

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS - IMPLEMENTATION IN MALDIVES

## Coordination Mechanism

A Sustainable Development Goals Division (SDGs Division) was established at the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) in May 2016. The Division is mandated to coordinate, monitor and report the implementation process of SDGs in Maldives. In order to facilitate and execute SDGs in the Maldives, a National Ministerial Coordination Committee (NMCC) was formed to provide guidance and feedback from the respective agencies and other areas of knowledge and ensure the integration of economic, environmental, governance and social actions towards the

development of SDGs at country context. In addition, a Technical Committee for the SDGs implementation was formed at the end of 2016 where all the government offices and state agencies are included who will act as focal points from their relevant agencies in providing critical and technical support

## ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

### National Dialogue on SDG Targets - May 2016

The first task that was done with the establishment of the SDGs Division was the mapping of the goals into policy documents. The work was carried out by MEE together with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and UN.

### Translation of the SDGs to local language - 20th December 2016

A Technical Committee Meeting was held with all the members. This was the first Technical Committee meeting held on SDGs where the translation of the SDGs was finalized with in-depth consultation with the members of the committee. In addition, discussions were held on identifying the challenges in aligning the global goals with National Development Plans and addressing institutional boundaries throughout the nation.

### Data Updates of SDG indicators - March 2017

A data analysis on the indicators of the SDGs target were completed by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and submitted to the NMCC. The Indicators were categorized as follows:

- Data that is already collected
- Data that can be collected with additional effort
- Indicators with no data collecting mechanisms
- Indicators not relevant to the country context
- Indicators that fall into tier 3 where no agreed methodology and data is available.

This exercise will help in the process of identifying the priority areas to be focused in the implementation of the SDGs.

### **Advocating SDGs to State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) - Ongoing**

Introduction of the implementation of the SDGs with SOEs were started at the end of last year by the SDG Division of MEE. These sessions focused on giving information on the SDGs, activities carried out and the role of SOEs in the implementation of the SDGs. The SOEs are encouraged to champion the SDGs and has an important role in the implementation of SDGs in identifying them as 'Partners for the Global Goals'.

### **National Workshop on SDG Core Health Indicators - January 2017**

The workshop was held to identify the national target setting for the SDG3, Good Health and Well Being. Ministry of Health organized the workshop with all the relevant stakeholders.

### **Development Plan (2017-2021) - Completed**

A five year Development Plan was formulated by the Local Government Authority to be implemented in the island councils. This plan was produced based on the SDGs.

## **PLANNED AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES**

### **Identifying Data Gaps and National Priorities**

With the completion of data analysis by NBS, preparing for the work of identifying national priorities is in process. The SDGs Division together with the NBS will be conducting meetings with different sectors separately regarding the data issues. This exercise with help to identify the data gaps, how to address them and the cross cutting issues with input from the sectors and implementing agencies.

### **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for High Level Political Forum – July 2017**

In order to track and review progress, a High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on SDGs is to be held from 10-19 July, 2017 in New York. Maldives has committed to participate in the VNRs to share experience with success, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of SDGs in the country. VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Voluntary National Reviews will be focused from a perspective of Small Island Developing State since Maldives is a developing country that is vulnerable to major economic, social, financial, political and environmental issues. In addition, Maldives is the chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The report will focus on 8 key goals, highlighting the challenges faced as an island nation and how the challenges have been attempted to overcome through innovative methods.

Implementation of the SDGs in the Maldives and successful experiences are to be presented from selected sectors. The sectors and the goals that will be focused in the VNRs are Health (Goal 3), Education (Goal 4), Gender (Goal 5), Water (Goal 6), Energy (Goal 7), Infrastructure (Goal 9), Climate (Goal 13) and Oceans (Goal 14).

The civil society and private sector input for the VNR is planned through consultations and during the validation process of the report. The final report is to be endorsed by the National Ministerial Coordination Committee for SDGs.

The VNR is being developed as a collaborative effort with the implementing agencies/sectors and it is crucial that the key sectors be represented at the Maldivian delegation for the HLPF. Efforts are underway to seek assistance for a multi-sector delegation to participate in the HLPF 2017.

## **Oceans Conference – June 2017**

To support the implementation of SDG 14 (Life below Water), and to mark the World Oceans Day, a high-level United Nations Conference is going to be held from 5-7 June 2017. The main purpose of the conference is to identify ways and means to support the SDG 14 and involve all relevant stakeholders building on existing successful partnerships and stimulate innovative new partnerships to advance the implementation of SDG 14.

To prepare for the conference, the work of coordinating between the sectors is led by the SDGs Division. A working committee is formed with all the relevant agencies where the members of the committee will contribute in giving technical input and provide materials required for the conference.

## **Creating Awareness**

The focus is mostly on creating awareness to all the stakeholders including Parliamentarians, Local Councils and school students to engage them in the implementation process of the SDGs.

The participation of NGOs and Civil Society is important in the implementation of the SDGs. A Forum for Civil Society and NGOs are arranged to enlighten and activate them in the implementation process. The Forum will help to encourage and empower the NGOs and civil society to seek resources for their work and identify how they can be engaged to reach the targets of SDGs. The purpose of reaching a lot of people will be covered through these forums since the NGOs are active at different islands.

Partnership with the Public Service Media (PSM) is important in creating awareness and reaches a wider audience. A capacity building workshop will be held for the media journalist of different media to make them aware of the SDGs and how they can link the SDGs into program development and in delivering reports and news. This will be an opportunity for the media journalists to learn the development issues and create opportunities for delivering meaningful reports to the public. In addition, special programs will be developed to be broadcasted in different Medias for the outreach of whole population. These awareness sessions and activities are arranged to be held separately throughout the year and will require technical support and funding throughout the process.

## **Integration of SDGs into Budgetary Process**

One of the main tasks for the year includes the integration of SDGs into the budgetary process. This work is on-going in the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and will help in the plan of future activities for the implementation of the SDGs.

## **Development of a Monitoring Framework**

Development of a Monitoring Framework is planned to be done in the 4th quarter of 2017. The framework will be developed to monitor and report the achievements of the SDGs targets in the process which will require Technical Assistance and financial support.

## **Identifying National Priority**

Identification of National Priority for the SDGs targets will be made through a process of consultations with the implementing agencies as well as input from the civil society and the private sector. A Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) is scheduled for Aril 2017, which will feed into the process of identifying of the National Priority.

## **Issues/Challenges in the implementation of SDGs in the Maldives**

Achieving five out of eight goals in the MDGs before 2015 was a great achievement for the country making Maldives the only 'MDG plus' country in the South Asia region. The implementation of the SDGs require strong coordination between the government agencies, SOEs, development partners, local governments, commitment by the private sector as well as the civil society. Furthermore, the implementation of SDGs also require continued political support and commitment as well as broad based participation as these will be critical to drive the national sustainable development agenda.

The lack of long term strategic direction, ad hoc implementation of strategic plans and frequent policy changes makes it difficult for sectors to plan programs, leading to duplication of work and resources and makes it difficult in planning for budget and execution.

The government agencies lack technical expertise as there is few staff who can engage in providing necessary and key information on issues related to sectors. Poor collaboration between the government agencies leads to duplication of work affecting the efficiency of decisions taken.

A series of activities are focused on raising awareness among the stakeholders given the lack of awareness on SDGs among the government agencies. In addition, due to the geographical dispersal of the islands, creating awareness for the local citizens requires more funding.

Across all the agencies, capacity building is required in collecting data. The lack of trained staff and necessary equipment for data collection contributes to this issue. Collaboration between the agencies are missing when it comes to data sharing since the current data systems are not integrated among the agencies and a proper mechanism for periodic/regular data collection is not in place. There is a need to strengthen the administrative data that is already available at different sectors since these administrative data can be used for decision making and avoid duplication of work and resources. One of the main challenges is getting funds for data collection. The National Bureau of Statistics has proposed 2 new surveys to be carried out in 2017 which will gather a lot of new data required for measuring the SDGs but lacks fund to carry out the proposed surveys. Therefore, strengthening the institutional and human capacity in the NBS is important.

Although Maldives has graduated from the status of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to Middle Income Status, the country faces a lot of economic, social, financial and political challenges. Additionally, being a Small Island developing State (SIDS), the country is vulnerable to environmental shocks. The main challenge is getting funds required for the implementation of the SDGs because of the population dispersion; additional efforts have to be made to reach everyone leaving no one behind. Moreover, financial aid is required for the activities to achieve the Goals throughout the implementation process