

Hunger declines globally, rises in Africa and western Asia: UN report

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An estimated 8.2 per cent of the global population, or about 673 million people, experienced hunger in 2024, down from 8.5 per cent in 2023 and 8.7 per cent in 2022. However, progress was not consistent across the globe, as hunger continued to rise in most subregions of Africa and western Asia, according to this year's The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI 2025) report published by five specialised agencies of the United Nations.

Launched during the Second UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) in Addis Ababa, SOFI 2025 indicates that between 638 and 720 million people faced hunger in 2024. Based on the point estimate of 673 million, this represents a decrease of 15 million people from 2023 and of 22 million from 2022.

While the decline is welcome, the latest estimates remain above pre-pandemic levels, with the high food inflation of recent years contributing to the slow recovery in food security.

Notable improvements are seen in southern Asia and Latin America. The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) in Asia fell from 7.9 per cent in 2022 to 6.7 per cent, or 323 million people, in 2024. Additionally, Latin America and the Caribbean as a region saw the PoU fall to 5.1 per cent, or 34 million people, in 2024, down from a peak of 6.1 per cent in 2020.

Unfortunately, this positive trend contrasts sharply with the steady rise in hunger across Africa and western Asia, including in many countries affected by prolonged food crises. The proportion of the population facing hunger in Africa surpassed 20 per cent in 2024, affecting 307 million people, while in western Asia, an estimated 12.7 per cent of the population, or more than 39 million people, may have faced hunger in 2024.

It is projected that 512 million people could be chronically undernourished by 2030. Almost 60 per cent of those will be in Africa. This highlights the immense challenge of achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), warned the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations agency for children (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).