



Maldives has achieved significant strides in the health and wellbeing of its people. Maternal, neonatal and child mortality have decreased, and life expectancy has improved to 79 years. However, Non-Communicable Diseases are a major disease burden needing immediate attention, and mental health and cancers are growing concerns. Furthermore, Maldives is moving towards an ageing population and needs better social protection planning and targeting.

Progressive changes in the education sector have enabled the Maldives to build human capital. Although gender parity in primary and secondary education has been achieved, inclusive education and access to quality higher secondary and tertiary education in the atolls remain to be challenges. To empower youth with skills needed for the workforce and entrepreneurship, skills development programmes are being planned in targeted locations across the country.

Furthermore, women's involvement in decision making has increased. One third local council seats, and 33 percent of the current Ministers comprise of women. Likewise, first women justices to the Supreme Court were appointed in 2019. Women, however, are still underrepresented in leadership and the Parliament and women's participation in the formal economy is low. Women's empowerment, engagement, and participation is crucial for SDG progress.

Continued political commitment, long term planning, social dialogue, and partnerships will drive the Sustainable Development Agenda forward. Maximizing on decentralization, building economic and climate resilience, improving human wellbeing, ensuring gender equality, and expansion of connectivity for improved access to services can enable SDG acceleration in the Maldives.

Nonetheless, access to international finance mechanisms and concessional financing terms are major development challenges for the Maldives. Given the budgetary constraints for development needs and growing climate vulnerabilities, urgent international finance is even more crucial for the Maldives to address climate adaptation, mitigation and ensure sustainable development.