

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is a lower middle-income country that has made considerable economic progress since the end of the decades-long armed conflict in 2009. Despite relatively good overall health and education standards, though, Sri Lanka's developmental gains are uneven.

There are significant regional disparities with pockets of poverty primarily in the northern, central and eastern provinces. Competitiveness and economic growth prospects remain tenuous. This is due in part to labour issues such as a shortage of skilled labour, low productivity, low female participation in the formal workforce and youth unemployment.

Sri Lanka also faces ongoing and significant challenges for achieving long-term reconciliation, peace and stability. This includes the need to build sound systems of governance and ensure the inclusion of minorities, as well as marginalized and vulnerable groups, in all

spheres of life. Women and girls face additional challenges, including the high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence. Women's rights organizations at the local level also lack the resources to engage effectively in advocacy.

In 2016-2017, Global Affairs Canada's Sri Lanka development program supported the economic well-being and social integration of the poor and most vulnerable. This includes women and girls and those affected by Sri Lanka's conflict. Canada's support helped strengthen:

- the agricultural production and enterprise development of former internally displaced persons; and
- the vocational skills of youth in high-demand trades, such as hospitality and construction.



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