



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Colombo



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**German Ambassador: “Without Justice, there can be no Democracy!”**

**Germany provides MRF 6 million to strengthen the justice system in Maldives**

MALÉ, May 25 - The Federal Republic of Germany will provide 6 million rufiyaa (€ 330579) over the next two years to expand the Access to Justice (A2J) Project in Maldives.

President Mohamed Nasheed attended the ceremony held at the President’s Office today to sign the funding agreement between the German government and UNDP.

Speaking at the ceremony, President Nasheed underlined that justice was the cornerstone of the democratic transitions ushered in the Maldives.

“Justice has always been the cornerstone of all our cries [for democracy]. The whole essence of democracy and people wanting democracy was also fundamentally because of a need to have justice,” President Nasheed said.

Noting that judicial reforms and justice have been the main challenge in the democratic reform process in the Maldives, the President reaffirmed the government’s commitment to reform the judiciary within the framework of the Constitution.

He said the German government’s assistance to the Access to Justice Project is “very timely that we are now able to work more vigorously towards judicial reform and capacity building in the judiciary.”

President Nasheed thanked German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the government of Germany for the assistance and the Chancellor’s continued engagement with the Maldives.

“We thank the German government as we have never thanked before. This is a new leaf of more solid German engagement with the Maldives,” he added.

Maldives has made significant progress in strengthening its democratic institutions with the broad range of constitutional reforms brought about in 2008 and the multi-party elections that followed.

“Without justice, there can be no vibrant democracy. This simple but fundamental truth is at the core of Germany’s commitment to and support for the Access to Justice Programme” said Jens Plötner, the Ambassador of Germany to Sri Lanka and Maldives. “Germany is convinced that strengthening and further professionalizing the legal system in Maldives is an essential contribution to consolidating this young democracy. Having equal access to well-trained judges and legal counsels upholding Law in a Spirit of Independence is important if people are to trust the institutions of their state.”

The A2J project aims to strengthen the justice sector by increasing public confidence in an independent judiciary, reducing barriers to accessing justice especially in the outer islands and addressing the issue of lack of legal representation. This would be achieved by training personnel in the justice system and by increasing awareness about legal rights among marginalised groups like women, children and the elderly.

Speaking at the ceremony, Zindu Salih, UNDP’s Assistant Resident Representative – Governance, said that with the constitutional guarantees for a host of human rights and freedoms, there is a parallel need to set up strong systems that could safeguard and deliver these rights and create a fair, equal and just nation.

“Public confidence and trust in the justice sector and other institutions can be strengthened through demonstrating commitment to internal integrity and values and reinforcing strong mechanisms for transparency and accountability,” she added.

The new phase funded by Germany, titled “Strengthening Democracy through Access to Justice”, will be implemented by UNDP in collaboration with the Government of Maldives and justice sector institutions, including;- the Attorney General’s Office; Prosecutor General’s Office; Ministry of Home Affairs; the Judiciary, and the Faculty of Sharia’h and Law of the Maldives National University.

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