

# Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

Extreme poverty remains a daily reality for more than 1 billion people who subsist on less than \$1 a day. Hunger and malnutrition are almost equally pervasive: more than 800 million people have too little to eat to meet their daily energy needs. For young children, the lack of food can be perilous since it retards their physical and mental development and threatens their very survival. More than a quarter of children under age 5 in developing countries are malnourished.

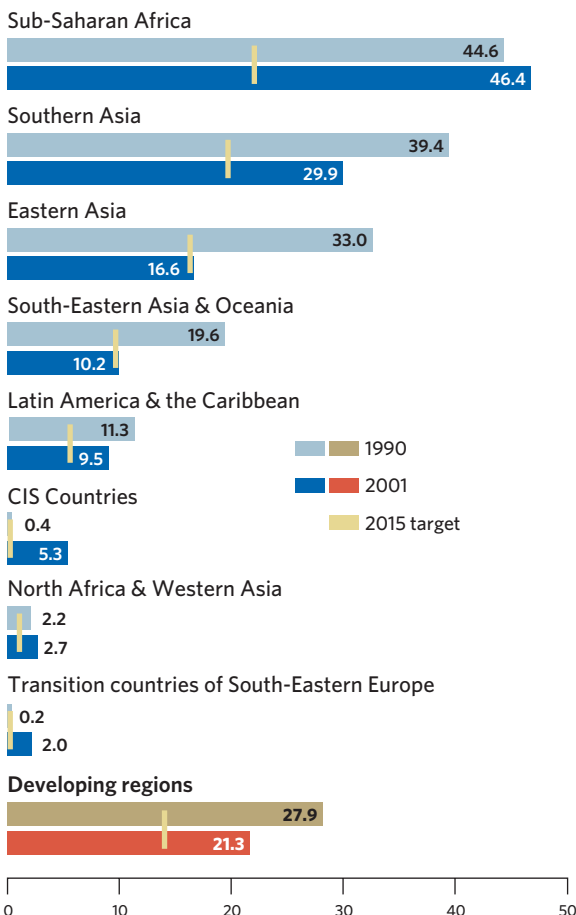
Overcoming poverty and hunger is possible. In Asia, reductions in poverty were dramatic. The number of people living on less than \$1 a day dropped by nearly a quarter of a billion from 1990 to 2001 — a period of rapid economic growth. In more than 30 countries, hunger was reduced by at least 25 per cent during the last decade. Fourteen of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, the region hardest hit by hunger and malnutrition.

## TARGET

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

### Asia leads the way in reducing poverty rates

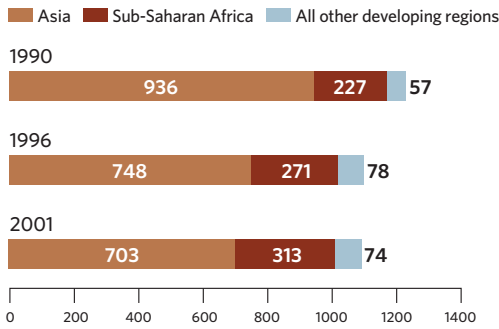
Proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990 and 2001 (Percentage)



During the 1990s, extreme poverty dropped in much of Asia, fell slowly in Latin America, changed little in Northern Africa and Western Asia, and rose and then started to decline in the transition economies. But in sub-Saharan Africa, which already had the highest poverty rate in the world, the situation deteriorated further and millions more fell into deep poverty.



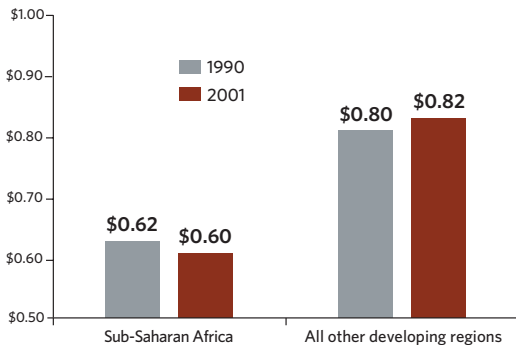
## Number of poor in Africa is rising



Number of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990, 1996 and 2001 (Millions)

Sustained growth in China and acceleration of the economy in India, the two most populous countries in the world, are the main reasons for the decline in the number of extremely poor people in Asia in the 1990s. But in sub-Saharan Africa, growing numbers of people have failed to find productive employment opportunities, agriculture has stagnated, and HIV/AIDS has taken a brutal toll on people in their most productive years.

## The very poor are getting poorer



Average income of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990 and 2001 (United States dollars)

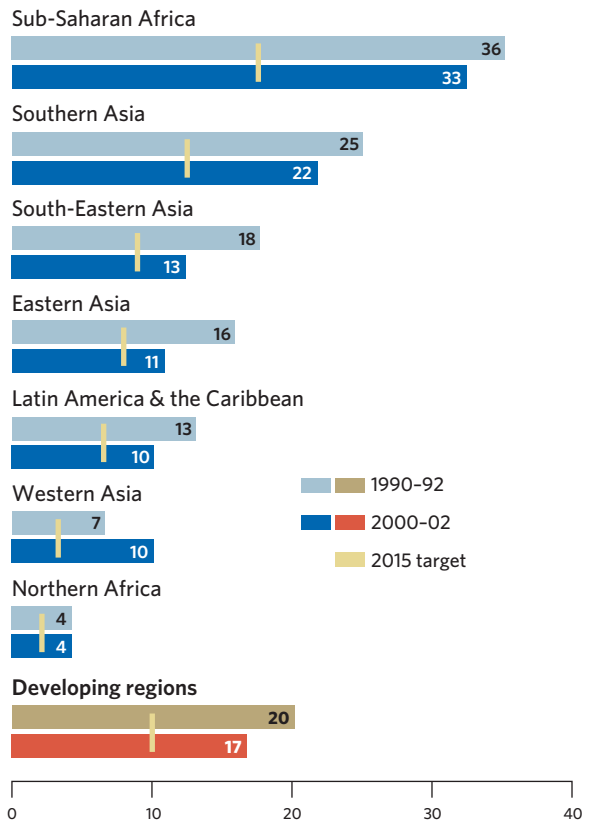
In most regions, the average daily income of those living on less than \$1 a day increased only marginally in the 1990s. Worse, the average income of the extremely poor in sub-Saharan Africa declined. Reversing this negative trend requires faster economic growth that reaches the poor — a challenging task in the face of disease and armed conflicts.

### TARGET

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

## The decline in hunger is slowing

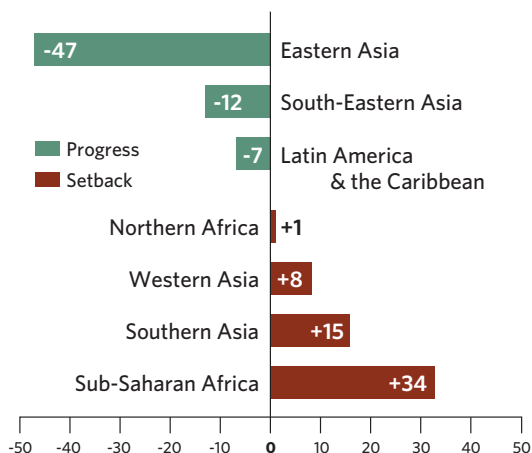
Proportion of people living with insufficient food 1990-1992 and 2000-2002 (Percentage)



Chronic hunger — measured in terms of the proportion of people lacking the food needed to meet their daily needs — is on the decline. The percentage of people with insufficient food was lower in 2000-2002 than in 1990-1992 in all regions except Western Asia. However, progress has slowed over the past several years, and the number of people going hungry increased between 1997 and 2002.



## Setbacks on hunger nearly outweigh progress

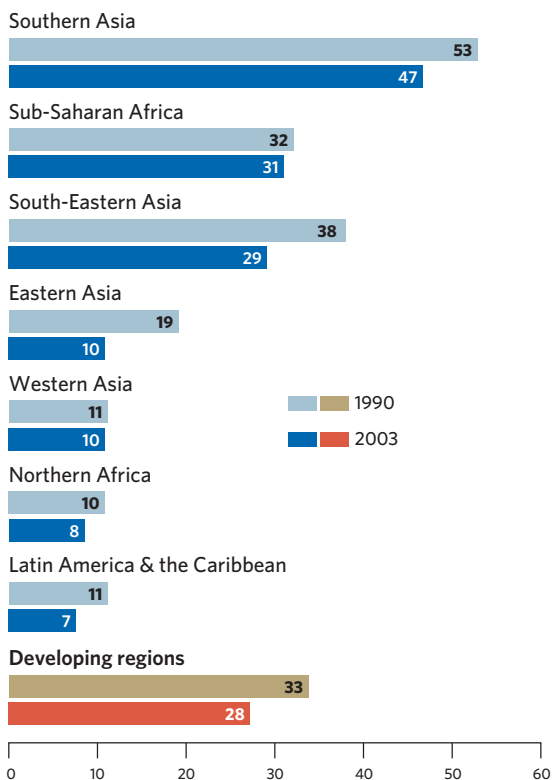


Change in number of people with insufficient food between 1990 and 2002 (Millions)

There were 815 million hungry people in the developing world in 2002 — 9 million less than in 1990. Yet in the worst-affected regions — sub-Saharan Africa and South-eastern Asia — the number of hungry people has increased by tens of millions. Growing populations and poor agricultural productivity have been the main reasons for food shortages in these regions. Most of the world’s hungry live in rural areas and depend on the consumption and sale of natural products for both their income and their food. Hunger tends to be concentrated among the landless or among farmers whose plots are too small to provide for their needs.

## More than a quarter of the children in the developing world are malnourished

Proportion of children under age five who are underweight, 1990 and 2003 (Percentage)

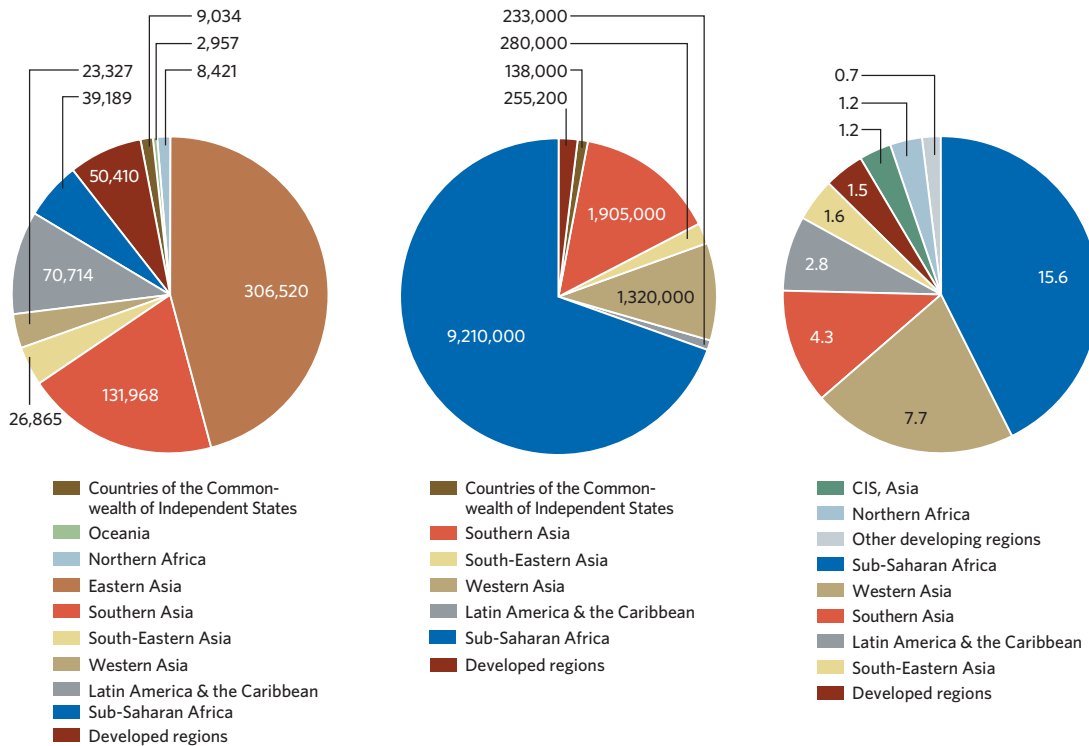


Malnutrition in children contributes to over half of child deaths. It is caused not only by food deprivation, but also by the debilitating effects of infectious diseases and lack of care. Progress in reducing child malnutrition has been slow. Over 150 million children under age 5 in the developing world are underweight, including almost half the children in Southern Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of underweight children increased from 29 million to 37 million between 1990 and 2003. Progress was made in Eastern Asia where the number of malnourished children declined from 24 to 10 million.

Strategies to combat child malnutrition include exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, increasing the use of micronutrient supplements, reducing infectious diseases, and improving access to clean water and sanitation.



## Conflicts and disasters exacerbate poverty and hunger



Estimated number of deaths due to disasters, 1994-2003

Estimated number of deaths in conflicts, 1994-2003

Number of refugees and internally displaced persons,\* 2003 (Millions)

Efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger are frequently set back by conflict and natural disasters. Hunger and poverty, in turn, can provide fertile ground for conflict, especially when combined with factors such as inequality, and make being prepared to cope with disasters more difficult.

Out of 13 million deaths in large-scale conflicts from 1994 to 2003, over 12 million were in sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and Southern Asia. Not surprisingly, these regions are also home to three quarters of the world's 37 million refugees and displaced persons and the areas where the number of hungry people is growing. In two of these regions — sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia — poverty is also on the rise.

Over the same period of time, 669,000 people died as a consequence of natural disasters. Nearly three quarters of these deaths were in Eastern and Southern Asia. In December 2004, in a matter of hours, the Asian tsunami killed hundreds of thousands more. Many of the deaths resulting from natural disasters could have been prevented through early warning systems and other measures. But, because of competing priorities, the poorest countries and people tend to lose out.

The Millennium Development Goals apply to all people, whatever their circumstances. Promoting the MDGs in humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict situations can help create a sound foundation for development over the longer term.

\* Data on internally displaced persons refer to those to whom the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees extends protection and/or assistance

