NAP Global Network

Coordinating Climate-Resilient Development

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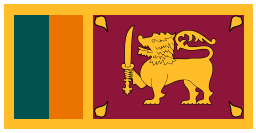
Alignment to Advance Climate-Resilient Development

COUNTRY CASE STUDY: Sri Lanka

This case study is part of a series of briefs focusing on alignment of country efforts under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The case studies explore early experiences in efforts to align national-level policy processes under these global agendas, highlighting the context-specific nature of the alignment process. This case study focuses on efforts in Sri Lanka to link planning for sustainable development, climate change adaptation and disaster management.



Key Messages

- Sri Lanka's policy documents are already making the links between sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- The iterative nature of the nationally determined contributions (NDC) and national adaptation plan (NAP) processes creates opportunities to increase alignment—upcoming updates to these policy documents represent a key entry point for better aligning the two processes in Sri Lanka.
- When policy processes are led by the same ministry—in this case, the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, which is responsible for sustainable development and climate change—the process of alignment is more straightforward.
- There are considerable efficiencies that can be gained through alignment in the establishment of key systems (such as monitoring & evaluation systems) and processes, including sub-national planning processes.

1. Introduction

Alignment of national-level policy processes under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) can help to increase coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in country efforts to achieve climate-resilient development (Dazé, Terton & Maass, 2018). In Sri Lanka, there are clear synergies among the policy processes related

to sustainable development, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, which create opportunities for alignment to occur. This case study presents an overview of the context for climate-resilient development in the country, followed by a discussion of the existing synergies and potential entry points for pursuing alignment.

2. Country Context

The island country of Sri Lanka is located in the Indian Ocean, off the southeast tip of India. Its territory of over 65,000 km^2 is mostly flat and low-lying, with over 1,300 km of coastline. The population of approximately 22.5 million people is concentrated in three areas: the southwest, the eastern coast, where the urban centres are located, and the Jaffna Peninsula in the north. Over 80 per cent of the population lives in rural areas (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2019). Sri Lanka is a lower middle-income country which has made significant progress in reducing poverty (World Bank, 2019). In 2017, the GDP per capita (purchasing power parity) was USD 12,900 (CIA, 2019). The Human Development Index in 2017 was 0.770, which places it in the high human development category (UNDP, 2018).

The country has a tropical climate, with variations in average temperature based on altitude, ranging from 26.5–28.5°C in lowland areas to 15.9°C. The mean annual rainfall is approximately 1,850 mm, again with regional variations ranging from 900 mm to 5,000 mm. There are three main climatic zones: the wet zone in the southwest, the dry zone in the north and east and the intermediate zone, which covers the south-central area. Analysis of observed and projected changes suggest three main impacts of climate change in Sri Lanka: increasing temperatures, changes in the distribution pattern of rainfall and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events (Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment [MMDE], 2016a), including heat waves, intense precipitation and tropical cyclones (Cruz et al., 2007). The country is characterized as having high vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, but also high readiness to respond (ND-GAIN, 2016).

3. Key Institutional Arrangements for Climate-Resilient Development

To understand the opportunities for alignment, it is important to understand the institutional arrangements for the respective policy processes. This section provides an overview of the coordination mechanisms that have been put in place for sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

At the highest level, the coordinating body for **sustainable development** is the Parliamentary Select Committee for Sustainable Development, which was established in 2017. This body consists of 15 members of Parliament and provides political leadership on SDG implementation. Specifically, it is mandated to make recommendations related to national laws and policies, allocation of domestic resources and strategies for securing international finance, among other issues. Coordination of SDG implementation is the role of the Sustainable Development Council (SDC), which has 12 members, including three representatives of provincial councils, the level of government below the national level. The members were appointed by the president in 2018. The SDC is tasked with developing the National Policy and Strategy for Sustainable Development (NPSSD), as well as with developing guidelines for other actors involved and reviewing progress in its implementation (Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka [GDSRSL], 2018).

The MMDE is the focal point within the government for coordinating, supporting and reporting on SDG implementation. The MMDE is in the process of establishing thematic committees for each of the SDGs, including SDG13, which focuses on climate action (Jayatunga & Perera, personal communication, February 15, 2019). To engage stakeholders in the development of the strategy, it plans to establish a multistakeholder reference group (GDSRSL, 2018).

The lead agency for **climate change** within the Sri Lankan government is also the MMDE, which established the Climate Change Secretariat (CCS) to coordinate mainstreaming of climate change, including the development of the NAP and the NDC (GDSRSL, 2018). Members of the CCS coordinate sectoral climate cells for each of the sectors identified in the NAP. These cells bring together stakeholders from government, private sector, NGOs and community organizations. They are tasked with coordinating the implementation and monitoring of sectoral adaptation actions (MMDE, 2016a), while line ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Management, among others, are mandated to implement adaptation actions in their respective sectors (GDSRSL, 2018). The CCS also leads a national working group focused on cross-cutting adaptation needs. At the sub-national level, Regional Climate Cells are being established, along with a forum for civil society organizations to coordinate community-based interventions (MMDE, 2016a).

Responsibility for managing **disaster risks** lies with the Ministry of Disaster Management (MDM), comprised of the Department of Meteorology and the Disaster Management Centre, among other institutions. The overall coordination of disaster management is undertaken by the National Council for Disaster Management, which is chaired by the president and includes representatives of the provincial councils as well as ministers responsible for social services, rehabilitation and reconstruction, health, water supply and finance, among others. The Council Secretariat sits in the MDM (MDM, 2019).

An overview of the institutional arrangements related to the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework is presented in Figure 1.

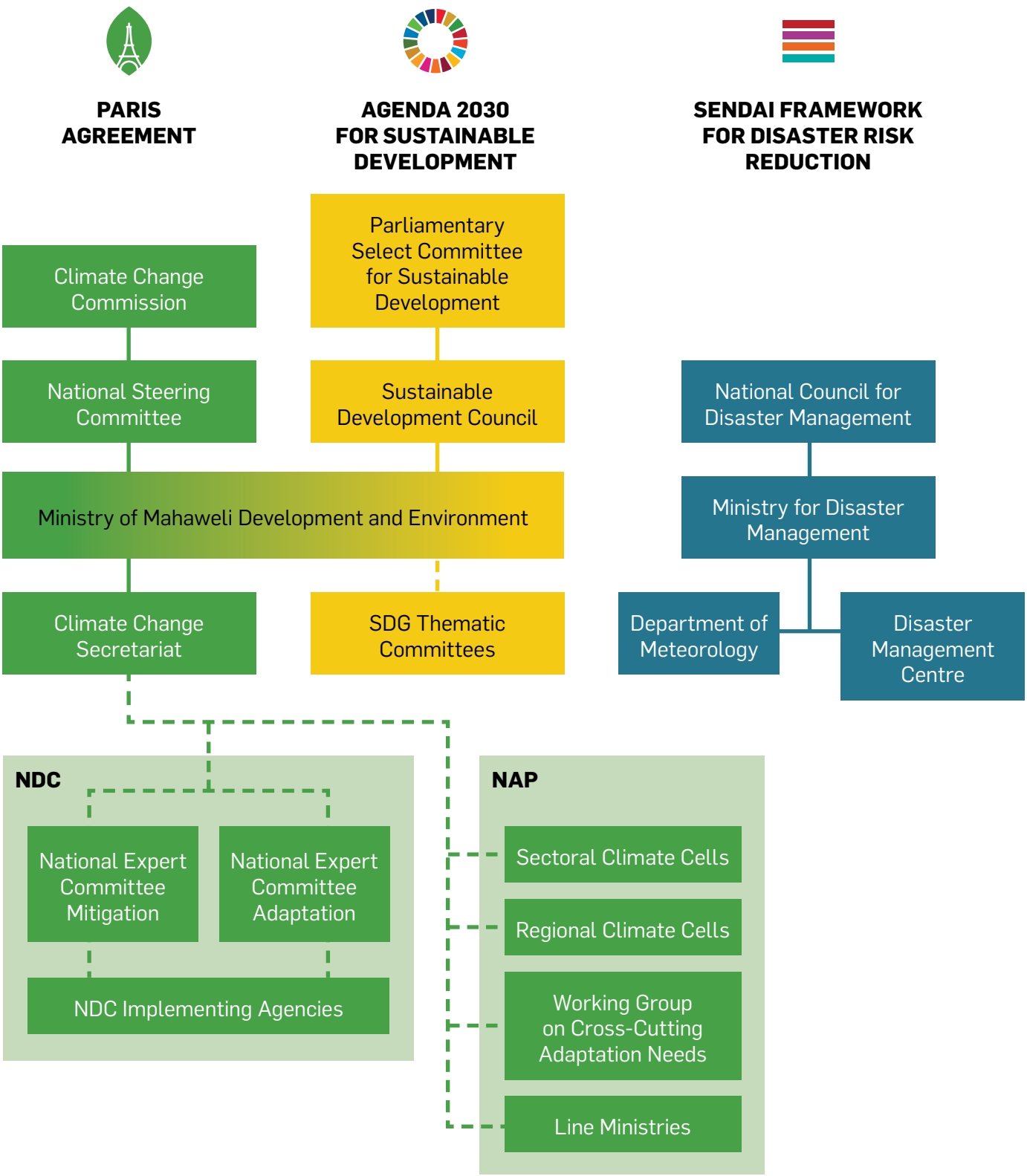
4. Status of Key Policy Processes for Climate-Resilient Development

This section provides an overview of the status of the main policy processes that are relevant for climate-resilient development in Sri Lanka. Table 1 summarizes this information.

Development Vision – Vision 2025: A country enriched

Sri Lanka's long-term development pathway is defined by Vision 2025: A Country Enriched. The aim is to transform Sri Lanka into the economic hub of the Indian Ocean, where all citizens have higher incomes and a better standard of living. It envisions change in a number of areas, including reforms in land, labour and capital markets; economic and social infrastructure; social safety nets; and agriculture and sustainable development, among others. There are limited references to climate change in this plan, with the exception of the chapter on agriculture and sustainable development, which highlights the importance of environmental protection and disaster management, as well as the need to build resilience in the agricultural sector (Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka [GDSRSL], n.d.a). This longer-term vision is translated into medium-term investment plans—the Public Investment Programme (PIP) for 2017–2020 is currently under implementation. An assessment of alignment of the PIP with the SDGs found that SDG13 on climate action was among the goals that require special attention in the next plan to ensure that they are adequately integrated (GDSRSL & UN Country Team, 2018).

Figure 1. Sri Lanka's institutional arrangements related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction



NOTE: Solid lines indicate direct responsibility, while dotted lines indicate a coordination relationship

National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development

Sri Lanka enacted the Sustainable Development Act in October 2017, which provides a legal framework for implementing the SDGs (GDSRSL, 2018). The act creates a mandate for the development and implementation of a National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development (NPSSD). It also calls for environmental, economic and social factors to be integrated in all decisions by the government (Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka [PDSRSL], 2017). As an input to the NPSSD, an expert committee developed a report outlining the vision and strategic path for sustainable development in the country. This report outlines the key issues and way forward for sustainable development in key sectors, including agriculture and food, health and water. Climate change and disasters (along with air quality) are identified as a cross-cutting theme requiring consideration across the other objectives (Presidential Expert Committee, 2019). The NPSSD is expected to be completed by the end of 2019 (S. Yalegama, personal communication, March 5, 2019). Once it is in place, the expectation is that the different ministries and sub-national authorities will develop Sustainable Development Strategies within one year, after which they will submit progress reports and conduct environmental and social audits for new initiatives. In the interim, the National Planning Department has requested that all government agencies map the SDG targets to their areas of work (GDSRSL, 2018).

Nationally Determined Contributions

Sri Lanka's first Nationally Determined Contributions emphasize the country's vulnerability to climate change. The document identifies four areas of focus, one of which is adaptation. The adaptation component aims to build resilience to the adverse effects of climate change in the most vulnerable communities, sectors and areas. It identifies five targets: mainstreaming adaptation into national planning and development; enabling climate-resilient and healthy human settlements; minimizing climate change impacts on food security; improving climate resilience of key economic drivers; and safeguarding natural resources and biodiversity from climate change impacts. Adaptation efforts will particularly focus on the most vulnerable sectors, namely health; food security; water and irrigation; coastal and marine; biodiversity; urban infrastructure and human settlements; and tourism and recreation. Specific commitments are outlined for each of these sectors, along with a commitment to mainstream climate change adaptation in national planning and development (MMDE, 2016b). A readiness plan for implementing the first NDC was also produced (MMDE, 2016c). The NDC is currently under review, and an update is planned in the coming year (Jayatunga & Perera, personal communication, February 15, 2019).

National Adaptation Plan

The National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change Impacts in Sri Lanka covers the period from 2016 to 2025. It categorizes adaptation needs in two ways: those that can be addressed within a particular vulnerable sector and those that cut across sectors. Sector-based adaptation needs are identified for nine sectors: food security (including crop and livestock agriculture and fisheries); water resources; coastal and marine; health; human settlements and infrastructure; ecosystems and biodiversity; tourism and recreation; agricultural exports; and industry, energy and transportation. The cross-cutting adaptation needs include institutional development and coordination; resource mobilization; research and development; building community adaptive capacity; and climate information management, among others. The NAP is guided by the principles outlined in the National Climate Change Policy (MMDE, 2016a), which emphasize timely action, environmental sustainability, social acceptability and economic viability, among other issues (GDSRSL,

n.d.b). Since its completion in 2016, a number of activities have been implemented, including the initiation of adaptation planning at the provincial level. A review and update to the NAP is planned for later this year (Jayatunga & Perera, personal communication, February 15, 2019).

National Policy on Disaster Management

Developed in 2013, the National Policy on Disaster Management envisions a safer Sri Lanka, aiming to put in place "effective disaster management for safety and resilience of lives and properties" (DSRSL, 2013, p. 1). In line with the Disaster Management Act (PDSRSL, 2005), the policy treats disaster management as a cross-cutting priority. It identifies strategies for disaster management in six areas: governance; (disaster) mitigation; preparedness; emergency, operations and response; relief and early recovery; and recovery, resettlement and rehabilitation (DSRSL, 2013). An action plan for achieving the targets set out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is under development (Jayatunga & Perera, personal communication, February 15, 2019).

Table 1. Sri Lanka's Response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Policy process	Vision 2025: A country enriched	National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development	Nationally Determined Contributions	National Adaptation Plan	National Policy on Disaster Management
Status	Launched in September 2017	Under development, expected to be completed by end of 2019	Completed in 2016, under review, update planned by 2020	Completed in 2016, under review, update planned by 2020	Developed in 2013
Timeframe	2017-2025	2020-2030	2021-2030	2016-2025	Not indicated
Lead institution	Prime Minister's Office	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Ministry of Disaster Management

Policy process	Vision 2025: A country enriched	National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development	Nationally Determined Contributions	National Adaptation Plan	National Policy on Disaster Management
Objectives related to climate-resilient development	In the context of agriculture and food security, aims to prioritize environmental protection and disaster management, including by promoting climate-resilient green technological improvement for food crop production	Recommended key actions include implementation of urgent short, medium and long-term measures to reduce vulnerability to disasters and adapt to climate change; adaptation recognized as a priority, particularly for the poor and vulnerable	Overarching objective for adaptation commitments is to build resilience in most vulnerable communities, sectors and areas to the adverse impacts of climate change	Aims to achieve sustainable development objectives and ensure a secure future for the country's citizens by minimizing the impacts of climate change on human life, ecosystems, national assets and the economy, through appropriate, timely measures of adaptation	Aims to increase awareness of risks, vulnerabilities and capacities to respond; emphasizes mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in planning and development, taking climate change into consideration
Priority sectors	• **Agriculture and sustainable development** • Social safety nets • Technology and digitalization • Land, labour and capital markets • Economic and social infrastructure	• **Agriculture and food** • **Water** • **Marine resources** • **Health** • **Urban development and physical planning** • Education • Energy • Transport	• **Food security (agriculture, livestock, fisheries)** • **Water and irrigation** • **Coastal and marine** • **Health** • **Urban infrastructure and human settlements** • Biodiversity • Tourism and recreation	• **Food security** • **Water resources** • **Coastal and marine** • **Health** • **Human settlements and infrastructure** • Ecosystems and biodiversity • Tourism and recreation • Export agriculture • Industry, energy and transportation	• Not specified
Source(s)	GDSRSL, n.d.b	Presidential Expert Committee, 2017; S. Yalegama, personal communication, March 5, 2019	MMDE, 2016b	MMDE, 2016a	DSRSL, 2013

5. Synergies and Linkages Among the Policy Processes in Sri Lanka

Among the different policy processes presented in Table 1, a number of linkages have already been made, which create opportunities to find synergies. These include:

The approach to SDG implementation acknowledges linkages between the international agendas.

- Sri Lanka's Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the status of implementation of the SDGs begins by making the links between the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for DRR. References to climate change adaptation as a means to achieving the SDGs are highlighted throughout the document, in relation to ending hunger, urban development and good health and well-being, among other goals.

The links between the NAP, the NDC and the SDGs are highlighted in SDG reporting.

- In Sri Lanka's VNR, the NAP, the NDC and the disaster management agency are highlighted as critical components in the implementation of SDG13 on climate action. It also notes the role of actions identified in the NAP and the NDC in implementing SDG6 on clean water and sanitation.

The NDC highlights the linkages between the Paris Agreement and the SDGs and are closely aligned with the NAP.

- The preamble to the commitments in the NDC highlights the importance of a "fair and ambitious" Agreement in achieving the SDGs. The NDC states that the adaptation-related commitments are based on the NAP. Further, there is significant overlap in the sectors identified in the NDC and in the NAP, with seven common sectors (in addition to these, the NAP also covers export agriculture and industry, energy and transportation).

The NAP highlights its consistency with the NDC.

- There is a section in the NAP which describes how the two documents were developed collaboratively and are complementary elements of Sri Lanka's response to climate change in the context of the Paris Agreement. It notes that the sectoral commitments in the NDC are captured within the adaptation options identified in the NAP.

The NAP includes a description of how it will contribute to achieving the SDGs.

- A mapping exercise has been conducted to identify the links between the SDGs and adaptation actions in the NAP sectors. This provides a useful overview of the synergies between the two policy processes.

The National Disaster Management Policy commits to addressing the impacts of climate change on disaster risks.

- In particular, the policy highlights the need for research programs and promotion of indigenous knowledge on climate change adaptation.

Building on these synergies can facilitate the identification of entry points for alignment, as described in the following section.

> "Integrated planning is the key means of implementation. Sri Lanka has already taken initiatives of integrated planning through the NAP [...] which should be extended to other sectors vertically and horizontally."
>
> Sri Lanka's NDC (2016)

6. Entry Points and Opportunities for Enhanced Alignment

There are four immediate entry points to build on these synergies and increase strategic alignment:

Reviewing and updating the NDC and the NAP. As mentioned, the review and update of both the NDC and the NAP will be completed in the coming year. This represents a key opportunity to build on the existing synergies to increase alignment of the two policy documents.

Potential next steps: To take this forward, a mapping exercise would be useful to assess the areas of focus in the NDC and the NAP to identify common areas of action, as well as gaps. The teams leading the update of the respective policy documents should ensure ongoing communication and coordination to ensure that the updates are strategically aligned.

Potential benefits: Aligning the updates to the NDC and the NAP document will help to ensure that they are mutually supportive and that the NAP provides a roadmap for operationalizing the adaptation commitments in the NDC.

Development of the NPSSD. Given that the NPSSD is in the development phase, an effort can be made to reflect the content of the updated NDC and NAP in this document (and vice versa) starting from the linkage analysis that has already been completed in the NAP document. This could also form a basis for improved integration of climate change in the next development vision for the post-2025 period.

Potential next steps: The NPSSD development process can seek input from the teams leading the NDC and NAP updates on how best to ensure that adaptation objectives are reflected in this policy.

Potential benefits: With this integrated framework in place, the government could work toward establishing a joint implementation mechanism and seek financial resources for implementation of actions that address multiple objectives. This can enhance efficiencies in implementing adaptation actions.

Monitoring & evaluation. The institutional arrangements for monitoring & evaluation (M&E) related to the NDC are in the process of being established. Currently, the main focus is on mitigation; however, the CCS is working with these actors to raise awareness of the importance of adaptation monitoring within the mandate for these committees (Jayatunga & Perera, personal communication, February 15, 2019).

Potential next steps: Ensuring that adaptation is incorporated in the M&E systems for climate change is critical to creating accountability, enabling reporting and ensuring a balance between adaptation and mitigation investments. Capacity strengthening will be needed to ensure that M&E committees are prepared to monitor and evaluate adaptation processes and outcomes.

Potential benefits: This would facilitate M&E and reporting not just under the Paris Agreement, but also for adaptation-related SDGs and, potentially, the Sendai targets. Efficiencies could be gained by developing a common M&E framework for adaptation, covering the NDC and the NAP, as well as adaptation-related SDGs.

Provincial adaptation planning processes. The adaptation planning processes that are being initiated at provincial level provide an additional opportunity to enhance alignment. By integrating adaptation into planning, provincial governments can articulate their role in implementing the NAP, as well as their contribution to the adaptation commitments in the NDC and the achievement of adaptation-related elements in the SDGs.

Potential next steps: To achieve this, establishment of the planned Regional Climate Cells will be important, and their mandate could include implementation of adaptation actions related to the SDGs, as well as the NDC and the NAP. These bodies, as well as local government actors, will require capacity development to understand the various commitments and identify appropriate adaptation actions.

Potential benefits: An aligned approach can reduce the burden on the provincial-level actors and ensure more effective and coordinated implementation of adaptation at the local level.

7. Conclusion

Currently, Sri Lanka is on its way from informal to strategic alignment (Dazé, Terton & Maass, 2018). The actors involved in the relevant policy processes are increasingly sharing information, and the various policy documents identify the synergies among the different processes, in terms of their objectives and areas of focus. There are considerable opportunities to increase alignment, particularly in relation to development and update of some of the key policies and mechanisms for climate-resilient development, as well as establishment of systems for planning, monitoring and evaluating climate action. The fact that sustainable development and climate change are under the responsibility of a single ministry may facilitate coordination and collaboration. Further, Sri Lanka is in the process of applying for adaptation planning readiness support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which may provide resources for taking the next steps identified above.

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