

**UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME**



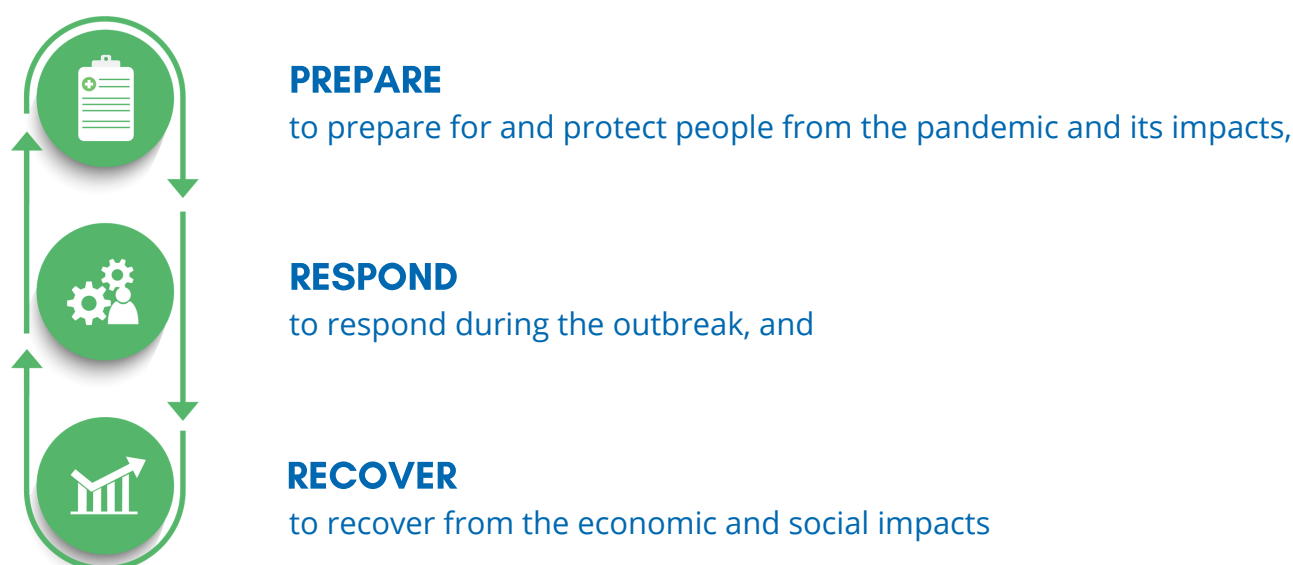
**UNDP SRI LANKA: PROPOSED
AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR THE
GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA IN
COMBATING COVID-19**

Drawing on our experience with combatting other outbreaks such as Ebola, HIV, SARS and Malaria, as well as our long history of working with the private and public sector, UNDP stands ready to help Sri Lanka to urgently and effectively respond to COVID-19 as part of its mission to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build resilience to crises and shocks. UNDP is rated as one of the most transparent development organisations which builds on the next generation network of innovation and digital solutions, while leveraging crucial institutional assets such as the Global Policy and Accelerator Lab Networks along with the Citra Social Innovation Lab in responding to this complex, fast-moving crisis.

As part of the United Nations Development System, UNDP works in close coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) in line with the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and in lockstep with our humanitarian partners under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

Further to this, the UN Secretary General has launched the UN's framework to support countries' socio-economic recovery. UNDP co-led the development of the framework and upon the request of the Secretary General, UNDP will be the designated technical lead of the UN's work at the country level socio-economic recovery under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC).

UNDP's integrated approach to COVID-19 is framed around three objectives: helping countries



Overall, the offer aims to support the Government of Sri Lanka to effectively deal with the crisis and 'bounce back stronger' and build resilience of health systems and population to cope with epidemics and similar crises in future.

In line with UNDP's role as the technical lead on socio economic recovery in the UN system, UNDP Sri Lanka will support to strengthen national efforts on COVID-19 response through five proposed key areas of intervention. These areas are closely aligned to the five streams of work outlined in the Framework – an integrated support package offered by United Nations to protect the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic, with particular focus on the most vulnerable countries, groups, and people who risk being left behind.



HEALTH SECTOR CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT AND PROCUREMENT

To address the immediate and urgent health sector priorities of the Government of Sri Lanka, UNDP can facilitate and assist the procurement of critical medical supplies whilst leveraging the support of the private sector.

UNDP Sri Lanka is well positioned to procure health products and medical equipment required for national COVID-19 responses. UNDP's global and regional procurement hub based in Copenhagen and Bangkok work directly with key suppliers and in partnership with UNDP China, provide surge capacity, health infrastructure and laboratory equipment, implement and support health waste management initiatives, support non-medical requirements of the health sector to enhance its capacity during times of crises including renewable energy provisions, coordination and management needs, transport, human resource and financial management, and provide strategic logistics support using government financing mechanisms effectively, urgently and transparently. UNDP assistance can be extended to enhance the capacity of the health sector to form a global, digital and data-driven plan to meet the urgent needs of digital transformation. Furthermore, whilst leveraging the support of global suppliers and networks, UNDP can offer a platform to engage private sector entities and philanthropists to collectively support the national health system to urgently adapt to new normals.

For more information on the *United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19* and the UNDP Sri Lanka offers, please visit www.lk.undp.org



SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS TO INFORM AND UNDERPIN POLICY INTERVENTIONS

The unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world and in Sri Lanka has given rise to a new normal, from deepening vulnerabilities of individuals & families, to straining an economy only just recovering from multiple crises. Experts caution that the magnitude of COVID-19 socio-economic impact will be far greater than that of the 2008 recession. A recent study by the World Bank predicts that Sri Lanka is economically the third worst hit country in the region, after Maldives and Afghanistan.

Examining social and economic impacts of COVID-19 necessitate examining the disruptions in supply chains, labour markets, micro and small enterprises and care systems. Such analyses can help Government prioritize and target care systems, cash transfers, food security measures and medical support. Working closely and in coordination with the World Bank, IMF, ADB and the wider UN system, UNDP can convene High-Level policy dialogues with Government officials, policy makers, as well as private sector partners to commence discussions on immediate and long-term policy and recovery actions.

Earlier analyses on the National Human Development Report on inequalities, may be leveraged to help Government prioritize limited resources.

Critical Tools: *Socio-economic impact assessment and compensation tools, deployed at both the meso (sectoral and supply chain level) and micro levels (household and individual targeting of services and social protection). Fiscal and monetary policy tools to address demand-side and supply-side shocks on the economy, supply chains and the labour market. The recovery is not likely to be a V-shaped crisis, but a long U-shaped process of rebuilding and activating markets and services.*

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RECOVERY PLANNING TO AVOID SDG REGRESSION

The need for continued analysis on the evolving COVID-19 situation is paramount in identifying and supporting capacity building in required areas. Continuing to explore short- and longer-term measures that need to be implemented to effectively manage the recovery measures is crucial, as a longer gestation of the crisis may have far-reaching consequences. These could range from job losses in the affected sectors to possibly leading to other adverse impacts such as a breakdown in law and order, escalation in crime rates, to increase in substance abuse, and to other related social trends.

Whilst attending to immediate needs and the provision of safety nets, tracking the transition back to a sustainable development pathway from a crisis response mode is paramount to prevent local and national capacities from weakening and laying the foundations for longer-term recovery.

Therefore, UNDP, while collaborating with other relevant UN agencies and setting up of a dedicated recovery team, is positioned to support the Government of Sri Lanka to strengthen the National Development Planning Framework with particular emphasis on the risk management systems that enable the country to cushion shocks imposed by natural disasters and epidemics.

Critical Tools: *Recovery planning tools include Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) conducted in partnership with EU, World Bank and other UN agencies, a comprehensive approach to recovery planning, and undertaking health sector assessments in emergencies. As co-chair of the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law, UNDP helps strengthen rule of law assistance in conflict affected regions. UNDP has an express deployment mechanism to offer immediate technical assistance in time of crises.*

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WHOLE OF SOCIETY

The response to the unprecedented nature and impact of COVID-19 on all segments of government and society requires a collective and holistic approach that supports national efforts

and leverages collective intelligence and innovation. Therefore, the establishment of a platform that drives a whole of society approach and the facilitation of policy dialogues which feed directly into national efforts help result in effective interventions that address immediate socio-economic impacts and longer-term recovery efforts.

To realise this approach, UNDP will convene and work with an array of partners including relevant government authorities, the Global Compact Network Ceylon (UNGC) and its members, numerous civil society organisations with strong presence on the ground, UNDP's very own network of innovators including those of Citra Social Innovation Lab's Next Generation Government Fellowship and Youth from UNDP Youth and Innovation platform HackaDev, UNDP Field offices, UN agencies, academia, and UNDP internal resources at the disposal of responding to this crisis at the regional and global level and many others on specific areas outlined in this offer.

Critical Tools: (a) UNDP's country-level support platforms for the 2030 Agenda; and (b) a global development advisory and implementation services platform. These platforms represent combinations of systems, services, knowledge and skills that change how UNDP organizes and deploys its assets and capabilities to achieve greater integration and improve efficiency and development effectiveness. They respond to the growing demand for greater collaboration amongst a wide range of actors (United Nations, Government, civil society, private sector, IFIs, etc.) recognizing that the Sustainable Development Goals, and the aspirations that underpin them, cannot be achieved through stand-alone sector or issue-based approaches.

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DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Digital readiness in Sri Lanka pre-COVID-19 was drastically different to the current situation. With the immense push to work remotely using digital technologies, the importance of digital governance mechanisms has increased tremendously. UNDP is in discussions with UNDP's Regional Innovation Centre, and the e-Governance Agency of Estonia (eGA) to support the Information Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) on a comprehensive strategy to further strengthen efforts taken by the Government in establishing digital systems and platforms.

UNDP is well positioned to support establishment of teleconferencing facilities for larger collaborative sessions, even paving the way for opportunities such as e-Cabinet and digital Parliament. Additionally, UNDP's ongoing initiatives including the Capacity Development for Local Government, and Citra Innovation Lab's Fellowship for Public Sector Excellence programme aim to strengthen and transform the public sector. Including remote learning systems for schools, universities and vocational education institutions.

Critical Tools: *Fostering Digital Champions; Enabling IT to deliver digital transformation; Aligning the IT Strategy and Digital Strategy; Service-oriented IT as business partner; Empower and inspire businesses and increase their digital capabilities, Foster innovation, Digital literacy, Digital communication, Alliances & ecosystem and Lighthouse initiatives*

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Sri Lanka reported the first confirmed COVID19 case on the 27 January 2020. By the third week of April, Sri Lanka had reported 300+ COVID-19 positive cases with 7 deaths. There are 26 hospitals island wide treating COVID-19 patients, however, the healthcare sector holistically requires further strengthening of necessary infrastructure, equipment and capacity posed by the growing threat of the crisis.

A LONG-STANDING PARTNER IN HEALTH PROCUREMENT

Aligned with our mission to support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our pledge to *'leave no one behind'* and our role as the SDG integrator, UNDP works in partnership with governments, UN agencies, civil society and private sector partners to build resilient and sustainable health systems. UNDP has supported health procurement and supply chain management across the world since 2003. UNDP draws on its experience delivering large-scale health programmes for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Global Fund) and has worked with partners in more than 50 countries. To date, through this partnership UNDP has provided HIV treatment to 1.4 million people, procured 75 million mosquito nets, and treatment for 927,000 cases of tuberculosis.

UNDP is currently procuring close to 60 products in relation to COVID-19 which are listed in the annex of this document. This is not an exhaustive list, but more of the demands UNDP is currently receiving from countries, and additional items can be procured that are not on the list.

SCOPE AND FOCUS

UNDP currently provides health procurement and supply chain strengthening services in 30 countries (US\$1 billion in signed agreements). A significant part of this relates to UNDP's portfolio of Global Fund grants in 19 countries and three regional programmes. UNDP's health procurement volumes have steadily increased in recent years, in response to government demands. In 2019, UNDP procured over US\$325 million in health products covering 27 countries. While the primary focus has been on providing medicines and diagnostics for communicable diseases as well as lab & hospital equipment, increasingly, UNDP is also being asked to procure medicines and other products for non-communicable diseases.

KEY FEATURES OF UNDP'S HEALTH PROCUREMENT SERVICES:

ROBUST OPERATIONAL PRESENCE AND DISTRIBUTING CAPACITY:

As the UN's development agency, UNDP has strong operational capacity and can rely on its presence in 170 countries and territories. This is complemented by 5 regional hubs providing advisory services and mobilizing knowledge and expertise, including through South-South learning and exchange. UNDP also offers centralized procurement services through a Global Centre for Health Procurement that brings together specialized expertise across the organization and a cadre of qualified personnel based in Copenhagen, Geneva, and New York to provide streamlined & quality-assured support to countries.

INTEGRATED, END-TO-END SUPPORT:

UNDP offers end-to-end support across the procurement cycle, including product selection, registration and regulatory issues, transparent contract awarding and freight & custom clearance. This model is underpinned by a robust Quality Assurance framework that mitigates risks related to procurement.

SPEED AND RELIABILITY:

UNDP's global arrangements to ensure speed and reliability for the procurement of quality-assured health products include corporate Long-Term Agreements (LTA) with major suppliers and manufacturers, procurement support for non-LTA or specialized pharmaceuticals & equipment, and services for international freight & insurance. UNDP has fast track processes for awarding contracts within very short timeframes for most standard products. Where required, UNDP will secure immediate availability of products from existing stocks. UNDP is already providing COVID-19 health systems support to many countries including China, El Salvador, Eritrea, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Nigeria, Serbia, Ukraine and Vietnam. UNDP has access to 11 suppliers from China who are readily available to be approached through the UNDP China Country Office.

VALUE FOR MONEY:

UNDP has a proven track record of procuring health products at highly competitive rates. For example, from 2014 to 2017, UNDP generated savings of US\$65 million in the procurement of a 1st line anti-retrovirals through reduced unit costs, volume discounts and other efficiencies.

PARTNERSHIPS:

As the SDG integrator, UNDP leverages the capacities of the UN family and other key partners in health procurement, including UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO, allowing for an extended scope of health product procurement support and value. Likewise, UNDP collaborates with major bilateral and multilateral actors engaged with health procurement through the Interagency Supply Chain Group and the UN Informal Interagency Task Team for Sustainable Procurement in the Health Sector. **UNDP is also actively participating in the response and coordinates closely with other UN agencies and partners involved in the COVID-19 response, these include:**

- COVID-19 Supply Chain Coordination Group
- Interagency group on COVID-19 Diagnostics
- Group on potential disruptions on pharmaceutical supply chain.

VALUE ADDITION OF UNDP SRI LANKA'S PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Building on UNDP's crisis response and disaster risk reduction capacity, especially on procurement services, UNDP will strive to deliver the needs of the healthcare sector and the growing demands posed by the current threats of the COVID-19 crisis. Upon receiving the procurement requests along with 100 percent pre-payment, UNDP Sri Lanka will reach out to the suppliers at regional and, if necessary, global level in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). UNDP will mobilize its various teams in Bangkok, Geneva, Copenhagen, New York, and elsewhere to meet the required demand. UNDP will help organize the shipment of goods through all available transportation channels, including through organized charter flights if necessary, with clearance from the Government.

In light of COVID-19 it is important to note, all Governments and agencies across the world, including UNDP, are facing the same challenges in procuring items for the COVID-19 response: a highly distorted market, a global lack of suppliers' stocks for the most urgently needed products, inadequate production capacity of the suppliers to meet the demand. The suppliers are providing prices with maximum of 48 to 72 hours bid validity and it is not until an order is secure that an estimate delivery time is provided. The challenges are exponentially compounded by export bans of COVID-19 products from several countries where most suppliers are located. However, China's recent lifting of its export ban is potentially a game changer. The UNDP Country Office in China, which previously supported the Chinese Government with procurement services during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak in China, already has the capacity and well-established relationship with Chinese suppliers, therefore placing UNDP in a privileged position to secure orders from China. Our Country Office is now successfully supporting UNDP's global team in securing orders from China.

ALIGNED WITH THE NATIONAL RESPONSE

How governments manage emergency public procurement will play a major role in how they contain COVID-19 and how many lives can be saved. Therefore, our response is consistent with the 'COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan' and is aligned with country-specific UN responses, led by the Resident Coordinator's Office and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Sri Lanka. We are building on our crisis response and disaster risk reduction capacity and long-standing partnership with the Global Fund which focuses on providing health services in challenging operating environments and is well positioned to support Sri Lanka's priorities.

In line with its Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and HIV, Health & Development Strategy 2016-2021, Connecting the Dots and UNDP's Role in Health Crises: Corporate Guidance for Response and Recovery March 2020, UNDP's work on health contributes to its broader commitment to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, strengthen effective & inclusive governance and build resilient & sustainable health systems.

AREAS OF SUPPORT

Given the backdrop of the immediate and urgent health and non-health sector related needs of the Government of Sri Lanka, UNDP Sri Lanka aims to strengthen the health system in the face of COVID-19 by enabling, facilitating and assisting the procurement needs whilst leveraging the support of private sector entities that have already expressed interest to support in this process. UNDP will support the efforts of the Ministry of Health and the national coordination mechanisms on COVID19 as outlined below:

- Procurement of health products and medical equipment required for national COVID-19 responses by reaching out to suppliers/vendors at regional and, if necessary, global levels.
- Through working closely with the UNDP Country Office in China, work directly with the key suppliers
- Provide surge capacity, health infrastructure and laboratory equipment building on UNDP's Global Fund implementation capacities
- Implement and support health waste management initiatives. For example, upgrading, provision, and instalment of autoclaves and incinerators, to reduce exposure to biological hazards and contaminants.

- Non-medical requirements of the health sector to enhance its capacity during times of crises. These include renewable energy provisions, coordination & management needs, transport, and human resource & financial management.
- Provision of strategic logistics support including freight services, customs clearance and inward handling.
- Support the efforts of the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, and other national coordination mechanisms on COVID19.

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TOGETHER WITH AND FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA

National COVID-19 procurement strategies need to be rapidly updated to form a global, digital and data-driven plan. Without data on prices, suppliers, lead times and specifications, it is going to be very challenging to move from being reactive to proactive in getting the right items to the right patient at the right time. All our procurement measures will be fully aligned with national Covid-19 response requirements, working in close coordination with the relevant government agencies and their leadership, and under the coordination of WHO.

In line with the support extended to several governments, especially in the Asia Pacific region, the Government of Sri Lanka can utilize UNDP's procurement services, complimenting national procurement efforts, for critical and urgent requirements, using government financing mechanisms.

PLATFORM FOR PARTNERS

UNDP's global procurement offer also provides a platform to engage private sector partners, donors, philanthropists and other stakeholders to contribute and finance critical health sector procurement needs. Civil society will play an important role in that effort too.

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*Upon receiving the procurement requests along with the complete pre-payment, the UNDP country office will reach out to the suppliers/vendors at regional and, if necessary, global level. Once the quotes are obtained, UNDP will share the pricelist with the requester and within 24-48 hours we will require the 'green light' to issue the purchase order. UNDP will strive to deliver the goods based on the schedule of delivery provided by suppliers. Timeline cannot be specified especially given the nature of the global market due to Covid-19, but UNDP will expedite the delivery as much as possible. UNDP will help organize the shipment of goods through all available transportation channels, including through organized charter flights) if necessary. Organization of charter flights will be an additional expenditure borne by the requester, and we will require Government's assistance with necessary aviation clearances. Please do note that it is not guaranteed that UNDP will be able to procure everything that is requested, due to distorted market conditions related to COVID-19. UNDP will mobilize its various teams in Bangkok, Geneva, Copenhagen, New York, and elsewhere to we meet the demand.



Sri Lanka is likely to face significant socio-economic impacts from the COVID-19 crisis. The economic shock is likely to be transmitted through a number of channels – particularly tourism, trade, investment, and remittances. With considerable clustering around the poverty line, a protracted crisis is likely to have an adverse impact on poverty and inequality. The Government of Sri Lanka has responded positively to the crisis, with a host of economic and social support measures aimed at cushioning the impact. However, broader measures aimed at sustainable recovery and averting long term damage to the development and SDG path may need to be backed by solid and continued policy analysis and actionable policy measures.

UNDP EXPERIENCE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUPPORT EFFORTS IN WAKE OF CRISIS

UNDP is working to understand the social, economic, and political impacts of the crisis, and to find ways to mitigate them with sustainable, resilient and rights-based solutions crafted with the public and private sectors. This leverages UNDP's capacity on innovation, digital solutions, social protection systems, response to increased gender-based violence, emergency job creation and economic restoration.

UNDP has a history of supporting countries to understand and overcome socio-economic impacts in the aftermath of a crisis. Comprehensive **post-disaster needs assessments** (PDNA) were developed for several countries in the wake of crises such as the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the Ebola and Zika epidemics in coordination with multiple partners such as the European Union, the World Bank and the rest of the UN system. In response to COVID-19, UNDP is supporting efforts in several countries carrying out **socio economic impact assessments** (such as in Niger in partnership with the Economic Commission of Africa) and in Madagascar, are collaborating with UNICEF, WFP and the World Bank to support Government develop a **social protection programme** to support the groups most at risk. Other examples include scaling up digital solutions for health care, designing targeted social protection for marginalized groups, developing women's economic empowerment strategies, and developing fiscal policy and SDG-aligned financing mechanisms with partner governments.

AREAS OF SUPPORT

In line with its national and international competencies, UNDP in Sri Lanka stands ready to provide the following socio-economic support measures with suitable collaboration with partners:

SUPPORT TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS:

with particular emphasis on strengthening the *risk assessment* and *risk management* capacities by leveraging international best practices and experience. Also support in identifying viable financing measures for risk management and supporting Government to establish those financing platforms.

CARRYING OUT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENTS TARGETED ON THE HH SECTOR:

this will have specific focus on gender dimensions; vulnerable and marginalized populations including ethnic minorities; mobile populations; people living with disabilities, looking at livelihoods, employment, access to social services and social inclusion.

CARRYING OUT OF A RAPID IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON MICRO-SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES):

which are the backbone of Sri Lanka's economy which has been made considerably weak and vulnerable in the face of the crisis. Particular issues are the loss of business, loss of employment, long periods of delay building inherent inertia that may lead to the long-term unviability of the business (particularly through competition). These will require innovative addressal mechanisms.

RAPID TURNAROUND SE ANALYSIS ON SELECTED TOPICS AS THE CRISIS EVOLVES:

The COVID-19 crisis is rapidly evolving and therefore requires a more dynamic platform for robust and rapid SE analysis on selected issues as they come to light. UNDP with its strong and nimble network is standing ready to provide government and private sector this ability to rapid turnaround analysis.

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UNDP SUPPORTING RECOVERY EFFORTS TO BUILD BACK BETTER



Like countries worldwide, Sri Lanka is dealing with the COVID-19 health emergency. While dealing with ending the pandemic and saving human lives, the country must simultaneously mitigate and recover from its immediate and far-reaching socio-economic impacts.

Prior to the COVID-19 crises, the poverty rate of Sri Lanka was over 4 percent (2016). At the same time, 12.4 percent of the households were multi-dimensionally poor (2016), with an additional 11.9 percent of the population being vulnerable to multidimensional poverty.¹ The lock-down measures taken to stem the spread of COVID-19 has led to income and food insecurity of a considerable section of the population. For instance: 33 percent of the households in the Jaffna district now require social welfare assistance from the government. Key sectors of the economy (such as tourism) are badly affected. This could increase inequalities in Sri Lanka and could affect all aspects of life in the country. The growing economic insecurity is also fueling social tensions along existing ethnic and religious fault lines in the country. Evidence of disproportionate impact on women and girls can already be seen. Preliminary evidence also points to growing domestic and gender-based violence.

A comprehensive, people-centered and resilient recovery calls for macro-economic policy and planning, livelihood and enterprise recovery, and basic social services restoration. It calls for focusing on those most at risk, including the poor, migrants, low-income earners, informal sector workers, and those with pre-existing vulnerabilities such as women, children, elderly and disabled. Recovery efforts should reinforce democracy and strengthen social cohesion. Recovery efforts should accelerate rather than undermine Sri Lanka's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and make institutions and communities more resilient to future shocks and challenges. Immediate focus and early interventions in recovery could also ensure that the country's systems can cope with other challenges such as floods, dengue and others. Initial research exploring Economic, Social, Environmental and Governance related 'New Normals' that Sri Lanka will face in the immediate aftermath of the crisis indicates that new multi-sectoral recovery plans would also need to be developed. UNDP Sri Lanka stands committed to support the Government of Sri Lanka in its recovery efforts.

A LONG-STANDING PARTNER IN RECOVERY

Globally, UNDP has vast experience supporting countries recover from crisis. In Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, UNDP led recovery efforts after the 2014 Ebola crisis, helping crisis management and recovery planning, livelihood recovery and service-delivery. A post-COVID19 recovery effort will draw on this comparative experience, including on a roster of deployable advisors. As the global recovery lead, UNDP has an extensive toolkit of assessment methodologies and programme instruments, including a comprehensive Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) tool, which can be adapted and used quickly as needed. As a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), UNDP is well positioned to draw on the cross-institutional expertise of the UN system, and in particular in this case, work with agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and ILO during the recovery phase.

¹Department of Census and Statistics (2019), 'Global Multidimensional Poverty for Sri Lanka -2016, Ministry of Economic Reforms and Public Distribution http://www.statistics.gov.lk/poverty/Bulletin/GMPI_Bulletin2019.pdf

In Sri Lanka, UNDP has 53 years of experience, working closely with Government, civil society, the private sector and communities at national and local levels on poverty eradication, democratic governance and climate adaptation, disaster risk management and environmental protection. The agency was a lead recovery actor in the aftermath of the 2014 Tsunami disaster and 2009 armed conflict, helping the Government and communities with recovery planning and coordination, income and employment generation, infrastructure rehabilitation, social cohesion and disaster preparedness.

UNDP Sri Lanka has established partnerships and ongoing projects with key Government institutions at national and sub-national level, and long-standing networks and links with civil society and communities, which will enable the agency to initiate recovery work and deliver results with agility.

UNDP SRI LANKA'S AREA OF SUPPORT AND VALUE PROPOSITION

UNDP's offer responds to the following recovery priorities:

STOPPING THE PANDEMIC:

Ensuring the continuity of health systems and services and supporting efforts to reach those at risk of being left behind such as people with disabilities, elderly, rural poor etc.

UNDP can provide support with:

- Policy and technical guidance on health sector assessments, shifting health service delivery platforms, inclusive health responses etc.
- Programme and implementation support for procurement.
- Support to improve community engagement – public outreach, community tracking

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR POLICY, PLANNING AND SERVICE-DELIVERY:

Strengthening the capacities of Government at all levels to plan recovery actions and delivery services and programmes and ensuring the engagement of independent institutions and communities.

UNDP can provide support with:

- Technical and backstopping support for a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), a roadmap for tourism sector recovery and other sector-based needs assessments and planning exercises as requested.
- Technical and programme support for digital solutions ensuring business continuity for Government.
- Technical and programme support to local level governance institutions for recovery planning and implementation, including for community outreach and consultation.
- Technical and backstopping support to institutions for delivering welfare and protection services, including supporting legal-aid service providers reach at-risk communities remotely/digitally and enhancing shelter services for victims and those at increased risk of domestic violence.
- Enhancing capacities of Parliament, the National Human Rights Commission and the Right to Information Act, to provide recovery-specific oversight, monitoring, and redress services.
- Technical support for climate and disaster sensitive recovery planning.

SUPPORTING LIVELIHOODS, EMPLOYMENT, PRODUCTIVE SECTORS AND MSME'S:

Supporting those engaged in hardest hit sectors recover livelihoods and productive assets, with a specific focus on wage labourers, workers in the informal sector, returnee migrants, women and young people.

UNDP can provide support with:

- Bolstering food security through support for seasonal cultivation and urban home-gardening schemes.
- Emergency employment and quick-impact income schemes, including cash-for-work irrigation rehabilitation activities.
- Technical and programme support to informal sector workers (e.g. farmers, small tour operators etc) to upgrade their productive capacities, skills or businesses.
- Programme support for young persons to innovate and develop social entrepreneurship solutions;
- Programme support for e-commerce solutions, such as for business registration, financial services, e-commerce platforms etc.
- Programme support for women micro and small entrepreneurs.

FACILITATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION:

Ensuring vulnerabilities are captured and addressed throughout the recovery process, empowering citizens to participate in the recovery process, and

- Mobilize and support civil society organizations, women's organizations and youth networks to monitor and respond to stigmatization, misinformation, discrimination and exclusion in their communities;
- Increasing the ability of communities to monitor and feedback on recovery including through digital tools.

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Aligned with UNDP's mission to support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our pledge to *'leave no one behind'* and our role as the SDG integrator, UNDP is adept at working in partnership with governments, UN agencies, civil society and private sector partners to build participatory approaches to solve dynamic development challenges. Hence a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach is our new norm.¹

In response to the unprecedented nature and impact of COVID-19 on all segments of government and society, UNDP will create the necessary space for the adoption of a truly 'whole of society approach' to tackling and recovering from the crisis, given the importance of collaboration, meaningful participation and collective intelligence.

The 'whole of society' approach identifies that while implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and there in responding to crises such as COVID-19, is primarily the responsibility of Governments, the scale and ambition of the agenda calls for contributions from all stakeholders. This is across society including parliamentarians, citizens, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and the media.²

For UNDP, whole of society translates to partnership building between Government and all stakeholders of society in addressing spheres including health, education, energy, agriculture, sports, transport, communication, environment, employment, industry, finance and social and economic development. This entails not only dialogue but also formulation of a unified or common agenda on how the Government and the broad civil society can collaborate and work together in solving these issues.

For COVID-19, as the World Health Organisation states, a whole-of-society approach means Government engaging the private sector, civil society, communities, academia, media, voluntary associations, families and individuals to strengthen the resilience of communities and society.³

Within this context, Youth will also play a critical role in the country's recovery process if actively engaged. Many young entrepreneurs, while hard hit by the crisis, will play a vital role in building the economy by leveraging the benefits of shared and digital economies.

SCOPE AND FOCUS

The whole of society approach is anchored in 5 major components

UNDP will lead in convening of a **multi stakeholder partnership platform** consisting of major private sector organisations, donors, philanthropists, to large civil society collectives to mobilise resources through a coordinated call to action on COVID-19

¹<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/dsgsm1131.doc.htm>

²<https://www.bccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/International-Partnership.pdf>

³https://www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/pandemic/2009-0808_wos_pandemic_readiness_final.pdf

UNDP intends to establish an (online) **citizen engagement platform** on COVID-19 to facilitate a participatory approach to gathering citizen insights and collective intelligence on both getting an accurate sense of an evolving crisis on the ground and to effectively respond to the same.

A large-scale **nation-wide business incubation programme** complete with seed grant support for startups and other small enterprises to apply and receive support on business recovery, where youth startups become a critical component of government stimulus. This will also look at removing **barriers to starting a business and acquiring capital**.

Reskilling and upskilling programmes developed to enhance citizen and entrepreneur capacity to thrive in the digital and shared economy spaces, ensuring pathways to start/restart business, enhancing technical skills, and accelerating their business potential to ensure viability.

UNDP will lead constructive **high-level policy dialogues** on both the crisis and its aftermath, informing policy responses, with a focus on the socio-economic impact of the crisis.

THE APPROACH

The partnership platform will be mobilised in support of immediate preparedness and response efforts of health procurement services, improving digital readiness and capacity for business continuity of Government as well as the putting Sri Lanka swiftly on the socio-economic recovery pathway. The partnership platform will be also promoted as a space where interventions are created and implemented on critical issues such as the effect on women due to the crisis, including sexual and gender-based violence, resilient agriculture and tourism, leveraging on long standing programmatic strengths of UNDP. The stakeholder platform would underline the broad ownership of country's recovery and building a sense of binding to the national effort dealing with the worst crisis it faced since independence. It would also lead to finances leveraging for relief, recovery and development from the private sector in addition to public sector. Such a focus will strengthen Government capacity to lead and manage national recovery efforts in the early, medium and long-term taking swift measures to put human development and economic development pathways back on track for SDGs.

Leveraging on a network of innovation champions on the ground which UNDP has established, UNDP will create a channel for citizen insights and create a space for crowd-sourcing ideas from citizens to respond to COVID-19. Concurrently, UNDP will use the same networks to amplify the Government's advocacy and outreach efforts on the crisis, contributing towards leaving no one behind.

UNDP will identify and assess the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on Sri Lanka, in order to catalyse the development of an effective response and recovery mechanism for the country. Accordingly, UNDP will leverage its role as an integrator, with global, regional and country level partnerships to bring together key stakeholders in Sri Lanka's policy and socio-economic discourse for the high-level policy dialogues, under the broader umbrella of UNDP's larger policy engagement platform.

To realise this whole of society approach, UNDP will work with an array of partners including relevant Government Authorities the Global Compact Network Ceylon (UNGC) and its members, numerous civil society organisations with strong presence on the ground, UNDP's very own network of innovators including those of Citra Social Innovation Lab's Next Generation Government Fellowship and Youth from

UNDP Youth and Innovation platform HackaDev, UNDP field offices, UN agencies, academia, and UNDP internal resources at the disposal of responding to this crisis at the regional and global level and many others on specific areas outlined in this offer. The high-level policy dialogues will engage key policymakers and stakeholders ranging from senior public officials, private sector leaders, academics, representatives from inter-governmental organizations and officials of the United Nations system.

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With decades of experience and an objective of ensuring inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, democratic governance and common security, UNDP provides expertise that supports countries in meeting their development goals and ensuring that all parts of society are included. With a focus on mainstreaming innovation and rethinking business as usual, UNDP has identified that digital technologies and advances in artificial intelligence have transformative implications for economies and societies, offering tremendous potential for progress.

UNDP has supported countries all over the world to digitally transform Governments, public services, economic sectors and improve governance and accountability. UNDP has undertaken large Digital Transformation efforts in Serbia, the Philippines, Bangladesh and others. In an effort to transfer best practices of Digital Transformation, UNDP has initiated the establishment of the e-Governance Academy (eGA) in partnership with the Government of Estonia and the Open Society Institute (OSI) to transfer knowledge and best practices in the areas of digital transformation within the Government.

Moreover, UNDP launched the Digital Strategy in 2019 as a call to action and innovation with the aim of leaving no one behind in this era of digital transformation. The Next Generation UNDP has an outward approach at how digital technologies can be used to improve the way we work, including how we deliver, create, collaborate and advocate to set the pathway in addressing fundamental development challenges. The embodiment of digitalization and digitization in the development landscape ultimately drives progress to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030.

As a thought leader in innovation, UNDP, with its global commitment towards the Digital Strategy aims to accelerate the digital transformative practices in Sri Lanka to impart the digital DNA across all disciplines in the country, especially in the field of digital governance.

SCOPE AND FOCUS

Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Biotechnology, Blockchain, Data Mining, Virtual and Augmented Reality are few of the cutting-edge technologies expected to reshape the way we live, work and relate with each other. These tools and technologies should be used in a coordinated approach of optimizing the digital transformation for the human future and not vice versa. This will ensure that humans are not required to adapt to technology, rather technology will be adopted and optimized for the human future. This approach will ensure a Citizen-Centric Digital Government which will enhance the quality of life of our people.

This is of utmost importance at an unprecedented time such as this where Sri Lanka along with the rest of the world is facing increasing complex challenges as a result of the prevailing global pandemic brought on by COVID-19. It is here that innovation plays a key role in a country's ability to resolve critical and complex problems, such as those continuing to present themselves in our prevailing context, which in turn will directly contribute to Sri Lanka's economic growth. It is through innovation and a digital transformation process that the public sector of Sri Lanka will become more people-centric and deliver effective and efficient services virtually and remotely to the public.

AREAS OF SUPPORT

With the immense push to work remotely and therefore digitally, the importance placed on digital governance mechanisms has increased tremendously. Using digital tools and systems to carry out work, especially in the public sector, is no longer a secondary option, but more so a vital component of continuing to support the nation and provide services to the citizens. Taking this into consideration, UNDP will support the efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka through interventions outlined below:

CONDUCT A DIGITAL READINESS ASSESSMENT

The digital readiness and the utilization rates of digital tools in Sri Lanka pre-COVID-19 is drastically different to the current situation at hand. Therefore, conducting a Readiness Assessment of the digital readiness levels of the country, especially the public sector officials who were pushed towards working digitally and remotely will be crucial in identifying and understanding the challenges that exist once the dust settles on COVID-19 responses, and what some of the gaps still are. This can be in terms of both skills gap, lack of access, as well as resources such as computers, laptops and other physical equipment.

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE DIGITAL STRATEGY

Working alongside the Government mandated organization for Digital Transformation of Sri Lanka, the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA), UNDP will support the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy that will take into account the off-shoots of digital solutions that have been formulated as crisis response efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This strategy will not only look at responses and solutions for the more immediate challenges at hand but will put in place measures which will target issue areas which might arise in the medium to longer-term.

USE OF TELECONFERENCING PLATFORMS

As an immediate intervention, UNDP intends to procure access and licenses for teleconferencing platforms and provide relevant technical trainings, so that Government offices around the country can work collaboratively if needed with each other to provide the necessary services to the citizens of the country.

PROVIDE AN E-CABINET SOLUTION TOOL

The Information System for Cabinet Sessions, better known as the e-Cabinet tool, streamlines the Government's decision-making process by utilizing a multi-user database and scheduler that keeps relevant information organised and updated in real time, giving Ministers a clear overview of each item under discussion. The business processes platform is based on the experience collected from the Estonian e-Cabinet usage during the last two decades. This tailor-made solution has been designed to prepare and conduct government meetings in an electronic form – entirely without paper. Based on the Estonian experience the main value addition brought upon by this system is the saving of time of Cabinet sessions. For instance, a Cabinet session which took 4 - 5 hours before this tool, would take on average only 30 minutes. Additionally, it also has other positives which include but not limited to; the acceleration of pre-approval process; simplifying the scheduling of the Cabinet sessions; and allowing better and faster information sharing before the Cabinet session.

RE-SKILLING EFFORTS AIMED AT PUBLIC OFFICIALS

UNDP aims to further capacitate the public sector officials in digital skills through existing projects such as the Capacity Development for Local Government, and initiatives such as Citra's Fellowship for Public Sector Excellence programme. Already existing programmes such as these within UNDP Sri Lanka will provide the opportunity to make swift and minor changes which will allow UNDP to work on providing skill building initiatives for the Government officials. These programmes aim to take insights gained through the assessment and pointers from the Strategy to develop capacity building programmes which will equip the public sector with the tools necessary to utilize the software made available to them in order to provide effective digital services to the public.

STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S PANDEMIC DASHBOARD

UNDP intends to work alongside the Ministry of Health, the Health Promotion Bureau, and the Task Force established to work on COVID-19, to strengthen the efforts already taken by the Government to monitor in real-time the pandemic and its spread. As tried and tested in Estonia, this monitoring of the isolation process and getting updates on health conditions of people in isolation with the help of Pandemic Dashboard enables cost-efficiency with high levels of accuracy, providing the national health authorities also with real-time data of the pandemic spread with a dynamic view on acceleration of the symptoms. Monitoring and reporting the symptoms during the entire period of the self-quarantine is essential and the Pandemic Dashboard – which can be made available for Sri Lanka, with necessary contextually appropriate changes made – is optimized for that function as well.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Working in collaboration with the Digital Education Taskforce established by the Government of Sri Lanka, UNDP will develop strategies and support implementation of digital interventions that facilitate remote learning for schools, universities, vocational training institutes, and find digital solutions which can be utilized to provide support for the students continuing to engage in their academic pursuits during this time. UNDP is in discussions with multiple partners from various sectors, both locally and globally, to explore and identify tools and platforms which can be used to provide such solutions.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINGLE DIGITAL ID AND SECURE INTEGRATED ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SYSTEM

Countries like South Korea that proactively acted upon the COVID-19 pandemic were able to rely on their integrated administrative data management system to help track and contain the spread of the disease. Introducing an integrated system would allow for: a) quick and efficient updating of government data, b) reduction in duplication of information and processes, and c) increased transparency. This, in turn, will lend itself to the establishment of an effective support system and to the creation of a single digital identity for all citizens that could be used across a range of platforms and services. In addition, such a system could pave the way for the inclusion of non-traditional data sources, such as big data into traditional statistical data domain, and the adoption of new data collection methodologies as an addition to the methodologies utilized at present. Further, COVID-19 has also seen a surge in the availability of online businesses, which has brought to light concerns of data privacy and digital security. An integrated data management system should take these concerns into account and ensure that strict guidelines are adhered to protect personal information.

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TOGETHER WITH AND FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA

UNDP aims to conduct these offerings in an effort to amplify the work that the Government is already carrying out in terms of providing digital solutions to the challenges facing Sri Lanka, especially with regards to the governance field. In addition to the above outlined interventions, UNDP stands ready to assist the Government in all areas identified as needing support in the digital transformation realm in order for Sri Lanka to find effective solutions.

PLATFORM FOR PARTNERS

In all the proposed areas of work mentioned above, UNDP in Sri Lanka will be working with relevant partners who will be able to provide a positive contribution to the situation at hand. As it stands, UNDP is working with the Regional Innovation Centre in Bangkok, the e-Governance Agency of Estonia, and other necessary Government partners in this field including ICTA.

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