

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Official Visit of His Excellency Hayashi Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan to the Maldives

Joint Press Release

30 July 2023

1. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Hayashi Yoshimasa paid an official visit to the Maldives from 29-30 July 2023 on the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives Abdulla Shahid. Minister Hayashi was accompanied by a high-level delegation from Japan.
2. Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid, and Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa, held bilateral discussions today.
3. During the Meeting, Minister Shahid welcomed Minister Hayashi and the delegation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and highlighted the enduring strength of the Maldives-Japan partnership and the close people-to-people engagement and friendship that is the foundation of the relationship.
4. Both Foreign Ministers discussed a whole range of issues in the bilateral and multilateral spheres, including those related to Ukraine as well as Indo-Pacific region, and agreed to continue to work closely together to uphold and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law, and to address shared interests, in further deepening the bilateral ties between the two countries.
5. Both Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen people to people exchanges, including on facilitating ease of travel between the two countries, and in promoting cultural cooperation.
6. On development cooperation, Minister Shahid thanked Minister Hayashi and the Japanese Government for the generous assistance provided to the Maldives over the years, including the construction of the seawall around the Capital City Male', which is the most symbolic assistance provided by Japan.

7. Recalling that Japan have provided technical support for the mechanisation of fishing vessels, Minister Shahid conveyed gratitude to the Government of Japan for the important contribution for the development of the Maldives' fisheries industry. Minister Shahid also underscored that Japan was instrumental in establishing the telecommunications infrastructure in the Maldives, which subsequently contributed immensely to the success of our world-renowned tourism industry.
8. Minister Shahid expressed his appreciation to Minister Hayashi and the Government of Japan for restarting the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) programme, which had been suspended since the COVID-19 pandemic, and also for the ongoing Grassroots Human Security Grant Aid in the Maldives.
9. Minister Hayashi announced the intention to explore and study the possibility of a new project, which will symbolize the bilateral friendship, following the construction of the Sea Wall during the 1990's.
10. Emphasising that the stability and prosperity of the Maldives is intrinsically linked to the peace and security of the Indian Ocean region and vice versa, both Foreign Ministers agreed to work closely to realize a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific", and to strengthen dialogue and interactions, on diplomatic and security cooperation in this context.
11. Minister Shahid also highlighted the significant contributions of Japan through the Human Resource Development Scholarship Programme (JDS) and conveyed gratitude to the Government of Japan for their continuous support and partnership in these critical areas, which have had a profound and positive impact on the development and well-being of the Maldives.
12. Minister Shahid also expressed appreciation for the support rendered by the Government of Japan during his presidency at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Minister Hayashi also congratulated the Maldives on being elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2023-2025.

13. Both Foreign Ministers agreed to work closely together at the United Nations and other international fora, on important issues of mutual interest, and to collaborate closely in addressing global challenges such as climate change.
14. Following the meeting, Minister Shahid and Minister Hayashi witnessed the exchange of Note Verbals between the Government of Maldives and the Government of Japan for the exemption of visa for Diplomatic and Official passports and the Exchange of Notes to provide a grant aid of One Hundred and Twenty Two Million Japanese Yen (approximately USD 1.1million) to the Maldives for the continuation of scholarship opportunities to be offered by the Government of Japan for the fiscal year 2023, under the Japanese Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS).
15. Both Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance the bilateral partnership between the Maldives and Japan, in various fields including economic and development cooperation as well as cooperation in the multilateral fora.