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## Joint Plan of Assistance for the Northern Province 2012

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The humanitarian response strategy JPA 2012 was reviewed and closed.
- The Government appreciated the good collaboration of the humanitarian community and the donors in resettling over 400,000 persons within three years.
- The humanitarian community stressed the importance of conducting multi-sectoral needs assessments to extend support to the most vulnerable when needs arise.
- Floods affected large part of the island in January.

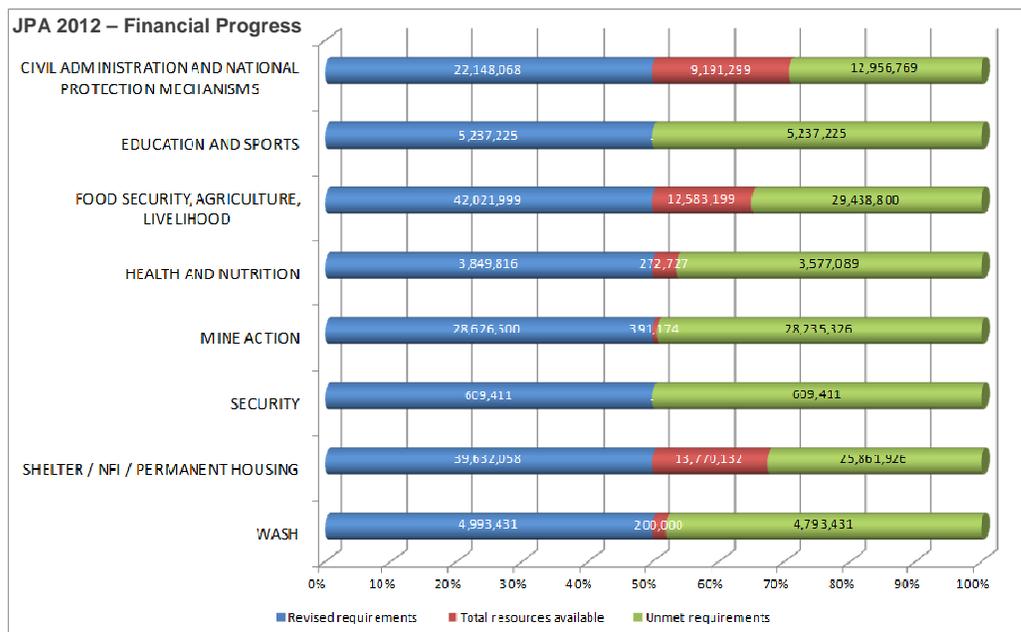
Since 2009, the humanitarian assistance to the Northern Province targeted individuals living primarily in IDP (internally displaced people) camps. During 2012 and going forward, the humanitarian response strategy was more to assist people in their areas of return, while not forgetting the remaining IDPs in welfare centers or living with friends and relatives. In 2012, 28 humanitarian agencies (12 UN agencies and 16 international NGOs) together with the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) launched the second Joint Plan of Assistance for the

### FUNDING

#### JPA 2012

147 million requested (US\$)

24.7% funded



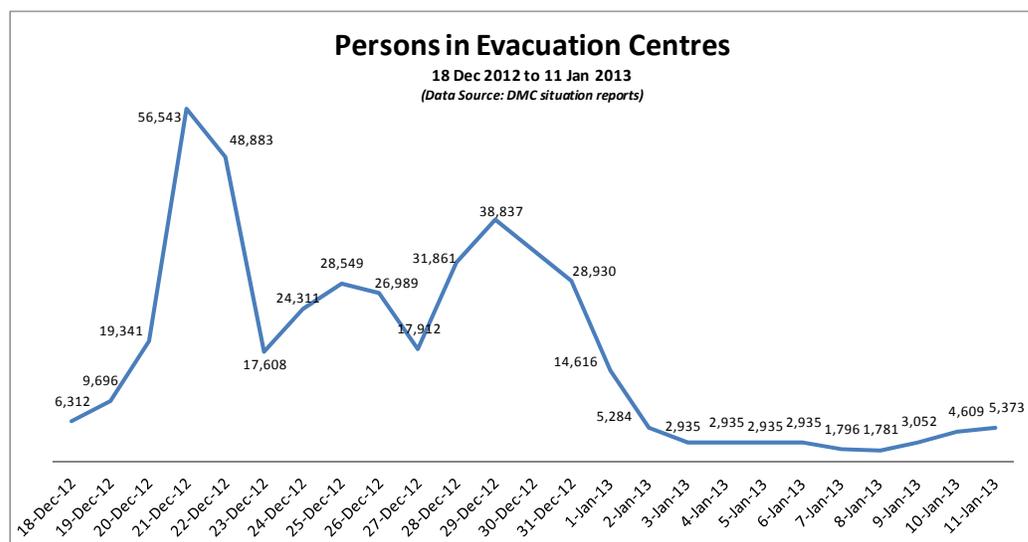
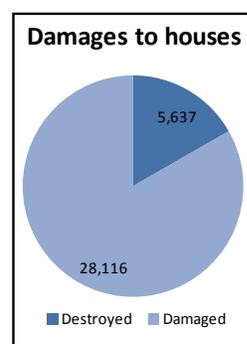
Northern Province (JPA), with a funding request of US\$ 147 million for 60 projects to support the displaced population in the Northern Province. By the end of December 2012, the JPA 2012 24.7% funded (\$36 million).

*The humanitarian community supported the Government's request to provide relief assistance, in the Northern Province.*

On 27 February 2013, the final review of JPA 2012 took place in Colombo. In an event co-chaired by the GoSL and the Humanitarian Coordinator, it was highlighted that there remain significant humanitarian needs and more critical work to be carried out. While recent returnees need assistance, the special needs of particularly vulnerable groups demand more attention. In addition to their material needs, resettled communities look for durable solutions to issues, such as land ownership, sexual and gender based violence, civil and legal documentation and equal access to resources, many of which are anchored in full restoration and strengthening of the district administrations. Therefore, continued donor commitment is needed to address shortfalls in assistance to avert potential lapse into deeper vulnerability among the IDPs and the returned population.

## Flood Emergency in Sri Lanka

The low depression in the Bay of Bengal in December 2012 adversely affected over 400,000 people in 21 districts across Sri Lanka through flood, landslide and high wind. At the peak of the situation, around 57,000 people were displaced and staying in safety centres. 45 deaths were reported, eight people went missing and 16 were injured. Cooked meals and dry rations were provided by the GoSL to the affected population. UN, international and national NGOs were able to provide complementary non-food items for the affected population mostly in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The low depression and the resulting situation in Sri Lanka were contained by early January 2013.



After a brief period of dry weather, heavy rain and floods again affected several parts of the country in late January 2013. A total of 146,600 people (49,554 families) in 12 districts in Central, Eastern, Southern, Sabaragamuwa, Uva and Northern Provinces were affected and

a total of 2,528 people (1,207 families) were evacuated to 31 safety centres. A total of 273 houses were destroyed and 2,408 houses were damaged by floods and landslides.

## Damage and Needs Assessments

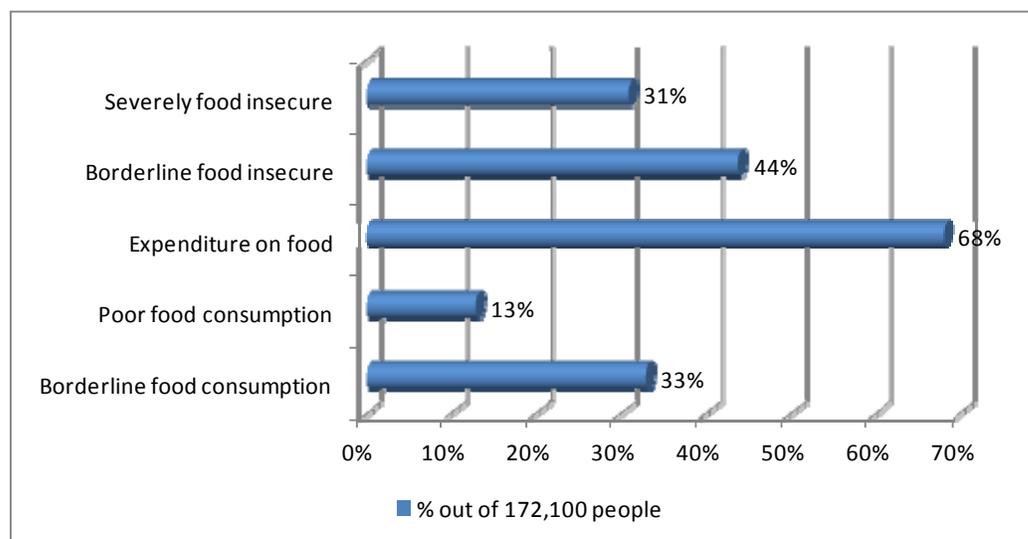
*No post-disaster multi-sectoral damage and needs assessments conducted.*

Though several agencies (government and non-governmental) conducted ad hoc damage and needs assessments in some of the most flood-affected areas (food security, crop damages and water and sanitation facilities), there was no multi-sectoral assessment conducted on flood / landslide damages and the resulting needs of the affected population.

The humanitarian community supports the request to the government to conduct multi-sectoral needs assessments both immediately after the disaster (particularly given the level of shelter needs) and looking at the medium term repercussions on crops, food security and markets. OCHA is ready to support this coordinated approach providing information management.

## Emergency Food Security Assessment

In order to prioritize the needs of the people, a rapid food security assessment was undertaken by WFP at the request of the Ministry of Economic Development and with the Ministry of Disaster Management.



The assessment covered ten of the worst affected districts and 580 households were surveyed and interviewed. Twenty-four focused group discussions were held in those districts.

According to the World Bank, if a household spends more than 65% of their total expenditure on food, vulnerability to food insecurity is very high. As noted in the graph above, the assessment showed 68% expenditure.

Currently, 41% of flood-affected households are using negative coping mechanisms such as skipping meals and limiting meal portions, eating less preferred food, pawning assets and borrowing money. This indicates that households have had little time to recover after the drought of last year, and that their food and livelihood security is becoming increasingly precarious.

Moreover, the assessment findings clearly indicated that a large number of surveyed

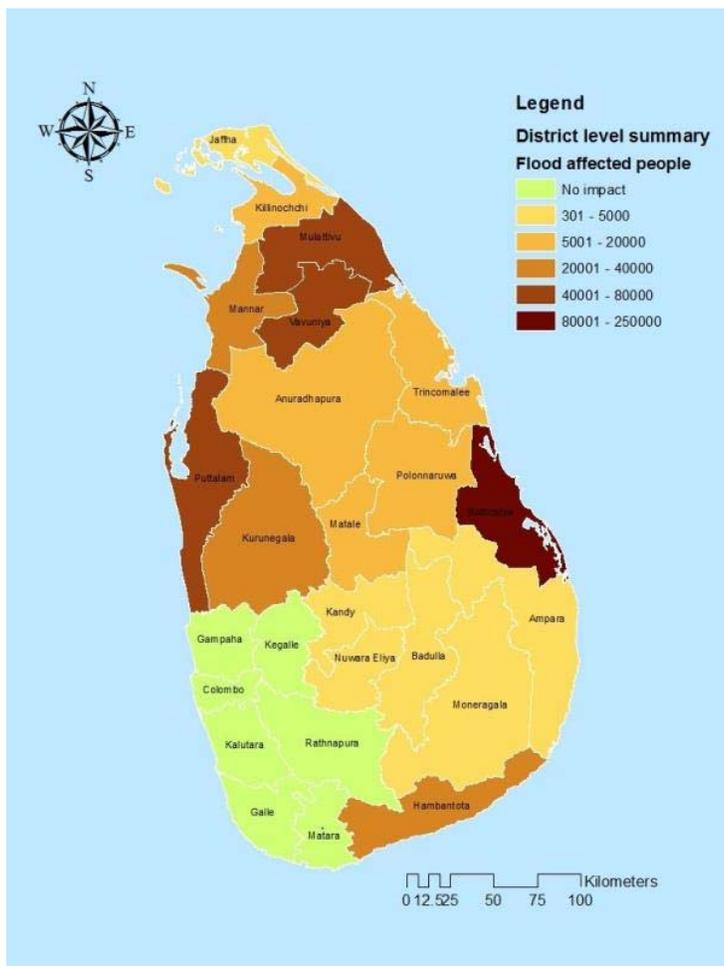
households have missed consecutive harvests due to the last year's drought and recent floods, further exacerbating their food insecurity levels.

The survey results have pointed out that markets are functioning properly in many places. However, prices of fresh vegetables increased significantly in the month of January against the normal trend.

Food and shelter grants were the most urgent needs requested by flood affected people. Shelter materials, seeds, credit facilities were the second priority needs requested. As an immediate response option, WFP is proposing a three month, US\$ 2.6 million cash-based food security intervention to assist 60,000 of the most vulnerable flood-affected individuals.

*Negative coping mechanisms used.*

*Markets are functioning but prices have increased.*



## WASH Assessment

Responding to a request from the Mannar Government Agent and District Disaster Management Unit (DDMU), Oxfam GB participated in a joint needs assessment of urgent WASH needs in flood affected areas of Mannar district, Northern Province during 4 – 9 January 2013. The assessment found that heavy rains, winds and overspill from tanks (water reservoirs) affected Nanattan and Musali Grama Niladhari Divisions (GNDs) particularly badly. People living in semi-permanent housing had to relocate to safety centres - and these centres were rapidly inundated by evacuees. The floods affected negatively the local market - small stores were either destroyed or damaged - adding to the difficulties people faced in accessing food.

Although shelter and livelihoods needs existed, this assessment focused on WASH needs. Safe drinking water provision for affected families was a challenge for the authorities - due to the fact that many affected locations remained inaccessible as well as due to inundation of dug or mud wells. Flood waters stagnated for more than 9 days, polluting the wells, the main drinking source for the local population. There was an urgent need to address people's short-term drinking water needs, as well as de-contaminate wells and ensure adequate hygiene standards. Pradeshiya Sabha (local authority) and the army were trucking in water, but not on a large enough scale to meet everyone's immediate water needs. Highland crops and paddy fields were damaged by the flood waters, and schools were also affected badly by serving as evacuation shelters, disrupting school services as well as causing some damage to school buildings and assets.

The WASH assessment conducted and the emergency response experience on the ground highlights the urgent need for coordinated, uniform, joint assessments to be conducted within the first few hours / days of the emergency, with government / DDMU in the lead role and other agencies in a support role in order to ensure adequate and timely relief services are provided to the affected population.