



## **Launching Ceremony – Handbooks on Witness and Victim Support Unit (WVSU), PGO’s services**

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**Main Partners: Prosecutor General’s Office, Government of Australia (Department  
of Foreign Affairs and Trade) and UNDP Maldives**

*Wednesday, 11 July 2021, 10:00am - 11:00am Maldives Time, Prosecutor General’s Office*

Prosecutor General Ustaz Hussain Shameem,  
Deputy Director General, Witness and Victim Assessment Unit Siyanath Hashim,  
Colleagues from the PG Office and the Witness and Victim Support Unit,  
Colleagues, and Distinguished Guests.

Assalaamu Alaikum and a very good morning to you all! It is a pleasure to be with you today.

It was an honour for UNDP to support the Prosecutor General’s Office to establish the Witness and Victim Support Unit, originally Victim Support Unit, in 2012. The work the Unit does it crucial: providing specialized information, support, and referral service to victims of crime, witnesses for the prosecution and their immediate families, in matters dealt with by the PG Office.

The COVID-19 crisis has posed emerging challenges to the justice sector all over the world. Now, more than ever, it has become crucial to ensure that justice institutions are responsive to the rights and needs of all people.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to first and foremost congratulate the Prosecutor General’s Office, and the Witness and Victim Support Unit on the important strides you are taking to ensure that even during pandemic-times, the most vulnerable can continue to access vital information. In doing so, you are contributing to ensure justice and the rule of law prevails, as well as people’s confidence and trust in the justice system.

The launch of the six new handbooks today, in support of the work of PG Offices’ Witness and Victim Support Unit, is timely and important. This host of new information materials will, above all, enhance support for victims and witnesses of crime. The handbooks cover essential information, from services rendered by the Witness and Victim Support Unit, to general topics such as prosecution processes, alternatives to prosecution and plea bargain system, and dealing with trauma.

UNDP is pleased to collaborate with PG Office in the development of the handbooks being launched today. We wish to acknowledge the generous support of Government of Australia, namely the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in this important initiative, and for other key development initiatives of UNDP’s Integrated Governance Programme in the Maldives.

I am certain that the information materials being launched today, will contribute greatly to enhance the quality of the services rendered by the Witness and Victim Support Unit, and increase awareness of the victims and witnesses regarding their role in the criminal trial.

In doing so, and in meeting several other important objectives, the handbooks will help contribute towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The principles of the rule of law – equality, equity, inclusion, rights, laws and institutions – are embedded throughout the 2030 Agenda. This initiative contributes specifically towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

In keeping with our commitment to Leave No One Behind, UNDP Maldives looks forward to continuing our support to the initiative to ensure that such significant information is accessible to all. We are thrilled with the plans by PG Office to disseminate the handbooks widely nationwide, both online and in hardcopy, so that it reaches the people most in need.

I wish to thank our partners and stakeholders once again. The Government of Australia makes a significant contribution to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction, with a special focus on strengthening human development. We are grateful for their continued support towards strengthening democratic governance in the Maldives.

We thank our national partners such as the Prosecutor General and His office for the important role you play in ensuring access to justice, and decentralizing services for the people.

Through these robust partnerships, UNDP continues to support work towards strengthening the justice sector and legal frameworks. We are committed to capacity building of governance institutions, alongside efforts to promote access to justice and an informed civil society.

Working together with development partners, UNDP is fully committed to build on our support to national partners to assist the Maldives, in strengthening Democratic Governance, in transitioning to a Blue/Green economy, and in embracing social protection and digitalisation as a means of achieving the SDGs.

Together, we can Build Forward Better.

Shukriya. Stay safe and strong.

Thank you.