



# WFP Sri Lanka

## Country Brief

January 2024

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



© 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 most households (62 percent) adopt livelihood-eroding coping strategies, while 56 percent are still adopting food coping strategies.

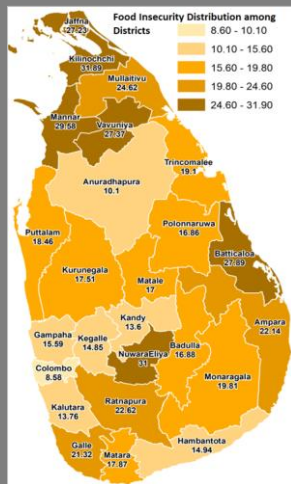
The country also faces significant threats from climate risks. Rising temperatures and extreme heat pose risks to human health and living standards and could potentially put downward pressure on agricultural yields. As the food security situation continues to show gradual improvement, WFP is implementing 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**



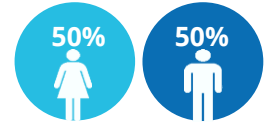
## In Numbers

**0 mt<sup>1</sup>** of food distributed

**US\$300,000** in cash and vouchers distributed

**US\$1.59 million** six-month (February-July 2024) net funding requirements

**962 people** assisted in January 2024



### Situation Updates

- According to the [Colombo Consumer Price Index](#) (CCPI), headline inflation (year-on-year) increased to 6.4 percent in January, from 4.0 percent in December. The increased inflation in January, according to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, is due to tax adjustments and weather-related disruptions to the food supply.
- According to WFP's [food security report](#), 24 percent of households are estimated to be food insecure. Improvements were seen in food- and livelihood-based coping strategies since March 2023.

### Operational Updates

#### Emergency Response

- In January, WFP distributed 1,924 food packs in two rounds, targeting 962 children with moderate acute malnutrition in three selected Medical Officer of Health areas in Anuradhapura district. The project was scaled up to provide a one-time food basket, targeting 2,803 children in twelve other Medical Officer of Health areas in Anuradhapura district.
- In 2023, WFP supported over 3.2 million people with unconditional food assistance (cash and in-kind), and through support to the National School Meals Programme and *Thripasha*<sup>2</sup> programme. This exceeded the initially targeted 2.4 million food-insecure people.

#### Programme Updates

- WFP organized the Operational Study on Gender-Transformative Approaches in School the National School meal programme in collaboration Ministry of Women, Child Affairs, Ministry of Education and the regional bureau.
- WFP organized a workshop in collaboration with the Environmental Health, Occupational Health & Food Safety unit of the Ministry of Health to prepare the food safety section of the National School Meal programme guideline.

Contact info: [WFP.Colombo@wfp.org](mailto:WFP.Colombo@wfp.org)

Country Director: Abdur Rahim Siddiqui

Further information: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/sri-lanka>

<sup>1</sup> No food was distributed in January 2024 as WFP's emergency response (in-kind) ended in December 2023. As schools are closed, no fortified rice was distributed in the month of January.

<sup>2</sup>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	54.77 m	1.59 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

- WFP, together with the Government, assessed the flood-affected areas of Ampara district. The assessment aimed to comprehend the level of food security within the affected community. The findings of the assessment are being finalized and will inform WFP’s response.

## Communication and Advocacy

- WFP Sri Lanka Representative and Country Director Abdur Rahimi Siddiqui was interviewed [by Il Corriere della Sera](#), a leading Italian daily, on the food security situation in the country. The Country Director emphasized on WFP’s support to early recovery, school meals programme and strengthening Government capacities.
- The Russian Federation handed over the last consignment of sunflower oil to the Government of Sri Lanka in support of WFP’s emergency operation. The [event](#) was held at the Partnership Secretariat for the World Food Programme Cooperation in Colombo in the presence of the Ambassador of Russia. from to the
- The Deputy Regional Director of WFP in the Asia and the Pacific [shared](#) WFP’s plans to boost the *Thripsha* programme by supporting smallholder farmers in producing key ingredients for *Thripsha*.



**“I often think that if I had both my legs, I could earn money as a daily wage earner, working in the peanut fields.”**

Philomena lost her leg in 2009 during Sri Lanka’s civil conflict. Restricted by her disability, Philomena sews clothes to supplement her husband Johnson’s income as a three-wheel driver.

When the economic crisis hit in 2022, Philomena and Johnson struggled to feed their two young daughters. With the generous support of donors, WFP stepped in to assist families like Philomena’s who were hard hit by the crisis.

**“We received food and cash assistance. In the face of so many difficulties, this assistance was so valuable to us. It helped us manage our food needs and brought relief and happiness.”**