



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief February 2022



## 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 23rd 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: **21 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **72 out of 189 countries**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **17% of children between 6-59 months**

## In Numbers

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

## Situation Updates

- The number of **COVID-19 infections** continued to increase in February, bringing the total number of positive cases to 645,037 and 16,190 confirmed deaths since the start of the pandemic. A total of 608,924 people have recovered from the disease. The third booster shot has been administered to over 7 million people and the number of fully vaccinated now at 13.4 million people.
- The Government has instituted social protection mechanisms in efforts to support the people to cope with food inflation over the past months. An extra allowance of LKR 1,000 per month was provided to low-income families under the Samurdhi **social protection scheme**. Similarly, public servants and pensioners were supported with a monthly grant of LKR 5,000. The Government also allowed imports of rice consignments which were available at a reduced price into the market. Further support included providing 15 kilograms of wheat flour at a concessionary price of LKR 80 per kg to low-income families in the plantation sector. Despite such measures, the general population continued to be heavily impacted by increasing prices of essential goods.
- The depletion of foreign exchange reserves continued to affect fuel imports, which resulted in reduced output from electrical power generation plants, resulting in daily power cuts from two to seven hours, country-wide. The Government continues to look for solutions, however rising fuel and transportation costs may impact prices of food and other goods, contributing to further inflation.

## Operational Updates

- WFP completed the assessment of the current Monitoring & Evaluating system (M&E) in the National School Meals Programme. Two national workshops were conducted with stakeholders to disseminate the findings of the study and create the draft programme action plan.
- WFP recommended policy changes to the school meal menus to improve the flexibility of the **National School Meals Program**. As a result, the nutritional composition of the existing school meal menu was revised by replacing with low-cost ingredients as a short-term solution, considering the prevailing high food inflation in the country.

**Contact info:** Tamara Nanayakkara ([tamara.nanayakkara@wfp.org](mailto:tamara.nanayakkara@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Abdurrahim Siddiqui

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)
<b>53.97 m</b>	<b>35.32 m</b>	<b>1.23 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.

- Together with UNESCAP, WFP conducted training sessions on digital technologies for disaster risk management, aiming to equip national officials with the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the overall framework of disaster risk management and the practical use of information technologies.
- WFP held training sessions in Batticaloa district, for teams responsible for the implementation of the Divisional Emergency Operation Centres. Twenty participants learned of information and basic tools of **emergency preparedness and response** and coordination with first responders and stakeholders during an emergency.
- Under WFP's **technical support** to the Department of Samurdhi Development on strengthening the Samurdhi national social protection system, WFP conducted 12 awareness raising sessions with the active support of Divisional Health and Samurdhi Officers in Kalutara district. In the **training**, 440 families with young children, impacted by COVID-19 economic setbacks and the high inflation in the country, received **awareness on nutrition, child feeding and best dietary practices**, household cash management and other useful topics. In addition, 80 staff members of Samurdhi Banks in 11 divisions in Kalutara, received training on delivery of cash assistance for 637 economically vulnerable families, through SCOPE - WFP's corporate beneficiary and cash transfer management platform.

## Donors

Government of Republic of Korea, Regional Trust Fund allocations, Government of Russian Federation, flexible funds, Government of Japan, USAID/BHA, Private donors.

*Cover Photo: WFP Sri Lanka Deputy Country Director Mr. Andrea Berardo, opening the training session on Digital Technologies for Disaster Risk Management, conducted for officials of disaster management agencies. @WFP/Yoona Choi.*