



Government of Maldives

Stakeholder Note

19 October 2008, Male'

The Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid has conveyed the appreciation of the Government to the international partners who had contributed to the observation of the first round of the Presidential Elections held on 8 October 2008. The Foreign Minister stated this at a press conference held at the Ministry yesterday morning. All statements published by the international community regarding the first round of the Presidential Elections highlighted the peaceful manner in which voting took place during the first round of the Elections and praised the people and the Government of the Maldives for their determination to usher in a modern liberal democracy.

Statement by European Union, released on 8th October 2008

In its statement, the European Union “congratulate[d] the people of the Maldives for the generally peaceful and disciplined atmosphere in which polling was conducted on 8 October, and [that it was] impressed by their very evident democratic commitment to the election process.

The election was conducted by the very recently formed multi-party Election Commission under a new legal framework. It faced very serious time constraints in organising the process. Despite very laudable efforts in a restricted timeframe, this was reflected by some procedural shortcomings on election-day notably regarding the reliability of voter registers, complaints management and resulting correction and control measures.”

The EU further expressed its “commitment to the people of the Maldives, and [that it stood] ready to continue providing technical advice and assistance to the election authorities in supporting the continuing democratic transition.”

Statement by Commonwealth Observer Group, released on 10th October 2008

The preliminary findings of the Commonwealth Observer Group found that many aspects of the election were “reasonably credible, largely due to a high level of participation, transparency, and the competitive nature of the poll. The Group was pleased to note that many recommendations made by Commonwealth and other Observer missions in previous elections, and the referendum, had been implemented, and that this contributed to a general improvement in the electoral process. The Group also found, however, that problems emanating from the compressed timelines and voter registration process did compromise some aspects of the election. The conduct of the second round is of paramount importance and final conclusions can only be reached once the entire process is completed.”

Statement by the Government of the United States, released on 10th October 2008

In its statement the United States “congratulate[d] the people of the Maldives on its successful first round of elections--the first free, multi-party election in Maldivian history. We especially applaud those who worked to ensure that the vote was free and fair. U.S. and other international observers noted some problems, especially with the voter registration lists. The U.S. urges the Elections Commission to take corrective action. However, the U.S. believes that few voting irregularities could not have affected the final outcome.”

Statement by the United Nations, released on 15th October 2008

In its statement, the UN stated that it [had] “followed with interest the important political reform process in the country leading up to the first round of the presidential election on 8 October. The UN welcome[d] the spirit of popular participation and noted that so far the election process has been peaceful. The UN hope[d] that the challenges arising in the first round, notably the issues with voter registry, can be addressed effectively in the second round. The UN also call[ed] on all stakeholders to ensure that the remaining steps of this historic process are conducted peacefully and in a manner that guarantee[d] all Maldivians their right to a free, fair and genuine election.

Statement by the Government of India, released on 16th October 2008

Reflecting the close relations shared by the Maldives and India, the Indian Government expressed that it was “heartened by the peaceful and fair manner in which the first round of multiparty Presidential elections in Maldives took place recently. The fact of the election under the new Constitution, and the manner of their conduct, are tribute to the sagacity and foresight of President Gayoom who had led the Maldives in its steady progress towards democratization and all round social development. The elections saw a high turnout of voters (85.5%). It is for the people of Maldives to take necessary decisions about their future in the next round of elections which will be held soon.”

In his remarks at the press conference yesterday, Minister Shahid noted the procedural difficulties that arose due to the voter registry nonetheless, he reverberated the call by the international partners to address the procedural shortcomings of the first round of the historic elections. The second round of the elections is now set for the 28th of this month.
