

FOOD SECURITY

The high cost of basic rights

References

CURRENT SITUATION

(latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION

(since 1990 or closest available year)

- ➔ Significant progress
- ➔ Slight progress
- ⏸ Stagnant
- ➔ Regression
- ➔ Major regression

Complete table at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER- NOURISHMENT (%)	ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)
—	Afghanistan (52)			39
⏸	Albania (94)	6 ⏸	7	8
➔	Algeria (94)	4 ⏸	6	4 ➔
⏸	Angola (62)	35 ➔	12	31 ➔
—	Antigua and Barbuda (—)		5	
⏸	Argentina (98)	3 ⏸	7	4
➔	Armenia (96)	24 ➔	8	4
⏸	Australia (99)	<2.5 ⏸	7	
⏸	Austria (—)	<2.5 ⏸	7	
➔	Azerbaijan (85)	7 ➔	12	7
⏸	Bahamas (99)	8 ⏸	7*	
—	Bahrain (99)		8	9*
➔	Bangladesh (57)	30 ➔	22	48 ➔
⏸	Barbados (99)	<2.5 ⏸	13	
⏸	Belarus (99)	4 ⏸	4	1
⏸	Belgium (99)	<2.5 ⏸	8*	
➔	Belize (93)	4 ➔	6	7
➔	Benin (68)	12 ➔	16	23 ➔
—	Bhutan (78)		15	19
➔	Bolivia (80)	23 ➔	7	8 ➔
⏸	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	9 ⏸	5	2
➔	Botswana (92)	32 ➔	10	13
➔	Brazil (92)	7 ➔	8	6* ⏸
⏸	Brunei Darussalam (100)	4 ⏸	10	
⏸	Bulgaria (99)	8 ⏸	10	
⏸	Burkina Faso (64)	15 ➔	16	37 ➔
➔	Burma/Myanmar (76)	5 ➔	15	32 ⏸
➔	Burundi (58)	66 ➔	11	39 ⏸
➔	Cambodia (66)	33 ➔	11	36
⏸	Cameroon (70)	26 ➔	11	19 ➔
⏸	Canada (99)	<2.5 ⏸	6	
—	Cape Verde (93)		13*	
➔	Central African Republic (65)	44 ➔	13	29
➔	Chad (42)	35 ➔	22	37 ⏸
➔	Chile (100)	4 ➔	6	1 ⏸
➔	China (90)	12 ➔	2	7 ➔
➔	Colombia (90)	13 ➔	9	7 ⏸
➔	Comoros (79)	60 ➔	25	25
➔	Congo, DR (69)	74 ➔	12	31
➔	Congo, Rep. (79)	33 ➔	13	14 ➔
—	Cook Islands (90)		3	10*

NOTE:

(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population. Last available data: 2002/2004; evolution since 1990-1992.

Estimated low birth weight (%): Percentage of newborns weighing less than 2.500 grams, with measurement taken within the first hours of life, before significant postnatal weight loss has occurred. Due to changes in the methodology of the sources the construction of data series presents comparability problems. Last available data: 1999/2006.

Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %): Percentage of children under five whose weight for age is less than minus two standard deviations from the median for the international reference population ages 0 to 59 months. The reference population adopted by the WHO in 1983 is based on children from the United States, who are assumed to be well nourished. Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER- NOURISHMENT (%)	ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)
←	Costa Rica (94)	5	7	5* ←
	Côte d'Ivoire (79)	13 →	17	20 ←
→	Croatia (99)	7 →	6	1*
→	Cuba (99)	<2.5 →	5	4
	Czech Republic (99)	<2.5	7	
	Denmark (98)	<2.5	5	
→	Djibouti (75)	24 →	10	29
←	Dominica (97)	8 ←	10	
→	Dominican Republic (88)	29	11	5 →
→	Ecuador (83)	6	16	9 →
→	Egypt (88)	4	14	6 →
→	El Salvador (79)	11	7	10 →
	Equatorial Guinea (59)		13	19
←	Eritrea (67)	75 ←	14	40
→	Estonia (99)	<2.5 →	4	
→	Ethiopia (54)	46 →	20	38 →
→	Fiji (99)	5 →	10*	
	Finland (100)	<2.5	4	
	France (99)	<2.5	7*	
	French Polynesia (—)	4		
→	Gabon (82)	5 →	14	12
←	Gambia (70)	29 ←	20	20
→	Georgia (89)	9 →	7	3
	Germany (100)	<2.5	7	
→	Ghana (66)	11 →	9	18 →
	Greece (100)	<2.5	8	
	Grenada (92)	7	9	
→	Guatemala (68)	22 →	12	23 →
→	Guinea (66)	24 →	12	26
←	Guinea-Bissau (61)	39 ←	24	19
→	Guyana (81)	8 →	13	14 →
→	Haiti (—)	46 →	25	22 →
→	Honduras (78)	23	10	11 →
	Hungary (99)	<2.5	9	
	Iceland (100)	<2.5	4	
→	India (71)	20 →	30*	46 →
→	Indonesia (84)	6 →	9	28 →
	Iran (91)	4	7*	11*
	Iraq (83)		15	8
	Ireland (100)	<2.5	6	
	Israel (100)	<2.5	8	
	Italy (99)	<2.5	6*	
→	Jamaica (95)	9 →	12	4 →
	Japan (99)	<2.5	8	
	Jordan (97)	6	12	4
←	Kazakhstan (98)	6 ←	6	4
→	Kenya (71)	31 →	10	20 →
	Kiribati (88)	7	5*	13
←	Korea, DPR (—)	33 ←	7	23
	Korea, Rep. (100)	<2.5	4	

NOTE:

(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population. Last available data: 2002/2004; evolution since 1990-1992.

Estimated low birth weight (%): Percentage of newborns weighing less than 2,500 grams, with measurement taken within the first hours of life, before significant postnatal weight loss has occurred. Due to changes in the methodology of the sources the construction of data series presents comparability problems. Last available data: 1999/2006.

Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %): Percentage of children under five whose weight for age is less than minus two standard deviations from the median for the international reference population ages 0 to 59 months. The reference population adopted by the WHO in 1983 is based on children from the United States, who are assumed to be well nourished. Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER- NOURISHMENT (%)	ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)
→	Kuwait (98)	5 →	7*	10*
→	Kyrgyzstan (95)	4 →	5	3
→	Lao, PDR (58)	19 →	14	40 →
	Latvia (99)	3	5	
	Lebanon (95)	3	6	4
	Lesotho (72)	13 →	13	20 ←
←	Liberia (65)	50 ←		26
	Libya (98)	<2.5	7*	5*
	Lithuania (99)	<2.5	4	
	Luxembourg (97)	<2.5	8	
→	Macedonia (96)	5 →	6	2
←	Madagascar (61)	38 ←	17	42
→	Malawi (62)	35 →	13	19 →
→	Malaysia (99)	3	9	8 →
→	Maldives (86)	10 →	22	30
	Mali (69)	29	23	33
	Malta (100)	<2.5	6	
	Marshall Islands (93)		12	
→	Mauritania (66)	10 →		32 →
→	Mauritius (98)	5	14	15* →
→	Mexico (94)	5	8	5 →
←	Micronesia (—)		18	15*
←	Moldova (96)	11 ←	6	4
→	Mongolia (95)	27 →	6	6 →
	Montenegro (—)		4	3
	Morocco (79)	6	15	10
→	Mozambique (66)	44 →	15	24
→	Namibia (85)	24 →	14	24
→	Nepal (65)	17 →	21	39
	Netherlands Antilles (—)	13		
	New Caledonia (—)	10		
	New Zealand (98)	<2.5	6	
→	Nicaragua (72)	27 →	12	10
→	Niger (52)	32 →	13	44
→	Nigeria (63)	9 →	14	29 →
	Niue (—)		0	
	Norway (100)	<2.5	5	
	Oman (99)		8	18*
	Pakistan (64)	24	19*	38
	Palau (99)		9*	
	Panama (91)	23	10	8*
	Papua New Guinea (68)		11*	
→	Paraguay (85)	15 →	9	5
→	Peru (86)	12 →	11	8 →
→	Philippines (77)	18 →	20	28 →
	Poland (100)	<2.5	6	
	Portugal (99)	<2.5	8	
	Qatar (96)		10	6*
	Romania (96)	<2.5	8	3
	Russian Federation (98)	3	6	3*

NOTE:

(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population. Last available data: 2002/2004; evolution since 1990-1992.

Estimated low birth weight (%): Percentage of newborns weighing less than 2.500 grams, with measurement taken within the first hours of life, before significant postnatal weight loss has occurred. Due to changes in the methodology of the sources the construction of data series presents comparability problems. Last available data: 1999/2006.

Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %): Percentage of children under five whose weight for age is less than minus two standard deviations from the median for the international reference population ages 0 to 59 months. The reference population adopted by the WHO in 1983 is based on children from the United States, who are assumed to be well nourished. Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	UNDER- NOURISHMENT (%)	ESTIMATED LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (%)	UNDER-5 CHILD MALNUTRITION (underweight for age, %)
→	Rwanda (53)	33 →	6	23 →
→	Samoa (97)	4 →	4*	
→	Sao Tome and Principe (82)	10 →	8	9
	Saudi Arabia (97)	4	11*	14*
→	Senegal (71)	20 →	19	17 →
	Serbia (—)		5	2
→	Seychelles (—)	9 →		
←	Sierra Leone (61)	51 ←	24	30
	Singapore (91)		8	3
←	Slovakia (97)	7 ←	7	
	Slovenia (99)	3	6	
→	Solomon Islands (82)	21 →	13*	
	Somalia (—)		11	36
	South Africa (89)	<2.5	15*	12
	Spain (99)	<2.5	6*	
→	Sri Lanka (98)	22 →	22	29 →
→	St Kitts and Nevis (95)	10 →	9	
→	St Lucia (98)	5 →	12	
→	St Vincent and Grenadines (93)	10 →	5	
←	Sudan (76)	26 →	31	41 ←
→	Suriname (86)	8 →	13	13
←	Swaziland (77)	22 ←	9	10
	Sweden (100)	<2.5	4	
	Switzerland (97)	<2.5	6	
	Syria (94)	4	9	10
←	Tajikistan (85)	56 ←	10	17 →
	Tanzania (73)	44 ←	10	22 →
→	Thailand (96)	22 →	9	9
	Timor-Leste (60)	9	12	46
→	Togo (71)	24 →	12	26
	Tonga (95)		3	
→	Trinidad and Tobago (95)	10 →	19	6
→	Tunisia (95)	<2.5	7	4 →
→	Turkey (92)	3	16*	4 →
→	Turkmenistan (—)	7 →	4	11
	Tuvalu (89)		5	
→	Uganda (59)	19 →	12	20
	Ukraine (99)	<2.5	4	1
	United Arab Emirates (99)	<2.5	15*	14*
	United Kingdom (99)	<2.5	8	
	United States of America (99)	<2.5	8	2*
→	Uruguay (96)	<2.5 →	8	5
←	Uzbekistan (—)	25 ←	5	5
	Vanuatu (87)	11	6	
	Venezuela (95)	18 ←	9	5 →
→	Vietnam (90)	16 →	7	25 →
	West Bank and Gaza (—)	16	7	3
←	Yemen (61)	38 ←	32*	46 ←
→	Zambia (73)	46	12	20 →
←	Zimbabwe (80)	47	11	17 ←

NOTE:

(*) Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

SOURCE:

The State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/sowc08/).

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2008

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Undernourishment (%): Percentage of undernourished in the total population. Undernourishment is the result of food intake that is insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements continuously. The World Health Organization recommended that the average person needs to take in a minimum of 2300 kcal per day to maintain body functions, health and normal activity. This global minimum requirement of calories is broken down into country-specific differentials that are a function of the age-specific structure and body mass of the population.
Last available data: 2002/2004; evolution since 1990-1992.

Estimated low birth weight (%): Percentage of newborns weighing less than 2.500 grams, with measurement taken within the first hours of life, before significant postnatal weight loss has occurred. Due to changes in the methodology of the sources the construction of data series presents comparability problems.
Last available data: 1999/2006.

Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %): Percentage of children under five whose weight for age is less than minus two standard deviations from the median for the international reference population ages 0 to 59 months. The reference population adopted by the WHO in 1983 is based on children from the United States, who are assumed to be well nourished.
Last available data: 1999/2006; evolution since 1990.

FOOD SECURITY

The high cost of basic rights

Today, in the world, every 24 hours, 100,000 people die of hunger, 30,000 of them children under the age of 5. Another 854 million people do not have enough food to cover their basic nutritional needs. This situation of extreme and generalized want persists and is heightened due to the ongoing food crisis, which particularly affects the poorest regions of the world.

The Heads of State and of Government at the 1996 World Food Summit reaffirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”¹ and committed themselves to achieving food security and making an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger.

But if we are still far from achieving this fundamental human right, the upcoming scenario is even more alarming, since from 2007 there have been huge hikes in food prices at world level. The reasons for this are the following: climate change, precarious crops in different parts of the world, especially in Australia, the growing demands from the Asian market and developed countries for the use of food as biofuel. On the other hand, the constant rise of the oil price brings about associated costs increases, such as fertilizers and the transport of goods.

These factors, together with the fall in world food reserves and the lack of stability produced by speculation in the stock market, have contributed to generate a situation unknown until now. In developed countries the price hike has become the main preoccupation of the working classes. According to the World Bank, some 100 million people could be at risk as a consequence of the crisis.

Climate change and the world demand for bio energy are challenges to food security. The impact of climate change on the yield of agriculture, given the alteration between the availability of water, land, biodiversity and land ecosystem services, causes great uncertainty in the entire food chain. According to FAO, climate change will have consequences on world food security and affect the availability of food for 9 billion people by 2050.

Greater competition over agricultural resources for the production of bio energy exerts, in the long run, an unsustainable pressure on natural resources. Therefore, it is necessary to produce approaches that take into account the interrelationship between food security and socioeconomic and environmental sustainability, and that ensure the development of policies that protect food security in the wider context of measures taken with respect to climate change and bio energy.

In much the same way the uneven demographic growth between developed and developing zones, migration and urbanization, the new structures of the

¹ FAO, Committee on World Food Security, “Fostering the political will to fight hunger”. Twenty-seventh Session, Rome, 28 May - 1 June 2001.

CHART 1. Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in food security

		Under-5 child malnutrition (underweight for age, %)	Undernourishment (%)	Estimated low birth weight (%)
Worse relative situation	Average	38.6	41.6	23
	Number of countries	5	5	5
Better relative situation	Average	15.1	8.1	8.2
	Number of countries	26	62	65
Total	Average	24.7	17.9	11.6
	Number of countries	75	123	126

CHART 2. Current situation in food security by region (number of countries)

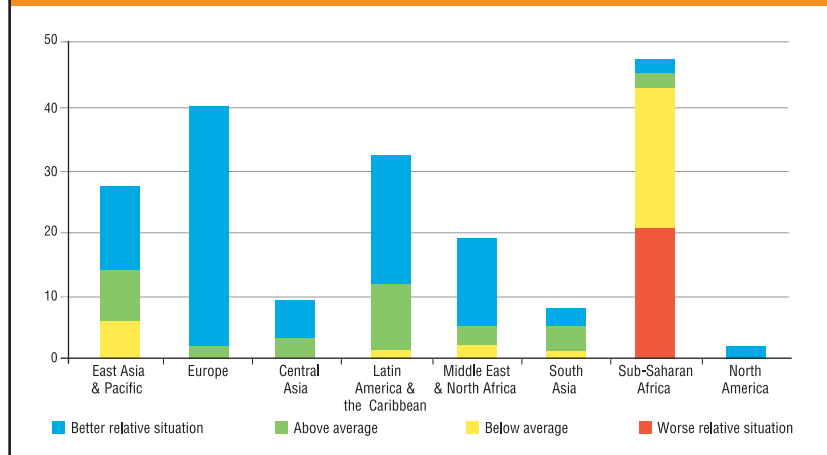


CHART 3. Current situation and evolution in food security (number of countries)

	←	↔		→	→	Total
Worse relative situation	1	2	0	1	1	5
Below average	3	5	4	9	7	28
Above average	2	4	10	8	4	28
Better relative situation	0	2	38	12	10	62
Total	6	13	52	30	22	123

agricultural food world market and new consumer patterns pose new challenges to the world food system.

In face of all these changes, the role of the State is crucial to ensure the articulation of agricultural production objectives, environmental sustainability and social redistribution of income; it is therefore the State's responsibility to promote development models that will ensure that goals are achieved in questions of food security.

The food gap

The study of the indicators in Chart 1 shows wide gaps in the food situation between countries in the better and worse relative situation. In the first group, on average, 8% of the population suffers undernourishment, while in the countries in the worse situation they are 40% of the population. In countries like Eritrea and the Democratic Republic of Congo the situation is intolerable: 75% of the population suffer undernourishment.

Also, in countries with greater deficiencies, 4 out of every 10 children under-5 suffer from mal-

nutrition, while in countries in the better relative situation, the relation is 3 for every 20. The more developed countries have zero cases for this indicator; therefore countries in the better relative situation do not necessarily reach the levels of countries in a developed state of food security.

Divergence by region

A geographic look at the world will show (Chart 2) that while in North America, Europe and Central Asia all the countries are in the better relative situation or above the world average, half those in Sub-Saharan Africa are in the most deficient situation or below the average.

Recent evolution (Chart 3) shows that more than 40% of countries register progress, while another 40% remains stagnant, although most show a satisfactory situation. The most worrying condition surfaces in countries with negative evolution, even in those that were in a poor situation to start with, such as Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Yemen. ■