Human Rights Commission of the Maldives

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Comments from HRCM to Gender Equality Action Plan sent by the Ministry of Gender and Family

General Comments

- To include specific action points for each strategy instead of a list of actions for each goal and to
 include shorter time frames for each action. This will lead to more effective realization and follow
 up of the specific actions.
- To add a column to specify relevant stakeholders and identify leading party for all the action points.
- To include an activity on identifying gaps between commitments and action taken under the action
 plan and to include HRCM and Ministry of Gender and Family as relevant stakeholders for this
 activity.
- Include civil society organizations with specialized knowledge and access to individuals at grass
 root levels as an important partner in relevant action points and include actions on engaging civil
 society by exchanging information, collaborating on trainings and undertaking joint advocacy.
- To include an action point on the protection of women human rights defenders who may face gender-specific risks and include HRCM and Ministry of Gender and Family as relevant stakeholders for this action.
- To include action points to introduce temporary quota systems for a period of 10 20 years for the judiciary, legislature, executive, local councils, public and private sector businesses.

Specific Comments

- Goal 1: To include more specific action points such as a quota system to ensure equal representation
 at leadership levels in the judiciary, parliament, executive branch, local councils, state and private
 businesses.
- Goal 1: Last policy target: To include a specific target for the percentage of female candidates in local council elections across political parties. We propose this percentage to be at 45%, similar to the target set for increasing percentage of party candidates for parliamentary elections.

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- Goal 1: Strategy 1 To include Ministry of Gender and Family, Attorney General's Office, HRCM, Elections Commission, Political parties, NGOs, Ministry of Education and Media Council as relevant parties/stakeholders for Strategy 1.
- Goal 1: Action point 1.5 To include raising awareness on the advantages of the quota system as part of this action to encourage mandatory and voluntary use of temporary quotas.
- Goal 1: Action 1.6 To identify relevant authority to monitor or review media's coverage and representation of male and female candidates.
- Goal 1: Action 1.6 To add an action point on the importance of countering gender stereotypes such as character assassination or damaging personal attacks on female candidates.
- Goal 1: Action 1.10 Since Parliament sittings usually includes debates on bills, urgent issues and
 questions to executive branch, one way to ensure balanced discussions on all issues in parliament
 can be to make sure that there is sufficient female representation at various committees of the
 Peoples Majlis.
- Goal 1: Action 1.11 To include specific targets for specific bodies at national and local levels such as businesses, councils and regional offices.
- Goal 1: Action 1.12: If it is an unpaid internship, the target group can be school students and paid
 internships can be offered to youth because youth population over 18 years would usually prioritize
 and require wage earning employment.
- Goal 1: Action 1.13: To include more specific actions such as awareness raising programs, capacity building programs, mentorship and coaching programs.
- Goal 1: Action Point 1.14: Add allocation of a separate budget or financial incentives to Women
 Development Committees and to include an action to review and bring necessary amendments to
 the legal mandate of WDCs to give them more autonomy.
- Goal 2: Include an action to amend Employment Act to introduce 30 days paternity leave which
 can be taken by the father after the mother's maternity leave is completed. This is to encourage
 more women to return to employment after giving birth and to encourage fathers to share care
 giving responsibilities.
- Goal 2: Include action points targeting women with disabilities and migrant workers.
- Goal 2: Action Point 2.6: Add 1 year as the time frame to implement flex-time for professional jobs.
- Goal 2: Action Point 2.6: Add 2 years as the time frame to introduce more part-time employment opportunities.



- Goal 2: Action Point 2.6: Add 6 months to 1 year as the time frame to improve options for work from home via the internet.
- Goal 2: Action Point 2.6: Add 2 years as the time frame to link home-based professionals with relevant employers and markets.
- Goal 2: Action Point 2. 7 To include a list of specific fields such as Engineering, Science, Technology, Mathematics, Teaching, Service industry and the Tourism sector where gender disparity exists and include specific actions to improve more equitable gender representation in these fields.
- Goal 2: Action Point 2.8: Include Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender and Family, NGOs,
 Media and Ministry of Youth and Sports as relevant stakeholders.
- Goal 2: Action Point 2.13: To set a target percentage to work towards achieving this action. The target can be set between 30-50%.
- Goal 2: Action Point 2.14: To include specific action points targeting tourist resorts, guest house businesses and other local employers in order to facilitate on-island jobs and jobs in nearby islands which can be accessible after a commute. This will vastly increase employment opportunities for women living in islands outside Male' City.
- Goal 3: Collect data on discrimination in the private sector and undertake promotion strategies to address complaints about women's rights and gender equality. Identify LRA, HRCM, Employment Tribunal, Ministry of Gender and Family and Ministry of Economic Development as relevant stakeholders.
- Goal 3: Set a 2-year period as the time frame for Strategy 1 on strengthening the mandate of Ministry of Gender and Family to enhance responsibility for implementing the National Gender Policy.
- Goal 3: Strategy 6: Add 2 years as the time frame to implement the proposed strategy of creating inter-agency plans to amend the Civil Service Appraisal system to introduce annual gender training or refresher gender trainings.
- Goal 4: Include an action to conduct a follow up research of the UNFPA Report on Gender Based Violence in the Maldives conducted in 2004.
- Goal 4: Include actions to strengthen legal aid and free legal representation for victims of gender based violence.
- Goal 4: Include actions to support civil society organizations and members working for prevention of domestic violence and gender based violence.



- Goal 5: Action Point 5.2 To rephrase it as "Introduce policies to encourage women's participation
 in law enforcement and the judiciary."
- Goal 5: Add actions to strengthen the existing trainings and refreshers to include a gender component for the judiciary.
- Goal 5: Add actions to support and facilitate research on women's access to justice with specific focus on women facing multiple discriminations such as women with disabilities, migrant workers, single women and single mothers.
- Goal 5: Add actions to promote and facilitate access to a judicial remedy for victims of gender based discrimination.

14th September 2017

