In Numbers

- **45 percent** of women in the reproductive age group are overweight or obese

- **33 percent** of pregnant and lactating women are anaemic

- **USD 3,171** cash-based transfers in March 2020

- **US$ 3.21 million** – Six months net funding requirement (March 2020 – September 2020)

Situation Update

- The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 27 January in Sri Lanka, and rose to **122** confirmed cases by the end of March, with two deaths occurring and 16 cases recovering completely. The Army has set up 45 quarantine centers around the country to tackle the pandemic. Over 14,000 people who had contacted the identified patients have been ordered to take self-quarantine measures.

- Schools have been closed for a 5-week period from 12 March to 20 April. This affects the provision of school meals and WFP is engaging in ongoing discussions with the Government on remedial measures.

- From 18 March, the Government imposed an emergency curfew in certain districts and followed it with a lockdown-style curfew for the entire island, with intermittent relaxations to allow people to purchase essential items. Essential service workers are allowed to operate, as are smallholder farmers and tea and other cash crop producers. The parliamentary elections due in April have been postponed.

- Arrivals by air and sea into the country were suspended from 19 March except for the arrival of cargo and WFP has had discussions on the arrangements for clearance of food commodity cargo in case of future need.

- Together with the private sector and state food distribution agencies, the Government organised door delivery of essential food items across the country throughout the curfew period. Government interventions brought soaring food prices under control, while many social assistance packages for vulnerable populations were initiated. The Central Bank has introduced measures to further prevent the depreciation of local currency and curtail expenditure such as suspending the import of motor vehicles and non-essential goods for the next three months.

Operational Updates

- As a short-term intervention to immediately address the food security issues related to the COVID-19 outbreak, WFP has developed possible types of assistance programmes to support the vulnerable families, to be discussed and confirmed with the Government.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

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<th>Strategic Outcome #1: End hunger by protecting access to food</th>
<th>Strategic Result #2: Food systems are sustainable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Requirement (in USD)</td>
<td>46.6 m</td>
<td>18.93 m</td>
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<td>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.21 m</td>
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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.

Monitoring

- In the fast developing COVID-19 scenario, WFP undertook a rapid assessment of the market situation (with staff members collecting food prices during personal shopping for supplies), to gauge the effect on food availability and access. Results indicated raised prices for some food items.

- On 28-29 March, WFP conducted remote monitoring for beneficiaries in WFP project areas through telephone interviews. Findings showed challenges in accessing adequate food, mainly related to lack of money. Many households expressed concerns about food shortages and livelihood disruptions related to the enforced movement restrictions established to control the virus spread.

- WFP has offered support for a wider impact assessment led by FAO to support the Government towards informed decisions in designing extended assistance for vulnerable groups.

Challenges

- Due to the absence of government counterparts at central and divisional levels as part of the social distancing measures and curfews, the R5n project activities and the Community Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) – consultation workshops were suspended.

- The School Meals programme was also put on hold as schools closed earlier than anticipated, as a precaution against the COVID-19 spread.

- WFP is pre-planning adequate and special response preparedness measures together with government partners to face potential floods and landslides with the start of Monsoon rains within the context of COVID-19 outbreak.

Donors

- Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Government of Japan, UN Peace-building Fund, The Earth Group, Italian Comitato, Government of Australia, Office of the US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Government of Denmark, Japan Association for WFP, FEED, DSM N.V

Operational Updates (cont)

- With the positive results on WFP Sri Lanka’s first test on the business continuity plan on 16 March, work from home arrangements continued throughout March.

- WFP initiated the in-country Logistics Cluster meeting for coordination and information management for humanitarian actors engaged in the COVID-19 response.