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Maldives Statistics Act

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The “Maldives Statistics Act” passed in the 21st Sitting of the 2nd Term of the People’ s Majlis held on Thursday the 8th of July 2021, has become law and has been published in the Government of Maldives Gazette upon its ratification by the President of the Republic on Wednesday the 20th Of July 2021 (10 Dhu al-Hijjah 1442).

Maldives Statistics Act

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Maldives Statistics Act

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction and Short title

1.
 - (a) This act is to establish a national statistical system, and to prescribe the rules related to collection, processing, publication and use of official statistics.
 - (b) This Act shall be cited as the Maldives Statistics Act.

Objectives of the Act

2. Principal objectives of the Act are cited below:
 - (a) Develop the field of Statistics in Maldives' and at a national level collect important statistical information relating to the economic, social and environmental status of the country, and disseminate it to the public in a reliable manner with equal and simultaneous access to all;
 - (b) Establish a mechanism for the relevant agencies to provide accurate and reliable statistics required for the formulation of government policies, the assessment of the effectiveness of these policies and the identification of changes that need to be made to the policies;
 - (c) To encourage and raise awareness among the public to exercise their social responsibility to provide accurate information to statistical activities such as data collections for surveys and census conducted at a national level;
 - (d) To enhance statistical knowledge and skills in the society and raise awareness regarding the field of statistics in order to encourage proper use of statistics and

promote evidence-based decision-making using statistics.

- (e) Facilitate the proper utilization of official and administrative statistics collected and maintained by the state agencies;
- (f) Establish guidelines and ensure adherence to internationally accepted statistical standards and to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the United Nations in the collection, production, analysis, dissemination and use of official statistics in the Maldives;
- (g) Protect the confidentiality of information provided by respondents and undertake all necessary measures to ensure that no individual data are disclosed, and promote public trust and confidence in official statistics;
- (h) Ensure strong coordination among all agencies within the National Statistical System, minimize the response burden on data providers and the cost of statistical operations, and promote the efficient use of resources to achieve high-quality statistical outputs;
- (i) Collect, compile, analyse and disseminate in a timely and reliable manner all official statistics on the economic, social, demographic, environmental and other matters that the Maldives is required to produce and provide at the international level;
- (j) Establish and maintain mechanisms for international cooperation in statistics with international and regional organisations, foreign statistical agencies and other relevant institutions.

Chapter Two

Maldives Bureau of Statistics

Establishment of Maldives Bureau of Statistics

- 3.
- (a) Upon the coming into force of this Act, there shall be established a separate governmental agency named “Maldives Bureau of Statistics” which shall formulate rules relating to the planning and conduct of statistical activities in the Maldives and shall carry out all actions necessary for the enforcement of this Act.
 - (b) Upon the establishment of the Maldives Bureau of Statistics under subsection (a) of this section, all property and facilities owned by the National Bureau of Statistics which was in operation prior to the commencement of this Act, and funds appropriated to the National Bureau of Statistics from the State Budget and approved by the Parliament, and all obligations and responsibilities under laws and contracts and legal and contractual rights of the National Bureau of Statistics are transferred to the Maldives Bureau of Statistics.
 - (c) The Bureau referred to in subsection (a) of this section shall, in the performance of its functions and exercise of its powers, act in an impartial, objective and transparent manner and shall be free from the direction or influence of any political party, government authority or other person or entity.
 - (d) The Minister shall be responsible to Parliament for all matters relating to the Bureau.

Responsibilities and obligations of the Bureau

4. The following are the responsibilities of the Bureau:

- (a) Establish and enforce national statistical standards and guidelines, in accordance with internationally accepted standards and best practices, to ensure uniformity and quality in the collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination and use of official statistics throughout the Maldives;
- (b) Develop, promote and enforce principles, standards and guidelines for the collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination and use of official statistics, and ensure the quality, accuracy, relevance and timeliness of such statistics;
- (c) Recognizing that official statistics are an essential public good and an indispensable element in the development of a democratic society, produce and disseminate, in an impartial, objective and timely manner, high-quality statistics on economic, social, demographic, environmental and other matters concerning the Maldives, and ensure equal and simultaneous access to such statistics for all users;
- (d) Develop, promote and enforce guidelines, methodologies and procedures, in accordance with internationally recognised statistical standards, for the collection, compilation, storage, analysis and dissemination of statistics by all agencies within the National Statistical System, in order to ensure the reliability, consistency and quality of official statistics produced in the Maldives;
- (e) Conduct the Population and Housing Census of Maldives and other essential national surveys required for the production of official statistics, and develop and maintain national statistical classifications and coding systems to be used in the compilation and dissemination of statistics;

- (f) Produce and maintain comprehensive statistics on poverty, household living conditions and social vulnerability.
- (g) Compile, produce and disseminate Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other key economic indicators, including the Consumer Price Index (CPI), in order to measure and monitor the economic growth and price changes in the Maldives;
- (h) Establish and maintain a central register of all statistical surveys and data collections conducted by government ministries, state agencies and other entities for the production of official statistics and designated statistics;
- (i) Collect, compile, maintain and disseminate, within the National Statistical System, official statistics and designated statistics required by government ministries and agencies for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of economic, social and development policies of the Maldives;
- (j) Conduct labour market surveys and compile, produce and disseminate labour force and employment statistics for the Maldives at least once every three years;
- (k) Promote the development of the National Statistical System of the Maldives through the establishment and strengthening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of official statistics with international organisations, regional bodies and national statistical offices of other countries;
- (l) Coordinate the collection, compilation and maintenance of designated statistics required at the national level through the relevant ministries and agencies within the National Statistical System;

- (m) Formulate and implement national statistics development strategies;
- (n) Prepare the annual statistical programme based on the national strategies for the development of statistics, designate the official and other statistics to be produced within the National Statistical System, and publish such statistics in accordance with the approved dissemination policy and advance release calendar;
- (o) Act as the official channel for the supply of national statistical information of the Maldives to international organisations, regional bodies and foreign governments, and coordinate all statistical reporting obligations of the Maldives at the international level;
- (p) Undertake capacity building in statistics for staff of the Bureau and other agencies within the National Statistical System in order to strengthen and develop the System;
- (q) Provide technical advice and assistance on statistical matters to other producers of official statistics within the National Statistical System;
- (r) Advise on, and take appropriate measures to correct, erroneous interpretation or misuse of official statistics;
- (s) Promote public awareness of statistical laws, regulations and the importance of official statistics;
- (t) Formulate and issue regulations concerning the collection, compilation, preservation and dissemination of official statistics;
- (u) Where any State agency is unable to collect, compile or produce designated

statistics that fall under its responsibility, the Bureau shall provide the necessary technical and operational assistance to enable the efficient production of such statistics; and regulations made under this Act shall prescribe the manner and conditions under which such assistance shall be rendered;

- (v) Perform all other functions and take all necessary measures to achieve the objectives of this Act and any regulations made thereunder.

Powers of the Bureau

5.

- (a) The Bureau shall have the power to do all such acts and things as may be necessary for or incidental to the proper discharge of its functions and the performance of its duties under this Act or any regulations made thereunder.
- (b) The Bureau shall have the power to charge and collect fees for services provided under this Act.

Chief Statistician

6.

The Maldives Bureau of Statistics shall be managed and operated by the Chief Statistician under the direction of the Minister.

Appointment of the Chief Statistician

7.

- (a) The Chief Statistician shall be appointed by the President in accordance with this section.
- (b) The person appointed by the President under subsection (a) of this section shall be selected from among the candidates who responded to the public announcement.
- (c) The President shall appoint the first Chief Statistician in accordance with this Act within thirty (30) days from the date on which this Act comes into force.

**Conditions of the
post of Chief
Statistician**

8. A person appointed as Chief Statistician shall satisfy the following requirements:

- (a) Be a Muslim;
- (b) Be a citizen of the Maldives;
- (c) Be of sound mind;
- (d) Have attained the age 35 years;
- (e) Must not have been convicted of any offence for which a hadd is prescribed under Islamic Shari'ah or of any offence involving fraud, dishonesty, or bribery;
- (f) Must not be in default on any debt owed to a State agency or institution;
- (g) Must not be serving a sentence for a criminal offence;
- (h) Must not hold any elected or appointed office under the Constitution or any law, nor hold any political post;
- (i) Must not hold a managerial position or a directorship in any government office, state-owned enterprise, or private company;
- (j) Must not be a member of any political party;
- (k) Must possess the educational qualifications, competence, and professional experience necessary to discharge the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Statistician;
- (l) Must hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification in statistics, economics, demography, or mathematics from an educational institution recognised by the Government, and must possess experience and training in statistics

together with demonstrated competence and managerial experience.

- Term of office**
9. The term of office of the Chief Statistician shall be five (5) years from the date of appointment. A Chief Statistician may be reappointed for one additional term, provided that he or she has not been removed from office under section 10 of this Act.
- Dismissal from office**
10. (a) The Chief Statistician may be removed from office by the President if he or she commits any act that renders him or her unfit to hold the office, becomes incapable of discharging the duties of the office, or is determined by the President to be incompetent to perform those duties.
- (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Chief Statistician shall not be regarded as having failed to discharge his or her duties by reason of any action taken in good faith in the exercise of his or her functions for the purpose of upholding the principles of official statistics.
- Vacancy of position**
11. (a) The office of Chief Statistician shall become vacant in the following circumstances:
- (1) Upon the expiry of his or her term of office;
 - (2) Upon the acceptance of his or her resignation;
 - (3) Upon his or her removal from office in accordance with section 10 of this Act;
 - (4) Upon applying for or accepting any elected or appointed office under the Constitution or any law;

- (5) Upon his or her death;
- (6) Upon ceasing to possess any of the qualifications or characteristics required for the office of Chief Statistician under this Act.

(b) Where the office of Chief Statistician becomes vacant, a new Chief Statistician shall be appointed within thirty (30) days of the date on which the vacancy occurs.

Salary and other allowances of the Chief Statistician

12. The salary and allowances of the Chief Statistician shall be the same as those payable to a Deputy Minister.

Resignation of Chief Statistician

13. Should the Chief Statistician wish to resign, he or she shall submit a written resignation to the President, and the office shall become vacant on the date the President receives the letter of resignation.

Responsibilities of the Chief Statistician

14. (a) The following are the responsibilities of the Chief Statistician;

- (1) To maintain the professional independence of the National Statistical System in accordance with technical and professional statistical standards, to develop the National Statistical System, and to ensure and maintain the quality of official statistics;
- (2) To plan, direct, and manage the National Statistical System and to represent the National Statistical System at national and international levels;

- (3) To ensure that the collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination of national statistics are carried out in full compliance with international statistical standards and principles;
 - (4) To uphold the professional independence of the National Statistical System by publishing all official statistics required to be produced under this Act strictly on the dates specified in the pre-announced advance release calendar;
 - (5) To establish long-term objectives for the development and operation of the National Statistical System;
 - (6) To perform all day-to-day functions necessary for the implementation of this Act and to administer the Bureau in accordance with the directions of the Statistical Council, the provisions of this Act, and any regulations made thereunder;
 - (7) To discharge all other functions and duties conferred or imposed on the Chief Statistician by or under this Act or any regulation made thereunder;
- (b) The Chief Statistician shall discharge his or her functions independently and free from any external influence or direction.

**Staff of the
Bureau**

15.

- (a) Upon the commencement of this Act, all persons who were employees of the National Bureau of Statistics immediately prior to such commencement shall be transferred to the Maldives Bureau of Statistics established under section 3 of this Act.
- (b) The employees of the Bureau shall be governed by the Maldives Civil Service Act (Act No. 5/2007) and the regulations made thereunder.
- (c) The Bureau shall, in consultation with the Minister, prepare and submit to the Civil Service Commission a proposed organisational structure setting out the employment grades, posts, responsibilities, qualification requirements, and staffing levels of its technical and administrative employees.

**Salary and other
allowances of
Bureau
employees**

16. The salaries and allowances of employees of the Bureau shall be determined by the Civil Service Commission.

**Delegation of
functions to the
Councils**

17.

- (a) The Bureau may, in accordance with this Act, delegate any of its functions to island councils or atoll councils in order to decentralise the implementation of those functions.
- (b) The Bureau shall not delegate any function to an island council or atoll council unless it has first ensured that the council has the necessary resources to perform that function effectively.
- (c) Functions shall be delegated to an island council or atoll council under subsection (a) of this section by means of a written agreement executed between the Bureau and the council concerned, in accordance with the regulations made under this Act.

- (d) The agreement referred to in subsection (c) of this section shall specify the functions delegated to the council, the resources to be provided for their performance, the arrangements for cooperation between the Bureau and the council, and the guidelines for coordination of activities.

Responsibilities of the Councils

18. The responsibilities of island councils and atoll councils under this Act shall be as follows:

- (a) To implement statistical functions at council level in accordance with the directions of the Bureau issued under section 17 of this Act;
- (b) To provide all necessary assistance to officers of the National Statistical System in conducting surveys and censuses within the council's jurisdiction for the purpose of collecting statistical data;
- (c) To assist the Bureau in enforcing the regulations made under this Act at council level;
- (d) To carry out all other functions and duties assigned to councils under any regulation made under this Act;

Responsibilities of other authorities

19. All State institutions and authorities shall provide full support and assistance to the Bureau in the discharge of its functions relating to the collection, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of official statistics.

Legal protection

20. The Chief Statistician, any employee of the Bureau, or any person acting within the National Statistical System shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability for any act done or omitted to be done in good faith in the discharge of his or her official duties under this Act or any other law, or in the lawful exercise of any power conferred by this Act or any other law.

**Delegating work
to another party**

21.

- (a) The Chief Statistician may, after consultation with the Statistical Council and the Minister and subject to the provisions of this Act and any other law, delegate any of the Bureau's functions, in whole or in part, to another party by means of a written agreement.
- (b) The functions that may be delegated and the procedure for such delegation under subsection (a) of this section shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.

Chapter Three

Statistical Council

**Statistical
Council**

22.

- (a) There shall be established a Statistical Council which shall serve as an advisory body to the Bureau in the discharge of its functions, the formulation of national statistical policies, and the development of the National Statistical System.
- (b) The Statistical Council shall consist of the following ten (10) members:
- (1) Chief Statistician;
 - (2) A representative of the Maldives National University;
 - (3) Four (4) persons appointed by the Minister from among State institutions that produce official statistics;
 - (4) Four (4) members appointed by the Minister from among users of official statistics representing civil society and the private sector, excluding

the State institutions
referred to in subsection
(b)(3) of this section;

- (c) The member appointed from the Maldives National University under subsection (b)(2) of this section shall hold at least a bachelor's degree and possess relevant experience in statistics or research.
- (d) The members appointed under subsections (b)(3) and (b)(4) shall each hold at least a bachelor's degree (or an equivalent qualification) in statistics, economics, demography, social sciences, environmental studies, data science, accounting, or a related field, and shall possess demonstrated managerial experience.
- (e) The Statistical Council shall be constituted and its members appointed in accordance with section 23 within sixty (60) days from the date on which this Act comes into force.

**Appointment of
members**

23.

- (a) Members of the Statistical Council shall be appointed by the Minister in accordance with this section.
- (b) The member referred to in subsection (b)(2) of section 22 shall be nominated by the Maldives National University.
- (c) Whenever a vacancy arises in respect of the members referred to in subsection (b)(2) of section 22, the Bureau shall submit to the Minister the names of at least as many candidates as are required to fill the vacancy.
- (d) The names submitted by the Bureau to the Minister under subsection (c) of this section shall be selected from among persons who respond to a public announcement issued for that purpose.

**Conditions of
Members**

24. A person shall be eligible for appointment as a member of the Statistical Council only if he or she satisfies all of the following conditions:

- (a) Be a Muslim;
- (b) Be a citizen of the Maldives;
- (c) Be of sound mind;
- (d) Have attained the age of twenty-five (25) years;
- (e) Must not have been convicted of any offence for which a hadd is prescribed under Islamic Shari'ah, or of any offence involving fraud, dishonesty, or bribery;
- (f) Must not be in default on any debt owed to a State institution;
- (g) Must not be serving a sentence for a criminal offence;
- (h) Must not hold any elected or appointed office under the Constitution or any law, nor hold any political post;
- (i) Must not hold any managerial position or directorship in a State institution or private company;
- (j) Must not be a member of any political party;
- (k) Must possess the educational qualifications, competence, and professional experience necessary to discharge the duties of a member of the Statistical Council;

**Chairperson of
meetings of the**

25. (a) Meetings of the Statistical Council shall be chaired by the Chief Statistician.

Statistical Council

(b) Under subsection (a) of this section, the functions of the Chairperson of the Statistical Council shall include planning and directing the work of the Council.

(c) In the event that the Chairperson of the Statistical Council is unavailable, the Chairperson shall designate a member of the Council to perform his or her duties.

Allowances to members

26. Members of the Statistical Council, other than ex officio members, shall be paid such sitting allowances as may be determined by the Minister responsible for finance in respect of meetings attended by them.

Tenure of members

27. The term of office of members of the Statistical Council, other than the Chief Statistician, shall be five (5) years. Nothing in this section shall prevent a member from being reappointed for a second term.

Dismissal and resignation

28. (a) The office of a member of the Statistical Council shall become vacant upon the occurrence of any of the following circumstances:

- (1) Upon the submission of his or her resignation to the Minister;
- (2) Upon the expiry of his or her term of office;
- (3) Upon ceasing to possess any of the qualifications required for membership of the Statistical Council;
- (4) Upon removal from office by the Minister, prior to the expiry of his or her term, for failure to discharge the duties of a member;
- (5) Upon his or her death;

- (b) A member who wishes to resign from the Statistical Council may do so by submitting a written resignation to the Minister, and the office shall become vacant on the date on which the letter of resignation is received by the Minister.
- (c) Where the office of a member of the Statistical Council becomes vacant, a new member shall be appointed in accordance with section 23 within thirty (30) days of the date on which the vacancy occurs.

**Responsibilities
of the Statistical
Council**

29. The following are the responsibilities of the Statistical Council;

- (a) To advise the Bureau on the formulation of policies relating to national statistics and other matters required under this Act;
- (b) To monitor the Bureau's adherence to fundamental statistical principles and to advise the Bureau on measures to further enhance such adherence;
- (c) To conduct research in order to identify the most important statistical data needs of the general public and to submit proposals thereon to the Bureau with a view to developing the field of statistics in the Maldives;
- (d) To submit proposals to the Bureau on new and emerging areas for the collection of statistics, with a view to developing the field of statistics in the Maldives;
- (e) To conduct research on newly developed statistical indicators and international standards and to provide information thereon to the Chief Statistician;
- (f) To approve, once a year, the work plan of the Statistical Council and the action plan for its implementation;

- (g) To provide advice on the formulation of the Bureau's statistical development targets, which are to be compiled and published every five (5) years;
- (h) To assess, at the end of each year, the implementation of the Council's action plan for that year, to review any failures to implement specific actions and the reasons therefor, and to recommend measures to be taken by the Bureau to address any shortcomings identified;
- (i) To advise the Bureau on possible measures that may be taken to rectify any issues relating to the implementation or enforcement of this Act;
- (j) To examine the efforts of individual agencies in implementing the requirements of this Act and to recommend reforms to be undertaken by those agencies in the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics;
- (k) To perform such other functions as may be conferred or imposed on the Statistical Council by or under this Act.

**Management of
the Statistical
Council**

30.

- (a) The Bureau shall, under the direction of the Minister, formulate regulations concerning the minimum number of meetings of the Statistical Council, the conduct of such meetings, and the procedures for the discharge of the Council's functions, within two (2) months from the date on which this Act comes into force.
- (b) The Bureau shall make the necessary administrative arrangements for the operation of the Statistical Council and for the convening of its meetings.

Chapter 4

National Statistical System

National Statistical System

31. The National Statistical System shall comprise the National Statistics Office and other producers of official statistics.

National Statistical Office

32. The leading authority of the National Statistical System of the Maldives shall be the Maldives Bureau of Statistics, comprising the Bureau and all its employees.

Other Producers of Official Statistics

- 33.
- (a) Other producers of official statistics are the government ministries, State institutions, and other public authorities, other than the National Statistics Office, that collect, compile, and disseminate official statistics in accordance with this Act.
 - (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), agencies that collect information primarily for their own administrative purposes under any other law or regulation shall not be regarded as other producers of official statistics for the purposes of this Act.
 - (c) The agencies referred to in subsection (a) shall maintain professional independence in technical and operational matters.

Formulation of committees

34. The Bureau may, in accordance with the regulations made under this Act, establish such committees as it considers necessary for the purpose of obtaining advice required for the discharge of its functions under this Act.

Chapter Five

Collection, analysis and usage of Statistics

**General rule for
statistics
collection**

35.

- (a) Official statistics in the Maldives shall be collected through censuses, surveys, the use of administrative records and official statistics maintained by State institutions, and such other methods as the Bureau may approve.
- (b) In the collection, compilation, use, and dissemination of statistics, agencies that produce or provide statistics shall apply internationally recognised principles and classifications.
- (c) All agencies producing official statistics shall apply uniform standards prescribed by the Bureau in accordance with this Act in the collection, compilation, maintenance, and dissemination of such statistics.
- (d) Statistical data collection operations shall be conducted in a manner that minimises the burden on respondents.
- (e) In determining the methods or sources of data collection, agencies producing official statistics shall have regard to data quality, timeliness, costs, and the burden on respondents.
- (f) Data shall be collected under this section in accordance with the fundamental principles of official statistics set out in Schedule 1 to this Act.

**Authorisation for
collecting
statistics**

36.

- (a) Surveys and inquiries conducted for the purpose of collecting designated statistics under this Act shall only be carried out by officers authorised by the Bureau or the relevant agency. Surveys for the collection of official statistics by government ministries, State institutions, or other public authorities shall only be conducted by agencies authorised by the Bureau. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no authorisation from the Bureau shall be

required for surveys conducted by such ministries, institutions, or authorities for purposes other than the production of official statistics.

- (b) Any person authorised by the Bureau or by any other State institution to collect information for statistical purposes under this Act shall be issued with an identification pass confirming his or her authority to collect such information.
- (c) When conducting a survey, any person authorised under subsection (a) to collect information shall prominently display the identification pass issued by the Bureau or the relevant agency to the respondent.
- (d) All matters relating to the issuance and use of the identification pass referred to in subsection (c) shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.

Official Statistics 37.

- (a) Official statistics relating to the fields specified in the National Statistical Development Strategy formulated under this Act shall be produced and provided by the State institution responsible for the relevant field.
- (b) Every agency that produces or provides official statistics shall establish and maintain a system for the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics relating to its functions, in accordance with the standards prescribed by the Bureau.
- (c) The periods within which agencies producing official statistics shall provide such statistics to the Bureau, and the manner in which they shall be provided, shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.

**Administrative
Statistics**

38.

- (a) Notwithstanding any provision of any other law, State institutions shall, upon request by the Bureau, provide the Bureau with any information collected or maintained by them for administrative purposes where such information is required by the Bureau for statistical purposes.
- (b) In obtaining administrative data for statistical purposes, the Bureau may, at its discretion, access data at the individual record level from each agency and link different datasets in order to derive insights, conduct analyses, and produce official statistics.
- (c) Where any agency that maintains administrative records decides to change its practices relating to the collection or storage of such records, the agency shall notify the Bureau and other producers of official statistics and shall consult them before implementing the change.
- (d) The rules governing the maintenance and dissemination of administrative records by State institutions to the Bureau for the purposes of this Act shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.

**Designated
Statistics**

39.

- (a) Surveys for the collection of designated statistics shall be conducted by the Bureau or by any other party authorised by the Bureau for that purpose.
- (b) The procedures for conducting surveys to collect designated statistics shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.

**Obtaining
information from
the public for
statistics**

40.

- (a) Surveys for obtaining statistical information may be conducted using one of the following two methods:

- (1) Direct questioning of respondents; or
 - (2) Use of a self-administered questionnaire to be completed by the respondent.
- (b) Where information is obtained by means of a self-administered questionnaire under subsection (a)(2) of this section, the questionnaire shall state the purpose for which the information is collected and shall include instructions on the procedure to be followed for its completion.
 - (c) Surveys shall be conducted in Dhivehi, except where it is necessary to conduct them in another language.
 - (d) Where the Bureau or any State institution sends a document to any person requesting information for statistical purposes, that document shall, until the contrary is proved, be presumed to be duly authorised under this Act, and the recipient shall be obliged to provide the requested information.
 - (e) Only officers who hold written authorisation from the Chief Statistician shall be permitted to enter any premises for the purpose of collecting statistical information.
 - (f) For the purposes of collecting statistical information under subsection (e) of this section, premises may be entered only with the consent of the owner or of an occupant who is present at the time.
 - (g) A court order shall be required to enter any premises where the consent of the owner or of any occupant present cannot be obtained in accordance with subsection (f) of this section.

Census

41.

- (a) A Population and Housing Census of the Maldives shall be conducted at least once every ten (10) years. The date for conducting the census shall be determined and publicly announced by the Bureau well in advance.
- (b) The Population and Housing Census of the Maldives and any other censuses shall be conducted in accordance with prevailing international standards and recommendations on population and housing censuses.
- (c) All persons shall be obliged to provide the information required for any census conducted under this Act.
- (d) The matters to be included in the census, the areas in respect of which information is to be collected, the population to be covered, and all other procedures relating to the conduct of the census shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.

Statistical Registers

42.

- (a) The Bureau shall establish and maintain registers in respect of the areas necessary for the compilation of official statistics.
- (b) The information required for the compilation of the registers referred to in subsection (a) shall be provided to the Bureau by the agencies responsible for maintaining such information.
- (c) Information contained in the registers compiled for statistical purposes may be disclosed only where it is required for the statistical work of other producers of official statistics within the National Statistical System, in accordance with procedures determined by the Bureau and with the prior approval of the Chief Statistician.

Obtaining and using the results of statistical information

43.

- (a) The Bureau shall be responsible for harmonising the classification and coding systems used for data collected in the course of statistical activities.
- (b) The classification systems used for coding the information referred to in subsection (a) of this section shall be internationally recognised standards or adaptations thereof that incorporate national requirements. Any newly developed classification system shall be subject to recognition by the Bureau.
- (c) Information collected under this Act shall be used primarily for the statistical purposes for which it was collected. Such information may also be used for further statistical research, subject to appropriate safeguards for confidentiality.
- (d) Designated statistics shall be published only by the Bureau or by the agency designated within the National Statistical System for that purpose.
- (e) Information collected for statistical purposes may be disclosed to other State institutions in a manner that does not contravene the confidentiality provisions of this Act and subject to procedures established by the Bureau.

Maintaining the quality of the information

44.

- (a) All agencies collecting or compiling official statistics in accordance with this Act shall ensure that such statistics are reliable, timely, and disseminated with equal and simultaneous access to all users.
- (b) Information obtained for statistical purposes shall be published only in aggregated form, in accordance with procedures established by the Bureau.

- (c) To ensure the quality of official statistics, producers of official statistics shall be obliged to employ record linking and other methods of integrating data from different sources when compiling statistics.
- (d) The use of new technologies and other resources, as well as data collected by universities, the private sector, and civil society, for the purpose of strengthening official statistics and the National Statistical System shall be in accordance with the fundamental principles of official statistics.

**Using statistics
for research**

45.

- (a) Any person requiring published official statistics at a more detailed level for the purposes of study or research may request the Bureau to provide such information in accordance with the procedure set out in this section.
- (b) A request for the provision of information under subsection (a) of this section shall be submitted to the Bureau together with details of the study, the extent and level of detail of the statistics required, and the purpose of the study.
- (c) Official statistics may be provided to any person or entity for research purposes, provided that the recipient undertakes to comply with the confidentiality provisions of this Act and that such provision does not breach those provisions.
- (d) Information or documents may be released under this section only after the recipient has signed an agreement containing provisions on the permitted use of the information, confidentiality obligations, and the destruction of the documents and datasets upon completion of the research.

- (e) Any study or research based on information provided by the Bureau under this section shall be made available to the Bureau upon request, free of charge.

Chapter Six

Maintaining Confidentiality and Disclosure

Maintaining confidentiality of information

46.

- (a) Surveys conducted to obtain information from the public for statistical purposes shall ensure the confidentiality of the information obtained. Such information shall be used solely for statistical purposes and only in a form that does not identify any individual respondent. In no circumstances shall personal information relating to an individual be disclosed.
- (b) When conducting a survey to collect information from the public for statistical purposes, the authorised officer shall explain to the respondent the purpose for which the information is being collected and shall assure the respondent that his or her personal information will be kept confidential.
- (c) Data containing personally identifiable information collected from individuals or businesses for statistical purposes shall be used solely for statistical purposes.
- (d) State institutions that collect or maintain official statistics shall be obliged to preserve the confidentiality of any personally identifiable data.
- (e) All parties within the National Statistical System shall securely and confidentially maintain the documents, forms, and other materials used in the collection of information for censuses and surveys until

the relevant official statistics have been compiled and published. Upon completion of such compilation and publication, those documents shall be destroyed in accordance with the regulations made under this Act.

- (f) Upon the commencement of this Act, all personnel engaged in statistical work at the Bureau or at other agencies producing official statistics within the National Statistical System shall be required to sign a declaration undertaking to comply with the provisions of this Act and to maintain the confidentiality of statistical information.
- (g) The form of the declaration referred to in subsection (f) of this section shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.
- (h) The rules to be followed by State institutions in the collection and disclosure of statistical information under this Act shall be prescribed in the regulations made under this Act.

**Publishing
statistics**

47.

- (a) Information collected under this Act shall be used solely for statistical purposes.
- (b) Official statistics compiled from information obtained from any person under this Act shall not be published in a form that permits the identification of that person.
- (c) Information collected under this Act shall not be disclosed to any unauthorised person except as permitted under subsection (d) of this section.
- (d) An authorised officer shall not disclose the information specified below to any person other than an employee designated for statistical work under this Act, except with

the written consent of the person who provided the information or, in the case of information provided by a business, the person responsible for conducting or managing the business or activity.

- (1) Information, or any part thereof, provided for the purposes of this Act;
 - (2) A response to a question asked for the purposes of this Act;
 - (3) A report, summary, or other document containing a response to a question, where the manner of presentation could reveal the identity of the person, business, or activity concerned;
 - (4) Information, or any part thereof, that is stored in electronic form;
- (e) The information referred to in subsection (d) of this section shall be exempt from the prohibition in subsection (c) where it has been published by the individual, business, or enterprise to which it relates in accordance with law, or where such information is publicly available through electronic means.
- (f) Where a person or business can be identified from information published in a report, summary, or similar document solely because it is the only one operating in the relevant field, subsection (d)(3) of this section shall not prohibit the publication of such information provided that it does not disclose the cost of production, capital expenditure, or profits of the enterprise concerned.

- (g) Notwithstanding any provision of any other law, information relating to private individuals collected under this Act shall not be used for the purposes of any investigation, prosecution, court proceeding, or administrative action.
- (h) All documents, forms, and other materials used for collecting information in censuses and surveys under this Act shall be destroyed upon completion of the compilation and publication of the relevant official statistics.

Advance release calendar

48.

- (a) Official statistics shall be disseminated to all users with equal and simultaneous access in strict accordance with the pre-determined and publicly announced advance release calendar.
- (b) All agencies producing official statistics and the Bureau shall publicly announce, in the annual programme of national statistics, the methods and scheduled dates for the publication of designated statistics within the National Statistical System. Any change to those scheduled dates shall be determined in advance and publicly notified.

Individual responsibility

49.

- (a) Any person from whom information is requested by an authorised officer in the exercise of powers under this Act for the collection of statistics shall provide accurate information.
- (b) Where the Bureau requires a person to complete and submit a form or other document prepared by the Bureau for the collection of statistical information within a specified period, that person shall complete and submit the document to the Bureau within the specified period.

- (c) No person shall obstruct, or attempt to obstruct, an authorised officer in the lawful exercise of his or her powers or the performance of his or her duties under this Act in relation to the collection of statistical information.
- (d) No person shall provide inaccurate information in response to a survey conducted by the Bureau or any State institution, or in completing a form issued by the Bureau or such institution, for the purpose of collecting statistical information.
- (e) Before providing any information under this Act, the person from whom information is requested shall satisfy himself or herself that the officer requesting the information is duly authorised. No person shall be obliged under this Act to provide information to any person who is not duly authorised.

Chapter Seven

Penalties

Use of information for personal gain

50.

- (a) No employee of the Bureau or of any other agency producing official statistics shall, in the course of his or her employment and prior to the dissemination of such information as official statistics, use that information, whether directly or indirectly, for personal gain or advantage.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 5,000 rufiyaa and not more than 60,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a). In addition, the Bureau may take disciplinary action against that person in accordance

with the Employment Act, having regard to the gravity of the conduct.

Illegal collection of statistics

51.

- (a) Except as expressly provided in this Act, no authorised officer shall collect statistical information beyond the scope prescribed by or under this Act.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 5,000 rufiyaa and not more than 60,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section. In addition, the Bureau may take disciplinary action against that person in accordance with the Employment Act, having regard to the gravity of the conduct.

Disclosure of illegally obtained information

52.

- (a) No agency producing official statistics shall knowingly publish or disclose to any other person information obtained in contravention of this Act.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 5,000 rufiyaa and not more than 60,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section. In addition, the Bureau may take disciplinary action against that person in accordance with the Employment Act, having regard to the gravity of the conduct.

Unauthorized disclosure of information

53.

- (a) No employee shall, in the course of his or her employment, publish or disclose to any unauthorised person any information obtained in the course of that employment, except as expressly permitted under this Act.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 5,000 rufiyaa and not more than 60,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section. In addition, the Bureau may take disciplinary action against that person in

accordance with the Employment Act,
having regard to the gravity of the conduct.

**Obstruction of
responsibility**

54.

- (a) No person shall interfere with, hinder, or obstruct an authorised officer in the lawful performance of his or her duties under this Act.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 1,000 rufiyaa and not more than 5,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section, having regard to the gravity of the conduct.

Impersonation

55.

- (a) No person, other than an authorised officer under this Act, shall falsely represent himself or herself as authorised to collect statistical information for the purposes of this Act.
- (b) Any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section shall be liable to an administrative fine of not less than 5,000 rufiyaa and not more than 30,000 rufiyaa and, where the contravention constitutes a criminal offence, to prosecution under the relevant law.

**Failure to fill and
return
documents**

56.

- (a) Any document, form, or other material sent or entrusted to a person for the purpose of collecting statistical information under this Act, and which is required to be returned after completion, shall be returned within the prescribed period.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 2,500 rufiyaa and not more than 5,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section.
- (c) Where a State institution contravenes subsection (a) of this section, the person responsible for the management of that

institution shall be liable to the fine specified in subsection (b) of this section.

Failure to provide information

57.

- (a) All questions asked by an authorised officer in the exercise of powers under this Act shall be answered, and all information requested by such officer shall be provided, in the manner prescribed by or under this Act.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 5,000 rufiyaa and not more than 30,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section.
- (c) Where a State institution contravenes subsection (a) of this section, the person responsible for the management of that institution shall be liable to the fine specified in subsection (b) of this section.

Negligence in providing information

58.

- (a) No person shall provide false or inaccurate information when completing any form or other document sent to him or her under this Act for the purpose of collecting statistical information and required to be returned, or when answering any question or request for clarification, or when giving any information or statement under this Act.
- (b) The Bureau may impose an administrative fine of not less than 2,500 rufiyaa and not more than 5,000 rufiyaa on any person who contravenes subsection (a) of this section.

Determining punishment for criminal offences

59.

In addition to any administrative action taken under this Act against persons who commit a prohibited act under this Act or who contravene any provision of this Act, nothing in this Act shall preclude the criminal prosecution or punishment of such persons for an offence under any other law.

Chapter Eight

Financial Matters

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| Budget | 60. The funds required for the discharge of the Bureau's functions shall be included in the annual State budget approved by Parliament and allocated to the Bureau. Accordingly, the Ministry shall submit the details of the budget required for the operation of the Bureau to the Minister responsible for State finances for inclusion in the State budget, in accordance with the Public Finance Act (Act No. 3/2006) and the regulations made thereunder. |
| Service Fee | 61. The Bureau may charge fees for services provided by it under this Act. The amounts of such fees and the procedure for their imposition and collection shall be prescribed in regulations made by the Bureau under this Act. |
| Financial Matters | 62. All accounts and records of the Bureau shall be maintained in accordance with the Public Finance Act (Act No. 3/2006). |
| Auditing | 63. The accounts of income, expenditure, assets, and financial liabilities of the Bureau shall be maintained and audited in consultation with the Auditor General in the manner determined by the Auditor General. |
| Annual Report | 64. Within three (3) months after the end of each financial year, the Chief Statistician shall prepare a report on the operations and activities of the Bureau during that financial year and submit it to the Minister. |

Chapter Nine

Other Matters

**Maintaining
Confidentiality**

65.

- (a) Information received by a person in his or her capacity as a member of the Statistical Council or as a member of a committee established under this Act shall be treated as confidential. Such information shall not be disclosed to any person except where such disclosure is required or permitted by law.
- (b) Members of the Statistical Council shall sign a declaration undertaking to maintain the confidentiality of statistical information obtained in the course of their duties and shall comply fully with that undertaking.
- (c) Information received by an employee of the Bureau in the course of his or her employment shall be treated as confidential. Such information shall not be disclosed to any person except where such disclosure is required or permitted by law.
- (d) Information received in the course of performing the duties of the office shall be treated as confidential both during the term of office and after the holder has left office.
- (e) The Bureau shall establish and maintain a secure system for the storage and protection of all information required to be maintained by the Bureau under this Act.

**Making
regulations**

66.

- (a) Unless otherwise provided in this Act, the Bureau shall make and administer the regulations required under this Act.
- (b) Unless otherwise provided in this Act, all regulations required to be made under this Act shall be made and published in the Government Gazette within six (6) months of the commencement of this Act.

- Schedules**
- 67.** The Schedule referred to in this Act and annexed to it shall form an integral part of this Act.
- Entry into force**
- 68.** This Act shall come into force on the date of its publication in the Government Gazette following its passage by Parliament and ratification.
- Definitions**
- 69.** Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions used in this Act shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them below.
- (a) “Authorised officer” means a person authorised under section 36 of this Act, and includes census and survey supervisors, enumerators, and persons authorised to perform data entry work.
 - (b) “Statistical Council” means the Statistical Council established under section 22 of this Act.
 - (c) “Bureau” means the Maldives Bureau of Statistics established under section 3 of this Act.
 - (d) “Chief Statistician” means the Chief Statistician appointed under section 6 of this Act, who shall be the head of the Bureau.
 - (e) “Financial year” means the period beginning on the date of commencement of this Act and ending on 31 December of the year in which this Act commences, and, in respect of each subsequent year, the period of twelve (12) months ending on 31 December of that year.
 - (f) “Other producers of official statistics” means government ministries, State institutions, and other public authorities, other than the Bureau, that collect, compile, analyse, and disseminate official statistics in accordance with this Act.

- (g) “Member” means a member of the Statistical Council appointed under section 23 of this Act.
- (h) “Census” means the complete enumeration of a population or specific groups at a particular point in time with respect to well-defined characteristics, such as Population, Age, Sex, Marital Status, Education, Employment, Housing, and other demographic, social, and economic variables.
- (i) “Population and Housing Census” means the complete enumeration of all persons resident in the Maldives and all dwelling units, conducted at a specific point in time or within a specified reference period, with respect to well-defined demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics.
- (j) “Other censuses” means censuses, other than population and housing censuses, that involve the complete enumeration of specific sectors, establishments, or activities (such as businesses, farms, or buildings) within a specified reference period with respect to well-defined characteristics. When referring to such censuses, the name of the subject matter shall precede the word “census” (for example, economic census, agriculture census, or building census).
- (k) “National Statistical System” means the National Statistical System comprising the Bureau and other producers of official statistics, as provided for under section 31 of this Act.
- (l) “Survey” means the collection of data from a selected sample of units in a population (or part thereof), rather than from the entire population, in order to produce statistical estimates relating to that population.

- (m) “Statistics” means numerical data derived from the collection, compilation, analysis, and aggregation of information in a manner that ensures the anonymity of individual respondents.
- (n) “Classification” or “coding system” means a system of categories or codes used to organise, classify, or convert raw data into statistical information.
- (o) “Administrative statistics” means data collected by State institutions in the course of administering any law or regulation.
- (p) “Designated statistics” means official statistics designated as having the highest priority for production within the National Statistical System and included in the Annual Statistical Programme.
- (q) “Official statistics” means numerical data that, on a representative basis, describe the economic, demographic, social, and environmental phenomena of the Maldives, and that are required for the formulation and monitoring of national policies and plans or by international organisations; and includes statistics compiled by producers of official statistics within the National Statistical System in compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the national data quality framework established by the Bureau.
- (r) “Employees dedicated to statistical work” means employees of agencies within the National Statistical System who are designated to perform functions relating to the production of official statistics.
- (s) “Ministry” means the ministry of the Government of the Maldives that is, at any given time, responsible for statistical policy.

- (t) “Minister” means the member of the Government of the Maldives who is, at any given time, responsible for statistical policy.
- (u) “Public Finance Act” means the Public Finance Act (Act No. 3/2006), as amended from time to time.
- (v) “Councils” means the island councils, atoll councils, and city councils established under the Decentralisation Act (Act No. 7/2010).
- (w) “Statistical register” means a list or database containing basic information on various units (such as businesses, workplaces, dwellings, buildings, and other entities) that is maintained solely for the purposes of conducting censuses, drawing survey samples, and compiling official statistics.
- (x) “Dissemination Policy” means the policy formulated within the National Statistical System that establishes procedures for the publication, correction, and equitable dissemination of official statistics to all users.
- (y) “Advance Release Calendar” means the calendar that specifies the scheduled dates and times for the publication of official statistics and that is made publicly available in advance.

Schedule 1

Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Principle 1: Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the

Government, the economy, and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social, and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility shall be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

- Principal 2:** To retain trust in official statistics, statistical agencies shall decide, according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage, and presentation of statistical data.
- Principal 3:** To facilitate correct interpretation of the data, statistical agencies shall present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods, and procedures of the statistics.
- Principal 4:** Statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.
- Principal 5:** Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, whether statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies shall choose the source having regard to quality, timeliness, costs, and the burden on respondents.
- Principal 6:** Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether relating to natural or legal persons, shall be treated as strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.
- Principal 7:** The laws, regulations, and measures under which the National Statistical System operates shall be made public.
- Principal 8:** Coordination among statistical agencies within the country is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

Principal 9: The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications, and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

Principal 10: Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.