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Maldives: Note on the Right to Information Act

The Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) is today launching its Note on the Right to Information (RTI) Act of the Maldives. Originally prepared to support a planned official review of the RTI Act, which may now be on hold, CLD is disseminating the Note in the hope of stimulating further discussion about possible reforms. The RTI Act is already very strong, earning 113 out of a possible total of 150 points on the RTI Rating, putting it in 20th position from among the 138 countries currently assessed there. But there is always room for improvement and the Note by CLD puts forward a number of recommendations to this end.

“CLD welcomed the Maldivian RTI Act from the very beginning as one of the stronger laws globally,” said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of CLD. “But we always support efforts to improve RTI legislation and we hope that this Note helps promote further debate in the Maldives on this issue.”

Some of the key recommendations in the Note include the following:

- All bodies which are owned or controlled by government should fall within the ambit of the Act.
- The time limit for responding to requests should be reduced to ten working days and requesters should not be required to provide their name, address or phone number when making a request.
- The Act should override inconsistent secrecy provisions in other laws, to the extent of the inconsistency, and the exceptions in the Act should be amended to protect only legitimate interests and to include harm tests for all exceptions.
- Public authorities should be required to publish a list of the documents they hold and to ensure that their staff receive appropriate training on RTI.

The Note is available [here](#).

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