National Security Policy 2012

Government of the Republic of Maldives

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FOREWORD

I take great pleasure in introducing the Government's first National Security Policy.

With the adoption of this Policy, the Maldives is adopting a comprehensive approach towards eliminating threats to national security. This Policy document will pave the way towards identifying and prioritising various threats to national security. It will enable the Government to achieve greater policy coherence and synergy among, and between, the relevant agencies of the State. The Policy would also enable the Maldives to achieve a more result-oriented, and goals-based approach to national security.

Today, countries face security threats emanating from myriad of sources. In the complex web of security threats, the traditional distinction between internal and external threats is increasingly becoming blurred. At the same time, nation-States are increasingly required to shift their focus from securing the national borders through the use of military force, to a more human centred approach to security. This National Security Policy takes into consideration some of the key issues and assumptions of the human security paradigm.

Yet, we are also mindful of the fact that the Maldives is the smallest country in South Asia, and we should not be under any illusions about the extent of our vulnerabilities to external threats. The vulnerabilities are manifested in various aspects of the country's national life; from political to social harmony, and from economic to environmental security. My Government is committed to building the country's resilience to reduce and mitigate these vulnerabilities. This National Security Policy provides a framework for further strengthening that resilience. It envisions Maldives as a safe, secure, and prosperous country: a country that is able to defend its territory and sovereignty and a nation that can protect and promote the rights of its citizens.

Mohamed Waheed
President

1. Introduction

1. The purpose of the National Security Policy (NSP) is to guide the various other policies and strategies of the State towards protecting and promoting the Maldives's political independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity, as well as the well-being of Maldivians. It is the overarching policy document of the State, based on which all other policies are formulated.

2. The NSP lays down the fundamental and core values of the State, and provides a framework for coordinating cross-cutting, and inter-related issues and concerns that may impinge on national security. It identifies the strategic priorities so that scarce resources can be allocated in a prioritized manner.

3. The President of Maldives, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, has the primary responsibility for managing the country's national security. As such, the President's Office, in collaboration with other relevant agencies of the State, formulates the NSP.

4. The NSP focuses on five elements: (1) national defence; (2) human and societal security; (3) economic and resource security; (4) political stability; and (5) environmental security.

2. Defining National Security in Maldivian Context

5. As defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Maldives (2008) in Chapter 13, Article 274, 'a threat to national security' means a threat to the independence and sovereignty of the Maldives, or a threat of major damage to people's lives, or property'. This definition includes terrorist attacks and acts of aggression committed using weapons. Thus, national security is the combined protection of the territory (including the Exclusive Economic Zone) of the Maldives, its social, economic, and physical environment.

6. The Maldives is a low-lying archipelago, located in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Its minute size, extremely narrow resource base, and geographic proximity to global maritime trading routes and conflict zones make the country vulnerable to a number of natural and human induced threats. Furthermore, securing and serving the interests of a population of approx. 350,000 people settled in over 190 islands, which is dispersed over 115,300 square kilometres of sea pose a constant challenge for national security agencies in the country.

7. Although in terms of its small landmass (less than 350 square kilometres) and small population size, the Maldives may be considered a small player in the geostrategic sense, the country has recently intensified its engagement with the international community, playing a leading role in global issues such as human rights and climate change.

8. Due to its geographic location and its small size, the Maldives is often required to be mindful of the competing interests, of other states, particularly in the region.

9. While the Maldives's graduation from the list least developed country (LDC) status to a middle-income country is a welcome shift, it also meant that the Maldives would no longer have access to concessional financing from external agencies. With worsening fiscal situation in the country, the loss of concessional financing also meant that the country would be more vulnerable to external financial and economic pressures.

10. The Maldives currently is in transition to democracy. The emergencies of political parties in a society that has never had a culture of political pluralism, together with the loss of traditional social institutions have posed significant challenge for the State to assert its authority and maintain and promote social cohesion and political stability

11. Perspectives such as national interests, threat perceptions, sensitivities, level of power, socio-economical and political dimensions, regional and global standpoints, resources and capabilities, all vary from one state to the other. Most importantly, due to the characteristics of 'smallness,' a small state, in general, is vulnerable to an extensive range of threats and challenges. Many who do not favour 'the level of power' as a line of comparison in identifying the national security aspects of states, nevertheless agrees that 'micro' and 'mini' states are exceptions.

12. Small states are immensely vulnerable to small groups of mercenaries, and it is the relative weakness of these states that identifies their special national security problems and needs. Hence, traditional Realist paradigm of national security, which addresses traditional threat,' when applied to small states, such as the Maldives, seems to be a far more problematic and an irrelevant concept. Thus, there are arguments for broadening the concept of national security of small states, which call for the inclusion of a wide range of other issues. Such issues range from terrorism, violence related to religious extremism, drug trafficking, piracy, poaching, security of industries (such as tourism and fisheries industries in the Maldives), ecological issues such as environmental degradation, natural disasters and so forth.

3. Vision

13. The Maldives will remain a unitary Republic, capable of protecting and defending its political independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, promoting national unity, upholding the principles of democracy, good governance and human rights, and creating an environment of justice peace and tranquillity, conducive to the realisation of full human potential of the Maldivian citizens.

4. Strategic Environment

14. Maldives is an 1192 island archipelago stretching from Latitude 7 Degree North to 1 Degree South. The Maldivian archipelago stretches 823 km north to south and 130 km east to west. Just over 780 km west of Sri Lanka and 500 km south of Indian subcontinent, locates the Maldives roughly in the very middle of the maritime trade route of the Indian Ocean. This geostrategic location and increasing maritime trade in the Indian Ocean region has already enhanced the importance of the Maldives in global and regional security scenario.

4.1 Global Environment

15. The end of the Cold War heralded a new era of geopolitical relationships. The bipolar world became a unipolar, which is now increasingly seen as a multipolar world. Since early 1990s, there has been a paradigm shift in the threat perception from traditional threat to threats emerging from failed states, non-state actors, armed gangs and super-empowered individuals. Their political ideology, social and religious zealousness, and the fanaticism of some of these groups and individuals are supplanted on an obliging audience, especially in the Pan-Asian region.

16. The events of 9/11 manifested themselves as an indicator of the scale and magnitude of the transformation that had taken place in the global geopolitical landscape. Terrorism is no longer bound within the confines of a single state; it had become 'globalized.'

17. At the same time, the increasing frequency, lethality, and the indiscriminate nature of attacks conducted by international terrorist networks, armed groups, and even individuals have forced the security forces to re-evaluate how they view and deal with these issues both domestically and internationally. In addition to terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and various other manifestations of organized crime, and natural and human induced disasters are impacting on national security.

4.2 Regional Environment

18. The Indian subcontinent region has had a history of violence that has manifested itself in conventional and unconventional conflicts. Some countries in the South Asian region have become bases for international and transnational terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, and groups with limited geographic reach such as Taliban, Tahrike Taliban, and Lashkare-eTaiba (LeT), Lashkar Jhangvi (LJ), and Harkatul-Jihad-Al-Islami. These groups have shown unprecedented commitment in their resolve to attack and eliminate anyone who rejects their ideology. Since, all of these groups operate in the banner of promoting global Islam, and that the Maldives is a Muslim nation, the country is particularly vulnerable to the influences of these groups.

19. In addition, the killing of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan has shifted the security paradigm in South Asia making the security environment even more volatile due to backlashes from Al-Qaeda and the Taliban to avenge Bin Laden's death.

20. The regional security dynamics is further complicated by the presence of several 'undesirables'; one of the chief being the trafficking of narcotics within the Indian Ocean region. The two primary hubs for narco-production and trafficking, namely the 'Golden Crescent' (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) and the 'Golden Triangle' (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam), lie within the region, and the waterways of the Indian Ocean provide ideal routes for their transfer to the markets in Asia and beyond. In addition to the menace of narcotics smuggling, there exist linkages between other organized crime syndicates, insurgent and terrorist groups and money-laundering networks, as well as human trafficking networks leading to the rise of criminal nexuses.

21. The security of the region is further jeopardized by the presence of states that has only juridical sovereignty over its territories. Dubbed as 'failed states', they create insecurity for their neighbours with their inability to maintain internal security within their state. Threats such as maritime piracy, the operation of mercenaries and even terrorism, to some extent are fuelled by the presence of lawlessness prevalent within such states.

22. It is a fact that a large numbers of the planet's natural disasters, unfortunately, happen to strike in the proximity of South Asia. The Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 demonstrated the level of death and destruction that can be brought to our region by a natural disaster. Earth quakes, violent weather patterns, climate change, global warming, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, frequent floods and droughts are already taking its toll on our region's security and stability. The potential impact of these natural disasters and its consequences on society and the security of the region need to be addressed and assessed.

4.3 Domestic Environment

23. The Maldives existed in isolation for centuries. The resulting community is ethnically, culturally and socially homogenous to a unique extent. The onset of globalization and the introduction of tourism to Maldives exposed us to the outside world. The rapid international exposure and the increase in the number of Maldivians travelling abroad for educational, business and other purposes brought a few alien concepts and ways of thinking and behaviour to our shores. Subsequently, it is important to study our present social, economic, political and religious environment and its effects on the society.

4.3.1 Social Environment

24. There is a remarkable level of homogeneity in the Maldives. Maldivians are of a single race, and speak the same language.

25. Yet, in the recent years, some alarming trends have been emerging in the society, which has begun to undermine the social fabric of the nation. Foremost is the proliferation of drug abuse. Drug related crimes are on the rise and the number of drug addicts is excessively high, given our small population. Secondly, gang violence and organized crime have been increasing at a steady rate. Thirdly, due to youth bulge and the increase in the amount of school leavers, the job market is inundated with school leavers expecting an administrative job. The job market needs to be diversified to cater for this growing demand from the school leavers to diminish the effects of the unemployed youth.

4.3.2 Economic Environment

26. Economically, the Maldivian society is one of the most affluent in South Asia. There are no perceivable economic conditions that could be exploited by anti-State elements to adversely impact National Security. As of 2011, the GDP per capita in the Maldives is USD 6,499. On average, even a Maldivian unskilled labourer earns at least MRF 200.00 (approx. USD 12.97) per day, even in the least developed islands. However, a progressive income tax and a more distributive business profit tax would further reduce income disparities.

27. In spite of the above-mentioned affluence, the Maldivian economy is very vulnerable to both external as well as domestic factors. The downturn in the economy following the September 11th incident in the United States and more recently the adverse effects from the Global Financial Crisis showed the susceptibility of the Maldivian economy to global events. The Asian Tsunami of 2004 proved that the Maldivian economy is vulnerable to natural disasters as well.

28. There is a substantial portion of young school leavers who are semi-skilled, waiting for an administrative level job opportunity. The government and the commercial industry need to work together to increase job opportunities in this sector. Additional efforts need to be put in place to create a larger skilled workforce. The school leavers, whose educational standard restricts them from going for further academic studies, need to be given some form of vocational training to increase their economic output. In addition, there exists an irregularity between the school leaving age and the legal age for employment.

29. Maldivian economy is heavily dependent on its tourism industry and a seasonal fishing industry. Both industries have a high degree of unreliability. It is imperative that the government diversify the economy to include other industries, such as traditional industries like agriculture and boat building, which the government, in collaboration with the private sector, is in the process of reviving.

30. The current macroeconomic imbalances has driven up inflation and raised the cost of living. Maldives is an import dependant country, and this continues to burden the economy.

4.3.3 Religious Environment

31. All Maldivians are Sunni Muslims. There are no major differences in the religious practices and norms. The Maldivians have been following the Shafi School for generations. There was complete homogeneity in Religion and religious practices. Till the 1970s the religious clerics were University educated scholars from Al Azhar of Egypt, where they teach and practice the same school of thought of Islam.
32. This homogeneity is rapidly diminishing today. There is an increased fear of religious disharmony. Today we see a large number of clerics coming into the country with different schools of thought preaching their ideologies in the Maldives. Some of these clerics are returning home with a more radicalized version of Islam. Assessing the government and the nation through a lens of radical ideology would suggest that the government is apostate because of its liberal, pro-Western, and democratic ideals as opposed to a theocratic and anti-Western ideology preached by such groups.

33. The capture and detainment of Ibrahim Fauzee by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is evidence of the fact that ties exist between various terrorist outfits and the radicalized segment of the Maldivian public. Subsequent events such as the detainment of two Maldivian youth suspected of travelling to Jihadist training camps and the fate of two Maldivian boys who died in Kashmir and Ali Jaleel of H. Moscowge carrying out a suicide attack on the ISI HQ in Lahore in May 2009 supports the evidence. However, the effort put by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has diminished the extremist ideology among some of the extreme cases. This is highlighted in the US state Department's country report which states "The Government of Maldives recognized that counter radicalization efforts form a critical component to long-term success against violent extremism, and has pursued initiatives to counter violent extremism. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs implemented a program designed to mobilize religious and social leaders to work against all forms of violence in society, including religious extremism that leads to violence. The Ministry conducted over 15 seminars and workshops for religious leaders, educators, and local government officials. Several of these workshops included participants from across the country."

34. Different groups exploited the 2004 Tsunami to make inroads into the Maldivian public. Donations, gifts, and moral support were extended through different Islamic religious groups and Christian missionary groups. Apprehension of nine Maldivian youth in the Waziristan region of Pakistan was another indicator that the ties between these radical groups and the radicalized youth of Maldives had grown stronger. The standoff in AA.Himandhoo between the extremist group and security forces was exploited by Al-Qaeda in one of its propaganda videos, calling the Muslim brethren to help Muslims suffering in Maldives.

35. Terrorist act of detonating an IED in the Sultan Park on 29th September 2007 could be the beginning of terror motivated by religion in the Maldives unless rapid actions are taken to curb the spread of extremist ideologies in the country in social, political, and religious arena.

4.3.4 Political Environment

36. The social transformation of the Maldivian society in terms of both education and economy did not reflect an equal transformation in the politics. The Maldives' democratic transition began after the former President Gayoom established a formal reform program in June 2004. This plan called for significant changes to the country's constitution and political structures.

37. From 2004 to 2008, the Maldives underwent a series of political upheavals, with large protests, referendums and high levels of change to the country's public institutions. The culmination of the reform process was the ratification of the constitution on the 7th August 2008 and was strengthened by the holding of the Maldives' first democratic multiparty Presidential elections in October 2008.

38. The introduction of Multi Party Democracy in such a short period of time and the sudden culmination of the process without embedding the democratic values in the society resulted in the formation of huge rifts in the politico social fabric of the society. A substantial fraction of households and families have felt the political rift to the extent that it has started affecting their family values.

39. However, the democratic transition is not yet complete. Rapid changes in a relatively short period of time have resulted in significant changes across the country, and consolidating this democratic change is an everyday challenge for all sectors of the country. Infant institutions, a slow and stumbling legislative process and a tight fiscal environment are realities that must be considered an integral part of the present national political environment.

40. The government needs to facilitate the emergence of a strong opposition party, to safeguard against the possibility of a weak coalition government. A weak coalition government could be prone to blackmail from small parties which represent a minority view.

41. A presidential decree paved the way for the formation of political parties. Until today, there is no concrete body of legislature governing the formation, activities, and operation of political parties in the Maldives. The promulgation of such legislature would impose prerequisite limits on the activities of the political parties and pave the way for smoother functioning.

5. Threats/ Concerns

42. National security is a state or condition of permanent protection of our norms, values and beliefs, our democratic way of life, our institutions of governance and our unity, welfare and well-being as a nation and people, from all sources of threats and aggressions. Furthermore, persistent protection of territorial integrity, national critical infrastructures, natural resources and economy, our fragile environment, political stability, ctural cohesiveness, moral and spiritual harmony, and external peace enhance national security.

43. As Maldives accelerate in democracy, economic and social changes, various internal sources as well as external sources and global climate changes and environmental issues threaten the national security of the Maldives.

44. Threats are grouped in to three dimensions including Environmental, Internal and External.

5.1 Environmental Threats

45. Environmental threats are unpredictable. In many cases these are low probability high impact threats. Environmental issues and natural disasters are major long-term security threats and an issue of survivability of the nation. Climate Change and Sea Level Rise, and Environmental degradation are major security concerns of the Maldives. Floods, wave surges, tsunami and earthquakes, though not very frequent in Maldives, its impact in terms of human casualties and infrastructure damage is grave and risky.

46. Seasonal droughts during the February to April period results in shortages of safe drinking water across a large cross section of Maldivian islands. The rain water harvesting and distribution facilities and their quality control mechanisms need to be improved to ensure the continued supply of safe drinking water and provide water security.

47. Population growth, resource utilization, urbanization, industrialization and pollution will impact on climate and weather patterns of the globe, damage fragile environments, and put more pressure on social security and public health management systems.

48. Geographically dispersed atolls and islands make it harder to manage all crisis and humanitarian assistance efforts efficiently at national level in a short period of time. While economic constraints remain as the major concern for the developments of the islands.

5.1.1 Climate Change

49. Global climate change is a real threat to the existence and viability of the Maldives due to its vulnerability to the adverse impact of climate change. Maldives being one of the most land scarce and low lying vulnerable island nations, the country is exposed to the risk of intensifying weather events such as extreme weather events, droughts, flooding and storm surges. Climate Change policy has been top of the political agenda of the Maldives for decades although Maldives' contribution to the cause of climate change (Greenhouse Gas emission) is relatively insignificant. With the melting of polar ice caps, the Maldives is also exposed to the risk of sea-level rise. Further sea level rise is projected within the range of 10 to 100 centimeters by the year 2100, in the worst case scenario, and could be inundated, according to the 4th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

50. A rise in average global temperatures would result in the bleaching of coral reefs, increased periods of drought, availability of fresh water, food and natural resource shortages. Maldives has long been advocating the threats and challenges caused by climate change in a number of international forums and were the first country to highlight the plight of Small Island Developing States. Maldives was also instrumental in formation of Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS), an alliance to lobby, to advocate and to fight against climate change. AOSIS has been calling the international community to reduce the GHG emissions that would prevent dangerous climate change that could potentially threaten the survival of Small Island Developing states like the Maldives.

51. As a small island developing state, Maldives is inherently vulnerable to climate change. The natural ecosystem is dependent on the coral reefs of which Maldives has the 8th largest in the world, covering 4513 km². The reefs are the bedrock of the country, providing shelter, protection, food, and livelihoods. The El Nino weather pattern in 1998, which caused a rise in sea level temperatures across the Indian Ocean, demonstrated the adverse impact a rise in sea temperature could have on the Maldives, when it was estimated that 90% of the Maldives' shallow coral reefs experienced a high degree of bleaching.

52. In a state that is highly dependent on vulnerable domestic natural resources, the impact of climate change can be devastating, ranging from damage to critical national infrastructure, loss of livelihoods, and food and water shortages. The Maldives is highly dependent on foreign imports of basic goods and climate change related global food shortages would heavily affect the local population as well as the imports which drive the country's tourist industry.

5.1.2 Natural Disasters

53. Another aspect of environmental security is the impact of natural disasters. In the Maldivian context the largest natural disaster to take place was the Boxing Day tsunami of December 2004, triggered by the 9.3 level earthquake which struck off the west coast of Sumatra.

54. The Maldives were hit by waves ranging between 1 and 5m high, resulting in 110 deaths and damages to 69 of 199 inhabited islands. According to the Asian Development Bank, the Maldives were one of the worst affected countries on a per capita basis, as the tsunami affected services that account for 2/3 of Maldives' GDP.

55. As a result of the tsunami, there was an increase in coastal zone erosion, solid waste was dispersed around the islands, ground water supplies were contaminated, the soil became salinized and communication and electricity disruptions were felt across majority of islands.

56. Although not on the scale of a tsunami, seasonal monsoons also produce large tidal wave surges which cause small scale damage to the more vulnerable islands in the country.

Maldives Marine Research Centre - http://www.mrc.gov.mv/index.php/mrc_content/coral_reefs/
Maldives Post- Tsunami Environmental Assessment Report: United Nations Environmental Program: 2005

57. While natural disasters pose tremendous challenges to the security of Maldives, the level and capacity within the national disaster response mechanism is dismal. Maldives lacks an overarching disaster response mechanism, as well as mobility and transportation platforms and communication networks.

5.1.3 Marine Pollution

58. The increased traffic of petroleum and other marine pollutants by ships and its impact on fishing and tourism industry has become an area of grave concern for the Maldives. The Indian Ocean SLOC's through the Maldivian waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone has become a major sea route to transit these oils and other toxic material across the Indian Ocean. The potential impact of a spill on our delicate marine environment, fishing industry and tourism industry is both unprecedented and disastrous. The economic and environmental cost of such an incident could very well cost us our country. Hence we believe that illegal discharging of bilges, dumping of toxic wastes and oil in the unregulated waters of Indian Ocean needs a collective effort from all nations.

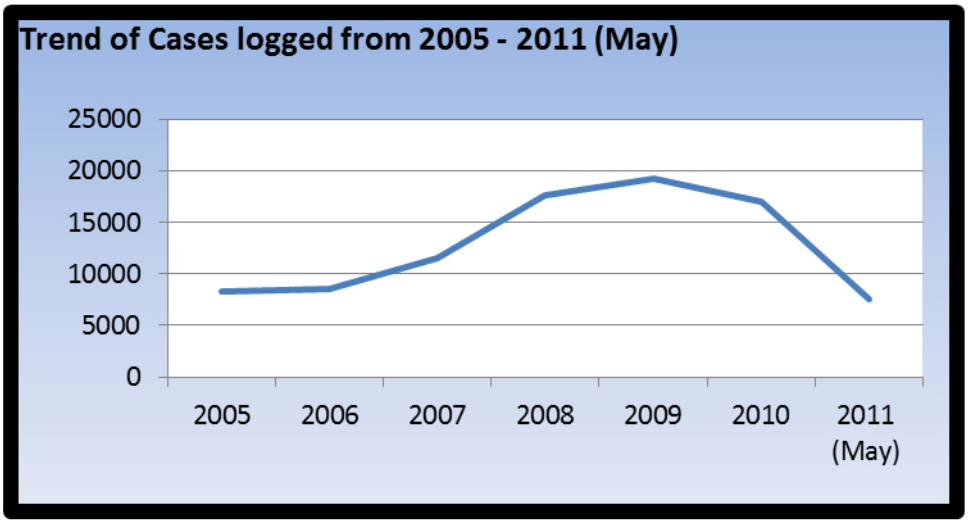
5.2 Internal threats

59. Internal threats are the second area of concern in the national security environment of the Maldives. These threats range from National level threats to Individual level threats.

5.2.1 Crimes

60. Crime rates in the Maldives increased significantly from 2007, declining in 2010. 2010 records show a crime reported every 30 minutes in the year. Crime trends over the last 5 years show a decrease in the number of incidents of crime, which have been logged by the Maldives Police Service. However, the perception of crime, and the fear of crime, although not quantitatively researched, seems to be high. It is felt that in relation to the population (approx 360,000) of the Maldives, the rate of crime is high. Crime rates in the capital city, Male' are naturally higher due to the size of the population of Male' (approx. 110,000).

61. There are numerous socio-economic issues which have led to this rise in criminal activity, including overcrowding (dense population), shortage of housing, broken families, and the lack of leisure and employment opportunities among the youth of the country. These factors combined with a high percentage of the population abusing narcotics and a weak criminal justice system has produced an environment favourable for criminals and a lot of challenges for law enforcement agencies.



Source: Police Statistics

62. Crime (violence, drugs, and financial crime) and Extremist ideologies and terrorism fall into the very high and high priority categories. This prioritization came about through the analysis of the crime statistics available to the MPS and a range of social analysis tools, PESTELO and horizon scanning. The current risk level for violence/gang violence, drugs and alcohol, and terrorist threat is extreme, while the risk level for theft and robbery, maritime Security and cyber crime is high.

63. Rising crime and violent extremism are the two most prominent domestic threats to national security. Without systematic prevention programs and a stronger implementation of the criminal justice system, it will be increasingly challenging to secure public security.

64. A high crime rate has disastrous implications for national security including:

    a. Negative impact on the economy, largely to the tourism industry through lack of a secure

environment
b. Loss of investor confidence
c. Increased levels of public spending to confront rising crime
d. Maldives seen as a favourable site for global criminal activity (recruitment for global terrorist movements)
e. Social and political instability

65. Intent: Crime is committed inherently for the fulfillment of self-interest – be it for economic gain, to fuel an addiction, or for survival. With reference to organized crime and gangs, the intent is often to defend and maintain control of their chosen territory, use criminal activity to fund their lifestyles and to establish authority/dominance over others. The intention of drug traffickers is primarily financial gain. With a UNODC report (2008) estimating that drug addicts make up 10% of the Maldivian population, drugs are a lucrative business in the country. Drug addicts also prove to be useful tools to use in other criminal activities, such as petty theft and politically motivated violence.

66. Capability: The number of criminal incidents logged in 2010 showed a decrease from the previous years. This could be due to greater enforcement of the law on the part of the authorities, especially in relation to drug abuse. However, criminal offenders and crime groups have also successfully demonstrated their capability in adjusting to new environments, finding more innovative methods to commit crimes, including newly emerging cyber crimes, blackmail and financial fraud. Organised crime groups/gangs have shown their capability in committing violence/crime, as they do it with impunity. Unless there is a constant high police presence, gang activity is not restricted. Affiliation of gangs with high profile politicians or public figures has allowed them to them to act without consideration of the law.

67. Vulnerability: Loopholes in legislation resulting in the weakness of the criminal justice system allow criminals to take advantage, avoid justice, and consistently reoffend. Limited resources, capacity and coordination among the law enforcement/criminal justice agencies results in ad hoc stop – gap policies, rather than long term prevention.

5.2.1.1 Organized crimes

68. Organized crime is a major source of instability and a national security concern. Emerging organized crimes such as counterfeiting, money laundering and smuggling undermines the economy (economic sabotage), financial system and the nation's resources.

69. There has been a rise in the number of gang violence, resulting in numerous deaths and an intensification of the Maldives Police Service (MPS)'s counter gang operations. The MPS has identified 40 gangs, which operate in the Maldives, with each gang averaging 20-30 members. Gangs have a long history in Maldives, but the nature of their activities and the level of violence had significantly changed within the last 3 – 5 years. Gangs are involved in drug abuse/trade, frequently commit assault and carry out robberies. What is of note is the number of gang violence related deaths that have occurred

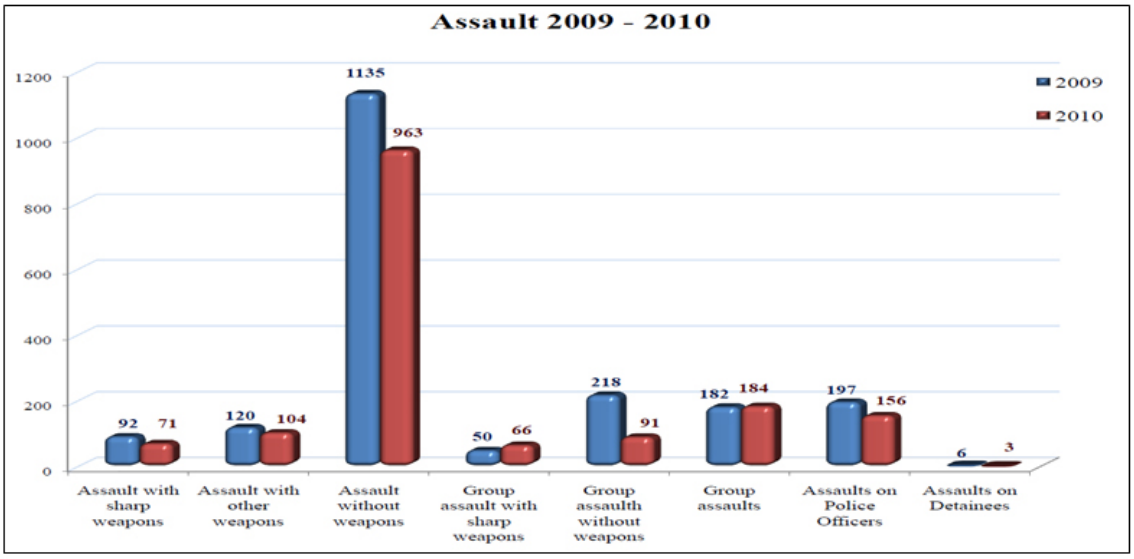
within the last 3 years. Most crimes are committed by males between the ages of 16 – 25. Knives, ranging from ordinary kitchen knives to box cutters, and swords are the weapons of choice.

70. A survey conducted by the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives on crime in Male' (2009) found that 21% of 1000 respondents were afraid to walk in Male' at night due to the perception of rising crime in the capital. Gangs have a heavy involvement in the trafficking and abuse of drugs, theft and sexual violence.

71. Criminal activities carried out by gangs also range into politically motivated violence, where gangs commit acts of violence on behalf of the Political Party to which they are affiliated to at the time. Theft, drug abuse/trade and financial crime have also become popular avenues for raising funds for gang activities.

5.2.1.2 Violent crimes

72. Increasing of violent crimes such as violent gang fights and sex exploitation undermines the cultural cohesiveness of the society maintained by adherence to the common set of values, beliefs and ethical standards within the society. Armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom by drug related criminals and desperate crimes of illegal expatriates are expected to emerge.



Source: Police Statistics

73. A study conducted by the Ministry of Gender and Family, UNICEF, and UNFPA in 2005 found that 1 in every 3 women between the ages of 15-49 in Maldives is physically or sexually abused at sometime in her life. Cases of sexual violence against women have been increasingly reported in the past few years, but this is not felt to be an increase in the actual number of cases, but rather that people are now more aware and therefore more willing to come forward about their experiences of abuse.

5.2.1.3 Narcotics

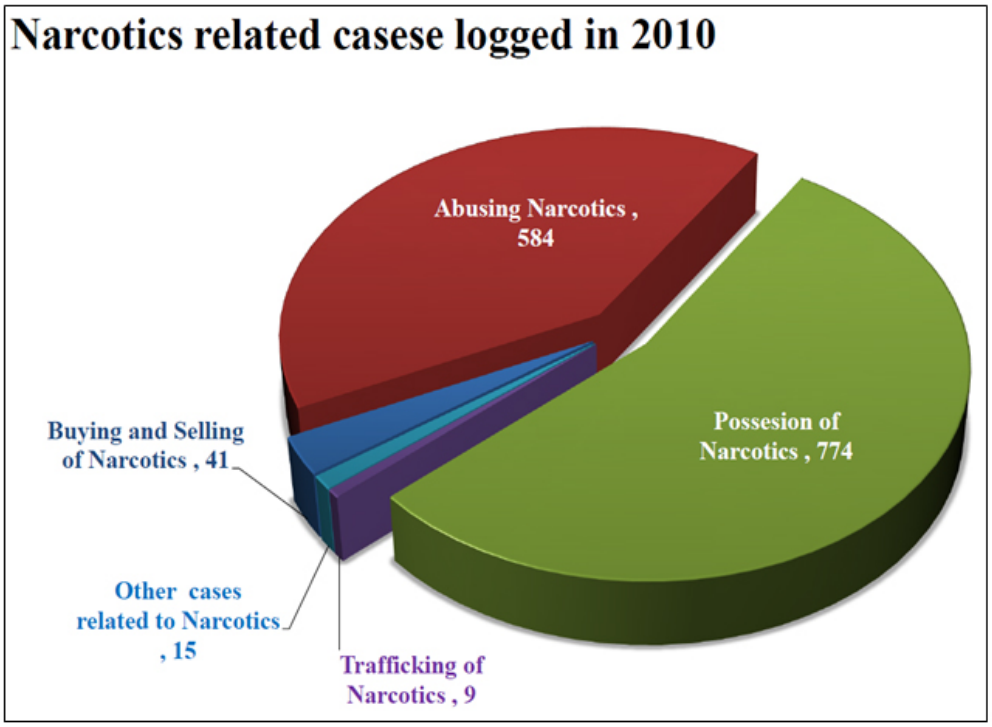
74. Narcotics remains the basis for most of the crimes committed in the country be it either through abuse, trafficking or the influence of narcotics in the carrying out of other crimes such as gang violence, sexual violence and theft. The UNODC (2009) estimate that 10% of the Maldivian population is addicted to drugs, while 80% of inmates in Maldivian jails have been convicted for drug related crimes. The drugs of choice are hash oil (as a soft drug) and the harder, unrefined heroin.

75. The challenge of drug trafficking, abuse and drug related crimes pose a serious threat to national security, especially to the extent that it breeds and backup crime and creates fear among the society. Drug abuse among the youth has risen alarmingly over the past years. The national crime rate had risen due to illicit drug trade, which involves number of crime syndicates.

76. Prevention of drug abuse and drug related crimes remains as one of the government's pledges. The anti-drug campaign is a major cornerstone of the government's law and order drive, involving the police, the public and private sector, and focusing on reducing drug supply and demand.

77. Narcotics related crime statistics shows that, in 2010, the percentage of trafficking of narcotics cases are as low as 0.63% while the cases of possession is as high as 54.39% and percentage of abuse case is at 41.04%. This indicates the supply of narcotics into Maldives remain higher and uncontrolled. Therefore, narcotics related crimes are expected to increase as the supply of narcotics remains at a higher level.

5.2.1.4



Source: Police Statistics

Financial Crimes

78. Financial crimes such as securities fraud, insider trading and market manipulation in the security sector will make the economy weak and investments less attractive in Maldives.

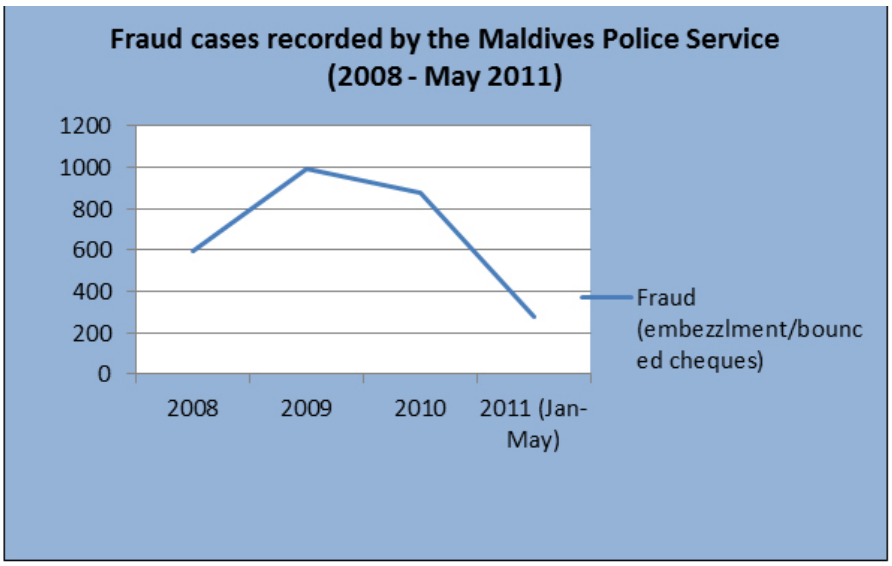
79. With the introduction of taxation, Maldives now needs to be more vigilant for the possibility of crimes involving tax evasion.

80. Maldives is also experiencing issuing of checks without sufficient in the bank accounts. This is a form of fraud and the Prosecution also faces challenges in prosecuting such cases due to lack of relevant legal framework, including evidence and criminal procedure laws.

81. With the increase in US Dollar demand and the shortage of US Dollar supply in the country, the apparent black market operations are also imminent in the Maldives. This is also another form of commercial crime that will undermine the foreign currency supply and demand in the Maldives and as we have seen in the last few months.

82. Occasionally, Maldives also experiences credit card fraud cases and this is another form of financial crime that damages the financial system and also the economy. The lack of relevant laws on electronic payment systems has made the country vulnerable to various types of card fraud that may also involve serious money laundering issues.

83. Maldives Police Service statistics show a 4.07% increase in the number of embezzlement cases from 2009 to 2010, while the same period also shows a 25.56% increase in counterfeit/forgery related cases. The extent of fraud in the Maldives is difficult to determine as fraud encompasses a number of crimes, which are not always recorded by the authorities.



Source: Police Statistics

5.2.1.5 Cyber crime

84. Cyber crime is an emerging security threat as technologies are more accessible now, than at any other time in the history of Maldives. Improvement in the communication network throughout the Maldives has seen an increase in the usage of the Internet. Cyber crimes threaten the protection of nation's critical information, communications systems, banking systems and even personal information of individuals. Cyber attacks, blackmail, fraud and propaganda are increasing at a faster speed, resulting in the need for law enforcement authorities to rapidly develop their capabilities to counter these types of crimes.

85. Incidents of cyber crime have ranged from blackmail to cyber attacks on the country's largest telecommunications company, Dhiraagu, to the hacking of a public database detailing birth dates, names and addresses of all adult citizens in the Maldives. Although in the majority of recent cases, cyber crime has been a demonstration of technical ability rather than a specific attack, it has proven to have disrupted communications and infringed the privacy of many individuals in a way that can be criminally exploited.

5.2.2 Cultural Diversification

86. The main strength of the Maldives is the cultural and ethnic identity and social homogeneity that has been the signature of the society since time immemorial. As part of the globalization process, the Maldivians are having an increased interaction with other societies and cultures. The foreign interaction has been immense help in the socio and economic development of the Maldives. Along with the development, the negative impact of this association has started taking its toll on the cultural identity of the society. The social harmony and the internal politics of islanders are severely affected by the large number of expatriate influx through inter marriages. The social value system is deteriorating and there is a rapid influx of new norms and cultures due to older Maldivian men and ladies marrying foreign brides and grooms who are much younger than them. The political, economic and social challenges from the children of those marriages, the widows and widowers need to be studied before they make an adverse impact on our socio political environment.

5.2.3 Corruption

87. Corruption remains a persistent threat to the national security by the huge scale by which it reduces public resources, undermines the morale of the civil society, affects the delivery of quality services, reduces the law enforcing capability and undermines the efficiency of judiciary system of the nation as a whole. As a result of corruption, the functioning of Anti Corruption Commission is undermined.

5.2.4 Unemployment

88. The youth of the Maldives are enrolled in an education system that is very much focused on acquiring good grades rather than imparting life skills. The competitive job market which is inundated with fresh school leavers forces the parents to make huge financial sacrifices to improve the grades of their children. The youth grows up in an environment where they are "exclusively" retained for studying. This results in a young working class devoid of life skills.

89. The academically less gifted are left jobless as the academic cream is given priority for administrative jobs. The government's technical and vocational education and training program need to be further strengthened to impart life skills to the young school leavers and school drop outs to make them productive contributors of the economy.

5.2.5 Health issues

90. Standard of health care sector remains a security concern of the Maldives as the public health condition promotes the nation's efficiency. Dependence on foreign countries for medical treatment increases the chance of foreign dominance of the nation's health sector. In addition to this, the huge amount of foreign currencies moving out of the country will continue to have an impact on our economy. Increase of expatriate population imports rare pandemics to the Maldives like filariasis, malaria, dengue etc due to poor health screening.

91. Food security and the limited amount of reserves is also another critical area. Maldives depends almost exclusively on foreign import for staple food items such as rice, flour, potatoes, as well a major portion of the fruits, vegetables and proteins (milk products, meat and poultry) consumed in the nation. Food security is especially problematic in Maldives, given the low reserves maintained by the government (at the most three months for staple foods such as rice and flour and no significant reserves of other products), the location of warehousing capabilities and the ad-hoc distribution mechanism. Any disruption to regional shipment would greatly jeopardize Maldives' food security and create significant shortages within a very short period of time. The fishing industry, which is the most significant domestic source of food, is also susceptible to disruptions such as adverse weather conditions or disruptions in the supply of fuel.

5.2.6 Energy Security

92. Energy Security is considered to be one of the threats facing the Maldives today. As we do not have any proven fossil fuel reserve in the country, we entirely depend on imported fuel. We spend approximately 20% of our GDP for fuel imports, and this figure is expected to increase annually if we do not find an amicable solution to energy need. Any external shock on world fuel is expected to pose a significant risk to our economy and development. To mitigate these risks, and address climate change threats, it is vital to shift towards low carbon development for enhancing energy security.

5.2.7 Radicalization

93. The Maldives is by constitution, a 100% Muslim country, requiring all citizens to be Muslims. The Constitution is the collective decision of the Maldivian people and it is the wish of the Maldivian people to be a 100% Muslim country. The Maldives is a Sunni Muslim society, which follows the Shafi school of Islamic Fiqh (sect of Islam), and is the first Muslim country to have achieved a peaceful transition to democracy. Radicalisation of the local population towards violent extremist or terrorist beliefs has been a long term security threat, and with the introduction of new political freedom and free media, authorities face greater challenges in adopting their counter radicalisation/ terrorism measures.

94. Radicalisation of Maldivian citizens began in the 1990s, which some officials attribute to greater numbers of Maldivians travelling to some Islamic countries for religious education in local Madrasas (schools) which are not accepted by the state education system prevalent is those countries. Extremist figures or individuals who seemed to deviate from the state sanctioned Islam were often arrested during the 90s, but this served to create greater friction between extremist groups and the state.

95. Radicalization activities are limited, disorganized and discreet in its nature. However, as the signs of radicalization increases, Maldives is portrayed in the foreign media as a sympathizer of radical ideologies, a suitable ground for training and as a future launching ground of terrorist activities.

96. Democracy, freedom of expression, human rights, easy accessibility to internet, misconception and absence of proper counter radicalization programs, increases the vulnerability of Maldives and makes it easier for the propagation of radicalization and indoctrination of young Maldivians.

97. A greater number of individuals are embracing the philosophies of Violent Extremist Organisations (VEOs). It is estimated that there are approximately over 300 individuals of interest to the Maldives Police Service's Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) who were trained in VEOs. Extremism became more than a passing concern for law enforcement agencies with the detonation of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in the Maldives in September 2007, by Maldivian terrorists. Since then, extremist activity in the Maldives has been limited to the recruitment of Maldivians by global VEOs. Of those recruited, Ali Jaleel of H. Moscowge carried out a suicide attack on the ISI HQ in Lahore in May 2009.

98. Extremists are now employing a more organized, tactical approach to spread their propaganda and to achieve their goals. Their use of internet and media to more effectively radicalize the population is of particular concern.

99. A matter of higher concern is the clear and alarming trends of a greater number of Maldivians affiliated to VEOs returning home. The desire, reasons and the significance of the timeline in which they are attempting to return could suggest the initial stages of a broader plan. Since 9 Maldivians were arrested and deported from Pakistan, 5 other individuals known to have been affiliated with VEOs have returned including one who is wanted for prosecution for the Sultan Park Bombings.

100. Intent: After the Sultan Park bombings and AA.Himandhoo uprising no other major incident has taken place, yet the possibility remains high. In July of 2009, CTU launched 'Operation Reach-Out' when intelligence from credible sources revealed an individual was attempting to collect large amounts of Calcium Nitrate. Further analysis confirmed that this individual had undertaken several trainings in assembling Improvised Explosive devices. Being inspired, trained and funded by Violent Extremist Organizations abroad, they share the main goal of all Islamic Fundamentalists; the establishment of a pan Islamic caliphate, re-establishing Islamic Sharia law and the fall of the west. This fact was made clear when the first ever terror attack at Sultan Park targeted tourists. If tourism; the backbone of the country's economy is targeted it is imperative that to fight against rising extremism and conflicts, both governmental and non-governmental organizations need to coordinate more effectively.

101. Capability: Though it can be assumed that the architect of the simple IED used in the Sultan Park bombing had reasonable knowledge of electronics and chemistry, it is fair to conclude that the work was done by amateurs. The extremist community in Maldives comprises of educated individuals that are capable of assembling a more destructive explosive with a more sophisticated detonating device. All they would require are the necessary materials and access to internet. In addition to this, intelligence sources also suggest that some Maldivian extremists have undergone various forms of terrorist trainings in the production of IEDs and other explosive devices at various terrorist training camps.

102. Vulnerability: Maldives enacted the law on Prohibition of Terrorism in 1990. It defines 'terrorist acts' as ranging from a minor death threat to a terrorist bombing. This terrorism legislation which is currently in place is out of date. Lack of legislation and the weakness in the criminal justice system does not allow the authorities to effectively deal with the ongoing issues of extremism and terrorism. It is noted that a lack of clarification over the mandates and roles of the country's different security agencies creates confusion and lack of trust between agencies and also replicates resources. Vulnerability of attractive local targets such as the tourism industry, with its high representation of western tourists being symbolic of the type of culture which Islamic extremists would like to eradicate, adds to this security challenge.

5.2.8 Diversification of Faiths

103. Since 1153, Islam is the only religion in Maldives. The Maldivian people decided to be a 100% Muslim country and stipulated the same in our constitution. The Maldivians and Foreign organizations as well as other nations need to honour the people's decision. Clandestine missionary activities by foreign organizations targeting Maldivians and religious freedom campaigns affect the cultural cohesiveness, internal peace and stability of Maldives. Christian missionary organizations attempt to infiltrate into different levels of the society in the guise of human rights promoters, aid workers, and by conducting information operations and through education system. Religious NGOs, are committed to monitor these activities through different local sources, and its efforts to alert the general public could result in confrontation.

5.2.9 Challenges to Law enforcement

104. Challenges to the law enforcement undermine governance, judiciary system, rule of law, and creates fear among the society. Ineffective law enforcement results in increasing crime rate, negative public image and weaken the trust on law enforcement agencies.

105. The politically motivated disruption of our daily life creates public frustration and diverts scarce law enforcement resources from more pertinent issues. In addition, it is impinging on civil liberties and rights.

106. Inadequate legislation and a weak criminal justice system, political corruption, lack of professionalism, and the attitude of staff of law enforcement agencies, continues to remain a challenge to the proper law enforcement and judiciary system of the Maldives.

5.3 External Threats

107. International interest and long term power projection plans of global powers in Indian Ocean remains a major security concern, even if a foreign aggression remains unlikely. Moreover, information operations such as propaganda to undermine tourism industry, disinformation campaigns intended for their long term benefits are likely to adversely affect the security of the Nation.

108. The economic dependency on tourism, heavy reliance on import of basic needs and a foreign policy without combination of national security aspects opens a window of opportunity to the world community to increase the vulnerability of Maldives to external influences.

5.3.1 Maritime threats

109. 99.7% of the territory of Maldives is made up of water, providing a vast, porous border. Most of the threats to national security in the Maldives are perceived to arise from the maritime domain. Maritime security continues to be a major long term security challenge for the national security of Maldives. Maritime domain enables the emergence of threats from three dimensions including external threats, internal threats and environmental threats. Limited assets available for the safety and security of maritime domain increase the vulnerability of Maldives for crimes such as piracy, smuggling, transit of illegal materials and people and exploitation of marine resources.

110. Majority of goods that passes through Indian Ocean transit the Maldivian archipelagic waterways and Exclusive Economic Zone before reaching its final destination. Any disruption in traffic flow through Maldives waterways would have catastrophic consequences. The interruption of energy flows in specific is a substantial security concern for littoral states, as a majority of their energy lifelines are sea-based.

111. Since energy is vital in influencing the geo-political strategies of a nation, any disruption to its supply has severe security consequences. Given the escalating demand for energy from economic powerhouses such as India and China, it is certain that these countries are highly sensitive to the security of the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and choke points of the region. The 8 degree channel located just north of Maldives, one and half degree channel, equatorial channel and south Addu channel are the main Sea Line of Communications through Indian Ocean which lies within the Maldivian waters.

112. With the rapidly growing economies in Asia and globalization, the prospects for seaborne trade are set to rise dramatically. Unfortunately, along with this rise in traffic, the assortment and concentration of threats, including transnational crimes (smuggling of commodities/persons, terrorism), manmade disasters (oil/chemical spills), the exploitation of the Maldives EEZ, piracy, and the expanding operations of local crime groups, are also expected to show a proportional rise. Securing such a vast maritime domain remains a constant challenge for national security agencies.

113. Establishment of nationwide transport system would increase marine transport of goods and people and would consequently increase the risk of maritime accidents which might require rapid Search and Rescue operations for the safety of people and high value assets.

114. In recent history the Maldives has been used by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to smuggle weapons, while large packages of narcotics have also be transported through the Maldivian EEZ. Local crime groups have also begun to expand their activities into the maritime domain targeting resorts and safari vessels, where a number of thefts have been recorded recently.

115. There are currently 4 ports operating in the Maldives under the authority of state owned company, Maldives Ports Ltd. It is noted that security at these ports is currently not up to international standards, which increases their vulnerability to smuggling, and other threats.

116. The impact of a vulnerable maritime domain is manifold. It could lead to financial loss, environmental damage and depletion of natural resources through the exploitation of the country's EEZ, and the loss of investor and consumer confidence. The maritime borders are where the Maldives is most vulnerable.

5.3.1.1 Piracy

117. The geographic composition of the Maldives and its geo- strategic location in the Indian Ocean makes the Maldives a vulnerable target to pirates. Every year billions of dollars worth of trade passes through Maldivian waters. The operations of pirates from East Africa, namely Somalia, are expanding. Counter piracy efforts by Coalition Task Force in the Gulf of Aden reduced the piracy activities in the region of the Horn of Africa. However, as a result of this, Somali pirates increased their operational capability and expanded their area of operation into the Indian Ocean towards Maldives, as the counter piracy operations are weaker in this region. Consequently, piracy threat significantly increased near Maldives.

118. Piracy in the Eastern Indian Ocean has increased dramatically, with over 15 known incidents occurring in the Maldives Area of Operation, the closest of which was only 95 Nautical Miles away from the Maldives.

119. Fear among the fishing industry affect the economy, by preventing the maximum utilization of EEZ, and limiting the profits of marine natural recourses. Even though no Maldivian vessels have been seized yet, 27 cases of illegal entry into Maldivian waters by Somali pirate boats were investigated from 2005-2011. In most of these cases, the individuals claimed they were in distress while out fishing. However, their lack of knowledge about fishing and the absence of proper fishing gear nullify their claims.

120. Based on the current patterns of pirates, it is highly probable that pirates would hijack a cruise liner within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Maldives. The most likely course of action of pirates within the Maldivian waters would be to hijack large vessels and use it as mother ships to operate far off from the Coast of Somalia.

121. A piracy situation in Maldivian waters would be a national level disaster both economically and politically, and the best way to prevent it is by conducting stabilizing operations in the territorial waters of the Maldives.

5.3.1.2 Illegal Fishing

122. Maldives is a country heavily dependent on the fishing industry. Throughout our history, fishing has been the main source of income and fisheries played a vital role in the national development. Except the presence of fish in these waters, there are no other known natural resource of value such as oil and minerals. Hence, fish has been the country's traditional and main source of food and plays a vital part of the economy. Illegal poaching of fish in Maldives EEZ by foreign vessels has become a matter of serious concern to the fishing industry and the country's socio-economic security.

5.3.3 Terrorism

123. Present-day terrorism is not an isolated phenomenon, but has to be viewed against the backdrop of fundamental and cultural antagonisms, domestic and international politics and national and international conflicts far beyond our own national boundaries, and associated phenomena such as radicalization and extremism, social discrimination, economic disparities, restrictions on rights and civil liberties and power politics. Though we are a single race, speaking a single language, following the same culture and religion, Maldives faces an emerging threat from extremists both religious and political, who believe they can advance their aims by committing acts of terror in the Maldives.

124. The various threats that can manifest themselves as terrorist related activities in Maldives need to be perceived in different dimensions. Given the existing global geopolitical environment in general and the regional scenario in particular, especially in South and South East Asia. Maldives, though not affected in the immediate future, needs to take concrete measures to safe guard against terrorist related activities to hinder any attacks on its soil.

125. Some of the drivers for terrorism include:

a. Global Trends

It has already been mentioned that the smallest of events in the world will affect the Maldives. Hence, it is vital to monitor such events, especially in this region, to foresee a possible threat. The main actors that would identify with these trends are states and criminals. Civil wars, border disputes, and ethnic clashes are some events that would provide criminals with ample motive and opportunity and commit acts of terror.

b. Ideologies

Ideologies encompass various aspects. Social, cultural, religious, and political beliefs can be used to lure unsuspecting individuals into terrorist networks. Political activists and conservative religious groups can eventually resort to terrorist activities to promote their ideals. The recent rise in extremist ideologies, especially religious extremism, poses a viable threat to the community. As in most cases, terrorists could use religion to get sympathizers for their cause and promote extremist ideas.

c. Natural disasters

Because of the geography of the country, any natural disaster could cause huge losses in the Maldives. While most natural disasters cannot be mitigated, the best option is to be resilient and be prepared as much as possible for an imminent threat, especially in the case of a possible earthquake and an impending tsunami that could follow the earthquake. Even though climate change by itself does not classify as a terrorist threat, terrorist groups can use natural disasters as a platform for promoting their principles and ideologies.

Unregulated Foreign Investments

Unregulated foreign investments corrupt the economy. It raises inflation and injects unaccounted foreign currency into the economy. This could interfere with the free market economy and raise an underground network of money laundering and terrorism financing.

d. Poverty, Inequality, and Poor Governance

Lack of basic necessities caused by poverty, inequality, and poor governance could cause terrorists to commit acts of terrorism and to recruit personnel for their cause. Furthermore, this could cause a domino effect that could tie into other drivers such as unregulated foreign investments and ideologies.

126. Based on the aforementioned drivers, the direct or indirect terrorist threats to Maldives are:

a. **Interference with trade** caused by unregulated foreign investments and global trends. This would directly impact the economy of the nation and could create opportunities for money laundering and smuggling. It could also damage small businesses. The best way to counter this is by deterrence, enforcing investment laws, controlling smuggling of goods, and by controlling trade of illegitimate goods. This could be done by reinforcing border security measures, and establishing and enforcing concrete regulations on import.

b. **Gunrunning:** Even though gunrunning is nonexistent directly in the Maldives, events in the neighboring countries could cause sympathizers and the actors involved to run such operations to resupply the insurgent forces utilizing Maldives as a hub. They could use Maldivian waters for transportation and could come across Maldivian anglers during such operations. The best way to counter this threat is to interdict using all assets available. By conducting patrols, including joint patrols with the armed forces of neighboring countries, the security forces can monitor the waters for such activities.

c. **Direct attacks:** Direct attacks could be from many possible actors, the most likely of them being criminals or terrorists. Another method is to use the events that occur in other parts of the world such as the war in Afghanistan and Iraq and use it as a tool to recruit Maldivians. There are no indications at present to suggest any overt or covert presence of linkages of any of the pan-Islamic terrorist groups in Maldives. However, given the religious profile of the country, terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Thoiba and Al'Qaeda expanding their network to this region cannot be ruled out. The same train of thought could be applied to politically and socially motivated actors. According to the theory of democratization and war, a country which transforms into a democracy will endure unrest. As the Maldives began transforming into a democracy in recent years, the

political environment of the country has remained volatile. While no politically motivated terrorist attack has occurred recently, it is important to be prepared because the political situation can be utilized by anti-national elements to propagate their aims and objectives. Some possible forms of a direct attack are:

- o Attack to critical infrastructure such as communication facilities, utility companies, and airports to disrupt and bring the nation to a standstill.
- o Take over a resort.
- o Assassinate a high profile individual.
- o Hijacking/kidnapping – this could happen on land, sea, or air.

The paramount way of countering a direct attack from any of these actors is by taking protective and responsive measures.

d. **Narco-Terrorism.** The number of youth getting addicted to drugs is on the rise. Such youth are prone to exploitation, especially given the heroine-terrorism nexus emerging from Afghanistan. The entry of drugs into the country and trafficking of the same within the nation will result in increase of criminal activities. This in turn will lead to mushrooming of criminal syndicates, who in turn will invariably develop nexus with terrorist groups in days to come. The conduit for narco-trafficking can also be used for arms trafficking.

e. **Bio- Terrorism.** The increasing lethality of new and emerging diseases and the ease of mass production, employment and spreading of a biological agent as a terrorist weapon makes bio-terrorism the preferred Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) of choice by extremists and loosely affiliated organizations. The use of such a weapon on any country would spread the threat around the world in a short period of time, disrupting the travel industry and causing a huge impact on the health sector and our tourism based economy.

f. **Adverse impact from a large expatriate work force.** Maldives has more than 100,000 expatriate workers in numerous sectors, often under minimal supervision and some of them as illegal workers. They are also stationed in remote and sparsely populated islands all over Maldives. A large segment of the expatriate workforce also resides in Maldives in violation of their visas and work permits, and hence, presents a very credible security risk. The expatriate workforce is linked to several violent crimes, drug related incidents, and other crimes. The possibility that they can also serve as conduits for smuggling in arms cannot be negated. The low level of surveillance and monitoring makes it highly possible for trained terrorists to seek refuge in Maldives and plan their operations. Maldives can also be used as a transit destination, where the terrorists are able to obtain safe havens.

g. **Social unrest/Gang violence.** The main problem with social unrest is that it is difficult to gauge when terrorism seeks into acts of social unrest. Occurrences such as gang violence starts because of personal problems between gangs and drug related incidents and escalates into series of crimes against personnel and property. Over the past two years, more than a dozen lives have been lost due to gang related violence since 2008. Similarly, political unrest sometimes leads to violent clashes between demonstrators and the security forces and between supporters of different political

parties as well. Even though the root causes for these incidents are not related to terrorism, these two groups of actors are susceptible to exploitation by an external influence to promote terrorist agendas.

127. It is important to note that almost all these threats are in the maritime domain. Maldives being an archipelago, the main routes of trade, travel, and communication are through the maritime domain. Thus dominating our maritime domain is of utmost importance for the security forces in order to counter terrorism.

128. Recruitment and training of Maldivian youth affiliated to regional terrorist groups, terrorist financing and radicalisation of the local population are high priority issues in the country today. Intelligence estimates that approximately 130-150 Maldivians have undergone terrorist training since the 1980s.

129. So far the only terrorist attack to have taken place in the country is the Sultan Park IED of 2007, which resulted in injuring 12 foreign tourists. Many individuals thought to be associated with the Sultan Park attack either left the country or were arrested. Of the three convicted of the attack, two individuals are currently free after gaining clemency, while one remains in jail after repeated attempts at escape.

130. Another trend to note domestically is the rise in the involvement of extremist individuals in the political process. Although it is welcomed that individuals engage in established processes rather than act outside the law, it is feared that some violent extremists may take advantage of political parties to finance terrorist activities or to propagate violent views.

131. Targets: The threats which have been outlined above are likely to be executed through terrorist actions against targets which will further the aims and agendas of those perpetrating such acts. The targets which can be identified are:

a. Tourism industry
   a. Tourist resorts
   b. Kidnapping of foreign tourist / hostage taking.
   c. Luxury Yachts.
b. International Airports.
c. International Seaports.
d. Fuel storage areas.
e. Cargo vessels.
f. Male': It is a very lucrative target, being the hub of all activity and the capital. It houses all government offices, foreign missions, financial institutions, etc. It would attract world attention and give the required publicity to the organization perpetrating a terrorist act.
g. The highest echelons of the government leadership.
h. The sea traffic moving through Maldivian waters along the SLOCs.

5.3.3 Foreign Influences

132. The tendency by external actors to try to exert political influence on the Maldives is alarming, but a real concern. In response, there is a need to articulate a clear strategy to more effectively manage the Maldives's external dependence in political, economic, and security spheres.

5.3.4 Transnational Financial Crimes

133. Cross border financial crime is an emerging threat to the national security of the nation. Criminal syndicates, drug and gun running cartels and human traffickers may exploit the weak financial institutions and monitoring mechanisms of the Maldives to legitimize their illegally accumulated wealth.

5.3.4.1 Money Laundering

134. Money Laundering, although a new concept in the Maldivian legal and law enforcement system, has become a major concern due to its complex scale of operations and various economic and other related risks that it may pose. Risks to the financial and economic system (legal and compliance risks, reputational risks, liquidation or solvency risks and operational risks to the financial institutions) are some of the direct risks to the country. In addition, money laundering will undermine the economic stability of a country when illegal funds are pumped into the economy. It will also undermine privatization efforts of the government when the financial system is less appealing and less attractive to the private investors. Money laundering will also increase corruption when the money launderers bribe public officials to stop investigations and other law enforcement measures that are put in place against money launderers.

5.3.4.2 Counterfeiting

135. Counterfeiting of currency and goods is another threat to the Maldivian economy. Currency counterfeiting tends to be a form of organized crime that can employ elements of weaknesses in the laws, law enforcement agencies as well as the economic reality of a country. In the most part, this is a major concern due to advancement of technology and increased access to such technologies. As of now, currency notes and coins have many security features but are not free from exploitation by crime networks.

136. Until recently Maldives did not have any law governing intellectual property. The recently introduced law on copyright and other related rights excludes intellectual property rights. The enforcement of this law is another challenge due to lack of technical and resource constrains. Hence, there is a need for Maldives to be on high alert on issues relating to counterfeiting of goods.

5.3.4.3 Terrorism Financing

137. Terrorism financing is another type of financial and organized crime that criminals can exploit. There are instances where intelligence revealed that Maldivians go abroad to affiliate with terrorist organizations and terrorists and therefore, the terrorists may financially support those Maldivian families and the acts of terror committed by them. In most serious cases, those Maldivians may return and directly target the highly vulnerable tourism sector. In addition, an act of terror committed in the Maldives would have an indirect impact on the well-known Maldivian hospitality experience through the negative publicity that it would create.

5.3.4 Transnational organized crime

5.3.4.1 Illicit Trafficking

138. The Arms, drugs and human trafficking in the Indian Ocean Region are still estimated to be on the increase and expanding in its scope and modus operandi. Maldivian experiences and past incidents suggested that under governed maritime spaces of Indian Ocean is heavily exploited by the criminal elements and perpetrators.

139. Maldivian waters have been used for Arms trafficking in the past. A South Indian vessel which had set sail on 7th March 2007 from Kollam in Kerala, India was captured by a group of armed men and used for gun running on Maldivian waters. It came across a local fishing vessel, just about 6 Miles off an Island in Gaafu Alifu (Ga) Atoll on Wednesday 16th May 2007 and fired on fishermen drawing attention of the Maldivian Coast Guard. After 12 hours of standoff, on early Thursday morning, the Maldivian Coast Guard was forced to fire on to the ship due to non-compliance and subsequently sank it in Maldivian territorial waters. The subsequent investigations have identified that the vessel hijacked by a LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elaam), for gun running and later rendezvoused with a bigger ocean going LTTE arms vessel in the high seas south of Maldives.

140. With the two principal areas of illicit opium production, the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent, located on the rim of the Indian Ocean, the illicit trafficking of drugs in Maldivian waters is a serious and looming threat. This is further proven by an incident in which Maldivian lobster catchers found 1,697 plastic bags weighing over 1.6 tons packed with cannabis in the lagoon of A.A Maavaru on 23rd April 2006. The shipment was obviously meant for the international market as the predominant drugs of choice in the Maldives are hash oil and unrefined heroin.

141. Human trafficking is widespread across the region and provides a lucrative source of income, which could be utilized for other illegal activities. The Maldives is also highly concerned about trafficking situation associated with the large expatriate labor force in the country, and we are undertaking an interagency effort towards tackling the issue.

142. Crime groups especially from where there are ongoing crisis, exploit Maldives as a transit destination for illegal entry to Europe. According to the department of immigration, significant amount of foreign nationals had been interdicted on their way to Europe, Canada and Australia by using counterfeit passports. These individuals are from countries including China, Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia Pakistan Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Nigeria and Ghana.

143. Expatriate workers are often victims of trafficking, where they pay exorbitant amounts to rogue agents in the range of USD 2000 to travel to Maldives, have their documents confiscated, and are made to live and work in inhumane conditions. Expatriate workers are also being found to be increasingly involved in criminal activities, either voluntarily or by force. Their identities are used in the registration of mobile phones used by criminal groups, for the running of human trafficking syndicates and the trafficking of narcotics. For instance, there has been registered Maldivian involvement in human smuggling cases originating from Sri Lanka and concluding in Australia.

144. The Maldives has been placed on the US State Department's Human Trafficking list as a Tier 2 Watch list country in 2009,2010 and 2011, requiring significant counter trafficking measures to be implemented in order to improve the country's standing. If the country's standing does not improve and the Maldives is downgraded to Tier 3, the Maldives will face restrictions in US state funding.

5.3.4.2 Illegal Expatriates

145. Illegal expatriates are a major security concern of the Maldives. According to the department of immigration, migrant worker population amounts around a third of the total population of Maldives. Among them an estimated 30,000 migrant workers are undocumented and illegal. It is estimated that 2400 new expatriate workers enter the Maldives every month. Incomparable increase of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and their involvement in criminal activities is causing a serious concern. Expatriates involvement in drug trade are also increasing.

146. The loss of revenue to the state from the number of illegal expatriate workers in the county is approximately USD 4.5m per month from remittances and MRF 90m per month in visa fees.

147. There is a lack of appropriate screening mechanisms and security vetting for expatriate workers during visa application processes. Immigration officials also highlight the lack of a National Migration policy which limits the number of expatriate workers that can enter the country. Due to allegations concerning a high level of corruption within the Department of Immigration and the Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports over the issue of immigrants, the Maldivian government took drastic corrective measures by having the armed forces take over the functions related to immigrant workers for a period of time.

6. National Security Policies

148. The National Security Policy aims to protect and promote the Maldives's political independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity, as well as the well-being of Maldivians. It is the overarching policy document of the State, based on which all other policies are formulated.

149. National security is achieved with the integrated application of all instruments of national power in achieving national defence, human and societal, economic, political, and environmental security and vital national interests. A whole-of-Government approach towards national security is needed to reduce duplication of effort and to increase inter-sectoral coordination.

150. There are five elements of our national security that amplify the national interests: (1) national defence; (2) human and societal security; (3) economic and resource security; (4) political stability; and (5) environmental security. All of these elements consider the psycho-social aspects of national security such as people's perceptions, belief systems, and social norms that affect the appreciation of the Government's policies and programs.

6.1 National Defence Background

151. The very existence of Maldives as an independent nation for centuries is proof that the Maldivians defended their motherland against all forms of foreign aggression and undue influences. Even before the introduction of a standing Armed Force, the people of the Maldives fought battles with foreign aggressors and defended the nation and its way of life.

152. Being a small state in the middle of the Indian Ocean straddling the important maritime trade routes, the Maldives is extremely vulnerable to external threats, particularly from mercenaries, terrorists, pirates, and armed groups.

Policies

153. Prevent, reduce, and eliminate, external threats to the security of the Maldives.

154. Maintain national unity in the Maldives and prevent the emergence of anti-State activities within and outside the Maldives.

155. The Maldivian Security Forces shall act as both the protector of the people and the State and shall maintain the territorial integrity of the country. The territory of the Maldives will be intact, permanently inviolable, and under the effective control of the State. This includes the preservation of our Exclusive Economic Zone and its protection from illegal incursions and resource exploitation.

Given the complex security environment arising from asymmetric threats such as terrorism, piracy and other transnational crimes, a credible force capable of defending the Maldives against these likely threats shall be maintained.

156. The Maldives will pursue an independent foreign policy aimed at enhancing the security of the Maldives, promoting the country's national independence, and increasing the country's relevance in the international arena.

157. Increase country's diplomatic resilience by establishing a professional Foreign Service cadre, and strengthen the diplomatic readiness of the country's foreign policy establishment.

158. Through its overseas diplomatic posts, the Government would strive to promote Maldivian exports, facilitate more tourist arrivals, and attract more foreign investments into the Maldives through commercial diplomacy.

159. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its overseas diplomatic and consular posts would improve the quality of consular services rendered to Maldivians travelling and living abroad.

160. Maldives shall honour its obligations and responsibilities to the international community by following a policy of cooperation with our neighbours and the world community to secure our borders and the Indian Ocean Region and shall contribute towards World Peace.

161. Given the geographic disposition of the Islands, the military will be decentralised to provide a quick response whenever a need arises. Area Commands will be maintained in four different areas of the country. These area commands shall be empowered to operate in a decentralised manner to provide a more efficient service to the nation. In order to protect the people and their property, the Defence Forces shall be empowered to respond quickly and effectively to natural or human induced disasters. The Forces will be deployed to be able to respond within hours of an emergency.

162. The Ministry of Defence and National Security will be the lead agency responsible for managing national level disasters. The Ministry of Defence and National Security will identify, maintain readiness, and increase the interoperability of stakeholders and prepare legislations, contingency plans, and carryout exercises and awareness programs for the Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery cycles of disasters.

6.2 Human and Societal Security Background

163. Maldives has been a society-driven nation throughout history. However, the establishment of a modern democracy in the Maldives requires the State to provide human-centric security in order to maintain democratic governance and to promote rule of law. In addition, Maldives has signed and ratified many international conventions for promoting and protecting human rights. It is therefore imperative that the Maldives takes a holistic approach to human-centric security.

164. From a security perspective, the likelihood of Maldivians facing conventional security threat from another State is marginal. It is therefore essential that resources are allocated optimally to promote human security in the country.

Policies

165. The capacity of State institutions responsible for protecting and promoting human rights would be strengthened.

166. A mechanism would be established to enable all stakeholder agencies in the country to coordinate and cooperate in order to Mitigate, Prepare, and Respond to all pandemics and epidemics.

167. Improve the capacity and capability of the Health Sector and establish a long-term health insurance plan to ensure that each individual's health and well-being is covered by the State. The Government shall also ratify the International Health Regulations to which the Maldives is a signatory.

168. Law enforcement agencies, under the strategic guidance of the National Security Council, will Prevent, Suppress, and Punish organised crimes and other criminal activities before they infringe on national security.

169. The stakeholder agencies will reduce drug trafficking and drug related crimes by 20 percent before 2014 and rehabilitate drug users to rejoin the society.

170. Reduce gang violence and violent crimes by 30 percent before 2014.

171. Improve cyber security in the Maldives by formulating an enacting a cyber-security Act and standardize cyber-related rules and regulations.

172. Strengthen the justice sector in the country to ensure that justice is served and is being seen as served, and that the judiciary and law enforcement agencies gain the trust and confidence of the people.

173. Ministry of Islamic Affairs will regulate all issues related to religious unity, promote tolerance, and conduct national level awareness programs in collaboration with all stakeholder agencies to promote religious unity.

174. Reduce the incidence of corruption in the Maldives by further strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Auditor General, and relevant NGOs, through legislations and technical assistance.

175. Establish and enforce a minimum wage by the end of the first fiscal quarter of 2013.

176. Formulate a national migration policy.

177. Set in place an effective border control mechanism by the end of 2012.

6.3 Economic and Resource Security Background

178. Historically, the Maldives was a fishery based economy exporting marine products in addition to our cowry shells, copra and coir rope. With the emergence of tourism as an industry in the early 1970s, the Maldivian economy saw rapid growth.

179. The economic security identifies key economic sectors and drivers, their respective opportunities, threats and potential areas of diversification. The economic security policies are developed to achieve rapid economic growth for maintaining economic security while improving the quality of life.

180. As a developing island economy, the Maldives has some nascent distinctive and progressive characteristics. The most intrinsic characteristic, which constitutes both its strengths and opportunities, is the way it has developed an environmentally friendly economy. Conscientious efforts to protect and conserve the environment have paid off and today Maldives is held in high regards internationally.

181. We must capitalize on our strengths to enhance our national security and prosperity. There is a greater chance of expansion in the export of tuna products and further developing the tourism industry. There is also a potential for growth in other sectors by developing proper; (a) port and logistic services; (b) information technology networks; And (c) offshore banking and financial centres.

Policies

182. Maldivian economy will be Diversified and strengthened.

183. Small and medium enterprises and budding industries will be protected.

184. Important industries will be protected with the use of various policy instruments.

185. Strive to attract foreign investment by actively pursuing policies and creating opportunities for large international companies to invest in the Maldives.

186. Legal and financial mechanisms and institutions shall be strengthened to provide investment security.

187. New legislations will be introduced to protect the country's unique beauty and market it to attract foreign tourists.

188. The Maldivian traditions, crafts, customs, and the unique Maldivian way of life will be promoted with special emphasis on introducing these to the tourism industry.

189. New policies will be set in place to increase the country's tourism industry's resilience to external shocks.

190. Securing the Fishing Industry: Maritime domain awareness will be increased and the capacity of the country's maritime security force will be enhanced to protect the Maldives's our EEZ from illegal poaching.

191. Maldives shall work with friendly countries, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organisations in the region to counter issues related to illegal poaching and unlicensed fishing.

192. Securing the Construction Industry: Greater initiatives shall be introduced with the public-private partnership notion to ease the crisis faced by the construction industry.

193. The government shall increase capacity within the construction sector by providing necessary training and restructuring support in collaboration with Maldives Association of Construction Industry.

194. Government shall facilitate the securing of low interest loans from international banks to boost this industry.

195. New mechanisms shall be introduced to encourage the youth to enter the construction industry.

196. The Government will set in place the necessary policies and guidelines to promote eco-construction methods to bring more environment friendly solutions for living and working.

197. Resource security: The Government shall strive to extend the country's EEZ to include the Extended Continental Shelf.

198. Food Security: Government shall provide food security to the nation by enhancing the reserves of staple food and by diversifying the Maldivian fisheries and agricultural industry.

199. Energy Security: The Government shall increase the reserves of fossil fuel and reduce our dependence on fossil fuel by facilitating the increase the use of renewable energy as the nation's primary energy source, towards making Maldives a low-carbon nation.

200. Water Security: The government shall identify the vulnerable islands and implement the necessary risk mitigation measures to ensure water security.

201. Human Resource Security: The Government shall diversify the economy and introduce mechanisms and incentives in the job market to retain the Maldivian intellects.

6.4 Political Stability Background

202. Safeguarding and ensuring political stability and harmony is of utmost importance to the Maldives. Maldivian politics has experienced tremendous changes in the past few years, and this fundamentally altered the political landscape. Prior to these changes, the political system of Maldives has always been described as an essentially exclusive and highly restrictive system.

203. After the Constitution of 2008, Maldives have embarked on a journey of multi-party democracy. The political system, which had hitherto been the sole domain of a few political elite, has now become open and transparent due to the presence of several political parties. The internal squabbles have now, by and large, become inter-party rivalries that are played out in the open, in full view of the newly freed and invigorated media. The voice of the common people, in the truest sense of representative democracy, is the deciding factor of all major political decisions.

204. The arduous task of democratic consolidation is still in its initial stages, and as in all or most transitional democracies, the road is slippery and steep. Furthermore, the necessary State and national institutional framework which serves as the buttress for democratic governance is still being crafted through the convoluted process of parliamentary bargaining. Most importantly, the general public, which is the repository of all political power, has to be made to realize the gravity of the power they wield. In essence, they must be taught that the exercise of democratic rights demands responsible citizenship.

205. The sustainment of this nascent democracy is crucial to the political stability of the state and forms a fundamental component of the core of human security. Therefore, all efforts must be expended to ensure that the democratic spirit that has taken root is carefully nurtured, and democratic values are cultivated into the way of life of the general public.

Policies

206. The Government will continue to uphold the principles of separation of powers between the legislative, judicial and executive branches, and work towards strengthening the capacities of these institutions to discharge their rights and responsibilities in the most effective fashion.

207. The government shall support the parliament in the formulation of legislatures to strengthen democracy.

208. A civic education program will be introduced to the secondary education syllabuses to educate the youth to carry out their roles as responsible citizens.

209. New policy instruments and guidelines will be set in place to strengthen the democratic civilian control over the armed forces.

6.5 Environmental Security Background

210. Environmental concerns are of high priority to the Maldives. Because of its ecological vulnerability, climate change remains an existential threat to the Maldives.

211. Environmental security can be conceptualised as the ability of a nation or a society to withstand environmental asset scarcity, environmental risks or adverse changes, environment-related tensions or conflicts. Environmental security as an often understated aspect of national security, especially within the traditional security paradigm, is found to be a critical component of national security from a human security standpoint.

212. The rapid global climate change and its adverse conditions pose a threat not only for the future, but its effects are faced by island communities even today. Tidal surges pose a constant threat to the low lying islands throughout the year, causing considerable damage to property and vegetation. Beach erosion and its resulting land loss is a threat tackled by islands on a daily basis, which threatens the already scarce land available for the growing population and its activities.

213. Sea-level rise is a grave danger and a challenge to the country with worst case scenario predictions according to IPCC 4th Assessment Report, the Maldives will be uninhabitable by 2100. Climate change also results in threats to the reef ecosystem such as the severe coral bleaching faced during 2008 and 2010 caused by a sustained period of elevated sea surface temperatures.

214. Furthermore, the depletion of freshwater aquifers greatly impacts the water supplies to the islands, which undergo water shortages in periods of drought and the lack of proper waste management systems also pose a significant hazard to the environment and health of the population.

Policies

215. The capacity of relevant Government institutions will be enhanced towards mitigating and responding to the effects from climate change, other environmental threats and other manmade and natural disasters

216. A population consolidation program though which the small communities in highly vulnerable islands are relocated to established “safe islands” with proper risk management measures and proper economic and social infrastructure, is a key priority of the Government.

217. A program to establish proper waste management systems at dense population centres and designated “safer islands” to mitigate the threats and effects to public health and environment will be pursued.

218. The Maldives will continue as the leading voice against climate change and proponent of measures to fight global warming.

219. The government shall enact a comprehensive legislative framework to enable effective conservation and protection of environment programmes and increase capacity building of enforcement agencies (i.e. Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency and Maldives Police Service) to ensure the proper enforcement of environmental and conservation legislature.

7. Conclusion

220. National security can be enhanced by improving the Maldives's ability to integrate and deploy every asset—military, diplomatic, intelligence, public, economic, or psychological tool that the country posses—to protect and advance the country's national interests. Acknowledging the fiscal, political and geographical environment in which national security agencies have to work in, it is recommended that agencies increase coordination and communication and do not duplicate resources in their efforts to confront what are often integrated threats. A whole-of-government approach is needed to reduce and eliminate threats to national security. The clarification of mandates and the establishment of national security mechanisms must be highlighted. Securing the loopholes either physical or legal should be a high priority in the effort to withstand threats to the country's national security.

221. Globalisation, easy access to technology, ineffective law enforcement due to a weak criminal justice system, corruption, institutional weaknesses to uphold rule of law, and geographic dispersion increase vulnerability of Maldives for national and international crimes and environmental impacts. Countering efforts such as monitoring, law enforcement and mitigation of risk from all security threats depend heavily on the coordinated deployment of State power. A system of good governance along with effective use of diplomacy and statecraft remain the most important policy instruments for protecting and enhancing the Maldives's national security