



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief May 2019



## Operational Context

Sri Lanka is a lower middle-income country that continues to struggle with the effects of a 27-year civil conflict that resulted in significant economic and social damage. Improvements in human development, nutritional status of children, women and adolescents remain stagnant.

The Demographic and Health Survey (2016) informs that poor nutrition is prevalent throughout the life cycle, starting moderate acute malnutrition – which is “wasting” or thinness – in children under 5 years of age. This is among the worst rates globally. Climate shocks contribute to increased frequency of natural disasters (droughts and floods) that compound food and nutrition security.

WFP has been present in Sri Lanka since 1968.



Population: **21 million**

2017 Human Development Index: **76 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Acute malnutrition (wasting): **15% of children between 6-59 months**

## In Numbers

Poor nutrition among women of reproductive age remains an issue in Sri Lanka, with **10 percent underweight and 45 percent overweight or obese**. Meanwhile, 33 percent of pregnant and lactating women are anaemic.

Sri Lanka ranks **2<sup>nd</sup> of 176 countries** prone to climate shocks (Global Climate Risk Index).

**US\$ 4.35 million** – Six months net funding requirement (June – November 2019).

## Operational Updates

- The Government of Sri Lanka began to distribute fortified rice, with support from WFP, in its national school feeding programme to improve the nutritional quality of meals provided. In May, distributions took place in the Anuradhapura District, where they reached approximately 17,000 primary school students. The model of implementation in Sri Lanka involves making fortified rice available at government-owned cooperative shops, where school caterers can procure it using vouchers that are provided to them.
- On May 18, in partnership with the Government’s National Food Promotion Board, WFP organised an awareness session on rice fortification for over 700 people in Anuradhapura District. Participants included district-level government officials and community members.
- WFP, in coordination with the National Disaster Relief Services Centre, Disaster Management Centre and District Secretariat Matara, held a flood simulation exercise in Akuressa Divisional Secretariat, Matara. The primary objective was to rehearse the coordination of a timely and effective response during an emergency. The Akuressa Division was badly affected during the South Western monsoon floods in 2017, when it faced multiple issues such as roadblocks. It remains acutely prone to flooding.
- The Scaling Up Nutrition – Business Network (SUN-BN) that was launched in Sri Lanka in March, has gained significant traction among the private sector. 25 established companies, with the technical support of WFP, have created sub-workgroups to rollout work-place health and nutrition programmes; production of nutritious foods; and advocacy strategies for nutritious food consumption.

Main Photo

Credit: WFP  
Caption: Students enjoy mid-morning meals, provided by the national school feeding programme.

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## WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	May - Oct Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
46.6 m	12.84 m	4.35 m

### Strategic Result 1: End hunger by protecting access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis-affected people have access to food all year round.

**Focus area:** Crisis Response to ensure humanitarian assistance

**Activities:**

- Provide food assistance to crisis-affected people.

### Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 2:** School-age children in food-insecure areas have access to food all year round.

**Focus area:** Root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition among school-age children

**Activities:**

- Provide nutrition-sensitive food assistance, in partnership with the Government, to school-age children.
- Provide technical and policy support for the delivery of nutrition-sensitive school meals programmes to the Government.

### Strategic Result 3: Smallholders have improved food security and nutrition

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Children under 5, adolescent girls and women of reproductive age have improved nutrition by 2025

**Focus area:** Immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition.

**Activities:**

- Provide evidence-based advice, advocacy, and technical assistance to government and implementing partners.
- Provide technical assistance and advocate the scaling up of the fortification of staple food and specialized nutritious foods to government and other stakeholders, including the private sector.

### Strategic Result 4: Smallholders have improved food security and nutrition

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers have strengthened livelihoods and resilience in the face of shocks and stresses all year round.

**Focus area:** Resilience building to enable vulnerable communities to better withstand shocks and stresses and to augment government capacity to implement disaster-management and integrated disaster-risk-reduction strategies.

**Activities:**

- Support nutrition-sensitive and gender-transformative livelihood diversification and income generation through integrated resilience-building activities.
- Provide technical assistance for emergency preparedness and response operations to the Government.
- Provide technical assistance to government and related agencies in the building of improved, unified, shock-responsive safety-net systems.

## Operational Updates (continued)

- The SUN-BN consultant presented the network's concept and strategy at the SheWorks forum in Sri Lanka, which is led by the International Finance Corporation. The forum brings together women CEOs of leading companies to advocate for equal participation in the workforce.
- WFP is supporting the Ministry of Social Empowerment – Department of Samurdhi Development, Sri Lanka's national social safety net system, to digitalize beneficiary identification and payment, which is currently done manually. As a pilot programme, the Government and WFP are rolling out real-time beneficiary registration using SCOPE, WFP's beneficiary and transfer management tool, by training enumerators and providing tablets and tools for biometric beneficiary registration in four districts.
- In these four districts, 400 Samurdhi-enrolled households and 1,100 other households were digitally registered in May, and all household data have been exported into the SCOPE platform. In June, training will be provided to the Samurdhi Bank officers to digitally verify beneficiaries and release the relevant payment.

## Challenges

- The political situation in Sri Lanka continues to be volatile, following the terrorist attacks on Easter Sunday and ahead of presidential elections due in November-December.
- WFP's business continuity plan has been effective in ensuring smooth operation and project implementation throughout this volatile period, while only a few trainings, including a social behaviour change communication training for nutrition have been rescheduled.

## Donors

KOICA, Japan, UN Peace-building Fund, The Earth Group, Italian Comitato, Australia, OFDA, Government of Denmark, Japan Association for WFP. FEED