





Threats to food security: from economic shocks to conflict and climate change

Position Paper

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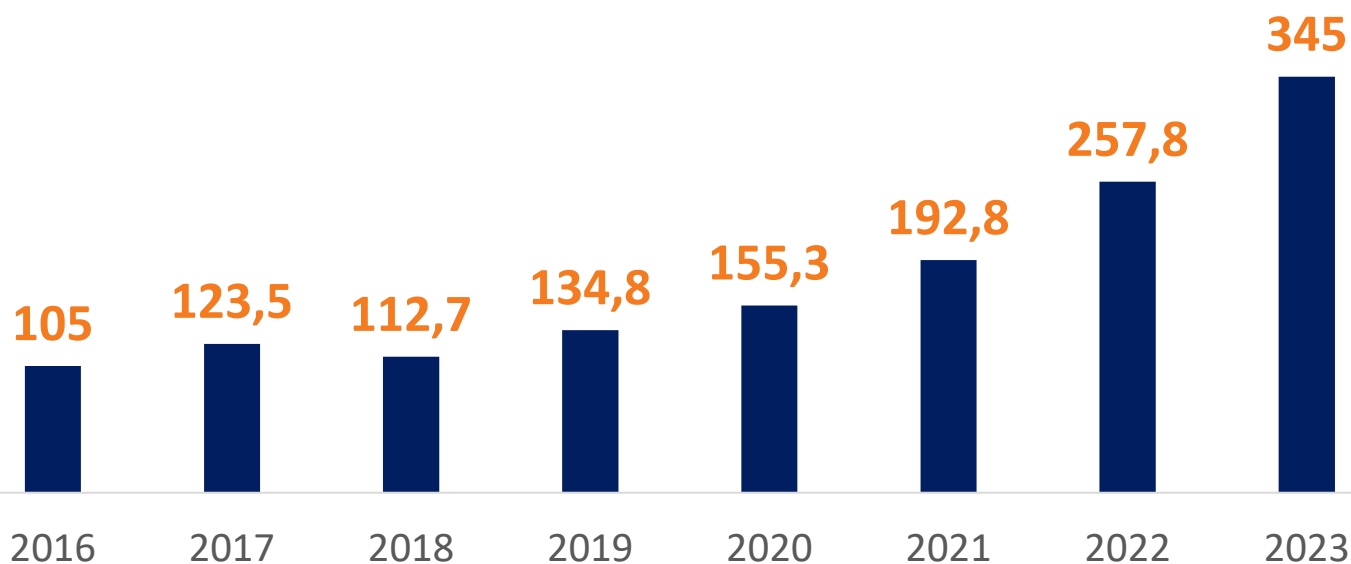
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Introduction: The global food crisis

The global escalation in food insecurity is reaching worrisome levels

In 2022, 258 million people in 58 countries/territories faced high levels of acute food insecurity. As of May 2023, more than 345 million people are facing high levels of food insecurity, with an increase of almost 100 million compared to the previous year.

Number of people facing acute food insecurity
(in millions), 2016-2023

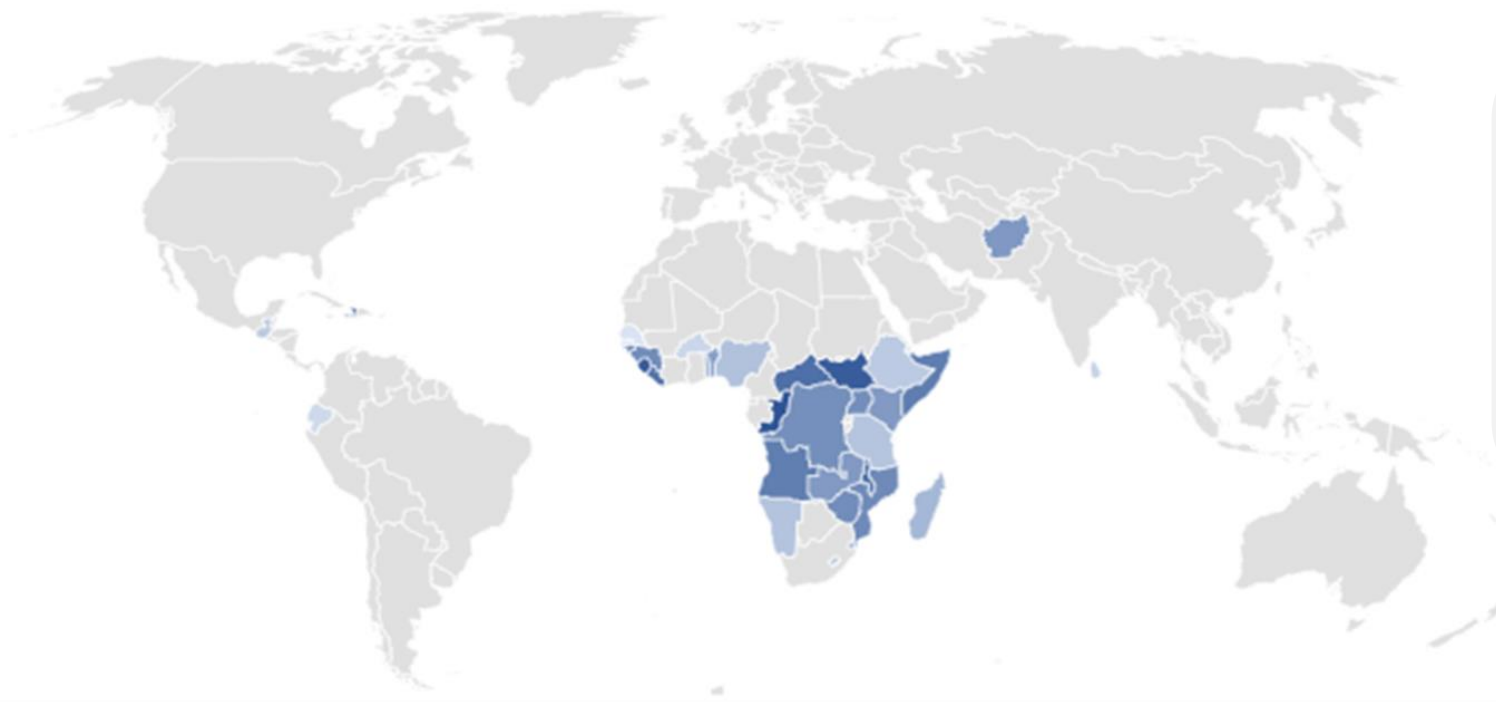


The three main causes of food insecurity are:

1. **Economic shocks**, particularly driven by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy
2. **Conflict**
3. **Climate change**

Developing countries pay the highest price

Countries where more than 50% of the population suffers from food insecurity
%, 2019-2021



More than half of the population living in the 36 identified countries, mainly located in Sub-Saharan Africa, suffer from food insecurity

% of people suffering from food insecurity  49% 89%

Source: Elaboration by The European House–Ambrosetti on World Food Program data, 2023.



**Three main factors threatening food security:
conflicts, economic shocks and climate change**

Developing countries pay the highest price



Geopolitics
and conflicts



Economic
shocks



Climate
change

Conflict and political tensions are the main drivers of food insecurity



In 2021, armed conflicts and other threats to security pushed **139 million people into acute food insecurity**, an increase of almost 40 million people compared to the year before.

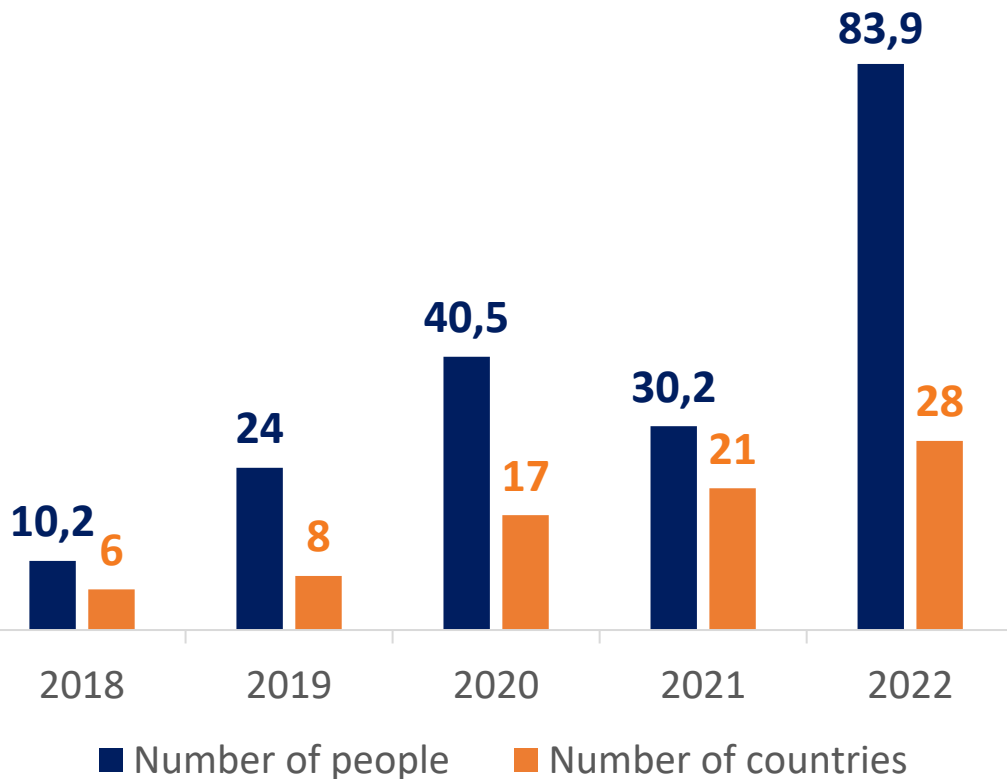
- Most conflicts mainly affect **rural areas** and their populations. This is particularly true for civil conflicts, today the most common form of armed conflict.
- The extent of **conflict** has strong and unambiguous adverse effects on food security and nutrition. It is the **major driver of both acute and chronic food insecurity and malnutrition**.
- **Increased malnutrition** brought by conflict and instability has **lasting impacts on human beings**. Children tend to be the most affected, suffering from lifelong physical and/or mental handicaps.
- The most common aspects of causal effects of the conflict-food security nexus are:
 - **Disruption of food production** and food systems;
 - **Plundering of crops and livestock**;
 - **Loss of assets and income**, thus directly and indirectly affecting food access.

Conflicts usually trigger economic crisis that today is worsening the fragile economic situation and slowing the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

In 2023, in the majority of countries, economic shocks became the no. 1 driver of food insecurity

People and countries suffering from food insecurity due to economic shocks as the main driver

People (in millions) and number of countries



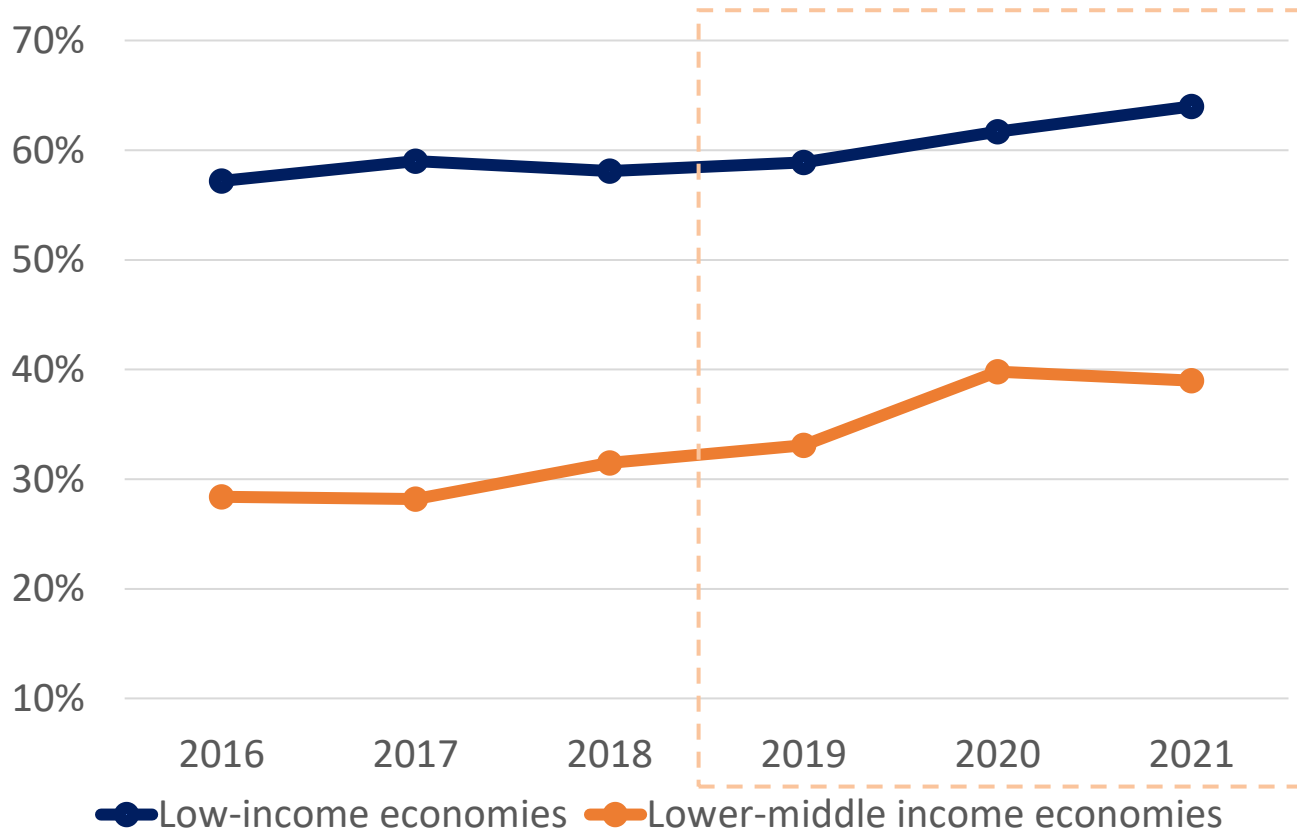
The result of the worldwide shocks of Covid-19 on the global market, coupled with the eruption of the war in Ukraine resulted in a **significant increase in the price of food and fertilizers.**

The **economic resilience of poor countries** has **dramatically decreased**, and they face extended recovery periods with diminished capability to cope with future shocks.

In 2023, there was an **increase of 36% in the number of people suffering from food insecurity** compared to 2022

This is also due to the economic impact of COVID-19 that severely hit low- and middle-income countries

Percentage of population suffering from moderate or severe food insecurity
Percentage, 2016-2023

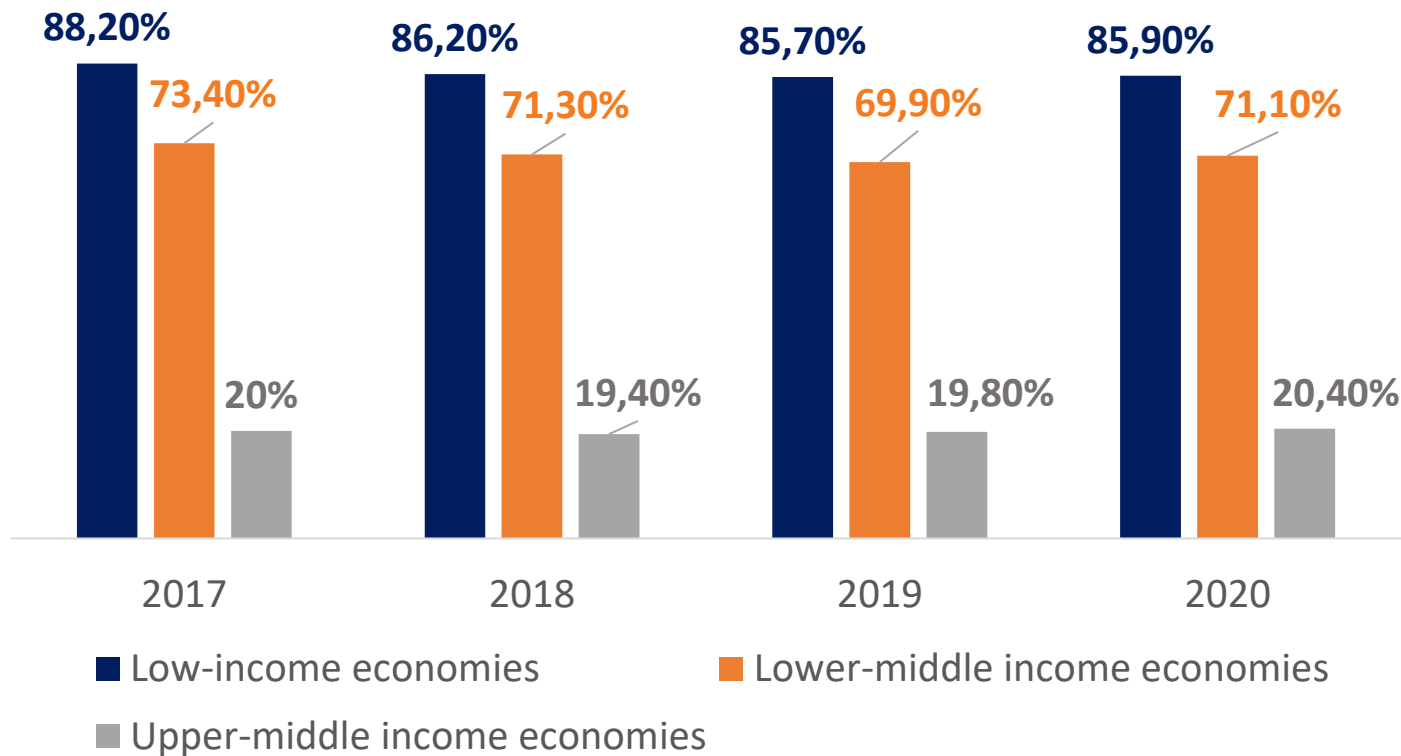


Between 2019 and 2021:

- **Low-income economies** registered an increase in food insecurity of 5%, resulting in **64% of the population suffering from food insecurity in 2021**
- **Lower middle-income economies** suffered the **highest increase (7%)** of food insecurity due to the economic impact of Covid-19

Due to the pandemic, in 2020, the percentage of people unable to afford a healthy diet started rising again

Percentage of population unable to afford a healthy diet
Percentage, 2017-2020

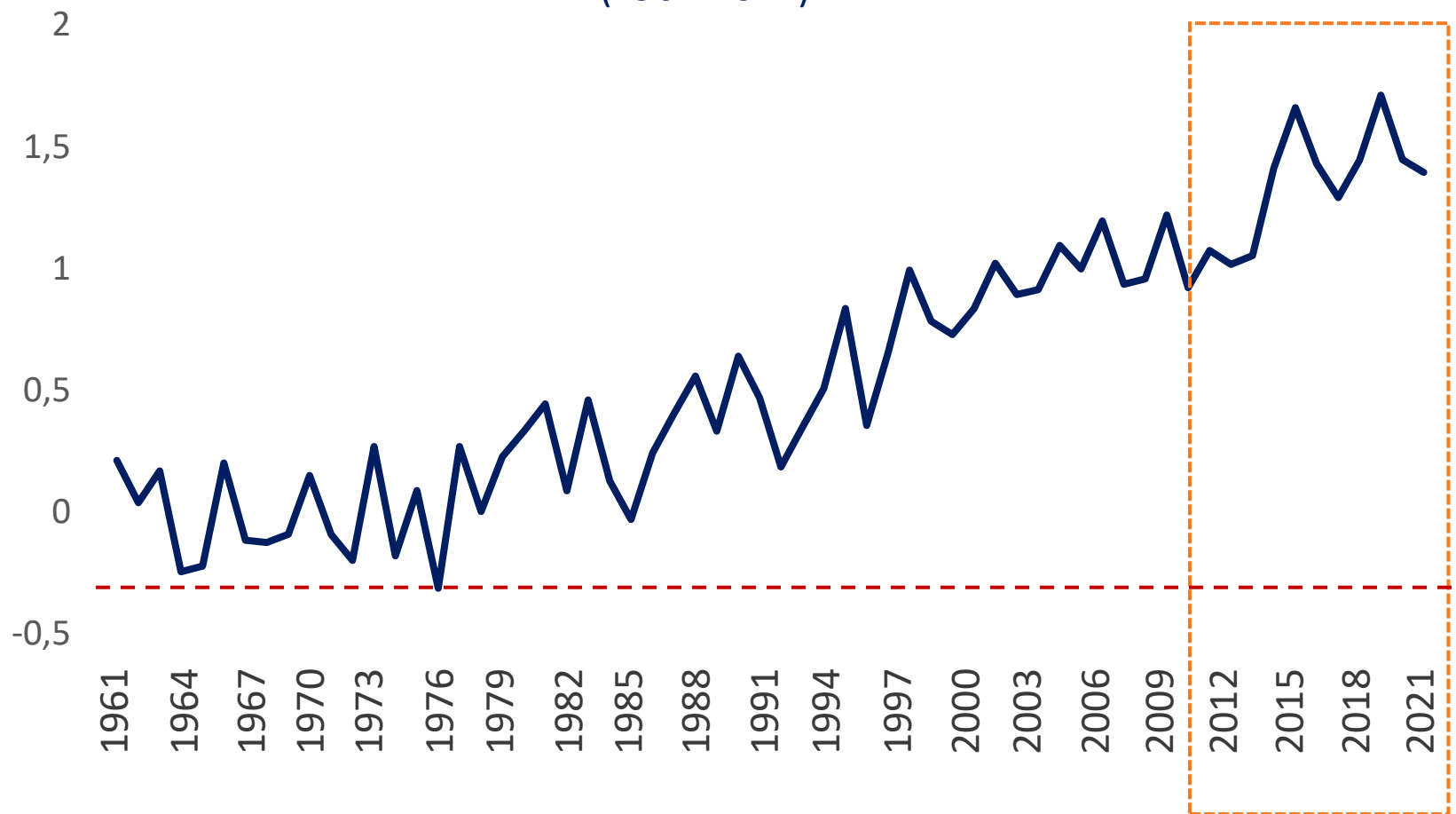


Between 2017 and 2019, the percentage of people unable to afford a healthy diet decreased.

Yet, this positive trend was reversed with the eruption of the pandemic in 2020, when this percentage started rising again due to the economic shock and worsening socio-economic conditions.

In addition, the global temperature of the planet is increasing at an unprecedented rate, posing an additional threat to food security

Global annual temperature change on land in degrees Celsius
(1961-2022)

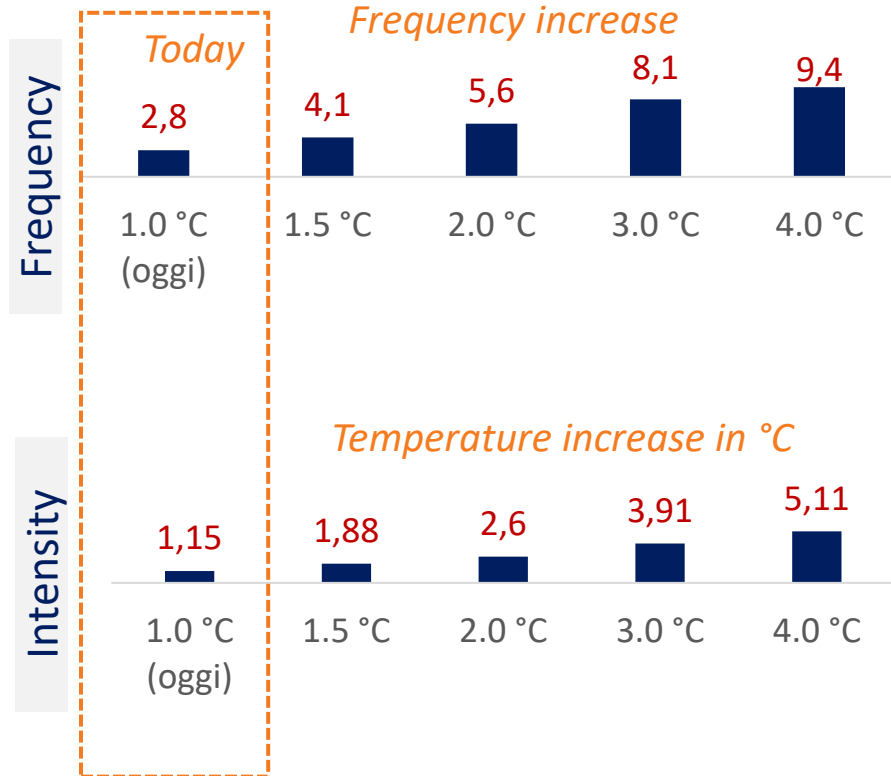


- The observed global warming is **unprecedented** on a human scale
- Over the past 10 years, the global land temperature continued to increase **over 1°C each year**

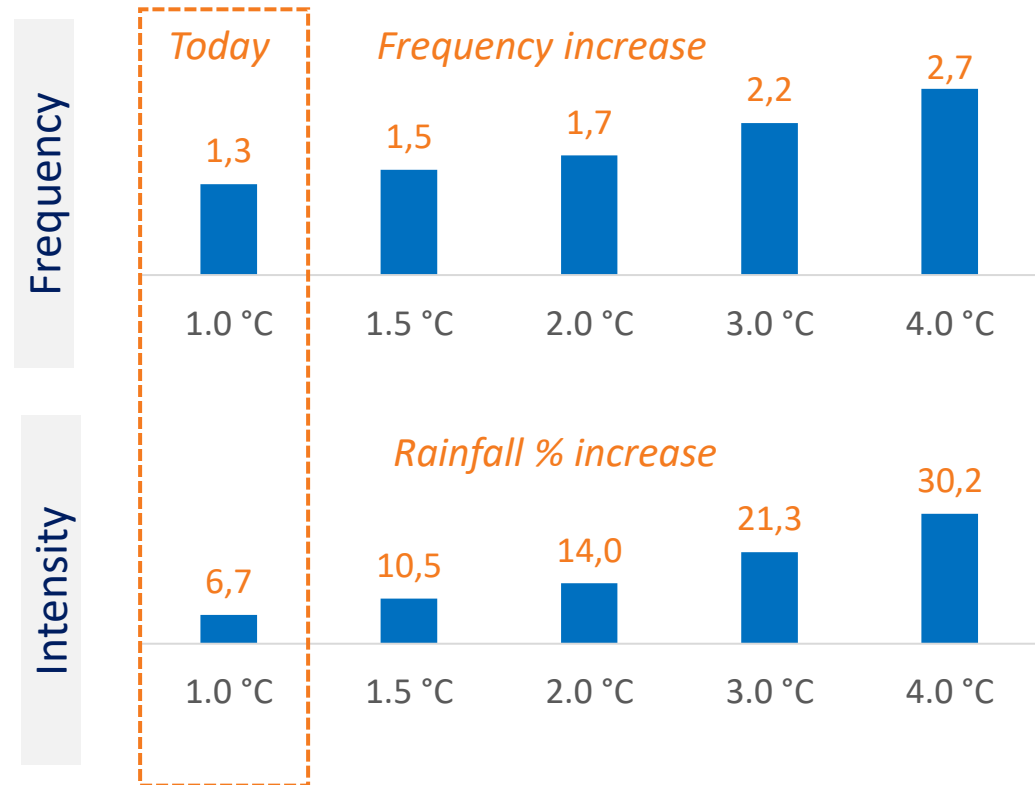
Extreme phenomena will continue to increase both in frequency and intensity

Increased frequency and intensity for extreme climate events that would occur every 10 years under the various temperature increase scenarios, median scenario versus baseline 1850-1900

Extreme temperature events



Extreme rainfall events

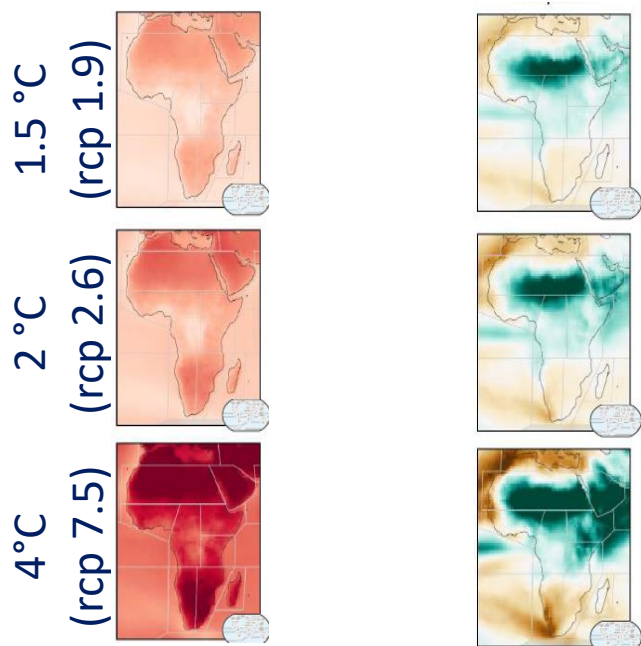


These phenomena have a direct impact on food security: spotlight on Africa

The majority of countries suffering from food insecurity are in Africa, yet the continent is expected to experience extreme weather events, with **rising temperatures and unpredictable precipitations**.

Projected changes in annual maximum temperature and mean precipitations at different degrees of global warming compared to 1851-1900

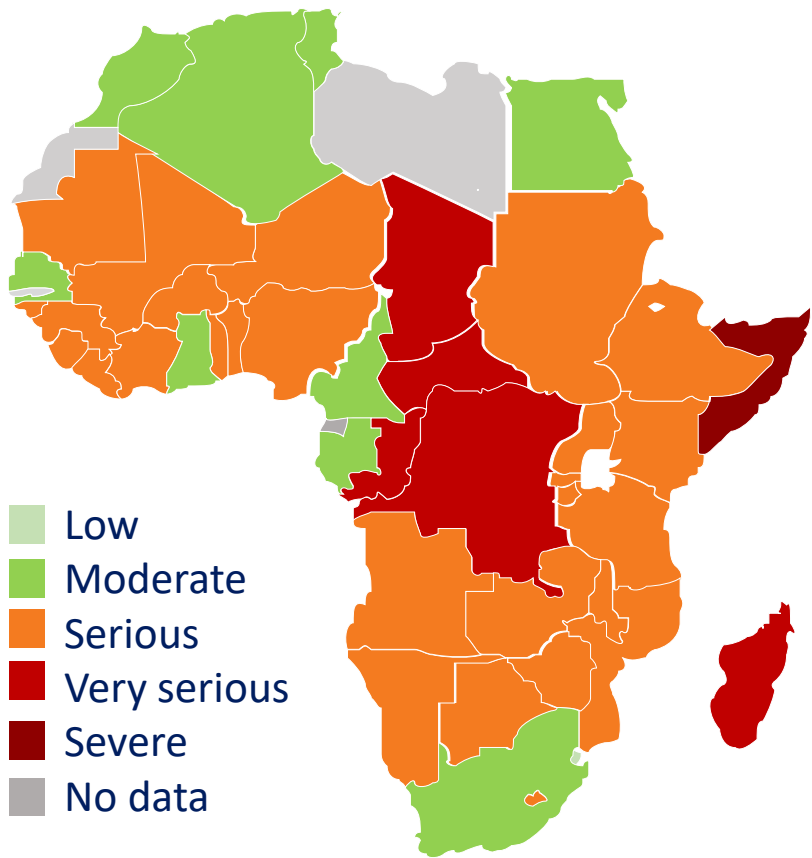
Global warming scenarios – 2100



These phenomena have direct impact on:

- **Food Availability:** due to crop failure and reductions in crop yield.
- **Food Accessibility:** long term negative effects on food access including increased poverty, negative coping strategies and erosion of livelihoods.
- **Food Stability:** impacted in the short- and medium-term by strong fluctuations in food supply, access and utilization induced by extreme climate events.

In 2022, 278 million people in Africa already suffer from chronic hunger which will be exacerbated by the impact of climate change



The severe food crisis will be exacerbated by the impact of climate change. **By 2050, warming of just 1.2 to 1.9°C** is likely to increase the number of malnourished people in Africa by 25% to 95%:

- 25% in Central Africa
- 50% in East Africa
- 85% in Southern Africa
- 95% in West Africa



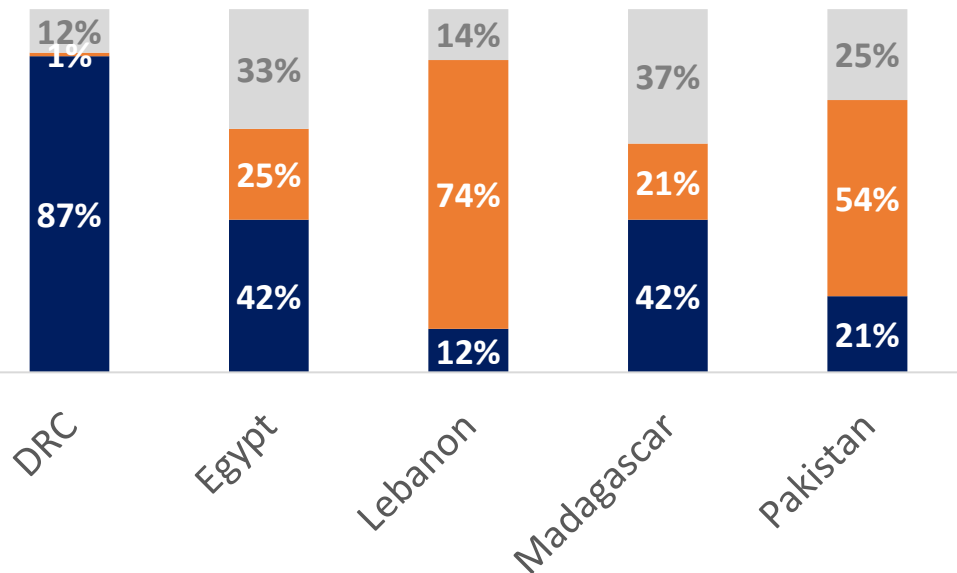
There is enough food to feed all 7bln people on the planet, yet high-income countries waste as much food as Sub-Saharan Africa produces.

Case study: the impact of the war in Ukraine on the global food crisis

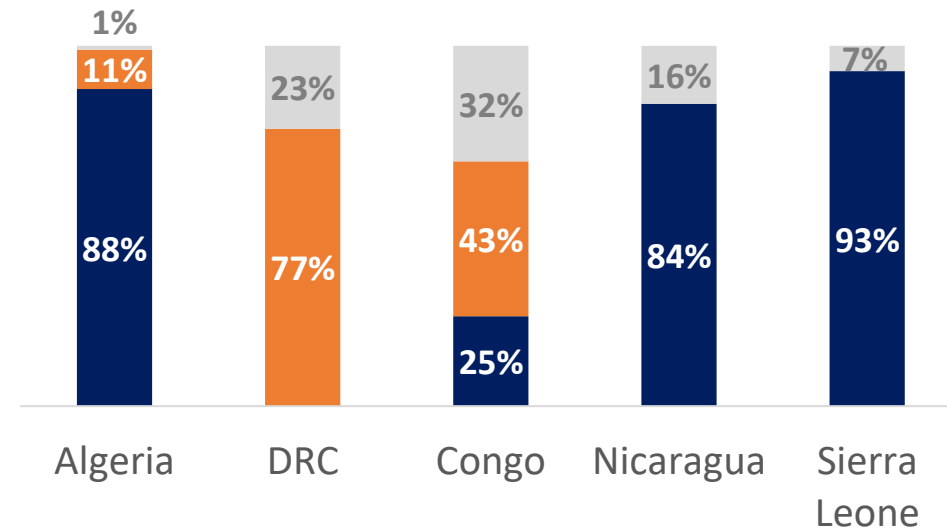
The war in Ukraine is worsening the global food crisis

Ukraine and Russia supply 30% of globally traded wheat, 20% of maize and 70% of sunflowers. The shortfall in exports is driving up prices, leaving import-dependent countries with higher import bills or less food to eat.

% of wheat import volumes from Ukraine and Russia in 2021



% of sunflower import volumes from Ukraine and Russia in 2021



■ Imports from Russian Federation

■ Imports from Ukraine

■ Imports from other countries

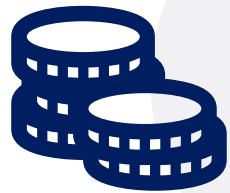
With the majority of countries being net food importers, food access is worsening

- In 2022, 78% of the countries identified as being in a major food crisis were net food importers.
 - Many, especially those in Africa and the Middle East, sourced staple foods from the Russian Federation and Ukraine in 2021, which further increased their exposure to the price fluctuations in global markets.
- By the end of 2022, food prices had increased in all countries/territories, with **food inflation being over 10% in 47 out of the 73 countries/territories** suffering from severe food crisis.
- Higher food inflation, coupled with the socio-economic crisis due to the pandemic is resulting in **higher government expenditure and government debt**.
 - By the end of 2022, a quarter of the countries suffering from acute food insecurity had a public debt over 60% of GDP.

Opportunities for international cooperation

Is international cooperation the key to end hunger globally?

Given the high interconnection between food insecurity, conflicts, economic shocks and climate change, advancing international cooperation is key to providing an effective response to a global crisis.



\$40billion to feed hungry people each year and end hunger by 2030



Technology transfer



Development of **sustainable agricultural practices**



Development of **capacity-building programs**



DRIVING
CHANGE
TODAY
FOR A PROSPEROUS
PLANET
TOMORROW



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