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- President Waheed meets Palestinian President
- Official talks held between Maldives and Palestine
- International recognition of the State of Palestine is no barrier to the continuation of peace talks – President Waheed
- Palestinian President to visit the Maldives
- Bi-Election Results Demonstrate Popular Support for Country's New Direction
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Government thanks UK Parliament for their continued engagement in Maldives



26 March 2012, Male'; On Thursday, 22 March Lord Howell of Guildford, the Commonwealth Minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office briefed the House of Lords on the developments in the Maldives and responded to questions from the House of Lords.

When questioned whether events in the Maldives were tantamount to a coup, Lord Howell responded that this indeed was not the case. Lord Howell called for continued engagement of the Commission of National Inquiry in establishing the full facts surrounding the transfer of power.

"We do not recognise this as a coup, although obviously there has been a change, we still need to establish the circumstances of what occurred and we hope that the commission of inquiry will do that," said Lord Howell.

Lord Howell also welcomed the appointment of Sir Don McKinnon as the Commonwealth's special envoy and praised the UK's support of the Roadmap brokered by India.

Lord Howell affirmed that the UK was "pressing for all sides to show calm and restraint and to work toward a sustainable political solution."

Lord Howell was also keen to emphasize that the Maldives remained a safe destination for tourists.

"At the moment we do not judge that there is any danger in the tourist areas," Lord Howell explained.

In response to the discussions at House of Lords, Minister Dr. Abdul Samad Abdullah thanked the Parliamentarians for their interest and continued engagement in the political process in the Maldives, and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to resolving the current political tensions. The Minister noted that the Constitution of the Maldives establishes a presidential system in which the President and Vice-President are elected together by popular vote. Thus when the President resigns the democratically-elected Vice-President becomes President.

The Minister also noted that the Government has already established an independent investigation mechanism to look into events of 7th February. That mechanism has requested international support for the completion of its mandate.

The Foreign Minister also said that in the interests of promoting national unity, President Dr. Mohamed Waheed has given a commitment to discuss the possibility of holding early elections, provided that there is consensus to do so among political parties, and that the necessary amendments are made to the Constitution.

ENDS

Mon, 26 Mar 2012

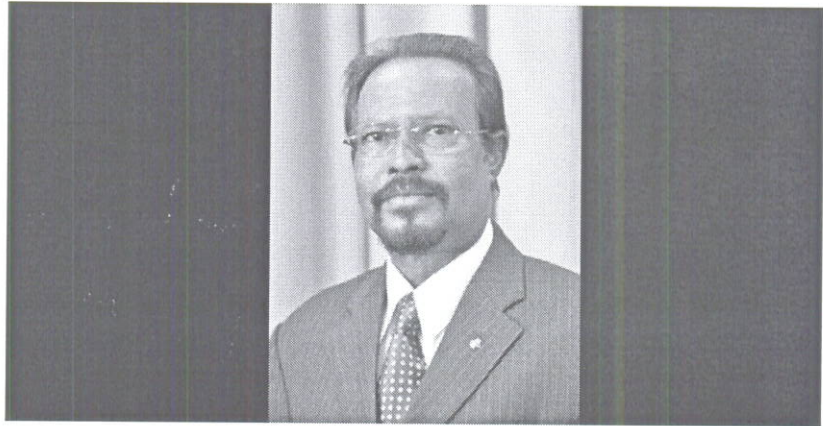


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Ministry of Foreign Affairs Response to EU Stateme



21 March 2012, Male': The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdul Samad Abdullah today responded to the statement issued yesterday by Baroness Catherine Ashton on behalf of European Union with regard to the situation in Maldives. In his response, the Foreign Minister thanked the EU for its continued engagement with the Maldives expressed his determination to work with the EU and other international partners in resolving the political tensions in the Maldives.

In a letter to Baroness Ashton, Minister Abdul Samad Abdullah reaffirmed the Government's commitment to resolving the current political tensions and to reassert normal democratic processes and rule of law. The Minister noted that the Constitution of the Maldives establishes a presidential system in which the President and Vice President are elected together by popular vote. Thus when the President resigns the democratically-elected Vice President becomes President.

The Minister also noted that the Government has already established an independent investigation mechanism to look into events of 7th February. That mechanism has requested international support for the completion of its mandate.

The Foreign Minister also wrote that in the interests of promoting national unity, President Dr Mohamed Waheed has given a commitment to discuss the possibility of holding early elections, provided that there is consensus to do so among political parties, and that the necessary amendments are made to the Constitution.

END

Thu, 22 Mar 2012



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The Government Responds to the CMAG Statement



18 March 2012, Malé: The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Dunya Maumoon, responded today to statement issued by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG). In her response the State Minister expressed the Government's disappointment at the unbalanced nature of the CMAG statement but emphasised the Government's determination to continue to work with CMAG to bring calm to the political situation in the Maldives.

"The Government has made clear that it is prepared to discuss holding of early elections once conditions in country are conducive to a free and fair poll, and the necessary amendments are brought to the Constitution. At the moment the conditions are clearly not conducive. The country is polarised, there are daily protests, the Constitution still states that elections must be held at the end of 2013 - not before, the capacity of independent institutions is not enhancing, and important secondary legislation remains pending.

This is why the Government has made clear that providing a date for early elections cannot be viewed in isolation but rather as part of a wider agreement between political parties designed to bring calm, amend the Constitution, enact key legislations, strengthen the judiciary and support independent institutions. That was the aim of the party talks, which MDP walked away from when they chose to block the opening of parliament."

Ms Dunya Maumoon also urged the "CMAG and other parts of the international community to show balance in public statements, in order to reflect the complex and inter-linked reality of the situation. Notwithstanding, we look forward to continuing to work with CMAG and the Commonwealth Special Envoy over the coming weeks in order to secure a broad and comprehensive all-party agreement. The Maldives also reaffirms its commitment to the Commonwealth and its core values."

ENDS

Sun, 18 Mar 2012



HOME THE MINISTRY FOREIGN RELATIONS MISSIONS ABROAD FOREIGN MISSIONS CONSULAR SERVICE MEDIA CENTRE

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Maldives Ambassador Updates UN on Development in the Country



14th March 2012, Male'; The Maldives Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, H.E.Ms. Iruthis Adam, today updated the Council on recent developments in the Maldives pertaining to the country's commitment as a member of the Council as well as its international human rights obligations.

Ambassador Adam informed delegates that since the resignation of former President Nasheed, the Government President Waheed has taken a number of steps to restore calm and to reassert human rights and rule of law.

"A commission of national inquiry has been established to look into the events leading up to the resignation of former President and to establish the facts of the transfer of power. The commission this week requested UN support through the provision of technical support" said the Ambassador.

"President Waheed also announced the establishment of a government of national unity to include all major political parties. He invited the MDP to join his cabinet, offering a number of senior posts. So far, former President Nasheed and his party have declined to take up this offer. They have, however, along with other parties, agreed to participate in all-party talks aimed at lessening tensions and bringing political stability", said Ambassador Adam - the talks have currently stopped after MDP blocked the opening of Parliament.

Ambassador Adam also relayed the Government's commitment "to uphold the new democratic constitution, and protect human rights. Already a number of steps have been taken in this regard, especially with regard to moving forward with key pieces of human rights legislation blocked in the parliament. With regard to women's children's rights - for example the government has announced the reestablishment of the Gender Ministry, and regard to judicial reform in cooperation with the OHCHR. Moreover, any and all human rights abuses will be dealt with according to the law and according to the Maldives' international human rights obligations".

In closing, the Ambassador welcomed international engagement with the Maldives. "The Maldives is in particularly close contact with the Commonwealth in this regard and looks forward to the upcoming visit of the Commonwealth Special Envoy to the Maldives Sir Don McKinnon".

End.

Wed, 14 Mar 2012



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/33

MEDIA RELEASE

“We serve the people of Maldives”, says new Foreign Minister

5 March 2012, Male'; The Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Dr. Abdul Samad Abdullah today assumed his duties as the new Minister in charge of the Maldives' foreign relations.

Addressing the staff members of the Ministry this morning the Minister underlined the importance of taking forward the Maldives' bilateral and international priorities. He stressed that all international achievements of the Maldives' should be aimed at benefiting all Maldivians. He also expressed his confidence in the Maldives Foreign Service and described it as a competent and professional Corp working diligently to protect and promote the Maldives' national interest abroad.

The new Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H E Ms. Dunya Maumoon also addressed the staff members. In her remarks she underscored the importance of working as a proficient and efficient service. At today's meeting a moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the Former Foreign Minister, the late Fathulla Jameel.

H E Dr. Abdul Samad Abdullah is a distinguished international public servant with an illustrious career at the WHO. Rising through the ranks of the Organisation Dr. Samad most recently served as the Coordinator of Communicable Disease Control at the Regional Office in New Delhi. Prior to joining the WHO he served in many posts at the Health Ministry the last of which was the Director General of Health Services.

In 2008, Dr. Samad Abdullah joined the Maldives Foreign Service and served as the first High Commissioner of the Maldives to Bangladesh.

H E Dr. Abdul Samad Abdullah is a graduate of the Leningrad Medical Institute and attained a Masters Degree in Public Health at the Royal Tropical Medicine Institute in Antwerp, Belgium.

ENDS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/32

MEDIA RELEASE

State Minister Concludes Visit to Geneva

3 March 2012, Geneva; The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H E Ms. Dunya Maumoon today concluded her visit to Geneva to participate in the High Level Segment of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

During her visit the State Minister addressed the Council yesterday in which she expressed the Government's determination to ensure that the successes and achievements of the Maldives' democratic transition would not be lost. She further elaborated on the commitments of the Government as contained in the Roadmap and reiterated the need to build dialogue with all political stakeholders to complete the Maldives' democratic transition successfully.

While in Geneva Ms. Maumoon also met with key bilateral and multilateral partners of the Maldives including human rights NGOs. She paid a courtesy call on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights H E Ms. Navi Pillay in which she briefed the UN human rights chief on the current developments in the Maldives. She also had a working meeting with the senior staff of the OHCHR to discuss ways of taking forward the Government's partnership with the Office aimed at strengthening the national human rights framework.

Speaking at the conclusion of her visit, State Minister said, "the Government is committed to upholding the Maldives' international human rights obligations and we will ensure that our partnerships with all international stakeholders reap successful results for all Maldivians".

The 19th Session of the Human Rights Council will continue on 1 the 23rd of March and the Maldives will be represented by its Delegation based in Geneva.

ENDS

Send to all
stake holders.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/31

MEDIA RELEASE

State Minister welcomes UN call for dialogue and consensus

3 March 2012, Male'; State Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ms. Dunya Maumoon, has warmly welcomed the statement attributable to the spokesperson of the Secretary-General in which he expressed his concern at yesterday's actions by the MDP to impede the opening of the People's Majlis.

The State Minister, who is currently in Geneva to attend the UN Human Rights Council noted that "the Secretary-General's comments echo what I have been hearing from various States and international organisations here at the UN - a uniform disappointment and opposition to MDP's actions which undermine country's democracy and call into question all-party talks aimed at resolving the current crisis".

She also welcomed the Secretary-General's assertion that the political crisis following the change of power on 7 February must be resolved peacefully through a national process and on the basis of dialogue and consensus. "This reflects the Government's beliefs", said the State Minister.

"The Government has made clear its willingness and determination to focus on dialogue, both in and outside parliament, in order to find a way forward" said the State Minister, "unfortunately, by its actions, MDP has shown that it does not have the same vision".

ENDS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/30

MEDIA RELEASE

Successes and Achievements of the Maldives' Democratic Transition

Will Not be Lost - State Minister

01 March 2012, Geneva; The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ms. Dunya Maumoon, today spoke at the High-level Segment of the UN Human Rights Council and used the occasion to express the Government's determination to ensure that the successes and achievements of the Maldives' democratic transition would not be lost. "It is our commitment to you today that we are determined to go forward, not backwards" she said. The State Minister also provided information on events which lead to the resignation of former President Nasheed and appointment of President Waheed, and outlined the new Government's key priorities in the field of human rights.

The State Minister informed the 47 members of the Council, as well as other delegates and NGOs, that since the adoption of the 2008 Constitution and the country's first multiparty elections, which themselves were the culmination of the four-year Reform Agenda, the country's young democracy has "not been consolidated, nurtured and strengthened".

"An independent review of our political and legal system...would" said the State Minister, "show that crucial work such as strengthening of independent institutions and the completion of the secondary legislative framework to implement the rights and principles foreseen in the new constitution have not been completed: that the strengthening of the judiciary has failed to keep pace with the changes taking place across the rest of Maldivian society; and that key independent oversight bodies need to be strengthened in order to fulfill their important roles in the system of democratic checks and balances".

The State Minister then described the Government's roadmap and said that in the field of human rights, President Waheed's administration had set itself four goals.

First, in order to build back stronger and learn lessons from past mistakes, the State Minister informed delegations that the Government has announced a full inquiry into events which lead to and ensued from the resignation of former President Nasheed.

Second, she announced that the new Government has committed itself to work with the judiciary and all other parties to strengthen the judicial sector so that it can gain the trust and respect of the whole population. In this regard, she reaffirmed invitation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights to send a team of Eminent International Jurists to the Maldives to advise on reform.

Third, the State Minister said the Government has committed ourselves to significant strengthening and depoliticizing of the country's various independent oversight bodies – including the Human Rights Commission, the Police Integrity Commission, and the Elections Commission.

“And finally,” she said “we will attempt to secure an all-party consensus to expedite those legislative bills which have been sidelined since 2008 and which are so desperately needed. This includes the new revised Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Evidence Bill, the Legal Aid Bill, the Juvenile Justice Bill and the Judicature Bill – all vital for the proper functioning of the justice system; a Freedom of Information Bill; and a new Prison and Parole Bill”.

In conclusion, the State Minister admitted that “this is an ambitious agenda, and one that we can only achieve with the support of all parties in the Maldives. Our hope is to work with all domestic and international stakeholders to complete these core unfinished parts of the Maldives' democratic and human rights reform agenda, so as to ensure that whichever government comes to Office after the next elections, will do so with the benefit of a more complete democratic system with robust independent institutions that work in the national interest and for the rights and well-being of all Maldivian citizens”.

ENDS.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/27

MEDIA RELEASE

Human Rights Council convenes for 19th Session

28th February 2012, Geneva; The UN Human Rights Council has begun its 19th regular session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Human Rights Council is the world's foremost human rights protection body. The Maldives has been one of the Council's 47 voting members since September 2010.

The 19th session began with a High Level Segment during which around sixty ministers will address the Council on major human rights developments around the world. The Maldives will be represented in the High Level Segment by H.E. Ms. Dunya Maumoon, State Minister for Foreign Affairs.

At the end of the High Level Segment, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay, will present her report on major human rights issues that should be addressed by the Council.

Major issues to be addressed during the session include: the human rights situations in Syria, Myanmar, Iran and Libya; freedom of expression on the internet; improving political participation among persons with disabilities; torture prevention; violence against children; and international efforts to promote children's rights. The UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, Dr. Shaheed from the Maldives, will also present his first report to the Council.

The session will also include a Signing Ceremony for the new UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing a communications procedure so that children who have suffered abuse, or their representatives, can write to the UN to assistance. This UN resolution which agreed to establish this new international treaty was negotiated by the Maldives, Slovenia and Slovakia.

The session will last until 23 March.

ENDS.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/26

MEDIA RELEASE

State Minister Departs to Geneva

29 February 2012, Male'; Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H. E. Ms. Dunya Maumoon has departed to Geneva, Switzerland to participate in the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

During the visit the State Minister will address the Human Rights Council session and also meet key partners of the Maldives. The objective of her visit is to emphasize the importance given to human rights by President Dr. Waheed's Government of National Unity. In these meetings the State Minister will hold discussions on ways to strengthen the human rights framework of the country and strengthening partnerships with Maldives' international stakeholders in this regard.

The Human Rights Council began on 27th of February and will run for three weeks.

ENDS.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/24

MEDIA RELEASE

President Welcomes CMAG's Recommendations

22 February 2012, Male'; President Waheed speaking in Male' tonight responded to the findings of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG):

"I want to thank the CMAG for their recommendations. When the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group visited the Maldives we gave them unprecedented cooperation and I am pleased that those with an outside perspective recognise the challenges we face as a nation and the honest attempts of the National Unity Government to deal with them.

The CMAG recognises that progress will only be made if:

- Peace and harmony return to our streets.
- Political Parties put aside partisan advantage and put the nation first.
- All parties join in a genuine dialogue without preconditions

It is also of note that the National Unity Government is already carrying out many of recommendations of the CMAG:

- We have already established an Independent National Enquiry Commission look into the events surrounding the transfer of power on the 7th February. Clearly as it is independent it will be for them to decide if they wish to take up the generous offer of international assistance in its deliberations.
- We are providing former President Nasheed with appropriate protections under the constitution.

I am also delighted that the CMAG recognises that the safeguarding of democracy in the Maldives has other crucial elements as well as the vital issue of elections-namely the promotion of democratic values and principle in all facets of our political life. Constitutional and major legal reforms along with institutional reform and institutional strengthening are required. Further it is good news that the Commonwealth has agreed to our request for its continuous engagement to ensure reforms take place and election is held in a free and a fair manner.

We will discuss the report of the CMAG with all Parties and encourage a wider dialogue with all people within the Maldives. I feel confident that along with the steps that we have already taken that we have now identified a way of moving forward constructively.”

ENDS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/23

MEDIA RELEASE

The Maldivian people need all politicians to put the interests of our country first.

President Waheed speaking in Male today said:

'The adoption of the 'Road Map- a Possible Way Forward' by all political parties yesterday has given us the opportunity to nurture national consensus and continue to build a Maldives for all its people..

We know that the success or failure of the Road Map will depend on all politicians putting aside partisan differences and putting the Nation first. This will require self discipline and compromise. It can't be 'business as usual' for politics in the Maldives-we need to move forward.

That is why I was disappointed with two actions of Mr Nasheed today:

- His decision to go ahead with his demonstration in Male' today despite assurances and promises that were given to the Indian Foreign Secretary H.E. Mr. Mathai yesterday that it would be cancelled and a smaller meeting will be held in its place.
- The press release by the MDP of a completely untrue and irresponsible suggestion that I have "not respect(ed) the agreements reached in the negotiations held between the political parties in the past week mediated by H.E. Mr. Mathai"

I can understand whilst it is easy to march your forces to the top of the hill, it is much harder to march them down again. I also understand that at this critical juncture in our country's history that showing strong leadership can be challenge. But I'm hopeful that Mr Nasheed can show the good judgement in the future that will be necessary to make the Road Map a reality. It's the very least that the people of the Maldives deserve."

END



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/22

MEDIA RELEASE

President Waheed Begins Creation of Government of National Unity; Promises Key Posts to MDP

13 February 2012, Male'; President Dr. Mohamed Waheed has moved over recent days to finalise the composition of his Cabinet, as part of his drive to create a government of national unity. As publicly promised following his succession to the Presidency, Dr. Waheed is working to ensure that all responsible political parties are represented in the Cabinet.

On 8 February, in order to respond to the deteriorating security situation in the country, the President appointed Dr. Jameel and Mr. Mohamed Nazim to the positions of Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Defence respectively.

Then, on 12 February, the President appointed individuals to the portfolios of Human Resources, Youth and Sport; Attorney-General; Economic Development: Education: Transport and Communication: Tourism and Arts; and Health and Family.

Of these ministerial appointments, three are from the Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP), two from the Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM), and one each from the DQP and Jumhooree Parties which have smaller representations in the Majlis. No Cabinet post has been handed to the President's own political party.

Other posts, including key portfolios of government, have been set aside for the Maldives Democratic Party (MDP), the party of the former President, in the hope that they will agree to join the government of national unity.

Speaking regarding these appointments, President Waheed has said:

“A key responsibility of any government in a democracy is to promote the economic and social well being of its people. It’s my belief that at this challenging time for our nation that this is best achieved by establishing a cabinet and government that represents all shades of opinion. I want to make it absolutely clear that there is room around my cabinet table and all levels of government for representatives of every political party in the Maldives. In particular I would urge our colleagues in the MDP to put aside partisan differences and to take up my offer of significant representation in the government.”

ENDS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/21

MEDIA RELEASE

Government Welcomes CMAG Decision

13 February 2012, Male'; The Government of Maldives today welcomed the decision of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) to constitute a ministerial mission to visit the Maldives to ascertain the facts surrounding the transfer of power, following the resignation of President Nasheed on 7th February.

The CMAG held an extraordinary meeting yesterday in which Foreign Ministers from the Group's members recognized the impressive gains made by the Maldives in recent years in consolidating multi-party democracy and expressed its solidarity with the people of Maldives to select a government of their choice through democratic means. The Group also stressed that the future of the country should be decided by Maldivians themselves through inclusive political dialogue and underscored the Commonwealth's political values as expressed by the 2009 *Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles*.

Referring to the decision, President Dr. Mohamed Waheed welcomed the interest of CMAG on the situation in Maldives and welcomed the Group's decision to dispatch a ministerial mission. "It was the Maldives that changed the mandate of the CMAG for it to be more proactive and to engage in a positive manner with member countries. The Government will never hesitate in engaging with all its international partners in achieving our aim of consolidating democracy. Maintaining the rule of law and uncompromising adherence to the Constitution is the utmost priority of this Government. I look forward to welcoming the ministerial mission", said the President.

ENDS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/20

MEDIA RELEASE

President Waheed Announces Independent, Impartial Investigation into Recent Events

11 February 2012, Male'; President Waheed today announced that an independent and impartial investigation will be conducted into developments in the Maldives from 14th January to 8th February, which culminated in the resignation of former President Nasheed and widespread disturbances across the country.

The President said the investigation would create factual and legal clarity around events with a direct bearing on the constitutional transfer of executive power that took place on 7th February. The investigation would also help establish accountability for any human rights violations which have taken place and thus set the groundwork for national reconciliation and dialogue.

Reiterating his commitment to a free and fair elections in 2013, the President urged all political parties to work together in creating a climate of trust and confidence in the build-up to next year's elections. The President is also hopeful that the investigation, together with his offer to create a strong National Unity Government that would provide impetus for building trust and the establishment of the rule of law, would facilitate the resumption of normal democratic processes in the country.

In conclusion, President Waheed urged all political parties and leaders to put forward national interest before politics. "The way of responsible leaders is not to cause strife among the people. The way of responsible leaders should be to resolve disputes peacefully through dialogue".

Ends



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/19

MEDIA RELEASE

"Difficult times can only be overcome through dialogue, cooperation and commitment to the constitution" – President

8 February 2012, Male'; The President of the Maldives, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Waheed Hassan, today recognised that the country is facing a difficult moment, following the resignation of former President Nasheed, but said that such difficulties can only be overcome by working together in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation. This is the spirit in which he has proposed the formation of a government of national unity, to include all political parties. The President also reaffirmed his belief that only by honouring and working within the Constitution will the country's democratic transition succeed. Finally, the President stressed his commitment to fulfilling the Maldives' international human rights obligations and to ensuring that all fundamental freedoms will be protected.

"I am aware of international concern about recent developments in the Maldives", said the President. "I have received phone calls and messages from many governments, from the UN and the Commonwealth. I am also aware of NGO statements calling on the Government not to backtrack on progress achieved in the field of human rights.

I understand these concerns and will continue to listen to them and respond.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure all of our friends in the international community that I am fully committed to upholding the Maldives' first democratic Constitution, and the fundamental human rights contained therein. Freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression and the right to free and fair elections will all be upheld. The new Government, which I will lead, will also work to uphold these principles, until the next presidential elections in 2013.

It is my fervent belief that the challenges we face as a country, which though serious are not unusual for a new democracy, can only be overcome by working together within the parameters set by the Constitution, and with the support of the international community. I therefore call on politicians of all stripes, to work together in a government of national unity so that together we can address the challenges the country faces, including the issue of judicial independence which brought the recent crisis to its head.

I say again, the Constitution is here to stay. Human rights are here to stay. Democracy is here to stay", said President Waheed.

Ends



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/18

MEDIA RELEASE

President Dr Waheed assures that rule of law will be upheld



President Dr Mohamed Waheed has assured that rule of law will be maintained in the Maldives.

In a statement to the public after taking the oath of office following the resignation of Mohamed Nasheed, President Dr Waheed gave assurance to the public that no unlawful order would be issued to the Police, the Maldives National Defence Forces, or to any individual.

He stated that it was today the sovereignty of the Constitution was upheld and rule of law in its true sense was restored. He added it was today that people got the assurance of rule of law and the protection of law.

"The nation witnessed difficult times in the recent past, but today the Maldivian people have made a momentous decision.

"Following that decision...at any cost, the rule of law must be upheld," said the President. He said differences among political parties and the public must be set aside for the sake of national unity. He urged everyone to join hands for the public interest.

Speaking on transitional justice, the President said no law must be violated in any revenge against the past political leaders.

He appealed for advancing national peace and security.

End.

http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid_11&derid_6734

2012-02-07 10:10:10
by Sarah



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/17

MEDIA RELEASE

Dr. Mohamed Waheed Swears in as the President of the Republic of Maldives

7 February 2012, Male'; Vice President of the Republic of Maldives His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Waheed has taken the oath of office as the President of the country today. President Waheed was sworn in following the resignation of Mr. Mohamed Nasheed this afternoon. The transition was smooth and peaceful.

After the ceremony the President committed for a smooth transitional period as per the laws of the Maldives and pledged to protect the infant democracy and uphold the sanctity of the Constitution and the rule of law. During this period the President appealed for support of the international community towards democracy consolidation in the Maldives.

ENDS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/06

INFORMATION NOTE

27 February 2012

Completing the Reform Agenda

The adoption of the Maldives' first democratic constitution in 2008 marked the end of a four-year process through which the political and human rights landscape of the country was changed beyond all recognition. This process, known as the Reform Agenda was governed by an associated Roadmap which had, as its end point, free and fair multiparty elections in 2008 and 2009.

However, despite the Roadmap ending with those historic elections, it is clear that the Maldives' democratic and human rights transition still has a long way to go both in terms of strengthening existing institutions and in terms of completing the secondary legislative framework to implement the rights and principles foreseen in the new Constitution.

Unfortunately, since 2008, the Maldives has made little progress in either regard. For example, reform of the judiciary has unfortunately not kept pace with the changes taking place across the rest of Maldivian society. Similarly, key independent oversight bodies such as the Judicial Services Commission, the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, the Police Integrity Commission and the Media Council, despite some progress, have not yet been able to fulfill their key roles in the system of democratic checks and balances. The police and the army have also not yet evolved into the strong non-politicized institutions necessary to protect law, order and security.

These significant gaps in the construction of the democratic framework of the new Maldives reflect, to an extent, the normal growing pains of a new democracy. They are also, in the same sense, partly unavoidable as human and technical capacity struggles to keep up with conceptual and legal changes. However, the gaps are also reflective of the over-politicization of all aspects of Maldivian society and a lack of political will, both on the part of those institutions themselves and on the part of the former Government and other politicians, to work consistently and methodically to strengthen independence and reduce political influence.

The story is even more clear cut with regard to the creation of a new secondary legislative framework foreseen and needed under the new Constitution. It is a disappointing but unavoidable fact that, since the adoption of the new Constitution, only a handful of the dozens of necessary legislative bills needed to strengthen human rights protection and the rule of law have been enacted. While the Disabilities Act, the Judges Act, the Misuse of Drugs Act and the Act on Drug Rehabilitation are now on the statute book and while defamation was made a civil rather than criminal offense in late 2009, other pieces of crucial legislation identified or foreseen in the Reform Agenda remain at the drafting and negotiation stage. This includes the new revised Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Evidence Bill, the Legal Aid Bill, the Juvenile Justice Bill and the Judicature Bill – all vital for the proper functioning of the justice system; a Freedom of Information Bill; and a new Prison and Parole Bill, based on the recommendations of the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture, which is central to penal reform. It also includes legislation to safeguard the rights of vulnerable population groups such as a bill on equality and non-discrimination, a bill transposing the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women into domestic law, a bill on domestic violence, bill on sexual harassment, an amended Children's Rights Act, a bill on mental health and a bill on trafficking in persons.

In the international field, efforts to use the Maldives' international human rights commitments, obligations and mechanisms to strengthen domestic human rights protection have also seen mixed results. Although important steps have been taken, such as signing the Convention on Enforced Disappearances, removing one of the Maldives' reservations under CEDAW, submitting and presenting various reports under the human rights Treaty Bodies, and becoming a member of the UN Human Rights Council, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration. Nonetheless implementation of pledges and commitments has sometimes not kept pace. For instance, at the time of assumption of office by the new administration, the Maldives has not yet ratified the eight core ILO Conventions and has not yet begun the process of implementing the hundred-plus recommendations put to it during the Universal Periodic Review in November 2010.

The National Unity Government headed by H.E. Dr. Mohamed Waheed has set itself the goal, for its time in Office, of completing these core unfinished parts of the Maldives' democratic and human rights reform agenda, in order to ensure that whichever government comes to Office after the next elections will do so with the benefit of a more complete and robust democratic system.

ENDS.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/05

INFORMATION NOTE

23 February 2012

President Waheed establishes National Inquiry Commission

The President of the Republic of Maldives, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Waheed, today established, by Decree and pursuant to Article 115(o) of the Constitution, a National Inquiry Commission and appointed its membership.

The establishment of the Commission follows Dr. Waheed's announcement, shortly after his swearing-in as President, that an independent and impartial investigation would be conducted into developments in the Maldives from 14th January to 8th February, which culminated in the resignation of former President Nasheed, the assumption of President Waheed into office and widespread disturbances across the country on the 8th of February.

The President has made clear that the investigation will create factual and legal clarity around events with a direct bearing on the constitutional transfer of executive power that took place on 7th February. The investigation will analyze in detail events which have taken place and thus set the groundwork for national reconciliation and dialogue.

The conduct of an independent, impartial investigation was also one of the key pledges made by the Government in its recently-released roadmap, agreed by all political parties in the Maldives and facilitated by the Indian Foreign Secretary. Such an investigation has also been one of the key requests of the Maldives' international partners including the Commonwealth.

President Waheed has appointed three individuals to the Commission. The individuals are Mr. Ismail Shafeeu who has also been appointed as the head of the Commission, Dr. Ali Fawaz Shareef and Dr. Ibrahim Yasir.

Mr. Shafeeu held a number of cabinet portfolios. Dr. Ali Fawaz Shareef, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the National University. Dr. Ibrahim Yasir is a medical professional.

The Commission will seek international assistance for the conduct of its work in the form of advisors/consultants who will work with members to carry forward the investigations.

In his decree, the President also requested the Prosecutor General to oversee the legality of the inquiries and investigations, as per Article 223(d) of the Constitution.

Further, the Commission has been asked to make a full report of its investigation together with conclusions and recommendations. This report will be made public and submitted to the President, the Prosecutor General and the Attorney General for follow-up action.

ENDS.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Male'
Republic of Maldives

No: 2012/04

INFORMATION NOTE

13 February 2012

Assumption of Office by Dr. Mohamed Waheed

As a member of the Commonwealth and the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Maldives has always pledged to uphold the Constitution, including fundamental human rights, and to safeguard its democratic fabric.

President Mohamed Nasheed resigned on the afternoon of 7th February. President Nasheed resigned as per Article 121 (a) of the Constitution that governs resignations of Presidents. Article 121 (a) stipulates that the President may resign by submitting his resignation to the Speaker of the People's Majlis.

The Constitution expressly states that if the Office of the President becomes vacant the Vice President assumes the Office of President. As per the prescribed Constitutional process, the Speaker of Parliament invited the then Vice President Dr. Mohamed Waheed to take the oath of Office. Dr. Mohamed Waheed was sworn in on the afternoon of 7th February by the Chief Justice and in the presence of the Speaker of Parliament.

President Waheed assumed the Office of President as stipulated in the Constitution of the Maldives. Therefore, there is no question as to the legitimacy of the process or the legitimacy of his Presidency.

As the Maldives' international partners would be aware, there are conflicting narrations about the events that led to President Nasheed's resignation. Therefore, President Waheed announced yesterday that an independent and impartial investigation will be conducted into developments in the Maldives from 14th January to 8th February, which culminated in the resignation of former President Nasheed.

On his assumption of Office, President Waheed highlighted that his key priorities included the return of public order, especially in Male', and the restoration of public confidence in democratic institutions by upholding the rule of law and uncompromising adherence to the Constitution.

President Waheed also immediately announced his intention to preside over a National Unity Government, which shall include all responsible political parties in the country.

President Waheed announced that the MDP, headed by Former President Nasheed, was also invited to be a member of the National Unity Government.

As part of his key priorities, the new President emphasized the core values of human rights and rule of law as being of particular importance. This also includes the continuation of efforts to reform the judiciary and to ensure full judicial independence and impartiality as per the Latimer House Principles. It also includes steps to safeguard and improve media freedom.

It is the Administration's firm belief that no government, especially those democratically elected, should fall below the fundamental standards set by the Constitution and a State's obligations under international law. Therefore, upholding rule of law at all times is vital in order to preserve the sanctity and supremacy of the Constitution: the fundamental legal document that establishes the social and political order in the Maldives. Therefore, the new administration should be given the chance to achieve these objectives.

Recent events in Maldives have truly been extraordinary. As mentioned above, the former President's resignation was announced in public by President Nasheed himself and inline with Article 121(a) of the Constitution. The incumbent Vice President then took over the running of the country as per the Constitutional provisions governing such transfers of power. This process is legally *intra virus*.

Welfare of the Former President

The President has confirmed publicly that the former President and members of his administration enjoy freedom of movement.

The Government has clarified that the former President has not been arrested or placed in detention. All former Presidents' enjoy immunities, privileges and personal security under the Constitution and Law No. 9/2009 and the Government will continue to uphold these standards.

The Government regrets the clashes of 8 February in the capital Male' and elsewhere in the Maldives and opposes all violence, and has stressed that everyone should have the right to peaceful assembly.

In a press conference the Home Minister reiterated that the Police will act with maximum restraint in handling any protests, and further reiterated that the Constitutional right to freedom of peaceful assembly will be upheld within the law. This right, as all would agree, entails responsibilities for both sides.

International Engagement

The role of the international community is crucial at this time. We hope that the international community will encourage all Parties, including the MDP, to work together as part of the National Unity Government.

The Government has not hesitated in engaging with all its international partners. A Commonwealth team is currently operating in the Maldives and Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations was also in town meeting with all stakeholders.

Assistant Secretary of State Blake visited the Maldives over the weekend and held discussions with the President, former President Nasheed and political parties.

The EU Heads of Mission team is currently in the Maldives. The Government hopes that the EU also meets with all stakeholders and gets a good sense of the situation on the ground.

The request for the UN/OHCHR to assist with judicial reform by dispatching a team of eminent international judges panel still stands.

During this short period, President has already met with delegations from the UN, the Commonwealth, the EU, UK, US, and India assuring them of his commitment in restoring public confidence in democratic institutions by upholding the rule of law and uncompromising adherence to the Constitution.

He continues to hold consultations with political parties in order to settle on the composition of a unity government that is acceptable to all:- as of today 9 ministers have been appointed to the Cabinet from various political parties.

Return to normality

The Maldives has enjoyed, over recent years, a remarkably rapid transition towards democracy, an achievement secured by many people across various political parties and across society more broadly. The first democratic Constitution remains in force, there is a free press, a strict separation of powers between the executive, parliament and judiciary, an array of independent oversight institutions, and a diverse civil society. More broadly, schools are in session and hospitals are functioning as normal. Nonetheless, democracy remains in its infancy and remains fragile – a point illustrated by last week's events.

Under such circumstances the Government believes that progress can only be achieved by reducing political tensions, by all parties working together in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, and by charting a common unified course forward for the whole country.

ENDS.