



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Sri Lanka

Country Brief

February 2023



Operational Context

Sri Lanka is experiencing its worst economic crisis since its independence in 1948. A majority of the population is struggling to meet their daily food needs in the face of shortages and high 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 in February was at 54.4 percent (CCPI) in urban areas of Colombo. 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 made a budget revision of 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**

2021/2022 Human Development Index:
73 out of 191 countries

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

11,294,95 mt of food distributed

US\$7 million in cash and vouchers distributed

197,192 people assisted in February 2023

Situation Updates

- In the face of Sri Lanka's economic crisis, food insecurity remains at concerning levels. 32 percent of households are food-insecure, according to WFP's latest Household [Food Security Survey](#) (February 2023).
- According to the latest [Colombo Consumer Price Index](#), food inflation (year-on-year) in urban areas of Colombo was at 54.4 percent in February.
- A joint Food Security Assessment (CFSAM) by the Government of Sri Lanka, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and WFP is ongoing. It is targeting 15,000 households from 25 districts. This is a follow-up to the CFSAM conducted in May 2022.
- Markets continued to report concerns around price volatility in January, according to WFP's [Market Functionality Index](#). However, markets remain functional and currently have a wide range of products, adequate physical availability of essential goods and a resilient supply chain.

Operational updates

Emergency response

WFP plans to assist 3.4 million people through general food distribution, school meals and nutrition support.

- Since the start of emergency operations in June 2022, WFP has reached 547,264 people with cash assistance and 486,096 with in-kind food assistance. This is a result of WFP's response scale-up aimed at reaching 1.4 million people through unconditional food assistance (cash or in-kind).
- As of February 2023, WFP distributed rice to 7,593 schools, reaching 1,065,686 children. WFP surpassed its plan to support 1 million children with school meals through the Government's national school meals programme in 2022.
- WFP is coordinating with the Government and partners to provide raw food commodities (maize and soybean) to the Government's Thripasha¹ facility which is targeting approximately 1 million pregnant and lactating women and young children with nutritious food support. Thripasha distributions have started, and assistance figures will be reported in the coming weeks.

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Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
74.87 m	37.8 m	0 m

Strategic Result 1: End hunger by protecting access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs

Focus area: Crisis Response to ensure humanitarian assistance

Activities:

- Provide food and nutrition assistance and essential livelihood support to targeted populations

Strategic Outcome 2: People have better nutrition, health and education outcomes

Focus area: Root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition among school-age children

Activities:

- Provide assistance to targeted children, pregnant and lactating women, children under 5, smallholders and communities vulnerable to food insecurity, unhealthy diets and malnutrition through asset transfers, food and cash assistance, home-grown school feeding, training and social and behaviour change communication to improve nutritional outcomes

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: People have improved and sustainable livelihoods.

Focus area: Immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition

Activities:

- Provide assistance to at-risk and vulnerable communities to develop nutrition-sensitive and inclusive livelihood diversification opportunities that improve resilience to climate change and other risks

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 4: National programmes and systems are strengthened

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:

- Provide technical assistance, including the co-creation, piloting and use of digital technologies among government and other food security, nutrition and social protection actors at the national and subnational levels

Donors

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

¹Thriplosa is an additional nutritious food aimed at minimizing and preventing maternal and child malnutrition and promoting local agricultural economy.

Cover Photo: Sri Lanka. Samantha Priyadaasa is a 45-year-old vegetable vendor at the Nugegoda market in Colombo. He is struggling to achieve his daily target as people have resorted to food rationing. © WFP/Josh Etsey.

Total beneficiaries reached (as of February 2023)

Activity	# People reached
Cash transfers	547,264
In-kind food assistance	486,096
School meals	1,065,686
Total	2,099,046

Capacity strengthening and support

- Training of 150 enumerators for the upcoming CFSAM was completed in February. Data collection is ongoing and is expected to be concluded in March.
- WFP Sri Lanka, the National Dengue Control Unit and the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division of the Ministry of Health, with funding from Australia, launched a handbook on Scenario-Based Training on Multi-Hazard Situations and Complex Emergencies for Grassroot level Public Health Workers and First Responders. The book provides critical information to better prepare for future hazards.

Monitoring

- WFP released the [Household Food Security Survey](#) for February 2023. The report found that 32 percent of households are food-insecure while 73 percent of households are resorting to negative food-based coping strategies such as consuming less preferred food, limiting portion sizes and/or reducing the number of meals.

Communication/Awareness promotion

- WFP Sri Lanka Representative and Country Director, Abdur Rahim Siddiqui met with the Swiss Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Dr Dominik Furgler to accept a contribution of CHF 800,000 (US\$802,000) from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The contribution will provide cash and other support to farmers affected by the country's economic and climate crises (see [Press Release](#)).
- A Multi-Tasking Server was handed over to the Sri Lanka Meteorology Department by the Representative and Country Director of WFP Sri Lanka, Abdur Rahim Siddiqui. The server will enable provision of more accurate weather forecasts and support informed planning and decision-making.
- USAID's Director for Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Stephanie Wilcock met with poor families in Rathnapura to understand their food needs and how WFP's US-funded programmes are helping them to cope with the economic crisis (see [Press Release](#)). She also visited an emergency operations center to observe how the district-level systems provide timely information to safeguard people from natural hazards.