



**INTERNATIONAL
LAWYERS ASSISTING
WORKERS NETWORK**

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu
The President's Office
Boduthakurufaanu Magu,
Male' 20113
Republic of Maldives

1 March 2024

Re: Industrial Relations Act

Your Excellency

On behalf of the International Lawyers Assisting Workers (ILAW) Network, which unites over 1,200 labour lawyers in over 90 countries, including in the Republic of Maldives, we write to urge the full and effective implementation of the Industrial Relations Bill as soon as possible.

Your decision to sign the Industrial Relations Bill, as well as the Occupational Safety and Health Bill, into law on 2 January 2024 was a major step for the Republic of Maldives. The IR Act provides for the first time a comprehensive legal framework for the exercise of the rights to freedom of association and to collectively bargaining, as well as procedures for collective dispute settlement. As such, this moves the government closer into line with its obligations under ratified ILO conventions, including the fundamental ILO conventions. For the government, implementing the IR Act will no doubt require new personnel, resources, and procedures in order to make the law effective for workers and employers in your country. You can be assured that the ILAW Network stands ready to support trade unions in the Maldives on the use and development of this new law, in order to build over time a mature industrial relations system which delivers for workers in the Maldives.

The IR Act is scheduled to enter into force on 2 April. We are concerned, however, as we have been informed that the government might attempt to amend the IR Act following the upcoming parliamentary elections on 21 April 2024 with the aim of weakening it. We would urge the government to stay the course and work to implement the provisions of the new IR Act, without amendment, in consultation with the representative worker and employer organizations. The Maldives will be better off socially and economically for having done so.

Sincerely

Jeffrey Vogt
Chair, ILAW Network