



# **Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development:**

**Linkages between Climate Action,  
Agriculture, and Inequality**

## **Summary Workshop Documentation**

24 May 2023

Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Growing evidence demonstrates that climate action necessitates a transition addressing all dimensions of sustainability. The need to address distributional impacts and inequality emerges as a critical requirement for climate action, and vice versa. A research consortium led by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) aims to advance policy coherence research by focusing on the causes of policy incoherence and how it affects achievement of global climate and sustainable development goals. The core objective of this programme is to explore the causes and consequences of policy incoherence at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels with a specific focus on reducing inequality.

Particularly important is the national level, where the project aims to demonstrate examples of how countries can improve synergies between climate change and sustainable development, as well as how to tackle often unavoidable trade-offs, while leaving no one behind. With that in mind case studies are done in countries: Australia, Fiji, Colombia, Sweden, Germany, Kenya, Philippines, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.

Overall, the objective is to provide insights and policy recommendations for achievement of the SDGs and any post-2030 goals without exacerbating inequality, at global and country levels.



In Sri Lanka, the case study was carried out by the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) and focussed on the nexus between agriculture policies, climate change, and inequality. Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to climate change and the agriculture sector bears the brunt of this risk. The risk spreads from those whose livelihoods depend on a stable climate to everyone who depends on rural agrarian communities for food and health security. These risks are asymmetric, and inequality differs at local, provincial, and national levels. Thus, worsening climate vulnerability could lead to spiralling inequality, but the converse is also true; a more resilient agricultural sector could improve the material conditions of agrarian communities and help them catch-up with more prosperous communities.

The Sri Lankan governments have produced a diverse series of policy responses to tackle climate change, agriculture and food security. The desired policy outcomes and processes are coloured by both domestic legislation and international commitments. However, rural agrarian communities continue to live in poverty with low levels of productivity, which warrants some questioning and deeper scrutiny of the policy responses.





Therefore, to understand how the interactions take place and how policy coherence can be achieved, this case study explored coherence of agriculture policies. It considers both inclusive growth and environmental considerations, exploring synergies and trade-offs among policies in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

The workshop hosted by CEPA, SEI and the Climate Change Secretariat of Sri Lanka on 'Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development: Linkages between Climate Action, Agriculture, and Inequality' aimed to share the findings of the study and to engage with a wider, diverse group to talk about policy coherence. Ultimately, the objective was to have a broader dialogue with key stakeholders on policy processes and finetune the final country case study on Sri Lanka.

The workshop held on 24 May 2023 at the Galle Face Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka, brought together over 45 participants to harness their experience and knowledge to highlight important aspects of policy making and policy coherence.



As part of the research process, it will also upgrade the **NDC-SDG Connections tool** to visualize synergies between climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals that aids decision-makers implementing the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda at different levels. The workshop also demonstrated this tool to the participants.

The workshop highlighted the need for policy coherence as well as better policy making processes for the achievement of sustainable

agriculture in Sri Lanka. Policy coherence is broadly defined as a process of policy making that systematically considers the pursuit of multiple policy goals in a coordinated way, minimising trade-offs and maximising synergies.



The workshop raised key issues in achieving policy coherence such as:

1. Weak evaluation processes
2. Fragmented institutions
3. Too many policy initiatives
4. Weak consultation
5. Ad hoc changes in policy
6. Low input user efficiency
7. Policy uncertainty

The SDG synergies tool used by the participants during the workshop highlighted the fact that policy making should be participatory as the determination of trade-offs and synergies needed justification from multiple stakeholders.