



Some 842 million people, or roughly one in eight, suffered from chronic hunger in 2011-13, not getting enough food to lead active and healthy lives, according to a report released by the UN food agencies.

The number is down from 868 million reported for the 2010-12 period, according to the annual report [State of Food Insecurity in the World](#) . The vast majority of hungry people live in developing regions, while 15.7 million live in developed countries.

Continued economic growth in developing countries has improved incomes and access to food. Recent pick-up in agricultural productivity growth, supported by increased public investment and renewed interest of private investors in agriculture, has improved food availability.

Strong differences

Despite the progress made worldwide, marked differences in hunger reduction persist. Sub-Saharan Africa has made only modest progress in recent years and remains the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment, with one in four people (24.8 per cent)

estimated to be hungry.

No recent progress is observed in Western Asia, while Southern Asia and Northern Africa witnessed slow progress. More substantial reductions in both the number of hungry and prevalence of undernourishment have occurred in most countries of East Asia, Southeastern Asia, and in Latin America.

Since 1990-92, the total number of undernourished in developing countries has fallen by 17 percent from 995.5 million to 826.6 million.

Hunger reduction targets

While uneven, the report stresses that developing regions as a whole have made significant progress towards reaching the target of halving the proportion of hungry people by 2015. This target was agreed internationally as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). If the average annual decline since 1990 continues to 2015, the prevalence of undernourishment will reach a level close to the MDG hunger target.

"With a final push in the next couple of years, we can still reach the MDG target," wrote the heads of three UN food agencies; FAO, IFAD and WFP, José Graziano da Silva, Kanayo F. Nwanze and Ertharin Cousin in their foreword to the report.

The three UN Food agencies are the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO), the [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).