

## Executive Brief: **Sri Lanka** Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification (IPC)

### Overview

Sri Lanka has long been celebrated as a model low-income country - one that has achieved extraordinary success in attaining high levels of literacy and health outcomes, despite low levels of per capita income. However the food security situation is still poor. The country classifies as a low income food deficit country and food availability depends predominantly on rice production and marketing. Furthermore poverty remains high and widespread.

The 2004 tsunami and the resumption of the armed conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the Government forces in the North and North East of the country have affected the lives and livelihoods of thousands of families. Since last year, 300,000 people have been displaced and two districts have plunged into a humanitarian emergency with others on the verge of doing the same.

As part of WFP's preparations for the next phase of the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) covering 2008, a food security assessment took place from 15-30 April using secondary data from various sources. WFP used this opportunity to further pilot the Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification (IPC). The assessment team worked closely with a task force consisting of FAO, SCF-UK, CARE, World Vision, FIVIMS and HARTI Research Institute.

### Food security: How is Sri Lanka classified?

While much of the country is classified either as "chronically food insecure" or "generally food secure", there are however areas which fall under the classification of "Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis" and "Humanitarian Emergency".

**Generally food secure:** Six districts are classified as food secure. They are the western districts: Kurunegala, Gampaha, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle and Matara.

**Chronically food insecure:** Twelve districts are classified in this phase. They are mainly situated in the centre and the south of the country. *Population below the poverty line = 2.8 million*

**Acute food and livelihood crisis:** Five districts are classified in this phase: Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee, Mannar and parts of Vavuniya are classified as livelihood crisis due to the armed conflict and the imposed embargo on fuel, agricultural and construction materials. *Population below the poverty line = 900.000*

**Humanitarian Emergency:** Two districts are classified in this phase; Jaffna and Batticaloa are facing a widespread high intensity conflict with thousands of IDPs, collapsing markets, increasing malnutrition levels and great income losses as households cannot resume their livelihoods. Jaffna is totally isolated due to the closure of the main road linking Jaffna with the rest of the island. *Population below the poverty line in this phase = 800.000*

To establish the classification, six key outcome indicators were used: under 5 mortality rate (U5MR); crude mortality; stunting; wasting; water/sanitation; livelihood assets (female literacy, access to health facilities, road access, banks).

In addition, the following process indicators were used to give a more comprehensive picture: poverty rates, infant mortality rate, underweight, real wages, rice production and productivity growth, rice self-sufficiency status, and physical access to markets.

### The IPC: classifying food security

The Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification (IPC) approach was developed by the Somalia Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU), for classifying current and expected food security into five phases:

- generally food secure
- chronically food insecure
- acute food and livelihood crisis
- humanitarian emergency
- famine/humanitarian catastrophe

The IPC is not an assessment method per se. It integrates information and analyses from diverse sources to classify food security according to reference outcomes that are drawn from recognized international standards (e.g. on nutrition).

WFP is working with FAO and other partners to adapt the IPC to other countries and contexts. The goal is to develop and advocate for a commonly accepted, standardized tool for classifying food insecurity to facilitate comparison between countries and over time. The Sri Lanka exercise is the third time that the IPC has been applied outside the Horn of Africa region (the first were in Indonesia and Cambodia).

## **Early warning levels, based on hazard perception (April- September 2007)**

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**Alert:** The districts with a history of floods and drought, Hambantota, Monaragala, Badulla, Polonnaruwa, and Kalutara have been given alert early warning as it is likely that it may occur again. However, the risk for it happening in the next 6 months is small. The conflict affected districts of Trincomalee and Vavuniya & Mannar (on the government side of the defence line) are also at an alert level.

**Moderate risk:** Jaffna and Batticaloa are in moderate risk of becoming a Humanitarian Catastrophe.

**High risk of falling into the next worst phase:** Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar & Vavuniya (on the Tamil Tiger's side of the defence line) are at high risk of becoming Humanitarian Emergencies.

## **The main causes of food insecurity**

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### **Food supply and availability:**

- Despite significant improvement over the past two years (2005-2006), the country's net rice production remains insufficient to meet household demand.
- Spatial disparities in rice self-sufficiency exist among districts, with the main rice surplus areas being located in the conflict-affected districts apart from the North-Central. As a result, inter-provincial trade opportunities from surplus to deficit areas are limited.
- Food availability is an issue in rural areas of Matara, Hambantota, Puttalam, Badulla, Monaragala, Ratnapura and Kegalle due to a combination of remoteness, poor access to markets and deficit production.
- Poor road network is an important underlying factor for increasing poverty disparities between urban and rural areas. The lack of infrastructure hinders physical access to markets and to livelihood activities. Poor road access is seen in the North, East and Central provinces

### **Access to food:**

- **Poverty** is a predominant factor that influences food security. In seven districts, Badulla, Hambantota, Kegalle, Matara, Moneragala, Puttalam and Ratnapura, the depth of poverty is about 7 percent or higher. It is very likely that poverty is also high in the conflict struck North-East.
- Under employment, affecting nearly 25 percent of the work force, is another factor which influences access and which is a problem particularly in the south. The wages for unskilled labour have not followed the speed of inflation and thus the purchasing power for these groups has in fact reduced over the years.
- Increased market prices prevent poor households from accessing food. The districts of Jaffna, Batticaloa, Badulla, Monaragala, Kalutara, Ampara and Kandy have seen particularly high price increases. Furthermore high price volatility affects access for those living below or just above the poverty line.
- In the conflict affected areas income losses combined with higher market prices have reduced the purchasing power for large numbers of households.
- There are huge discrepancies between urban and rural districts, with the North-East particularly affected after more than 20 years of conflict. The Estate districts also have an elevated poverty rate due to poor labour employment practices in the tea plantations.

### **Food utilisation:**

- **Malnutrition:** Despite improved poverty levels and reduced infant and child mortality the nutritional indicators have remained unacceptably high, especially acute malnutrition (wasting) and underweight. Disparities between districts are sometimes two-three times. Highest rates of under-nutrition are reported in the conflict affected north and east as well as estate areas. Nutrition knowledge is still seen as the underlying cause for high prevalence of under-nutrition as well as micronutrient deficiencies.
- **Under 5 mortality rate:** Sri Lanka has seen a remarkable reduction in child mortality over the years as well as in maternal mortality. There is however some disparity between districts due to availability and access to health services, but rates are still very low.

- **Water / sanitation:** Access to clean water is not seen as a problem in Sri Lanka and the large majority has access to safe drinking water even though it is not piped in the rural areas. Two districts have much reduced safe water access: Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu in the north. Sanitation on the other hand is a problem with huge differences between districts. In the western districts some 95 percent have access to toilets whilst it is as low as 30 percent in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu in the north.

## Recommendations for WFP interventions

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The assessment concludes that food supply and availability are significant problems in districts where the road network is poor and thus affecting access to markets. Access to food, chronic poverty and malnutrition are other main issues, as well as the armed conflict, which pushes people to flee.

**General Food Distribution (GFD):** IDPs and vulnerable households, such as the fishermen, in the conflict areas are in need of life saving food assistance as their livelihoods have been severely affected. This intervention would also aim at livelihood protection. This group consists of 800.000 people in Jaffna and Batticaloa. GFD will be required as long as they cannot resume their livelihoods due to the armed conflict.

**Food for Work:** in rural areas, FFW could include drought and flood mitigation projects such as soil and water conservation, water harvesting work on farm land, latrine construction in schools as well as rural road construction in very remote areas. If resources are available, FFW is recommended for the non-conflict areas where some 560,000 households would benefit from such intervention during the total PRRO duration. In addition, 150,000 households in the conflict areas would require livelihood protection activities. Depending on the security situation, these households could temporarily be eligible for GFD.

**Nutrition interventions:** Joint efforts are needed to tackle the high malnutrition levels. A causal analysis is needed to determine the most cost effective interventions. WFP should also review the food basket in the MCN programme as the rations are currently too small to have much impact.

A Supplementary Feeding Programme for malnourished children under five is needed in the conflict areas due to increasing malnutrition rates caused by the significant reduction in households' food access.

**Food for Education:** WFP should revise the objectives of the school feeding project as there are virtually no enrolment problems or gender disparities in Sri Lanka. Emergency Food for Education is recommended in the conflict areas in order to prevent short term hunger as food availability and access are big problems. WFP should continue to support the FRESH initiative in the schools where it is currently implemented and initiate it in the schools supported through FFE, as water/sanitation conditions in schools are particularly poor.

**Vouchers:** There are two districts where vouchers could be considered. Kilinochchi is a district with surplus rice production but very restricted access to its normal lucrative market outside the Vanni. Ampara is the other district with substantial surplus production where rice vouchers could be considered. Households would thus pick up their rice rations from pre-identified shops.

**Food Security Monitoring System:** WFP should consider developing a Food Security Monitoring System due to the volatile situation in the North and the East and thus a constant need for updated livelihood and food security information. This would reduce the need for the more costly and time consuming assessments and would give the Programme Unit more regular data for decision making.

### For more information, contact

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