

HUNGER

DECEMBER 08

Millennium Development Goal 1: To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 2: To halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015

Progress: Higher food prices have triggered an increase in hunger worldwide making the task of reaching the target more difficult.

Are we on track to meet the target?

		Africa		Asia					Latin America & Caribbean
		Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Central	
Progress toward reducing hunger by half		low hunger	very high hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger	high hunger	high hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger
Proportion of people living with insufficient food	1990-2	6	34	15	24	25	36	8	13
	2003-05	8	30	10	16	21	14	11	10

Line 1 (progress) - The words describe current levels. The colours show the trend towards meeting the 2015 target.

Key: **Dark Green** = target met. **Light Green** = almost met, or on target. **Orange** = some/negligible progress, but insufficient to meet target. **Red** = no change or negative progress.

Line 2 (level) - Proportion of people living with insufficient food (percentage) - **Key:** Please refer to map key below.

Source: [FAO - State of Food Insecurity in the World 2008](#)

Progress

- In September 2008 the United Nations [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#) (FAO) announced that high global food prices have pushed 75 million more people into hunger. The number of people suffering from hunger is now 923 million.
- However, there has been a reduction in hunger due to a decrease in countries in Eastern and South East Asia. These regions, along with Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to meet the target.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and Western Asia, the absolute number of under nourished has increased, but the percentage of under nourished has decreased.

Key messages

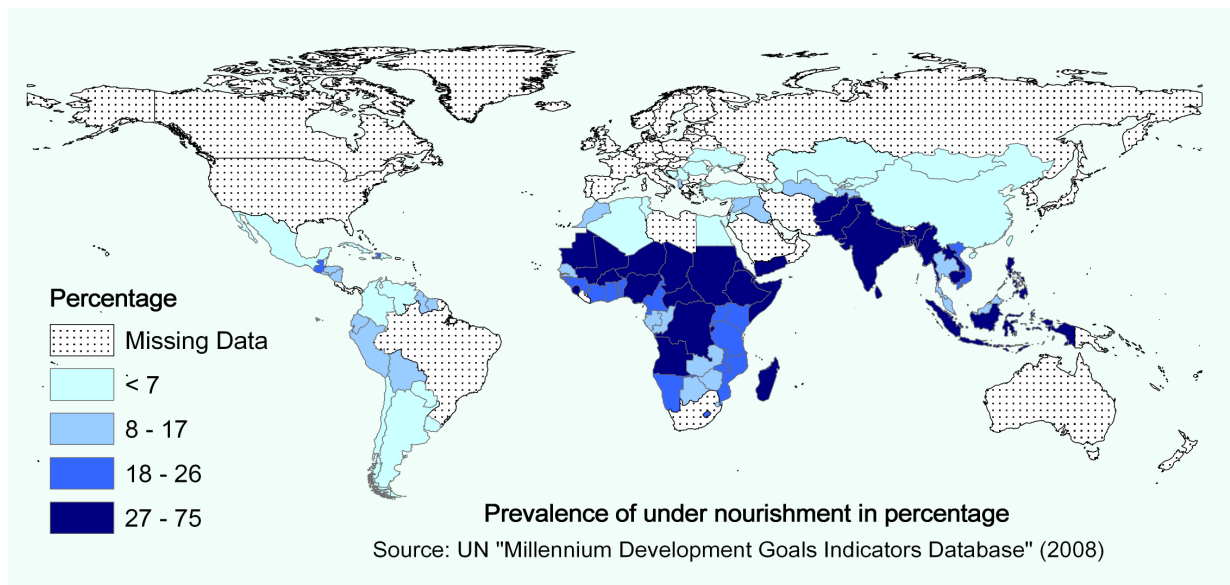
The number of people suffering from hunger is now 923 million, an increase of 75 million from one year ago (FAO [The State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2008](#)). Contributing to this increase is high food, fuel and fertilizer prices. Food prices rose 52 per cent between 2007 and 2008, and fertilizer prices nearly doubled. The hardest hit have been the poorest, landless and female-headed households.

Food price rises were being driven partly by supply disruptions and a cyclone in Bangladesh, but mostly by rising demand due to changing diets, economic growth, an expanding world population, urbanization, use of fuel crops for biofuel, export bans by some countries to protect local markets, panic buying by governments to build strategic grain reserves and inappropriate agricultural policies, including subsidies in developed countries.

The world grows enough food to feed its population. To eradicate hunger, ordinary people in the developing world need to be able to access food either by growing it or through purchase.

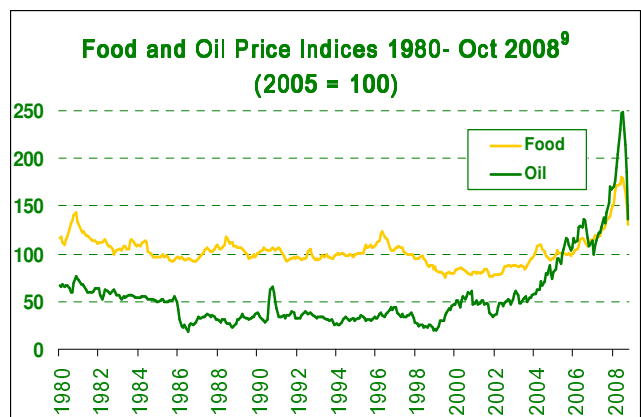
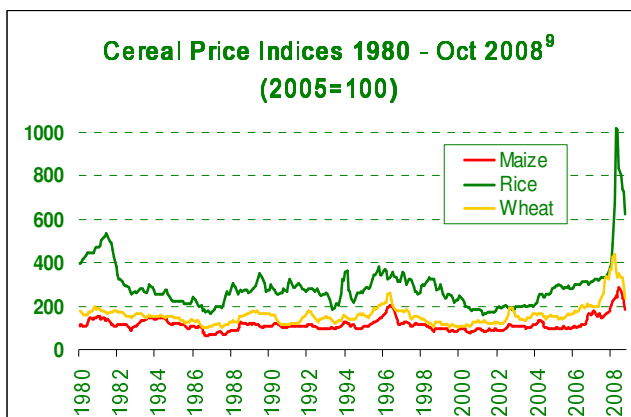
Poverty is the primary cause of hunger and poverty reduction is the principle means of tackling it. But climate, poor farm productivity, weak governance and armed conflict are also contributing factors. Drought and other natural disasters often increase the number of people facing acute hunger. They have to sell their livestock, tools or land which helps them to survive - but makes it harder to get out of the poverty trap in the longer-term.

Hunger reduces the ability of the poor to work and make a living. Efforts to reduce child mortality, improve educational attainment and enable people to invest in building a future for themselves, are compromised by the persistence of hunger. Government policies and actions to encourage efficient markets and trade; enhance productivity, especially farm productivity, and economic growth; tackle risk and vulnerability; and put in place measures to directly assist the poor are critical for creating an environment in which people can obtain enough food.



Facts and figures

- Rising food prices hit the poorest hardest. In the UK, families spend as much as 15% of their weekly budget on food. For the urban poor in developing countries this figure is even more – around 60% of the weekly budget.² For the poorest in rural areas this has risen to 80% due to the rise in food prices.² This means the poor are more vulnerable to price shocks.
- Global food prices have eased due to good harvests, but problems will remain. Food production needs to increase by 50% by 2030 to meet additional demand from a bigger population and predicted dietary changes (FAO).
- Malnutrition is a contributing factor in over half of under-five deaths in developing countries.³
- More than 20 million low birth weight babies are born in the developing world every year - about one quarter of all children. In some countries, including India and Bangladesh, over 30 percent of all children born are underweight. Low birth weight babies are more likely to die in infancy, to be condemned to stunted physical and cognitive growth during childhood and, ultimately, to suffer from reduced working capacity and earnings as adults.^{4p.8}
- Every year that hunger continues at present levels costs more than five million children their lives and costs developing countries billions of dollars in lost productivity and earnings.^{4p.4}
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of undernourished people rose by over 34 million between 1990-92 and 2000-2002 – a figure equivalent to more than half the population of the United Kingdom.^{1p.4}
- Developed countries spent \$US 279 billion to support their own agriculture in 2004.^{5p.2} By comparison, in the same year, total net Official Development Assistance to the developing world from donor countries amounted to \$US 79 billion.⁶



Challenges and Solutions

The Comprehensive Framework for Action (see box) sets out two priorities. One is to meet the immediate needs of the vulnerable populations by improving access to food and nutrition support and increasing food availability. This includes humanitarian actions as well as actions to boost smallholder farmer-led food production, trade and tax measures. Another set of immediate actions aims at building longer-term resilience and global food and nutrition security by expanding social protection systems; sustaining growth of smallholder farmer food production; improving international food markets; and developing an international consensus on biofuels. In addition, a third set of actions aims at establishing better global information and monitoring systems.

Poverty and Hunger

The main obstacle to reducing hunger is poverty. Poor people cannot get enough food either by growing it or buying it – particularly in times of economic downturn and high food, fuel and fertilizer prices. Introducing measures to reduce poverty will help to reduce hunger. In the past there has been too much focus on treating the symptoms of hunger, e.g. through providing food aid, rather than dealing with the underlying causes. Instead of focusing on the production of food, the emphasis also needs to be on its accessibility and affordability. In the words of M.S Swaminathan, the father of the Indian Green Revolution "In many developing countries, including India, chronic hunger is related to a famine of work and purchasing power and not to a famine of food in the market".

Whilst the link between poverty and hunger is strong, poverty levels do not explain all malnutrition. For example, in South Asia where poverty levels are decreasing, child malnutrition persists. ^{7p.6} Tackling hunger means addressing the structural reasons that lock people into a poverty cycle.

Hunger hinders economic growth for poor people. The causes of hunger and poverty are bound up with access to resources, markets, knowledge and political voice. Efforts to reduce hunger and poverty need to take this into account. Decreasing the vulnerability of the poorest to debilitating levels of hunger reduces the long-term damage that malnutrition causes and can also help poor people to become agents of development who can contribute to economic growth.

Agriculture and the Environment

Agricultural growth is critical for hunger reduction. Some 70% of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, either directly or indirectly. Combating hunger requires an expanded commitment to agriculture and rural development both to generate income and keep food at affordable prices. ^{8p.28} Raising farm productivity is the key.

The UN Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA)

In April 2008, the United Nations Secretary General established a High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis (HLTF), which comprises the Heads of the UN agencies, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, to agree a common strategy to respond to the global food crisis in a coherent and coordinated way. The CFA was finalized mid-July.

UK's vision and approach to tackling high food prices:

The UK's vision is coordinated international action that will lead to a:

- Doubling of agricultural productivity in Africa,
- Doubling of the rate of agricultural growth in Asia,
- Doubling of investment in international agricultural research, and
- Doubling of the number of people taken out of long-term dependence on food aid through expansion of social protection.

Our four pronged approach for achieving this vision is to:

1. Increase humanitarian assistance
2. Meet the immediate needs of developing countries (budget support, social protection).
3. Provide longer term support for agricultural productivity and social protection
4. Get the international system working more effectively

Forests and other natural habitats are increasingly being cleared to grow food. Poor management of the environment risks future food production as land becomes eroded or exhausted. Strategies for reducing hunger must therefore be based on long-term environmental sustainability.

A challenge to world food production and prices is biofuels. Investment in biofuels related agriculture and processing is increasing rapidly, due to recent high oil prices and policies on climate change. Biofuels production accounts for around 1% of the world's arable land, but this will rise to a projected 12-15% per annum between now and 2015. This includes expansion in poor countries. In the future, there will need to be a balance between food for people and food for energy.

What the UK government is doing to help

For current and planned activities: just over £1 billion is programmed to boost agriculture and reduce hunger in rural areas, approximately £250 million per year. This includes investments in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, rural roads and food aid. For example:

- £20 million worth of better roads and new and better markets for poor farmers in Mozambique;
- £10 million to improve the livelihoods of 75,000 poor tribal households in Orissa, India;
- Long-term social protection can improve food security, nutrition and self sufficiency. DFID supports social protection programmes in 20 countries. In Africa alone we spend £55 million a year, covering 10 million people.
- In Bangladesh we have spent over £50 million on the Chars Livelihoods Programme to support people through asset transfers to the extreme poor. This includes provision of livestock, seeds, cash transfers, and land leases, with appropriate training and capacity building.
- In Zimbabwe - social transfers and other support to agriculture are included in the £36 million Protracted Relief and Recovery Programme and £23 million orphans and vulnerable children programme.

To address high food prices: the UK has announced an additional £868 million for both short and long term actions. This includes:

- This year, DFID has contributed £75 million to the [World Food Programme](#) for emergency and protracted relief operations, more than double last year's response (£35 million).
- Drought and food shortages in the Horn of Africa are worsening with 17 million people in need of emergency assistance. UK has announced an increased contribution to this region of £42 million.
- A further £22 million to the Ethiopian Productive Safety Nets Programme to cover extra food costs and to increase the wage rate for the public works programme.
- A further £70 million over 6 years for social protection in [Bangladesh](#).

The Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS):

The UK is calling for a Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS), which is envisaged as being a compact to bring together a broad range of partners behind nationally developed country plans and policies; hold everyone to account; and help facilitate access to finance. It will:

- Involve donors, developing countries, international agencies, civil society, and the private sector.
- Use existing financing mechanisms and instruments.
- Help to align stakeholders behind key national and regional plans (such as CAADP and AU-led Social Protection processes in Africa).
- Help to take forward the UN

The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is the

Africa Union's own programme for addressing MDG 1 in Africa. DFID support's CAADP (£5 million) because it is Africa led and focused on doing more with the money and effort being expended by national governments and donors to address food security and encourage economic growth. African governments commit to raising agricultural productivity by 6% per year by increasing investment in agriculture to 10 per cent of national budgets. So far Mali, Madagascar, Namibia, Niger, Chad and Ethiopia have met or surpassed the 10% goal. Zambia, Malawi, Kenya and Rwanda have already boosted their agriculture budgets significantly in pursuit of the 10% target.

- Doubling support for Agricultural Research to £400 million over the next five years. Areas of spending will include: £200m to international agricultural research organisations; £75m to regional research organisations and £25m to Responsive Programmes with the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).
- This year, DFID has given £330 million of budget support to eight countries in Africa and South Asia. Further budget support is likely to be made this financial year.

Impacts and Results

Ethiopia – Although in its early days, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is contributing to improved food security of recipient households and helping them to protect and build their assets:

- Three in five recipients avoided having to sell assets to buy food and 36% of recipients avoided using savings to buy food. In both cases, 90% of these households explained these positive outcomes in terms of the PSNP.
- Three quarters of households surveyed consumed more food or better quality food than before the advent of the PSNP. 94% of these households attribute this to the PSNP.

This year the PSNP responded to the drought and high food prices by delivering 2-3 months additional financial support to 4.4 million beneficiaries.

Zimbabwe – Evaluation of the Protracted Relief Programme has documented its success in improving household livelihoods. Group members borrowed to avoid asset sales as well as to invest in income-generating activities. Participants purchased food, kitchen utensils, school fees and uniforms, livestock and other farm inputs, clothing, furniture and spent money on small business investments and home repairs.

India - The Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP): 31% of poor households that experienced food shortage in previous years reported a reduction in food shortages during the project period. The Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (OTELP), which is jointly supported by IFAD and WFP: a food for work initiative improved access to food and created over half a million people days of employment - out of which 50% beneficiaries are tribal women.

Ethiopia – DFID has given £70 million so far (over 3 years) for the Productive Safety Net Programme, PSNP, which helps support 7.2 million people who had previously depended on emergency relief. DFID will give £30 million per annum to the PSNP when it will cover over 8 million people. DFID partners in this programme are the government of Ethiopia, the World Bank, the European Commission, the Canadians, Irish Aid, the US and the World Food Programme.

Sources

1. Unless otherwise indicated the source of all data is [UN Statistics Division report on progress to MDG 1 \(1990 -2005\)](#).
2. Ensuring the UK's Food Security in a Changing World – Discussion Paper, July 2008, [DEFRA and Hausse des prix des denrées alimentaires au Sahel : l'urgence d'une action à long terme, Oxfam International et Save the Children, Page 2, Novembre 2008 \(available in English\)](#)
3. [Connect-World: Global Themes](#)
4. [UN Food & Agriculture Organisation: The State of Food Insecurity in the world 2004 – Monitoring progress Towards the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals](#)
3. [United Nations: The Millennium Development Goals Report 2006](#)
5. [OECD – Agricultural Policies in OECD Countries – Monitoring and Evaluation 2005](#)
6. [OECD - Statistical Database](#)
7. [UN Millennium Project - UN Millennium Project | Publications](#)
8. [UN Food & Agriculture Organisation: The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2006 – Eradicating world hunger – taking stock 10 years after the World Food Summit](#)
9. IMF Commodity Price data from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/res/commod/index.asp>