

# Major Reform Work Currently Underway

## 1. Progress in the Amendment of the Constitution:

Debate on the following chapters has been completed, and the work of drafting the chapters is now in progress.

- a) Fundamental Rights
- b) Form of Government (to be decided by a public referendum)
- c) Maldives to be a unitary state
- d) Judiciary

The currently ongoing debate is on the chapter concerning the Legislature.

## 2. Drafting of the Bill to amend the Law of Evidence

The Bill has been drafted and would be submitted to the Parliament within September 2006. Some amendments to the draft Bill were brought due to the Maldives' accession to the ICCPR and ICESCR.

## 4. Drafting a Bill on Local Governance

A regulatory framework has been drafted to decentralise the administration of Atolls and Islands, and for the establishment of Atoll Councils and Island Councils. The drafting was done in the light of the outcome of wide-ranging consultations held throughout the whole country.

To further provide for a statutory framework to decentralize and strengthen the administration of the atolls and islands, and to set up a system for local governance a Bill on Local Governance is currently being drafted for submission to Parliament for its first session of 2007.

In this regard, a senior delegation had visited Kerala State, India and Philippines to observe and learn about local governance systems in those places.

## 5. Bill on Parliamentary Privileges

The original Bill on Parliamentary Privileges was passed with amendments by the parliament. However, concerns that some of the privileges arrogated to parliament by them were excessive and also infringed the concept of rule of law led to the President's decision to return the Bill to parliament for re-consideration. After much debate on the issue, the parliament rejected the proposal to amend

the Bill but also declined to reconfirm it as already passed, whereupon the Bill lapsed under the relevant provisions of the Constitution. The government subsequently decided to resubmit the Bill, incorporating necessary changes in the light of the parliamentary debate. This Bill has been submitted to the Parliament on 15 October 2006.

## **6. Bill on Political Parties**

The original Bill was submitted to parliament on 19 February 2006, was rejected by parliament due to deep divisions on conceptual issues. The government subsequently decided to resubmit the Bill, incorporating necessary changes in the light of the parliamentary debate. The new Bill would be submitted to parliament during 2006.

## **7. Bill to amend the Law on Narcotics**

The draft of the Bill is in the final stages of the drafting process, and final consultations with stakeholders are due to be held in September, with a view to submitting the Bill to parliament for its third session commencing in October 2006. The Bill will provide a comprehensive treatment and rehabilitative characteristic to the existing law, while also amending the regulatory and penal provisions to bring them more into line with this context, as well as the provisions of the Penal Code Bill recently tabled in parliament.

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