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Actions Aimed at Eradicating Hunger

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Abstract: Paradoxically, on our planet where there are resources and therefore food can be produced to feed all people, hunger exists. It is imperative to draw a distinction between hunger and food insecurity. Hunger can be defined as the discomfort or pain caused by the lack of food. Food insecurity, on the other hand, is defined as the lack of regular access to safe and nutritious food, which is necessary for adequate development and an active and healthy life. Hunger represents the most severe form of food insecurity. The causes of hunger are diverse – economic inequalities, climate emergencies, armed violence. The effects of hunger are multiple, affecting health and life prospects. Based on these considerations, the article aims to highlight some statistics on hunger and some of the actions of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program to eradicate this serious form of food insecurity.

Keywords: hunger; food insecurity; statistics; Food and Agriculture Organization; World Food Program

1. Introduction

Hunger and food insecurity are among the concerns of many experts from different fields; for example, in the academic environment, Virgínia Henriques Calado (2018),

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Maria Sassi (2018) or Christophe Béné and Stephen Devereux (2023) presents interesting aspects related to hunger and food insecurity.

Internationally, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 - Zero Hunger, i.e. “*eradicating hunger, ensuring food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture*” (1, p. 2), depends to a large extent on the promotion of sustainable production systems, on increased investments in rural infrastructure and in agricultural research and development, on the joint effort to reduce the causes of hunger, and on academic studies.

2. A Few Statistics Regarding Hunger

The Global Hunger Index is used to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional and national levels, and scores are based on four indicators: undernourishment (the proportion of the population with insufficient caloric intake); child stunting (the proportion of children under five who are short for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition); child wasting (the proportion of children under five who are short for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition); and child mortality (the proportion of children who die before the age of five, partly reflecting the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments) (2, p. 39).

The overall scores for this index are as follows: low (≤ 9.9), moderate (10.0-19.9), serious (20.0-34.9), alarming (35.0-49.9) and extremely alarming (≥ 50.0).

According to “*Global Hunger Index 20 years of tracking progress: time to recommit to zero hunger 2025*”, progress against hunger is insufficient, the situation of regional scores of this index for the years 2000, 2008, 2016 and 2025 is presented in figure 1 (2, p. 11):

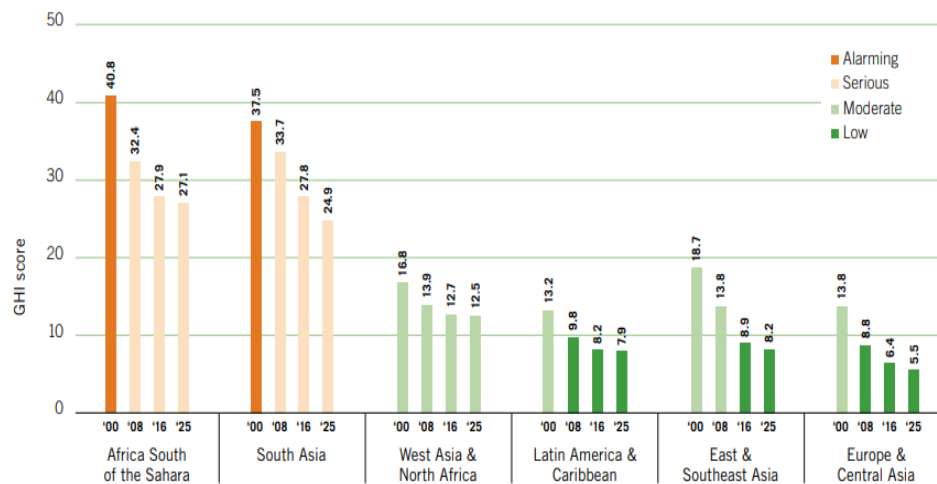


Figure 1. A comparison of regional Global Hunger Index scores for the years 2000, 2008, 2016 and 2025

Hunger persists in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, but the slight improvement in undernourishment is largely due to progress in areas of South and South-East Asia and Latin America (2, p. 3).

Targeted policies and sustained investments are generating significant progress in reducing hunger, with examples in Angola, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Nepal and Sierra Leone (2, p. 5).

As of 2025, insufficient progress in reducing hunger highlights the great challenges of crises and conflicts (2, p. 5).

The most destructive force fueling hunger is military conflict. Armed violence fueled 20 food crises affecting nearly 140 million people in 2024. The wars in Gaza and Sudan illustrate how armed violence devastates livelihoods and vital resources: global food insecurity, largely concentrated in these two contexts, doubled between 2023 and 2024 (2, p. 5). Another finding of this paper is that humanitarian aid budgets have fallen sharply while military spending has soared – a reversal of priorities that is undermining the global response to hunger.

Economic inequalities, climate emergencies (such as floods, droughts, heat waves, earthquakes, etc.) etc. are among the causes of famine, which significantly destroy

lives, livelihoods and cultures, while degrading soils and affecting infrastructure and agricultural assets (3).

The effects of famine are multiple, affecting health and life prospects and, in a vicious circle, can fuel conflicts.

3. Activities Aimed at Reducing and Eradicating Hunger

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that leads global efforts to address challenges related to food and agriculture. With 194 members, this organization operates in over 130 countries around the world.

To fulfill its mandate to eradicate hunger (and thus realize Sustainable Development Goal 2 – zero hunger, established at the UN Development Summit in September 2015 through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), this organization collaborates with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, building on their strengths and advantages.

The work of the Food and Agriculture Organization is directed by a Strategic Framework established for a period of ten to fifteen years, reviewed every four years. The current Strategic Framework for the period 2022-2031 aims to accelerate strategic thinking on global challenges and opportunities. Based on this document, the Food and Agriculture Organization is implementing a Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise (CSFE) to enhance preparedness and effectiveness in providing support for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda and to inform on the challenges and opportunities related to transforming agri-food systems to become efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable for good production, nutrition, lives and a good environment.

The actions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to achieve the established goals are numerous. We will highlight a few.

In December 2025, it launched the first Global Appeal for Emergencies and Resilience, through which emergency agricultural assistance is placed at the center of efforts to protect food production and strengthen resilience in crisis contexts. In this regard, the allocation of “*\$2.5 billion will support more than 100 million people in 54 countries and territories in 2026*” (4).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Asian Development Bank are deepening their collaboration to create a framework for both expanding private sector investment in agri-food value chains and promoting digital solutions based on artificial intelligence and resilient to climate change. To this end, the FAO Risk Monitor Platform has been launched¹, which allows the management of agri-food crises through the use of geospatial data and automatic alerts and timely decision-making to mitigate risks to food security.

Another sustainable initiative led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations with technical input from the World Food Programme and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is the Financing for Shock-Driven Food Crisis Facility², with a commercial orientation, designed to protect vulnerable populations and strengthen international efforts on food security and nutrition.

The conflict in Ukraine has resulted in the destruction or damage of agricultural infrastructure and markets, disruption of food supply chains, and food insecurity for vulnerable populations. Among the actions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, we mention the support provided to over 250,000 families in rural areas with vegetable seeds, animal feed, day-old chicks, cash and vouchers. This organization's initiative is also being added, calling on donors and partners to step up support for farming families in this country, as well as advocacy work *"to ensure that the needs of rural communities remain visible and prioritized on the international agenda"* (5).

Using satellite imagery from multiple sources and agricultural reference data, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in collaboration with the United Nations Satellite Centre, has conducted *"an assessment of the availability of agricultural land and related facilities in the Gaza Strip following the escalation of the conflict"* (6).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' assistance package to support those affected by the conflict in Gaza includes emergency feed distributions, veterinary kits and financial assistance for the purchase of basic items (6).

¹ <https://riskmonitor.fao.org/>.

² <https://www.fao.org/new-york/events/detail/the-financing-for-shock-driven-food-crisis-facility/en>.

The 2025 edition of the “*State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025 Report*” illustrates not only the state of the main indicators of food security and nutrition based on recent information but also the need for global coordination and specific actions at the national level (7).

Other actions undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization are those held at its headquarters; for example, the panel on the theme “*The role of religious organizations in realizing the right to food for all*”¹, which for the first time in the history of this organization, faith-based organizations participated to strengthen partnerships and amplify diverse voices to promote food security for all. We also add the various methodologies (such as the Food Insecurity Experience Scale and the Prevalence of Undernourishment), designed to highlight statistics on food security and consumption, ultimately with the aim of reducing food insecurity and eradicating hunger.

The World Food Programme (WFP) was established in 1961 as an initiative of the United Nations (UN) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Since then, it has functioned as the world’s foremost humanitarian agency, with a core objective of saving lives in times of emergency and utilizing food assistance to foster peace, stability, and prosperity for individuals and communities recovering from conflict and disaster, as well as the adverse effects of climate change.

The World Food Programme operates in over 120 countries and territories, offering both emergency assistance and long-term development, and adjusting its activities to the context and challenges of each location and its people.

The agency’s work is multifaceted. Feeding millions of hungry people and helping others cope with the effects of conflict, climate change and extreme poverty requires billions of dollars each year. For 2026, for example, the funding requirement is “*13 billion US dollars to reach 110 million people*” (8).

To organize resources, identify innovative solutions, and deliver food assistance to vulnerable communities, the World Food Programme collaborates with a range of entities, including governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, private companies, and academic institutions. Partnerships reinforce the agency’s commitment to remain at the forefront of solutions to fight hunger,

¹ <https://iofs.org/news/iofs-calls-for-ethical-action-to-end-hunger-at-fao-panel-on-the-right-to-food>.

promoting local solutions and supporting generations of leaders in food security and humanitarian action.

The actions carried out are highlighted through various publications (such as “*A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point - Global brief*”, September 2025; “*Social Protection Pathways to Nutrition and WFP 2026 Global Outlook: Hunger and hope: Innovative solutions to address food insecurity*”, November 2026).

Hunger is an international insecurity problem that has increased alarmingly since 2015, due to a combination of factors (armed conflicts, deepening inequalities, COVID-19 pandemic, climate change).

In order to achieve Sustainable Development, Goal 2 requires continuous efforts.

The work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, or the World Food Program, is a prime example.

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