and provision of wood for boat building.

Fishing is an occupation of long social standing in Maldives and rightly so. Few other countries in the world are so vitally dependant upon fishing for their income and employment of their population. I hope that the Fishermen's Day will further increase the awareness and respect for the role of the fishermen in Maldives and highlight the importance of the fishing sector for the Maldivian economy.