

# Maldives

*A bulwark against global warming*



NATIONAL FLAG



NATIONAL EMBLEM



H.E. MOHAMED NASHEED  
President

*The Maldives was long a Sultanate, first under Dutch and then under British protection. It became a republic in 1968, three years after independence. President Maumoon Abdul GAYOOM dominated the islands' political scene for 30 years, elected to six successive terms by single-party referendums. Following riots in the capital Male' in August 2004, the President and his government pledged to embark upon democratic reforms including a more representative political system and expanded political freedoms. Progress was sluggish, however, and many promised reforms were slow to be realized. Nonetheless, political parties were legalized in 2005. In June 2008, a constituent assembly - termed the "Special Majlis" - finalized a new constitution, which was ratified by the President in August. The first-ever presidential elections under a multi-candidate, multi-party system were held in October 2008. GAYOOM was defeated in a runoff poll by Mohamed NASHEED, a political activist who had been jailed several years earlier by the former regime. Challenges facing the new President include strengthening democracy and combating poverty and drug abuse. Maldives officials have been prominent participants in international climate change talks due to the islands' low elevation and the threat from sea-level rise.*



## Geography

- LOCATION:** Southern Asia, group of atolls in the Indian Ocean, south-southwest of India; Island
- GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES:** 3 15 N, 73 00 E.
- AREA:** Total: 298 sq km; Country comparison to the world: 209
- MARITIME CLAIMS:** Measured from claimed archipelagic straight baselines  
Territorial sea: 12 nm  
Contiguous zone: 24 nm  
Exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
- COASTLINE:** 644 km
- LAND BOUNDARIES:** 0 km
- CLIMATE:** Tropical, hot, humid, dry, northeast monsoon (November to March), rainy, southwest monsoon (June to August)
- ELEVATION EXTREMES:** Lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m  
Highest point: Unnamed location on Wilingili island in the Addu Atoll 2.4 m
- NATURAL RESOURCES:** Fish
- NATURAL HAZARDS:** Tsunamis; low elevation of islands makes them sensitive to sea level rise
- ENVIRONMENT - CURRENT ISSUES:** Depletion of freshwater aquifers threatens water supplies; global warming and sea level rise; coral reef bleaching
- ENVIRONMENT - INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS:** Party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution  
Signed, but not ratified: None of the selected agreements
- STANDARD TIME:** GMT +5 hours

## People

<b>NATIONALITY:</b>	Maldivian
<b>POPULATION:</b>	395,650 (July 2010 est.); Country comparison to the world: 174
<b>POPULATION GROWTH RATE:</b>	-0.178% (2010 est.); Country comparison to the world: 214
<b>LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH:</b>	74.21 years; Country comparison to the world: 99
<b>HIV/AIDS - ADULT PREVALENCE RATE:</b>	0.1% (2001 est.); Country comparison to the world: 145
<b>HIV/AIDS - PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS:</b>	Fewer than 100 (2001 est.); Country comparison to the world: 163
<b>HIV/AIDS - DEATHS:</b>	NA
<b>ETHNIC GROUPS:</b>	South Indians, Sinhalese, Arabs
<b>RELIGIONS:</b>	Sunni Muslim
<b>LANGUAGES:</b>	Maldivian Dhivehi (dialect of Sinhala, script derived from Arabic), English spoken by most government officials
<b>LITERACY:</b>	96.3%

## Government

<b>COUNTRY NAME:</b>	Maldives; Official Name - Republic of Maldives
<b>GOVERNMENT TYPE:</b>	Republic
<b>CAPITAL:</b>	Male'
<b>HEAD OF THE STATE:</b>	H.E. Mohamed Nasheed, President
<b>HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:</b>	H.E. Mohamed Nasheed, President
<b>INDEPENDENCE:</b>	26 July 1965 (from the UK)
<b>CONSTITUTION:</b>	New constitution; Ratified on 7 August 2008
<b>LEGAL SYSTEM:</b>	Based on Islamic Law with admixtures of English common law primarily in commercial matters; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
<b>SUFFRAGE:</b>	18 years of age; Universal





## Economy

**ECONOMY - OVERVIEW:** Tourism, Maldives' largest economic activity, accounts for 28% of GDP and more than 60% of foreign exchange receipts. Over 90% of government tax revenue comes from import duties and tourism-related taxes. Fishing is the second leading sector. Agriculture and manufacturing continue to play a lesser role in the economy, constrained by the limited availability of cultivable land and the shortage of domestic labor. Most staple foods must be imported. The Maldivian Government implemented economic reforms, beginning in 1989 that initially lifted import quotas, opened some exports to the private sector, and liberalized regulations to allow more foreign investment. Real GDP growth averaged over 7.5% per year for more than a decade, and registered 18% in 2006, due to a rebound in tourism and reconstruction following the tsunami of December 2004. GDP slowed in 2007-08, then contracted in 2009 due to the global recession. Falling tourist arrivals and fish exports, combined with high government spending on social needs, subsidies, and civil servant salaries contributed to a balance of payments crisis, which was eased with a December 2009, \$79.3 million dollar IMF standby agreement. Diversifying the economy beyond tourism and fishing, reforming public finance, and increasing employment opportunities are major challenges facing the government. Over the longer term Maldivian authorities worry about the impact of erosion and possible global warming on their low-lying country; 80% of the area is 1 meter or less above sea level.

**GDP (OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE):** \$1.395 billion (2009 est.)

**GDP - REAL GROWTH RATE:** -4% (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 181

**GDP - PER CAPITA (PPP):** \$4,200 (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 152

**POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE:** 16% (2008)

**INFLATION RATE (CONSUMER PRICES):** 7.3% (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 175

**AGRICULTURE - PRODUCTS:** Coconuts, corn, sweet potatoes, fish

**INDUSTRIES:** Tourism, fish processing, shipping, boat building, coconut processing, garments, woven mats, rope, handicrafts, coral and sand mining

**INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION GROWTH RATE:** -0.9% (2004 est.); Country comparison to the world: 75

<b>ELECTRICITY - PRODUCTION:</b>	542 million kWh (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 157
<b>ELECTRICITY - CONSUMPTION:</b>	542 million kWh (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 160
<b>ELECTRICITY - EXPORTS:</b>	0 kWh (2009 est.)
<b>ELECTRICITY - IMPORTS:</b>	0 kWh (2009 est.)
<b>OIL - PRODUCTION:</b>	0 bbl/day (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 149
<b>OIL - CONSUMPTION:</b>	5,490 bbl/day (2008 est.); Country comparison to the world: 163
<b>OIL - EXPORTS:</b>	0 bbl/day (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 165
<b>OIL - IMPORTS:</b>	5,490 bbl/day (2008 est.); Country comparison to the world: 155
<b>OIL - PROVED RESERVES:</b>	0 bbl (1 January 2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 139
<b>NATURAL GAS - PRODUCTION:</b>	0 cu m (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 148
<b>NATURAL GAS - CONSUMPTION:</b>	0 cu m (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 169
<b>NATURAL GAS - EXPORTS:</b>	0 cu m (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 156
<b>NATURAL GAS - IMPORTS:</b>	0 cu m (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 97
<b>NATURAL GAS - PROVED RESERVES:</b>	0 cu m (1 January 2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 115
<b>EXPORTS:</b>	\$88 million (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 195
<b>EXPORTS - COMMODITIES:</b>	Fish
<b>EXPORTS - PARTNERS:</b>	Thailand 34.5%, UK 13.8%, France 12.2%, Italy 9%, Sri Lanka 8.5% (2008)
<b>IMPORTS:</b>	\$782 million (2008 est.); Country comparison to the world: 179
<b>IMPORTS - COMMODITIES:</b>	Petroleum products, ships, foodstuffs, clothing, intermediate and capital goods





**IMPORTS - PARTNERS:** Singapore 26.6%, UAE 16.5%, Malaysia 9.5%, India 9.2%, Thailand 4.7%, Sri Lanka 4.5%, Germany 4% (2008)

**EXCHANGE RATES:** Rufiyaa (MVR) per US dollar - 12.8 (2009), 12.8 (2008), 12.8 (2007), 12.8 (2006), 12.8 (2005)

## Communication

**TELEPHONES - MAIN LINES IN USE:** 50,396 (2009); Country comparison to the world: 162

**TELEPHONES - MOBILE CELLULAR:** 450,500 (2009); Country comparison to the world: 158

**BROADCAST/TELECAST STATIONS:** Radios: AM 1, FM 6, Shortwave(SW) 1 (2009)

Televisions: 2 (2009)

**INTERNET TLD:** .mv

**INTERNET HOSTS:** 1,732 (2009); Country comparison to the world: 151

**INTERNET USERS:** 71,700 (2008); Country comparison to the world: 164

**INTERNATIONAL DIALING CODE:** +960

## Transportation

**AIRPORTS:** 5 (2009); Country comparison to the world: 177

**ROADWAYS:** Total: 88 km; Country comparison to the world: 214 (2006)

Paved roads: 88 km - 60 km in Male; 14 km on Addu

Atolis; 14 km on Laamu;

*Note: Village roads are mainly compacted coral*

**MERCHANT MARINE:** Total: 29; Country comparison to the world: 87

By type: Bulk carrier 1, cargo 23, petroleum tanker 3, refrigerated cargo 2

Foreign-owned: 1 (Greece 1)

Registered in other countries: 2

(Panama 1, Tuvalu 1) (2008)

**PORTS AND TERMINALS:** Male'

## Issues

**INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS:** -1,000-10,000 (December 2004 tsunami victims) (2007). Source: wikipedia and various other sources