



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief June 2020



Operational Context

Sri Lanka has shown steady growth over the last decades with progress on SDGs, reflecting the country's elevation to middle-income status. Presidential elections were held in November 2019 with parliamentary polls scheduled for August 2020.

Despite the progress, the country faces many socio-economic challenges, including the impact of a nutritional 'double burden' — undernutrition rates unchanged for over a decade in addition to high rates of overweight and obesity.

Sri Lanka is ranked 6th on the Climate Risk Index reflecting the extent and impact of hydro-meteorological hazards brought about by climate change.

Moreover, the outbreak of Covid-19 in March this year, with serious effects on the economy and livelihoods of vulnerable people, will hinder progress towards the country's socio-economic status, as is the case globally.

WFP has been present in Sri Lanka since 1968, working in partnership with the Government for the past 50 years to save lives in times of crises, and improve livelihoods for the future.



Population: **21 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **71 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower Middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **15% of children between 6-59 months**

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 2,293 cash-based transfers in June 2020

35 participants (**140** beneficiaries) assisted through cash-based transfers in resilience projects in June 2020

US\$ 3.19 million – Six months net funding requirement (July – December 2020)

Situation Updates

- At the end of June, 2,047 people had been diagnosed with COVID-19 with deaths remaining at 11, while over 1,711 patients had recovered from the disease.
- Under the World Bank's country classification for 2020-2021, Sri Lanka was downgraded to a "Lower Middle Income" level in 2020, after the country recorded a reduced per capita income of USD 4,020 in comparison to the USD 4,060 last year (prompting its classification as Upper MIC).
- The Government announced the new date of 5 August for the postponed parliamentary elections, which will be held adhering to COVID-19 prevention guidelines.
- Schools remain closed due to COVID-19, however, the Ministry of Education plans to open schools on a staggered basis from July.

Operational Updates

- WFP transferred US\$ 400,000 to the Ministry of Education to contribute to the government's plan to provide take-home rations for primary school children. These rations will support families by providing meals during school closures given the disruption to the regular meal programme. Phase 1 of the Ministry's distribution plan is planned for completion by the end of July.
- With the return of government field staff, WFP has re-started the postponed activities of the R5n project, adopting stringent measures to ensure the safety of participants such as providing hand washing facilities and facemasks at project sites, and initiating a health communication poster campaign for beneficiaries in local languages.
- WFP continued the work of the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster, bringing UN, Government and I/NGO members together for timely discussions. These discussions include socio-economic aspects, including the production and supply of agriculture and livestock produce, e-commerce platforms for agriculture supply chains, and the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the urban and rural labour situation.

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Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
46.6 m	24.22 m	3.19 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 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 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

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

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

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 the government and related agencies in the building of improved, unified, shock-responsive safety-net systems.

- The results of an online survey through WFP-supported inputs to a global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network initiative, indicated low production in the private sector, triggering worker layoffs or pay cuts, exacerbating the effect of the COVID-19 economic slowdown on workers. However, the survey also found that many companies have looked at opportunities for new business models or products, helping to minimize downsizing.

- The joint COVID-19 prevention [social media campaign](#) on monsoon preparedness by WFP and WHO, was circulated amongst communities including through inter-faith leaders. Local influencers shared these messages on their social media accounts, providing a broader outreach.
- WFP supported the Ministry of Health to continue the national infant and young child feeding programme during the COVID-19 lockdown, helping to alleviate negative consequences of delaying maternal and child health services. WFP helped to design and print 14,000 copies of an infant and young child feeding best practices booklet to be distributed among mothers through the maternal and child health clinics.

Monitoring

- WFP is commissioning the final decentralized evaluation of the Adaptation Fund project which is coming to a close after seven years in September 2020. The evaluation is coming at the mid-way point of WFP’s five-year strategy for Sri Lanka. The findings and lessons learned will be used by WFP and its partners to inform the implementation of the country strategy and for future programming.

Challenges

- Due to COVID-19-induced restrictions of food commodity imports including maize, the production at the Ministry of Health’s “Thripasha” (supplementary food) factory has been halted due to a lack of the commodity. Locally grown maize has been deemed unsuitable due to some level of contamination by aflatoxins, hence, at the request of the Ministry, WFP is planning provide financial support to the Ministry to procure maize sufficient for several months.
- The national school feeding programme has been suspended since 12 March, with a loss of daily in-school meals for children which, by WFP estimates, contributes to 16 percent of the household family income.
- WFP is closely monitoring market dynamics, availability, and prices of key commodities, especially those related to protein sources such as poultry, given their importance to the Sri Lankan diet.

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](#).