

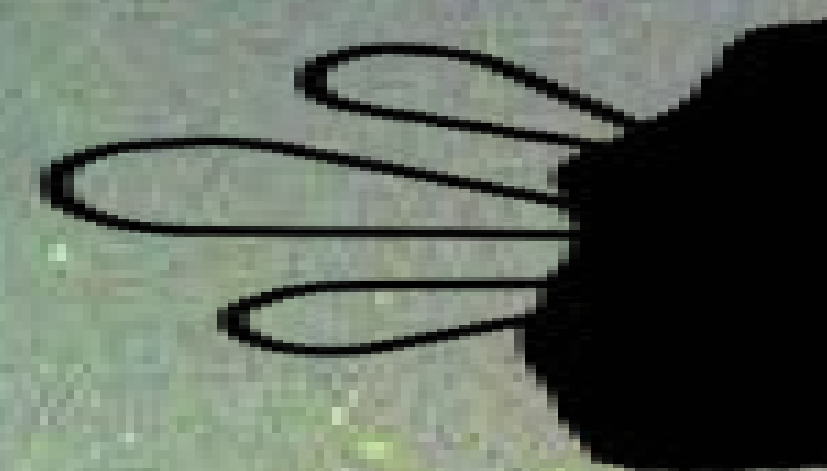
MALDIVES
IGF
2025

youth
MALDIVES
IGF
2025



 Internet Society
Foundation

Forum 2025 Proceedings Report



Maldives Internet Governance Forum
24 - 25 October 2025



Introduction

The Maldives Internet Governance Forum (MvIGF) 2025 served as the Maldives' national multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue on internet governance and digital policy. Held on 24–25 October 2025 at Villa College Maldives, the forum convened stakeholders from government, the private sector, civil society, academia, the technical community, and youth to engage in inclusive discussions on the country's evolving digital ecosystem.

MvIGF 2025 was delivered through an onsite and online hybrid format, combining physical and virtual participation to enhance accessibility across the country's geographically dispersed islands. The forum featured interactive sessions, panels, and facilitated discussions, encouraging active engagement and knowledge exchange. A choice-driven participation model allowed participants to join sessions aligned with their interests and expertise, fostering cross-sector interaction and deeper thematic dialogue.

A key development in 2025 was the introduction of the Youth Internet Governance Forum Maldives as a new engagement area within the national IGF framework. While the National IGF remained the core policy dialogue platform, the Youth IGF created dedicated space for adolescents and young people to contribute their perspectives on digital inclusion, online safety, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies. The youth sessions were designed and co-created with young people, ensuring meaningful participation and ownership. Youth perspectives from these discussions fed into broader national dialogue, strengthening intergenerational engagement.

Discussions across the forum addressed priority issues including digital inclusion, digital resilience, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, data protection and privacy, platform integrity, and the role of councils in the digital era. Participants highlighted the Maldives' unique island geography, the importance of strong digital connectivity, and the growing impact of digital technologies on daily life and the broader economy.

Beyond convening dialogue, MvIGF 2025 placed strong emphasis on documentation and continuity. Key insights and emerging priorities were systematically recorded to inform policymakers, stakeholders, and future initiatives, supporting evidence-informed decision-making and ensuring that outcomes extend beyond the event itself.

By strengthening the National IGF platform, introducing the Youth IGF as a new engagement area, and adopting an inclusive hybrid and interactive format, MvIGF 2025 reinforced its role as a cornerstone for multi-stakeholder collaboration on digital governance. The forum strengthened cross-sector networks and laid a foundation for future IGFs and continued engagement toward an inclusive, resilient, and future-ready digital ecosystem in the Maldives.

Contents

Introduction2

About the Maldives IGF.....4

Background and Progress4

mvIGF 2025 Themes5

Key Highlights.....6

Theme Highlights7

Calls to Action8

 For Government & Policymakers8

 For Private Sector & Technical Community.....9

 For Civil Society & Academia10

mvIGF 2025 Agenda 11

Opening Ceremony 13

 Welcome Remarks13

 Keynote Address by the Chief Guest, Dr. Kinaanath . 14

 Acknowledgements15

Session Proceedings 16

 The Future of Networks and Telecommunications in the Maldives..... 18

 Pushing Forward: Declaring Robotics as a Sport..... 21

 Is AI in Social Media Doing More Harm Than Good to Youth?..... 24

 Youth Voices for Digital Governance27

 Bridging Generations: Navigating Online Safety, Privacy, and Digital Well-being in the Maldives..... 30

 Building Digital-Ready Councils: Bridging Capacity and Policy Gaps 33

 From Archives to Audience: A Case Study in Digital Preservation for Dhivehi Language Content 36

 Civil Society’s Role in Shaping Digitalization 39

 Journey to Digitalization of All Citizen-Centric Services by 2027 42

 How Generative AI Accelerates Professional Learning to Unlock New Revenue Streams and Income Opportunities 45

 The Need for Data Protection Bill in Maldives Harmonizing Tech Legislation with Current Global Standards 48

 From Tourism to Technology: AI as Maldives’ Second Economic Pillar51

 Cybercrime on Our Shores: Case Studies from the Maldives..... 54

 Basic Cybersecurity for Internal Infrastructure:The Need for SIEM Solutions for Every Organisation57

 The Elderly Lens: Inclusion in a Digital Nation..... 60

 Governance of Digital Higher Education in Small Island States: Challenges and Pathways 63

 Digital Transformation: Navigating the Crossroads for Maldives 2045..... 66

 Defying the Unit of Economics: Democratizing AI for Dhivehi and Beyond 69

 Navigating Policy and Innovation: Startup Voices in the Digital Economy72

 Data Sharing and Innovation: Strategies for the Future . . .75

 From Policy to Practice: Oversight of National Digital Transformation78

 Opportunities and Challenges in Developing Local AI Solutions81

 Beyond Play: Maldivian Gaming Scene 84

Useful Links87



About the Maldives IGF

The Maldives Internet Governance Forum (Maldives IGF) is a national regional initiative that brings together the technical community, civil society, academia, private sector, government institutions, and policymakers for open and inclusive dialogue on Internet governance and the digital future of the Maldives.

Established in 2022, the Maldives IGF is part of the global Internet Governance Forum ecosystem convened by the United Nations. It serves as a neutral, collaborative platform for discussing how Internet and digital technologies can be governed and developed to promote trust, inclusion, innovation, and rights-based digital development.

The Maldives IGF operates as a National Regional Initiative (NRI) led by an Executive Committee composed of representatives from government, the private sector, academia, the technical community, and civil society. The Executive Committee is supported by an Advisory Committee, which provides strategic guidance on the direction and priorities of the forum.

Background and Progress

Since its inception, the Maldives IGF has been successfully conducted annually from 2023 to 2025, adopting a multi-stakeholder approach that reflects the diversity of voices in the country's digital ecosystem.

Each edition has provided a meaningful platform for participants to voice critical perspectives on Internet policy, digital inclusion, and innovation. The forum has become a trusted national space for identifying opportunities, discussing challenges, and sharing knowledge on the evolving Internet landscape.

Comprehensive reports and outcomes of past forums are publicly available at the Maldives IGF website — <https://maldivesigf.mv>.

mvIGF 2025

Themes

Building Islands of Trust: Actions for Digital Resilience and Security

In an increasingly digital world, small nations like the Maldives face unique challenges and opportunities in building trust and resilience within their digital infrastructures. This theme explores actionable steps toward strengthening digital security, fostering a culture of trust, and ensuring resilient systems that are both secure and inclusive. It focuses on practical strategies, policies, and technological solutions that can be implemented to safeguard digital environments, protect citizens' privacy, and build confidence in digital systems.

Building Future-Ready Governance: Enabling a Digital Nation

As the Maldives embraces its digital future, it's essential to transform governance structures to support this evolution. This theme focuses on actionable steps to modernize the country's digital governance, enhance infrastructure, and adapt to emerging technologies. The goal is to ensure that governance systems are scalable, efficient, and inclusive, enabling the Maldives to thrive in the digital age while remaining resilient to global changes.

Bridging Digital Divides: Harnessing AI for Inclusive Access

This theme focuses on building a transformative future by leveraging emerging technologies and innovative solutions. The goal is to explore how these technologies can reshape industries, drive economic growth, and address societal challenges, especially in small nations like the Maldives. It emphasizes practical strategies for integrating these technologies into existing systems to accelerate digital transformation and foster a culture of innovation.

Building a Future of Innovation: Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Transformation

This theme focuses on using AI and digital technologies to bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusive access for all, particularly marginalized communities. It explores how AI, along with innovative digital solutions, can address challenges such as access to education, healthcare, financial services, and information for underserved populations. The goal is to discuss actionable solutions that promote digital inclusion, empowering individuals in both rural and urban areas to fully participate in the digital economy and society.

Key Highlights



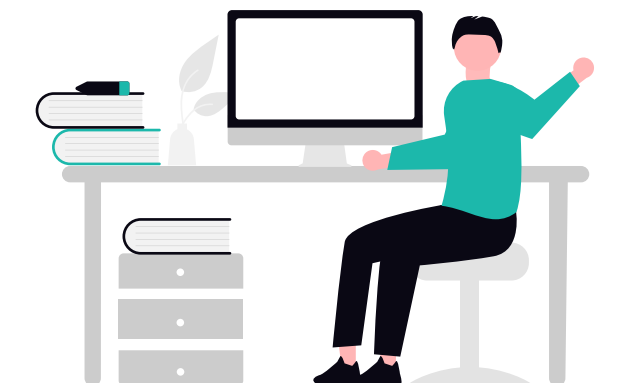
23

SESSIONS



73

PANELISTS & SPEAKERS



306

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS



112

YOUTH IGF PARTICIPANTS

Theme Highlights

Building Islands of Trust: Actions for Digital Resilience and Security

- 1 Legislative Urgency:** Strong call to expedite the Data Protection Bill to safeguard citizen privacy and curb data misuse.
- 2 Combating Cybercrime:** Addressing rising online scams and financial fraud (over MVR 16 million lost) through better reporting and public awareness.
- 3 Infrastructure Security:** Mandating SIEM solutions and “Zero Trust” principles for internal networks to protect critical infrastructure.
- 4 Consumer Safety:** Enhancing collaboration between banks and law enforcement to recover funds and protect victims of digital fraud.

Building Future-Ready Governance: Enabling a Digital Nation

- 1 Maldives 2.0:** The strategic push to fully digitalize citizen-centric public services by 2027.
- 2 Council Digitalization:** Harmonizing policies to support local councils, ensuring decentralized governance remains efficient and scalable.
- 3 Parliamentary Oversight:** Increasing the technical literacy of MPs to ensure effective scrutiny of digital budgets and legislation.
- 4 Data Interoperability:** Establishing a National Data Exchange to reduce duplication and enable secure data sharing between agencies.

Bridging Digital Divides: Harnessing AI for Inclusive Access

- 1 Elderly Inclusion:** Mandating assisted service points and Dhivehi interfaces to prevent the digital exclusion of seniors.
- 2 Dhivehi-First AI:** Developing local language models (LLMs) to ensure AI tools are accessible to the wider population.
- 3 Civil Society Role:** Ensuring CSOs have a seat at the design table to advocate for persons with disabilities and migrant workers.
- 4 Digital Preservation:** Digitizing Dhivehi content (books, magazines) into searchable formats to preserve cultural heritage for future generations.

Building a Future of Innovation: Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Transformation

- 1 AI as an Economic Pillar:** Positioning AI alongside tourism to diversify the economy, with a focus on local product creation.
- 2 Youth & Gaming:** Transforming the gaming scene from a hobby into a professional ecosystem with recognized career pathways.
- 3 Robotics as a Sport:** Formally recognizing robotics to foster STEM skills, discipline, and national pride among youth.
- 4 Startup Ecosystem:** Creating regulatory sandboxes and simplified licensing to encourage digital entrepreneurship.

Calls to Action

For Government & Policymakers

1 Expedite Critical Legislation:

- Pass the Data Protection Bill and Cybersecurity Act immediately to safeguard privacy and digital trust.
- Enact frameworks for Digital Identity and AI Governance to support the Maldives 2.0 vision.

2 Strengthen Infrastructure & Access:

- Conduct a national telecommunications assessment to identify redundancies and resilience gaps.
- Mandate accessibility standards (Dhivehi language & disability-friendly features) for all public digital platforms.

3 Modernize Governance:

- Harmonize policies for Local Council digitalization to ensure consistent service delivery across islands.
- Establish a National Data Exchange platform to enable secure interoperability between agencies.
- Invest in sustained capacity-building to strengthen digital, cybersecurity, data, and AI expertise nationwide.

4 Inclusive and Participatory Digital Governance

- Establish formal mechanisms to integrate youth perspectives into digital policy and strategy development.
- Adopt participatory design approaches that involve civil society and user groups in public digital service development.

5 Empower Future Generations:

- Formally recognize Robotics as a Sport and integrate esports/AI into national education curricula.

Calls to Action

For Private Sector & Technical Community

1 Elevate Cybersecurity Standards:

- Adopt Zero Trust architecture and SIEM solutions for internal infrastructure.
- Improve data security and regular security audits as business-as-usual practices.
- Collaborate with regulators and government to strengthen network resilience, redundancy, and service continuity across all regions.

2 Drive Local Innovation:

- Invest in Dhivehi-first AI models and open APIs to local developers to reduce reliance on foreign tech.
- Support the gaming ecosystem by investing in local low-latency servers and sponsoring tournaments.

3 Commit to Inclusive Design:

- Collaborate with government, civil society, and academia to support inclusive innovation, responsible technology adoption, and locally relevant digital solutions.
- Ensure all digital products are multilingual and simplified navigation for elderly and people with disabilities.
- Create employment pathways for women and youth in technical roles.

Calls to Action

For Civil Society & Academia

1 Champion Digital Rights & Literacy:

- Actively engage in the co-design, testing, and evaluation of digital services and solutions, ensuring accessibility, usability, and protection of rights.
- Lead intergenerational dialogues to bridge the digital gap between youth and parents/elderly.
- Conduct scam awareness and digital safety programs specifically for seniors and migrant workers.

2 Support Evidence-Based Policy:

- Collaborate with the government to create Dhivehi benchmark datasets for AI research.
- Advocate for transparency in how public data and algorithms are utilized.
- Generate research, evidence, and community insights to inform policy development and implementation.

3 Foster Community Resilience:

- Create safe online spaces and mentorship networks for women and gamers.
- Provide “assisted service” support at the community level to help non-digital natives access e-services.

mvlGF 2025 Agenda

Day 1 – 24th October 2025				
4:00 – 4:30 PM	Opening Ceremony	Opening Ceremony	Maldives IGF	Ocean View Hall
4:30 – 5:15 PM	Session 1	The Future of Networks and Telecommunications in the Maldives	Maldives IGF	Ocean View Hall
8:00 – 8:10 PM	Session 2 Youth IGF	Pushing Forward: Declaring Robotics as a Sport	First Global Team Maldives	Ocean View Hall
8:20 – 8:50 PM	Session 3 Youth IGF	Is AI in Social Media Doing More Harm Than Good to Youth?	Women in Tech Maldives	Ocean View Hall
9:00 – 9:30 PM	Session 4 Youth IGF	Youth Voices for Digital Governance	Maldives IGF	Ocean View Hall
9:40 – 10:15 PM	Session 5 Youth IGF	Bridging Generations: Navigating Online Safety, Privacy, and Digital Well-being in the Maldives	Maldives Girl Guides Association	Ocean View Hall
9:00 – 9:30 PM	Session 6	Building Digital-Ready Councils: Bridging Capacity and Policy Gaps	Local Councils Association	Online

Day 1

Day 2 – 25th October 2025 Morning Session		Day 2 – 25th October 2025 Afternoon Session		
9:00 – 9:10 AM	Session 21	From Archives to Audience: A Case Study in Digital Preservation for Dhivehi Language Content	<i>Xylam Tech</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
9:20 – 9:50 AM	Session 8	Civil Society's Role in Shaping Digitalization	<i>CSO Network Maldives</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
10:00 – 10:10 AM	Session 10	Journey to Digitalization of All Citizen-Centric Services by 2027	<i>MindCo</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
10:00 – 10:45 AM	Session 9	How Generative AI Accelerates Professional Learning to Unlock New Revenue Streams and Income Opportunities	<i>AI Consulting</i>	<i>Online</i>
10:40 – 11:25 AM	Session 11	Digital Transformation: Navigating the Crossroads for Maldives 2045	<i>Nexia Maldives</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
11:00 – 11:30 AM	Session 12	The Need for Data Protection Bill in Maldives	<i>Fishle</i>	<i>Online</i>
11:35 – 11:45 AM	Session 13	From Tourism to Technology: AI as Maldives' Second Economic Pillar	<i>Ikram Hassan</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
12:00 – 01:00 PM		BREAK		

Day 2 – 25th October 2025 Morning Session		Day 2 – 25th October 2025 Afternoon Session		
1:00 – 1:20 PM	Session 14	Cybercrime on Our Shores: Case Studies from the Maldives	<i>Maldives Police Service</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
1:30 – 2:15 PM	Session 15	Basic Cybersecurity for Internal Infrastructure: The Need for SIEM Solutions for Every Organisation	<i>Maldives Police Service</i>	<i>Room – 1</i>
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Session 16	The Elderly Lens: Inclusion in a Digital Nation	<i>Women in Tech Maldives</i>	<i>Room – 2</i>
2:20 – 3:05 PM	Session 17	Governance of Digital Higher Education in Small Island States: Challenges and Pathways	<i>Villa College</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
3:15 – 3:25 PM	Session 18	Defying the Unit of Economics: Democratizing AI for Dhivehi and Beyond	<i>Synetecs</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
3:35 – 4:20 PM	Session 19	Navigating Policy and Innovation: Startup Voices in the Digital Economy	<i>SparkHub</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
3:35 – 4:20 PM	Session 24	Data sharing and innovation: Strategies for the Future	<i>NCIT</i>	<i>Room – 2</i>
4:05 – 4:50 PM	Session 20	From Policy to Practice: Oversight of National Digital Transformation - Parliamentary	<i>Maldives IGF</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
5:00 – 5:10 PM	Session 7	Opportunities and Challenges in Developing Local AI Solutions	<i>DhivehiGPT</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>
5:15 – 6:00 PM	Session 22	Beyond Play: Maldivian Gaming Scene	<i>Gaming Community</i>	<i>Online</i>
6:00 – 6:30 PM	Closing Ceremony	Closing Ceremony	<i>Maldives IGF</i>	<i>Ocean View Hall</i>

Day 2

Opening Ceremony

Welcome Remarks



Nahza Ibrahim, President of Women in Tech Maldives and Executive Committee Member of the NRI for the Maldives Internet Governance Forum, delivered the welcome remarks at the opening of the Forum, emphasizing the importance of inclusive dialogue and collective responsibility in shaping the digital future of the Maldives.

In her address, Ms. Ibrahim highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue in internet governance, noting that the internet and digital technologies are now essential to everyday life. She emphasized that everyone has the right to participate in conversations that shape the digital space and stressed the need for open, safe, and accessible platforms for meaningful engagement on internet-related issues.

She placed strong emphasis on the active involvement of youth in the design and delivery of the Youth Internet Governance Forum, highlighting that the youth track was co-created with young people. Youth voices and leadership played a central role in shaping the agenda, discussions, and priorities, reinforcing the importance of empowering young people as contributors to digital policy and governance processes.

Addressing emerging technologies, she underscored the growing impact of artificial intelligence on daily life and the broader economy, noting that AI is already influencing how people work, learn, communicate, and access services. She

emphasized that discussions around AI must be inclusive, ethical, and forward-looking, particularly in relation to skills development, livelihoods, innovation, and economic transformation, making AI a key theme across the forum.

She warmly welcomed all speakers, participants, and stakeholders, expressing appreciation for their interest, commitment, and active engagement, which contributed to the success of the Forum.

Ms. Ibrahim expressed sincere gratitude to the Internet Society Foundation for their grant support, which made the hosting of the Maldives IGF possible, and briefly highlighted the Foundation's global role in supporting open, secure, and inclusive internet ecosystems. She also thanked Villa College for their partnership in hosting the event, and Dhiraagu for supporting the Forum with reliable internet connectivity.

In closing, Ms. Ibrahim highlighted the role of Women in Tech Maldives as the Secretariat of the Maldives IGF, reaffirming the team's commitment to ensuring that the voices, discussions, and insights from the Forum are meaningfully documented and shared with relevant stakeholders and decision-makers, contributing to inclusive and future-ready digital governance in the Maldives.

Keynote Address by the Chief Guest, Dr. Kinaanath



Mohamed Kinaanath, State Minister for Homeland Security and Technology and Head of the National Centre for Information Technology (NCIT), delivered the keynote address at the opening of the Maldives Internet Governance Forum (MvIGF), emphasizing the importance of inclusive, ethical, and human-centred digital transformation in the Maldives.

In his address, Dr. Kinaanath described the Internet Governance Forum as a “beautiful example of multi-stakeholder collaboration and open dialogue,” highlighting the importance of bringing together government, the private sector, civil society, academia, youth, and the technical community to collectively shape the country’s digital future. He noted that internet governance goes beyond infrastructure and regulation, and must ultimately serve people, trust, and societal well-being.

He acknowledged the strong foundation of the Maldives’ telecommunications sector, highlighting the country’s robust digital infrastructure, wide broadband connectivity, and high levels of internet penetration across the islands. He noted that these strengths place the Maldives in a strong position to advance digital services and innovation, while also emphasizing that infrastructure alone is not enough without inclusive policies and responsible governance.

A key focus of his keynote was the government’s Maldives 2.0 initiative, which outlines a national vision for digital transformation aimed at improving public service delivery, strengthening governance systems, and expanding digital access nationwide. He emphasized that technology-driven transformation must be inclusive by design and responsive to the diverse needs of communities.

Dr. Kinaanath also highlighted the Maldives’ progress in preparing for emerging technologies, noting with pride that the country is the only nation in the region to have completed a national AI Readiness Assessment. He stressed that readiness extends beyond technical capability to include strong governance frameworks, ethical safeguards, skills development, and public awareness.

Addressing digital inclusion, he referred to recent research insights showing that while women in the Maldives demonstrate high levels of internet usage, they remain under-represented in digital service design and technology development. He emphasized the importance of moving beyond access to ensure that women are actively involved in shaping digital products, platforms, and policies.

Throughout his address, Dr. Kinaanath underscored the role of education, research, and youth engagement in guiding responsible digital growth. He encouraged stronger collaboration with academic and research institutions to inform policy development, particularly in relation to emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

He concluded by reaffirming that sustainable digital progress depends on shared responsibility and continued multi-stakeholder cooperation, principles that lie at the heart of the Internet Governance Forum, and called for collective action to build a secure, inclusive, and future-ready digital Maldives.



Acknowledgements

Afrah Ismail, Executive Committee Member of the National and Regional Initiatives (NRI) for the Maldives Internet Governance Forum, delivered the vote of thanks at the opening of the Forum. In his remarks, he warmly welcomed participants and expressed sincere appreciation to all individuals and organizations who contributed to making the Forum possible.

He extended a heartfelt thank you to Women in Tech Maldives for continuing to serve as the IGF Secretariat, recognizing their leadership and sustained efforts in creating inclusive and meaningful spaces for dialogue on the Maldives' digital future.

Mr. Afrah expressed sincere gratitude to the Internet Society Foundation for their grant support, which made the hosting of the Maldives IGF possible. He also briefly highlighted the

Foundation's global role in supporting open, secure, and inclusive internet ecosystems. He thanked Villa College for their partnership in hosting the event and acknowledged Dhiraagu for supporting the Forum with reliable internet connectivity, as well as for its continued commitment to advancing digital connectivity in the Maldives.

He also thanked the chief guest, panelists, and all participants, including tech industry leaders, innovators, civil society representatives, and attendees, for their presence and active engagement. He noted that their voices, perspectives, and ideas were essential in shaping conversations on internet governance and the wider digital governance landscape in the Maldives.

Mr. Afrah highlighted a key milestone achieved during the year—the launch of the first Youth Internet Governance Forum in the Maldives. He expressed appreciation to the young people who played an active role in making it possible and encouraged participants to attend the youth sessions later in the program to hear from the next generation of digital leaders.

He concluded by encouraging discussions to proceed in a spirit of openness, collaboration, and shared responsibility, working collectively to shape the internet the Maldives aspires to build.

Session Proceedings

Panel Discussion

The Future of Networks and Telecommunications in the Maldives



Aminath Shiufa
Secretary General
Women in Tech
Maldives
(Moderator)



Abdulla Samir
President, Maldives
Information
Communication
Technology Alliance



Mausoom Abdullah
Senior Engineer
Network, Security, and
IT Infrastructure Fenaka
Corporation Ltd



**Aishath Ashna -
Abdul Rasheed**
NOC Technician
ROL



Zulaikha Ibrahim
Deputy Director
General
Communications
Authority of Maldives

The Future of Networks and Telecommunications in the Maldives

Panel Discussion by the Maldives IGF

SESSION SUMMARY

This session examined the future of telecommunications and network infrastructure in the Maldives, emphasizing its critical role in enabling digital transformation, national resilience, and inclusive digital access. Discussions focused on emerging technologies such as subsea fiber connectivity, satellite systems, 5G deployment, and AI-driven network management, while addressing the unique challenges posed by the country's dispersed island geography and exposure to climate-related risks.

Panelists reflected on progress made in nationwide connectivity and mobile penetration, alongside persistent challenges related to affordability, infrastructure resilience, cybersecurity preparedness, and coordination between public institutions and private service providers. The session underscored the importance of stronger policy frameworks, enhanced technical capacity, and sustained collaboration among government, regulators, telecom operators, and the technical community to ensure secure, reliable, and resilient connectivity nationwide.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Nationwide broadband coverage and high mobile penetration across all inhabited islands represent a significant policy and infrastructure achievement despite geographical constraints.
- 2 Affordability remains a key concern, requiring continued policy attention to ensure equitable access as digital services and dependency increase.
- 3 There is a critical shortage of professionals with deep expertise in network infrastructure, vulnerability assessment, and resilience planning, limiting effective management and future-proofing.
- 4 Multiple government and institutional network infrastructures exist, but limited visibility into their purpose, interconnectivity, and utilization results in inefficiencies and duplication.
- 5 Domestic network resilience remains weak, with limited redundancy despite improvements in international connectivity routes and challenges in establishing inter-provider collaboration agreements.
- 6 Cybersecurity readiness is insufficient, and as system integration increases under national digital initiatives, gaps in specialist capacity, protocols, and regulatory frameworks pose significant national risk.

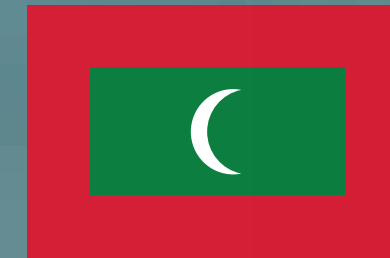
CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Conduct a comprehensive national assessment of telecommunications infrastructure to map assets, identify redundancies, and improve infrastructure utilization.
- 2 Strengthen broadband and affordability policies and accelerate the enactment and implementation of cybersecurity legislation.
- 3 Invest in targeted capacity-building programs to develop expertise in network engineering, resilience planning, and cybersecurity.
- 4 Improve domestic network resilience by expanding local fiber infrastructure, strengthening inter-island connectivity, and adopting resilient network architectures.
- 5 Promote collaboration among service providers on shared resilience strategies, including redundancy planning and emergency response coordination.
- 6 Implement secure data management practices and robust disaster recovery plans across public and private sector institutions.
- 7 Establish formal cross-sector coordination mechanisms to support infrastructure planning, information sharing, and emergency preparedness.





#LightningTalk



PUSHING FORWARD: DECLARING ROBOTICS AS A SPORT

The youth bringing passion,
code, and creativity to the
world stage through
robotics!



#STEMathlete
#RoboticsIsASport

Pushing Forward: Declaring Robotics as a Sport

Lightning Talk by Forloop Coding Academy and FGC Team Maldives

SESSION SUMMARY

This session was delivered as a lightning talk, aimed at reframing robotics from being perceived solely as programmable machines to being recognized as a competitive, team-based STEM sport that fosters innovation, collaboration, and youth development.

The session highlighted the evolution of robotics through the establishment of FIRST in 1989 and the launch of the FIRST Global Challenge in 2017, framing STEM learning as a competitive, collaborative, and globally engaged sport for youth.

Members of the FIRST Global Challenge Team Maldives participated in the session, sharing insights into their team structure, individual roles, preparation process, competition themes, and robot design. The team also reflected on their learning journey, challenges faced, and experiences leading up to international participation.

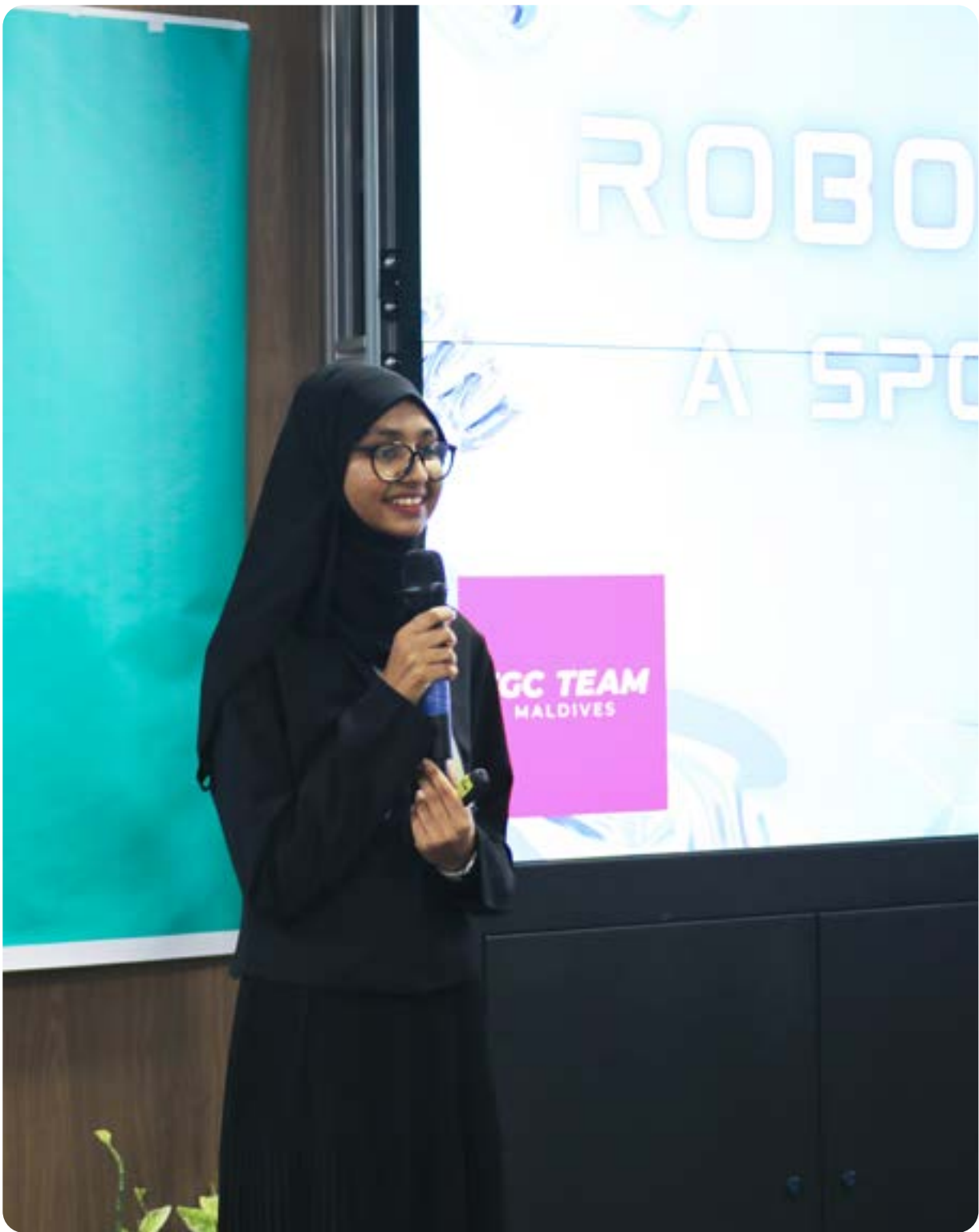
The session concluded with a discussion on why robotics should be formally recognized as a sport, emphasizing its strong parallels with traditional sports in terms of discipline, teamwork, intensive training, and national representation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Competitive robotics reflects core values found in traditional sports, including discipline, teamwork, resilience, strategic thinking, and sustained practice.
- 2 Participation in robotics competitions has a strong link to future careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, contributing to national innovation capacity and workforce readiness.
- 3 Robotics functions as a “sport of the mind,” fostering leadership, creativity, innovation, and critical thinking among youth participants.
- 4 A recognition gap remains, as robotics is not officially acknowledged as a sport in many contexts, limiting access to structured funding, institutional support, and policy backing.
- 5 The sustainability of robotics participation depends on strong community support, mentorship, institutional endorsement, and encouragement from families, schools, and national bodies.

CALL TO ACTION

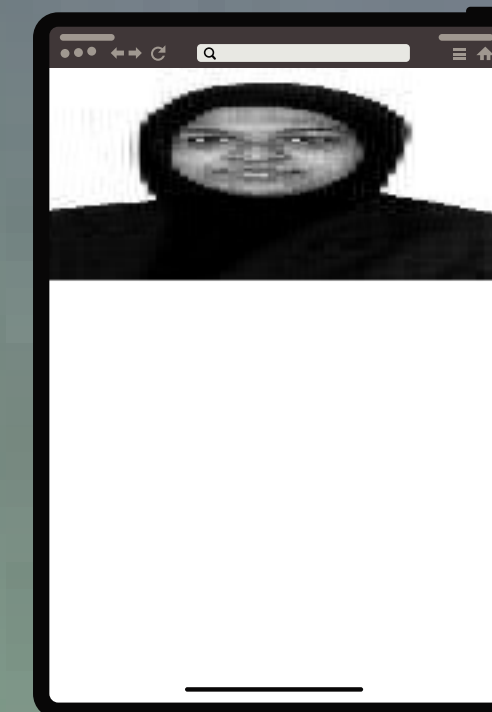
- 1 Recognize competitive robotics as a legitimate STEM sport within national sports, education, and youth development frameworks.
- 2 Provide structured funding, infrastructure, and mentorship support for school- and community-based robotics teams.
- 3 Encourage educational institutions to integrate robotics into STEM curricula and extracurricular programs.
- 4 Build national and community pride around youth representing the Maldives in international robotics competitions.
- 5 Strengthen partnerships among government, private sector, educational institutions, and civil society to sustain a national robotics ecosystem.



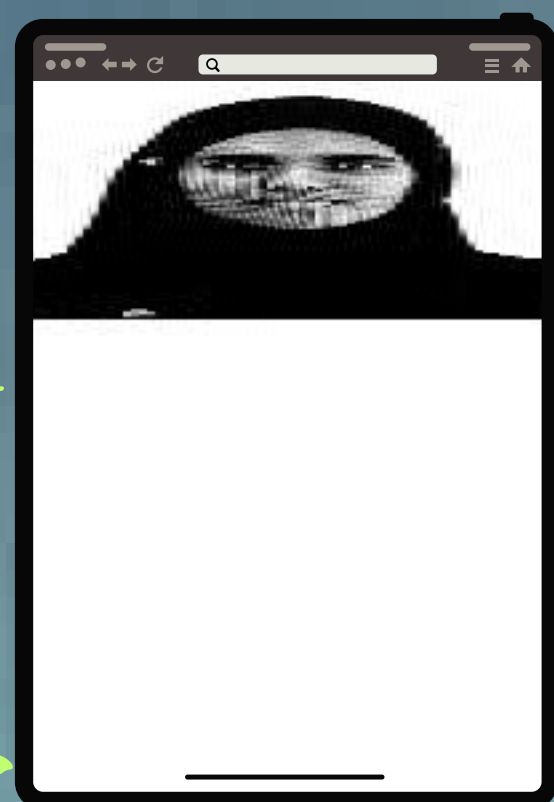
#Debate

Women in Tech Maldives

IS AI IN SOCIAL MEDIA DOING MORE HARM
THAN GOOD TO YOUTH?



Moderator: Mahu



Anna



Yazak



Yaseen



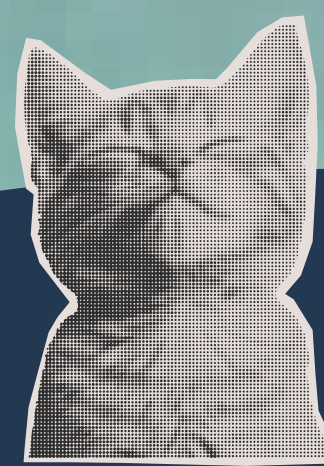
Yumnu



Saifa



Youshau



Is AI in Social Media Doing More Harm Than Good to Youth?

Debate by Women in Tech Maldives

SESSION SUMMARY

This session was conducted as a youth-led debate examining the positive and negative impacts of artificial intelligence in social media within the Maldivian context. The debate explored whether AI-driven platforms do more harm than good for youth, focusing on their influence on mental health, online behavior, access to information, and social connections.

Two youth teams presented structured opening statements and rebuttals, outlining contrasting perspectives on the benefits and risks of AI-powered algorithms. The discussion addressed issues such as algorithmic content curation, misinformation, addictive design patterns, and personalized user experiences. An audience poll was conducted during the session to capture participant perceptions and encourage engagement.

Overall, the session promoted critical thinking, respectful dialogue, and reflection on how AI in social media can be ethically designed, responsibly used, and effectively governed to support youth wellbeing.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Engagement-driven algorithms can unintentionally amplify harmful, misleading, or addictive content if not properly designed or regulated.
- 2 While AI enhances connectivity, access to information, and educational content, it can also contribute to misinformation, excessive screen time, and negative mental health outcomes.
- 3 Ethical design, transparency, and accountability are key factors in determining whether AI in social media has a positive or harmful impact on youth.
- 4 In geographically dispersed contexts such as the Maldives, AI-powered platforms play an important role in improving access to information and digital connectivity.
- 5 AI significantly enhances user experience by tailoring content discovery and search based on individual preferences.
- 6 AI in social media functions as a double-edged tool, with the potential to both connect and socially isolate young people.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Strengthen digital literacy and critical thinking skills among youth to help them navigate AI-driven online environments safely and responsibly.
- 2 Promote informed and inclusive dialogue among policymakers, technology companies, educators, parents, and youth on the governance of AI in social media.
- 3 Develop appropriate oversight and regulatory frameworks that balance innovation, freedom of expression, and protection from harm.
- 4 Use debates, public forums, and youth-led platforms to ensure young voices are actively included in discussions on digital ethics and AI futures.
- 5 Raise awareness among youth about ethical AI use, online privacy, and the risks of oversharing personal information on AI-powered platforms.
- 6 Encourage responsible use of AI technologies through education, community norms, and platform accountability measures.

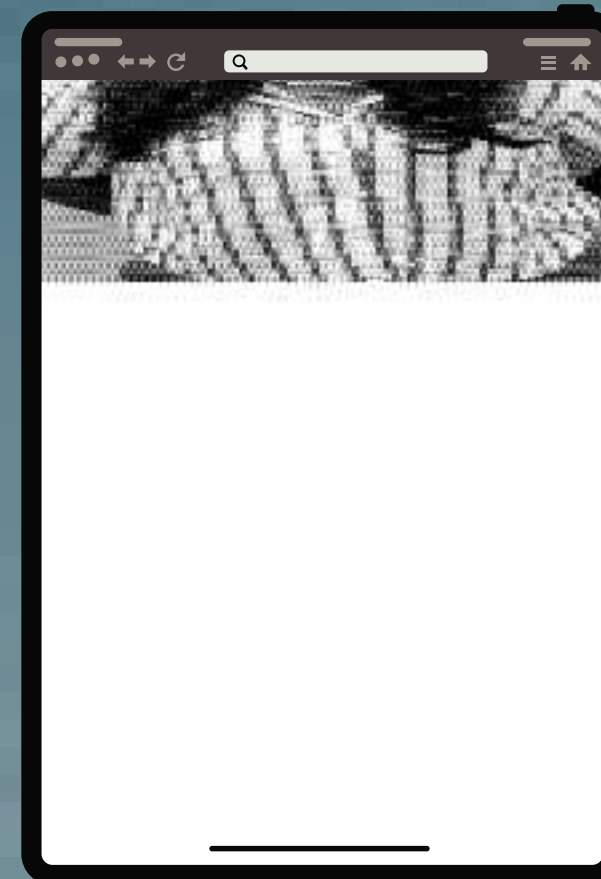


#PanelDiscussion

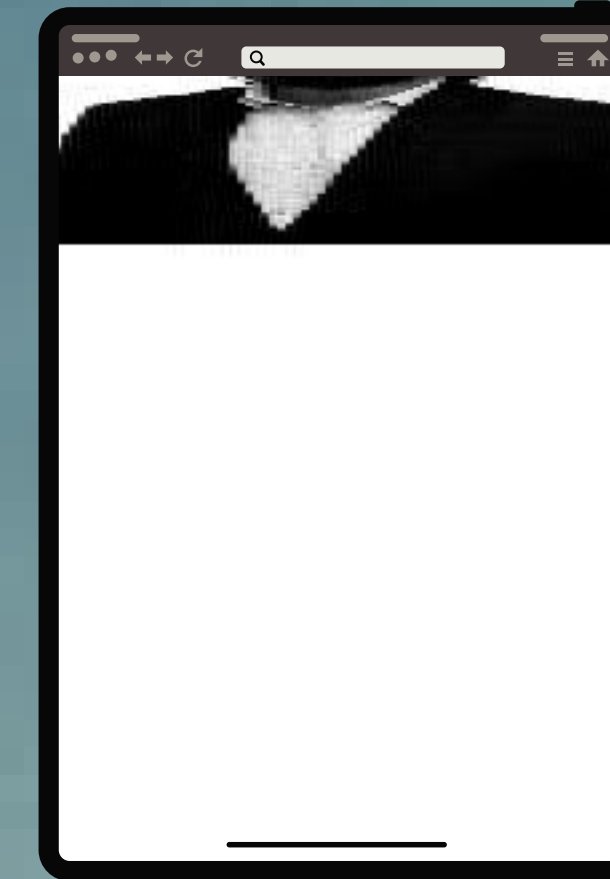
YOUTH VOICES FOR DIGITAL GOVERNANCE



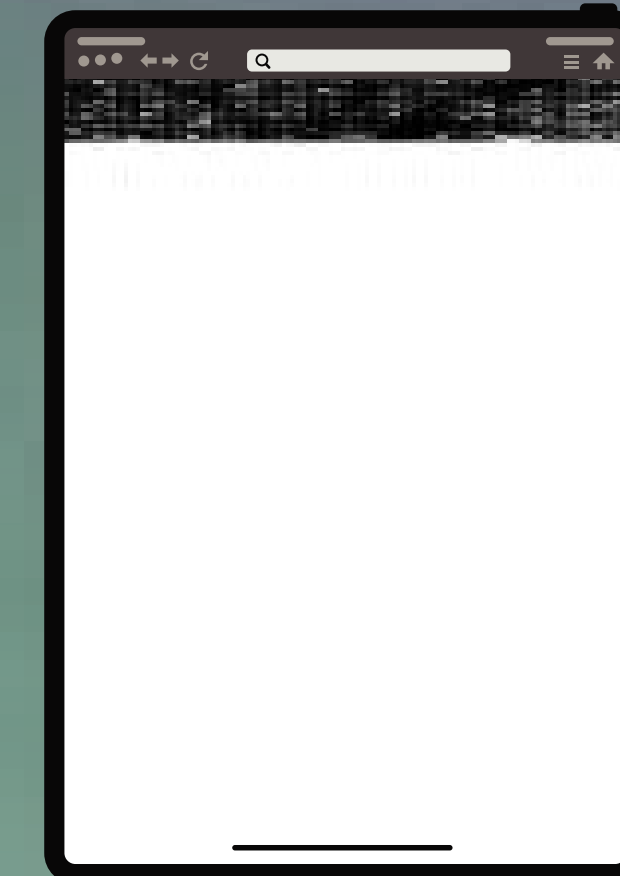
Miuvan
CEO/CFO
Eeezap



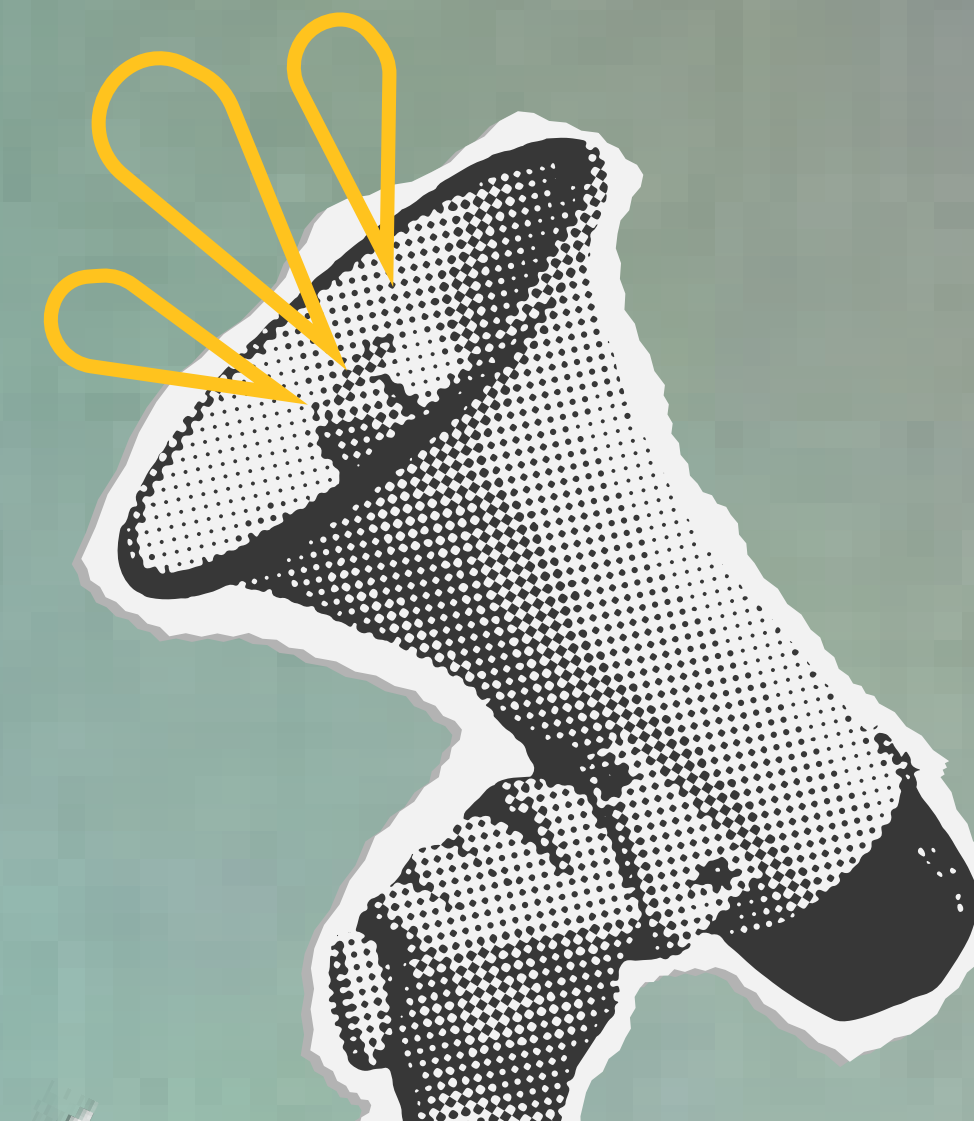
Thyma
Youth Engagement
Officer
UNICEF



Affan
Junior Software
Engineer
Oxiqa



Shimaanath
Cyber Security Professional
Moderator



Youth Voices for Digital Governance

Panel Discussion by the Maldives IGF

SESSION SUMMARY

This session brought together youth panelists to discuss their role in shaping digital governance and contributing to a future-ready digital nation. The discussion explored how young people can meaningfully contribute to policymaking, innovation, and digital inclusion, positioning youth as key stakeholders rather than passive users of digital systems.

Panelists emphasized the importance of digital literacy, inclusive technology design, and sustained collaboration between government, academia, and youth-led initiatives. The session also highlighted challenges to youth participation, including confidence gaps, limited formal engagement mechanisms, and unequal access to opportunities, particularly in non-urban and island contexts.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Youth are major stakeholders in digital governance and should be actively involved in policy development and decision-making processes.
- 2 Youth voices are often overlooked, and many young people lack the confidence or platforms needed to engage meaningfully in governance discussions.
- 3 Stronger legal enforcement and cybersecurity reporting mechanisms are necessary to create a safer digital environment for youth participation.
- 4 Digital literacy is essential for effective engagement in digital governance, and gaps in skills and access risk deepening existing inequalities.
- 5 Youth-led startups and innovation initiatives play a critical role in digital nation-building, but human resource constraints and risk aversion remain key challenges.
- 6 Collaboration between government, academia, and youth technology communities, including those in rural and island contexts, is essential for inclusive and sustainable digital development.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Establish formal mechanisms to include youth voices in digital governance and policy-making, ensuring their contributions are taken seriously.
- 2 Build youth confidence through mentorship programs, leadership platforms, and initiatives that amplify youth perspectives.
- 3 Strengthen legal enforcement frameworks and cybersecurity reporting systems to improve digital safety for youth engagement.
- 4 Encourage cross-sector collaboration between government, educational institutions, and youth technology communities to support inclusive digital governance.
- 5 Create entrepreneur-friendly policies that support youth innovation, including easier access to financing and targeted programs to address human resource limitations.



#FocusGroupDiscussion

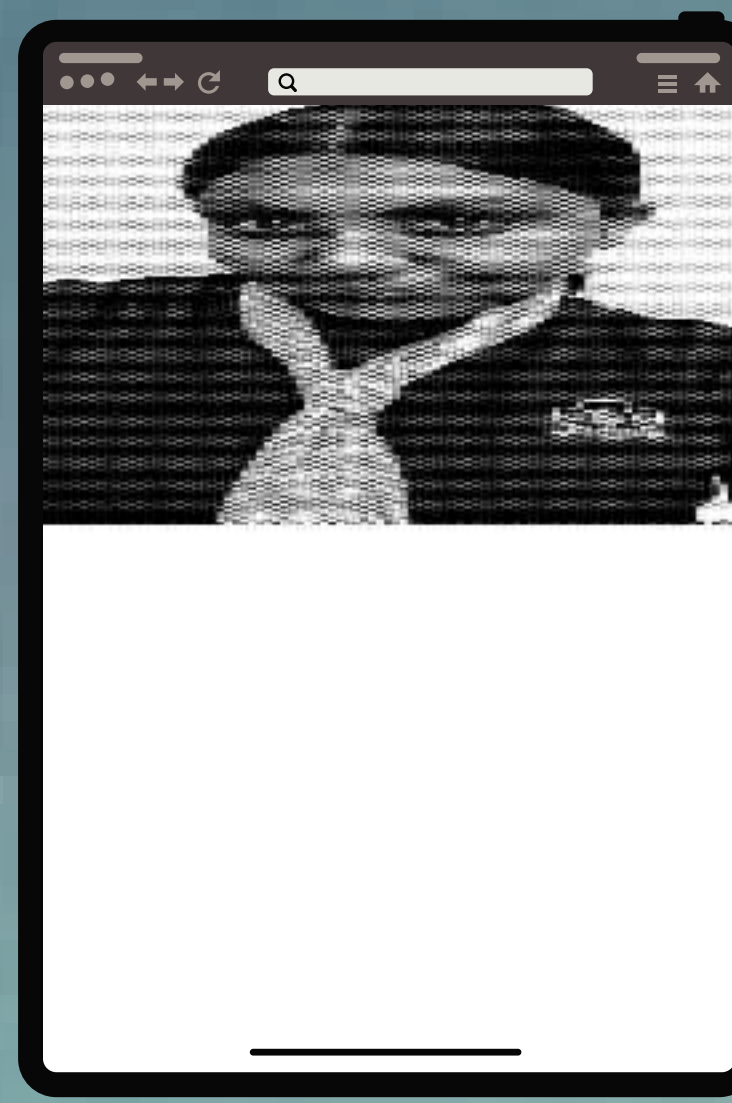
Girl Guide Association of the Maldives

BRIDGING GENERATIONS:

NAVIGATING ONLINE SAFETY, PRIVACY, AND DIGITAL WELL-BEING IN
THE MALDIVES "



Fathmath Yumna Athif
Young Leader
MGGA



Aishath Zainab
Young Leader
MGGA



Bridging Generations: Navigating Online Safety, Privacy, and Digital Well-being in the Maldives

Focus Group Discussion by Girl Guide Association of the Maldives

SESSION SUMMARY

This session was conducted as an interactive focus group discussion with the aim of encouraging youth to express their concerns regarding online safety, privacy, and digital well-being in the Maldives, in order to contribute to the broader goal of improving intergenerational understanding of digital challenges in the Maldives. Through participatory activities, young people reflected on their experiences of digital life, the risks they face online, and the support they need from families, schools, and institutions.

The session highlighted that young people are deeply aware of issues such as cyberbullying, privacy risks, misinformation, and screen-time pressures, and that they actively seek guidance, trust, and understanding from adults in navigating the digital world. These invaluable insights into how the youth view and experience the internet and online privacy form a critical foundation for strengthening intergenerational engagement in future initiatives.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Youth experience the internet as both empowering and risky, balancing social connection, learning, and creativity with concerns around safety, privacy, and mental well-being.
- 2 Online risks such as cyberbullying, misinformation, privacy breaches, and excessive screen time were identified as major concerns affecting digital well-being.
- 3 Lack of awareness and guidance contributes to unsafe online behavior, particularly among younger users.
- 4 There is a clear need for stronger intergenerational dialogue to bridge gaps in digital understanding between youth, parents, and educators.
- 5 Participatory and creative activities are effective tools for enabling young people to articulate their digital concerns and priorities.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Promote regular intergenerational discussions in schools and communities, ensuring parents, teachers, and youth can openly discuss online risks, expectations, and responsibilities to improve the understanding of digital challenges and opportunities.
- 2 Develop awareness programs on online safety, privacy, and digital well-being that are tailored for both young people and adults, using language and formats accessible to each group.
- 3 Encourage collaborative community-led solutions to address cyber risks, misinformation, and digital well-being concerns.
- 4 Consider youth perspectives for better informed policy-making and designing parental guidance programs and digital literacy initiatives.



Roundtable Discussion

Maldives Local Council Association PRESENTS

Building Digital-Ready Councils: Bridging Capacity and Policy Gaps



Mohamed Basheer

President of Noonu Council and
Chairperson of Maldives Local
Council Association



Aiman Rasheed

Consultant
Maldives Local Council Association

Building Digital-Ready Councils: Bridging Capacity and Policy Gaps

Roundtable Discussion by Maldives Local Council Association

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on the digitalisation of local councils in the Maldives, examining the challenges and opportunities in building digitally capable, autonomous, and responsive local governance systems. The discussion highlighted the central role of councils in frontline service delivery and community governance, and how gaps in digital capacity, infrastructure, and policy coherence continue to slow effective digital transformation at the local level.

Panelists discussed how limited human resource capacity, outdated and fragmented digital infrastructure, and inconsistent policy guidance have resulted in inefficiencies, duplication of work, poor data sharing, and weakened transparency and accountability. Participants emphasized that effective digitalisation, supported by interoperable systems and strong data management, has the potential to significantly improve governance outcomes and citizen engagement.

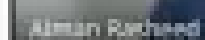
A key highlight of the session was the evolving role of the Local Government Authority (LGA), with participants emphasizing a shift from operational functions to monitoring and regulation to enable more independent, scalable council-level digital solutions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Local councils face significant capacity and digital literacy gaps, limiting their ability to adopt and manage digital systems effectively.
- 2 Outdated and fragmented digital infrastructure across councils leads to inefficiencies, duplicated processes, and weak data sharing.
- 3 The absence of harmonised policies for council-level digitalisation results in inconsistent practices and accountability challenges.
- 4 Effective digitalisation can significantly enhance governance, transparency, and citizen engagement when supported by interoperable systems and strong data management.
- 5 Current human resource policies do not adequately support the recruitment and retention of IT professionals within councils.
- 6 Open-source platforms, machine-readable systems, and interoperable solutions present opportunities to reduce costs and increase flexibility.
- 7 Improved internal coordination systems and data-driven monitoring can strengthen decision-making at the council level.
- 8 Continued research, structured frameworks, and stakeholder dialogue are needed to inform sustainable policy reform.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Develop harmonised policies to guide council digitalisation, ensuring consistency, accountability, and alignment with national digital strategies.
- 2 Reform recruitment and human resource policies to enable councils to attract and retain digital and IT expertise.
- 3 Upgrade and standardise digital infrastructure across councils to ensure interoperability, reliability, and scalability.
- 4 Develop interoperable systems to improve data sharing and coordination between local councils and central government.
- 5 Redefine the role of the LGA to focus on monitoring, oversight, and regulation, rather than direct operational control.
- 6 Strengthen digital literacy and capacity-building programmes for council staff.
- 7 Adopt open data policies and open-source solutions to improve transparency, reduce costs, and increase system flexibility.
- 8 Strengthen collaboration among councils, government agencies, technical experts, civil society, and private sector partners to co-develop sustainable digital solutions tailored to local needs.



Flashtalk

XYLAM TECH PRESENTS

From Archives to Audience: A Case Study in Digital Preservation for Dhivehi Language Content



Mohamed Jallam

Sole Proprietor & Developer

Xylam Tech

From Archives to Audience: A Case Study in Digital Preservation for Dhivehi Language Content

Flashtalk by Xylam Tech

SESSION SUMMARY

This lightning talk examined the importance of digital preservation in sustaining Dhivehi language content, using From Archives to Audience as a practical case study. The session highlighted the decline of physical Dhivehi publications, such as magazines and books, and the increasing risk of losing valuable cultural and educational materials due to the absence of structured digital archiving systems.

Discussions focused on ongoing efforts to collect school-generated content, digitize existing archives, and transition from static formats such as PDFs to searchable, OCR-enabled formats. The session further highlighted the initiatives of the Foiy App and the progress made in digitizing, preserving, and expanding access to Dhivehi language content. The discussion also explored how digital platforms can simultaneously preserve linguistic heritage, improve accessibility for readers, and create sustainable opportunities for authors through fair revenue-sharing models. Participants emphasized that long-term preservation of the Dhivehi language depends on collective participation from institutions, content creators, educators, and the wider public.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Many Dhivehi publications, including historic magazines and school or government archives, are at risk of being lost due to the lack of a structured digital archiving mechanism.
- 2 Schools have begun contributing materials primarily for long-term preservation and future research access.
- 3 Most existing digitized content remains in static PDF formats, limiting discoverability, accessibility, and reuse.
- 4 Transitioning to searchable formats such as EPUB and OCR-enabled archives significantly improves usability and long-term value.
- 5 Digital preservation is critical to keeping the Dhivehi language relevant, accessible, and usable for future generations.
- 6 Digital platforms can serve both readers and creators by expanding access to Dhivehi content while enabling sustainable, revenue-generating publishing models.
- 7 Features such as audiobooks and digital writing tools improve accessibility and encourage broader community participation.
- 8 Author-centric revenue-sharing models help incentivize content creation and sustained engagement.
- 9 While formal collaboration with language institutions is still evolving, there is growing interest and support from government stakeholders and educators.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Accelerate the digitization of existing Dhivehi materials, prioritizing school publications, historic magazines, and cultural archives.
- 2 Strengthen collaboration between schools, government institutions, and digital platforms to improve access to archival content.
- 3 Support the transition from static formats to searchable, OCR-enabled digital archives to enhance accessibility and long-term preservation.
- 4 Encourage authors, educators, and content creators to actively publish and preserve Dhivehi works through digital platforms.
- 5 Raise awareness among students and communities about digital preservation as a shared responsibility in sustaining the Dhivehi language.



Panel Discussion

MALDIVES CSO NETWORK FACILITATES

Civil Society's Role in Shaping Digitalization



Shimla Ahmed

President/ Co-Founder
Southern Community
Empowerment
Association of Maldives
(Moderator)



Raheema Adam

Founding Member
Association of
Lady Entrepreneurs



Ahmed Anwar

Chairperson
Hope for Women



Ahmed Naif

President
Maldives Journalists
Association



Ahmed Ali Maniku

Chairman
Maldives Senior Citizens
Association

Civil Society’s Role in Shaping Digitalization

Panel Discussion by Maldives CSO Network

SESSION SUMMARY

This session explored the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in ensuring that digitalization efforts in the Maldives are inclusive and serve all segments of society. Panelists discussed the importance of accessibility, inclusivity, and public trust in digital systems, emphasizing that digital transformation must be people-centered and responsive to diverse community needs.

The discussion highlighted significant barriers faced by marginalized groups, including elderly citizens, women, migrant workers, and persons with disabilities. Panelists emphasized that digital platforms must prioritize user-friendly design, accessibility features, and multilingual support, reflecting the Maldives’ multi-generational and multi-national population. The session also stressed that stronger collaboration between government and civil society is essential to ensure digital systems are designed, implemented, and governed inclusively.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for inclusive, accessible, and people-centered digitalization.
- 2 Civil society is currently excluded from discussions related to the design and development of core and essential digital applications.
- 3 Exclusion of civil society contributes to inclusivity gaps within financial services and other government and public digital platforms.
- 4 Language barriers and digital literacy gaps significantly exclude elderly citizens, migrant workers, and individuals with limited proficiency in English or Dhivehi.
- 5 Lack of transparency around data security and privacy undermines public trust in digital systems.
- 6 Gender gaps persist in STEM participation and digital governance, despite women being among the most active internet users.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Strengthen collaboration between government and civil society organizations to ensure inclusive participation in the design and implementation of digital services.
- 2 Design all digital platforms with accessibility and inclusivity as core requirements, ensuring they are user-friendly for elderly citizens, multilingual (at minimum Dhivehi, English, and Bangla), and compatible with assistive technologies for persons with disabilities.
- 3 Establish structured mechanisms for cooperation among government, civil society organizations, and citizens in the co-design of digital systems.
- 4 Build public trust through transparency on data security and privacy protections, including clear guidance on how personal information is collected, stored, and used, and by strengthening safeguards against digital harassment.
- 5 Address gender gaps in STEM and digital governance by ensuring women have equal opportunities to participate in leadership and decision-making roles.



Lightning Talk

MALDIVES INNOVATION AND DIGITAL COMPANY PRESENTS

Journey to Digitalization of all Citizen Centric Services by 2027



Ahmed Varish Mohamed
General Manager, Business
Development
MINDCo

Journey to Digitalization of All Citizen-Centric Services by 2027

Lightning Talk by MINDCo (Maldives Innovation and Digital Company)

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on the Maldives’ ambitious digital transformation agenda, examining plans to fully digitalize citizen-centric public services by 2027. The discussion highlighted flagship platforms such as OneGov, the unified digital gateway for government services, and Tradian, the National Single Window for trade facilitation, which aim to streamline service delivery, improve accessibility, and enhance efficiency across government agencies.

Participants discussed major implementation challenges, including the modernization of legacy systems, skills and capacity gaps, and organizational change management across government bodies due to differences in processes and service models. Data privacy and cybersecurity were emphasized as critical enablers of public trust, with updates shared on the development of a data privacy protection bill and the adoption of ISO standards. Significant gaps in inclusivity and accessibility were also identified, particularly the absence of Dhivehi language support in initial designs and limited accommodations for persons with disabilities. Public-private partnerships and coordinated upskilling initiatives were highlighted as essential to achieving the 2027 digitalization goals.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The Government of Maldives aims to fully digitalize all citizen-centric public services by 2027, with major agency integration planned by 2026.
- 2 Legacy systems, skill shortages, and organizational differences across government bodies pose significant modernization challenges.
- 3 Public trust in digital services is being addressed through the development of a data privacy protection bill and ISO-aligned system implementation.
- 4 Inclusivity and accessibility gaps remain, including the lack of Dhivehi language support and insufficient digital accommodations for persons with disabilities.
- 5 Public-private collaboration and structured upskilling programs are critical to building institutional capacity and sustaining digital transformation efforts.
- 6 Service delivery processes vary across councils, highlighting the need for harmonization while maintaining flexibility for local requirements.
- 7 Continuous citizen and civil society feedback, including live testing mechanisms, is essential to track progress and refine services toward the 2027 goals.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Ensure inclusivity of critical government services by integrating Dhivehi language support and accessibility tools for persons with disabilities across all digital platforms.
- 2 Strengthen legal and cybersecurity frameworks by passing and implementing the data privacy protection bill and relevant cybersecurity legislation.
- 3 Invest in comprehensive capacity-building and upskilling programs to address skill gaps across government institutions.
- 4 Harmonize council-level services and processes across government bodies while retaining flexibility to address local needs and contexts.



ONLINE

Webinar

AI CONSULTING PRESENTS

How Generative AI Accelerates Professional Learning to Unlock New Revenue Streams and Income Opportunities



Nageeth Abdullah
Disruptive Consultant

How Generative AI Accelerates Professional Learning to Unlock New Revenue Streams and Income Opportunities

Webinar by AI Consulting

SESSION SUMMARY

This session explored how generative artificial intelligence (AI) can accelerate professional learning and enable individuals to unlock new income and revenue opportunities. The facilitator focused on practical applications of AI for ideation, communication, automation, and decision-making, while emphasizing the importance of understanding how AI systems function to ensure effective and responsible use.

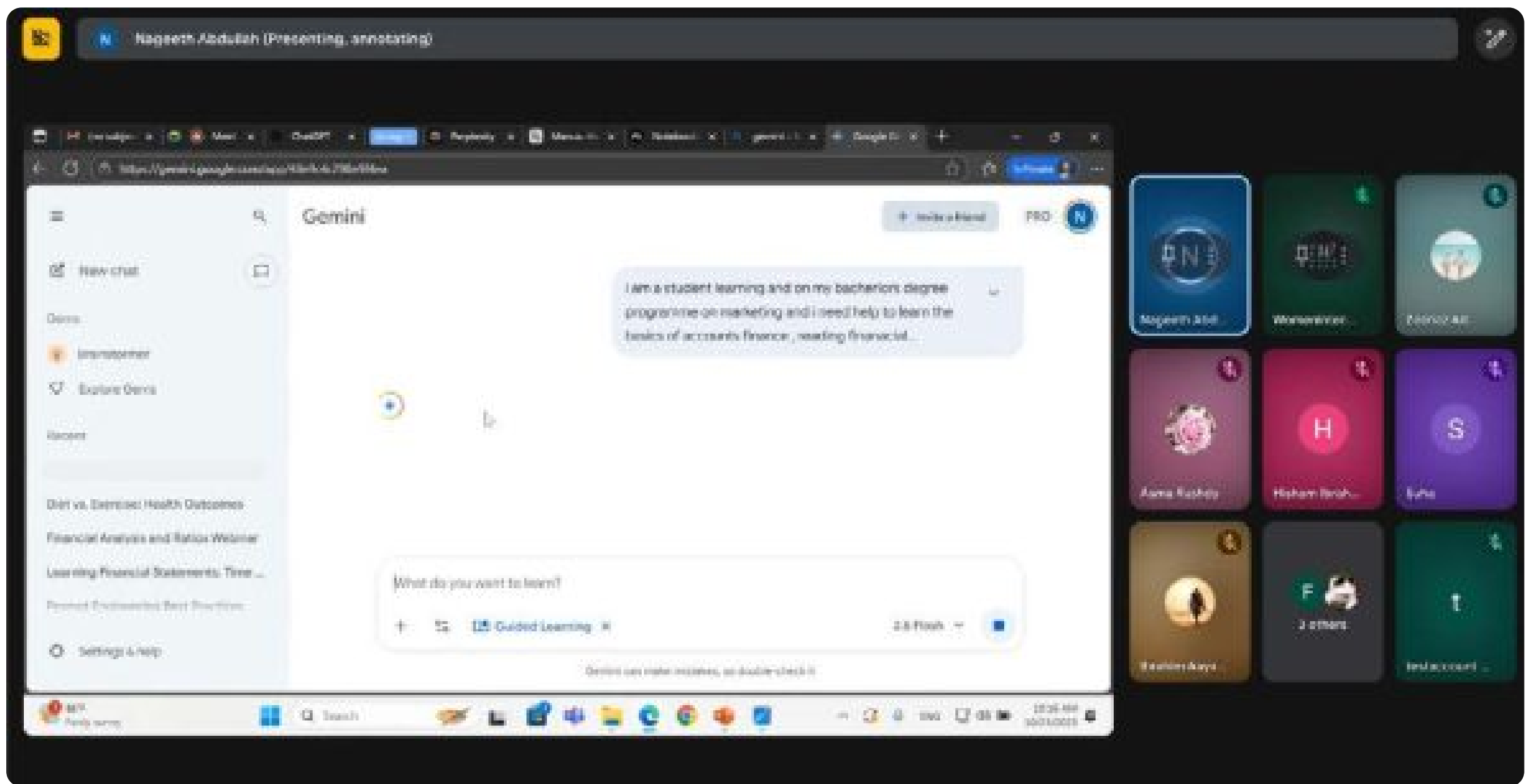
The discussion highlighted how AI-enabled digital skills can be leveraged beyond local markets and applied globally through online platforms, creating new pathways for entrepreneurship, freelancing, and remote employment. Participants were encouraged to view AI as a tool that enhances human capabilities rather than replacing human judgment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Understanding how AI systems function helps professionals identify tasks that can be delegated to AI, improving efficiency and output quality.
- 2 Generative AI accelerates professional learning by enabling faster brainstorming, ideation, content creation, and knowledge acquisition.
- 3 Generative AI is widely used to enhance communication, drafting, editing, content creation, and workflow design.
- 4 Automation of manual and repetitive processes using AI delivers quick productivity gains across professional environments.
- 5 AI applications are expanding across data analytics, predictive modeling, customer engagement, and decision support functions.
- 6 Professionals can leverage AI-enabled digital skills to access global markets through online platforms and remote work opportunities.
- 7 While AI democratizes access to knowledge, critical thinking, verification, and human judgment remain essential.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Promote AI literacy among professionals to ensure safe, ethical, and effective use of generative AI technologies.
- 2 Encourage hands-on experimentation with multiple AI tools to build practical skills and validate outputs.
- 3 Support the development of local AI-based solutions that address real-world challenges faced by individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises.
- 4 Strengthen digital entrepreneurship capacity to help individuals generate sustainable income and revenue streams.
- 5 Integrate AI learning into education, professional training, and workforce development programs to future-proof skills and maintain competitiveness.



ONLINE

Lightning Talk

The Need for Data Protection Bill in the Maldives Harmonizing Tech Legislation with Current Global Standards



Fishie
Independent Security Researcher

The Need for Data Protection Bill in Maldives Harmonizing Tech Legislation with Current Global Standards

Lightning Talk by Fishie

SESSION SUMMARY

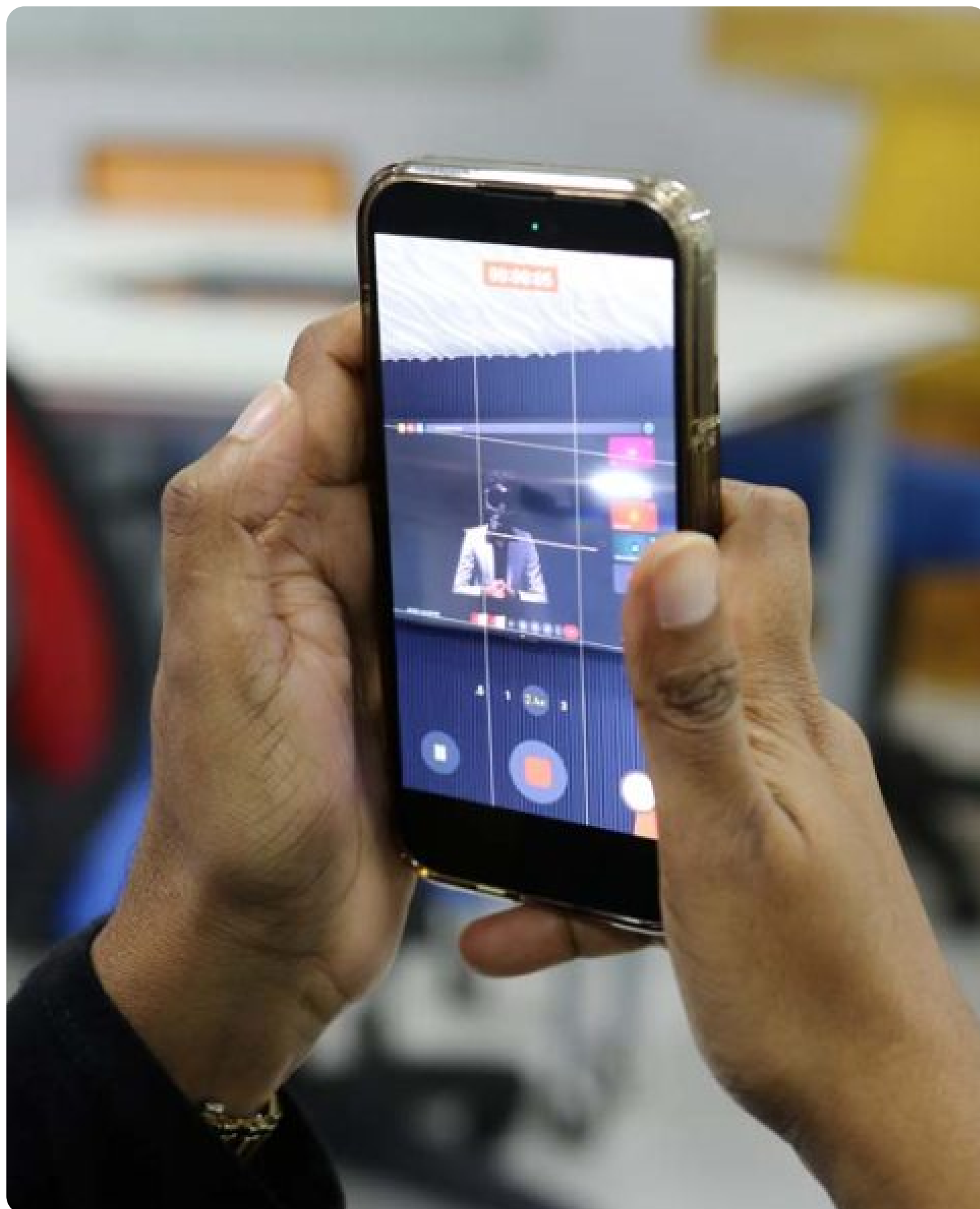
This session highlighted the growing gap between the Maldives’ rapid digital transformation and the absence of a modern data protection and accountability framework. Drawing on firsthand experiences as an independent security auditor and real world incidents observed in local applications and government systems, the session demonstrated how personal data is being leaked, misused, and exploited without effective legal or institutional safeguards. The discussion focused on three critical areas; the stalled Data Protection Bill, increasing pressure from global data protection standards such as GDPR, and the role of the National Bug Bounty Program, in building digital trust, protecting citizens’ rights, and strengthening the country’s digital economy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The Maldives is digitizing faster than its legal and institutional safeguards, leaving citizens’ personal data vulnerable to misuse and exploitation.
- 2 Scam activity is at an all-time high, driven by the misuse of leaked personal data.
- 3 Sensitive user data is exposed across government portals without adequate safeguards.
- 4 The absence of a Data Protection Law means users currently lack control, transparency, and accountability over how their data is collected, used, or shared.
- 5 Global frameworks like GDPR shape market access for Maldivian developers, making compliance a business necessity.
- 6 Without a Data Protection Law, individuals have limited control over their data, and organizations have weak incentives to strengthen data security.
- 7 Data protection is not only a legal issue but a business and economic necessity, especially for fintech, tourism, and export-oriented digital services.
- 8 The National Bug Bounty Program is a positive step toward responsible vulnerability disclosure and trust building between ethical hackers, government, and industry.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Expedite the enactment of a Data Protection Law, with a phased rollout that immediately introduces core principles such as consent, transparency, breach notification, and accountability.
- 2 Establish an independent Data Protection Authority to oversee enforcement, investigations, and citizen complaints.
- 3 Mandate regular security audits and data protection assessments for government platforms and high risk private digital services.
- 4 Strengthen and expand the National Bug Bounty Program, with a long term roadmap that includes financial incentives and broader institutional participation.
- 5 Encourage citizen participation by promoting public dialogue, civic advocacy, and direct engagement with Members of Parliament on digital rights and data protection.



Lightning Talk

From Tourism to Technology: AI as Maldives' Second Economic Pillar



Ikram Hassan
Founder & CEO

flessystems.com & ldzlink.com

From Tourism to Technology: AI as Maldives’ Second Economic Pillar

Lightning Talk by Ikram Hassan

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on economic diversification in the Maldives through artificial intelligence (AI) and was delivered as a lightning talk. The presentation positioned AI as a potential second economic pillar alongside tourism, highlighting how AI-enabled productivity, creativity, and locally developed digital systems can support sustainable economic growth in a small island context.

Through real-world demonstrations, the presenter showcased a locally developed AI-powered event management system, illustrating how modern AI and no-code tools have significantly lowered technical barriers to innovation. The case study demonstrated how a real operational need was transformed into a fully functional digital system within a short development cycle, without relying on traditional coding approaches.

The session reframed the Maldivian context as an opportunity rather than a limitation, highlighting how AI enables individuals and small teams to build globally relevant digital products from the islands. The presentation emphasized that AI shifts economic value creation from physical infrastructure and natural resources to human creativity, domain knowledge, and digital capability, while underscoring the importance of skills development, responsible adoption, and alignment with national priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Artificial intelligence presents a strong opportunity for economic diversification, positioning technology as a complementary pillar to tourism in the Maldivian economy.
- 2 AI and no-code tools have significantly reduced technical barriers, enabling faster development cycles and broader participation in digital product creation.
- 3 The demonstration of a locally developed AI-powered event management system showed that practical productivity gains can be achieved without large teams or extended development timelines.
- 4 Domain knowledge and problem understanding were highlighted as key advantages, with AI acting as an enabler of human creativity rather than a replacement.
- 5 The Maldives’ dispersed geography can be leveraged as an “archipelago of innovation”, allowing digital services and products to be developed and delivered from multiple islands.
- 6 AI enables the Maldives to expand beyond exporting tourism experiences to exporting high-value digital services and products globally.
- 7 Skills development, belief in local capability, and curiosity-driven innovation were identified as essential for sustaining AI-driven economic growth.
- 8 Government support, including investment in local AI capabilities, language access, and education, was recognised as critical to unlocking long-term impact.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 To support AI-driven economic diversification in the Maldives, participants identified the following priority actions:
- 2 Recognise AI and digital innovation as strategic enablers of economic diversification within national development and productivity frameworks.
- 3 Support local AI development initiatives, including investments in skills, local language technologies, and AI-enabled public services.
- 4 Invest in locally developed AI and no-code solutions that address real operational challenges and demonstrate export potential.
- 5 Strengthen AI literacy, no-code development skills, and problem-solving capabilities to build a workforce ready for AI-enabled innovation.
- 6 Foster collaboration among government, industry, educators, and innovators to translate AI potential into measurable economic and productivity outcomes.



Lightning Talk

MALDIVES POLICE SERVICE PRESENTS

Cybercrime on Our Shores: Case Studies from the Maldives



Mohamed Sameeh
Superintendent of Police
Head of Cyber Crime Centre



Adam Naveedh
Inspector of Police
Head Of Anti-Scam Centre

Cybercrime on Our Shores: Case Studies from the Maldives

Lightning Talk by Maldives Police Service

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on the evolving cybercrime landscape in the Maldives and was delivered as a presentation, drawing on real, anonymised cybercrime investigation cases handled by the Maldives Police Service. By combining national cybercrime statistics with practical case examples, the session demonstrated how common digital crimes occur and the consequences they have for individuals, organisations, and public trust.

The presentation highlighted prevalent cyber threats including online scams, account takeovers, financial fraud, and insider-related incidents. Through real investigation scenarios, the session illustrated common attack methods, systemic weaknesses, and the cascading impacts of cyber incidents such as financial loss, operational disruption, and reputational damage.

The session emphasised the importance of early detection, timely reporting, and strong basic cyber hygiene in preventing and mitigating cybercrime. It also reinforced the role of law enforcement in safeguarding the national digital ecosystem and highlighted the shared responsibility of individuals, organisations, and institutions in strengthening digital resilience.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Cybercrime incidents in the Maldives are increasing annually, affecting individuals, organisations, and critical infrastructure.
- 2 Hacking and unauthorised access represent the largest and fastest-growing category of reported cybercrime cases.
- 3 Financial fraud and online scams remain consistently prevalent, with recovery rates for victims remaining low.
- 4 Social media and digital communication platforms are the primary attack vectors, with impersonation scams accounting for a significant proportion of reported incidents.
- 5 Insider threats and weak internal controls can lead to serious organisational compromise, as demonstrated by real investigation cases.
- 6 Many cyber incidents can be prevented through basic security controls such as multi-factor authentication (MFA), least-privilege access, and verification of financial and sensitive requests.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Strengthen national cyber awareness campaigns using real, anonymised case studies to help citizens and organisations recognise and avoid common cyber threats.
- 2 Mandate the adoption of strong baseline security controls, including MFA, least-privilege access, and robust onboarding and off-boarding procedures.
- 3 Encourage continuous network monitoring, regular security assessments, and strict software and access control policies.
- 4 Enhance collaboration between law enforcement, regulators, digital platforms, and financial institutions to improve fraud prevention, detection, and recovery outcomes.
- 5 Reinforce public trust by encouraging timely reporting of cyber incidents to the Maldives Police Service Cybersecurity Operations Centre to enable faster response and investigation.



Lightning Talk

MALDIVES POLICE SERVICE PRESENTS

**Basic Cybersecurity for Internal Infrastructure:
The Need for SIEM Solutions for Every Organisation**



Ahmed Nasheed

Head of Core Network
Maldives Police Services

Basic Cybersecurity for Internal Infrastructure: The Need for SIEM Solutions for Every Organisation

Lightning Talk by Maldives Police Service

SESSION SUMMARY

This session highlighted the growing importance of cybersecurity as a core component of organizational risk management, emphasizing the need for foundational security practices and SIEM solutions. With evolving threats driven by cloud computing, remote work, IoT, and AI, the discussion highlighted the importance of strong security fundamentals, workforce awareness, and centralized monitoring. The session underscored the role of SIEM solutions in providing visibility, threat detection, and effective incident response across organizational infrastructure.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Cybersecurity must be treated as a core organizational risk, not just a technical issue.
- 2 Strong fundamentals such as MFA, timely patching, secure configurations, and encryption prevent most cyber incidents.
- 3 Human error remains a major risk, making continuous cybersecurity awareness and training essential.
- 4 SIEM solutions are critical for visibility, enabling timely detection and response to security threats.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Mandate comprehensive security audits across government institutions and critical sectors to regularly assess system configurations, patch levels, and access controls.
- 2 Implement SIEM platforms to centralize security logs, enable real-time threat detection, and align monitoring with international frameworks such as MITRE ATT&CK.
- 3 Develop incident response plans by enforcing clearly defined roles, escalation procedures, and periodic tabletop exercises across public sector organizations.
- 4 Invest in national cybersecurity workforce development through structured training programs, professional certifications, and continuous awareness initiatives to close skills gaps.
- 5 Adopt Zero Trust as a national cybersecurity principle, ensuring continuous verification, network segmentation, and proactive monitoring across government digital infrastructure.



Roundtable Discussion

The Elderly Lens: Inclusion in a Digital Nation



Mihna Zahir
Vice President
Women In Tech Maldives
(Moderator)



Mohamed Shihab
Chief Happiness Officer
The Happiness Club Maldives



Fathimath Ibrahim
President
Maldives Disability Council



Yaseen Nasoon
Full-Stack Developer
MWDCs



Mariyam Lathifa Khateel
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Social and Family
Development



Hussain Shifau
IT Executive
NCIT



Razeeha Tuttu Didi
Director
Aged Care Maldives



Ahmed Ali Mawku
Chairman
Maldives Senior Citizens Association



Fathimath Aamath Ali
Chief Credit Officer
Maldives Islamic Bank



Aminath Yashfa Shahid
Manager,
Digital Products Portfolio S.O.A
Bank of Maldives



Ahmed Shinau Abdul Gadhiri
Manager R2B Products,
Business Solutions
Dhiraagu

The Elderly Lens: Inclusion in a Digital Nation

Roundtable Discussion by Women in Tech Maldives

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on elderly inclusion in a rapidly digitalising Maldives and was conducted as a round table discussion, with participation from representatives across relevant stakeholder groups. The discussion examined challenges related to accessibility, safety, inclusion, and human-centred digital governance as digital public and private services increasingly become the primary mode of access.

Participants highlighted that while digitalisation has improved efficiency and service delivery, it has also unintentionally increased dependency, exclusion, and vulnerability among elderly citizens. Key contributing factors identified included language barriers, usability challenges, limited digital literacy, and the rapid transition of essential services to digital-only or digital-first models. Drawing on real-world experiences, participants shared how elderly citizens navigate e-government platforms, digital banking, and online services, often relying on family members or intermediaries for assistance, which can expose them to risks of misuse, financial exploitation, and digital scams.

The session emphasized that meaningful digital inclusion for the elderly must extend beyond access to platforms and ensure access to people, trust, and support systems. Participants acknowledged ongoing initiatives such as assisted service kiosks, Dhivehi-language platforms, accessibility-focused design approaches, and community-based awareness programmes, while agreeing that stronger coordination, clearer policy alignment, and the early inclusion of elderly voices in system design remain critical gaps.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Elderly citizens are among the most vulnerable in the digital ecosystem, facing heightened risks of scams, device misuse, and financial exploitation.
- 2 Language remains a key barrier, as many digital services continue to be primarily English-based, limiting independent access for seniors.
- 3 Participants agreed that access to platforms alone is insufficient; meaningful inclusion requires assisted services, physical touchpoints, and trusted human support.
- 4 Accessibility and user-friendly design must be intentional, including simplified navigation, voice-based options, alternative authentication methods, and disability-inclusive features.
- 5 Banking sector experiences showed that hybrid service models combining digital services with in-branch support and local access points are most effective for elderly users.
- 6 Elderly voices are often absent from policy and system design processes, resulting in solutions that do not reflect lived experiences or physical and cultural realities.
- 7 While senior-focused digital literacy initiatives have shown positive impact, they remain fragmented and limited in reach.
- 8 There was broad consensus that digital literacy should be a national priority, with tailored approaches and sustained support for elderly populations.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Embed elderly inclusion into digital policy and regulatory frameworks, ensuring that accessibility requirements, Dhivehi language options, and assisted alternatives are mandated across public digital services.
- 2 Design digital services with elderly users and disability representatives involved from the outset, incorporating their perspectives during planning, testing, and deployment rather than retrofitting accessibility after implementation.
- 3 Expand assisted digital access points nationwide where elderly citizens can receive guided assistance while gradually building digital confidence.
- 4 Strengthen Dhivehi-first and accessibility-by-design approaches by adopting recognised accessibility frameworks and inclusive design standards suitable for elderly users and persons with disabilities.
- 5 Develop targeted cyber safety and scam awareness programmes for seniors, delivered through CSOs, community groups, mosques, and island councils, focusing on safe digital practices, financial protection, and rights awareness.
- 6 Improve offline-friendly awareness of accessibility features and strengthen cross-sector coordination to support elderly digital inclusion.



Panel Discussion

VILLA COLLEGE FACILITATES

Governance of Digital Higher Education in Small Island States: Challenges and Pathways



Margret Vijay
Director, Global Ranking
Data Management &
Analytics
Villa College
(Moderator)



Ahmed Shafeeu
Minister of State for
Higher Education,
Labour and Skills
Development



**Dr Ahmed Naufal
Abdul Hadhee**
Chief Executive Officer
National Cyber Security
Agency



Hussain Naushad
Senior Government
Digital Service
Specialist
NCIT Data Centre



Aishath Musheera
Final Year Computer
Science Student
Villa College

Governance of Digital Higher Education in Small Island States: Challenges and Pathways

Panel Discussion by Villa College

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on the governance of digital higher education in small island developing states (SIDS) and was conducted as a panel discussion, with participation from representatives across relevant stakeholder groups. The discussion examined how countries such as the Maldives can effectively govern the rapid digital transformation of higher education, shaped by online learning, digital credentialing, data governance, artificial intelligence, and cross-border education delivery.

Panelists representing policymaking bodies, regulatory authorities, higher education institutions, researchers, and students highlighted the unique governance challenges faced by geographically dispersed island nations. Key issues discussed included infrastructure gaps, unequal connectivity, institutional readiness, regulatory flexibility, data sovereignty, and ensuring inclusive access for marginalized learners.

Drawing on policy perspectives, institutional realities, research insights, and student experiences, the session emphasized that digital higher education governance must balance innovation with quality assurance, ethics, and equity. Participants underscored the urgent need for coordinated national frameworks, strengthened partnerships, capacity building, and evidence-based policy development to support secure, inclusive, and sustainable digital higher education ecosystems in the Maldives and comparable SIDS contexts.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Existing higher education governance frameworks are not fully equipped to address emerging challenges such as digital credentialing, cross-border recognition, AI-enabled learning systems, and online quality assurance.
- 2 Digital equity remains a national challenge, as dispersed island geography contributes to unequal access to connectivity, devices, and digital learning opportunities.
- 3 The growing use of learning analytics, cloud-based platforms, and AI tools raises critical concerns related to student data protection, privacy, ownership, and ethical governance.
- 4 Institutional capacity building is essential, particularly in faculty digital readiness, infrastructure investment, and interoperability across systems and platforms.
- 5 Participants emphasized that students should be active contributors to digital governance, rather than passive recipients of digital education systems.
- 6 Collaboration across government, regulators, institutions, and the private sector was identified as a key enabler for scaling infrastructure, innovation, and policy coherence.
- 7 There was broad agreement on the need for a coordinated national digital higher education roadmap aligned with global frameworks such as SDG 4, UNESCO digital education guidance, and regional SIDS collaboration mechanisms.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Develop a national digital higher education roadmap setting standards for governance, quality assurance, credentialing, interoperability, and cross-border recognition.
- 2 Strengthen regulatory frameworks for digital delivery to enable flexibility while safeguarding academic quality, student protection, and institutional accountability.
- 3 Invest in digital equity and infrastructure to expand affordable access across all islands and prevent geographic exclusion.
- 4 Embed data governance and ethics frameworks addressing student data protection, AI use, cybersecurity, and data sovereignty in education systems.
- 5 Build institutional and faculty capacity through continuous professional development in digital pedagogy, assessment integrity, and inclusive technology design.
- 6 Institutionalise student participation in governance through formal mechanisms for input into digital policy, platform evaluation, and accessibility planning.
- 7 Strengthen research and regional collaboration through joint studies, pilots, and SIDS-focused knowledge-sharing platforms.
- 8 Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships to support innovation, sustainability, and long-term resilience in digital higher education.



MALDIVES
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Interactive Co-Creation Session on

Digital Transformation: Navigating the Crossroads for Maldives 2045



Digital Transformation: Navigating the Crossroads for Maldives 2045

Interactive Co-Creation Session by Nexia Maldives

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on digital transformation as a strategic enabler of the Maldives’ long-term national development and was conducted as an interactive policy co-creation workshop. The session was designed as a structured consultation to gather multi-stakeholder policy inputs for the 20-year national development plan, Resilient Maldives 2045: Prosperity for All.

Adopting a policy co-creation approach, the workshop moved beyond exploratory dialogue to collectively identify priority policy areas, governance gaps, and implementation trade-offs shaping the Maldives’ digital future. Key areas examined included future-ready digital governance frameworks, cybersecurity and data protection, the balance between imported and locally developed technologies, and addressing persistent digital divides arising from the country’s dispersed island geography.

Through facilitated group discussions and guided prompts, participants worked to translate diverse perspectives into shared policy directions and priority actions. The session aimed to ensure that digital transformation under Maldives 2045 is secure, inclusive, resilient, and measurable, while producing structured inputs that can directly inform national digital strategies and institutional frameworks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

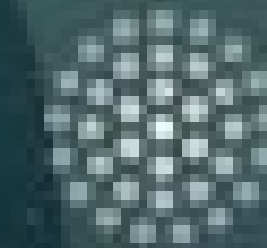
- 1 Participants collectively identified digital transformation as a cross-cutting national priority, requiring coordinated action across governance, infrastructure, cybersecurity, innovation, and social inclusion.
- 2 There was strong agreement on the need for future-ready digital governance frameworks that are adaptive, coherent, and aligned with long-term national development objectives.
- 3 Cybersecurity, data protection, and trust were recognised as foundational pillars for sustaining public confidence in digital systems and services.
- 4 Participants emphasised the importance of balancing imported digital solutions with locally developed technologies to strengthen national relevance, resilience, and skills development.
- 5 Persistent digital divides linked to geographic dispersion and uneven access were identified as a critical policy challenge that must be addressed within national digital strategies.
- 6 Multi-stakeholder participation was viewed as essential for navigating complex policy trade-offs and ensuring digital transformation reflects diverse lived realities and community needs.
- 7 There was broad consensus on the need to convert workshop outcomes into structured, actionable policy inputs that can meaningfully contribute to the Maldives 2045 development process.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Integrate digital transformation priorities into Maldives 2045 through clear, inclusive, and measurable policy and regulatory instruments.
- 2 Strengthen institutional coordination to ensure digital governance, cybersecurity, data protection, and digital service delivery frameworks evolve in a coherent and future-ready manner.
- 3 Leverage technical expertise and innovation to support the development of secure, scalable, and locally relevant digital solutions aligned with national priorities.
- 4 Support evidence-based policy development through research, community engagement, and advocacy to keep digital transformation inclusive and human-centred.



MALDIVES
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Internet Society
Foundation

Lightning Talk

SYNETECS PRESENTS

Defying the Unit of Economics: Democratizing AI for Dhivehi and Beyond



Ismail Kaleem
CEO & CoFounder
Synetecs

Defying the Unit of Economics: Democratizing AI for Dhivehi and Beyond

Lightning Talk by Synetecs

SESSION SUMMARY

This session explored the challenges and opportunities involved in developing scalable, cost-effective, and language-inclusive artificial intelligence systems, with a particular focus on conversational AI. Discussions highlighted the lack of first-class Dhivehi language support in most global AI platforms, alongside infrastructure constraints and latency issues arising from multi-model architectures and reliance on overseas data centers.

The session emphasized the importance of building local AI infrastructure, opening foundational technologies to the technical community, and developing proprietary AI models to strengthen the domestic AI ecosystem. Participants also discussed how local infrastructure development and efficient model design can support long-term innovation, improve accessibility, and enhance venture growth within the Maldivian AI landscape.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Most global AI platforms do not provide first-class support for Dhivehi, creating barriers to inclusive and localized AI adoption.
- 2 Deploying conversational AI at production scale presents significant challenges due to high infrastructure costs and scalability requirements.
- 3 The use of multiple AI models within a single system increases latency, negatively affecting the natural flow of human-AI interactions.
- 4 Hosting AI systems and data centers overseas can reduce costs but often introduces higher latency, impacting real-time performance.
- 5 Efforts to develop more efficient AI models using lightweight architectures can reduce operational costs and improve accessibility.
- 6 Infrastructure limitations remain one of the primary obstacles to building and deploying advanced AI systems locally.
- 7 Opening foundational AI infrastructure and APIs to the local technical community can accelerate innovation and ecosystem growth.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Invest in the development of Dhivehi-first AI language models to ensure inclusivity in future AI-driven services.
- 2 Strengthen collaboration with local data centers to reduce latency and improve the performance of conversational AI systems.
- 3 Open foundational AI infrastructure and APIs to local developers and researchers to encourage experimentation and innovation.
- 4 Support the development of efficient and cost-optimized AI models to lower barriers to entry for local organizations and startups.
- 5 Encourage the development of proprietary AI and deep-tech solutions to strengthen venture financing opportunities and long-term sustainability.



Panel Discussion

SPARKHUB FACILITATES

Navigating Policy and Innovation: Startup Voices in the Digital Economy



Yaamin Mohamed
Co-Founder
SparkHub
(Moderator)



Musnim Rasheed
Chief Operating officer
Payer



Mohamed Yaniu Rameez
Managing Director
Avas Enterprises
(AvasRide)

Navigating Policy and Innovation: Startup Voices in the Digital Economy

Panel Discussion by Sparkhub

SESSION SUMMARY

This panel discussion brought together startup founders to examine the challenges of navigating regulatory frameworks within the Maldives’ digital economy. Panelists shared practical experiences related to licensing, compliance, and regulatory uncertainty, highlighting gaps between existing regulations and the operational realities of innovative digital businesses.

The discussion emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between startups, regulators, and academia to ensure policies are evidence-based, adaptable, and aligning with emerging digital business models. Participants also underscored the importance of regulatory environments that enable innovation while safeguarding consumer trust, safety, and market fairness.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Regulatory frameworks often lag behind innovation, creating uncertainty and barriers for startups operating in the digital economy.
- 2 Licensing processes can be challenging, and in areas where regulations are absent or unclear, startups face limitations in experimentation and service expansion.
- 3 Many existing regulations are designed for large institutions and are not well suited to digital-first or startup-driven business models.
- 4 There is a critical lack of research and data to inform policy-making that reflects real-world digital business operations.
- 5 Customer trust is essential for the growth of the digital economy, but it is undermined by regulatory gaps that fail to address sector-specific risks, particularly in fintech.
- 6 There is no formal mechanism for startups to engage with regulators prior to policy development, resulting in regulations that do not fully align with business realities.
- 7 International best practices demonstrate the value of regulatory sandboxes and controlled experimentation environments, which could be adapted to the Maldivian context.
- 8 Startups expressed willingness to collaborate with academic institutions to strengthen research and improve digital service development.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Establish tiered regulatory frameworks that are proportionate to startup size, risk, and stage of growth.
- 2 Create formal platforms for collaboration between startups, regulators, and academia prior to the development of new regulations.
- 3 Encourage universities and academic institutions to partner with startups and regulatory bodies to conduct research that informs applicable and forward-looking policies.
- 4 Introduce regulatory sandboxes that allow startups to test innovations in controlled environments before wider implementation.
- 5 Develop regulations that promote competition and efficiency in digital markets, ensuring consumers have meaningful choices.
- 6 Increase public awareness of licensed digital platforms, particularly in sectors such as fintech and transport, to strengthen trust and consumer confidence.



Roundtable Discussion

NCIT FACILITATES

Data sharing and innovation: Strategies for the Future



Hussain Naushad
Senior GDS Specialist
NCIT

(Moderator)



Fazeena Ahmed
Project Coordinator
NCIT



Hany Nasyr
Senior Software
Engineer
NCIT



Fathimath Liusha
Software Engineer
NCIT

Data Sharing and Innovation: Strategies for the Future

Roundtable Discussion by NCIT

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on data sharing as a foundation for future-ready digital governance and was conducted as a round table discussion. The session served as a consultative forum to gather inputs for the development of a national data exchange platform under the Maldives 2.0 action plan.

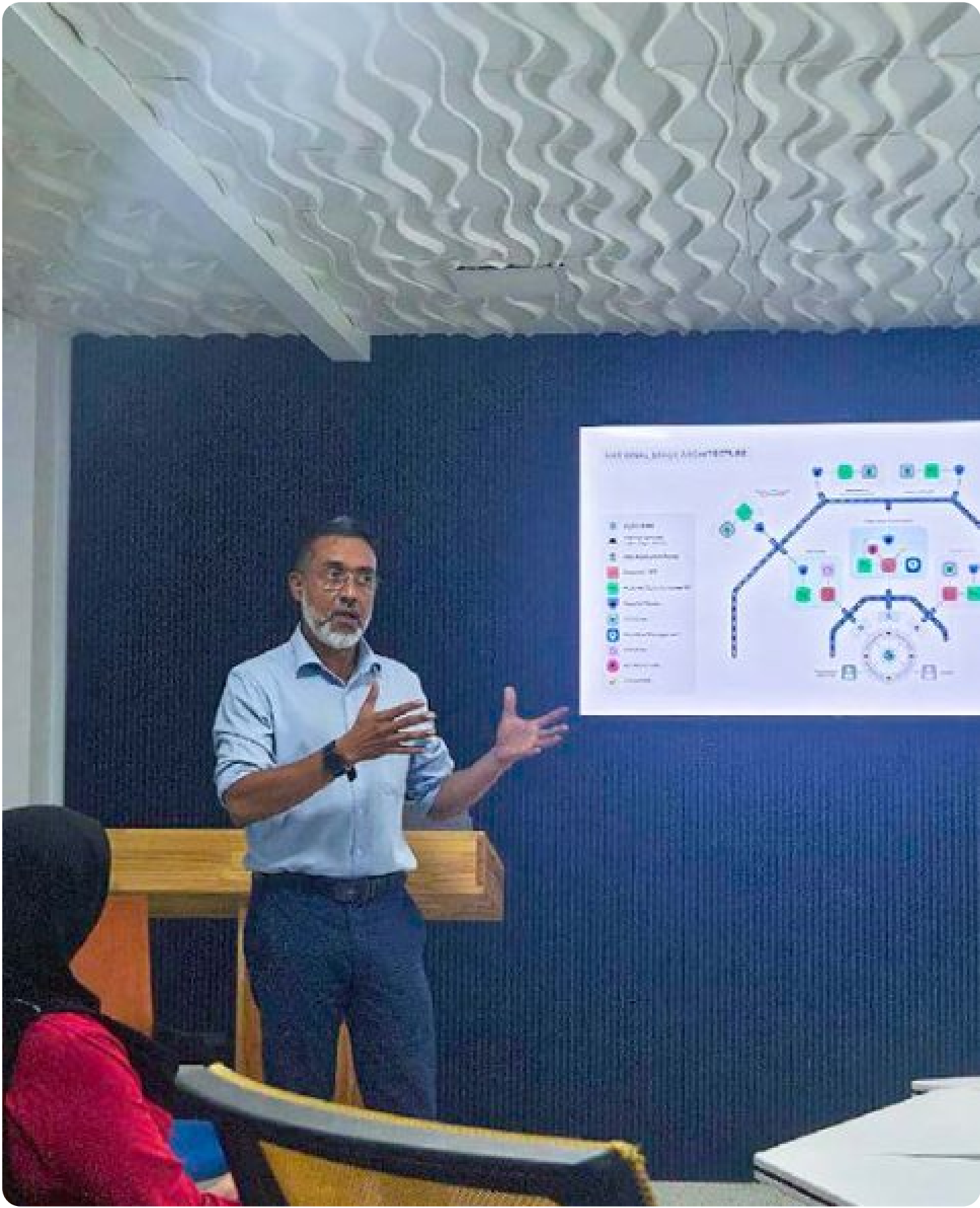
The discussion examined how authoritative digital registries, standardised interfaces, and a shared interoperability layer can enable secure and efficient data exchange across public sector institutions. Participants explored how improved data sharing can reduce duplication, enhance service delivery, support analytics, and strengthen evidence-based policymaking.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Data sharing is a critical enabler of future-ready governance, supporting improved service delivery, policy insight, and cross-sector innovation.
- 2 Authoritative digital registries and standardised interfaces can significantly reduce duplication and improve interoperability across government agencies.
- 3 Effective data sharing requires clear governance arrangements, including defined stewardship roles, accountability mechanisms, and operational standards.
- 4 Privacy, security, and data protection safeguards are essential to building trust and ensuring responsible reuse of data.
- 5 Technical clarity is needed on APIs, event-based exchange, data cataloguing, certification, and integration requirements.
- 6 Capacity and skills gaps persist, particularly in data stewardship, platform integration, and operational readiness within institutions.
- 7 Engagement of youth, entrepreneurs, researchers, and the private sector is important for identifying use cases, prototyping services, and driving innovation.
- 8 Sustained coordination and follow-up are necessary to refine priorities, phase implementation, and maintain momentum beyond initial consultations.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Establish clear policy and regulatory frameworks governing data sharing, interoperability, privacy, security, and institutional accountability.
- 2 Progress the development and implementation of a national data exchange platform, including authoritative registries, standard interfaces, and a governed interoperability layer.
- 3 Define stewardship roles, certification requirements, and operational guidelines to support consistent adoption across institutions.
- 4 Develop and publish technical standards, templates, and playbooks to support secure integration and platform operations.
- 5 Engage in responsible innovation, research, and prototyping using shared and anonymised datasets to expand public value.
- 6 Strengthen coordination across institutions to address capacity gaps, refine implementation priorities, and sustain momentum toward deployment.



Fireside Chat

From Policy to Practice: Oversight of National Digital Transformation



Uz.Humadha Ahmed
Rule of Law Expert
(Moderator)



Jeehan Mahmood
Co-founder & Vice chairperson
Maldives Policy Think Tank
Former Member of Parliament
Hinnavaru Dhaalraa



Hussain Imran Latheef
Member of Parliament
Henveiru Dhekunu
Constituency

From Policy to Practice: Oversight of National Digital Transformation

Fireside Chat by the Maldives IGF

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on the role of parliamentary oversight in national digital transformation and was conducted as a fireside chat involving parliamentarians and a moderator. The discussion examined how parliament can bridge the gap between digital policy vision and implementation as the Maldives advances initiatives such as eGovernment services, electronic budgeting, national data integration, digital identity systems, and smart governance platforms.

The session highlighted parliament’s responsibility in reviewing and approving digital budgets, prioritising legislation, and ensuring accountability in the rollout of national digital initiatives. Particular attention was given to the Digital Identity Bill, alongside broader discussions on data privacy, data protection, and ethical data use, recognising these as foundational to public trust in digital public services.

A key feature of the session was the active dialogue between parliamentarians and the audience, with questions prompting in-depth exchanges on legislative intent, implementation challenges, and safeguards for citizens. The discussion underscored the importance of informed oversight, technical understanding, and collaborative engagement with experts to ensure that digital transformation remains inclusive, secure, and citizen-centric across all islands.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Parliamentary oversight is central to digital governance, particularly in reviewing, approving, and monitoring electronic budgeting and funding allocated for national digital initiatives.
- 2 Participants noted that digital literacy among parliamentarians needs strengthening to enable informed debate, scrutiny, and decision-making on complex digital policies, systems, and investments.
- 3 The prioritisation of digital legislation and initiatives was recognised as closely linked to government policy priorities, which can affect the pace and sequencing of digital reforms.
- 4 The discussion referenced ongoing cybercrime legislation, focusing on victim protection, scam prevention, financial transparency, and accountability in the digital ecosystem.
- 5 Challenges in accessing timely technical expertise during legislative review of complex digital/technology related bills and programmes.
- 6 Participants emphasized a broader role for the technical community in supporting parliamentary oversight through advisory input, evidence-based analysis, capacity-building, and engagement via the Civil Society Parliamentary Network.
- 7 Ensuring that digital transformation delivers value to citizens in outer islands and underserved communities was highlighted as a priority requiring sustained parliamentary attention.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Strengthen parliamentary capacity in digital governance, including targeted digital literacy and technical briefings to support informed legislative oversight.
- 2 Enhance scrutiny of digital budgets and impact assessments to ensure funding aligns with citizen needs, equity, and national priorities.
- 3 Improve transparency and reporting mechanisms to support parliamentary review of digital initiatives, outcomes, and risks.
- 4 Provide timely, accessible technical documentation and progress updates to legislators reviewing digital programmes and legislation.
- 5 Establish structured channels for the technical community to provide independent advice, analysis, and guidance during legislative review of digital policies and bills.
- 6 Support mechanisms for citizen and local council feedback to inform parliamentary monitoring of digital transformation outcomes, particularly in outer islands.
- 7
- 8 Strengthen collaboration among parliament, ministries, regulators, technical experts, and the public to ensure that digital transformation is accountable, inclusive, and aligned with national development goals.



Lightning Talk

Opportunities and Challenges in Developing Local AI Solutions



Arushad Ahmed

Co-Founder & Chief Technology Officer
Javaabu Pvt. Ltd.



Ahmed Yameen

Machine Learning Research Engineer
Javaabu Pvt. Ltd.

Opportunities and Challenges in Developing Local AI Solutions

Lightning Talk by Javaabu

SESSION SUMMARY

This session focused on the opportunities and challenges of developing local AI solutions for Dhivehi in the age of artificial intelligence. The discussion highlighted gaps in data availability, limited benchmarks, and minimal open source resources, which hinder the inclusion of Dhivehi in global AI systems. A key focus of the session was the development of Dhivehi-focused AI models, including the Dhivehi GPT initiative, underscoring the importance of building local AI models to preserve linguistic and cultural identity, ensure inclusive access, and address the systemic deprioritization of low resource languages by global models. Approaches to model development, community involvement, and future collaboration were also explored.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

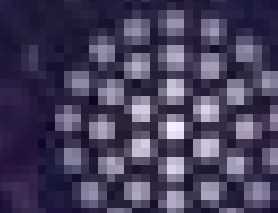
- 1 Dhivehi is a low resource language with limited text data, few benchmark datasets, and minimal open source and synthetic data resources.
- 2 Global AI models often deprioritize low resource languages, limiting accessibility and representation for local communities.
- 3 Local AI models are essential to ensure cultural and linguistic continuity and inclusive access to AI powered services.
- 4 Community participation is critical for sustainable dataset creation, supported by ethical and open data frameworks.
- 5 Collaboration with academic and public institutions is necessary to strengthen data quality, scale, and trust.
- 6 Although public data such as Parliament session recordings and court documents are regularly published and translated, they are often not released in formats suitable for AI training, limiting their practical use for language and speech models.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Develop and publish Dhivehi benchmark datasets and evaluation metrics to support research and innovation.
- 2 Encourage community driven data collection initiatives guided by ethical and open data principles.
- 3 Continue improving efficient, small scale AI models tailored to low-resource language contexts.
- 4 Foster collaboration among local, regional, and international institutions working on language technologies.
- 5 Support local AI innovation that enables technologies to understand and communicate effectively in Dhivehi.
- 6 Standardize the publication formats of public audio and text data, including Parliament sessions and court records, to make them machine readable and usable for training Dhivehi language and speech models.



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ONLINE

Focus Group Discussion

Beyond Play: Maldivian Gaming Scene

From mobile to virtual realms, your voice matters in
building the Maldivian gaming ecosystem.

Beyond Play: Maldivian Gaming Scene

Focus Group Discussion by the Gaming Community

SESSION SUMMARY

This focus group session at IGF Maldives brought together gamers, content creators, educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders to explore gaming as a catalyst for creativity, innovation, and youth empowerment in the Maldives. Discussions highlighted a rapidly growing gaming community driven by streamers, TikTok creators, and telecom-led initiatives across platforms such as TikTok, Twitch, Facebook, and YouTube.

The session identified critical gaps, including the absence of professional infrastructure, limited access to international platforms and tournaments, and the lack of recognition of gaming as a viable career pathway. Participants emphasized barriers faced by women, differently abled youth, and island communities, including gender stereotypes, inaccessible gaming setups, connectivity challenges, and exclusionary online environments. The need for centralized platforms, safe community spaces, and targeted support mechanisms was highlighted as essential to building an inclusive ecosystem.

The discussion also explored the intersection of gaming with education, cultural preservation, and digital skills development, including strategic thinking, teamwork, and pathways into technical and creative careers. Stakeholders underscored the importance of coordinated action across government, private sector, educational institutions, and civil society to transform gaming from an isolated hobby into a structured, inclusive, and professionally viable ecosystem.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Skilled gamers and passionate communities exist in the Maldives, but limited infrastructure, professional pathways, and international connectivity restrict career opportunities.
- 2 Gaming extends beyond entertainment and contributes to digital literacy, STEM learning, creative technology careers, and the development of problem-solving and collaboration skills.
- 3 Local game development presents an opportunity to preserve Maldivian language, folklore, and cultural narratives through interactive digital experiences.
- 4 Women, differently abled youth, and island communities face persistent barriers to participation, highlighting the need for safe spaces, accessible design, representation, and targeted programs beyond Malé.
- 5 The lack of professional recognition and societal acceptance of gaming remains a systemic barrier, forcing many talented individuals to choose between passion and sustainable livelihoods.
- 6 Progress in building a gaming ecosystem requires coordinated multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government, private sector, educational institutions, and civil society organizations.
- 7 With focused investment and stakeholder engagement, initiatives such as national esports associations, conventions, regional hubs, and structured leagues could be established within two to three years.

CALL TO ACTION

- 1 Recognize esports as an official sport and support pathways for national representation and international participation.
- 2 Allocate funding and resources for gaming infrastructure, national teams, international tournaments, and local game development initiatives.
- 3 Develop policy frameworks that address gaming infrastructure, education pathways, professional standards, and accessibility requirements.
- 4 Establish a centralized digital platform to connect Maldivian gamers with local and international competitions, opportunities, and industry trends.
- 5 Invest in low-latency servers, island-based gaming hubs, and high-speed connectivity to improve access and performance nationwide.
- 6 Introduce game design, coding, and esports management programs at secondary and tertiary education levels.
- 7 Create safe, inclusive gaming spaces and programs that actively support women, differently abled individuals, and island communities.
- 8 Build mentorship networks and grassroots tournaments to sustain momentum, visibility, and skills development within the gaming community.
- 9 Promote healthy gaming practices and enforce anti-harassment standards within gaming communities and competitive environments.

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Internet Society
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ONLINE

Focus Group Discussion

Beyond Play: Maldivian Gaming Scene

From mobile to virtual realms, your voice matters in
building the Maldivian gaming ecosystem.



Mohamed Sibag Ali Saleem



Sanfa Nazeefa



Thahseen Ali



Mohamed Ahmed



Aruham Abdulla



Shaarig Hussain Amir

Over Gaming



Useful Links

Website

<https://maldivesigf.mv>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/mvigf>

https://www.facebook.com/mvigf/live_videos

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/maldivesigf>

LinkedIn

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X (Twitter)

<https://x.com/lgfmv>

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