



# WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief August 2020

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## 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 followed by parliamentary polls in August 2020, where the incumbent Government won a convincing majority. 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

**US\$ 1,441** paid as cash-based transfers in August 2020

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

**US\$ 1.90 million** – six months net funding requirement (September 2020 – February 2021)

## Situation Updates

- The number of COVID-19 cases increased to 3,012, with no community transmission reported. All COVID-19 patients have been placed in quarantine. Twelve people have died from the disease since the first diagnosed case in March, and 2,868 patients have recovered.
- Schools that were closed due to COVID-19 have re-opened adopting a staggered approach, ensuring that hand washing facilities and social distancing measures are in place.

## Operational Updates

- WFP together with other UN Agencies, commenced discussions for plans to celebrate 75 years of the United Nations on 24 October. Plans comprise of a webinar series on five key topics - of which WFP will co-host one topic; a coffee table book; a UN Day event; and dissemination of the UN75 survey to gather local opinions on the future that people want and the role of the UN in shaping it.
- WFP and the Government conducted a joint review of WFP's resilience project in five districts. The review also evaluated the feasibility of new projects to be implemented before the end of the year, with a focus on the rehabilitation of minor irrigation schemes (community water reservoirs), agro-wells and farm ponds for rainwater harvesting for the efficient use of water. WFP conducted community sensitization sessions and training of smallholder farmers in strict adherence to COVID-19 prevention measures.
- WFP has resumed work on the third phase of the development of Platform for Real-time Information and Situation Monitoring (PRISM) system, together with the Department of Meteorology. PRISM is a map-based platform for real-time monitoring and assessment of the impact of weather hazards on food security and livelihoods. The third phase includes a module which enables the system to integrate remote sensing meteorological data. With this enhancement, PRISM will be able to monitor slow onset disasters, such as droughts, and their impacts on vulnerable populations, markets and crop.

**Contact info:** Tamara Nanayakkara ([tamara.nanayakkara@wfp.org](mailto:tamara.nanayakkara@wfp.org))  
**Country Director:** Brenda Barton  
 Further information: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/sri-lanka>

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
46.57 m	26.99 m	1.90 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.

- WFP continues to support the Department of Census and Statistics on the analysis of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) indicator. WFP coordinated with FAO headquarters-based statistics unit to organise a virtual training to over 20 statisticians (including from the Medical Research Institute and Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute -HARTI) on the computation of the prevalence of food insecurity based on the FIES, using STATA and R software. FIES is being incorporated into the 2019 national Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) to help monitor Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger.

Challenges

- Although schools were re-opened following a staggered approach, the school meals programme has not yet re-started. The Ministry of Education is currently awaiting the Ministry of Health’s assurance that school-meal providers are able to deliver school meals in accordance with the required COVID-19 prevention hygienic conditions and quality. This involves certification by public health inspectors of the hygienic condition of kitchens and food items used by all the school meal providers.
- Given the disruption to the regular school meal programme, WFP supported the Ministry of Education to distribute take-home rations to about 80,000 children in the national school feeding programme, to support their families to provide meals during the school-closure period.

Donors

SAARC Development Fund, 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.

