



**HRCM's comments to National Suicide Prevention Strategy for Maldives shared by Ministry of Health**

**General Comments**

- To present the information in a way that can represent information and issues from Maldivian context throughout the strategy including social issues in Maldives such as substance use disorder, mental health issues or illness, bullying, self-harm, family problems and divorce rate, especially in the sections such as 'Background Information', 'Suicide in Maldivian Context', 'Vulnerable Groups', 'Key Strategy 1: Table 1' and Key Strategy 2: Table 2'.
- To include statistics from Bureau of Crime Records in Maldives Police Service and other relevant local agencies related to suicide deaths, suicide attempts, suicide ideation, self-harm cases with gender and age group including elderly, adults, adolescents, youth and children.
- To include in-text referencing where statistics are presented to help reader to differentiate global and local statistics.
- To review and do an analysis of relevant current legislations, policies, strategies and action plans including: National Mental Health Policy 2015- 2025 and National Mental Health Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021 developed by Ministry of Health, School Health Policy 2011, National Child Protection Policy 2017, and Anti-Bullying Policy 2019, Incident Reporting Policy in Schools 2015, Suicide Prevention and Referral Policy, School Behavioral Management Policy 2018, Grade 1 Risk Assessment Guideline, Attendance Policy developed by Ministry of Education as well as to review mental health related course modules developed by Maldives National University and to identify strengths and policy gaps in the existing policies and plans.
- To incorporate comments shared by local technical experts in the field of mental health.
- To identify budget required activities and address on allocations of sufficient budget in the strategy.

**Specific Comments**

**SECTION A**

**Suicide prevention is everyone's business**

- To add public and private schools, universities, colleges and health care facilities in key responsible agency list.
- To include 'civil society organisations and private service providers' instead of specifying names of private institutions or agencies in the strategy.

**SECTION B**

**Addressing social factors that contribute towards suicide**

- To highlight social factors that are common in Maldives context such as housing stress, congested living space, substance use disorder, child abuse, issues related to bullying in school and workplace, high divorce rate, broken families, gang violence and domestic

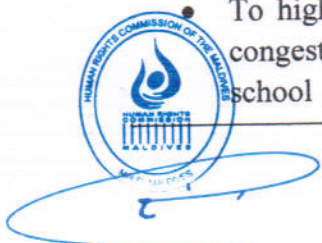








Table 3. Key focus, tasks, outcome indicators and co-ordination agencies/ departments to implement Key strategy III: Surveillance, integrated data collection system, research and evaluation to improve the evidence base and understanding of suicide prevention

- To include a lead agency for each task in the table.

Table 4. Key focus, tasks, outcome indicators and co-ordination agencies/ departments to implement Key strategy IV: Ensuring suicide is one and all’s business

- To add Ministry of Education and schools as key responsible agency under the key focus area ‘Public awareness campaign and activities’.
- To include details of a proper referral mechanism of suicide related cases as well as creating public awareness of the referral mechanism.

Table 5. Key focus, tasks, outcome indicators and co-ordination agencies/ departments to implement Key strategy V: Restricting access to means

- To include a key task on identifying prominent places and means of committing suicide in local context. And to add Ministry of Health as lead agency for this task.
- To include a key task on reviewing Penal Code focusing on decriminalizing the act of suicide and ensuring accessibility of compulsory assistance and rehabilitations legislations and policies. To add Attorney General’s Office as lead agency for this task.
- To add Local Government Authority, Island Councils, Maldives Police Service, Ministry of Defence under Coordination Agencies

SECTION C

- To revise the timeline given in Section C

28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

