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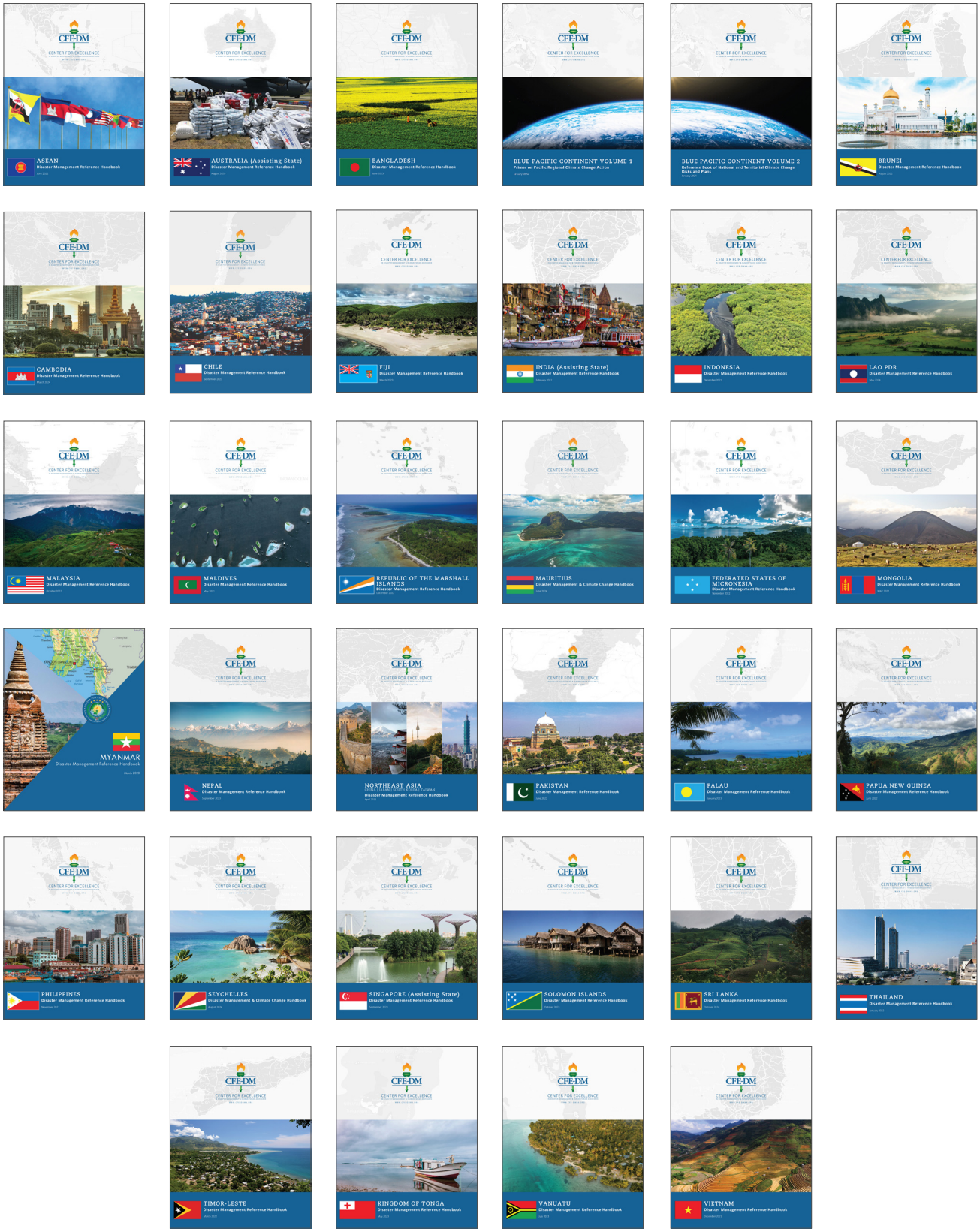
SRI LANKA

Disaster Management Reference Handbook

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Letter from the Director

As the world continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, communities are still contending with earthquakes, cyclones, droughts, and other emergencies. Among other challenges, Sri Lanka has been confronting a humanitarian crisis related to complex socio-economic and political challenges that saw citizens face crumbling health services, education, and livelihoods before going back to the polls to elect a new national government in latter 2024. Amidst this crisis, the country's progress on institutionalizing disaster management over 20 years also faced obstacles as funding and other resources ran scarce or were diverted to other programs.

The international community has responded to Sri Lanka's need for reinvigorated engagement to recover and build resilience ahead of future crises. In addition to agreements with the world's development agencies and financial institutions, Sri Lanka's bilateral relationships continue to rebound. The partnership of the Unites States (U.S.) with Sri Lanka's government and people will not flag, especially as climate change exacerbates the hazards hanging over the island. In recent years, the U.S. and Sri Lanka have reinforced military cooperation and people-to-people programming alongside other facets of U.S. foreign assistance to the country. One of the priorities for this engagement is building disaster response capacity even as the full scope of U.S. engagement helps Sri Lanka angle toward environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation. While the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supports Sri Lanka's inclusive economic growth and the resilience of marginalized and disaster-affected communities, regular engagement between the Sri Lankan and U.S. armed forces continues apace with subject matter expert exchanges and exercises to rehearse military operations in support of disaster response.

This updated Sri Lanka Disaster Management Reference Handbook is a contribution from the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) to ensure that progress made before the pandemic and complex socio-political crisis is not lost. This publication sets out the historic, social, economic, and climatic context for Sri Lanka's domestic and international action to build resilience to natural and anthropogenic hazards. It provides an overview of the country's disaster management practices and details the systems in place to help communities cope with emergencies. This handbook is intended to support U.S. armed forces planners and personnel who may be responding to a disaster in Sri Lanka or conducting a disaster response exercise alongside Sri Lankan personnel.

Sincerely,

Joseph D. Martin, SES
Director

About the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance

Overview

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) is a United States (U.S.) Department of Defense (DoD) organization comprised of nearly 30 subject matter experts that provide academic research, civil-military coordination training, and operational insights to support decision making before, during, and after crises. The Center is designed to bridge understanding between humanitarians, civilian, and military responders. CFE-DM partners with a diverse group of governmental and nongovernmental actors, as well as academic institutions to increase collaborations and capabilities in humanitarian assistance and disaster response. While maintaining a global mandate, the Indo-Pacific region is our priority of effort and collaboration is the cornerstone of our operational practice. The Center is a direct reporting unit to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and is located on Ford Island, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Vision

Resilient Joint Forces, Allies, and Partners that are fully prepared to respond across the spectrum of humanitarian crises.

Mission

CFE-DM builds crisis response capacity in US and Partner militaries, enhances coordination and collaboration with civilian and foreign partners, and strengthens those relationships to save lives and alleviate human suffering before, during, and after humanitarian crises in a changing climate environment.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka is an island state whose land and people are exposed to various natural and technological or anthropogenic hazards – disease outbreak, drought, earthquake, flooding, fire, hazardous materials incident, heat, landslide, shipping or aviation accident, storm, and tsunami. Not infrequently, national stakeholders are working to address more than one hazard event simultaneously as drought or a dengue outbreak strikes one region of the country while flooding and landslides impact another region.

The devastation that the 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami wrought in Sri Lanka triggered wide and deep reform to the country's legal and institutional structures for emergency management. Only six months after the tsunami, the Government had a new Disaster Management (DM) Act in place and was establishing the National Disaster Management Council, which was followed by establishment of the Disaster Management Centre (DMC).[1] Since then, DM offices have stood up throughout the country, and technical agencies continue to work to understand hazards and mitigate risk alongside national and international partners.

Sri Lanka's DM structure now fully integrates disaster risk reduction (DRR), risk management, climate change adaptation (CCA), and climate mitigation. This shift has been realized with the development of the most recent National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP), in which the country has integrated the DM cycle – prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery – rather than retaining the past relief-centered approach. The new approach means that the country continues to work to develop a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach by ensuring coherence across laws, policies, and plans, building information networks, extending opportunities to all Sri Lankans, coordinating responses when they are needed, and enabling more resilient recovery. Over the years, Sri Lanka has benefited from its partnerships with United Nations (UN) system agencies and bilateral and multilateral stakeholders to build all facets of the DM cycle.

The key institutions involved in DM are the DMC and National Building Research Organisation (NBRO), both under the Ministry of Defence. Together, and in cooperation with other national agencies, sub-national governments, and civil society, the DMC and NBRO analyze hazard exposure, assess risk, and help develop and implement plans and regulations to mitigate assessed risk and launch responses to hazard events. The most recent innovation in the country's DRR approach has been ecosystem-based DRR and ecosystem-based adaptation, both of which reflect the seriousness with which the country takes the potential for climate change to exacerbate the hazards it confronts.

Based on the country's own assessment, some 87% of the population lives in a place that is considered at moderate or severe risk of a disaster. Moreover, increasing demand for water and land, rising urbanization, and unplanned development are contributing to rising risk.[2] In conjunction with the influence of climate change, these elements spell a problematic future if DRR is not mainstreamed into government, business, and community action. However, the country's DM and climate change agencies remain somewhat siloed within the central government structure. Efforts to meet the country's commitments under global climate agreements will require not only national action but international assistance in the form of financial options and technical support. Since the end of the civil war in 2009, Sri Lanka's government has worked to rebuild its international and regional ties to ensure that it is not acting alone to address shared challenges, and ongoing shifts and incomplete reform agendas continue to slow the country's march toward full-scale participation in international and regional hazard mitigation and climate change action.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Sri Lanka is an Indian Ocean island state, home to more than 22 million people. It remains a largely rural society although the economy is increasingly diverse with strong industrial and services sectors. A civil war disrupted socio-economic development and troubled Sri Lanka's international relations between 1983 and 2009. In the midst of that conflict, the country was hit hard by the 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami. Since the end of the conflict, Sri Lanka's government has struggled to balance the demands of ethnic and religious factions with the need to ensure equitable access to resources for all Sri Lankans. Most recently, an economic crisis exacerbated by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic triggered a socio-political movement that topped the government in 2022. Recovery and reconciliation continue in 2024.

History

Modern humans have inhabited the island that is today Sri Lanka for an estimated 36,000 years. Hunter-gatherers thought to be the ancestors of Sri Lanka's modern Vedda minority people were joined in the middle of the 1st millennium BCE by cattle herders and farmers thought to be the ancestors of today's Sinhalese majority[3] and Tamil minority. Buddhism arrived on the island before the 2nd century BCE, and the religion's spread pre-dates formation of whole-island kingdoms ruled by monarchs bolstered by Buddhist influence.[4] Photo 1 shows the stupa of the historic Kalutara Buddhist temple, south of Colombo.[5]

In the early centuries CE, collecting and controlling water for irrigation of crops became a centralized task under the ruling monarch who fostered a massive, professionalized bureaucracy to manage human and material resources for building and maintaining irrigation works. At the local level, notable families who could build, control, maintain, and tax the use of irrigation works became nobles within the feudal structure that would emerge in about 1200 CE.[6]

In 1505, the Portuguese arrived in what they called "Ceilao," which would become "Ceylon" in English. Their publicized intention was to trade in spices,[7] but by 1619, they ruled most of the island's coastal regions. During the Portuguese hegemony, Roman Catholicism arrived and spread, especially among upper class Sinhalese.[8] In 1656, Portuguese rule was succeeded by Dutch rule, which lasted until 1796, when Dutch rule gave way to British rule. Communications, health care, education in English, and plantations (first coffee then tea, rubber, and coconut) developed.[9] By 1815, Britain had brought the entire island under its control and had begun building roads and railways through the center of the island, which had for centuries been a buffer-zone between Tamils of the northeast and Sinhalese



Photo 1: Kalutara Buddhist Temple, South of Colombo

of the south. Not only did Tamils begin moving southward to take advantage of economic development, but Britain also began to bring in Tamil laborers from India to work on the plantations of Ceylon.[10]

In 1932, Britain granted universal adult suffrage and internal self-rule to Ceylon, and the island gained independence in 1948.[11] In 1956, Solomon Bandaranaike was elected on a wave of Sinhalese nationalism, and his administration succeeded in passing laws making Sinhala the sole official language and other measures to consolidate Sinhalese and Buddhist hegemony.[12] In Colombo and elsewhere, Tamil civilians mobilized to protest and were met with Sinhalese resistance.[13] Economic stagnation in the 1960s drove high unemployment rates and, in 1971, the ultra-leftist Sinhalese Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Army) nearly toppled the government.[14] The next year, the country changed its name to Sri Lanka. Along with the name change, the political system became a presidential republic, and Buddhism was given primary place as the country's religion. Tamil resistance eventually grew into various political and armed movements, the best known of which was the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), founded in 1976.[15] In 1983, civil war erupted.[16] For over 25 years, government forces, LTTE, and other splinter movements battled over control of the island's northern and eastern districts.[17] The 1990s were especially deadly amidst suicide bombings,[18] summary executions, disappearances, and destruction of civilian property.[19]

In 2002, the civil war had appeared to begin to settle as the Government and LTTE signed a ceasefire. However, the 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami had major impacts on both conflict-affected communities and other coastal communities. More than 35,000 people were killed island-wide when the tsunami waves struck,[20] and at least 9,000 of those killed were in LTTE-controlled areas. Both LTTE and the Government promised to maintain the cease-fire and channel resources to the disaster response. However, LTTE eventually accused the Government of discriminating against Tamil communities. Fighting resumed in 2006. The United States (U.S.), United Kingdom (UK), and European Union (EU) declared LTTE a terrorist group, and, consequently, the group was ineligible to receive foreign disaster recovery resources.[21] President Mahinda Rajapaksa's administration (2005-2015) took an extremely firm stance upholding the unitary state and rejecting Tamil federalism, and it prosecuted the war with greater commitment.[22] In 2009, Government forces defeated LTTE. Some 70,000-80,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the war,[23] and some 800,000 people were displaced.[24]

In the 15 years since the end of the civil war, the Sri Lankan state has remained strongly centralized. Efforts to devolve power have made little headway.[25] During President Mahinda Rajapaksa's second term, he helped push through reforms that would have allowed a third term. However, Presidential elections in 2015 brought Maithripala Sirisena to power.[26] The Sirisena administration had promised to pursue devolution and promote Tamil involvement in government, but these promises were unfulfilled. Potentially more damaging to the administration were the Easter bombings of 2019, when jihadist suicide bombers killed more than 350 people in attacks on churches and hotels. The public largely blamed Sirisena for not stopping the bombings, and societal tensions ticked upward; the country's Muslim minorities bore the brunt of post-attack discrimination and violence.[27] After Presidential elections in late 2019, Sirisena was succeeded by Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who had commanded the armed forces during the latter part of the civil war and was popularly equated with Sinhalese nationalism and authoritarianism.[28] He was, himself, forced out of office by a mass public uprising – the Aragalaya ("struggle") – amidst economic crisis in 2022. Protests erupted in March; in May, Mahinda Rajapaksa – then serving as Prime Minister – stepped down, and in July, the President resigned.[29] Parliament selected Ranil Wickremesinghe to serve the remainder of the Presidential term.[30] Although

the administration negotiated a fresh deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), economic fundamentals still require reform,[31] and when voters went to the polls to elect a new President in September 2024, they selected Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who campaigned on a platform of good governance.[32]

Culture and Demographics

As of 2022, the Department of Census and Statistics estimated the national population at 22.18 million; the male-to-female ratio was 48 : 52.[33] However, it must be noted that the country has not run an official census since 2012.[34] Broadly, there is parity between the sexes at birth,[35] but females tend to outlive males with a life expectancy at birth of 79.9 years for Sri Lankan females and 73.7 years for Sri Lankan males.[36] The government estimates that the population growth rate stood at 1.08% annually in 2021, an increase over 2020, the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the growth rate plummeted to 0.53%, the sharpest recent contraction as the growth rate had been relatively steady for over a decade.[37] Over the longer term, the country's population growth rate has been falling fairly steadily since the 1960s with the exception of a swifter dip at the height of the civil war between approximately 1992 and 2002.[38]

The country's culture is broadly determined by ethno-linguistic and religious groupings. A large majority of the population remains rural, and small community ties and observances are very important. The availability of educational, health, and livelihoods resources in rural areas means that strong family and community ties continue to operate rather than elders and youth at home in rural areas relying on laborers who migrate into cities for work. Especially in areas where traditional irrigation systems still operate, villagers continue to cultivate rice paddy and fruit and vegetable gardens. Paddy land would traditionally be collectively held by a kinship group, but privatized ownership became the norm during the British colonial era, during and after which a system of land investment and sharecropping predominated. There is an historic Sinhalese caste system that was not strictly stratified but that did build strongly authoritarian family structures into society. Due to modern educational and employment developments, caste has not been a barrier to Sri Lankans joining the upper echelons of society.[39]

Ethnic Makeup

The 2012 census found that, of the 20.36 million people then present in Sri Lanka, 15.25 million people or 75% of the population were Sinhalese, 2.27 million people or 11% of the population were Sri Lankan Tamil, and more than 839,000 people or 4% of the population were Indian Tamil. An additional 1.9 million people or 9% of the population were Sri Lankan Moors (Muslims). Additional small groups – fewer than 50,000 people – include "Burghers" and Eurasians, Malays, Sri Lanka Chetty, Baratha, and Vedda (Adivasi). Figure 1 shows a chart of the ethnic makeup of society.[40]

The Sinhalese majority are descended from groups of people who arrived in the mid- to latter-1st millennium BCE from the sub-continent. Over the centuries, they developed

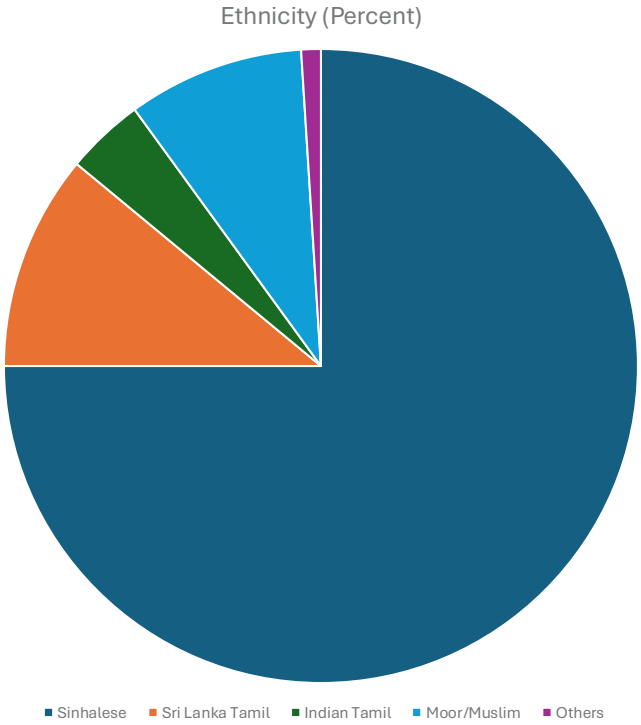


Figure 1: Ethnic Groups of Sri Lanka, Percent of Population

a culture separate from but in communication with communities across the Palk Strait, and they widely adopted Buddhism when it arrived.[41] However, during the period of rule by the Portuguese in coastal areas, many "low-country" Sinhalese adopted Roman Catholicism. It was not until 1815 that "up-country" Sinhalese in and around Kandy came under British rule.[42] Slight linguistic and hereditary differences still distinguish "low-" and "up-" country Sinhalese although these differences can, in some ways, be chalked up to standard variations in culture based on location and livelihood.[43]

The difference between Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils dates to the late 19th century when Britain brought indentured laborers into Sri Lanka from India's Tamil-dominated southern states; this practice lasted into the 1940s. Sri Lanka's "Indian" Tamils descend from these laborers and live primarily on the country's tea, rubber, and coconut plantations, or "estates" in the Central, Uwa, and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, whereas Sri Lankan Tamils live primarily in the island's northern and eastern regions.[44]

It is posited that today's Vedda are the descendants of the island's residents at the time of the arrival of the ancestors of today's Sinhalese and Tamils. Nonetheless, it remains disputed whether there is any way to define the Vedda as the descendants of the legendary "yaksha" who were the target of extermination attempts by the legendary early Sinhalese settlers, as recounted in key 3rd-5th-century CE pseudo-historical narratives found in the Dipavaṃsa and Mahavaṃsa chronicles.[45]

The other minority groups have long histories in the country but number far fewer people either due to emigration or to integration. Sri Lankan Moors (Muslims) are local Muslims, as distinct from ethnic Malay Muslims; they are thought to be the descendants of Tamils who converted to Sunni Islam and who have long had substantial connections to Arab traders serving the island.[46] "Burghers" or "Eurasians" are the descendants of children born of Portuguese or Dutch marriages with locals; they are mainly Christian, live in urban areas, and speak English as their first language, but they have also broadly integrated into the Sinhalese-majority country rather than standing apart.[47] Sri Lanka Chetties are found mostly in the Western and northwestern Provinces, and they descend from merchants and traders who long plied trade routes between India and Ceylon.[48] Baratha communities are mostly present in Mannar district; they descend from seafarers who sailed and dove for pearls in the waters between India and Sri Lanka. Most Baratha are Roman Catholics.[49]

Key Population Centers

As of 2022, the government estimated that Colombo and Gampaha districts had the largest populations with more than 2.4 million people in each. They were followed by Kurunegala (1.74 million), Kandy (1.5 million), Kalutara (1.29 million), Ratnapura (1.19 million), and Galle (1.15 million). No other district was home to more than 1 million people.[50] The government estimates that the country overall has a population density of 325 people per square kilometer (km^2; 842 people per square mile).[51] Based on the 2012 census, the last available, Colombo had the highest population density (3,438 people per km^2; 8,904 people per square mile), and Gampaha had a density of 1,719 people per km^2 (4,452 people per square mile). No other district registered more than 1,000 people per km^2 (2,590 people per square mile), and the lowest population density was found in Mullaitivu – 38 people per km^2 (98 people per square mile).[52]

In 2012, the urban population was still vastly outnumbered by the rural population with urban residents making up less than 20% of the population. This number marks a recovery of sorts after the 2001 census returned a total of just 16.3% of the population living in urban areas; this total had itself been a reversal of the long-term trend of rising urbanism noted in the four census exercises conducted between 1953 and 1981. Of note, the 2012 census included a separate category for the "estate" sector, which comprises the tea and rubber plantations, which had historically been counted as "rural."[53]

Language

Sinhala, Tamil, and English are Sri Lanka's official languages. Sinhala is from the Indo-European language family (Indo-Aryan branch), and Tamil, from the Dravidian language family, is spoken predominantly in the island's northeast. English is widely spoken and understood.[54] The census does not ask respondents about primary or other language usage; broadly, first language is thought to mirror ethnic identity. Local Muslims (Moors) mainly speak Tamil as a first language, Malays often speak a Malay dialect, and the Vedda use a dialect that is a hybrid local language mixed with Sinhala.[55]

Religion

The 2012 census found that of the 20.36 million people then present in Sri Lanka, 14.27 million people or 70% of the population practiced Buddhism, 2.6 million people or 12.6% of the population practiced Hinduism, 1.97 million people or 9.7% of the population practiced Islam, and 1.6 million people or 7.6% of the population were part of a Christian congregation. Figure 2 illustrates the religious make-up of the country as a whole.[56]

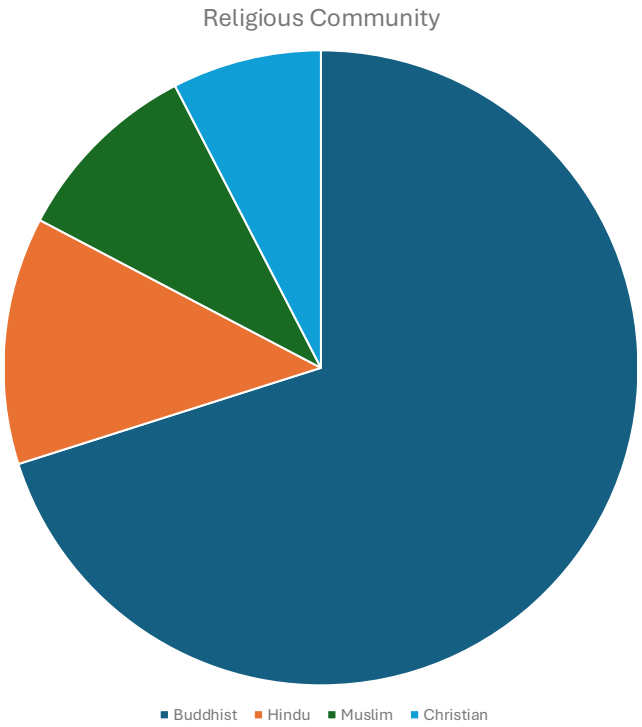


Figure 2: Religious Practice in Sri Lanka, Share of Population

There are some districts where one religion dominates or is concentrated. Trincomalee and Puttalam districts are the most evenly split districts in terms of major religious communities; in Trincomalee, approximately one-quarter of the population practices Buddhism, one-quarter practices Hinduism, and 42% practice Islam; in Puttalam, approximately 43% follow Buddhism, 20% Islam, and 31% Roman Catholicism. Beyond these two districts, Buddhism is dominant throughout the country with large majorities (three-quarters or more) of the population following this religion in Hambantota (96%), Matara (94%), Monaragala (94%), Galle (93%), Anuradhapura (90%), Polonnaruwa (89%), Kurunegala (88%), Ratnapura (86%), Kegalle (84%), Kalutara (83%), and Matale (79%). In several other districts, Buddhists make up not quite three-quarters of the population, and only in Jaffna is the Buddhist population smaller than 1% of the population. Hindus are present throughout the country but make up majorities in Jaffna (82%), Kilinochchi (81%), Mullaitivu (75%), Vavuniya (69%), Batticaloa (64%), and Nuwara-Eliya (51%). Along the east coast, in Ampara, Trincomalee, and Batticaloa, Muslims make up 43%, 42%, and 25% of the population, respectively. In Mannar and Puttalam, Roman Catholic Christians make up 52% and 31% of the population, respectively, whereas they account for no more than one-fifth in any other district and are all but absent in areas of the southern coast.[57]

Vulnerable Groups

"Vulnerable groups" are groups of people who are likely to be disproportionately disadvantaged by the effects of natural disasters, economic shocks, or other crises, due to their social position, circumstances, or resources. Vulnerabilities vary from one society to the next and can be compounded by multiple factors. Higher poverty rates and social or political marginalization often result in less ability to build resilience, recover after a shock, or adapt to change. The categories below are not comprehensive but simply highlight some groups

with increased social vulnerabilities. Vulnerable groups should not be considered in isolation, as factors such as economic status, sex, age, and health or disability status are often cross-cutting. The vulnerable groups discussed here are intended to provide additional context for considering crisis impacts.

Elderly People

Sri Lanka's government defines people over the age of 60 years as the elderly cohort.[58] Estimates based on the 2012 census indicate that elders make up more than 12% of the population, but they are not evenly spread across the country; Western Province is home to more than 31% of the national elderly population whereas Northern Province is home to less than 5% of the national elderly population.[59] Overall, approximately77% of the country's elders live in a rural area.[60] Many demographers expect people over the age of 60 years to make up one-quarter of the population as a large working age population ages with fewer younger laborers taking their place.[61] Moreover, there has been a long-term trend of elderly people making up more of society – if not the formal population – because younger people in their hundreds of thousands migrate overseas for work.[62]

While labor migration and an aging society have stark economic consequences, social and political consequences must also be considered. An aging population puts pressure on the healthcare sector, and already in 2021, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the healthy life expectancy in Sri Lanka stood at 67 years. Compared to the overall life expectancy of more than 77 years, elder Sri Lankans could experience 10 years of less-healthy life – i.e., increased morbidity and disability. Increased demand for care of elders can also have various impacts – e.g., family members dropping out of the formal workforce to care for elders or increased demand for elder care homes. As of 2021, the country had only six public sector elder care centers and 324 private or community centers.[63]

Elders frequently have special needs related to how they access and understand information related to hazards and disaster events. Moreover, provisions for delivering assistance to elders must take into account various cultural mores as well as mobility or financial limitations among the elderly populace. Integrating elders and their advocates into planning for DM activities may help ensure that elders' specific cultural, financial, and physical needs are planned for rather than being addressed in an ad hoc manner.

People Living with Disabilities

In the 2012 census, more than 1.6 million respondents affirmed that they are living with at least one disability, or "difficulties" as defined in the census exercises. Thus, at the time, more than 8.7% of the population experienced difficulty with seeing, hearing, cognition, communication, mobility, or self-care. By far, the largest proportion of those living with a disability – 996,939 people – reported difficulty seeing.[64] The next most commonly-experienced difficulty was with mobility – 734,213 people – followed by hearing – 389,077 people.[65] The most impacted districts of the country were Gampaha, Colombo, Kurunegala, and Kandy. Females living with a disability outnumbered males living with a disability (922,661 versus 695,263),[66] and the number of females experiencing disabilities related to both vision and mobility is higher than males experiencing both of these disabilities,[67] likely in a reflection of females living longer lives and, therefore, experiencing disabilities that come with old age.[68] Indeed, the census found that more than half of the 1.1 million people living with disabilities and who were not economically active reported that they were not employed due to age.[69]

Sri Lanka has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and it passed the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act in 1996,[70] which established the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.[71] However, critics indicate a need to craft and implement new legislation that extends the 1996 act's declaration that people living with disabilities have various rights; rather, they promote a law that ensures that

all public spaces and services are accessible to people living with disabilities. The Ministry of Public Administration has issued rules requiring all public institutions to ensure that 3% of employees are people living with disabilities, but, as of 2023, only the Education Department had publicized numbers that reached this threshold.[72]

The Government has recognized that it has struggled to integrate people living with disabilities into decision-making and policy-making processes in part due to social stigma and in part to other barriers to participation. There is a prevailing attitude that people living with disabilities required protection, and these people are also excluded from pathways to participation by their exclusion from many public and private employment schemes, an absence that thereby means their "lack of economic productivity" is perceived as a lack of ability – or right – to contribute.[73] A lack of representation by people living with disabilities in hazard identification or disaster planning may mean that plans do not consider the needs of people living with disabilities – e.g., no sign interpretation of disaster alerts or a lack of mobility-aid accessible shelters.

Sexual and Gender Minorities

For legal reasons, there are only estimates of how many people in Sri Lanka may be homosexual, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer. A 2021 study by Sri Lanka's Equal Ground advocacy group estimated, based on widespread interviews, that there may be more than 1.4 million homosexual, bisexual, transgender, or intersex people in the country; by far, bisexual people are thought to be the largest group, especially among the cohort of people 18-29 years of age.[74]

Sri Lanka's Penal Code retains British colonial-era criminalization of homosexual activity. Moreover, the Penal Code criminalizes "impersonation" of genders and prohibits non-normative gender expression. Penalties under both articles can include prison time or fines. Additional criminal laws related to vagrancy have been used to harass and arrest homosexual or transgender persons.[75] There have been frequent reports of police using the threat of prosecution under either of the Penal Code provisions to extort, blackmail, detain, and mistreat gender-non-conforming people. Most recently, in 2023, a bill came before Parliament to decriminalize consensual homosexual activity, and the Supreme Court agreed that no portion of the bill ran contrary to Sri Lanka's constitution. The Government agreed that it supported passage of the bill.[76] However, as of the writing of this book, a final law regarding decriminalization had not been passed.

There are no protections for people whose sexuality or gender expression do not conform to norms. They are frequently reports of discrimination in accessing education, housing, and health care.[77] There is no protection against "conversion therapy" for either homosexuality or trans identities, and, in fact, the country's medical establishment has broadly agreed that homosexuality and non-normative gender expressions are pathologies to be treated medically. Both traditional Ayurvedic medical practitioners and western practitioners provide conversion therapies.[78] Equal Ground finds that the country's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/questioning people are subject to legal, political, and social restraints that mean that they consistently hide their identities. Indeed, Equal Ground's surveys have found that more than half of Sri Lankans neither know nor would be pleased to associate with people with non-normative sexual or gender identities.[79] Thus, people from sexual and gender minorities are absent from key community activities, including planning for an executing DRR, CCA, and humanitarian action. People of non-normative sexualities or gender identities may fear for their physical safety or freedom if they try to access aid after an emergency. Moreover, no voice advocates for them in planning to accommodate or assist people who may not fit into general categories used for inclusion in aid or assistance programs.

Women

Traditional Sinhalese society is male-dominated and patriarchal, with a strong division of labor by sex and a tendency to stigmatize the female roles of preparing food and caring for children. Traditionally, a family lost status if it permitted its women to engage in extra-domestic agricultural labor or cash-crop marketing. Men and women led separate lives. There has traditionally been a strong preference for male children, who may receive better care than female children, and the infant mortality rate for girls was long higher than that for boys. Girls are traditionally expected to work harder than boys and may be given significant household chores at ages as young as 5 or 6 years, and girls may be taken out of school before boys in times of straightened household resources. However, more recently, women have gained entry into and prominence in higher education and the professions.[80] Moreover, since the 1970s, the son preference at birth has all but disappeared.[81] Although these shifts mean the school- and working-age population is more equitable for females and males, the country is experiencing an increase in the proportion of women among elders over the age of 60 years. As of the most recent census, females accounted for some 56% of this cohort,[82] and these elder women are less likely to be literate or financially secure, and they may be less able or willing to accept new cultural or social contexts, a limitation that could expose these elder women to higher risk in case of a disaster event.

As of 2023, indices regarding female education show that Sri Lanka's females enter and complete approximately the same amount of formal schooling as males, and the adult female literacy rate is nearing parity with the male literacy rate.[83] Nonetheless, the female labor force participation rate is still only approximately half of the male labor force participation rate (34.5% of females and 73% of males either in formal employment or looking for work).[84] This rate in fact marks a worsening female labor force participation rate; the rate had been falling slightly for more than a decade but dropped markedly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic crisis. Given that an estimated one-third of formally employed females in the country are in work that is considered "vulnerable" – i.e., lacks a formal contract agreement, does not contribute to social protection schemes, or is likely to disappear during an economic shock[85] – even formally employed females may not be able to build savings or access formal banking systems that allow them to be resilient in the face of disasters or other emergencies.

Economics

Economic factors played a significant role in the 2022-2023 socio-political crisis that rocked the country. Domestic structural economic weaknesses were exacerbated by global market shocks – the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine – alongside local policy issues. The country had lost access to international financial markets during the early stages of the pandemic in 2020; official financial reserves dropped, and liquidity constraints led to severe shortages of basic goods alongside high inflation. Food insecurity and malnutrition increased, and poverty doubled. An estimated 60% of households experienced a decline in income due to reduced work hours or job losses. With a change in government and implementation of structural reforms, stability returned, but household budgets continued to struggle into 2024.[86]

Historically, the Sri Lankan economy was heavily agricultural, with crops driving domestic production and consumption and making up a major portion of exports. While rice is the main crop and the foundation of the national diet, tea, rubber, spices, and coconut are major commercial crops,[87] and tea was historically the foundation of export earnings. In 1972, total exports made up approximately 8% of gross domestic product (GDP), and tea accounted for more than 54% of exports.[88] By 2016, the country's economy had diversified to integrate large tourism and industrial components.[89]

At that time, exports accounted for some 22% of exports; key services – travel and tourism, transport, and information and communications technology (ICT) – accounted for nearly 40% of exports, and apparel accounted for nearly 28%, whereas coffee, tea, and other processed beverages accounted for just 8%.[90] As of 2023, exports accounted for approximately 6% of GDP, and the export of goods was still dominated by garments and tea.[91]

Although agriculture has consistently lost ground to other sectors in terms of contribution to GDP, plantation agriculture – rice, tea, rubber, and coconut – still accounts for large portions of the labor force.[92] In the 2022 labor force survey, the Department of Census and Statistics found that the number of people involved in agricultural labor has remained approximately the same since 2015, but the numbers of workers in the industrial and services sectors have steadily ticked upward. In 2022, slightly more than 26% of employed workers were in agricultural employ, and this share continues to show sustained decrease in the share of workers active in this sector. In 2022, an additional 26% of employed workers were in industry jobs, and 47% were employed in the services; industry's share of workers has remained somewhat stable, and the services have continued to gain share. There were 8.5 million people in the labor force in the 2022 survey, and this number accounted for less than half of the labor force-eligible population. Roughly 70% of the active labor force was male, and the labor force was roughly evenly split between urban and rural workers. The unemployment rate was below 5%, but the labor force participation rate had consistently fallen since 2015 as the economy suffered various systemic headwinds.[93]

Alongside falling labor force participation rates at home, Sri Lanka's labor force has increasingly looked overseas for opportunity. Over the past decade, remittances from Sri Lankans employed abroad have contributed a large share towards foreign exchange.[94] Since world economies began to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, remittances from Sri Lankan workers overseas have made up 5-6.5% of GDP.[95] In 2022, total remittances topped US$3.7 billion, a significant drop from pre-pandemic remittances, which had grown from US$5.98 billion in 2015 to a high of US$7.24 billion in 2016 before slowing somewhat to US$7.1 in 2020 before pandemic losses began to be felt.[96] An estimated 200,000-300,000 workers depart every year for employment overseas.[97]

In terms of GDP, in 2021, Sri Lanka's economy had begun to recover from the shock of the pandemic as GDP grew by more than 4.2%. However, in 2022, GDP fell by 7.35%.[98] These losses accompanied a sovereign debt crisis, limits on imports, and socio-political unrest that contributed to the downfall of the sitting government. The economy also contracted by 2.3% in 2023, but the final two quarters of the calendar year did show growth following six quarters of contraction. The construction and mining, financial and IT services, and textile manufacturing sectors all shrank amid weak demand, tight private-sector credit, and shortages of inputs. The transport, accommodations, and food and beverage sectors did show strength based on a rebound in tourism. The World Bank assesses prospects for sustained recovery as highly dependent on political will to continue reforms, and it projects a bleak few years for Sri Lankans due to significant welfare losses during the global health crisis and the domestic socio-political unrest. Indeed, poverty is projected to remain above 22% until 2026 as labor force participation has fallen below 50%.[99]

Government

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a presidential republic. The administrative capital is Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte, which is adjacent to the central urban area of the commercial capital, Colombo. The country is divided into nine provinces – Central, Eastern, North Central, Northern, North Western, Sabaragamuwa, Southern, Uva, and Western.[100] Provinces are administered by a directly-elected provincial council, and each province is divided into districts, each of which is further divided

into smaller administrative units.[101]

The constitution has been in effect since 1978; it has been amended numerous times.[102] The 20th amendment, passed in October 2020, codified the concentration of executive power in the President's office. In the wake of the 2022 Aragalaya movement and departure of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from power, the follow-on administration proposed and succeeded in passing the 22nd amendment in October 2022; although some critics did not see this amendment as fully restoring checks on presidential power, it did bolster anti-corruption safeguards and promote economic reform.[103]

The President is head of state and of government. The President is directly elected by popular vote for a 5-year term with a 2-term limit.[104] The President appoints the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers from among Members of Parliament (MP).[105] The unicameral Parliament has 225 seats, 196 of which are filled by direct popular election in multi-seat districts, while the remainder are filled by proportional party-list selections. MPs also serve 5-year terms. The highest court in Sri Lanka is the Supreme Court of the Republic, which has one chief justice and nine associate justices. There are also courts of appeals, high courts, magistrates' courts, and municipal and primary courts.[106]

Since 1987, local authority has been devolved to provincial councils, which oversee municipal and urban councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas, which oversee the country's smaller towns.[107] Provincial and central governments provide funding grants, and local authorities collect taxes and user fees as well rents and grants. Provincial councils oversee internal law and order, provincial economic plans, education, housing and agriculture. Local authorities have responsibility for public health, utilities, and roads. Pradeshiya Sabhas have some oversight over development activities.[108]

Environment

Sri Lanka lies between 5° 55 and 9° 50 North and between 79° 42 and 81° 52 East.[109] It lies in the northeastern Indian Ocean and is separated from India by the Palk Strait.[110] The island stretches 430 km (267 miles) from north to south and 225 km (140 miles) from east to west[111] and has a total land area of 65,610 km^2 (25,332 square miles).[112] The coastline runs 1,340 km (833 miles)[113] with the Palk Strait and Palk Bay to the northwest, the Bay of Bengal to the east, the Indian Ocean to the south, and the Gulf of Manar to the west. Figure 3 is a general map of Sri Lanka.[114]

Geography

The island is a mostly low, flat plain with a mountainous area, the Central Highlands, in the south-central region. The elevation of the plains ranges from sea level to about 300 meters (m; 1,000 feet) while the Central Highlands rise to Pidurutalagala, which is the country's highest point at 2,524 m (8,281 feet). The highlands integrate various plateaus, ridges, basins and



Figure 3: Map of Sri Lanka

escarpments, the last of which tend to sharply define the highlands from the plains. To the north and northeast of the highlands, the plain is traversed by low ridges. The western and southwestern areas of the plain feature alternating ridges and valleys running parallel to the coast and increasing in elevation toward the interior. In other areas, there are rocky buttes and mounds marking the plain. Twelve major and many dozens of smaller rivers are present, and most of these rivers flow from the south-central highlands to the coasts around the island.[115]

Borders

There are no land borders.

Sri Lanka and India have signed two agreements regarding their boundaries in the Bay of Bengal, Palk Strait, and Gulf of Mannar. The boundary stretches 288 km (179 miles) from southwest to northeast.[116]

Climate

The tropical climate is marked by year-round high temperatures. Monthly average temperatures range 22-33°C (72-92°F). The higher altitudes of the Central Highlands do experience lower temperatures – i.e., 7-21°C (44-71°F).[117]

Sri Lanka has two main seasons, the Maha season associated with the northeast monsoon (September-March) and the Yala season associated with the southwest monsoon (May-August). The combination of dual monsoons and geography mean that there are three broad zones: Wet, Intermediate, and Dry. The Wet Zone, in the southwest, is most impacted by the southwest "Yala" rains. The Dry Zones are in the south and northwest. The Intermediate Zones, in the eastern and central regions, receive most of their precipitation from the northeast "Maha" monsoon. All regions receive steady rainfall during the inter-monsoon seasons.[118]

Most of the country receives average annual rainfall of 1,270 millimeters (mm; 50 inches). In the Wet Zone, annual rainfall averages 2,490 mm (98 inches) along the coast and 3,810 mm (150 inches) in the highlands with most of the rain coming in the "Yala" season. Over the rest of the island, annual rainfall totals range 760-1,778 mm (30-70 inches) with most of the precipitation received during the "Maha" season.[119] Figure 4 illustrates the average minimum, mean, and maximum air temperatures and precipitation for Sri Lanka for the period 1991-2022.[120]

Monthly Climatology of Average Minimum Surface Air Temperature, Average Mean Surface Air Temperature, Average Maximum Surface Air Temperature & Precipitation 1991-2022; Sri Lanka

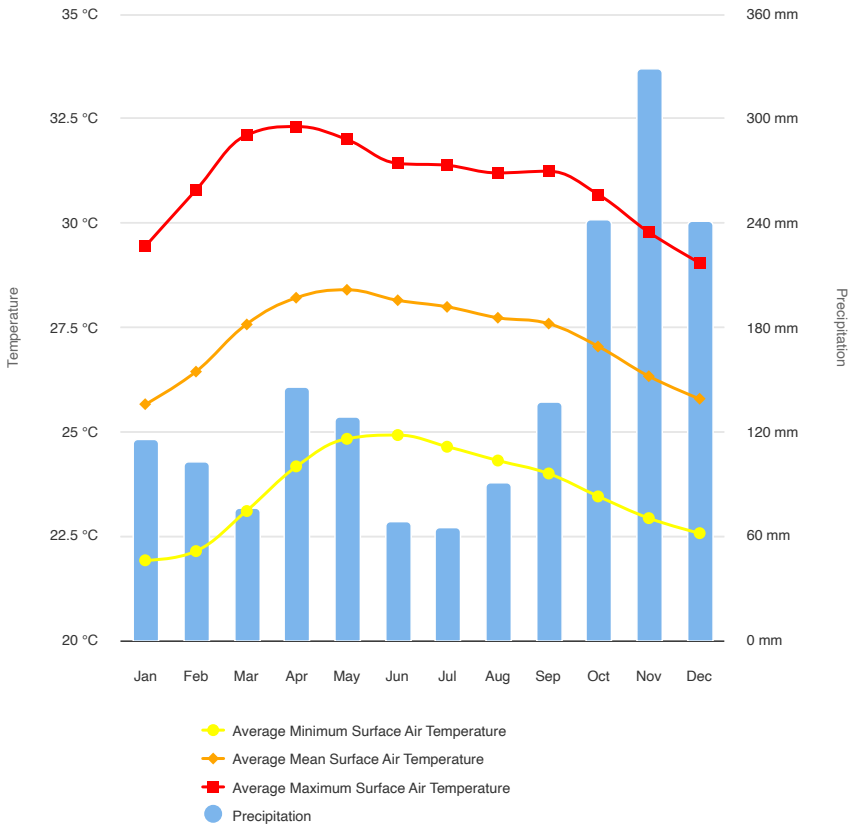


Figure 4: Average Temperatures and Precipitation, Sri Lanka (1991-2022)

DISASTER OVERVIEW

Sri Lanka confronts various natural and technological or anthropogenic hazards – i.e., disease outbreak, drought, earthquake, flooding, fire, hazardous materials incident, heat, landslide, shipping or aviation accident, storm, and tsunami. Based on data in EM-DAT, the international disaster database, the country experienced 91 disaster events between 2000 and 2023. Figure 5 shows the proportion of hazard event occurrences during that 23-year period.[121] EM-DAT defines a disaster for inclusion in its data as an event or situation that overwhelms local capacity and necessitates a request for assistance at the national or international level. For inclusion, the event must have caused 10 fatalities, affected 100 people, resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency, or led to a call for international assistance. Within the database classification system, "technological" hazards include transport accidents, industrial accidents, and other miscellaneous incidents.[122]

The World Bank estimates that, on average, Sri Lanka experiences Rs 50 billion (US$313 million) in annual disaster losses, of which Rs 32 billion (US$200 million) results from flood losses. Cyclones or high winds account for Rs 11 billion (US$68 million), drought for Rs 5.2 billion (US$32 billion), and landslides for Rs 1.8 billion (US$11 million). These losses are equivalent to 0.4% of GDP, or 2.1% of government expenditure.

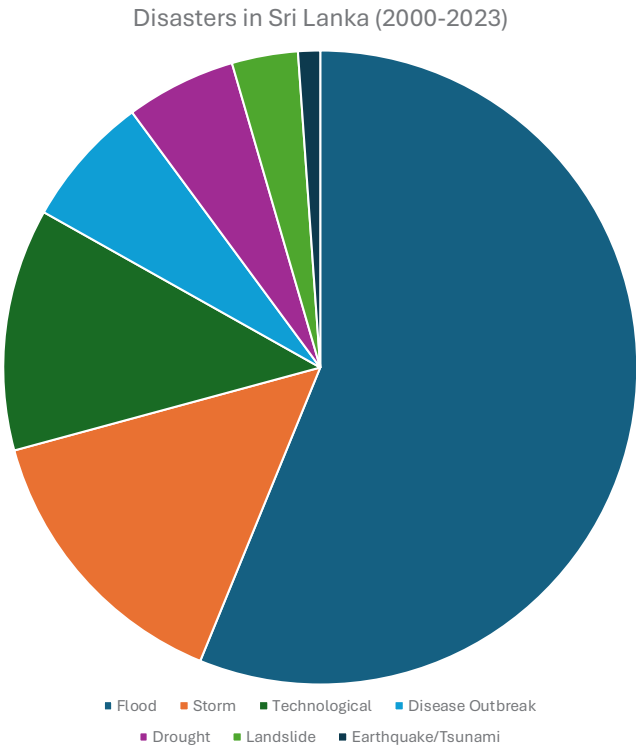


Figure 5: Disaster Events in Sri Lanka (2000-2023)

Climate change will likely drive more intense hazard events. These events cumulatively impact various socio-economic elements; among the projected impacts are food insecurity, which will be heightened due to changes in precipitation and temperature as well as pesticide use, disease prevalence, and the establishment of invasive species. Some of this shift is already evident. In 2016, Sri Lanka faced its worst drought, which resulted in a 40% decline in paddy production in early 2017, followed by heavy rains that further affected food crop production. Food insecurity among rain-fed farmers and agricultural laborers became acute.[123]

Climate Change

Sri Lanka is already exposed to climate-related hazards, including but not limited to drought, flooding, cyclones, coastal erosion, and disease outbreaks. Moreover, an estimated one-quarter of the population lives within 1 km (0.62 mile) of the coast in areas exposed not only to sea level rise but also storm surge and saltwater intrusion into cropland and freshwater sources. Indeed, salinity intrusion in the Kelani River has already become a concern; the river serves the Ambatale water treatment plant, which provides drinking water for parts of the greater Colombo area, and the plant has experienced water intake stoppages in recent years due to salinity intrusion in the source river water. The Malwathu Oya, Kalu, and Nilwala rivers have also shown higher salinity that has damaged water treatment stations and agricultural land along them.

The country is a low greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter although it has significant room for

reduction of its emissions, especially in shifting inputs of the electricity generation and transport sectors, both of which rely heavily on fossil fuels. The transport sector generates approximately one-half of the country's total GHG emissions. In addition, deforestation marks a significant challenge as it is reducing the country's ability to claim carbon sinks. Forested land makes up nearly 30% of the total land area, but forest cover has steadily fallen due to land degradation, soil erosion, human-induced forest fires, and other human activity.[124]

The range of average temperature increase is based on the lowest-emission and highest-emission Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) scenarios. RCPs describe possible trajectories for carbon dioxide emissions and the resulting atmospheric concentration. There are four commonly used RCPs (2.6, 4.5, 6.0, and 8.5), which were developed based on their end-of-century "radiative forcing" – a measure of the combined effect of greenhouse gases, aerosols, and other factors that can influence climate to trap additional heat.[125] RCP2.6 is the most optimistic scenario and indicates a 2.6 watts per meter squared (W/m^2) forcing increase relative to pre-industrial conditions. RCP8.5 is the most pessimistic of the four scenarios and indicates an 8.5 W/m^2 forcing increase.[126] RCP2.6 projects a rise of 1.0°C (1.8°F) above the 1986–2005 baseline by 2100, while RCP8.5 projects a rise of 3.6°C (6.5°F).[127]

The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) offers some generalizations of temperature projections for South Asia that can be helpful for Sri Lanka. Temperature is the element of greatest concern as the already tropical climate of Sri Lanka can expect temperatures and humidity that pose a threat to human health under mid-range and high emissions scenarios (RCPs 4.5 through 8.5).[128] Scholars using a regional climatic model approach project that temperatures in Sri Lanka will rise by 3.6°C (6.5°F), 3.3°C (5.9°F), and 2.3°C (4.1°F) by 2080 under scenarios that posit three different scenarios: 1) increasing global populations and fragmented economies; 2) rapid economic growth and balanced global energy resources; and 3) steady population with rapid economic shifts toward greater sustainability, respectively.[129] While these temperature rises are expected to be marginally lower than the global average, the rise in minimum temperatures is expected to be swifter than the rise of average temperatures, meaning that the country will see fewer periods of respite from high temperatures.[130] The number of hot days (>35°C; >95°F) is expected to increase from 14 in 2024 to over 100 in 2100.[131] Extreme heat will threaten human health, especially in urban areas where a lack of cooling is prevalent among poorer households. Outdoor laborers nationally will suffer health effects as agricultural and construction industries suffer reduced productivity.[132]

Some models based on population and economic development scenarios project a 30-40% increase in rainfall across Sri Lanka, but models that are driven by more localized data are more ambiguous with projections showing both increases and decreases in rainfall nationally.[133] Many climate models foresee changes in both the southwest and northeast monsoons, and these shifts will result in greater variability in the overall annual rainfall pattern nationally. Despite this low confidence in long-range projections, under mid-range and high emissions scenarios (RCPs 4.5 through 8.5), there is relatively high confidence that Sri Lanka will receive overall increased mean annual rainfall. The southwestern "wet zone" is expected to see increased total rainfall. The eastern and central "intermediate zones" may see some shifts in precipitation that are elevation specific. The southern and northwestern "dry zones" are projected to experience reduced annual rainfall by the year 2050.[134] Barring adaptive action, an increase in extreme precipitation events poses the threat of riverine and flash floods as well as more frequent landslides, and increased floods often mean increased incidence of water- and vector-borne illnesses.[135]

Projections of sea level rise along Sri Lanka's coasts foresee a faster rise than the global average of 3.7 mm (0.15 inches) per year.[136] However, as of the writing of the country's

national adaptation plan, there was no scientific consensus surrounding the rate and extent of the rise nationally.[137] Table 1 details some of the projections for climate-linked phenomena in Sri Lanka.[138]

In its 2021 updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Sri Lanka committed to reducing GHG emissions by 14.5% by 2030; only 4% of the committed reduction is unconditional – i.e., that the country will achieve on its own without contributions from external partners. The planned pathways to reach reduced GHG emissions are focused on 1) increasing to 70% the share of electricity generated from renewable sources; 2) discontinuing capacity increases of coal power plants; and 3) increasing forest cover to 32%. To achieve mitigation and adaptation goals, Sri Lanka's Climate Prosperity Plan (CPP) estimates a need of US$26.5 billion in investment by 2030. As of 2024, the country was revising its National Adaptation Plan (NAP).[139]

Hazards

Although droughts, flooding, and landslides are the most common hazard events in Sri Lanka, the country is exposed to a variety of natural, anthropogenic, and technical hazards. Moreover, small, localized events that do not rise to the level of a national emergency frequently occur, and their impact accumulates to erode the country's socio-economic development, increase vulnerability, and decrease coping capacity ahead of larger-scale events.

Cyclones and Storms

The Department of Meteorology has reported that only 11 cyclonic storms and six cyclones made landfall on Sri Lanka after 1881. All have reached the island from the east, and most have occurred in November or December.[140] While monsoons and inter-monsoon rains bring regular accumulations of precipitation, sudden extreme storms can also deliver lightning strikes, high winds, sea surge, and coastal erosion.

Phenomenon	Trend	Projection	Potential Impacts
Cyclone	Northern Indian Ocean averages 5.4 cyclones annually	Reduced incidence, but increased intensity of storms that do occur	High winds damage coastal structures; stronger surges exacerbate coastal erosion and increase flooding
Drought	El Niño conditions in the Pacific increase drought conditions; increase in number of consecutive dry days during 20th century	Increase in drought conditions during November-April	Hydropower plants reduce output; reduced crop productivity and increased food insecurity; dry soils more prone to erosion; wildfires
Rainfall	High interannual and regional variability; general decrease in average precipitation since 1960; decrease in number of consecutive wet days; El Niño events increase northeast monsoon rainfall	Reduced rainfall during first inter-monsoon and increased rainfall during second inter-monsoon; decreased northeastern monsoon rainfall; mountain areas will receive increased overall rainfall	Disruptions to growing seasons; more frequent flooding and landslides
Sea Level Rise	1.5 mm (0.06 inches) per year (1993-2023) on average across the northeastern Indian Ocean	No consensus	Coastal erosion reduces access to near-shore fishing areas; saltwater intrusion into cropland and drinking water wells; biodiversity loss among coastal species
Temperature	Mean daytime maximum and mean nighttime minimum temperatures have increased; warming of approximately 0.8°C (1.4°F) during 20th century; rise accelerated toward the end of the century	Overall higher temperatures; rise of 2.9–3.5°C (5.2-6.3°F) by the 2090s under worst-case scenario; rise of 0.8–1.2°C (1.4-2.1°F) by the 2090s under low-emissions pathway; increased incidence of heatwaves (three consecutive days of temperatures above the 95th percentile)	Faster evaporation reduces soil moisture; disrupted plant lifecycles; heat stress impacts human and animal health

Table 1: Projections and Impacts of Climate-Linked Phenomena

Cyclone Roanu, in 2016, brought the greatest amount of rain in a single 24-hour period that the country had seen in 18 years. This amount of rain drives larger-than-normal flooding, knocks down trees, buildings, and infrastructure, and can halt economic production in some sectors for days or weeks. All districts are also prone to lightning strikes, which peak during the two inter-monsoon periods (March-April and October-November).[141] Localized high winds linked to nearby storm systems have damaged upwards of 55,000 homes annually, on average.[142] Storm surges also impact the eastern, northern, and northwestern coasts. The Department of Meteorology developed a peak storm surge inundation map based on a storm event with maximum sustained winds of 270 km per hour (168 miles per hour); the result of this mapping exercise is shown in Figure 6.[143]

Diseases

The Ministry of Health Epidemiology Unit operates an island-wide network of monitoring for communicable diseases; the Ministry's National Dengue Control Unit specializes in preventing and controlling that disease. The country is both exposed to ongoing transmission of various vector-borne diseases and could be vulnerable to new diseases as climate change shifts the habitats and breeding areas of disease vectors. Dengue shows a seasonal pattern of transmission based on the two monsoon periods, and it is present in all regions of the country. Schools, construction sites, religious sites, and public spaces are considered areas of high transmission, and the most vulnerable groups in the country are school students and people aged 20-49 years. The country's tropical climate, and standing water continue to promote breeding of the Aedes mosquitos that carry dengue.[144]

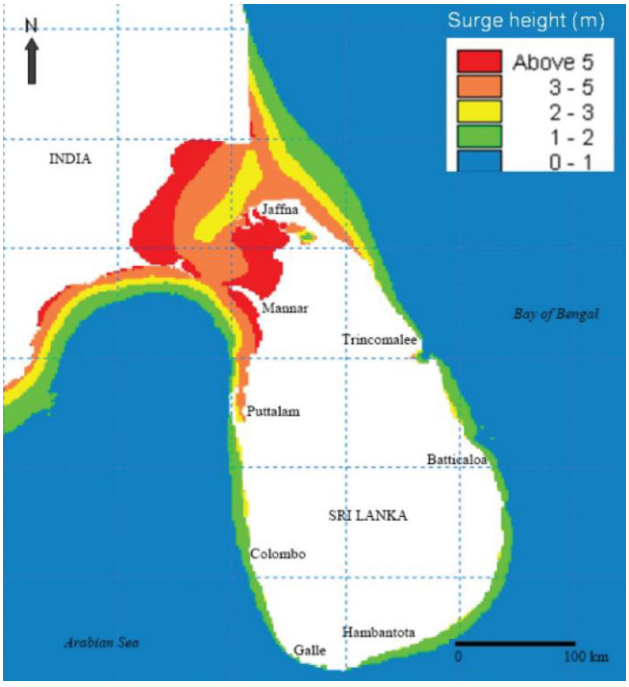


Figure 6: Peak Storm Surge Heights

Drought

Sri Lanka is affected by both meteorological (precipitation deficit) and hydrological (surface and subsurface water deficit) droughts. The country faces a 4% annual probability of severe meteorological drought. In a ten-year period, approximately 10% of the population is exposed to drought.[145] Upwards of 4.7 million were affected by major droughts between 2000 and 2023.[146] Based on Department of Agriculture profiles, the "intermediate dry zone" areas of the country are at high to very high risk for a drought, and it expects rising vulnerability due to land use and degradation issues, intensive agriculture, and inadequate awareness, among other elements. The Department's drought hazard profile map is shown in Figure 7.[147]

Earthquake

Sri Lanka has been impacted by only one earthquake in recent decades – the 2004 quake off Indonesia's Sumatra and that generated the Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami, which caused loss of life and significant damage in Sri Lanka. Broadly, Sri Lanka is only minimally exposed to seismic activity, with the Kalpitiya peninsula on the central west coast having somewhat higher exposure.[148]

Flooding

Sri Lanka is affected by river, flash, and coastal flooding. Based on historic probabilities, the population that could be expected to be affected by river flooding annually is 59,000

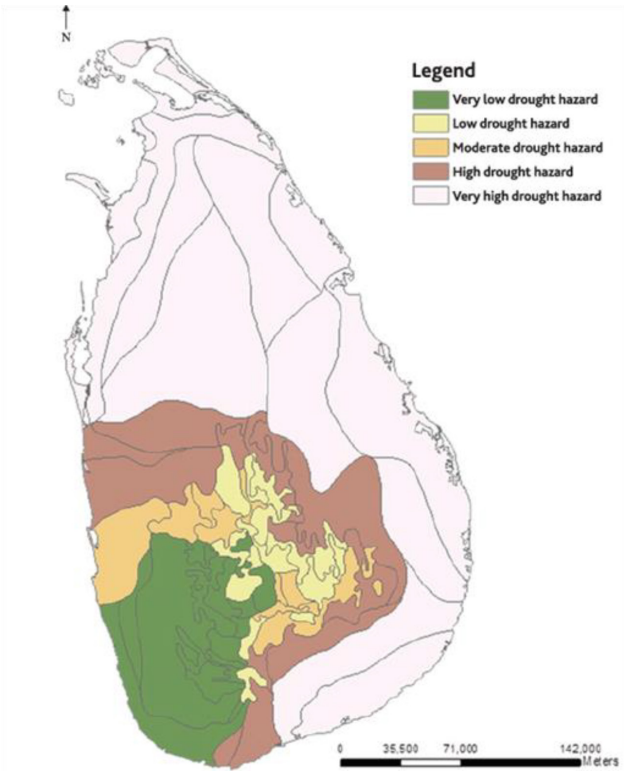


Figure 7: Sri Lanka Drought Hazard Map

people, and the expected annual impact on GDP is estimated at US$267 million. Floods are the largest contributor to Sri Lanka's average annual losses from disasters.[149] A combination of many factors, such as intense rainfall, topography, rapid urbanization, encroachment of buildings and infrastructure into waterways, and inadequate maintenance of rivers and canals, has exacerbated flood hazard exposure, in part by increasing the exposure of already vulnerable populations.[150] Major floods are associated with the two monsoon seasons, southwest (May-September) and northeast (December-February). The southwest monsoon affects south-southwestern areas, and the northeast monsoon impacts eastern, northern, and northcentral areas.[151] Between 2000 and 2023, more than 1,350 people were killed by flooding, and cumulatively, more than 9 million people were affected.[152] Batticaloa, Ampara, Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, and Ratnapura districts are the most affected by flooding. Ampara and Batticaloa mainly experience reservoir floods; inadequate drainage in urban and unplanned settlements contribute to floods in Colombo and Gampaha.[153] The Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Irrigation has conducted flood hazard mapping to support development of risk profiles and management[154] for 10 river basins under the Climate Resilience Improvement Project and the Climate Resilient Integrated Water Management Project with financial support from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Green Climate Fund (GCF).[155]

Forest Fire

With a 2020 baseline, the country overall has a "medium" risk of forest fires. However, there are areas of higher and lower risk based on exposure of people and assets as well as the ability of authorities to respond swiftly to incidents of fire. "Very high risk" areas account for less than 1% of total land area, although 12-15% of land may be at "high" risk. Between 30% and 40% of land can be considered at "low" or "very low" risk. The districts of Hambantota, Kalutara, and Kurunegala have the greatest portion of their land area in the highest risk classes, and experts suggest that a combination of altitude and temperature play a role in the higher incidence of and potential for fire. Moreover, the elevated risk may come from human factors – e.g., vehicle use, open fires, etc.[156] Despite the overall low risk of most of the country, fires that do spark can be difficult to extinguish. In 2023, authorities were taxed by trying to respond to several blazes simultaneously, and they blamed the remote fires on intentionally-set blazes as well as accidents as people undertook hazardous farming techniques, lit ritual fires, and spent recreational time in vulnerable areas in a particularly dry period.[157]

Heatwave

Sri Lanka regularly experiences very high maximum temperatures. The current probability of a heat wave – a period of three or more days where the daily temperature is above the long-term 95th percentile of daily mean temperature – is approximately 3%. Nearly one-quarter of the population is exposed to hazardous heatwaves in any 10-year period, on average.[158] In addition to overall warming, heat island effects pose a threat to Sri Lanka's urban residents.

Landslide

An estimated 20% of Sri Lanka's land is considered exposed to landslides, with the hazard most prevalent in ten administrative districts in the southern inland regions – Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Kandy, Kegalle, Ratnapura, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, and Hambantota. Slides most often occur in places where water drainage systems are inadequate (especially tea plantations) and where steep slopes have been cut for housing, plantations, and roads.[159] Although it is likely an undercount as the EM-DAT does not count smaller-scale events, during the period 2000-2023, nearly 250 people were killed by landslides; thousands of people were affected, and hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed.[160] As the designated national focal point for landslide risk management, the NBRO has conducted national landslide hazard mapping. It is also the technical lead for various studies seeking to quantify and qualify levels of landslide vulnerability.[161]

Technological (or Anthropogenic)

More than 200 people – some of them not Sri Lanka citizens or residents – were killed and 500 people were injured in anthropogenic hazard incidents during the period 2000-2023. These incidents included air, rail, road, and water accidents as well as industrial and hazardous materials incidents.[162] The country is exposed to the conditions that can create a technological hazard, such as technical and industrial conditions, unregulated procedures, vulnerable infrastructure, and incautious human activity. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) lists some examples of technological hazards as: pollution, radiation, toxic waste, dam failure, explosions, and chemical spills.[163] Sri Lanka has also experienced deadly building collapses due to an absence of or disregard of building codes.[164] In addition to human losses and property damage, incidents related to technological hazards – e.g., failures of utilities, transport links, or containers for hazardous materials – can result in loss of key services for communities, losses of livelihoods, and long-term contamination of natural resources.

Tsunami

The 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami was the only tsunami to impact Sri Lanka in recent decades. The initial tsunami waves arrived in Sri Lanka approximately 2 hours after the quake, which struck off of Sumatra, Indonesia, and waves continued to arrive in Sri Lanka for many hours. Though the waves initially struck the country's eastern coast, they diffracted around the island's land mass.[165] A 30-m (98-foot) wave struck along 1,000 km (621 miles) of coastline[166] where it killed more than 35,000 people and injured 23,000 more people,[167] and damaged 110,000 houses, of which 70,000 were destroyed. An estimated 250,000 families lost their livelihoods. In the end, the tsunami ranks as the most expensive and destructive disaster in Sri Lankan history as it led to losses of over US$1 billion in assets and US$300 million in potential output.[168]

Despite the existence of only this one major, historic event to illustrate Sri Lanka's exposure to tsunami, the country is broadly highly exposed to tsunamis generated by megathrust earthquakes along the Sunda Subduction Zone – stretching south from Bangladesh and Myanmar to Southern Sumatra and Java – and the Makran Subduction Zone to the south of Iran and Pakistan. Given the island's distance from these potential sources of earthquake-induced tsunami, the country has time to issue early warnings and conduct evacuation. Tsunami arrival times from seismic events range from 95 minutes to 280 minutes.[169] Figure 8 shows the tsunami inundation map for the country.[170]

History of Natural Disasters

The following is a list of disasters and situations of humanitarian need in Sri Lanka in the last ten years.

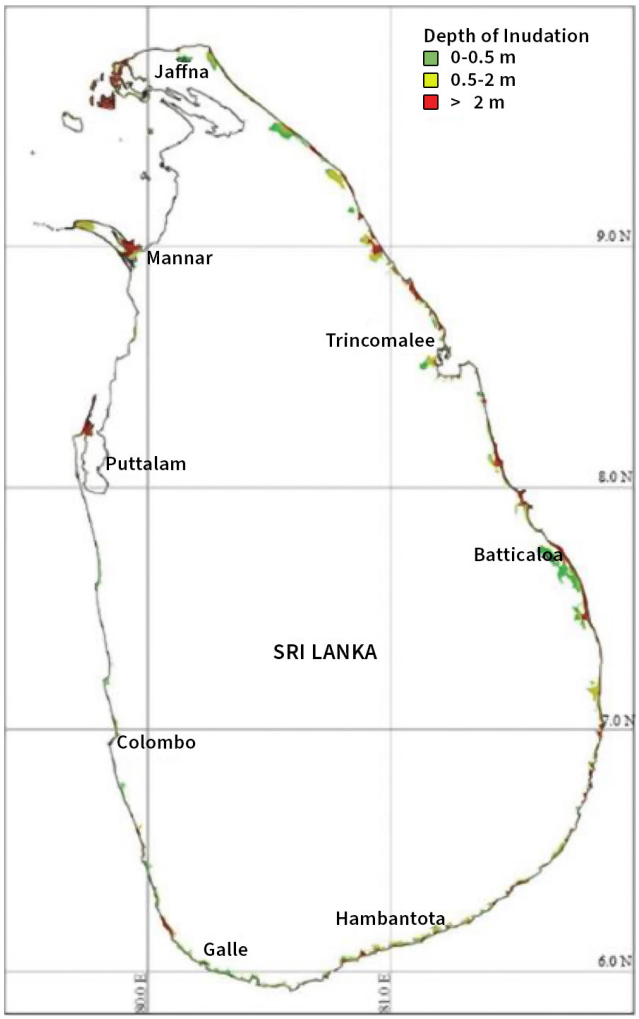


Figure 8: Sri Lanka Tsunami Inundation Hazard Map

May-June 2024 – Flooding

Extremely heavy monsoon rains began on 20 May 2024, and on 2 June, rainfall of 400 mm (15.7 inches) fell in one day across Western, Sabaragamuwa, Northwestern, Central, and Southern Provinces. Precipitation was accompanied by high winds of over 70 km per hour (43.5 miles per hour), and the extreme weather drove flash floods and mudslides. Rivers throughout the provinces overflowed their banks and inundated low-lying areas. Navy and Army units deployed to affected districts and conducted more than 100 rescues. Electricity was cut to various parts of the affected provinces, and flights at Colombo's international airport were disrupted. Schools had been closed ahead of the worst of the rains, but flooded school facilities disrupted education following reopening. In total, the DMC reported that more than 250,000 people across 13 districts were affected, 21 people were killed, and five remained missing as of 5 June. Upwards of 10,000 people were displaced from their homes. In addition to damage to houses and schools, community sewage and drinking water systems were damaged, and 15,000 farmers lost crops across the affected areas. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) launched relief operations by distributing household items, participating in clean-up campaigns, and delivering first aid services, while Save the Children was active in some districts where the group delivered drinking water and educational support.[171]

January 2024 – Flooding

In mid-January 2024, heavy rains were widespread across the country. Roads and railways flooded and were damaged, and communities were cut off. The Moravil, Gal, Ekgal, and Pallang rivers breached their banks and flooded Ampara, the hardest-hit area. More than 150 mm (5.9 inches) of rain fell on that district on 9 and 10 January. On 10 January, overflow gates on the Ampara and Konduwatuan reservoirs were opened, and the Ampara Iginiagala main road was completely submerged by the spillover. Floods in the district displaced more than 2,000 families who relocated to 31 temporary shelters. In total, nearly 170,000 people were affected, and 181 houses were damaged. Schools were inundated, and 26,000 acres of rice paddy were destroyed. The DMC ensured that temporary shelters were identified and established, and the armed forces and police responded by supporting transport into and out of the affected area. The SLRCS distributed household items, school supplies, and cash and conducted medical and water-sanitation-hygiene (WASH) services outreach.[172]

December 2023 – Severe Weather

During the first three weeks of December 2023, northern Sri Lanka experienced heavy rains and high winds (over 70 km per hour; 43.5 miles per hour). Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, and Puttalam districts reported especially heavy losses after rain and wind caused flooding and

damage to homes and infrastructure. Kilinochchi authorities reported that some 2,350 people living in low-lying areas were displaced after spill gates at the Iranamadu reservoir were opened and inundated parts of the province. In Mullaitivu, all reservoirs, including the province's largest, the Thannimurippu, overflowed and flooded many areas, from which some 2,700 people fled. Two people were killed and three were injured. Crops were destroyed, and an estimated 10,000 farmers lost their seasonal production. Nearly 26,000 people suffered some impacts. The SLRCS distributed household items, school supplies, and cash and conducted medical and WASH services outreach. However, downed trees and washed-out roads made it difficult to reach many areas even as people within those districts lost work and were expected to see extended periods of financial difficulty due to lost livelihoods and household savings.[173]

October 2023 – Flooding and Landslides

Heavy rains began in western and southern provinces on 6 October 2023. The Nilwala, Gin, Kalu, and Attanagalu rivers overflowed their banks into low-lying areas. Flooding and land- and mudslides damaged homes and schools and displaced many people in southwestern areas, with the districts of Gampaha, Matara, and Galle especially impacted. Water and sanitation facilities were also damaged. In total, there were seven deaths, and more than 75,000 people across 13 districts were affected. The SLRCS distributed household items, school supplies, and cash and conducted medical and WASH services outreach.[174]

2022-2023 – Political Unrest and Economic Crisis

On 31 March 2022, small scale protests that had been simmering for months erupted in massive protests throughout the country; the drivers were economic, social, and political. Throughout the first quarter of 2022, food and other necessities had been becoming increasingly scarce, fuel and food prices were skyrocketing, and daily electric power cuts became necessary as power plants ran short of fuel. There were increasingly common reports of people dying while waiting in line for food. Although civil society and trade unions mobilized nationally, the focus of the protests was the President's residence in the capital, where protesters and police clashed and where dozens were injured and arrested. On 1 April, the government declared a state of emergency, but protests continued. Although all cabinet ministers resigned on 4 April,[175] the President held on until June.[176] A full-scale economic crisis had kicked off in May with livelihoods lost and households prioritizing food consumption over education, health, and other financial outlays. Children were increasingly absent from school, and there was an increase in reports of domestic violence, suicides, and child abuse and labor.[177]

From 9 June, the UN Resident Coordinator's office (RCO) led the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) via the Humanitarian Needs and Priorities (HNP) plan, which targeted 3.4 million people with provision of nutrition, livelihoods support, medical care, and protection services. HNP implementation was led by the Resident Coordinator with support from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), which coordinated the strategic level along with participating agencies. At the operational level, the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group (ISCG), co-led by OCHA and the RCO, met regularly with sector lead agencies even as thematic working groups addressed specific coordination needs. By March 2023, the HNP called for a transition from OCHA coordination to the RCO as the ISCG met less frequently.[178] By October 2022, an estimated 9.6 million people (42% of the population) had fallen below the poverty line, 60% of families were eating less, and programs for school feeding or for maternal-child nutrition were being scaled back. UN OCHA estimated that 5.7 million people needed humanitarian assistance, and 4.9 million people were food insecure. SLRCS continued working on cash grants, health assistance, school supplies and supplemental nutrition in schools, drinking water provision, and sanitary product

distribution to girls. However, even the SLRCS was experiencing difficulty acquiring relief items due to the prolonged economic crisis and increasing demand for humanitarian assistance after flooding in 10 districts in August and September 2022.[179]

As of 15 March 2023, OCHA's accounting of HNP implementation noted that 2.9 million people had received assistance. The UN World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Save the Children continued work on food and nutrition assistance delivery, crop and food security assessments, and increased protection services, even as bilateral and multilateral donors and financial institutions worked with the government to allow the country to secure financial assurances from creditors. Nonetheless, at this stage, some protests and labor strikes continued to erupt after the postponement of local elections that had been planned for 9 March.[180]

On 20 March 2023, the government and IMF reached a debt restructuring agreement, which was expected to allow the country to exit – albeit slowly – from its economic crisis. Even so, a May 2023 FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission found that 3.9 million people were still moderately food insecure, and 2.9 million children still needed lifesaving food, medical, WASH, protection, and other social services. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) sustained support to 1.8 million people during 2023 by using both cash transfers and direct provision of mental and psychosocial services, access to safe drinking water, learning recovery and educational materials, and meals.[181] A recovery, driven partly by the return of tourism and remittances from Sri Lankan workers overseas, had begun to strengthen by July 2023. Nonetheless, an estimated one-half of households nationally continued to prioritize food expenditures, and out-migration by working age young people continued.[182]

January-August 2023 – Drought, Dengue Outbreak, and Cyclone Mocha

Drought-like conditions affected 10 districts of Sri Lanka as a result of below-average rainfall in the first half of 2023. By August, all 25 districts had felt some effects. Nearly 150,000 people lacked safe drinking water, with Jaffna, Ampara, and Batticaloa the hardest hit. Moreover, some 50,000 farmers were affected due to a lack of water for irrigation, and this lack triggered protests among farmers in the southwest in July and August 2023. Local authorities undertook distribution of drinking water to more than 128,000 people in affected districts. Dryness extended into October although some rainfall in most regions provided relief from the worst impacts.[183]

The first half of 2023 also saw significantly higher numbers of reported dengue cases than had been recorded during the same periods in the preceding two years. The districts of Colombo (7,017 cases) and Gampaha (7,602 cases) saw the greatest numbers of cases, but Kalutara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Galle, Kegalle, and Kandy also saw high numbers. There were 22 dengue-related deaths reported by the National Dengue Control Unit (NDCU). The first two weeks of May 2023 were particularly concerning for the NDCU as it recorded nearly 4,000 of the 33,700+ year-to-date cases between 1 and 14 May. Authorities partly ascribed the skyrocketing caseload to weather abnormalities that had impacted the country in early 2023. Health authorities issued a public health warning about the severity of the outbreak.

In addition to dry conditions that had sent people using marginal water sources, Cyclone Mocha brought high winds and heavy rains on 15 and 16 May as it swept past – but did not make landfall on – the country. Winds across southern Sri Lanka ranged 50-60 km per hour (31-37 miles per hour) with gusts up to 70 km per hour (43.5 miles per hour), and heavy rains in Western, Sabaragamuwa, Central, and North-Western Provinces, as well as Galle and Matara districts caused rivers to overflow their banks and brought flash floods. Houses were damaged and trees knocked over, and access to affected areas was disrupted by debris and flooding on roads. Schools, cropland, and public

buildings were inundated. On 17 May, the DMC situational report indicated that 14,986 people had been affected by flooding in seven districts whereas the combined number of people affected by flooding and the dengue outbreak topped 48,700.[184] DMC reported seven people injured.[185] After the storm, the potential for standing water to provide more space for mosquito breeding sites led government to implement various prevention initiatives from May 2023 onward. SLRCS and health authorities ramped up health information campaigns related to vector- and water-borne diseases. The Ministry of Health also launched a program for the leaders of public institutions to inspect their premises and eradicate mosquito breeding sites. Meanwhile, national and local disaster managers and district administrative units directed the flood and landslide response. The DMC reported Army, Air Force, Navy, and police deployments to all affected areas for the purposes of conducting rescues.

The Presidential Task Force on Dengue and the Ministry of Health NDCU developed a Rapid Intersectoral Programme to prevent and control dengue. An emergency operations center (EOC) was formed at the NDCU to handle preventative health initiatives, while a separate EOC was established at the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division to meet the needs of hospitals and ensure coordination between local authorities and SLRCS branches.

Despite mobilization to address the spread of dengue and other aspects of the emergency, the outbreak and flooding exacerbated the decline in living standards that much of the country had experienced since mid-2022. Food insecurity and malnutrition among children and pregnant women ticked upward. Dengue patients experienced difficulty accessing treatment. More than 60 schools were damaged; the children in their vicinities frequently also lost their school supplies in flooding, and their families were unable to purchase replacements due to straightened finance circumstances.[186]

December 2022 – Migrant Rescue

In early December 2022, four boats carrying Rohingya people originally from Myanmar's Rakhine state left Bangladesh, where the passengers had been after being displaced from Rakhine. The UN reported that one vessel was detected near India's Andaman Islands, one vessel was rescued by a Vietnamese vessel, which handed those aboard over to Myanmar's naval forces, and one was known to still be at sea near Indonesia's Aceh Province. The fourth, carrying 105 people, suffered a mechanical failure on 17 December and sent a distress signal. It was adrift when the Sri Lanka Navy rescued the people aboard on 18 December. The Navy's Northern Naval Command oversaw the rescue operation, and the Navy delivered those aboard to Kankesanthurai harbor in northern Sri Lanka, where they received emergency medical attention and other support. Those rescued then entered a legal process that saw them initially detained in immigration centers near Colombo and then lodged in homes on one-year rental agreements that the government, the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), and implementing partner, Muslim Aid, had negotiated. SLRCS also assisted with distribution of basic relief items and medical services. Moreover, along with other elements of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, SLRCS visited and assessed the detention centers, and after this mission, SLRCS began to provide food, WASH, and health care within the centers. Once all of those rescued were moved to rental housing, SLRCS also provided needed food, household items, medicines, and sanitary items, as well as cash and voucher assistance to allow the recipients to access the local market. As these people integrated into the community, UNHCR continued to provide support with skills and language training.[187]

August-October 2022 – Extreme Weather

Repeated instances of extremely heavy rain were recorded during the southwest monsoon of 2022. On 6 August, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts in Central Province, and Rathnapura district in Sabaragamuwa Province were hit by heavy rains and high winds that brought flooding and landslides. The Department of Meteorology

reported that 243 mm (9.6 inches) of rain had fallen in areas of Central Province where several landslides and rock falls damaged houses and blocked roads and railways. Districts in Sabaragamuwa received upwards of 100 mm (3.9 inches) of rain the same day. Subsequent heavy rains from 2 to 6 September drove flooding in and around Colombo. Upwards of 150 mm (5.9 inches) of precipitation was recorded in one district on 5 September, and more than 1,000 families were affected. Then, during 14-20 October, thunderstorms brought heavy rains to Western, Sabaragamuwa, Central, and North-Western Provinces, with some areas recording more than 100 mm (3.9 inches) of rain in one day. At the end of the season, the DMC reported that 82,300 people in total were affected by rains, floods, and landslides. Five people died during the storms and floods in August. DMC also reported that 17 houses were demolished even as 1,750 were partly damaged. At various points during the monsoon season, security forces conducted rescue operations with the Army reporting rescues of 120 people. Among other activities, SLRCS conducted various needs assessments and delivered relief items and cash grants.[188]

June 2021 – Flooding and Landslides

Heavy rains hit southwestern Sri Lanka from 2 to 5 June 2021. On 3 June alone, 346 mm (13.6 inches) of rain fell in Puttalam district. Along with heavy winds, the rains caused damage across 10 districts and affected upwards of 245,000 people. The DMC reported that 14 people were killed by flooding and landslides. More than 800 houses were damaged, with areas of Ratnapura and Gampaha districts among the worst hit. Authorities opened 72 safety centers to accommodate and assist 15,600 of the worst affected people, many of whom were temporarily displaced. Navy and Army search-and-rescue (SAR) units deployed to all affected districts; in addition to rescue operations, these units provided cooked meals and drinking water to displaced people and assisted in clearing fallen trees to support reconnection of electric power lines.[189]

May 2021 – Shipping Accident

On 20 May 2021, the Singapore-flagged X-PRESS PEARL, a container ship carrying, among other cargo, 25 tons of potentially hazardous materials, micro plastics, and other plastics, caught fire 16 km (9.9 miles) off the coast of Colombo.[190] The fire burned for 12 days;[191] even when it was contained, smoke continued to rise from the ship, and a number of small explosions were heard. Sri Lanka's Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard, supported by the Indian Navy, worked to contain the fire amidst heavy rain and high winds.[192] In the end, the ship sank in shallow coastal waters.[193] The 25 members of the ship's crew were evacuated and treated, as needed, in local hospitals in Colombo; the crew included citizens of India, the People's Republic of China, Philippines, Russia.

Sri Lanka's Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA) categorized the ensuing damage as the worst environmental disaster in national history with dire consequences for the marine environment. The fire caused damaged containers, micro plastics, chemicals, and other toxic substances to spill into the sea; these contaminants spread across a wide swath of the western coast, with Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara districts especially badly impacted as chemicals and plastic pellets damaged the coastline, the natural marine environment, and ecosystems more broadly. Several popular tourist areas and resorts were also damaged, beaches were thickly coated with plastic pellets, and micro plastics and oil were visible in the water.[194] MEPA later reported that the oil slick had covered 0.51 km^2 (0.2 square miles).[195] Locals were advised not to touch any of the debris as it could be highly toxic. Fishing was banned in the area, and the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (DFARD) reported that more than 16,500 fishers and their families saw their livelihoods disrupted.

The main responders were the Sri Lanka Navy and MEPA; indeed, the toxicity of spilled materials limited the ability of non-specialist responders to address even the shore-based effects. However, SLRCS and other organizations did deliver equipment and relief items. SLRCS

delivered personal protective equipment to MEPA and two boat engines to the National Aquatic Resource Research Development Agency (NARA), and SLRCS also organized meetings among government and community stakeholders to ensure a shared understanding of the humanitarian consequences of the incident. In the end, clean-up was primarily conducted by the armed forces and DFARD with advice from NARA and MEPA. MEPA activated the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCOP) and managed the incident in collaboration with the armed forces, technical agencies, and local authorities. MEPA also established physical control barriers around the immediate vicinity of the ship, lagoon entrances, and key locations along the beach. Responding to Sri Lankan government requests for expert technical support, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and OCHA deployed a 4-member expert team to advise on designing and implementing an environmental assessment; preventing, mitigating, and responding to risks from the incident; and strengthening national capacities to deal with future maritime disasters.

A legal process ensued to ensure the government could claim compensation from the ship's owners and operators. Estimates from various sources with the government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) suggested that some 50,000 Sri Lankans were affected by this incident. SLRCS and NGOs provided relief to those families and communities that lost livelihoods; and relief mostly came in the form of cash and voucher assistance.[196] Observers also reported that, by mid-2023, more than 300 marine animals had been killed by direct exposure to the spilled plastics and chemicals. That total did not include all of the smaller fish killed by ingesting either plastic pellets or toxic metals.[197]

May-June 2021 – Flooding

Heavy monsoon rains and high winds struck Sri Lanka during the second week of May 2021. The resulting floods impacted Colombo, Gampaha, and Galle districts, with some lesser impacts in six other districts. Homes and agricultural land were damaged, with crops submerged, and infrastructure was also damaged by inundation.[198] The rains were made worse, on 13-14 May, by the remnants of Cyclone Tauktae, which had crossed India from west to east. This weather system alone brought more than 250 mm (9.8 inches) of rain in one day to many areas of Sri Lanka's southwest, and Kalutara recorded 336 mm (13.2 inches) of rain in one 24-hour period.[199] On 17 May, the DMC reported that the severe weather had affected 43,700 people, and five people had been killed. During the first week of June, as clean-up and recovery were on-going, fresh heavy rains arrived, and Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Rathnapura, Puttalam, Kegalle, and Nuwera Eliya districts saw heavy precipitation that triggered landslides in many areas. The Department of Meteorology reported that Kalutara recorded 331 mm (13 inches) of rain in one day during the June rains. On 5 June, the DMC reported that the fresh flooding and landslides had killed 15 people and damaged 1,400 houses. Upwards of 266,900 people were affected, with 26,800 evacuated to shelters. With crops and infrastructure also damaged by both instances of flooding, livelihoods in the southwestern districts were undermined amidst the worst of the socio-economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Military units deployed to support rescue operations, and local administrations managed shelter and cooked food provision for affected families, in coordination with local civil society. In support of the government's response, SLRCS conducted emergency assessments and helped distribute relief items. Among the major post-disaster activities that involved government, SLRCS, and civil society was clean-up of 3,000 shallow wells and areas of standing water to disrupt mosquito breeding. An additional complication was contamination of some drinking water in the Colombo area after the Sapugaskanda Oil Refinery's storage tanks overflowed; the Navy and Coast Guard were tasked with stopping the spread of contamination.[200]

December 2020 – Flooding

During the first week of December 2020, a weather system dropped nearly 280 mm (11 inches) of rain over northern areas of Sri Lanka. Jaffna and Kilinochchi were the hardest hit districts. Although authorities had pre-emptively shuttered schools and other public institutions, two people were caught out in the weather and killed in Jaffna. Agricultural land was heavily damaged. As of 8 December, the DMC reported that more than 111,600 people in 14 districts were affected; 106 houses were destroyed, and 3,783 other houses were damaged. More than 200 families evacuated to 15 shelters. Local and district authorities ran the response with SLRCS and local organizations participating in assessments, dissemination of information and warnings, and distribution of relief items and cash in the immediate post-disaster period. Priority was given to drinking water supplies as many wells across the affected regions were inundated and contaminated.[201]

September 2020 – Shipping Accident

On 3 September 2020, a boiler exploded in the main engine room of the MT New Diamond, a Panama-flagged oil tanker, as it was 70 km (43.5 miles) off southern Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Navy, Air Force, and Ports Authority, and the Indian Navy and Coast Guard responded to fight the fire in hopes of keeping it from spreading to the vessel's cargo of 270,000 metric tons (2 million barrels) of crude oil. One crew member was killed in the initial conflagration.[202] Twenty-three crew members were rescued immediately. Sri Lanka's MEPA also put out an international request for assistance to prepare to minimize the damage after evidence of at least some fuel leaking into the water.[203] Two Russian naval vessels were also in the area and helped fight the fire and push the burning vessel away from land as the ship began to drift.[204] By late on 4 September, the fire had been brought under control. On 6 September, an international team of salvage experts arrived to assess the damage, and two Indian Coast Guard pollution control vessels were on scene after a crack in the vessel's hull was sighted. Nonetheless, at that time, there was no indication that the cargo of crude oil was spilling into the environment.[205] After a week of work, firefighting crews had completely extinguished the fire, and Sri Lanka's government sought compensation for expenses incurred; once a settlement was reached, in November, Sri Lankan authorities allowed the ship to be towed away from territorial waters.[206] Nonetheless, in April 2021, the Sri Lankan government pressed a further claim against the MT New Diamond owners for environmental damage, which included damage to Sri Lankan fisheries and marine life, property damage, and impacts on tourism and other economic sectors.[207]

2020-2022 – COVID-19

Sri Lanka reported its first case of infection by the virus that causes COVID-19 on 27 January 2020; the patient was a tourist. On 11 March 2020, the first Sri Lankan national was confirmed to have an infection within the country.[208] On 17 March, the Government imposed stringent restrictions, including a curfew and near-total lockdown that prohibited social gatherings and limited people's movements.[209] The President's Task Force for COVID-19 was established in March to provide a forum for government agencies, health leaders, and other stakeholders to coordinate the response;[210] in addition to cabinet and agency leaders, it comprised epidemiologists, medical administrators, infectious diseases specialists, military personnel, police officers, and social workers.[211] Meanwhile, the Army-led National Operations Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak (NOCPCO) oversaw coordination of prevention, control, quarantine, and other operations. These mechanisms were heavily government-focused with some input from the private sector.[212] Military units played a major role overseeing quarantine centers and conducting contact tracing, and police managed the curfew. Health authorities used the National Action Plan for Health Security as a framework for their response.[213]

By April 2020, the Government was delivering

monthly cash transfers to beneficiaries across the country, and the Central Bank supported affected firms via monetary easing, suspensions of loan payments, and a concessional refinancing program. Nonetheless, the pandemic shutdown had immediate consequences. School closures sent home 4.2 million students, and gaps in education emerged between those able to access remote learning and those unable to do so. Women shouldered additional caregiver responsibilities and faced more sexual and gender-based violence, with the national hotline on domestic violence recording 463 cases in March-April 2020 compared to 123 cases in February-March 2020. Finally, the Government established emergency measures for the 1.8 million Sri Lankans working overseas and who may need or want to return, and it issued temporary documents and facilitated repatriation and quarantine of returnees.[214]

The first wave of infections subsided amidst the Government's "zero-COVID" strategy. Then, from October 2020, the country saw sustained, local transmission, and by December, the Government had shifted away from elimination to tolerance and vaccination.[215] This second wave, from October 2020 to April 2021, was more widespread and more deadly, but authorities did not implement as stringent controls as during the first wave.[216] The third wave, in June-August 2021, was fueled by the Delta variant of the virus; it had an even higher case fatality rate than had either the first or second waves. This third wave brought the country's total confirmed cases of COVID-19 to nearly 290,000 with nearly 4,000 deaths.[217] At this point, the Government did implement another lockdown, this time for two months.[218] UNICEF was among the agencies delivering support with a focus on medical equipment and supplies for hospitals, especially intensive care units, and on development of the country's cold chain management system for vaccines. Beyond the health response, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education implemented a strategy on learning continuity and recovery.[219] By December 2021, the vaccination campaign had reached a large proportion of the adult population. Sri Lanka had also developed a COVID-19 Immunization Tracker, Smart Vaccination Certificate, and the National Covid-19 Health Information System as part of its public health and recovery process, not only for the country generally but also for individuals.[220]

Throughout 2022, the country experienced successive waves fueled by the virus' Omicron variants, but each round of infections was steadily less widespread and less deadly than the preceding ones. At that stage, the Government shifted attention to the economic consequences of two years of disruption, and testing largely stopped. Thus, case numbers after mid-2022 do not necessarily provide a complete view of the health situation.[221] During the pandemic, the country reported a total of 672,797 confirmed cases of COVID-19. There had been 16,907 deaths due to the disease. Between 29 January 2021 and 31 December 2023, upwards of 40 million vaccine doses were administered, and nearly 70% of the population had completed at least the initial primary series of the vaccine. Figure 9 shows the shape of Sri Lanka's pandemic infection curve.[222]

December 2019 – Flooding and Landslides

From 30 November 2019, heavy rains fell across Sri Lanka. In the first few days of December, they caused flooding and landslides in 14 districts; five people were reported to have been killed by flooding and landslides while more than 250 homes were damaged and 3,100 people evacuated, mostly from areas of Puttalam, Batticaloa, Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts. By the first few weeks of the month, the armed forces had deployed for search and rescue and pre-positioned equipment in the expectation of continued need for rescue operations.[223] On 21 December, some areas received upwards of 100 mm (3.9 inches) of rainfall in 24 hours, and parts of Badulla, Polonnaruwa, Hambantota, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, and Matale were cut off by landslides. The DMC also reported rising water levels in major rivers and overspill from water retention areas and reservoirs.[224] The agency then

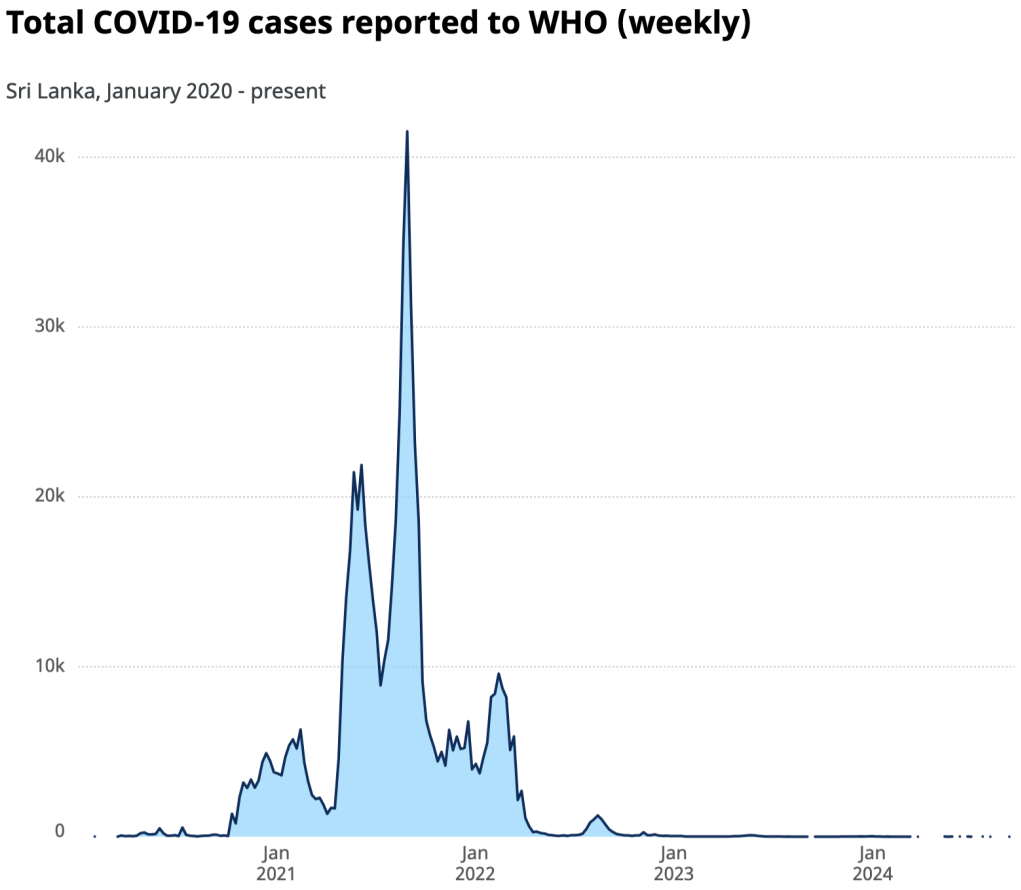


Figure 9: Sri Lanka's COVID-19 Epidemic Curve, Weekly Cases (January 2020 - January 2024)

reported on 23 December that more than 65,300 people had been affected. Two people were killed, 62 houses were destroyed, and 1,463 more houses were damaged. More than 17,700 people across all affected areas evacuated to 133 safe locations. During the rainy period, government and civil society cooperated in disseminating weather warnings and other informational bulletins, and they coordinated distribution of relief items. The military conducted SAR operations. As with other flooding events, drinking water sources – mostly 1,000 wells – were contaminated by flood waters and overflowing sewage pits; this situation created high need for clean water and high risk of spread of water- and vector-borne illness. However, landslides had cut key roads into and out of affected areas and complicated the response.[225]

April 2019 – "Easter" Terrorist Attack

On 21 April 2019, terrorists taking inspiration from the so-called Islamic State conducted a series of suicide bombings against hotels and churches in the greater Colombo area and Batticaloa.[226] The attacks killed 269 people and injured more than 500 others. With the targeting of tourist hotels, victims were not only Sri Lankan but also from 14 other countries. Authorities focused on two local Muslim groups that had allegedly pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, and officials charged dozens of people connected to those groups.[227] However, the legal case was still stalled as of the publication of this handbook; while a civil case had found political leaders at fault for not preventing the attacks and ordered them to pay compensation to victims families, no one has been held criminally liable.[228]

Beyond the legal and security front, local and international humanitarian actors swung quickly into action after the bombings. People and families had suffered losses, the economy was impacted, and inter-ethnic anxiety rose nationally. Curfews and states of emergency

disrupted livelihoods, schools were closed for at least two weeks, and when they did re-open, schools had heavy police presences.

The Government, armed forces and police, Ministry of Health, the DMC, religious institutions, Caritas Sri Lanka, SLRCS, and district administrations coordinated assistance. SLRCS provided immediate life-saving care as its first aid instructors offered first aid and relief at explosion sites. SLRCS Gampaha Branch opened a first aid center on its premises, where providers treated minor injuries and drove people to hospitals. First aid practitioners also provided psychological first aid to people in distress. To help hospitals cope with the sudden influx of injured people, SLRCS helped transfer patients and launched a blood drive. SLRCS also activated Restoring Family Links to re-establish contact among family members separated as a result of the attacks; this system accepts tracing requests, exchanges Red Cross Messages, and offers phone calls to relay information about patients to families and relieve pressure on medical staff. Additional SLRCS volunteers supported the national hospital and Institute of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology in management of the morgue.[229] UNICEF worked to procure and provide supplies to hospitals treating victims, provided financial and technical assistance to authorities working to reunite families and especially children who lost parents in the attacks, delivered immediate psycho-social first aid to impacted children and families, and provided sustained support to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and the Ministry of Health for data collection.[230]

In the days and weeks after the attacks, government authorities and civil society coordinated to address medium- to long-term recovery initiatives for victims and their families. Programs focused on mental health and psychosocial support, social cohesion, and reconciliation.[231]

2019 – Drought and Dengue Outbreak

An El Niño-related dry spell that began in December 2018 extended into 2019, and successive months saw significantly less rainfall than average across much of the country. By late September, an estimated 780,000 people had been affected across 18 districts.[232] The worst affected were Batticaloa, Jaffna, Ampara, Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Monaragala. Mannar and Mullaitivu registered the highest percentages of affected people (each over 60% of their populations), especially farming families.[233] The country's reservoirs had fallen to about 19% of their capacity, and these levels were too low for irrigation of seasonal crops and even put electric generation at risk.[234] Rice and maize cultivation was impossible. Between March and August, drinking water was scarce. DMC was delivering water in all affected districts. The World Health Organization (WHO), WFP, UNICEF, and FAO – all with long-running programs in the country – and other humanitarian groups shifted to providing emergency assistance to farming families, ethnic minorities, displaced people, and women – groups with limited ability to swiftly shift location and employment or to access official non-emergency support.[235] Finally, in October, the drought began to ease with numbers of affected people falling by about 20% month-on-month.[236]

This drought year also proved a challenge in terms of public health as some 96,903 dengue cases and 90 clinically confirmed dengue deaths were reported from across the country over the course of the 2019. These numbers mark a doubling of cases and 50% higher deaths. The Epidemiology Unit urged the public to regularly seek out and clean up mosquito breeding sites, especially in the hardest hit areas of Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Ratnapura, and Galle districts. Colombo alone had recorded more than 19,500 dengue cases. November 2019 marked the peak of dengue cases with 21,511 confirmed cases over the course of the month, and there was significant concern that rainy condition that had returned in October would worsen the outbreak before the end of the year.[237]

December 2018 – Flooding

Heavy rains brought flooding to five districts

of Northern Province on 22-23 December after more than 250 mm (9.8 inches) of rain were recorded in one 24-hour period. The DMC reported that more than 45,000 people were affected in Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya, and Jaffna. The Navy and Army deployed personnel for relief and rescue missions in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi. Despite these initial efforts, continued rainfall meant that, by 25 December, the number of people affected had risen to 75,000 with more than 11,000 people staying in 35 evacuation centers. The DMC reported one death. The President delivered guidance to district leadership regarding provision of cooked food, dry rations, and health care at government-run or partner-managed welfare centers. Flooding finally subsided before 31 December, and thousands of people returned to their homes although affected people still required livelihoods assistance and other types of relief.[238]

October 2018 – Flooding

The first two weeks of October 2018 saw heavy rainfall and high winds that brought flash floods to 12 districts in Southern, Western, North-Western, and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. Authorities issues early warnings that saw many people evacuate ahead-of-time, and security forces pre-positioned equipment to allow swift launch of SAR operations. The DMC reported that, as of 12 October, some 75,600 people had been affected, and 12 people had been killed. National disaster management and relief groups mobilized to distribute cash to local leaders to meet immediate needs.[239]

May 2018 – Flooding

Between 19 and 21 May 2018, heavy rains over southwestern areas triggered floods and landslides. The DMC reported that more than 153,700 people across 19 districts were affected. Twenty people were reportedly killed from a combination of the rain, winds, lightning, and landslides. Thousands of families evacuated to 339 welfare centers in Puttalam, Gampaha, Ratnapura, Colombo, Kurunegala, Kalutara, and Kegalle. The DMC coordinated the national response to meet emergency needs for drinking water and to clean up wells and standing water. SLRCS supported the government effort by conducting assessments and distributing relief items and food. The SLRCS also supported SAR operations and provided first aid.[240]

April 2017 – Meethotamulla Dump Collapse

After heavy rains in mid-April 2017, the mound of garbage at the Meethotamulla dump,[241] 4 km (2.5 miles) east of central Colombo,[242] collapsed on 14 April. More than 1,700 people were affected, and 32 people were killed. The DMC reported that 146 homes were destroyed, and there was considerable infrastructure damage in the affected area.[243] The site had been used by locals as a solid waste dump for at least 30 years, and the Colombo Municipal Council had sent 800-900 tons of garbage daily to the facility for approximately 20 years.[244] The facility covered 78,000 m^2 (840,000 square feet), and, at the time of the collapse, the garbage mound had reached 45-50 m (147-164 feet) in height.[245] The NBRO post-disaster report detailed that the site lacked basic drainage or gas collection systems and that the facility was built on what had been marshy land, was subject to rains throughout the year, and was affected by frequent flooding. Indeed, in 2016, the dump and surrounding area had been inundated after extreme rains, and drainage in the area was insufficient.[246] The DMC, Army, Navy, Air Force, and Police responded to the 14 April collapse[247] with the Army taking the lead on SAR operations.[248] A shelter for the displaced was established at the Terrence De Silva School, also in Meethotamulla, and various medical groups delivered emergency health care there.[249] The Government appointed a technical committee led by the Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development; the committee's task was to oversee management of the response. It developed a short-term plan to first stabilize the waste facility and then a longer-term strategy to address the health hazards, property damage, and likely environmental impacts.[250]

2017 – Drought, Floods, and Dengue Outbreak

From late 2016, Sri Lanka experienced minimal rainfall that, by mid-2017 had led to the worst drought in 40 years, with significant impacts on the economy and society. By 19 September, the DMC estimated that upwards of 1.9 million people had been affected across 17 districts during the 9-month dry spell.[251]

In March 2017, one-quarter of households nationally had expressed concern about access to drinking water. Follow-on assessments in August by WFP and the Ministry of Disaster Management found that 45% of communities reported that their closest reservoirs were now empty; official reports pointed to overall water levels in reservoirs at 18% in the beginning of August, a nearly 30% drop year-on-year.[252] This long period of drought was complicated by flooding and landslides in southwestern areas. In the final week of May, the weather system that would become Cyclone Mora, which impacted Bangladesh, formed in the Bay of Bengal and joined with monsoon rains to deliver heavy precipitation to Sri Lanka, which saw flooding and landslides, especially in southwestern districts. On 25 and 26 May, the Department of Meteorology and NBRO sent out severe weather and landslide warnings, and by late on 26 May, 13 people were dead and dozens were injured. The warnings were extended through 29 May and to cover most of the country before the weather system moved away to the northeast.[253] However, the respite was brief, and additional monsoon rains arrived swiftly. As of 8 June, an estimated 603,000 people in 12 districts had been impacted by May-June flooding. Authorities confirmed that 212 people had been killed, 3,000 houses were destroyed, and 20,285 other houses had been damaged. The DMC reported 72,000 people displaced at the peak of the flooding on 1 June. While Government ministries were developing recovery and reconstruction plans, the armed forces and partners international SAR teams were conducting rescue and evacuation operations. Navy troops also donated dry rations and drinking water to affected districts. Civil society provided relief through organized and coordinated responses.[254]

Meanwhile, this drought year had started with an exceptionally high number of dengue cases, and the numbers ballooned into an outbreak after the May-June floods; it became the largest dengue outbreak in the country in three decades. Ahead of the May floods, there had been nearly 20,000 suspected cases reported to the Ministry of Health; 320 people had died. However, from the flooding through the end of the year, an additional 166,000 suspected cases were reported. The highest number of dengue cases throughout the whole year were reported in early- / mid-July.[255]

The Department of Agriculture noted that the May floods and months-long drought had impacted primary and secondary harvests of 2017, and rice production for 2017 was expected to be the lowest paddy production in 10 years. More than 300,000 households were estimated to be food insecure. A lack of both agricultural production and paid farm labor meant that 50% of households had spiraling debt and were cutting back on health and education spending.[256]

The response to the various aspects of these months of difficulty integrated government, military, national NGOs, and international assistance. In the aftermath of flooding, SAR operations involved military forces. District Secretaries established 504 safety centers, which housed 109,890 people evacuated from the flooded areas and unsafe locations at the peak of the late-May rains. As of 31 July, the Government had released Rs 995.6 million (US$3.3 million) for emergency relief, cleanup of roads and key infrastructure, and two additional government disbursements went directly to support affected families by way of cash for cleanup and minor repair or rental allowance over three months. Government operations were supported by private companies and the general public, who collected and distributed monetary donations and relief items. UN agencies and national and international NGOs supported national efforts with a total budget of US$ 8.1 million, mobilized to ensure child protection, education, food security and nutrition, WASH, shelter, non-

food items, and emergency livelihood support. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs managed offers and delivery of bilateral and multilateral donor assistance in the form of in-kind relief or financial support.[257]

In response to the drought, the government launched deliveries of drinking water and distributed packs of dry rations and other household items with the assistance of the Army. There was also an official cash-based agricultural compensation plan for farmers who had lost crops. UN and NGO activities supplemented the Government's programs via cash distribution to 50,000 people, provision of water bowsers to the Government, delivery of micro-irrigation kits and vegetable seed packs, and the conduct of WASH programming. Rains experienced in mid-September across various districts led to easing of conditions.[258]

May 2016 – Tropical Storm Roanu

The weather system that would become Cyclone Roanu formed in the Bay of Bengal, east of Sri Lanka, on 14 May 2016. It remained a well-formed low-pressure area just off the Sri Lanka coast into 15 May. It moved northwestwards to lay over Sri Lanka on 16 May before moving northwestward toward the Indian coast on the morning of 17 May. The storm would eventually strengthen into a cyclone, skirt the east coast of India and bring heavy rains and high winds to Bangladesh before weakening while still delivering rains to northeastern India and Myanmar on 21-22 May.[259] In Sri Lanka, the Kelani, Kalu, Mahaweli, Deduru, Yan, Maha, and Attanagalu rivers overflowed. In the course of 24 hours, Deraniyagala, Katunayake, and Colombo recorded 355.5 mm (14 inches), 262 mm (10.3 inches), and 256 mm (10.1 inches) of rain, respectively. A dozen more districts received more than 100 mm (3.9 inches) of rainfall.

The floods unleashed by the rains were the worst experienced in Sri Lanka in 25 years. Severe landslides also occurred in several divisions in Kegalle district. The worst landslide was in the Aranayake where three villages were swept away.[260] The storm affected 22 of the country's 25 districts. At least 104 people were reported dead, many as the result of the Aranayake landslide.[261] District Secretaries established 350 safety centers to house people evacuated from inundated areas and unsafe locations in landslide-prone districts. At the peak of the emergency, nearly 115,000 people stayed in these centers.[262] In all, more than 58,900 houses were affected, of which 6,382 were destroyed.[263] Additionally, government estimates suggested that 25,000-30,000 businesses were impacted, mostly in Colombo district.

The DMC activated the national and division EOCs and triggered sector coordination for the response with relevant line ministries taking lead in their respective sectors.[264] The DMC also initiated SAR operations and coordinated the assistance delivered by the armed forces and police. The Army deployed more than 1,500 personnel for immediate search, rescue, and relief operations; the Air Force dispatched helicopters for rescue operations and delivered relief aid to victims; and the Navy dispatched 81 flood relief teams.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a request for international assistance to foreign missions, and various countries offered and delivered financial and in-kind relief.[265] The Government and local organizations provided cooked food, water, and access to health care using mobile health teams and disease control activities. Clean-up was a security force responsibility in the immediate term, with the Ministry of Health overseeing supplies and information campaigns.[266] Several international, national, and local NGOs, UN agencies, and external partners also joined the response. A US$4.3 million dispersal from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund was released to humanitarian partners including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN-Habitat, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO to provide shelter, health facility rehabilitation, food, and WASH support. SLRCS secured funding for the procurement of mosquito nets from UN-Habitat. The Government assigned various organizations

responsibility for managing camps. SLRCS was assigned responsibility for addressing WASH requirements at all camps in Kegalle, and it received funding and technical support from OXFAM. WHO delivered life-saving medical interventions and early recovery activities. UNICEF and WHO mobilized water and WASH assistance together with the Ministry of Health. Plan International, ChildFund, CARE, and ACTED also participated in various aspects of the response and recovery. The Government identified safer land to which it would relocate some families displaced in Kegalle and agreed to provide monetary support to construct houses for some beneficiaries.

SLRCS teams also participated in distribution of non-food relief and food with a particular focus on people sheltering in the camps housing the flood-affected communities. SLRCS' National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) members deployed to Kegalle to support SLRCS' Kegalle branch. Recovery activities focused on cleaning contaminated wells and cleaning homes as well as livelihoods support in Colombo, Gampaha, and Kegalle.[267]

September-November 2015 – Flooding and Landslides

From mid-September, southern areas of the country received heavy rains, and the resulting floods and landslides killed eight people. More than 7,300 people across four districts were affected by September flooding as 450 houses were damaged, and 151 houses were destroyed. By 30 November, the number of affected people had risen to over 52,500 people as flooding struck Jaffna district. The Department of Irrigation reported that 18 major reservoirs were overflowing, and follow-on flooding and landslides were expected. SLRCS mobilized to deliver relief to some of the estimated 138,600 people who were impacted. In Jaffna, the worst-affected district, the SLRCS branch assisted in evacuation and coordination with the Government.[268]

December 2014-January 2015 – Flooding

Heavy rains and high winds began to impact the country on 19 December 2014. As of 5 January 2015, the DMC reported that more than 1.1 million people had been affected by flooding, landslides, and wind damage across 22 districts. Thirty-nine deaths were reported. By the first week of 2015, more than 30,000 people were still living in 230 safety centers in 17 districts after 6,400 houses had been destroyed and 18,500 houses had been damaged.[269]

October 2014 – Landslide

On 29 October 2014, a landslide struck Meeriyabedde, in the Koslanda Tea Estate, Haldumulla Division, Badulla District. In the immediate aftermath, 38 people were reported missing. The Army launched search-and-recovery operations.[270] The DMC reported that 1,067 people were affected, and 66 houses were destroyed. Meanwhile, due to ongoing rains and slope instability, the DMC extended mudslide warnings to six other districts.[271] The Government established 22 evacuation camps in Badulla.[272] The HCT identified WASH support to people in government-established safety centers as the top priority; other priority elements were tarpaulins, clothes, qualified Tamil-speaking counsellors, and mobility equipment (wheelchairs, crutches, etc.). SLRCS, World Vision, UNICEF, and WHO mobilized resources and assets to support the Government response.[273] After weeks of recovery work, 16 people were confirmed dead.[274]

Country Risk

Risk calculation takes into account exposure to hazards, vulnerability, and coping capacity. Addressing all of these elements is important in reducing and mitigating disaster risk. Various indices emphasize structural or institutional risk while others emphasize hazards or losses (human and economic). Regardless of emphasis, disaster risk calculations use some form of the equation:

$$\textit{Disaster Risk} = (\textit{Hazard} \times \textit{Vulnerability}) / \textit{Capacity}$$[275]

Taken from the UNDRR glossary, definitions will help clarify this formula:

- Capacity - The combination of strengths, attributes, and resources available within an organization, community, or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience.
- Disaster risk - The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets, which could occur to a system, society, or a community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity.
- Hazard - A process, phenomenon, or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation.
- Vulnerability - The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets, or systems to the impacts of hazards.[276]

In general, the goal of indexing risk is to inform decision makers and DRR and CCA practitioners of the level of risk to and underlying capacity of the target community. The various risk calculation models support proactive crisis management frameworks and are helpful for prioritizing allocation of resources and for coordinating actions focused on anticipating, mitigating, and preparing for humanitarian emergencies.

INFORM Risk Profile

INFORM is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning, and Preparedness with the European Commission. It is a multi-stakeholder forum for developing shared, quantitative analysis relevant to humanitarian crises and disasters. The Joint Research Center of the European Commission is the scientific lead. There are three operational dashboards – i.e., INFORM Risk, INFORM Severity, and INFORM Climate Change.

- INFORM Risk is an open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters. It can support decisions about prevention, preparedness, and response.
- INFORM Severity is a way to measure and compare the severity of humanitarian crises and disasters globally. It can help develop a shared understanding of crisis severity and ensure all those affected get the help they need.
- INFORM Climate Change is an upgraded INFORM Risk Index that includes climate and socio-economic projections with results intended to inform policy choices across climate mitigation, climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, sustainable development, and humanitarian assistance.[277]

The **INFORM Risk** Index measures the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters in 191 countries. The INFORM model is based on the standard dimensions of risk: Hazards and Exposure, Vulnerability, and Lack of Coping Capacity. The first dimension measures the natural and human hazards that pose the risk. The second and third dimensions cover population factors that can mitigate against or exacerbate the risk. The Vulnerability dimension considers the strength of individuals and households relative to a crisis while the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension considers factors of institutional strength.[278]

The INFORM model is split into different levels to provide a quick overview of the underlying factors leading to humanitarian risk. INFORM gives each country a risk score of 1-10 (1 being the lowest risk and 10 the highest risk) for each of the dimensions, categories, and components of risk, as well as an overall risk score.[279] The higher the score the more at-risk a country is. In the 2025 INFORM Risk Index, Sri Lanka had an overall risk score of 2.9/10, which INFORM categorizes as the "Low" risk class and lands Sri Lanka as the 115th most at-risk country in the Index. The Hazards and Exposure dimension score takes into account

a combination of both natural and human hazards, and Sri Lanka rated 2.3/10 or 103rd of 191 countries. The Vulnerability dimension score was 2.7/10 or 143rd of 191 countries, and the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension score was 4.1/10 or 100th of 191 countries. Physical exposure to Tsunami at 8.0/10, was the greatest threat in the Hazards and Exposure dimension, with Inequality measuring at a 4.1/10 for the Vulnerability dimension, and Governance Issues rated 6.2/10 in the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension.[280] Figure 10 shows the INFORM Risk Dashboard for Sri Lanka.[281]

World Risk Report

The World Risk Report by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft strives to raise awareness of disaster risk among the global public and political decision-makers and to provide practitioners with data to promote faster orientation to complex situations – i.e., societies experiencing disasters. This effort stems from the perception that disaster risks are not solely determined by the occurrence, intensity, or duration of extreme events. Social factors, political conditions, and economic structures play an important role in turning these events into crises. Thus, this index is based on the assumption that every society can take precautions – e.g., effective disaster preparedness and management – to reduce the impact of extreme events and lower the risk of disasters.

The World Risk Report calculates the level of risk a country faces based on a formula of exposure to hazards and vulnerability. It provides an assessment of the risk that countries will confront disasters but does not indicate probabilities for the emergence of disasters, nor does it forecast the timing of future disasters. This index uses 100 indicators that include risk, hazard exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity (as defined above), and adds two others:

- Susceptibility - The disposition to suffer damage in the event of extreme natural events. Susceptibility relates to structural characteristics and frameworks of societies.
- Adaptation - A long-term process that also includes structural changes and comprises

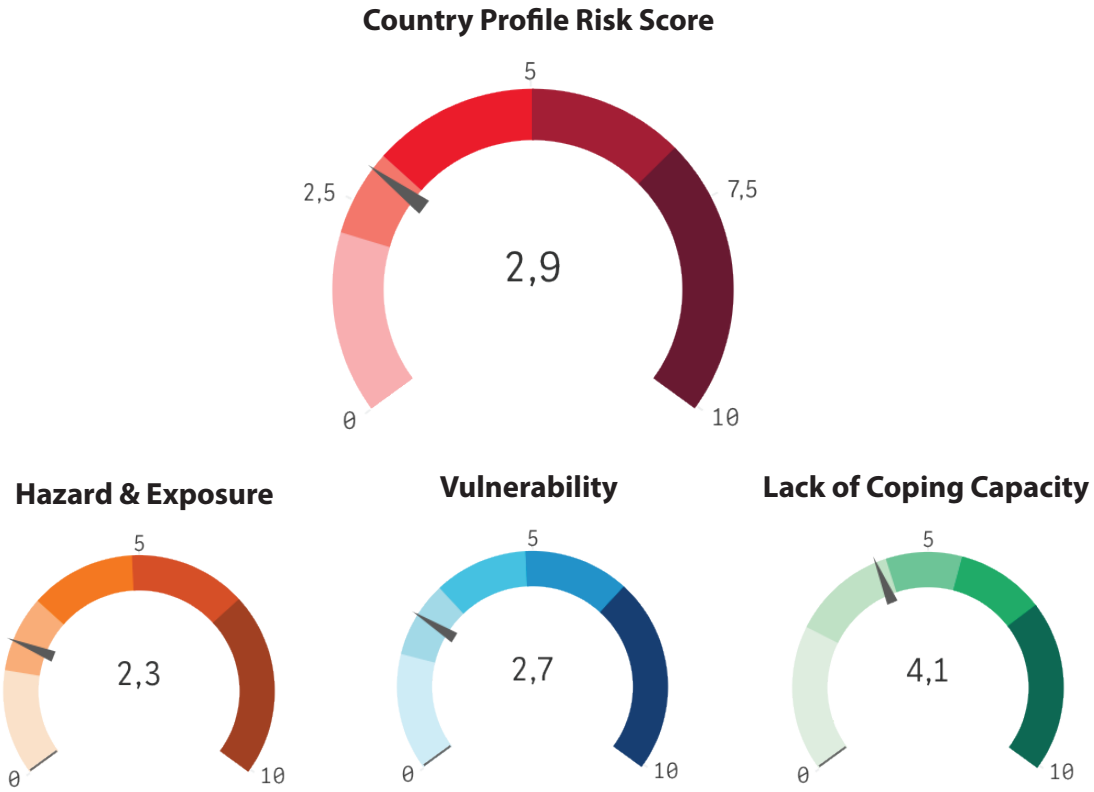


Figure 10: INFORM Risk Index, Sri Lanka (2024)

measures and strategies that address and try to deal with future negative impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Analogous to "lack of coping capacity," the lack of adaptive capacities is included in the Index.

In the 2023 World Risk Report, Sri Lanka ranked 77 of 192 countries wherein the lower the rank (1), the greater risk the country faces. Sri Lanka's total Index score was 5.92 (on a scale of 0-100 wherein the lower the number [0] the less risk a country faces), putting Sri Lanka in the "High" risk class. The component scores were:

- Exposure: 1.60 (Medium)
- Vulnerability: 21.88 (Medium)
- Susceptibility: 18.92 (Medium)
- Lack of Coping Capacity: 12.10 (Medium)
- Lack of Adaptive Capacity: 45.75 (Medium)

For comparison, Sri Lanka's score (5.92) is above the regional (Asia) median of 4.97 and is the same as the sub-regional (South Asia) median. Despite the presence of very low-risk states like Singapore, Asia is the most at-risk continent within the Index because of high ranks for exposure and vulnerability for most countries. South Asia is the median of all five Asian sub-regions as its constituent countries also have mid-range exposure and vulnerability but also, due to regular experience of major disasters, experience relatively high inabilities to build coping capacity. In terms of Exposure, Sri Lanka sits on the medians for Asia and South Asia (1.60) in a reflection of Sri Lanka's exposure to multiple hazards, especially tsunami and epidemics. In the Vulnerability dimension, Sri Lanka is on the median for Asia (21.88) but below the median for South Asia (31.12) in a reflection the county's combination of vulnerable populations and lack of adaptive capacity. Under Susceptibility, Sri Lanka (18.92) is above the median for Asia (14.75) but well below that for South Asia (27.73) due, in part, to the sustained presence of societal disparities and of populations that suffer from violence and disasters. In the Lack of Coping Capacity dimension, Sri Lanka (12.10) is just below the median for Asia (12.60) and far below the median for South Asia (55.86) as the country has worked to build governance capacity and has maintained a streak of several years of relatively less disaster loss, compared to regional neighbors. Finally, on the Lack of Adaptive Capacity score, Sri Lanka (45.75) sits just above the median for Asia (44.39) and on the median for South Asia (45.75) in a reflection of the country's similar levels of health, education, financial, and scientific achievements to its neighbors. Figure 11 shows the World Risk Report's matrix of scores and their classifications.[282]

Classification	World Risk Index	Exposure	Vulnerability	Susceptibility	Lack of Coping Capacities	Lack of Adaptive Capacities
very low	0.00 - 1.84	0.00 - 0.17	0.00 - 9.90	0.00 - 7.17	0.00 - 3.47	0.00 - 25.28
low	1.85 - 3.20	0.18 - 0.56	9.91 - 15.87	7.18 - 11.85	3.48 - 10.01	25.29 - 37.47
medium	3.21 - 5.87	0.57 - 1.76	15.88 - 24.43	11.86 - 19.31	10.02 - 12.64	37.48 - 48.04
high	5.88 - 12.88	1.77 - 7.78	24.44 - 33.01	19.32 - 34.16	12.65 - 39.05	48.05 - 59.00
very high	12.89 - 100.00	7.79 - 100.00	33.02 - 100.00	34.17 - 100.00	39.06 - 100.00	59.01 - 100.00

Figure 11: World Risk Report Classification Matrix

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The Disaster Management Division of the Ministry of Defence is overseen by an Additional Secretary within the Ministry. The Division incorporates the Department of Meteorology (DoM), National Disaster Relief Service Center (NDRSC), National Building Research Organization (NBRO), and Disaster Management Center (DMC), the last of which is led by a Director-General and is an institution that covers the DM cycle – mitigation, preparedness, coordination, relief, and early warning.[283]

Climate change action is governed by a separate government ministry. The Climate Change Secretariat (CCS) resides within the Ministry of Environment, which is the focal point for the UNFCCC and its subsidiary funds. The CCS covers policy and planning and has facilitated the development of provincial climate change adaptation plans. It works in partnership with the Global Green Growth Institute to mainstream climate change into development processes at the provincial level.[284]

Lead Government Agencies in Disaster Response

Per the DM Act (2005), the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) is the top-level oversight body; it is chaired by the President and comprises representatives of various ministries, the nine provincial councils, and representatives of the political opposition.[285] The goal of the NCDM is to ensure that all potential stakeholders have a voice in the country's direction on all aspects of the DM cycle.[286] The NCDM's mandates are to formulate national policy and give strategic direction. Figure 12 illustrates the NCDM composition.[287]

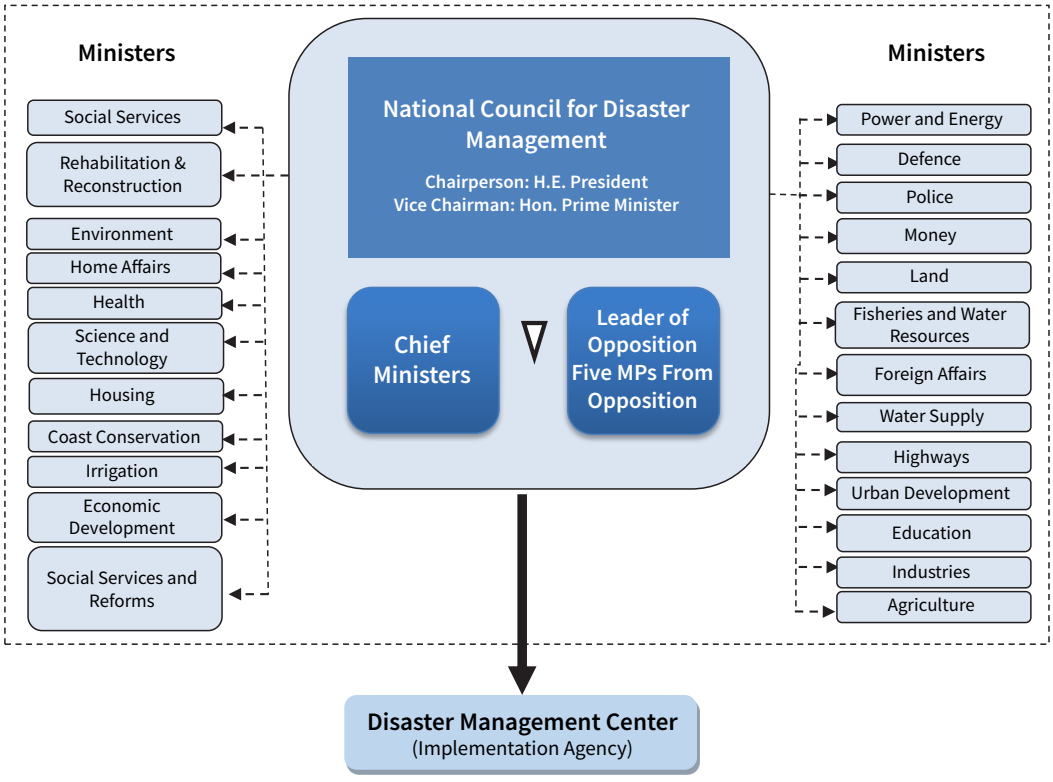


Figure 12: Composition of Sri Lanka's National Council for Disaster Management

Since 2019, the Ministry of Defence has been tasked by the President's office with various duties and functions in relation to DM; they include:

- Cooperation on international humanitarian operations
- Rescue operations and administration of the Coast Guard Service
- Providing weather and climate services
- Meteorological surveys and research
- Landslide management and related research and development
- Forecasting natural disasters and sensitizing relevant sectors regarding them
- Coordinating awareness programs on natural and man-made disasters
- Conducting rescue operations during natural and man-made disasters
- Promoting disaster resilient construction and providing technical guidance

Thus, under the Ministry fall the DMC, NDRSC, NBRO, and DoM.[288] While the DMC is the executing body of the NCDM, the Ministry of Defence guides DMC activities. The DMC is lead agency for overall DM with responsibility for implementing and coordinating national and sub-national programs for response and DRR. The main functions of the DMC are:

- Formulating the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) and National Emergency Operations Plan (NEOP), based on the National Policy
- Hazard mapping and risk assessment
- Coordinating and conducting training and awareness programs
- Preparedness to respond to disasters, including assisting government agencies to develop Preparedness Plans
- Early warning and dissemination
- Emergency operations management and coordination of SAR operations
- Coordinating post-disaster activities, including relief
- Implementing structural projects for disaster mitigation
- Research and development
- Mainstreaming DRR into development programs
- Coordinating CCA programs
- Liaising with Ministries, government authorities and agencies, private sector agencies, NGOs, international organizations, and other relevant agencies on DRR matters to ensure timely execution
- Initiating and coordinating foreign-aided projects for disaster mitigation, response, and recovery.

The DMC runs the EOC, which operates 24 hours every day, seven days every week.

Under the Director-General, the DMC's operations are carried out by seven departments:

1. Mitigation, Research, and Development
2. Preparedness and Planning
3. Training and Awareness
4. Emergency Operations and Early Warning Dissemination
5. Human Resources and Administration
6. Finance
7. Internal Audit

Figure 13 shows the DMC organizational structure.[289]

The NDRSC is primarily tasked with acquiring immediate relief resources – e.g., funding, dry rations, cooked meals, drinking water – and distributing them, as well as coordinating distribution of relief items by other agencies or organizations. In addition, the NDRSC assists District Disaster Management Coordination Units (DDMCU) in maintaining temporary safety centers up to international standards pertaining to WASH, food and nutrition, and health.[290]

As initially envisioned, the distinction between the DMC and NDRSC are:

DMC

- Formulates the NDMP and NEOP
- Coordinates post-disaster activities (relief) and mitigation

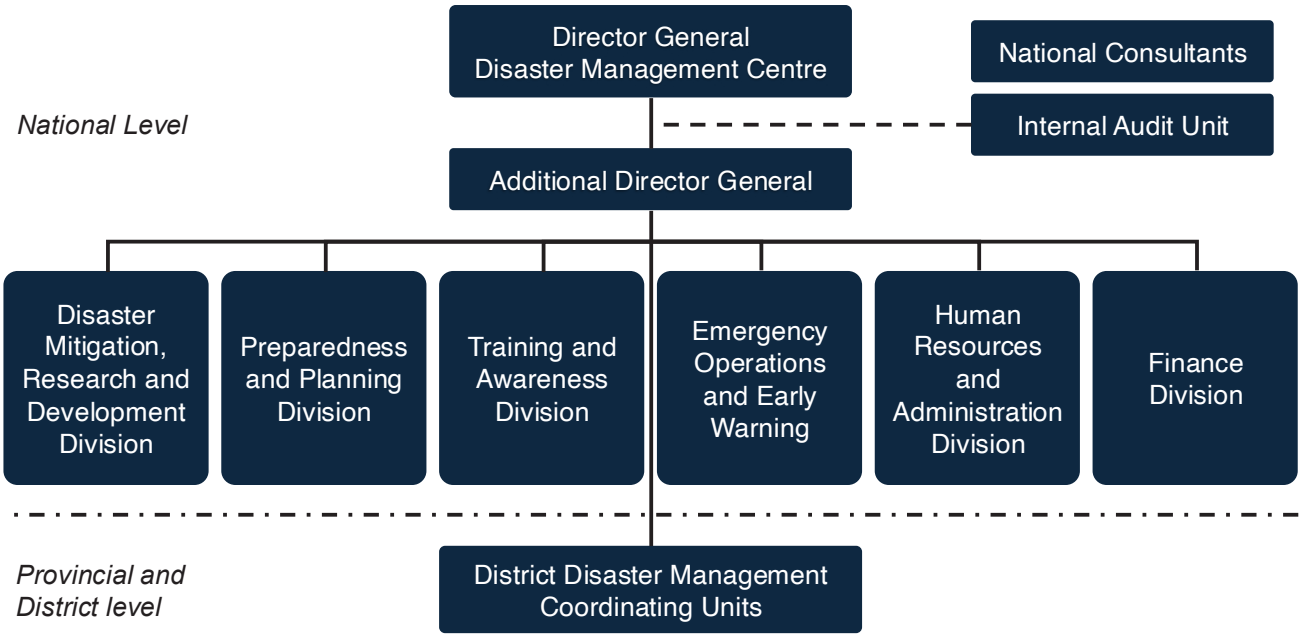


Figure 13: DMC Organizational Structure

- Conducts hazard mapping and risk assessment
- Manages early warning and information dissemination

NDRSC

- Formulates and implements programs to rescue people affected by disasters
- Coordinates and directs implementation of reconstruction and rehabilitation
- Conducts awareness for administration staff and the public on disaster situations and relief arrangements[291]

The NBRO is in charge of landslide mitigation and has developed and enforced planning and zoning regulations to address the vulnerability of the national building stock to landslides.[292]

Outside the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Irrigation is the lead technical agency for flood management, and the Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation is responsible for managing floods in Colombo. Local authorities are responsible for managing localized flooding.[293] The MEPA implements the NOSCOP in case of a maritime accident or oil spill in Sri Lanka's waters. MEPA is the coordinating authority for a response, and along with the Sri Lanka Navy, it is responsible for maritime surveillance for ships with potentially hazardous cargo. The Sri Lanka Navy functions as the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC).[294]

The DMC has assisted with development of provincial, district, division, and village disaster preparedness and mitigation plans with the support of domestic funding and multilateral development bank funding.[295] EOCs have been established in each district and are expected to be activated for emergencies.[296]

DDMCUs have been established in all 25 districts to coordinate and carry out DRR activities at the sub-national level. Each DDMCU is staffed by a District Assistant Director, Management Assistants, and support staff, and the number of District Disaster Management Assistants varies depending on the risk profile of each district, but there are a total of 107 Management Assistants nationally. The DDMCUs in Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, and Puttalam are under the administration of Sri Lanka Army and Air Force officers; other district units are under the administration of civilian District Assistant Directors. All DDMCUs are connected to their respective District Secretariats and function under the operational supervision of the District Secretary.[297] Coordinating committees have also

been established at division and village levels.[298] Figure 14 shows the DDMCU coordination mechanism.[299]

Climate Change

The National Steering Committee (NSC) on climate change is an inter-agency body, chaired by the Secretary within the Ministry of Environment and tasked with overseeing implementation of the NDC under the UNFCCC and of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP). Line ministries in charge of sectors addressed within the NDC sit on the NSC, which oversees policy coherence, prevents duplication of effort, presents practical solutions to barriers, and monitors overall progress.[300]

The Ministry of Environment's CCS was established in 2008 as a dedicated division to support the Ministry's role as national focal point under the UNFCCC and its funding mechanisms. Since its founding, the CCS has instituted National Experts Committees on Climate Change (NECCC) and an Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change. The CCS is tasked with developing national GHG inventories, supporting technology transfer to adaptation and mitigation sectors, facilitating implementation of GHG reduction and resilience building actions, and building climate data and knowledge collections and dissemination.[301] Figure 15 shows Sri Lanka's institutional structure for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including technical support aspects on measuring, reporting, and verification (MRV), and the loss-and-damage (L&D) sector; this structure operates within the context of the international arrangements related to the UNFCCC and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).[302]

Under the NAP (2016-2025), sectoral climate cells were planned to coordinate activities for vulnerable sectors; the CCS would have overall coordinating authority for these cells. The cells were expected to include members of state agencies, representatives of the private sector, and community organizations and NGOs. The planned cells spelled out in the NAP were: 1) food security and water; 2) biodiversity and coastal resources; 3) health; 4) human settlements and infrastructure; 5) tourism,

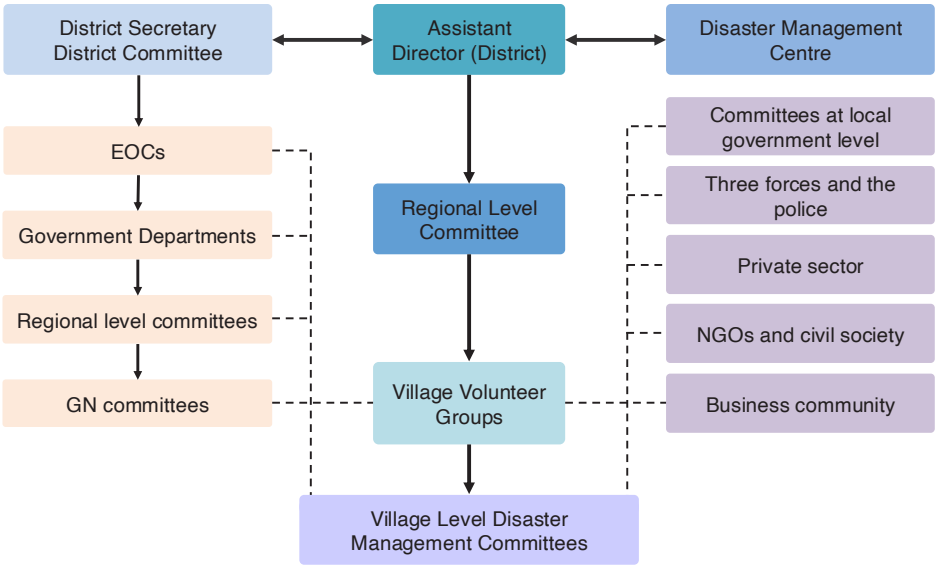


Figure 14: DDMCU Mechanism

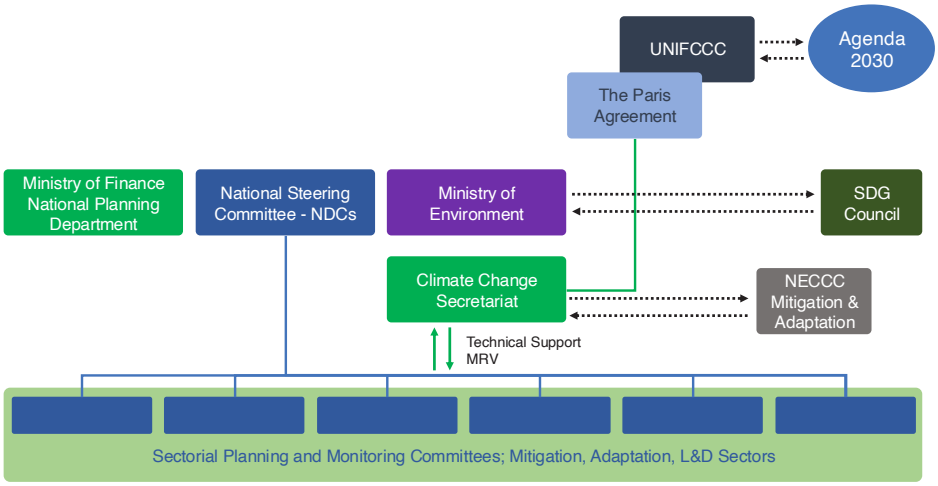


Figure 15: Sri Lanka's Institutional Structure for Climate Action

energy, industry, and infrastructure; and 6) export agriculture.[303]

Disaster Relief and Emergency Response

Local authorities are expected to build and maintain local emergency response capacity and to develop resources, including necessary equipment, to perform response functions.[304] Under Ministry of Home Affairs direction, district and division authorities may activate their respective Institutional Disaster Management Plans, mobilize resources to respond to a disaster situation, and coordinate response activities within their jurisdictions and with agencies at the national level.[305] If an emergency event overwhelms the capacity of local authorities, national authorities will be called upon for assistance, led by the DMC's EOC. During locally-managed disasters, the district EOC under the DDMCU will coordinate with the armed forces, police, and relevant local authorities.[306] Among the key national stakeholders, the SLRCS has a pivotal role in emergency response and relief with its branch network in all 25 districts.[307]

The DMC's Emergency Operations Division operates continuously for early warning and emergency response, and it consists of civilian officers as well as armed forces and police officers. The division's main duties include:

- Providing early warning of potential disasters
- Coordinating all activities related to publicizing information to save lives and property
- Responding immediately during and after an accident
- Coordinating institutional efforts for search and rescue

The Emergency Operations Division coordinates with first responders and other stakeholder agencies and communities to plan operations.[308] The DMC may also stand up an Emergency Response Committee (ERC) to support emergency planning and implementation in the wake of a major calamity, which requires national-level intervention and involves various agencies. The ERC will oversee resource availability and mobilization and identify gaps in either resources or response action. In case of a very large-scale disaster, the government may invite UN agencies, international humanitarians, and foreign military forces to participate in the response, and these external responders will be coordinated by the DMC (and its parent Ministry) in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all under overall guidance by the NCDM.[309]

The DMC's EOC is always open and monitors various data inputs and scenarios for indicators of a potential disaster event. The EOC call center is always available for public inquiries, and it is always staffed by members covering Sinhalese, Tamil, and English languages. The standing EOC staff includes civilians, armed forces members, and representatives of the police. In an emergency, additional stakeholders – e.g., experts from technical agencies – will join the EOC. The EOC and its linkages are illustrated in Figure 16.[310] Per the NEOP, the emergency response process is broken down into stages:

- Situation Monitoring and Forecasting – Technical agencies conduct ongoing monitoring of meteorological, hydrological, biological, technological, and anthropogenic hazards. When the technical agency notes a deviation from normal conditions, they inform the DMC's EOC of the specific condition.
- Emergency Watch - Technical agencies issue a watch state notice to the EOC to take advance measures to notify stakeholders to be on standby for impending hazardous situations.
- Assessing Emergency Situation and Early Warning – With verification from the technical agency, the EOC assesses the situation for possible adverse impacts to normal conditions or vulnerable people and prepares for an impending disaster situation. The technical agency provides the EOC with an early warning notice with scientific

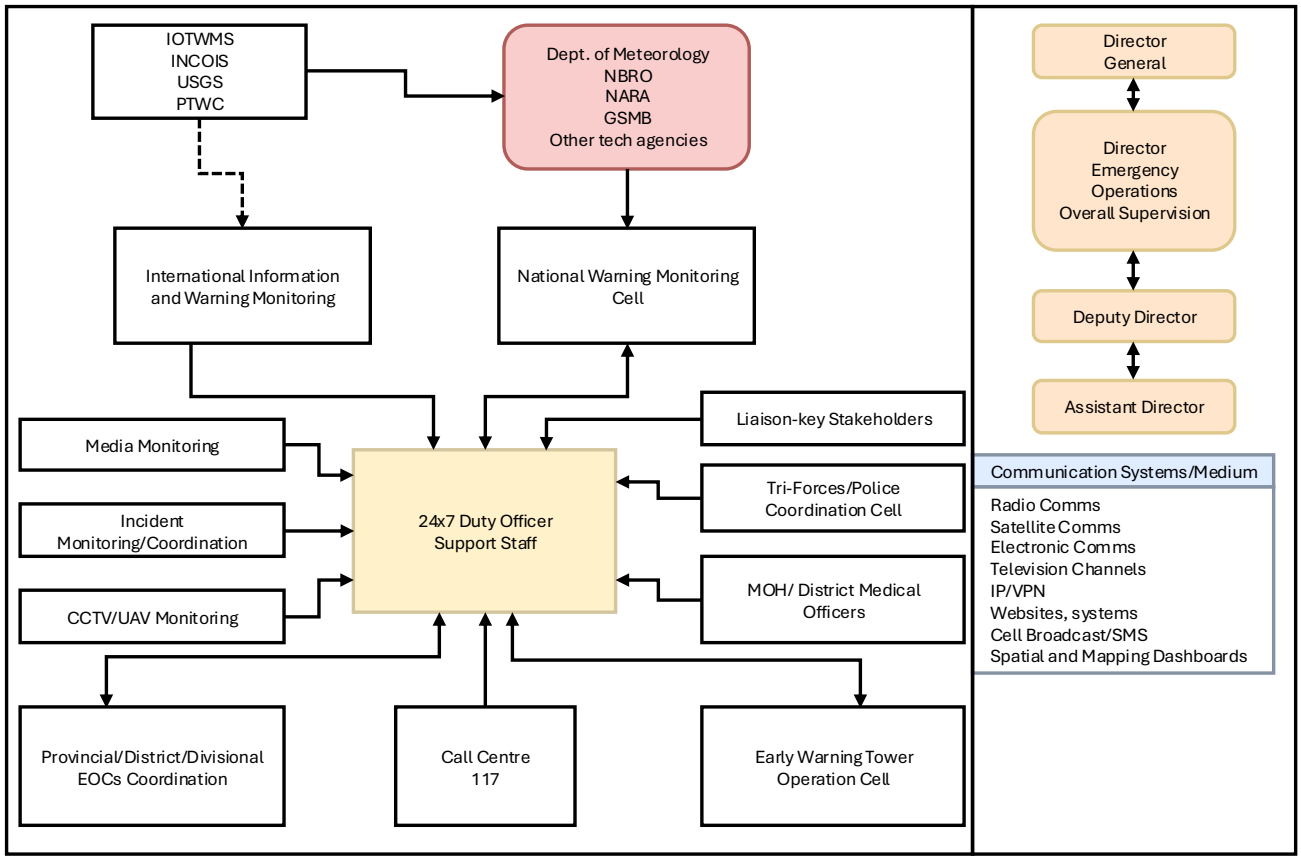


Figure 16: DMC EOC Operational Structure and Linkages

classifications of Alert/Warning with recommendation to evacuate to save lives and safeguard properties.

- Dissemination – The EOC uses established communication mediums to inform vulnerable and at-risk communities through district and divisional secretaries; informing the public about the impending situation crosses three phases: 1. Alert: Take precautionary measures; 2. Warning: Take appropriate measures to save lives and safeguard properties; and 3: Evacuation: EOC and district authorities direct public to vacate at-risk areas and move to safer areas (identified during preparedness planning). Mass media disseminate the early warning messages received from technical agencies and the DMC.
- Issuance of Evacuation Order – On receipt of the early warning and recommendation for evacuation, the Secretary within the Ministry responsible for disaster management issues the evacuation order at national and district levels.
- Emergency Preparation and Activation of Emergency Operation Plans – The Director-General of the DMC authorizes activation of the NEOP and Institutional Disaster Management Plans by responding organizations related to the hazard and based on a briefing by the Minister/Secretary about the situation and receiving approval from either the Minister or Secretary to activate the NEOP or another plan.
- Declaration of State of Disaster – With development of the situation into an impending disaster beyond the coping capacity of the sub-national and national organizations, the Minister may advise the NCDM and President to declare a state of disaster to trigger additional powers for responding organizations. The President may declare the state of disaster for specific areas or for the entire country.

- Situation Analysis/Emergency Mapping – The EOC assesses incoming information from communities and national and international technical agencies for possible impacts and informs the respective district and division secretariats to mobilize SAR teams and to take appropriate measures to provide assistance to affected people per District and Divisional Disaster Management Plans. The DMC activates its emergency mapping mechanism to obtain satellite and space data to produce impact maps and other reports.
- National and International SAR Assistance – With verification of on-the-ground information, the EOC shall ascertain that the situation is beyond the coping capacity of district authorities, coordinate with the armed forces to mobilize additional personnel to assist, and continuously monitor the need for external assistance; the Director-General of the DMC briefs the Minister to request international assistance through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Management of Safe Centers and Needs Assessments – Divisional Secretaries mobilize officers working at village levels to establish safe centers and register displaced people accommodated at the center. Management of the center follows the Divisional Disaster Management Plan and village-level Disaster Management Plan. The NDRSC will collect disaggregated data from safe centers on a common format agreed by all agencies prior to the disaster. Rapid needs assessments for food and non-food items will be undertaken by division and district administrators with the support of external agencies and volunteer organizations. Meeting emergency needs will be detailed after verification of numbers and categories of affected people against baseline data available within the Information Management Unit of the Ministry.
- Coordination of Disaster Response – Disaster response activities will be coordinated at national and sub-national levels based on the Coordination Framework in the NEOP.
- Early Recovery Needs Assessment – Once the situation has started to normalize, a Post-Disaster Need Assessment will be conducted with the assistance of all sector agencies and district and divisional secretaries.
- Early Recovery Implementation – Housing compensation, temporary shelters, food assistance, livelihood support, drinking water supply, and rehabilitation of essential services and infrastructure begin. Designated early recovery plans may be developed on a case-by-case basis. The Ministry will take necessary measures to mobilize resources through treasury funds as well as international assistance for implementation of such plans.[311]

The Ministry of Health and provincial health services will mobilize medical staff to provide emergency medical services to victims. The Ministry also arranges medical clinics at temporary safe centers to prevent disease outbreaks.

The Ministry of Local Government supports provincial and local governments to exercise their powers and provide services. It ensures public safety by overseeing Emergency Medical Response, paramedic teams, and firefighting, the last of which is conducted by fire brigades.

A Rapid Response Team is present at the national level for response to an oil spill, hazardous material accident, chemical or industrial accident, or radiological emergency. For disposal of lethal, toxic, and other hazardous chemicals after a technological disaster, the mandated technical agencies will work with the Central Environmental Authority, Police, Military, and other agencies.

All police stations are among the first offices to receive information of any disaster situation, and, as they are present at the location, they manage the situation until other first responders arrive. Police establish contact with the EOC to get additional support.

The Ministry of Mass Media and Information formulates, facilitates, implements, monitors,

and evaluates policies and strategies to establish a people-friendly, development-oriented, free and responsible media culture. The Ministry assists the DMC to conduct media briefings on a regular basis until the disaster situation resolves.

The NDRSC is responsible for establishing safe centers, coordinating evacuation of people to safe centers, managing safe centers, conducting rapid needs assessment, and providing funds to district and divisional authorities for procuring emergency relief supplies. The NDRSC also coordinates the collection and distribution of international relief supplies and directs technical teams for setting up temporary tents and camps. The NDRSC supports the assessment of affected houses and small businesses and coordinates with the National Insurance Trust Fund to process the claims for payment of compensation.[312]

Humanitarian organizations generally coordinate through the HCT, chaired by the UN, and utilize a sectoral model similar to the UN cluster system. International NGOs are present in the country for development work and can play a role in crisis response because they have already built trust with communities potentially affected by hazard events. Integrating community-based organizations (CBO) is a crucial component as they are able to provide support in remote regions and can contribute to local development with their detailed knowledge about local livelihoods and community needs.[313] The UN's coordination structure for Sri Lanka's socio-economic crisis of 2022 is illustrated in Figure 17, from UN OCHA; this structure serves as an example of how UN system agencies can work together for crisis response.[314]

Armed Forces Role in Disaster Relief

The Ministry of Defence oversees the Army (SLA), Navy (SLN), Air Force (SLAF), and Coast Guard (SLCG). As it is also the parent ministry for the DMC and its sister agencies, the Ministry has a key role in oversight of DM resources and operations. Officers from each of the armed services are present in the DMC's EOC, and personnel may be present in DDMCUs. All of the military branches may be called upon to support civilian responders during a disaster, and the forces specialize in evacuations, SAR, and clearing debris.

Sri Lankan military assistance to civilian authorities in time of emergency works under the concepts of "Civil Military Cooperation" and "Military Aid to Civil Authorities," as coordinated by the Office of the Chief of Defence Staff (OCDS), along with the commanders of each military branch and the Inspector-General of Police. The SLA, SLN, and SLAF, along with police, are responsible for conducting SAR operations, as supported and coordinated by the

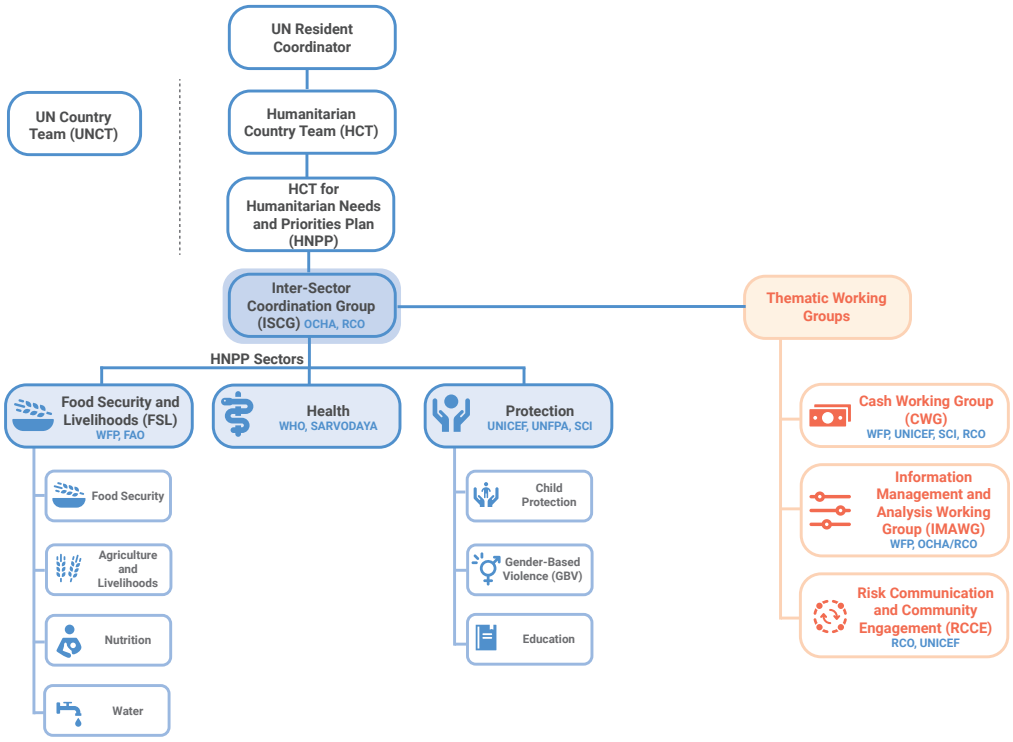


Figure 17: UN-Led Humanitarian Coordination Structure in Sri Lanka

OCDS. There are SAR units attached to each of the seven military area commands, and they may assist local authorities, coordinated by dedicated liaison officers within a DDMCU. These SAR units drill, train, and conduct preparedness activities with their respective local DDMCUs.[315]

The Army has established separate units at districts to engage in SAR operations immediately upon receipt of early warning messages and requests for assistance.[316] The SLA maintains various vehicles for accessing affected communities and assisting in SAR actions or delivering relief. Army units are resourced to establish cooking facilities and provide meals to affected communities as well as deliver safe drinking water. Units may be tasked with restoring electric power and communications services.[317]

The Navy and Coast Guard respond to requests for assistance in territorial waters; this action most commonly takes the form of evacuating injured or ill crew members from vessels, although they have also responded to hazardous materials incidents and fires. The SLN also engages with the private sector – including shipping lines – as needed to coordinate management of emergencies within Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone and overall area of responsibility for rescue and response.[318] For SLN and the SLCG, the Sri Lankan SAR Region covers an area stretching from the southern tip of India almost to Sumatra in the Eastern Indian Ocean and southern Bay of Bengal.[319]

The SLN operates the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC), located in Colombo at the SLN headquarters, under the Director of Naval Operations. The MRCC is the hub for Maritime SAR and is staffed around the clock to respond to distress calls from vessels in the region. The MRCC works in coordination with the Air Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) and DFARD, which can act as alert sources; ARCC, under the SLAF can also provide SAR operational assets. There is one Maritime Rescue Sub Centre, at Hambantota, and seven sub-stations around the coast support transmission of distress calls to MRCC.[320]

The MRCC maintains collaboration with communications centers in India and Singapore to support responses to vessels in distress in the Indian Ocean. The Navy also supports the Department of Irrigation in maintaining the Flood Monitoring System for early warning and information dissemination.[321]

In addition to maritime rescue, the SLN maintains flood relief teams that can deploy small boats to rescue flood-affected people.[322]

In response to emergencies, SLAF can support evacuations and firefighting and can undertake reconnaissance by air or ground as part of a Disaster Assistance Response Team. It is also involved in responses to aircraft accidents or incidents.[323]

By law, the SLCG's duties in relation to humanitarian action or disaster response include:

- Assisting ships that meet with distress and the people on board such ships
- Assisting in marine environmental protection activities and the conservation of marine species
- Providing assistance in ensuring maritime traffic safety
- Preventing and combating maritime disasters, including SAR, disaster relief, and salvage operations
- Supporting disaster preparedness, including disseminating information and warnings by radio and other means in the event of natural catastrophes
- Controlling and monitoring marine pollution
- Cooperating with domestic and foreign organizations to protect Sri Lanka's national security and economy and to ensure its national integrity.[324]

In its role of protecting the marine environment, the SLCG assists other authorities in implementing and monitoring measures for prevention and control of pollution and other hazards at sea that threaten the environment, and it assists in conservation of marine species. Under the NOSCOP, the SLCG's responsibilities are:

- To perform surveillance of oil slicks

- To maintain a standing staff trained and equipped to respond
- To combat spills and participate in clean up
- To update the NOSCOP
- To nominate Incident Management team members to help the MEPA Incident commander.

There is a fully-trained and -equipped SLCG Oil Spill Response Team in each of the four SLCG regions. The main oil spill equipment warehouse is at Coast Guard Station Dikovita, on the coast north of Colombo. SLCG ships Samudraraksha and Samaraksha are both equipped to handle oil spill incidents at sea.[325]

Disaster Management Partners

The Government, led by the DMC and its parent ministry, coordinates international involvement. The DMC is the focal point for humanitarian agencies, international organizations, NGOs, and volunteers involved in emergency response, relief, and preparedness activities.[326] In cases where a disaster overwhelms national capacity, the government may invite UN agencies, international humanitarians, and foreign military forces to participate in the response. The DMC and Ministry of Defence, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will coordinate the work of these external responders.[327] The Ministry will chair meetings of UN agencies, the donor community, international aid agencies, and humanitarian agencies to brief them on the situation and emergency assistance required. The Director-General of the DMC coordinates international assistance for SAR operations, and the Ministry of Health coordinates international medical assistance. The Director of the NDRSC coordinates relief item delivery and distribution. The Minister may request UN assistance to prepare a flash appeal for assistance from the international community, and the Minister, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will make an appeal to Embassies resident in Sri Lanka. If the Government deems it necessary, further support can be sought from Sri Lankan embassies overseas through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Resources Department. Once an international appeal is publicized, the Ministry may call coordination meetings with stakeholders to ensure an appropriate response.[328]

The Government recognizes the value of having a range of partnerships into which to tap for expertise and resources. The importance of the whole range of Sri Lanka's national and international partnerships was made clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. UN agencies, multilateral financial groups, and NGOs mobilized to provide a wide range of social and economic supports, including immediate material and financial relief. In addition to external agencies and relationships, Sri Lanka's own civil society plays a vital role, especially as advocates for and representatives of marginalized groups. National and local NGOs work in poverty reduction, health, nutrition, women's and children's rights, workers' rights, education, environmental protection, and peace and justice.[329] Their presence across this spectrum means that they are present and active during the response to a disaster.

United Nations

There are 22 UN system agencies present in Sri Lanka.

UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2023-2027 outlines how the UN system agencies active in Sri Lanka work together with the national government, civil society, the private sector, youth, and other stakeholders to help Sri Lanka reach its objectives under the 2030 Agenda. The UNSDCF is structured around four priorities that drive where the UN system concentrates expertise in support of Sri Lanka's own action on economic, social, and environmental facets of development. The priorities are:

- Inclusive and equitable human development and wellbeing

- Resilient and green recovery and growth for shared prosperity and environmental sustainability
- Social cohesion and inclusive governance and justice
- Gender equality

To achieve these priorities, the UN agencies deliver evidence-based strategic policy advice, research, and technical inputs, technical assistance and capacity development, modeling of innovative solutions, leveraging global and regional networks, and convening partners. For each desired outcome, a UN agency is partnered with a Sri Lankan Government ministry to guide planning, monitoring, and reporting. As the UNSDCF identifies climate change and natural disasters as posing a risk to achievement of the priorities and outcomes, UN system agencies are expected to contribute to the country's vision of building disaster resilience and addressing the impacts of climate change by responding to vulnerabilities and supporting adaptation approaches, including by improving DM techniques.[330]

UN Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Plan

As an example of the way in which the UN system can be called upon for assistance in a crisis in Sri Lanka, in 2022, amidst the escalating national socio-economic crisis, the government sought international assistance, and the UN crafted a Humanitarian Needs and Priorities (HNP) Plan that established the short-term ways in which UN agencies would deliver multi-sectoral support to save lives and shore up threatened livelihoods. The HNP Plan targeted US$47.2 million in funding to address the needs of 1.7 million people, not quite one-third of the people estimated to have been in need at the time of the Plan's creation. Work under the HNP Plan was overseen by the HCT with sectoral groups serving as the technical arms of the UN response. With support from OCHA, the Resident Coordinator and the members of the HCT were responsible for implementation of activities in support of three objectives:

1. Save lives through the provision of food assistance and essential medicines, targeted nutrition services, safe drinking water, and emergency livelihoods support for the most vulnerable
2. Provide immediate agricultural support that allows the resumption of basic productive activities for the maintenance of livelihoods and food and nutrition security
3. Provide protection from violence, especially that based on gender, age disability, and other vulnerabilities, and prevent and mitigate other protection risks through timely assistance, including mental health and psycho-social support and education

The objectives were then translated into work through three sectors – Food Security and Livelihoods, Health, and Protection, the last including Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection.

- Food Security and Livelihoods: Food and nutrition security supported by the provision of safe drinking water, basic agricultural support, and emergency livelihoods
- Health: Provision and distribution of vital and essential medicines and supplies
- Protection: Provision of support to general protection, protection from GBV and child protection, and addressing mental health, and psychosocial and education needs that expose to the most vulnerable, especially children, to further risks.

HNP Plan implementation involved 18 operational partners, of which three were national NGOs. Food Security and Livelihoods involved 17 participating organizations, and Protection involved nine organizations; some partners worked on both sectors. The Health sector primarily involved the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNDP. All partners worked through the sector leads and government counterparts, the latter of which were the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Women and Child Affairs.[331]

Non-Governmental and Community Organizations

The National Secretariat for NGOs counts 568 registered NGOs working in the country as of June 2024. The Secretariat, under the Ministry of Public Security, manages a system of registrations and regulations for local and international NGOs, CBOs, and micro-finance groups.[332] The largest and most active NGOs working in the country are World Vision Lanka, Save the Children International, Halo Trust, Asia Foundation, Amnesty International South Asia, ACTED, Room to Read Sri Lanka, We Effect, National Peace Council of Sri Lanka, HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation, Child Action Lanka, ChildFund Sri Lanka, and Gammadda. They work across the development and community engagement spectrum, from literacy to mine clearance.[333]

National Secretariat for NGOs

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International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

International Committee of the Red Cross

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a private, independent, humanitarian organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The ICRC bases its activities on the provisions of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and it is neutral in politics, religion, and ideology. The ICRC assists with the protection of civilian victims of armed conflict and internal strife and their direct results. Within these roles, it may take any humanitarian initiative as a neutral and independent intermediary.[334] The ICRC has been active in Sri Lanka since 1989 in order to respond to the needs of people affected by civil unrest and armed conflict. Since the end of the civil war, ICRC's work in the country has focused on addressing the lingering needs of families of missing persons, as well as helping the country integrate aspects of IHL into domestic law and law enforcement. The ICRC also supports the SLRCS in its work to respond to the humanitarian consequences of emergencies.[335]

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a humanitarian organization that provides assistance and promotes humanitarian activities carried out by each of the 191 National Societies worldwide, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering. IFRC was founded in 1919 and carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters alongside development work to strengthen the capacities of the National Societies.[336] The IFRC Country Representation Office in Colombo works with the assistance of the IFRC Operations Manager and the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Maldives, based in New Delhi, India. In its 2024 network country plan, the IFRC expects to focus on Sri Lanka's ongoing complex socio-economic emergency and on building extreme weather resilience, in addition to long-term food security, health, migration, and developing the capacity of the SLRCS for DM, protection, and community engagement. In case of an emergency in Sri Lanka, the IFRC does participate in HCT meetings as well as sector coordination groups and working groups.[337]

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society

SLRCS has branches in all 25 districts of the country; each of the branches is capable of providing relief in times of disaster. As of 2024, there are some 150 SLRCS staff and 1,500 volunteers.[338] Founded in 1936 and admitted into the IFRC in 1952, the SLRCS works closely with the government, especially the Ministry of Health and DMC, in order to build resilience among vulnerable communities, reduce risks of morbidity and mortality during health emergencies, promote healthy lifestyles, and reduce discrimination across society.[339] The

SLRCS sits on the NCDM[340] and takes part in HCT meetings as well as other coordination working groups and maintains partnerships with national and international stakeholders, especially UN agencies and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as corporate players and media networks to ensure resources, coordination, and financial stability.[341]

SLRCS National Disaster Response Teams (NDRT), Branch Disaster Response Teams (BDRT) and Divisional Disaster Response Teams (DDRT) are available at the national, district, and division levels. SLRCS has also trained disaster response teams specialized in water and safety. Members of these teams are versed in life-saving techniques to assist SAR operators. Additional first aid-trained volunteers are available in all districts and can be deployed to support lifesaving during an emergency. SLRCS has a pool of 25 people trained in Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA); they also can be deployed to set up and assist in the implementation of CVA programs.[342]

One of the key long-term efforts of SLRCS is to develop greater capacity to support government and community programs to bolster climate resilience. As of 2024, the SLRCS was working to build its internal capacity for climate-smart practices, risk communication, and knowledge in order to better engage national and international stakeholders on climate change issues, including awareness, advocacy, and data management. All aspects of climate- and environmentally-sensitive action will be integrated into SLRCS' management and training of the NDRT and BDRTs. Both the NDRT and BDRTs are already in the midst of a revamp related to surge capacity and rapid deployment.[343]

U.S. Government Agencies in Sri Lanka

The most recent U.S. Department of State Integrated Country Strategy for Sri Lanka seeks to ensure that the country can emerge from its most recent socio-economic crisis swiftly and continue to exercise its role as a partner in sustaining a free, open, connected, and secure Indo-Pacific region. In recent years, the U.S. and Sri Lanka have added military cooperation and people-to-people programming alongside U.S. foreign assistance to the country. Two priorities for this engagement are tackling transnational maritime crime and building disaster response capacity. An additional goal of the U.S. diplomatic mission in the country is to help Sri Lanka reform its economy toward an inclusive, market-driven system that promotes a better business climate and ensure integration of environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation.[344] Key technical assistance, advice, and trade facilitation work is done by members of the Embassy team from the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Commerce.[345] The Peace Corps and USAID are also present at the U.S. Embassy in Colombo.

There have been Peace Corps volunteers in Sri Lanka since 1962. The early emphasis was on education, health, agriculture, and community development. In the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami, volunteers shifted to tsunami recovery programs. In 2016, the Government invited the Peace Corps to aid the Ministry of Education in enhancing English-language education across rural public schools, and since 2018, the program has been formalized through Memorandum of Understanding.[346]

USAID programming in Sri Lanka supports inclusive economic growth, a stronger democratic system, and the resilience of marginalized and disaster-affected communities. USAID partners with Sri Lanka on CCA capacity strengthening through a project implemented by Tetra Tech ARD and supports the Research Triangle Institute's activity to reduce ocean plastic pollution.[347] The CCA project supports the conduct of climate risk assessments, identifies and supports CCA technologies and products, and builds community understanding of and involvement in CCA.[348] Meanwhile, support to the Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum allows USAID to directly engage communities to improve the resilience of drinking water systems even as the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has provided significant funding to

support government, community, and NGO capacity for early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4).[349] Finally, during the socio-economic and political crisis of 2022-2023, USAID/BHA continued ER4 programming in Sri Lanka with a focus on supporting food security and livelihoods among crisis-affected people. In partnership with WFP, they delivered cash, food, and nutrition assistance to some 1.5 million people between mid-2022 and mid-2023, and BHA delivered emergency funding to UNICEF for emergency nutrition assistance to more than 200,000 children and pregnant or lactating women. Finally, on the DRR front, BHA continued to support Save the Children, World Vision, ACTED, and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) across projects intended to boost climate-smart agricultural practices, enhance community-based DRR stakeholder communication and coordination, and establish protocols for landslide response.[350]

USAID/BHA is the U.S. Government lead federal coordinator for international disaster response and humanitarian assistance. USAID/BHA requests U.S DoD support to disaster response operations on an as-needed basis, and only in situations where the U.S. military can provide a unique capability that other first responders, including those of the host nation and international humanitarian partners, have insufficient capacity to provide. USAID/BHA responds to humanitarian crises—including natural disasters, conflicts, and severe food insecurity— in approximately 80 countries every year, and it fulfills its mandate of saving lives, alleviating human suffering, and reducing the physical, social, and economic impact of disasters worldwide. USAID/BHA provides funding, supplies, and expertise for the rapid and effective provision of humanitarian aid throughout the world.

USAID/BHA's staff presence globally and at its Washington, D.C., headquarters includes experts in the food security, nutrition, WASH, health, shelter/settlements, logistics, agriculture, economic recovery/livelihoods, livestock, DRR, CCA, and humanitarian protection sectors. USAID/BHA has humanitarian advisors at all of the DoD combatant commands, Special Operations Command, and key DoD field-forward positions, as well as at the U.S. Mission to the UN in New York, the U.S. Mission to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva, the U.S Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome, the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S. To support disaster response globally, USAID/BHA maintains regional offices in six countries – Costa Rica, Hungary, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Thailand – as well as 14 liaison offices, where regional advisors coordinate with relevant actors across their respective regions and countries. In addition to these offices, full-time USAID/BHA staff are present in 32 other countries. USAID/BHA's vast network of implementing partners includes affected communities, local and national governments, other U.S. Government entities, and international partners, including NGOs, international organizations, the international donor community, and the private sector. Relief supplies are pre-positioned primarily in implementing partners' warehouses, and in five USAID/BHA-managed warehouses around the world to enable a rapid response to any location globally.

As the lead federal coordinator for Foreign Disaster Response (FDR), USAID/BHA's annual budget reflects the U.S. Government's interest in providing needs-based assistance, and it has been as high as US$11.9 billion annually in recent years for humanitarian assistance activities. All of USAID/BHA's programs and activities are humanitarian assistance, targeting populations most vulnerable to the impacts of shocks from slow or sudden-onset emergencies. USAID/BHA's humanitarian assistance consists of two major conceptual areas, which may frequently be interlinked programmatically and strategically. The first area is humanitarian response pursuant to a Declaration of Humanitarian Need (DHN) issued by the U.S. Ambassador or Chief of Mission in the affected country based on four criteria:

1. There is evidence of significant unmet humanitarian need
2. U.S. Government humanitarian assistance will save lives, reduce human suffering, and mitigate the impact of humanitarian emergencies on the most vulnerable
3. The host country requests or will accept international assistance; and
4. Responding aligns with U.S. Government interests and humanitarian objectives.

This DHN permits USAID/BHA to begin emergency response activities. Humanitarian response is characterized by urgent action, including rapid assessment of needs and provision of funding to partners to meet those needs, logistical support to local and national actors, and frequently the deployment of USAID/BHA disaster response experts or teams. The second conceptual area of USAID/BHA assistance is ER4, which aims to improve the well-being of vulnerable people by strengthening their capacities to manage risk, to anticipate, withstand, recover from, and adapt to shocks and stresses, and to support positive, transformative change. ER4 activities may be integrated with humanitarian response programming or may be stand-alone activities. ER4 programs and activities are cost-effective, reducing the need for future humanitarian assistance when shocks occur.

Core USAID/BHA Responsibilities During an Emergency Response

- Conducting assessments of humanitarian needs
- Developing U.S. Government response strategy
- Coordinating the operational on-ground response in support of the U.S. Ambassador
- Providing fast and effective funding to established partners (NGOs, international organizations, etc.)
- Leading official reporting on humanitarian issues and U.S. Government response activities
- Requesting support from other U.S. Government agencies as required.

When civilian and host nation military response capacity is overwhelmed and the U.S. military has a unique capability, USAID/BHA may request supplemental FDR support from DoD for a limited period. These requests occur in less than 5% of all official U.S. Government responses. Interagency requests for DoD support to FDR are transmitted to the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) in an official memorandum (Executive Secretariat Memo), which is required in order to leverage such DoD support. With SecDef approval, DoD components may provide non-reimbursable foreign disaster relief support to USAID using available Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) funds. Coordination between USAID and DoD personnel is facilitated at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels by Humanitarian Assistance Advisors to the Military (HAA/M), who are USAID/BHA personnel trained to liaise with DoD counterparts and bridge gaps between the U.S. military and international humanitarian community. The DoD capabilities most commonly requested by USAID/BHA during a disaster response are logistics and airlift support rather than direct assistance to beneficiaries. USAID uses the Mission Tasking Matrix form as the formal means of tasking for DoD resources at the tactical level. OHDACA steady-state projects are distinct from FDR activities, and their implementation requires coordination with the local or regional USAID mission as well as approval by the relevant U.S. Ambassador and DoD combatant command.

The U.S. Government prioritizes civilian leadership in humanitarian operations in accordance with internationally-recognized, humanitarian principles, including both the leadership of our responses and engagement with partner nations. The unique socio-political context of each partner nation is a key consideration for decision makers at all levels before, during, and after the use of DoD capabilities in a disaster response scenario.

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Laws, Policies, and Plans on Disaster Management

Sustainable Development Act

The Sustainable Development Act (2017) is the central legal document that underpins not only Sri Lanka's work to achieve the SDGs but also to ensure ecological use of resources and to balance economic, social, and environmental sectors. The Act mandated the establishment of the Sustainable Development Council, which was housed under the Ministry of Finance as of 2022; the Council guides work to meet the SDGs. Meanwhile, the draft National Policy and Strategy for Sustainable Development sought to guide all national cabinet ministries, government agencies, and sub-national authorities in preparing their own sustainable development strategies. However, as of the country's 2022 voluntary review of national progress toward the SDGs, the National Policy and Strategy had not been finalized. Rather, the National Policy Framework (NPF; 2020-2025) remained the primary source of national and subnational strategy. The NPF does identify the SDGs as the source of objectives for the NPF's 10 key policies.[351] Centralized direction of work toward the SDGs resulted in the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (2014-2018), which helped stakeholders build coherent policies, plans, and institutions to address DRR, climate change action, and overall development.[352]

Disaster Management Act (2005)

Written in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami, the DM Act formed the legal basis for the past 20 years of multi-hazard programming.[353] The text of the legislation covers natural and anthropogenic or technical hazards, excluding terrorism and conflict. In promotion of DRR, it does lay out the foundations for risk assessments and community participation, especially in training. Moreover, the law lays out the provisions for declaring a disaster and terminating the disaster period. It expressly covers SAR operations but does not address the involvement of international actors.[354] The law mandated the establishment of the NCDM and its operational office, the DMC.[355]

National Policy on Disaster Management (2013)

The 2010 National Policy served as the main governing mechanism for DM and included considerations for local authorities, multi-stakeholder approaches, and standards for response and relief.[356] The original Policy explicitly committed to the equal rights of all Sri Lankans – regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, etc. – to receive information on hazards and relief, and it committed to participation in planning and mitigation activities by disaster-prone communities.[357] The Policy was updated in 2013 and is organized along the lines of cross-cutting principles – multi-dimensionality; collective responsibility; equity, diversity, and inclusion; transparency and accountability; and "best fit of best practice." The last of these principles reflects a commitment

to integrate local, indigenous, and traditional knowledge and approaches.[358]

The National Policy places responsibility for dealing with disasters with the government – national, provincial, district, and local[359] – but also states that DM is a collective responsibility to be undertaken in cooperation with the Government by NGOs, religious organizations, the private sector, and communities.[360] The DMC acts as a body for coordinating, facilitating, and liaising with stakeholders at national, regional, and local levels. The Policy is based on the DM Act and the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015) for achieving disaster resilience in vulnerable communities; the Hyogo Framework was succeeded by the Sendai Framework, which Sri Lanka ratified but of which some of the verbiage and goals are not in the National Policy given the chronology. The Policy identified five priority areas:

1. Ensure that DRR is a national priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation
2. Identify, assess, and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning
3. Use knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response.

In addition, the National Policy lays out objectives for actions related to disaster mitigation and resilience and highlights areas of focus for DM actions. The main objectives are:

- Establish, strengthen, and maintain the following in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders
  - Sustainable mechanisms, structures, and programs to enhance capabilities for disaster risk management (DRM)
  - National, regional, and local level coordinating mechanisms for DRM
  - Resources for DRM activities through a special fund
- Minimize disruption of economic activity and damage to the environment
- Mainstream and integrate DRR into sectoral development programs including resource allocation in order to achieve sustainable development
- Ensure use of appropriate procedures and guidelines for responding to disasters and threats of disasters in Sri Lanka in order to save lives and property
- Adhere to higher standards than previously in medium- and long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives
- Ensure introduction of planning guidelines and building codes for construction in disaster-prone areas
- Promote community-based DM and micro-insurance to improve the resilience of vulnerable communities[361]

National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction

The National Strategy on DRR was formulated by the DMC in 2021 with a focus on mitigating against and adapting to climate change-induced disasters in order to ensure that key socio-economic sectors and communities adapt and mitigate risk.[362]

National Disaster Management Plan 2023-2030

The NDMP aims to create a joint approach between the primary government institutions involved in the DM cycle and international organizations, NGOs, and humanitarian agencies.[363] The NDMP covers slow-onset and sudden disaster events as well as the long-term impacts of climate change in its list of hazards and impacts. It concretely links climate change to the slate of hazards confronting Sri Lanka and promotes CCA as means to manage disaster risk. Among its long-term aims is to mainstream DRR into the climate change NAP.[364] The 2034-2030 NDMP builds on a multi-sector approach under which all sub-national levels of administration, NGOs, and grassroots organizations are expected to maintain operational plans, which conform with the NDMP.[365] The goals of the NDMP are explicitly in line with the Sendai Framework in an effort to ensure localization of DRR and to avoid exacerbating risk when responding to a disaster event.[366]

The NDMP is organized along four objectives or thematic pillars, related to the four priorities for action within the Sendai Framework.

- Priority 1: Understand disaster risk – Integrate the latest scientific knowledge, technological advancement, and data-driven approaches to assess and monitor risk and enable prioritization of interventions, enhance early warning, and implement measures to mitigate risk
- Priority 2: Strengthen disaster risk governance – Facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement, informed decision-making, and integrated planning; mainstream DRR into national and sectoral policies; ensure participation of marginalized groups; and promote accountability and transparency
- Priority 3: Investing in DRR for resilience – Adopt nature-based solutions and sustainable land use practices to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance adaptive capacity, and develop innovative financing mechanisms and risk transfer instruments to ensure funding for DRR efforts
- Priority 4: Enhancing preparedness for effective response and to "Build back better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction – Strengthen early warning, enhance community-based preparation, and improve capacity of response and recovery mechanisms; ensure comprehensive risk communication, training, and capacity-building programs

The four operational strategies are linked to these priorities as follows:

1. Strengthen DRM systems, capacities, and partnerships through risk-informed, technologically-advanced, and evidence-based approaches across all hazards, disasters, vulnerabilities, and risks
2. Improve risk governance through adequate legal mandates, DRR-integral development, and meaningful participation by all stakeholders
3. Enhance public and private investment by facilitating legislative and regulatory frameworks and instruments for risk financing, risk insurance, and social protection
4. Ensure the efficiency of early warning systems, build community resilience, and foster national and international partnerships[367]

National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2019-2030

The National DRM Plan was developed as a successor document to the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (2014-2018).[368] It is intended to mainstream DRR into all sectoral plans. It covers action across national, provincial, district, community, private sector, and civil society levels, with an emphasis on participation across society.[369] The focus of the Plan is to ensure the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for implementation of DRM and to ensure inclusive participation.[370]

National Emergency Operations Plan

The NEOP is under the purview of the NCDM with the assistance of the DMC. When a disaster has been declared, the DMC coordinates implementation of the NEOP,[371] which establishes the emergency operations mechanism. It lays out actions to be taken to ensure an effective response. The Plan focuses on:

- Management arrangements
- Stakeholder relationships
- Operations procedures
- Mechanisms for ensuring effective response
- Specific roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder in difference scenarios.[372]

The NEOP takes an "all-hazards" approach in the assumption that various capabilities and actions are important across the hazards landscape; thus, there is not a specific plan for tsunami versus flooding or landslide.[373] There are emergency operations plans at national, provincial, and district levels of administration, all overseen by the DMC but maintained and implemented by the respective jurisdictional

authorities. The plans are intended to identify roles and delegate them to specific stakeholders for different response scenarios. The lower-level plans also describe management arrangements, incident command systems, operational procedures, and coordination mechanisms.[374]

National Climate Change Policy (2012)

The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) laid out 25 broad, national statements to guide national and sub-national decision-making.[375] It laid out a national commitment of "adaptation to and mitigation of climate change impacts within the framework of sustainable development."[376] It was established in an effort to develop strategies and mechanisms to mitigate risk and manage disasters linked to the impacts of climate change in addition to protecting communities, ecosystems, and the natural and built environment.[377] The policy statements cover vulnerability, adaptation, mitigation, sustainable consumption and production, knowledge management, coordination, research and development, technology transfer, legal and regulatory frameworks, market- and non-market-based mechanisms, and resource mobilization.[378]

Climate Prosperity Plan

The CPP (2022) aims to promote risk-informed investment, enable financial and social protection, including insurance, and strengthen credit for domestic banks to enable the financing of adaptation and resilience projects. It also commits to setting up a Sustainable Insurance Facility that integrates micro-, small-, and medium-enterprise insurance as a core offering via private sector banks and wholesale associations.[379] To achieve these goals, the CPP lays out efforts to:

- Reduce GHG emissions
- Increase climate finance and carbon markets
- Improve climate risk management through natural resource restoration by 2040

The focus of the plan is to repurpose and reduce debt through debt-for-climate swaps and to shift debt toward climate-smart investments.[380]

Carbon Net Zero 2050 Roadmap and Strategic Plan

The Carbon Net Zero 2050 Roadmap and Strategic Plan sets the stage for the country's transition to "net zero" pathways. It proposes actions to achieve the NDC commitment to reach net zero carbon status by 2050. Recommendations touch upon actions to mitigate GHG emissions and increase carbon sequestration and storage across the energy, transport, industry, waste, agriculture, and forestry sectors. The Roadmap and Strategic Plan provides a series of strategies in 5-year intervals for each sector, and there is a GHG emissions reduction target for the end of each period. However, many of the actions are proposed for the latter part of the 25-year period (2025-2050) as the country continues to try to stabilize the economy, build political and public knowledge, and ensure that conservation practices are possible across the national population.[381]

Nationally Determined Contribution

Sri Lanka is a party to the UNFCCC; it signed and ratified the Paris Agreement and submitted its first NDC to the UNFCCC Secretariat in 2016. It updated its NDC in September 2021. The key concern is that climate change will spell long-term changes in the monsoon regime and thereby shift the country's ecology and economy in ways that will be difficult to manage. Indeed, continuing to develop into an upper-middle-income country but keep GHG emissions low is a stiff social, economic, and political challenge. Moreover, given the country's development status and already low per capita GHG emissions, Sri Lanka will rely on global stakeholders to undertake much of the mitigation work while Sri Lankans undertake significant adaptation work at home.

The updated NDC continues to target a 4% unconditional reduction in GHG emissions and a 10.5% conditional reduction, all with respect to business-as-usual scenarios from 2010. External assistance to reach the conditional goals will

include significant financing and investment by partners as well as additional technical capacity. The country commits to increasing forest cover to 32% by 2030. Among key targets are 70% of electricity generated using renewables by 2030, carbon neutrality in electricity generation achieved by 2050, and no capacity additions to coal power plants. Moreover, the country has adopted the ambition of halving nitrogen waste by 2030, banning agro-chemicals and chemical fertilizers, banning single-use plastics, promoting e-transport, and promoting the circular economy.

As part of its plans for its conditional commitments, Sri Lanka will seek climate financing and technology transfer support towards:

- Exploiting more renewable energy resources
- Expanding energy storage systems
- Upgrading the electricity distribution network, waste-to-energy systems, and public transport
- Upgrading the road and railway network

Government measures to address climate vulnerability already in process include investments in developing and fortifying the eroding coastline, expanding irrigation and trans-basin diversions to moderate drought, and developing meteorological and early warning capacity for floods and landslides. Some resettlement of communities living in landslide- and flood-prone areas has begun, and exposure to hazards is being factored into the design and implementation of road, reservoir, and new settlement projects; however, the ability to implement the full range of mitigation measures will continue to require external financial and technological assistance.[382]

National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change Impacts 2016-2025

The NAP was devised with a focus on mainstreaming adaptation and to link various plans and legislation, including the Coastal Zone Management Plan, National Physical Plan, the agriculture policy, and the sustainable development program.[383] The NAP covers adaptation needs of key vulnerable sectors and cross-cutting national needs. The nine vulnerable sectors are food security, water, coastal sector, health, human settlements, biodiversity, tourism and recreation, export development, and industry-energy-transportation. The NAP identifies adaptation options that can fulfill the needs of each sector, actions necessary to achieve adaptation options, responsible agencies, and key performance indicators. The NAP also includes interventions necessary to fulfill cross-cutting national needs and proposes an institutional and coordination mechanism along with implementation and resource mobilization strategies.[384] Simplified, the goals of the NAP are:

- Raise the adaptive capacity of individuals, communities, and society to cope effectively with impacts of climate change
- Reduce vulnerability to climate risks by enhancing the resilience of communities and ecosystems
- Capture opportunities that arise due to changes for society and people[385]

Disaster Management Communications

Early warning on disasters and information related to hazards, risk, early warning, and public awareness rely on a variety of media and data and information sources. The DMC maintains its website with key information and warnings, but without additional resources, this outlet would be unlikely to meet all needs of all stakeholders. Thus, DMC media staff update information via traditional and social media and communicate with other government agencies, international partners, and local and national NGOs to ensure that information is shared and disseminated as widely as possible.

Early Warning Systems

Immediate information related to disasters is publicly available via the "117" emergency call center run by the Emergency Operations Division of the DMC.[386]

The national early warning system (EWS) comprises technical agencies responsible for hazard monitoring and analysis and for dissemination of information products and warnings. Per the national DM policy, the following agencies are responsible for monitoring and assessing specific hazards:

- DoM – meteorological and tsunami hazards
- NBRO – landslide hazards
- Geological Survey and Mines Bureau – seismic hazards
- Department of Coast Conservation / NARA – coastal and sea level hazards
- Department of Irrigation – river flooding
- Land Reclamation and Development Corporation – storm drainage and urban flooding
- Ministry of Health – health-related hazards[387]

All technical agencies disseminate early warning through the DMC's EOC, which is, in turn, responsible for issuing warning messages to the general public through Provincial Councils, Districts Divisions, Local Authorities, police and the military, local volunteers, and civil society partners. Moreover, there is a system for bottom-up citizen-centered approached for alerts and early warnings; it employs networks of local stakeholders – e.g., local government, private sector, SLRCS, NGOs, and civil society.[388] Figure 18 illustrates the process of activating the EWS and ensuring receipt of its messages.[389]

The DMC's responsibilities with relation to EWS are:

- Establish a reliable communication system (telephones, radio communication, etc.) from technical agencies to the EOC and to provincial and district control rooms directly or through the EOC, and ensure redundancy in this system
- Maintain and operate Early Warning Towers and other dissemination equipment
- Disseminate Early Warning Messages and ensure their receipt at remote vulnerable villages
- Establish with mass media a system to ensure dissemination of information through media outlets
- Create awareness among communities and agencies about the communication system and what immediate actions should be taken
- Coordinate donor assistance to strengthen capacity of technical agencies for early warning
- Develop strategy and policy for the entire EWS
- Initiate awareness on activities related to early

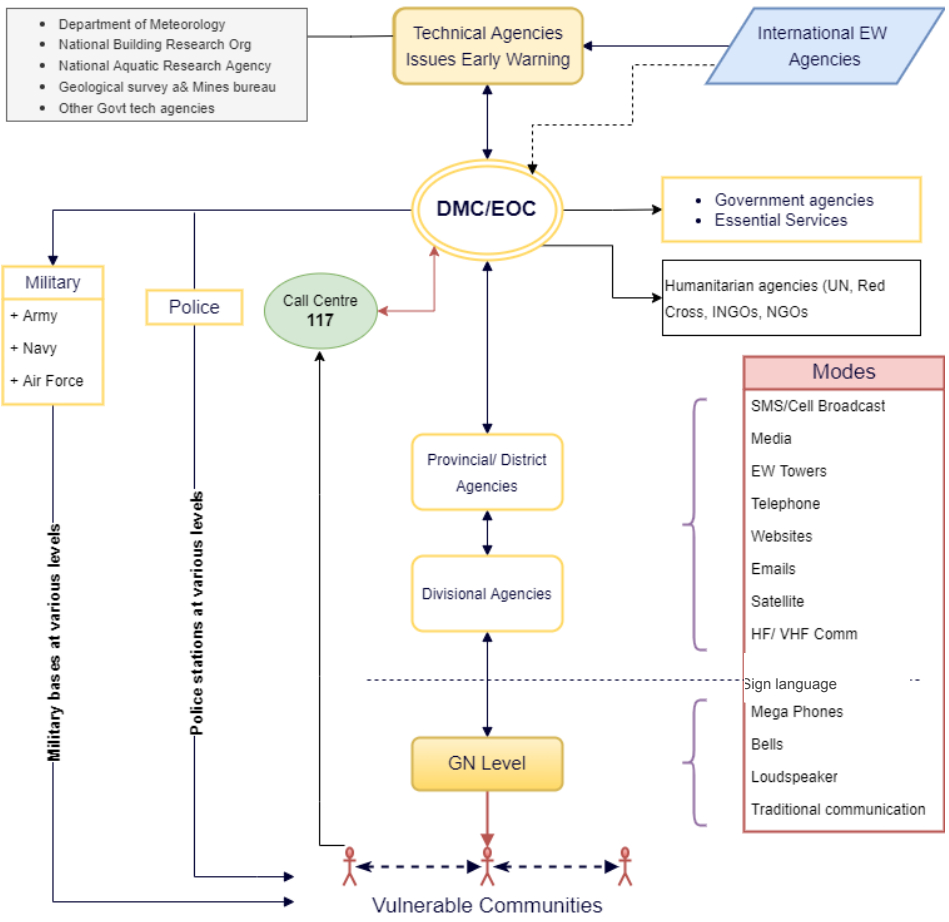


Figure 18: Dissemination of Early Warning Messages

warning among the various agencies and public
- Establish coordination with technical agencies responsible for forecasting different hazards
- Guide DDMCUs in coordinating and implementing warning dissemination.

Broadly, the EWS relies on police and military communication systems, satellite and radio (high- and very-high-frequency), 77 multi-hazard early warning towers, the mass media, and the normal telephone systems (fixed and mobile, SMS, etc.). Within villages, dissemination can use public address systems, police vehicles, church and temple bells, motorcycle messengers, and door-to-door knocking. In the final case, personnel recruited to go door-to-door may include local authority officials, police, members of faith-based and civil society organizations, military members, and volunteers.[390] The Disaster Early Warning Network (DEWN) is a data system that can provide early warning information to the public via text (SMS) and mobile apps. All local media outlets, the small and medium business community, and civil society are connected to the DEWN. The DMC, Telecommunication Commission, and Dialog, Mobitel, Hutch, and Airtel mobile telephone service providers have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to provide early warning notification to people living in an affected area.[391]

The EOC is directly linked to key automated early warning sources – i.e., the USGS, NBRO's Automated Rain Gauges, the DoM, Department of Irrigation, the Online Reservoirs System, Online River Status System, and local and international TV channels. The EOC uses the "Mobilize" data management system to integrate data and maps. The DMC and DDMCUs coordinate with the DoM and Geological Survey and Mines Bureau to utilize seismic activity data, which is delivered by the USGS.[392]

The DoM operates a national network of 42 automated agrometeorological stations to gather continual weather data, which is published in the weekly "agro-meteorological bulletin." Raw weather data as well as historic data can be accessed from these stations as well as Irrigation Department rain gauges, which collect further relevant weather data. The government issues cultivation advisories to farmers through key channels, such as toll-free advisory and notification services, as well as DMC and NBRO disaster information bulletins.[393]

The DMC is responsible for operating and coordinating tsunami early warnings. The EWS partly comprises a network of tsunami early warning towers within populated areas along the coast. In a 2020 drill – IOWAVE 20 – run by the Intergovernmental Coordination Group and Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS), it took more than 40 minutes for tsunami alerts to be issued and an additional 10 minutes for evacuation orders to be issued to various coastal provinces.[394] The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) IOTWMS also developed after the 2004 tsunami. Tsunami monitoring and warning services are provided by Australia, India, and Indonesia through the IOTWMS mechanism to support 36 Indian Ocean basin countries, which also share a unified Probabilistic Tsunami Hazard Assessment for the Indian Ocean. National and sub-national warning and response capabilities are also strengthened through this mechanism. The Tsunami Ready Programme, through a bottom-up approach, supports communities to adopt mitigation measures to cope with their tsunami risk.[395]

The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) was established through the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness, launched by multiple donors in 2005 in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami. As of 2023, RIMES, which is collectively owned and supported by 48 member and collaborating states, has become a regional EWS within a multi-hazard framework for generative and communicating early warning information and for developing regional capacity to prepare for

and respond to trans-boundary hazards. RIMES' analytical capacity rests on India's Ministry of Earth Sciences and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, and it delivers modeling, forecasting, and decision support tools to the national meteorological and hydrological services across its members.[396]

Information Sharing

Understanding how to overcome the information challenges that civilian and military agencies experience during a typical disaster response mission is important. Sharing information is critical since no single responding entity, NGO, international governmental organization, assisting country government, or the host government can be the source of all the required information.[397] Collaboration, information sharing, and networking have been the backbone of successful disaster response and preparation. Disseminating information not only to those in-country and threatened by disaster, but also to those responding to assist in the emergency has been crucial to timely, efficient, and effective disaster response. There are many resources, stakeholders, and components to consider before, during, and after a natural disaster. This section will discuss country-specific, humanitarian, regional, government, and U.S. DoD information sources.

Sri Lanka Information Sources

Disaster Management Centre

The DMC's website maintains information on operations and preparedness. There are links to various hazard and early warning partners and an index of publications – e.g., policies, plans, procedures.

Disaster Management Centre
120/2 Vidya Mawatha
Colombo, Sri Lanka
Call Center: 117
Tel: +94 112 136 136
EOC: +94 112 136 222 / +94 112 670 002
Fax: +94 11 2670079
E-mail: *eocdmc@gmail.com*
Web: *http://www.dmc.gov.lk/*
Facebook: DMC Srilanka
X: dmc_lk

Ministry of Environment

News and information related to the environment are available on the Ministry homepage.

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E-mail: *info@env.gov.lk*
Facebook: env.gov.lk
Instagram: ministry_of_environment_lk
X: Min_of_Env_SL

Climate Change Secretariat
Tel: +94 112034198
E-mail: *dircc@env.gov.lk*

DesInventar

The DMC's Mitigation, Research, and Development Division has had responsibility for updating the DesInventar database since 2008. The database contains information related to past disasters and is available to the public. The system is updated every fortnight with freshly-collected data.

Web: *www.desinventar.lk*

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society

The SLRCS is an auxiliary to the government for delivering humanitarian relief and disaster response. It provides operational updates and information on its homepage and social media channels.

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
Red Cross Tower
No. 106, Dharmapala Mawatha
Colombo 07, 00700 07
Tel: +9411 2691095 or +9411 5388710

E-mail: *info@redcross.lk*
Web: *https://www.redcross.lk/*
Facebook: srilankaredcross
X: @SLRedCross

Humanitarian Information Sources

UN OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

UN OCHA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific seeks to optimize the speed, volume, and quality of humanitarian assistance and coordinates emergency preparedness and response throughout the region in support of national governments. The Office covers 41 countries with whom it partners for coordinated and effective international responses to emergency situations.

Web: *https://www.unocha.org/roap*
For OCHA situation reports, click on "Subscribe" button on bottom of page.
X: OCHAAsiaPac

ReliefWeb

ReliefWeb is a service of UN OCHA that consolidates information and analysis from organizations, countries, and disasters for the humanitarian community.

A subsection of ReliefWeb is ReliefWeb Response (RW Response). It aggregates operational content from other humanitarian action platforms to provide an authoritative source of information. The goal is to ensure that humanitarians can share, find, and re-use critical information quickly and efficiently.

Web: *https://reliefweb.int/*
RW Response: *https://response.reliefweb.int/*

PreventionWeb

PreventionWeb is provided by UNDRR to consolidate disaster risk reduction information into an online, easy to understand platform.

Web: *https://www.preventionweb.net/*

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IFRC is the world's largest humanitarian organization, comprised of 191 National Societies, including SLRCS, a secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, and over 60 delegations around the world. The IFRC carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of the National Societies. IFRC's work focuses on four core areas: promoting humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health and community care.[398]

Web: *https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc*
and *https://go.ifrc.org/*

International Committee of the Red Cross

ICRC is an impartial, neutral, and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. It also works to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.[399] ICRC maintains an office in Sri Lanka.

Web: *https://www.icrc.org/en*
Facebook: @ICRC
X: @ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross
29, Layards Road
Colombo 05
Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 250 33 46

Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS)

GDACS is a cooperation framework among the UN, the European Commission, and disaster managers worldwide to improve alerts, information exchange, and coordination in the first phase after major sudden-onset disasters.

Web: *https://www.gdacs.org/alerts/*

Virtual OSOCC

The Virtual OSOCC is a real-time online coordination tool for disaster response professionals from urban SAR teams, national authorities, and regional and international organizations.

Web: *https://vosocc.unocha.org/*
The latest alerts can be found here: *https://www.gdacs.org/Alerts/default.aspx*
To subscribe: *https://www.gdacs.org/About/contactus.aspx*

ThinkHazard!

ThinkHazard! is a website that provides detailed information on a country. Information is provided on Sri Lanka regarding hazards, country assessments, projects, EWS, and other resources.

Web: *https://thinkhazard.org/en*

Humanitarian Country Team

The HCT is a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum established and led by the Humanitarian Coordinator in each country. It is generally comprised of representatives from UN agencies including the IOM, international NGOs, and the IFRC and the National Red Cross/Crescent Society. During a disaster response, HCTs often produce a Situation Report (SitRep), usually in conjunction with OCHA.

Most HCT SitReps can be found through ReliefWeb: *https://reliefweb.int/*

Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)

HDX is an open platform for sharing data across crises and organizations. Launched in 2014 with the goal of centralizing humanitarian data for easy access and analysis, HDX is managed by OCHA's Center for Humanitarian Data in The Hague.

Web: *https://data.humdata.org/*

U.S. Government Sources

U.S. Agency for International Development

USAID is committed to responding to crises around the world to help people and places most in need. They aim to:

- Promote Global Health
- Support Global Stability
- Provide Humanitarian Assistance
- Catalyze Innovation and Partnership
- Empower Women and Girls

USAID produces a monthly "USAID Newsletter," available digitally: *https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/newsletter*. More information and updates from USAID are available on Facebook (@USAID), Instagram (@uasid), X (@usaid), and YouTube (USaidVideo).

Web: *https://www.usaid.gov/*
Facebook: USAIDSriLankaMaldives
X: @USAIDSriLanka

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance

USAID/BHA is responsible for leading and coordinating the U.S. Government response to disasters overseas. BHA works with the international population to help countries prepare for, respond to, and recover from humanitarian crises. BHA responds to an average of 75 disasters in 70 countries every year. BHA fulfils its mandate of saving lives, alleviating human suffering, and reducing the social and economic impact of disasters worldwide in partnership with USAID functional and regional bureaus and other U.S. government agencies. The U.S. DoD only responds to international disasters when requested, in support of USAID.

USAID/BHA products include situation reports and maps, which are available via email mailing lists as well as ReliefWeb. Information products (Updates/Fact Sheets, etc.) are also available on USAID.gov (*https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance*)

Pacific Disaster Center

Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) has trademarked an early warning and decision support system called DisasterAWARE®. DisasterAWARE® is primarily for disaster management practitioners and senior decision makers. It supports DRR and best practices throughout all phases of disaster management from early warning to multi-hazard monitoring. It has a collection of scientifically verified, geospatial, data and modeling tools to assess hazard risks and impacts. A restricted version of DisasterAWARE is the EMOPS (Emergency Operations) system, which is specifically for the disaster management community, including government agencies and humanitarian assistance organizations serving at local, state, federal, and regional levels.[400]

PDC also provides a public version, Disaster Alert, which offers open access to a world map documenting 18 hazard types.[401] Disaster Alert also has a free, early-warning app to receive customizable, maps-based, visual alerts regarding active hazards. The app offers a global notification system covering natural and man-made hazards. It is available on both iPhone and Android.[402]

Web: *https://www.pdc.org/* and *https://www.pdc.org/disasteraware/*
Emergency Operations (EMOPS) system (request account): *https://disasteraware.pdc.org*

Joint Typhoon Warning Center

The Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) provides advanced warning for U.S. Government agencies and organizations.

Web: *https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html*

Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies

The Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI-APCSS) is a U.S. DoD institute that addresses regional and global security issues by inviting military and civilian representatives of the U.S. and Asia-Pacific nations to its program of executive education and workshops.

Web: *https://dkiapcss.edu/*

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance

The CFE-DM is a U.S. DoD organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1994 and is a direct reporting unit to USINDOPACOM. CFE-DM provides training and education to help U.S. and foreign military personnel navigate complex issues in disaster management and humanitarian assistance. They produce country focused disaster management reference handbooks, after action reports, best practices, and lessons learned for advancement in response coordination. CFE-DM also works to improve cross-coordination, reduce duplication of efforts, and promote U.S. involvement in civil-military consultations and dialogues with relevant humanitarian and disaster response parties such as UN OCHA and the Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre. CFE-DM provides resources and updates at its website, as well as via their Facebook (cfedmha) and X (@cfedmha) accounts.

Web: *https://www.cfe-dmha.org/*
Disaster Management Reference Handbooks are available for download at: *https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Disaster-Management-Reference-Handbooks*
Civil-Military Coordination in Foreign Disaster Relief Missions: Best Practices for Information Sharing is available here: *https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Best-Practices-Pamphlets*

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sri Lanka's southwestern region has well-developed physical infrastructure. Rural areas in the northern and eastern regions have lagged in the development of transport and telecommunications infrastructure due to the effects of the civil war and natural disasters. After the civil war ended in 2009, Sri Lanka's logistics and transport sector grew 40% in just the following six years. Since then, the logistics sector has been growing due to the country's location along key shipping routes; it accounted for approximately 2.5% of GDP in 2022 and provides full-time direct employment for more than 40,000 people.[403] Per 2023 estimates, approximately 70% of registered service providers in the national freight and logistics market are local companies, while the remainder are multinational enterprises.[404]

As climate change makes Sri Lanka susceptible to more extreme weather events, including flooding, infrastructure such as roads, bridges, power grids, and communication networks may be at higher risk of significant damage. This potential disruption risks stifling economic activity, resulting in lower output, supply chain disruptions, and lower consumer spending.

Transport

The transport sector plays an important role in the country's development and growth. Sri Lanka's strategic location on the shipping lane that transports two-thirds of the world's oil and half of global trade makes the country a significant hub for logistics and transport services, including transshipment between countries. Due in part to heavy reliance on fossil fuels, the transport sector generates almost 50% of Sri Lanka's total GHG emissions. Sri Lanka is considered a low GHG emitter globally, and the Government is committed to supporting the Paris Agreement goals and recognizes the importance of climate resilience for economic growth. Low-carbon and sustainable public transportation vehicles (e.g., electric buses) and infrastructure, conversion of three-wheelers to electric vehicles, and solar battery charging centers for public transportation are being considered. A light-rail transport system has been proposed to reduce public and private sector vehicle emissions and improve public transportation, although the project has not yet been implemented.[405]

Airports

The Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (CAASL) is the regulatory body responsible for overseeing and regulating civil aviation activities in Sri Lanka. Its mission is to facilitate through strategic planning and effective regulation, the operation of a safe, secure, efficient, regular, and environmentally friendly national civil aviation system that conforms to International Standards and Recommended Practices and national legislative requirements. In 2024, the Director General of Civil Aviation, Sagara Kotakadeniya (Retired Air Vice Marshal), became the Chair of the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Program – South Asia (COSCAP-SA) for a two-year term. COSCAP-SA was established in 1997 and is dedicated to advancing civil aviation safety in the region.[406]

There are a total of 22 airports in the country; five serve as international airports, and the remaining airports are primarily domestic. All international airports and key domestic airports are detailed in Table 2.[407]

Bandaranaike International Airport handles approximately 37,599 aircraft movements annually and an estimated 5,502,539 passengers each year. The total capacity of the airport is 250,000 metric tons (MT). Notably, it is also used for humanitarian flights by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), which is operated by the WFP. While the airport is not equipped with helipads, passengers and charter companies can land helicopters

Airport	Location	IATA/ ICAO Code	Elevation	Runway	Notes
Bandaranaike International Airport	Colombo (32.5 km/ 20 miles), Gampaha District, Western Province 7.181111 °N 79.883611 °E	CMB / VCBI	8 m (26 feet)	Length: 3,350 x 45 m (10,991 x 148 feet) Orientation: 04/22 Surface: Asphalt	Public/ Military use; Use by UNHAS for humanitarian flights
Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport	Hambantota (18 km/ 20 miles), Southern Province 6.291227 °N 81.122007 °E	HRI / VCRI	48 m (159 feet)	Length: 3,500 x 60 m (11,483 x 197 feet) Orientation: 05/23 Surface: Asphalt	Public use
Colombo International Airport, Ratmalana	Colombo (19 km/ 12 miles) Ratmalana District, Western Province 6.821223 °N 79.890295 °E	RML / VCCC	5 m (16 feet)	Length: 1,833 x 30 m (6,014 x 98 feet) Orientation: 04/22 Surface: Asphalt	Public/ Military use
Batticaloa International Airport	Batticaloa (2.4 km/ 1.5 miles), Eastern Province 7.706208 °N 81.681501 °E	BTC / VCCB	3 m (10 feet)	Length: 1,066 x 46 m (3,497 x 151 feet) Orientation: 06/24 Surface: Bitumen	Public/ Military use
Jaffna International Airport	Jaffna (16 km/ 10 miles), Northern Province 9.795141 °N 80.067562 °E	JAF / VCCJ	10 m (33 feet)	Length: 1,400 x 30 m (4,593 x 98 feet) Orientation: 05/23 Surface: Asphalt	Public/ Military use
Anuradhapura National Airport (domestic)	Anuradhapura (4.7 km/ 3 miles), North Central Province 8.303872 °N 80.429110 °E	ACJ / VCCA	99 m (325 feet)	Length: 1630 x 46 m (5,348 x 151 feet) Orientation: 05/23 Surface: Bitumen	Public/ Military use; Managed by SLAF
China Bay National Airport, also known as Trincomalee Airport (domestic)	Trincomalee (7 km/ 4.3 miles), Eastern Province 8.545674 °N 81.189271 °E	TRR / VCCT	2.13 m (7 feet)	Length: 2,397 m (7,864 feet) Orientation: 06/24 Surface: Asphalt	Public/ Military use; Managed by SLAF
Ampara Airport, also known as Gal-Oya Airport (national/domestic)	Ampara (8.1 km/ 5 miles), Eastern Province 7.3355 °N 81.62217 °E	ADP / VCCG	46 m (151 feet)	Length: 1,097 x 46 m (3,599 x 151 feet) Surface: Bitumen	Public/ Military use; Managed by SLAF
Koggala Airport (national/domestic)	Galle (14 km/ 8.7 miles), Southern Province 5.993889 °N 80.320556 °E	KCT / VCCK	3 m (10 feet)	Length: 958 x 43 m (3,143 x 141 feet) Orientation: 07/25 Surface: Asphalt	Public/ Military use; Managed by SLAF

Table 2: Codes and Runway Lengths for Sri Lanka's Main Airports

with approval through helicopter marshalling signals. Additionally, helipads are available at the adjacent military base. The largest aircraft that can be offloaded on bulk cargo or pallet are Antonov, Boeing 747, and Airbus 380. There are a total of 29 aircraft parking spaces. Storage areas include warehouses covering a combined area of 8,690.8 m^2 (93,550 square feet) in Terminals I, II, and III, as well as 377 m^3 (13,300 cubic feet) of freezer and cold room storage in the Imports Terminal. Handling equipment includes elevators/hi loaders and loading ramps.

Mattala Rajapaksha International Airport is the first greenfield airport in Sri Lanka. Due to low demand, it currently serves as an aircraft parking facility and aviation training center. It is not currently used for humanitarian flights, but the airport's underutilized status could serve as an advantageous resource in emergency situations. The airport has an estimated capacity

of 25,767 passengers and 50,000 MT of cargo. Helicopter operations are allowed at the airport, though there are no designated locations for parking helicopters. Engine ground running with rotors turning is not permitted within 200 m (656 feet) of other aircraft, motor vehicles, or buildings. Ground and air taxiing of helicopters must be done using the existing taxiway system with the permission of air traffic control. The largest aircraft that can be offloaded on bulk cargo or pallet are Antonov, Boeing 747, and Airbus 380. Total aircraft parking area covers 73,500 m² (791,150 square feet).

Colombo International Airport was the country's first international airport. It handles approximately 236,387 aircraft movements, an estimated 2,336,897 passengers, and 1,256 MT of cargo annually. A helicopter landing area is available.

Batticaloa International Airport serves as the international airport for eastern Sri Lanka. It reopened for civil operations in 2018, as it had previously been limited to military use and operated by the SLAF during the civil war. There is no refueling capacity. There is no designated area for parking helicopters.

Jaffna International Airport was officially opened in October 2019. The airport was originally built by Britain's Royal Air Force during World War II and was later used by the SLAF. There is no refueling capacity. Helicopter operations are allowed at the airport, though there are no designated locations for parking helicopters. Engine ground running with rotors turning is not permitted within 200 m (656 feet) of other aircraft, motor vehicles, or buildings. Ground and air taxiing of helicopters should be done using the existing taxiway system.

Anuradhapura National Airport is a domestic airport used for both military and civil aviation purposes. It is not a major commercial airport and operates on a smaller scale relative to the country's international airports. There is no refueling capacity.

China Bay National Airport, also known as Trincomalee Airport and SLAF China Bay, is a domestic airport that serves military and civil aviation purposes, and it is used as a training academy. It is not a major commercial airport and operates on a smaller scale relative to the country's international airports. There is no refueling capacity.

Ampara National Airport, also known as Gal-Oya airport, is a domestic airport used for both military and civil aviation purposes. It is not a major commercial airport and operates on a smaller scale relative to the country's international airports. There is no refueling capacity.

Koggala Airport is a domestic airport used for both military and civil aviation purposes. It is not a major commercial airport and operates on a smaller scale relative to the country's international airports. There is no refueling capacity.

In 2024, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Aviation declared that the Government has a goal of operating Hingurakgoda, Mattala, Katunayake, Ratmalana, and Palali airports as civil airports.

Hingurakgoda Domestic Airport (also known as Minneriya airport) is slated for upgrades to facilitate international flight operations. Due to its central location in Polonnaruwa District, North Central Province, the facility is part of the Government's plans to bolster the economy. The Government's 2023 and 2024 budgets included Rs 2 billion (US$6.65 million) each year to commence initial construction and development activities. The total estimated cost is Rs 17 billion (US$56.5 million), and Hingurakgoda local authorities work annually to provide funds from the budget for airport construction. The national Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Aviation conducted a special inspection at the airport on 4 April 2024 to assess challenges and conduct a feasibility study to guide the airport's development. The first phase of development will focus on extending the runway's length from 2,287 m (7,503 feet) to 2,500 m (8,202 feet). The Ministry emphasizes that upon completion of these enhancements, the runway will be capable of accommodating Airbus 320 and Boeing 737 aircraft. Hingurakgoda Domestic Airport was originally constructed for Britain's Royal Air

Force during World War II and was known at that time as RAF Minneriya.[408]

The main airlines operating within Sri Lanka include Sri Lankan Airlines, Cinnamon Air, and FitsAir. Sri Lankan Airlines is the national carrier offering full-service flights domestically and internationally. Cinnamon Air operates domestic flights from a dedicated terminal at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo. Fits Air, formerly known as ExpoAir, primarily flies domestic passenger and international cargo flights. Additionally, Helitours was the commercial air arm of the SLAF; it offered fixed and rotary wing flights until they were suspended in 2018,[409] and it remains suspended as of August 2024.[410] Colombo is directly connected by international passenger flights via Sri Lankan Airlines[411] or AirAsia[412] to Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, UK, and Vietnam.

Figure 19 shows the busiest domestic routes, as sourced from Cinnamon Air.[413]

Seaports

Sri Lanka is a key player in global maritime trade due to its proximity to some of the world's busiest shipping routes. The country's ports and maritime sector is overseen by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA), which was established in 1979 by merging Colombo Port Commission Department and two statutory corporations.[414] Sri Lanka has a well-developed port network that plays a critical role in the country's industries and economy. There are six major seaports, which are detailed in Table 3,[415] in which the "port code" refers to the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE).[416]

Colombo Port is the largest seaport in Sri Lanka. It is a rapidly growing maritime hub for South Asia and ranks among the top 25 ports globally. It is primarily a container port and connects cargo between Europe, East and South Asia, the Persian Gulf, and East Africa. It also serves as the primary hub for most of the cargo destined for Malé, Maldives. The port has an annual handling capacity of approximately 7 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) and processed 7.25 million TEUs in 2021 and 6.86 million TEUs in 2022. The port has five major terminal facilities — Jaya Container Terminal (JCT), East Container Terminal (ECT), South Asia Gateway Terminal, Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT), and



Figure 19: Sri Lanka Domestic Flights by Cinnamon Air

Seaport	Location	Nearest Location	Port Code
Colombo Port	Colombo town (5 km/ 3 miles) 6.939561 °N 79.846080 °E	Bandaranaike International Airport	LKCMB
Hambantota International Port (HIP)	Hambantota (9.7 km/6.0 miles), Southern Province 6.122077 °N 81.105620 °E	Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport	LKHBA
Trincomalee Port	Trincomalee (7.2 km/ 4.5 miles) 8.545642 °N 81.222900 °E	Batticaloa International Airport	LKTRR
Galle Port	Galle (3.7 km/ 2.3 miles) 6.034294 °N 80.231886 °E	Bandaranaike International Airport	LKGAL
Kankesanthurai Port	Jaffna (20 km/ 12 miles) Northern Province 9.818889 °N 80.0325 °E	Jaffna International Airport	LKKNK
Oluvil Port	Palamunai (2.5 km/ 1.6 miles) Ampara District, Eastern Province 7.275 °N 81.866667 °E	Batticaloa International Airport	LKOLU

Table 3: Details of Major Sri Lankan Ports

Unity Container Terminal — and a conventional berth operated by private or government operators. CICT is a joint venture company of China Merchants Holding (International) Co. Ltd and SLPA.[417] The West Container Terminal (WCT) is under construction as of the writing of this handbook. In 2008, Colombo Port's South Harbor area (285 hectares) was developed to accommodate deep water berths and the latest generation of mainline vessels or "mother ships," and it is served by a two-way channel with an initial depth of 20 m (65 feet) and a width of 570 m (1,870 feet).

Hambantota International Port is Sri Lanka's second largest port. Inaugurated in 2010, it is a diversified deep-water, multi-purpose port.[418] The port can handle up to 300,000 TEUs of containers, 2.5 million tons of bulk cargo, 3 million tons of breakbulk shipments, and 600,000 units of roll-on/roll-off (RO-RO) operations. The international port is envisioned to become a regional transshipment hub and logistics hub for cargo consolidation. It has a deepwater draft of 17 m (56 feet), enabling it to handle large vessels and multipurpose cargo. The port possesses the essential infrastructure, equipment, and workforce to manage bulk, breakbulk, and project cargo. There is also a dedicated berth for cruise vessels.

Trincomalee Port is the world's fifth largest natural harbor. SLPA is currently redeveloping the port as a metropolitan growth center. Trincomalee harbor has approximately 10 times the available water and land area as Colombo Port. Trincomalee was tentatively identified to cater for bulk and break-bulk cargo and port-related industrial activities including heavy industries, tourism, and agriculture. SLPA has completed the zoning plan to utilize a large amount of existing but un- or under-utilized land.[419]

Galle Port, on the southwestern coast, is the country's oldest port and one of the most active regional ports in the country. It is the only Sri Lankan port that provides facilities for pleasure yachts, and international yacht societies have recognized Galle harbor as one of the world's best attractions for yachting. Galle harbor is a major natural harbor and served as Sri Lanka's most important harbor for centuries in the colonial era. It became a secondary port after the British colonial government constructed breakwaters in the Colombo Harbor in the late 19th century and much international marine traffic shifted to Colombo. The port has limited depth and is not able to handle large vessels.[420]

Kankesanthurai Port serves as both a navy and a commercial port. It is under full control

of the SLN and operates as a high-security area. Since the end of the civil war, the harbor area has been cleared of sunken warships, clearing access to the docking terminal. The port has the capacity to accommodate ships weighting from 10,000 to 15,000 MT. The port is the closest in Sri Lanka to eastern India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. A port improvement project aims to increase functionality and boost economic growth in the region by repairing existing breakwaters, piers, and roads, as well as dredging, removing wrecks, and constructing a new pier. A high-speed passenger ferry between Sri Lanka and India launched in October 2023, between Kankesanthurai and Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu.[421] One intra-district ferry is available for passenger service, following a fixed route. Within the district, three to four cargo ferries are operational and available for hire for the transportation of goods with routes that can be adjusted upon request.[422]

Oluvil Port is a commercial and fishery harbor that officially opened in September 2013. The port's establishment is a key part of the government's plan to stimulate economic development in the eastern region.[423]

Roads

Sri Lanka's well-established road network, centered around Colombo, serves as the primary mode of transportation within the country. The comprehensive network extends throughout the entire island and handles over 90% of freight and passenger traffic. The majority of roads are under the purview of the Sri Lanka Road Development Authority (RDA), the national organization responsible for the development and maintenance of the road sector. A small portion of roads fall under provincial control. Following the end of the civil war in 2009, road development accelerated, including the nationalization of new expressways and construction of several overhead bridges. Substantial challenges remain in meeting the increasing demand for roads. Expansion projects are underway as most existing roads are aging and carry higher traffic volumes than originally anticipated.

Sri Lanka has over 115,873 km (72,000 miles) of roads, and about 26% of them are paved. While urban areas are increasingly connected by paved roads and expressways, rural areas typically just have unpaved 1-lane roads that are often impassible during monsoon rains. The new Southern Expressway (E01) connects Colombo and Matara, with additional expressways (E04, E06) under construction in the southwestern region. After the civil war, Sri Lanka reopened highways connecting Jaffna and Batticaloa in the north and east to the southwest, and there was work to repair damaged roads in the northeast.[424]

There are three categories of national highways: E, A, and B. Class "E" roads are toll expressways, which are primarily located in the southern and central regions. Speed limits on these expressways range from 80 to 110 km per hour (50 to 68 miles per hour) and prohibit pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, three-wheelers, and tractors. Class "A" roads are arteries or long-distance routes connecting major cities and towns. Class "B" roads channel traffic from residential areas, industrial zones, and town centers onto Class "A" Roads and facilitate the connection between administrative districts and provincial cities. Additionally, there are Class "C" roads that serve local neighborhoods.

Road safety is a significant concern, as Sri Lanka averages 38,000 vehicular crashes annually; the toll is 3,000 deaths and 8,000 serious injuries every year. The rainy season makes roads potentially more hazardous and susceptible to blockages when affected by floods and landslides. To address the issue, the government has established the National Road Safety Commission, set up a national road crash database, and worked to improve infrastructure.[425]

Railways

Sri Lanka has about 1,561 km (970 miles) of railways, with reconstruction efforts continuing to upgrade the aging infrastructure and expand the network. Railways connect all major urban areas, with commuter trains serving the greater

Colombo metro area. Some railway lines date from the British colonial era, but newer and more efficient lines connect Colombo to Jaffna and Mannar. Most service is slow, though new construction and restoration projects have improved efficiency in recent years.

Sri Lanka Railways (SLR) is a department under the Ministry of Transport and is the only rail transport organization in the country. While initially providing more freight than passenger services, today SLR is more passenger-oriented, partially reflecting the extent to which goods are transported within the country by road. In 2020, state-owned SLR and two private railway companies served 65.1 million passengers, a decrease from 96 million in 2011.[426] As of 2023, SLR operated approximately 396 trains, including 67 long-distance and 16 inter-city trains, carrying approximately 3.72 million passengers daily.[427]

The SLR Network's Colombo Suburban Region includes railway lines from Colombo to Rambukkana (85 km/ 53 miles) on the Main Line, Colombo to Panadura (45 km/ 28 miles) on the Coastal Line, Colombo to Avissawella (65 km/ 40 miles) on the Kelani Valley Line, and Ragama to Negambo (30 km/ 19 miles) on the Puttalam Line. The Colombo Suburban Railway Project was initiated under the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation in 2016 and funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).[428] Additionally, the ADB issued a loan for US$160 million for the Railway Efficiency Improvement Project that started in September 2019 to modernize SLR's operations by improving maintenance, safety, skills development, and technical capacity, including a multichannel ticketing system and state-of-the-art telecommunications system. The project will also finance a new operations headquarters and train control center, provide infrastructure and equipment for the maintenance of track and rolling stock, improve railway safety, and upgrade the technical training center.[429] The project progress was summarized at 15% by the end of 2022 with a planned implementation period through June 2025.[430]

Figure 20 shows the SLR network, sourced from the Logistics Capacity Assessment by WFP and the Logistics Cluster.[431]

Waterways

Sri Lanka has around 160 km (100 miles) of inland waterways, primarily on rivers in the southwest, as well as 980 km^2 (378 square miles) of inland water bodies.[432] There are 16 rivers longer than 100 km (62 miles) in length, with 12 of them carrying about 75% of the mean river discharge in the entire country. These major rivers are located primarily in the southwestern region and flow in a radial pattern from the central highlands toward the sea.[433] The longest rivers are the Mahaweli Ganga (335 km; 208 miles) and the Aruvi Aru (170 km; 106 miles). In the highlands, river courses are frequently broken up by waterfalls and rapids. Rivers slow down across plains and deltas. Several hundred kilometers of canals, most of which were built by the Dutch in the 18th century, link inland waterways in the southwestern part of Sri Lanka.[434] The country's extensive network of inland waterways irrigate crops and support hydropower generation. They are not heavily utilized to transport passengers and goods, partially due to significant fluctuations in water levels in the mountainous inland region. Additionally, rough seas and currents raise challenges for transport between peripheral areas surrounding the island. In 2018, a project was approved to maintain an inland water transport service, with initial waterway transport focusing on services from Battaramulla to Wellawatta, from Fort to Union Place via Beira Lake, and from Mattakkuliya to Hanwella.[435]

The Integrated Watershed and Water Resources Management Project (IWWRMP) runs 2020-2025 under the Ministry of Irrigation, funded by the World Bank and the Government. The project aims to improve watershed and water resources planning and improve water resources infrastructure, with a total cost of US$75.03 million. The first component focuses on the upper Mahaweli watershed, covering watershed management planning and restoration and multi-sector water resources planning. The second

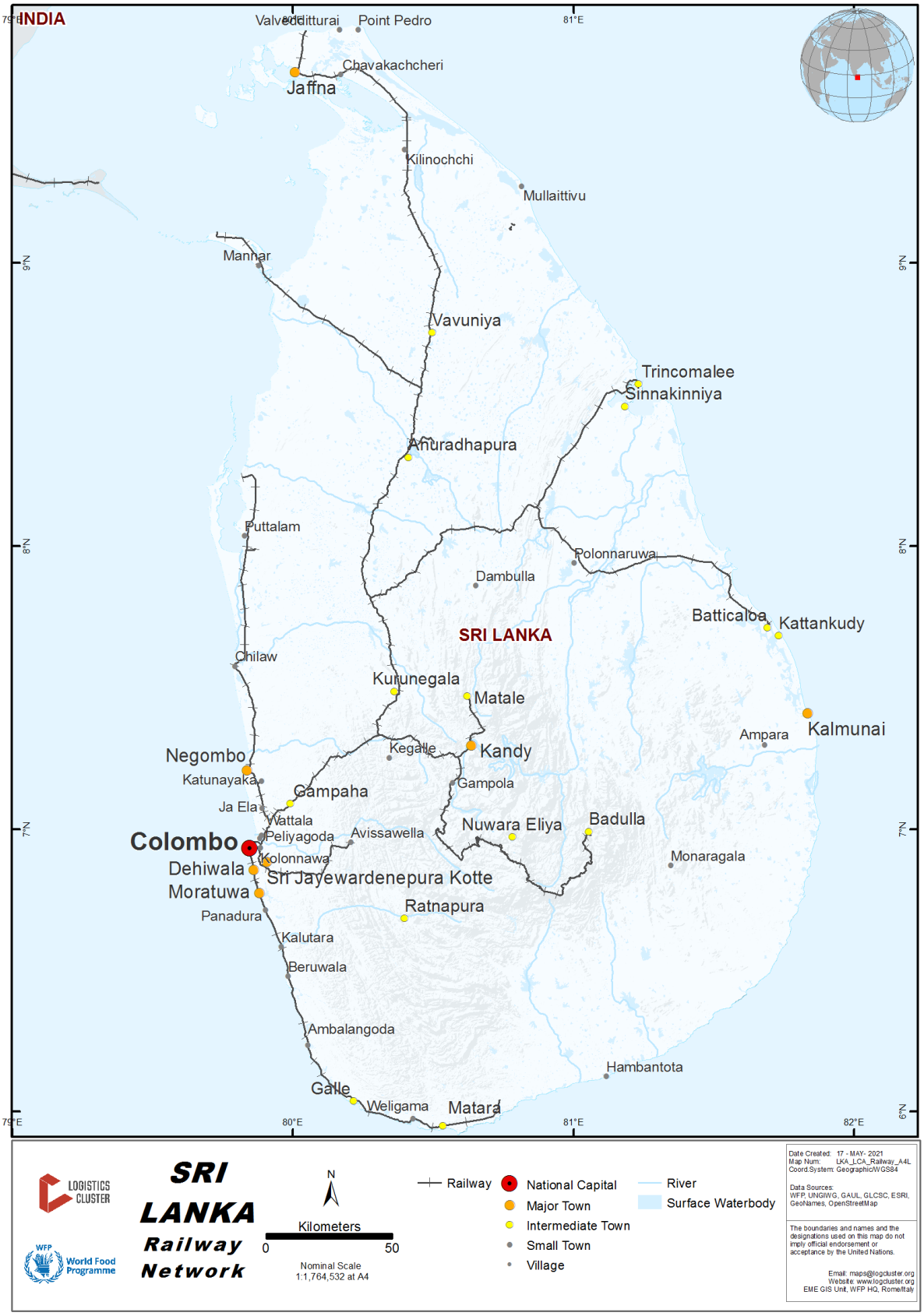


Figure 20: Sri Lanka Railway Network (Source: WFP)

component covers infrastructure improvements across 36 dams and 19 canal systems.[436] The third and fourth components address contingent emergency response and project management, respectively.[437] The project is expected to help lessen longer-term economic impacts of climate change and improve agricultural production and livelihoods.[438]

Schools

The Ministry of Education (MoE) funds, sets policies for, and manages the general education system at the national level, in coordination with nine provincial ministries and departments of education. The National Institute of Education (NIE) establishes the curriculum, the Department of Publications produces school textbooks, and the Department of Examinations conducts public examinations. Provincial ministries and departments of education recruit and pay teachers.

The educational system is organized around four stages:

- Primary, Grades 1–5 (ages 5-9+ years)
- Junior Secondary, Grades 6–9 (ages 10-13+ years)
- Senior Secondary, Grades 10–11 (ages 14-15+ years)
- Collegiate, Grades 12–13 (ages 16-17+ years)

Education is compulsory up to Grade 11 and is free up to Grade 13. Sri Lanka has high rates of participation and gender parity in primary and secondary education in comparison with other lower middle-income countries. The 2017 net enrollment rate was 99% for primary education, 84% for junior secondary education, and 70% for senior secondary and collegiate education. The net enrollment rates are 99% for girls and 98% for boys in primary education and 85% for girls and 84% for boys in junior secondary education.[439] There are more than 10,000 government schools and 93 private, special, or piriven (temple or religious) schools in the country. Among the government schools, 62% instruct in the Sinhala language only, 30% instruct in the Tamil language only, and the remainder use a combination of language mediums with bilingual options starting in Grade 6.[440] Figure 21 depicts the number of students, by grade and sex, in government schools as of 2021, per the MoE.[441]

Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector

Natural hazards pose an ongoing risk to the education sector. Historically, disasters have damaged or destroyed school infrastructure and disrupted classes and attendance. The MoE is concerned about a wide range of hazards, which may impact schools and school children; these hazards include fires, storms, floods, earthquakes, tsunami, and anthropogenic hazards, such as bomb threats. Disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and historically endemic diseases such as dengue fever have also impacted schools and schoolchildren. Psychosocial distress from both sudden- and slow-onset disasters, public health issues arising from natural hazards, and climate change are also factors impacting schooling in Sri Lanka. The

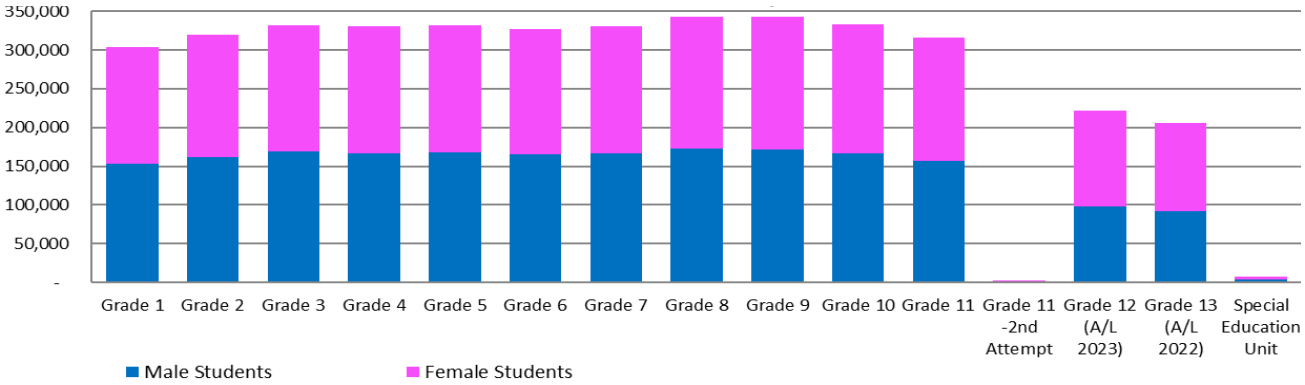


Figure 21: Sri Lanka Students in Government Schools, by Grade and Sex, in 2021

devastating 2004 Indian Ocean "Boxing Day" tsunami was a watershed event, which altered the country's approach to dealing with natural hazards, including in schools.

Because of the natural hazard and disease threat to education, Sri Lanka's curriculum includes hazard and disaster education through all levels of schooling. Relevant classes are taught at the primary level (Grades 1- 5) through "environmental studies" and at the secondary level (Grades 6 – 13) through courses on geography, science, citizenship education, and technical skills.[442] For teachers, the National Colleges of Education have been teaching disaster safety to instructors since 2008, when a new syllabus on disaster safety was introduced; it consisted of five modules that instructors could communicate to students and covered disaster risk management, mitigation, and relief; disaster safety at schools; practical drills and exercises; post-disaster counseling; and post-disaster health care.[443] The effects of climate change have also been taught in schools through various educational programs and initiatives. A 2021 study by UNICEF reports that climate change related topics are also being included in the curriculum at the secondary school level in subjects such as science, geography, agriculture, civics, and health. The MoE, NIE, and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) partnered to teach the Climate Change Awareness Raising Project (2012-2014) to over 200 schools across the country. However, in the intervening years, the incorporation of climate change education in the schools has been lacking. Additionally, the impacts of climate change on the educational system itself have yet to be quantified, according to the UNICEF study.[444]

The National Policy on Disaster Management (2013) and the National Disaster Management Plan 2013-2017 outlined embedding DM and risk awareness education in school curricula. In 2019, the MoE developed a 5-year plan (2019-2023) for developing a comprehensive program on school safety and education in emergencies in line with the global framework on Comprehensive School Safety.[445]

Tsunami is a major natural hazard to which the country is exposed, and there is major concern for schools located along the island's coastline. An estimated one-third of Sri Lankan victims of the 2004, Indian Ocean tsunami were children. The tsunami destroyed 74 schools and severely damaged another 108, affecting around 5% of the country's schools, while another 287 schools were utilized as shelters for people displaced by the tsunami. Some 80,350 students and 3,300 teachers were displaced from their homes across 10 districts. After the tsunami, the MoE sought to reduce tsunami risk for schools; it mandated a 100-m (328-foot) setback from the coast in most areas and a 300-m (984-foot) setback in the North and East. However, this attempt reportedly largely failed due to cost, land procurement, and need to build back swiftly, and the buffer zone was moved back. A 2022 study found that established architectural designs were used to speed up the approval process for reconstructed schools, and, thus, most schools were rebuilt in the same locations, with the same type of construction, and without additional resilience measures. The same study found that schools were heavily reliant on tsunami early warning towers but that only half of the 430 schools exposed to tsunami are within audible range of a tower. Additionally, few or no fire drills or tsunami evacuation plans or drills are conducted.[446]

Other natural hazards pose a threat to school infrastructure and education. A 2021 UNICEF report noted an NBRO analysis of multi-hazard exposure; this analysis found that schools continue to operate in areas of high landslide risk despite recommendations regarding urgent relocation of schools. Lack of finances is one of the main reasons why those schools are not relocated.[447]

As another result of the 2004 tsunami, there have been several projects that promote disaster education and risk reduction in schools. "Education for Social Cohesion and Disaster Risk Management/Psycho-social Care" was jointly carried out by the MoE, NIE, and GTZ in Northeast Province. A second

mission was part of a School Disaster Safety pilot program which consisted of four missions by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) in Sri Lanka conducted in 2007 and 2008.[448] More recently, since 2017, Sri Lanka and 17 other countries at risk for tsunami have participated in "Partnerships for Strengthening School Preparedness for Tsunamis in the Asia Pacific Region," also popularly known as the "Tsunami Project." The project is supported by the Government of Japan and UNDP. The project aims to lessen the impacts of tsunamis by strengthening school preparedness across the Asia-Pacific region.[449] For example, in Sri Lanka in 2018, tsunami drills were kicked off in Galle to help raise awareness of tsunami risks. It was conducted by UNDP, MoE, the then Ministry of Disaster Management, SLN, SLRCS, and school development societies. The drills and tsunami awareness education were held in five schools affected by the 2004 disaster. The project is meant to guide schools to perform hazard assessments, design emergency plans, organize emergency drills to test and evaluate the operational and decision-making readiness of schools, and test disaster management plans in case of a tsunami. The exercise also allows the identification of safe locations.[450]

Guidelines to promote disaster safety and education in schools have also been developed. In 2008, the MoE and NIE, in partnership with GTZ and the support of the ADPC, worked together again to create the "National Guidelines for School Disaster Safety," which outline seven steps in school safety planning, including identification of hazards and resources, establishing and training a school disaster safety team, the creation of a school safety plan, and holding drills.[451] The guidelines address various hazards, including fires, lightning and thunderstorms, cyclones and floods, earthquakes, tsunami, and bomb threats, and they provide preparedness and safety tips and outline specific drills for each hazard.[452] The MoE has recently worked on updating the 2008 guidelines as the new National Comprehensive School Safety Guidelines. According to UNICEF, the new guidelines will consider the impacts of climate change and slow-onset disasters such as drought.[453]

Other Sri Lankan ministries aside from the MoE have worked towards promoting DRR education to children. From 2015, the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs in partnership with UNICEF implemented the Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction (CC-DRR) Programme. The program aims to enhance skills and knowledge on disaster preparedness to Children's Clubs members so that they can share their knowledge and experiences at the village and community level.[454] NGOs such as Save the Children have augmented DRR teaching, executing projects such as "DRR and School Safety in Eastern Sri Lanka" in 2014-2015. Additionally, in a consortium with Oxfam, Handicap International, and ACTED, the DIPECHO 8 project in northern Sri Lanka aimed to link and integrate DRR education with government programs and to bridge the gap between the MoE and then Ministry of Disaster Management.[455] Other organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management Sri Lanka (APAD – SL), have also supplemented DRR and preparedness education in some schools under the Safe Schools initiative, which is a globally recognized DRR and management initiative that aims to equip schools with the necessary knowledge and skills for disaster preparedness, DRR, and disaster mitigation.[456] In 2022, APAD-SL conducted Safe School training for students from Southern, Uva, and Eastern provinces in consultation with education authorities. The training included education on thunder and lightning, floods, and heat events.[457] APAD-SL has also provided educational material such as "A Hand Guide to School Safety and Security: Guidelines for Safer Schools in Sri Lanka" for schoolchildren; the Guide covers natural and anthropogenic threats and aims to provide an efficient system for evaluating, planning, and implementing school safety and security."[458]

Disease outbreaks impact schools and schoolchildren. In a 2023 dengue outbreak,

classes were interrupted after affected schools required interior and exterior cleaning to remove debris, while mosquito breeding areas were identified to help prevent the spread of dengue. As part of the campaign, schools received information, education, and communication materials and students were briefed about dengue. Public Health Inspectors from the Ministry of Health district offices conducted awareness sessions. These educational briefings aimed to encourage children to practice good waste management practices at home as well as at school.[459] More intensely, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the educational system, with some 4.2 million students and 235,000 teachers impacted. School closures affected more than 10,000 schools, 736 piriven, and over 100 private schools across the country.[460] All government schools closed from 13 March to June 2020. In July 2020, some grades were able to resume schooling, but educational activities were disrupted from outbreaks across the country. Some schools in the Western Province were closed for a large part of 2020.[461] The closing of schools in the country for just one day causes a loss of about 25 million learning hours and 1.4 million teaching hours, according to a report by the UN.[462]

Communications

The Sri Lanka Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC), established in 1996, regulates telecommunications usage and maintains market competition. It processes applications for licenses to operate telecommunications systems, use radio frequencies and equipment, and operate a private network. In addition to monitoring and ensuring compliance, it formulates pricing policies and provides information to the public on telecommunication services.[463]

The information and communication sector is a critical part of Sri Lanka's economy. In an effort to overcome data silos and fragmentation in ICT and the government's data ecosystem, in 2020 the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) was tasked with the overall management and supervision of digital solutions in government agencies in accordance with the National Digital Policy. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, the information and communication sector had robust growth of 13.7%, driven by demand as employees started to work from home and new ICT requirements emerged. That momentum continued into 2021 with 17% growth for the sector. The ICTA's collaborative efforts significantly enabled the government's continuous operations during the period of pandemic-induced movement restrictions.[464]

The major UN agencies working in Sri Lanka — UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, OCHA, WHO, FAO, and UNHCR — use very-high and high frequencies (VHF and HF). As of May 2023, they do not use very small aperture terminal (VSAT) data transmission.[465]

Telephones

As of 2023, the TRC reported a total of 3,428,893 fixed access (landline) telephone subscriptions, voice or data, in Sri Lanka. Noting a 2023 mid-year population estimate of 22.037 million people, the TRC assesses the fixed access telephone teledensity rate at almost 16%. The TRC reported in 2024 a total of 29,004,516 cellular mobile telephone subscriptions, voice or data, for a cellular mobile teledensity rate of over 131%.[466]

Network coverage is provided by both government and private companies. There are five fixed broadband service providers — Sri Lanka Telecom, Mobitel, Dialog, Lankabell, and Airtel. Three of these companies – Dialog, Mobitel, and Airtel – also deliver mobile broadband service; they are joined by a fourth company — Hutch. The telecommunication network coverage is generally good, and SIM cards are readily available. Sri Lanka's country dialing code is 94.

Internet Access

Per 2023 data, 72.3 per 100 people had active mobile broadband subscriptions. Approximately 99.5% of the population has at least 2G mobile

network coverage, and 97% has at least 3G or LTE/WiMAX network coverage. Mobile-broadband Internet traffic within the country averages 79.6 gigabytes (GB) per subscription. An estimated 50.1% of individuals used the internet in 2022. Per 2021 data, among individuals using the internet, approximately 41.4% were women or girls and 47.9% were men or boys. Fixed-broadband internet basket prices in 2023 averaged 0.78% gross national income (GNI) per capita, and mobile data and voice low-consumption basket prices averaged 0.33% GNI per capita.[467] The prices of various mobile or broadband baskets are a measure of affordability. The world affordability targets are 2% GNI for the fixed-broadband basket and 1.4% GNI for the mobile data and voice low-consumption; Sri Lankan prices are well under those targets. Not only is this considered affordable by global targets, but Sri Lankan prices are well under the average internet prices of other low- and middle-income countries.[468] Internet services are provided countrywide by five internet service providers (ISP). The main companies providing mobile broadband facilities are Sri Lanka Telecom, Mobitel, Dialog, Lankabell, and Airtel.

Mass Media

Sri Lanka's constitution protects freedom of speech and of the press, but the protection of journalists is not guaranteed. Violent crimes committed against journalists who opposed the civil war have gone unpunished. In March 2016, the government ordered all news websites to join a registry, a demand that provoked fears of increased government control of the media.[469] According to the 2024 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Sri Lanka ranks 150th out of 180 countries in press freedom.[470]

The BBC provides the following summary of newspapers, television broadcasters, radio broadcasters and internet news agencies in or pertaining to Sri Lanka.

Major newspapers include:

- Daily News - state-owned, English-language daily
- The Island - private, English-language daily
- Daily Mirror - private, English-language daily
- Dinamina - state-owned, Sinhala daily
- Lankadeepa - private, Sinhala daily
- Uthayan - private, Jaffna-based Tamil-language daily
- Virakesari - private, Tamil-language daily

Television broadcasters include:

- Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC) - state-owned, operates Rupavahini in Sinhala, Channel Eye in English, and Nethra in Tamil
- Independent Television Network (ITN) - state-run, Sri Lanka's first TV station
- TV Derana - private
- Hiru TV - private
- Sirasa TV - private
- TNL - private
- ART TV - private
- Swarnavahini - private
- Shakthi TV – private

Radio broadcasters include:

- Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) - state-owned, operates domestic services in Sinhala, Tamil, and English, including widely-listened-to Commercial Service
- FM Derana - private
- Hiru FM - private
- TNL Radio - private
- Sun FM - private
- Yes FM - private
- Sirasa FM - private
- Sooriyan FM - private
- Shakthi FM – private

Internet news agencies include:

- Lankapuvath - state-owned
- Roar Media - news, multimedia
- TamilNet– U.S.-based Tamil news site, widely described as pro-LTTE[471]

Post

Sri Lanka Post is the national postal service provider. It has a total of 4,692 post offices throughout the country and employs

more than 17,000 employees. Sri Lanka Post offers a range of domestic and international mailing options, including regular mail, registered mail, and express mail, as well as local courier services.[472] Post offices hours are usually 8:30am-5:00pm Monday to Friday and 8:30am-1:00pm on Saturday, but hours may vary.[473]

Utilities

The Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) is the regulatory authority for electricity and water services. However, only the PUCSL's regulatory authority for electricity has been codified in law. Thus, the PUCSL works as the regulator for electric power even as the Ministry of Power and Energy is the strategic and implementing authority.[474] Until enabling legislation for water regulation is established, the PUCSL will continue to act only as a consulting agency to the Ministry of Water Supply and Drainage.[475]

Power

The country reached 100% household electrification in 2016. In 2021, there was a total installed generation capacity of 4,186 megawatts (MW). Figure 22 illustrates the fuel mix for electric power generation in Sri Lanka as of 2021.[476]

Sri Lanka has no significant reserves of oil, natural gas, or coal.[477] it relies on imported fuel for nearly half of its electricity generation. Given its small economy, it is a price-taker, exposed to global disruptions in the oil and gas markets. In part, volatility and skyrocketing prices in these markets in early 2021 and 2022 fed socio-economic unrest and subsequent political shifts of 2022.[478] That year, disruptions to oil, gas, and coal imports spelled a decline of 4.6% in total electric power generation.[479] A stabilizing global market in early 2024 alongside domestic political and economic reforms delivered some relief for Sri Lankans who had been living with wide-ranging and long-lasting blackouts for more than a year.[480]

By 2030, the government plans to increase the share of renewables-generated electric power to

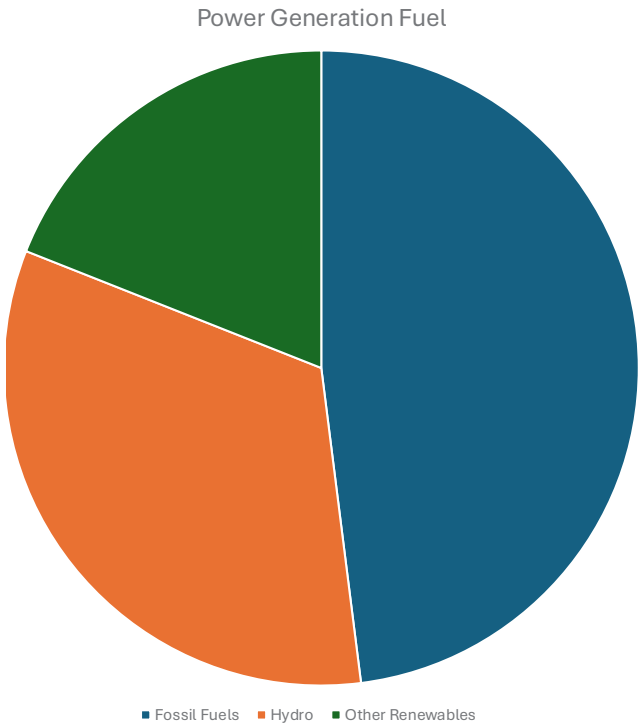


Figure 22: Electric Power Generation, by Fuel

70% and to reach carbon neutrality in the sector by 2050. However, this goal has been stymied to date by a lack of power sector reform that will allow renewables to compete with fossil fuel generation on cost and price. Among the key shifts will be integration of the private sector into the overall market and better strategic planning to lessen reliance on emergency power and fuel purchases, which come at a significantly higher cost than long-term contract purchases.[481] In time, these reforms will help the country meet the demands of growing electricity demand and use as well as to address the climate change impacts on hydroelectricity, as increased incidence of drought may cause an unstable power supply and frequent blackouts.[482]

For the short-term, the government targets an expansion of generation capacity to 6,900 MW by 2025, primarily by expanding renewables' contribution to the total. The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB), the legacy monopoly, plans to expand installed renewable (other than conventional hydro) generation to 6,925 MW by 2042 with the following contributions: 4,705 MW from solar, 1,825 MW from wind, 195 MW from mini-hydro, and 200 MW from biomass. With estimates that overall electricity demand will

increase by nearly 5% by 2040, the CEB is already projecting a shortage in base generation of some 300 MW.[483]

The Electricity Act of 2009, as amended in 2022, legislated reform of the power sector by unbundling the CEB into separate corporate entities for each of generation, transmission, and distribution of electric power. The reforms are intended to both adjust the cost/price regime and to promote the development of renewable electricity generation as a competitive option for the private sector. As of mid-2024, the ADB was preparing technical assistance to Sri Lanka to ensure that the successor companies to CEB would be established as sound entities with the capacity to manage environmental and social safeguards, comply with financial accounting requirements, meet planning and procurement needs for accelerated adoption of renewable resources, and operate efficiently. By 2025, the target is to have established the CEB successor companies, as follows: four generation companies, one transmission company, one operations and bulk supply company, and four distribution companies. The Public Utilities Commission will be involved in adopting operations codes and guidelines for licensing the successor companies.

Ahead of the reforms, the Ministry of Power and Energy is the top-level government and strategic entity. The Energy Ministry side of the house is responsible for upstream activities – e.g., domestic oil and gas production, petroleum refining and fuel standards, fuel storage and conservation, and reliable procurement of oil and gas imports. The Energy Minister has oversight over the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited.[484] The Power Ministry side of the house works toward goals related to the power grid – e.g., generation, transmission, reduction of losses, and development of the smart grid. It has oversight of the CEB and Lanka Electricity Company Limited (LECO), as well as the Sustainable Energy Authority, Atomic Energy Regulatory Council and Board, and Lanka Coal.[485]

The CEB holds four of five distribution licenses, the sole transmission, bulk supply, and operations license, and a generation license accounting for some 65% of total generation capacity. Moreover, the CEB is a key shareholder in the fifth distribution license, as held by LECO. As of 2024, the private sector owns one oil-fired power plant and 320 renewables plants, each of less than 10-MW capacity.[486] The 350-MW liquified natural gas (LNG) combined cycle plant at Kerewalapitiya (outside Colombo) was commissioned in August 2024; it is the country's first to operate on LNG as its primary feedstock.[487] Figure 23 shows the CEB's network, including generation and transmission, as of 2019.[488]

Water and Sanitation

Groundwater resources have been used for irrigation and drinking water since ancient times, and there is a tradition of building, maintaining, and using shallow open wells island-wide. There are about 15,000 tube-wells in the country. The quality of the groundwater is generally good and constant throughout the year. However, in northern and northwestern coastal areas, excessive iron and nitrates have been detected; this contamination is largely linked to agricultural run-off. Moreover, as demand for water has increased, uncontrolled abstraction has allowed brackish water intrusion into groundwater reserves in coastal areas. There is little expectation that water demand will slacken as the country continues to experience economic development, urbanization, and growing demand for food production and hydropower.[489] Moreover, the country already faces difficulties in ensuring an uninterrupted supply of drinking water during droughts, and most projections expect droughts to become more common and more severe dur to climate change.[490]

The Ministry of Water Supply and State Ministry of Rural and Divisional Drinking Water Supply are the responsible authorities for drinking water and sanitation services; the State Ministry largely has the responsibility to support rural water and sanitation projects. However, Provincial Councils and other local authorities

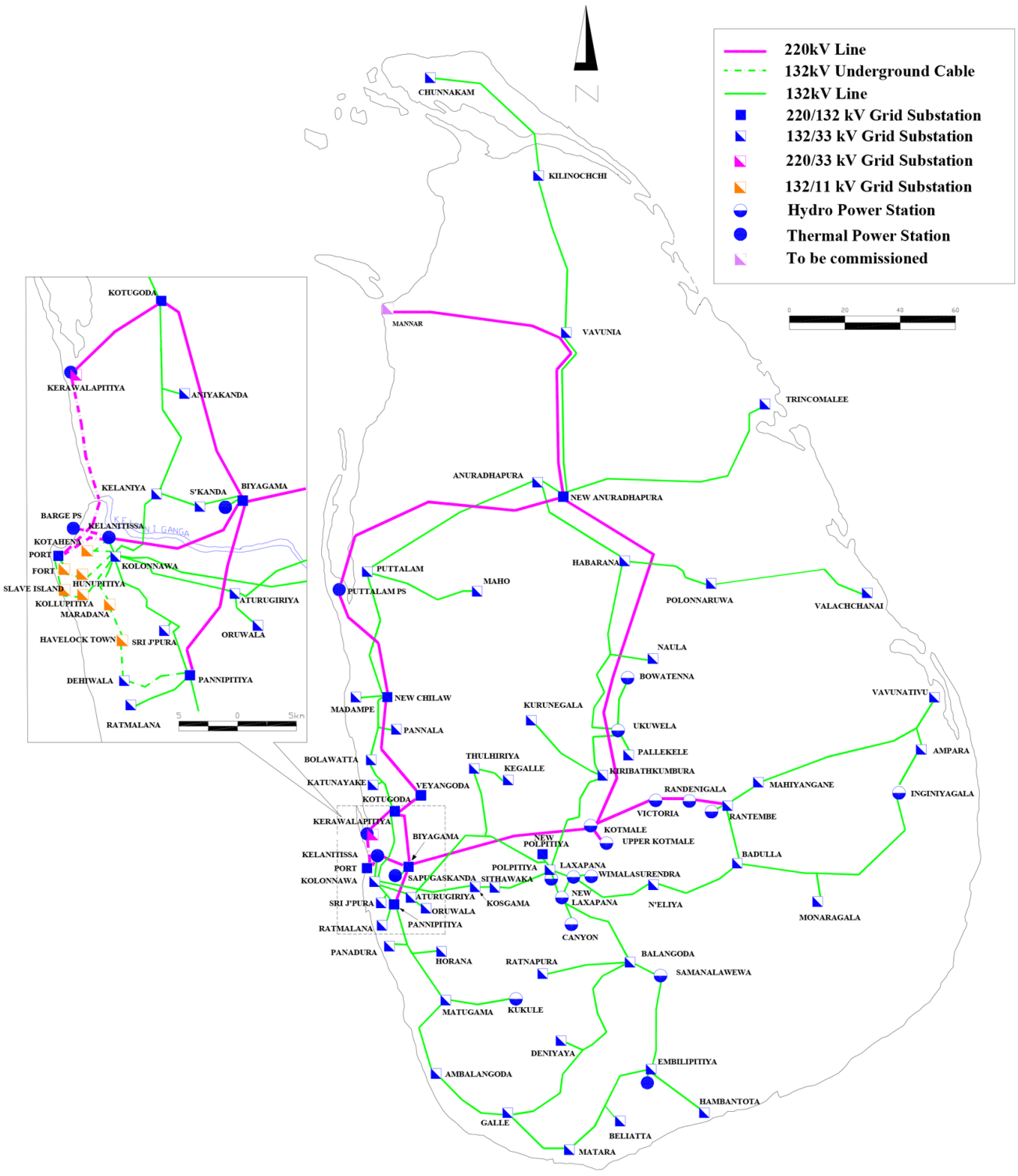


Figure 23: Ceylon Electricity Board Network

have significant ability to direct and mobilize resources for water and sanitation services, and Provincial Councils are responsible for ensuring quality and standards. The infrastructure of the sector is primarily owned and operated by government entities; CBOs do have some input into and control over small, rural systems and are active in conservation schemes. The National Water Supply and Drainage Board, under the Ministry of Water Supply, is responsible for implementing water and sanitation projects, providing water supply and sanitation facilities, and providing support to CBOs and local authorities. The Water Resources Board, also under the Ministry, is responsible for groundwater; it focuses on planning, extraction, and supervision of groundwater use, and construction of tube wells. The Department of National Community Water Supply, under the State Ministry has been made responsible for ensuring a safe drinking water supply and basic sanitation facilities for rural populations through community-managed facilities. In the estates, plantation companies supply water with other private entities providing what limited sanitation service exists.[491]

According to a national demographic health survey in 2021, 90% of households had access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Coverage largely benefits urban populations; Colombo has an access rate of 99.9% whereas 57% of households in the estate sector do not have access to improved water sources.[492] The estimated 7% of households that rely on unimproved sources of drinking water use unprotected wells, rainwater, rivers, and springs.[493] As of 2023, only 60% of the population had access to piped drinking water to their homes. The remainder of households with access to safe and improved water sources access drinking water through protected, dug wells, rainwater harvesting systems, or public point sources, all of which are exposed to disruption during flooding, landslides, and droughts.[494]

The only public sewer system is in Colombo,[495] and piped sewerage only covers about 2% of the total population.[496] Nationally, more than 92% of people have access to safe and improved sanitation even if that does not integrate centralized sewerage and wastewater treatment.[497] The non-piped systems generally are on-site systems – e.g., septic tanks or closed-pit latrines. The estate sector shows the least access to improved sanitation with less than 80% of residents in estate areas having access to improved systems. The Colombo Municipal Council manages that city's sewerage system, and the National Water Supply and Drainage Board fulfils this mandate in some other cities. Beyond cities, households assume primary responsibility for sanitation; local authorities may provide septic services.[498]

HEALTH

The Government of Sri Lanka has invested in the health system to ensure access to free health care for the population. Consequently, Sri Lanka has achieved a relatively high standard of health. An effective maternal and child healthcare system has produced significant decreases in infant mortality, neonatal mortality, under-5 mortality, and maternal mortality, but the rate of decline has slowed during the past decade. Progress in addressing under-5 mortality has meant an improvement in the rate from 9.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 6.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2022.[499] The country has eradicated polio and neonatal tetanus, eliminated malaria, filariasis, and measles, and nearly eliminated other diseases covered by the Expanded Programme on Immunization.[500] Additionally, the country is broadly successful in preventing new HIV infections.[501]

Sri Lanka is making progress in achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In 2021, the country netted a UHC index score of 67, as reported on a unitless scale of 0 to 100 where 0 equals no service coverage and 100 equals total coverage.[502] Life expectancy at birth is 73.7 years for males and 79.9 years for females.[503] According to the 2023 Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report, Sri Lanka is ranked 60th of 125 countries assessed. The country's GHI score of 13.3 indicates moderate hunger, the second lowest level from among low, moderate, serious, alarming, and extremely alarming hunger levels.[504]

The Government has committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030. The country ranked 93rd of 166 countries in the 2024 Global Sustainable Development Report, with a score of 67.43, just better than the East and South Asia regional average of 66.5.[505] Scores may be interpreted as a percentage of achievement; thus, 100 indicates the SDGs have been achieved in full while 0 means no progress toward the SDGs. Figure 24 depicts Sri Lanka's achievements and remaining challenges related to SDG health targets, where green represents success exceeding the set target; the columns from left to right are "value," "year," "rating," and "trend," where "value" represents the metric per indicator.[506]

Remaining health challenges include:

- Ensuring children are receiving WHO-recommended childhood immunizations
- Increased incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCD) - cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases
- Access to maternal and early childhood nutrition services
- Adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation
- Incidence of tuberculosis (TB) detection
- Ageing population
- Emerging infectious diseases
- Healthcare workforce development and retainment
- Household and ambient air pollution
- Traffic deaths

SDG3 – Good Health and Well-Being				
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	28.8	2020	●	↑
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	3.7	2022	●	↑
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	6.5	2022	●	↑
Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 population)	62.0	2022	●	→
New HIV infections (per 1,000 uninfected population)	0.0	2022	●	↑
Age-standardized death rate due to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease in adults aged 30–70 years (%)	13.2	2019	●	↑
Age-standardized death rate attributable to household air pollution and ambient air pollution (per 100,000 population)	92	2019	●	●
Traffic deaths (per 100,000 population)	11.5	2021	●	↑
Life expectancy at birth (years)	76.4	2021	●	↗
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19)	16.5	2015	●	●
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	99.5	2016	●	●
Surviving infants who received 2 WHO-recommended vaccines (%)	98	2022	●	→
Universal health coverage (UHC) index of service coverage (worst 0–100 best)	67	2021	●	↗
Subjective well-being (average ladder score, worst 0–10 best)	3.6	2023	●	↓

Figure 24: Sri Lanka's Sustainable Development Goals Health Targets Status (2024)

Health Care System Structure

The country's health system comprises public and private health sectors, providing curative, preventive, and rehabilitation services.[507] There are both Western allopathic and traditional systems available. As of mid-2022, there were over 1,500 healthcare institutes, comprising 588 hospitals, 517 primary care institutes, and specific service facilities for the armed forces, police, and prisons.[508] As of 2017, hospital bed density was 4.2 beds per 1,000 population.[509]

All state-provided services, including medicines and laboratory facilities, are free of charge at the point of delivery. The state provides nearly 95% of in-patient care and approximately 50% of out-patient care.[510] Citizens and residents are registered for treatment at their local health center and can be referred to secondary care institutions if necessary.

The enactment of the Provincial Councils Act in 1989 resulted in the establishment of the Ministry of Health (MoH) at the national level and nine Provincial Ministries of Health. There are 26 Regional Directorates of Health Services (RDHS) implementing the Provincial Health plans outlined by the respective Provincial Directorates. Each RDHS area is subdivided into Medical Officer of Health areas responsible for preventive and promotional health care; the country has 354 Medical Officer of Health areas.[511] These geographic areas are served by the Medical Officer of Health and a team of community-based professionals, including nursing, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology, and medical records coordinators. The curative arm of the Provincial Health Directorate operates through a network of tertiary- and secondary-care institutions, divisional hospitals, and primary medical care units that provide out-patient care.[512] The primary and secondary levels of curative care and preventive services function under the nine Provincial Ministries.

The administration of public health services is overseen by the Cabinet Minister of Health and three state ministers. Their portfolios encompass various aspects such as pharmaceutical production, supply, and regulation; promotion of indigenous medicine; development of rural and Ayurveda hospitals and community health; and management of primary health care, epidemics, and COVID-19 disease control.

The MoH is responsible for policy formulation and health legislation, program monitoring and technical oversight, management of health technologies, human resources, and oversight of tertiary and other selected hospitals.[513] The mission of the MoH is to contribute to the social and economic development of Sri Lanka by striving to achieve the highest attainable health status and consistently providing high-quality health services to the people of Sri Lanka. Figure 25 depicts the institutional structure of the MoH.[514]

Established in alignment with the DM Act of 2005, the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division (DPRD) is the focal point of the MoH for the national disaster framework that aims at reducing mortality, morbidity, and health effects of displacement in the aftermath of disasters.[515] Key areas of the DPRD are preparedness, disaster response, relief activities, capacity building, funds for disaster response, and DM training. The objectives of the DPRD include:

- To improve the structural, non-structural, and functional capacity of health facilities through the safe hospitals initiative
- To improve human resources for health sector DM
- To promote stakeholder coordination for health sector DM
- To improve information support, knowledge management, and research for health sector DM
- To improve community participation towards health sector DM[516]

The role of the private sector in health care is growing, but it remains accessible to only a small fraction of the population due to its high out-of-pocket cost. Ambulatory care, limited in-patient care, and rehabilitative care are among the primary healthcare services provided by the

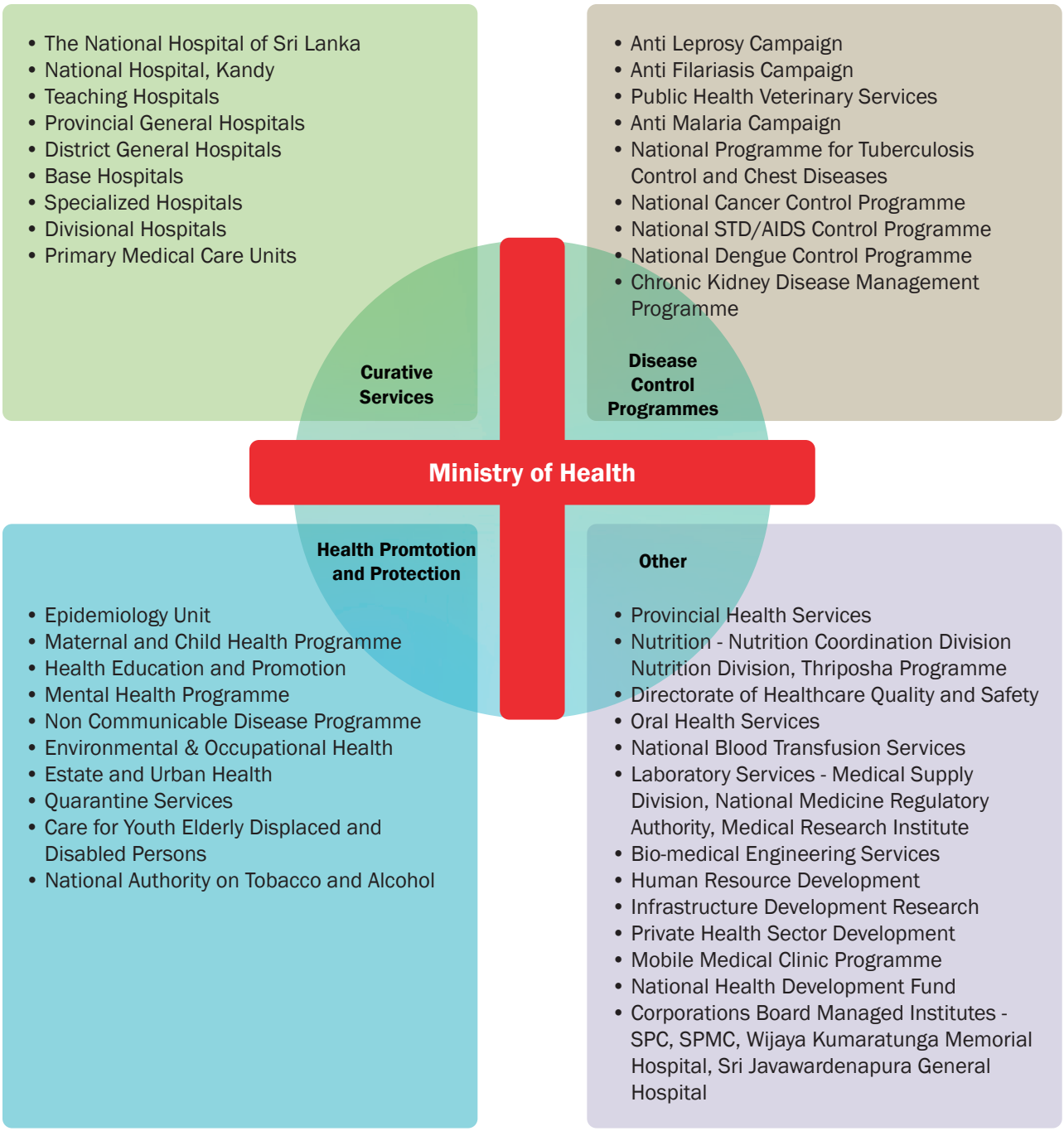


Figure 25: Overview Structure of the Ministry of Health

private sector, with funding coming from out-of-pocket payments or private health insurance schemes.[517] It is common for government medical officers to offer private primary out-patient care during their non-duty hours, while private hospitals provide out-patient and in-patient services and specialist consultations. Notably, private pharmacies and investigative services have seen significant expansion, both within private hospitals and as independent entities.

However, challenges remain for the integration of patient-related statistics from the private sector, as the National Health Information System only covers the public sector. According to the Private Medical Institutions Regulatory Act, those establishing or maintaining private medical institutions must obtain a Certificate of Registration from the MoH. The Private Health Services Regulatory Council (PHSRC), with representation from the Sri Lanka Medical

Council, the Independent Medical Practitioners Association, and the Dental Association, oversees the establishment, monitoring, and evaluation of the standards maintained by registered private medical institutions. Registration with the PHSRC and meeting minimum operational requirements is compulsory for all private hospitals.[518]

On 24 June 2024, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved US$150 million for the Sri Lanka Primary Healthcare System Enhancing Project.[519] The project aims to address the underutilization of primary healthcare facilities and overcrowding in tertiary care facilities in the country. This project builds upon previous projects of expanding over 1,000 facilities with a more comprehensive service package and improved quality of care. The project also addresses the health of the aging population through the provision of comprehensive primary healthcare services covering mental health, palliative, geriatric, rehabilitative, and emergency care.

Health Strategies and Surveillance

The first comprehensive National Health Policy (2014-2016) on primary health care was drafted in 1992 with a focus on UHC. The current National Health Policy (2016-2025) is people-centered and addresses emerging health issues, quality, and safety. The 2016-2025 National Health Policy is informed by the National Strategic Framework for Development of Health Services (Strategic Framework) and the National Health Strategic Master Plan (Master Plan).[520] Professional colleges and experts provided situational analysis under each sub-sectoral profile of the Master Plan; these include Volume I – Preventive Services; Volume II – Curative Service; Volume III – Rehabilitative Service; and Volume IV – Health Administration and Human Resources for Health.[521] The Master Plan consists of sets of specific objectives, major activities, and the expected outputs with verifiable indicators to monitor and evaluate progress. The Strategic Framework outlines the health policy targets and strategies for implementation. Figure 26 outlines the specific contents at the Health Policy, Strategic Framework, and Master Plan levels.[522]

The National Health Policy consists of statements of major objectives designed to address policy issues identified in the situational analysis; these policy statements are:

- Strengthen service delivery to achieve preventive health goals
- Appropriate and accessible high-quality curative care for all Sri Lankan citizens
- Promotion of equitable access to quality rehabilitation care
- Strengthen evidence-based service delivery to support the journey along the continuum of care
- Develop new strategies to reduce out-of-pocket spending and reduce financial risk
- To ensure a comprehensive health system through better re-structuring including human resources management
- Develop strategic partnerships with all providers of health care

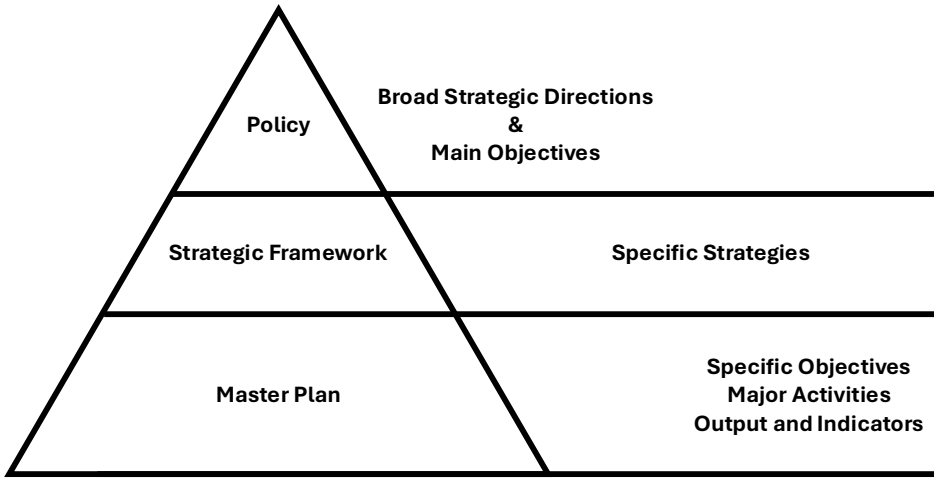


Figure 26: Summary of Sri Lanka's National Health Policy, 2016-2025

The strategic objectives of the Health Development Master Plan to improve health status and reduce inequalities include:

- To provide technical advice in policy formulation, planning, and programming on promotion of health through advocacy, behavior change communication, social marketing, and community mobilization
- To support various health programs conducted by the Department of Health Services and other health-related sectors through advocacy, behavior change communication, and social mobilization for health actions
- To promote, support, and undertake planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation of health promotion programs in different settings
- To promote health care consciousness among the masses through mass media
- To assist and develop Information, Education, and Communication and Behavior Change Communication materials required for health promotion
- To develop the workforce capacities within and outside the Department of Health Services to act as health promoters and change agents through advocacy, behavior change communication, and social mobilization
- To educate and empower the public on health issues and to enable them to increase control over and promote individual and community health
- To coordinate with health-related governmental, non-governmental, and international agencies and organization in promoting health of people
- To develop managerial capacities of health and health-related sectors to manage health promotive programs
- To monitor and evaluate health promotive programs and facilitate monitoring and evaluation of them at different levels
- To support and undertake research related to behavior change of the community and social mobilization[523]

According to the 2021 Global Health Security Index, Sri Lanka scored 34.1 out of 100, in which 100 represents the most favorable health security conditions and 0 represents the least favorable conditions.[524] This score earned Sri Lanka a rank of 105th of 195 countries assessed. The country's score for 'Detect' and 'Respond' are 35.6 and 26.2, respectively; where 'Detect' is higher than the global average of 32.3, and 'Respond' is lower than the global average of 37.6. Furthermore, the WHO conducted a Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of the International Health Regulations (IHR) core capabilities of Sri Lanka in June 2017.[525] The JEE noted significant accomplishments in immunization, laboratory testing for detection of priority diseases, real-time surveillance, workforce development, linking public health and security authorities, and risk communication. However, the evaluation also identified some overarching challenges, including coordination, communication, and advocacy for IHR surveillance, antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic diseases, biosafety and biosecurity, national public health emergency response plan, chemical events, and radiation emergencies.[526]

The WHO plays a crucial role in enhancing Sri Lanka's health system by providing technical assistance and working with the MoH through the Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) 2018-2023.[527] The CCS aligned with the SDGs and UNSDCF for Sri Lanka and builds on the priorities identified in the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. The CCS identified four strategic priorities: policy support for service delivery, addressing NCDs and their determinants, resilience in the face of health threats, and knowledge-based approach to health.

The country has a robust disease surveillance system overseen by the MoH's Epidemiology Unit. Registered medical practitioners are mandated to report to the appropriate authorities when encountering individuals exhibiting symptoms listed under notifiable diseases. This disease surveillance system comprises routine notification of communicable diseases, special

surveillance on selected specific communicable diseases, and sentinel site surveillance.[528] The Epidemiology Unit produces a weekly epidemiology record summarizing the trends and situations for the week under consideration. The epidemiology record is shared with all curative and preventive institutions under the MoH. Figure 27 summarizes Sri Lanka's infectious disease surveillance system and the health stakeholders involved.[529]

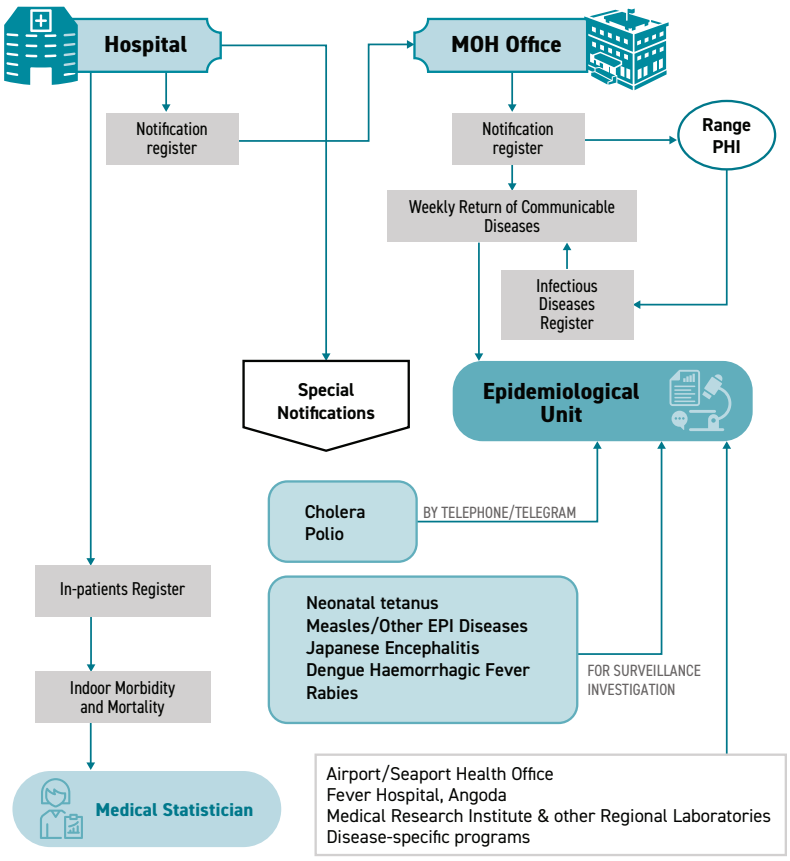


Figure 27: Sri Lanka's Infectious Disease Surveillance System

Communicable Diseases

Sri Lanka is burdened with the following communicable diseases:

COVID-19

The country's first confirmed case of COVID-19 came on 27 January 2020.[530] Owing to a strong health system, the country promptly stopped the first wave of infections and adopted a "Zero-COVID" strategy with the goal of bringing local transmission to zero and enabling communities to return to normal life behind protected borders.[531] The "Zero-COVID" strategy consisted of a two-pronged approach: 1) preventing entry of COVID-19 via effective border security, and 2) acting aggressively to stop local outbreaks by implementing strict contact tracing and isolation.[532] Despite the government's efforts to mitigate the spread of the disease, there were lapses in adherence to isolation policies coupled with insufficient levels of testing for symptomatic individuals in local health facilities.[533] By the end of 2020, widespread community transmission of the virus went undetected for months, a circumstance that led to overwhelmed health facilities and disrupted health services because healthcare workers were among the infected.[534] The Government responded by converting the DPRD office into a 24-hour and 7-day-a-week Health Emergency Operation Center (HEOC). The HEOC compiled and circulated COVID-19 situation reports, compiled sentinel surveillance of deaths, mobilized emergency resources, and hosted regional coordination meetings.[535] Furthermore, a Presidential Task Force for COVID-19 was instituted to oversee, coordinate, and supervise the provision of uninterrupted services to sustain the community's holistic well-being.[536]

The involvement of NGOs and civil service organizations (CSO) was limited, with the notable exception of the NGO Sarvodaya, which played a crucial role in coordinating and managing a collective of CSOs that focused on addressing the population's food security, hygiene, and medical needs. In addition, Sarvodaya mobilized and trained community and religious leaders in implementing prevention and control measures.[537] From June 2020 to March 2021, the ADB provided Sri Lanka with a US$3 million grant from the Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund to help mitigate the effects of the

pandemic. This allocation was made as part of the Health System Enhancement Project.[538] The funds were used to procure test kits, diagnostic reagents, personal protective equipment, and other vital medical supplies and to facilitate risk communication. The U.S. Government collaborated extensively with the Government of Sri Lanka to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through these efforts, the U.S. contributed more than 3.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, over US$17.9 million in grants, and 200 portable ventilators provided through USAID to support Sri Lanka's response and recovery.[539]

As of 4 August 2024, the cumulative number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Sri Lanka stood at 672,798, with 16,907 reported deaths.[540]

Dengue

Dengue in Sri Lanka is a significant public health concern. In 2023, the incidence rate was reported at 407.5 cases per 100,000 people, making it the most common vector-borne disease in the country. Although the disease has an annual case fatality rate of less than 0.1%, it has become endemic in all districts of Sri Lanka, with outbreaks occurring every 3-4 years.[541] The spread of the Den-3 variant of the dengue virus has expedited its transmission throughout the island.[542] Monsoon and cyclonic storms significantly impact the incidence by bringing increased rainfall and flooding, conditions that favor mosquito breeding, leading to the accelerated spread of the disease and an increase in the number of patients admitted to hospitals.

HIV/AIDS

By 2025, the country aims to achieve the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) "fast-track" targets of 95-95-95: 95% of people living with HIV know their HIV status; 95% of people who know their status are receiving HIV treatment; and 95% of people on treatment are virally suppressed.[543] In 2023, there were approximately 4,700 people living with HIV, 3,400 people living with HIV who were on antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 2,900 people living with HIV who had suppressed viral loads; these numbers brought Sri Lanka's "fast-track" numbers to 88-71-61.[544] New infections and deaths relevant to HIV/AIDS appear to be declining. In 2019, Sri Lanka attained the WHO certification for the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and syphilis, and subsequently underwent a successful revalidation in 2021.[545] This accomplishment positioned the country as the fourth in the region to achieve the validation certificate. The National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) of the MoH coordinates and implements the National HIV/STI Strategic Plan of Sri Lanka (2023-2027).[546] Services provided by NSACP include sexual health services, HIV treatment and care, HIV/sexually-transmitted infection (STI) testing, interventions to prevent HIV/STI, sexual health promotion, antenatal services, HIV self-testing, and training and capacity building.[547] Furthermore, Sri Lanka revised its laws or policies to make it easier for adolescents to access testing and other HIV services in recent years.[548] The NSACP collaborates with national and international partners, particularly the Global Fund, UNAIDS, and WHO, to control HIV in Sri Lanka.[549]

Tuberculosis

TB is an infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, a bacterium that primarily affects the lungs. TB is considered endemic in Sri Lanka, but there is a relatively low burden of cases in the country.[550] The National Programme for Tuberculosis Control & Chest Diseases (NPTCCD) under the MoH is responsible for overseeing the control and prevention of TB and other respiratory diseases.[551] Services offered by the NPTCCD includes GeneXpert (TB-PCR), digital x-ray, and microscopy centers. Figure 28 is a list of facilities with GeneXpert installed.[552] The Global Fund allocated US$9.35 million for the period 2023-2025, with 68.24% of the fund allocated to address HIV/AIDS and 31.76% for TB.[553] Through the Global Fund's efforts, 8,110 people with TB were treated in 2022. Furthermore, 24

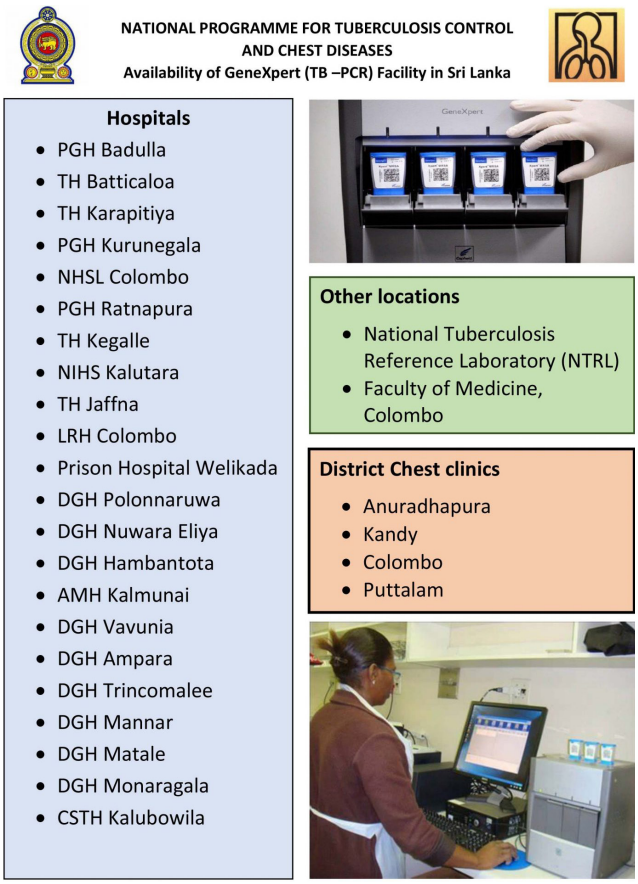


Figure 28: List of GeneXpert Facilities in Sri Lanka

HIV-positive TB patients were on ART during TB treatment.[554]

Measles

The WHO declared the successful eradication of measles in Sri Lanka in 2019; however, the country experienced a resurgence of measles cases in May 2023.[555] Health authorities reported 863 measles cases nationwide that year. From 6 January 2024, Sri Lankan health officials implemented supplementary immunization activity and initiated a nationwide vaccine campaign. In 2022, measles vaccination coverage in Sri Lanka had been estimated at 99%, well above the 92-95% required to prevent wider community transmission. Slackened public health campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to falling vaccination rates and, therefore, to the 2023 return of the diseases. Measles, a highly contagious viral disease, primarily spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or speaks. Moreover, measles can be transmitted via contaminated surfaces by infected individuals. Common symptoms of measles include a high fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a characteristic red rash that initially appears on the face and then spreads downward.[556] While measles can impact individuals of all ages, children are particularly susceptible to the disease.

Non-Communicable Diseases

NCDs - hypertension, diabetes, and cervical cancer – are a leading cause of mortality and morbidity, responsible for approximately 80% of deaths in Sri Lanka.[557] The effective control and management of NCDs necessitate the implementation of robust screening, early diagnosis, treatment, and effective follow-up procedures. Figure 29 illustrates Sri Lanka's top 10 causes of death, mostly attributable to NCDs.[558]

According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, the top 10 risk factors contributing to death and disability in Sri Lanka combined are high fasting plasma glucose, high blood pressure, dietary risks, air pollution, high body-mass index, tobacco, kidney dysfunction, high cholesterol, malnutrition, and high alcohol use.[559] The latest data reveals that the per capita alcohol consumption for individuals aged 15 years and above was reported at 2.8 liters in 2019. In comparison, per capita alcohol consumption was 4.9 liters in India and 1.4 liters in Maldives during the same period.[560] The prevalence of tobacco use in 2020 was recorded at 22%, with 41.4% of males and 2.6% of females, respectively, using tobacco.[561]

The National Policy and Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Chronic NCDs was published by the MoH in 2010.[562] This policy primarily addresses cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, chronic respiratory diseases, and chronic renal disease due to the burden on the population and resource requirements for their preventive measures. The policy addresses

the following strategic areas to achieve its objectives:

- Support prevention of chronic NCDs by strengthening policy, regulatory, and service delivery measures for reducing level of risk factors of NCDs in the population
- Implement a cost-effective NCD screening program at community level with special emphasis on cardiovascular diseases
- Facilitate provision of optimal NCD care by strengthening the health system to provide integrated and appropriate curative, preventive, rehabilitative, and palliative services at each service level
- Empower the community for promotion of health lifestyle for NCD prevention and control
- Enhance human resource development to facilitate NCD prevention and care
- Strengthen national health information system including diseases and risk factor surveillance
- Promote research and utilization of findings for prevention and control of NCDs
- Ensure sustainable financing mechanisms that support cost-effective health interventions at both preventive and curative sectors
- Raise priority and integrate prevention and control of NCDs into policies across all government ministries, and private sector organizations[563]

Communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases
Non-communicable diseases
Injuries

Cause	2011 rank	2021 rank	Change in deaths per 100k, 2011-2021
Stroke	1	1	↑ +5.1
Ischemic heart disease	2	2	↑ +4.2
COVID-19	-	3	↑ +75.4
Diabetes	3	4	↑ +7.5
COPD	4	5	↑ +1.5
Chronic kidney disease	5	6	↑ +3.4
Alzheimer's disease	11	7	↑ +4.6
Hypertensive heart disease	9	8	↑ +1.6
Self-harm	7	9	↓ −2.7
Lower respiratory infect	6	10	↓ −3.6

Figure 29: Top 10 Causes of Deaths per 100,000 and Rate Change (2011-2021)

On 23 September 2003, Sri Lanka became a party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and ratified this Framework later that year.[564] The Framework tracks the country's status and compliance regarding monitoring, smoke-free environments, cessation programs, health warnings, mass media, advertising bans, taxation, and less affordable cigarettes. The Prevention and Cessation of Tobacco Use Unit, established under the Directorate of NCDs, carries out activities relevant to the prevention and control of tobacco use and implements the Framework and the National Authority for Tobacco Alcohol Act through community awareness and initiatives at the national level.[565] Furthermore, tobacco cessation services are available and provided through "Healthy Lifestyle Centers" in healthcare facilities.

Training for Health Professionals

Sri Lanka is grappling with a shortage of healthcare workers, and this situation has garnered increased attention due to the escalating outward migration of health workers, a flight aggravated by the economic crisis in 2022 and COVID-19 pandemic.[566] As of 2018, the density of the healthcare workforce was reported as 100.41 doctors per 100,000 individuals and 218.03 nurses and midwives per 100,000 individuals.[567] According to the Government Medical Officers Association, the largest trade union representing government doctors in Sri

Lanka, more than 1,700 doctors, 10% of the national total, have emigrated in recent years; they have cited economic factors as the primary motivation for their departures.[568] This trend has further weakened the nation's already precarious healthcare system.

Doctors are required to register through the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC) to practice medicine and surgery in Sri Lanka under Chapter 105 of the Medical Ordinance.[569] Sri Lankan universities recognized by SLMC include:

- Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
- Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya
- Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna
- Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna
- Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya
- Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
- Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
- Faculty of Healthcare Sciences, Eastern University of Sri Lanka
- Faculty of Medicine, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
- Faculty of Medicine, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
- Faculty of Medicine, University of Moratuwa
- Faculty of Medicine, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University[570]

The Doctor of Medicine (MD) program in the field of Medical Education, established in 2012, is offered by the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine at the University of Colombo. This program aims to equip health professionals with the necessary medical knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to become proficient medical educators. The 5-year program includes three years for MD studies and two years for Board Certification. It is specifically designed for medical professionals engaged in teaching at the undergraduate, postgraduate, and/or continuing professional development levels, and who aspire to specialize in the field of Medical Education.[571]

The Provincial Health Training Centre (PHTC) was founded in 2018 in North Central Province. The primary objective of PHTC is to offer education, training, and research services aimed at enhancing the capacity of the healthcare workforce to deliver high-quality health services. The PHTC is formally recognized by the North Central Provincial Council and operates in close collaboration with the Education, Training, and Research and Nursing Services directorates of the MoH, as well as the National Institute of Health Sciences. The objectives of the PHTC include:

- To identify education and training needs for the health workforce in North Central Province to achieve the highest global standards of health care
- To initiate and undertake education, training, and research activities for the capacity building of the health workforce in accordance with the national policy of health workforce development and provincial needs
- To provide multisectoral collaborations and support for health workforce development activities in the Province and in Sri Lanka
- To initiate and undertake continuing professional development programs
- To promote, support, and facilitate health research among healthcare professionals[572]

The International Institute of Health Sciences Multiversity, founded in January 2003, is situated in northern Colombo. The institution provides locally-accredited degree programs to both domestic and international students. Its academic offerings include disciplines such as nursing, biomedicine, physiotherapy, and healthcare administration.[573]

Health professionals from Sri Lanka and other countries participate in the Regional Field Epidemiology Training Programme organized by the National Centre for Disease Control.[574] The Programme is tailored for participants from countries of the Southeast Asia Region to enhance their epidemiological skills and bolster health security through interventions such as prevention and control. The Programme has graduated over 316 health professionals in the region.

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index for 2023-2024 ranked Sri Lanka 60th of 177 countries assessed; it netted an index score of 0.743 on a scale of 0 to 1, with 0 being absolute inequality and 1 being complete gender parity.[575] The WPS Index measures the country's inclusion, justice, and security variables. The statistics indicate that 38.7% of Sri Lankan women are employed, and 5.3% of parliament seats are held by women.[576] As of 2019, the literacy rate among individuals aged 15 years and older stood at 92%. When broken down by sex, the literacy rate is 93% for males and 91.6% for females.[577]

Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981. Thus, the country is obligated to report to CEDAW every four years.[578] The CEDAW is a landmark international agreement that affirms the principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women worldwide. As of April 2022, 189 countries are parties to the Convention.

In 2000, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted, marking the first formal acknowledgment by the Council of the distinct impact of armed conflict on women and the crucial significance of integrating gender perspectives into all UN initiatives concerning conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.[579] The emphasis on women's security and gender equity has been bolstered by the passing of UNSCRs 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).[580] These subsequent UNSCRs also highlight the important role women can play in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. In 2015, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, carried out a comprehensive global review of UNSCR 1325. The recommendations from the global study underscored the necessity to facilitate the meaningful involvement of women in peace processes, with a focus on safeguarding the well-being of women and girls during humanitarian crises and augmenting women's leadership and decision-making roles in endeavors aimed at the prevention and mitigation of violent extremism.[581]

The Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment launched Sri Lanka's first WPS National Action Plan (NAP) for the period 2023-2027.[582] The NAP was developed in partnership with the Government of Japan and with technical support from UN Women. The adoption of this NAP represents a significant advancement in the promotion of gender-responsive conflict and crisis management, as well as in enhancing the participation of women in peacebuilding and leadership to prevent conflicts. As part of the development process, provincial dialogues were carried out in all nine provinces to ensure that the NAP accurately represents the lived experiences of women, especially those affected by conflict. Stakeholders include officials working at the village, divisional, district, and provincial levels; representatives of CSOs, NGOs, and CBOs; and victim-survivors of conflict, military widows, women with disabilities, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, ex-combatants of the LTTE, women working in the estate sector or fisheries, and women providing care for partners and/or children with disabilities. Key objectives of the NAP include:

- To increase the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of national life, including the maintenance of peace and security
- To protect women's safety and well-being by addressing their needs, priorities, and rights

during and after conflict, as well as other emergency situations such as disasters and pandemics
- To build and strengthen the capacities of communities and government institutions to promote social cohesion and prevent violence, terrorism, and crimes
- To facilitate the relief and recovery of women and girl children affected by conflict contexts
- To contribute towards achieving gender equality and the SDGs by ensuring inclusive, responsive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels[583]

Furthermore, the NAP outlines activities to be implemented through six focus areas: 1) legal and policy reforms to ensure the protection of women against gender-based violence and discrimination; 2) institutional reforms towards gender-inclusivity, with gender-responsive budgets and personnel with increased capacity to accelerate the WPS agenda in Sri Lanka; 3) service delivery to women affected by conflict and disaster-related displacement; 4) safe and accessible safe house facilities for people affected by natural disasters; 5) addressing concerns of military and police widows, women ex-combatants, and female heads of households; and 6) protection of women and girls against violence, including sexual violence.[584]

In 2024, the Government of Japan and UN Women initiated the "Pathways to Peace" project to enhance women's economic empowerment and involvement in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Sri Lanka. Designed to support the execution of the NAP, the initiative encompasses the provision of capacity-building assistance to 500 women peacebuilders, empowering them to facilitate dispute resolution, mediation, and peacebuilding. Additionally, it entails the implementation of social norms and behavior change initiatives at the household and community levels to advocate for gender equality and social harmony. Furthermore, the project aims to bolster 500 women-led micro-enterprises in previously conflict-affected regions and extend assistance to marginalized groups, including female heads of households and women living with disabilities who have been affected by the nation's socio-economic challenges. The project will be implemented in the districts of Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Mannar, and Mullaitivu.[585] Furthermore, UN Women is providing assistance to the Government in overseeing the execution, funding, and supervision of the NAP through the initiative "Advancing Sri Lanka's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security," funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea.[586]

In collaboration with the Women's Development Federation, USAID facilitated the "Capacity Building Program on Trade and Market Access for Women Entrepreneurs," an extensive year-long training and mentorship program aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs from the southern districts of Sri Lanka – Hambantota, Galle, Matara, and Monaragala. This comprehensive training initiative was designed to provide women entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to adeptly manage their small businesses, enhance their market presence, and gain access to both local and international trade prospects. Notably, this program plays a pivotal role in bolstering women-led and women-owned enterprises while concurrently fostering socio-economic advancement within the region. Photo 2 depicts USAID officials with women entrepreneurs as part of the program.[587]



Photo 2: USAID Officials with Women Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka

CONCLUSION

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and socio-economic crisis that led to changes within the central government, Sri Lanka's capacity to rebuild human, material, and financial resources for DRR and CCA is limited. However, the country is already taking advantage of international partnerships and support to plug funding gaps and to ensure that, in case of a catastrophic event, Sri Lankans would not be left alone to deal with the consequences.

The country does have 20 years of experience reforming and modernizing its DM sphere through legal and institutional action that followed the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The DM Act of 2005 led to the establishment of top-level political and technical leadership of all facets of DM. The NCDM and DMC now oversee a network of offices nationally and work alongside technical agencies that continue to develop capacity in cooperation with national, regional, and international partners. In furtherance of the priority actions for the 2030 Agenda, especially the Sendai Framework, the country has built strong ties with global scientific and technical agencies – e.g., WHO and USGS., among others – to understand and map hazards and risk and to institutionalize risk governance. Moreover, the extension of the early warning system to most communities through public-private partnerships and inclusion of community leaders has proven fruitful. However, two challenges are apparent. One is that centralization of DM agencies under the Ministry of Defence could risk both domestic and international partnerships since some local groups may have minimal trust in the military apparatus and global humanitarians may be wary of being seen to work directly with armed forces units or personnel. Secondly, even though the national DM structure now fully integrates DRR, issues of climate change mitigation and adaptation are addressed by a separate set of institutions that work directly with agencies under the UNFCCC. Sustained development of linkages between DM agencies and stakeholders in the risk management and climate sector spheres will be required as climate change influences the hazards to which Sri Lanka is exposed.

As an island state already exposed to hydrometeorological hazards that regularly cause loss of lives, property, and livelihoods, Sri Lanka confronts a very high potential for shifting climate regimes to drive more frequent or more deadly disease outbreaks, droughts, floods, fires, and landslides. Already, national stakeholders regularly have to respond to more than one hazard event at one time with minimal time or support to recover or rebuild resources before the next emergency. The impacts of climate change on the atmosphere and oceans surrounding the country can be expected to combine with increased demand for water, rising urbanization, and unplanned development to increase vulnerability among the population and further stress already limited coping capacity. Mainstreaming DRR and CCA into government, business, and community action can help mitigate this stress, but Sri Lanka will still require international assistance over the short- to medium-term.

Along with the financial backing of the World Bank, IMF, GCF, and others, the country enjoys strong relationships with UN agencies, Indian Ocean regional groupings, and bilateral players, including but not limited to India, Japan, and the U.S. There remains keen interest in seeing Sri Lanka succeed and build capacity as a reliable and resourceful player who supports global development, environmental, and economic systems through building its own ecological, social, and political resilience.

APPENDICES

DoD DMHA Engagements in the Past Five Years (FY 2019-2024)

The list below describes the disaster management and humanitarian engagements that the U.S. DoD has had with Sri Lanka in the last five years.

August 2024 – Atlas Angel

The Montana National Guard (MTNG) and U.S. Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), in collaboration with the SLAF and members of the Maldives National Defense Force, conducted Exercise Atlas Angel from 5 to 9 August 2024. Atlas Angel consisted of a series of seven exchanges aimed at enhancing preparation for and response to natural and anthropogenic disasters. More than 80 U.S. personnel and two C-130 Hercules aircraft participated alongside 400 Sri Lankan and 13 Maldivian counterparts to work on critical DRR activities. Exercise components included C-130 aircraft operations and maintenance, an incident command tabletop exercise (TTX), urban SAR, medical SAR, airfield repair, and WPS. The incident command TTX brought together representatives from Sri Lanka's DMC, the Sri Lankan military, USAID, and the MTNG Disaster and Emergency Services unit to discuss planning considerations and intra-governmental relationships and roles during disasters.[588] The DMC provided civilian experts to advise during the exercise.[589]

May 2024 – Gobi Wolf

Sri Lanka was among 14 countries that participated in Exercise Gobi Wolf 2024, a four-day event hosted by Mongolia in May 2024. Co-organized by the Mongolian National Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC), this iteration of the exercise included a Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange (DREE) to emphasize partnership and shared commitment to building resilience against disasters. The exercise encompassed an Expert Academic Discussion, TTX, and Field Training Exercise (FTX), all intended to delve into various facets of disaster response. Topics ranged from earthquake response to hazmat management, field hospitals, and swift water rescue. The exercise enjoyed the collective expertise of more than 350 participants from government agencies, ministries, disaster protection services, military, law enforcement, and international humanitarian organizations.[590]

December 2023 – Nepal DREE

A U.S. Navy SEAL Team conducted a joint training exchange alongside the Nepali Army and members of the Nepali Army Special Operations Force Brigade near Kathmandu, Nepal, from 30 October to 6 November 2023. The training exchange consisted of a week-long subject matter expert exchange (SMEE) and a week-long multilateral disaster response training. The first week of the joint training included classroom instruction from Nepali Special Operators and instructors from the Nepali Army's High Altitude Mountain Warfare School. During the second week of training, Naval Special Warfare Operators participated in the 2023 Nepal DREE. Hosted by USARPAC, the DREE saw multiple partner forces come together to participate in the disaster response exercise; Sri Lanka was among the participating forces, alongside Canada, India, Maldives, Mongolia, Thailand, and the UK. The DREE culminated in multiple FTXs showcasing swift water and dive recovery, firefighting, mass casualty response, disaster response search and recovery, and hazardous material decontamination.[591]

January 2023 – CARAT/MAREX

Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)/Marine Exercise (MAREX) Sri Lanka 2023 concluded in Colombo on 26 January after eight days of in-person and at-sea engagements that enhanced collaboration between the Sri

Lanka and U.S. militaries. CARAT/MAREX Sri Lanka took place at SLN bases in Trincomalee and Mullikullam and in the Laccadive Sea. The exercise focused on increasing proficiency in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) as well as maritime security capabilities. SLN offshore patrol vessels SLNS Gajabahu (P 626) and SLNS Vijayabahu (P 627) met the U.S. Navy (USN) amphibious transport dock USS Anchorage (LPD 23), with embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), at sea. The exercise included participants from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Maldives National Defence Force, as well as the SLAF. For the HADR training, two USN landing craft transferred troops, supplies, and vehicles ashore to a beach area of Mullikulam. The subsequent exercises tested and improved the partners' ability to coordinate and communicate with one another in a simulated disaster environment. Additional exercises conducted at sea included divisional tactics, visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS), replenishment-at-sea approaches, and reconnaissance and gunnery exercises. Shore phase highlights included a WPS roundtable with members of the Sri Lanka and U.S. militaries hosted by U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Julie Chung. CARAT/MAREX Sri Lanka is a bilateral exercise designed to promote regional security cooperation, practice HADR, and strengthen maritime understanding, partnerships, and interoperability. In its 28th year, the CARAT series is comprised of multinational exercises, designed to enhance U.S. and partner forces' abilities to operate together.[592]

October 2022 – Health Equipment Donation

To support the urgent medical needs of Sri Lankans, the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Julie Chung, participated in the donation of medical equipment from the U.S. DoD to Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health at the Base Hospital in Panadura after meeting with Dr. Keheliya Rambukwella, the Minister of Health, on 18 October. The equipment, intended to enhance medical services of hospitals and clinics throughout the country, included electrocardiograph (ECG) machines, multipara monitors, a defibrillator, spinal boards, infusion pumps, and oxygen cylinders. At the hospital, Ambassador Chung met with Ministry of Health officials, doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel.[593]

September-October 2022 – Gobi Wolf

Sri Lankan personnel were among personnel from eight countries that participated in Gobi Wolf 2022. The Alaska National Guard (AKNG) and Mongolia led the HADR-focused exercise in Bayankhongor Province, Mongolia, from 5 through 10 September 2022. Since 2003, the AKNG and Mongolian Armed Forces and agencies have cooperated in peacekeeping exercises and disaster simulations, among them the Gobi Wolf series of exercises, which has tackled components ranging from SMEEs on cold weather operations and disaster resource logistics to simulated infrastructure failures and a massive earthquake in a remote area. Members of the Alaska Air and Army National Guard presented expert academic discussions and facilitated training on public information, critical infrastructure recovery, casualty evacuation via helicopter, basic firefighter exchange, hazardous material operations, and WPS. Collaboration extended beyond the conference room when exercise participants from around the world took to the field to train each other in hazmat decontamination, SAR, and mass medical care.[594]

August 2022 – SEACAT

The 20th annual Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercise ran 10-20 August 2022 and included in-person and at-sea engagements that enhanced collaboration among Indo-Pacific partners. SEACAT brought together partner nations' military and civilian personnel as well as international and national NGOs. The exercise is designed to provide mutual support to address crises, contingencies, and illegal activities in the maritime domain using standardized tactics, techniques, and procedures. Ashore, the exercise involved a command post exercise at Singapore's Changi Naval Base, which served as

a centralized hub for information sharing. The exercise scenarios were designed to encourage countries to share information to enhance understanding of the operational environment, build capacity for humanitarian support missions, and uphold international laws and norms. The largest SEACAT to date, the 2022 iteration involved 21 nations, including Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Canada, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, the UK, U.S., and Vietnam. Other organizations included the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), EU Critical Maritime Route Wider Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO), and Global Fishing Watch.[595]

June 2022 – Oil Spill Response Workshop

U.S. INDOPACOM's Environmental Security Directorate and the U.S. Embassy in Colombo conducted an Oil Spill Response Workshop and Exercise, facilitated by the SLCG, 6-10 June 2022 in Colombo. The 5-day workshop included training on how to respond to marine oil spills; how to enhance interagency coordination during incidents; the incident command system; how to assess environmental impacts and minimize environmental damage resulting from oil spills; and safety measures for first responders. SLCG conducted a static display of equipment and participated in an equipment deployment exercise simulating an oil spill response incident inside Dikovita Fishery Harbour to showcase existing capacity. Additional participants represented Sri Lanka's Central Environment Authority, Ceylon Petroleum Cooperation, Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited, the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Department, DFARD, Department of Wildlife Conservation, DMC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MEPA, Merchant Shipping Secretariat, NARA, SLAF, SLCG, SLN, and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority.[596]

August 2021 – SEACAT

The 20th annual SEACAT exercise ran 10-20 August 2021 with in-person and at-sea engagements that enhanced collaboration among Indo-Pacific partners and focused on shared maritime security challenges of the region. Sri Lanka was among 21 partner nations that took part in this iteration of SEACAT, a multilateral exercise that brings together civilian and military personnel with international and local NGOs. It aims to allow participants to rehearse responses to crises, contingencies, and illegal activities in the maritime domain. Ashore, the exercise involved a command post exercise at Singapore's Changi Naval Base that served as a centralized hub for information sharing. The exercise scenarios were designed to encourage countries to share information to enhance understanding of the operational environment, build capacity for humanitarian support missions, and uphold international laws and norms.[597]

June 2021 - CARAT

Naval forces from the U.S., Sri Lanka, and Japan, as well as the SLAF took part in a week-long training during CARAT in June 2021. CARAT Sri Lanka included two days of SMEEs and five days at sea where representatives from the USN and the militaries of Sri Lanka and Japan worked together to strengthen their relationships. The at-sea phase took place in territorial and international water near Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, where USS Charleston (LCS 18) and a P-8A Poseidon aircraft partnered with ships and aircraft from Sri Lanka and Japan. The exercise focused on building interoperability and strengthening relationships through a variety of maritime events and SMEEs. The virtual SMEE events featured a variety of joint training opportunities, to include vessel interdiction and boarding training, replenishment at sea best practices, and WPS symposium. Other virtual exchanges included maritime domain awareness, maritime aviation training, and anti-terrorism force protection. Non-military participants included members from UNODC and the CRIMARIO.[598]

June-September 2020 – COVID-19 Relief

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives

Alaina B. Teplitz donated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Sri Lanka's Minister of Health, Hon Pavithra Wanniarachchi, on 24 September 2020, as part of the United States' on-going assistance to Sri Lanka in its response to COVID-19. The donation included 23,000 masks, 24,000 nitrile gloves, 600 isolation gowns with hoods, 60 infrared thermometers, 50 portable oxygen concentrators with a large supply of expendable equipment to support their operation, and disinfectants. The total value of donation was US$191,000, funded by the U.S. DoD. All items were procured locally in keeping with U.S. efforts to support Sri Lanka's local businesses and industry as they recover from COVID-19's economic impact.[599] Earlier in August, as part of on-going U.S. government donations to bolster Sri Lanka's medical and health care capacity, the DoD donated US$80,000 worth of PPE to Sri Lanka's hospitals, as well as coveralls and cleaning supplies to the Civil Aviation Authority, and over 48,000 pieces of PPE to the DMC.[600] These donations also followed a June delivery of PPE and other materials to Major General Sudantha Ranasinghe (ret'd), Director-General of the DMC, to contribute to Sri Lanka's battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. DoD funded the donation of more than 48,000 masks, safety goggles, and isolation gowns with hoods. In coordination with the Ministry of Defence and disaster relief authorities, the donations were distributed to eight health care facilities.[601]

April 2020 – Pandemic Response

Sri Lanka was represented when air chiefs and leadership representing 19 air forces from five continents joined a video teleconference hosted by General CQ Brown, Jr., PACAF commander, on 29 April 2020. Discussion focused on sharing lessons learned regarding COVID-19 response, desires for resuming engagement and exercises in a post-COVID world, and a commitment to continued cooperation across the Indo-Pacific region. The group also addressed a number of opportunities they have or are pursuing cooperation on, from supply chain support, sharing protocols on transport of patients, to testing and tracing applications. Additionally, many participants shared they felt some level of preparation due to lessons learned from previous pandemics in the region, while others echoed the importance of their military's ability to assist in response efforts.[602]

July 2020 – SEACAT

The 19th iteration of SEACAT was a three-day virtual symposium in July 2020; it included 22 participating nations, including Sri Lanka. The symposium focused on improving maritime domain awareness and featured presentations, live question and answer sessions, panel discussions, and interactive small group breakout sessions with representatives from all participating nations. SEACAT 2020 presentations and workshops focused on information sharing, joint interagency task force operations, multinational force standard operating procedures, and multinational collaboration utilizing SeaVision, a web-based maritime situational awareness tool that enables users to share maritime information. This iteration of the long-running exercise series featured the largest number of participating nations.[603]

July 2019 – PAC ANGEL

More than 50 U.S. military personnel, alongside service members from Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, conducted several humanitarian assistance events throughout Lalmonirhat, Bangladesh, during Pacific Angel 19-1, which ran 22-28 June 2019. Participants teamed up to provide medical care and engineering assistance as well as to conduct SMEEs in coordination with the Bangladesh air force and civil organizations, such as the Red Crescent and Ministry of Health. The Oregon Air National Guard is paired with Bangladesh through the State Partnership Program, run by the U.S. DoD. One of the goals of PAC ANGEL is to build partner capacity and strengthen relationships to promote future cooperation in HADR.[604]

International/Foreign Relations

Sri Lanka maintains some 50 diplomatic missions overseas, including at various UN agency headquarters. More than 40 countries maintain representation in Sri Lanka. The UN RCO in Sri Lanka coordinates the work of UNDP, the UN Information Centre (UNIC), WFP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the WHO, FAO, International Labour Organization, UNHCR, UNODC, IOM, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN-Habitat, and the UN Volunteers. Additional international organizations with representative offices in the country are the ICRC and IFRC, IMF, the World Bank and its Group members, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Korea EXIM Bank, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), International Water Management Institute, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), ADB, Asia Foundation, Colombo Plan Secretariat, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).[605]

Although India's size and regional influence historically weighed on Sri Lanka's international relationships, Colombo long held a formally non-aligned international stance. In recent years, this stance has meant more active balancing of ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC), India, and the U.S. Colombo rejects pressure to develop security policies that are explicitly "anti-" any one party. Instead, as a small state, Sri Lanka's foreign policy is directed to ensuring that it plays a role in multilateral institutions and projects that allow parties to diversify their trade and economic relationships and to leverage the power of multi-party groupings to exercise diplomatic heft that the country might not have if it operates alone. Sri Lanka is an active member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) of which Colombo took the chair in 2023 for a two-year tenure, and it used its speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2023 to emphasize the urgency of mobilizing climate finance and international solidarity for small, climate-vulnerable, debt-inflicted countries.[606] It is possible to view this engagement as part of Colombo's effort to mobilize international ties to help rebuild after the 2022-2023 economic and political crisis.

Over a longer period, the country has tried to manage its international relations to help rebuild after more than 25 years of civil war between the government and the LTTE. The needs of domestic socio-economic development and internal political currents have shaped Colombo's approach to the PRC, India, and the U.S. since the end of the conflict in 2009. In the initial decade plus after the conflict, Western concerns lingered over human rights in Sri Lanka, and these concerns precluded full reintegration into multilateral funding schemes. Thus, Colombo relied heavily on Beijing for financing for development – especially for infrastructure – and thereby offered the PRC more political influence than it had historically enjoyed. Beijing-New Delhi competition for influence in Colombo heated up after 2014 when Prime Minister Modi took power in India.[607] Within this context, Colombo overcame years of ineligibility for lending from multilateral development funds as, in March 2023, it secured a major loan from the IMF and began to rebuild long dormant relationships with the World Bank and ADB.[608]

Colombo Plan

The Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific formed in 1977 out of the Colombo Plan for Technical Co-operation, which had been signed in 1951 by seven Commonwealth countries –Australia, Canada, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), India, New Zealand, Pakistan, and the UK. It sought to deliver aid from the Plan's developed countries to its developing countries in terms of physical capital and technology with an emphasis on workforce skills development. As of 2024, the Plan implements programs in 80 countries with an emphasis on south-south cooperation to address economic and social development challenges. The Plan's programs

include the Drug Advisory Programme, Capacity Building Programme, Maritime Advisory Programme, Gender Affairs Programme, and the Programme for Environment and Climate Change.[609] With the Plan Secretariat based in Colombo, the heads of diplomatic missions representing member government and who are resident in Sri Lanka form the Plan Council to identify important development challenges and ensure implementation of decisions.[610] As of 2024, the Plan members number 28 and represent all continents.[611]

Indian Ocean Rim Association

Sri Lanka assumed the position of Chair of IORA at the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers held in Colombo in October 2023. The theme of Sri Lanka's two-year tenure is "Strengthening Regional Architecture: Reinforcing Indian Ocean Identity."[612] The 23 members share six priority areas and two cross-cutting issues, all linked to the importance that the Indian Ocean plays in each of their social, political, and economic lives. The priority areas are:

- Maritime Safety and Security – focuses on search and rescue, maritime crime, partnerships, and information sharing to build collaboration on a framework for cooperation, standardized processes, an integrated policy approach, and institution building, all to enhance maritime domain awareness and ensure freedom of navigation and overflight[613]
- Trade and Investment Facilitation – to improve production capacity, competitiveness, and value addition, the focus is on addressing impediments to trade, building business community collaboration, creating a platform for dialogue, encouraging training on improving livelihoods, and proposing a framework for developing long-term strategies for sustainable economic development[614]
- Fisheries Management – under the Core Group on Fisheries Management and IORA Fisheries Support Unit, members and partners focus on strengthening science-based management and conservation, promoting environmentally sustainable practices, boosting technical assistance on protection and preservation of the coastal and marine environment, and supporting small-scale fishers[615]
- Disaster Risk Management – the Working Group on DRM (WGDRM) provides a mechanism for engaging disaster and emergency response officials and experts to facilitate coordination by building toward a Collaborative IORA DRM Framework, establishing an integrated policy approach for institutional capability enhancement, capacity building, and DRM mainstreaming, establishing a Coordinated Regional Vision for DRM[616]
- Tourism and Cultural Exchanges – the Core Group on Tourism is tasked with implementing cooperation to enhance the region's tourism profile through strategies, collaboration, and sustainable practice[617]
- Academic, Science, and Technology – strategic goals are to foster collaborative research, knowledge exchange, and capacity building, and to spearhead cooperation and collaboration to bridge gaps between individual advancements and an ecosystem of share knowledge[618]

And the two cross-cutting issues are:

- Blue Economy - embracing public-private partnerships and technology transfer to enhance livelihoods, promote protection and conservation of marine resources, and inform policy decisions[619]
- Women's Economic Empowerment – vision of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, ensuring women's rights, access, and opportunities for participation in and leadership of the economy, and eliminating violence and discrimination against women and girls[620]

India

Sri Lanka and India have shared ties for more

than 2,500 years, and the Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed by their two governments in 1977 laid the foundations for cultural exchange.[621] Geographic proximity and domestic factors have also shaped their modern bilateral defense and security cooperation. To Sri Lanka, India has been its security provider and first responder during crises, especially after the 2019 Easter Sunday attack, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and amidst the economic crisis in 2022-2023. Sri Lanka holds military significance for India, and India has consistently been involved in Sri Lanka's domestic security, both as a supporter of the LTTE early in the civil war and as a backer of the Sri Lankan government in the latter stages of the conflict, and India is wary of any foreign military presence in Sri Lanka. In 2011, Sri Lanka and India agreed to initiate an annual defense dialogue, hold regular discussions between different military services, and conduct the first joint naval exercise in Sri Lankan waters. India has offered thousands of training placements for Sri Lankan security force personnel in India's training academies. India provides support in military training, building naval operational capacity, and strengthening Sri Lankan intelligence. Trilateral meetings between the national security advisors (NSA) and deputy NSAs from the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and India began in 2011 and ultimately led to the formation of a "minilateral group," the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), in 2020. The CSC seeks practical cooperation and intends to host regular exercises that train to improve maritime SAR, cybersecurity, coastal security, and counter-terror operations.

Bilateral trade surged after implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Free-Trade Agreement (ISFTA) in March 2000. India was the primary source of imports and Sri Lanka's top trading partner from 2001 to 2016, and it has occasionally regained that position from the PRC in succeeding years. Bilateral trade has exceeded US$5 billion annually. In 2022, the share of Sri Lanka's imports from India stood at nearly 26% while exports to India made up nearly 7% of Sri Lanka's total exports. India maintains a strong position as a key source of foreign direct investment (FDI) for Sri Lanka and invests across the ICT, banking, tourism services, real estate, manufacturing, and infrastructure sectors.

A shift in leadership in both Sri Lanka and India spelled closer relations between the two countries from 2015 to 2019. The Modi government in New Delhi and Sirisena administration in Colombo pushed for pragmatic dealings to focus on necessities. Modi's Neighbourhood First policy placed Sri Lanka in a central position as New Delhi aimed to contain the PRC's expanding presence, and the Sirisena administration perceived this as an opportunity to re-balance Sri Lankan ties with the two major regional powers – India and the PRC. Sirisena suspended key Chinese investments, and Sri Lanka and India undertook highly-publicized, high-level visits. India also began to support Sri Lanka's interests at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) after 2014. Although power in Sri Lanka shifted hands twice more – in 2019 and 2022 – India's place in Sri Lanka's economic universe has remained strong even as Colombo has sought to ensure that trade and non-security issues come to the forefront rather than becoming embroiled in geopolitical competition.[622]

Japan

Japan views Sri Lanka as an important partner in South Asia because of the island country's importance along major trade routes, upon which Japan relies for connections to the Middle East and Africa, as well as within South Asia itself. Since they cemented diplomatic ties in 1952, Japan and Sri Lanka have cooperated on promoting Sri Lanka's economic growth and post-conflict national reconciliation and ensuring democracy and stability across South Asia to contribute to stable and secure maritime transport throughout the region. To move toward these goals, Japan has focused its investment in and assistance to Sri Lanka on business sectors, equality, and disaster vulnerability, especially outside the capital.[623] JICA oversees significant portions of Japan's development assistance in

the country. Amidst the country's economic and political crisis in 2022, JICA made an emergency maize seed procurement for distribution to farmers. Overall, JICA programming in Sri Lanka in 2022 had a value of US$12.2 million.[624]

Up through the 1970s, Japan was the largest source of imports to Sri Lanka and ranked in the top ten for markets for Sri Lankan exports. Even after India eclipsed Japan as a source of imports, the balance of trade remained in Japan's favor with Sri Lankan imports from Japan totaling some US$875 million (2019) and exports to Japan totaling US$281 million (2019).[625] Beyond trade, Japan annually welcomes several thousand workers from Sri Lanka; more than 5,600 Sri Lankans went to Japan to work in 2023, and this number was expected to top 6,000 in 2024. The country has shifted away from sending less-skilled workers and toward sending those with more desirable and highly remunerated skills – e.g., caregivers, construction workers, agricultural workers, etc. – to plug gaps in Japan's workforce.[626]

Japan also delivers loans and grants in addition to private Japanese corporate investments. Japan's financial and technical cooperation with Sri Lanka has, in recent years, focused on key transport, electricity, water-sewer, and ICT projects, as well as on supporting Sri Lanka's government to develop climate change and DRR measures. On DRR, Japanese financial and technical resources are helping Sri Lanka build its weather radar network, flood and landslide forecasting plans and skills, and local authorities' DRR planning.[627]

PRC

Beijing has maintained diplomatic ties with Colombo since 1957, but the relationship grew swiftly after 2005. The Mahinda Rajapaksa administration (2005–2015) fortified Colombo's ties with the PRC to the point that they signed a Strategic Cooperative Partnership in 2013.[628] During the final years of the conflict with LTTE, in April 2007, the two countries signed a deal for US$37.6 million in ammunition and ordnance supplies. The PRC would then emerge as Sri Lanka's leading supplier of weapons during the final years of the conflict with LTTE.[629] Not only did Beijing offer financial and technical support to Colombo's domestic priorities, but it offered diplomatic support against U.S.-sponsored UNHRC resolutions for accountability and reconciliation four times between 2009 and 2021. Although ties cooled somewhat as Sri Lanka's political leadership changed hands in 2015, they resumed an upward trajectory after 2019, when Gotabaya Rajapaksa gained power in Colombo and sought to ensure Sri Lanka enjoyed good ties with both India and the PRC. Beijing did withdraw from some additional projects in Sri Lanka, but overall bilateral economic ties were resurgent. Even after the 2022 political crisis, Sri Lanka's new administration has endeavored to maintain flourishing economic ties with the PRC without becoming entangled in geopolitical competition.[630]

In 2016, the PRC overtook India as Sri Lanka's top trading partner, with a total bilateral trade value of US$4,270 billion, or nearly 15% of the total. India regained top position from 2017, but Beijing surpassed it again in 2020 and lost the top position again in 2021. In 2022, the share of PRC goods and services among Sri Lanka's imports was approximately 18%, while only 2% of Sri Lanka's exports went to the PRC. Beijing also holds a dominant position as a source of FDI in Sri Lanka, and it held the top spot for FDI from 2011 to 2015 and accounted for more than 15% of Sri Lanka's total FDI. Loans and grants from Beijing are largely targeted to investments in major infrastructure.[631]

Among the key developments in the bilateral relationship was Sri Lanka's place in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), whereby the PRC developed and eventually took control of Sri Lanka's Hambantota port. In March 2007, a PRC-Sri Lanka agreement saw Beijing deliver 85% of the needed funding for construction of the port. Subsequent years saw Sri Lanka's economy struggle. Unable to repay the loan, Colombo, in 2017, transferred the port to the PRC through a 99-year lease. The Colombo International Container Terminal was already 85% owned by

PRC and hosted an unannounced visit by People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy submarines in 2014. Although India and the U.S. have expressed concerns that the PLA could use the port in ways that undermine strategies for a free and open Indo-Pacific, Colombo has consistently rejected the idea of foreign military basing in the country. Nonetheless, in 2021, reports emerged that the PRC intended to establish a new jungle radar base in extreme southern Sri Lanka to enhance PLA naval projection into the Indian Ocean, and in 2022, a PRC spy ship visited Hambantota.[632]

In the past 20 years, Sri Lanka and China have also steadily increased military ties. Beijing had already spent more than 50 years as Sri Lanka's primary supplier of conventional arms, and this trend significantly escalated after 2007. High-level visits by military officials were exchanged, and PLA naval ships made port calls every few years. The countries concluded rounds of Defense Cooperation Dialogue and signed agreements worth more than US$2.6 billion in military assistance to Sri Lanka. Defense ties further intensified after the PLA hospital ship Peace Ark visited Colombo's port in August 2017.[633]

South Korea

Seoul and Colombo established diplomatic relations in 1977, and the relationship has been based primarily on trade, investment, and sharing of expertise in various industrial sectors. As of the 2020s, South Korea is a key source of overseas development assistance for Sri Lanka with Korea EXIM Bank managing the portfolio. Moreover, the bilateral trade relationship was worth an estimated US$110 million in 2020.[634] On the basis of South Korean support for Sri Lanka's efforts to meet the objectives of its National Development Plan (2020-2025), Seoul has prioritized support across education, transportation, water, and health. The education element emphasizes technical and vocational training to bolster Sri Lanka's workforce,[635] and a key facet is to see Sri Lankan students and workers studying and working in South Korea. Annually, South Korea welcomes thousands of Sri Lankan workers to fill gaps in the South Korean fishing and construction work forces.[636] In 2021 alone, 23,000 Sri Lankan workers were employed in South Korea. That year, Sri Lanka's education authorities also added the Korean language to the advanced curriculum in the expectation that this skill will ensure bilateral collaboration on job creation.[637] Alongside these people-to-people contacts, KOICA operates various programs in Sri Lanka to ensure that ICT and transportation infrastructure also support economic growth and workforce development while water management and rural development promote equity and democracy.[638]

United States

The U.S. and Sri Lanka established diplomatic relations in 1948.[639] However, after 2007, the U.S. suspended direct aid to Sri Lanka due to allegations of human rights violations amid the on-going conflict between government forces and Tamil separatists.[640] Furthermore, the U.S. was among the "Core Group" that passed resolutions in the UNHRC that resulted in Sri Lankan administrations taking anti-Western positions.[641] Thus, in the past 15 years, the U.S. focus has been on promoting ethnic reconciliation, democracy, and human rights in the wake of the Sri Lankan civil conflict. Broader socio-economic development has been the secondary focus, although the U.S. emphasis on human rights has made it relatively less able to engage various factions within Sri Lankan domestic politics in comparison to Indian and PRC engagement. Nonetheless, during the Sirisena administration (2015-2019), the bilateral relationship significantly improved, with defense and political ties cemented. Most recently, since 2022, the U.S. has taken advantage of shifts in Colombo's political atmosphere to prioritize Sri Lanka's domestic needs. In 2023, the U.S. announced US$553 million in infrastructure investment, especially the West Container Terminal at Colombo's port.[642]

The U.S. is Sri Lanka's top export market, accounting for 26% of the total or US$3.3 billion of export revenue in 2022.[643] Since 2002, the

Trade and Investment Framework Agreement has served as the institutional framework guiding bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Sri Lanka and the United States. Since 2005, Sri Lanka has enjoyed an average trade surplus of some US$2 billion annually with the United States. In 2022, the U.S. FDI to Sri Lanka stood at US$234 million.[644]

The U.S. has committed to helping Sri Lanka build its domestic security capabilities, especially during CARAT multi-lateral exercises, maritime domain awareness training, and engagements to address climate change, trafficking, and unregulated fishing.[645] The U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific in 2021 emphasized that South Asia is a key region where the U.S. needs to build stronger and enduring partnerships, partly by strengthening the capacity of Maldives, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka "to contribute to a free and open order." To an extent, this facet of the framework reflects fresh U.S. recognition of the role small South Asian states, including Sri Lanka, play along key sea lanes and within multilateral Indian Ocean organizations. Since the publication of the framework, the U.S. Navy has undertaken key initiatives with Sri Lankan military forces.[646]

Participation in International Organizations

Sri Lanka is a member of, participates in, or cooperates with the following international organizations and agreement frameworks either as a government or via a national NGO or other entity:

Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Colombo Plan (CP), Commonwealth (C), Conference on Disarmament (CD), Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA, observer), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Group of 11 (G-11 developing countries in debt), Group of 15 (G-15 developing countries on investment, trade, and technology), Group of 24 (G-24, Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development), Group of 77 (G-77 on the collective economic issues of the "global South"), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Chamber of Conference (ICC-national committees), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), International Development Association (IDA), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Organization for Standardization (ISO, correspondent), International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC, NGOs), Institute of Catastrophe Risk Management (ICRM), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Organization of American States (OAS, observer), Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO-dialogue member), South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), United Nations (UN), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations

Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Customs Organization (WCO), World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU NGOs), World Health Organization (WHO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Trade Organization (WTO)

UN peacekeeping missions that Sri Lanka is contributing personnel to, as of 30 June 2024:

- United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) – 2 experts on mission
- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) – 4 staff officers, 109 troops
- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) – 206 troops
- United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) – 1 staff officer, 125 troops
- United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) – 1 expert on mission, 11 individual police, and 65 troops[647]

Force Protection/Pre-Deployment Information

The following information is taken from the U.S. State Department traveler information for Sri Lanka[648] and is provided for pre-deployment planning and preparations. Visit www.travel.state.gov prior to deployments for further up-to-date information. DoD personnel must review the Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG) for travel to Sri Lanka (www.fcg.pentagon.mil). All official travel and personal travel for active-duty personnel must be submitted through an APACS request. Contact information for the Defense Attaché Office can be found in the FCG if you have additional questions.

Passport/Visa

U.S. citizens visiting Sri Lanka must have either an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) or a visa to enter Sri Lanka.

U.S. citizens intending to visit Sri Lanka for tourism or in transit require an approval notice from Sri Lanka's ETA System, onward/return ticket, and proof of sufficient funds. The ETA System is available online or at the port of entry; however, visitors are strongly urged to use the online system to avoid lengthy delays at the port of entry. This travel authorization allows entry for up to 30 days.

U.S. citizens intending to visit Sri Lanka for short-term business activities such as participating in business meetings, engaging in business negotiations, or attending conferences and workshops are required to obtain a Business ETA. Business ETAs are not available online. Business travelers must obtain travel authorization either from the nearest Sri Lankan Embassy or Consulate before arrival in Sri Lanka, or at the port of entry in Sri Lanka.

U.S. citizens intending to visit Sri Lanka for religious or volunteer work or for local employment must obtain entry visas from the nearest Sri Lankan Embassy or Consulate before arrival in Sri Lanka. These visas are not available at the port of entry or through the online system.

All visitors staying beyond the expiration date of their visa must obtain a visa extension from the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Colombo and pay the relevant visa fees.

The Sri Lankan police and military maintain several checkpoints throughout the country. U.S. citizens are advised to always carry identification such as their passports with them while in Sri Lanka.

Safety and Security

Terrorism: Terrorist groups and those inspired by such organizations are intent on attacking U.S. citizens abroad. Terrorists are increasingly using less sophisticated methods of attack – including knives, firearms, and vehicles – to target crowds more effectively. Frequently, their aim is unprotected or vulnerable targets, such as:

- High-profile public events (sporting contests, political rallies, demonstrations, holiday events, celebratory gatherings, etc.)

- Hotels, clubs, and restaurants frequented by tourists
- Places of worship
- Schools
- Parks
- Shopping malls and markets
- Public transportation systems (including subways, buses, trains, and scheduled commercial flights)

The last terrorist attack in Sri Lanka occurred on 19 April 2019, when terrorists carried out coordinated bombings of hotels and churches in Colombo and Batticaloa, where they killed more than 250 people and injured more than 500 more. The terrorists were Sri Lankan nationals associated with the Islamic group National Thowheeth Jama'ath Millathu Ibraheem. Authorities believe the perpetrators of the attack are dead or have been captured. Many hotels and shopping areas increased their physical security presence in response to the bombings and security screenings of guests and bags has become standard in many locations.

Crime: Most crimes against U.S. citizens are petty crime and crimes of opportunity (e.g., pickpocketing, hotel room thefts, and fraud). There is some organized criminal activity, which can involve drug-related crimes and gang-on-gang violence, but these events do not tend to involve foreign travelers.

There are occasional reports of credit card fraud. Authorities have arrested foreign nationals and organized groups for complicity in financial crimes. Avoid situations where your card is removed from your view. There have been reports of employees at reputable businesses (e.g., restaurants or chain grocery stores) wearing data skimming devices in their clothing and scanning a victim's credit card or using other methods to steal credit card information. ATM skimming is also a threat. If you use an ATM, be on the lookout for skimming devices. Cover keypads with your hand.

Street hustlers are common around popular hotels, shopping areas, and other tourist sites. There are occasional reports of snatch and grab theft of purses or jewelry owned by tourists, but no recent reports of armed robberies. Beware of tuk-tuk or taxi drivers offering "special" tours or access to festivals or gem shops. This common scam often results in tourists being heavily pressured to buy "gems" that are either cut glass or are worth much less than the price being asked.

Likely due to Sri Lanka's economic situation, there is a scam in which a tuk-tuk driver charges your ride using an app on their phone, claiming the meter is broken. When you get close to the destination, the phone either slips down or the app closes, and they charge a much higher amount than the routine cost. If a tuk-tuk does not have a meter, agree on a price before beginning the ride, and try to have the correct amount of cash so you do not need change.

Surf schools are known to run scams where they claim renters damaged their boards and demand exorbitant prices to repair the damage. Examine and take pictures of your surfboard before taking it into the water.

Sexual harassment is pervasive. Both foreigners and locals, more commonly women, report instances of cat calls and physical harassment (grabbing of body parts) while in crowded areas and/or public transportation.

Demonstrations: Demonstrations occur frequently. They may take place in response to political or economic issues, on politically significant holidays, and during international events. Demonstrations can be unpredictable, avoid areas around protests and demonstrations. Past demonstrations have turned violent. Police may deploy water cannons and/or tear gas in response to violent protests. Check local media for updates and traffic advisories.

In general, demonstrations in Sri Lanka are peaceful, resulting only in traffic congestion. However, some have ended in violence between the protestors and police or opposition groups. Demonstrations can involve confrontations with police, resulting in the use of water cannons and tear gas to disperse crowds. Large political rallies are common. These rallies are generally peaceful but can disrupt traffic.

International Financial Scams: Internet romance and financial scams occasionally occur in Sri Lanka. Scams are often initiated through Internet postings/profiles or by unsolicited text messages and WhatsApp messages. Common scams include:

- Romance/Online dating
- Contracts with promises of large commissions
- Work permits/job offers

Tips to avoid scammers:

- Look for red flags like their location is far away, their profile was recently created or seems too good to be true, the pace of the relationship is moving too quickly, or they ask for money.
- Set up a phone call/video chat in the initial stages.
- Do a reverse image search on the profile picture.
- If they ask for help, you should refer them to the closest U.S embassy or consulate so we can assist them.

Victims of Crime: U.S. citizen victims of sexual assault are encouraged to contact both the tourist police (hotline: 1912 or 011-242-1451) and the U.S. Embassy (011-202-8500) for assistance. Report crimes to both the tourist police and the U.S. Embassy. Local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting crime.

The U.S. Embassy can:

- Help you find appropriate medical care
- Assist you in reporting a crime to the police
- Contact relatives or friends with your written consent
- Provide general information regarding the victim's role during the local investigation and following its conclusion
- Provide a list of local attorneys
- Provide our information on victim's compensation programs in the U.S.
- Provide an emergency loan for repatriation to the United States and/or limited medical support in cases of destitution
- Help arrange flights home
- Replace a stolen or lost passport.

Emergency Contact Information

Tourist police hotline: 1912
Tourist Police: 011-242-1451

U.S. Embassy Colombo
210 Galle Road, Colombo 03,
Sri Lanka
Tel: 94 11 202-8500
Emergency: 94 11 202-8500
Fax: 94 11 243-7345
Email: *colomboacs@state.gov*
Website: *https://lk.usembassy.gov/*

Currency Information

Sri Lanka Rupee (LKR or Rs)
LKR 1.00 = US$0.0033 or LKR 304.12 = US$1.00 (as of 22 July 2024)

Travel Health Information

The CDC provides guidance that all travelers to Sri Lanka should be up to date on routine vaccinations. The following are additional recommendations for travel to Sri Lanka. The information in Tables 4 and 5 is taken directly from the CDC website under the Travelers Health Section (*https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/*).[649]

Health Alerts: As of July 2024, there are no health risk alerts for Sri Lanka.

The following actions you can take to stay healthy and safe on your trip include:

Eat and Drink Safely

Unclean food and water can cause travelers' diarrhea and other diseases. Reduce your risk by sticking to safe food and water habits.

Eat

- Food that is cooked and served hot
- Hard-cooked eggs
- Fruits and vegetables, you have washed in clean water or peeled yourself
- Pasteurized dairy products

Routine Vaccines	All travelers should be up to date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include: • Chickenpox (Varicella) • Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis • Flu (influenza) • Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) • Polio • Shingles
COVID-19	All eligible travelers should be up to date with COVID-19 vaccines.
Hepatitis A	Recommended for unvaccinated travelers 1 year old or older going to Sri Lanka. Infants 6-11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A; the dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series. Travelers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given. Unvaccinated travelers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions and who are planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.
Hepatitis B	Recommended for unvaccinated travelers younger than 60 years of age traveling to the Sri Lanka. Unvaccinated travelers over the age of 60 years may consider vaccination before travel to Sri Lanka.
Japanese Encephalitis	Vaccination is recommended for travelers who: • Are moving to live in an area with Japanese Encephalitis • Will spend one month or more in areas with Japanese Encephalitis • Frequently travel to areas with Japanese Encephalitis Other travelers who may consider vaccination if they will be doing activities that increase risk of infection – e.g., visiting rural areas, hiking or camping, staying in places without air conditioning. Vaccination is not recommended for short-term travelers who will be in urban areas or areas with no clear Japanese Encephalitis season.
Measles	Travelers are at risk of measles if they have not been fully vaccinated at least two weeks prior to departure or have not had measles in the past and travel internationally to areas where measles is spreading. All international travelers should be fully vaccinated against measles with the MMR vaccine, including an early dose for infants 6–11 months.
Rabies	Dogs infected with rabies are commonly found in Sri Lanka. Rabies is also present in some terrestrial wildlife species. If rabies exposures occur while in Sri Lanka, rabies vaccines are typically not readily available. Rabies pre-exposure vaccination considerations include whether travelers will be performing occupational or recreational activities that increase risk for exposure to potentially rabid animals or if travelers might have difficulty getting prompt access to safe post-exposure prophylaxis.
Typhoid	Recommended for most travelers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.
Yellow Fever	Required for travelers 9 months old or older and who are arriving from countries with risk for virus transmission.

Table 4: CDC Travel Health Information for Vaccine- and Prophylaxis-Preventable Diseases in Sri Lanka

Dengue	Transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitos. Avoid bug bites.
Hantavirus	Contracted by breathing in air or accidentally eating food contaminated with the urine, droppings, or saliva of infected rodents, by the bite of an infected rodent, or, less commonly, by being around someone sick with hantavirus. Avoid rodents and areas where they live. Avoid sick people.
Leishmaniasis	Transmitted by sand fly bites. Avoid bug bites.
Leptospirosis	Contracted by touching urine or other body fluids from an animal infected with leptospirosis, by swimming or wading in urine-contaminated fresh water or contact with urine-contaminated mud, or by drinking water or eating food contaminated with animal urine. Avoid contaminated water and soil.
Tuberculosis	TB is transmitted by inhaling TB bacteria that is in the air from an infected and contagious person coughing, speaking, or singing. Avoid sick people.

Table 5: CDC Travel Health Information for Non-Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in Sri Lanka

Don't Eat

- Food served at room temperature
- Food from street vendors
- Raw or soft-cooked (runny) eggs
- Raw or undercooked (rare) meat or fish
- Unwashed or unpeeled raw fruits and vegetables
- Unpasteurized dairy products
- "Bushmeat" (monkeys, bats, or other wild game)

Drink

- Bottled water that is sealed
- Water that has been disinfected
- Ice made with bottled or disinfected water
- Carbonated drinks
- Hot coffee or tea
- Pasteurized milk

Don't Drink

- Tap or well water
- Ice made with tap or well water
- Drinks made with tap or well water (such as reconstituted juice)
- Unpasteurized milk

Prevent Bug Bites

Bugs (like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can spread a number of diseases in Sri Lanka. Many of these diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites.

To prevent bug bites:

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use an appropriate insect repellent (see below).
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). Do not use permethrin directly on skin.
- Stay and sleep in air-conditioned or screened rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.

For protection against ticks and mosquitoes:

Use a repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET for protection that lasts up to several hours.

For protection against mosquitoes only:

Products with one of the following active ingredients can also help prevent mosquito bites. Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection.

- DEET
- Picaridin (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and Icaridin)
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or para-Menthane-3,8-diol (PMD)
- IR3535
- 2-undecanone

If you are bitten by bugs:

- Avoid scratching bug bites and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce the itching.
- Check your entire body for ticks after outdoor activity. Be sure to remove ticks properly.

Sendai Framework

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is the global blueprint and 15-year plan to build the world's resilience to natural disasters.[650] The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.[651] Adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in 2015, the Framework aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities, and countries by 2030.[652]

The Framework outlines seven targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks.

The Seven Global Targets include:

- Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality rates in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
- Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020 -2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
- Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP by 2030.
- Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.
- Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies by 2020.
- Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030.
- Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard EWS and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.[653]

The Four Priorities of Action include:

- Understanding disaster risk
- Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk
- Investing in disaster reduction for resilience
- Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

Figure 30 shows the Sendai DRR Framework.[654]

Priority 1: <u>Understanding disaster risk</u>

The Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme 2014-2018 identified various hazards and calculated disaster risks alongside proposed actions to overcome them.[655] This program led to the development of the NDMP 2023-2030, which integrates a detailed list of hazards – natural and anthropogenic – that Sri Lanka confronts. The NDMP also lays out ways to ensure that knowledge of and information regarding hazards is widely available and understood. It promotes use of modern modeling and visualization to increase understanding and calls for use of all available technologies and venues for spreading this information to vulnerable communities. Central government agencies are the technical leads for producing data and information, and divisional and district administrators are expected to coordinate with communities, NGOs, and vulnerable groups to map hazards onto the actual communities and landscapes.[656] Sector vulnerability profiles prepared for agriculture, health, water, biodiversity, and human settlements have identified geographical locations and economic sectors vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. However, the country lacks detained climate data and information to guide adaptation actions.[657]

Chart of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
2015-2030

Scope and Purpose
The present framework will apply to the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters, caused by natural or manmade hazards as well as related environmental, technological, and biological hazards and risks. It aims to guide the multi-hazard management of disaster risk in development at all levels as well as within and across all sectors
Expected Outcome
The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities, and countries
Goal
Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political, and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience

Targets						
Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality during 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015	Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 during 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015	Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP by 2030	Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030	Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020	Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this framework by 2030	Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030

Priorities for Action			
There is a need for focused action within and across sectors by States at local, national, regional, and global levels in the following four priority areas.			
Priority 1 Understanding disaster risk	**Priority 2** Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk	**Priority 3** Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience	**Priority 4** Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction
Disaster risk management needs to be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics, and the environment	Disaster risk governance at the national, regional, and global levels is vital to the management of disaster risk reduction in all sectors and ensuring the coherence of national and local frameworks of laws, regulations, and public policies that, by defining roles and responsibilities, guide, encourage, and incentivize the public and private sectors to take action and address disaster risk	Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural is non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health, and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries, and their assets, as well as the environment. These can be drivers of innovation, growth, and job creation. Such measures are cost-effective and instrumental to save lives, prevent and reduce losses, and ensure effective recovery and rehabilitation	Experience indicates that disaster preparedness needs to be strengthened for more effective response and to ensure capacities are in place for effective recovery. Disasters have also demonstrated that the recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction phase, which needs to be prepared ahead of the disaster, is an opportunity to "Build Back Better" through integrating disaster risk reduction measures. Women and persons with disabilities should publicly lead and promote gender-equitable and universally accessible approaches during the response and reconstruction phases

Figure 30: UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

DRM has been identified as a cross–cutting need of adaptation so that all disaster-related actions can be coordinated by existing DM agencies - e.g., the DMC. DM and climate plans are joined by additional policies and plans related to land conservation and coastal zone management.[658] Risk-informed planning is mandated at the central government levels, and each central government ministry is expected to elaborate its own goals and rules. The DMC is mandated to support this development as well as the construction of plans by other local administrations and non-government stakeholders.[659] The Climate Change Secretariat of the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment leads activity linked to understanding climate risk under the UNFCCC. Among national initiatives, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and National Climate Change Policy have been joined by the NAP for Climate Change Impacts.[660]

Priority 3: Investing in disaster reduction for resilience

The Climate Prosperity Plan of 2022 outlines ways that Sri Lanka can utilize global climate finance mechanisms to build DRR across forestry, transport, energy, and other sectors. Moreover, financing conservation of natural resources is embedded across the NDC and other climate policies and plans. The Central Bank has laid out venues and rules for raising funds for DRR for all development sectors. Finally, in cooperation with the UNDP, the Ministry of Wildlife, Department of Forests, Department of Wildlife Conservation, and key NGOs have developed a digital citizen engagement platform to allow communities to flag unsanctioned or destructive development that contravenes publicized DRR strategies. The NDMP promotes various financial mechanisms, especially public-private partnerships to build green and resilient infrastructure and facilities across energy, water, transport, health, and communications.[661]

Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction

The DMC centralizes work on hazard monitoring and assessment, forecasting, development of response procedures, and early warning. The DMC's Preparedness Planning Division coordinates and carries out activities with technical agencies, reviewing and finalizing lower-level administration DM plans, conducting preparedness drills and exercises, ensuring integration of marginalized groups in planning, and guiding response. As a beginning to "build back better," the NDMP promotes the integration of DRR with all poverty reduction and equality programming. Moreover, it encourages the private sector to plan for and execute key actions for early recovery and to invest in risk management by reducing the potential for anthropogenic events, such as hazardous materials incidents or pollution.[662]

Country Profile

The information in the Country Profile section is sourced directly from the CIA World Fact book for Sri Lanka. Additional numbers on country comparison to the world can be found by going directly to the CIA website (*https:/www.cia.gov*). It discusses topics including geography, people and society, government, economy, energy, communications, military and security, transportation, terrorism, and transnational issues.[663]

Background

The first Sinhalese arrived in Sri Lanka late in the 6th century B.C., probably from northern India. Buddhism was introduced circa 250 B.C., and the first kingdoms developed at the cities of Anuradhapura (from about 200 B.C. to about A.D. 1000) and Polonnaruwa (from about A.D. 1070 to 1200). In the 14th century, a South Indian dynasty established a Tamil kingdom in northern Sri Lanka. The Portuguese controlled the coastal areas of the island in the 16th century, followed by the Dutch in the 17th century. The island was ceded to the British in 1796, became a crown colony in 1802, and was formally united under British rule by 1815. As Ceylon, it became independent in 1948; the name was changed to Sri Lanka in 1972. Prevailing tensions between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil separatists erupted into war in 1983. Fighting between the government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continued for over a quarter-century. Although Norway brokered peace negotiations that led to a cease-fire in 2002, the fighting slowly resumed and was again in full force by 2006. The government defeated the LTTE in 2009.

During the post-conflict years under then-President Mahinda RAJAPAKSA, the government initiated infrastructure development projects, many of which were financed by loans from China. His regime faced allegations of human rights violations and a shrinking democratic space for civil society. In 2015, a new coalition government headed by President Maithripala SIRISENA of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and Prime Minister Ranil WICKREMESINGHE of the United National Party came to power with pledges to advance economic, political, and judicial reforms. However, implementation of these reforms was uneven. In 2019, Gotabaya RAJAPAKSA won the presidential election and appointed his brother Mahinda prime minister. Civil society raised concerns about the RAJAPAKSA administration's commitment to pursuing justice, human rights, and accountability reforms, as well as the risks to foreign creditors that Sri Lanka faced given its ongoing economic crisis. A combination of factors including the COVID-19 pandemic; severe shortages of food, medicine, and fuel; and power outages triggered increasingly violent protests in Columbo beginning in 2022. In response, WICKREMESINGHE -- who had already served as prime minister five times -- was named to replace the prime minister, but he became president within a few months when Gotabaya RAJAPAKSA fled the country.

Geography

Location
Southern Asia, island in the Indian Ocean, south of India

Geographic coordinates
7 00 N, 81 00 E

Area
total: 65,610 sq km
land: 64,630 sq km
water: 980 sq km
comparison ranking: total 122

Area - comparative
slightly larger than West Virginia

Land boundaries
total: 0 km

Coastline
1,340 km

Maritime claims
territorial sea: 12 nm
contiguous zone: 24 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate
tropical monsoon; northeast monsoon (December to March); southwest monsoon (June to October)

Terrain
mostly low, flat to rolling plain; mountains in south-central interior

Elevation
highest point: Pidurutalagala 2,524 m
lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m
mean elevation: 228 m

Natural resources
limestone, graphite, mineral sands, gems, phosphates, clay, hydropower, arable land

Land use
agricultural land: 43.5% (2018 est.)
arable land: 20.7% (2018 est.)
permanent crops: 15.8% (2018 est.)
permanent pasture: 7% (2018 est.)
forest: 29.4% (2018 est.)
other: 27.1% (2018 est.)

Irrigated land
5,700 sq km (2012)

Population distribution
the population is primarily concentrated within a broad wet zone in the southwest, urban centers along the eastern coast, and on the Jaffna Peninsula in the north

Natural hazards
occasional cyclones and tornadoes
Geography – note: strategic location near major Indian Ocean sea lanes; Adam's Bridge is a chain of limestone shoals between the southeastern coast of India and the northwestern coast of Sri Lanka; geological evidence suggests that this 50-km long Bridge once connected India and Sri Lanka; ancient records seem to indicate that a foot passage was possible between the two land masses until the 15th century when the land bridge broke up in a cyclone

People and Society

Population
total: 21,982,608
male: 10,642,043
female: 11,340,565 (2024 est.)
comparison rankings: female 60; male 62; total 61

Nationality
noun: Sri Lankan(s)
adjective: Sri Lankan

Ethnic groups
Sinhalese 74.9%, Sri Lankan Tamil 11.2%, Sri Lankan Moors 9.2%, Indian Tamil 4.2%, other 0.5% (2012 est.)

Languages
Sinhala (official and national language) 87%, Tamil (official and national language) 28.5%, English 23.8% (2012 est.)

Religions
Buddhist (official) 70.2%, Hindu 12.6%, Muslim 9.7%, Roman Catholic 6.1%, other Christian 1.3%, other 0.05% (2012 est.)

Age structure
0-14 years: 22.6% (male 2,537,918/female 2,423,615)
15-64 years: 65% (male 6,954,869/female 7,336,897)
65 years and over: 12.4% (2024 est.) (male 1,149,256/female 1,580,053)

Figure 31 shows the Population Pyramid for Sri Lanka for 2023. A population pyramid illustrates the age and sex structure of a country's population. The population is distributed along the horizontal axis, with males shown on the left and females on the right. The male and female populations are broken down into 5-year age groups represented as horizontal bars along the vertical axis, with the youngest age groups at the bottom and the oldest at the top.

Dependency ratios
total dependency ratio: 53.7
youth dependency ratio: 35.4
elderly dependency ratio: 17
potential support ratio: 5.9 (2021 est.)

Median age
total: 34.1 years (2024 est.)
male: 32.2 years
female: 35.8 years
comparison ranking: total 107

Population growth rate
0.39% (2024 est.)
comparison ranking: 159

Birth rate
14.5 births/1,000 population (2024 est.)
comparison ranking: 116

Death rate
7.5 deaths/1,000 population (2024 est.)
comparison ranking: 101

Net migration rate
-3 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2024 est.)
comparison ranking: 179

Population distribution
the population is primarily concentrated within a broad wet zone in the southwest, urban centers along the eastern coast, and on the Jaffna Peninsula in the north

Urbanization
urban population: 19.2% of total population (2023)
rate of urbanization: 1.22% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)
total population growth rate v. urban population growth rate, 2000-2030

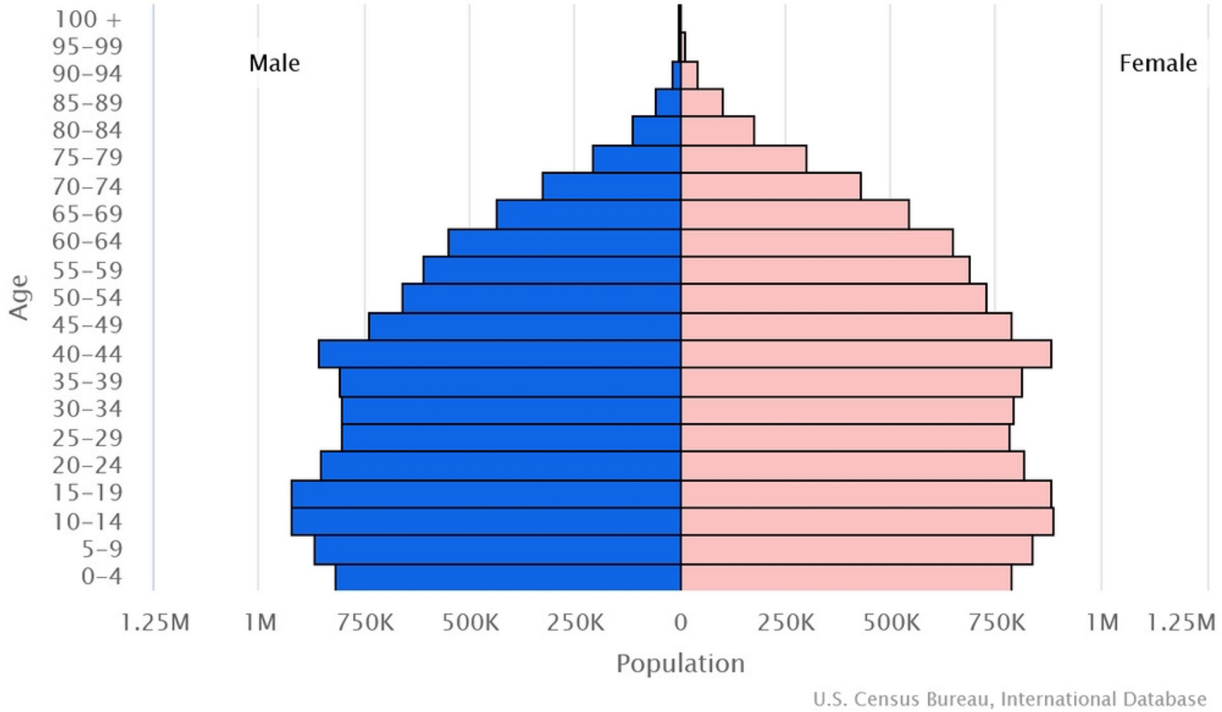


Figure 31: Population Pyramid, Sri Lanka (2023)

Major urban areas - population
103,000 Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte (legislative capital) (2018), 633,000 COLOMBO (capital) (2023)

Sex ratio
at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
0-14 years: 1.05 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 0.95 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.73 male(s)/female
total population: 0.94 male(s)/female (2024 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth
25.6 years (2016 est.)
note: data represents median age at first birth among women 30-34

Maternal mortality ratio
29 deaths/100,000 live births (2020 est.)
comparison ranking: 112

Infant mortality rate
total: 6.8 deaths/1,000 live births (2024 est.)
male: 7.5 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 6.1 deaths/1,000 live births
comparison ranking: total 157

Life expectancy at birth
total population: 76.8 years (2024 est.)
male: 73.7 years
female: 79.9 years
comparison ranking: total population 100

Total fertility rate
2.13 children born/woman (2024 est.)
comparison ranking: 93

Gross reproduction rate
1.04 (2024 est.)

Contraceptive prevalence rate
64.6% (2016)

Drinking water source
improved: urban: 99.7% of population
rural: 91.2% of population
total: 92.8% of population
unimproved: urban: 0.3% of population
rural: 8.8% of population
total: 7.2% of population (2020 est.)

Current health expenditure
4.1% of GDP (2020)

Physician density
1.23 physicians/1,000 population (2020)

Hospital bed density
4.2 beds/1,000 population (2017)

Sanitation facility access
improved: urban: 96.6% of population
rural: 97.9% of population
total: 97.6% of population
unimproved: urban: 3.4% of population
rural: 2.1% of population
total: 2.4% of population (2020 est.)

Major infectious diseases
degree of risk: intermediate (2023)
vectorborne diseases: dengue fever
water contact diseases: leptospirosis
animal contact diseases: rabies

Obesity - adult prevalence rate
5.2% (2016)
comparison ranking: 182

Alcohol consumption per capita
total: 2.58 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
beer: 0.22 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
wine: 0.01 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
spirits: 2.32 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
other alcohols: 0.03 liters of pure alcohol (2019 est.)
comparison ranking: total 122

Tobacco use
total: 22% (2020 est.)
male: 41.4% (2020 est.)
female: 2.6% (2020 est.)
comparison ranking: total 72

Children under the age of 5 years underweight
20.5% (2016)
comparison ranking: 16

Currently married women (ages 15-49)
65.1% (2023 est.)

Child marriage
women married by age 15: 0.9%
women married by age 18: 9.8% (2016 est.)

Education expenditures
1.9% of GDP (2019 est.)
comparison ranking: 187

Literacy
definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 92.3%
male: 93%
female: 91.6% (2019)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education)
total: 14 years
male: 14 years
female: 14 years (2018)
Environment

Environment - current issues
deforestation; soil erosion; wildlife populations threatened by poaching and urbanization; coastal degradation from mining activities and increased pollution; coral reef destruction; freshwater resources being polluted by industrial wastes and sewage runoff; waste disposal; air pollution in Colombo

Environment - international agreements
party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Climate Change-Paris Agreement, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban, Marine Life Conservation

Climate
tropical monsoon; northeast monsoon (December to March); southwest monsoon (June to October)

Land use
agricultural land: 43.5% (2018 est.)
arable land: 20.7% (2018 est.)
permanent crops: 15.8% (2018 est.)
permanent pasture: 7% (2018 est.)
forest: 29.4% (2018 est.)
other: 27.1% (2018 est.)

Urbanization
urban population: 19.2% of total population (2023)
rate of urbanization: 1.22% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)
total population growth rate v. urban population growth rate, 2000-2030

Food insecurity
widespread lack of access: due to serious macroeconomic challenges, significant reduction in 2022 cereal output, and high food prices - severe macroeconomic challenges, mostly reflecting dwindling foreign currency reserves after revenues from merchandise exports, remittances, and from the tourist sector declined dramatically over the last year, have had a negative impact on the country's capacity to import cereals; the 2022 cereal production sharply declined due to a government ordered reduction in the application of chemical fertilizers; unprecedentedly high food prices are constraining economic access to food for a majority of households

Revenue from forest resources
0.06% of GDP (2018 est.)
comparison ranking: 126

Revenue from coal
0% of GDP (2018 est.)
comparison ranking: 178

Air pollutants
particulate matter emissions: 23.88 micrograms per cubic meter (2019 est.)
carbon dioxide emissions: 23.36 megatons (2016 est.)
methane emissions: 10.95 megatons (2020 est.)

Waste and recycling
municipal solid waste generated annually: 2,631,650 tons (2016 est.)
municipal solid waste recycled annually: 336,588 tons (2016 est.)
percent of municipal solid waste recycled: 12.8% (2016 est.)

Total water withdrawal
municipal: 810 million cubic meters (2020 est.)
industrial: 830 million cubic meters (2020 est.)
agricultural: 11.31 billion cubic meters (2020 est.)

Total renewable water resources
52.8 billion cubic meters (2020 est.)
Government

Country name
conventional long form: Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
conventional short form: Sri Lanka
local long form: Shri Lanka Prajatantrika Samajavadi Janarajaya (Sinhala)/ Ilankai Jananayaka Choshalichak Kutiyarachu (Tamil)
local short form: Shri Lanka (Sinhala)/ Ilankai (Tamil)
former: Serendib, Ceylon
etymology: the name means "resplendent island" in Sanskrit

Government type
presidential republic

Capital
name: Colombo (commercial capital); Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte (legislative capital)
geographic coordinates: 6 55 N, 79 50 E
time difference: UTC+5.5 (10.5 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)
etymology: Colombo may derive from the Sinhala "kolon thota," meaning "port on the river" (referring to the Kelani River that empties into the Indian Ocean at Colombo); alternatively, the name may derive from the Sinhala "kola amba thota" meaning "harbor with mango trees"; it is also possible that the Portuguese named the city after Christopher COLUMBUS, who lived in Portugal for many years (as Cristovao COLOMBO) before discovering the Americas for the Spanish crown in 1492 - not long before the Portuguese made their way to Sri Lanka in 1505; Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte translates as "Resplendent City of Growing Victory" in Sinhala

Administrative divisions
9 provinces; Central, Eastern, North Central, Northern, North Western, Sabaragamuwa, Southern, Uva, Western

Independence
4 February 1948 (from the UK)

National holiday
Independence Day (National Day), 4 February (1948)

Constitution
history: several previous; latest adopted 16 August 1978, certified 31 August 1978
amendments: proposed by Parliament; passage requires at least two-thirds majority vote of its total membership, certification by the president of the republic or the Parliament speaker, and in some cases approval in a referendum by absolute majority of valid votes; amended many times, last in 2020

Legal system
mixed legal system of Roman-Dutch civil law, English common law, Jaffna Tamil customary law, and Muslim personal law

International law organization participation
has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt

Citizenship
citizenship by birth: no
citizenship by descent only: at least one parent must be a citizen of Sri Lanka
dual citizenship recognized: no, except in cases where the government rules it is to the benefit of Sri Lanka
residency requirement for naturalization: 7 years

Suffrage
18 years of age; universal

Executive branch
chief of state: President Anura Kumara DISSANAYAKE (since 23 September 2024)
head of government: Prime Minister Harini AMARASURIYA (since 24 September 2024)
cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president in consultation with the prime minister
elections/appointments: president directly elected by preferential majority popular vote for a 5-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held on 21 September 2024 (next to be held in 2029)
election results:
2024: Anura Kumara DISSANAYAKE elected president; percent of vote after reallocation - Anura Kumara DISSANAYAKE (JVP) 55.9%, Sajith PREMADASA (SJB) 44.1%
2022: Ranil WICKREMESINGHE elected president by Parliament on 20 July 2022; Parliament vote - WICKREMESINGHE (UNP) 134, Dullas ALAHAPPERUMA (SLPP) 82

Legislative branch
description: unicameral Parliament (225 seats; 196 members directly elected in multi-seat district constituencies by proportional representation vote using a preferential method in which voters select 3 candidates in order of preference; remaining 29 seats, referred to as the "national list" are allocated by each party secretary according to the island wide proportional vote the party obtains; members serve 5-year terms)
elections: last held on 5 August 2020 (next to be held in August 2025)
election results: percent of vote by party/coalition - SLFPA 59.1%, SJB 23.9%, JVP 3.8%, TNA 2.8%, UNP 2.2%, TNPF 0.6%, EPDP 0.5%, other 7.1%; seats by party/coalition - SLFPA 145, SJB 54, TNA 10, JVP 3, other 13; composition- men 213, women 12, percentage women 5.3%

Judicial branch
highest court(s): Supreme Court of the Republic (consists of the chief justice and 9 justices); note - the court has exclusive jurisdiction to review legislation
judge selection and term of office: chief justice nominated by the Constitutional Council (CC), a 9-member high-level advisory body, and appointed by the president; other justices nominated by the CC and appointed by the president on the advice of the chief justice; all justices can serve until age 65
subordinate courts: Court of Appeals; High Courts; Magistrates' Courts; municipal and primary courts

Political parties and leaders
Crusaders for Democracy or CFD [Ganeshalingam CHANDRALINGAM]
Eelam People's Democratic Party or EPDP [Douglas DEVANANDA]
Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front or EPRLF [Suresh PREMACHANDRAN]
Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi or ITAK [Mavai SENATHIRAJAH]
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna or JVP [Anura Kumara DISSANAYAKE]
Jathika Hela Urumaya or JHU [Udaya GAMMANPILA]
National People's Power or NPP (also known as Jathika Jana Balawegaya or JJB) [Anura Kumara DISSANAYAKE]
People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam or PLOTE [Dharmalingam SIDDARTHAN]
Samagi Jana Balawegaya or SJB [Sajith PREMADASA]

Sri Lanka Freedom Party or SLFP [Maithripala SIRISENA]
Sri Lanka Muslim Congress or SLMC [Rauff HAKEEM]
Sri Lanka People's Freedom Alliance or SLPFA [Mahinda RAJAPAKSA] (includes SLPFP, SLPP, and several smaller parties)
Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (Sri Lanka's People's Front) or SLPP [Gamini Lakshman PEIRIS]
Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization or TELO [Selvam ADAIKALANATHAN]
Tamil National Alliance or TNA [Rajavarothiam SAMPANTHAN] (includes ITAK, PLOTE, TELO)
Tamil National People's Front or TNPF [Gajendrakumar PONNAMBALAM]
Tamil People's National Alliance or TPNA [Canagasabapathy Visuvalingam VIGNESWARAN]
United National Front for Good Governance or UNFGG [Ranil WICKREMESINGHE] (coalition includes JHU, UNP)
United National Party or UNP [Ranil WICKREMESINGHE]

International organization participation
ABEDA, ADB, ARF, BIMSTEC, C, CD, CICA (observer), CP, FAO, G-11, G-15, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, MINURSO, MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, NAM, OAS (observer), OPCW, PCA, SAARC, SACEP, SCO (dialogue member), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNISFA, UNMISS, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US
chief of mission: Ambassador Mahinda SAMARASINGHE (since 13 January 2022)
chancery: 3025 Whitehaven Street NW, Washington, DC 20008
telephone: [1] (202) 483-4025
FAX: [1] 202-232-2329
Email: *slemb.washington@mfa.gov.lk*
Website: *https://slembassyusa.org/new/*
consulate(s) general: Los Angeles
consulate(s): New York

Diplomatic representation from the US
chief of mission: Ambassador Julie J. CHUNG (since 17 February 2022)
embassy: 210 Galle Road, Colombo 03
mailing address: 6100 Colombo Place, Washington DC 20521-6100
telephone: [94] (11) 249-8500
FAX: [94] (11) 243-7345
Email: *colomboacs@state.gov*
Website: *https://lk.usembassy.gov/*

Flag description
yellow with two panels; the smaller hoist-side panel has two equal vertical bands of green (hoist side) and orange; the other larger panel depicts a yellow lion holding a sword on a maroon rectangular field that also displays a yellow bo leaf in each corner; the yellow field appears as a border around the entire flag and extends between the two panels; the lion represents Sinhalese ethnicity, the strength of the nation, and bravery; the sword demonstrates the sovereignty of the nation; the four bo leaves - symbolizing Buddhism and its influence on the country - stand for the four virtues of kindness, friendliness, happiness, and equanimity; orange signifies Sri Lankan Tamils, green Sri Lankan Moors, and maroon the Sinhalese majority; yellow denotes other ethnic groups; also referred to as the Lion Flag

National symbol(s)
lion, water lily; national colors: maroon, yellow

National anthem
name: "Sri Lanka Matha" (Mother Sri Lanka)
lyrics/music: Ananda SAMARKONE
note: adopted 1951

National heritage
total World Heritage Sites: 8 (6 cultural, 2 natural)
selected World Heritage Site locales: Ancient City of Polonnaruwa (c); Ancient City of Sigiriya (c); Sacred City of Anuradhapura (c); Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications (c); Sacred City of Kandy (c); Sinharaja Forest Reserve (n); Rangiri Dambulla Cave Temple (c); Central Highlands of Sri Lanka (n)
Economy

Economic overview
economic contraction in 2022-23 marked by increased poverty and significant inflation; IMF two-year debt relief program following 2022 sovereign default; structural challenges from non-diversified economy and rigid labor laws; heavy dependence on tourism receipts and remittances

Real GDP (purchasing power parity)
$270.611 billion (2022 est.)
$293.581 billion (2021 est.)
$283.62 billion (2020 est.)
note: data in 2017 dollars
comparison ranking: 60

Real GDP growth rate
-7.82% (2022 est.)
3.51% (2021 est.)
-4.62% (2020 est.)
note: annual GDP % growth based on constant local currency
comparison ranking: 213

Real GDP per capita
$12,200 (2022 est.)
$13,300 (2021 est.)
$12,900 (2020 est.)
note: data in 2017 dollars
comparison ranking: 130

GDP (official exchange rate)
$74.404 billion (2022 est.)
note: data in current dollars at official exchange rate

Inflation rate (consumer prices)
49.72% (2022 est.)
7.01% (2021 est.)
6.15% (2020 est.)
note: annual % change based on consumer prices
comparison ranking: 215

Credit ratings
Fitch rating: CCC (2020)
Moody's rating: Caa1 (2020)
Standard & Poor's rating: CCC+ (2020)
note: The year refers to the year in which the current credit rating was first obtained.

GDP - composition, by sector of origin
agriculture: 7.8% (2017 est.)
industry: 30.5% (2017 est.)
services: 61.7% (2017 est.)
comparison rankings: services 109; industry 75; agriculture 102

GDP - composition, by end use
household consumption: 62% (2017 est.)
government consumption: 8.5% (2017 est.)
investment in fixed capital: 26.3% (2017 est.)
investment in inventories: 10.2% (2017 est.)
exports of goods and services: 21.9% (2017 est.)
imports of goods and services: -29.1% (2017 est.)

Agricultural products
rice, coconuts, plantains, tea, sugarcane, milk, cassava, fiber crops, maize, chicken (2022)
note: top ten agricultural products based on tonnage

Industries
processing of rubber, tea, coconuts, tobacco and other agricultural commodities; tourism; clothing and textiles; mining

Industrial production growth rate
-15.95% (2022 est.)
note: annual % change in industrial value added based on constant local currency
comparison ranking: 216

Labor force
8.775 million (2022 est.)
note: number of people ages 15 or older who are employed or seeking work
comparison ranking: 61

Unemployment rate
6.18% (2022 est.)
5.31% (2021 est.)
5.36% (2020 est.)
note: % of labor force seeking employment
comparison ranking: 128

Youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24)
total: 26.1% (2021 est.)
male: 21.1%
female: 35.6%
comparison ranking: total 57

Population below poverty line
14.3% (2019 est.)
note: % of population with income below national poverty line

Gini Index coefficient - distribution of family income
37.7 (2019 est.)
note: index (0-100) of income distribution; higher values represent greater inequality
comparison ranking: 74

Average household expenditures
on food: 27.7% of household expenditures (2021 est.)
on alcohol and tobacco: 3.4% of household expenditures (2021 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share
lowest 10%: 3.1%
highest 10%: 30.8% (2019 est.)
note: % share of income accruing to lowest and highest 10% of population

Remittances
5.13% of GDP (2022 est.)
6.24% of GDP (2021 est.)
8.46% of GDP (2020 est.)
note: personal transfers and compensation between resident and non-resident individuals/households/entities

Budget
revenues: $10.623 billion (2019 est.)
expenditures: $17.496 billion (2019 est.)

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-)
-5.5% (of GDP) (2017 est.)
comparison ranking: 174

Public debt
79.1% of GDP (2017 est.)
79.6% of GDP (2016 est.)
73.51% of GDP (2015 est.)
note: central government debt as a % of GDP
comparison ranking: 42

Taxes and other revenues
7.38% (of GDP) (2021 est.)
note: central government tax revenue as a % of GDP
comparison ranking: 203

Current account balance
-$1.453 billion (2022 est.)
-$3.284 billion (2021 est.)
-$1.187 billion (2020 est.)
note: balance of payments - net trade and primary/secondary income in current dollars
comparison ranking: 135

Exports
$16.169 billion (2022 est.)
$14.974 billion (2021 est.)
$13.083 billion (2020 est.)
note: balance of payments - exports of goods and services in current dollars
comparison ranking: 96

Exports - partners
US 24%, India 8%, UK 7%, Germany 6%, Italy 4% (2022)
note: top five export partners based on percentage share of exports

Exports - commodities
garments, tea, used rubber tires, rubber products, precious stones (2022)
note: top five export commodities based on value in dollars

Imports
$19.244 billion (2022 est.)
$21.526 billion (2021 est.)
$18.271 billion (2020 est.)
note: balance of payments - imports of goods and services in current dollars
comparison ranking: 96

Imports - partners
India 34%, China 19%, UAE 5%, Malaysia 4%, Singapore 4% (2022)
note: top five import partners based on percentage share of imports

Imports - commodities
refined petroleum, fabric, ships, cotton fabric, synthetic fabric (2022)
note: top five import commodities based on value in dollars

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold
$3.137 billion (2021 est.)
$5.664 billion (2020 est.)
$7.648 billion (2019 est.)
note: holdings of gold (year-end prices)/foreign exchange/special drawing rights in current dollars
comparison ranking: 113

Debt - external
$55.332 billion (2019 est.)
$52.567 billion (2018 est.)
comparison ranking: 64

Exchange rates
Sri Lankan rupees (LKR) per US dollar -
198.764 (2021 est.)
185.593 (2020 est.)
178.745 (2019 est.)
162.465 (2018 est.)
152.446 (2017 est.)
Energy

Electricity access
electrification - total population: 100% (2022 est.)

Electricity
installed generating capacity: 5.04 million kW (2022 est.)
consumption: 10.401 billion kWh (2022 est.)
transmission/distribution losses: 1.62 billion kWh (2022 est.)
comparison rankings: transmission/distribution losses 117; consumption 103; installed generating capacity 90

Electricity generation sources
fossil fuels: 47.4% of total installed capacity (2022 est.)
solar: 5.3% of total installed capacity (2022 est.)
wind: 5.8% of total installed capacity (2022 est.)
hydroelectricity: 40.6% of total installed capacity (2022 est.)
biomass and waste: 0.8% of total installed capacity (2022 est.)

Coal
consumption: 2.084 million metric tons (2022 est.)
exports: (2022 est.) less than 1 metric ton
imports: 2.205 million metric tons (2022 est.)

Petroleum
refined petroleum consumption: 121,000 bbl/day (2022 est.)

Carbon dioxide emissions
21.766 million metric tonnes of CO2 (2022 est.)
from coal and metallurgical coke: 4.663 million metric tonnes of CO2 (2022 est.)
from petroleum and other liquids: 17.103 million metric tonnes of CO2 (2022 est.)
comparison ranking: total emissions 82

Energy consumption per capita
14.449 million Btu/person (2022 est.)
comparison ranking: 142
Communications

Telephones - fixed lines
total subscriptions: 2.582 million (2022 est.)
subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 12 (2022 est.)
comparison ranking: total subscriptions 45

Telephones - mobile cellular
total subscriptions: 31.237 million (2022 est.)
subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 143 (2022 est.)
comparison ranking: total subscriptions 47

Telecommunication systems
general assessment: Sri Lanka's fixed-line telephony market was one of the very few in the world to experience a significant upsurge in subscriptions in 2020; while the country suffers from a relatively poor fixed-line infrastructure and a correspondingly strong mobile sector, demand for traditional phone services increased 14% in 2020; preliminary results suggest a further jump of up to 13% can also be expected in 2021; this will take Sri Lanka's fixed-line penetration to levels not seen since 2013; the most reason behind the market's reversal of fortunes is the Covid-19 crisis and Sri Lanka's ensuring lock downs; these forced much of the population back inside and reverting to 'traditional' methods of communication for both voice and data services; the fixed broadband market was equally robust, growing 20% in 2020 alone; Sri Lanka possesses a relatively low number of computers per household so the fixed broadband market's success comes off a small base; the one area of the telecommunications market that experienced a fall was the mobile segment; up until the start of the pandemic, Sri Lanka had a very high mobile penetration rate of 155%; this near-saturation level reflected the preponderance for subscribers to carry multiple SIM cards to take advantage of cheaper on-net call rates; the reduction in demand and traffic because of the pandemic led to a sharp drop in the number of active subscriptions, down to just 135% – a 17% decline in just one year; the market is expected to bounce back quickly, as soon as the country eases back on its lock down measures and reduces travel restrictions; it will also be boosted, come 2022, by the anticipated launch of commercial 5G mobile services (2021)
domestic: fixed-line is 12 per 100 and mobile-cellular is 143 per 100 (2022)
international: country code - 94; landing points for the SeaMeWe -3,-5, Dhiraagu-SLT Submarine Cable Network, WARF Submarine Cable, Bharat Lanka Cable System and the Bay of Bengal Gateway submarine cables providing connectivity to Asia, Africa, Southeast Asia, Australia, the Middle East, and Europe; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (Indian Ocean) (2019)

Broadcast media
government operates 5 TV channels and 19 radio channels; multi-channel satellite and cable TV subscription services available; 25 private TV stations and about 43 radio stations; 6 non-profit TV stations and 4 radio stations

Internet country code
.lk

Internet users
total: 14.74 million (2021 est.)
percent of population: 67% (2021 est.)
comparison ranking: total 51

Broadband - fixed subscriptions
total: 1,781,530 (2020 est.)
subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 8 (2020 est.)
comparison ranking: total 60
Transportation

National air transport system
number of registered air carriers: 3 (2020)
inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers: 34
annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers: 5,882,376 (2018)
annual freight traffic on registered air carriers: 436.2 million (2018) mt-km

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix
4R

Airports
18 (2024)
comparison ranking: 141

Heliports
1 (2024)

Pipelines
7 km refined products

Railways
total: 1,562 km (2016)
broad gauge: 1,562 km (2016) 1.676-m gauge
comparison ranking: total 81

Roadways
total: 114,093 km
paved: 16,977 km
unpaved: 97,116 km (2010)
comparison ranking: total 44

Waterways
160 km (2012) (primarily on rivers in southwest)
comparison ranking: 110

Merchant marine
total: 96 (2023)
by type: bulk carrier 5, general cargo 15, oil tanker 11, other 65
comparison ranking: total 92

Ports
total ports: 6 (2024)
large: 0
medium: 2
small: 1
very small: 1
size unknown: 2
ports with oil terminals: 2
key ports: Batticaloa Roads, Colombo, Galle Harbor, Hambantota, Kankesanturai, Trincomalee Harbor

Military and Security

Military and security forces
Sri Lanka Armed Forces: Sri Lanka Army (includes National Guard and the Volunteer Force), Sri Lanka Navy (includes Marine Corps), Sri Lanka Air Force, Sri Lanka Coast Guard; Civil Security Department (Home Guard)
Ministry of Public Security: Sri Lanka National Police (2024)
note 1: the Civil Security Department, also known as the Civil Defense Force, is an auxiliary force administered by the Ministry of Defense
note 2: the Sri Lanka Police includes the Special Task Force, a paramilitary unit responsible for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations; it coordinates internal security operations with the military

Military expenditures
1.6% of GDP (2023 est.)
1.7% of GDP (2022 est.)
1.9% of GDP (2021 est.)
2% of GDP (2020 est.)
2% of GDP (2019 est.)
comparison ranking: 88

Military and security service personnel strengths
approximately 260,000 total personnel (200,000 Army; 30,000 Navy; 30,000 Air Force); approximately 11,000 Special Task Force personnel (2023)
note: in January 2023, Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defense announced plans to decrease the size of the Army to 135,000 by 2024 and 100,000 by 2030

Military equipment inventories and acquisitions
the military's inventory consists mostly of Chinese and Russian-origin equipment with a smaller mix of material from countries such as India and the US (2023)

Military service age and obligation
18-22 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2023)

Military deployments
110 Central African Republic (MINUSCA); 125 Lebanon (UNIFIL); 240 Mali (MINUSMA) (2024)

Military – note: the military is responsible for external defense and may be called upon to handle specifically delineated domestic security responsibilities that generally do not include arrest authority; it has sent small numbers of personnel on UN peacekeeping missions; from

1983 to 2009, it fought against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a conflict that involved both guerrilla and conventional warfare, as well as acts of terrorism and human rights abuses, and cost the military nearly 30,000 killed; since the end of the war, a large portion of the Army reportedly remains deployed in the majority Tamil-populated northern and eastern provinces; the military over the past decade also has increased its role in a range of commercial sectors including agriculture, hotels, leisure, and restaurants

Sri Lanka traditionally has had close security ties to India; India participated in the LTTE war in 1987-1991, losing over 1,000 soldiers; the Sri Lankan and Indian militaries continue to conduct exercises together, and India trains over 1,000 Sri Lankan soldiers per year; in recent years, Sri Lanka has increased military ties with China, including acquiring military equipment, hosting naval port calls, and sending personnel to China for training (2023)

Terrorism

Terrorist group(s)
Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS); Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
Transnational Issues

Refugees and internally displaced persons
IDPs: 12,000 (civil war; more than half displaced prior to 2008; many of the more than 480,000 IDPs registered as returnees have not reached durable solutions) (2022)
stateless persons: 35 (2022)

Acronyms and Abbreviations

°	degree(s) – of latitude or longitude (North [N], South [S], East [E], West [W]) or of temperature (Celsius [C] or Fahrenheit [F])
$	dollar(s) – U.S.
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
APAD-SL	Asia-Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management, Sri Lanka
ARCC	Air Rescue Coordination Centre
ART	antiretroviral therapy
BCE	Before Common Era (formerly BC)
BDRT	Branch Disaster Response Teams
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (of USAID)
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CAASL	Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka
CARAT	Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training
CBO	community-based organization
CCA	climate change adaptation
CCS	Climate Change Secretariat or Country Cooperation Strategy
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CE	Common Era (formerly AD)
CEB	Ceylon Electricity Board
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFE-DM	Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
COSCAP-SA	Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Program – South Asia
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPP	Climate Prosperity Plan
CRIMARIO	Critical Maritime Route Wider Indian Ocean
CSO	civil service organization
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DDMCU	District Disaster Management Coordination Units
DDRT	Divisional Disaster Response Teams
DEWN	Disaster Early Warning Network
DFARD	Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development
DHN	Declaration of Humanitarian Need
DM	disaster management
DMC	Disaster Management Centre
DoD	Department of Defense (of the U.S.)
DoM	Department of Meteorology
DPRD	Disaster Preparedness and Response Division (of the MoH)

DREE	Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange
DRM	disaster risk management
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EOC	emergency operations center
ER4	early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience
ERC	Emergency Response Committee
EU	European Union
EWS	early warning system
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the UN)
FDI	foreign direct investment
FDR	Foreign Disaster Response
FTX	Field Training Exercise
GBV	gender-based violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	gross domestic product
GHG	greenhouse gas
GNI	gross national income
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HADR	humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HEOC	Health Emergency Operation Center
HNP	Humanitarian Needs and Priorities
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	information and communications technology
ICTA	Information and Communication Technology Agency
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHR	International Health Regulations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IOTWMS	Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System
IPCC	Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change
ISCG	Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group
IWWRMP	Integrated Watershed and Water Resources Management Project
JEE	Joint External Evaluation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JMSDF	Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force
km / km^2	kilometer(s) / square kilometer(s)

KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LECO	Lanka Electricity Company Limited
LNG	liquified natural gas
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
m / m^2 / m^3	meter(s) / square meter(s) / cubic meter(s)
MAREX	Marine Exercise
MEPA	Marine Environment Protection Authority
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
mm	millimeter(s)
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MP	Member of Parliament
MRCC	Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
MT	metric ton(s)
MTNG	Montana National Guard
MW	megawatt(s)
NAP	National Adaptation Plan or National Action Plan
NARA	National Aquatic Resource Research Development Agency
NBRO	National Building Research Organisation
NCDM	National Council for Disaster Management
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
NCD	non-communicable disease
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDCU	National Dengue Control Unit
NDMP	National Disaster Management Plan
NDRSC	National Disaster Relief Service Center
NDRT	National Disaster Response Team
NECCC	National Experts Committees on Climate Change
NEOP	National Emergency Operations Plan
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIE	National Institute of Education
NOCPCO	National Operations Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak
NOSCOP	National Oil Spill Contingency Plan
NPF	National Policy Framework
NPTCCD	National Programme for Tuberculosis Control & Chest Diseases
NSACP	National STD/AIDS Control Programme
NSC	National Steering Committee
OCDS	Office of the Chief of Defence Staff
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (of the UN)
OHDACA	Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid

PACAF	Pacific Air Forces (of the U.S.)
PHSRC	Private Health Services Regulatory Council
PHTC	Provincial Health Training Centre
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
PUCSL	Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office (of the UN)
RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway
RDA	Road Development Authority
RDHS	Regional Directorates of Health Service
RIMES	Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia
Rs	Sri Lankan Rupee(s)
SAR	search-and-rescue
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEACAT	Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training
SLA	Sri Lanka Army
SLAF	Sri Lanka Air Force
SLCG	Sri Lanka Coast Guard
SLMC	Sri Lanka Medical Council
SLN	Sri Lanka Navy
SLPA	Sri Lanka Ports Authority
SLR	Sri Lanka Railways
SLRCS	Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
SMEE	subject matter expert exchange
TB	Tuberculosis
TEU	Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit
TRC	Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
TTX	tabletop exercise
U.S.	United States
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSDCF	United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USARPAC	United States Army Pacific
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USN	United States Navy
VBSS	visit, board, search, and seizure
W/m^2	watts per meter squared
WASH	water-sanitation-hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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