



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# MALDIVES

## COUNTRY PROFILE

Maldives is an archipelago of 1,200 coral islands grouped in 26 atolls in the Indian Ocean. With its highest point only eight feet above sea level, it is one of the world’s most vulnerable countries to global climate change. Located along major international shipping routes, a peaceful and resilient Maldives is critical to maritime security and regional stability.

USAID programs address climate-related impacts such as rising sea levels, increasing shortages of potable water and droughts.

### OUR WORK

Home to approximately 330,000 people, Maldives’ rich marine life and biodiversity have fueled strong growth in tourism, boosting the economy; however, climate change poses a significant threat to sustained progress. High population density—Maldives is ranked the 11<sup>th</sup> most densely populated country in the world—and dependence on climate-sensitive industries such as fisheries and tourism exacerbate the impact of climate change. USAID works to strengthen the resilience of Maldivians to the adverse effects of global climate change in two main areas: coastal resource and water management.

PHOTO CREDIT: USAID/REGENERATE

## GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

Coral reef ecosystems are essential for sustainable oceans. Not only do they support major fisheries, they also buffer shorelines against waves, storms and floods, helping to prevent loss of life, property damage and land erosion. Yet, coral reefs are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including sea level rise, warmer sea temperatures and ocean acidification.

USAID is strengthening the management of coral reef ecosystems to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change in Maldives. USAID trained 650 volunteer marine biologists between 2014 and 2016 on best practices to monitor marine biodiversity. These “citizen-scientists” help raise awareness and implement much-needed climate impact mitigation and management measures. USAID has also sponsored a series of public seminars on environment at the Maldives National University. More than 6,000 people have attended these seminars. We are also helping the Maldivian Government achieve its goal of being designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve—an international recognition that will help boost conservation efforts.

To address the issue of decreasing potable water, USAID is building an integrated desalination and rainwater system. When completed, the system will provide reliable access to safe drinking water to 5,300 residents. In addition, USAID is providing a water treatment plant and a fully equipped water quality testing laboratory to serve the northern Maldivian islands. To help sustain the water supply systems, USAID is training local and national utilities personnel to operate and maintain these systems.



Hinnavaru residents celebrate the start of a new USAID-supported desalination plant that will provide safe drinking water.

PHOTO CREDIT: USAID/PASSANNA GUNASEKERA



With USAID support, young students learn about climate change and how they can help secure a brighter future for Maldives.

PHOTO CREDIT: USAID/REGENERATE

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