

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES



MALDIVES WELCOMES BACK FIRST TOURISTS

*Joint Press Statement by the Ministry of Tourism,
Maldives Marketing & PR Corporation and Maldives Airports Company Ltd*

After almost four months since the suspension of on-arrival tourist visas, Maldives tourism industry has reopened with enhanced precautionary measures against COVID-19. The first tourists arrived this morning onboard Qatar Airways which landed in Velana International Airport (VIA). Connecting from various countries, 107 foreigners and 24 Maldivians arrived on the first commercial flight to land in Maldives since borders closed for tourists on 27th March 2020.

The momentous occasion was graced by the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Honorable Aishath Nahula, Acting Minister of Tourism, Uz. Fayyaz Ismail, Acting Managing Director of the Maldives Airports Company Ltd (MACL), Mr. Moosa Solih, Senior Dignitaries of Government and Industry Stakeholders. The flight was welcomed by a water salute organized by MACL. As tourists disembarked onto a beautiful day in the Maldives, they were warmly welcomed to the new normal at VIA. Precautionary measures such as social distancing, minimal touch points, frequent sanitization and mask wearing are in place to ensure the safety of all visitors and staff at VIA.

The tourism sector is the worst hit of all major economic sectors with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is especially true in the Maldives, where tourism accounts for the majority of foreign exchange earnings. Nevertheless, the health and safety of tourists and residents in the Maldives have always been paramount and the resumption of the tourism industry was only given the go ahead following extensive consultations with health professionals and all stakeholders. A COVID-19 safe tourism guideline has been issued by the Ministry of Tourism along with a certification program to ensure the safety and hygiene standards of all tourism facilities which include accommodation, transportation, airports and other related facilities.

Resorts, hotels and liveaboards located on uninhabited islands are allowed to resume operations from 15th July 2020 whereas hotels and guest houses located on inhabited islands will be allowed to open from 1st August 2020. A total of 40 resorts are in operation as we reopen the borders today. With the gradual lifting of travel restrictions and the resumption of flights around the world, the Maldives is excited to once again welcome its shores to travelers.

The unique one island, one resort aspect of the tourism product, which has always been sought after by visitors, and the naturally distanced geographic formation of the islands is especially ideal as the world seeks new ways to travel.

Maldives registered a record breaking 1.7 million tourist arrivals in 2019, the highest number of tourists to have visited Maldives in one year. H. E. President Solih has announced a target of 850,000 visitors by the end of 2020.