



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief December 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 followed by parliamentary polls in August 2020, where the incumbent Government won a majority. Despite the progress, the country faces many socio-economic challenges, including a nutritional 'triple burden' comprising of undernutrition, overnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

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, in reaching zero hunger by 2030 in all its forms.

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: **72 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

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Further information: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/sri-lanka>

In Numbers

45 percent of women of reproductive age group are overweight or obese; **33 percent** of pregnant and lactating women are anaemic (Demographic and Health Survey, Sri Lanka, 2016).

WFP: **US\$ 26,411** paid as cash-based transfers and **394** participants (**1,576** beneficiaries) assisted in resilience projects for December.

US\$ 1.67 million - six months net funding requirement (January - June 2021)

Situation Updates

- COVID-19 infections rose to 42,702 at the end of December with deaths rising to 199. However, 35,324 people had recovered.
- In preparation for the gradual opening of the country for tourism, the Government permitted limited groups of travellers to arrive under a bio-secure bubble, adhering to health guidelines and limited contact with the local population. The tourism industry has been severely affected since March 2020 after airports were closed for international tourists, under strict COVID-19 prevention measures.
- Schools remained closed throughout December, however the Ministry of Education plans to reopen them in low risk areas in early 2021.

Operational Updates

- Continuing from the previous month, WFP carried out a campaign to publicise the Nobel Peace Prize Award. This included press coverage for the Norwegian Ambassador's visit to the Country Office and the awards ceremony in Norway. The campaign also included a TV interview of the Country Director, aired on the day of the awards ceremony. Additionally, a series of photos and stories titled '[Stories from the Field](#)' was published as reflections of WFP's work during Sri Lanka's former civil conflict, narrated by WFP staff, generating high reach on social media.
- WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) spearheaded the virtual dialogue "Building Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems in the Age of Pandemics" to engage stakeholders on agricultural value chains in Sri Lanka. This dialogue was part of a series of events leading up to the [2021 Food System Summit](#).
- Anticipating heavy rain and strong winds during the north east monsoon season, WFP supported the National Disaster Relief Service Centre to pre-position non-food items such as hand sanitizers, cans, kitchen utensils with gas cookers and gas cylinders to support COVID-19 health and safety readiness in safe temporary shelters in the event of a population displacement. These items will be used in 14 high priority districts according to district level contingency plans.

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
46.57 m	28.04 m	1.67 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: Habitant venenatis placerat

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.

- With an aim to link farmers and communities to farmlands, markets and basic services and reduce transportation costs, WFP built 6 km of new feeder roads alongside the community water reservoirs rehabilitated during asset creation activities. WFP also commenced restoring degraded ecosystems by planting 1,400 trees in catchment areas of five community water reservoirs. Community and government contributions helped to achieve these results.

Monitoring

- WFP launched the data collection for the Market Functionality Index (MFI). Testing the questionnaire in the field helped team leaders and enumerators of the survey to familiarize themselves with the practice. At the end of December, WFP had reached 1,300 traders in five provinces across the country. Results of the survey are expected in February 2021.

Challenges

- The national school meals programme remains temporarily suspended, due to COVID-19 related school closures. However, the Ministry of Education plans to reopen schools in some areas in January 2021, which will provide the space to restart the national school meals programme in accordance with COVID-19 prevention guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.
- Given the challenges posed by COVID-19, distribution of “Thripasha” – a dietary supplement to pregnant and lactating mothers and children under five - was temporarily suspended due to scarcity of maize which is a key imported ingredient. To help restart the programme, WFP supported the Ministry of Health with an advance of USD 600,000 to procure locally grown maize.

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, Johns Hopkins University-USA, Government of Canada.