

**21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of MATI**  
14<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Dhoshimeynaa Maalan, Dharubaaruge, Male’.

## **Chairman’s Address**

“Bismillah

Honourable members of MATI, my dear colleagues and partners,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of MATI.

I need not emphasize here that we are meeting at a crucial time, both for our industry and our nation.

There is much upheaval in our country and our economy, mainly due to needs to adjust to a new climate of political change and national priorities.

It is our hope that our politicians, in the government and in the opposition, will always put the nation first; and their political agendas after that.

On a brighter note, we meet at the end of an year, during which there was unparalleled cooperation between the government and our industry.

It is a matter of immense satisfaction to me and to my colleagues on the Board, to note that we have, working closely with government and parliament, achieved much success in addressing challenges in the industry.

The Secretary General will highlight our areas of endeavour in his report.

I do not wish to take too much time before we get down to our business Agenda today.

I would, nevertheless, like to touch upon a few important points.

There will not be a solution to the labour issues in the Resorts unless there is a shift in national thinking; the dignity of labour, the fact that all work is honourable must be inculcated in our national conscience.

The need to be meaningfully employed, whether you are rich or poor, young or old. There is work to suit everyone who is of working age. National productivity

cannot be ignored as we compete with our neighbors and with more developed economies.

The need for a proper system of training for jobs in the economy; for those entering the workforce and retraining programmes for those who require upskilling or a different set of skills.

The second point I wish to note is the increasing demand for a return to basics; this industry has evolved over 35 years and we have definitely done some things right. There is a model of resort development that we have followed and that has been very successful for the Maldives. We cannot turn away from success; keeping our strengths, our natural endowments as our basis for development, providing value-for-money and the willingness to change to tourist demand. In this globalised world, where the Maldives competes with so many destinations, we must focus on our strengths; the experience and know-how that we have acquired through building an entire industry from scratch.

Our challenge is now to return to profitability. The global recession has indeed taken its toll on our businesses. Working towards recovery means we may have to rethink our approach to doing business and concentrate on those possibilities that have worked for us in the past. It also requires keeping an eye on emerging trends in the market.

I would like to call upon our members to work together as never before, to return our industry to profitability and, indeed, sustainability.

We have weathered storms before; the Asian tsunami, the SouthEast Asian currency meltdown, SARS, mad-cow disease and two Gulf wars.

We bounced back. We can do it again.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is called to order.

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