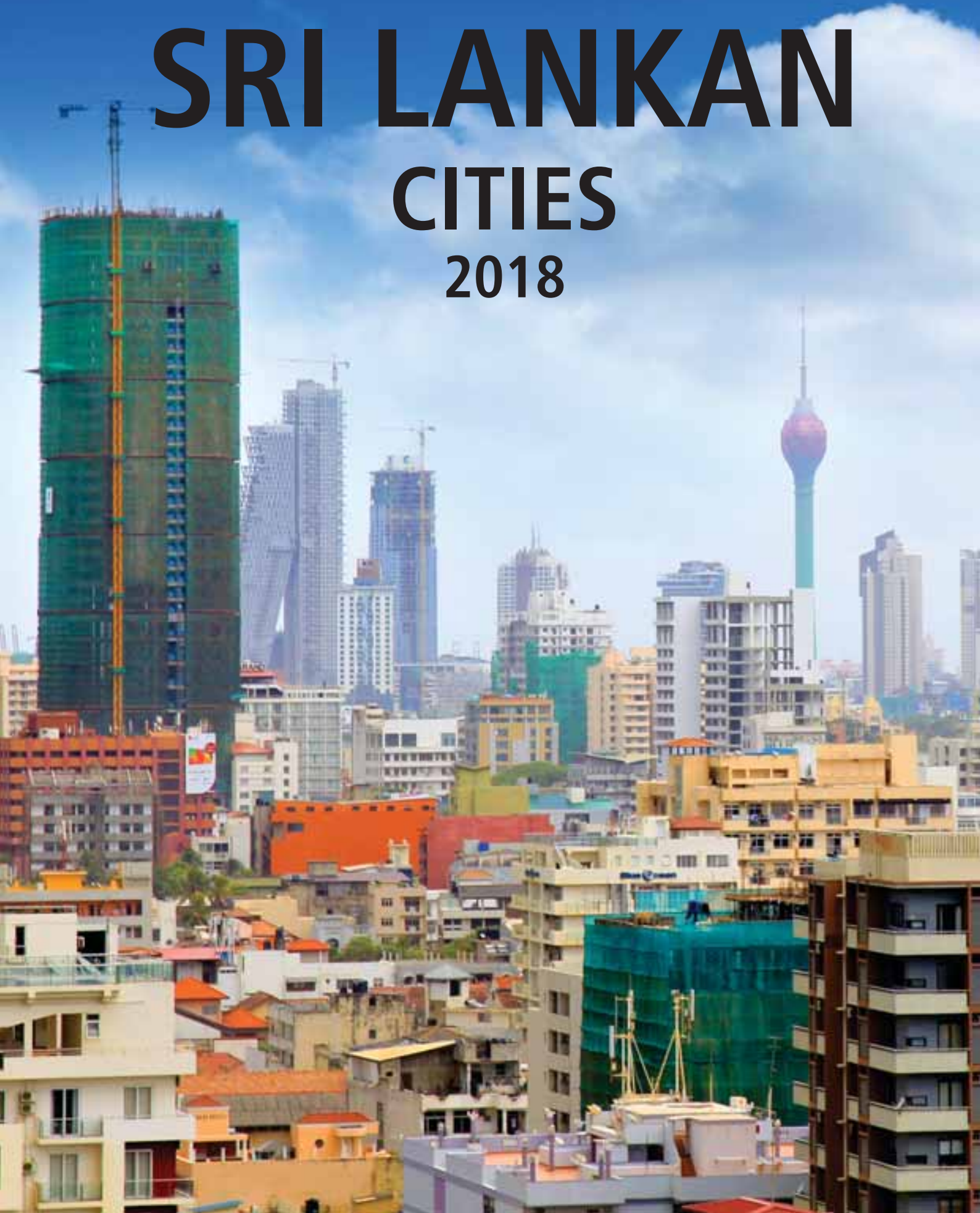




# STATE OF SRI LANKAN CITIES 2018







**STATE OF  
SRI LANKAN  
CITIES  
2018**

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## FOREWORD

Ministry of Provincial Councils, Local Government and Sports



Current comprehensive data and information relevant to major cities in Sri Lanka is not readily available. This collaborative effort by the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) with the financial assistance of the Government of Australia, under the guidance of my Ministry is commendable. Hence, it is with great pleasure that I am introducing the *State of Sri Lankan Cities 2018* report.

Although similar reports are available in other countries, Sri Lanka has not had such a compilation of wide ranging city specific analysis and data available. This is the first ever effort made to fill up the data and policy gap for our cities with accurate information and data, highlighting eight major relevant areas and assembling this gamut of information into a single publication.

As evident in this report, it has been compiled initially for eleven municipality areas covering all the 9 Provincial Capitals of the country. However, Colombo being the district with the most number of municipalities in the Western Province, and the most densely populated, information relevant to three Municipal Councils are included.

I wish to avail this opportunity to acknowledge the effort made by UN-Habitat in encouraging my Ministry to undertake this initiative to facilitate development oriented decision making at the Local Government level and with the assistance of the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance to produce a good reference handbook. With the success of this report, it is intended to expand this exercise to other municipal areas of the country as well.

It is equally important to stress here that the data and information given in this report needs to be updated periodically, so that any interested party would be able to utilize this as a reliable source of information for decision making now and into the future.

It is my belief that this report with crucial and multi-sectoral data and information on the selected cities will address the significant lack of data on our cities and help us move towards an integrated policy approach into the future.

Finally, I would like to thank the UN-Habitat and the Government of Australia for their generous assistance and active support to make this collaborative effort a reality.

### **Faiszer Musthapha (M.P.)**

Hon. Minister of Provincial Councils,  
Local Government and Sports  
President's Counsel

## FOREWORD

UN-Habitat



It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Report, the *State of Sri Lankan Cities 2018*, which takes an in depth look at the nation's provincial capitals. The '*State of Sri Lankan Cities*' project was conceptualized by UN-Habitat based on its global and regional experience in developing status reports of cities for over a decade. At the national launch of the *State of Asian and Pacific Cities 2015 Report* in February 2016 in Sri Lanka, it emerged that a national report of the same nature would be very useful. This was reinforced by recent experiences in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan where UN-Habitat worked in partnership with the respective governments to produce State of Cities reports, and a decision to work towards *State of Sri Lankan Cities* report was begun.

Rapid urban growth is witnessed across many countries, and with it come significant challenges in the areas of urban planning and design and city management. These include land scarcity for habitable space; spiralling land values; overloading of physical infrastructure; urban poverty and underserved settlements; degradation of the urban environment and environment pollution; improper disposal of waste; encroachment of sensitive areas; increased exposure to disaster risk and impact of climate change on settlements; lack of institutional capacity; and uneven distribution. Rapid growth, if not managed properly can threaten the health and well-being of the city's population. In short, the economic, social and environment cost of unstructured urban growth can outweigh the benefits of urbanization.

This analytical report provides an update of the nine provincial capital cities in Sri Lanka and presents a way forward for all stakeholders providing a rigorous evidence base for better social, environmental and economic planning and programming for the cities. UN-Habitat is grateful to our funding partner — the Government of Australia, who has also supported similar reports in the region; as well as to our lead partners in the Government of Sri Lanka — the Ministry of Provincial Councils, Local Government and Sports through the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance who has taken leadership in this process; the Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development, together with all Ministries associated with cities, who extended their support to the project.

I hope this report is useful to the local authorities, the national government and other stakeholders in Sri Lanka interested in achieving both the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

**Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and  
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



View of central Colombo across the Beira lake

Source: UN-Habitat/Charmalee Jayasinghe

The *State of Sri Lankan Cities 2018* (SoSLC) report includes 10 chapters of data and analysis, to provide detailed sectoral assessments of Sri Lanka's cities and present an integrated policy analysis. In doing so, it aims to support evidence-based urban policy and planning to drive the social and economic development of the country's urban centres. Drawing on the United Nation's New Urban Agenda, the report presents a Roadmap for Sri Lankan Cities, which promotes cross-sectoral and holistic interventions that recognise Sri Lanka's cities as interrelated urban systems. This approach yields **5 key policy recommendations** that work across sectors to achieve *a better urban future for all Sri Lankans*:

1. Develop a national urban policy framework that provides a clear vision, strategy and institutional arrangements for urban development.

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