



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

E

# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

## Thirty-seventh Session

Amman, Jordan, 5-8 February 2024 and 4-5 March 2024

## Global and regional Food Security Outlook

### Executive Summary

This document presents an overview of the current food security situation in the world and in the Near East and North African (NENA) countries, or Arab States, as well as the short- and medium-term outlook for food security. It focuses on the food security dimensions of availability, access and stability and the impact of drivers such as climate variability and extremes, economic slowdowns and downturns, and conflict. Following the introduction, section II presents the global and regional trends in chronic food insecurity followed by an assessment of the acute food insecurity situation in food crisis countries. Global and regional indicators of the cost and affordability of a healthy diet are also presented. Section III discusses the agricultural outlook for the major food commodities in both the short- and medium-term and highlights emerging issues in the region.

### Suggested action by the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference is invited to call upon Members to:

- a. Take note of the information and analysis presented in this document, In particular, the deteriorating situation of food security in some NENA countries.
- b. Recognize the urgent need to work together to address the main drivers of undernourishment and food insecurity in the world: conflicts and geopolitical tensions, extreme and more frequent climatic events, economic slowdowns and downturns, and persistent inequalities.
- c. Address the need for continued urgent humanitarian assistance, including the scaling up of agricultural interventions and longer-term investments in FAO's resilience-building activities, which provides those reached with urgently needed, life-saving and cost-effective agricultural assistance.
- d. Appreciate the statistical work of FAO as the leading agency producing data on food and agriculture, relevant for monitoring food security and urge governments to provide up-to-date and complete data and statistics to FAO to allow timely assessments and analyses to inform policy decisions.
- e. Provide guidance on FAO's future support to the region, as deemed appropriate.

Documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:*

Máximo Torero Cullen  
Chief Economist  
Tel: +39 06570 50869  
Email: [Maximo.Torero@fao.org](mailto:Maximo.Torero@fao.org)

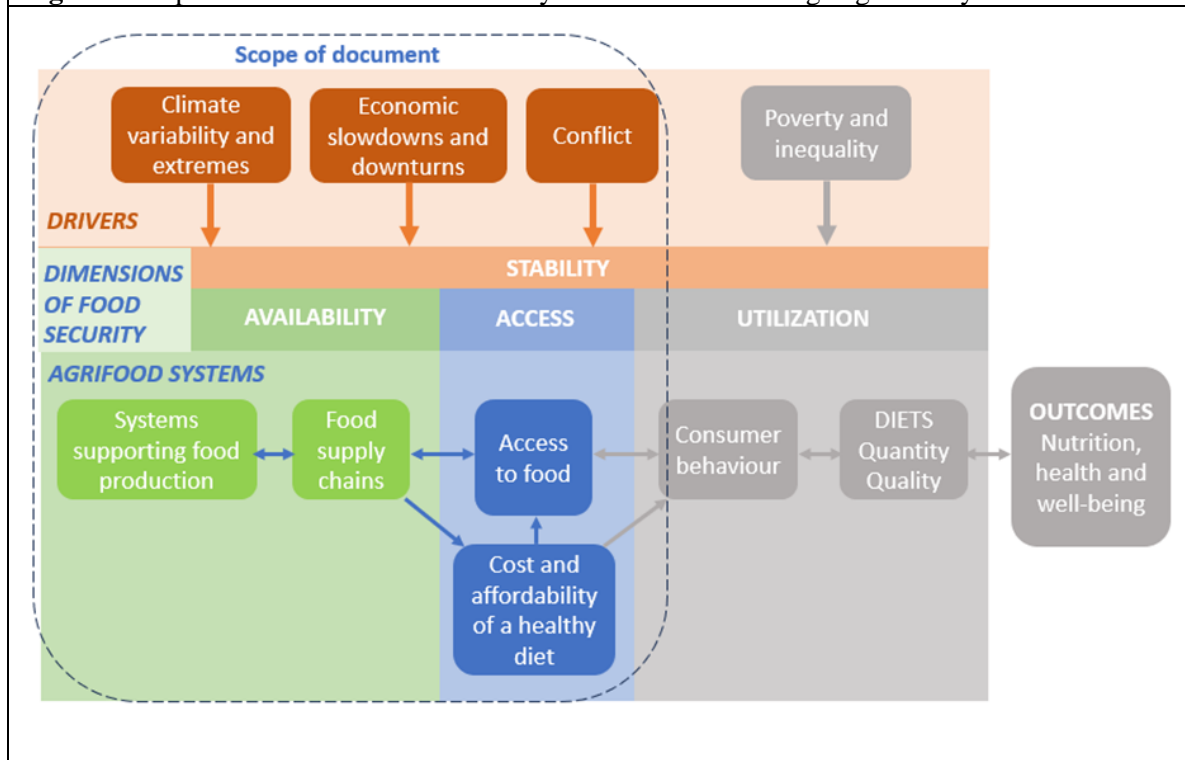
or

RNE NERC Secretariat  
FAO-RNE-NERC@FAO.ORG

## I. Introduction

1. The assessment of the global and regional food security situation presented in this document reflects a world that was beginning to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic when the war erupted in Ukraine in early 2022, involving two major producers of agricultural commodities in the world and sending shockwaves through commodity and energy markets. The pandemic, the ensuing economic rebound, the war in Ukraine and the soaring prices of food, agricultural inputs and energy, due in part to the war have all played out differently across regions and populations, with differing impacts on hunger and food insecurity. Many countries were hit hard by higher food and energy import bills, while others benefitted from the higher prices. Many population groups were not buoyed up by the economic recovery or were bearing the brunt of higher food and energy prices – or both.
2. This document presents an overview of the current food security situation in the world and in Arab States, as well as the short- and medium-term outlook for food security. As widely recognized, food security can be conceptualized by four dimensions: availability, access, stability and utilization of food (Figure 1). This document focuses on the dimensions of availability, access and stability as reflected by the indicators used to describe the food security situation and, more importantly, by the elements that influence the outlook of food security presented in the document, which are based on the analysis of aggregate supply and demand for food. At the same time, this analysis is influenced by the impact of drivers such as climate variability and extremes, economic slowdowns and downturns, and conflict. In this sense, the dimension of utilization and other key drivers, such as poverty and inequality, are beyond the scope of the document.
3. Following this conceptual framework, section II presents the global and regional trends in chronic food insecurity followed by an assessment of the acute food insecurity situation in food crisis countries. Global and regional indicators of the cost and affordability of a healthy diet are also presented. Section III discusses the agricultural outlook for the major food commodities in both the short- and medium-term and highlights emerging issues in the region.

**Figure 1.** Impacts of drivers on food security are transmitted through agrifood systems



Source: Adapted from FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO. 2020. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*. Rome, FAO; and from HLPE. 2017. *Nutrition and food systems. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security* (September 2017). Rome, FAO.

## II. Global and regional food security situation

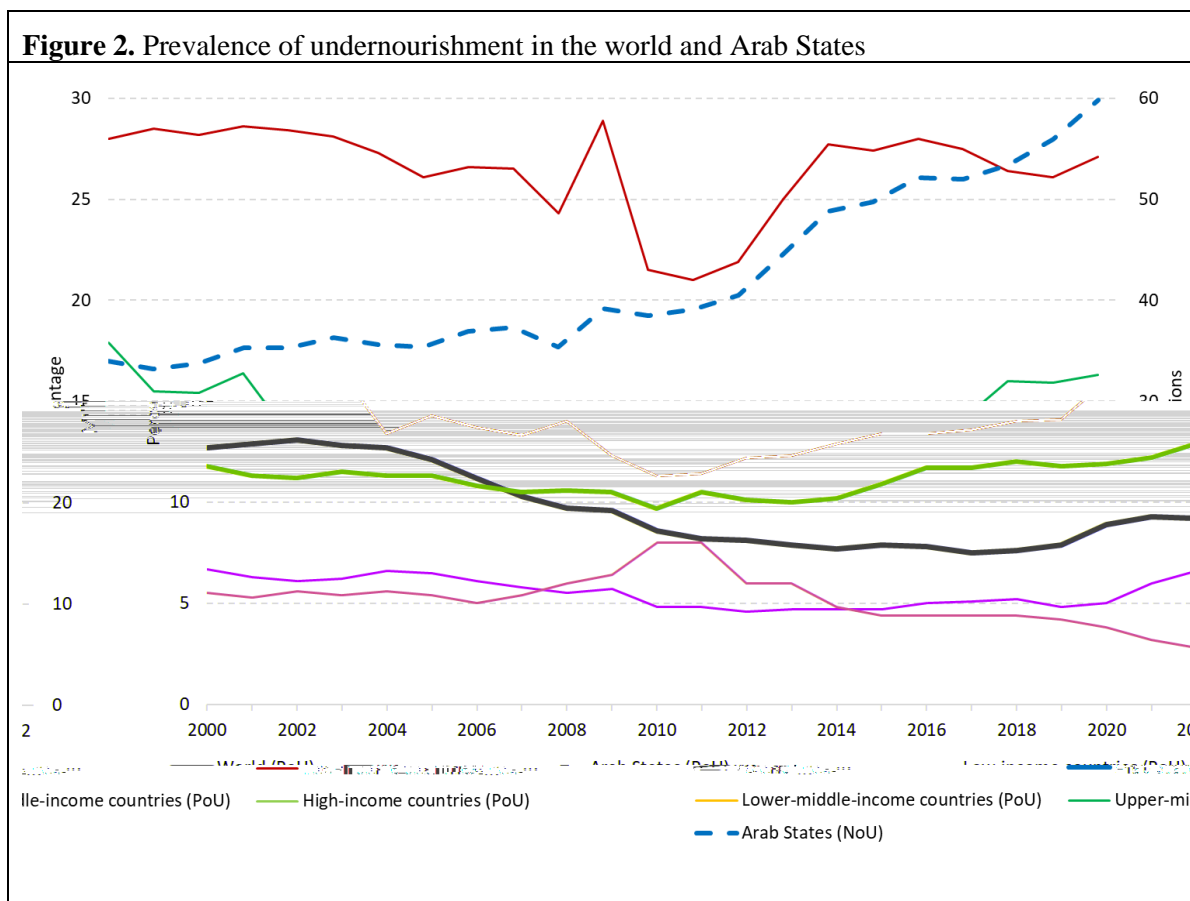
### A. Trends in chronic food insecurity

4. After rising sharply in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, global hunger, measured by the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU), remained relatively unchanged from 2021 to 2022, affecting around 9.2 percent of the world population in 2022, compared with 7.9 percent in 2019. It is estimated that between 691 and 783 million people in the world faced hunger in 2022. Considering the midrange (about 735 million), 122 million more people faced hunger in 2022 than in 2019, before the global pandemic.

5. However, undernourishment in the Arab States continued to rise, reaching its highest value since 2000 at 12.9 percent in 2022, well above the global average (Figure 2).

6. Within Arab Countries, in 2022, the PoU was the highest in low-income countries<sup>1</sup> (27.1 percent) and was higher among upper-middle-income countries (16.3 percent) compared to the average for the region. It was considerably lower in lower-middle-income countries (6.6 percent), which includes Algeria, with a PoU below 2.5 percent. The proportion of the population facing hunger in the group of high-income countries was very low with a PoU of 2.8 percent on average.

<sup>1</sup> The Arab States are grouped by their income level as defined by the World Bank for fiscal year 2023: low-income economies include Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen; lower-middle-income economies include Algeria, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia; upper-middle-income economies include Iraq, Jordan and Libya; and high-income economies include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.



Source: Based on FAO. 2023. Suite of Food Security Indicators. In: *FAOSTAT*. Rome. [Cited July 2023]. <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS>

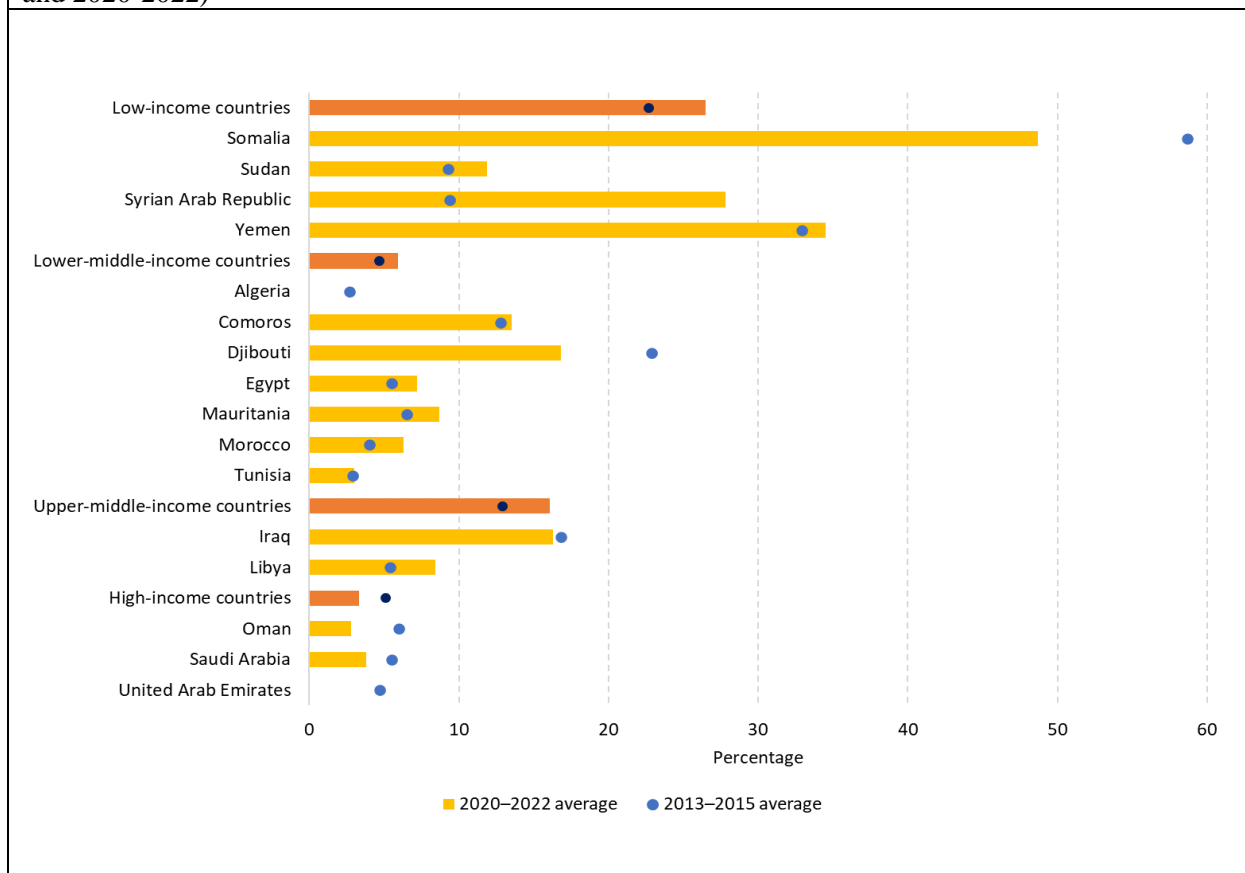
7. Hunger in the Arab region reached its lowest level in 2010, when 9.7 percent of the region's population suffered from hunger. Considering recent trends, hunger increased in the region from 11.8 percent in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, to 12.9 percent in 2022. The two crises had the most significant impact in lower-middle-income countries (37.5 percent increase) and upper-middle-income countries (15.6 percent increase). On the other hand, high-income countries succeeded in decreasing undernourishment significantly by one-third since 2019, as oil-exporting countries benefitted from the oil price boom in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery and from the increase of oil prices driven by the effects of the war in Ukraine.

8. The number of undernourished people in the Arab States reached 59.8 million in 2022, up from 55.9 million in 2021 and from 34.0 million in 2000. In 2022, 8.1 percent of the world's undernourished people lived in Arab States. Over half (32.6 million) of undernourished people in the Arab region lived in low-income countries, 14.4 million in lower-middle-income countries and 11.1 million in upper-middle-income countries.

9. Undernourishment varies significantly within each country income group (Figure 3). Somalia had the highest PoU among low-income countries; nearly half the population of Somalia suffered from hunger in 2020-2022, although it was reduced by 10 percentage points compared to 2013-2015 (before the launch of the Sustainable Development Goal [SDG] agenda). Somalia is followed by Yemen (34.5 percent), the Syrian Arab Republic (27.8 percent), and Djibouti (16.8 percent). The much higher PoU level in upper-middle-income countries compared to lower-middle-income countries can be partially explained by the fact that this country income group includes two conflict-hit countries, Iraq and Libya, where 16.3 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively, of the population was undernourished in 2020-2022. The lower-middle-income group consists of many countries that have relatively well-developed agricultural sectors with a larger food production basis, such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Among the lower-middle-income countries, in 2020-2022, hunger was the highest in Djibouti (16.8 percent), followed by Comoros

(13.5 percent), Mauritania (8.7 percent), Egypt (7.2 percent), Morocco (6.3 percent), Tunisia (3.0 percent) and Algeria (below 2.5 percent). Improvements were seen in Algeria and Djibouti in comparison to 2013–2015. High-income countries, which benefit from high oil export revenues, all made progress in relation to 2013–2015, and all had low levels of hunger: Oman (2.8 percent), Saudi Arabia (3.8 percent) and United Arab Emirates (below 2.5 percent).

**Figure 3.** Prevalence of undernourishment in Arab States by income group and country (2013–2015 and 2020–2022)



Note: The PoU is less than 2.5 percent for Algeria and the United Arab Emirates in 2020–2022.

Source: Based on FAO. 2023. Suite of Food Security Indicators. In: *FAOSTAT*. Rome. [Cited July 2023].

<https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS>

10. It is projected that almost 600 million people in the world will be chronically undernourished in 2030, pointing to the immense challenge of achieving the global SDG target to eradicate hunger. For the Arab States, the number of undernourished is projected to increase from the current 59.9 million to 65.9 million people by 2030.

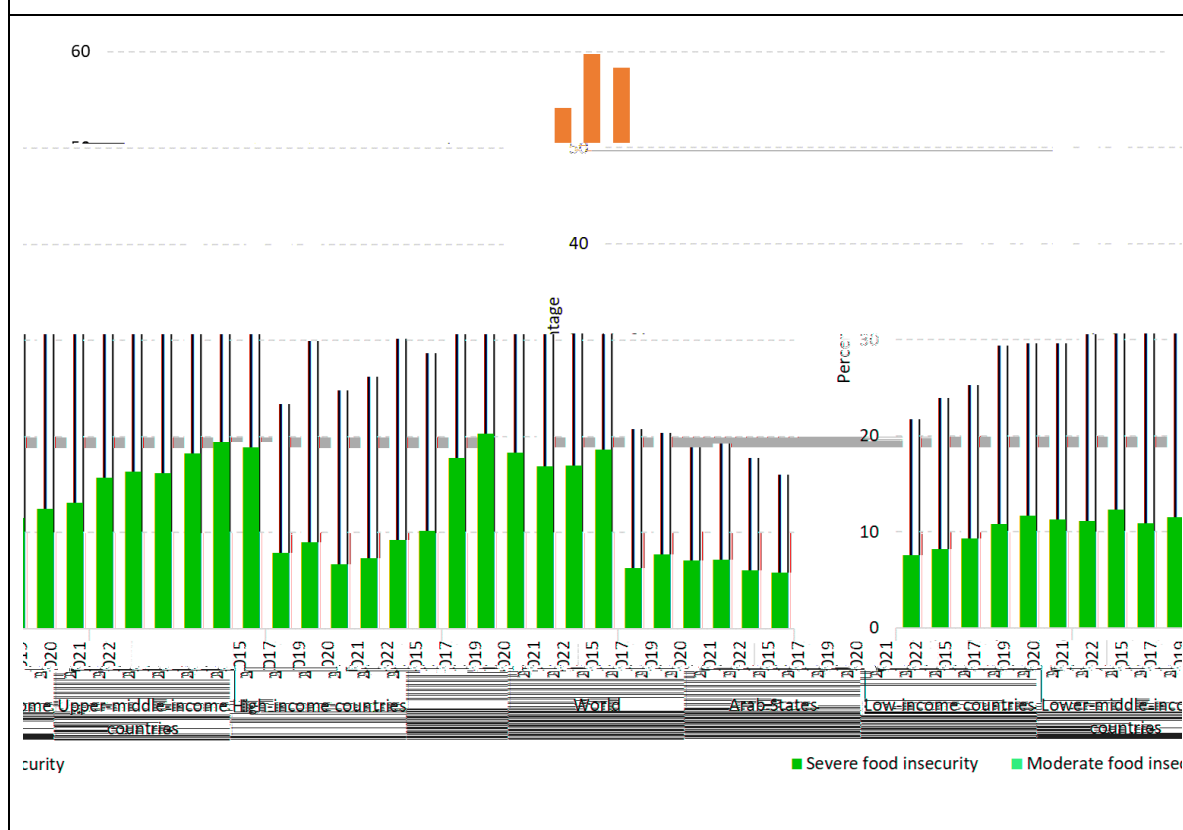
11. The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is an estimate of the proportion of the population facing moderate or severe constraints on their ability to obtain sufficient food over the course of a year. People face moderate food insecurity when they are uncertain of their ability to obtain food and have been forced to reduce, at times over the year, the quality and/or quantity of food they consume due to lack of money or other resources. Severe food insecurity means that individuals have likely run out of food, experienced hunger and, at the most extreme, have gone for days without eating, putting their health and well-being at serious risk.

12. The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the world remained unchanged for the second year in a row after increasing sharply from 2019 to 2020 (Figure 4). About 29.6 percent of the global population – 2.4 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure in 2022, of which about 900 million (11.3 percent of people in the world) were severely food insecure.

13. In the Arab States, the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity was 36.6 percent in 2022, equivalent to 170 million people. This is 1.3 percentage points lower than in 2021, but 7 percentage points above the global average. The prevalence of severe food insecurity in Arab States increased slightly from 12.5 percent in 2021 to 13.1 percent in 2022. Of the 900 million people in the world suffering from severe food insecurity in 2022, 61 million live in Arab States.

14. The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity was 58.3 percent in low-income countries in the region and 16.0 percent in high-income countries in 2022. Like the PoU estimates for the different country income groups, food insecurity was higher among upper-middle-income countries in the region compared to lower-middle-income countries – 41.4 percent compared to 28.7 percent.

**Figure 4.** Prevalence of food insecurity in Arab States by country income group



Source: FAO. 2023. Suite of Food Security Indicators. In: *FAOSTAT*. Rome. [Cited July 2023].

<https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS>

15. Food insecurity in the region was above global levels in all years between 2015 and 2022, on average by 8.3 percentage points for moderate or severe food insecurity and 2.4 percentage points for severe food insecurity. Food insecurity increased across all country income groups in the region during the same period, with the exception of the high-income country group, where the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity declined from 20.8 percent in 2015 to 16.0 percent in 2022.

16. The prevalence of food insecurity was higher among women than among men, both globally and in the Arab region. Worldwide, the gender gap in 2022 was 2.5 percentage points for moderate or severe food insecurity and 1.1 percentage points for severe food insecurity. In Arab States, the gender gap is larger: 5.4 percentage points for moderate or severe food insecurity and 2.7 percentage points for severe food insecurity.

### Acute food insecurity situation in selected food crisis countries<sup>2</sup>

17. When considering all countries in the world classified as “food crisis” countries, 258 million people have been estimated to be facing “high levels”<sup>3</sup> of acute food insecurity in 2022. This includes 35 million people facing emergency levels and 376 thousand in catastrophe.

18. Due to the evolving scope and changed/increased coverage of the various editions of the reports, it is difficult to compile consistent series of comparable figures over time. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the total number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity, as reported in the 2023 edition of the *Global Report on Food Crises* (GRFC), has increased for the third year in a row, from 155 million in 2020 to 193 million in 2021, to 258 million in 2022.

19. In the region, it is estimated that about 51 million people may have faced high levels of acute food insecurity (that is, corresponding to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] Phase 3 or higher), across ten countries in 2022.<sup>4</sup> The vast majority (81 percent) of these were in Yemen (17.37 million), the Syrian Arab Republic (12.6 million), and the Sudan (11.65 million). The other largest numbers were 5.59 million in Somalia, 1.98 million in Lebanon (including both Lebanese residents and Palestinian refugees), and 1.54 million in Palestine. The figure includes the 4.6 million people in Yemen, 3.1 million in the Sudan, 1.52 million in Somalia and 0.31 million in Lebanon, classified as being in a state of Emergency (IPC Phase 4), and also the 214 000 people in Somalia and 31 000 people in Yemen classified as being in a state of Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

---

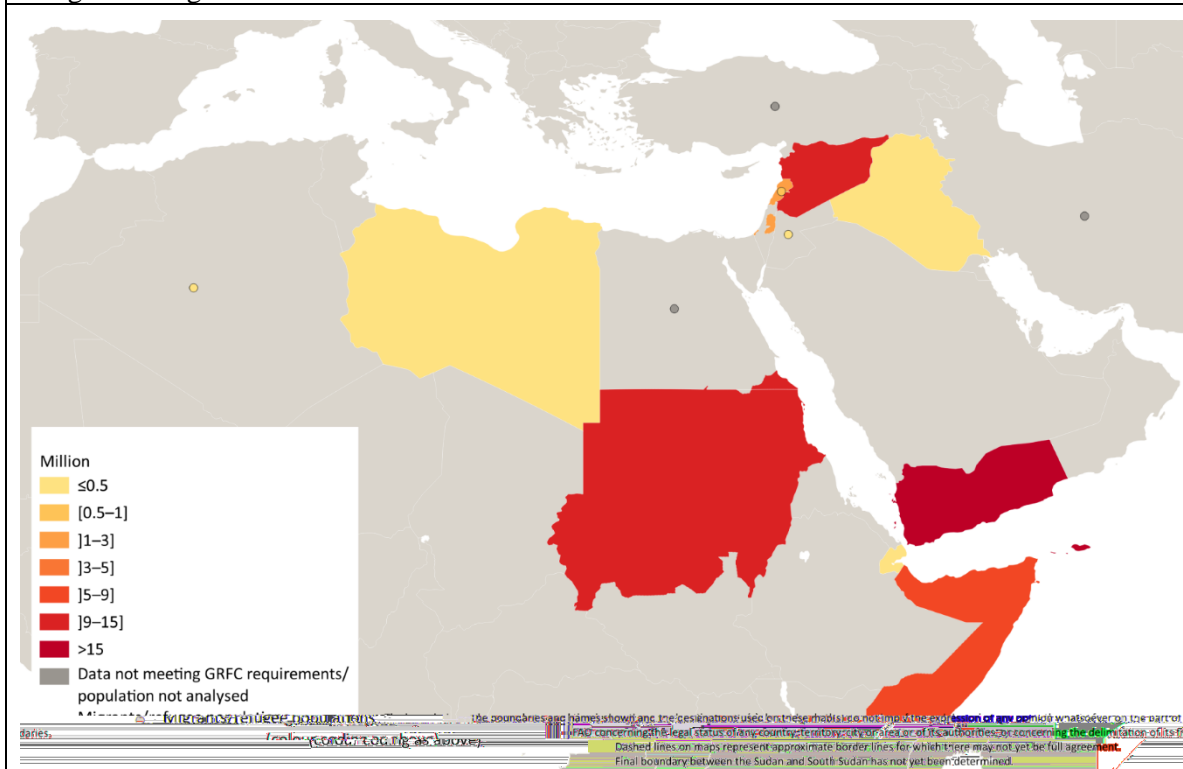
<sup>2</sup> This section is based on the *Global Report on Food Crises 2023* (GRFC), published in May and on the GRFC 2023 Mid-year update published in September. Additional information on Hunger hotspots of highest concern is derived from the FAO/WFP Hunger hotspot report published in end-October.

<sup>3</sup> Food insecurity is considered to have reached “high levels” when it corresponds to phase 3 (“crisis”) or more according to the definitions set by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analytic approach. See <https://www.ipcinfo.org>.

<sup>4</sup> The assessments covered Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, plus specific population groups in Algeria (Sahrawi refugees), Iraq (internally displaced persons and returnees), and Jordan (Syrian refugees). Available data on the situation of Syrian refugees in Türkiye and Egypt, and on the Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran did not meet the requirements for inclusion in the assessment. For details, see [FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2023](#).



**Figure 5.** Number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2022 in countries/territories in the Near East and North Africa, affected by major food crises, and among refugees in Algeria and Jordan



Note: Available data on the situation of Syrian refugees in Türkiye and Egypt did not meet the requirements for inclusion in the assessment

Source: the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) and the Global Network Against Food Crises. 2023. *2023 Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC)*. Rome. [www.fsinplatform.org/globalreport-food-crises-2023](http://www.fsinplatform.org/globalreport-food-crises-2023)

20. The Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan and Yemen continued to be among the countries facing the world's largest protracted food crises in 2022. In these countries combined, the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity increased from 28.15 million in 2021 to 29.43 million in 2022. This increase was attributable to an additional 1 million people in "Crisis" or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in Yemen between the first five months of 2021 and the same period in 2022, bringing the total to over 17 million people or 55 percent of the population, the highest share since 2017 (60 percent) (GRFC 2018).

21. As of August 2023, escalating numbers of acute food insecurity were driven by the conflict in the Sudan. A reduction in the number of people in "Catastrophe" (IPC Phase 5) in Somalia was partly linked to the provision of humanitarian assistance and to improved access to income-generating activities following a better late-2022 rainy season. Weather extremes are the main drivers in Somalia, while conflict/insecurity is the main driver in the Sudan and remains an important factor in Somalia.

22. Also, still as of August 2023, 20.7 million people among the Syrian refugees in Jordan, both residents and Syrian refugees in Lebanon and in Yemen are estimated to be facing high levels of acute food insecurity.

23. As of October 2023, the Sudan remains at the highest concern level of hunger hotspots. The conflict, which started in April 2023, continues to severely impact its neighbouring countries. The magnitude and pace of displacement persist at an alarming level, with almost 5.6 million people displaced by mid-September 2023. This includes 1.2 million people who have crossed the border into neighbouring countries, representing a sixfold increase in cross-border movements, up from 220 000 people in May 2023.

24. Acute food insecurity is expected to persist in Somalia, driven by the lingering impacts of the 2020–2023 prolonged drought, the anticipated decline in the level of humanitarian assistance because of funding constraints, and flooding resulting from an anticipated above-average 2023 October–December rainy season. Conflict and insecurity, as well as high food prices, continue to exacerbate needs.
25. Conflict/insecurity remains the primary driver in Yemen and for refugee populations in Jordan, while economic shocks are the main driver for resident and refugee populations in Lebanon.
26. Palestine was added to the list of countries of highest concern monitored by FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) in the latest Hunger Hotspot report,<sup>5</sup> due to the severe escalation of conflict in October 2023. Later, an IPC brief report released on 21 December<sup>6</sup> revealed that by 7 December 2023, over 90 percent of the population in the Gaza Strip (about 2.08 million people) could be classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (“Crisis” or worse). The report also projected that under the most likely scenario in terms of hostilities, displacement of population and no possibility to increase volume and targeting of humanitarian assistance, the entire population of the Gaza Strip will be in IPC Phase 3 or above, meaning to be in urgent need of humanitarian food assistance. This extreme situation has never been reached anywhere in the world in any of the IPC acute food insecurity assessments conducted, since the IPC practice began in 2004.
27. The IPC assessment pointed to 30 percent of the population in the Northern Governorates and to 25 percent of the displaced population in the Southern Governorates of the Gaza Strip having reached catastrophe levels (IPC Phase 5) of acute food insecurity by 7 December 2023. Because of that, a Famine Review Committee was activated. Its conclusion was that if the current condition persists or deteriorates, there is a risk of famine for a period that extends to May 2024.<sup>7</sup>

### **Evolution in the Cost and Affordability of a Healthy Diet**

28. The cost of a healthy diet in the Arab States in 2021 was 3.55 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) dollars per person per day, slightly lower than the global estimate of 3.66 PPP dollars. Over the years since 2017, the cost of a healthy diet in the region has seen a yearly increase, with a notable 2.5 percent rise between 2020 and 2021. This upward trend varied across income categories, with high-income countries experiencing the highest increase (6.4 percent), followed by lower-middle-income countries (4.4 percent) and upper-middle-income countries (3.5 percent).
29. In 2021, a significant portion of the region's population, 43.8 percent or 141.6 million people, could not afford a healthy diet. An increase of 7.9 million people unable to afford a healthy diet between 2017 and 2020 was partly compensated by an improvement in 2021, when the diet was out of reach for 3.8 million fewer people. The Sudan reported the highest proportion of people unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021 (85.4 percent), totalling 67.3 million individuals, meaning that nearly half of the total population that was unable to afford the diet in the region lives in this country (Figure 6). In lower-middle-income countries, a healthy diet was unaffordable for 44 percent of the population, showing variability among countries. Around 61 to 65 percent of people were unable to afford a healthy diet in Djibouti, Egypt and Mauritania, while the proportion was four times lower in Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, ranging between 17 and 20 percent. In upper-middle-income countries, 16 percent of people lacked access to healthy diets, slightly more than in 2017.

---

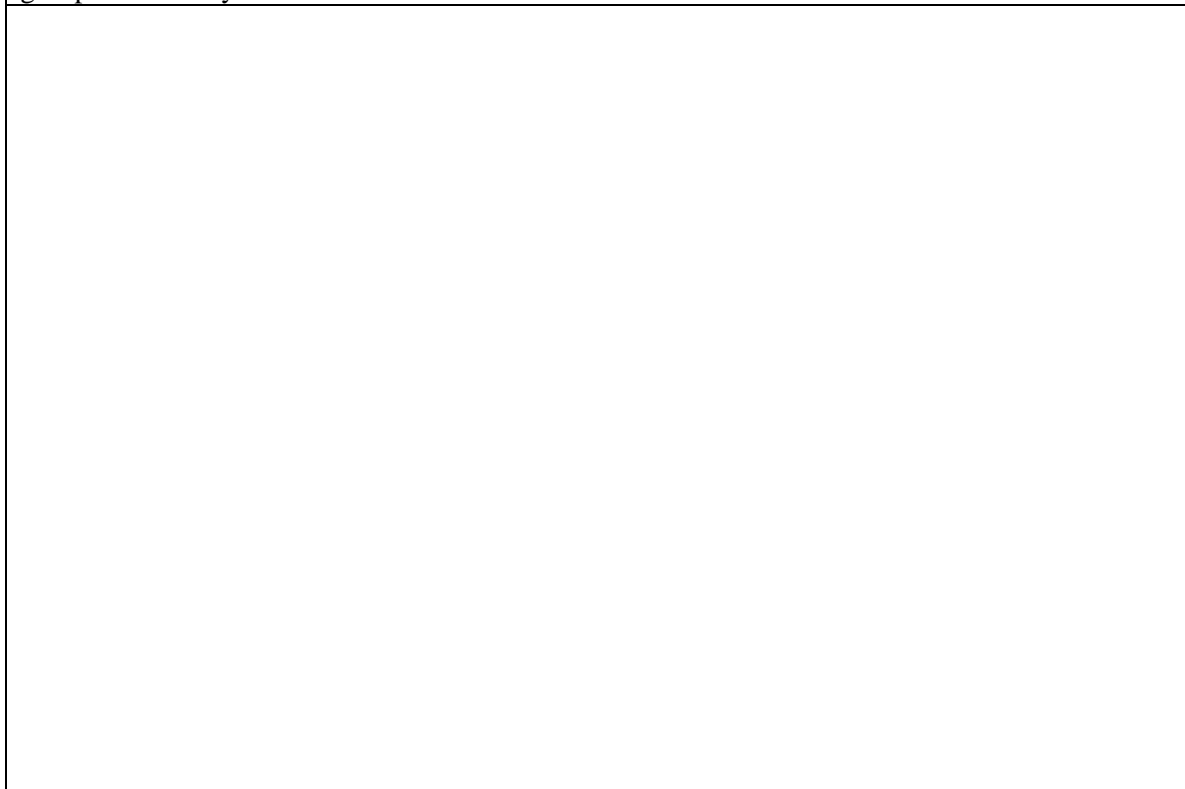
<sup>5</sup> See WFP and FAO. 2023. *Hunger Hotspots. FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: November 2023 to April 2024 Outlook*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8419en>

<sup>6</sup> See

[https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Gaza\\_Acute\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_Nov2023\\_Feb2024.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Nov2023_Feb2024.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Famine\\_Review\\_Report\\_Gaza.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Review_Report_Gaza.pdf)

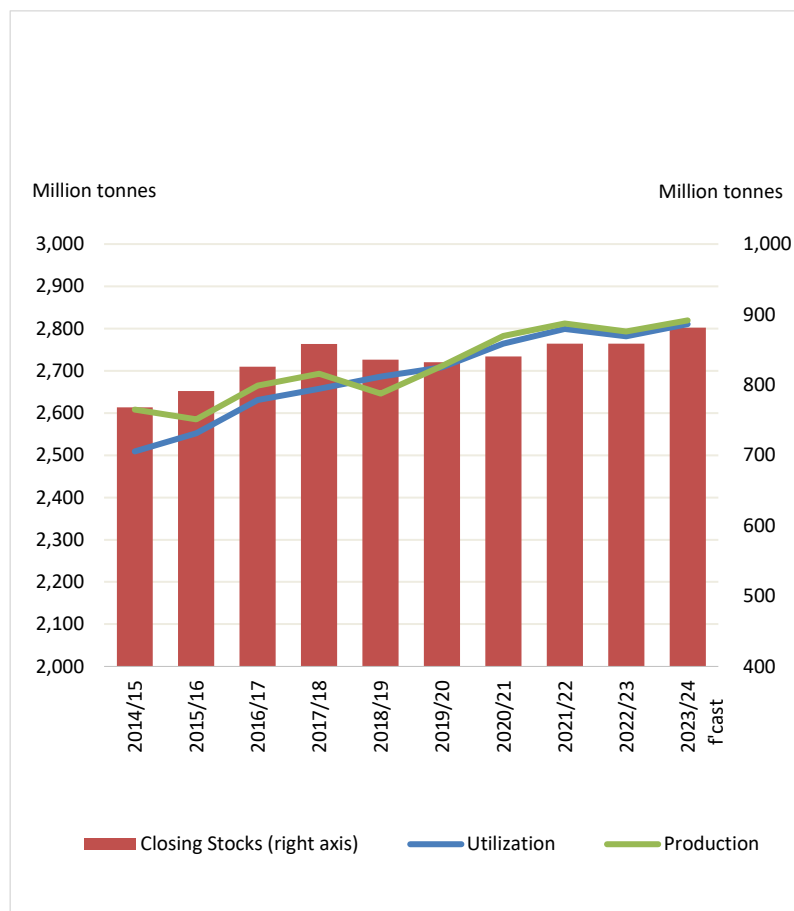
**Figure 6.** Percentage of people unable to afford a healthy diet in Arab State by country income group and country in 2017 and 2021



Source: Based on FAO. 2023. Cost and Affordability of a Healthy Diet (CoAHD). In: *FAOSTAT*. Rome. [Cited July 2023].

**Figure 7.** FAO Food Price Index (left) and price indices for commodity groups (right)

Source: FAO. 2023. Food Price Index.

**Figure 8.** Global cereal production, utilization and stocks

Source: FAO. November 2023. FAO Cereal Supply and Demand Brief.

<https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/fao-cereal-supply-and-demand-brief/en>

35. Historically high national food prices, weak national currencies and lower economic growth prospects continue to constrain access to food for many net-food-importing developing countries and vulnerable communities.

36. These concerns are further exacerbated by policy-induced uncertainties, especially export restrictions, limiting the free flow of food across countries and restricting food availability.

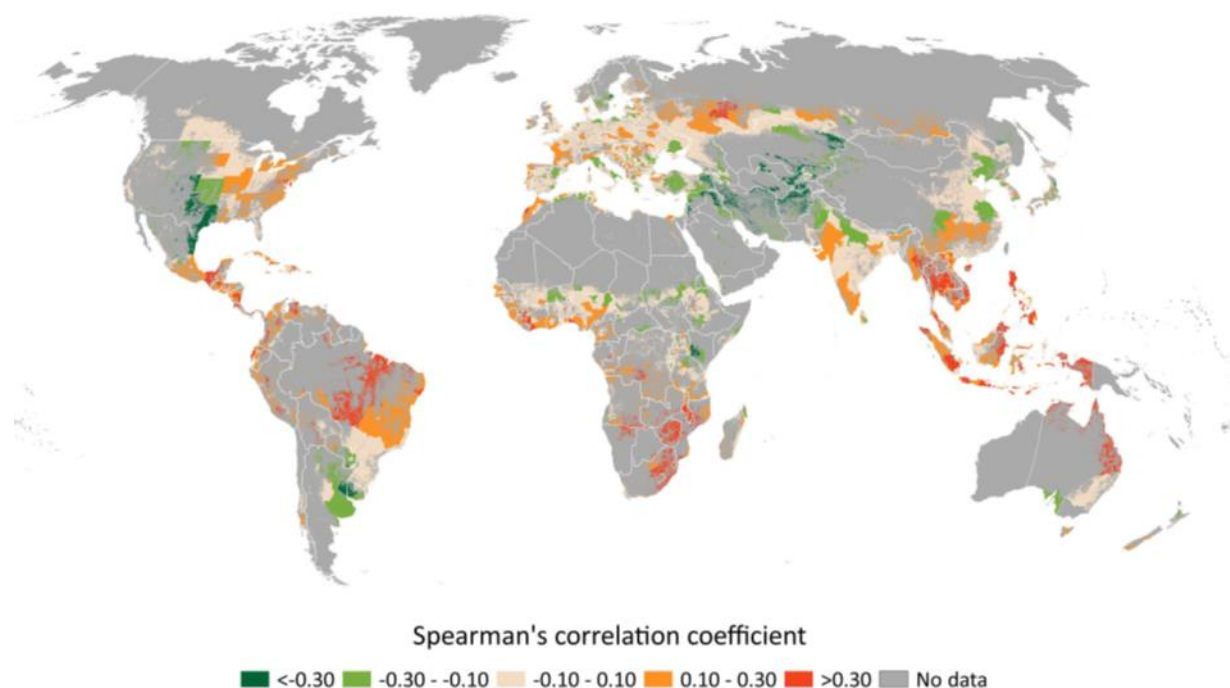
37. Adverse weather conditions, especially associated with the ongoing El Niño event, are expected to intensify the lingering impacts of droughts, excessive rainfall and floods, lowering yields and constraining food production worldwide (Figure 9).

38. Conflicts, geopolitical tensions and ongoing wars undermine food production worldwide, further aggravating concerns over food availability and access in many countries. The war in Ukraine lowered the sown area under wheat, while the cessation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in mid-July increased freight costs.

39. Challenging logistics at some prominent points of origin, including low water levels on key inland waterways and marine passages, such as the Mississippi River in the United States of America, the Tapajós River in Brazil and the Panama Canal, constrained food trade. Recent developments in the Middle East also raised concerns about potential disruptions at major commercial chokepoints, especially the Suez Canal.

40. Transboundary animal diseases, especially African swine fever and avian influenza, continue to constrain livestock activities worldwide, despite implementing measures to control their spread and minimize impacts on trade by using the regionalization approach (continue to accept products from non-affected regions of a country even after a disease outbreak).

**Figure 9.** Correlation between vegetation conditions in croplands and El Niño events (Spearman correlation coefficient)



Source: FAO, El Niño to return in 2023 following a three-year La Niña phase, GIEWS update, 26 April 2023.

### Medium-term outlook

41. Over the decade to 2030, the evolving energy and nutrition requirements of a growing and increasingly affluent global population are expected to be the key drivers of demand for agricultural commodities. The macroeconomic assumptions underlying the projections suggest a slowdown in global population growth alongside a decline in the population of China. Meanwhile, global economic growth will result in per capita income growth in most parts of the world. Projected rates of inflation are expected to slow down over the next ten years.
42. Globally, food remains the primary use for basic agricultural commodities, accounting for 49 percent of quantities consumed at the global level. Global food consumption is projected to increase by 1.3 percent per year. Population growth will continue to be the main factor shaping food demand at the global level, driven predominantly by the increasing consumption requirements of rising populations in Sub-Saharan Africa, India, and the Near East and North Africa region (Figure 10).
43. Globally, staple foods are expected to remain the most significant source of calories. Consumption of higher value foods will primarily expand in response to rising incomes in emerging markets. Particularly in Asia and the Latin America and Caribbean region, animal proteins are expected to increase their share of protein consumption.
44. Growth in global consumption of animal products necessitates a higher feed use of crops. Low- and middle-income countries are expected to account for the bulk of the increase, as these countries move to more commercialized and feed-intensive livestock production systems.
45. Based on ongoing investments in technology, infrastructure, and training, growth in total global agricultural production is expected at 1.1 percent per year. Most of this growth will occur in middle- and low-income countries. Global crop production growth will mainly be driven by increased productivity rather than increased land use (Figure 11).
46. Similar to trends in crop production, a large share of the projected growth in livestock and

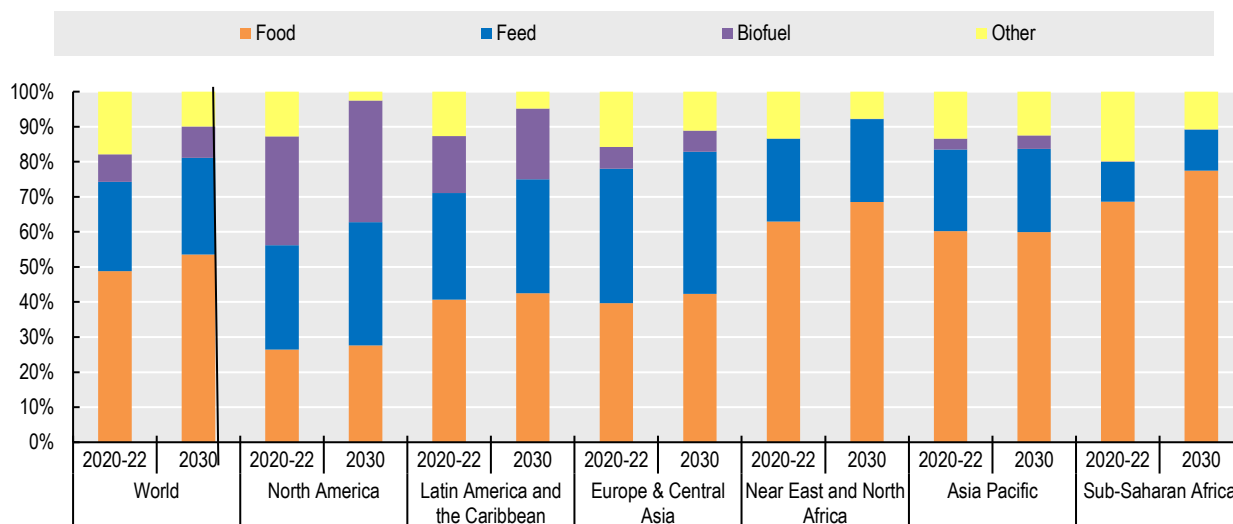
fish production will result from improvements in per animal productivity resulting from more efficient herd management and higher feed intensity.

47. Trade in primary agricultural commodities and processed products is projected to grow in line with production over the next decade. The COVID-19 pandemic led to worldwide disruptions in commerce, but trade in the agricultural commodities has proven to be resilient (Figure 12).

48. Aside from conflict and geopolitical tensions, at present the most severe threat to the consumption of agricultural commodities – and the consumption of food in particular – is posed by the adverse economic repercussions of persistently high inflation rates and a potential global recession.

49. Despite recent easing, the risk of continued uncertainties could alter production decisions, limit input use, and subsequently depress yield growth, eventually threatening global food security. The production of agricultural commodities remains also vulnerable to plant and animal diseases. And in the longer-term, climate change and environmental policies may cause market disruptions and reshape global patterns of production.

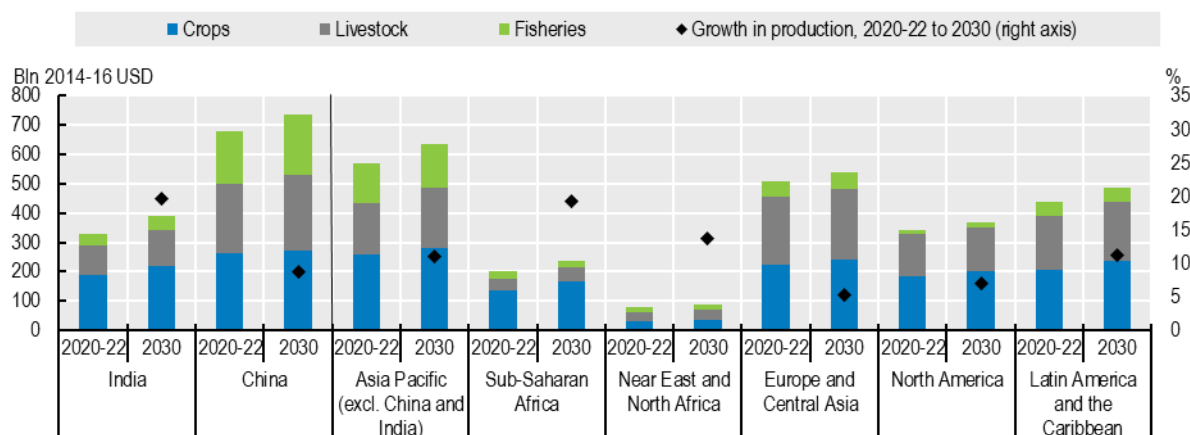
**Figure 10.** Use of agricultural commodities by type and region



Note: the shares are calculated as use in calorie equivalent

Source: OECD/FAO (2023), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>.

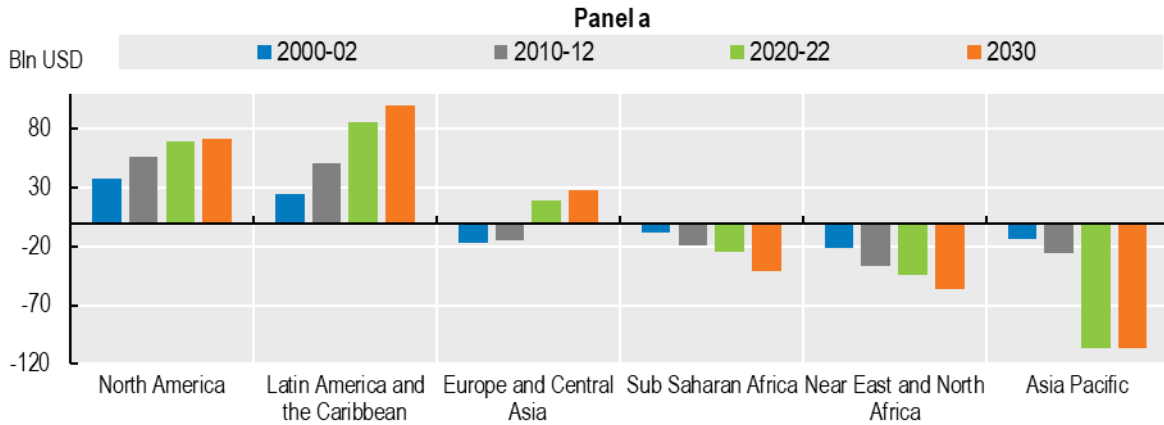
**Figure 11.** Trends in global agricultural production



Note: Estimates are based on historical time series from the FAOSTAT Value of Agricultural Production domain which are extended with the Outlook database. The remaining products are trend extended. The Net Value of Production uses own estimates for internal seed and feed use. Values are measured in constant USD of the period 2014-2016.

Source: OECD/FAO (2023), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>.

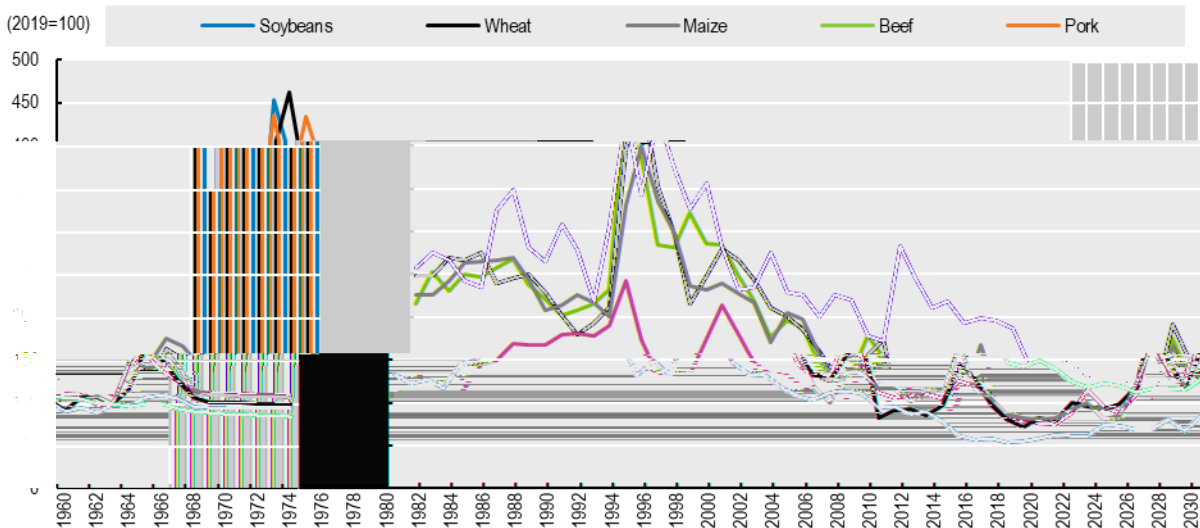
**Figure 12.** Net trade by region, in constant value



Note: Net trade (exports minus imports) of commodities covered in the Agricultural Outlook, measured in constant 2014-16 USD. Net trade figures include intra-regional trade but exclude intra-EU trade.

Source: OECD/FAO (2023), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>

**Figure 13.** Long-term evolution of commodity prices, in real terms



Note: Historical data for soybeans, maize and beef from World Bank, "World Commodity Price Data" (1960-1989). Historical data for pork from USDA QuickStats (1960-1989).

Source: OECD/FAO (2023), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>



## III.2. Regional Outlook

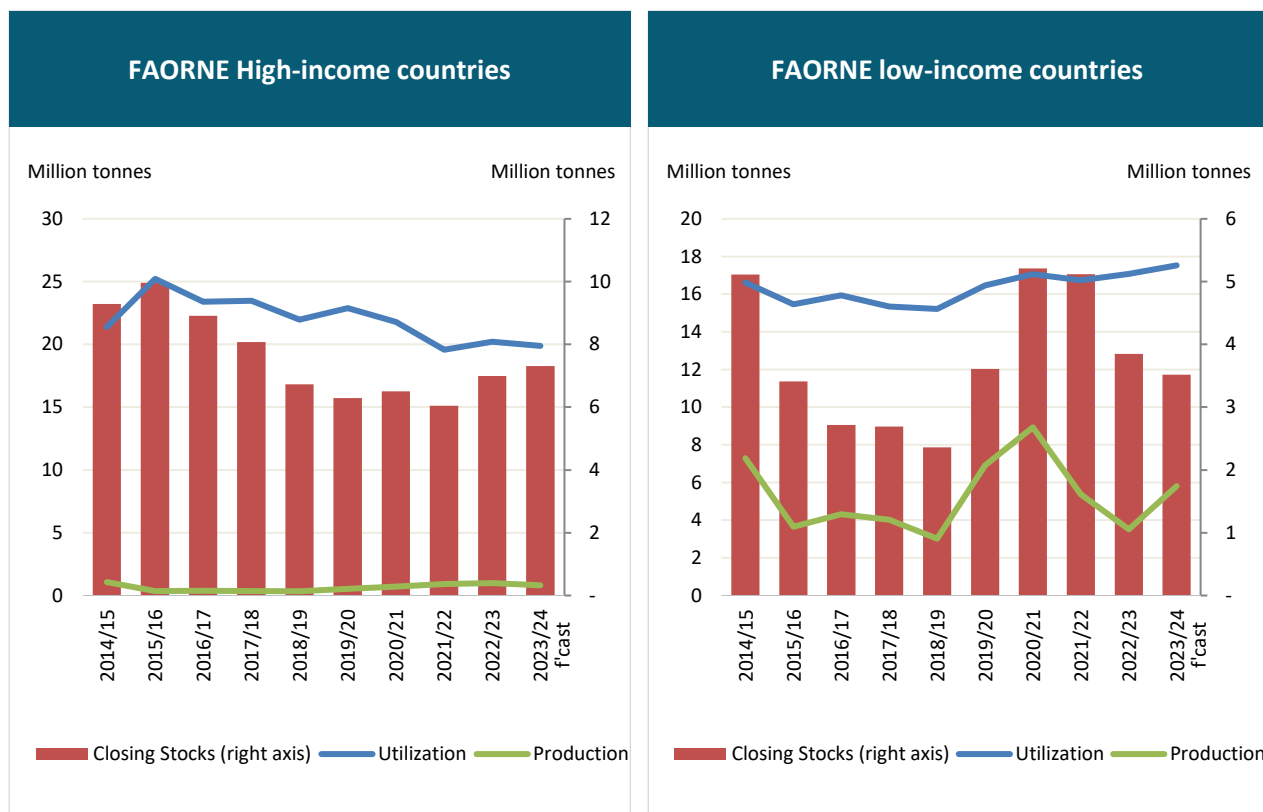
### Current market situation and short-term outlook

50. In the NENA region, the total cereal production (wheat, maize, sorghum and barley) in 2023 is forecast at 48 million tonnes, 4.4 percent above last year's output, reflecting more favourable weather conditions in Morocco compared to drought-hit production setbacks in the previous season, although it will remain 5 percent below the three-year average between 2020/21 and 2022/23. The anticipated year-on-year increase in cereal production reflects a 12 percent increase in wheat production but is offset by a drop in coarse grains. Rice production is forecast to increase by 5.9 percent to 4.2 million tonnes, mainly attributable to Egypt, where domestic prices favour expanding the planted area despite government efforts to curb rice cultivation to preserve scarce water resources.

51. The region relies heavily on oil crops imports to meet human consumption and feed requirements, with imports reaching 8.2 million tonnes of oilseeds, 8.9 million tonnes of vegetable oils and 6.4 million tonnes of oil meals in 2023/24. While the current forecasts suggest a 15 percent rebound in oilseeds imports, induced by lower international prices, this would remain lower than the 5-year average. A stagnation in imports of vegetable oils and oil meals is anticipated in the 2023/24 season.

52. Meat production is also expected to decline in 2023, primarily attributed to a drop in poultry meat production stemming from high costs and limited availability of animal feed. However, imports are forecast to remain stable, except for a slight increase in poultry meat, possibly lowering meat consumption.

53. Milk production is forecast to drop marginally to 27 million tonnes in 2023, marking the third consecutive decline, reflecting lower producer margins among leading producers. Imports are anticipated to increase by 5 percent to 18 million tonnes, with a high concentration in high- and middle-income countries, driven by increasing consumer demand.

**Figure 14.** Cereal production, utilization and stocks in Near East Region (RNE)

Source: FAO. November 2023. Cereal Supply and Demand Brief.

<https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/fao-cereal-supply-and-demand-brief/en>

54. Despite prevailing food subsidies in many countries, food price inflation in the region remains a concern, exacerbating the challenges faced by the non-oil-exporting countries amidst the ongoing macroeconomic challenges, high energy and input costs, national currency depreciations and fallouts from geopolitical conflicts.

55. Conflicts and social unrests in the region constrain food production activities and intra-regional trade. Meanwhile, conflicts beyond the region's borders, including the war in Ukraine, the cessation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and food export restrictions imposed by various governments limit food supplies and agricultural inputs, thereby limiting the region's capacity to meet its food requirements.

56. Decreasing rainfall and increasing incidents of drought continue to be serious concerns, especially in the southern Mediterranean region, resulting in declining water availability with implications for producing staple food commodities and livestock-derived products. On top of the lower feed supplies, high feed import costs and national currency depreciations exacerbate challenges to food production.

57. Livestock farm operational costs remain a serious challenge, despite some drops in feed prices. Any increase in grain prices and their volatility and limited access, together with high energy costs, could engender the viability of most small- and medium-sized livestock farming operations, reducing production prospects and lowering access to animal protein and livelihoods.

### Medium-term outlook

58. The Near East and North Africa region encompasses a range of countries with diverse income and socioeconomic profiles. Medium term per capita income growth is expected to average 1.5 percent *per annum* (p.a.) to 2030 making it unlikely to constitute a major driver of demand, which is a concern in a region where healthy diets are unaffordable to more than half of the

population.

59. Self-sufficiency rates for most major commodities are expected to decline further. In an increasingly volatile and fragmented global market, adaptable and effective policies will be essential to ensure food security and improve resilience.

60. Average total calorie consumption per person is expected remain at current levels in the region reflecting the slow economic recovery, higher food prices, and an increasing awareness of healthy eating. In the average diet in the region, 54 percent of calories will still come from cereals by 2030. The “triple burden” of malnutrition will be a key policy challenge that will need to be addressed over the medium term. The growth of the livestock sector, particularly poultry, will increase feed use, but efficiency gains keep the rate of growth below that of meat production. The bulk of feed will continue to be imported, reflecting policies that prioritize the production of food crops.

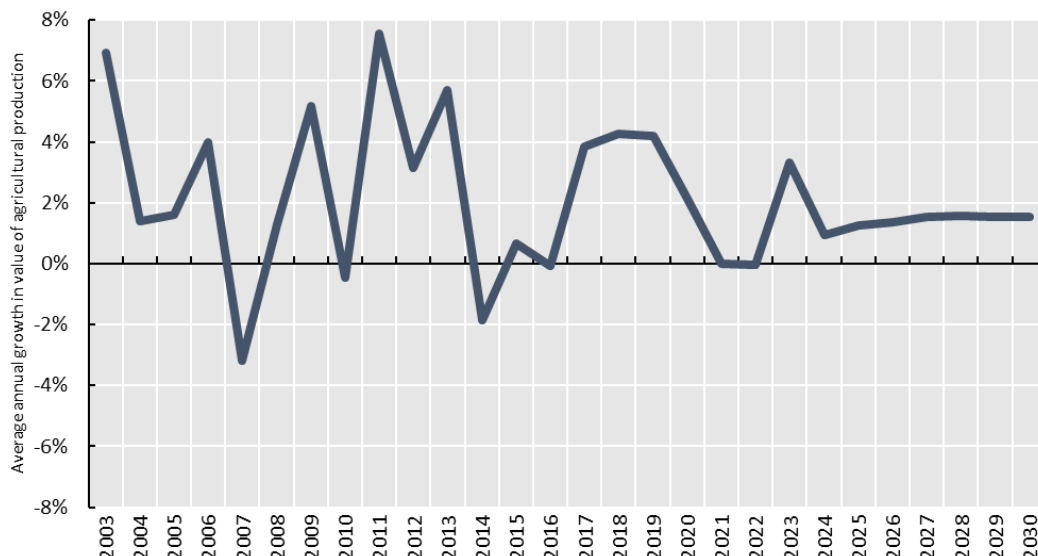
61. The projected expansion of 1.1 percent p.a. in agriculture and fish production remains below the population growth rate of 1.4 percent p.a. little change is expected in total agricultural land use. Increased land use intensity combined with yield improvements, especially in cereals, are essential to crop production growth. Livestock production growth is projected to outpace the crop sector, led by poultry, which would account for 61 percent of total meat production by 2030. Fish production is also an important contributor.

62. To 2030, the region’s per capita net imports of food products are expected to remain the largest in the world, growing by 10 percent compared to the base period. Combined with the 20 percent population growth, this leads to the expected 30 percent increase in regional net imports (Figure 12). Imports are expected to rise for almost all commodities, though generally at a faster rate for meat and dairy than plant-based foods. Imports by the region will account for high and mostly rising shares of global trade by 2030, including wheat, sugar and maize, as well as sheep meat, cheese and poultry.

63. The increase in international cereal prices, further exacerbated by currency depreciation in many non-oil exporting nations, combined with surging inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, strained affordability of basic foods in lower income areas and that of healthy diets across the region. In a low-income growth environment, and with several countries affected by geopolitical conflict, some of the greatest challenges facing the region relate to accessibility of affordable food products to a growing population.

64. In an effort to reduce import dependence in major cereals and thereby also the associated vulnerabilities to disruptions, policies have historically sought to stimulate production. While these policies strove to reduce risk, they in fact constrained growth, as these cereals compete with higher value crops for limited water resources.

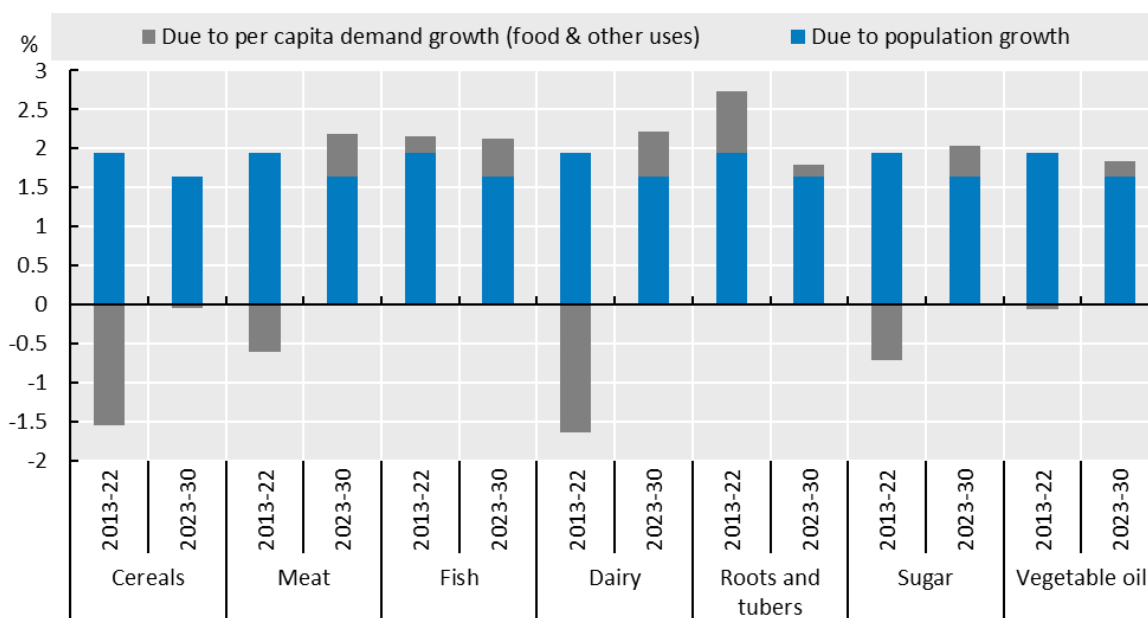
**Figure 15.** Growth in agricultural production in Near East and North Africa



Note: Estimates are based on historical time series from the FAOSTAT Value of Agricultural Production domain which are extended with the Outlook database. Remaining products are trend-extended. The Net Value of Production uses own estimates for internal seed and feed use. Values are measured in constant 2014-2016 USD.

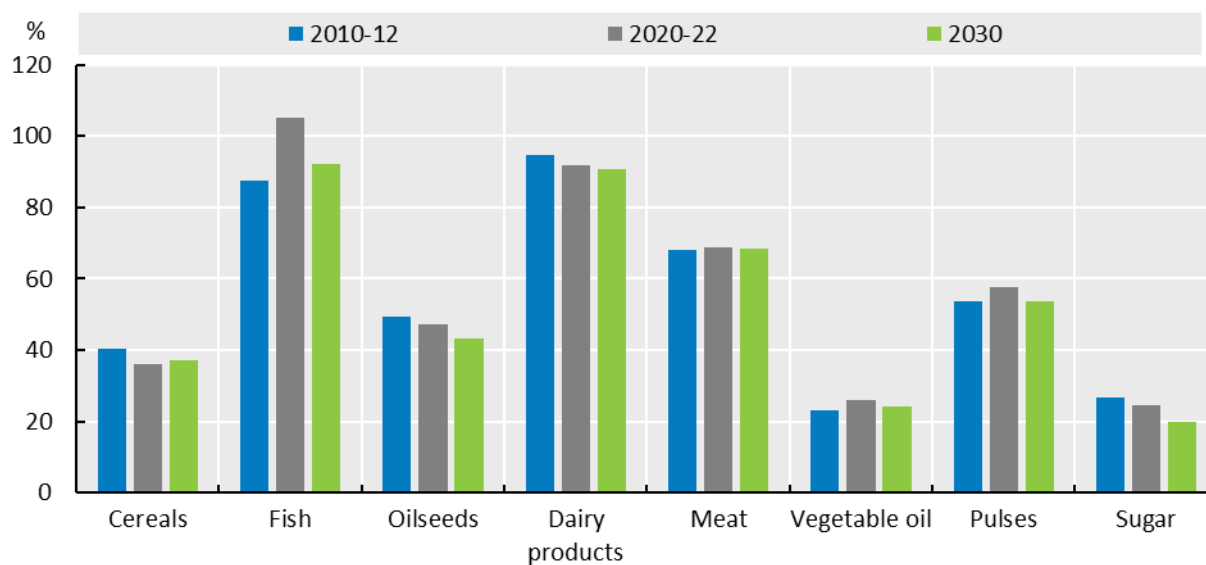
Source: OECD/FAO (2023), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>

**Figure 16.** Annual change in demand for key commodity groups in Near East and North Africa, 2013-22 and 2023-30



Note: The population growth component is calculated assuming per capita demand remains constant at the level of the year preceding the decade. Growth rates refer to total demand (for food, feed and other uses).

Source: OECD/FAO (2023), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>

**Figure 17.** Self-sufficiency ratios for selected commodities in Near East and North Africa

Note: Self-sufficiency ratio calculated as  $(\text{Production} / (\text{Production} + \text{Imports} - \text{Exports})) * 100$

Source: OECD/FAO (2023), OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>