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Replies of Maldives to the list of issues in relation to its combined sixth and seventh periodic reports*, **

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** The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



Part I

Replies to the list of issues in relation to the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Maldives (CRC/C/MDV/Q/6-7)

A. Reply to paragraph 2

1. As noted in the Combined 6th and 7th Periodic Reports of the Maldives (“State Report”), reservations to Articles 14 and 21 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (“Convention”) were placed on the basis of Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Maldives (“Constitution”), which states that Islam shall be one of the bases of all the laws in the Maldives, and that no law contrary to any tenet of Islam shall be enacted in the Maldives.

2. The Maldives notes that Islam is a fundamental characteristic of the Maldivian identity. The Maldives has been a Muslim country for over 800 years. The social framework, historic and traditional values have evolved over the decades to be intimately linked to Islamic practices. Islamic values are part of our national identity and national heritage. Therefore, the Maldivian law does not accommodate for freedom of religion and conscience.

3. Similarly, adoption beyond the parameters of fostering is not a prescribed practice in Islam. This creates legislative obstacles in light of Article 10(b) of the Constitution, to integrate these provisions into the Maldivian legal framework and subsequently withdraw the reservations.

4. It is important to note that, in the absence of a legal framework for adoption—as outlined in the State Report—the Maldives has established an effective fostering mechanism. This system is codified under the Act Number 19/2019 (Child Rights Protection Act) (“CRPA”), which provides the legal basis for placing children in alternative care through fostering arrangements, ensuring their protection and well-being in a family environment.

5. Enactment of the CRPA and the Act Number 18/2019 (Juvenile Justice Act) (“JJA”) drastically improved the legislative framework pertaining to children in the Maldives. Both legislations were enacted following thorough consultations with all relevant stakeholders, and in line with international norms. As a result, the transformations that took effect not only significantly altered the institutional framework in this sector, but also introduced new resource-related challenges.

6. At the initial stages of implementation, to ensure a timely roll out of the laws, a Ministerial level Steering Committee was established to identify the tasks allocated to State institutions under the Acts, resources required for implementation, anticipated challenges to implementation and proposed solutions.

7. The CRPA framework has been strengthened through new regulations, including the General Regulation on Child Rights Protection (2020), Regulation on the Council for Protecting the Rights of the Child (2020), Case Management Regulation (2020), Regulation on reuniting children under State care with their families (2021), Foster Regulation (2024) and relevant standard operating procedures (“SOPs”).

8. Implementation of CRPA is ensured through two main national-level programmes. IBAMA (*Ijthimaaee Badhahi Madhahuverin*) is a community-based, multi-sectoral mechanism designed to prevent and respond to violence against children and vulnerable groups, while promoting human rights and ensuring a safe society, in alignment with the Constitution and international conventions. This mechanism aims to overcome fragmented responses, and act as a first point of contact in cases of child rights violations, particularly in island communities, to implement holistic solutions. IBAMA members receive training to assess the needs of vulnerable individuals and create tailored intervention plans. A total of 1,124 members (505 males and 619 females) has been trained till date. The Maldives is on track to expand IBAMA’s presence nationwide by the end of 2025.

9. The second programme, *Haalu Kihineh* (How Are You?), is a preventive community-driven initiative led by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (“MoSFD”) to strengthen communication between the Government and local communities. The programme

focuses on addressing residents' concerns and enhancing community well-being, especially for the vulnerable groups including children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. MoSFD representatives conduct door-to-door visits to assess and address issues and aims to complete visits to all households by 2026.

10. The Maldives believes that effective implementation of the CRPA can only be achieved through comprehensive awareness and training for those working directly with children and families. To this end, a wide range of awareness sessions and trainings have been conducted to ensure effective service delivery in line with established protocols.

11. Key programmes have included clinical supervision training, psychological first aid training, child protection modules, and compassionate care team sessions, alongside specialised programmes such as the *Beleniveriya* Joint Positive Parenting Programme, and awareness on counter-terrorism and fostering of children in State care. Staff have also benefitted from self-care and restorative practices facilitation, family identification training, and a multi-batch Skill Enhancement Programme delivered across regions. Additional capacity-building covered play therapy, mediation, basic first aid, community awareness, and legal and procedural briefings for care workers. In 2024 and 2025, training efforts further targeted staff from Family and Children's Service Centres ("FCSCs"), Villingili Social Service Centre, *Fiyavathi* (the orphanage), and other social care units, addressing areas such as laws and regulations, disability support, emergency response, food and hygiene, and behavioural issues in children. Staff also participated in international programmes on ageing policies, community-based care, leadership, and specialised workshops on gender-based violence ("GBV") and social protection.

12. A review of the CRPA is planned for the last quarter of 2025 to address both current and future challenges.

13. As for the implementation of the JJA, the Department of Juvenile Justice ("DJJ") has developed and endorsed the Juvenile Justice Act Implementation Roadmap (2024–2027), to ensure effective and systematic implementation of the Act.

14. To further reinforce the legislative framework related to the JJA, the following regulations have been introduced:

- (a) Juvenile Justice Regulation (2020);
- (b) Regulation on management of juvenile cases by the Prosecutor General's Office (2021);
- (c) Regulation on the provision of specialised training and the evaluation of individuals who work with children (2021);
- (d) Regulation on a rapid response system for children at risk of offending (2021);
- (e) Regulation on Juvenile Court procedures for criminal cases involving minors (2021);
- (f) Regulation on Children's Residential Centres and Parole Principles (2021);
- (g) Regulation on preparing social assessment reports for children suspected of committing unlawful acts (2021);
- (h) General Regulation on Juvenile Justice (2021);
- (i) Regulation on procedures for investigating cases of children suspected of violating the law (2022);
- (j) Regulation for Children's Residential Centres (2023);
- (k) Regulation on transferring children housed in residential facilities and release under parole (2023);
- (l) Regulation on Children's Correctional Facilities (2025).

15. Since 2021, the DJJ conducted multiple awareness sessions and training programmes on the JJA, juvenile justice system, restorative justice philosophy, diversion, child rights,

parenting skills, and related topics, reaching stakeholders across numerous islands and atolls. A detailed breakdown of these programmes is provided at Annex 1 of these Replies.

16. The Maldives acknowledges the need for an overarching child rights policy. Work is underway to develop a 20-year National Development Plan, that addresses key economic, social, environmental, urban development and governance priorities for the sustainable growth and prosperity of the Maldives by 2040. The Plan expected to be completed in 2026, will be aligned with the Maldives' international commitments under the Convention and its Optional Protocols, and will have legislative backing to ensure continuity across successive administrations.

17. In September 2024, a National Action Plan on Prevention and Response to Violence against Children (2024-2028) ("NAPVAC") was developed and endorsed. NAPVAC focuses on creating safer homes, communities, schools and online spaces for children and strengthening the child protection system. It also defines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders to address existing gaps in combating violence against children.

18. As to appointing new members to the Council for Protecting the Rights of the Child, the composition stipulated in CRPA comprises of representatives from: the MoSFD; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Education; the Maldives Police Service ("MPS"); the Prosecutor General's Office ("PGO") and two representatives from civil society organisations ("CSOs") engaged in the promotion of child rights. This composition encompasses those sectors most relevant to child rights protection. Where necessary, the Council is empowered by law to seek support from any entity or institution deemed necessary for consultation.

B. Reply to paragraph 3

19. In 2022, the Maldives adopted a Program Performance-Based Budgeting¹ approach to link public expenditure with performance indicators and sectoral results. Each year, Ministries submit expenditure proposals aligned with Government policies, which are reviewed and finalised by the Ministry of Finance before parliamentary approval. Following the enactment of the CRPA and JJA, Parliament prioritised adequate budget allocations to support institutional setup and regulatory changes. Budgetary needs are identified during the planning stage, and the MoSFD, together with the Ministry of Finance, continuously monitors utilisation to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

20. The budget for the Child and Family Protection Services ("CFPS") established under the CRPA, is provided through the State budget, with additional funds allocated from the MoSFD's budget to support programmes on preventing child abuse and rights violations.

21. The Parliament's Standing Committee on Human Rights and Gender consults institutions on budgetary needs and submits recommendations to the Budget Committee. In 2021, this process led to an additional MVR 2,300,000 being allocated to the DJJ for diversion programmes and consultancy services.

22. With regard to data collection and accessibility, in 2022, the MoSFD aligned case coding and data collection mechanisms with the CRPA, the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes and the Convention. Monthly child case statistics are now published on MoSFD's social media platforms, while ongoing revisions to coding, data collection, and data-sharing guidelines aim to improve methods, strengthen confidentiality, and ensure alignment with stakeholders to reduce fragmentation.

23. Additionally, the Maldives Bureau of Statistics ("MBS") in 2022, undertook a comprehensive analysis on the situation of children in the Maldives, utilising data from the

¹ Program Performance-Based Budgeting (PBB) in the Maldives – Guidelines for Developing Performance Information, March 2022
<https://www.finance.gov.mv/public/attachments/WvbWN4Nj1MSbZvYXyB2teXXQYCAWwZ8PxDPtuAXL.pdf>.

census.² MBS also continues to publish data infographics on Children's Day, and has partnered with authorities to strengthen administrative data collection for its use for national reporting. Furthermore, MBS publishes statistical yearbooks, which identify social protection allowance spendings, as well as demographic related indicators necessary for policy formulation.³

24. In relation to the mandates of the Children's Ombudsperson's Office ("COO") and the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives ("HRCM"), the COO is a statutory oversight body established under the CRPA. It is mandated to: (a) monitor and ensure State institutions' compliance with the CRPA and the Convention; (a) monitor and evaluate performance of State institutions and employees under the purview of the CRPA; and (c) investigate and review actions of State institutions and employees, concerning the rights and welfare of the child. The HRCM established under the Constitution holds a broader mandate as the National Human Rights Institution, to: (a) promote respect for human rights; (b) promote the protection, development, and attainment of human rights; and (c) monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Maldives. The HRCM is vested with powers to investigate and take steps to secure appropriate redress where human rights have been violated, conduct research and rights advocacy and exercise the additional powers afforded to it under Act Number 6/2006 (Human Rights Commission's Act).

25. While the COO focuses specifically on child rights compliance and child-specific legislation, the HRCM addresses wider human rights issues, with both institutions collaborating and sharing information on cases where mandates intersect. The HRCM and COO also share information acquired from reviews and visits to State care facilities. On a case-by-case basis, both the institutions have undertaken discussions to pursue joint investigations pertaining to child rights violations.

26. Although initial concerns were raised about overlapping functions, the co-existence of the COO and HRCM is recognised as strengthening child rights protection—the COO brings a dedicated focus, child-specific expertise, and a rights-based lens tailored to the unique needs of children, while the HRCM ensures systemic accountability across all sectors.

27. Since its establishment five years ago, the COO has played a pivotal role in advancing child protection efforts, enhancing the visibility of child rights issues, promoting more consistent monitoring of State institutions, and contributing to important legal, policy, and systemic reforms.

28. The HRCM is currently undertaking a Child Rights Legal and Policy Review to identify legislative and enforcement gaps in the current human rights protection framework in the Maldives. This assessment is foreseen to yield, among other findings, potential legislative solutions to conflicts and overlaps between the statutory mandates of HRCM and those assigned to other State institutions, such as the COO.

29. With regard to efforts to ensure the HRCM's effective execution of its mandate and its independence, while persistent resource constraints have posed challenges, the Government continues efforts to provide HRCM with the autonomy and support needed to function effectively. The 2020 amendment to the Human Rights Commission's Act restored HRCM's independence, reversing the Supreme Court's 2014 *suo motu* decision and enabling full engagement with domestic and international bodies, including on treaty obligations as the National Human Rights Institution. Budgetary support, though modest, has been incrementally increased between 2021–2024. Despite these advances, challenges remain, particularly in relation to limited funding and expertise gaps, and the Government remains committed to working closely with HRCM to address these issues and ensure alignment with the Paris Principles.

30. As for the COO, the appointment process is designed to minimise political interference, thereby safeguarding its independence. A separate budget is allocated for the

² Leave no one behind – Children in Maldives <https://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/leave-no-one-behind-children-in-maldives/>.

³ <https://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/yearbook/>.

COO through the State budget every year, with supplementary budgetary allocations made when required.

C. Reply to paragraph 4

31. The principle of non-discrimination is encapsulated in Article 17 of the Constitution and further reinforced in the CRPA in relation to children. Section 6 of the CRPA states that no child shall be discriminated on the basis of the child's or the parents' race, colour, gender, language, political or any other belief, nationality, family heritage, birthplace, social status, disability, financial status or any other factor. Furthermore, the Section goes on to state that no child shall be discriminated on the basis of a parent's or family member's circumstance, action, expression of opinion or belief.

32. The Gender Equality Action Plan (2022-2026) ("GEAP"), sets out five key policy areas, with actions to eliminate gender-based discrimination, including addressing conservative gender role perceptions, improving access to justice and government services, and eliminating GBV.

33. With regard to children with disabilities, Section 18 of CRPA specifically identifies the protection that should be afforded to children with disabilities, stipulating that every child with a disability has the right to a full and dignified life, with equal opportunities for community participation, and has the discretion to make decisions to the extent that their abilities permit and in a manner that does not hinder the dignity of the child. The Act further states that children with disabilities are entitled to special care and protection from their families, community and the State, which is a reiteration of the right enshrined in Article 35 of the Constitution. Act Number 24/2020 (Education Act) also bolsters non-discrimination in education for children with special needs.

34. Furthermore, Section 12 of the CRPA states that every child shall have the right to be protected from physical and mental abuse, neglectful treatment, mistreatment, exploitation, sexual abuse, and any other treatment that may negatively impact the welfare of the child. In line with this provision, one of the key guides for the development of the NAPVAC is that no child should be discriminated against based on their gender, child's parents or legal guardian's background, ethnicity, social origin, disability, birth status or other status, political views, etc. However, any needs arising from their culture, religion, or language are considered when providing child protection services.

35. Regarding children of unmarried parents and non-Muslim parents, they are also entitled to rights, services and protection as any other child, within the Maldivian jurisdiction. This includes the right to birth registration. Any challenges pertaining confirmation of citizenship and nationality stems from the provision encapsulated in Article 9 of the Constitution, which says that citizenship can be afforded to children born to Maldivians.

36. With regard to access to services by children—particularly children with disabilities and children in outer islands—ongoing initiatives such as IBAMA and *Haalu Kihinei* (How Are You?) have strengthened community-based protection and outreach, ensuring that vulnerable children across all islands are identified and supported. Furthermore, inclusive education is advanced through *ShaamiluVeshi* model school projects, focusing on accessible infrastructure, assistive technology, and inclusive pedagogical approaches including universal design for learning, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction.

37. The Maldives considers raising awareness on children's equality essential to transforming community perceptions. In that regard, the HRCM has implemented a range of initiatives to eliminate discrimination and promote inclusion. Over the past five years, these have included reviewing human rights education in the curriculum, the Annual Human Rights Quiz Programme, specialised sessions for teachers and parents on issues such as bullying and discrimination, establishing Human Rights Clubs in schools to promote fairness, equity and non-discrimination, and conducting nationwide public awareness campaigns focused on addressing discrimination against children.

38. Additionally, HRCM investigates cases involving violation of children's right to non-discrimination. Between 2021 – 2024, one such case was reported, concerning access to

education for a child housed at the National Reintegration Centre (“NRC”), which was subsequently resolved in collaboration with relevant Government institutions.

39. Regarding delays in birth registration processes, Act Number 23/2022 (Birth and Death Registration Act) was enacted in 2022, making it mandatory for parents, or guardians where applicable, to register a child’s birth within 7 days, with penalties for non-compliance. The Act also requires registration to be completed within 7 days of submission and ensures that every child born in the Maldives, and every child born to a Maldivian abroad, is issued a Birth Certificate, while children born to Maldivians are additionally issued a National Identity Card.

40. As for children born to a foreign mother, as mentioned above, the citizenship requirements are outlined in Article 9 of the Constitution, which grants citizenship to children born to at least one Maldivian parent, further elaborated in Act Number 4/69 (Maldives Citizenship Act). Therefore, in a situation where a child is born to a foreign mother, a paternal link must be established to a Maldivian to attain citizenship. The Maldives emphasises that all necessary administrative arrangements are made for the child to access basic services, until any judicial processes can be resolved.

41. At present, the Maldives does not have a legal framework governing the prevention of statelessness of children, particularly in situations where it cannot be confirmed that a father of a child born to a foreign mother is a Maldivian. However, as noted above, the Birth and Death Registration Act mandates registration of all births including those of non-citizens to ensure every child has a legal identity. While this is the case, the Maldives acknowledges that the law does not confer citizenship or nationality to the child via this registration.

42. With regard to access to information for children, Section 17 of the CRPA states that every child shall be entitled to acquire and possess information that is required for and will positively impact the child’s social, behavioural and spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing. The Act also enables children to utilise all available national and international sources to acquire such information.

43. In order to empower children towards productive and safe use of online platforms, digital literacy has been incorporated into the NAPVAC as a key component. In schools, school based digital projects and digital devices are provided for a broad-based curricular and to ensure that every child has multiple skill sets.

44. The Family and Child Protection Department of the MPS has conducted numerous awareness sessions in schools across various islands, targeting students, parents, and teachers, sessions primarily focused on child safety and sensitisation, with child online safety incorporated as a key component.

D. Reply to paragraph 5

45. Section 30 of the CRPA states that no child shall be punished or harmed in a ruthless, inhuman or humiliating manner at home or educational institution or institution where the child is housed or any other environment where the child resides, effectively prohibiting corporal punishment in all institutional settings. The Maldives is pleased to inform the Committee that Section 44(a) and Section 44(e)(1) of Act Number 9/2014 (Penal Code of the Maldives) have been repealed by Section 132(b) of the CRPA.

46. Comprehensive and multi-sectoral measures have been implemented in the Maldives to address, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children. Sections 11, 12, 13 and 30 of CRPA firstly, establishes the rights of children to be protected from any form of exploitation, violence, abuse and all forms of corporal punishment, while also establishing mechanisms for reporting violations and ensuring effective interagency referrals.

47. Based on the CRPA framework, the MoSFD has developed SOPs and the Case Management Regulation (2020), which requires MoSFD and CFPS to refer cases to the MPS within 24 hours, ensuring timely coordination between social services and law enforcement. The Regulation is currently under review to strengthen procedures, with updates to be aligned

with the Case Management Procedure Manual for greater clarity, consistency, and effectiveness in inter-agency collaboration.

48. Sections 122–126 of CRPA also establishes punishable offences of exploitation, grooming, neglect, failure to protect a child from harm and failure to report an offence committed against a child to the authorities. In 2024, the Penal Code was amended to introduce cybercrime offences, criminalising the use of computer systems to produce, distribute, or store child pornography, as well as online harassment, threats, or blackmail of children, particularly for sexual exploitation.

49. A notable step in the prevention of violence against children nationally, is the development and the endorsement of the NAPVAC. This comprehensive plan sets out a coordinated framework across five strategic areas:

(a) *Home (Safer Families)*: strengthening early detection and intervention pathways, empowering parents to create nurturing environments, and promoting positive parenting to prevent family breakdown;

(b) *School (Safer Educational Settings)*: reducing bullying, harassment, and violence in schools through evidence-based approaches and capacity building for educators to identify and respond to risks;

(c) *Community (Safer Communities)*: fostering child-friendly environments, mobilising community efforts, and embedding safeguarding practices across sectors, including business and tourism;

(d) *Online (Safer Online Spaces)*: protecting children from online violence by advancing legislative safeguards, institutional mechanisms, and digital literacy to ensure safer use of online platforms;

(e) *Child Protection System and Services*: strengthening multi-sectoral mechanisms, improving institutional responses, aligning laws and policies, and prioritising prevention alongside protection.

50. Through these strategic areas, NAPVAC directly addresses sexual violence and GBV, abuse, neglect, domestic violence (“DV”), and online abuse, ensuring a whole-of-society approach to protect children and align national efforts with international standards. Importantly, NAPVAC incorporates a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that establishes measurable outcomes, reporting lines, and timelines to track progress across all strategic areas. The Government will review progress periodically and adapt measures as necessary to achieve the overarching goal of ensuring that all children in the Maldives live free from violence.

51. Community-based apparatus such as IBAMA and *Haalu Kihineh* (How Are You?) serve as the first point of detection, and adopts a preventive approach, prioritising early detection and identification of vulnerable children. Both mechanisms being community driven and multisectoral, are perfectly positioned to initiate multifaceted interventions.

52. The Child Helpline (1412), established under the CRPA, serves as the Maldives’ primary 24-hour reporting channel for children in need, ensuring immediate assistance and protection. Cases reported are managed under the Case Management Regulation (2020), with MoSFD providing specialised training for helpline staff to strengthen emergency response and child safeguarding. All reported cases receive follow-up, including protective measures, social inquiry assessments, and welfare assignments required for court proceedings.

53. The HRCM also conducts advocacy and awareness programmes to inform the public and stakeholders on lodging child rights violation cases and on issues such as children’s rights, discrimination, bullying, torture, DV and GBV, and sexual harassment. It also collaborates with CSOs to identify challenges faced by children and strengthen joint efforts to address rights violations more effectively.

54. As for DV and GBV, in February 2025, the Maldives endorsed an updated Procedure Manual and Referral Pathway on GBV and DV, establishing survivor-centred, standardised guidelines for case management, specific protocols for different types of GBV, tailored approaches for diverse survivor groups, and frameworks for inter-agency coordination and

referral pathways, which includes CSOs. To implement this, MoSFD is rolling out social worker training using a Training of Trainers (“ToT”) model.

55. Additionally, the Family Protection Authority (“FPA”) has in 2024, developed Minimum Standards for DV Service Delivery, based on victim-centric approaches and best practices, providing minimum standards for the social, health, law enforcement sector and advocacy work. FPA has also introduced safety plan templates for social workers to protect survivors and their children across home, work, public, and digital spaces.

56. In terms of legislative reform, work is underway to review Act Number 3/2012 (Domestic Violence Prevention Act).

57. On the prevention end, a publicly accessible Child Sex Offender Database⁴ was launched in 2023, in collaboration with the PGO, enabling identification of individuals convicted of sexual offences against children. The Database allows searches by name, national identification number, or address, and provides details on location, sentencing, and completion status, with information retained for 10 years after sentence completion. The MoSFD is currently reviewing and strengthening this system.

58. Capacity building is a significant component of strengthening institutional response to all forms of violence against children. In that regard, trainings and awareness sessions conducted for social workers, law enforcement and the general public by MoSFD and FPA are detailed in Annex 2 of these Replies.

59. In 2024, the training for newly appointed judges and magistrates on DV and GBV was revised to emphasise survivor-centric approaches, covering the impact of victimisation, power and control dynamics, effects on children, and reasons victims may hesitate to report, while guiding judges on ensuring survivor protection in such cases. Details of sessions conducted for the judiciary is included in Annex 3 of these Replies.

60. With regard to cases of child marriages, the Maldives notes that Section 25 of the CRPA sets the legal age of marriage at 18 years of age and expressly prohibits child marriages.

E. Reply to paragraph 6

61. The MoSFD is in the process of reviewing and reforming the daycare system in the Maldives. This initiative aims to introduce targeted daycare subsidies and implement structural improvements to ensure greater accessibility, affordability, and availability of quality daycare services nationwide.

62. The GEAP also contains an action to introduce and implement the facilitation of affordable and accessible childcare options for working men and women through workable subsidies for safe and quality childcare institutions. Several state-owned enterprises have already begun providing subsidies for childcare services, with some (and the MoSFD) having established childcare spaces to increase accessibility for working parents. Further work is underway to strengthen this initiative.

63. As noted above, the regulatory framework pertaining to fostering has been codified in the CRPA, and subsequent regulations have strengthened the system. Section 98 of CRPA mandates the Minister to set up a mechanism to foster children who, for various reasons cannot be with their own families. Accordingly, Section 99 – 107 of the Act stipulates the procedure to foster children. A new Foster Regulation (2024) has been published, allowing for fostering through two main avenues—temporary fostering and permanent fostering through transfer of legal guardianship. The Regulation establishes the Foster Care Panel as the primary decision-making body in this regard.

64. Under the new Regulation, foster families are eligible to receive a monetary allowance from the Government. To further incentivise and support foster families, monthly financial assistance of MVR 5,000 has been introduced for individuals providing temporary foster care.

⁴ <https://aamahi.pgo.mv/child-offenders>.

65. To strengthen the foster system and promote fostering, the MoSFD has enhanced monitoring of foster families and launched advocacy campaigns on parenting. A tailored Parenting Programme is provided to approved foster parents recommended by the Foster Care Panel, with content customised to individual needs identified through case reviews and consultations with caseworkers, ensuring responsive and relevant support.

66. The Maldives notes that the concept of establishing smaller State care homes (*Amaan Veshi*) in the atolls have positively contributed to addressing the stigma attached to children in alternative care homes. Programmes such as *Konme Kujjakah Aaaila Eh* (A Family for Every Child) and programmes dedicated for fostering are actively working to address this stigma by changing public perception towards children in alternative care.

67. HRCM's monitoring visits to childcare facilities located in the islands, revealed limited public awareness regarding the circumstances and needs of the children being brought to the centres. To address this, the MoSFD produced the television drama *Aaila* (Family), which portrays fostering, challenges stereotypes, and highlights the resilience of children in State care, thereby reducing stigma and fostering inclusivity.

68. HRCM conducts regular awareness sessions on general human rights and anti-torture principles for staff members of State care facilities. These programmes are designed with a special focus on children's rights, to ensure that they do not harbour or exhibit any form of stigma toward the children in their care. Additionally, the sessions empower staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond appropriately if discriminatory attitudes or behaviours are observed among others within the facility. HRCM is also planning a legal review to examine challenges faced by alternative care centres.

69. A Youth Resilience Programme was also conducted in 2023 for children aged 16-18 in State care. The programme equipped children in State care with skills and licenses for employment in the water sports sector, empowering them as skilled professionals while addressing stigma through visibility and fostering broader societal change. Within the education system, schools implement regular programmes on tolerance, acceptance, and anti-bullying.

70. With regard to relocation of children in alternative care for short periods of time, the Maldives assures that it is not done as a form of punishment, but rather in the best interest of the child, such as for better opportunities for internship or better education. The Regulation on reuniting children under State care with their families (2021) emphasises that the child's primary care worker should adequately prepare the child before shifting alternative care facilities. Such decisions are made only when necessary and strict safeguards are in place to ensure the child's protection, security, and best interest. The SOPs established under the Regulation outline the procedures for transferring children from alternative care settings.

71. With regard to raising awareness, particularly among religious and community leaders about *kafalah* and its benefits, under the *Konme Kujjakah Aaaila Eh* (A Family for Every Child) programme, awareness activities have been conducted with Government ministries and through public outreach via radio and television, to promote greater understanding of the system. Additionally, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs have been raising awareness through Friday sermons, regular lectures in mosques and through media.

72. During training visits under IBAMA, meetings are also conducted with community leaders across various islands to raise awareness and share information on the importance and benefits of fostering. In the past year, such engagements were held on 13 islands in Baa Atoll, boosting community support for fostering.

F. Reply to paragraph 7

73. The Maldives has implemented targeted measures to safeguard the rights of children with disabilities, ensuring their protection, inclusion, and equal access to services. As noted above, the IBAMA mechanism acts to prevent and respond to all issues faced by children, including children with disabilities. Additionally, the Community-Based Rehabilitation programme launched in 2021, which extended social protection services to all children with disabilities in remote islands, have now been integrated into IBAMA.

74. In January 2023, a significant milestone was reached when The National Registry of Persons with Disabilities was launched. As of September 2025, a total of 14,790 individuals has been registered, out of which 4959 are children (1490 female and 3469 male). The Registry facilitates access to financial support such as the Disability Allowance, as well as assistive devices and therapeutic services.

75. The National Social Protection Agency (“NSPA”) also updates and maintains information of registered individuals. Work is underway to develop the Maldives’ Priority Assistive Product List to meet the specific needs of persons with disabilities, including children.

76. Another significant policy measure taken is the endorsement of the National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion (“NAPDI”) in 2025. The NAPDI developed with extensive consultation, is expected to guide the implementation of Act Number 8/2010 (The Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Provision of Financial Assistance Act) (“Disability Act”). The Plan specifically emphasises the rights and well-being of children with disabilities under five policy goals:

- (a) *Health and Well-being*: Ensuring access to quality healthcare, support services, and assistive technologies;
- (b) *Quality Education*: Promoting inclusive and accessible education across all regions;
- (c) *Decent Work*: Laying the foundation for future employment opportunities;
- (d) *Inclusive Communities*: Building safe, accessible environments, including measures to prevent bullying and violence; and
- (e) *Access to Justice*: Guaranteeing equal legal protection and support services for children with disabilities.

77. In order to reduce the prevalence of disabilities through preventive measures, the Maldives is working to strengthen the Growth Monitoring and Promotion programme and digitise child health records. A structured system has been developed to track children’s developmental milestones and promptly identify potential risks. An Early Identification Committee has been established to guide early detection and prevention strategies, supported by technical meetings and a referral pathway for children needing further assessment.

78. The Child Nutrition and Growth Module has been launched through the Maldives Integrated Health Information System, to enable early screening, detection of developmental delays, and timely intervention. A beneficiary portal is under development to provide parents with online access to their children’s health records. Work is also underway to mandate Growth Monitoring and Promotion visits in schools, to ensure that every child is monitored consistently throughout the first five years of life.

79. To enhance the quality of therapy services provided for children with disabilities, three out of five National Therapy Protocols (Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Therapy and Audiological Clinical Services, and Early Learning and Development Services) have been finalised and published to standardise evidence-based care practices, ensuring equitable access to specialised support. These standards define the roles and responsibilities of service providers, therapists, educators, families, and the NSPA.

80. Healthcare providers work with families to raise awareness and enable early detection and diagnosis of impairments, ensuring timely access to services. Where needed, the NSPA facilitates financial support for therapeutic services, physiological assessments, and assistive devices.

G. Reply to paragraph 8

81. Access to healthcare is ensured for all citizens of the Maldives through the universal health insurance scheme, *Aasandha*. Health facilities are established on all inhabited islands, with services structured according to a grading system based on the population size of each

island or atoll. Outreach services from central hospitals are organised to lower-level facilities both on need and regular basis, to deliver equitable, accessible and quality healthcare services.

82. Regarding maternal and child health rights, the CRPA mandates the State to provide adequate healthcare to children, which includes maternal healthcare services and any other healthcare services essential for the child and the mother of the child, from the time of conception.

83. The Maldives National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2025) continue to be in force as a roadmap to improve maternal health services in the Maldives. In December 2022, the Maldives launched the National Guideline on Antenatal and Postnatal Care in the Maldives.

84. In terms of improving mental health services in regional and atoll level facilities, human resource requirements have been incorporated into the Central and Regional Mental Health Services Plan (2022-2025)⁵. Further, the Ministry of Health has conducted the *mhGAP* training—a World Health Organization package on mental health to address the gap in service provision—in 5 regions, and plans to cover all the atolls within 2 years.

85. To prevent non-communicable diseases (“NCDs”), initiatives to improve nutrition and reduce NCDs include the implementation of the National Multi-sectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs in Maldives (2023- 2031)⁶ and the First 1000 Days Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy, which promote healthy diets, exclusive breastfeeding, and improved infant and young child feeding practices.

86. Ongoing micronutrient supplementation programmes—such as Vitamin A distribution, deworming, and iron/folic acid provision for pregnant women—are actively in place. Efforts are also underway to revitalise the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, partially implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and build healthcare provider capacity.

87. Nutrition and physical activity have been incorporated into school curricula, while partnerships with other sectors and CSOs are expanding outreach. As part of implementation of the Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy, public education efforts include a published recipe book, a video series, and awareness campaign materials. Nutrition-specific interventions are being conducted across 12 islands in 4 atolls.

88. Additionally, the Maldives Food and Drug Authority is actively working to regulate food advertisements and reduce the marketing of unhealthy beverages to children. Guidelines for healthy events and physical activity have been introduced, and advocacy for sugar-sweetened beverage taxation continues to curb consumption. Established food-based dietary guidelines and capacity-building initiatives further support healthy eating.

89. The ongoing NCD Campaign “25 by 30” aims to reduce NCD-related deaths by 25% by 2030, with NCD care increasingly integrated into primary healthcare services. To support this goal, the National Physical Activity Policy has been endorsed, under which awareness sessions on healthy eating, risk factors, causes, and the importance of physical activity are being conducted across different age groups. Furthermore, hospital-based national NCD interventions are implemented in line with the Global NCD Action Plan.

90. Access to sexual and reproductive health (“SRH”) services and education are improved through multi-stakeholder collaboration and organised health services. School counsellors and public health staff have been trained in adolescent and SRH, enabling them to provide accurate information to students, teachers, and parents. The Ministry of Health partners with CSOs and media to deliver nationwide SRH awareness, focusing on youth and maternal health.

91. All health facilities in the atolls offer SRH services and information, with referral systems to higher levels of care and medical supplies, and comprehensive cost coverage through the national health insurance scheme *Aasandha*.

⁵ <https://health.gov.mv/storage/uploads/NAq7Loeg/opbcrit8.pdf>.

⁶ <https://health.gov.mv/storage/uploads/4YEzn1qe/mzxb7cmh.pdf>.

92. Age-appropriate SRH education is included in the national curriculum, covering puberty, reproductive health, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections, with a commitment to strengthen life-skills-based SRH education.

93. Additionally, an interactive mobile application developed by a CSO serves as a platform to facilitate access to adolescent SRH information, offering young people a user-friendly and confidential source of support and education.

94. To improve mental health services, a National Centre for Mental Health was established in 2019. Additionally, the national health insurance scheme *Aasandha* now covers certain mental health treatments. The Mental Health Helpline was established in February 2024, with over 10900 calls received so far, out of which approximately 120 calls were made by children. Furthermore, the National Mental Health Strategic Action Plan 2025-2029⁷ was endorsed in February 2025 and work is underway to finalise the Mental Health Bill.

95. As for decentralisation of mental health services, the Central and Regional Mental Health Services Plan (2022-2025) introduces a four-tier decentralisation model extending services from Malé to regional, atoll, and island levels. The Plan envisages development of regional hospitals as multidisciplinary hubs supported by outreach clinics and telemedicine to link island facilities to specialist services. It also introduces a referral pathway, staff training, and monitoring systems to ensure equitable nationwide access.

96. To increase the number of well-trained and qualified mental health professionals working with children, training areas have been identified, including counselling, psychology, social work, psychiatric nursing, speech therapy and occupational therapy, with long term courses underway.

97. Between 2021 and 2025, staff from the Ministry of Health, the National Centre for Mental Health, regional hospitals, FCSCs, and other institutions participated in international and regional engagements on child and adolescent mental health, psychosocial support, deinstitutionalisation, and community mental health networks. Additionally, several professionals are currently pursuing postgraduate studies in fields directly relevant to child mental health, supported under the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Scholarship scheme.

98. The Maldives has made significant ground breaking achievement in tobacco control. In November 2024, the First Amendment to the Act Number 15/2010 (Tobacco Control Act) was enacted to prohibit the import, sale, free distribution, and use of e-cigarettes, vaping devices, and products designed for use with such devices in the Maldives. Notably, the Amendment raises the legal age for tobacco sales to 21, requires identity verification, and prohibits involving under-21s in sales.

99. The Second Amendment to the Tobacco Control Act was enacted in May 2025, introducing a generational ban prohibiting the sale, purchase, and use of tobacco products for individuals born on or after 1 January 2007.

100. The health sector conducts regular awareness campaigns through social media, NCD initiatives, and school health programmes, supported by orientations and guidelines for school health officers and teachers. Tobacco cessation services are available nationwide, including nicotine replacement therapy under the national health insurance scheme *Aasandha*. These services are adolescent friendly and accessible to school children. A quitline has also been operational since November 2024.

H. Reply to paragraph 9

101. NSPA implements social protection schemes under Act Number 2/2014 (Social Protection Act) and the Disability Act to address child poverty, including single parent, foster parent, food assistance, and disability allowances. Eligible single parents receive MVR 1000

⁷ <https://health.gov.mv/storage/uploads/7wzEkvoW/bwjwjfot.pdf>.

per child (up to MVR 10,000), while foster parents get MVR 1000 per foster child plus MVR 500 for the guardian/foster parent.

102. Maldivian communities are extremely vulnerable to climate change effects, including natural disasters. In February 2025, the Government launched the Maldives National Climate Action Plan towards Resilience and Low-Carbon Development⁸, which recognises the need to raise awareness on climate-related public health issues and to enhance children's participation in disaster preparedness and resilience. To address this, the Plan proposes locally tailored campaigns focusing on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups, including children.

103. To address air pollution, the Maldives joined the Global BreatheLife Network in 2019, aiming to raise awareness and improve public health, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children. The Maldives has also conducted a health impact assessment in Malé, and developed the BreatheLife Action Plan (2021–2025), focused on building healthcare provider capacity, increasing public engagement, raising awareness on air quality conditions, and encouraging preventive and protective measures.

104. The Maldives is also developing a low-carbon, climate-resilient health system through green, climate-smart hospital policies, the Health National Adaptation Plan, and the “Green Smart Island” initiative in four islands, alongside healthy city/island programmes that promote environmentally responsible behaviours, particularly among children.

105. The Third Nationally Determined Contribution⁹ address and incorporates the vulnerability of children and youth to the impacts of climate change, and emphasises strengthening support, outreach, skills training, and inclusive participation in climate action to empower children and youth and enhance their resilience.

I. Reply to paragraph 10

106. The Department of Inclusive Education established within the Ministry of Education since 2019, undertakes the primary mandate to create a system of inclusiveness. In 2021, the Department formulated a working document on the “Inclusive Education Guidelines and Adaptations to Support the Implementation of the National Curriculum”, which outlines the inclusive education policy, and the corresponding differentiated teaching strategies. Currently, there are 6703 children with disabilities enrolled in Maldivian schools.

107. In August 2022, the Maldives established a Skills and Innovation Training Center in Malé, to provide vocational education and training to students, including those with complex learning profiles. In 2022, the Maldives also launched the first-ever screen-reading software using Dhivehi Language, to allow accessibility of social platforms for blind children.

108. In 2023, a Guideline on Early Identification Screening Tool was published, to enable accessibility of teaching standards and to establish a systemic early intervention contact point for children with disabilities, outlining development milestones and scoring criteria for assessment.

109. Additionally, the Enhancing Education Development Project supported the development of inclusivity hubs in schools. Under this Project, the National Institute of Education received technical assistance to establish a delivery mechanism for inclusive education. Furthermore, technical and vocational laboratories in 28 selected schools, are being set up, with plans to expand.

110. In May 2025, the Maldives launched an initiative to address a shortage of 600 teachers to adequately support students with special needs. This will be achieved through a specialised training programme and by procuring modern, tailored educational resources to support special needs instruction. While 571 teachers have been trained in inclusive education previously, under this new initiative, an additional 150 teachers are being trained.

⁸ <https://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/news/31496>.

⁹ <https://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/download/31493>.

111. A table with information on additional training and capacity building efforts undertaken by the Department of Inclusive Education is provided in Annex 4 of these Replies.

112. To address low secondary school enrolment, a study on barriers to progression is underway, to inform policy and programmatic interventions. Furthermore, the Maldives Atoll Education Development Project aims to improve secondary-level learning outcomes in key subjects and expand vocational education. Nationwide expansion of A-Level programmes and the reopening of Centre for Higher Secondary Education campuses in Malé and Hulhumalé have already boosted enrolment by 77%, and discussions are ongoing to make A-Level the compulsory final stage of secondary education.

113. In the area of higher education and skills development, initiatives led by the Maldives National Skills Development Authority include the development of marketing materials to raise public awareness on vocational education and training programmes, and the formulation of 121 National Competency Standards aligned with national skill development needs. The National Apprenticeship Training and Recognition framework has been completed and is currently awaiting approval for the Prior Learning Framework. Capacity building efforts are also underway, focusing on the training of staff and national assessors, along with the development of a comprehensive National Vocational Framework.

114. Since the enactment of the Education Act, the Ministry of Education has made early childhood education compulsory for all children, ensuring universal access across the country.

115. In 2024, the Maldives launched a national teacher training programme under the *Thauleemah Ingilaabee Badhalu* (Revolutionary Change to Education) Project to address teacher shortages, especially in high-need subjects and remote islands. In its first round, 135 scholarships were awarded to A' Level students, who completed a Teaching Foundation Course alongside their studies, with a pathway into teaching degree programmes.

J. Reply to paragraph 11

116. With regard to children working in family businesses and labour inspection, as noted in the State Report, the CRPA and the General Regulation on Child Rights Protection (2020) elaborates on the rules around children engaging in work.

117. During routine labour inspections, the Labour Relations Authority checks for minors in workplaces. If underage employment is found, compliance with the Act Number 2/2008 (Employment Act) and General Regulation on Child Rights Protection (2020) is assessed, and non-compliant establishments receive guidance through a recommendation letter to take corrective action and ensure future compliance.

118. In terms of training for prosecution of child labour cases, the PGO been a constant participant and facilitator in all juvenile justice training programmes conducted by the DJJ, which include substantive modules on child labour laws and regulations.

119. Following the enactment of the JJA, the DJJ undertook a comprehensive review of its organisational structure and significantly increased the number of juvenile justice officers. A Departmental Procedure Manual has been developed to guide DJJ's operations. A ToT module has also been developed, and 31 participants were trained as trainers. These trainers subsequently facilitated 8 juvenile justice training sessions, reaching a total of 231 stakeholders, including representatives from the MPS, the PGO, Juvenile Court, Maldives Correctional Service, MoSFD, National Drug Agency, and the Drug Court.

120. In further capacity-building efforts, 20 DJJ staff members received training as restorative justice facilitators, and 7 staff were trained on a newly developed parenting manual designed for parents of children with substance use issues or those in conflict with the law. Additional training and capacity-building activities are planned under the Juvenile Justice Act Implementation Roadmap (2024–2027).

121. In May 2025, PGO and the United Nations Children's Fund ("UNICEF") hosted a three-day National Juvenile Justice Conference with 16 agencies, focusing on closing systemic gaps and developing child-focused strategies for juvenile crime prevention, intervention, diversion, rehabilitation, reintegration, and non-custodial measures.

122. Among the three types of facilities mandated to the DJJ, two have already been established: the Juvenile Halfway House, launched on 30 January 2025, and a temporary Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre, established on 17 April 2025. Both centers are currently housed in the same building, each with a bed capacity of six, and are equipped with child-friendly facilities.

123. To protect the rights of children in conflict with the law, the DJJ ensures all minors have legal counsel through the State legal aid mechanism at every stage of the justice process. For drug-related offences, DJJ officers work with the National Drug Agency on rehabilitation plans and remain engaged throughout the process.

124. The DJJ continues to enhance its capacity and promote a restorative approach in line with the JJA. A Risk Assessment and Diversion Programme Implementation Workshop was conducted, bringing together DJJ staff and relevant stakeholders. Additionally, DJJ co-organised a roundtable discussion on restorative justice, which explored existing restorative justice mechanisms. The DJJ also conducts awareness sessions for communities, targeting students, parents, and stakeholders to promote better understanding of juvenile justice principles and practices.

125. The concept of Hope Island is a cabinet endorsed plan to address and support at-risk children and youth to transform into productive individuals in the community. The plan will be implemented in support of children deemed vulnerable due to being subjected to exploitation in some form. The Maldives notes that children as young as 11 years of age in the Maldives, have been recruited into gangs, with them being used to commit serious and violent crimes abusing the legal protections afforded to children. Due to wider social issues, the Government faces an uphill battle in pulling these children away from the grasp of the criminal groups, while they remain in the broader society. Oversight bodies, including the COO agree with this assertion.

126. Therefore, the concept of Hope Island, is intended only to provide such children with rehabilitation in a controlled environment, ensuring a future for them where they can take care of themselves and the society they live in. To ensure this, a wide range of academic, sports and skill-based programmes will be included as a part of their rehabilitation. The children will also have access to their families and the outside world, removed from the congested urban society filled with crimes that they knew.

127. In execution of this plan, the Maldives will position safeguards to prevent children from being stigmatised. The Maldives also fully understands and acknowledges that the issue of children offending the law is symptomatic of broader societal issues. As such, the concept of Hope Island will be implemented in line with holistic social protection solutions.

128. On the judicial side, the Juvenile Court has, since December 2020, maintained a strong focus on non-custodial measures and rehabilitative sentencing for children in conflict with the law. Custodial sentences have been reserved for serious or repeat offenses. Since the JJA, 24 children were found guilty and sentenced. A table containing data on juvenile cases and outcomes is provided in Annex 5 of these Replies.

129. With regard to the age of criminal responsibility, the Maldives notes that the recently enacted CRPA and the JJA have established the age of criminal responsibility in the Maldives at 15 years. At present, there is no Government policy aimed at lowering this age. However, the Government is increasingly concerned about the exploitation of children by criminal groups, who appear to be taking advantage of the current legal threshold to involve minors in illegal activities. In response to these concerns, the Government has emphasised that any potential legislative review in this area will be approached with careful consideration of the Maldives' obligations under international human rights conventions, and will be conducted in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a rights-based and well-informed process.

K. Reply to paragraph 12

130. The CRPA and Act Number 12/2009 (Special Provisions Act to Deal with Child Sex Offenders), effectively criminalise the sale of children, child prostitution, and child

pornography. Additionally, the NAPVAC includes initiatives targeting the business sector—particularly the travel and tourism industry—by promoting the establishment of child protection and safeguarding policies to ensure that environments frequented by children uphold the highest standards of safety and protection.

131. Under the NAPVAC, the MPS in partnership with UNICEF, implements the Child Safe Tourism programme, with awareness and protective measures to prevent child exploitation in the tourism sector. Between 2022–2024, MPS, trained 128 individuals (parents, teachers, frontline police, and tourism workers) in six locations, to promote child-safe tourism and enhance child protection awareness.

L. Reply to paragraph 13

132. The Maldives acknowledges the emerging issue of violent extremism and radicalisation and is addressing it through the implementation of the National Action Plan on Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism. This Action Plan is currently being reworked to address home grown threats, include components of prevention and a success evaluation matrix.

133. The Maldives has taken proactive measures to prevent Maldivians travelling to conflict zones, ensure their safe return and ensure accountability of individuals who may have perpetrated acts of terrorism in the conflict regions. To that end, comprehensive amendments to Act Number 32/2015 (Anti-Terrorism Act) have been introduced in recent years, to establish travelling to conflict zones to engage in hostilities as a criminal offence, and outline procedures of rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees.

134. As per the obligation under Section 18 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, a list of terrorist organisations and conflict zones have been published in October 2023 and amended in December 2024, and will be updated annually.

135. The NRC established in October 2020 under the Anti-Terrorism Act, is responsible for providing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for Maldivians repatriated from conflict zones. Its role includes assessing individuals and delivering tailored support. Before admission, a risk assessment—differentiated for children—is conducted by trained officers. The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Committee oversees the quality and suitability of NRC's individual programmes, evaluating each phase of the process. NRC's operations and standards are governed by the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Regulation.

136. Rehabilitation of those who return from the conflict zones involves providing medical care, counselling, education, vocational training, and psychosocial support along with religious interventions. For children, programmes are specialised to help them recover from trauma, reintegrate into society and start their formal education in the age-appropriate level.

137. So far, a total of 26 individuals (including 18 children) has been repatriated back to the Maldives, with all reintegrated back into society as of September 2025.

Part II

M. Reply to paragraph 14

138. The Maldives notes that key laws and regulations have been enacted since submission of the State Report, which include:

Laws

(a) Third Amendment to the Anti-Terrorism Act - 15 December 2021: better defines returnees, and enhances the procedures relating to returnees, especially children belonging to such families, maintaining a presumption that children are victims of terrorism unless otherwise established in a risk assessment conducted by a specialised committee. Rules pertaining to registration of children born in warzones are also covered;

- (b) Civil Procedure Act – 16 December 2021: the first consolidated civil procedure code of the country;
- (c) Associations Act – 9 May 2022: governs the particulars of exercising the right to form associations provided for in Article 30(b) of the Constitution;
- (d) Evidence Act – 18 July 2022: overhauls the outdated evidence law of 1976, specifying evidentiary procedures in civil and criminal proceedings;
- (e) Birth and Death Registration Act – 18 December 2022: governs registration of births, formal declaration of deaths, issuing of national identification cards, and prescribes penalties for the breach of law;
- (f) First Amendment to Tobacco Control Act – 13 November 2024: prohibits the import, sale, distribution, and use of e-cigarettes, vaping devices, and related products;
- (g) Sixth Amendment to Penal Code of the Maldives – 17 December 2024: introduces cybercrime offences;
- (h) First Amendment to Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act – 17 December 2024: enhances international cooperation on cybercrime;
- (i) Second Amendment to the Tobacco Control Act – 21 May 2025: imposes a generational ban on smoking and prohibits access to tobacco products for future generations;
- (j) Prevention of Gang and Other Serious Offences Act – 25 May 2025: replaces earlier ineffective legislation and addresses gang-related and serious organised crime by defining offenses and penalties, expanding law enforcement powers, introducing child protection measures, and establishing monitoring systems for high-risk individuals;

Regulations and Guidelines

- (k) Guideline on Registering Children born in Conflict Zones - 23 January 2022: addresses returnee children;
- (l) First Amendment to the Regulation on Provision of Financial Allowances to Foster Families – 10 March 2022: covers the procedure to apply for the financial allowance, and the rules pertaining to its approval and revocation;
- (m) Regulation on procedures for investigating cases of children suspected of violating the law – 27 March 2022: details the procedure of initiation of the investigation through a report, categorisation of the submitted cases, law enforcement powers, the parameters of questioning and use of force with children, the rules pertaining to investigation and rights afforded to children under investigation;
- (n) First Amendment to the Regulation on management of juvenile cases by the Prosecutor General's Office – 19 October 2022: amends the procedure for deciding on sending cases for diversion;
- (o) First Amendment to General Regulation on Child Rights Protection – 24 January 2023: revises the categories of work in which child employment is prohibited, while also specifying forms of work where children over the age of 16 may engage for training or family business purposes with appropriate supervision;
- (p) Regulation for Children's Residential Centres - 26 February 2023: determines the rules governing residential facilities, minimum standards, programmes and services, safeguards to protection of rights of children in the facilities, and arrangements necessary for the wellbeing of the child including, education and skills trainings;
- (q) First Amendment to the Regulation on the Council for Protecting the Rights of the Child – 6 March 2023: introduces procedural guidelines pertinent to the functioning of the Council;
- (r) Regulation on transferring children housed in residential facilities and release under parole - 19 March 2023: applies to children in conflict with the law who were serving a sentence in a correctional facility at the time of enactment of the JJA, and stipulates that

the underlying principle of transfer should be the best interest of the child, provision of more liberty than the correctional facility and effective reintegration into society;

(s) Guideline on the Children’s Ombudsperson’s approved parameters to disclose information relating to vulnerable children – 11 June 2023: sets parameters for disclosing information about vulnerable children in the media, prioritising the child’s best interests and dignity;

(t) Second Amendment to the Regulation on reuniting children under State care with their families – 30 January 2024: adds a psychologist or counsellor of CFPS as a member of the Committee stipulated in the Regulation;

(u) Foster Regulation – 4 February 2024: stipulates rules applicable to the fostering system in the Maldives;

(v) First Amendment to Foster Regulation – 5 February 2025: introduces a transitional provision until a new foster panel is constituted under the new Regulation;

(w) Regulation on Children’s Correctional Facilities – 16 June 2025: stipulates the procedures for operations and management of children’s correctional facilities;

(x) Second Amendment to Foster Regulation – 25 August 2025: introduces procedures for temporary fostering.

139. As for new institutions since the submission of the State Report, additional children’s shelters (*Amaan Veshi*) have been established in H.A. Dhidhoo, Sh. Funadhoo, N. Manadhoo, B. Eydhafushi, Dh. Kudahuvadhoo, L. Fonadhoo and Fuvahmulah City.

140. Recently introduced programmes include the *Komme Kujjakah Aailaa Eh* (A Family for Every Child) initiative, launched as part of the “First 14 Weeks Roadmap” of the Government, which focuses on fostering and family reintegration.

141. Furthermore, as noted above, NAPVAC is now under implementation, enhancing national level collaboration to reduce the overall risk and vulnerability of children to violence and exploitation.

142. State children’s shelters have been reorganised to group children by age categories, to provide more tailored, age-appropriate care and services.

143. With regard to recent ratifications of human rights instruments, the Maldives ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance on 31 July 2023, becoming party to eight core international human rights treaties.

Part III

N. Reply to paragraph 15

144. Budget lines allocated to the MoSFD, including allocation to institutions involved in child rights protection is detailed in Annex 6 of these Replies.

O. Reply to paragraph 16

145. Data on prosecution and conviction of cases on violence against children and DV are provided in Annex 7 of these Replies.

146. Data on child marriage cases are provided in Annex 8 of these Replies.

P. Reply to paragraph 17

147. Data on children separated from their families and are under State care is provided in Annex 9 of these Replies.

148. Data on children within the fostering mechanism is provided in Annex 10 of these Replies.

Q. Reply to paragraph 18

149. Disaggregated data on children with disabilities is provided in Annex 11 of these Replies. Data on children with disabilities under State care are provided in Annex 12, and data on children with disabilities in schools are provided in Annex 13 of these Replies.

150. Additionally, according to data available at MoSFD, in the past 3 years, only 1 child was abandoned by the family.

R. Reply to paragraph 19

151. Data on children who came into contact with law enforcement is provided in Annex 14 of these Replies.

152. A total of 9 cases has been referred for diversion. Out of these, 5 were referred to by the MPS (4 cases currently in progress and 1 successfully completed) and 4 were referred to by PGO (2 in progress, 1 completed and 1 concluded without completion).

153. A table detailing data on children in pre-trial detention is provided at Annex 15 of these Replies.

154. Data on children held in detention is provided at Annex 16 of these Replies.

S. Reply to paragraph 20

155. During budget planning, priorities are guided by the Convention, Sustainable Development Goals, and CRPA, with programmes designed around identified needs and a child rights-based approach applied throughout to keep children's well-being central.

T. Reply to paragraphs 21 and 22

156. The responsible Ministry for child rights was renamed the Ministry of Social and Family Development, while its child welfare and protection mandate remains the same.

157. The 2025 national budget reflects increased prioritisation of social protection with higher allocations for the CFPS, FCSCs, and Case Management Division in comparison to 2022. Ongoing efforts are focused on strengthening a centralised database on vulnerable children and families, including children with special needs, in collaboration with UNICEF.

Conclusion

158. The Maldives notes that significant steps have been taken to advance the protection and promotion of children's rights since the submission of the State Report. While recognising the remaining challenges, particularly in relation to resources and capacity, the Government reaffirms its commitment to addressing gaps and sustaining progress in line with the Convention. The Maldives assures the Committee of its unwavering dedication to safeguarding the rights and well-being of all children in the Maldives, and looks forward to engaging constructively during the dialogue.
