

## 2009 Global Hunger Index Key Facts and Findings

### *About the Index*

- The 2009 Global Hunger Index (GHI) ranks 84 developing and transitional countries using three equally-weighted indicators and combines them into one score. The three indicators are:
  1. The proportion of people who are calorie deficient, or undernourished, which is a key indicator of hunger.
  2. The prevalence of underweight in children under the age of five, which is a measure of childhood malnutrition—children being the most vulnerable to hunger.
  3. The under-five mortality rate, which measures the proportion of child deaths that are mainly caused by malnutrition and disease.
- By using these three indicators, the GHI captures various aspects of hunger and undernutrition and takes into account the special vulnerability of children to nutritional deprivation. In the 2009 report, the GHI is calculated for 1990 and for the most recent period for which data are available to measure progress over time.
- Countries are ranked on a 100-point scale, with 0 and 100 being the best and worst possible scores, respectively.
- Some countries with severe hunger, including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia, are not included in the GHI because sufficient data are not available to calculate their scores.
- The GHI offers a picture of the past, not the present, using data from 2002 until 2007—the most recent available for specific indicators. The 2009 Index therefore could only very partially reflect increases in food and energy prices and does not account for the negative household effects of the global financial crisis. However, it does reference the likely impact of the crisis on hunger.

### *Global and Regional Trends*

- Globally, hunger has decreased by less than one quarter (24 percent) since 1990, with overall scores improving from “alarming” (20.0) in 1990 to “serious” (15.2) in the 2009 GHI.
- Since 1990, a handful of countries have been able to reduce their GHI scores by half or more, and about one third have reduced their scores between 25-49.9 percent.
- As regions, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa performed the worst, with “alarming” levels of hunger represented by scores of 23.0 and 22.1, respectively.

- The food and financial crises exacerbate hunger problems in many countries, cutting into poor households' food budgets, with serious risks for undernourished infants and children under two.

### ***Country Trends***

- Of the ten countries that have seen percentage *increases* in their GHI scores since 1990, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made the least progress in reducing hunger, followed by Burundi, the Comoros, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, North Korea, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Swaziland.
- The Syrian Arab Republic has the best score (lowest level of hunger) on the 2009 GHI, followed by Trinidad and Tobago, Paraguay, Suriname, and China.
- More than 40 percent of children are underweight in Timor-Leste, India, Yemen, and Bangladesh.