

Press Release

Maldives airports prepare action plan to cope with future natural disasters

Male, August 13, 2017: Deutsche Post DHL Group and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will support the Maldives authorities in their efforts to build resilience against future natural disasters. The two partners will team up with Maldives Airports Company Limited, National Disaster Management Centre and government officials, as well as representatives of the military and other humanitarian response experts in the South Asian island republic to host their internationally recognized Get Airports Ready for Disaster (GARD) Programme from August 13 to 17 at Velana International Airport, the main international airport in the Maldives.

Over 35 officials and experts from the Maldivian airport authorities, government ministries, the Armed Forces and other humanitarian responders will participate in the four-day GARD workshop, led by specialists from Deutsche Post DHL Group and UNDP. During the workshop, the participants and trainers will assess and evaluate the current level of preparedness at the airports, conduct training exercises, and develop specific recommendations and an action plan to ensure that the airports in the Maldives are prepared for future disasters.

Airports play a critical role in channeling humanitarian teams and relief goods quickly to people in need in the immediate aftermath of a disaster caused by natural hazards like floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, storms, cyclones, etc. In addition to having the necessary airport infrastructure and local transport connections to smoothly deliver lifesaving support to impacted communities, the team on site needs to be trained in the necessary protocols and know-how to handle the dramatic rise in air traffic and flow of goods and people that typically follows a natural disaster.

“A clear and flexible action plan can help airport operators to minimize logistics bottlenecks and better manage sudden influxes of relief aid, bulky supplies like food, water and medical supplies, as well as NGO personnel entering the country,” said Chris Weeks, Director of Humanitarian Affairs for DHL. “It is very encouraging to see the way the government and airports are considering preparedness as a priority and incorporating it into action plans that could potentially save more lives in the future.”

“The Maldives is situated in an isolated position in the Indian Ocean. Airports can play an important role in the country’s resilience to potential natural disasters, and are critical to its emergency response capability,” said Shoko Noda, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives. “The impact of the 2004 tsunami showed the extent of damage that can be caused by a disaster, and the need to react quickly to contain additional losses. More than 100,000 people (33% of the population) suffered directly or indirectly from the tsunami, which

caused loss of life, large-scale flooding and damage. The GARD workshop is an opportunity to develop strong and effective contingency plans to manage the flow of emergency relief goods to the people in need. It will assist in UNDP's ongoing efforts to support the Maldivian government to prepare for future disasters."

"Effectively channeling relief efforts from airports to affected communities requires appropriate infrastructural capabilities and efficient administrative procedures. In addition to reassessing airport facilities and strengthening staff expertise at Velana International Airport, the workshop will lead to a series of follow-up activities including an action plan that we can use to build up our readiness for any potential emergencies," said Adil Moosa, Managing Director of Maldives Airports Company Ltd. "We are committed to working together with all emergency counterparts to follow up on implementation and further strengthening our resilience."

The Maldives relies heavily on air routes to transport aid and supplies during times of emergency. As part of the current GARD workshops, experts from Deutsche Post DHL Group and UNDP will be equipping participants with best-practice logistics management during natural disasters and working with them to devise customized disaster-response plans for their airports. The workshops will also raise awareness of Disaster Risk Reduction and identify priorities for investment in national infrastructure that could further improve the resilience of emergency supply chains during a disaster.

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Background

Despite covering a relatively small territory of 298 square kilometers and a resident population of just over 400,000, Maldives is one of the most geographically dispersed locations in the world. The island archipelago comprises 1,192 coral islands, of which only 188 are inhabited. As the lowest-lying country in the world, the Maldives has been identified as one of the most exposed countries globally to rising sea levels due to climate change, and it is regularly affected by monsoons and flooding. Due to its proximity to the Great Sumatra fault, it is also particularly vulnerable to tsunamis.

The experiences of UNDP and Deutsche Post DHL Group in addressing disaster response and recovery in locations that are vulnerable to adverse events around the world have shown that an adequate level of infrastructure and effective logistical operations would not only save lives but also help reduce economic loss.

About GARD

In 2009, GARD was developed by Deutsche Post DHL Group in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the aim of preparing airports in disaster-prone areas to handle the surge of incoming relief goods after a natural disaster occurs. It also enables the various organizations and aid agencies to better understand the processes at the airport in the aftermath of a disaster, which will help facilitate relief efforts and enhance overall coordination.

To date, GARD workshops have been held at around 40 airports in Armenia, Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Nepal, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

GARD trainers and training materials are provided free-of-charge by Deutsche Post DHL Group while UNDP leads the project implementation and facilitates the coordination with the government authorities. GARD training workshop arrangements and logistics costs are fully covered by UNDP with funding contribution by the government of Germany.

GARD is an integral part of Deutsche Post DHL Group's GoHelp program in which the Group pools all of its activities related to disaster preparedness and management. As a form of crisis prevention, GARD workshops are used to prepare airports for coping with potential natural disasters. Should a disaster strike, Disaster Response Teams (DRTs) provide emergency aid and ensure that relief supplies can be accepted in a coordinated manner and passed on to the correct aid organizations.

The DRTs were established in cooperation with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). They encompass a worldwide network of more than 400 volunteers, all specially trained employees of Deutsche Post DHL Group.

You can find the press release for download as well as further information on dpdhl.com/pressreleases

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Deutsche Post DHL Group is home to two strong brands: Deutsche Post is Europe's leading postal service provider. DHL offers a comprehensive range of international express, freight

transport, and supply chain management services, as well as e-commerce logistics solutions. Deutsche Post DHL Group employs approximately 510,000 people in over 220 countries and territories worldwide. The Group generated revenues of more than 57 billion Euros in 2016.

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UNDP works in some 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion. We help countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results.

This is a critical time for the world. At UNDP, we see this period as a huge opportunity to advance the global sustainable development agenda. Last year, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to continue the work of the Millennium Development Goals. UNDP is working to strengthen new frameworks for development, disaster risk reduction and climate change. We support countries' efforts to achieve the new Sustainable Development Goals, or Global Goals, which will guide global development priorities for the next 15 years. www.undp.org.

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Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) is a 100% government owned limited liability company incorporated under the Companies Act of the Republic of Maldives. MACL is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Privatisation & Corporatisation Board of the Maldives. The Corporate Office of MACL is on the island of Hulhule', Republic of Maldives.

Maldives Airports Company Ltd is the operator of Velana International Airport and has been massively involved in destination marketing and bringing in new airlines to the Maldives to boost up the tourism industry. MACL has embarked on one of the biggest projects in the history of Maldives in developing the future Velana International Airport such as the development of a brand new international passenger terminal, a new code F runway, a new cargo terminal complex and a new fuel farm and major infrastructure developments at Velana International Airport.