



KEYSTAGE 2 FACT SHEETS

PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION
INFORMATION PACK



PEOPLE'S MAJLIS SECRETARIAT 2024

THE MALDIVIAN CONSTITUTION

A Constitution is the ultimate set of rules that everyone in the country agrees to follow. It makes sure that everyone is treated fairly, and the country runs smoothly.

The current Maldives constitution was written in 2008. It specifies the rights and responsibilities of both the citizens and the state.

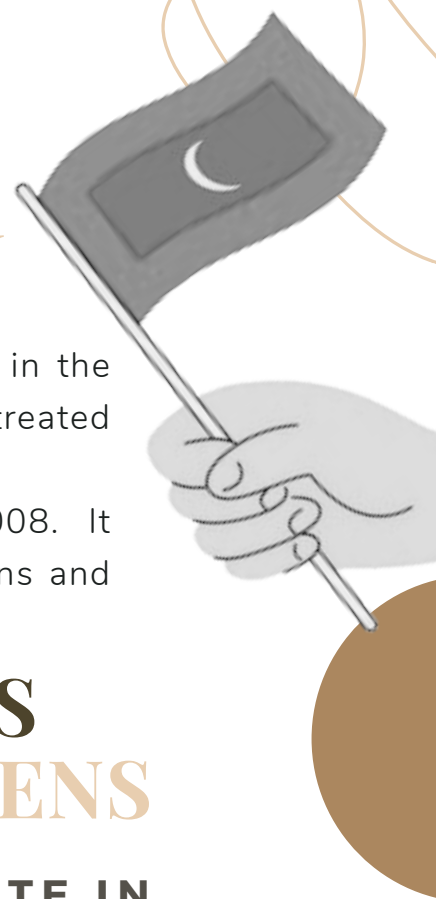
DUTIES OF THE STATE VS DUTIES OF THE CITIZENS

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE STATE IN MALDIVES?

The State's responsibility is to uphold the Constitution's provisions and to protect and promote the freedoms and rights outlined in it. It is the duty of the State:

- To protect and preserve the natural environment, biodiversity, resources, and beauty of the country for the benefit of present and future generations.
- To ensure every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law.
- To guarantee the social and economic rights, progressively realizing them through reasonable measures within its capacity and resources. These measures include providing nutritious food and clean water; housing and clothing; high standards of healthcare; a healthy environment; equal access to communication, media, transportation, and natural resources, and essential services like sewage and electricity systems for all.
- To ensure every Citizen is entitled to all the basic human rights stated in the Constitution such as right to privacy, right to education, right to vote, freedom of expression, etc.

As stated in the Constitution, the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms is inseparable from the performance of responsibilities and duties. A good citizen would have respect for others, as well as personal and national obligations.



WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS OF MALDIVES?

Following are some of the responsibilities of every citizen:

- to uphold and defend the rights and freedoms of others
- to encourage tolerance, respect, and friendship among all individuals and groups
- to contribute to the community's advancement and well-being
- to advance the Maldives' sovereignty, unity, security, integrity, and dignity
- to respect the Constitution and the rule of law
- to advance democratic values and practices in a way that aligns with Islamic tenets.
- to safeguard and uphold the State religion of Islam, culture, language, and heritage of the nation
- to preserve and protect the country's natural environment.
- to respect the national flag, state emblem and the national anthem



FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM

WHAT ARE RIGHTS?

Rights are fundamental entitlements or privileges that individuals possess by virtue of being human. These rights are typically protected and recognized by laws, ethical principles, or social norms.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM IN THE CONSTITUTION OF MALDIVES

Chapter two of the **Constitution** of Maldives clearly lists the basic rights and freedoms that every citizen has.

The constitution guarantees rights and freedoms that are not contrary to the tenets of Islam.

Everyone is entitled to the rights and freedoms included in this Constitution without discrimination of any kind, including race, national origin, color, sex, age, mental or physical disability, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status, or native island.

Special assistance or protection to disadvantaged individuals or groups, or to groups requiring special social assistance, as provided in law is not deemed to be discrimination.

Let's look at some of the fundamental rights ensured by the Constitution of Maldives.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS



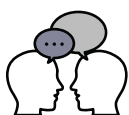
- **Freedom from restraint** - One is free to engage in any conduct or activity that is not expressly prohibited by Islamic Shari'ah or by law.



- **Equality** - Everyone is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law.



- **Privacy** - Everyone has the right to respect their private and family life.



- **Freedom of expression** - Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and the freedom to communicate opinions and expression in a manner that is not contrary to any tenet of Islam.



- **Right to life** - Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS





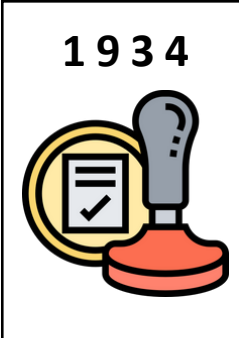
- **Economic and social rights** - Everyone has the right to nutritious food and clean water, clothing and housing, better health care, a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, equal access to means of communication, the establishment of an adequate sewage system, and the establishment of electricity.
- **Freedom from acquiring and imparting knowledge** - Everyone has the right and freedom to acquire and impart knowledge, information, and learning.
- **Special protection to children, young, elderly, and disadvantaged people** - Children and young people, elderly and disadvantaged people are entitled to special protection and special assistance from the family, the community and the State.









CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

- **Right to vote** - Every individual above eighteen years of age has the right to vote in elections, and in public referendums.
- **Freedom of Assembly and Association:** The right to gather and associate with others for peaceful purposes.



THE MALDIVES PARLIAMENT AND CONSTITUTION'S TIMELINE

YEAR	EVENTS
 <p>1153</p>	Maldives converts to Islam
 <p>1880s</p>	Maldives signs a protectorate treaty with Britain.
 <p>1932</p>	The first Constitution of Maldives ratified on 22 December 1932. With the constitution, the first parliament was also established.
 <p>1933</p>	First constitution of Maldives gets abolished.
 <p>1934</p>	Constitution ratified with amendments to the first one.

YEAR	EVENTS
<p>1951</p>	<p>First Political Party formed. "Rayyithunge Muthagaddim Party"</p> 
<p>1953</p> 	<p>Changed from Monarchy to a Republic after a public referendum. Government switches back to a Monarchy in 1954</p>
<p>1965</p> 	<p>Independence from Britain</p> 
<p>1968</p> 	<p>Referendum voted and Second Republic formed</p>
<p>2004</p> 	<p>Political reforms begins The constitution also underwent amendments to reflect good governance, democratic values, and practices</p>
<p>2008</p> 	<p>Constitution ratified on 7 August 2008</p>
<p>2009</p> 	<p>The 17th sitting of Parliament, sworn in on 28th May 2009, consisted of MPs representing different political parties.</p>

SEPARATION OF POWERS: THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE STATE

WHAT IS SEPARATION OF POWERS?

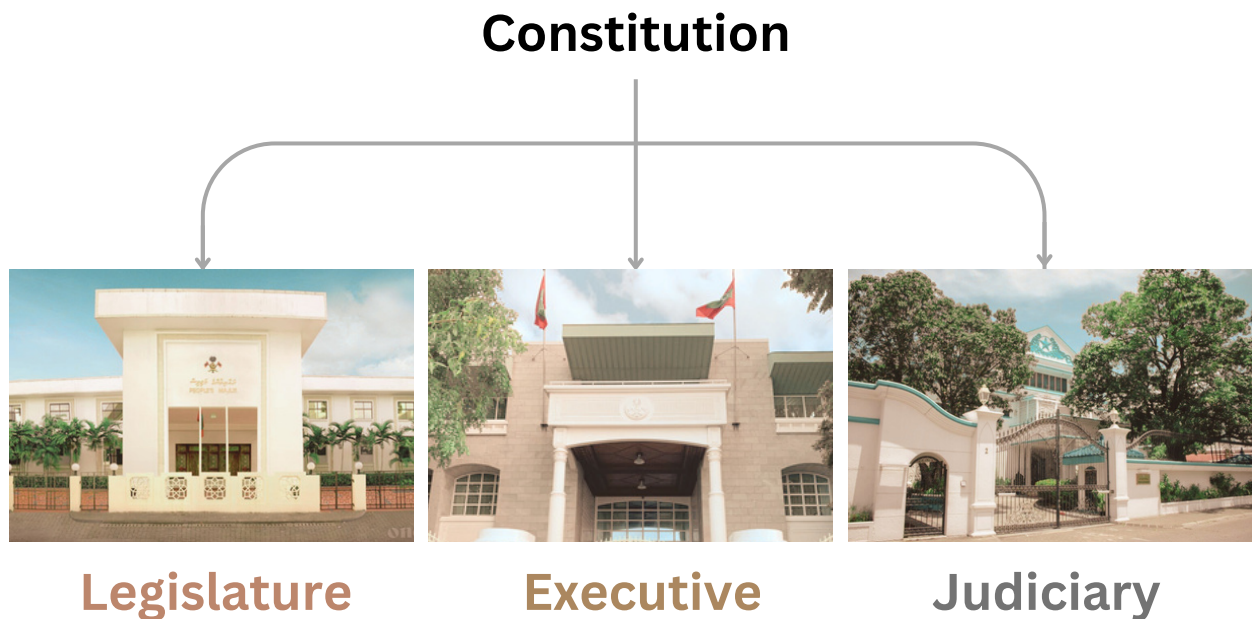
- It is a key feature of a democratic government.
- It means to divide the state into 3 branches: **Executive, Legislature and Judiciary**.
- Each branch has the power to fulfill its responsibilities. Each branch can check the power of the other branch. Power is shared among three branches and no single branch is more powerful than the other.

WHY IS SEPARATION OF POWERS IMPORTANT?

Separation of powers is important because it provides a system of checks and balances. This means each branch checks the exercise of power by the other branch and is accountable to each other. By doing this, abuse of power by one single branch is prevented.

SEPARATION OF POWER IN MALDIVES

The constitution of Maldives lays down the powers and responsibilities of three branches. These are:



LEGISLATURE

The Constitution vests legislative authority of Maldives to the Parliament. The Parliament consist of Members of Parliament (MPs) who are elected through a parliamentary election.



WHAT ARE THE POWERS OF THE LEGISLATURE?

Some of the powers granted for Parliament in chapter three of the Constitution include;

- amendment of the Constitution according to the terms provided
- changing laws, provided that it does not conflict with any Islamic principles
- approval of the annual budget and any extra budget
- holding of public referendums on issues of public importance



EXECUTIVE

The 4th Chapter of the Constitution of Maldives establishes the executive. The executive power is vested in the President. The President of Maldives is the head of state, the government, and the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

WHAT ARE THE POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE?

Some of the powers of Executive include;

- Selecting members as Cabinet Ministers (the Parliament must approve each cabinet member)
- creating important state policies and sharing them with relevant government bodies

- to manage political ties with other countries and international organizations;
- appointing, removing or accepting resignations of Cabinet members and other officials
- appointing the Chief of Justice, and Judges of the Supreme Court (after consulting the Judicial Service Commission and Parliament's confirmation)

JUDICIARY

The sixth chapter of the Constitution establishes the Judiciary.



Judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court, the High Courts and the trial courts as established by law. It is composed of all the courts as well as all the judges and magistrates. The Supreme Court is the highest authority for the administration of justice in the Maldives.

WHAT ARE THE POWERS OF JUDICIARY?

- The Judiciary operates independently, free from undue influence or interference from any power. This independence is crucial for ensuring fair and impartial decision-making.
- The judiciary is responsible for resolving legal disputes brought before the courts. This includes interpreting laws, reviewing evidence, and making decisions based on each case.
- The judiciary explains what laws mean to make sure they are applied fairly and consistently. This includes resolving confusions in laws and providing advice on legal principles.



FUNCTIONS OF PARLIAMENT

LEGISLATION:

One of the main jobs of a parliament is to make and change laws. It creates new laws, makes changes to existing ones, and can also get rid of old laws.



- **Lawmaking:** Lawmakers suggest new laws called bills. They debate about it, get opinions from different people, and then vote on them. Only after this process, the bill can become a law.
- **Amendment of Existing Laws:** The parliament can change old laws to fit new situations. During emergencies, they can quickly make new laws to deal with urgent problems.
- **Repeal of Outdated Laws:** Parliament can get rid of laws that are not needed anymore.
- **Treaties and Conventions:** When the government makes agreements with other countries or international groups, the Parliament (a part of the parliament) needs to give its approval. The Parliament will also make or change laws to follow the agreements they approved.



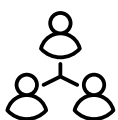
OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE:

Oversight means the parliament's job of watching and checking what the government does. They make sure the government is doing things that are good for the country and following the rules. Here are some ways they do it:



- **Questioning Cabinet Ministers and members of the government:** Members of parliament can ask government officials questions about how they are doing their job.
- **Checking the Budget:** Parliament looks at and approves the government's yearly budget. They want to make sure that the money is being spent the right way.
- **Conducting Inquiries:** They can investigate different issues or problems that people or groups bring to their attention.
- If needed, parliament can vote to remove certain officials from their positions. This includes the President, Vice President, Judges, Cabinet Members, and others.
- When the President picks people for important jobs, like ministers or judges, parliament checks if they are a good fit for the job.

REPRESENTATION:



The main job of parliament is to make sure that the government decisions and policies match what the people want. It acts like a link between the government and the citizens, letting people have a say in how the country is run through their chosen representatives.

UNDERSTAND OUR PARLIAMENT

WHAT IS THE PEOPLE'S MAJLIS?

In most countries, the group of people who make the laws is usually called the parliament. In the Maldives, the parliament is called **The People's Majlis**, and it's the place where all the elected representatives, chosen by the people, meet to discuss important topics and make the necessary rules and plans to make the community or country a better and fairer place for everyone in it.



WHO IS A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT OR MP?

A person who has been chosen by the people to represent them in the Parliament is known as a Member of Parliament (MP). Each Member of Parliament represents a group of people of a specific area called a constituency or Dhaairaa.

The 19th Parliament sworn in 2019 had 87 members elected according to the constituencies. However, with the increase in population, the 20th Parliament would comprise 93 members. The election for 20th Parliament will take place in 2024.



HOW DOES THE PARLIAMENT WORK?

Parliament members have meetings called preliminary sittings, where all the MPs debate and discuss important topics put forward to the Parliament. Parliament members also work in specific Committees, where they investigate matters in detail before they make decisions.



Preliminary sittings



Committee Meetings

The operations of the Parliament are governed by 2 major documents;

CONSTITUTION OF MALDIVES

STANDING ORDER
(OR THE RULES THAT DEFINE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARLIAMENT)



RULES AND LAWS

WHAT IS A RULE?

Rules tell us what we should and should not do. We have different rules everywhere; in our families, schools, parks, roads, restaurants, offices, hospitals, etc.

We need rules in our daily lives so people do the right things, like:

- showing respect and treating everyone fairly
- taking care of yourself, others and the surroundings
- staying safe and organised



WHAT IS A LAW?

A law is like a special rule or group of rules that a country or community makes. The government makes sure everyone follows these rules. Laws help everyone know how to behave, what they can do, and what they should not do. They are important to make sure our community is fair and organized.



WHY DO WE NEED RULES AND LAWS?

- **Order and Peace:** Laws help everyone know how to behave, so things don't get messy or confusing in our community.
- **Rights and Freedom:** Laws make sure that each person has their own rights and freedom, and they keep those rights safe.
- **Problem solving:** Laws tell us what's okay and not okay to do, so we can avoid arguments and fights. They help us solve problems in a peaceful way.
- **Being Fair:** Laws make sure everyone is treated the same and that nobody is treated unfairly.

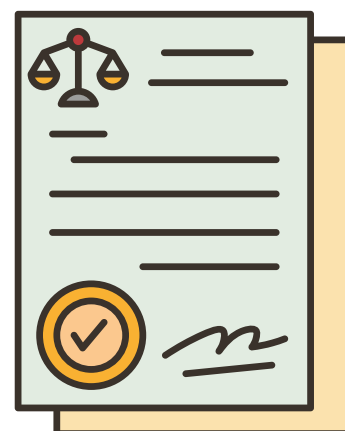
- **Leadership and Rules:** Laws also tell leaders and people who work for the government how to do their jobs. They make sure that leaders follow the rules too.
- **Taking Care of Nature:** Laws give us rules to protect the environment and keep our world safe and healthy.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RULES AND LAWS

RULES	LAWS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules can be made in different situations by different people • Rules have to be followed only by the group of people involved in the situation • Consequences are made differently by those who make the rules for that situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws are made by the Leaders of a country • Laws have to be followed by everyone in the country • Consequences are made by the lawmakers and are written down so everyone knows the consequences and everyone gets the same consequences.

WHAT IS A BILL?

A bill is an idea for a new law. Members of Parliament discuss it and decide if it's a good idea after researching it and giving it a lot of thought. If they agree, it is sent to the President to see if he agrees too. If he accepts it, then it becomes a law and gets written down for everyone to see in a special government newspaper.



PATH OF A BILL

The following flowchart represents the stages a Bill goes through to become a Law.



1. DRAFTING

First, people come up with a 'BILL' or a new idea for a law or changes they want to make to an old one.

The member of Parliament who presents this idea is called the "Sponsor of the Bill."

2. FIRST READING

The new law idea (also known as a Bill) is introduced to the Parliament. They just read the title of the idea at this point.

3. SECOND READING

All the members discuss the main ideas of the law. They don't change anything yet. At this stage, they vote whether they will accept the Bill to continue working on it or not.

If the Bill is accepted into the Parliament, another group, called a committee, looks closely at the idea. They get advice from experts and make suggestions to improve it. The Committee then shares a report with everyone in the Parliament.

4. THIRD READING

The Parliament talks about the idea one last time. Members can suggest changes.

Then, everyone votes on whether to make it a law or not. If the majority say yes, it goes on to the next step to become a law. If not, they can send it back to discuss more changes or cancel the idea.

5. PRESIDENTIAL AGREEMENT

If the Parliament agrees, the President needs to say it's okay too. The President can agree and make it a law, suggest changes, or send it back to the Parliament for more discussion.

6. Publishing and Following the Law



If the President agrees, the idea becomes a law. They publish it in the National Gazette, and everyone must start following the new law on a specific day.

BUDGET PROCESS



WHAT IS A NATIONAL BUDGET?

The national budget, or government budget, is like a big money plan. It shows how much money the government thinks it will get, how much it plans to spend, and if it needs to borrow any money. This plan is for a specific time, usually a year. It's like a detailed map that guides the government on how to use money for different things like schools, health, and other important services.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL BUDGET?

- **Planned Money In and Out:** The budget shows how much money the government expects to get and how much it plans to spend during the year.
- **What Actually Happened Last Year:** There's a report on how much money the government really got and spent in the previous year.
- **Predictions for Future:** The budget includes predictions about the future, like how much the country's economy will grow and how prices might change.
- **Where the Money Goes:** Details are given about how the government plans to divide the money among different areas, like schools, health, and other important things they want to focus on.

WHERE DOES THE GOVERNMENT USUALLY SPEND ITS MONEY ON (EXPENDITURE)?

- **Health:** Taking care of people's well-being, hospitals, and healthcare.
- **Economic Affairs:** Dealing with money matters, businesses, and the economy.
- **Education:** Schools, teachers, and everything related to learning.
- **Housing and Community Amenities:** Making sure people have good places to live and community facilities.



- **Social Protection:** Helping and supporting people who might need it.
- **Environmental Protection:** Taking care of the environment and nature.
- **Defense and Public Order and Safety:** Keeping the country safe and maintaining law and order.
- **General Public Services:** Providing basic services that everyone needs.
- **Recreation, Culture, and Religion:** Supporting activities for fun, cultural events, and religious practices.

WHAT ARE WAYS THE COUNTRY GETS MONEY (REVENUE):

Taxes:



- **Tourism Tax:** When tourists visit, they pay a tax.
- **Business and Property Tax:** Companies and landowners pay taxes too.
- **Goods & Services Tax:** Everyone pays a bit of tax when they buy things or get services.

Other Money Sources:



- **Fees:** Sometimes, people pay fees for certain services.
- **Fines:** If someone breaks a rule, they might pay a fine.
- **Rent for Resorts:** If resorts are on government land, they pay rent.

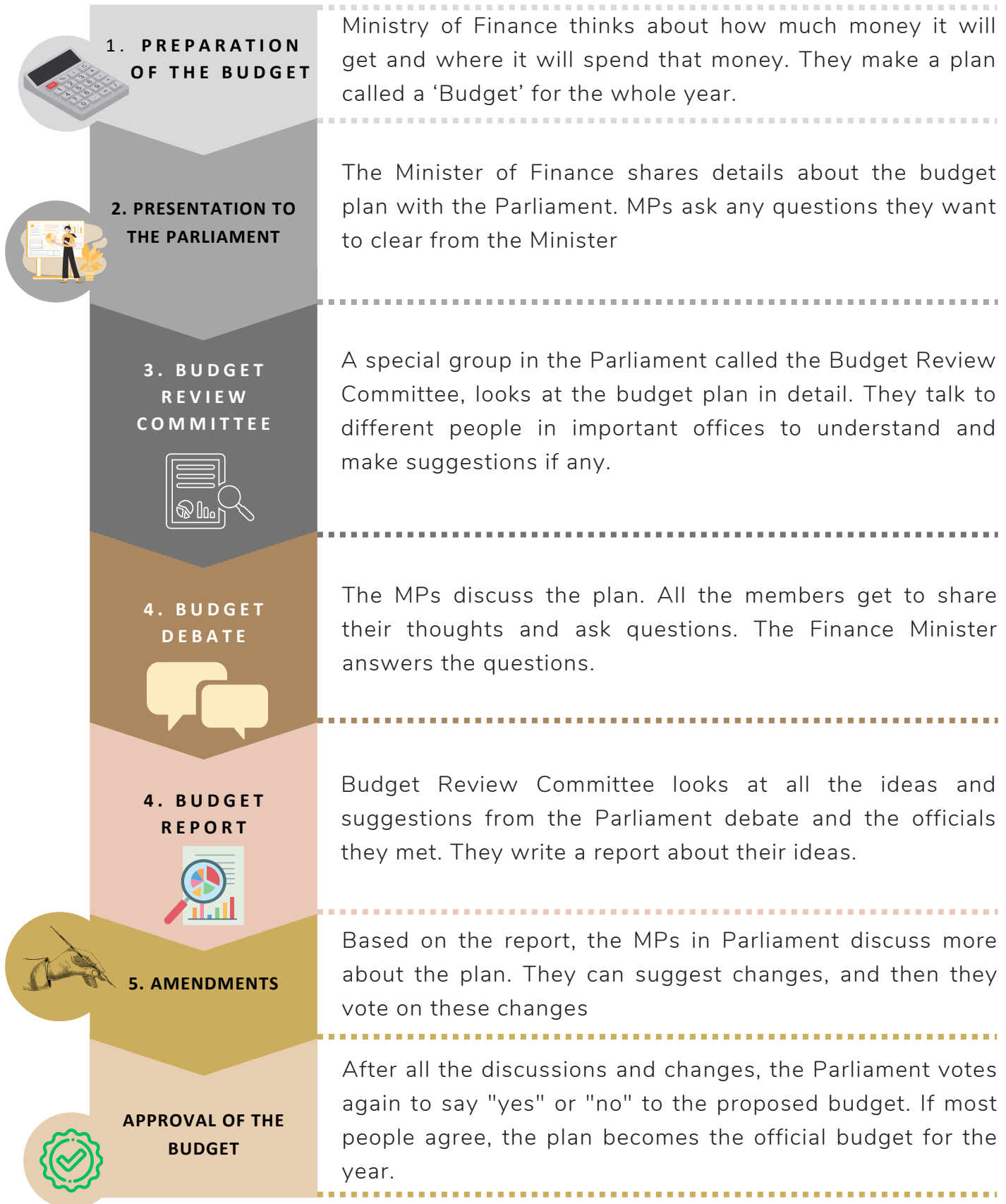


Help from Others:

- **Foreign Aid:** Other countries might give money to help.
- **Grants:** Special funds or aid from other places.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN THE NATIONAL BUDGET?

One of the main responsibilities of the Parliament is to approve or pass the National Budget. The flowchart below details how this is done:



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENT

WHY IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

Having people actively take part in decision-making is important for a good democracy. When citizens get involved, they can share their opinions on laws, make sure leaders are doing their job right, and have a role in choices that impact them. It's a way for everyone to have a voice and keep our community strong.

There are several ways in which the public can participate in Parliament

VOTING



Citizens can vote to choose the people who will represent them in the parliament. This helps shape the makeup and decisions of the legislative body.

CONTACTING REPRESENTATIVES



Citizens can contact their MPs through:



Emails using the Parliament website.



Public forums where citizens, experts, and groups can share their thoughts on laws.

VISITING THE PARLIAMENT



Citizens can visit Parliament, watch sittings or committee meetings, and even take guided tours. The Parliament Office also offers educational programs for schools.

PETITIONS



Petitions on specific issues that can be sent to Parliament.

ONLINE PLATFORM



Online platforms provided by the Parliament website, which includes information on MPs, meeting minutes, sittings agenda, bills, and committee reports.

LIVE STREAMING



Live streaming of preliminary sittings and committee meetings on YouTube.

SOCIAL MEDIA



The Parliament shares important updates and invites public comments through social media handles. Citizens can comment on bills through these platforms.

SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE PARLIAMENT



People can write letters to Parliament, addressing them to the Speaker, to express their concerns.

