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Sri Lanka

Economic Crisis 2022

Situation Report No. 1



Reporting Period: 1 January to 30 June 2022

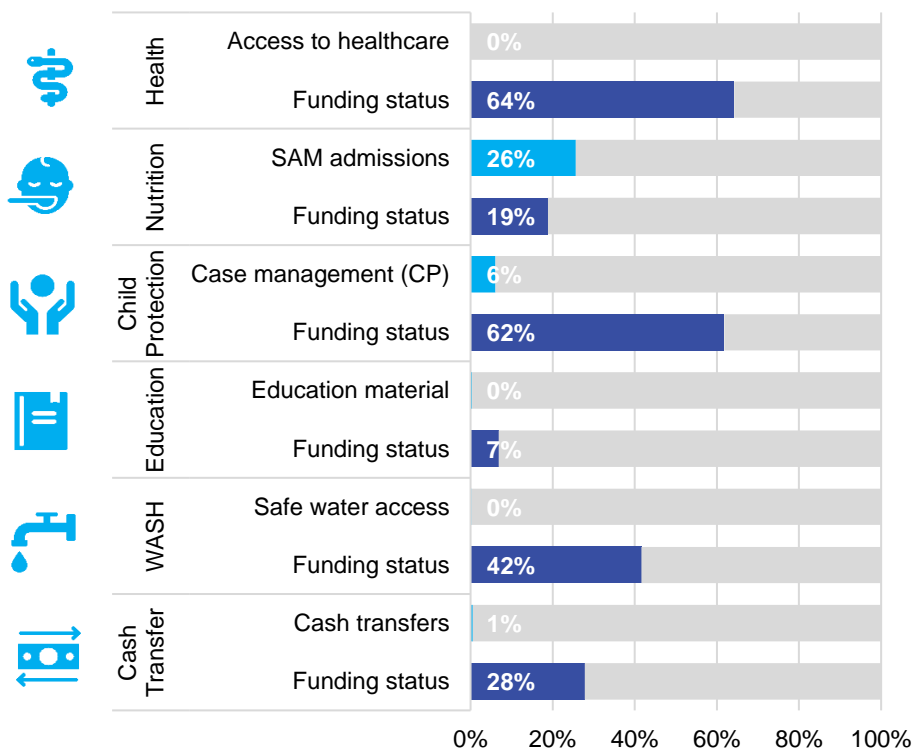
Highlights

- Sri Lanka is enduring a major economic, energy and political crisis with millions of citizens in desperate need of assistance.
- All children in Sri Lanka are at the heart of the crisis due to interrupted services and needs in education, protection, health, nutrition, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene
- UNICEF is procuring 3,630 cartons of BP-100 to treat children with severe acute malnutrition.
- More than 3,000 people connected to rural water supply schemes have received access to safe drinking water.
- Over 200,000 secondary students in Northern and Eastern provinces benefitted from psychosocial support assistance through teachers trained by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education.
- Severe fuel shortage is hindering timely delivery of lifesaving assistance to children. UNICEF is working closely with government and non-government partners to find practical, innovative solutions to reach children in need.

Situation in Numbers

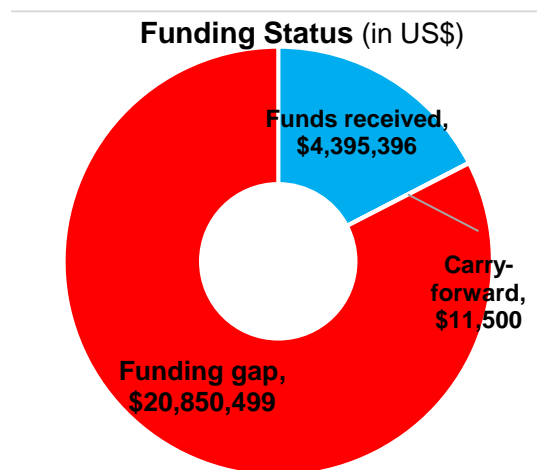
- 2,263,227** children in need of humanitarian assistance
- 5,711,089** people in need (HNP, June 2022)
- 56,000** Children with severe acute malnutrition under 5 need urgent treatment
- 4.8 million** Children require access to education

UNICEF's Response and Funding Status



UNICEF Appeal 2022

US\$ 25 million



*Funding available includes funds received in the current year and funds carried forward

**The HAC was launched on 10 June 2022 and therefore programme implementation only reflects support provided to the end June 2022.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

UNICEF has appealed for USD 25 million to provide timely life-saving services for women and children affected by the worsening economic crisis in Sri Lanka. UNICEF launched the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) on 10 June 2022 along with an inter-agency Humanitarian Needs and Priorities (HNP) appeal for Sri Lanka. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to public and private donors for the US\$ 4.63 million received, however an 82% funding gap remains.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

All children in Sri Lanka are severely affected by the worsening economic and political crises. Persistent fiscal deficits, severe depletion of foreign reserves and political instability mean families are enduring daily struggles to afford nutritious food and access lifesaving services including health, nutrition, education, child protection, water and social protection. The fuel crisis has brought life to a standstill with the majority of crucial services halted and only essential services operating since 28 June 2022. With no substantial volume of fuel arriving in the country, day-long queues are continuing with no end in sight.

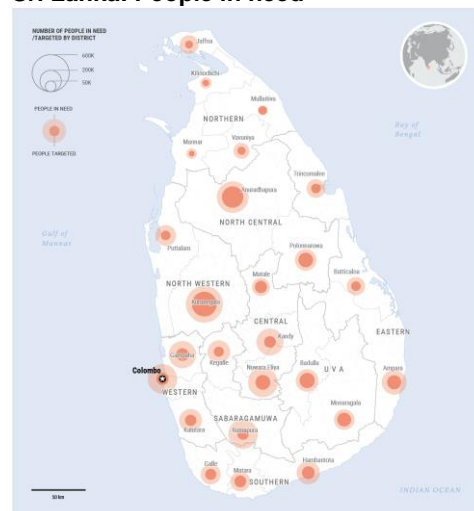
On 9 July 2022, an unprecedented number of Sri Lankans gathered in Colombo and across the island, unanimously demanding for the resignation of the President and the Prime Minister. Continued protests and clashes with law enforcement authorities for over 6 days resulted in one death and 184 people hospitalized with injuries. In the face of such massive public pressure, the president of Sri Lanka left the country and submitted his resignation on 14 July 2022. The prime minister assumed duties as the Acting President of the country and subsequently sworn in as the 8th President of Sri Lanka elected through a Parliamentary election on 20 July 2022. Protests continue, demanding the resignation of the new President and an all-party interim government and elections within six months. Despite a new President and Cabinet of Ministers in place, the country continues to face daunting political instability, public unrest and economic crisis. Sri Lanka has been under a state of emergency since 17 July 2022 which empowers the military to detain people, limit public gatherings and search private property to maintain national security. During early hours of 22 July 2022, security forces razed the main anti-government protest camp near the entrance to the Presidential Secretariat triggering concern by international community and human rights groups.

Given the severe fuel shortages, economic and political crises, many essential services for children and women are functioning with very limited capacity. UNICEF's telephone survey in April 2022 revealed the income of 73 per cent of households was negatively impacted forcing families to adapt negative coping mechanisms (borrowing, pawning etc) and resulted in families having less to invest in children's health and education.

The Maternal and Child Health Programme is affected by the fuel crisis leading to late presentation of patients with medical emergencies including childbirth to hospitals, resulting in serious consequences including home deliveries. Challenges in transport for health staff are affecting hospital and field health services including immunization. Over 149 vital medicines, 2,700 essential surgical consumables and 250 regular laboratory items are out of stock in the health institutions¹. Urgent measures are needed to maintain essential health services. The current economic crisis that exacerbates food insecurity will contribute to already alarming malnutrition rates in the country. The health system requires external assistance to treat children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and there is an acute shortage of therapeutic food (BP-100) to treat under five children with SAM. Additionally, the micronutrients given for infant and young children to prevent micronutrient deficiencies have been out of stock for many months.

Due to reduced livelihoods and household income coupled with long waits in queues to buy essential supplies (fuel, cooking gas etc) by parents, children are being neglected and at risk of protection issues at home. In addition, child protection service provision is constrained due to severe fuel crisis. Field visits by the existing service providers are extremely limited due to fuel shortages. Learning losses and lack of education opportunities are causing significant levels of mental health and psychosocial issues among children, adolescents and youth in the country. The ongoing youth uprising and protests against political instability are also contributing to unrest and despair among young people.

Sri Lanka: People in need



Source: HNP, OCHA

¹ Ministry of Health records

There have been frequent and *ad hoc* school closures since 2020, compounded by a continuing lack of transportation and lack of teaching and learning material contributing to serious learning losses and disparities among the total school student and pre-school children population of 4.8 million. As a result, children are currently facing increased risks of school dropout, child protection issues and limited learning outcomes. While some privileged government and private schools continued to function using virtual modalities, many resource-poor schools and students continue to suffer from ever-expanding learning losses and inequities.

The economic crisis has also resulted in an acute shortage of water treatment and testing chemicals negatively affecting water treatment services and hampering access to safe drinking water by urban, rural and estate populations. In addition, the government has halted many unfinished urban and rural water supply projects delaying water pipeline connections to vulnerable communities.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

The UNICEF Sri Lanka HAC was launched on 10 June 2022 and the programme response interventions detailed below only reflect results achieved by end June 2022.

Health

UNICEF is procuring 14 essential medicines for children and pregnant mothers with funding from the Government of Japan to support 643 hospitals across the country. With airlines starting to reduce frequencies to Sri Lanka, UNICEF faces unexpected delays in delivering the medicines procured offshore². In addition, UNICEF is supporting a rapid assessment of the health system to ensure maintenance of essential and emergency sexual, reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH) and nutrition services and to identify immediate gaps; this is being done with other UN agencies.

Nutrition

It is estimated that 56,000 children would be severely malnourished, and the numbers are expected to rise in the coming months due to the prevailing food insecurity situation as well as the ongoing fuel related challenges impacting the nutrition service delivery. During the reporting period, 14,370 children (7,200 girls and 7,170 boys) were diagnosed with SAM at the maternal and child health clinics and referred to the specialist hospital for management. UNICEF urgently procured 3,630 cartons of ready to use therapeutic food (BP-100) for SAM treatment. This stock will be pre-positioned at the Ministry of Health to be distributed to district hospitals treating SAM children. However, the Ministry of Health reports reduced number of visits by parents for SAM treatment at the district hospitals, possibly due to lack of transportation. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health to find a solution to support children and their families to access appropriate SAM treatment.

UNICEF and WFP are supporting the Medical Research Institute of the Ministry of Health to conduct a national nutrition and a micronutrient survey to study the prevalence of key micronutrient deficiencies, to assess the coverage of key nutrition interventions and household food insecurity. The research proposal was finalized in April 2022 with the national steering committee but import restrictions have delayed implementation. In addition, UNICEF continues to support the Family Health Bureau convert the standard capacity building programme for Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and growth monitoring to an online module in English and other national languages. While the English and Sinhala online modules were completed in 2021, Tamil language modules were initiated in 2022 to benefit 1,500 health care workers in maternal and child health who use Tamil as their first language.

Given the urban poor are the worst affected by the ongoing economic crisis and many children in pre-schools require assistance to access meals in pre-schools, UNICEF is preparing to launch a joint programme with the Colombo Municipal Council to provide mid-day meals to 1,258 pre-school children in Colombo city from 1 August onwards. The programme will be scaled up to reach 5,000 children in public pre-schools and day care centres in most disadvantaged three provinces (Uva, Central and Western) for six months in collaboration with the local authorities and other partners, which will contribute to improving nutrition levels and encouraging pre-school attendance. Awareness raising for parents on nutritional/Early Childhood Development information will be combined.

² [Sri Lanka faces risk of international airlines pullout after fuel notice](#)

Child Protection

UNICEF, and Save the Children, convened the Child Protection Working Group for bi-weekly meetings to monitor and coordinate response efforts with the humanitarian agencies. A separate coordination forum was also established with the government counterparts (National Child Protection Authority and the Department of Probation and Child Care Services) to find alternative ways to monitor service delivery, identify gaps and solutions to reach the most vulnerable children with appropriate and timely child protection services. Given the rapidly changing dynamics in the country, the humanitarian partners are preparing to provide case management and child protection services including family strengthening, reunification and reintegration to 3,700 children and adolescents, targeted mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) to 7,500 children, adolescents and care givers and ensure that at least 2,000 children have safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse from August 2022.

Since the beginning of the year, around 326 community members including children were reached with psychosocial and referral support through already established divisional mental health and psychosocial forums and community support networks in Northern, Eastern, Uva and Central provinces with technical support from UNICEF. As part of UNICEF continuous advocacy and technical support, around 86 children were reunified with their families from institutions and social service workforce system was strengthened at community level to regularly monitor the progress of already reunified children. Around 152 children in childcare institutions were trained on skills development training programs which helped to build their resilient skills and coping capacity in response to COVID-19. In addition, UNICEF reached 1,257 people through messaging on positive parenting and supported 2,709 children and adolescents to access MHPSS services.

Education

Given the shortage of paper and school stationery in the country, UNICEF prioritized the procurement of paper, teaching and learning materials to benefit 224,000 children in Uva, Central, Northern and Eastern provinces. Distribution of these materials to schools and students will commence in mid-July. UNICEF and the Ministry of Education are preparing to print study packs for Grade 3 and 4 students that will be distributed to 48,000 most disadvantaged children in Western Province including Colombo to assist their continuous learning.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Education have organized five Training of Trainers (ToTs) sessions on psychosocial support through schools/teachers (250 master trainers). Over 200,000 secondary school students from the Northern and Eastern provinces have benefited to date. The teacher trainings were conducted using both on-line and physical modes. The teacher trainings in other provinces have not yet been conducted because schools have remained closed with ad-hoc reopening schedules.

WASH

UNICEF procured chlorinators for 34 rural water supply schemes and commenced installing 6 of these in Puttalam, Kurunegala and Kandy districts benefiting approximately 3,000 people. In coordination with the National Water Supply and Drainage Board, UNICEF identified the total annual requirement and estimates of water purification chemicals and is in the process of procuring the one-month requirement of four out of six chemicals. In addition, UNICEF and the Department of Community Water Supply will identify priority requirements in the rural water supply sector.

Cash-based Programming

In January and February 2022, UNICEF with WFP and the Department of Samurdhi supported 637 families with children under five in Kalutara district through cash transfers for two months (January and February 2022) to ensure food security amidst the COVID-19 and economic crisis.

Prior to the crisis, in recognition of the importance of the first 1,000 days of a child's life, the Government of Sri Lanka committed to expanding an existing voucher programme for pregnant and lactating women. Initially, this programme provided vouchers worth LKR 2,000 (US\$5.6) per month for six months of pregnancy and four months of lactation. In the 2022 budget, the government committed to extending the coverage from 10 to 24 months. However, due to severe fiscal constraints this proposal was never implemented. Therefore, UNICEF is finalizing a programme to provide nutrition-sensitive humanitarian cash transfers to approximately 3,000 mothers with children aged 6 months or younger, in Colombo district for a period of three months (LKR 5'000/US\$14.11 per month). Along with the cash transfer, the women will also receive a flyer with additional information on the importance of nutrition during lactation and the composition of a diverse diet. This programme complements WFP's programme to support pregnant women with cash-

based assistance. The digitization of beneficiary lists has been completed and the verification of these lists and collection of additional information (such as bank account details) will start in late July 2022, with the first disbursement planned for mid-August 2022. UNICEF is also preparing a scale up of these transfers to support approximately 110,000 women with young children in the five most vulnerable districts, considering the prevalence of multidimensional poverty and child wasting as well as ensuring close alignment with programs by other partners.

Communications for Development (C4D), Accountability to Affected Population

Since January 2022, UNICEF has amplified the voices of young people through U-Report by conducting polls on areas that matter to them including the experiences and feelings of young people during the post-covid recovery and subsequent socio-economic crisis. Key areas assessed include availability and affordability of food supplies, and disaster and climate change. Over 7,800 U-Reporters were engaged with the polls and shared their voices, while the related communication products and information reached more than 5.6 million young people on social media.

UNICEF developed training & Information Education and Communication materials, targeting people living in plantation estates and trained 210 Plantation Communication Community Facilitators and Community Empowerment Officers. In addition, a total of 61 Estate Managers were oriented to promote COVID-19 protective practices, to monitor the adherence to the IPC measures and to mobilize communities. Around 0.5 million most vulnerable people living in plantation sector were reached through the risk communication messages disseminated through public address systems to promote protective practices, increase booster dose uptake and update on the new variants of COVID-19.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF is leading three sectors and one Area of Responsibility (AoR). UNICEF leads the overall Protection including the Child Protection AoR, Education and the WASH sectors. Child Protection AoR and the Education sector leadership is co-led with Save the Children while the WASH sector is co-led with the Ministry of Water Supply. UNICEF co-led clusters and AoR are all part of the Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG) led by OCHA and the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) at a national level. UNICEF participates in the in-country interagency PSEA Task Force.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

External Media

- [Malnutrition stokes little Krishanthi | UNICEF Sri Lanka](#)
- [Supporting children's nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic | UNICEF Sri Lanka](#)

Statements and Press Releases

- [Japan provides us\\$ 1.5 million for medicines in emergency aid to sri Lanka through UNICEF](#)

Social Media

- [Five things to know about the crisis in Sri Lanka, and its impact on children](#)
- [Pat Cummins in conversation with Sri Lankan youth](#)
- [Anuja from Kandapola: 'I would like to go to school'](#)
- [Niruthma shares how her family is coping with the current economic crisis in Sri Lanka.](#)
- [Sithika's story](#)
- [Nethmi Umesha](#)

Next SitRep: 10 October 2022

UNICEF Sri Lanka Crisis: [SRI LANKA CRISIS: | UNICEF Sri Lanka](#)

UNICEF Sri Lanka Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: [Sri Lanka Appeal | UNICEF](#)

Who to contact for
further information: Christian Skoog
Representative
UNICEF Sri Lanka
Tel: +9477 373 3781
cskoog@unicef.org

Emma Brigham
Deputy Representative
UNICEF Sri Lanka
Tel: +9477 741 6734
ebrigham@unicef.org

Watsala Jayamanna
Programme Officer (Emergency)
UNICEF Sri Lanka
Tel: +9477 285 8949
wjayamanna@unicef.org

Summary of Programme Results (by end June)³

Sector		Total needs	UNICEF and IPs Response			Cluster/Sector Response		
			2022 target	Total results	Change* ▲ ▼	2022 target	Total results	Change* ▲ ▼
Indicator	Disaggregation							
Health								
# of people accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities		1,967,858	1,236,480	0				
# of health care facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control		8,000	2,000	0				
Nutrition								
# of children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment	girls	28,560	28,560	7,200				
	boys	27,440	27,440	7,170				
# of primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling	women	163,200	163,200	0				
	men	156,800	156,800	0				
# of children aged 6 to 59 months receiving multiple micronutrient powders	girls	219,632	219,632	0				
	boys	211,019	211,019	0				
# pre-school children reached through school feeding programmes	girls	62,208	51,000	0				
	boys	59,769	49,000	0				
Child Protection								
# of girls and boys assisted through individual case management and specialized services	girls	186,472	1,530	81		186,472	216	
	boys	179,160	1,470	102		179,160	278	
# of women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions ⁴			300	24		300	24	

³ Sri Lanka HAC was launched on 10 June 2022 with the targets being set at mid-year. While UNICEF Sri Lanka expedited the implementation of humanitarian responses, by end-June the results achieved remains comparatively low. Majority of the activities commenced in July 2022 and will be reported in the next Situation Report.

⁴ Under the case management intervention, girls and boys requiring GBV assistance are targeted, as women will be covered by other UN agencies.

# of people who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse (1929 Helpline)		1,800	1,800	86		1,800	86	0
# of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services (positive parenting/MHPSS)		367,597	350,000	1,257		400,000	1,257	
# of children and parents/caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support	girls	501,993	501,993	103,382		501,993	103,965	
	boys	482,307	482,307	99,327		482,307	99,888	
Education								
# of children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning	girls	339,502	339,502	0		339,502	3,940	
	boys	326,188	326,188	0		326,188	3,510	
# of children receiving individual learning material	girls	339,502	339,502	0		339,502	9,949	
	boys	326,188	326,188	0		326,188	9,152	
WASH								
# of people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking and domestic needs	girls	1,556,775	252,858	505		1,556,775	5,293	
	boys	1,495,725	242,942	485		1,495,725	5,085	
	women	3,160,725	513,379	1,025		3,160,725	10,746	
	men	3,036,775	493,246	9,85		3,036,775	10,325	
# children use safe and appropriate WASH facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities	girls	852,899	153,000	0		852,899	229,500	
	boys	819,452	147,000	0		819,452	220,500	
# of people reached with hand-washing behaviour-change programmes		25,000	10,000	0		50,000	0	
# girls and women accessing menstrual hygiene management services	girls	2,475	825	0		7,425	0	0
	women	5,025	1,675	0		15,075	0	0
Social Protection								
# of households ⁵ reached with cash transfers through an existing government system where UNICEF provided technical assistance and/or funding (voucher for PLWs)		307,479	121,796	637				
C4D, Community Engagement and AAP								

⁵ This indicator targets lactating mothers with children aged 0 – 6 months.

# of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services			350,000	0				
# of people engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions			25,000	0				

Annex B

Funding Status*

Sector	Requirements	Funds available			Funding gap	
		Humanitarian resources received in 2022	Other resources used in 2022	Resources available from 2021 (Carry-over)	\$	%
Nutrition	5,816,519	960,769	0	0	4,855,750	83
Health	2,344,134	1,500,000	0	0	844,134	36
Water, sanitation and hygiene	1,414,500	388,261	0	0	1,026,239	73
Child Protection, GBViE & PSEA	1,834,492	383,902	12,497		1,438,093	78
Education	6,273,000	498,577			5,774,423	92
Social Protection	6,713,750	605,181	21,709		6,086,860	91
Cross-sectoral (C4D, RCCE & AAP)	615,000	0	0	11,500	603,500	98
Emergency Preparedness & Coordination	246,000	24,500	0		221,500	90
Total	25,257,395	4,361,190	34,206	11,500	20,850,499	83

* As defined in Humanitarian Appeal of 09/06/2022