

# Equal Futures Audit



# Inequality in the Maldives



## Poverty

1.7%

Lives below international poverty line

5.4%

Lives below national poverty line



## Age

4%

Are above 65 years

65+

are covered by universal old age pension



## Gender

5%

Women's representation in the Parliament

45.6%

Women's participation in the labor force (men's participation is 77%)



## Disability

9%

Have a disability

8,476

individuals receive disability allowance



## Migration

1/3

of the resident population are Migrant workers

1/3

Migrant workers are undocumented

# Inclusion Strategy of SAI Maldives



SAI Maldives' Inclusion Strategy will aim to;

- prioritize audits in areas of inequality
- establish audit objectives that cover critical areas such as gender equality, poverty alleviation, immigration issues and disability inclusion
- conduct social impact assessments, to evaluate the impact of government policies on equality, diversity and inclusion

# Relevant Audits

**Performance Audit on Institution Response to Child Abuse**

**Performance Audit of the Family Support & Social Services Division**

**Performance Audit of Social Protection Scheme (Centre for Mental Health & Elderly People)**

**Service Coordination for People with Developmental Disabilities**

# Main Findings – The Usual Suspects

01

Weak & fragmented regulatory framework

02

Weak institutional arrangements

03

Resource constraints

04

Inefficiencies in managing resources

05

Inefficiencies in implementation of policies and programs

# Choosing a Dimension



In which dimensions do we perform the least favorably?



Which dimension receives the least policy focus?



Which areas have we (as an SAI) not covered?



Where can we create the most impact?

Poverty

# Background and Risks at a Glance



## low poverty rate

- 5.4% lives below national poverty line
- Yet 11.2% lives at risk of falling into poverty



## Inequality Issue

- 90% of the poor are concentrated in the atolls



## little policy focus

- no explicit policies or regulatory instrument
- responsibility has not been assigned to any ministry
- causes and drivers have not been identified



## costly, welfare and assistance system

- 15% of government budget is earmarked for assistance and subsidies
- Yet most of these are universal and so benefits the rich



## fragmented social protection system

- welfare benefits are extended to a few categorical groups
- SPS does not meet ILO floors
- duplications and leakages



## reforms are underway

- reforms of subsidy system and National Health Insurance Scheme are in progress

# About the Audit

## Title

Effectiveness of  
Government's Initiatives to  
Alleviate Poverty

## Scope

focus on initiatives related to poverty  
reduction or initiatives that have pro-poor  
objective from 2019 to Q2 of 2024

02



01

## Objective

assess whether cohesive regulatory,  
governance and operational arrangements  
exist between different actors working  
directly or indirectly to alleviate poverty in  
the Maldives and examine the effectiveness  
of current policies and programs in  
alleviating poverty



03



# Audit Focus



## Regulatory Gaps

Identifying regulatory and governance gaps

## Progress of Reform

Assessing the extent to which planned reforms would address Social Protection Floors of ILO and address targeting issues

## Effectiveness

Measuring the effectiveness of donor funded projects with employability objectives

## SDG Progress

Measuring the progress of SDGs relevant to poverty and equality

# Impact Expected from Audit



achieve policy cohesiveness with clear responsibility frameworks to address poverty issues

ensure the issue of poverty receives policy focus

improve targeting in selecting recipients / beneficiaries for;

- social protection schemes
- social programs
- donor-funded projects with pro-poor and employability objectives

reduce duplications in the existing framework

# Challenges

01

Lack of clear goals and  
policy cohesiveness

02

Complexity

# Opportunities

01

Policy focus &  
mainstreaming

02

Improved targeting of  
govt programs

03

Creating value in the  
lives of vulnerable  
groups

04

Increased  
awareness