Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators

2025

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Executive summary

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the 2030 Agenda is now more crucial than ever, as the target date draws near and many goals are still far from being achieved. Countries across the globe are grappling with an array of complex and interconnected challenges, including ongoing conflicts, health crises, biodiversity loss, the escalating impacts of climate change, and political and economic tensions. These multifaceted challenges are having profound effects on the goals under the 2030 Agenda, including those aimed at eradicating hunger, reducing poverty and inequality, building sustainable agrifood systems, addressing climate change, and preserving and restoring ecosystems.

FAO is the custodian agency for 22 SDG indicators spanning Goals 2, 5, 6, 12, 14 and 15. Among its key responsibilities as a custodian agency is to curate the indicator methodologies, collect, harmonize and compile data from countries, as well as disseminate and analyse data at global level. This report provides an analysis of regional and global figures and trends for the 22 SDG indicators under FAO's responsibility, thus fulfilling one of FAO's key roles as custodian agency. It is such analysis by custodian agencies that also forms the basis for the annual global SDG reports prepared by the United Nations (UN) Statistical Division.

The world is at a moderate distance to achieving roughly half of the food and agriculture-related SDG indicators under FAO custodianship; one-quarter of the indicators are close to being achieved, whereas another quarter remains far or very far from being achieved. Meanwhile, progress since 2015 has deteriorated on over three-fifths of the indicators; one indicator has stagnated; whereas only the remaining one-third of indicators have registered an improvement or slight improvement.

An estimated 8.2 percent of the global population faced hunger in 2024, down from 8.5 percent in 2023 and 8.7 percent in 2022, but still higher compared to 2015. Global food insecurity has also declined gradually since 2021 but remains far above 2015 levels: about 28 percent of the global population – nearly 2.3 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure in 2024 compared to 21.4 percent (1.6 billion) in 2015.

To achieve the SDG 2 target, a new indicator on minimum dietary diversity (MDD) has been introduced, emphasizing the vital role of healthy diets in addressing all forms of malnutrition. Globally, between 2019 and 2023, 65 percent of women of childbearing age achieve minimum dietary diversity (MDD-W), with the lowest MDD-W prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa (44 percent) and Central Asia and Southern Asia (48 percent). Moreover, most regions have seen a deterioration over time, with the exception of Northern America and Europe (on track to achieve the target) and Central Asia and Southern Asia (on path but too slow to achieve the target).

Small-scale food producers play a vital role in supporting global food systems and local economies, but consistently exhibit lower productivity compared to non-small-scale producers, particularly in higher-income countries. In low- and middle-income countries, the labour productivity falls below USD 25 (constant purchasing power parity [PPP] 2017) per day. Across various countries, small-scale food producers earn, on average, less than half of what their non-small-scale counterparts make, with annual agricultural incomes often below USD 1 500 (constant PPP 2017). Disparities also persist regarding land ownership. Data from 49 countries reveals a widespread lack of secure land rights for both men and women in agricultural households, with women being less likely to own land than men in most countries. In nearly 80 percent of these countries, less than half of women have secure land rights, and men are often at least twice as likely to own land. Complementary legal surveys corroborate this picture, suggesting that

only 17 percent of reporting countries offer high or very high levels of protection of women's land rights; 24 percent of countries offer medium levels of protection; while 59 percent of countries provide low, very low or no protection at all.

New data derived from a combination of key economic, social and environmental indicators suggests that the world is at a moderate distance to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture, while also having registered slight improvement towards achieving productive and sustainable agriculture since 2015. The number of animal genetic resources secured in conservation facilities has increased, with growing efforts to cryopreserve genetic material. However, only 4.6 percent of local breeds and 17.2 percent of transboundary breeds are kept with sufficient material to reconstitute the breed in case of extinction. At the same time, 69 percent of local breeds (up from 67 percent in 2015) and 50 percent of transboundary breeds (up from 49 percent in 2015) with known risk statuses are still at risk of extinction. While the amount of global crop and crop-associated diversity conserved *ex situ* has continued to increase, this growth has also continued to slow down over time, dropping to 0.5 percent in 2023 and 0.1 percent in 2024.

Increasing public investment in agriculture, as well as adopting measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets in an effort to prevent extreme food price volatility, are some of the key means of implementation that governments have for ensuring food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. Between 2015 and 2023, global government spending on agriculture increased in nominal terms, reaching an all-time high of USD 701 billion in 2023. However, the agriculture orientation index, which compares government expenditure on agriculture to the agriculture sector's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), fell from 0.50 in 2015 to 0.43 in 2023. Regarding food price anomalies, the proportion of countries with moderately to abnormally high food prices saw a modest decline in 2023, but it remains three times higher than the 2015–19 average value. While some regions saw slight improvements, ongoing geopolitical tensions and weather-related disruptions, particularly in Asia and Small Island Developing States, contributed to the continued instability in global food markets.

Improving water-use efficiency and reducing water stress are key to ensure the continued availability and sustainable management of water resources, particularly in agriculture-reliant countries where water can be a major constraining factor. The global trend in water-use efficiency (WUE) has shown significant improvement, with a 23 percent increase between 2015 and 2022, mainly driven by economic growth. Despite this progress, regional disparities persist. While Oceania, Northern America, and Europe have surpassed the world average in WUE, Central and Southern Asia exhibit the lowest levels of WUE. On the other hand, water stress worldwide has remained relatively stable, at 18 percent as of 2022. However, a closer examination at the regional level reveals a more concerning picture, with Western Asia and Northern Africa grappling with severe water scarcity. In these regions, water stress has surged by 12 percent since 2015, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these challenges.

Oceans are the world's largest ecosystem, supporting the livelihoods of millions of people – many of whom rely on small-scale fisheries – and supplying a sizable proportion of animal proteins worldwide. However, the sustainability of fishery resources is a cause for concern. Protecting small-scale fisheries and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) are some of the key measures to ensure the sustainability of global fisheries and the health of marine ecosystems. The world has achieved a high level of implementation (score of 4 upon 5) in 2024 of instruments to combat IUU fishing and a very high level (score 5 upon 5) of implementation of instruments to protect small-scale fisheries. Notable developments include the expansion of the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to 78 parties in January 2025, and the introduction in 2023 of the PSMA Global Information Exchange

System, which allows states to exchange compliance information on fishing vessels. Nonetheless, the concrete impacts of these recent measures are still to be seen, as the proportion of global fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels decreased to 62.5 percent in 2021, down from 90 percent in 1974.

Terrestrial ecosystems are the backbone of sustainable development and a prerequisite for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, yet they are facing increasing threats. The world's forest area continues to diminish, albeit at a slightly reduced rate compared to previous decades. The proportion of forest coverage decreased from 31.9 percent of the total land area in 2000 to 31.2 percent in 2020, resulting in a net loss of almost 100 million hectares. Despite progress in sustainable forest management, the rate of forest loss remains high, mainly because of the expansion of agriculture for crop and livestock production (FAO, 2022). Global mountain green cover decreased from 83 percent to 82.2 percent between 2000 and 2021. Approximately 3.5 percent of the world's mountain area experienced detrimental land cover changes, with sub-Saharan Africa (6.8 percent) seeing the highest rate of degradation in mountain land.

An updated assessment of global and regional progress towards SDG 2 suggests that the world has made no improvement since 2015 and remains at a moderate distance from achieving the goal – an assessment that is unchanged compared to the previous edition of this report in 2023. Eastern Asia and Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Europe are also at a moderate distance to the target, though the latter three have also made a slight improvement, whereas progress for the first has stalled. Conversely, Western Asia and Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania are currently far from achieving SDG 2, though Oceania has observed a slight improvement towards the goal, whereas sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia and Northern Africa have made no improvement since 2015.

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Introduction: The Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework at the ten-year anniversary of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The previous edition of this report (FAO, 2023) coincided with the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2023 report highlighted persistent data gaps across multiple indicators as well as a general stagnation of progress towards most of the food- and agriculture-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets. This report coincides with other important milestones in the trajectory of the 2030 Agenda: it has been ten years since the adoption of the SDGs, while the year 2025 has also marked the second – and last – Comprehensive Review of the SDG indicator framework (UNSD, 2025).

At global level, progress towards the SDGs continues to be uneven and insufficient. According to the latest global SDG progress report in 2025 (Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: report of the Secretary General, 2025), the world is on track on only 20 percent of SDG targets, while it is making moderate progress on 15 percent of targets. By contrast, progress on 47 percent of the targets is insufficient, and there has been regression from the 2015 baseline in relation to 18 percent. Clearly, with only five years left until the 2030 deadline, there is a pressing need to redouble efforts at all levels and bring the SDGs back on track.

The outlook for the food- and agriculture-related SDG targets, in particular, is no less uneven and troubling. As with previous editions of this report, this edition supplements descriptions of relevant SDG indicators with a statistical assessment of progress, offering the reader an answer to the question of how far the world or a given region is to achieving the target and how quickly it is moving towards that target. New, intuitive visualizations summarize progress at global and regional level throughout the report, whereas country-level results are accessible through the relevant annexes. In addition, this report provides an updated assessment of progress towards SDG 2 – a composite assessment inaugurated by the previous edition of 2023.

Readers of this report will also notice a slight shift in the overall scope of the report compared to its previous edition. On one hand, this report is enriched with two additional indicators, both under Goal 2: *Progress towards sustainable agriculture* (SDG Indicator 2.4.1) – a proxy indicator approved by the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG) in 2024; and *Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women* (SDG Indicator 2.2.4b) – one of two components of the new indicator on Minimum Dietary Diversity approved by the United Nations (UN) Statistical Commission in the context of the 2025 Comprehensive Review of the SDG indicator framework. On the other hand, while the previous edition had, on an exceptional basis, included indicators beyond FAO's custodianship, this edition aims to return to the report's "roots" and focus on SDG indicators for which FAO has a formal custodianship role.

The 2025 Comprehensive Review of the SDG indicator framework has been a milestone both for the SDG indicator framework overall and for FAO in particular. Key changes were introduced to better reflect today's challenges, including climate change, inequality, malnutrition and digital transformation. Minimum Dietary Diversity was approved as a new SDG indicator, in recognition of the inextricable link between balanced diets and health outcomes, as well as the need to supplement the traditional anthropometric indicators of malnutrition with survey-based dietary intake information. With FAO granted the responsibility of measuring the component on *Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women* (the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] will be responsible for measuring *Minimum Dietary Diversity for Children*), FAO is now the custodian agency for 22 instead of 21 SDG indicators.

But if progress towards the SDGs has been limited, so too has progress on the data availability of the more than 230 SDG indicators. According to the latest UN Secretary-General's report on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (2025), a comparison of the data availability of SDG indicators between 2019 and 2025 reveals tangible progress across all Goals. Nonetheless, the actual level of data availability is still very low: only 7 out of 17 Goals currently have data available for at

least 50 percent of countries. Though the situation for the SDG indicators under FAO custodianship is somewhat better (two-thirds of the indicators have data available for at least 50 percent of countries), the massive data gaps still afflicting the SDG indicator framework overall today should give prospective architects of the "post-2030 indicator framework" pause for thought, especially on the question of whether any drastic changes to the current framework would be sensible in the first place.

This is especially the case given that progress on financing for development data has stalled in recent times. Notwithstanding the pioneering research by the "Power of Data" initiative showing an average return of USD 32 for every USD 1 invested in strengthening data systems in low and middle income countries (Dalberg Advisors, 2022), the latest report by Paris21 (Paris21, 2024) notes a continued trend of stagnation in funding for data and statistics, and erstwhile promising global initiatives such as the Clearinghouse for Financing for Development Data or the Global Data Facility have failed to gain traction. Meanwhile, a staggering three-quarters of low- and lower-middle-income countries are experiencing moderate (from 20 to 60 percent) or severe (over 60 percent) funding gaps for their national statistical programmes (UNDESA, 2023). Were this not enough, the recent freeze of the USAID Demographic and Health Survey Program (USAID, undated) will take a toll on the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality data in the broader health sphere.

A renewed commitment to data for the SDGs is needed, in line with the Pact for the Future's Digital Compact (The Pact for the Future resolution, paragraph 45), which calls for increasing financing for data and statistics, strengthening efforts to collect, analyse and disseminate data with a view to increase, by 50 percent, the data available to monitor the SDGs. In the domain of food security and nutrition (FSN) data in particular, the Committee on World Food Security's recent Policy Recommendations on strengthening collection and use of FSN data also issue a clarion call for concerted action to enhance the availability and quality of FSN data, with a view to improving decision-making in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Despite the uncertain global outlook, FAO is powering forward with renewed confidence bolstered by a more streamlined corporate statistical structure prioritizing organizational efficiency and state-of-the art technology. As a subset of FAO's total statistical output, the 22 SDG indicators under its custodianship have benefited from an improved framework of corporate statistical standards geared towards enhancing data quality. As custodian agency, FAO has continued to invest in providing statistical capacity support to countries: since 2023, more than 140 countries have received training or technical assistance on one or more SDG indicators, while the total number of registered learners for FAO's e-learning courses on SDG indicators is close to 40 000. Thanks to such efforts, the data availability for the SDG indicators under FAO custodianship has continued to grow, reaching 65 percent in 2025, up from 62 percent in 2023 and only 32 percent in 2017. Nonetheless, with about one-third (8 out of 22) of the SDG indicators under FAO custodianship still registering a data availability of less than 50 percent of countries, FAO will continue its efforts, at all levels, to strengthen country capacity, simplify reporting procedures, and introduce new cost-effective data collection mechanisms.

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Methodological note

This report is based on the latest data available for the 22 SDG indicators under FAO custodianship available on the global SDG database (UN, 2025); FAOSTAT's SDG data domain (FAO, 2025c); and the new FAO DATA Explorer (FAO, 2025d). The official methodology or "metadata" for each indicator, as approved by the UN Statistical Commission, is accessible through these same portals, as well as on the global metadata repository (UNSD, 2025).

As custodian agency, FAO collects data from official national sources, where available, usually through questionnaires or online platforms. Designated national focal points fill in these questionnaires or access the relevant online platforms in order to submit updated data. In the absence of data from official national sources, FAO may estimate country data based on alternative sources, in which case country estimates are validated by national authorities in accordance with the IAEG-SDG Guidelines on Data Flows and Global Reporting (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2018).

Throughout this report, a statistical progress assessment will flag to readers how close or far the world or a given region is to achieving the target ("current status") and whether it is moving closer or farther away from the target ("trend"). Trends are generally determined with reference to the baseline year of 2015, coinciding with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, unless otherwise stated.[1] Current status is determined in two main ways: for indicators associated to a target with a numerical yardstick, current status is calculated based on the distance required to reach this target. In the absence of a numerical yardstick, current status is determined by assessing the distribution of country values and classifying these into five "quintiles", ranging from the lowest values ("far below median") to the highest values ("far above median").[2]

This progress assessment is summarized by means of the illustrations in the "Trend status" and "Current status" tables. Detailed progress assessment results at the global, regional and country level are available in the relevant summary tables at the beginning of each chapter.

1 A small number of indicators may have a different baseline due to data constraints. Data for 2015 may not be available because of a general lack of data, or because the indicator has a non-annual reporting frequency which skips the year 2015 (for example, indicators that are reported on a biennial basis on even-numbered years).

2 For the full progress assessment methodology at indicator, target and goal level, please see Savini Nicci, di Candia and Khalil, 2024.

Table 1. Trend status

Interpretation for targets without numerical yardstick		Interpretation for targets with numerical yardstick	
	**Improvement**		**Target met**
	**Slight improvement**		**On track to achieve the target**
	**No improvement**		**On path but too slow to achieve the target**
	**Slight deterioration**		**No improvement**
	**Deterioration**		**Deterioration away from the target**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Table 2. Current status

	Interpretation for Goal/targets without numerical yardstick	Interpretation for Goal/targets with numerical yardstick
	**Far above median**	Target achieved
	**Above median**	Close to achieving the Goal/target
	**Median**	Moderate distance to achieving the Goal/target
	**Below median**	Far from achieving the Goal/target
	**Far below median**	Very far from achieving the Goal/target
	Current status not possible due to data limitations or methodological reasons	

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2

Zero Hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

INDICATORS

2.1.1.	2.1.2	2.2.4.b	2.3.1	2.3.2	2.4.1	2.5.1.a	2.5.1.b	2.5.2	2.a.1.	2.c.1

SDG INDICATOR 2.1.1

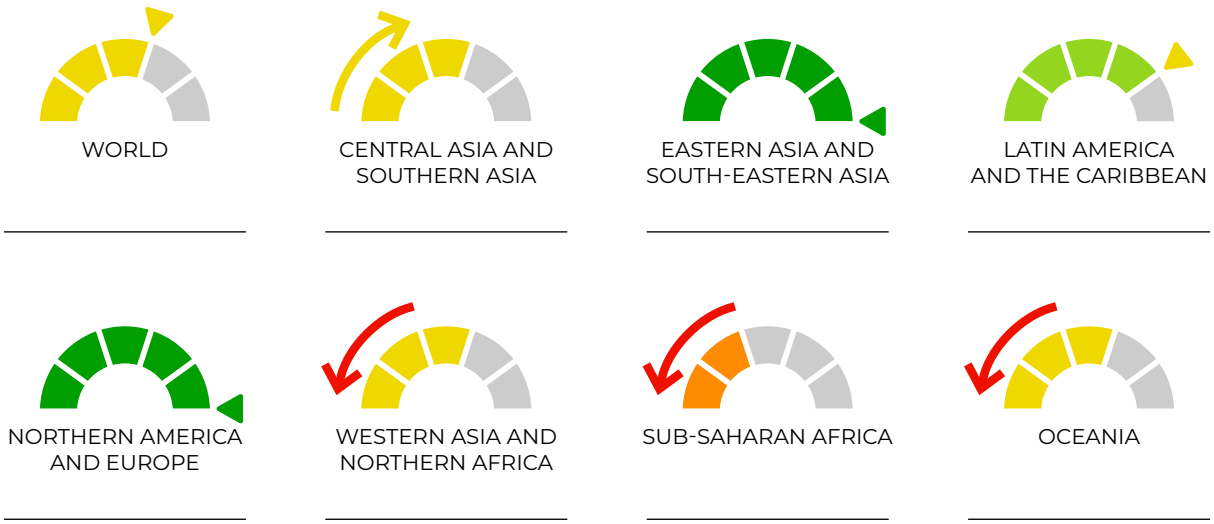
Prevalence of undernourishment

Target 2.1

By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

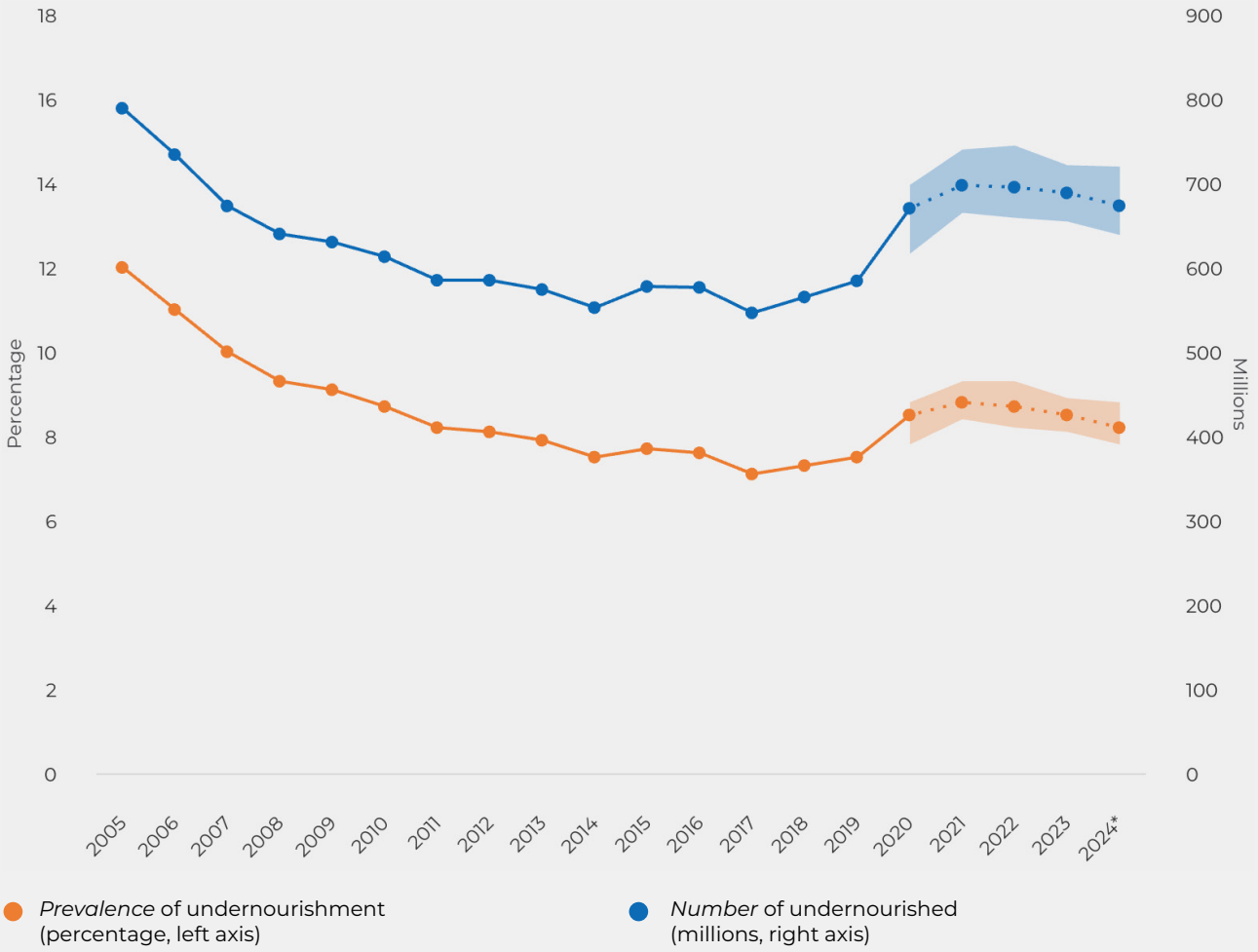
SDG 2.1.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



Updated global estimates point to some progress in decreasing world hunger in recent years. An estimated 8.2 percent of the global population may have faced hunger in 2024, down from 8.5 percent in 2023 and 8.7 percent in 2022. It is estimated that between 638 million and 720 million people faced hunger in 2024.

The latest assessment of world hunger, measured by the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU), reveals signs of improvement in recent years. The PoU had begun to rise slowly in 2017 and then increased sharply in 2020 and 2021 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the latest assessment points to encouraging progress from 2022 to 2024. An estimated 8.2 percent of the global population may have faced hunger in 2024, down from 8.5 percent in 2023 and 8.7 percent in 2022 (Figure 1). It is estimated that between 638 million and 720 million people (7.8 to 8.8 percent of the global population) faced hunger in 2024. Considering the point estimate (673 million), this indicates a decrease of 15 million compared to 2023 and of 22 million compared to 2022. Nevertheless, the numbers are still far above those in 2015, when the prevalence was 7.7 percent, equivalent to about 577 million people.

Figure 1. Prevalence and number of undernourished people in the world (2005–2024)



Note: Bars show lower and upper bounds of the estimated range. Projections based on nowcasts for 2024 are illustrated by dotted lines.

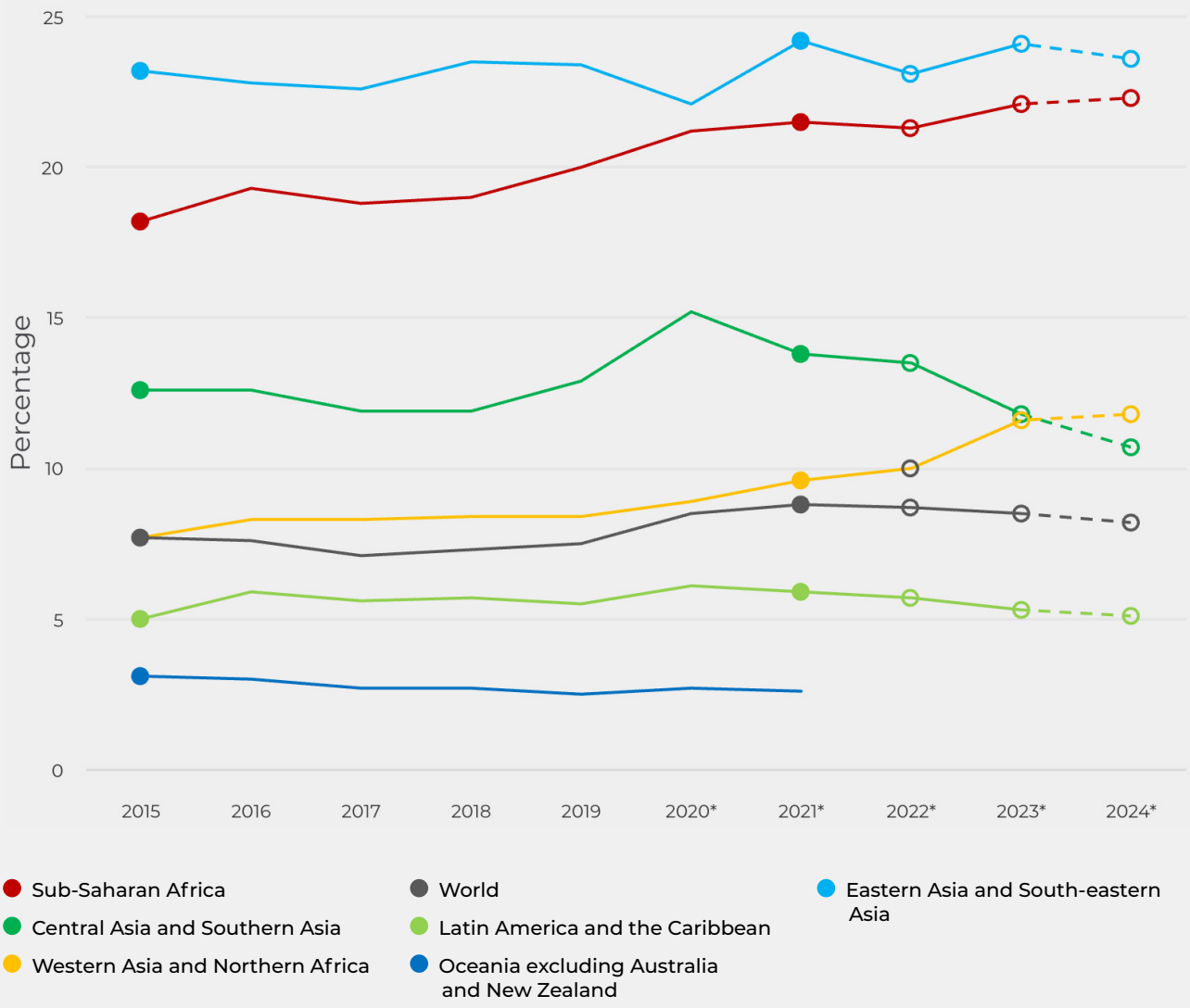
Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: Suite of Food Security Indicators.* [Accessed on 28 July 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

The differences among the regions of the world are stark. The estimated proportion of the population facing hunger in 2024 in Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand and in sub-Saharan Africa (23.6 and 22.3 percent, respectively) was approximately twice that of Western Asia and Northern Africa (11.8 percent) and Central Asia and Southern Asia (10.7 percent) and more than four times the percentage in Latin America and the Caribbean (5.1 percent).

The regional trends also differ (Figure 2). The progress seen at the global level is driven by notable improvement in two regions: Central Asia and Southern Asia, which mainly reflects evidence based on new government data from India; and Latin America and the Caribbean, reflecting significant improvement in South America. The proportion of the population suffering from hunger in Central Asia and Southern Asia decreased from 13.5 percent in 2022 to 10.7 percent (229 million people) in 2024. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the latest estimates show the PoU decreasing to 5.1 percent in 2024 after peaking at 6.1 percent in 2020. The estimate is still slightly above the 2015 value of 5.0 percent.

Unfortunately, these positive trends contrast with the steady rise in hunger in Western Asia and Northern Africa, where the number of people facing hunger has nearly doubled since 2015. The PoU in this conflict-affected region increased from 7.7 percent (38 million people) in 2015 to 11.8 percent (more than 68 million people) in 2024. Hunger is also on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa, increasing from 18.2 percent (180 million people) in 2015 to 22.3 percent (nearly 278 million people) in 2024.

Figure 2. Prevalence of undernourishment by region (2015–2024)



Note: Only the regions and years for which the prevalence of undernourishment was greater than 2.5 percent are shown. Values are based on the point estimates.

Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: Suite of Food Security Indicators*. [Accessed on 28 July 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SDG INDICATOR 2.1.2

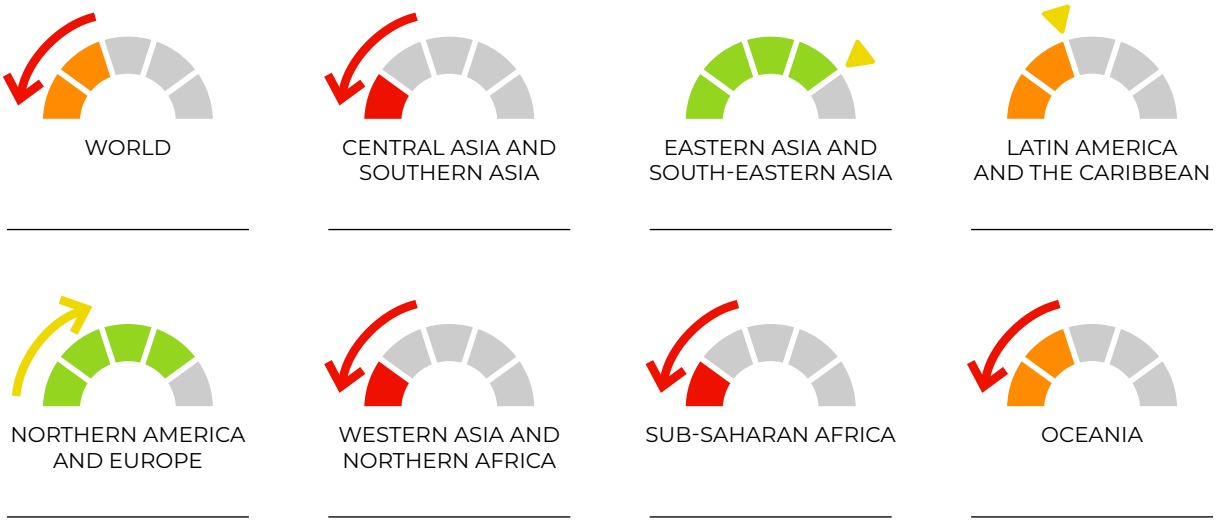
Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the food insecurity experience scale (FIES)

Target 2.1

By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.1.2 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



Global food insecurity has declined gradually since 2021, but remains far above 2015 levels. About 28 percent of the global population – nearly 2.3 billion people – were moderately or severely food-insecure in 2024, compared to 21.4 percent (1.6 billion) in 2015.

SDG Target 2.1 challenges the world not only to end hunger, but also to ensure access for all people to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. SDG Indicator 2.1.2 – the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in a population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) – tracks progress towards this ambitious goal. The prevalence of food insecurity at severe levels provides an additional lens to examine hunger, complementarily to SDG Indicator 2.1.1.

At the global level, the prevalence of food insecurity has declined gradually since 2021, the year when trends began to show signs of improvement following the sharp increase in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The global prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity decreased marginally from 28.4 percent in 2023 to 28.0 percent in 2024 (Figure 3). About 2.3 billion people in the world are estimated to have been moderately or severely food insecure in 2024– 335 million more than in 2019, before the pandemic, and 683 million more than in 2015, when the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched.

Of the approximately 2.3 billion people in the world facing moderate or severe food insecurity in 2024, an estimated 828 million were severely food insecure. The prevalence of severe food insecurity decreased marginally from 10.4 percent in 2023 to 10.1 percent in 2024.

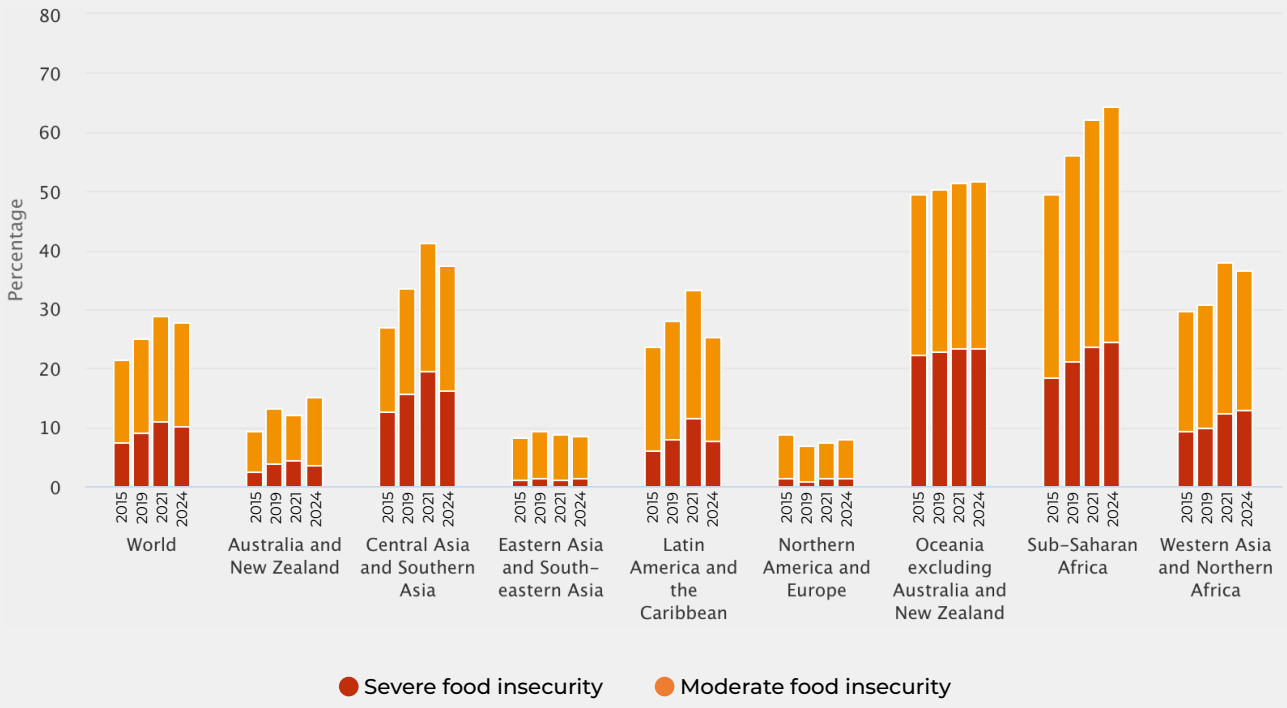
More than two-thirds the population of sub-Saharan Africa was moderately or severely food insecure in 2024, up sharply from just under 50 percent in 2015. The prevalence has also been increasing since 2015, albeit much more gradually, in Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, where more than half the population was food-insecure in 2024. In Central Asia and Southern Asia, and in Western Asia and Northern Africa, over one-third of the population was moderately or severely food insecure in 2024 (37.5 and 36.5 percent, respectively). The prevalence is far above 2015 levels in both regions but lower compared to 2021, and in Western Asia and Northern Africa, it has been on the rise since 2022.

Notable improvement occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where steady progress has been made since 2021. The number of people affected by moderate or severe food insecurity fell by 50 million between 2021 and 2024, with a decrease in the prevalence from 33.4 to 25.2 percent (equivalent to about 217 million and 167 million people, respectively), driven mainly by progress in South America.

In 2024, the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia (8.5 percent) was just slightly higher compared to Northern America and Europe (8.1 percent), and in Australia and New Zealand, the prevalence was 15 percent.

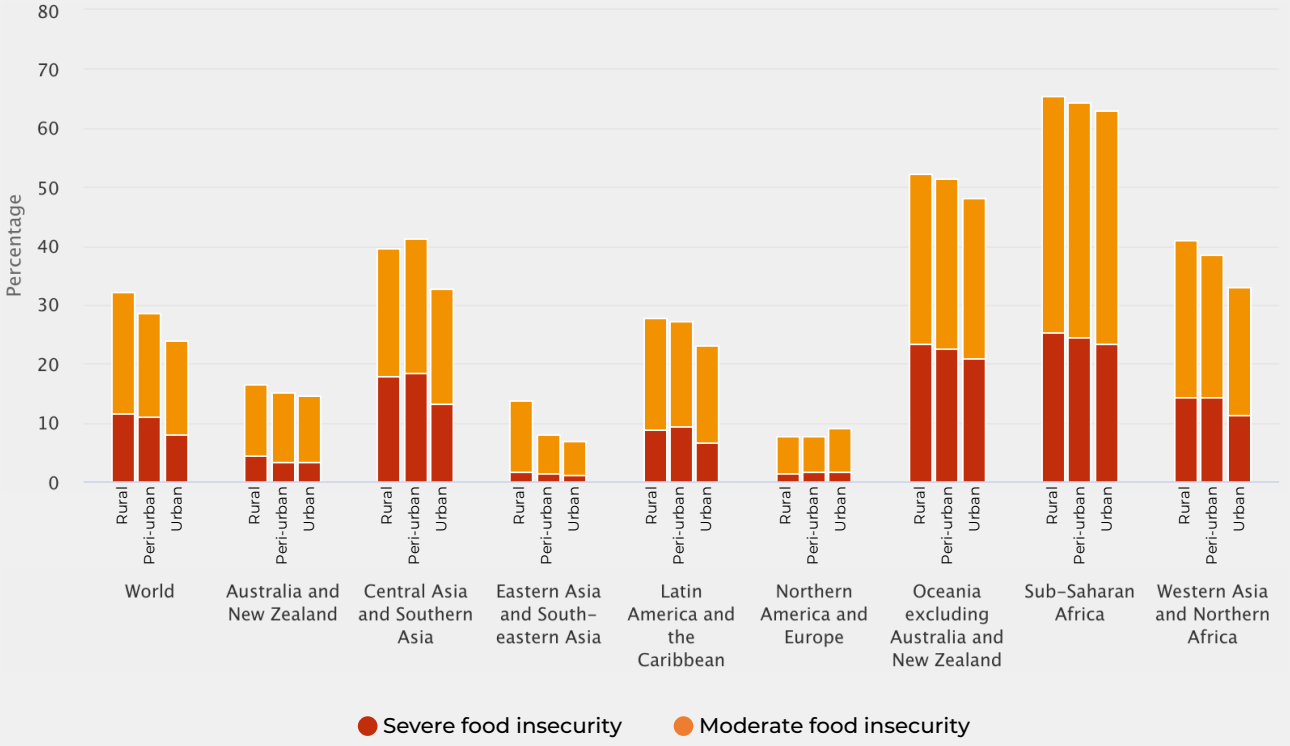
A comparison of food insecurity in rural, peri-urban and urban populations at the global and regional levels using the degree of urbanization (DEGURBA) classification (European Union *et al.*, 2021) shows that at the global level, food security improves as the degree of urbanization increases (Figure 4). In every region of the world except Northern America and Europe, people living in rural areas tend to be more food-insecure than those living in urban areas, although the relative situation of peri-urban populations differs among the regions.

Figure 3. Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the world and by region (2015, 2019, 2021 and 2024)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: Suite of Food Security Indicators.* [Accessed on 28 July 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS. License: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 4. Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in urban, peri-urban and rural areas in the world and regions (2024)



Note: Differences in totals are due to rounding of figures to the nearest decimal point.
Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: Suite of Food Security Indicators*. [Accessed on 28 July 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS. License: CC-BY-4.0.

About 32.0 percent of people living in rural areas in the world were moderately or severely food-insecure in 2024, compared to about 28.6 percent in peri-urban areas and 23.9 percent in urban areas. Focusing specifically on severe food insecurity only, a similar pattern emerges; around 11.5 percent of the rural population in the world is severely food-insecure compared to 11.0 percent of the peri-urban population and 8.1 percent of the urban population.

Persistent inequalities between men and women are also evident, with food insecurity still more prevalent among adult women than men in every region of the world. The gender gap widened considerably at the global level in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, most notably in 2021; it then grew smaller for two consecutive years. However, new estimates point to a widening of the gap at the global level between 2023 and 2024. During this period, the difference in the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity between women and men increased from 1.3 to 1.9 percentage points, and for severe food insecurity, from 0.6 to 0.8 percentage points. After these fluctuations over the past nine years, the gender gap in 2024 was about the same as it was in 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was launched.

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SDG INDICATOR 2.2.4.b

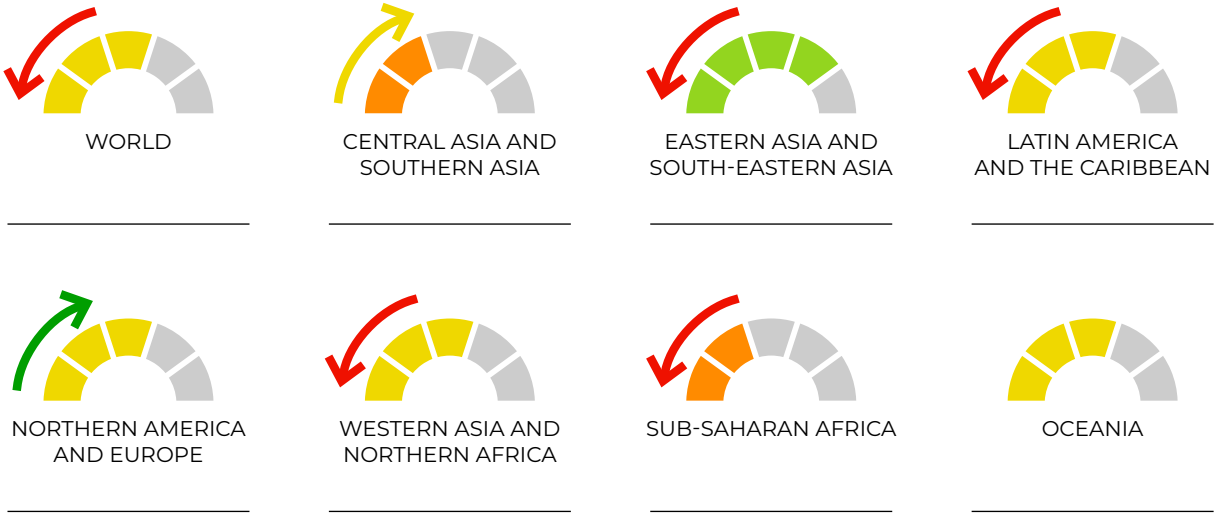
Prevalence of minimum dietary diversity among women aged 15–49 years (MDD-W)

Target 2.2

By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.2.4.B PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



A new SDG indicator of minimum dietary diversity highlights the essential role of healthy diets in ending all forms of malnutrition but points to critical gaps.

Unhealthy diets are a leading cause of poor health and non-communicable diseases worldwide (GBD 2017 Diet Collaborators, 2019). Despite the centrality of healthy diets to achieving SDG 2 and their underlying role in achieving many other Goals and targets, diet was previously not captured specifically by any indicator in the SDG indicator framework. While hunger, food insecurity and nutrition outcomes were measured, these concepts are not synonymous nor interchangeable with diets, leaving a critical gap in our understanding of global progress on ending malnutrition in all its forms.

The addition of minimum dietary diversity for children and women (MDD) to SDG Target 2.2, with overwhelming support from the IAEG-SDG and international development stakeholders, is testimony to the essential role of healthy diets in achieving the 2030 Agenda. While not all diets that are diverse are necessarily healthy, all healthy dietary patterns are by definition diverse in nutritious and health-promoting foods. The MDD indicator thus enables, for the first time, gauging the extent to which diets are likely to be inadequate in micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) worldwide.

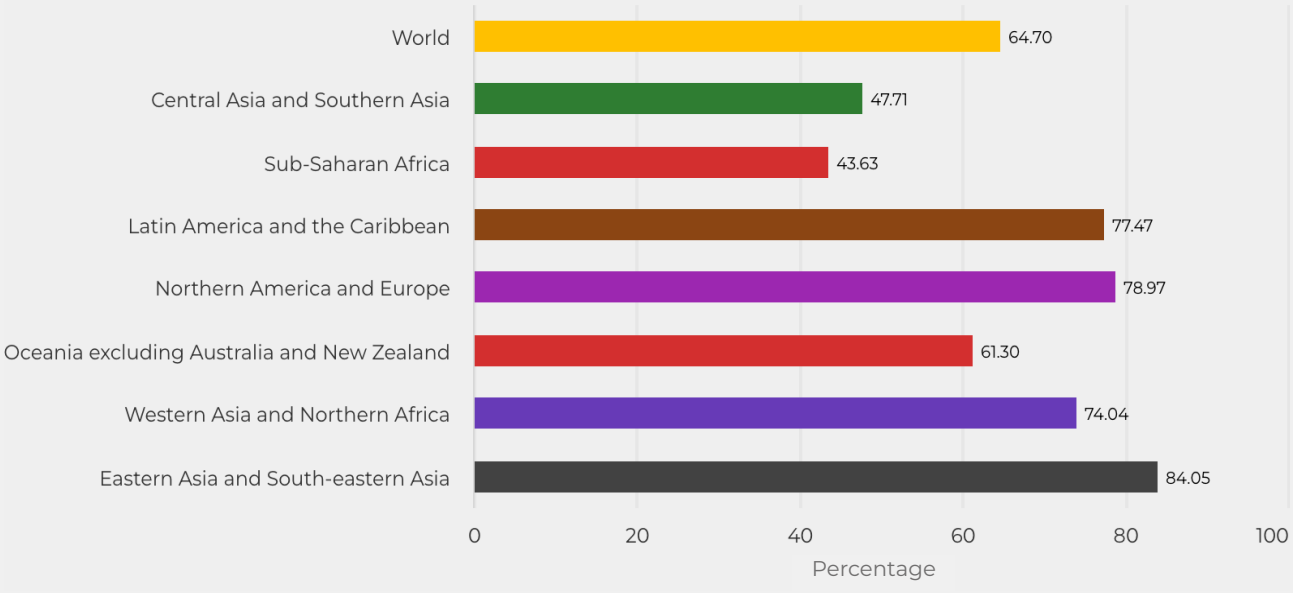
The first global estimate of minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W) from 88 UN Member States provides a sobering baseline, with only two-thirds (64.7 percent) of women of childbearing age globally having achieved MDD

(that is, consuming foods from a minimum of five out of ten food groups the previous day) between 2019 and 2023. In other words, one-third of women are at risk of having diets that are inadequate in the micronutrients required for nutrition, health, well-being and productivity. As shown in Figure 5, a regional breakdown suggests vast differences, with the lowest MDD-W prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa (43.63 percent), Central and Southern Asia (47.71 percent) and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) (61.3 percent), and the highest in Eastern and South-eastern Asia (84.05 percent), followed by North America and Europe (78.97 percent), Latin America and the Caribbean (77.47 percent), and Western Asia and Northern Africa (74.04 percent).

The progress assessment of MDD-W shows that the world and most of the regions are at moderate distance to achieving the target with a general trend of deterioration over time. Northern America and Europe is the only region on track to achieve the target, and Central Asia and Southern Asia is on path but too slow to achieve the target, but all other regions have seen a deterioration over time. Sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia and Southern Asia are far from achieving the target, while Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia is close to the target; whereas all other regions are at a moderate distance to the target.

The Food Systems Countdown Initiative (Food Systems Countdown Initiative, 2025) highlights how MDD are highly connected to other agrifood system indicators, such as the availability of nutritious foods, the cost and affordability of a healthy diet and the experience of food insecurity. Nutrition-specific actions to improve diets will be essential to increasing MDD globally. However, its desired upward trajectory will also be dependent on coordinated nutrition-sensitive actions across systems, such as reducing poverty and strengthening social protection systems, leaving no one behind.

Figure 5. Proportion of women aged 15–49 years achieving Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women across the SDG regions between 2019 and 2023



Note: Nationally representative data are available for 88 countries worldwide, of which 11 countries are from Central Asia and Southern Asia, 34 are from sub-Saharan Africa, 12 are from Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 are from Northern America and Europe, 1 is from Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, 11 are from Western Asia and Northern Africa, and 11 are from Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia. Prevalence estimates for SDG regions are weighted based on the total population of each available country as of 1 July 2022.

Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Box 1. Addressing the gap in the SDG indicators framework through the adoption of a new SDG indicator on dietary intake

The 2025 Comprehensive Review of the SDG indicator framework, which was completed at the latest (Fifty-Sixth) session of the United Nations (UN) Statistical Commission, was the second – and last – such comprehensive review within the time horizon of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2025 Comprehensive Review was led by the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG), a subsidiary body of the UN Statistical Commission tasked to oversee the implementation of the SDG indicator framework. During this process, a wide range of stakeholders had the opportunity to table proposals for indicator deletions, additions, replacements, or substantial changes.

Among the changes approved within the 2025 Comprehensive Review was the acceptance of a new indicator under SDG target 2.2 on the Prevalence of minimum dietary diversity (MDD). The indicator would focus on two vulnerable population groups: MDD-C for children aged 6–23.9 months, and MDD-W for women aged 15–49 years, with the United Nations Children's Fund and FAO assuming the role of custodian agency, respectively.

The acceptance of the MDD as a new SDG indicator reflects a broad agreement that this indicator would cover a critical gap in the SDG indicator framework, which hitherto lacked any direct measure of healthy diets. The absence of a specific indicator on dietary diversity, which is a cornerstone of healthy diets, leads to a neglect of the pivotal role that balanced diets play in realizing the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, it is widely recognized that unhealthy dietary patterns stand as a primary driver of poor health outcomes and the proliferation of non-communicable diseases globally. More and better data on MDD would boost efforts to formulate evidence-based strategies for enhancing nutrition and health outcomes through dietary interventions.

Both components of the MDD can be collected through nationally representative household surveys. A corresponding module for each component asks respondents to state whether they have consumed a predefined list of food groups in a recent given period (previous 24 hours). MDD-W measures the proportion of women aged 15–49 years who have consumed at least five out of ten predefined food groups, whereas MDD-C measures the proportion of children aged 6–23 months who have consumed at least five out of eight predefined food groups. The modules are simple, quick to enumerate, easy to interpret and have been successfully integrated into large-scale multitopic survey questionnaires with relative ease and low cost.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Table 3. The food groups for the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Children (MDD-C) and Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) components

Food groups – MDD-C	Food groups – MDD-W
▪ Breastmilk ▪ Grains, white/pale starchy roots, tubers and plantains ▪ Beans, peas, lentils, nuts and seeds ▪ Dairy products (milk, infant formula, yogurt, cheese) ▪ Flesh foods (meat, fish, poultry, organ meats) ▪ Eggs ▪ Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables ▪ Other fruits and vegetables	▪ Grains, white roots and tubers and plantains ▪ Pulses (beans, peas and lentils) ▪ Nuts and seeds ▪ Milk and milk products ▪ Meat, poultry and fish ▪ Eggs ▪ Dark green leafy vegetables ▪ Other vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables ▪ Other vegetables ▪ Other fruits

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

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Food Systems Countdown Initiative. 2025. *The food systems countdown report 2024: Tracking progress and managing interactions.* New York: Columbia University; Ithaca: Cornell University; Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Geneva: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). https://doi.org/10.36072/fsci2024

GBD 2017 Diet Collaborators. 2019. Health effects of dietary risks in 195 countries, 1990–2017: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. *The Lancet*, 393(10184): 1958–1972. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(19)30041-8.

SDG INDICATOR 2.3.1

Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size

Target 2.3

By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.3.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

not possible at global and regional level due to insufficient data.[3]

Disparities in labour productivity between small- and large-scale food producers, as well as between production units headed by men and women, persist.

Small-scale food producers are essential for resilient agriculture, food security and the fight against hunger. Despite their significant contributions to food production globally, they often face substantial vulnerability within rural areas and the broader agrifood system.

Data for the labour productivity of small-scale food producers is relatively scarce, covering fewer than 50 percent of countries at both global and regional level. Hence, it is not yet possible to determine global and regional trends, and an analysis of country values can only provide a tentative snapshot of the situation across the countries with available data.

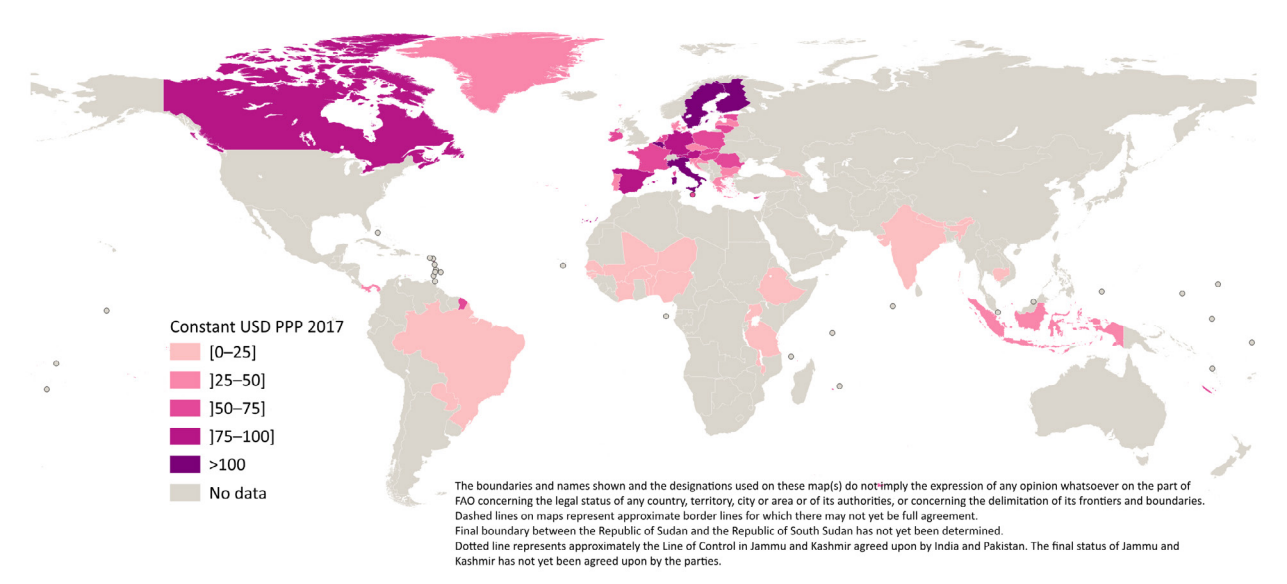
Available data shows that labour productivity for most small-scale food producers in low- and middle-income countries is below USD 25 (constant PPP 2017) per day (Figure 6). In several European countries, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden, labour productivity among small-scale food producers exceeds USD 100 per day.

Globally, labour productivity among small-scale food producers is lower than that of non-small-scale producers. The ratio of labour productivity between small-scale and non-small-scale food producers reveals significant disparities in developed countries, with small-scale producers' productivity accounting for less than 25 percent of that of large-scale producers. These gaps are less pronounced in low- and middle-income countries (Figure 7). In addition, the data shows that in many African countries, including Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, labour productivity remains generally low for both small- and non-small-scale producers.

When analysing the average labour productivity of small-scale food producers by sex, it is evident that the gender gap varies across countries. In all countries except Panama, the labour productivity of female-headed households is at least 50 percent of that of male-headed households, and in many instances, the difference is nearly nonexistent. In some countries like Guinea-Bissau, India, Senegal, Togo and Uganda, production units headed by women have higher labour productivity than those headed by men. However, in a few European countries, as well as in some countries in Africa and Latin America where data is available, the gender gap appears to be slightly larger (Figure 8).

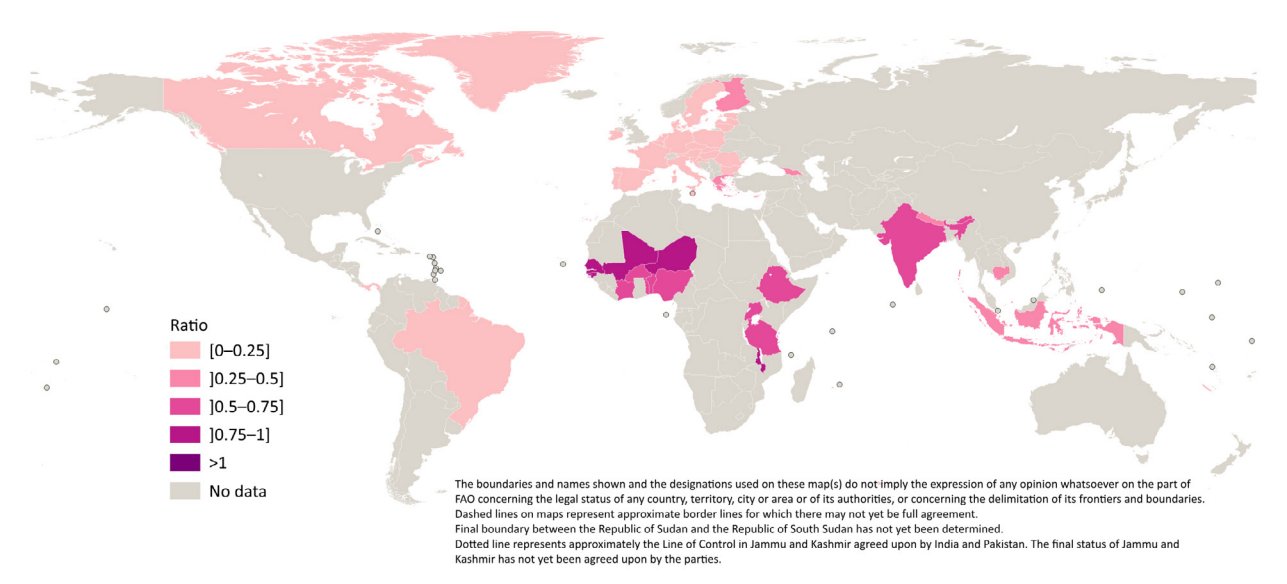
3 Progress at global and regional level can only be assessed when country coverage reaches a minimum of 50 percent. This is not yet the case for this indicator.

Figure 6. Small-scale food producers' average labour productivity (2017 purchasing power parity) (countries' last year reported)



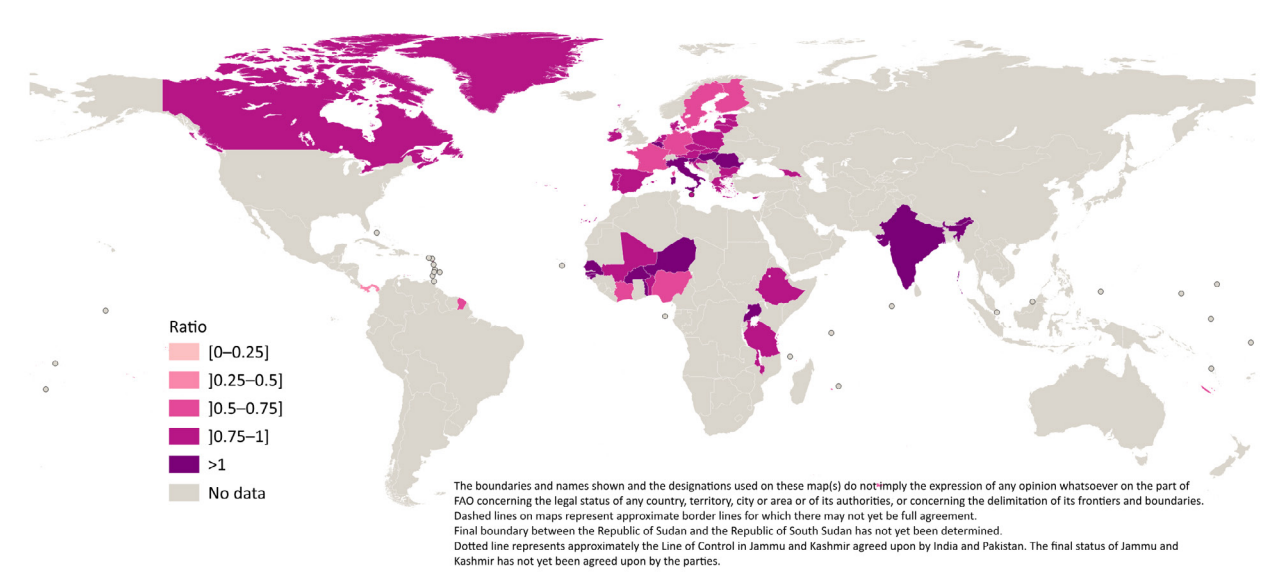
Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 7. Ratio of small-scale over non-small-scale food producers, average labour productivity (countries' last year reported)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 8. Ratio of female-headed over male-headed holdings, average labour productivity (countries' last year reported)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SDG INDICATOR 2.3.2

Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status

Target 2.3

By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.3.2 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

not possible at global and regional level due to insufficient data.

Across various countries, small-scale food producers earn, on average, less than half the income their non-small-scale counterparts make.

Increasing the income of small-scale food producers is crucial for poverty reduction, food security and sustainable development. Small-scale food producers, who are often among the world's poorest, need improved incomes to afford a decent standard of living; invest in their farms; expand, specialize and market their produce; and contribute to a sustainable food supply.

Similarly to data on productivity, data on the incomes of small-scale food producers is relatively scarce, covering fewer than 50 percent of countries and hence not allowing a proper monitoring of global and regional trends. An analysis of country values therefore only provides an illustrative description of the situation across the countries with available data.

The latest country data highlights a persistent income gap between small-scale and non-small-scale food producers. In most reported countries, small-scale producers earn significantly less, with annual agricultural incomes often below USD 1 500 (Figure 9).

Across various countries, small-scale food producers earn, on average, less than half of what their non-small-scale counterparts make, with the most pronounced differences found in certain countries in the Americas and South-eastern Asia (Figure 10).

When we look at the ratio of small-scale female-headed production units' income over those headed by males, we see that in most countries with available data, there is a gender gap in favour of male-headed production units. This gap may be more pronounced, as in Bangladesh and Benin, with men earning more than twice compared to the women-headed production units. Conversely, the gender gap is almost non-existent in Cambodia and Canada and smaller in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Iraq and Tonga. Only in Marshall Islands and South Africa, women-headed production units were earning slightly higher than their male counterparts (Figure 11).

Figure 9. Average annual income from agriculture of small-scale food producers (2017 constant purchasing power parity, United States dollars)

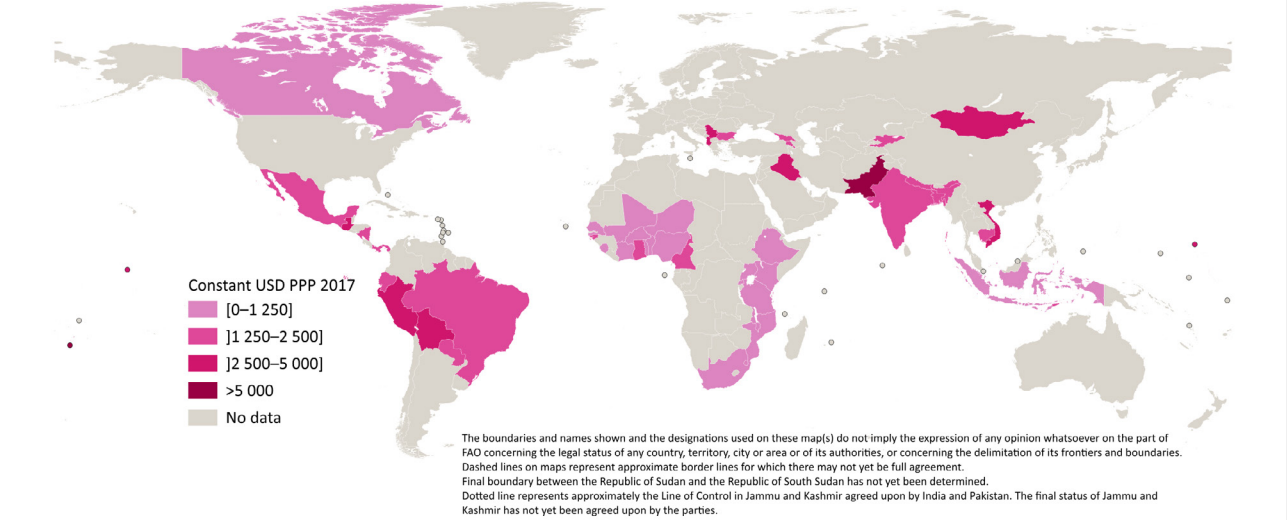


Figure 10. Ratio of small-scale over non-small-scale food producers, annual income from agriculture (countries' last year reported values)

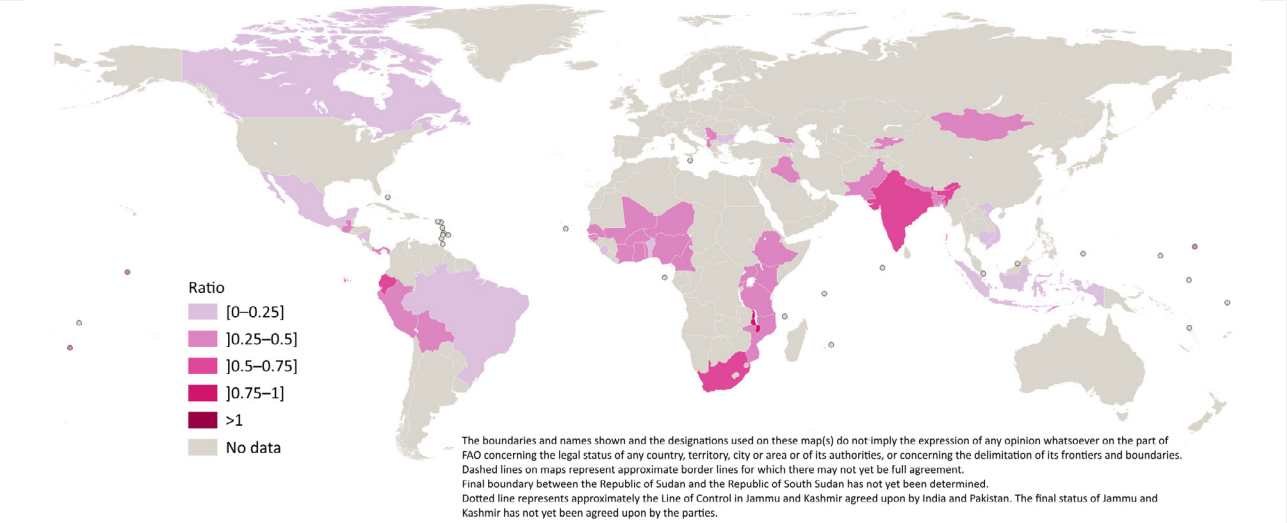
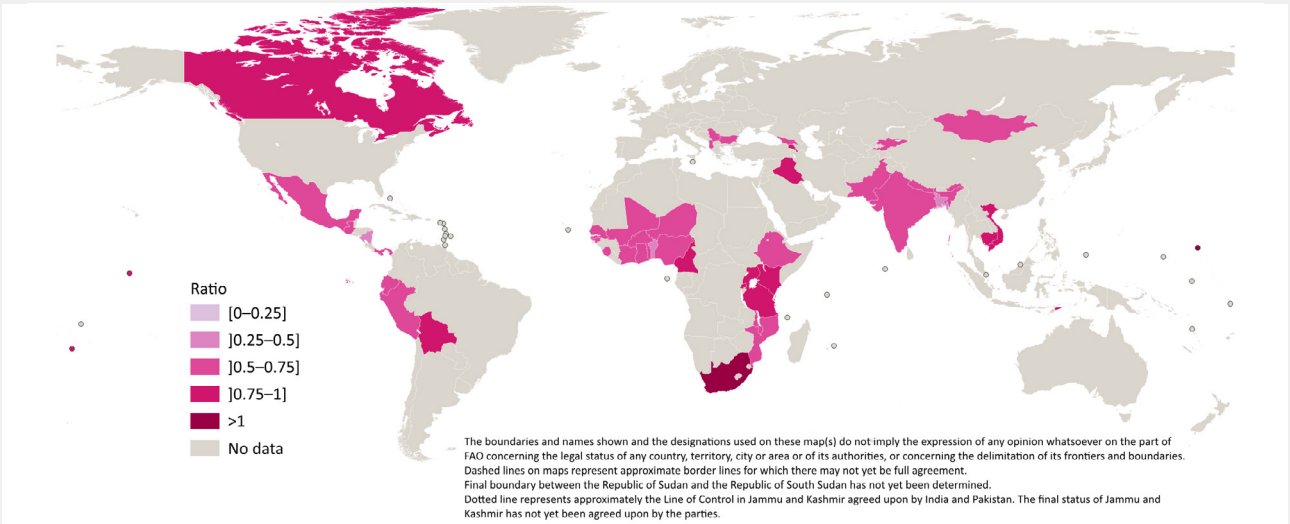


Figure 11. Ratio of small-scale female-headed over small-scale male-headed production units (countries' last reported values)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SDG INDICATOR 2.4.1 proxy

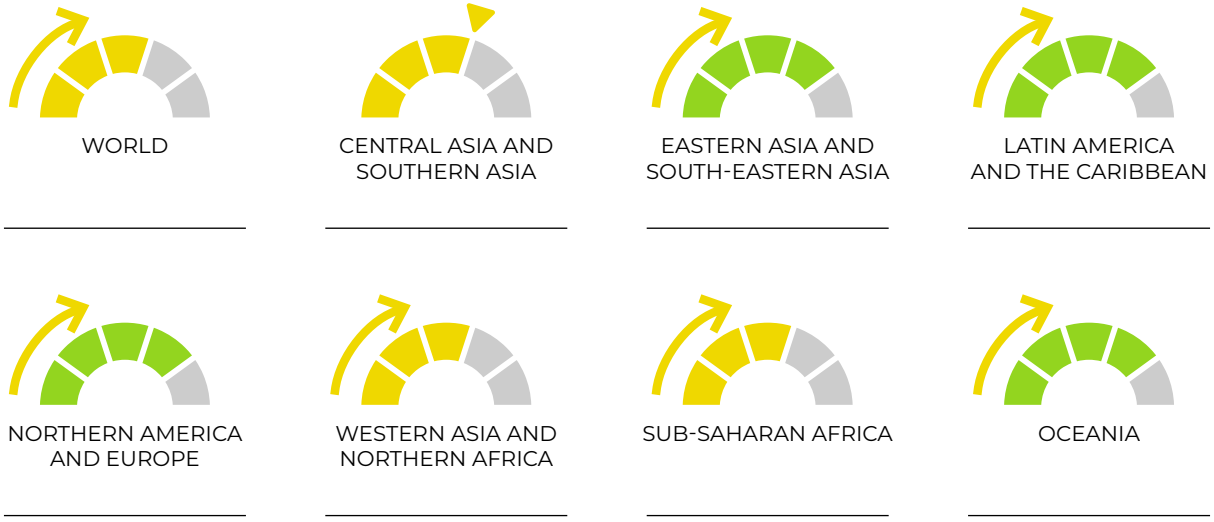
Progress towards productive and sustainable agriculture

Target 2.4

By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.4.1 PROXY PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



The world is only at a moderate distance from achieving productive and sustainable agriculture, with only a slight improvement since 2015.

Achieving productive and sustainable agriculture in a way that meets the world's needs but without compromising an already depleted natural resource base is a prerequisite for ensuring world food security and nutrition, while sustaining economic and social development and protecting the ecosystem services on which agriculture depends.

Data derived from a combination of key economic, social and environmental indicators suggests that the current status of the world is at a moderate distance to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture (score 3.3 out of 5), while also having registered a slight improvement in the trend towards achieving productive and sustainable agriculture (score 4.0 out of 5) since 2015.

While the world is at a moderate distance to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture (based on most recent year analysed), some subindicators included in this assessment are performing better than others. As shown in Figure 12, while the world has not achieved productive and sustainable agriculture for any of the subindicators, it is close to achieving the target for gross output diversification, cropland nitrogen use efficiency, and the agricultural component of water stress. The world is at a moderate distance to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture for agricultural value added per worker, greenhouse gas emissions intensity in agriculture, and informal

employment in agriculture. The world is far from achieving productive and sustainable agriculture for the subindicator on gross production value per hectare. At the subindicator level, the majority of the subindicators show slight improvement towards productive and sustainable agriculture – the exceptions are informal employment in agriculture, which showed no improvement, and gross production value per hectare, which displayed improvement.

Box 2. Measuring productive and sustainable agriculture

Since the final endorsement of the methodology of SDG Indicator 2.4.1 on productive and sustainable agriculture in March 2019, FAO has invested substantial efforts in providing capacity development support to countries to ensure their regular reporting of the indicator. These efforts have helped over 50 countries report partial data on SDG Indicator 2.4.1, though only a handful of countries have reported complete data. This is due to a multiplicity of factors, including the inherent complexity of the indicator, the difficulty in leveraging alternative data sources, the low frequency of agricultural surveys in countries (which took an additional hit with the COVID-19 pandemic), as well as low technical and financial means to include the 2.4.1 module in new agricultural surveys.

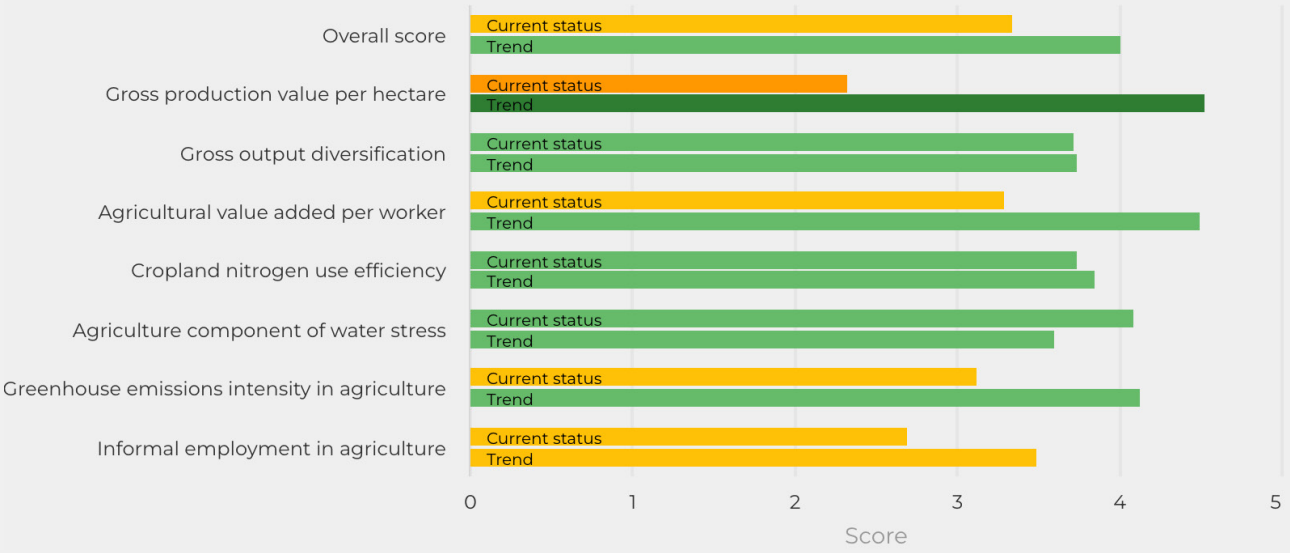
The current dearth of data on the official SDG Indicator 2.4.1 created a critical information gap in SDG reporting. In 2023, FAO decided to try to fill this information gap and report on progress towards SDG Target 2.4 by means of a provisional, alternative measure. This "proxy" measure consists of a set of seven established metrics linked to sustainability and productivity in agriculture, based on widely available national statistics. This proxy indicator was finally endorsed by the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG indicators in 2024.

The 2.4.1 proxy indicator, on which the following analysis is based, builds on an innovative methodology that expands on the Progress Toward Sustainable Agriculture (PROSA) analytical framework (Ignaciuk *et al*., 2021) launched by FAO in 2021. This framework synthesizes the information from the seven constituent metrics to produce an overall score for both trend towards and current status of the target of productive and sustainable agriculture. The proxy indicator will be able to provide good guidance on countries' progress until countries are able to produce the official SDG indicator 2.4.1. The results of this first assessment are reported in, to be read and interpreted with the help of the following legend.

SCORE	Trend towards productive and sustainable agriculture
1 – < 1.5	Deterioration away from productive and sustainable agriculture
1.5 – < 2.5	Slight deterioration from productive and sustainable agriculture
2.5 – < 3.5	No improvement towards productive and sustainable agriculture
3.5 – < 4.5	Slight improvement towards productive and sustainable agriculture
4.5 – 5	Improvement towards productive and sustainable agriculture
SCORE	**Current status of productive and sustainable agriculture**
1 – < 1.5	Very far from achieving productive and sustainable agriculture
1.5 – < 2.5	Far from achieving productive and sustainable agriculture
2.5 – < 3.5	Close to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture
3.5 – < 4.5	Very close to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture
4.5 – 5	Productive and sustainable agriculture already achieved

Source: Ignaciuk, A., Ilicic, J., Asprooth, L., Sitko, N.J., Bernard, A., Maggio, G., Tubiello, F.N. & Mueller, M. 2021. *Progress towards sustainable agriculture - Drivers of change.* FAO Agricultural Development Economics Technical Study No. 13. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7896en

Figure 12. World SDG 2.4.1 proxy – 2022 current status score and trend (2015–2022) assessment to achieve productive and sustainable agriculture, by subindicator

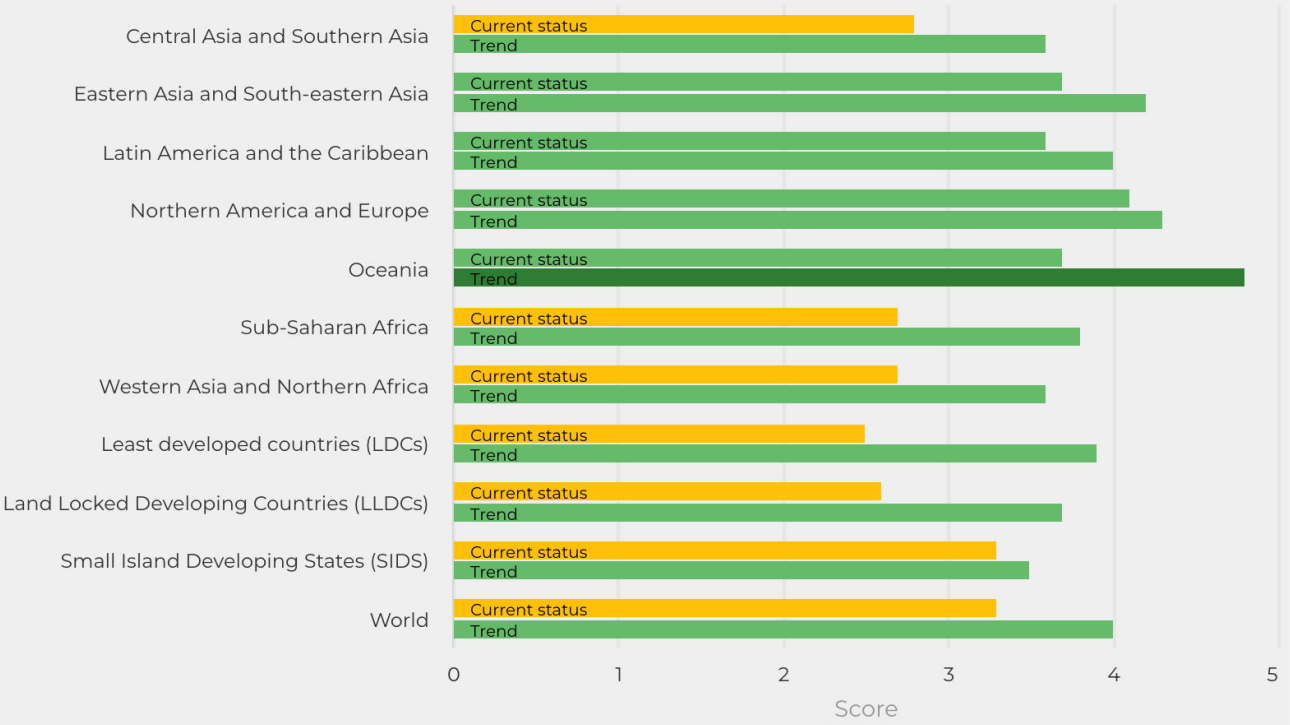


Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

As shown in Figure 13, at the regional level, Northern America and Europe, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, Oceania, and Latin America and the Caribbean, are close to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture. Central Asia and Southern Asia, Western Asia and Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa are at a moderate distance to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture. Least developed countries (LDCs) and Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), with the lowest scores (2.5 and 2.6 out of 5, respectively), are likewise at a moderate distance to achieving productive and sustainable agriculture. Over the period 2015–2022, Oceania showed improvement towards productive and sustainable agriculture. All other regions achieved slight improvement towards productive and sustainable agriculture. Similarly, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), LDCs and LLDCs showed slight improvement. The heterogeneity in countries contributing to these aggregates can be seen in Figures 14 and 15, displaying the current status and trend assessments at country level.

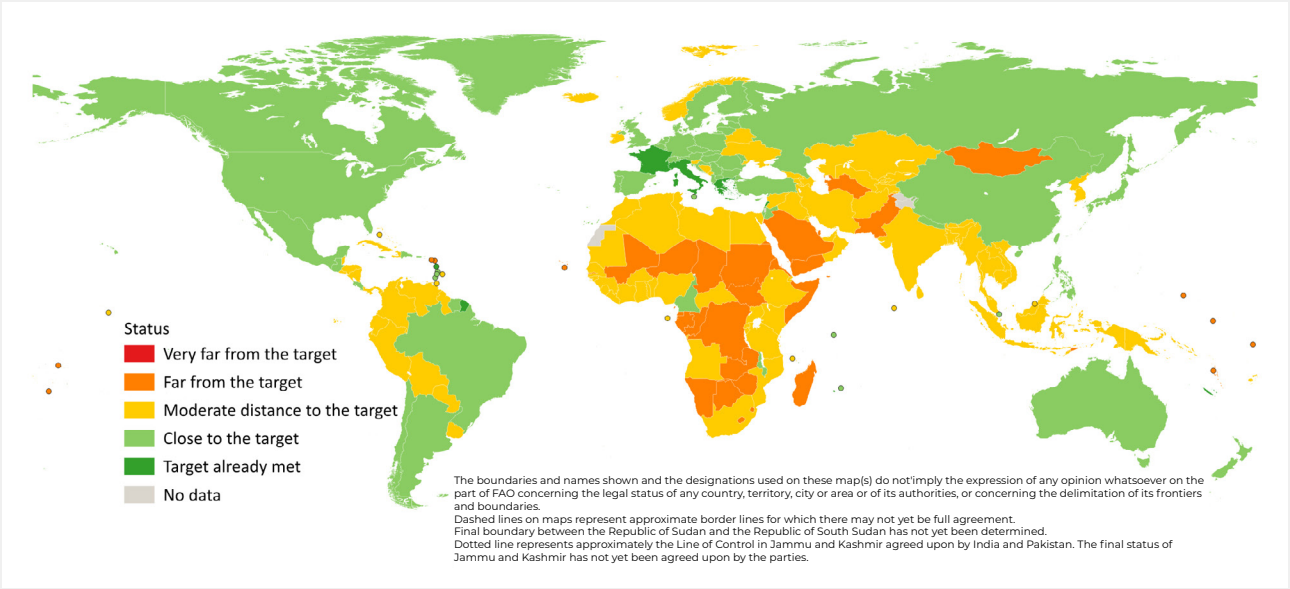
The overall picture is therefore one of slight improvement with respect to achieving the SDG Target 2.4 of ensuring sustainable and productive agriculture. Most regions are close to achieving the goal, while others are very close. Although more detailed analysis is required to investigate the root causes, the evidence suggests that all regions of the world urgently need sustained, concerted actions geared towards improving productive and sustainable agriculture by 2030, or otherwise risk missing the target.

Figure 13. SDG 2.4.1 proxy – Current Status 2022 score and Trend (2015–2022) assessment to achieve productive and sustainable agriculture.



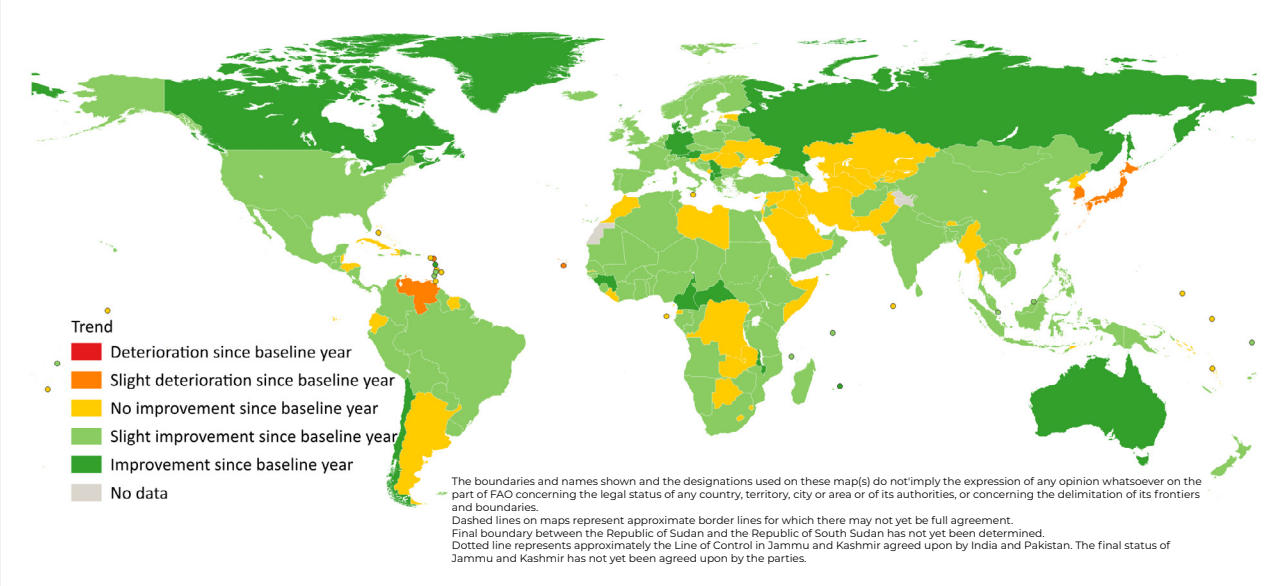
Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 14. Current status assessment of 2022 for SDG 2.4.1 proxy



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 15. Trend assessment (2015–2022) for SDG 2.4.1 proxy



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SDG INDICATOR 2.5.1.A

Number of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities

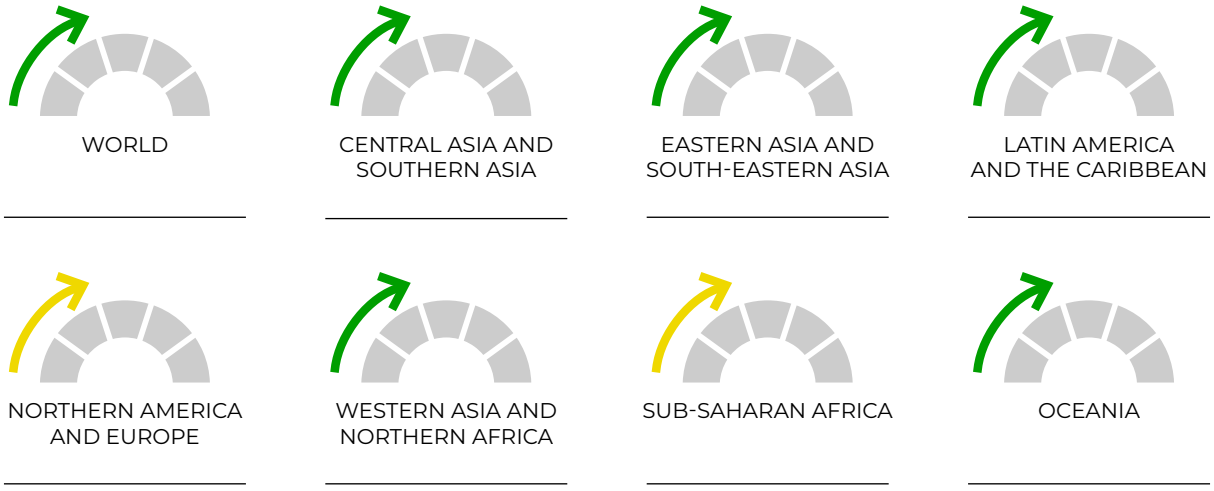
Target 2.5

By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.5.1.A PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

current status assessment not possible due to the methodological characteristics of this indicator.[4]



While global crop and crop-associated diversity has continued to increase, this growth has continued to slow down over time. Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture are essential to achieving food security, improving nutrition and ensuring sustainable agricultural livelihoods, as they provide the basis for developing crops and varieties that are well adapted to their environment, rich in nutrients and climate-resilient. At the end of 2024, about 6 million plant germplasm accessions were conserved under medium- or long-term conditions in 902 gene banks in 118 countries and 17 regional and international research centres. This estimate is based on updated reports from 59 countries and 4 research centres, representing 58 percent of total holdings, and on reports from recent years for the remaining countries and centres.

While global crop and crop-associated diversity has continued to increase, this growth has also continued to slow down over time, dropping to 0.5 percent in 2023 and 0.1 percent in 2024. As such, it is considerably lower than the annual average of the past 29 years (3.2 percent). The largest germplasm acquisitions by gene banks

4 This indicator is expressed as a count (rather than a proportion), meaning that absolute values across countries cannot be compared. As a result, quintiles at the regional and global level cannot be produced, and only trends can be determined and compared.

during 2023–2024 were reported in Western Asia (35 percent of new global acquisitions), Eastern Asia (16 percent), Eastern Africa and South America (14 percent each). These new acquisitions consisted mainly of farmers' varieties (37 percent) and population samples of crop wild relatives and wild food plants (22 percent).

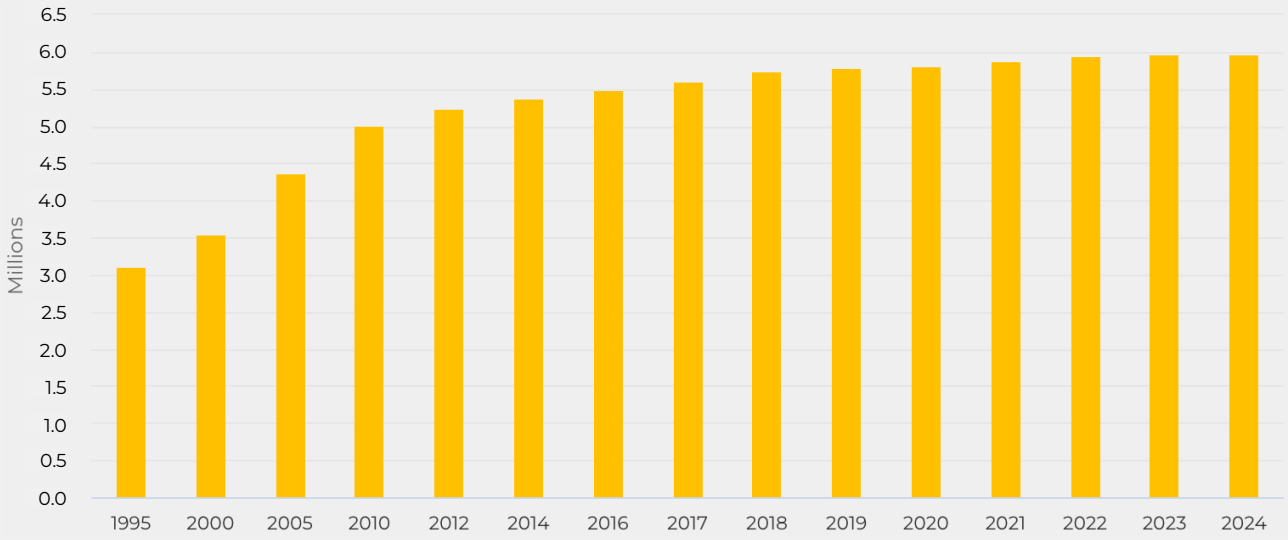
Since 2022, the highest net increases in gene bank holdings were in Central America (16 000 or 19 percent of the subregional holdings); and Eastern Asia (9 000 or 3.5 percent of the subregional holdings), and Western Asia (5 000 or 5.5 percent of the subregional holdings). In the remaining regions, the increase averaged 0.1 percent.

Net decreases in gene bank holdings of more than 1 percent occurred in three countries in Europe, two countries of South America and one country of Melanesia. Armed conflicts in Eastern Europe and Northern Africa continued to affect the operations of important national gene banks conserving 16 and 13 percent of the respective subregional holdings. Collections from these gene banks have been secured in conservation facilities far from the conflict zones and have been safely duplicated with the collaboration of the international community.

Looking at a broader timespan, most regions have increased their accessions of plant genetic resources since 2015 and hence have registered a positive trend towards the target. The exceptions are sub-Saharan Africa and Northern America and Europe, which have only registered slight or no improvement since 2015.

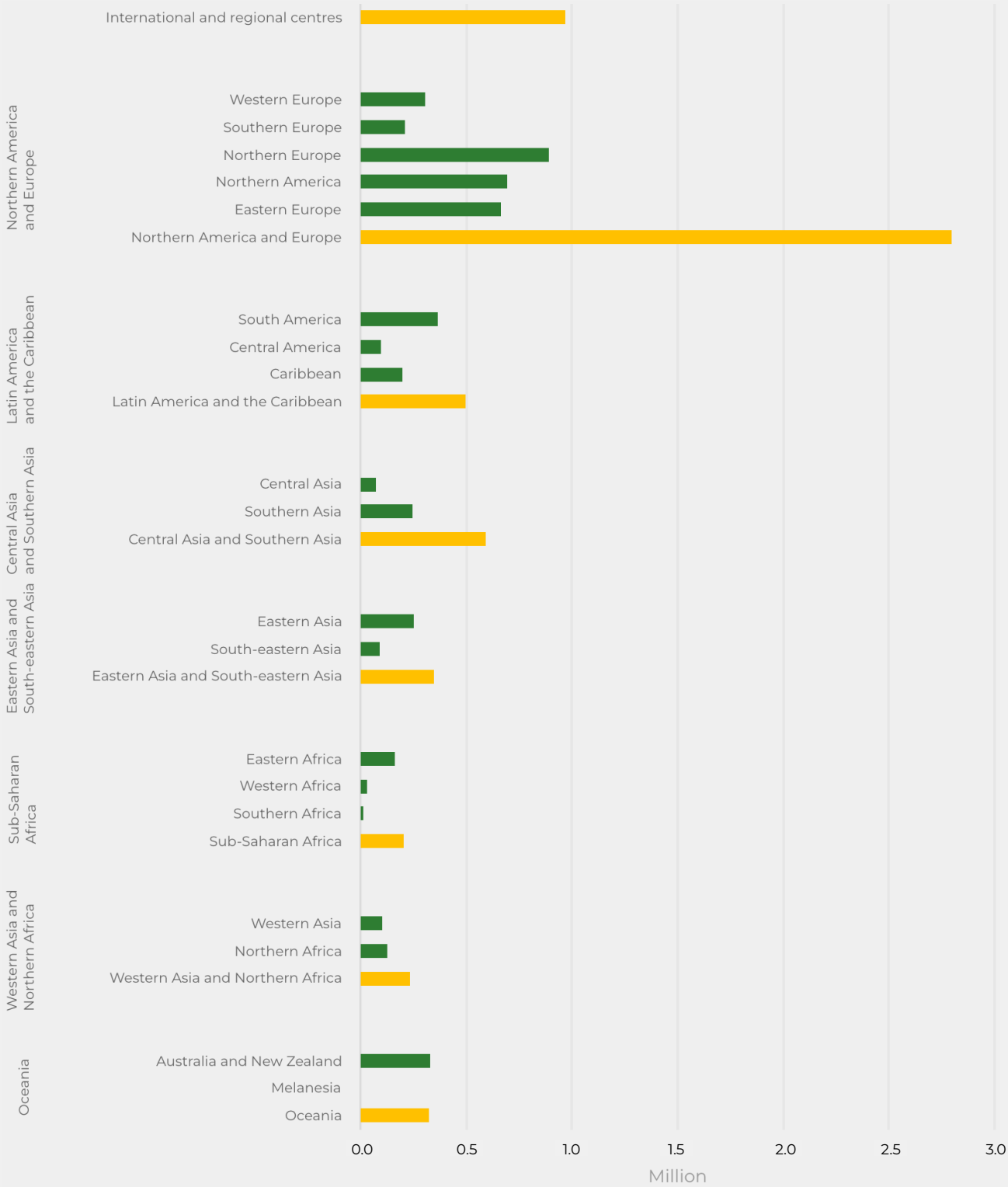
Crop wild relatives, wild food plants, and underutilized or neglected crop species represent some of the most threatened plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Their survival is increasingly jeopardized by socioeconomic pressures and climate change, both in natural habitats and farming systems. Despite some small recent increases in safeguarding diversity of these plant groups, significantly more urgent and coordinated action is required at local, regional and global levels, particularly through complementary conservation efforts both *in situ* and *ex situ*.

Figure 16. Number of accessions of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture conserved in medium- or long-term conservation facilities in the world (1995–2024)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 17. Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture accessions stored *ex situ* (number of accessions), by region and subregion (2024)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SDG INDICATOR 2.5.1.B

Number of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities

Target 2.5

By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.5.1.B PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

not possible due to insufficient data and the absence of numerical yardstick in target.

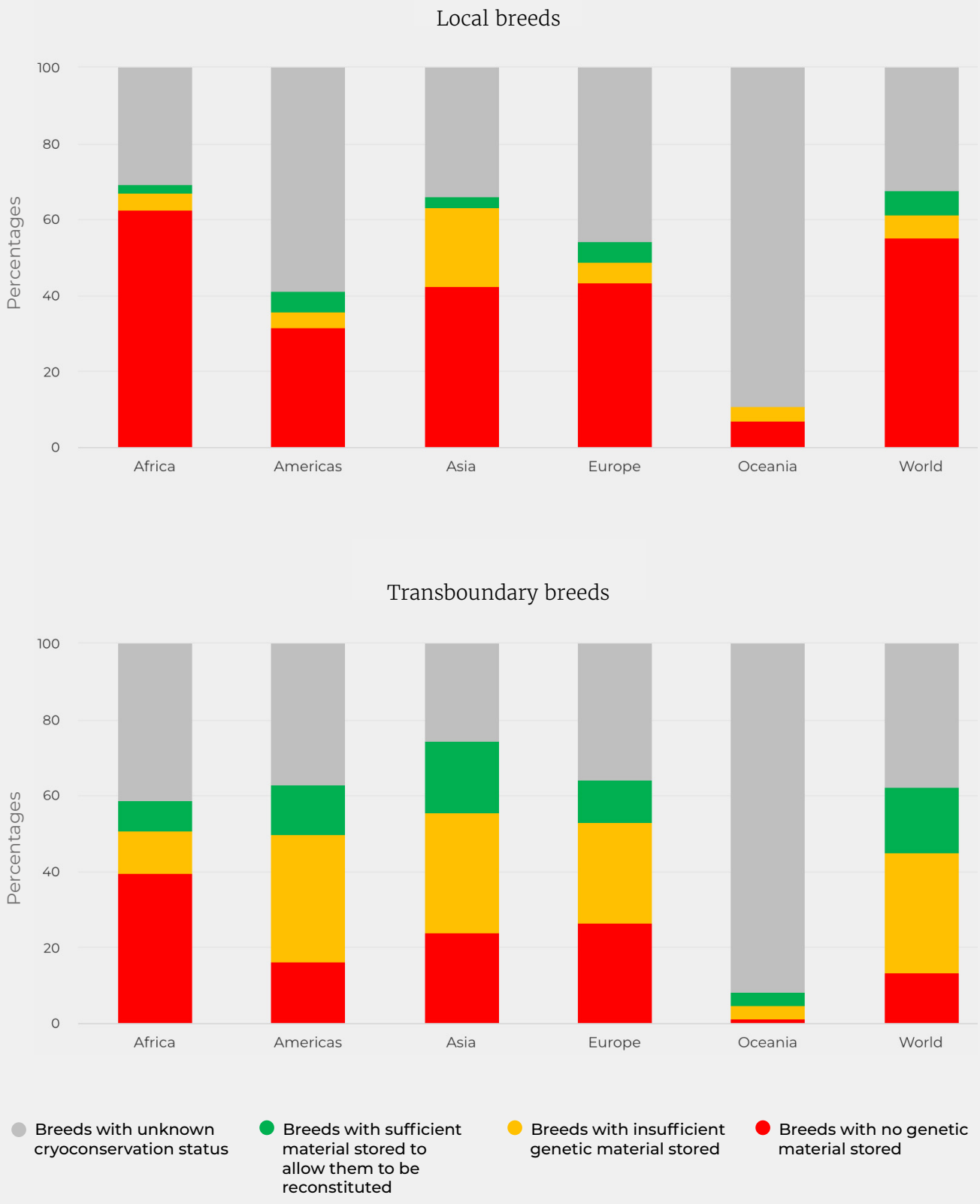
Increased efforts are needed to preserve the genetic diversity of farmed and domestic animals, to bolster the resilience of agrifood systems facing increasingly frequent challenges due to the climate crisis.

To support efforts towards maintaining the diversity of farmed and domesticated animals, which mainly takes place through the use of living animals by farmers and pastoralists, genetic materials of livestock breeds are cryoconserved (deep-frozen) and stored in gene banks to allow reconstitution of breeds in case of extinction. This is called *in vitro ex situ* conservation. SDG Indicator 2.5.1.b refers to this type of conservation, which is complementary to SDG Indicator 2.5.2, described in the next section.

An increasing number of breeds with sufficient material stored can be interpreted as a positive trend regarding the achievement of the target. This is why this measure is used to gauge progress towards both Agenda 2030 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Unfortunately, we are still far from maintaining the genetic diversity of farmed and domesticated animals. As of December 2024, for *in vitro ex situ* conservation, sufficient material is stored for only 365 out of 7 809 local breeds (5 percent), and 194 out of 1 126 transboundary breeds (17 percent), reflecting only a marginal increase from 4 percent and 14 percent in the year 2022, respectively.

Given that the number of endangered local breeds is unlikely to decrease significantly in the near future, countries need to strengthen efforts to store genetic material in sufficient quantities. Currently, the number of local breeds that have sufficient material is alarmingly low. In Europe, sufficient material is reported for 190 local and 77 transboundary breeds (6 and 11 percent, respectively), while this is the case for 133 local and 58 transboundary breeds (6 and 15 percent, respectively) in Asia, and only 21 local and 31 transboundary breeds (2 and 8 percent, respectively) in Africa (see Figure 18). In Oceania, there are no local breeds and 10 transboundary breeds (3.44 percent) with sufficient genetic material stored for reconstitution. The number remains also low in the Americas, with 21 local and 87 transboundary breeds (2.94 and 18.71 percent, respectively).

Figure 18. Proportion of local and transboundary breeds (including extinct ones) with sufficient, insufficient or no genetic material stored



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SDG INDICATOR 2.5.2

Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk of extinction

Target 2.5

By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.5.2 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

not possible due to insufficient data and the absence of numerical yardstick in target.

The proportion of breeds at risk of extinction remains worryingly high. Furthermore, the lack of data availability hinders a complete understanding of the scope of the issue for a majority of breeds.

The diversity of farmed and domesticated animals is mainly maintained *in vivo in situ*, which refers to living animals being kept and used in the respective livestock production system. If the number of living animals in a population falls below certain thresholds, they are considered to be at risk of extinction. Farmers and countries have to take conservation actions, such as improving management, to maintain or increase the population sizes of breeds at risk, in order to avoid extinction. Thus, in *vivo in situ* and the previously discussed *in vitro ex situ* (see section on SDG Indicator 2.5.1b) are complementary to each other, and SDG indicators 2.5.2 and 2.5.1b, referring to those two main ways of maintenance, must be interpreted simultaneously. For both indicators, the number of countries with updated data preclude the meaningful assessment of global results.

Stable or declining proportions of breeds at risk represent progress towards achieving SDG Target 2.5, which aims to maintain the genetic diversity of farmed and domesticated animals. However, in countries where sufficient data is available, we remain far from achieving this goal. As of 2024, the risk status of most local breeds worldwide is still unknown, with data available for only 42 percent of local breeds and 66 percent of transboundary breeds. Among the breeds with known status, local breeds are more frequently classified as being at risk of extinction compared to transboundary breeds – 70 percent versus 50 percent, respectively (see Figure 19).

Regionally, Europe and Oceania report a higher proportion of local breeds with known status (68 percent and 58 percent, respectively) compared to the global average of 42 percent. Reporting on transboundary breeds is more consistent across regions. Among breeds with known status, Europe, Oceania and the Americas report higher proportions of breeds at risk: 83 and 53 percent of local and transboundary breeds are classified as being at risk of extinction in Europe, 91 and 47 percent of local and transboundary breeds in Oceania, and 61 and 45 percent of local and transboundary breeds in the Americas. In contrast, the proportions are significantly lower in Africa and Asia. Only 28 percent and 26 percent of local and transboundary breeds with known status, respectively, are classified as at risk in Africa, while in Asia, the figures are 31 percent and 29 percent.

Concerted actions at national, regional and global level – including a renewed commitment to and proactive implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework – are needed to better safeguard animal genetic diversity for food and agriculture.

Figure 19. Proportions of local and transboundary breeds at risk of extinction as a proportion of breeds with known risk status (2025)

Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

REFERENCE

International instrument (non-binding)

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 19 December 2022, CBD/COP/DEC/15/4, https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf

SDG INDICATOR 2.A.1

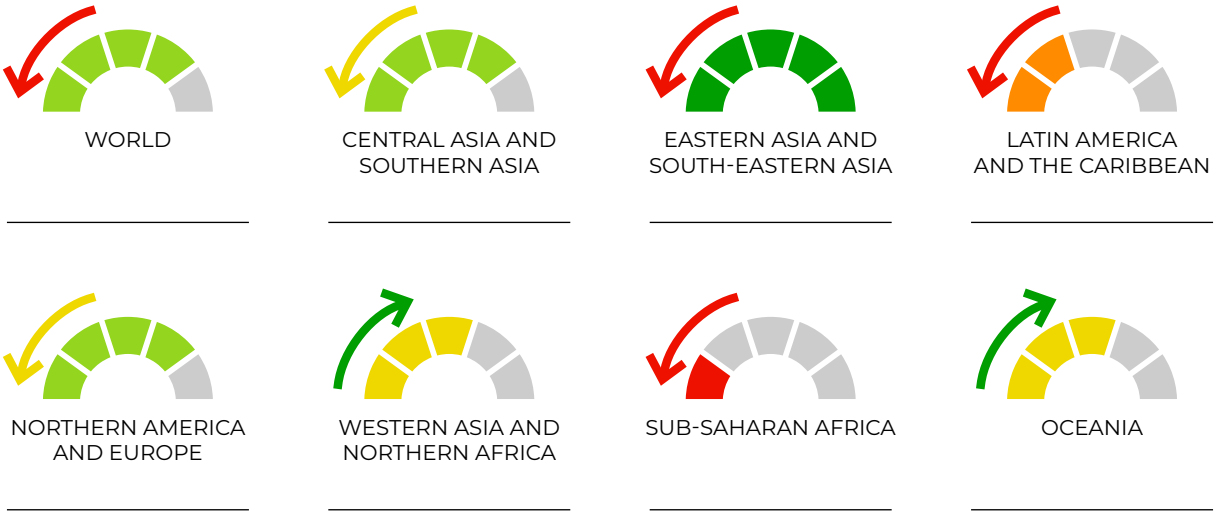
Agriculture orientation index for government expenditure

Target 2.a

Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.A.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



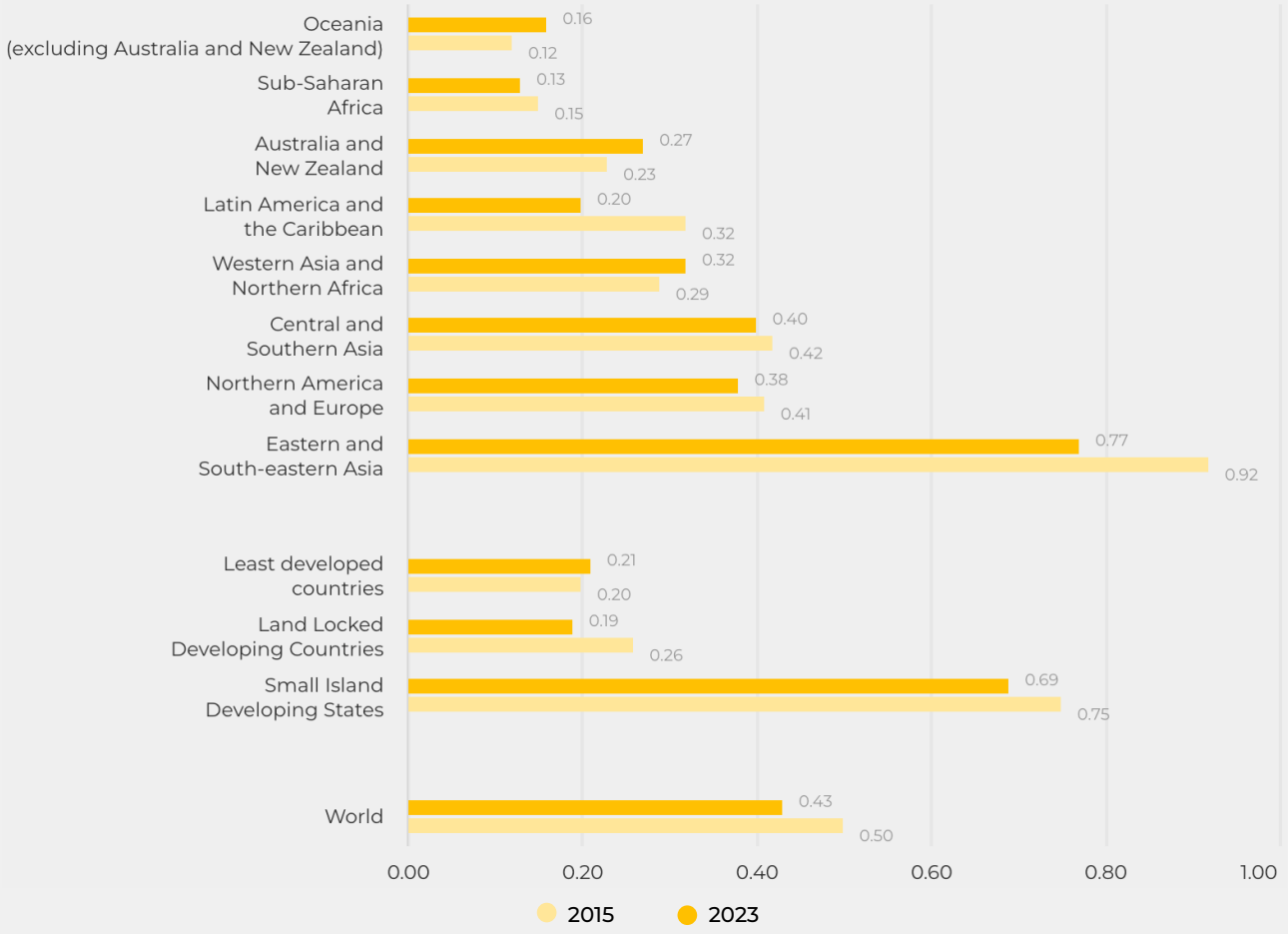
Government spending in agriculture is increasing in nominal terms, but the global agriculture orientation index continues to decline.

Government expenditure is a key source of investment in the agricultural sector, acting as a catalyst for sector efficiency, productivity and income growth, and a lever for attracting additional private or international investment.

Between 2015 and 2023, the global government spending in agriculture in nominal terms showed an increasing trend and recorded an all-time high of USD 701 billion in 2023, growing at an average annual rate of about 2 percent. Throughout this period, agriculture received between 1.86 percent and 2.1 percent of global total spending. Government spending is distributed among different programmes and sectors and can be used as a direct response to cushion the impacts of economic and social challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters or increasing inflation.

At the global level, the agricultural sector contributes between 3.9 percent to 4.4 percent of the GDP between 2015 and 2023. When government expenditure on agriculture is compared relative to the agriculture sector's contribution to GDP, measured in terms of the Agriculture Orientation Index (AOI), it recorded a declining trend during the same period. The global baseline AOI was 0.50 in 2015. It fell to 0.45 in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and further declined to 0.43 in 2023 (Figure 20). A drop in the AOI may therefore signify that governments are investing less in agriculture compared to the sector's contribution to the economy.

Figure 20. Agriculture orientation index, by SDG region, 2015 and 2023



Note: The number of countries with data available may vary over time. Global and regional aggregates include imputed data.

Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: Government Expenditure*. [Accessed January 2025]. http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/IG. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

The declining trend in AOI is also observed among all regions with the exception of Western Asia and Northern Africa, and Oceania. Specifically, between 2015 and 2023, the regions of sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern and South-eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Southern Asia reported a decline of their AOI in 2023, as did the subregions of Eastern Asia, South-eastern Asia, Central America and South America.

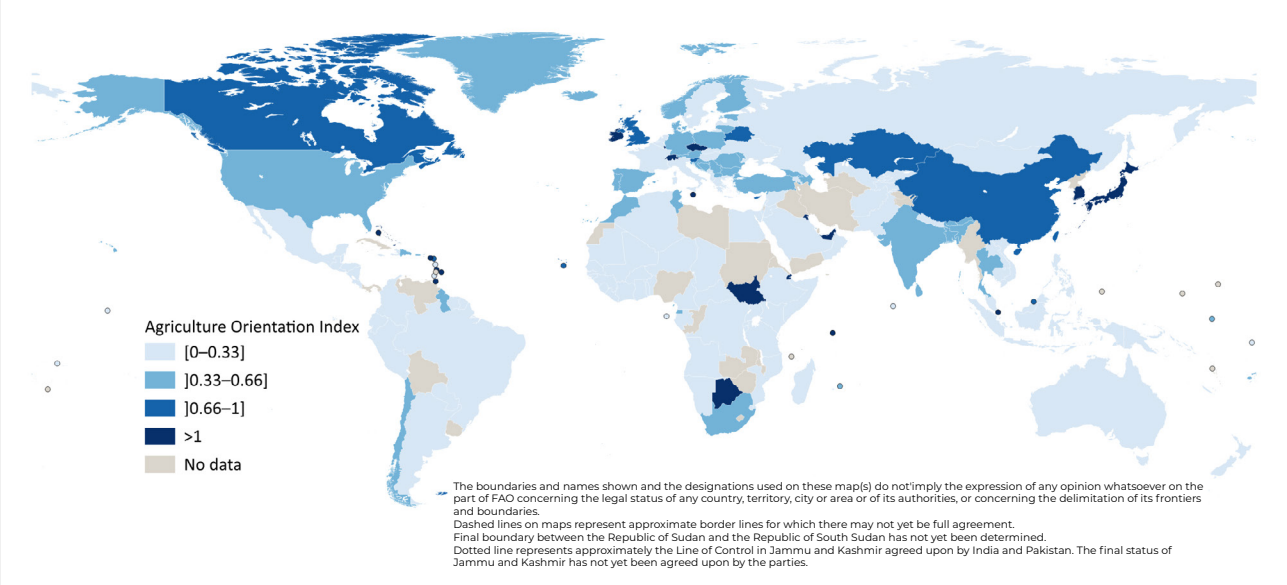
By contrast, during this period, Western Asia and Northern Africa as well as Oceania recorded an increase in AOI (from 0.29 to 0.32 and from 0.12 to 0.16 respectively). Looking at the subregional level, increases in the AOI are more pronounced in Northern Africa (from 0.24 to 0.30) compared to Western Asia (from 0.33 to 0.34), while the increase in Australia and New Zealand (from 0.23 to 0.27) is similar in magnitude to that of Oceania as a whole (from 0.12 to 0.16).

From a progress assessment lens, the world and most of the regions are above the median of country values, although they have experienced a decline since the baseline year. Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as sub-Saharan Africa, stand as the regions below and far below the median of country values and have also shown deterioration over time. While Oceania, Western Asia and Northern Africa are at the median, both regions have recorded improvements since the baseline year.

Countries that belong to the LDCs and LLDCs are among the highest spenders in agriculture in terms

of share to total government expenditures. On average, the LDC and the LLDC regions allocated about 4 percent of their total expenditures to agriculture, yet the agriculture sector generates about 18 percent of their GDP. In terms of AOI, LLDCs reported a decline from 0.26 in 2015 to 0.19 in 2023, while there was a small increase for LDCs from 0.20 in 2015 and 0.21 in 2023. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS), also recorded a decline in AOI from 0.75 in 2015 to 0.69 in 2023.

Figure 21. Agriculture orientation index, 2022–2023 average



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: *CC-BY-4.0*.

SDG INDICATOR 2.C.1

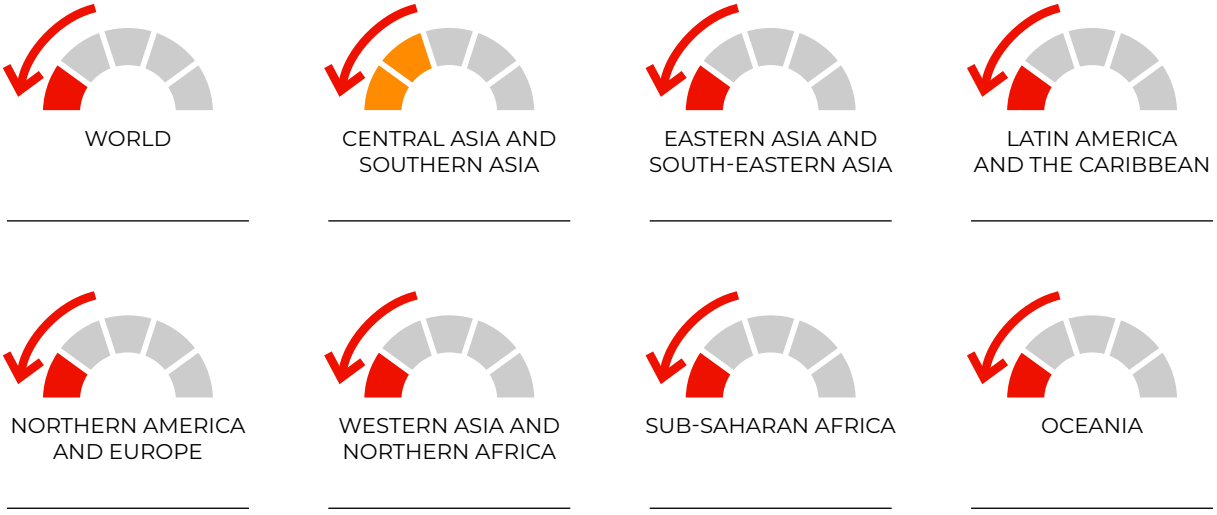
Indicator of food price anomalies assessment

Target 2.c

Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 2.C.1. PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



The proportion of countries with moderately to abnormally high food prices saw a modest decline in 2023 compared to the preceding year, but it remains three times higher than the 2015–19 average value – a significant deterioration for the achievement of this target.

Extreme food price volatility has negative consequences on food security, hampering effective decision-making by both producers and consumers, and especially affecting vulnerable groups such as small-scale food producers and family farmers. Globally, the proportion of countries facing moderately to abnormally high food prices declined to about 50 percent in 2023 compared to the preceding year. This trend was consistent across most monitored regional groupings, except for Eastern and South-eastern Asia and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). While the global figure for 2023 represents a moderate decline from the record value of 60 percent in 2022, it remains over three times higher than the 2015–2019 average value of 16 percent and similar to the high level registered in 2020. This is why most regions are far from achieving the target of limiting extreme food price volatility, and their situation has deteriorated, overall, since the beginning of the SDG period.

Following the sharp increases in 2022, global food prices mostly declined during the first half of 2023, driven by lower shipping costs and easing prices for fuel and fertilizers. However, in the latter half of the year, global food prices saw a modest rebound due to heightened uncertainty from multiple factors, including geopolitical tensions from conflicts in the Near East and rising oil prices linked to OPEC+ production cuts. Despite the year-on-year improvement and a generally favourable food supply situation, global food prices remained historically high in 2023.

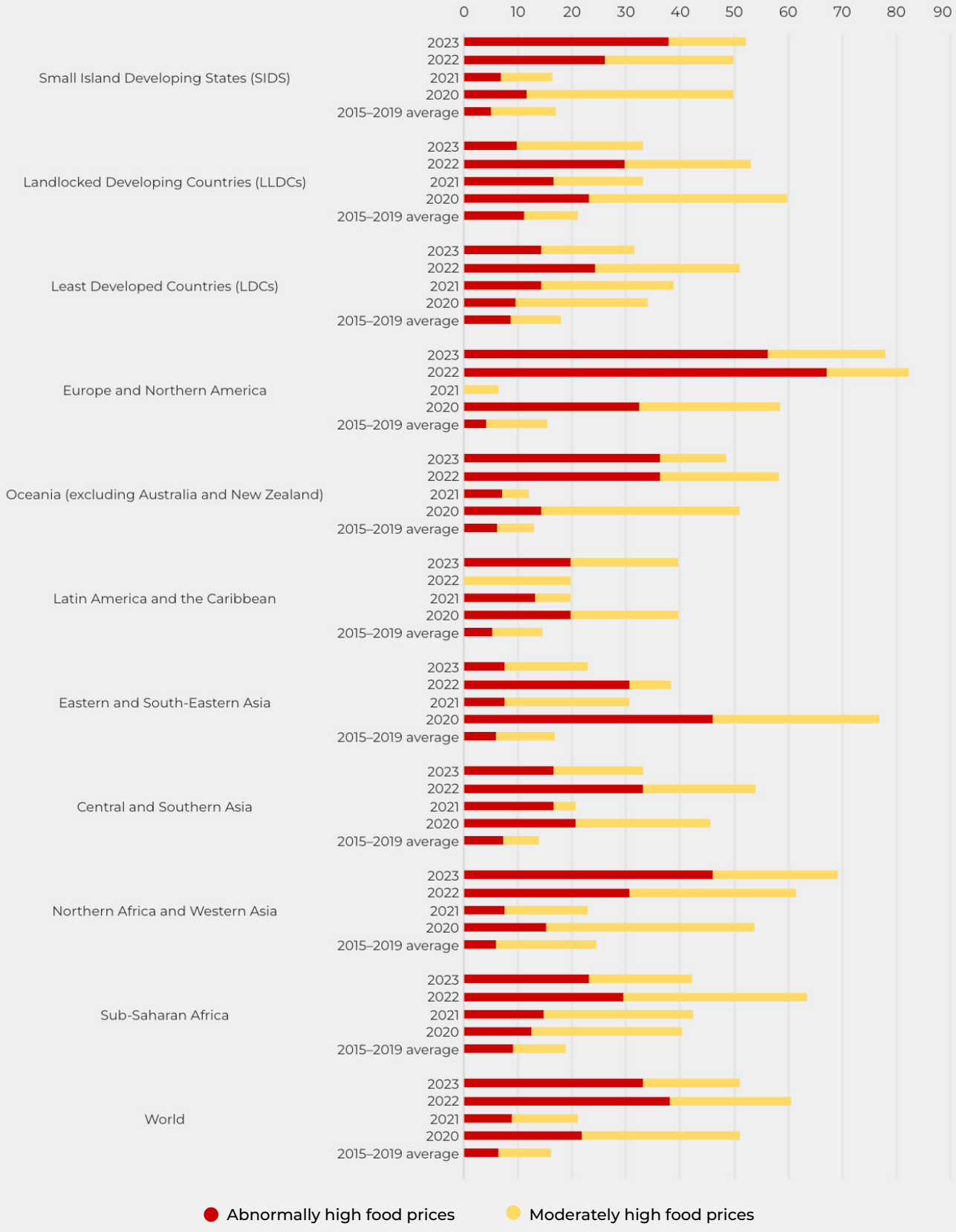
In Eastern and South-eastern Asia, the proportion of countries experiencing moderately to abnormally high food prices doubled on an annual basis in 2023, returning to the levels observed in 2020. This change was driven by a jump in the number of countries with abnormally high food prices. Concerns about weather-related declines in rice production led to a sharp rise in rice prices throughout most of the year, prompting trade restrictions and stockpiling by major rice-producing countries.

In 2023, the proportion of SIDS facing moderately to abnormally high food prices increased for the second consecutive year. In contrast, sub-Saharan Africa and in LDCs – with sub-Saharan Africa comprising over 70 percent of LDCs –saw a reversal of this trend, with a year-on-year decline. The rise in food prices for SIDS can be attributed to a sharp increase in the number of countries experiencing abnormally high food prices, driven by persistent food price inflation throughout much of 2023. This situation exacerbated pre-existing economic vulnerabilities, particularly due to the heavy reliance of SIDS on food imports.

In Europe and North America, the share of countries experiencing moderately to abnormally high food prices decreased year-on-year in 2023 but remained significantly above 2020 and 2015–2019 average levels. On an annual basis, the percentage of countries experiencing abnormally high food prices fell in 2023 after rising sharply in the immediate aftermath of the conflict in Ukraine, which began in February 2022 and intensified broader inflationary pressures. In contrast, the share of countries with moderately high food prices increased year-on-year in 2023.

The above figures indicate that the world and all SDG regions, except Central Asia and Southern Asia, remain very far from achieving the target, with deteriorating trends since the baseline year underscoring the urgent need for accelerated progress.

Figure 22. Proportion of countries by region affected by moderately to abnormally high food prices in 2015–2019 average, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 (percentage)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5

Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

INDICATORS

5.A.1. 5.A.2

SDG INDICATOR 5.A.1

(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.

Target 5.a

Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

SDG 5.A.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

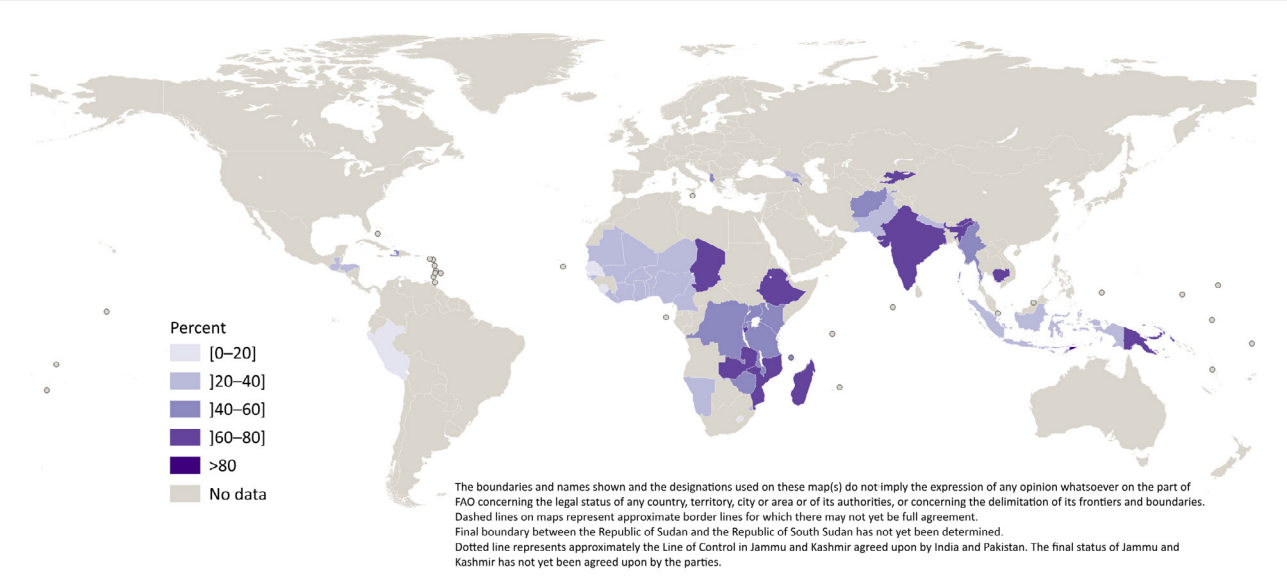
not possible due to insufficient data and the absence of numerical yardstick in target.

Limited ownership and secure land rights in agricultural land with notable gender gaps

Ownership and secure land rights are critical for promoting equitable, sustainable agricultural development, incentivizing farmers to invest in raising productivity and unlocking access to finance as collateral. Women, in particular, play a key role throughout the agricultural value chain, from cultivating family plots to preparing and distributing food within households. In this context, access to agricultural land is essential for women's economic empowerment. Land ownership and secure tenure rights not only benefit women individually but also contribute to broader societal gains. Although global data remains limited, hampering the ability to determine global and regional trends, information from 49 countries between 2009 and 2023 highlights a general lack of ownership and secure tenure rights over agricultural land for both men and women living in agricultural households. Moreover, significant gender disparities persist within the agricultural population, with women being less likely than men to own agricultural land in most countries.

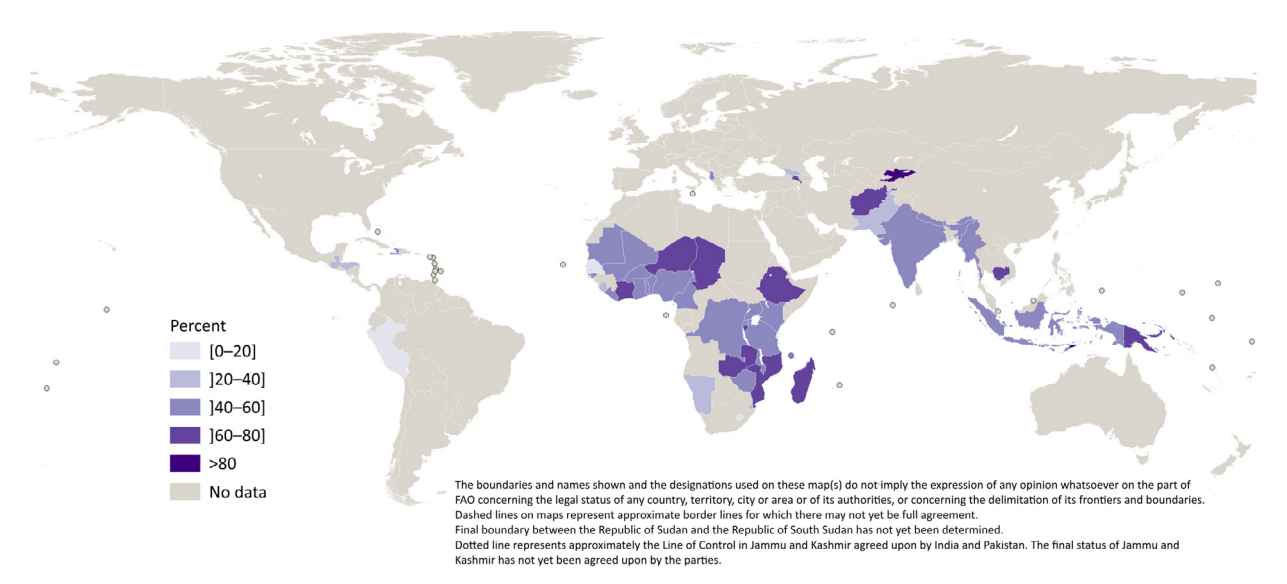
In nearly 80 percent of countries with available data, less than half of women have ownership or secure rights to agricultural land (Figure 25). Likewise, in half of these countries, less than half of men hold such rights. A significant gender gap exists, with men owning land at least twice as often as women in almost half of the countries.

Figure 23. Share of people in the total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights (total)



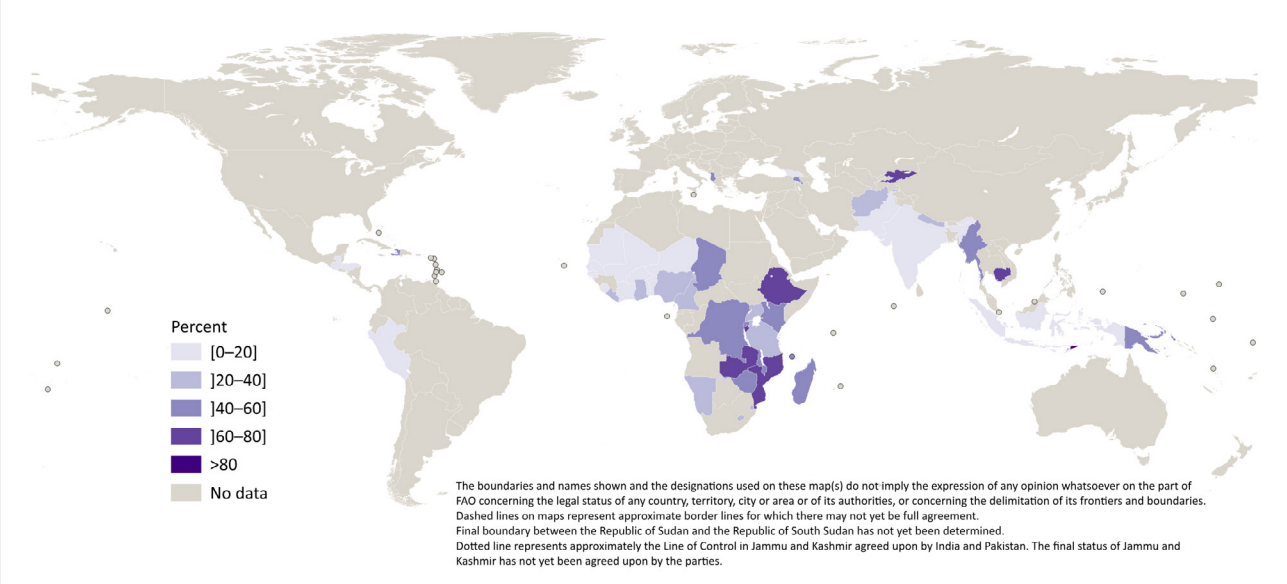
Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 24. Share of people in the total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights (male)



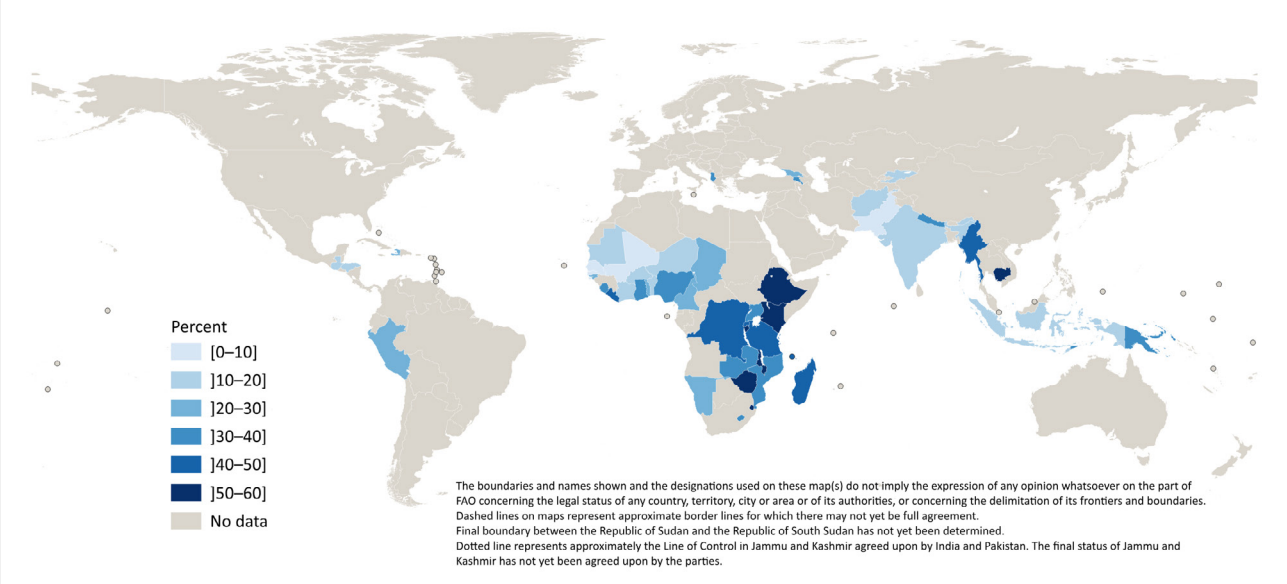
Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 25. Share of people in the total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights (female)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 26. Share of women among owners or holders of secure tenure rights over agricultural land



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Gender equality in agricultural land ownership remains a persistent challenge. Only ten countries report women making up slightly more than 50 percent of total landowners. By contrast, in almost half of the countries, male landowners account for more than 70 percent of the total landowners (Figure 24).

SDG INDICATOR 5.A.2

Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control

Target 5.a

Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

SDG 5.A.2 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:
not possible due to insufficient data.

Strengthening women's land rights: legal and policy reforms for inclusive, sustainable development

Secure land tenure for women and men and women's participation in land governance help create more resilient, equitable agrifood systems that can better withstand challenges like climate change, migration, economic downturns and food insecurity.

SDG Indicator 5.a.2 provides critical insights into land tenure and governance systems, identifying both gaps and restrictions in legislation affecting women's land rights. It helps understand how legal and policy frameworks can be strengthened to benefit both women and men, while supporting broader societal goals. It is measured by national governments using a questionnaire comprising the following six "proxies", or criteria, for which definitions and thresholds are provided in the methodological guidelines and metadata (FAO, 2021 and United Nations, 2023):

A. Is the joint registration of land compulsory or encouraged through economic incentives?

B. Is spousal consent for land transactions required if the land is joint or common marital property?

C. Do women and girls have equal inheritance rights, at least in estate successions?

D. Have financial resources been allocated to increase women's land ownership on the ground?

E. If customary land tenure, customary law or customary institutions are recognized in the law, are women's land rights explicitly protected?

F. Do quotas exist for women's participation in land management and administration institutions?

While most of the 84 countries reviewed globally have broad constitutional guarantees of gender equality and property rights, their legal frameworks often do not ensure them equal rights to own, use, manage, inherit or register land. As shown in Table 4, only 17 percent of surveyed countries offer high or very high levels of protection of women's land rights; 24 percent of countries offer medium levels of protection; while a staggering 59 percent of countries provide low, very low or not protection at all. Although there has been a notable increase in legislative reforms aimed at improving women's land rights, a wide gap persists between what the policies intend and what happens in practice. This disparity, as evidenced by Indicator 5.a.2 data and reinforced further with Indicator 5.a.1 data, is particularly significant for Indigenous women, women from ethnic and religious minorities, widows, and unmarried or divorced women. Furthermore, the Indicator 5.a.2 legal assessments also highlight the existence of fragmented legal frameworks containing discriminatory or inconsistent provisions, which also significantly hinder governments from achieving their broader policy goals.

Legal protections for women's land rights vary significantly by region. As shown in Table 4, while Europe, Latin America and Asia have generally strong inheritance laws and spousal consent requirements, regions such as Western Asia and sub-Saharan Africa lag behind. For example, legal safeguards as promoted by SDG 5.a.2 are scarce in Western Asia, while sub-Saharan Africa has seen some success with quotas for women's participation in land administration, despite slow implementation. Joint registration of matrimonial property is more common in Asia and Latin America, while financial allocations aimed at increasing women's land ownership or tenure security are still rare globally. Thirteen countries have reported having statistical data showing that at least 40 percent of those with ownership or secure rights to land are women, with half of these countries located in Europe.

The COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts, climate change, political instability, threats to the rule of law, among other phenomena, have intensified challenges for women's secure land rights, deepening vulnerabilities, hindering progress on gender equality and women's economic empowerment, and weakening governance.

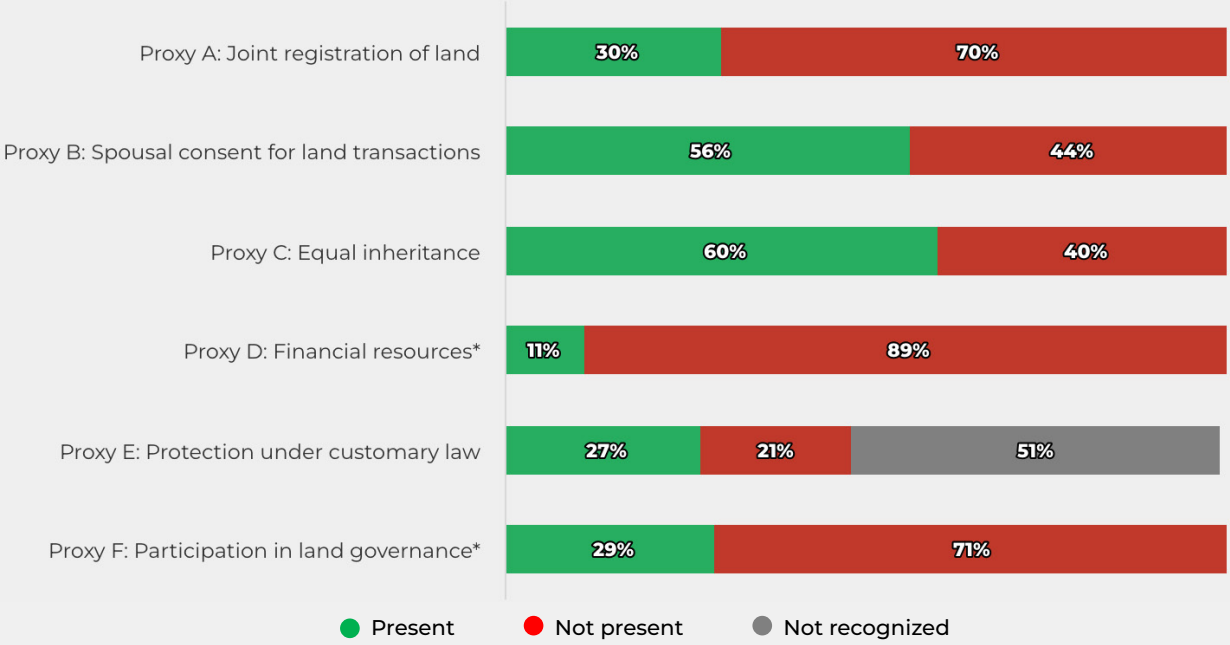
Table 4. Level of protection for women's land rights in national legal frameworks

Number of proxies present	Score*	Level of protection in the law	No. of countries (n=84)	Share of countries globally (%)
0	1	None	16	19
1	2	Very low	9	11
2	3	Low	24	29
3	4	Medium	20	24
4	5	High	13	15
5 or 6	6	Very high	2	2

Note: This table gives an overview of legal score based solely on legal measures, excluding the statistical data reported in 13 countries. * The score equals the number of proxies present plus one. The maximum band is 6, even for the countries where 6 proxies are applicable.

Source: Percentages based on officially submitted SDG Indicator 5.a.2 assessments. FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed February 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

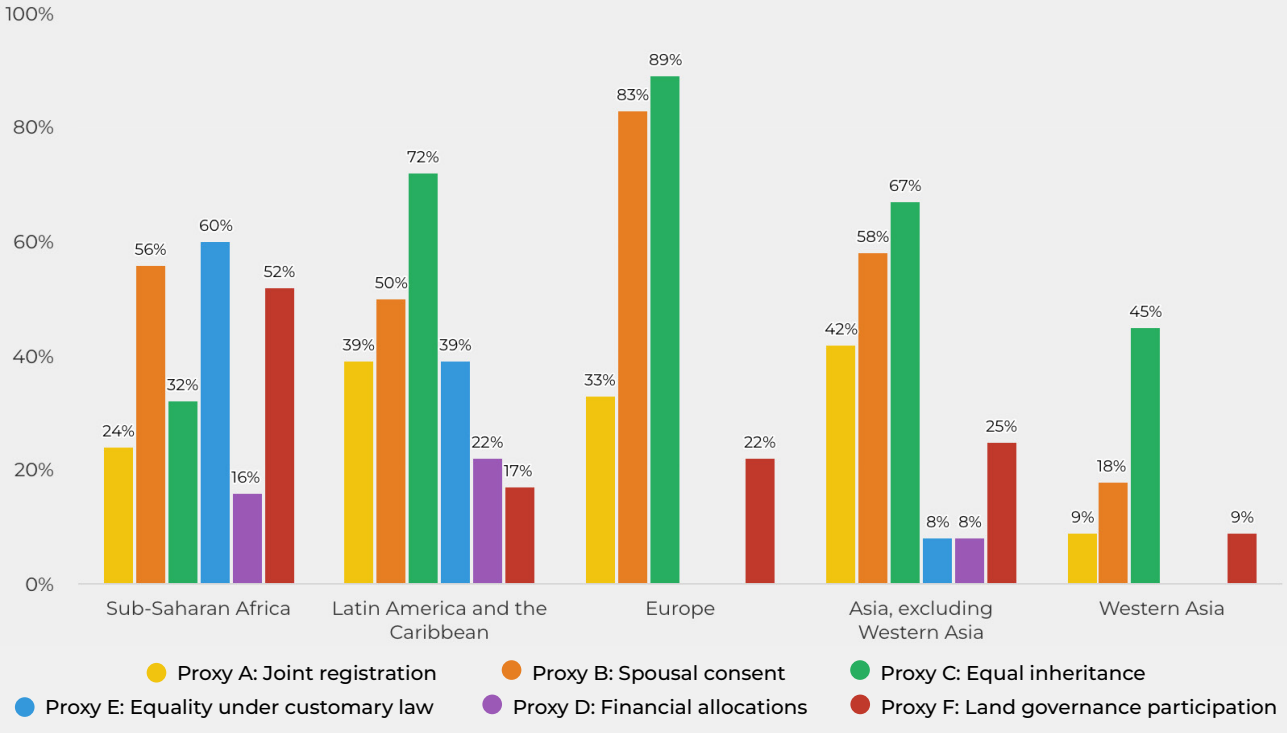
Figure 27. Share of countries out of 84 reporting countries globally in which each proxy is present



Note: Figures for proxy D and F are based solely on legal measures, without considering statistical data in 13 countries that show no or a limited gender gap in land ownership or secure tenure rights, with a disparity of 40 percent or less.

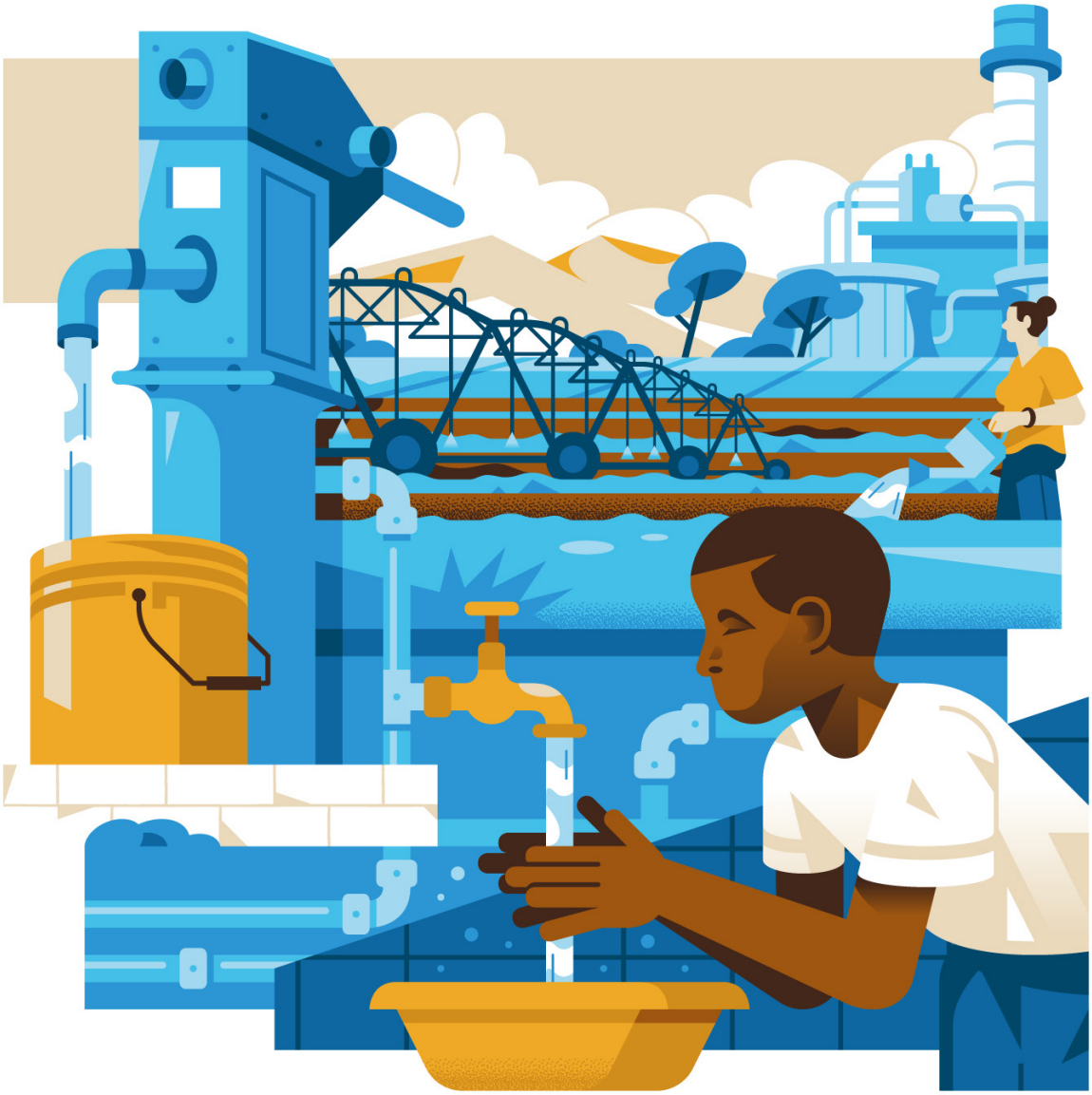
Source: Percentages based on officially submitted SDG Indicator 5.a.2 assessments. FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed February 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 28. Share of countries (out of SDG 5.a.2 reporting countries in each region) per region, where legal proxies A, B, C, E, D and F are present



Note: Figures for proxy D and F are based solely on legal measures, without considering statistical data in 13 countries that show no or a limited gender gap in land ownership or secure tenure rights, with a disparity of 40 percent or less.

Source: Percentages based on officially submitted SDG Indicator 5.a.2 assessments. FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed February 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6

Clean Water and Sanitation

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

INDICATORS

6.4.1 6.4.2

SDG INDICATOR 6.4.1

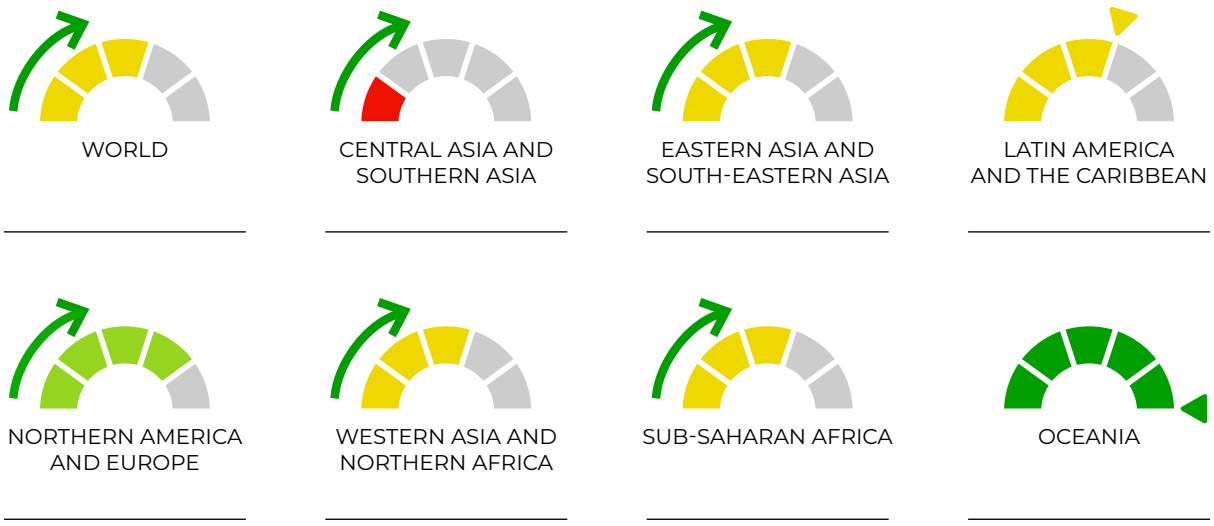
Change in water-use efficiency over time

Target 6.4

By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 6.4.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



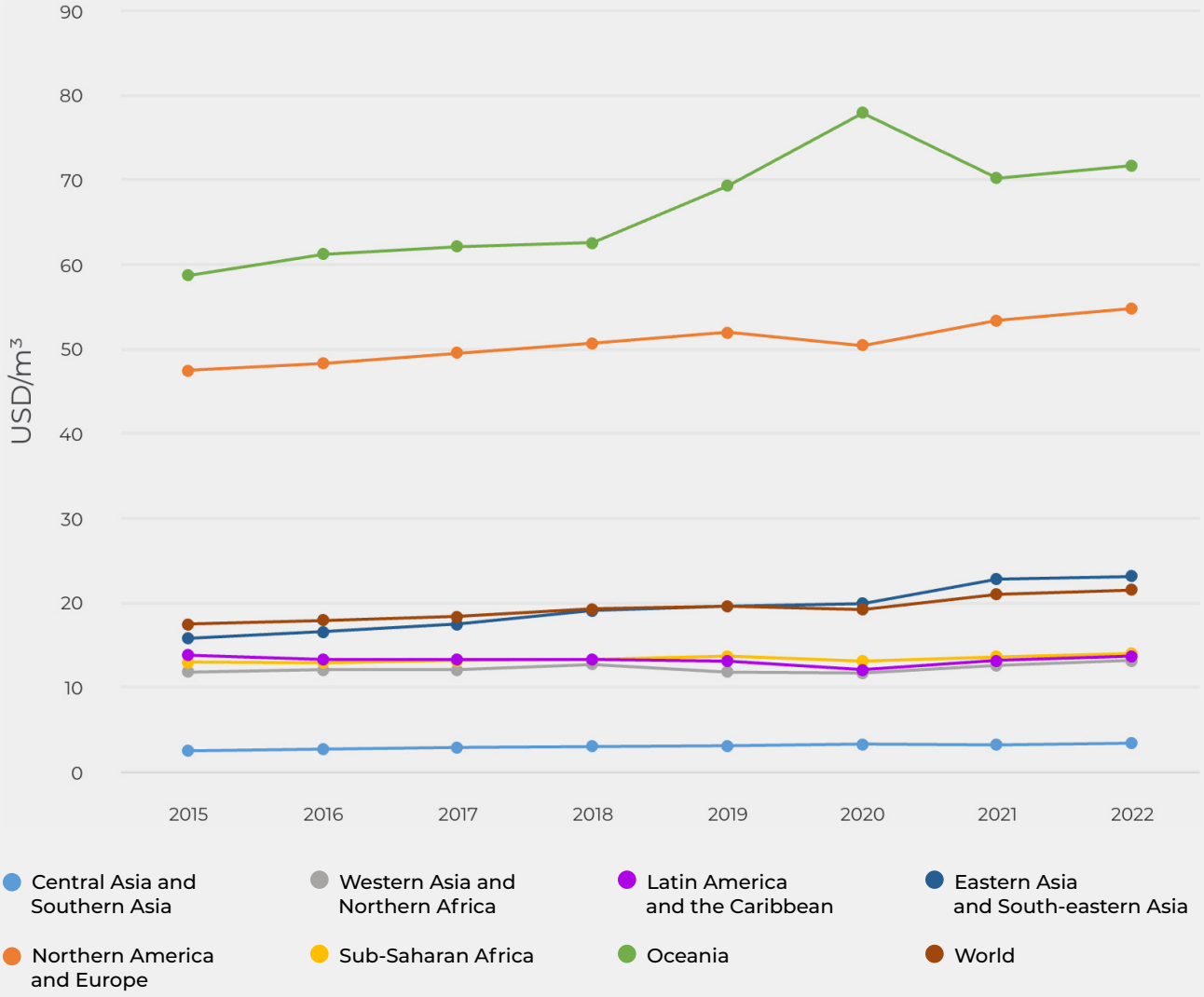
Global water-use efficiency rises, driven by economic growth rather than reduced withdrawals.

Water-use efficiency (WUE) serves as a key indicator of how economic growth relies on water resources, reflecting a country's ability to expand its economy without overexploiting its water supply. Between 2015 and 2022, global WUE improved significantly, rising from USD 17.5/m^3 to USD 21.5/m^3, marking a 23 percent increase. However, despite this progress, 57 percent of countries still face challenges with low efficiency, with WUE remaining below USD 20/m^3 (Figure 30), highlighting persistent disparities in water resources management worldwide. Regional disparities are also significant (Figure 29). Oceania and Northern America and Europe exhibit WUE levels surpassing the world average, whereas Central Asia and Southern Asia record the lowest levels.

Looking at these figures through a progress assessment lens, we see that Oceania is far above the median, and Northern America and Europe are above the median, with improvement since the baseline year. In contrast, Central Asia and Southern Asia are below the median, despite making some progress towards the target. Other regions and the world as a whole are at the median with improvements towards the target, except Latin America and the Caribbean, which has shown no improvement.

These findings emphasize the need for targeted strategies and address regional challenges.

Figure 29. Progress in water-use efficiency (USD/m³) by region (2015–2022)

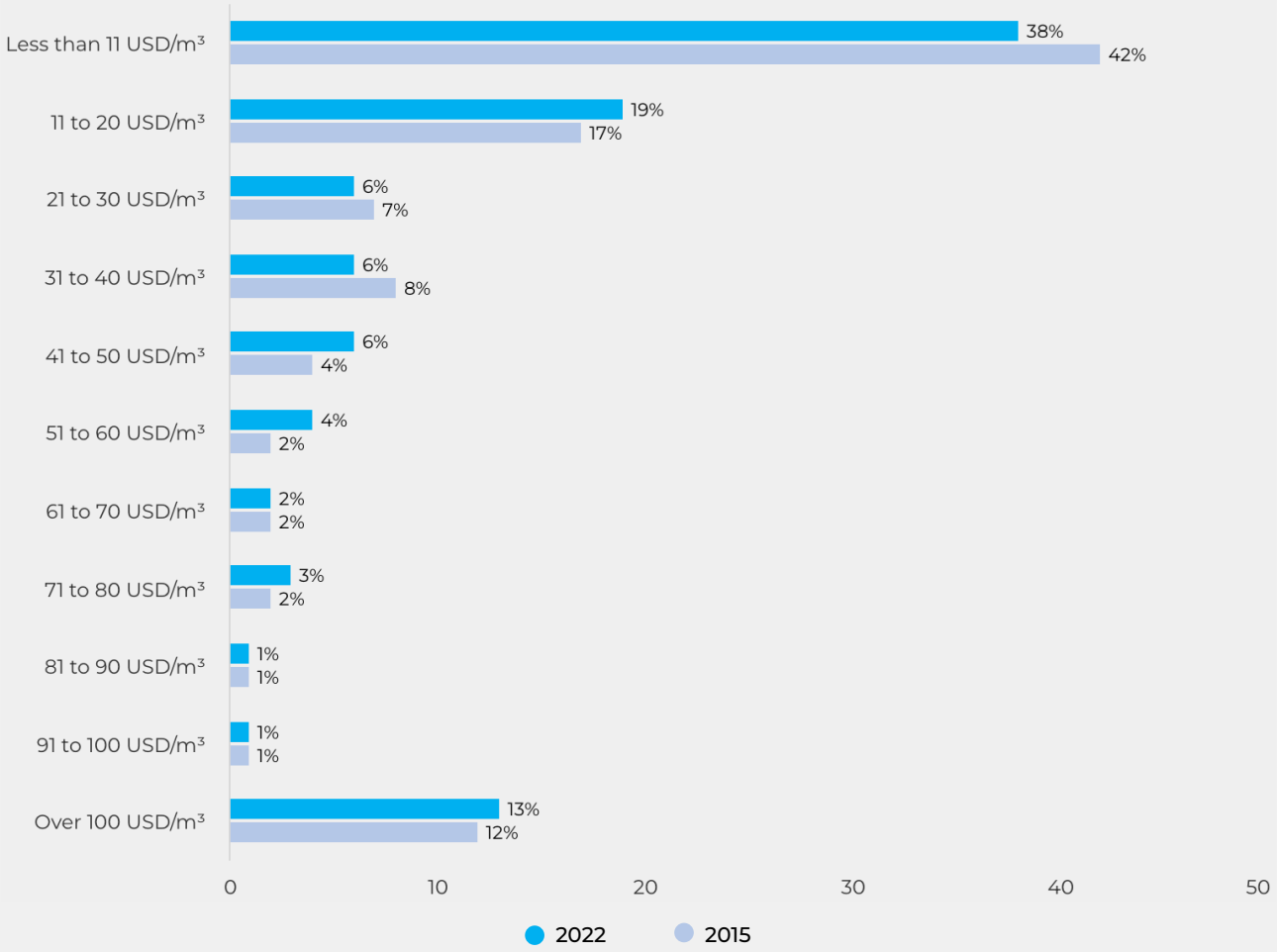


Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

The increase in WUE has been primarily driven by economic growth rather than a reduction in water withdrawals, as total water withdrawals have remained nearly constant. Sectoral water withdrawal trends reveal shifting water uses between 2015 and 2022 – while agricultural water withdrawals remain steady, municipal water withdrawals grew by 10 percent, while industrial withdrawals declined by 5 percent (Table 6).

Each economic sector has made improvements in WUE. In 2022, the industrial sector had a WUE equivalent to USD 38.5/m³, the services sector USD 114.4/m³ and the agriculture sector USD 0.7/m³. Despite its low efficiency, agriculture saw the greatest relative improvement (39.5 percent), surpassing gains in the industrial (34.9 percent) and service (9.2 percent) sectors.

Figure 30. Percentage of countries by water-use efficiency range (USD/m³)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Table 5. Global trends in sectoral water-use efficiency (2015–2022)

Sectoral water-use efficiency (WUE)	2015	2022	Percentage change 2015–2022
WUE Agriculture (USD/m³)	0.5	0.7	39.5%
WUE Industry (USD/m³)	28.6	38.5	34.9%
WUE Services (USD/m³)	104.7	114.4	9.2%

Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Table 6. Global trends in sectoral water withdrawals (2015–2022)

	2015	2022	Percentage change 2015–2022
Agricultural water withdrawal [billion m³/year]	2 868.59	2 850.4	– 0.6%
Industrial water withdrawal [billion m³/year]	640.75	608.67	– 5.0%
Municipal water withdrawal [billion m³/year]	477.08	527.65	10.6%
Total water withdrawal [billion m³/year]	3 987.21	3 985.80	– 0.03%

Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

These findings underscore the importance of sector-specific strategies to enhance WUE globally. In water-stressed regions, where scarcity threatens economic growth and development, improving WUE is crucial. Agriculture, the largest freshwater user, operates with low efficiency, making it a key sector for transformation. By modernizing irrigation systems, adopting climate-smart agricultural practices and integrating digital water management tools, countries can boost agricultural productivity while ensuring sustainable water use. However, achieving lasting impacts requires more than just technology: strengthening governance, policy frameworks and capacity development is essential to improve WUE.

SDG INDICATOR 6.4.2

Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resource

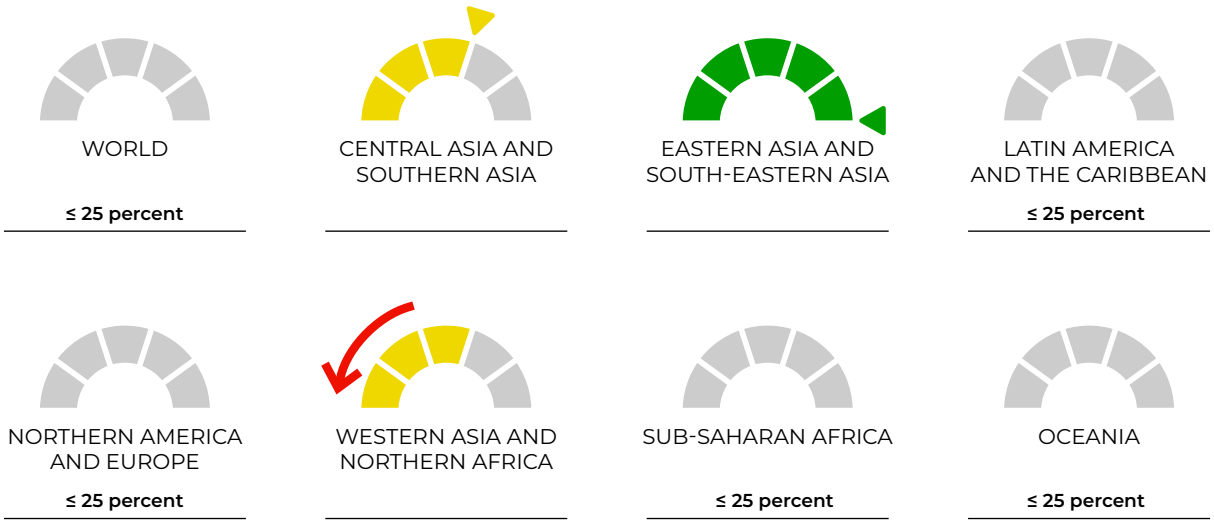
Target 6.4

By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 6.4.2 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

an assessment is not performed when the value of the indicator is below 25 percent.

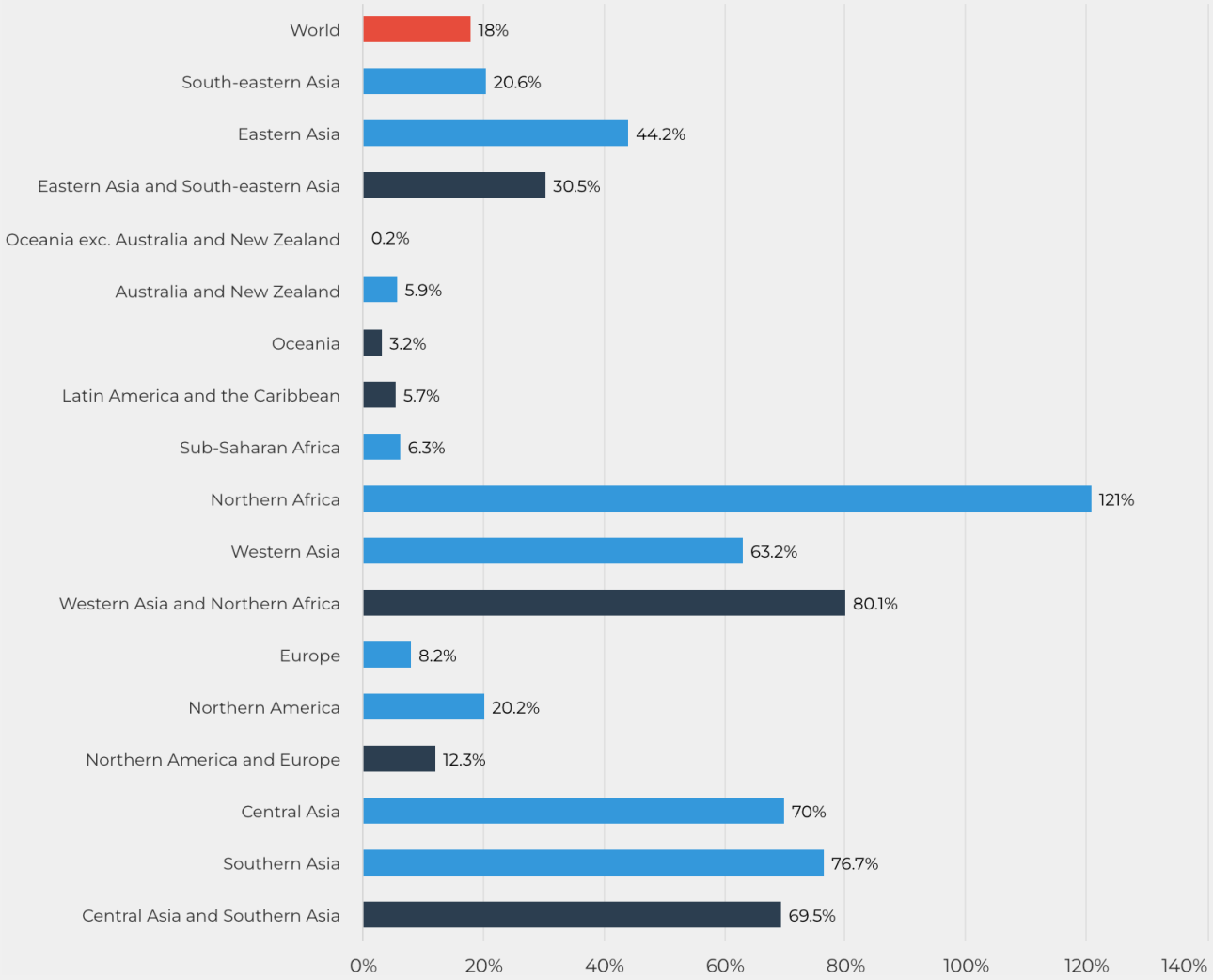


Uneven water stress threatens global development.

High water stress can have devastating consequences for the environment and constrain economic and social development. A withdrawal rate above 75 percent of renewable water resources represents high water stress, and a withdrawal rate over 100 percent is classified as critical.

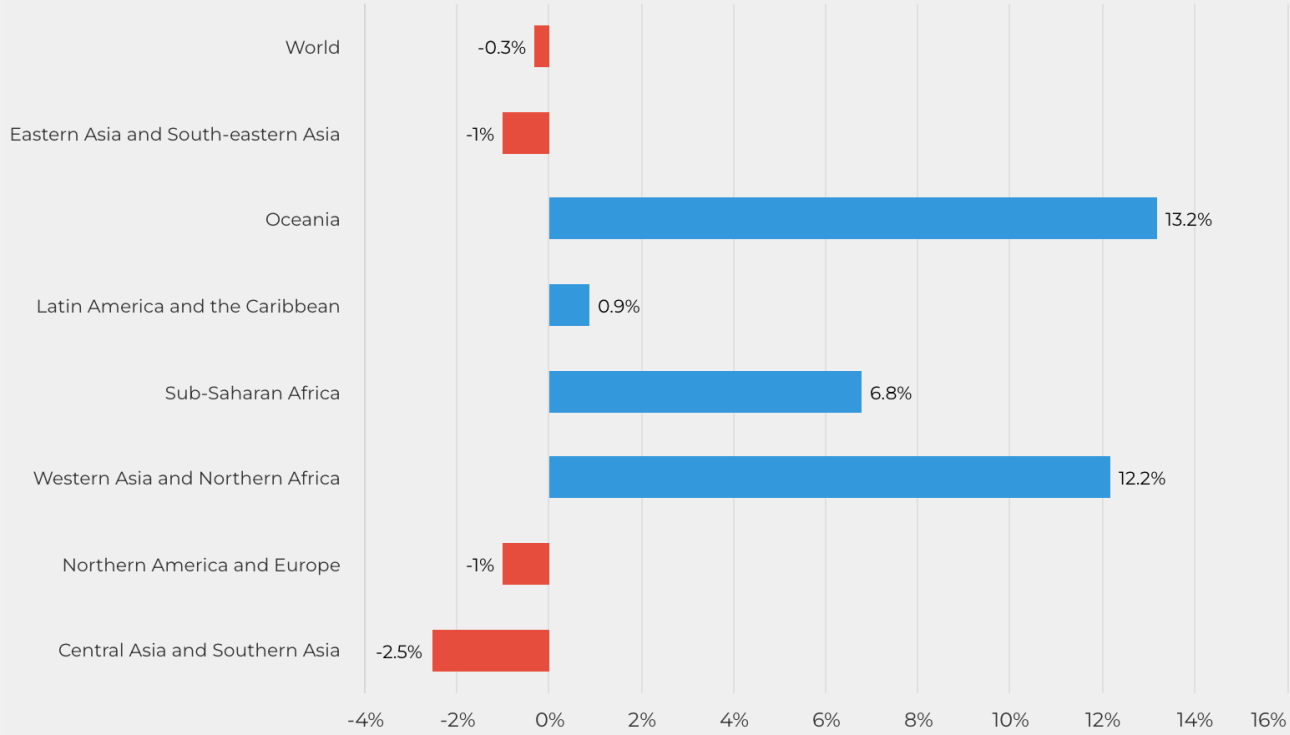
At global level, the water stress remained steady at an average of 18 percent in 2022, showing little change since 2015. However, this figure masks regional variations: while some regions maintain a low water stress, others face extreme scarcity. In Northern Africa and Western Asia, as well as Southern and Central Asia, countries face water stress levels beyond 75 percent, placing immense pressure on communities, economies and ecosystems. The situation is particularly alarming in Western Asia and Northern Africa, where already high levels of water stress have increased by 12 percent since 2015. As a result, approximately 10 percent of the global population live in countries with high and critical water stress levels. From a progress assessment lens, Western Asia and Northern Africa is the region with a high water stress level, followed by Central Asia and Southern Asia at medium water stress, with both regions showing slight or no improvement since the baseline year. Only Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia show no stress.

Figure 31. Level of water stress by region and subregion, 2022



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 32. Percentage change of the level of water stress by region (2015–2022)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Economic sectors also play a key role in shaping water stress levels. Agriculture remains the dominant user of freshwater, accounting for 72 percent of total withdrawals in 2022, followed by industry (15 percent) and services (13 percent). While agriculture plays a vital role in ensuring food security and driving economic development in many countries, it faces the growing challenge of water stress, making it both a contributor and a victim, being a sector highly vulnerable to the crisis.

To fully understand and address this challenge, subnational and temporal disaggregation of water stress levels is needed to capture local variations. National averages often obscure critical subnational disparities, where water stress varies within countries. The disaggregation of water stress can reveal hidden vulnerabilities and provide the foundation for targeted interventions.

Tackling water stress requires a shift towards smarter water management. Enhancing WUE efficiency in agriculture – through strategic investments and policy measures – will be crucial for sustaining food production while mitigating water scarcity.[5]

REFERENCE:

Savini Nicci, M., di Candia, S. and Khalil, C.A. 2024. *The FAO methodology to measure progress towards the achievement of SDG targets and goals.* Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3381en

5 For the full progress assessment methodology at indicator, target and goal level, see Savini Nicci, di Candia and Khalil, 2024.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 12

Responsible Consumption and Production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

INDICATOR

12.3.1.a

SDG INDICATOR 12.3.1.A

Food loss index

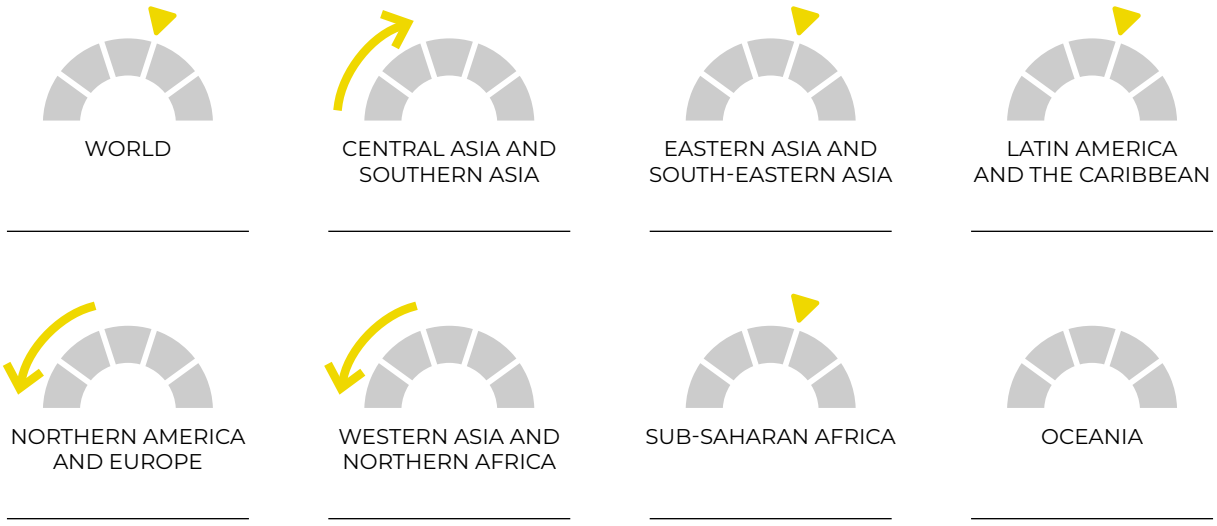
Target 12.3

By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 12.3.1.A PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

current status assessment not possible due to insufficient data.[6]



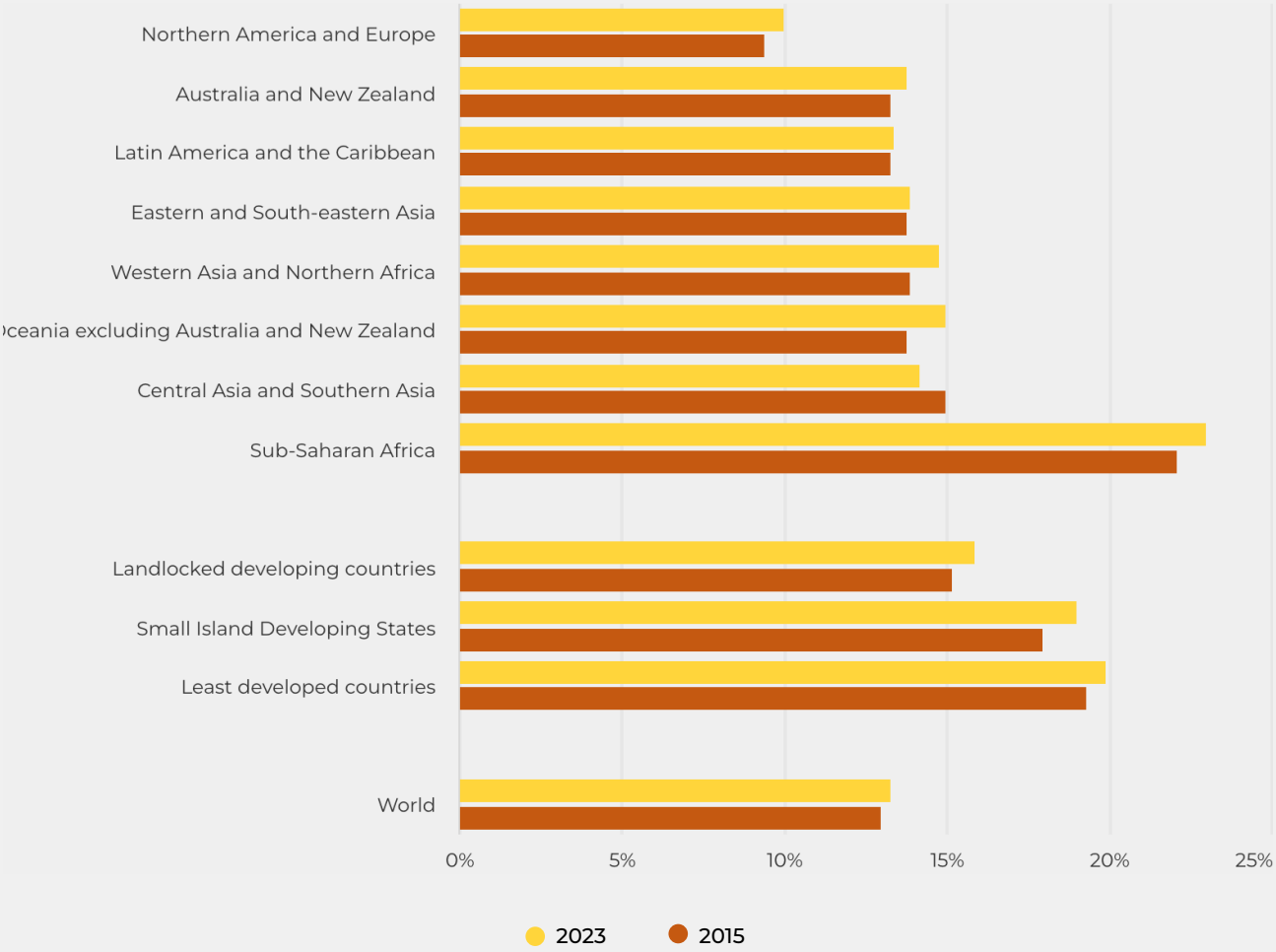
The world has made no apparent progress in reducing food losses since 2015.

Food losses impose a substantial economic, social and environmental toll, hampering efforts to improve food security and nutrition and reduce the impact of agriculture on land use, biodiversity loss, water stress and climate change.

Nonetheless, the available data points to an overall stagnation, if not deterioration, in the progress to reduce food losses. The percentage of food lost globally after harvest on farm, transport, storage, wholesale and processing levels is estimated at 13.3 percent in 2023, up slightly from 13.0 percent in 2015, when global monitoring began. This marginal increase falls within the expected range of model oscillations and is primarily driven by updates to national production data and newly available or revised country-level estimates.

6 Current status for indicators associated with a target without a numerical yardstick is calculated based on the quintile distribution of country values, yet Indicator 12.3.1.a is currently only reported at regional and global level, not yet at country level.

Figure 33. Food loss percentages by region, 2015 and 2023

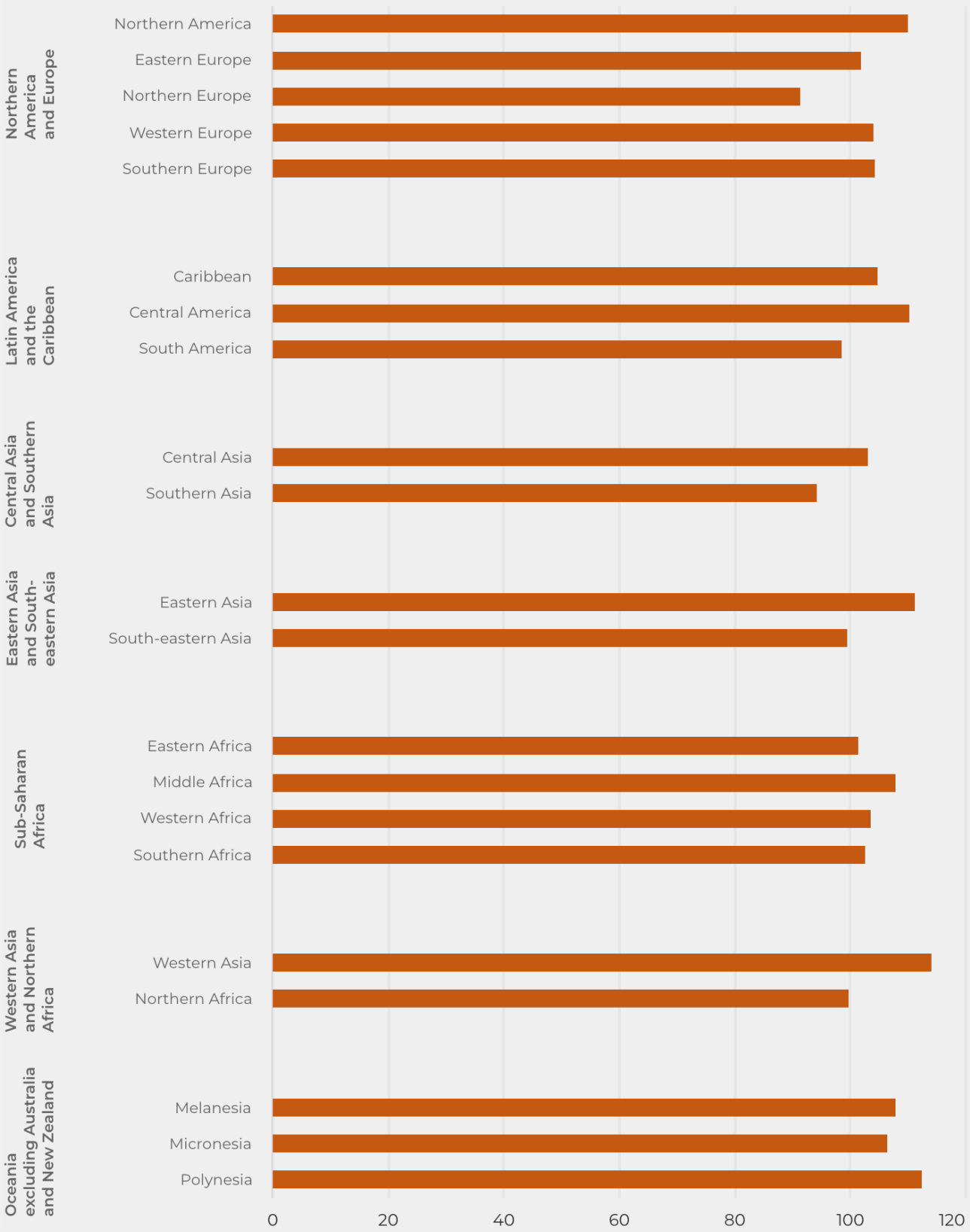


Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 15 September 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

As shown in Figure 33, slight increases in food loss levels were recorded across most regions between 2015 and 2023. An exception is Eastern and South-eastern Asia, where the regional average remained relatively stable, increasing only marginally from 13.8 percent to 13.9 percent, driven by a small decrease in South-eastern Asia. Northern America and Europe continue to report the lowest regional loss at 10.0 percent, up from 9.4 percent in 2015, while sub-Saharan Africa remains the highest at 23.0 percent, up from 22.1 percent. Other high-loss regions include LDCs at 19.9 percent and SIDS at 19.0 percent, both slightly higher than in 2015. These persistently high rates reflect systemic constraints in post-harvest infrastructure and supply chains.

The Food Loss Index (FLI) captures relative changes since the base year, 2015. Using the FLI to look at trends at the subregional level, Western Asia registered the greatest deterioration, with an increase from 12.1 to 13.8 percent (FLI: 114.2), followed by Polynesia and Eastern Asia. In contrast, Northern Europe improved its performance, reducing food loss from 10.8 to 9.9 percent (FLI: 91.5), while Southern Asia and South America also showed slight reductions.

Figure 34: Food Loss Index by subregion (2023)

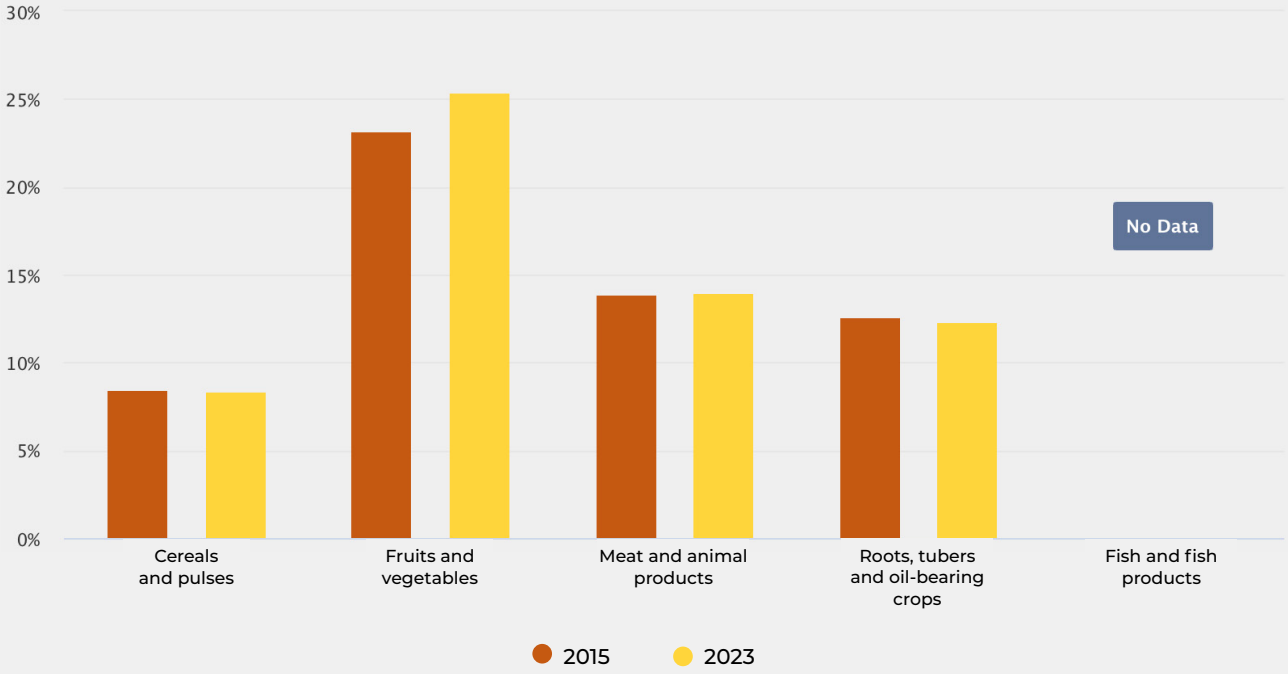


Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 15 September 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

At the global level, food loss patterns vary significantly by commodity group. As shown in Figure 35, fruits and vegetables account for the highest losses, increasing from 23.2 percent in 2015 to 25.4 percent in 2023, due to their high perishability and handling requirements. Meat and animal products remained relatively stable, rising slightly from 13.9 to 14.0 percent. Roots, tubers and oil-bearing crops decreased from 12.6 to 12.3 percent, while cereals and pulses saw a minor decline from 8.5 to 8.4 percent. There are currently no loss estimates for Fish and fish products. These differences reflect the perishability of different products, supply chain challenges and infrastructure constraints.

Despite persistent data gaps at the country level, the continued high global and regional food loss levels call for accelerated investments in infrastructure, policy action, and improved data systems and targeted strategies to address post-harvest inefficiencies.

Figure 35. Global food loss percentages, by food group (2015, 2023)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 15 September 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB Licence: CC-BY-4.0

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14

Life below Water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

INDICATORS

14.4.1 | 14.6.1 | 14.7.1 | 14.b.1

SDG INDICATOR 14.4.1

Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels

Target 14.4

By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

SDG 14.4.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT BY FAO MAJOR FISHING AREA:

WORLD

PACIFIC, NORTHEAST

PACIFIC, NORTHWEST

PACIFIC, WESTERN CENTRAL

PACIFIC, SOUTHWEST

PACIFIC, SOUTHEAST

PACIFIC, EASTERN CENTRAL

ATLANTIC, SOUTHEAST

ATLANTIC, NORTHWEST

ATLANTIC, SOUTHWEST

ATLANTIC, WESTERN CENTRAL

ATLANTIC, EASTERN CENTRAL

ATLANTIC, NORTHEAST

INDIAN OCEAN, EASTERN

INDIAN OCEAN, WESTERN

MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA

The sustainability of global fishery resources continues to decline, although the rate of decline has decelerated in recent years.

Oceans are the world's largest ecosystem, supporting the livelihoods of millions of people and supplying a sizable proportion of animal proteins worldwide. However, the sustainability of fishery resources is a cause for concern.

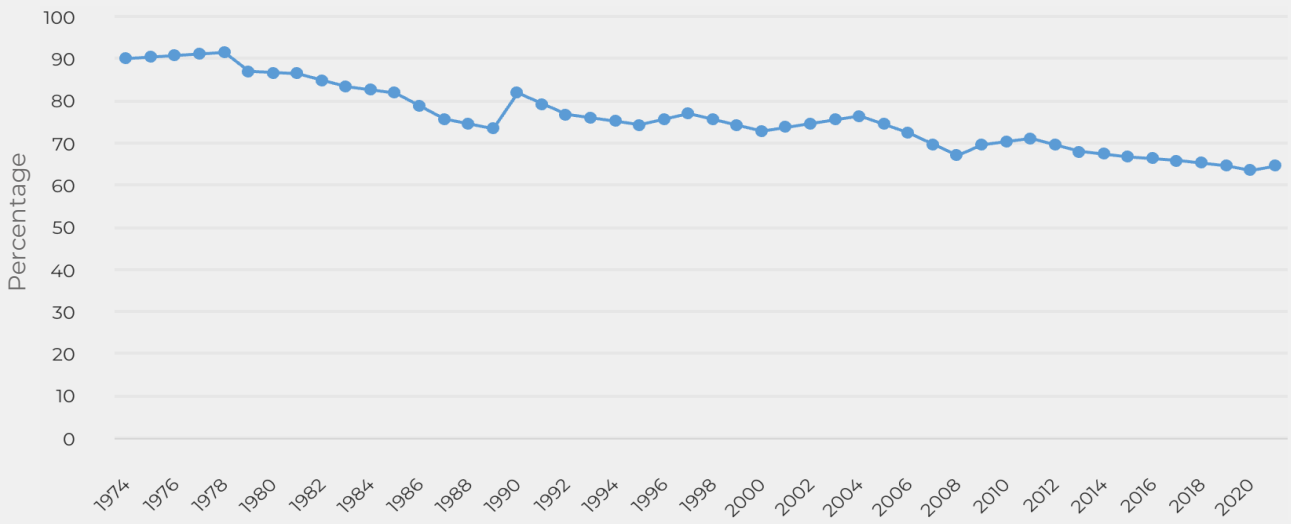
The sustainability of global fishery resources continues to decline, from 90 percent in 1974 to 64.5 percent in 2021. Global marine fish landings have remained relatively stable in 2021, averaging 80 million tonnes since 1995. When weighed by their production levels, approximately 77.2 percent of the fishery landings in the base year (2021) were estimated to be from biologically sustainable stocks. The decreasing trend since 2019 continues the declining trend since 1974 (Figure 36). However, the global trend is not universal, and FAO regions vary from 35 percent to 92 percent.

Among the 15 FAO Major Fishing Areas reviewed, the Southeast Pacific (area 87) had the highest percentage (64.9 percent) of stocks fished at unsustainable levels (35.1 percent sustainably fished), followed by the Mediterranean and Black Sea (area 37) at 53.6 percent fished at unsustainable levels (46.4 percent fished sustainably), the Northwest Pacific (area 61) at 52.3 percent unsustainably fished (47.7 percent sustainably fished) and the Eastern Central Atlantic (area 34) at 47.1 percent unsustainable levels (52.9 percent sustainable). In contrast, the Eastern Central Pacific (area 77), Northeast Atlantic (area 27), Pacific Northeast (area 67) and Southwest Pacific (area 81) had the lowest proportion (8–27 percent) of stocks fished at biologically unsustainable levels (or between 72–92 percent sustainably fished). Other areas varied between 31 percent and 42 percent of unsustainable levels in 2021 (or between 58 and 70 percent sustainably fished).

From a progress assessment lens, these figures suggest that the Pacific, Southwest, and Atlantic Northeast are fishing areas close to the target, whereas the Mediterranean and Black Sea is very far from the target. The Pacific Northeast has already met the target. The other FAO Major Fishing Areas are currently at a moderate distance or far from the target. The assessment of the trend indicates deterioration away from the target across eight FAO Major Fishing Areas.

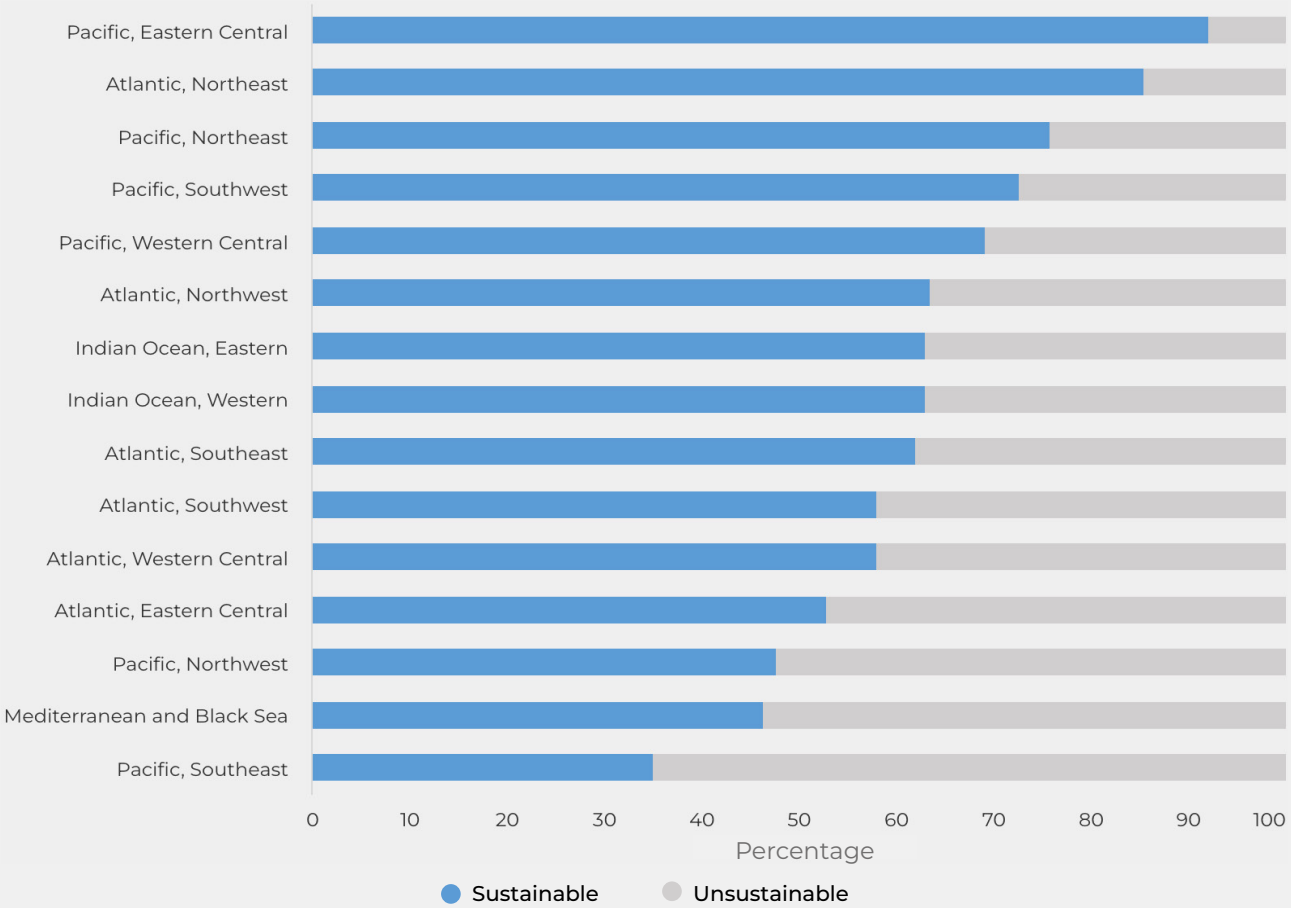
From 9 to 13 June 2025, countries gathered at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, and reaffirmed their strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources. This political commitment, enshrined in the Our Ocean, Our Future: United for Urgent Action draft declaration (UN, 2025), now needs to be translated into concrete action so as to halt and overturn the long-term declining trend in the sustainability of global fishery resources.

Figure 36. Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels globally (1974–2021), percentage



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 37. Fish stock sustainability status across major fishing areas (2021), percentage



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

REFERENCE

International instrument (non-binding) *Our Ocean, Our Future: United for Urgent Action. Draft declaration.* 7 May 2025, A/CONF.230/2025/14, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4082611?ln=en&v=pdf

SDG INDICATOR 14.6.1

Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Target 14.6

By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

SDG 14.6.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

States globally continue their efforts towards combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing threatens the social, economic and environmental sustainability of global fisheries, hindering countries' abilities to manage their fisheries effectively. Adopting and implementing relevant international instruments is key to curbing IUU fishing.

Indicator 14.6.1 measures the degree of implementation by States of relevant international instruments to combat IUU fishing, by scoring their responses to the questionnaire for monitoring the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments using a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

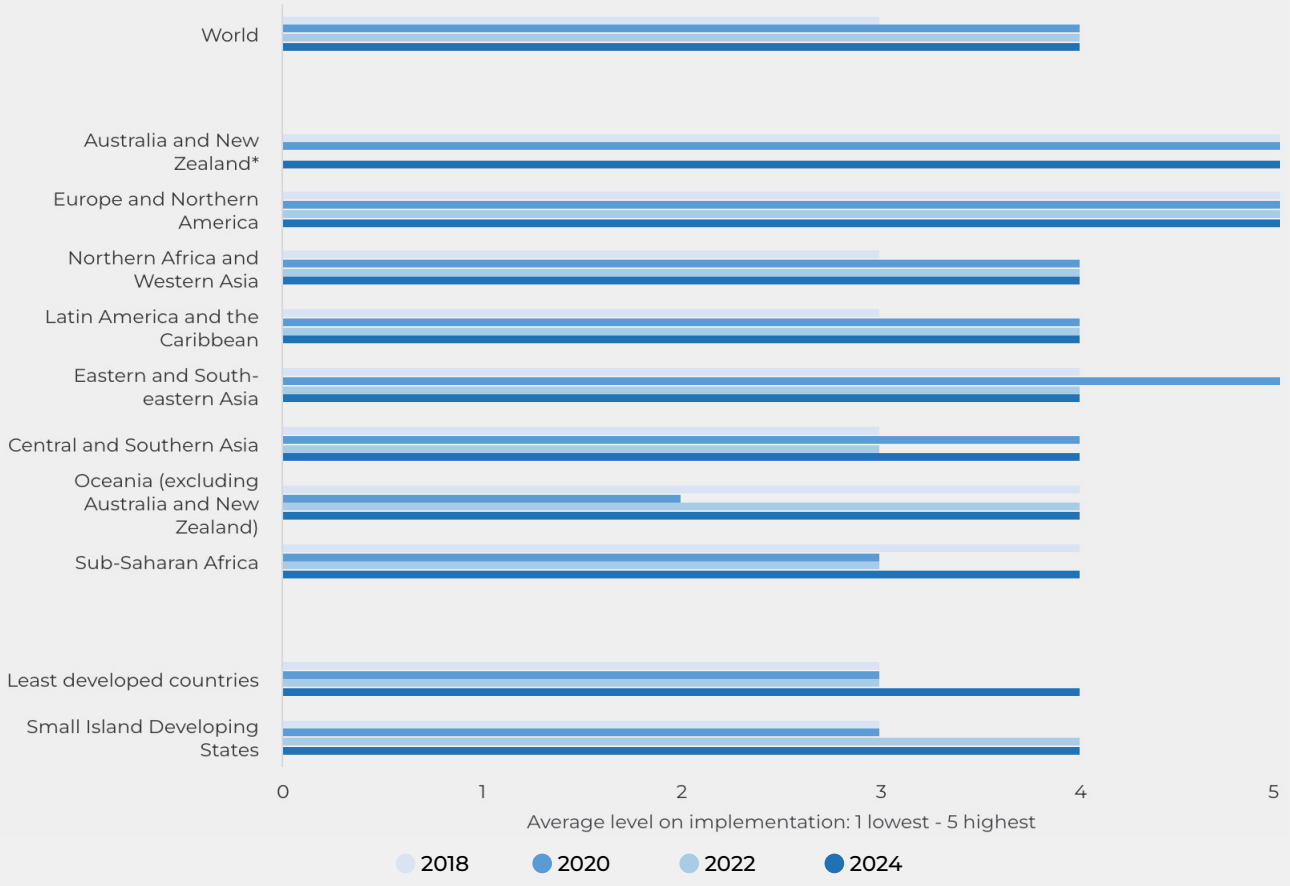
The global average score as measured by this indicator increased, from a 3 in 2018 to 4 in 2020, and has remained the same through to 2024. The percentage of States achieving a score of 5 increased from 48 percent in 2018 to 56 percent in 2022 and 2024. Reporting rates, excluding those States that resulted as not applicable for this indicator, increased from 90 in 2022 to 101 States in 2024, therefore reflecting more representative aggregate figures globally and for certain regions. From a progress assessment lens, the world and all regions are currently close to the target, with Northern America and Europe having already achieved it. The trend assessment indicates slight or no improvement since the baseline year. SIDS, faced with specific challenges in fully implementing these instruments due to the large areas of waters under their jurisdiction, registered

an improvement, from an aggregate score of 3 in 2018 and 2020 to 4 in 2022 and 2024. LDCs, which can also face challenges due to limitations in the availability of human or financial resources, nonetheless registered an improvement in the aggregate level of implementation: from 3 in 2022 to a 4 in 2024. In terms of regional groupings, fluctuation can be seen over the years in certain regions. However, no clear trend can be noted in the aggregate levels of implementation.

Key developments relevant to Indicator 14.6.1 have occurred in recent years, with the adoption in 2022 of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Transshipment. The FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), the first binding international instrument developed expressly for combating IUU fishing, now counts 84 Parties. This figure represents 65 percent of coastal States as at January 2025, including the European Union as one Party representing its Member States. In 2023, the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES) was launched, an information system facilitating PSMA implementation by providing a way for States to exchange compliance information on fishing vessels. In the meantime, FAO has continued to expand its assistance to States, including through the provision of support on legal and policy matters, monitoring, control and surveillance, enforcement, interagency coordination, catch documentation, electronic information exchange and the delivery of specialized training courses, all aimed at furthering the capacity of States to combat IUU fishing.

While global and regional figures from this indicator paint a positive picture, IUU fishing remains a serious threat, and requires continued and concerted efforts to minimize its potential impact on people and the environment. Emphasis should continue to be placed towards adopting and effectively implementing the increasingly comprehensive framework of international instruments and tools that have been put in place, in order to close the net on IUU fishing.

Figure 38. SDG Indicator 14.6.1 aggregate scoring, 2018–2024



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

SDG INDICATOR 14.7.1

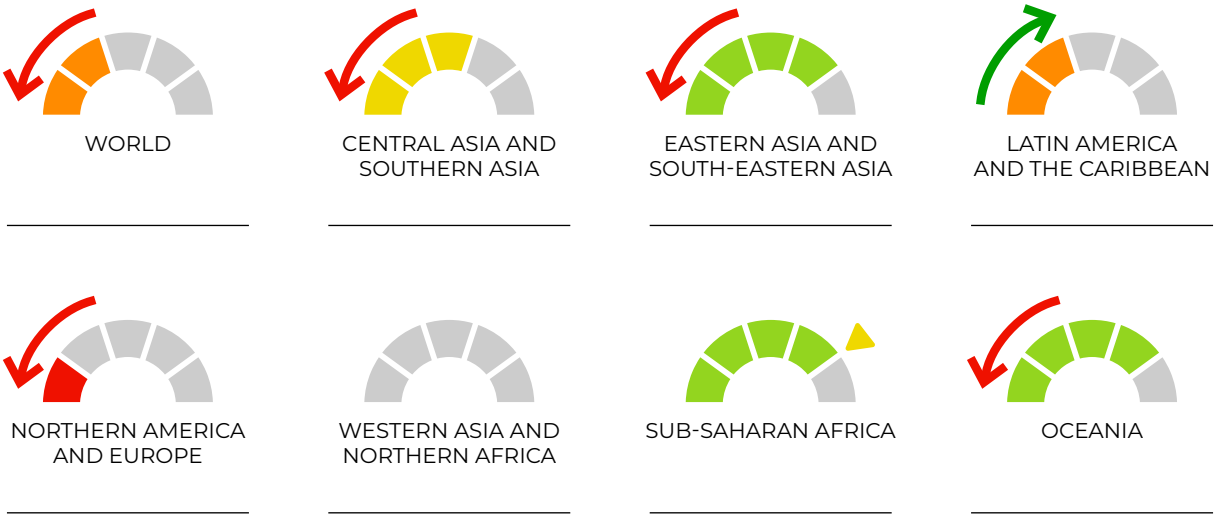
Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in Small Island Developing States, least developed countries and all countries

Target 14.7

By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 14.7.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP continues to decline despite the call for increasing the economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources.

The landscape of global fisheries continues to evolve, with increased fish production, rising incomes worldwide and expanding trade. Since the 1960s, per capita fish consumption has doubled. The imperative for sustainable management practices in the fish industry will increase in tandem with the global demand for fish. This is crucial to safeguard the sector's sustainability and capacity to foster food security and economic resilience, particularly in LDCs and SIDS.

Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP experienced a marginal decrease in 2021, from 0.096 percent to 0.094 percent. This trend can be attributed, in part, to the relative decline in the importance of fisheries associated with the economic expansion of other sectors, and the declining levels of sustainability in several fishing areas.

Although there has been a modest decrease on a global scale, several countries that heavily depend on fisheries for their livelihoods and food security have experienced positive developments. Aquatic food systems remain critical for the economic stability and food security of millions of people around the globe, with the majority of the approximately 58.5 million people employed in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture residing in developing countries. There was positive growth in sub-Saharan Africa, with the

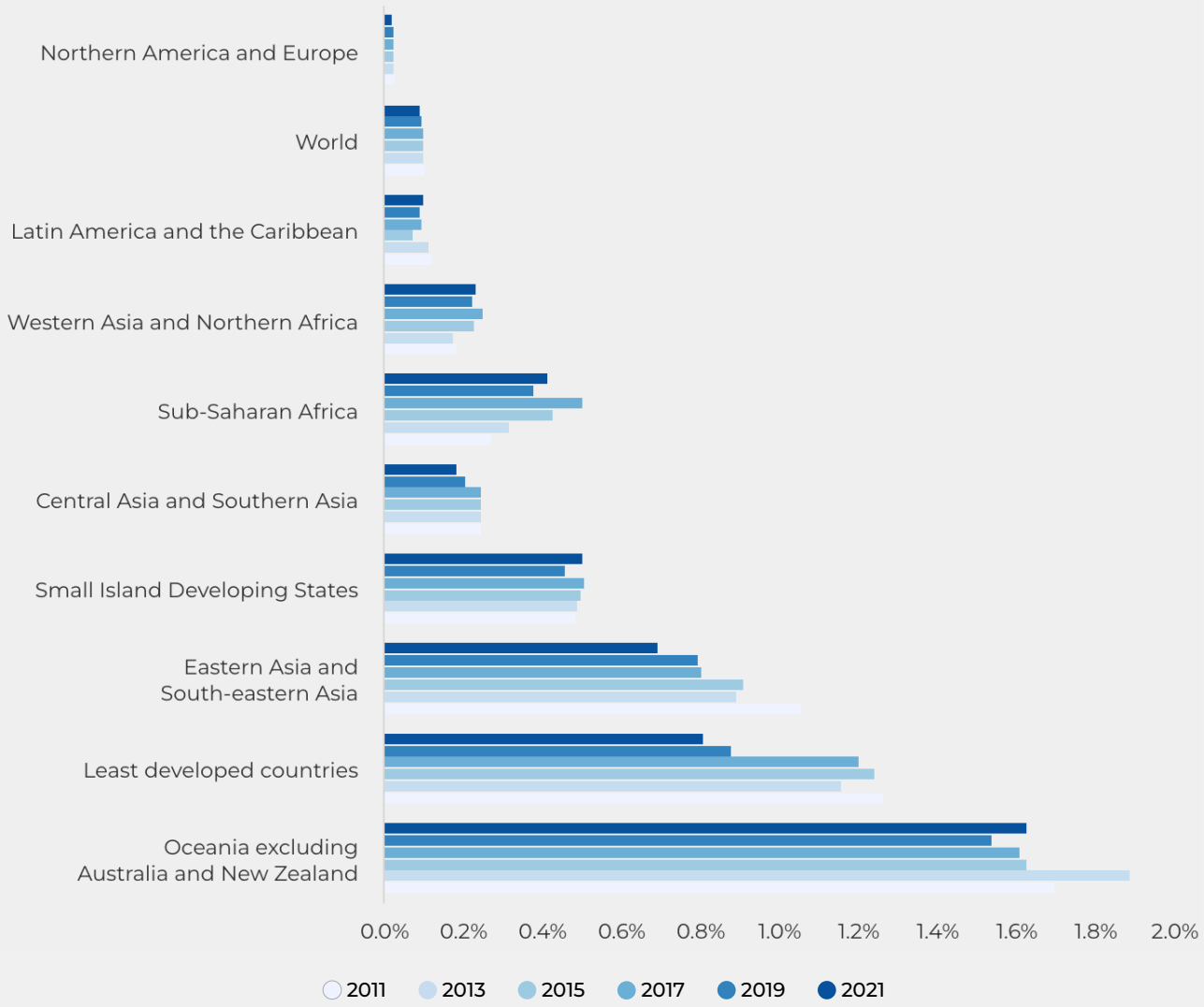
sector's GDP share climbing to 0.42 percent in 2019. Similarly, aggregate values for SIDS showed promising growth, from 0.46 percent of GDP in 2019 to 0.51 percent in 2021. Pacific SIDS, which rank among the countries most dependent on fisheries globally, witnessed the proportion of their GDP linked to sustainable fisheries increase, from 1.54 percent in 2019 to 1.63 percent in 2021. This growth underscores the sector's potential as a driver of economic development, even as it faces diminishing returns in other regions of the world.

The economic dividends from fisheries can only be sustained through the judicious implementation of fish stock management practices that prevent overexploitation and depletion. The ongoing, albeit decelerated, decline in fish stocks worldwide that remain within biologically sustainable thresholds underscores the necessity for enhanced regulatory frameworks and efficient monitoring systems. Estimates for Indicator 14.7.1 were impacted by the declining sustainability of several stocks, most notably in the Eastern Central Atlantic, the Northwest Pacific, Northeast Pacificand Western Central Pacific, where the proportion of sustainably fished stocks fell by 18 percent, 20 percent, 11 percent and 17 percent, respectively, between 2019 and 2021.

In the last few years, the fisheries and aquaculture industry has encountered significant difficulties. The initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was followed by considerable fluctuations in supply and demand for fish, while also presenting national statistical offices worldwide with unprecedented challenges. This latter point has led to greater reporting delays, particularly among developing countries, and reduced the availability of easily accessible data, making it more difficult to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indicator 14.7.1.

The progress assessment of Indicator 14.7.1 reveals that currently, the world is far from achieving the target and has deteriorated since the baseline year. Northern America and Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean are either far or very far from achieving the target, although the latter region has shown some improvement towards the target. In contrast, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, are close to achieving the target, but the trend assessment reveals no improvement or deterioration away from the target.

Figure 39. Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of gross domestic product



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB.
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SDG INDICATOR 14.B.1

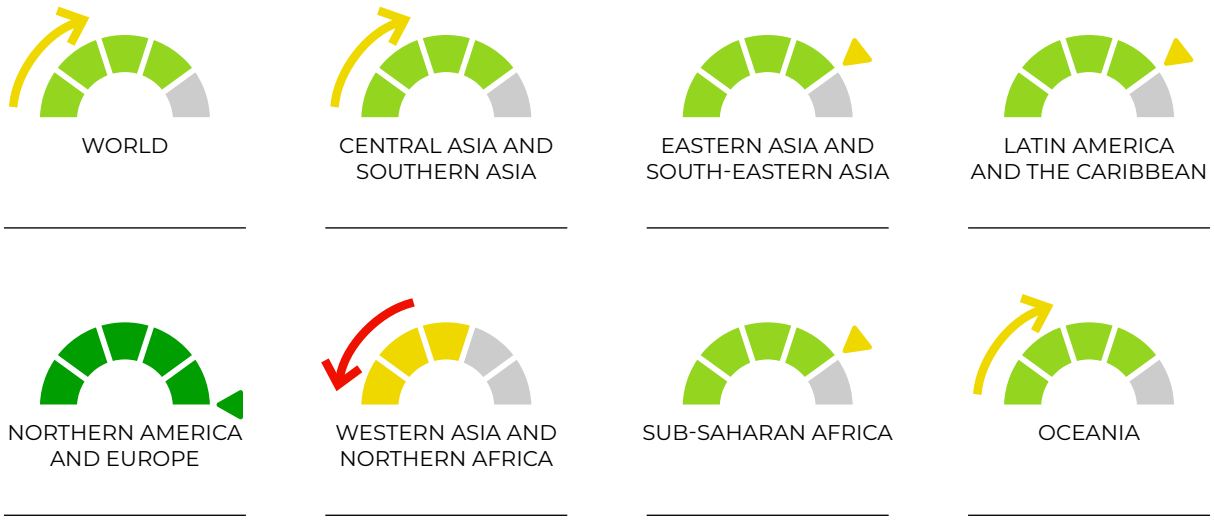
Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries

Target 14.b

Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

(Target with a numerical yardstick)

SDG 14.B.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



A decade of SSF Guidelines helps achieving SDG 14.b.

The year 2024 marked the tenth anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). The first decade has seen increasing levels of uptake and implementation, embedding the SSF Guidelines firmly in global and regional policy processes, within fisheries and beyond. Importantly, chapters 5 and 7 of the SSF Guidelines speak directly to SDG 14.b., which calls to provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

FAO and partners have provided a large amount of capacity development, guidance, materials and resources – including e-learning and communication materials – to promote transformation and progress towards access to resources and markets, and the SSF Guidelines implementation more broadly, which pay specific attention to the most vulnerable and marginalized, in the spirit of leaving no-one behind.

As shown in Figure 40, for 2024, the global average degree of implementation of international instruments to protect and promote small-scale fisheries was 4/5, which is a slight decline from 5/5 in the previous reporting year (2022), but an overall improvement since 2015, when the global average score was 3/5.

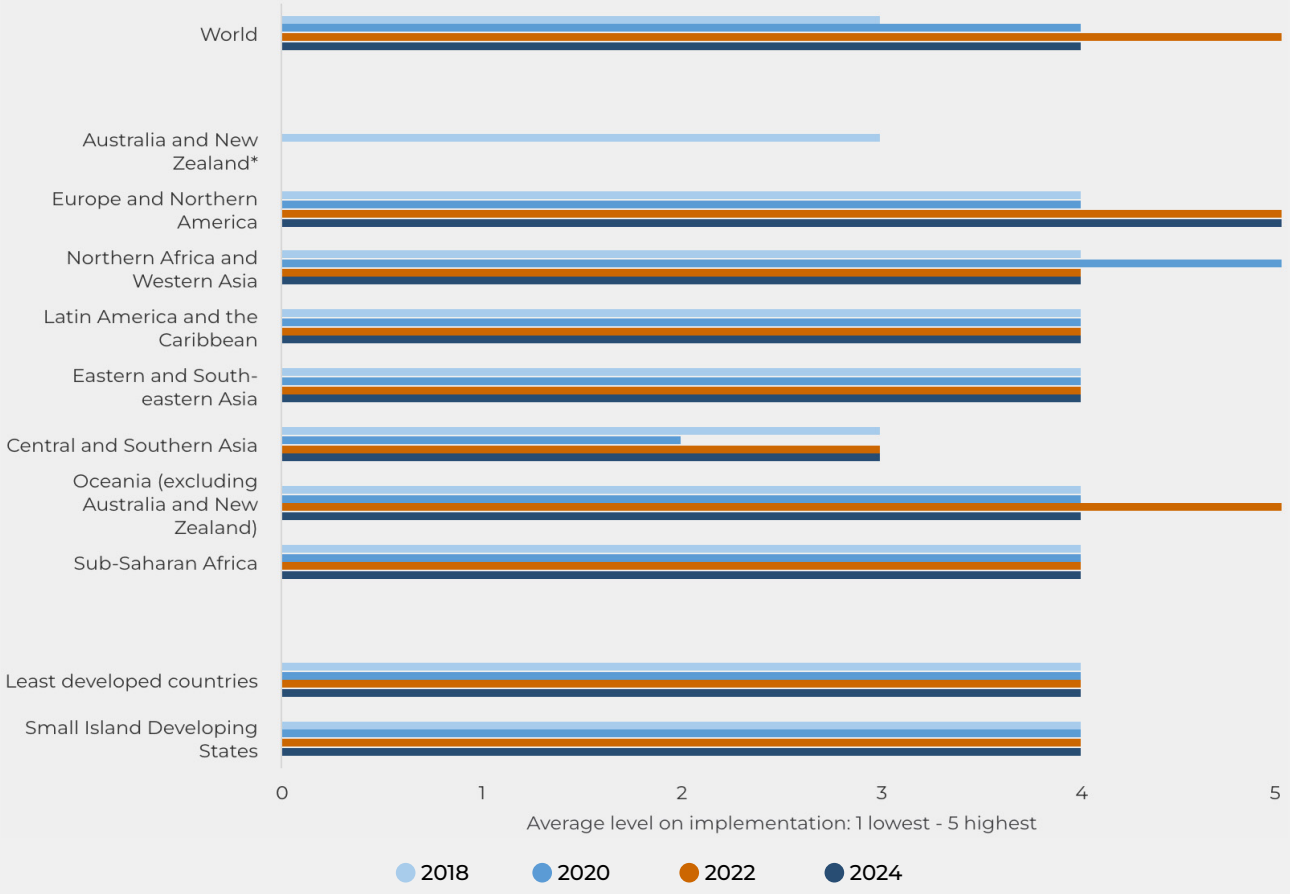
From a progress assessment lens, these figures suggest that the world and all regions are close to achieving the target, with the exception of Western Asia and Northern Africa, which

remain at a moderate distance from reaching it. The trend assessment indicates slight or no improvement towards the target across all regions, with deterioration observed in Western Asia and Northern Africa.

Most importantly, significant uptake at country level has been achieved, paving the way for moving from an international voluntary instrument to firm expressions of political will at national level. This is taking various forms. Several countries in Africa as well as the Philippines have engaged in the development of National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSFs). The NPOA-SSFs developed include priorities for implementation to address specific challenges around access of small-scale fishers to marine resources and markets. Other countries have directly taken up the SSF Guidelines in management plans, policies and legislation, further paving the way to ensure access in the sense envisaged in SDG 14.b.

Nonetheless, the recent drop in the global average score for the implementation of international instruments protecting and promoting small-scale fisheries, as well as the fact that over 30 percent of reporting countries in 2024 registered a medium, low or very low level of implementation, suggests that it is more urgent than ever to put the SSF Guidelines into action. Indeed, this is key, in order not to lose a sector that provides food, nutrition and livelihoods for millions of people, while playing a key role in resource conservation.

Figure 40. Progress in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries by region, 2018–2024



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 15

Life on Land

Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.

INDICATORS

15.1.1 15.2.1 15.4.2

SDG INDICATOR 15.1.1

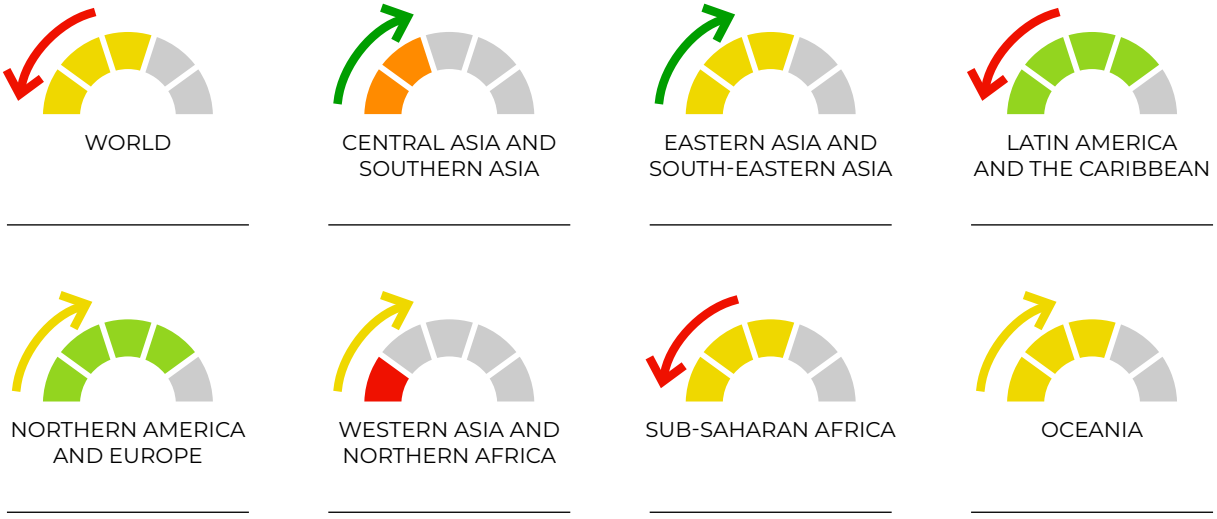
Forest area as a proportion of total land area

Target 15.1

By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 15.1.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:



In 2020, forest covered 31.2 percent of the total land area, 100 million hectares less than in 2000.

Forests play a vital role in the livelihoods and well-being of rural and urban populations, contributing significantly to regulating the water cycle, mitigating climate change, and harbouring the majority of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. Building capacities for forest management and increased agricultural productivity seems to be critical to halt forest loss and the negative dynamics caused by the associated disruption of ecosystems, impacting climate, human–wildlife interactions, land-use activities, and ecosystem services provision, especially in the tropics and LDCs.

The proportion of the world's total land area covered by forest has declined from 31.9 percent in 2000 (4.2 billion ha) to 31.5 percent in 2010, further decreasing to 31.2 percent (4.1 billion ha) by 2020. Over the past two decades, net forest area losses have amounted to nearly 100 million ha. However, there has been a slight deceleration in the rate of loss observed over the last ten years.

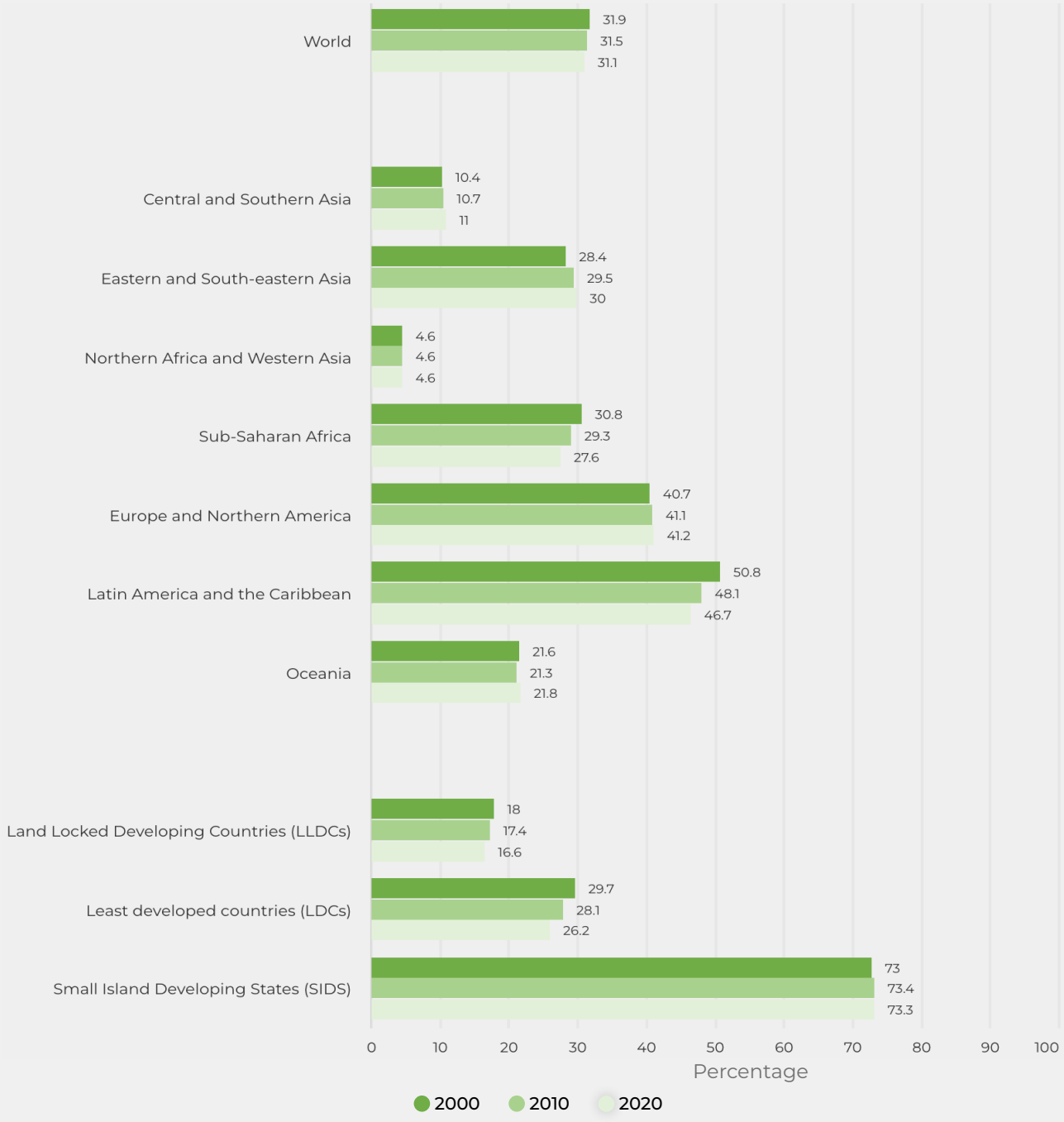
Net forest area change is a result of two factors: increase in forest area through afforestation and natural expansion, and decrease caused by deforestation. Agricultural expansion is the primary driver behind almost 90 percent of global deforestation (FAO, 2022). Cropland expansion is the most significant of direct deforestation driver (49.6 percent), followed by livestock grazing (38.5 percent). Oil palm cultivation alone contributed to 7 percent of global deforestation from 2000 to 2018. Poverty and lack of access to technology might be entrenching global deforestation, as most of the conversion of forest to agricultural lands was associated with small-scale farming.

The global trend reflects opposing regional dynamics. Asia, Europe and Northern America showed an overall

increase in forest area from 2000 to 2020 due to afforestation, forest restoration efforts, and natural forest expansion. This expansion slowed down from 2010 to 2020 compared to the period from 2000 to 2010. On the other hand, large forest area losses occurred over the past two decades in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, with LDCs particularly impacted by forest area reductions. While livestock grazing is the primary cause of deforestation in Latin America, in sub-Saharan Africa, forest loss mostly stems from cropland expansion.

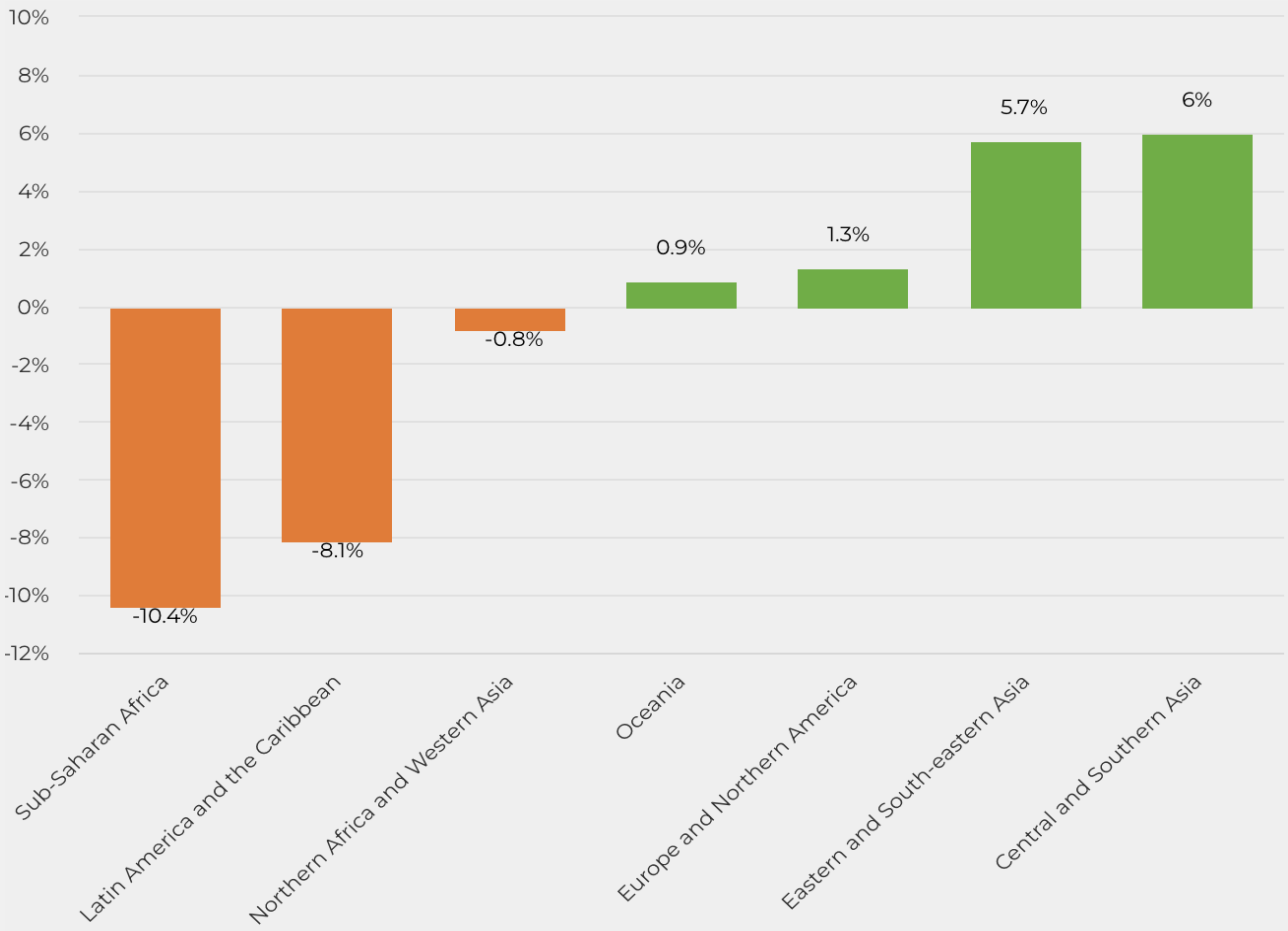
The short and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 and post-pandemic period on forest area are yet to be fully measured, although they directly affected forest cover and forestry due to changes in urban-rural population flows, increased demand for certain forest products and other factors. Many rural areas,

Figure 41. Forest area as proportion of total land area (percentage)



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Figure 42. Change in the proportion of forest from 2000 to 2020, by region



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

particularly in the tropics, faced heightened pressures from deforestation and illegal logging during the COVID-19.

This annual update of Indicator 15.1.1 is based on the latest data from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020, which used the best available country data and information. The information on deforestation drivers was sourced from the latest FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment Remote Sensing Survey (FAO, 2022). New data on forest area status and trends will be released on 21 October 2025 as part of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025.

From a progress assessment lens, these figures suggest that the world is at the median of country values and has registered deterioration since the baseline year. Across the regions, only Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Northern America and Europe, are above the median of country values, although Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced deterioration since baseline year, as did sub-Saharan Africa. Western Asia and Northern Africa stand as the regions furthest from the median of country values. Central Asia and Southern Asia are also below the median of country values, while the remaining regions are at this median, with some showing progress and others experiencing deterioration.

REFERENCE

FAO. 2022. *FRA 2020 Remote Sensing Survey.* FAO Forestry Paper, No. 186. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb9970en

SDG INDICATOR 15.2.1

Progress towards sustainable forest management

Target 15.2

By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 15.2.1 PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:
not carried out due to methodological reasons.

The global progress towards sustainable forest management is evident; however, a high rate of forest loss persists.

The available data on progress towards sustainable forest management shows evident global strides towards sustainable forest management over the past decade. However, it also highlights the persistent shrinkage of the world's forests, primarily attributed to agricultural expansion for crop and livestock production, with progress varying across regions.

In 2023, 389 million ha of forest were under a certification scheme, marking a 13 percent increase, equivalent to around 46 million ha since 2010. Despite this overall positive trend, forests under a certification scheme decreased by 56 million ha (12 percent) between 2022 and 2023, primarily linked to the suspension of certificates in Europe due to ongoing conflicts. Europe and Northern America collectively represented 79 percent of the certified forest area in 2023.

Globally, the proportion of forest area within protected areas increased from 17 percent to 18 percent from 2010 to 2020. Central Asia showed the highest proportion of forest in protected areas in 2020 (59 percent), along with the highest relative increase since 2010 (12 percent). Conversely, Europe and North America exhibit the lowest proportion, with only 6 percent of their forests within protected areas.

Forest area under a management plan has seen an increase from 2010 to 2020, particularly notably so in Central Asia and Eastern Asia. Despite a gradual increase, the proportion of forest under management plans remains below one-third in Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania and sub-Saharan Africa.

The above-ground biomass in forests has slightly increased, primarily driven by notable rises in Eastern Asia, Europe and Western Asia.

The annual forest change rate remains relatively stable at the global level (around -0.1 percent), indicating that the loss of forests persists, albeit not accelerating. Notable forest expansion occurred in Asia, Europe and Northern America from 2010 to 2020, while significant losses were recorded in Africa, South-eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. These losses were mainly due to agricultural expansion. Deforestation and forest degradation remain significant challenges, especially in the tropics, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced actions to reduce deforestation and implement sustainable forest and land management practices, including for small-scale farmers.

Although assessing the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 and the post-pandemic era on forests is challenging, it is likely that they have affected forests and forestry due to changes in urban–rural population flows and shifts in the demand for certain forest products.

Forests serve as the largest carbon and biodiversity reservoirs on Earth and are essential sources of food, goods and services, crucial for the livelihoods of the poorest populations and rural communities. Efforts at both global and regional levels to sustain forest ecosystems and their social, economic and environmental functions should be intensified, with particular emphasis on the tropics and developing countries.

This annual update of Indicator 15.2.1 is based on the latest data from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020, as well as the most recent certification data updated for 2023 from forest certification organizations (namely, the Forest Stewardship Council and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification). FAO Global FRAs are based on the best available country data and information to date. New data on forest status and trends will be released on 21 October 2025 as part of the Global FRA 2025.

Table 7. Progress towards sustainable forest management at regional and global levels

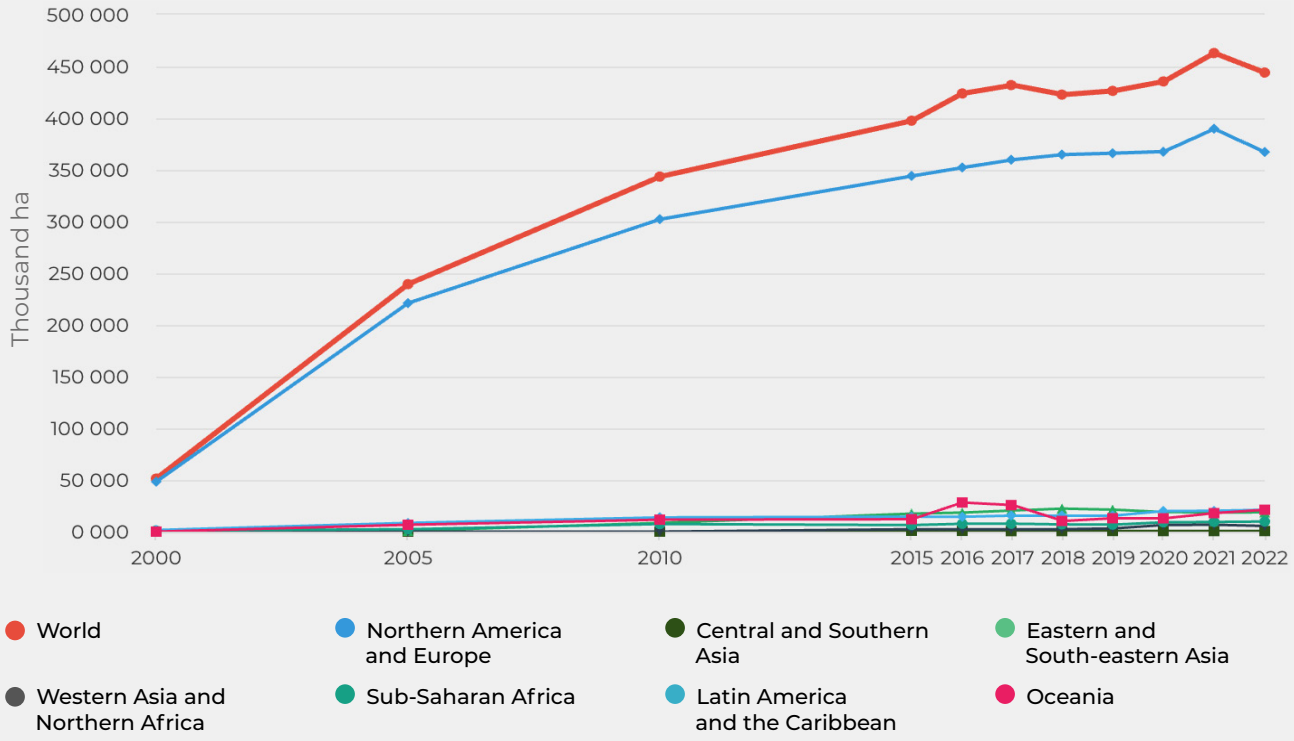
SDG region	Progress between 2000–2010 and 2010–2020 decades	Progress between 2010 and 2020			Progress between 2010 and 2023	Progress between 2015 and 2022	Progress between 2022 and 2023
	Annual forest area change rate*	Above-ground biomass stock in forest (tonnes/hectares)	Proportion of forest area within legally established protected areas	Proportion of forest area under a long-term forest management plan	Forest area certified (2010–2023)	Forest area certified (2015–2022)	Forest area certified (2022–2023)
World	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Central and Southern Asia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Central Asia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢			
Southern Asia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Eastern Asia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
South-eastern Asia	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Western Asia and Northern Africa	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Northern Africa	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢		
Western Asia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢		🟢	🟢
Sub-Saharan Africa	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Northern America and Europe	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Europe	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Northern America	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Latin America and the Caribbean	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Oceania	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Oceania (exc. Australia and New Zealand)	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Australia and New Zealand	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Least developed countries (LDCs)	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢

*The annual forest area change rate is calculated using a compound interest formula.

🟢 Positive change 🟡 No/small change 🔴 Negative change ▭ Non certified change

Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB.

Figure 43. Trends in certified forest area at regional and global levels



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators*. [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

REFERENCE

FAO. 2022. *FRA 2020 Remote Sensing Survey*. FAO Forestry Paper, No. 186. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb9970en

SDG INDICATOR 15.4.2

(a) Mountain Green Cover Index and (b) proportion of degraded mountain land

Target 15.4

By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

(Target without a numerical yardstick)

SDG 15.4.2 (A) PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

WORLD

CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTHERN ASIA

EASTERN ASIA AND SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

NORTHERN AMERICA AND EUROPE

WESTERN ASIA AND NORTHERN AFRICA

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

OCEANIA

SDG 15.4.2 (B) PROGRESS ASSESSMENT:

WORLD

CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTHERN ASIA

EASTERN ASIA AND SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

NORTHERN AMERICA AND EUROPE

WESTERN ASIA AND NORTHERN AFRICA

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

OCEANIA

Mountain land degradation has accelerated globally, driven by agricultural expansion and urban and infrastructure development.

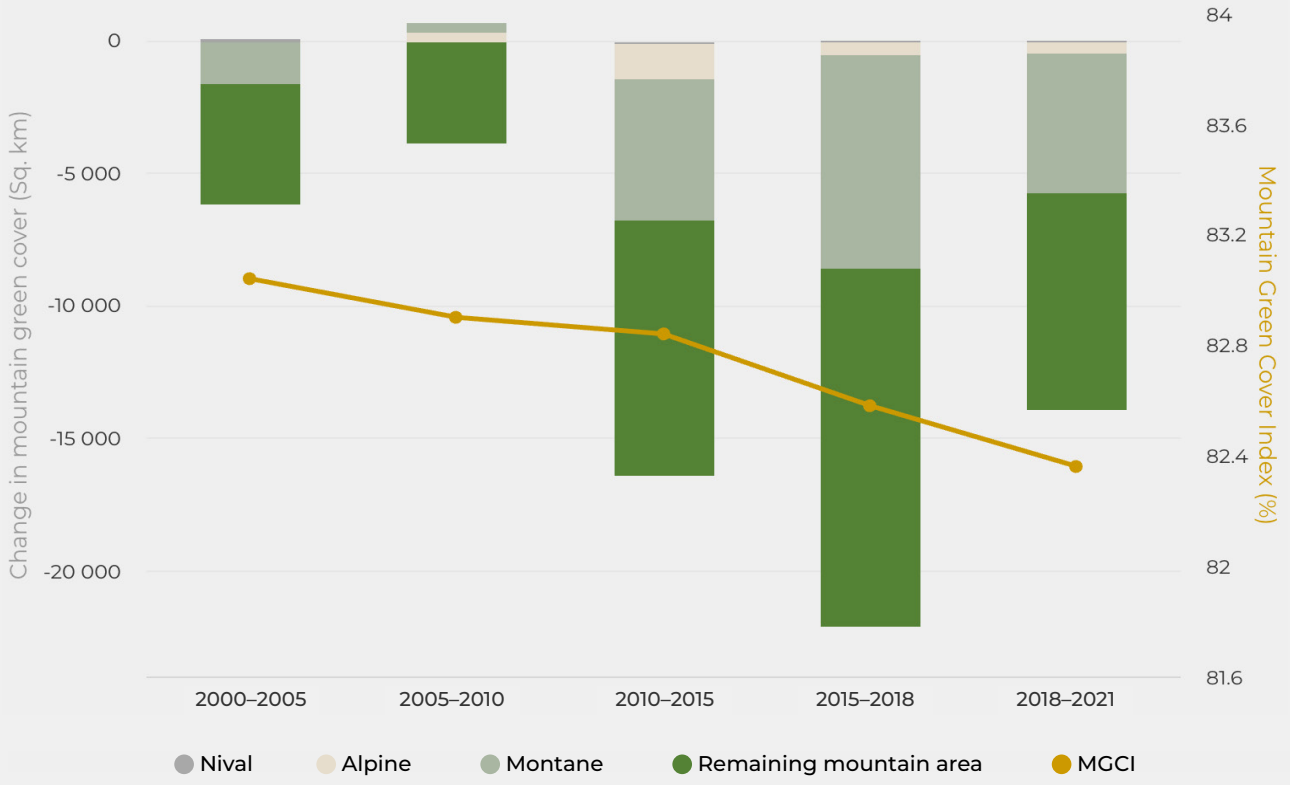
Mountains cover only about one-quarter of the Earth's land area, yet contribute disproportionately to global biodiversity and provide vital resources, such as clean water, to a significant proportion of the global population. However, climate change, land use change, pollution, invasive species and unregulated mining – among others – are compromising the ability of mountains to continue playing their many key beneficial roles.

Mountain green cover decreased from 83 percent to 82.2 percent in the 2000–2021 period. This reduction primarily occurred in areas below the mountain tree line (montane belt and lower remaining mountain areas) and was progressively less significant with increasing altitude (Figure 44). However, the period 2018–2021 marks a change in the rate of green cover loss compared to the two preceding reporting periods.

Disaggregation of the indicator by land cover types provides additional insights on how climate and land use changes are shaping the world's mountains. Changes in mountain landscapes above the tree line (nival and alpine belts) are driven by climate change and are characterized by significant declines in permanent snow and ice. This reduction has resulted in increases in both terrestrial barren lands and waterbodies (Figure 45).

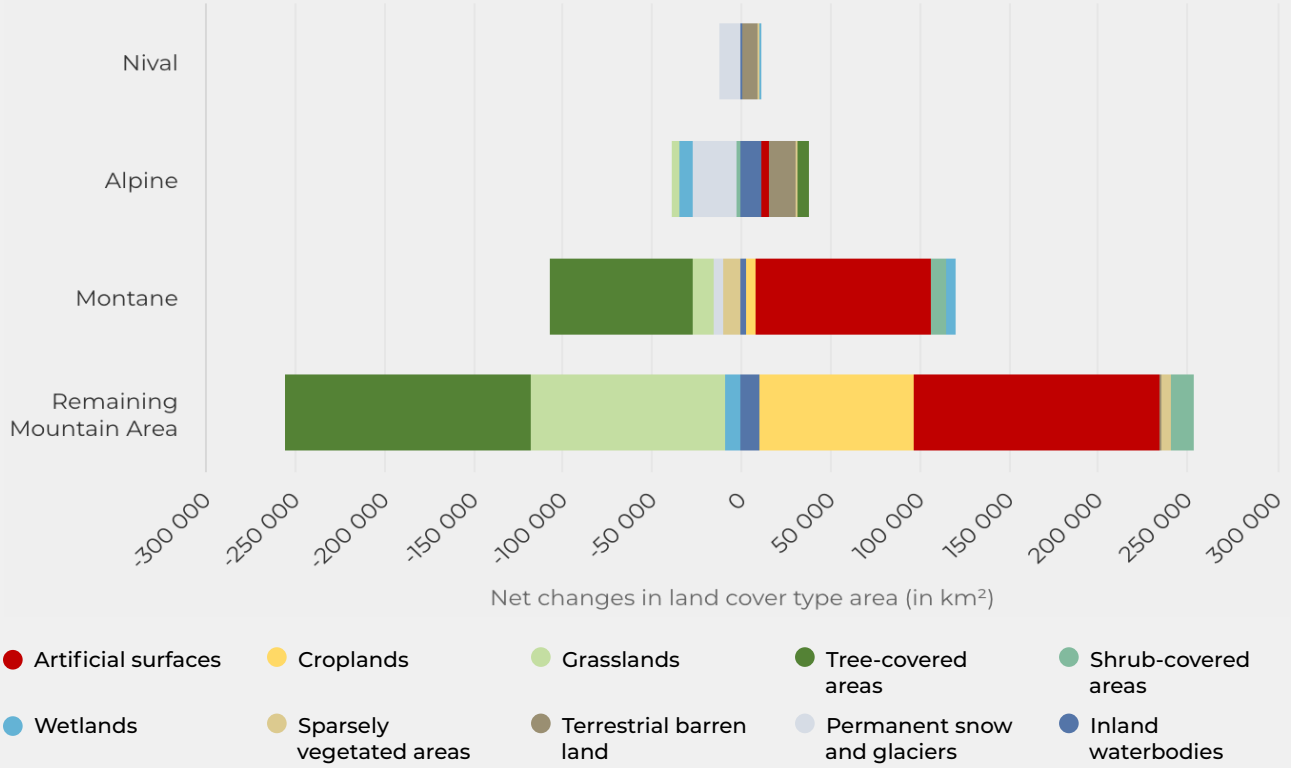
Conversely, changes in lower mountain areas are driven by the conversion of areas of natural vegetation (forests, grasslands and to a lesser extent, wetlands) into croplands and artificial surfaces (Figure 45). The conversion of natural vegetation into artificial surfaces is the main driver of the reduction in mountain green cover.

Figure 44. Changes in green cover area (in km²/year) by bioclimatic belt and reporting period



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB.

Figure 45. Net changes in land cover type area (in km²) by bioclimatic belt during the 2000–2021 period



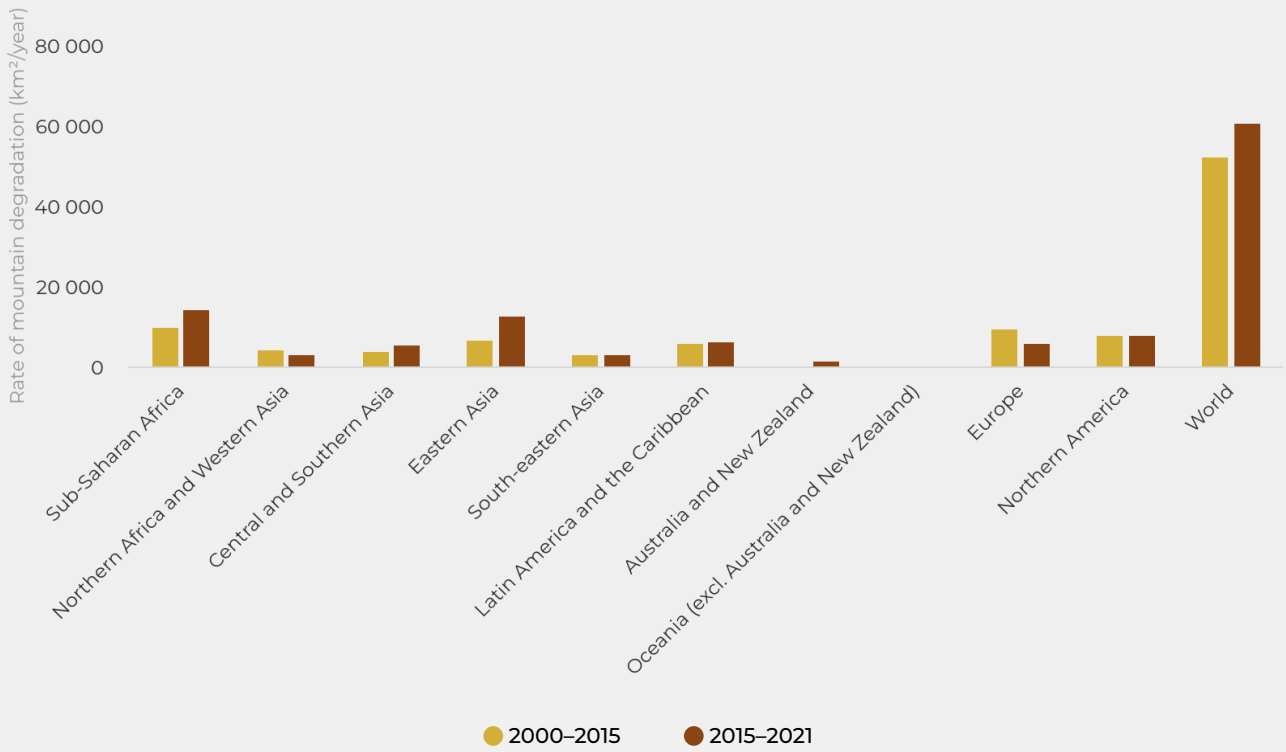
Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0

Detrimental changes in land cover and land use are major contributors to terrestrial biodiversity loss, including in mountain ecosystems. Subindicator (b) (proportion of degraded mountain land) measures this by quantifying land cover transitions that indicate a decline or loss of biodiversity and mountain ecosystem functions or services.

The results of this subindicator suggest that, between 2000 and 2021, approximately 3.5 percent of the world's mountain area experienced detrimental land cover changes. The regions with the highest proportions of degraded mountain land are sub-Saharan Africa (6.8 percent), Northern Africa and Western Asia, Australia and New Zealand (4.1 percent each), Northern America (4 percent) and South-eastern Asia (3.9 percent). Oceania's mountains (excluding Australia and New Zealand) are least affected, at 0.6 percent.

The rate of mountain degradation, measured in km² per year, increased globally in the 2015–2021 period compared to the 2000–2015 baseline, driven by detrimental land cover changes occurring in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 46).

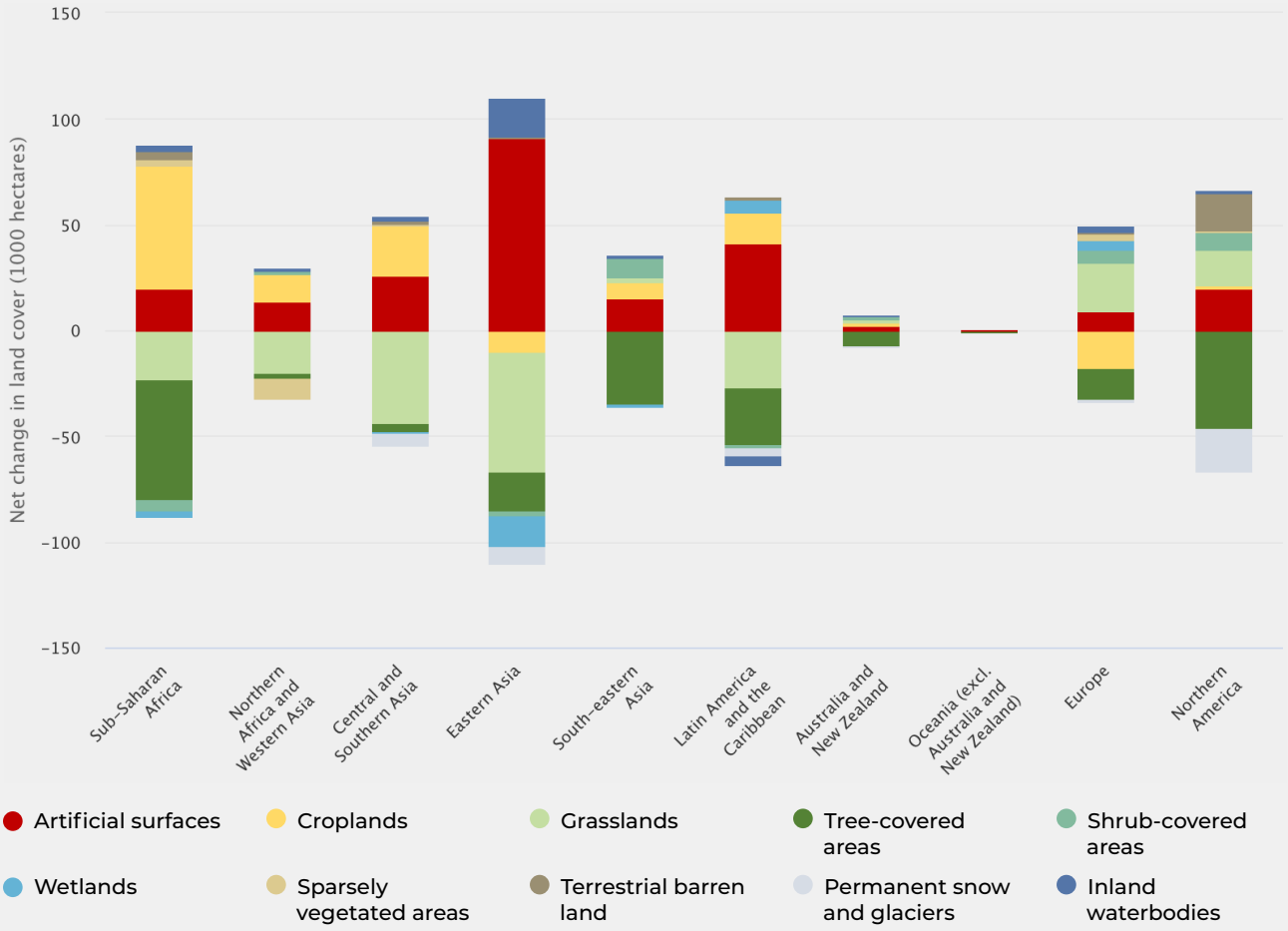
Figure 46. Rate of mountain land degradation (in km²/year) per SDG reporting region and period



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

An analysis of net changes in the different land cover types allows us to identify the main drivers behind mountain land degradation in each region. Agricultural expansion is the main driver in sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast, urban and infrastructure development is proportionally more significant in Eastern Asia, along with Latin America and the Caribbean. The main hotspots of permanent snow and ice loss are in Northern America, Central and Southern Asia, and Eastern Asia (Figure 49).

Figure 47. Changes in land cover type during 2000–2021 in each SDG region



Source: FAO. 2025. *FAOSTAT: SDG Indicators.* [Accessed on 31 May 2025]. https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB. Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

From a progress assessment lens, the above figures suggest that the world is currently below the median of country values, with a slight deterioration since the baseline year. Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean reflect this global trend, both remaining below the median of country values. Central and Southern Asia, Eastern Asia, South-eastern Asia, and Western Asia and Northern Africa are far below the median of country values and have not improved or deteriorated since the baseline year. On a more positive note, Oceania is above the median of country values, with no improvement over time.

For Subindicator 15.4.2(b), the current status shows positive progress, with the world and all regions – except sub-Saharan Africa – close to achieving the target. However, the trend assessment reveals a deterioration away from the target since the baseline year.

Goal-level assessment: the world is still at a moderate distance to achieving SDG 2 while progress is stagnant

With only five years remaining to make meaningful progress on the SDGs, the world stands at a pivotal moment. Despite some progress in limited spheres, significant challenges – economic, social and environmental – persist, compounded by an ever-changing global context. These challenges pose risks to our ability to achieve the ambitious goals set out in the 2030 Agenda. Now, more than ever, sustained commitments and accelerated actions are essential to achieving the SDG targets in the limited time left.

In its role as custodian agency for the majority of SDG 2 indicators, FAO plays a central role in advancing and supporting global efforts towards ending hunger, malnutrition and achieving sustainable agriculture. Building on its first global assessment conducted in 2023, FAO has now undertaken the second statistical assessment of progress on SDG 2. This assessment offers a comprehensive review of the world's current standing in relation to the SDG 2 targets and offers critical insights to inform policy decisions and guide further action.

To enable this target and Goal-level assessment, FAO developed a streamlined method, detailed in the statistical annex.

Each indicator is evaluated based on its trend and its current status (how close it is to the target). These results are scored from 0 to 4, with higher scores indicating better performance. When multiple indicators are used for a single target, their scores are averaged, and the same is done to summarize progress across all targets for the overall goal.

Table A1: Progress assessment legend

TREND STATUS			
	Interpretation for targets without numerical yardstick		**Interpretation for Goal/ targets with numerical yardstick**
-	-	▲	Target met
↗	Improvement	↗	Improvement towards the goal/ target
↗	Slight improve-ment	↗	Slight improve-ment towards the goal/target
▲	No improvement	▲	No improvement towards the goal/ target
↙	Deterioration	↙	Deterioration away from the goal/ target

CURRENT STATUS		
	Interpretation for targets without numerical yardstick	**Interpretation for Goal/ targets with numerical yardstick**
	Far above median	Goal/target achieved
	Above median	Close to achieving the goal/target
	Median	Moderate distance to achieving the goal/target
	Below median	Far from achieving the goal/target
	Far below median	Very far from achieving the goal/ target
	Current status not possible due to data limitations or methodological reasons	

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The first global level assessment of progress on SDG 2 was conducted in 2023 and presented a mixed picture across regions on the assessment of targets under Goal 2. At the global level and for SDG 2, the picture was similar across regions, and the world was "at a moderate distance to achieving the Goal", with "no improvement" towards the Goal since the baseline year (2015).

The 2025 assessment shows the same result at the global level, with no improvement since the baseline year and currently at a moderate distance to achieving the goal. Similarly, Central Asia and Southern Asia, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Europe are also at a moderate distance to the target, though the latter two have also made a slight improvement whereas progress for the first two has stalled. Conversely, Western Asia and Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania are currently far from achieving SDG 2. However, we can observe a slight improvement towards the goal for sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, whereas Western Asia and Northern Africa has made no improvement since the baseline year.

At the target level, it is important to note that, compared to the previous edition of this report, the introduction of the SDG 2.4.1 proxy has improved the availability of data, thereby making an assessment of the corresponding target possible.

The world and most of the regions stand at a moderate distance or far from achieving **Target 2.1**. The exceptions are sub-Saharan Africa, which is very far from the target, underscoring an urgent need for intensified efforts and tailored interventions. At the other end of the spectrum, only two regions – Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, and Northern America and Europe – are currently close to achieving the target. Looking at progress over time, trend assessments show a widespread decline in progress towards the target across most regions. Turning to **Target 2.2** on ending malnutrition, the world and most regions stand at a moderate distance or far from achieving the target, while also registering stagnation in progress. **Target 2.3** on the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers cannot be assessed at global level, as both constituent indicators have less than 50 percent of country coverage.

On a more positive note, greater progress has been observed on **Target 2.4** on sustainable agriculture, with several regions currently close to achieving the target and showing slight improvement over time. Nonetheless, the world as a whole, along with Central Asia and Southern Asia, Western Asia and Northern Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa, still remain at a moderate distance from achieving the target, whereas Oceania has achieved the greatest improvement since 2015.

The current status of **Target 2.5** on the conservation of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, cannot be assessed due to low data availability, except for Northern America and Europe, which appears to be far from target. Looking at trends over time, an improvement or slight improvement has been registered since the baseline year across most regions.

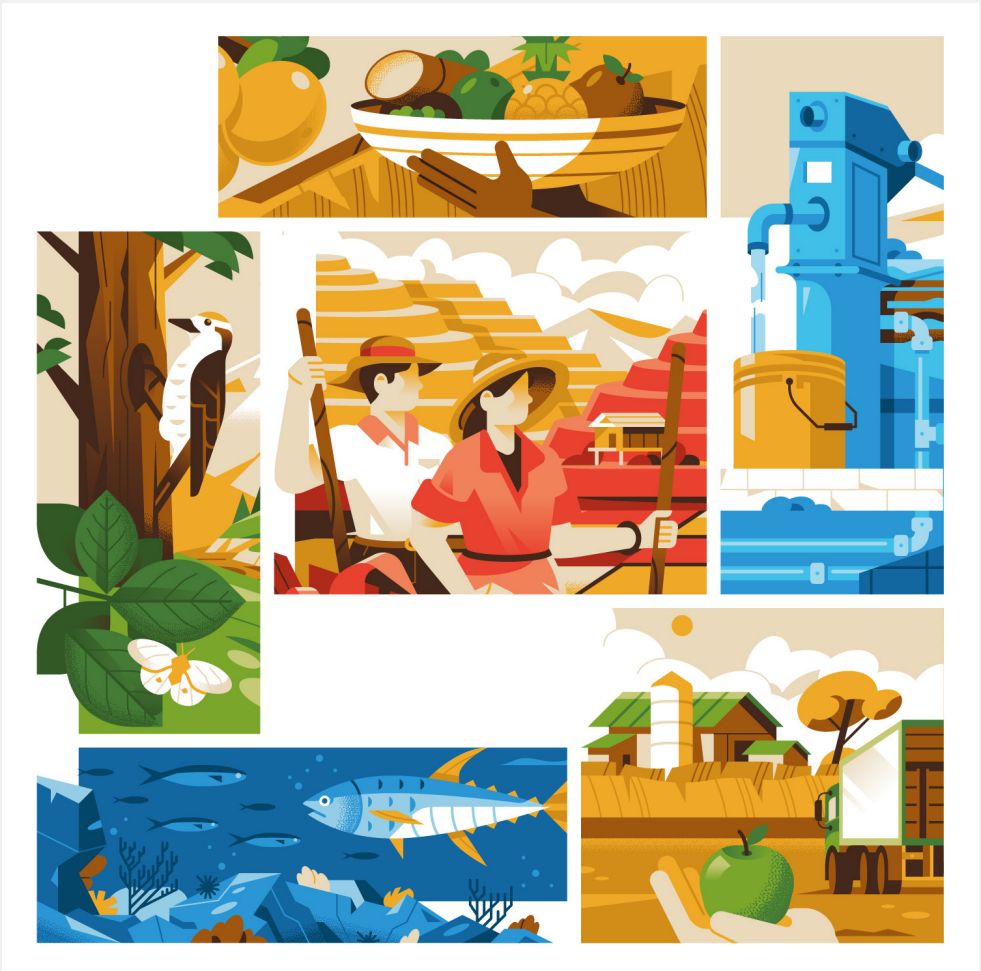
Turning to the "means-of-implementation" Targets 2.a, 2.b, and 2.c, the picture is mixed. For **Target 2.a** on increasing investment in agriculture, the world, along with Central Asia and Southern Asia, and Northern America and Europe, are currently above the median of country values, with a global deteriorating trend. In contrast, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia are far above median of country values. The remaining regions fall below or at the median of country values; however, these regions have shown improvement or slight progress since the baseline year. For **Target 2.b** on eliminating trade restrictions, the picture is even more mixed, with three regions currently far above the median of country values and three regions – Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, Northern America and Europe, and Western Asia and Northern Africa – far below, with trends over time ranging from deterioration to improvement. Finally, currently, all regions are far or very far from achieving **Target 2.c** on limiting food price volatility, with a deteriorating trend since the baseline year. As such, Target 2.c is the Goal 2 target with the weakest achievement record so far.

Table A2. Goal- and target-level assessment of progress on SDG 2, by SDG region

SDG region / Goal/ Target	World	Central Asia and Southern Asia	Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia	Latin America and the Caribbean	Northern America and Europe	Western Asia and Northern Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Oceania
Goal 2								
Target 2.1 *Ensure food security*								
Target 2.2 *End malnutrition*								-
Target 2.3 *Double the productivity and incomes of smallhold-ers*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Target 2.4 *Ensure sustainable agriculture*								
Target 2.5 *Conserve animal and plant genetic resources*								
Target 2.a *Increase investments in agriculture*								
Target 2.b *Eliminate trade restrictions*								-
Target 2.c *Limit food price volatility*								

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators 2025



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