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## International Food Security Assessment, 2017-2027

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### What is the Issue?

Eliminating food insecurity is a goal shared around the globe and it requires ongoing assessments to inform decisionmakers and stakeholders about the direction and speed of progress made. Employing a uniform assessment approach to a large number of countries around the world allows for regional and country-by-country comparisons. ERS researchers assess the food security status and outlook for 76 low- and middle-income countries that are former or current food-aid recipients for the 2017-2027 period. Food prices and income changes affect international food security. The current report presents food security indicators, the number of food-insecure people, the share of population food insecure, and the food gap, projected for 2017 and 2027 based on projected food price and income changes.

### What Did the Study Find?

Grains comprise the bulk of the diet in most of the study countries. Prices of these commodities are projected to remain low over the next decade. Incomes in nearly all the study countries are projected to rise, but lower prices for oil and key minerals slow income growth for exporters of these commodities.

Given projections for low food prices and rising incomes for most study countries, food security is expected to improve through 2027. The share of population that is food insecure is projected to fall from 17.7 percent in 2017 to 8.9 percent in 2027. In total for the countries studied, the number of food-insecure people is projected to fall by 42 percent, leaving 372 million food-insecure people in the 76 countries in 2027. The intensity of food insecurity is also projected to decline.

- GDP in developing *Asian* countries is projected to grow 6.3 percent per year—much faster than the global average of 3.8 percent—and the share of Asia's population that is food insecure is projected to decline the most of all the regions studied, from 13.5 percent in 2017 to 4.6 percent in 2027. The number of food-insecure people in Asia is projected to fall 62 percent between 2017 and 2027. In 12 of the region's 22 countries, less than 5 percent of the population is projected to be food insecure in 2027. Only three countries in the region (Yemen, Afghanistan, and DPR Korea) are projected to have more than 10 percent of the population food insecure in 2027.

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.

- The number of food-insecure people in the *Latin America and Caribbean* (LAC) region is projected to fall by almost half over the next decade; the share of population that is food insecure is expected to fall from 14.8 percent in 2017 to 8.3 percent in 2027. Strong gains are expected throughout most of the region. Haiti continues to have the most food-insecure people in the region, though this number declines by 27 percent through 2027.
- *Sub-Saharan Africa's* (SSA) food security situation is projected to improve, but more slowly than in other regions. The number of food-insecure people is projected to fall by 22 percent and the share of population that is food insecure to drop from 31.7 in 2017 to 19.5 percent in 2027. In 23 of the 39 SSA countries, 20 percent or less of the population is projected to be food insecure in 2027. However, six countries are projected to have more than half their population food insecure in 2027, including Eritrea, Central African Republic, and Burundi with over 75 percent food insecure.
- Improvement in food security is also projected for *North Africa*, which is the most food secure of all the regions in the study. The share of population food insecure is projected to fall from 2.5 percent in 2017 to 1.3 percent in 2027.
- Over time, diets in all regions have improved and diversified. Meat and fruits/vegetables now make up a larger share of the diet in IFSA countries, while the cereal share has fallen. Between 2000 and 2013, average caloric, protein, and fat consumption increased and all regions reached caloric and protein requirements (average fat consumption shares fell slightly short of the 20-percent recommendation in SSA and Asia). Lower income populations continue to fall short of nutritional targets in all regions.

## How Was the Study Conducted?

The ERS demand-oriented International Food Security Assessment (IFSA) model projects food consumption (food demand) and food gaps in 76 low- and middle-income countries through 2027. Food security is evaluated for each country by estimating the share of the population unable to reach a caloric target of 2,100 calories per person per day. The intensity of food insecurity is measured by determining the gap between projected food consumption for those falling below the threshold and the caloric target. Food demand is expressed in grain equivalent based on caloric content to allow aggregation across four separate food groups: major grain, other grains, roots and tubers, and all other food.

Average per capita food consumption data are from the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Balance Sheets. Observed domestic prices are from FAO's Global Information Early Warning System (GIEWS) database. Tariff data are from the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS). Incomes, exchange rates, and Consumer Price Indexes are from the ERS International Macroeconomic Dataset. World prices are from USDA's *Agricultural Projections to 2026*.