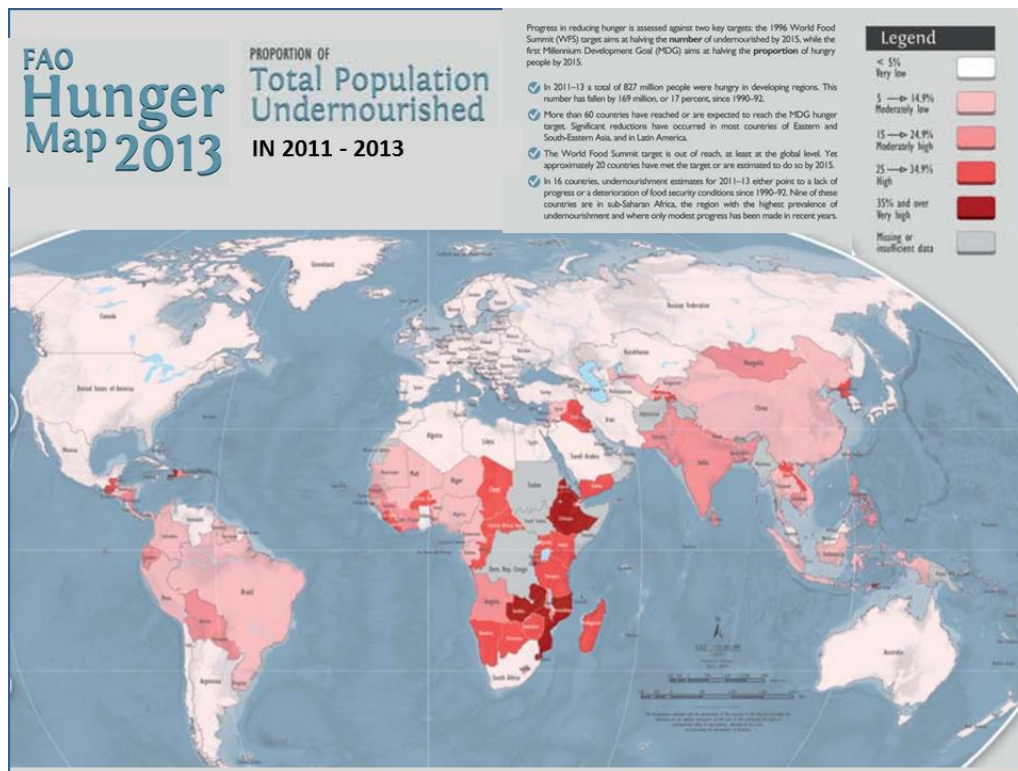
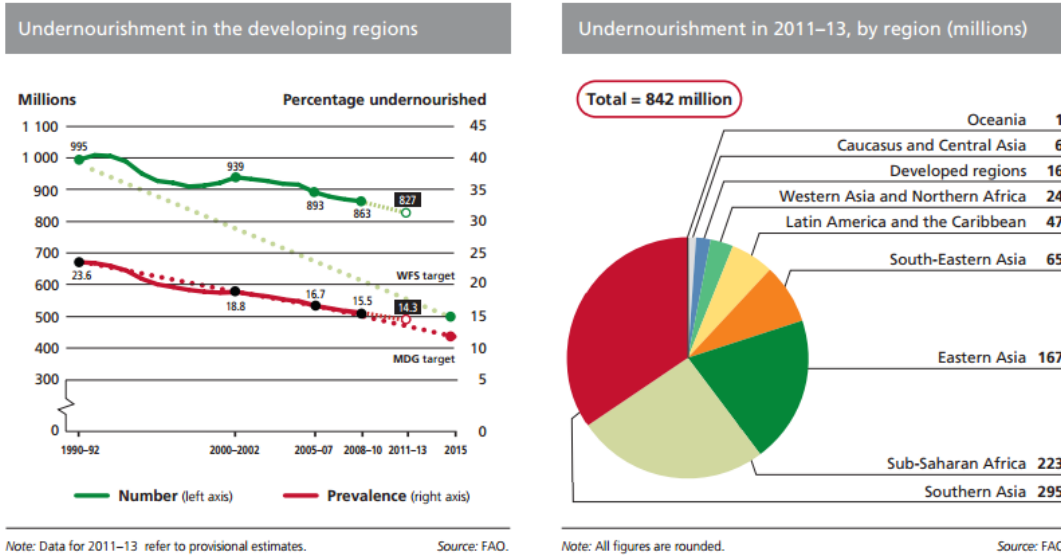


The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013

FAO October 2013

Climate change excerpts



Globally, 842 million people – 12 percent of the global population – were unable to meet their dietary energy requirements in 2011–13, down from 868 million reported for the 2010–12 period in last year’s report. Thus, around one in eight people in the world are likely to have suffered from chronic hunger, not having enough food for an active and healthy life. The vast majority of hungry people – 827 million of them – live in developing regions, where the prevalence of undernourishment is now estimated at 14.3 percent in 2011–13.

While the estimated number of undernourished people has continued to decrease, the rate of progress appears insufficient to reach international goals for hunger reduction. There are two established targets against which progress in reducing hunger is assessed. One is the 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) target, which is to halve the number of hungry people; the other is the 2001 Millennium Development Goal (MDG) hunger target, which is to halve the proportion of hungry people in the total population. Both targets have 1990 as the starting year and 2015 as the target year. Given the often high rates of population growth in many hunger-affected countries, the WFS target is the more ambitious goal. The deviation of actual progress from the target trajectory is therefore growing more rapidly for the WFS target than for the MDG one, at least for developing regions as a whole

To meet the WFS target, the number of hungry people in developing regions would have to be reduced to 498 million by 2015, a goal that is out of reach at the global level. However, many individual countries are on track to meet the WFS target: indeed, 18 countries¹ had already met it in 2012 and received a special recognition during the 2013 FAO Conference.

The MDG hunger target of halving the proportion of people who are undernourished is less ambitious than the WFS target, and the deviation from its trajectory appears relatively small. The current assessment pegs undernourishment in developing regions at around 24 percent of the population in 1990–92, thus implying an MDG target of 12 percent. Assuming that the average annual decline over the past 21 years continues to 2015 the MDG target could still be reached, but more efforts are needed.

Global climate change

The vulnerability dimension of food security is increasingly cast in the context of climate change. The number of extreme events such as droughts, floods and hurricanes has increased in recent years, as has the unpredictability of weather patterns, leading to substantial losses in production and lower incomes in vulnerable areas.

Changeable weather patterns have played a part in increasing food price levels and variability. Smallholder farmers, pastoralists and poor consumers have been particularly badly affected by these sudden changes.

Climate change may play an even more prominent role in the coming decades. Mitigating its impacts and preserving natural resources will be major objectives, especially in connection with the management of land, water, soil nutrients and genetic resources. Improved management of natural resources should focus on reducing variability in agricultural outputs and increasing resilience to shocks and long-term climate change.