



## Ministry of Tourism

Male', Republic of Maldives

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020

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### **Statement by the Minister of Tourism His Excellency Ali Waheed at the Commonwealth's Virtual Seminar on the Impact of Tourism, Debt and Disaster Risk Management**

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Secretary General,

Our tropical nation is heavily dependant on Tourism, which accounts for one third of the total government revenue. For the first time in 47 years of Tourism in the Maldives, we have experienced zero tourist arrival since this March, which is more devastating than the 2004 Tsunami and 2008 Global Financial Crisis.

Being a small nation, vulnerable to global hit, it is estimated that the economic growth of Maldives may recede to a negative 26% in the worst case scenario.

In our government's effort to contribute to flatten the curve, our industry has utilized 26 tourist establishments, nearly 3000 rooms, for quarantine and isolation purposes. Controlling and managing the pandemic today is key for a progressive economy for tomorrow.

We cannot keep our borders closed for long, we are engaging with the relevant industry stakeholders in compiling "Guideline for Restarting Maldives Tourism" from July.

The government has a unique opportunity to go foreward with green and inclusive policies for recovery. It's a good chance to integrate policies on climate change.

Government of Maldives is deteremined to address the socio-economic impacts promptly. Rescuing the businesses and bringing back the workforce back to their jobs is on top of our agenda. Also we will use this opportunity to strengthen the local parity and women empowerment in our industry.





We are glad that we are back in the Commonwealth. We thank the support given to us by the organization and its member states during previous tough times. Once again for a nation who are heavily dependent on Tourism, we need your support in our road to recovery.

To beat COVID-19 we need to be innovative and pragmatic. We need to be more united. We should focus on common grounds to achieve the common targets to defeat the common invisible enemy.

We urge Commonwealth countries to open up borders without compromising safety. Its time to build travellers confidence, towards an intra-commonwealth travel and tourism.



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