



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# FAO Sri Lanka Newsletter

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*Silkworm Genetics/ Silk Egg Breeding Expert Project in 1985*

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# Regional Initiative on Sustainable Intensification of Aquaculture for Blue Growth in Asia-Pacific

Sri Lanka is one of six focus countries for implementing FAO's Regional Initiative on Sustainable Intensification of Aquaculture for Blue Growth in Asia-Pacific (others are Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam). This regional initiative aims to contribute to food and nutrition security, and increase livelihood opportunities and blue economic growth through supporting sustainable growth of aquaculture in Asia-Pacific

## *Fish consumption and aquaculture*

Fish is now an important source of diet protein for the world population, and population growth coupled with an emerging global middle class are contributing to a rapidly increasing demand for seafood. The Asian region in particular is projected to make up 70 percent of global fish consumption by 2030. Asia is also the main contributor to the world aquaculture (90 percent), and, considering the stagnant capture fish production, aquaculture will largely need to meet this increased demand for fish. It is expected that up to 62 percent of food fish will come from aquaculture by 2030. Fisheries and aquaculture are a vital source of jobs, nutritious

food and economic opportunities, especially for small-scale fishing communities.

The main focus of this Regional Initiative is therefore on promoting informed policy, good governance and improved management practices in the course of intensification of aquaculture. The aim is to contribute to sustainable development of the aquaculture sector, covering the whole supply chain from the input supply to the marketing of products.

## *Regional Initiative Workshops*

Government focal points and key technical persons of the six regional initiative focus countries responsible for implementing the Regional Initiative in the focus countries attended two workshops at the FAO Regional Office in Bangkok (October 2014 and March 2015) to: discuss activities and share experiences; review the implementation status and progress; and, identify issues, gaps and constraints. FAO Representatives to all the six regional initiative focus countries and officers from the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific also attended the workshops.

*Sri Lanka's activities being implemented under the Regional Initiative.*

Sri Lanka is implementing a number of aquaculture projects and activities under the initiative, including:

- Improving seabass aquaculture through better feed and health management;
- Supporting culture-based fisheries Farmer Societies to undertake fish seed production activities;
- Strengthening human resource capacity to undertake fish genetic improvements;
- Improving brood stock management and genetics of Nile Tilapia brood stock;
- Reducing and managing the risks of Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease (AHPND) of cultured shrimp;
- Studying the aquaculture value chain for improved income generating opportunities and market linkages; and
- Strengthening women participation in fisheries societies; capacity building on leadership and entrepreneurship skills; and training on value addition activities.



*Seabass aquaculture supported through a FAO Project*

# The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015

Global hunger has continued to decline, gradually, to an estimated 795 million undernourished people, or a reduction of 167 million hungry people over the last ten years according to the latest edition of the annual UN hunger report, The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015 (SOFI) published by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP). This decline has been most pronounced in developing countries, despite significant population growth.

In the developing regions, the prevalence of undernourishment - which measures the proportion of people who are unable to consume enough food for an active and healthy life - has declined to 12.9 percent of the population, down from 23.3 percent a quarter of a century ago.

Out of the countries monitored by FAO, 72 out of 129 have achieved the Millennium Development Goal target of halving the prevalence of undernourishment by 2015, with developing regions as a whole missing the target by a small margin.

During the past quarter century, of all regions in the world, the Asia and the Pacific region has achieved the fastest rate of economic growth, leading to a dramatic reduction in extreme poverty below US\$ 1.25/person/day and meeting, in early 2010, the Millennium Development Goal of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half. The region also achieved the largest reduction in the number of undernourished people in the world, and the region as a whole achieved the MDG 1c target of reducing the

proportion of people who suffer from hunger by half by 2015.

While Sri Lanka has made progress, it has however yet to achieve the MDG 1c target. The proportion of undernourished in Sri Lanka stands at 22.0% in 2014-16, down from 30.6% in 1990-92.

The challenge of ensuring food security can only be met if all stakeholders work together, with a multi-sectoral outlook. Economic growth is a key success factor for reducing undernourishment, but it has to be inclusive and provide opportunities for improving the livelihoods of the poor. Enhancing the productivity and incomes of small-holder family farmers is key to progress.

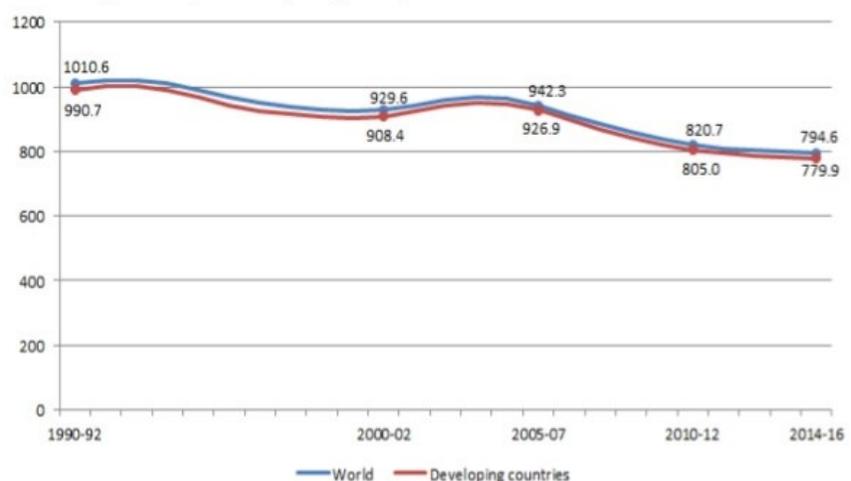
While increasing agricultural production is vital for improving food security, other elements are equally important, including investing in research and development,

diversifying production, ensuring access to safe and nutritious foods, reducing post-harvest losses, and putting in place appropriate policies and social protection measures.

FAO is committed to working together in Sri Lanka and around the region and the globe to achieve food security, drive forward economic and social progress, and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

**“Hunger and food insecurity are often an access problem, caused by lack of purchasing power, lack of physical access or lack of social protection schemes,”** said Ms. Beth Crawford, FAO Representative for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. **“The challenge, therefore, is not only increasing food production and availability to meet the growing demand, but also ensuring continual access to nutritious and diverse food.”**

- **795 million** undernourished people in the world in 2014–16
- **780 million** in developing regions
- **Decline by 216 million** since 1990–92 and by 167 million over the last 10 years (faster progress)



## Scaling up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach

'Scaling up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach' is a Joint Programme of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) being implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka. This project aims at implementing prioritized activities of the national Multi-Sector Action Plan on Nutrition (MSAPN) through a grant from the Corporation Espanola, administered by the Sustainable Development Goal Fund (SDG-F), and through matching funds from the Government of Sri Lanka.

*The two main objectives of the WFP and FAO Joint Programme (JP) are to:*

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of government investment on food security and nutrition by highlighting the gaps, opportunities and impact of current initiatives; and
- Achieve attitudinal and behavioral changes through enhanced nutrition education and nutrition promotion on safe and nutrient/rich foods, dietary, nutrient deficiencies and its root causes.

The key focus for FAO within the JP is to improve the nutrition, knowledge, and dietary practices of school children and pre-school children by providing nutrition information; curriculum development; technical guidelines and tools; training of teachers, education officers, and other relevant stakeholders in nutrition education; introducing school garden-based learning; and strengthening school nutrition information systems. To achieve these goals, FAO works closely with the State Ministry of Education (SMoEd) and Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MoWCA).

Inception workshops were conducted on 21 and 24 July 2015 with SMoEd and MoWCA, respectively, and relevant stakeholders to discuss detailed activities in achieving the project objectives, outputs and outcomes. Subsequently, consultative workshops were held on 3–4 September 2015 with SMoEd to revise and develop detailed school feeding guidelines and obtain recommendation for curriculum development in nutrition. FAO is continuing to work in close partnership with both Ministries to implement the activities of the JP to promote nutrition information and improve the nutritional status of children. Following the recent changes within the government, the SDG-F JP is collaborating with the National Nutrition Secretariat of Sri Lanka (NNSL) to ensure programmatic oversight and coordination between the implementing ministries to work together towards a successful outcome of reducing maternal and child under-nutrition and contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of under-nutrition by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of government nutrition programmes.



*Participants at the Inception workshop with SMoEd*

## Introduction of Quinoa Towards Improved Food & Nutritional Security in Sri Lanka



Quinoa is a grain crop which has gained worldwide attention because of its ability to grow in various abiotic stress conditions such as soil salinity, acidity, drought, frost, etc. Its grain is a rich source of a wide range of minerals, vitamins, oil and high quality protein containing ample amounts of sulphur-rich amino acids. These benefits necessitated the introduction of quinoa to newer areas outside its native region (Andean region of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Colombia), especially in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. FAO with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture initiated the project 'Technical Assistance for the introduction of Quinoa toward improved food and nutrition security in Bhutan and Sri Lanka'. The project identified Quinoa as one of the main crops for which adaptability trials are to be carried out in different locations of Sri Lanka. Five varieties are being tested (Blanca De Junin, Amarilla Sacaca, Salcedo Inia, Kancolla and Amarilla Marangani) in Gannoruwa, Sitaeliya, Rahangala, Kalpitiya, Thirunelveli, Kilinochchi and Meepilimana, to identify the suitability for commercial cultivation.

## Sri Lanka elaborates on potential REDD+ action

More than thirty representatives from national institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector, gathered on 2–3 July 2015 in Wadduwa, to discuss potential policies, measures and actions to reduce carbon emissions from land use and land use changes in Sri Lanka.

This was part of the on-going effort in partnership with civil society and private sector actors to improve the ways in which Sri Lanka's forests are currently being managed and conserved through a new mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which focuses on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+).

To support this effort, the UN-REDD Programme, a joint initiative between FAO, UNDP and UNEP, is working closely with both the state and non-state actors to put in place necessary capacities, mechanisms, strategies and action plans to implement REDD+ in Sri Lanka.

One of the expected results through this effort is the preparation and adoption of Sri Lanka's National REDD+ Strategy, which outlines, among others, a comprehensive set of policies, measures and actions to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and to enhance forest cover in the country.

The participants of this two-day event conducted a problem tree analysis of key drivers including encroachments, infrastructure development, and commercial agriculture. Building on the analysis, the participants then developed a solution tree to each problem or driver, in order to identify a set of potential interventions.

This list of potential policies, measures and actions will be compiled and prioritized based on a range of criteria identified by stakeholders, through a consultative multi-criteria analysis. An initial set of prioritized potential REDD+ policies, measures and actions was completed in early October 2015.

## Regional Workshop on Negotiation Skills



*Participants of the workshop*

The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) organized a training workshop on Negotiation Skills on 25-26 May to improve staff competency in negotiating skills in entering into formal agreements.

The two-day in-house workshop was conducted by Learning Tree International of UK. It was attended by seven representatives from the region and six RAP officers. Dihan Hettige, Assistant FAO Representative (Administration) participated from Sri Lanka.

The sessions mainly entailed interactive discussions and video presentations by the facilitator. Many experiences at field level were shared by the participants around the table from their own country experiences. The emphasis was on principled negotiations that result in wise agreements, formulating communications strategies based on various situations, developing a confident negotiating style to deflect tough tactics, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and applying influence to gain commitment from others and foster collaboration.

# World Food Day 2015

FAO celebrates World Food Day each year on 16 October, the day on which the Organization was founded in 1945.

*The objectives of World Food Day are to:*

- encourage attention to agricultural food production and to stimulate national, bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental efforts to this end;
- encourage economic and technical cooperation among developing countries;
- encourage the participation of rural people, particularly women and the least privileged categories, in decisions and activities influencing their living conditions;
- heighten public awareness of the problem of hunger in the world;
- promote the transfer of technologies to the developing world; and
- strengthen international and national solidarity in the struggle against hunger, malnutrition and poverty and draw attention to achievements in food and agricultural development.

The theme this year is 'Social Protection and Agriculture; Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty'. Social protection exists when governments develop policies and programs to address economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty. Through cash transfers, vouchers, insurances and in-kind contributions, social protection programs enhance the income, status and capacities of poor and vulnerable people. Social protection improves people's access to healthcare and other social services, enabling them to sustainably provide for themselves and their family members.

FAO Sri Lanka intends to commemorate this day by depicting the theme through skits which will be organized through Non-Government Organizations, Schools and Department of Agriculture. Skits will be performed in Sinhala, Tamil and English languages to communicate information to farmers and government officials on how to break the cycle of rural poverty through Social Protection and Agriculture. This event would be done in partnership with World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Agriculture and would take place at the Institute of Post-Harvest Research and Technology Center in Anuradhapura on October 16th from 9.30a.m to 12.30p.m.

## *The World Food Day Poster Contest 2015*

The World Food Day Poster Contest is one of the oldest FAO outreach projects involving students across the globe. Since its launch, the WFD poster contest has inspired thousands of children and young people to put their creativity and talents to work and figure out ways to fight poverty and hunger in their countries.

This year, contestants have to think about how to illustrate the theme, Social Protection and Agriculture: Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty. FAO Sri Lanka has disseminated information regarding this competition to all schools in the Western Province by designing a flyer with competition details available in all 3 languages (English, Sinhala and Tamil)

The contest will be run according to age groups with three sections for the following age groups: 5 - 8 yrs, 9 - 12 yrs and 13-17 yrs. The top three entrants for each age group will see their posters showcased in the multimedia UN Zero Hunger Itinerary at Expo Milano, where the World Food Day will be celebrated this year with the participation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon. On top of that, since 2015 marks the 70th Anniversary of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, all the award winners of the WFD Poster Contest will also receive a commemorative medal from FAO.



The flyer for the World Food Day Poster Contest 2015 features the FAO logo and the title 'World Food Day Poster Contest 2015'. It includes a small illustration of children and a globe. The text on the flyer provides details about the contest, including the theme, age groups, deadline, and submission requirements.

**World Food Day Poster Contest 2015**

Design, draw or paint a poster for the World Food Day 2015. Winners will have their poster widely showcased and will receive a commemorative medal from FAO.

**Contestants**  
All school children within the age groups : 5 - 8 yrs, 9 - 12 yrs and 13-17 yrs.

**Deadline for submissions**  
30 September 2015

**Poster Requirements**

- Entries should represent the theme 'Social Protection and Agriculture: breaking the cycle of rural poverty'
- Through your poster, show us how you think we could free the poor people of this country from the grip of poverty and hunger.
- Scan your finished poster, or take a digital photo of the poster (JPG format) and upload.
- Posters must be submitted online at: <http://www.fao.org/world-food-day/contest/2015/en/>
- Just follow the instructions and submit your poster. You will receive a confirmation email.
- Please send an email to [World-food-day@fao.org](mailto:World-food-day@fao.org) if you have any technical difficulties in uploading the poster. For other questions, please write to [FAO-LK@fao.org](mailto:FAO-LK@fao.org)

*Flyer dispatched to schools on the Poster contest*

## Good Food Festival and Entrepreneur Exchange

The first “Good Food Festival and Entrepreneur Exchange” program was organized to coincide with the ‘Nutrition Month’ in Sri Lanka in June 2015.

It combined nutrition promotion with small enterprise development and reconciliation to serve the public a unique culinary, cultural, educational and entertaining experience. It was held at Green Path, Colombo on 27–28 of June 2015.

This program focused on nutrition



FAO stalls

promotion by creating awareness on the importance of nutrition, promoting local producers and suppliers of safe, nutritious food and demonstrating convenient ways of preparing healthy traditional food to suit today’s busy life style.

It promoted local enterprises by providing Northern entrepreneurs the opportunity to establish business linkages with markets in Colombo and other regions, promoting local agricultural produce and small farmers and creating awareness about Northern products and suppliers. It facilitated reconciliation by building inter regional and inter ethnic economic and social relationships and promoting cultural exchanges between participants from different regions in Sri Lanka.

FAO showcased two stalls. One was

occupied by groundnut vendors from Killinochchi and Mullaitivu and the other stall was divided between a traditional rice vendor from Anuradhapura and FAO visibility through a quiz program.

Both vendors gained income and experience through this event as it was a platform for them to market their products to the Colombo city consumers. The quiz raised awareness on the mandate of FAO and also on the importance of good nutrition.

Taking part in the FAO Quiz



## UN Regional Nutrition Meeting Asia Pacific



Participants of the workshop

UN Regional Nutrition workshop to improve coordination of UN’s efforts on nutrition at global, regional and country levels was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 29–30 June 2015. United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) organized this two day session where all participating UN agencies (FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) and other key partners could discuss the way forward in working together to improve the status of nutrition at a country level.

There were 90 participants at this workshop including officers of UN agencies, government representatives working on the areas of health and nutrition, nutrition experts, stakeholders from global and regional nutrition related initiatives, etc.

*“There is a need for harmonizing UN efforts, and allowing countries to take ownership and lead the actions for improving nutrition. Also with UN agencies building on comparative advantages, we can use this to leverage better synergies,” said Tina Jayaratnam, participant from FAO Sri Lanka.*

## Introducing new Assistant FAO Representative (Programme)

Dharmassree Bandara T. Wijeratne assumed duties as Assistant FAO Representative (Programme) for Sri Lanka on 6 July 2015. Wijeratne was born and raised in Kandy. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and a MPhil in Natural Products from the University of Peradeniya, and a PhD in Food Science from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA. Wijeratne commenced his career in 1985 as a Research Officer in food technology research and then as Director of Research and Development at the Ministry of Agriculture. He was once the Chairman of the Coconut Research Board and for the past four years, he has been an Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture in charge of both development and agriculture technology. In his capacity as the Additional Secretary of the Ministry, he has worked very closely with the FAO Representation as well as participated in several FAO Conferences in Rome and attended other FAO workshops globally. Wijeratne's wife is employed at the Puspadana Girls School and they have two daughters who are currently pursuing higher studies in California, USA.



## Joining FAO Sri Lanka (Since March 2015)



Alexis Maxime Corblin  
Chief Technical Advisor  
Colombo - UNREDD



Arulappu Vincent  
Project Assistant  
GCP/SRL/069/CAN



Dharmassree Bandara T.  
Wijeratne  
Assistant FAO Representative  
(Programme)



Gandhithason Kamaleswaran  
Technical Officer  
GCP/SRL/062/EC



Jawahir Umer Lebbe  
Technical Officer  
GCP/SRL/062/EC



Jin Ho Ahn  
UN Youth Volunteer in  
Communications



Logatharshini Sivarajah  
Veterinary Officer  
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Mahentheran Vimalakanth  
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*'For a world without hunger'*

## Social protection and agriculture



breaking the cycle of rural poverty