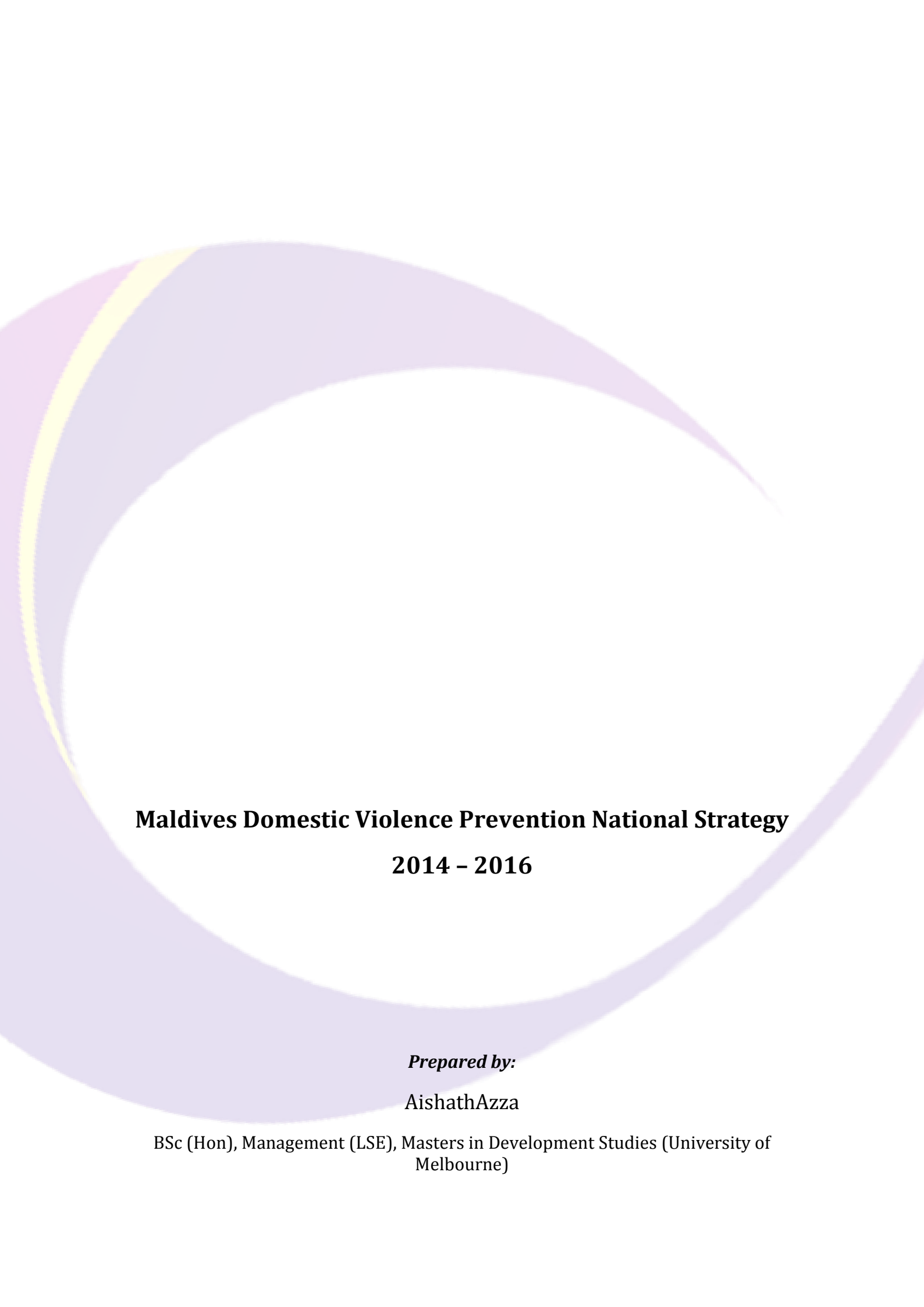


**Maldives  
Domestic Violence  
Prevention National  
Strategy 2014 - 2016**



Family Protection Authority  
Government of Maldives





**Maldives Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy**  
**2014 – 2016**

*Prepared by:*

AishathAzza

BSc (Hon), Management (LSE), Masters in Development Studies (University of Melbourne)

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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AGO	Attorney General's Office
DV	Domestic Violence
DVPNS	Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy
DPR	Department of Penitentiary and Rehabilitation
FPA	Family Protection Authority
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
LGA	Local Government Authority
MPS	Maldives Police Service
PGO	Prosecutor General's Office
WHLE	Women's Health and Life Experiences
DNP	Department of National Planning
MNU	Maldives National University
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
HRCM	Human Rights Commission of the Maldives
MoHG	Ministry of Health and Gender
MoFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MCS	Maldives Correctional Services
JJU	Juvenile Justice Unit
MoHI	Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure
MoIA	Ministry of Islamic Affairs
WDC	Women's Development Committees

## INTRODUCTION

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The Domestic Violence Prevention Act (3/2012), the “DVP Act” was enacted in April 2012, marking a landmark event in the history of the Maldives where any act of domestic violence is clearly and categorically identified as a criminal offense. The DVP Act identifies specific acts that are deemed acts of domestic violence and for the first time accords roles and responsibilities to various government and non-governmental bodies to address and combat domestic violence in the Maldives. In doing so, it recognises the complex nature of the issue of domestic violence and the necessity of taking a multi-sectoral approach.

The Family Protection Authority (FPA) was established under the DVP Act in September 2012 with the mandate to combat domestic violence in the Maldives. In order to bring the comprehensive support for the prevention, protection and access to justice for domestic violence victims mandatory by law under a national policy and to implement such policies, FPA initiated the preparation of the Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy (DVPNS) for the Maldives.

The purpose of the DVPNS is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in combating the issue of domestic violence in the Maldives and to provide support, services and due justice for the victims. The DVPNS aims to assist in providing practical direction to those roles and responsibilities mandated under the DVP Act.

The DVPNS is divided into two sections. In the first section, the current situation of domestic violence in the Maldives will be presented. This includes empirical evidence as well as an overview of the institutional configuration and a brief background to the DVP Act from which the Strategy Areas are drawn from. The second section presents methodology used to prepare the DVPNS, an introduction to the key Strategy Areas and the details of the DVPNS of the Maldives.

## CURRENT SITUATION

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### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE MALDIVES

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Domestic violence is an issue that is neither new nor unique to the Maldives. It is a serious issue and often a hidden issue, where the victims silently live in humiliation and indignity. Giving voice to the issue is a first step in combating it and the DVP Act is a milestone in making the existence of the issue in the Maldives loud and clear.

The landmark study “Women’s Health and Life Experiences (WHLE)” published in 2007 was the first to shed empirical evidence on the reality of the issue of domestic violence in the Maldives. According to the Study (MGF 2007) **1 in 3 women (34.6%) aged 15-49 reported experiencing at least one form of physical or sexual violence, or both, during their lifetime.** This is further broken down into the following:

- 1 in 5 women aged 15-49 (19.5%), who had ever been in a relationship, reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by and intimate partner.
- Approximately 1 in 8 women aged 15-49 (13.2%) reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by someone other than an intimate partner, since the age of 15.
- Combining physical and/or sexual violence by partners and non-partners, since the age of 15, we find that more than 1 in 4 women (28.4%) have experienced partner or non-partner violence, or both.

Approximately 1 in 8 women aged 15-49 (12.2%) reported that they had been sexually abused before the age of 15, that is, that they had experienced childhood sexual abuse. The evidence from the Maldives is comparable with other countries around the world and shows that for the first time, there is evidence to support the need for urgent and proactive action to address the issue of domestic violence in the Maldives.

While this study was limited to violence against women, domestic violence against men is also an issue that is prevalent in many countries and should not be excluded in the case of the Maldives as well. While it is understood that there are disproportionately more women who are victims of domestic violence than men, there are many cases where men become victims of domestic violence as well. Reporting or collecting information where men become victims of domestic violence is less for various reasons such as societal perceptions and stereotypes. Furthermore, empirical evidence of cases of domestic violence against those outside of the 15-49 age groups in the Maldives, especially the more vulnerable groups such as the disabled or elderly, is an area that requires further attention.

## THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT

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The Domestic Violence Prevention Bill was passed on the 5<sup>th</sup> sitting of the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the People's Majlis, held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2012. It was ratified by the President and became a law on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012.

The DVP Act defines certain acts conducted between two individuals in a “domestic relationship” to be an act of domestic violence. Section 3(a) of the DVP Act defines what constitutes such a domestic relationship and furthermore, Section 4(a) lists 17 individual acts which when conducted between two people can be considered an act of domestic violence.

The DVP Act is a gender-neutral Act. The Act recognises two people in an act of domestic violence, the perpetrator and the victim and is not designed to target nor discriminate according to sex, age or any other factor.

The creation of the DVP Act paved the way to establish the key stakeholders in combating domestic violence in the Maldives. A major strength of the DVP Act lies in the identification of the stakeholders and the assignment of specific roles and responsibilities to these stakeholders. The key stakeholders and their roles as defined by the DVP Act are discussed below.

The DVP Act introduced mandatory reporting of cases of domestic violence in the Maldives. According to Section 9 it is mandatory for the key stakeholders, that is, health professionals and social service providers, to report cases of domestic violence via the proper channels to the police and to the Family Protection Authority. In addition to this reporting by any other stakeholder or the general public is also made easier by reducing the reporting requirements when it comes to a case or a suspected case of domestic violence.

A major outcome of the DVP Act is the introduction of “protection orders” detailed in sections under Part 7 and 8 of the Act. Under the DVP Act, victims are able to request and obtain emergency and permanent protection orders against the perpetrators.



## THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

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### Family Protection Authority

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The DVP Act required the establishment of the Family Protection Authority (FPA) to:

“combat domestic violence; create public awareness on issues of domestic violence; provide the required services to the victims of such violence; co-ordinate the work of the relevant government institutions including the Police and the Health Sector, coordinate various local efforts made by individuals (to protect victims of domestic violence) by bringing such efforts under a national policy and implementing such policies and; to undertake a leading role in carrying out such work on a national scale.” [Section 52(a) DVP Act]

Sections 52, 53 and 66 list the powers and responsibilities of the FPA to include services required to combat domestic violence in the Maldives as well as the responsibilities to implement the DVP Act. This includes the formulation of regulations related to all aspects of the implementation of the Act other than the work assigned to the Police and court.

### Minister

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According to Section 50(a);

“The Minister shall be the highest authority responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the provisions in this Act (with the exception of those responsibilities allocated to the court and the Police under this Act) in respect of stopping domestic violence.” [Section 50(a) DVP Act]”

Section 67(l) defines the “Minister” as:

“[T]he minister of the Government responsible for the Authority or under whom the mandate for the prevention of domestic violence on a national scale lies”. Currently the Minister responsible for the FPA is the Minister of Health and Gender.

### Family Protection Authority Board

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The Family Protection Authority is governed by a Board as per Section 52(b) of the DVP Act. The board is accountable to the Minister and comprises of seven members

appointed by the President. The Chief Executive Officer of the Family Protection Authority is responsible for the implementation of decisions made by the Board.

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### **Health Professionals, Social Service Providers, Police and Court**

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In addition to the role and establishment of the FPA, Part 6 of the DVP Act identifies the roles of the Police, Health Professionals and Social Service Providers as the key stakeholders to protect victims and investigate cases of domestic violence.

Furthermore, Part 7 details the role of the court in the implementation of the Protection Orders prescribed by the Act. Section 66(a) requires Police and the Court to make regulations related to the work assigned to the Police and the court respectively.

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### **City, Atoll and Island Councils**

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Section 51 highlights the role of the decentralised system of governance in the DVP Act. According to Section 51(a), the Minister may determine the Island, Atoll and City Councils as the agent responsible for the enforcement of the Act within their respective jurisdiction. Section 51(e) requires the provision of a regulation to establish the details of the responsibilities delegated to these Councils.

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### **Other Stakeholders**

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The provision of services under the DVP Act and to address and combat domestic violence in the Maldives requires the efforts and partnerships of a diverse range of government and non-governmental agencies and bodies. Many institutions already provide services to victims and are active in raising awareness on domestic violence. Furthermore, the police, Prosecutor General's Office and the courts are already active in the investigative and justice aspect of domestic violence. The FPA has the responsibility of ensuring partnership with such agencies and bodies to delineate the different roles by the relevant sectors and identify collaborations and cohesive referral systems where necessary.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

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The purpose of the Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy (DVPNS) is to recognise the importance and the need of a multi-sectoral approach to addressing domestic violence in the Maldives. In order to do so, the DVPNS aims to provide a cohesive framework within which the roles of the stakeholders are identified and collaborative mechanisms are established. This is the first national strategy in the Maldives to address domestic violence. It is therefore important to note the complexities in incorporating a multi-sectoral approach and the short, medium and long-term nature of the individual strategies and goals of the DVPNS.

## METHODOLOGY

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**The DVPNS was prepared through a highly participatory process divided into two phases.**

### **Phase 1:**

Phase one utilised document analysis as the main method through which a thorough literature review of existing documentation (see Annex 4) such as official documents, studies and reports relating to domestic violence were reviewed to gain a better understanding of the existing structures and services in the Maldives as well as the needs and requirements to address domestic violence. In addition to these a literature review of international domestic violence documentation and national strategies, action plans and policy documents was undertaken to incorporate best practices into the DVPNS preparation process in the Maldives. At the end of first phase, the key themes or the four parts of the DVPNS were identified.

### **Phase 2:**

The second phase of the process involved the individual consultative meetings held in Male'. During these meetings information on current services and planned activities to combat domestic violence by the individual stakeholders were discussed. A list of the stakeholder meetings held during this phase is provided in Annex 1 of this document.

Field visits were made to the Atolls, one to Gn. Fuahmulah and one to HA. Dhidhdhoo. During these visits workshops were held with the key stakeholders at the island level to determine the existing services and the strategies under the DVPNS. Focus group discussions were held with different interest groups, mainly men, women, school students and youth, to determine the needs, discuss current services and future strategies to combat domestic violence at the island level. A list of the workshop participants and the participants at the focus groups in both Atolls are provided in Annex 3 of this document.

The final step of the second phase of the process was a national consultative workshop where the needs, current activities, future activities/strategies and collaborative mechanisms were determined through highly participatory activities involving all the stakeholders. The main result of this workshop was the strategies put forth by the stakeholders including the roles of the different stakeholders within each strategy. A list of workshop participants is provided in Annex 2 of this document.

### **Phase 3:**

The third phase of the process involved the preparation and write-up of the DVPNS after which it is disseminated with the stakeholders for comments. A final comments/validation workshop is held to finalise and for the endorsement of the DVPNS by the stakeholders involved in the preparation of the DVPNS.

## **TERMINOLOGY**

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This section is dedicated to the terminology used in the DVPNS since domestic violence and the subject around it is multi-disciplinary with various different references by different sectors.

This document uses the term “domestic violence” instead of “gender-based violence” or “violence against women”. The term “violence against women” narrows the issue down to those types of violence experienced by women only and therefore limits the use of the term. “Gender-based violence” is often used inter-changeably with “domestic violence” given the strong element of the social construction of gender and gender roles in the existence of domestic violence within society. However, while understanding and acknowledging the role of gender in the incidence of domestic violence in the Maldives, this document uses “domestic violence” as the key terminology to be consistent with the existing terminology in naming the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of the Maldives.

This document also uses the term “victim” as opposed to “survivor” in referring to the victims of domestic violence. While acknowledging the reasons why the “survivor” is appropriate given the positive and triumphant nature of the word to describe a person who has experienced domestic violence, “victim” is used in this document to be consistent with existing terminology.

The recommendation is that through the process of combating domestic violence in the Maldives, and by raising awareness among the public as well as government and non-government bodies on the issue, terminology that is more appropriate to the Maldivian context can be applied.

## THE STRATEGY AREAS

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The key challenges in combating domestic violence in the Maldives relates firstly to the lack of collaboration and partnership between the different stakeholders that are already involved in addressing the issue. Secondly, the lack of funding is often cited as a challenge in providing services or conducting activities necessary to combat the issue.

Based on these challenges, the existing needs of the Maldives in addressing domestic violence and the requirements of the DVP Act, the DVPNS is divided into four parts, namely prevention, victim-based interventions, perpetrator-based interventions and collaboration.

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### Prevention

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The bottom-line in combating domestic violence lies in preventing it in the first place. Acts of domestic violence has effects that are not just limited to the immediate physical or emotional impact. The effects are almost always long-lasting and can spread into other parts of the private and public life of the victim and those around them. It can have a generational impact where victims and the impact on the victims may extend to those who witness acts of domestic violence, especially children.

A crucial battle in addressing domestic violence lies in the social context of how domestic violence is perceived by society. For various reasons it is an issue that has traditionally been kept hidden and down-played by the victims, mainly women. There is a strong sense of stigma and shame attached with incidences of domestic violence by the victims in addition to the blame that is often placed on the victim due to the patriarchal mind-set and gender inequality that exists within society. The gender roles within society have a big influence on how domestic violence is perceived and takes place in the first place. Gender equality is an important first step in the prevention of domestic violence.

A second step lies in understanding what domestic violence entails and what effects it has and can have on individuals as well as society as a whole. As such the key emphasis in the prevention aspects of domestic violence lies in raising awareness and knowledge among the general public, and especially within the most vulnerable groups within the community on the issue of domestic violence. Part One of the DVPNS focuses on the prevention aspect of domestic violence and the strategies that can be employed.

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## **Victim – based Interventions**

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The reality of the situation is such that, despite persistent efforts in prevention, domestic violence still exists in all countries around the world. Any act of domestic violence involves at least two people, the perpetrator and the victim. The main aim of combating domestic violence and the DVP Act is to protect victims of domestic violence. In addition to the empowerment of the vulnerable groups to domestic violence, such as women, children, elderly and the disabled, and raising awareness on the prevention aspects of domestic violence, special services are required to address the needs of the victims. Part Two of the DVPNS addresses the provision of such services by identifying the different roles of stakeholders. The emphasis is on providing services to avoid re-victimisation and to assist in the recovery and rehabilitation of the victim to stop the spiral of violence often endured by the victim.

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## **Perpetrator – based Interventions**

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The second element in any act of domestic violence is the perpetrator. The key factor in the case of the perpetrator is to ensure that due justice prevails via thorough investigations, criminal conviction and punishment under the law. However, while acknowledging the importance of adopting the principle criminalising acts of domestic violence, the DVPNS also adopts the philosophy of rehabilitating perpetrators to stop spiral of violence. Part Three of the DVPNS addresses the strategies in providing the services required for the criminal conviction and in addition addresses the services required for the rehabilitation of the perpetrators as a way of breaking the spiral of violence.

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## **Collaboration**

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One of the weakest aspects of combating domestic violence in the Maldives is the lack of inter-agency collaboration or partnership. Most strategies adopted in the first three parts of the DVPNS dedicated to prevention, victims and perpetrators of domestic violence requires the involvement of multiple agencies and bodies. The success of combating domestic violence lies in the strength of the multi-sectoral partnerships that need to take place for the implementation of the strategies. Referral systems and provision of services such as safe houses or investigations cannot take place without a inter-agency collaboration. Part Four of the DVPNS is therefore dedicated to strategies that can be implemented to improve multi-sectoral partnerships and collaborations to address domestic violence in the Maldives.

## **TIME FRAME**

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The time frame for the first DVPNS of the Maldives is three-years from 2014-2016. Annual work plans will supplement the DVPNS to prioritise strategies and actions under the strategies to work in partnership with stakeholders.

An evaluation at the end of the three-year period will determine the best timeframe for future strategies.

## **ROLE OF THE FAMILY PROTECTION AUTHORITY**

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The Family Protection Authority (FPA) has various roles and responsibilities accorded under the DVP Act (refer to sections 52, 53, 54, 55 and 63 of the DVP Act). These include a strong role in creating partnerships and coordination between different stakeholders, in addition to being a monitoring and regulatory body for combating domestic violence in the Maldives. The role of FPA can therefore be defined as one that is more involved with overseeing and collaborating between agencies rather than as a service provider itself. However, some elements of services and actions required in implementing the DVP Act and the DVPNS may require service provision directly by FPA in the immediate and short term. In the long term such a role will be minimised as much as possible when the roles of the different stakeholders to combat domestic violence are more clearly established.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

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The DVPNS is designed to provide a comprehensive framework within which all activities related to combatting domestic violence undertaken by the different sectors are coordinated. The DVPNS highlights the “Purpose” of each strategy to showcase the gaps in the current system and approaches to combating domestic violence in the Maldives which the strategy is attempting to address. The “Actions” broadly encapsulates the actions that need to be taken to fill these gaps and to improve the current setting in order to fulfil the needs and requirements under the DVP Act.

As mentioned above, the DVPNS is planned for a three year period. It requires an annual work plan for each of the years which will detail the individual activities under the actions required in order to achieve the strategies.

FPA is responsible for the overall monitoring of the DVPNS. The DVPNS Action Group will play a key role in assisting FPA in monitoring the strategy activities and outcomes. The preparation of a monitoring and evaluation framework can assist with setting detailed indicators in order to measure the progress of the strategies.

## STRATEGY AREA 1: PREVENTION

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These strategies are aimed at preventing domestic violence from occurring in the first place or, when it has taken place, to prevent its recurrence through the promotion of a culture of prevention and recognition through increased understanding of domestic violence. Prevention strategies include those aimed at raising awareness, increasing understanding and recognition and educating people about the dynamics of domestic violence and its impact. It demands promoting values of equality that reduce social tolerance and the acceptance of a culture of violence by eliminating gender stereotypes that perpetuate unequal relationships in the family and within society. Focus on children and young people are of utmost importance in changing societal norms and attitudes in this aspect. Furthermore, public and institutional awareness, education and information on the DVP Act, including what constitutes domestic violence in the Maldives, the legal actions and protections under the Act, services deemed necessary by the Act and the key stakeholders and service providers all contribute towards the prevention of domestic violence.

In the long term, prevention results in reducing the incidences of domestic violence through raising awareness of the problem and changing attitudes.

OUTCOME 1: Increased awareness, understanding and recognition and reporting of domestic violence and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act at the individual, societal and institutional level.

Strategy 1.1: Increase the role of research and documentation in combating domestic violence

Strategy 1.2: Raise public and institutional awareness on domestic violence, causes, impacts and consequences

Strategy 1.3: Raise public and institutional awareness on the DV P Act

Strategy 1.4: Improve the reporting mechanisms

Strategy 1.5 Advocate the role of the Family Protection Authority



Strategy	Purpose	Actions	Stakeholders	Role of FPA
<b>1.1 Increase the role of research and documentation in combating domestic violence</b>	To better understand the extent, causes and consequences of domestic violence and to better understand the loopholes and bottlenecks in the provision of services to victims and perpetrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake complete and in-depth analysis of domestic violence</li> <li>• Analyse data and records of incidences of domestic violence</li> <li>• Collect and analyse data on the services provided to victims of domestic violence (service mapping)</li> <li>• Collect and analyse data on the investigative and justice process.</li> <li>• Establish standards on the collection of data and standardised reporting mechanisms within and between sectors</li> </ul>	MoHG, MoE, DNP, MNU, MPS, HRCM, Courts, atoll and island councils, WDCs, educational institutions, NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play a lead role in conducting research, setting standards, collecting and collating data/records from various institutions and bodies</li> <li>• Play a lead role in conducting research into the status of service provision and the loopholes and bottlenecks in the system.</li> <li>• Work with academia to garner and focus research on the subject of domestic violence.</li> </ul>
<b>1.2 Raise public and institutional awareness on domestic violence, causes, impacts and consequences</b>	To bring about societal changes in attitudes and behaviour towards gender roles, equality and acts of domestic violence through information and education. This includes influencing religious misconceptions and promoting and understanding Islam's message of equality and non-violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a media and advocacy plan that is segment-based and identifies target-audiences</li> <li>• Conduct public awareness campaigns on the causes, consequences and prevention of domestic violence</li> <li>• Promote the role of educational institutions in educating the young about causes and consequences of domestic violence by</li> </ul>	MoHG, MoYS, MoHA, MoIA, MNU, MPS, HRCM, Courts, atoll and island councils, WDCs, educational institutions, NGOs and Civil Service Training Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and advocate for the use of existing avenues through which public and institutional awareness can be raised by continuously engaging with the state institutions, NGOs, media, atoll and island</li> </ul>

		<p>embedding domestic violence content within education systems, such as through life skills education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate media on their role in raising awareness, informing and educating the public on incidences, causes and consequences of domestic violence</li> <li>• Conduct awareness and information sessions within both governmental and non-governmental institutions</li> <li>• Gather information on the work, roles and responsibilities of both state and other institutions and how they may affect the incidences of domestic violence</li> </ul>		<p>councils/WDCs, and educational institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase relationship and engagement with sectors such as education and media.</li> <li>• Lead the process of gathering information on the work, roles and responsibilities of both state and other institutions and the relationship with domestic violence</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.3 Raise public and institutional awareness on the DVP Act</b></p>	<p>To inform the public on their rights under the law with regards to domestic violence, including information on what constitutes acts of domestic violence under the law, the services available, the punishments and protections under the law. This contributes towards public holding institutions accountable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct awareness campaigns to the public on the DVP Act</li> <li>• Utilise the existing education systems, media and other avenues to educate on DVP Act</li> <li>• Conduct information sessions on the roles and responsibilities of institutions under the DVP Act</li> <li>• Assist in recognising and understanding the roles of</li> </ul>	<p>MoHG, MoIA, MoYS, MoHA, PGO, MPS, HRCM, Courts, atoll and island councils, WDCs and NGOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with institutions to provide assistance where necessary in forming linkages between stakeholders and in providing technical knowledge on the DVP Act</li> </ul>

		individual institutions under the DVP Act		
<b>1.4 Improve the reporting mechanisms</b>	To improve the accessibility and availability of reporting mechanisms and improve confidentiality issues in reporting domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise public awareness on the available reporting avenues including information on the rights of those reporting as provided for by the DVP Act</li> <li>• Increase user-friendliness of reporting mechanisms</li> <li>• Raise institutional awareness on mandatory reporting (such as health and social service providers) and methods of reporting acts of domestic violence</li> <li>• Ensure identity of those reporting acts of domestic violence will be held confidential by all authorities involved.</li> </ul>	MoHG, HRCM, MPS, courts, atoll and island councils, WDCs and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the process of establishing efficient reporting mechanisms and monitor the compliance of stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>1.5 Advocate the role of the Family Protection Authority (FPA)</b>	To understand the role of the Family Protection Authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish relationships with state and non-governmental partners to delineate the roles and responsibilities in combating domestic violence as per the DVP Act</li> <li>• Prepare FPA regulations as per the DVP Act</li> </ul>	FPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full responsibility of promoting and advocating the roles and responsibilities of FPA.</li> <li>• Prepare the FPA regulations</li> </ul>

## STRATEGY AREA 2: VICTIM-BASED INTERVENTIONS

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The protection of victims of domestic violence is at the core of any strategy or legislation to combat domestic violence. Victims of domestic violence have a need for and a right to, help from the support services in the form of interventions. These interventions are complex and involve a multi-sectoral approach. One of the primary objectives of this strategy area is to develop an integrated, accessible, efficient, consistent and professional service to victims of domestic violence in the form of interventions. The first point of contact for victims of domestic violence is either law enforcement officers or health/social service providers. This strategy area focuses on the immediate services to address the needs of victims as well as those services to assist in the recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims back into society.

OUTCOME 2: Improved access to services, interventions and protections needed by victims of domestic violence and required by the Domestic Violence Prevention Act.

Strategy 2.1: Improve reporting mechanisms

Strategy 2.2: Improve the health sector response to domestic violence

Strategy 2.3: Improve social service providers' response to domestic violence

Strategy 2.4: Improve the Police response to victims of domestic violence

Strategy 2.5: Establish "safe shelters" for victims and families of victims of domestic violence

Strategy 2.6: Provide services to rehabilitate victims of domestic violence and reintegrate them into the community

Strategy 2.7: Ensure easy access to "Protection Orders"

Strategy 2.8: Ensure the legal framework and institutional mechanisms provide ample protection to victims of domestic violence



Strategy	Purpose	Actions	Stakeholders	Role of FPA
<b>2.1 Improve reporting mechanisms</b>	To provide easy and user friendly mechanisms for the victims to report cases of domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train first point of contact professionals such as police, health and social service providers, education providers, to recognise and deal with victims and those affected by domestic violence by ensuring reasonable opportunity is provided for disclosure of domestic violence</li> <li>• Special training for those working with children and young people to recognise victims of domestic violence and provide support</li> </ul>	MPS, MoHG, public and private health service providers, social service providers, MoE, educational institutions, atoll and island councils, WDCs, NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form partnerships and collaborate between agencies to ensure trainings within agencies and between agencies where required are undertaken</li> </ul>
<b>2.2 Improve the health sector response to domestic violence</b>	To improve access to efficient, consistent, sensitised and professional services to victims of domestic violence in order to encourage victims to seek their services and to avoid re-victimisation in the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the loopholes and bottlenecks in the provision of services to victims of domestic violence through research</li> <li>• Improve the accessibility of services for victims of domestic violence by quantity and quality of centres and professionals that are sensitised to the needs of victims of domestic violence</li> <li>• Produce and retain health sector professionals who are sensitised to the needs of victims of domestic violence</li> <li>• Improve referral systems</li> </ul>	MoHG, public and private health service providers, health education providers, investigative bodies such as MPS, atoll and island councils, WDCs and NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the research to identify the loopholes and bottlenecks of service provision</li> <li>• Collaborate in the preparation of referral systems</li> <li>• Collaborate in the preparation and implementation of health sector regulation to address domestic violence</li> </ul>

		<p>within the health sector and with other related sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train health service providers in gathering information and handling forensic data to ensure smooth and efficient investigation of cases of domestic violence</li> <li>• Prepare a health sector regulation to address domestic violence in the Maldives and one that includes the requirements of the sector under the DVP Act</li> </ul>		
<b>2.3 Improve social service providers' response to domestic violence</b>	<p>To improve access to efficient, consistent, sensitised and professional services to victims of domestic violence to encourage victims to break the silence of abuse and to improve social protection and psychosocial support to victims. This includes geographically consistent services at island/atoll levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the loopholes and bottlenecks in the provision of services to victims of domestic violence through research</li> <li>• Improve the accessibility of services for victims of domestic violence by quantity and quality of centres and professionals that are sensitised to the needs of victims of domestic violence</li> <li>• Increase and retain the number of professionals who are sensitised to the needs of victims of domestic violence through increased numbers of training for counsellors and social service providers.</li> <li>• Improve referral systems</li> </ul>	<p>MoHG, public and private social service providers, , Public and private educational institutions, atoll and island councils, WDCs, and NGOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the research into identifying the loopholes and bottlenecks of service provision</li> <li>• Lead the collaboration between sectors in training and utilising counsellors and social service providers.</li> <li>• Collaborate in the preparation of referral systems with other sectors</li> </ul>

		<p>within the health sector and with other related sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve collaborations between sectors, such as education sector, police, health sector, judiciary, that require services of counsellors and social service providers to address domestic violence to support in sharing the services and in producing trained professionals in the area.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.4 Improve the Police response to victims of domestic violence</b>	To improve the accessibility, sensitivity and professionalism of the police as one of the leading body in protecting victims of domestic violence in order to encourage victims to report cases of domestic violence and break the barrier of silence as well as to avoid re-victimisation in the hands of the Police.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitize Police officers on dealing with victims of domestic violence.</li> <li>• Train police officers on gathering information and forensic data from victims in a sensitive manner to avoid re-victimisation.</li> <li>• Establish referral systems within the police and with other related sectors.</li> <li>• Prepare regulation on Police response to domestic violence as required by the DVP Act</li> </ul>	MPS, MoHG, and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with MPS in preparing regulation and in providing trainings on dealing with victims of DV</li> <li>• Collaborate in the preparation of referral systems with other sectors</li> </ul>
<b>2.5 Establish “safe shelters” for victims and families of victims of domestic violence</b>	To provide safety and security for victims and families of victims of domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and run “safe shelters” in city areas (Male’ and Addu)</li> <li>• Establish “safe shelter” options in the rest of the atolls</li> </ul>	MoFT, MoHG, MoHI, MPS, atoll and island councils, WDCs, NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the collaboration between stakeholders to establish “safe shelters” across the nation.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.6 Provide support services to victims of domestic violence.</b></p>	<p>To provide support services to victims of domestic violence, to reintegrate back into the community and normal life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with existing institutions to provide special treatment to victims of domestic violence in receiving services such as housing, welfare, healthcare, education, skill development, employment</li> <li>• Provide an on-going support service in terms of counselling and other services</li> </ul>	<p>MoHG, MoYS, MoE, MoHA, MoHI, atoll and island councils, WDCs, NGOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the process of establishing linkages between institutions by providing the required services.</li> <li>• Collaborate in the preparation of guidelines and Service Operating procedures.</li> <li>• Monitor the services provided by the service providers on a regular basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.7 Ensure easy access to “Protection Orders”</b></p>	<p>To give emergency and long-term protection to victims from their perpetrators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the existing system and standards of procedures in obtaining Protection Orders</li> <li>• Improve ease of access to obtaining Protection Orders, especially at the island level by raising awareness and information on the Protection Orders</li> <li>• Differentiate access and procedures to obtain emergency and long-term protection orders</li> <li>• Create a uniform system of obtaining and granting Protection Orders across the country</li> <li>• Educate and train the police and judiciary on the DVP Act</li> </ul>	<p>Department of Judicial Administration, Courts, MPS, private law firms, Law Council, atoll and island councils, WDCs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the collaboration between the agencies in improving the systems of obtaining Protection Orders including training, and sensitizing the relevant stakeholders and raising public awareness on the availability of Protection Orders under the law.</li> </ul>



<p><b>2.8 Ensure the legal framework and institutional mechanisms provide ample protection to victims of domestic violence</b></p>	<p>To protect the rights of victims and ensure that the interaction of various legal instruments does not encroach upon the rights and safeties of the victims</p>	<p>specifically on PO's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the DVP Act and other related legal instruments to strengthen the rights, protection and security of victims</li> <li>• Engage private legal firms to provide support to victims in taking legal action against perpetrators</li> </ul>	<p>AGO, PGO, legal firms, courts, HRCM, MPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the process to review the DVP Act by fostering partnerships with necessary stakeholders</li> </ul>
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## STRATEGIC AREA 3: PERPETRATOR-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Addressing the perpetrators of domestic violence is a key task in combating domestic violence and in contributing towards ending the spiral of violence. Appropriate services for the reporting, investigating and the criminal conviction of perpetrators are of utmost importance to the prevention of domestic violence as well as to protect victims of domestic violence. The DVP Act has deemed any act of domestic violence a civil liability and a criminal offence liable for criminal prosecution. The use of a system of restorative justice is encouraged, especially where young perpetrators are involved. Rehabilitation of perpetrators through the justice system as well as through support services outside of the justice system is necessary to reintegrate perpetrators back into society and to halt the spiral of violence.

**OUTCOME 3:** Improved reporting, investigating and criminal conviction of perpetrators and the rehabilitation of perpetrators.

Strategy 3.1: Strengthen investigative processes in cases of domestic violence

Strategy 3.2: Strengthen the legal framework and institutional support for the conviction of perpetrators

Strategy 3.3: Establish a restorative justice approach

Strategy 3.4: Establish in-prison treatment and rehabilitation programmes for convicted perpetrators

Strategy	Purpose	Actions	Stakeholders	Role of FPA
<b>3.1 Strengthen the investigative processes in cases of domestic violence</b>	To ensure that perpetrators receive due criminal conviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train police officers on investigation skills and gathering information and forensic data in cases of domestic violence.</li> <li>• Fasten the referral process between police, PGO and courts.</li> <li>• Prepare regulation on Police response to domestic</li> </ul>	MPS, courts, PGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for the development of regulations by MPS</li> <li>• Monitor the standards of investigation.</li> <li>• Monitor the standards of court proceedings.</li> </ul>

		<p>violence as required by the DVP Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare regulation on court response to domestic violence as required by the DVP Act</li> <li>• Establish mechanisms for witness protection for cases of domestic violence</li> <li>• Establish mechanisms to ensure complete confidentiality in giving statements when required.</li> </ul>		
<b>3.2 Strengthen the legal framework and institutional support for the conviction of perpetrators</b>	To ensure that the requirements under the DVP Act for the criminal prosecution of the perpetrators are carried out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase efficiencies of the prosecution and court proceedings of cases of domestic violence</li> <li>• Improve the accessibility and process for issuing Protection Orders against perpetrators</li> <li>• Establish systems of monitoring the Protection Orders to better enforce the Protection Orders through improved coordination and communication between stakeholders</li> <li>• Establish more efficient systems of taking action against those breaking Protection Orders</li> </ul>	PGO, Courts, MPS, MoHG, NGOs, MoHA, atoll and island council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the process of issuing Protection Orders and maintain records of Protection Orders.</li> </ul>
<b>3.3 Establish a restorative justice approach</b>	To minimise damage to relationships and assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use counselling and rehabilitation services for perpetrators depending on</li> </ul>	MPS, Courts, JJU, MoHA, MoHG, DPR, social service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate services between stakeholders to</li> </ul>

	of perpetrators back into society	<p>the severity of crime and for perpetrators who do not get convicted due to investigation reasons or when reports are withdrawn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run community conferences</li> </ul>	providers, atoll and island councils, WDCs, NGOs	<p>ensure efficient delivery of rehabilitation and counselling services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the rehabilitation services provided to the perpetrators</li> </ul>
<b>3.4 Establish in-prison treatment and rehabilitation programmes for convicted perpetrators</b>	To provide rehabilitative services to break the spiral of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with existing rehabilitative services within the prison system to include support services and educate on the consequences of domestic violence</li> <li>• Special approaches to rehabilitate juvenile perpetrators through existing systems such as the Juvenile Justice system.</li> </ul>	MoHA, MCS, JJU, NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to linking existing services to match the rehabilitative needs of perpetrators</li> </ul>

## STRATEGY AREA 4: COLLABORATION

Although a diverse range of Government and non-governmental institutions and bodies are already involved with addressing various aspects of domestic violence in the Maldives, there is a strong desire for a concerted and collaborated effort to bring about more concrete changes and impacts. The DVP Act provides a strong foundation for the requirement of a multi-stakeholder process and approach to combating domestic violence in the Maldives. The establishment of the Family Protection Authority further cemented this by becoming the regulatory and coordinating body for the various aspects of domestic violence. This document, the DVPNS will guide FPA in the roles of stakeholders and the delivery of actions to combat domestic violence in the Maldives.

However, levels of collaboration and coordination between stakeholders are weak in terms of combating domestic violence. In recognition of this, the Strategy Area 4 is aimed at improving the levels of collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders. This includes data sharing and management as well as establishing a monitoring and coordination mechanism for the DVPNS.

Outcome 4: Establish and strengthen multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms through clarification of stakeholder roles, regular communication and coordination and improved data sharing and management.

Strategy 4.1: Advocate for integrated data management between multiple sectors

Strategy 4.2: Establish the roles of the island, atoll and city councils in implementing the DVPNS

Strategy 4.3: Set up a Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy Action Group

Strategy 4.4: Monitor the progress of implementation of the DVPNS

Strategy	Purpose	Actions	Stakeholders	Role of FPA
<b>4.1 Advocate for integrated data management between multiple sectors</b>	To understand and analyse the incidence of domestic violence in the Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasise standardised reporting mechanisms to meet the minimum requirements as per the</li> </ul>	MPS, MoHG, courts, atoll and island councils, and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead the process into standardising reporting mechanisms</li> </ul>

		<p>DVPAct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and implement regular reporting of data on domestic violence to FPA as the central body.</li> <li>• Establish and improve existing mechanisms to share data on domestic violence incidences, including Protection Orders.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect and centrally manage data on domestic violence in the Maldives</li> </ul>
<b>4.2 Establish the roles of the island, atoll and city councils in implementing the DVPNS</b>	To take a participatory approach across the country in addressing domestic violence and improve the efficiency of delivering the strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the role of councils in delivering the DVPNS and in providing domestic violence services as required by the DVP Act</li> <li>• Sensitise and provide training to councillors on domestic violence and the roles of councils in combating domestic violence.</li> </ul>	MoHG, MoE, MPS, courts, LGA, and atoll and island councils, WDCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the process of establishing the roles of councils</li> </ul>
<b>4.3 Set up a Domestic Violence National Strategy Action Group</b>	To improve efficiency of the implementation of strategies under the DVPNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the Terms of Reference of the Action Group including compilation and frequency of meetings</li> </ul>	Representatives from all stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the process of establishing the Terms of Reference of the Action Group and chair the Group</li> </ul>
<b>4.4 Monitor the progress of implementation of the DVPNS</b>	To ensure the effectiveness of DVPNS implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve coordination through regular meetings of the DVPNS Action Group</li> <li>• Set up bi-annual or annual reports on the progress of strategy by the stakeholders.</li> </ul>	All the stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the process of monitoring progress of the DVPNS</li> </ul>

## ANNEX 1: LIST OF MEETINGS

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- Attorney General's Office
- Family Court
- Gender Section, Ministry of Health and Gender
- Human Rights Commission of Maldives
- Juvenile Justice Unit and NGO Section, Ministry of Home Affairs
- Maldives Police Service
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of Islamic Affairs
- Prosecutor General's Office
- Society for Health Education

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF NATIONAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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### List of participants

- Prosecutor General's Office
- Attorney General's Office
- Family Court
- Juvenile Court
- Criminal Court
- Maldives Police Service
- Department of Penitentiary and Rehabilitation / Ministry of Home Affairs
- NGO Unit / Ministry of Home Affairs
- Juvenile Justice Unit / Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of Health and Gender
- Ministry of Education
- Male' City Council
- Local Government Authority
- Family Protection Authority
- Human Rights Commission of the Maldives
- Society for Health Education (SHE)
- UNFPA
- UN Women
- UN RC Office



## ANNEX 3: LIST OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS (FIELD VISITS)

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### List of Participants Gn. Fuahmulah

- Prosecutor General's Office
- Gn. Fuahmulah Court
- Gn. Fuahmulah Atoll Council Office
- Dhoodigan Council Office
- Funaadu Council Office
- Hoadhadu Council Office
- Miskiymagu Council Office
- Maadhadu Council Office
- Dhiguvaadu Council Office
- Gn. Fuahmulah Police Station
- Gn. Atoll Hospital
- Gn. Family and Children Service Centre
- Gn. Atoll Education Centre
- Gn. Maldivian Red Crescent Branch
- Open Hand

### Focus Groups

- School students (7)
- Women (5)
- Youth (11)
- Men (2)

### List of Participants, HA.Dhidhdhoo

- Ha. Atoll Council Office
- Ha. Dhidhdhoo Police Station
- Ha. Family and Children Service Centre
- Women Development Committee
- Bank of Maldives / Ha. Dhidhdhoo Branch
- Ha. Atoll Education Centre
- Ha. Dhidhdhoo Pre-School
- Ha. Atoll Hospital
- Cheynujamiyya

### Focus Groups

- School students (3)
- Women (3)
- Youth (2)

## ANNEX 4: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REFERRED

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- 1991, Child Rights Act 9/91, Government of Maldives, Male', Maldives
- 2000, Family Act 4/2000, Government of Maldives, Male', Maldives
- 2004, Domestic Violence Action Plan (2004-2007), Ministry of Justice and the Police, Government of Norway
- 2007, National Plan Against Domestic Violence 2007-2010, Government of Portugal
- 2007, National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2007-2010 (Unofficial Translation), Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Government of Albania
- 2007, The Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences, Ministry of Gender and Family, Male', Maldives
- 2008, Maldives Child Protection Act 2008 (Draft), Government of Maldives, Male', Maldives
- 2008, National Strategy on Domestic Violence 2008-2012, Ministry of Health and Social Development, Government of Seychelles
- 2010, Decentralization Act 7/2010, Government of Maldives, Male', Maldives
- 2010, National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014 Executive Summary, The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Government of Ireland
- 2011, National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women 2011-2019, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Government of Palestine
- 2012, Domestic Violence Act 3/2012(Unofficial English Translation), Government of Maldives, Male', Maldives
- 2013, Domestic Violence Prevention Action Plan, Family Protection Authority, Male', Maldives
- 2013, Family Protection Authority Regulations (Draft), Family Protection Authority, Male', Maldives
- 2013, "Gulhigen Manifesto", Government of Maldives, Male', Maldives
- 2013, Health Sector Response to GBV: National Guideline on Providing Care and Prevention for Health Care Providers (Draft), Ministry of Health and Gender, Male', Maldives
- 2013, Mapping of Existing Services Responding to Domestic Violence, Fathimath Yumna, Male', Maldives

2013, Police Regulations on Domestic Violence (Draft), Maldives Police Service, Male', Maldives

2013, Strategic Plan 2013-2018, Ministry of Gender, Family and Human Rights, Male', Maldives

2013, Validation Workshop on the Legal Review of the Domestic Violence Act of the Maldives, Presentation by Democracy House, Male', Maldives

2013, "Gulhigen Manifesto", Government of Maldives, Male', Maldives

With compliments from FPA and UNFPA



Family Protection  
Authority

