Background

Nearly 4.6 million of the total population in Sri Lanka are reported as undernourished. Food security has been further undermined by repeat natural disasters.

From 25-26 May, heavy monsoon rains over the southwestern Bay of Bengal began inundating southwestern Sri Lanka, causing severe flooding and landslides in 5 river basins, affecting 15 districts, from a total of 25, mainly in the south of the country. Rain continued intermittently over the following three days, leaving people stranded and cut off from both road and river access. Two major towns were completely inundated, over 8,000 houses were destroyed or damaged, and roads throughout the affected area were washed out.

A preliminary assessment indicated that up to 75,000 people are in urgent need of assistance, with 495,000 people moderately affected and 565,000 people indirectly affected by flooding and landslides. 212 people were confirmed dead with at least 79 people missing. 68,730 people were temporarily displaced to 365 camps, operated by district governments.

Despite flooding in the south and west, drought conditions are ongoing in places, particularly in northern districts. Water levels in some reservoirs are at 30% of capacity vs 60% this time last year.

The March 2017 Maha harvest was less than 50% of normal production, with 900,000 people suffering from food insecurity and 25,000 severely food insecure in four worst affected districts in need of urgent assistance.

FUNDING ALERT

Severe floods and landslides due to monsoon rains have affected up to 1.1 million people in Sri Lanka.

WFP is preparing to assist 75,000 of the most vulnerable people in the hardest-hit flood areas for a two month period, subject to funding. This is in addition to 25,000 people who need assistance in drought affected areas. Drought conditions in the north are ongoing despite heavy rains in the south.

As a result of the flooding, WFP is seeking additional funding bringing the total funding required to assist those affected by the drought and the flooding to USD 5.7 million.
Impact Assessment

A joint impact assessment following the drought showed that 900,000 people suffered from food insecurity as a result. It also found that poor food consumption was twice as likely to occur in female-headed as in male-headed households. Loss of income led to increased levels of debt among the poor, and diminished the seed-base of paddy in the country for subsequent plantings.

Following the flooding, WFP and the Ministry of Disaster Management conducted an initial assessment using the 72-hour assessment approach. Estimates derived from this assessment indicate that of the total of 1.1 million impacted, up to 75,000 people are in the most urgent need of assistance.

WFP Flooding Response

Daily meals are provided by the government to people taking refuge in the camps. The Ministry of Disaster Management made a written request to WFP for immediate food assistance in order to enhance the minimal cooked meals that are being provided. In response, WFP provided a one-off in-kind ration of pulses which was distributed across nine of the most affected districts. This covered a portion of the basic food basket with 100g rations for 75,000 people for three days.

A response is also being launched, aiming to provide cash-based assistance to 75,000 people severely affected by flooding for two months as people return to their homes, subject to funding. The monthly household ration will be approximately $65. The targeting of beneficiaries will be facilitated, to the extent possible, through the government social safety net programme, Samurdhi.

This is in addition to planned drought assistance which will see 25,000 people receiving cash based assistance per month for a two month period. Each beneficiary household of four members (the average family size in Sri Lanka) will receive USD 65 per month as unrestricted cash assistance, equivalent to approximately Rs 10,000.

WFP urgently requires USD 2.7 million to meet the funding shortfall for drought and flood response, as indicated in the below table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Update</th>
<th>Drought</th>
<th>Flooding</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Cost</td>
<td>USD 3.1 million</td>
<td>USD 2.6 million</td>
<td>USD 5.7 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Secured</td>
<td>USD 1.9 million</td>
<td>USD 1.1 million</td>
<td>USD 3.0 million</td>
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<td>Funding Shortfall</td>
<td>USD 1.2 million</td>
<td>USD 1.5 million</td>
<td>USD 2.7 million</td>
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