

Project Number: 201064 | **Project Category:** Emergency Preparedness Activity
Project Approval Date: February 17, 2017 | **Planned Start Date:** February 20, 2017
Actual Start Date: February 20, 2017 | **Project End Date:** May 20, 2017
Financial Closure Date: December 31, 2017

Contact Info

Thushara Keerthiratne
Thushara.Keerthiratne@wfp.org

Country Director
Brenda Barton

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Specific Preparedness Activities in Sri Lanka due to severe drought impact

Standard Project Report 2017

World Food Programme in Sri Lanka, Democratic Socialist Republic of (LK)



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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Achievements at Country Level

WFP saw significant achievements in Sri Lanka in 2017, following the sustainable development goal (SDG) 2 road map. In particular, the National Country Strategic Review (CSR) on Food Security and Nutrition towards Zero Hunger was launched by the Government of Sri Lanka and the WFP Executive Director in February 2017. The CSR provided a rich consultative process and led to eight recommendations. The findings and recommendations laid the foundations for the development of WFP's Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022), approved by the WFP Executive Board in November 2017.

With regard to resilience building activities, the first wave of cash-based resilience building/livelihood diversification projects, supported by a USD 4 million multi-year grant from the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), was rolled out. For the first-time, a USD 2 million grant was secured from the Peacebuilding Fund for 'Empower', a joint initiative of WFP and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The project, which is planned to be implemented in 2018, aims to provide livelihood support to conflict-affected women.

In the face of another year of climatic shocks—both drought and floods—WFP was called on to assist, both through emergency response and preparedness. During floods and landslides in May 2017 following Cyclone Mora, the Ministry of Disaster Management requested WFP to carry out a rapid (72-hour) impact assessment, which was subsequently used as a basis to inform the national programmatic response. Furthermore, WFP assisted the Ministry in establishing a monitoring system called 'Platform for Real-Time Information and Situation Monitoring' (PRISM) to support its efforts to deal with Sri Lanka's worst drought in 40 years. In this context, WFP also provided relief assistance to 109,000 beneficiaries affected by drought and floods.

WFP continued its partnership with the Department of Samurdhi Development, which runs the country's largest social safety net programme. In the aftermath of drought, followed by the second year of floods and landslides, WFP delivered cash-based transfers through the network of Samurdhi community banks. The partnership aimed also to strengthen the shock-responsiveness of the national safety net system to enable effective and efficient assistance for those affected by disasters.

Country Context and Response of the Government

Sri Lanka graduated to a lower middle-income country in 2010, following nearly three decades of armed conflict, which ended in 2009. The country ranked 73rd out of 188 countries in the 2016 Human Development Index. In relation to food security and nutrition, Sri Lanka ranked 84th out of 119 countries in the 2017 Global Hunger Index. According to the 2017 State of the World Food Security and Nutrition Report, 4.6 million Sri Lankans (22 percent of the population) were found to be undernourished. The degree of food insecurity was fragmented in the country with regional disparities being prevalent. The share of food-insecure and poor populations was higher in the Northern, Eastern and Uva Provinces, mainly in Mullaitivu, Killinochchi, Batticaloa, Badulla and Moneragala Districts. A nutritious diet was unaffordable to many in the estate sector as well as in the Eastern districts.

According to Sri Lanka's recently released demographic and health survey (2016), the prevalence of acute undernutrition among children aged 0–59 months was 15 percent, placing Sri Lanka among the countries with the highest prevalence in the world and indicative of a critical public health situation. In contrast, the prevalence of stunting was low at 17 percent according to the World Health Organization's (WHO) cut-off values for public health significance. Almost one in six newborns in Sri Lanka had low birth weight (<2,500 g), indicating a vicious cycle of malnutrition and the need for improved maternal nutrition. Regional disparities existed for both stunting and wasting levels, with children in the estate sector and rural sector being more vulnerable to malnutrition than those in the urban sector. According to a nutrition survey among primary school children conducted by the Medical Research Institute in 2016, one in three children aged 6–12 years was found to be thin (low body mass index for age) and one in five anaemic. The prevalence of thinness ranged from 20 percent in Colombo to 46.3 percent in Nuwara Eliya, where half of the population lived in the estate sector. If not prevented, malnutrition will continue to affect school-aged children, negatively impacting their ability to learn and develop.

While Sri Lanka achieved close to universal participation in primary education, it continued to face challenges in ensuring the quality of education and retention for secondary education according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey from 2012. Completion rates were very high at over 98 percent for primary education, but dropped to 84 percent for lower secondary education level. Low quality of education service provision and consequentially low learning outcomes remained issues of great concern across all levels—primary, secondary and tertiary—with significant disparities across regions and population groups. Learning outcomes were poorest in the former conflict-affected areas of the North and East as well as the Central and Uva Provinces.

Sri Lanka remained highly vulnerable to climate change, being the fourth most climate-change-affected country in 2016 according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2018. In fact, in 2016 and 2017, Sri Lanka experienced the worst drought in 40 years, which resulted in a significant decline in rice paddy production—the lowest in the last ten years. The drought impacted 20 out of 25 districts and led to overall significant crop losses, increased debt levels, and reduced agricultural labour opportunities. The effects were detrimental to food security and nutrition, income levels and access to water cultivation, particularly amongst hardest-hit communities. The joint impact assessments by WFP, the Ministry of Disaster Management and humanitarian actors found that approximately 340,000 individuals were severely food-insecure, with some families resorting to negative coping strategies such as selling livelihood assets or taking children out of school. In contrast, in May 2017, the drought affected communities of Sri Lanka were hit by Tropical Cyclone Mora that caused the worst floods in 14 years. The floods spread across five major river basins, affecting approximately 620,000 people and resulting in 202 deaths and the destruction of thousands of houses.

The Government of Sri Lanka continued to implement its development priorities as articulated in the Vision 2025 and Public Investment Programme (2017–2020), aiming to address food insecurity, malnutrition and climate shocks as part of its commitment to achieving the sustainable development goal (SDG) 2: zero hunger. In this context, the Government led the consultation process for the national strategic review of food security and nutrition, which contributed to the design of WFP's Country Strategic Plan (2018–2022) for Sri Lanka. Strategic review recommendations were used to develop strategies and action plans under the National Multi-Sector Action Plan of Nutrition (NMSAPN). Given the increased vulnerability to natural disasters and fragmented poverty status, national social safety net programmes were crucial to improving the livelihoods of the people. In 2017, 17 social assistance and cash-based transfer programmes were active under the national social protection systems. The Samurdhi social welfare programme implemented by the Ministry of Social Empowerment's Department of Samurdhi

Development was the largest social protection system in Sri Lanka, benefiting 1.4 million families. Operating with more than 14,000 staff and more than 1,000 community bank branches, the programme assisted low-income and needy communities through the provision of social security, social welfare, development of human capital, promotion of livelihood development activities and provision of microfinance.

WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

WFP is transitioning towards providing a more comprehensive range of technical assistance and capacity development to support the Government's efforts to: 1) reduce undernutrition among children aged 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW); 2) increase food intake and school attendance among schoolchildren in food-insecure areas; 3) enhance vulnerable households' resilience to shocks and facilitate adaptation to climate change; and 4) increase government capacities to address food and nutrition insecurity as well as strengthening emergency preparedness and response. The transitional **country programme (2016–2017)**, with an approved budget of USD 19.7 million, focused on improving food and nutrition security, and building the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate shocks, through four components elaborated below.

Nutritional support for vulnerable groups: WFP aimed to provide technical assistance to the Government in treating moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) amongst children aged 6–59 months and PLW as well as in addressing micronutrient deficiencies. WFP's objective was to support the Government with technical assistance to improve the quality and quantity of locally-produced fortified food as well as promoting the consumption of fortified and nutritious food.

School meals programme: Complementing the Government's extensive national school meals programme which covers 1.2 million children, WFP sought to provide school meals to 158,000 schoolchildren in the Northern Province where food insecurity and undernutrition were the highest in the country. WFP advanced the plans to progressively transfer the school meals programme to the Government through technical assistance and policy advice to move towards one harmonized national school meals programme that follows international standards. Government officials participated in the Global Child Nutrition Forum which led to follow-up discussions with the line ministries and subsequently the Government decided to increase the coverage of the programme to ensure that vulnerable children have full access to education.

Resilience building to reduce risk and vulnerability to shocks: WFP's objective was to cooperate with and provide technical assistance to the Government to identify the most heavily climate-affected communities and households for inclusion in resilience building activities. Communities in 13 highly vulnerable districts were targeted for food assistance-for-assets activities and marketable skills training with the aim of providing them with opportunities to diversify their livelihoods and overcome food and nutrition insecurity. The resilience building programme was designed to link with the Government's social protection programmes. The most vulnerable households which were covered under the national social protection systems were prioritized for WFP's livelihood development and resilience building activities.

Emergency preparedness and response: WFP focused on providing technical advice and capacity support to the Government during the floods, landslides and drought while standing ready to deliver relief assistance in the form of food or cash-based transfers when needed. WFP launched the Emergency Operation 201072 (April–October 2017), with an approved budget of USD 3 million, to assist the Government with relief assistance to communities affected by drought and floods. The operation provided an opportunity to pilot the implementation of cash-based transfers through the nationwide network of community banks under Samurdhi, the national social safety net system, and to test the shock-responsiveness of the system.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

WFP's overall support to the Government during the two-year country programme was restricted by a lack of resources. In 2017, the component of the country programme focused on nutrition support for vulnerable groups faced serious resource challenges, and with no new funding received during the year, the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) programme could not be implemented.

Fortunately, the Country Office's trust fund—the Joint Programme of the Sustainable Development Goals Fund (SDG-F)—permitted WFP to increase its technical support to the Ministry of Health in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Initiatives carried out under the trust fund aimed to enhance the quality and quantity of the locally-produced nutritious corn-soya blend Thriposha, as well as explore the potential of rice fortification in Sri Lanka while continuing to support the Ministry of Health in strengthening the national nutrition surveillance system.

Through its school meals programme, in 2017 WFP provided a daily balanced meal for 158,300 children in the Northern Province using a donation from the Government of Sri Lanka (in-kind rice as well as cash for vegetables and condiments). The donation from the Government of Sri Lanka was complemented by multi-year carry-over funds from Canada and a donation of canned fish from Japan. WFP also mobilized more resources, including from emerging donors in the public and private sector, as was the case involving consultations with domestic private sector companies and provincial authorities, which ultimately led to contributions from two new private sector donors in 2017.



Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	6,540	6,540	13,080
Children (5-18 years)	102,603	96,663	199,266
Adults (18 years plus)	43,161	48,393	91,554
Total number of beneficiaries in 2017	152,304	151,596	303,900





Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Country Programme	1,876	241	494	-	291	2,902
Single Country EMOP	-	-	23	-	-	23
Total Food Distributed in 2017	1,876	241	517	-	291	2,925



Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Country Programme	1,804,614	-	-
Single Country EMOP	2,844,243	-	-
Total Distributed in 2017	4,648,856	-	-

Supply Chain

WFP purchased commodities locally, regionally and internationally in 2017. Split lentils were locally purchased, as beneficiaries preferred domestically grown varieties, which do not need pre-soaking. In addition, the local purchase of lentils significantly reduced delivery times and supported the local markets and small farmers. While local suppliers delivered the commodities to district warehouses, the Government took the title of internationally purchased WFP food commodities at the entry ports, and was responsible for laboratory testing, clearance of the cargo, as well as the transport to warehouses in Colombo, district warehouses and finally to the distribution points. An in-kind donation of 128 mt of dried fruits from Qatar arrived infested and was declared to be unfit for human consumption by the laboratory testing authority of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the consignment was stored at the central warehouse in Colombo, awaiting disposal in accord with procedures.

In March 2017, WFP supported the Ministry of Health to conduct a supply chain assessment of Thripasha, the locally-produced nutritious corn-soya blend. The following main areas for improvement were identified: 1) procurement and quality control of raw materials and flaws in the Thripasha supply chain (lack of proper storage facilities at district and divisional level); 2) improper logistics management in the estate sector; 3) poor knowledge of food storage and handling by responsible staff; 4) delays in transport and inaccurate record keeping; and 5) food spoilage during transport and wastage during storage. The findings of the assessment have been endorsed by the Ministry and will enable the Government and the Thripasha factory to identify the types of tools that may be required to optimize the process. Based on the recommendations, the Government of Sri Lanka has taken actions to improve the identified shortcomings. Following the assessment, WFP organized a train-the-trainers workshop on warehouse management in seven of the nine provinces in Sri Lanka. The workshop has resulted in a better understanding of the gaps in the supply chain among Ministry of Health staff. However, it was noted that further assistance in this area would still be required.

WFP continued to strengthen the implementation of the Ministry of Disaster Management's national emergency preparedness plan in accord with the memorandum of understanding between WFP and the Ministry. As one of the first countries to be selected, in October 2017, WFP held an emergency logistics train-the-trainers workshop for over 30 participants from the Government, military, private sector, humanitarian and non-governmental organizations. The workshop covered strategic and operational emergency logistics, focusing on international emergency case studies. It aimed to provide practical exercises, promote the application of lessons learned and the

process of preparing a concept of operations (ConOps). The workshop sought to prepare the Ministry of Disaster Management and its partners to effectively respond to natural disasters or other emergencies by providing necessary support to the affected population. The workshop participants committed to training their subordinates and to rolling the training out to the regional and district levels.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Canned Fish	-	339	339
Split Lentils	368	-	368
Vegetable Oil	-	154	154
Total	368	492	861
Percentage	42.8%	57.2%	

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

The combined efforts by the Government and WFP to address moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and low birth weight through supplementary feeding have not been effective owing to a lack of resources that led to the interruption of WFP's treatment of MAM programme. The lack of an appropriate treatment protocol and implementation modality for MAM and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) at the national level as well as clear criteria to target children suffering from MAM had been identified as the main challenge and will require further improvements.

Recent assessments of the production, supply chain and efficacy of the locally produced corn-soya blend Thripasha have been conducted with WFP assistance. WFP supported the Government in taking up the recommendations made by WFP-supported experts to strengthen the national MAM treatment programme. As a result, the Ministry of Health, through the Secretary of Health, has established a committee to develop an improved product for MAM. Currently the revised formula with increased energy density is being tested at the Institute of Technology. Furthermore, the Thripasha factory is putting in place a work plan to achieve standards issued by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and good manufacturing practices, as well as budgeting for the procurement of improved equipment, for example for electronic dosing to ensure the appropriate addition of vitamins and minerals.

The evaluation of WFP's portfolio in Sri Lanka (2011-2015) was published in January 2017. The six primary recommendations from the evaluation were to: 1) engage the Government as a full partner in the development of its Country Strategic Plan (CSP); 2) encourage all United Nations agencies to coordinate and streamline their activities in line with Sri Lanka's middle-income country status; 3) support the needs of internally displaced people; 4) continue offering specialist support to multi-sector nutrition approaches; 5) hand the WFP school meals programme over to the Government and integrate it with the national programme; and 6) strengthen economic analysis to inform the CSP development and programmatic interventions. During the year, WFP has taken action to address the recommendations of the evaluation and monitors closely their implementation.

Efforts were made to join forces with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to carry out an impact evaluation and monitor nutrition outcomes of food-assistance-for-assets projects. However, due to limited funding to establish baseline data, this has not yet been accomplished. The Country Office continues to advocate with donors the importance of gathering evidence on nutrition-sensitive interventions. Throughout 2017, WFP worked closely with the Government to progressively increase its ownership of the school meals programme in the Northern Province, as foreseen in the transition to the CSP. In preparation for the Government to subsume the school meals programme, WFP has advocated for Government commitment to adopt the home-grown school meals approach by supporting the participation of eight high-level Sri Lankan delegates in the Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) in Montreal, Canada, in September 2017.

Trust Fund – Sustainable Development Goal Fund

In line with the Global Agenda 2030 and in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2—Zero Hunger, WFP and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) worked together with the Government of Sri Lanka on the Joint Programme for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) through a multi-sector approach. The joint programme commenced in January 2015 and was completed in September 2017.

Under the programme, WFP supported the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine in a variety of initiatives:

- to conduct national nutrition baseline surveys for pregnant and lactating women and school children;
- to document the impact and opportunities of government investment on nutrition and food security;
- to complete a landscape analysis for rice fortification and a pilot programme on fortified rice for school children and households in order to evaluate the operational feasibility and acceptability to inform government interventions;
- to strengthen locally-produced fortified food commodities, such as Thriposha, through multi-sectoral advocacy and capacity development; and
- to promote the inter-linkage between health, nutrition and food security as a national development priority at all levels.

To strengthen the national nutrition information system, WFP worked closely with the Ministry of Health, organizing consultations on the national nutrition surveillance system with 378 government officials in 12 districts; providing training to 34 Medical Research Institute staff and survey enumerators on data collection and field lab sample analysis for baseline food and nutrition surveys; as well as conducting end-user training on the surveillance system for 50 participants. The revamped information management system for nutrition surveillance was rolled out in all the districts in 2017.

In an effort to address micronutrient deficiencies among the population, WFP also continued its collaboration with the Ministry of Health to explore the potential for rice fortification in Sri Lanka. Given the complexity of undertaking rice fortification, a landscape analysis was published in September 2017 and a pilot programme initiated to assess the acceptability and feasibility of rice fortification. The analysis showed that fortified rice was well accepted amongst the study groups. As part of the pilot programme, which was run in collaboration with the University of Peradeniya and the government-appointed technical advisory group (TAG), WFP provided fortified rice to 2,500 children in 60 schools and 2,000 adults in the Moneragala and Kandy Districts.

In March 2017, WFP in partnership with the Food Fortification Initiative, assisted the Ministry of Health in organizing a national food fortification workshop, which brought together over 100 participants from across sectors and led to the decision for voluntary fortification of rice as well as advocacy for fortified rice to be distributed through the national social safety net system. WFP also provided the Ministry of Agriculture's National Food Promotion Board (NFPB) with equipment valued at USD 65,000, as well as with technical assistance to produce fortified rice for the pilot programme and to serve as a model facility for in-country blending of fortified rice.

To facilitate knowledge sharing and technology transfer through South-South and triangular cooperation, an exchange mission to India and Bangladesh on rice fortification was organized for 17 delegates (government officials, representatives of the academia and the private sector). As a result of the mission, a presentation on rice fortification was made to the Food Advisory Committee, which then proposed to work on standard setting. In addition, a visit to Rwanda was arranged for officials from the Government of Sri Lanka and managers of the Thriposha factory, to observe the production of Super Cereal Plus.

Following WFP's advocacy efforts and technical support, a food fortification strategy is being developed and will be submitted to the cabinet of ministers for approval to introduce fortified rice in school meals and other social safety net programmes.

To provide sustainable nutritional support to vulnerable groups, WFP undertook efforts to enhance the quality and production capacity of Thriposha, which was distributed through the country's social safety net system. The national treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) programme using Thriposha has been in place since 1973 and in 2017, covered 1.1 million children aged 6–59 months affected by growth faltering, MAM and/or underweight, as well as pregnant and lactating women regardless of their nutritional status. Following WFP's technical assistance, the production capacity of Thriposha stabilized in 2017 after significant improvements in 2016. This allowed the Thriposha factory to meet the production requirements as well as to extend their products to the commercial market. In line with WFP's recommendations, in 2016 and 2017 the Thriposha factory undertook steps to improve the nutritional composition of the product by revising the formulation of the fortification premix to meet the World Health Organization's (WHO) standards for treatment of MAM products. WFP also supported the Government to carry out an effectiveness study, as well as product quality and supply chain assessments, the recommendations of which were taken up to improve the product. The effectiveness study found that, when adequately implemented

—including ensuring regular supply, proper training of health staff and in-depth nutrition awareness sessions—Thriposha had a significant impact on the weight gain of children. As a result of WFP's technical support, the Government has endorsed a plan to improve the product profile of Thriposha to make it better suitable for the treatment of MAM among children, as per the international standards.

WFP in partnership with the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network Secretariat organized nutrition workshops and training for civil society members, gathering 260 participants from Anuradhapura, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya, Hambantota, Polonnaruwa, Matale and Colombo Districts. The sessions focused on raising awareness of the importance of good nutrition especially during the first 1,000 days of life.

Project Results

Activities and Operational Partnerships

Under the immediate response preparedness project (IR-PREP), WFP implemented four major activities: 1) support to the Government and humanitarian food security sector for drought response planning; 2) a joint food security assessment and a market assessment; 3) development of a real-time drought impact monitoring system, using remote sensing and mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) techniques; and 4) capacity strengthening in three WFP satellite offices in drought-affected districts for the foreseen drought relief operation.

After an initial drought impact analysis conducted by WFP in December 2016, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Drought Response recommended to monitor the drought impact on household food security and livelihoods. The Committee nominated WFP as the technical lead to carry out a joint assessment of drought impact on food security and livelihoods. In February/March 2017, WFP conducted the assessment in collaboration with the Ministry of Disaster Management, the National Disaster Relief Services Centre (NDRSC), Disaster Management Centre (DMC), Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research & Training Institute (HARTI), Save the Children and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) members, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The main objective was to assess the household-level impact of the drought in the most vulnerable areas in the ten most affected districts. The exercise also estimated the immediate needs for food security assistance, agriculture support (inputs and seeds) and water to inform the design of potential short-, medium- and long-term response options.

Following the assessment, the Ministry of Disaster Management requested WFP to support the Government further with technical expertise to monitor the impact of the drought using the mVAM approach. Three mobile surveys were planned under the IR-PREP project and conducted under the following emergency operation 201072 during the 2017 *Yala* agricultural season to monitor the full extent of the drought impact during three different phases: 1) after the planting for the *Yala* minor harvest season (end-July); 2) during the *Yala* cultivation season (end-August); and 3) during the *Maha* main harvest planning season (mid-November). Under the IR-PREP implementation, WFP established a short-term drought impact monitoring system to follow the evolving impact of the drought on local communities as the *Yala* season unfolded. Furthermore, WFP introduced its widely tested mVAM techniques to augment the Government's monitoring system and to follow up on the joint assessment of drought impact.

In line with the official request from the Ministry of Disaster Management, WFP initiated the establishment of a real-time drought impact monitoring system, using the Platform for Real-time Information and Situation Monitoring (PRISM). An addendum to the existing memorandum of understanding between WFP and the Ministry of Disaster Management was signed in May 2017 to include the collaboration on PRISM. A technical committee representing the Government, United Nations, non-governmental organizations and private sector partners was established in order to inform any system updates and functional improvements to PRISM and to share the information products developed on the drought impact.

Under this project, WFP strengthened the emergency coordination among the line departments through periodic response planning meetings. WFP led the Food Security Sector of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and jointly with FAO and others designed the drought relief operations. WFP continually provided information to the HCT, development partners and other stakeholders on the progression of the meteorological and agricultural season and its impact, for example, on national water reservoir levels.

Results

With a short duration of three months, the objective of the immediate response preparedness project (IR-PREP) was to prepare WFP to support the Government to respond to the drought, the worst in Sri Lanka in 40 years. The specific objectives included: 1) crisis-affected people have access to food all year round; and 2) vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers in Sri Lanka have strengthened livelihoods and resilience to shocks and stresses all year round.

Under the IR-PREP, an Emergency Coordinator was recruited to provide support to the Country Office to work closely with the Government and humanitarian partners through the Resident Coordinator's Office and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The HCT served as the platform to coordinate the emergency response in the absence of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which ceased its operations in Sri Lanka at the end of 2015. The joint humanitarian drought response plan was developed with

significant contributions from WFP and was communicated to the Government and the HCT. It was also used as an advocacy tool for resource mobilization to respond to the drought.

WFP led the joint assessment of drought impact on food security and livelihoods, which was conducted in February/March 2017 at household level. The assessment findings and recommendations were shared with the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Drought Response for its endorsement and response. Upon the Committee's endorsement, the Ministry of Disaster Management disseminated the recommendations to all respective government stakeholders. The HCT utilized and disseminated the report, which strongly contributed to advocacy efforts and relief assistance planning, including the targeting of assistance.

During the IR-PREP implementation, a drought monitoring system was established using the mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) approach. The three mobile surveys which were conducted later in 2017 covered 1,891 households in five livelihood zones across the ten districts that were most severely impacted by the drought. WFP partnered with a local mobile network operator, Dialogue, for the mobile data collection. Survey respondents were contacted through a call centre and asked to respond to a short series of questions on food security, coping mechanisms, access to water, livelihoods and agricultural assets. An mVAM bulletin was shared with the Government and the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Sri Lanka, and was published on the mVAM website.

With funds from the IR-PREP, the Platform for Real-time Information and Situation Monitoring (PRISM) was set up successfully to monitor the drought situation. As a result, phase one of the PRISM system was established within the Ministry of Disaster Management on 17 August 2017.

WFP finalized a market assessment, which was used to inform the selection of the transfer modality for the emergency response, and worked with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to finalize the joint food security and crop assessment during the peak of the drought, which led to informed food security interventions.

The capacity of WFP staff at the satellite offices of Mannar, Vavuniya and Moneragala was strengthened through training in beneficiary identification with the Government, registration and verification. As a result, WFP field monitors were able to coordinate emergency relief operations, track progress and provide updates on the drought response in these districts.

Performance Monitoring

The performance of the immediate response preparedness project (IR-PREP) was measured using periodic reviews. Monthly progress review meetings were convened at the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Disaster Management. The meetings assessed the status of training government staff on setting up targeting criteria for geographical coverage, beneficiary selection and prioritization. The progress of training on beneficiary registration and verification was also reviewed to make sure that all necessary preparations were ready before responding. In addition, WFP made periodic financial progress reviews.

Emergency preparedness meetings with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) were convened and chaired by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office to assess the readiness of the humanitarian community to respond to the drought. During these meetings, WFP shared updated information on the evolution of the drought using maps and reports generated by the 72-hour assessment techniques and the Platform for Real-time Information and Situation Monitoring (PRISM). These were highly appreciated by both the HCT and the Government.

Progress Towards Gender Equality

Gender inequality and inequity remained intrinsic challenges in the country. According to the Gender Gap Report 2017, Sri Lanka's gender equality ranking declined from 100 of 144 countries in 2016 to 109 of 144 countries. Low economic and political participation were major contributing factors to this gender gap, despite high levels of educational attainment and public health access among Sri Lankan women. In this context, gender considerations were central to this project.

When designing the Platform for Real-time Information and Situation Monitoring (PRISM) established under this project, WFP considered the importance of producing sex- and age-disaggregated data. Therefore, PRISM was designed to be able to visualize and develop vulnerability indicators disaggregated by sex and age. Moreover, drought impact monitoring assessments were conducted using a sampling methodology which was representative

of gender and age. During data collection and field surveys, women and men enumerators were equally represented.

WFP introduced mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) techniques where household food security data were collected through short mobile phone surveys. Under mVAM surveys, male enumerators were assigned to male respondents, whereas female enumerators were assigned to female respondents, to factor in the cultural context within Sri Lanka where it is more socially acceptable and comfortable for women to provide information to other women.

Questionnaires were designed to collect information on the household profile, including households headed by women, widows and persons with disabilities. This information then enabled vulnerable households to be prioritized during programme design.

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

WFP worked to achieve higher quality programmes with greater results by being more accountable to affected populations, increasing their participation and feedback in intervention identification, design, delivery and lessons learned.

In this project, WFP's Corporate Information and IT Security Policy was followed in all data management aspects. All assessments conducted under this project ensured the protection and confidentiality of the information collected. Data which contained personally identifiable information were password protected and treated as confidential. All data transmitted through emails were end-to-end encrypted to prevent data mining. WFP ensured the protection of personal contact details of the survey respondents.

Disaster impact assessments were conducted by facilitating a two-way dialogue with affected communities at all stages of the project cycle, including to determine what kind of information the communities required and the best means for them to receive it. All households were asked for their permission to be re-contacted through live calls.

WFP shared information on the impact of the drought with the authorities of the affected districts, who further disseminated it to the affected populations. Feedback that was received from the affected populations through local authorities and WFP field monitoring contributed to the design of the emergency response project.

The anticipated transfer modality in response to the emergency was cash-based transfers to the most vulnerable people in the worst affected districts. During the preparedness phase, WFP also considered safety and security of the affected populations. In anticipation of the cash transfers using community banks of the Samurdhi programme (the largest safety net programme in Sri Lanka), WFP mapped out the community banks in the affected areas in order to ensure the beneficiaries would not go long distances to reach the bank for safety and security reasons.

A complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM) was established through which beneficiaries could make toll-free calls to WFP to share their opinions and any complaints about the drought response. Since this was a preparatory phase and no relief assistance was carried out under this project, WFP did not receive any calls related to the drought response. However, some calls related to activities carried out under WFP's Country Programme were received. Most questions were about beneficiaries' entitlement, beneficiary selection and schedule of cash transfers, as there were some delays. These questions were answered by WFP's CFM focal points after internal clarification.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

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Reservoir water levels in Kallanchiya are at a minimum during Sri Lanka's worst drought in 40 years.