



INTERNATIONAL FOOD
POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
sustainable options for ending hunger and poverty

2008 Global Hunger Index

Key Findings and Facts

Background Facts

- The 2008 Global Hunger Index (GHI) ranks 88 developing and transitional countries using three equally-weighted indicators and combines them into one index. The three indicators are:
 1. The proportion of people who are calorie deficient, or undernourished, which is a key indicator of hunger.
 2. The prevalence of underweight in children under the age of five, which is a measure of childhood malnutrition—children being the most vulnerable to hunger.
 3. The under-five mortality rate, which measures the proportion of child deaths that are mainly caused by malnutrition and disease.
- By using these three indicators, the GHI captures various aspects of hunger and undernutrition and takes into account the special vulnerability of children to nutritional deprivation.
- In the 2008 report, the GHI is calculated using the most recent available data (ranging from 2001-2006, depending on the indicator), and for 1990, to measure progress over time.
- Countries are ranked on a 100-point scale, with 0 and 100 being the best and worst possible scores, respectively.
- The GHI offers a picture of the past, not the present. It incorporates data only until 2006—the most recent available. The 2008 GHI therefore does not reflect recent increases in food and energy prices, but it indicates their likely impact on hunger.

Global Trends

- Overall Global Hunger Index scores have improved from 15.2 in the 1990 GHI to 18.7 in the 2008 GHI.
- On a global level, the most progress has been made in reducing the proportion of underweight children, with that indicator decreasing by 5.9 points since 1990.
- The ongoing food price crisis exacerbates hunger problems in many countries, cutting into poor households' food budgets, with particularly serious risks for undernourished infants and children under two. High prices also reduce the amount of food aid that donors can supply.

Regional Trends

- As regions, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the worst scores (23.3 and 23.0, respectively) on the 2008 GHI.
- Of the ten countries with the highest levels of hunger on the GHI, nine are in Sub-Saharan Africa. None of the Sub-Saharan African countries is amongst the ten most improved since 1990.

Country-level Trends

- Mauritius has the best score (lowest level of hunger) on the 2008 GHI, followed by Jamaica, Moldova, Cuba, and Peru.
- The countries that have made the most progress in reducing hunger since 1990, with the most improved GHI scores, are Kuwait, Peru, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, and Mexico.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the worst score (highest level of hunger), followed by Eritrea, Burundi, Niger, and Sierra Leone.
- The GHI scores of the DRC, North Korea, Swaziland, Guinea-Bissau, and Zimbabwe actually increased (worsened) since 1990.
- Eritrea and the DRC have the highest proportion of undernourished people, with 75 and 74 percent, respectively, of their populations being calorie deficient.
- India, Yemen, and Timor-Leste, have the highest prevalence of underweight children (a measure of malnutrition) of more than 40 percent.
- In Sierra Leone and Angola, more than one-fourth of all children die before the age of five, with child mortality rates of 27 and 26 percent, respectively, the highest of all GHI ranked countries.