



Food security is becoming a growing concern in Sri Lanka's war ravaged north where a majority of the inhabitants live on less than a dollar a day. At the same time only a quarter of a UN-Sri Lanka post-conflict reconstruction programme has been financed partly because the World Bank has classified Sri Lanka a middle income nation. Only 23% of the joint UN-Government of Sri Lanka-NGO reconstruction programme for the war ravaged northern provinces in Sri Lanka has been financed, says Subinay Nandy, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sri Lanka. This means the fund is facing a US\$200 million shortfall. Paradoxically, the World Bank reclassified Sri Lanka in late 2010 as a middle-income country and some analysts blame this for the funding shortfall.

"People ask why they should help a middle-income country; what they fail to see is that there are large pockets of poverty here," Andre Krummacher, the [ACTED](#) country director for Sri Lanka told IRIN, the news service of the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Others have blamed the international focus on alleged war crimes committed during the last phase of Sri Lanka's war and moves to initiate an international investigation as distracting donors.

"There has been so much attention on this that donors seem to have lost sight of the conditions in the former war area," Jagath Abeysinghe, president of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society.

UN Officials indicate it is highly unlikely the full appeal would be met this year. Further constraints were avoided in May this year when Valerie Amos, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, released \$4.9 million to the priority sectors: food security, agriculture, protection, shelter, water and sanitation, nutrition and health.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) office, whose emergency food assistance is funded through the JPA, said it had not limited or suspended food distribution due to funding constraints and that food intake in the province was still acceptable - albeit deteriorating.

"Over 60 percent of households in the Northern Province are food-insecure, and lack the income generation and food-production capacity to secure basic needs," the WFP told IRIN.

The latest WFP assessment found that half the households in the Northern Province lived on less than \$1 a day. According to the UN's latest Joint Humanitarian and Early Recovery Update, released on 24 June 2011, 63 percent of returnees live below the poverty line.

"The reality is that there is food, but it is very expensive, people don't have the income to buy it," said Andre Krummacher, ACTED country director for Sri Lanka. He said the impact of tight budgets and insufficient job opportunities was becoming apparent: "Soon we will see more unless the tide changes," he said.