



NORWEGIAN EMBASSY



UNDP Sri Lanka's Flagship Portfolio on SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Progress Report

December 2018 – October 2019



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Resilient nations.*

Donor Report Summary Information

Title of Proposal	UNDP Sri Lanka Flagship Portfolio on SDG 16+ on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
Country	Sri Lanka
Donor	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Total Proposal Budget	US \$ 1,500,000.00
Total Expenditure	US \$ 433,964.41 (Utilization as of 15th October 2019 (USD))
Project Duration	From: December 2018 to: December 2022
Contributing Outcome (UN Sustainable Development Framework/ Country Programme Document)	UN Sustainable Development Framework 2018-2022 Driver 2: Strengthened innovative public institutions and engagement towards lasting peace Outcome 2: By 2022, people in Sri Lanka, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from more rights-based, accountable, inclusive and effective public institutions, to enhance trust amongst communities and towards the State.
Project Outcomes:	Outcome 1: Select policymaking and oversight structures strengthened to perform core functions for improved accountability and inclusivity. Outcome 2: Marginalized and vulnerable communities have increased and equitable access to justice, including demand-driven legal protection and gender sensitive services. Outcome 3: National and sub-national level institutions have the capacity to deliver equitable, accountable and effective services *Outcomes 1 and 2 are expected to be achieved with Norwegian funding
Partnerships	Following partners support project implementation: Parliamentary Advisory Board (consisting of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and six Members of Parliament across political parties as well as the Secretary General); Members, secretaries/director generals/senior officials of the following Commissions: Human Rights Commission, National Police Commission, Right to Information Commission; Secretaries/senior officials of Ministries mandated with the subjects of Justice; Law & Order; Women & Child Affairs; and Foreign Affairs; Judicial Service Commission, Attorney General's Department, Government Analyst's Department, Judicial Medical Service, Prisons Department, and National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses; the Police Department, The Bar Association of Sri Lanka, Women in Need; Women's Development Centre; Men Engage Alliance

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Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CLE	Continuous Legal Education
COPA	Committee on Public Accounts
CPC	Community Police Committees
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
ERD	External Resources Department
HRC	Human Rights Commission
LK	Sri Lanka
MP	Member of Parliament
NPC	National Police Commission
OIC	Officer in Charge
RTI	Right to Information
RTIC	Right to Information Commission
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Summary

During the first year of implementation of the UNDP Flagship Portfolio on SDG16+ on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, significant strides were taken towards strengthening Parliament and independent commissions to be more transparent, responsive and people-centered. Additionally, state and non-state justice sector actors have been further supported to deliver victim-centric services on areas including SGBV, victims and witness protection, and transitional justice. The project supported these institutions with key effectiveness improvements: such as systems development (e.g. NPC and HRC systems for addressing complaints/appeals); formulation of evidence-based and gender-responsive policies (e.g. on proactive disclosure) and public outreach and advocacy and outreach support to serve all sections of the population. These major achievements, and the other important results which will be elaborated on, have helped with consolidating vital peace and democratic gains in the country and will set the stage for further strengthening key institutions with a view towards supporting Sri Lanka to achieve SDG 16+ targets and contribute to the achievement of all SDGs.

The 19th amendment of the constitution curtailed the executive powers of the presidency and reinforced democracy in the country with the establishment of the constitutional council, and strengthening of independent commissions¹, and setting up of the Right to Information Commission. Parliament and targeted Independent Commissions are able to fulfil their roles and functions and have enhanced their institutional independence following the institutional strengthening and technical capacity building support provided by UNDP. This is critical for ensuring checks and balances in policy making and improving the accountability of public sector institutions in implementing policies and adhering to the rule of law. Target Parliamentary committees, such as the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender, Joint Parliamentary Sub-committee on Solid Waste and Waste Water Management, Parliamentary Select Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals, have pushed forward relevant legal reform, policy discourse and action on SDG implementation respectively with expert technical assistance support provided by UNDP under pillar 1 of the Portfolio. Effectiveness of the Independent commissions was enhanced with the operationalization of systems such as the Case Management System (for HRC) and Smart Commission Management System (for NPC). These systems have enhanced Human Rights Commission's complaints handling / investigation functions and National Police Commission's internal organizational functions respectively. In addition, support to the development and adoption of procedural rules for investigation by NPC has helped the commission to fulfil its core functions and be responsive and accountable to the public by speedy processing of public complaints against the police. Another key achievement was the adoption of communications strategies, recruitment and training of communications staff which has contributed towards increased transparency of and public trust towards the Independent Commissions.

The Peacebuilding Priority Plan sets out the Government of Sri Lanka priorities in rebuilding a peaceful and just society, including through addressing grievances from two decades of civil war, and enabling victims and those affected by war to seek justice and redress. Under pillar two of the portfolio, interventions focused on pushing forward legal reforms and establishing mechanisms and processes for hitherto marginalized and vulnerable sections of the population to seek justice. Specifically, the victim and witness protection legal framework was further strengthened; the Victims of Crime and Witnesses Protection Act was reviewed and the amended draft law secured Cabinet approval in September 2019,

¹ These commissions are: Election Commission; Public Service Commission; National Police Commission; Audit Service Commission; Human Rights Commission; Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption; Finance Commission; Delimitation Commission; National Procurement Commission; University Grants Commission; and Official Languages Commission

which has helped Sri Lanka towards fulfilling its international commitment under the UN HRC Resolution 2015. Victims centric services such as victim hotline, and referral mechanisms for victims of sexual and gender-based violence were developed and rolled out. Capacities of state and non-state actors (CSOs, youth organizations) to develop and provide victim-centric services was also enhanced.

2019-2020 has been a period of increased political instability and uncertainty which has affected implementation of certain project activities. Changes in ministerial portfolio affected implementation as reshuffles to the Cabinet of Ministers and respective portfolios (i.e. Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Ministry of Justice) resulted in delays in approvals processes. The Easter Attacks in April 2019 and frequent public sector strikes resulted in delays in implementation of activities (e.g. capacity building interventions with the police, media etc.) which caused disruptions to the work plan. There was also a reluctance from Government ministries to undertake key decisions until the conclusion of the General Election and the appointment of Secretaries to key Line Ministries which resulted in delays to project implementation for Outputs 2.2 and 2.3 as detailed in the Challenges, Deviations and Mitigation Measures section.

The outcome of the 2019 presidential election is set to alter the political landscape and will have a bearing on the work proposed under the SDG 16 Portfolio. Promoting transparency and accountability, addressing corruption, improving access to justice, preventing violent extremism and improving national security are identified as priorities by new regime and UNDP is in the process of reframing the Portfolio in order to identify key entry points to support the Government in its efforts towards fulfilling the SDG agenda. Furthermore, the SDG 16+ portfolio document was designed with in-built substantive and financial flexibility, it will allow UNDP to be agile and respond to the changing political landscape by adapting its implementation strategies to promote democratic governance, human rights and peacebuilding.

Background

UNDP Sri Lanka's Flagship Portfolio on SDG16+ on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions² (henceforth, the "portfolio"), brings together the governance and peacebuilding work under one umbrella. This allows UNDP to provide a cohesive and integrated support to the Government to achieve its governance and development objectives, as articulated in Sustainable Sri Lanka 2030 Vision, and Peacebuilding Priority Plan among others. This includes: improving the effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability of key institutions to deliver people-centered services; promoting inclusive, and participatory decision-making processes; and strengthening peace and reconciliation. Specifically, the portfolio is intended to contribute to the achievement of SDG 16+ targets and contribute to the achievement of all SDGs.

The portfolio intervenes across three inter-related pillars: (1) Parliament and Independent Commissions; (2) Rule of Law and Access to Justice; and (3) Public Sector and Local Governance. Assistance from the

² In addition to the targets of Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 24 targets across seven other sustainable development goals are linked to the aspiration of peace, justice and strong institutions. Together, these targets are called SDG 16+.

Government of Norway helped to implement programme priorities under Pillars one and two. The Portfolio is implemented by UNDP as part of its Country Programme.

The portfolio document was approved by the External Resource Department of the Ministry of Finance in 2019.

Norway was the first donor to support implementation of SDG 16+ Portfolio, and this funding has been catalytic in triggering support from other donors such as the European Union, the British High Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund towards achieving the broader aims of the portfolio, and contribute to strengthening of peace and democracy gains in Sri Lanka.

Project Progress

This section highlights output level achievements and progress made from December 2018 to October 2019.

Pillar one: Parliament and Independent Commissions

Outcome 1: Select policymaking and oversight structures strengthened to perform core functions for improved accountability and inclusivity

Under Outcome 1, SDGs have been further mainstreamed into work of Parliament through support for the formation of a Parliamentary Select Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – in particular, linking evaluation of Parliament’s work against the SDGs. Transparency of the public institutions and public trust towards the State have been enhanced through support provided under the Portfolio for the implementation of communications strategies for the Parliament and Independent Commissions. Information management and service delivery of the HRC and NPC have been further streamlined and improved through support for the rolling out of the Case Management and Smart Commission Meeting systems respectively. The research capacity of Parliament, NPC, RTIC have been further strengthened through provision of technical expertise and capacity building in order to support the development of evidence-based policies for Parliament; improve analytical skills of NPC staff and to realize the full potential of the RTI Act respectively. Specifically, support to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender has resulted in the committee putting forward several bills (see below for more details) that would have direct implications on women’s empowerment and women’s right to inherit. UNDP has supported the operationalization of communications strategies developed for Parliament, HRC and NPC to ensure follow-up to past support and to avoid the pitfall of supporting the development of these strategies without the necessary accompanying support for implementation. Through the establishment of a formal communications Department at Parliament; recruitment and training of communications personnel at Parliament and HRC; and development of communication products for NPC, UNDP has implemented key recommendations of these strategies in order to enhance the citizen-interface across all these institutions and build public trust towards the State and support peace and reconciliation. Details are outlined below.

Output 1.1 : The core functions (legislative, oversight, representation and budgetary) of Parliament and its role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development strengthened

Key partners for this output: Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender; Joint Parliamentary Sub-committee on Solid Waste and Waste Water Management; Sectoral Oversight Committee on Privileges and Ethics and a Parliamentary Select Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- **Legislative function of Parliament strengthened through Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender.** During the reporting period, the following Private Members' bills have been drafted to ensure gender equality for all citizens. UNDP provided technical expertise to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender to draft the three bills given below:
 1. Bill to amend the General Marriages Ordinance called, '*An Act to Amend the Marriage Registration Ordinance*', calling for allowing all citizens to register their marriage under the General Marriages Ordinance. Previously, the Muslim community was not allowed to marry under the said Law and there is now a provision for the Community to choose whether to marry under this Ordinance or under Muslim Law.
 2. Bill called, '*An Act to Introduce Minimum Age of Marriage in Sri Lanka*' establishing 18 years of age as the minimum age of marriage for all citizens. This proposed new law will override personal laws.
 3. A bill called, '*An Act to Amend the Land Development Ordinance (Chapter 464)*' would ensure gender equality in land inheritance through the Land Development Ordinance. Previously, the male child was given prominence in inheritance and the female child only inherited in the absence of male siblings. Under the proposed amendment to the Act, all references to the "male child" will be changed to "child" to give equal weight and inheritance rights to male, female, legitimate and illegitimate children. And wherever the term "male" was given prominence, a gender-neutral term would replace such references.

In June 2019, UNDP in consultation with a senior official of the Department of Legislative Services of Parliament drafted these Private Members' Bills for the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender. Subsequent to the receipt of the draft Bills from the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender, the Parliament Secretariat forwarded the same to the Legal Draftsman's Department to translate the Bills into legal terminology. The Legal Draftsman's Department has reviewed the Bills and forwarded to the Attorney General's Department where the bills are currently being reviewed to examine whether any of the clauses in the Bills are inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution. UNDP's intervention was crucial in terms of providing technical assistance as well as following up and expediting this entire process.

All three Bills are considered to be progressive laws - which have been discussed and debated in multiple forums by various stakeholders over a long period of time. UNDP's support to catalyze a discourse with the active participation of the members of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender was timely given the fact that the issue was gaining increased momentum and focus following national discussions on the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act. The law reform exercise supported by UNDP will help ensure enhanced protection of rights of traditionally excluded and vulnerable groups, such as particular groups of women and religious minorities.

- Parliament’s oversight function strengthened through technical assistance provided to Joint Parliamentary Sub-committee on Solid Waste and Waste Water Management.** This Joint-Sub Committee was formed through a joint decision of the Sectoral Oversight Committee (SOC) on Health and Human Welfare, Social Empowerment, and the Sectoral Oversight Committee (SOC) on Sustainable Development and Environment and Natural Resources, at a meeting held in February 2019. The key objective of the Joint Sub-Committee was to emphasize on the importance of and take necessary measures to develop and implement a national policy on waste management. Through engagement in policy discourse with key stakeholders, including but not limited to National Solid Waste Management Support Centre (Ministry of Internal and Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government); Solid Waste Management Project (Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development); Central Environmental Authority and Waste Management Authority, Western Province, discussions were initiated on practical challenges pertaining to waste management in Sri Lanka.

The Joint Sub-Committee has identified policy recommendations in April 2019 through a review of policies related to solid waste management and waste water management and developed a work plan, following the research and technical assistance provided by UNDP. Collaborative efforts of the two Sectoral Oversight Committees is a clear example where the Parliament of Sri Lanka executed its oversight function in a strategic manner to identify feasible solutions for a growing issue in Sri Lanka.

- Set standards and principles established for the conduct of every MP in order to fulfill their responsibilities to the Parliament, their constituents and the public.** *There was previously no format for the Code of Conduct and UNDP supported the development of the code in consultation with the Secretary General, Parliament under the previous EU funded programme.*³ Following the development of the Code of Conduct, a comparative analysis on the implementation of the Code for Parliamentarians was presented to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Privileges and Ethics at their request in March 2019. Drawing from best practices adopted in UK, India, Canada and Australia, the analysis highlighted the importance of maintaining Declaration of Financial Interests and Register of Members Interests, particularly with a view to provide transparency on the interests which Members hold that may influence, or be perceived to influence, their decision-making in Parliament. Notwithstanding different opinions of the Members, UNDP support the Parliament Secretariat on improving and implementing the Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians (which was developed under a previous EU funded project) which will eventually increase confidence of the public about the Members. Support is also extended to review and update the existing Code of Conduct for Parliamentary staff. At a time where the conduct of Parliamentarians is under increasing scrutiny by the general public, the implementation of a code of conduct is important towards setting standards for the behaviour of MPs and improving the perception of Parliament in order to enhance public trust and accountability.
- The role of Parliament in the implementation of United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development strengthened.** *The Parliamentary Select Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was formed by contributing for the Motion to set up the committee and developing a Terms of Reference with technical assistance provided by UNDP under previous EU funded Catalytic Support to Peace-building project.* Further, the Select Committee

³ Results not funded by the Norwegian contribution to the UNDP SDG 16 Portfolio are indicated in green text.

has clustered the SDGs according to key thematic areas of: environment, basic needs and fundamental rights following UNDP's technical support in order to ensure that the Select Committee is able to address these issues in a more focused and targeted manner. Assistance under this Project was provided to members of the Select Committee on linking evaluation with SDGs and knowledge sharing at regional level conferences. The Select Committee will play a critical role in mainstreaming SDGs into the work of the Parliament and results under this output will further strengthen Parliament's overall role in promoting sustainable development, and peace and reconciliation. Under the previous EU funded Catalytic Support to Peacebuilding Project, the Parliamentary Select Committee on SDGs was assisted, resulting in inter alia mainstreaming SDGs into National Budget call. The 2019 budget call incorporated a template developed with UNDP support and required government institutions to align budget estimates with SDG targets.

Output 1.2 : The openness of the Parliament and its ability to obtain public/civil society input to its functions improved

Key partners for this Output: Department of Communications, Parliament of Sri Lanka, Committee on Public Accounts.

- **Expanding the Parliament's public outreach and improving the openness of Parliament.** Communications related functions of the Parliament of Sri Lanka were mostly handled by the Department of Serjeant-at-Arms and Information Systems and Management. However, following the Communication Strategy of Parliament developed by UNDP in the previous phase of programming, a new Department of Communications was established at Parliament with Cabinet approval and permanent cadre allocations in the 2019 National Budget Estimate. The Parliament Communications Department is being operationalized through the support of UNDP with Norway funds; the Department consists of two units: Media and Outreach (which has the exclusive mandate to work on increasing civic engagement in parliamentary affairs). The Communications Department has developed job descriptions for the positions identified as well as an organigram for the newly established department with the technical assistance of UNDP
- **Internal capacity improved to promote better civic engagement and ensure openness of Parliamentary procedures:** Newly recruited staff of the Department of Communications were made aware on Communications Strategy and key techniques through capacity building by UNDP Expert on Communications, Public Outreach and SDGs and the UNDP Country Office Communications team. A three-day residential programme was held in October 2019 with the participation of all 15 staff members of the Department. Innovative ideas were generated from the officials to increase public engagement in parliamentary affairs. The training helped revamp social media platforms in a more user-friendly and attractive manner whilst reinforcing credibility of information shared on such platforms. Following the capacity building, the Media Unit has: developed 50+ press releases in all three languages; developed and uploaded 20+ videos with interviews with the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Secretary General and senior Parliamentary staff; developed a documentary on the proceeding of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Legal Affairs, (Anti-corruption) and Media; and increased FB engagement by 2500 followers. Key results from the Outreach Unit are outlined as follows: designed a special shuttle tour around Parliament for professionals and restructured Parliament's typical visitor tours to

tailor-made tours, targeting various groups across age/profession, and improved tour guide scripts for 18 different tours. This has resulted in receiving a group of architects (60) visiting the Parliament to study and experience architectural value of the Parliament premises. Additionally, following the tours, feedback was collected through the introduction of feedback forms to help further refine the Parliamentary tours. In line with the recommendations of the Parliament’s Communication and Public Outreach Strategy, the Parliament has developed concept notes for the establishment of museums, mock parliaments and mobile parliaments. Overall, the establishment and capacity building of the Department of Communications at the Parliament is vital to implementing the Public Outreach and Communications Strategy. The key results highlighted above have contributed towards increased transparency of and public engagement in committee proceedings and policy making . The project has also helped increase the positive image of the Parliament of Sri Lanka as an accountable and transparent institute.



Communications training by UNDP Expert on Communications, Public Outreach and SDGs and the UNDP Country Office Communications team.

- Media and citizen engagement with the Parliament enhanced:** Media engagement is critical for inclusive democratic governance and therefore, **building on a toolkit developed by UNDP under a previous EU funded programme**, media guidelines for parliamentary public consultations were developed at a consultative session held in October 2019. The Secretary General, staff of the Department of Communications and selected media personnel shared their input and the UNDP Expert on Communications, Public Outreach and SDGs facilitated the consultation. Through the media guidelines, journalists will have standard and systematic way of reporting committee proceedings, and UNDP will continue to support Parliament with the implementation of the media guidelines in order to support enhanced and constructive media and citizen engagement.
- Openness of Parliament committee proceedings enhanced through facilitation of policy and infrastructure support:** Traditionally, access to committee proceedings of the Parliament of Sri Lanka is restricted. However, public access to key information through which public institutions are held accountable was enhanced through provision of broadcasting equipment to enable the Committee on Public Accounts (COPA) to conduct live sessions in August 2019. COPA is one of the most active committees and through support for live broadcasting, UNDP and COPA have provided the public with greater insight into public expenditure and a key tool to assess the financial discipline of the Government, Ministries, Departments, Provincial Councils and Local Authorities.

Output 1.3 : Human Rights Commission (HRC) has improved capacities to discharge its core functions

Key partners for this Output: Human Rights Commission, UN Volunteers.

- **Investigation and inquiring mechanisms strengthened and Public access to efficient services increased and transparency of the HRC improved through customization of existing automated Case Management System.** An automated case management system, developed with EU funds, was established in the Head Office and 10 district offices. Further customization to incorporate the new standard operating procedures for investigations is on-going. Technical proposals are being evaluated by UNDP to identify a suitable service provider. The customization of the case management aims to help streamline and expedite processing of human rights complaints. This web-based case management system will also allow the public make complaints and check the case status which will ensure greater transparency into the HRC processes and strengthen public trust in the institution.
- **Communication and Outreach Strategies in place: Public awareness on the services of HRC and the scope of fundamental rights promoted.** The operationalization of the communications and outreach strategy, developed under the previous phase of programming, is in progress. A media coordinator for the implementation of the communications strategy is being recruited and this position will be critical to supporting HRC's efforts towards generating greater public awareness on its services and mandate. By building greater awareness, the project seeks to encourage the general public to utilise the services of the Commission in investigating and addressing human rights violations.
- **HRC's human resources capacity strengthened and backlogs reduced:** HRC has fast tracked investigations and inquiries with the necessary human resource support provided by UNDP. Inquiries and investigations processes were expedited and 204 cases have been processed following the strengthening of HRC capacity. UN Volunteers (UNVs) have contributed towards HRC's official functions, including translating, proof reading, researching, minuting, drafting letters, assisting in investigative visits, drafting reports and case analysis for 204 cases, out of which 87 are related to custodial violations and 32 are on arbitrary arrest. UNV support to the project has also supported the drafting of 11 HRC reports on special monitoring visits post the Easter attacks on communal violence and inaction of law enforcement and reports to UN special processes and rapporteurs. The project has supported strengthening of HRC capacity in order to discharge core functions in responding to the needs to the people and supported the international community to assess human rights related concerns in the country.

Output 1.4 : National Police Commission (NPC) has improved capacities to discharge its core functions.

Key partners for this output: National Police Commission, Sri Lanka Police

- **Communication and outreach mechanisms of NPC strengthened.**

Enhanced outreach of the NPC has helped enhance awareness and knowledge on the mediums available to register complaints against the police among the general public. The following interventions have helped strengthen the outreach and communications capacity of the NPC:

- Capacity of NPC Media unit enhanced with media equipment enabling improved communications and public information
 - Increased user-friendliness of the NPC website for up to date information for citizens in all three languages in line with international standards. A new functionality is also being installed into the website which will allow the public to make a police complaint through the website. This will enhance ease of access to NPC services and promote greater informative outreach (e.g. new disciplinary procedures and Commission decisions will be updated and readily available for the public).
 - Series of full page newspaper advertisements published in leading English, Sinhala and Tamil newspapers to increase awareness on the services of the NPC and its complaint methodology. Many cases were reported where individuals visited NPC Provincial Offices with the newspaper cutting which provides testimony to the efficacy of the campaign. UNDP is in the process of collecting data on complaints made following the newspaper campaign in order to evaluate its success.
 - Development and distribution of communication materials: English and Tamil publicity boards and brochures have been printed and distributed to generate greater awareness on NPC at the grassroots level.
- **Research and data presentation skills increased.** A training course has been designed to improve NPC service provision to the public and enhance the research, reporting and analytical skills of NPC staff, as staff are expected to present their performance to stakeholders such as Parliament, constitutional council, donors and the police on a frequent basis. Two training sessions were conducted in November 2019, and two further sessions will be conducted by December 2019. The training was one of the key recommendations of the training needs assessment and the NPC Communications and Outreach Strategy and will strengthen NPC's capacity to discharge core functions.
 - **Knowledge on investigations increased.** NPC staff have increased their awareness on: the role of the NPC; its mandate and vision; circulars issued by the Inspector General of Sri Lanka Police; issues related to Fundamental Rights; and the important provisions of Police Ordinance etc. 45 NPC members (31 males, 14 females) participated in capacity building workshops on NPC's mandate and investigation procedures.
 - **Investigation Mechanisms improved and standardized: *IT integrated into NPC's case management processes and procedures for improved efficiency:*** Operationalization of a **Smart Commission Meeting System (SCMS) which was developed with EU funds**, is being supported by UNDP under the portfolio. UNDP has procured equipment required for the system with Norway funds (such as laptops, audio system, server and other related equipment) and system installation and testing is also being supported. Through the new system, NPC aims to enhance efficiency in making commission decisions; improve access to previous case records; support strategic and timely decision making by senior management and create a paperless working environment. Additionally, Norwegian funds will also be utilised to establish an IT unit within the Commission in order to ensure the sustainability of systems development assistance provided by donor funded projects. NPC is in the process of requesting cadre for this unit.

- **Strengthen investigation platforms and improve case management: Validation of newly developed procedural rules for NPC.** Newly designed procedural rules for NPC were validated and ready for commissioning. The procedural rules were developed with EU funds and provide standard operating procedures for processing police and public complaints in order to strengthen investigation platforms and improve case management through the consolidation of NPC laws and regulations and identification and rectification of gaps in existing regulations. Two 3-day workshops were conducted to validate the new procedural rules with the participation of 46 NPC members (including senior DIGs, DIGs, Commission Members, Chairman and staff grade officers of NPC). Prior to these interventions, NPC did not have consolidated and updated procedural rules to solve and expedite inquiry processes.
- **Strategies developed to address gaps in police and to improve functions of NPC**
 - **Strengthening community police engagement:** UNDP is currently advocating the Sri Lanka police to strengthen community policing and an initial dialogue is in progress on ways to enhance the capacity of Community Police Committees (CPC) as a pilot initiative. A consultation was organized at the Thedeniya Police Division, with the participation of 70 individuals across the Sri Lanka Police, NPC and UNDP, to design a pilot initiative to enhance the capacity of Community Police Committees (CPC).
 - **Development of a 5-year strategic plan for NPC:** Development of a five year strategic plan for NPC is underway with the support of UNDP. The plan is expected to help formalize service delivery mechanisms and help ensure the sustainability of NPC services to the public, and Sri Lanka Police. A service provider has been selected to work on this assignment, which will leverage internal SWOT capacity analysis, PESTEL context analysis, assessment of the functions/services of NPC in order to develop the strategic plan. The service provider is in the process of conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with officers of NPC, SLP and other senior government officials.
- **Consultative discussions to improve the services of NPC and other relevant institutions further:**

An action plan was developed following consultations held with the general public and senior government officials on the services of the NPC and its complaint procedure. Proposals and recommendations on ways to improve the service delivery and the standards of the Sri Lanka Police were identified through a discussion facilitated by UNDP. A 2-day workshop was held to develop an action plan by consolidating the recommendations of previous community and technical consultations. 40 participants (including staff grade officers of NPC, Chairperson and commission members) were engaged in the workshop to develop the action plan, which has been submitted for the Commission's approval. UNDP will look towards implementation of selected recommendations depending on the funding availability and the scope in order to further enhance NPC services.

Output 1.5 : Right to Information Commission (RTIC) has improved capacities to discharge its core functions

Key partners for this output: Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs and Justice, RTIC and Ministry of Mass Media

- **Policy framework and institutional capacity for effective proactive disclosure strengthened.** UNDP is working towards strengthening public institutions' capacity for proactive disclosure and a preliminary discussion with the Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs and Justice, RTIC and Ministry of Mass Media has been held to this end. A Cabinet policy paper on proactive disclosure was developed in October 2019 with the project support and is to be tabled at the Cabinet. Following Cabinet approval, work will commence on the design of the Proactive disclosure policy. The comprehensive policy is in line with regulation number 20 of the RTI Act which identifies 17 categories for public disclosure. Adoption and implementation of this policy will help create greater transparency which is vital to tackle corruption and build greater accountability in state institutions.



Meeting with the Ministry of Mass Media and the RTI Commission on the formulation of a National Policy on Proactive Information Disclosure to guide public authorities

- **Monitoring mechanism for implementation of RTI Act is established. Supporting RTIC with their core legal and monitoring functions in order to give effect to and realize the full potential of the RTI Act.** Until the RTIC has recruited its permanent cadre, UNDP has provided a Senior Research Consultant, 3 Junior Research Consultants, a Monitoring Officer and an Assistant Monitoring Officer to expedite the RTI appeal process (recruited during 2018-2019) The public have received access to information through the processing of 1051 RTI appeals and the backlog of appeals has also been cleared with project support. The researchers have proved critical in this task as the Commission is unable to handle and ensure the timely completion of the appeals without the support provided. Additionally, with support of the UNDP Monitoring Officer and Assistant Monitoring Officer, the Commission has commenced the implementation process of Monitoring and Evaluation with the development of an Action Plan.
- **Public officers' knowledge on RTI Act strengthened:** Cabinet and Non Cabinet secretaries have increased their understanding of the Role of Secretaries in implementing the RTI Act No. 12 of 2016 through an awareness workshop held in September 2019. 58 public officers attended the

awareness raising programme. UNDP has supported the Right to Information Commission to train and engage government officials for effective implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the RTI Act; strengthen proactive disclosure mechanisms and improve RTIC's capacity to discharge core functions. This has contributed towards meeting the project objectives of generating greater transparency in the public sector; supporting citizens to demand information from the state and hold officials accountable for their actions.

Pillar two: Access to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation

Outcome 2: Marginalized and vulnerable communities have increased and equitable access to justice, including demand-driven legal protection and gender sensitive services.

Key highlights from the Portfolio under Pillar 2 include the greater accessibility of gender-sensitive services to SGBV victim survivors and wider communities through enhanced grassroots outreach of CSOs in target districts. This has helped ensure improved access to legal and other essential services for SGBV victims, including a referral system for SGBV victims implemented at the divisional level. Stronger policies and actions for addressing SGBV have also been strengthened at the national level: UNDP is working closely with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development to strengthen the institutional role of the Ministry, including by supporting to meet the reporting requirements under the Beijing Platform for Action. Technical assistance is also provided to the National Committee on Women to monitor and identify gaps in implementation of priorities to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

Access to Justice of vulnerable victims was also enhanced through increased awareness of and sensitization about the Victims of Crime and Witnesses Protection Act among duty bearers (police, lawyers, child protection officers, legal aid commission, and psychiatrists etc.). This has helped to facilitate access to justice for vulnerable categories of victims, and resulted in a number of victims being awarded compensation by courts. Through the key results, described in further detail below, UNDP and implementing partners⁴ have improved the ability of justice sector institutions to deliver people-centered services, and uphold the rights of all persons including excluded and vulnerable groups, such as children, women and persons with disabilities.

Output 2.1 : Baselines established/updated, and policy dialogue, policy adoption and implementation increased on access to justice, with a focus on excluded and vulnerable groups

Key partners for this Output: Ministry of Justice, Ministerial Law Review Committees, National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses, the Victims of Crime and Witnesses Assistance and Protection Division of the Police; Legal Draftsman's Department, Sri Lanka Police, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Prisons Department, Legal Aid Commission, Bar Association, National Child Protection Authority

- Qualitative criminal justice knowledge base in the country strengthened through the completion of the Pioneering Criminal Victimization Survey to ascertain trends of victimization with an aim to better target preventive interventions and inform policy. Extensive field research completed island-wide and findings from police records as well as victim interviews were analyzed in collaboration with justice sector partners. The final report submitted to UNDP in November

⁴ Refer to Page 2 and the chapter on project progress for specifics of implementing partners

2019 is currently being reviewed ahead of the presentation of the findings. This survey tends to complement the pioneering national crime trends survey that is being initiated. The findings will mark the first instance in which qualitative data on trends in crime is being compiled. The findings will be tabled before a criminal Justice Steering Committee in order to create an impetus for the development of a National Crime Prevention Strategy.

- Comprehensive review of the existing Victim and Witness Protection law completed (in keeping with Sri Lanka's undertaking under the UNHRC resolution 2015) and aligned to international standards and best practices on the subject through technical expertise provided to the Ministerial Committee. The amended law received Cabinet approval in August 2019, and technical expertise is currently being provided to the Ministry of Justice and the Legal Draftsman's Department to finalise the Bill to be presented to Parliament. The amended draft includes expansive provisions on the protection of and assistance to vulnerable victims/witnesses with the inclusion of a dedicated chapter on the subject. Provisions assigning responsibilities to the National Police Commission were introduced to ensure independence in the appointments to the Police Protection Division charged with the investigation of offences against and protection of victims of crime and witnesses. A special compensation board has been proposed in order to ascertain the quantum of compensation based on objective criteria and measures also introduced to ensure gender sensitivity in the provision of services.
- Technical expertise is being provided to the Ministerial Law Review Committees appointed to draft a special law for the assistance and protection of child victims of crime and witnesses and a law on whistleblower protection. Support is being provided to incorporate International standards and best practices such as a) withholding of identity from court records in keeping with the best interest of the child principle, b) introduction of a case worker charged with the welfare and protection of the child victim/witness until the conclusion of the case, c) special measures before, during and after trial to encourage testimony by child witnesses.

Technical expertise is also being provided to the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses to develop 'Protection Guidelines' and establish the operational procedure for the Victims of Crime and Witnesses Assistance and Protection Division of the Police. The guidelines spell out the procedure to be followed by the National Authority and the Police Protection Division once a request for protection/assistance is received either by way of a court direction, direct victim/witness or through any of the measures outlined by law. Support is also being provided to draft the standard Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be entered into between the victim/witness and the Police Protection Division/ National Authority upon completion of the threat assessments.

- Discussions initiated on the development of a National Sentencing Policy for Sri Lanka, based on the Study on Existing Trends and Practices in Sri Lanka conducted by the Ministry of Justice supported by UNDP.

Output 2.2 : State and non-state justice sector actors strengthened to deliver victim-centric services on areas including SGBV, victims and witness protection, and transitional justice

Key partners for this output: Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Cyber Violence Unit of CID, National Committee on Women (Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development), LK domain (hosting Hithawathi), University of Colombo ICT unit, National Child Protection Authority Cyber Crimes

Unit, UNICEF Sri Lanka, Women In Need (WIN), Women's Development Centre, Kandy OfERR Ceylon, Sri Lankan Bar Association, Police, Child Protection Officers, National Authority for Victim and Witness Protection.

- **Rights and duty bearers have increased their awareness and knowledge on the provision of the Victims of Crime and Witnesses Protection Act.** A number of duty bearers made aware on the provision and operationalization of the Victims of Crime and Witnesses Protection Act of Sri Lanka across different segments using various types of interventions such as trainings, awareness campaigns and workshops. The act has been given due prominence within the justice sector in Sri Lanka. Targeted officials and institutions include:
 - **750 Officers in Charge OIC (HQI) officers of the Sri Lanka Police** island-wide increased their understanding on the operationalization of the Victim and Witness Protection law through a series of workshops held over the period of 2018/19. This has supported efficient and comprehensive implementation of the law (including information on legislative procedure, international standards, norms and best practices and psychological impact of investigations on victims of crime and witnesses). The trained officials are now enthusiastically involved in operationalization of the law within their limits.
 - **200+ Psychiatrists (clinical and forensic)** island-wide were made aware of how to support 'Trauma informed Care for victims of crime and witnesses', through intensive training held in December 2018 and August 2019. The training was based on a module specially developed by the Project. Sessions covered the impact of trauma on victims, vulnerable victims (including child victims/witnesses). A panel discussion by experts in Legal, Medico Legal, Pediatrics and Psychiatry resulted in the identification of case-conferencing procedures to facilitate a multi-sectoral response to victim care. A session on the 'impact of trauma on the developing brain' also focused on the psychological consequences of crime on children. The trained Psychiatrists expressed that the skills that they gained were very useful in dealing with victims and witnesses.
 - **100 Members of the Sri Lankan Bar Association** have increased their awareness on the operationalization of the Victims of Crime and Witnesses Protection Act through a training specially designed for the target group held in July 2019. Meanwhile the legal practitioners of Jaffna private Bar and Kandy private Bar also increased their awareness on the Act through special sensitization programmes. Sessions covered: the use of the specific protection provisions; the victims' right to be informed of the progress of the case; the date of release from remand/prison of the accused; and international standards, norms and practices. As a result of the programmes, a number of cases were channeled to the National Authority by the legal practitioners who received training following which victims were supported through the development of the Victim Impact Statement and compensation was secured by the court.
 - **75 Child protection officers and over 1000 officials of the Grama Niladhari divisions** increased their awareness on their role on channeling victims of crime to protection services through extensive training conducted by the National Authority. These sessions were conducted following requests from Education Officers and Grama Niladhari officers, owing to the success / impact of the sensitization programmes conducted under the previous UNDP programme for various institutions, including prosecuting officers of the Attorney General's Department, Legal Officers of the Legal Aid

Commission, Officers of the Police Special Investigations Unit and Officers of the National Child Protection Authority.

- **Operationalization of the Victim Hotline.** The Victim Hotline operated by the National Authority received a sudden influx of requests for protection and further information by victims, victims' families and witnesses following a comprehensive electronic media campaign which was conducted on TV and Radio with the production of 30 second TV / radio infomercials woven around four typical scenarios where victims/witnesses are threatened, intimidated etc. The infomercials, developed with funds from the US State Department, raised public awareness on the rights/entitlements of victims of crime / witnesses as per the law and the services of the National Authority of Victim and Witness Protection and the special police division. Further as a result of the campaign, a total of over 400 + requests can be attributed to the awareness raised through the infomercials. The response for requests for protection received from July 2019 onwards was facilitated through Norway funding. Similarly, four posters were developed on multiple provisions on the law (in Sinhala and Tamil) and targeting a wide range of victims (including children) and distributed amongst all Grama Niladhari officers. These posters are currently being distributed among schools, hospitals, courts, police stations island-wide.
- **Strengthening of the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses:** As a result of the sensitization of the service providers, specifically, the police, the members of the Bar Association, Legal Aid Commission, to the Victim and Witness Protection Law resulted in a number of requests for protection and complaints for investigation being channeled to the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses, as a result of which a number of victims were awarded enhanced compensation by Courts. The intervention by the National Authority also resulted in a significant number of victims being supported to present Victim Impact Statements that enabled courts to order an aggravated sentence for perpetrators and ensure protection of the victim/witness throughout the duration of the court proceedings. Increased awareness of the provisions of the law, resulted in the Legal Aid Commission and the National Authority forging a coordinated response to the submission of bail applications to the Court of Appeal, thereby facilitating equal access to justice for indigent clients. Support extended to the Police Special Investigations Unit has also enhanced the law enforcement and investigative capacities on the investigation into cases of alleged witness intimidation by police officers – thereby facilitating access to justice for a vulnerable category of victims. The significant increase in the number of requests for protection on the victims hotline following the public awareness campaign is indicative of the large number of victims accessing justice. Additionally, improved awareness of the presence of a victim/witness assistance and protection mechanism resulted in a large number of victims/witnesses coming forward to report offenses and testify before courts thereby impacting positively on the delays associated with case- flow across the penal chain (which is a key government priority within the justice sector).
 - The support extended to the National Authority resulted in the submission of Victim Impact Statements to Court, based on which proportionate sentences are awarded, creates an entry point for the initiation of the development of a National Sentencing Policy which would address a key gap within the justice sector. The large volume of cases supported by the National Authority will provide an empirical baseline for the development of uniform sentencing guidelines.

Moving forward, UNDP envisages building on its interventions during the preliminary phases, and engaging in discussions with the Judicial Service Commission and the Ministry of Justice in supporting the development of a National Sentencing Policy for Sri Lanka in keeping with international standards and best practices.

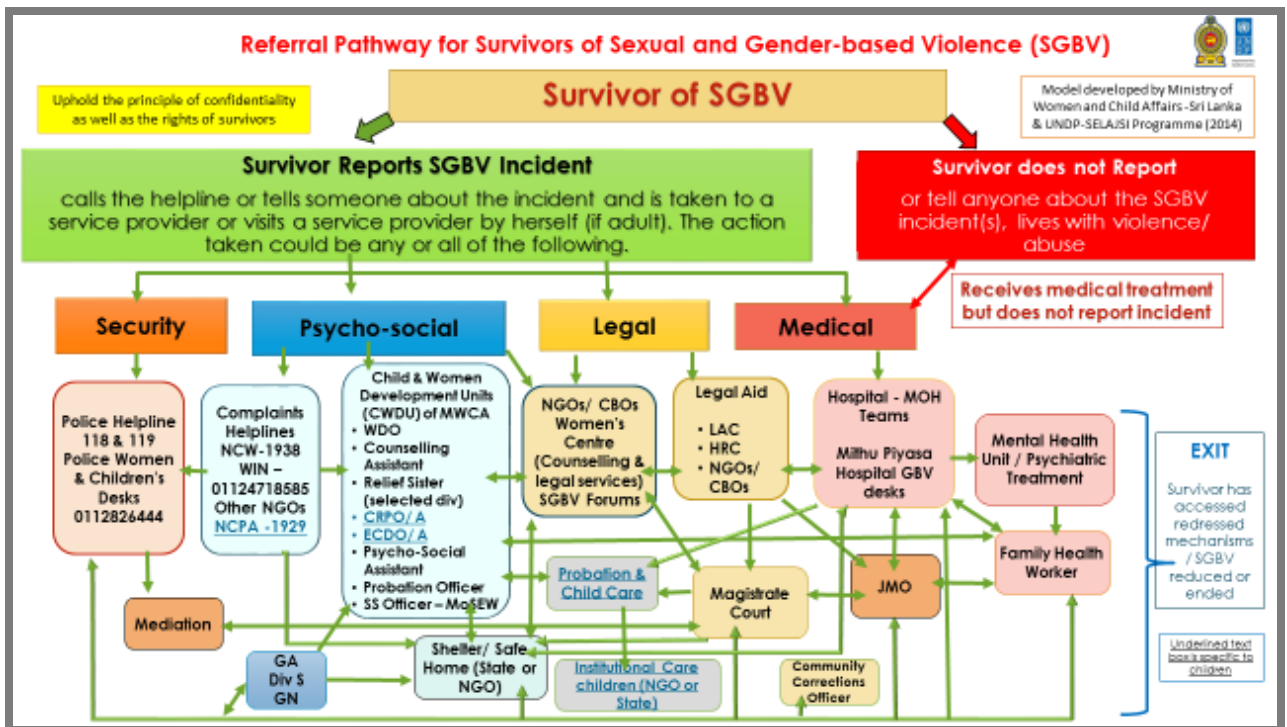
At a policy level, the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development was supported to implement the National Plan of Action to address SGBV: Under Output 2, Key Indicative Result 2.2.2⁵, UNDP has signed the Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development. The Ministry is continuing to obtain progress on the implementation of the National Plan of Action to address SGBV from partner ministries in order to strengthen its institutional role as the national machinery for engagement on SGBV. UNDP is providing technical assistance to the Ministry to meet the reporting requirements under the Beijing Platform for Action. In the next two months, UNDP will provide technical support to the Ministry to call the Steering Committee and to assess the status of progress of the nine sectors of the National Action Plan. This will help to identify and address the lagging areas of the plan. Assistance is also provided to the National Committee on Women to monitor and identify gaps in implementation of priorities to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

- **Expanded grassroots outreach to victims of SGBV through strengthened partnerships with CSOs:** The services of the 3 CSOs to provide victim-centric services to SGBV survivors were strengthened in 15 districts including Colombo, Matara, Anuradhapura, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Badulla, Kandy, Vavuniya, Monaragala, Nuwaraeliya, Vavuniya, Mullativu and Kilinochchi through partnering with CSOs namely Women In Need (WIN), Women's Development Centre, Kandy and OfERR Ceylon. SGBV survivors who are unable to access the mainstream systems, have been assisted through the provision of legal assistance, shelter support and counselling. In this respect in the reporting period: WIN has supported a total of 3733 cases (psychological counselling- 2184; total legal services -1144; court representation-371; shelter-34); WDC has supported 120 victim-survivors (of which 64 sought shelter support with 23 cases of pregnancy among unwed teenage and young mothers largely between the ages of 14 – 18 years of age); OfERR Ceylon has supported 43 SGBV survivors to access legal counselling, court representation, counselling and shelter through its referrals to other agencies that provide these services. OfERR has also provided 96 survivors with civil documentation support, which still remains a need in the North 10 years after the civil conflict ended.
- Given the increased number of cases referred from Monaragala/ Uva district to WDC, the project supported WDC to setup a new Women's Resource Centre, which was three years in the planning process. Women Federation leaders from different Grama Niladhari divisions who lead women's societies in their areas were mobilized into a group through linkages with the Divisional Secretariat and other previous projects of WDC. This formed the women's network which runs the Women's Centre. The Monaragala Centre was opened on 12 September 2019 and has already commenced referrals to the counsellor at the Divisional Secretariat in a more organized manner. Women in the community are now able to access several resources and referred for critical SGBV and other support services through the women's resource centre. In 2019, a total of 12 cases have been referred from Monaragala to the WDC shelter, with 3 cases being referred in the last 2 months after the centre was established. Given the centre is still in

⁵ 2.2.2 - Lagging/priority sectors/components of the National Action Plan on SGBV implemented, including on justice, empowerment and media.

its initial stage, WDC has initiated a capacity building program on SGBV for the women leaders who are part of the Women's Centre.

- Provision of victim-centric services has been strengthened through Divisional level SGBV referral meetings at Divisional Secretariats, which has also helped to identify and address various gaps and bottlenecks. UNDP's support was instrumental towards setting up these divisional meetings (following the circular of the Ministry) as many issues were not taken up at the divisional level. Action following the divisional referral meetings were then proposed for implementation at the District Secretariat (DS) level. UNDP has shared and briefed the team on the referral model as outline below, which was developed by UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs in 2014. UNDP also advocated for the need to coordinate at all levels, in order to prevent re-victimization of survivors and to ensure prevention mechanisms are in place. Where possible the gender specialist has presented the referral model in identified divisions, such as in Chaddikulam in Vavuniya. Key issues highlighted at these meetings include: teen-age pregnancy, drug problems in school, lack of shelter facilities for women and girls, indebtedness issue, cyber violence, domestic violence and abandoned women and children among others.



SGBV Referral Pathway UNDP/ MWCA



SGBV referral meeting at Chaddikulam , Vavuniya



Opening of Women's Resource Centre in Monaragala

- **Innovation and design thinking promoted among youth to address key SGBV challenges:** Linking SGBV with Victim and Witness protection, an innovative challenge on addressing Cyber Violence and SGBV among youth (especially young women) was launched by UNDP) was conducted under the Hack a Dev Challenge. New thinking on addressing cyber violence was put forward through the innovation camp held in Negombo (14 – 19 October 2019). Key stakeholders for remedial measures such as the CID Cybercrimes unit, National Authority for the Protection of Victims and Witnesses of Crimes, schools and CSOs among others were linked through the project. This innovative challenge has engaged with youth to provide solutions to a problem where young women are the main victims. Knowledge on cybercrimes, victim and witness protection was strengthened through technical input from UNDP as well as resource persons from the Cyber Violence Unit of CID, National Committee on Women (Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development), LK domain (hosting Hithawathi), University of Colombo ICT unit, National Child Protection Authority Cyber Crimes Unit and from UNICEF Sri Lanka.



Resource persons from National Committee on Women, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs at the Hack a Dev challenge

Output 2.3 : State and non-state justice sector actors have increased access to progressive international principles, standards and good practices on access to justice

Key partners for this output: Judges Training Institute, Legal Draftsman's Department

- **Special legislation drafted on the incorporation of international standards, norms and best practices on victim and witness protection following the support provided to the law review**

committees. A number of the key technical recommendations which reflected international standards and best practices were accepted by the legal review committees and specific legal provisions were included in draft legislation (E.g.: special provisions for vulnerable victims). The amended Law received Cabinet approval in September 2019 and is currently before the Legal Draftsman's Department for final review before submission to Parliament for enactment. The intervention helped achieve a key undertaking as per the 2015 UNHRC resolution that was co-sponsored by the Government of Sri Lanka. (for more details refer Output 2.1)

- **Module on trauma informed care on victims of crime developed with assistance from the project in keeping with international standards on the subject.** Approximately 200 Psychiatrists, in collaboration with Ceylon College of Psychiatrists, were sensitized on special measures adopted in other jurisdictions (USA, UK, South Africa etc.) on the psychological assistance provided to victims of crime, specific case law on the subject, case-conferencing models, and specific measures adopted in courts in jurisdictions to support victims who have undergone trauma (including child victims of crime). As an outcome of the intervention, a module is being developed to establish a coordination mechanism between law enforcement and clinical psychiatrists on responding to the needs of victims of crime.
- **Continuing legal education for judiciary:** A continuous legal education (CLE) programme for judicial officers is being explored through discussions with the Judges Training Institute. This will provide judicial officers with an opportunity to benefit from the expertise of UN experts, and the exposure to case law from other jurisdictions.

Output 2.4⁶ : UN Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights adopted and implemented.

- An inaugural National Dialogue on Responsible Business & Human Rights was conducted with the active participation of private sector, civil society, the National Human Rights Commission and the government in October 2019 . Best practices on business and human rights were presented and greater engagement was generated on the topic. The specific benefits of adhering to the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights were illustrated and next steps identified. Case studies illustrating the nexus between business and environmental justice were presented along with a specific example of how civil society advocacy resulted in a positive outcome whereby the business community adopted specific policy changes and acknowledged the harmful effect of their work (E.g. – lobbying that resulted in the 'lead-safe' production of paint)
- Extensive discussions held with key stakeholders (e.g. Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Human Rights Commission, UN Global Compact, Private Sector, CSOs and Academia) on identifying entry points to business and human rights action in Sri Lanka

Pillar 3: Public administration & local governance

Outcome 3⁷: National and sub-national level institutions have the capacity to deliver equitable, accountable and effective services.

⁶ Output 2.4 is not funded under the Norwegian contribution

Under Outcome 3/ pillar 3 of the Portfolio, UNDP and UN Women have commenced implementation of the “Hidden Challenges: Addressing Sexual Bribery Experienced by Military and War Widows in Sri Lanka to Enable Resilience and Sustained Peace” project to address challenges faced by military and war widows. This project is placed under the output 3.4 “Excluded and vulnerable groups have improved living standards, including socio-economic conditions and social cohesion”. With a USD 1.5 million funding envelope from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, the 18 month project aims to increase access to sustainable livelihoods among military and war widows and increase the commitment of public institutions in relation to prevention of and response to sexual bribery and sexual exploitation. Implementation of project activities commenced in November 2018. The preliminary assessment to identify the perceptions of widows on peacebuilding and reconciliation was initiated, and the findings of this survey would set baselines and determine the training needs of beneficiaries. In parallel, a needs assessment and a value chain analysis to identify entry points for economic empowerment interventions for the beneficiaries was conceptualized. The knowledge assimilated during this phase contributes towards effective implementation aimed at reaching the expected outcome. The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs entered into a Letter of Agreement to strengthen institutional mechanisms in preventing and responding to sexual bribery and exploitation. During the reporting period, the project has identified an implementation strategy with govt. stakeholders to implement the project interventions.

UNDP has mobilized EUR 10 million from the European Union towards its “Capacity Development of Local Government Authorities (CDLG)” project under the output 3.3 “Local Government Authorities provide improved, inclusive and responsive services”. The main aim of the project is to strengthen the capacities of local government authorities (LAs) to be inclusive, responsive and accountable, and be able to plan and deliver better services in four provinces – North, North Central, Eastern and Uva. The three-year project will emphasize strengthening of vertical and horizontal linkages between different levels of local government and national government (i.e., from national to provincial council level to LA level), and between devolved and deconcentrated units, and local CSOs and other actors supporting development and reconciliation efforts (i.e., between elected provincial councils and local governments, and divisional and district secretariats and central government line ministries, as well as CSOs). The agreement was signed with the European Union in October 2019 and work has commenced on the baseline assessment and target setting. Further the mapping of activities and development of Terms of References for the project has been initiated.

UNDP is currently in the process of mobilising GBP 2.2 million from the British High Commission for the “Support to Durable Resettlement” Project under output 3.4 of the pillar. This project is designed to support the durable resettlement of communities in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mulaitivu, and Trincomalee Districts over a three-year period and build confidence and trust in the reconciliation process.

Further, UNDP is also mobilising funds from the Japanese Embassy for its “Creating socio-economic empowerment and early response to prevent violent extremism and promote social cohesion in Sri Lanka” project under the same output. The one year project, due to commence in March 2020, aims to engage multi-track stakeholders, with particular attention given to the Sri Lankan youth, to create

⁷ Outcome 3 not funded under the Norwegian contribution.

awareness, acceptance and enhance people's capacity to prevent or respond to violent extremism by addressing push and pull factors of extremism and systematically building trust between diverse groups.

Challenges, Deviations and Mitigation Measures

- Changes in ministerial portfolio and Board management affected implementation

Reshuffles to the Cabinet of Ministers and respective portfolios, and sometimes changes in the mandates of ministries and departments, resulting in certain delays to project implementation as outlined below. For example, there has been a high turnover with Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (particularly change of Secretary level) which have posed challenges to project implementation as additional briefings with new personnel were required resulting in delays in approval processes. Given the focus of the LOA on addressing SGBV, the Ministry officials who were not familiar with the subject matter were hesitant to approve the project pending further discussions with the previous Secretary. Additional documentation, explanation and meetings were required from UNDP and UN Women to mitigate this issue. This resulted in deviations from the work plan in the form of delays to the signing of the Letter of Agreement with the Ministry; originally planned for May 2019, however, it only took place in September 2019. Currently, funds have been disbursed by Ministry, however, the funds have yet to be released by the Treasury due to a failure to incorporate this fund into the Ministry Workplan at the beginning of the year (although the Ministry had requested for allocation from the External Resources Department (ERD), and the latter had approved the SDG 16 portfolio). In order to mitigate this setback, UNDP channeled funds to directly contract and implement select initiatives.

Similarly, there have been three different Secretaries to the Ministry of Justice in the past year and this has adversely affected project implementation as the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses falls directly under the Ministry of Justice. This has resulted in several delays with approval processes for the conduct of programmes – for example with the recruitment of cadre for the National Authority and transfer of programme funds.

Additionally, the term of the members of the Board of Management of the National Authority expired in mid-2019, and the new Board was only reappointed through the Presidential Secretariat towards the end of September 2019. In the interim 4 month period, decisions could not be made to advance project implementation as no official board meetings were convened and board approvals could not be obtained. As a mitigation measure, UNDP identified and implemented selected interventions, including workshops for the Bar Association with focus on the substantive aspects of the Victim and Witness Protection Law and the review process.

- Logistical and Administrative challenges

Under the support to parliament component, securing MPs' participation for systematic and continuous knowledge-sharing and on-the-job training has proved challenging. For example, UNDP had organized a number of dialogues on SDGs and female political participation, however MPs were not able to attend these programmes due to limited availability. UNDP is increasingly engaging in capacity development on a one-on-one nature – in small groups of MPs representing all political parties and staff, or focusing on Parliamentary committees on relevant subject matter to address this.

There has also been a delay in implementation of activities in Human Rights Commission's project due to certain administrative issues. For example, implementation of recommendations of the Communication and Outreach Strategy, such as recruitment of Communications staff, was delayed due to low response from qualified /suitable individuals. UNDP is currently in the process of using a wider network to circulate the advertisements for the positions as a mitigation measure.

- Delays in staffing of the RTIC and HRC

Until the permanent cadres of the RTIC and HRC are approved, the project has provided interim staff support. This has posed challenges to project implementation and resulted in delays in processing HRC inquiries and RTI appeals. Moving forward, the RTIC will be developing an internship programme with the University of Colombo to recruit legal interns for their departments which will help to ensure sustainability of the intervention following the conclusion of project support.

- Delays and disruption due to security risks and political and civil unrest

The Easter Attacks in April 2019 as well as civil unrest in the form of frequent strikes across various public sectors impacted project implementation during the reporting period as field level programmes were affected. For example, district referral meetings were postponed as the LOA with the Ministry was delayed and therefore work with Government could not be initiated. CSO partners largely took forward divisional referral meetings but due to various strikes and the security situation, there were constant interruptions hence programmes had to be re-scheduled to later in the year. Additionally, capacity building interventions with the police, media, Grama Niladari etc. on the Victim and Witness Protection Law had to be postponed following the Easter Attacks as there were obstacles to convening meetings with large groups of participants. This led to disruptions in the work plan as many planned activities and meetings could not be held. The media programmes originally planned for June 2019 and the sensitization programmes for the police and public officials planned during June – September 2019 were rescheduled for December 2019.

- Political climate: upcoming Presidential Elections and General Election

The upcoming Presidential elections in November 2019 and General Election in 2020 has also created challenges during the implementation period as there has been hesitation on the part of Government ministries to undertake key decisions until the conclusion of the General Election and the appointment of Secretaries to key Line Ministries. For example, allocation of funds for activities stalled at Ministry of Women and project funds were not released by the Treasury during the interim period. There were also significant challenges in pursuing work with law enforcement and conduct of field research due to election priorities. Furthermore, delays lasting a few months were encountered with the submission / enactment of key legislation (such as the special law for the assistance and protection of child victims of crime and witnesses and a law on whistleblower protection) in relation to work on access to justice. Additionally, UNDP faced challenges with the formation of the Select Committee on Sustainable Development, which had to be postponed due to the fluid political situation in the country. The Cabinet policy paper on proactive disclosure was to be tabled to Parliament on 7th November, however, due to completing priorities with the Presidential Election, the Ministry of Mass Media was not able to prioritize the submission. As such, UNDP is working towards tabling the Policy Paper in collaboration with the Ministry.

Updated risk log is included as Annex 1.

Cross cutting issues

GENDER EQUALITY

The portfolio recognizes the disproportionate impacts of under-development, weak governance and conflict on women, as well as their role in finding solutions to and addressing the issues of inequality and power structures.

The portfolio has pushed forward action on generating greater gender equality and women's empowerment through the following interventions:⁸

Access to Justice (Donor – INL [up to June 2018] and Norway [2018- 2019]):

- Victim and Witness Protection (VWP) law reviewed integrating aspects of gender and disability.
- Ongoing support for operationalization of VWP Authority, and implementation of law ensuring gender considerations.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (Donor – INL [up to June 2018] Norway [2018 -2019]):

- Formulation and operationalization of the Policy Framework and National Plan of Action (NPoA) to address SGBV
- All key officials in the lead and supporting ministries/ departments implementing the NPoA to address SGBV capacitated on gender and SGBV (as part of operationalizing the NPoA to address SGBV) including selected field level officers.
- Over 25,000 SGBV survivors supported to access legal and counselling services, and shelter through strengthened victim-centric services by CSOs. CSOs include Women In Need, Women's Development Centre, Change Humanitarian Organization (up to August 2018) and OfERR Ceylon working in 17 districts in Sri Lanka.
- 5 shelters for women and girl SGBV survivors supported in Batticaloa, Matara, Colombo, Kandy and Anuradhapura
- A new Women's Resource Centre opened in Monaragala to provide legal assistance and counseling support for SGBV survivors in the Monaragala district (Uva province).
- District/ divisional referral mechanisms on SGBV established and strengthened in 12 districts, including follow-up in selected districts/ divisions
- 300 men and boys engaged as changemakers to end violence against women and SGBV
- Youth engaged on developing innovative solutions using design thinking to address cyber violence among youth, especially among young women and girls.

Parliament (Donors – Norway, UNDP HQ):

- Provided technical assistance to amend discriminatory laws against women through the Sectoral Oversight Committee (SOC) on Women and Gender. Legal reform support provided to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender to draft 3 bills related to marriage and inheritance, which recognizes minimum age of marriage as 18 years (as a safeguard against underage marriage) and advances female right to inheritance in order to advance gender equality.

⁸ Interventions that are not covered under the current Norwegian contribution are indicated accordingly.

- Support provided for implementation of the Code of Conduct of Parliamentarians, which emphasizes gender sensitivity .
- Technical support to Parliament to implement UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (funded by UNDP HQ)
- Dialogue forums between civil society organizations and the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Women and Gender, as well as the Parliament Secretariat on identified issues concerning women, peace, and security were conducted. (funded by UNDP HQ)
- Public hearing on gender equality and WPS budget proposals conducted by the Parliamentary Public Finance Committee (funded by UNDP HQ)

Right to Information (Donors – Peacebuilding Fund, Norway):

- 25% of RTI trainers at the Ministry of Mass Media capacitated by UNDP are female; this is a step towards identifying and addressing issues related to the low number of RTI requests from women.
- A gender training is planned in 2020 for the implementing agencies of RTI, namely the RTI Commission and Ministry of Mass Media, to address the low rate of RTI requests from women.

National Police Commission:

- Supported the National Police Commission (NPC) to carry out a gender gap analysis in 42 police stations across the country, specifically targeting Women and Child Police Bureaus, which is the first point of contact for SGBV victims . The study generated important recommendations to enhance gender sensitivity and to strengthen the victim-centric investigation process. (EU funded)
- UNDP also supported NPC to conduct a study on barriers faced by women police officers in upward career mobility within the Police Department using EU funds. Positive findings on addressing gender inequalities and discrimination were put forward by this study. One recommendation is to remove the gender distinction associated with female police officer ranks, thereby promoting inclusivity. However, given that the Police Department is largely male dominated with decision making power in the hands of men, many challenges remain in fully adopting these recommendations and promoting gender equality. In 2019, these recommendations will be taken up by a special committee at the NPC. (EU funded)
- Development of gender standards for NPC ongoing. (Norway funded)
- Preliminary disciplinary inquiry skills of assistant superintendents and capacity of investigation officers developed, including gender sensitive victim-oriented focus (EU funded)

National Human Rights Commission:

- A Prison study, inclusive of gender considerations, was conducted covering 21 of 30 prisons country wide. The study has helped generate increased awareness of HRC and promoted greater trust in the Commission among prisoners, and has helped to highlight the need for prison reforms and the existing problems in the current system. Another key outcome from the study is the promotion of further intervention by the Commission; UNDP has utilised follow up grants to

conduct activities based on these findings. The report has been submitted to the HRCSL for review and will be launched thereafter. (EU funded)

Business and Human Rights (Donor: CIDA & EU):

- Partnering with LIIN (Lanka Impact Investment Network) to host 2 regional 'Women Emerging Summits' in Jaffna (held in September) and Kandy where the entrepreneurship of women-led investors / women-led businesses is showcased and challenges / best practices discussed, including barrier that hinder the realization of women's rights.
- Supporting a Gender Assessment focusing on the gender pay gap and other key priorities in the private sector
- Providing actionable guidance to private sector on promoting Women's Rights and thereby enhance private sector engagement on advancing gender equality.
- Advocating for zero tolerance of sexual harassment at the workplace – looking to learn from private and state sector institutions that have established complaints and grievance mechanisms/ committees to address violations of sexual harassment.
- Engage with Ceylon Chamber of Commerce / Women's Chamber of Commerce to initiate discussions to address low levels of Labour Force Participation by women.
- Building partnerships to promote and integrate 'gender equality & women's empowerment' with the private sector and hospitality industry

Gender & Peace (GYPI) - Addressing Sexual exploitation and Bribery among War and Military Widows (Donor: UN Peace Building Fund) Joint Programme with UN Women (Anuradhapura, Kilinochchi and Kurunegala)

- Proposed sensitization of public officials on sexual bribery (SB) and sexual exploitation (SE) as crimes, through innovative methods
- Strengthen the work of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development to provide guidance on legal aspects through WDOs and Counselling Assistants on SB & SE.
- Support and strengthen the newly formed/ re-established anti-sexual harassment committees in public institutions as per the circular of Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

Partnering with the Industrial Services Bureau (ISB) will undertake the following:

- Provide skills training and capacity building on business management skills for war and military widows in targeted districts leading to provision of special grants to widows for viable / innovative business proposals.
- Support entrepreneurship of widows by linking them with potential markets & through mentoring.
- Organize Diversity Market Fairs in targeted districts where widow entrepreneurs showcase their products in the other districts to foster cross-regional learning, build social cohesion and inter-linkages for peace.

Reconciliation (Donor: Peace Building Fund)

- Carried out several initiatives with CBOs on inter religious harmony where the programmes are developed and rolled out by women, strengthening women’s role in peace building.
- Linkages facilitated with women’s groups, multi-ethnic and religious groups in order to foster a more inclusive peacebuilding process
- Community radio talk shows include gender elements in its programmes as well as discuss women’s participation. Productions on peace building by women producers is also encouraged for example, *Sirahuruni*

DISABILITY INCLUSION

- UNDP is providing technical support to the Law Review Committee on drafting a special law for protection of child victims of crime and witnesses, incorporating provisions specific to child victims and witnesses with disabilities, drawing from international standards and practices. (Norway funded)
- Research is being conducted on non-discriminatory business practices from the perspective of disability inclusion within the private sector in relation to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. (CIDA and EU funded)
- Improved accessibility of NPC and HRC services for persons with disabilities through the websites developed. Additionally the website contains functionalities such as screen readers which will help the visually and hearing impaired to interact with NPC/HRC. (EU and Norway funded)
- Following the Communications training for the Parliament Communications Department, the Department is in the process of developing a special guided tour for persons with disabilities.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACHES (HRBA)

The portfolio adopts a human rights and rights-based approach. The project has strengthened the ability of institutions such as Parliament and the targeted Independent Commissions; Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and justice sector institutions, as duty-bearers to be more responsive and accountable to all citizens as rights-holders. Focused initiatives, such as: development of parliamentary public consultation media guidelines; live broadcasting of COPA sessions; implementation of communications and outreach strategies for Parliament and targeted independent commissions, have strengthened how these institutions consult with, elicit feedback from, and report back to citizens (and the media). The project has also helped strengthen NPC services to ensure fundamental human rights of citizens are protected (e.g. in relation to illegal arrest and detention / torture / disappearances/ freedom of expression etc.).

UNDP has also supported institutions to actively promote equality and non-discrimination. While UNDP has primarily targeted public institutions (the supply-side), the portfolio has also supported civil society and citizens (the demand-side) to better engage with these institutions. On the supply-side, UNDP has supported efforts to raise public awareness on rights and entitlements of victims and witnesses and protection mechanisms. On the demand-side, the project has sensitized a number of duty bearers (i.e. Sri Lankan Bar Association, Police, Child Protection Officers, psychiatrists) on the Victims of Crime and

Witnesses Protection Act in order to improve how traditionally vulnerable and excluded groups access human rights remedies and justice.

Finally, the portfolio has provided technical support to target institutions to improve their ability to meet reform commitments and international human rights obligations. For example, support was provided to the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development to meet the reporting requirements under the Beijing Platform for Action in order to push for greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys in all dimensions of life. Additionally, in line with Sri Lanka's undertaking under the UNHRC resolution 2015, UNDP in collaboration with the Ministerial Committee, supported a comprehensive review of the existing Victim and Witness Protection Law in order to incorporate international standards and best practices on the subject. Interventions under this Project have also contributed towards meeting the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)'s concluding observations on Sri Lanka; specifically, the implementation of the National Plan of Action on SGBV and addressing legal aspects in relation to women's rights with regards to marriage and inheritance.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND DISASTER RESILIENCE

The lack of political will and political influence over decision-making, as well as the proliferation of institutions with overlapping mandates and gaps in institutional capacities and coordination, have been flagged above as some of the underlying causes of the country's climate and disaster vulnerability. UNDP's interventions have integrated environmental protection and disaster resilience into all 3 of its outcomes/service lines, including for instance: through its support to Parliament committees; implementation of right to information; improving access to justice for environment protection; adoption and implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights; and support to participatory planning and budgeting processes at national and sub-national levels.

- The National Dialogue on Business and Human Rights included a dedicated panel discussion on environmental justice. Environmental issues will be one of three key thematic areas UNDP's business and Human Rights programme will focus on. (CIDA and EU funded)
- In relation to Right to Information, UNDP and RTIC conducted an awareness raising programme on using the Right to Information Act to raise environmental concerns with regard to construction / development projects. (UN PBF funded)
- The Joint Parliamentary Sub-committee on Solid Waste and Waste Water Management was supported to emphasize the importance of and take necessary measures to develop and implement a national policy on waste management. Through engagement in policy discourse with key stakeholders, the Sub Committee has helped initiate discussions on practical challenges pertaining to waste management in Sri Lanka. Additionally, UNDP's research and technical assistance supported the development of a work plan in order to identify policy recommendations. (Norway funded)

TRANSPARENCY AND ANTI-CORRUPTION METHODS

Although UNDP takes a decentralized approach to procurement by different business units; organization-wide policies and procedures apply. The procurement process encompasses planning, requisitions, sourcing of suppliers, solicitation and evaluation of offers, contract review, contract award, and the management of contracts and assets. Therefore, the procurement general principles, including sourcing the best value for money, transparency in procurement, efficient competition through timely and equal access to needed information by vendors. Technical assessment involves the following criteria: reliability, quality, experience, reputation, past performance, cost/fee and reasonableness as well as social, environment and other strategic objectives underlined the procurement plan. UNDP staff follows the highest standard of ethics in all procurement processes, and are prohibited from involvement if there is a personal, professional or financial conflict of interest.

In the selection of NGO implementation partners, UNDP does extend the reach and effectiveness of its programs by leveraging the capacity and networks of NGOs/CSOs (including community-based groups, youth associations and others) through collaborative relationships. All collaborative relationships with NGOs/CSOs involving engagement of NGOs/CSOs as Implementing Partners (IP) or as Responsible Parties (RP) (including Grantees) are subject to a vetting process, which requires a mapping exercise followed by programmatic engagement or strategic selection based on the performance assessment carried out by the independent panel.

Any NGO/CSO that is engaged to act as IP is subject to and must comply with the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) policy (i.e., micro-assessment and assurance activities). When an NGO/CSO has been selected to become an Implementing Partner of a UNDP project, the agreement between UNDP and the NGO/CSO shall be formalized through the signing of a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Responsible parties receive funding against the achievement of milestones or the provision of goods and services under the specific components of a project, and may receive advanced funds as per the applicable Financial Regulations and Rules governing prepayment. Authorization from government officials are required when releasing funds and they are audited annually by the Assistant Commissioner of Cooperative Development. Payments are released after review and verification of documentation by different authorities at UNDP.

Way Forward

UNDP's Flagship Portfolio on SDG 16+ builds on the momentum generated from past programming with target institutions to consolidate gains in the strengthening of democracy. At the same time, the Portfolio makes a strategic transition towards enhancing citizen engagement with these institutions.

Political instability and uncertainty, pending Presidential elections in November 2019 and General Elections in March 2020, will have varying degrees of consequences for outputs/activities of the Flagship Portfolio, particularly those relating to supporting transitional justice and reconciliation mechanisms and processes. Depending on the outcomes of the elections there will be an impact on the conduct of parliament business and the focus of MPs, including the functioning of Parliamentary committees, sessions, and day-to-day work of Parliamentary Secretariat. Additionally, delays are anticipated in securing buy-in for key judicial reforms post the presidential election.

Following the conclusion of the elections, the Project will re-examine and re-align activities based on the commitment and manifesto of the new regime as there may be a reluctance to pursue the reforms agenda of the previous regime (i.e. rejection of the HRC resolution-related interventions). The project will also need to explore alternatives, including engaging with civil society actors to implement certain interventions.

In order to address the issues outlined, UNDP will provide support reaching out to different parties through identified active MPs, Committees and the Secretariat. This was the approach taken by UNDP's Parliament support following the constitutional crisis in 2018 which helped the organization to meet all its delivery targets despite the prevailing political instability. UNDP's relationship with key Ministries, MPs, Parliamentary Committees and the Parliament Secretariat will help to overcome some of the obstacles outlined. As the portfolio was designed with in-built substantive and financial flexibility, it will allow UNDP to respond to changes in the socio-political context, including changes in the political agenda and political bottlenecks, while still contributing to promised aggregated results.

At the same time, UNDP will aim to take forward the following interventions under each of the outcome areas.

Under the first year of programming for Outcome 1, UNDP has helped to strengthen the technical capacity of Parliament and Independent Commissions through capacity building based on identified needs and gaps. Support to the Parliament following the 2020 elections will involve orientation of the new Parliament on SDGs and communications.

The communications capacity of these institutions has been further strengthened through the operationalization of Communications Department and Media Unit at Parliament and NPC respectively and the implementation of the HRC's communications strategy. Going forward, the Project will continue to prioritize the implementation of the communications and outreach strategies developed for Parliament and the Independent Commissions to build greater citizen awareness and engagement with these institutions and ultimately enhance public trust towards the State.

The Portfolio will continue to capitalize on UNDP's long-standing work and partnerships with national and non-state justice sector institutions and service-providers, under Outcome 2, to drive forward equitable access to justice and gender-sensitive services. Studies such as the pioneering Criminal

Victimization Study and Study on Existing Trends and Practices in Sentencing in Sri Lanka, supported by UNDP, have strengthened the knowledge base and have created the impetus for the next steps which include the development of a National Crime Prevention Strategy and National Sentencing Policy respectively. UNDP will also continue to provide technical expertise to support the protection of child victims of crime, witnesses and whistleblowers.

Partnership with CSOs will remain a key strategy for UNDP in ensuring that no one is left behind in providing legal assistance, shelter support and counselling to SGBV survivors. UNDP is also looking to build partnerships with the private sector to strengthen sustainability of service provision on SGBV to CSOs. Furthermore, innovative alternatives through Hack a Dev on engaging with youth are also included as part of UNDP's response to SGBV.

UNDP envisages supporting the Government to address criminal justice case flow management as a key priority within the justice sector that has also received the attention of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Justice.

Moving forward, UNDP is in the process of identifying the key priorities within the justice sector with a view to developing a holistic programme of support that illustrates an impact-mapping of the entire criminal justice sector. UNDP also envisages strengthening the government's capacity to adhere to its treaty reporting obligations based on sound empirical data and analysis that would help position Sri Lanka as a compliance-driven country. In response to the significant challenge of delays related to the passing of laws, UNDP envisages initiating discussions with the justice sector to identify and strengthen alternate dispute resolution mechanisms, support the pilot digitalization of court processes, and promote a culture of electronic case management across the justice sector service providers.