

OF THE USA IN LUXEMBOURG

Ambassador: Kingdom Gould, Jr.

Deputy Chief of Mission: Marshall H. Noble. *Heads of Sections:* Merwin W. Peake (*Political*); Jay R. Graham (*Economic*); Gus P. Peleuses (*Administrative*).

BOOKS OF REFERENCE

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NATIONAL LIBRARY. Luxembourg-City, 14a Boulevard Royal. *Director:* Prof. Dr Joseph Goedert.

REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

The Republic of Maldives, 400 miles to the south-west of Ceylon, consists of some 2,000 low-lying coral islands (only 220 inhabited), grouped into 12 clearly defined clusters of atolls but divided into 19 for administrative purposes. Area 115 sq. miles (298 sq. km). Population (census 1963), 96,432. Capital Malé (10,875 inhabitants; 5,779 males, 5,096 females). The people are all Moslems, and Islam is reflected in the constitution and the judicial system. The islands are covered with coconut palms and yield millet and fruit as well as coconut produce.

The official language is Maldivian, which is akin to Elu or old Sinhalese.

President: Ibrahim Nasir.

British Ambassador: The British High Commissioner to Ceylon.

The islands were under British protection from 1887 to mid-1965. They now enjoy complete independence under the agreement signed in Colombo on 26 July 1965. The Republic of Maldives became a republic on 11 Nov. 1968.

The 1965 agreement confirmed the agreement of 1956, which allowed the British Government to reactivate the wartime air staging post on Gan island in Addu Atoll, the southernmost of the group (8,235 inhabitants). There is another airstrip at Hulele in the Malé atoll, some 300 miles from Gan.

In 1960 the British Government made a gift of £100,000 to the Maldivian government and promised economic assistance to the extent of £750,000 over a period of five or more years. The money is being used to finance projects such as a hospital, a floating dispensary, the expansion of the fishing industry and shipping.

The Maldivian economy is based on the fishing industry. Dried bonito ('Maldivian fish') is the main export commodity. Exports and imports balanced at about Rs 9.5m. in 1964. There is no direct taxation.

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