

## **Service Delivery for Pro-Poor Growth in Sri Lanka**

### Concept Note

Although Sri Lanka has achieved per capita income growth of about 3 per cent per year over the past two decades, poverty reduction has been slow while inequality has risen in recent years. Headcount poverty declined only from 26 per cent to 23 per cent between 1990-91 and 2002. Further, national poverty measures mask widening disparities between urban, rural and estate poverty, as well as across geographic districts across the country.

The Government of Sri Lanka has stressed the importance of pro-poor development strategies by introducing several supportive programmes as articulated in the ‘Mahinda Chinthana’ and most recently the “Mahinda Chinthana: Vision for a New Sri Lanka - A Ten Year Horizon Development Framework 2006-2016.” This new approach integrates the positive attributes of market economic policies with the domestic aspirations by providing necessary support to domestic enterprises and encouraging foreign investment. Within the macroeconomic parameters, the programme includes a ten-year framework for various sectors of the economy covering sector visions, issues, challenges and strategies.

It is thus important to take an integrated view of Sri Lanka’s long term development challenges, so that the vision of reduced poverty and more equitable, balanced growth is achieved. The workshop “Service Delivery and Pro-Poor Growth in Sri Lanka” intends to tackle the key issues that would spur pro-poor growth. The focus is on highlighting implementation strategies that will achieve national goals, and are feasible from a resource and political economy perspective. Further, national policies will have to be nuanced to incorporate important differences across geographic districts. The workshop aims to contribute towards developing policy innovations which will effectively address the economic disparities across the country, reduce poverty and generate robust economic growth.