



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief August 2019



Operational Context

Despite progress on many of the SDGs, Sri Lanka continues to struggle with the effects of a 27-year civil conflict on communities and frequent climate shocks which cause significant damages economically and to livelihoods. While now an Upper Middle Income Country, there are significant gaps in human development including the nutritional status of children, women and adolescents which remains stagnant.

The Demographic and Health Survey (2016) informs that poor nutrition is prevalent throughout the life cycle, especially moderate acute malnutrition – known as “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 (mostly droughts and floods in Sri Lanka) 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: **Upper middle
incoming earning country**

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 **2nd of 176 countries** prone to climate shocks (Global Climate Risk Index)

US \$3.36 million – Six months net funding requirement (September 2019 – February 2020)

Operational Updates

- WFP, together with the Government of Sri Lanka and Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), launched a three-year US \$6 million (LKR 1.6 billion) project to build communities’ resilience to natural shocks.

The project, “Building Resilience Against Recurrent Natural Shocks Through Diversification of Livelihoods for Vulnerable Communities”, consists of key activities such as building household water harvesting and storage facilities, rehabilitation of irrigation schemes and skills development for youth in agriculture. 21,600 people in five districts will receive assistance.

This project builds on an existing partnership between the Government of Sri Lanka, KOICA and WFP, which has provided resilience building and livelihood support to communities in 13 districts over the past two years. As a result of the ongoing partnership, farmers are profiting from two cultivation seasons instead of one, water sources have been created to mitigate drought conditions, the area of land under cultivation has increased, as have household incomes, and young people have received skills training.

- In August, cabinet ministers from the Government gave the final approval for a cabinet memo to integrate fortified rice into the National School Meals Programme. This marks a significant step towards the reduction of anaemia and anaemia-related health issues among school-aged children.
- WFP, in partnership with PCI Media, an education-entertainment company focused on social behaviour change communication, held a social and behaviour change communication workshop. Attendees, including representatives of the Ministry of Health, other UN agencies, and stakeholders, discussed plans for, and the design of, a national campaign on nutrition and healthy eating.

Main Photo

Credit: WFP Sri Lanka
Caption: Launch of the resilience building and livelihood support project.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Sep 2019-Feb 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
46.6 m	18.53 m	3.36 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)

- WFP and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) collaborated this month to produce a joint [Climate and Food Security Monitoring Bulletin](#). The Bulletin highlighted that despite rainfall, moderate drought continues in the dry zones (North, North-West, North Central, Uva and Eastern Provinces). The report also found that water reservoirs are becoming dangerously low, at 19 percent capacity compared to 33 per cent during the same time last year. The report follows a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between WFP and IWMI in July.
- As part of its 'Change' project, WFP, together with UNFPA and Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, is providing a training of trainers (ToT) to promote healthy dietary practices among communities while promoting gender equality by making trainees aware of gendered social norms surrounding nutrition and food preparation. Altogether 18 ToT sessions will be conducted in 6 districts targeting key influencers like leaders of mother support groups, public midwives, home science teachers and school caterers.
- WFP is supporting the Ministry of Social Empowerment's 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 study, the Government and WFP have rolled 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, nearly 400 Samurdhi-enrolled households were digitally registered in May and their household data was imported into the SCOPE platform. In June, WFP provided training to the Samurdhi Bank officers to digitally verify beneficiaries and release the relevant payments. In June, July and August monthly Samurdhi payments to these beneficiaries were made through the SCOPE platform.

Challenges

Presidential elections in Sri Lanka have been confirmed to take place between November and December 2019. Accordingly, government officials are highly focused on the process. A new President and Government will take office in early January.

Donors

Australia, Denmark, Earth Group, FEED, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea (KOICA), U.S.A. (OFDA) and the UN Peace-building Fund