

MAPS APPROACH SUPPORTING SDG IMPLEMENTATION IN SRI LANKA



United
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**MAPS APPROACH SUPPORTING SDG IMPLEMENTATION
IN SRI LANKA**

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IN SRI LANKA, JANUARY 2018**

This report is the result of an inter-agency UN mission conducted under the aegis of the MAPS* led by UNDP, UNFPA and UNESCAP in Sri Lanka in 2017 at the request of the Government. In close collaboration with the Sri Lankan Government authorities and the UN Country Team, the UN MAPS mission team aimed to provide integrated policy support and to conduct consultations to inform the development of a SDG Roadmap.

The following Government offices are acknowledged for their guidance in the process and for actively participating in the consultations: The Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, in particular the Department of National Planning and the Department of Census and Statistics; the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife; the Expert Panel on SDG Implementation at the President's Office; and the Parliamentary Select Committee on the SDGs.

* MAPS is a common approach by the UN Development Agencies, endorsed by the UN Development Group, to deliver joint and integrated support to countries to achieve the SDGs.

ART DIRECTION, DESIGN & INFOGRAPHICS
Camilo J. Salomón, www.cjsalomon.com

PRODUCTION
United Nations Development Programme

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ABBREVIATIONS

BPPS	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support
CSO	Civil society organization
DCS	Department of Census and Statistics
ESCAP	Regional Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
HDI	Human Development Index
HRC	Human Rights Council (UN)
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NSS	National Statistical System
PIP	Public Investment Programme
PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
RIA	Rapid Impact Assessment
SCRIM	Secretariat for Coordination of Reconciliation and Mechanisms
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
WHO	World Health Organization

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka has a strong track record of human development achievements compared to other South Asian and comparable economies. An island nation that is one of the most densely populated nations in the world, it achieved the Millennium Development Goal target of halving poverty seven years ahead of the 2015 deadline. It stands at 72 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index, despite 30 years of armed conflict.



Sri Lanka's Stilt Fisherman. Photo by Jankovoy.

However, there are remaining pockets of poor human development in certain geographic areas, ethnic communities and by gender and age, and rising inequality compounded by declining social sector expenditures. The country is highly vulnerable to environmental and economic shocks and has been experiencing extreme weather conditions in the last decade, increasing droughts and floods in certain parts of the country. In the social sphere, unemployment remains high among women and youth, and marginalized groups where the poverty rate is the highest. Education is uneven in quality and over a third of youth do not study beyond the upper secondary level. Non-communicable diseases are on the rise. Sri Lanka has among the highest wasting prevalence in the world and is one of the few countries with wasting higher than stunting. Gender inequality and violence against women remains an issue.

When working towards fulfilling the SDGs, two considerations are key: first, the SDGs cannot be met one hundred percent. Second, not all goals can be pursued equally and at the same time, which is why accelerators are central to success, being actions that have the maximum impact across different goals. A country should prioritize its actions in four ways: identify national priorities; identify goals that lag the furthest; accelerate goals that are within reach; and accelerate goals that will most address the country's challenges and yield spill over effects across different SDG targets.

Accelerators will need to focus on these core issues: (1) Addressing inequalities; (2) Bridging the development and peace gap; (3) Investing in the blue and green economy; (4) Increasing local capacity for service delivery; and (5) Strengthening quality data and statistical coherence.

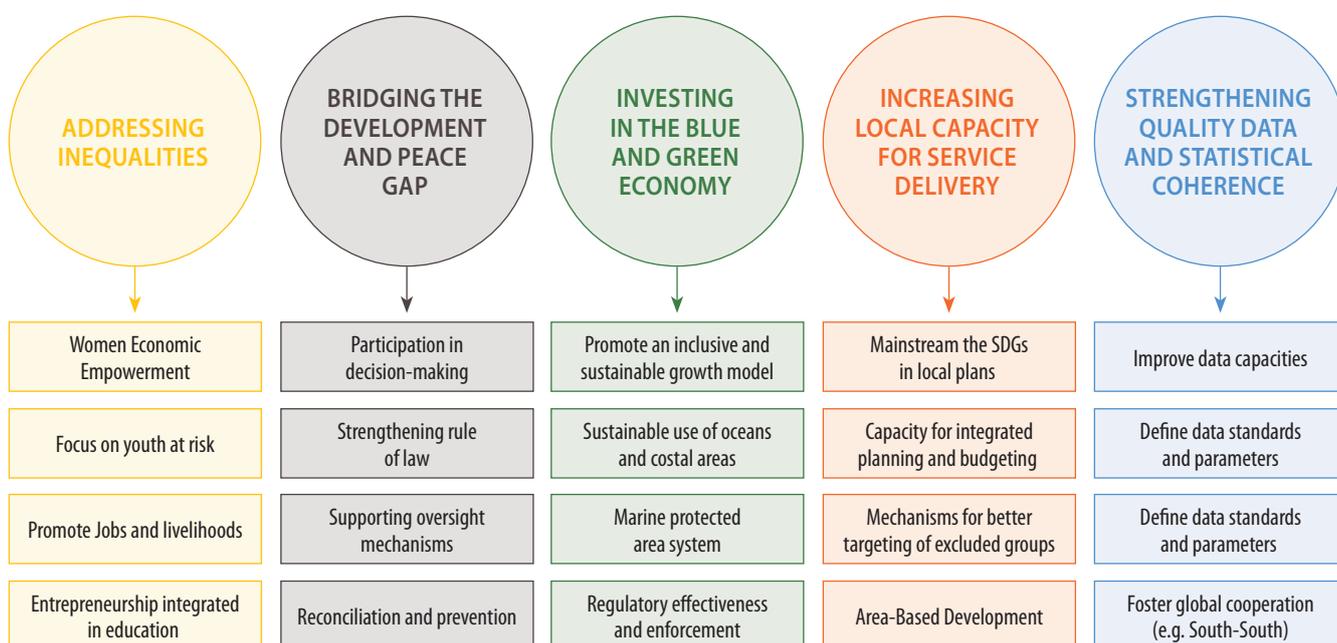
ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES

For Sri Lanka, strong GDP growth has been accompanied by rising inequality and disparities in access to the benefits of development. This can undermine the progress made to date and is thus an immediate priority for the Government. Not just economic inequality but the multiple and intersecting forms of inequality should be addressed.

Women and youth constitute the largest segments of the population who are underrepresented in both the economic and the political sphere. The gender ratio of the population has more females than males, yet women's economic participation remains at a very low 35 percent. Other than being a concern in its own right for women themselves, it puts a damper on productivity and competitiveness of the economy as a whole. Addressing this gender barrier requires action on other fronts: discriminatory laws including those involving inheritance, separation, and widowhood; support for the high volume of unpaid care work that women do; parental leave expansion; and gender based violence and sexual harassment on public transport.

The high rate of youth unemployment affects the future of Sri Lanka's 4.4 million young people, particularly young women. National expenditure on education is under two percent of the GDP. At the same time, sexual and reproductive health services for the young population are inadequate: teenage pregnancy rates are rising and awareness of contraception is low. Young people report discrimination on grounds of income, ethnicity and sex which affects their employment opportunities. Other groups that are disadvantaged are the 700,000 displaced by conflict, those employed in the estate sector (who have the highest poverty rates) and the rising population of the elderly.

FIGURE 1: SRI LANKA'S POTENTIAL ACCELERATORS FOR A SDG ROADMAP AT A GLANCE



To tackle this persistent discrimination and marginalization, job creation and skill development needs to be targeted at these groups. Market linkages and entrepreneurship opportunities should be made available to them. Public institutions should emphasize diversity, including through temporary measures such as quotas. An independent national human rights commission was established in 1996, but it needs to be supported by strong legal mechanisms for accountability and protection, and a strong national action plan on human rights.

BRIDGING THE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE GAP

Peacebuilding since the conflict touches directly on these efforts. While it is making progress it is on a separate and parallel stream from the efforts on sustainable development, although they mutually depend on each other. With regard to peacebuilding, countrywide reconciliation needs more inclusive democratic governance and rebuilding of the country's heavily politicized justice and policing system.

The country has committed to progress although the road may be slow. The present coalition government has supported a comprehensive reform agenda to build an institutional culture that would address the legacies of the conflict and bring about post-conflict reconciliation and social stability, including a new constitution that reflects a more pluralist vision of the state.

Bridging the development and peace gap, including preventive efforts to avoid social tensions and violence; a greater voice for the marginalized (women, youth, ethnic groups) in decision making; strengthening transitional justice mechanisms that draw on broad consultations with all groups in society will be key to moving to a sustainable pathway. Strong focus on reconciliation is necessary. This also includes the return of land to their rightful owners; strong oversight mechanism and access to information as an important vehicle for citizen activism; adopting zero tolerance towards corruption and enforcing the capacities of anti-corruption agencies; addressing sexual and gender-based violence which includes the conflict-affected areas; and engaging the community in voluntary activities to rebuild trust and resilience, with the involvement of mediators such as the elderly, teachers and religious leaders.

INVESTING ON THE BLUE AND GREEN ECONOMY

Sustainable development for Sri Lanka means investing in a 'blue and green' economy. Green refers to a low carbon, resource efficient growth that includes vulnerable populations. It invests in greenhouse gas reductions and cleaner energy investments. The blue economy complements these efforts

by recognizing the oceans and marine and coastal ecosystems as great asset for an island country, which needs to be preserved and sustainably harvested. These are the first line of defence from natural disasters and the source of livelihoods for millions. Focus areas for action include the following: investing in renewal energy; improving water quality; making waste management systems eco-efficient through technology transfers and a recovery and recycling process; developing food value chains on the supply and demand side; expanding, managing and protecting Marine Protected Areas; and increasing private financing for climate through measures like low carbon lending.

To unlock the value of Sri Lanka's ocean resources sustainably, the Government has launched a Blue-Green Strategy which will require continued political championship, and public and private investments.

INCREASING LOCAL CAPACITY FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Localizing the SDGs is an important accelerator because it is at the local level that the SDGs will be delivered. Localization allows local governing bodies to actively engage with the central government. It enables the long-term transformational vision of the SDGs through the reform of governance and service delivery systems, transferring more functions and resources to the local level. Going local reduces the urban-rural divide and reaches vulnerable groups (minority groups, people with disabilities, the elderly, etc.) more inclusively, tackling the issue of persistent pockets of poverty.

STRENGTHENING QUALITY DATA AND STATISTICAL COHERENCE

The scope of the 2030 Agenda calls for strong national statistics capacity. Sri Lanka's data capacity requires substantial improvements in quality and frequency to direct resources and prioritize investments effectively. National indicators are needed to plan how to incorporate the SDG targets into national planning processes and development strategies. During stakeholder meetings, the need for a centralized structure for data was recognized, and other country examples were seen as possible templates. The Department of Census and Statistics, that has led most of the progress in identifying data needs, has been assessing SDG indicators and line ministries have begun doing the same for areas under their purview. Establishing an SDG data task team would be extremely useful in overseeing the crucial activity of coordinating data requirements of the SDGs. Working groups could be established under this task team to either work on each goal separately or grouping goals into common themes.

WAY FORWARD: CAPITALIZING ON THE RENEWED IMPETUS FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The establishment of the Sustainable Development Council, through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Act, could significantly improve the much needed coordination for SDG implementation at national and provincial levels. There is strong support for the SDGs emanating from the President's Office, key line ministries that have been enlisted to become official members of the Council, the Parliament and the Provincial Councils.

The Government of Sri Lanka has volunteered to take part in the Voluntary National Review at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to be held in New York in July 2018. The HLPF process could provide additional impetus for Sri Lanka to better coordinate SDG implementation efforts.

This report provides elements that could inform the preparation of an SDG Roadmap, structured around five critical areas: (1) Defining an institutional coordination framework; (2) Assessing national priorities through SDG alignment; (3) Identifying

and prioritizing SDG accelerators; (4) Preparing SDG-based planning and budgeting; and (5) Identifying alternative modalities for financing for development. A Roadmap for SDG implementation in Sri Lanka could be a critical instrument to inform the preparation and support the implementation of a future National Policy Strategy on Sustainable Development.

As the Sustainable Development Council embarks in the planning process to develop the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development that will provide the vision for development for Sri Lanka to 2030, it is important to ensure that SDG planning has to encompass not just national and subnational governments but also a diverse set of other stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions and the private sector, and groups normally under-represented, such as women's and youth's groups.

For this purpose, the planning process must be inclusive, participatory and transparent from the outset. Applying a 'whole-of-society' approach will be key to building a foundation for broad-based participation and enhancing the legitimacy of both the national vision and the resulting development strategy.



Man Painting a Mask. Photo by Tatiana Tolstykh.

II. OVERVIEW OF SRI LANKA DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT



Colombo seafront at sunset. Photo by Asian Dream.

2.1 SUMMARY

Sri Lanka is a lower-middle-income country of 21.4 million¹ people with a growing economy and ambitions of becoming a higher-middle-income country within 15 years.² Economic growth has averaged over 4.7 percent in the past five years,³ driven largely by rehabilitation in the North and East provinces after almost 30 years of armed conflict, and accompanied by a structural shift toward services and industry.

An island nation of 66,000 square miles, Sri Lanka is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The main ethnic groups include the Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Indian Tamils, Moors or Muslims, Burghers and Malays. To understand the context of its development successes and challenges, the political economy of the Sri Lankan internal conflict needs to be understood in its demographic, economic and political context.

Sri Lanka has a track record of strong human development achievements compared to other South Asian and comparable economies. The country achieved the overarching Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target of halving poverty at the national level seven years before the 2015 MDG deadline, and between 2002 and 2012–2013 alone reduced poverty from 13.2 to 3.2 percent of people living on less than \$1.25 a day.⁴ A long tradition, dating back to post-independence, of extensive investment in education, health and poverty alleviation programmes, coupled with economic growth averaging 6–7 percent a year over the past decade explain Sri Lanka's development success.

Today, Sri Lanka's human development indicators for 2015 reflect a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.766, indicating 'high human development', positioning the country at 72 out of 188 countries.⁵ Sri Lanka graduated to Middle Income Country status in 2010, following the end of its nearly 30 years of armed conflict.

Despite these overall positive rankings there are significant disparities in income, infrastructure and access to basic services across the country. A large proportion of people in Sri Lanka live just above the poverty line and are at risk of being impacted by the negative effects of economic or climatic shocks. Nearly one

in four people live on less than \$2.50 a day (2012–2013).⁶ The living standards of the near poor are closer to those of the poor than those living above \$2.50 per day. Sri Lanka is currently ranked 66/113 on the Global Food Security Index, while the FAO estimates that 4.1 million out of the 21 million population (over 25% of the population) do not have sufficient food to maintain healthy lives. Inequality is also rising, notably between the densely populated areas in the Western Province and the rest of the country. The share of total household income of the poorest quintile of the population was 4.8 percent in 2016.

Aggregate figures at the national level also occult the poorer socio-economic condition of subgroups of the population. While new data suggest recovery in many of the social sectors in the conflict-affected North and East, the proportion of employed people living below the poverty line in these areas remains high in some districts, suggesting a need for sustained attention to livelihood promotion and market development.⁷ High rates of poverty and vulnerability persist in the central parts of the country which are dominated by plantations, and isolated regions, including Moneragala. Poverty rates remain particularly high in the estate sector,⁸ far higher than in urban or rural sectors (8.8 percent, vs 1.9 and 4.3 percent respectively).⁹ Gender disparities persist: only 35.9 percent of women participate in the labour force, and in the 24.3 percent of households headed by women, only 35 percent of women are employed.

Hence, while aggregate figures are positive, there are pockets of poor human development in several districts, mainly due to unequal access to basic services like health and education, as well as income opportunities. Life expectancy at birth is 75 years, according to an unpublished analysis from the National HDR 2017, but there is a 10-year gap between the district with the highest life expectancy (Matara, 77.2 years) and the district with the lowest life expectancy (Mullaitivu, 66.9 years). While densely populated districts (Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara) are the best off, the districts of Mullaitivu, Batticaloa, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya in the former conflict-affected areas are the worst off.¹⁰

Given its relatively small domestic market, Sri Lanka will need to look outward to fulfill its ambitions to become a prosperous

¹ Department of Census and Statistics (available at www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/VitalStatistics/MidYearPopulation/Mid-year%20population%20by%20district.pdf)

² UN Country Team in Sri Lanka. *Common Country Assessment*, 2016.

³ ADB Economic Outlook (available at www.adb.org/countries/sri-lanka/economy).

⁴ United Nations in Sri Lanka and Government of Sri Lanka (2016). *Sri Lanka Peacebuilding Priority Plan* (hereafter PPP).

⁵ *Human Development Report 2016*.

⁶ World Bank, Sri Lanka (2015). *Ending Poverty and Promoting Shared Prosperity*.

⁷ United Nations in Sri Lanka (2014). *Millennium Development Goals Country Report 2014* (hereafter MDGR 2014).

⁸ The estate sector in Sri Lanka refers to plantation areas which are more than 20 acres in extent and have not less than 10 residential labourers.

⁹ Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016).

¹⁰ Department of Census and Statistics, Government of Sri Lanka. A majority of the poor and the bottom 40 percent of the population tend to live in the densely populated, urban areas in the centre of the country. For example, the highest numbers of people living in poverty are, in fact, located within the Kandy-Colombo-Galle multi-city agglomeration. Similarly, Kurunegala is home to 7.7 percent of the country's poor people, despite only 6.5 percent of the population living under the poverty line. The same is true at the DS division level, where large numbers of poor people live in Gampaha, Nuwara Eliya and Ratnapura. Therefore, there must be a simultaneous focus on efforts to improve economic performance and improve urban management structures to reduce poverty within these regions, along with other efforts specifically targeted to help the poor in more isolated areas of the country. See for more information: World Bank, Sri Lanka (2015). "Ending Poverty and Promoting Shared Prosperity – A Systematic Country Diagnostic", Washington, D.C. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/363391467995349383/pdf/103246-SCD-P152526-PUBLIC-NON-BOARD-VERSION-SriLankaCompleteFinal-122515lr-2.pdf>

and competitive middle-income country. The country has important strengths, such as overall strong human capital and a reliable infrastructure base, particularly when compared to other South Asian countries. Sri Lanka also enjoys an enviable location in a fast-growing region along a major trade route, opening opportunities to serve as a regional trading hub. Moreover, Sri Lanka boasts unique natural assets, with a temperate climate, diverse topography and unique historical assets, giving it a strong basis for tourism. Besides, the country has a track record of developing globally competitive companies, particularly in the apparel and information technology (IT) sectors (WB 2015).

2.2 SRI LANKA'S PERFORMANCE IN ACHIEVING THE MDGS

The MDGs covered the following eight areas: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger, Achieve Universal Primary Education, Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, Reduce Child Mortality, Improve Maternal Health, Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases, Ensure Environmental Sustainability and Develop a Global Partnership for Development. The target date for achieving the MDGs was the end of December 2015, exactly 70 years after Sri Lanka became a Member State of the United Nations. The country was able to achieve most of the goals well ahead of time. Its high ranking on the HDI has been above other middle-income countries, even those like Turkey with a much higher per capita income. A look at Sri Lanka's record in achieving the MDGs provides important information that informs the direction the country needs to go in to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

According to the MDG Report 2014, compiled for all 25 districts by the Sri Lankan Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka had achieved the targets for 13 out of the 44 MDG indicators relevant for Sri Lanka over 2012 and 2013. Eleven targets were on track to be achieved by 2015. Only two indicators were off track, namely the indicator on nutrition (proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption) and on access to anti-retroviral drugs (proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs). Free education, universal health care and a series of welfare programmes that had been implemented for more than six decades, helped to accelerate progress and contributed to the impressive results in education, health and living conditions. Table 1 compares the status of the indicators for the base year (1990 or closest) with 2013.

The target of halving poverty was achieved at the national level seven years before the 2015 deadline: National poverty

incidence declined from 26.1 percent in the 1990–1991 period to 6.7 percent in the 2012–2013 period. All districts, except those in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and Monaragala District in Uva Province, had achieved the target of halving poverty. The Jaffna and Ampara Districts, which had been badly affected by the conflict, began to make progress after 2009. Poverty in Jaffna district declined from 16.1 percent in 2009–2010 to 7.7 percent in 2016, and in Ampara from 11.8 percent to 2.6 percent during the same period.¹¹

But while Sri Lanka has made considerable progress on most of the indicators at the national level, considerable regional variations remain.¹² While the national unemployment rate had declined to less than 4 percent, the employment ratio for females is low despite the rapid growth in female education. By 2016, only 35.2 percent of females were employed compared to 64.8 percent of the male population.¹³ In addition, the proportion of women in parliament remains very low, at 5.8 percent in 2014.

Sri Lanka achieved all three targets related to Universal Primary Education. Since 1998, education for children aged 5 to 14 has been compulsory in Sri Lanka. As a result, by 2016, 97.9 percent of children aged 5–11 and 98.4 percent of children aged 12–14 were attending school in all districts.¹⁴ Sri Lanka also reached gender parity in primary education. However, beyond the mandatory age of 14, a decline in school attendance was observed in all districts: only 86 percent of those aged 15 to 16 years are still in school and only around 60 percent (national average) continue their education after 16 years. The quality of education also needs to be improved.

Free health care services for all have helped Sri Lanka in reducing infant, child and maternal mortality to a very low level compared to most other countries in the region. Sri Lanka achieved the target of reducing both the under-five and infant mortality rates by two thirds compared to the base year (1990). The proportion of one-year-old children immunized against measles increased from 95.5 percent in 1993 to 99.0 percent in 2011. The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) declined from 92 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 26.8 in 2013.¹⁵ The proportion of births attended by skilled nurses reached the target of 99.8 percent by 2010. Despite these improvements in maternal and child health, the nutrition status of children under five years is still a major concern, with more than one fifth of the children under five being underweight. The proportion of people consuming less than the minimum diet required has remained unchanged at around 50 percent since before the 1990s.¹⁶ Although Sri Lanka remains a low HIV/AIDS prevalence

¹¹ Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016).

¹² www.ft.lk/2015/04/17/millennium-development-goals-sri-lankas-achievements-and-challenges-ahead/#sthash.A0ZRoUU9.dpuf.

¹³ Labour Force Survey (2016).

¹⁴ Demographic and Health Survey (2016).

¹⁵ Department of Census and Statistics (available at www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/VitalStatistics/Indicators/BDM%20IMD%202000-2016.pdf).

¹⁶ www.news.lk/news/business/item/6776-sri-lanka-achieves-most-millennium-development-goals-targets-well-ahead-of-schedule-mdg-country-report.

TABLE 1: SNAPSHOT OF THE MDG STATUS IN SRI LANKA, 2012/2013

GOAL		STATUS (FIGURES ARE FOR “BASE YEAR” → “LATEST”) FOR 27 INDICATORS						
1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Poverty: 26.1 → 6.7%	Poverty Gap Ratio: 5.6 → 1.2	Prevalence of underweight children (under 5 years): 29.7 → 21.1%			Prop. of population below minimum energy consumption: 51.3 → 47.8%	
2	Achieve universal primary education	Net enrolment rate in primary school: 88.0 → 99.7%		Prop. Of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5: 64.1 → 100.0%			Literacy rate in the age group 15-24 years: 92.7 → 97.8%	
3	Promote gender equality & empower women	Primary Education 94.2 → 99.4%		Lower Sec. Education 91.2%	Upper Sec. Education 107.7%	Tertiary Education 75.4 → 113.8%		
		Secondary Education → 102.6%						
4	Reduce child mortality	Under-five Mortality Rate: 22.2 → 11.3 (per 1000 LBs)		Infant Mortality Rate: 17.7 → 9.4 (per 1000 LBs)			Prop. of 1 year old children immunized against measles: 95.5 → 95.0%	
5	Improve maternal health	Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live births): 92.0 → 33.3		Prop. of births attended by skilled Birth Attendants: 94.1 → 99.8			Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit): → 95.8 (in 2006/07)	
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	HIV Prevalence: Less than 0.01%	HIV-Access to antiretroviral drugs: 34.0%	Malaria death rate: 0.8 → 0.0	Prevalence of TB: 118 → 109	TB Death Rate: 7.5 → 1.1	Prop. of TB cases detected: 58 → 73%	Prop. of TB cases cured under DOT short course: 86.3 (2005) → 84.9% (2008)
		(per 100,000 population)						
7	Ensure environmental sustainability	Prop. of land covered by forest: 33.8 → 29.6%		Prop. population using an improved drinking water source: 68.0 → 89.7%			Prop. of population using an improved sanitation facility: 69.0 → 87.2%	

Key → ■ Already achieved ■ Almost achieved ■ On track ■ Off track

Note: Refer – unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Attach/Indicators/OfficialList2008.pdf, for official list of MDG indicators; “Base year” – 1990 or closest and “Latest” – 2013 or closest (based on the availability of data)

country, the number of cases has been gradually increasing:¹⁷ Sri Lanka has managed to bring malaria cases down from around 400,000 in the early 1990s to 124 cases by 2011 and has no malaria-related deaths since 2007. Tuberculosis (TB) was still considered a public health problem in Sri Lanka with around 8,000 new cases are reported every year.

As is the case in other countries, economic growth and higher per capita income in Sri Lanka have resulted in increased income inequality. Social protection programmes remain critical to help the most vulnerable groups in the country. The growing number of elderly people in the country will also require particular attention.

In conclusion, although Sri Lanka has made significant progress towards achieving the majority of the MDGs at national level, the MDG 2014 report concluded that further efforts were required to ensure uniform progress across the country, and to sustain and further improve the progress beyond 2015. Areas identified for additional focus were women's empowerment, nutrition, climate change and regional disparities.¹⁸ After 30 years of conflict, uniting the country, achieving cohesion among the diverse communities and religions as well as the garnering of adequate revenue to invest further in education and health were also considered important preconditions for achieving the SDGs. Hence, a boost in tax revenue will be important given the very low domestic revenue/GDP ratio which stood at 13 percent at the time of the MDG report; it is now even lower, at only 11 percent of GDP, an exceptionally low ratio for a middle-income country.

2.3 SRI LANKA – OVERVIEW OF THE POST-CONFLICT POLITICAL SITUATION SINCE 2009

In 2009, after a 26-year-long civil conflict between the Sinhalese dominated government and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam), the government claimed victory over the Tamil insurgency in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The end of the conflict was expected to open up space for constructive negotiations with more moderate Tamils and for reviewing the prevalent policy of Sinhalese nationalism. But during the initial years after the conflict there was limited progress on post-conflict reconciliation and addressing the grievances that not only fueled the conflict with the Tamil Tigers but that also caused feelings of injustice and exclusion by other groups in Sri Lankan society. There had been no credible investigations into allegations of conflict crimes, disappearances or other human rights violations. Land seizures by the military continued and more than 90,000 people remained displaced in the north and

east.¹⁹ Critics of the government continued to be censored based on the Prevention of Terrorism Act. And there remained allegations of widespread corruption.

In 2013, the government started to reduce the military presence in the north, and the same year the long-awaited provincial council elections were organized for the North-East, which were won by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) majority. But the devolution of powers guaranteed by the Constitution's 13th amendment continued to be put on hold. Violence among religious groups was also on the rise with Buddhist attacks on mosques, and violence against Christians. Despite significant improvements, the early post-conflict period, 2009 to 2014, was largely considered one of missed opportunities, and the economic, political and cultural drivers of insecurity — centred around language, education and religion — perceived by the Tamils and other groups (including disempowered Sinhalese) remained.²⁰ The challenge for Sri Lanka was to make the important transformation from 'negative peace' (or an absence of violence that belies the existence of structural forms of unresolved conflict) towards 'positive peace' (that entails addressing grievances, abating insecurities, advancing justice, fostering dignity, improving social cohesion and increasing socio-economic well-being).²¹

The Presidential elections on 8 January 2015 defied all predictions. The opposition coalition led by Maithripala Sirisena (former Secretary General of then President Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Freedom Party) won with overwhelming support from the Tamils and Muslims, and a large portion of the Sinhala majority votes.

The victory of a broad coalition representing Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims provided hope that the country could begin to heal the political, ethnic and religious wounds, start a power-sharing process and strengthen the rule of law for all people in the nation. The initial months of the new Government witnessed positive developments. Important political space for civil society and human rights groups was opened. The parliament passed the nineteenth amendment to the constitution which considerably redistributed presidential powers to the Office of the Prime Minister and the Parliament and established independent oversight commissions. Some Tamil political prisoners were released and portions of military-occupied land in Tamil areas were returned.

The subsequent legislative elections in August 2015 brought together Sri Lanka's two major parties, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the United Nationalist Party, for the first time to form a unity government. The coalition Government adopted an

¹⁷ Through 2012, a total of 1,649 HIV cases and a total of 432 AIDS cases have been reported.

¹⁸ www.ft.lk/2015/04/17/millennium-development-goals-sri-lankas-achievements-and-challenges-ahead/#sthash.A0ZR0UU9.dpuf.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, 'Sri Lanka's Authoritarian Turn: The Need for International Action', February 2013.

²⁰ De Mel, N. & Venugopal, R., 'Peacebuilding Context Assessment', March 2016.

²¹ Ibid.

ambitious reform agenda to address the many challenges the country faces: keeping a beleaguered economy afloat, strengthening the rule of law, tackling corruption, drafting a new constitution, promoting a national reconciliation effort and establishing a multi-pronged set of transitional justice mechanisms agreed on with the Human Rights Council.

On 16 September 2015, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights delivered its long-awaited report on Investigation on Sri Lanka to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). The report presented evidence of serious violations by government forces, pro-government paramilitaries and the separatist LTTE, particularly during the final months of the civil conflict and the immediate aftermath. The report suggested that Sri Lanka's criminal justice system would need support to conduct credible investigations and prosecutions, given the limited trust in the system. The report therefore called for the establishment of a 'hybrid special court' which would include international judges, prosecutors, lawyers and investigators.²²

The Sirisena government responded to the report with a series of proposals including setting up a special council to respect "the right of victims to a fair remedy and ... to address the problem of impunity for human rights violations suffered by all communities."²³ An Office of Missing Persons (OMP) has been established following legislation passed in Parliament in 2016, although some concerns have been expressed with respect to the process and the law. A Right to Information Act was approved in June 2016 and has been in force since February 2017, providing citizens and NGOs the right to seek information including on land issues and missing persons. The National Policy on Reconciliation and Co-existence was approved by the Cabinet in May 2017, focusing on equality, human rights, justice and rule of law, linguistic rights, participation in decision-making and representation in public service. A policy on transitional justice is also under discussion and a draft national human rights action plan has been developed.

To advance reconciliation, the Government has established three ministries with complementary functions. The Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation operates under the leadership of the President and includes in its structure an Office of National Unity and Reconciliation, specifically focusing on strengthening inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships. In addition, there is a Ministry of Prison Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Hindu Religious Affairs, and the Ministry of National Co-existence, Dialogue and Official Languages, headed by Cabinet Ministers. These ministries are responsible for the resettlement of internally displaced persons

(IDPs), refugees and returnees, rehabilitation of combatants and implementation of the official language policy, amongst others. The government also established the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM) within the Prime Minister's Office to oversee the reconciliation and transitional justice process. The SCRM will ensure institutional coherence by coordinating with relevant ministries, task forces, provincial councils, district secretariats etc. to facilitate and progress reconciliation and non-recurrence.

In November 2015, Sri Lanka was declared eligible by the Secretary-General to receive support from the Peace Building Fund. With support from the Peace Building Fund and UN agencies, the Government agreed on a comprehensive Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) in August 2016.²⁴ According to the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, Sri Lanka's reconciliation process needed to prioritize three broad areas of consideration:

- (a) Address the underlying structural and societal drivers of the conflict which has been as much a conflict between people as between communities and the state magnified through ethnically divisive state policies and practices;
- (b) Foster a process of closure and accountability and listen to the views and opinions of the victims and survivors who will prioritize different aspects of transitional justice depending on their lived experiences of the conflict and current circumstances;
- (c) Build a climate of peace that is resilient at the level of communities and individuals, engages in memorialization, restores a sense of normalcy and confidence in people's everyday lives, involves and integrates young people in the peacebuilding process and rebuilds social support structures to ensure non-recurrence of violence.

The PPP rests on four pillars of support: (1) **transitional justice**; (2) **reconciliation**; (3) **good governance**; and (4) **resettlement and durable solutions**. The Peace Building Fund will also provide technical support to the institutionalization of peace education within schools and other learning establishments. This is the first time in decades that there is a new generation of young people growing up outside the shadow of conflict, and the education sector has a critical role in fostering a culture of peace starting from childhood. The SCRM in the PMO has been assigned the central coordination function.

The Peace Building Fund has committed \$5.3 million to implement the PPP through its Immediate Response Facility. An additional \$67.2 million will be mobilized through the Government, development partners and the UN.

²² See OHCHR website, www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/LKIndex.aspx.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Government of Sri Lanka and UN, Sri Lanka Priority Peacebuilding Plan, August 2016.



The Pettah Market. Photo by Efesenko.

Moving forward

Since 2015, the coalition government of President Sirisena has championed a comprehensive reform agenda and underlined its commitment to long-term peace by co-sponsoring HRC resolutions 30/1 (2015) and 34/1 (2017), which set out a comprehensive framework to advance transitional justice to address the legacies of the conflict. Much of the physical damage has also been repaired, but the experience of Sri Lanka shows how hard it is to address post-conflict reconciliation.

While Sri Lanka has not seen a reversal of the conflict, many challenges remain, in particular around the de-politicization of the judiciary, the police and the civil service, the reduction of the military presence in the north, the initiation of land reforms, addressing wide-scale corruption, issues of devolution of power, accountability and reconciliation and the inclusion of women and young people in the peacebuilding process. The recommendation by the HRC to have international judges and prosecutors participating in the special court has been opposed, and there is strong resistance within the military to any sort of investigations with regard to violations of human rights and conflict crimes.²⁵

Despite the progress made in terms of creating institutions and submitting policies and reforms, a culture of counter-insurgency remains present in the military and will require a rethinking of the functions of the security sector to reorient the sector from a conflict focus to peacetime security needs of citizens. The Prevention of Terrorism Act which granted law enforcement authorities sweeping powers of arrest and detention is still in place²⁶ and while arrests under the law have

ceased, civil society organizations (CSOs) claimed in 2016 that some 125 people arrested under the provisions of the law are still in prison or awaiting trial.²⁷ At the 34th session of the HRC meeting in March this year the Sri Lankan Government delegation also promised to finalize the return of private lands – most of them held by the military – by the end of 2018.

The enormity of the crimes committed, by all parties involved in the conflict makes them impossible to ignore, yet difficult for the military, and most Sinhalese, to accept responsibility for. Progress toward ending impunity is essential to reestablishing the rule of law for all ethnic communities and building the trust needed for a lasting political solution. Justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and full participation of women in the peacebuilding process will be key in this regard. The way in which the reconciliation process is addressed will itself be an important condition of the peacebuilding process. Every decision in these areas can be a step towards peace as it can trigger a regression towards the reappearance of tensions and conflict. Given the prevailing power tensions (government, military, opposition forces), decisions related to peace and reconciliation are weighed with caution.²⁸

A new constitution that reflects Sri Lanka's ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity would certainly help to articulate a pluralist vision of the state and was considered one of the essential political reforms to be undertaken, but one that will take time.²⁹ Political leaders will need to change the ethno-nationalist dynamics that sustained a quarter century of conflict. Devolution remains another politically sensitive issue that is at the heart of the peace and state building process. A meaningful

²⁵ De Mel, N. & Venugopal, R., 'Peacebuilding Context Assessment', March 2016.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ International Crisis Group, 'Sri Lanka's transition to Nowhere', 16 May 2016.

²⁸ One example is the decision by the President that there will be no foreign judges and experts engaged in the transitional justice process, not even in observer roles (www.dw.com/en/sri-lanka-rejects-un-call-for-foreign-judges-in-war-probe/a-37814346).

²⁹ The Peacebuilding Context Assessment (De Mel and Venugopal 2016) outlines political reforms needed at the level of the Constitution, the legislation and the institutions and administration.

measure of territorial devolution, particularly over land and policing, to the Tamil and Muslim populations in the northern and eastern provinces is considered essential to reducing the level of mistrust in the State and the Central Government.³⁰ Proposals for a far-reaching form of self-governance will, however, meet with resistance, and Tamils therefore need to be reassured that a united Sri Lanka is in the interest of all parties.

Securing a peaceful, just and inclusive society is a sine qua non for the achievement of the whole SDG agenda, but progress will be premised on particular efforts towards more inclusive democratic governance and the strengthening of some of Sri Lanka's core governance institutions, which include not only the public service and the judiciary but also essential accountability institutions like the Human Rights Commission, the Parliament and the Anti-Corruption Commission. The SDG agenda provides an opportunity to address the future of the country from a forward-looking perspective, using its international goals and targets to communicate to the population and political parties the blueprint of a more inclusive and sustainable Sri Lanka. SDG Goal 16 in particular provides an opportunity for the UNCT to provide concrete support to the national good governance and peacebuilding agenda.

2.4 SRI LANKA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

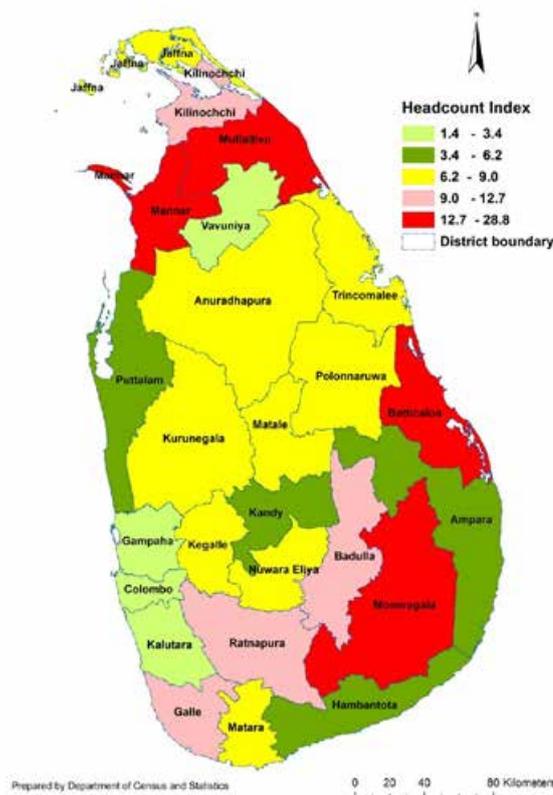
Whilst Sri Lanka's economic reforms have been slow, the country's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew 43 percent in the first five post-conflict years from 2009 to 2014 with the top four economic sectors accounting for half of total growth. The Government's high debt-to-GDP ratio reflects an imbalance between high imports and low exports, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) remaining at 1.1 percent in 2016.³¹ The Government of Sri Lanka projected that the budget deficit would narrow to 4.7% of the GDP in 2017, although the World Bank estimated that it would reduce to 5.2% of GDP, an improvement from 5.4% of GDP in 2016 and 7.4% in 2015.³²

Even though the number of people living below the poverty line has dramatically dropped during the last two decades, around 845,000 are still living under the official poverty line (Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2016).

2.4.1 Poverty and exclusion

Overall, the country has done remarkably well in human development even during the period of the secession conflict in the North and East. Its human development losses due to inequality, at 11.6 percent, are far lower than for South Asia overall (28.7 percent) or for high HDI countries (19.4 percent). But important pockets of poverty and exclusion remain, based on geography, ethnicity and religion.

FIGURE 2: POVERTY INCIDENCE IN SRI LANKA



Poverty rates are highest in some districts in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The North also has a higher number of people with physical disabilities and psychological problems, in particular ex-combatants and widows. Poverty is also increasingly becoming an urban phenomenon; the bottom 40 percent live in cities.

But cities are not adequately equipped to deal with this problem. Since urbanization in Sri Lanka is a strong engine of growth, it is critically important to improve the governance and infrastructure of cities. Improved connectivity across the country will also support economic growth outside the Kandy-Colombo-Galle agglomeration. The region of Moneragala in the southeast, and places with plantation-based agriculture are other areas where poverty is persistent.

The estate sector in the centre of the country has poverty rates higher than in urban and rural sectors. It has the highest MMR in the country, and women and children suffer from high rates of malnutrition that are way above the national average and they often lack drinking water, sanitary facilities or electricity. The quality of services, if available, in the estates is comparatively low. Due to the poor quality of education youth are increasingly leaving the sector but are ill-equipped when competing in the paid labour market. Alcoholism and the resultant abuse of women is much higher in the estate sector.³³

³⁰ De Mel & Venugopal (2016).

³¹ World Bank Open Data (see <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS>).

³² See www.dailymirror.lk/131903/World-Bank-forecasts-budget-deficit-for-this-year

³³ World Bank (2015).

2.4.2 Unemployment

Unemployment in Sri Lanka declined to 4.4 percent in 2016 from 5.8 percent in 2009 and the poverty headcount ratio dropped to 4.1 percent in the 2016³⁴ period from 15.7 percent in 2006–2007. But the UNDAF 2015 mid-term review states that Sri Lanka has experienced the phenomenon of ‘jobless growth’, where job creation has not kept pace with economic growth. Investments are still mainly state-driven and mainly made in the infrastructure sector (construction and transport) and trade. Foreign direct investment is only 1–2 percent of GDP (see Figure 2). In seven provinces outside of the North and East, the number of jobs remained the same in mid-2012 as it was in 2006, despite the real GDP growth of over 40 percent. According to Sri Lanka’s Public Investment Programme (PIP 2017–2020), the country’s average economic growth from 2010 to 2015 was 6.43 percent. Since the end of Sri Lanka’s armed conflict in 2009, there has been a rapid expansion of the construction sector, as well as growth in tourism, telecommunications, trade and financial services. The share of agricultural exports, on the other hand, increased only 1 percent between 2010 and 2015.³⁵

The prioritization of public investment in capital infrastructure following the armed conflict has squeezed spending on other public goods, including health, education and social protection, which are currently below levels in other regional and emerging market comparators. Wage pressure has been rising due to a 57 percent increase in the number of public servants in the past 10 years. Public servants account for 14.6 percent³⁶ of the labour force, comparable to the OECD average of 15 percent in 2011. Increases in recurrent expenditures in early 2015 were also due to a raise in allowances to public servants. A strong commitment to fiscal consolidation in the face of these pressures resulted in extremely low levels of public spending on education, health and social protection as

a percentage of GDP. Going forward, continued commitment to fiscal consolidation is critical to ensure macroeconomic stability³⁷, but this will require a combination of investment in revenues without neglecting social and environmental investments.

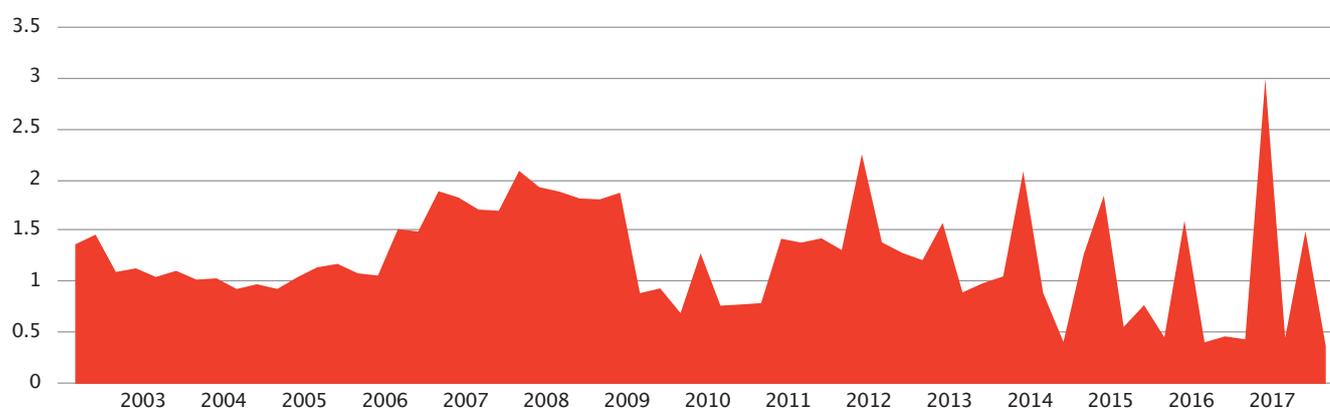
Per capita GDP in 2016 was \$3,835³⁸ which places Sri Lanka in the group of lower-middle-income countries. But while national statistics indicate considerable progress in poverty alleviation, regional disparities in income distribution and growth persist. Pockets of vulnerability and severe poverty remain in areas of the North and East, Uva and Central provinces.

Growth has been mainly concentrated in the urban areas. From 2009 to 2012 the urban sector, representing 17 percent of Sri Lanka’s households, experienced a 48 percent increase in mean household income compared with 23 percent and 24 percent for the rural and estate sectors, representing 79 percent and 4 percent of households respectively. The post- conflict dividend clearly has not yet reached the wider public.³⁹

Nearly half of the poorest 40 percent of Sri Lanka’s population live within a 30 km radius of urban areas and are directly or indirectly dependent on urban centres for livelihood. Urbanization holds immense potential for generating socio-economic and development momentum the country needs.

The decline in agricultural employment led to an increase in workers employed in small establishments with no regular employees. The informal sector remains an important source of employment for the bottom 40 percent. The contribution of informal sector employment in total employment in Sri Lanka was 60.2 percent in 2016.⁴⁰ A majority of unskilled workers (those with less than a primary education) work in precarious conditions, with wages on average 33 percent lower than wages of permanent workers.⁴¹

FIGURE 3: FDI AS A PERCENTAGE OF NOMINAL GDP IN SRI LANKA (QUARTERLY ESTIMATES)



Source: www.ceicdata.com

³⁴ Labour Force Survey (2016).

³⁵ Department of National Planning, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Public Investment Programme 2017–2020, Draft October 2016, p.11

³⁶ Labour Force Survey (2016).

³⁷ World Bank (2015).

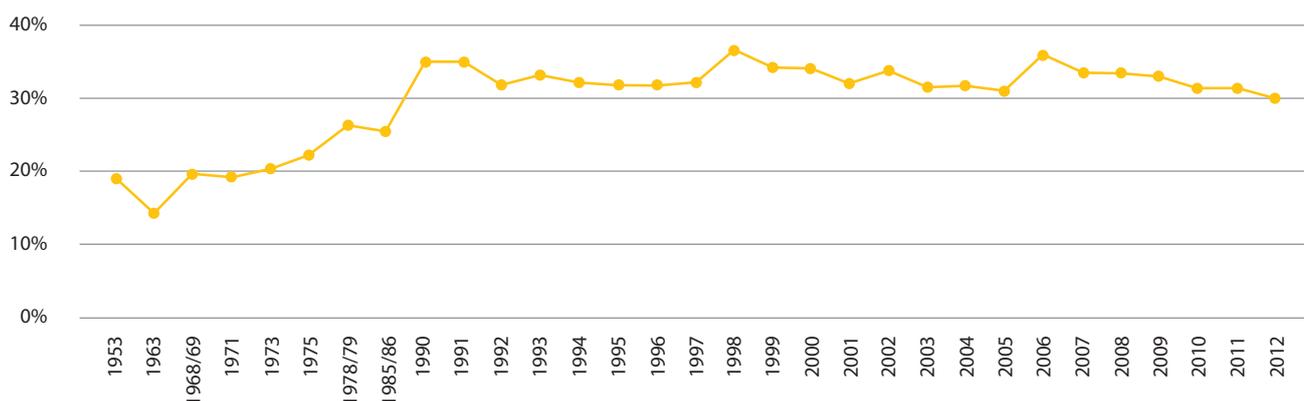
³⁸ Annual Report 2016 – Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

³⁹ UNDAF Mid-Term Review 2015.

⁴⁰ Labour Force Survey (2016).

⁴¹ UNDAF Mid-Term Review 2015.

FIGURE 4: FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES IN SRI LANKA (%)



Source: Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka, Labour Force Survey, *Various issues*.

Overall, the unemployment rate was 4.6 percent in 2016 and is particularly high among young and educated people. The relatively low unemployment rate can be attributed mainly to an increase in migrant employment and public sector recruitment.⁴² Sri Lanka's public sector employs approximately 1.4 million people, a ratio of 65 civil servants per 1,000 inhabitants, one of the highest in the world.⁴³ And with 48 members of Cabinet, including the President and Prime Minister (May 2017), Sri Lanka is among the countries with the highest number of ministries.

2.4.3 Gender gap in employment

There is a large gap between male and female labour force participation in Sri Lanka. Only 35.2 percent of women participate in the labour force, compared to 64.8 percent of men in 2016.⁴⁴ Women's labour force participation has fallen in South Asia overall, and Sri Lanka is no exception: Women's participation declined by 4 percent, from 39.5 percent in 2006 to 35.9 percent in 2015. Their low workforce participation is in sharp contrast to high levels of educational attainment: gender parity has been achieved or even exceeded at all levels of education.⁴⁵ However, this parity has been undermined by occupational segregation: Gender imbalances in technology courses are likely to exclude women from participation in emerging areas of employment.⁴⁶ Women remain concentrated in agriculture, the public sector and as self-employed and unpaid family workers. The unemployment rate for women has been double that of men since the 1960s, and although overall

the unemployment rate has declined since 2006, the rate in 2016 was 7.0 percent for women compared to 2.9 for men.⁴⁷

Low levels of female labour force participation are also driven by the higher burden of unpaid care work that women shoulder. While time-use survey data is not yet available, census data show that 62 percent of working age economically inactive women⁴⁸ were engaged in unpaid care work (referred to as housework), compared with just 6 percent of economically inactive men.⁴⁹

The youth unemployment rate stood at 21.6 percent in 2016 among 15–24-year-olds. The gender gap is also evident: 29.2 percent of young women aged 15–24 were unemployed compared to 17.1 percent of young men. At higher levels of education, the unemployment rate is 4.7 for men and 11.9 percent for women respectively.

The Gini co-efficient still remains at a startling 0.45, which shows that income inequality is high in the country. The income share of the highest quintile was 50.8 percent in 2016 compared to just 4.8 percent for the lowest quintile.⁵⁰ The top 40 percent hold 67.5 percent of the income share.⁵¹ Consumption inequality also rose between 2009 and 2016.⁵²

Inheriting large budget deficits and a dangerously high debt, the Government has faced difficulties to deliver the needed jobs and improved living standards. A prolonged drought, which raised food prices and increased household debt levels, threatens serious social and economic disruptions in parts of the country.⁵³

⁴² UNDAF Mid-Term Review 2015.

⁴³ Department of National Planning, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Public Investment Programme 2017-2020, Draft October 2016, (PIP), p.138.

⁴⁴ Labour Force Survey 2016.

⁴⁵ DB (2015), *Country Gender Assessment Sri Lanka: An Update*.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Labour Force Survey (2016).

⁴⁸ Out of the total economically inactive population, 75.3 percent are women, while only 24.7 percent are men" Labour Force Survey (2016).

⁴⁹ UNFPA (2015), '20.4 million: Sri Lanka's Population at a Glance'.

⁵⁰ Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016).

⁵¹ World Bank 2015.

⁵² World Bank (2016), 'Sri Lanka Poverty and Welfare: Recent Progress and Remaining Challenges'.

⁵³ The budget deficit fell to 5.6 percent of GDP in 2016, but total public debt reached 76 percent of GDP at the end of 2015, and the government must repay some \$4 billion over the next 18 months. Marwaan Macan-Markar, 'Sri Lanka struggles to build foreign reserves', *Nikkei Asian Review*, 3 April 2017. Also, Integrated Regional Information Networks, 'Drought may leave 80,000 Sri Lankans in need of "life-saving" food aid', 6 March 2017. The drought has exacerbated inflation and could cost the economy \$1 billion. Crisis Group interview, UN official, March 2017. Also see Economy Next, 'Sri Lanka's national inflation soars to 8.6-pct in March', available at www.economynext.com.

Sri Lanka received approximately \$5.8 billion in aid in 2014. The top five largest disbursements were received from China (22 percent of total disbursements), Japan (18 percent), India (10 percent), the Asian Development Bank (18 percent) and the World Bank Group (14 percent). Sectors with the highest level of donor financing were roads and bridge infrastructure (approximately 50 percent of total disbursements), energy and water supply (approximately 9 percent each), and education, labour and vocational training (approximately 7 percent).

2.5 THE SOCIAL SECTORS

Despite its overall high performance as an MDG champion, Sri Lanka has a considerable unfinished agenda, which, if unaddressed, will affect progress toward nearly all SDGs as well. Nutrition is one such area (see also Section 2.3), with more than 21 percent of under-5 children found to be underweight in 2016.⁵⁴ Another is gender equality, where despite strong health and education results, Sri Lanka struggles to provide equality to women in employment and political representation, and to address sexual and gender-based violence. It also performs less well on the Gender Inequality Index, with a 2015 value of 0.386, ranking it 87th out of 188 countries, due to lagging levels of political and economic participation.⁵⁵

The quality of education, readiness for the labour market, as well as education outcomes at secondary and tertiary levels will all require more attention, as does the low share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and in political participation.

2.5.1 Education

One of the most significant issues Sri Lanka faces is the uneven quality of and access to education, despite its commitment to the universal provision of education. The National Youth Survey 2013 found that 44 percent of youth in the Western Province had attained the General Certificate of Education (GCE), but only 15 percent had done so in the Uva Province, which has many estates and a higher poverty rate.

Despite high rates of enrolment at primary level, the education system is unable to retain youth at the higher levels. Thirty-seven percent of youth do not proceed beyond upper secondary level, even though education is highly valued in Sri Lankan society. Twenty-three percent of respondents of the National Youth Survey 2013 stated they dropped out of school as they did not find it useful and only 2 percent reported being enrolled in higher education.

Among public and private technical, vocational and training institutions, the quality is not high enough to satisfy demands

of domestic industry or the changing economic environment. Brain drain is also a problem, with engineers and other professionals who are valued in industrialized nations migrating to those countries.

2.5.2 Health

One key concern is the persistent undernutrition among children and women. Other major concerns are inequitable access to preventive and curative health and nutrition services, including for mental health and adolescent sexual and reproductive health; increasing levels of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and related overweight and obesity; pockets of unacceptable neonatal, infant and under-5 mortality; and a continuing high level of violence and abuse perpetrated against women and children (see also Sections 2.3 and 1.3.5).

Life expectancy at birth is 74.3 (72 for males, 78 for females), literacy for the 15 to 24 age group is 98 percent and infant mortality is 10 per 1,000 live births.

The 2017 Global Nutrition Report suggests that Sri Lanka has among the highest wasting prevalence rate in the world, at 19.6 percent, ranking 128 out of 130 countries, and is one of the few countries with higher wasting rates than stunting, a reflection of the long-term effects of poor nutrition on Sri Lanka's human development. Serious issues around men's health and the physical risks for men are reflected in projections for male life expectancy at 71.7 years in 2021, compared with 81.7 for women.

Fertility rates have increased in Sri Lanka, the first country in Asia to see such an increase, rising from a low of 1.9 in 1998 to 2.2 in 2016. This rate was once lower than the replacement fertility rate. The Total Fertility Rate is higher in the estate sector, at 3.0, and in rural areas at 2.5, compared with urban areas at 2.1.⁵⁶ The Demographic and Health Survey data shows a slight decrease in the contraceptive prevalence rate from 70 percent in 2007 to 65 percent in 2016; however, the use of modern methods increased slightly from 53.1 to 53.6 percent in this period. Unmet need for family planning stood at 7.5 percent in 2016.⁵⁷ The maternal mortality ratio, while low overall at 26.8 per 100,000, varies significantly across the country, at 53.2 in Polonnaruwa, 26.3 in Nwara Eliya and 19.5 in Kegalle.

2.5.3 Gender inequality

Women are poorly represented in the workforce and political participation. In 2012, women made up 53 percent of the working-age population, but only 35.2 percent of the employed population, a figure that has remained static for decades. Also, significantly, the majority of the informal sector consists of female workers, and this sector is not covered by labour laws.

⁵⁴ Demographic and Health Survey (2016).

⁵⁵ HDR 2015 Briefing Note.

⁵⁶ UNFPA 2015.

⁵⁷ Demographic and Health Survey (2016).



Aerial view of Galle Fort. Photo by Oleh Slobodeniuk.

Closing the gender gap is critical for not just social inclusion but the broader challenge of raising competitiveness.

While national prevalence data on violence against women is not available,⁵⁸ a recent survey revealed that 90 percent of Sri Lankan women have experienced sexual harassment on public transport. Given that 50 percent of working women use public transport, safety is clearly a factor in women's low and declining labour force participation.⁵⁹ Further, a small-scale study on men's use of violence found that 33 percent of (ever) partnered men reported committing sexual or physical violence against an intimate partner, supported, though likely under-reported by 29 percent of (ever) partnered women who reported experiencing such violence.⁶⁰ Harmful practices such as child marriage also persist: 12 percent of women aged 20–24 were married before they turned 18. While domestic violence is prohibited under law, some forms of violence such as marital rape are not included.⁶¹ Impunity from justice remains a significant concern.⁶² A National Plan of Action for addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence is in place but has not yet been adequately resourced or implemented.

Female participation and representation in public institutions and politics remain low and below the global average.⁶³ From 1989 to 1994, women comprised 5.8 percent of parliamentarians, and in 2014 the proportion increased only marginally to 6.8 percent,⁶⁴ falling again to 5.8 percent in 2015.⁶⁵ Women represent only 4.1 percent of seats in the provincial councils and 1.9 percent of seats in subnational Government bodies in Sri Lanka.⁶⁶

High rates of poverty are attributed to a lack of employment, particularly among youth and educated women. Women-headed households comprise 25.8 percent of all households, and only 35 percent of women in these households are employed. In the estate sector, women make up 44.6 percent of the workforce but are employed in precarious work.⁶⁷ The proportion of employed people living below the poverty line in the conflict-affected North and East remains high, indicating a need for sustained attention to small economic engagement and market development in particular to meet the specific needs of women.⁶⁸ In general, women-headed households face specific vulnerabilities, compounded by intersecting forms of discrimination that result in a lack of access to resources,

⁵⁸ See UNFPA, Sri Lanka and Institute of Policy Studies (2015). *Investing in the Demographic Dividend: Successes, Challenges and Way Forward for Sri Lanka*. Also, see *Demographic Dividend study quoted in the UN Common Country Assessment* (pp 21-22): "The prevalence of violence against women in Sri Lanka is high and has been particularly noted in the CEDAW Concluding Observations, despite Sri Lanka's commitments to major international instruments that have relevance to gender-based violence (GBV) and the recent adoption of the National Policy Framework and National Action Plan to Address Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2016. Rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, forced prostitution, and trafficking are the most prevalent types of violence against women, according to the Gender Based Violence Forum in Sri Lanka. Marital rape continues to be excluded as a crime in Sri Lanka's substantive and procedural laws alike. It is observed that 83 per cent of females in the estate sector are victims of GBV; 57 per cent of female garment workers experience sexual harassment at the workplace, as do 62 percent of female employees in the industrial sector; and 11 percent of returnee migrant women were sexually abused."

⁵⁹ UNFPA (2017), "Sexual Harassment on Public Buses and Trains in Sri Lanka," *Population Matters Policy Issue*, 4 March 2017.

⁶⁰ CARE and Partners for Prevention (2013), "Broadening gender: Why masculinities matter: attitudes, practices and gender-based violence in four districts in Sri Lanka."

⁶¹ CEDAW Committee, "Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Sri Lanka," 3 March 2017, CEDAW/C/LKA/CO/8.

⁶² ADB (2015), *Country Gender Assessment Sri Lanka: An Update*.

⁶³ Demographic Dividend, in *UN Common Country Assessment*, pp 21-22.

⁶⁴ Sri Lanka MDG Progress Report 2014.

⁶⁵ IPU (2017). *Global Parliamentary Report*.

⁶⁶ Department of National Planning, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, *Public Investment Programme 2017-2020 Draft October 2016*, (PIP) ; Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) stats.

⁶⁷ Labour Force Survey (2016).

⁶⁸ United Nations in Sri Lanka, *Millennium Development Goals Country Report 2014*, 2014.

skills and livelihoods, lack of access to income-generating opportunities and social welfare benefits, and the denial of land rights.⁶⁹

Discriminatory laws and practices further constrain women's economic participation. Inequalities in divorce and custody laws, and personal laws, and discrimination against women in inheritance and land ownership have not yet been addressed. Around two thirds of women are concentrated in the informal sector outside the ambit of labour legislation.⁷⁰

2.5.4 Youth

The country's 4.4 million young people aged 15–29⁷¹ represent almost a quarter of the country's population.⁷² While their employment situation has been discussed above, a major grievance is the need to have connections politically or socially to get employment, particularly in the public sector. This is more important than merit. Irregularities in competitive examination results and recruitment procedures have undermined trust in the public systems.⁷³

Young people recognize the many initiatives taken to improve their political participation (youth clubs and the Youth Parliament) but these were perceived as parallel structures that do not yet offer an opportunity to participate directly in decision-making at national and local levels. Apart from voting, few young people take place in political decision-making, even though a youth quota of 30 percent applies to candidates in all political parties.

The teenage pregnancy rate was 6 percent for 15–19 year olds in the 2012–2013 National Youth Survey.⁷⁴ The data show that 6.4 percent of 15–19 year olds have begun childbearing, with significantly higher rates in some districts.⁷⁵ The use and awareness of contraception is low: 57 percent of young people aged 15–29 reported they were not aware of any contraceptive method.⁷⁶

Eight percent of young people reported feeling discriminated against, with a higher proportion in urban areas (9.2 percent) and estate sector (12.4 percent) compared with 7.5 percent in rural areas.⁷⁷ Less than 2 percent of young people are actively involved in political parties or trade unions.

Sri Lanka has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, at 35.3 per 100,000 in 2015: 58.7 for men and 13.6 for women respectively.⁷⁸ In the 2012–2013 National Youth Survey, 6.4 of young people said they had seriously considered ending their life, and 4 percent had made plans to do so.

However, on a larger level, Sri Lanka hosted the 2013 Commonwealth Youth Forum in conjunction with the Heads of Government Meeting and the 2014 World Conference on Youth leading to the Colombo Declaration on Youth. In 2014, the Government launched a National Policy on Youth. UNDP recently co-organized a Youth & Prevention of Violent Extremism regional meeting in Sri Lanka with the Inter Parliamentary Union, in collaboration with the Parliament. Sri Lanka supports youth participation in UN's global meeting through national youth delegates and is at the origin of the adoption of an International "Youth Skills" Day at the UN (15 July).

2.5.5 Other disadvantaged population groups

People living with some form of disability comprise 8.7 percent of the population over age 5 and face significant barriers accessing education, employment and services. Only 29 percent of people living with a disability aged 15 and over are employed.⁷⁹

The population over age 60 doubled from 6.6 percent in 1981 to 12.4 percent in 2012 and is predicted to rise to 24.8 percent in 2041. In this age group, women significantly outnumber men: the sex ratio is 79 men per 100 women for those over 60, and falls to 65 for those aged 80 plus.⁸⁰ The labour force participation rate for older people is just 25.6 percent — 43.2 percent for men and 11.6 percent for women — which is of particular concern given that women comprise the greater proportion of the population and live longer.

Sri Lankan Tamils and Sri Lankan Moors have relatively high levels of poverty.⁸¹ Educational attainment is lower and rates of ownership of land are also uneven among the country's ethnic communities. Unemployment is high but, interestingly, outside the post-conflict regions both Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils have higher labour force participation and employment rates than their Sinhalese counterparts. That would suggest that different rates of participation are mostly determined by differences in employment opportunities.

⁶⁹ DCEAW Committee 2017.

⁷⁰ ADB (2015), *Country Gender Assessment Sri Lanka: An Update*.

⁷¹ UNDP's NHDR 2014, *Youth and Development*, also highlights a host of issues across education, employment, reconciliation, and civic and political participation. Available at www.lk.undp.org/content/srilanka/en/home/library/human_development/national-human-development-reports/NHDR2014.html.

⁷² UNFPA 2015.

⁷³ UNDP NHDR (2014), *Youth and Development*, available at www.lk.undp.org/content/srilanka/en/home/library/human_development/national-human-development-reports/NHDR2014.html

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ National Youth Health Survey 2016.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ WHO database, available at www.who.int/gho/mental_health/suicide_rates/en/

⁷⁹ UNFPA 2015.

⁸⁰ UNFPA 2015.

⁸¹ World Bank (2015). Sri Lanka: Ending poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

One fifth of the population (20 percent) comprises internal migrants or those who have changed their residence at least once. Migration is increasingly feminized, with women outnumbering men in all age groups, for reasons of marriage as well as employment. An estimated 1.9 million Sri Lankans migrate overseas for work. From 1990 to 2009 the number of women departing increased twenty-fold, with a majority of women concentrated in domestic work; these numbers have since fallen as a result of government efforts to regulate and professionalize external migration.⁸² An estimated 300,000 IDPs fled their homes in 2010, of whom 180,000 have returned.

2.6 THE ENVIRONMENT

Sri Lanka's policy towards the environment is guided by national strategies such as the Haritha (Green) Lanka Strategy, the Roadmap towards a Safer Sri Lanka, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the National Cleaner Production Strategy, which together promote a vision for a greener, safer and cleaner environment.⁸³

There are 22 National Parks declared in Sri Lanka, which are open to the public and wildlife research. The Government has introduced rules and regulations in order to ensure the maximum protection of wildlife and habitats within National parks.

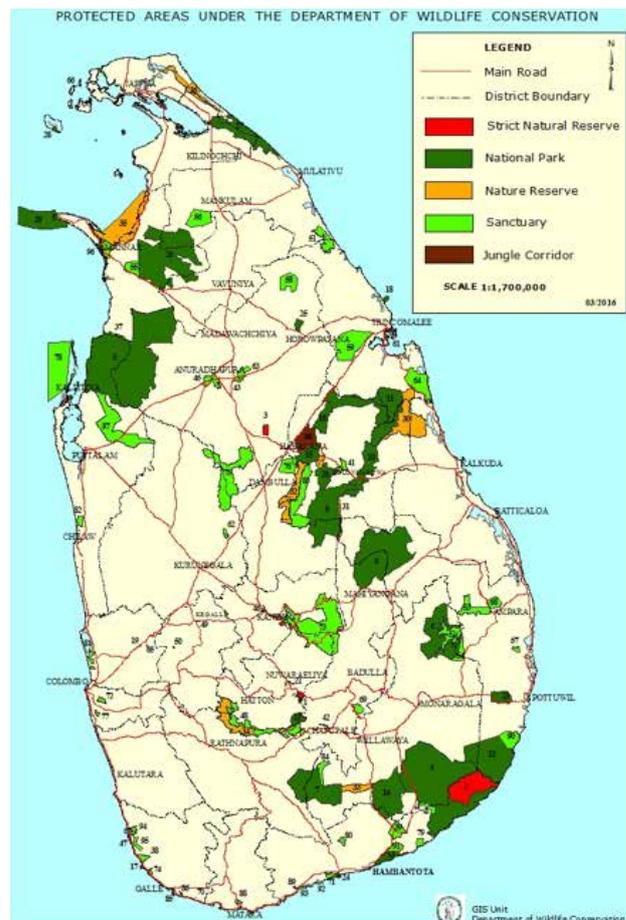
The percentage of total land area declared as protected area in Sri Lanka is between 23.3 and 28 percent.⁸⁴

Over 28 percent of the total land area is reserved and administered by either the Forest Department (16.1 percent) or Department of Wildlife Conservation (12.4 percent).

The protected area system is central to conserving wildlife biodiversity and in supporting rural economies (e.g., through watershed protection, ecotourism, scientific, and educational opportunities). Protected areas are classified as Strict Nature Reserves (SNR), National Parks (NP), nature reserves, sanctuaries and jungle corridors.

Historically, Sri Lanka lost 50 percent of its forest cover within 50 years.⁸⁵ Currently, there are several threats to the established protected areas, including increasing population density, poverty incidence, dependence on subsistence agriculture, habitat degradation, overexploitation of biological resources and spread of alien invasive species. Some of the forest loss is attributed to the redefinition of district boundaries, land clearing for irrigation schemes through the Mahaweli Development Project, and hydro-electric generation.

FIGURE 5: PROTECTED AREAS IN SRI LANKA



Source: Department of Wildlife Conservation, GoSL

Sri Lanka has 1,620 km of coastline with a diverse marine and coastal biodiversity.

Although the country has six Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), only two have been declared as marine sanctuaries especially to protect the coral reefs. They are the Hikkaduwa Marine Sanctuary (1979) and the Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary (1992). In addition, these two MPAs have developed a Special Area Management plan which allows them to have some degree of planning and community input into management.

In Sri Lanka, MPAs are often under resourced. The focus has been more on the creation of new legislation rather than enforcing existing regulations and management of existing protected areas.

Over the past decades, economic transformation and poverty have accelerated the rate of environmental degradation. Recognizing the increasing problems associated with deforestation, biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution,

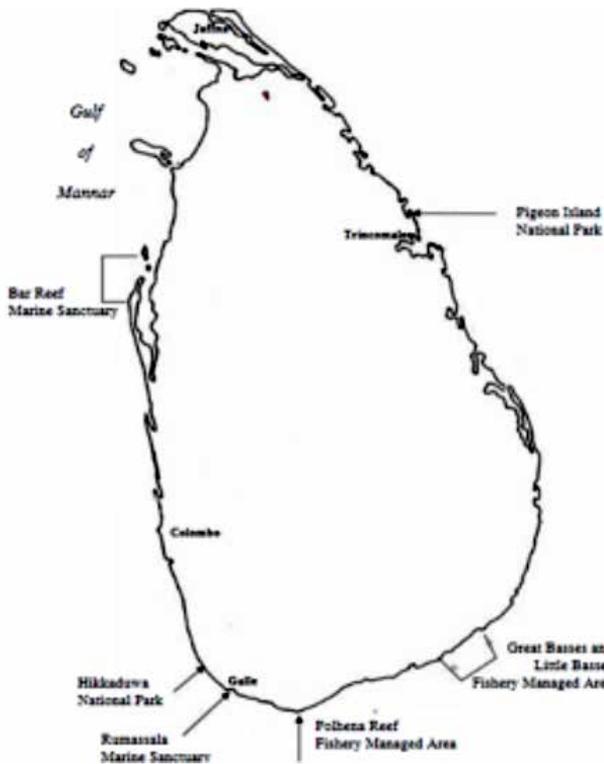
⁸² ADB (2015), *Country Gender Assessment Sri Lanka: An Update*.

⁸³ MDG Progress Report for Sri Lanka 2014.

⁸⁴ World Bank Development Indicator Database, available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.LND.PTLD.ZS>.

⁸⁵ Action Plan for implementing the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, submitted on October 2011 by the Government of Sri Lanka

FIGURE 6: LOCATION OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN SRI LANKA



Source: Marine protected areas in Sri Lanka: A review. Available at www.researchgate.net/publication/5916310_Marine_protected_areas_in_Sri_Lanka_A_review, accessed July 27, 2017.

chemicals, health hazards, floods and droughts, the Government adopted a National Environment Act in 1982 and established a Central Environment Authority and a Ministry of Environment.

With the rapid economic transformation from an agriculture-based rural economy to a more commercial economy, successive governments have prioritized investments in infrastructure (e.g., construction of dams and irrigation) and with the end of the civil conflict, investments on infrastructure are expected to triple with the expansion of the road network and export-led productive sectors. The trade-offs are likely to be negative impacts on the environment if mitigation plans are not put in place. Over the years, Sri Lanka has also become more vulnerable to climatic changes and development actions need to focus on building resilience.

2.6.1 Increasing vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change

Sri Lanka has been experiencing extreme weather conditions for the past 10 years, with flood and drought alternately affecting farmers in particular and the population at large. In 2016, Cyclone Roanu affected 24 out of 25 districts in the country, causing 210 deaths, damage to almost 60,000 houses and displacing 500,000 people. While floods affected populations across the country, the damage was concentrated in the highly urbanized and industrialized Western Province of Sri Lanka, and estimated at around \$700 million. Only three months later, the country was in the grip of the worst agricultural drought in two decades with resultant crop failure.

In 2017, the onset of the southwest monsoon brought heavy rains resulting in flash floods and landslides in 15 of the 25 districts, causing 213 deaths and affecting 1 million people. Meanwhile 18 districts have been in the grip of drought. The worst affected are in the formerly conflict-affected areas of North, North Central and Eastern Provinces. An estimated 1.2 million people have sought drought related assistance, and the government has resorted to withdrawing unspent budgets of ministries to provide drought relief. Chronic drought and flooding has had an adverse effect on the national unity government's popularity on the ground, with increasing food and water insecurity as well as the cost of living. These extreme and volatile weather conditions have increased demand on line ministries to respond to recovery needs at the cost of mid- to long-term development plans.

Despite its low per capita emissions of 0.78 metric tonnes per capita in 2015 (up from 0.55 in 2000, see Figure 7) Sri Lanka is facing the adverse effects of climate change, including a slow but steady rise of ambient temperature (0.01–0.03 °C per year). High-intensity rainfall resulting in landslides, coastal erosion, salinity intrusion into soils and aquifers, and increasingly extreme droughts and floods are becoming common.⁸⁷

The recent floods and landslides very early in the monsoon season are linked to soil erosion, deforestation and increased rains and have affected 630,000 people across 15 districts, displaced more than 100,000 people and killed over 200.⁸⁸

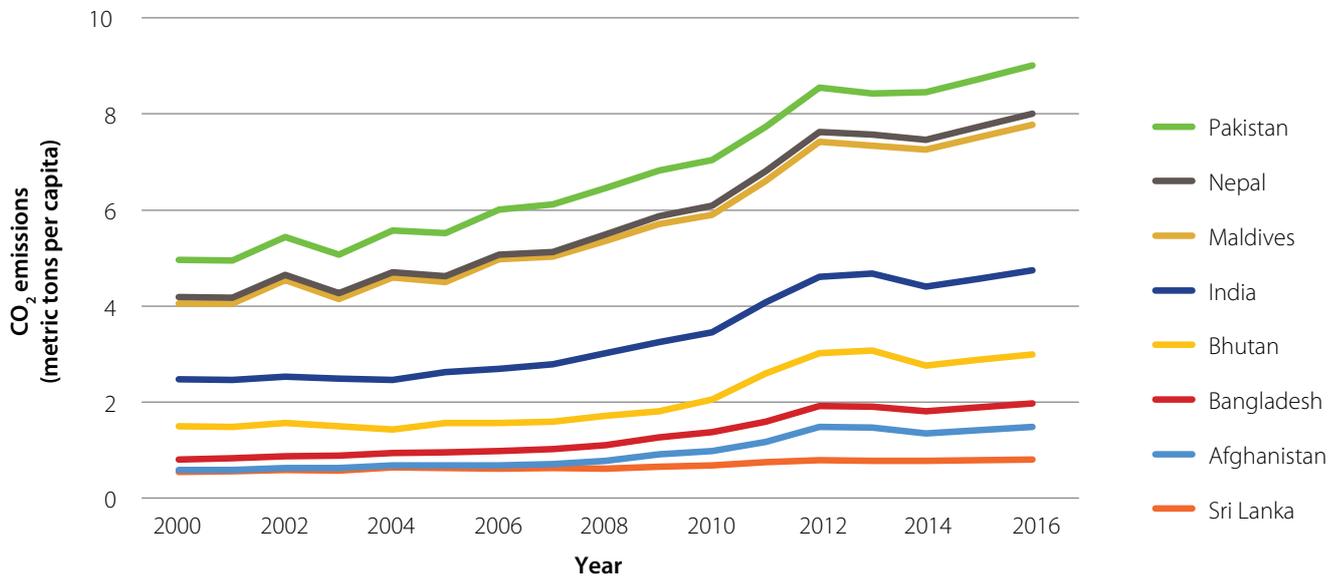
⁸⁶ World Bank, CIAT (2015), *Climate-smart agriculture in Sri Lanka*, CSA country profiles for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean series. Washington D.C.: The World Bank Group.

⁸⁷ <http://reliefweb.int/report/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-2017-monsoon-floods-and-landslides-office-un-resident-coordinator-flash-0>.

Sri Lanka needs to pay urgent attention to the environmental risks from the long-term impacts of climate change. The total number of people affected by floods from 2005 to 2014 was more than 4.6 million.⁸⁸ The 2015 Vulnerability Programme

Assessment found that 53 percent of households surveyed in nine disaster-prone districts in Sri Lanka were categorized as highly vulnerable. Figure 7 shows the indices for droughts, floods, cyclones and multi-hazards by district.

FIGURE 7: CO₂ EMISSIONS IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES



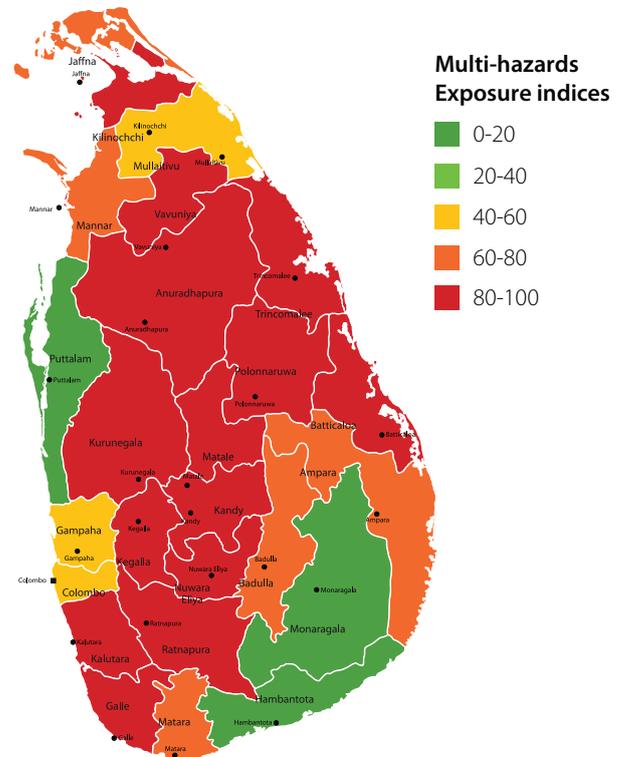
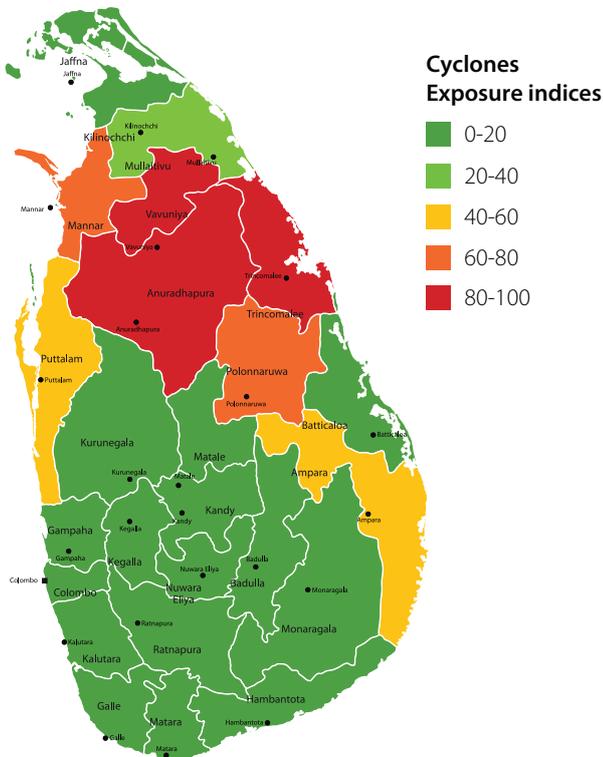
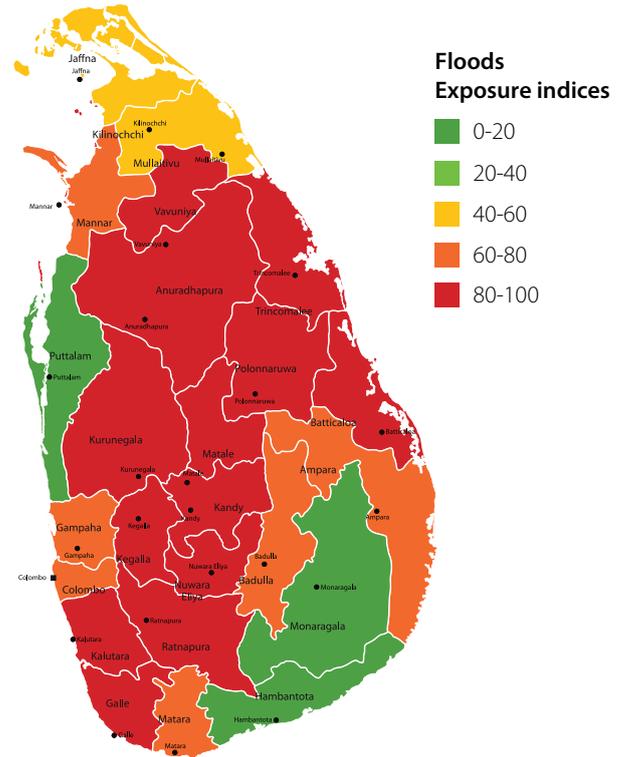
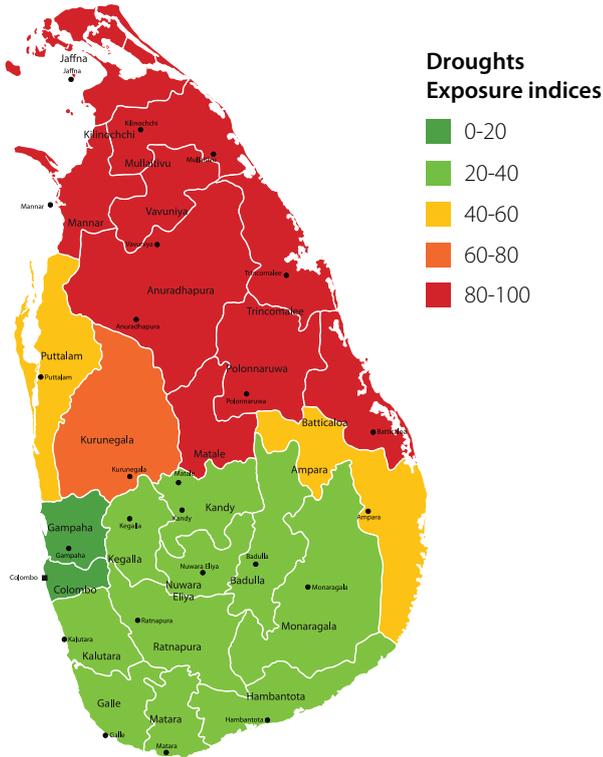
Source: World Development Indicators.



Brightly colored water lily floating on a stil pond. Photo by Ricardo Reitmeyer.

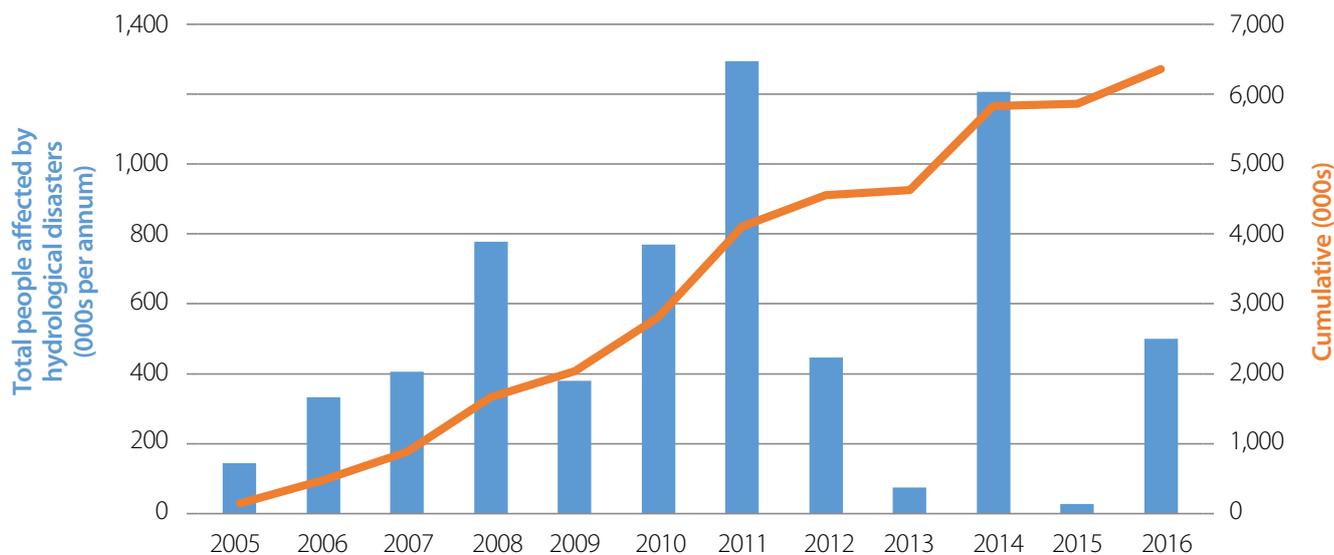
⁸⁸ EM-DAT 2014.

FIGURE 8: EXPOSURE INDICES FOR DROUGHTS, FLOODS, CYCLONES AND MULTI-HAZARDS FOR EACH DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA



Source: International Water Management Institute (IWMI), 2010, Impacts of Climate Change on Water Resources and Agriculture in Sri Lanka: A Review and Preliminary Vulnerability Mapping.

FIGURE 9: TOTAL PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HYDROLOGICAL DISASTERS IN SRI LANKA (2000–2015)

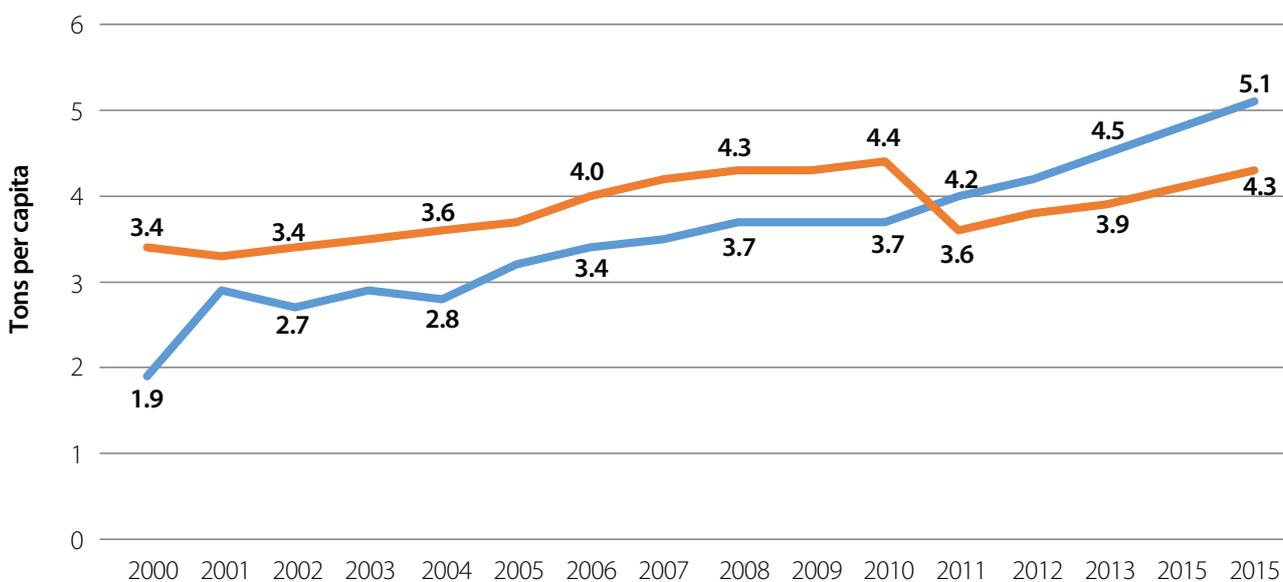


Source: ESCAP, Statistical Database. Available at http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/ (accessed 5 June 2017).
 Note: Hydrological encompasses floods, landslides and wave action.

With a per capita GDP of \$3,835 – expected to reach \$5,797 by 2020 – domestic material consumption increased from 1.9 tons per capita in 2000 to 5.1 tonnes per capita in 2015. This is a more rapid increase than the subregional average

of 3.4 growing to 4.1 tonnes per capita.⁸⁹ Continuing rising incomes will put additional pressure on natural resources and the environment.

FIGURE 10: DOMESTIC MATERIAL CONSUMPTION (2000–2015)



Source: ESCAP, Statistical Database. Available at http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/ (accessed 5 June 2017).
 Note: Hydrological encompasses floods, landslides and wave action.

⁸⁹ <http://data.unescap.org/sdg/#compareData>, accessed 25/05/2017.

2.6.2 Greenhouse gas emissions

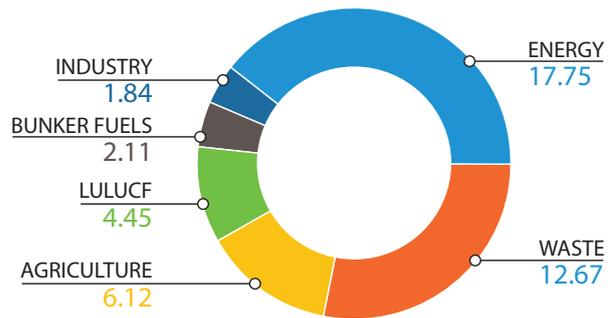
The main greenhouse gas emitters are the energy and transport sector, followed by the waste and agricultural sector.⁹⁰ But the transport sector in Sri Lanka is also an important contributor to the country's economic development. In 2003, the transport sector contributed 10 percent to the country's GDP.⁹¹ In 2013, that number had increased to 15 per cent.⁹² In 2014, CO₂ emissions from transport accounted for almost 50 percent of the total fuel combustions.⁹³ The issue is becoming more severe as Sri Lanka hit an all-time record of vehicle import in 2015, surpassing \$2 billion, a 60 percent increase from 2014.⁹⁴

2.6.3 Pollution

As CO₂ emissions rise from the transport sector, so does the overall ambient air pollution in the country. The air in Sri Lanka had an annual average of 28 µg/m³ of PM2.5 particles in 2015.⁹⁵ That is almost three times the level the World Health Organization (WHO) deems safe.⁹⁶ In 2012 alone, approximately 24,000 people died of air pollution in Sri Lanka⁹⁷ and Sri Lanka had the second highest mortality rate from indoor air pollution in the South and South-West Asia region.⁹⁸

Waste is responsible for 28 percent of greenhouse gas (emissions in Sri Lanka, second after the energy sector. Although haphazard solid waste disposal has been identified to be one of the major causes for environmental degradation in The National Action Plan of Sri Lanka, the most common method of municipal solid waste disposal still remains open dumping and local burning, causing significant problems with direct pollution of the coastal areas and clogging of canals. Sri Lanka's Colombo Municipality produces about 1,000 tonnes of solid waste a day while the satellite towns around Colombo produce about a further 1,500 tonnes of solid waste a day.⁹⁹ The recent collapse of a garbage dump near Colombo, which brought huge damage in terms of property and human lives is a wakeup call to change in outdated waste management practices towards waste segregation and reuse of organic and non-organic materials from the municipal waste.¹⁰⁰

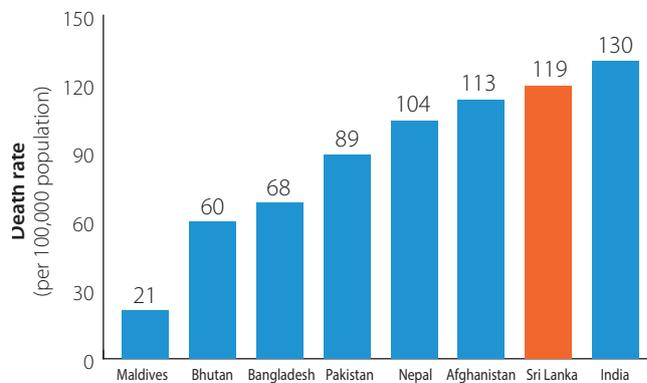
FIGURE 11: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY SECTOR IN SRI LANKA
EMISSIONS BY SECTOR IN MtCO₂ (2013)



Source: CAIT 2013, <https://goo.gl/OrWRPq>, accessed 07/06/2017.

Freshwater is being polluted by industrial effluents, domestic waste water and land-use run-offs. The run-off of chemical pollution from agricultural activities creates severe health problems.^{101,102} Arsenic contamination in groundwater has been observed in the north-central part of Sri Lanka.¹⁰³ The share of treated waste water is lower than 20 percent. The second largest watershed in Sri Lanka, the Kelani River, is the most polluted river of the country.¹⁰⁴

FIGURE 12: MORTALITY FROM HOUSEHOLD AIR POLLUTION PER 100,000 POPULATION (2012)



⁹⁰ CAIT 2013, available at <https://goo.gl/OrWRPq>, accessed 07/06/2017.

⁹¹ World Bank (2015), Sri Lanka Transport Sector, available at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/EXTSARREGTOPTRANSPORT/0,,contentMDK:20699037~menuPK:869140~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:579598,00.html>.

⁹² Government of Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics (2013), 'National Accounts of Sri Lanka 2012', available at http://www.statistics.gov.lk/national_accounts/Annual2013/index.pdf.

⁹³ World Bank, World Development Indicators, available at <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators>.

⁹⁴ UN Comtrade Database, available at <https://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

⁹⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators, available at <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators>

⁹⁶ World Health Organization (2016), 'Ambient (outdoor) air quality and health fact sheet', available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/>.

⁹⁷ ESCAP, Statistical Database, available at http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ See more at www.ft.lk/2015/04/20/solid-waste-no-more-waste-but-like-gold-says-sri-lankan-born-scientist-c-visvanathan/#sthash.qwPvo5n4.dpuf.

¹⁰⁰ www.nytimes.com/2017/04/17/world/asia/sri-lanka-garbage-dump.html?_r=0.

¹⁰¹ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11269-009-9510-6>

¹⁰² [www.narbo.jp/data/01_events/materials\(tp7\)/12%20-%20Mr.%20R.S.%20Wijesekara.pdf](http://www.narbo.jp/data/01_events/materials(tp7)/12%20-%20Mr.%20R.S.%20Wijesekara.pdf)

¹⁰³ United Nations Environment Programme and Development Alternatives (2014), 'South Asia Environment Outlook 2014: UNEP, SAARC and DA'.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Environment Programme and Development Alternatives (2014). 'South Asia Environment Outlook 2014: UNEP, SAARC and DA'.



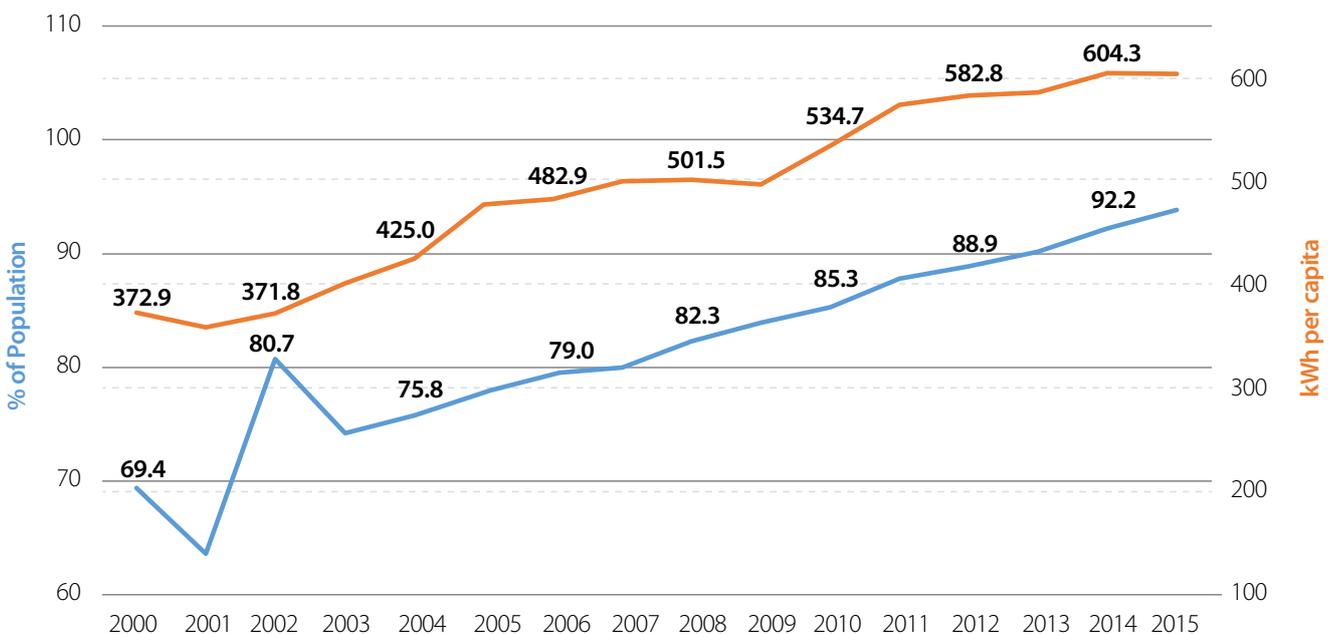
Colombo skyline. Photo by The Koala.

2.6.4 Access to energy

Electric power consumption has nearly doubled over the past 15 years – from 297 kwh per capita to 531 kwh per capita and Sri Lanka will soon reach 100 percent electrification. Energy use per capita has increased from 446 kg of oil equivalent per capita (2000) to 516 kg (2015), driven mainly by the industrial sector. However, Sri Lanka remains a low energy intensity economy, using 2.0 megajoules per unit of GDP, down from 3.3 in 2000 and lower than the subregional average of 4.9.¹⁰⁵ On the way to becoming a competitive middle-income country, Sri Lanka’s annual electricity demand is expected to increase by roughly

4 to 6 percent in the face of high electricity prices. Hydropower and biomass-based energy make up 56 percent of total energy consumption and are the country’s only large-scale indigenous primary energy sources. Increasing demand will put further strain on net imports of oil, refined petroleum products and coal, making up nearly 50 percent of Sri Lanka’s import expenditure (or around \$5 billion in foreign exchange). This would result in an increased dependency on fuel imports and exposure to volatile market prices, impacting the country’s balance of trade and exchange rates.¹⁰⁶

FIGURE 13: ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION AND ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY IN SRI LANKA, 2000–2015



Source: ESCAP, Statistical Database. Available from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/ (accessed 5 June 2017).

¹⁰⁵ <http://data.unescap.org/sdg/#compareData>, accessed 26/05/2017, in 2011 PPP.

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Power and Energy (2015), Sri Lanka Energy Sector Development Plan for a Knowledge-based Economy 2015-2025, Colombo: Government of Sri Lanka.

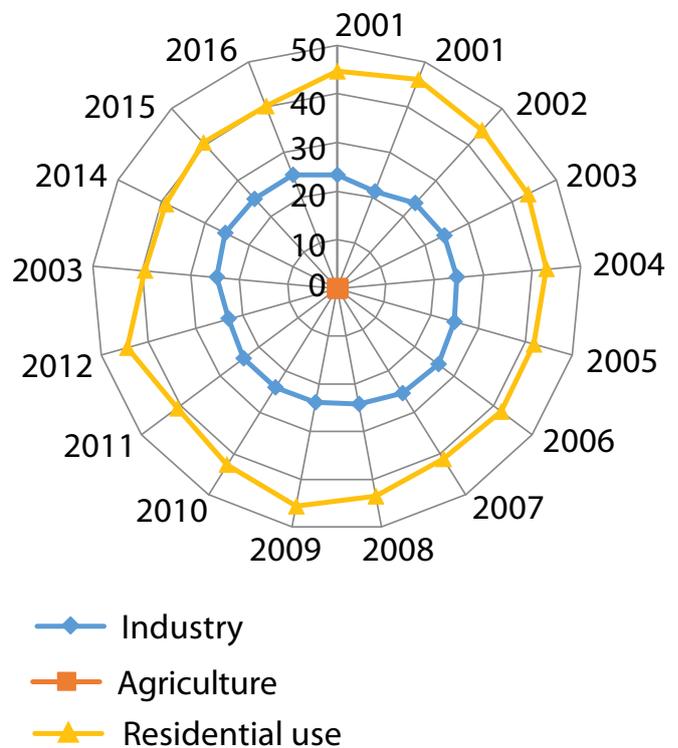
2.6.5 Agriculture

Agriculture represents 8.7 percent of the national GDP.¹⁰⁷ It continues to be an important source of livelihood, employing approximately 30 percent of the total economically active population.¹⁰⁸ Yet, productivity is low: The yield levels of domestically grown food crops, including rice, have stagnated during recent times. For example, only sorghum and cowpea have shown over 5 percent average yield growth, while rice and black gram have had negative yield growth in the last five years primarily due to a lack of investment in research and development.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, nominal prices of all food commodities have been rising due to increasing food demand from a growing population and income levels, shift of consumer preferences and the net taxation of the food sector. Sri Lanka thus has poor achievement in respect to food security and nutrition. The Global Hunger Index and Global Food Security Index rank Sri Lanka 84 out of 118 countries, and 65 out of 113 countries, respectively.

Future climate change will continue to impact the agricultural sector in general, but will be especially acute for Sri Lanka's smallholder farmers, due to several factors. It is estimated that a reduction of monthly rainfall by 100 mm could reduce tea yields by 30–80 kg per year.¹¹⁰ All districts surveyed under the 2015 Vulnerability Programme Assessment were found to be vulnerable to a loss of agricultural production (and hence income) due to severe weather events. A lack of access to irrigation systems increases susceptibility to drought – this has reduced rice yields by 44 percent in some districts.¹¹¹ And small-scale farmers have limited access to other forms of technology that would help them cope with climate-related challenges.¹¹²

Sri Lanka as an island country relies heavily on marine resources for the livelihood of its population and its economic development. But they face serious challenges, including land-based pollution, oil spills, marine accidents and ballast water disposal from international shipping. Non-native species introduced by ballast water disposal can cause significant harm economically and ecologically, as well as to human health.¹¹³ Non-native species can result in loss of habitat and a loss of biodiversity. Another growing and serious problem is plastic pollution from land-based garbage disposal.

FIGURE 14: FINAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURE AND RESIDENCE IN SRI LANKA, 2000–2016
SECTORS: % FINAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION



Source: ESCAP, Statistical Database. Available from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/ (accessed 5 June 2017).

The Readiness Plan for Implementation of Intended Nationality Determined Contributions 2017–2019 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan of Sri Lanka (2015–2024) are well aligned with a number of sectoral plans on mitigation and adaptation with regard to energy, urban planning, agriculture and waste. But the main challenge for the country is to capitalize adequate financing for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

¹⁰⁷ Worldbank (2015).

¹⁰⁸ http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/#data/, accessed 25/05/2017.

¹⁰⁹ National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Wijeratne, A., Amarathunga, R., Basnayake, and Kalra, N. (2007), "Assessment of impact of climate change on productivity of tea (*Camellia sinensis* L.) plantations in Sri Lanka," National Science Foundation 35(2):119–126.

¹¹¹ Chandrasiri, Chamila (2013), "Farmers' perception and adaptation to climate change: a case study in vulnerable areas of Kurunagala District," ASDA. 15:13–23.

¹¹² World Bank, CIAT (2015), Climate-smart agriculture in Sri Lanka. CSA country profiles for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean series. Washington D.C.: The World Bank Group.

¹¹³ www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=126133.



III. ACCELERATING PROGRESS ON THE SDGS



School children in classroom. Photo by Hadynyah.

Not all goals can be pursued equally and in tandem. Thus, it is critical to focus on catalytic actions, or accelerators, that can have maximum impact across various goals and targets. Prioritization in the context of the 2030 Agenda includes: (a) identifying national priorities; (b) identifying those areas and populations that are lagging furthest behind; (c) accelerating actions in areas where the country has made considerable progress and for which reaching the last mile is in sight; and (d) accelerating actions in those areas that will help address the country's critical development challenges. Prioritization also requires an explicit analysis of trade-offs and sequencing across different goals or set of goals.

Based on the consultations with the Government of Sri Lanka and stakeholders and understanding on the key bottlenecks faced by the country to advance the SDGs, following is a proposed list of five accelerator areas that could yield progress in multiple areas if systematic investments are made in the coming years: (1) Addressing inequalities; (2) Bridging the development and peace gap; (3) Investing in the blue and green economy; (4) Increasing local capacity for service delivery; and (5) Strengthening quality data and statistical coherence.

FIGURE 15: SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL ACCELERATORS FOR SRI LANKA



3.1. ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES: REACHING THE LAST MILE AS AN ACCELERATOR

Strong economic growth has not translated into equal benefits for all Sri Lankans. To the contrary, strong GDP growth has been accompanied by rising levels of inequality, including income and consumption inequality, and disparities in access to services, opportunities and to the benefits of development. The easy gains may have been won at the aggregate level as well as in MDG-related priorities such as health and education – but inequality threatens to undermine the good progress to date.

Underlying the 2030 Agenda is the powerful commitment to leave no one behind and to reach those farthest behind first. The ambitious goals and targets laid out in the SDGs will not be met without reaching those who are most marginalized. The root causes of inequalities in society must be at the centre of future efforts and must target multiple and intersecting forms of poverty and inequality, not economic inequality alone.

Discriminatory laws and practices – together with perceptions of inequality and the exclusion of benefits and opportunities – also need to be addressed.

The participation of women and young people in the public sphere and access to economic opportunities and services (including sexual reproductive health and rights) is key to achieving economic growth. Other disadvantaged groups are those working in the estate sector, unemployed Tamils and Moors in the former conflict-affected districts in the North, women-headed households, people with disabilities, older persons and migrants and IDPs.

While economic inequalities in themselves do not necessarily incite (political or interethnic) violence, when some groups face horizontal inequalities (a combination of discriminations that lead to a perception that they are excluded, as a group, from benefits and opportunities) these disenfranchised groups may be more willing to use violence as a resort to survive.

FIGURE 16: ACCELERATOR 1 – ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION AREAS

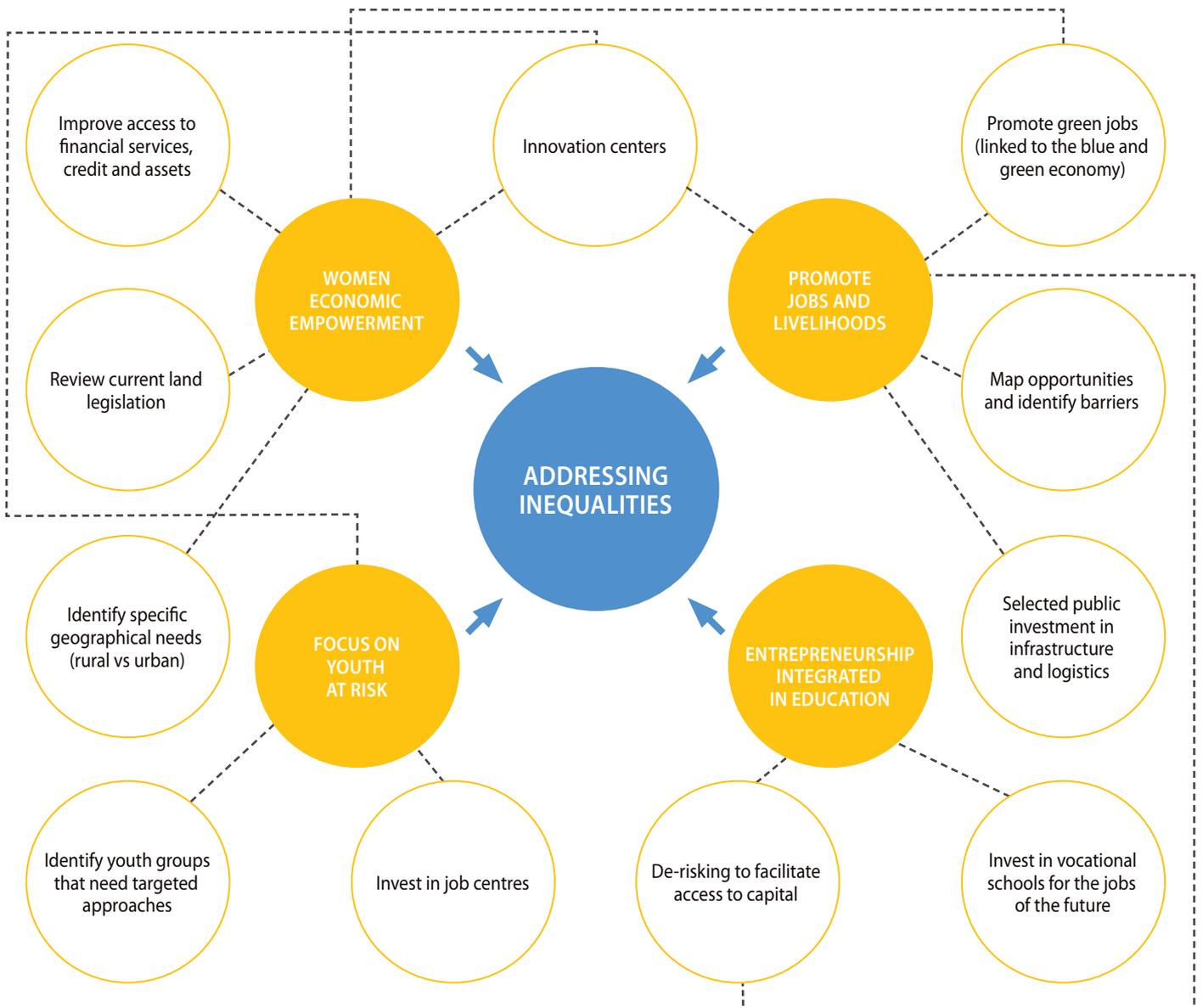
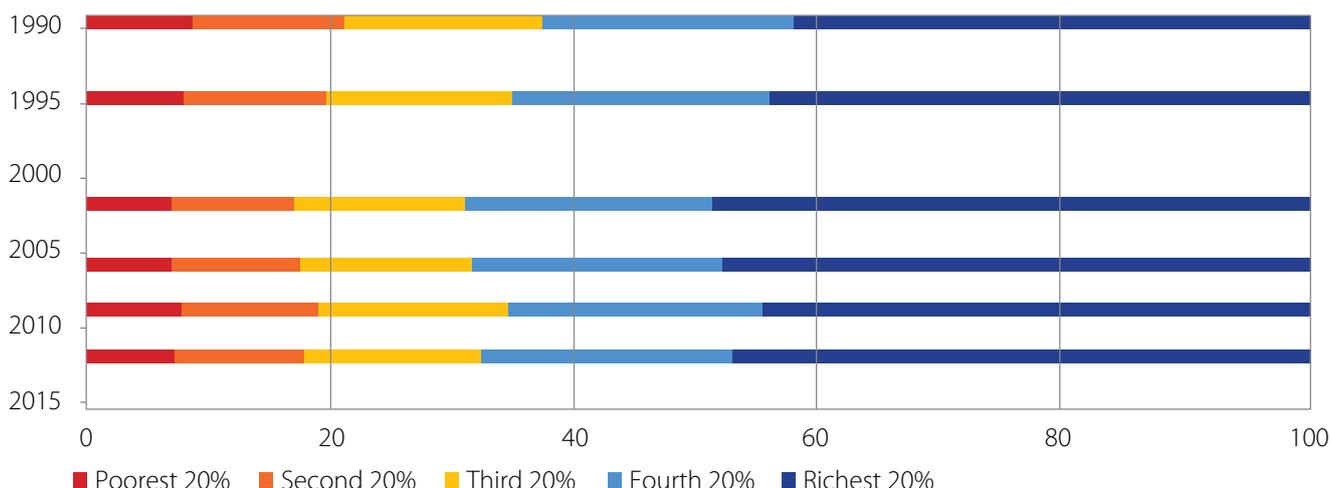


FIGURE 17: INEQUALITY TRENDS IN SRI LANKA

COUNTRY INEQUALITY TREND: Distribution of income or consumption by quintile



Source: Poverty & Equity Databank and PovcalNet.

3.1.1. Interventions to increase the political and economic empowerment of women

Women's economic participation remains very low at 35 percent and a key concern. If the government wants to boost women's participation, in line with the importance it is given in the PIP, it should make targeted investments, and create initiatives to remove barriers and promote greater access to and control over land and other assets. It should implement public policies and initiatives that support the care giving role of women, and address non-discrimination especially in the non-state sectors.

The low levels of economic participation by women act as a brake on overall productivity and competitiveness.¹¹⁴

In addition to job creation, however, training and skills matching are required to address gender-related labour force segregation, particularly in technology-related jobs and industries. Incentives and targeted programmes are needed to increase girls' and women's participation in STEM-related education and training.¹¹⁵ Moreover, if the Government is serious about achieving these targets, it has to take action on several related fronts:

- i. Elimination of discriminatory laws and practices to ensure women's equal access to land and other assets including inheritance rights, and in cases of divorce, separation and widowhood;

- ii. Support for women's unpaid care work including government benefits and services for child and elder care (child care subsidies, tax credits etc.);
- iii. Expansion of parental leave provisions to include paid paternity leave and incentives for fathers to take up these benefits (use or lose it benefits have proven effective even for small payments);
- iv. Urgent attention to tackling the extremely high rates of sexual harassment on public transport that impede women's mobility (including establishing and strengthening complaints mechanisms, referrals, strengthened law enforcement and security responses).¹¹⁶

Low rates of women's political participation have remained largely unchanged in Sri Lanka over several decades. A welcome step has been the introduction of quotas for women's representation in public office, including the adoption of a 25 percent quota for the appointment of women in local government, and a 30 percent quota for nominations of women by political parties at the provincial level. However, more remains to be done to implement these policies and to address the limited resources women have to participate in elections, the time constraints due to the unequal gender division of labour in the household, and their reluctance to compete in a volatile and insecure political environment.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ World Bank (2015).

¹¹⁵ STEM refers to science, technology, engineering and mathematic fields.

¹¹⁶ UNFPA 2017.

¹¹⁷ ADB and GIZ (2015). Country Gender Assessment: Sri Lanka An Update

Raising awareness among the public, political parties and women themselves about the value and contribution of women's participation is key. Quotas should also be introduced for nominations and appointments to national public institutions, in particular at decision-making levels in the public service. Representation in the private sector, in the security, police and judiciary should also be accelerated as a priority.

With regard to data, there is a need for further discussion on SDG-related indicators that may be considered to be either achieved or not relevant:

- In general, many indicators have been achieved at the aggregate level, but not for all groups, so disaggregation becomes all the more critical to better understand who is being left behind (e.g., MMR).
- Responsible line ministries need to have input from a sectoral perspective otherwise important issues may be missed or overlooked. Female genital mutilation is one example: while the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) says it does not apply in Sri Lanka, participants in the gender equality discussion said it does in specific communities.
- New studies are needed to support key accelerators such as a time use survey to understand women's unpaid care work burden, and a national survey on the prevalence of violence against women.

3.1.2. Investments in education and services for youth

Sri Lanka's 4.4 million young people aged 15–29 have a high level of education but low levels of political and economic participation, and disparities in access to services and opportunities. As a result, unemployment is high, in particular for young women. The quality of education remains questionable and drop-out rates increase at higher levels of education, in particular among boys and disadvantaged groups. Investing in education and improving the quality of education are urgent needs. The current national expenditure on education is low, at less than 2 percent of GDP.¹¹⁸ Sexual and reproductive health is another urgent area. Teenage pregnancy rates are rising and knowledge of contraception is low. Comprehensive sexuality education that addresses gender and power dimensions, and the so-called soft skills of social and emotional learning, should be offered in combination with sexual and reproductive health services. They must be fully

responsive to young people's needs. The well-being of young people is vital to overall social stability and sustained peace which is a goal of SDG 16.¹¹⁹

3.1.3. Multisectoral response for women-headed households

The specific vulnerabilities of women-headed households have been recognized as a priority in the PIP. It highlights the need for a multisectoral response that goes beyond livelihood support. In order to achieve this, priority actions include the following:

- Clear and inclusive categorization of women heads of households to ensure a uniform approach in welfare and resettlement policies and programmes;
- Specific targeting of social protection and social welfare;
- Equal eligibility for access to credit and financial services; availability of low interest and interest-free credit;
- Clear and systematic provision of legal identity to enable equal access to resources, services, and land rights.¹²⁰

3.1.4. Increased investments in social protections and universal health coverage

The imperatives of an ageing population require rapid improvements to Sri Lanka's social protection system. Currently low levels of spending on social protection and social services will need to be reversed, through taxation reform and greater direct spending. Recent expenditure has not kept pace with GDP growth. Spending on social transfers has fallen in real terms: social transfers (Samurdhi,¹²¹ fertilizers, school feeding etc.) amounted to just 3 percent of the total household consumption for the bottom consumption quintile. The impact of Samurdhi and other social transfers on poverty reduction has been small and targeting is increasingly less effective: 39 percent of transfers reached the bottom quintile and 65 percent reached the bottom 40 percent in 2012–2013.¹²² Similarly, the PIP notes that while 6.7 percent of households are below the poverty line, 16 percent of households have received cash transfers, and two thirds of the poorest quintile do not receive any cash transfers at all.¹²³ Elderly dependency rates will rise quickly as the population ages, and pensions are only available to public sector employees, meaning that less than a third of the workforce receives pension contributions from an employer.¹²⁴ More generous spending on social assistance, and broader social protection coverage – including

¹¹⁸ World Bank op cit.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ CEDAW Committee 2017

¹²¹ Launched by the Government of Sri Lanka in 1995, the Samurdhi Programme aimed to reduce poverty through subsidies to beneficiary households such as food stamps. The household eligibility threshold was set at approximately one-third of the national poverty line. The programme was fully functioning in 21 out of the country's 25 districts.

¹²² World Bank 2016 Trends in Poverty and Welfare in Sri Lanka.

¹²³ Department of National Planning, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Public Investment Programme 2017–2020.

¹²⁴ Ibid



Photo by Mihtiander.

extending pension coverage beyond the public sector – is needed to continue to lift living standards and ensure equity and inclusion.

Sri Lanka has outperformed neighbouring countries in reaching the health targets of the MDGs including the maternal health goal. Access to free health care at the point of delivery has helped drive this success. Yet, rising consumption and income inequality is linked to unequal access to health services. Poor households report spending 20–30 percent more time reaching health services. Among children, the stunting rate remains high at 19 percent and is strongly determined by wealth and education level of the household head. Living in conflict-affected areas hinders children's access to nutrition and safe water.¹²⁵ High out-of-pocket expenditure and heavy reliance on the private sector despite availability of free health care exposes households to shocks and catastrophic health expenditure. According to the PIP, out-of-pocket expenditure for health care stood at 83 percent of total household expenditure in 2013.

Thus, the rise in nonNCDs, an ageing population and high out-of-pocket expenditures for chronic conditions are putting the health care system under pressure, preventing the achievement of universal health coverage, a cornerstone of the SDG Health Goal. What is needed are multisectoral interventions to reduce communicable diseases, manage and reduce NCDs, provide services for the elderly and people with a disability, and offset out-of-pocket expenditures through safety nets including health insurance.¹²⁶

3.1.5. Ensuring equal opportunity and non-discrimination

Young people report experiencing stigma and discrimination on the grounds of income, ethnicity and sex¹²⁷ which obstructs

employment opportunities. Similarly, studies have found that minority groups are less optimistic about improvement in their rights and equal treatment in the job market in particular in the public sector.¹²⁸ The 700,000 IDPs who have returned to the Northern and Eastern provinces face significant challenges in meeting their basic needs and accessing their rights, including land rights. Lack of legal identity and the loss of documents pose a particular challenge to accessing assistance and exercising rights including the right to vote.¹²⁹ Exclusion, stigma and discrimination perpetuate internal conflict and undermine security and stability. Specific interventions are needed to address multisectoral poverty and increase access to jobs and services in the areas with the highest poverty rates (the estate sector in the central districts in particular) and for marginalized and disadvantaged groups. This includes ensuring equality of opportunity across ethnic groups in every geographic areas. This involves the following:

- Opportunities to develop skills as well as linkages to markets and entrepreneurship opportunities;
- Increased and equitable participation and voice in public decision-making;
- Diversity in public institutions, including through temporary special measures such as quotas;
- Strong legal and accountability and protection mechanisms, and an empowered and independent National Human Rights Commission;
- Finalization and implementation of the national action plan for human rights.

¹²⁵ World Bank 2016.

¹²⁶ de Silva, A., Ranasinghe, T., Abeykoon, P., "Universal health coverage and the health Sustainable Development Goal: achievements and challenges for Sri Lanka," WHO South-East Asia Journal of Public Health 5(2): 82–88.

¹²⁷ National Youth Survey 2012-2013, World Bank 2015.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid. See also *Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues on her mission to Sri Lanka*, 31 January 2017, A/HRC/34/53/Add.3

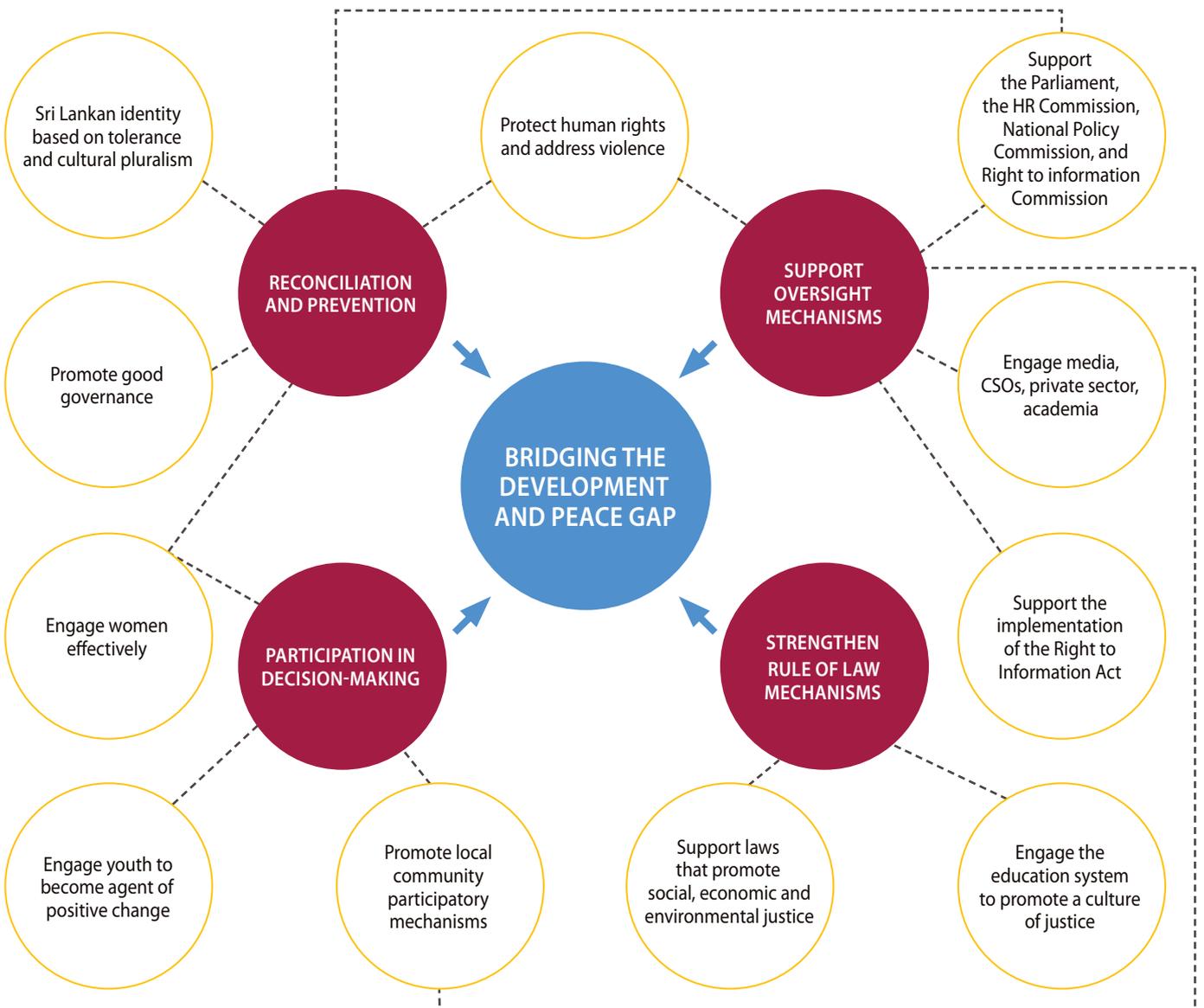
3.2. BRIDGING THE DEVELOPMENT PEACE GAP: RESTORING TRUST AND SOCIAL COHESION AS AN ACCELERATOR

The Government of President Sirisena remains dedicated to ensure lasting peace after decades of conflict. This peacebuilding process aims to heal the political, ethnic and religious wounds and restore trust between the State and people, between communities and the security forces, and between different groups in society. The process takes time and will remain politically challenging. There are clearly social and political tensions but open contestation is also the result of new spaces for voice and disagreement. One of the main challenges is the reform of the national security state to tackle the institutionalized impunity that fed ethnic unrest. A political consensus is needed to manage the legacy of killings, disappearances and other human rights violations by various parties to the conflict, as well as violence between religious groups.

It is important to note that while the peacebuilding process is underway in a number of ministries and commissions, the discourse on sustainable development is being addressed in a parallel streams. Achieving real peace requires equitable and sustainable progress on all goals, and not just political reconciliation on its own.

Progress will be premised on countrywide reconciliation, a nationally driven process of transitional justice, efforts towards more inclusive democratic governance and the strengthening of some of Sri Lanka’s core governance institutions. These include not only the public service and the judiciary, but also essential accountability institutions like the Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Parliament. Equally important is to start rebuilding Sri Lanka’s heavily politicized justice and policing system. Every decision in these areas could be a step towards peace but it could also trigger a regression towards tensions and conflict, directly undermining the SDG agenda.

FIGURE 18: ACCELERATOR 2 – BRIDGING THE DEVELOPMENT PEACE GAP AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION AREAS



Development will remain an unfinished process if the grievances that fuelled the conflict in the past are not addressed; hence, a lasting settlement of the drivers of the conflict is needed through an inclusive and nationally owned peacebuilding process. Sri Lanka has taken notable steps in this regard: the ongoing reform of the constitution, the adoption of a national policy on reconciliation and co-existence (2017), the (pending) adoption of a policy on transitional justice, the ongoing (albeit slow) reduction of the military presence in the north, the holding of provincial council elections for the North and East, the creation (despite weaknesses in the legislation) of an Office of Missing Persons (OMP), and implementing the Right to Information Act in February 2017 providing citizens and NGOs the right to seek information including on land issues and missing persons.

The quality of governance needs more work, including measures to address widespread corruption, and institutional reforms at the national and subnational level to support a more inclusive and transparent political settlement.

This accelerator will need to focus on the following:

Reconciliation founded on democracy, good governance and human rights to address the breakdown of trust, and prejudice between and within communities based on tolerance and respect for diversity in culture and languages and the protection of human rights for all groups in society. Preventive efforts are needed to avoid reoccurrence of tensions and violence. Part of this process is to promote a Sri Lankan identity, enriched by cultural, ethnic and religious pluralism.

Participation in decision-making of women, youth and all ethnic and religious groups as promoters of peace and reconciliation in their communities.

Strengthening the rule of law including transitional justice mechanisms to promote and protect social, economic, cultural and political rights. This includes:

- actions to review or repeal laws that are discriminatory;
- establishing grievance and redress mechanisms at all levels of society;
- introducing laws to foster reconciliation, social and economic justice;
- a rights-based culture in education programmes;
- broad consultations with all groups in society, including faith based leaders, the military, youth and women organizations;
- a victim-centred approach;
- the return of land to their rightful owners;
- protecting the rights of missing persons and their relatives and reparations for victims.

Supporting oversight mechanisms such as the Parliament, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, National Police Commission and Right to Information Commission, with access to information as an important vehicle for citizen engagement and activism.

Addressing the corruption problem which will require both short- and medium- to long-term policy decisions. In the short term, it is important to proclaim a society-wide zero tolerance for corruption commitment.¹³⁰ Corruption risk assessments need to be undertaken in corruption prone sectors and in the social sectors where the impact of corruption on the poor can be significant. Urgent action will be needed to foster the investigation and enforcement capacities at the level of the anti-corruption commission, the judiciary, the police and the tax and customs departments. In the medium to long term there is a need to continue to engage civil society and the private sector to generate a national campaign for the prevention of corruption, including educating young people and university students on the criminal nature of corruption and the negative impact it can have on society, as a source of inequality and conflict.

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected areas: While a national action plan is in place to address SGBV in the broader development context, more remains to be done to address SGBV in former conflict-affected areas. Violence against women had undoubtedly increased due to the conflict. Women experienced increased insecurity due to the presence of military forces, displacement and living in displacement camps, the loss of male household members to conflict, and alcohol abuse caused by conflict-related trauma. Disasters also can have a negative impact on women's security. The 2004 tsunami added to this environment of insecurity for women who were victims of sexual and domestic violence in the aftermath of disaster, and in the post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction process.¹³¹ In addition, there are accounts of girls being rushed into child marriages in the wake of disaster, as well as the prevalence of child marriage in conflict-affected and border areas.¹³² The implementation of the National Action Plan on SGBV must therefore address conflict-related SGBV. Reconciliation and transitional justice efforts must also recognize and specifically respond to SGBV including by providing services, referral and psychosocial support to survivors.

Engaging communities in the social cohesion process: Efforts to manage risk in conflict or crisis have largely followed a centralized or hierarchical model for mitigating hazards and risk. The aftermath of the conflict opens opportunities for women, youth and other groups to engage in voluntary activities that

¹³⁰ A new Anti-Corruption Commission was created in 2015, but has so far, not been effective.

¹³¹ World Bank (2015).

¹³² Fokus Women (2015), Post War Trends in Child Marriage in Sri Lanka

can help (re)build the trust and resilience of their communities. Insider mediators (teachers, elderly, religious leaders) can play a key role in this process.

The accelerators are interlinked. Horizontal inequalities, limited access to services, along with heightened risks due to environmental hazards, constitute significant triggers for future conflict. Addressing the problem of horizontal inequality and lack of equal opportunities for all remains a major source of discontent in the country. Peace will require addressing the problem of inequality.

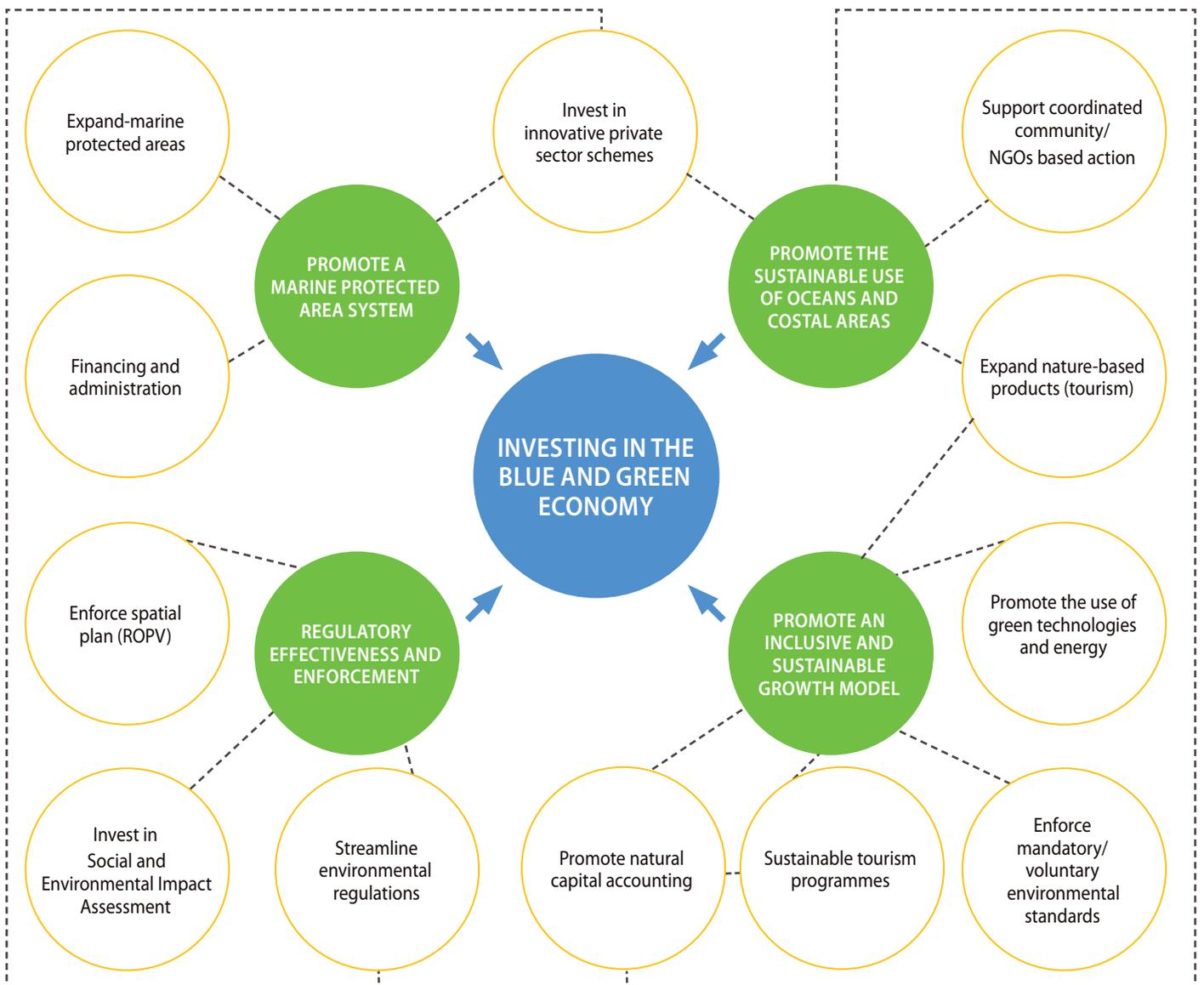
3.3. CAPITALIZING ON THE BLUE AND GREEN ECONOMY FOR SRI LANKA AS AN ACCELERATOR

A *green economy* is characterized by low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive growth that balances the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable

development. In a green economy, growth in income and employment adequately addresses resource constraints and climate change and is driven by investments in greenhouse gas emission reductions, in cleaner energy and resource efficiency and in healthy ecosystems that support sustainable and inclusive livelihoods.

The *blue economy* concept completes and complements the green economy framework by recognizing oceans and marine and coastal ecosystems as essential sustainable development spaces of vast economic, social and environmental intergenerational value. A blue economy calls for careful balancing of ecosystem protection and biodiversity conservation with economic and social needs in a changing climate. Oceans are crucial carbon sinks and vibrant habitats that are threatened by unsustainable fishery practices and trade operations. Marine and coastal ecosystems are the first line of defence from natural disasters and the source of livelihood

FIGURE 19: ACCELERATOR 3 – INVESTING IN THE GREEN AND BLUE ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION AREAS



for billions of people. Green growth in a blue world needs to include the protection of oceans and coastal ecosystems and the sustainable and inclusive use of marine resources.

Both the green and blue economy approaches are central to sustainable development in Sri Lanka, a developing island nation that is highly vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change impacts across all economic sectors. Marine, soil and air pollution; land degradation; deforestation; waste generation; loss of coastal, marine and terrestrial biodiversity; and climate change are identified as major environmental challenges for Sri Lanka.¹³³ They require major shift in policies for resource management to improve sustainability of consumption and production.

In response to these challenges, Sri Lanka has developed the vision of a 'blue-green era' to promote inclusive and environmentally sustainable development.¹³⁴ As Sri Lanka moves towards "strengthening its economy and promotes investment and infrastructure development as a means of accelerating economic growth to take the country to middle income status within a short time" (PIP, p. i), it must do so by balancing the country's economic growth strategy with social and environmental considerations.¹³⁵

A blue and green economy would foster economic growth for the country while ensuring that natural assets are conserved and continue to provide the resources and environmental services that the well-being of all Sri Lankans rely on. There will be spill-overs from such a structural transformation, but more is needed from the government to stimulate green research, investment and public-private partnerships to ensure positive implications for growth, jobs and a sustainable development pathway towards higher value added. It will require Sri Lanka to decouple carbon emissions from economic growth through a series of measures across all economic sectors, such as energy generation, efficiency improvements, changes in fuel mix, managing land use change and environment friendly agriculture.

The following are a number of recommended development interventions areas:

Invest in the sustainable energy sector: The National Energy Policies and Strategies of Sri Lanka are aligned with SDG 7 and aim to accelerate achievement of several targets before 2030. Sri Lanka's Energy Sector Development Plans aim to increase the share of electricity generation from renewable energy sources from 50 percent in 2014 to 60 percent by 2020 and finally to become an energy self-sufficient nation by 2030. To meet national energy demand and increase energy security, Sri Lanka will need to further develop renewable

TABLE 2: RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCE POTENTIAL

Energy Resource	Theoretical Potential	Technical Potential	Already Developed
PJ Biomass	97	59.77	0.59
Hydro	33	30.46	21.91
Wind	242	57.05	1.31
Solar	35,174	32.17	0.01

Source: Source: Ministry of Power and Energy, 2015: 15.

and other indigenous energy resources balanced by energy conservation measures and energy efficiency improvements across all sectors. While hydropower expansion may face limits and is affected by changes in rainfall, the country's biomass and wind and solar energy resource potential remains underexplored (see Table 2). Net-metering schemes such as the recently implemented "Battle for Solar Energy" programme, which enables consumers to sell electricity generated by rooftop solar photovoltaic systems to the grid, can create an enabling environment for market growth of renewable energy technologies. Expanding the domestic sustainable energy market and with it the number of service providers and needed infrastructure, will create a number of local jobs, especially if met by strategic training and skill development schemes.

Policy measures should aim for the following: (1) improve *reliable* and *affordable* access to clean energy; (2) enable a shift toward incentivizing private sector investments; (3) improve demand-side management and energy efficiency measures; and (4) facilitate the development of renewable energy sources and a stronger financial commitment. Better monitoring and reporting frameworks are required to track and review progress. Making the energy sector more climate-sensitive and resilient will strengthen energy security, increasing economic competitiveness and addressing social needs such as access to clean and affordable energy and improved health through reduced air pollution.

Improve water quality: Sri Lanka has to invest strongly in enhancing water quality in view of rapid urbanization and water scarcity. The effectiveness and efficiency of wastewater management can be improved by meeting investment needs and improving financial sustainability. Innovative technical solutions are available in the region – for instance, 100 percent of Singapore's wastewater is recycled and reused – and Sri Lanka should consider fostering innovative

¹³³ United Nations Environment Programme and Development Alternatives (2014), 'South Asia Environment Outlook 2014: UNEP, SAARC and DA'.

¹³⁴ The blue-green era document is available at http://www.srilankanext.lk/pdf/a-blue-green-era_english.pdf.

¹³⁵ A preliminary assessment of the PIP shows relatively lower investment plans with respect to 'planet'.

financing mechanisms and economic instruments to stimulate wastewater treatment services. Technical solutions for decentralized wastewater treatment systems should be promoted and impactful investments in efficient water and access to sanitation services facilitated. To improve water quality, simultaneous investments into enforcement, education, restoration, reduction of hazardous waste, and proper collections and disposal of waste will be necessary. Progress in this area will support human health, protect marine and terrestrial ecosystems and reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities.

Strengthen solid waste management. Sri Lanka should consider using technology transfers, standard procedures and approaches such as the 3R approach or the ‘circular economy’ (recovering resources from waste through recycling, composting and turning waste into energy) to create eco-efficient waste disposal systems. This will reduce health hazards and the negative environmental impact of open dumping, increase the availability of limited land resources for other productive activities, improve the foreign exchange balance as prices for raw materials will rise, and improve provincial budgets as reducing the volume or weight of the waste can save on operating costs, and the recovery of recyclable materials can generate revenues from their resale. Waste management also provides for an opportunity to bring quick and visible results through private sector involvement and wider local community action.

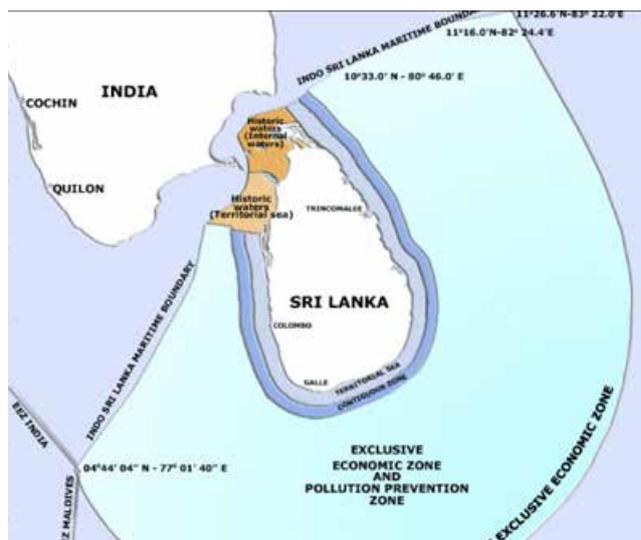
Promote sustainable food value chains. Building a sustainable agricultural sector involves the following:

- Investing in R&D;
- Scaling up existing good practices;
- Investing in channels for the marketing of products;
- Reducing food losses and waste;
- Strengthening demand-side intervention through eco-labelling and eco-certification.

This will help meet the rising demand for safe and fairly produced food and as a result open new export markets for small-sale food producers. It will ensure the implementation of resilient agricultural practices, reduce global food waste and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Several activities are already carried out in compliance with the policy framework of the ‘Mahinda Chinthana Ten Year Development Plan (2010)’, such as enhancing the productivity of cultivated lands by breeding resistant varieties, using site-specific fertilizers, implementing research and development programmes (including on integrated pest management), value addition for goods and services and promoting brand names,

FIGURE 20: SRI LANKA’S EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE



and the sustainable use of lands. However, such good practices need to be mainstreamed and scaled up into food value chains. Sri Lanka will also need to address conflicting policy objectives such as import substitution and export promotion, protecting producers and safe-guarding consumers, achieving food self-sufficiency and achieving self-reliance and food security, and building competitiveness and sustainable production. These are steps towards creating more sustainable food value chains to achieve targets related to SDG2, SDG8, SDG 13 and SDG 15 simultaneously.

Invest in well-managed, resourced and equipped MPAs.

Globally, more than 3 billion people depend on fish as their principal source of protein, while fisheries, aquaculture and marine tourism provide much needed jobs for people living in coastal areas.

Coral reefs and coastal ecosystems such as mangrove forests and estuaries serve as nurseries for fish and other marine life, and protect shorelines from storm damage and tidal surges. In the case of Sri Lanka, areas covered by mangroves suffered less impact by the tsunami in 2004 than those that were uncovered.

The estimated global market value of marine and coastal resource and industries is \$3 to 6 trillion annually.

SDG-14, Life under water, includes 10 targets for addressing the urgent challenges facing the oceans, including pollution, overfishing and destructive fishing methods, perverse fisheries subsidies, loss of coastal habitats, and ocean acidification.

Target 14.5, which aims to have at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas included in protected areas by 2020, is vital for protecting biodiversity, restoring fish stocks and supporting ocean-based economies and livelihoods.

Over the past decades, there has been a major effort worldwide to establish MPAs to restore and preserve ocean health. Through the use of marine spatial planning, integrated ocean management, and building the blue economy, it promotes the creation of low-carbon, resource-efficient and inclusive societies. But MPAs need to be well-resourced and engage the local communities that directly depend on natural resources.

For Sri Lanka, the blue economy represents a huge opportunity. Its Economic Exclusive Zone, the sea zone over which the country has rights, is about five times its land mass. Sri Lanka is a habitat of unique biodiversity which allows for the diversification of viable economic options.¹³⁶

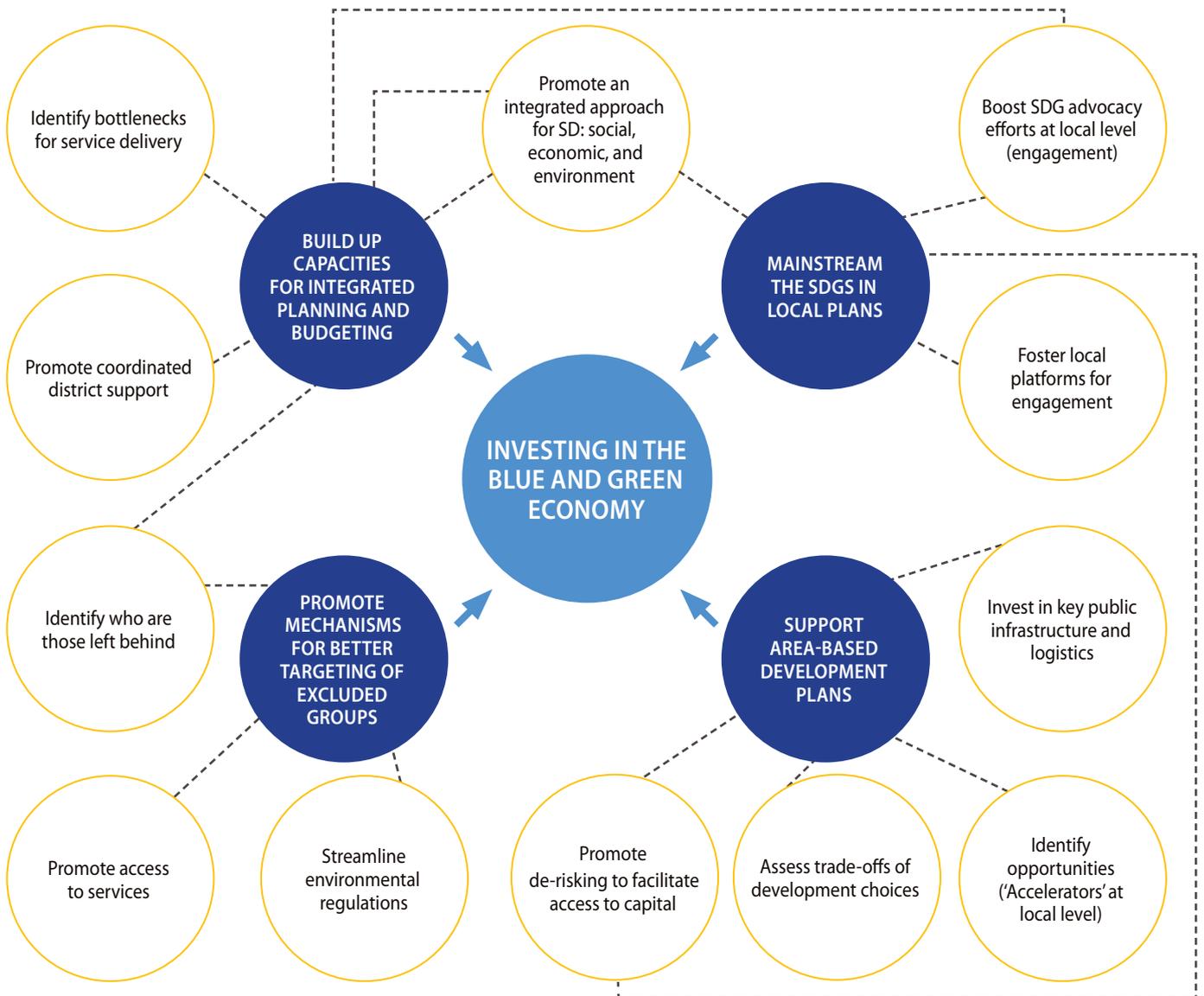
Environmental financing: Given Sri Lanka’s ambitious climate change adaptation and mitigation plans, opportunities to strengthen private climate financing should be sought.

Scaling up climate finance will require creating a conducive policy environment to catalyse private sector investment. This should include the development of guidelines to promote the greening of the banking sector and for establishing of green and low carbon lending. Financial regulation and green bonds will also play an important role in easing the risks for private investors.

3.4. LOCALIZING THE SDGs: INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY AS AN ACCELERATOR

Localizing the SDGs at the subnational level is an important accelerator in the Sri Lanka context for at least three reasons. First, it will allow provinces (including local governments) and

FIGURE 21: ACCELERATOR 4 – INCREASING LOCAL CAPACITY FOR SERVICE DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION AREAS



¹³⁶ An exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is a sea zone prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea over which a state has special rights for the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind. For further information, see www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part5.htm.

BOX 1: THE CONCEPT OF COMPLEMENTARITY

The concept of complementarity is based on a strategy whereby SDGs will be implemented following a clear attribution of functions and a redistribution of resources between central and subnational governments. While, service delivery is currently mainly under the purview of districts and divisions, provincial councils and local governments will need over the next few years to be empowered and resourced to play an active role in localizing the SDGs. The central government could retain 'provision functions'¹³⁷ for service delivery, including adopting national policies, standards and norms, developing and costing sector strategies and allocating and transferring resources (including human and fiscal). Provision functions could be extended to districts to ensure policy coherence and alignment of local SDG priorities with the national SDG 2030 Roadmap and Sri Lanka's 2030 Vision.¹³⁸ Service delivery production functions would then become a shared responsibility between districts, provinces and local governments. This will likely require a review of functional assignments to move production responsibilities to provincial and local governments, while giving districts an increased role for policy and technical oversight.

divisions/districts to become actively engaged with central government in the planning and implementation process for sustainable development. Second, the 2030 Agenda should be regarded as a long-term 'transformational agenda' and this becomes an opportunity for the country to reform its governance and service delivery system and gradually transfer additional functions and resources to provincial councils and local governments so that they can take a more active role in delivering the SDGs alongside with the districts and divisions. Finally, localizing the SDGs is an opportunity for local development to be more inclusive, to reduce the urban-rural divide and for vulnerable groups (see Section III) to have equal access to services and rights.

As in other middle-income countries (despite economic growth), regional socio-economic disparities exist across Sri Lanka.¹³⁹ Landing the SDGs at the provincial and local level, is an effective solution to address pockets of poverty (including in urban areas). For this approach to succeed, the concept of a centrally driven planning and budgeting process must be reoriented towards a system where planning and budgeting is increasingly defined by local priorities. Landing the SDGs at the subnational level in Sri Lanka, calls for a consensus around the **concept of complementarity** (and shared responsibilities) between central and subnational governments, until a decision is made on the question of subsidiarity. The localization agenda also requires acknowledging the **pivotal role of provinces and subnational governments** (in geographical and administrative terms) in deciding their growth strategies and prioritize (in terms of planning and budgeting) the most relevant SDG targets to accelerate local development. **People-centric** and **whole of government** approaches are necessary to align local SDG targets with national SDG strategies and global reporting commitments. The localization agenda is also an opportunity for local **development to be more inclusive**, for innovative SDG financing and implementation modalities to be identified, and for new partnerships to be forged with the private sector and with society as a whole.

Recommendations: Coordination systems for planning, budgeting & monitoring

Localization of the SDGs provides an opportunity to address the following weaknesses, challenges and opportunities.

SDG provincial visions: Many of Sri Lanka's current development challenges, such as urbanization, inequality and regional disparities in poverty, require an integrated approach based upon a territorial dimension. In a decentralized context, provinces can function as the most appropriate government tier to localize the SDGs, based on a vision or plan that will support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A provincial SDG vision or plans will be developed on the basis of a holistic vision of local development for sustained growth and better balancing of economic, social, environmental and democratic governance, conflict-prevention and peacebuilding elements. This will enable a shift from a sector-specific to a more integrated geographical policy approach.

¹³⁷ In the language of decentralization, the term 'provision' refers to a Central Government function to plan/budget the delivery of services. In this case we suggest the districts (as representatives of the Central Government) implement or contribute to these functions. Provincial councils (as autonomous authorities) will be responsible for developing the provincial SDG plans that shall encompass a 'provincial territorial approach' while being aligned to national priorities (as developed in the later sections).

¹³⁸ Provinces have been given limited powers under the Constitution. See G. R Tressie Leitan (2010), "Overview of Decentralization and Local Governance in Sri Lanka – Context Study and Actor Mapping in the South Asian Region," Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).

¹³⁹ Over 40 percent of the population of the northern and the eastern provinces has been identified as food insecure. Inequality is also rising, notably between the densely populated areas in the Western Province and the rest of the country. The share of total household income of the poorest quintile of the population declining from 1.9 percent in 1990 to 1.5 percent in 2012. (United Nations in Sri Lanka, *Millennium Development Goals Country Report 2014*).



Tamil women walking with their children, Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon. Photo by Bartosz Hadyniak.

A provincial SDG vision would take into account the following:

- National priorities identified in the national SDG vision, roadmap, PIP, sector plans and policies;
- Area-based (socio-economic) development scenarios (setting mid-term SDG or other development targets, e.g., 'Reduce percent of population living below the poverty line by percent by 2020');
- Provincial development trade-offs, provincial specific accelerators (including SDG interlinkages), and catalytic investments;
- Financing and other partnerships for SDG opportunities within the province (private sector, municipal bounds, Peacebuilding Priority Plans).

Integrated planning & budgeting:¹⁴⁰ Pooled spending seeks to establish systems of integrated planning and budgeting at the subnational level, to target national, provincial and local resources to a spatially disaggregated SDG agenda, enabling the integration of intergovernmental agency services in service delivery. Combined with a whole of government approach, this will help subnational governments understand the interconnectivity between the SDGs, and foster inter-departmental coordination and information sharing between districts, divisions, local governments and provincial councils. Using the analysis conducted for SDG 6, 'system thinking' could be expanded to cluster development outcomes

beyond traditional vertical sector interventions. From a budget and public financial management perspective, this will help spending agencies move from a process by which they allocate budgets to activities, to a new system where allocations are assigned to achieve specific development outcomes and SDG targets. Decision on local priorities (and SDG targets) will nonetheless need to be aligned taking into account national priorities, SDG targets/indicators, the PIP and sector plans/strategies.

A people-centric approach: Provinces and districts would need to conduct inclusive public consultation processes with CSOs, vulnerable populations, women, youth, the private sector, academia, etc. This consultation process allows for conflict sensitivity, a human rights-based approach and gender-sensitive analysis to be applied. As in other countries in the region, **transparency, integrity** and **efficiency** would be needed, not only to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery but also to strengthen the social contract and maintain **social cohesion** as an essential enabler for sustainable development and SDG 16 in particular.

Vertical policy implementation: Transforming Sri Lanka's service delivery system cannot be restricted to the provincial and local levels only, nor is it achievable through top-down legal reforms. Hence, the capacity of state institutions needs to be strengthened, to manage multiple linkages and network within the public sector as well as across the public-private

¹⁴⁰ UNDP's 2016 Report on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development authored by Asoka Gunawardena for the Parliament Select Committee on Sustainable Development has been adopted by the Select Committee and is reflected in its Interim Report.

TABLE 3: NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL, LOCAL REVENUE/EXPENDITURE OUTTURN. RS. MILLIONS

	National	%	Provincial	%	Local	%
Revenue	1,195,206	94.2	59,133	4.7	14,988	1.2
Expenditure	1,795,865	87.3	216,824	10.5	43,278	2.1

Source: Annual Report of the Central Bank and Review of Financial Performance of Local Authorities, Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government, 2014.

sector divide and between the central and subnational level. Integration between the policies, priorities, and programmes of different government bodies is equally essential for balanced SDG implementation, both at the subnational and national levels.

Horizontal programme implementation: Addressing the disconnect between policy implementation and programme interventions at the local level requires going beyond single-issue-based approaches to an integrated development systems approach of choices and capabilities. This will reduce the fragmentation of basic services being delivered by multiple sectors/agencies, improve intersectoral alignment of budgetary contributions to results frameworks, and improve efficiency in spending by national, provincial and local authorities.

Coordinating mechanisms for multisector outcome-based approaches: The extant approach to engaging with multi-sectoral portfolios and agendas is agency coordination at the district and divisional levels. What is required are systems of multisectoral engagement for intergovernmental service provision, based on information shared through an integrated information system. This will complement the horizontal coordination of planning, budgeting and financing.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships: Localizing the SDGs calls for new forms of partnerships between the public sector, the private sector, civil society and different population groups. For instance, provincial councils could encourage private investments by adopting fiscal policies and legal frameworks on private-public partnerships, special economic zones, and simplified business licensing and procurement procedures. Service delivery agreements with the private sector could be developed for education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, tourism, construction and the maintenance of local infrastructure.

Expanding the fiscal space: Implementing SDGs requires significant increases in investments, well beyond the currently available resources. The practice of fiscal devolution treats provinces more as budgetary units of the central government

rather than competent providers of services with taxing and spending powers. The Constitution (Article 148) vests control of public finance in Parliament, thus “Parliament shall have full control over public finance. No taxes shall be imposed by any local or public authority except by the authority of the Parliament or existing law”. Funding for decentralized development, through block grants, is still very limited and would require fiscal decentralization policies and allocation formulas to be reviewed to provide necessary, equitable and predictable fiscal resources (i.e., Inter Governmental Fund Transfers, special funds and performance grants). An analysis of opportunities to increase fiscal space for provinces and local governments to levy, collect and mobilize additional resources is necessary. For example, in urban municipalities such as Colombo, use of municipal bonds and innovative Peacebuilding Priority Plans and crowdfunding could be tested. As part of this exercise, subnational Public Finance Management and municipal finance capacities must be strengthened, including oversights and complaints mechanisms. One-stop-shops can be established/strengthened to simplify business licensing, procurement and other municipal administrative services. Use of e-governance and mobile technology should be promoted.

Local supply and demand: Capacity development action plans should not be limited to training and coaching staff and local councillors, but include enabling policies and legal instruments to deliver the SDGs. Diagnostic tools such as the ‘Local and Urban Governance Diagnostic for SDGs’¹⁴¹ would facilitate this process. Capacity development for the implementation of the SDGs must include CSOs, the private sector, academia and the population as a whole. Significant efforts need to be made to improve local leadership, human resources, and the technical and management capacities of provincial and local authorities, as well as their ability to involve the population in decision-making. Also, provincial councils still lack legal human resource capacities which hampers their ability to effectively engage in policy discussions with central governments, and draft and propose statutes and other normative instruments pertinent to the SDGs.

¹⁴¹ Tool developed by UNDP.

3.5. DATA AND STATISTICS

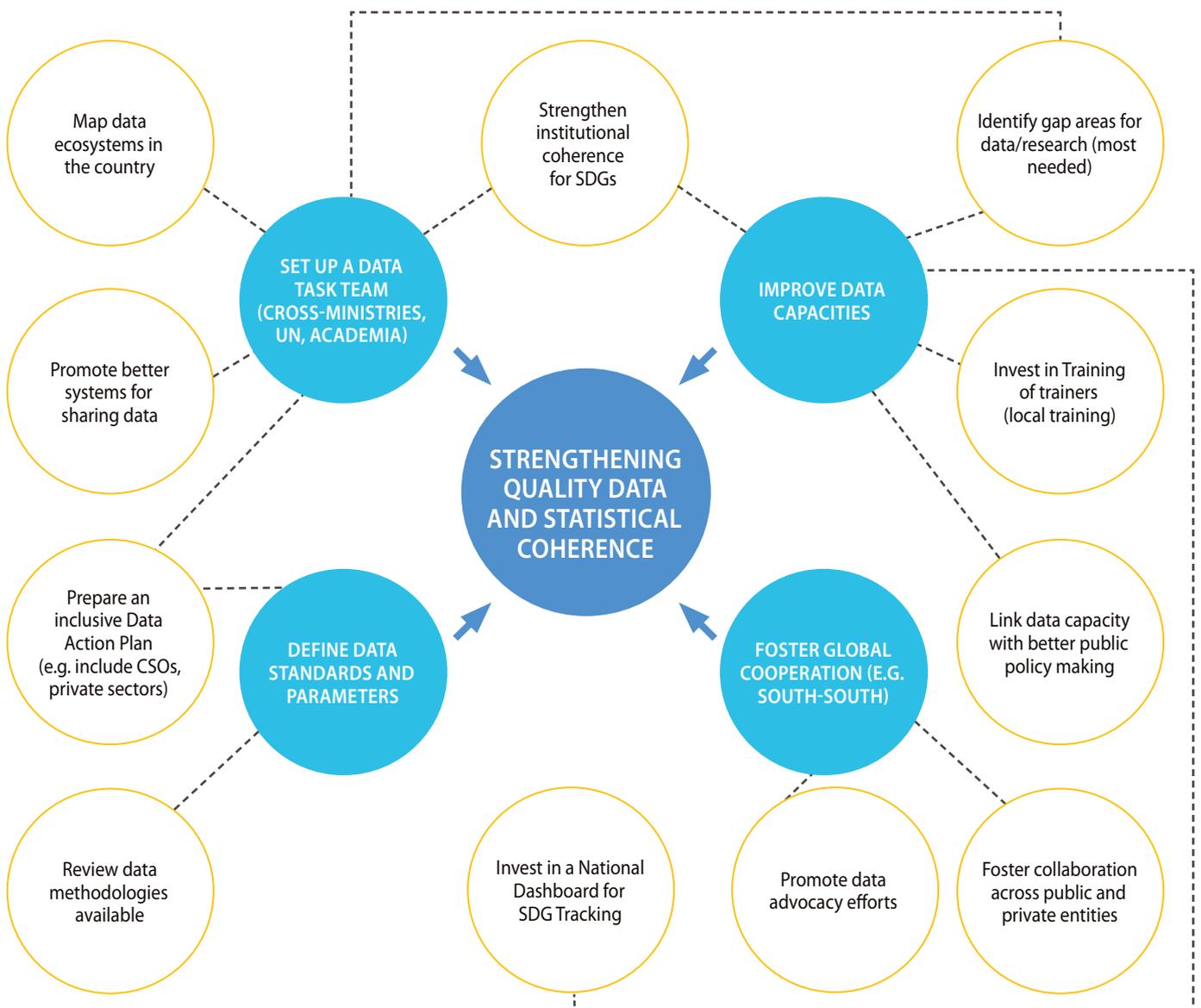
3.5.1. Importance of data to the mainstreaming of SDGs

Tracking progress of the SDGs in Sri Lanka will require substantive improvements in national statistical capacity. High-quality, high-frequency, timely and reliable data will help direct resources, prioritize investments and ensure effective service delivery.

Given the scope of the 2030 Agenda and the number of topics not currently covered in regular data production, compiling data on all relevant indicators of sufficient frequency and quality, and at the necessary level of disaggregation, will be a challenge for Sri Lanka. It will be important to adapt some of the globally agreed indicators and/or complement them with additional ones.

To decide how the SDGs targets are to be incorporated into national planning processes and development strategies, a well-defined process is needed to prepare national indicators. Under the guidance of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, the Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) – linked to the Department of National Planning under the Ministry of National Policy and Economic Affairs – is the institution best mandated to initiate and lead the process of consultation with stakeholders. Key stakeholders would include planners and policy makers representing all relevant ministries, statistical focal points of all line ministries that are potential sources of data for national SDG indicators, provincial and district authorities, the UNCT, civil society and the private sector.

FIGURE 22: ACCELERATOR 5 – STRENGTHENING QUALITY DATA AND STATISTICAL COHERENCE AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION AREAS



3.5.2. Institutional set-up to address data issues

During the MAPS mission in Colombo, a session was devoted to data issues associated with mainstreaming, implementing and monitoring SDGs, attended by all major stakeholders. The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, the Department of National Planning and most importantly, the DCS, presented on progress made. The absence of a clear national structure to strategize and coordinate data requirements emerged from these discussions. The experience of Malaysia could be of relevance to Sri Lanka. The Department of Statistics Malaysia established a series of working clusters within its office to take the lead on indicators which fell within their areas of responsibility, working with the working committees established under their SDG steering committee. The terms of reference have been to provide technical guidance on the development of the indicators, update the data according to the SDG, check quality and standards being adopted and to ensure data is collected and released in accordance with the agreed time lines.

3.5.3. Progress made on identifying data requirements and addressing data gaps

The DCS has been leading most of the progress thus far in identifying data requirements, by assessing all SDG indicators and assigning them to one of six categories:

- Data already compiled by the DCS;
- Data that could be made available to them by adding new modules into ongoing censuses, surveys, etc.;
- Data available with other institutions of the National Statistical System (NSS);
- Data that could be made available through other institutions of the NSS;
- Data that are monitored at the regional or global level;
- Data that are not relevant to Sri Lanka.

Whilst this procedure is similar to the process other countries have been undertaking, so far, only three indicators have been identified by the DCS as not being relevant to Sri Lanka:

2.3.1: Volume of production per labour unit by classes of family/pastoral/forestry enterprise size;

2.3.2: Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status;

5.3.2: Proportion of girls and women, aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age.¹⁴²

It is expected that other indicators will be added as other line ministries within the NSS undertake further work on the relevance of SDG indicators to their specific sectors.

As a result of this work, the DCS have also been working on an SDG database¹⁴³ which will include baseline indicators where available, but only those which fall under its responsibility, and vital information on the disaggregation requirements for these indicators. It will be presented to the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, and the DCS will work with other line ministries on a similar exercise of identifying priority indicators and production of baselines. In the meantime, other line ministries have also started their own studies of SDG indicators falling under their area of responsibility. For instance, the Sri Lanka Ministry of Health, with the support of the WHO Country Office has developed an indicator framework to address the Health SDG requirements.

3.5.4. Establishment of an SDG data task team

A data task team would oversee the crucial activity of coordinating the data requirements of the SDGs. The priority selection and modification of globally agreed indicators, and inclusion of additional indicators to accommodate national circumstances would be a priority starting point for such a task team. Such an indicator list would then be referred to as the Sri Lanka SDG Indicators. A series of working groups under this task team would focus on the indicator requirements of each of the 17 SDG goals, through a working group for each goal separately, or grouping of goals into common themes.

The terms of reference of a data task team and corresponding working groups would go beyond the identifying the indicator requirements of the SDGs for Sri Lanka to include:

- Identifying methodologies and corresponding data sources for computation of each required indicator, under the guidance of the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the SDGs (IAEG-SDG), and corresponding development partners' inputs;
- Establishing disaggregation requirements of each indicator under the recommendations of the 2030 Agenda's Leave No one Behind principle, and guided by the input of relevant policy makers and planners;
- Establishing a strategy of frequency of reporting for each indicator, taking into consideration the feasibility of production under the various data sources, guided by relevant policy makers and planners;

¹⁴² Women's groups consulted during the MAPS mission in Sri Lanka said female genital mutilation exists, and this needs to be validated with relevant line ministries.

¹⁴³ Available at <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/sdg/index.php/sdg/page/Tables>.

- Identifying current data gaps in the proposed Sri Lanka SDG indicator list:
 - Gaps in indicators which don't currently exist at all;
 - Gaps in meeting all levels of disaggregation required for each indicator;
 - Gaps in meeting the required frequency of production for each indicator.
- Developing an overarching strategy for addressing data gaps, which could entail doing a feasibility assessment of meeting each gap requirement, and based on this assessment, proposing a plan for when gaps could be met in line with the existing three-phase approach proposed by Sri Lanka for SDG implementation (2017–2020, 2020–2025, 2025–2030). Such strategies could include, but not be limited to:
 - Modifications to the existing survey practices in place by both the DCS and other Line Ministries undertaking such activities;
 - Modifications to the procedures to collect and process administrative data; Exploration of alternative data sources such as Big Data and Satellite Imagery.
- Developing guidelines on data quality requirements, and ensuring that they are met.

The data requirements would need to take into account the subnational requirements of the SDGs where provinces and districts of Sri Lanka may wish to modify the targets and indicators to make them more relevant. Options including additional indicators to monitor targets where they are relevant at that subnational level, and modifying the target in cases where it has already been met at the subnational level.

3.5.5. Harmonizing the SDG indicator framework with existing plans

As discussed above, the primary starting point for an SDG data task team would be to establish the content of the Sri Lanka SDG indicators. This should take into account existing plans by the Sri Lanka Government, including the Sri Lanka PIP and Sector Plans developed by line ministries where monitoring progress through carefully developed indicators is a key component.

Adoption of the Sri Lanka SDG indicators could incorporate them into these existing plans where appropriate, and monitor them through these existing mechanisms, with an alternative being to monitor the SDG indicators in a separate platform.

Either way, the DCS should consider establishing a National Indicator List which includes all relevant national indicators (including the SDGs), with a mechanism in place to identify the link between each indicator and the respective plans they monitor.

The manner in which the indicator frameworks are established and adopted by the Sri Lanka Government should be harmonized, to ensure that a wide range of recommended practices are implemented. The benefits from this would include:

- Adopting internationally recommended guidelines for standards and classifications;
- Producing meta-data in a consistent manner for all indicators;
- Creating a better environment that ensures data quality checks are carried out.

Further, having all nationally required indicators centrally located in a harmonized manner would make identification of national data gaps, including those of the SDGs, a significantly easier task, and consequently, the ease of designing the most efficient approaches to meet these data gaps.

3.5.6. Mechanisms for assisting the process

Two key processes will help in establishing a data task force team:

1. The development of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) which addresses the main gaps and needs on data production, collection, analysis and dissemination in the context of monitoring, evaluation and reporting on all development plans at the global (e.g. SDGs), regional, national (including at the sector level) and subnational levels. Plans are already in place to produce this strategy within the DCS, with the first stage of this work due to commence shortly with a focus on economic statistics. This work must be fast tracked and form the basis of identifying all national statistical development needs including key stakeholders' involvement in meeting development requirements.
2. Stronger collaboration between regional offices of UN Specialized Agencies, which have access to data on specialized areas of the SDGs, and the UNCT, which has needed expertise on the ground.

IV. DEVELOPING AN SDG ROADMAP FOR SRI LANKA



Sri Lankan little girl with her mother, Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon. Photo by Hadynyah.

Many countries have embarked in a process to develop a clear SDG Roadmap. The purpose of an SDG Roadmap is to chart the future course a country should follow in turning the Sustainable Development Goals and targets into a management tool to align national priorities with the goals of the 2030 Agenda, implement programmes of action, and allocate resources accordingly.

The elements presented here for an SDG Roadmap for Sri Lanka were developed through a consultative process with the Government of Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team in Sri Lanka, and many partners and stakeholders in government, the private sector, donor community and civil society. It includes critical elements for effective and coherent support in the implementation

of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, following the MAPS approach (mainstreaming, acceleration, and policy support).

A Roadmap for SDG implementation in Sri Lanka could be a critical instrument to support the implementation of the future National Policy Strategy on Sustainable Development. The Roadmap could be structured around five critical areas:

1. Defining an institutional coordination framework;
2. Assessing national priorities through SDG alignment;
3. Identifying and prioritizing SDG accelerators;
4. Preparing SDG-based planning and budgeting; and
5. Identifying alternative modalities for financing for development.

FIGURE 23: ELEMENTS OF A ROADMAP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE SDGS IN SRI LANKA



4.1. DEFINING AN SDG INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION FRAMEWORK FOR SRI LANKA

A mapping of the institutional framework for SDG implementation (national ministries and cross-sectoral government bodies) in Sri Lanka was undertaken by the Munasinghe Institute for Development which identified the potential mandates of various ministries and linkages with the SDGs as shown in Table 4. A mapping was also carried out by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife.

Given the large executive machinery in Sri Lanka – 53 line ministries,¹⁴⁴ 416 central level agencies, nine Provincial Councils, and 335 local government authorities – the institutional framework is complex.

In terms of strategic direction and coordination of the SDG agenda, the situation is equally complex with several entities having overlapping responsibilities (see Figure 24).

4.1.1. Expert panel on SDG implementation at the President's Office

In early 2016, the President established an expert panel to draw up Vision 2030 which links to SDG implementation but may go beyond. The expert panel is led by Mohan Munasinghe, formerly Vice Chair of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). Vision 2030 for Sri Lanka aims to be a strategic document based on scenarios to show the path that the country will need to take to become a sustainable model. The vision is not a political manifesto, or a detailed national development plan. It will cover the three cluster areas of sustainable development: economic, social and environment. Vision 20130 will provide a sectoral perspective on agriculture, energy, transport, health, education, water, urban and physical planning, marine and fisheries. Cross-cutting issues include reconciliation and harmony; governance and institutional framework; citizenship, values, ethics and behaviour; gender; poverty and inequality; innovation, technology and industry; climate, air and disasters; and employment.

TABLE 4: KEY LINE MINISTRIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE MANDATES ACROSS THE SDGS

Ministries	SDGs																
	SDG-1 Poverty	SDG-2 Hunger-Agr	SDG-3 Health	SDG-4 Education	SDG-5 Gender	SDG-6 Water-Sanit	SDG-7 Energy	SDG-8 Growth-Jobs	SDG-9 Industry	SDG-10 Inequality	SDG-11 Sust.Cities	SDG-12 Sust.Cons.P	SDG-13 C.Change	SDG-14 Marine Res.	SDG-15 Land-Ecosys.	SDG-16 Peace-Incl.	SDG-17 Partnership
Defence																	
Mahaweli Dev. & Environment																	
Policy Planning, Economic Aff., Child, Youth & cultural Aff.																	
Public Order, Disaster Management & Christian Affairs																	
Home Affairs & Fisheries																	
Food Security																	
Foreign Affairs																	
Bud. Sasana, Pub. Adm., Prov. Coun., Local Govt. & Dem. Gov																	
Plantation Industries																	
Finance																	
Urb.Dev., Water Sup. & Drain.																	
Power & Energy																	
Health & Indigenous Medicine																	
Irrigation & Agriculture																	
Highways, H.Educ., Inv. Prom																	
Lands																	
Housing & Samurdhi																	

Source: *Framework and Approach for Implementing Sustainable Development Goals in Sri Lanka*, Prepared for the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator by Munasinghe Institute for Development (MIND) in collaboration with the UNDP, Colombo, Sri Lanka July 2016

¹⁴⁴ As of 27 August 2017.

FIGURE 24: SRI LANKA INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR COORDINATING SDG IMPLEMENTATION



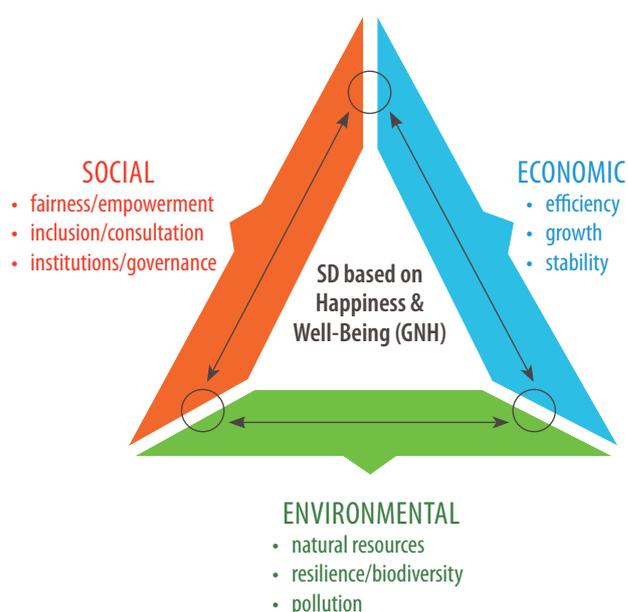
4.1.2. The Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs

The Ministry hosts the Department of National Planning responsible for policy development, planning and implementation. It provides a national perspective on policies, programmes and projects, in contrast with the sectoral or regional perspectives of other institutions. The Ministry also hosts the DCS, and the Department of Project Management and Monitoring – both responsible for the preparation of the SDG National Progress Report. The Ministry is responsible for preparing the PIP. As the Ministry responsible for planning, it is also responsible for ensuring better alignment between the national development priorities and the SDG agenda. Recently the Ministry requested UNDP support with SDG planning and implementation.

4.1.3. The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife

Following the general elections held in August 2015, a new Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife was established.¹⁴⁵ One of its tasks is to lead the development of a national Roadmap for SDG Implementation in Sri Lanka. Initial efforts were supported by an advisor to the Ministry, a team of interns and volunteers and an annual budget for 2016 of around \$30,000 (SLR 5,000,000). The convening and coordination power of this new Ministry has witnessed some limitations. Recently, the ministry has been provided with additional capacity - an additional secretary for sustainable

FIGURE 25: VISION 2030



Source: Munasinghe Institute for Development.

development and a director for the sustainable development division (appointed in 2017). In 2016, the Ministry launched the National and Provincial Sustainable Development Engagement Platforms that brings together representation from the political sphere, administration, local government, civil society, academia, business, development agencies, women and youth.

¹⁴⁵ Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, 'Deputy Minister's Message' available at <http://msdw.gov.lk/about/deputy-ministers-message/>, (accessed on 17.06.2016).

With the support of ESCAP, the Ministry piloted a framework for an 'Integrated Systems Thinking Approach' to the SDGs, using Goal 6 on water and sanitation as sample. While the Ministry made efforts to engage relevant line ministries in the process, an SDG roadmap is not yet available.

4.1.4. The Parliamentary Select Committee on SDGs

The 14-member Parliamentary Select Committee on SDGs appointed in November 2016 and chaired by the Deputy Speaker Hon. Thilanga Sumathipala is playing an increasingly prominent role in SDG mainstreaming.¹⁴⁶ The Select Committee on SDGs has a mandate to make recommendations to ensure that the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is realized in Sri Lanka:¹⁴⁷

- Formulating national policies and legislating laws in consultation with relevant line Ministries;
- Allocation of adequate domestic resources and finding international funding resources;
- Coordinating among Government implementing agencies;
- Networking measures at national, provincial and local levels;
- Encouraging public-private partnership;
- Obtaining the support of United Nations agencies and CSOs;
- Sharing expertise and experiences among countries at regional and international levels;
- Developing separate database and reviewing the progress periodically;
- Considering all matters related to the above issues.

The Select Committee is divided into four thematic clusters: (1) Sustainable Economic Growth (including food security and productivity, and closing the infrastructure gap); (2) Health, Education and better services for all; (3) Addressing inequality, ensuring social inclusion and protection; and (4) Climate and Disaster Resilience including Environmental Protection.

The Committee has signalled its intention to act as a parliamentary coordinating body on SDGs.

4.1.5 Ministerial SDG Sub-Committee¹⁴⁸

The Ministerial Sub-Committee comprising five Cabinet Ministers and the chief minister of a province, was established in keeping with a memorandum submitted to the Cabinet by the President.

The sub-committee has been tasked with:

- Identifying the priority areas and the development level Sri Lanka should achieve;
- Establishing a time frame for achievement of goals, identifying the roles of public sector, private sector and CSOs;
- Conducting progress reviews of the achievement of those **goals**.

4.1.6. Office of Strategic Development Evaluation

The Presidential Secretariat has set up a new Office of Strategic Development Evaluation, which will assess Sri Lanka's development performance and provide the President with key information on development status and prospects of SDG process in Sri Lanka.

4.1.7. SDG coordination of sectoral ministries

In addition to the ministries in charge of horizontal and vertical coordination there are also measures being taken at the sectoral level. The Ministry of Education has a focal point for SDGs, already working with UNESCO. There is an inter-ministerial committee for education where the Ministries of Education, Higher Education and Skills Development are working on SDG 4. UNESCO has offered support to see where SDG indicators fit in ongoing policy reforms.

Coordination between national and subnational levels is also working well in the Health Sector, due to extensive work by the Ministry of Health and the WHO. The detailed mapping of the health sector SDG targets and their baselines/ national targets was supported by WHO and published by the Ministry of Health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

How a government organizes its ministries and mandates responsibilities for government agendas such as the 2030 Agenda is not a mere technical issue. The current partnership between the two largest political parties in Sri Lanka (which have traditionally been rivals since post-independence) is unprecedented. The 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which aimed to restore checks on executive presidential power, contemplated a degree of power sharing between the President and Prime Minister. Accordingly, under Article 43(2), the President is mandated to determine the Cabinet members in charge of ministerial portfolios, in consultation with the Prime Minister.¹⁴⁹ The complexity of current institutional arrangements and wide range of ministerial portfolios and government agencies is a reflection of the current coalition Government.

¹⁴⁶ See www.parliament.lk/en/business-of-the-house/view/1271?category=25

¹⁴⁷ Addendum to the Order Book No. 4 of Parliament, Issued on 17 October 2016, available at <http://www.parliament.lk/uploads/documents/addendums/1476699847066328.pdf>.

¹⁴⁸ For additional information, see <http://www.president.gov.lk/ministerial-sub-committee-appointed-to-achieve-sustainable-development-goals/>.

¹⁴⁹ 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

However, clarity is needed to improve internal coordination within the Government, and also with the broader stakeholder community, civil society and the private sector, and the UN agencies supporting SDG implementation. Discussions on the strategy and direction the government wants to take to support SDG implementation is an opportunity to reduce the ambiguity in SDG-related institutional arrangements.

To provide for a broader platform of dialogue on the SDGs, the government proposed the creation of a Sustainable Development Council through the approval of the Sustainable Development Act, No.9 of 2017¹⁵⁰. This Council could be a solution to improve horizontal coherence, provided four issues can be addressed:

1. First, include in the membership of the council representatives from the private sector and civil society. Similar arrangements around the world have pointed to the importance of broader stakeholder involvement. The Sustainable Development Act currently does not include non-state actors. As the Council is operationalized, its structure should make it clear how CSOs, the private sector, the UN and donor community can potentially contribute.
2. Second, decide on the designation of the technical secretariat of the council, which should be an entity with sufficient convening power within the Government. Given the current political economy challenges, a joint secretariat co-managed by the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs (which is mandated with National Planning) and the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Wildlife could be an option to explore.
3. Third, ensure that the nine Provincial Councils' voice is sufficiently heard and valued. When the bill was to be presented to the Parliament, Provincial Councils reportedly raised concerns about excessive centralization and the risk of the Act intruding into the devolved functions of Provincial Councils.
4. Fourth, make sure that the Council has a mandate that covers all aspects of the sustainable development agenda as well as the importance of having peace and prevention of violence as a condition. The Council and its National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development should be a key source of guidance on development policy, minimizing the multiplication of development priorities and prescriptions from the different arms of the coalition government.

BOX 2: EXPERIENCES OF COUNTRIES IN ESTABLISHING AN INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Overall, there are two common broad institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SDGs which are observed across countries globally:

Establishment of a new coordination entity:

Bangladesh established an Inter-ministerial Committee on SDG Monitoring and Implementation chaired by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. Ghana established a High-Level Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee comprised of Ministers and Directors from 11 ministries and agencies under the supervision of the President. Liberia launched an Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDG implementation under the oversight of the Ministry of Finance. Sierra Leone proposed a Presidential Board that will provide overall policy guidance related to the SDGs to be chaired by the President. In Colombia, the newly established mechanism serves as a means to ensure that national and local priorities are reflected and taken into account in the implementation of the SDGs, as well as the articulation of the three pillars of sustainable development. In Belize, the SDGs were incorporated in the design of its national development strategy, the Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy, to ensure its implementation with participation of other key stakeholders.

Building on or adapting existing coordinating structures:

In Ethiopia, the National Planning Commission chaired by the Prime Minister and comprised of Cabinet ministers, chief executives of regional states, will take on the major coordination role for SDG implementation. In Uganda, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is leading the process towards SDG implementation. In Germany, the SDG implementation strategy is driven by a high-level State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development – headed by the Chancellery with representation from all Federal ministries. In Norway, the Ministry of Finance is currently in charge of promoting SDG implementation. In Costa Rica, the coordination mechanism serves as a platform to implement a National Agreement on the SDGs which brings together different stakeholders, including non-state actors, committed to the achievement of the SDGs.

¹⁵⁰ The Sustainable Development Act was certified by the Speaker of the Parliament on 3rd October 2017.

4.2. SDG ALIGNMENT: ASSESSING NATIONAL PRIORITIES

One of the key initial steps in developing an SDG Roadmap is to define the alignment of a country existing development plans at the national and sub-national levels with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The UN Country Team and the MAPS mission team, in consultation with the Department of National Planning, conducted a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) on the Public Investment Programme (PIP) 2017-2020.

The RIA aims to help countries assess the level of alignment of planning documents (at national or subnational levels) with the SDG targets as a first step in building a country roadmap or action plan. It reviews development plans and existing sectoral strategies to:

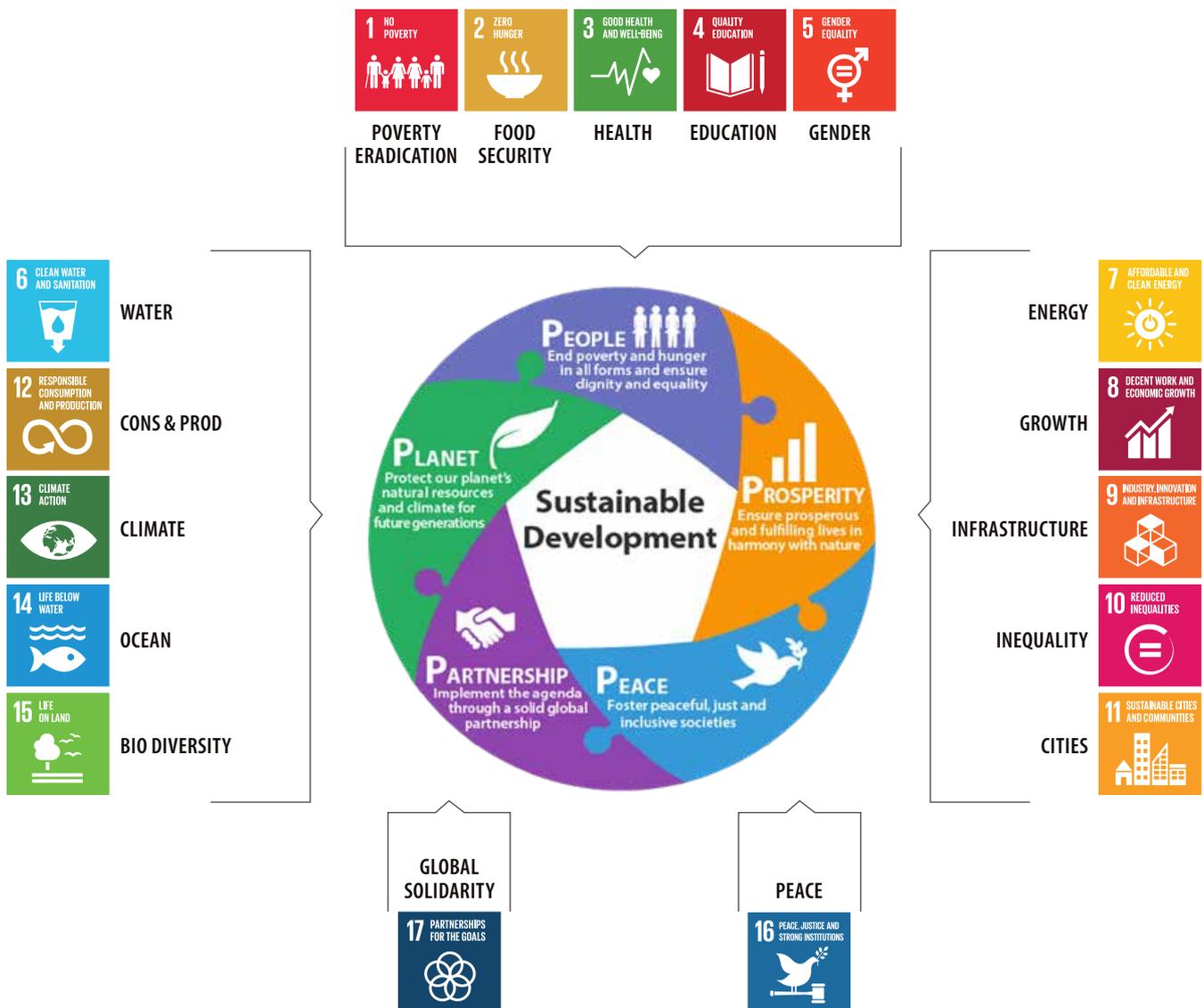
- Determine the relevance of the SDGs to the country context, at national and subnational levels;

- Summarize the level of alignment between plans and strategies at national and subnational levels for SDG implementation;
- Identify the interconnections between the SDG targets and sectoral areas of coordination;
- Identify issues of relevance to further enhance policy coherence across sectoral institutions and all levels of governance.

For the RIA alignment exercise, the SDG Goals were grouped under the five categories ('5 Ps') of sustainable development: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. The SDG targets were mapped against the 2017–2020 Public Investment Programme under one of the following categories:

- **Not relevant for the country:** The SDG target is not relevant to country policy development, or it relates to governance issues that are to be solved at the regional or global levels.

FIGURE 26: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS – THE '5 Ps'



- **Aligned:** There is a target in the national planning document that corresponds to an SDG target, not only in text, but also in scope and ambition. It has defined indicators to measure their progress.
- **Partially aligned:** There is a target in the national planning document that corresponds to an SDG target, but not completely in either scope or ambition, or there are no indicators to measure their progress.
- **Not aligned:** There is no equivalent target in the national planning document to the SDG target in question.

In the case of Sri Lanka, 16 SDG targets were considered not of relevance to the country context (e.g., either applicable to LDCs or SIDs, or to Developed Countries in their donor capacity). Therefore, 153 SDG targets were considered in the assessment. Of these, 44 were not identified in the 2017–2020 PIP, and could be considered as targets that are potentially not aligned.

An assessment of sectoral plans could yield a more in-depth analysis, with sectoral targets closely aligned to SDG targets. It is recommended that the RIA be applied at the subnational level to measure the level of alignment of provincial development plans with the SDGs. Given that many SDG targets will require action at local levels, a solid strategy on how to localize these goals would be valuable.

Tables 5 and 6 below provide a summary of the status of targets. Out of the 109 targets that are aligned, 64 SDG targets are considered fully aligned (clear alignment of the SDG target with the target contained in the government document; in the case of the PIP, resources may be associated with a target; and indicators to measure progress may have been identified) and 45 SDG targets are considered partially aligned (SDG targets may be expressed in the introduction of the document, but no resources or explicit targets or indicators are associated).

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF ALIGNMENT OF SDG TARGETS WITH THE 2017–2020 PIP

SDG	# TARGETS CONSIDERED	# TARGETS ALIGNED	% ALIGNMENT
1. No Poverty	6	6	86%
2. Zero Hunger	7	5	63%
3. Good Health and Well-being	13	9	69%
4. Quality Education	10	10	100%
5. Gender Equality	9	6	67%
6. Clean Water and Sanitation	8	7	88%
7. Affordable and Clean Energy	5	5	100%
8. Decent Work and Economic Development	11	10	83%
9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	8	8	100%
10. Reduced Inequalities	7	6	60%
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	9	9	90%
12. Responsible Consumption and Production	10	7	64%
13. Climate Action	4	4	80%
14. Life below Water	9	3	40%
15. Life on Land	12	4	33%
16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	12	5	42%
17. Partnerships for the Goals	13	5	32%
Total	153/169	109/153	—

Source: RIA Assessment based on PIP 2017-2020

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF ALIGNMENT OF THE 2017-2020 PIP WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PILLARS

AREA	TOTAL TARGETS CONSIDERED	TARGETS ALIGNED	% ALIGNMENT
People	45	36	80%
Planet	43	25	58%
Prosperity	40	38	95%
Peace	12	5	42%
Partnership	13	5	38%
Total	153	109	—

Source: RIA Assessment based on PIP 2017-2020

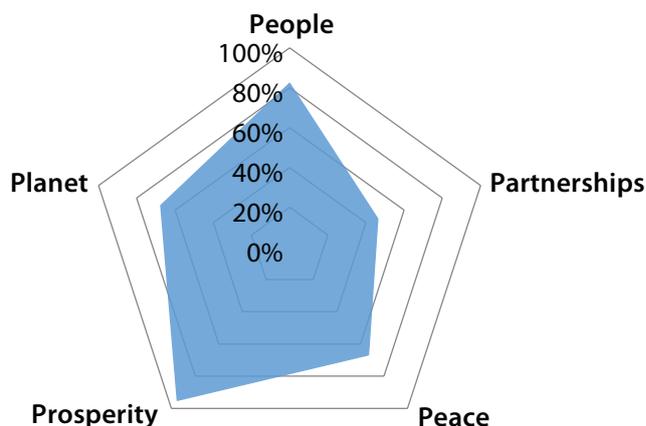
The RIA assessment of the Public Investment Programme reveals an uneven alignment between the 2017–2020 PIP and the SDG target areas (5Ps) for prosperity (84 percent); people (80 percent); planet (58 percent); peace (42 percent) and partnerships (38 percent) as shown on figure 27.

It is important to stress that realistically no country should pursue a 100 percent alignment with the SDG targets. And not all policy goals can be pursued equally and at the same time. A clear set of criteria is needed to plan and implement interventions. The principle of integration requires setting priorities, reviewing the trade-offs and synergies across targets. This will enable strategic investments which will drive the largest impact, minimizing setbacks. The idea is to ensure a balance across the different sustainable development dimensions.

The 2017–2020 PIP has its main focus on economic growth, with an eye on rationalizing expenditures, and relying on an efficiency-based approach. This should be complemented by the trade-off/synergy analysis with other pillars of sustainable development to ensure the country is on track to achieve a balanced development pathway. Development interventions aimed at boosting prosperity may or may not lead to a positive impact on poverty reduction (people) and have a negative impact on the environment (planet). Sustainable development is about balancing its different dimensions.

In summary, the assessment indicates that out of 153 SDG targets, a total of 109 SDG targets are aligned (full and partial SDG targets combined) with the 2017-2020 PIP. While the level of alignment is good, the nature of alignment – partial or fully aligned – needs to be considered. In addition, it is important to probe deeper into the nature of the potential 44 SDG targets that are supposedly not aligned. The preliminary analysis seems to indicate a suboptimal investment in areas related to environment and not enough focus on partnerships.

FIGURE 27: RIA ASSESSMENT, 5PS MAPPING OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (PIP) 2017-2020



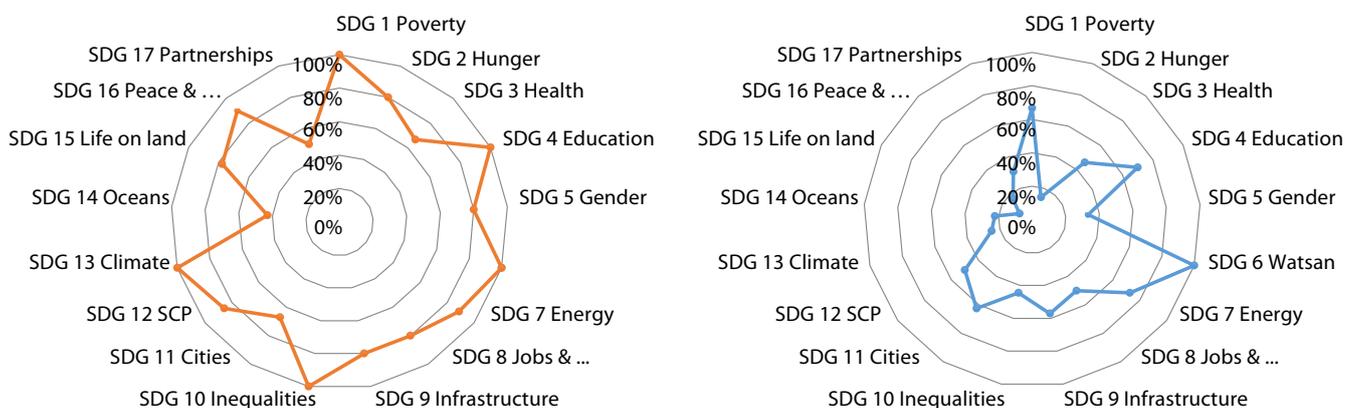
Source: Sri Lanka National Development Planning and UNDP.

The thematic focus of non-aligned SDG targets needs to be considered and their potential catalytic role to positively impact across multiple SDG goals and targets.

Moving forward, an analysis of sectoral plans could provide a better balanced view of the national priorities and alignment with the SDGs. A rapid integrated assessment of the development plans for the nine provinces in Sri Lanka could also provide a good basis for the implementation of the future National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development.

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FIGURE 28: RAPID INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT, BASED ON PIP 2017-2020



Source: Sri Lanka National Development Planning and UNDP.



Fishermen sort fish. Photo by Ertyo5.

development to ensure the country is on track to achieve a balanced development pathway. Development interventions aimed at boosting prosperity may or may not lead to a positive impact on poverty reduction (people) and have a negative impact on the environment (planet). Sustainable development is about balancing its different dimensions.

In summary, the assessment indicates that out of 153 SDG targets, a total of 109 SDG targets are aligned (full and partial SDG targets combined) with the 2017-2020 PIP. While the level of alignment is good, the nature of alignment – partial or fully aligned – needs to be considered. In addition, it is important to probe deeper into the nature of the potential 44 SDG targets that are supposedly not aligned. The preliminary analysis seems to indicate a suboptimal investment in areas related to environment and not enough focus on partnerships.

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4.3. IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING SDG ACCELERATORS

Various lessons have been learned from the MDG agenda, one of which marks a fundamental difference in the 2030 Agenda: these new goals are only achieved if there are clearly defined targets, bottlenecks are addressed and there is engagement in efficient intersectoral and inter-territorial coordination with these targets in mind. The holistic nature of the SDG agenda

requires an approach that promotes solutions capable of going beyond a sectoral and territorial approach and bureaucratic fragmentation, to encourage coordination and efforts to achieve the goals in every country.

The process of grouping the targets into clusters of accelerators is by no means random. It begins with the identification of a strategic objective established in a government policy, such as the eradication of all forms of poverty and inequality, building resistance to natural disasters and climate change or the promotion of citizen security and social cohesion.

Identifying a critical mass of interventions has a greater impact than promoting dozens of actions with a low level of funding, high territorial dispersion and high bureaucratic fragmentation. If political decision makers can increasingly and persistently focus their attention on strategic and structural matters, there will be a better chance of achieving sustained impacts.

Understanding how the targets are interconnected helps guide policymakers in identifying the specific areas that require political actions to be implemented in order to achieve the desired results. This approach also makes it possible to prioritize the creation of indicators for monitoring those targets that contribute to the achievement of the specific agenda in each country. Ultimately, it enables areas to be identified where there are structural problems that need to be addressed through democratic dialogue, the creation of a consensus, the strengthening of institutions, and so on.

This report makes recommendations on key accelerators which can help Sri Lanka accelerate progress across SDGs to achieve sustainable development in which 'no-one is left behind'. These five accelerator areas have been detailed under section 3 of this report, which provides the rationale based on the social, environmental and economic impacts.

Below is a quick summary of proposed accelerators, respective package of interventions and directly related SDG targets. Moving forward, this approach could provide a basis for discussion among Government counterparts and relevant partners and inform the preparation of the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development.

4.4. SDG-BASED PLANNING AND BUDGETING¹⁵¹

4.4.1. Planning, programming and budgeting at the national level

Sri Lanka's current systems and procedures for planning, programming and budgeting is centralized. Thus the functioning of the set of public sector institutional roles

in planning, programming and budgeting has tended to demonstrate striking features of dualism, dichotomy and duplication thereby posing challenges of coherence in urban and local development and for the implementation of the SDGs. As described in the following sections, the governance structures work through the decentralized (i.e., deconcentrated) form as far as central government is concerned and devolved arrangements as far as provincial councils and local authorities are concerned.

Localizing the SDGs and leaving no one behind requires localized allocation of resources, giving local authorities the ability to redistribute the allocation of public expenditures to address spatial inequalities.

Accelerator(s)	Intervention(s)	Related SDGs targets
Addressing inequalities	Invest in Women Economic Empowerment	1.4, 1.b, 5.1, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 8.5, 8.8
	Focus on youth at risk	4.4, 4.6, 8.6, 8.b
	Promote Jobs and livelihoods	1.4, 3.5, 4.4, 8.3, 8.5, 8.9, 8.b, 12.b
	Promote entrepreneurship integrated in education	4.3, 4.4, 4.b, 8.3
Bridging the development and peace gap	Promote participation in decision-making	5.5, 6.b, 9.c, 16.7, 16.10
	Strengthen rule of law mechanisms	16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6
	Support oversight mechanisms	16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.a
	Promote reconciliation and prevention	4.7, 5.2, 16.1, 16.4, 16.b
Investing in the blue and green economy	Promote an inclusive and sustainable growth model	8.1, 8.4
	Invest in sustainable use of oceans and coastal areas	14.2, 14.5, 14.c
	Expand marine protected area system	14.2, 14.7
	Promote regulatory effectiveness and enforcement	14.6, 14.c
Increasing local capacity for service delivery	Mainstream the SDGs in local plans	6.b, 12.b, 13.b, 15.9
	Boost capacity for integrated planning and budgeting	11.3, 11.b, 16.6
	Invest in mechanisms for better targeting of excluded groups	1.3, 1.b, 4.5, 4.a, 9.c, 16.7, 16.10
	Support Area-Based Development	6.b, 8.9
Strengthening quality data and statistical coherence	Improve data capacities	17.18, 17.19
	Define data standards and parameters	17.18, 17.19
	Set up a Data Task Team (cross-ministries, UN, academia)	17.16
	Foster global cooperation (e.g. South-South)	17.6, 17.9

¹⁵¹ This section is based on the report prepared upon the request of the Hon. Chair of the Select Committee of Parliament on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, formulated by Asoka S. Gunawardena as part of the technical assistance provided by UNDP Colombo, 2016.



The fruit stalls in Sea street of Colombo. Photo by Efesenko.

Planning

Constitutionally, planning is a function at the national level. The 13th Amendment demarcating the spheres of the centre and the provinces reserves 'national policy' as a central subject. The National Planning Department is the central planning agency functioning under the purview of a central Ministry for Planning. National planning is essentially of a sectoral nature and works more through a process of project identification than through a national policy framework. The medium-term engagement of the National Planning Department in setting a national planning framework for government is through the preparation of a PIP over a five-year period in the form of a rolling plan. At the level of the ministry, planning is more of an implementation nature guided by the allocations of funds for capital expenditure. As the apex planning body, the National Planning Department makes observations to the Cabinet of Ministers on proposals for projects submitted by sectoral ministries.

At the subnational level, provincial councils are assigned the 'implementation of provincial economic plans'. Provincial planning is mainly confined to allocation of spending for projects identified by provincial sectoral departments. Hence provincial plans are closer to annual implementation plans than to territorial development or SDG plans.

Budgeting

The budget is the central policy document of the government. It is therefore at the centre of a strategy for integrating SDGs, giving policy coherence vertically and horizontally, to targeting 2030 agenda outcomes. Mainstreaming SDGs in the budget will then require matching of budgetary purposes and agenda outcomes through a unified framework built by aligning systems, structures and processes to ensure consistency of practices.

From an SDG implementation perspective, budgeting should be an integrated process, internally expenditures being focused on outcomes, and externally involving a whole of government approach. Mainstreaming SDGs in the budgeting process would then require addressing the issues of aligning the implementation imperatives of the post-2015 agenda with policy and practice budgeting.

An analysis of the alignment of Government budgeting with the imperatives of SDG implementation reveals gaps in systems, structures and processes that arise from fundamental differences in concepts and planning approaches. To resolve these, the following differences need to be reconciled:

- First, the orientation, the aspirational and long-term agenda of SDGs (planning) with the short-term focus of public spending (budgeting);
- Second, the context, the indivisible, integrated and interactive nature of SDG implementation versus sectoral and agency-based fragmentation.
- Third, sustainability of policy measures requiring a participatory multi-stakeholder engagement is different from the practice of budgeting which is essentially technocratic, where negotiations are driven by considerations of control and compliance.

4.4.2. Integrated planning and budgeting at the subnational level

As discussed in this report, regional inequalities in human development underscore the development imperative of devolved provision. Ensuring desired outcomes of devolved provision is about what and how provincial and local governance carries out planning, implementing and monitoring of service delivery programmes. The capacity for

managing provincial and local finance and devolved services must also be reflected in its ability to leverage the development process for the delivery of development outcomes.

Pooled spending targets resources available from national, provincial and local can be targeted to a spatially disaggregated SDG agenda, so that intergovernmental agency services are integrated and delivered laterally and longitudinally, to target sustainable development of households and communities. It involves the following:

- Establishment of integrated budgeting at provincial councils and local government authorities;
- Preparing a matrix of integrated national, provincial and local financing of SDGs;
- Defining a hierarchy of roles and responsibilities to deliver the subnational financing of SDGs, bringing local entities into a partnership to align service delivery with SDG implementation; Defining, within such a hierarchy, define the role and responsibilities of the districts and divisions in monitoring, planning and financing, as well as networking service delivery respectively.

4.4.3. Gender responsive budgeting

Sri Lanka was one of the early pioneers of gender responsive budgeting in Asia. In 1997, it joined a Commonwealth pilot on gender budgeting with a follow-up initiative supported by UNIFEM (now UN Women) in 2002. The initial Commonwealth initiative was coordinated by the Department of National Planning and concentrated on health, education, the public sector, employment, agriculture, industry and social services. The second initiative was undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and UN Women and involved conducting an ex-post analysis of the budget in 2003. In 2004, the National Budget Statement required all ministries to allocate 10 percent of their budgets to initiatives that would improve the status of women.¹⁵² Gender responsive budgeting efforts then appeared to slow down; however, in March 2016, with the support of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs a cabinet memorandum was issued mandating allocation of at least 25 percent of all investment on rural economic development for women.¹⁵³ The Memorandum envisaged the development of a Provincial Women's Economic Development Plan in order to ensure that benefits of the development projects reached rural women.¹⁵⁴ This represents a timely opportunity and entry

TABLE 7: INTERGOVERNMENTAL EXPENDITURE

Goal	No. of targets	National	Concurrent	Provincial	Local
1. Poverty	07	01	04	05	05
2. Hunger	08	03	05	05	02
3. Health	13	02	03	06	04
4. Education	10	07	02	09	02
5. Gender	09	02	04	04	00
6. Water	08	03	03	03	04
7. Energy	05	00	01	02	01
8. Employment	12	08	05	03	01
9. Infrastructure	08	05	02	03	01
10. Inequality	10	00	04	04	02
11. Cities	10	03	08	08	03
12. Consumption	11	00	05	03	00
13. Climate	05	00	03	01	01
14. Oceans & Seas	10	07	04	00	00
15. Ecosystems	12	02	08	04	00
16. Inclusive Societies	12	09	01	07	00
17. Partnerships	19	11	02	01	01
Total	169	56	57	68	28

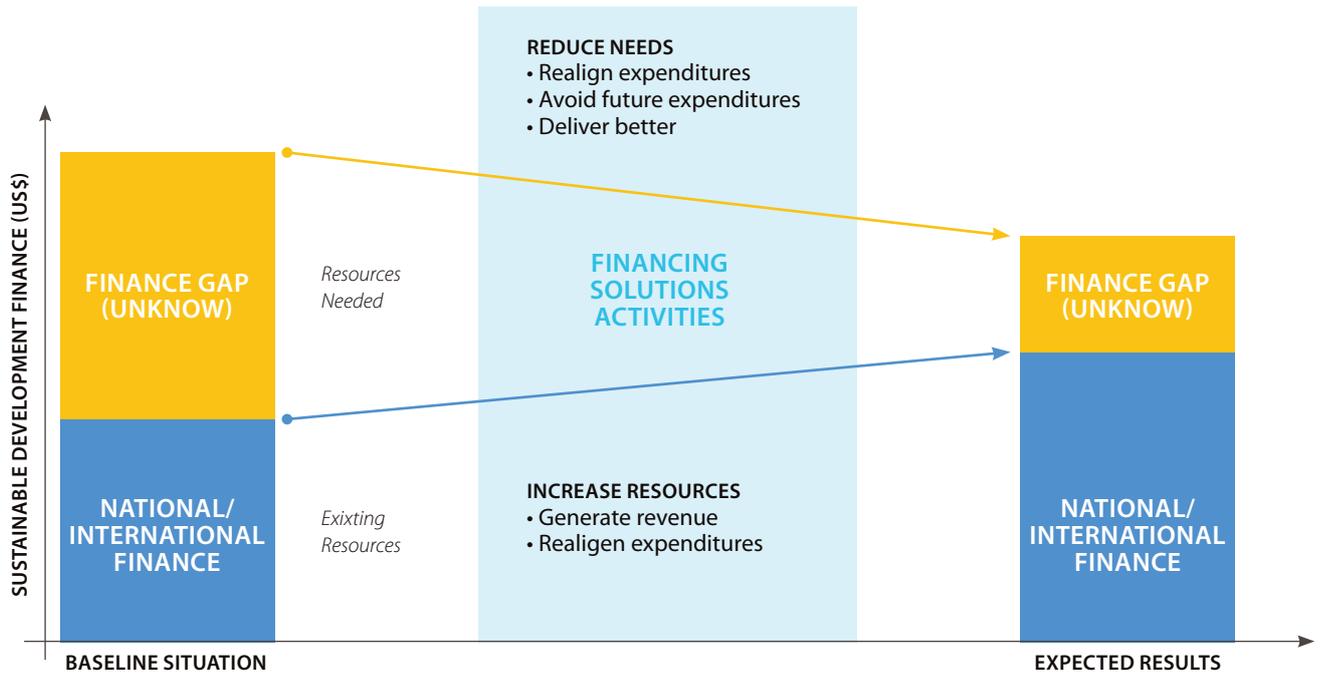
Source: Asoka S. Gunawardena, UNDP report, 2016.

¹⁵² Chakraborty, Lekha (2016), *Asia: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts*, IMF.

¹⁵³ UN Women (2016), 'Gender responsive budgeting in the Asia Pacific Region: A Status Report'.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

FIGURE 29: FINANCING THE SDGs



Source: UNDP, Financing Solutions for SD Platform

point for gender-responsive budgeting at the subnational level. However, gender mainstreaming is not mandated across all government sectors, and in the PIP is confined to a Women’s Empowerment section which is not aligned with specific targets and resources.

4.5. FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA

A major task for policy makers in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in financing the 2030 Agenda will be to devise financing solutions to attract and direct investments to areas where greater co-benefits and multiplier effects can be achieved. The development of the domestic financial sector and the integration of local, national, regional and international markets have increased the number of options the public and private sector can choose from to advance investments in SDG sectors.

The review of existing financing solutions which are available to Sri Lanka must be guided by three overarching principles:

- **Efficiency:** Public and private finance must be used catalytically, i.e., to plan wisely, allocate resource for results and leverage multiple sources of finance.
- **Effectiveness:** Finance solutions should not be framed in silos. They should be combined to deliver multiple economic, social and environmental benefits and be risk informed.

- **Equity:** Countries and people need to participate fairly and benefit. The financial market and the multiplication of financial flows have largely benefited a fewer economies, sectors and groups.

Once the Government of Sri Lanka has defined its strategy or roadmap to achieve the SDGs, the next logical step is to estimate the resources required to finance its implementation based on the existing resource envelope and the finance gap.

4.5.1. Domestic resource mobilization: Fiscal space

The Government has a large unmet financing need for its development plans and has been putting in place measures for a broader much needed tax reform to simplify taxes, widen the tax base and increase compliance.

4.5.2. Alternative financing for development mechanisms

Below is a non-exhaustive list of existing financing solutions that may or may not already be in use in Sri Lanka for financing development.¹⁵⁵

- **Biodiversity offsets:** Measurable conservation outcomes resulting from actions that compensate for significant residual adverse biodiversity impacts arising from development projects.

¹⁵⁵ UNDP has developed an online platform for financing solutions for sustainable development that provides guidance to review and operationalize financing solutions for the implementation of national sustainable development plans and SDG-specific strategies.

- **Bioprospecting:** Systematic search for biochemical and genetic information in nature in order to develop commercially valuable products and applications.
- **Carbon markets:** Carbon markets aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions cost effectively by setting limits on emissions and enabling the trading of emission units.
- **Climate credit mechanisms:** Market mechanisms that enable entities for whom the cost of reducing emissions is high, to pay low-cost emitters for carbon credits that they can use towards meeting their emission-reduction obligations. An example is the Clean Development Mechanism.
- **Ecological fiscal transfers:** Integrating ecological services by making conservation indices (e.g., size/quality of protected areas) part of the fiscal allocation formula to reward investments in conservation.
- **Enterprise challenge funds:** Funding instrument that distributes grants (or concessional finance) to profit-seeking projects on a competitive basis.
- **Environmental trust funds:** Legal entity and investment vehicle to help mobilize, blend and oversee the collection and allocation of financial resources for environmental purposes.
- **Fuel taxes:** The sale tax any individual or firm who purchases fuel for his/her automobile or home heating pays. Fuel taxes can reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions while generating public revenues.
- **Green bonds:** Bonds where proceeds are invested exclusively in projects that generate climate or other environmental benefits.
- **Impact investment:** Investments made into companies, organizations and funds with the intention to generate a measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.
- **Lotteries:** Governments and CSOs use lotteries as a means of raising funds for benevolent purposes such as education, health, preservation of historic sites and nature conservation.
- **Public guarantees:** Guarantees can mobilize and leverage commercial financing by mitigating and/or protecting risks, notably commercial default or political risks.
- **Remittances:** Private unrequited transfers sent from abroad to families and communities in a worker's country of origin.



Sri Lankan fisherman holding lotus flower. Photo by Sbedaux.



V. WAY FORWARD: CAPITALIZING
ON THE RENEWED IMPETUS
FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Fisheries Activities and Fish Market in Negombo, Sri Lanka. Photo by Saman Weeratunga.

The approval of the Sustainable Development Act is a critical milestone for the implementation of the SDGs in Sri Lanka. It is expected that the Act will generate the political momentum needed to unleash action that can engage relevant actors in the Sri Lankan society.

The Act stipulates that the Sustainable Development Council will lead the preparation of a National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development for Sri Lanka. The Act also stipulates that “It shall be the duty of every ministry, department, provincial council, provincial ministry and department and any local authority to comply with the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development” (part II, paragraph 11). It notes that “[e]very ministry, department, provincial council, provincial ministry and department and local authority shall prepare the Sustainable Development Strategy relevant to the scope of such ministry, department, provincial council, provincial ministry and department and local authority in accordance with the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development within a period of one year from the date of approval under subsection (6) of section 11 by the Parliament.”

Furthermore, the Government of Sri Lanka has volunteered to take part in the Voluntary National Review at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to be held in New York in July 2018. The HLPF process will provide additional impetus for Sri Lanka to better coordinate SDG implementation efforts.

As the Sustainable Development Council embarks in the planning process to develop the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development that will provide the vision for development for Sri Lanka to 2030, it is important to ensure that SDG planning has to encompass not just national and subnational governments but also a diverse set of other stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions and the private sector, and groups normally under-represented, such as women’s and youth’s groups.

For this purpose, the planning process must be inclusive, participatory and transparent from the outset, considering the engagement of the following:

- **Local government authorities:** The SDGs can only be achieved if the right conditions are created at the local level – with adequate resources, investment and capacities. The Sustainable Development Council is expected to effectively engage the nine Provincial Councils in the formulation of the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development for Sri Lanka and deliberations of the Council. Each province is expected to develop local sustainable development plans aligned with the national policy and strategy.

- **Civil society and local communities:** Civil society and local communities should be involved since they can represent the needs of under-represented communities and regions. They also have extensive experience in delivering services to the poor and can recommend interventions appropriate to particular target populations and geographic areas. They should therefore be represented in thematic working groups, as well as in public consultations.

- **Private sector:** The private sector contributes directly to the achievement of the SDGs by providing the investments, employment, innovation, and green technologies needed to eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable development. It also contributes to social services such as health and education and can add vital management expertise and help mobilize resources. Private sector representatives should therefore work with the government to identify priority infrastructure investments — such as energy, transportation, water and sanitation – while ensuring they meet the social and environmental standards. In thematic working groups and other activities they can be represented by national chambers of commerce or similar organizations.

- **Donors:** Sri Lanka has a vibrant donor community which is interested to engage in SDG implementation. Identifying clear early entry points for the donor community on the SDGs will help to gain the needed traction to achieve the country’s vision for development by 2030.

- **UN System:** the Government of Sri Lanka at national and provincial levels can rely for critical support on UN agencies, funds and programmes. For this purpose, the UN Country Team (UNCT) can help establish consultative processes and advise on different aspects of SDG planning. The team can also appoint UN focal persons to support thematic working groups and coordinate UNCT assistance. The UNCT is also aligning its SDG efforts in Sri Lanka with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). UN support on the ground is coordinated through the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator.

Applying a ‘whole-of-society’ approach will be key to building a foundation for broad-based participation and enhancing the legitimacy of both the national vision and the resulting development strategy. This is not easy. A whole-of-society approach requires careful management and ensuring groups have the adequate capacity to engage at national and sub-national levels.

Moving forward, the political momentum in Sri Lanka could not be more suitable to embark in a ‘Sustainable Era’ as described by His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena.

ANNEXES



Sri Lanka transport strike. Photo by Musthaq Thasleem.

ANNEX I. MAPS MISSION OBJECTIVES

In response to Member States' request for coherent and integrated support from the UN development system for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has drawn up a common approach – known as MAPS – that would provide effective and coherent implementation support to implement the SDGs at the country level.

MAPS stands for Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support. The approach was adopted by UNDG in October 2015 and captures the core components of the UNDG's upstream support to the SDGs:

- Raise public awareness on the 2030 Agenda and ensure that the principles and goals of sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda are fully integrated into national and subnational policy formulation, planning and budgetary processes.
- Conduct analytical work that informs policy makers about the drivers and bottlenecks to sustainable development at the country level, and contributes to the design of policy interventions that can accelerate progress towards achieving national SDGs by 2030.
- Provide policy support through joint approaches that will enable the UN to deploy its technical expertise and advice to Member States in support of SDG implementation in an integrated way.

A one-week MAPS mission was deployed to Sri Lanka to respond to the requests from the Government and the United Nations Country Team and UN Resident Coordinator's Office to assist them in addressing key challenges of mainstreaming of and accelerating the SDGs. The mission was requested to analyse the status of alignment between national plans and strategies and the SDGs, through a Rapid Integrated SDG Assessment, and discuss the findings of the assessment, and related opportunities and challenges, with the widest possible group of stakeholders. The mission was also asked to review the current institutional architecture for SDG planning, coordination and monitoring, as well as the data needs and capacities for information and statistics management.

The UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) reached out to other UN partners to devise a more integrated UN approach to the MAPS mission. As a result, the MAPS mission to Sri Lanka also involved colleagues from the Regional Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (ESCAP) and from the United Nations Population Fund Regional Office (UNFPA) in Bangkok. In addition, members of the UNCT engaged in several meetings and dialogues with the mission team, with development partners and at the debrief

session with the Government. The mission also conducted a four-hour training session with UNCT technical staff.

The mission was planned for the end of 2016 but was postponed to give the UNCT time to advance their discussions on a new UN Sustainable Development Framework and for the Government to progress on the SDG Roadmap, and Vision 2030, a national policy to meet sustainable development goals for Sri Lanka. The preparation of the SDG Roadmap is the responsibility of the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Wildlife (MSDW), while the development of Vision 2030 has been assigned to a Committee of Experts reporting to the President and led by Prof. Mohan Munasinghe.

The initial purpose of the mission was to prepare an action plan for UNCT to support both the national vision and roadmap. However, after meetings with the MSDW and the Presidential Expert Group, the mission was informed that both the Roadmap and Vision 2030 were still being developed. The inter-agency mission therefore changed its purpose to provide strategic direction to the Government on how best to accelerate the advancement of the SDGs in Sri Lanka. The outcome of the mission would contribute to finalizing the government's SDG Roadmap and Vision 2030, and also help the UNCT in finalizing the UN Sustainable Development Framework 2018-2021 (see Annex 1 for the final Terms of Reference).

The mission composition was done in consultation with the Resident Coordinator Office, the UNDP office and UNCT. The involvement of ESCAP in the interagency mission was considered important as ESCAP was already engaging with a few government entities on creating SDG monitoring systems. The mission composition was as follows:

Patrick Keuleers

Director, Governance and Peacebuilding, BPPS New York (UNDP, Team Leader)

Renata Rubian

Policy Specialist, Sustainable Development, BPPS New York (UNDP)

Katinka Weinberger

Chief Environmental and Development Policy Section, UNESCAP

Ingrid Fitzgerald

Technical Advisor Gender and Human Rights, UNFPA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Christoffer Ryan

Regional Advisor on Statistics, UNESCAP

Patrick Duong,

Regional Programme Advisor, Local Governance and Decentralization, UNDP Regional Hub in Bangkok

The composition reflected the need to discuss SDG mainstreaming and alignment with national goals as the main entry point for a dialogue on the larger picture in Sri Lanka: the SDG strategy, climate change and environmental issues, economic growth, poverty and exclusion, gender and human rights, localizing the SDGs, data and statistics management, and last but not least, the importance of the governance and peacebuilding agenda in the context of Sri Lanka's transition from conflict towards a more peaceful and inclusive society.

The mission was conducted from 22 to 27 May 2017. Over the course of the week, the mission met with a wide variety of stakeholders from government, the parliament, civil society, the private sector, youth organizations, subnational governments and development partners where it presented the MAPS approach, and was briefed on the ongoing constitutional reform process.¹⁵⁶

ANNEX II. THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT, NO.19 OF 2017

The Sustainable Development Act, No.19 of 2017¹⁵⁷, aims to support the development and implementation of the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development, and establishes the Sustainable Development Council.

The Council is mandated to formulate the National Policy and Strategy, in collaboration with all relevant parties and the nine Provincial Councils. The link to the SDGs is explicit: "The National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development shall be in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets and "the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development shall be in force until the end of the year 2030" (part II, paragraph 11, Sustainable Development Act).

The Council would consist of the following ex-officio members:

- Secretary to the President;
- Secretary to the Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife;
- Secretary to the Minister of National Planning (currently, the Prime Minister also holds the office of Minister of National Planning);
- Secretary to the Minister of Environment (currently, the President also holds the office of the Minister of Environment);
- Eight other members: two nominated by the President, one by the Prime Minister, two nominated by the Minister

of Sustainable Development, and three members out of the nine persons nominated by the provincial councils on a rotational basis.

According to the Sustainable Development Act, the powers, functions and duties of the Council are as follows:

- Facilitate the achievement of national, regional and international commitments relating to sustainable development;
- Formulate National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development in consultation and with the concurrence of all relevant parties and nine provincial councils and place before the Cabinet of Ministers for approval;
- Review and update the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development periodically as and when the Cabinet of Ministers decides;
- Issue sustainable development guidelines for the ministries, provincial councils and project-approving agencies for new development projects;
- Facilitate and monitor the mechanisms and review processes of the progress made on implementation of the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development;
- Appoint expert committees to study specific issues;
- Identify sustainable development standards and ecological footprint indicators;

¹⁵⁶ The Ministry of National Policy and Economic Affairs (in particular the Planning Department and Department of Census and Statistics); the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, the Ministry of Finance (the Budget Department); the Presidential Secretariat Expert group on the country's vision 2030 (Professor Munasinghe and five members of the expert group); the Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office; the Ministry of Disaster Management; the Climate Change Secretariat; the Ministry of Agriculture; the Parliamentary Select Committee on the SDGs (under the chairmanship of the Deputy Speaker of Parliament); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and the Secretariat for Coordination of Reconciliation Mechanisms as well as Representatives from the President's Office, Prime Minister's Office, Human Rights Commission and Office of National Unity and Reconciliation, the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils; the Ministry of Home Affairs; the Provincial Deputy Chief Secretaries (in charge of planning); the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration, the Centre for Poverty Analysis; the Finance Commission; the Institute of Policy Studies (Verite); Asoka Gunawardena, Consultant on Localizing the SDGs; Private sector partners (UN Global Compact, Ceylon Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Commerce and Industries and a number of private companies); civil society organizations; youth organizations and UN Youth Coordination Group; women's organizations and UN Gender Group; development partners (EU, France, ADB, World Bank, IMF, GTZ, USAID, JICA, KOICA, The International Committee of the Red Cross).

¹⁵⁷ The full document of the Sustainable Development Act, No. 19 of 2017, is available at: http://documents.gov.lk/files/act/2017/10/19-2017_E.pdf

- Promote sustainable development including research and development, innovation, education and awareness;
- Identify, introduce and follow up the mechanisms, audits and all other matters relating to sustainable development;
- Acquire, hold, take or give on lease or hire, any immovable property;
- Open, maintain and close current and savings accounts in any State bank; and
- Accept grants, gifts or donations from persons or bodies of persons, in or outside Sri Lanka, provided that the Council has obtained prior written approval of the Department of External Resources of the Ministry of the Minister assigned the subject of National Policies and Economic Affairs.



Traditional fishing boat on Sri Lanka. Photo by Nevodka.



United Nations
Office in Sri Lanka
202 – 204, Bauddhaloka Mawatha
Colombo 07, Sri Lanka
www.un.org

