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sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty

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PRESS RELEASE

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New Global Hunger Index Shows Most Countries Are Making Slow Progress

Washington, DC—Only two regions of the world—Latin America & the Caribbean and East Asia & Pacific—are on track to reach all Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets related to hunger and child mortality. As part of the MDGs, the international community set targets to cut hunger in half and under-five mortality rates by two-thirds by 2015. According to the Global Hunger Index, most countries will not reach all these targets if progress continues at current rates.

The Index is being released for the second year in a row by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in conjunction with German Agro-Action and Concern Worldwide.

“Because hunger has many faces, the Global Hunger Index uses a multidimensional approach that simultaneously captures various aspects of hunger and undernutrition,” explained Doris Wiesmann, the IFPRI researcher who developed the Index. “By combining three indicators into one index and ranking countries accordingly, the Index gives us a very comprehensive picture of hunger in developing and transitional countries.”

New this year, the Global Hunger Index assesses whether developing countries are on track to reach MDG targets that relate to the three Index indicators—the proportion of people who are calorie deficient, child malnutrition, and child mortality.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, many countries are particularly off-track for meeting the targets. Of the 42 countries ranked, 38 are off-track regarding child mortality, 35 are not on track when it comes to reducing child malnutrition, and 27 are off-track to reduce the proportion of people who are calorie deficient.

Worldwide, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi experienced the greatest setbacks towards achieving the Global Hunger Index target for 2015, followed by Swaziland, Liberia, and North Korea.

“Despite these negative setbacks, there is good news. Every region of the world is experiencing some progress,” said Wiesmann. “In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Mozambique, Ghana, and Malawi have made considerable progress towards reducing hunger.”

Ethiopia and India have also made notable progress, and are very close to being on track to achieve the Global Hunger Index target based on the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Global Hunger Index ranks countries for six different years, beginning in 1981. The most recent round was calculated for 2004 and ranks 118 countries. Nine of the ten countries with the highest levels of hunger are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“In September 2000, leaders of 189 countries signed the Millennium Development Declaration, a global plan to meet the needs of the world’s most poor and hungry by 2015,” said Wiesmann. “We are now midway between the declaration and the deadline. By calling attention to countries and regions that are not on track to meet the goals for reducing hunger and child mortality, we hope the Global Hunger Index motivates world and national leaders to take increased action to ensure that the goals are achieved.”

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