



Grant Awarding Ceremony for CSO's on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Monday, 13 September 2021, 11:00am - 11:45am (UTC +5)

Speech by Vera Hakim, UNDP Maldives Resident Representative, ad interim

Excellencies David Holly.

Grant recipients and representatives from civil society organisations.

Special invitees gracing our ceremony today.

Assalaam Alaikum. A very good morning.

It is an absolute honour to be here with such an inspiring audience committed to a great cause - To Leave No Woman or Girl Behind.

Congratulations and thank you, first and foremost, to all the grant recipients for your passion and promise to advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment. The actions that you are taking brings hope for opportunities, and great transformations for individuals and communities from across the islands of the Maldives.

Our gratitude and thanks go out to our partner Australia for the continued support to the cause.

And of course, thank you to team UNDP Maldives, for the coordination and unwavering commitment to advance the sustainable development agenda, even through crisis times.

All our grant recipients have shouldered a great responsibility:

- To fight for women's equality.
- To address social and gender norms that hinder women.
- To meaningfully engage women in decisions that will ultimately affect them, their families and communities.
- To harness women's leadership in public and political life.

- To equip women with innovative tools and non-conventional skills-sets.
- To cultivate women's economic independence and leadership.
- To position them as catalysts of change.

Let me acknowledge our grant recipients who will be undertaking this important work:

- Equal Rights Initiative
- Public Interest Law Centre
- Youth Initiate
- Land Sea Maldives
- Women Enhancement, and,
- Moms Offering Moms Support (MOMS).

As members of civil society, you are part of a noble entity driving progress and positive change. As you harness your energies as citizens committed to the public good, we remain with you.

When we include women, great things happen.

Women's empowerment, women's rights, women's skills, women's voice and contributions, are the entire margin of victory in the fight for prosperity, security and peace.

Yet, no country has achieved gender equality. In the Maldives too, despite the apparent progress made in the advancement of women, there is still plenty of room for development in fully unleashing the potential and power of women.

We stand no chance of meeting any of the Sustainable Development Goals unless we address gender equality, and empower women.

At UNDP, we place women and girls at the heart of all our efforts.

Working together with development partners, UNDP is fully committed to build on our support to national partners and actors to assist the Maldives address barriers facing women.

This includes promoting women's representation and participation at the decision-making level, and increasing their meaningful participation in public life. In doing

so, we ensure that an enabling environment is created for women to thrive - making every woman and girl count.

We once again thank Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as our vibrant and thriving civil society partners - who are the cornerstone of a healthy and prosperous nation.

Our work today will help us strengthen Democratic Governance, and accelerate the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals: from Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, to Reduced Inequalities, leading to Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

Together, let's build a future that works for everyone.

I thank you.

Shukriya. Stay safe and well.

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