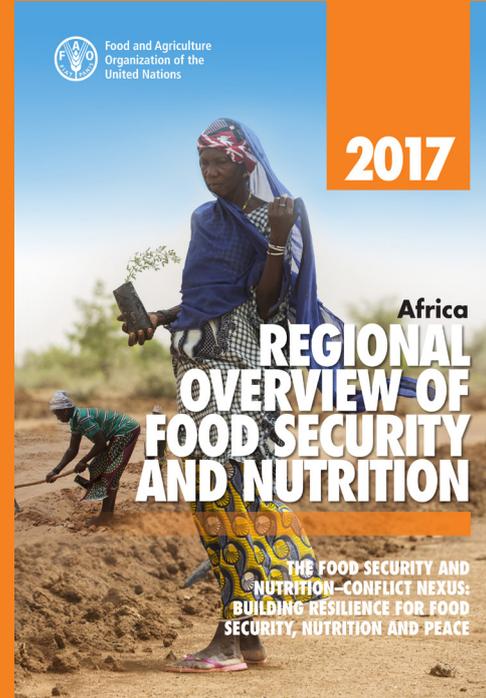




2017 Africa REGIONAL OVERVIEW FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION REPORT



The food security and nutrition–conflict nexus: building resilience for food security, nutrition and peace

This year's edition of the Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition reports on progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goal 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture."

Two measures of food security are reported. FAO's traditional indicator of the extent of hunger, the prevalence of undernourishment, is complemented by the prevalence of severe food insecurity, which measure people's ability to access food, based on direct interviews. In addition, the report assesses the trends for six nutrition indicators: anaemia in women of reproductive age, stunting, wasting, overweight, obesity and levels of exclusive breastfeeding.

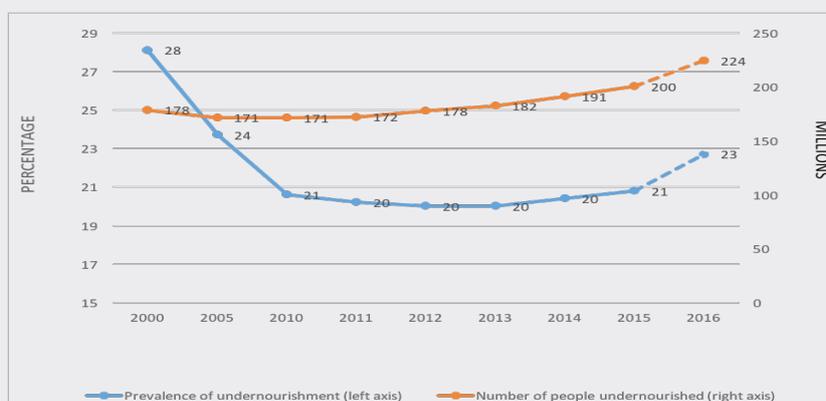
After a prolonged decline, hunger appears to be on the rise globally. In 2016 the number of undernourished people in the world increased to an estimated 815 million, up from 777 million in 2015. In sub-Saharan Africa the prevalence of undernourishment in all regions of the continent has remained flat since 2010 and then, from 2015 to 2016, rose from 20.8 to 22.7 percent. In 2016, there were about 224 million undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa, up from 200 million in 2015.

In many countries, the worsening situation in 2015 and 2016 can be attributed to adverse climatic conditions, often linked to the El Niño phenomenon, resulting in poor harvests and the loss of livestock. Conflict, sometimes in combination with drought or floods, also contributed to severe food insecurity in several countries. Lower commodity prices and a difficult global economic environment have furthermore contributed to the worsening food security situation.

The worrying trend in undernourishment is not yet reflected in the series of indicators referring to

nutritional outcomes in the region, with the prevalence of stunting and wasting for children under the age of five continuing to decline gradually. However, progress in reducing multiple forms of malnutrition, as monitored through six, interlinked, World Health Assembly global nutrition targets for 2025 has been generally poor. A relatively large proportion of countries are on track to meeting the WHA target for overweight in children, but the rates for adult obesity are soaring in all regions and are especially high in Southern Africa.

BETWEEN 2015 AND 2016 THE PREVALENCE OF UNDERNOURISHMENT APPEARS TO HAVE RISEN FROM 20.8 TO 22.7 PERCENT AND THE NUMBER OF UNDERNOURISHED FROM 200 TO 224 MILLION



Note: Prevalence and number of undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa, 2000-2016. Figures for 2016 are projected estimates. Source: FAO.

KEY MESSAGES

→ In sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of undernourishment appears to have risen from 20.8 to 22.7 percent between 2015 and 2016, and the number of people undernourished rose from 200 to 224 million, accounting for 25 percent of the 815 million people undernourished in the world in 2016. At the same time, the proportion of the population that has experienced severe food insecurity because of their inability to access food has risen in the region.

→ Adverse climatic conditions and conflict, often occurring concurrently, are key factors driving the recent increase in food insecurity in the region. A difficult global economic environment, reflected in falling prices of extractive and non-extractive commodities and weak growth, also contributed to increased food insecurity in many countries.

→ Despite a rising prevalence of undernourishment, rates of stunting continue to decline while levels of overweight and obesity continue to grow, notably in Southern Africa in terms of the latter. Progress towards the World Health Assembly global nutrition targets has been poor and a majority of countries need to step up their efforts, especially with regard to reducing anaemia in women of reproductive age as well as stunting and wasting in children.

→ The improvements achieved by many countries manifests that cumulatively, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme has contributed significantly to raising agricultural public investment and growth, reducing poverty and advancing mutual accountability in sub-Saharan Africa. This momentum needs to be

sustained through effective implementation and delivery on the goals of the Malabo Declaration on agriculture, integrating it with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Decade of Action on Nutrition.

→ Effective implementation and delivery of policies and investment plans aligned with the Malabo Declaration requires adequate funding, setting the right priorities and strengthening institutional capacities.

→ In sub-Saharan Africa, a majority of the population undernourished in 2016 live in countries affected by conflict. The prevalence of undernourishment is about twice as high in conflict-affected countries with a protracted crisis than in countries not affected by conflict, and nutrition outcomes are also generally worse in these countries.

→ For all countries in sub-Saharan Africa attaining food and nutrition security while addressing climate change and the degradation of the environment is a primary challenge. A further dimension is added to this challenge in countries that are in fragile situations and have weak institutions. In these countries food insecurity may itself be a trigger for conflict, and or prolong conflicts.

→ Conflict-sensitive and timely interventions aimed at improving food security and nutrition can contribute to building resilience and sustaining peace. A sustainable impact on peace is more likely when implemented as part of a broader set of multisectoral humanitarian, developmental and peace related interventions at country, subregional and regional level.

Across the board, countries have developed and are developing policy frameworks and investment plans that are aligned, or efforts are being made to align them, with the goals of the Malabo Declaration and SDG 2. Through CAADP, policy processes are coherent, and this initiative has raised the profile of agriculture and heavily influenced agricultural policy at regional and national levels. However, the worrying trends in undernourishment underline the need for even greater efforts to achieve the SDG 2 by 2030.

Conflict is an increasingly important cause of food insecurity and malnutrition. A majority, or 489 million, of the 815 million people in the world

that were undernourished in 2016 live in countries struggling with conflict, violence and fragility, many of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.

The impact of conflict on rural livelihoods is particularly severe in countries with large rural and agricultural sectors, many of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. This economic upheaval translates into reduction in availability, access, stability and utilization of food, that is to say it causes food insecurity and hunger.

Conflict not only leads to food insecurity but food insecurity and malnutrition can also become conflict multipliers and vectors for other grievances, especially in

fragile post-conflict situations, and often contributing to fragility by weakening institutions, one of the main driver of fragility.

Conflicts are usually complex and multifaceted and addressing these complexities, and not only post-conflict, is essential to sustain peace. Often, other shocks occur with conflict, and building household resilience is necessary for lasting peace. Once these complexities are acknowledged, a range of pathways can be identified through which support to food security and livelihoods can also help build resilience against conflict and contribute to sustaining peace.

