

Bill on Protection of Whistleblowers

Chapter 1: Preliminary

Introduction & Title

1. The Bill lays down the procedures applicable to reporting wrongdoing, the protection afforded to whistleblowers, the requirements on investigative authorities, and other procedures necessary to instil a culture of transparency and accountability, and to prevent wrongdoings.
2. This Bill will be entitled the “Bill on Protection of Whistleblowers”.

Objectives

3. This Bill has the following objectives:
 - a. institute procedures to whistleblow by reporting wrongdoings and to encourage such acts;
 - b. adequately investigate and act upon the disclosures made;
 - c. provide protection and safety for whistleblowers;
 - d. promote a culture of accountability, transparency and integrity;
 - e. encourage responsibility in availing oneself of the rights herein and prevent their misuse.
4. This Bill will commence on the date it is ratified and published in the public gazette.
5. Should any existing law or regulation contradict any term or provision of this Bill, such other law or regulation shall be of no effect as of the date of the commencement of this Bill.
6. This Bill will have no effect on events that occurred prior to its commencement.

Chapter 2: Whistleblowing

7. Making a disclosure regarding a public or private party, in the manner prescribed in this Bill, wrongdoings such as the following constitutes whistleblowing:
 - a. any violations of the law and administrative regulations;
 - b. human rights abuse;
 - c. abuse of international humanitarian law;
 - d. corruption;
 - e. a danger to public health or safety;

- f. a danger to the environment;
 - g. abuse of public office;
 - h. miscarriage of justice;
 - i. waste or mismanagement of resources;
 - j. retaliation for whistleblowing;
 - k. anything to intentionally cover-up any of the above.
8. The following will not be considered whistleblowing merely by reason of them not being in agreement with the personal views of the whistleblower:
- a. Government policy, amount of funds, utility or priority allocated thereto;
 - b. Public expenditure that has been approved by legislative controls and is proceeding in accordance with public finance laws and regulations;
 - c. Wrongdoing related only to the whistleblower and that is based around the personal interests of the whistleblower.
9. In addition to conduct within the territory of the Maldives, the scope of this Bill covers conduct outside of the Maldives as well.
10. Disclosure can be made in any of the following manners to an investigative authority as prescribed in this Bill:
- a. Letter
 - b. Facsimile Message
 - c. Phone call
 - d. Internet Communications
 - e. SMS or MMS
 - f. Electronic Mail or Messages
 - g. Audio File
 - h. Video Clips
11. Whistleblowers: the following parties are entitled to whistleblow under this Bill:
- a. Employee of a Public Entity;
 - b. Employee of a Private Entity;
 - c. Any separate legal entity.
12. Permanent and temporary employees, employees on contractual and project bases, and any other employees within the meaning of the Employment Act of a Public or Private Entity or any person that has been in any of the foregoing capacities within 02 (two) years of the date of the complaint are entitled to whistleblow under this Bill.
13. A Whistleblower is entitled to make a disclosure anonymously. Anonymous disclosures shall be accepted and investigated unless the fundamentals of

the disclosure have not been provided. Within 90 (ninety) days of commencement of this Bill, the Independent Commission shall issue a regulation on making anonymous disclosures, registering and investigating anonymous disclosures and institute processes for the system of anonymous disclosures.

14. In the event this Bill provides protection where a person is liable to receive benefits of another law or regulation, this Bill will not prevent the person from availing themselves of the other laws and regulations. Reference to such other law or regulation will not restrict a person from seeking remedies under this Bill.
15. In the event a disclosure is made more than 02 (two) years after occurrence of the material event the investigative authority has discretion whether to accept such disclosure or not.

Reasonable Belief of Wrongdoing

16. If a person believes that a wrongdoing has taken place, or is under the belief that a wrong is taking place or may take place, such person is entitled to whistleblow under this Bill. If it is reasonable to hold such belief, in consideration of the facts known to the whistleblower at the time, and the situation of the whistleblower at the material time, a disclosure can be made in accordance with this Bill based on such belief.
17. A person under such belief as described in Clause 16 of this Bill may in order not to get involved in a wrongdoing refuse to comply with an order. This refusal to comply whether through act or omission will not be considered a breach of any civil agreement to which such person is party, nor will it be considered the basis of any criminal or civil action or administrative procedure.
18. Where a person is mistaken and there is in fact no wrongdoing taking place, however, provided that person is under reasonable belief as described in Clause 16 such person shall be considered a whistleblower for the purposes of this Bill and shall be afforded protection accordingly. However, a person may not be liable to receive protection under this Bill where the person submits information that is known to be untrue.

Investigative Authorities

19. Disclosure channels for the purposes of whistleblowing are:
 - a. Internal Procedure for whistleblowing within the organisation;
 - b. Head of the organisation or such person nominated thereby for the purposes of whistleblowing;
 - c. Independent Commission;

d. General Public.

20. The Investigative Authority shall be determined for the purposes herein in accordance with the following:
- a. Disclosure may be made to another Investigative Authority if any Investigative Authority has not proceeded with the investigation in an adequate manner, or if any Investigative Authority in the event information is made known to them may attempt to destroy or tamper with evidence or influence or place under duress any witnesses, or cause any danger to the whistleblower or any third party or if the whistleblower has reason to believe that the Investigative Authority does not have the capacity to adequately investigate and act upon a disclosure.
 - b. If a party has instituted internal mechanisms for disclosures to be made disclosures should utilise such internal mechanisms.
 - c. If a party has not instituted an internal mechanism for disclosures to be made disclosure may be made to the Head of such party, or such person nominated by the Head for disclosures.
 - d. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that a situation mentioned in Clause 20.a may arise if disclosure is made to the internal mechanism, or Head or such person nominated thereby, the whistleblower is entitled to make such disclosure direct to the Independent Commission.
 - e. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that a situation mentioned in Clause 20.a may arise if disclosure is made to the Independent Commission, such disclosure may be made to the alternative Independent Commission mentioned in this Bill. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that a situation mentioned in Clause 20.a may arise if disclosure is made to the alternative Independent Commission, the whistleblower is entitled to make such disclosure to the general public.
21. A whistleblower may not be protected under this Bill where disclosure is made to the general public and the whistleblower has disclosed more information than is necessary to investigate the alleged wrongdoing, and has disclosed personal information that has no bearing on the alleged wrongdoing, or has disclosed information as true that the whistleblower knew to be untrue.
22. Where disclosure relates to any of the following and is thus classified a disclosure related to national security such disclosure can be made in the manner prescribed for national security disclosures, and unless expressly provided for herein the general terms and conditions will apply to all other disclosures:
- a. Disclosures affecting national security shall be the following:

- i. Information relating to the military or tactical readiness of the Maldives Security Services;
 - ii. Information that can be used against the Security Services, such as military tactics, techniques, facilities and such other information;
- b. Where a disclosure affects national security the whistleblower is entitled to make disclosure to the Independent Commission directly.
- c. Where a disclosure may give rise to a situation described in Clause 20.e and where disclosure is required to prevent danger to a life or lives or to public health and safety, and there are reasonable grounds to so believe, or unless the public interest defence as described in this Bill is satisfied, disclosures relating to national security will not be afforded protection under this Bill.

Chapter 3: Protection of Whistleblowers

Protection from Retaliation

- 23. Whistleblowers are protected from any act or omission in retaliation against person on account of whistleblowing or attempting to whistleblow, or based on any belief thereto. The same protection extends to retaliation on account of refusal to comply as described in Clause 17, or any attempt or belief thereto.
- 24. Retaliation includes acts and omissions in the work place or any discrimination and as such:
 - a. Dismissal
 - b. Removal of duties
 - c. Reduction of working hours
 - d. Probation
 - e. Withholding any allowance or decision on such allowance as a punishment
 - f. Ban or restriction on promotion and training opportunities
 - g. Demotion or restriction on allowances
 - h. Issuing threats and warnings and causing loss and damage
 - i. Such other activity carried out against the whistleblower.
- 25. Making a Complaint of Retaliation: Complaints against retaliation can be made in all employment related cases to the Employment Tribunal and in all other cases to the Maldives Civil Court.
- 26. Complaints of Retaliation must be submitted within a maximum of 02 (two) years from the date of the material incident.

27. In the event there are reasonable grounds to believe that a complainant may suffer irreparable loss or damage if urgent action is not taken, the Independent Commission has authority to make judicial orders on any party in order to avoid such irreparable loss.
28. The aggrieved party is liable to receive compensation for damage suffered due to retaliatory action. The nature of such damage will be determined by the Court in consideration of the following, stated in order of precedence:
 - a. As much as possible to accommodate the requests of the aggrieved party;
 - b. As much as possible to make restitution orders, with a view to restoring things to how they were prior to occurrence of the damage;
 - c. In case of irreparable or irredeemable damage, to provide sufficient financial compensation, in consideration of prevailing economic prices;
 - d. With respect to retaliatory action in the workplace the parties that caused the damage and the employer itself shall be jointly and severally liable to the aggrieved – however, the employer will not be liable where the employer can establish reasonable steps were taken to prevent retaliatory action in the workplace.
29. Compensation for retaliatory action may include the following:
 - a. Medical costs for treatment of any physical or mental damage;
 - b. If damage affects ability of the aggrieved to obtain an income, compensation in lieu of restricted or prevented access to obtain an income;
 - c. Considering the type of damage caused, compensation in lieu of damage to the reputation and name of the aggrieved and for any cause for embarrassment or duress;
 - d. Compensation in lieu of costs incurred for lawyers and administrative and other costs expended in pursuing the matter

Immunity from Civil or Criminal Charges or Administrative Action

30. An act or omission of a whistleblower acting under this Bill may be not be subject to any Criminal or Civil charge, nor subject to any Administrative action. This will not affect the individual liability of the whistleblower, not any third party, for civil or criminal charges arising from the content disclosed.
31. Any law or regulation or contract penalising the whistleblower from an act or omission protected under this Bill shall be to that extent null and void.

Protection of Personal Information

32. The Investigating Authority shall protect the following information of the whistleblower:
 - a. Full name and common name;

- b. Permanent or resident address;
 - c. Age;
 - d. Family information of the whistleblower;
 - e. Place of employment, or office or branch and job title/position;
 - f. Contact numbers and email address.
33. The whistleblower is entitled to not disclose the existence of any third parties that may have provided the information to the whistleblowers, and such whistleblowers should not be discriminated against for that reason.
34. If the Independent Commission is of the view that a whistleblower is entitled to protection of the Security Services of the State, the Independent Commission may at its discretion order the Security Services of the State to provide such protection as the Commission deems necessary.

Burden of Proof

35. The burden of proof to establish the facts of a disclosure shall not be with the whistleblower.
36. In a claim against retaliatory action or claim for compensation, the burden of proof shall be on the respondent party to establish that an act or omission was not subsequent to whistleblowing. The respondent party shall establish that there was reasonable cause for an act or omission regardless of the incidence of whistleblowing.
37. Any parties that voluntarily assist or otherwise co-operate with an investigation under this Bill will be afforded the same rights and entitlements as whistleblowers under this Chapter.

Chapter 4:
Responsibilities of Investigating Authorities

38. Public and private parties have the following responsibilities as Investigating Authorities, and Investigating Authorities under this Bill shall be subject to the following:
- a. Provide to their employees information about their entitlements under this Bill, information on whistleblowing, procedures related to whistleblowing, protection from retaliatory action, and other rights afforded to employees regarding whistleblowing, and in general all other information related to this Bill;
 - b. Provide to their employees information on what may be considered retaliatory action, making complaints of such action, and the right to compensation awarded for aggrieved parties;
 - c. Investigate disclosures and complaints made, protect personal information of the whistleblower, and provide to them safety and

protection in accordance herein and investigate claims of retaliatory action and take action in accordance with this Bill;

- d. Where Disclosure relates to a Member of Parliament the Investigating Authority in the first instance shall be the secretariat of the People's Majlis;
 - e. Where Disclosure relates to a specific Court of Law, including Magistrates Courts, Courts of first instance, and appellate Courts, or any Tribunal the Investigating Authority considered in the first instance shall be the administrative office supporting such Court.
39. If any party requests the Independent Commission, or if it is deemed necessary by the Independent Commission, the Independent Commission shall provide to such party information and assistance on fulfilling their obligations as an Investigating Authority under this Bill.
40. If any Investigating Authority other than an Independent Commission considers that it is unable to provide protection and security to the whistleblower, or unable to effectively investigate a disclosure, such Investigating Authority may after informing to the whistleblower such reason, handover such disclosure to another Investigating Authority so designated under this Bill.
41. Within a maximum of 90 (ninety) days from the Commencement of this Bill, Public Authorities shall institute internal mechanisms for investigating disclosures and share such information with their employees.

Investigating a Disclosure

42. Within a maximum of 03 (three) days of a disclosure being made to an internal mechanism or designated person or Independent Commission:
- a. If such body does not have jurisdiction to investigate the disclosure, the same should be informed to the whistleblower, and the disclosure shall be handed over for investigation to such Investigating Authority vested with jurisdiction over the matter or the Independent Commission;
 - b. If such body has jurisdiction to investigate the disclosure, register the disclosure and inform the same to the whistleblower;
 - c. If such disclosure is not protected under this Bill, inform the same to the whistleblower with reasons, and even in the event a disclosure is not protected Investigating Authorities shall protect and hold confidential personal information of the whistleblower.
43. Investigations following a disclosure shall be completed within a maximum of 21 (twenty one) days from the date of registration of the disclosure, and in the event the Investigating Authority has reason to believe that the investigation will not be concluded within this time, at least 48 (forty eight)

hours prior to expiry thereto, the Investigating Authority shall inform the same to the whistleblower and further specify a period of not more than 30 (thirty) extra days within which an investigation will be completed and inform the same to the whistleblower.

44. Investigating Authorities in investigating disclosures made hereunder shall be vested with such powers and rights that they are entitled to under this Bill and other laws and regulations, and shall as soon as possible determine whether or not a wrongdoing is involved, and are further entitled to make judicial orders on any third party in order to mitigate the effects of such wrongdoing.
45. The Independent Commission is entitled to request and obtain the assistance of any body recognised as an investigating authority under the Constitution. The Independent Commission is further entitled to request private parties and individuals for assistance in its investigations. However, in obtaining and providing such assistance it is the responsibility of the Independent Commission and other authorities of the State to protect and hold in confidence personal information of the whistleblower.
46. In addition to personal information of the whistleblower which must be protected, if the Investigating Authority has reason to believe that evidence may be destroyed or a witness may be coerced such Authority may decide to conduct a secret investigation in order to prevent this.
47. An investigation report must be produced at the conclusion of an investigation and the following information should be contained therein:
 - a. Details of the complaint made;
 - b. Details of how the investigation was carried out;
 - c. Details of the findings of the investigation;
 - d. Steps that may be taken to prevent the wrongdoing;
 - e. Details of any charges that may be brought against any party in light of the findings of the investigation;
48. Investigation Reports shall be made public in the following manner:
 - a. If the investigation did not find evidence of any wrongdoings, or if the disclosure is not protected under this Bill, the investigation report may be made public after withholding personal information of the whistleblower and any information that may be cause for a claim of defamation.
 - b. If the findings of any investigation indicate that a criminal charge may be brought against any party, such information shall be made available to the relevant investigating and prosecutorial authorities. In such instances investigation reports may be made public without prejudice to any ongoing criminal investigation or charge.

- c. If an investigation does not find evidence of wrongdoing, such information shall be shared with the whistleblower and those questioned during the course of the investigation and those parties that were under investigation for alleged wrongdoings.
- d. The whistleblower is entitled to request for updates on ongoing investigations and conclusion of investigations.

Chapter 5:
Independent Commission

49. Independent Commission for the purposes of this Bill are:
- a. Anti-Corruption Commission so designated under the Constitution;
 - b. In disclosures related to Clauses 7.b and 7.c, the Human Rights Commission so designated under the Constitution; and
 - c. In the event there is any overlap of jurisdiction regarding the Independent Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission is entitled to make a final decision on such matter, taking into account the best interests of the whistleblower.
50. Upon request of any party or at the discretion of the Independent Commission, it is the responsibility of the Independent Commission to provide information relating to any aspect of this Bill. In the event any party has made a disclosure or is making or is considering to make a disclosure and shares such information with the Independent Authority, it is the responsibility of the Independent Authority to provide the following information and instructions to such party:
- a. Disclosures protected under this Bill and the requirements for protection under this Bill;
 - b. Procedures and requirements for making a disclosure under this Bill;
 - c. Information on the Independent Commission designated under this Bill;
 - d. Information on making complaints against retaliatory action and compensation for damages;
 - e. All other rights and entitlements afforded to the whistleblower under this Bill;
 - f. All remedies afforded to those protected under this Bill by laws and regulations;
 - g. Provision of legal aid to be provided in accordance with such Regulation that will be enacted by the Independent Commission.
51. In addition to the responsibilities of the Independent Commission stated elsewhere in this Bill the following shall be the responsibility of the Independent Commission:
- a. Institution of mechanisms for the submission of complaints and making disclosures;

- b. Registration and acceptance of complaints and disclosures;
 - c. Protection of personal information of whistleblowers;
 - d. Investigation of complaints and disclosures;
 - e. Investigating complaints of retaliatory action in the same manner that other complaints and disclosures are investigated.
52. The Annual Report of the Independent Commission shall contain the following information related to the period covered by the Annual Report:
- a. Regulations enacted by the Independent Commission authorised under this Bill, any amendments made thereto and any Judicial Orders made pursuant to the provisions of this Bill;
 - b. Number of complaints the Independent Commission has acted upon and the nature of such complaints;
 - c. Number of instances where the Independent Commission has extended assistance or instruction under this Bill and nature of such assistance and instruction;
 - d. Any other action taken by the Independent Commission under authority of this Bill.

Chapter 6: Miscellaneous

Criminal Penalties

53. Any act or omission in retaliation to whistleblowing or attempting to whistleblow, or in belief of the same, against any party is a crime under this Bill. The penalty for such crime shall be imprisonment or house arrest for a duration of 6 (six) months and 5 (five) years.
54. Release of any information specified under Clause 32 in such manner or extent not permitted under this Bill is a crime under this Bill. The penalty for such crime shall be imprisonment or house arrest for a duration of 3 (three) months and 5 (five) years.
55. Tampering with any evidence or document relating to an investigation under this Bill, or any attempt to influence or coerce a witness related to such investigation is a crime under this Bill. The penalty for such crime shall be imprisonment or house arrest for a duration of 3 (three) months and 5 (five) years.
56. If any party does not comply with a Judicial Order made by the Independent Commission pursuant to Clause 27 of this Bill, such party may be fined by up to a maximum of one (one) million Rufiya as determined by the Independent Commission. The Independent Commission may at its absolute discretion waive or refund a fine paid as described herein, upon the party in breach subsequently following the Judicial Order.

57. If in the commission of a crime under this Bill any damage is caused to the person or property of any person, without prejudice to any liabilities or penalties under any other law or regulation, and in addition to the penalties prescribed hereunder, a Court of Law may increase the penalty by a maximum of 02 (two) years imprisonment or house arrest.
58. A criminal investigation or charge relating to a crime specified in this Bill shall not prejudice the right of whistleblowers to obtain safety and protection under this Bill, or protection from retaliation, or eligibility for compensation or any other right or entitlement of the whistleblower under this Bill.
59. In establishing a crime under this Bill, emphasis must be placed on the intent of the perpetrator and not on the effect of any act or omission on the aggrieved party.
60. A crime under this Bill will be established in the following manner:
- a. Person or persons directly responsible to be penalised;
 - b. If an act or omission is the result of a decision taken by any person(s) other than those directly responsible for the act or omission, and where the person directly responsible was in danger or may suffer a loss had such person not acted in accordance with the decision, the person directly responsible shall not be penalised;
 - c. If any act or omission is the result of any decision taken by a person or group of persons, such person(s) responsible for the decision shall be penalised;
 - d. If it can be established that an act or omission was decided upon without knowledge of the incidence of whistleblowing, such person(s) responsible for the act or omission will not be penalised.

Public Interest Defence

61. In the event a disclosure is not otherwise protected under this Bill, but it can be established that the Public Interest is served better by disclosing rather than protecting such information (information that is in the Public Interest) disclosure of such information may not be the subject of Criminal or Civil Charge or any Administrative action.
62. Whether or not any information is in the Public Interest may be determined by the following parties in the event:
- a. Public Interest is raised as a defence against any Criminal or Civil Charge by a respondent to such charge and in such event by the presiding Judge;
 - b. Any party makes a submission to the Independent Commission for information to be determined to be in the Public Interest and in such event by the Independent Commission;

- c. Public Interest shall be defined as specified under this Bill, and in case of any gaps therein, the terms herein shall be defined in accordance with practice in free and democratic societies.
63. Any information designated to be in the Public Interest, unless and until the same designation has been revoked on appeal, may not be the subject of any Judicial Order providing for concealment or non-publication of such information.
64. In determining whether the Public Interest defence is applicable, in addition to the facts of the case, the following shall be taken into account:
- a. Extent of any wrongdoing disclosed;
 - b. Extent of any personal or other information disclosed that is unrelated to any wrongdoing;
 - c. Extent to which it can be determined that disclosure was motivated by any personal or other issues with any person(s) and a desire to damage their interests.
65. Where a deadline for submission of a disclosure mentioned under this Bill has expired but it can be determined that Public Interest will be better served by such disclosure being allowed rather than rejected the Investigating Authority will accept such disclosure.

Commencement

66. This Bill will commence once it is ratified and published in the Public Gazette.
67. If this Bill contradicts any law or regulation that is in effect at the time of its commencement, the extent of such other law or regulation that is in contradiction with this Bill shall be considered null and void as of the date of commencement of this Bill.
68. This Bill will not affect anything that occurred before the date of its commencement.

Enacting Regulations

69. The Anti-Corruption Commission is empowered to enact all general regulations relating to this Bill. However, where the Bill has designated certain areas to be under the jurisdiction of a specific Independent Commission, such specific Independent Commission shall have authority to enact regulations relating to the area so designated.
70. In enacting regulations under this Bill the Independent Commission shall observe the following deadlines:
- a. Within 90 (ninety) days from commencement of this Bill the Independent Commission shall institute procedures for making anonymous disclosures;

- b. As Public Authorities are mandated to institute internal mechanisms for whistleblowing and to provide information related to such mechanisms to their employees within 90 (ninety) days of commencement of this Bill, the Independent Commission will assist and provide information to Public Authorities in order to complete this;
- c. If this Bill does not specify a deadline within which a regulation is to be enacted or some other procedure is to be completed, the deadline for completion of the same shall be within a period of 60 (sixty) days from the Commencement of this Bill.
- d. If this Bill provides for the levy of any fine, the amount of such fine shall be reviewed by the Independent Commission at least once a year and any appropriate changes made thereto in consideration of economic indicators.

Definitions

71. Unless a term or phrase is specifically defined otherwise in this Bill the following terms and phrases shall have the meanings ascribed to them below:
- a. Endangering the Environment shall mean any breach of the laws and regulations relating to the environment prevailing in the Maldives or any other act or omission that may be seen as a danger to the environment;
 - b. Endangering Public Health and Safety shall mean any act or omission that endangers the safety and security, health or lives of any person(s);
 - c. Wastage or Mismanagement of Resources shall mean use of a resource in a manner inconsistent with obtaining its benefits or in such manner that the resource is wasted, and shall especially mean:
 - i. Unreasonable, unjust or discriminating use; or
 - ii. Negligent or unreasonably prolonged act or omission; or
 - iii. Act or omission that is unauthorised or unlawful.
 - d. Breach of International Humanitarian Laws shall mean breach of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocols and Commentary or such other international treaties that are held to be part of international humanitarian law and binding upon the Maldives;
 - e. Breach of Human Rights shall mean breach of a human right as defined under the laws of the Maldives or international human rights treaties binding upon the Maldives;
 - f. Corruption shall mean corruption as defined under the laws of the Maldives and under international treaties on Corruption, especially the UN Convention Against Corruption, binding upon the Maldives;
 - g. Misuse of Public Office shall mean breach of any law or regulation or contract binding upon a public office, or not fulfilling or overstepping the duties of a public post, or use of a public post or influence to serve personal interests;

- h. Miscarriage of Justice shall mean use of any unjust influence at any stage within the administration of justice, including first instance and appellate Courts, or unduly influencing or attempting to influence a judge or a judicial officer or any party to commit any act or omission with regards to administration of justice in general or in relation to any specific case or incidence.
- i. Retaliation shall mean termination of employment, or suspension, or demotion, or enforced labour, or unreasonably withholding an approval or benefit, or marginalisation, or not allocating any work, or intimidation for whistleblowing.
- j. State or Public Authority or Party shall mean (i) Ministries, Departments, or all other Agencies that form part of the Executive branch of the State; (ii) all Agencies that form part of the Legislative branch of the State, including Members of Parliament, the People's Majlis and its offices; (iii) Courts of Law and Tribunals and all other Departments, Offices or Agencies that form part of the Administration of Justice; (iv) All other Agencies of the State (v) Companies that are wholly or partly owned by the State (vi) All other Companies, Agencies, Associations that receive public funding, including Political Parties; and (vii) any other Agency that is related to decisions taken by the State.
- k. Private Authority or Party shall mean any legal entity that is not included as a State or Public Authority or Party herein.
- l. Wrongdoing shall mean any act or omission defined under Clause 7 of this Bill.
- m. Whistleblowing shall mean making a Disclosure in accordance with this Bill.
- n. Disclosure shall mean providing information on any Wrongdoing in such manner and to such authorities prescribed in this Bill.
- o. Investigating Authority shall mean any authority designated as Investigating Authority in this Bill vested with authority to receive and investigate Disclosures.
- p. Independent Commission shall mean any authority designated as Independent Commission in this Bill.
- q. Security Services of the State shall mean the army and police services of the Maldives, including all agencies acting therein, and any other party vested with authority to exercise the legitimate use of force on behalf of the State.
- r. State shall mean, inclusive of the executive, the administration of justice, and legislature, the State of the Republic of Maldives as established under the Constitution of the Maldives (2008).
- s. Public Interest shall mean anything affecting the lives of the public at large and shall include public health, safety and security, the economic and social systems of society, the environment and sustainable development.

72. In the event a right or entitlement is afforded to the whistleblower under an international treaty to which the Maldives is party but is not afforded as such under this Bill, the Independent Commission or a Court of Law shall consider such additional right or entitlement afforded to the whistleblower.
73. The principles enumerated in this Bill are specified in this Chapter so as to ensure that the objectives of the Bill are fulfilled as widely as possible. Each and every Clause of this Bill should be read and construed such that the principles enumerated herein are not adversely affected or restricted.