

UN: Fewer hungry people in the world despite wars, poverty

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The number of hungry people around the world has dropped to 795 million from over a billion a quarter-century ago despite natural disasters, ongoing conflicts and poverty, the three U.N. food agencies said Wednesday.

Countries in East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean showed the most progress in reducing [hunger](#), thanks in part to economic growth that didn't exclude the poor, investments in agriculture and political stability, the agencies said in their annual State of Food Insecurity report.

The report found that a majority of the countries monitored—72 out of 129—have met the U.N.'s ambitious Millennium Development Goals to halve undernourishment by 2015.

"The near-achievement of the MDG hunger targets shows us that we can indeed eliminate the scourge of hunger in our lifetime," said U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization's chief, Jose Graziano da Silva.

The agencies said the reduction in hunger and undernourishment came despite [natural disasters](#), political instability and conflict in much of the developing world—even though the world's population had grown by 1.9 billion people since 1990.

The agencies said improved agricultural productivity, especially by family and small-scale farmers, and better social protection measures like food vouchers or school meal programs had had the most impact in

reducing hunger.

Sub-Saharan Africa still had the highest levels of undernourishment in the world: Almost one in four people there don't get enough food to live an active and healthy life. Some West African countries that did invest in agricultural productivity and infrastructure managed to meet the U.N. hunger targets, the report found.

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