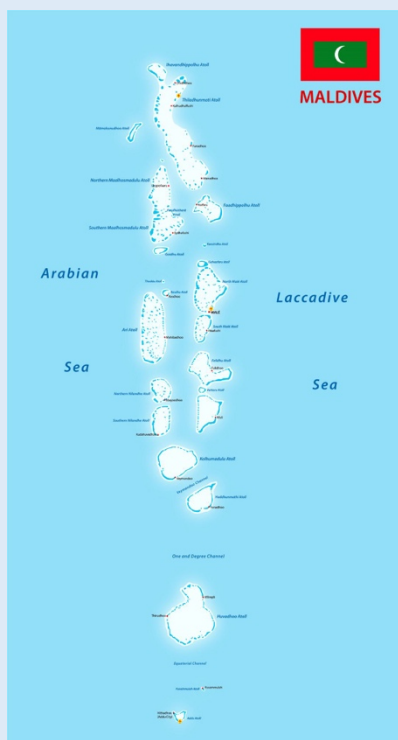


MALDIVES RESPONSE TO COVID-19

SITREP: 9 July, 2020



SUMMARY OF SITUATION



Update

Confirmed Cases	2517
Recoveries	2158 (86%)
Deaths	13
Isolation Facilities	254
Quarantine Facilities	107
Active Cases	341
Geographical distribution of cases	
Male	2481
HA Uligamu	1
HA Thakandhoo	3
SH Narudhoo	11
SH Milandhoo	1
N Manadhoo	9
K Thulusdhoo	5
K Himmafushi	3
GA Maamendhoo	3

Public health risk alert levels

National	Level 2	YELLOW
Male' City	Level 4	RED

WHO Risk Assessment

Global Level	Very High
Global Status	Pandemic

Summary of the response 15 June - 7 July 2020

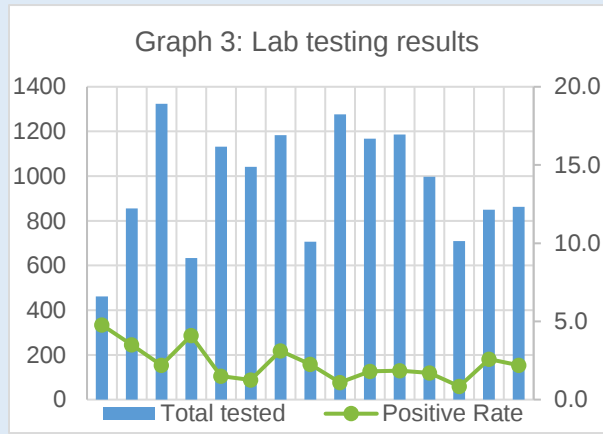
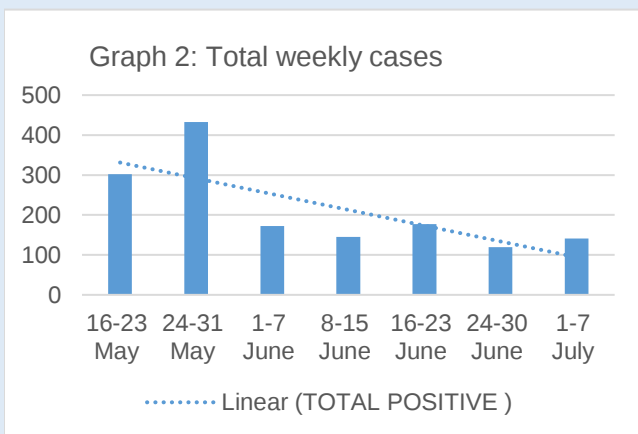
- COVID-19 transmission is stabilizing in the Maldives
- Government Offices open following Health Protection Agency's guideline
- Maldives COVID-19 response has transitioned from National Emergency Operation Center to Health Emergency Operation Center.
- Incremental Easing of lock-down measures rolled out.
- HE President of Maldives established the National Taskforce on Resilience Building and Economic Recovery
- WHO delivers COVID-19 testing using GeneXpert through a collaborative arrangement with UNDP with exceptional support from RD-SEARO.
- Tourism restarting in the Maldives from 15 July 2020
- Schools reopen in the new normal from 1st July
- WHO continues to support and advocate maintenance of Essential Health Services.
- WHO continues to extend all technical assistance, support expansion of laboratory services, intensive care and medical isolation facilities and services at the regional/atoll level.
- Government total expenditure on COVID-19 response so far is at USD 63.3 million

COVID-19 transmission stabilizing in the Maldives



Graph 1: Dash board of COVID-19 cases and trend in the Maldives

Maldives COVID-19 transmission is stable currently with cases being reported amongst identified in clusters. A total of 2517 cases have been reported so far, out of which 86% have recovered. 13 deaths have been reported, all amongst the high-risk group. There are 341 active cases, which are being observed and managed at Isolation Center that are away from the community. The weekly cases in June and July have declined by 50% compared to May, 2020 (Graph 2) and the sample positivity rate has decreased from 4% to 2% which corresponds to the case rates. RRT continue to trace and test contacts and randomly check general population to early detect cases.



Key Interventions: Update based on Summary of response, check weekly updates sent to Regional Office and UN Team

Government Offices open following Health Protection Agency's guideline

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has issued a directive to start partial reopening of government institutions from the 2nd of July 2020. Similar to previous directives, government institutions may open their offices from 0900 hours to 1300 hours. Despite the partial reopening, general members of the public are not to be allowed inside any government building.



Photo 1: HE Ibrahim Mohammed Solih, President of the Maldives

Government buildings may only be opened within the specified hours, in order to complete essential tasks. Any duties that need to be performed outside of the given working hours should be authorized by the relevant institutional head. In such cases, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) should be informed of the exact nature of the work and the employees attending the tasks. The HPA's advice should be sought prior to requiring employees to physically attend the workplace and strictly follow. "Guideline on work place safety during COVID-19" which is available in the following link. <https://covid19.health.gov.mv/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FINAL-GUIDELINE-ON-WORK-PLACE-SAFETY-DURING-COVID-19-Version-1.pdf>

Maldives COVID-19 response has transitioned from National Emergency Operation

Center to Health Emergency Operating Center. The decision was made due to the decrease in transmission of the COVID-19 cases in the Maldives. HE Abdulla Ameen, the Minister of Health leads the HEOC. The HEOC meets every day at Dharubharuge and the multisectoral body discusses situation, progresses and challenges. HEOC nominated spokes person transparently share information through press conferences that are covered live by state media.



Photo 2: HE Mr Abdulla Ameen, Minister of Health leading the Health Emergency Operation Center

Easing lock-down measures announced

Under the efforts to help the country gradually adapt to a new normal, measures to ease the lockdown are distributed into several phases. The decision was taken considering reduced COVID-19 transmission in the country. The ease outs have been planned in three phases. The first Phase lasted from 29 May to 14 June and second phase from 15-30 June 2020..

Phase 3 measures started from 1 July 2020. The key messages are

- **Practice the new normal:** It is best not to go out unless necessary. Always maintain 3 feet distance with others. Use of masks are mandatory for all closed spaces and public service areas. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or sanitize your hands if hand washing is not possible. Cover your nose and mouth while coughing and sneezing.
- Stay home if you are feeling sick. If you are having any symptoms of Covid-19, visit a flu clinic immediately.
- **The following is not allowed:** For islands with Covid-19 confirmed or suspected cases, schools (including tuition classes) and day-care services for young children below 12 years. Sports academies and activities targeted for multiple children. Mass gathering, such as parties and rallies. Operation of guesthouses in islands with Covid-19 confirmed or suspected cases.

Details of the Phase 3 measures are available at <https://www.gov.mv/en/covid19/news-and-communications/phase-iii-measures-to-ease-lockdown>

HE President of Maldives convened the National Taskforce on Resilience Building and Economic Recovery

HE President Solih convened the National Taskforce on Resilience Building and Economic Recovery with 3 subgroups – Finance, Social Sector and Economic Recovery.

First Working Group is on FINANCE under which the key output expected is restructuring of 2020 budget and cash flow management and AID coordination and resource mobilization. The second working group is supporting ECONOMIC RECOVERY which will provide recommendations on “Interventions on economic recovery, economic stimulus program implementation and oversight”.

The Third Working Group is on SOCIAL SECTOR. WHO is an important member of this group and providing technical leadership to prioritize continuity of Essential Health Services and health systems strengthening, Social Protection, Education and addressing Migrant Issues

The forth working group is on crime prevention

WHO team’s input has been accepted to prioritize health sector response in 2020 and WHO work plan has been reshaped to support the new needs.

WHO delivers COVID-19 testing using GeneXpert-A WHO-UNDP Collaborative effort

WHO handover 5000 GeneXpert SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic cartridges to the Ministry of Health at a formal handover event held at the National Emergency Operating Center. The event was covered live by the national media. The cartridges were procured through a joint project with UNDP Maldives. COVID-19 can now be diagnosed outside Male and at regional hospitals of the Maldives where GeneXpert machines have been functioning for diagnosis of Tuberculosis. WHO is working to honor the request of the President of the Maldives to the WHO Director General to provide the cartridges.



Photo 3: HE Minister of Health, WR Maldives and UNDP RR at a live event Organized for handing over of the GeneXpert cartridges



Photo 4: SARSCoV-2 GeneXpert Cartridges

Tourism restarting in the Maldives from 15 July 2020

Maldives is opening its borders from 15 July 2020. The Ministry of Tourism has developed a guideline on “Public Health Interventions to prevent COVID-19 transmission in the Tourism sector”. The Guideline sets out the standards which have to be met by all stakeholders in order to reopen the border and welcome back visitors into the country. This document provides the minimum standards upon which each individual property has to formulate a tailored plan before commencement of operations

<http://www.tourism.gov.mv/16889/guideline-for-restarting-tourism-in-maldives/>

37 resorts have initially received permit to accept tourists. The guest houses in inhabited island without COVID-transmission will start operations starting from 1 August 2020 after meeting set criteria.

The International Finance Cooperation (IFC) will invest USD 50 million in the Bank of Maldives to support the tourism sector of Maldives amid COVID-19 pandemic.



Schools reopen in the new normal

Children across Maldives headed to schools from 1 July 2020, after more than three months of school closure due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Schools reopened for all grades in islands without COVID-19 transmission except pre-school cases. However, in Male' city and other islands with COVID19 transmission, schools reopened for students of grade 9 and above only.

The school functions and processes have been defined under the Standard Operating Procedures on COVID-19 developed by Ministry of Education through technical support from the Health Protection Agency and WHO Maldives. The SOP is available in the following link.

https://www.moe.gov.mv/assets/upload/SOP_on_COVID_19_09.03.2020.pdf

WHO Maldives also reviewed and supported enrichment of the Emergency Response Plan of Education with development of appropriate training materials for cleaning and disinfection. Link to the training video is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0e6pE8RDQQ8&list=PLeMVe0Ph4TDVIGVJeN-t21gQF6OtGsYVo&index=2&t=0s&app=desktop>

WHO provided exceptional support and honored Ministry of Education to supply disinfectants and Infection Prevention and Control Materials to the Ministry to meet key gaps in reopening school.

WHO Supports Strengthening of Essential Health Services

WHO team met with Hon Minister and his senior officials & discussed ongoing COVID-19 response, preparations for easing out and maintenance of essential health services. WHO workplans have been updated to respond to the changing needs.

WHO Maldives team is working with UN partners to finalize the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Framework. Detail inputs have been provided to Pillar 1: "Protecting health services and systems during the crisis" and to other sections.

To mitigate the risk of Dengue outbreak, WHO facilitated and coordinated a Dengue Stakeholders meeting and a series of actions were undertaken and continued at the community level to reduce mosquito breeding sites.

To better manage severe dengue cases and reduce the risk of mortality, WHO hired a local expert and facilitated virtual training on "Clinical Management of Dengue and Chikungunya". The training is being held one by one. All atoll teams including of greater Male region have been trained.



Photo 5: Girl screened for fever at school entry



Photo 5: Atoll participants in virtual Dengue training

WHO provides critical logistics to support response

WHO team is supporting the NEOC with critical logistics to respond to the pandemic effectively. Key supplies provided to support the response during the last 2 weeks are as follows

- 23,000 additional E Gene reactions for COVID19 diagnosis. Thus far WHO has provided more than 50000 E-gene reactions that has ensured interrupted testing.
- 18 Oxygen Concentrators
- 15,000 Viral Transport Media
- 2 Bio-safety cabinets
- 50,000 Ampules of Fentanyl
- 700 vials of midazolam handed over to the Ministry of Health.
- 5,000 SARS-CoV-2 GeneXpert cartridges to Ministry of Health.
- Personal Sanitation and Essential Items for People with Disabilities as requested by the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services
- Infection Prevention and Control materials to the Ministry of Education



Photos: WHO delivering critical logistics

Government Spending on COVID-19 Response

Government total expenditure on COVID-19 response so far is at **USD 63.3 million** which is **an increment of 1.3%** from previous week. Similar to the earlier weeks, the this increase in expenditure is due to frontline agencies (NDMA, MOH and IGMH). NDMA spent approximately 65.6% on Operational Services this week, while MoH and IGMH primarily spent on the procurement of Capital Equipment to facilitate with their COVID-19 efforts.

The COVID-19 Economic Relief Package (ERP) was formulated to provide financial support and relief to individuals, households and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Graph 4: COVID-19 Health Spending as of 29 June 2020 (Ministry of Finance)

It is worthy to note that expenditure for **Total Economic response**, which is **USD 23.3 million**. This includes **USD 376,135** allocated to National Social Protection Agency to support implementation of income support scheme and **USD 3.9 million discounts provided to water and electricity** bills of around 140,000 Households. In addition, disbursements worth MVR 350 million (USD 22.69 million) have been made to partnered banks for the implementation of COVID-19 Recovery Loan Scheme.

To compliment the government's efforts, the World Bank has approved US\$ 12.8 million for COVID-19 Emergency Income Support Project to help mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic on poor and vulnerable workers and their families. Similarly, The Government of UAE donated medical equipment and supplies worth US\$ 5 million and the government of Japan provided a grant aid worth US\$ 5.6 million to promote economic and social development.

The Asian Development Bank has approved 50 million to support Maldives in the fight against COVID-19 , out of which USD 25 million is a concessional loan and USD 25 million is a grant.