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# International Food Security Assessment, 2015-2025

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## What Is the Issue?

This report projects two key determinants of food security for each country: food production and import capacity. Domestic food production performance plays the most critical role in the food security of these countries, particularly for those in the Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa regions that depend primarily on locally produced grain supplies. Conversely, the capacity to pay for imports is significant in regions like Latin America and the Caribbean and North Africa that import a large share of their food supplies. To understand how food production and import capacity affect food security, ERS researchers estimated and projected the number of food-insecure people regionally and in each of the 76 developing countries covered in this report for 2015-25.

## What Did the Study Find?

Between 2014 and 2015, ERS estimates food security for the 76 countries analyzed to improve. The number of food-insecure people is estimated to fall 9 percent, from 521 million in 2014 to 475 million in 2015. The share of the population that is food insecure in these countries is expected to decrease from 14.8 percent in 2014 to 13.4 percent in 2015. The distribution gap (the amount of food needed to reach the nutritional target of roughly 2,100 calories per person per day) is estimated to decline 6 percent in 2015 to 11.8 million tons, grain equivalent. The distribution gap is a measure of the intensity of food insecurity—the extent to which consumption falls below the nutritional target.

The number of food-insecure people in *Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)* is estimated at 254 million in 2015, virtually unchanged from 2014. The share of population estimated to be food insecure is 28.4 percent. The countries in the *North African (NA)* region are expected to remain food secure. After *NA*, *Asia* is the most food-secure region as 8.4 percent of the population, on average, is estimated to be food insecure in 2015, largely due to improved production prospects in India and Sri Lanka.

The food security situation is expected to improve in the *Latin America and Caribbean (LAC)* region as the estimated number of food-insecure people falls 19 percent, from 31 million in 2014 to 25 million in 2015. Increased grain output and continued slowing of population growth contributed to the improvements.

ERS is a primary source of economic research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.

Over the next decade, the number of food-insecure people for the 76 countries is projected to deteriorate as the share of population that is food insecure moves from 13.4 percent in 2015 to 15.1 percent in 2025. LAC's food security situation, on the whole, is projected to improve to the greatest extent as the share of population considered food insecure falls from 15 percent in 2015 to 10.6 percent in 2025.

Asia's share of population that is food insecure is projected at just under 10 percent in 2025. Growth in grain output and imports are projected to exceed population growth. However, food insecurity among the population that is considered food insecure is projected to intensify. The distribution gap is projected to jump 53 percent over the next decade. This result is principally driven by Afghanistan (where production growth, while higher than the regional average, fall short of population growth) and Yemen (where growth in imports, which account for the bulk of grain supplies, are projected to slow from historical trends).

The food security situation in SSA is projected to deteriorate, as the share of population that is food insecure is projected to rise from 28.4 percent in 2015 to 30.4 percent in 2025. This change is largely driven by countries where civil strife disrupts agricultural activities (i.e., Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Somalia) or where population growth remains around or above 3 percent per year thereby precluding increase per capita food supply (i.e., Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burkina Faso). The increases in the number of food-insecure people and the distribution gap nearly match, meaning that there is little measureable intensification in food insecurity, on average. In 20 of the region's 39 countries included in this study, 20 percent or less of the population is projected to be food insecure in 2015.

### ***How Was the Study Conducted?***

The International Food Security Assessment model used in this report projects food consumption, food access, and food gaps in low- and middle-income countries through 2025. Food security of a country is evaluated based on the gap between projected domestic food consumption (domestic production plus imports minus nonfood uses) and a consumption target.

All historical and projected data are updated relative to the *International Food Security Assessment, 2014-24* report. Food production estimates for 2014 are based on data from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as of March 2015. Historical production data are from FAO and food aid data from the World Food Programme (WFP). Financial and macroeconomic data are based on World Bank data as of March 2015. Projected macroeconomic variables are either based on calculated growth rates for the 1990s through 2013 or are taken from International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank projections. Projections of food availability include food aid, with the assumption that each country will receive the 2011-12 average level of food aid throughout the next decade.