



## Ministry of External Affairs

Government of India

[Home](#) > [Media Center](#) > [Press Releases](#)

# Visit of External Affairs Minister to Maldives

October 11, 2015

1. External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Maldives on October 10-11, 2015. She co-chaired the 5th Meeting of the India-Maldives Joint Commission. The Joint Commission was set up under the 1986 Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation and first met in Male in 1990. The Framework Agreement for Cooperation, signed in November 2011, mandated the Joint Commission to broaden its cross sectoral emphasise to include defence and security related issues.
2. During her visit to Maldives, EAM called on the President of the Republic of Maldives, H.E. Mr. Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. Discussions with the President of Maldives were reflective of the privileged relationship between India and Maldives. EAM emphasised the Government of India policy of 'Neighbours First'. President Yameen underscored the need to cement India-Maldives relations further. President Yameen and EAM exchanged views on a qualitative enhancement in the multifaceted relationship between India and Maldives and in addressing the common challenges in the Indian Ocean Region. President Yameen conveyed that Maldives would hold an Investment Forum in India in 2016, which is also the 'Visit Maldives' year. He reiterated Maldives' policy of 'India First'.
3. Subsequent to the Joint Commission, EAM had meetings with Minister of Economic Development Mr. Mohamed Saeed and Minister of Health Ms. Irthisham Adam. During her visit, EAM also had an interaction with the Indian community in Maldives at the India-Maldives Friendship Faculty for Hospitality and Tourism Studies.
4. In their discussions during the Joint Commission meeting, EAM and Maldivian Foreign Minister H.E. Mrs. Dunya Maumoon reviewed the entire gamut of the relationship. These discussions held special significance not only because the Joint Commission was meeting after a gap of 15 years but also because the meeting took place in the year of the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Maldives.
5. Discussions took place in an atmosphere of traditional warmth and friendship, mutual respect and sensitivity to each others' interests, which have characterised the vibrant and robust relations between Maldives and India.
6. The defence and security relationship was part of the forward looking discussions in the Joint Commission for the first time. Ongoing cooperation was reviewed and future requirements were discussed. India-Maldives defence cooperation includes, inter-alia, the construction of a Composite

Training Centre for the Maldivian National Defence Forces, joint patrolling, training programmes for MNDF officers in India, medical camps, joint exercises, etc. The Maldivian side acknowledged the usefulness of the Advanced Light Helicopter given by India in the development of aviation capacities in the Maldives. We welcomed the participation of Maldives in the next Dosti Exercise in Goa later this month. The Ministers were of the view that the bilateral partnership was important also for maintaining security in the Indian Ocean Region. It was felt that increased cooperation would help in meeting the common threat from radicalism and terrorism and combat the growing menace of drug trafficking and financing of terrorism in the region.

7. The Joint Commission discussions endorsed enhancement of the trade and investment ties and the development partnership between the countries. The Ministers discussed various measures which could be recommended towards this objective. The experience of Indian companies in Maldives was reviewed. The Joint Commission proposed establishment of a Joint Business Forum and suggested that an investment oriented forum be part of the calendar for 2016. Both sides acknowledged the positive impact of increasing the B-to-B interface and facilitating a more participant role for the private sectors. The Joint Commission agreed to explore further measures to increase trade in goods and services and to strengthen links in the banking and financial sectors of both countries. The Maldivian side reiterated their interest in engaging with private investors in India for iHavan and Hulhulmale Youth City projects. Sectors such as tourism, fisheries, education, IT, infrastructure development, energy cooperation including renewable energy, and traditional medicine were identified for future cooperation. Both countries agreed to sign agreements at the earliest on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Tax Information Exchange. They agreed to also consider the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement for early finalisation.
8. Health sector has been an important area of bilateral cooperation. Both countries had signed an MoU in 2014 on short, medium and long term collaboration. The Joint Commission agreed that a Working Group should be set up at the earliest to monitor implementation of the MoU. Bilateral collaboration in the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) was reviewed. It was agreed to strengthen tele-medicine linkages between IGMH and PGI, Chandigarh and to expand the number of speciality hospitals in India available to Maldivian nationals under the AASANDHA scheme. The Maldivian side requested Indian assistance to set up a state-of-the-art National Diagnostic Centre in Maldives. There was agreement on continuing the training of health professionals of Maldives and to agree on the deputation of Indian specialist doctors to IGMH. Both sides agreed to create a framework for cooperation in the area of traditional medicine.
9. With a common demographic youth dividend, both Ministers laid special emphasis on human resource development and further cooperation in education, skill development and vocational training. It was agreed to take further the cooperation in the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies. The Maldivian side welcomed the joint initiative to establish an e-Library for Maldivian schools and the Indian initiative to establish a Hindi language Chair at the Maldives National University.
10. Consular matters and community issues were also reviewed. The Indian side welcomed the ratification by Maldives of the Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons. Both sides agreed on an early finalisation to the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in criminal matters. The Joint

Commission acknowledged the need for early finalisation of the MoU on the employment of workers between the countries.

11. Maldives and India have a cultural cooperation agreement since 1983. The Joint Commission suggested revision of the agreement. Both sides agreed to finalise the MoU on cooperation in the area of archaeological conservation and restoration. The Joint Commission suggested expediting an MoU for cooperation in the field of tourism in view of the need to further increase tourist traffic between the two countries.
12. The Joint Commission welcomed the signing of the MoU between the Foreign Service Institutes of India and Maldives and the MoU on Youth Affairs and Sports on the sidelines of the Joint Commission.
13. Maldives also apprised India of progress in its internal processes for joining the Agreement on Orbit Frequency Coordination for the Satellite for the SAARC region.
14. Maldives reiterated its strong support to India's candidature as a permanent member of the UN Security Council
15. The next meeting of the India-Maldives Joint Commission would be in 2017 in India. Both EAM and the Maldivian Foreign Minister have tasked their senior officials to hold a review meeting in 2016, preparatory to the next Joint Commission.

New Delhi,  
October 11, 2015

[Click here for Malayalam version](#)  [104 KB]

[Click here for Telugu version](#)  [148 KB]

[Click here for Urdu version](#)  [227 KB]

[Click here for Bengali version](#)  [90 KB]

[Click here for Tamil version](#)  [155 KB]



[Terms & Conditions](#)   [Privacy Policy](#)   [Copyright Policy](#)   [Hyperlinking Policy](#)   [Accessibility Statement](#)   [Help](#)

© Content Owned by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Visitors: 135066032 , Page last updated on: 11/10/2015

Working hours at Headquarters 9:00 A.M. To 5:30 P.M.