



Key points

- Humanitarian needs in Sri Lanka continued to rise sharply in 2022 as a result of political and economic upheaval.
- Sri Lanka is facing a rapidly growing food security crisis, and one in four people are already facing food insecurity.
- Since June 2022, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has scaled up its emergency and resilience interventions, reaching more than 62 640 households (244 300 people).

Challenges facing food security and agriculture

Sri Lanka is witnessing an unprecedented economic crisis, and the situation is exacerbated by political and social turmoil. Nearly 40 percentⁱⁱ of the population of Sri Lanka depend on agriculture as a primary source of income. The ongoing multidimensional crisis is posing an enormous threat to their livelihoods and disrupting the national food system. Agricultural production is in a downward trend since mid-2021 due to the unavailability of fertilizers and other essential production inputs; livestock keepers are unable to access feed and basic veterinary supplies; and fishers are unable to access fuel for motorized boats.

Consequently, the supply of food in local markets is shrinking and food inflationⁱ is soaring, reaching 90 percent in July 2022. Moreover, four in every ten households experienced a reduction in their incomes, and one in every two households are currently relying on negative coping mechanisms to cope with the lack of food or money to buy it. The window of opportunity to support Sri Lankan farmers and their communities is narrowly time-bound. Immediate action to provide farmers with quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides will enable them to protect their livelihoods and feed their communities. It is also critical to provide the most vulnerable farmers, livestock keepers and fishers with cash assistance to enable them to restore their productive assets and fast-track their recovery.

In numbers



6.2 million people facing moderate acute food insecurityⁱ



40% of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihoodsⁱⁱ



Paddy rice production costs increased by more than **100%** in 2022ⁱ



Food inflation reached **90%** (July 2022)ⁱ

Providing vulnerable farmers and fishers with time-critical production inputs and cash assistance will enable them to protect their livelihoods and feed their communities.

Response to date

- Distributed 2 381 tonnes of urea to 47 619 farming households (185 700 people).
- Provided unconditional cash transfers to 15 021 households (58 600 people), disbursing a total of approximately USD 1.4 million. The beneficiaries included vulnerable green gram farmers and fishers in the poorest areas of Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Batticaloa, Hambantota, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Matale, Monaragala, Mullaitivu, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam and Trincomalee.



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- Engaged 600 households (2 340 people) in urban agricultural activities in Colombo, establishing two community plots and providing the beneficiary households with agricultural production inputs to contribute to improving their food security.
- FAO is currently supporting the establishment of 200 school gardens in Badulla, Jaffna and Moneragala districts and providing capacity building support to teachers and students to increase their knowledge on nutrition and agriculture.

Planned response

- Provide 201 148 households (784 477 people) with a total of 10 057 tonnes of urea to enable them to produce approximately 774 000 tonnes of paddy rice. This intervention will primarily target vulnerable farming households in areas that witnessed low yields during the previous *Maha* season.
- Provide 53 000 farming households (206 700 people) with unconditional cash transfers (USD 84/household) to cover their basic food and livelihoods needs during the lean season.
- Provide 997 000 paddy farming households (3.9 million people) with 36 000 tonnes of triple superphosphate to restore agricultural production during the upcoming 2023 *Yala* season.
- Provide 5 058 vulnerable fishing households (19 727 people) from the most vulnerable districts with unconditional cash transfers (USD 141/household) to enable them to meet their immediate food and nutrition security needs.
- Support the most vulnerable and food insecure households with severely malnourished children by establishing 2 500 backyard gardens and facilitating capacity-building activities on improved nutritional and dietary practices, to enhance food production and nutrition at the household level.

Notes

- FAO and WFP. 2022. *Special Report – FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. September 2022.* Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc1886en>
- FAO. 2022. *Sri Lanka: Urgent call for assistance 2022.* Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc1045en>

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Funding

To date, FAO has mobilized USD 51 171 005 for its emergency and resilience interventions to be implemented during 2022/23.

Resource partners

Canada, New Zealand, the Sustainable Development Goals Fund, Sweden (through FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the United States Agency for International Development

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