

REPORT ON MID-TERM INTERNAL EVALUATION

Social Dialogue for Peace and Crisis Prevention in Sri Lanka

Project Code: LKA 24/50/UND

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Executive Summary

This Mid-Term Evaluation assesses the Social Dialogue for Peace and Crisis Prevention Project, implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF). The evaluation focuses on progress made towards strengthening inclusive social dialogue mechanisms in the public, private, and informal sectors in Sri Lanka.

The project has three outcomes:

Outcome 1: Improved social dialogue in the public sector enables gender-responsive and peaceful dispute prevention and resolution, through institutionalized mechanisms at workplace, sectoral, and national levels, contributing to inclusive and stable public service delivery during economic recovery.

Outcome 2: Strengthened social dialogue in the private sector supports gender-responsive and peaceful dispute resolution by enhancing workplace and national consultation mechanisms to reduce conflict and enable inclusive labour policymaking.

Outcome 3: Enhanced engagement of women, youth, and other under-represented workers in the informal economy with District and National Level Policy Making structures aimed towards highlighting concerns faced by marginalized communities and facilitating inclusive and gender-responsive peaceful dispute resolutions.

The primary objective of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the project's progress towards achieving its intended outcomes and identify key enablers and barriers to success. Accordingly, this mid-term evaluation will assess the project's progress in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and early outcomes, with a focus on all three outcomes. It will also provide actionable insights to adjust the implementation strategy for the remainder of the project period. Moreover, the followings are the specific objectives of the evaluation

- To assess the relevance, validity of project design, coherence, and strategic alignment of the project with national priorities and PBF peacebuilding objectives.
- To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation approach, partnerships, and coordination mechanisms among UN agencies and partners.
- To measure the progress made toward the intended outcomes using the project's results framework.
- To examine the extent to which gender equality, youth participation, and inclusion of marginalized groups have been integrated.
- To identify early outcomes, unintended effects, and lessons learned.

- To provide evidence-based recommendations for course correction, adaptation, and sustainability.

A mixed-methods approach has been used in this evaluation as follows.

- Desk review of project documents, reports, and baseline data
- Semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews (KIIs)
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with target groups (e.g., public sector workers, WPF members, Formal private sector and community organizations)
- Outcome mapping and analysis of changes
- Gender-sensitive and participatory approaches to data collection

This evaluation is an analysis of how the project's design and implementation has ensured the achievement of the project's overall goal and specific objectives.

The project is well-aligned with national priorities on public sector reform, labour relations, and inclusive economic development. Findings confirm that the project has established 33 Workplace Forums (WPFs) across key public sector institutions, enhancing communication, dispute resolution, and collaboration between management and workers. Training activities have capacitated 1,794 public servants and trade union members, fostering gender-responsive dialogue and workplace cooperation.

While implementation of Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 is ongoing, early achievements demonstrate improved social dialogue, particularly in the transport, education, and energy sectors. Challenges include staff turnover, uneven sectoral commitment, and delays in institutionalizing WPFs within public service structures. However, the project's relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency are evident, with strong potential for sustainability through government ownership.

The following strategic and operational recommendations should be considered to the achievement of the project and its sustainability. At the strategic level and to ensure project sustainability the government intervention by the relevant authorities is paramount.

High priority

1. Need to get the highest-level political will to demonstrate the commitment of the state leadership to accept this project as a mandatory mechanism for dispute prevention and resolution for the entire public service, which can be used effectively for a better public service delivery and for a satisfied and productive public workforce, as outlined in the current government's policy statement. **(Office of the HE the president, Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Public Administration Provincial Councils and Local Government) high priority, short-term period**
2. Creation and maintain of independent secretariat/ coordination unit for social dialogue and workplace cooperation at the Ministry of Public Administration to coordinate with other Ministries to follow-up and monitor the progress of implementation of the dispute prevention and resolution system and introduce an automated reporting system to this coordination unit/secretariat linking institutional,

sectoral and national level forums.(**Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, ILO Colombo office) High priority ,Short- term period**

3. Accelerate the process related to establishment of the National- level Forum to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination through a National Public Service Dialogue Forum and formalize WPF and Sectoral Forum mechanisms through circulars/regulations to ensure continuity beyond the project lifecycle. **(Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government) High Priority, Short-term Period)**

4. Develop legislation that would provide the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC) with statutory status, a clear mandate with dedicated institutional support to strengthen the NLAC, transforming into a modern social dialogue forum for the private sector. **(High priority, short-term period Ministry of labour, technical assistance from ILO Colombo Office)**

5. Accelerate the process of developing a database on Strike/Lockout in line with ILO Resolution 1993 on Statistics on Strikes and Lockouts. It is proposed to integrate this data collection into the Ministry of Public Administration HRMIS for scale-up. **(high priority, short-term period, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, Ministry of Labour, ILO)**

6. Develop an effective communication strategy for sharing information, good practices, experiences, success stories, dedicated web sites as so on. Document the process of the current project to draw lessons and best practices for sector-wide application. Encourage Advocacy Platforms multi-actor dialogue forums, engage state actors, promote diverse caste, religion, and income groups to surface lived experiences, facilitate a “Voices from the Ground” campaign. **(High priority, short-term period, all project Partners)**

7. Embedding reforms into existing public sector performance appraisal or audit systems would improve traction and accountability. **(Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government) High priority, short - -term period**

8 Formulate a comprehensive industrial relations legislation and development of a comprehensive policy cover the public sector employees as the other countries who have successfully integrated public sector dispute prevention and resolution legislations at present. e.g., South Africa, Ireland, Philippines, Malaysia and so on. **(Ministry of Public administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government), Ministry of Justice and Ministry of labour should jointly work on this and with the technical assistance of the ILO,) High priority, medium term period.**

9 With the coverage of the legislative and policy framework, a special Chapter needs to be included in the Establishment Code with provisions for public sector dispute prevention and resolution. This should not be created any conflict with the existing contents of the E Code, and more emphasis should be placed on prevention of disputes rather than mere settlement. A clear definition of industrial dispute is also required. **(Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government) High priority, medium-term period**

10. Expand the coverage of the informal sector under the project outcome 3 and enhance engagement with policy -making structures to address concerns of marginalized communities, youth and women. Introduce conflict sensitivity in all project activities addressing varied conflict triggers at the district/ community level. (such as compensation disputes, caste exclusion, ethnic fragmentation). **(high**

priority, medium-term period, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, Ministry of Labour, UN Project partners)

11. Prioritize the modern HR management processes in the public service, processes include strategic workforce planning, competency-based recruitment, continuous performance management with linked incentives, and a greater emphasis on training, employee relations, and compliance. It should be the key function of the HR Division of the public sector institutions expanding capacity building for second-tier leadership, including training, coaching and mentoring to address management gaps in government sector institutions. **(High priority, medium-term period, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, SLIDA, ILO Colombo office)**

Moderate priority

12. It is also recommended to ratify ILO conventions, Collective bargaining Convention (C15 and the labour relations (Public service) convention (C151) to strengthen and formalize labour relations, protect the rights of public sector workers, and promote effective collective bargaining and social dialogue. **(Ministry of Labour, ILO Colombo office) moderate priority, medium term-period**

The project is well-aligned with national development strategies, particularly the Public Sector Reform Agenda, the National Policy Framework and the commitments of Sri Lanka under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This project contributes Sustainable Development Goals and Targets (SDGs 8 and 9), Decent work, economic growth and industry, (SDG16, SDG 3) Peace, inclusive societies, governance and Justice, good health and well-being, (SDG 5), Gender Equality. Findings of the midterm evaluation indicate the high level of relevance of the project to the public sector and the positive responses and feedback from key stakeholders ensure the commitment of the public sector employees to implement the project activities. Non-availability of a mechanism for preventing and resolving disputes arises in the sector, expectations of the public sector employees on this new initiative are very high.

The evaluation concludes that the project is a critical step towards a peaceful, equitable, and productive public service in Sri Lanka.

Introduction

1. A Brief Outline of the Economic, Political, Social, Cultural, Historical Context for the Country.

Sri Lanka has a relatively large public sector and around 1.4 million employees currently in the public sector. Sri Lanka has a strong legal framework for the security of employment and welfare of working population in the country, and the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is the fundamental law of the country that set out directive principles of state policy that oblige the state to, amongst other things,

- the promotion of the welfare of the People by securing and protecting as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice (social, economic and political) shall guide all the institutions of the national life; and
- the realization by all citizens of an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, the continuous improvement of living conditions and the full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities¹

Employees may also themselves directly invoke the fundamental rights provisions in the Constitution, mostly in relation to individual disputes with their employer (Section 12 of the Constitution guarantees the right to equality, Article 14 (c) the right to freedom of association generally and Article 14(d) the right to form and join trade unions specifically. Under Article 17 read with Article 126, any person may petition the Supreme Court in respect of any apprehended violations of fundamental rights, including violations by administrative or executive action.

1.1. Dispute settlement and prevention mechanism in the public service in Sri Lanka

The public sector in Sri Lanka refers to all government-owned entities, including ministries, departments, provincial councils, and state-owned enterprises. The public service is the body of government employees who work within the public sector to provide services to the public.

Employee relations of the public service differ from the analytical conditions in the private sector. Public service employee relations are governed by the Establishment Code approved by Parliament, which covers the provisions for privileges, concessions and terms and conditions to public employees

¹ Article 27(2) (b) and (c) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 1978 constitution.

including duty leave, free travel, release of officers for trade union work, and supplemented by the circulars issued by the Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Finance.²

The Public sector dispute settlement mechanism is set up as below.

Disputes concerning matters of the public sector are within the scope of the Public Service Commission (PSC), established under the Article 54 (1) of the Constitution. Appointments, promotion, transfer, disciplinary cases and dismissals of all public officers except heads of departments are also commonly referred to the PSC by either the employer or employee concerned. In addition, the PSC also has roles in relation to Schemes of Recruitment (SOR) and Service Minutes (SM) that affect conditions of employment. Any employee aggrieved by reason of a decision of an appointing/disciplinary authority, has the right to make an appeal to the PSC through his/her department and the ministry. The PSC seeks the observations of the relevant head of department on the issue, but an aggrieved party cannot defend himself/herself before the PSC and the Trade unions also have no right to represent their members before it.

If an employee is not satisfied with a decision of the PSC, she/he can appeal to the Administrative Appeal Tribunal (AAT), which operates as a quasi-judicial body. The functions of the AAT are confined to the hearing and determination of appeals referred to it by employees against decisions of the PSC. Lawyers and others are allowed to appear before the AAT on behalf of the appellants.

Pursuant to Article 156(1) of the Constitution, the Ombudsman was established and charged with the duty of “investigating and reporting upon complaints or allegations of the infringement of fundamental rights and other injustices by public officers and officers of public corporations, local authorities and other like institutions”. However, only a few seek redress from this institution.

Aggrieved public servants regularly approach the Human Rights Commission (HRC) for assistance on rights issues. Comprehensive inquiries are conducted by retired judicial officers supported by other junior officers. The HRC often summons the respective Heads of Departments and other relevant parties to account for decisions they take. However, experience has shown that such officers are reluctant to abide by the HRC’s decisions. Existing bodies such as the HRC, PSC and AAT have jurisdiction with respect to human rights, appointments, pay and appeals respectively.

At present, there is no single coherent pathway towards the final resolution of public sector employee disputes. As a result, initial disputes arising out of working terms and conditions tend to persist and indeed escalate into major issues. As previously noted, even before dispute management comes into the picture there is a lack of basic social dialogue mechanisms such as consultative forums in place in the public sector.

Fundamental rights cases are filed before the Supreme Court under Article 126 of the constitution on grounds of alleged violation of fundamental rights. Writ applications can be made to the Court of Appeal on grounds of abuse of power or failure to exercise executive authority against public officers

² Chapter XXV of the Establishment Code

in authority or against relevant authorities. There is also the possibility of normal civil remedies such as declaratory actions in the district court.

In the semi-government sector, there is a tendency in the case of disputes to resort to discussions with the Head or CEO, and later the minister, and if there is no settlement no remedy is available other than strike action. It has been seen that in some cases the minister has requested the labour Ministry to attempt to resolve the issue. It is necessary that the Industrial Disputes Act (ID ACT) be used as in the case of the private sector. Despite the provisions of the ID Act apply to State-Owned Enterprises (SOE), it is important to note that many SOEs are significantly affected by union actions, which in turn create challenges for the delay of public services through these entities.

Industrial relations and dispute settlement in Sri Lanka's informal sector are largely outside the formal mechanisms like the ID Act, as the sector is characterized by a lack of formal employment, low capital investment, heterogeneous workforce and diverse activities such as trade, transport, and services.

While the formal system offers dispute resolution through collective agreements, conciliation, arbitration, the Industrial Court, and Labour Tribunals, these are not easily accessible or applicable to informal workers. Consequently, informal sector disputes are often resolved through informal, flexible, and sometimes informal-traditional mechanisms due to the formal system's limitations in addressing their unique challenges and the formal judicial system can be cumbersome, costly, and time-consuming, making it a less viable option for informal workers.

One of the drawbacks in public sector dispute management is the absence of basic social dialogue mechanisms such as consultative bodies /structures. This drawback was highlighted during the pilot phase of the dispute settlement and social dialogue initiative in the Ministry of health as follows:

“One of the major drawbacks in labour management relations in the public service in Sri Lanka is non-existence of an environment for social dialogue and appropriate mechanisms to prevent and settle disputes. There is no proper environment for the employees and the management to come together to learn and listen to each other to find mutually acceptable ways in dealing with common problems and issues. There should be an environment for the labour and the management to solve their problems on fairgrounds where dialogue and participation should be the characteristics of labour relations. In the absence of a proper procedure for public sector trade unions to seek their demands they adopt different ad hoc methods to gain their demands using personal relationships with higher officers or political leaders or with their bargaining power” (ILO Colombo 2013, Dispute settlement and social dialogue mechanism for the public service of Sri Lanka)

1.2. Dispute settlement mechanisms in the private sector in the Country

The Industrial Disputes Act (ID ACT) No 43 of 1950 is the main legislation for maintaining industrial peace. The Commissioner of Labour and his officers are authorized by the Act to make inquiries and take any steps necessary to promote a settlement of a dispute. The means available are, Collective Agreement, Conciliation, Arbitration (Voluntary and Compulsory) and Labour Tribunal (Litigation). In this connection power has been vested with the Commissioner of Labour, Minister in charge of the subject of labour and Labour Tribunal by the Act.

The Commissioner of Labour endeavours to settle industrial disputes by way of Agreement, appointing an authorized officer, conciliation and voluntary Arbitration. If any establishment or

workplace where dispute arose, has valid collective agreement and if such agreement has provisions on how to settle industrial dispute at workplace, the commissioner may encourage parties to the dispute to settle the dispute as per the provisions of the collective agreement. Another mechanism is that the commissioner can appoint an 'Authorized Officer' and refer the dispute to settle through conciliation. Most important mechanism of settling industrial dispute is the conciliation by the officials of the Labour Department.

Accordingly, the main objective is establishing the industrial peace required for uplifting economic productivity, safeguarding terms and conditions stipulated by labour legislations, registration of collective agreements and promotion of such registration, minimizing strikes and industrial disputes by enforcing the relevant legislations, Industrial Disputes Act No. 43 of 1950, Gratuity Act No. 12 of 1983, Termination of Employment of Workers' (Special Provisions) Act No. 45 of 1971, Trade Unions Ordinance No. 14 of 1935, Minimum Retirement Age of Workers' Act No. 28 of 2021 (Dept of Labour, 2023, Annual Performance Report, Industrial disputes, 1997–2005,)

Majority of the disputes are settled through this mechanism, and it is about taking every possible step by labour authority to bring the parties to an amicable settlement (Franklin Amarasinghe, ILO, 2009, The Current Status and Evolution of Industrial Relations in Sri Lanka, page 46)

In case conciliation fails, Commissioner of Labour seeks the consent of parties to the dispute to refer the matter to an 'Arbitrator' to give a just and equitable award and both parties consented, the dispute will be referred to an arbitrator. This is what is called voluntary arbitration.

In the absence of consent or any objection from either party to the dispute to refer dispute to an arbitrator, notwithstanding such objection, Minister in charge of the subject of labour refers to it for an arbitrator seeking just and equitable award. This is known as compulsory arbitration. If the dispute is major, which may have national level consequences, Minister may refer the dispute to an Industrial Court which is pool of arbitrators (2 or 3 arbitrators) who are appointed by the President of Sri Lanka based on the recommendation made by the Minister of Labour. Industrial Court is also supposed to give an Award based on just and equity principle.

If the dispute is about termination of employment, which comes under the definition of industrial dispute as per the provisions of the Industrial Dispute Act (ID Act), the employee may make an application to the Labour Tribunal (LT) six months before the date of such termination seeking relief. LT is also empowered to give an order based on just and equity principles.

Many companies in the private sector have grievance processes and some even dispute resolution procedures. Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) has built into its collective agreements in dispute settlement processes and in some cases strikes on matters covered by the agreement are totally prohibited during the validity of the agreement. Many employers now see a collective agreement as an effective dispute settlement process as by and large unions respect their undertaking to follow the agreed process.

2. The Social Dialogue for Peace and Crisis prevention project

Projects' purpose, logic, structure and objectives

The Social Dialogue for Peace and Crisis prevention in Sri Lanka project supported by the UN peace building Fund (PBF) and implemented by the ILO as the lead Agency, UNFPA and UNESCO. This project

aims to strengthen inclusive social dialogue mechanisms at national, sectoral, workplace in the public sector, formal private sector organizations and in the informal economy. Moreover, the project is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027 and the ILO Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) as well as the gender promotion initiative and youth promotion initiative are the PBF priorities.

2.1.Objectives of the project

Overarching goal of the PBF project is to support the achievement of a peaceful, inclusive and just response to Sri Lanka's economic crisis, based on participation, partnership and dialogue, particularly at national, district and community levels.

In the absence of a formal mechanism and structure for prevention and resolution of disputes, strikes, work-to-rule, lockouts occur frequently in the public service, resulting in a loss of number of man-days for the economy and brings a lot of suffering to the public who seek services from the public sector. Moreover, there is no formal mechanism that exists in the public sector for resolving interest disputes between an individual worker or group of workers as well as in cases where the rights of a group of employees are affected. This is affected adversely to the quality of the public service delivery and to the production process of the country.

Due to the public expectation for a well-functioning public service, high level of industrial disputes in the government sector, limited scope for the trade unions to engage on behalf of their members although in Sri Lanka 84% of the registered trade unions are in public sector, non-existence of an environment for social dialogue, no appropriate mechanisms to prevent and settle disputes and no proper environment for the employees and management to learn and listen each other, public sector critically needs changes in the existing industrial relation mechanism.

At the end of 2023, there were 2118 trade unions registered with the DOL representing employees of the central government (41 percent), Provincial Councils (32 percent), semi-government organizations (11 percent), and private sector organizations (16 percent). Accordingly, there is a heavy concentration of trade unions in the public sector (Table 1). It appears that there are more opportunities to promote social dialogue in the public sector compared to their counterparts in the private sector. (Dept of Labour, 2024, Annual performance report)

Table 1 Sector wise distribution of registered trade unions as at 31.12.2023

	Central Government	Semi Government -	Provincial, Local Government & District Level	Private sector	Total
No of registered trade unions	866	682	227	343	2118

% Share	41	32	11	16	100.0
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Source: DOL & Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment

This project intervention is expected to provide public sector employees with an opportunity to resolve their issues that arise in respect of their rights and interest disputes through social dialogue, conciliation, mediation and arbitration between trade unions and management within the workplaces. In addition, it is expected to change the existing culture of workplaces, eliminating adversarial relationships between the management, and trade unions/employees. These changes will improve the cooperation between these two social parties and improve the productivity and quality of the public service expected by the general public.

2.2. Main means of action and milestones of the project, geographic coverage; management structure; and funding arrangements.

The Dispute prevention and resolution mechanism (DPRM) in the public service is expected to be implemented in the entire public service, and it will be implemented at the three levels of workplace, sectoral and national. Furthermore, nine provincial Mediation boards at the provincial level and the National Arbitration Panel at the National Level, affiliated to the Ministry of public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government will be established to implement the methods of mediation and arbitration, respectively to resolve disputes. (Ministry of Public Administration, 2024, Guidelines for the Introduction of a Dispute Prevention and Resolution mechanism in the public service, Annex 1)

The project has three outcomes as follows.

Outcome 1: Outcome 1 focuses on developing and institutionalizing coordinated dialogue and dispute resolution mechanisms for the public sector, which are gender responsive, and which support improved public service delivery. This will entail supporting the establishment of mechanisms that would mainly facilitate the prevention of disputes at workplace and sectoral levels and resolve public sector disputes at a national level. This is a key to achieving a stable and productive public sector within the context of job losses potentially arising from economic recovery efforts. Improved social dialogue in the public sector allows for gender-responsive and peaceful dispute resolution that includes employer's organizations, trade unions and civil society organizations in the inclusive formulation and implementation of socio-economic recovery actions. The project will support the establishment of dialogue and dispute resolution mechanisms at workplace, sectoral and national levels as a basis for reducing conflict at the national level, sectoral level and at the workplace level in the public sector. The project will design and support the establishment of a National Public Sector Dialogue Forum which will serve as an apex -level dispute resolution mechanism for the public sector.

At the sectoral level, project will establish sectoral forums in priority sectors of the public service, including transport, health and education to address disputes that are referred to by workplace forums operating in their sector of focus. At the workplace level in the public sector project will focus on establishing workplace forums in priority sectors of the public service and initiative has focused under Outcome 1 on capacitating representatives of workplace forums within the pilot sectors to create awareness, monitor and combat sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace.

Outcome 2: This focuses on the private sector and the strengthening of mechanisms for consultation and dispute prevention at the workplace level as a basis for collectively developing inclusive labour policy at the national level. The NLAC will form the central focus of intervention, and it will be strengthened to prioritize labour matters affecting women and youth and for enhanced connectivity with districts/community level structures. Reducing conflict at the workplace is another focus under the outcome 2 which has affected business operations and has resulted in business closures, increased layoffs, high cost of living and generally increased hardships for both employers and employees. The establishment of a structured mechanism is critical to enable constructive dialogue between management and workers, and joint action taken to avoid situations of conflict. workplace forums will be established in partnership with the EFC, as a basis for management -worker consultation on a wide range of workplace issues. Through the partnership with the EFC and Chamber of Commerce, the project will work to ensure safe and dignified workplaces, where there is protection from sexual harassment and exploitation. The project will support the development of grievance handling procedures aimed at guiding the resolution of grievances at a workplace level in rapid, transparent, structured and gender -sensitive manner, this will reduce the potential for grievance into full blown disputes which undermine peace in the workplace.

Outcome 3: This focuses on empowering women, youth, informal economy workers and other under-represented groups in key economic sectors to actively engage with district and national policy making structures, steering policies towards gender responsive inclusive socio-economic recovery. It also aims to incorporate the voices of underserved communities into an inclusive economic engagement, and mechanisms will be established to integrate feedback from marginalized communities in to crucial decision-making bodies at the local level (District level Coordination committees) and at the national level. Strengthening local forums in key economic sectors and it will be fortified by imparting knowledge and skills for effective engagement with government actors and policy makers. This involves a grassroot level capacity assessment to identify gaps and priorities for inclusive economic recovery dialogue. In addition, under this outcome and designed an activity to connect one women's group in each district with National Labour Advisory Committee (NLAC) members specifically the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and industry, EFC and Sri Lanka Exporters Association towards

sharing and creating opportunities for training, networking and possibly income generation. (PBF Project Document)

The Project, Social Dialogue for Peace and Crisis Prevention in Sri Lanka has started on 12 August 2024 and continues up to 19 May 2026.

Table 2: Funding arrangements- Peace Building fund

Recipient organisation	Budget Allocated (in full USD)	Amount Transferred to date (in full USD)	Amount spent / committed to date (in full USD)
ILO	1,150,000.00	805,000.00	694,320.00
UNESCO	350,000.00	245,000.00	208,281.85
UNFPA	500,000.00	350,000.00	179,883.94
TOTAL	2,000,000.00	1,400,000.00	1,082,485.79

Source: ILO, Oct 2025, PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT Updated

2.3. Gender-responsive Budgeting:

45.7 percent of the budget contributes gender equality or women's empowerment (GEWE) as per the project document. Accordingly, 914,836 USD contributed to gender equality or women's empowerment and expended to date 494,696.01 USD, by the ILO, UNESCO and UNFPA on efforts contributing to gender equality or women's empowerment.

3. Purpose, scope and clients of the mid-term evaluation

The primary objective of the mid-term independent evaluation is to assess the project's progress towards achieving its intended outcomes and identify key enablers and barriers to success. The evaluation will cover all three outcomes, including the component implemented by the other Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) UNFPA and UNESCO.

All geographic areas of implementation, including:

- (i) five priority sectors in the public service (Power & Energy, Transport, Ports, Shipping and Civil Aviation, Health, and Education);
- (ii) the private sector at the national level; and
- (iii) the informal economy, focusing on women and youth at the community level in the districts of Gampaha, Badulla, Batticaloa, and Jaffna.

This mid-term internal evaluation covers the entire project duration to date (from inception in October 2024 to Oct -2025) and this will be the ILO internal evaluation to assess the progress up to date. In how far the project is making a significant contribution to broader and longer-term development

Evaluation questions

The public service is a major employer in Sri Lanka, engaging some 1.4 million people. The productivity, affordability and reliability and of its services are critical to the health, well-being and socio-economic progress of the country. However, the delivery of those services is impaired by inadequate systems, low skills and limited competencies, and is often interrupted by strike action. The issues within the public sector are rooted in several key factors. Historically, there have been adversarial relations between management and trade unions, a problem exacerbated by the absence of a complete mechanism for resolving rights and interest disputes. Employees also lack opportunities for formal dialogue with management on critical issues like pay and service conditions. This is compounded by the absence of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) tools such as dialogue, conciliation, mediation, and arbitration. The prevalent top-down decision-making without formal structures for consultation often leads to anomalies, while the lack of opportunities for professional advancement further demotivates the workforce.

The methodology using in this evaluation is framed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Dispute Prevention and Resolution Mechanism implemented through the project, its relevancy to the overall policies of the government of Sri Lanka, effectiveness and efficiency to response the prevailing issues in the public sector and also its impact, sustainability of maintaining the outcomes of the project.

1. Does the project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its national partners?
2. Whether the public sector disputes, including those arising from the economic reform process, are addressed through initiated social dialogue mechanisms, disaggregated by gender?
3. How does the project align with and support national development plans, as well as programmes and priorities of the national social partners?
4. Can observed changes be causally linked to the project's interventions?
 - Attitudes
 - Capacities:
 - Institutional buy-in.
5. Is the project meeting its objectives and achieving desired outcomes?
 - Outcome 1: National Level, workplace level, Sectoral level
 - Outcome 2: Work related to the NLAC is on-going with initial discussions with the MOL in strengthening the NLAC for greater inclusivity of women and youth.
 - Outcome 3: UNFPA, UNESCO (Alliance Development Trust (World Vision)
6. Are national partners willing and committed to continuing with the project?
 - How effectively has the project built national ownership?
 - How effectively has the project built the necessary capacity of people and institutions (of national partners and implementing partners)?

3.1. Methodology

Analytical Framework and Evaluation Criteria

This mid-term internal evaluation adopts OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and the ILO's project evaluation standards and expectations as set out in the Terms of Reference.

Relevance: with the guidance of the Government, the project identifies and resolves a problem through the direct involvement of beneficiaries, partners and the satisfaction of their expectations. It

also explains the relevance to the policies/strategies of the government and concerns cross-cutting themes.

Effectiveness: the capacity of the current activities to deliver the expected outcomes and to contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives.

Efficiency: quality of resources, mainly human or financial, is transformed into outputs and outcomes.

Impact: Direct /indirect contribution, to the project towards achieving overall objectives or specific objectives of the project.

Sustainability: assesses the potential for maintaining the outcomes of the project once external support comes to an end.

3.2.Data Collection Process

The evaluation study is based on a qualitative approach and data collection process has mainly focused on following methods:

- a) Desk reviews of project documents and international best practices, international labour standards
- b) Discussions with the ILO project team
- c) Qualitative data have been collected using two questionnaire schedules through the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) including project partners, national partners, resource persons and tripartite constituents
- d) Qualitative observations based on the evaluation objectives and methodology.
- e) Firsthand information gathered on the outcome 1 activities, by observing two training sessions for workplace forum participants and orientation programme for WPF members of the State- Owned Enterprise, Lanka Electricity Company (LECO)

These methods help to identify the degree of commitment on the part of various stakeholders that is critical for the success of the project and its sustainability in the future. Selection of the key stakeholders for KIIs will be done in consultation with the ILO project team considering the time limitations. (Annex 1: details of the key stakeholders interviewed; observations and data collection tools/questionnaires designed for each target group).

Limitations

As this is a mid-term internal evaluation, projected activities in some areas are still in the preliminary stages, especially relating to the activities in outcome 2 and the outcome 3. Therefore, it is too early to evaluate the progress of these areas.

4. Main Findings

Analysis and Results

Given the proposed methodology, the evaluation study is based on a qualitative approach. As a result, the data collection process has mainly focused on (i) desk reviews of project documents; (ii) individual and group interviews with key stakeholders. Accordingly, qualitative data gathering tool, the two set of

questionnaires have been developed to collect information focusing the evaluation criteria of relevancy, effectiveness, efficiency, Impact and sustainability of the PBF project. The findings have been set out under these five criteria.

Table 3: Summary of Workplace Forums (WPF) Status by Sector as of November 2025

Sector	Workplace Forums		Total Trained	
	Operational	In Progress	Female	Male
Transport (Land)	11	2	84	179
Health	2		21	61
Public Administration	6		122	136
Ports, Shipping & Aviation	8		119	247
Education (Higher)	4	1	210	347
Education (Vocational)	3	5		
Education (General)	2	11		
Energy	2	6	62	206
Total	38	25	618	1176
Grand Total	1,794			

Note: "In Progress" includes entities where members are identified/trained but the WPF is not yet formally established, or where establishment is imminent.

Table 4 Details of WPF Status by Sector as of November 2025

Sector	No.	Workplace Forum (WPF)	Training details
General Education	1	Education Services	
	2	Teacher Establishment	WPF formed
	3	School Affairs	

	4	National Institute of Education	
	5	Department of Examination	WPF formed
	7	Teacher Education	
	8	Education Quality Development	
	9	Combined and non-academies services	
	10	General Administration Section	
	11	Engineering Services	
	12	Piriven Education	
	13	State Printing Cooperation	
Vocational Education	1	National Apprentice & Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)	WPF formed
	2	Vocational Training Authority (VTA)	
	3	Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)	
	4	Ceylon German Technical Training Institute	
	5	Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET)	WPF formed
	6	Ocean University of Sri Lanka (OCUSL)	
	7	University of Vocational Technology UNIVOTEC	
	8	Vocational Training Section of the Ministry	WPF formed
Higher Education	1	Higher Education Section - MoE	WPF formed
	2	Homagama Buddhist University	WPF formed
	3	Anuradhapura Bhikshu Vishva Vidyalaya	WPF formed
	4	Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education	
	5	University Grants Commission	WPF formed
Energy	1	Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC)	WPF is not formed yet
	2	Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Ltd (CPSTL)	Initial discussion held.
	3	Lanka Coal Limited	Not initiated
	4	Atomic Energy Board	Initiated
	5	Sri Lanka Atomic Regulatory Commission	Not initiated

	6	Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority	WPF formed
	7	Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB)	To be established
	8	Lanka Electricity Company (LECO)	WPF formed
Transport (Land)	1	Chief Mechanical Engineer's Sub-department - SLR Ratmalana	2022
	2	Motive Power Engineering Sub Department SLR - Maligawaththa	2022
	3	Way & Works Sub Department SLR	2022
	4	Office of GMR & Chief Financial Officer	2022
	5	Procurement SLR	2022
	6	Railway Security Authority	2022
	7	Signal & Electricity	2022
	8	Transport & Commercial	2022
	9	Ministry of Transport Sethsiripaya	WPF formed
	10	National Transport Commission (NTC)	WPF formed
	11	Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB)	To be established
	12	National Transport Medical Institute	To be established
	13	Department of Motor Traffic	WPF formed
Port & Aviation	1	Civil Aviation Authority	WPF formed
	2	Airport & Aviation Authority	WPF formed
	3	Ceylon Shipping Cooperation	WPF formed
	4	Ports Authority	WPF formed
	5	Port & Aviation Section of the Ministry of Transport & Civil Aviation	WPF formed
	6	Merchant Shipping Secretariat	WPF formed
	7	Port Management & Consultancy Services	WPF formed
	8	Jaya Terminals LTD	WPF formed
Public Administration	1	Ministry of Public Administration	WPF formed
	2	Home Affairs	WPF formed
	3	Registrar General Department	WPF formed
	4	Pensions Department	WPF formed
	5	SLIDA	WPF formed

	6	Provincial councils and Local Government	WPF formed
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Source: Social Dialogue and the Dispute Resolution in the Public Sector in Sri Lanka, Progress: Oct 2025

According to the above data and information, the project, in essence, is building a new engine for the public sector dispute settlement. The Priority was given to sectors known for heavy trade union action such as Health, Transport, Education, Ports, Shipping & Aviation, and Power & Energy. The implementation phase has focused on training and establishing the foundational Workplace Forums. By the end of October 2025, 63 WPFs were formed or planned to be formed in key workplaces at the national level. A total of 1,794 trade union and management members of the WPFs received comprehensive, two-day residential training on the formation and functioning of WPFs.

4.1.Relevance of the Project

Findings of the stakeholder consultation and observations indicate the high level of relevance of the project to the public sector and the positive responses and feedback ensure the commitment of the public sector employees to implement the project activities. Non-availability of a mechanism for preventing and resolving disputes arises in the sector, expectations of the public sector employees on this new initiative are very high.

a) Alignment with National Development Priorities

- The project is well-aligned with national development strategies, particularly the Public Sector Reform Agenda, the National Policy Framework and the commitments of Sri Lanka under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This project contributes Sustainable Development Goals and Targets (SDGs 8 and 9), Decent work, economic growth and industry, (SDG16, SDG 3) Peace, inclusive societies, governance and Justice, good health and well-being, and the (SDG 5) Gender Equality. As an ILO member country, Sri Lanka has ratified the ILO Conventions of Freedom of Association and protection of the Right to Organize(C87), Tripartite consultation(C144) and the Right to organize and collective bargaining (C98) which related to industrial relation. However, the ILO Conventions on Collective bargaining 1981 (C154) and Labour Relations (Public Service) 1978 (C151) has not been ratified which directly related to the public sector.
- The approach complements priorities of the social partners, such as public sector reforms (Ministry of Public Administration), improved grievance handling (trade unions), and efficient service delivery (Ministries). The emphasis on dispute prevention, digital transformation, and participatory dialogue resonates with current national needs.
- The development strategy of the present government places a priority on the topic of ‘**a productive workforce**’ by providing a space that to build a high- quality and modernized public service in Sri Lanka.
 - I. Adhere to fair treatment, fair remuneration, safe working conditions and respect for workers’ rights in line with the ILO principles.
 - II. Ensure labour relations through collective engagements that improve productivity to empower workers through co-operation and collaboration.
 - III. Implement mechanisms to resolve disputes in production relations through effective stakeholder engagements

- IV. Promote stakeholder engagement, including businesses, workers and community representatives in decision -making processes to develop democratic workplaces
- V. Digital Transformation; Implement comprehensive digitization programmes across government institutions to improve efficiency, transparency and accessibility. (National People's Power Manifesto ,2024, A Thriving Nation, A Beautiful Life, Pg. 9,21,40 and 48)

Clean Sri Lanka Project

The recently introduced 'Clean Sri Lanka' project, aims to address a cleaner physical environment and a nationwide moral commitment to enhance ethical principles. The scope of the project is a community -driven responsible and sustainable participatory initiative with three pillars, namely social pillar, environmental pillar and ethical pillar which promote and focus integrity, responsibility and ethical behaviour in all aspects emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability and mutual respect. (<https://cleansrilanka.gov.lk>, Clean Sri Lanka, Beautiful Island, Smiling People)

Accordingly, this PBF project document is aligned with these objectives and transforms them into activities with a view to aligning each priority area with outcomes specific to the project.

b) Responsiveness to Changing Environment

The project has been adaptive to significant political and institutional changes including changes in ministerial leadership and evolving fiscal constraints. For example, training materials were customized, and the case management system design now incorporates interoperability with existing HRM platforms.

C) Legal and regulatory responsiveness

The Constitution of the country sets out directive principles of the state policy that oblige the state to, amongst other things to promote well- functioning public service which is essential for the continued development and welfare of the country.

- promotion of the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice (social, economic and political) shall guide all the institutions of the national life
- realization by all citizens of an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, the continuous improvement of living conditions and the full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities
- Moreover, Legal and regulatory responsiveness demonstrated through alignment of procedures with Cabinet of Ministers approval, gazetted as a function of the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and local government (MPA) 'Introducing an arbitration process for resolving public service disputes' Part I: Sec. (I) - GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA - 25.11.2024 and the Public Administration Ministry Circular 05/2024.

d) This project is based on a comprehensive study

This project is based on a comprehensive study report, completed in 2014 that led to an agreement to conduct a pilot study on how to improve social dialogue, dispute resolution and human resource management within the Ministry of Health. That study was completed in 2014, and a decision was then taken by then the Secretariat of Senior Ministers to extend that exercise to cover the entire public service. The ILO was requested to continue its assistance from the beginning of this process and up to now ILO is the lead project partner of the project in coordination with the ILO, project engaged with the UNFPA and the UNESCO as project partners and the World Vision Sri Lanka, Women in Need (WIN) and Alliance Development Trust (ADT) as the implementing partners for detailed activities under each outcome laid down in the project document. Expertise of the research institutions was obtained by the project partners to conduct training and a need assessment at the community level in selected Districts.

4.2. Efficiency of the Project:

With respect to project efficiency, evaluation is mainly focused on the operational aspects of the activities to find out whether the project activities have been carried out in an optimal way.

All stakeholders interviewed have expressed their appreciation for the project team for their commitment to managing the project efficiently. Building close relationships with the national partner, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local government(MPA) and other key partner ministries such as Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Health and Media, Ministry of Power and Energy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Aviation and through regularly updating with necessary information, submission of reports, the project team ensures the continuity of the project.

However, there are some delays that have also been identified in communicating project team and the national level Ministries that can affect the project activities, as they are responsible for implementation of this Cabinet approved project. For example, establishment of institutional structure such as the National Forum, appointment of members to the proposed institutional structures, making of appropriate regulatory and legislative changes have not been finalized yet by the MPA. Moreover, sectoral forums have not been established to continue the project activities as planned. MPA has the responsibility to maintain harmonious labour relations for the public sector through effective labour dispute prevention and resolution mechanism ensuring efficient delivery of public services. It, however, currently lacks the institutional mechanisms that would enable it to carry out these dispute prevention and resolution responsibilities.

With respect to human resources, project Partners managed to recruit required staff, experienced persons as resource persons and technical advisors ensuring the efficiency. However, according to the interviewees, within the last ten months of project implementation, staff turnover is very high in the priority ministries, especially in the national partner organization, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Council and Local Government, this has caused some delay in executing project activities within the scheduled time. For instance, due to the absence of a focal person/Officer at present ³ (after leaving the former additional secretary of the MPA) for supervising and monitoring some project activities, getting approval for continuing project activities at the national level as well as the local/community level was delayed.

³ At the time of this mid-term evaluation

- a) In terms of financial resources, ILO reports on budgetary arrangement seem no difficulties at all. According to the ILO, 54 percent of the budget has been spent up to now, there is some delay in executing planned activities related to outcome 2 and outcome 3
- b) 45.7 percent of the budget contributes gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) as per the project document. Accordingly, 914,836 USD contributed to gender equality and women empowerment and expended to date 494,696,01 USD on efforts contributing to gender equality or women's empowerment by the project partners, the ILO, UNESCO and UNFPA.

4.3. Effectiveness of the Implemented Activities

Comparing the outcome / results expected by the project team and the information gathered from the key stakeholders interviewed and through the observations, this section provides an overview of the project's achievements so far.

Despite its generally good reputation for public sector service delivery, the current public sector labour relations system raises serious concerns and negatively affects service delivery. Employees and their trade unions have limited opportunities to express their views, and there is no effective platform for employees and management to engage, learn from one another, and work together to address shared issues and challenges. (ILO Dec 2014, Building a High-quality Public Service in Sri Lanka through workplace Forum)

This project aimed to support a more productive, efficient, and effective public service by establishing structures to promote social dialogue, creating opportunities for improved dispute prevention and resolution, and strengthening human resource development within the public sector.

- 4.3.1.** As this is a new concept for public sector employees, project activities initially focused on building awareness among key stakeholders. In terms of effectiveness, the project achieved most of the outputs under Outcome 1 during this period.

Activities under Outcome 1 mainly focused on conducting orientation programmes to introduce the new concept to public sector employees, as well as two-day residential workshops for Workplace Forum (WPF) members in selected ministries and institutions. According to progress reports, from 2023 to date, the ILO and its team of experts have provided training to 1,794 public officers, senior staff, and trade union members from priority sectors, including Health, Transport, Education, Ports, Shipping and Aviation, and Power and Energy.

In addition, capacity-building training on mediation and conciliation for members of sectoral and national forums, along with Training of Trainers (TOT) programmes for government officials in the priority sectors, have been completed. These activities have strengthened the capacity of 100 officials, helping to ensure continuity of project activities.

Under Outcomes 1 and 2, the project partner UNFPA has taken steps to sensitise public officials through workplace forums on policy changes related to gender equality and inclusivity in priority sectors. UNFPA has also sensitised officials working in labour tribunals on transformative social and gender norm changes. In addition, gender-sensitive training sessions on workplace cooperation and grievance handling were conducted to strengthen

the TOT group of the EFC and going to support ten Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) member companies and the National Chamber of Commerce.

Under Outcome 3, focusing on the engagement of women, youth, and informal economy workers, two-day training manual on gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH), developed by the UNFPA and conducted training programmes for participants in selected districts and Divisional Secretariat (DS) divisions. Alliance Development Trust (ADT) and the Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka (CEPA) were the partners of the UNFPA in implementing activities under the outcome 3.

At the community level, UNESCO, in collaboration with CEPA and other experts, has trained 180 community-based forum members in the selected districts (34 existing forums that represented the relevant informal sectors in the project districts) Gampaha and Badulla and Batticaloa covering two Divisional Secretary's Division (DS divisions) in each district to date.

According to information gathered from project partners and interviewed resource persons, post-training survey results show strong positive outcomes. Eighty-eight percent of participants reported a significant improvement in their understanding of Workplace Forums, and all participants expressed interest in further skills development in social dialogue, workplace cooperation, and dispute resolution.

UNFPA representatives also reported positive feedback from participants in gender and workplace sexual harassment training programmes. The findings revealed that the majority of trained WPF members (Mostly men) approximately 500 members from 25 WPFs, had not received any prior gender-related training.

Feedback gathered through stakeholder interviews and observations indicates that these training programmes were well received. Participants expressed satisfaction with the training modules, particularly the introduction of dispute resolution mechanisms through social dialogue and the Workplace Forum structure.

The ILO's decision to engage senior public officials with extensive public sector experience as resource persons for the training programmes proved effective and enhanced participants' confidence in and recognition of the project activities. Furthermore, the training programmes contributed to raising awareness on the importance of collaboration between institutions.

- 4.3.2.** Apart from, the project introduced Workplace Forums, Sectoral Forums, and the National Public Service Dialogue Forum as effective institutional arrangements for a comprehensive social dialogue framework. This framework is intended to cover individual workplaces, ministries, and other organisations under the responsibility of the prioritised ministries.

Although the sectoral forums and the national forum have not yet been established, the Workplace Forums provide an institutional mechanism that enables management and trade unions to engage in constructive dialogue on issues affecting the workplace.

Based on data from project progress reports and a study conducted by the ILO project team, by the end of October 2025, a total of 63 Workplace Forums (WPFs) had been established or were planned to be established in key workplaces at the national level. (Formed 38 WPF and Planned to form 25 Workplace Forums)

The ILO conducted a survey in October 2025 to assess the effectiveness of the bipartite social dialogue mechanism, with a focus on the implementation of Workplace Forums (WPFs). The study analysed data collected from 22 key workplaces to evaluate whether this model can promote industrial harmony, improve service delivery, and enhance overall public sector performance. Key findings on workplace issues and the effectiveness of the dispute prevention and resolution mechanism are presented below.

The survey found that workplace culture is gradually shifting from a hierarchical, top-down model to one based on cooperation and equality. This represents a significant change from adversarial relationships to more cooperative ones, with less emphasis on subjective disputes. The mechanism has been effective in addressing workplace issues, encouraging cooperation between management and trade unions, and increasing satisfaction among both parties with the new collaborative approach.

Government participation in activities related to Outcome 1 has been strong. This includes active involvement in orientation and awareness programmes and the establishment of Workplace Forums in priority ministries such as Power and Energy, Transport, Ports, Shipping and Aviation, Health, and Education.

As a result, the project successfully raised awareness of its objectives, planned the piloting of sectoral forums in the Transport, Health, Ports, and Aviation sectors, and is now planning to expand the establishment of Workplace Forums to additional institutions. These include the Inland Revenue Department, Sri Lanka Customs, and Sri Lanka Post, following a request from the Steering Committee.

The Government has acknowledged the challenges associated with unresolved disputes in the public sector and has shown a genuine commitment to adopting a more systematic approach to dispute resolution. However, to ensure sustainability and to promote lasting peace and harmony in the workplace, this dispute resolution mechanism needs to be formally institutionalised within the public sector.

The success of establishing and sustaining Workplace Forums depends largely on the commitment and active engagement of senior management. For example, the recent orientation programme organised by the Lanka Electricity Company (LECO) for its WPF members demonstrated strong leadership commitment. Senior management outlined plans to use the dispute prevention and resolution mechanism and the WPF structure as tools to transform workplace culture into a more cooperative and productive one, while also improving the company's competitiveness in the power supply sector.

- Data collection on disputes addressed by the Workplace Forums is ongoing. A recent study by the ILO project team analysed 82 issues submitted to a sample of 22 functioning WPFs, with the

following findings. (ILO project team, Oct 2025, Social Dialogue and Dispute Resolution in the Public Sector: Year 1 Results)

- All 22 WPFs received at least one issue during their initial meetings.
- Trade unions submitted most issues (56.1percent), followed by employee groups (19.5percent), management (17.1 percent), and individual employees(7.3percent)
- The most affected areas were human resource productivity (25.5 percent) and the quality of public service delivery (25.0 percent), followed by employee welfare (19.9 percent) and workplace disputes (18.5 percent).
- Nearly half of the issues (47.6 percent) related to administrative and procedural matters.
- More than half of the issues (52.4 percent) were resolved directly at the WPF level, while the remainder have to be escalated to Sectoral Forums (30.5 percent) or the National Forum (17.1 percent).

Although many Workplace Forums are newly established and the number of reported cases remains relatively low, they are laying a strong foundation for effective social dialogue. Pre and post evaluation conducted through a qualitative assessment it was observed that the participants overall understanding of the concepts, and the workings of the WPFs and positive impact of such a forum at the workplace had substantially improved as a key outcome of the workshop

However, delays in establishing the Sectoral Forums and the National Public Service Dialogue Forum remain a concern. These higher-level structures are essential for resolving disputes referred by Workplace Forums, but they have not yet been established as planned due to delays in obtaining approvals from higher authorities. This may negatively affect trust and confidence in the dispute resolution mechanism and its ability to address grievances and resolve disputes effectively.

4.3.3. Outcome 2

Private sector companies currently lack structured, transparent, gender-sensitive, and timely grievance handling procedures. In response, this project focused on supporting the establishment of workplace and grievance redress mechanisms in EFC member companies. The project also aimed to strengthen dispute prevention, raise awareness, and support the monitoring and prevention of gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace.

Accordingly, all activities under Outcome 2 focus on strengthening social dialogue in the private sector and promoting gender-responsive and peaceful dispute resolution. This is being done by enhancing workplace-level and national consultation mechanisms to reduce conflict and support inclusive policymaking.

Based on information gathered through stakeholder consultations and interviews, the following activities have been implemented as planned:

- Initial discussions with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) on improving social dialogue and grievance handling mechanisms have been completed. The establishment of four grievance handling mechanisms in selected sectors;

Manufacturing, Agriculture, Healthcare, and Tourism and Hospitality is expected to commence.

- Engagement with tripartite stakeholders of the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC) on expected outputs has not yet begun but is planned for mid-Q3 2025.
- Work related to the NLAC is ongoing, with initial discussions held with the Ministry of Labour to strengthen the NLAC and improve the inclusion of women and youth. The Ministry has supported the expansion of the definition of representativeness in the informal economy to ensure these voices are reflected in policymaking. The project also plans to establish a sub-committee to revise the NLAC constitution to improve inclusivity, with technical assistance from the ILO.
- Gender sensitisation training was conducted by UNFPA for NLAC members to strengthen the Council's role in advocating for improved social dialogue, gender equality, and industrial peace.
- The project also aims to introduce frameworks on gender equality and the prevention of violence and harassment through networks involving the EFC and local chambers of commerce, to promote safe and dignified workplaces. In line with this objective, UNFPA conducted training to strengthen Training of trainers of the EFC and will support for ten EFC member companies in gender-sensitive training sessions on workplace cooperation and grievance handling.

However, the NLAC currently lacks strong connectivity with district-level and community structures representing women and youth. As a result, the voices of women and youth are not yet adequately represented at the national level.

As these activities have not yet been fully implemented, it is too early to assess the overall effectiveness of the project interventions under this outcome.

4.3.4. Outcome 3:

According to the PBF Project Document, increased participation of women and youth, including gender minorities and persons with disabilities, will be prioritised at the community level. This approach aims to strengthen local forums such as district coordination committees and community groups. Strengthened forums will provide platforms to integrate the issues and voices of women, young people, and marginalised communities. These groups will be supported to identify and collectively implement economic priorities that promote social cohesion. In addition, they will engage with national-level policymakers to enhance gender-responsive policymaking, with a focus on the Government's economic reform agenda.

As Parliament holds ultimate authority over the economic reform programme, the project also seeks to engage with the Parliamentary Permanent Committee on Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS Committee). This engagement aims to support inclusive and conflict-sensitive legislation and effective implementation, as well as collaboration with other relevant parliamentary committees, including the Women's Caucus and the Committee on Public Finance and Public Enterprises. (PBF Project Document, June 2025)

In line with these objectives, activities under Outcome 3 focus on strengthening the engagement of women, youth, and other under-represented workers in the informal economy with district- and national-level policymaking structures. These activities aim to create space for raising the concerns of marginalised communities and to facilitate inclusive, gender-responsive, and peaceful dispute resolution.

The project has identified community-level forums, such as cooperatives, community groups, employers' organisations, trade unions, and local women's and youth networks, including those representing informal economy workers as strategic partners for cross-community dialogue, peacebuilding, and participatory decision-making. The project also aims to establish communication channels between these groups and national institutions, including the Parliament, the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC), and the tripartite Labour Market Task Force, to address key challenges such as increasing labour force participation among women and youth. In addition, the Special Mediation Board has been identified as a key stakeholder to support the resolution of labour disputes at the community level.

Given these objectives, it is important to assess the actual progress of implementation against the planned activities to determine whether project expectations are being met.

UNESCO, as a project partner, is implementing these activities in several districts (Gampaha, Badulla, and Batticaloa) across two Divisional Secretary's (DS) divisions in each district, with World Vision Lanka serving as the implementing partner. A needs assessment was conducted with support from World Vision Lanka and Chrysalis to identify community priorities and challenges. The findings will be documented as policy briefs and shared with implementing partners to ensure alignment and effective delivery of project activities in these districts.⁴

UNESCO has shortlisted 34 existing forums representing relevant informal economy sectors across the three project districts. Community-level training programmes have been conducted in selected Divisional Secretary's (DS) divisions within these districts, with 180 forum members trained to date.⁵

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, World Vision developed a training module covering two key areas: conflict sensitivity and the do no harm principle, and intercultural dialogue. Training on conflict sensitivity and the do no harm principle was delivered by Chrysalis, while intercultural dialogue training was conducted by FACTUM. Both organisations were selected by the World Vision as expert institutions to conduct trainings.

Feedback received from forum members who participated in training sessions in the Gampaha and Badulla districts indicated a strong need for greater emphasis on practical skills rather than theoretical content in future programmes. In response, a second round of training has been

⁴ Gampaha District: Wattala and Negombo DS Divisions (Fisheries Sector)
Batticaloa District: Chenkadali and Vaharai DS Divisions (Agriculture and Fisheries Sectors)
Badulla District: Welimada and Haliella DS Divisions (Plantation Sector)

⁵ Information collected through interview with UNESCO representative

planned for these forums, with technical support from CEPA. This training will focus on economic policies related to the agriculture, fisheries, and plantation sectors.

- a) UNESCO has conducted post training assessments and found 90 percent of the total participants were satisfied with the contents of the training programme and 10 percent of the participants have proposed additional areas such as financial literacy, project proposal writing, technical knowledge on proper Agri-practices and legal backup for the farmer's organisations etc to be included in the training programmes.⁶
- The Need assessment findings also weighted the responses of the forum members on the relevancy of training modules as below.⁷

Area of training	Responses of forum members
Conflict Analysis & Mapping	27
Mediation and Peaceful Dispute Resolution	25
Advocacy and Engagement with the government	20
Applying Do No Harm (DNH) Principles	16
Financial management	16
Economic policy literacy	12
Inclusive Decision-Making and Inclusive governance	09
Safeguarding of marginalised communities	03

- b) Since the Parliament and its related bodies have the ultimate authority over the economic reform program, the project seeks to engage with the Parliament Permanent Committee on post-legislative scrutiny (PLS Committee) to support inclusive conflict sensitive legislation, its implementation and other relevant committees⁸ of the Parliament.

Due to the delay in establishing PLS committee, UNESCO with the support of CEPA is continuing to seek alternative entry points such as the Sectoral Oversight Committees of the parliament that have similar mandate to reflect key findings from community-level dialogue including issues, opinions, voices, grievances, and frustration of women, young people and marginalized communities. This effort is encouraging as it is one of the ways to convince local and national level parliamentarians on this new concept.

Findings from the needs assessment survey indicate that women remain underrepresented in formal leadership positions, despite their active involvement in production and support roles.

⁶ Interview findings with UNESCO

⁷ Need Assessment -Mapping of Grassroots-Level Forums-UNESCO, World Vision Lanka, Chrysalis, Sept 2025

⁸ Parliamentary Women's Caucus, Committee of Public Finance (CoPE), The Committee of Public Enterprise (COPE), and the Parliamentary Women's Caucus for Open Parliament

Structural and attitudinal barriers continue to limit women's participation in leadership at the community level.⁹

Although it is too early to assess the full effectiveness of activities under Outcome 3, as implementation has only recently begun, the project's engagement with the informal sector should be recognised as an important entry point for the proposed reforms. According to the project progress report, the inclusive approach adopted in these training programmes and the selection of diverse sectors, such as fisheries, agriculture, and the plantation sector are key strengths that should be maintained throughout community level activities under Outcome 3.

In addition, there is a strong need at the community level to build broader coalitions using existing networks to address internal disputes and differences. Further capacity-building support is also required for second tier leadership, including training, coaching, and mentoring, to address existing management gaps.

Promoting continued dialogue between state institutions and sectoral leadership through structured platforms, and systematically documenting the project's implementation process, will help identify lessons learned and best practices. This will support wider application across sectors and contribute to a more cooperative environment at the community level.

To assess public satisfaction across the targeted sectors, the ILO has launched a Baseline Expectations Survey on Public Sector Dispute Resolution, Operational Capacity of the National Public Sector Forum, and the Impact of Economic Reform Efforts.

UNESCO and its implementing partner, World Vision, with support from Chrysalis, have completed the needs assessment and post training surveys as part of Outcome 3 activities. Sharing and disseminating these findings would benefit all project partners, particularly local level implementing partners.

Such research studies and surveys related to project outcomes are particularly valuable, as the gaps identified and lessons learned can inform future activities and strengthen coordination among project partners and implementing agencies.

Monitoring of project implementation

The project will be monitored in line with the PBF Results Framework by a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officer appointed for this purpose. The officer will establish baseline data and collect information throughout the project cycle. Each UN agency will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on its respective components.

Meanwhile, progress on activities is being tracked through the High-Level Intersectoral Steering Committee and the Inter-Agency Project Steering Committee.

4.3.5. Communication Effectiveness

- a) Communication between the ILO team and the Ministry of Public Administration is moderate. Interaction with line ministries varies; some focal points are proactive, while others require reminders and closer follow up.

⁹ Need Assessment Survey - Mapping of Grassroots-Level Forums- Chrysalis World Vision Lanka and UNESCO

- b) Communication within the government sector at the District Secretary and Divisional Secretary levels in the selected districts is satisfactory. Project partners expect this level of coordination to continue in the future.
- c) It is important to strengthen collaboration among project partners (ILO, UNFPA, UNESCO) to ensure cohesion, as this is a UN initiative working toward a common goal. Coordination can be improved by aligning timelines and sharing progress updates more regularly.

4.4. Impact of the Project

As the mid-term independent evaluation and most project activities have only recently commenced (except for the pilot project), it is too early to fully assess the overall impact of these activities.

However, some positive outcomes have already been observed, which will help strengthen the success of future initiatives.

- a) Interviewees noted a shift in workplace culture from adversarial relationships to more cooperative ones, with a reduced focus on subjective disputes. The project has fostered a change in attitudes toward social dialogue and workplace cooperation, enabling management and workers to raise a wide range of issues through Workplace Forums (WPFs).
- b) The mechanism has effectively addressed issues that could lead to workplace disputes, promoting collaboration between management and trade unions. Both parties have expressed satisfaction with the new cooperative approach. WPFs have provided an inclusive platform for employees and union members to voice concerns and contribute to decisions affecting their work environment.
- c) Key informant interviews highlighted good practices at the Department of Railways as an example of workplace transformation. Functional WPFs established in institutions such as Sri Lanka Railways, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, and Ports sector have brought meaningful changes, including fair treatment, improved communication, and timely resolution of issues.
- d) Improved collaboration between management and unions is evident, with several local disputes resolved without escalation.
- e) Technology adoption has been another milestone. WhatsApp groups were introduced to enhance coordination, but further development of digital systems is needed to reduce inefficiencies, modernize communication, and align with government digitalization policies. This momentum should continue by sharing good practices and experiences with other public sector institutions.
- f) Gender equality and women's empowerment have been a major focus, with 45.66 percent of the total project budget allocated to related activities. Efforts include building women's capacity to participate in social dialogue, dispute resolution, and decision-making bodies. Training programs conducted by ILO, UNFPA, and UNESCO have reached 500 members across 25 WPFs, though UNFPA's sessions have faced delays due to pending approvals. Female participation in training and forums has ranged from 18 percent to 53 percent, reflecting a

- strong commitment to gender inclusivity. However, structural and attitudinal barriers persist at the community level, where women remain underrepresented in formal leadership roles.
- g) Attribution of changes can be seen through improved trust and openness to dialogue among staff in pilot institutions, as well as institutional buy-in demonstrated by internal instructions supporting WPFs. Over 1,000 WPF members (1794) have been trained in problem-solving, grievance resolution, and facilitation skills. To reinforce these positive impacts, the project team and partners should prioritize implementing digital grievance systems and avoid delays caused by procurement and IT compatibility issues.

To reinforce positive impacts of the project, project team and other project partners need to facilitate implementation of the digital grievance systems, avoiding further delays due to procurement and inter-agency IT compatibility issues.

4.4.1. Unintended Outcomes-Positive and negative

Positive outcomes

Greater inter-ministerial exchange of good practices can be highlighted as a positive outcome (e.g., the Railway Department holding the second anniversary Workplace Forum meeting focused mainly on institutional issues). Improved collaboration between management and unions is evident, with several local disputes resolved without escalation, demonstrating the maturity of forum members. The establishment of functional WPFs in institutions such as Sri Lanka Railways, TVET, and Ports has been transformative.

Even though the overall programme has not yet been fully completed, a few cases can be presented as evidence of early outcomes. For example, the Motive Power Engineering Sub-Department WPF, which has been functioning for nearly two years, demonstrates several positive changes. These include:

- A shift in work culture from a top-down approach to a more consultative and participatory process.
- Transforming long-standing adversarial relations between trade unions and management into a more collaborative and constructive partnership.
- Trade unions increasingly engaging on objective, fact-based considerations rather than subjective or confrontational positions.
- Providing a forum for addressing interest disputes, filling a long-standing gap.

In addition to cultural transformation, there are early signs of productivity improvements. These include reductions in ad hoc and frequent strike actions within the Railway Department, improved engine and train repairs, and the expansion of the operational fleet.

These positive outcomes will contribute to the long-term development of the country as the project strengthens public-sector resilience, accountability, and service delivery—key elements for achieving SDG 16. Furthermore, embedding social dialogue and grievance prevention as governance norms, formal complaints and feedback mechanisms, and structured grievance redress systems at the community level (planned and ongoing) are also long-term contributions.

However, further promoting the interface between the state and sectoral leadership through continued dialogue platforms is critical at this stage to achieve the project goal of “a more peaceful, inclusive, and just response to the effects of Sri Lanka’s economic crisis, through inclusive social dialogue at national and local levels.” (PBF Project Document ,2025)

Negative outcomes:

Staff turnover in key ministries has disrupted continuity of dialogue and delayed some pilot activities. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with all three project partners specifically highlighted the negative impact of changes in senior government officers who are directly involved in project supervision and guidance, particularly within the Ministry of Public Administration. Gender training programmes conducted by UNFPA have been unable to continue since September due to delays in obtaining approval, and UNESCO is currently facing similar challenges in expanding project activities to additional DS divisions.

As a solution, project partners have suggested establishing stronger working relationships with middle management in ministries and incorporating supervision and monitoring responsibilities for Dispute Prevention and Resolution Mechanisms (DPRM) into their official duty lists/job roles to strengthen project implementation.

Institutionalizing and mainstreaming WPFs within official Human Resource Development structures in ministries has been challenging due to competing reform priorities. Additionally, commitment levels vary across sectors: some ministries perceive Workplace Forums as “extra work” rather than an integral part of governance, while others express concerns about the proliferation of forums with similar objectives within the same ministry.

Delays in forming Sectoral Forums and the National-Level Forum could negatively impact the continuity of the Dispute Prevention and Resolution mechanism. If WPF members lose trust in the system because they cannot submit the unresolved grievances beyond the workplace level, the mechanism’s credibility will be undermined.

In a few cases, community-level forums have become dominated by a small number of individuals, reducing inclusivity. This issue is more pronounced in community-level forums, where women remain underrepresented in formal leadership positions despite their active roles in production and support tasks. Structural and attitudinal barriers persist, and dominance often stems from control over resources (e.g., land, fishing gear), limiting opportunities for women to lead.

Finally, ensuring profound behavioural change toward interest-based problem-solving remains a long-term challenge. However, as these project initiatives are still relatively new and have not yet become deeply embedded practices, nor institutionalized within the public sector, there are potential risks that could undermine their effectiveness.

4.4.2. Coverage of Cross-Cutting Themes

- **Tripartism & Social Dialogue:** Strongly embedded - unions, management, and public authorities collaborate to co-create solutions.

- **International Labour Standards (ILS):** Incorporated into grievance and mediation tools; efforts focus on familiarizing management and workers/trade unions with both rights and obligations under ILS.
- **Gender:** Moderately addressed — there is room to improve gender inclusion in forums and leadership roles and to mainstream gender considerations across all planned project outcomes. Gender equality and women’s empowerment are cross-cutting priorities and should be integrated throughout the project. Enhanced representation and meaningful participation of women in social dialogue processes and mechanisms at national, provincial, district, and community levels must be prioritized. Efforts should focus on building women’s capacity to actively engage in social dialogue, dispute resolution mechanisms, and decision-making bodies at all levels.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Minimal focus to date; could be integrated in Phase II through Green Public Sector dialogue themes and alignment with government policy on “Clean Sri Lanka.”
- **Capacity Development:** Strong — includes training-of-trainers and contributions to national curriculum development.

4.5.Sustainability of the Project

The project has introduced a structured approach for public sector dialogue and dispute resolution, with the Ministry of Public Administration assuming responsibility for maintaining these structures. There is visible commitment from the Ministry in its leadership role, as well as from sectoral champions (e.g., Transport, Education, Ports and Shipping, Civil Aviation). However, this commitment remains uneven across sectors and should be formalized through action plans.

Ministries that have demonstrated early success (e.g., Transport, Education, Ports) are likely to sustain progress, while others may require incentives or policy mandates, such as inclusion in performance appraisals or directives through Public Administration Circulars.

The project is currently being handed over gradually. Therefore, a formal exit and sustainability plan is required, including clear timelines, budgets, and designated anchor institutions. Long-term sustainability depends on continued leadership support and institutional embedding. Tools and frameworks developed under the project (e.g., grievance dashboards, constitution templates, training modules) are designed to be reusable and adaptable beyond the project’s lifespan.

It should be noted that social dialogue and workplace cooperation are new initiatives within the public sector, and ongoing challenges may arise from diverse stakeholder interests. This was further emphasized during interviews, underscoring the need to institutionalize the project appropriately within public sector structures.

The following key milestones will further facilitate sustainability of the project

- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the formation and maintenance of Workplace Forums in the public sector, along with toolkits to support national rollout.
- Designate focal points in line ministries and establish strong working relationships with middle management. Include supervision and monitoring of the Dispute Prevention and Resolution Mechanism (DPRM) in their official duty lists/job roles.

- Conduct capacity-building sessions on DPRM for Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) and the Ministry of Public Administration to ensure continuity of project activities within the public sector.
- Integrate a DPRM module into orientation and training programmes for public officers (such as SLIDA and other public service training institutes, Human resource training institutions).
- Expedite the formation of community-level forums and link them with District and Divisional-level coordinating committees to ensure meaningful engagement of women and youth in local decision-making platforms.

4.5.1. Resource Allocation and Cost-Effectiveness

Resources have been well targeted, with priority funding allocated to training, piloting, and digital system design. Project partners leveraged external expertise to develop high quality training tools and templates, ensuring efficient resource utilization, particularly through multi-purpose materials such as manuals and templates that can be applied across sectors.

However, some delays (such as software deployment) resulted in underutilized budget periods.

A high Return on Investment (ROI) is evident in the training to impact ratio. **For instance, early warning systems introduced in the Railway sector prevented at least two strikes.** Additionally, the use of hybrid training methods (combining Zoom and in-person sessions) optimized costs and enhanced accessibility.

5. Recommendations

The following strategic and operational recommendations should be considered to the achievement of the project and its sustainability. At the strategic level and in order to ensure project sustainability the government intervention by the relevant authorities is paramount.

High priority

1. Need to get the highest-level political will to demonstrate the commitment of the state leadership to accept this project as a mandatory mechanism for dispute prevention and resolution for the entire public service, which can be used effectively for a better public service delivery and for a satisfied and productive public workforce, as outlined in the current government's policy statement. **(Office of the HE the president, Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Public Administration Provincial Councils and Local Government) high priority, short-term period**
2. Creation and maintain of independent secretariat/ coordination unit for social dialogue and workplace cooperation at the Ministry of Public Administration to coordinate with other Ministries to follow-up and monitor the progress of implementation of the dispute prevention and resolution system and introduce an automated reporting system to this coordination unit/secretariat linking institutional, sectoral and national level forums. **(Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, ILO Colombo office) High priority ,Short- term period**

3. Accelerate the process related to establishment of the National- level Forum to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination through a National Public Service Dialogue Forum and formalize WPF and Sectoral Forum mechanisms through circulars/regulations to ensure continuity beyond the project lifecycle. **(Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government) High Priority, Short-term Period)**
4. Develop legislation that would provide the NLAC with statutory status, a clear mandate with dedicated institutional support to strengthen the NLAC, transforming into a modern social dialogue forum for the private sector. **(High priority, short-term period Ministry of labour, technical assistance from ILO Colombo Office)**
5. Accelerate the process of developing a database on Strike/Lockout in line with ILO Resolution 1993 on Statistics on Strikes and Lockouts. It is proposed to integrate this data collection into the Ministry of Public Administration HRMIS for scale-up. **(high priority, short-term period, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, Ministry of Labour, ILO)**
6. Develop an effective communication strategy for sharing information, good practices, experiences, success stories, dedicated web sites as so on. Document the process of the current project to draw lessons and best practices for sector-wide application. Encourage Advocacy Platforms multi-actor dialogue forums, engage state actors, promote diverse caste, religion, and income groups to surface lived experiences, facilitate a “Voices from the Ground” campaign. **(High priority, short-term period, all project Partners)**
7. Embedding reforms into existing public sector performance appraisal or audit systems would improve traction and accountability. **(Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government) high priority, short - -term period**
8. Formulate a comprehensive industrial relations legislation and development of a comprehensive policy cover the public sector employees as the other countries who have successfully integrated public sector dispute prevention and resolution legislations at present. e.g., South Africa, Ireland, Philippines, Malaysia and so on. **(Ministry of Public administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government), Ministry of Justice and Ministry of labour should jointly work on this and with the technical assistance of the ILO,) High priority, medium term period.**
9. With the coverage of the legislative and policy framework, a special Chapter needs to be included in the Establishment Code with provisions for public sector dispute prevention and resolution. This should not be created any conflict with the existing contents of the E Code, and more emphasis should be placed on prevention of disputes rather than mere settlement. A clear definition of industrial dispute is also required. **(Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government) High priority, medium-term period**
10. Expand the coverage of the informal sector under the project outcome 3 and enhance engagement with policy -making structures to address concerns of marginalized communities, youth and women. Introduce conflict sensitivity in all project activities addressing varied conflict triggers at the district/ community level. (such as compensation disputes, caste exclusion, ethnic fragmentation). **(high priority, medium-term period, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, Ministry of Labour, UN Project partners)**

11. Prioritize the modern HR management processes in the public service, processes include strategic workforce planning, competency-based recruitment, continuous performance management with linked incentives, and a greater emphasis on training, employee relations, and compliance. It should be the key function of the HR Division of the public sector institutions expanding capacity building for second-tier leadership, including training, coaching and mentoring to address management gaps in govt sector institutions. **(High priority, medium-term period, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government, SLIDA, ILO Colombo office)**

Moderate priority

12. It is also recommended to ratify ILO conventions, Collective bargaining Convention (C15 and the labour relations (Public service) convention (C151) to strengthen and formalize labour relations, protect the rights of public sector workers, and promote effective collective bargaining and social dialogue. **(Ministry of Labour, ILO Colombo office) moderate priority, medium term-period**

Annex 1

Questionnaire-Project Partners

Project Title: Social Dialogue for Peace and Crisis Prevention in Sri Lanka August 2024- May 2026

Priorities: Gender promotion initiative and Youth promotion initiative

Questionnaire

1. 1. Have the stakeholders (project partners) taken ownership of the project concept and approach since the design phase?
2. How does the project align with and support national development plans, as well as programmes and priorities of the national social partners?
 - a. Has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country /environment?
 - b. Has the project approach produced demonstrated successes?
 - c. In which areas do the project have the greatest achievements?
 - i. National
 - ii. Sectoral
 - iii. Institutional
3. In which areas do the project have the least achievements?
4. How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
 - a. Issues and challenges:
5. Are there any new issues or challenges that have arisen in implementation?
6. Are there any concerns about the quality of the work so far?
7. What was the biggest success of the project so far?
8. What was the most challenging aspect?
9. Are there any unintended positive or negative outcomes?

10. Have new, more relevant needs emerged during the implementation that the project should address?
11. If the project has a national project steering or advisory committee, do the members have a good grasp of the project strategy?
12. How effective is communication between the project team and the national implementing partners?
13. Has cooperation with project partners been efficient? (UNFPA, UNESCO)
14. Can observed changes be causally linked to the project's interventions?
 - a. Attitudes
 - b. Capacities:
 - c. Institutional buy-in.
15. In how far the project is making a significant contribution to broader and longer-term development
16. What are the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome?
17. What, if there were any alternative strategies that would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?
18. Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
19. Have resources been used efficiently?
20. Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective
21. Does the project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its national partners?

Sustainability

22. Is the project gradually being handed over to the national partners? (Exit strategy)
23. Are the project's results likely to continue after the project ends?
24. Once external funding ends, will national institutions and implementing partners be likely to continue the project or carry forward its results?
25. Are national partners willing and committed to continuing with the project?
26. How effectively has the project built the necessary capacity of people and institutions (of national partners and implementing partners)?
27. Can any unintended or unexpected positive or negative effects be observed as a consequence of the project's interventions?
 - a. Positive effects:
 - b. Negative effects:
28. If so, how has the project strategy been adjusted?
29. Should there be a second phase of the project to consolidate achievements?
30. The cross-cutting themes adequately covered?

(e.g., tripartism and social dialogue, International Labour Standards, gender, environmental sustainability, capacity development initiatives).
31. What are the successful practices identified from those lessons which are worthy of replication?
32. Whether the public sector disputes, including those arising from the economic reform process, are addressed through initiated social dialogue mechanisms?
33. Any mechanism for Data collection on disputes addressed through the WPF

34. Any other issues, challenges and recommendations for project implementation?

Annex 2

Questionnaire for Project Partners

Project Title: Social Dialogue for Peace and Crisis Prevention in Sri Lanka August 2024- May 2026

Priorities: Gender promotion initiative and Youth promotion initiative

Project value US \$ 2,000,000.00

Implementing Partners: 1. World Vision Lanka (WVL) - CSO

Meeting with the project team - ILO, UNFPA, UNESCO

Evaluation Background

7. A description of the contributions

- a. Role of Project partners (ILO, UNFPA, UNESCO)
- b. Project implementors
- c. Other stakeholders

8. The purpose and scope of the evaluation

- a. Accountability
- b. Project improvement
- c. Organizational learning

9. The scope of the evaluation

- a. Geographical coverage:
- b. Evaluated time period:

10. Special focus areas of the project

- a. Social Dialogue
- b. Gender and Non-discrimination
- c. SDG Contribution
- d. Medium and long-term effects of capacity development action

11. The clients of the evaluation and/or who will use the evaluation findings?

Project Implementation

12. Who are the partners of the project?

13. How strategic are partners in terms of mandate, influence, capacities and commitment?

14. How does the project align with and support ILO strategies?

- a. Decent work country programmes

- b. Mainstreamed strategies
- 15. Up to date Is the project meeting its objectives and achieving desired outcomes?**
 - a. Outcome 1: National Level, workplace level, Sectoral level
 - b. Outcome 2: Work related to the NLAC is on-going with initial discussions with the MOL in strengthening the NLAC for greater inclusivity of women and youth.
 - c. Outcome 3: UNFPA, UNESCO (Alliance Development Trust (World Vision))
- 16. Were all project requirements and deliverables happened as planned?**
- 17. Are we still on track to meet the original goals?**
- 18. Have the stakeholders (project partners) taken ownership of the project concept and approach since the design phase?**
- 19. How does the project align with and support national development plans, as well as programmes and priorities of the national social partners?**
 - a. Has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the project environment?
 - b. Has the project approach produced demonstrated successes?
 - c. In which areas do the project have the greatest achievements?
 - i. Geographic
- 20. In which areas do the project have the least achievements?**
- 21. How can the project build on or expand these achievements?**

Issues and challenges

- 22. Are there any new issues or challenges that have arisen?**
- 23. How is the project progressing against the established criteria?**
- 24. Are there any concerns about the quality of the work so far?**
- 25. What was the biggest success of the project?**
- 26. What was the most challenging aspect?**
- 27. Are there any unintended positive or negative outcomes?**
- 28. Are these needs still relevant?**
- 29. Have new, more relevant needs emerged that the project should address?**

Management of the project

- 30. If the project has a national project steering or advisory committee, do the members have a good grasp of the project strategy?**
- 31. How do they contribute to the success of the project?**
- 32. How effective is communication between the project team and the national implementing partners?**
- 33. Has cooperation with project partners been efficient?**

Effectiveness

- 34. Can observed changes be causally linked to the project's interventions?**
 - a. in attitudes
 - b. Capacities:
 - c. Institutions.

35. In how far the project is making a significant contribution to broader and longer-term development
36. What are the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome?
37. What, if there were any alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?
38. Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
39. Have resources been used efficiently?
40. Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective
41. Does the project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its national partners?
42. Do implementing partners provide effective project implementation? impact? (World Vision,
43. Is there a need to scale down the project)?
44. Can the project be scaled up during its duration? If so, how do project objectives and strategies have to be adjusted?

Sustainability

45. How effective and realistic is the exit strategy of the project?
46. Is the project gradually being handed over to the national partners?
47. Are the project's results likely to continue after the project ends?
48. Once external funding ends, will national institutions and implementing partners be likely to continue the project or carry forward its results?
49. Are national partners willing and committed to continuing with the project?
50. How effectively has the project built national ownership?
51. How effectively has the project built the necessary capacity of people and institutions (of national partners and implementing partners)?
52. Are national partners able to continue with the project?
53. Can any unintended or unexpected positive or negative effects be observed as a consequence of the project's interventions?
54. If so, how has the project strategy been adjusted?
55. Have positive effects been integrated into the project strategy?
56. Has the strategy been adjusted to minimize negative effects?
57. Should there be a second phase of the project to consolidate achievements?
58. The cross-cutting themes has covered?
(e.g., tripartism and social dialogue, International Labour Standards, environmental sustainability, and medium and long-term effects of capacity development initiatives)
59. identifying successful practices from those lessons which are worthy of replication.
60. Whether the public sector disputes, including those arising from the economic reform process, are addressed through initiated social dialogue mechanisms, disaggregated by gender?
61. Any mechanism for Data collection on disputes addressed by WPF
62. Any other issues, challenges and recommendations for project implementation?

Annex 3

Participants -Key Stakeholder Interviews

1. Mr. Mahinda Madihahewa - Senior Consultant, ILO, Former Secretary, Ministry of Labour and the Senior Ministers Secretariat
2. Mr S.M Piyatissa, Secretary, Ministry of Labour
3. Dr. M Sumanadasa, National Project Consultant, Former Secretary, Ministry of Women Affairs.
4. Mr. Upali Athukorale, Resource person of the Project, Former Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Labour
5. Ms Pearl Weerasinghe, Project Coordinator, Former Secretary, Ministry of Indigenous medicine
6. Ms Yamuna Perera, Resource Person of the project, Former Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs.
7. Mr L.H. Thilakarathne, Resource person of the Project, Former Additional Secretary, Ministry of Transport
8. Mr. A. Wimalaweera, Former Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment
9. ILO Project Team: Ms Promodini Weerasekara, ILO project Coordinator, Ms Keshani Bandara, M&E Officer
10. UNFPA Project Team: Ms Bimali Amarasekara, Ms Miki Sakiyama, Mr Rukshan Lovell
11. UNESCO Representative: Mr Charudhattha Ekanayake

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