



SRI LANKA

Disaster Management Reference Handbook

March 2021

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Front Cover

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Table of Contents

- Acknowledgements 2**
- Letter from the Director 6**
- About the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance 7**
- Executive Summary..... 8**
- Country Overview..... 9**
 - History9
 - Culture and Demographics.....13
 - Ethnic Makeup14
 - Key Population Centers15
 - Language.....15
 - Religion15
 - Vulnerable Groups16
 - Economics.....19
 - Government20
 - Environment.....21
 - Geography.....21
 - Borders.....22
 - Climate22
- Disaster Overview..... 23**
 - Climate Change23
 - Hazards.....23
 - History of Natural Disasters.....24
 - Country Risks26
 - Country Risk Profile26
- Organizational Structure for Disaster Management..... 27**
 - Lead Government Agencies in Disaster Response27
 - Disaster Relief and Emergency Response.....28
 - Armed Forces Role in Disaster Relief28
 - Civilian Role in Disaster Relief and Emergency Response29
 - The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement29
 - U.S. Government Agencies in Sri Lanka.....30
 - Laws, Policies, and Plans on Disaster Management31
 - Disaster Management Communications32
 - Early Warning Systems32
 - Information Sharing34

Infrastructure.....	39
Transport.....	39
Airports.....	39
Seaports.....	40
Roads.....	43
Railways.....	43
Waterways.....	43
Schools.....	46
Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector.....	48
Communications.....	50
Utilities.....	53
Power.....	53
Water and Sanitation.....	56
Health.....	58
Health Care System Structure.....	59
Health Strategies and Surveillance.....	61
Communicable Diseases.....	63
Non-Communicable Diseases.....	66
Training for Health Professionals.....	67
Women, Peace, and Security.....	69
Conclusion.....	71
Appendices.....	72
DoD DMHA Engagements in the Past Five Years (FY 2015-2020).....	72
International/Foreign Relations.....	79
Participation in International Organizations.....	83
Force Protection/Pre-Deployment Information.....	84
Passport/Visa.....	84
Safety and Security.....	84
Emergency Contact Information.....	84
Currency Information.....	84
Travel Health Information.....	84
Sendai Framework.....	88
HFA Country Progress Report.....	90
Country Profile.....	95
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	108
Endnotes.....	114

Figures

Figure 1: 2021 INFORM Risk Index for Sri Lanka	26
Figure 2: Organizational Structure for Disaster Management in Sri Lanka	27
Figure 3: Ports Managed by Sri Lanka Ports Authority	41
Figure 4: Sri Lanka’s Major Roads Network.....	44
Figure 5: Sri Lanka Railways National Network.....	45
Figure 6: Sri Lankan Students by Grade	47
Figure 7: Sri Lanka Primary Energy Mix (2015)	54
Figure 8: Sri Lanka Electricity General Mix (2015)	54
Figure 9: Renewables as Part of Electricity Generation Mix, Progress to Reach 100% by 2050	55
Figure 10: Top Causes of Death in Sri Lanka	58
Figure 11: The Structure of the Ministry of Health Care Networks	59
Figure 12: Proportion of Non-Communicable Disease as a Cause of Mortality in Sri Lanka.....	67
Figure 13: UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030	89
Figure 14: HFA Level of Progress Achieved	90

Photos

Photo 1: The Reclining Buddha, in the Gal Vihara (Stone Temple), in Polonnaruwa	16
Photo 2: The Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar Separate Sri Lanka from India.	22
Photo 3: Sri Lanka Navy Aids in Rescue and Relief Operation for Flood Victims, 2017.....	28
Photo 4: Sri Lanka’s Disaster Information Management System	35
Photo 5: Port of Colombo’s East Terminal	42
Photo 6: Trincomalee Port Facilities	42
Photo 7: Hambantota Port Hosts Large Crude Tanker, July 2020.....	42
Photo 8: Students Practice Evacuation during Safety Day (26 December) Trainings	49
Photo 9: Sri Lankan Women Receive Training ahead of 2018 Local Council Elections.....	69
Photo 10: UN Women Provides Technical Assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka.....	70

Tables

Table 1: National Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction Policies and Plans	33
Table 2: Specifications of Sri Lanka’s Airports.....	40
Table 3: CDC Travel Health Information for Sri Lanka	85
Table 4: National Progress Report on the Implementation of the HFA.....	90
Table 5: HFA Country Progress Report Future Outlook Areas, Sri Lanka.....	92

Letter from the Director

In the past 15 years, Sri Lanka has worked to institutionalize disaster risk reduction and disaster response in planning among health, education, and public safety agencies. This is partly an answer to the country's experience with the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and partly a forward-looking attempt to address the impacts of climate change. The U.S. has partnered with Sri Lanka's government and people to bolster progress in building resilient communities, entrenching risk reduction practices, and rehearsing actions to be taken in the wake of a disaster.

This handbook sets out some of the historic, social, economic, and climatic context for Sri Lanka's present and future ability to weather natural hazards, climate change, and human-made incidents. The country confronts the risk of floods, landslides, tsunamis, droughts, and cyclones. The Sri Lankan public also confronts the threat of endemic diseases on top of the challenge of pandemics such as COVID-19. To mitigate risks, Sri Lanka's health, education, information technology, energy, and security stakeholders have built early warning systems, incorporated disaster response into school curricula, institutionalized disease reporting processes, and strengthened global partnerships.

In addition to Sri Lanka's engagement with UN agencies, the country's people and business communities are partners of USAID and other global disaster management and humanitarian assistance (DMHA) actors. This presence will strengthen the civilian side of disaster response when Sri Lanka confronts another major disaster. However, equally important is the Sri Lankan Armed Forces' regular engagement with the U.S. Armed Forces and other regional military forces. The U.S. in particular partners with Sri Lankan colleagues in conferences, peer-to-peer talks, subject matter expert exchanges, and full-scale exercises to rehearse military operations in support of DMHA.

While many engagements had to be virtual in 2020, there is every indication that Sri Lanka-U.S. military-to-military partnerships will be revitalized as the COVID-19 pandemic threat recedes. This handbook is an effort to ensure both that the progress made before the pandemic is not lost and that our partnership is forward-looking.



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

The Joint Force, allies, and partners are fully prepared to conduct and support foreign humanitarian assistance.

Mission

CFE-DM builds crisis response capacity, enhances coordination and collaboration, and strengthens relationships to save lives and alleviate human suffering before, during, and after humanitarian crises.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka is a lower middle-income country with an estimated total population of 23 million people.¹ More than a decade after the country's civil war ended, there has been significant economic and diplomatic progress. Nonetheless, social and political weaknesses continue to stymie efforts to ensure all Sri Lankans enjoy the benefits of economic growth.

The economy had been growing at an average of over 5% annually for a decade when the COVID-19 pandemic caused a contraction.² While the economy is relatively diverse, the country does rely heavily on tourism-related services and on exports of consumer goods, both of which were badly hit by the pandemic-induced global slowdown. Sri Lanka's consumer and commodity agricultural activities are expected to better weather the slowdown while tech-oriented manufacturing and services along with mining should be reliable pillars in the post-pandemic economy.³ Having pushed poverty rates down to nearly 4% by 2016, the country may see some rise in poverty rates as workers pushed off the lowest rungs of the employment ladder slip back into poverty.⁴

Sri Lanka maintains a mostly non-aligned diplomatic stance in hopes of avoiding becoming a client state of any world or regional power (India, China, the U.S., etc.). Since 2009, successive governments have cultivated investors, development partners, and regional organizations to insulate the country from great power competition and retain options for seeking assistance.⁵ China and Japan are development and infrastructure investors; India is a key business partner; and the U.S. and Europe are major export markets. Still, concerns are high that Sri Lanka's loss of control of key infrastructural projects due to debt will affect political and diplomatic stances.⁶

The country has expanded public utilities, state-sponsored health care, and modern education as infrastructural development and repair have taken hold, particularly in areas of the north and east coast that were still struggling

to recover from the civil war and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Boxing Day tsunami).⁷ That tsunami is only the most extreme example of natural disasters that Sri Lanka regularly confronts. Storms, flooding, and landslides can accompany tropical cyclones that occasionally strike. Meanwhile, drought is becoming increasingly common as climate change affects the timing and volume of monsoon rains.⁸

Some deep socio-political divisions remain. The Sinhalese (74.9% of the population) have a strong hold on political, economic, and cultural activities.⁹ Tamils (15.4% of the population) and Moors (9.2%)¹⁰ can face discrimination. In the wake of the 2019 Easter bombings, many Muslim Tamils and Muslim Moors confronted harassment or loss of business as their Buddhist Sinhalese and Christian neighbors stayed away out of a mixture of concern over terror threats and anger at the Islamist terror plot that left 250 dead.¹¹ During the COVID-19 pandemic, tensions increased when government ordered that all persons who died of COVID-19 be cremated, contrary to World Health Organization guidance.¹² The policy angered the Muslim community, as Islam forbids cremation. Following pressure that culminated in a visit from Pakistan's Prime Minister,¹³ in February 2021 Sri Lanka reversed the order.¹⁴

In addition to communal tensions, political rivalries stand in the way of needed reform. The present dominance of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna nominally presents President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his Prime Minister-brother, Mahinda (who served as President from 2005 until 2015), an opportunity to drive reforms.¹⁵ However, there are concerns they will use their strong political position to entrench their clan's (and fellow Sinhalese) dominance while exacting revenge on activists and journalists who opposed them during or immediately after the civil war – when Gotabaya was both a military general and Secretary within the Defense Ministry under his brother's Presidency.¹⁶

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Officially named the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the island country commonly called Sri Lanka lies in the Indian Ocean off the southeastern coast of India. Sri Lanka is a multiethnic society, primarily comprised of Buddhist Sinhalese, followed by Hindu Tamils as the largest minority, alongside Muslims, Burghers, and other peoples. Few indigenous Veddah people remain, after successive migration waves of Sinhalese and Tamil people from India, as well as various European colonizers, populated the island for more than the past 2,000 years. The island fell under European rule in the 17th century, first to the Portuguese, then the Dutch, and finally the British. Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon, gained its independence in 1948.

Sri Lanka has a multi-party parliamentary system. A new government is elected by popular election every five years. Legislative authority is executed by a unicameral parliament whose members are selected directly within multi-seat constituencies. The President is elected by direct popular vote and exercises both executive power and the defense portfolio. Colombo is the financial center and serves as the commercial capital, but nearby Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte is officially the administrative capital. The nation's primary export is textiles, though tea, rubber, coconuts, and precious gems are significant to the economy. In the past decade, tourism has also grown considerably as part of the economy's services sector.

Sri Lanka is vulnerable to several natural hazards. Storms, flooding, and drought pose the most frequent risks. Tsunamis occur less frequently but can be high impact when they do strike, as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami had a devastating impact on Sri Lanka. Many of the island nation's vulnerabilities to natural hazards are being exacerbated by climate change.

History

Sri Lanka's current society has been formed by influences from various peoples, cultures, religions, and nations over the centuries. While there are apparent similarities with India – as Sinhalese and Tamil peoples respectively migrated from northern and southern areas of modern-day India – Sri Lankan society distinctly developed with its own unique culture.¹⁷

Pre-historic people are believed to have inhabited Sri Lanka at least as far back as 130,000 BCE, though the timeline may stretch two to three times as far back as that.¹⁸ The indigenous Veddahs, who call themselves *Wanniya-laeto*, are thought to be the only modern descendants of pre-historic Neolithic peoples, with the Veddahs' presence dating back to around 16,000 BCE on the island.¹⁹ Over 15,000 years later, the first Indo-Aryan ancestors of the Sinhalese arrived with Prince Vijaya and his 700 followers from Northern India. According to the *Mahavamsa*, a Buddhist chronicle of Sri Lanka's early history, Prince Vijaya was exiled from his father's kingdom and landed on the west coast of Sri Lanka the same day the Buddha gained enlightenment in 483 BCE. The Sinhalese initially settled in river valleys and cultivated rice. They eventually spread out to the northern plains, enabled by incredible engineering feats that produced tank and irrigation systems as sophisticated as the *qanats* (underground aqueduct) of ancient Persia.²⁰ The largest settlement became Anuradhapura, and it was during the Kingdom of Anuradhapura (377 BCE – 933 CE) that Buddhism arrived in Sri Lanka. Around 246 BCE, Mahinda, son of Emperor Asoka in India, arrived in Sri Lanka with a contingent of Buddhist monks who converted King Devanampiyatissa and eventually all the Sinhalese people.

Numerous invasion attempts originated in India over centuries, resulting in several Tamil kings who took the throne at Anuradhapura. The longest ruling Tamil king, Elara, arrived around 205 BCE and ruled for 44 years. Elara was defeated by Dutugemunu, a prince from the southern part of the island. Dutugemunu had battled through minor kingdoms en route to Anuradhapura, and he is renowned not only for defeating Elara but also becoming the first king to unite the whole island. However, the unity he wrought did not last after his reign. Successive rulers were variously Sinhalese or Tamil kings, and by the 5th century CE Tamil influence had significantly grown, due in part to Sinhalese kings recruiting Tamil mercenaries for support in internal disputes.

Stability was temporarily reestablished during the Polonnaruwa Kingdom (933-1255 CE) with Sinhalese ruler King Parakramabahu I (1153-86), who succeeded Vijayabahu, 43 years after his heirless death. Vijayabahu had captured Polonnaruwa after driving out the Cholas, who hailed from an ancient South Indian Tamil kingdom. Parakramabahu I is among Sri Lanka's most famous kings; he was a great patron of Buddhism, launched a naval expedition against Burma and the Pandyas, another ancient South Indian Tamil kingdom, and he completed a considerable amount of construction in Polonnaruwa, albeit at great expense. Stability and development did not continue long after Parakramabahu's reign. He was succeeded by the peaceful reign of his Tamil brother-in-law, Nissankamalla (1186-1196), whose reign ended when Magha invaded from Kalinga (central-eastern India). Polonnaruwa deteriorated under Magha (1215-1255), leading the mostly Sinhalese population to eventually abandon it and move south.²¹

While Polonnaruwa was in decline, a separate and predominantly Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna was developing in the north. It flourished by controlling pearl fisheries and establishing Jaffna as a trade center for elephants and spices. With continuing waves of migration from South India, Hindu Tamil culture became established in the

north. Meanwhile, the Sinhalese monarchy had split by 1340, with rival kings in or around the central highlands in Gampola and Dedigama. As the Sinhalese had retreated south, a geographic gap was left between them and the Tamil in the north – resulting in a culturally significant divide between the two distinct regions that had different ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures.

The first Europeans to arrive were the Portuguese in 1505,²² when Sri Lanka had three main kingdoms – a Tamil one in Jaffna and two Sinhalese ones in Kandy and Kotte. The Sinhalese kingdom in Kotte was friendly, which led to the Portuguese eventually taking control of the Kotte kingdom. Jaffna at first successfully resisted, but fell in 1619 to the Portuguese, who destroyed the area's many Hindu temples and royal library. The Kandyan kingdom in the central highlands resisted Portuguese rule and became a protector of Buddhism, as Sinhalese Buddhists flocked there. They were not the only ones fleeing forced conversion to Christianity, which the Portuguese imposed with massacres when met with resistance. Many Muslims (descendants of Arab traders who first arrived in the 7th century) also fled inland away from Portuguese persecution.²³

The Dutch arrived in 1602 and by 1658 had wrested control of most of the island from the Portuguese. The exception was Kandy in the central highlands; the rulers of Kandy extended the Dutch a monopoly on the spice trade in a bid to keep Kandy's autonomy. During their 140-year rule, the Dutch built canals along the west coast to ship cinnamon and other crops, and they left a legal legacy that is retained in parts of Sri Lanka's legal code today.

The British took over in 1796 when the Dutch ceded the island as a pragmatic move for protection against French influence from India, following the French takeover of the Netherlands in 1794 amid the French Revolution. By 1815, the British controlled the entire island, including the kingdom of Kandy, which had withstood previous European colonizers, yet gave way to the British due to internal strife between the king and disgruntled courtiers.²⁴ British settlers

established plantations in the central highlands – initially coffee and rubber, then tea by the 1870s – and started bringing in Tamil plantation laborers from the southern part of India (which the British ruled from 1858-1947). These Tamil laborers were known variously as Plantation Tamils, Indian Tamils, Hill Country Tamils, or Up-country Tamils. They were a distinct group from the Tamil community that had been settled on the island for centuries, as the Plantation Tamils were primarily from a lower social caste and were geographically separated from the Tamil population in the north.

Following a half-century of growing nationalism as both Sinhalese and Tamil groups demanded greater participation in government, on 4 February 1948 the island, then known as Ceylon, gained independence from Britain. The name “Ceylon” was a relic of European influence, originating from the Portuguese alteration of Sinhala-dvipa (Island of the Sinhalese) to Ceilão, which the Dutch recast to Ceylan, and the British to Ceylon. The Sinhalese had always referred to the island as Lanka, and Tamils called it Ilankai. The country’s name was eventually changed in 1972 to Sri Lanka, with the addition of ‘Sri’ as a title of respect.²⁵

Shortly after independence, the United National Party (UNP) came to power on an agenda of socialized reforms that nationalized key industries, and it promoted Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism. As the economy slowed, ethnic strife worsened when the UNP disenfranchised Plantation Tamils by revoking their citizenship and moving to repatriate them to India. In 1956, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) came to power and passed a Sinhala-only language law. This was partly fueled by resentment that the Tamils had received preferential treatment under British colonialism. The law not only made Sinhalese the country’s only official language, but it disenfranchised Tamil-speakers – about 30% of the population, comprised of Hindu Tamils and some Muslims – from having access to government jobs. The first island-wide anti-Tamil riots followed in 1958; they lasted several days, displaced thousands of

Tamils, and left more than 200 people dead in violent attacks, including some revenge attacks.

In 1959, as SLFP Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was trying to negotiate with Tamil leaders to build a federation, he was assassinated by a militant Buddhist monk. His widow, Sirimavo, who became known as Mrs. Bandaranaike, won the general election the following year and became the world’s first female prime minister. She continued nationalizing critical industries (including oil), took a hardline stance on enforcing the Sinhala Only law, and deported up to one million Plantation Tamils to India. Power shifted back to the UNP in the 1965 election, but that party made little headway with attempted economic reforms, and Mrs. Bandaranaike was re-elected in 1970.

The 1970s saw the rise of various militant groups, including young Tamil groups advocating for Tamil autonomy, as well as young Sinhalese Marxist groups frustrated with unemployment and wanting radical economic change. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, or People’s Liberation Front) – a predominantly Sinhalese, student-led Marxist revolutionary group – staged an unsuccessful armed rebellion against the government in 1971. The most prominent and notorious of the Tamil groups was the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, or Tamil Tigers). Led by Vellupillai Prabhakaran, the group advocated for an independent Tamil state to be called Eelam (precious land). The LTTE would later be labeled as a terrorist group by multiple nations, and it became the first group to institutionalize suicide bombing as a tactic.²⁶

The Tamil separatist movement was fueled by events in 1981, when Sinhalese mobs burned down Jaffna’s historic library, which contained histories of the Tamil people on ancient palm-leaf manuscripts. A series of reprisals followed, culminating in 1983, when the Tigers killed 13 soldiers in the Jaffna region, leading to anti-Tamil massacres in Colombo. In what is known as Black July, anywhere from 400 to 3,000 Tamils were beaten to death, several Tamil-majority areas in Colombo were looted and levelled, and

the violence spread to anti-Tamil ambushes island-wide. Cyclical reprisal attacks involved atrocities on both sides and escalated into civil war over.

The year 1987 was calamitous on a couple fronts. The JVP, which had become increasingly Sinhalese nationalist, launched a second insurrection. It attempted a Marxist-inspired peasant rebellion in the countryside against the government. The rebellion cost tens of thousands of lives before it was put down the following year. Also in 1987, an Indian peacekeeping force was initiated, but was ultimately unsuccessful. A July 1987 accord called for Sri Lankan security forces to stop an offensive on Jaffna, for LTTE to disarm, and for the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to protect the truce ahead of autonomy for Tamil regions. But opposition to having a foreign peacekeeping force on Sri Lankan soil came from both Tamil and Sinhalese militant groups, and after initial compliance the LTTE refused to disarm and battled with the peacekeeping force. India lost more than 1,000 peacekeepers by the time IPKF withdrew in 1990. India was dealt yet another blow the following year, when former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by the LTTE, presumably in retaliation for the IPKF. The killing marked the first suicide bombing carried out by a female; the assailant was a Black Tiger, a Tamil Tiger trained for suicide attack. The perception that her gender rendered her non-threatening facilitated her getting close to Gandhi. Women were relatively prominent in the Black Tigers and seemed to execute a large share of attacks on political targets.²⁷ The LTTE did not invent the suicide bomb, but it had the dubious distinction of pioneering it as a tactic in war. The LTTE, a secular suicide terrorist group, accounted for 75 of the world's 186 suicide terrorist attacks during the period 1980–2001.²⁸

A ceasefire was brokered by Norway in 2002, but amid accusations of bias on all sides the peace talks eventually faltered. Another event that impacted the war, and possibly prolonged it, was the Indian Ocean tsunami that struck on 26 December 2004. An undersea earthquake

near Indonesia sent a massive tsunami across the Indian Ocean, killing nearly 230,000 people across 14 countries. In Sri Lanka alone, more than 35,000 people died as a result of the tsunami.²⁹ The tsunami damaged LTTE bases along the northeastern coast, costing the rebels some attack boats, weapons caches, and missiles. In a speech two years later, LTTE leader Prabhakaran admitted the tsunami was an occasion when the LTTE postponed its military plans.³⁰ The allocation of relief aid also proved divisive. The LTTE insisted on distributing aid in the portions of northern and eastern Sri Lanka it controlled. They set up the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), which was later revealed as an LTTE fundraising front that diverted millions of dollars to the rebels to build up an arsenal. The U.S. banned the TRO for funding the LTTE, which was on the terrorism lists of the U.S. and at least 30 other countries.³¹

After what was widely seen as a pivotal election for Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa became president in November 2005.³² President Rajapaksa had taken a hard line with the Tamil Tigers and narrowly defeated his opponent, Ranil Wickramasinghe, who had pledged to uphold the ceasefire agreement. Curiously, LTTE's Prabhakaran boycotted the election and forbade Tamils from voting. The majority of Tamils supported Wickramasinghe, and their votes very likely would have resulted in his victory. Instead, it was during Rajapaksa's leadership that the LTTE were eventually defeated.³³

Another ceasefire in 2006 also unraveled as both sides resumed military operations in the north and the east, and a wave of disappearances and killings over the following year prompted international human rights criticism toward both parties to the conflict. The final years leading up to the end of the war in 2009 were marked by some of the worst violence in the 30-year civil war. In September 2008, the government, stating it could no longer guarantee their safety, ordered UN agencies and NGOs to leave the Vanni region, although the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was permitted to remain.³⁴ This departure resulted in

a lack of humanitarian support or human rights monitors for the trapped Tamil population. As independent journalists were also barred from the conflict area, it remains very difficult to independently verify claims about human rights abuses. By early 2009, the LTTE had lost control over almost all of the territory it had controlled one year earlier and, along with 300,000 Tamil civilians, they were penned into a small area in the northeast near Mullaittivu. As the end of fighting neared, UN investigations reported that human rights abuses were likely committed by both sides. Allegations of abuses remain a controversial issue, with various government inquiry commissions or international reports addressing the matter.³⁵ In May 2009, the Sri Lankan military surrounded the last few hundred remaining LTTE rebels. Prabhakaran and other senior Tiger rebels were killed, and the three-decade civil war came to an end.

Following the war's end, Sri Lanka experienced an influx of international tourism and money even as thousands of primarily Tamil people displaced from the conflict remained in camps and reconstruction and development efforts were ongoing. Infrastructure development increased, roads were newly constructed or repaved, a second international airport was built, and a deep-water port in the prime minister's home district of Hambantota in the south was developed with Chinese funding. The Hambantota port raised international concern over debt compromising sovereignty if loans for infrastructure development projects cannot be repaid to Beijing. While Sri Lanka retains ownership of the port, a majority stake has been leased to China Merchants Port Holdings Company Limited for 99 years.³⁶

In 2015 Maithripala Sirisena was elected president in a surprising loss for incumbent Mahinda Rajapaksa, who had lost the support of his own party over corruption and expanded presidential powers. During his tenure, President Sirisena introduced a two-term limit for the presidency and eased media censorship, though other reforms did not make headway. In late 2018, a coalition breakdown led the President to

dissolve parliament and triggered a governance crisis. The Supreme Court resolved competing claims to governing legitimacy, resulting in Ranil Wickramasinghe replacing his old rival, Mahinda Rajapaksa, as prime minister. However, Wickramasinghe stepped down as prime minister after a year, following the November 2019 presidential elections. Newly elected President Gotabaya Rajapaksa then appointed Mahinda, his brother, as Prime Minister.³⁷

Issues from the civil war have not simply disappeared. Part of the complicated dynamic in Sri Lankan society is that there are voices calling for addressing the rights of aggrieved communities, while there is also a focus on reconstruction and future development.

Culture and Demographics

Sri Lanka has a population of more than 22 million people, ethnically comprised of Sinhalese, Tamil, Moor, Burgher, and other various groups, including the indigenous Veddah or Wanniyala-aetto, all of whom contribute to the nation's complex and layered cultural dynamics. The official spoken and written languages are Sinhala and Tamil, but English is also commonly used. The national religion is Buddhism, though Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and other religions are also practiced.

Sri Lankan music has varied influences, including religious chanting, drums, Indian Bollywood musicals, and songs from African slaves brought by Portuguese and British colonizers. Sri Lanka's classical dance goes back 2,500 years, and is accompanied by drums, cymbals, and bells. Costumes, body movement, and rhythm vary across styles, from the masked, low-country dances to five styles of Kandyan dancing.

In general, Sri Lanka's culture places a high value on education, family relations, tradition, and the community. Religion also plays a significant part in daily life. Sri Lanka had traditionally been an agrarian society, with the exception of the indigenous Veddah or

Wanniyala-aetto, who were traditional hunter-gatherers. While the majority of the population still live in rural towns, there has been increasing migration to cities for work and education. The urban populations tend to be more Westernized in living style, while the rural populations are generally more conservative.³⁸

Ethnic Makeup

The main ethnic groups in Sri Lanka include the Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Burghers, and the indigenous Veddahs or Wanniyala-aetto. The Sinhalese comprise 74.9% of the population, Tamils 15.4%, and Moors or Muslims 9.2%. Burghers, Veddahs, and others (e.g. Malay, etc.) combined comprise the remaining 0.5% of the population.³⁹

The Sinhalese are the dominant ethnic group and are predominantly Buddhist. Among themselves, Sinhalese may identify as “low country” or “high country” (Kandyan). The Kandyans consider their spiritual hub to be the Hill Country’s Kandy – the last capital of the Sinhala kings until British occupation in 1815.⁴⁰

Sri Lanka’s Tamils can broadly be divided into two groups; the first, the Sri Lankan or “Jaffna Tamils” (11.2% of Sri Lanka’s population), are found in the island’s north and east where they have lived for many centuries whereas the Indian or “Plantation Tamils” (4.2% of the Sri Lankan population) were brought from India by the British in the 1800s to work on tea plantations. Tamils are predominantly Hindu, with Jaffna Tamils mainly from the high-ranked Vellala caste and Plantation Tamils mainly from lower castes. Although traditional caste distinctions are not now as strongly recognized as they were historically, the system endures as enough of a cultural factor that inter-caste marriage can still be controversial, especially in rural areas.

Sri Lankan Moors are Muslim descendants of Arab or Indian traders who arrived approximately 1,000 years ago. Many of the Sri Lankan Moors moved to the east coast or into the “Hill Country” of the Central Highlands to

flee Portuguese persecution. Most Moors speak Tamil.

The Burghers are multiethnic descendants of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British – primarily men – who intermarried with Sri Lankan women. Many Burghers are Christian and speak English as their first language. The term comes from the Dutch *Vrij Burgher* (free citizen), as children of the initial unions between Dutch or Portuguese men and local Sinhalese women could not at the time claim citizenship from either their birth country or the European country of their father. They predominantly have European surnames, which stem from the patrilineal legal definition made in 1883 by the Chief Justice of (then) Ceylon, delineating Burghers as people having a father born in Sri Lanka and with at least one European ancestor on one’s direct paternal side. Most Burghers live in the cities, including Colombo, Matara, and Galle.⁴¹ While Burghers have mixed cultural influences, they are the most Westernized ethnic group in Sri Lanka.⁴²

The indigenous Veddahs (Hunters) refer to themselves as Wanniyala-aetto (People of the Forest). They are the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka, descending from a Neolithic community present by at least 16,000 BCE in Sri Lanka.⁴³ Their population has been dwindling and they are now so few in number that they have not been tallied in their own category in the census in recent decades;⁴⁴ the indigenous population is estimated to be approximately 0.05% (1/20th of 1%) of Sri Lanka’s total population.⁴⁵ Successive waves of migration to Sri Lanka left the Wanniyala-aetto with ever less forest to subsist on.⁴⁶ They are a matrilineal society, but many aspects of their traditional lifestyle are endangered, with modern legislation criminalizing hunting and gathering without permits.⁴⁷ Only a small portion of Wanniyala-aetto retain their hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Most of this indigenous people – both the Kele Weddo (jungle-dwelling) and Can Weddo (village-dwelling) – primarily reside in the area between Badulla, Batticaloa, and Polonnaruwa.⁴⁸

Key Population Centers

While the last official government census in 2012 placed Sri Lanka's population at 20,359,439, the estimated population in 2018 grew to 22,409,381.⁴⁹ Sri Lanka is planning to conduct the next census of population and housing in 2021.⁵⁰ The population is primarily concentrated within a broad wet zone in the southwest, in urban centers along the eastern coast, and on the Jaffna Peninsula in the north. Approximately 20% of the people live in cities. The migration from rural areas has been increasing. Between 1999 and 2010, Sri Lanka experienced the fastest urban expansion within the Southeast Asian region.⁵¹ While Colombo and other major cities are common destinations for rural migrants, the growing tourism economy has enabled domestic migrants to also circulate around the country.

The most populous city is Colombo, considered the country's financial and cultural center, with an estimated population of 753,000 in the city center, as of a 2018 estimate.⁵² However, this expands to some 5.6 million when including the district's surrounding metropolitan area. Other major cities in Sri Lanka are not nearly as populous as Colombo; cities include the administrative capital of Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, along with Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia, Moratuwa, Negombo, Kandy, Kalmunai, Vavuniya, Galle, and Trincomalee.⁵³

Language

The official languages of Sri Lanka are Sinhalese and Tamil. Approximately 74% of the population speak Sinhalese as a first language, and 18% speak Tamil; additional people may speak each as a second language. English is additionally considered a "link language" and is spoken by almost 25% of the population.⁵⁴ English is usually the first language of the Burghers and a second language for other Sri Lankans in major cities or areas frequented by tourists. English in Sri Lanka has developed its own unique characteristics, spelling, and words, and is dubbed Sri Lankan English.

Sinhala is an Indo-Aryan language spoken only in Sri Lanka but is related to Maldivian

Dhivehi. It has evolved distinctly from the language that Prince Vijaya brought over from an Indian kingdom in the 5th century BCE. Over the centuries it has absorbed some influence from Tamil, and a bit from Portuguese, Dutch, Malay, and English. Written Sinhala can differ significantly from colloquial, spoken Sinhala. The written script consists of 47 characters. Tamil is a Dravidian language and was brought to Sri Lanka by South Indians in the 3rd century BCE. It is also found in southern India, Malaysia, and Singapore, but Tamil in Sri Lanka has developed as a distinct dialect with a unique accent and vocabulary. Tamil is spoken in Sri Lanka primarily in the north and east. Written Sinhala and Tamil both have curvilinear scripts, though the Tamil script features more rectangular shapes. Muslims or Moors in Sri Lanka predominantly speak Tamil with Arabic words sprinkled in, though Muslims living in the south and west regions may speak Sinhala as well.⁵⁵

Language may be a sensitive topic. In 1956, a "Sinhala Only" law was passed, which prevented Tamils from taking government positions and effectively demoted the Tamil language. Tamil was reinstated as an official language in 1987, through the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.⁵⁶ Schools are required to teach Sinhala, Tamil, and English. One related USAID activity is facilitating access to teachers of the different languages, as part of a reconciliation program.⁵⁷

Religion

The dominant religion is Buddhism, followed by 70.2% of the people in Sri Lanka. The population also consists of Hindus (12.6%), Muslims (9.7%), Christians (7.4%), and others, as of 2018 estimates. The Sinhalese are predominantly Buddhist, Tamils predominantly Hindu, Moors predominantly Muslim, and Burghers primarily Christian.

As the predominant religion, Buddhism has a significant impact on Sri Lankan culture and society. Buddhist images and artifacts are treated with the utmost respect, and sporting images

of the Buddha in body art (e.g., tattoos) or on clothing is often deemed offensive.⁵⁸

Photo 1 depicts Gal Vihara, the rock temple of the Buddha; it was originally known as Uttararama (northern monastery). Carved in the 12th century during the reign of Parakramabahu I, it is located in the ancient city of Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka's North Central Province. The temple's central feature is four Buddha statues carved into a large rock face, with the largest rock relief image being the reclining Buddha, which is over 14 m (46 feet) in length.⁵⁹

Vulnerable Groups

There are vulnerable groups in every society. They face higher degrees of social disadvantage or structural inequality, which impact quality of life outcomes. In Sri Lanka, these groups may include, but are not limited to internally displaced persons (IDPs), various ethnic minorities, and women in certain aspects.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Disasters are the main drivers of internal displacement in Sri Lanka and caused 100,000 new displacements in 2018. However, disaster-induced displacements tend to be shorter in duration than conflict-driven displacements. From 1 January to 31 December 2019, there were 87,000 occurrences of new displacements due to disasters (a measure which reflects movements, not people, and may not identify individuals displaced several times), but by the end of 2019 there were only 4,900 internally displaced persons (IDPs) still displaced by disaster. This compares with 27,000 IDPs displaced by conflict or violence by the end of 2019 in Sri Lanka.⁶⁰ There has been significant progress since 2009, the end of Sri Lanka's 30-year civil war when more than a million people were displaced. By the end of 2019, an estimated 25,889 people were still displaced as a result of the war.

A 2019 report by the Internal Displacement



Photo 1: The Reclining Buddha, in the Gal Vihara (Stone Temple), in Polonnaruwa

Monitoring Centre records several caseloads of IDPs in Sri Lanka, including protracted IDPs and IDPs recently displaced by religious tensions and anti-Muslim sentiments.⁶¹

Increasing religious tensions are a significant concern and reflect increased politicization of religious identity. In March 2018, 1,100 people were displaced following anti-Muslim riots in Kandy, which were sparked when a Sinhalese man died after being beaten by Muslim men following a traffic accident.⁶² In April 2019, 300 people were displaced during anti-Muslim riots in Minuwagoda, Negombo, and Kurunegala. In April 2019, more than 1,400 people were evacuated during military operations in Ampara district. Both 2019 incidents followed the Easter Sunday attacks of 21 April 2019, when Islamic militants carried out simultaneous suicide attacks on churches and hotels.⁶³

Plantation Tamils

Tamil plantation laborers are among the more isolated groups on the island. They are variously referred to as Plantation Tamils, Hill Country Tamils, Upcountry Tamils, or even Indian Tamils. Tamil plantation workers were brought in from southern India by the British colonizers in the 19th century to work the plantations. However, they hail from a lower social caste and are also separated geographically and historically from the Tamils who largely inhabit the island's north and who trace their roots in Sri Lanka back over centuries or millennia. As plantation workers, Plantation Tamils live close to the tea fields on the plantation estates with their families in small adjoining houses, often in overcrowded conditions. They are dependent on plantation estate owners for housing, water, and health care.⁶⁴ After independence, amid a growing Buddhist Sinhalese nationalism, many Plantation Tamils were stripped of citizenship and forcibly repatriated to India, a country most had never been to or did not remember. (While the longer-settled “Jaffna Tamils” in the north were also disenfranchised by Sinhalese-only laws, they were not rendered stateless.) The Plantation Tamils’ stateless status was legally rectified

in 2003, when Parliament passed legislation allowing them and their children to receive Sri Lankan citizenship. The legislation attempts to correct legal limitations for Plantation Tamils. “Persons without citizenship are denied some of the most basic rights and entitlements: they cannot open a bank account, own property, or work for the government; they cannot obtain an identity card, a birth certificate, a marriage certificate, or a passport; if they leave the country they cannot return,” said UNHCR Representative Neill Wright.⁶⁵

In the north, Jaffna Tamils did not face statelessness nor the isolation of living on plantations as laborers, but they can face some degree of discrimination as an ethnic minority. The manifestations of this can vary from intermittent communal violence to a lack of public services in their own language.⁶⁶ Although Tamil was restored as an official language in 1987, in 2015 then-President Sirisena felt the need to state that the national anthem could be sung in Tamil at official and institutional events. In 2020, President Rajapaksa stated the anthem would only be sung in Sinhala during Independence Day celebrations.⁶⁷

Muslims

While many minority groups have been affected by violence, the vulnerability of the local Muslim community may be increasing, particularly given reactions following the 2019 Easter bombings as well as the issue of Muslims not being allowed to bury those who die from COVID-19.

Most Sri Lankan Muslims are Sunni, but the Muslim community is not homogenous, and some follow Sufism, the mystical form of Islam. Most speak Tamil as their first language, leading them to sometimes be categorized with the Tamil minority (who are predominantly Hindu), although some Muslims do speak the majority language, Sinhala. The decades-long civil war is largely framed as between Tamil rebels and the Sinhalese majority (who are predominantly Buddhist), but the LTTE rebels also targeted Muslims, notably massacring worshippers in

mosques⁶⁸ and forcibly expelling Muslims from the Northern province in the early 1990s.⁶⁹ Amid the Tamil Tigers' rebellion, missionary Islamic movements arrived in Sri Lanka, leading to internal clashes among Muslims. A 2006 attack upon a Sufi Mosque perpetrated by Islamic fundamentalists highlighted the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism and stark divisions in the Muslim community.⁷⁰

Tensions for the Muslim community increased in the wake of attacks on Easter Sunday 2019. On 21 April 2019, coordinated bomb attacks were perpetrated against three churches – two Roman Catholic and one Protestant – and three hotels frequented by foreigners and locals,⁷¹ killing 270 people and injuring 500 more.⁷² The attacks were claimed by ISIS⁷³ and linked to little-known local Islamist groups, but triggered a backlash against the broader local Muslim community in Sri Lanka. Although fringe actors executed this first occurrence of Muslim-on-Christian mass violence, politicians and Sinhalese nationalists have used the bombings to justify actions that harass the broader local Muslim community in Sri Lanka. Reports indicated the main culprits were a radical Salafi preacher, M.C.M. Zaharan, whose own religious organizations had cut ties with him over his aggressive rhetoric, and two radicalized brothers who came from a prominent Colombo business family. A government commission of inquiry also held the President, Prime Minister and intelligence community at the time partially accountable for negligence for not acting on available information and warning signs. Prior to this attack, Sri Lankan Muslims did not have a history of tension with local Christians.⁷⁴

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the perception of discrimination among the Muslim community has increased, with the government mandating compulsory cremation of all who died from COVID-19. Cremation is considered a “haram” or unclean practice in Islam and is forbidden for Muslims, although it is a common practice among Buddhists (the majority religion) and Hindus (minority, but second-largest religious group). The policy engendered an intense amount of resentment

among Sri Lankan Muslims, with even the Muslim Council of Britain lodging a complaint with the UN Human Rights Council on behalf of UK families whose relatives in Sri Lanka were cremated. Some Christians, who generally practice burial, were also unhappy with the cremation order, which came despite World Health Organization guidelines and statements from Sri Lankan doctors' groups allowing burials for people who die from COVID-19.⁷⁵ Following international pressure, including from the Prime Minister of Pakistan, a country Sri Lanka has warm relations with,⁷⁶ Sri Lankan Prime Minister Rajapaksa stated in February 2021 that Muslims who die of COVID-19 will be permitted burials.⁷⁷

Indigenous Veddahs or Wanniyala-aetto

The indigenous Veddah or Wanniyala-aetto people are estimated to comprise approximately 0.05% (1/20th of 1%) of Sri Lanka's total population.⁷⁸ Their population has dwindled as they have been displaced by successive waves of settlers over centuries, including the Dutch, Portuguese, British, Sinhalese, and Tamil. Many Veddah have assimilated with mainstream Sinhalese and Tamil society, with remaining small Veddah communities scattered in the Eastern, Uva, and North Central Provinces, where there are Veddah settlements in Dambana, Rathugala, Pollebedda, Dalukana, Henanigala, Vakarai, Muttur, Anuradhapura, and Panama. Contributing factors to their population decline have included: an 1809 fever epidemic referenced in oral histories; conflict during the great rebellion of 1817-1818 featuring Kandyan chiefs against the British; and, most significantly, displacement from land they traditionally lived on or accessed for livelihoods, particularly due to the establishment of colonial coffee and later tea plantations in the 19th century and modern development projects, including irrigation, agricultural extension, infrastructure, tourism, and post-2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and post-conflict development projects. Research indicates a significant portion of the community may live in immense poverty. Distinct Veddah cultural, religious, and language practices have largely vanished. Many aspects of Veddahs'

lives, including subsistence patterns, economic activities, and family life, have assimilated into mainstream Sinhalese or Tamil cultures.⁷⁹

Women

The status of women in Sri Lanka is relatively high compared to the South Asian region, but it can vary depending on which factors are focused upon. According to the 2020 Gender Inequality Index, Sri Lanka ranks 90 out of 189 countries.⁸⁰ Women only hold 5.3% of the seats in Parliament (12 out of 225), though elections to local seats are increasing due to a 2016 amendment requiring that women hold one-quarter of seats. The 2016 gender quota led to 17,000 women running among more than 56,000 candidates for over 8,000 seats to be filled in 2018. That year, female representation increased from 89 to 2,300, primarily at the local level. However, women participating in political leadership roles continue to face challenges, from structural entry barriers to harassment.⁸¹ The education structure does not encourage women pursuing politics; women politicians lack finances to run competitive campaigns (one municipal councilor from Moratuwa estimated it costs about LKR25 million (US\$125,400) to campaign throughout a district); and barriers for women are higher to enter political parties without men's extensive patronage networks, reflected in the few women in Parliament having had their entry largely facilitated by their relation to male politicians.⁸²

Significant strides have been made to create equal opportunities for women, particularly in terms of free and equal access to education and healthcare. Literacy rates are very high across the population and nearly equal among genders, with a 91% literacy rate among women and girls aged 15 and older, and a 93% literacy rate for men and boys the same age. However, work force opportunities are limited, with women only having a 35% labor force participation rate compared to 75% for men, and with the gap usually increasing in rural areas.⁸³

There are relatively high levels of violence against women in Sri Lanka, with the 2019 Women's Wellbeing Survey showing that one in five women ever partnered have experienced

physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Inegalitarian attitudes can be widespread, with even one-third of women stating men may have a good reason to hit their wife or partner. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging reports reflect that violence against women and girls – particularly domestic violence – has increased in Sri Lanka.⁸⁴ The island nation's situation has unfortunately reflected a trend among many countries around the world, including the U.S., where rising domestic violence incidents amid COVID-19 lockdowns and unemployment comprise a shadow pandemic.⁸⁵

Tamil-speaking women in the country's north for years have advocated for truth and accountability for acts committed during the civil war, but have often been marginalized in the transitional justice process. Many women's war experiences include the deaths and forced disappearance of family members, sexual violence, forced recruitment and killing by the LTTE, and destruction of homes and communities. Although women's activism has increased visibility of these issues, women have few decision-making roles in transitional justice policies. Tens of thousands of Tamil-speaking women in the north and east have had to become heads of household and primary income earners following their husbands being killed or going missing in the war. Muslim and Sinhala women in the north and east have also faced their own difficulties from the war, and neither are they thoroughly included in transitional justice processes.⁸⁶

For more information on women in Sri Lanka, see the Women, Peace, and Security section.

Economics

Sri Lanka is categorized as a lower-middle-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$3,852 as of 2019. After the civil war ended in 2009, the economy grew at an average rate of 5.3% from 2010 through 2019. The immediate post-war years saw an even higher growth rate of around 5.8%, reflecting policies focused on reconstruction and development; the growth has slowed somewhat

in recent years. The economy contracted slightly for the first time in the first quarter of 2020. Since then, the COVID-19 health crisis is believed to have severely impacted economic activity, though the full effects are still being determined.

What was once a predominantly rural-based economy is shifting toward an urbanized economy with strong growth in manufacturing and service sectors. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) comprise a large portion of commerce, along with government-owned institutions and a smaller but growing number of multinational corporations. The country has been attracting more foreign investors, though Sri Lanka still has a lower volume of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) than neighboring countries, which is partially attributed to complex bureaucratic regulations, the amount of time needed to acquire licenses and permits, and relatively high taxes. The national poverty rate has declined from 15.3% in 2006-2007 to 4.1% in 2016. While a significant portion of the population is living just slightly above the poverty line, extreme poverty is rare.⁸⁷

Significant areas of the country's economy include services (including tourism), textiles, apparel, tea exports, rice, construction (especially ports), and telecommunications. The services sector is the largest sector of the economy, contributing approximately 62% of GDP and employing 45% of the labor force. A major part of the services sector is tourism, which has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism activity was halted by airport closures to tourists originally planned for April to September 2020, but extended to January 2021. The COVID-19 crisis has led to job and earnings losses, which may reverse some of the gains made against poverty. There have reportedly been significant jobs cuts in the apparel industry, which typically employed about half a million workers. While agricultural production was not as disrupted as other sectors, declining external demand is impacting export-oriented subsectors.⁸⁸

Sri Lanka has received approximately \$1.2 billion in lending from the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) since June 2016 with a new disbursement of \$164.1 million agreed upon in May 2019.

Sri Lanka exported a total of \$11.1 billion in goods in 2018, with tea and garments among the leading export products. The United States is Sri Lanka's largest export market, accounting for almost 25% of the \$11.7 billion of goods Sri Lanka exports annually. Exports from Sri Lanka to the U.S. are mostly apparel, but also include rubber, industrial supplies, gemstones, tea, and spices.⁸⁹ Other export markets for Sri Lanka include India (8%), Germany (7%), the United Kingdom (7%), Italy (4%), Belgium-Luxembourg (3%), France (3%), and China (3%). Sri Lanka imported \$18.7 billion in 2018, with China and India being the largest origin markets, each accounting for 23% of imports into Sri Lanka. Other key origins of imports are Singapore (9%), Japan (6%), Malaysia (4%), and the United Arab Emirates (3%). Leading import products into Sri Lanka are refined petroleum, cars, light rubberized knitted fabrics, broadcasting equipment, and packaged medicaments (mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic uses).⁹⁰

Government

Officially called the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the country is a presidential republic. The president is both chief of state and head of government, as well as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The president is elected by a simple majority (more than 50%) of the popular vote and may serve up to two five-year terms. The president appoints the prime minister from the ruling party, and the prime minister serves as deputy to the president and as head of the cabinet.

The legislative branch consists of a unicameral Parliament, where members serve 5-year terms. Out of 225 total seats, 196 members are directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation using ranked-choice voting, which uses a ranked ballot for the voter to select three candidates in order of preference.

The remaining 29 seats are allocated to other political parties and groups in proportion to the share of the national vote. The most recent elections were held on 5 August 2020, having been postponed multiple times from 25 April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP, also known as the Sri Lanka People's Front) won a major victory with 145 seats; the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) party won 54 seats; the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) won 10 seats, and the main opposition United National Party (UNP) won only one seat.⁹¹ SLPP is the party of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, whose brother Mahinda Rajapaksa (who served as President from 2005 until 2015) holds the office of Prime Minister.⁹²

The judicial branch consists primarily of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, where judges are appointed by the president and serve until 65 years of age. The High Court and a number of subordinate courts are also components of the judiciary. Legal influences have come from multiple cultures, including British criminal law and Roman-Dutch civil law. Kandyan, Jaffna, and Muslim laws wield regional influence in personal disputes.⁹³

In 2017, a historic mandate was approved requiring 25% of locally elected government officials be women, a change that followed years of lobbying by women's organizations. Local elections in 2018 saw significant changes in the political landscape, with nearly 2,000 women elected out of approximately 8,000 total seats filled in local government – a drastic improvement over women filling only 82 local seats in 2011. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) played a role by supporting the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) to work with Sri Lanka's Women Parliamentarians Caucus to train some 2,400 local women leaders in awareness of the new quota system, focusing on motivation, leadership, and campaign skills.⁹⁴

The official legislative capital is Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte. However, Colombo – the largest and most populous city in Sri Lanka – is the commercial capital and financial center.

Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte lies within the larger surrounding metropolitan area of Colombo, akin to a suburb.⁹⁵

Environment

Geography

Sri Lanka is located in the Indian Ocean, southwest of the Bay of Bengal. The island country is situated close to the equator, located largely between 6-10° North, and primarily, though not entirely, between 80-82° East. Sri Lanka lies just east of India's southern tip, separated from India by the Palk Strait to the north and Gulf of Mannar to the south. A geographic feature in the ocean that separates the Palk Strait from the Gulf of Mannar is a broken chain of limestone islets and shoals known as Adam's Bridge or Rama's Bridge (Rama Setu), where waters are at most 1 m (3 feet) deep between the islets and shoals or reefs. This feature is visible in the satellite image of Sri Lanka shown in Photo 2.⁹⁶

Sri Lanka has an impressive variety of topographical features, including plains, mountains, plateaus, rivers, and rain forests. However, the geography can be distinguished by three categories of elevation – the coastal belt, the plains, and the mountainous Central Highlands also known as “Hill Country.” While the country's average elevation is 228 m (748 feet), Sri Lanka is mostly made up of plains that are between 30 and 200 m (98 and 656 feet) above sea level. In the east and north, the plain is flat and divided by long, narrow ridges of granite running from the central highlands. The Central Highlands, or “Hill Country,” is in the south-central interior region where the highest point in Sri Lanka can be found – Pidurutalagala at 2,524 m (8,280 feet). The Central Highlands are the source of most of the island's rivers, which flow radially out toward the ocean. Much of the coast is comprised of sandy beaches, and the coastal belt area surrounding the island lies about 30m (98 feet) above sea level. With a land area of 65,610 square kilometers (25,332 square miles), Sri Lanka is comparable in area to the U.S. state of West Virginia and slightly smaller

than Ireland. In the northeast, the port of Trincomalee is among the largest and safest natural harbors in the world.⁹⁷

Borders

As an island country in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka has no land boundaries. The country has 1,340 km (832 miles) of coastline. Its nearest neighbor is India, located to the northwest, across the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait.

Climate

Being located relatively close to the equator, Sri Lanka experiences a warm climate year-round, particularly in the lowland regions. The country does have a mix of different climate zones, with multiple monsoon seasons occurring at different times on opposite sides of the island. Most of the island – west, north, east, and southeast – has a tropical climate with wet and dry seasons. In the north and east, the Maha monsoon season can run from October through January or February. The Yala monsoon season occurs from May through approximately August and brings rain to the south and west coasts as well as to the mountainous south-central region known as the “Hill Country”.⁹⁸ The Hill Country experiences warm to hot summers with mild winters. December to March is the driest season for both the “Hill Country” and beaches on the west and south coasts. April and September offer the highest chance of moderate weather countrywide.⁹⁹



Photo 2: The Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar Separate Sri Lanka from India.

DISASTER OVERVIEW

Climate Change

Sri Lanka is very vulnerable to current and anticipated effects of climate change. In regards to countries affected by climate change, Sri Lanka was ranked as the 6th most affected country in the world in 2018, according to the Global Climate Risk Index released in 2020; the Index looks at extreme weather events and analyzes to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of weather-related loss events (storms, floods, heatwaves, etc.). Climate change is attributed as a factor in Sri Lanka experiencing increasingly severe monsoon rains, which, in 2018, killed 24 people, displaced 6,000, and affected 170,000.¹⁰⁰

Climate change threatens to erode Sri Lanka's gains in economic development and poverty reduction made in the last two decades. Approximately 25% of Sri Lanka's population live within 1 km (0.6 miles) of the coast, in areas threatened by future sea level rise. Primary economic drivers – including tourism, commercial agriculture, and manufacturing – are vulnerable to extreme weather events and sea level rise. Additional effects of climate change, including deforestation, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity, also threaten to reduce the country's economic output. Projected changes in Sri Lanka's climate as a result of climate change include:

- Increase in mean annual temperature of between 0.8°C and 2°C by 2060.
- Increase in both daily maximum and minimum temperatures of between 0.7°C and 0.8°C by 2050.
- Projections of change in precipitation vary, with some predicting decreases and some increases, but they generally indicate an increase in variability and extreme events.
- Increase in cyclone frequency and intensity.
- Increased frequency and severity of floods, drought incidence, and landslides.

- Total sea level rise of between 0.2 and 0.6 meters by mid-century, compared to 1971-2010 levels.¹⁰¹

Hazards

The natural hazards that Sri Lanka is most at risk from include tsunamis, floods, epidemics, cyclones, droughts, coastal erosion, and sea level rise.

Tsunami

Sri Lanka's tsunami hazard risk is classified as medium, with a greater than 10% chance of a potentially damaging tsunami occurring in the next 50 years. Coastal areas will be at increased risk of tsunami due to the impact of climate change and the rise of the global average sea level.¹⁰² While not necessarily a frequent occurrence, when tsunamis do occur the impact can be devastating. Sri Lanka suffered massive damage from the historic Indian Ocean tsunami, which struck on 26 December 2004, killing more than 30,000 people in Sri Lanka alone,¹⁰³ and leading to 200,000-300,000 deaths across a dozen countries around the Indian Ocean rim.¹⁰⁴

Flood

Localized and seasonal flooding occurs frequently in Sri Lanka, particularly during the monsoons. Between 1974 and 2008, there were more than 1,000 flood events, including riverine, urban, and flash flooding.¹⁰⁵ The flood risk profile is rising in Sri Lanka from the expected increase of hydro-meteorological hazards, attributable to climate change.¹⁰⁶ Coastal flood hazard poses a medium risk, with a more than a 20% chance of potentially damaging coastal flood waves occurring in the next 10 years.¹⁰⁷ However, urban flood hazard poses a high risk, with potentially damaging and life-threatening urban floods expected to occur at least once in the next 10 years.¹⁰⁸

Epidemic

Sri Lanka experiences various disease outbreaks, particularly of mosquito-borne illnesses. Frequent dengue transmission seems driven by climate change, as its occurrence seems to correlate with multiple variables interlinked to

climate change (precipitation levels, increasing temperatures, humidity, etc.), and with occurrences especially high in regions with high population density.¹⁰⁹ Leptospirosis and rodent-borne diseases also correlate with monsoon seasons. An increase in the prevalence of dysentery, hepatitis, and typhoid is also expected as a result of increased flooding and droughts linked to climate change.¹¹⁰

COVID-19 is certainly having a huge impact on Sri Lanka, from health to economic sectors. Sri Lanka is one of several countries for which the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate shocks is likely to increase food insecurity.¹¹¹

Cyclone

The risk from cyclone hazards in Sri Lanka is high. Cyclone Roanu in 2016 and Cyclone Mora in 2017 were among tropical cyclones with the highest impact on Sri Lanka in decades. Cyclone Roanu brought the largest recorded rainfall in more than 18 years. This led to flooding in 24 of Sri Lanka's 25 districts, covering 1,400 square km (540 square miles), affecting almost half a million people, and causing US\$600 million in damage. In 2017, Cyclone Mora brought flooding that affected 15 districts in the south and caused major landslides. Impacts included about US\$415 million in damage, including to infrastructure, and significant disruptions to agricultural operations (tea, rubber and coconut plantations, and paddy fields).¹¹²

Drought

Drought is also a common hazard due to the variation in monsoon seasons. Drought tops the list of disaster-related events that contribute to the costs of sustaining national healthcare. The healthcare costs associated with floods and droughts are estimated at US\$52.8 million annually, with 78% of the costs originating from droughts.¹¹³

History of Natural Disasters

The following is an overview of natural disasters affecting Sri Lanka in the last five years.

2020: December – Cyclone Burevi and Flooding

Cyclone Burevi struck Sri Lanka on 2 December 2020, with wind speeds of 60-100 kph (37-62 mph). Flooding affected the northern tip of the island, namely Jaffna and Kilinochchi

districts.¹¹⁴ Authorities had evacuated more than 75,000 people, most of them from the Trincomalee area on the east coast, before the cyclone hit.¹¹⁵ Damage was minimal, comprising 12 houses submerged by a flash flood in Trincomalee district. More than 630 families were accommodated in temporary relief camps, while some 1,700 families made personal arrangements in safe locations.¹¹⁶

Weeks after Cyclone Burevi dissipated, rainfall continued to intensify in the Northern Province due to the northeast monsoon. More than 100,000 people were affected, 106 houses fully destroyed, and 3,783 houses partially damaged. Of the 14 districts affected, Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts were the most severely impacted.¹¹⁷

2020: May – Heavy Rains

Strong winds and heavy rains on 16-17 May 2020 affected 2,000 people. Two people were killed, five people were injured, and more than 500 houses were partially damaged. The adverse weather was induced by the proximity of Cyclone Amphan, which formed in the Bay of Bengal and directly struck India and Bangladesh.¹¹⁸ Reflective of their role in domestic disaster response, all three branches of the armed forces took precautionary measures. The Sri Lanka Navy pre-deployed rescue and relief teams with boats in flood risk areas and cleared bottlenecks under bridges and waterways in flood prone areas. The Sri Lanka Air Force stationed helicopters and placed rescue crews on standby at several locations. The Sri Lanka Army positioned troops in high-risk areas and prepared to deploy if the Disaster Management Centre had requested assistance.¹¹⁹

2020: March to May – Drought

From March to May 2020, the number of people reportedly affected by drought grew from 39,801 in four districts,¹²⁰ to over 500,000 people in 14 districts across 8 provinces. By May, drinking water was being distributed in six provinces: Sabaragamuwa, Central, Western, North Western, North Central, and Eastern. Drought-affected areas included Sabaragamuwa Province (Kegalle and Rathnapura districts); Central Province (Kandy district); Western Province (Gampaha and Kalutara districts, with the latter also experiencing sea water contamination in drinking water); North Western Province (Puttalam district); Southern Province (Matara and Hambantota districts);

North Central Province (Polonnaruwa district); Eastern Province (Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts); and Northern Province (Jaffna, Mannar, Killinochchi, and Mulaitivu districts).¹²¹ The onset of the southwest monsoon in May improved the situation.

2019: December - Floods and Landslides

From 2-25 December 2019, heavy rains inundated the island, leading to widespread flooding and landslides. This resulted in 16 deaths, more than 7,000 people displaced, and hundreds of thousands affected. The most affected areas included North, East, North-Central, Central, South, and Uva Provinces.¹²²

2019: January to December – Dengue Outbreak

From January to December 2019, Sri Lanka recorded 96,903 dengue cases, including 90 clinically confirmed dengue deaths. This represents a concerning rise over the 58 dengue deaths reported in 2018. The most dengue-affected area was Western Province, which recorded 42,636 dengue cases in 2019. Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Ratnapura, and Galle districts were identified as high risk. The spike was partially attributed to a different dengue strain than had previously circulated, and to which fewer people would have built up immunity.¹²³ Dengue outbreaks are common in Sri Lanka between May and July, usually coinciding with the southwestern monsoon, which commences in May.¹²⁴

2019: January to May – Fall Armyworm Infestation

Fall armyworm, *Spodoptera frugiperda*, is native to the Americas, but spread to Africa in 2016 and arrived in Asia for the first time in the summer of 2018.¹²⁵ It had arrived in Sri Lanka by January 2019.¹²⁶ Eastern, Uva, and North Central provinces had reported the worst crop damage. Official reports in April indicated that approximately half of the area cultivated with maize was affected and that crop losses were estimated at 10% of the initially expected output.¹²⁷ Global warming is considered a contributing factor in the Fall armyworm's rapid spread across multiple continents.

2018: May – Floods and Landslides

Severe monsoon rains from 20-26 May 2018 affected 20 districts, triggering floods and landslides. The most affected areas include Galle and Kalutara districts, in Southern and Western

Provinces, respectively. In Galle, 166mm of rain fell in 24 hours, whereas the district usually only receives an average of 290mm of precipitation for the entire month of May. As a result of the monsoon-induced flooding and landslides, at least 24 people died, nearly 6,000 people were displaced, and more than 170,000 people were affected.¹²⁸

2017: May - Floods and Landslides

In what became Sri Lanka's worst disaster since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, heavy rains that started on 25 May 2017 triggered flash flooding and landslides, which resulted in more than 210 deaths and affected around 630,000 people across 15 of the country's 25 districts. The worst-affected provinces included Central, Southern, and Western. Once rainfall eased, local authorities, Sri Lanka Armed Forces personnel, and relief actors were able to clear roads and facilitate distribution of relief on 30-31 May.¹²⁹ The floods and landslides displaced nearly 73,600 people to at least 350 displacement sites and damaged or destroyed more than 9,000 houses. The severity of the flooding and landslide disaster prompted Sri Lanka to request assistance from neighboring countries and the U.S.¹³⁰ On 27 May, U.S. Ambassador Atul Keshap declared a disaster due to the effects of the floods. The then-Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA, now USAID/BHA) provided more than \$2 million in assistance. OFDA supported activities to strengthen emergency medical response and disease surveillance, supported the delivery of shelter and settlements and WASH assistance, and provided emergency relief commodities, including hygiene supplies, to flood-affected communities. OFDA also deployed staff to Sri Lanka to assess the humanitarian situation and coordinate response efforts with Government of Sri Lanka authorities and relief organizations, including implementing partners, IOM, Sarvodaya, WHO, and World Vision.¹³¹

2016-2017: Drought

Drought conditions spread and intensified from October 2016 through October 2017. The worst affected areas were the North Western, North Central, Northern, and South Eastern Provinces, which rely heavily on agriculture. Following the failure of two harvests, the government started providing relief packs in August 2017. This was the worst drought in four decades, affecting up to 2.2 million people.¹³²

Country Risks

Country Risk Profile

Risk calculation takes into account exposure to hazards, vulnerability, and institutional coping capacity, all of which are important factors in Disaster Risk Management. The Index for Risk Management (INFORM) Global Risk Index (GRI) measures the risk of humanitarian crisis and disasters in 191 countries. The INFORM GRI supports a proactive crisis management framework. INFORM GRI is helpful for establishing an objective allocation of resources for disaster management as well as for coordinating actions focused on anticipating, mitigating, and preparing for humanitarian emergencies. The INFORM GRI model is based on risk concepts published in scientific literature with three dimensions of risk: Hazards & 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.¹³³

The INFORM GRI 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 and 10 the highest) for each of the dimensions, categories, and components of risk, as well as an overall risk score.¹³⁴ The higher the score the more at risk a country is to disasters. In the 2021 INFORM Global Risk Index, Sri Lanka had an overall risk of 3.8/10, which was categorized in the Medium risk class. The Hazards and Exposure dimension score takes into account a combination of both natural and human hazards, for which Sri Lanka rated 4.4/10, which disaggregates into 5.2/10 for natural hazards and 3.4/10 for human hazards. Among natural hazards, Sri Lanka was at highest risk of exposure to tsunamis (8.5/10), floods (6.1/10), epidemics (5.8/10), cyclones (3.6/10), and droughts (3.5/10). The Vulnerability dimension score was 3.1/10, with the largest vulnerability factor identified as inequality (4.4/10). The Lack of Coping Capacity dimension score was 4.0/10, with the largest lack of coping factor categorized as governance (5.9/10). A visual representation of these disaster risk dimensions for Sri Lanka are depicted in Figure 1.¹³⁵



Figure 1: 2021 INFORM Risk Index for Sri Lanka

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Sri Lanka has increased efforts to build a multi-hazard disaster management infrastructure since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which have led to reforms including the Disaster Management Act of 2005 and the establishment of the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) and its operative office, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC).¹³⁶ The Ministry of Disaster Management that you see in the middle of the figure, was recently rolled under the Ministry of Defense, but it remains a ministry. It has been changed into a state ministry (headed by a member of parliament) instead of a cabinet ministry (headed by a minister).¹³⁷

Figure 2 depicts the organizational structure of disaster management in Sri Lanka. This includes the NCDM, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, and the DMC depicted in the middle of the Figure.¹³⁸ The Sri

Lanka Disaster Management Act No. 13 of 2005 established two important Institutions, namely NCDM and the DMC. NCDM is the lead agency on disaster risk management in the country.¹³⁹

Lead Government Agencies in Disaster Response

The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) is the lead agency for disaster management in Sri Lanka and is the executing agency of the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM). The DMC is mandated with the responsibility to implement and coordinate national and sub-national level programs for reducing the risk of disasters with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

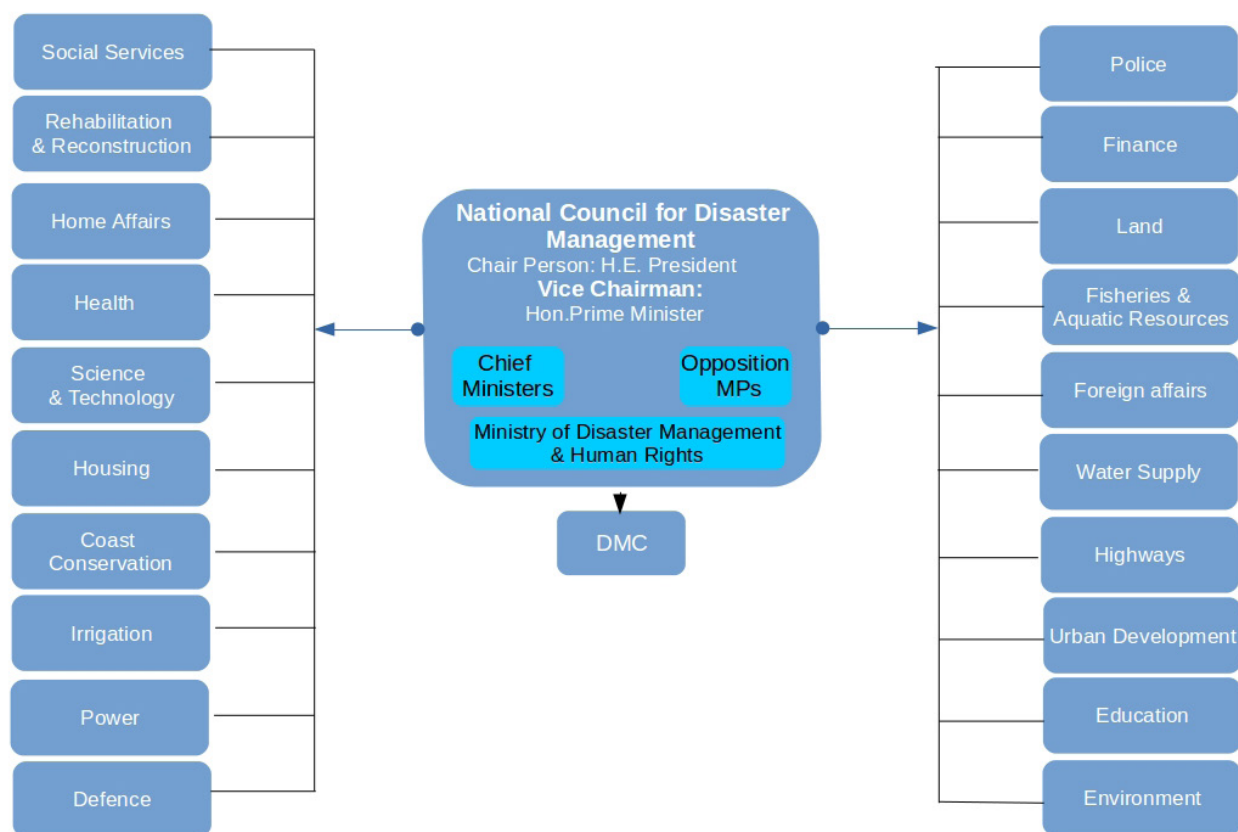


Figure 2: Organizational Structure for Disaster Management in Sri Lanka

DMC's main activities are Research and Development, Mitigation, Planning Preparedness, Dissemination of Early Warning for vulnerable populations, Emergency Response, Coordination of Relief, and Post Disaster Activities in collaboration with other key agencies.

There are also Disaster Management Committees at District, Divisional, and Grama Niladhari Wasams levels across the country. District Disaster Management Coordination Units (DDMCU) were also established in all districts to carry out Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities at the sub national level.¹⁴⁰

Disaster Relief and Emergency Response

In the event of a disaster, emergency operations are established to coordinate all response agencies to minimize the adverse effect of the disasters. The National Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) has the following main duties and responsibilities:¹⁴¹

- Develop SOPs at National/District/ Divisional/Community level.
- Prepare a National Emergency Operation Plan (NEOP).
- Verify and analyze information receiving from various local/international agencies.
- Early warning and dissemination of information to vulnerable communities.
- Coordination of immediate relief and medical supplies.
- Coordinate search and rescue (SAR) operations and evacuation missions.
- Establishment of Emergency Response Committees.
- Coordinate with NGOs/INGOs and other stakeholders in an emergency.
- Coordinate with Military, Coast Guard, and Police for warning and evacuation.
- Mobilize resources with various agencies.
- Coordinate emergency relief assistance
- Collect data and provide daily situation reports at 0900, 1200, and 1800.

In the event of a disaster in Sri Lanka that requires international assistance, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) would coordinate response.

Armed Forces Role in Disaster Relief

Sri Lanka's Armed Forces are comprised of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The Army is involved in search and rescue (SAR) operations after natural disasters.¹⁴² The Navy is capable of a full range of operations ranging from high intensity war fighting to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.¹⁴³ In addition to the Army and Navy, the Air Force may assist local disaster management agencies.¹⁴⁴ In May 2017, the Armed Forces responded to flooding and landslides in Western and Central Provinces. In coordination with the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) and District Secretariats in areas affected by floods and landslides, the Army, Navy, and Air Force launched a massive rescue and relief operation for flood victims. The Armed Forces and Police conducted SAR and evacuation operations in affected areas. The Army rushed in six troop carriers with 85 troops; the Air Force kept four helicopters on standby and deployed one helicopter for reconnaissance duties; and the Navy deployed 31 relief, search, and rescue teams comprising 200 personnel along with 31 relief boats in affected areas.¹⁴⁵ Photo 3 depicts the Sri Lanka Navy assisting with the rescue and relief operation in May 2017.¹⁴⁶



Photo 3: Sri Lanka Navy Aids in Rescue and Relief Operation for Flood Victims, 2017

Civilian Role in Disaster Relief and Emergency Response

In addition to government, police, and military response, there are a range of national civilian stakeholders including community groups, national civil society coalitions, academia, the private sector, Red Cross, NGOs and civil society. Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) plays a major role in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) activities from preparing for and implementing disaster preparedness, mitigation and post-disaster relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and resettlement. In this process, disaster risk communities are actively engaged in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring, and evaluation of disaster risks in order to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their coping capacities. CBDRM brings actors together to collaborate in risk sensitive development planning, putting communities in the middle of the approach with more emphasis on sustainability.¹⁴⁷

A CBDRM approach has been accepted by the Sri Lanka government and other DM actors as a key strategy to develop community capacity and resilience.¹⁴⁸

Humanitarian organizations coordinate through the UN Humanitarian Country Team. A sectoral model similar to the UN cluster system has been developed to improve coordination of NGOs since the 2017 flooding. There are upwards of 50,000 civil society organizations (CSO) operating in the country. These operators, especially the Community Based Organizations (CBO), have a major impact on national disaster management efforts; CBOs are able to provide support in remote regions and can contribute to local development with knowledge about local livelihoods and community needs. International Non-governmental Organizations (INGO) also play an important role in building trust and sustainable peace among communities in the aftermath of conflicts.¹⁴⁹

UNDP works in Sri Lanka focusing on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR). The Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) builds

technical capacity of the government to conduct flood and landslide risk assessments, urban risk assessments, and risk reduction in urban planning.¹⁵⁰ With support from international partners, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European Union (EU), and the World Bank, the Sri Lanka Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs and Ministry of Disaster Management have jointly conducted Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) for major catastrophic events such as Flood and Landslides in 2016 and 2017.¹⁵¹

As a response to the May 2017 floods and landslides, there was international, national, private sector, and individual donations. The relief efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka were supported with relief items and the Ministry of Disaster Management. The local Dialog Mobile Company held a national campaign for customer donations generating approximately US\$330,000 to be used in house building and relief assistance. In addition, UN agencies, and national and international NGOs supported the national efforts for disaster relief and early recovery. Approximately US\$8 million was mobilized for child protection, education, food security and nutrition, water provision and sanitation, health, shelter, non-food item provision, and emergency livelihood support.¹⁵²

The 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, 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.¹⁵³

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 by their National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering. It was founded in 1919 and includes 192 National Societies. The IFRC carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its member National Societies.¹⁵⁴

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) is the National Society of the Red Cross in Sri Lanka. It gets its legal status from a Royal Charter of 1951.¹⁵⁵ The Sri Lanka Red Cross has an important role in emergency response and relief with its branch network in all 25 districts, along with the army and navy troops to support search and rescue operation.¹⁵⁶ The SLRCS assists with humanitarian relief and response work for both natural and manmade disasters. It also engages in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities to reduce the impact of future disasters by improving the resilience of vulnerable populations and strengthening early warning systems, and the protection of students and schools by implementing school disaster management programs. SLRCS mobilizes its organization and volunteers at appropriate levels to carry out disaster response and has been expanding its DRR initiatives up to the community level. SLRCS also supports national, regional, and global level initiatives.

SLRCS collaborates with the other stakeholders involved in DM, especially with the government's DMC and is a member of National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC). In addition, SLRCS is involved in the government DM plan, representation at national level DM forums, establishment of Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) at the national level, setting up regional warehouses and maintaining standard buffer stocks, implementation of

Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) projects, creating training programs, and the formation of disaster response teams at all levels. After the 2004 Tsunami, SLRCS DM aided in setting up an emergency control room at the national level.¹⁵⁷

U.S. Government Agencies in Sri Lanka

USAID is a development partner working directly with communities on natural disaster and risk management in Sri Lanka. USAID provides clean water and sanitation facilities, psychosocial and early recovery support to vulnerable populations, and builds local capacity for disaster response and risk reduction. Specifically, USAID Sri Lanka has provided job skills to more than 50,000 Sri Lankans affected by conflict and natural disasters. USAID also provides services to disadvantaged and vulnerable populations including war widows, female-headed households, disabled persons, and resettling families.

In addition, USAID collaborates with Lanka Rain Water Harvesting Forum to provide safe drinking water and improve community resilience, supporting communities that experience floods and droughts regularly to recover more quickly. It is implemented in Badulla and Moneragala districts in the Uva Province, Batticaloa district in the Eastern Province, and Kilinochchi district in the Northern Province.¹⁵⁸

During the past two decades, USAID has mobilized emergency aid for recovery, reconstruction, and rebuilding after the 2004 tsunami, the end of conflict in 2009, and the floods that have occurred every year since 2010. USAID works with the people of Sri Lanka to strengthen democratic governance, social cohesion, and sustained and inclusive economic growth.¹⁵⁹ USAID's contact information includes:¹⁶⁰

USAID

Mission Contact: Reed Aeschliman, Mission Director

Address: No. 44, Galle Road,
Colombo 3, Sri Lanka
Phone: +94 (11) 249-8000
Email: infosl@usaid.gov

USAID Contact: Adam Kaloides,
Country Desk Officer for Sri Lanka/Maldives
USAID Asia Bureau/SCAA
Address: 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20004, USA
Phone: 202-712-4487
Email: akaloides@usaid.gov

U.S. Embassy Colombo

Address: 210 Galle Road,
Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Phone: +94 (11) 249-8500
Fax: +94 (11) 243-7345
Emergency after-hours telephone:
+94 77-725-6307
Website: <https://lk.usembassy.gov/>
Email: ColomboACS@state.gov

Laws, Policies, and Plans on Disaster Management

The Government of Sri Lanka has developed various legal and institutional arrangements to plan and manage disaster risk reduction and management activities including the Disaster Management Act of 2005, the Disaster Management Policy of 2010, the National Disaster Management Plan of 2013-2017, and the Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Program in 2014. The government has begun developing the National Disaster Risk Management Plan for 2018-2030. This plan carries on previous disaster management work and will have an enhanced focus on the actual implementation of policies at all levels, with participation of various sectors highlighted as the key objective.¹⁶¹

Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No. 13 of 2005

In May 2005, the Disaster Management Act No.13 of 2005 was enacted. This provides the legal basis for a Disaster Risk Management

(DRM) system in the country. The Act establishes the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM), chaired by the President and vice-chaired by the Prime Minister with participation from Opposition, minority communities, and Chief Ministers of the Provinces.¹⁶² This NCDM provides direction to DRM work in the country and was established to implement the functions indicated in the Act. The principal functions enumerated in the Disaster Management Act include:¹⁶³

- Assisting the Council in the preparation of the National Disaster Management Plan and the National Emergency Operation Plan and proposals for upgrading.
- Taking responsibility for the implementation of the National Disaster Management Plan and the National Emergency Operation Plan, and, upon the declaration of a state of disaster, to direct and coordinate the implementation of the National Emergency Operation plan.
- Ensuring that the various Disaster Management Plans prepared by Ministries, Government Departments, or public corporations conform to the National Disaster Management Plan.
- Preparing and implementing programs and plans for disaster preparedness, mitigation, prevention, relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction activities; coordinating organizations, obtaining financial assistance from the Treasury for such activities, and releasing the same to the relevant regions; and monitoring and evaluating these activities.
- Issuing instructions and guidelines to appropriate organizations, non-governmental organizations, district secretaries and divisional secretaries on activities relating to disaster management and initiating and implementing work programs in coordination with such organizations and secretaries.
- Promoting research and development programs in relation to disaster management and setting up and maintaining a data base on disaster management.

- Submitting reports to the Council from time to time and whenever required by the Council in regard to its activities.

The Disaster Management Act of 2005 recognizes 21 natural and man-made hazards.¹⁶⁴ Among them are floods, landslides, tsunamis, earthquakes, fire, air hazards, air raids, industrial hazards, civil or internal strife, chemical accidents, radiological emergency, oil spills, nuclear disaster, urban and forest fire, and coastal erosion.¹⁶⁵

The National Disaster Management Policy of 2010

The National Disaster Management Policy was adopted in 2010 to act as the main governing mechanism for disaster management. It includes important considerations such as participation of local level authorities, supports multi-stakeholder approaches, and determines standards for response and relief.¹⁶⁶

The National Disaster Management Plan of 2013-2017

This plan further mandated a multi-sector approach under which all sub-national levels of administration, NGOs, and grass-roots level organizations will have operational plans that conform with the national DRM plan to translate policies into tangible action.¹⁶⁷

Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (SLCDMP)

In 2014, the NCDM approved the Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (SLCDMP) for 2014-2018 to reduce disaster and climate risks by minimizing impacts on people, properties, and the economy. Under the SLCDMP, Sri Lanka has started the process for improving capacity of local level operators by institutionalizing local level support in the SLCDMP planning.¹⁶⁸

Table 1 represents additional national disaster and climate risk reduction policies, plans, and legislation in Sri Lanka.¹⁶⁹

Disaster Management Communications

Early Warning Systems

Institutional arrangements for early warning systems are established throughout Sri Lanka. The system includes technical agencies (including the Meteorological Department, Geological Survey, and Mines Bureau) responsible for hazard monitoring of each hazard type and disseminating early warning through the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) of the Disaster Management Centre (DMC). For local hazards, there is a bottom-up and top-down citizen-centered approach for hazard alerts and early warnings, employing networks of local stakeholders including local government, the private sector, Red Cross, NGOs, and civil society.¹⁷⁰

The DMC is the main focal point responsible for coordinating early warning, along with the relevant technical agencies. The EOC of the DMC coordinates with the technical agencies responsible for natural and man-made hazards. The EOC informs the responsible officers for onward communication to the sub-national levels and communities. Methods of obtaining information about impending disaster events and issuing early warnings would vary from one hazard to another. When local hazards such as floods and landslides occur, local systems are strengthened. For other hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, adverse weather conditions, and cyclones, the relevant agencies coordinate with the respective regional and international warning centers.¹⁷¹

Communication of early warnings from national level to district, divisional, local authority, or Grama Niladhari levels, or to other specific identified locations is mainly through the Police and military communication systems, radio communication, multi-hazard early warning towers, media, and telephone. Sri Lanka also has the Nation-wide Emergency Communication System, which will be used to provide information on:¹⁷²

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION	LEGISLATION/POLICY	SCOPE	PURPOSE
NDMC, DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE AND THE MINISTRY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT	Disaster Management Act (2005)	National, Provinces, Districts	Mandated the establishment of the NDMC and the DMC. Intended to enhance the disaster operations through coordination of stakeholders and localization of operations.
DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE	The Roadmap for Disaster Risk Management (2006-2016)	National, Provinces, Districts	Shifting the focus from reactionary measures to proactive approach, in consideration of preparedness, response, mitigation and risk reduction.
MINISTRY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT, DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE	National Policy on Disaster Management (2010)	National	Intended to complement the core elements of other Acts and plans for different Ministries, departments and local governments (such as land use planning to achieve "how things should be".
DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE, STAKEHOLDERS, PRIVATE SECTOR	Sri Lanka National Disaster Management Plan (2013-2017)	National, Provinces, Districts, NGOs, CSOs, Community leaders, etc.	Continuation to the 2006-2016 plan, with an aim to establish a multi-sectoral, inter-ministerial and inter-agency mechanism for DRM, based on all phases of disasters and in consideration of international agreements and frameworks.
DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE, STAKEHOLDERS	National Emergency Operations Plan (NEOP) (2013)	National, Provinces, Districts	Developed under the 2013-2017 plan, NEOPs are intended to specify and identify roles of various stakeholders in different response scenarios to enhance coordination.
PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY	Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (2014-2018)	National, Provinces, NGOs, private sector	Focus on risk reduction and on creating enabling environments. Interventions are based on multi-hazard risk information and aligned with international frameworks.
THE GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR, CSO'S, CBO'S	National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change Impacts in Sri Lanka (2016-2025)	National, Provinces, Districts and Communities	Identifies sectoral climate adaptation needs based on risk information, and identifies the overall national plan, roles, cross-cutting issues and key stakeholders. National Adaptation Fund (NAF) is proposed as well.
PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY	(Draft) National Disaster Risk Management Plan (2018-2030)	National, Provinces, Districts, Communities, NGOs, Private Sector, CBOs etc.	Based largely on the same principles as the program of 2014-2018, but with a focus on actual, tangible implementation at all levels with monitoring and evaluation. Participation is highlighted as the key objective.

Table 1: National Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction Policies and Plans

- Impending cyclones, floods, landslides, epidemics, sea surges, tsunamis, and storms, etc.
- Impending floods due to dam breach, rapid opening of sluice gates, or dam and reservoir related floods
- Inundated areas, and closure of roads and bridges that have become impassable, and evacuation routes and safe areas
- A 24-hour call center is operational in the country. The emergency telephone number to the DMC is 117 and a dedicated telephone line was established for the public to communicate with the DMC.¹⁷³

Information Sharing

Understanding how to overcome the information challenges that civilian and military agencies experience during a typical disaster response mission is important. Knowing what the available Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) resources are will assist Joint Task Force leaders and staff during mission planning.¹⁷⁴ Sharing information is critical since no single responding entity, NGO, International Governmental Organization (IGO), assisting country government, or host government can be the source of all the required information.¹⁷⁵

Collaboration, Information Sharing (IS), 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. Recent technology has advanced to aid predicting and alerting of disasters around the world which has resulted in early warning and evacuation measures as well as opportunities to react and prepare for incoming threats to countries. The following are some of the ways in which information regarding disaster risk management and response are shared. Managing information is central to the overall mechanisms within disaster preparedness and response. There are many resources, stakeholders, and

components to consider with IS before, during, and after a natural disaster. This section will discuss country-specific, humanitarian, regional, government, and DoD information sources.

Sri Lanka Information Sources

The Disaster Information Management System-Sri Lanka

The Disaster Information System in Sri Lanka was launched by the Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights in June 2007 with a link on the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) website (www.desinventar.lk). With technical and financial support from the UNDP Disaster Risk Management (DRM) program and the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok (RCB), the DMC of the Ministry of Disaster Management developed a database on disaster incidents from 1974 to present. The Disaster Information Management System includes a software product with two main components (*DesInventar* and *DesConsultar*). Photo 4 is a screenshot of the *DesInventar* home page.¹⁷⁶

Disaster Management Centre

Website: <http://www.dmc.gov.lk>

The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) has a website which offers important information including:

- the present weather and disaster situation in the country
- information on preparedness and planning
- training and awareness
- mitigation, research, and development
- emergency operations and early warning

RiskInfo

RiskInfo or Sri Lanka Disaster Risk Information Platform - an open, online portal to host the country's geospatial data and interactive maps of multiple hazards - was launched in December 2017 under the Open Data for Resilience Initiative (OpenDRI), with GFDRR and World Bank support.¹⁷⁷

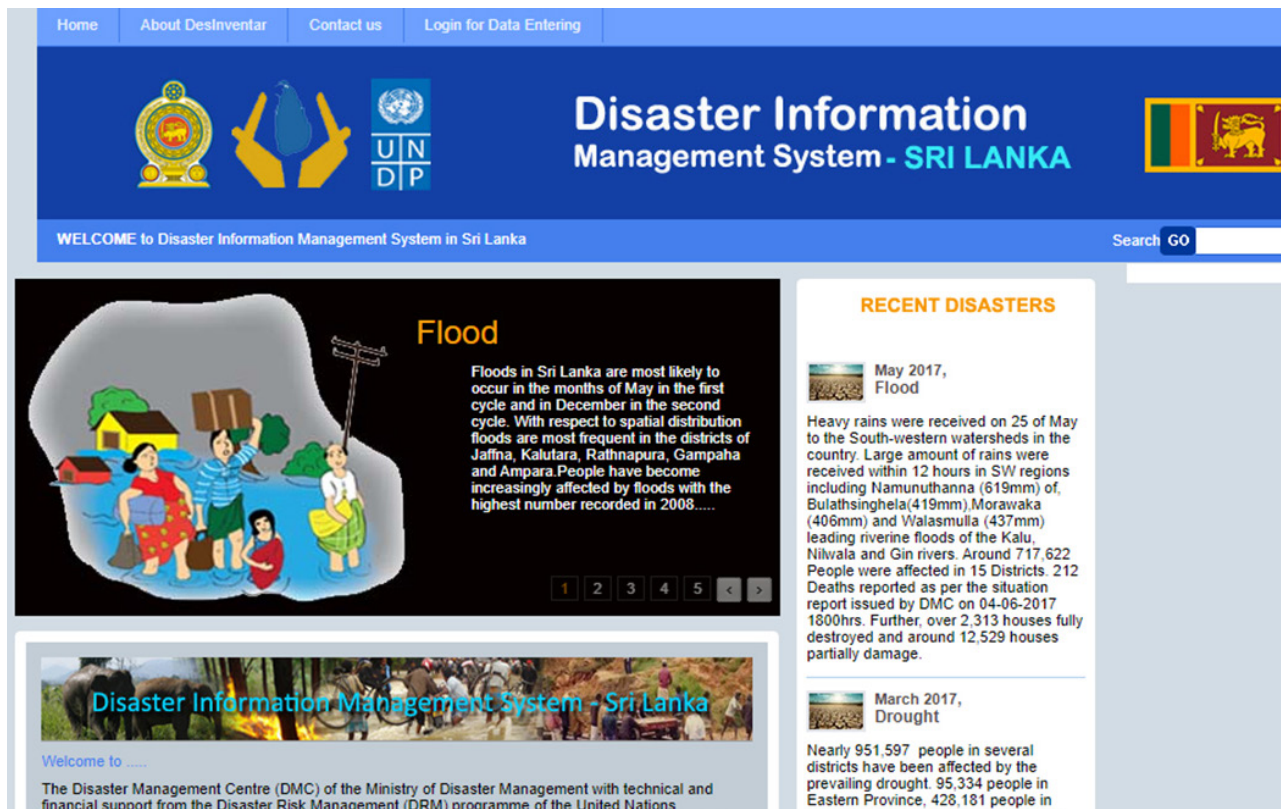


Photo 4: Sri Lanka's Disaster Information Management System

Humanitarian Information Sources

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) seeks to optimize the speed, volume, and quality of humanitarian assistance and coordinates emergency preparedness and response in the world's most disaster-prone region in support of national governments. ROAP covers 41 countries, partnering with them for coordinated and effective international responses to emergency situations.

Website: <https://www.unocha.org/roap>

For OCHA situation reports, click on "Subscribe" button on bottom of page.

ReliefWeb is a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) that consolidates information and analysis from organizations, countries, and disasters for the humanitarian community.

Website: <https://reliefweb.int/>

PreventionWeb is provided by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, formerly UNISDR) to consolidate disaster risk reduction information into an online, easy to understand platform.

Website: <https://www.preventionweb.net/english/>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, comprised of its 192-member National Societies including the Sri Lanka Red Cross, a secretariat in Geneva, 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 its member National Societies. The IFRC's work focuses on four core areas: promoting humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health and community care.¹⁷⁸

Website: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc>

The 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. ICRC, together with IFRC and the 192 Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, make up the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.¹⁷⁹
Website: <https://www.icrc.org/en>

Humanitarian Response is a platform providing the humanitarian community a means to aid in coordination of operational information and related activities.
Website: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info>

Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) is a cooperation framework between the United Nations, the European Commission, and disaster managers worldwide to improve alerts, information exchange, and coordination in the first phase after major sudden-onset disasters.
Website: <https://www.gdacs.org/alerts/>

Virtual OSOCC is a real-time online coordination tool for disaster response professionals from urban search and rescue (USAR) teams, national authorities, and regional and international organizations at a global level.
Website: <https://vosocc.unocha.org/>

The latest alerts can be found here:
<http://www.gdacs.org/Alerts/default.aspx>

To subscribe:
<http://www.gdacs.org/About/contactus.aspx>

Consider other information resources, such as:

Think Hazard is a website that provides detailed information on a country. Information is provided on Sri Lanka regarding hazards,

country assessments, projects, early warning systems, and other resources. You can log onto their website at <http://thinkhazard.org>

Humanitarian Country Teams (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, and from international NGOs, IFRC, and the respective National Red Cross Society in the country. During a disaster response, HCT often produces a Situation Report (SitRep), usually in conjunction with OCHA.

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

Humanitarian Data Exchange (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.
Website: <https://data.humdata.org/>

Regional Information Sources

Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC)

Changi RHCC was launched in September 2014 to support the military of a disaster affected state in coordinating assistance with assisting foreign militaries. It aims to provide open, inclusive, and flexible platforms that allow both regional and extra-regional militaries to work together effectively in a multinational disaster response. Changi RHCC manages the OPERA CIS web portal to broadcast the updated situation status of multinational military responses to disasters to minimize duplication and gaps in the provision of foreign military assistance.
Website: <https://www.changirhcc.org/>

To subscribe to RHCC Weekly and Spot Reports, email: Changi_RHCC@defence.gov.sg

U.S. Government (USG) Sources

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

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 newsletter called USAID Newsletter which is available digitally at <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/newsletter>.

More information and updates from USAID are available via their blog, IMPACT, at <https://blog.usaid.gov/> and on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

Website: <https://www.usaid.gov/>

Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)

The Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is responsible for leading and coordinating the USG response to disasters overseas. BHA responds to an average of 65 disasters in more than 50 countries every year. BHA fulfills 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. BHA works with the international population to assist countries prepare for, respond to, and recover from humanitarian crises.¹⁸⁰

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

For BHA updates on a disaster response, ask the BHA representative for the respective DoD Geographic Combatant Command to add you to the email list, if you have a U.S. government

email address:

- BHA.INDOPACOM@usaid.gov
- BHA.SOUTHCOM@usaid.gov
- BHA.NORTHCOM@usaid.gov
- BHA.AFRICOM@usaid.gov
- BHA.SOCOM@usaid.gov
- BHA.CENTCOM@usaid.gov
- BHA.EUCOM@usaid.gov

Pacific Disaster Center (PDC | Global)

Established as the Pacific Disaster Center after Hurricane Iniki hit the Hawaiian Islands in 1992, PDC Global has trademarked an early warning and decision support system called DisasterAWARE®. DisasterAWARE® is primarily for disaster management practitioners and senior decision makers. It supports disaster risk reduction 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.¹⁸¹

PDC Global also provides a public version, Disaster Alert, which offers open access to a world map documenting 18 hazard types.¹⁸² Disaster Alert also has a free, early-warning app to receive customizable maps based visual alerts of active hazards. The app offers a global notification system covering natural and man-made hazards. It is available on both iPhone and Android.¹⁸³

Website: <https://www.pdc.org/>
<https://www.pdc.org/apps/disasteraware/>

Emergency Operations (EMOPS) system:
 (Request account): <https://emops.pdc.org/emops/>

All Partners Access Network (APAN)

APAN is the Unclassified Information Sharing Service (UISS) for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). APAN provides the DoD

and mission partners community space and collaboration tools to leverage information to effectively plan, train, and respond to meet their business requirements and mission objectives. Importantly, APAN's technology team has been supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR) operations for over 15 years. APAN has played an integral role in the success of disaster responses, such as the 2015 California Wildfire Response and the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan Response in which they provided organizations and militaries a centralized location to share information, increase situational awareness, and decrease response time and duplicated efforts for best practices in HADR services.¹⁸⁴

Website: <https://www.apan.org/>

Note: The Multinational Communications Interoperability Program (MCIP) has an APAN site used in planning exercises and real world HADR information sharing.

Joint Typhoon Warning Center

JTWC provides advanced warning for U.S. Government agencies and organizations in relevant areas.

Website: <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI-APCSS)

DKI-APCSS is a U.S. Department of Defense institute that addresses regional and global security issues, inviting military and civilian representatives of the U.S. and Asia-Pacific nations to its program of executive education and workshops.

Website: <https://apcss.org/>

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM)

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) is a U.S. Department of Defense organization that was established by the U.S.

Congress in 1994 and is a direct reporting unit to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. CFE-DM provides training and education to help U.S. and foreign military personnel navigate complex issues in DMHA. 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 and reduce duplication of efforts and promote U.S. involvement in civ-mil consultations and dialogues with relevant HADR parties such as the AHA Center, OCHA, and Changi RHCC. CFE provides DMHA resources and updates at its website, as well as via their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Website: <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/>

Disaster Management Reference Handbooks are available for download at:

<https://www.cfe-dmha.org/DMHA-Resources/Disaster-Management-Reference-Handbooks>

CFE-DM Disaster Information Reports are available for download at:

<https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Reports>
Civil-Military Coordination in Foreign Disaster Relief Missions: Best Practices for Information Sharing is available here:

<https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications>

COVID-19 Information Sharing Sources

Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> COVID-19

Cases Database

<https://github.com/CSSEGISandData/COVID-19>

INFORM's new COVID-19 Risk Index

<https://data.humdata.org/dataset/inform-covidanalysis-v01>

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport

Sri Lanka relies heavily on its roads for domestic travel and freight transport as there is a significant deficit in port and airport infrastructure. There is an almost total absence of rail for cargo. Air and sea transport are expanding with major projects, but this development is focused on international trade and transport.

Transport infrastructure financing has typically been dominated by public funding and supported by loans from development partners such as China and Japan, as well as multilateral development banks and financing institutions. However, the government is increasingly seeking to use public-private partnerships (PPP). The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MTCA) has regulatory authority; under MTCA are Sri Lanka Railways (SLR), the Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB), the National Transport Commission, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Department of Motor Traffic, and provincial transport authorities. As part of Vision 2025, the government's blueprint for obtaining upper-middle-income status, transport infrastructure is an investment priority. Future improvement plans include light rail and bus systems in Colombo, a new transport system within Port City Colombo, the expansion of the Port of Colombo, and a technology update for road, railway, and airports.

China has, by far, been the largest source of external investment for infrastructure projects over the last decade. Chinese investment promises to transform Hambantota Port and the surrounding area into a major hub for industry and trade, but the project remains controversial. Critics see it as evidence that China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which focuses on the development of land and marine transport corridors linking Asia with Europe, Africa, and the Pacific, is a form of debt diplomacy that saddles developing economies with unsustainable

financial burdens. In recent years, Sri Lanka has made efforts to forge closer commercial ties with other East and Southeast Asian countries, which offer the potential to generate increased foreign direct investment (FDI). A notable example of this is a \$1.7bn loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to finance the first phase of the Colombo light rail transit (LRT).¹⁸⁵

Airports

There are two international airports: Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo and Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Hambantota. Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport has struggled to attract flights since it opened its doors in 2013. Designed to accommodate one million passengers per year, it handled only 4,700 passengers in all of 2016 and notched massive losses. In the meantime, a plan has been drawn up for a third international airport in Hingurakgoda. Over the longer-term, there is some interest in developing Trincomalee as the eastern gateway to Sri Lanka by the year 2050, and there are also plans to redevelop Ratmalana air base into an international, civilian airport by 2030. The Sri Lanka Air Force initiated the process of handing over Ratmalana's facilities to the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka in January 2019, and the government is planning to spend LKR1.5bn (US\$9.5m) to develop it into a modern domestic and international terminal.¹⁸⁶ Table 2 includes specifications for each of the country's airports.¹⁸⁷

Thirty-two airlines serve Sri Lanka (international and domestic inclusive), and the country logs upwards of 40,000 landings and takeoffs annually.¹⁸⁸ Operating from its hub in Colombo, SriLankan Airlines, the national carrier, transported 5.2 million passengers and 113,000 tons of cargo in 2020, both year-on-year decreases that likely reflect pandemic-related disruptions. Before 2020, SriLankan Airlines had seen annual increases in passenger and cargo carriage; 2019 had seen 5.6 million passengers

and 125,753 tons of cargo.¹⁸⁹ Although air transport offers some domestic human and cargo traffic, Sri Lanka relies more on air for international tourism and trade. Tourists from India, China, and Europe dominate passenger air arrivals with direct routes from India, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar topping passenger numbers. The busiest air cargo routes serving Sri Lanka are direct from the UAE, Qatar, the Maldives, India, and Hong Kong. Some estimates think Sri Lanka could see more than 10 million international passenger arrivals annually by 2040.¹⁹⁰

Seaports

Sri Lanka’s total throughput at all container ports was 7.23 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) for the year 2019, an increase of 230,000 TEU year-on-year from 2018 and well over the 2008-2019 average of 4.6 million TEU

annually. Indeed, 2019 marked an all-time high.¹⁹¹

As of 2018, the Port of Colombo still ranked in the world’s top 25 container ports for total throughput, and the Port of Colombo far outpaces Trincomalee and Hambantota in both ship traffic and cargo throughput. It has been ranked among the world’s fastest-growing major ports in terms of container handling. While the Port of Colombo holds a regional competitive advantage due to its deep draught and geographic location, it is nearing full capacity and needs to increase capacity to avoid loss of business. One shift to minimize wait times was a 2018 agreement among the three terminal operators – Jaye Container Terminal, South Asia Gateway Terminal, and Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT) – to operate collectively and allow vessels to be accommodated at the first available terminal.

International Airports							
Location	Airport Name	ICAO	IATA	Customs	Runway Type	Runway meters (M)	Runway feet (ft)
Colombo	Bandaranaike International Airport	VCBI	CMB	Yes	Paved	10,991 x 148	9,842
Hambantota	Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport	VCRI	HRI	Yes	Paved	3,500 x 60	11,483 x 197

Domestic Service Airports							
Location	Airport Name	ICAO	IATA	Customs	Runway Type	Runway meters (M)	Runway feet (ft)
Ampara	Ampara National Airport / Gal Oya	VCCG	ADP	No	Paved	1,097 x 23	3,600 x 151
Anuradhapura	Anuradhapura National Airport	VCCA	VCCA	No	Paved	1,630 x 46	5,348 x 151
Batticaloa	Batticaloa National Airport	VCCB	BTC	No	Paved	1,095 x 12	3,592 x 40
Jaffna	Kankasanturai Airport	VCCJ	JAF	No	Paved	2,286 x 30	7,500 x 98
Galle	Koggala Airport	VCCK	KCT	No	Paved	957 x 43	3,142 x 140
Colombo	Ratmalana National Airport	VCCC	RML	No	Paved	1,833 x 30	6,013 x 100
Trincomalee	Trincomalee National Airport / China Bay	VCCT	TRR	No	Paved	2,393 x 26	7,850 x 85
Vavuniya	Vavuniya Airport	VCCV		No	Paved	1,542 x 24	5,060 x 80
Weerawila	Weerawila Airport	VCCW	WRZ	No	Paved	1,219 x 28	4,000 x 93

Helipad							
Location	Airport Name	ICAO	IATA	Customs	Runway Type	Runway meters (M)	Runway feet (ft)
Batticaloa	Pasikudah Helipad	-	PQD	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Specifications of Sri Lanka’s Airports

Hambantota Port, in the island's south, opened in 2010. Sri Lanka borrowed heavily from China to build the port but was unable to repay the loans due to lower-than-expected shipping activity. As a result, the Sri Lankan government agreed to a December 2017 sale whereby 70% of the port's ownership passed to the China Merchants Port Holdings Company on a 99-year lease.¹⁹²

The Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) also manages smaller harbors throughout the country as illustrated in Figure 3.¹⁹³ Galle Harbor is a natural harbor on the south-western coast. It is the country's main recreational and yacht harbor. It was the country's main pre-industrial port, eclipsed only in the 19th century. There are some plans to develop the existing Port of Galle to accommodate freight with construction of a deep-water passenger vessel terminal and breakwaters, dredging an entrance channel and basin, and other facilities. Some of the port's facilities were damaged by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. SLPA expects to provide berthing facilities to passenger vessels of 300 meters in length and cargo vessels of 200 meters in length with a draught of 10 meters and 10.9 meters respectively.¹⁹⁴ Kankesanthurai Harbor is a target for intense rehabilitation and improvement; development of a new pier depends on repair and rehabilitation work on existing breakwaters, piers, and roads, as well as dredging and wreck removal. The turning basin is 8 meters deep.¹⁹⁵

Port of Colombo

Latitude: 6° 57' N
 Longitude: 79° 50' E

The Port of Colombo is made up of several terminals: Jaye, Unity, South Asia Gateway, Colombo International Container (CICT), and East Container Terminal (ECT). Jaye has 130 hectares of land area. It includes four container main berths and two feeder berths with a total

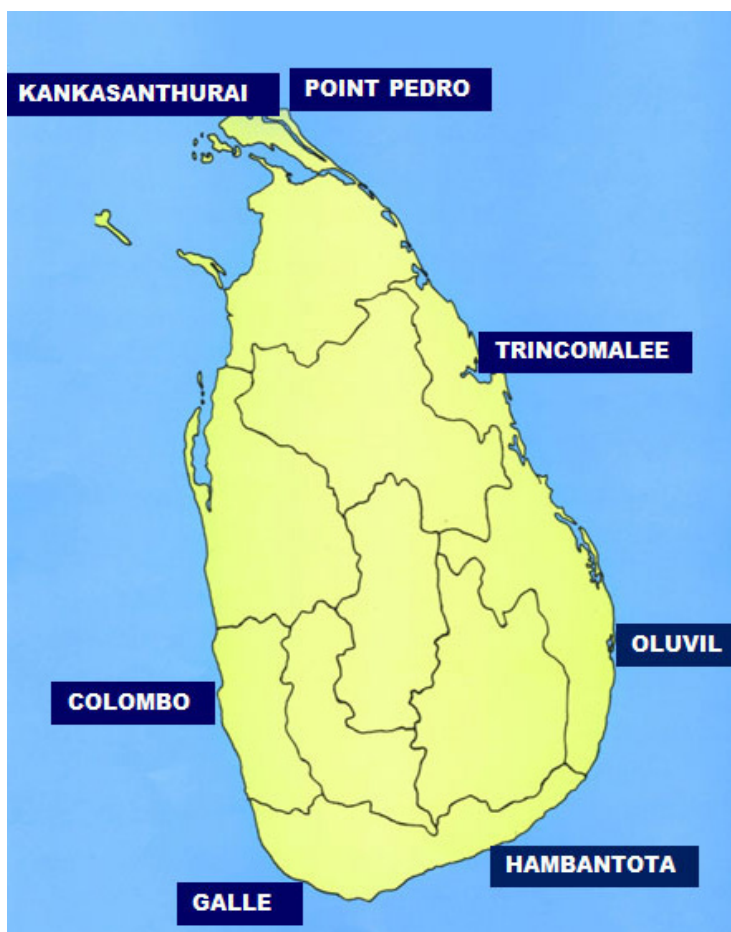


Figure 3: Ports Managed by Sri Lanka Ports Authority

of 1,642 meters of quays with 12.0 - 15.0 meters dredged depths. Jaye has Panamax and Super Post Panamax quayside cranes along with other transfer cranes and rail-mounted gantry cranes. Jaye's container terminal tops 55,538 TEU capacity for dry and reefer container stacking, and 15,000m² of container freight area. Unity includes two container berths and one multi-purpose berth with 590 meters of quays and a 9.0-11.0 meters dredged depth. This terminal covers 1.53 hectares with 8,000 TEU stacking capacity and various cranes and other handling equipment. South Asia Gateway has 940 meters of quays with 15 meters of depth alongside. It has a total area of 20 hectares with 540 slots for reefer containers. South Asia Gateway has cranes to handle Post Panamax and Super Post Panamax along with other handling equipment. Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT) covers 57 hectares of land area. Depth alongside at

the four berths is 18 meters with a 6,830-meter breakwater. The container yard covers 10 hectares with dozens of gantry cranes and other handling equipment. Quayside cranes are capable of handling 18,000 TEU ships.

Sri Lanka's government had expected the Eastern Container Terminal (ECT) (Stage 1) to be operational by mid-2020; Photo 5 shows the ECT development area.¹⁹⁶ ECT Stage 1 has a total area of approximately 260,000 square meters and is expected to have four quay cranes capable of stacking containers up to 24 rows from the quay wall to the opposite end of the vessel width. Total quays will stretch 450 meters with a depth alongside of 18.0 meters. Total capacity will be 18,000 TEU.¹⁹⁷ Delays in developing the ECT were exacerbated when Sri Lanka stopped a 2019 agreement for India and Japan to develop and operate the ECT, following protests by trade unions and opposition parties. On 2 March 2021, Sri Lanka's government stated it would allow India and Japan to develop a new container terminal at the port.¹⁹⁸

Port of Trincomalee (Trinco)

Longitude: 81° 13'E

Latitude: 8° 33'N

Trinco port covers 5,261 hectares of land with a further 1,630 hectares of water area. The entrance channel is 500 meters in length. There are three berths with alongside draft of 5.9–13.0 meters and a total length of 1,044 meters taken up by the Prime Jetties, Cement Jetty, Oil Jetty, Ashroff Quay, and bulkhead. There are various mobile cranes and forklifts for handling.¹⁹⁹ Trinco Port's various facilities can be seen in Photo 6.²⁰⁰

Hambantota International Port (HIP)

Latitude: 6° 07' N

Longitude: 81° 06' E

Phase I development of the Hambantota Port is complete with Phase II development in progress. The harbor area is protected by two breakwaters of 312 and 988 meters. The access channel is 210 meters wide and 17 meters deep

with a turning circle 600 meters in diameter and 17 meters in depth to facilitate vessels up to 100,000 DWT.²⁰¹ Photo 7 shows large vessels calling at HIP.²⁰²

HIP terminals include a Ro-Ro terminal, two oil terminals, a multi-purpose quay, and a container terminal, all with depth alongside of 17 meters. Total quay length 2,876 meters. HIP Phase 2 is expected to add container and multi-purpose berthing for vessels up to 100,000 DWT at an additional 2,346 meters of quays; artificial



Photo 5: Port of Colombo's East Terminal



Photo 6: Trincomalee Port Facilities



Photo 7: Hambantota Port Hosts Large Crude Tanker, July 2020.

islands will add 42 additional hectares of port area. The Bunkering Facility and Tank Farm is about one kilometer away from the waterfront and is connected to the oil terminal through a pipeline. The facility consists of 14 tanks with a total storage capacity of 80,000 cubic meters.²⁰³

Roads

The road network is the most important method of transport, responsible for 95% of all passenger traffic and 98% of freight nationally. However, a decade after the end of the civil war, much of the road network in the North and East is still in disarray.

According to the World Bank, Sri Lanka has South Asia's highest road density, with more than 173.9 km of roads per 100km² of land.²⁰⁴ As of mid-2020, Sri Lanka had 271,676 km of "Class E" roads or expressways, including the Southern, Outer Circular, Colombo-Katunayake, and Andarawewa-Hambantota expressways. Beyond these major routes, the country has 4.2 million km of "Class A" roads and 80,000 km of "Class B" roads that link major towns and cities.²⁰⁵ This network can be seen in Figure 4.²⁰⁶

While the main roads are in good condition, the network has trouble dealing with congestion, especially in Colombo. Vehicular traffic moves on the left (British style). Narrow two-lane highways, overloaded trucks, poorly driven buses, and a variety of conveyances - ranging from ox carts and bicycles to new four-wheel-drive vehicles - make driving dangerous. Unexpected roadblocks and one-way streets are common and may not be clearly marked. Heavy rains sometimes cause flooding which can make roads inaccessible for several days and bring with them the risk of landslides.²⁰⁷

In 2017, there were 7.3 million registered vehicles in Sri Lanka; public transport tends to be unpopular as buses are typically slow, uncomfortable, and unpredictable, while taxis and motorized tricycles are prone to accidents and are often unavailable at peak times. Low occupancy car use results in both heavy traffic jams and high pollution levels. The Sri Lanka Transport Board has 6,300 buses in operational

condition, of which 2,467 are older than 10 years and prone to breakdowns. The country needs 7,257 functioning buses. The government has pledged to buy 50 electric buses for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to reduce air pollution, although the timeline for the full rollout of the BRT is unclear.²⁰⁸

Railways

Sri Lanka Railways (SLR) operates a network of three regions - Colombo in the west, Nawalapitiya in the south, and Anuradhapura in the center and north; this network is illustrated in Figure 5.²⁰⁹ SLR runs more than 400 trains every day on 1,340km of track. The network is exclusively for passenger transport; there is some oil tanker cargo from Colombo Port to Bandaranaike Airport soon to be replaced by a pipeline.²¹⁰

A continued lack of investment has stymied upgrades across Sri Lanka's rail network. This has allowed mechanical problems in ageing fleets to persist and led to frequent delays and overcrowding. In an effort to improve service, the government signed a 2018 US\$82 million contract agreement with India for the supply of 160 passenger coaches, 10 locomotives, 20 container carrier wagons, six diesel multiple units, and 30 fuel tank wagons for SLR.²¹¹ In addition, the country's 2017 budget included plans for a light rail transit (LRT) system for the capital and its surrounding area, with construction planned to have started in 2020. Seven transit corridors have been highlighted, with 75km of track, 25km of it elevated, three routes in the central business district, and four others extending to the suburbs of Kollupitiya, Bambalapitiya, Borella, Maradana, Rajagiriya, Battaramulla, and Malabe.²¹²

Waterways

There are 103 natural river basins in Sri Lanka, with a total length of about 4,500km. The largest river is the Mahaweli River at 335km long with a total volume of 10,448 km². In addition, there are a significant number of reservoirs including ancient irrigation reservoirs and

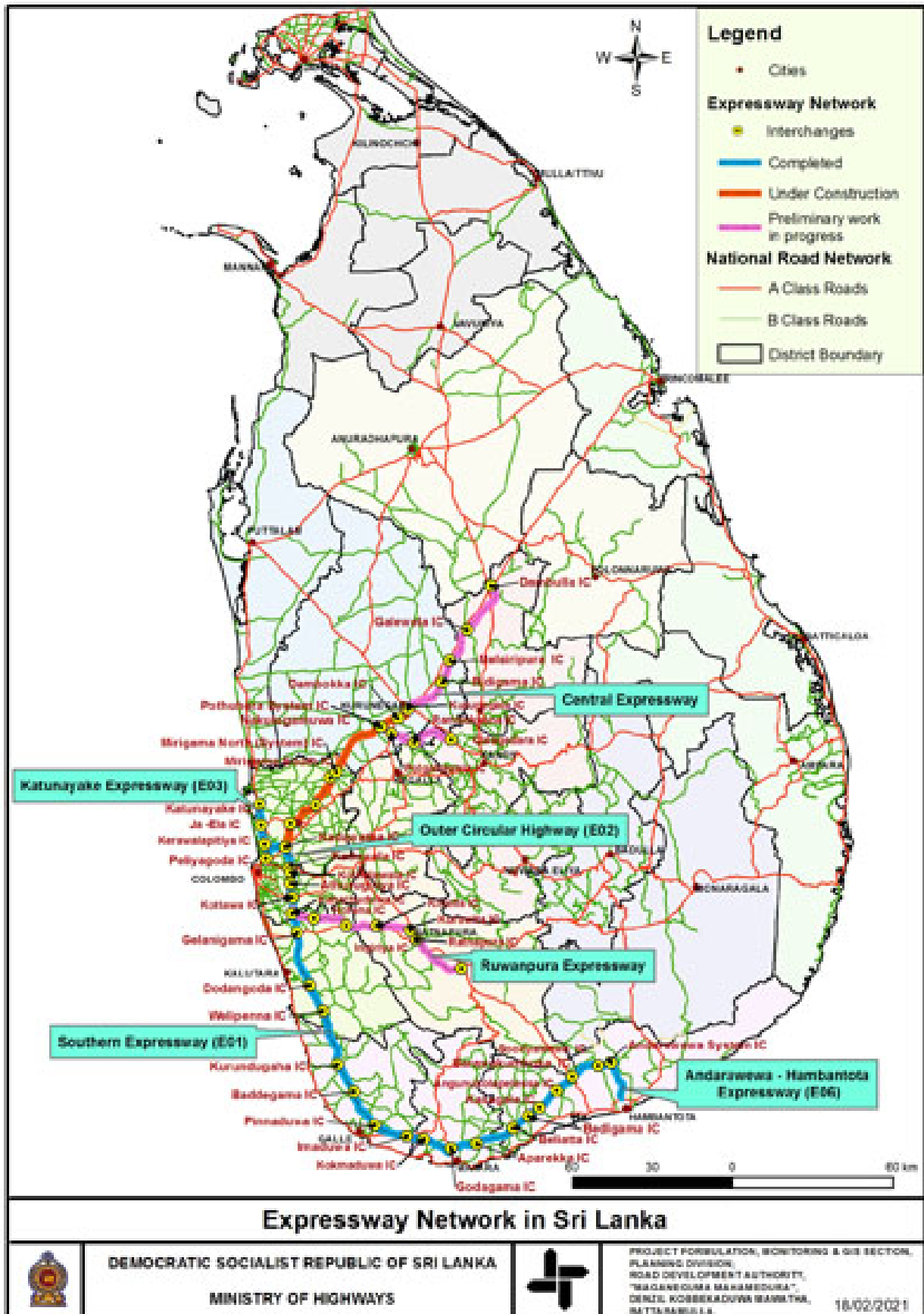


Figure 4: Sri Lanka’s Major Roads Network

RAILWAY NETWORK

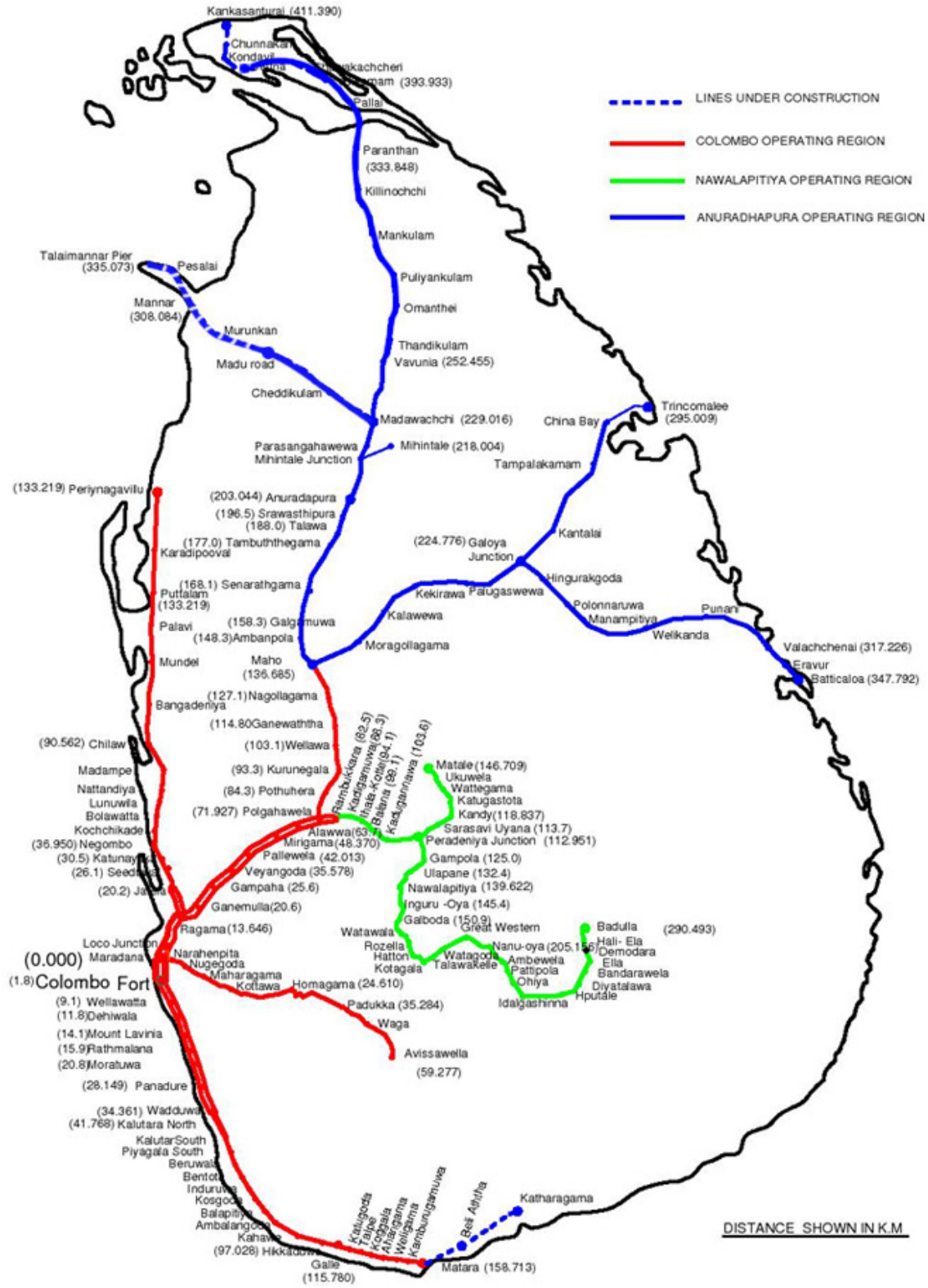


Figure 5: Sri Lanka Railways National Network

recently constructed multi-purpose reservoirs with a total area of 169,941 hectares. Beyond some canal ferry service in Colombo, the country does not utilize inland water transport for commercial reasons.²¹³

Schools

Sri Lanka has seen generally high achievement in its education sector, but adult literacy rates only just top 90%. Males slightly outpace females in literacy (93% to 91%) although females, on average, spend one more year in school than their male counterparts (15 years compared to 14 years).²¹⁴ The Ministry of Education (MOE) oversees schooling and approves the curriculum for all schools nationally. Education is state funded and free of charge at all levels although there are more than 50 private schools that use either the government curriculum or British system.²¹⁵ Since 2010, the sector has undergone reforms focused on preparing students for the modern, knowledge economy. Known as the Mahinda Chinthana, the reform program included an extension of compulsory schooling years for children; enrollment is now required for children ages 5-16 years, up through 11 years of instruction or the “Ordinary Level” for exams.²¹⁶ Students sit the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (O/L) at the end of senior secondary school (11 years of instruction) and GCE Advanced Level (A/L) examinations at the end of collegiate education (13 years of instruction). Students may sit GCEs in any of the three languages of instruction (Sinhala, Tamil, or English).²¹⁷

According to the MOE 2019 school census, fewer than 400 of the country’s 10,000+ public schools are single sex; co-education is the norm. Just over 4 million students were served by the public schools in 2019, and students were split roughly 50-50 by sex. Male students outnumber female students by about 1% at the primary and junior secondary levels while females outnumber males by 1% in early senior secondary. After the lower cycle of senior secondary, the sexes diverge; females account for 10% more students in the upper cycle of senior secondary whereas

males account for 20% more students in special/vocational education. Divisions between the sexes in subject streams at the Advanced Level are starker with females dominating the biological sciences and the arts while males dominate in the physical sciences and engineering; business studies and bio-technology show a more equitable representation of both sexes. Females outnumber males in the teaching profession by a ratio of approximately 3:1; the 2019 census found 184,125 female teachers employed in public schools in contrast to only 62,467 male teachers.

Sinhala-language only schools out-number Tamil-language only schools by a ratio of 2:1, and the 2019 school census found that nearly 3 million students are in Sinhala only instruction. Nearly 800 schools are bi- and tri-lingual (Sinhala with either or both Tamil and English). In terms of progress through school stages and student retention, the 2019 census found 1.65 million students enrolled in primary (grades 1-5) schools, 1.35 million students in junior secondary (grades 6-9), and 1 million students in senior secondary lower and upper cycles (grades 10-11 and 12-13 respectively).

Schools are broadly equal in terms of sex representation while Sinhala-medium education is far more common than Tamil-medium instruction as shown in Figure 6.²¹⁸

There are fifteen universities in the country; all of them are public institutions. Other institutions of higher education include medical schools, engineering schools, schools of law, and technical and vocational training schools, as well as the National Colleges of Education. Admission to university at the undergraduate level is based solely on the results of the GCE (A/L). Due to the limited number of facilities, admissions are competitive, and only 6% of students who sit the examination are admitted to universities.²¹⁹

Key elements of the education system that have promoted attendance are the free textbook policy, free school uniform policy, Navodya development program, and Mahindodaya program. For nearly 40 years, successive governments have committed to the free

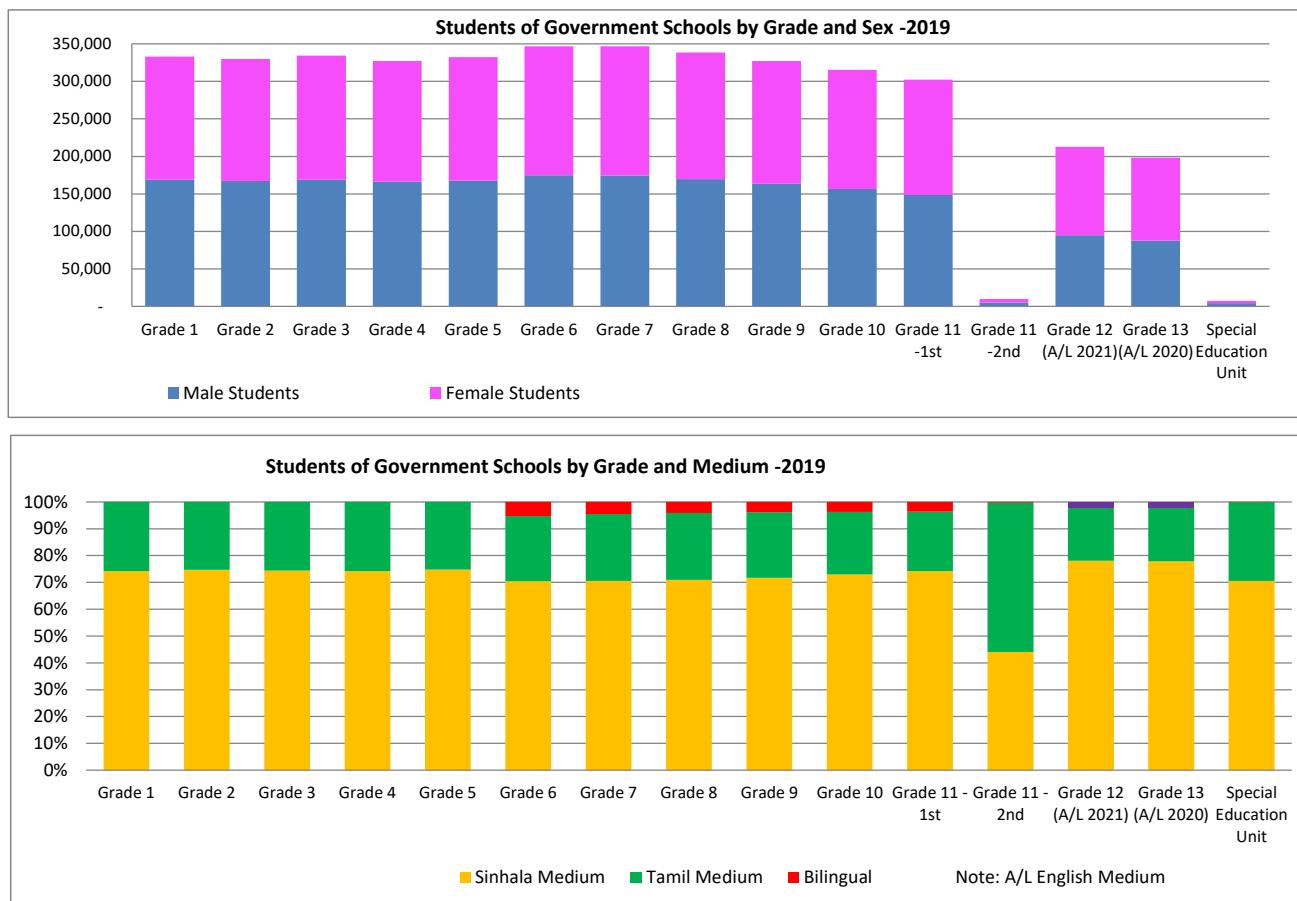


Figure 6: Sri Lankan Students by Grade

textbooks program to ensure that all students regardless of their families’ means, have the best learning materials. Beginning in 1993, free school uniforms became available as part of MOE’s effort to reduce absenteeism. The Navodya School Development Program of 1997 was an infrastructure and equipment project aimed at rural schools to overcome differences between rural (less privileged) areas and their urban counterparts. Navodya intended to construct and develop at least one school for each Divisional Secretariat, the smallest administrative division within the country. The program provided new buildings, laboratories, classrooms, and libraries. However, funding shortfalls eventually interrupted the program. Finally, the Mahindodaya program that launched in 2012 aimed at developing 1,000 secondary schools to eliminate discrimination between urban and rural schools. The schools were selected on a provincial basis and equipped with a computer unit, language unit, mathematics and science

unit, and distance learning center. Policy makers expected technology delivery in villages to create opportunities for rural students via exposure to the rest of the world and new technology.²²⁰ Construction of the Mahindodaya facilities was completed in latter 2015, and early results saw more than 13,000 Advanced Level students enroll in the resulting Technology streams offered. Thus, by 2016, nearly 10,000 students had completed the technology A-level and enrolled in technology courses at national universities.²²¹

Despite progress in extending education nationally, a lack of consistency has resulted from differing policy goals of successive national governments, all of which are characterized as ad hoc rather than being managed under a dedicated regulatory body. Moreover, there are chronic shortfalls of funding. The country annually budgets about 2.1% of GDP²²² to education whereas the Central Bank and successive professional studies have recommended a spending threshold of

6% of GDP. Years of funding shortfalls have exacerbated disparities between rural and urban schools and created competition among parents for sending children to urban schools; this competition, in turn, has created opportunities for corruption and malpractice.²²³ To illustrate some of the shortfalls of basic services that send parents seeking opportunities in urban areas, by 2012, more than 15% of schools did not have adequate water and sanitary facilities.²²⁴

Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are helping lay bare some of the shortfalls in the education system, many of which are elements that, when addressed, will help promote disaster risk reduction across the sector. The nationwide school closure caused by the pandemic disrupted learning for more than 4 million students.²²⁵ This disruption will affect not only educational attainment but also nutritional outcomes as more than 1 million students receive free lunches based on family poverty. Beyond learning and nutrition, pandemic-related closures have disrupted programs focused on period hygiene, mental health, reproductive health, obesity, and drug prevention.²²⁶

Specific reactions to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic included government planning for educational continuity in the face of emergencies that are not necessarily threats to infrastructure. To secure sustained learning for all children and adolescents amidst pandemic-related disruptions, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and National Institute of Education (NIE), in partnership with the private sector, activated an e-platform and televised lessons in Sinhala and Tamil for Grades 5 and higher. MOE drafted an Education Response Plan for adaptation and operationalization by the provinces; the plan includes consideration for continuous learning, safe school re-opening, and children's well-being. Whether the plan will be finalized remains to be seen. Meanwhile, MOE, together with the Ministry of Health, drafted a safe school operations guideline, also yet to be finalized.²²⁷

Beyond the present pandemic, Sri Lanka's schools operate in a world where disasters and emergencies are not uncommon. Nonetheless, the MOE did not have a policy to promote Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in schools until the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami after which the Ministry of Disaster Management (MDM) was established. During that emergency, it became clear not only that some schools were built in high-risk zones but also that many Sri Lankans did not know how to react when waters around the island receded ahead of the tsunami waves. Thus, one of MDM's first steps was to create a Road Map for future education, cooperation, and coordination. The Road Map singled out the education sector as a vehicle of central importance. Children would be taught in school how to protect themselves from hazards and how to conduct themselves and respond correctly in the event of a disaster. They and their teachers, thus, would also become the messengers of disaster safety, carrying these topics home to their families.

The below are key education entities involved in developing school based DRR:

- The Ministry of Education (MOE) assumes the lead role. It is responsible for issuing guidelines and developing education policy, including provisions governing disaster safety.
- The National Institute of Education (NIE) is in charge of developing guidelines for action on the basis of policy provisions; this remit includes training college lecturers and instructors, implementing teacher training, and preparing syllabi and instruction materials.
- The country's 17 National Colleges of Education train teaching staff for the entire country. Since 2008, the practical aspects of disaster safety have been incorporated into training the country's teachers via Colleges' recreational program. Students prepare vulnerability analyses, run emergency evacuation drills, and practice firefighting and first-aid techniques.

- In-service training for teachers and school principals is as follows: 100 Teacher Training Centers responsible for expanding the methodological knowledge and skills of teachers within the scope of pre- and in-service training; school based in-service teacher trainers pass on what they have learned to their colleagues; the National Institute of Education maintains a Centre for Educational Leadership Development (CELD) to prepare teachers to assume leadership roles. CELD, in 2009, after coordinating with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) developed National Guidelines for School Disaster Safety, which were subsequently adopted by the MOE.

Among other developments, the MDM-MOE partnership saw Safety Day become an annual observation in Sri Lanka's schools as a means to both practice disaster response and to commemorate those lost and harmed by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, as seen in Photo 8.²²⁸

After the 2009 implementation of teacher training and establishment of links between MOE and MDM, follow-on projects for DRR and School Safety focused on areas of Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka. Between 2012 and 2016, the European Union's DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations)) worked with Oxfam, Handicap International (now Humanity & Inclusion), ACTED, and Save the Children to improve the effectiveness of emergency response by enhancing awareness of DRR, and reduce the impact of disasters through education and training on DRR coupled with the use of creative mitigation activities and devices. The project sought to link and integrate DRR education in the Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (2014-18) and Education Sector Development Framework and Program (2012-16), and to bridge the gap between MDM and MOE to ensure full integration of community and school based DRR programming and create safe learning facilities.²²⁹

The Ministry of Disaster Management (MDM) has now been rolled under the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) is the implementing agency.²³⁰ Training, Education, and Public Awareness are an office under the DMC Director-General, and the office's tasks are listed as follows:

- Disaster Management incorporated into school curricula
- Additional reading material for school children on different hazards developed and distributed
- Conducting awareness programs for state sector agencies continuing
- Safety Day program organized annually to commemorate victims of all disasters and create a culture of safety among people of Sri Lanka
- DRR concepts to be introduced into the tertiary education system
- Audio visual materials on disaster management are available in the Resource Centre of DMC
- National Disaster Management Coordinating Committee established as the National Platform to coordinate and monitor work of all stakeholders involved with disaster management.²³¹



Photo 8: Students Practice Evacuation during Safety Day (26 December) Trainings

Communications

Sri Lanka's information and communications infrastructure is well developed, growing, and constantly modernizing. Both the government and private companies are involved in investing in the latest generation of technology not only to promote communication in general but to open areas for job creation in high-tech fields. Although the infrastructure exists for swift, reliable, free communications, there are structural shortcomings. Literacy of Information Technology (IT) and computers among some communities is low, and the cost of accessing data can be beyond the reach of poorer Sri Lankans. Meanwhile, political interference in media and information is a problem with instances of government influence and manipulation.

Following years of steady growth, Sri Lanka's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector growth is accelerating from a position of reliably providing basic services to one of innovating processes for other industries and becoming a critical foundation for job creation. The ICT sector is currently served by more than 300 companies, some of which are general while other specialize in agriculture, financial services, manufacturing, and tourism. National ICT companies export software products and services globally.

The ministry in charge of ICT policy and regulation is the Ministry of Digital Infrastructure and Information Technology (MDIIT). Other public bodies with oversight include Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) and Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA). ICTA is responsible for implementing all industry-related projects initiated by the government, including reforms and projects that fall under Vision 2025, a strategy particularly focused on developing ICT and instituting regulatory reforms to enhance the digital ecosystem, improve productivity and competitiveness, and raise standards of living.²³²

Telephones

As of 2019, Sri Lanka had a total of approximately 2.6 million fixed telephone lines or 12 lines per 100 people.²³³ By early 2020, mobile subscriptions topped 31.8 million, significantly higher than 100% penetration.²³⁴ The national trunk network consists of digital microwave radio relay and fiber-optic links; fixed wireless local loops are installed. There has been an increase in mobile broadband penetration, and government has set aside funds for the telecom sector to expand fiber and LTE networks. The following submarine cables provide connectivity globally: SeaMeWe -3 and -5; Dhiraagu-SLT Submarine Cable Network, WARF Submarine Cable, Bharat Lanka Cable System; and the Bay of Bengal Gateway. There are 2 Intelsat (Indian Ocean) satellite earth stations.²³⁵

The telecoms industry comprises four mobile operators and three fixed-access operators all of which are in intense competition for market share. The fixed-line providers are: Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT), Lanka Bell, and Suntel. The mobile market formerly had five operators until local firm Hutchison Telecommunications Lanka (Hutch) and the United Arab Emirates' Etisalat completed their merger in 2018. The leader in terms of market share among mobile operators is Dialog Axiata at 44.2% of subscribers. Dialog is followed by Mobitel at 28%, Hutch-Etisalat at 18.6%, and Airtel with 9.2%.²³⁶

Internet Access

Estimates of total internet use in Sri Lanka range from 7.2 million or 33.5% of the population²³⁷ to 10.1 million or 47% of the population.²³⁸ Fixed broadband accounts for about 1.5 million users, or just 7% of the population.²³⁹ Although internet access has increased in recent years, the speed and quality of service is inconsistent. In a 2019 survey, 25% of respondents said cost of data was a limiting factor in internet use. That year, Sri Lanka's average monthly price for fixed-line broadband was LKR 4,910 (US\$27.40); the country's mean household income stood at LKR 62,237 (US\$341). The International Telecommunication

Union (ITU) ranks Sri Lanka 21st of 181 countries for affordability of mobile broadband, although taxes for services are high. The province with the highest percentage of households accessing the internet is the Western Province, the country's most populous, where Colombo and other urban areas boast well-developed infrastructure. Government statistics for the first half of 2019 found about 43.4% of Western Province residents were "computer literate," compared to a national computer literacy rate of 30.1%. The civil war delayed infrastructure development in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and by 2019, 19.6% of Northern Province residents were categorized as computer literate. Rural and up-country Tamil communities have significantly lower computer and digital literacy rates.²⁴⁰

In 2017, the country began the process of adopting 5G technology. At the October 2018 Techno Sri Lanka exhibition, Mobitel demonstrated 5G technology using massive multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) in 64x64 MIMO configuration and in the 3.5 gigahertz (GHz) band. This follows earlier trials by telecoms firms operating in the country, including Dialog Axiata, which carried out a trial in August 2017. Dialog has signed an agreement with MDIIT and Sweden's Ericsson to establish an innovation center to develop internet of things (IoT) and ICT technologies; Dialog and Ericsson are also preparing to deploy a large-scale IoT network across Sri Lanka. Ericsson has assessed that the required infrastructure and ICT towers for the network already exist but that the government has delayed spectrum allocation.²⁴¹

The entire constellation of global social media sites claims some 6.4 million users in Sri Lanka, about 30% of the population and between 63% and 88% of the country's internet users. Sri Lankans mostly access the internet via mobile phone (62%) or laptop/desktop (36%). Indeed, 98% of social media users in the country access these sites via mobile phone. Facebook users number upwards of 5.9 million, split roughly 32:67 between females and male users. Instagram counts fewer than 1 million users in the country, and Twitter only 265,000.²⁴²

Top 5 Websites Accessed from Sri Lanka

1. Google.com
2. Youtube.com
3. Google.lk
4. Facebook.com
5. Zoom.us²⁴³

Freedom House reports that internet freedom is constrained in Sri Lanka. In recent years, the government has, at times, blocked social media and communications platforms, and free expression on-line is not entirely guaranteed. Following November 2019 presidential elections, the government has consolidated several regulatory and oversight bodies, including Telecoms Regulatory Commission (TRC), the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, and Sri Lanka's Computer Emergency Readiness Team (SLCERT), under the Ministry of Defence, and there are some concerns over the government's ability to order telecom operators to block social media platforms. Despite the country's access to multiple international cables, most landing stations are controlled by the majority state-owned Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT), giving the government control over internet infrastructure.

As of 2020, the government was finalizing a Cyber Security Act to tackle cybercrime, the nonconsensual dissemination of intimate images, hacking, and intellectual property theft. The information technology (IT) industry criticized the initial draft bill for a lack of transparency in the process and the broad definitions contained therein. For example, broad definitions for terms like "critical information infrastructure" and "cyber security incidents" could allow for the extension of government control over private institutions, could extend criminality to "actions that are otherwise acceptable but politically inconvenient," and could have a chilling effect on privacy and freedom of expression.

The National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2017–2021 contains the objective of ensuring the constitutional recognition of the right to privacy, but in practice, this right is frequently not

respected. For example, in April 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, there were reports that military intelligence was receiving cell phone contacts of patients from service providers and that the information was being used to track down those who had close contact with people who had tested positive for coronavirus or who were evading quarantine.²⁴⁴

Mass Media

There are both government and private mass media outlets serving the country. Multi-channel satellite and cable TV subscription services are available and have large up-take. Dozens of private TV and radio stations are joined by non-profit and community stations.²⁴⁵ Privately-owned networks enjoy a majority of the TV viewership market, and non-state media regularly and loudly engage in political debate, including criticism of government policies.²⁴⁶

Press

- Daily News - state-owned, English-language, daily newspaper (<https://dailynews.lk/>)
- The Island - private, English-language, daily newspaper (<https://island.lk/>)
- Daily Mirror - private, English-language, daily newspaper (<http://www.dailymirror.lk/>)
- Dinamina - state-owned, Sinhala, daily newspaper (<http://www.dinamina.lk/>)
- Lankadeepa - private, Sinhala, daily newspaper (<http://www.lankadeepa.lk/>)
- Uthayan - private, Jaffna-based, Tamil, daily newspaper (<https://newuthayan.com/>)
- Virakesari - private, Tamil, daily newspaper (<https://www.virakesari.lk/>)

Broadcast

- Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC) - state-owned, operates Rupavahini in Sinhala, Channel Eye in English, and Nethra in Tamil (<http://www.rupavahini.lk/>)
- Independent Television Network - state-run, Sri Lanka's first TV station (<https://www.itntv.lk/>)
- TV Derana - private, Sinhala-language programming (<http://www.derana.lk/>)

- Hiru TV - private, Sinhala-language programming (<https://www.hirutv.lk/>)
- Sirasa TV - private, Sinhala-language programming (<http://sirasatv.lk/>)
- TNL - private, English- and Sinhala-language programming
- ART TV - private, some English-language content
- Swarnavahini - private, Sinhala-language programming (<https://www.swarnavahini.lk/>)
- Shakthi TV - private, Sinhala-language programming (<https://shakthitv.lk/>)
- Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) - state-owned, operates domestic services in Sinhala, Tamil, and English (www.slbc.lk)
- FM Derana - private, Sinhala-language programming (<http://www.fmderana.lk/index.php>)
- Hiru FM - private, Sinhala-language programming (<https://www.hirufm.lk/>)
- TNL Radio - private, English- and Sinhala-language programming (<https://thisistnlnow.com/>)
- Sun FM - private, world music (<https://www.sunfm.lk/>)
- Yes FM - private, English- and Sinhala content (<https://www.yesfmonline.com/>)
- Sirasa FM - private, Sinhala-language programming (<https://sirasafm.lk/>)
- Sooriyan FM - private, Tamil-language programming (<https://www.sooriyanfm.lk/>)
- Shakthi FM - private, Tamil-language programming (<https://shakthifm.com/>)

News Agency

- Lankapuvath - state-owned

On-Line

- Roar Media - multimedia news content in English, Tamil, Sinhala, Bangla and Hindi (<https://roar.media/>)²⁴⁷

At the height of the civil war, Sri Lanka was one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists. Despite the pledges given by President Sirisena in 2015 to investigate past attacks on journalists, nearly all the crimes

of violence against journalists remained unpunished as of 2020.²⁴⁸ Reporters without Borders (RSF) has signaled that it expects some tightening of the mass media sphere under the resumed Rajapaksa administration. Known as the “Terminator” from his decade as defense secretary during his brother Mahinda’s two terms as president (2005-2015), Gotabaya Rajapaksa was sworn in as president in November 2019.²⁴⁹

Freedom of the press is guaranteed in the constitution, and respect for this right has improved in recent years. However, political bias remains problematic, and senior government officials and lawmakers sometimes threaten journalists.²⁵⁰ The spread of disinformation and misinformation has been a growing concern in recent years. A report from the Oxford Internet Institute released in September 2019 identified Sri Lanka as having coordinated cyber squads that manipulate information on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube on behalf of government agencies, politicians, and political parties. The report found evidence that Sri Lankan teams work to support preferred messaging, attack opposition, create divisions, and suppress critical content. Disinformation increased in the lead-up to and during the November 2019 election period, including some originating from political parties and candidates. Meanwhile, misinformation spread by ordinary users is a problem. For instance, false posts circulated online in March 2020 touting coronavirus cures and claiming that Sri Lanka had eradicated the virus.²⁵¹

Post

Sri Lanka Post (SLP) is the national postal provider with national service via more than 4,500 offices. SLP holds a monopoly on the island for letter delivery but does compete with other providers for parcel delivery.²⁵² Beyond letter and parcel services, SLP provides financial and insurance products such as savings accounts, handles some public employee pension payments, and manages payments to utility providers (electricity, telephone, etc.). SLP offices can provide *poste restante* services, and an SLP

ID card is available to the public for use as a valid, legal, national ID.²⁵³

World majors such as FedEx, UPS, and DHL serve Sri Lanka, and there are dozens of small, local/national parcel handlers and couriers.

Utilities

Demand for electric power and water and sanitation services is steadily rising. Investment needs for both sectors are large and will grow due to the combined effects of scarcity, degradation, and increasing demand.

Power

In the early stages of Sri Lanka’s electrification, electricity demand was mainly met by hydro generation. With time, thermal generation became preeminent, replacing hydro. At present, energy demand is mainly met with fossil fuels, all of which are imported. This import-dependence applies equally to transport energy supplies and to electricity generation although the country is aggressively moving toward renewables on the latter.

The upshot of Sri Lanka’s steady economic growth in recent decades has been increased demand for energy, a demand that is not expected to decrease any time soon. Demand is currently met by indigenous non-fossil fuels and imported fossil fuels, to include biomass, petroleum, and coal. Major local sources set for development over the short-term are large hydropower, solar, small hydro, and wind. Fossil fuel consumption is driven primarily by the transport and electricity sectors. The energy mix as of 2015 is shown in Figure 7.²⁵⁴

Sri Lanka’s electricity demand has been growing at an average annual rate of around 6% over the past 20 years, and this trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. By the end of 2015, approximately 99% of the total population had access to electricity from the national electricity grid.

The contribution of fossil fuels to Sri Lanka’s electricity generation mix has risen continuously. Electricity in Sri Lanka is mainly generated using coal and oil (as illustrated in Figure 8).²⁵⁵

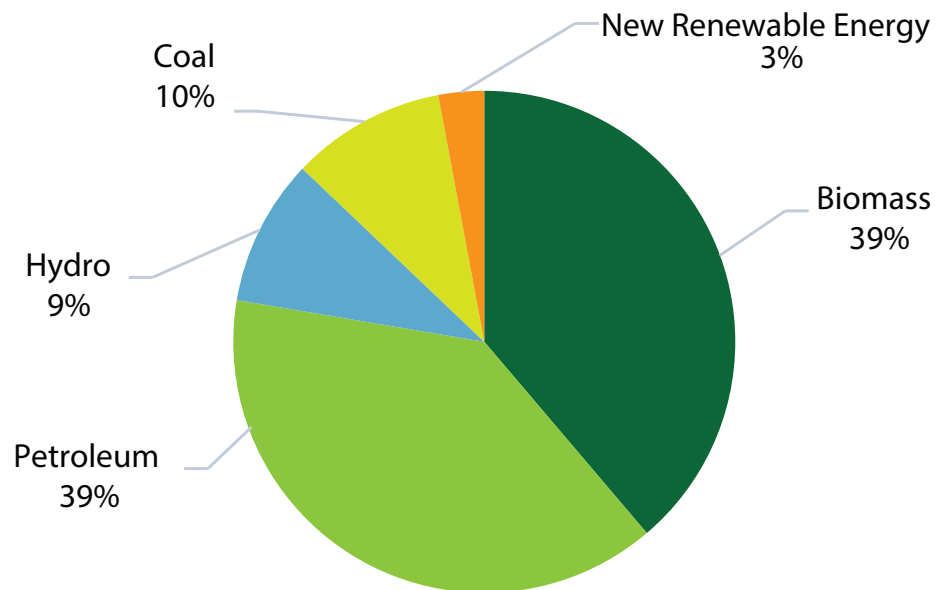


Figure 7: Sri Lanka Primary Energy Mix (2015)

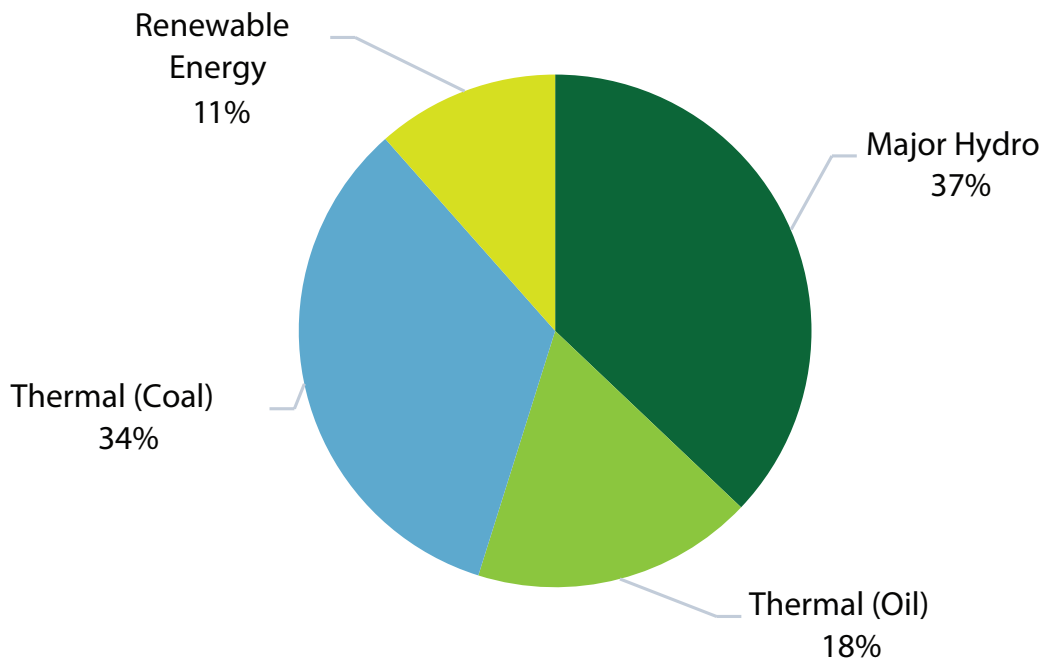


Figure 8: Sri Lanka Electricity General Mix (2015)

As a country with limited indigenous fossil fuel resources, Sri Lanka is dependent on imported coal and petroleum. While Sri Lanka is currently exploring the Mannar basin for natural gas, its commercial viability is still in question and the country’s dependence on imported fossil fuels for electricity generation will continue until renewables are sufficiently integrated and adopted in a large-scale manner.

As part of its Energy Sector Development Plan for a Knowledge-based Economy (2015-2025), Sri Lanka aims to become energy self-sufficient by 2030. It intends to do so using indigenous natural gas and large hydropower projects along with renewable sources. The 100% target for renewable energy (RE) electricity generation is slated to be achieved purely through renewables by 2050. In addition to the RE pledge, Sri Lanka’s

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) envision the following projects:

- Large scale wind power farms (514 MW) to replace planned thermal power plants generating equivalent amounts of electricity
- Broadening solar power electricity generation capacity up to 115 MW with increased participation by the private sector and adoption of advanced technology available around the world
- Promoting use of biomass (fuel wood) and waste (municipal, industrial, and agricultural) by elevating its use in power generation, adding 104.62 MW by 2025
- Promoting mini- and micro-hydro power generation projects as an environment-friendly power generation option with a targeted additional capacity of 176 MW
- Introducing Demand Side Management activities to improve the load factor of the system and upgrade efficiencies at the consumer end through measures such as high efficiency fans, pumps, motors, compressors, refrigerators, and Building Management Systems for the commercial, government, and domestic sectors
- Encouraging fuel switching to biomass in

industries and adoption of energy efficient and environmentally sustainable transport systems; and

- The Government prioritized the implementation and enforcement of sustainable energy policies to absorb more Non-Conventional Renewable Energy (NCRE) in the system, increasing its contribution to at least 50% by 2030.

Sri Lanka has worked to increase the share of renewables in its electricity mix. In 2014, the country met its target of generating at least 10% percent of electricity using RE. Subsequently, in 2015, the contribution of fossil fuels to the electricity mix decreased at the same time as a rise in the contribution of both renewables and large hydro. Sri Lanka, while attending the 22nd United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties in Marrakech, Morocco, as part of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, pledged to use only RE for electricity generation by 2050, a process that would involve shifting to a mix of RE sources (as envisioned in Figure 9).²⁵⁶

The Ministry of Power (MOP) is the main government body involved in the energy/

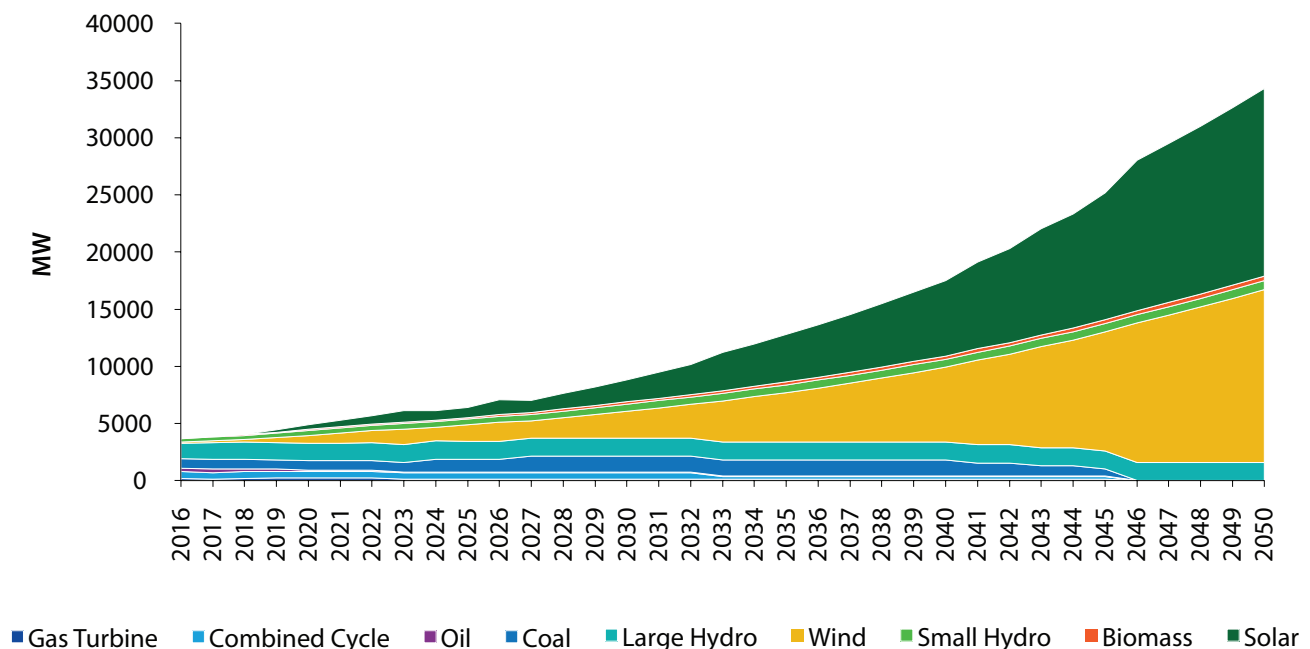


Figure 9: Renewables as Part of Electricity Generation Mix, Progress to Reach 100% by 2050

electricity sector. It formulates and implements policies and projects and is charged with monitoring and developing all electricity facilities throughout the country. Subsidiary to MOP is the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB), the state-owned utility responsible for generation, transmission, distribution, and revenue collection. Under CEB, there are 25 power plants and various licensees that, together, serve 90% of Sri Lanka's electricity consumers. CEB itself is a majority shareholder in Lanka Coal (LCOC) and Lanka Electricity (LECO). LCOC, alone in Sri Lanka, may procure and supply coal to the country's coal-fired plants. LECO is the state's distribution company, purchasing power from CEB and licensees, and distributing it to consumers.

Both CEB and private power producers generate electricity to supply the national grid. CEB-owned assets account for about two-thirds of installed capacity; this includes all the large hydropower plants, the only coal-based power project, and a significant amount of the oil-fired capacity in the country. Apart from generation, CEB is also the only buyer of electricity; it purchases electricity from private Independent Power Producers (IPPs) with whom it has entered into contracts. All large IPPs are oil fired, but mechanisms are set up to purchase electricity from renewable based power plants, and these mechanisms have enabled many Small Power Producers (SPPs) to generate and sell renewable power to the national grid. With the increase in electricity demand, contributions from private power plants have increased significantly in recent years.

Associated with MOP's long-term planning for electricity generation and distribution is the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment (MMD&E), which is responsible for formulating and adopting national measures necessary for protection of the environment. MMD&E's Climate Change Secretariat is the main platform for addressing emissions. Despite government leadership on planning and policymaking for sustainability, corporations and civil society are major players with several

companies already supplying the grid with wind- and solar-generated power. The Solar Industries Association, Federation of Electricity Consumer Societies, and Bio Energy Association are all advocacy and consumer education groups involved in mediating between the public and electricity producers.²⁵⁷

Water and Sanitation

While theoretically, there is no shortage of water in Sri Lanka, the country does have a comparatively low per capita water supply of 2,400 cubic meters.²⁵⁸ Moreover, a lack of compliance on pollution, land-use, and watershed management challenges national and local water managers and intensifies the issue of water rights. An estimated 90% of the country's land area belongs to river basins, and the country has historically been rich in use of catchment and irrigation in dry zones to manage surface water. Meanwhile, natural springs and aquifers have generally provided ample clean drinking water as well as water to supplement the above-mentioned surface water.²⁵⁹ A combination of more frequent droughts and overall rising water consumption mean that the country's water resources will come under greater stress in the coming years.

Sri Lanka ranks among the best countries in its region on the reach of safe drinking water and sanitation. The World Bank notes that 95% of Sri Lanka's population is served by safe drinking water, and 96% of the population has access to sanitation. Nonetheless, urban poor and rural communities are still to be reached.²⁶⁰ Major progress was made in extending water and sanitation systems between 2005 and 2015 as international donors and partners backed projects to address damage from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and three decades of civil war. Regions that benefited were concentrated in the north and east as well as coastal areas.²⁶¹ The next step for the country will be to meet the Sustainable Development Goals for treated, piped water and sanitation to reach down to the household level by 2030. Ensuring the budgetary and regulatory mechanisms are present to maintain these systems will also be a challenge.²⁶²

Key players in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sectors are the Ministry of Water Supply (MWS) and the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB). NWSDB is the country's dominant WASH utility. It reports to Parliament through MWS, and annual funding is allocated via Parliament's budgetary approval for the Ministry. NWSDB charges tariffs for water and sanitation services; its revenue – and, therefore, ability to extend and maintain the network – depends almost entirely on those tariffs. NWSDB's revenues tend to cover the cost of water sold, but often they do not cover the overall cost of operations, which fluctuate based on costs of fuel, personnel, and energy.

By 2015, NWSDB had an estimated 1.7 million water connections, and the country was seeing increased use of community-managed water supply systems that had emerged from district-level, rural water supply systems operated by the communities themselves via some form of community-based organization (CBO). These CBOs manage about 10% of all piped water systems and take the shape of a trust, non-government organization (NGO), or company. The National Community Water Trust (NCWT) was founded by the Government of Sri Lanka in 2010 to achieve sustainable CBO service provision. Both MWS and NWSDB provide leaders to the NCWT board. NGOs that are involved in the WASH sector are not permitted to be involved in the operation and maintenance of water supply schemes. Private sector involvement is restricted to bottled water distribution and de-sludging services to customers with septic tanks. Finally, the Plantation Housing Development Trust (PHDT) has some WASH remit. Tea plantations in the Hill Country are located on terrain that does

not favor large-scale development of common amenities. Thus, water supply systems in the tea estate sector are characterized by numerous small systems using many, disparate sources. PHDT monitors these systems that are, themselves, maintained by the plantation companies. While centrally managed, NWSDB water generally meets quality and reliability tests. However, the reliability of water supply systems in some community-based water supply systems does not consistently reach acceptable levels.

By 2020, sanitation coverage had reached 96%. Piped sewer systems are limited to areas with higher population and housing density such as major urban areas such as Colombo, Kataragama, Hantana, and Hikkaduwa, as well as major housing complexes and condominiums. Colombo city sewers are managed by the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) while most other sewer systems are managed by NWSDB. Sewer systems installed at housing schemes are either managed by individual households or, in some cases, by NWSDB. Outside these piped systems, most Sri Lankans households use one of four other approved, on-site systems: water-sealed latrines with septic tanks and soakage pits; water-sealed latrines with disposal pits; ventilated improved pit latrines; and ecological sanitation (dry compost latrines).

One of the keys to progress in the WASH sector over the past decade is change in people's behavior. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), public perception of the importance of sanitation in schools has increased; it is no longer acceptable to randomly construct a set of toilets at schools as parents expect combined water, sanitation, and hygiene allocated based on the number of students served.²⁶³

HEALTH

Sri Lanka is in the midst of a long-term shift from a higher prevalence of communicable diseases to a higher burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD). Sri Lanka's elderly population – over 65 years of age – is just larger than 10% of the population but is expected to grow to 20% by 2030. As the population ages, the country is seeing tighter health care budgets and higher out-of-pocket expenditure for chronic diseases. Chronic health challenges such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and mental ailments are layered on top of an historical burden of injuries, acute ailments, and communicable diseases like dengue and respiratory ailments.²⁶⁴

Figure 10 illustrates the top 10 causes of death in Sri Lanka – topped by heart disease, stroke, and diabetes – as well as changes over the past 10 years.²⁶⁵

The country has a strong, government-run health care system that reaches all communities via primary, preventative health centers. Although the years of the civil war (1983-2009) saw higher rates of violent injuries and deaths, even during the conflict, the health system continued to reach most communities with little fall-off in service in areas outside the war-torn northern and eastern regions. Indeed, during these nearly three decades, the country made some of its greatest progress against common causes of illness and death.

Between 1980 and 2015, Sri Lanka massively reduced infant mortality rates from 36.8 per 1,000 live births to 8.4 per 1,000.

Moreover, in the past 20 years, under 5 mortality rates have fallen from 16.3 per 1,000 to 10 per 1,000. Meanwhile, maternal mortality rates have settled to approximately 32 per 100,000 live births.²⁶⁶ The country does still struggle with pockets of undernourishment. It ranks 64th of 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index for 2020, and its score places it in the “moderate” category for hunger. The country's overall score has fallen steadily in the past 20 years with overall population-wide hunger falling the fastest to 7.6% in 2020. Meanwhile, the rates of wasting and stunting among children under age 5 have remained stubbornly consistent at between 15% and 17%.²⁶⁷

Despite this progress on primary and preventative results, the causes of hospitalization in the country remain somewhat consistent; intestinal infections and asthma have remained the top two causes for hospitalization since 1985 while hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes now round out the top five causes whereas they used to be lower within the top ten.²⁶⁸

What causes the most deaths?

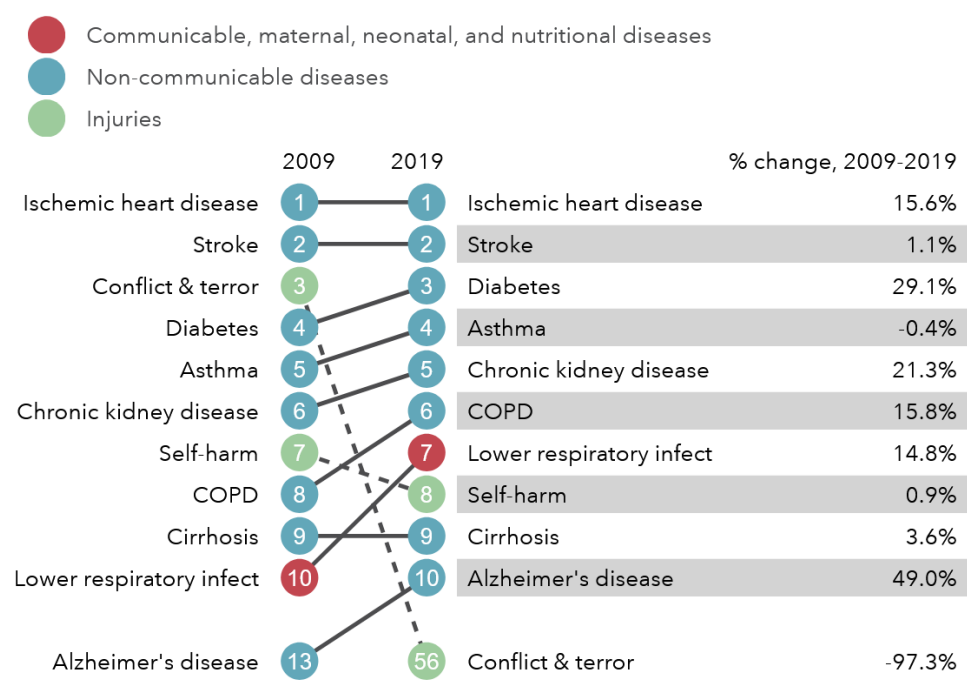


Figure 10: Top Causes of Death in Sri Lanka

Health Care System Structure

The primary care system in Sri Lanka has both government and private providers that belong in allopathic and alternative medicine sectors. The alternative sector includes ayurvedic and other traditional practices. Nongovernmental organizations (NGO) also provide limited health services.

Sri Lanka provides free health care through a government system with national availability. Primary health care services fall into three parallel systems: community, curative, and rehabilitative. The Rehabilitation Service is the newest and is still developing.²⁶⁹ Community health services address the key issues of maternal and child health, and communicable diseases; there is a heavy emphasis on prevention and health promotion via health units that coincide with local government administrative units (or Ministry of Health areas), each staffed by a medical doctor and public health field staff.²⁷⁰ Generally, people register for and access free preventive health services within their area of residence. They can also access private general practitioners (GP) who provide preventive

health care but who also charge higher rates for care. The allopathic, curative system provides hospitalization and out-patient care. The dominant hospital provider is the government. Outpatient care is distributed almost equally between private and governmental providers. All government doctors are allowed to participate in private practice after hours as part of the government's effort to improve retention of trained and competent personnel.²⁷¹

The Ministry of Health (MOH) oversees a decentralized system, as illustrated in Figure 11,²⁷² whereby management of primary health care services is devolved to provincial councils. Some 68 basic hospitals and 18 district general hospitals provide diagnosis and treatment. The central authority manages the National Hospital, the teaching hospital, and 10 larger specialist hospitals together with the procurement of drugs, recruitment and deployment of staff, and training. While decentralization has allowed broad provision, it has also contributed to unequal distribution of resources. Recent years have seen reduced funding for primary care and a preference for by-passing primary care in favor of specialized services.²⁷³

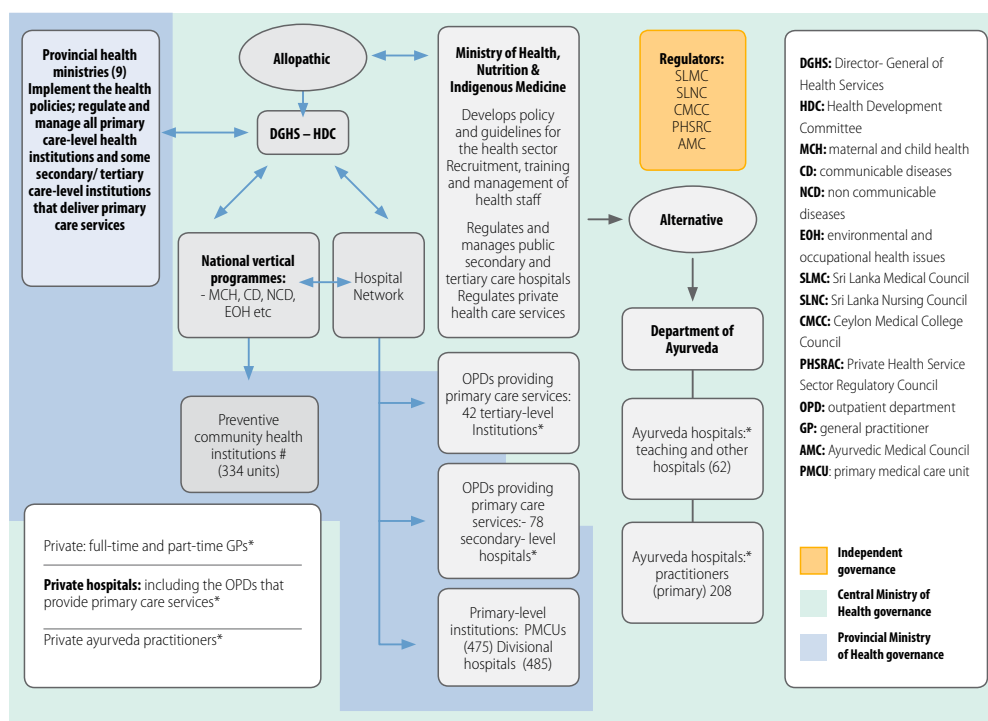


Figure 11: The Structure of the Ministry of Health Care Networks

Healthcare service delivery is managed by the national MOH and the nine provincial ministries of health. The administrative head is the Cabinet Minister of Health, and the central level is responsible for national policy related to healthcare services, recruitment and training, and administration of staff. The central ministry manages all teaching hospitals and most of the tertiary care hospitals. Management of secondary, primary care, and non-specialist divisional institutions, including hospitals, is the responsibility of the provincial ministries, each under their respective ministers. Provincial ministries are expected to adjust their services, strategies, and action plans according to national policies and guidelines set out by the central MOH.

The primary care institutions in Sri Lanka mainly divide into preventive healthcare institutions (community health services) and curative healthcare institutions. The country is divided into 338 preventive healthcare areas, each with a preventive healthcare institution overseen by a medical officer of health, who is responsible for all the preventive healthcare activities of the allocated area. All the areas are headed by at least one medical officer of health, with one or two additional officers depending on the population size. In addition, field health officers, such as midwives and public health inspectors, are attached to the health care institution under the medical officer. These preventive health care institutions are responsible for providing antenatal and postnatal care services, immunization services, family planning services, nutrition care for children through field clinics, and domiciliary services. Control of communicable diseases, inspection of occupational settings, environmental health and food safety, surveillance, and notification of notifiable diseases are also responsibilities of the medical officers of health and their staff.

Curative sector institutions include divisional hospitals and primary medical care units. The divisional hospitals are further classified into three categories – A, B, and C. The main differences among these categories are the

numbers of beds available. All divisional hospitals are managed by a medical officer in charge who is accountable to the regional directors of health services of the district. Divisional hospital type A usually has a bed capacity of above 50 at one institution. Apart from the medical officer in charge, there are few medical officers attached to each type of divisional hospital. Type B divisional hospitals usually have the services of two to three medical officers per institute. The bed capacity of these institutes is usually between 20 and 50. Type C institutes have a bed capacity of less than 20, and they are also served by one to two medical officers with other staff. All these divisional hospitals provide maternity care services, and labor rooms are available for utilization.

Traditional medicine plays a vital role in primary care. Certain beliefs from traditional medicine influence health practices and affect compliance with the allopathic system. Although the popularity of indigenous medicine has reduced since the mid-20th century, Section 89 of Act No. 31 of 1961 identified four systems that still fall within the purview of traditional systems: Ayurveda, siddha, unani, and desiya chikitsa. Of these four systems, Ayurveda is the most widely practiced.

The Department of Ayurveda of the MOH executes some of the functions assigned to it through its own administrative network. The rest of the functions are performed through three statutory bodies set up under the Ayurveda Act: the Ayurvedic Medical Council, the Ayurveda Education and Hospital Board, and the Ayurvedic Research Committee. The Ayurvedic Medical Council is empowered to:

- Make recommendations to the minister as to whether any institute for teaching Ayurveda should be approved by the minister for the purposes of the act
- Register names of persons as Ayurveda practitioners
- Register names of persons as Ayurveda dispensers
- Register names of persons as Ayurveda nurses

- Cancel or suspend such registrations
- Make regulations for professional behavior of Ayurveda physicians, Ayurveda dispensers, and Ayurveda nurses
- Make regulations required for any matter referred to with regard to the above.

Health care services provided by NGOs are limited, as there is an efficient distribution of public healthcare services. Some international NGOs, such as Médecins Sans Frontières, have provided medical care services in conflict-affected areas for a limited time. Organizations providing specific services, such as counselling or rehabilitation services, have also only operated for limited periods. The Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka has continued to provide family planning services to Sri Lankans for 50 years. Some agencies such as Help Age International, provide primary care services specifically targeting older people in the community. Some government agencies work in close collaboration with NGOs in delivering primary care services to hard-to-reach populations. The role of NGOs in providing such services is diminishing as government services expand their coverage. The National STD/AIDS Control Program continues to work with NGOs to promote prevention activities among at-risk populations.

Development partners range from international to local agencies. United Nations agencies are particularly active in contributing to the sustainable development agenda. Agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have their own country cooperation strategies for the health sector that are in most instances developed in consultation with provincial ministries of health. Although the overall contribution from external donor funding is considered small, the technical inputs that have resulted have made a significant impact.

As the country's economy has developed, both transport and communication infrastructure have improved, and the knock-on effect has been

reasonably good physical access to health care institutions in all parts of the country alongside telephone/mobile data access to information and experts. Although this is nominally a boon to the public, some structural issues have emerged. Of note, Sri Lankan patients have autonomy in accessing primary, secondary, and tertiary care hospitals for first contact, and there is no referral system in place. Patients therefore tend to access larger institutions with better facilities, by-passing smaller medical intuitions with minimal facilities for patient care. There is thus underutilization of smaller institutions and overcrowding of larger institutions.²⁷⁴

Health Strategies and Surveillance

The Strategic Framework for Development of Health Services and Master Health Plan covers the period 2016-2025. The changes made compared to the preceding document (2004-2015) are intended to minimize inequity, improve quality and safety, develop a health system that can respond to the needs and expectations of the new generation of Sri Lankans, and match demographic changes.

The over-riding objectives for the national health service are:

- Equity** of distribution of services to all patients
- Accessibility** for each patient
- Quality** of services provided to each patient
- Financial Protection** of the patients

The Strategic Framework recognizes the structure of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In the government's 2018 voluntary national review, the country assessed its progress toward SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being. The review underscored Sri Lanka's achievements.

- The country reached the maternal mortality rate global target (SDG Target 3.1) more than two decades ago.
- In 2015, Sri Lanka's maternal mortality rate had hit 33.7 per 100,000 live births, well below the SDG target of 70 per live births.

- The under-five mortality rate and the neonatal mortality rates in 2018 were 10 and 5.8 per 100,000 live births, respectively, both lower than the SDG Target 3.2.

Performance on mitigating certain communicable diseases (SDG Target 3.3) has been rather more mixed.

- In 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) certified Sri Lanka as Malaria free.
- The tuberculosis (TB) incidence rate in 2015 was 65 per 100,000 population, with a mortality rate of 5.6 per 100,000, well below the rest of East and South Asia.
- The incidence of Dengue increased from 142 cases per 100,000 population in 2015 to 260 cases per 100,000 population in 2016.
- The Demographic and Health Survey of 2016 showed that only 33% of women have comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS; although Sri Lanka's HIV prevalence is below 1%, there was an increase in the reported HIV cases from 95 in 2009 to 285 in 2017.

Meanwhile, lifestyle and non-communicable diseases are a growing challenge.

- The rate of injuries and deaths attributed to road accidents (SDG Target 3.6) is on the rise. The average number of daily deaths on roads increased from 6.6 in 2014 to 7.5 in 2015. The death rate due to road accidents was 13.4 per 100,000 population in 2015.
- The threat posed by NCDs (SDG Target 3.4) is high, with 71% of all annual deaths in government hospitals being due to chronic NCDs. Cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases are the major NCDs burdening the country's population.
- Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) has been recognized as an issue of concern. Furthermore, there is a rising incidence of CKD in farming areas, which points to the possibility of chronic diseases resulting from exposure to pesticides; it is necessary to focus on reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and

pollution (SDG Target 3.9).

- Among factors that contribute to the increasing prevalence of NCDs: a rapidly ageing population, increasing prevalence of CKD, increasing household income coupled with unhealthy food habits, and the rise of alcohol and tobacco consumption (SDG Target 3.5).²⁷⁵

Within the National Strategic Framework for Health Services Development, MOH addresses the rising burden of NCD. It does not have a disease burden or surveillance database to allow accurate measurement of the burden or how it is being addressed. The activities targeted for the strategy period include establishing a research and monitoring bureau and enhancing health promotion programs that emphasize "Healthy Places" (village, market, workplace, etc.). Along with the short-term evolution of the establishment of a Rehabilitation Service that is co-equal to the Preventative and Curative Services, the Ministry is developing a policy for post-trauma care and rehabilitation. These changes are calculated to address the following SDG indicators: mortality among citizens ages 30-70 years from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or suicide; hypertension diagnosis and treatment; prevalence of insufficient physical activity; and the number of road deaths per 100,000 people.

Beyond disease burden, Sri Lanka still confronts problems of nutrition. At present, the country is caught in a double bind of rising obesity in some communities while other communities are undernourished. Thus, the country must address the SDGs of both reducing the percentage of overweight/obese people (including children under 5 years of age) and reducing the prevalence of underweight children or people with below minimum levels of dietary consumption. MOH foresees the establishment of a nutrition bureau to research, develop, and communicate nutrition plans, particularly on tea plantations.

MOH forecasts that depression will be a leading cause of morbidity by 2030. Along with

a growing disease burden, Sri Lanka struggles with inadequate public understanding and knowledge of mental health issues. There is little space dedicated in the primary health services to mental health, and there is a deficit of mental health professionals of all types (counsellors, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers). To meet the SDG of an increased proportion of persons living with a mental illness who are accessing care, the first goal is to expand mental health service; this will involve the development of a system and its protocols, to train a cadre of professionals and to build the infrastructure necessary to house mental health services. In addition to building the formal mental health structures, MOH will work to prevent isolation of persons with mental illnesses from society.

The Strategic Framework addresses the trend of increasing incidence of natural disaster and man-made disaster due to climate change and other factors. MOH plans to play its part in tackling the health consequences of disasters via monitoring disaster preparedness across MOH levels, and to collaborate in risk assessments and public education with other government bodies. Moreover, on the issue of pandemics, MOH is strengthening its own presence at ports of entry to monitor and prevent the arrival of diseases of concern, establishing a notification/information system at ports of entry, strengthening the legal framework for public health emergency measures and quarantine, and training public health staff on border security.²⁷⁶

Communicable Diseases

Sri Lanka is burdened with the following communicable diseases: dengue fever, Chikungunya, and Japanese encephalitis.²⁷⁷ HIV/AIDS is a minimal risk with less than .1% of the adult population infected and fewer than 3,600 identified cases within the country.²⁷⁸

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

The Sri Lanka Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) was finalized in April 2020 and has been the Government's and UN team's guide

on the health sector response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Early in the pandemic, Sri Lanka instituted curfews and physical distancing measures, activated testing and quarantining processes, ensured food and essential services delivery, and suspended in-coming international passenger flights. The result was that by mid-June 2020, the country had reported 1,869 cases, and there was broad discussion of reducing restrictions in order to stanch economic harm and re-open health services to reduce the risks from other diseases that are endemic.²⁷⁹ Indeed, re-opening some sectors induced a somewhat greater spread of the illness, and the country had reported more than 59,000 cases as of 26 January 2021.²⁸⁰ Transmission has been significantly higher since October 2020 than it was in mid-2020. During December 2020 and January 2021, confirmed cases numbered more than 500 nearly every day in a sign of steady community spread. It must be noted that Sri Lankans who have been confirmed to have had COVID-19 account for less than .25% of the population, and the mortality rate stands at .5% of cases.²⁸¹

Despite Sri Lanka's robust health system and infrastructure, there are shortages of trained health care providers. In addition, a lack of public health messaging was expected to combine with other socio-economic elements to result in non-compliance by some people with safety measures. The SPRP thus sought to coordinate the country's health services with other government agencies and with global players, such as WHO and UNICEF. The domestic, all-of-society response was to be coordinated from the President's office where a 40-member task force included provincial governors, ministry secretaries, the Director-General of Health Services, military service chiefs, the inspector-general of police, and some major corporations. The government immediately sought private sector support, particularly from media and telecoms companies, to address public health communications.²⁸²

As the pandemic has dragged on, the country has not been immune to problems associated with politicization of the disease, inequitable application of restrictions, and obstacles in

accessing personal protective equipment, medications, and vaccinations. In mid-January 2021, MOH ordered that a medical officer and regional epidemiologist be involved in all decisions to close establishments or restrict movement rather than allowing local political administrations make these decisions.²⁸³ This followed a mid-2020 order to free key businesses from travel and curfew restrictions in hopes of reducing the economic and social damage that widespread lockdowns had caused. Much of the country's logistics, food processing, food distribution, and electronics and furniture manufacturing sectors had been allowed to operate almost entirely without restriction.²⁸⁴

Beyond the direct health consequences of the spread of COVID-19, the economic effects will have significant implications for long-term health. Poverty will tick back upward after jobs and earnings losses, especially among informal workers (70% of the workforce). High food price inflation will also disproportionately affect the poor who spend a larger share of their budget on food.²⁸⁵

Chikungunya

There is some risk of Chikungunya infection in Sri Lanka. Chikungunya is a viral infection caused by the CHIK virus belonging to the *Togaviridae* family. The virus is transmitted through the bite of infected, daytime biting, female – primarily *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* – mosquitoes. They are typically found in and around urban and suburban dwellings. Monkeys and other wild animals are believed to be reservoirs or carriers. In some cases, Chikungunya is asymptomatic. Those with symptoms usually get ill 3-12 days after being bitten. Symptoms include sudden fever and severe muscle and joint pain. They can be accompanied by headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and a rash. Although most patients fully recover, chronic joint pain may last for several weeks or months. Other persistent problems may include eye, gastrointestinal, neurological, and heart complications. Persons with chronic health conditions, a weakened

immune system, infants, and older persons are at risk of developing complications with this infection. Chikungunya is rarely fatal.²⁸⁶

Dengue

Dengue is a major concern with MOH working to strengthen prevention, surveillance, and case management. During 2020, more than 30,800 cases were reported with January 2020 alone seeing more than 11,000 infections. Colombo, Kandy, and Batticaloa are the worst affected regions with more than 3,400 cases each during 2020.²⁸⁷

Dengue is a viral infection caused by four types of viruses (DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and DENV-4) belonging to the *Flaviviridae* family. The viruses are transmitted through the bite of infected *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* female mosquitoes that feed both indoors and outdoors from dawn to dusk. These mosquitoes thrive in standing water, including puddles, water tanks, containers, and old tires. In some cases, infection is asymptomatic. Those with symptoms get ill 4-7 days after the bite. The infection is characterized by flu-like symptoms which include a sudden high fever coming in separate waves, pain behind the eyes, muscle, joint and bone pain, severe headache, and a skin rash with red spots. The illness may progress to Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF). Symptoms include severe abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, bruising, and uncontrolled bleeding. High fever can last 2-7 days. Complications can lead to circulatory system failure and shock and can be fatal. Infection with one Dengue virus serotype confers immunity to future infections only by that serotype; subsequent infection by a different serotype is possible.²⁸⁸

HIV/AIDS

As of 2019, some 3,600 Sri Lankans were living with HIV; of these, fewer than 100 are children under the age of 15.²⁸⁹ The same year, WHO certified the country as having eliminated mother-child transmission, and the country was undertaking “fast track” interventions to “End

AIDS by 2025.” The National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) of the MOH reports that of the people living with HIV/AIDS, only 64% know their status and 51% are on anti-retroviral treatment (ART). These numbers represent a challenge to the country if it is to reach “90-90-90” target by 2022 (90% know their status; of those 90% are on ART; of those 90% are virally suppressed). Testing and treatment are the key shortfalls. NSACP oversees a network of 34 full-time STD clinics, which function as service delivery centers; of these, 27 STD clinics are also ART facilities. Still, these clinics are concentrated in Colombo with less coverage elsewhere in the country. In addition, the country’s most intense testing occurs among antenatal women and blood donors, among whom 0.00% and 0.01% of tests are positive, respectively.

The trend of adult, female HIV infections was stable at around 60 cases per year until 2018, but there was an uptick to 77 cases in 2019, and there is some concern that this is a growing trend. However, during the same period, adult, male infection has increased exponentially from 78 in 2018 to 359 cases in 2019, a 460% increase. Since 2018, male-to-male sexual transmission is the most frequent mode of HIV transmission, nearly 60% in 2019. Indeed, epidemiological studies have found the proportion of new infections among men who have sex with men has steadily increased during the last 10 years. Meanwhile, HIV infection among the clients of female sex workers appears to have decreased. The number of female sex workers with HIV has been falling gradually. HIV among people who inject drugs appears to be slightly rising, while HIV among low-risk females has been stable. In addition to condom promotion, biomedical interventions such as preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis following sexual exposure (PEPSE) will be required.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) collaborates with the Government of Sri Lanka to accelerate the government efforts to “End AIDS in Sri Lanka by 2025.” The USAID-

funded “Linkages across the Continuum of HIV Services for Key Populations Affected by HIV – LINKAGES Project” led by FHI 360, works in collaboration with NSACP and local civil society organizations to support the adoption of several community-led approaches and technological innovations to improve service coverage and quality for at-risk and key populations. The USAID-FHI 360 partnership accomplished the below results:

- Reached 40,000 people through the Know4sure.lk online outreach intervention
- Trained 146 providers from the private sector on providing HIV services to key populations
- Prepared “due list” of key population individuals who had not been tested for six months, and mobilized 2,393 female sex workers and 255 men who have sex with men and trans women from the list for HIV testing
- Using the enhanced peer outreach approach, reached and tested 378 individuals who had never been reached through existing peer-led outreach interventions
- Developed and implemented community and clinic-based client feedback systems to learn key population perspectives on the quality and use of STI and HIV services, condom use, and exposure to stigma and violence
- Developed social and behavior change communication capacities and toolkit to improve the quality of interpersonal communication and online outreach
- Developed a National Key Population Program Monitoring Dashboard and key indicators to inform programmatic decision-making, address supply-chain issues, and link key population members to HIV testing
- Built capacity of local civil society partners through the establishment of three learning sites to support improvements in HIV testing services and programming

While the USAID/PEPFAR involvement in the LINKAGES program ended at the end of 2019, the LINKAGES project was slated to continue.²⁹⁰

Japanese Encephalitis

The risk of Japanese Encephalitis (JE) is present throughout the country, and transmission is year-round. Japanese Encephalitis is a viral infection that is zoonotic, primarily transmitted by evening biting *Culex* mosquitoes that feed on infected birds, pigs, and other mammals, and that pass the infection to humans around rice paddies and irrigation systems. Most cases are asymptomatic. Those with symptoms usually get ill 5-15 days after exposure with fever, severe headache, vomiting, diarrhea, and general weakness. Some patients will develop neurological symptoms such as tremors, seizures (especially children), expressionless face, and sudden paralysis of the respiratory system and bladder. Patients may also experience behavioral changes. JE can be fatal in 20% to 30% of cases, and many survivors have long-term neurologic, psychiatric, or cognitive problems. The vaccine is readily available and is part of the regular childhood vaccine schedule in endemic countries.²⁹¹

While Sri Lanka is still considered an endemic country for JE, immunization has become widely available. Sri Lanka implemented immunization against JE with the inactivated vaccine in 1989. The last recorded outbreak in the country was in Ratnapura district in 2002. Since that outbreak, only sporadic cases have been registered with the demography of patients now skewing older, among those generations that were not vaccinated as children. Moreover, the health system has two reporting processes that will identify and notify upwards any suspected cases of JE; annually, fewer than 50 cases are now reported along with fewer than 10 deaths.²⁹²

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis control comes under the National Program for Tuberculosis Control and Chest Diseases, a decentralized unit under MOH. Population coverage of directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) is 100%, and treatment outcome of new smear-positive pulmonary tuberculosis cases in 2013 was 85.2%, according to the annual health bulletin for

2014.²⁹³ Observations in the 2016-2025 Strategic Framework include a decreasing caseload of TB but a rising case fatality rate due to late detection and inattention to co-morbidities linked to the fact that a high proportion of TB patients are alcohol and drug users. The community health system is developing a monitoring and tracing system to address shortfalls in TB control in urban areas, prisons, and tea estates. An increase in awareness among primary care physicians is expected to help increase early case detection and keep treatment at the district level.²⁹⁴

Non-Communicable Diseases

In Sri Lanka, noncommunicable diseases (NCD) cause more than three-quarters of all deaths, as illustrated in Figure 12,²⁹⁵ and nearly one in five people die prematurely from NCDs. A 2015 mission by a UN Interagency Taskforce on NCDs placed heavy blame on tobacco use, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol, and physical inactivity. More than one-third of Sri Lankan adult males are tobacco users. One of every three people have elevated blood pressure, and one-third of women are overweight. Dietary sodium consumption is two to three times higher than recommended. The Ministry of Health (MOH) has set up an operational NCD unit that has the lead in tackling many of these challenges. It also has an operational action plan to reduce tobacco use, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol, and physical inactivity.²⁹⁶

Sri Lanka published the first version of the National Multisectoral Action Plan (NMSAP) for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2016–2020 in October 2015. Under Advocacy, Partnership, and Leadership targets, central authorities and administrations are priority actors, tasked with formulating policies for training staff and allocating financial resources. Moreover, many of the actions planned in the NMSAP require broader government action, such as revising the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA) Act of 2006 to ban tobacco advertising and potentially raise taxes

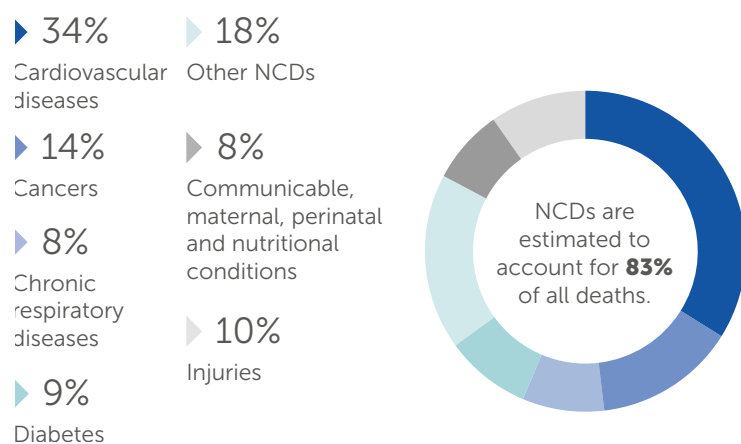


Figure 12: Proportion of Non-Communicable Disease as a Cause of Mortality in Sri Lanka

on tobacco products. However, other changes are focused on the district level where smoking cessation hotlines and clinics can be set up. The major challenge embedded within the MOH's plans is that behavioral change is not simply a matter of health care practitioners informing or monitoring their patients. The NMSAP foresees cooperation across sectors from education to commerce in hopes of establishing healthier lifestyle infrastructure to support changes impelled by information campaigns.²⁹⁷

MOH forecasts that depression will be a leading cause of morbidity by 2030. Sri Lanka struggles with inadequate public understanding and knowledge of mental health issues. There is little space dedicated in the primary health services to mental health, and there is a deficit of mental health professionals of all types (counsellors, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers).²⁹⁸ In order to address the shortfalls in mental health service, MOH crafted an officially approved mental health policy in 2005. The overarching mental health plan was revised in 2010 and addresses: funding for the implementation of the plan, shifting services and resources from mental hospitals to community mental health facilities, and integration of mental health services into primary care. The National Mental Health Advisory Council is responsible for mental health services, and the Mental Health Directorate of the MOH is responsible for executing decisions made by the Council.

The National Institute of Mental Health

(NIMH) is the country's sole mental health hospital; it also functions as a training center for the public and the media in addition to training primary health care staff, medical officers, and postgraduates. It houses a mother-baby unit, learning disability unit, forensic unit, gender-based violence unit, telephone hotline service, therapy units, and an independent-living home. Outside NIMH's 1,500 beds, however, the country has limited space (about 500 total beds) for inpatient mental health care.²⁹⁹

Training for Health Professionals

As of 2014, there were an estimated 85 general physicians per 100,000 Sri Lankans. In addition, there were 185 nurses, 7 public health inspectors, and 29 midwives all per 100,000 persons. In the alternative sphere, there were more than 22,600 registered Ayurveda practitioners. The country saw a very swift expansion (more than a doubling) in the number of nurses between the years 2000 and 2014, but this expansion has not been mirrored in other categories of health workers.

Most of Sri Lanka's primary care physicians in the public health system's allopathic arm have a Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery degree, the sole training required to practice as a primary care physician in the country. There is some sentiment among the country's medical doctors that most medical faculties in Sri Lanka do not provide adequate exposure to primary care in their undergraduate curricula. There are eight government medical faculties, and one faculty attached to the Ministry of Defence. Foreign graduates of recognized universities may enter the system via a qualifying exam. Of the eight government medical faculties, only two faculties have separate departments of family medicine. In two faculties, family medicine is combined with the community medicine department. Other medical faculties do not have academic staff designated to teach family

medicine. The curricula of these universities are not uniform and vary from a final year professorial appointment to a few general practitioner (GP) assignments without any formal teaching about family medicine.

Most other categories of health workers (nurses, midwives, and public health inspectors) have pre-service basic training in training institutions managed by the Ministry of Health (MOH). MOH's Education, Training, and Research Unit recruits from these trainees. The training programs are specific for each category and are conducted according to an approved curriculum; all training centers for each staff category follow the same curriculum. The country uses selection criteria from the Public Service Commission to select trainees for specific training programs. Candidates for nursing courses follow the basic training conducted by nursing training schools registered with the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC). There are 16 such nursing training schools managed by MOH. The course of training is three years. Nursing training schools are located island-wide, and all are affiliated to a teaching hospital, general hospital, or base hospital in the district for clinical skills training. On successful completion of the training course, a diploma certificate is awarded. A Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing is available at five state universities; entry to these programs is via General Certificate of Examination Advanced Level (GCE A/L) or lateral entry for practicing nurses after a qualifying exam.

Candidates for public health inspector and for midwife training undergo 18 months of training and receive a diploma after completion. The National Institute of Health Sciences is the leading institute for training public health inspectors and midwives; there are several other institutions situated around the country. These inspectors and midwives receive an extensive training in primary health care via both theoretical and practical fieldwork during the training period; most of their work is related to primary care services once they are within the system.

The Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, is the main institute that provides postgraduate education to medical practitioners. There are limited opportunities for postgraduate training in primary care. The Diploma in Family Medicine is a full-time, one-year teaching program organized by the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine. The annual intake is 50 students for the 52-credit-hour program. The Doctor of Medicine Degree in Family Medicine by Clinical Training is a full-time, three-year program from the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine.

The Membership of the College of General Practitioners and Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners are two programs conducted by the College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka to enhance the knowledge and skills of medical officers in primary care. Both are recognized qualifications by SLMC. A Master of Science Degree in Community Medicine and Doctorate in Community Medicine are offered at the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine and are related to the MOH primary care service. The Master's Degree in Community Medicine is a program that covers all the areas relevant to the practice of public health, to include preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative services, thus addressing the needs of both ill and well populations at the grass-roots level in the community. Master's and Doctoral degrees in Medical Administration courses aim to produce specialist medical administrators. The graduate doctors, appointed as medical officers of health, receive structured training at the National Institute of Health Sciences before their placements.

Regular in-service training programs are conducted in the preventive health care sector, led by national-level agencies like the Maternal and Child Health Program, NCD Prevention Program, or district-level technical officers. Participation in these programs is not compulsory for any health staff category. Nor are there structured regular programs for continuing professional development or reaccreditation.³⁰⁰

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

In the 2020 Global Gender Gap report, Sri Lanka ranked number 102 of 153 countries with a total score of 0.680 on a scale of 0-1 where 0 means entirely unequal and 1 means women have reached parity with men across political, economic, health, and education sectors. Sri Lanka's total score and ranking have fallen in the past 15 years, and the political sphere is the element causing this decrease. Of note, the percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions in government were 5.3% and 6.7% respectively in 2020, and these numbers net Sri Lanka scores of 0.056 and 0.072 (on the 0-1 scale).³⁰¹ The country has had one female President (of eight Presidents since independence)³⁰² and two female Prime Ministers (of 14 government heads since independence).³⁰³

A change to law in 2018 inaugurated a quota

for female representation at the local level. Henceforth, local councils must have 25% of elected seats filled by women; previously, only 2% of such seats had been filled by women on average. USAID provided support to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and Development Alternatives Inc. to work with Sri Lanka's Women Parliamentarians Caucus to train 2,400 local women leaders – as in Photo 9³⁰⁴ – to take advantage of the new quota system, focusing on motivation, leadership, and campaign skills. Additional sessions sought to educate the public about the quota system. Beyond candidate training and public education, USAID and partners also trained the Sri Lankan media to cover women in politics fairly, including when negative public perceptions of women leaders arise.³⁰⁵



Photo 9: Sri Lankan Women Receive Training ahead of 2018 Local Council Elections

Sri Lanka's women enjoy near parity with men in terms of health and longevity, eclipsing male Sri Lankans on the latter point by an average of five years. Female academic achievement is reaching parity with female literacy at 91% and male literacy at 93%. While girls' enrolment in primary education is slightly less than boys' enrolment (96% versus 98%), female enrolment in secondary and tertiary education outpaces male enrolment.³⁰⁶

Female representation in higher education is belied somewhat by the fact that 10% of Sri Lankan women are married before the age of 18. Although only 1% of Sri Lankan women are married before age 15, there are strongly regional components with Batticaloa showing the lowest average age at first marriage for the entire country. Two key historic events also pulled down marriage ages: the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the civil war (1983-2009). After the tsunami, pressure rose on girls to enter marriage for physical and financial protection, and similar drivers fueled low marriage age in the northern and eastern regions during the civil war. Colombo has committed to eliminating child, early, and forced marriage by 2030. Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981; CEDAW obligates states to ensure free and full consent to marriage. In 2017, the CEDAW Committee recommended in its Concluding Observations that Sri Lanka increase the minimum age of marriage for all women to 18 years of age. In 2010 and 2018 the Committee on the Rights of the Child urged Sri Lanka to increase the minimum age of marriage, including by amending the Constitution. A lingering problem remains the absence of a minimum age for marriage under Muslim Law in the country.³⁰⁷ Of note, Sri Lanka has not submitted a National Action Plan to address progress toward UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325.

Despite health and education elements, there are some disparities in female economic participation and opportunity that, in some ways, reflect the lack of representation in political spheres. Fewer than 40% of women participate in the formal economy, and women make up less than one-third of senior officials and managers. Concurrently, however, Sri Lanka's professional and technical class is roughly evenly split between men and women in a reflection of the edge women enjoy in enrolment in tertiary education.³⁰⁸ In December 2020, the U.S. launched a new US\$19.5 million initiative to help small businesses and economically empower Sri Lankan women. The Private Sector Development Project, funded through USAID, is intended to provide technical assistance and financing to small businesses in the tourism, technology, and commercial care industries. It will also help Sri Lanka weather the economic impact of COVID-19 by providing financial assistance through which businesses will be able to expand job opportunities for women and increase profits thanks to better business practices. In part, the initiative will provide incentives for Sri Lankan financial institutions to support under-served communities in rural areas and will encourage businesses to hire more women.³⁰⁹

UN Women provides technical assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka in Photo 10.³¹⁰



Photo 10: UN Women Provides Technical Assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka

CONCLUSION

Sri Lanka has faced many natural disasters in the past including floods, landslides, tsunamis, droughts, and cyclones.³¹¹ With the exception of three months each year, flooding and landslides are frequent problems that can cause loss of life and property as well as damage transport, water, health, and education infrastructure.³¹² Meanwhile, the country is vulnerable to current and anticipated effects of climate change. Of note is the expected greater frequency of more intense monsoons, such as that which, in 2018, killed 24, displaced 6,000, and affected 170,000 Sri Lankans.³¹³ Temperature and precipitation inconsistencies are expected to drive more frequent floods, droughts, and epidemics even as the 25% of the population that lives within 1 km of the coast confronts the threat of sea level rise.³¹⁴

The impact on Sri Lanka of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was not just loss of life and property but also a change to the way in which Sri Lanka sought to manage disaster risk and responses.³¹⁵ Since that disaster, Sri Lanka has worked with development partners, built a disaster management structure, and expanded its disaster risk reduction initiatives, including flash flood and landslide early warning systems and disaster management capacity-building.³¹⁶ The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) is the lead government agency for disaster management and is the executing agency of the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM). DMC implements and coordinates national and sub-national level programs for reducing the risk of disasters with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. There are also Disaster Management Committees at District, Divisional, and Grama Niladhari Wasams levels across the country.³¹⁷ The Armed Forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force) have specific DMHA duties such as search and rescue³¹⁸ and evacuation.³¹⁹

In addition to Sri Lanka's engagement with UN agencies, USAID, and other global DMHA actors, the country's armed forces engage regularly with the U.S. armed forces

in conferences, peer-to-peer talks, subject matter expert exchanges, and full-scale exercises to rehearse military operations in support of DMHA.³²⁰ Of particular note is Sri Lanka's expansion of participation in U.S.-led regional activities such as Pacific Angel, Pacific Partnership, and CARAT exercises, the latter for the inaugural time in 2017.³²¹

Beyond the government's and armed forces' direct engagement in DRR and rehearsals for disaster response, there has been a consistent effort to extend infrastructure and public services that help make communities more resilient in case of an emergency and help speed arrival of assistance. As of 2019, more than 100% of the population was covered by telephonic communications with more than 100% penetration of mobile telephones.³²² Moreover, by 2015, some 99% of the population had access to electricity from the national grid.³²³ On top of this extension of communications and electricity infrastructure, the state-sponsored health system reaches every district with at least basic, preventative care. Sri Lankans nationally can communicate about emergencies and travel to reach or deliver assistance in the wake of disasters and pandemics.³²⁴

The country has established nationwide early warning systems that include technical agencies responsible for hazard monitoring and disseminating early warning through the Emergency Operation Centre of the DMC. For local hazards, there is a bottom-up and top-down citizen-centered approach for hazard alerts and early warnings, employing networks of local stakeholders including local government, the private sector, Red Cross, NGOs, and civil society.³²⁵ Communication of early warnings from national level downward is via Police and military communication systems, radio communication, multi-hazard early warning towers, media, and telephone. Indeed, a 24-hour call center is available so the public can communicate with the DMC.³²⁶

APPENDICES

DoD DMHA Engagements in the Past Five Years (FY 2015-2020)

Bilateral military cooperation between the U.S. and Sri Lanka is strongly oriented toward maritime cooperation. Exercises with Sri Lanka's Navy and Air Force focus on building cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and on maritime security issues. In addition, the U.S. Navy has donated former U.S. Coast Guard high endurance cutters through the Excess Defense Articles Program, which has bolstered Sri Lanka's ability to patrol its territorial waters, interdict illegal goods, and provide search and rescue support to civilian vessels.³²⁷

The list below describes the DMHA Engagements that the U.S. has had with Sri Lanka in the last five years.

Virtual U.S.-Sri Lanka Airmen-to-Airmen Talks, December 2020

Airmen from the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) engaged with U.S. Pacific Air Force (PACAF) Airmen during the first virtual and fourth annual Airmen-to-Airmen Talk (A2AT) hosted from Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, on 15 December 2021. The meeting included subject matter experts from each country in logistics, flight safety, risk management, crisis response, cyber security, and medical procedures in response to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies. A2ATs enable PACAF to expand Indo-Pacific alliances and partnerships through joint discussions with partner nations. The joint discussions help PACAF build a networked security architecture capable of deterring aggression, maintaining stability, and ensuring free access to common domains. During A2ATs, PACAF and partner nations sharpen interoperability by sharing best practices. The Virtual A2AT ended with an open discussion that allowed Airmen on both sides

to gain knowledge, sharpen their understanding of the information environment, and expand options that provide complimentary capabilities on both sides. Overall, by working together PACAF and its allies aim to amass the greatest possible strength for the long-term advancement of common objectives. As a result, this can help maintain favorable balances of power that deter aggression and promote peace and security throughout the Indo-Pacific region.³²⁸

Regional Air Chiefs Share Pandemic Response Lessons, April 2020

Air chiefs and leaders representing 19 air forces across five continents joined a video teleconference hosted by General CQ Brown, Jr., U.S. Pacific Air Forces (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. Brown shared PACAF's focus on protecting people, maintaining readiness, and assisting the whole of government response. The group also addressed opportunities for cooperation on supply chain support, sharing protocols on transport of patients, and 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. The group agreed to explore more virtual training and engagement opportunities and innovative processes. Participants represented air forces from Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Canada, Chile, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United States.³²⁹

Third U.S.-Sri Lanka Airman-to-Airman Talks, August 2019

U.S. Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) hosted service members from the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) for Airman-to-Airman Talks (A2AT) 19-22 August 2019. The event marked the third A2AT between the U.S. and Sri Lanka. A2AT are discussions designed to bolster relations and provide an opportunity to share best practices from a variety of subject matter areas. PACAF views A2AT with nations throughout the Pacific as important for supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's objectives by building relationships with allies and friends. During the four-day visit, SLAF and U.S. Air Force senior leaders engaged in three different working groups: humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, air and maritime domain awareness, and force development.³³⁰

U.S.-Sri Lanka CARAT Exercise, April 2019

The United States and Sri Lanka jointly decided to suspend the Cooperation Afloat and Readiness Training (CARAT) exercises underway after the Easter Sunday terror attacks in Sri Lanka. The CARAT exercise was slated to take place for a week from 19 April 2019 and was based off the southern port city of Hambantota. The suspension of exercises would allow Sri Lanka to reallocate military resources as necessary in the bombings' aftermath. According to the U.S. Navy, this U.S.-Sri Lanka CARAT exercise would have given Sri Lankan Navy sailors a chance to "serve aboard Navy vessels for hands-on learning during the at-sea phase of the exercise to increase interoperability between the two countries." Two U.S. warships and one U.S. Navy aircraft were slated to participate; they included a P-8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS Spruance*, and expeditionary fast transport ship *USNS Millinocket*.³³¹

Some portions of the at-sea phase of the exercise did occur. For example, *Spruance* departed Hambantota Port and integrated with the Sri Lanka Navy vessels at sea to test their ability to communicate, coordinate, and respond to scenarios at sea to include maritime patrol

operations, maneuvering exercises, surface gunnery drills, visit, board, search and seizure drills, vertical replenishments operations, flight operations, and search and rescue swimmer exercises. *Spruance* embarked six senior Sri Lanka naval officers to provide an opportunity for hands-on learning and sharing of best practices during the "at sea" phase.³³²

Pacific Angel 19-1, June 2019

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 exercise Pacific Angel 19-1, from 22 to 28 June 2019. The U.S. and partner nations teamed up to provide medical care and engineering assistance as well as conduct subject matter expert exchanges with the Bangladesh Air Force and civil organizations, such as the Red Crescent and Ministry of Health. U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Crosby, Oregon Air National Guard assistant adjutant general and State Partnership Program director, said, "Pacific Angel events are a tangible expression of the United States' commitment to South Asia and the U.S. Indo Pacific Command's region and demonstrate our continuing resolve to support international disaster and humanitarian relief efforts in this region." Based on the need of the Lalmonirhat community, the Bangladeshi government chose a local high school as the primary location from which to provide medical services to community residents. The high school and four additional schools received structural updates and projects provided by U.S. Air Force civil engineers. The medical care provided at the clinics included dental, optometry, and general medicine services.³³³

Tri-Lateral Search and Rescue Exchange, February 2019

Representatives of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) and Japanese Ministry of Defense (MoD) were hosted by the U.S. Air Force's 459th Airlift Squadron on 13 February 2019 at Yokota Air Base (Japan) as part of a trilateral search and

rescue (SAR) exchange. The exchange was a free flow of information regarding SAR practices between the SLAF, Japanese Self Defense Force (JSDF), and U.S. Air Force (USAF) to increase effective coordination in the event of a humanitarian assistance mission. This event was a part of the JSDF's first defense cooperation event with the SLAF focusing on Capacity Building Assistance for Search and Rescue. SAR engagements have been a priority during USAF-SLAF Airman-to-Airman Talks (A2AT). When Japan's MoD extended an opportunity for the 459th Airlift Squadron to showcase their expertise, the squadron stepped up to the challenge. As part of the subject matter expert exchange, USAF and SLAF compared SAR procedures.³³⁴

USS Rushmore Port Visit Allows Senior Leader Engagement, December 2018

Dock landing ship *USS Rushmore* (LSD 47), with the embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived in Colombo, Sri Lanka, for a scheduled port visit on 21 December 2018. Part of a growing U.S.-Sri Lanka naval partnership, the visit included key leader engagements between senior leadership of *Rushmore*, 13th MEU and the Sri Lankan Navy to build the foundation of mutual understanding to increase interoperability between the U.S. and Sri Lanka, including the extensive humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HADR) capabilities brought to bear by *Rushmore*.³³⁵

Colombo Air Symposium, October 2018

Major General James Eifert, Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), addressed the importance of partnership and integration at the 2018 Colombo Air Symposium in Attidiya, Sri Lanka, on 19 October 2018. The theme was "Air Strategy in Substantiating the Geo-Strategic Importance of Sri Lanka." Military leaders, technical experts, global think tanks, and diplomats from more than 25 nations met to discuss and address common challenges. Eifert said, "I hope that we can leverage our collective expertise to consider

how best to deter aggression, maintain security and stability throughout the region, and provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief support."³³⁶

USS Anchorage Pays Visit to Sri Lanka, August 2018

Amphibious transport dock *USS Anchorage* (LPD 23) with the embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, for a scheduled port visit on 24 August 2018. During the visit, Sailors and Marines met their counterparts in the Sri Lanka Navy and Marines. The visit was part of a growing U.S.-Sri Lanka naval partnership and allowed U.S. 7th Fleet to explore local logistics support services for visiting naval forces. Captain Dennis Jacko, commanding officer of *Anchorage*, said, "The goal with *Anchorage* is to not only enhance security cooperation, but to build understanding of the HADR (humanitarian assistance, disaster relief) capability that contributes to disaster response, along with sharing of best practices and enabling more efficient joint relief efforts in the event of a future disaster." Approximately 300 Sri Lankan naval academy midshipmen and 40 distinguished visitors, toured the ship to learn about amphibious capabilities. "The Sri Lankan navy, host nation support team and the U.S. Embassy have provided tremendous assistance and cooperation in developing the first temporary air logistics hub concept in Sri Lanka," said Commander Deborah K. McIvy, assistant chief of staff, Expeditionary Strike Group 7. "Successfully leveraging local logistics support services will help standardize the process for future operations, to include supplying mission-critical supplies for HADR efforts."³³⁷

Pacific Angel 2018, August 2018

The U.S. and Sri Lanka conducted humanitarian assistance engagements during Pacific Angel 2018 (PAC ANGEL), which ran 13-18 August 2018. PAC ANGEL is an annual joint and combined humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) engagement that includes

general health and engineering programs, as well as various subject-matter expert exchanges. PAC ANGEL 2018 brought together 65 U.S. military members with Sri Lankan service members, local non-governmental organizations (NGO), and partner nations. Now entering its eleventh year, PAC ANGEL ensures the region's militaries are prepared to work together to address humanitarian crises.³³⁸ During PAC ANGEL 18-4, participating U.S. and Sri Lankan military members and partners performed health services outreach in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Nicole Christiano, medical troop commander assigned to the 146th Air National Guard Airlift Wing, said, "Exercises like this are critical to advancing our ability to operate together and prepare for future engagements. Together with our partner nation, we were able to learn a different perspective on medicine. It's this type of hands-on training and interaction that will ultimately help us work together if we are ever called to operate in an emergency capacity." The week-long medical event provided health services to include general medical, dental, physical therapy, optometry, and pharmaceutical services for the people of Sri Lanka.³³⁹

Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2018, July-August 2018

Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2018 ran 29 June-2 August 2018 with training events conducted in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. Twenty-five nations, 46 surface ships, five submarines, 17 land force units, more than 200 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel participated. This iteration was the 26th in the RIMPAC series that began in 1971 and is held every two years. RIMPAC 2018 was hosted by U.S. Pacific Fleet and led by Vice Admiral John D. Alexander, commander of the U.S. 3rd Fleet. Alexander said the involvement of so many different countries working together to successfully accomplish RIMPAC was a strong reminder of the unity coalition forces can exhibit in a real-world situation. The 2018 exercise included forces from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico,

Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam. Israel, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam participated in RIMPAC for the first time. Participating nations and forces exercised a wide range of capabilities and demonstrated the flexibility of maritime forces, such as disaster relief, maritime security operations, sea control, and complex warfighting. The training program included amphibious operations, gunnery, missile, anti-submarine and air defense exercises, counter-piracy operations, mine clearance operations, explosive ordnance disposal, and diving and salvage operations.³⁴⁰

Pacific Partnership 2018, June 2018

The 13th annual Pacific Partnership mission concluded on 21 June 2018 after completing mission stops throughout Asia. The annual multilateral, multi-service mission featured partner nation counterparts working together in eight Indo-Pacific nations to improve disaster response preparedness and enhance relationships across the region. The Military Sealift Command hospital ship *USNS Mercy* (T-AH 19) conducted mission stops in Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Japan. During mission stops, the Pacific Partnership team conducted host nation engagements covering medical, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), engineering, and community relations. Pacific Partnership personnel partnered with host nation medical personnel to hold cooperative health engagements and subject matter expert exchanges. These partnerships allowed the mission to treat more than 12,700 patients and to conduct 62 surgeries on board *Mercy*. Civil engineering teams worked side-by-side with their host-nation counterparts to complete renovation and construction projects on schools, health clinics, hospitals, and community halls. Humanitarian and disaster relief experts from the mission held exchanges, tabletop exercises, and field training exercises to help host nation counterparts increase readiness for contingencies and natural disasters.³⁴¹

Second U.S.-Sri Lanka Airman-to-Airman Talks, May 2018

U.S. Air Force Airmen from across the Indo-Pacific assembled in Sri Lanka to work with their Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) counterparts to discuss best practices and various courses of action through the second round of Airman-to-Airman Talks (A2AT) in mid-May at SLAF Headquarters. Sri Lanka's geographic location makes it an ideal staging area for U.S. forces to provide assistance in the region. "Sri Lanka holds an important location in the Indian Ocean, and it is vital that we maintain a strong relationship with them," said U.S. Air Force Major General James O. Eifert, Air National Guard assistant to the commander of Pacific Air Forces (PACAF). "In the event of a natural disaster, it would save time and resources if we have prepositioned humanitarian assistance supplies. It would allow us to immediately assist with their humanitarian response and save lives." The seven U.S. Airmen represented experts in airfield operations, logistics, safety, and medicine. During the meeting, the groups focused on enhancing regional security, future training and exercises geared toward interoperability, and professional military education opportunities.³⁴²

Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Exercise, October 2017

U.S. and Sri Lankan maritime forces joined together for Sri Lanka's first-ever Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, during 2-6 October 2017. CARAT Sri Lanka 2017 is part of a series of bilateral CARAT military exercises between the U.S. Navy and the armed forces of Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Thailand. The focus of CARAT is developing maritime security capabilities and increasing interoperability among participants. Skill areas exercised during the CARAT include small boat operations, evidence collection, diving procedures, and anti-terrorism security. Training exchanges were conducted on the Sri Lankan Navy base in Trincomalee.³⁴³

Sri Lanka Health Engagement 17, September 2017

U.S. Navy Sailors and Sri Lanka Marines and Sailors came together to exchange medical capabilities during Sri Lanka Health Engagement 17 at Naval Base Welisara, Sri Lanka, 11-22 September 2017. Since 2014, the U.S. and Sri Lanka navies have annually worked together through health engagements with the overall mission of enhancing regional partnerships, interoperability, and medical readiness. "[It is] an ongoing sustainment effort by the Sri Lankans to continue the programs that they've developed," said U.S. Navy Lieutenant Raymond Posey, the Health Service Support Officer for 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). Sri Lankan Marines and Sailors reviewed basic life-saving skills to include administering intravenous lines, applying tourniquets for hemorrhage control, and other forms of casualty management. "During this training, a lot of non-medical [service members] are involved," said Sri Lanka Navy Surgeon Lt. P.L.P. Rathnasekara, the battalion surgeon for the Sri Lanka Navy Marine Battalion. "They need the medical fundamentals to treat their subordinates or buddies. The training will help them save their soldiers not only in the battlefield, but in [cases like] humanitarian assistance and disaster relief."³⁴⁴

Pacific Airlift Rally, September 2017

To prepare for natural disasters and humanitarian relief in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. Pacific Air Force (PACAF) and Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) co-hosted the Pacific Airlift Rally 2017 (PAR17) in Sri Lanka, 11-15 September 2017. Pacific Airlift Rally is a biennial exercise that brings these nations together for a command post and flying training exercise that focuses on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. A C-130J Super Hercules from the U.S. Air Force Reserve's 815th Airlift Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, and a C-130J from the 327th Airlift Squadron, Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, as well as 75 U.S. Air Force personnel participated in the event along with 12 other countries. PAR17

also included a medical Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE) that focused on post-disaster medical relief and a Civil Engineering SMEE that covered the capabilities of the regional forces to address civil engineering issues. One highlight of PAR17 was a U.S.-SLAF interfly that included air-land and airdrop operations at the SLAF Base Katunayaka and SLAF Station Ampara.³⁴⁵

USS Lake Erie Responds to Flooding and Landslides in Sri Lanka, June 2017

U.S. Sailors from the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Lake Erie* (CG 70) contributed to a humanitarian assistance mission in Sri Lanka that ended on 17 June 2017. More than 400 Sailors participated in the mission. Heavy rainfall brought by a southwest monsoon triggered flooding and landslides throughout Sri Lanka, displaced thousands, and caused significant damage to homes and buildings. Captain Alexis T. Walker, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 7, said, “Working alongside Sailors and Marines from the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, our team conducted irrigation repairs, well rehabilitation, and levee repairs throughout the region.” Sailors from *Lake Erie* spent a last week working alongside local government agencies and the Sri Lanka Red Cross to assist local communities with community cleanup, food distribution, and dewatering of wells in support of humanitarian relief efforts in the island nation. A total of 125 wells were repaired in Colombo and Galle. Captain Darren McPherson, commanding officer, *Lake Erie*, said “We established a fantastic working relationship between our militaries. The newly established Sri Lankan Marine Corps worked side-by-side with us each day, and the Sri Lankan Navy liaison elements coordinated our efforts with local officials. And it was the local officials, like those in the Sri Lankan Red Cross who assisted us in getting the help to the people in need the most.”³⁴⁶

Pacific Partnership 2017, March 2017

The U.S. Navy and partner nation forces joined for the 12th Pacific Partnership

mission from 1 March 2017. This annual maritime operation improves disaster response preparedness and capacity and enhances partnerships with participating nations throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The 2017 mission included more than 200 supporting military and civilian personnel from the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Vietnam were hosts. Medical, dental, civil-engineering, and veterinary teams partnered with host nations to conduct civic-action projects, community health exchanges, medical symposiums, and humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) drills. The engagements and exchanges during Pacific Partnership 17 were intended to improve capacity, enhance regional partnerships, and increase multilateral cooperation for HADR preparedness.³⁴⁷

This iteration was distinct from previous iteration in that Sri Lanka joined for the first time. Pacific Partnership 2017 made its initial mission stop in Hambantota, Sri Lanka, on 7 March 2017 with the arrival of the United States Navy’s expeditionary fast transport ship *USNS Fall River* (T-EPF-4). The Pacific Partnership mission in Sri Lanka continued through 18 March 2017. Participating in the Sri Lanka mission were partner military and non-government personnel from the U.S., Australia, and Japan. While in Hambantota, Pacific Partnership personnel worked with Sri Lankan medical professionals, participated in civil engineering projects, conducted HADR readiness drills, and partnered in community engagements. In addition, local Sri Lankan organizations, working together with U.S. Navy civil engineers, completed renovations of the Divisional Hospital Ambalantota, Wishaka Mahila Preschool, Sri Gunananda Preschool and multiple Maternity and Child Clinic Centers.³⁴⁸ Meanwhile, members of the U.S. and Sri Lankan militaries exchanged best practices and lessons learned during a first-ever, bilateral Humanitarian Aid/Disaster Relief Symposium at the Magam Ruhunupura International Convention Center in Hambantota. This symposium, led by the

Sri Lankan Navy, focused most of its efforts discussing disaster management and relief response in scenario driven events such as tsunamis and flooding caused by natural disasters.³⁴⁹ Finally, representatives from Sri Lanka, Japan, Australia, the U.S., and the UN joined Sri Lankan civic leaders in Matara for a Women, Peace, and Security Discussion on 9 March 2017. The event enabled the various experts to discuss the best methods for protecting women and girls from gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict. The Pacific Partnership WPS discussion highlighted the importance of enabling equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts related to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.³⁵⁰

Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) Military-to-Military Exchange, March 2017

The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 27 March 2017 for a Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) engagement, the second military-to-military exchange with Sri Lanka for the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and 11th MEU during their multi-month deployment. This iteration of exchanges focused on the infantry and logistical skills necessary to implement humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. The training culminated with a full scale, bilateral humanitarian assistance mission exercise. U.S. Marines also provided increased familiarization of Marine Corps tactics and equipment to advance Sri Lanka Marine Corps' knowledge and expertise on basic offensive and defensive tactics, combat lifesaving skills, tactical convoy operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training, and amphibious assault vehicle familiarization. Approximately 325 Marines and Sailors from the Makin Island ARG/11th MEU and 175 Marines and Sailors from the Sri Lankan navy and Marine Corps participated in the TSC.³⁵¹

Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) Military-to-Military Exchange, November 2016

Marines and Sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group, (ARG) embarked aboard the *USS Somerset* (LPD 25), participated in a Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) exchange, training side-by-side with the recently inaugurated Sri Lankan Marine Corps. The TSC ran 22-25 November 2016 at Sri Lanka Naval Base, Trincomalee. The TSC consisted of sharing best practices in all facets of bilateral training such as offensive and defensive tactics, officer and noncommissioned officer leadership development, explosive ordnance disposal, physical fitness and martial arts, developing and evaluating training programs, combat lifesaving skills, and maritime interception operations, all of which support progress toward humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness and crises response. The TSC also provided opportunities for key leader engagement between representatives from both nations' naval services to discuss the future of the partnership based on shared experiences.³⁵²

Galle Dialogue 2016, November 2016

As U.S. forces strengthen ties in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, Sri Lanka has emerged as a significant contributor to regional stability and security, U.S. Pacific Command's commander said at the Galle Dialogue 2016 conference in Colombo on 28 November 2016. The first American four-star officer to visit Sri Lanka in almost a decade, Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr. said that he was pleased to see a deepened military-to-military relationship between Sri Lanka and the U.S. Ultimately, he said, expanded cooperation will benefit both countries in important and meaningful ways. Sri Lanka and the U.S., as well as India and Australia, rightfully take maritime security in the Indian Ocean seriously as a result of grave regional challenges such as piracy, terrorism, illegal trafficking, and other threats to stability.³⁵³

Pacific Angel 2016, August 2016

The multinational team led by U.S. Pacific Command concluded their week-long assistance program on 22 August 2016 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, where they provided general medical care for approximately 4,000 people and renovated six schools that serve a total of 1,100 students. Approximately 70 participants from the U.S. Pacific Command and military experts from Bangladesh, Nepal, and Maldives joined with the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) during the project. Free medical assistance for dental procedures, physical therapy, general care, and optometry were held at Idaikkadu Maha Vidyalayam (15-17 August 2016) and Punguduthivu Sri Subramaniya Vidyalayam (19-20 August 2016). The week-long program continued U.S. support for the people of Sri Lanka, especially in communities most affected by conflict. Operation Pacific Angel is a joint civil-military operation led by U.S. Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) to build relationships with other countries in the event of future humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.³⁵⁴

USS Blue Ridge Port Visit to Colombo, March 2016

Senior military leaders from U.S. 7th Fleet and the Sri Lanka Navy and Air Force met to discuss operational topics aboard the *USS Blue Ridge* on 29 March 2016. Sixteen officials from Sri Lanka attended the bilateral meeting to share knowledge and discuss lessons learned within the Indo-Asia-Pacific. There were discussions about potential bilateral training between the U.S. and Sri Lanka during Pacific Partnership, a joint effort between the U.S., foreign militaries, and other organizations to conduct civil-military operations including humanitarian and civic assistance, as well as veterinary, medical, dental, and civil engineering support. *Blue Ridge* and embarked 7th Fleet staff were in Sri Lanka conducting a port visit to build new ties and promote peace and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific.³⁵⁵

International/Foreign Relations

The two most important factors in Sri Lanka's foreign relations immediately after independence in 1948 were: 1) a commitment in principle to nonalignment; and 2) the necessity of preserving satisfactory relations with India without sacrificing independence. Then, from the 1980s through the early 2000s, Colombo's global relations were indelibly colored by the Sri Lanka civil war that saw the government fighting ethnic Tamil insurgents. Over the last 15 years, since the end of the civil war, Colombo's foreign policy can be described as a combination of seeking investors to repair war damage and attempting to balance the interests of major powers that have a keen interest in the country, which is strategically located at the heart of the Indian Ocean.

Regarding non-alignment, Sri Lanka's first prime minister, Don Stephen Senanayake, had committed the country to a "middle path" to avoid entanglement in the superpower rivalries of the mid-20th century. In practice, the "middle path" meandered as governments alternated between the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the former being generally friendlier to the West. SLFP Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike deeply distrusted Washington's intentions and cultivated close and friendly relations with China during her first term in office in the early 1960s. By contrast, UNP's J.R. Jayewardene gave Sri Lanka's foreign policy a decidedly Western orientation after he came to power in July 1977. Although there is ample evidence that this change was calculated to secure aid and investment and to promote economic liberalization, it was also true that Sri Lanka shared with Western nations apprehensions concerning India's very close ties to Moscow.

On the India question, India's geographic, demographic, and economic heft meant that Colombo could not ignore New Delhi's point of view, but neither Sri Lanka's political leaders

nor its people wanted the island to become an appendage to India's regional policies. This balance was challenged in 1987 by the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord that saw India broker a first cease-fire in the Sri Lankan civil war and Indian troops be deployed to Sri Lanka's northeast as peacekeepers. To many Sri Lankans, the Accord was an unacceptable compromise of national independence.

On the global scene, the 1972 constitution declared Sri Lanka a republic and ended its dominion status within the Commonwealth of Nations. Nonetheless, Sri Lanka remained a Commonwealth member even as it joined the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), a group formed in the early 1980s to deliberate on regional problems. At the same time, Sri Lanka sought unsuccessfully to gain membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), reputedly to expand the geopolitical distance between itself and India. The application was rejected, ostensibly on geographic grounds.³⁵⁶

The Civil War

Even as Colombo tried to expand its operational space on the global stage, its own civil war was creating fresh problems. The late 1970s had been a period of economic and ethno-political ferment, and unrest escalated in the 1980s as armed groups from within the Tamil minority moved toward insurgency. Tamil fighters built bases both in the island's northern and eastern parts and in southern districts of India's Tamil Nadu state, where Sri Lankan Tamil groups could find official and unofficial support. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers) became the most prominent militia. Fighting in the north and anti-Tamil riots elsewhere caused large-scale displacement, including refugee flows from Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu.

With other global players seemingly unable or unwilling to try to mediate, Colombo became receptive to initiatives by the Indian government. After prolonged negotiations, a 1987 accord offered Tamils an autonomous

integrated province in the northwest within a united Sri Lanka, and an Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) was detailed to enforce the terms of the agreement. However, the Sri Lankan government, LTTE, and the IPKF disagreed over implementation, and LTTE resumed its offensive, this time against the IPKF. After 1989, a change in government saw President Premadasa negotiate a withdrawal of the IPKF, and the battle against the Tamil insurgency was taken up by the Sri Lankan army. The war rumbled on, eclipsing another cease-fire in 2002 between LTTE and the government and slowing reconstruction in northern regions after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.³⁵⁷

During the latter stages of the conflict, Colombo's international engagement was winning the explicit support of global players by having them declare LTTE a terrorist organization. India banned the group in 1992, the U.S. in 1997, the UK in 2001, and the European Union (EU) in 2006. Despite global rejection of LTTE, Colombo's own methods of prosecuting the conflict earned it considerable opprobrium, particularly focused on the Rajapaksa family. The loudly anti-LTTE Mahinda Rajapaksa won the national Presidency in 2005 and promptly shifted the prosecution of the war into a higher gear, all but ending it by 2009 ahead of the 2010 Presidential election which Rajapaksa won. Western distaste for the President's methods saw Rajapaksa seek increasing financial support and investment from China, particularly the development of the Hambantota port, located in Rajapaksa's home district, funded by loans from China, and of dubious potential return.³⁵⁸

Managing Power Competition

Ties between China and Sri Lanka date to 1950 when Colombo supported China's accession to the United Nations and the two countries' 1952 rubber-rice barter deal. More recently, China has become an important provider of commercial loans for infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka, and Sri Lanka's external public debt owed to China amounted to US\$5 billion (6% of GDP) in 2018. Much of China's

investment is part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The cumulative value of Chinese infrastructure investment in Sri Lanka amounted to US\$13 billion between 2006 and August 2020; these projects include the deep-water Colombo International Container Terminal, the adjacent Colombo Port City industrial estate, and Colombo Lotus Tower - a delayed telecommunications and leisure project. The short-term influence on Sri Lanka's economy have been mixed; the rising imported inputs from China for construction projects have widened the significant trade deficit between the two countries, but there have also been knock-on expansions in Sri Lanka's manufacturing and technology sectors and local jobs.³⁵⁹

Concern over Sri Lanka's reliance on China comes from both the U.S. and India. India and the U.S. tried to counter Chinese BRI projects during the United National Party (UNP) administration that was in power in Colombo from 2015 to 2019, during which time Sri Lanka signed bilateral and multilateral agreements with the U.S. and its partners.³⁶⁰ Senior Indian officials are concerned that a growing Chinese footprint risks violating Sri Lanka's sovereignty and threatens India's Southern flank and national security. Concerns have arisen that Hambantota Port — managed by a Chinese state-owned enterprise — could become a dual use commercial/military facility. The Sri Lankan Navy has emphasized that it manages port calls made by foreign ships and security at Hambantota Port while India–Sri Lanka defense cooperation has been bolstered by regular dialogue, navy exercises, and training in India for the Sri Lankan armed forces.³⁶¹ Nonetheless, India tried to gain control over the country's other strategic seaports, develop an oil-tank farm in Trincomalee, and build a container terminal at Colombo port in partnership with Japan, next to a Chinese terminal built as part of the BRI. Sri Lanka's internal politics ensured a backlash against these Indian efforts, and the return to power in 2019 of the pro-China, Rajapaksa-led SLFP, and Colombo has, since then, cancelled various infrastructural projects backed by India

and Japan.³⁶²

Meanwhile Chinese Communist Party Politburo Member Yang Jiechi visited Sri Lanka just after the October 2020 visit by then U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo. Beijing delivered a US\$90 million grant for medical care, education and water supplies to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the United States remains Sri Lanka's largest export market and donated US\$6 million in COVID-19 assistance to Sri Lanka.³⁶³

The Future

Over the short-term, the newly reinforced grip of the historically pro-China Rajapaksa family on power signals an authoritarian turn at home and an emphasis on neutrality within the world. During now Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's term as President (2005-2015), China and the Rajapaksa clan entered into a close relationship. Despite these ties, the new regime has continued the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe government's approach that included public moves towards India under Prime Minister Modi and away from China under Xi Jinping on several fronts. Most prominently, during campaigning for 2019 Presidential elections, Gotabaya Rajapaksa publicly declared that he wanted to renegotiate the Hambantota port deal to ensure greater local control. He also promised to review "all loans." Throughout the campaign, Rajapaksa avoided anti-India rhetoric and appeared to desire stronger ties with India. India has presented Sri Lanka with a US\$400 million currency swap facility and a currently proffered US\$1.1 billion agreement to pay off Sri Lanka's debt. Shared domestic concerns and a majoritarian and anti-Muslim nationalism also drive the Sri Lanka-India convergence.

As with other Belt and Road countries, such as Malaysia, Myanmar, and others in the Indo-Pacific, Sri Lanka remains concerned about losing autonomy and being caught up in great power competition. In the aftermath of the 2017 Hambantota deal, protests broke out over concerns that Sri Lanka's sovereignty was infringed upon. Moreover, the opposition in Sri

Lanka has long argued that Chinese investments are corrupt and dangerous. In a sign that Sri Lanka's reticence to outside interference is general and not restricted to China, the United States has more recently come under fire in the country. The Trump administration's attempts to advance two defense agreements meant to improve U.S. military access to Sri Lanka, a renewal of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and a logistics-focused Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), triggered significant local opposition. Both agreements were negotiated during the Sirisena government's tenure, and the current Rajapaksa administration has slow walked the formal approval of the SOFA. Furthermore, a US\$480 million Millennium Challenge Corporation grant has been scrapped due to a lack of engagement by Sri Lanka's new government.

Beyond a desire to defend its sovereignty, perhaps the most important driver of Sri Lanka's shift lies in the security realm. The fear of Indian military intervention looms large. Certainly, the fear exists in the ruling family's mind as Mahinda Rajapaksa blamed Indian intelligence for his ouster in 2015. Hoping to avoid any unwanted Indian intervention, now-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa prioritized alleviating India's security concerns immediately after coming to power in late 2019. Furthermore, India weighs far more heavily on the Rajapaksas' minds than China because China in 2020 lacks the military capabilities to truly challenge India for the allegiance of smaller South Asian nations. Until China can successfully overcome the so-called "Malacca Dilemma" via strategic Belt and Road Investments or establish a defensible naval basing presence in the region, it remains a distant goal for it to intervene effectively in the Indian Ocean.³⁶⁴

United Kingdom

Britain's influence over Sri Lankan affairs dates to the 18th century and marks one of the longest-running relationships for Colombo despite substantial changes over the decades since 1948. In the early 1980s, the bilateral relationship was

very important with British aid to Sri Lanka tripling in those years and funding massive infrastructure and humanitarian projects like the Victoria Dam Hydro-electric Scheme, completed in 1984. This bilateral support remains intact with the UK boosting its humanitarian and development assistance since 2008. Following the 2009 end of Sri Lanka's civil war, many western donors reduced their engagement while the United Kingdom channeled ever more to the country, to include over US\$6.8 million on de-mining alone. In fact, de-mining nearly 73,000 square meters of land in the Northern Province was one of the Britain's main accomplishments in Sri Lanka. Neither is this a question of one-way influence. Sri Lankans have been migrating to Britain for centuries and make up a significant part of the Asian population in Britain. The Sri Lankan diaspora in UK numbers approximately 500,000.³⁶⁵ Sri Lanka remains a member of the Commonwealth that is led by the Monarch of Great Britain (presently Queen Elizabeth II), via which Colombo can build international partnerships on climate change, terrorism, and trade.³⁶⁶ Britain has become one of the top trade partners of Sri Lanka with over 200 UK companies operating on the island and having a two-way annual turnover of US\$1.2 billion.³⁶⁷

United States

U.S.-Sri Lanka relations place an emphasis on building democratic institutions, encouraging economic development, countering terrorism, and promoting a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. The two countries engage in regular exchanges in maritime security and safety, and they pursue joint initiatives to enhance security, stability, transparency, and economic opportunity for mutual benefit. For example, following the April 2019 Easter terror attacks in Colombo and other cities, the United States sent Federal Bureau of Investigations experts to support the investigation. Bilateral military cooperation includes U.S. Navy port calls, support for the Sri Lanka Navy's program to establish a Sri Lanka Marine Corps, backing for a National Defense College for senior

military officials, and exercises with the Sri Lanka Navy and Air Force to build cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and maritime security issues toward a safe and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Bilateral, non-military ties are also substantial with direct U.S. assistance and investment encompassing agriculture, enterprise development, education, healthcare, energy and natural resources, and humanitarian activities to the tune of more than \$2 billion since Sri Lanka's independence in 1948. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic alone, the United States provided upwards of \$5 million in assistance to Sri Lanka. Moreover, the United States is Sri Lanka's largest export market and accounts for nearly \$3 billion of the \$11.7 billion of goods Sri Lanka exports annually. U.S. goods imports from Sri Lanka totaled \$2.7 billion in 2018, while U.S. exports to Sri Lanka were valued at \$372 million. U.S. imports from Sri Lanka are mostly apparel, but also include rubber, industrial supplies, gemstones, tea, and spices. Top U.S. exports to Sri Lanka include animal feeds, medical equipment, soybeans, plastics, dairy products, wheat, cloth, and textiles.³⁶⁸

Participation in International Organizations

Sri Lanka participates in the following international organizations:³⁶⁹

Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA), Asian Development Bank (ADB), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Commonwealth (C), Conference on Disarmament (CD), Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA; observer), Colombo Plan (CP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Group of 11 (G-11), Group of 15 (G-15), Group of 24 (G-24), Group of 77 (G-77), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),

International Chamber of Conference (ICC-national committees), Institute of Catastrophe Risk Management (ICRM), International Development Association (IDA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Mobil Satellite Organization (IMSO), International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), International Olympic Committee (IOC), UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), International Organization for Standardization (ISO; correspondent), International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-NGOs), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO-dialogue member), United Nations (UN), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Customs Organization (WCO), The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU NGOs), World Health Organization (WHO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Trade Organization (WTO).

UN peacekeeping missions that Sri Lanka is contributing personnel (civilian, military or police) to:³⁷⁰

The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Force Protection/Pre-Deployment Information

The following information 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 active-duty personal travel 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

Before entering Sri Lanka, you must ensure that your passport has at least 6 months validity. U.S. citizens entering must acquire a tourist visa and have at least one blank passport page before entering. There are also entry/exit requirements related to COVID-19 which include quarantine information, testing requirements at traveler's cost, and health insurance requirements. Information regarding COVID-19 related travel requirements are available on the U.S. Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka website at: (<https://lk.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>). General information for U.S. citizens' entry or exit requirements can also be found on the main page of the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka website or in person at:

U.S. Embassy Colombo

Address: 210 Galle Road,
Colombo 03, Sri Lanka

Phone: +94 (11) 249-8500
Fax: +94 (11) 243-7345
Emergency after-hours telephone:
+94 77-725-6307
Website: <https://lk.usembassy.gov/>
Email: ColomboACS@state.gov

The following information is taken directly from the U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs' Country Information for the Sri Lanka.³⁷¹

Safety and Security

Note that conditions can change rapidly in a country at any time. To receive updated Travel Advisories and Alerts for the countries you choose, sign up at step.state.gov.

As of 15 February 2021, the travel advisory for Sri Lanka is "Level 3: Reconsider Travel." This status is due to COVID-19 and terrorism in the country.³⁷²

Emergency Contact Information

U.S. Citizens should call the Embassy as soon as is practical in the event of an arrest, death, hospitalization, or other emergency involving a U.S. citizen. In an emergency, Embassy personnel can assist in talking with medical personnel, police, or other officials on behalf of the U.S. citizen and his or her family.

To reach the U.S. Embassy Colombo, call +(94) (11) 249-8500 during regular office hours. In the event of an emergency after hours, please call +(94) (011) 249-8686.³⁷³

Currency Information

The Sri Lanka Rupee is the unit of currency used in Sri Lanka, symbolized by Rs or LKR.³⁷⁴

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 the country. The information in Table 3 is taken directly from the CDC website under the Travelers Health Section (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>).*³⁷⁵

<p>Routine vaccines (for all travelers)</p>	<p>Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. These vaccines include varicella (chickenpox), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, Flu (influenza), Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR), and Polio.</p> <p>Note: Infants (6 through 11 months old): 1 dose of MMR vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as the first dose in the routine childhood vaccination series.</p>
<p>Hepatitis A (for most travelers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended for unvaccinated travelers one year old or older going to Sri Lanka. • Infants 6 to 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 planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment they receive immune globulin.
<p>Typhoid (for most travelers)</p>	<p>You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in Country Sri Lanka. The CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas.</p>
<p>Hepatitis B (for some travelers)</p>	<p>You can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products, so the CDC recommends it for unvaccinated travelers.</p>
<p>Japanese Encephalitis (for some travelers)</p>	<p>Recommended for the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term travelers (i.e., trips lasting a month or more) to endemic areas during Japanese encephalitis virus transmission season. <p>Consider for the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term (<1 month) travelers to endemic areas during Japanese encephalitis virus transmission season if their itinerary or activities will increase their risk (e.g., spending substantial time outdoors in rural or agricultural areas; staying in accommodations without air conditioning, screens, or bed nets.) • Travelers to an area with an ongoing outbreak of Japanese encephalitis. • Travelers to endemic areas who are uncertain of specific activities or duration of travel.
<p>Rabies (for some travelers)</p>	<p>Rabid dogs are commonly found in Sri Lanka. If you are bitten or scratched by a dog or other mammal while in Sri Lanka, there may be limited or no rabies treatment available.</p> <p>Consider rabies vaccination before your trip if your activities mean you will be around dogs or wildlife.</p> <p>Travelers more likely to encounter rabid animals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campers, adventure travelers, or cave explorers (spelunkers) • Veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers handling animal specimens • Visitors to rural areas. • Since children are more likely to be bitten or scratched by a dog or other animals, consider rabies vaccination for children traveling to Sri Lanka.
<p>Yellow Fever (for some travelers)</p>	<p>Required if traveling from a country with risk of YF virus transmission and ≥9 months of age, including transit >12 hours in an airport located in a country with risk of YF virus transmission.</p> <p>Note: Yellow fever vaccine availability in the U.S. is currently limited. If you need to be vaccinated before your trip, you may need to travel some distance and schedule your appointment well in advance. Find the clinic nearest you.</p>

Table 3: CDC Travel Health Information for Sri Lanka

Health Alerts for Sri Lanka: As of February 2021, there is a COVID-19 High risk alert for Sri Lanka.³⁷⁶

An 11 February 2021 update to the Travel.State.gov website requires all airline passengers to the U.S. ages two years and older to provide a negative COVID-19 viral test taken within three calendar days (72 hours) of travel. Alternatively, travelers to the U.S. may provide documentation from a licensed health care provider. Any travel to Sri Lanka and returning to the U.S. requires this.

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

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

Take Medicine

Talk with your doctor about taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs with you on your trip in case you get sick. If you are going to a high-risk area, fill your malaria prescription before you leave, and take enough with you for the entire length of your trip. Follow your doctor's instructions for taking the pills; some need to be started before you leave.

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% 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 is the global blueprint and fifteen-year plan to build the world’s resilience to natural disasters.³⁷⁷ The information in this section is sourced directly from the Sendai Framework. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 outlines seven clear 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 Gross Domestic Product (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 the people by 2030.³⁷⁸

The Four Priorities of Action include:

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

The Sendai 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 over 15 years. It was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in 2015.³⁷⁹ The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.³⁸⁰ Figure 13 shows the Sendai DRR Framework.³⁸¹

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 between 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 between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015	Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (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
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Figure 13: UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

HFA Country Progress Report

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was adopted as a guideline to reduce vulnerabilities to natural hazards. The HFA assists participating countries to become more resilient and to better manage the hazards that threaten their development. The levels of progress of the 2013-2015 results of the HFA for Sri Lanka are represented in Figure 14 and Table 4. Table 5 provides an overview of the overall challenges and the future outlook statement from the HFA report.³⁸² The 2013-2015 is the most recent HFA report available for Sri Lanka.³⁸³

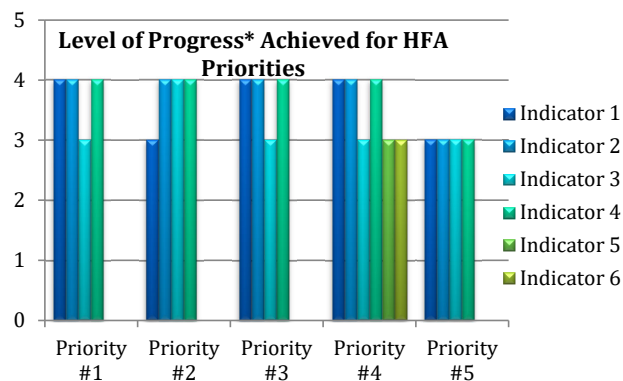


Figure 14: HFA Level of Progress Achieved

Priority for Action #1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.		
Core Indicator*	Indicator Description	Level of progress Achieved*
1	National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralized responsibilities and capacities at all levels.	4
2	Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels.	4
3	Community participation and decentralization is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels.	3
4	A national multi sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.	4
Priority for Action #2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.		
1	National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors.	3
2	Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities.	4
3	Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities.	4
4	National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans-boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.	4
Priority for Action #3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels		
1	Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems, etc.).	4
2	School curricula, education material and relevant trainings include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices.	4
3	Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.	3
4	Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.	4

Table 4: National Progress Report on the Implementation of the HFA

Priority for Action #4: Reduce the underlying risk factors.		
1	Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.	4
2	Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk.	4
3	Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities.	3
4	Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes.	4
5	Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes.	3
6	Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure.	3
Priority for Action #5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.		
1	Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management, with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place.	3
2	Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programs.	3
3	Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required.	3
4	Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters, and to undertake post-event reviews.	3

Table Notes:

*Level of Progress:

1 – Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

2 – Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

3 – Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

4 – Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

5 – Comprehensive achievement with sustained commitment and capacities at all levels

Table 4: National Progress Report on the Implementation of the HFA (cont.)

Future Outlook Area 1: The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.	
<p>Challenges:</p>	<p>Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and mainstreaming DRR into development involve a number of sectors, agencies, and require appropriate institutional powers and technical capacity and the endorsement of political authorities. The Disaster Management Act does not provide authority to formulate regulation which is one of the major challenges for the implementation of the certain activities entrusted by the act.</p> <p>Lack of a proper mechanism to either disseminate or share data and information at local-national-global level is a challenge that needs to be addressed at higher level. Assumption based analysis and design create lot of technological disasters. Minimum interest on reporting and maintenance of databases especially on pre as well as post disaster conditions create tremendous impact on disaster management as these databases are very much important to conduct the damage and loss assessments and the cost benefit analysis. Decision makers are not properly sanitized on risk sensitive investment.</p> <p>Public interest on disaster management has to be developed and attitude on disaster should be changed by increasing awareness on disaster management. Maintaining trust of the vulnerable people on the early warning systems, early warning messages and evacuations instructions is a challenge.</p> <p>Since there is a knowledge gap on DRR & Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) but interface is available, it is essential to take steps to integrate scientific information and local knowledge. Confusion on CCA versus mitigation is also another challenge. Further, there is a lack of standards for DRR & CCA plans & implementation modalities, and effective implementation of DRR & CCA to the national to local level and private public partnership in DRR & CCA.</p>
<p>Future Outlook Statement:</p>	<p>Data and information on risk assessment and evaluation is the core of mainstreaming DRR into development. Therefore, it is required to ensure mechanism for data sharing and dissemination at national as well as local level by implementing a National spatial Data Infrastructure.</p> <p>Sustainable development tools such as the Integrated Strategic Environment Assessment (ISEA), Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) have to be use more effectively to evaluate the disaster impact on the development. A mechanism of project evaluation with respect to a disaster management component will be established and enforced in relation to all public or private sector investment projects to cover all applicable aspects of disaster risk management. Tools such as Cost Benefit analysis, damage and loss assessment need to be made available for the proper implementation of the Mainstreaming DRR into development process.</p> <p>Survey, research, and data analysis will be given the prominence in disaster risk management spectrum. Strategic direction and, managerial, scientific, technological and all other knowledge bases of disaster management will be accordingly updated continuously in all government organizations involved in disaster risk management.</p>

Table 5: HFA Country Progress Report Future Outlook Areas, Sri Lanka

Future Outlook Area 2: The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.	
Challenges:	<p>The Disaster Management (DM) Center was established in 2005 under the parliament Act no13 of 2005. It is the apex body that has the responsibilities of coordination and implementation of the disaster management activities in the country. Major challenges identified is the lack of understanding of the disaster management act and provisions for the formulation of regulations to implement certain activities given in the DM Act. The act should be properly interpreted and the amendment has to be introduced to the act and legislation powers have to be enacted. Public Sector agencies involved in disaster risk management activities without legal framework should be strengthened legally to address specific issues. The shortcomings such as inadequate institutional capacity and information communication systems should be rectified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of /inadequate consultation and participation in project formulation and implementation from the local stakeholders as well as effective multi-stakeholders coordination. • Institutional arrangement is not fully implemented, and is overlapping and duplicated. • There is an unequal level of understanding, knowledge on system & approaches of different stakeholders groups and differing priorities of different groups.
Future Outlook Statement:	<p>The Disaster Management Act has to be revised and finalized considering all the gaps as this is one of the major tasks that have to be accomplished immediately.</p> <p>All the Public Sector Agencies including stakeholder Ministries should prepare a Disaster Management Plan for the Institution and submit it to the National Council for approval.</p> <p>Public and private sector institutions should be prepared to face any disaster with minimum affect to the people and infrastructure.</p> <p>The institutional mechanism established number of coordination bodies at the national and local level is in place, but needs to become functional. Gaps between the intentions in the regulations / policies and implementation particularly at local level and the needs for more evidence base of community partnership in building 'resilient community'.</p>

Table 5: HFA Country Progress Report Future Outlook Areas, Sri Lanka (cont.)

Future Outlook Area 3: The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programs in the reconstruction of affected communities.	
<p>Challenges:</p>	<p>The Disaster Management Center (DMC) made lots of attempts to popular disaster risk management concepts among all strata in society, while implementing different programs on DRM following challenges are identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of guidelines for preparation of emergency preparedness plan is big challenge for consistency of preparedness plan. • There is a lack of standardized training manuals covering all aspect of DRM. It is essential to guide training programs. Lack of high skilled trained professionals in the DRM sector is an issue. Multi-lingual professional are also essential. • The DMC has been entrusted with the dissemination of early warning, but technical agencies directly issue early warning messages to media. Therefore, establishing an acceptable mechanism to all stakeholders on early warning message dissemination is a challenge. • There is a lack of knowledge and local community awareness on “How to behave during calamity” and camp management. • Institutions that directly handle natural disasters belong to different ministries and therefore their priority may be different, which causes a huge impact on the sustainable disaster management in the country. • Maintenance of relationship with armed forces is one of the most important tasks for disaster management as they are the key respondents for search rescue, responses on disaster. • Maintenance for functions of early warning systems (Towers, DEWN System, satellite Communication etc.) are also identified as a challenge in disaster preparedness. • Integration of DRR and CCA into development planning has been taking place but it is difficult to determine with certainty the extent and the success of its application. • Framing and implementing disaster and climate change risk-integrated development practices are still focused on physical/infrastructure, and it should focus more on non-structural interventions. There are gaps in policy leadership on Climate Change (CC) risk reduction while balancing the emphasis on relief as short and longer term action sustainable development agenda.
<p>Future Outlook Statement:</p>	<p>Building community resilience –turning vulnerability into resilience and reducing exposure/ underlying risk factors have been identified as the most important sector that have to be highly focused during the post HFA programs.</p> <p>Reviewing and aligning grant programs related to infrastructure and capacity building with respect to localized disaster risk should support development of synchronized strategic master plans for improvement of operational mechanism to reduce the underline risk factors throughout the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish legal requirements to perform disaster/impact assessment (as part of EIA) for large private/ public investments and promote public/ private investments for risk avoidance/risk reduction/ risk transfer; facilitate the process, provide accurate timely information. <p>Disaster risk information should be made available to decision makers to make decisions in future development programs.</p> <p>Mainstreaming DRR into the development process would be helpful for sustaining the investment made.</p> <p>Motivating and enabling actions are essential to adapt and implement proven incentives and ward programs to motivate individuals and communities to reduce underline risk factors and further develop mechanism to facilitate and enable engagement.</p> <p>Urban and regional planners need to develop long and short-term plans for the use of land and the growth and modernization of urban, suburban, and rural communities and the regions in which they are located with respect to disaster exposure. They help local officials forecast and preempt or alleviate social, economic, and environmental problems by recommending locations for roads, schools, and other infrastructure and suggesting zoning regulations for private property—to meet existing and future community continuity needs.</p>

Table 5: HFA Country Progress Report Future Outlook Areas, Sri Lanka (cont.)

Country Profile

The information in the Country Profile section is sourced directly from the Central Intelligence Agency (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.³⁸⁴

INTRODUCTION

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 circa 200 B.C. to circa A.D. 1000) and Polonnaruwa (from about 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; its name was changed to Sri Lanka in 1972. Prevailing tensions between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil separatists erupted into war in July 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 ceasefire in 2002, the fighting slowly resumed and was again in full force by 2006. The government defeated the LTTE in May 2009.

During the post-conflict years under President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the government-initiated infrastructure development projects, many of which were financed by loans from China. His regime faced significant 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, governance, anti-corruption, reconciliation, justice, and accountability reforms. However, implementation of these reforms has been uneven. In October 2018, President Sirisena attempted to oust Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, swearing in former President Rajapaksa as the new prime minister and issuing an order to dissolve the parliament and hold elections. This sparked a seven-week constitutional crisis that ended when the Supreme Court ruled SIRISENA's actions unconstitutional, Rajapaksa resigned, and Wickremesinghe was reinstated. In November 2019, Gotabaya Rajapaksa won the presidential election and appointed his brother, Mahinda, prime minister.

GEOGRAPHY

Location

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

Geographic coordinates

7 00 N, 81 00 E

Map references

Asia

Area

total: 65,610 sq km

land: 64,630 sq km

water: 980 sq km

country comparison to the world: 122

Area - comparative

Slightly larger than West Virginia

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

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

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, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: Marine Life Conservation

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

23,044,123 (July 2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 58

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.)

note: data represent main languages spoken
by the population aged 10 years and older;
shares sum to more than 100% because some
respondents gave more than one answer on the
census; English is commonly used in government
and is referred to as the “link language” in the
constitution

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: 23.11% (male 2,696,379/female
2,592,450)
15-24 years: 14.58% (male 1,700,442/female
1,636,401)
25-54 years: 41.2% (male 4,641,842/female
4,789,101)
55-64 years: 10.48% (male 1,110,481/female
1,288,056)
65 years and over: 10.63% (male 1,023,315/
female 1,410,734) (2020 est.)

Dependency ratios

total dependency ratio: 53.7
youth dependency ratio: 36.4
elderly dependency ratio: 17.3
potential support ratio: 5.8 (2020 est.)

Median age

total: 33.7 years
male: 32.3 years
female: 35.1 years (2020 est.)
country comparison to the world: 97

Population growth rate

0.63% (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 147

Birth rate

14.01 births/1,000 population (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 131

Death rate

6.45 deaths/1,000 population (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 137

Net migration rate

-1.24 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 148

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: 18.7% of total population
(2020)
rate of urbanization: 0.85% annual rate of change
(2015-20 est.)
total population growth rate v. urban population
growth rate, 2000-2030

Major urban areas - population

103,000 Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte (legislative
capital) (2018), 613,000 COLOMBO (capital)
(2020)

Sex ratio

at birth: 1.04 male(s)/female
0-14 years: 1.04 male(s)/female
15-24 years: 1.04 male(s)/female
25-54 years: 0.97 male(s)/female
55-64 years: 0.86 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.73 male(s)/female
total population: 0.95 male(s)/female (2020 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth

25.6 years (2016 est.)
note: median age at first birth among women
30-34

Maternal mortality rate

36 deaths/100,000 live births (2017 est.)
country comparison to the world: 106

Infant mortality rate

total: 8.36 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 9.35 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 7.34 deaths/1,000 live births (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 150

Life expectancy at birth

total population: 77.75 years
male: 74.31 years
female: 81.33 years (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 81

Total fertility rate

2 children born/woman (2021 est.)
country comparison to the world: 113

Contraceptive prevalence rate

61.7% (2016)

Drinking water source

improved: urban: 98.1% of population
rural: 91.4% of population
total: 92.6% of population
unimproved: urban: 1.9% of population
rural: 8.6% of population
total: 7.4% of population (2017 est.)

Current Health Expenditure

3.8% (2018)

Physicians density

0.93 physicians/1,000 population (2017)

Hospital bed density

4.2 beds/1,000 population (2017)

Sanitation facility access

improved: urban: 97.1% of population
rural: 99.3% of population
total: 98.9% of population
unimproved: urban: 2.9% of population
rural: 0.7% of population
total: 1.1% of population (2017 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate

<.1% (2019 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS

3,600 (2019 est.)
country comparison to the world: 127

HIV/AIDS - deaths

<200 (2019 est.)

Major infectious diseases

degree of risk: intermediate (2020)

-vectorborne diseases: dengue fever
-water contact diseases: leptospirosis
-animal contact diseases: rabies

Obesity - adult prevalence rate

5.2% (2016)
country comparison to the world: 182

Children under the age of 5 years underweight

20.5% (2016)
country comparison to the world: 23

Education expenditures

2.1% of GDP (2018)
country comparison to the world: 160

Literacy

definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 91.9%
male: 93%
female: 91% (2017)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education)

total: 14 years
male: 14 years
female: 15 years (2018)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24

total: 21%
male: 16.8%

female: 28.4% (2016 est.)
country comparison to the world: 60

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/Ilankai Jananayaka

Choshalichak Kutiyarachu

local short form: Shri Lanka/Ilankai

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 Gotabaya Rajapaksa (since 18 November 2019); note - the president is both chief of state and head of government; Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa (since 21 November 2019)

head of government: President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (since 18 November 2019)
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 16 November 2019 (next to be held in 2024); prime minister appointed by the president from among members of Parliament for a 5-year term)

election results: Gotabaya Rajapaksa elected president; percent of vote - Gotabaya Rajapaksa (SLPP) 52.2%, Sajith Premadasa (UNP) 42%, other 5.8%

Legislative branch

Description: unicameral Parliament (225 seats; 196 members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote using a preferential method in which voters select 3 candidates in order of preference; remaining 29 seats allocated to other political parties and groups in proportion to share of national vote; members serve 5-year terms)

elections: last held on 17 August 2015 (next originally scheduled for 25 April 2020 but postponed to due to the COVID-19 pandemic)

election results: percent of vote by coalition/party - 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 coalition/party - SLFPA 145, SJB 54, TNA 10, JVP 3, other 13; composition - NA

Judicial branch

highest courts: 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 [Ganeshalingam Chandralingam]

Eelam People's Democratic Party or EPDP [Douglas Devananda]

Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front [Suresh Premachandran]

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna or JVP [Anura Kumara Dissanayake]

Jathika Hela Urumaya or JHU [Karunaratna Paranawithana, Ven. Hadigalle Wimalasara Thero]

National Peoples Power or JVP [Anura Kumara Dissanayake]

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 [Mahinda Rajapaksa]

Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna or SLPP [G. L. Peiris]

Tamil National Alliance or TNA [Rajavaroatham Sampanthan] (alliance includes Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi [Mavai Senathirajah], People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam [D. Siddarthan], Tamil Eelam Liberation

Organization [Selvam Adaikalanathan])
 Tamil National People's Front [Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam]
 United National Front for Good Governance or UNFGG [Ranil Wickremesinghe] (coalition includes JHU, UNP)
 United National Party or UNP [Ranil Wickremesinghe]
 United People's Freedom Alliance or UPFA [Maithripala Sirisena] (coalition includes SLFP)

International organization participation

ABEDA, ADB, AFR, 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, IFRC, 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, and WTO.

Diplomatic representation in the US

chief of mission: Ambassador E. Rodney M. PERERA (since 8 July 2019)
 chancery: 3025 Whitehaven Street NW, Washington, DC 20008
 telephone: [1] (202) 483-4025 through 4028
 FAX: [1] (202) 232-7181
 consulate(s) general: Los Angeles, New York

Diplomatic representation from the US

chief of mission: Ambassador Alaina B. TEPLITZ (since 1 November 2018); note - also accredited to Maldives
 telephone: [94] (11) 249-8500
 embassy: 210 Galle Road, Colombo 03
 mailing address: P. O. Box 106, Colombo
 FAX: [94] (11) 243-7345

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

ECONOMY

Economic overview

Sri Lanka is attempting to sustain economic growth while maintaining macroeconomic stability under the IMF program it began in 2016. The government's high debt payments and bloated civil service, which have contributed to historically high budget deficits, remain a concern. Government debt is about 79% of GDP and remains among the highest of the emerging markets. In the coming years, Sri Lanka will need to balance its elevated debt repayment schedule with its need to maintain adequate foreign exchange reserves.

In May 2016, Sri Lanka regained its preferential trade status under the European Union's Generalized System of Preferences Plus, enabling many of its firms to export products, including its top export garments, tax free to the EU. In 2017, Parliament passed a new Inland Revenue

Act in an effort to increase tax collection and broaden the tax base in response to recommendations made under its IMF program. In November 2017, the Financial Action Task Force on money laundering and terrorist financing listed Sri Lanka as non-compliant, but reported subsequently that Sri Lanka had made good progress in implementing an action plan to address deficiencies.

Tourism has experienced strong growth in the years since the resolution of the government's 26-year conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. In 2017, the government promulgated plans to transform the country into a knowledge-based, export-oriented Indian Ocean hub by 2025.

Real GDP growth rate

2.29% (2019 est.)

3.32% (2018 est.)

3.58% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

Inflation rate (consumer prices)

4.3% (2019 est.)

4.2% (2018 est.)

6.5% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 174

Credit ratings

Fitch rating: CCC (2020)

Moody's rating: Caa1 (2020)

Standard & Poors rating: CCC+ (2020)

Real GDP (purchasing power parity)

\$285.141 billion (2019 est.)

\$278.776 billion (2018 est.)

\$269.853 billion (2017 est.)

note: data are in 2010 dollars

country comparison to the world: 56

GDP (official exchange rate)

\$84.016 billion (2019 est.)

Real GDP per capita

\$13,078 (2019 est.)

\$12,865 (2018 est.)

\$12,584 (2017 est.)

note: data are in 2010 dollars

country comparison to the world: 122

Gross national saving

33.8% of GDP (2017 est.)

32.8% of GDP (2016 est.)

28.8% of GDP (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 20

GDP - composition, by sector of origin

agriculture: 7.8% (2017 est.)

industry: 30.5% (2017 est.)

services: 61.7% (2017 est.)

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.)

Ease of Doing Business Index scores

73.3 (2020)

Agricultural products

rice, coconuts, sugar cane, plantains, milk, tea, cassava, maize, poultry, coir

Industries

processing of rubber, tea, coconuts, tobacco and other agricultural commodities; telecommunications, insurance, banking; tourism, shipping; clothing, textiles; cement, petroleum refining, information technology services, construction

Industrial production growth rate

4.6% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 64

Labor force

8 million (2020 est.)

country comparison to the world: 60

Labor force - by occupation

agriculture: 27%
 industry: 26%
 services: 47% (31 December 2016)

Unemployment rate

4.83% (2019 est.)
 4.44% (2018 est.)
 country comparison to the world: 72

Population below poverty line

6.7% (2012 est.)

Gini Index coefficient - distribution of family income

39.8 (2016 est.)
 46 (1995)
 country comparison to the world: 64

Household income or consumption by percentage share

lowest 10%: 3%
 highest 10%: 32.2% (2012 est.)

Budget

revenues: 12.07 billion (2017 est.)
 expenditures: 16.88 billion (2017 est.)

Taxes and other revenues

13.8% (of GDP) (2017 est.)
 country comparison to the world: 204

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-)

-5.5% (of GDP) (2017 est.)
 country comparison to the world: 174

Public debt

79.1% of GDP (2017 est.)
 79.6% of GDP (2016 est.)

note: covers central government debt and excludes debt instruments directly owned by government entities other than the treasury (e.g. commercial bank borrowings of a government corporation); the data includes treasury debt held by foreign entities as well as intragovernmental debt; intragovernmental debt consists of treasury borrowings from surpluses in the social funds,

such as for retirement; sub-national entities are usually not permitted to sell debt instruments
 country comparison to the world: 35

Fiscal year

calendar year

Current account balance

-\$10 million (2019 est.)
 -\$17 million (2018 est.)
 country comparison to the world: 69

Exports

\$16.322 billion (2019 est.)
 \$15.238 billion (2018 est.)
 \$15.166 billion (2017 est.)
 country comparison to the world: 82

Exports - partners

US 24.6%, UK 9%, India 5.8%, Singapore 4.5%, Germany 4.3%, Italy 4.3% (2017)

Exports - commodities

textiles and apparel, tea and spices; rubber manufactures; precious stones; coconut products, fish

Imports

\$24.984 billion (2019 est.)
 \$26.521 billion (2018 est.)

\$26.063 billion (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 74

Imports - partners

India 22%, China 19.9%, Singapore 6.9%, UAE 5.7%, Japan 4.9% (2017)

Imports - commodities

petroleum, textiles, machinery and transportation equipment, building materials, mineral products, foodstuffs

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold

\$7.959 billion (31 December 2017 est.)
 \$6.019 billion (31 December 2016 est.)
 country comparison to the world: 78

Debt - external

\$51.72 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$45.26 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 64

Exchange rates

Sri Lankan rupees (LKR) per US dollar -

185.8 (2020 est.)

181.2 (2019 est.)

178.545 (2018 est.)

135.86 (2014 est.)

130.57 (2013 est.)

ENERGY

Electricity access

electrification - total population: 100% (2019)

Electricity - production

13.66 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

Electricity - consumption

12.67 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 86

Electricity - exports

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 202

Electricity - imports

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 204

Electricity - installed generating capacity

3.998 million kW (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 89

Electricity - from fossil fuels

52% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Electricity - from nuclear fuels

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 187

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants

42% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 49

Electricity - from other renewable sources

6% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 103

Crude oil - production

0 bbl/day (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 203

Crude oil - exports

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 199

Crude oil - imports

33,540 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 60

Crude oil - proved reserves

0 bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 199

Refined petroleum products - production

34,210 bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 84

Refined petroleum products - consumption

116,000 bbl/day (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 74

Refined petroleum products - exports

3,871 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 96

Refined petroleum products - imports

66,280 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 70

Natural gas - production

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 200

Natural gas - consumption

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 201

Natural gas - exports

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

Natural gas - imports

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 192

Natural gas - proved reserves

0 cu m (1 January 2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 197

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy

25.19 million Mt (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

COMMUNICATIONS**Telephones - fixed lines**

total subscriptions: 2,641,982

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 11.62 (2019 est.)

country comparison to the world: 47

Telephones - mobile cellular

total subscriptions: 26,160,623

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 115.06 (2019 est.)

country comparison to the world: 49

Telecommunication systems

general assessment: telephone services have improved significantly; strong growth anticipated as Sri Lanka is lagging behind other Asian telecoms; increase in mobile broadband penetration; govt. funds telecom sector to expand fiber and LTE networks and growing investment in 5G services (2020)

domestic: fixed-line 12 per 100 and mobile-cellular 115 per 100; national trunk network consists of digital microwave radio relay and

fiber-optic links; fixed wireless local loops have been installed; competition is strong in mobile cellular systems and mobile cellular subscribership is increasing (2019)

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)

note: the COVID-19 outbreak is negatively impacting telecommunications production and supply chains globally; consumer spending on telecom devices and services has also slowed due to the pandemic's effect on economies worldwide; overall progress towards improvements in all facets of the telecom industry - mobile, fixed-line, broadband, submarine cable and satellite - has moderated

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: 7,700,876

percent of population: 34.11% (July 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 65

Broadband - fixed subscriptions

total: 1,544,313

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 7 (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 63

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 mt-km (2018)

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix
4R (2016)

Airports

total: 18 (2020)
country comparison to the world: 140

Airports - with paved runways

total: 11 (2020)
over 3,047 m: 2
1,524 to 2,437 m: 5
914 to 1,523 m: 4

Airports - with unpaved runways

total: 7 (2020)
1,524 to 2,437 m: 2
914 to 1,523 m: 3
under 914 m: 2

Heliports

1 (2020)

Pipelines

7 km refined products

Railways

total: 1,562 km (2016)
broad gauge: 1,562 km 1.676-m gauge (2016)
country comparison to the world: 82

Roadways

total: 114,093 km (2010)
paved: 16,977 km (2010)
unpaved: 97,116 km (2010)
country comparison to the world: 43

Waterways

160 km (primarily on rivers in southwest) (2012)
country comparison to the world: 100

Merchant marine

total: 96
by type: bulk carrier 6, container ship 1, general cargo 19, oil tanker 12, other 58 (2020)
country comparison to the world: 92

Ports and terminals

major seaport(s): Colombo
container port(s) (TEUs): Colombo (6,209,000) (2017)

MILITARY AND SECURITY

Military and security 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); Sri Lanka National Police: Special Task Force (counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency) (2019)

Military expenditures

1.9% of GDP (2019)
1.9% of GDP (2018)
2.1% of GDP (2017)
2.1% of GDP (2016)
2.6% of GDP (2015)
country comparison to the world: 60

Military and security service personnel strengths

the Sri Lankan military has approximately 250,000 total personnel (180,000 Army; 40,000 Navy; 30,000 Air Force) (2019)

Military equipment inventories and acquisitions

the Sri Lankan military inventory consists mostly of Chinese and Russian-origin equipment; since 2010, China and India have been the leading suppliers of arms to Sri Lanka (2019)

Military deployments

110 Central African Republic (MINUSCA); 140 Lebanon (UNIFIL); 240 Mali (MINUSMA); 170 South Sudan (UNMISS) (2020)

Military service age and obligation

18-22 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2019)

TERRORISM

Terrorist group(s)

Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham; Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (2019)

note: details about the history, aims, leadership, organization, areas of operation, tactics, targets, weapons, size, and sources of support of the group(s) appear(s) in Appendix-T

TRANSNATIONAL ISSUES**Disputes - international**

none

Refugees and internally displaced persons

IDPs: 27,000 (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) (2019)

Trafficking in persons

current situation: Sri Lanka is primarily a source and, to a lesser extent, a destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking; some Sri Lankan adults and children who migrate willingly to the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Afghanistan to work in the construction, garment, and domestic service sectors are subsequently subjected to forced labor or debt bondage (incurred through high recruitment fees or money advances); some Sri Lankan women are forced into prostitution in Jordan, Maldives, Malaysia, Singapore, and other countries; within Sri Lanka, women and children are subjected to sex trafficking, and children are also forced to beg and work in the agriculture, fireworks, and fish-drying industries; a small number of women from Asia, Central Asia,

Europe, and the Middle East have been forced into prostitution in Sri Lanka in recent years

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List – Sri Lanka does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so; in 2014, Sri Lanka was granted a waiver from an otherwise required downgrade to Tier 3 because its government has a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; law enforcement continues to demonstrate a lack of understanding of trafficking crimes and inadequate investigations, relying on trafficking cases to be prosecuted under the procurement statute rather than the trafficking statute, which carries more stringent penalties; authorities convicted only one offender under the procurement statute, a decrease from 2013; the government approved guidelines for the identification of victims and their referral to protective services but failed to ensure that victims were not jailed and charged for crimes committed as a direct result of being trafficked; no government employees were investigated or prosecuted, despite allegations of complicity (2015).

Acronyms and Abbreviations

A2AT	Airmen-to-Airmen Talk
ABEDA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
ACSA	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ARG	Amphibious Ready Group
ART	Anti-Retroviral Treatment (for HIV/AIDS)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCE	Before Common Era (before year 1)
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA, formerly USAID/OFDA)
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative (of China)
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
C	Commonwealth
CARAT	Cooperation Afloat and Readiness Training
CBDRM	Community Based Disaster Risk Management
CBO	Community-based organization
CBRN	Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CE	Common Era (which starts with year 1)
CEB	Ceylon Electricity Board
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CELD	Centre for Educational Leadership Development
CFE-DM	The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia
CICT	Colombo International Container Terminal
CKD	Chronic Kidney Disease
CMC	Colombo Municipal Council
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease – 2019
CP	Colombo Plan
CSOs	civil society organizations
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated (now DAI Global LLC)
DDMCU	District Disaster Management Coordination Units
DHF	Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever

DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (of the European Union)
DKI-APCSS	Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies
DM	Disaster Management
DMC	Disaster Management Centre (under the Sri Lanka Ministry of Defence)
DMHA	Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
DOD	Department of Defense (U.S.)
DOTS	directly observed treatment, short course (for TB)
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DWT	Dead Weight Tonnage
ECT	East Container Terminal (of the Port of Colombo)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EOC	Emergency Operation Centre
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCG	Foreign Clearance Guide
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
ft	Feet
G	Group
GCE O/L or A/L	General Certificate of Education (examination) Ordinary or Advanced Level
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHz	Gigahertz
GP	General Practitioner (medical doctor)
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
HCT	Humanitarian Country Teams
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HIP	Hambantota International Port
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICC	International Chamber of Conference
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICRM	Institute of Catastrophe Risk Management
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTA	Information and Communication Technology Agency

APPENDICES

IDA	International Development Association
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGO	International Governmental Organization
IHO	International Hydrographic Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IMSO	International Mobil Satellite Organization
INFORM GRI	Index for Risk Management Global Risk Index
INGOs	International Non-governmental Organizations
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organisation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IOM	International Organization for Migration (UN)
IoT	Internet-of-Things
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
IPP	Independent Power Producer
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IS	Information Sharing
ISEA	Integrated Strategic Environment Assessment
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Information Technology
ITSO	International Telecommunications Satellite Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JE	Japanese Encephalitis
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSDF	Japanese Self Defense Force
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)
km	kilometer(s)
kph	kilometers per hour
LCOC	Lanka Coal
LECO	Lanka Electricity
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupee
LRT	Light Rail Transit
LTE	Long Term Evolution (4G mobile communications)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

m	meter(s)
MCIP	Multinational Communications Interoperability Program
MDIIT	Ministry of Digital Infrastructure and Information Technology (formerly MTDI)
MDM	Ministry of Disaster Management (2004-2010)
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
MIMO	Multiple-Input Multiple-Output (of 5G telecommunications technology)
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MMD&E	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment
MMR	Measles-Mumps-Rubella
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOP	Ministry of Power
mph	miles per hour
MTCA	Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
MTDI	Ministry of Telecommunications, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment (now MDIIT)
MW	Megawatt
MWS	Ministry of Water Supply
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATA	National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NCDM	National Council for Disaster Management
NCRE	Non-conventional renewable energy
NCWT	National Community Water Trust
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions (to reducing climate change)
NDMC	National Disaster Management Committee
NEOP	National Emergency Operation Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIE	National Institute of Education
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health
NMSAP	National Multisectoral Action Plan (for non-communicable diseases)
NSACP	National STD/AIDS Control Programme
NWSDB	National Water Supply and Drainage Board
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA, now USAID/BHA)

APPENDICES

OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
PACAF	Pacific Air Forces (of the U.S. armed forces)
PAR	Pacific Airlift Rally
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PDC	Pacific Disaster Center
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PEPFAR	President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PEPSE	post-exposure prophylaxis following sexual exposure (for HIV/AIDS)
PHDT	Plantation Housing Development Trust
PPP	Public-Private Partner(ship)
PrEP	preexposure prophylaxis (for HIV/AIDS)
RE	Renewable Energy
RHCC	Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (Singapore)
RIMPAC	Rim of the Pacific (U.S.-led naval exercise)
RSF	Reporters sans Frontières (Reporters without Borders)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACEP	South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme
SAR	search and rescue
SARS-CoV-2	South Asia Respiratory Syndrome – Coronavirus – Second Strain
SCO	The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Sustainable Energy Authority
SJB	Samagi Jana Balawegaya
SLAF	Sri Lankan Air Force
SLBC	Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
SLCDMP	Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Program
SLCERT	Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lanka Medical Council
SLP	Sri Lanka Post
SLPA	Sri Lanka Ports Authority
SLPP	Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (Sri Lanka People’s Front)
SLR	Sri Lanka Railways
SLRC	Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation
SLRCS	Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
SLT	Sri Lanka Telecom
SLTB	Sri Lanka Transport Board
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SMEE	Subject Matter Expert Exchange
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement

SPP	Small power producer
SPRP	Sri Lanka Preparedness and Response Plan (to COVID-19)
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TB	tuberculosis
TEU	Twenty-foot Equivalent Units
TNA	Tamil National Alliance
TRCSL	Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka
TRO	Tamil Rehabilitation Organization
TSC	Theater Security Cooperation
U.S.	United States
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNP	United National Party
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
U.S.	United States
USAF	United States Air Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollars
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WCO	World Customs Organization
WFTU	The World Federation of Trade Unions
WHO	World Health Organization (UN)
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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