



## Global Studies

FAO: State of Food Insecurity

Name:

Section:

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Directions: Read through and text tag the sections of the Food and Agriculture Organization's "The State of Food Insecurity in the World" report from 2015 and be prepared to discuss the article.

### Undernourishment around the World 2015

- Based on the latest estimates, about 795 million people remain undernourished globally, down 167 million over the last decade, and 216 million lower than in 1990–92. This means that just over one in every nine people in the world are currently unable to consume enough food to conduct an active and healthy life.
- About 780 million people, or the vast majority of the hungry, live in the developing regions. In these regions, the prevalence of undernourishment has dropped by 44.4 percent since 1990–92, and the overall share now stands at 12.9 percent of the total population.
- The year 2015 marks the end of the monitoring period for the World Food Summit (WFS) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) hunger targets. The latest projections suggest that, as a whole, the developing regions have almost reached the MDG 1c hunger target. From a statistical perspective, the target was missed by a small margin, but from a development perspective, Key findings the essence of the MDG 1c commitment has been fulfilled, at least globally. The WFS target, by contrast, has been missed by a large margin. The estimated number of undernourished people is some 285 million above the envisaged target for 2015.
- Wide differences persist across regions. Some have made rapid progress in reducing hunger: Latin America as well as the Eastern and South-Eastern regions of Asia have all achieved both the MDG 1c hunger target and the more ambitious WFS goal. The MDG 1c target has been reached in the Caucasus and Central Asia and in the Northern and Western regions of Africa. Progress has also been recorded in the Caribbean, Oceania, Southern Asia, and Southern and Eastern Africa, but at too slow a pace to reach the MDG 1c target. Finally, Central Africa and Western Asia are moving away from the hunger targets, with a higher proportion of undernourished in the population now than in 1990–92.
- A total of 72 developing countries of the 129 monitored have reached the MDG 1c hunger target. Of these, 29 countries have also achieved the more ambitious WFS goal. Another 12 countries, among the 72 countries considered to have achieved the MDG 1c target, have maintained the prevalence of undernourishment below, or very close to, 5 percent since 1990–92.
- Most countries that have achieved the international hunger targets enjoyed stable political conditions and economic growth, accompanied by sound social protection policies targeted towards vulnerable population groups. In these countries, the commitment to fight food insecurity proved successful in spite of the difficulties posed by rapid population growth, volatile commodity prices, high food and energy prices, rising unemployment and the economic recessions that occurred in the late 1990s and again after 2008.
- In several countries that have failed to reach the international hunger targets, natural and human-induced disasters or political instability have generated a status of protracted crisis, which has prevented the protection of vulnerable population groups and the promotion of income opportunities for all. In other countries, the benefits of economic growth have failed to reach the poor population, due to lack of effective social protection and income redistribution policies. In the short run, the only means

to address food insecurity is humanitarian intervention. In the medium and the long term, hunger eradication can only be pursued if all stakeholders contribute to designing and enacting policies for improving economic opportunities, the protection of vulnerable groups and disaster preparedness. Action undertaken at the global and regional levels should take into account country specificities and exposure to natural and human-induced disasters, especially those of small island developing states.

### **Comparing trends in undernourishment and underweight in children**

- For the world as a whole, the MDG 1 indicators for prevalence of undernourishment and underweight children under 5 years of age have largely moved in parallel, providing a consistent message regarding achievement of the hunger target. At the regional level, however, noticeable divergences have emerged and often persisted. These differences can often be traced back to different rates of progress in improving the quality of diets and in improving hygiene conditions and access to clean water. These factors affect people's ability to derive sound nutrition from the food they consume.
- Underweight in children is expected to decline less rapidly than undernourishment, given that better hygiene conditions, access to clean water and more varied diets usually require more investment and more time to materialize than enhanced availability of calories. This has been the case in South-Eastern Asia, where undernourishment has declined at a faster rate than child underweight, especially throughout the 2000s, indicating that there is still room for improving dietary quality, particularly for poorer population groups. A similar situation is found in Northern Africa, where carbohydrate-rich diets keeps undernourishment under control, but a lack of dietary quality and diversity has pushed child malnutrition to relatively high levels.
- Despite showing rapid reduction, Southern Asia is the region with the highest historical prevalence of underweight children among the developing regions. Factors such as poor health and inadequate hygiene conditions have held back progress towards improving overall food security. These factors may deserve more attention in future efforts to improve food security at the country level.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, there has been limited progress in reducing both undernourishment and child underweight. This suggests that all aspects of food security need to be tackled – including ensuring the availability of, and access to, more and better quality food, enhanced hygiene conditions and access to clean water – before significant progress towards improved food security can be made.

### **The drivers of change**

- Economic growth is necessary for sustaining progress in efforts to reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition. But it is not sufficient.
- Inclusive growth – growth that provides opportunities for those with meagre assets, skills and opportunities – improves the incomes and livelihoods of the poor, and is effective in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. Rural people make up a high percentage of the hungry and malnourished in developing countries, and efforts to promote growth in agriculture and the rural sector can be an important component of a strategy for promoting inclusive growth and improving food security and nutrition.
- Improving the productivity of resources held by family farmers and smallholders is, in most cases, an essential element of inclusive growth and has broad implications for the livelihoods of the rural poor and for the rural economy in general. Wellfunctioning markets for food, inputs and labour can help to integrate family farmers and smallholders in the rural economy and enable the rural poor to diversify their livelihoods, which is critical for managing risk, and reducing hunger and malnutrition.

- In many situations, international trade openness has an important potential for improving food security and nutrition by increasing food availability and for promoting investment and growth. International trade agreements should provide for effective safeguards and greater policy space for developing countries to avoid detrimental effects on domestic food security and nutrition.
- Social protection directly contributes to the reduction of hunger and malnutrition by promoting income security and access to better nutrition, healthcare and education. By increasing human capacities and mitigating the impact of shocks, social protection fosters the ability of the very poor to participate in the growth process through better access to decent employment.
- Prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition is significantly higher in protracted crisis contexts resulting from conflict and natural disasters. Strong political commitment is necessary to address the root causes of protracted crises situations. Action should focus on addressing vulnerability, respecting basic human rights and integrating humanitarian and development assistance.