

# **MALDIVIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

## **DRAFT MANIFESTO**

We, the citizens of the Maldives, have joined the Maldivian Democratic Party to work by legal means to establish in the Maldives; a contemporary law-based liberal state, form an effective market economy and establish a civil society.

### **OUR GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH A FREE, PROSPEROUS AND STRONG MALDIVES**

To reach this goal; we shall work to establish a democratic and flourishing Maldives, a developing economy with the capacity to:

- sustain her integrity and unity;
- establish a world-standard educational and public health system within everybody's reach;
- enable the preservation and development of our culture that will yield progress and prosperity;
- facilitate the progressive protection and promotion of the Islamic faith that will strengthen the moral fabric of the society and create civility amongst the peoples;
- create a societal value system that will respect basic human rights of all individuals;
- create a climate of liberal business that is ethically sound, morally correct and environmentally friendly;

### **THE STATE EXISTS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

Human dignity and respect for the individual and the family must be asserted as the essential foundation of the socio-political and political system of the Maldives. All individuals have a right to freedom, prosperity, security and the opportunity to develop their abilities. The state is no more than a tool to attain these goals. The state exists to serve the citizen and not to sacrifice the citizen for abstract ideas.

Our principle is: the state exists for the individual: the individual does not exist for the state.

### **FREEDOM AND JUSTICE**

Freedom is an essential value of human life. The people of the Maldives have not been able to enjoy their lives to the full. Only a free Maldives can assure the prosperity and security of its citizens and enable the country to develop

dynamically in the 21st century. Freedom cannot survive in a society that does not strive for justice. Such a society is doomed to split the gap between the haves and the have-nots without ever bridging it. Such a division may result either in social upheavals or a dictatorship of the privileged minority. Justice demands that we strive not only for equal rights for citizens, but also for equal opportunities so that each individual can realize their abilities. Justice should also guarantee a worthy existence for the less fortunate.

### **AUTHORITARIAN RULE IS FRAUGHT WITH THE DANGER OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A THIRD-WORLD COUNTRY**

The absence of massive and conscious support for democratic institutions, the latter's underdevelopment and inefficiency, and the unlimited opportunities to manipulate public opinion stimulated the temptation of the governing elite to establish a bureaucratic authoritarian system in the Maldives serving the interests of a small minority. Control over information, media and election procedures and to a considerable extent the government's economic policy are serving these interests. Attempts to construct an authoritarian system in the Maldives are leading the country to bureaucratic stagnation and irreversible backwardness.

### **DEMOCRACY IS VITALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE MALDIVES**

Democracy is vitally important for the Maldives, as it protects the dignity of the individual to a greater degree than any other political regime. This advantage makes it the most competitive form of political arrangement in the post-industrial world, where human resources are the chief development factor.

Only democracy:

- secures the maximum freedom for an exchange of ideas and the spread of information, without which it is impossible to establish a 21st- century information society;
- furthers the development of a civic society and independent political parties capable of controlling the government and preventing isolation and stagnation;
- achieves the principle of a division and mutual control of the powers, which is the most effective means against the bureaucratic degradation of the state.

Stable democracy in the Maldives is an imperative, as the essential catalyst for dynamic development in the 21st century.

### **THE NEW DEMOCRATIC COURSE**

The new democratic course proclaimed by the Maldivian Democratic Party is based on a revision of past regretful approaches and a clear conception of future tasks.

This course is based on modern liberal- social ideology, with the goal of establishing a stable democratic order, implying the rule of law, a fairer market

economy, civic society, and a modern security system and a 21st century developmental strategy.

## **LIBERALISM FOR ALL**

A free society can only be established if it meets the interests of the majority. It is the state's duty to create a situation where the maximum possible numbers of citizens reap the fruits of freedom. Both the 'rich and strong', and the 'poor and weak' have a right to freedom. The latter must have a chance to gain this freedom.

We seek reforms in the interest of all of the Maldivian citizens, rather than the prosperous minority. It is necessary to revise the tasteless approaches to reform in view of the scale of social stratification and imbalances in our country's regional development, factors which pose a threat to its unity in future. A civilized distribution of the national income must have the same priority in state policy as its growth.

We aim to establish a society of equal opportunities based on the principles of social justice and social solidarity of the strong and weak. In other words, as well as the liberation of private initiative, a robust system of social support is a crucial condition for the existence of a free society in the Maldives.

A free society can only be created in a stable political system that rules out all abuse and presupposes the state's active role in maintaining economic order in order to achieve prosperity for everybody.

The market is not an aim in itself, but rather a means of securing freedom and sufficiency for all Maldivian citizens. The state must steer the free market to attain social objectives, and not try to coerce it to obtain such goals.

## **RULE OF LAW**

The Maldivian Democratic Party is a party of constitutional democracy. To create a democratic rule of law in the Maldives, one needs merely to abide by all the principles of the present Constitution. Today in the Maldives there is a danger of restrictions on:

- equality before the law and the court through selective application of the law for political purposes and owing to the court's dependence on the executive authorities;
- election rights of citizens through the use of administrative resources and extensive opportunities for falsifying elections;
- Freedom of speech and the press through various forms of pressure on information media that displease the authorities; Freedom of association and citizen's societies through attempts to control them;
- Freedom of enterprise through aggressive actions by the unwieldy and corrupt bureaucratic apparatus;
- Right of ownership through political pressure on some categories of proprietors;

- Freedom of individual development through unequal access to education, health care and culture;

The Maldivian Democratic Party is seeking to ensure the exercise of these rights and freedoms in full, insisting that rule of law is impossible unless the authorities themselves abide by the law.

### **A FAIRER MARKET ECONOMY**

- A fairer market economy is an organized economy whereby lawful regulation of the free market forces aims at achieving social results:
- the prosperity of all Maldivian citizens by ensuring access to goods distributed through the market;
- Guarantees of a worthy existence if such access is futile. The fairer market economy is a system where the state creates institutions regulating the play of market forces without dictating its will. This fairer market economy model presupposes a state policy in the following directions:
  - guarantees for private property, protection of economic freedom, elimination of bureaucratic barriers to entrepreneurs, and protection of small and medium- sized businesses;
  - creation of favorable conditions for all possible investments;
  - active struggle against monopolies, maintenance of a competitive environment, stiff controls on tariffs of the natural monopolies;
  - combating poverty by reducing blatant social stratification;
  - creating jobs and raising the incomes of the population;
  - work to improve the quality and expanding access to education and health care.

### **A CIVIC SOCIETY**

Maldivian Democratic Party pursues a policy of active support and protection of civic society in the belief that diverse forms of self-organization of citizens contain enormous reserves for the social, economic and cultural development of the Maldives. A civic society emerges from a sense of social responsibility, i.e., the citizen's attempts to settling his/her own problems and common problems independently or in cooperation with other citizens, instead of dumping them on the state.

Social progress in the Maldives cannot be attained without a responsible civic society capable of criticizing and controlling the authorities and making them work in its interests. Maldivian society today is far removed from this goal. Before our eyes it is turning into a passive object of manipulation by the authorities. This blind alley leads the country to backwardness.

We insist on ending such a policy. The state must not "administer" the voluntary associations of citizens, but support them and extend opportunities for participation in state issues.

## **PATRIOTISM IN DEEDS**

Maldivian Democratic Party is a party of people who advocate a strong state, provided that the interests of the state do not prevail over those of the individual. We advocate a strong state in the service of its citizens.

Maldivian Democratic Party is a party of patriots. But not of the kind that prods the country towards isolation and nationalist insanity. For us, to be a patriot is not to endlessly proclaim one's patriotism, but to work for the good of the country and its citizens. Our patriotism is one of deeds, not words.

## **OUR SOCIAL CONTRACT**

Maldivian Democratic Party is a civic party. We represent the interests of Maldivian citizens and assume responsibility before them for anything we do. The burgeoning middle class represent our social support. If we win executive power, we will assume the following obligations:

- put an end to the falsification of elections at all levels;
- triple the volume of investments in the economy;
- eliminate the economic causes of corruption;
- raise minimum wages and salaries to the subsistence minimum;
- reduce by two-thirds the number of Maldivians living below the poverty line;
- manage our foreign debt in a responsible manner;
- Transfer fully to the establishment of a professional police force,
- place all force structures under the control of society; and finally,
- TO MAKE THE MALDIVES A COMFORTABLE AND ATTRACTIVE COUNTRY OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.