

## A crisis of confidence in democratic institutions

### PRESS RELEASE

Transparency Maldives' (TM) survey, Democracy at the Crossroads, points to a crisis of public confidence in key democratic institutions. Citizens are cynical. Politicians, they think, lie to get elected and they don't believe that the government cares about ordinary people.

The nationwide survey aims to encourage informed debate of democratic norms and about the performance of democratic institutions.

“This [the survey] shows that citizens are less likely to meaningfully participate in public matters and in holding public officials accountable. If so, it will ultimately lead to impunity and corruption,” Mariyam Shiuna, Executive Director of TM said.

### Crisis of confidence

Citizens lack confidence in their key representative institutions. 62% of survey respondents say they have no confidence at all in the parliament. And 58% have no confidence in political parties. 50% and 46% citizens lack confidence in local governments and courts respectively. These results are similar to TM's Global Corruption Barometer surveys from 2012 and 2013.

77% of Maldivians identify “politics,” which includes conflict, corruption and the party system, as the most important problem facing the country. Half of the public is dissatisfied with the way democracy operates in the Maldives.

Maldivians give political leaders a low rating. None rate better than average.

### Cynicism, democratic values and social order

86% of Maldivians say that the government does not care about ordinary people and 92% of Maldivians believe that politicians are “ready to lie to get elected”, showing extraordinarily high levels of cynicism in comparison to similar transitional democracies.

Citizens are critical of the social order: 84% think that power is concentrated in the hands of too few people. The good news is that 90% of the public believe dialogue is the way to solve the country's problems. The bad news is that 1 in 3 think that violence is sometimes a necessary response to social injustice.

Maldivians are not enthusiastic about gender equality. A majority think men make better leaders than women. Remarkably, more women than men support the idea that men make better leaders than women.

### **Is there hope?**

“Democratic institutions must take extraordinary measures to regain the trust of the public and the public must step up to hold public officials to account,” said Aiman Rasheed, Advocacy and Communications Manager. “Levels of confidence in institutions is a key indicator of the levels of corruption in a system,” he added.

This is the first systematic survey on democracy conducted in the Maldives and provides important benchmark data. The random sample of approximately 1,000 citizens provides a margin of error of +/- 3.0% and the findings are generalisable to the entire country. The questions asked come from surveys that have been repeatedly used and tested around the world.

ENDS

For all media queries, please contact Advocacy and Communications Manager, Aiman Rasheed (00 960 7908967).

