

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



Ministry of Environment and Energy

Male', Republic of Maldives.

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Main Message of the Voluntary National Review for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals, 2017

Introduction

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Maldives will be built upon the successes in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in the country. In this regard, the thematic focus of the current review will be on the substantive progress the country has made in the areas of health, education, gender, water and sanitation, energy, infrastructure, climate change and marine resources.

As a small island developing state, the Maldives faces significant economic, social and environmental challenges. These are exacerbated by the impacts from climate change and vulnerability to both internal and external shocks. In addition to this, the geographic insularity coupled with a dispersed population and high transaction costs results in limited potential for economies of scale. Despite these challenges, the country has made significant progress in areas of eradicating extreme poverty, achieving universal education and health care and protecting terrestrial and marine biodiversity. However, additional efforts have to be made in other area such as empowering women, strengthening mechanisms of governance and justice, minimizing economic disparity and sustainable consumption and production in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

This review will attempt to voice out the challenges faced by a Small Island State such as the Maldives, and the efforts made towards overcoming these challenges through innovation, strategic long term policies and collaborative decision-making processes. Innovation and participation of various stakeholders is critical, especially given the ambitious nature of the 2030 Agenda and the need to prioritize our efforts in the implementation process. In this regard, support and assistance from national and international development partners is needed in terms of financing and resource mobilization that is required to achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Current focus

The Maldives recognises the importance of stakeholder engagement and participation in the substantive realisation of SDGs. To this regard, emphasis has been made to create awareness and engage stakeholders throughout the SDGs process, including implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Focused awareness sessions are planned to be conducted for parliamentarians, local councils, and members of the judiciary, NGOs, students and the general public for the 3rd quarter of 2017.

With the completion of stock taking of available data by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), initiating the work of identifying national priorities is currently in progress. Identification of national priorities for the SDGs targets will be made through a process of consultations with implementing agencies as well as input from the civil society and the private sector. A Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) is scheduled for the third quarter of 2017, which will feed into the process of identifying of the national priorities. Corollary to this, the SDGs Division and NBS,

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in consultation with relevant stakeholders, is undertaking an exercise to identify data gaps, and mechanisms to address these. Development of a Monitoring Framework is planned for the 4th quarter of 2017. The framework will be developed to monitor and report the achievements of the SDGs targets in the implementation process. The development of this Framework will, however, require technical assistance and financial support.

Main Challenges

Long term strategic direction and focused policies will be fundamental to eliminate the duplication of work and in this manner, determine the success of budgeting and execution of sectoral programs towards the implementation of the SDGs.

The lack of technical expertise, particularly in terms of data collection and management, remains a major hurdle in the implementation of SDGs in the country. This is compounded by the lack of trained staff and necessary equipment for data collection and management.

Furthermore, enhanced collaboration across government agencies is required in order to effectively track and monitor progress on SDGs. In this regard, the integration of data systems and the institutionalisation of a coherent and holistic mechanism for periodic and regular data collection will be critical. In addition to this, there is a need to strengthen the administrative data that is already available at different sectors since these can be used for evidence based decision-making and avoid duplication of work and resources. One of the main challenges in this regard is attainment of funds that is required for the data collection process.

Means of implementation

The National Ministerial Coordination Committee, constituted of cabinet ministers, provides the overall policy guidance and political support towards the implementation of SDGs in the country. The Ministerial Committee is supported by a Technical Committee on SDGs, which brings together representatives from various government institutions and civil society. Together, the National Ministerial Coordination Committee and the Technical Committee ensures country ownership and broad based participation that will be critical for the successful implementation of SDGs. The SDGs Division at the Ministry of Environment and Energy functions as the nodal agency in coordinating work related to the implementation of SDGs and is tasked with the overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the implementation process.

The Sustainable Development Goals will be implemented in the Maldives by the agencies, civil society and independent institutions whose mandate aligns with the targets of the SDGs. The role of the monitoring and reporting body, then, will be to ensure that proper consultation has been carried out with all relevant stakeholders in the implementation process, given the integrated nature of the SDGs. It is also the role of the monitoring body to promote the mainstreaming of the SDGs into sectoral policies, plans and strategies and develop a review and follow-up mechanism to provide coherence between line agencies and ensure the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda in the implementation process.

Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals require strong coordination and cross sectoral collaboration between the government agencies, development partners, local governments, commitment by the private sector as well as the civil society. The implementation of the Agenda 2030 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 forward.

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