

REPORTING ON POLITICS AND THE MAJLIS

Reporting on politics and the Majlis is one of the most important and exciting jobs a journalist can do in the Maldives.

WHY REPORT ON POLITICS?

Politics is all about power:

- Who has power?
- Who wants power?
- How is the power being used?
- Who is it benefiting?
- Who is abusing their power?

Politics affects how we live our lives:

- The price we pay for diesel, rice and clothes.
- How much money we have to spend
- The quality of education in our schools
- The hospitals, harbours and essential supplies in the Atolls

It is a journalist's job to inform the public about the work and activities of politicians. Journalists must question those in power and elected to represent us:

- Are the politicians developing policies which are workable?
- Are the politicians making decisions which tend to benefit themselves and their friends or ones which benefit the citizens?
- Are the politicians doing enough to solve the country's problems?
- Are they creating laws and regulations which keep us safe and secure?

- Are they developing policies which will improve the quality of life for people?
- Are they concerned with the long-term or only thinking about the present?

In a democracy is it very important that journalists tell the public what their elected representative is doing because every few years people get the chance to vote. If they know their elected representative is doing a good job, they may vote to keep them but if they know they are doing a bad job, they may vote them out of office. It is the journalist's job to accurately and fairly report on the activities of the elected representatives. This is so the public can make an informed decision on whom to keep and whom to reject.

TOP TIP!

If you make it clear how politics impacts on people's every day lives – they will want to hear your story.

WHY REPORT ON THE MAJLIS?

The Majlis is where laws are approved, repealed or amended. It is essential that the workings of the Majlis are reported:

- People need to know what the new laws are. Otherwise, they may break them out of ignorance
- People need to know what their elected representatives are saying on their behalf
- If a new regulation is being drafted members of the public may want to voice their opinion so they can influence and change unpopular legislation
- People need to know what is happening so they can make informed decisions

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE MAJLIS?

Under the new constitution the Majlis comprises:

- Two members from each Athol
- Two members from the capital, Male
- One member from each constituency with a population of more than 5,000 people

The role of members of the Majlis:

- To represent the needs and views of the people in his or her Athol or constituency
- To suggest a new law by drafting a bill
- To scrutinize draft legislation when they sit on a committee
- To question the President or government ministers

All these tasks are a vital way of making sure that the laws and regulations in the Maldives are created for the benefit of its citizens.

A Majlis or Parliament is known as the legislature because its role is to legislate. To legislate is to propose or enact law. It is not the same as the government.

WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT DOES THE MALDIVES HAVE?

The Maldives is a Presidency. This means that the country is governed by the President and his or her Vice-President, together with the Cabinet. The President will have been chosen by the people in a presidential election, together with the Vice-President. The President should have at least 51% of the vote in order to govern. Once the President has secured the backing of the

electorate he or she can appoint their Cabinet. Under the new constitution a cabinet member cannot also be a member of the Majlis. Each cabinet member would have a portfolio. A portfolio means a post or office. A cabinet minister would have responsibility for a government department dealing with a particular area: e.g. foreign affairs.

WHAT DOES THE GOVERNMENT DO?

- The government is responsible for the day-to-day management and running of the country
- The government can decide on policy (a course of action) but it cannot create or amend laws without the agreement of the Majlis

At the time of writing this means that 51% of the Majlis must agree. The government is sometimes known as the executive. In a presidential system like the Maldives it is possible for the executive and legislature to be controlled by two different political parties. This situation is known as co-habitation. It means that both sides must co-operate and compromise if the government is to work properly.

THE FOURTH ESTATE

You may have heard the phrase “the fourth estate”. Journalists are known as the fourth estate. This refers to the three different official estates which govern a country:

1. Executive or government
2. Legislature or parliament (Majlis)
3. Judiciary

The journalists' function is to hold the other three estates to account. Imagine a country where the powerful are allowed to rule without restraint. Would they make decisions which benefited themselves and their friends or would they act in the interests of ordinary people? The media's role is act as counter balance to the weight and power of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary.

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT IN THE MALDIVES

You cannot report properly on politics unless you have a thorough understanding of the political system. These are just a few of things you should know. Find out if you do not know the answers! This booklet cannot give you the answers because the situation may have changed by the time you read this! This is because politics in fast-moving. This makes it exciting to cover.

THE POWER OF THE PRESIDENT

- What powers does the President have? How is he or she restricted in their power?
- Do not report on an abuse of power unless you are correctly informed about the rights and limits in the first place
- Before reporting an allegation of abuse of power you must have evidence and offer the right to reply

THE ROLES OF CABINET MINISTERS?

Be sure you know the following about all cabinet members:

- Full names
- Present posts or offices
- Previously held posts or offices
- Current areas of responsibility

Remember politics is about power so you should also know about the hierarchy within the cabinet:

- Who is senior or junior in terms of rank?
- Who currently is in favour and can command the ear of the President?
- Who is out of favour?
- Who has their eye on a better job?
- Who is unhappy with the way that the Cabinet is going and may be willing to make their complaints known to an eager journalist?

What is the relationship between the Presidency, Cabinet and Majlis?

A good working relationship can mean a smooth and speedy passage for legislation and a negative one may mean that new bills keeps getting delayed.

Find out what the current situation is like. Like all relationships this will change all the time!

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF DIFFERENT COMMITTEES

A lot of important work in governing the Maldives is done within committees. It is impossible for all the members of the Majlis to discuss all the new legislation or problems in the country which need resolving. There is too much. Therefore the work is divided up.

The Majlis decides who should be in which committee.

Here are some of the roles of the committees:

- Scrutinizing draft legislation. Committee members will consider whether or not they should recommend that a bill becomes law. Is it

sufficient as it is? Or, does it need some changes? Often a committee will bring in experts to advise them. They will discuss any issues affecting the bill which were raised in the Majlis. Once they have reached a conclusion, they will write a report which the chairperson will submit to the Majlis for further consideration.

- The appointment of certain official positions, such as the Auditor General, the Civil Service Commission and the Human Rights Commission
- Investigating petitions
- Investigating whether new regulations issued by the government conform to national law
- Internal affairs
- National Security

You can see that these committees discuss issues of immense public interest. However, at the time of writing, many of these committees meetings are closed to journalists. The media will only know what has been discussed once the committee submits its report to the Majlis for debate. However, it is important for journalists to know who sits on each committee. If they need further material about a topic raised in the Majlis they can gain a lot of useful background information from the appropriate committee members.

JOURNALISTS ARE A BRIDGE BETWEEN POLITICIANS AND PUBLIC

Question:

How do journalists act as a bridge between politicians and the public?

Answer:

They inform the public about new laws and regulations which affect us all.

Question:

Does this matter?

Answer:

Yes, of course. New laws can have a positive or negative affect on our lives.
Would a new law banning satellite TV be popular?

Question:

What can the public do about new laws?

Answer:

The public can also have an influence on whether or not draft legislation becomes law.

Question:

How?

Answer:

Most politicians want to be re-elected and not kicked out of office. They are therefore usually open to influence and persuasion from the electorate. They will change their minds or act in a certain way if they think it is popular among voters.

It is a journalist's job to act as a bridge between members of the public and politicians. But in order to do this effectively – you need to understand how bills become law.

HOW BILLS BECOME LAW

We all know what the law is. Once a law has been passed we all have to obey it or face the consequences. Following the law is mandatory – there is no choice. It is therefore essential that all laws are workable and benefit the country. In order to achieve this, legislation has to go through several stages of scrutiny and approval. A bill is a piece of draft legislation which has not yet been fully scrutinized and approved of by members of the Majlis. Once it has gone through all the stages it becomes law.

1. The government or any member of the Majlis can introduce a bill. It is submitted to the Secretariat for its first reading. Its first reading is decided by the Speaker of the Majlis. The title of the bill and the member who introduced is announced. If the bill comes from a private member it needs to be seconded by a supporter. A date for the second reading will be announced. Copies of the bill will be distributed to the media. At this stage, it might be worth doing some research on the bill.
2. At the second reading, the bill is open for debate by the Majlis. At this stage, it may be worth covering the debate. If the bill is rejected by the Majlis it will go no further.
3. If the bill is accepted, the Majlis votes on which committee should scrutinize it. It could be the semi-permanent, the joint committee or the committee of the house itself.
4. The bill is carefully examined by the members. Sometimes expert witnesses are brought in to give advice. The committee members will agree on a draft. This report and draft will be submitted to the Majlis by the Chairperson of the Committee. It is usual for the person who suggested the bill to sit on the committee discussing it.

5. The bill is then available to the Majlis for a third reading. Again, this is another useful time when journalists can cover the story.

HOW A JOURNALIST CAN COVER THE THIRD READING:

Here is a piece of legislation which will affect the lives of people.

- The journalist can cover the debate in the Majlis
- Once the new Constitution is approved they may be able to cover the committee meeting
- They can interview the Chair and members of the Committee
- They can interview Majlis members
- They can talk to members of the public. It is especially important to talk to the ordinary people who will be affected by the possible new legislation
- They can talk to NGOs
- They can talk experts, professional associations

For example, if it is a new piece of legislation proposing that dhonies should have more safety equipment – is this something which dhoni owners can afford or will it put many out of business? Do they want to financial help or additional time in order to kit out their boats with new safety equipment?

The work of journalists can contribute to the public debate. By accurately explaining the new legislation the public can understand how it may affect them and express their views. In a democracy, the public can makes it views known several ways. They all provide the journalist with additional material for a good story.

HOW THE PUBLIC CAN EXPRESS ITS VIEWS ON DRAFT LEGISLATION

- They can petition the member of the Majlis which represents them
- They can contact the media and make their feelings known
- They can lobby through local non-governmental organisations or civil societies
- They can lobby through political parties
- They can hold peaceful public demonstrations or rallies

If the media fairly and accurately reports the public debate, then members of the legislature can make their decisions based on public opinion. This can help the democratic process because it means that the laws are made with the needs and views of the public in mind, rather than just the interests of the politicians.

A BILL COMES LAW

After the third reading, there is another vote in the Majlis. If there has been a lot of media coverage this may change how some Majlis members vote. Sometimes the bill will be returned to the committee again for further work to be done on it, sometimes it will be passed as it is and sometimes it will be passed but with certain amendments. Once it has been passed by the Majlis it goes to the President for ratification.

The President can ratify it within 30 days or he/she can return it to the Majlis for reconsideration on issues they have highlighted.

If the bill was passed by the Majlis at the second stage with a two thirds majority it becomes law automatically. It is treated as if it has been ratified. Otherwise for a law to be passed it has to have 51% approval.

Currently, if after 30 days the President does not return the bill or ratify it – it is deemed ratified anyway. Please check and see if this is still the case.

For a journalist, the story is best at the second or third stage it is read. It is more interesting and more important for the public to know about a change in law or policy at the time when there is still the opportunity for them to have some influence on it. Of course, ratified laws can be repealed and amended but it is better if the changes are made at the consultation stage.

TOP TIP

If you write about controversial and potentially unpopular legislation you will have a story which everyone wants to hear.

UNDERSTANDING POLICIES

Make sure you understand policies and bills progressing through the Majlis. They may be expressed in complicated or technical language. Don't repeat this. Your job is to explain the policies to your readers or audience in a way that they can understand. You must do this using straightforward language. Explain technical terms. Make clear how the new policies may affect their lives.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE AT LOCAL LEVEL

Not all decisions are taken at national level. Who is responsible for water, electricity and waste disposal?

Know the names and roles of all the Athol and Island Chiefs. If you are an Athol reporter you should also know all the members of the Island Development Committees.

Within the Municipality of Male who is responsible for what? Who is elected to represent the capital?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A POLITICIAN AND A CIVIL SERVANT

A politician is elected to office in an election. Or, they seek to be elected to office in an election. They are often leading members of a political party although they may also be independent and not belong to any political party or movement

Civil servants work for either national or local government. They are appointed and promoted according to their ability and experience rather than because of their political affiliations. Civil servants are a bit like journalists in that their political allegiances should be kept personal rather than made public.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR JOURNALISTS?

- Both politicians and civil servants can give you reliable and useful information about policies and other issues affecting national and local government
- Check that the civil servant you are speaking with has responsibility for that particular area
- Civil servants cannot tell you whether or not they are in favour of a policy because they did not make the decision to implement it. They

may have advised but it is the politician who had the authority to make the final decision

- Civil servants are accountable for how well they have implemented a policy but they are not responsible for the policy itself
- Therefore you cannot hold a civil servant to account in the same way that you can a politician
- A civil servant has not been elected to represent people so cannot be held accountable to the public in the same way that a politician can

POLITICAL PARTIES

The Maldives is a multi-party democracy. Political parties are useful because they enable the electorate to identify a politician with a specific range of policies, values and ideas. For example if you know that politician A is a member of Party X you know what his views are on taxation, capital punishment and law enforcement. Political parties also provide the politician with support: staff, offices, publicity etc. In return, they expect loyalty and obedience to the party line.

WHAT A JOURNALIST SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EACH POLITICAL PARTY

- Official name, logo, colours
- Background history: when did they start and how
- Leadership
- Key members: they may not hold an official post but they might be influential
- Key policies

- Have their policies changed over the years? If so, how and why?
- The constituencies/areas where they have the strongest support
- The constituencies/areas where they have the weakest support
- Their support base. For example some parties appeal more to young people or women
- Has their support grown or declined?
- It may be a small party but does it hold the balance of power? If so, how?
- It may be a small party but does it influence the bigger parties? If so, how?
- What do they need to do to become more successful?

WHAT A JOURNALIST SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MONEY!

A politician cannot do very much without money. They may promise a new harbour or hospital but where is the money coming from? You need to understand basic economics. When a politician tells you that the rates of thalassemia have gone down are you able to examine the statistics he/she is quoting and determine whether or not this is true?

Fiscal Policy

Know how the Maldives raises money for itself:

- How is tax raised from individuals?
- Who is pays the most? Who pays the least?
- How is tax raised from businesses?
- From the fishing industry? From the tourist resorts?

- How much money comes from indirect taxation? This is tax which is added to some goods or services. In many countries luxury products like cars are heavily taxed or eating out in a restaurant
- Do some people or organisations have ways of avoiding pay tax – both legal and illegally. How does this affect the economy?

Expenditure Policy

- How does the government spend money?
- What are the government's priorities?
- Do the other political parties have any alternative policies?

ECONOMIC POLICIES

- What sort of economy does the Maldives have? Is it one where the government tries to manage it or does it prefer to leave matters to the free market?
- What industries and facilities are owned by the state and which are in private hands? How does the lease system for tourism development on the islands operate?
- The Maldives is economically dependent on tourism. Tourism can be affected by airlines prices, fuel prices and the economies where the tourists come from. Be aware of the global economy too.
- The Maldives is also dependent on fishing. Is the government investing in this industry? Is the licensing system fair?
- The Maldives is still suffering from the effects of the Tsunami. What effect on the economy does international aid have?

- How about corruption? How much money is being lost? Where is it going?

TOP TIP!

If you follow the money – you will always have a terrific story!

HOW TO WRITE A GOOD POLITICAL STORY

What it does NOT need:

- It does not have to be a report of a debate in the Majlis or a committee
- It does not have to involve an announcement or a speech by a politician

It should HAVE:

- It should involve politicians somehow
- It should involve politicians' powers somehow

See how the two following stories differ. The second one is more suited to the sports page while the second one focuses far more on the politics.

Story One

The new football stadium in Male is to be closed until further notice because of worries over the safety of the building. The closure, only six months after it was open means the national team will have nowhere to train. It puts the team's top place in the Asian Football Confederation tournament in jeopardy. Maldivian football fans have been protesting and expressing their anger.

Story Two

Cabinet ministers are facing accusations of corruption and incompetence after it emerged that Male's multi-million dollar football stadium is to be closed because of safety fears. News of the shut-down comes just six months after the stadium was opened to a blaze of publicity on the eve of the election. The closure will add to the opposition's claims that the project was rushed through in order to win votes. Opposition members are calling for an enquiry.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MAJLIS REPORT AND A POLITICAL STORY

PARLIAMENTARY OR MAJLIS REPORTING

You may have to cover a debate in the Majlis. You could write a straightforward account of which member said what. This sort of journalism is parliamentary reporting. It is a bit like football commentary. The football commentator tells the audience who has the ball, who they passed it to and if a goal was scored.

POLITICAL REPORTING

To turn a make a political story you need a more complete picture. You would need background and context. You might need to explain why the members are arguing about a particular issue. Who appears to be winning the argument. This is not the same as giving your opinion. You are not saying who you think is right or wrong. You are like a football commentator at the end of the match saying who you thought played particularly well. A political report is a bit like an end of match report. You not only say who won but also point out the significance of the win, where it places the team in the league. What does it mean for the losing team? Will there be a

change of players? This is not the same as openly supporting one side against another. A football commentator does not do this and political journalist does not reveal which party or politician they support.

TOP TIP!

A good political story lets us know where the real power is and if there has been a shift in power.

HOW TO WRITE A FAIR AND BALANCE POLITICAL REPORT

Balance does not mean giving each side exactly the same air time or space in your paper

Balance means that you give all significant arguments due weight

However, if one side attacks another side – you should offer the right to reply to the party or person who is criticised

Remember your audience has not necessarily followed the whole debate so you need to make the balance of opinion and background clear in your report

You may have to summarise all the main arguments so your audience understands the story properly

Treat all sides fairly. This means giving all sides the opportunity to put their views forward.

TOP TIP!

All sides does not just mean politicians. For a livelier story interview the public

A POLITICAL STORY NEEDS CONTEXT TO BE UNDERSTANDABLE

- Politicians always do things for a reason. This needs to be communicated to your audience for the story to be complete.
- Are they speaking to you privately or at a press conference? What are the political implications of speaking off-the-record to one journalist as opposed to hosting a media event?
- Why are they making this particular announcement now? Is there an election in a couple of weeks? Is there a problem which they are trying to distract the media and public away from? Are they making this speech to impress someone?

What other political parties are saying on the topic:

- What does the public think
- What do other groups think – NGOs, local professional and trade organisations
- Independent experts – international observers, academics, research institutes

TOP TIP!

Your job is to side with the public, not the politicians. You are an advocate of the ordinary man and woman – acting as a bridge to the elected representatives

HOW TO DEAL WITH POLITICIANS

First of all, remember that politicians are human beings too. They feel pressure, they get nervous and they enjoy a joke too.

Second – remember that they have an agenda, which is different to yours. You are both serving your country but you are doing it in different roles and in different ways.

You need politicians to give you stories, information and quotes. Sometimes the best stories are at the politicians expense.

Politicians need journalists in order to communicate with the electorate. In the old days they might spoken to a crowd of people. Nowadays it is more practical to do it through the media, especially in a country like the Maldives which is spread out across hundreds of miles/kilometres.

TOP TIP!

Politicians need journalists. The politicians need journalists to get their messages across to the public

MAKE SURE YOU ARE CLEAR ABOUT THE TERMS ON WHICH YOU ARE SPEAKING

It is best to have as much as possible on-the-record. In another words you are able to name the politician you have spoken with and quote them directly. For example, “Politician X says he thinks the plans for a new hospital for Island B will not work.” Naming your source gives your story greater credibility.

However, sometimes politicians and other sources do not want to be identified. There are many reasons for this. Sometimes it is because they are afraid of the consequences. They may be threatened or attacked. Or, it could be because they want to criticise or cause damage but do not want to be associated with this. Be wary of the politician who hides behind off-the-record because what they are saying is not accurate!

TERMS:

- Off-the-record – means the information is not to be made public nor the speaker identified
- Background only – means you can use the information for “background context” but not as the focus of your story and without quotes
- Deep background – means you can use the information for “background context” but you must be extra vigilant about not identifying the source
- Journalists sometimes quote officials by giving an indication of their position but without revealing their identity. For example, a government source has told me that he has doubts about the new health care system

RESIST THE REQUEST FOR QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE

You will often be asked for a list of questions in advance but resist doing this. If you do, it means you may have difficulty when you want to ask an alternative or follow-up question. The only occasion when this is sensible to do is when you need specific facts, figures or statistics. The person will need time to research this.

It is better to give the interviewee an idea of the areas and topics you want to talk about. They need to be comfortable that this is an area which they have the authority or experience to talk about.

PRESS OFFICERS AND SPIN DOCTORS

In the same way that soft drinks and sweets are sold to us with advertising and branding – so are politicians and their policies.

Press officers and spin doctors want us to believe the politicians and their messages.

The phrase “spin” means to present information in a certain way. Information will be offered to you with “spin.” For example, a press officer may say, “The delay to building a new harbour on island X is because we wanted to make sure all the safety measures are in place.” You could argue that this is putting a positive spin on the delay. Is this true or is it incompetence that has led to the delay?

It is your job as a good political journalist to see through the spin and reveal the truth.

HOW TO DEAL WITH SPIN

- First of all be aware of spin. Recognise when you are being influenced to see things a certain way
- Look behind the message. Context is always important. Why is the announcement being made now? Has some information been left out? Are they putting a positive spin on the message or are they playing down a problem?

- Don't be afraid to challenge a politician who is using spin. Ask them why they are trying to manipulate you and then report it. Politicians sometimes leave out information which makes them look bad or only include those facts which make them look good. It is your job as a journalist to make clear the audience that crucial bits of information have been left out. You should also indicate why it has been left out!
- Be careful about doing deals with politicians. Sometimes you may be offered an exclusive story in return for favourable coverage. Is this honest journalism? Is it something you would be proud to reveal to your readers or audience? Journalists are quick to boast that they have been arrested by the police while covering a protest but they are reluctant to tell their readers that they have been given some money or offered an exclusive story in return for some good publicity for a politician

HOW TO DEAL WITH INDUCEMENTS AND BRIBES

Some politicians and press officers will take matters further and offer you inducements to write a story a certain way. It could be a blatant bribe or it could be exclusive access – joining the President on a foreign tour. Sometimes it is difficult to know where normal hospitality ends (a drink and short eats) and where an inducement begins (dinner at a five star resort)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Establish a firm policy within your media organisation. For example, gifts over the value of \$20 should be refused. This means that you will not offend the giver if you return their “gift.”

If you are offered “exclusive” access be clear that you will retain editorial independence and that you will not offer your copy for advance authorisation or guarantee a certain interpretation of events or positive view.

HOW TO DEAL WITH INTIMIDATION AND THREATS

It is difficult and sometimes even dangerous reporting on politics. Your news organisation may be owned by a political party or have close links to a politician. There may be censorship from above. Sometimes journalists censor themselves for fear of what might happen. Politicians can be linked to businesses and even criminals.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Stay politically neutral. Do not reveal to anyone who you vote for or support. Point out that your political views are personal and do not affect your work
- Follow good journalistic principles. Have a reputation for accuracy, fairness, balance and impartiality
- If you make a mistake – apologise quickly and sincerely
- If you are threatened, it may be possible for you to go to the police or a higher authority. It depends on the current situation. But your best allies are your audience. If you are uncovering a story which is in the public interest, any attempt to harm you will cause backfire on the perpetrator.
- Threats are often just that: attempts to frighten you off a story. If someone really wants to harm you – they won’t waste time threatening you

- Take precautions. Always let people know where you are. Meet unknown or untrustworthy sources in a public place. Vary your routes home and to the office. Avoid unlit and empty places
- Work with other journalists – both in your news organisation and beyond to build an environment where free speech is respected and independent journalism is protected. Join with international journalist associations

MAKING REPORTING THE MAJLIS LIVELY

Harry Radcliffe of CBS said, “Too much of what I see is press release broadcasting. You automatically go and get a ministry, then somebody from the opposition. All these people do is give you party political statements. I find that boring and I can’t believe the public learns anything. You already know what the political parties are going to say, and I can’t see where any of that does a damn thing to improve the quality of our understanding.”

Covering debates and meeting is important sometimes but they can often be very boring and have no stories!

TOP TIP!

Look outside the Majlis to make your stories better and more lively. Test what the politicians are saying against the experience of ordinary people or against the expertise of professionals.

Try using the following:

- Vox pop
- Setting up an issue and using real human examples

- Explaining the background and context
- Interrogating politicians about their decision and proposals
- Using professional to test the claims of politicians

SUMMARY

- It is a journalist's duty to hold politicians to account
- Journalists act on behalf of the public scrutinizing those in power
- They report on what is happening in the Majlis so the people of the Maldives know what their elected representatives are doing
- They then question the politicians to make sure that the members of the Majlis and the government are acting in the best interests of the public.
- Journalists cover the issues which are important to Maldivians and then question whether the politicians are responding satisfactorily

TOP TIP!

Enjoy your work. Not everyone has the opportunity to talk to fishermen, students, members of the Majlis and the President – possibly all in one day!

Naomi Goldsmith