

November 4th 2025

Ministry of Environment
"Sobadam Piyasa",
416/C/1, Robert Gunawardana Mawatha,
Battaramulla,
Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte,
Sri Lanka.

Subject: Strategic Priorities for Sri Lanka's Climate Negotiations at COP30

Dear Honorable Minister,

As Sri Lanka prepares for COP30 in Belém, Brazil, we believe that our delegation must position the country's climate priorities within our unique and urgent context. Sri Lanka ranks among the world's top ten countries most vulnerable to extreme weather events, with climate disasters impacting 14.2 million people between 2000-2020, while simultaneously navigating our 17th IMF programme following the 2022 fiscal default.

Sri Lanka is simultaneously a biodiversity hotspot, a Small Island Developing State facing existential threats, a nation in economic recovery requiring policy space, and a country with ancient sustainable practices offering proven solutions. This unique position makes us a compelling voice for the Global South's climate-debt nexus. This convergence of climate vulnerability and economic crisis demands a principled yet strategic approach that advances both national interests and global climate justice.

The following priorities should guide our delegation's negotiations at COP30:

1. Debt Relief and Climate Finance

With the current high debt-to-GDP ratio and climate damages exceeding Rs. 50 billion (\$170 million) annually, Sri Lanka cannot simultaneously meet debt obligations and climate goals under current financial architecture. The Sri Lankan delegation should,

- Push for grant based climate finance that does not add to our debt burden.
- Demand explicit recognition that debt-distressed nations require debt cancellation and policy space for climate action, not conditionalities that restrict our ability to invest in resilience.

2. Loss and Damage

Current Loss and Damage Fund pledges (\$788.8 million) represent less than 0.1% of estimated needs (\$128-937 billion annually for vulnerable countries). Sri Lanka's 2017 floods displaced

500,000 people, while droughts that same year affected 1.9 million and doubled household debt for 50% of affected communities. We should,

- Demand Loss and Damage as a dedicated sub-goal within the NCQG with quantified targets.
- Support a dedicated minimum annually for Loss and Damage by 2030, with fast track access procedures that deliver support to affected communities within months rather than the current multi-year delays.
- Advocate for recognition of non-economic losses such as cultural heritage threatened by sea-level rise, displacement trauma in communities like Mannar, erosion of traditional fishing and agricultural knowledge, and mental health impacts on climate-affected communities.

3. Climate Finance Architecture

COP29 established a roadmap to scale financing from \$300 billion to \$1.3 trillion by 2035. COP30 must define how this scaling happens and who pays. Sri Lanka should,

- **Push for a new standing agenda item to serve as an accountability and delivery mechanism for the NCQG**, including holding developed countries accountable for the provision of public climate finance (Article 9.1), and promoting direct access finance mechanisms to ensure funds reach Indigenous Peoples and local communities directly.
- **Support as part of the Baku to Belém Roadmap or any other negotiated climate finance outcome progressive environmental taxation rooted in the polluter pays principle and CBDR-RC** - such as taxes on fossil fuel corporations; and space under the new NCQG agenda item to advance these mechanisms.
- Advocate for Multilateral Development Bank reform that increases concessional lending while requiring full transparency on loan terms, conditionalities, and climate finance accounting, with accessible grievance mechanisms for affected communities.
- Outside of the formal COP outcome, we also wish to see the **Global Solidarity Levies Taskforce final COP30 declaration publicly endorse bold global fossil fuel profit taxation** for international climate finance under the UN Tax Convention, alongside bolder fossil fuel profit taxes and extraction levies at the **national and regional levels to help communities** at home and around the world rebuild from climate disasters and invest in climate solutions.

4. Agriculture, Food Security, and Water

The Dry Zone employs 27% of our population, yet under high emissions scenarios, days exceeding 35°C could rise from 20 to over 100 annually by the 2090s. Rice is crucial to 32% of our population's livelihoods, yet farmers face severe temperature stress. Our water stress is 90.8%, meaning we consume nearly all available renewable freshwater. We should,

- Ensure COP30's agriculture workstream includes dedicated support for small-scale farmers in climate hotspots.
- Strengthen farmer seed systems and community seed banks that maintain climate resilient crop diversity through traditional knowledge. Support South-South farmer exchange networks and participatory plant breeding controlled by farmers, not corporations. Guarantee farmers' rights to save, breed, exchange, and sell seeds as recognized in UNDROP and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Reject patented seeds, biopiracy, and any mechanisms that commodify seeds or undermine seed sovereignty.
- Position Sri Lanka's ancient cascade tank systems as models for climate-resilient water management worthy of international investment.
- Support integration of water security within climate finance frameworks.

5. Just Transition Aligned with Brazil's Presidency

Brazil's COP30 emphasizes Indigenous knowledge, biodiversity, and connecting climate action to people's lives. These priorities perfectly align with Sri Lankan needs. Our 70% renewable energy target by 2030 faces challenges from economic crisis and policy uncertainty. Sri Lanka should,

- Support Brazil's Tropical Forests Forever Facility while advocating for similar mechanisms for other critical ecosystems including mangroves, coral reefs, and montane forests.
- Push for renewable energy transition support including capacity building and patient capital and not high-interest loans that deepen debt.
- Advocate for "Cascade System Finance" that recognizes traditional ecological knowledge as proven climate solutions.
- Ensure just transition frameworks include social safety nets for workers in transitioning sectors.

6. Indigenous Knowledge and Community Rights

Brazil is establishing a 'Circle of Indigenous Leadership', an excellent opportunity to elevate Sri Lankan traditional knowledge. Aligning with this initiative, Sri Lanka should commit to ensuring,

- Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as mandatory for all climate projects affecting local communities.
- Dedicated funding streams for community-led adaptation initiatives.
- Recognition of traditional knowledge holders as equal partners in solution design, not merely "stakeholders" to be consulted.
- Protection of community rights in any carbon market mechanisms and nature-based solutions.

Our 2,000 year old cascade irrigation systems, traditional monsoon prediction methods used by fishing communities, and biodiversity-maintaining home garden practices offer proven climate resilient solutions that deserve global recognition and investment.

7. Enhanced Transparency and Accountability

We should advocate to:

- Strengthen reporting requirements for corporate climate commitments with independent verification to prevent greenwashing
- Mandate climate risk disclosure by financial institutions investing in developing countries
- Establish grievance mechanisms within climate finance institutions that are genuinely accessible to affected communities
- Support an independent ombudsperson for the Loss and Damage Fund to ensure accountability

COP30 represents a critical juncture. The "Baku to Belém Roadmap" will be defined in the coming months, and Sri Lanka's voice must be heard. A clear and principled position will advance our national resilience while contributing meaningfully to transforming global climate finance from a system perpetuating inequality into one enabling true climate justice.

Our message is clear: No climate action without debt justice. No climate finance that deepens debt. No false solutions that commodify nature or violate community rights.

Yours sincerely,



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CC: Mr. Leel Randeni, Director Climate Change Secretariat