

Maldives

NEWS

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[The National Consultation on Readiness to Implement Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in the Maldives](#) was launched in Maldives jointly by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, and the United Nations Maldives team.

Governments in Asia and the Pacific have increasingly recognized social protection as a key policy instrument to build a more productive, protected and healthy population in Asia and the Pacific. In 2020, ESCAP member States endorsed the regional [Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection](#), which serves as a shared vision, strategy and platform for promoting partnership and peer learning as well as identifying needs for capacity development. The Action Plan sets out 12 national actions that underpin the achievement of more inclusive and comprehensive social protection systems, ranging from upholding the right to social protection in legislative and regulatory frameworks, to ensuring a more effective design, coordination and delivery of social protection schemes.

To support member States in the implementation of this first ever regional Action Plan, ESCAP has been undertaking stocktaking initiatives on the readiness to implement the Action Plan and achieve more inclusive and comprehensive social protection systems in Cambodia, Georgia, Maldives, Mongolia, the Philippines and Turkey.

The Maldives has demonstrated strong commitment to social protection and achieved universal old age pensions through both contributory and non-contributory schemes, as well as a universal disability allowance and universal health insurance.

The stocktaking consists of a brief report that showcases the Maldives' policies for promoting social protection and its overall readiness to implement the national actions of the Action Plan. A second part of the stocktaking exercise involves a national consultation with selected participants from the Ministries to discuss and validate the findings of the draft report, notably its recommendations for achieving the objectives of the Action Plan. The consultation also served as a forum to reflect how a more holistic and strategic social protection system could be an economic investment in future labour markets, the economy and prosperity of the country.

Aishath Mohammed Didi, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, elaborated on the recently developed National Framework on Social Protection that sets the architecture to establish a minimum social protection floor, enhance the sustainability of social protection programs, and promote a legal and regulatory framework to ensure greater quality, efficiency, and equity in providing social protection services.

Reflecting on the different pathways to more inclusive and comprehensive social protection systems across countries in the region, Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP outlined the key elements within the Action Plan that underpin strong social protection systems. Emphasizing the need for a lifecycle approach, Catherine Haswell, UN Resident Coordinator for Maldives, indicated it was an opportune moment to gather and review the various components of Maldives' social protection system, to leverage what has worked and make adjustments to transform the system into one which meets the future needs of the Maldives.

As the country moves forward to implement the National Framework on Social Protection, the Consultation was a rare opportunity to engage stakeholders from across different line Ministries and stakeholders in the Maldives to chart actions towards a future where all Maldivians are protected.

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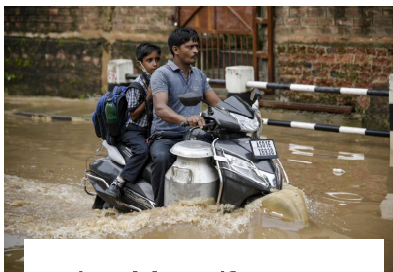


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