



Rural poverty approaches, policies & strategies in Sri Lanka

The Government's current agricultural policies aim to improve the sector's productivity, raise farm incomes and achieve family food security by transforming traditional agriculture into a commercially viable enterprise. At the same time, Government policies recognize the importance of small-scale agriculture as a means of reducing poverty in rural areas. Working toward its agricultural development goals, the Government plans to:

- improve land markets and tenure arrangements
- upgrade extension services and marketing channels
- provide more effective rural financial services
- promote decentralization
- target welfare programmes more efficiently

Under its strategy for poverty reduction and economic growth, the Government has committed itself to broader and deeper economic reforms. It focuses in particular on promoting a gradual shift from subsistence agriculture to commercially oriented agriculture. The challenge is to ensure that rural poor people obtain their share of the expected benefits of growth.

The Government's overall poverty reduction strategy includes six main points:

- building a supportive macroeconomic environment and boosting private-sector investment
- reducing conflict-related poverty
- creating opportunities for participation of poor and marginalized communities in economic growth, through investments in infrastructure and changes in production systems
- investing in human resources by improving access to social services

Suggested reading

International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Country Strategic Opportunities Paper* (2003) [<http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/78/e/EB-2003-78-R-23-Rev-1.pdf>]

International Monetary Fund. *Regaining Sri Lanka: vision and strategy for accelerated development* (2002) [<http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/2002/lka/01/120502.pdf>]

- empowering poor people and strengthening governance
- effectively monitoring and evaluating progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals

Source: IFAD