

# A Convidized SDG 16

Sri Lanka -2020 to 2021

Democracy, Governance

Human Rights

Lockdown and Impact



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## **Executive Summary**

The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by world leaders in 2015, outline an ambitious global agenda for sustainable development. Its 17 goals and 169 targets are interconnected, and together they create a picture of what a sustainable world could look like in 2030. Successive Sri Lankan Government/s have taken a concerted effort in subscribing to the Sustainable Goals (SDGs), involving a variety of stakeholders to ensure the achievement of the different goals. The Goal number 16 that promotes Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is a complex one given the various political dimensions, conflicts and vested powers that are at play. While taking a general view on the progress of Sustainable Development Goals being implemented in Sri Lanka, this report takes a closer look at SDGs carried out in the context of the spread of the pandemic of Covid-19 in Sri Lanka. The specific period that is covered in is from March to August 2020, including the period of curfew (Sri Lankan modality of a lockdown) and its immediate aftermath. Amongst SDGs, particular attention is made on SDG 16 which is on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

As national governments mainstream the 2030 Agenda into planning and budgeting processes, they face the complex challenge of integrating the entire set of goals and targets in a way that stays true to the foundational idea of treating the agenda as an indivisible whole. The poverty rate has dropped to 4.1% in 2016 and country reached towards the upper middle income status with a per capita GDP of USD 4,066 in 2017. Unemployment rate stood below 5% for last seven years. Free education and health policies have resulted in high life expectancy (75 years) and high youth literacy (98.7%) rates. UN has recognized Sri Lanka among “high human development” achieved countries.

The establishment of a Ministry in charge of Sustainable Development (2015) was a significant step to provide for an integrated option towards coordinating the sustainable development needs and criteria of the country. The central mission of the sustainable development division of the ministry is coordinating policies, strategies, programmes, mechanisms and tools to address development challenges towards ensuring environmental, social and economic sustainability through an integrated approach, inter-ministerial/agency mechanisms, and broad stakeholder engagement. Another progressive step was to introduce the Sustainable Development Act in 2017 to ensure that the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development is prepared in an integrated manner. As per the section 10 of Sustainable Development Act No 19 of 2017, a main responsibility of the Sustainable Development Council is to formulate and implement a National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development (NPSSD) to achieve the sustainable development goals in Sri Lanka.

Strategies of achieving SDG 16 in Sri Lanka included, aligning national policies and regulations with international instruments to country context, in order to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime; strengthening rule of law and legislation system to promote transparency and accountability, thereby ensuring free of corruption and bribery in all their forms, while assuring justice for all; eliminating serious and adverse impact of corruption and bribery in all areas by ensuring good governance; strengthen the availability of and accessibility to information

and institution accordance with national legislation (e.g. Right to Information Act) and international agreements in all levels governance, and private sector; strengthening the role of the state, civil society and other stakeholders in line with the national strategy that prioritizes locally owned and sustainable development assistance based on collaborative partnerships in safe guarding human rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), conflict mitigation & transformation, resolution and reconciliation, in order to ensure peace harmony and ensuring a peaceful, resilient and secure cyber space in Sri Lanka.

Following the performance of the above mentioned institutional frameworks and strategies, this paper strives to understand the dynamics of the pandemic on areas under the SDG 16 and how they have impacted and the new challenges that are posed in implementing SDG 16. Specifically, the paper takes a closer look at issues of democracy, governance and human rights that fall under the general purview of SDG 16. The paper is organized into five parts. First a detailed description and an analysis on SDGs in Sri Lanka is presented. Secondly, the situation on democracy, governance and human rights are presented. Thirdly, a full description of the chronology of the spread of the Covid 19 in Sri Lanka from March to August is presented. Fourthly, an analysis of the impacts of Covid-19 on areas of democracy, governance and human rights are made. Finally, a brief discussion on overall conclusions, areas for action and recommendations is made.

## **Acknowledgement**

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## **Introduction**

This paper analyzes the background and recent trends of the Sustainable Development Goals implemented in Sri Lanka. The analysis of SDGs is carried out in the context of the spread of the pandemic of Covid-19 in Sri Lanka. The specific period that is covered in this report is from March to August 2020, including the period of curfew (Sri Lankan modality of a lockdown) and its immediate aftermath. Amongst SDGs, particular attention is made on SDG 16 which is on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The paper strives to understand the dynamics of the pandemic on areas under the SDG 16 and how they have impacted and the new challenges that are posed in implementing SDG 16. Specifically, the paper takes a closer look at issues of democracy, governance and human rights that fall under the general purview of SDG 16.

This paper is organized into five parts. First a detailed description and an analysis on SDGs in Sri Lanka is presented. Secondly, the situation on democracy, governance and human rights are presented. Thirdly, a full description of the chronology of the spread of the Covid 19 in Sri Lanka from March, 20 to Feb 25 2021 is presented. Fourthly, an analysis of the impacts of Covid-19 on areas of democracy, governance and human rights including the Prisoners' rights are made. Finally, a brief discussion on overall conclusions, areas for action and recommendations are made.

## I. Author and Institutional Affiliation



***Isha Wedasinghe Miranda - Collaborative Partner***

Isha Wedasinghe Miranda is an Independent Evaluator and Programme Management. She is also one of the Technical Advisers to the Sri Lanka National Evaluation Committee and the Sri Lanka National Sustainable Technical Committee.

The Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) registered under the Social Services Act is an association working in Sri Lanka and is a subsidiary of the Centre for Humanitarian Affairs. CHA employs full-time and commissioned personnel led by sectional heads reporting to the Chairman and Board.

Activities of CHA are promoting and protecting human rights, Equal Rights and Change, Research, Information & Communication, Developing and disseminating human rights and humanitarian standards, guidelines, principles, and participatory working methods and approaches and promoting good governance. Strong expertise in influencing policy making and strategies at national level. Experience working with marginalized communities, including minorities, migrants, and women-headed households at village, district and national levels;



***Udan Fernando - Asian Civil Society Research Network – Collaborative Partner***

The Asian Civil Society Research Network (ACSRN) is hosted by the Asia Center of the University of Melbourne, upon holding a series of Annual Conferences in Melbourne since 2017, with resultant publications: Handbook on Civil Society in Asia (Ogawa, 2018, Routledge), Transnational Civil Society (Avenell and Ogawa, forthcoming, Routledge) and Civil Societies under Authoritarian Rule (Ogawa et al. Forthcoming). ACSRN brings together scholars from different parts of the world whose focus and specialization is on civil societies in Asia. ACSRN asserts that Civil Society needs to be reconceptualized from its Eurocentric origins, where the idea refers to a particular set of relationships between the state and individuals in the West. Most of the existing scholarship on civil society has been narrowly circumscribed by modern Western modes of liberal individualism.

Civil society organizations have become agents of globalization that spread Western values, ideologies, and practices. Hence Civil society scholarship in Asia requires deeper analysis and benefits from adopting collaborative and constructive approaches. The Asian Civil Society Research Network creates momentum in this line of civil society inquiry.

## **II. Abbreviations and Acronyms**

CHA – Consortium of Humanitarian Agency

ACSRN - The Asian Civil Society Research Network

MDG - Millennium Development Goals

SDG – sustainable Development Goals

VNR - Volunteer National Review

HLPF – High Level Political Forum

NPSSD - National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development

RTI – Right to Information

FLICT – Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

MOH - Ministry of Health

MOE - Ministry of Educations

MOPA - Ministry of Public Administrations

MOF - Ministry of Finance

PPP – Public Private Partnership

NHRI - National Human Rights Institution

HRCSL - Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

GANHRI - Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

ICT - Information and Communication Technologies

VSSO - Voluntary Social Service Organizations

CMEV - Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV)

ICCPR - The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

LECO - Lanka Electricity Company

CIABOC - Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption

SLCERT - Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team (SLCERT)

NCSA - National Cyber Security Agency

SAPA - Strategize Asian Civil Society;

SAARC - South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

### III. Major Websites Cited

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donoughmore\\_Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donoughmore_Commission)  
<http://www.parliament.lk/files/committees/soc/oversight-plan-8th-parliament-en.pdf>  
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<https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Sri-Lanka-Report-2020-FINAL-ol>  
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## IV. Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Acknowledgement .....	3
Introduction .....	4
I. Author and Institutional Affiliation.....	5
II. Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	6
III. Major Websites Cited .....	8
IV. Table of Contents .....	9
Country Profile .....	11
i. UN Core Document.....	11
ii. Reports of International Organizations on Sri-Lankan Ranking .....	12
ii. Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators.....	13
<b>ii Mapping interactions between SDG 16 Targets for policy integration and strategies Score card...19</b>	
A. State Institutions and Democracy .....	27
1) Executive body (Government structure).....	27
2) Legislative body (national and local parliament) .....	28
3) Provincial Administrative Structure .....	29
4) Judiciary Body: .....	29
5) Election Body .....	31
6) Anti-corruption agency.....	32
A.6.1 Sri Lanka Bribery Commission. ....	32
7) National Human Rights Institution (NHRI).....	32
8) Gender Equality Commission.....	33
9) Oversight Institution .....	35
10) <b>Significant steps towards equality - Score Card – Specific .....</b>	<b>34</b>
11) Oversight Commissions.....	35
A.9.1 Notable general Action.....	36

10)	Public Institution on Information and Communications.....	36
A.	State of Democracy and Civic Space .....	37
A.1	Voluntary Social Service Organizations Act. (Registration and Supervision).....	37
A.1.1	.....Post-lock down trends on democracy, governance and human rights	39
A.1.1.1	.....Amendment to the Constitution and impact on governance	40
A.1.1.2	..... Increased surveillance on CSOs	41
A.1.1.3	..... Civil Society Space and Moves to introduce new legislation on CSOs.	42
B.	Covid-19 and Data and Trends .....	44
<b>B.1</b>	<b>Chronology of the Pandemic’s spread and vaccination in Sri Lanka and Economy of Post Covid 19</b> .....	45 - <u>50</u>
C.	Covid-19 Impact on Human Rights and SDGs .....	50
C.1	Governance: Legislation, Structures and Institutions –Pre Covid19.....	50
C.2	Human rights of Migration workers of Sri Lankan .....	51
C.3	Human Rights and Right to Information- RTI – SDGs.....	<u>53</u>
C.4	Post-conflict and Transitional Justice.....	<u>54</u>
C.4. A	Mahara prison riot and Human Rights & Justice to Inmates.....	55
C.4.B.	ECONOMY –Post Pandemic.....	57
E.	COVID-19 : Government’s and Civil Society Responses .....	60
E.1	The pressure to hold an election in the midst of a pandemic.....	60
E.2	The role of Police, Militarization, rule of law and freedom of expression.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
F.	COVID-19: Challenges and Assessment.....	<u>62</u>
F.2	Refugees from India .....	<u>63</u>
<b>G.</b>	<b>Proposal and Recommendation</b> .....	<u>64</u>

## Country Profile

### i. UN Core Document

#### Reports of International Organizations on Sri-Lanka and South Asia

- General Report
- UN Reports
- UN DESA's Policy Briefs #660E6
- CORE DOCUMENT FORMING PART OF THE REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES
- SRI LANKA-29 July 1994

#### LAND AND PEOPLE

Sri Lanka is a multiracial and multi-religious nation and throughout many centuries the people of Sri Lanka of all races and religions have lived in peace and harmony with one another. According to the statistical pocket book issued by the Department of Census and Statistics for the year 1992 the total population of the island is 17.6 million. The composition of the population according to race and religion is as follows: Race Percentage Sinhalese 74%, Sri Lanka Tamil 13%, Indian Tamil 6%, Sri Lanka Moor 7 Malays, Burghers and others (negligible)

1. Religion Percentage: Buddhists 69.3%, Hindus 15.5%, Muslims 7.5%, Christians 7.6%, Others 0.1

These races entered the island at different times in the course of its history and contributed to form a single nation.

2. The Sinhalese are the descendants of immigrants from northern India who colonized the island around 500 B.C. Buddhism, the religion of the majority of Sinhalese, came from India in the third century B.C. The Sinhalese speak Sinhala.

3. The largest ethnic minority in the country, the Tamils, are immigrants from southern India who practice Hinduism and speak Tamil. They too came from early times, and made their home mostly in the northern part of Sri Lanka. The Tamil population was substantially increased with the arrival of Indian Tamils in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as workers first in the coffee and later in the tea and rubber estates in the hill country during British colonial rule.

(Ref: Annexes)

## Reports of International Organizations on Sri-Lankan Ranking

Organization	Description and link	Rank -2019	Rank 2020 to Jan 2021
IDEA	<a href="https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices/#/indices/countries-regions-profile?rsc=%5B780%5D&amp;covid19=1">https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices/#/indices/countries-regions-profile?rsc=%5B780%5D&amp;covid19=1</a>		
Democracy Index	<a href="https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index">https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index</a>	6.0-7.0	
SDG indicator 2020	<a href="https://dashboards.sdginde.org/rankings">https://dashboards.sdginde.org/rankings</a>	66.88/100 94/193	
Human Development Index	<a href="http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LKA">http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LKA</a>	HDI . <b>0.780 -71</b> Life expectation 78.6 Mean years of Schooling (SDG 4.3) 11.1, GNI/PPP \$ (SDG 8.5) 11,611	HDI .0782 Rank <b>72</b> Life Expectation <b>77.0</b> Schooling years. <b>14.1</b> Gross national income (GNI)per capita : <b>\$12707</b> Inequality . <b>673</b> Gender: <b>0.955</b> Poverty : <b>2.9%</b> Employment to population ratio (% ages 15 and older) <b>51.7</b> Human Security: Homicide rate (per 100,000 people) <b>2.4</b> Trade flows : Exports and imports (% of GDP): <b>52.4</b> Internet users, total (% of population) <b>34.1</b>
Environmental sustainability	<a href="http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LKA">http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LKA</a> :	<b>Rank 97</b>	<b>Rank 109</b>
Rule of Law Index	<a href="https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/wjp-rule-law-index-2020">https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/wjp-rule-law-index-2020</a>	<b>66/128</b>	<b>66/128</b>
Freedom house	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores</a> Partly free 55 , Political rights 22, Civil Liberty 33		
World press freedom	<a href="https://rsf.org/en/ranking">https://rsf.org/en/ranking</a>	<b>127/180</b> <b>Score 41.94</b>	<b>127/180</b> <b>Score 41.94</b>
Freedom house Index	62.19,political freedom 56.87,press freedom 52.99, total freedom 57.35	Total Free <b>55/100 – (partly free) Global Freedom</b> Internet Freedom – <b>52/100</b> Political Rights <b>22/40</b> Civil Liberties <b>33/60</b> Freedom of net : <b>52/100 (Total Ranking)</b> Obstacles to access – <b>12/25</b> Limits on Content – <b>22/35</b> Violations of User Rights- <b>18/40</b>	
Human Freedom Index	<a href="https://www.cato.org/search?query=sri+lanka">https://www.cato.org/search?query=sri+lanka</a>	<b>94/180</b>	
CIVICUS	Sri Lanka: A year after Presidential elections, civic freedoms under increasing assault News- 17 November 2020 <a href="https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/4740-sri-lanka-a-year-after-presidential-elections-civic-freedoms-under-increasing-assault">https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/4740-sri-lanka-a-year-after-presidential-elections-civic-freedoms-under-increasing-assault</a>	Obstructed	
TI	Corruption perception Index - <a href="https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi#">https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi#</a>	<b>93/198</b> <b>Score 38/100</b>	pending

Global Freedom index	Score 2.003 and ranking	Down 4 Score 2.003	
Protection of HR Defenders	Ranking Zero <a href="https://www.protectdefenders.eu/en/stats.html?yearFilter=2020&amp;regionFilter=as&amp;countryFilter=LK#mf">https://www.protectdefenders.eu/en/stats.html?yearFilter=2020&amp;regionFilter=as&amp;countryFilter=LK#mf</a>	0	
OGP-Global Report Data	Action Plan –odd. <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gcV2vTNPCwLI8mcLb0tZaxVDjDO-o_sLEZADjCmgM4Y/edit#gid=261093125">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gcV2vTNPCwLI8mcLb0tZaxVDjDO-o_sLEZADjCmgM4Y/edit#gid=261093125</a>	Current AP 15	

## ii. Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators.

### Millennium Development Goals (MDG) era 2000-2015

In the year 2000, Sri Lanka joined 188 countries in signing the Millennium Declaration, which Committed nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and set out a series of time-bound targets with a deadline of 2015 that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The first Country Report on Millennium Development Goals, was released in 2005, created awareness on the MDGs and promoted dialogue among policy makers, within a short time after the Millennium Declaration in 2000 the second Country Report released in 2009, showed that Sri-Lanka was well on-track to achieve most of the MDG targets by 2015, at national level.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)		1990 or closest year (Base Year)	2006 or closest year	2012 or latest year	Target for Indicator (in 2015)*	Status of Indicator & Remarks
<b>Indicators for monitoring progress</b>						
<b>Indicators under Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>						
1.1	Proportion of population below National Poverty Line (%)	26.1 (1990/91)	15.2 (2006/07)	6.7 (2012/13)	13.1 (Half of Base Year value)	"Achieved"
1.2	Poverty gap ratio	5.6 (1990/91)	3.1 (2006/07)	1.2 (2012/13)	2.8 (Half of Base Year value)	"Achieved"
1.3	Share of poorest quintile in national consumption (%)	8.9 (1990/91)	7.1 (2006/07)	7.2 (2012/13)	No target	Need to improve Satisfactory Progress
1.4	Growth rate of GDP per person employed (15 years & above) (%)	-	4.2 (2006)	7.3 (2012)		Males 73%, Females 37% (low). Progressing well (Reduced to one fifth the value in 1990/91)
1.5	Employment-to-population ratio <sup>6</sup> (15 years & above) (%)	43.6 (1990)	53.4 (2006)	50.5 (2012)		Need to create more productive employment, in all regions
1.6	Proportion of employed people living below poverty line <sup>7</sup> (%)	31.1 (1990/91)	16.3 (2006/07)	5.8 (2012/13)		These 4 indicators were introduced in 2008 & no targets have been proposed
1.7	Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total Employment <sup>8</sup> (%)	43.0 (1990)	41.3 (2006)	40.8 (2012)		
1.8	Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age	NCHS/CDC/WHO Child Growth Std. <sup>9</sup> (%) 37.7 (1993)	26.9 (2006/07)	Not available	19.0 (Half of Base Year value)	"On Track"
		New WHO Child Growth Std. <sup>10</sup> (%) 29.7 (1993)	21.1 (2006/07)		14.9 (Half of Base Year value)	No data to monitor the progress after 2006/07
1.9	Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption <sup>11</sup> (%)	51.3 (1995/96)	50.7 (2006/07)	47.8 (2012/13)	25.6 (Half of Base Year value)	"Off Track" Needs Attention
	Proportion of Indicator 1.9, if 90% of the energy requirement is considered (%)	36.9 (1995/96)	-	33.8 (2012/13)		
	Proportion of Indicator 1.9, if 80% of the energy requirement is considered (%)	23.5 (1995/96)	-	21.3 (2012/13)		
	Proportion of Indicator 1.9, if 70% of the energy requirement is considered (%)	12.7 (1995/96)	-	11.2 (2012/13)		

1.1 Proportion of population below \$1.25 (PPP) per day, 1.2 Poverty gap ratio, 1.4 growth rate GDP –

Need improvement: gender equality and disparities in

1.8. Prevalence of underweight children under five of ages, nutritional consumption

1.9. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy

graduated from lower to middle income status, and reduced poverty from 15.2% in 2006/7 to 6.7% in 2012. However while there are pockets of high poverty in the North and East, encouragingly, the report shows that poverty rates fell in most Districts where data is available, between 2009/10 and 2012/13. Additionally, performance in areas such as school enrollment and he employment to population ratio, are also very much in line with other parts of the country.

## Sustainable Development Goals – Era of Agenda 2030

The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by world leaders in 2015, outline an ambitious global agenda for sustainable development. Its 17 goals and 169 targets are interconnected, and together they create a picture of what a sustainable world could look like in 2030.

As national governments mainstream the 2030 Agenda into planning and budgeting processes, they face the complex challenge of integrating the entire set of goals and targets in a way that stays true to the foundational idea of treating the agenda as an indivisible whole.

The poverty rate has dropped to 4.1% in 2016 and country is reaching towards the upper middle income status with a per capita GDP of USD 4,066 in 2017. Unemployment rate stood below 5% for last seven years. Free education and health policies have resulted in high life expectancy (75 years) and high youth literacy (98.7%) rates. UN has recognized Sri Lanka among “high human development” achieved countries.<sup>1</sup>

Over a period of time since 2015 Sri Lanka is well –poised to address the bottlenecks. Also the relevant ministries were developed key assessment, analysis documents in order sail the SDGs platform and transformation for agenda 2030.

- Sustainable Sri Lanka vision and strategic path Presidential task committee 2017
- Status of SDG indicators – Dept. of Census and Statistics (Dec 2017)
- A MAP supported by the UN (Jan 2018)
- Translations of global targets and indicators into national languages (March 2018)
- VNR at HLPF – (March 2018)
- Digital Platform initiation (2018)
- National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development (NPSSD) in Sri Lanka

National responsibility structures are:

a) National Sustainable Development Platform - entity formulate by the office of His excellences the President in 2015. The main objectives are;

- i. facilitating a regular stakeholder dialogue on the sustainable development pathways of the nation;
- ii. building stakeholder partnerships towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 SDGs;
- iii. creating awareness, knowledge building and engagement on sustainable development;
- iv. A National Sustainable Development Engagement Platform has been arranged to “Transform a Dialogue between Parliamentarians, Officials and Stakeholders on Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals”,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/srilanka>

## Legislation responsibilities – Parliament of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places people at the center of the development process. Parliamentarians have an opportunity, and a constitutional responsibility, to play a significant role in supporting and monitoring implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>2</sup>. Parliaments and other Stakeholders to design and deliver laws and programmes that meet the needs of the people, break down policy silos, uphold human rights, and leave no one behind.

Therefore, role of the Sri Lanka legislations the parliament is initiated the following activities for agenda 2030;

- i. Established Parliamentary Representatives should be included in any such high-level body, so that they can contribute their constituents' views and provide institutional support;
- ii. “Accelerating Growth with Social Inclusion” – the broader theme of the 2017 National Budget of Sri Lanka;
- iii. Establishment of a Parliamentary Select Committee on SDGs for agenda 2030 until 2030; The establishment of a Parliamentary Select Committee for Sustainable Development to provide political leadership for the implementation of the SDGs..
- iv. Localizing SDGs in Sri Lanka; collaborative effort with Dpt. Of censers and statistics; “Sustainable Development Goals Indicators compiled by DCS for Sri Lanka.”
- v. Clustering the Sustainable Development Goals; are focus on Sustainable Economic Growth, Health, Education and Better Services for All, Addressing Inequality; Ensuring Social Inclusion and Protection, Climate and Disaster Resilience, and Environmental Protection;
  - a) Cluster 1 : Economic Sustainability (Sustainable Economic Growth)
  - b) Cluster 2: Fundamental Needs (Health, Education and better services for all)
  - c) Cluster 3: Just and Fair (Addressing Inequality; Ensuring Social Inclusion and protection)
  - d) Cluster 4: Environment and Stability
- vi. Appointing and meeting Sub Committees based on clusters headed by the member of the parliament (MP).

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary\\_development/](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development/)

## **Ministry in charge of Sustainable Development**

The establishment of a Ministry in charge of Sustainable Development (2015) provides a for an integrated option towards coordinating the sustainable development needs and criteria of the country. The central mission of the sustainable development division of the ministry is coordinating policies, strategies, programmes, mechanisms and tools to address development challenges towards ensuring environmental, social and economic sustainability through an integrated approach, inter-ministerial/agency mechanisms, and broad stakeholder engagement.

### **Main Roles and Responsibilities:**

- i. To function as the central agency to undertake sustainable development responses and interventions including the facilitation of the formulation of necessary sustainable development policies, strategies, programmes, mechanisms and tools.
- ii. To liaise with sectoral agencies at national and sub-national levels for identifying priorities and developing mechanisms to implement national policies on sustainable development.
- iii. To facilitate Sustainable Development related research and distribution of research results to trigger policy reforms and actions.
- iv. To facilitate and coordinate national and international commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs including monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

### **Sustainable Development Act in 2017:**

The primary objects of this Act shall be to

- i. ensure that the National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development is prepared in accordance with section 11 of this Act and provide the legal framework for developing and implementing such National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development;
- ii. ensure an ecologically efficient use of natural, social and economic resources; to promote the integration and maintain the equipoise of environmental, social factors in the making of all decisions by government;

### **Sustainable Development Council**

The Council shall consist of the 100% members from government entities from central and sub-national. During the debate activist of Civil societies actively protest on selection of members due to lack of transparency, omitting most important representations such as Ministry of women and child protection, ministry of Justice etc. it also very prominent missing entity was representations of civil societies. After many discussions under the Act 4 (b) civil society was given a seat in the council in 2019 onwards. seat is comparison two scholars, 2 civil society members.

## **National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development (NPSSD) in Sri Lanka”.**

As per the section 10 of Sustainable Development Act No 19 of 2017, one main responsibility of the Sustainable Development Council is to formulate and implement a National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development (NPSSD) to achieve the sustainable development goals in Sri Lanka.

In the global context, a variety of progressive interventions have been made by several countries to incorporate the SDGs into national frameworks, policies and strategies and they have been able to demonstrate tangible actions in their progression towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The important facets of international lessons learnt that fortify the local endeavors include, among others:

- respect for the core principles of SDGs,
- mainstreaming SDGs through localization or domestication,
- institutional mechanisms for implementation,
- stakeholder consultation processes, advocacy & awareness raising,
- partnership developments,
- progress monitoring & evaluation, and
- Evidence-based & innovative approaches for implementation.

In this context, the lessons learnt and best practices at international level provide a very useful resource-base for the process and content design of the National P&S on SD in Sri Lanka. This NPSSD drafted under seven (07) guiding principles and 17 Policy goals of the National P&S on SD in line with SDGs, which represent a range of desired outcomes to be achieved through implementing the policy, particularly by embracing localizing and contextualizing the SDGs and providing guidance for action at all levels of governance (national, provincial and local authority levels)

## **National SDGs – Goals, Targets and Indicators - Goal 16 and Goal 17. Perception and challenges**

Country perspective on SD Goal 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions and Goal 17: partnership vital, challenging and complex.

In the era of SDGs in Sri Lanka and the good governance inclusive of accountability, transparency with “Right to Information” (RTI) culture has changes the people’s perception on the government is a welcoming outcome.

Evidence shows that SDGs achievement on gender equality lenses, women’s empowerment and women’s full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are vital to achieve sustainable development and significantly enhance economic growth and productivity. Overall, this was divided into four (04) criteria’s in terms of governance perception and challenges:

- *First would* be investment in transformation of technology: Keeping track of fast moving technology vs. human resources, right infrastructure investments and in same phase developing human resources. Most challenging part will changing the mind set to embrace technology as part of the culture which is very evidently overtaken by the human skills and knowledge.
- *Secondly* the Globalization Economy: Can any given country stand alone in the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century? Either by socially, financially, economically and governing? For country like Sri Lanka what is the purpose of globalization from the perspective of the developed countries?
- *Thirdly* universal principles, such as those of human rights and environmental sustainability,

Under this ministry it is very evident that launched two projects and two initiation will lasting peace and human rights which formulated in 2015.

- Office for National Unity and Reconciliation:
  - Office of missing persons: Under the ministry in 2017 following policies and action plan initiated
  - National Reconciliation Action Plan
  - Facilitating Initiatives for Social Cohesion and Transformation (GIZ/FLICT)
  - The Strengthening Enforcement of Law, Access to Justice and Social Integration – (SELAJSE)
- Fourthly embracing MDG's and transformation to SDG's. Transformation from MDG to SDGs, 15 years after world leaders committed to a new global partnership to reduce poverty, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have made a profound difference and made room for further improvement in whole world through Global Goals.

Policy on Goal 16 following strategies: <sup>3</sup>

- i. Align national policies and regulations with international instruments to country context, in order to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime;
- ii. Strengthen rule of law and legislation system to promote transparency and accountability, thereby ensuring free of corruption and bribery in all their forms, while assuring justice for all;
- iii. Eliminate serious and adverse impact of corruption and bribery in all areas by ensuring good governance;

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<sup>3</sup> [https://issuu.com/uclcgglu/docs/plnote\\_durban-joburg\\_srilanka\\_4-10](https://issuu.com/uclcgglu/docs/plnote_durban-joburg_srilanka_4-10) (some adopted from this references)

- iv. Strengthen the availability of and accessibility to information and institution accordance with national legislation (e.g. Right to Information Act) and international agreements in all levels governance, and private sector;
- v. Strengthen the role of the state, civil society and other stakeholders in line with the national strategy that prioritizes locally owned and sustainable development assistance based on collaborative partnerships in safe guarding human rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), conflict mitigation & transformation, resolution and reconciliation, in order to ensure peace harmony.
- vi. Ensure a peaceful, resilient and secure cyber space in Sri Lanka this below table describe the based on the policy targets how national strategies drafted on specific action and indicators. (Some remain on global indicators some strategies with national and global too).

Mapping interactions between SDG 16 Targets for policy integration and strategies **Score Card**

Zero Improvement	Some what	improved	Lack of strategy
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Policy Targets	Specific Strategies – National proposal and commitments – 2015 -2019	Score card 2019	Score card 2020
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates.	i. Strengthen, maintain and enforce law and order to suppress and eliminate all forms of violence and criminal activities including ragging, which threaten the life and security of the people.	Somewhat controlling and strategy has been placed in the University systems, however lack of long term planning has created gaps in the process.	
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.	i. Strengthen laws on the protection of minors to crack down on illegal and criminal activities against children, such as child labor, forced labor and child trafficking. ii. Identify the gaps and introduce new rule of law to assure free from all kind of violence (physical, mentally and psychological). iii. Strengthen the laws to prevent secondary victimization, and empower civil societies on to assure the safety network for children. iv. Strengthen the litigation process and expedite the procedures in courts to end all kind of violence for children. v. Educate parents/ guardians on child rights and child protection	i. Lack of strategy and initiative from law and order i.e. ii. Accumulating cases at courts- yearly approximately 1000 to 2000 per year . iii. Financial constrain in the legal systems to accommodate victims cases iv. Politicization integrated in the systems some of the issues	
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.	i. Introduce judicial reforms to establish a judicial system that is just, effective, and authoritative at all times. ii. Improve the judicial protection of rights and the judicial supervision	Systems in place under the constitutional rights. All vacancies fulfill in the appointments of judges. 20 <sup>th</sup> Amendment allow	

	<p>over government power.</p> <p>iii. Improve efficiency of the rule of law in terms of social governance.</p>	<p>appointment of more judges to the Supreme court</p>	
<p>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.</p>	<p>i. Strengthen international cooperation on the transfer of sentenced persons, signing of treaties on the transfer of sentenced persons, and strengthen cooperation with relevant countries on crackdown on transnational crimes.</p> <p>ii. Introduce more stringent punishments for organized crimes irrespective of the value of assets stolen in order to eliminate such crimes.</p> <p>iii. Intensify the efforts to pursue fugitives and recover stolen assets.</p> <p>iv. Improve supporting regulations and mechanisms.</p>		
<p>16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.</p>	<p>i. Strengthen the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption.</p> <p>ii. Implement programmes aimed at preventing bribery and corruption including National Action Plan for Combating Bribery and Corruption 2019-2023.</p> <p>iii. Amend the law in line with United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).</p> <p>iv. Resolutely correct improper conduct that harms the interests of the general public, and punish corruption without fail.</p> <p>v. Maintain the pressure and strengthening accountability and enforcement.</p> <p>vi. Strengthen the checks and balances and oversight on the exercise of power, improve inspection tours and on-the-site supervision, and improve oversight.</p> <p>vii. Promulgate laws to enable the introduction of an e-technology system to receive public complaints anonymously and promote whistle blowing in the main public sector institutions that would become a strong deterrent to corruption and bribery in public life.</p>	<p>Somewhat , yet mix of zero improvement in all a levels</p>	
<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.</p>	<p>i. Develop long term public service delivery strategies for each government organizations identifying medium term and long-term targets.</p> <p>ii. Publish National Procurement Guidelines to enable an e-Procurement at both national and local level that will also help curb bribery and corruption.</p> <p>iii. Enact standalone law to protect</p>		<p>Lack of transparency , zero in accountability</p>

	whistleblowers that adheres international standards. iv. Enact laws on public records management through the National Archives Law as further strengthened by the Right to Information (RTI) Act.		
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.	i. Make stakeholder engagement including private sector and civil society an essential component of development planning at all levels. ii. Set up a people-centric board at every Grama Sewa division under the purview of each village's religious leaders, educated and knowledgeable seniors, youth leaders and women representatives, who will actively get involved with the government's programme.		
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.	i. Explore and exploit opportunities to collaborate and involved with the institutions of global governance.		Based on the political agenda. It has lack of strategy too.
16.9 By 2020, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	Enhance the institutional mechanism and infrastructure for birth registration and for providing legal identity through registration of persons		
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	i. Ensure compliance with proactive disclosure mechanisms outlined in the RTI Act. ii. Create an enabling environment for the freedom of expression. iii. Strengthen the commitment of the government to the Open Government Partnership by sharing information and data among state and non-state sector stakeholders as appropriate. iv. Enact legislation to prevent all forms of cybercrimes and to protect personal data in electronic and non-electronic formats.		So far systems are in place. however with reason disclose that government is hopefully. Sri Lanka's defence ministry has said it is brining law to control social media and a new agency will be set up to combat cybercrimes, on national security grounds.  "The new legal framework will be introduced under the National Cyber Security Strategy, which will be formulated soon to address emerging cybercrimes issues that pose a threat to the national security," the defense ministry said in a statement
16. a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.	i. Strengthen police, coast guard, SLCERT and other relevant agencies with increased training and resources.. ii. Strengthen the intelligence agencies of the armed forces and the police. iii. Endow the National Chief of Intelligence with adequate powers to carry out the responsibilities and powers for coordination among all		Lack of unknown strategical approach has failing continuity

	<p>the agencies.</p> <p>iv. Strengthen working links with foreign intelligence agencies.</p> <p>v. Provide intelligence personnel with modern training, both locally and abroad.</p> <p>vi. Equip intelligence personnel to use modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and enable them to perform their duties fearlessly and with dignity, without any political interference.</p>		
<p>16.b Promote and enforce nondiscriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.</p>	<p>i. Conduct policy and legislation review to identify gaps for promoting and enforcing nondiscriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development, and implement necessary interventions to improve the status.</p>		<p>Lack of strategical approach existing systems has failing continuity</p>

## **Key Bottlenecks faced by the country –SDG implementations process.**

1. Lack of awareness: Primary as whole lack of awareness demonstrated by the all parties. Time to time certain entities performed in central government level, but key ministries were engaging with ongoing implementing of national priorities which was line with MDG as well too. Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Educations (MOE), Ministry of Public Administrations (MOPA) and Ministry of Finance (MOF) are few ministries were performed well in certain global indicators.
2. Secondly Coordination: more dispersed responsibilities, mandates, vertical structures spread cross the many central government entities. Lack of collaborative effort among the PPP, private sectors and other institutions;
3. Civil society vs. government: Most civil society organizations were engaged one to one basis with their respective field of work. E.g. women and Gender only with Ministry designated;
4. Individualistic approach by most government sources and entities, due to complex in the linkage.
5. Guidelines, standards, implementations strategies –Many exit but need to take stock to assess the working status;
6. Data deficits are concern and disaggregation’s challenges in data collection regional and national wise.

## **SDGs monitoring and Evaluation frame work**

Even as far back as 1979, had urged for systems of evaluation and a systematic policy for measuring the success of projects implemented at the time. National Evaluation Policy was approved by the Cabinet members on 26 June 2018 as a symbol of country’s heading for a sustainable development era.

Policy has clearly indicates, evaluations should examine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and gender-responsiveness of policy, program or project initiatives at ex-ante, during and post outcome and impact. Taking SDG 17 into account all evaluation methodology should focus on the financial, economic, social, environmental, technical, policy, institutional and sustainability aspects as may be relevant. Cross-sectoral issues such as gender equality, social equity and the environment should be assessed in all evaluations.

In order archive the successful ear of sustainable development goals fulfilling agenda 2030 Department of project management and monitoring which is act as focal entity’s to the government monitoring systems develop 2 main primary objectives to suits overall, a) Demonstrate key partner to achieve development effectiveness and b) function as the National Focal Point for monitoring and evaluation of all development policies, programmes and projects of Government, to ensure results.

## Civil Society engagement SDG s – Activism and Monitoring

Engagement and Constrains: Engagement of Sri Lankan civil society: The main categories of CSO operating in Sri Lanka are a) INGOs involved in humanitarian and post-conflict activities, b) INGOs and domestic CSOs involved in advocacy, c) Domestic NGOs involved with poverty alleviation in conjunction with government programs, d) Local NGOs and CBOs involved in grassroots development. Sri Lanka Sustainable Development Act, No. 19 of 2017 clearly omitted the civil society engagements and collaborations.

Taking the consideration to the challenges and constrains created by the government stakeholders most civil societies were planned the as per the article 14 of the Act. (b) The monitoring mechanisms and progress review processes on Sustainable Development Strategy implementation were conducted by preparing the civil partners report along with national VNR in 2018; such as following reports were presented to the county as follows are

- i. National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change Impacts in Sri Lanka: 2016 – 2025 – collaborative report from Government and Civil Societies <sup>4</sup>
- ii. National Volunteer Peoples Report -2018<sup>5</sup>
- iii. Policy, SDGs, and fighting for corruption for the people – Transparency international of Sri Lanka 2018
- iv. Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals- 2018/2018<sup>6</sup>
- v. Sri Lanka 2019 – Amnesty international <sup>7</sup>
- vi. Also under the consortium of agencies of Non-Governmental organizations secure the rights of the people as largely monitoring the progress of Human Rights.

UNESCAPE collaboration of developing and national volunteer review table firmly and pre requisition was the complete engagement of civil societies in to the process. In 2018 a) Stakeholder Engagement Plan was established and developed. Established platforms in which stakeholders from government, civil society, academia and the private sector can engage on the implementation of the SDGs. b) This has included preparing the VNR report, c) Regional - Sub-national participation in n workshops to contribute to the VNR and an online platform was also used for VNR engagement.

## Presidential Address in August 2020

Speech made by the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the Inaugural meeting of the Ninth Parliament of Sri Lanka, says that the two-thirds majority in the legislature is indeed a mandate for constitutional change, but the winner ought to decide whether the proposed change would bring about reform or impairment; whether it would strengthen democratic institutions or weaken

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<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Documents%20NAP/National%20Reports/National%20Adaptation%20Plan%20of%20Sri%20Lanka.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://action4sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SRI-LANKA-Voluntary-Peoples-Review-on-the-SDGs-to-HLPF-2018.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://southernvoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/SV-OP-41.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/sri-lanka/report-sri-lanka/>

them. His speech clearly indicates that Sri Lanka indeed needed institutionalization changes and sustainable future. This is brief analysis did with selective SDGs goals targets. Nevertheless SDG 5, 10, SDG 16 .1 to 16.3 were either oversight or not taking into the inaugural address.<sup>8</sup>

Highlights of the speech and integration SDG 16 are:

*Target 16.4, by 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime;*

“As I have pledged, the launch of the methodical mechanism to protect the people against social evils such as the activities of the underworld and the drug menace that have been a hindrance to the day-to-day lives of the people has also increased the confidence of the public.”

*Target 16.5 substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms*

“In the National Policy Framework ‘Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor’, we promised the people that we would eradicate waste and corruption. This is a core responsibility of all of us. We will take steps to completely eradicate waste and corruption in all the Ministries and institutions. In future I will not hesitate to enforce the law against those who are involved in fraud and corrupt actions, irrespective of the status of any such perpetrators.”

*Target 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*

“It is equally important to precisely interpret the mandate given by the people. We respect the trust that the people have placed in me and the Prime Minister and the newly elected people’s representatives. We have a clear understanding of the expectations with which the people gave such a powerful mandate to the government. We will leave no room for such expectations to be dashed for any reason. It should always be remembered that the prime responsibility of a people’s representative is to serve the public. We will be sensitive to fulfilling the needs of the people, keeping in mind that all these positions are responsibilities and not privileges.”

*Target 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*

“An unstable Parliament that cannot take firm decisions and succumbs to extremist influences very often is not suitable for a country. While introducing a new constitution, it is essential to make changes to the current electoral system. While retaining the salutary aspects of the proportional representation system, these changes will be made to ensure stability of the Parliament and people’s direct representation.”

*Target 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.*

“In order to overcome both local and global challenges and revive the economy, we will have to adopt new ways of thinking. Out of the box thinking is required in order to meet the economic challenges. This time, the ministries have been formed with this thought in mind.”

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<sup>8</sup> Adaptation from the speech – selectively - SDG 16

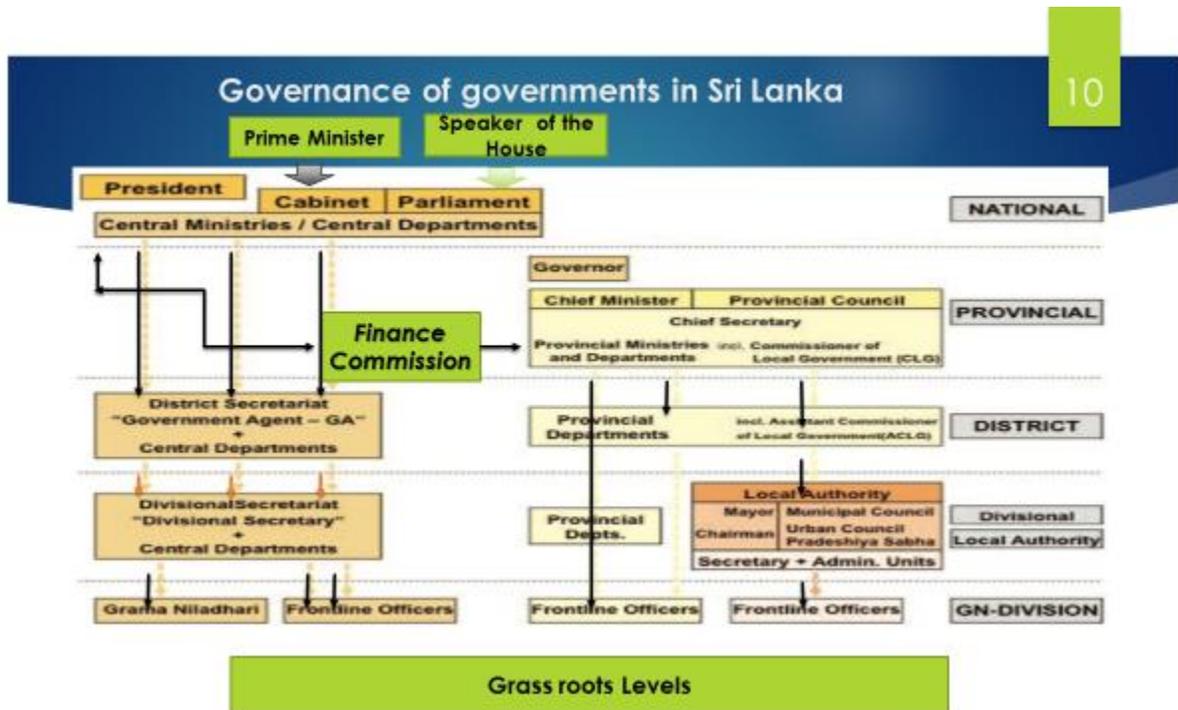
*Target 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.*

“When we took over the government, the confidence of the people in the security of the country had been severely dented due to the Easter Sunday attacks that occurred in 2019. Establishing firmly that the prime policy of our Government is national security, we have restructured the security apparatus and intelligence services, eliminating the fears of the people thereby restoring the security of the country. We have re-created an environment where any citizen can live freely without any fear for the safety of themselves and their families.”

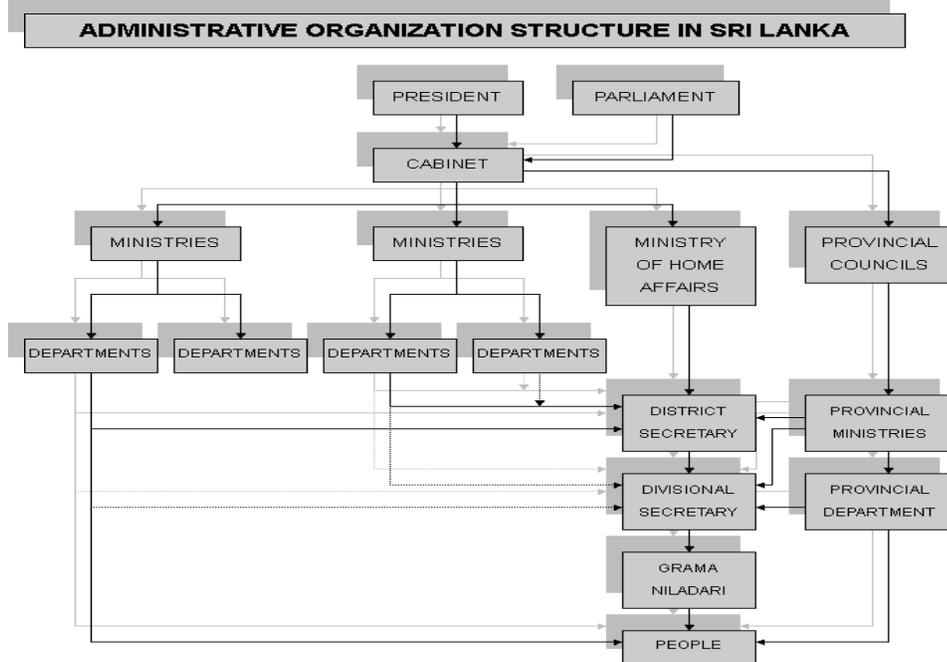
*Target 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.*

“While ensuring priority for Buddhism, it is now clear to the people that freedom of any citizen to practice the religion of his or her choice is better secured.

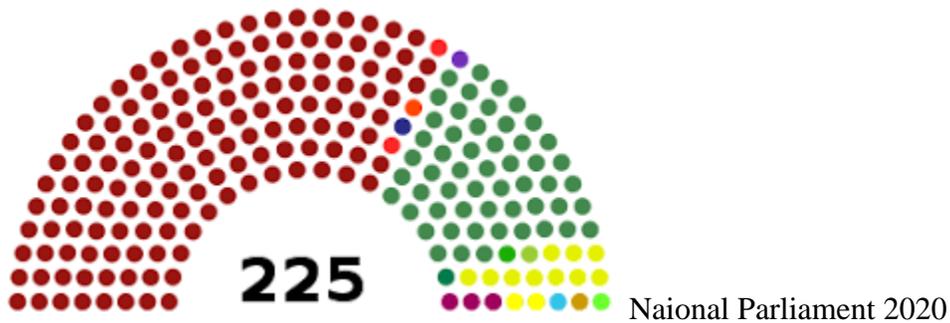
1) Executive body (Government structure)



## General Administrative hierarchy of Sri Lanka



## 2) Legislative body (national and local parliament)



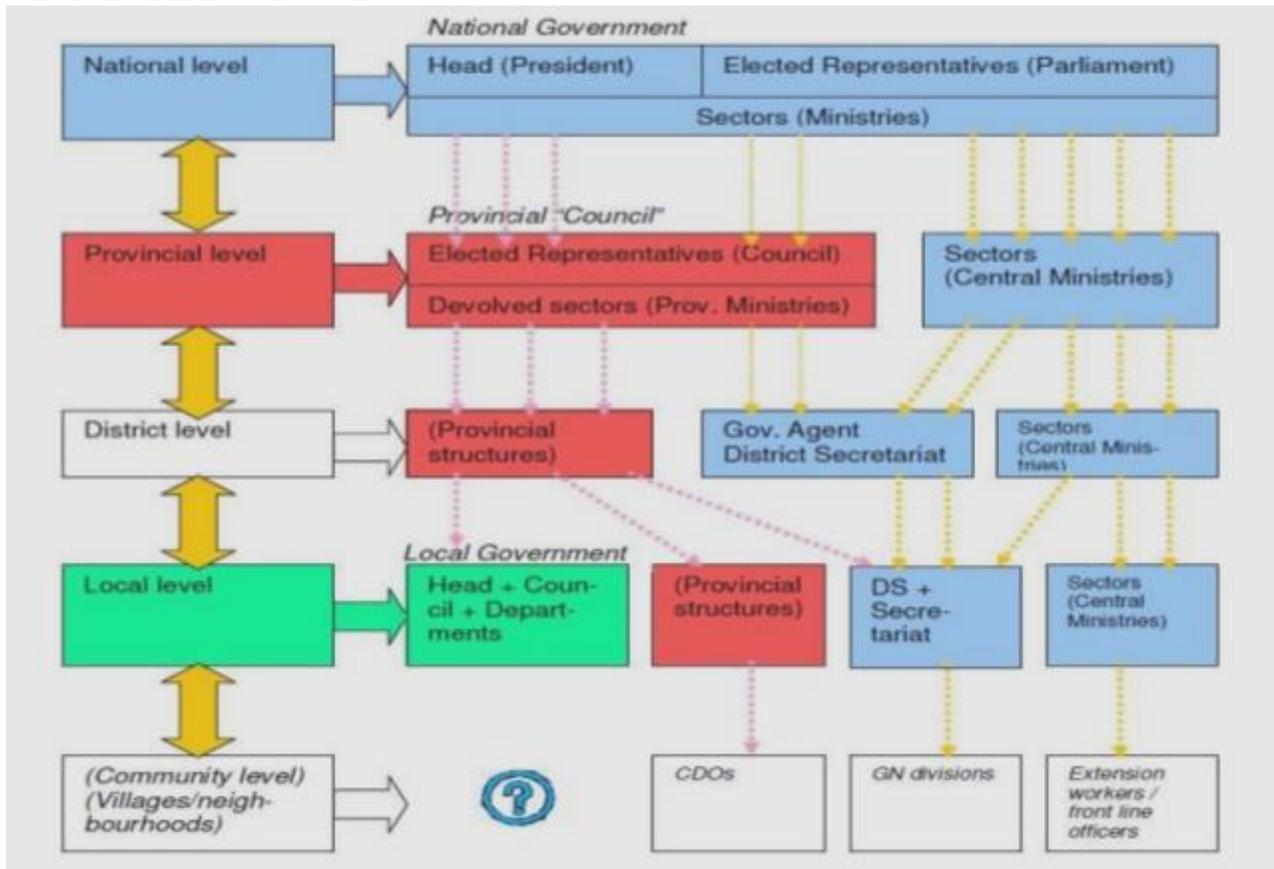
Democratically Elected Members - 172

National List - 53

Term – 4 ½ years

### 3) Provincial Administrative Structure

#### Level of State in Sri Lanka



No of Provinces : 9

No of Elected Members – 393

No of ministy per Council- 5

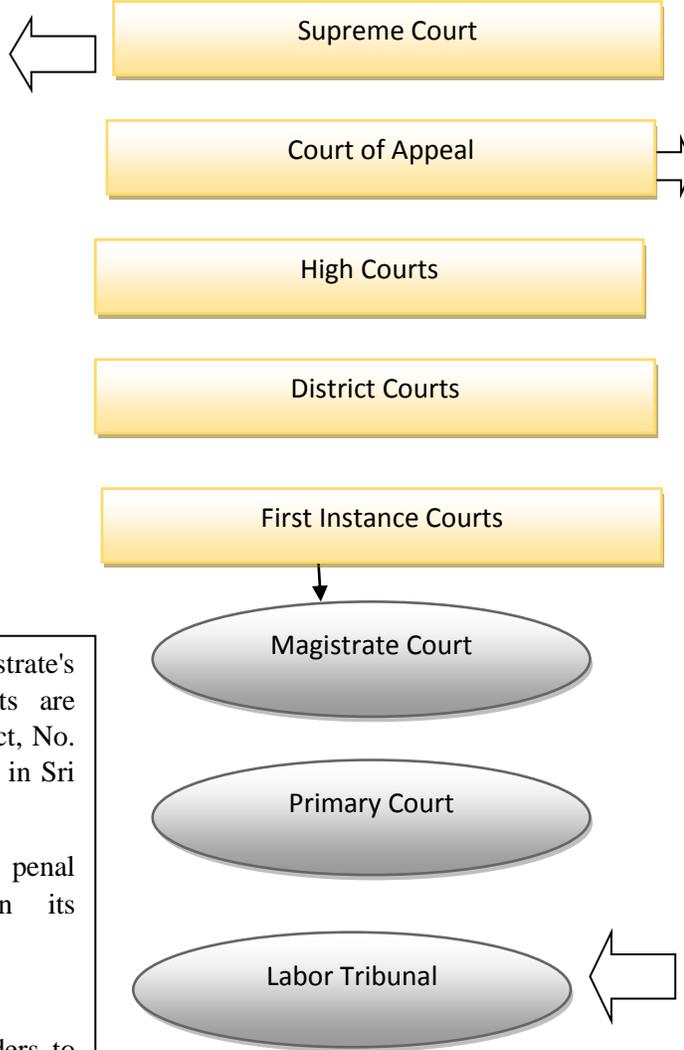
Term 4 ½ years

### 4) Judiciary Body:

The judicial system of Sri Lanka is the system of courts which interprets and applies the law in Sri Lanka. The system is set out according to the constitution which also defines the courts as independent institutions. All the Sri Lankan courts are presided over by professional judges. It is the president of the country who appoints the judge of the Supreme Court with the nomination of the parliamentary council.

## Hierarchy of courts

**Article 132 of the Constitution** - The several jurisdictions of the Supreme Court is ordinarily exercised in Colombo unless the Chief Justice otherwise directs and, subject to the provisions of the Constitution, is ordinarily exercised at all times by a Bench of at least three Judges ; the Chief Justice may, on his own motion or at the request of two or more Judges hearing any matter or on the application of a party , if the question involved is in the opinion of the Chief Justice one of general and public importance, direct that an appeal, proceeding or matter be heard by a Bench comprising five or more Judges.



An act to provide for the a and constitution of the court of appeal, for defining the jurisdiction of the court, for the abolition of appeals to her majesty in council, and for all matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Originally known as police magistrate's courts, current magistrate's courts are established under the Judicature Act, No. 2 of 1978 to each judicial division in Sri Lanka. It has jurisdiction of;

- Criminal cases filed under the penal code and other laws within its jurisdiction.
- First mortem examinations.
- Post mortem examinations.
- Issue of Warrants of Judicial orders to arrest and produce suspected persons.
- Issue of search warrants.
- Ordering persons to enter into bonds of good conduct and preventive jurisdiction on public nuisance.

Labour Tribunals are tribunals in Sri Lanka formed under the Industrial Disputes Act No.62 of 1957, to handle labour disputes and termination of employment

## 5) Election Body

In the year 1931, with the proposals of the Donoughmore Commission<sup>9</sup>. The right of all qualified citizens, irrespective of their race, religion, language, ethnicity, caste, education, ownership of wealth, birth, the place of birth, gender or any other difference, to participate in the administration of the country and / or to elect their representatives.

All citizens of Sri Lanka who have completed 21 years of age were granted universal franchise in the year 1931, unless they were subject to any special disqualification. The age of right to cast vote was lowered from 21 years to 18, by the Elections Amendment Act No, 11 of 1959. Universal franchise has been a right constitutionally substantiated by the Republic Constitution of 1972 and the Constitution of 1978. The Article 3 of the constitution of 1978 states that sovereignty is in the people and is inalienable.

**Process the elections conducted in Sri Lanka:** Periods of elections are given in relevant Acts. The period of election is from the date of calling for nominations, through determining on the objections, the poll, up to the declaration of results after counting of votes.

1978 it is the proportional representation system. Under the proportional electoral system the number of members for the district is elected according to the number of votes received in the district by respective parties and independent groups. It is essential that, the name of the voter is listed in the electoral register.

The sole authority to conduct elections is the Election Commission. Commissioner of Election was empowered to exercise this authority before the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

The position of the Commissioner of Elections was placed equal to the Auditor General who could function independently, free from any intervention of the government, and by the Ceylon Parliamentary Elections Amendment Act No 8 of 1964 the Commissioner's independent position was affirmed by the amendment that the Commissioner could not be removed from the post without two third majority of the House.

The independence of the Election Commission appointed under the 19th Amendment is equally secured and the Amendment has gone even further. The Election Commission is responsible to the Parliament in regard to its responsibility in conducting elections and Parliament, in turn, is responsible to the people.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donoughmore\\_Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donoughmore_Commission)

## 6) Anti-corruption agency

### A.6.1 Sri Lanka Bribery Commission.

Commission Act 19 of 1994 to provide the establishment of a permanent Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption This Act may be cited as the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption Act, No. 19, of 1994, and shall come into operation on such date as the Minister may appoint, by Order published in the Gazette.

The Commission shall consist of three members, two of whom shall be retired Judges of the Supreme Court or of the Court of Appeal and one of whom shall be a person with wide experience relating to the investigation of crime and law enforcement.

The members of the Commission shall be appointed by the President, on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council: Provided however, that during the period commencing on the appointed date and ending on the date on which the Constitutional Council is established, members of the Commission shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister in consultation with the Speaker.<sup>10</sup>

Bribery Act. chapter 26 legislative enactments: This Act may be cited as the Bribery Act.

- 1) Every provision of this Act which may be in conflict or inconsistent with anything in the Ceylon (Constitution) Order in Council, 1946,\* shall for all purposes and in all respects be as valid and effectual as though that provision were in an Act for the amendment of that Order in Council enacted by Parliament after compliance with the requirement imposed by the proviso of subsection (4) of section 29 of that Order in Council.
- 2) Where the provisions of this Act are in conflict or are inconsistent with any other written law, this Act shall prevail.

## 7) National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka-HRCSL- Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

To give force to the commitment of Sri Lanka as a member of the United Nations in protecting human rights, and to perform the duties and obligations imposed on Sri Lanka by various international treaties at international level; as well as to maintain the standards set out under the Paris Principles in 1996 the Government of Sri Lanka formulate. Act No. 21 of 1996 to establish the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [https://www.ciaboc.gov.lk/images/Publications/Commission\\_Act\\_english.pdf](https://www.ciaboc.gov.lk/images/Publications/Commission_Act_english.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.hrsl.lk/home/>

## 8) Gender Equality Commission

1978 Women's Bureau in Sri Lanka was 1st established under the Ministry of Plan Implementation thereafter in 1997 government of Sri Lanka established Ministry of Women affairs as separate entity. Establishments has formulate and made structural and ministerial changes time to time to accommodate needs of women and child protection, equality.

Chronology of the establishment - History of the Ministry

Year	Ministry	Commissions/Bureau on women
1978	Women's Bureau in Sri Lanka was 1st established under the Ministry of Plan Implementation	Women's Bureau
1983	Women's Bureau in Sri Lanka was re-established under the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Teaching Hospital	Women's Bureau
1997	Ministry of Women's Affairs. (Separate Ministry)	National Women Commission
2004	Ministry of Women Empowerment and Social Welfare	Women's Bureau
2006	Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment	
2010	Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs	
2015	Ministry of Women's Affairs changes to Ministry of Women and Child Affairs	Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to address Sexual and Gender - Based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka 2016 - 2020
2018	Ministry of Women & Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development	-National Committee on Women -Women Bureau of Sri Lanka
2019	Ministry of Women & Child Affairs and Social Security	

## Significant steps towards equality - Score Card – Specific

Zero Improvement	Some what	improved	Lack of strategy
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Action	Commitments	Yet to address -2019	2020/2021 (Jan)
Equal Pay	<p>All government sector employees category as under the term of SLAS (Sri Lanka Administrative Services grading class system. SLAS introduced four grades, such as: Special Grade offices (present cadre is 200), Class I officers (present cadre is 507) Class II officers (present cadre is 639), Class III officers (present cadre is 1059).</p> <p>Every officer (Any gender) need to be seated a government examination to obtain and promote to his/hers next grade. Salaries are equal also any allowances were equal according to your grade not according to your gender identity.</p>	Noticeably Lack of opportunities for recruitment of People with special needy, disable community in the government sectors	
		Equal pay based on grades and class	
		Need improvement on recruitment in sub-national levels and provincial governance	
	<p>Every officer (Any gender) need to be seated a government examination to obtain and promote to his/hers next grade. Salaries are equal also any allowances were equal according to your grade not according to your gender identity.</p>		<p>Militarization of public officials has been visibly implementing in government offices which as risking the government civil services in national and provincial levels as well as some of the athourites.</p>
	<p>Private Sector, – based on company requirements and strategies embedded in their administrative planning.</p>	<p>Somewhat addressed in some organizations Inequality very much in almost all levels.</p>	<p>Due to covid 19 most companies has offeres VRS (Volunteer retwirment services and ironically most women have applied to the scheme.</p>
	<p>Agriculture Sector –more workers are daily paid, some are seasonal labor. Work</p>	<p>Labor rates: per day Suburb: male \$ 5-8 female \$ 3-5</p>	

		Urban: Male 10-12 Female: Female \$5-8	
	Manufacturing Sector – More workers on daily wages and seasonal/based on Orders labor work. 13 Zones in Island wide • 134956 Employees • 266 Enterprises • 70 % are female workers • Majority of them are migrants from far villages	Gender inequality Female labor – 70% Male - 30% Visible absenteeism from special needy personals. Yet more male workers wages are higher than female in terms of the technical capacity	
Equal Appointment Ministerial heads	Elected Country President has constitutional right on appointment of Ministerial Heads	Appointment of most powerful ministries were dominated by the male officials than female. Lack of strategies were applied on these positions. Presently most ministries were headed by ex-military officials	

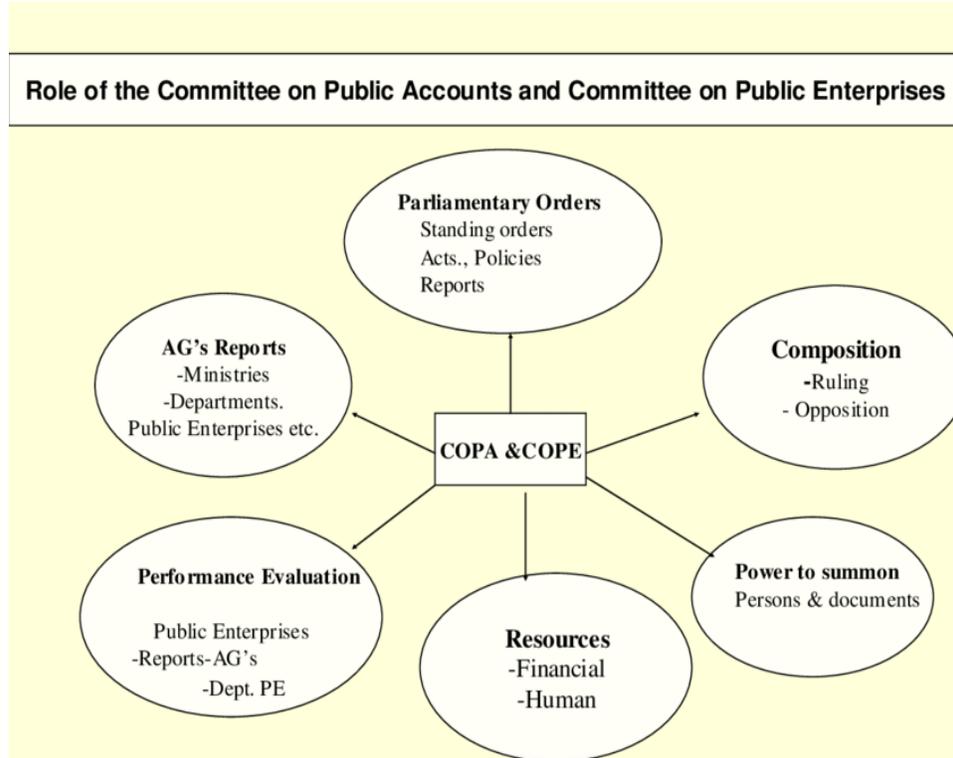
## 9) Oversight Institution

Sri Lanka, as a democratically elected government, exercises oversight function in the financial performance of public institutions through the legislations. This Oversight Plan includes areas in which the Committee and its sub Committees expect to conduct oversight during this Parliament. The Committee will consult, as appropriate with other Committees of Parliament that may share jurisdiction on any of the subjects listed.

<sup>12</sup>As per the resolution this Oversight Plan contains initiatives to be undertaken in order to determine whether laws, projects and programmes addressing subjects within the jurisdiction of the Committee are being implemented and carried out in accordance with the intent of Parliament and whether they should be continued, curtailed or eliminated.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.parliament.lk/files/committees/soc/oversight-plan-8th-parliament-en.pdf>

## Role of the Committee on Public Accounts and Committee on Public Enterprises



### A.9.1 Notable general Action

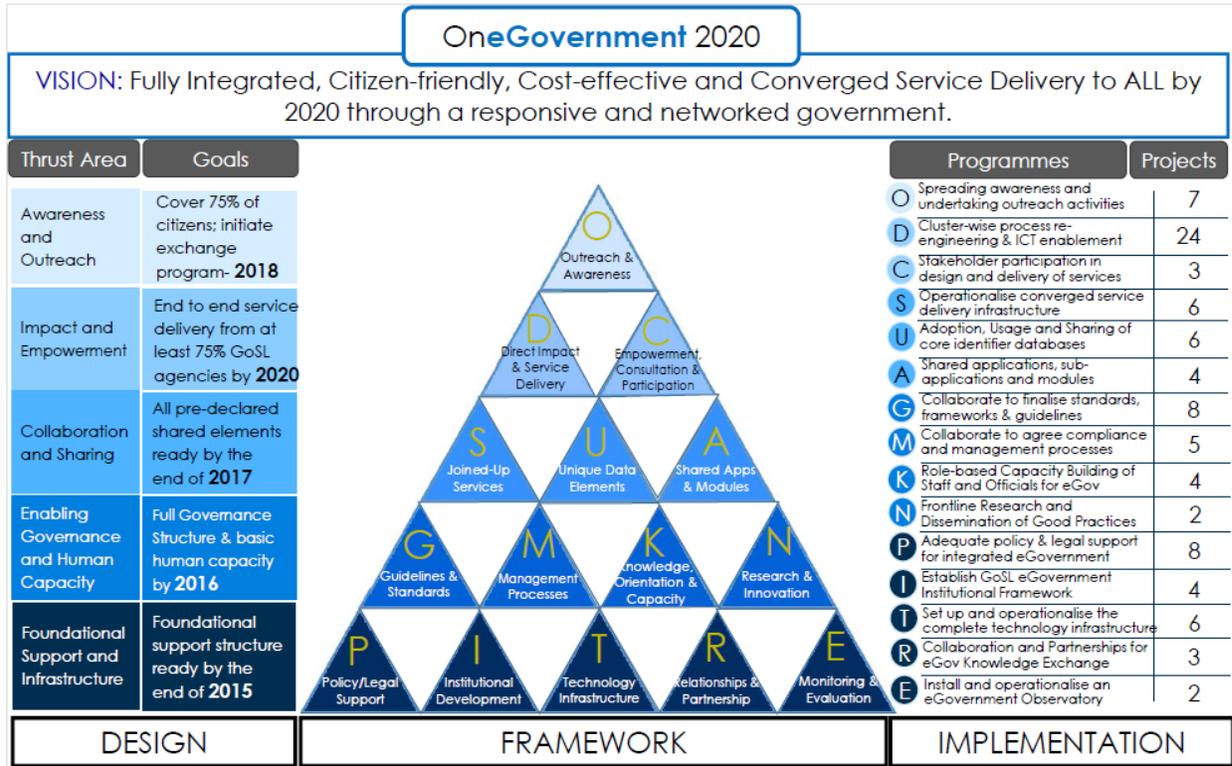
The Committee will monitor the functions (mentioned in the Column II) carried out by the Minister and seek to identify the challenges faced in the discharge of these functions. The Committee will provide recommendations to ensure that the Ministry exercise the functions conferred upon them in accordance with the Article 43(1) and 44(2) of the Constitution.

## 10) Public Institution on Information and Communications

Two nearly coterminous events creating the legal, policy, institutional and strategic background necessary for the rapid development of information technology in Sri Lanka and the Government of Sri Lanka's "e-Sri Lanka" initiative, have decisively determined the central role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as an instrument of national development in this island nation. In particular, the objective is to use ICT to foster social integration, peace, economic growth and poverty reduction. A key anticipated outcome is a more effective, citizen-centered, and transparent government through ICT-enabled governance, or eGovernment. Government Information Center.

GoSL's unified eGovernment strategy envisions a "Fully Integrated, Citizen friendly, Cost-effective and Converged Service Delivery to ALL by 2020 through a responsive and networked government" also referred to as "OneGovernment 2020".

OneGovernment 2020



## A. State of Democracy and Civic Space

### A.1 Voluntary Social Service Organizations Act. (Registration and Supervision)

In February 2018, the government published a draft amendment to the VSSO Act without properly consulting civil society and the public. The draft amendment would expand the types of organizations that fall under the Act's purview to include smaller organizations and informal movements. It also broadens the NGO Secretariat's powers over all CSOs. Following concerns expressed by prominent civil society actors that the proposed amendment would severely restrict CSOs, the government withdrew the bill. A committee including civil society members was appointed to draft another amendment and present it to the government. CSOs have also expressed concern over the proposed Counter Terrorism Act (CTA), in particular the potential for the law to be used to impose arbitrary restrictions—through proscription orders—on

organizations acting in a manner deemed “prejudicial to national security.” The proscription orders can prohibit organizations from entering into contracts, using bank accounts, or lobbying and canvassing. They can be recommended by the Inspector General of Police or requested by any foreign country. In October 2018, several petitions were filed in the Supreme Court against the proposed CTA. In November, the Supreme Court ruled that certain clauses were inconsistent with the Constitution and would need to be amended<sup>13</sup>.

The change of political administration with the change of the President (November 2019) and Parliament (August 2020) resulted in a change of attitude and policy on civil society. A few weeks after being sworn in as President, Hon. G. Rajapaksha, made some explicit remarks about his displeasure on the problematic and undesirable role played by NGOs: Sri Lanka's new government will not succumb to pressures from non-governmental organizations, NGOs cannot do what they want and the situation needs to be changed and "I am not acting in the interests of the NGOs" (Times of India 2019)<sup>14</sup>. The NGO Secretariat, that oversaw the work on civil society, was brought back under the Ministry of Defense which comes under the purview of the President as the Minister of Defense. The new administration of the NGO Secretariat had informed that the government will bring a new law to regulate the work of NGOs. The new law is believed to be introducing stringent measures on NGOs with stricter rules and regulations and close supervision as well as control of content and finances.

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<sup>13</sup> Verite (2019)

<sup>14</sup> Times of India. 2019. Lankan government not to succumb to pressures from NGOs.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/lankan-govt-not-to-succumb-to-pressures-from-ngos-president-gotabaya-rajapaksa/articleshow/72224484.cms>. Accessed on 5th February 2020

## A.1.1 Post-lock down trends on democracy, governance and human rights

### Run-up to the General Elections<sup>15</sup>

Following the end of the curfew in end May 2020, and the gradual control of the spread of the virus at both from import and community levels, the country crept back normalcy. However, by this time the economy has suffered a great deal with many key revenue channels such as remittances from migrant workers, apparel exports and tourism have suffered a great back during the months from March to May. The much awaited general elections were held on 5<sup>th</sup> August. Safety measures were used on the election day itself. However, there were many instances where these measures were not observed during the run-up to the elections. Social media was used extensively however, door-to-door canvassing as well as mass meetings were also held. The elections were held in a peaceful manner. There were no significant reports of elections not being free and fair. The post-election violence, a common occurrence, in Sri Lanka, was also not reported.

Election Commission assured voters with confidence that the polling station would be “the safest place in Sri Lanka” and appealed voters to take part in the elections. The Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medical Services, in collaboration with the Election Commission, issued the “Health guidelines for conducting the Elections amidst the COVID-19 outbreak” on 3 June 2020. Several groups, including Election Commission, expressed concern<sup>25</sup> over the non-issuance of a gazette containing the health guidelines which prevented health officials from carrying out their duties. President of the Public Health Inspector’s Union of Sri Lanka, said people could challenge their arrests and mandatory quarantine process in court as the health guidelines on COVID-19 were not legally binding. The health guidelines were gazette on 17 July 2020, after calls for it to be gazette and a few weeks prior to the rescheduled election date of 5 August 2020 when the campaign period and preparations for Election Day had already commenced. The Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) raised concerns<sup>30</sup> about the gazette health guidelines called the “Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (Elections) Regulations No. 1 of 2020”, a two-page document containing more lenient limits on campaigning, polling station and other settings. The gazette health guidelines focused on four areas: campaign meetings, canvassing, candidates’ election offices, and polling stations, counting centers and Election Commission offices.

The Election Commission of Sri Lanka conducted a series of mock polls to test the health guidelines for the election. The mock polls allowed the Election Commission to identify the best approaches to the implementation of the health guidelines and see the preparedness of voters during the pandemic. Around 8,000 health services officers were deployed on Election Day. This

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<sup>15</sup> This section is largely drawn from the findings from: ANFREL (2020) The 2020 Sri Lankan Parliamentary Elections: Defending Democracy Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic. ANFREL International Election Assessment Report. Bangkok: ANFREL. <https://anfrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Sri-Lanka-Report-2020-FINAL-ol.pdf>

was a novel feature for elections as we as health services sector to deploy officers for duty to provide assistance to the Election Commission.

Out of the 16,263,885 registered voters for the General Elections, 12,343,302 (75.89%) went out to vote on Election Day. This percentage of turnout, given the Covid-19 challenges and fears were considered, the remarkably high and have not significantly changed since the 2015 parliamentary elections which was 77.66%. However, the voter turnout in the November 2019 presidential election was 83.72%. It is the common trend that that presidential elections attract higher voter turnout. It was remarked that the COVID-19 was expected to drive voters away from the polls, the relatively healthy electoral attendance can be attributed to the Election Commission's active information campaign regarding health guidelines, and displays the voters' strong confidence in the process. However, there was a phenomenally high cost involved to ensure a safe election. There was an estimate in February that calculated the cost at around LKR 5 billion (Approximately 27 million USD. This estimate was revised in August for LKR 10 billion (54 million USD).

### **A.1.1.1 Amendment to the Constitution and impact on governance**

Following the elections, a key priority was to introduce a major amendment to the constitution called the 20A (20th Amendment). The Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution Bill ("proposed Amendment") was published in the Gazette Supplement dated 2nd September 2020 (and made available to the public on the 3rd of September 2020). The crux of the proposed Amendment is that it does away with most of what was introduced by way of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 2015, and reintroduces much of what was in place under the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, in 2010 (CPA). It is also claims that the 20A attempts to take Sri Lanka back to the executive presidency that was put in place by the Constitution of 1978. It was vested with enormous powers and regarded as among the most powerful in the world.

Whilst the chief promoter of the 20A, the newly appointed President, claims that he received an overwhelming electoral mandate from the people to effect a Constitutional Change, it is also heavily critiqued as shift to a system of autocratic government that would bring to an effective end to a parliamentary democracy and liberal democratic traditions and institutions. Clearly, the 20A envisages an excessive concentration of powers in the executive presidency. It is claimed that the 2-A will bestow overwhelming and unfettered powers in the presidency, while significantly reducing the powers and role of the prime minister and Parliament. It will give the president the power to sack the prime minister and other ministers at his discretion and to dissolve Parliament just a year after its election. It will also provide the president with full immunity against prosecution.

It is also opined that the proposed amendment would pave the way for the politicization of institutions and commissions. Appointments of top judges, the police chief, and members of the election, public service, bribery and human rights commissions – which are currently the responsibility of the constitutional council, which includes civil society members as well – would, after 20A is enacted, be left to the discretion of the president. The amendment replaces

the constitutional council with a parliamentary council, whose “observations” the president could seek to in making these key appointments – but with no “approval” required, even such cursory consultation is not a given.

There are three key features introduced by the Nineteenth Amendment that will remain in tact under the proposed Amendment; 1) The Nineteenth Amendment introduced the Right to Information into the Fundamental Rights chapter of the Sri Lankan Constitution (Article 14A). The proposed Twentieth Amendment does not take away this right., 2) Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Sri Lanka were held every 6 years prior to the Nineteenth Amendment. After the Nineteenth Amendment both these elections are to be held every 5 years (Term of the President – Article 30(2), Term of Parliament – Article 62(2)). The proposed Amendment does not change this position., 3) Prior to the Eighteenth Amendment, there was a limitation in the Constitution that any person who had been elected as President twice was not qualified to be elected a third time (two-term limit)., 4) The Eighteenth Amendment removed this limit, which is how former President Hon. Mahinda Rajapaksa was able to contest the Presidential election for a third time in 2015. The Nineteenth Amendment reversed this position, reinforcing the two-term limit (Article 31(2)). The proposed Amendment leaves the two-term limit in place. (CPA)

The scope for Sri Lanka to oppose or dilute 20A remains a formidable challenge. Following the tabling of draft amendment in Parliament, political parties and civil society members went to court against its provisions. The court’s decision was that except a very few clauses, the amendment in general was in line with the current constitution. A few prominent religious leaders from the Buddhist institutions as well as Catholic and Protestant Churches voiced their opposition and concern. However, this scenario of a Parliamentary opposition is unlikely given the current government’s 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority.

### **A.1.1.2 Increased surveillance on CSOs**

A Joint Statement made at the at the 44th session of the Human Rights Council, in July 2020, concluded, also demonstrated by the Special Rapporteur’s report, the space for Sri Lankan civil society is rapidly shrinking and for several months, civil society organizations have been subject to intensified military surveillance and questioning by different government authorities. The statement at the 44<sup>th</sup> sessions also noted that “Worryingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has been exploited by the Sri Lankan government to impose restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, resulting in the arrest and detention of social media commentators like Ramzy Razeek. Senior lawyer and minority and civic rights activist, Hejaaz Hizbullah, who was arrested and detained on suspicion of offences under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, has now been detained for close to three months without being produced before a judge, after having been misled to believe that the authorities were visiting his house to discuss his potential exposure to COVID-19.

Since January 2020, the Government of Sri Lanka has established multiple Presidential Task Forces. Decisions have been taken with no oversight by Parliament. The Presidential Task Force to build a “Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society” is fully comprised of

security sector personnel and given an ambiguous mandate. Sri Lankan civil society has raised a serious concern that the task force can extend military control over civilian life. Its power can be abused to curtail dissenting voices which are deemed to be “harmful to the free and peaceful existence of society”. The increased deployment of military personnel along with the police, and the disproportionate use of force against peaceful protesters, as observed recently, are also alarming<sup>16</sup>.

The said joint statement issued by Amnesty International, CIVICUS, Forum Asia, Franciscans International, Human Rights Watch, International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, ISHR and Minority rights group international, concluded that “Considering growing concerns over shrinking space for dissent domestically, the Council remains effectively the only forum where Sri Lankan civil society has the possibility to engage openly in dialogue with the Government and other States on human rights concerns in Sri Lanka, and even this space is increasingly under threat due to deepening risks of reprisals against Sri Lankan civil society actors who speak at the Council. Those human right defenders are increasingly vilified as “traitors” in both mainstream and social media. Given Sri Lanka’s announced withdrawal from its commitments to the implementation of resolution 30/1, and the clear and consistent recommendations by the OHCHR that the Council should monitor progress towards accountability, the Council needs to take a more robust approach on Sri Lanka. Against this backdrop, we encourage the Special Rapporteur to continue to follow up on the situation and urge the Human Rights Council to enhance its monitoring of Sri Lanka’s compliance with international human rights law, including to ensure that human rights are protected throughout the forthcoming general elections”.

### **A.1.1.3 Civil Society Space and Moves to introduce new legislation on CSOs.**

Civil society space was opened up since the changes at the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in January and August 2015, respectively. However, the legal environment for civil society had been deteriorated since 2018 as CSOs faced delays in registration, continued state scrutiny and surveillance, and weak legal and support services<sup>17</sup>. In April 2019, the government responded to the Easter attacks with social media blocks, efforts to enhance surveillance, and restrictive emergency regulations that greatly curbed free expression and press freedom online. The blocking of social media and communication platforms three times within the span of a month suggests that it has been normalized as a policy tool. The downward trajectory of internet freedom is expected to continue, evidenced by recently proposed amendments criminalizing false information and suggestions of increased government surveillance<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> CIVICUS (2020) Sri Lanka: Civil society subjected to intensified military surveillance and other restrictions Geneva 10 July 2020 <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/united-nations/geneva/4518-sri-lanka-civil-society-subjected-to-intensified-military-surveillance-and-other-restrictions>

<sup>17</sup> Verite (2019) Civil Society Sustainability Index. <https://www.veriteresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CSOSI-Sri-Lanka-2018.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Freedom House (2019) Sri Lanka. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/sri-lanka/freedom-net/2019>.

In 2018, the Company Registrar simplified the process for registration by establishing an online registration system. Several bureaucratic procedures still create delays in the registration process. For example, if a CSO registering with the Company Registrar indicates “human rights” as one of its objectives, the Company Registrar may request the approval of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka.

The NGO Secretariat forwards all applications that it receives to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense; these ministries then make recommendations to approve or reject registration. Defense authorities are also directly involved in overseeing the registration of certain organizations working in the North and East. CSOs in these areas face significant difficulties in registration.

Driven by negative perceptions of CSOs, local banks have been reluctant to permit newly formed CSOs to open bank accounts. Banks also continue to exercise additional scrutiny of the financial transactions of CSOs with existing accounts. In 2018, the NGO Secretariat re-issued a 2017 statement requesting all CSOs to submit action plans, audited financial reports, annual reports, statements on funding flows, and staff details because it was updating its monitoring mechanisms. According to the statement, any organization failing to submit the requested information will be classified as “inactive<sup>19</sup>.”

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<sup>19</sup> Verite (2019)

## B. Covid-19 and Data and Trends – Jan to March 2020 (1<sup>st</sup> Wave) & October 1<sup>st</sup> to Jan 2021 (2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

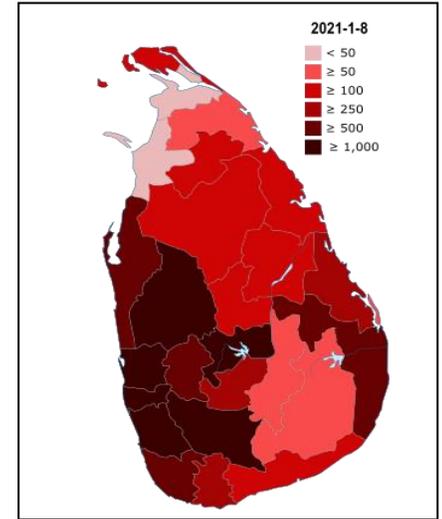
### With 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave

Cases overview  
Sri Lanka

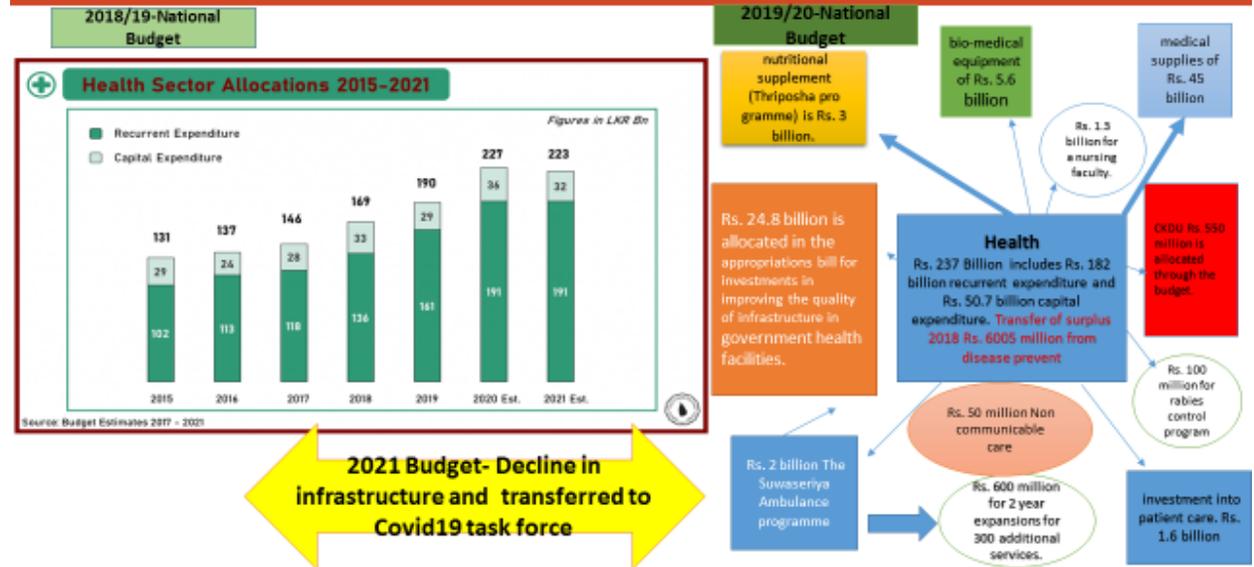
Total cases	Recovered	Deaths
81,753	75,562	450

Worldwide

Total cases	Recovered	Deaths
111,419M	51M	2,470M



## National Health budget 2018/2020 – 4<sup>th</sup> Highest allocations from national budget





## B.1 Chronology of the Pandemic’s spread and Health Services in Sri Lanka

The first confirmed case of coronavirus was reported in Sri Lanka on 27 January. The patient was a 44-year-old Chinese woman from Hubei Province who was visiting Sri Lanka. She was immediately admitted to a local hospital, underwent treatment, and was discharged on 19 February, complete with a ceremony and photo-op in which the health minister offered flowers to and kissed the recovered patient. In the meantime, the president dissolved the Parliament on 2 March, and called snap elections six months early. The elections were to be held on 25 April, but only a day later, the first case involving a person of Sri Lankan origin was reported in Italy on 3 March. One week later on 10 March, the first local case was reported: a tourist guide who had led a group of Italian tourists. Both the Chinese woman and the tourist guide were treated at the so-called “IDH,” or Infectious Disease Hospital, which later came to be known as the National Institute of Infectious Diseases. It is considered a high-service level hospital focused on infection control, HIV, and other infectious diseases. Quarantine centers were also set up by the Army initially in their facilities in Central and Other provinces initially. Later on many other Quarantine centers were opened by the military. Private hotels were also allowed to offer Quarantine facilities for a considerable tariff.

A 40-member “Presidential Task Force to Coordinate and Monitor the Delivery of Continuous Services for the Sustenance of Overall Community Life” was formed under Basil Rajapaksa, another brother of President GR’s. In mid-March, a “National Operation Center” was tasked with curbing the spread of COVID-19, with the Army Chief appointed at its head. The Center was mandated to coordinate preventive and management measures to ensure that healthcare and other services would be well equipped to serve the general public during the outbreak period. The mandates of these two structures were vague and lacked clarity regarding the division of labour. The legitimacy of introducing these new structures while existing structures were not being used drew heavy criticism (Center for Policy Alternatives, 2020).

## Chronology of the Pandemic's spread in Sri Lanka

Date	Global / National Events
2019 Dec. 31	China - 27 cases suspicious of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China discovered and reported
Jan 29,	Four Pakistani students studying in China were tested positive for COVID-19
Jan 30, 2020	WHO declares "Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)"
Sri Lanka	
January 27, 2020	Active cases 1
January 27, 2020,	a 44-year-old Chinese woman from Hubei Province in China; she was admitted to the National Institute of Infection Diseases.[3] She had arrived as a tourist with another group of travelers and had been screened at the Bandaranaike International Airport after having a high fever. She had fully recovered and was released from the hospital on 19 February.
February 1, 2020	33 Sri Lankan students and families were evacuated from Wuhan on 1 February and kept under Quarantine at a Military facility at Diyatalawa- Central Province of Sri Lanka
March 5, 2020	Set it up Presidential task force Health officials Nationally, including Military (All 3 forces,) police and three Ministries food, transportation and local government and Pharma distributors - private sector
March 6 to 7	-Set it up quarantined two centers in Batticaloa –(East) and 2 centers in north and Colombo suburb -The Sri Lankans as well as foreigners arriving from South Korea, Italy and Iran has been sent to these centers for 14-day quarantine period and issue a certificate after the period. [Which later considered as mandatory for them to provide when going out of country again] -cabinet paper passed on mandatarly to those who arriving from other countries to SL living in isolation in their own houses or quarantined centers (based on the condition)
March 10 2020	The first Sri Lankan local national tested positive for COVID-19. A 52-year-old tour guide working with a group of Italians had tested positive.
March 11	WHO Declares Pandemic
March 11 to 13, 2020	2020-March week 2 [Active cases 15]
March 13, 2020	-Visa for Europeans suspended for 2 weeks due to the expanding Covid-19 situation for tourist from France and Italy -Measures to disinfect public transport
March 14 to 15 , 2020	Measures to disinfect public transport -Attention was drawn to regulate the distribution process of face masks in a manner that it could be purchases from anywhere at a controlled price. -Firms which can make 150,000 face masks daily have been identified to check for the quality for this crisis. -Stressed the importance of using electronic, print and social media to educate the people about the disease.
March 15, 2020	-Sri Lanka Politics– Members of the dissolve parliament request the elected president to reopen the legislative for business to have a debate on Covid 19 -Sri Lanka – Caretaker government called for party leaders meeting to update on the operation of Covid 19 and looked for further advice on mitigating potential risk.
March 15, 2020	2020- March week 3 [Active cases 86] reported
March 16 -18 2020	-SAARC ministerial meeting was conducted by the Leaders of each country to formulate a collective response to combat COVID-19 and overcome a deadly threat and formulate a mechanism to assist SL economy to tide over the economically difficult period. - Students who were studying in Wuhan province china [34] were brought back based on cabinet decision. - according to their request and quarantined for 14-day period. Other 750 people who were in china were asked to self-quarantine. The officials were asked to bring the people of 300 who are currently scattered in India who were on pilgrimage. - 12 other major government hospitals have been modified and designed to treat suspected/ confirmed cases.
March 19 <sup>th</sup> 2020	President of the Election commission revealed that the election would be postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

March 18-20, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-National task force with all major stakeholders empowered to take crucial decisions and setup to meet daily basis deliver press releases.</li> <li>- All education centers from pre-schools to universities had been closed ranging from 2 weeks to 6 weeks.</li> <li>-One day of the week has been declared as a public holiday to keep the people away from the roads and sanitizing of public transport.</li> <li>-All schools and educational institutions including Universities and private institutions and schools declare holiday for the term.</li> <li>- Suspended all the inbound passenger flights to the country for 2 weeks. But directed Heads of departments and other entities to ensure uninterrupted economic and trading activities as well as other essential services.</li> <li>-Health ministry formed a provisional clinical practice guideline on COVID-19 suspected and confirmed patients</li> <li>-Island wide curfew has imposed for the week end of the 3rd week</li> </ul>
March 21-23,	2020-March week 4 [Active cases 105]
March 21-23,	<p>Working from home :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The government has declared a period of work from home for both public and private sectors for 7-day period. (When implementing the remote work system, the relevant heads of departments were asked to take steps to limit the summoning their staff to the office.)</li> <li>- Private sector followed the suitable and priority basis.</li> <li>- Authorities were empowered to take steps to ensure continuous supply of essential services including health, public administration, transportation, banking, food, water, electricity, distribution of fertilizer and buying paddy.</li> <li>-The curfew has been extended to several districts [Colombo, Gampaha, Puttlam] due to increased number of patients in those districts indefinitely.</li> </ul>
March 24,	-Closed of the International and domestic Airports- Colombo, Katunayake and Mattala: (To prevent imported new cases of Corona virus in the country, the government decided to indefinitely extend the closure of the arrival terminal at the Airport. The departure terminal will continue to be operational and flights are allowed in to the country to take departing passengers. All import and export operations are to Continue without interruption.)
March 24,	<p>Essential Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All the essential things are being delivered to the door steps including food, medication and mobile ATM machines. To ensure smooth operation of delivering essential consumer goods to each household, a special task force has been established comprised of Secretaries to the ministries, Government agents, Divisional Secretaries and other relevant officers. The vehicles used for the delivery will be permitted on the road during curfew period.</li> </ul>
March 25, 2020	<p>-Government declare economic and social relief measures are as following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To extend until 30 April, 2020 all payments on income and VAT taxes, driving license renewal fees; all bills on water and electricity, assessment taxes, and bank cheques valued less than Rs 15,000; and repayment of all credit cards below the limit Rs. 50,000.</li> <li>B. A six-month moratorium on the leasing loan installments of all three-wheelers.</li> <li>c. A moratorium on loan installments until 30 May, 2020 from salaries of all public and private (except board of directors) sector employees.</li> <li>d. A three-month moratorium on all personal bank and leasing loan installments of value less than Rs. 1 million.</li> <li>g. A six-month debit moratorium on tourism, garment and small &amp; medium industries and for Central Bank of Sri Lanka to re-evaluate the finances.</li> <li>j. All bank branches to provide their full services to customers when curfew is not in effect.</li> <li>K. Sri Lanka Ports, Customs and other related institutions to release without any interruption to relevant entities food and essentials such as fertilizers, medicines and fuel.</li> <li>l. To provide interest free loans of Rs. 10,000 to Samurdhi (poor among poor population) recipients and Samurdhi card holders through all Samurdhi Bank Associations.</li> </ul>
March 25,	Set up the Covid 19 Fund: a special bank account has been opened at the Bank of Ceylon for tasks related to preventing the spread of the Coronavirus and for providing the necessary healthcare and relief measures.

	For this purpose, Rs. 100 million had been deposited from the President's Fund. Tax and foreign exchange control restrictions have been lifted for all local and foreign donors who wishes to contribute to this fund.
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	-Government re-address the final rights regulation in order to coherence with WHO.
March 27,	1 <sup>st</sup> Death reported – A Sri Lankan National
March 27,	-In order to prevent prison outbreak due to over crowd: Granted some relief to the prisoners who were charged with minor offences and those who are unable to meet their bail conditions.
March 31 <sup>st</sup>	3 death reported – all sri lankan nationals live in sri lanka
April 1,	2020-April week 1 [Active cases 138]
April 2,	Government Measure on SME farmers yield efforts. -Government decided to facilitate the farmers on cultivation of rice and vegetables and other animal products such as meat, egg and fisheries without any interruption. -The products were expected to deliver through a combined effort between cooperative outlets and supermarkets after purchasing from domestic farmers with the assistance of the center for disaster management
April 3,2020	Medicare and aged old population. - A decision was taken to deliver medicines to homes of regular patients who have registered at hospitals with the support of divisional Secretaries, Public health officers and the security forces. -Set it up mobile system to distribute medicines through few locally selected pharmacies to patients who purchase medicine from private pharmacies
April 4 <sup>th</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>	-Total number of death were 7 reported in the country - Sri Lanka reported 8th COVID-19 death and first female death
April 6 <sup>th</sup> 2020	-The Sri Lanka Police actions: A. has taken steps to issue licenses for private sector workers engaged in essential and related duties on the recommendation of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. b. Facilities have been arranged to obtain fuel needed for the container / freight carriers operating between the terminals and inter terminals at the port. c. SLPA employees engaged in essential services are to be provided sanitation, welfare and transportation facilities
April 20, 2020	Election Commission of Sri Lanka declared 20 June 2020 as the date of elections, after a member of commission Professor Ratnajeevan Hoole object to hold the election on 28 May 2020 with the government influence
April 22, 2020	Biggest cluster – sri lanka navy –total number 238
April 23 to 24 <sup>th</sup>	88 sailors were tested positive
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	148 sailors were tested positive
May 7,	Around 4000 people at the Navy Camp which include sailors and their families, were quarantined within the camp
May 18,	Supreme Court's five-member judge bench started hearing 8 petitions against the 20 June general election date
May 20,	Elections Commission inform the Supreme court that 20 June fix date is no longer a possible date for the election
May 21, 2020	72 sailors discharge from hospital after recovery.
May 22, 2020	Total number of cases exceed 1000
June 2, 2020	The Supreme Court dismissed all Fundamental Rights petitions filed and denied granting leave to proceed with all petitions
June 10, 2020	Election Commissioner Mahinda Deshapriya confirmed that the postponed parliamentary elections would be held on 5 August 2020 with strict health measures and guidelines
June 28, 2020	A total of 2047 patients were identified with 1748 recovered cases.
July 3,2020	Sri Lanka has raised surveillance along its northern coast, following reports of some Sri Lankan refugees in India attempting to return by boats following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic
July 10, 2020	Country start moving towards the normalcy after period time
July 12, 2020	Government decided to reopen the all schools after the general elections on 3 phases until end august
Aug 5 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Sri Lanka held General election under the WHO guidelines 70% voters voted for 9 <sup>th</sup> parliament

Aug 10, 2020	1 <sup>st</sup> batch of high schools reopen for students under the strict guidance from WHO
August - Sept	Most private company as well as the government institutions start opening for business
Sep 23, 2020	Sep 23, 2020 Some 33 sick employees has been working in a Garment factory without proper medical attention.
Sep 28 2020	One employee has been admitted to the hospital with critical condition.
October 3,	One employee of sep 28 <sup>th</sup> tested positive of covid19
October 4 <sup>th</sup> ,	Second wave – from Minuwangoda cluster
October 10,	Total Minuwangoda cluster total cases rises up 1,512. Government fear to enforce another lockdown.
Oct 11, 2020	Govt. declare total lock down of Gampha district 13 division with immediate effect.
Oct 11 2020	Government held grade 5 scholarships examination island wide under health guidelines. Successfully
Oct 12,	Katunayaka international Airport. Sri Lankan Airlines confirmed media reports a cargo operate employee tested positive for the COVID-19. He worked in Bandaranaike International Airport. This case reported on 12 October.
Oct 12 <sup>th</sup>	Delegation of highest Chinese officials arrived to SL for urgent discussion with the president and PM. Pledge US 90 million as a urgent recovery fund and rest will be deliver to time to time to government up US\$ 500 million.
Octo 12-23 <sup>rd</sup>	Government holding high's school (A/L) examination island wide under health guidelines.
Oct 12,	The government announce that Sect. of State Mike Pompeii will arrive to Sri Lanka on Oct 27 <sup>th</sup> of 2020
October 13,	Total Minuwangoda cluster total cases rises up 1,512
October 14,	Minuwngoda cluster spread around country from northern province to southern province.
October 14 ,	Total number of Corona rise up to 5038 recover/discharge 3357 suspected hospitalize 293. Deaths 13. New cluster are brandix (Garment Manufacturing factory) cluster 1582 Other cluster average of 10-16 per cluster.
Oct 14,2020	Number of PCR test 385,300 as of today
Oct 14, 2020	Most private sector taken PCR test sponsored by the company.
Oct 14, 2020	Government denied that so far it has not spread among the community and we are still under stage 3 of covid19. This is a questionable.
Oct to Nov 2020	1. Government re isolated highly populated clusters in poor and middle income population in Western provinces (Colombo and Gampha), some of the area's in Eastern Provinces. 2. On 11/02/2020 the WHO renamed the disease as COVID-19 and on 11/03/2020 declared as pandemic. The incubation period is reported as 2-14 days. 3.Deaths total 20
Nov 29/2020	The riot in Sri Lanka's Mahara prison on November 29, in which 11 inmates were killed, has turned the spotlight on the alarming conditions in the country's prisons, only magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic that has not spared even highly guarded prison cells. Eight of the 11 victims were found to be COVID-19 positive.
Nov 30/2020	Total deaths increased to 116-Public health inspectors warned the public that Colombo city Covid19 spread beyond control. Colombo Mayors Mrs. Rosie Senanayake plead government to consider for 2 months lock down to overcome prevention
Dec 1/2020	Total deaths increased to 118
Dec 7/2020	Govt. announcements: <b>Travel Restrictions Authorities</b> have suspended the arrival of international commercial passenger flights, including inbound repatriation flights, until further notice. Limited flights may restart depending on local case numbers. Authorities have suspended the issuance of all visa types, including electronic, landing, multiple-entry, and residential, indefinitely; previously issued visas stand canceled. Foreign nationals with diplomatic, official, and service passports are exempt from the controls.
Dec 9/2020	Diplomatic personnel permitted to enter Sri Lanka must submit a COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result taken within 72 hours of departure or undergo a PCR test upon arrival.
Dec 15/2020	Total deaths increased to 154
Dec 31/2020	Total deaths increased to 199- Govt. health bureau declared updated 12 points Environmental <b>Cleaning Guidelines</b> to be used during the COVID-19 outbreak. Significantly emphasis on Environment Cleaning/surface cleaning in isolation units and Triage areas
Jan 1 / 21	National Health Bureau (NHB) Operational guidelines were updated for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> wave at work places and other public area'. "Workplace COVID-19 preparedness and response plan" <b>Total confirm daily 536 and death total raise to 204</b>

Jan 13 /21	Total number of covid19 49,535 with 247 deaths recorded.
Jan 15 /21	Development of estate hospitals: “The government is continuing the process to take over 76 Estate hospitals in the country that are at the moment operates under Plantation Companies,” Minister Wanniarachchi told parliament. Ministry of Health also looks for possibilities to increase the number of MBA qualified doctors, health staff and Ambulance services in the Estate medical centers which is not been practices in the centers. Sri Lanka has allowed Coronavirus hit firms to pay lower salaries till March 2021, provided workers are kept in employment, under a proposal approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.
An 17 /21	Government announces Airports in the country will reopen from 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan for all commercial flights.
Jan 18/21	Covid 19 Vaccine rollout by Feb/March 2021. Government negotiations underway with India and China as well as Russia. India has agreed to donate a consignment of vaccines by the end of Feb besides the other two countries.
Feb 1-23 <sup>rd</sup>	Deaths rise up to 457 with an average of Covid 19 cases per day around 300-600 cases per day. Highest per day indicated on 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb to 968.
<b>Covid-19 Vaccination: he vaccination program commenced on January 29<sup>th</sup> continued.</b>	
Jan 29 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> Procurement of Vaccination arrive to SL – Brand As of December 28, 2020, AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 vaccine, Novavax’s COVID-19 vaccine initiated to Front line officials and Military
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> to 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Public vaccination initiated in western Province. See below chart
Feb 24 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> batch of 500,000 vaccination arrived to SL from India

දිනය Date	එන්නත් ලබා ගත් ගණන Number Immunized	සම්පූර්ණ එකතුව Cumulative Total
29. 01. 2021 - 04. 02. 2021	146,327	146,327
05. 02. 2021 -11. 02. 2021	31,760	178,087
12. 02. 2021- 18. 02. 2021	55,385	233,472
19. 02. 2021	30,307	263,779
20. 02. 2021	39,078	302,857
21. 02. 2021	35,912	338,769

## C. Covid-19 Impact on Human Rights and SDGs

### C.1 Governance: Legislation, Structures and Institutions

#### Differentiated of 19<sup>th</sup> Vs. 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Sri Lanka Constitution.

The overall constitutional framework that was in force in the pre-Covid 19 period was under the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment that introduced significant progressive changes from a Governance perspective. How ever 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment has change the most prospects and performance of the governance has decline significantly in many part of the governing structure. However 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment prospects are:

19 <sup>th</sup> Amendment	20 <sup>th</sup> Amendment
Reducing the term of President and Parliament from six to five,	Remain same. Age as forward to presidential candidate to 35 years from 45 years.
Limiting the number of President’s term to two,	remain same
Making the President accountable to the Parliament,	removed

Limiting the President’s absolute legal immunity,	Where the President is immune from both civil and criminal proceedings. As such, citizens will no longer be able to file Fundamental Rights Applications against the President
Increase the period from 1 to 4.5, the period after a President can dissolve the Parliament,	Under the proposed Amendment, however, the President can remove the Prime Minister unilaterally (Article 47(a) of the proposed Amendment).
Establishment of a Constitutional Council with the Representation of the Civil Society (without the consent of this Council, the President cannot appoint key offices such as the Chief Justice, the Judges of the Supreme Court, the President and the Judges of the Court of Appeal, the Members of the Judicial Service Commission, the Attorney-General, The Auditor-General, the Inspector, General of Police, the Ombudsman, the Secretary-General of Parliament.	<p>n appointing Ministers</p> <p>At present, it is the President who decides on how many Ministers there are (subject to the limitation of it being 30 or less) and what subjects and functions are allocated to them, consulting the Prime Minister when the President considers such consultation to be necessary (Article 43(1) of the Constitution).</p> <p>However, when deciding which MPs to appoint as Ministers to such Ministries, the President is required to act on the advice of the Prime Minister.</p> <p>Under the proposed Amendment, even when appointing Ministers, the President only needs to consult the Prime Minister when he/she considers such consultation to be necessary.</p>

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Act of 2007, a law meant to protect human rights. The ICCPR Act criminalizes advocacy of “national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, the hostility of violence”. However, the Act has been misused to curtail freedom of expression since mid-2019.

The ICCPR Act does not permit individuals charged under it to be granted bail at a magistrate’s court, unless the individual be granted bail before a high court. There were arrests and threats of arrests of those engaged in the field of arts and media. The Act is posed as a threat to intimidate people whose views are perceived as dissent and undesirable by the state. There were two cases of an arrest of poet who published a fictional short story of a Buddhist monk and a threat to arrest of a senior journalist. The former was kept in remand prison from April to August until he was granted bail. It is believed that the said Act is being used to instill fear, threat and intimidation as a measure to control dissent.

## **Migrant workers reparation**

### **C.2 Human rights of Migration workers of Sri Lankan**

Sri Lanka’s migrant workers are an integral part of our economy, with their remittances traditionally accounting for the second largest share of the country’s foreign exchange earnings (8% of GDP in 2019) after merchandise exports. After the COVID-19 outbreak and resultant difficulties, a sizeable proportion of migrants looked forward to a safe return home. This blog, written to mark International Migrants Day, examines the experience and challenges in the

repatriation process, and offers suggestions on the way forward.<sup>20</sup> There is an estimated million Sri Lankan migrant workers. Nearly 10,000 Sri Lankan migrant workers have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, according to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.

Those who have lost the jobs as well as others who wish to return are stranded in their respective domiciled countries. It is reported that some of them are deprived of basic facilities and adequate food. Under these circumstances, they have been vulnerable to catch the virus. As a result, Over 2000 SL migrant workers spread over 16 countries have been infected with COVID-19 and among those infected, close to 400 migrant workers, have recovered as per Aug 2020.

In the Middle East as coronavirus death toll of Sri Lankan migrants had climbed up to 44 as of 20 July 2020. Estimates show that around 17,000 migrant workers intend to return to Sri Lanka (IPS 2020). The government faces a formidable challenge of repatriating these workers and their families. Those who want to return must also face the barrier of paying for a mandatory PCR test, which many do not have the funds to afford, especially as they scramble to pay for basic needs.

Sri Lanka has found the process of repatriating vast numbers of Sri Lankans abroad since the closure of international airports for inward travel hugely challenging. The government coordinated large-scale repatriation missions to bring home different categories of migrants – such as students, pilgrims and workers – including those undocumented. By mid-October 2020, after bringing home over 54,000 citizens, at least another 60,000 migrants (**including the legal and illegal workers**) remain to be repatriated. Compared to the total of 4,992 and 1,179 repatriations handled in 2017 and 2018 respectively, the current scale of repatriations is challenging the capacity of the relevant authorities.

### **Role of the Private Sector**

The combination of capacity constraints, excess demand and willingness to pay gradually has created a market for repatriation. The result was a fee-based repatriation package for travel and quarantine. While state-sponsored quarantine facilities were available, the paid option for quarantine was a minimum of LKR 7500 per day for the 14 days in a hotel including hotel transfer and two PCR tests. Both types of quarantine services are under government supervision, while the latter provides more amenities.<sup>21</sup>

### **National Migration Policy (draft) 2020 to 2023**

This policy has been more important than before due to Pandemic and impact due to global human developments.

Migration for employment is not just left to market forces alone but is subject to compliance

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2020/12/16/covid-19-and-migrant-workers-the-economics-of-repatriation/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2020/12/16/covid-19-and-migrant-workers-the-economics-of-repatriation/>

of international labour standards and frameworks. International standards provide a framework for national legislation, policy and practice that ensure effective governance of migration, protection and for safeguarding the rights and interests of the migrant workers.

*This policy influenced by SDG 8 Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all, Target 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.*

International standards provide a framework for national legislation, policy and practice that ensure effective governance of migration, protection and for safeguarding the rights and interests of the migrant workers.(Draft NMP 2020/2023)

“Sri Lanka is in need of a portfolio of policies and strategies to gainfully shape the world of work in the country. The portfolios have been articulated across four domains:

- a.) Education and Skilling,
- b.) Technology y and Innovation,
- c.) Labor Protection,
- d.) Redistribution.”<sup>10</sup>

### **C.3 Human Rights and Right to Information- RTI – SDGs**

Sri Lanka’s attempt to enact an RTI law had been prolonged and difficult struggle since 1995 when a Committee was appointed to advice (to then Government) on the reform of laws affecting media freedom and freedom of expression. The Committee recommended drafting a Freedom of Information Act.

#### Right to Information RTI Chronology

1996	Sri Lanka Law Commission prepared a draft Freedom of Information Bill.
2000	Draft Constitutional Bill also included a ‘Right to Information’ clause but the Bill was not passed in the
2004	The Prime Ministerial Committee drafted the 2004 Freedom of Information Bill which was approved by the then Cabinet and tabled in Parliament. (premature dissolution of that Parliament, the Bill was never debated)
2008	The Colombo Declaration on Media Freedom and Social Responsibility, by the Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association, Free Media Movement, Newspaper Society of Sri Lanka, and The Editors’ Guild of Sri Lanka, emphasized the need for a RTI law in Sri Lanka.
2011	The “2004 draft” Freedom of Information Bill as a private member’s Bill which was also not taken up for debate in Parliament. (Held due to general elections intervened, the Bill was never presented to Parliament) and recommended that the Government introduce RTI legislation,
2013	LLRC’s National Action Plan included which was also included as an action point in the
2016	The Parliament of Sri Lanka, enacted the Right to Information Act to give meaning to the citizen’s Fundamental Right to Information.

It is important to remember that the RTI Act does not give us any new rights. It only provides for a process to exercise the Constitutional right of access to information that came with the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 2015. The current RTI Act was prepared by a drafting committee under the auspices of the Ministry of Parliamentary Reforms and Mass Media based on an updated draft of the 2004 Freedom of Information Bill. The stated purpose of the Act is to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in Public Authorities by giving effect to the right of access to information and thereby promote a society in which the people of Sri Lanka would be able to more fully participate in public life through combating corruption and promoting accountability and good governance. The Minister in charge of the subject of Mass Media is given the responsibility of effectively implementing the Act<sup>22</sup>.

#### C.4. Post-conflict and Transitional Justice:

Following the end of the war in 2009, that lasted nearly three decades, Transitional Justice became a major concern because of the brutality of the war and the way in which it ended – the rebel movement being defeated militarily. Massive human rights violations, including widespread disappearances and extrajudicial executions, were committed during the armed conflict in the North /East and a Southern insurgency in the period 1987-89. The number of missing or disappeared persons in Sri Lanka is estimated to be between 60,000 and 100,000 since the late 1980s. The armed conflict was also characterized by torture, the recruitment of child soldiers, political repression, and sexual and gender-based violence, according to the 2014 United Nations investigations into Sri Lanka. Transitional Justice involves the government, acknowledge and address these losses and abuses as well as to uncover the fate of the disappeared, develop innovative strategies to obtain redress for victims, and safeguard the political and economic rights of all persons. There were many demands for Transitional Justice and response came in different forms.

In 2015, the Sri Lankan government promised to implement a range of measures to address the history of past abuses, to pursue truth and justice, and to provide redress to victims.

In 2015, the Sri Lankan government promised to implement a range of measures to address the history of past abuses; to pursue truth, justice, and accountability; and to provide redress to victims. These measures include four transitional justice processes: a mechanism to search for the disappeared, an office for reparations, a truth commission, and a judicial mechanism.

The government's promises were affirmed in the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1 of 2015. Chief among the action taken by the government was;

i. 2017 The establishment of the Office of Missing Persons:

The OMP is significant in that it is the first permanent body to address the issue of the missing and disappeared in Sri Lanka. However, its creation came after a series of

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.slpi.lk/rti/history-of-rti-in-sri-lanka/>

commissions were established to investigate cases of missing or disappeared persons but proved to be unsuccessful and failed to contribute to accountability. It is the responsibility of the Office for Reparation to identify the aggrieved victims qualified for reparation and provide appropriate compensation individually or collectively to them. Office for Reparations is the second step of the transitional justice mechanisms for reconciliation process formulated locally and implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka.

ii. 2018 The Office for Reparations was established:

As an independent body reporting to the parliament of Sri Lanka. The list of nominees selected by the Constitutional Council from a competitive selection process has been directed to the approval of the President. The government in 2019 budget allocated Rs. 700 million for the Office for Reparations. The Office is tasked to identify the aggrieved persons who are eligible for reparations as well as their level of need, and to formulate and recommend to the Cabinet of Ministers, Policies on Reparations and guidelines with regard to the grant of individual and collective reparations, including the criteria for eligibility for aggrieved persons to obtain reparations, including criteria relating to the nature and severity of grievances for which reparations will be available.

*(Notwithstanding Sri Lanka's formal commitments, the implementation of transitional justice processes has been alarmingly slow. Meanwhile, most victims live in dire economic circumstances and continue to struggle with the consequences of the violations they experienced. The lack of tangible results for victims, combined with the apparent delays in implementing transitional justice measures, have resulted in a loss of public trust in the government's willingness to make good on its promises and provide redress to victims. Going forward, it is imperative that the government follow through on all of its commitments to transitional justice, in order to adequately address victims' needs and engage them in an inclusive process of rebuilding<sup>23</sup>).*

#### **C.4 .A Mahara prison riot and Human Rights & Justice to Prison Inmates**

Mahara prison riot was an arson attack which took place between the prison inmates and police officials from 29 November 2020 to 30 November 2020 at the Mahara Prison in Sri Lanka at the outskirts of the capital city of Colombo in Mahara. (*Location : Western Province, district of Colombo .*) As a result, prison inmates staged hunger strikes and protests demanding for better treatment and healthcare facilities. According to several sources, Sri Lankan prisons were heavily congested with each jail having over 26,000 inmates. As of November 2020, two prison inmates died due to the coronavirus<sup>24</sup>.

As of 30 November 2020, 11 inmates were reportedly killed and about 117 inmates were severely injured during the prison riot. Police guards opened fire to control the arson attack and also in order to prevent a jail break. A fire also spread from the Mahara fire following gun shots, and most of the deceased inmates succumbed to gun shots. It was revealed that prison inmates

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ictj.org/our-work/regions-and-countries/sri-lanka>

<sup>24</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahara\\_prison\\_riot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahara_prison_riot)

set fire to the kitchens inside the prison facility and briefly took 2 wardens hostage. The riots occurred following the rumors and speculations regarding the transferring of COVID-19 infected prisoners to Mahara Prison from other crowded prisons. Initially the prison inmates staged unrest demanding the officials and authorities to increase the PCR testing following the surge in COVID-19 cases in Sri Lankan prisons. Prior to the riots, around 12 prisoners tested positive for COVID-19

The HRCSL, prisoner rights groups and prison officials have reiterated that measures need to be taken reduce overcrowding in the prisons. There are some 32,000 prisoners incarcerated in Sri Lanka's jails which have an official capacity of 11,000 according to a statement made by the Justice Minister in Parliament. The Covid situation has increased the risk of unrest in the jammed jails as inmates are fearful of newcomers and want to avoid being in the same cell as them.

The recommendations have been sent to the Commissioner General of Prisons, Chief Justice, Attorney General, Inspector General of Police, Minister of Prison Reforms and Director General of Health Services by Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. The Commission said it commenced the inquiry on its own after seeing the media reports of several deaths of prisoners following prison unrest, serious injuries to prisoners and officers and two officers being held hostage.<sup>25</sup>

Recommendations for immediate implementation based on the Commission's obligations under Ss. 10, 11 & 14 of the HRCSL Act. A full report and final set of recommendations will be issued following conclusion of inquiry.

A. Immediate: Reduce the prison population: in 4 (four points) and the recommendations of the HRCSL's study of the Prisons, it is essential the following steps are taken to reduce the population **immediately**:

- Expedite release of remainders on bail-able offences,
- Hold emergency bail hearings for others,
- Stop remanding those arrested in suspicion of bail-able offences and
- Commence the early release programme.

**Health** and treatment of prisoners: in (05) five points

- All new admissions must be first subject to PCR testing before being included in the Prisons;
- Quarantine facilities for new intakes to be strictly maintained;
- Provide a separate treatment facility for all prisoners and remandees who are infected with the virus;
- Test all prisoners at Mahara and
- Regular testing and treatment for officials.<sup>26</sup>

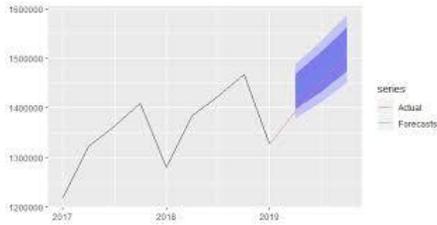
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<sup>25</sup> Human Rights Commission issues interim recommendations on Mahara Prison riot  
[http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_20B/Dec05\\_1607154744CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_20B/Dec05_1607154744CH.php)

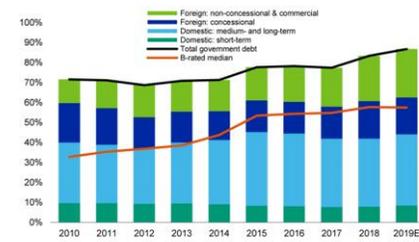
<sup>26</sup> <https://srilankabrief.org/2020/12/hrc-sl-recommendations-mahara-prison-clash-and-deaths-could-have-been-completely-avoided/>

# ECONOMY –Post Pandemic

## C 4.B. Covid 19 and Economy

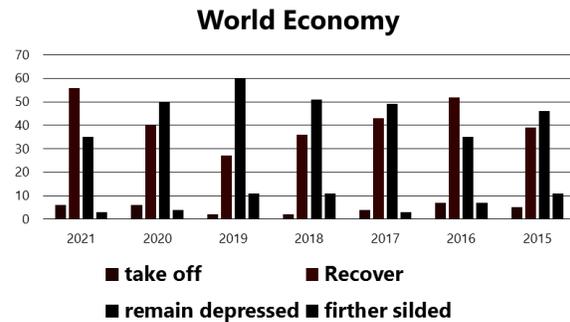
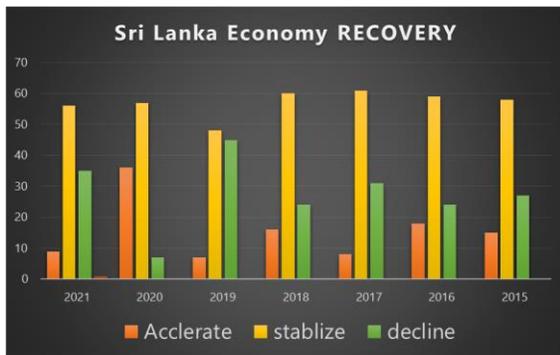


Debt burden continues to increase, particularly on growing foreign borrowing (Percent of GDP)



Sources: Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Finance and Moody's Investors Service

Moody's Investors Service yesterday (29) warned that Sri Lanka is facing simultaneous domestic and external shocks amid the global coronavirus outbreak.<sup>9</sup> <http://bizenglish.adaderana.lk/global-covid-19-outbreak-exacerbates-government-liquidity-external-risks-moodys/>



### General View

Global poverty is expected to increase for the first time in over 20 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Up to 115 million people worldwide will fall into extreme poverty this year. So, this particular “End Poverty Day” was marked not with celebration as in years past, but with reflection and recommitment.

Sri Lanka reflect on the achievements of this island nation over the past few decades. Indeed, Sri Lanka has carved out a special place in the region. Its economy has undergone important transformations. Sri Lanka ranks the highest in the South Asia Region in the World Bank Human Capital Index for the second time in a row.

However Covid19 transformed this fast moving economy to challenging phase by creating most vulnerable in to most effected non-recoverable sector. Informal workers, about 70% of the workforce, and especially those in the industries and low-end services, are likely to be the most affected. What remedies to create?

### **Sri Lanka stocks plunged:**

6.5 per cent Tuesday wiping out 245 billion rupees from stock values after making steep gains over several weeks on the back of low interest rates and strong earnings in some firms, brokers said. Trading was halted twice as falling index hit circuit breakers. Many investors will take profit and take off some of their margins. However the expert says that fundamental valuations for many good shares are still intact.

### **Tourism Sector**

In early part of Jan 2021 Sri Lanka launch a pilot programme on Tourism sector which were create controversial due to country origin was lock down for indifferently due to rising of Covid19. It has many short comes on health guidelines as well as indiscipline tourist ignoring the country level health guidelines. However in order to rebound the tourism sector government decided to open the Airports for commercial flights from Mid-January 2021 in order open the country for business.

Other Areas?

Other areas also to be immediate concern were agriculture sector, manufacturing, and foreign remittance from migrant workers which cover nearly 20% of GDP in 2018/2019 which has dropped to little less than 5% overall.

### **Agriculture Sector**

The emphasis on increasing agriculture production is a step in the correct direction. Long term Strategies are needed to enhance tea, rubber, coconut, cocoa, and other tree crop production that has been neglected over the years due to in addition to existing vulnerabilities to climate shocks, including floods and droughts, which disproportionately impact the lives of the poor, lack of keeping promises on subsidiaries and other farmers issues on human capital development now turned worst due to lack market in locally and internationally.

### **Manufacturing**

Company investments zones are facing severe stress as resulted increasing expenses on testing covid19 which is company has to bear the cost, also tight order situation and staff turnout dropping by 25%. (Sunday Times of Sri Lanka Jan21).

### **Emerging Markets**

The spread of COVID-19 puts additional strain on Sri Lanka, a small open economy with limited fiscal scope to combat the pandemic. That said, the government has employed wide-ranging measures to curb the spread, and cushion the impact on businesses and people, aided by multilateral agencies and support from China, the United States, the EU, Canada, and India.

Similar to other emerging economies, worries over an economic slowdown in Sri Lanka, led to a sell-off in the financial market and capital outflows. In less than two months<sup>12</sup> the country witnessed a 70% outflow of foreign-owned T-bills and T-bonds (US\$ 372 million or 0.42% of GDP)<sup>13</sup>, whilst the Sri Lankan Rupee depreciated by 5.3% over the same time frame.<sup>14</sup> The CSEALL Price Index, Sri Lanka's leading stock market index, fell to its lowest level in eight years on 12th May. Previously, trading had been suspended to restrict panic selling. Ever since, the market has increased 13.1%, leading to a Year-To-Date return of -21.6%.<sup>15</sup>

## E. COVID-19 : Government's and Civil Society Responses

### E.1.The pressure to hold an election in the midst of a pandemic

Despite some unease over COVID-19 strategies, the dissolution of the Parliament and call for elections on 25 April created a distraction that put all of Sri Lanka in election mode. Sri Lankans' public awareness regarding the impending danger of the virus that had already begun spreading across Asia and Europe was rather low at the time. While the numbers of affected people were gradually rising in the third week of March, there were still no concrete measures introduced by the interim government (in the context of a dissolved Parliament) and the president.

This passivity is ascribed to the desire of the president and his party to hold elections in April. On television, the health minister mentioned that she did not see any need to introduce stringent rules to curb the spread of the virus since the situation was not that bad and that they would go ahead with the election anyways because they would win. The deadline for nominations was at noon on 19 March, and the Election Commission was apparently under pressure to downplay the coronavirus outbreak to ensure the election would proceed.

However, only a few hours later, the president gave instructions to declare an island-wide curfew, and to close the airport to inbound flights. At first, people did not follow the curfew rules, but within a few days it became strictly enforced. Many businesses sprung up to provide services such as the delivery of groceries, food, medicine, gas, and other essential items, while some banks organized mobile ATM services. The island-wide curfew was gradually relaxed, but a few districts, including Colombo, were subject to the full curfew of 52 days, until 10 May.

In mid-March, the Election Commission decided to postpone the planned 25 April election indefinitely due to the outbreak, but there was substantial pressure on the commission to hold the elections before 2 June because the dissolved Parliament needed to reconvene by then due to the Constitution only allowing for a maximum three months' closure. In response, the Election Commission wrote to the president to inform him that due to COVID-19, they could not organize an election before 2 June.

However, in light of the constitutional constraints, the commission requested that the president seek the opinion of the Supreme Court, which would have the power to invoke *force majeure* as a way out of the constitutional deadlock. However, President GR responded that it was not necessary. He also disregarded appeals by political parties, trade unions, religious leaders, and civil society to reconvene the Parliament by annulling his gazette that had dissolved it. The adamant behaviour exhibited by the president in his resolve to not parley with the Supreme Court highlighted his preference for exercising strong executive powers at the expense of the legislature and judiciary.

In the hope of holding elections, the curfew was slated to be lifted on 19 April. The health minister declared that, "by April 19, all possible COVID-19 patients in Sri Lanka will disappear and the people who had it without any symptoms or with mild symptoms will be completely

recovered” (Gunatilleke, 2020). Lankadeepa, the weekly newspaper with the largest circulation published a headline reading: “The Corona Danger is Over” in its 18 April edition (Fernando, 2020).

The same weekend prior to 19 April, a private television channel that is considered pro-president aired a graph that showed a downward trend in the numbers of infections. However, the graph was misleading, as the unit of time of the first three bars was weekly, while the last few bars were measured in daily units. The attempt to downplay the outbreak and gear up for a hurried election ultimately failed as on 20 April, a new all-time high (until then) of 33 infections in a single day was recorded.

Between the times of the first case of COVID-19 on 10 March, until 17 April, the total number of positive cases (271) and the number of deaths (5) were still relatively low. From 20 April, however, there was a steep spike in infections due the so-called “Navy cluster.” As mentioned previously, it was the military that was tasked with taking the lead in tracing, tracking and apprehending infected individuals who were hiding their condition to avoid being quarantined.

As a result, a number of Sri Lanka Navy personnel at camp Welisara (located Colombo City Suburb) became infected. Given the dormitory-style accommodations, the virus spread quickly.

## **F. COVID-19: Challenges and Assessment**

### **F.1. Military intervention in Covid19 pandemic exercise.**

The military played a key role in Sri Lanka's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Army commander was heading the National Operations Centre on COVID-19 and the military was tasked with carrying out search operations for contact tracing and arrests. The quarantine centers were run by the military, often using their camps, infrastructure, and personnel. Moreover, the ministers of health and agriculture were replaced by two military officers on the very first day the country began to reopen after the 52-day curfew. The military was also disproportionately represented on the Presidential Task Force in charge of economic revival and poverty eradication. The judicial system was essentially shutdown during the curfew period creating opportunities to overturn convictions and release cronies. For example, on 26 March, a military member who had been convicted of the murder of eight people, including four children, by slitting their throats and was serving a death sentence, was released by presidential pardon (Asia Times 2020). The domestic media reported this news as if it were the release of a war hero. Additionally, a former diplomat to Russia and a cousin of the president who had been in custody for his alleged involvement in a corruption scandal surrounding the procurement and renovation of aircraft for the Sri Lankan Air Force in 2006, was granted bail on 4 April, while the country was still under curfew (Asia Tribune 2020).

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After 52 days of lockdown, the country was finally 're-opened' on 11 May, although between 11 PM to 5 AM the curfew remained in force. On the same day, a retired senior Army officer was appointed as the secretary to the Ministry of Health. This was the first time that military personnel had been entrusted with this post, which had until this point been held by members of

the Sri Lankan Administrative Service, who have to undergo years of training and service as well as pass an exam. Two days later, the former minister of health, an actual medical doctor, and ardent critic of the president and staunch member of his opposition, was arrested.

During the first week after reopening the country, President GR brought together the senior bureaucrats, including secretaries of ministries and heads of departments to appraise the situation and plan ahead. The president did not mince words when he said to the country's most senior bureaucrats: "You know what my policies are. You will either need to act according to that or say you can't or leave. That is what I have to say." He also expressed his belief that "[he is] doing things the right way and if the right policies cannot be implemented there is no point in having public sector officials" (News Wire, 2020).

## **F.2. Refugees from India**

Sri Lanka raised surveillance along its northern coast, following reports of attempts of South Indians trying to reach Sri Lanka by boats following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. A specific case of a father-daughter duo, who were residents of the Pooluvapatti Sri Lankan Refugee Camp in Coimbatore arriving in Sri Lanka from Tamil Nadu by boat early in June. Sri Lankan police took them into custody on arrival and also arrested six other Sri Lankans who assisted them enter the island. Nearly 100,000 Sri Lankan refugees live in Tamil Nadu, many of whom are keen on returning to their former homes, while aware of the many challenges that await them, including the lack of opportunities and livelihood options in the war-battered economy.

With the spike in COVID-19 cases in Tamil Nadu, some may be desperately trying to leave. The issue came up when Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa addressed editors of Tamil newspapers on July 1. According to a report published in popular Tamil newspaper *Virakesari* on July 2, Mr. Rajapaksa told the editors: "The number of those entering illegally is increasing. The Prime Minister assured that President and himself have spoken with the Indian government on the matter<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> The Hindu (2020) Sri Lanka watching northern coast to prevent refugees from India. July 03, 2020. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/sri-lanka-watching-northern-coast-to-prevent-refugees-from-india/article31979732.ece>

## G. Proposal and Recommendation

### a) Proposals and recommendations - Integrating Civil Societies engagements

- i. Right to Information (RTI) clause that survived the sweeping changes created by the 20th Amendment still stands to be the beacon of hope as far as SDG 16 is concerned. Though the appointment of the Commissioners is now finally vests with the President, the other provisions of the RTI Act remains intact. This is an area where civil society groups can leverage its work;
- ii. Promotion of the knowledge of the RTI Act and its provisions as well as procedures of obtaining information is a key task that the civil society groups can carry out among the public. Such knowledge will lead to further usage of the Right to Information which is recognized as a fundamental right by the Constitution which is a significant achievement as far SDG 16 is concerned;
- iii. Shrinking the civil society space and the increased level of surveillance as well as regulation is a trend that is emerging. This raises serious concerns on fundamental freedoms such as freedom of association and freedom of expression. These apparent contradictions with the SDG 16 strategies and overall commitment to SDGs by the government should be brought to attention by civil society groups in their reviews of the SDG progress
- iv. Another area which is affected is Anti-Corruption. Exempting nearly 200 government-owned companies from the government audit regulation is a major concern. The abolition of the Audit Commission which functioned as an Independent Commission is also another serious threat to the anti-corruption strategies set under the SDG 16. These apparent deviations from the commitments on SDG 16 should be brought to notice under regular SDG reviews to be carried by the civil society groups.

### b) Proposals and recommendations – Political, Governance and Collaboration

- a. Proposal of Provisional law order systems to combat pandemic lockdown domestic violence's subjected to physical, psychological or sexual;
  - i.
- b. Strengthen civil partnership and advocacy to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels during the health pandemic/epidemic;
- c.
- d. Strengthen the Government Monitoring systems and Develop strong evaluation policy frame work.
  - i.
- e. Strengthen the fullest capacity on relevant institutions nationally and Equally in sub-nationally to combat pandemic and epidemic;

### Strengthen the Capacity building;

- i. Provisional Guidelines for Clinical Management of COVID-19 and /or for any pandemic (Potential)
- ii. Risk Management and Community Engagement
- iii. Proposing strengthen the civil society engagement to formulate national volunteering squad to assist with capacity on community preventions
- iv. Develop and strengthen the capacity on all essential services resources on above pandemic management as compulsory

### c) Proposal and recommendation Civil society engagement

- a) Strengthen the Regional and sub regional to address impact on Social, economic , environment and good governance affiliated with Beijing+25 Regional CSO Forum , SAPA General Forum Strategize Asian Civil Society;
- b) Lobby and promote more member countries to ADN & UN Democracy Fund supports civil society's dialogue with policy makers in Asia;
- c) Strengthen the affiliation and dialogue with other regions; i.g. EU, North American, African ect.  
Develop effective civil society monitoring & evaluation mechanism to assess countries accountability and transparency institutions at all levels

### d) Proposal for Regional & International

- a) WHO as a focal international organization should collectively encompass all the UN families into there pandemic strategic plan including following.
- b) Major Civil Societies such as Major groups identified in the SDGs forum;
- c) Strengthen the WHO national entities to follow the above strategic plan to strengthen the inclusive participatory civil societies participatory in the process;
- d) Highlighted SDG 16 and 17 in to the WHO strategic plan to overcome disparities occur during the pandemic where social and economic constrains.
- e) Established Regional and sub regional forum of Pandemic to address Social, economic , environment and good governance under UNESCAP, Asian, SAARC, SA

### E) Proposals and recommendations – Political, Governance and Collaboration

- a) Overcome the underperformance economic policies, to elimination of communal violence's, and revisiting the policies and acts to adjustment post covid19 impact to the economy.
- b) Look for long term as well as short term economic solutions such as pragmatic economic policies without political gains.

## **H.Overall conclusion**

### **Analysis, Implications and Need for Action**

It is important to understand that COVID-19 hit Sri Lanka at a politically significant time with a regime change and when a new president was just settling into his role and preparing to further consolidate executive power. The curfew provided an opportunity for a president who came from a military background and favored the military over existing administrative structures to establish a near-authoritarian style of governance. At a time when the Parliament had been dissolved and the court system was not fully functioning, the president was able to use and expand executive powers to marginalize legislative and judicial checks-and-balances to further his agenda. Thus, while the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in Sri Lanka may seem relatively limited compared to other nations, it has been exploited politically to consolidate a modality governance with an emphasis of excessive executive powers. Fortunately, the public health consequences were limited owing to a free healthcare system and an efficient public health network. However, the health of democracy, the rule of law, and constitutional freedoms of citizens remain at risk from an equally dangerous virus as COVID-19, one that has been contracted by the body politic of Sri Lanka during the 52-day curfew.

#### **Specific conclusions on the Impact on Policy Goal 16 Strategies**

*Align national policies and regulations with international instruments to country context, in order to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime*

A serious contradiction and misuse of international instrument such as the ICCPR originally meant to combat violence and discrimination based on race, religion and ethnicity was explained in the report. ICCPR had been (mis)used to curb freedom of expression as well as to intimidate and threaten dissenting voices.

Strengthen rule of law and legislation system to promote transparency and accountability, thereby ensuring free of corruption and bribery in all their forms, while assuring justice for all

*Eliminate serious and adverse impact of corruption and bribery in all areas by ensuring good governance*

The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution established a Constitutional Council and without the consent of this Council, the President cannot appoint key offices such as the Chief Justice, the Judges of the Supreme Court, the President and the Judges of the Court of Appeal, the Members of the Judicial Service Commission, the Attorney-General, The Auditor-General, the Inspector, General of Police, the Ombudsman, the Secretary-General of Parliament. Further, the said Amendment established Independent Commissions on Police, Elections, Audit, Human Rights,

and Judicial Services. With the passage of the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment, these progressive changes enhanced the transparency and accountability of governance. However, the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment, passed in October 2020, significantly diluted these progressive advancements in terms of governance. The most relevant institution in regard to transparency and accountability, the Audit Commission, was abolished by the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment. It also abolished the National Procurement Services Commission, which was established to “formulate fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective procedures and guidelines” for government procurements, and ensure integrity, transparency, and accountability.

With the abolishing of the Audit Commission, nearly 120 State-owned companies including the Sri Lankan Airlines, Lanka Electricity Company (LECO), Sri Lanka Insurance, Lanka Hospitals PLC, Litro Gas Lanka Ltd, Lanka Sathosa, multiple plantation and electricity companies and Lanka Coal Company Ltd, etc. will be exempt from Government audit under the proposed 20th Amendment to the Constitution. The qualifications required of an Auditor General—which were more defined under Article 153(1) of the Constitution—have been removed and the method of appointment changed to allow direct nomination, by the President, without the Constitutional Council’s involvement. The Amendment also impinges on the independence of the Auditor General by placing him within the definition, once again, of “public officer”. Article 170 of the Constitution had held him as exempt. The proposed changes go against international conventions, traditions and norms.<sup>28</sup>

Concerns on the repeal of Article 156A of the constitution as a result of the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment have also been raised. Further to compromising the constitutional recognition of the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC), it said, the repeal of this Article also strips CIABOC of the *suo moto* powers it was afforded through the 19th amendment, to initiate investigations of its own accord<sup>29</sup>.

*Strengthen the availability of and accessibility to information and institution accordance with national legislation (e.g. Right to Information Act) and international agreements in all levels governance, and private sector.*

A positive feature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment was that it retained the Right to Information clause of the Constitution as well as the Independent Commission. However, the appointment of the members of the Commissioners was taken away from the independent Constitutional Council. That power and task was vested with a Parliamentary Council which is perceived not be able to make recommendations given its limited scope and powers, thus putting the operationality of RTI at risk. This is believed to be compromising the independence of the commission members.

*Strengthen the role of the state, civil society and other stakeholders in line with the national strategy that prioritizes locally owned and sustainable development*

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<sup>28</sup> Sri Lanka Brief (2020) 120 State-owned companies will be exempt from Government audit under the proposed 20th Amendment. 13.09.2020. <https://srilankabrief.org/2020/09/120-state-owned-companies-will-be-exempt-from-government-audit-under-the-proposed-20th-amendment/>.

<sup>29</sup> Economy Next (2020) Sri Lanka 20th amendment: TISL warns of compromised accountability. September 10, 2020, <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-20th-amendment-tisl-warns-of-compromised-accountability-73813/>.

*assistance based on collaborative partnerships in safe guarding human rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), conflict mitigation & transformation, resolution and reconciliation, in order to ensure peace harmony.*

During the subsequent negotiations on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Member States held regular hearings with major groups and other stakeholders to hear their concrete suggestions and proposals. However it may have implement and heard the voice of <sup>30</sup>MGoS, locally establishment of link to the MGoS did not materialized due to lack of commitment not only from the government entities but also by NGO/CSO sector's. Therefore sustainability on CSO presence create a major void to the needs and issues of the vulnerable.

*Ensure a peaceful, resilient and secure cyber space in Sri Lanka this below table describe the based on the policy targets how national strategies drafted on specific action and indicators. (Some remain on global indicators some strategies with national and global too)*

The rising levels of cybercrimes are a major threat to global and national security. For instance, with the spread of the coronavirus affecting thousands of people all around the world, it has also led to the emergence of cybercriminals taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to further their own aims. <sup>31</sup>It is important for Sri Lanka to learn and recognize vulnerabilities in order to help prevent or minimize the effects of future cybercrimes. Therefore, this LKI Blog will discuss the dangers of cybercrimes and explore how Sri Lanka is currently tackling cybercrimes with the help and cooperation of key actors.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/aboutmajorgroups.html>

<sup>31</sup> <https://lki.lk/blog/mitigating-the-risk-of-cyber-crime-in-sri-lanka/>

2Williams, H. (2020). Scams jump 66 per cent during lockdown as fraudsters take advantage of nation's uncertainty. [Online] The Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/scams-rise-coronavirus-lockdown-fraud-warning-a9678291.html> [Accessed 21 August 2020].

4Ministry of Defence. (2020). Govt. to bring new laws to combat emerging cybercrimes. [Online] Defence News. Available at: [http://www.defence.lk/Article/defence\\_article/837](http://www.defence.lk/Article/defence_article/837) [Accessed 08 April 2020].

5Perera, A. & Wattedgama, C. (2019). Sri Lanka's unsung cyber security champions [Online] Daily FT. Available at: <http://www.ft.lk/columns/Sri-Lanka-s-unsung-cyber-security-champions/4-677891> [Accessed 09 April 2020].



Accordingly, Sri Lanka proposed the Cyber Security Act under the National Cyber Security Strategy of Sri Lanka, which is being finalized by Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team (SLCERT), as a comprehensive framework to prevent and manage cyber security threats and incidents effectively, and protect critical information infrastructure.<sup>4</sup> This bill creates the legal framework for setting up a National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), which will be the central apex body responsible for all cyber security activities.<sup>5</sup> Hence, by conducting cyber risk assessments with the available technological assets, Sri Lanka can identify liabilities and easily mitigate future risks.

