



WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief July 2022

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Sri Lanka is experiencing its worst economic crisis since its independence in 1948. The population is struggling to meet their daily food needs in the face of shortages and higher food and fuel prices. This exacerbates the hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the last two years, reversing years of developmental gains since elevating to lower middle-income-country status in 2019. Food inflation is at an all-time high of 80 percent in June 2022.

The country also faces significant threat from climate risks. Rising temperatures and extreme heat pose risks to human health and living standards and could potentially put downward pressure on agricultural yields.

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. In 2022, WFP has revised its Country Strategic Plan to reflect actual needs of the current economic and food crises. WFP aims to support an additional 3.4 million people whose lives and livelihoods were severely impacted by the crisis.



Population: **22 million**

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

Income Level: **Lower middle**

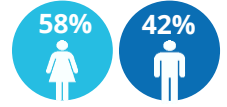
Chronic malnutrition: **17% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

US\$9,963 in cash and vouchers distributed

US\$36.39 million six-months (August 2022 – January 2023) net funding requirements

636 people assisted
in July 2022



Situation Updates

- Sri Lanka continues to experience a devastating economic and food crisis that has beset millions of households. Prices of food continued to skyrocket in July, making it increasingly difficult for low-income households.
- According to the [Colombo Consumer Price Index](#), food inflation (year-on-year) increased to 90.9 percent in July 2022 from 80.1 percent last month.
- An alarming 6.3 million people (about 3 in 10 households) were food-insecure in June 2022, according to preliminary findings from WFP and FAO's joint Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM). Of this number, 66,000 people were severely food-insecure; these numbers are expected to be higher in subsequent months. A full CFSAM report is expected to be released by August.

Operational Updates

Crisis Response

- WFP reached **2,194 nutritionally at-risk pregnant women in Colombo** with vouchers valued at LKR 15,000 (approximately US\$40). WFP aims to reach the remaining 206 pregnant women targeted in this intervention in August. This programme was intended to support pregnant women from low-income households in meeting their food and nutritional needs.
- **WFP's cash-based transfers are due to start in August** in Galle, Mullaitivu, and Nuwara Eliya districts, followed by Ampara, Colombo, Jaffna, Kurunegala, Mannar, Monaragala, and Vavuniya. Current funding is sufficient for WFP to reach approximately 179,000 individuals from low-income households. Overall, WFP aims to reach 3.4 million people in its economic crisis response.

Capacity Strengthening

- In coordination with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, **WFP conducted a workshop on Food Safety Risk Assessment** in Kurunegala in the North Western Province on 26-27 July. In light of the economic crisis, the workshop facilitated

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Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Months Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
117.34 m	64.05 m	36.39 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.

Donors

Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Regional Trust Fund allocations, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, UN CERF, the United States of America, and the private sector

Cover Photo: Minabige, 49, and her family are among the millions struggling to meet their food and nutrition needs in the face of shortages and higher prices of food and fuel. © WFP/Josh Estey

conversations on the continuation of the Government's school meals programme. 35 government stakeholders attended the workshop.

- **WFP held a Financial Literacy Training Planning workshop** in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa on 27-28 July. In collaboration with Hirdaramani Apparel, this workshop is part of a series of financial literacy training/workshops on Home-Grown School Meals directed at women development officers, which aims to provide a platform for economic empowerment for women. The programme covers, *inter alia*, minimalism, 5S home concepts, savings accounts for women, and debt analysis and management. 38 participants worked together in developing a strategic plan to include school meals catered at the village level.
- To take stock lessons learned so far in its **R5n** project, **WFP conducted a bi-annual performance review**. Best practices and responses to challenges will be incorporated in its 2022 Action Plan for the rest of the project duration (December 2022). **R5n (Resilience, Risk Reduction, Recovery, Reconstruction, and nutrition)** is WFP Sri Lanka's flagship venture for integrating complementary and nutrition-sensitive programming to support vulnerable farmers through asset diversification and expansion of productive assets.

Monitoring

- WFP's monitoring of vouchers for pregnant women in Colombo indicated that 84 percent partially or completely lost their income due to the crisis. Nine in ten households earn less than LKR 50,000 (USD 138) per month. The most pressing concerns raised by beneficiaries were food prices (93 percent), food shortages (77 percent), and transport issues due to fuel shortage (75 percent).
- Recipients of the vouchers reported purchasing cheaper food (90 percent) and dipping into their savings (57 percent) to cope with the higher prices and lower income.
- Almost all (99.5 percent) of the respondents said they were satisfied with the amount that they received, and 69 percent indicated the support is sufficient to cover the food needs of a household with an average of four/five members for two weeks.