



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief October 2021



## 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.

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 30th globally on the Climate Risk Index highlighting the exposure and vulnerability to climate change. Hydro-meteorological hazards have a serious impact on vulnerable communities.

Moreover, the outbreak of Covid-19 in March 2020, 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: <b>21 million</b>	2019 Human Development Index: <b>72 out of 189 countries</b>
Income Level: <b>Lower middle</b>	Chronic malnutrition: <b>17% of children between 6-59 months</b>

## In Numbers

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

WFP will pay out approximately **USD 30,838** as cash-based transfers to 465 participants who joined resilience building activities in October.

US\$ 840,000 - six months net funding requirement (November 2021 – April 2022)

## Situation Updates

- Over the last two weeks of October, COVID-19 cases stabilized, attributed to the country-wide lockdown in place during the previous month and the massive vaccination efforts by the Government. The country registered 539,416 positive cases since the beginning of the pandemic, while deaths stood at 13,706. The total number recoveries were 512,481. The number of fully vaccinated people reached 13.4 million.
- Inter-provincial travel restrictions continued however, public transport was gradually reinstated throughout October. Secondary schools were also opened in phases.
- The price controls imposed on food commodities were gradually eased by the Government, although food prices remained high. Non-food items such as cement were reported to be in short supply, mainly due to import bans currently in effect. This has affected the construction industry.
- Prospects of reaping the expected harvest in the ongoing cultivating season may be affected, given the shortages of fertilizer, pesticide etc., as well as the possible reduction of maize cultivation.

## Operational Updates

- The flagship R5n project continued with smallholder farmer engagement in building resilience to climate shocks and stresses in five districts. WFP handed over nearly 30,000 mango and cashew plants to augment the 'Saubagya' national home gardening programme. The contribution was made as part of WFP's response and recovery efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In line with Programme Excellence goals, WFP Resilience and Nutrition teams conducted an oversight mission to assess the projects under R5, Last Mile Climate Services, South-South Triangular Cooperation post-harvest support, and the Home-Grown School Meals projects.

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## Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>53.97 m</b>	<b>30.56 m</b>	<b>0.84 m</b>

### 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.

## Monitoring

- The Food Security Sector meeting was held in mid-October, which brought together donors and partner organisations to discuss the current food security situation and the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable communities. The Department of Agriculture presented their reflections on National Dialogues and the Food Systems Summit that took place in September.

- WFP operationalized its activities through an integrated programming approach that strengthens local and national capacities to ensure programme sustainability. This integrated approach ensures synergy across all WFPs activities and programmes for better food security, resilience, and nutrition outcomes.
- In collaboration with the Samurdhi Development Authority, WFP carried out sensitization sessions to 1,517 pregnant and nursing mothers on nutrition, gender, cash management and social behaviour change and communication. Adding further value, WFPs implementing partners Scaling-Up Nutrition People's Forum (SUNPF) shared written and verbal messages through mobile phones, social media, and over selected national and regional radios networks to spread the message among the wider general public.
- WFP, together with FAO and IFAD carried out a campaign for World Food Day to raise awareness of the need to support transformation to more inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems. The campaign comprised an event with a panel discussion, an opinion editorial from the Representatives of FAO, IFAD and WFP, social media influencer posts, tweets and videos on topics related to food systems, a kids' TV programme, a debate competition for youth and a series of human interest stories on one of the leading newspapers in Sri Lanka.
- WFP commemorated the 'International Day of Rural Women' with a feature on the special podcast 'Talk with Trace', as one episode of a tri-part series recognising the crucial role that women and girls play in agriculture, food security and nutrition. The discussion centred on WFP's support towards rural women who are transforming environments affected by drought.
- On social media, WFP also highlighted how digital innovation helps fight against hunger, supporting social protection efforts across Sri Lanka. WFP has assisted the Department of Samurdhi Development to transition from manual to digital cash payments through the beneficiary management platform 'SCOPE', which enables the digital transfer of cash to beneficiaries in emergency situations. Over 7,000 vulnerable households across the country continue to benefit from this venture.

## Donors

Top donors to WFP Sri Lanka CSP 2018-2022 include: Government of Republic of Korea, Regional Trust Fund allocations, Government of Japan, USAID/BHA, Private donors, flexible funds.

*Photo Page 1: WFP Country Director handing over a batch of mango and cashew plants to the Government, supporting the "Saubagya" national home gardening programme. @Thushara Keerthiratne/WFP*