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MALDIVIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (UK)-
MSA(UK)

INTERIM REPORT

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By: Central Committee

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is a report prepared by the Central Committee of Maldivian Students' Association in UK – MSA (UK) with the purpose of giving an outline of the performance of MSA (UK) over the last three months or so since the current Central Committee was elected.

The report is divided into eight main sections, in order to present the information in a clear and concise manner.

2. MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Dear Members,

We would like to thank all the members of MSA (UK) for the support they have shown to the Central Committee since its election at the AGM of 2006. Whatever we have achieved so far has been achieved through close cooperation between the Central Committee, the Advisory Council and the general members of the association.

It is our policy to work in close cooperation with everyone to re-shape MSA (UK) as a friendly, supportive and productive student body that is loved by everyone who come to know about it.

With this in mind, we have undertaken several tasks, both minute and large, over the last three months or so, and we have planned several major activities for the months ahead.

We would like to sincerely urge all the members to give their full support and contribution and work closely with the Central Committee in carrying out these activities successfully and thus contributing towards achieving the set target highlighted above.

Unite we stand!

Thank you

On behalf of the Central Committee

Mohamed Muizzu

Chairperson, 2007

3. MAIN TASKS

In order to implement the policy set out, we identified several major tasks that need to be undertaken, as much as possible. These are, improving the social relationship amongst the members and between the members and the Central Committee, improving and strengthening the membership of the association, reaching out to the prospective members of the association, improving the awareness of MSA (UK) amongst the Maldivian community both in the UK and back at home, and seeking funding through sponsorships and other possible means.

Furthermore, the revitalisation and refurbishment of 9 Rosemont Avenue is another major task identified.

Work was started immediately after the election of the Central Committee in carrying out actions in order to work towards implementing the tasks.

4. ACTIVITIES

Given below are the various works carried out over the last three months or so and the planned activities for the months ahead.

4.1. Activities since AGM 2006 up to EGM 2007

The activities of MSA (UK) since the election of the central committee on 22nd December 2007 up to the EGM 2007 are as follows:

December

- 25 Dec 2006: Call for the MSA (UK) Eid Celebrations Competition made
- 26 Dec 2006: A Tsunami message on behalf of all the members of MSA (UK) posted on the MSA website
- 30 Dec 2006: MSA (UK) Eid Celebrations Competition held throughout the UK

January

- 01 Jan 2007: New Year wishes made to all the members and the public on the MSA website
- 04 Jan 2007: Call for a volunteer to join the MSA (UK) Web team was made
- 16 Jan 2007: MSA (UK) Eid Celebration Competition results announced
- 22 Jan 2007: MSA (UK) Museum Outing event announced
- 24 Jan 2007: Call for a flag bearer of the Maldives on the Commonwealth day Observance made

February

- 03 Feb 2007: Online Membership Registration system launched
- Rosemont Report published
- Special email address for Rosemont assigned and announced
- 04 Feb 2007: Financial Year Report 2006 of MSA (UK) published
- 07 Feb 2007: MSA (UK) Constitution amendments debate opened in the MSA Forum

- Rosemont Guidelines amendments debate opened in the MSA Forum
- 09-11Feb 2007: Central Committee 2007 working weekend held at Rosemont
Meeting of the CC with the Tenants of Rosemont held
Meeting of the CC with the Deputy High Commissioner of Maldives to the UK held
- 17 Feb 2007: Launching of the MSA (UK) Blog
- 18 Feb 2007: Announcement of the MSA (UK) Go-teach Project
Announcement of the Venue, Date and Agenda of the EGM
- 20 Feb 2007: Publishing of the MSA (UK) Activity Plan
Announcement of the Rosemont Committee
- 28 Feb 2007: Launching of MSA (UK) SMS Service
Call for volunteers for the Go-teach Project
Announcement of the MSA (UK) Dhivehi Traditional Cooking Event to be held in March
Call for a volunteer to join the MSA (UK) Web team was made
- March
- 1 Mar 2007: MSA (UK) Forum fixed and re-launched
- 12 Mar 2007: Participation of Mohamed Razeem in the Commonwealth Day Observance
- 17/18 Mar 2007: MSA (UK) Dhivehi Traditional Cooking Event held across the UK

4.2. Activities planned from EGM 2007 to AGM 2007

The activities planned for the months ahead are as follows:

Mar/Apr

- 30 Mar-1 Apr 2007: MSA (UK) Extra Ordinary General Meeting-EGM in Manchester

May

1 May 2007: Call to submit applications for Rosemont rooms (No other events -Exams Period)

June/July/August/September

In UK:

30 June 2007: Deadline for receiving submissions for places at Rosemont

Date to be fixed: MSA (UK) Beach Event with Barbecue

Date to be fixed: Farewell Party for new graduates

In Maldives:

Dates to be fixed: MSA (UK) Go-teach Project in the atoll

Date to be fixed: MSA (UK) Awareness Event

September/October

Date to be fixed: MSA (UK) Freshers' Faire with Roadha veellun and Haaru

October

13 Oct 2007(apprx): MSA (UK) Eid-ul-Fitr Competition

Date to be fixed: MSA (UK) Fundraising Event

November

Date to be fixed: Activity to be decided

December

22-24 Dec 2007: AGM 2007 with Eid-ul-Adha Celebration

5. ESTIMATED BUDGET

The estimated budget for the year is given below. The main sources of income are expected to be the annual donation given by Ministry of Education and income from the proposed fundraising event. Other venues of income expected are from sponsorships/donations from well wishers.

The main expenditures for the year are for EGM 2007 and AGM 2007.

MSA (UK) Budget for the year 2007

BALANCE B/F from 2006	£ 339.29
INCOME	£
Annual contribution by Ministry of Education	1,000.00
Go-Teach Sponsorship	650.00
Fund-raising event	1,500.00
Financial assistance from well wishers	1,200.00
TOTAL	4,350.00

EXPENDITURE **£**

2006

December

Eid and New Year Cards	10.00
Eid Competition Prizes	30.00
Reimbursement of money owed by CC2005 to Rosemont	303.65

2007**January**

Museum Outing	45.00
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March

Maldivian Cultural Meals Event	120.00
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EGM:

Food	300.00
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Activities	400.00
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Other	200.00
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Summer

Barbeque	90.00
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Picnic/ beach activity	120.00
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Independence day cards	10.00
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Farewell Party	150.00
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Go-Teach Project	250.00
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MSA(UK) Awareness Event	350.00
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September

Freshers Day	200.00
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Ramadan Mubarak cards	10.00
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MSA Roadha Veellun	350.00
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October

Fundraising event	200.00
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Eid competition prizes/ contribution towards cooking	90.00
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Eid cards	10.00
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December

Eid Celebration	250.00
<u>AGM</u>	
Food	300.00
Activities	400.00
Other	200.00
Miscellaneous	
Cards for other occasions (Huravee/ Jumhooree, etc)	40.00
Other expenses	200.00
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4,628.65
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BALANCE C/F for following year	£ 60.64

6. DETAILED INSIGHT INTO THE MAIN ACTIVITIES

In this section more detail of the major activities that have been executed and also planned are given.

6.1. Between AGM 2006 and EGM 2007

The main activities held and the milestones reached during the period between AGM 2006 and EGM 2007 are the Eid Competition, Launching of the Online Membership Registration System, Launching of the MSA SMS Service and MSA Blog, Meeting with the Deputy High Commissioner of Maldives to the UK, Maldivian Cultural Meals Event, Launching of the Go-Teach project, Participation in the Commonwealth Day Observance and the various improvements achieved for Rosemont. Brief summaries of each of these activities are given below (with those activities that are scheduled to be conducted after the EGM being addressed to in section 6.2).

6.1.1. Eid-ul-Adha Celebration Competition

Shortly after the Central Committee was elected a decision was taken to celebrate the Eid-ul-Adha which was to come in about a week's time. Thus the best option to celebrate the Eid amongst as many members as possible by spending as little from MSA or by the members themselves was sought. It was concluded that this could be effectively achieved by holding a competition right across the country wherever Maldivian students are. The competition was announced on 25 December 2005, with the categories upon which the competition will be judged. The three categories are Best Report, Best Video/Photos, and Highest Turnout.

Three groups participated in the competition. They were London, Manchester and Bristol. The participants from London, the London Team, won the competition in all the three categories.

Prizes for the winning team are to be awarded during the EGM.

6.1.2. Online Membership Registration System

In order to establish an official Register of members, and to contribute towards improving the membership of the association in a sustainable and effective manner, an official online membership registration system was launched on 3 February 2007.

One might wonder why members have to register when the current Constitution says that all Maldivian students are considered to be members by default unless notified to the association in writing. This inability to keep track of our members has been a source of problem as our membership increases. This lack of information has also prevented MSA-UK from establishing a constructive and comprehensive network of interaction and communication amongst all the members towards the development and sustenance of social relationships as per one of our mandates.

Thus there are several major benefits of getting members to register officially. First of all, we are building an official Register of MSA members, thus the best way to compile the register is through online registration.

Also, by registering you will have full access to members' only areas such as MSA Forum, MSA Blog, and MSA Gallery! These areas give the members an excellent opportunity to interact with other members and build up a close and friendly atmosphere amongst the members.

In addition to this, the proposed MSA constitution under discussion right now states that the Maldivian students who study in the UK have the option to become a member, thus making it even more important to launch this registration system, which will fully compliment the new proposed constitution.

In the implementation of this Online Membership Registration system, we hope to pave the way to establish a good mechanism by which we can get onboard as many members as possible and facilitate interaction. Definitely this is just a first step towards achieving this noble goal of a constructive and comprehensive network of interaction and communication. We are in the works of equipping this minor step towards an online membership presence to building a buzzing social network. The membership system is at a very early stage at the moment; however we will be combining other

MSA-UK website features with the membership to make it all easier and build a real community presence.

6.1.3. SMS Service

On 28 February 2007 SMS service was launched. We intend to keep the members updated with the activities of the association including the main news items published in MSA website. We hope to keep a close tie with the members and look forward to draw in members who are relatively new to the activities of MSA.

The first batch was sent using phone numbers that we gathered at the AGM and in from different cities as part of our work towards reaching out to all Maldivian students and establishing a member registry. We will not be using this list in the future and will only send to members registered via the Online Membership Registration system. If you would like to keep receiving further updates, please ensure that you have registered online at the MSA (UK) website and that you have provided your mobile phone number.

We hope the service is useful and contributes to building a closer knit MSA society!

6.1.4. MSA Blog

To further enable the members to interact with each other we decided after careful considerations to launch a blog in the MSA website. It is intended to give members a wonderful opportunity to submit their articles of daily lives, interesting findings, views, funny stories etc to the blog and other members will be able to vote and/or comment on the article.

Just to give an incentive we had decided to award a prize at the end of each month for the article that gets the most comments that month.

However, it has to be mentioned that so far the reaction to this exciting new feature has been very subdued. This may be because most of the members are unaware of the details related to the blog. Thus it is intended to promote the blog during the EGM.

6.1.5. Participation in the Commonwealth Day Observance

The High Commission of Maldives in the UK gave the opportunity to MSA (UK), as in previous years, to nominate a flag bearer for the procession to mark the Commonwealth Day Observance to be held on Monday 12 March 2007. We invited an interested member to take up the opportunity and proudly represent the Maldives at the event. Mohamed Razeem, a Medical Student (Year 2) at King's College London, University of London mailed us after our second email reminder to the members and was promptly awarded the chance as it was a first-come first-serve opportunity as we had announced.

Upon request from MSA (UK) the High Commission of Maldives provided the participant a financial contribution for the day.

6.1.6. MSA (UK) Constitution Debate

The Constitution of MSA (UK) had several shortcomings and thus a proposed amendment was prepared by Fazeel Najeeb (Chairperson, 2005) and modified by the current Central Committee. It was put on the MSA (UK) Forum on 7 February 2007 for members to discuss the proposed amendments and submit their comments/amendments. However, so far only a very few members have given any comments to the proposal.

Thus it was agreed to hold a session during the EGM at which members will have the last opportunity to give their comments, before a vote is taken at the Main Meeting of the EGM.

6.1.7. Meeting with Deputy High Commissioner of the Maldives in UK

The Central Committee met with Mr. Adam Hassan, the Deputy High Commissioner of the Maldives, as the High Commissioner was abroad, on 11th Feb 2007 at his home in London to discuss some urgent matters that students have raised.

The main issue that was discussed was the growing difficulty in obtaining the UK Student Visa. Students from the Maldives currently are required to travel to the British Visa office in Sri Lanka, lodge their application and wait for a period anywhere from 5 to 14 days. The costs of doing so increases if a member has a spouse and/or children to bring along as they too are required to go to the Visa office in person. Upon urging

from members, previous Central Committees have continued to raise the issue several times with various government authorities and CC 2007 joins this effort in hopes of finding a solution as quick as possible. The Deputy High Commissioner assured us that it was an issue that had been raised to the High Commission as well and that they were in talks with the relevant government authorities. He also mentioned that they would raise the issue at a soon-to-be-held meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The second point of discussion that was raised by the CC was the renovation efforts for Rosemont. The CC informed Mr. Adam Hassan of the results of last year's renovation effort and the recommendations from the Rosemont report. The CC then outlined the urgently needed renovations still needing to be done at Rosemont and raised the issue of securing funds for doing so. The Deputy High Commissioner recommended that MSA-UK request the Ministry of Education with a list of needed repair.

The Central Committee then sought suggestions and recommendations on various activities for the year including the Go-Teach project and the fund raising activities being planned.

We have recently been informed by the High Commission that they have written to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the issue and that the latter has contacted the British High Commission in Sri Lanka and the matter is in progress.

6.1.8. Maldivian Cultural Meal Event

As part of our tasks to enhance social relationship amongst members and to revive Maldivian traditions a special event was held across the country. Members were invited to get together at their respective city or nearby cities and prepare a feast of Maldivian traditional meal, funded by MSA (UK) up to an agreed amount, enjoy themselves and have a nice time together, and send in the photos and videos of the event.

Two groups took part in the event, Bristol (23 members) and Leeds/Bradford (21 members).

The event was held by both groups on 17 March 2007.

6.1.9. Re-launching of the MSA (UK) Forum

MSA UK forum was re-launched on 1 March 2007 after it was updated/upgraded and several problems fixed. The forum login was tied up with the MSA Online Membership Registration system so that members can use their MSA login details to access the forum as well. The forum has been upgraded to a new software and sadly had to lose the posts in the older forum. However, we hope this doesn't deter members from joining in and restarting the lively discussions on the forum.

6.1.10. Invitation to other Maldivian students associations

An invitation to establish an official network of communication amongst all the Maldivian students associations was sent on 2 March 2007, to Maldivian students associations in other countries, namely, Sri Lanka, India and Malaysia. The contact details of the corresponding associations in Egypt and Nepal as being sought and once obtained, the invitation is to be sent to those associations too. Information about such associations in other countries will also be sought.

The purpose of establishing such a network of communications is forming a strong bond between all the Maldivian students studying all over the globe regardless of their field of study or any other factor.

This is undoubtedly an extremely important step forward in the right direction, as by establishing this formal network, we can work together, whilst we are abroad, in contributing to the development of our country in whatever way possible. This can be done through organised activities which can directly benefit the local communities in the atolls and in Male'. Such activities, if successful can be broadened and strengthened to be built into a sustainable framework of activities.

Once the above-mentioned formal network is established between the Maldivian students' associations abroad, activities organised by any of the associations will be contributed to by the other associations, thereby strengthening our goal of working together to help those who need help.

6.1.11. Improvements to various aspects of Rosemont

9 Rosemont Avenue, commonly called as 'Rosemont' by members is always at the centre of attention because it has been the central socializing point for Maldivian students studying in the UK for more than 20 years. Thus everything related to Rosemont tends to be closely followed by members as they would undoubtedly like whatever issue related to the house be resolved properly and efficiently.

Hence, the Central Committee penned improvements to various aspects of Rosemont as one of the main tasks to be undertaken.

The main activities carried out in this regard are publishing of the Rosemont Report (2005/6), assigning of special email address to Rosemont, meeting of the Central Committee with the tenants of Rosemont and forming a priority list of refurbishment works required, formation of Rosemont Committee, sending the income and Expenditure Reports from October 2005 to February 2007 to the Ministry of Education, replacement of the shed and water tap in the toilet and many other improvements to the house.

Details of everything related to Rosemont will be presented in a separate Report.

6.2. From EGM 2007 to AGM 2007

The main activities planned for the period between EGM 2007 and AGM 2007 are given below.

6.2.1. EGM 2007

As per the Constitution of MSA (UK) an EGM is to be held. It is planned to hold the EGM in Manchester from 30 March to 1 April. A special document for the EGM has been prepared giving details of every aspect of the gathering to the members.

6.2.2. Farewell Party

A special farewell party for the graduates returning home is planned to be held in the summer. The gathering will be attended by not only those graduate who are returning back to Maldives, but by all the members who graduate from university that year and all the other members who are still undergoing their studies.

The purpose of the gathering is to further enhance ties amongst all the members of the association and give a good moment of celebration for those who have successfully completed their studies.

6.2.3. Go-Teach Project

The idea for the project was conceived during informal discussions held during the MSA (UK) EGM 2006 in Bristol. Hence the Bristol team decided to submit the project to the MSA (UK) Central Committee and Advisory Council for serious consideration due to the benefits and impact of the project.

The project will enable volunteer members of MSA (UK) to teach in an island community for a short period of time during the summer break.

The project has since being given formal approval by the Ministry of Education.

The subject areas that can be taught are any GCSE/GCE O'level/A'level subjects (aimed for students in the island) or any professional/vocational field that is the speciality of the volunteer (aimed for the island community).

The project will be solely carried out in the islands excluding Male'.

The time period for carrying out the project is any time from 01 June 2007 to 15 Sept 2007.

The project outline and application forms for volunteers have been published in the MSA (UK) on 28 February 2007.

Funding is currently being sought and is expected to be finalised in time for execution of the project.

6.2.4. MSA (UK) Awareness Event

As one of our main tasks is to reach out to prospective members of the association, it is planned to hold an awareness event in Male' during the summer, aimed

at school leavers and other potential students who may come to UK for their higher studies.

The details of the event is being finalised, and it is hoped that this event can be held during the summer.

6.2.5. Freshers' Faire and Roadha Veellun

Continuing on from previous years a special freshers' faire is to be held this year, with more specific and purpose oriented features for new students. It is expected to hold the event in the second weekend of the new academic year. Since the event is expected to fall within the holy month of Ramadan, a Roadha veellun and Haaru keyun will be held in combination, promising to be a wonderful ice breaker for new students and an excellent opportunity to make new friends.

6.2.6. Eid Competition

Following on from the success of the Eid competition held for Eid-ul-Adha at the beginning of the year, it is hoped to conduct the competition, this time for the Eid-ul-Fitr.

6.2.7. Special Fund Raising Event

A special fund raising event is being planned, and it is expected to be held around October 2007. The details of the event are not available, however, it is expected that a reasonable amount of funds can be generated from the event. At the moment, the planning process of the event is underway at a reasonably fast speed.

6.2.8. Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Eid ul Adha Celebration

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is expected to be held around 22 December 2007. Since it falls during the joyous occasion of the blessed Eid-ul-Adha it is planned to combine the two occasions and hold a special event.

7. ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Since its election, the Central Committee has been working very closely and holding meetings as often as required in order to discuss, plan and execute actions for the betterment of MSA (UK).

7.1. Office bearers

The Central Committee is consisted of the following members.

Chairperson: -	Mohamed Muizzu (PhD in Structural Engineering, University of Leeds, Leeds)
Vice-Chairperson:-	Jawish Hameed (BSc. Applied Artificial Intelligence and Cybernetics, University of Reading, Reading)
Student Advisor: -	Mohamed Samnoon Fuad (BEng Civil Engineering with Surveying, The City University, London)
Treasurer: -	Aminath Hauzan Nasir (BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance, Southbank University, London)
Secretary:-	Hassan Khalid (Aeronautical Engineering EASA pt 66 license + Foundation Degree, City of Bristol College, Bristol)

7.2. Meetings

The Central Committee has been holding meetings under a carefully planned timetable, based upon the needs of the association and the work load of the members.

So far 15 meetings have been held, the minutes of most of which can be downloaded from the MSA (UK) website.

Out of these meetings, one meeting was held at London where all the members gathered specifically during the weekend of 10-11 February 2007 to hold a working weekend.

All other meetings are held either via MSN Messenger or Skype.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since the report is intended to act as only a guide into the executed/planned activities of MSA (UK) since the current Central Committee was elected at the AGM 2006 up to now, the report may not be exhaustive.

It may very well be the case that by the end of the term of office of the current Central Committee, the planned activities may have various differences, in that some of the activities may not be executed or some new activities are carried out etc.

As stressed in the opening message, the close cooperation of all the members of MSA (UK) are very much required in making MSA (UK) a better association for all of us.