

CHILDREN'S VOICE FOR RIO+20

THREE AREAS IN FUVAHMULAH ISLAND DECLARED AS PROTECTED AREAS

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT DR. SHAKEELA ANNOUNCES THE GREEN ISLAND INITIATIVE, GREEN BUSINESS AND GREEN GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

RIO+20 NATIONAL PREPARATIONS: MURAL DEPICTING CHILDREN'S VOICE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2012: OBSERVANCE OF NO VEHICLE DAY



PRESIDENT LAUNCHES THE BAA ATOLL UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE, OFFICE AND BAA ATOLL CONSERVATION FUND



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

13 June 2012

President Dr. Mohamed Waheed launched the Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and Baa Atoll Conservation Fund and officially opened the Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve Office on 13 June 2012. The event took place at a special ceremony held in Baa Atoll Eydhafushi.

Baa Atoll which includes Hanifaru, an area world renowned for sighting whale sharks and manta rays, was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve as it meets the necessary criteria. The Baa Atoll Conservation fund is a collaborative effort between the Global Environment Facility and the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Many tourist resorts in Baa Atoll have pledged to donate to the fund, which will finance projects to conserve the environment in Baa Atoll as well support livelihood activities.

The newly established Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve is situated in Eydhafushi, the capital island of Baa Atoll. The office is mandated with managing and developing the biosphere reserve. The office will function under the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

In her address, the Minister of Environment and Energy Dr. Mariyam Shakeela remarked that Baa Atoll which has obtained the status of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is a source of national pride to Maldivians. She called for all Maldivians to support in the management of the Biosphere Reserve.



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

In the ceremony, on behalf of the Global Environment Facility, Ms. Azusa Kubota from UNDP handed over a cheque worth 250,000 US dollars to the fund. On behalf of the government of Maldives, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Mr. Ismail Shafeeq handed over a cheque for 50,000 US dollars. The cheques were received by the Minister of Environment and Energy Dr. Mariyam Shakeela.

Mr. Abdul Mumin Adam, Member of Baa Atoll Council delivered the welcome address at the ceremony. Mr. Abdullahi Majeed, Deputy Minister of Environment and Energy delivered the vote of thanks.

Baa Atoll was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve during the 23rd session of the MAB-ICC held from 28th June to 1st July 2011, in Dresden, Germany.

CHILDREN'S VOICE FOR RIO+20

12 June 2012

The Children of Maldives voiced their concerns for Rio+20 in a forum held in Bandos Island Resort on 11 June 2012.

Children from across the Maldives gathered in Orchid Room of Bandos Island Resort in Maldives to voice their concerns, discuss solutions and come up with a declaration to present to the President in order to extend their voices to the Rio+20 summit to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 20-22 June 2012.

Maldivian "Children's Voice for Rio+20" was presented to the President on 12 June 2012 at an event held at Bandos Island Resort. The event was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Energy in partnership with Ministry of Education and received full support of the President's Office.

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Mohamed Mahid Moosa

Maldives will be represented at the highest level at the upcoming Rio+20 Summit with His Excellency President Mohamed Waheed leading the Maldives national delegation.

Rio+20 marks the 20th anniversary of the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The objective of the Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges.



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

THREE AREAS IN FUVAHMULAH ISLAND DECLARED AS PROTECTED AREAS

18 June 2012

Ministry of Environment and Energy has declared three areas in Fuvahmulah island as Protected Areas today. The three areas include the “Bandaara Kilhi” and its associated wetlands, “Dhandi Magu Kilhi” and its associated wetlands and the unique beach located on the north end of Fuvahmulah island.

Fuvahmulah is a unique island and is famous for its natural beauty and healthy environment. Protecting these

area will serve as a big achievement towards conserving the biodiversity and the natural beauty of the island for the future generations. A management plan for these areas is being developed under Climate Change Trust Fund (CCTF).



Rifath Naeem, EPA

The cabinet has taken decision to declare these areas as Protected Areas on 12th June 2012 while the Atoll Council of Fuvahmulah has also passed a Decree to establish these Protected Areas in Fuvahmulah on 19 January 2012.

The total number of protected areas in Maldives is increased from 39 to 42 including these newly protected areas in Fuvahmulah.



Rifath Naeem, EPA

Photo: Rifath

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT DR. SHAKEELA ANNOUNCES THE GREEN ISLAND INITIATIVE, GREEN BUSINESS AND GREEN GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

05 June 2012

World Environment Day celebrations in the Maldives began with a special ceremony held at Villimale. At the ceremony “the Green Island Initiative” was officially announced by Minister of Environment and Energy, Dr. Mariyam Shakeela by unveiling of a billboard installed in front of the arrival terminal of Villimale.

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RIO+20 NATIONAL PREPARATIONS: MURAL DEPICTING CHILDREN'S VOICE FOR A BETTER FUTURE



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

Speaking at the ceremony Minister highlighted the relevance of this year's World Environment Day theme "Green Economy: Does it include you?" to our society. She emphasized that the Maldives has already started working towards a green economy with the Nations carbon neutral pledge and stressed on the importance of using renewable energy at a large scale to minimize the nation's dependency on oil.

Minister stated that the nationwide "green island challenge" will encourage individuals, communities and businesses to work together for a better and sustainable environment. Under the Green Island Initiative, the Environment Ministry will select the best home garden, Best Island for waste management and best green business. The winners will be announced on the next year's World Environment Day. Minister also announced a new program targeted at government offices called the 'Green Government' at the event.

Ministry of Environment will soon make available to the public detailed information of the new programs launched today.

Minister also visited K. Villingili Muhyiddin School to officially inaugurate the exhibition on renewable energy. Several school children and government officials visited this exhibition to see the renewable energy products and models in display.



Mohamed Mahid Moosa



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

09 June 2012

Murals depicting children's voice for a better future has been prepared as part of the national preparations for the Rio+20 Summit. The murals portray Maldivian children's interest in environmental issues and their hopes and aspirations for the future.

The two five by two feet murals were painted by children in the two age categories of under 15 years old and between the ages of 15 to 18 years old. Over 100 children participated in the activity.



Akram Waheed

The two murals will be presented by the Maldivian delegation to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 to be convened in Brazil this month. The conference is expected to be represented at the highest level by a large number of nation states.



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

The main objective of establishing a Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve Office is working towards maintaining a fully functional Biosphere Reserve, promoting Biosphere Reserve, conservation of biological diversity in the atoll by involving all relevant stakeholders and working towards increasing the livelihood of the residents of Baa Atoll.

The Biosphere Reserve Office will be hosted in Baa Atoll Eydhafushi and will employ around 10 staff. Biosphere Reserve Office will be run Ministry of Environment and Energy governed by an advisory board.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2012: OBSERVANCE OF NO VEHICLE DAY



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

09 June 2012

A no vehicle day was observed on Friday, 8 June 2012 from 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm as part of the World Environment Day official programme.

The event received immense support from the general public. During the no vehicle hours, the usually traffic congested streets of Male' were quiet and peaceful, and a large number of families ventured out to the streets in the capital to enjoy the unusual serenity of the Male' atmosphere. Several activities were held on the streets of Male' to support the event. The Ministry of Environment and Energy in collaboration with civil society organizations set up stalls in Ameene Magu in front of Kudakudhinge Bageecha, where environmental awareness and entertainment activities were undertaken. One such activity was painting of two murals by children expressing their views on environmental issues and hopes for the future.

The Minister of Environment and Energy Dr. Mariyam Shakeela participated in the programme and thanked the public for their participation and overwhelming support for the event.

ENVIRONMENT MINISTER ANNOUNCES A NEW GOVERNMENT OFFICE



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

05 June 2012

On the occasion of this year's World Environment Day, Minister of Environment and Energy Dr. Mariyam Shakeela announced a new office named the Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve office.

In recognition of the outstanding natural values of this atoll, and the commitments being made by local communities and resorts, the Atoll Ecosystem Conservation project proposed international designation of Baa Atoll as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve through Government on 28 September 2010 and Baa Atoll was declared as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve on 29 July 2011.



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

The theme for this year's World Environment Day is 'Green Economy: Does it include YOU?' During no vehicle day, all motorized vehicles excluding bicycles and public transport in major cities were not permitted on the streets of all inhabited islands. It is hoped that the event would contribute to the increased adoption of environmentally sustainable transport by the public, and encourage businesses to promote such vehicles in the Maldives.



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

MEMP'S WASTE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTH REGION HAVE BEGUN

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY LAUNCHES STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2011



Mohamed Mahid Moosa

Minister of Environment and Energy, Dr. Mariyam Shakeela launched the State of the Environment Report 2011 (SoE) on this year's World Environment Day (5 June 2012). The State of the Environment Report 2011 highlights environmental issues and current environmental conditions of the country. Unlike previous SoE reports, SoE 2011 has been published electronically. SoE 2011 is made available on Ministry's website www.mhe.gov.mv.



Maldives Environment Management Project

The Minister of Environment and Energy Dr Mariyam Shakeela has initiated the lifting of accumulated waste in 5 pilot islands in the North Region. The ceremony to mark the beginning of this effort under the Maldives Environmental Management Project (MEMP) was held on Saturday the 16th of June 2012 at Dhuvaafaru in Raa Atoll. Under this activity, over 100 tons of accumulated in five pilot islands in the North Region have been lifted to the site at Thilafushi.

The other islands involved in the pilot are N. Manadhoo, Lh. Hinnavaru and Naifarua, and B. Eydhafushi. Under this pilot effort in the five islands, it is planned to remove the accumulated waste every 3 months, partly with MEMP funds, and to establish a more robust waste management system for these islands, with the inclusion of a fee collection system to help finance the system. The

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waste management at island level will be carried out by the island councils, as mandated in relevant laws and regulations, and will include user fees.

In addition to the initiation of the waste lifting, the Minister has also launched the Island Waste Management Plan that was developed by MEMP and the Dhuvaafaru Island Council. Similar plans have already been developed for the other 4 pilot islands.



Maldives Environment Management Project

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Waste management planning will be carried out in further islands in the North Region shortly with MEMP assistance, in order to make preparations on the islands for inclusion in the waste management system that will be established on R Vandhoo. Under these planning exercises, both an island waste management plan and an environmental management plan will be developed for each island, through which there will be an assessment of the waste management situation on each island, and plans drawn up on how to fund the waste management systems to ensure that there is as little impact on the environment as possible from solid waste from the islands.

MEMP is a World Bank funded project whose main component aims to establish a waste management system for the four atolls of the North Region: Noonu, Raa, Baa and Lhaviyani atolls.



Maldives Environment Management Project

THE BAIT FISHERY AND RESOURCE

Maldives Environment Management Project



The bait fishery

The livebait pole and line fishery actually consists of two separate fisheries: one for livebait and one for tuna. Baiting is carried out inside the atolls using a simple liftnet. Tuna fishing is carried out in the ocean, outside the atolls, using hook, pole and line. The Maldivian livebait pole and line fishery has been in existence for centuries, indeed almost certainly for more than 1000 years. It was mentioned by the great Arab traveller Ibn Battuta, who described the preparation and consumption of Maldivian fish at the time of his visits in the 1340s (Gray, 1889; Gibb, 1929). A later Portuguese visitor, Valentin Fernandes, gave a clear description of the fishery in 1507 (Fitzler, 1935). François Pyrard de Laval, a Frenchman who was shipwrecked in the Maldives in 1602 and left the most comprehensive early account of the islands, also noted the fishery (Gray, 1889).

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Traditionally, baiting was carried out first thing in the morning. A simple, cotton lift net was used, and deployed from one side of the *masdhoni* (Maldivian fishing boat) using four long poles. Scraped fish paste might be used to lure the bait school over the net, when it was rapidly hauled and the captured fish transferred into the flooded hull of the *masdhoni*. Circulation of water within the bait hold was maintained by hand-bailing, a laborious task at which crew members took turns.

Starting in the 1970s a number of developments and innovations have revolutionised the livebait fishery (Table 1), even though the essentials remain unchanged: bait is still caught with a simple rectangular liftnet, and is still kept alive in the flooded hull of the *masdhoni*.

Time line of significant developments within the livebait fishery

Early 1970s	Replacement of traditional cotton liftnets with nylon nets. The new bait nets were much lighter and stronger, so could be larger and were easier to use and to maintain. These larger, non-rotting nets were also suitable for overnight bait holding; as a result the use of traditional bait cages (<i>lagari</i>) died out by the mid-1980s.
1974	First <i>masdhoni</i> mechanised. By the early 1980s the entire active <i>masdhoni</i> fleet had converted from sail. Mechanisation paved the way for many developments in the fishery, including improvements in bait holding.
Mid-1970s	Diving masks introduced, following arrival of tourism in 1972 (Anderson, 1983). These allowed fishermen to see what was happening underwater, and eventually led to the replacement of long poles to deploy the bait net with swimmers in the water. This in turn allowed the use of larger nets.
1981	First visit to Maldives by two Hawaiian masterfishermen (Walter Paulo and Richard Kinney) who demonstrated several innovations for bait holding and use (Wilson, 2005). Among other things, they introduced the use of much larger holes in <i>masdhoni</i> hulls and the use of angled plastic pipes in the holes to improve water circulation and thus livebait survival. Now universal.
Late-1980s onwards	Increasing size of <i>masdhonis</i> . The original mechanised <i>masdhonis</i> were simply converted from sailing boats. Once conversion of the originally sailing fleet was complete, new purpose-built mechanised vessels started appearing. The 'second-generation' <i>masdhonis</i> started the trend of increasing size, but it continues to this day, with vessels in excess of 30m now being commonplace. This has considerably increased the daily bait requirement of individual boats.
1990	First use of mechanical sprayers (replacing hand spraying) for tuna fishing (Anderson and Waheed, 1990). This required the use of pumps, which can also be used to improve water circulation in the baitwell. Started in Raa Atoll and rapidly spread throughout the country.
1995	Use of lights for night baiting spreads (Anderson <i>et al.</i> , 1997). Although first used in Addu Atoll as early as 1971, the use of lights did not spread to other atolls for many years. In 1995, fishermen in Huvadhu Atoll started using lights, and from there it spread to Malé in 1997, after which the use of lights rapidly became established throughout the country.
2001	First bait fish aggregating device (BFAD) deployed, in Addu Atoll (Maajid, 2001). The effectiveness of BFADs remains to be demonstrated.

The use of lights for baiting at night is now widespread (although within the project area, most fishermen in Baa Atoll do not use lights which they feel disrupt bait supplies). For the country as a whole, it is likely that over three-quarters of all livebait for the pole and line fishery is now taken at night.

Extracted from: R. Charles Anderson. 2009. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO BAIT FISHERIES MONITORING.

Available online at: <http://www.mhe.gov.mv/memp/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/12/MEMP-Bait-Fisheries-Monitoring1.pdf>

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President Dr Mohamed Waheed's statement at the 1st Plenary Meeting at Rio+20, United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 20 June 2012, Ref: PRO/RMW/2012/93

Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I would like to thank President Dilma Rousseff and the friendly people of Brazil for the warm hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for this conference.

Mr President;

I'm from one of the smallest countries on this planet. I'm here because the survival and development of our children are inextricably linked to what happens in your countries.

Twenty years ago, world leaders here adopted one of the most historic documents of all time, the Agenda 21. It was the first time that human beings were placed at the center of development. It also set out principles that would govern humankind's aspirations for a better life in a way that would not deplete the planet's finite resources.

Twenty years since, the world has a better appreciation of the magnitude of the challenges we face. But in terms of actions, we have very little to show. Millions of children are denied the right to development.



Millions of youth are deprived of the opportunity to show their creativity and ability to shape their own future. And it appears that millions of people would be denied the right to a livable environment. For these millions of people, the future looks gloomy.

Mr President;

The Maldives' international advocacy on matters of environmental sustainability, especially relating to climate change, is well-known. We have stood resolutely in forums and conferences around the world and asserted our right to survival. I am here today to reassert that right.

But I also stand here to say that the Maldives wants more than that. We want not only to survive, but also to thrive.

Our commitment, as a country, to sustainable development is evident across our economy and across our society. By relying on sustainable practices, the Maldives has achieved remarkable success. Maldives is one of only three countries to have ever graduated from the United Nations' Least Developed Country category. And we are also on course to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals.

Our economy, built primarily on tourism and fisheries, has grown significantly. Our tourism sector is a sustainable one, relying on the preservation of our magnificent coral reefs, beautiful beaches and our rich and diverse marine life.

Maldives remains wedded to sustainable pole-and-line fishing, while others continue unsustainable fishing practices. Such practices are destroying our regional and global fish stocks, with dire consequences on the livelihood of many Maldivians.

This year we have established the first UNESCO Biosphere reserve in the Baa Atoll, one of the 20 atolls that make up the Maldives. I would like to announce today that Maldives will become the first country to be a marine reserve. We can do it in a short time. I hope we can do it in 5 years. It will become the single largest marine reserve in the world.

This policy will allow only sustainable and eco-friendly fishing. It will exclude destructive techniques. Already Maldives is a sanctuary for sharks, turtles and many species of fish in the Indian Ocean. Trade in these products is now illegal in the Maldives.

Mr President;

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Mr President;

The Maldives is undergoing the most dramatic and difficult challenges in the country's history. The country is in a critical phase of a demographic transition. We are struggling to cope with the rapid growth of the adolescent and youth population in recent years. Significant and growing numbers of youth have fallen prey to the scourges of substance abuse and crime. The Government has set in policies and strategies to reverse this trend and create a more economically and socially productive youth population in the country. Yet, the challenges are daunting requiring innovative solutions. We seek to forge new partnerships to overcome such challenges.

Maldives is also in a difficult transition to democracy. Our newly acquired freedoms have enabled us to participate in the country's political life with passion. That passion, while encouraging, has also led to an extreme polarization of our close-knit society. Yet, I will assure you of our commitment to cultivate democratic values and to strengthen the institutions of democracy. In this endeavour, we continue to work with our international partners.

Mr President;

Maldives has one of the world's most ambitious carbon neutrality targets. We also support the targets in the Secretary General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative.

We will cover 60% of our electricity needs with solar power, and the rest with a combination of biofuels, other clean technologies and some conventional energy.

Progress towards achieving these goals is slow because of the huge financial and technological investments involved. If we are, as a global community, committed to the concept of transitioning to a green economy, then developing countries will need significant financial and technical support. It is critically important that we forge partnerships in this conference and beyond that will deliver real solutions. We reiterate our call for a third global sustainable development conference for small island developing states in 2014.

A small island state like the Maldives cannot, on its own, secure the future we want. We rely on our international partners to ensure that their development paths are sustainable and don't negatively impact on vulnerable countries like the Maldives.

Mr President;

Just when I was about to leave for Rio, representatives of children from all parts of my country came to see me and to voice their concerns about their future. They are worried that their islands are severely eroding; their aquifers getting saline, their fish stocks getting depleted and their farmers getting fewer yields. I am conveying their concerns to you and to the world. Today, out of the 194 inhabited islands in the Maldives, 113 suffer serious beach erosion and over 90 islands require fresh water. The total cost of addressing coastal erosion, fresh water and sewerage will cost more than 500 million dollars. The children of my country, like many other children around the world, have high hopes that this summit will produce some concrete results. The Maldives has made this point in Rio twenty years ago and every subsequent world summit since then.

Mr President;

Our children need answers. Their future, and the future of generations to come, is in our hands. It is time that we as leaders, should make bold decisions for the future of our children and for the future of our common home.

For the sake of our children, our future generations, we must protect and nurture the earth. To do that we must use the best of science and technology but remain grounded in the collective wisdom of our people, both ancient and modern. Development policy must address the need for peaceful co-existence among all species while we address the need for economic development. It is my hope that world governments will seize the moment to create a new paradigm for sustainable development.

Thank you.