

# The Commitment to Society and Environment

We operate within a network of communities whose goodwill provides us with a legitimate licence to operate. In the same way, these same communities depend on us for the improvement of their lives and livelihoods. Just as we derive value from and deliver value to society, we are also a part of the value creation cycle that relates to the environment. Safeguarding our natural resources for future generations, while also encouraging and educating our stakeholders to do the same, ensures the long term sustainability of our operations.

## Contributing towards the SDGs

We are proud to contribute towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were adopted by all 193 Member States of the United Nations in 2015. Now in its fifth year, this 15-year plan focuses on ending extreme poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and protecting our planet. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which clearly define the world we aspire to, applies to all nations, leaving no one behind.

After overcoming a 30-year domestic conflict, Sri Lanka has already begun transforming towards a sustainable and resilient society. The extreme poverty rate dropped to 0.8% in 2016, while the unemployment rate has been below 5% since 2010. Free education and health policies have resulted in high youth literacy rates of 98.7% and high life expectancy of 75 years. Based on its index of human development, Sri Lanka is a high achiever.

In terms of challenges, Sri Lanka is focused on improving the quality and relevance of education, providing medical treatment and care facilities for the ageing population, and fighting climate disasters – all of which will require further policy support, financial mobilisation and stronger partnerships.

Incorporating the SDGs into its national policy framework, Sri Lanka has taken several significant steps. The most important is the Sustainable Development Act in 2017, which establishes the legal framework to implement the SDGs with improved institutional and policy coherence. The Sustainable Development Council has been established under this Act to formulate related national policies and guide new development projects. Sri Lanka is leading many of its peers in efforts to include and mainstream the SDGs into its national plan and budget, proving that a country can begin tackling social well-being and environmental health even before it achieves economic affluence. [Source: <https://www.unescap.org/blog/sdg-implementation-and-budgeting-sri-lanka>]

During the year under review, SDB bank contributed towards the following SDGs:

### 1. End poverty



- Disbursed LKR 29 Bn. to SME segment including SMEs and micro-enterprises across the island.

### 2 Zero hunger



- MOU with John Keells Holdings PLC to offer special leasing facilities for Mahindra tractors for smallholders
- Financing and support for value chains in agriculture sector
- Smallholder Agribusiness Partnership Programme (SAPP), an initiative to enhance production levels, productivity, quality, and value-addition of agricultural products

### 4 Quality education



- 11 *Lakdaru* seminars for 4,445 Grade 5 scholarship students covering five provinces of the island
- Book donation to school in Kebithigollawa to improve knowledge and reading interest among rural communities
- Empowering Education programme in Mullaitivu
- Bronze sponsor and participant in Digital Experience Management Exchange organised by Sri Lanka Institute of Service Management
- Bronze sponsor of CIMA Business Leaders Summit 2019
- Bronze sponsor of the "40th National Conference of Chartered Accountants"
- Silver Sponsor of Junior National Law Conference 2019

## 5 Gender equality



- *Uththamavi* loan scheme for empowering women
- “*Uththamavi* Investment Account” designed especially for women to enjoy a higher interest rate and realise life’s objectives step by step. It paves the way for the account holder to realise the aspirations to own a house, and meet expenses. Conducted 42 *Uththamavi* workshops on financial literacy and entrepreneurship which were attended by 4,000 participants
- Sponsored ICSE 2019: International Conference on Women Entrepreneurship

## 7 Affordable and clean energy



- Green Leasing for electric and hybrid vehicles

## 8 Economic growth



- Introduced mobile banking to grassroots communities and created awareness
- Installed internet banking kiosks in over 100 co-operatives across Sri Lanka

## 10 Reduced inequalities



- In partnership with the State Ministry of Defence launched the “*Neelahiritha* Project” to support retired war veterans into becoming agro-veterans.
- Disbursed LKR 12 Bn. to senior citizens and war heroes and their families
- 30 financial literacy seminars for war veterans, disabled soldiers and their families
- Introduced mobile banking to grassroots communities and created awareness
- Installed internet banking kiosks in over 100 co-operatives across Sri Lanka

## 12 Responsible consumption and production



- Donated a bio-gas unit

## 15 Life on land



- *Surakimu Siripa* polythene clean up

Being a socially responsible bank bolsters our image and brand, creating ambassadors of our customers and fuelling our employees’ passion to make a difference in the world. As we create value for the society and the environment, so they too create value for the Bank. The networks that have sprung up between the Bank and each stakeholder group enhance the well-being of the individual, the community and the Bank itself.

In addition to the initiatives outlined above, we also undertook the following initiatives in our commitment to the community.

### Other community events

- SANASA *Nelum Mal Poojawa* was organised by the SANASA Federation and the SANASA Movement with the sponsorship of SDB bank for the 19th time. The main objective of this event is to bless Sri Lankan citizens, SANASA members and SDB bank customers with a healthy and prosperous new year.
- SDB bank’s annual blood donation programme 2019, held at the Head Office lobby drew a large number of donors.
- Women’s Day – held number of events under *Uththamavi* to support and celebrate women entrepreneurs
- Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrations that centre on cultivating thrifty habits
- SDB bank Quiz competition for employees
- Celebrating 22 years of the SDB journey
- Silver sponsor of Great Place to Work Conference 2019
- Sponsor for National Pensioner’s Day Celebration 2019
- Employee Christmas Carols