

# Synopsis of Rapid Drought Impact Assessment Report



April 2014

## BACKGROUND

The northeast monsoon, which supplies water for agriculture across the key producing areas of the country, received below average rainfall for consecutive months between September 2013 and March 2014 leading to prolonged drought across most of the country.

The availability of rainfall in this period is critical as it provides water for the main agricultural season (*Maha*) for the northern, eastern, and southeastern parts of Sri Lanka. Given that most of the rice consumed is produced in these areas, insufficient production can have detrimental effects on food security.

More than 1.5 million are estimated to have been affected, mostly in the northern and eastern parts. An estimated 768 thousand need urgent assistance in order to meet basic food and livelihood requirements.

## For more information, please contact:

WFP Sri Lanka

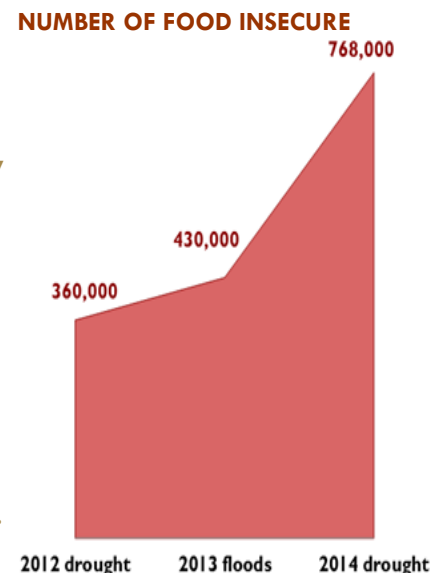
Address: 2, Jawatte Avenue, Colombo 5, SRI LANKA

Telephone: +94 11 2586244

E-mail: [WFP.Colombo@wfp.org](mailto:WFP.Colombo@wfp.org)

## food security and livelihoods affected by erratic weather KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ The *Maha* 2014 drought seriously damaged agricultural production - and is threatening to significantly limit the upcoming *yala* harvest.
- ✓ Three consecutive years of natural disasters has undermined household resilience: populations in affected areas have built up unsustainable levels of debts, have insufficient access to water for irrigation, have limited quality seed supply and are exposed to a continue decline in agricultural income.
- ✓ As a consequence, food insecurity has increased dramatically to an estimated 768,000. More than double the caseload in 2012.
- ✓ Household food consumption deteriorated sharply: 18 percent of households consume inadequate diets of low calorie and/or diversity. This used to be around 6 percent. A threefold increase.
- ✓ Immediate coordinated relief and agricultural inputs specifically targeting the vulnerable households, are recommended to prevent a further collapse in household resilience.



ChildFund  
Sri Lanka

DANISH  
REFUGEE  
COUNCIL



OCHA



Save the  
Children



## IMPACT ON CROP PRODUCTION

The lack of precipitation has damaged 83,746 hectares of paddy lands, or 13 percent of planted area. The production loss of paddy is estimated at 280,000 MT, or 15 percent of forecasted production.

Forecast for *Yala* remain speculative. However, with the unfavorable e lNino climate outlook, insufficient water reserves for *Yala* cultivation, looking that 90% of the surveyed population did not had quality seeds, only 23 percent of farming households are preparing for paddy cultivation. This indicates that *Yala* production will likely be insufficient to offset the *Maha* losses.

## IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Only a little more than half (57%) of the expected number of working days was achieved during the *Maha* season. This together with incurred crop losses, immediately translated into a drop of more than 50 percent in income for many households. Income in affected areas in March 2014 was 37% below the national poverty line.

Further, the spread of foot & mouth disease outbreak was aggravated due to the convergence of animals at limited water points.

## COPING THROUGH BUILDING UP DEBTS

To cope with the reduction in incomes, an increasing number of people are relying on loans in order to cope with the drought. Populations in affected areas have build up unsustainable levels of debts (on average more than 100 percent of their annual income). As of March, only 17% of outstanding loans was settled.

Households are mostly using their loans to restore their livelihoods in anticipation of the upcoming agricultural cycle: this includes purchase of seeds, agricultural inputs, machinery, and fertilizers. Around 15% of the loans are being used to purchase food—highlighting that meeting basic food needs is still a priority for one sixth of the population. This is particularly the case in the northern areas.

## IMPACT ON WATER AVAILABILITY

Water availability is precarious with 60% of the HH reporting in adequate drinking water and 30% reported having issues providing adequate water for their livestock. Paddy farmers depending on irrigation reported a 75% inadequacy of water supply for the next season.

## IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

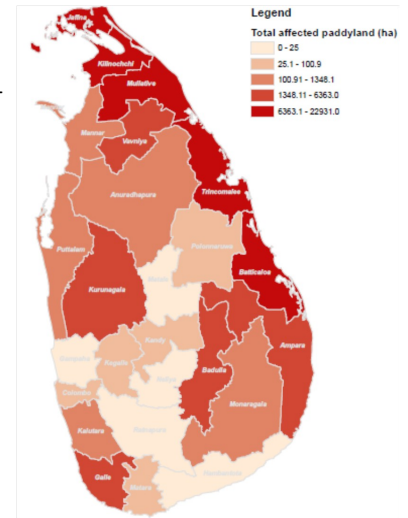
The food security situation continues to deteriorate. The series of consecutive disasters has exposed more people to the risks of food insecurity—the total number of food insecure is now estimated at 768,000. A number likely to further rise if the *Yala* production is affected, as is expected. The proportion of households with an inadequate diet is estimated to have tripled: in normal conditions, the proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption in the northern provinces is estimated to be around 6 per cent; by comparison, the recent survey suggests that 18 per cent of the population have limited meal diversity and/or quantities.

## RESPONSE

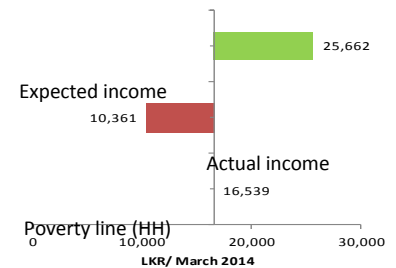
The government has spent 276 million LKR over the past 3 years for disaster relief. International contributions in contrast were marginal.

Urgent relief is required to prevent the breakdown of resilience at the household level. Food insecurity has accumulated due to consecutive disasters events over the past 3 years. Agricultural inputs such as seeds , fertilizers and vaccinations for Foot & Mouth disease are required.

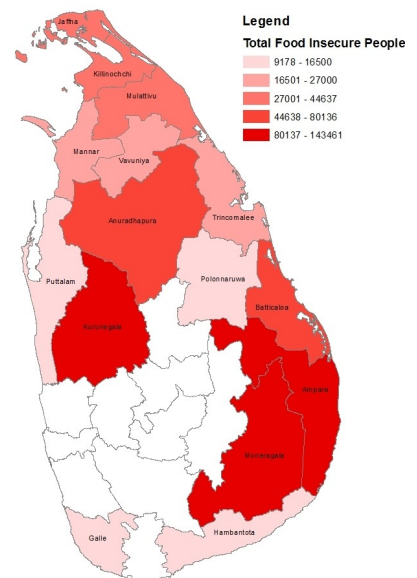
## PADDY CROP LOSSES



## INCOME SEVERELY IMPACTED



## DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD INSECURITY



## GOVERNMENT DISASTER RELIEF

2012	drought	61.9
2013	flood	147.7
2014	drought	66.3