



TUNDRA CHRISTMAS DONATION

DECEMBER 2017



OUR SINCERE WISHES FOR A PEACEFUL HOLIDAY

ECPAT (PEaCE) SRI LANKA

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Each December, Tundra Fonder makes a small carefully considered financial contribution to an organisation that works with vulnerable sections of society. Previous Christmas giving has gone to educational institutions and a non-profit hospital with state-of-the-art technology in Pakistan. This year we have chosen ECPAT (PEaCE), Sri Lanka.

Since the end of the civil war in 2009, Sri Lanka has witnessed a strong increase in tourism. Growing tourism while broadly beneficial also brings with it challenges of sexual predation and trafficking. ECPAT is an international network of organisations and individuals working together to eliminate child prostitution, documenting sexual abuse involving children and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. ECPAT PEaCE (Protecting Environment and Children Everywhere) was launched in 1991 in support of ECPAT International. It nurtures collaboration among local civil society activists and concentrates on protecting children from sexual exploitation.

Through hard-won awareness raising PEaCE was able to break through the taboos surrounding this subject. It is now a member of the steering committee of the two -year action plan on “zero tolerance for child sex tourism in Sri Lanka” launched by the Sri Lanka Tourist Board. The National Tourist Guide Lectures’ Association of Sri Lanka has also joined hands with PEaCE to change Sri Lanka’s tourism sector. Bridging trust and building partnerships across government agencies, businesses and non-profit organisations are crucial to preventing crimes against children.

SRI LANKA FACTS

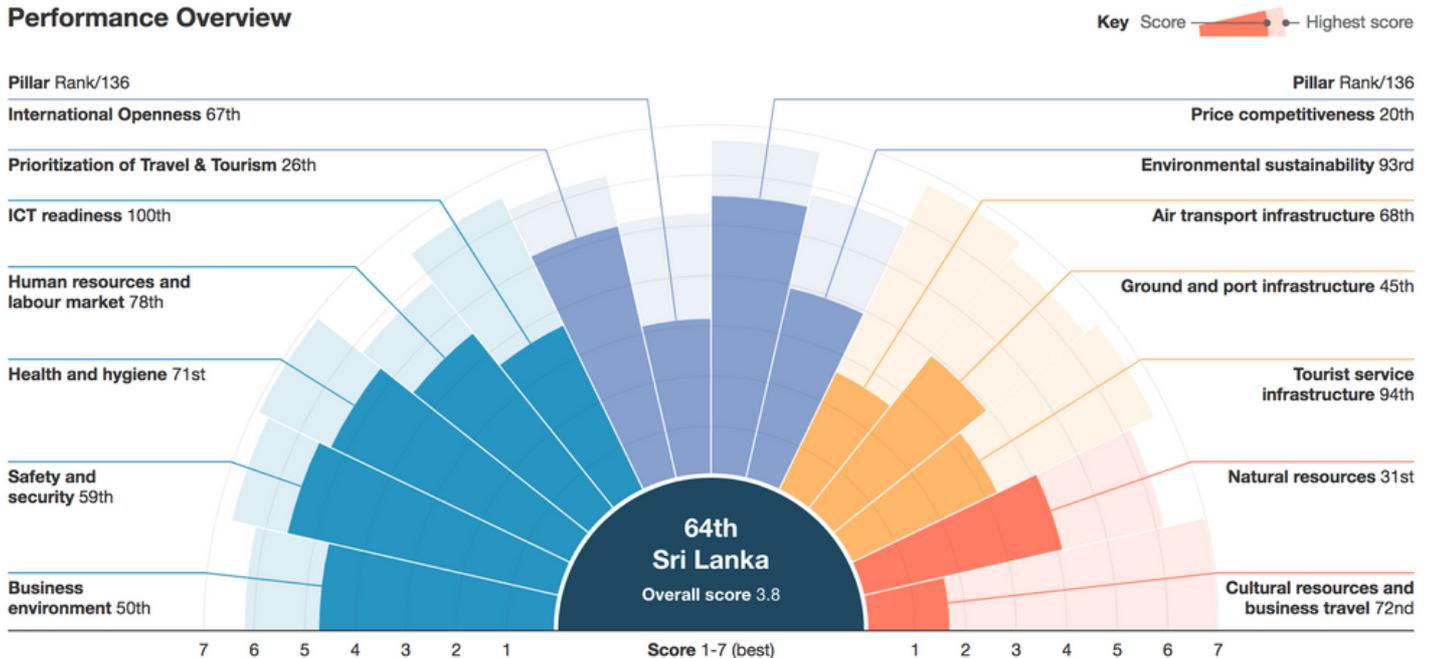
Capital: Colombo
Population: 21 203 000
Life expectancy at birth: 75 yrs (Female 78 / Male 72)
Area: 65 610 km² (Land 62 710 km²/ Water 980 km²)
GDP (current): \$81 321m (2016)
GDP per Capita: \$3 835 (2016)
Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR)
Official Language: Sinhala
Access to Improved drinking water: 96%
Access to Improved Sanitation: 95%
Adult Literacy Rate (2015): 93% (F: 92% / M: 98%)
CO2 Emissions (metric tons/capita) 2013: 0.8
Labour Force Participation Rate: 52% (F: 30% /M: 75%)
Maternal mortality (2015): 30 deaths/100,000 live births
Total fertility rate: 2.1 births per woman
Under-5 mortality (2015): 10 deaths/1,000 live births



INCREASING TOURISM

WITH AN INCREASING NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISITING SRI LANKA PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A HIGH PRIORITY.

Performance Overview



Source: World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017

In 2016, global tourism grew by 3.9% with countries in Asia and the Pacific witnessing the highest growth (8.4%) [1]. In Sri Lanka tourism surged to reach over 2 million visitors. An increase of 15% from the same period in 2015 [2]. Revenue from tourism also increased reaching \$2.5bn in the corresponding time frame [3]. Tourism is one of Sri Lanka's biggest earners, coming in 3rd after foreign remittances and textiles. In terms of tourist composition, nearly 45% visitors were from Asia, 31% were from Western Europe, and the remainder (24%) were a mixed international group [4].

According to a 2016 mid-term progress report by the Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Affairs, the government has

prioritised tourism development as a key feature of its economic development strategy making budgetary allocations to associated infrastructure and service development [5].

The World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 agrees with this assessment [6]. It ranks Sri Lanka 64 out of 136 countries with an overall score of 3.8. According to all indications, the Sri Lankan government has done a tremendous job in promoting and energising the travel sector. It scores an impressive 5.2 out of a possible 7 in 'prioritisation of travel and tourism.' With increasing numbers of tourists expected to visit the country in the coming years; protecting vulnerable children constitutes an important task.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Governments play a key role in the fight against human trafficking. They have the ultimate responsibility for punishing offenders, protecting victims, and preventing trafficking crimes. High acquittal rates, suspended sentences, the imposition of fines in lieu of incarceration, and weak prison terms are ineffective deterrents. Furthermore, when authorities punish trafficking victims for crimes they were forced to commit, including prostitution and immigration violations, they hinder their own efforts to investigate and punish traffickers [7].

Numerous reports state that during the 26-year civil war in Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam abducted children exploiting them for labour, military conscription and sexual abuse [8]. In 2003, the Sri Lankan police recorded 1,643 cases of child abuse. However, the government and activists state that a large majority of the cases go unreported and that the actual numbers are well into their thousands, citing over 30,000 cases [9].

After the 2004 tsunami, which left nearly 35,000 dead [10], many children were left without any social networks putting them at risk for serious crimes including kidnapping and trafficking [11]. In 2008, La Strada International, an international NGO working on addressing the trafficking of persons in Europe, undertook a study on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Sri Lanka [12]. The study found that children were commercially sexually exploited through domestic services, marriage or proximity to prostitution hot-beds such as tourist sites or military installations.

A recent Dutch documentary highlighted a 1983 adoption scandal where Flash, a Dutch adoption agency, bought new-borns and then sold at a high price. Reportedly, nearly 11,000 infants were sold. According to the documentary, women were systematically raped to meet the demand for infants. Other eye-witnesses described certain paediatric wards resembling supermarkets where foreigners “would come, buy and go” [13].

In 2015, Sri Lanka launched standard operating procedures of international standards to protect the victims of human trafficking. The government has made significant efforts to meet international standards in order to eliminate trafficking, leading to an upgrade to Tier 2 in the ranking system [14].



ADDITIONAL READING

- [1] Annual Statistical Report 2016. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority. <http://bit.ly/2z2xtQ3>
- [2] Progress Report 2016. Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Affairs 2016. <http://bit.ly/2BDAXeB>
- [3] Times Sri Lanka. [2017]. 'Sri Lanka Tourism Earnings Pass 2 bln USD in 2017. <http://bit.ly/2CLy8al>
- [4] Annual Statistical Report 2016. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority. <http://bit.ly/2z2xtQ3>
- [5] Progress Report 2016. Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Affairs 2016. <http://bit.ly/2BDAXeB>
- [6] Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017. World Economic Forum. <http://bit.ly/2BOcMg1>
- [7] The trafficking in persons report 2017. US Department of State. <http://bit.ly/2ABK2H7>
- [8] The Sydney Morning Herald. [2005]. 'Orphaned children face a new nightmare of abuse.' <http://bit.ly/2olvNLv>
- [9] Tamil Eelam News Service. [2004]. 'Sri Lanka: Hotbed for sexual exploitation of children.' <http://bit.ly/2AZjhJg>
- [10] The Atlantic. [2014]. 'Ten Years Since the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.' <http://theatlantic.com/2BEHPry>
- [11] Daily News. [2005]. 'Join effort to nab Lankan tsunami child trafficking trawler.' <http://bit.ly/2oL5sfQ>
- [12] Terre des hommes. [2008]. 'Sri Lanka Research Report: The sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children in Sri Lanka.' <http://bit.ly/2klJYRZ>
- [13] Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. [2017]. 'Sri Lanka's baby farms inter-country adoption racket exposed!' <http://bit.ly/2kj3LLh>
- [14] International Organization for Migration. [2015]. 'Sri Lanka sets out to protect victims of human trafficking.' <http://bit.ly/2kk4LWc>

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