



PROGRESS REPORT

January - March 2016

Integrated Governance Programme (IGP) Phase II

Supported by: Government of Australia and UNDP funds (Bureau for Policy and Programme Support & UNDP Core contributions)

Country: MALDIVES
Reporting Agency: UNDP

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Project Title: Integrated Governance Programme (IGP) II
Reporting period: January –March 2016

I. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The country has been attempting to build on considerable economic and human development gains, while simultaneously still challenged by deep socio-economic, environmental and political issues. Important challenges still remain, particularly with regard to issues of strengthening participation, transparency, accountability and rights-based approaches to development. Against this backdrop, UNDP commenced Phase II (2016-2020) of the Integrated Governance Programme. The new phase aims to create an enabling environment for citizen's engagement, especially young people and women, while simultaneously increasing their confidence in an independent, transparent and accessible legal system. The overall Programme will contribute towards reduced societal tensions, improved citizen participation for sustainable human development.

During the first quarter, the 2016 IGP Annual Work Plan was finalized with inputs from the new technical committees and the programme board. Additionally, preliminary assessments were undertaken to select the five focus Atolls for the programme. Based on stakeholder consultations, literature review and scoping visits, the following five Atolls were selected; Haa Dhaal, Shaviyani, Thaa & Fuvahmulah.

Under the new programme, UNDP continued its support to Attorney General's Office (AGO), focusing on implementing its five-year strategic plan (2014-2018). Areas of intervention include creating a legal aid mechanism for the country and improving institutional capacity for treaty body reporting. More specifically, quarter 1 focused on preparing the groundwork for the development of a legal aid bill and Human Rights Action Plan.

As a follow up from the 2014 Legal and Justice Sector Baseline Study, preparatory work was undertaken to conduct an assessment on women's access to justice. The findings of this assessment will strengthen planned interventions that are aimed at enhancing access to justice at local level especially for vulnerable groups.

The new phase has a strong focus on engaging communities especially youth in development processes. In this regard, IGP will be hosting the first ever Social Innovation Camp in May. The Camp aims to provide a platform for young people to test out their innovative solutions to their own developmental challenges. Quarter 1 focused on building stakeholder partnerships and identifying key developmental challenges.

Additionally, preparatory consultations were held with key institutions such as Election Commission (EC) and Human Rights Commission (HRCM) of Maldives to strengthen civic engagement and foster dialogue on democratic principles and processes.

This report captures the progress from January–March 2016 as well as the challenges faced by the programme in the implementation of planned activities.

The programme contributes to the following UNDAF Outcomes and UNDP Country Programme Document Outputs:

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcomes:

Outcome 02: Gender equality advanced and women empowered to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in access to social, economic and political opportunities

Outcome 03: By 2020 Citizen Expectations for voice, sustainable development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance

Country Programme Document (CPD) Outputs:

Citizen expectations for voice, development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance.

The IGP will seek to achieve the following inter-linked two programme results:

1. Increased voice and participation for stronger governance systems
2. Enhanced Access to Justice and Protection of Human Rights

II. RESOURCES FOR THE PROGRAMME

The total expenditure for this quarter was USD 98,664 against the annual budget of USD 518,004. The funds have mainly been utilised for providing technical support to the IGP scoping missions, Family Protection Agency and the Social Innovation Camp. The challenges and delays faced in meeting implementation and expenditure targets are explained in the subsequent sections. The contributing partners are Government of Australia, and UNDP funds (Bureau for Policy & Programme Support and UNDP Core contribution).

III. RESULTS

Result Area 1: Increased Voice and Citizen Participation for Stronger Governance Systems

This Result Area focuses on strengthening engagement between state and citizens to ensure that the voices of the communities are taken into account and there is meaningful participation in political processes for a strengthened governance system. UNDP interventions aim to improve the linkages between public service providers, oversight bodies that hold governance institutions accountable, and the citizens and civil society organisations.

During quarter 1, support was provided to Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to hold the national NGO forum. Preparatory work for the Social Innovation Camp was undertaken and development of a civic engagement strategy for Election Commission (EC) was carried out.

The details of activities under Result Area One are given below.

Output 1.1 Enhanced Capacity of Civil Society to Contribute to Policy Development and Democratic Discourse

Phase II of IGP continues to engage civil society as crucial stakeholders in the democratic process and as primary entry points to civic participation for youth, women and vulnerable groups.

In this regard, planned activities aim to enhance their capacities to contribute to democratic discourse and expansion of democratic space through community dialogues and provision of medium term grants programmes to build their capacity. Activities conducted during quarter 1, include a national NGO forum, preparatory work for the first ever Social Innovation Camp and continuing support to the 2015 Medium Term Grant projects for CSOs.

National NGO Forum

The main objective of this forum was to provide a dialogue platform for NGOs and MoHA to discuss challenges, partnerships and ways forward. The forum also created networking opportunities for the NGOs involved in the different sectors of national development.

A steering committee consisting of the selected CSOs largely led the forum planning process. The NGO forum was held on 23-24th January 2016 with more than 100 CSO representatives. The participants highlighted the low engagement between CSOs and state institutions and limited funding opportunities available to implement their planned activities at local level. During the forum, the post-forum plan was laid out and shared with the participants. The post forum Report including Action Plan is being finalized and will be shared with participants in quarter 2.

Issue-based dialogues in IGP focus atolls

One of the key objectives of conducting issue-based dialogues is facilitating community led and community owned local solutions for every day developmental challenges.

During this quarter, IGP visited 3 of the four focus atolls, Thaa Atoll, Shaviyani Atoll and Haa Dhaalu Atoll. A scoping visit to the remaining geographical focus atoll will be completed at the beginning of the quarter 2. The IGP team met with key stakeholders including Atoll and Island Councils, Women's Development Committees (WDCs), school managements, court representatives, island level NGOs, and made household visits to recognise what the community regarded as critical developmental issues for the islands.

The findings of the scoping visits will be used to determine focus islands as well as thematic issues for the community dialogues. IGP aims to roll out the issue-based dialogues in the geographical focus atolls in quarter 3.

Social Innovation Camp- Miyaheli

Youth comprises of 35% of the population and are the leaders of the next generation. A key focus of the programme is engaging vulnerable groups including youth and women in addressing developmental challenges and democratic processes.

This year IGP is planning to hold the first Social Innovation Camp 'Miyaheli' in Maldives. The Social Innovation Camp aims to bring together youth, innovative ideas as well as digital and non-digital tools in order to create local solutions to developmental challenges.

The Camp is currently scheduled to take place in quarter 2. This quarter, the focus was on building strategic partnerships and identifying the key challenges youth faces across the country. In this regard, field visits were conducted to outer islands and information sessions were held in Schools. The problem statements were developed through youth focus group discussions in Male' and islands, and through analysing vulnerability and capacity assessment conducted in atolls by Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC). Additionally, Ooredoo (Telecommunication Corporation) will be the official partner for the Camp. The Camp will be held on 1st & 2nd June and will include youth from across the country.

Civic education camps

Conducting effective civic education within a community could be regarded as an important tool for ensuring good governance. Particularly, school level civic education is an important platform for ensuring young people in the community practises active citizenship.

In this regard, IGP will be assisting the Human Rights Commission in carrying out two civic education camps. The camps are targeted for students of the Human Rights Club and will be rolled out in quarter 2.

Medium Term Grants (MTG) projects

In order to ensure sustainability and maximum impact, IGP changed its mode of support to civil society organizations from small grants to MTG in 2015. This project was launched in May 2015 and 3 NGOs were awarded grants to implement development projects in the following areas; good governance, human rights, youth development, women empowerment etc. The NGOs that were awarded the grants are, Hope for Women, Naifaru Juvenile and Journey. Regular follow up was done to monitor the progress of the grant activities during quarter 1. The second interim reports are due by the first month of the quarter 2.

Output 1.2 Increased Transparency and Accountability of Governance Processes

The Election Commission remains a key focus of IGP II in light of the 2017 Local Elections and 2018 Presidential Election. Long-term support needs to be provided throughout the electoral cycle for a credible and nationally owned election. The new phase focuses on strengthening the Commission's outreach and engagement with the public. In this regard, IGP will be supporting EC to develop a civic education strategy for effective voter and civic education.

Development of civic education strategy

In March of this year, the Elections Commission officially launched its Strategic Plan for the next 5 years. The Strategic Plan developed in partnership with UNDP, included promoting stakeholder and public engagement as one of its strategic goals. Under this goal, the Commission aims to increase knowledge and understanding of election processes and democratic principles through an extensive voter education campaign. As enhancing citizen participation is a key goal of IGP, is supporting EC to create a civic education strategy to implement the activities.

The Civic Education Strategy will attempt to streamline the civic education activities conducted by EC with the activities of other agencies. During this quarter, preparatory work was undertaken to recruit a local consultant and the work is expected to begin in the second quarter.

Output 1.3 Increased representations and participation of women in public sphere

Systematically creating awareness is seen as one of the most critical step for facilitating a change in public perception on the issue of women's role in the public and political sphere. This output focus on creating an enabling environment for women's meaningful participation and representation at the social, economic and political sphere.

Activities planned under this output include capacity building activities for women leaders, increasing knowledge and understanding of gender issues through gender sensitization. Additionally, community dialogue sessions and improving access to engage in the political sphere through political parties will be key areas.

Mapping study of Political Parties Women's Wings

With the broader objective of increasing representations and participation of women in the public sphere, IGP plans to work with the women's wings of the major political parties to increase women's participation in the political sphere.

Preparatory work was undertaken to develop the concept for capacity assessment of women's wings of political parties. This assessment aims to highlight the current context in which women's wing operate and also identify the key capacity gaps that exist. Further training needs will be identified for those potential female leaders beyond political parties under this exercise. This activity will be carried out in the second quarter.

Gender Equality Policy

UNDP through IGP Phase I supported the development of the National Gender Equality Policy for the Government. This Policy was launched on International Women's Day, 8th March 2016. In Quarter 1, the programme supported the development of awareness materials for the launching ceremony. During Quarter 2 the focus will be on establishing the steering committee and developing a work plan for each of the 4 outcome areas; leadership and governance, economic empowerment, institutional gender mainstreaming and gender based violence.

Result Area 2: Enhanced Access to Justice and Protection of Human Rights

This Result Area focuses on strengthening access to justice and protection of rights. Considering the need for further understanding key challenges in this area the programme will continue to support policy research to ensure legislative and institutional reform is evidence based. As evidence suggests high prevalence of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) IGP will also support strengthening the SGBV referral mechanisms by supporting the implementation of the existing legislative frameworks.

Quarter 1 focused on laying the groundwork for the new initiatives under Result Area 2, aimed at enhancing access to justice for vulnerable groups. UNDP continued its support to the AGO in their effort to strengthen the legal aid mechanism including the development of a comprehensive legal aid Bill. Preparatory work was undertaken for the women's access to justice study and domestic violence prevention training in collaboration with the Family Protection Authority (FPA). Additionally, significant progress was made towards formulation of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP).

The details of activities under Result Area Two are given below.

Output 2.1: Strengthened legal aid mechanism

Access to legal aid is essential for enhancing access to justice and is considered as a

fundamental human right. Under IGP Phase I, UNDP supported the AGO in developing a green paper on options for a legal aid mechanism in the Maldives and subsequently supported the AGO to conduct public and stakeholder consultations on the green paper. Building from this work, UNDP laid the groundwork for developing the legal aid bill. In addition, preparatory work was undertaken for the community based paralegal baseline assessment. Both initiatives under this output give a particular attention to enhance access to justice for most vulnerable groups in the community, including victims of sexual and gender based violence.

Legal Aid Bill

Building on UNDP's work to strengthen the legal aid mechanism, IGP is supporting the AGO to develop a comprehensive legal aid bill. The Terms of Reference for a local consultant have been finalized and will be recruited in the next quarter. The local consultant will work closely with the counterparts from the Legal Sector Resource Centre (LSRC) and subsequently support capacity development of LSRC staff.

Community-based paralegals programme

As a follow-up on the recommendations from 'Legal and Justice Sector Baseline Study' and 'Options for Legal Aid in the Maldives', UNDP under IGP Phase II is supporting the establishment of a community-based paralegals programme at the island level. The main objective is to ensure that there is a mechanism for legal aid outside of the capital city Male'. As an initial work under this activity, UNDP this quarter has finalized the Terms of Reference for an international consultant to conduct the baseline assessment and the recruitment process is ongoing. As a strategic partnership building, UNDP has also collaborated with the American Bar Association and will be conducting the baseline assessment with their support on a pro-bono basis.

Output 2.2: Strengthened referral mechanism to address SGBV

Strengthening the referral mechanism is key to addressing the high prevalence of sexual and domestic violence in the Maldives. One of the major focus under this output is to support implementation of existing legislations such as the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA) and support strengthening institutional mandates. Building on the findings of the DVPA implementation gap analysis, UNDP this quarter collaborated with the FPA to identify current challenges to DVPA implementation. Preparations for the first legal aid conference, focusing on establishing an alternative mechanism within relevant government institutions to provide pro bono legal services to victims of SGBV is also underway. In order to ensure successful implementation of the DVPA and to strengthen the referral mechanism, UNDP supported FPA to conduct training for stakeholders in one Atoll. Initiatives under this Output, aims to introduce new and strengthened existing legal aid and justice services to prevent and address SGBV.

Formulation of key regulations under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act

One of the key recommendations of the DVPA implementation gap analysis conducted by the

Gender Advocacy Working Group is for the FPA to develop and implement the overarching regulations and protocols required under the Act. This regulation would ensure a harmonized approach in dealing with domestic violence nationally. In order to validate this recommendation and to seek stakeholder input, UNDP in collaboration with the FPA conducted a stakeholder consultation workshop on 16th March 2016. This was attended by all major stakeholders including the judiciary, police, social service providers and NGOs. Based on the stakeholder consultations, the General Regulation for the Prevention of Domestic Violence under the DVPA will be formulated. The consultant will be recruited in quarter two.

Mechanism for Pro Bono legal services to victims of SGBV

This quarter, UNDP has commenced the preparation work for the first national legal aid conference to be jointly organized with the AGO and the FPA. A concept note has been developed for the conference and shared with key stakeholders. In the next quarter, a taskforce will be setup to coordinate the preparations for the conference, which will be held in July 2016. In addition, under a pro-bono partnership with the UNDP, a team of experts from the American Bar Association will prepare a research paper on best practices for establishing formal pro bono legal initiatives. The main objective of the conference is to engage more with the legal community and relevant stakeholders to provide alternative legal aid mechanisms, including pro-bono initiatives. Further this conference will open up avenues to enhance accessibility of legal aid services at community level, especially for vulnerable groups including victims of SGBV.

Domestic Violence Prevention Training at local level

As part of support for the implementation of existing legislations to strengthen the referral mechanism for SGBV, UNDP is collaborating with the FPA to conduct stakeholder training on prevention of domestic violence at local island level. During quarter 1, the preparatory work undertaken concluded including the development of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation tool. The training is aimed at strengthening the technical capacity and improving the responsiveness of all relevant stakeholders to incidents of domestic violence.

Output 2.3: Improved capacities for treaty body reporting and implementation

Given that Maldives is party to seven of the core international human rights instruments and two of the optional protocols, further strengthening of national capacity for treaty reporting, coordination and implementation of treaty body and UPR recommendations is essential. A well-functioning national human rights coordination mechanism is crucial for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Country. Under this output, UNDP is supporting the Ministry of Law and Gender (MoLG), in formulating the National Human Rights Action Plan. Once developed it will pave way to establish an effective national human rights coordination mechanism to implement treaty body and UPR recommendations.

Development of National Human Rights Action Plan

In this quarter, significant progress has been made towards the formulation of National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP). With the guidance from MoLG, the local consultancy

firm has already begun the stakeholder consultations in Male'. The NHRAP is expected to be finalised by end of quarter 2. The NHRAP will ensure that there is an institutional set up for coordinating implementation of Maldives human rights obligations as well as better monitoring of recommendations received from Treaty Bodies.

CHALLENGES

The key challenges were;

- Difficulty in recruiting competent local consultancy firms for consultancies planned for quarter 1
- Delay in receiving feedback from national partners regarding activity scope and technical expertise required.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Closer coordination with national partners for smooth implementation of planned activities

ACTION TAKEN TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES/LESSONS LEARNED

- A number of email exchanges, meetings and discussions were held with the implementing partners to expedite implementation of project activities.
- In order to expedite the implementation and avoid re-advertisements, the recruitment processes for all international consultants were initiated in the first quarter.
- IGP scoping mission to identify focus Atolls were undertaken in quarter 1 and community issues were identified early on. Based on this, dialogue sessions will be undertaken in quarter 2 & 3.