



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



WORLD BANK GROUP



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Food
Programme



Sweden
Sverige

Regional Forum on Accelerating Food Systems Transformation in the Arab Region

Amman, Jordan, 30-31 October, 2024



STATUS OF FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE ARAB REGION

Ahmad Mukhtar/ Regional Programme Leader a.i/ FAORNE

1. Food security and nutrition situation in the Arab region
2. Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024: examples of some policy recommendations to transform agrifood systems in the region

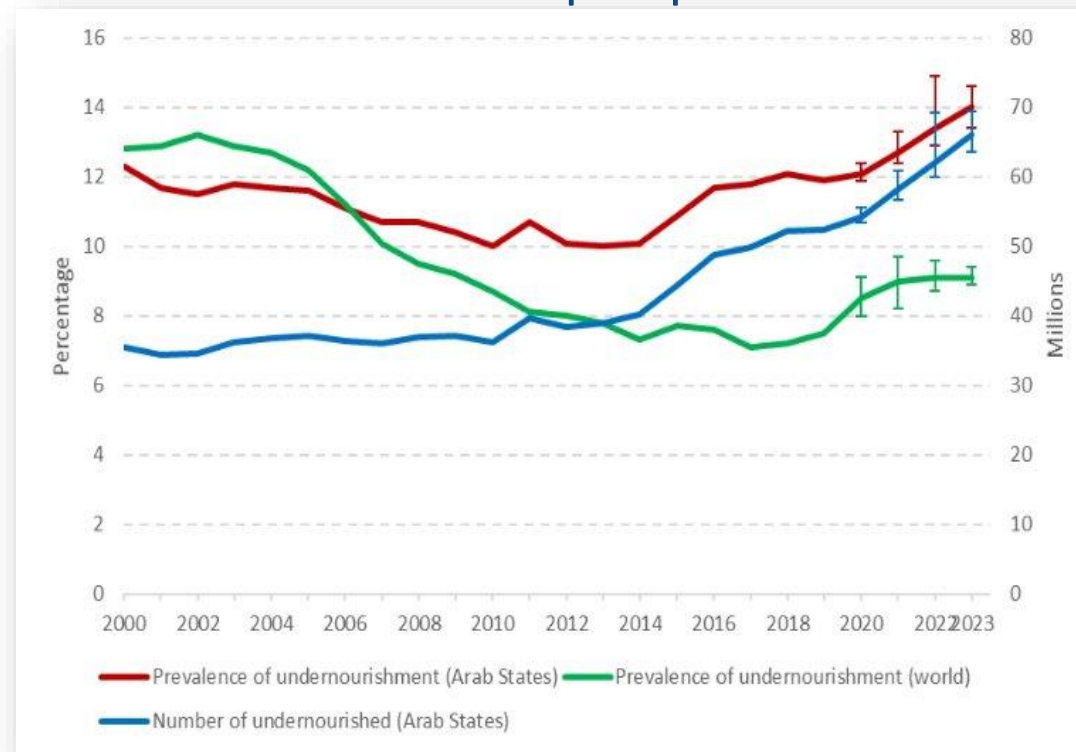


1. Food security and nutrition situation in the Arab region



Undernourishment in the Arab region

- Undernourishment in the Arab States reached a **record high in 2023**.
- The **prevalence of undernourishment (PoU)** increased by **0.6 percent** in **2023** from the previous year and reached **14 percent**.
- There were **66.1 million** undernourished people in **2023**, an increase of **4 million** from **2022**.

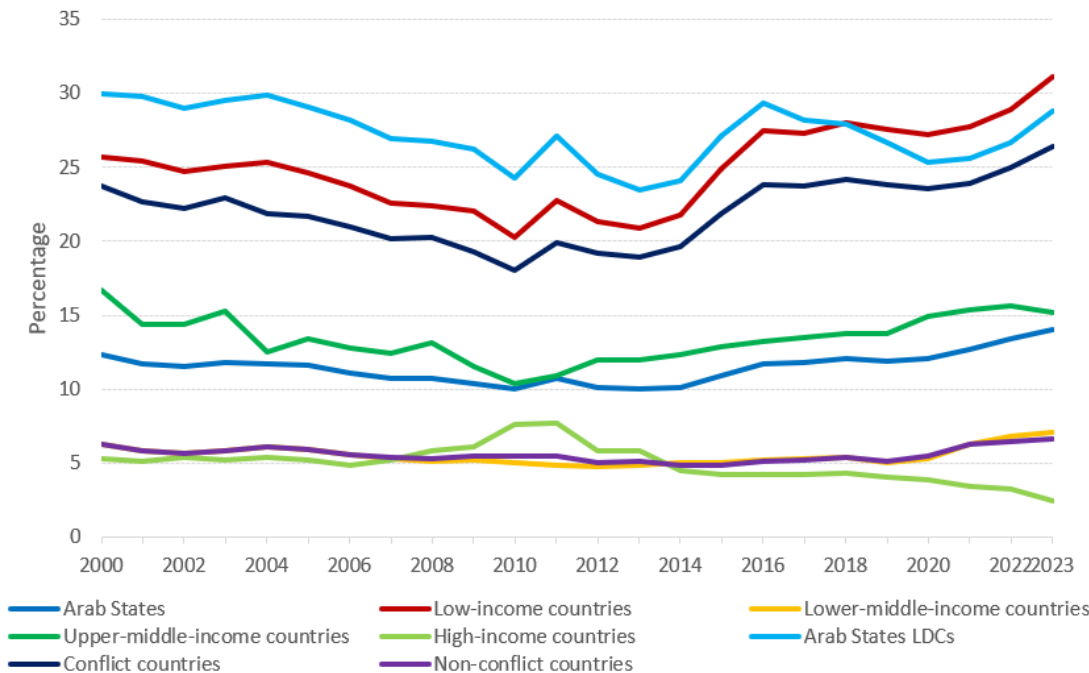


Source: FAO, Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024



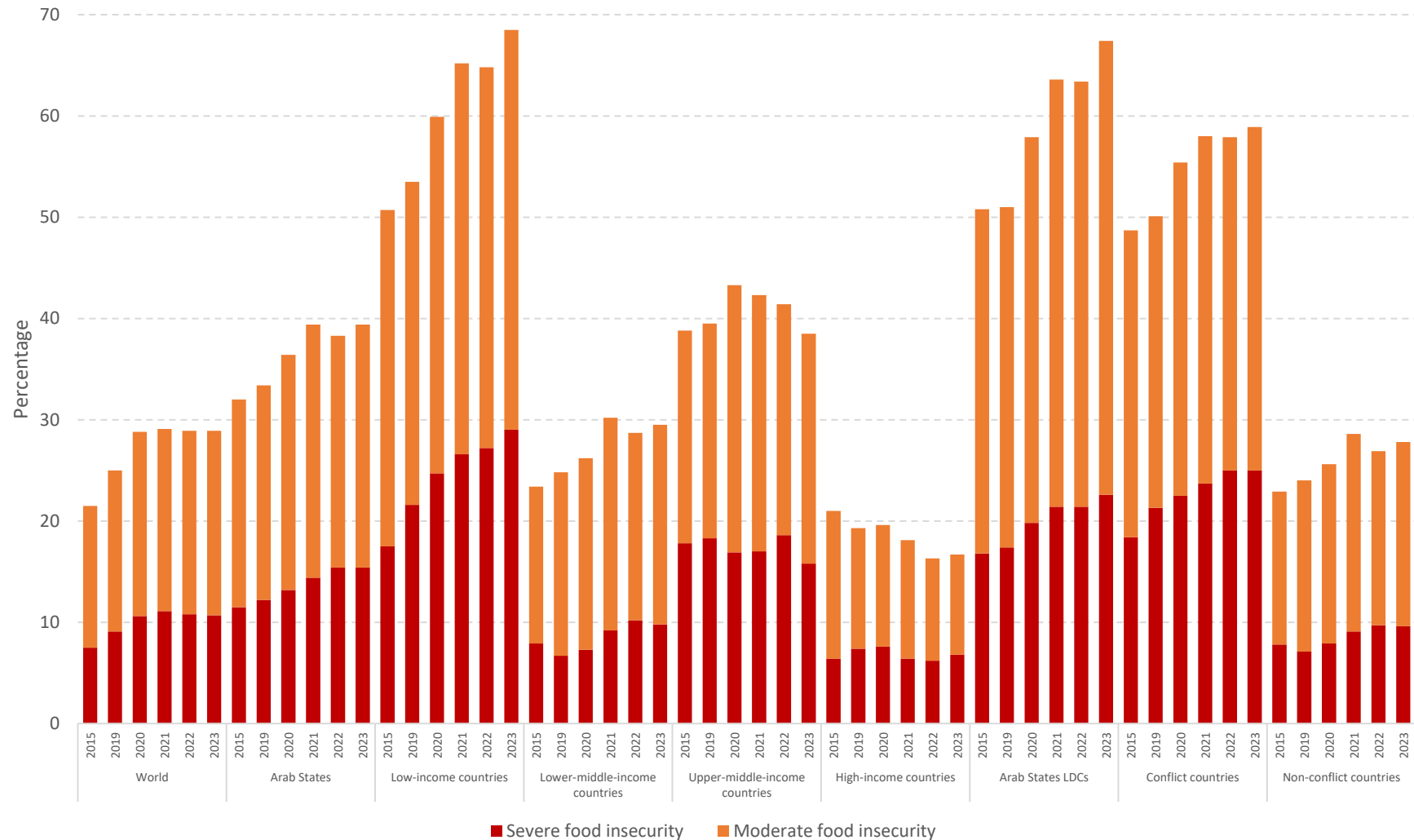
Undernourishment by country groupings

- Prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) was the highest in low-income countries, reaching **31.1 percent**, and Arab States LDCs with **28.8 percent**
- The PoU was **four times higher in conflict countries (26.4 percent)** than in non-conflict countries (**6.6 percent**).
- Hunger was the lowest in high-income countries (2.5 percent), and lower-middle-income countries (7.1 percent).



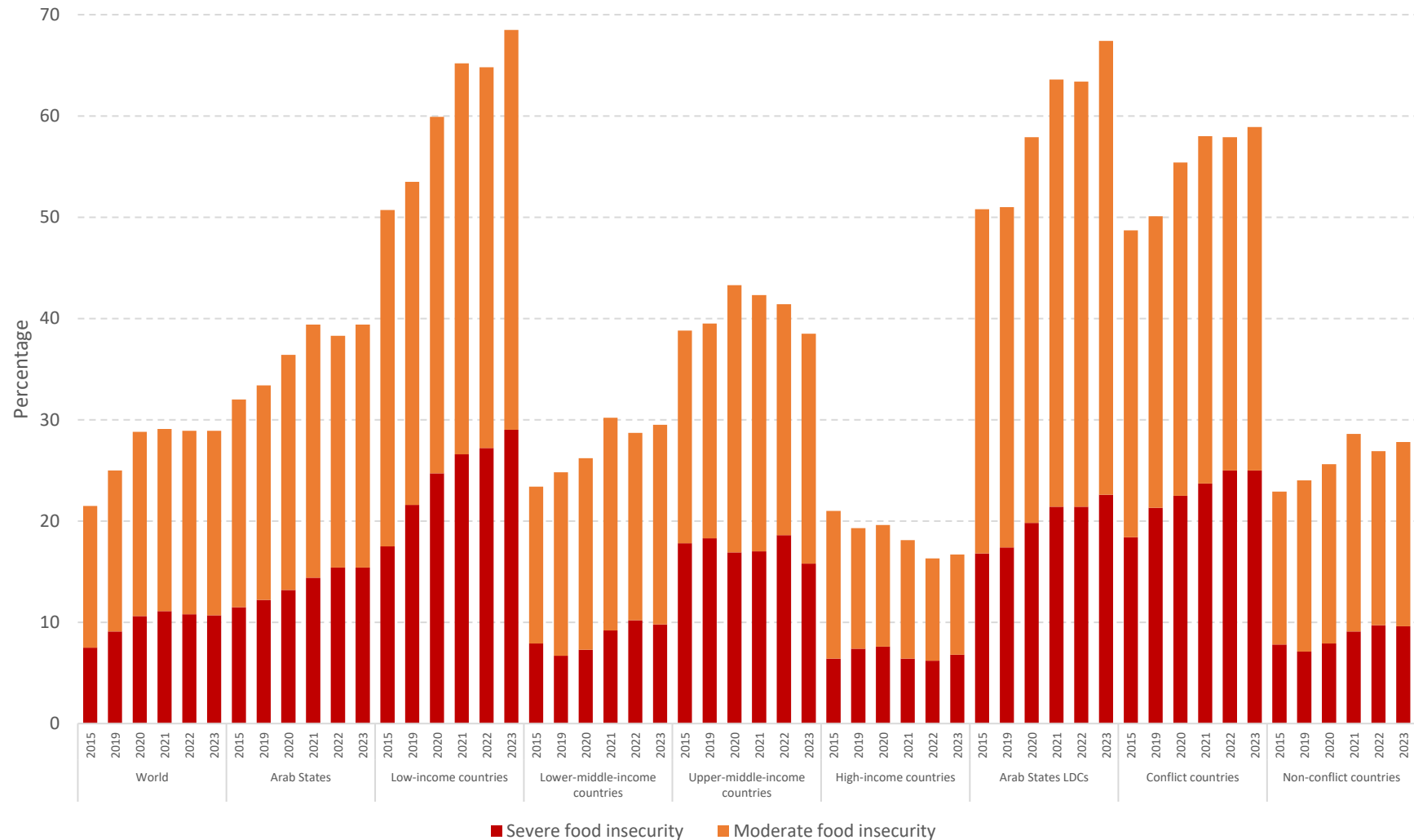
Moderate and severe food insecurity

- In 2023, moderate or severe food insecurity in the Arab region reached 39.4 percent (1.1 percentage points increase from the previous year).
- Low-income countries: 68.5 percent of population experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023 and 29.0 percent facing severe food insecurity.



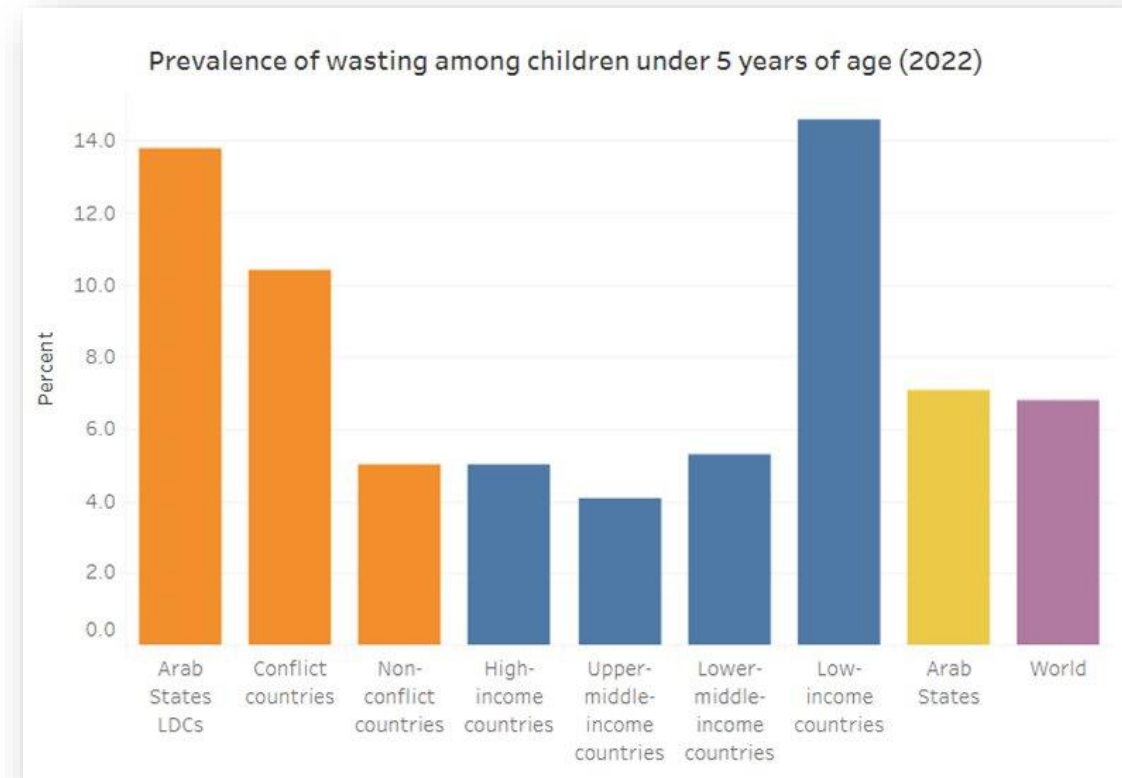
Moderate and severe food insecurity

- Arab States LDCs experienced significant increase in food insecurity, rising from 50.8 percent in 2015 to 67.4 percent in 2023, with severe food insecurity increasing from 16.8 percent to 22.6 percent.
- Conflict countries reported much higher prevalence of food insecurity in 2023 at 58.9 percent compared to non-conflict countries at 27.8 percent.



Malnutrition: Wasting

- The prevalence of **wasting** was higher in the **Arab countries (7.1 percent)** than the **world average (6.8 percent)** in 2022.
- **Low-income countries** had the highest prevalence in 2022 (**14.6 percent**).

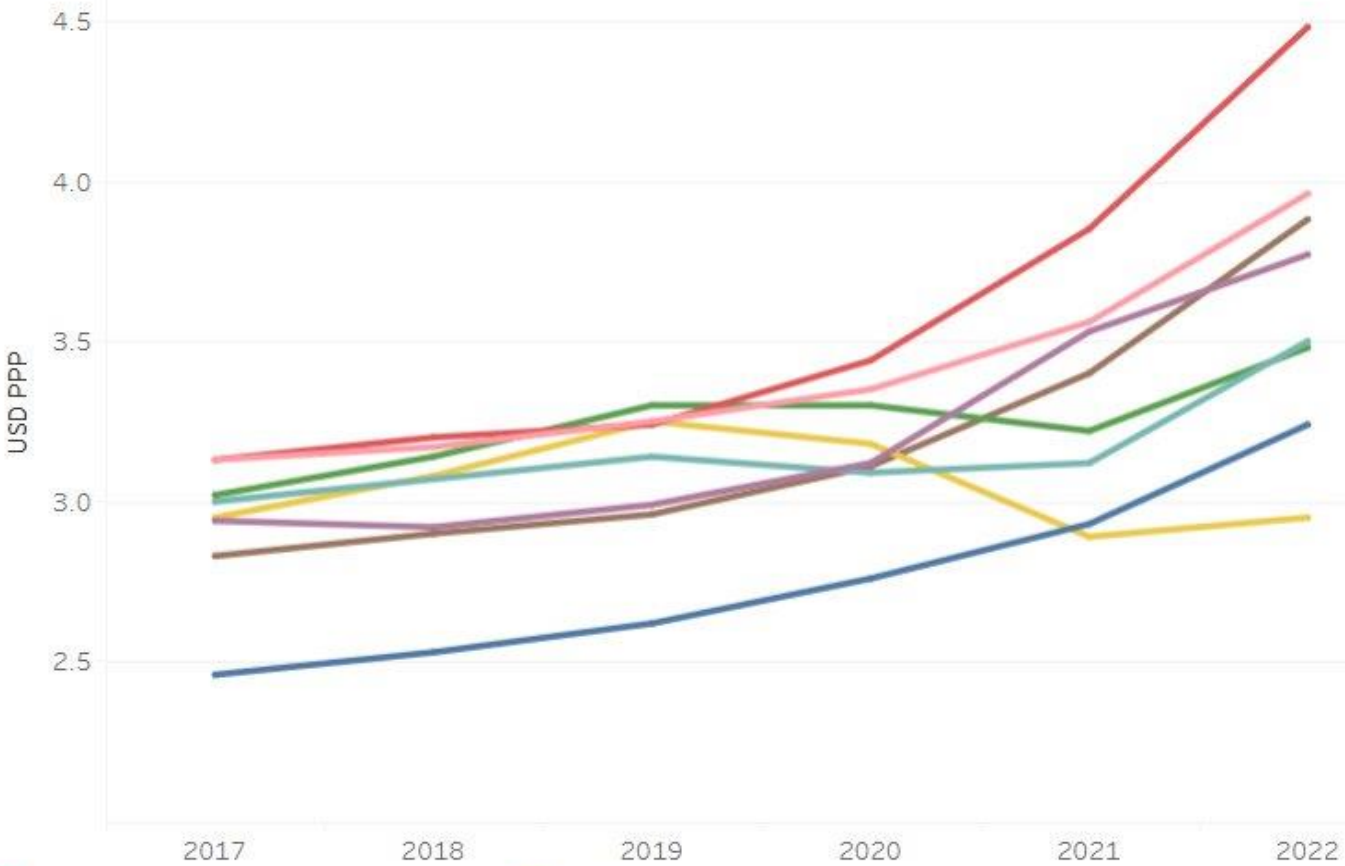


Source: FAO, Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024



Cost of A Healthy Diet

Cost of a healthy diet



- The cost of a healthy diet in the Arab States was **3.77 PPP** (purchasing power parity) dollars per person per day in 2022, up by **6.8 percent** from the year before.
- Since 2017, the cost of a healthy diet has increased by **28.2 percent**.
- In 2022, **151.3 million people**, almost third of the region's population (**32.6 percent**) could not afford a healthy diet in the Arab States.

Source: FAO, Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024



2. Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024: examples of some policy recommendations to transform agrifood systems in the region

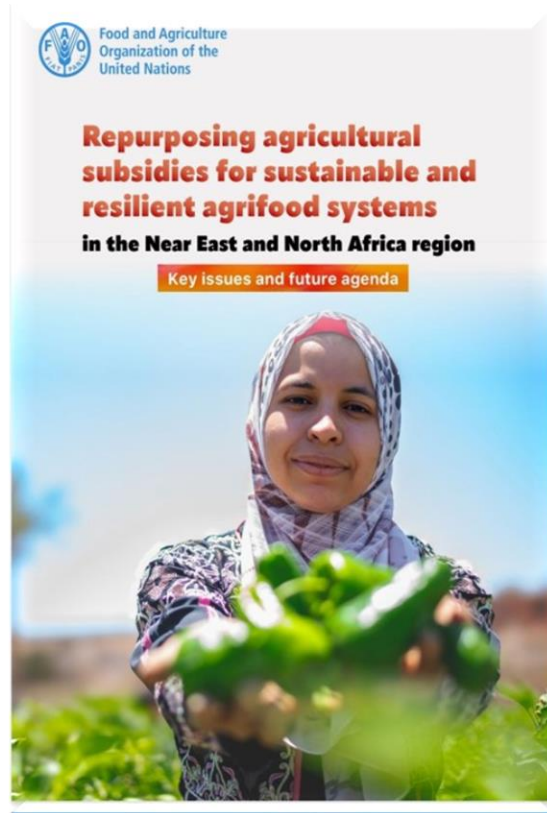


Forthcoming Regional FAO Publications

- **FAO, Near East and North Africa– Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024: Financing agrifood systems transformation**
- Will map **financial flows** into agrifood systems in the region
- Propose **policy options** for **repurposing agricultural subsidies**
- Present **innovative financial mechanisms** to help bridge the financing gap for agrifood systems transformation



Forthcoming Regional FAO Publications



- This study analyses the **current state of agricultural and food subsidies** in NENA region
- Develops policy options for **repurposing agricultural subsidies** that would lead to a more resilient and sustainable agrifood system.



Repurposing agricultural subsidies – examples

- Repurposing fiscal subsidies to consumers must be done carefully and with thorough attention to adverse circumstances that could arise, particularly due to their importance to low-income and vulnerable members of the community. Care should also be taken that the **repurposed subsidies target low-income and vulnerable populations** and that they still offer a net benefit to households.
- Current subsidies should be repurposed **to support the consumption of more healthy foods**
- **Cash transfers** provide beneficiaries with greater flexibility and can be distributed quickly and at a lower cost compared to in-kind food transfers. They can be beneficial to both producers and consumers and reduce the risks of market disruption.
- Cash transfers could be more versatile, allowing consumers to use subsidy resources to spend on foods that might include the previously subsidized staples, like bread, as well as **other nutritious foods**, such as fruits, vegetables and nuts, at the consumer's discretion

Source: FAO, Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024



Repurposing agricultural subsidies – examples

- However, where food stores are not widely available (like in some rural areas), in-kind transfers can be actually more effective for food security and nutrition purposes. In latter cases, it should be ensured that this support also the consumption of nutritious foods.
- Cash transfer alone does not provide any incentive to shift consumption from staple foods to a variety of nutritious foods. **Additional measures, such as conditionalities or nutrition education programmes,** should be considered for achieving that goal. For example, in Brazil, the Bolsa Familia program is a successful conditional cash transfer, which includes education and health components in its design (a family cannot access the cash transfer if their children have not attended school or medical checks, for example).

Source: FAO, Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024



4 As, 4 Cs, 4 Ts **ACT on Food Security**

ASPIRATIONS F. S

4 As

- Availability
- Access
- Affordability
- Adequacy

CHALLENGES

4 Cs

- Climate change
- Conflicts
- Calamities
- Consumers

Transformative Solutions

4 Ts

- Technology
- Trade
- Tapping into local resources
- Transforming Diets



Thanks

ahmad.mukthar@fao.org

