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United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework For Sri Lanka

2023-2027

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2023-2027

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
JSC	Joint Government of Sri Lanka – United Nations Steering Committee
MPHSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIP	Public Investment Programme
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027
UNSDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2018-2022
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

UN ENTITY ACRONYMS

ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

DECLARATION

The Government and people of Sri Lanka and the United Nations Country Team are committed to working together, in support of national development priorities and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) will guide the work of the UN system in Sri Lanka through 2027. This Cooperation Framework is anchored in a rights–based approach and is underpinned by the principle of leaving no one behind as the country makes progress on all three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The collective results expected from the Cooperation Framework will contribute to a vision where all people in Sri Lanka, especially the most vulnerable, contribute to and benefit from inclusive, just, sustainable and rights-based development in a resilient, peaceful and cohesive society, leading to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. At the centre of the Cooperation Framework is a focus on investing in people.

The current Cooperation Framework represents a commitment of support at a time of severe economic challenges. The Strategic Priorities and Outcomes contained in this Cooperation Framework which have been finalized in partnership with the Government of Sri Lanka will remain constant for the duration of the implementation cycle as they are based on a theory of change designed to support the long-term attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka. At the same time, the Cooperation Framework has a flexible, adaptive approach that allows for regular adjustments to Outputs and joint work plans through which United Nations contributions are operationalized in line with evolving national priorities.

In line with the United Nations General Assembly's Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of UN system operational activities and its relevant resolutions on development cooperation with middle-income countries, the Cooperation Framework embodies a continued shift from a traditional model of direct support and service provision towards a greater emphasis on integrated high-quality policy advice, strengthening institutions, capacity development and support for the leveraging of partnerships and financing.

The implementation of the Cooperation Framework is guided by the repositioning of the United Nations Development System and the Delivering as One approach, aimed at enhanced coordination, transparency, efficiency and impact of United Nations development activities.

In pursuit of this vision, we will respect and adhere to the evolving priorities and needs of the Government and people of Sri Lanka as well as of the principles and objectives of the United Nations.

K M Mahinda Siriwardana
Secretary to the Treasury, Ministry of Finance
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

UNITED NATIONS
SRI LANKA

Hanaa Singer-Hamdy
Resident Coordinator
UN in Sri Lanka

SIGNATORIES

By signing hereunder, we, as members of the United Nations Country Team in Sri Lanka endorse this United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027) and underscore our joint commitment to coherently working together in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration towards supporting the collective achievement of the expected outcomes.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Vimlendra Sharan
Representative
FAO

IFAD
Investing in rural people

Sherina Tabassum
Country Director
IFAD

International Labour Organization

Simrin C. Singh
Country Director
ILO

IOM
UN MIGRATION

Sarat Dash
Chief of Mission
IOM

International Trade Centre

Ashish Shah
Director, Division of Country Programmes
ITC

unicef
for every child

Christian Skoog
Representative
UNICEF

UNDP

Robert Juhkam
Resident Representative
UNDP

UNITED NATIONS ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Mikiko Tanaka
Director and Head, South and South-West Asia Office
ESCAP

unesco

Eric Falt
Regional Director for South Asia
UNESCO

UN WOMEN

Sarah Knibbs
Deputy Regional Director
Asia and the Pacific
UN Women

UN environment programme

Dechen Tsering
Regional Director and Representative
for Asia and the Pacific
UNEP

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Menique Amarasinghe
Head of National Office
UNHCR

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Laxman Perera
Officer in Charge, Country Office
UN-HABITAT

UNIDO

Cornelius Van Berkel
Representative
UNIDO

UNDRR
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Marco Toscano-Rivalta
Chief, Regional Office for
Asia and the Pacific
UNDRR

UNOPS

Charles Callanan
Director-Sri Lanka
Multi-Country Office (LKMCO)
UNOPS

UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Tullio Santini
Regional Representative a.i.
UNODC

UNFPA

Kunle Adeniyi
Representative
UNFPA

UN VOLUNTEERS
Sri Lanka

Dmitry Frischin
Officer in Charge, Regional Office
for Asia and Pacific
UNV

WFP
World Food Programme

Abdur Rahim Siddiqui
Representative/Country Director
WFP

World Health Organization
Sri Lanka

Alaka Singh
Representative
WHO

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) for 2023-2027 articulates the collective vision and contribution of the United Nations (UN) system to support Sri Lanka to accelerate actions towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Cooperation Framework was developed during an unprecedented period of economic, political and social disruption.

Persistent fiscal deficits, a significant tax reduction package in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic has meant Sri Lanka's public debt burden has quickly become unsustainable,[1,2] while sharp reductions in foreign exchange receipts combined with food and energy price shocks in early 2022 to result in a debt and balance-of-payments crisis. These developments threaten to reverse the progress which has been made towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Sri Lanka.

A decades-long build-up of fiscal and debt sustainability issues, and recent shocks to the economy following the Easter Sunday attacks in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic, have pushed Sri Lanka into a crisis of illiquidity and insolvency. Despite economic growth of 3.7 per cent in 2021 following a 3.6 per cent contraction in 2020, the effects of the tax cuts in late 2019 and additional expenditure measures to combat the pandemic led to a sharp increase in public debt from 93.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 to a projected 118.9 per cent of GDP in 2021.[3] The Government is struggling to repay these persistent levels of debt and manage rising inflationary pressure. These issues have contributed to a series of sovereign credit rating downgrades, culminating in the country losing access to global capital markets in 2021, which further restricts its ability to refinance public debt. A short-term ban on chemical fertiliser imports in April 2021 severely hampered domestic agricultural production and resulted in increased food prices and limitations in availability of staple foods. The dollar shortage and increases in global commodity prices have resulted in the government's inability to purchase essential goods such as fuel, gas, medicines and food, or manage rising inflationary pressures. Against this backdrop, in April 2022, Sri Lanka commenced negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for macroeconomic stabilization and debt restructuring.

While the economic crisis leading towards sovereign default proved to be a major trigger event, long-standing issues of governance also pose risks to the country's political and social stability and its ability to chart a solution to the economic crisis. As the economic crisis worsened, it increasingly impacted other aspects of society and will likely continue to be a key driver of social and political issues in the country until a sustainable resolution of the situation. These developments illustrate the need for sufficient institutional resilience and political consensus to facilitate Sri Lanka's macroeconomic stabilisation.

Within this challenging environment, the theory of change for the Cooperation Framework outlines the pathway towards the vision where all people in Sri Lanka, especially the most vulnerable and at risk of being left further behind, contribute to and benefit from inclusive, just, sustainable and rights-based development in a resilient, peaceful and cohesive society, leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. It is based on the logic that transformative and inclusive governance are requirements for promoting shared prosperity in a sustainable environment, building human well-being and resilience, and ensuring the realization of gender equality and human rights. The Cooperation Framework gives primacy to accelerating actions to ensure a

rapid recovery from the economic crisis along with the impact of COVID-19, prioritising support to revitalise the economy and economic activities, social services, decent employment, social cohesion, and health and well-being as critical towards the achievement of its objectives.

The Cooperation Framework is mutually owned and anchored in national development priorities, the 2030 Agenda and the principles of the UN Charter.

Jointly led by the Ministry of Finance through the National Planning Department and the UN Resident Coordinator, the Cooperation Framework was developed in a participatory, transparent and multidisciplinary manner, benefitting from a wide range of consultative processes across government, civil society, private sector, development partners, and engaging all resident and non-resident UN agencies.

The principles of human rights and non-discrimination, gender equality and women's empowerment, sustainable development, resilience, accountability, and ensuring that "no one is left behind" will guide all UN system programming. In line with the United Nations' reform process, this Cooperation Framework transforms the way the United Nations system undertakes coherent development and humanitarian planning and programming cooperation and is the basis for activities within the country of all resident and non-resident agencies and entities.

The Cooperation Framework is structured around four interrelated and mutually reinforcing Strategic Priorities where the UN system will concentrate its expertise to support Sri Lanka to make transformational and accelerated progress in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and peace. Underpinning all four Strategic Priorities is the recognition that the achievement of the SDGs will not be realized without accelerated actions to ensure a rapid recovery from the economic crisis and the impacts of COVID-19.

Derived from the Strategic Priority areas is a set of higher-level Outcomes towards which the UN system will contribute, each of which are informed by a theory of change that articulates the pathway to overcome the key challenges and bottlenecks towards achievement of the Outcome.

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CHAPTER 01

Country Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda

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PERSONS OVER 60

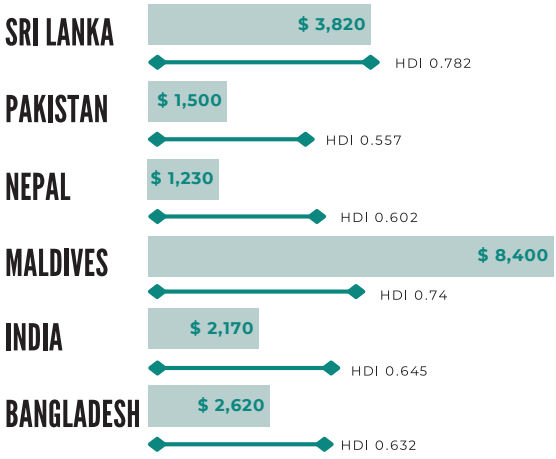
UN DESA World Population Prospects 2022

22.1 MN

POPULATION (2021)

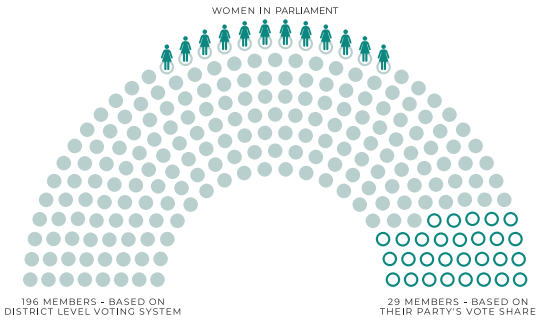
7.8731° N, 80.7718° E

SRI LANKA



GNI PER CAPITA AND HDI SCORE

World Bank Database & UNDP 2021



PARLIMENT OF SRILANKA 2022

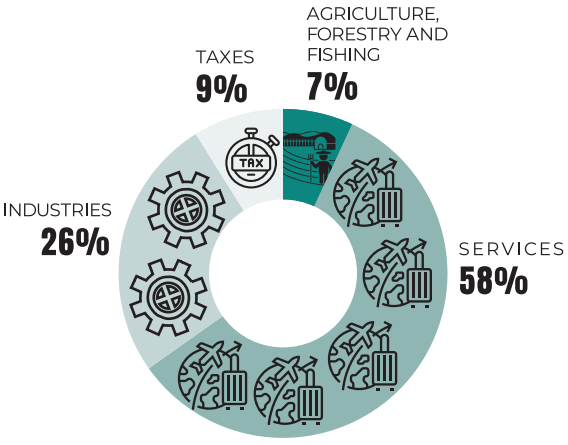
FEMALE - 2,792,581

8.5 MN

LABOUR FORCE

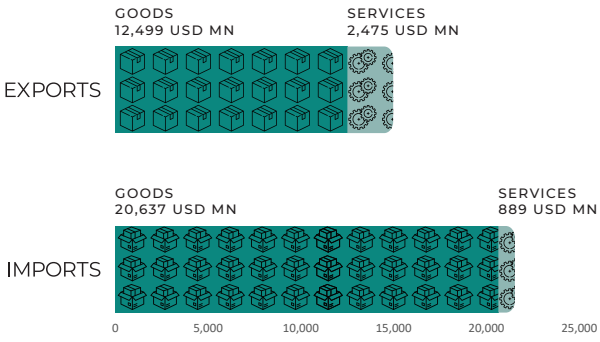
Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey Annual Bulletin 2021

MALE - 5,722,184



SECTORAL CONTRIBUTION TO GDP

Central Bank of Sri Lanka 2021



IMPORT/ EXPORT DISTRIBUTION

Central Bank of Sri Lanka 2021

1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka), with an estimated 22.2 million population,[4] is a lower-middle-income country with a gross national income per capita of US $3,820 in 2021.[5] The country experienced a period of strong economic growth and poverty reduction following the cessation of a 26-year conflict in 2009, culminating in its categorisation of upper-middle-income in 2019, before falling below the threshold in 2020 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthening social cohesion remains an important priority to maximise social and economic well-being through appreciation of diversity and the uniqueness of various communal groups. Sri Lanka's main communities are the majority Sinhala (75 per cent), Tamil (15 per cent) and Muslim (nine per cent). Sustaining peace, protecting investments and ensuring development will require continued efforts to build social cohesion across and between all of Sri Lanka's communities. Maintaining responsive and inclusive institutions will also be a critical priority as the country faces a period of unprecedented economic hardship that has already demonstrated signs for triggering political uncertainty.

A decades-long build-up of fiscal and debt sustainability issues, along with recent shocks to the economy following the Easter Sunday attacks in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic, have pushed Sri Lanka into a crisis of illiquidity and insolvency. Despite economic growth of 3.7 per cent in 2021 following a 3.6 per cent contraction in 2020, the effects of the tax cuts in late 2019 and additional expenditure measures to combat the pandemic led to a sharp increase in public debt from 93.6 per cent of gross domestic product in 2019 to a projected 118.9 per cent of GDP in 2021.[6] The Government is struggling to repay these persistent levels of debt and manage rising inflationary pressure. These issues contributed to a series of sovereign credit rating downgrades, culminating in the country losing access to global capital markets in 2021, which further restricts its ability to refinance public debt.

A short-term ban on chemical fertiliser imports in April 2021 severely hampered domestic agricultural production and resulted in increased food prices and limitations in availability of staple foods. The dollar shortage and increases in global commodity prices have resulted in the government's inability to purchase essential goods such as fuel, gas, medicines and food, or manage rising inflationary pressures. Against this backdrop, in April 2022, Sri Lanka commenced negotiations with the IMF for macroeconomic stabilisation and debt restructuring.

While the economic crisis leading towards sovereign default proved to be a major trigger event, long-standing issues of governance also pose risks to the country's political stability and ability to chart a solution to the economic crisis. Sri Lanka has had a long-running debate among political parties, civil society, and other key stakeholders on forms of governance, checks and balances and the nature of institutions, while also grappling with its post conflict legacy well and new risks to social cohesion. The economic crisis reinvigorated some of these debates and led to the consideration of new reform processes.

These developments also threaten the country's considerable progress towards the SDGs. They confirm the need to prioritize an inclusive recovery and strengthen institutions as part of any reform pathway addressing the structural weaknesses highlighted by the sovereign default. In the immediate term, the country needs sufficient institutional resilience and political consensus to facilitate its macroeconomic stabilisation.

Further macroeconomic instability will likely inhibit any post-COVID-19 economic recovery and pose disruptions that risk translating into lower living standards, especially for the most vulnerable populations as a result of income and employment losses and reduced fiscal capacity for essential government services. The World Bank estimated that over 500,000 people may have been pushed into poverty primarily as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic by March 2021. It is expected that many more will have been impacted in late 2021 and then as a result of the economic crisis in 2022, with

more moving into poverty and with job losses most concentrated in urban areas and among income earners in the lower-middle part of the income distribution.[7,8]

The Government responded to the initial outbreak of COVID-19 with a comprehensive package of measures, including a lockdown, that saw the country avoid a serious first wave of the pandemic. Intermittent movement restrictions persisted in 2021 as the country faced several surges of COVID-19 infections driven by new variants, although by late 2021 mobility indicators were largely back to their pre-pandemic levels and tourism started to recover. The public health emergency created by the pandemic was met with a rapid mobilisation of emergency-responsible health services across Sri Lanka's government hospitals and Primary Medical Care Units, which continued to deliver the Essential Services Package and other key services to the population even as underlying capacity challenges became manifest during periods of peak demand. Sri Lanka's national rollout of COVID-19 vaccination has been among the fastest in the region, with more than 97 per cent of Sri Lanka's over-12 population having received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, 82 per cent having received two doses and 55 per cent having received a third dose by May 2022.[9] The Government's COVID-19 relief measures included cash transfers to vulnerable families, tax and utility bill forbearance and loan repayment moratoria for affected businesses. The Central Bank relaxed prudential requirements for banks and developed a refinancing facility to provide micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with concessional working-capital loans. Many of these actions helped the economy deal with the impact of the pandemic.

By May 2022, more than

97%

of Sri Lanka's over-12 population having received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine,

82%

had received two doses, and **55%** had received a third dose.

Sri Lankans have shown high levels of community resilience and solidarity in the face of the social and economic crisis. However, the current economic crisis is unprecedented in scale and impact and has already shown how it can increase risks. The social unrest triggered by the economic crisis in March 2022 is illustrative of how economic and political risks can exacerbate each other rapidly and undermine avenues for economic recovery. Government institutions are at risk of becoming overstretched, affecting service provision and making communities more vulnerable. For example, the justice sector has historically seen lengthy delays in resolving civil and business disputes and experiences prison overcrowding.[10] Community-level care networks and social protection systems are also under strain, as an estimated 50,000 migrant workers have returned home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As these pressures risk impacting social cohesion, it will be important to further strengthen social solidarity and community initiatives.

1.2 NATIONAL VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sri Lanka continues to be committed to the SDGs with the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda featuring prominently in national development strategies. The National Policy Framework makes strong references to the 2030 Agenda and commits to a programme of actions to achieve the SDGs.

The policy framework seeks to: minimise inequality and eliminate poverty; improve people's health and lifestyle through the promotion of sustainable and nutritious agricultural practices; provide good education for all; make clean drinking water and cost-effective energy available; ensure gainful employment for youth through green industries, and the greening of cities to make them suitable for human habitation; ensure equal and better opportunities for women; address issues of climate change and prevent the pollution of oceans; safeguard biodiversity; and establish a society that values and promotes peace. The framework incorporates aspirations and targets from across the 2030 Agenda in its broader transformative agenda and pledges to rearrange the Cabinet of Ministers and to implement a "systematic plan" to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Sri Lanka's medium-term Public Investment Programme (PIP) 2021-2024 is informed by the policy framework. The PIP focuses on strategic sectors that are viewed as crucial to stimulating the economy and prioritises the public investments that are central to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the medium term. The PIP outlines key strategies and policy targets in social sectors (including education and health), labour markets, technology, agriculture, public infrastructure (including roads, transport, water and sanitation), governance, environmental management, social protection and regional development.

Established in 2017, the Sustainable Development Council is the nodal government institution that spearheads the coordination, facilitation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. Sri Lanka completed its first Voluntary National Review in 2018 and is expected to submit a second Review in 2022. An interministerial steering committee chaired by the Prime Minister was also formed in 2020 to provide political leadership for overall SDG implementation. The committee is in the process of revising the National Policy on Sustainable Development and Strategic Plan.

The nine Provincial Councils in Sri Lanka play a key role in achieving balanced regional development of the country. Based on the Guidelines of the Finance Commission of Sri Lanka, All nine Provincial Councils have formulated Medium Term Development Plans which are updated through Annual Development Plans covering 23 sectors. The Medium Term and Annual Plans are framed around the national priorities of the Government while addressing the regional-specific needs of provinces.

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1.3 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sri Lanka's Progress on the SDGs

SDG Index Rank

76/ 163

SDG Index Score

SDG Spilover Score

According to the 2022 Sustainable Development Report, Sri Lanka's SDG Index Score of 70 per cent is ranked 76 out of 163 countries.[11] The Report suggests that achieving the 2030 Agenda in Sri Lanka is ongoing work, with uneven advancement and challenges to progress indicated across the SDGs.

Progress has been made in **poverty reduction (SDG 1)**,[12] although recent economic developments place these gains at risk. Sri Lanka's post-conflict economic growth and development saw the national poverty headcount ratio reduced by more than half from 8.9 per cent in 2009 to 3.2 per cent in 2019.[13] Extreme poverty at the US$1.90 a day poverty line fell by three quarters between 2009 and 2019, while poverty at the US$3.20 a day poverty line more than halved between 2009 and 2019. On average, poverty was highest in the estate sector in 2019, more than double the average for rural areas and nearly six times that of urban areas.[14] Elderly poverty is also becoming increasingly "feminised" as life expectancy for women continues to outpace men. Elderly women then become dependent on their families, with implications not only for their own welfare but also for the economic opportunities of carers (mainly productive-age women).[15] Nearly one out of every six people in Sri Lanka (16 per cent) were multidimensionally poor in 2019, with levels higher in rural (16.6 per cent) than in urban areas (4.4 per cent) but highest in estate areas (51.3 per cent). Some 80 per cent of those multidimensionally poor live in rural areas. Child multidimensional poverty—which uses the same indicators as for general population but extends to undernutrition and early childhood development—is estimated at 42.2 per cent of children aged 0–4 years.[16]

The economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis is expected to have significantly increased poverty across the country. Recent projections from the World Bank suggest that the US$3.20 a day poverty rate increased to 11.7 per cent in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis before falling to an estimated 10.9 per cent in 2021.[17] The poverty rate is forecasted to fall only marginally to 10.7 per cent by 2024,[18] meaning that many of the estimated 500,000 people pushed into income poverty by as a result of COVID-19 may remain there as a result of the current crisis. This situation calls for urgent action to institute new and better systems of social protection and ensure the well-being of the population, particularly those living in poverty.[19]

The population-wide prevalence of **undernourishment (SDG 2)** has almost halved between 2009 (11.4 per cent) and 2019 (6.8 per cent).[20] However, affordability and access to a healthy diet—one where food intake is insufficient to continuously meet dietary energy requirements—is still limited for many Sri Lankan households and being challenged further by rising costs of essential food items.[21] The 2020 Global Food Security Index ranked Sri Lanka 66th among 113 countries across measures of affordability, availability, and quality and safety of food items. Child undernutrition indicators have been stagnant for the past two decades. The child stunting rate (a standardised height-for-age measure that reflects chronic undernutrition in early life) remained unchanged at 17.3 per cent between 2006 and 2016 and affects as much as a one-third of children in the estate sector, while child wasting (a standardised weight-for-height measure) has been broadly unchanged over the last 20 years.[22] Sri Lanka articulated its vision for sustainable and resilient food systems at the Food Systems Summit in September 2021, including maximising opportunities to link sustainable production and market-oriented inclusive food value chains to poverty reduction and improvement in food and nutrition security.

Sri Lanka has an impressive record of achievement in key indicators of **good health and well-being (SDG 3)**, in part driven by the primary health care-oriented health system and the effective synergy between preventative and curative care approaches. The country is making progress towards universal health coverage, with an essential service coverage index of 66 per cent in 2019, up from 53 per cent in 2010.[23] Life expectancy at birth for Sri Lankans has increased to 76.9 years in 2019 compared to 76.3 in 2015, considerably higher than the South Asia average of 69.6 years.[24] Sri Lanka also had the lowest maternal mortality (30.2 deaths per 100,000 live births) and infant mortality (8.9 deaths per 1,000 live births) rates in South Asia in 2020.[25] Recent improvements in neonatal and under-five mortality rates have been shared equally between boys and girls. The number of medical officers per 10,000 population had increased from 8.5 to 9.35 between 2014-2019, while numbers of nursing officers rose from 18.5 to 21.5 during the same period.[26] However, at 4.08 per cent as a share of GDP,[27] Sri Lanka's estimated health spending (including private and out-of-pocket expenditure) and the public health expenditure of 1.6 per cent as a share of GDP[28] are both relatively low by regional standards and constrained by persistently low levels of government revenue generation. Similarly, while the ratio of doctors and nurses has increased over the past two decades, it remains around one-third of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average.[29]

More Sri Lankans than ever before are completing **education (SDG 4)** at all levels, with high rates of school enrolment a product of the commitment of successive post-independence governments to provide comprehensive, public-funded primary and secondary education.[30] Completion of primary and secondary education has expanded in the post-conflict period to be universal at the primary level and near-universal at the lower-secondary level. Similarly, nearly 25,000 students graduated tertiary studies in 2019, almost double that of 2010.[31] Sri Lanka has also consistently maintained gender parity in enrolment and completion of primary and secondary education. Women have consistently had a higher enrolment in tertiary education, with a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 26.7 as opposed to males at 16.6 in 2020.[32] However, early childhood education and ensuring relevance and quality of learning for the future of work, including transformational skills, remain relatively underdeveloped.[33] Implementing an integrated trilingual education system is also an important tool for peace and social cohesion. Constitutionally, Sri Lanka recognises the Sinhala and Tamil languages as official and national languages, with English as a 'link' language.[34] A Ten Year Plan for a Trilingual Sri Lanka (2012-2021) outlines measures to re-establish English as a medium of instruction in schools, along with the teaching of second national languages as a way to eliminate language prejudice and promote social cohesion.[35,36] However, implementation of this policy has fallen short of its ambition.[37]

Gender equality (SDG 5): Sri Lanka's Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and non-discrimination based on sex, though the ability for women to exercise these rights is limited by outdated legislation. This dynamic is reflected across national systems, institutional cultures, and socioeconomic structures, posing social restrictions on the choices women make and rendering them more vulnerable to gendered violence. Large and persistent disparities in employment outcomes remain between men and women, despite continued economic growth and increases in human capital among women. Since 2016, the unemployment rate for women has been around twice that of men. Women accounted for 24 per cent of managerial-level positions in the fourth quarter of 2020 (broadly unchanged since 2015),[38] and in 2018, only 136 (8.5 per cent) of more than 1,500 board directors in Colombo Stock Exchange-listed companies were women.[39] Likewise, only 5.3 per cent of elected parliamentary representatives in 2020 were female.[40]

Sanitation coverage in Sri Lanka is the highest in South Asia at 92 per cent in 2012 and **drinking water** coverage is 94 per cent **(SDG 6)**. The remaining six per cent of the population without access to improved water sources obtain water via container transport from sources such as rivers, streams or unprotected wells.[41] These sources can be disproportionately affected by contaminants, especially during dry periods.[42] Efforts are being made to identify these communities to provide them with improved water supply facilities.

Clean energy (SDG 7): Sri Lanka has achieved 100 per cent access to electricity, and 99.9 per cent electricity coverage, notwithstanding recent events that have disrupted the continuous supply of electricity across the island.[43] However, shifting Sri Lanka's energy mix in favour of a larger share in renewables is an equally important area for policy action. Some 44 per cent of Sri Lanka's total energy (including electricity generation and other uses such as cooking, heating and transport) was supplied by petroleum sources in 2019,[44] while the share of energy supplied by fossil fuels has more than doubled since 1990 to 55 per cent.[45] The Government has set an ambitious target of achieving 70 per cent share of power generation through renewable sources by 2030. The 2019 National Energy Policy and Strategy envisages energy security through supplies that are cleaner, economical and reliable in order to provide convenient and affordable energy services and ensure equitable and sustainable development.

Decent work, economic growth and industry (SDGs 8 & 9): Per capita GDP has slowed in recent years, reflecting a moderation in GDP growth following a brisk period of expansion during Sri Lanka's immediate post-conflict period.[46] In line with this, the unemployment rate has increased steadily from a recent low of 4 per cent in 2012 to 5.5 per cent in 2020.[47] Labour force participation in Sri Lanka has also declined in recent years to 50.6 per cent, several points below the recent peak of 54.1 per cent in 2017.[48] The macroeconomic crisis allied with the COVID-19 impact have hit the labour market: enterprises and many workers in the informal economy, as well as those in low wage paying jobs, have become unable to cope with the dual challenge of rising costs of inputs and widespread shortages. The impact on employment, especially of the most vulnerable groups such as youth and women, is a serious concern.

The economy has become increasingly service-based, and manufacturing contribution to the economy steadily declined from 20.8 per cent in 2000 to 16.3 per cent in 2020, a regression from the SDG 9.2 target.[49] A high degree of informality also characterises Sri Lanka's labour market, accounting for 58.1 per cent of total employment in 2020, and is highly concentrated in agriculture, while the unemployment rate for women is consistently more than double that of men at 8.5 per cent in 2020 compared to 4.0 for men.[50] Progress towards greater formalisation of Sri Lanka's labour force and gender equality in labour market outcomes is crucial to realising the 2030 Agenda.

Inequalities (SDG 10): The bottom 40 per cent of the population recorded income growth of 3.7 per cent in 2016,[51] slightly below the national average of 4.1 per cent and short of the SDG commitment to "sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average".[52] Incomes have also grown more quickly among the rich than the poor (the Gini index increased from 0.37 in 2009 to 0.46 in 2019).[53]

Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11): Significant rural-urban migration in the country is straining urban settlements. One in three Sri Lankans are expected to reside in urban settlements by 2050.[54] The rapid urban expansion has contributed to mounting economic, social and environmental costs. Population growth in flood-prone areas of major urban centres exposes an increasing number of people to flooding hazards. In Colombo, changes in land use from non-urban to urban purposes has reduced water-holding capacity in wetland areas, reducing drainage capacity by up to 30 per cent.[55,56] In addition, unplanned urbanisation is stimulating environmental degradation.[57] More sustainable urban planning practices are needed—such as the principles of the UN's 'Compact Cities' agenda—including more risk-informed and climate-resilient special planning, urban transition, and infrastructure development which considers the most vulnerable, as well as critical environmental protection systems.

Climate environmental action and management (SDGs 12, 13, 14, & 15): The increasing frequency of extreme weather events leaves Sri Lanka vulnerable to substantial natural disaster losses and damage. The World Bank estimates average annual disaster losses of LKR 50 billion (US$313 million), equivalent to 0.4 per cent of GDP or 2.1 per cent of government expenditure.[58] On average, 800,000 people in Sri Lanka were affected annually by natural disasters over the decade to 2019,[59] underlining the country's increasing vulnerability to extreme hydrometeorological events due to climate change. Deforestation has also contributed to declining forest cover in Sri Lanka, with the total forest area reduced from an estimated 70 per cent at the turn of the 19th century to 29.7 per cent in 2017.[60] This has ramifications on biodiversity, ecosystems and rural livelihoods.[61] Globally, climate change is increasingly viewed as a potential threat to safety and security, and there are implications for this dynamic in Sri Lanka.

Peace, governance and justice (SDG 16): SDG 16 is critical as it strongly influences all other development goals. It is well understood that there can be no development without peace, and vice versa. Noting Sri Lanka's statement at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council, the country remains engaged in advancing progress in "post-conflict recovery and healing," including through "reconciliation, accountability, and social justice".[62] In this regard, further supporting Sri Lanka's human rights commitments as well as addressing issues related to the legacy of the conflict remain important. The rate of homicides in 2020 of only 2.1 per 100,000 people is around one-half of what it was in 2008[63] and in line with regional patterns. "Grave crimes" as classified by the Sri Lanka Police have also declined over 30 per cent between 2010 and 2019. However, there are bottlenecks in the justice process, caused primarily by an overloaded court system and lack of digitalisation. Sri Lanka's prisons were at 260 per cent capacity as of April 2020, the most overcrowded in South Asia. In April 2020, the Government recognised this, and released 2,961 remand prisoners on bail. Some 30 per cent of remand prisoners spent between six months to over two years awaiting sentencing in 2020, while 5 per cent waited over two years.[67]

Partnerships (SDG 17): The 2030 Agenda and its SDGs recognise the interconnectedness of prosperous business, a thriving society and a healthy environment. The Agenda names all three sectors as key development actors and requires an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration among civil society, business, government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, academia and others for its success. While progress has been made in Sri Lanka, driving real change to deliver the SDGs and impact people's lives for the better will require greater commitment to partnerships at the national, subnational and community level to tackle systemic challenges in a bottom-up approach, informed and supported by top-down experience, technology, finance and coordination.

1.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

There are a number of interlinked opportunities Sri Lanka must grasp to accelerate recovery from the impact of COVID-19 and reignite progress towards its national development vision, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. These cut across the three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda: social, economic, and environmental.

Leaving No One Behind is a central tenet of the 2030 Agenda. While Sri Lanka has made significant progress towards the SDGs, segments of the population remain marginalised due to geographic location, migratory status, age, ethnicity, religion, gender, education level, socioeconomic status or the nature of their job. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent macroeconomic instability have also created a new wave of poverty and vulnerability concentrated among those residing in urban areas, those with higher attained education and those working in the industrial and services sectors, many of whom may be outside the scope of conventional social protection and welfare schemes.[68] Addressing these inequalities is crucial to enable Sri Lanka to achieve an inclusive development transformation and deliver on the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.

Achieving the 2030 Agenda and effectively addressing the needs of these most vulnerable populations requires an **integrated approach to sustainable development**. A study conducted by the Stockholm Environment Institute concluded that pursuing progress on the SDGs in Sri Lanka is a highly synergistic process, with more synergies than trade-offs.[69] Opportunities to drive the national transformative agenda through SDG-focused interventions exist in areas such as climate change, social protection, digitization and technology-driven diversification and sustaining peace.

Progress towards **more inclusive, responsive and climate-resilient social service systems and services** is important to ensure all Sri Lankans can receive quality essential services when they need them. Important areas for progress towards SDGs achievement include building a strengthened primary health care-oriented system as a foundation for achieving the goal of Universal Health Coverage; establishing a comprehensive social protection mechanism; providing greater continuity and resourcing of education services particularly at younger ages; expanding services to better address undernutrition and the needs of an ageing population; and preventing and responding to violence against children and women. Safeguarding investments in these areas amid the ongoing need for fiscal consolidation is a careful balancing act that is crucial to achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

Better social service systems can both support and benefit from an **inclusive and sustained economic recovery**. Targeted, catalytic growth-enhancing investments and structural reforms are crucial to consolidate the country's medium-term transition to macroeconomic sustainability and debt sustainability. Restarting progress towards full and productive employment and decent work (particularly for young people and women), transitional measures supporting businesses including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting green and environmentally sustainable development through innovation, better use of digital technologies, improved productivity and reskilling and up-skilling of the labour force all lay the groundwork for a more diversified, innovative, low-carbon economy that fully capitalizes on the country's demographic potential.

Sri Lanka is also rising to the challenge of mitigating the effects of a triple global man-made planetary crisis in the form of compounding impacts from climate change, biodiversity loss and accumulation of pollution and wastes on communities, livelihoods and the economy at large. Meeting this challenge requires action to **conserve, protect and sustainably manage natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems**, including learning from the four Biosphere Reserves in Sri Lanka,[70] supporting the transition to a low and ultimately zero carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy powered by renewable energy, and more sustainable urban development.

Increasingly **improved, efficient, non-discriminatory, gender-transformative and participatory governance and justice** is also key to ensuring Sri Lanka's path to sustainable development is inclusive and rights-based. Overcoming the limitations in availability of regularly updated and disaggregated district-level data across all social, economic and environmental sectors will be essential for evidence-informed decision-making and ensuring policy stability. Sri Lanka's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security aims to respond to the needs and priorities of conflict-affected women. It stresses the importance of women's equal participation in maintaining peace and security and intends to address structural inequalities that impede gender equality in the country.

More effective rights-based and gender-transformative processes and mechanisms will also promote a **more cohesive, peaceful society with human rights for all**. Protecting, preserving and strengthening the space and capacity for civil society to engage openly and safely in human rights issues is key to supporting social cohesion in relation to sustaining peace among communities, as is managing social tensions through community resilience processes and non-discriminatory and inclusive early warning mechanisms.

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Sri Lanka has consistently performed well in relation to health and education indicators for women and girls. However, this has not transformed to meaningful progression and **empowerment of women and girls**. Sri Lanka ranks lowest for women's participation in politics among South Asian countries. Women have never exceeded 6 per cent representation in Parliament. The country has the potential to add US$20 billion to its GDP if gender parity is addressed and the potential to increase its economic growth trajectory by about 14 per cent.[71] To achieve these development outcomes the country needs to address the institutional and structural barriers that perpetuate gender stereotypes and biases, resulting in gender-based violence, women being under-represented and preventing their full engagement in the economic, political and social spheres.

CHAPTER 02

UN Development System Support to the 2030 Agenda in Sri Lanka

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The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework ("Cooperation Framework") represents the UN's collective offer to support Sri Lanka to address key development priorities and challenges and continue to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Cooperation Framework is mutually owned, and anchored in national development priorities, the 2030 Agenda and the principles of the UN Charter. A fundamental objective of the Cooperation Framework is to support and capacitate different levels of government and other duty bearers to fulfil the rights and aspirations of their people and to be accountable to them, with a commitment to leave no one behind.

The Cooperation Framework serves as the core accountability tool between the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the host government, as well as between and among UNCT members for collectively-owned development results. It also shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country. United Nations entity-specific country programmes are derived from the Cooperation Framework.

Based on the UN system's expertise and comparative advantages, its normative agenda and ability to leverage, influence and unlock a broad range of resources for development and humanitarian response, the Cooperation Framework reflects: (a) an agreed theory of change towards the achievement of the SDGs; (b) the expectations national stakeholders have of the UN development system's contribution to national development; (c) a shared agreement of the strategic priorities and contributions of the United Nations, derived from the theory of change; and (d) the strategic partners with whom the UN system will work in pursuit of development solutions.

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1.2 THEORY OF CHANGE

Sri Lanka continues to be committed to the SDGs with the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda featuring prominently in national development strategies. The National Policy Framework makes strong references to the 2030 Agenda and commits to a programme of actions to achieve the SDGs.

VISION OF CHANGE: **All people in Sri Lanka, especially the most vulnerable, contribute to and benefit from inclusive, just, sustainable and rights-based development in a resilient, peaceful and cohesive society, leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.**

Equitable, inclusive and gender-responsive social services and systems are more available, affordable, accessible and of acceptable quality, especially for the most vulnerable.

Sri Lanka achieves an inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic recovery, with green growth and economic diversification that provides equitable opportunities for decent employment and livelihoods, and achieves higher levels of human capital and productivity.

People in Sri Lanka, particularly the most vulnerable, enjoy improved environmental conditions and increased resilience to disasters.

More inclusive, participatory, and transparent governance systems and mechanisms are in place at all levels that promote a peaceful, inclusive and cohesive society and enable all people to deal with the past, be empowered, engaged and enjoy human rights, justice and security.

Rapid recovery from economic crisis and impact of COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen social services, decent employment, economic activities, Well-being and social cohesion

- Progress towards **gender equality, women's empowerment and eliminating gender-based discrimination** is accelerated.
- Macroeconomic and all development policies, strategies and plans **are evidence-informed, pro-poor, pro-environment, gender-responsive, risk-informed and factor in demographic change** (aging population and urbanisation).
- Accelerated **uptake of productive technologies and information and communication technologies** and the digital divide is addressed.
- **Discriminatory institutional and social norms** (e.g., in ethnicity, language, religion, age, disability, class/caste, etc.) and intolerance are reduced.
- Greater **respect for human rights**, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalised.
- **Financial resources** (domestic and external) are mobilized and allocated efficiently to achieve the national vision and the SDGs.

2.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE UN SYSTEM

The 2023-2027 Cooperation Framework is structured around four Strategic Priorities identified from the analysis of the overarching Theory of Change. These are pillars where the UN system will concentrate its collective expertise to support Sri Lanka to make transformational and accelerated progress in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, with a particular focus on equity and leaving no one behind. The Strategic Priorities are interrelated, mutually reinforcing and multisectoral: together, they offer the opportunity to accelerate development progress and contribute to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs by 2030.

Strategic Priority 01:

Inclusive and Equitable Human Development and Well-Being

Encompassing human capital and social development, addressing gaps and ensuring no one is left behind in health, food security and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and skills development, the protection of children and women, and in accessing social protection mechanisms.

Strategic Priority 04:

Gender Equality

This cross-cutting Strategic Priority addresses structural and intersectoral gender inequalities. It also promotes women's equal and meaningful engagement in leadership and decision-making to foster an environment where women and girls and gender-diverse people live free from discrimination and violence.

Strategic Priority 02:

Resilient and Green Recovery and Growth for Shared Prosperity and Environmental Sustainability

Focusing on pursuing macroeconomic stability and promoting green, sustainable and more equitable economic growth through diversification and transformation, leading to increased opportunities for decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods; while also addressing the triple man-made planetary crisis through pursuing natural resources and environmental management and protection, a transition to environmental sustainability that also contributes to the development of the country, along with reducing vulnerabilities to climate change and natural hazards.

Strategic Priority 03:

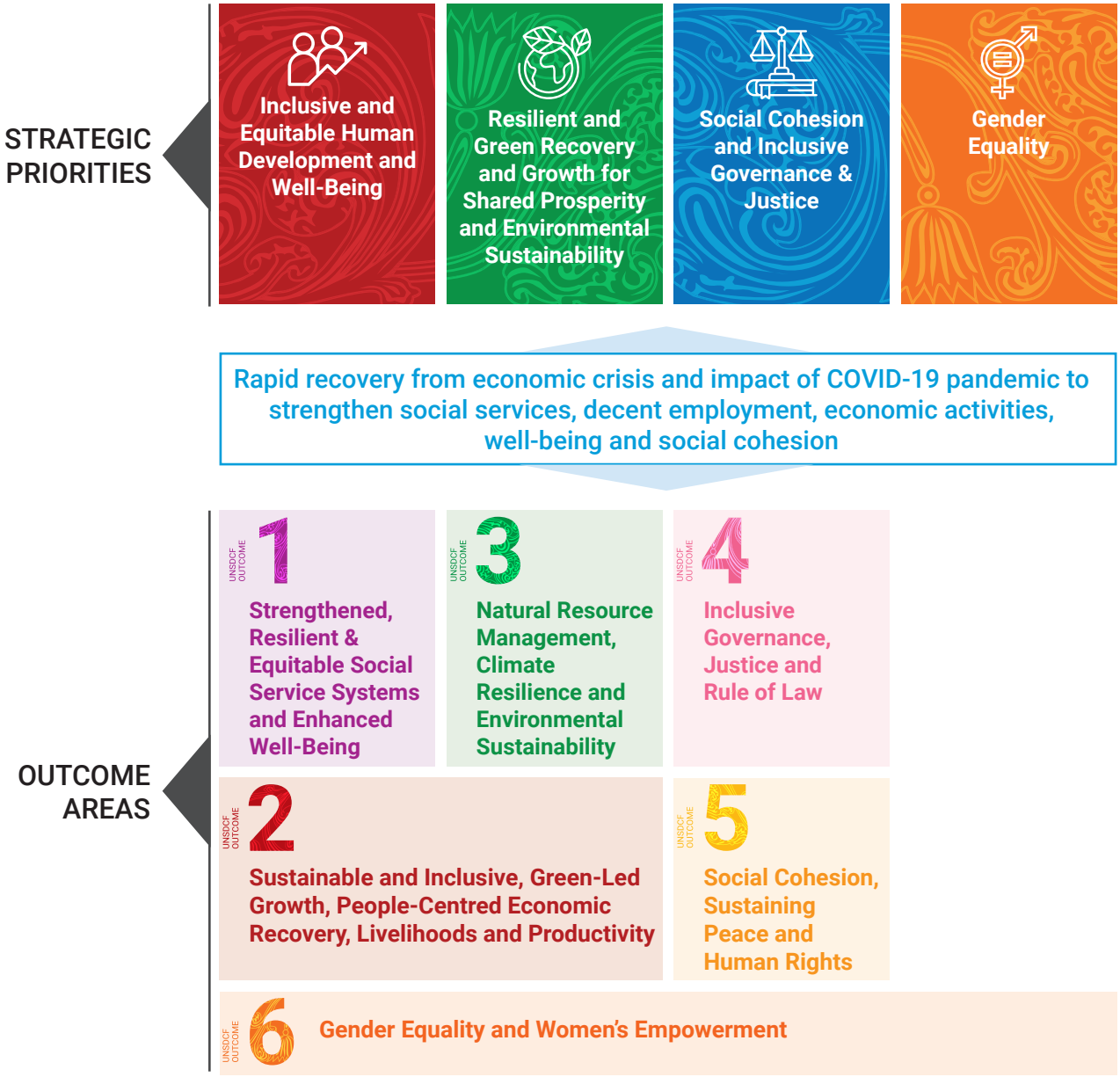
Social Cohesion and Inclusive Governance & Justice

Aiming to ensure that more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance systems and mechanisms are in place at all levels that effectively, efficiently and equitably pursue progress towards the SDGs while leaving no-one behind. At the same time, promote a peaceful, inclusive and cohesive society and enable all people to deal with the past, be empowered, engaged and enjoy human rights and justice.

Underpinning all four of the Strategic Priorities is the recognition that achievement of the SDGs will not be realised without accelerated actions to ensure a rapid recovery from the macroeconomic crisis and its impact on the people in Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on those most vulnerable and at risk of being left behind. To this end, the United Nations system will support national efforts to restore social services, decent employment, economic activities, well-being and social cohesion, as well as relevant growth-enhancing policies and structural reforms that safeguard progress on the 2030 Agenda, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

Derived from the Strategic Priority areas is a set of higher-level Outcomes, each informed by a Theory of Change that articulates the pathway to overcome the key challenges and bottlenecks and grasp the opportunities outlined in chapter 1.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND OUTCOME AREAS



2.3 INTENDED RESULTS

Recognising their interrelated and mutually reinforcing nature, UN support will be provided under the four Strategic Priorities of the Cooperation Framework, through contributing to the achievement of a core set of time-bound Outcomes.

This Cooperation Framework is designed to respond directly to the sustainable development agenda of the Government of Sri Lanka, as outlined in the National Policy Framework, towards the advancement of the 2030 Agenda in the country.

	Outcome	SDGs	National Policy Framework
UNSDCF OUTCOME 1	**Strengthened, Resilient & Equitable Social Service Systems and Enhanced Well-Being**		• A knowledge-based economy through Human Resource Development • Reduce social inequality and protect vulnerable people
UNSDCF OUTCOME 2	**Sustainable and Inclusive, Green-Led Growth, People-Centred Economic Recovery, Livelihoods and Productivity**		• Develop a national economic policy for the benefit of the present and future generations • Technology and Innovations • Bridging the urban and rural gap by providing services & infrastructure facilities equally across the sectors of living
UNSDCF OUTCOME 3	**Natural Resource Management, Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability**		• Sustainable development through balanced social, economic and environmental practices • Bridging the urban and rural gap by providing services & infrastructure facilities equally across the sectors of living
UNSDCF OUTCOME 4	**Inclusive Governance, Justice and Rule of Law**		• Efficient and Democratic Governance • National Security and Non-Aligned Foreign Policy • Rural & regional development and Women's Empowerment • Reduce social inequality and protect vulnerable people
UNSDCF OUTCOME 5	**Social Cohesion, Sustaining Peace and Human Rights**		• National Security and Non-Aligned Foreign Policy • Rural & regional development and Women's Empowerment • Reduce social inequality and protect vulnerable people
UNSDCF OUTCOME 6	**Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**		• A knowledge-based economy through Human Resource Development • Rural & regional development and Women's Empowerment • National Security and Non-Aligned Foreign Policy • Reduce social inequality and protect vulnerable people

The Strategic Priorities, and the major areas of the United Nations systems' contributions to them, are guided by six overarching UN global core programming principles contextualised to Sri Lanka.

Understanding the barriers faced by specific vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups, and prioritising support for actions to ensure their needs and rights are met, is at the centre of the Cooperation Framework. One important priority group for intersectional interventions is the estate sector population, which remains disproportionally affected by poverty and is the largest proportion of households that cannot afford a nutritious diet, among other exclusionary factors. Migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, internally displaced persons, refugee returnees and victims of human trafficking are also subject to complex patterns of vulnerability and exclusion that call for tailored solutions cutting across several Outcomes of the Cooperation Framework. Subsections of the female population that are particularly likely to be left behind and continue to experience poverty, abuse and a failure to realise their rights include women heads of households, ex-combatants, and female sex workers. Age is a significant risk factor for increased vulnerability, as evidenced by children being at higher risk of falling behind on nutrition indicators and older persons of a lower socioeconomic background particularly likely to be affected adversely by economic and

other crises, limitations in critical health and care services. Other groups disproportionally affected by multiple forms of exclusion and stigmatisation and at great risk of being further left behind include individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, drug users, prison populations, and people living with HIV/AIDS. Understanding and addressing the needs of specific vulnerable groups is key to an approach guided by the principle of "leaving no one behind." Often, these needs inherently cut across the Outcomes of this Cooperation Framework, given the complex and multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion. Ongoing systematic analyses of patterns of marginalisation affecting vulnerable populations will therefore be at the centre of implementing the Cooperation Framework.

In keeping with this priority of leaving no one behind in the Cooperation Framework, ensuring the rights of people with disabilities cuts across all Outcomes. In Sri Lanka, disability and poverty are fundamentally connected. In any community, people with disabilities are among the poorest and most vulnerable. They are less likely to access health care, education, livelihoods and social opportunities than people without disability, and often face discrimination or are stigmatised. This results in reduced income, poorer health and social exclusion. Poverty is also a cause of disability, due to factors such as malnutrition, disease, hazardous working conditions and poor sanitation. The United Nations will support Sri Lanka's own commitments to differently abled and disabled people, as stated in the national policy framework, and in line with the country's commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, regarding economic and social security rights and the recognition that that they have the right to equal opportunities to improve their quality of life.

2.4 COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Under each of the four Strategic Priorities, measurable Outcome results have been defined, for which the United Nations system will contribute towards the achievement.

CORE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The UN will contribute to the achievement of the Outcomes of the Cooperation Framework through a wide range of implementation strategies, including:

Evidence-based strategic policy advice, research and technical inputs to address the development challenges and emerging issues facing Sri Lanka.

Technical assistance and capacity development to government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society to assist with delivering on national and international commitments, informing legislation and policymaking, and for providing quality public services.

Modelling of innovative solutions, including greater digitalisation, to development challenges with government at national and local levels and the private sector.

Leveraging global and regional networks and platforms to strengthen development cooperation and knowledge and experience sharing between Sri Lanka and other countries.

Convening partners and relevant actors towards a greater development impact on the ground.

The core strategies are reflective of the findings in relation to the value-add of the UN system in Sri Lanka highlighted in the evaluation of the 2018-2022 United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF).

UNSDCF OUTCOME 1

By 2027, more people in Sri Lanka, particularly the most vulnerable, access and benefit from equitable, resilient and gender-responsive quality social services and with enhanced well-being and dignity.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The pathway of change for this Outcome to be realized requires that:

- The Government at national and subnational levels delivers quality social services (health, food security and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, housing, and protection) to all throughout the life cycle, particularly to vulnerable groups, that are more accessible, affordable, equitable, inclusive, gender-responsive and resilient to crises and natural disasters.
- The Government ensures comprehensive and shock-resilient social protection mechanisms which are more inclusive with expanded coverage.
- Household food security and nutrition is enhanced, particularly for the most vulnerable and households with young children.
- More people have the knowledge, skills and means to demand and actively participate in promoting quality social services for all, particularly those most vulnerable, and to address harmful social norms and practice behaviours which are safe, healthy and protective.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

The UN system will prioritise a range of strategic contributions and partnerships across health, food security and nutrition, water and sanitation, education, protection of children and women, and inclusive social protection to contribute to ensuring that people, especially the most vulnerable, at all times including during the current macroeconomic and social crisis and then the recovery period, can access and utilize quality social services and social protection systems that are universal, gender-responsive and affordable. The UN system will also support actions to allow for a decent standard of living for all. This will be accomplished through promoting enhanced access to affordable, adequate and healthy living environments, including housing, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the estate populations, the urban and rural poor, and persons with disabilities. In all areas of support and engagement, the UN will focus on systems design approaches, with a strong focus on building more resilient institutions and strategies, and the use of data and innovative approaches, including digital transformation.

To support Sri Lanka to make social protection and social services universal in coverage and more gender-responsive, affordable, equitable and resilient, the UN will support intersectoral efforts including generation of evidence, strengthened coordination for response mechanisms, and facilitating experience-sharing on innovative and cost-effective models. The UN system will factor in the lessons learned and consequences of the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change on services and vulnerabilities, and place the principle of "leaving no one behind" firmly at the centre of its programming collaboration.

The UN will focus on supporting the Government strategically to further strengthen the national health systems and provide quality health more effectively, including mental health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services for all, across the life cycle. This will include support for situation analyses to understand the needs of vulnerable groups, advocating for appropriate evidence-informed policies, strategies and plans and supporting cost-benefit analyses to help develop the evidence base required to safeguard investments in social services and social protection. The UN's technical support and capacity-building will assist the health sector in preparing for Sri Lanka's demographic changes, with the growing number of elderly persons leading to an increase in non-communicable disease burden and heightened demand for costlier and complex health services, including mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and care services. Support will be provided for ensuring the inclusion of health across the spectrum of social and economic policies, primary health care reorganization, whole-of-society approaches in addressing social determinants of health, and health promotion approaches that encourage and empower individuals and communities to adopt healthy lifestyles, attitudes and behaviours.

Building on successful experience during the COVID-19 pandemic response, the UN will promote the enhancement of service delivery models through accelerated integration of digital and telemedicine practices into Sri Lanka's public health system. These approaches will broaden access to essential healthcare services, reduce unnecessary face-to-face contact, and save on travel and waiting time at facilities. In addition, the UN will support the accelerated integration of public health emergency preparedness at the primary health care level, ensuring availability of services close to the community in times of crisis.

Through technical assistance and capacity-building of a wide range of government, private sector and community-based partners, the UN will support national efforts to ensure expanded and more equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, adequate sanitation and hygiene (including menstrual health management) for all, with special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable households. A specific focus will be placed on improving water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools and healthcare settings, including making them climate resilient, and on promoting behaviour change on hygiene practices.

In response to the disproportionate rate of undernutrition in Sri Lanka – particularly among children – and concerns about food insecurity in the context of over 70 per cent of households spending 40 per cent of their total expenditure on food even before the current economic crisis, to complement actions under Outcome 2 in relation to improving household income, the UN will advocate to elevate nutrition higher in the political agenda and promote strengthened and sustainable nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions to ensure food security and optimum nutrition. This will include collaboration on the translation of commitments made at the UN Food Systems Summit into a country food systems pathway, as well as the Nutrition for Growth Summit commitments. The UN system will provide technical support, generate and share evidence on innovative and sustainable models, facilitate strategic public-private partnerships, and promote strengthened multisectoral nutrition coordination mechanisms and approaches, including nutrition-sensitive social protection and food systems. As a member of the Scaling up Nutrition ("SUN") movement in Sri Lanka, the UN will work with sectors and stakeholders to pursue coherent scaling up and institutional change at all levels, so that people and communities will be able to own and further develop systemic solutions. The UN will also promote the use of the Committee on World Food Security voluntary guidelines for food systems for nutrition.

The UN will support Sri Lanka's efforts to develop the country's human capital through a more inclusive and resilient education system that provides equitable access to quality learning and promotes education outcomes and skills development for all. A specific focus will be placed on increasing the relatively low levels of quality early childhood education access and participation, which are critical for cognitive and non-cognitive development and ensuring school readiness. There will be a strong focus on addressing digital divides and building a future-oriented education system.

Technical and financial assistance will be provided to strengthen the education system through Sri Lanka's ongoing education reform to improve access, inclusion, learning and skills outcomes for girls and boys in general education (preschool/early childhood education, primary and secondary). The focus of the UN's support will be on policy formulation, enhancing data and monitoring systems, the relevance and quality of school curricula, teacher education and training, quality assurance and assessment, and on safe, protective and healthy learning environments. The digitalization of learning systems and approaches in general education as well as in the technical and vocational system will be promoted, building on the experiences in remote learning during the COVID-19 school closures.

Priorities will be supporting national efforts to build a strengthened system to better protect children, adolescents, women and persons with disabilities from abuse, violence, exploitation and harm. This will include advocacy and technical assistance for development of a comprehensive child protection and family welfare framework, with strengthened social welfare and justice capacities both within government and civil society organizations, supported by community mechanisms, along with enhanced guidelines, monitoring and case management systems. The UN will continue to support the education system to ensure child protection policies and procedures are in place in schools to detect and refer cases of abuse and violence. The UN will expand partnerships with civil society and local communities to change attitudes and norms surrounding corporal punishment and other harmful traditional practices in communities and schools. Emerging threats to children and adolescents in Sri Lanka, particularly online safety and abuse, will also be prioritized. In support of the National Action Plan to Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), the UN will continue to support efforts to improve the quality, delivery and evidence base for prevention and response services for victims and those at risk, along with more effective multisectoral coordination mechanisms.

The impacts of the current economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic on increasing household income poverty have highlighted the inadequacies of the social protection system in Sri Lanka, with fragmented programmes, limited coverage, exclusion errors and insufficient resourcing. Reinforcing and complementing actions under Outcome 2, the UN will invest in support for reform of the social protection system so that it progressively provides equitable access to all people and protects them throughout their lives against poverty and risks to their livelihoods and well-being. This will be an important first step

to cushion the fallout of necessary financial adjustment measures imposed in the wake of the economic crisis. This should help set pathways for limiting or preventing regression of socioeconomic gains made over recent years. The priorities include basic income security for children, those unable to work or in the informal sector, and the elderly. The system-strengthening contribution of the UN will primarily involve technical support, experience-sharing and institutional capacity development, including on integrated administration and digitalized management information and delivery systems. All actions will be guided by the principles of inclusivity (leaving no one behind), universality, the lifecycle approach, and shock and gender-responsiveness.

The UN will support administrative systems so they provide local-level gender- and age- disaggregated data and information to track the impact of development programmes on vulnerable or at-risk populations. The support will include institutional capacity enhancement of government authorities at national and subnational levels. The UN will also advocate for free and open access and availability of the data and information, augmenting the work under Outcome 4 on transparent and participatory governance.

PARTNERSHIPS

Pursuing more equitable human development and well-being through ensuring that people, in particular the most vulnerable, have improved and inclusive access to and benefit from improved social protection and social services requires engagement and commitment across all public institutions and sectors, along with the private sector and civil society.

The UN system's contribution to the Outcome will therefore involve partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders including: line Ministries, directorates and other government agencies at national and subnational levels; development partners; professional associations and colleges; financial institutions; training institutes and academia; civil society and community-based organizations including women and youth led organizations; volunteer organizations; community and religious leaders; the media; public sector service providers; private sector service providers and producers; along with individuals, families and communities themselves. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

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UNSDCF OUTCOME 2

By 2027, more people in Sri Lanka, particularly youth and the most vulnerable, have equitable, decent, just work and income opportunities, and benefit from and contribute to inclusive, gender-transformative, resilient and green-led economic recovery, growth and diversification.

THEORY OF CHANGE

For the Outcome to be achieved, at least six sets of conditions must be fulfilled:

- The Government and the private sector commit to pro-poor, inclusive and green economic recovery, growth and diversification.
- Policies create an enabling environment for doing business that protects the rights of employees and employers, supports decent job creation and facilitates better access to financing, markets, technology and business development services and entrepreneurship.
- Enterprises and the formal and informal workforce have improved access to social protection and other support services.
- Education, learning and skills development are lifelong, gender-responsive and relevant to the needs of the current and future economy.
- New technologies and digital solutions for improving industry, services, livelihoods and market access are available and affordable for all, particularly youth, women and marginalised groups.
- Infrastructure is in place that overcomes spatial inequalities and makes employment more accessible, particularly for people with disabilities, women and marginalised populations.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

A long-term build-up of fiscal and debt sustainability issues, a significant economic downturn since 2019, a worsening business environment especially for micro, small and medium enterprises and the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic have cumulatively shocked the Sri Lankan economy and society. The observed job losses, high inflation and sovereign default impact fragile livelihoods, especially of the most vulnerable. Inclusive and sustainable economic recovery and growth are even more crucial for restoring jobs and livelihoods, restarting progress towards full and productive employment and decent work, and providing impetus to Sri Lanka's transition to a more diversified, innovative economy, while accommodating the country's demographic potential. As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, an economic recovery that focuses on green and environmentally sustainable development and diversification is both a necessity and an opportunity to achieve Sri Lanka's low-carbon and climate-resilient transition, with strategic investments that can both drive economic growth and support better natural resource management, resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

In support of this objective and with the focus on ensuring no one is left behind, the UN will provide technical advice and guidance, engage with international finance institutions, economic commissions and the private sector, build capacities of institutions, businesses and people, and facilitate investment efforts towards initiatives that ensure: (i) the economy and public financing recover and diversify and are green-led, revitalised and resilient to shocks such as the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) socioeconomic growth, in particular for creation of livelihood opportunities and decent work, is more equitable and inclusive; (iii) MSMEs, in particular in the manufacturing sector, are increasingly competitive and entrepreneurship is promoted; (iv) there is greater accessibility to market-based and gender-responsive workplaces and work-related education, skills development and lifelong learning; and (v) economic, labour and livelihood institutional frameworks and capacities are strengthened, with human rights-based legislation and policies in place.

Support will be provided for macroeconomic policy development and for increasing and diversifying public finances from their present all-time low, in order to invest in people-centric economic recovery, diversification and green-led and digitally-enabled growth, including through financing strategies that incentivise private sector investment and innovation. This will include capacity-building for analysis of demographic shifts to inform policies, incorporating population change to capture the benefits of demographic dividend and accelerate economic recovery, growth and diversification.

The UN system will provide its technical and normative expertise and experience towards strengthening economic development and labour market governance and institutional capacities, with human and labour rights-based legislation and policies in place and a conducive environment for decent employment, investment and strengthened partnerships, fair access to productive resources and safe workplaces.

Technical support will focus on strengthening national policies, regulatory frameworks and institutional mechanisms and support development of strategies that reduce informality, eradicate child and forced labour, and promote inclusive, decent work and sustainable livelihoods for full employment. A specific focus will be pursuing a more gender-equal and gender-transformative workforce (informal and formal), workplaces and income opportunities. This will include supporting reforms to labour laws and macroeconomic policies to expand decent work employment opportunities for women; promoting public investment and strengthened capacities to

provide services to support women's labour force participation; for the formulation of policies that promote small and medium firms; and for female entrepreneurship, ownership and management. The UN will also engage with the private sector in creating inclusive workplaces that are free from harassment and discrimination and ensuring more women and those from marginalised groups are represented in positions of leadership and management.

Towards supporting more effective employment and labour market governance, the UN will assist with capacity-building for the generation of labour market information and analysis for use by both the public and private sector for occupational and skills forecasting. This will enable more market-responsive, agile and flexible skills-building and employment as well as an inbound labour migration system informed by skills gaps.

The UN will stimulate innovation at large, including through start-ups and investments in the green economy, such as renewable energy, resource efficiency and circular economy. It will provide technical support to foster innovation and use of digital technology to improve quality and productivity, market access, business development services and value chain development in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. The UN will support actions to enable the transition to green and inclusive manufacturing, construction, agriculture production, wellness and service sectors with diversified product and services baskets, domestically and internationally. The UN will encourage technology transfer and the establishment of higher technology industries.

Recognising the importance of high-demand employability skills that are aligned with inclusive, green and equitable job creation, as well as emerging trends required by technological development and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the UN will provide technical assistance to nurture an enabling environment for future-fit skilling, reskilling, up-skilling and lifelong learning. This will include support for identifying and addressing skills gaps, mutual recognition and harmonisation of skills frameworks, sustainable investments in skills programmes and the formalisation of volunteerism experience during education, given its positive impact on the labour market. The UN system will encourage the provision of high-quality work-while-studying strategies, internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities, particularly for women and youth. Complementing the promotion of transferable skills within the general education curricula under Outcome 1, the UN will provide technical support to strengthen systems and mechanisms that provide young people with access to more relevant learning and opportunities—including volunteerism and work-based learning—for apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, leadership, digital skills and other emerging skills for the current and future labour market. This will include support for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training system, promoting recognition of prior learning of young people and adults, and engagement with youth organizations that promote skills development and recognition to allow employees to secure higher skilled jobs in Sri Lanka and overseas. Specific efforts will be made to strengthen the economic empowerment of women, youth and people with disabilities through addressing cultural and social barriers, skills-training and providing access to market opportunities, including access to financing and other business services.

MSMEs are crucial in the socioeconomic fabric of the country. They employ over a quarter of Sri Lanka's labour force and are critical to employment generation and economic recovery but are among the worst-hit by the economic crisis and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Towards overcoming these challenges and ensuring that MSMEs, particularly in the manufacturing sector, are increasingly competitive and environmentally and socially responsible, the UN will collaborate with government and the private sector in a wide range of initiatives. Approaches will be supported that nurture entrepreneurship, particularly for youth and women; improve productivity, quality, decent work, safe and healthy workplaces; and encourage responsible business conduct and formalisation of MSMEs and social protection through advocacy, direct engagement, provision of business development services, facilitating

access to affordable financing, and enabling regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity-building. These approaches aim to open up new opportunities for the provision of online services, promote export diversification, boost efficiency and growth in manufacturing, improve competition and innovation in the financial sector, increase access to market-relevant information, and increase market access for MSMEs. Special efforts will be supported to promote MSMEs contributing to sustainable business practices, such as the circular economy, that decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

PARTNERSHIPS

The UN will facilitate and lead platforms comprising of diverse partners to promote green-led sustainable and more equitable economic recovery and growth through diversification and transformation, leading to increased opportunities for decent jobs and livelihoods. This involves a wide range of stakeholders including government ministries and agencies at national and provincial levels, the private sector including MSMEs and the financial sector, recruitment agencies, employers' and workers' organizations, academia, women, youth, migrant and disability organizations, along with international financial institutions and development partners, among others. Details of the partners are in Annex 1, Results Matrix.

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UNSDCF OUTCOME 3

By 2027, more people and communities in Sri Lanka, especially the vulnerable and marginalized, are more resilient to climate change and disaster risks, have enhanced water and food security, and benefit equitably from ambitious climate action and increasingly sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural resources.

THEORY OF CHANGE

To achieve the Outcome at least six sets of conditions must be fulfilled:

- Gender- and socially-inclusive, risk-informed and adaptive environmental and disaster risk reduction governance and development planning policies, frameworks and sector-specific strategies are in place, resourced and fully implemented in a transparent and predictable manner.
- Economic recovery and growth are green-led, environmentally sustainable, gender- and socially-inclusive, and accepted.
- Natural resources, biodiversity, natural habitats and the environment are better protected, conserved, managed and utilized sustainably to achieve national and international commitments, while resource users, especially women, are capacitated and empowered to engage in co-management of natural resources.
- Industrial production and consumption are more sustainable and there is increased use of sustainable and resilient agricultural, forestry, fishing and livestock practices.
- There is greater investment in promotion of green technology, nature-based solutions, renewable energy, and the carbon-neutral and climate-resilient transition.
- Individuals (especially women and youth), households and communities are empowered to adopt sustainable consumption behaviours, lead in climate action, and be more resilient to and better adapted to the impact of climate change and to recover from shocks.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

Sri Lanka is experiencing the impacts of the triple global man-made planetary crisis—climate change, loss of nature and biodiversity and accumulation of pollution and waste—and undergoing a macroeconomic crisis, which together pose serious threats to the country's development trajectory. To reverse the trend, the UN will support Sri Lanka in its efforts to transition to inclusive green development with low and ultimately net-zero carbon emissions and a resource-efficient and circular economy powered by renewable and efficient use of energy. Support will come through evidence-based policy advice, capacity building, empowering of local stakeholders and at-risk communities, providing technical assistance and fostering cleantech innovation, technology transfer and implementation of best practices and investments.

The UN system will focus on a core set of strategic contributions and partnerships towards the national priority of accelerating actions for the conservation, protection and sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems – including addressing crimes that affect the environment – environmental resilience-building, decarbonization of the economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and sustainability of food value chains, along with reducing institutional, community and household vulnerabilities. Technical support will be provided for enhancing capacities of relevant institutions and at-risk communities, especially women, disabled, children and elderly and other marginalised communities to better prepare for and adapt to climate change and natural hazards. The UN system will support economic recovery, especially targeting land-based primary industries, fisheries and aquaculture, and tourism: those dependent on climate-sensitive natural resources to protect, sustain, and develop the livelihood security of vulnerable communities.

The existing enabling conditions and capacity limitations for sustainably managing the environment have exacerbated biodiversity depletion, while deforestation, loss of vegetation cover and poor land use management are also placing livelihoods at risk by nullifying the efforts of communities to adapt to climate change. To overcome these bottlenecks, the UN system will support enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of the governance framework and ensuring existence of adequate human, financial and technological institutional capacities, including data and monitoring systems for the conservation and management of natural resources and environment, including terrestrial, marine and aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity. It will also assist efforts to strengthen the resilience of communities and the economy to climate change and disaster risks.

Capacity development, research and support for strengthening monitoring systems will be undertaken to assist Sri Lanka meeting its obligations, targets and standards of multilateral environmental agreements, including the country's 2021 updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as a party to the Paris Climate Agreement. The NDCs will be based on the mechanisms that operationalise the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and other environmental conventions and commitments. The UN system will support enhancing the governance framework and capacities for adopting decarbonization technologies and solutions to meet the NDCs and align with the 2050 Net Zero emission goal announced by the Government, specifically focusing on energy generation and use in transport and industry sector.

The UN will support evidence-based public policy updating and formulation in the areas of environmental sustainability, clean and green energy, including energy efficiency, climate

resilience, and disaster risk reduction, along with costing analyses to ensure provision of key information necessary to safeguard investments in environmental protection and management. The development of national/subnational and sectoral action plans and guidelines for environmental sustainability, for the development of guidelines and tools for sustainable land use, regional and urban planning, and natural resources planning, climate, disaster risks and vulnerability assessments, capacity building on climate change adaptation will be supported, with a specific focus on social inclusivity, including relating to dimensions of gender, age, disability and other social identities. Technical assistance will be provided for monitoring and promoting environmental compliance, and water and soil conservation and management practices to enhance the well-being of people and the environment. Integrated water resource management will be strengthened, with capacity development and facilitation of knowledge and technology transfer, covering stormwater management, wastewater treatment, water supply and security, and conservation of existing water sources. Recognising the key role played by women in water management both at household and community levels, actions to empower women to engage in water resource governance will be supported. Advocacy, capacity-building and technology transfer will be undertaken for the integration of sustainable production, renewable energy and waste management into the manufacturing, agriculture, plantation and other productive sectors. The UN will also support strengthening the capacity of Government in planning, delivering, and management of resilient and sustainable infrastructure, leveraging its importance as a cross-cutting factor in over 90 per cent of all SDG targets.

Complementing the objectives of Outcome 2, advocacy will be undertaken, and technical support provided to promote climate-smart and diversified income-generating livelihoods, value chains and markets that are environmentally sustainable, and also enhance sustainable and climate-smart agricultural, fisheries, and livestock production for improved productivity and food and nutrition security. The work under Outcome 2 on promoting and creating platforms for engagement of the private sector in a sustainable and resilient economy, and capacity development of MSMEs, will also contribute to the achievement of this outcome.

UN system support will also include building national and local capacities for disaster risk reduction, including sector-specific risk information and assessments and localised modelling tools for accurate risk-informed investments and for integrating socially-inclusive climate change adaptation actions into relevant sectoral plans and programmes and operationalizing them. Within this cooperation, assistance will be available to support the preparation of updated vulnerability and risk maps for the coastal belt of Sri Lanka.

To enable more people and communities in Sri Lanka to contribute to sustainable management of the environment and pollute less, and for those most vulnerable to effectively adapt and respond to climate change and disasters, the UN will promote enhanced access to the most marginalised to basic services, resilient infrastructure, information, finance and technology to build local resilience to climate change, environmental stress, natural hazards and disasters. These will complement the interventions outlined in Outcome 1 for strengthening social protection, social safety nets and the WASH sector. Communication initiatives, technology transfer and localized solutions will be promoted, including through community organizations, youth and women's groups, volunteer involving organizations and local volunteers to increase public awareness of and engagement in actions for the protection, responsible use and sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable consumption practices, pollution reduction, renewable energy and environmental protection. Specific efforts will be supported to promote the integration of environmental stewardship, climate resilience and disaster risk reduction within the education curricula.

A key focus for the UN will be to maximise its position and expertise to mobilise increased investment and effective use of financing instruments for sustainable management of natural resources and for proactive risk management, supporting a comprehensive,

cross-agency response to natural disasters. This will include pursuing public and private sector partnerships for incentivising an increasingly multisectoral approach at national and subnational levels in Sri Lanka for planning and implementation of initiatives that address environmental sustainability and climate change including the sustainability of food systems. The UN will also strengthen the institutional capacities and implementation mechanisms of key Government ministries and other entities to identify SDG-related and innovative green and climate financing instruments that can be used to finance green development initiatives.

PARTNERSHIPS

Ensuring effective and sustainable management of natural resources and enhanced resilience to climate change, environmental degradation and disasters requires collaboration among a broad spectrum of stakeholders and engagement across society. The UN system's contribution to the Outcome will therefore involve partnerships including government at national and local levels, international and national NGOs, civil society organizations (CSO's), academia and research institutions, the private sector, women and youth-led organizations, volunteer-involving organizations and volunteer groups, and utility service providers, along with other bilateral and multilateral agencies and donors. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

UNSDCF OUTCOME 4

By 2027, people in Sri Lanka, particularly the most vulnerable, have increased trust and confidence to claim and benefit from enhanced, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, participatory and efficient governance and justice systems and rights-based development.

THEORY OF CHANGE

At least five key conditions of change must be met in order for the Outcome to be achieved:

- Laws and procedures are consonant with international standards and best practices.
- Policies are evidence-driven, adequately resourced and responsive to public needs and individual rights.
- Institutions and duty bearers are non-discriminatory, efficient, adhere to the rule of law and respond to the public.
- More people are aware of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and are able to demand accountability from duty-bearers and be effectively engaged in civic life and decision-making processes that affect them.
- All people have equal protection before the law and equal and expeditious access to and delivery of justice.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

The UN system will work with various government, non-governmental institutions and civil society to contribute to the ongoing efforts under the national policy framework towards a people-centric and efficiency-driven public sector. Support will be provided for initiatives to expand the space for civic engagement and dialogue on inclusive and transparent governance, the role of state and civil society in ensuring sustainable and participatory development planning and management and in promoting fundamental freedom and human rights.

Technical assistance and advice will be provided to support public sector reform including through the implementation of the Official Languages Policy and the promotion of anti-corruption and ethical service delivery by government. Technical advisory assistance will be available from the UN system to support efforts to strengthen the inclusivity, transparency, accountability and openness in the core functions of the Parliament: law-making, oversight, budget and representation. Advocacy and coordination support will be made available to facilitate and strengthen public and private sector partnerships to enhance governance and administration and promote responsible business practices. The UN will also support the Government and partners in building more efficient and transparent public procurement mechanisms, recognising their important enabling role in terms of poverty reduction and access to public goods and services, which will also contribute to strengthening public trust and confidence throughout the economic recovery process.

The UN will assist in strengthening the capacity of oversight and coordination bodies for effective implementation of their mandates, including support for institutionalisation across state agencies of platforms, policies and mechanisms to eliminate corruption and for greater transparency and accountability. Complementing this will be an investment in promoting transparency through strengthened public access to information.

Expanding the use of information technology and other innovative mechanisms for governance and public administration in line with international standards – including privacy safeguards – will be a major focus of UN collaboration, aiming to enhance efficiencies and access, ensure citizen-centric public sector systems and promote greater trust in the Government and citizen involvement in decision-making. This will contribute to reducing inequalities through enhanced social connectivity, community feedback and compliance mechanisms, and ultimately more efficient and effective governance and administration. Serving as a significant SDG accelerator, a comprehensive approach to digital transformation will support the objective of all other Outcomes.

The UN system will provide strategic support for the strengthening of national and subnational institutions to drive economic recovery efforts through people-centred, rights-based and SDG-focused development planning. Technical support will be provided for promoting participatory and inclusive, needs-based budgeting, and advocacy undertaken for strengthened resource allocation from national and subnational budgets towards SDG priority areas. Support will be extended to expand consultative processes at all levels that facilitate greater public understanding of socioeconomic and sociopolitical issues, and that promote participation in the development of policies for sustainable recovery and restore public confidence in the developmental trajectory of the country.

Ensuring the availability and use of reliable and timely data for effective decision-making in development planning and implementation will be a key objective of the UN's support. The UN will support strengthening the capacity

of government institutions, including the Sustainable Development Council as the lead entity for coordination and monitoring and evaluation of SDGs implementation in Sri Lanka and the Department of Census and Statistics to collect, manage and analyse disaggregated rights-based data for evidence-informed decision-making, monitoring and reporting towards achieving the SDGs. This will include support for better integration of data systems with a focus on ensuring that the large data and evidence gaps in relation to the SDG indicators are filled.

Support will be provided to independent oversight institutions such as the Human Rights Commission, National Police Commission and the Bribery or Corruption Commission, to carry out their statutory mandates of independent inquiry and protection. This will include actions to strengthen public access to the remedial measures provided by the Commissions against the backdrop of the socioeconomic crisis. Technical assistance will be provided to strengthen access to legal representation for those whose fundamental rights have been violated, to ensure protection and assistance for victims and witnesses that testify before courts/commissions, and to facilitate access to grievance mechanisms for vulnerable individuals and communities.

The UN will support structured capacity-building approaches to ensure more effective, transparent and legitimate security and justice system and institutions, including law enforcement, prosecution, judiciary and prisons at national, subnational and community levels, aiming to allow the population to exercise their rights with respect to the rule of law. To prevent violence and crime and provide equitable access to security and justice services for all, capacity enhancement of the security sector and institutions will be undertaken through policy and capacity-building support, including a focus on promoting gender equality, disability inclusion and human rights.

Technical assistance and capacity development will be provided by the UN to contribute to justice sector reform initiatives, aimed at strengthening justice delivery and the rule of law and ensure an independent, transparent, inclusive and efficient system.

Assistance will be provided to strengthen individual and institutional capacities in the sector, and to improve access to justice through enhanced legal aid, language mainstreaming, gender and disability inclusion, and greater public awareness of and empowerment to claim rights and entitlements guaranteed under the law. Advocacy will be undertaken, technical assistance made available and international experience-sharing facilitated for the alignment of criminal and civil legislation and justice sector reform in line with international standards and best practices, and treaty obligations, including on human rights, the prevention of terrorism, preventing and combatting trafficking in persons, drugs and wildlife, smuggling of migrants and other forms of organized crime, victim and witness protection, laws on children and young persons, sexual and gender-based violence, and commercial and labour laws and on alternate dispute resolution.

Recognising the significant bottlenecks caused primarily by an overloaded court system and a lack of digitalization that contribute to lengthy delays in resolving civil and commercial disputes, the UN will support implementation of modernised systems, policies and standards for ensuring gender- and disability-responsive, and age-appropriate justice service delivery.

PARTNERSHIPS

To contribute to the national vision where institutions at all levels are more gender-responsive, participatory and transparent, and ensure equitable access to justice and services to all people, the UN system will collaborate with a broad and diverse range of partners. These will include the full spectrum of Government ministries, agencies, departments, and justice sector stakeholders, parliamentarians, local government authorities, Judicial Service Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Election Commission, Commission to Investigate Bribery or Corruption, universities and academic institutions, civil society and community-based organizations, NGOs, women's rights organizations and platforms, organizations for persons with disability, youth and faith-based organizations, labour organizations, the private sector, and the media and development partners. Details of the key implementing partners are included in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

UNSDCF OUTCOME 5

By 2027, the people of Sri Lanka live in a society which is more cohesive and strengthened by transformative and rights-based processes and mechanisms which support peaceful coexistence and human rights for all.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The pathway of change for this Outcome to be realized requires that:

- All people in Sri Lanka, including the marginalised and the vulnerable, enjoy freedom from discrimination, violence, hate speech, and other forms of social exclusion.
- People and community organizations are empowered to engage more effectively in decision-making processes and are able to claim their rights and express their grievances.
- Effective mechanisms and processes which enjoy the support of all communities in Sri Lanka are in place to support reconciliation, to provide holistic support for individuals and communities affected by the legacy of conflict and to promote their socioeconomic well-being.
- Social tensions are managed more effectively and in a timely manner through early warning and rapid assessment mechanisms at subnational and community levels.
- Effective mechanisms are in place to monitor, protect and promote respect for human rights, the rule of law and adherence to international law.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

Central to the realization of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, the aims of the national policy framework in Sri Lanka along with the achievement of the objectives of the Cooperation Framework are a socially cohesive and peaceful society. Under this Outcome, the UN system will continue to invest in providing coherent, well-sequenced and strategic assistance to support social cohesion and sustain peace among communities, including those most impacted owing to the current socioeconomic crisis. This includes actions to enhance their ability to engage with the state and for dealing with the past and ensuring well-being, community resilience-building, and promoting civic engagement initiatives, particularly for the most vulnerable groups.

In support of ensuring that the fundamental freedoms of all people in Sri Lanka are better protected by observation of internationally accepted human rights principles and standards, the UN will promote actions which protect, preserve and strengthen civil society space and capacity to engage on human rights issues in a safe and open manner through capacity-building of civil society groups. Enhanced awareness and understanding of human rights principles within state and non-state entities, communities and vulnerable groups will be pursued, along with initiatives supported that strengthen private sector engagement in promoting human rights due diligence processes in the workplace. The UN will engage with, encourage and strengthen the capacities of human rights defenders in civil society, academia and the media to protect and promote the rights of victims and vulnerable communities.

As part of its normative role within the Cooperation Framework, the UN will continue to support the Government to meet its obligations and commitments as a State party to key human rights instruments at global and regional levels, including the Universal Periodic Review and a wide range of international Conventions, including the Convention on All Forms of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention Against Torture, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and a wide range of environment-related and labour-related Conventions, among others. The human rights recommendations and concluding observations will further inform the planning and implementation of UN programme collaboration across the outcomes.

Contributing to reducing the risk of discrimination, inequality and violence, the UN will invest in actions for increased social dialogue, civic engagement, participation and empowerment of the most vulnerable and excluded communities. The UN will provide technical assistance and resources and share south-south experiences to strengthen the education system to promote peace, socioemotional skills, resilience and intercultural dialogue, and to foster reconciliation and education on violent pasts through integration of relevant concepts into national education policies, plans, strategies and curricula. Capacity-building, advisory services and resources for civil society and organized national-level volunteer organizations—particularly youth and women's organizations and their leaders—will be provided to increase their ability to lead, influence, implement and expand the reach of effective community engagement to promote social cohesion, inclusive development and collective action. These will be supported by actions under Outcome 4 which strengthen peoples' participation and recognition for their volunteer contributions in local-level policy development and decision-making processes, ensuring proper representation of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups, including young girls and women, differently-abled individuals, LGBTQ+ communities, indigenous groups and others.

A range of approaches will be supported that aim to ensure social tensions are managed through community resilience processes and

non-discriminatory and inclusive early warning mechanisms. Actions will include support for enhanced state and non-state early warning mechanisms, through research and analysis and promoting timely reporting of conflict dynamics and for local resolution capacities, along with promotion of information integrity and media ethics in online and offline mediums to prevent the spread of hate speech and disinformation.

The UN will contribute to actions to ensure that individuals and communities affected by the legacy of the armed conflict receive appropriate and timely remedy, restitution and support from government institutions. This will include capacity-strengthening of the relevant mechanisms to promote credible and victim-centric processes to provide holistic, appropriate, and timely redress and support to those affected, and promote socioeconomic well-being. Technical support will be provided to effectively integrate mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) within relevant government mechanisms and directly support community organizations to build MHPSS capacity and form a structured and interconnected network of service providers to assist communities in recovery and resilience.

The UN will promote trust and confidence of survivors in government reparations programmes that align with international standards, including encouraging them to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of measures which will contribute progressively towards achieving sustained peace in Sri Lanka. In addition, technical support will be provided for the formulation and implementation of equitable national and subnational policies and processes relating to post-conflict recovery and resettlement which are sensitive and responsive to those most marginalised within affected communities.

PARTNERSHIPS

Ensuring a socially cohesive society and sustained peace in Sri Lanka requires a whole-of-society approach. The Outcome will therefore depend on engagement, partnerships and commitment with a diverse set of stakeholders. In contributing to the Outcome, the UN will collaborate with a wide range of government ministries and authorities at national and subnational levels, political organizations, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, community-based organizations, volunteer-involving organizations and volunteer groups, civil society, traditional and faith leaders and other social change agents, the private sector, and the media among others. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

UNSDCF OUTCOME 6

By 2027, women and girls enjoy and are empowered to exercise their full rights, representation, and agency over all aspects of their lives, and live free from discrimination and violence.

THEORY OF CHANGE

To achieve the Outcome at least four sets of conditions must be fulfilled:

- National laws, policies and practices must fully recognise, promote and protect the rights of women and girls in compliance with international norms and standards.
- These instruments are informed by reliable, disaggregated data and gender analysis for gender-responsive planning and are sufficiently resourced, implemented, enforced, monitored and reported on.
- Women and girls are more empowered and can access high-quality services and equal opportunities towards effectively engaging and leading in all spheres of life, including decision-making in social and political processes.
- All of society, including boys and men, are engaged as agents of change to end harmful and discriminatory gender norms, roles and practices that perpetuate and reinforce gender inequality and ensure freedom from sexual and gender-based violence.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

This Outcome aims to ensure that women and girls in Sri Lanka enjoy and exercise their rights and fundamental freedoms, as envisioned in the Constitution of Sri Lanka and underpinned by Sri Lanka's commitments to the SDGs and international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. Through enhancing commitment, accelerated action and a whole-of-society approach, the Outcome will contribute to a gender-transformative society, where more women, girls and other marginalised groups benefit equally from development and have access to the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential, and are not further left behind.

In pursuing this, the UN will remain cognizant of the gendered impact of contemporary economic and social challenges, and that the rights, protection and empowerment of women have weakened significantly, and—in line with global and regional analyses—re in danger of further regression. The UN will therefore continue to offer targeted support to ensure that recovery efforts are equally shaped by women, with particular support to women from marginalised communities, and that these actions along with austerity measures that are put in place are gender-responsive.

The UN contributions to Outcome 6 will also serve as enablers for all other Cooperation Framework Outcomes, by focusing on strengthening institutions to be more inclusive, accessible and effective in meeting the diverse needs of women and girls; supporting civil society to promote social accountability; driving normative and behavioural change at all levels; and investing in new partnerships.

The UN will focus on a range of contributions towards four inter-linked strategic objectives of the Outcome:

(i) Ensuring women and girls benefit from more accessible and gender-responsive institutions and systems.

(ii) Increasing women's engagement in leadership and decision-making which impacts their lives.

(iii) Ensuring laws and policies are aligned and measures in place to facilitate women's economic autonomy with access to decent work, and to promoting the rights of women and girls in the world of work and to productive and sustained livelihoods.

(iv) Ensuring that the potential, rights and dignity of women and girls is not constrained by violence and discrimination.

The UN will focus on strengthening the gender-responsiveness of laws, policies, regulatory frameworks and implementation strategies to be fully aligned with international standards and commitments on gender equality. This will include support for the review and strengthening of institutional mechanisms, capacity and coordination across public institutions to effectively implement the existing legal, policy and programmatic frameworks to promote gender equality. Where necessary, the UN will also support the development of new policies and mechanisms in line with international and national commitments including CEDAW and other human rights treaties, and the recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development's Programme of Action, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (C190).

The UN system will engage with policy makers to strengthen accountability and build ownership of the transformative approach needed to accelerate gender equality, while simultaneously strengthening institutional capacities to generate quality disaggregated gender statistics to

address data gaps and support evidence-based policy and decision-making. Technical support will be made available for the development of systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment which are proportionate and do not regress on the achievements made so far; to strengthen the institutionalization of gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes at the national and subnational levels; and for strengthening institutions including government, the private sector and other organizations to adopt gender-responsive policies and build inclusive institutional cultures.

The UN will continue to pursue advancing women's engagement in leadership and decision-making on multiple fronts, based on good practice and lessons learned from within and outside Sri Lanka. This includes support for the development and implementation of legal and electoral frameworks and administrative arrangements that enable women's participation, such as relevant reforms to laws, party statutes and procedures, alongside temporary special measures and initiatives to reduce the potential for violence against women during periods of increased risk such as elections. Addressing negative sociocultural and gender norms that constitute barriers to effective participation of women and other marginalised groups in leadership and decision-making structures, particularly in local councils and within communities, will be emphasized.

Strengthening of civil society, volunteer groups, women's organizations, media and multistakeholder forums at national and subnational levels to promote collective leadership and consultatively developed community-led actions towards gender equality and women's empowerment in all sectors will be supported. These efforts will be supported by actions to build greater awareness among women, girls and marginalised groups of their legal rights and existing protections, promoting initiatives that enhance civic engagement, and supporting them to take up leadership roles in extending this knowledge to their communities.

Complementing the UN's commitments under Outcome 2 on enhancing women's economic empowerment and autonomy in the context of discriminatory social norms and stereotypes about gender roles and inadequate labour laws and policies, under this Outcome the UN will advocate for more equitable distribution of household and unpaid care work within households, targeting both public and private sector employees. The UN will further support actions that will allow for women's increased access to land, resources, credit and knowledge in initiating their own enterprises.

The UN will increasingly focus on prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence in Sri Lanka and breaking intergenerational cycles of violence, including exploring new strategies such as the use of economic empowerment strategies to improve financial independence and autonomy that will support survivors or women at risk, helping them to leave abusive environments. The UN will promote the development and implementation of comprehensive legislation and policies to prevent and respond to SGBV in public spaces. Initiatives will be supported that strengthen the ability of communities to recognize patterns of SGBV across various contexts and empower them to counter these. Promoting positive social and gender norms, attitudes and behaviours to prevent SGBV, focused on respectful relationships, communal harmony and gender equality will be a key area, including engaging men and boys. Complementing the UN's contributions under Outcome 1 towards prevention of SGBV, the UN will continue to support the adoption and implementation of multisectoral, evidence-based and survivor-centric approaches by government, CSOs and other stakeholders in a coordinated manner at national and subnational levels.

Strengthening survivors' access to justice and essential services will be addressed by enhancing the capacity of the justice sector to implement legislation and policies on addressing SGBV, and also effective and accountable enforcement of the rights of victim-survivors. The UN will support increasing the provision of accessible, coordinated and quality essential services for survivors in line with international standards and guidelines, by capacitating service providers and focusing on addressing barriers preventing their access to services.

PARTNERSHIPS

Contributing to ensuring women's empowerment and gender equality will involve engagement and partnering across a very broad spectrum of Government, public and private sectors, including CSOs. The UN will collaborate with, among others, Government ministries, Members of Parliament, local government and administrators, employers and workers organizations, the private sector, law enforcement entities, the justice sector, educational institutions, civil society organizations including the women's movement, formal and social media, development partners, along with traditional leaders and other social change agents. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

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2.5 SYNERGIES BETWEEN COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

The four Strategic Priorities and six Outcomes are interdependent and integrated for sustainable peace and development. Progress towards the achievement of one Outcome will both contribute to and require progress in other Outcomes. The relationships between the six Outcomes are clearly aligned with the synergies across the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnerships.

The synergies between the six Cooperation Framework Outcomes are reflective of the mutually reinforcing nature of the SDGs and are highlighted across the planned UN support under section 2.4. For example, pockets of severe poverty persist, particularly in the former conflict areas of the North and East (Prosperity - SDG 1; UNSDCF Outcomes 1 and 2). These parts of the island are also among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change (Planet – SDG 13; UNSDCF Outcome 3), which can contribute to increased social tensions and conflict risk through additional stress on resource allocation, management and scarcity (Peace – SDG 16; UNSDCF Outcome 5). Intercommunity tensions and conflict incidence directly contribute to physical and economic insecurity, which places women at greater risk of violence and disempowerment (People - SDG Target 5; UNSDCF Outcome 6). Pursuing strengthened environmental protection and natural resource management including use of renewable energy and a circular economy under Outcome 3 will contribute to the objectives of Outcome 2 on green-led economic development and improved livelihoods, and vice versa. Investing in lifelong health and nutrition, as well as school readiness and improved learning outcomes under Outcome 1, will also contribute to Outcome 2 in relation to improved livelihoods and decent work. Strengthening social protection mechanisms —particularly for the most vulnerable—will not only contribute to the objectives of Outcome 1 but also to strengthening resilience to climate change and disasters under Outcome 3 and to people's potential to contribute to and benefit from economic diversification and growth. While objectives of their own, more inclusive and efficient governance mechanisms (Outcome 4) along with a socially cohesive society (Outcome 5) are essential for sustainable human, economic and environmental development.

Promoting digitalization and technology-driven diversification is another example of the synergies across Outcomes. While the COVID-19 pandemic may have accelerated the update of certain digital technologies, further digitalization measures are required to bridge certain gaps in public service provision. Information technology infrastructure is essential to enable digital and telemedicine practices to be integrated effectively into Sri Lanka's public health system, which will broaden access to healthcare services, and for digitalization of education and learning systems and approaches. Strengthened digitalization will assist overcoming system bottlenecks and delays in resolving civil and business disputes in the justice system and service provision to end users that are a mix of online and offline processing. Technological upgrading will enhance natural disaster preparedness, where investments in information systems are required to improve weather forecasting and early warning systems and to protect human settlements and coastal infrastructure. Promoting foreign direct investment from private firms can facilitate technology transfer and productivity growth, and allow Sri Lanka's entry into new and higher-productivity export industries.

The inclusion in the Cooperation Framework of a specific Strategic Priority and Outcome on Gender Equality, while also including the mainstreaming of actions to promote gender and women's empowerment as a core strategy within all Outcomes, further reinforces the interdependence and synergies between the Outcomes. Strengthened commitment by all parties to continuing Sri Lanka's progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment across human development,

social, political, environmental and economic spheres within the country will make a crucial contribution towards the achievement of the Outcomes of this Cooperation Framework and ultimately, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

The Cooperation Framework adopts a cross-cutting approach guided by the Youth 2030 Strategy to include young people not only as beneficiaries but as partners across all Outcomes. This will support the national development strategy of more effective engagement of youth as proactive partners in the country's sustainable development process.

The intertwined peace and development nexus is a key element to this Cooperation Framework. Additionally, it takes a prevention approach, cognizant of the fact that prevention protects investments and development gains at less cost than reacting to crisis after the fact. Across all programme cooperation and interventions, the UN will incorporate a risk-informed approach. In the event of a humanitarian crisis or emergency, the UN system will strive to ensure support and assistance is provided in accordance with humanitarian principles and incorporates conflict analysis across humanitarian and development programming.

As part of its normative role within the Cooperation Framework, the United Nations will continue to support the Government to meet its implementation, monitoring and reporting obligations and commitments as a State party to key human rights instruments at global and regional levels, including with regard to accountability mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review and implementation of recommendations of UN human rights treaty bodies, along with a wide range of environment- and labour-related conventions, among others. The human rights recommendations and concluding observations will further inform the planning and implementation of UN programme collaboration across the Outcomes.

2.6 SUSTAINABILITY

The National Policy Framework of the Government aims to achieve four interconnected objectives: productive citizenry, contented families, a disciplined and just society, and a prosperous nation. The analytical and consultative processes undertaken in the formulation of the Cooperation Framework considered very closely these objectives and the ten key policies within. As such, the sustainability of the impact of Outcomes beyond 2027 will be ensured through this close alignment of the Cooperation Framework and national development priorities and plans.

In line with the principles of Agenda 2030, the Cooperation Framework aims to ensure that sustainable development is owned and led by Sri Lanka in the spirit of transparency, accountability and mutual respect. The UN will coordinate its work with government, national stakeholders, other multilateral institutions and the international community through the government-led development coordination architecture, including the Joint Steering Committee for the Cooperation Framework.

Complementing a primary strategy of the Cooperation Framework to strengthen the capacities and accountabilities of government institutions at national and subnational levels, strategic partnerships will be forged with community-based organizations— including civil society organizations, NGOs and community leaders—towards inclusive, sustainable development, social cohesion and realization of human rights. A key focus of this approach is to promote the commitment and ability of all levels of government to meaningfully engage with its people.

2.7 UN COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND UN COUNTRY TEAM CONFIGURATION

Building on decades of strong development, technical, and humanitarian cooperation, the UN development and humanitarian system is seen as a trusted partner of the Government and people in Sri Lanka. The UN and its entities seek to continue to be an unbiased partner, and an impartial convener for multistakeholder engagement and partnership at all levels, with strong regional and global networks through which it can mobilize cutting-edge international expertise on advanced development challenges and for humanitarian preparedness and response.

The UN also has a unique strength in its distinct approach to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, including its key programming principles, which take a people-centric approach that places focus on leaving no one behind, a human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental sustainability, transparency and accountability at its core. As evidenced in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN is also able to respond to emergencies to support the delivery not only of life-saving assistance, but also to rebuild and revitalise systems so that the humanitarian response contributes to long-term development.

Through its unique role as the custodian of international treaties and conventions, the UN system brings value in terms of supporting Sri Lanka in internalizing international norms and standards and for the fulfilment of its duties and obligations through responding to the recommendations arising from the respective treaties and conventions to which the country is party. The UN is able to draw on global, regional and national expertise to support Sri Lanka across a wide spectrum of international standards, ranging from human rights, education, health, nutrition, justice and rule of law, labour practices, governance and the environment, among many others.

As highlighted in the evaluation of the 2018-2022 UNSDF, the UN can provide a more systematic approach to national capacity-building, development and prioritization of innovative solutions and use of technology, and a reduction of vulnerability to risks and shocks. Together, these principles and approaches provide the basis for cooperation that is relevant, effective and sustainable. It also has the expertise to promote and facilitate the development of frameworks for expanded public-private partnerships by identifying suitable partners from the private sector, undertake due diligence analyses, and promote accountability.

The UNCT will draw on capacities across the UN system. The UNCT will be configured to include all agencies and entities, both resident and non-resident in Sri Lanka, that have committed through signature to contributing towards at least one of the Cooperation Framework Outcomes. Given the evolving country context, the effectiveness and efficiency of the UNCT configuration will be reviewed annually during the Cooperation Framework annual progress meeting.

While the main responsibility for the implementation of the Cooperation Framework will rest with the UNCT members, additional expertise from other UN entities across the broader UN system, including its regional and global levels, can be mobilized to support as necessary, facilitated by the Resident Coordinator. This additional expertise will strengthen the ability of the UN to be a provider of cutting-edge advice and support in response to complex and dynamic situations and to grasp opportunities to accelerate sustainable development.

In addition to mobilising resources and strengthening promotion of the UN Sri Lanka SDG Fund, the UN entities will explore leveraging of private sector funding opportunities along with development of investment cases for Government to enable the scaling up of support beyond the limitations of donor funding. To facilitate the exploration and adaptation of innovative delivery modalities, the UN will deepen collaboration with partners, especially from civil society, academia, international financial institutions and the private sector, facilitate South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and advance joint programming initiatives. The UNCT will ensure strategic dialogue with neighbouring UNCTs to facilitate effective subregional cooperation.

All UN entities will benefit from coordination and substantive support from the Resident Coordinator's Office, including analytical capacities in strategic planning, economics, partnerships and financing for development, data monitoring and reporting, and communications and advocacy.

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CHAPTER 03

Cooperation Framework Implementation Plan

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3.1 GOVERNANCE

The Joint Government of Sri Lanka-United Nations Steering Committee (JSC), co-chaired by the Secretary to the Treasury and the UN Resident Coordinator, will be the highest governing body of the Cooperation Framework. The Joint Steering Committee will meet twice a year to provide oversight and guidance on the implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

The UNCT will establish six Outcome Groups, chaired by a UN head of agency in partnership with a lead Ministry and with the participation of the Department of National Planning and other relevant ministries, which will guide the Cooperation Framework annual joint planning, monitoring and reporting, including to the JSC. The UNCT, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, will be responsible for the overall effectiveness of the United Nations' development contributions and results and will ensure that individual United Nations entity programming documents are derived from, aligned with and in support of the Strategic Priorities and Outcomes of the Cooperation Framework 2023-2027.

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Cooperation Framework will be nationally executed under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Finance and will be operationalized through the development of joint work plans (see section 3.3). Implementation of the Cooperation Framework will reflect the contemporary relationship between the Government and the UN in collaborating to achieve the national development priorities and the SDGs. The Cooperation Framework was co-designed by the Government and the UN to ensure alignment with national priorities. At the implementation stage, ongoing discussions with the Government will ensure that the Cooperation Framework remains aligned to national priorities even within a shifting context.

The UN will build on ongoing successful relationships and actively pursue a range of strategic, innovative and operational partnerships to advance the priorities identified in the

Cooperation Framework and help drive transformational and systemic change towards sustainable development. The implementation strategy of the Cooperation Framework places at its centre the impact of the macroeconomic crisis on the people in Sri Lanka, through an inclusive, "no one left behind" and multisectoral approach, including undertaking systematic analyses of patterns of exclusion and marginalisation in the country. The UN is committed to provide support required in addressing the needs of the Government and the most vulnerable as macroeconomic and fiscal conditions change throughout the course of UNSDCF 2023-27, while ensuring that the Outcomes of the Cooperation Framework will continue to be aligned with the priorities of the Government.

The UN will utilize a wide range of joint working approaches in delivering on the ambitious multisectoral outcomes of the Cooperation Framework. These will include joint projects and programmes where relevant, joint programming, joint advocacy and communications, coordinated implementation where relevant, as well as different joint funding modalities. The purpose of this will be to reduce transaction costs, provide value-for-money and reap the economies of scale and scope in maximizing impact.

The UN system agencies will provide support to the development and implementation of activities within the Cooperation Framework, which may include technical support, cash assistance, supplies, commodities and equipment, procurement services, transport, funds for advocacy, research and studies, consultancies, programme development, monitoring and evaluation, training activities and staff support. Part of the UN system entities' support may be provided to non-governmental and civil society organizations as agreed within the framework of the individual work plans and project documents.

Additional support may include access to UN organization-managed global information systems, the network of the UN system agencies' country offices and specialized information systems, including rosters of consultants and providers of development services, and access to the support provided by the network of UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes. The UN system agencies shall appoint staff and consultants for programme development, programme support, technical assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

Subject to annual reviews and progress in the implementation of the programme, the UN system agencies' funds are distributed by calendar year and in accordance with the Cooperation Framework. These budgets will be reviewed and further detailed in the work plans and project documents. By mutual consent between the Government and the UN development system entities, funds not earmarked by donors to UN development system agencies for specific activities or Outcomes may be allocated to other priority areas indicated in the Cooperation Framework.

The Government will support the UN system agencies' efforts to raise funds required to meet the needs of this Cooperation Framework and will cooperate with the UN system agencies including: encouraging potential donor Governments to make available to the UN system agencies the funds needed to implement unfunded components of the programme; and endorsing the UN system agencies' efforts to raise funds for the programme from other sources, including the private sector both internationally and in Sri Lanka.

Cash assistance for travel, stipends, honoraria and other costs shall be set at rates commensurate with those applied in the country, but not higher than those applicable to the United Nations system (as stated in the International Civil Service Commission circulars).

3.3 JOINT WORK PLANS

For effective implementation of the Cooperation Framework, the United Nations contributions to the achievement of each of the six Outcomes will be through a set of Outputs. These concrete and measurable Outputs will enable the attribution of the United Nations contribution to national priorities. As the social, political and economic context are subject to change over time, the Cooperation Framework has an adaptive approach, allowing for adjustments to achieve expected results in an evolving operating environment. While the Cooperation Framework Outcomes will remain constant for the duration of the cycle, the Outputs and activities can be updated and adjusted to remain relevant.

To operationalise Outputs, in collaboration with partners the UN system will develop, monitor and report on annual joint work plans. The annual joint work plans will ensure alignment with national priorities and the evolving situation and context of Sri Lanka, and support country capacities to deliver development results and ensure transparency and accountability in their implementation.

The joint work plans, along with agency-specific work plans and project documents will form an agreement between the UN and each implementing partner as necessary on the use of resources. Joint work plans for each Cooperation Framework Outcome area will be developed on an annual or biannual basis by the Results Group responsible for the outcome.

To the extent possible, the UN system agencies and partners will use the minimum documents necessary, namely the signed Cooperation Framework and signed joint or agency-specific work plans and project documents to implement programmatic initiatives. However, as necessary and appropriate, project documents can be prepared using, inter alia, the relevant text from the Cooperation Framework and joint or agency-specific work plans and/or project documents.

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CHAPTER 04

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

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4.1 MONITORING PLAN

The Cooperation Framework Results Matrix is the main tool against which progress will be measured. The selection of indicators was informed by considerations of their prioritisation at the national level and their mainstreaming into official statistics, as well as the existence of baselines and agreed targets—the absence of which were barriers to measuring progress under the UNSDF 2018-2022. In operationalizing the monitoring plan, the UN will make maximum use of the existing national data and information systems. The UN will also support national capacity development for data collation, analysis and use, and SDG monitoring.

The Cooperation Framework Results Matrix will be uploaded on UNINFO, and the six Outcome Result Groups will be responsible for providing updated data on the indicators. The UN Programme Monitoring and Reporting Teamwill support the Outcome Result Groups in the reporting and ensure quality control. In the first meeting of the Joint Steering Committee every year, the UN Resident Coordinator, on behalf of the UNCT, will report on the development results of the previous year based on data collected through quarterly reporting.

As noted in section 3.3, detailed workplans with indicators, baselines and targets for Outputs under each of the Outcomes will be used at the operation level for measuring the UN's specific contributions towards the achievement of the Outcomes.

Field level monitoring

Joint monitoring visits will be one of the main tools for joint collection of field-level monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) on results, processes and activities.

Monitoring of activities and financial management

Implementing Partners agree to cooperate with the UN system agencies in monitoring of all activities supported by cash transfers and will facilitate access to relevant financial records and personnel responsible for the administration of cash provided by the UN system agencies. To that effect, Implementing Partners agree to the following:

1. Periodic on-site reviews and spot checks of their financial records by the UN system agencies or their representatives as appropriate, and as described in specific clauses of their engagement documents/contracts with the UN system agencies;
2. Programmatic monitoring of activities following the UN system agencies' standards and guidance for site visits and field monitoring; and
3. Special or scheduled audits: Each UN agency, in collaboration with other UN system agencies (where so desired and in consultation with the respective coordinating ministry), will establish an annual audit plan, giving priority to audits of Implementing Partners to which UN system agencies provide large amounts of cash assistance, and those whose financial management capacity needs strengthening.

4.1.1 RISKS

There are three higher order risks identified which cut across all the Outcomes and if they occur, would significantly block or alter the development trajectory in Sri Lanka, the achievement of the SDGs and the planned results of this Cooperation Framework.

1. Failure to adequately address the macroeconomic crisis

The major risk to a positive development trajectory relates to the current macroeconomic instability and the impact that it will have on sustainable social, economic and environmental development if not addressed in a timely, fiscally responsible and people-centred manner. Sri Lanka is challenged with regard to servicing public debt, low international reserves, and persistently large financing needs. Against this backdrop, there are limited external buffers to

absorb the effects of any unforeseen shocks to the global economy. Failure to address these will present a considerable cost to economic and human development, which poses direct risks not only in terms of achieving the objectives under this Cooperation Framework, but also significant challenges to the UN system as a whole in the delivery and prioritization of its development cooperation contributions.

Longer-term economic challenges also reduce the scope for policymakers to progress with growth-enhancing structural reforms that realize the 2030 Agenda. A protracted process of addressing the country's external imbalances could materially affect the ability to access international capital markets, while weaker economic performance can also undermine domestic resource mobilisation efforts to raise the financing Sri Lanka needs to invest in activities that contribute to the 2030 Agenda. Restoring macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability in the medium term will likely require significant reforms in public financial management, together with an enabling environment for business and trade and export reforms and facilitation, while protecting vulnerable groups and reducing poverty through a strengthened, shock-responsive social protection system.

In addition to supporting recovery efforts, an important mitigation strategy for the UN would be to support a more responsive social protection system that provides timely, targeted assistance in a way that leverages existing transfer mechanisms and minimises the fiscal and coordination burden on national and subnational governments. The UN system's support for acceleration of digitalization of social services as well as expanded and affordable information technology connectivity, particularly for the most vulnerable, is an additional mitigation measure, aiming to ensure access to social services, to markets, and to ensure open communication channels.

2. Climate change and natural disasters

Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, and this is being exacerbated by climate change. The country was ranked 23rd most affected by climate change between 2000 and 2019, according to the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index, which analyses extreme weather events and the extent to which countries have been affected by impacts of weather-related loss events. Some regions are chronically and acutely susceptible to climate extremes, including floods, typhoons, drought and salt water intrusion, putting at risk millions of people, critical infrastructure and Sri Lanka's agricultural production. Climate-related natural disasters have impacted significantly on the country's GDP annually over the last three decades, and the growing potential of increased climate change risks unravelling Sri Lanka's sustainable economic and social development.

The UN will contribute to achieving Sri Lanka's vision for addressing the adverse impacts of climate change by enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience of systems and communities, providing effective response to the vulnerabilities of critical sectors, and efficient support for the accelerated mainstreaming of climate change considerations into national development policies, strategies and plans. While continuing to support mitigation measures, the UN will increasingly focus on adaptation approaches at systems and community levels, including promotion of renewal energy and the circular economy, improving agricultural and disaster management techniques to strengthen resilience to climate shocks as well as promoting sustainable management of natural resources and protecting the environment. In a preventative approach the UN will accord a focus on areas where climate change can exacerbate community conflict risks.

3. Risks and stresses for social cohesion

In the context of past events and the additional social and economic stresses being experienced, the possibility of intercommunity tensions and violence are potential risks to social cohesion and progress towards sustainable development and the SDGs in Sri Lanka. In line with the global Sustaining Peace and Prevention agendas of the United Nations, mitigating these risks will remain critical during the period of the Cooperation Framework. In this regard, addressing structural issues including more inclusive, transparent and effective governance, rule of law and justice that address impunity will remain important priorities in working towards the goal of lasting reconciliation. In addition to the inclusion in the Cooperation Framework of a specific Outcome focusing on social cohesion and human rights, cross-cutting UN support for access to social services, improved livelihoods and strengthening resilience to shocks and stresses, in particular for the most vulnerable, are important underlying risk mitigation measures.

4.1.2 COOPERATION FRAMEWORK REVIEW AND REPORTING

The Outcome Results Groups and M&E Group, on behalf of the UNCT, will undertake annual reviews of the UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) and Cooperation Framework to measure overall progress towards planned results, monitor risks, identify key opportunities and challenges, and reflect on learning to inform decisions and course correction in the evolving context of Sri Lanka and the world.

Based on this, the UNCT Country Results Report will be prepared annually by the end of the first quarter of the following year and submitted to the Joint Steering Committee, which will provide evidence to explain to the Government and partners any necessary adaptations in UN programming for continued relevance. The report will also be informed by the annual updating of the CCA as necessary and course-correcting the Joint Work Plans to make sure the focus of the Cooperation Framework remains relevant and effective.

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4.2 EVALUATION PLAN

An evaluation of the Cooperation Framework will be conducted by an independent consultant(s) in the penultimate year of the cycle (2026). Prior to the commencement of implementation of the Cooperation Framework, an Evaluability Assessment will be conducted with the support of the Regional United Nations Development Coordination Office to determine that the Cooperation Framework's objectives are adequately defined and its results verifiable and therefore can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.

The evaluation Terms of Reference will ensure an inclusive and participatory approach involving all stakeholders as well as the independence and impartiality of the evaluation team. The Cooperation Framework evaluation will adhere to UN Evaluation Group norms and standards, follow OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, and utilize a gender equality and human rights-based approach.

ANNEX 1: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK RESULTS MATRIX

UNSDCF OUTCOME 1

STRENGTHENED, RESILIENT & EQUITABLE SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEMS AND ENHANCED WELL-BEING

Outcome:

By 2027, more people in Sri Lanka, particularly the most vulnerable, access and benefit from equitable, resilient and gender-responsive quality social services and with enhanced well-being and dignity.

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 10 Reduce inequality, within and among countries

Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Contributing UN agencies: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women, WFP, WHO

Government and other key partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilisation and National Policies, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs , Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Ministry of Water Supply, Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment, State Ministry of Education Services and Reforms, Department of Immigration and Emigration, Human Rights Commission, Provincial Councils, Academia and Research Institutions Civil Society and Community-Based Organizations, Education-Related Service Providers, Faith-Based Organizations and Leaders, Families and Communities, Financial Institutions, Media Organisations and Journalists, Non-Governmental Organizations, Open Universities and Distance Learning Institutions, Private Sector, Professional Associations, Training Institutes, Vocational Education Institutions Volunteer Organizations and Groups, Women's Organizations, Youth Organizations

Indicator	Baseline	Proposed Target	Target Data Source
1.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems SDG Indicator 1.3.1	42.3% (2016) Male: 41.7% Female: 42.8% Children: 40.5%	At least 60.0%	DCS Household Income and Expenditure Survey
1.2 National prevalence of undernourishment SDG indicator 2.1.1	19% (2020)	Less than 15.0%	Global Nutrition Report

1.3	Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods SDG indicator 3.7.1	74.2% (2016)	79.0%	Demographic and Health Survey
1.4	Coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population SDG indicator 3.8.1	65% (2020)	At least 77.0%	WHO SEARO SDG country profiles
1.5	Proportion of households that have access to improved drinking water	90% (2016)	100% (2025)	Demographic and Health Survey
1.6	Percentage of children aged 3–4 years who attend a preschool or an early childhood development centre	61.1 (2016)	76.0%	Demographic and Health Survey
1.7	Percentage of households: (a) Connected to sewerage (b) With a (i) handwashing facility, (ii) water facility and (iii) soap facility	(a) 2.05% (2020) (b-i) Handwashing facility: 86.3% (2019) (b-ii) Water facility: 90.1% (2019) (b-iii) Soap facility: 85.1% (2019)	(a) 3.5% (b-i, b-ii, b-iii) 95.0%	(a) Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2019. (b) WHO/UNICEF Hand Hygiene for All Global Initiative
1.8	Percentage of shanties, row houses/line rooms	4.8% (2016)	Less than 4.0%	DCS Household Income and Expenditure Survey
1.9	Proportion of children aged 5–17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression in the past month	54% (2019)	45%	DCS Household Income and Expenditure Survey
1.10	Expenditure of essential services as a percentage of GDP (a) Education expenditure as a % of GDP (b) Health expenditure as a % of GDP	(a) 1.93% (2019) (b) 1.63% (2019)	More than 3.7% More than 2.3%	Central Bank Annual Report

UNSDCF OUTCOME **2**

SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE, GREEN-LED GROWTH, PEOPLE-CENTRED ECONOMIC RECOVERY, LIVELIHOODS AND PRODUCTIVITY

Outcome:

By 2027, more people in Sri Lanka, particularly youth and the most vulnerable, have equitable, decent, just work and income opportunities, and benefit from and contribute to inclusive, gender-transformative, resilient and green-led economic recovery, growth and diversification.

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10 Reduce inequality, within and among countries

Contributing UN agencies: ESCAP, FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, ITC, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women, WFP

Government and other key partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education , Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilisation and National Policies, Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilisation and National Policies, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Technology and Investment Promotion, Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food Security, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment, Central bank of Sri Lanka, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Department of Census and Statistics, Department of National Budget, Department of National Planning, Employers' Federation Ceylon, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, Presidential Secretariat, Provincial Councils, Relevant Presidential Task Forces, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Academia and Research Institutions, Employers' and Workers' Organizations, International Financial Institutions, Microfinance Companies, Migrant Organizations, Organizations of Persons with a Disability, Private Sector, Recruitment Agencies, Vocational Education Institutions, Volunteer Organizations and Groups Women's Organizations, Youth Organizations

Indicator	Baseline	Proposed Target	Target Data Source
2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line SDG Indicator 1.2.1	National: 14.3% Male: 14.5% Female: 14.2% (Updated Poverty Line - 2019)	Less than 14.0%	DCS Household Income and Expenditure Survey

2.2	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills SDG Indicator 4.4.1	National: 32.3% (2020)	35.0%	DCS Computer Literacy Statistics (Annual)
2.3	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita SDG Indicator 8.2.1	-4.1% (2020)	2.0% on average	DCS National Accounts (Annual); Vital Statistics - Mid-year Population Estimates
2.4	Proportion of informal employment in (a) total employment by sex (b) non-agriculture employment SDG Indicator 8.3.1	(a) 67% (2020) Male 60.1% Female 70.4% (b) 57.9%	(a) 65.0% (b) 53.0%	DCS Labour Force Survey (Annual)
2.5	Unemployment rate by sex SDG Indicator 8.5.2	5.5% (2020) Male: 4.0% Female: 8.5%	Less than 5.0%	DCS Labour Force Survey (Annual)
2.6	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET) SDG Indicator 8.6.1	21.5% (2020) Male: 15.3% Female: 27.5%	Less than 20.0%	DCS Labour Force Survey (Annual)
2.7	Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP SDG Indicator 9.2.1	16.2% (2020)	At least 18.0%	DCS National Accounts (Annual)
2.8	Material footprint per unit of GDP SDG Indicator 9.b.1	1.59kg/USD (2015)	Less than 1.59kg/USD	UNEP Global Material Flows Database

UNSDCF OUTCOME 3

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Outcome:

By 2027, people and communities in Sri Lanka, especially the vulnerable and marginalised, are more resilient to climate change and disaster risks, have enhanced water and food security, and equitably benefit from ambitious climate action and increasingly sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural resources.

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Contributing UN agencies: FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV

Government and other key partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Defence , Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Irrigation, Ministry of Lands and Land Development, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Ministry of Water Supply, Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation, State Ministry of Livestock, Central Environment Authority, Coast Conservation Department, Department of Agriculture, Department of Census & Statistics, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources , Department of Irrigation, Department of Meteorology, Department of National Community Water Supply, Disaster Management Centre, Family Health Bureau, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Land Use Policy and Planning Department, Marine Environment Protection Authority, National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency, National Disaster Relief Services Centre, National Water Supply and Drainage Board, Provincial Councils, Sustainable Energy Authority, Academia and Research Institutions, Civil Society and Community-Based Organizations, Livestock Industry, Micro Finance Companies, Non-Governmental Organizations, Private Sector, Volunteer Organizations and Groups, Waste Disposal and Community Cleanliness Organisations, Women's Organizations, Youth Organizations

Indicator	Baseline	Proposed Target	Target Data Source
3.1 Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0–100) SDG Indicator 6.5.1	47/100 (2020)	62/100	UNEP Integrated Water Resources Management Tracking SDG 6 series

3.2	Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption SDG Indicator 7.2.1	43.1% (2019)	At least 65.0%	International Energy Agency (IEA): Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report
3.3	Number of: (a) deaths; and (b) directly affected persons attributed to disasters	(a) 152 (b) 186,162 (2015)	(a) 65.0% (b) 53.0%	DCS Labour Force Survey (Annual)
3.4	Existence of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) national action plan or SCP mainstreamed as a priority or a target into national policies SDG Indicator 12.1.1	No (2022)	Yes	Joint Assessment with SDG Council
3.5	Existence of integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning in primary, secondary and tertiary curricula SDG Indicator 13.3.1	No (2021)	Yes	Ministry of Education
3.6	Forest area as a proportion of total land area SDG Indicator 15.1.1	29.15% (2015)	At least 30%	Sri Lanka Forest Reference Level Submissions to UNFCCC as part of Nationally Determined Contributions
3.7	Total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per year SDG Indicator 13.2.2	1.02 tonnes per person (2010)	At least 10% reduction relative to Business as Usual (BAU)	Sri Lanka Updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

UNSDCF OUTCOME 4

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE, JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW

Outcome:

By 2027, people in Sri Lanka, particularly the most vulnerable, have increased trust and confidence to claim and benefit from enhanced, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, participatory and efficient governance and justice systems and rights-based development.

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 10 Reduce inequality, within and among countries

Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Contributing UN agencies: ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women

Government and other key partners: Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government , Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment, Attorney General's Department, Bar Association of Sri Lanka, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Chief Justice , Commission to Investigate Bribery or Corruption, Community Corrections Department, Department of Immigration and Emigration, Department of Labour, Department of Probation and Childcare Services, Department of Social Sciences, District Secretariats, Election Commission of Sri Lanka, Employers' Federation Ceylon, Government Analyst Department, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Information and Communication Technology Agency, Judicial Service Commission, Legal Aid Commission, Legal Draftsman's Department, Local Government Bodies, National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Employers Federation, National Child Protection Authority, National Police Commission, National SDG 16 Committee, National Youth Services Council, Parliament of Sri Lanka and Relevant Parliamentary Committees, Parliamentary Secretariat, Prisons Department, Provincial Councils, Sri Lanka Police, Victim and Witness Protection Authority, Civil Society and Community-Based Organizations, Employers' and Workers' Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations, Media Organisations and Journalists, Non-Governmental Organizations, Organizations of Persons with a Disability, Private Sector Organizations, UN Global Compact Network Sri Lanka, Universities and Other Academic Institutions, Women's Organizations, Youth Organizations, Youth Parliament

Indicator	Baseline	Proposed Target	Target Data Source
4.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms. SDG Indicator 16.3.1	Available July 2022	To be determined once baseline in place	UNDP Access to Justice Reform Programme

4.2	Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population SDG Indicator 16.3.2	66.4% (2020)	Less than 50.0%	Department of Prisons: Prison Statistics of Sri Lanka
4.3	Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget SDG Indicator 16.6.1	87.7% (2021)	100.0%	Ministry of Finance: Fiscal Management Report
4.4	Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics SDG Indicator 17.18.1	34% (2021)	75%	Joint validation with Sustainable Development Council
4.5	Corruption Perception Index (CPI) Score	37 (2021)	At least 50	Transparency International
4.6	Number of cases filed in courts as a proportion of total complaints made to the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery and Corruption	2.7% (2021) (2,335 complaints received, 62 cases filed)	At least 5.0%	Sri Lanka Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption: Progress Reports

UNSDCF OUTCOME 5

SOCIAL COHESION, SUSTAINING PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Outcome:

By 2027, people in Sri Lanka, particularly the most vulnerable, have increased trust and confidence to claim and benefit from enhanced, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, participatory and efficient governance and justice systems and rights-based development.

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 10 Reduce inequality, within and among countries

Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Contributing UN agencies: IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women

Government and other key partners: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs , Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment, State Ministry of Education Services and Reforms, Bar Association of Sri Lanka, Chambers of Commerce, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Local Government Bodies, National Institute of Education, National Youth Services Council, Office for National Unity and Reconciliation, Office for Reparations, Office on Missing Persons, Provincial Councils, Provincial Land Commissioner–North, Regional Directors of Health Services, Sustainable Development Council of Sri Lanka, Civil Society and Community-Based Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations and Leaders, Global Compact Network Sri Lanka, Media Organisations and Journalists, Private Sector, Universities and Other Academic Institutions, Volunteer Organizations and Groups

	Indicator	Baseline	Proposed Target	Target Data Source
5.1	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment SDG Indicator 4.7.1	TBD (2022)		UNESCO (Division for Peace and Sustainable Development; Institute for Statistics)
5.2	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population SDG Indicator 16.1.1	2.1 (464 cases, 2020)	Less than 2.1	Sri Lanka Police: Grave Crime Abstract

5.3	Existence of an independent national human rights institution in compliance with Paris principles SDG Indicator 16.a.1	A Status: Fully compliant with the Paris Principles (2021)[72]	A Status: Fully compliant with the Paris Principles (2021)	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) reports
5.4	Percentage of requests for information submitted under the Right to Information Act furnished within relevant legislated timeframes	19.7% (81 of 411 requests)	75%	Joint validation with Sustainable Development Council
5.5	Percentage of claimants through the Office for Reparations receiving timely and appropriate reparations and other support from government institutions	32.0% (2020) (5,964 claims settled, 18,420 claims pending, approved for payment or awaiting settlement – either at year end or January 1, 2021)	At least 50%	Office for Reparations – Annual Report

UNSDCF OUTCOME 6

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Outcome:

By 2027, women and girls in Sri Lanka enjoy and are empowered to exercise their full rights, representation, and agency over all aspects of their lives, and live free from discrimination and violence.

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 10 Reduce inequality, within and among countries

Contributing UN agencies: ESCAP, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV, UN Women, WFP

Government and other key partners: Ministries of Agriculture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilisation and National Policies, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs , Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation, Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment, State Ministry of Foreign Employment, State Ministry of Skills Development, Department of Census and Statistics, Election Commission of Sri Lanka, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Legal Aid Commission, Local Government Bodies, Members of Parliament, National Child Protection Authority, National Institute of Education, Office for Reparations, Parliamentary Sectoral Oversight Committee on Gender, Provincial Councils, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Sustainable Development Council of Sri Lanka, Women Parliamentarians Caucus, Academia and Research Institutions, Civil Society and Community-Based Organizations, Education-Related Service Providers, Employers' and Workers' Organizations, Law Enforcement Entities, Media Organisations and Journalists, Microfinance Companies, Plantation Companies, Pre-School and Primary Education Institutions, Private Sector, Justice Sector, Universities and Other Scademic Institutions, Vocational Education Institutions, Women's Organizations

Indicator	Baseline	Proposed Target	Target Data Source
6.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex SDG Indicator 5.4.1	Men: 6.25% Women: 23.4% (2016)	Men: More than 6.25% Women: Less than 20%	DCS Sri Lanka Time-Use Survey

6.2	Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliament and (b) local governments SDG Indicator 5.5.1	National: 5.3% (2021) (b1) Provincial Councils – 6.98 (April 2022) (b2) Local governments – 25% (2021)	National: 25% Provincial Councils: 25% Local Governments: 25%	Parliament of Sri Lanka Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government
6.3	Proportion of women in managerial positions SDG Indicator 5.5.2	27% (2020)[73]	At least 32%	DCS Labour Force Survey
6.4	The existence of system or systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment SDG Indicator 5.c.1	No (2022)	Yes	Ministry of Finance
6.5	Female labour force participation rate	32.0% (2020)	At least 38%	DCS Labour Force Survey
6.6	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months	14.5% (2019)	Less than 14.5%	DCS Demographic and Health Survey. State and independent hotlines. Independent national studies
6.7	Percentage of households: (a) National Action Plan [NAP] on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (b) NAP on Women Headed Households (c) NAP on Women, Peace and Security (d) National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (e) Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (f) Land Development Ordinance (in relation to equal rights of land to women) 1 = No Policy 2 = Policy drafted but not approved 3 = Policy approved but not operationalized 4 = Policy partly operationalized 5 = Policy fully operationalized, with resources allocated and monitored	(a) 1 (Plan expired 2021) (b) 2 (c) 2 (d) 2 (e) 5 (f) 4	(a) 5 (b) 5 (c) 5 (d) 5 (e) 5 (f) 5	Department of National Planning, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs Ministry of Women and Child Development Department of Government Printing

ANNEX 2: LEGAL ANNEX

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka (hereinafter referred to as "the Government") has entered into the following relationships:

(a) With United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have entered into a basic agreement to govern UNDP's assistance to the country (Standard Basic Assistance Agreement or SBAA), which was signed by both parties on 20 March 1990. Based on Article I, paragraph 2 of the SBAA, UNDP's assistance to the Government shall be made available to the Government and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of the competent UNDP organs, and subject to the availability of the necessary funds to the UNDP. In particular, decision 2005/1 of 28 January 2005 of UNDP's Executive Board approved the new Financial Regulations and Rules and along with them the new definitions of 'execution' and 'implementation' enabling UNDP to fully implement the new Common Country Programming Procedures resulting from the UNDG simplification and harmonization initiative. In light of this decision this Cooperation Framework together with a work plan (which shall form part of this UNDSDCF and is incorporated herein by reference) constitute together a project document as referred to in the SBAA.

(b) With the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) the Basic Cooperation Agreement (BCA) concluded between the Government and UNICEF on 29 January 1969.

(c) With the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the Government and the United Nations Development Programme, dated 20 March 1990 and the exchange of letters between the Government and UNFPA, dated 11 August 2005.

(d) With the World Food Programme (WFP), a Basic Agreement of Assistance which was signed with the Government on 10 November 1968.

(e) With the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), an Agreement for the opening of the FAO Representation in Sri Lanka on 4 January 1979.

(f) With the International Labour Organisation (ILO), an Agreement which was signed with the Government on 21 March 1988.

(g) With the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), a Cooperation Agreement which was signed with the Government on 26 June 2001.

(h) With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an Agreement which was signed with the Government on 7 December 2005.

(i) With the World Health Organization (WHO), a Basic Agreement which was signed by the Government on 21 December 1959.

(j) With the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and the UNEA's approval of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-25 and Related Programmes of Work.

(k) With the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women), through the SBAA signed by UNDP and the Government on 20 March 1990.

(l) With the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), through the SBAA signed by UNDP and the Government on 20 March 1990.

(m) With the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), through the SBAA signed by UNDP and the Government on 20 March 1990.

(n) With the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through the Regional Programme for South Asia.

(o) For other resident, non-resident and specialized agencies: Assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of their competent governing structures. Additional agreements to be signed during the new Cooperation Framework cycle will be included when available.

The Cooperation Framework will, in respect of each of the United Nations system agencies signing, be read, interpreted, and implemented in accordance with and in a manner that is consistent with the basic agreement between such United Nations system agency and the Host Government.

The Government will honour its commitments in accordance with the provisions of the cooperation and assistance agreements outlined in paragraph one on the Basis of the Relationship.

Without prejudice to these agreements, the Government shall apply the respective provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (the "General Convention") or the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (the "Specialized Agencies Convention") to the Agencies' property, funds, and assets and to their officials and experts on mission. The Government shall also accord to the Agencies and their officials and to other persons performing services on behalf of the Agencies, the privileges, immunities and facilities as set out in the cooperation and assistance agreements between the Agencies and the Government. In addition, it is understood that all United Nations Volunteers shall be assimilated to officials of the Agencies, entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to such officials under the General Convention or the Specialized Agencies Convention. The Government will be responsible for dealing with any claims, which may be brought by third parties against any of the Agencies and their officials, experts on mission or other persons performing services on their behalf and shall hold them harmless in respect of any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is mutually agreed by Government and a particular Agency that such claims and liabilities arise from gross negligence or misconduct of that Agency, or its officials, advisors or persons performing services.

Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Government shall insure or indemnify the Agencies from civil liability under the law of the country in respect of vehicles provided by the Agencies but under the control of or use by the Government.

(a) Nothing in this Agreement shall imply a waiver by the UN or any of its Agencies or Organizations of any privileges or immunities enjoyed by them or their acceptance of the jurisdiction of the courts of any country over disputes arising of this Agreement.

(b) Nothing in or relating to this document will be deemed a waiver, expressed or implied, of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, including WFP, whether under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13th February 1946, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 21st November 1947, as applicable, and no provisions of this document or any Institutional Contract or any Undertaking will be interpreted or applied in a manner, or to an extent, inconsistent with such privileges and immunities.

ANNEX 3: HARMONIZED APPROACH TO CASH TRANSFERS (HACT)

HACT is a common operational framework implemented by some UN Agencies to govern transferring cash to government and non-government implementing partners. There are three agencies in Sri Lanka currently implementing HACT: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

The management of HACT subscribes to the following principles: (i) cost-effective management of risks; (ii) standardized and streamlined inter-agency practices; (iii) accountability and (iv) national ownership. It applies to all cash transferred to government and civil society partners.

i. Cash Transfers

All cash transfers to an Implementing Partner are based on the Work Plans agreed between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies.

Cash transfers for activities detailed in work plans can be made by the UN system agencies using the following modalities:

1. Cash transferred directly to the Implementing Partner:
   a. prior to the start of activities (direct cash transfer), or
   b. after activities have been completed (reimbursement).
2. Direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner.
3. Direct payments to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners.

Where cash transfers are made to a national institution, the national institution shall transfer such cash promptly to the Implementing Partner. Direct cash transfers shall be requested and released for programme implementation periods not exceeding three months. Reimbursements of previously authorized expenditures shall be requested and released quarterly or after the completion of activities. The UN system agencies shall not be obligated to reimburse expenditure made by the Implementing Partner over and above the authorized amounts.

Following the completion of any activity, any balance of funds shall be refunded or programmed by mutual agreement between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies. Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may depend on the findings of a review of the public financial management capacity in the case of a Government Implementing Partner, and of an assessment of the financial management capacity of the non-UN[74] Implementing Partners.

A qualified consultant, such as a public accounting firm, selected by the UN system agencies may conduct such an assessment, in which the Implementing Partner shall participate. The Implementing Partner may participate in the selection of the consultant. Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may be revised in the course of programme implementation based on the findings of programme monitoring, expenditure monitoring and reporting, and audits.

In case of direct cash transfer or reimbursement, the UN system agencies shall notify the Implementing Partner of the amount approved by the UN system agencies and shall disburse funds to the Implementing Partner within the number of days as per UN system agency schedule. In case of direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by

the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner, or to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners, the UN system agencies shall proceed with the payment within the number of days as agreed by the UN system agency.

The UN system agencies shall not have any direct liability under the contractual arrangements concluded between the Implementing Partner and a third-party vendor.

Where one UN system agency and other UN system agencies provide cash to the same Implementing Partner, programme monitoring, financial monitoring and auditing will be undertaken jointly or coordinated with those UN system agencies.

ii. Audits

The audits will be commissioned by the UN system agencies and undertaken by private audit services.

A standard Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) report reflecting the activity lines of the work plan (WP) will be used by Implementing Partners to request the release of funds, or to secure the agreement that the UN organization will reimburse or directly pay for planned expenditure. The Implementing Partners will use the FACE to report on the utilization of cash received.

The Implementing Partner shall identify the designated official(s) authorized to provide the account details, request and certify the use of cash. The FACE will be certified by the designated official(s) of the Implementing Partner. Cash transferred to Implementing Partners should be spent for the purpose of activities and within the timeframe as agreed in the work plans only.

Cash received by the Government and national NGO Implementing Partners shall be used in accordance with established national regulations, policies and procedures consistent with international standards, in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the work plans and ensuring that reports on the utilization of all received cash are submitted to the UN organization within six months after receipt of the funds. Where any of the national regulations, policies and procedures are not consistent with international standards, the UN system agency financial and other related rules and system agency regulations, policies and procedures will apply.

In the case of international NGO/CSO and intergovernmental organization Implementing Partners, cash received shall be used in accordance with international standards, in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the workplans and ensuring that reports on the full utilization of all received cash are submitted to the UN organization within six months after receipt of the funds. To facilitate scheduled and special audits, each Implementing Partner receiving cash from a UN organization will provide UN system agency or its representative with timely access to:

(i) All financial records which establish the transactional record of the cash transfers provided by the UN system agency, together with relevant documentation.

(ii) All relevant documentation and personnel associated with the functioning of the Implementing Partner's internal control structure through which the cash transfers have passed.

The findings of each audit will be reported to the Implementing Partner and the UN organization. Each Implementing Partner will furthermore:

(i) Receive and review the audit report issued by the auditors.

(ii) Provide a timely statement of the acceptance or rejection of any audit recommendation to the UN organization that provided cash so that the auditors include these statements in their final audit report before submitting it to the UN organization.

(iii) Undertake timely actions to address the accepted audit recommendations. Report on the actions taken to implement accepted recommendations to the UN system agencies on a quarterly basis (or as otherwise agreed).

The audits will be commissioned by the UN system agencies and undertaken by private audit services.

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