The State of

Food Insecurity in the World

Economic growth necessary, but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition

Economic and Social Development Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, 9 October 2012

http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi
Undernourishment in the world

- With almost **870 million** people chronically undernourished in 2010–12, the number of hungry people in the world is unacceptably high.
- The vast majority, more than **850 million**, live in developing countries.
MDG 1 hunger target achievable

- More progress in reducing hunger in developing world than previously thought.
- MDG target within reach, only if adequate and appropriate actions to reverse slowdown after 2006.
Uneven progress across regions

- **Sub Saharan Africa**: 32.8% (1990-92), 26.8% (2010-2012)
- **Caribbean**: 28.5% (1990-92), 17.8% (2010-2012)
- **South Asia**: 26.8% (1990-92), 17.6% (2010-2012)
- **Oceania**: 13.6% (1990-92), 12.1% (2010-2012)
- **East Asia**: 20.8% (1990-92), 11.5% (2010-2012)
- **South East Asia**: 29.6% (1990-92), 10.9% (2010-2012)
- **West Asia**: 6.6% (1990-92), 10.1% (2010-2012)
- **Latin America**: 13.6% (1990-92), 7.7% (2010-2012)
- **Caucasus and Central Asia**: 12.8% (1990-92), 7.4% (2010-2012)
- **North Africa**: 2.7% (1990-92), 3.8% (2010-2012)
Diets change as incomes rise

Note: Data refer to households of lowest and highest income quintiles in 47 developing countries.
Source: FAO, analysis of household surveys.
Food and nutrition: challenges remain

- Progress remains uneven – both geographically and in terms of different nutrients
- Underweight remains the single largest risk factor contributing to the burden of disease in the developing world
- Micronutrient deficiencies still affect over 30% of the world’s people
- More than 1.4 billion people worldwide are overweight
- “Double burden”: Hunger coexists with overweight and other forms of malnutrition – even in the same countries, communities and even households
Agricultural growth is particularly effective in reaching the poor.

Social protection is crucial for accelerating hunger reduction

- Social protection comes in a variety of forms with different impacts
  - cash transfers, subsidies for education and health services, etc.
- First, it can protect the most vulnerable who have not benefited from economic growth
- Second, social protection, properly structured, can contribute directly to more rapid economic growth
Key points for the way forward

- Economic growth must involve and reach the poor
- Public action should create a conducive environment for pro-poor long-term economic growth:
  - Attention to agriculture especially smallholder farming
  - Provision of key public goods and services
  - Equitable access to resources by the poor
  - Empowerment of the poor, especially women, to participate in the decisions that affect them
  - Improved social protection systems
- Improved governance is also essential
  - Transparency, accountability, rule of law and human rights
Improvements in data and methodology

- The new estimates reflect several key improvements in data and methodology
  - the latest (2010) revision of world population data
  - new anthropometric data from surveys, informing revision of minimum dietary energy requirements
  - country-specific estimates of calorie supply losses at the retail distribution level
  - most recent available data on food access from household surveys (57 surveys for 44 countries)
  - revised estimates of dietary energy supply up to 2009
  - food supply projected up to 2012 based on current data on food commodity balances
  - technical improvements to the methodology
Overall impact: old vs new assessment

- **Millions**
  - Old assessment
  - New Assessment

- **Data Points**
  - 1990-92: 980, Old assessment, 950, New Assessment
  - 1995-97: 909, Old assessment, 866, New Assessment
  - 2000-02: 905, Old assessment, 833, New Assessment
  - 2005-07: 870, Old assessment, 853, New Assessment
  - 2009: 866, Old assessment, 851, New Assessment
  - 2010: 850, Old assessment, 850, New Assessment
  - 2011: 774, Old assessment, 800, New Assessment
  - 2012: 744, Old assessment, 800, New Assessment

- **Legend**
  - Blue: Old assessment
  - Orange: New Assessment
Further improvements are needed

- More and better data on food losses and household food consumption (statistical capacity development)
- The PoU indicator is based on assessment of chronic (3 year average) caloric deprivation. Limitations:
  - Not meant to capture the impact of temporary crisis
  - It does not reflect welfare cost of high food prices
  - Does not capture aspect related to the quality of diets
- A suite of existing indicators is needed to capture various manifestations of food insecurity
- A new global indicator of people’s experience of food insecurity to complement existing measures
Thank you
For more information ...

The State of
Food Insecurity in the World

The international reference on global hunger issues

www.fao.org/publications/sofi