



## Policy Dialogue on Private Sector Engagement in Disaster Management

SUPPORTED BY THE STRENGTHENING PREPAREDNESS AND  
RESILIENCE THROUGH INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE  
(SPRING) PROJECT

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09.00 – 15.00, 11th July 2024

Venue: Solite Venue, Ameer Ahmed Magu,  
Malé City, Maldives

## Policy Dialogue on Private Sector Engagement in Disaster Management

Recognizing the critical need for collaborative engagement with the business community in disaster preparedness, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC), and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) organized a Policy Dialogue in Malé City on 11 July 2024. The primary objective of this dialogue was to develop recommendations for private sector engagement in disaster management in the Maldives, which is essential for integrating businesses into preparedness and response efforts. This workshop was supported by the Strengthening Preparedness and Resilience through Inclusive Community Governance in the Maldives (SPRING) program, generously funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

A total of 27 participants attended the workshop, comprising 16 males and 11 females. These participants came from diverse backgrounds, representing a wide range of organizations, including the Ministry of Economic Development, Business Center Corporation, SME Development Finance Corporation, Maldives Ports Limited, Maldives Airports Company Limited, Maldives Association of Tourism Industry, SIGs Maldives, Allied Maldives, UNDP, Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company Ltd (MIFCO), AgroNat, Malé Water & Sewerage Company Pvt. Ltd. (MWSC), Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC), and USAID. The diversity among the participants enriched the discussions, providing varied perspectives and insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by private companies and industries.



Group photo of policy dialogue participants

The workshop commenced with opening remarks from the management teams of the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). MRC Program Manager Ibrahim Shameel and NDMA Deputy Chief Executive Umar Moosa Fikry delivered these remarks. Mr. Umar Moosa Fikry initiated the session by providing the audience with an overview of the disaster-prone landscape in the Maldives and outlining NDMA's ongoing efforts to mitigate these risks. Drawing from recent experiences, he highlighted the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and underscored the importance of collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors in disaster management. He also expressed gratitude for ADPC's initiatives, acknowledging their role in bridging the gap and facilitating coordination between NDMA and the private sector.



*Mr. Umar Moosa Fikry, NDMA Deputy Chief Executive provided opening remarks of the forum*

Subsequently, Mr. Ibrahim Shameel addressed the participants, extending a warm welcome and introducing ADPC. He elaborated on the significance of the SPRING Program, emphasizing its crucial role in fostering collaboration and advancing Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) efforts within the country.

The next session was conducted by Maryam Shizna, Director of Programs, Research, and Advocacy at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Ms. Shizna provided an in-depth overview of the disaster management arrangements and outlined various initiatives to engage the Maldives' private sector. Her presentation highlighted the existing frameworks and strategies to improve disaster preparedness and response through private sector involvement.

Following Ms. Shizna's detailed presentation, the workshop transitioned to a session facilitated by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). The session began with an introduction to ADPC, focusing on its organizational vision of creating safer communities and promoting sustainable development through effective disaster risk reduction strategies. ADPC shared insights into its approach to working with the private sector, emphasizing the critical role of such partnerships in building resilience against disasters.

The facilitation then discussed priority areas for private sector engagement in the Maldives. This discussion aimed to identify key areas where private sector involvement could significantly enhance disaster management efforts.

During the discussions, several challenges faced by different sectors were identified:

1. Tourism Sector: Resorts experience delays in conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) following natural disasters, leading to resorts proceeding with renovations independently without completing EIAs. Consequently, very few disaster incidents are reported to the Ministry of Tourism.

2. Malé Water and Sewerage Company (MWSC): MWSC faces challenges related to the lack of new technologies or flotation systems available. Additionally, the company faces space limitations, capped production capacity due to growing demand, and the absence of contingency stock.
3. Maldives Ports: The ports face inadequate equipment and space, insufficient communication infrastructure, centralized bonding, and a lack of warehouses. These challenges result in repetitive movements and logistical inefficiencies.
4. Media Sector: It was noted that specific policies need to be established regarding the availability and dissemination of alerts at various levels. Authorities and the public need to be more aware of these policies.

NDMA emphasized that specific policies and guidelines are necessary to enhance private sector involvement in disaster risk reduction (DRR). While businesses contribute funding and essentials during response efforts, greater engagement in DRR activities is needed. NDMA also highlighted the importance of making Business Continuity Planning (BCP) mandatory for businesses, ensuring specific equipment requirements, and implementing mandatory occupational health and safety training for all staff.



*Participants contributed to interactive sessions during the workshop*

After the lunch break, NDMA and ADPC led a joint session to discuss priority recommendations for strengthening private sector engagement in the Maldives. This session focused on formulating actionable recommendations to improve public and private disaster management collaboration.

Strengthening private sector engagement in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in the Maldives can significantly enhance the country's resilience to natural hazards. Here are some priority recommendations that were discussed during the discussion sessions:

1. Establish Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Form strategic partnerships between government agencies, private businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to create a collaborative approach to DRR. These partnerships can facilitate resource sharing, expertise, and funding.

2. Incentivize Private Sector Participation: Offer incentives such as tax breaks, grants, or recognition programs for businesses that invest in DRR initiatives. This can encourage more companies to integrate DRR into their operations and community engagement strategies.
3. Develop and Implement DRR Policies for Businesses: Create clear guidelines and policies for private sector participation in DRR. This could include regulations on building codes, risk assessments, and emergency response planning tailored to different industries.
4. Promote Risk Assessment and Management: Encourage businesses to conduct regular risk assessments and implement risk management practices. This could be supported by providing tools, training, and resources for practical risk analysis and mitigation strategies.
5. Enhance Disaster Preparedness and Response: Support businesses in developing and maintaining robust disaster preparedness and response plans. This includes training employees, conducting drills, and establishing communication channels with local emergency services.
6. Foster Innovation and Technology Transfer: Encourage private sector innovation in DRR technologies and solutions. Support research and development in early warning systems, building materials, and disaster-resistant infrastructure.
7. Raise Awareness and Build Capacity: Conduct awareness campaigns and training programs to educate businesses about the importance of DRR and their role in it. This could include workshops, seminars, and information dissemination through industry associations.
8. Strengthen Local Supply Chains: Work with businesses to develop resilient local supply chains that can withstand disaster disruptions. This involves diversifying suppliers, building stockpiles of critical resources, and ensuring continuity of operations.
9. Monitor and Evaluate Engagement Efforts: Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of private sector engagement in DRR. This will help identify gaps, measure impact, and make necessary adjustments to strategies and policies.
10. Facilitate Collaboration with International Organizations: Leverage expertise and resources from international organizations and donors to support private sector engagement in DRR. This can provide additional funding, technical assistance, and best practices from other countries.

The workshop concluded with a summary statement and closing remarks delivered by ADPC. These final remarks encapsulated the key outcomes of the workshop, reinforced the importance of private-sector engagement, and outlined the next steps for implementing the discussed recommendations.

To reinforce continued engagement, participants were informed that they would receive follow-up correspondence including a summary statement and an activity report to try to maintain ongoing support and collaboration in building resilient communities in the Maldives, including private sector entities. The final Summary Statement is attached as an Annex together with this report.

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## Participant List

#	Name	Gender	Organization	Designation	Email
1	Umar Moosa Fikry	M	National Disaster Management Authority	Deputy Chief Executive	<a href="mailto:umar.fikry@ndma.gov.mv">umar.fikry@ndma.gov.mv</a>
2	Kilian Murphy	M	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center	Program Lead	<a href="mailto:kilian.murphy@adpc.net">kilian.murphy@adpc.net</a>
3	Ibrahim Shameel	M	Maldivian Red Crescent	Programs Manager	<a href="mailto:ibrahim.shameel@redcrescent.org.mv">ibrahim.shameel@redcrescent.org.mv</a>
4	Maryam Shizna	F	National Disaster Management Authority	Director	<a href="mailto:mariyam.shizna@ndma.gov.mv">mariyam.shizna@ndma.gov.mv</a>
5	Aishath Ilma	F	National Disaster Management Authority	Development and Resilience Manager	<a href="mailto:aishath.ilma@ndma.gov.mv">aishath.ilma@ndma.gov.mv</a>
6	Fazeela Jaufar	F	National Disaster Management Authority	Senior Training and Advocacy Officer	<a href="mailto:fazeela.jaufaru@ndma.gov.mv">fazeela.jaufaru@ndma.gov.mv</a>
7	Aishath Shiuna	F	National Disaster Management Authority	Development and Resilience Officer	<a href="mailto:aishath.shiuna@ndma.gov.mv">aishath.shiuna@ndma.gov.mv</a>
8	Aminath Shareef	F	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center	Consultant	<a href="mailto:aminath.shareef@adpc.net">aminath.shareef@adpc.net</a>
9	Farouq Ahmed	M	Agronational Corporation (Agronat)	Asst. General Manager	<a href="mailto:Farouq.ahmed@agronatational.mv">Farouq.ahmed@agronatational.mv</a>
10	Yoosuf Naeem	M	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Consultant	<a href="mailto:yoosuf.naeem@trade.gov.mv">yoosuf.naeem@trade.gov.mv</a>
11	Hussain Nuwaas	M	Business Center Corporation	Asst. Manager	<a href="mailto:hussain.nuwaas@bcc.mv">hussain.nuwaas@bcc.mv</a>
12	Zeeba Atho Mohamed	F	Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development	GO (OSH)	<a href="mailto:zeeba.athomohamed@mohe.gov.mv">zeeba.athomohamed@mohe.gov.mv</a>
13	Mohamed Ashham Mujthaba	M	Maldives Water and Sewerage Company	Operations Engineer	<a href="mailto:ashham262@gmail.com">ashham262@gmail.com</a>
14	Fizan Ahmed	M	UNDP	Program Officer	<a href="mailto:fizan.ahmed@undp.org">fizan.ahmed@undp.org</a>
15	Hassan Shiham	M	Allied Insurance	Deputy Manager	<a href="mailto:shiham@allied.mv">shiham@allied.mv</a>
16	Ahmed Shamaan	M	Maldives Ports Ltd	Asst. HSE Officer	<a href="mailto:sham'aan5470@port.mv">sham'aan5470@port.mv</a>

17	Mohamed Abdullah	M	Maldives Airport Company Ltd	GM – OSHEM	<a href="mailto:mohamed.abdulla@macl.aero">mohamed.abdulla@macl.aero</a>
18	Fathimath Shaheedha	F	MIFCO	Manager - Admin	<a href="mailto:fathimath.shaheedha@mifco.mv">fathimath.shaheedha@mifco.mv</a>
19	Mohamed Shabaan Shabau	M	Small Island Geographic Society	Marketing and Communication Assistant	<a href="mailto:mc@signmaldives.org">mc@signmaldives.org</a>
20	Hussain Naseem	M	National Disaster Management Authority	Senior Administrative Officer	<a href="mailto:hussain.naseem@ndma.gov.mv">hussain.naseem@ndma.gov.mv</a>
21	Nazim Habeeb	M	SME DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION (SDFC)	Chief Operating Officer	<a href="mailto:nazim@sdfc.mv">nazim@sdfc.mv</a>
22	Zayan Ismail	M	Maldivian Red Crescent	Program Associate	<a href="mailto:zayanismail@redcrescent.org.mv">zayanismail@redcrescent.org.mv</a>
23	Hana Farook	F	Maldivian Red Crescent	Project Manager	<a href="mailto:hana.farook@redcrescent.org.mv">hana.farook@redcrescent.org.mv</a>
24	Aminath Eema	F	Maldivian Red Crescent	Project Officer	<a href="mailto:aminath.eema@redcrescent.org.mv">aminath.eema@redcrescent.org.mv</a>
25	Aminath Mazuha	F	State Electric Company	General Manager	<a href="mailto:amazuha@stelco.com.mv">amazuha@stelco.com.mv</a>
26	Reena AW	F	Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI)	Communications Strategist	<a href="mailto:reena@matimaldives.com">reena@matimaldives.com</a>
27	Ahmed Nishan	M	Youth Ministry	Consultant	<a href="mailto:ahmed.nishan@youth.gov.mv">ahmed.nishan@youth.gov.mv</a>

# ANNEX

## Summary Statement on Private Sector Engagement in Disaster Risk Management in the Maldives

Policy Dialogue on Private Sector Engagement in Disaster Risk Management in the Maldives

11 July 2024

Malé City, Maldives

The escalating intensity and severity of natural hazards, exacerbated by global climate change, have inflicted significant disruptions on livelihoods and economic stability in the Maldives. This evolving risk landscape not only affects communities but also has adverse impacts on businesses of varying scales, which are integral to the Maldivian economy. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030 underscores the importance of business continuity in fostering resilient communities and economies as it advocates for partnerships that integrate private sector actors into development actions. Disruptions to business operations in times of disasters have profound implications for affected communities. The interdependence between the private and public sectors is evident, as the smooth operation of one is reliant on the stability and functionality of the other.

Building on the existing efforts to engage the business community in resilience building, the participating DRM stakeholders in this policy dialogue aspire to develop recommendations for enhanced private sector engagement in disaster management in the Maldives. This is in view of strengthening the coordination and cooperation between disaster management agencies and private sector entities in the Maldives.

Recognizing the urgency to further integrate businesses into disaster risk management (DRM) and resilience building efforts in the country, the following key areas of action are recommended:

- Enhancing engagement between the private sector and relevant government agencies on mutual concerns related to: (a) policy and regulation; (b) coordination and partnerships; (c) information and capacity building; and (d) incentives for private sector engagement in DRM;
- Establishing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Form strategic partnerships between government agencies, private businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to create a collaborative approach to DRR. These partnerships can facilitate resource sharing, expertise, and funding;
- Establishing or strengthening coordination and collaboration mechanisms with other relevant stakeholders in DRM: This includes local civil society organizations (CSOs), non-government organizations (NGOs), academia, media, development partners, and other relevant entities;
- Increasing awareness among private sector entities: Increase awareness among large corporations about the importance of ensuring the continuity of business operations and building resilience within local communities;
- Incentivize Private Sector Participation: Offer incentives such as tax breaks, grants, or recognition programs for businesses that invest in DRR initiatives. This can encourage



more companies to integrate DRR into their operations and community engagement strategies;

- **Develop and Implement DRR Policies for Businesses:** Create clear guidelines and policies for private sector participation in DRR. This could include regulations on building codes, risk assessments, and emergency response planning tailored to different industries;
- **Promote Risk Assessment and Management:** Encourage businesses to conduct regular risk assessments and implement risk management practices. This could be supported by providing tools, training, and resources for practical risk analysis and mitigation strategies;
- **Enhance Disaster Preparedness and Response:** Support businesses in developing and maintaining robust disaster preparedness and response plans. This includes training employees, conducting drills, and establishing communication channels with local emergency services;
- **Foster Innovation and Technology Transfer:** Encourage private sector innovation in DRR technologies and solutions. Support research and development in early warning systems, building materials, and disaster-resistant infrastructure;
- **Raise Awareness and Build Capacity:** Conduct awareness campaigns and training programs to educate businesses about the importance of DRR and their role in it. This could include workshops, seminars, and information dissemination through industry associations;
- **Providing support to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs):** Support MSMEs, which are typically embedded in local communities and critical to supply chains. This support can help ensure their resilience and capacity to contribute to local disaster risk management efforts;
- **Strengthen Local Supply Chains:** Work with businesses to develop resilient local supply chains that can withstand disaster disruptions. This involves diversifying suppliers, building stockpiles of critical resources, and ensuring continuity of operations;
- **Monitor and Evaluate Engagement Efforts:** Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of private sector engagement in DRR. This will help identify gaps, measure impact, and make necessary adjustments to strategies and policies;
- **Facilitate Collaboration with International Organizations:** Leverage expertise and resources from international organizations and donors to support private sector engagement in DRR. This can provide additional funding, technical assistance, and best practices from other countries; and
- **Complementing and supplementing government efforts in building the resilience of local communities:** Support and enhance government initiatives to strengthen overall community resilience.