



## **FAO MALDIVES PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FAO Supports Pest Management in the Maldives FAO workshop, mist blowers and protective clothing to support pest eradication in agricultural islands**

**Male, 12 September 2006** – “Improved pest management is a priority for the Agriculture sector. The sprayers and the training will enhance both income generation and food security in the islands” Yon Fernandez de Larrinoa, FAO Officer in Charge for the Maldives said today.

FAO is distributing 56 motorized mist blowers and 300 kits of protective clothing to 20 atolls throughout the Maldives.

The FAO Coordinator’s comments arose at the occasion of the opening ceremony for a workshop entitled “Workshop on pest management, safe use of pesticides and mist blower operation and maintenance”. The workshop will train 26 farmers on pest management and pesticide hazards.

The training and distribution is part of a Trinidad and Tobago funded project which has already conducted an assessment of boat damage in eight atolls, distributed 400 000 seedlings and cuttings of fruit trees and vegetable plants, as well as tools for more than 4 000 Maldivian farming families.

The blowers will ensure that each atoll will be equipped to combat various tree or plant pest and disease outbreaks rapidly. In 2004, 9 000 people suffered medically, economically and environmentally when agrarian islands in the Maldives were invaded by gypsy moths

FAO is the UN’s lead agency for the rehabilitation of the fisheries and agriculture sectors in the Maldives. Whilst FAO and the Maldivian government’s immediate priority following the tsunami disaster has been to restart the livelihoods of coastal communities as soon as possible, the longer-term strategy is to improve the sectors as a whole with a view to improving the livelihood opportunities of affected communities. FAO’s programme to assist more than 50 Tsunami affected islands and over 40 000 Maldivian farmers and fishers will conclude in October.