

Transparency Maldives calls for more transparency in order to avoid escalating the social, economic, and political repercussions stemming from the water crisis

PRESS RELEASE - December 09, 2014

Transparency Maldives thanks friendly nations, the Government of the Maldives, local businesses, civil society organisations, and the public for their continued efforts to provide water aid to residents of Malé, in response to the water crisis following the incident of fire at Malé Water Sewerage Company (MWSC) on 4 December.

In order to avoid further escalation of the social, economic and political repercussions stemming from the water crisis, Transparency Maldives calls on the Government and MWSC to be more transparent in their efforts to provide aid and to overcome the crisis.

The following issues must be addressed by the Government and MWSC (a joint venture company that has 80 per cent government shares and whose board is appointed by the government) in order to be transparent and accountable to the public:

The Government must publicly provide a breakdown of the estimated US\$20 million (more than MVR300 million) needed to overcome the crisis, and how the government intends to spend it. Furthermore, the decision to seek donations from the public raises questions given that MWSC is a private, profit-making corporation with 80 per cent government shares.

Transparency Maldives calls on the Government and MWSC to conduct an independent, transparent, and technical investigation into the 4 December fire incident; make the findings public; and establish effective and preventative mechanisms to ensure such incidents do not occur again. The investigation must scrutinise MWSC's risk mitigation policy and asset management plan.

The current situation demonstrates the interminable relationship between good governance and citizens' right to essential human needs. Therefore, Transparency Maldives believes that it is the responsibility of the government to hold accountable and to ensure that MWSC and other companies that provide essential services, such as the State Electric Company Limited (STELCO) and FENAKA Corporation Limited, have mechanisms in place to review their working procedures so that similar incidents can be avoided in the future. These accountability measures must incorporate company boards and relevant state regulatory bodies.

ENDS

For all media queries, please contact Advocacy and Communications Manager, Aiman Rasheed (7908967).