

Results of the Field Survey on Human Trafficking in Male', Maldives

Male', July 2014

IOM Maldives

Dr. Annett Fleischer

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Acknowledgements

The survey has been made possible through a project funded by the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP), which is implemented by IOM from September 2012 until September 2014 in the Maldives. We wish to thank J/TIP for their generous financial support.

We would also like to thank the Department of Planning of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of the Maldives for their support and for allowing us to conduct the survey.

The survey would not have been possible without the dedicated work of the enumerators who dedicated their energy and enthusiasm to collect the data. Furthermore, we thank the data entry clerks and data analyst who did an excellent job.

Finally, we like to thank in particular all migrants and Maldivian nationals who participated in the survey for taking the time to talk to us.

Executive summary

Human trafficking is a multi-dimensional threat. It deprives people of their human rights and freedoms, it increases global health risks, and it fuels the growth of organized crime. Human trafficking has a devastating impact on individual victims who often suffer physical and emotional abuse, rape, threats against self and family, document theft and even death. Trafficking in persons (TIP) is a crime that gravely affects the Maldives as a destination country.

This field survey, the first of its kind in the Maldives, aims to provide an analysis of the trafficking phenomenon in and to the Maldives with a view towards developing effective counter trafficking strategies in the future. Data was collected in March 2014 from face-to-face interviews with international migrants¹ and Maldivian nationals in the Maldivian capital Male'. A total of 210 interviews with migrants and 50 interviews with Maldivians were conducted.

The information below presents a summary of major findings from the migrant and the Maldivian national questionnaires.

Migrants

- The majority of migrants paid a large amount of money in recruitment fees in order to migrate to the Maldives (156 individuals, or 75%). Of those 156 migrants who paid fees to enter the country, 73% (113 individuals) of the migrants paid money to a local recruitment agency in their country of origin to enable their emigration, 11% (17 individuals) of the migrants paid a Maldivian recruitment agency. Others paid money in order to receive contacts/networks, for visa documents or to their future employer. Migrants paid between USD 400 and USD 2500 in order to reach the Maldives. Their reasons for coming to the Maldives included 'better salary' and 'better job opportunities'.

¹ The term "international migrants" refers in this study to non-Maldivian nationals living in the Maldives.

- When asked whether they faced any difficulties in the Maldives regarding their living and working conditions, a total of 178 out of 210 migrants mentioned difficulties. Interestingly here, crucial problems were ‘access to housing’ (37%), ‘unsatisfied with the salary level’ (34%) or ‘working conditions, e.g. security, health, contracts or rights (20%)’. Only few respondents claimed to face legal problems or experienced discrimination.
- 53% of surveyed migrants would seek help/support from friends or country men/women in case of emergency. However, a large number of migrants would also ask for help in the embassy/consulate/high commission (43%) or even seek assistance from the police (20%). In this regard, the majority (76%) would feel comfortable to use a hotline in case of an emergency.²
- The majority of migrants have neither medical insurance (74%) nor a bank account (56%).
- Out of 210 interviewees, 151 stated that they or their acquaintances had experienced a difficult living and/or working situation in the Maldives. The major problem migrants faced was the confiscation of their documents, mainly their passport. In fact when the respondents were asked whether they have their passport/identification with them, 64% replied with ‘no’. The majority of those who were not in possession of their documents reported that their passport was with their employer.
- The second major problem for the interviewees was “false promises”. Respondents explained that in many cases, they were forced to do work under conditions different from what had been promised, such as defined working hours, no extra duties or fixed salary.
- Other major problems, particularly for women, were the harsh treatment by their employers, rude behavior of employer or restriction of movement.

² Currently, there is no emergency hotline particular for migrants in place.

Maldiviannationals

- The majority of Maldivian nationals stated having personal contacts with migrants: some were friends with migrants and others were colleagues or co-workers.
- Most respondents (54%) have not heard about the confiscation of documents among migrants, although migrants indicated this as one of the problems they face.
- 54% of the Maldivians in the survey think that migrants should not have the same rights as Maldivians.
- Concerning the definition of human trafficking, 32% think of trafficking in person as synonymous of smuggling.
- Only 35% of the respondents have heard about trafficking in persons in the Maldives. If they have heard about such cases, they read it in the newspaper or internet (76%) or from personal accounts of friends/neighbours (28%).
- Only 28% of all respondents have heard about cases of internal human trafficking in the Maldives, for example, girls who were brought for education purposes to Male, but who were also asked to provide sex by the male members of the host family.
- Only 24% of the interviewees have heard about the Anti-Human Trafficking Act which came into force in December 2013.
- Maldivian nationals believe that the best vehicles for sharing information on the phenomenon of human trafficking with the general public are 'awareness campaigns', 'social media (Facebook, Twitter)' and 'newspaper'.
- Maldivians who participated in the survey largely believe that their country does not need migrants (55%).

The main recommendations of this survey

- Increase awareness among and mobilize commitment of various decision makers, political leaders and stakeholders on the situation of migrants and on the issue of human trafficking in the country.
- Conduct information campaigns to educate vulnerable migrants on the risks and realities of migration so that they are better equipped with information to recognize suspicious situations and can make better decisions when offered jobs.

- Enhance capacity particular of stakeholders such as Department of Immigration and Emigration (DoIE), Maldivian Police Service (MPS), Labor Relations Authority (LRA) and NGOs with regard to victim identification and direct assistance to victims.
- Support data generation for policy development and formulation.
- Strengthen border management and continue to train border police officers on victim identification.
- Support the development of a law enforcement database for effective investigation and prosecution.
- Encourage the establishment of an emergency helpline/hotline for migrants.
- Recommendations are divided in three areas, namely prevention, prosecution and protection and are elaborated on in the final section of this report.

The field survey provides evidence for the fact that human trafficking does exist in the Maldives. However, the Maldives can significantly reduce the problem by putting the right mechanisms in place. Different governmental entities such as Department of Immigration and Emigration (DoIE), Maldivian Police Service (MPS), Labor Relations Authority (LRA), non-governmental actors such as civil society organizations as well as the private sector need to work together to achieve successful results. In this regard, the implementation of migration policies and the counter-trafficking act are essential.

Acronyms

DoIE	Department of Immigration and Emigration
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LRA	Labor Relations Authority
MPS	Maldivian Police Service
NGO	Non-governmental organization
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
VoTs	Victims of Trafficking

Introduction

According to the Maldivian government estimates, nearly a third of the country's population of 370,000 inhabitants is composed of migrant workers, of which many have an irregular status.³ The majority of the migrant workers are believed to be Bangladeshi; however there are also a large number of migrants from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Philippines and other South Asian countries, amongst others. Precise and systematic data on the scope of migration to and in the Maldives is lacking.

The majority of male migrants work in the construction and service sectors, while female migrants are mainly employed as domestic workers. Other areas of employment are the tourist industry, fishery and agriculture on local islands. A high percentage of the doctors, nurses and teachers in the country are also expatriates. It is estimated that expatriate workers, whether documented or undocumented, form a large part of the work force.⁴

To date there is no assessment of the extent of trafficking in persons in the Maldives. However, it has been noted that the Maldives is a destination country for men, women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking and Maldivian children are said to be subjected to human trafficking within the country.⁵

The Government of the Maldives has enacted national legislation criminalizing human trafficking. In December 2013, the Government of the Maldives passed a bill on anti-human trafficking, which makes trafficking in persons a criminal offence with perpetrators liable to 10 to 15 years imprisonment. In line with the Palermo Protocol, the bill also criminalizes offenses such as forced labor and fraudulent recruitment as acts of human trafficking.

³ US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP), 2013: http://photos.state.gov/libraries/sri-lanka/5/pdfs/TIP_2013_Maldives.pdf

⁴ Minivan news, 24 April 2014, Government plans massive operation to deport undocumented workers: <http://minivannews.com/society/government-plans-massive-operation-to-deport-undocumented-workers-83514>

⁵ US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP), 2013: http://photos.state.gov/libraries/sri-lanka/5/pdfs/TIP_2013_Maldives.pdf

Despite passing an anti-human trafficking law, there is still a lack of standard procedures in dealing with victims of trafficking, low level of awareness about human trafficking among the general public and poor coordination between countries in the region.

IOM signed a cooperation agreement with the Government of the Republic of the Maldives in August 2011. Its office in Male' was established in April 2013. The main objective of the J/TIP funded project is to contribute to strengthening the efforts of the Government of the Maldives and non-governmental actors to combat Trafficking in Persons in the areas of prevention, prosecution, protection and partnerships.

The field survey is part of the J/TIP funded project and was carried out over 10 days in March 2014 in order to collect data on the migrant population residing in Male', Maldives. The emphasis was on potential victims of human trafficking. This preliminary field survey serves as a basis for the proposed full baseline assessment to be undertaken in the prospective next phase of the J/TIP funded project in the Maldives.

Objective of field survey

The main objective of this study is to provide an analysis of the trafficking phenomenon to and in the Maldives, based on first-hand data, with a view towards developing effective counter-trafficking strategies in the future. Furthermore, the aim of this survey is also to grasp the level of understanding of the issue by Maldivian nationals. Therefore, two questionnaires were developed: the first for the migrant population residing in Male' and the second targeting community informants such as teachers, religious leaders and community elders who could give insight into common perception and awareness level of human trafficking among the general public.

The findings of the survey will help to understand the living and working conditions of migrants in Male' and support the eventual design of an awareness campaign including appropriate use of media and dissemination strategy.

Methodology

As previously mentioned, there were two populations being targeted, first migrants with foreign nationalities and second Maldivians nationals. Questions for migrants aimed to address immigration experience, current employment situation and future plans. The second questionnaire asked community informants to give an insight into common perception and awareness level of human trafficking among the general public.

The questionnaires have been developed by the author of this report in close cooperation with IOM Maldives. Both questionnaires requested basic demographic and socio-economic information such as sex, age, nationality, marital status, educational level.

The questionnaires were approved by the Department of National Planning and were pre-tested and validated by IOM staff.

IOM conducted one day training for the enumerators to ensure that:

- The objectives of the survey were clearly understood and that the enumerators as interviewers would be able to administer the questionnaire properly without influencing their respondents.
- The rules of confidentiality and anonymity would be respected.
- The procedures for collecting the field data as well as the data entry would be respected.
- The enumerators were also provided with an overview of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Identification and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking in the Maldives and the victim assistance directories, so that they could refer any potential cases to appropriate service providers

The respondents' confidentiality and anonymity were ensured in accordance with IOM's Data Protection Principles.

A total of 260 interviews were conducted: 210 with migrants and 50 with Maldivians nationals. There were 10 enumerators: 8 foreign nationals (enumerators from Bangladesh (3), Sri Lanka (2), India (2) and Nepal (1)) and 2 Maldivians. Each enumerator filled out one questionnaire for each interview. The interviews with migrants were either held in English or

in the respective local language. The questionnaire for Maldivian nationals was translated from English into Dhivehi. The enumerators also acted as interpreters. In most cases, men interviewed men and women interviewed women.

Each interview lasted around 30 minutes. The enumerators introduced themselves and IOM, explained the objectives of the survey and asked for participants' consent to join the interview. Participants were ensured of confidentiality and anonymity, and interviews were conducted face-to-face with enumerators filled out the questionnaires. All interviews were conducted in Male'.

Interviewees were allowed to withdraw their participation from the survey at any time. However, none of the participants decided to do so. In cases of identified victims of trafficking (VoTs) when there was need for support or assistance, the enumerators referred the VoTs to IOM Maldives or another governmental or non-governmental entity.

In order to avoid any delays, coding and analysis of field data started as they were collected. The interviews were conducted face-to-face using the paper version of the questionnaire. As the interviews were gradually collected, the field data were entered and the data processing started immediately. The analysis was conducted by using the statistical software STATA.

Considering the limited number of interviews, the restricted budget and time frame, the survey has an explorative character. In addition, it is important to note that the survey methodology had limitations. First of all, the sample size of 210 migrants cannot be considered representative of potential trafficking cases in the Maldives. Moreover, 50 Maldivian nationals is a small number which does not represent the Maldivian population. Furthermore, the survey has been limited to the capital Male'. Hence, this is an explorative survey to collect basic information on the phenomenon of human trafficking in the country.

Limitations of this survey

The major challenge of the survey was the fear and insecurity of the migrants to discuss their situation. Some interviewees were afraid to talk about their living and working conditions. Therefore, certain individuals declined to answer some questions (e.g. regarding work

permits, recruitment history and difficulties they faced) and the relevancy of their answers to some other questions could be questioned.

Another challenge was the place of the interview. Out of 210 interviews, 28 interviews with migrants were conducted at the work place. In many cases, there were other people around, often colleagues or some cases even the employer. This might have had an effect on the answers given.

Profiles of the interviewees

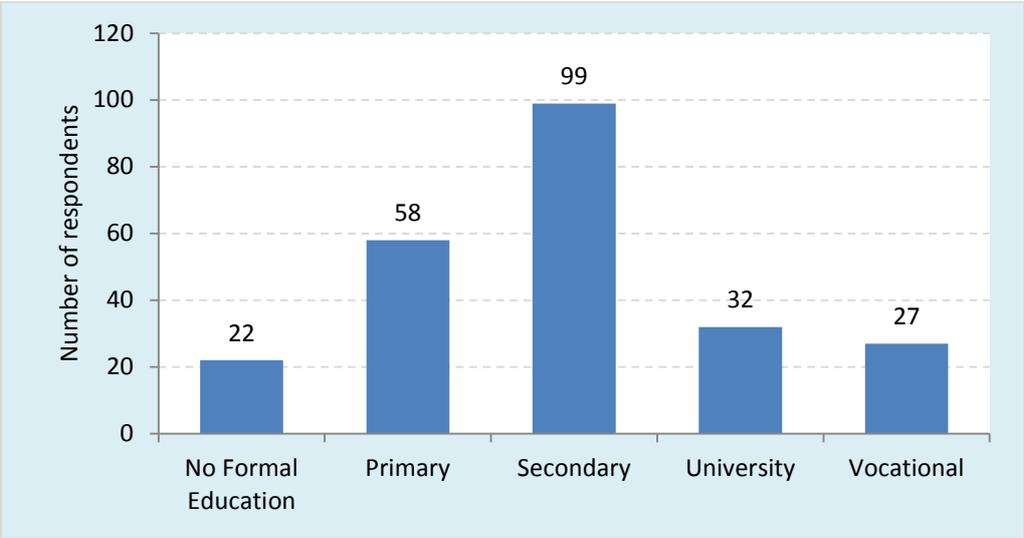
A total of 260 people were interviewed over the course of 10 days. Among the 210 migrants, we targeted specifically '*at risk*' groups which are known to be more vulnerable to trafficking as well as educated comparison groups such as teachers and doctors. The Maldivian nationals were selected according to their demographic and socio-economic profile in order to grasp the diversity of views and attitudes.

Socio-demographic characteristics of the migrant population

Our sample includes 121 male (58%) and 89 female migrants (42%). Migrants were in majority between 25 and 40 years old, only 15% were above 40 years. The majority of migrants came from Bangladesh (40%), followed by India (26%), Sri Lanka (24%), Nepal (8%) and Philippines (2%). Other expatriates come from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Philippines. Women migrants largely come from Nepal, Philippines and India. Male migrants are in majority Bangladeshi. The majority of migrants have been married at the time of the interview (66%) and most interviewees have children (57%).

As would be expected with such a diverse group of respondents, education level varied from no formal education to university degree. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of education level of respondents.

Figure 1: Educational level of respondents (migrants)



The majority of migrant women in the Maldives are domestic workers such as housemaids or nannies. Some female migrants are employed as teachers or nurses. Men are mainly employed in the service and construction sector. A few migrants work as traders and professionals such as doctors or accountants.

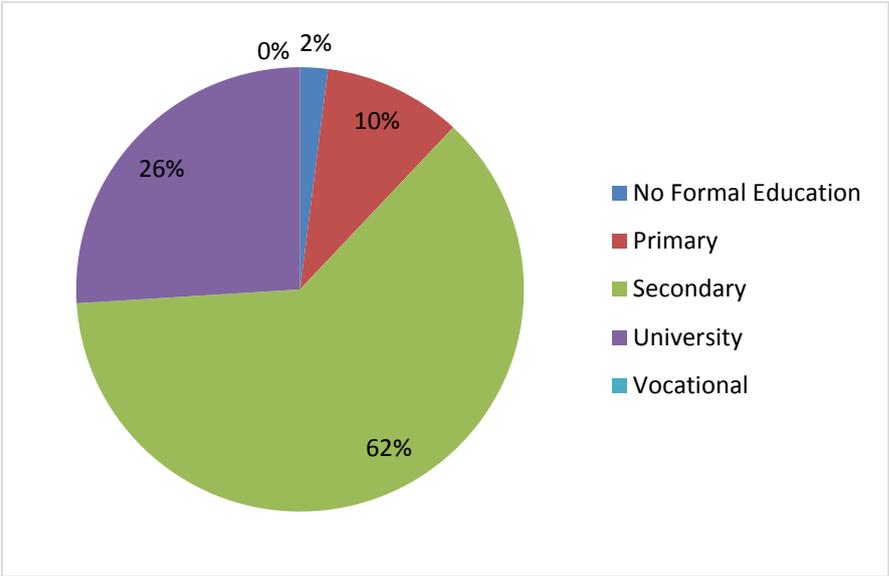
The majority of interviewees claimed that their financial situation before leaving their country of origin was either 'not good' (38%) or 'average' (36%). Only 12% described their financial situation before migration as either 'good' or 'very good'.

Interviewed migrants arrived in the Maldives for the first time between 1990 and 2014. The majority entered the country in the last five years, between 2009 and 2014.

Socio-demographic characteristics of Maldivian nationals

The sample included half women (50%) and half men (50%). They were mainly between 25 and 40 years old and had a high educational level with 62% having completed secondary education and 26% university.

Figure 2: Educational level of respondents (Maldivian nationals)



Their professional background is quite diverse ranging from employment in agriculture (2%), to government employees (18%), self-employed (14%), in the private sector (22%) or in tourism (10%). 16% of the respondents have been unemployed at the time of the interview.⁶

Results

The results from the migrant questionnaires and the findings from the interviews with the Maldivian nationals are recorded below.

Migrants

The majority of migrants paid a large amount of money in recruitment fees in order to migrate to the Maldives (75%). Of those 156 migrants who paid to enter the country, 73% of the respondents paid money to a local recruitment agency in their country of origin to enable their emigration, and 11% of the migrants paid a Maldivian recruitment agency. Others paid money in order to receive contacts/networks, for visa documents or to their future employer. Migrants paid between USD400 and USD2500 in order to reach the Maldives. Of those interviewees who mentioned the amount of money paid to either a

⁶ Interviewees were randomly selected in order to grasp public perception towards migrant workers in the Maldives.

recruitment agency or to friends/relatives, all were Bangladeshi, except one Nepali who paid USD400. This finding shows the significance of recruitment agencies in the process of migration for Bangladeshis. The Bangladesh High Commission states that Bangladesh nationals become: “in certain cases, unwitting victims of a section of unscrupulous recruiting agencies”⁷.

As expected, the majority of migrants stated having entered the country with a work visa. Others arrived with a tourist visa. Only few migrants felt comfortable to talk about their legal status in the country. Those who did stated to have a proper visa and work permit.

As Figure 3 shows the majority of respondents mentioned as reasons for coming to the Maldives ‘better salary’ or ‘better job opportunities’. Only a few said they had already a job offer or expected better working conditions.

Figure 3: What were the main reasons for coming to the Maldives?



Most of the interviewees were employed at the time of the interview (76%). They found their job either through ‘compatriots/friends/family members’ or with the support of a recruitment agency.

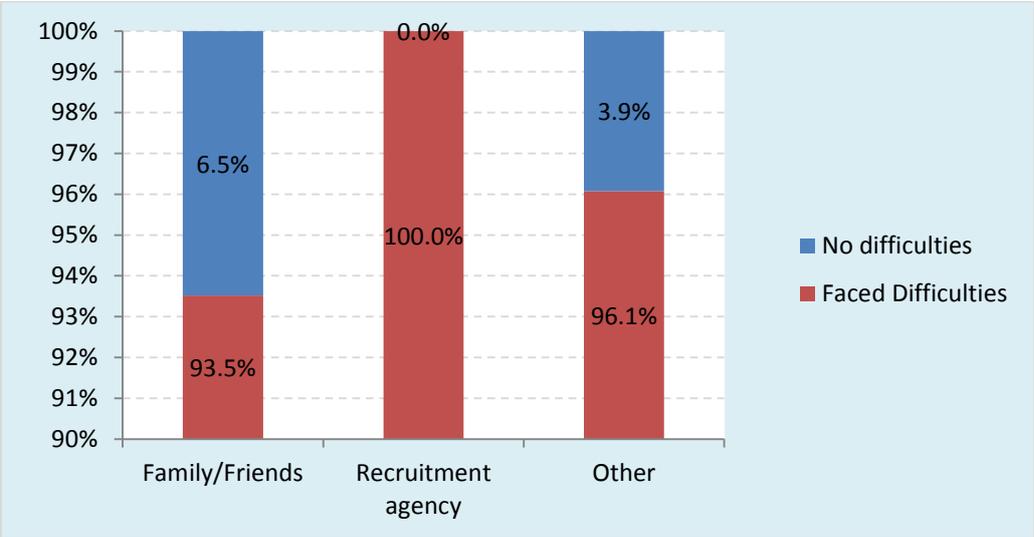
When asked whether they faced any difficulties in the Maldives regarding their living and working conditions, a total of 178 out of 210 migrants mentioned difficulties. Crucial problems were ‘access to housing’ (37%), ‘unsatisfied with the salary level’ (34%) or ‘working

⁷Minivan news, 24 September 2013, Bangladesh halts worker migration to the Maldives: <http://minivannews.com/politics/bangladesh-halts-worker-migration-to-the-maldives-66545>.

conditions, e.g. security, health, contracts or rights (20%)'. Only few respondents claimed to face legal problems or experienced discrimination by the public.

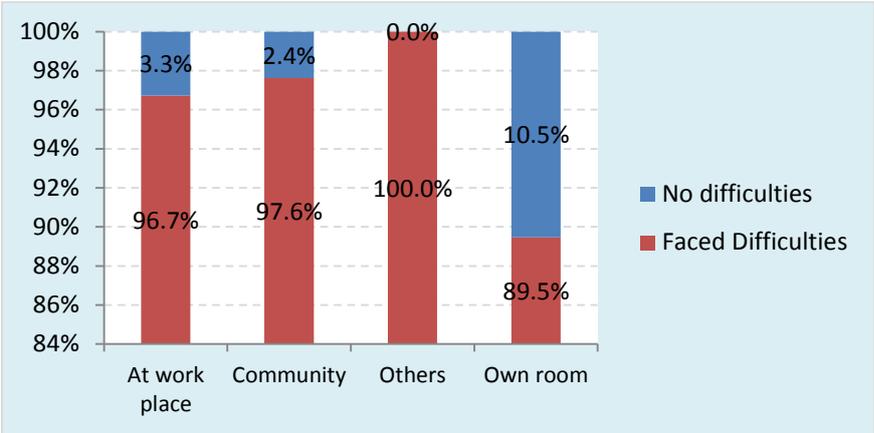
As Figure 4 illustrates the correlation between facing any difficulties and how migrants found their job in the Maldives revealed an interesting result. All of those who paid for a recruitment agency reported difficulties. In contrast, migrants who found their job through contacts of friends or relatives stated to have fewer problems in the country.

Figure 4: Correlation between facing any difficulties and how migrants found their job



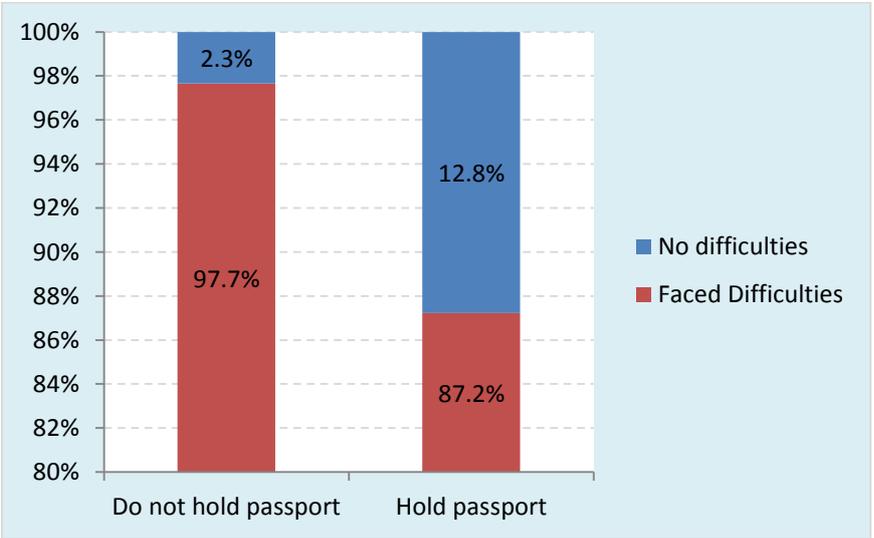
As expected, those who have their own private space reported fewer problems than migrants who slept and ate at their work place or who had to share their room. For example, housemaids live and work in the same place and are often confronted with problems such as mistreatment by the employer.

Figure 5: Correlation between facing any difficulties and where they sleep and eat



Similarly, those who are in possession of their passport talked about fewer problems than those respondents whose passports were with their employer. Not having their documents with them also means that they need to ask the employer each time they would like to leave the country or extend their work permit.

Figure 6: Correlation between facing any difficulties and having their passports



53% of surveyed migrants would seek help/support from friends or country men/women in case of emergency. However, a large number of migrants would also ask for help in the embassy/consulate/high commission (43%) or even seek assistance from the police (20%). In

this regard, the majority (76%) would feel comfortable to use a hotline in case of an emergency.⁸

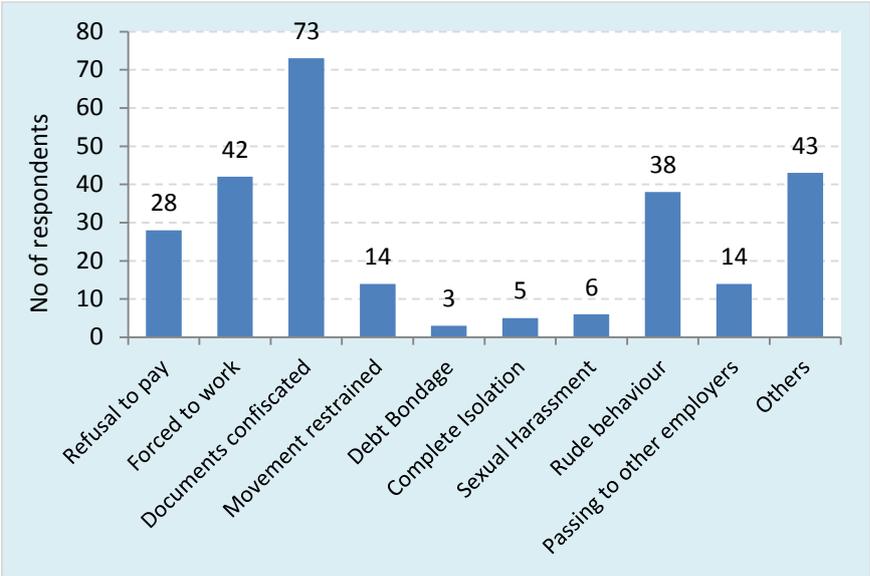
The majority of migrants have neither medical insurance (74%) nor a bank account (56%). Despite not having a bank account, almost all interviewees (96%) send remittances to their home country. A large number of migrants living and working in the Maldives visited their home country once a year or less than once a year. Twenty percent of the survey participants never went home and 13% went twice or more a year. Regarding their decision to return home, 86% of the participants reported that they would like to return home. A large number of migrants stated that they would like to return as soon as they have saved enough money to build a house or to finance the education of their children.

Out of 210 interviewees, 151 stated that they or their acquaintances experienced difficult situation in the Maldives. As Figure 7 shows, the major problem migrants faced was the confiscation of their documents, mainly their passport. In fact when the respondents were asked whether they have their passport/identification with them, 64% replied with 'no'. The majority of those, who were not in possession of their documents, reported that their passport was with their employer.

The second major problem for the interviewees was "false promises". Respondents explained that in many cases, they were forced to do work under conditions different from what had been promised by the employer such as defined working hours, no extra duties or fixed salary. 60 per cent of the respondents had a work contract before coming to the Maldives.

⁸ Currently, there is no emergency hotline particular for migrants in place.

Figure 7: Did you or any acquaintances experience one of the following situations?



When asked whether their job corresponds with what they have been promised (Figure 8), a worrying 48% of the respondents reported that their job was different from what had been promised, for example, regarding the salary promised to be paid, the number of working hours and the kind of job. The situation might be particular difficult for domestic workers. Their work takes place in the private sphere which makes them especially vulnerable to exploitation and leaving them little recourse in cases of abuse, non-payment or the arbitrary withholding of wages.

Figure 8: Did the job correspond with what you have been promised? If no, what was different?



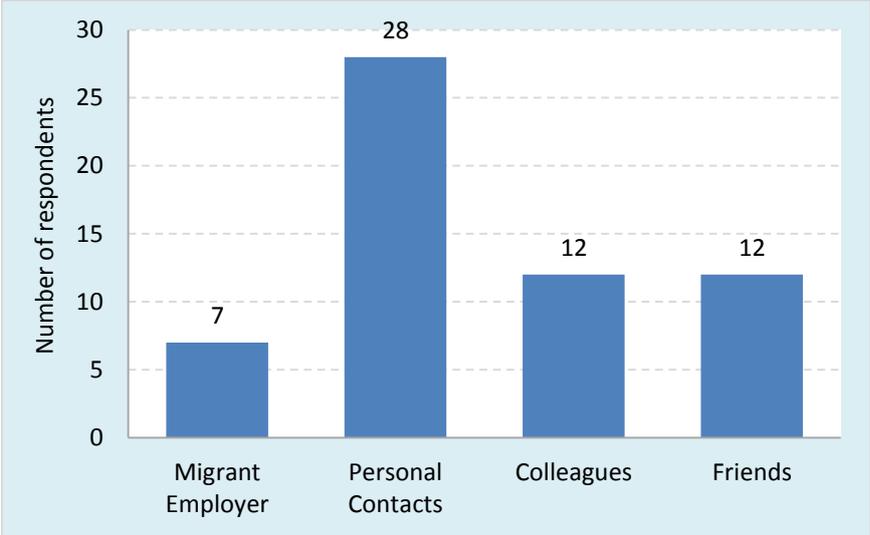
Another major problem particularly for women was the harsh treatment by their employers. Some stated that the employer shouted at them or got angry with them. Twenty five percent of the migrants talked about ‘rude behaviour of the employer’. This is particularly difficult for housemaids who live and work in the same place. Thirty percent of the respondents declared that they slept and ate at their work place. In this regard, a number of migrants also mentioned that their movements were restrained, for example, housemaids were only allowed to leave the house with somebody of the family or they were not allowed to join gathering of other migrants.

Interestingly, when asked what the migrants would tell their friends/family if they were considering moving to the Maldives, they said potential migrants to the Maldives should ‘make sure to have a proper contract’, ‘arrange visa and work permit’, ‘get in contact with the employer before departure’ and ‘get information about working and living conditions’.

Maldivian nationals

Asked in what ways the Maldivian participants were in contact with migrants, the majority stated to have personal contacts with migrants: some were friends with migrants and others were colleagues or co-workers.

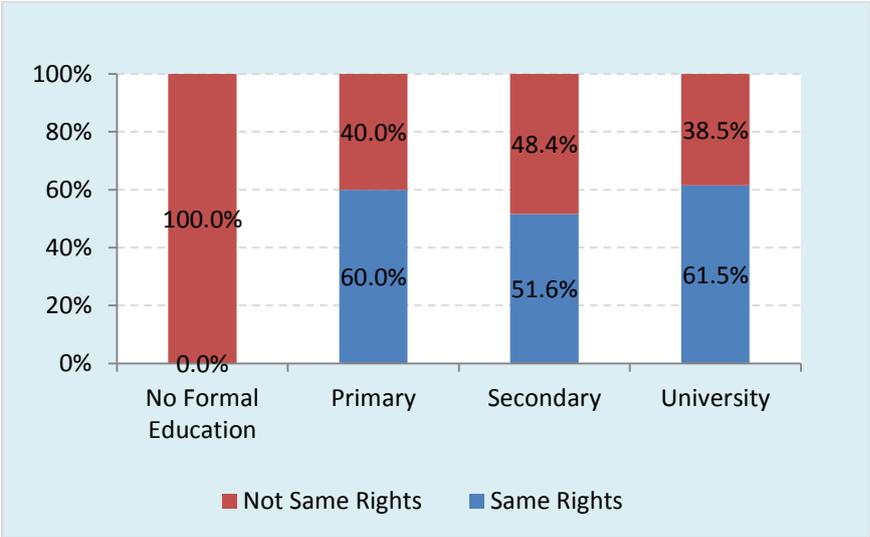
Figure 9: In what ways are you in contact with migrants?



76 per cent of the Maldivian nationals think that migrants mainly face problems regarding their working conditions (security, health, contract or rights). 54 per cent assume that migrants experienced problems to access housing. The majority of the respondents (54%) have not heard about the confiscation of documents among migrants while this was expressed as one of the major problems from the results of interviews with migrants. However, those who have heard about this practice declare commonly that they do not agree with this practice.

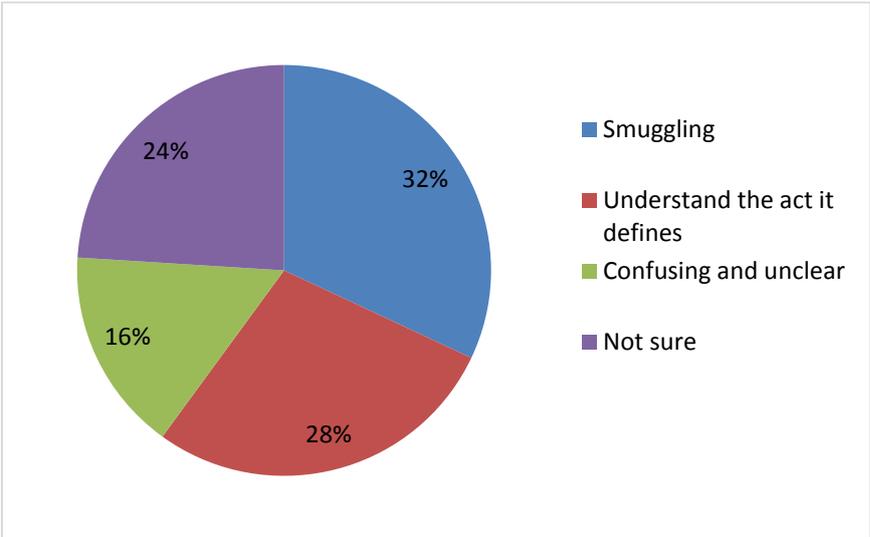
A total of 54% of the Maldivians in the survey think that migrants should not have the same rights as Maldivians. However, as Figure 10 exemplifies, there is a difference according to the educational level of the respondents. Of those who are higher educated (secondary and university degree), the majority thinks migrants should have the same rights.

Figure 10: Correlation between education level and question whether migrants should have the same rights as Maldivians



Concerning the definition of human trafficking, 32% think of trafficking in person as synonymous of smuggling while 28% claim they understand the Maldivian Anti-Human Trafficking Act that defines trafficking in person and 20% are not sure what trafficking in person means or the definition is confusing or unclear to them.

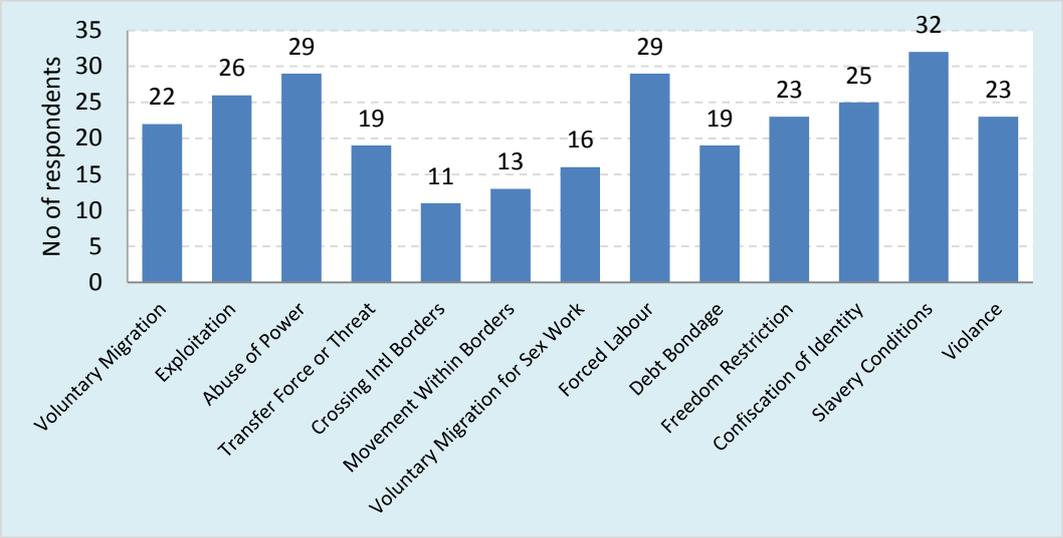
Figure 11: When you hear the term ‘trafficking in person’ you think of:



When we analyse the answers of respondents on how to define human trafficking, a large number of Maldivians rightly believes that trafficking in persons is connected to ‘involuntary

servitude or slavery-like conditions’ (68%), ‘abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability’ (62%) or ‘forced labour/prostitution’ (62%).⁹

Figure 12: Trafficking in person can involve which of the following (check all that apply):



Interestingly, only 35% of the respondents have heard about trafficking in persons in the Maldives. If they have heard about such cases, they read it in the newspaper or internet or from personal accounts of friends/neighbours.

Only 28% of the respondents have heard about cases of internal human trafficking in the Maldives, for example, Maldivian girls who were brought for education purposes to Male,

⁹ By way of recapitulation, the United Nations Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol, Dec 2000) defines ‘Trafficking in persons’ as

- a.) **Action** the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons
- b.) **by Means** of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the
- c.) **Purpose** of exploitation. Exploitation include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

In human trafficking, all three elements above need to be present:

A+B+C = human trafficking

The only exception is trafficking in children where the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means (A+C=trafficking).

but who were also asked to provide sex by male members of the host family.¹⁰ Those who have heard about such cases reported for example:

- “Girls are abused by house owner and afterwards threatened. With lack of knowledge they find it hard to report.”
- “I've heard stories from my elders about stories of people brought to Male' from atolls and use them for sex and household chores.”
- “She was asked to do all the household works - without giving a chance to study - heard from a friend.”

Only 24% of the interviewees have heard about the Anti-Human Trafficking Act which came into force in December 2013.

Maldivian nationals believe that the best way of sharing information on the phenomenon of human trafficking among the general public are ‘awareness campaigns’, ‘social media (Facebook, Twitter)’ and ‘newspaper’.

Maldivians who participated in the survey largely believe that their country does not need migrants (55%). Those who think that the Maldives need migrants, see migrants working either as doctors or teachers or in areas where hard labor is required such as the construction sector or domestic services.

When asked what the possible reasons for the high unemployment rate in the Maldives might be, respondents largely replied that there is a ‘mismatch between the demand in the job market and the skills locals have’. Only few stated that migrants are taking jobs from the locals.

Regarding the question on how the Maldivian government should address migration management in the future, some of the cited answers were:

- “Some jobs should not be allowed for foreign labor. This should be in the Labor Law in Maldives, e.g. agriculture, fisheries, construction.”
- “Stop corruption of senior government officials, encouragement to employ locals for all jobs.”

¹⁰ Internal human trafficking refers in this study to human trafficking of Maldivian nationals.

- “Find a way to control and minimize migrants in Maldives.”
- “Have a limit in the amount of migrants and fix the loop holes in the constitution.”
- “Need to encourage Maldivians to do the jobs.”

Conclusions and recommendations

The field survey provides information about migrant worker profiles as well as about Maldivian nationals’ awareness on the issue of human trafficking. The main aim of this study was to contribute to Maldivian government’s efforts in improving the situation of migrant workers and combat human trafficking. The overall objective was to understand the living and working conditions of migrant workers in Male’ as well as to grasp public perception of Maldivian nationals towards migrant workers.

The field survey provided some evidence that strongly supports the occurrence of exploitation of migrant workers in the Maldives, some of which could amount to human trafficking.

Action:

As shown in the report, the majority of interviewees paid up to USD 2500 for a recruitment agency to migrate to the Maldives.

Means:

A number of migrants have faced deception or fraud – what was promised to them at the time of recruitment turned out to be false promises.

Purpose:

There are strong indications that exploitation of migrant workers are occurring. There are cases of migrants who face exploitative situation such as forced labor, debt bondage, non-payment of salary, harsh living and working conditions and restriction of movement. Hence, in some cases all three elements of human trafficking: Action, Means and Purpose can be identified.

For Maldivian nationals, the survey found that there was little general knowledge about the issue of human trafficking. While many people heard about some kind of exploitation of migrant workers, only a small number could define human trafficking or is aware of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act. In addition, only some respondents have heard about trafficking in persons in the Maldives; even less have heard about cases of internal human trafficking in the Maldives. The field survey on Maldivian nationals revealed that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of human trafficking. Maldivian nationals are not fully aware about the phenomenon in their country. An awareness campaign among Maldivian nationals on the phenomenon of human trafficking in the country and its consequences is definitely needed.

The field survey has met its goals and yield meaningful data that can and should be used to inform governmental officials, legislators, service providers and the general public about risks of human trafficking faced by migrant workers in Male'.

The findings of the field survey open windows for policy makers to effectively discuss issues related to migrants in particular possible exploitations they face in the Maldives. It is important that different governmental entities such as DoIE, MPS, LRA, non-governmental actors such as civil society organizations as well as the private sector work together to achieve successful results. In this regard, the implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act and other migration policies is essential.

The following recommendations have been formulated on the basis of the field survey findings. They are divided into the three areas of policy interventions, namely prevention, prosecution and protection:

Prevention

- Increase awareness among of various decision makers, political leaders and stakeholders on the situation of migrants and issues of human trafficking in the country. Target specifically community leaders such as islands councils or religious leaders as they can give direct advice to the general population. Inform Maldivian nationals of signs of human trafficking and whom they should refer to if they come across possible victims of human trafficking.

- Conduct information campaigns to educate vulnerable migrants (target both potential internal Maldivian migrants and international migrants workers) on the risks and realities of migration so that they are better equipped with information to recognize suspicious situations and can make better decisions when offered jobs.
- Mobilize commitment and enhance capacity building in particular of relevant stakeholders such as DoIE, LRA, MPS, NGOs and others. It is an important first step that stakeholders know the concepts of human trafficking, the difference between trafficking and smuggling and the content of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law.
- Initiate awareness campaigns on human trafficking. The field survey has shown that there is a lack of understanding of the issues and general confusion about the concepts of human trafficking and smuggling. Build the capacity of community leaders in detecting trafficking cases and referring victims for assistance.
- Consider labor inspections and specific legal instruments regulating the work of domestic workers.
- Support data generation for policy development and formulation. There is an urgent need for reliable and accurate data on migration to and in the Maldives and specifically on the phenomenon of human trafficking. A comprehensive baseline study involving local and resort islands is required.
- Initiate and enhance dialogue with the high commissions, consulates and embassies in the country to prevent human trafficking and protect victims of human trafficking.
- Build the capacity of journalists so that the local media, particularly broadcast media such as TV and radio, can cover and correctly report on issues related to human trafficking. Also use social media such as Facebook and Twitter for awareness campaigns.

Prosecution

- Strengthen border management and continue to train border police officers on victim identification.
- Support the development of a law enforcement database for effective investigation and prosecution. Information on cases of human trafficking must be recorded, analysed and shared in a timely and consistent manner through the use of a common database among relevant agencies, while protecting the identity of victims.

- Continue the training of law enforcement officers, including the police, prosecutors and judges, on how to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases as well as how to handle cases using a victim centered approach.

Protection

- Encourage the establishment of a helpline/hotline for migrants. Migrants need to be able to contact an anonymous service in case of emergency. A collaboration with the high commissions/consulates might be possible.
- Support the implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act. Identification, direct assistance and return and reintegration are only possible with the endorsement of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The referral mechanism must be clear to the respective stakeholders involved (e.g. LRA, DoIE, MPS, NGOs).
- Encourage community watch groups to inform and warn people (both migrants and Maldivian nationals) on the risks of trafficking and to protect potential victims.
- Provide shelter specifically designed for victims of trafficking and train shelter staff on human trafficking issues so that they can address the specific needs of victims in a gender-sensitive and appropriate manner. Having been subjected to extreme traumatic experience, most victims are in need of both short- and long-term support.

The field survey provided some evidence that strongly supports the occurrence of exploitation of migrant workers in the Maldives, some of which could amount to human trafficking. The Government of the Maldives can significantly reduce the problem by putting the right mechanisms in place.

In conclusion, it should be noted that this field survey was just the starting point in the effort to gather information on living and working conditions of migrants in Male' and the level of awareness among Maldivian nationals. It is strongly recommended to conduct a baseline study to fully assess the extent of the phenomenon of human trafficking not only in Male', but also on other local and resorts islands.

Annex: Questionnaires

IOM Maldives

Field survey for Migrants

Trafficking in person in the Maldives

Number of questionnaire

Questionnaire

This field survey aims to collect data on the migrant population residing in Male', Maldives. The emphasis will be on potential victims of human trafficking. The main objective is to provide an analysis of the trafficking phenomenon to and in the Maldives, based on first-hand data, with a view towards developing effective counter-trafficking strategies in the future. The questionnaire is targeted for potential victims of human trafficking, wherein questions regarding their recruitment process, immigration, employment situation and future plans are addressed.

Please note that all information given in this survey will be kept strictly confidential as stipulated in IOM Data Collection Principles and is only for statistical use.

Place of the interview: _____

Are there other persons present during the interview? (Who?):

Name of the interviewer: _____

Date of the interview: |_| |_| |_| |_| |_| |_|_|_|_|

Start time of the interview: |_| |_| : |_| |_|

Time the interview ended: |_| |_| : |_| |_|

Additional information (optional):

Socio-demographic characteristics

1. Sex

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

2. Age of Respondent

- 1. 18-24 years
- 2. 25-40 years
- 3. Above 40 years

3. Nationality

What do you think how many fellow countrymen/women are living in the Maldives?

4. Marital status

- 1. Single
- 2. Married

5. Children

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

6. Educational level of respondent

- 1. No formal education
- 2. Primary (1-6 grade)
- 3. Secondary and/or High School (6-12 grade)
- 4. University/post graduate
- 5. Vocational training

7. Were you working before your emigration?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

8. At the time of emigration, how was your financial situation?

- 1. Very good
- 2. Good
- 3. Average
- 4. Not good
- 5. Very bad
- 6. No opinion

9. Did you have to pay to come to the Maldives?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, for whom or for what did you pay money?

- local recruitment agency
- Maldivian recruitment agency
- contacts/networks
- visa documents
- future employer
- other (specify)-----

10. Did you leave the country of origin with...

- 1. a tourist visa
- 2. a work permit/visa
- 3. a family reunification visa
- 4. a student visa
- 5. a business visa
- 6. other (specify) _____

11. Which means of transport did you use?

- 1. Plane
- 2. Ferry/boat

12. In which year did you come to the Maldives for the first time?

|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|

13. What were the main reasons for coming to the Maldives?

- 1. Better job opportunities
- 2. Better working conditions
- 3. Better salary
- 4. I had a job offer
- 5. My family/friends were already there
- 6. Other (specify) _____

14. Did you have a work contract before you came to the Maldives?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If no, did you have a verbal agreement with your employer?

15. How did you find employment in the Maldives?

- 1. Recruitment agency
- 2. Compatriots/friends/family members
- 3. Other (specify) _____

16. Currently, do you have a work contract?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

17. Could you explain the process on how you received the work permit and contract?

18. Did your employer support you in arranging medical certificate, work permit, visa, etc.?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

19. Did you face any difficulties in the Maldives?

- 1. Access to housing
- 2. Discrimination/racism
- 3. Could not find a regular job
- 4. Non-payment of salary
- 5. Unsatisfied with the salary level
- 6. Working conditions (security, health, contract, rights, etc.)
- 7. Access to the health and welfare systems
- 8. Legal problems
- 9. Lack of social networks
- 10. Other (specify) _____

20. What would you do in case of emergency (e.g. problems with employer, visa, etc.)?

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Seeking help/support from friends/countrymen | __ |
| 2. Getting assistance from police | __ |
| 3. Getting assistance from immigration | __ |
| 4. Getting assistance from Labour Relations Authority (LRA) | __ |
| 5. Contacting an NGO for help (if yes, which organization?) | __ |
| 6. Contacting Human Rights Commission Maldives (HRCM) | __ |
| 7. Contacting embassy/consulate/high commission | __ |
| 8. Other (specify)----- | __ |

21. Would you feel comfortable utilizing a hotline?

- | | |
|--------|----|
| 1. Yes | __ |
| 2. No | __ |

Do you know any active hotlines that could be used in case of emergency?

22. In which sector are you working?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 1. Construction/building industry | __ |
| 2. Service/hotel industry | __ |
| 3. Trade | __ |
| 4. Education | __ |
| 5. Health sector | __ |
| 6. Other (specify) _____ | __ |

23. Do you have a medical insurance?

- | | |
|--------|----|
| 1. Yes | __ |
| 2. No | __ |

24. How much money do you have on an average per month at your own disposal (state currency used)?

|__||__||__||__||__|

25. Do you have a bank account in the Maldives?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

26. Do you send money to your home country?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

27. How often do you visit your country of origin?

- 1. Twice or more a year
- 2. Once a year
- 3. Less than once a year
- 4. Never

28. Did you or any acquaintances experience one of the following situations:

- 1. refusal to pay for work completed, underpayment (not full payment)
- 2. forced to do work you/they were not supposed to do
- 3. have their documents confiscated (passport)
- 4. have their movements restrained
- 5. were in debt bondage (i.e. forced to work as a means of “repayment”)
- 6. complete isolation
- 7. sexual harassment from your employer, intermediate
- 8. rude behaviour of the employer, intermediate
- 9. passing you on from one employer to another without your consent
- 10. other (specify)-----

If yes, please explain in more detail!

29. Did the job correspond with what you have been promised?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If no, what was different

- kind of job
- working hours
- salary
- holidays
- paid home leave
- other (specify)-----

30. Can you leave your job if you want to?

1. Yes
2. No

31. Where do you sleep and eat?

1. Own room/apartment
2. Community/collective accommodation
3. At work place
4. Other (specify)-----

32. Are you in debt to your employer?

1. Yes
2. No

33. Do you have your passport/identification?

1. Yes
2. No

If no, who has it?

34. What do you think are your rights as a migrant in the Maldives?

Would you be willing to participate in an in-depth interview (biographical/narrative interview)?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, could you provide us with your

Name:

Phone number:

Email:

IOM Maldives

Field survey for Maldivian nationals

Trafficking in person in the Maldives

Number of questionnaire

Questionnaire

This field survey aims to collect data on the migrant population residing in Male', Maldives. The emphasis will be on potential victims of human trafficking. The main objective is to provide an analysis of the trafficking phenomenon to and in the Maldives, based on first-hand data, with a view towards developing effective counter-trafficking strategies in the future. This questionnaire is targeted for community informants such as teachers, religious leaders and community elders who could give insight into common perception and awareness level of human trafficking and pertinent issues.

Please note that all information given in this survey will be kept strictly confidential as stipulated in IOM Data Collection Principles and is only for statistical use.

Place of the interview (home, public place, etc.): _____

Are there other persons present during the interview? (Who?):

Name of the interviewer: _____

Date of the interview: |_| |_| |_| |_| |_| |_|_|_|_|

Start time of the interview: |_| |_| : |_| |_|

Time the interview ended: |_| |_| : |_| |_|

Additional information (optional):

Socio-demographic characteristics

38. Sex

- 3. Male
- 4. Female

39. Age of Respondent

- 4. 18-24 years
- 5. 25-40 years
- 6. Above 40 years

40. Marital status

- 3. Single
- 4. Married

41. Educational level of respondent

- 6. No formal education
- 7. Primary (1-6 grade)
- 8. Secondary and/or High School (6-12 grade)
- 9. University/post graduate
- 10. Vocational training

42. Employment status/Nature of work

- 1. Unemployed
- 2. Government employee
- 3. Tourism
- 4. Private sector
- 5. Agriculture/fishery
- 6. Self-employed

7. Others (specify)

43. In your opinion, what are some of the problems migrants in the Maldives are facing?

- 11. Access to housing
- 12. Discrimination/racism
- 13. Cannot find a regular job
- 14. Non-payment of salary
- 15. Unsatisfied with the salary level
- 16. Working conditions (security, health, contract, rights, etc.)
- 17. Access to the health and welfare systems
- 18. Legal problems
- 19. Lack of social networks
- 20. Other (specify) _____

44. In what ways are you in contact with migrants?

- 4. I am an employer of a migrant
- 5. Personal contacts
- 6. Colleagues, co-worker
- 7. Friends
- 8. Other (specify) _____

45. Have you heard about the confiscation of documents among migrants?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, do you think it is an acceptable practice and why?

46. Do you think migrants should have the same rights as Maldivians?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, in what way?

47. When you think of the term 'trafficking in persons':

1. I'm not sure what it is.
2. The definition is confusing and unclear to me.
3. I think of trafficking in persons as synonymous with smuggling.
4. I understand the act it defines.

48. Trafficking in persons can involve which of the following (check all that apply):

1. Voluntary migration with deception or coercion
2. Exploitation
3. Abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability
4. Transfer or reception of people by force or threat
5. Crossing of international borders
6. Movement within borders
7. Voluntary labor migration for sex work
8. Forced labor/forced prostitution
9. Debt bondage (i.e. a person is forced to work as a means of "repayment")
10. Restriction of personal freedom
11. Confiscation of legal identity
12. Involuntary servitude or slavery-like conditions
13. Violence or threat of violence

49. Have you heard about trafficking in person in the Maldives?

3. Yes
4. No

If yes, please explain:

50. Where have you heard about trafficking?

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Media (newspaper, internet, etc.) | __ |
| 2. Personal accounts of friends, neighbours, etc. | __ |
| 3. Governmental reports/UN organisation | __ |
| 4. Other (specify)----- | __ |

51. What forms of exploitation do you know or have heard about?

- | | |
|---|----|
| 7. Forcing to work without payment or underpayment | __ |
| 8. Trafficking in children for labour or for any other purposes | __ |
| 9. Forced prostitution/sex trafficking | __ |
| 10. Others (specify) | __ |

If yes, please explain:

52. Have you heard about cases of internal human trafficking in the Maldives? (For example, of girls who were brought for educational purposes to Male, but who were also forced to work as mistress.)

- | | |
|--------|----|
| 3. Yes | __ |
| 4. No | __ |

If yes, please explain in detail:

53. What, in your opinion, are the main forms of exploitations of trafficking in persons?

- | | |
|-------------------------|----|
| 1. Forced labour | __ |
| 2. Forced prostitution | __ |
| 3. Other (specify)----- | __ |

58. Do you think the Maldives need migrants?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, what would be the areas where the Maldives needs migrants for?

59. The unemployment rate in the Maldives is very high. What do you think the main reasons are?

- 1. Mismatch between the demand in the job market and the skills that locals have
- 2. Poor economic policy/ performance
- 3. Migrants taking jobs from the locals
- 4. Other (specify)

60. How do you think the Maldivian government should address migration management in the future?

Would you be willing to participate in an in-depth interview?

- 3. Yes
- 4. No

If yes, could you provide us with your

Name:

Phone number:

Email: