United Nations
Development Assistance Framework

This publication highlights the collaborative efforts of the UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes responding to the country's main development challenges and priorities for poverty reduction, improving governance and democracy, consolidation of peace and gender equality in the next five years (2008-2012).

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The UN in Sri Lanka

United Nations agencies have been active in Sri Lanka since 1952. The UN, in partnership with the government and people of Sri Lanka, works to ensure that all Sri Lankan people enjoy better living conditions. Collectively and through its individual agencies, the UN creates opportunities for the poor and most vulnerable, and for youth, to whom the future belongs.

There are many ways the UN can contribute to the country’s development, whether through supporting livelihoods; working on children’s education and health; rural development; responding to disasters and helping communities recover; promoting human rights; strengthening systems of governance; or supporting the government in designing and implementing social and economic policy reforms.
SRI LANKA DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Development aims to help all people reach an acceptable standard of living by ensuring access to basics like food, housing, jobs, health services, education, and security in everyday life.

Sri Lanka has made enormous strides in human development over the past 50 years and is closer than most south Asian nations in key human development indicators outlined under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Sri Lanka's accomplishments in areas such as health and education are notable given severe restraints such as a festering civil conflict and the 2004 tsunami. The country has long demonstrated a steady commitment to social welfare, with free access to health and education since independence in 1948.

Progress on key MDG criteria includes:

Reducing child mortality (MDG 4)
- Between the 1950s and 2005, Sri Lanka reduced its infant mortality rate from 71 to 11.2 deaths per 1,000 live births (Census and Statistics Dept. – Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2006/7 Preliminary report).
- The proportion of one year olds fully immunized against measles, diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus was only 51% in 1981, and rose to 99 % by 2006 (Human Development Report 1990 and 2007/2008).

Improving maternal health (MDG 5)
- Between 1946 and 2005, the maternal mortality rate dropped from 490 to 43 deaths per 100,000 live births (Human Development Report 1990 and 2007/2008), while fertility rates declined from 6 births per woman in 1950 to a near replacement level of 2.1 births in 2003 (Census and Statistics Dept & Ministry of Health Demographic & Health survey – 2000).

Ensuring environmental sustainability - Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water (MDG 7)
- Between 1985 and 2007, access to safe drinking water more than doubled to 82% of Sri Lankans, while sanitation doubled to 86% (World Development Indicators database).

Achieving universal primary education (MDG 2)
- Primary school enrolment and primary education completion stand at around 99%, with girls' enrolment as high as that of boys. (Census and Statistics Dept. – Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2006/7 Preliminary report)
- The national literacy rate increased steadily from 57.8 % in 1946 to 91% in 2001 (Census and Statistics Dept & Ministry of Health Demographic & Health survey – 2000), and women's literacy level is on par with men's.

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1)
- The proportion of the population below the national poverty line was 26.1% in 1990 and this had been reduced to 22.7 % by 2002. (Census and Statistics Dept. – Household Income and Expenditure Survey)
DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

However, the successes shouldn’t hide the reality of inequalities in income distribution and unequal access to essential services among different districts. Although per capita income, at US $4,595 per person, is the second highest in the South-Asian region, growth rates tend to be low and irregular. MDG studies indicate that reducing the country’s visible poverty will be difficult. A return to peace, as well as transparency, accountability and the rule of law, also remain high on the development agenda, along with issues around gender equality and empowerment.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is an agreement between the UN system and the government of Sri Lanka on the strategic framework for development activities. In a constantly changing international and national environment, the UNDAF helps focus the work of UN agencies, and commits the UN and government to rigorous monitoring and evaluation, with realistic indicators to measure results for each UNDAF outcome. It aims to mobilise US $370 million over five years (2008-12) for four ‘pillars’:

- Poverty Reduction
- Improving Governance and Democracy
- Consolidation of Peace
- Gender Equality

In addition, the UN system has identified a number of ‘cross-cutting’ issues that include protection of human rights, environmental sustainability, disaster risk management, capacity development, HIV/AIDS, and results-based management.

The UN’s development activities combine so-called ‘upstream’ activities - such as advice on sound economic and social policies - with ‘downstream’ operations, which include a range of programmes to strengthen local institutions, to implement policies, and to work with communities to promote sustainable livelihoods. Wherever possible, the UN encourages joint programming between agencies, and the implementation of programmes in the 119 DS Divisions identified as the most economically backward by the Government of Sri Lanka in its National Development Strategy.

“The Government of Sri Lanka and the UN Country Team commit themselves jointly to provide an inclusive, common response to pro-poor, people-centred development in Sri Lanka.”
UNDAF AND THE MDGS

A central plank of UNDAF’s mission is to help Sri Lanka to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Although gains have been made against certain indicators, progress has been slow in other areas, with some reversals.

The MDG challenge for the country provides a motivational focus for UN agencies. They look to strong partnerships with the government, donors and other stakeholders to help accelerate development to meet the MDGs. The UNDAF is a programme framework that helps the UN agencies to work together to support the national government’s MDG efforts.

“We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone.”

(Millennium Declaration)

THE UN FAMILY IN SRI LANKA

There are numerous UN programmes, funds and specialized agencies operating in Sri Lanka, known together as the UN system. Related to the UN through special agreements, each has its own mandate. The UNDAF is a product of a partnership between 14 UN agencies which include:

- FAO - United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
- ILO - International Labour Organisation
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Programme
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Fund
- UNHabitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- UNOPS - United Nations Office for Project Services
- UNAIDS - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
- WHO - World Health Organisation
- WFP - World Food Programme
- WB - World Bank
- IOM - International Organisation for Migration
- UNEP - The United Nations Environment Programme

Millennium Development Goals

- Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- Achieve Universal Primary Education
- Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- Reduce Child Mortality
- Improve Maternal Health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
- Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- Develop a Global Partnership for Development
The UN programme will promote robust economic growth, develop and implement sound economic and social policies, build the capacity of government agencies, and work with communities to promote sustainable livelihoods.

The UNDAF outcomes, in line with MDGs 1 and 8, are:

1. Relevant national economic policies, strategies and programmes address disparities across and within regions and socio-economic groups.

2. Providers of socio-economic services ensure equitable access to improved quality services and interventions, focusing on selected disadvantaged areas.

3. Vulnerable populations participate meaningfully in and benefit fully from socio-economic development.
“Governance mechanisms and practices enable the realization of the principles of the Millennium Declaration and promote and protect human rights of all persons.”

UN programme will support national and local governance systems that exercise the principles of inclusive good governance, strengthening the institutional capacity of the independent oversight bodies, respecting and upholding human rights, and community participation in decision making at all levels.

The outcomes reflected in the joint UNDAF are:

1. Independent oversight bodies are strengthened and legal/ institutional frameworks enhanced for improved governance and respect for human rights.
2. Improved performance of regional and local level structures in fulfilling their role as duty bearers in delivering services in a transparent and accountable manner.
3. Empowered people and communities as claim holders participating in decision making and accountability processes.
4. Responsiveness of central level institutions enhanced for effective policy formulation, enforcement and review in order to achieve national development priorities.
An improved environment for a sustainable peace anchored in social justice and reconciliation.

UN programme outcomes will build effective strategies to advance peaceful coexistence, social cohesion and reconciliation into all relief and development efforts and programmes. This will include, for instance, the promotion of health as a bridge to peace; the role of women as peace builders; and community dialogue.

The outcomes reflected in the joint UNDAF are:

1. Increased equity in socio-economic opportunities and services for conflict affected communities, including IDPs.

2. Improved and increased participation of civil society and individuals to promote human rights, prevent conflict, promote peaceful co-existence and building national consensus.

3. Improved performance and participation of public institutions to uphold human rights and humanitarian law, prevent and respond to conflict, promote peaceful co-existence and build national consensus.
"Women are further empowered to contribute and benefit equitably and equally in political, economic and social life."

The UN will formulate programmes and projects that address issues such as women’s access to resources, their right to be free from gender based violence, the role of women in peace initiatives and the role of women in decision making and in politics.

1. Women’s access to and control over resources is optimized to ensure their right to enjoy the benefits of sustainable development.

2. Improved women’s active participation in and contribution to peace-building efforts at national, regional and community level in line with UN Resolution 1325.

3. An enabling environment for well-resourced and stronger institutional mechanisms for women’s empowerment created and substantive contribution of women in decision-making processes at all levels increased.

4. Gender based violence is reduced through multi-sectoral interventions and the effective implementation of laws and policies in keeping with international standards.
The implementation of the UNDAF is overseen by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Sri Lanka, with the support of Theme Groups around each UNDAF pillar, and the Resident Coordinator’s (RC) office. The RC’s office provides ongoing support to the UNCT and Theme Groups, and monitors implementation. The Theme Groups coordinate UNDAF implementation in their respective areas, promoting joint programming and collaboration, both between UN agencies and the UN and external partners.
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