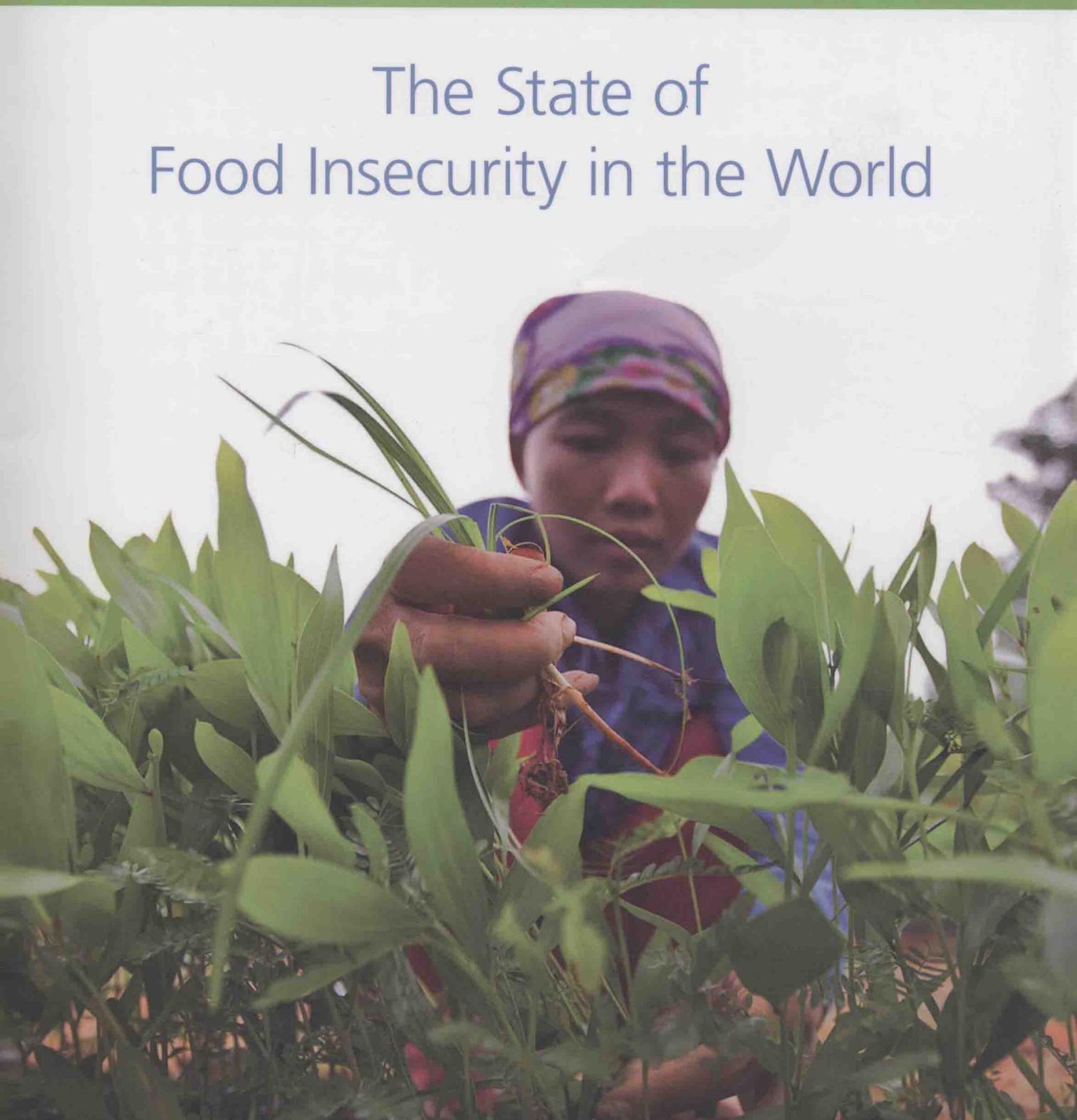


2014

The State of Food Insecurity in the World

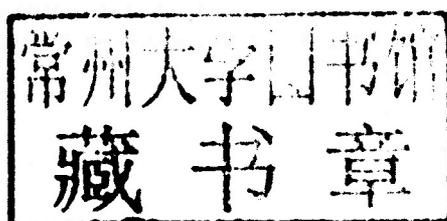


**Strengthening the enabling environment
for food security and nutrition**

2014

The State of Food Insecurity in the World

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for food security and nutrition**



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 2014

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Key messages



- The latest FAO estimates indicate that global hunger reduction continues: about 805 million people are estimated to be chronically undernourished in 2012–14, down more than 100 million over the last decade, and 209 million lower than in 1990–92. In the same period, the prevalence of undernourishment has fallen from 18.7 to 11.3 percent globally and from 23.4 to 13.5 percent for the developing countries.
- The hunger target of the Millennium Development Goal 1c (MDG 1c) – of halving the proportion of undernourished people in developing countries by 2015 – is within reach. However, the developing world is not on track to achieve the World Food Summit (WFS) target of halving the number of undernourished people by next year.
- Despite overall progress, marked differences across regions persist. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of undernourishment, with only modest progress in recent years. Around one in four people in the region remains undernourished. Asia, the most populous region in the world, still has the highest number of undernourished. Southern Asia has made slow progress in hunger reduction, while more rapid progress has been achieved in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia with the latter having already met the WFS hunger target. Latin America and the Caribbean, as a whole, met the MDG1 hunger target while Latin America has achieved the more stringent WFS target.
- Since 1990–92, 63 developing countries have reached the MDG hunger target and 25 countries have achieved the more stringent WFS target. Of the 63 developing countries that have achieved the MDG hunger target, 11 countries have maintained the prevalence of undernourishment below 5 percent since 1990–92.
- Sustained political commitment at the highest level is a prerequisite for hunger eradication. It entails placing food security and nutrition at the top of the political agenda and creating an enabling environment for improving food security and nutrition through adequate investments, better policies, legal frameworks, stakeholder participation and a strong evidence base. Institutional reforms are also needed to promote and sustain progress. Regions as well as countries have strengthened their political commitment to food security and nutrition.
- Hunger reduction requires an integrated approach, which would include: public and private investments to raise agricultural productivity; better access to inputs, land, services, technologies and markets; measures to promote rural development; social protection for the most vulnerable, including strengthening their resilience to conflicts and natural disasters; and specific nutrition programmes, especially to address micronutrient deficiencies in mothers and children under five.

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4 Foreword**6 Acknowledgements****8 Undernourishment around the world in 2014**

8 Progress in hunger reduction continues

9 The MDG hunger target is within reach...

9 ...but the World Food Summit target cannot be met

12 Key findings

13 Beyond undernourishment: insights from the suite of food security indicators

13 Analysing the dimensions of food security

14 Empirical findings from the suite of indicators

17 Key findings

18 Strengthening the enabling environment to improve food security and nutrition: lessons learned from the analysis of individual countries

20 Plurinational State of Bolivia

23 Brazil

26 Haiti

29 Indonesia

32 Madagascar

34 Malawi

36 Yemen

39 Key findings

40 Technical annex

40 Annex 1: Prevalence of undernourishment and progress towards the World Food Summit (WFS) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets in developing regions

44 Annex 2: The prevalence of undernourishment indicator

50 Annex 3: Glossary of selected terms used in the report

51 Notes

When the 69th United Nations General Assembly begins its General Debate on 23 September 2014, 464 days will remain to the end of 2015, the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

A stock-taking of where we stand on reducing hunger and malnutrition shows that progress in hunger reduction at the global level has continued but that food insecurity is still a challenge to be conquered.

The latest estimates show that, since 1990–92, the prevalence of undernourishment has fallen from 18.7 to 11.3 percent in 2012–14 for the world as a whole, and from 23.4 to 13.5 percent for the developing regions. The global MDG target 1c of reducing *by half* the *proportion* of undernourished people is within reach, if appropriate and immediate efforts are stepped up. Not only is MDG 1c within reach at the global level, but it has already been achieved by many countries. Sixty-three developing countries have already reached the target, 11 of which have maintained the prevalence of undernourishment below 5 percent since 1990–92, while another six are on track to do so by 2015. Twenty-five of the 63 countries have also accomplished the more ambitious 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) goal of halving the *number* of chronically underfed people.

Since 1990–92, the number of hungry people has fallen by over 200 million. This is proof that we can win the war against hunger and should inspire countries to move forward, with the assistance of the international community as needed, by finding individual sets of action that respond to their national needs and specificities. This is the first step to achieving the other MDGs.

Despite this progress, however, the number of hungry people in the world is still unacceptably high: at least 805 million people, or one in nine, worldwide do not have enough to eat. Global trends in hunger reduction mask disparities within and among regions.

While Northern Africa has had a consistently low prevalence of hunger at less than 5 percent, in sub-Saharan Africa, one in four people remain chronically hungry. Reversing this trend is our greatest challenge and requires transforming into concrete progress the growing political will in the region shown by the commitment made at the June 2014 African Union Summit to end hunger by 2025.

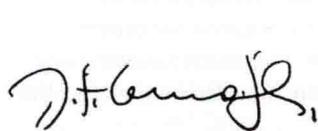
The sheer size of Asia makes it a region of extremes: 217 million Asians have overcome hunger since 1990–92; yet, it is still the region where two-thirds of the world's hungry live. Significant reductions in global hunger numbers require even greater progress in the region. While the MDG hunger target has already been achieved in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, hunger prevalence in Southern Asia has declined, but insufficiently, since 1990–92.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region that has shown the greatest progress in hunger reduction, with the prevalence of hunger reduced by almost two-thirds since the early 1990s. As a whole, it has already reached the MDG hunger target and is very close to meeting the WFS target. Government-led efforts combining support for production with social protection have been supported by much wider commitment: societies have decided to end hunger; parliaments are taking responsibility, and national efforts have been pushed forward by the strong commitment of the region as a whole that became the first region to commit to the goal of zero hunger by adopting the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative 2025 nearly ten years ago – a commitment reaffirmed by the region's leaders at recent Summits of the Community of Latin America and the Caribbean States (CELAC).

A most welcome message emerging from this year's report is that accelerated, substantial and sustainable hunger reduction is possible with the requisite political commitment. This has to be well informed by sound understanding of national challenges, relevant policy options, broad participation and lessons from other experiences. This year's report includes seven case studies that summarize how and to what extent some countries have sought to create an "enabling environment for food security and nutrition".

Food insecurity and malnutrition are complex problems that cannot be solved by one sector or stakeholder alone, but need to be tackled in a coordinated way, with the necessary political commitment and integrated leadership. A critical appreciation of lessons learned is essential for hunger reduction.

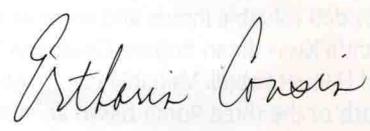
We, as heads of the Rome-based food and agriculture agencies, will continue working with our member countries to support their efforts to accelerate progress in improving food security and nutrition by strengthening their capacities and capabilities to realize their commitments to make hunger a part of history and not of our future.



José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General



Kanayo F. Nwanze
IFAD President



Ertharin Cousin
WFP Executive Director

This is the fourth edition of *The State of Food Insecurity in the World* that has been jointly prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Technical coordination of the publication was carried out by Pietro Gennari, with the support of Kostas Stamoulis and guidance of the management team of the FAO Economic and Social Development Department. Piero Conforti, George Rapsomanikis and Josef Schmidhuber, of FAO, served as technical editors. Constanza Di Nucci, of IFAD, and Astrid Mathiassen, of WFP, collaborated in preparing the country case studies and coordinated support from their respective institutions. Lisa Hjelm provided valuable inputs for WFP on the country case study for Yemen, as did Iain McDonald and Endalkachew Alamnew (WFP) and Claudia Martinez Mansell (FAO). Other WFP colleagues who provided valuable inputs and comments included Arif Husain, John McHarris, Susanna Sandstrom, Lynnda Kiess, Brian Bogart, Getachew Diriba, Sergio Torres, Rachael Wilson, Maherisoa Rakotonirainy and Naouar Labidi. Valuable comments and final approval of the report were provided by the executive heads of the three Rome-based agencies and their offices.

The section on *Undernourishment around the world in 2014* was prepared by Piero Conforti, Erdgin Mane, Adam Prakash and Josef Schmidhuber, with technical inputs from Filippo Gheri and Michele Rocca, all of the Statistics Division (ESS) of the FAO Economic and Social Development Department.

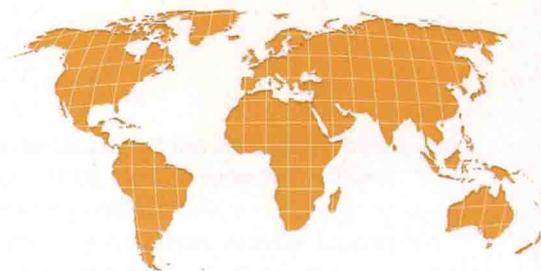
The section on *Beyond undernourishment: insights from the suite of food security indicators* was prepared by Piero Conforti and Josef Schmidhuber, with substantive inputs from Chiara Brunelli, Michael Kao, Adam Prakash and Nathalie Troubat. The box on “Measuring food insecurity” was prepared by Carlo Cafiero.

The section on *Strengthening the enabling environment to improve food security and nutrition* was prepared by George Rapsomanikis, Mariana Aguirre and Rodrigo Rivera, all of the FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA); Anne Kepple (ESS); Gordon Abekah-Nkrumah, Constanza Di Nucci, Raghav-Gaiha, Katsushi Imai and Purnima Purohit (IFAD); and Astrid Mathiassen and John McHarris (WFP).

Filippo Gheri was responsible for preparing Annex 1 and the related data processing, with key technical contributions from Chiara Brunelli, Michele Rocca, Nathalie Troubat, Nathan Wanner and Firas Yassin. Carlo Cafiero, Chiara Brunelli, Piero Conforti, Nathalie Troubat and Nathan Wanner prepared Annex 2.

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Undernourishment around the world in 2014

Progress in hunger reduction continues

The latest FAO estimates indicate that the trend in global hunger reduction continues. About 805 million people were estimated to be chronically undernourished in 2012–14, down by more than 100 million over the last decade and by 209 million since 1990–92. However, about one in every nine people in the world still has insufficient food for an active and healthy life. The vast majority of these undernourished people live in developing countries, where an estimated 791 million were chronically hungry in 2012–14. Although developing countries also

account for most of the improvements over the last two decades – with an overall reduction of 203 million undernourished people since 1990–92 – about one in eight people in these regions, or 13.5 percent of the overall population, remain chronically underfed (Table 1). Considerable efforts are therefore still needed to reach the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) hunger target by 2015, especially in countries that have registered inadequate progress.

TABLE 1

Undernourishment around the world, 1992–92 to 2012–14

	Number of undernourished (millions) and prevalence (%) of undernourishment									
	1990–92		2000–02		2005–07		2008–10		2012–14*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
WORLD	1 014.5	18.7	929.9	14.9	946.2	14.3	840.5	12.1	805.3	11.3
DEVELOPED REGIONS	20.4	<5	21.1	<5	15.4	<5	15.7	<5	14.6	<5
DEVELOPING REGIONS	994.1	23.4	908.7	18.2	930.8	17.3	824.9	14.5	790.7	13.5
Africa	182.1	27.7	209.0	25.2	211.8	22.6	216.8	20.9	226.7	20.5
Northern Africa	6.0	<5	6.5	<5	6.4	<5	5.6	<5	12.6	6.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	176.0	33.3	202.5	29.8	205.3	26.5	211.2	24.4	214.1	23.8
Asia	742.6	23.7	637.5	17.6	668.6	17.4	565.3	14.1	525.6	12.7
Caucasus and Central Asia	9.6	14.1	10.9	15.3	8.5	11.3	7.4	9.5	6.0	7.4
Eastern Asia	295.2	23.2	222.2	16.0	218.4	15.3	185.8	12.7	161.2	10.8
South-Eastern Asia	138.0	30.7	117.7	22.3	103.3	18.3	79.3	13.4	63.5	10.3
Southern Asia	291.7	24.0	272.9	18.5	321.4	20.2	274.5	16.3	276.4	15.8
Western Asia	8.0	6.3	13.8	8.6	17.0	9.3	18.3	9.1	18.5	8.7
Latin America and the Caribbean	68.5	15.3	61.0	11.5	49.2	8.7	41.5	7.0	37.0	6.1
Caribbean	8.1	27.0	8.2	24.4	8.4	23.7	7.6	20.7	7.5	20.1
Latin America	60.3	14.4	52.7	10.7	40.8	7.7	33.9	6.1	29.5	5.1
Oceania	1.0	15.7	1.3	16.5	1.3	15.4	1.3	13.5	1.4	14.0

Note: * Projections.
Source: FAO.



The MDG hunger target is within reach...

The decline in the share of hungry people has been more impressive than the reduction in absolute numbers. Between 1990–92 and 2012–14, the prevalence of undernourishment has fallen from 18.7 percent to 11.3 percent at the global level, and from 23.4 percent to 13.5 percent in developing countries. This means that the MDG 1c hunger target of *halving the proportion* of undernourished people by 2015 is within reach. If the current trend of a reduction of about

0.5 percent per year since 1990–92 continues, the prevalence of undernourishment in developing regions would reach 12.8 percent in 2015 – 1.1 percentage points above the MDG target of 11.7 percent (Figure 1). With greater efforts, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern and Western Asia, the trend in hunger reduction can be accelerated to meet the MDG hunger target.

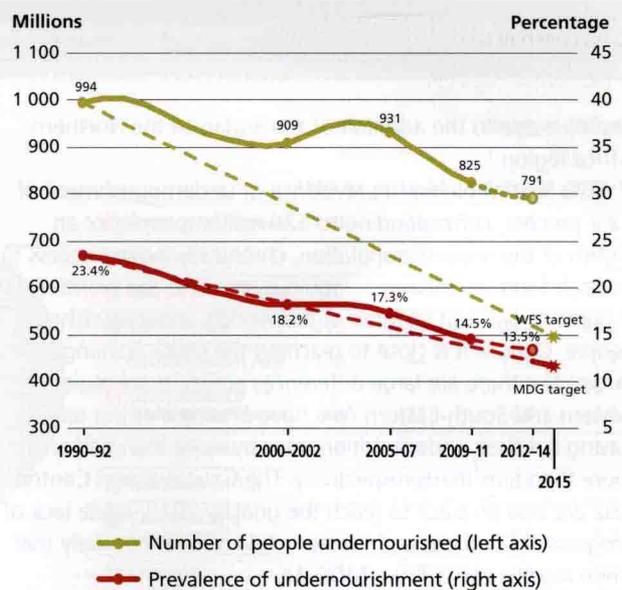
...but the World Food Summit target cannot be met

While the MDG hunger target seems to be within reach globally, there is not enough time to achieve the World Food Summit (WFS) target of *halving the number* of undernourished people by 2015.

Despite the progress in developing regions as a whole, large differences remain across regions (Figures 2 and 3). In general, in Africa, there has been insufficient progress towards international hunger targets, especially in the sub-Saharan region, where more than one in four people remain undernourished – the highest prevalence of any region in the world. Nevertheless, the prevalence of undernourishment in sub-Saharan Africa has declined from 33.3 percent in 1990–92 to 23.8 percent in 2012–14. Growing political commitment to promote food security in Africa is being transformed into concrete results. Strong economic growth (7 of the 10 fast-growing economies in the world are in Africa) is improving the living conditions of its growing population. There is greater recognition of the importance of ensuring peace and stability, the lack of which has been both cause and consequence of conflict that risks thwarting efforts to fight hunger in many countries in Africa. The situation is different in Northern Africa, which has a far lower hunger burden, with the prevalence of undernourishment consistently less than 5 percent since 1990. The apparent abrupt increase in 2012–14 (Figures 3

FIGURE 1

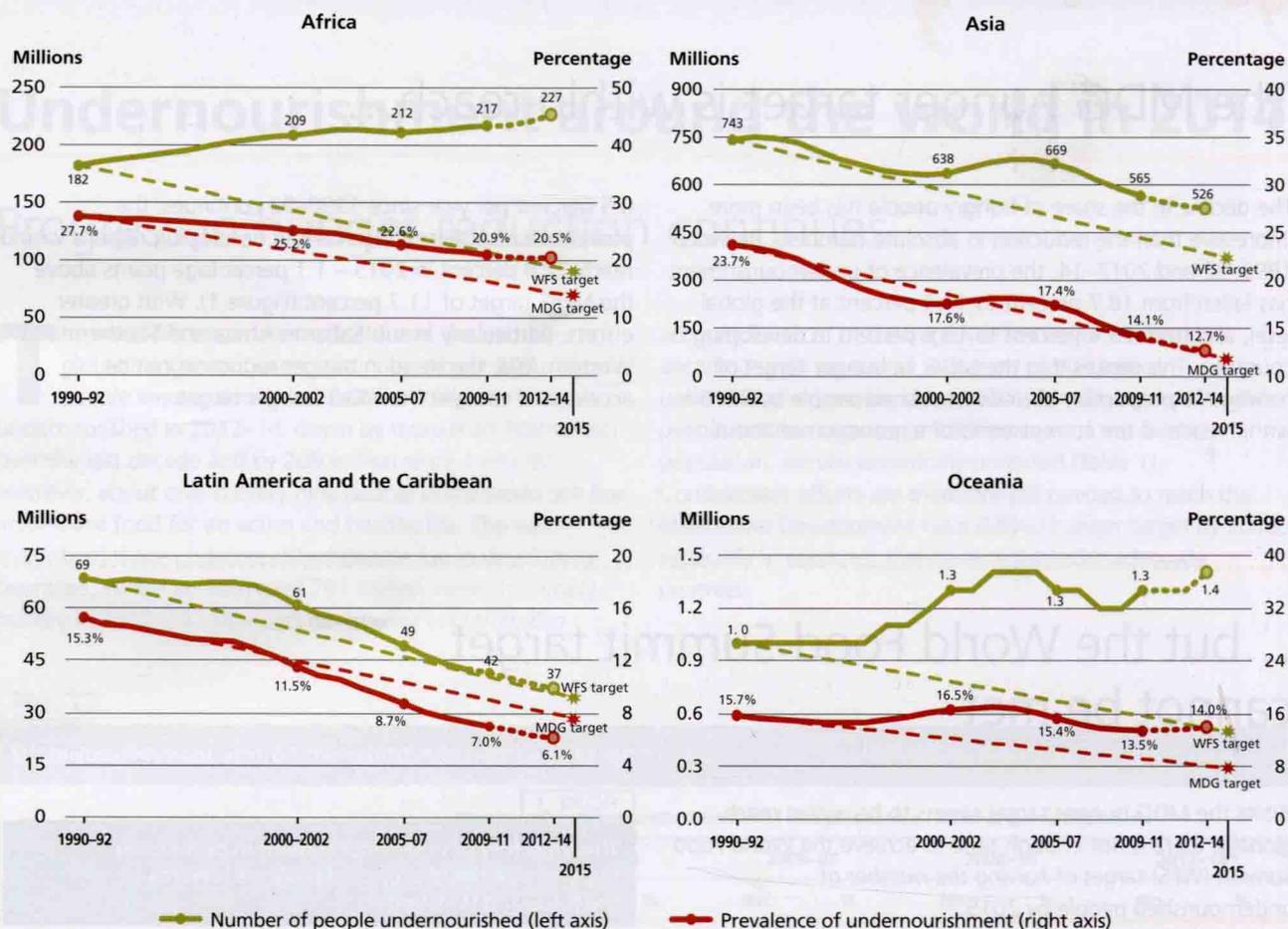
The trajectory of undernourishment in developing regions: actual and projected progress towards the MDG and WFS targets



Note: Data for 2012–14 refer to provisional estimates.
Source: FAO.

FIGURE 2

Regions differ markedly in progress towards achieving the MDG and WFS hunger targets



Note: Data for 2012–14 refer to provisional estimates. Source: FAO.

and 4) is due to the addition of the Sudan to the Northern Africa region.¹

Asia as a whole has a prevalence of undernourishment of 12.7 percent, corresponding to 526 million people, or an eighth of the region's population, chronically lacking access to enough food. As the most populous region in the world, Asia is home to two out of three of the world's undernourished people. Overall, it is close to reaching the MDG 1c hunger target, but there are large differences across its subregions. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia have already met the target, having cut their undernutrition rates by more than half and more than two-thirds respectively. The Caucasus and Central Asia are also on track to reach the goal by 2015, while lack of progress in Southern and Western Asia makes it unlikely that these regions can achieve MDG 1c.

Hunger continues to take its largest toll in Southern Asia, where population growth is high. The estimate of 276 million chronically undernourished people in 2012–14 is only marginally lower than the number at the beginning of

the MDG process. Although the prevalence of undernourishment has declined from 24.0 percent in 1990–92 to 15.8 percent in 2012–14, progress is still too slow to allow Southern Asia to reach the MDG target by 2015. The situation is worse in Western Asia, where the prevalence of undernourishment actually increased from 6.3 percent in 1990–92 to 8.7 percent in 2012–14, largely owing to political instability and the deterioration in overall economic conditions during recent years.

To date, Latin America and the Caribbean – the first region to publicly commit to eradicate hunger by 2025 – has the most successful developing region record in increasing food security. It has already met the MDG target by a comfortable margin and is close to the WFS summit target. Much of the success results from rapid hunger reduction in Latin America, which has reached the WFS target, while the Caribbean has seen slower progress in fighting undernourishment so far. For the region as a whole, the prevalence of undernourishment has declined to

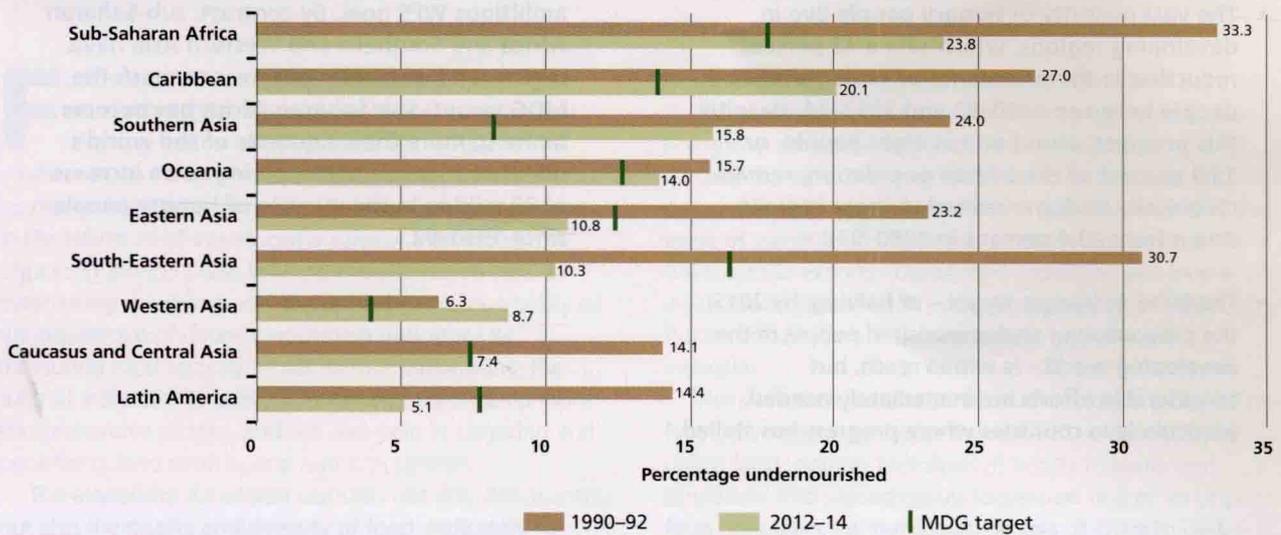
6.1 percent – representing little more than one-third of its hunger burden in the early 1990s.

Of all the developing regions, Oceania currently has the lowest number of undernourished people. However, despite the low overall burden of hunger in the region, this number has increased over the last two decades, while the prevalence of undernourishment has only registered a very

modest reduction: estimates place undernourishment at 14.0 percent in 2012–14, only 1.7 percentage points below the level for 1990–92. An additional cause for concern is that rising undernourishment in Oceania has been accompanied by a growing burden of overweight and obesity, exposing the region to a significant double burden of malnutrition.

FIGURE 3

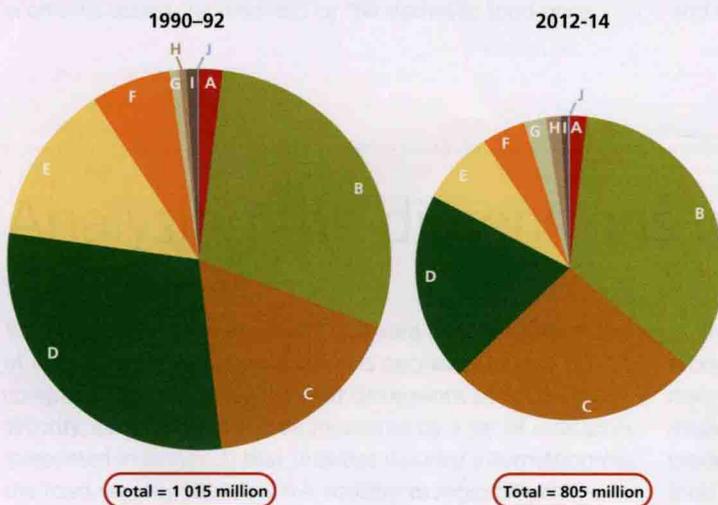
Undernourishment trends: progress made in almost all regions, but at very different rates



Note: Data for 2012–14 refer to provisional estimates. Source: FAO.

FIGURE 4

The changing distribution of hunger in the world: numbers and shares of undernourished people by region, 1990–92 and 2012–14

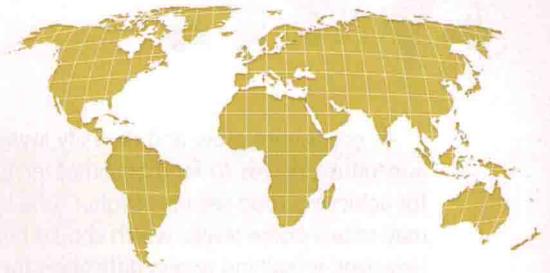


Region	Number (millions)		Regional share (%)	
	1990-92	2012-14	1990-92	2012-14
A Developed regions	20	15	2.0	1.8
B Southern Asia	292	276	28.8	34.3
C Sub-Saharan Africa	176	214	17.3	26.6
D Eastern Asia	295	161	29.1	20.0
E South-Eastern Asia	138	64	13.6	7.9
F Latin America and the Caribbean	69	37	6.8	4.6
G Western Asia	8	19	0.8	2.3
H Northern Africa	6	13	0.6	1.6
I Caucasus and Central Asia	10	6	0.9	0.7
J Oceania	1	1	0.1	0.2
Total	1015	805	100	100

Note: The areas of the pie charts are proportional to the total number of undernourished in each period. Data for 2012–14 refer to provisional estimates. All figures are rounded. Source: FAO.

Key findings

- The latest estimates indicate that 805 million people – about one in nine of the world's population – were chronically undernourished in 2012–14, with insufficient food for an active and healthy life. This number represents a decline of more than 100 million people over the last decade and of 209 million since 1990–92.
- The vast majority of hungry people live in developing regions, which saw a 42 percent reduction in the prevalence of undernourished people between 1990–92 and 2012–14. Despite this progress, about one in eight people, or 13.5 percent of the overall population, remain chronically undernourished in these regions, down from 23.4 percent in 1990–92.
- The MDG 1c hunger target – of halving, by 2015, the proportion of undernourished people in the developing world – is within reach, but considerable efforts are immediately needed, particularly in countries where progress has stalled.
- Despite overall progress, large differences remain across developing regions. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia have already achieved the MDG hunger target. The same is true of Latin America and the Caribbean, while the Caucasus and Central Asia are on track to reach MDG 1c by 2015. Latin America and the Caribbean is also on track to reach the more ambitious WFS goal. By contrast, sub-Saharan Africa and Southern and Western Asia have registered insufficient progress to reach the MDG target. Sub-Saharan Africa has become home to more than a quarter of the world's undernourished people, owing to an increase of 38 million in the number of hungry people since 1990–92.



Beyond undernourishment: insights from the suite of food security indicators

Food security is a complex phenomenon that manifests itself in numerous physical conditions resulting from multiple causes. The WFS of 1996 established four dimensions of food security: availability, access, stability and utilization. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013* introduced a suite of indicators organized around these four dimensions with a view to overcoming the drawbacks that arise from relying solely on the prevalence of undernourishment indicator.² By measuring food security across its four dimensions, the suite of indicators (presented in Annex 2) provides a more comprehensive picture, and can also help in targeting and prioritizing food security and nutrition policies.

The *availability* dimension captures not only the quantity, but also the quality and diversity of food. Indicators for assessing availability include the adequacy of dietary energy supply; the share of calories derived from cereals, roots and tubers; the average protein supply; the average supply of animal-source proteins; and the average value of food production.

The *access* dimension comprises indicators of physical access and infrastructure such as railway and road density; economic access, represented by the domestic food price

index; and the prevalence of undernourishment.

The *stability* dimension is divided into two groups. The first group covers factors that measure exposure to food security risk with a diverse set of indicators such as the cereal dependency ratio, the area under irrigation, and the value of staple food imports as a percentage of total merchandise exports. The second group focuses on the incidence of shocks such as domestic food price volatility, fluctuations in domestic food supply, and political instability.

The *utilization* dimension also falls into two groups. The first encompasses variables that determine the ability to utilize food, notably indicators of access to water and sanitation. The second group focuses on outcomes of poor food utilization, i.e. nutritional failures of children under five years of age, such as wasting, stunting and underweight. Since the 2013 edition of this report, four more utilization indicators of micronutrient deficiency have been added: the prevalence of anaemia and of vitamin A deficiency among children under five; and the prevalence of iodine deficiency and of anaemia in pregnant women.³ Data for the suite of indicators are published in FAOSTAT and on the FAO Food Security Indicators website.⁴

Analysing the dimensions of food security

To obtain a complete and more nuanced picture of the state of food security in a population, it is necessary to comprehensively analyse the four dimensions of food security. Each of them can be measured by a set of indicators (presented in Annex 2) that provides detailed information on the food security situation in a country or region. Such measurement and analysis inform the design of targeted strategies and policies to tackle food insecurity and to pave the way to its sustainable reduction.

Availability of food from domestic production is key as economies begin to develop and domestic agriculture is still the main provider of food and the principal source of income and employment in rural areas. At this stage, increasing agricultural productivity improves access of subsistence food producers to food. However, increasing productivity may not sufficiently address problems of access for net food buyers and for other vulnerable groups who may require targeted policy interventions such as strengthening safety nets and other social protection.