



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Sri Lanka

Country Brief

October 2023



Aiysha Rilvan, a school meal caterer serving school meals. © WFP/Carol Taylor.

Operational Context

In 2022, Sri Lanka experienced its worst economic crisis since its independence in 1948. The food inflation rate reached an all-time high of 95 percent as the government defaulted on its foreign debts. This resulted in 6.2 million people becoming food-insecure. The situation in 2023 has stabilized with the inflation rate in October at -5.2 percent (NCPI). About 3.9 million people are estimated to be food insecure, a 40 percent improvement compared to 2022. However, significant concerns remain as the majority of households (62 percent) adopt livelihood-eroding coping strategies, while 56 percent are still adopting food coping strategies.

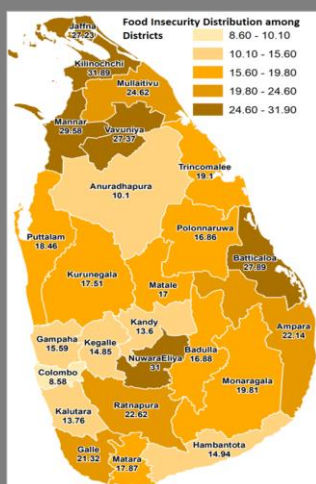
The country also faces significant threats from climate risks. Rising temperatures and extreme heat pose risks to human health and living standards and could potentially put downward pressure on agricultural yields. As the food security situation continues to show gradual improvement, WFP is implementing activities aimed at assisting communities in transitioning from emergency relief to early recovery and long-term resilience building while also focusing on improving the nutritional outcomes of the population and institutional capacity strengthening. WFP has been present in Sri Lanka since 1968, working in partnership with the Government for the past 55 years to save lives in times of crises and improve livelihoods for the future.

Population: **22 million**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

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



In Numbers

23,100 mt of food distributed

US\$13.2 million in cash and vouchers distributed

US\$0.67 million six-month (November-April 2023) net funding requirements

58,519 people assisted in October 2023



Operational Updates

- Since the start of emergency operations in June 2022, WFP has reached over 4.2 million people through general food assistance, school meals and nutrition support.
- In 2023, WFP is targeting 2.4 million food-insecure people through cash and voucher assistance, general food assistance, school meals and nutrition support.

Total beneficiaries reached (June 2022-October 2023)

Activity	# People reached
Cash transfers	1,416,465
In-kind food assistance	1,255,452
School meals	955,902
Thripasha	659,704
Total	4,287,523

General food assistance

- WFP is now scaling down its emergency food assistance as the food security situation in the country continues to improve. In October, over 52,000 people were reached with in-kind food assistance and 208 people received cash assistance.
- Since June 2022, over 1.2 million people have received in-kind food assistance and over 1.4 million people were supported with cash and value vouchers.

Nutrition support

- WFP has provided specialized nutritious food to 955,902 school children from 7,076 schools since June 2022.
- Food pack distributions for children with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) started in Nuwara Eliya, with 5,619 children receiving food packs in October.
- WFP is also providing maize and soya beans to the Government's *Thripasha* facility, targeting pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged 6-59 months. Over 4.5 million packets of *Thripasha* have been produced since June 2023.
- In October, the *Thripasha* factory dispatched 362,010 packets for distribution to pregnant and breastfeeding women and 353,820 packets for children aged 6-59 months. The *Thripasha* facility is available in all growth-monitoring and antenatal clinics across the country.

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

Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
104.87 m	52.73 m	0.67 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.

Assessments and monitoring

- According to WFP's latest post-distribution monitoring for October 2023, 77 percent of women do not meet the acceptable daily dietary requirements. The main deficiencies are protein, fruits and dairy foods.
- According to the latest [National Consumer Price Index](#), food inflation (year-on-year) was at a record low of -5.20 percent in October, marking continued deflation since July 2023.

Resilience Building and Capacity Strengthening

- The Department of Meteorology and WFP launched the Platform for Real-Time Impact and Situation Monitoring (PRISM), a web-based dashboard with relevant data related to drought monitoring and analytics to support the Government with risk-informed decision making.
- On 4 October, WFP, in collaboration with the Disaster Management Centre, Meteorology Department, District Secretariat, Security Forces, and selected private sector organizations conducted the Indian Ocean Wave Tsunami Exercise (IOWave) to assess the existing emergency response capacity of key institutions during a tsunami emergency.

Gender and Protection

- WFP's Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) hotline continues to operate daily in Sinhala, Tamil and English. All concerns by callers are flagged to the respective focal points for immediate action.
- In October, WFP registered 1,124 cases through its CFM channels, of which 99 percent were immediately resolved.

Communication and Advocacy

- On 16 October, WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) commemorated the World Food Day. The commemorations included a joint [op-ed article](#), a [special TV programme](#) on Swarnavahini TV and a [special on-line dialogue](#) hosted by local think tank Advocata Institute featuring WFP and FAO representatives.
- On 24 October, UN agencies in Sri Lanka celebrated UN Day where WFP showcased its engagement with the private sector through the Scaling up Nutrition Business Network (SBN). [A video](#) with WFP's Communications Officer speaking about WFP's work with the private sector and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to help in advancing Goal 2: Zero Hunger and Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals, was published on social media platforms.

Supply chain

- WFP dispatched over 702.5 mt of food commodities to affected communities in October.