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USD 8.5 million (MVR 129.2 million) to Maldives to Address Climate Change

Male, September 19, 2012: The Government of Maldives (GOM), the World Bank, European Union (EU) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) today launched three projects — Clean Energy for Climate Mitigation (CECM), Wetlands Conservation and Coral Reef Monitoring for Adaptation to Climate Change (WCCM) and Ari Atoll Solid Waste Management Pilot (AASWM) — in Male’ under the umbrella of the Maldives Climate Change Trust Fund (CCTF). The World Bank, EU and AusAID view the CCTF as a platform for donor harmonization and cooperation for strategic support to the Maldives. The EU and AusAID contributed EUR 6.5 million and AUD 1.0 million to the CCTF that the World Bank will administer until March 31, 2015. The Ministry of Environment and Energy of the GOM will implement the projects for the next two years.

The CECM introduces innovative mechanisms to provide 300 MWh annually of renewable energy through grid-connected solar photovoltaic systems and energy efficiency measures to 7000 inhabitants on Thinadhoo Island in the Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll. “Independence from carbon-based fuels, if achieved through energy efficiency improvements and use of indigenous renewable energy resources has important energy security co-benefits as it will avoid fossil fuel imports that cost Maldives 20 percent of its GDP, annually”, said Dr. Mariyam Shakeela, Minister of Environment and Energy, GOM.

“Sustaining wetlands and coral reefs is a cost-effective strategy for climate change adaptation with strong benefits for disaster mitigation, ecosystem conservation and economic growth” said Robyn Mudie, Australia’s High Commissioner for Maldives. The WCCM being implemented in Fuvahmulah of Gnaviyani Atoll, Hithadhoo of Addu Atoll and Alif Alif Ukulhas Island in North Ari Atoll will benefit its 22,000 inhabitants enabling the local governments to implement a clear strategy for wetland management, drainage management, ecotourism and community rainwater harvesting. The Project will also enter into a partnership with selected tourist resorts in the North and South Male Atolls for coral reef monitoring and

demonstrate how information from monitoring can be used to support decision-making to prioritize areas for conservation.

The AASWM will help effectively manage solid waste generated in selected inhabited islands of the Ari Atoll, thereby reducing the environmental risks to marine habitats and green house gas emissions. The Project intends to set up five Island Waste Management Centers (IWMCs) operational on a pilot basis and facilitate the process of scaling up an integrated solid waste management system in the inhabited islands and resorts of Ari Atoll. “The success of the pilot project is expected to bring about the participation of the remaining inhabited islands of Ari Atoll, particularly those where IWMCs were built with prior funding from EU”, said Bernard Savage, EU’s Ambassador to the Maldives.

These three projects will be particularly useful in the context of the decentralized governance framework and public private partnerships. Once piloted and proven successful, the models could be scaled-up and replicated across the country.

Maldives is particularly vulnerable to adverse consequences of climate change, including increases in sea level, sea surface temperature, ocean acidification and frequency/intensity of droughts and storms. These will affect the country’s economy that depends on fishery and tourism. “With the country’s high dependence on a few key environmental assets and as pressure on these assets rises, prudent economic management calls for strengthened stewardship on climate change and environmental sustainability”, said Diarietou Gaye, Country Director of the World Bank to the Maldives. The implementation of these projects also marks Maldives’ commitment to use the assistance provided by the international community to help the country cope with climate change.

For more information on Climate Change in the Maldives go to: <http://go.worldbank.org/RJKKD5YKG0>

For more information on the World Bank in Maldives go to: <http://go.worldbank.org/RJKKD5YKG0>

For more information on the European Union’s Delegation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives go to: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/sri_lanka/

For more information on the AusAID go to: www.ausaid.gov.au

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