

**Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee Meeting,
Maldives Report**

1. Data on the number of women representatives

Including:

Statistics in legislatures, executive, company boards

Changes in representation following elections

Affirmative Action policies, as they relate to quotas, constitutional, legislative, electoral changes

Political Party Reforms and appointments of women within the Party Structures

- **Legislature:** As of the 2024 parliamentary elections, only 3 women were elected to the 93-seat People's Majlis, marking a significant decline in female representation.
- **Changes in Representation:** The 2024 elections saw a decrease in female representation in parliament, with only 3 women elected out of 93 seats.
- **Affirmative Action Policies:** There have been discussions about implementing gender quotas to increase female representation in parliament.

2. Information on elections that were held this year Including: Data on women Members that won and/or lost seats or appointed to new positions	A. Elections overview - The People’s Majlis parliamentary elections were held in April 2024. - Local / Island Council elections are held periodically; the 2019 reform (quota in place from then) still influences local elections. No other national elections with major changes for women representatives are reported in this period. B. Women candidates & results table<table><tr><th>Election / Level</th><th>Seats contested</th><th>Women candidates</th><th>Women winners</th><th>Women appointed (if any)</th><th>Notes</th></tr><tr><td>Parliamentary Election 2024</td><td>93 seats</td><td>Data not publicly disaggregated in sources I found</td><td>3 women</td><td>–</td><td>Women maintained only 3 seats in Parliament.</td></tr><tr><td>Local / Island / City Councils (following 2019 quota reforms)</td><td>Varies by council</td><td>Higher participation of women, many elected via reserved seats under the 33% quota in local councils.</td><td>In local councils about 40% of seats held by women under reserved quota system in the 2021 elections.</td><td>–</td><td>Elections under the 2019 amendments to the Decentralisation Act enforced the quota.</td></tr></table> C. Analysis - The national parliamentary level remains very low for women’s representation (3/93 ≈ 3.2%). - Local governance has seen much stronger gender-balanced outcomes due to quota / reserved seats (33% reserved in city, island, and atoll councils). The 2021 local / island council elections under the amended Decentralisation Act showed women’s seats rising to ~40%. - There is a disconnect: even when women are elected locally under quotas, transitioning to national-level seats remains very difficult. - Scarcity of women candidates in national elections, limited party support, and socio-cultural barriers remain strong obstacles.	Election / Level	Seats contested	Women candidates	Women winners	Women appointed (if any)	Notes	Parliamentary Election 2024	93 seats	Data not publicly disaggregated in sources I found	3 women	–	Women maintained only 3 seats in Parliament.	Local / Island / City Councils (following 2019 quota reforms)	Varies by council	Higher participation of women, many elected via reserved seats under the 33% quota in local councils.	In local councils about 40% of seats held by women under reserved quota system in the 2021 elections.	–	Elections under the 2019 amendments to the Decentralisation Act enforced the quota.
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3. Status of the CWP in regional constitutions Including: Updates in Regional Constitutional changes and/or challenges where applicable	- The Constitution of the Maldives (adopted 2008) explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender and allows for temporary special measures to redress inequalities. Recent constitutional/administrative updates: The Decentralization Act was amended in 2019 to reserve 33% of seats in local councils (city, island, atoll) for women. Challenges: There is no constitutional or legal quota yet for the national parliament under current law; proposals exist but have not been passed. The effectiveness of temporary special measures is debated, and enforcement mechanisms / resources remain constrained. Some worry that recent proposals to increase central government control over local governance may reduce the autonomy or effect of local councils where women have benefited under quotas.																		

4. CWP Regional Structure Including: Updates on changes and/or challenges to Regional CWP Structures	• Current leadership & structure: There are currently three female MPs in the legislature: Hon. Asma Rasheed, Hon. Dr. Anara Naeem, and Hon. Fathimath Sauda. They are active in committees including the Human Rights & Gender Committee, Social Affairs, etc as well as in international platforms. Hon. Asma is a member of IPU High – Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, Hon. Anara is a member of IPU Bureau of women Parliamentarians, and she was AFPPD Executive Committee member too. Hon. Fathimath Sauda is a member of IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security she also was a member of IPU Young parliamentary Committee and is currently contesting for the post of CPA CWP chairperson. • Active chapters / participation: The “Practice Parliament for Women 2025” programme was held (5-12 July 2025), bringing together aspiring women leaders across Maldives to build capacity and understanding of legislative work. • Operational challenges: Funding, candidate support, political party culture, social norms, and a lack of strong internal institutional quotas at national level limit women’s participation. Additionally, gender data is sometimes insufficiently disaggregated or updated. • Opportunities: The quota in local councils shows that legal measures can produce visible gains; capacity building programmes (e.g. Practice Parliament) help build pipeline of leaders; there is public and parliamentary attention to quota proposals.
5. Regional Budget for CWP Activities Including: Updates on changes and/or challenges to Regional CPA Budgets where applicable	• Budget lines / sources: Public sources do not clearly state a dedicated national budget line for CWP or equivalent parliamentary women’s caucus activities for Maldives. However, funding for gender equality initiatives appears under the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), Ministry of Social and Family Development, UNDP, and donor partners. • Recent changes / impact: The Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2026 includes targets and resources for gender equality programmes. There is investment in capacity building workshops, such as Practice Parliament for Women. • Challenges / urgent needs: Budget transparency and sufficiency, sustainability of donor funds, ensuring local councils have recurrent funds to support women councilors (training, travel, secretariat support), and resources for monitoring and evaluating gender equality initiatives.
6. Regional Conference – What role did CWP play? Including: Updates on changes and/or challenges to holding a regular CWP meeting at CPA	• Maldives’ CWP-type actors / women parliamentarians / civil society have been active in regional and sub-regional gatherings, including the AFPPD’s Sub-Regional Parliamentarians’ Meeting on Women Empowerment & Investment in Young People, where Maldives hosted discussions

Regional Conferences Updates on Regional CWP activities					
7. CPA International Executive Committee – does your region have a female Member? Including: Updates on changes to Regional Representatives to the CPA International Executive Committee	As of the latest information, Maldives does not currently have a designated female member in the CPA International Executive Committee.				
8. Initiatives linked to CWP Thematic Priorities undertaken by Parliaments and/or Regions Including:	Initiative	Objective	Implementer(s)	Beneficiaries / Status	Indicators of Success / Impact
	<i>Practice Parliament for Women 2025</i>	Empowering women aspiring to legislative leadership; exposing them to legislative processes, debate, policymaking	People’s Majlis + UNDP Maldives + Australian High Commission + HerGov Consultancy	Women from across Maldives; participants have increased skills and confidence; network building among women leaders. Completed July 2025.	Number of participants; feedback reports; whether participants run/seeks seats or engage in public policy afterwards.

Legislation, resources, Inter-organizational strategies, Intra-Ministerial and Civil Society Cooperation and all other strategies.	Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP 2022-2026)	Strengthen gender equality across policy areas and improve data, participation, legislation	Ministry of Social and Family Development, Maldives Bureau of Statistics, UN Women, other donor partners	Wider public globally; women/girls in Maldives; policymakers.	Improvement in gender statistics; implementation of planned reforms; fund allocations; public awareness; surveys of gender equality perceptions.
	Local government quota reforms (Decentralisation Act amendments, 2019)	Reserve 33% of seats in island/city/atoll councils for women; increase local representation	Parliament, Local Government Authority, electoral authorities	Women in local councils; local governance bodies.	Seats held by women in local councils ($\approx$ 40% in many councils under quota), increased visibility.
	Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) for public administration	To enhance women's participation in public admin / leadership roles (research, guidance)	UNDP & government partnership / legal guidance	Public sector ministries, posterity of leadership roles	Adoption of guidance; increase in women in leadership / decision making in public service.
9. The Contribution of women parliamentarians to The Parliamentarian journal article					
10. Other Including, for example: Strategies to Overcome Gender Inequality Education	- Strategies to overcome gender inequality: - Workshops, mentorship, and training programmes (e.g., for women leaders) to build capacity. - Supporting changes in party culture and internal quotas. - Education & awareness campaigns: Integrated in programmes like Parliament; also proposals to reform school curricula to include gender equality, civic responsibility, leadership. - Gender quotas: Active at the local council level; national parliament quota proposals under discussion but not yet adopted. - Leadership programmes: Practice Parliament for Women; mentor relationships supported by UNDP and others. - Childcare / family support: paid maternity leave for up to six months				

Gender Quotas Leadership programmes Childcare Mechanisms to prevent political violence Equal access to Party resources Coordination with other like-minded Women's organizations	• Coordination with NGOs / civil society: Strong. NGOs like “Hope For Women”, “Women On Boards”, etc., are active in advocacy, awareness, leadership training. UNDP, WFD, etc., are partners.
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