



**Executive Board of the  
United Nations Development  
Programme, the United Nations  
Population Fund and the United  
Nations Office for Project Services**

Distr.: General  
3 July 2017

Original: English

**Second regular session 2017**

5 to 11 September 2017, New York

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**UNFPA – Country programmes and related matters**

**United Nations Population Fund**

**Country programme document for the Socialist Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka**

Proposed indicative UNFPA assistance: \$4.0 million: \$2.7 million from regular resources and \$1.3 million through co-financing modalities and/or other resources, including regular resources

Programme period: Five years 2018-2022

Cycle of assistance: Ninth

Category per decision 2013/31: Pink

Proposed indicative assistance (in millions of \$):

Strategic plan outcome areas		Regular resources	Other resources	Total
Outcome 2	Adolescents and youth	1.0	0.8	1.8
Outcome 3	Gender equality and women's empowerment	1.1	0.4	1.5
Outcome 4	Population dynamics	0.3	0.2	0.5
Programme coordination and assistance		0.3	0.0	0.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>

## I. Programme rationale

1. Sri Lanka is a lower middle-income country, with a population of 21 million. Following the end of a three-decade conflict in 2009, the National Unity Government elected in 2015 opened a space and opportunity for citizens to seek accountability through reconciliation efforts and transitional justice mechanisms. In addition, Sri Lanka embarked on a process of constitutional reforms to promote sustainable peace, inclusive societies and reduce inequalities. Between 2010 and 2015, Sri Lanka's economy grew at an average of 6.4 per cent per year with a per capita income of \$3,926 in 2015. The country is ranked 73rd in the 2015 Human Development Index, the highest among the South Asian countries.

2. Sri Lanka has made significant progress in social development indicators, including achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals. The maternal mortality rate is 33.7 per 100,000 live births (2015) and the unmet need for contraceptives is 7.3 per cent among couples (2012), due to a free primary healthcare system. There are several well-established policies and mechanisms in place, including the Maternal and Child Health policy and designated, technical advisory committees appointed to ensure the implementation of these national policies. Education indicators show near universal school enrolment with achievements in gender parity. However, gaps exist in addressing gender-based violence, comprehensive sexuality education and in the lack of evidence-based policy-making.

3. There is a clear need to address the last-mile challenges to create an inclusive society where every Sri Lankan enjoys their rights and dignity. While the national HIV/AIDS prevalence is 0.01 per cent, new infections are increasing, especially among young people. Teenage pregnancy is also low at 5.2 per cent; however, subnational disparities exist with a rate of 8.0–9.0 per cent in the North and East. Tea-plantation workers, garment industry workers and women migrants are often left behind. Regular droughts and floods further increase the vulnerabilities of marginalized groups, especially women and girls of reproductive age. The increasing ageing population is another marginalized community and strengthened evidence-based policies are required for healthy and active ageing.

4. Sri Lanka has over 4.4 million young people aged 15 to 29 years. The majority of young people live in the conflict-affected areas, where young people need an enabling environment to lead the country towards social cohesion, peace and resilience. The political participation of young people is limited. Parliamentarians under age 35 have consistently remained below 10 per cent, and less than 2 per cent of young people are involved in any political party. The urgency to invest in young people's potential is evident as Sri Lanka approaches the last stage of its demographic dividend. The comparative advantage of UNFPA to support youth development is well recognized through the past initiatives, including leading on the United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security.

5. Comprehensive sexuality education in schools is limited, and teachers lack the skills and knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively. Data shows that 45-55 per cent of adolescents, especially those who are unmarried, have limited knowledge about basic sexual and reproductive health. Sri Lanka is the only country in South Asia where the average age at marriage has decreased and the fertility rate has increased. Over the last two decades, the teenage fertility rate increased from 27 to 36 live births per 1,000 females, primarily due to the 30-year conflict and its impact on young people. The contraceptive prevalence rate has remained almost stagnant between 60 and 65 per cent among married women since 2007.

6. The 2015 World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report ranks Sri Lanka 100 out of 144 countries. The low political participation of women, at only 6.5 per cent, and the low female labour force participation at 36 per cent highlight the barriers women face despite higher education indicators. There is a strong correlation between marriage and non-participation in the labour force. Due to the effects of war coupled with the outmigration of men, women, mostly in deprived regions of the country, head a quarter of households in Sri Lanka. A national action plan focusing on the needs of female-headed households was developed in 2016, which needs to be effectively implemented in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders.

7. Sri Lanka lacks systematic and national level prevalence data on gender-based violence, while available information indicates a significant level of violence against women across the country. Although a legal framework to address gender-based violence exists, its implementation is weak. Significant delays of procedures, lack of service provision, social barriers of stigma and social pressure contribute to underreporting of this phenomenon. Coordinated multisectoral services for gender-based violence survivors are not well developed, and women have a low awareness about their rights. Addressing this issue is critical for lasting peacebuilding and social cohesion.

8. While the national capacity to collect and analyse data has been strengthened over the past years, there is a strong need to ensure data and evidence are used for policy and decision-making. The availability of disaggregated data and access to data by civil society and other stakeholders are needed to promote accountability and transparency. Stronger focus on data and evidence will facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNFPA is leading the United Nations' joint efforts to provide effective support in promoting an evidence-based policy and decision-making.

9. To strengthen UNFPA's programme niche and to demonstrate its relevance in Sri Lanka, the mid-term independent evaluation made forward-looking recommendations for a new country programme. These are: (a) the promotion of data-driven advocacy and communication; (b) the design of a culturally compatible framework to contextualize sometimes culturally sensitive issues; (c) the exploration of innovative communication and advocacy modalities; (d) the forging of new partnerships enabling UNFPA to continue to have an impact; and (e) improving the alignment of programme indicators to the Sustainable Development Goals. These recommendations are reflected in the programme priorities and strategies.

## **II. Programme priorities and partnerships**

10. The new country programme will contribute to the equitable enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights by all Sri Lankans, particularly among women and young people, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the International Conference on Population and Development. The strategic priority areas are aligned with the national priorities expressed by the Government of Sri Lanka and its peace and reconciliation mechanisms, while taking into consideration the societal priorities of a diverse range of Sri Lankans. The programme was developed in close consultation with the Government and other development partners.

11. The proposed programme recognizes Sri Lanka's capacities and status as a low middle-income country and the fact that key reproductive health indicators, such as skilled birth attendant coverage, the maternal mortality rate and coverage of antenatal care have mostly exceeded the standards of many lower middle-income countries, although subnational disparities exist. The national capacity for data generation and analysis is also relatively high. Consequently, the programme focuses on the remaining challenges, which are evident in the following areas: (a) young people's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and their meaningful participation in national development and peacebuilding; (b) gender inequality, in particular gender-based violence; and (c) data and evidence-based decision-making, on population dynamics, including ageing. Through these three broad areas of focus, the programme will contribute to building a more inclusive, equitable and peaceful society.

12. In the lower middle-income context, the national capacity to deliver social services is relatively high. In order to implement the programme, significant emphasis on creating an enabling environment that supports women's and young people's ability to claim their reproductive rights must be strengthened through strategic partnerships. The programme will be implemented in collaboration with the United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, including youth organizations and private sector enterprises. These partnerships have critical roles to play in promoting social inclusion and cohesion and in exploring innovative solutions to address the remaining development challenges. The existing partnership with parliamentarians on population and sustainable development will also be strengthened.

13. UNFPA continues to support the Government to identify gaps in policies and policy implementation, and to convene policy-makers, civil society actors, religious scholars and youth groups to advocate for an enabling social, legal and policy environment for women and young people, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized, to ensure no one is left behind in the post-conflict context. The programme integrates data and evidence in all components of its programme for an evidence-based policy and advocacy for social cohesion, peace and reconciliation. UNFPA continues to explore innovative ways to effectively disseminate evidence-based messages through strategic communications and advocacy initiatives aimed at mobilizing support for social change interventions. Additional efforts will be made to deliver information in local languages to reach out to wider audiences. The integrated approach will contribute to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. The limited regular funding for the programme requires a strong focus on comparative advantages and on multi-stakeholder partnerships for advocacy and policy engagement. UNFPA will coordinate closely with United Nations organizations to ensure complementarity through the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework, for which UNFPA is expected to lead the outcome related to data and evidence-based decision-making.

**A. Outcome 2: Adolescents and youth**

14. Output 1: Young people have more opportunities to participate in national development and peacebuilding processes with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. The programme will work to create an enabling environment through advocacy, policy dialogue and empowerment so that young people can act on their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including by: (a) capacity development of youth organizations to participate meaningfully in policy dialogue and peacebuilding; (b) advocacy and support to the participatory development and monitoring processes of national and subnational youth policies; and (c) roll-out of comprehensive, gender-responsive reproductive health education.

**B. Outcome 3: Gender equality and women's empowerment**

15. Output 1: Prevent and address gender-based violence through strengthened national policies and systems that advance gender equality and reproductive rights in development and humanitarian settings to empower marginalized and vulnerable women. The programme includes: (a) advocating for national policies on gender equality and reproductive rights; (b) strengthening national frameworks and mechanisms to ensure the availability of women's and girls' access to coordinated multi-sectoral services against gender-based violence, including in humanitarian emergencies; (c) strengthening the engagement and capacities of the national human rights institution to promote reproductive rights and gender equality.

**C. Outcome 4: Population dynamics**

16. Output 1: Strengthened capacity for use of evidence-based analysis of population data for decision-making at national and subnational level to address inequalities and advance the International Conference on Population and Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The programme includes: (a) promoting the importance of disaggregated data and access to data for the development of policies and the monitoring of policy implementation to address inequalities and advance gender equality, the Sustainable Development Goals framework and the International Conference on Population and Development; (b) advocating for evidence-based financing for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and (c) use of demographic data to inform policies related to adolescents and young people, demographic dividend and population ageing.

**III. Programme and risk management**

17. The Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs will be the coordinating authority for the programme. In unforeseen circumstances, such as humanitarian

emergencies, UNFPA may seek to reprogramme funding in consultation with the Government, towards emergency-response activities aligned with its mandate.

18. UNFPA will primarily use the direct execution modality, and, where relevant, develop detailed workplans with partners. In partnership with the Government, UNFPA will seek to mobilize and leverage additional resources at the country level, including from the Government of Sri Lanka, as outlined in the resource mobilization plan.

19. The programme was developed based on assumptions that the political context of the country will remain largely stable, and that Sri Lanka will continue to prosper while addressing transitional justice.

20. The programme faces the risk of a further decline in traditional official development assistance. UNFPA will mitigate this risk by seeking to broaden the base of its funding and leveraging strategic partnerships, including with the private sector. While Sri Lanka is well on its way towards national reconciliation following its civil war, UNFPA recognizes the need to employ conflict-sensitive methodologies and promote social cohesion in its programming. UNFPA will also ensure its operation is adaptable to any emerging context, including potential natural disasters, and ensure business continuity.

21. UNFPA will align staffing to the requirements of the programme and earmark programme funds as required, ensuring country office capacity for technical and policy advisory services. UNFPA will seek technical assistance in strategic areas of the programme from the regional office, headquarters and international and national experts.

22. This country programme document outlines UNFPA contributions to national results, and serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme at the country level. Accountabilities of managers at the country, regional and headquarters levels, with respect to country programmes, are prescribed in the UNFPA programme and operations policies and procedures and the internal control framework.

#### **IV. Monitoring and evaluation**

23. UNFPA will employ the principles of results-based management in all its programming. An end-of-cycle country programme evaluation will be conducted in coordination with evaluation exercises under the United Nations Sustainable Development framework, and in accordance with the guidelines and procedures of the United Nations Development Group and UNFPA.

24. Where possible, UNFPA will use national systems for data and seek to strengthen the national capacity for evidence-based monitoring and evaluation. UNFPA will support the Department of Census and Statistics and other national partners to identify statistical data gaps, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems and, as the lead agency on data, as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework, support the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. The country office will develop a monitoring plan and assign roles and responsibilities for monitoring results, data collection mechanisms, data sources, a timetable for data collection and quality assurance mechanisms. For selected advocacy priorities, UNFPA will develop an advocacy strategy with a monitoring and evaluation framework. The data from programme monitoring will inform the annual or biennial work planning and reviews. This feedback mechanism will help inform and adjust programme implementation to remain relevant in the rapidly changing middle-income country context.

26. The country office will document and communicate good practices in policy advocacy and programme delivery, using innovative and inclusive channels to reach diverse audiences, and will make efforts to support regional and global knowledge management initiatives and South-South and triangular cooperation.

## RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK FOR SRI LANKA (2018-2022)

<p><b>National priority:</b> Public Investment Programme (2017-2020): Create more opportunities for all communities to interact and to see the diverse cultures among them</p> <p><b>UNDAF outcomes:</b> By 2022, people in Sri Lanka, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from more rights-based, accountable, inclusive and effective public institutions to enhance trust among communities and towards the State. By 2022, people in Sri Lanka, especially the vulnerable and marginalized groups of children, youth, women, elderly and disabled, benefit equitably from dynamic and responsive social protection systems.</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b> Extent to which priorities identified in the Peacebuilding Priority Plan are implemented to achieve the country's peacebuilding and reconciliation vision. <i>Baseline: 10%; Target: 75%</i></p>				
UNFPA strategic plan outcome	Country programme outputs	Output indicators, baselines and targets	Partner contributions	Indicative resources
<p><b>Outcome 2: Adolescents and Youth</b></p> <p><u>Outcome indicator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of laws, policies and programmes that allow adolescents access to sexual and reproductive health information and services Baseline: 2; Target 3</li> </ul>	<p><u>Output 1:</u> Young people have more opportunities to participate in national development and peacebuilding processes with knowledge and skills to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of provinces that have developed comprehensive youth policies in line with the national youth policy <i>Baseline: 4; Target 9</i></li> <li>Number of Youth Platforms engaged with the State on peacebuilding. <i>Baseline: 1; Target 2</i></li> <li>National education curriculum incorporating comprehensive, gender-responsive reproductive health education for Grade 1-13 implemented <i>Baseline: No; Target Yes</i></li> </ul>	<p>Ministries of Vocational Training and Skills Development; Health; Education; Higher Education; National Policies and Economic Affairs; Social Empowerment and Welfare; Provincial Councils and Local Government and Institutions; Department of Census and Statistics; Asian Forum for Parliamentarians on Population and Development; University Grants Commission; University of Colombo and other universities; private sector; professional organizations; the media; civil society organizations</p>	<p>\$1.8 million (\$1.0 million from regular resources and \$0.8 million from other resources)</p>
<p><b>National priority:</b> Public Investment Programme (2017-2020): Zero tolerance of gender-based violence. Reduce incidence of women and child violence and ensure women and children's rights.</p> <p><b>UNDAF outcome:</b> By 2022, people in Sri Lanka, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from more rights-based, accountable, inclusive and effective public institutions to enhance trust amongst communities and towards the State. By 2022, people in Sri Lanka, especially the vulnerable and marginalized groups of children, youth, women, elderly and disabled, benefit equitably from dynamic and responsive social protection systems.</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b> Amount of national budget allocation for gender empowerment and elimination of discrimination against women. <i>Baseline: Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR) 2.83 billion; Target: LKR 5.69 billion</i></p>				
<p><b>Outcome 3: Gender equality and women's empowerment</b></p> <p><u>Outcome indicator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of actions taken on Universal Periodical Review -accepted recommendations on reproductive rights from the previous reporting cycle Baseline: 0%; Target: 75%</li> </ul>	<p><u>Output 1:</u> Strengthened national policies and systems to advance gender equality, reproductive rights and to prevent and address gender-based violence in development and humanitarian settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National and subnational multisectoral coordination mechanism for prevention and response to gender-based violence established for development and humanitarian settings <i>Baseline: No; Target: Yes</i></li> <li>National guidelines and protocols for essential services for women and girls subjected to violence developed and implemented <i>Baseline: No; Target: Yes</i></li> <li>Existence of a functioning tracking and reporting mechanism to follow up on implementation of reproductive rights and gender equality recommendations and obligations from treaty bodies.</li> </ul>	<p>Prime Minister's Office; Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Higher Education; Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs; National Human Rights Commission; Department of Census and Statistics; National Forum against Gender-based Violence; Asian Forum for Parliamentarians on Population and Development; private sector; professional organizations; the media; civil society organizations</p>	<p>\$1.5 million (\$1.1 million from regular resources and \$0.4 million from other resources)</p>

<i>Baseline: No; Target: Yes</i>				
<p><b>National priority:</b> Public Investment Programme (2017-2020); Reducing maternal mortality at least up to the current national average by 2020 in provinces such as Central, Northern and North Central.</p> <p><b>UNDAF outcome:</b> By 2022, people in Sri Lanka benefit from improved data and knowledge management to address inequities and ensure inclusive and responsive decision-making.</p> <p><b>Indicator:</b> Proportion of SDG indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target. <i>Baseline: 25%; Target: 78%</i></p>				
<p><b>Outcome 4: Population dynamics</b></p> <p><u>Outcome indicator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of surveys collected, analysed and disseminated that allow for the estimation of key population and reproductive health indicators.</li> </ul> <p>Baseline: 2; Target: 3</p>	<p><u>Output 1:</u> Strengthened capacity for use of evidence-based analysis of population data for decision-making at the national and subnational level to address inequalities and advance International Conference on Population and Development and the Sustainable Development Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data on the prevalence of gender-based violence available for policy-making and development planning <i>Baseline: No; Target: Yes</i></li> <li>National policy on elderly updated to incorporate sexual rights and feminization of ageing <i>Baseline no Target Yes</i></li> <li>National database of population data that facilitates mapping of socioeconomic and demographic inequalities for the Sustainable Development Goals monitoring available and accessible. <i>Baseline No; Target Yes</i></li> </ul>	<p>Ministries of Health; National Policies and Economic Affairs; Social Empowerment and Welfare; Department of Census and Statistics; Provincial Councils and Local Government and Institutions; Asian Forum for Parliamentarians on Population and Development; Elder's Secretariat; University Grants Commission; University of Colombo and other universities; private sector; professional organizations; the media; civil society organizations</p>	<p>\$0.5 million (\$0.3 million from regular resources and \$0.2 million from other resources)</p>