

A reassuring presence

By AHMED AMEEL

MANAGING DIRECTOR, ALLIED INSURANCE COMPANY



AHMED AMEEL holds a Masters of Science in Insurance and Risk Management, from City University in London. He is also an Associate of the Chartered Insurance Institute (ACII), and an Associate of the Malaysian Insurance Institute (AMII). He was appointed Managing Director of Allied Insurance Company in 2013 and has been with the company for over 20 years. He has played a vital role in the company's product design and development, claims administration and has been a major contributor to the success of the company.

The Allied Insurance Company of the Maldives started life in 1985 as a joint venture between the United Kingdom's Commercial Union Assurance Company and the Maldives' State Trading Organisation (STO), the nationwide leader of all commercial activities in Maldives. In early 1987, STO bought back Commercial Union's stake, establishing Allied Insurance as a subsidiary of the organisation.

Today, under local management, the company is one of Maldives' largest financial entities and its leading insurers, making an important contribution to the growth and development of the country. Allied has enjoyed tremendous growth, both in terms of volume and profitability.

Our customers come from across the geographical divides of this tiny island nation: whether a fisherman with a couple of boats or major resort operators, we strive to meet the needs of all Maldivians.

Which is why in 2011, Allied Insurance entered into a public-private partnership with the government to help set up Aasandha "health insurance for all" scheme. The health service will cover emergency treatment, domestic emergency evacuation, inpatient and outpatient services, medicine under prescription, and diagnostic and therapeutic services.

For example, the company provides a range of solutions to the tourism and hospitality sector, offering policies that are specifically targeted for particular requirements such as diving. Our inbound Travel Insurance is exclusively designed for the needs of holidaymakers. The plan gives tourists complete peace of mind. The plan covers personal accident – including death and loss of limb resulting from accidents – emergency medical services, hospital benefits, loss of passport, personal liability, and travel delay. Allied Insurance, in collaboration with Divers Alert Network (DAN) has specifically designed insurance policies to protect divers, instructors, diving centres and other designated diving businesses. Our hull policy is useful for safari vessel operators in the hospitality sector as it covers risks associated with navigational operations of vessels including damages to the boat, machinery, and equipment.

For companies working in the tourism sector, consequential loss insurance covers hoteliers' loss of profit and other financial losses if the company

needs to vacate the premises due to any peril covered under the fire insurance policy. Similarly, fire and additional perils insurance covers business properties and homes against risk of fire and other such perils including protection to contents of the premises such as machinery, equipment, stock, furniture, etc.

Reflecting the growing demand in the Maldives for shariah-compliant finance, we set up the Ayady Takaful window. Takaful is commonly referred to as Islamic insurance; this is due to the apparent similarity between the contract of kafalah (guarantee) and that of insurance. In takaful, the policyholders are joint investors with the insurance vendor (the takaful operator), who acts as a manager or an entrepreneurial agent for the policyholders. The policyholders share in the investment pool's profits as well as its losses. A positive return on policies is not legally guaranteed, as any fixed profit guarantee would be akin to receiving interest.

The Maldives' different regulatory bodies and relevant financial institutions have played a significant role in the development of the insurance industry, making Maldives a destination where innovative investments can be considered. Our financial sectors are growing, and there are many infrastructure projects underway.

Recognising the important role of the tourism industry, Allied Insurance is proud to be a sponsor of the MATATO Maldives Travel Awards, the hospitality industry's most prestigious prize.

The Maldives' insurance industry has developed considerably since 2004 when a new set of regulations were introduced. The growth of Takaful insurance, the proposed implementation of medical health insurance for all Maldivian citizens and the introduction of mandatory third-party motor vehicle liability insurance in 2012 are expected to be the main growth drivers. The Maldives has a competitive insurance industry and over the forecast period the industry is expected to experience strong competition in tourism-aligned insurance products such as travel and diving insurance. Tourism is considered to be the primary revenue earner and is expected to be a growth driver for the insurance industry, with new products created in partnership with the government and other key stakeholders.

With its long-standing experience of the local market, Allied Insurance Company is now poised to play a further role in the development of the insurance industry in Maldives, as well as in the wider economy. **E**