

Service Delivery and Provincial Budgeting for Promoting Pro-Poor Growth and Development in Sri Lanka

Concept Note

Although Sri Lanka has achieved per capita income growth of approximately 5 per cent per year over the past decade, poverty reduction has been slow and inequality has in fact risen in recent years. Besides, national poverty measures mask widening disparities between urban, rural and estate poverty, as well as across geographic districts in the country. Sustainable growth and development will not be a reality unless the benefits of growth are shared across the country and not limited to particular geographic and socio-economic strata.

Consequently, there has been a necessity to achieve a more broad-based growth. Government economic policy has taken this need into account and the importance of boosting economic activity beyond the Western Province has been well articulated. The policy direction of the GOSL is reflected in the *Framework for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction and the Medium-term Expenditure Framework*, prepared by the Ministry of Finance, and expanded in the 2005 and 2006 Budgets.

It is 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 workshops on "Service Delivery and Provincial Budgeting for Promoting Pro-Poor Growth and Development in Sri Lanka" intend to tackle the major issues that would spur pro-poor growth and is aimed at key officials involved in provision of services at the provincial level. The sessions will provide expert training and analysis on provincial budgeting, issues in service delivery at the provincial level – focusing on health, education and infrastructure, and case studies of innovative strategies in service delivery from Sri Lanka and abroad. The focus is on highlighting implementation strategies that will achieve national goals, and are feasible from a resource and political economy perspective. The workshops aim to contribute towards developing policy innovations which will effectively address the economic disparities across the country, reduce poverty and help generate robust economic growth.