



THE PATH TOWARDS EQUITY

Actions to address socio-economic and food security challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2023

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Executive Summary of the socio-economic and food security challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2023

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) face growing food insecurity, inequity and widening social gaps in 2023. Since the previous year these situations have been aggravated by the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine and the consequent increase in oil, energy, and food prices. The region also faces an unprecedented increase in migratory flows, representing more than a quarter of the world's migrants, in addition to multiple climate-related emergencies and disasters.

This context poses a humanitarian challenge to promote the socio-economic well-being of the most vulnerable people. To address this, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) proposes three activities that promote the recovery, strengthening and diversification of the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations:

1. Strengthening food security at the household and community level
2. Supporting the livelihoods of migrants and returnees
3. Incorporating environmentally sustainable production practices and natural resource management

Current situation in LAC

Hunger affected 56.5 million people (8.6% of the region's population). Currently 40.6% of people suffer moderate or severe food insecurity, with women being the most affected.

Inflation also increased. In June 2022, the regional rate reached 8.4%, or 1.8 percentage points above that observed during 2021, and represented more than double the average value for the period from January 2005 to December 2019.

Fuel and food prices have risen. Energy products are expected² to show the highest price increase, reaching 55% with respect to the average levels observed in 2021. Following the upward trend, food prices have soared dramatically: in March 2022, the FAO Price Index reached its highest value since its creation in 1990.

This global and regional scenario, will continue to deepen the already difficult situation of the most vulnerable people, delaying socio-economic recovery, and increasing inequality and the risk of food insecurity.

Emphasis on strengthening the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people

In 2023, the IFRC will emphasize three actions to promote the socio-economic well-being of the most affected populations. First, food security will be strengthened at the household and community level. Second, given the current context that hampers the living conditions of migrants, host communities and returnees, the livelihoods of migrants and returnees will be supported. Third, given the increase in the price of fuel and fertilizers, it is estimated that there will be greater pressure to overexploit forests or fields, as well as the expansion of agricultural frontiers; to address this effect on nature, environmentally sustainable production practices that consider the management of natural resources will be incorporated.

Finally, the actions proposed and outlined in the report *Readjusting the path towards equity: Challenges and Actions for a Sustainable and Equitable Recovery from the Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean*, published in 2022, remain fully relevant:

- Support the safe reincorporation of children and adolescents into the education system

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

² Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC)

- Strengthen food security at the household and community level
- Support the incorporation of environmentally sustainable production practices and natural resource management
- Support the reincorporation of women into the labor market
- Support micro-entrepreneurship and labor market reinsertion
- Promote access to technology and technological skills at all levels of people's lives
- Support the livelihoods of migrants and returnees
- Prevent and protect victims of discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence



Women affected by the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, go to entrepreneurship activities. Photo: Argentinian Red Cross

The Venezuelan Red Cross has worked with communities in the state of Portuguesa, Venezuela, to strengthen their livelihoods, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the heavy rains and droughts, aggravated in recent years by the climate crisis. Photo: IFRC



Update on the socio-economic and food security situation in Latin America and the Caribbean

In May 2022 IFRC presented the report [*Readjusting the path towards equity: Challenges and actions for sustainable and equitable recovery from the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean*](#). The document highlighted the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable groups and presented the enormous challenges that the region faces in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Although the conflict in Ukraine was still incipient at the time of the report's launch, it was already revealing its effects on key aspects for the Americas region, such as food prices, fuel prices and supply chains. This document complements and updates the information presented in May 2022.

Below are some key aspects of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic mentioned in the IFRC report:

- **By 2021 in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the extreme poverty indicator was estimated at 13.8% and poverty at 32.1%, reaching levels of extreme poverty not seen for 27 years.** During the first year of the pandemic, 23 million more women were added to poverty for a total of 118 million. 54.3% of them were employed in the most affected sectors such as commerce, tourism, and manufacturing.
- **LAC was the region most impacted by the loss of income compared to the rest of the world.** Wealth declined by 12.5% in US dollar terms. The pandemic is projected to have long-lasting effects on its ability to create wealth.
- **There was an increase in income inequality.** Those who remained employed during the pandemic experienced a 15% contraction in their labor income. In the lowest income quintile, the fall in labor income was 42%, while in the highest income quintile the average fall was around 7%.
- In 2020, an estimated **60 million people suffered**

from hunger in the region, almost 14 million more than in the previous year. The impact of the increase in severe food insecurity meant a reversal of at least a decade.

- In total, 34.6 million women aged 15 or older, suffered food insecurity by the year 2020 in the region. This figure drops to 26.9 million for men.
- **An estimated 675,000 children in the region may have suffered from acute malnutrition in the first year of the pandemic.**
- School closures affected more than 165 million young people and children who were unable to attend school in person from mid-March 2020. Regionally, **1.2 million students would drop out of the education system because of the COVID-19 pandemic.** In addition, **300,000 children could be forced into child labor in the region.**
- Informal employment was the most affected at the onset of the pandemic. About **140 million informal workers in LAC are neither covered by labor legislation nor subject to the formal rules of the world of work.** On average, one out of every two women works without social security coverage in the region.
- The conditions for achieving the SDGs in the region have deteriorated. Prior to the pandemic, some indicators were already at a stage of stagnation or reduction with strong setbacks in several indicators of the End Poverty, Zero Hunger, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Decent Work and Reduction of Inequalities.

Despite these impacts, global food prices remained relatively stable during 2020. The following year reported a rise to an average of 125.7 points on the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Food Price Index, 27.6 points higher than in 2020.

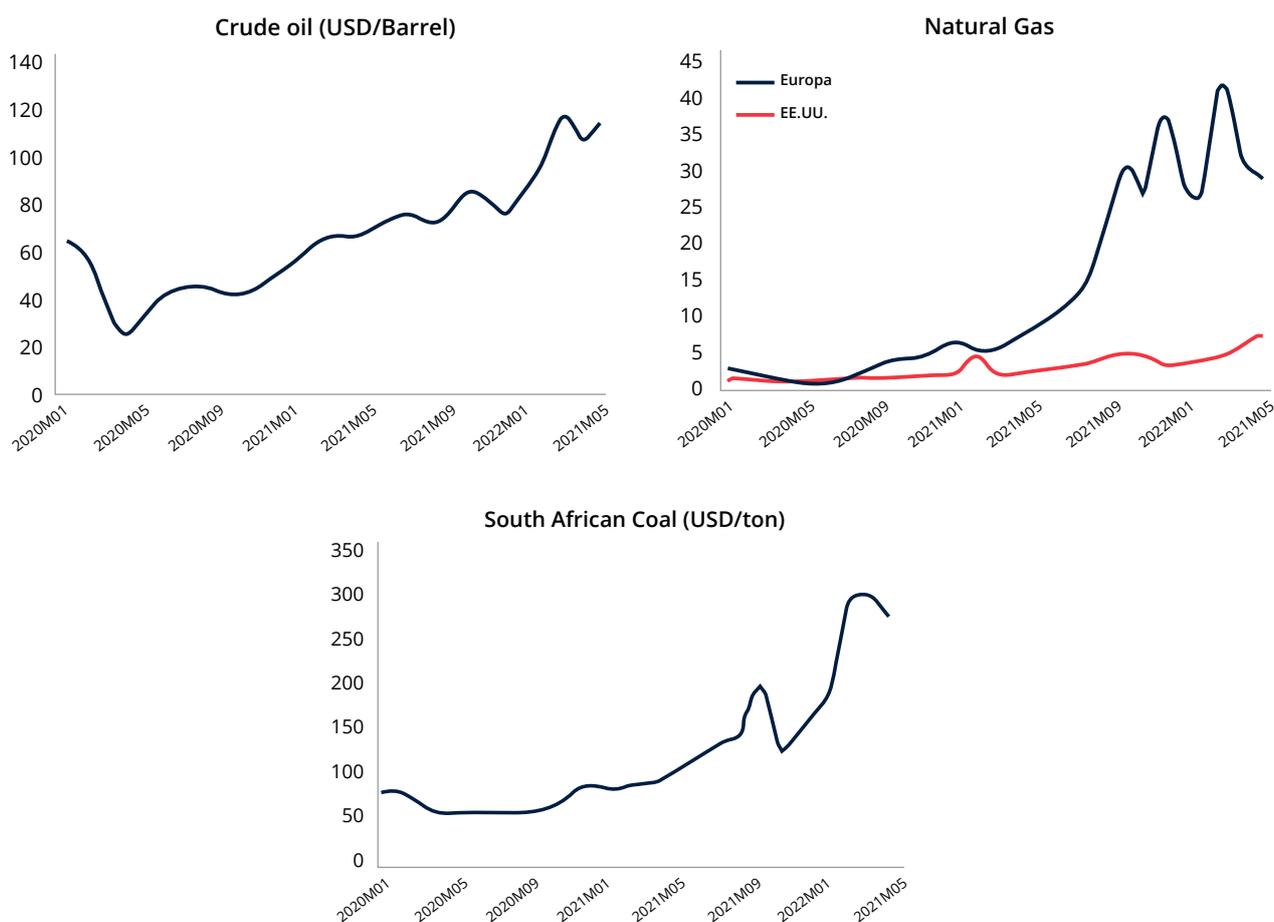
Table 1: FAO Food Price Index, 2010 to 2021

Years	FAO Food Price Index
2010	106.7
2011	131.9
2012	122.8
2013	120.1
2014	115.0
2015	93.0
2016	91.9
2017	98.0
2018	95.9
2019	95.1
2020	98.1
2021	125.7

Source: Own elaboration based on FAO information.

Fuel prices showed a similar trend to food prices. Towards the end of 2020 there is an upward trend, which increases sharply with the start of the conflict in Ukraine during 2022.

Figura 1: Fossil fuel prices between January 2021 and May 2022



Source: IDB. 2022, based on World Bank Pink Sheet.



Women from an association of mothers of children with disabilities received multipurpose cash assistance to support their livelihoods at the household level. Photo: Luis Carlos Rosero, IFRC

Current situation in Latin America and the Caribbean

The following is general information on the current situation in LAC, based on secondary information from the IDB, the World Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and FAO, available as of August 31, 2022.

Economic growth, Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

ECLAC³ updated its growth projection for LAC in August 2022. For that year, the region's GDP is projected to show an average growth rate of 2.7%, returning to the low growth path it exhibited prior to the onset of the pandemic. It is projected that:

- South America will grow by 2.6% (compared to 6.9% in 2021)

- Central America and Mexico will grow by 2.5% (compared to 5.7% in 2021).
- The Caribbean will be the only sub-region to grow more than in 2021, at 4.7%, excluding Guyana (compared to 4.0% in the previous year).

An expected global growth framework of 3.1% of GDP is projected as a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine.

Inflation

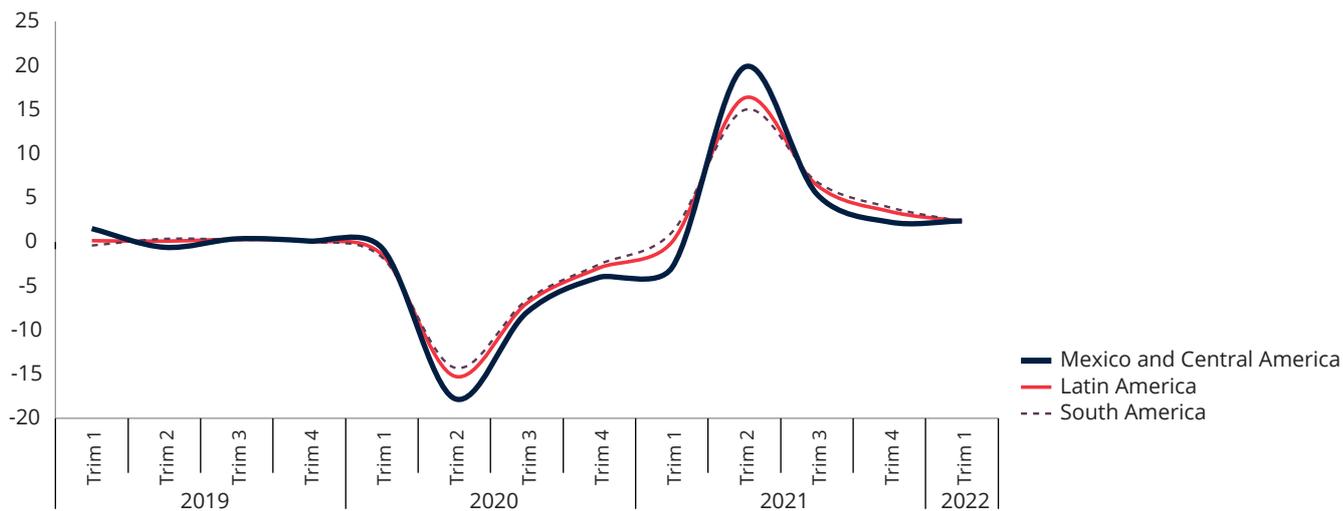
ECLAC⁴ highlighted that global average inflation reached 7.2% in May 2022, a level not recorded since mid-2008, amid the world economic and financial crisis. On the other hand, the average inflation of emerging economies reached 7.1% and that of advanced economies 7.5%. Among these, inflation in the United States reached a 40-year high (9.1%) in June 2022, while in the Euro area it reached 8.6% in the same month, the highest level since the creation of that currency.

^{3,4} ECLAC. 2022. Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean: Dynamics and Challenges of Investment to Drive a Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery.

Inflation in LAC economies has tended to increase since May 2020, when the regional inflation rate stood at 1.8%. At the end of that same year, inflation approached its pre-pandemic level and reached, in 2021, a level similar to that recorded during the global financial crisis.

As of the first half of 2022, 28 countries showed an inflation rate above the average that each country had recorded between January 2005 and December 2019. In 13 cases, year-on-year inflation to June 2022 exceeded 10%. It should be noted that in 20 cases the inflation rate doubled when comparing June 2022 with the same month in 2021.

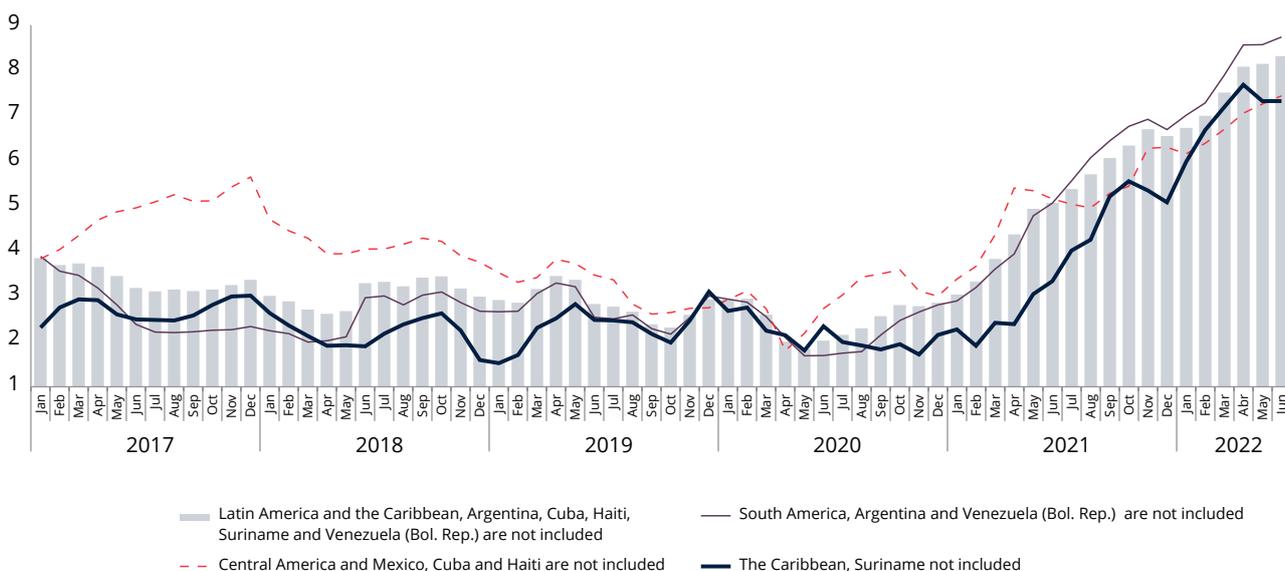
Figure 2: Year-on-year GDP growth rate. 2019 to Q1 2022



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on official figures.

Figure 3: 12-month consumer price index (CPI) variation rates between 2017 and 2022

Latin America and the Caribbean: 12-month variation rates of the consumer price index (CPI), by subregion, January 2017 to June 2022 (In percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on official figures.

Note: Economies with chronic inflation (Argentina, Cuba, Haiti, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Suriname) are excluded from the averages.

Figure 4: Latin America and the Caribbean, consumer prices, percentage change over 12 months

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				2022	
					March	June	Sept.	Dec.	March	June
Latin America and the Caribbean a/	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.8	5.1	6.1	6.6	7.5	8.4
Latin America										
Argentina	25.0	47.1	52.9	34.1	40.4	48.3	51.7	51.4	55.9	65.0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2.7	1.5	1.5	0.7	1.2	0.2	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.8
Brazil	2.9	3.7	4.3	4.5	6.0	8.3	10.2	10.0	11.3	11.9
Chile	2.3	2.6	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.8	5.3	7.2	9.4	12.5
Colombia	4.1	3.1	3.8	1.6	1.5	3.6	4.5	5.6	8.5	9.7
Costa Rica	2.6	2.0	1.5	0.9	0.5	1.9	2.1	3.3	5.8	10.1
Cuba b/	0.6	2.4	-1.3	18.5	73.1	74.8	72.1	77.3	21.7	28.9
Ecuador	-0.2	0.3	-0.1	-0.9	-0.8	-0.7	1.1	1.9	2.6	4.2
El Salvador	2.0	0.4	0.0	-0.1	1.8	2.6	5.0	6.1	6.7	7.8
Guatemala	5.7	2.3	3.4	4.8	5.8	3.9	3.7	3.1	4.2	7.6
Haiti	13.3	16.5	20.8	19.2	17.2	12.5	12.9	24.6	25.9	29.6
Honduras	4.7	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.7	4.6	5.3	7.0	10.2
Mexico	6.8	4.8	2.8	3.2	4.7	5.9	6.0	7.4	7.5	8.0
Nicaragua	5.8	3.4	6.5	2.6	4.2	4.1	5.8	7.3	8.7	10.2
Panama	0.5	0.2	-0.1	-1.6	0.3	1.6	2.5	2.6	3.2	5.2
Paraguay	4.5	3.2	2.8	2.2	2.4	4.5	6.4	6.8	10.1	11.5
Peru	1.4	2.2	1.9	2.0	2.6	3.3	5.2	6.4	6.8	8.8
Dominican Republic	4.2	1.2	3.7	5.6	8.3	9.3	7.7	8.5	9.1	9.5
Uruguay	6.6	8.0	8.8	9.4	8.3	7.3	7.4	8.0	9.4	9.3
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	862.6	130060.2	9585.5	2959.8	3012.2	2507.9	1946.0	686.4	284.4	157.2
The Caribbean										
Antigua and Barbuda	2.4	1.7	0.7	2.8	2.1	0.6	2.1	1.2	6.1	10.5
Bahamas	1.8	2.0	1.4	1.2	1.4	2.7	4.1	4.1	4.7	6.2
Barbados	6.6	0.6	7.2	1.3	1.1	2.9	5.6	5.0	9.3	9.3 c/
Belize	1.0	-0.1	0.2	0.4	1.5	3.0	3.8	4.9	5.7	6.6 c/
Dominica	-1.5	4.0	0.1	-0.7	0.5	0.6	1.8	3.8	5.3	5.3 d/
Granada	0.5	1.4	0.1	-0.8	0.3	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.9	2.9 d/
Guyana	1.5	1.6	2.1	0.9	2.0	6.5	6.4	5.7	6.8	4.7
Jamaica	5.2	2.4	6.2	4.5	4.5	4.4	8.3	7.3	11.3	10.9
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-1.2	0.3	1.4	1.7	1.9	1.2	1.2 d/
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	3.0	1.4	0.5	-1.0	-0.1	1.9	2.7	3.4	3.6	5.2
St. Lucia	2.0	1.6	-0.7	-0.4	0.9	2.9	2.1	4.1	6.2	6.2 d/
Suriname	9.3	5.4	4.2	60.7	50.2	54.0	69.5	60.7	62.2	55.1
Trinidad and Tobago	1.3	1.0	0.4	0.8	0.8	1.8	2.4	3.5	4.1	4.9

Source: ECLAC.2022

a/ Latin America and the Caribbean, excluding Argentina, Haiti, Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

b/ Refers to local currency markets.

c/ Data as of May.

d/ Data as of March.

The effect of the conflict in Ukraine

The conflict in Ukraine has generated effects at a global level, reflected in different ways in the regions. ECLAC notes that in LAC it intensified the upward dynamic of commodity prices that had already been present since the second half of 2020, causing historic high levels. By 2022, global commodity prices are expected to be on average 21% above the levels recorded in 2021. Energy products are expected to show the largest increase, 55% above the average levels observed in 2021, while

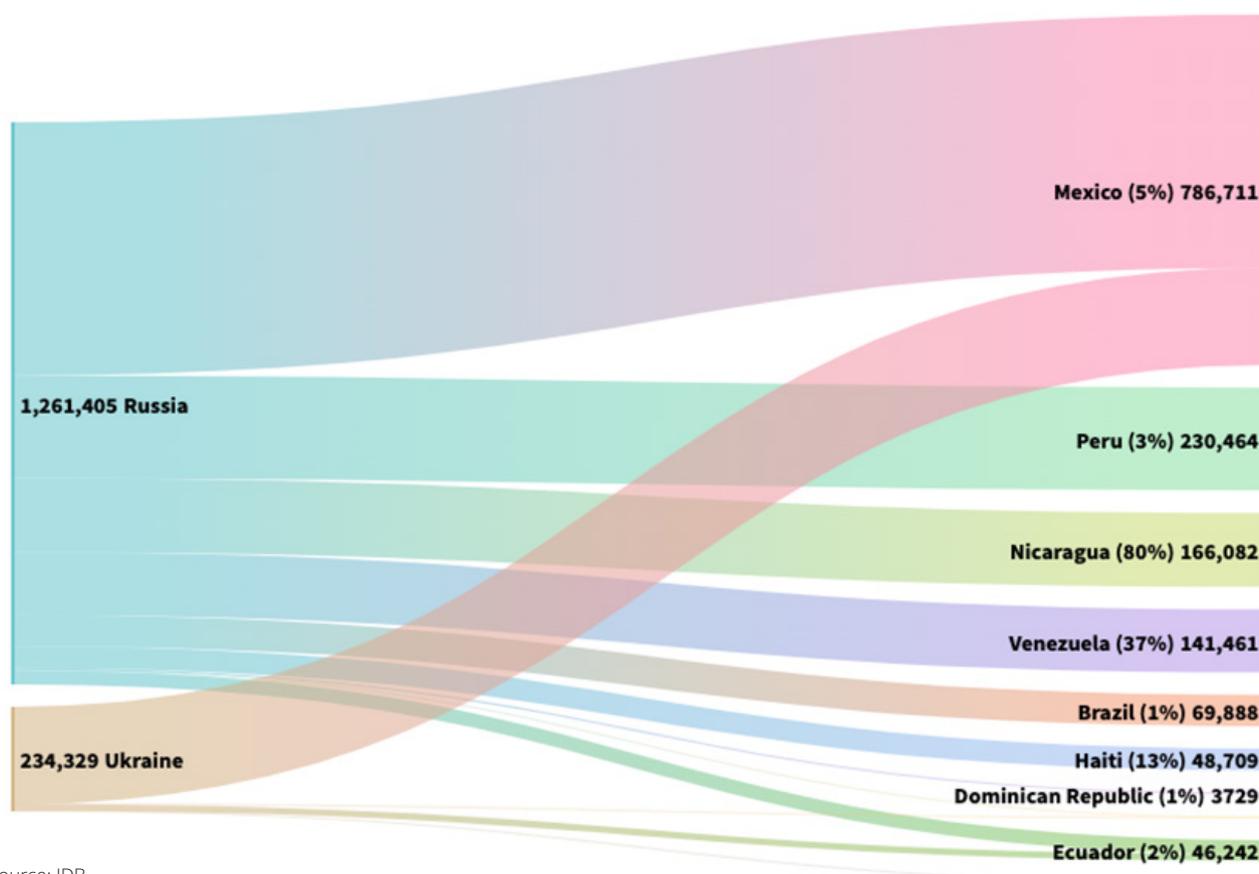
agricultural commodity prices are expected to increase by 15%.

FAO⁵ noted that in 2021, the Russian Federation and Ukraine were among the world's three largest exporters of wheat, barley, maize, rapeseed and rapeseed oil, sunflower seeds, and sunflower oil. The IDB⁶ notes that the Russian Federation and Ukraine together accounted for 25% of global wheat exports. The Russian Federation was also one of the three largest exporters of fertilizers in the world.

⁵ FAO. The state of agricultural commodity markets 2022. Available at <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/es/c/cc0475es>

⁶ Source: IDB - <https://blogs.iadb.org/sostenibilidad/en/how-the-conflict-between-ukraine-and-russia-might-affect-your-dinner-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

Figure 5: Wheat export flow 2013-2020. Thousands of dollars; in parentheses for each country indicates the share of total imports of Russian and Ukrainian origin



Source: IDB

FAO mentions that both countries are major suppliers to many others that rely heavily on food and fertilizer imports. Several of these countries belong to the group of the least developed, while many others are in the group of low-income food-deficit countries. In total, more than 30 net wheat importers depend on these two countries to meet more than 30% of their wheat import needs. For its part, the IDB notes that LAC countries import significant amounts of wheat from both countries. For example, Mexico imports 5% of its total from the Russian Federation and Ukraine, while Nicaragua imports 80% and Haiti imports 13%.

FAO⁷ stresses that the conflict will directly limit agricultural production, reduce economic activity and drive-up prices, further eroding the purchasing power of the local population, which in turn will lead to a consequent increase in food insecurity and malnutrition. There has

also been a significant increase in humanitarian needs in neighbouring countries, where displaced populations are seeking refuge.

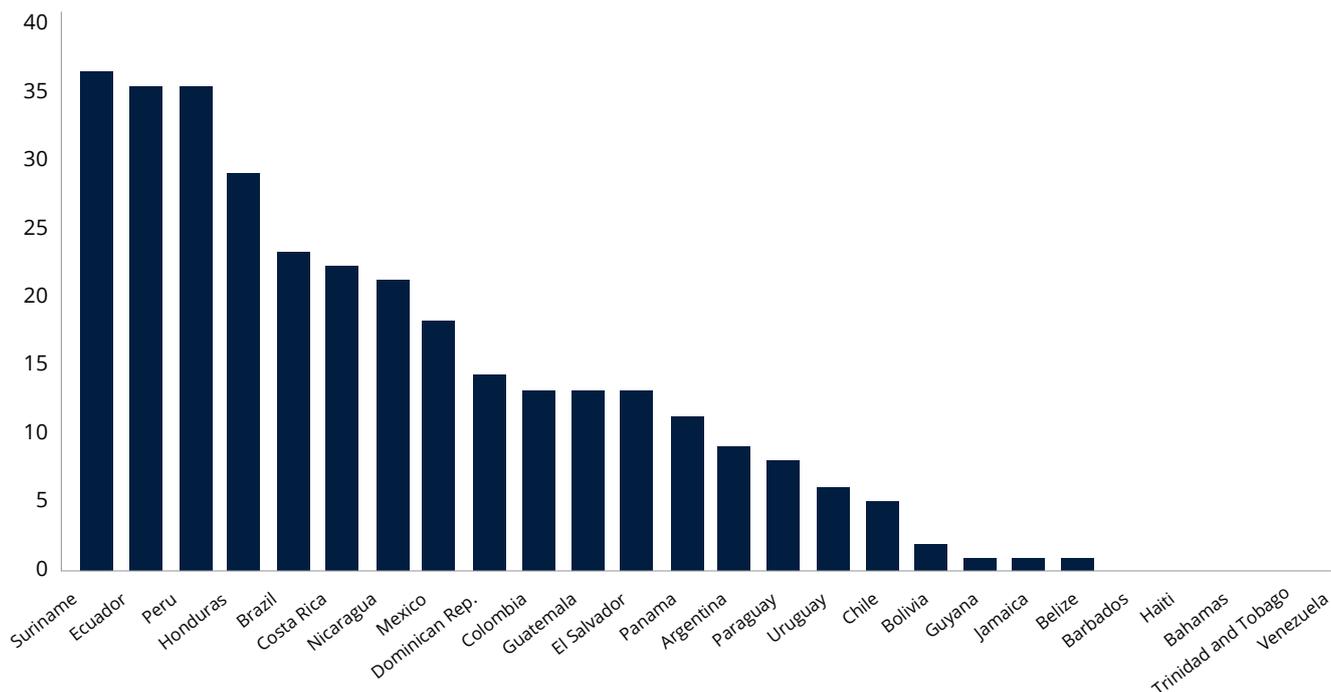
In addition to the effects on food prices, the war has affected the availability of fertilizers, as emphasized by the IDB⁸, thus triggering potential medium- and long-term impacts for the agricultural sector worldwide. This is because both Russia and Ukraine are suppliers of fertilizers (e.g., UREA, Anhydrous Ammonia, Nitrogen, Potassium and Phosphates), and generate the inputs needed for their production from other countries (e.g., natural gas). In fact, the Russian Federation alone provides 15% of total fertilizer exports and 10% of oil exports globally.

In general, LAC is 15% dependent on the supply of fertilizers from the Russian Federation, although some

⁷ FAO. The state of agricultural commodity markets 2022. Available at <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/es/c/cc0475es>

⁸ Source IDB: <https://blogs.iadb.org/sostenibilidad/en/how-the-conflict-between-ukraine-and-russia-might-affect-your-dinner-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

Figure 6: Share of fertilizer imported from Russia in each country (2019)

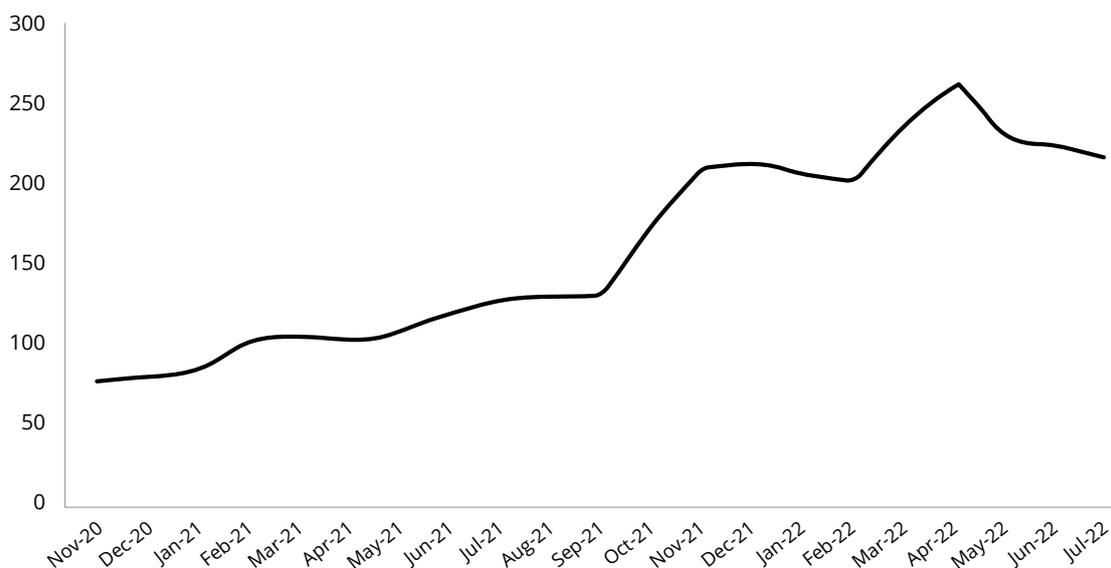


Source: IDB based on ATLAS-HARVARD

countries such as Peru, Ecuador and Suriname supplies elevate to more than 30%. Brazil (23%) is the world's largest soybean producer and at the same time the world's largest importer of fertilizers.

The World Bank's fertilizer price index⁹ was up about 15% from earlier this year, and prices are more than three times higher than two years ago. High input costs, supply disruptions and trade restrictions have been the main drivers of this dramatic price increase.

Figure 7: World Bank fertilizer price index



Source: World Bank, Indexes based on nominal USD (2010=100)

⁹ World Bank. Food Safety Update

Rise of food prices

Globally, the World Bank¹⁰ and FAO have reported on rising food prices and the effect this will have on food security. The World Bank, in its August 11th 2022 Food Security Update, highlighted that according to information collected that same year between April and July, high inflation is reported in almost all low- and middle-income countries:

- 92.9 % of low- and middle-income countries.
- 92.7% of lower middle-income countries
- 89% of upper middle-income countries have recorded inflation levels above 5%, with many experiencing double-digit inflation.

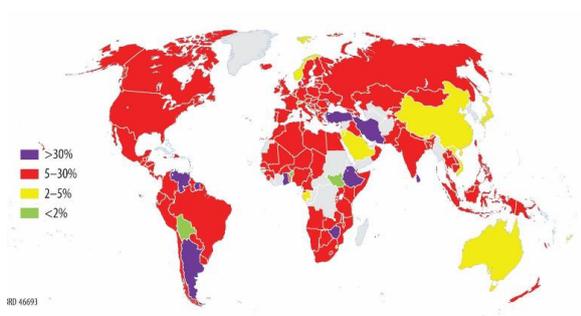
Argentina (66%) and Venezuela (155%) are among the 10 countries with the highest nominal increase in food

prices and Colombia (14%) is among the 10 countries with the highest real increase in food prices globally.

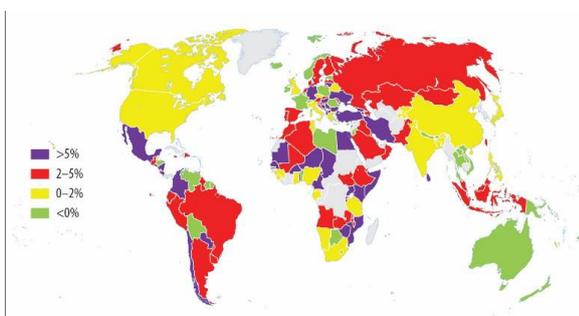
ECLAC¹¹ indicated that at the end of 2021, food inflation in the region was 7.4% and by June 2022 it was 11.9%. At the sub-regional level, the economies of Central America and Mexico recorded the highest rate in 2021 (8.7%), while in the first half of 2022 the highest rate was observed in the economies of South America (11.9%). At the country level, during 2021 food inflation increased in 24 of them, while in the first half of 2022 it increased in 29.

In March 2022, food prices reached a record high globally. Despite registering a sustained decline since May, reaching 135.9 points in October, this value is still 2% higher than that recorded in the same month of the previous year.

Food Inflation Heat Map



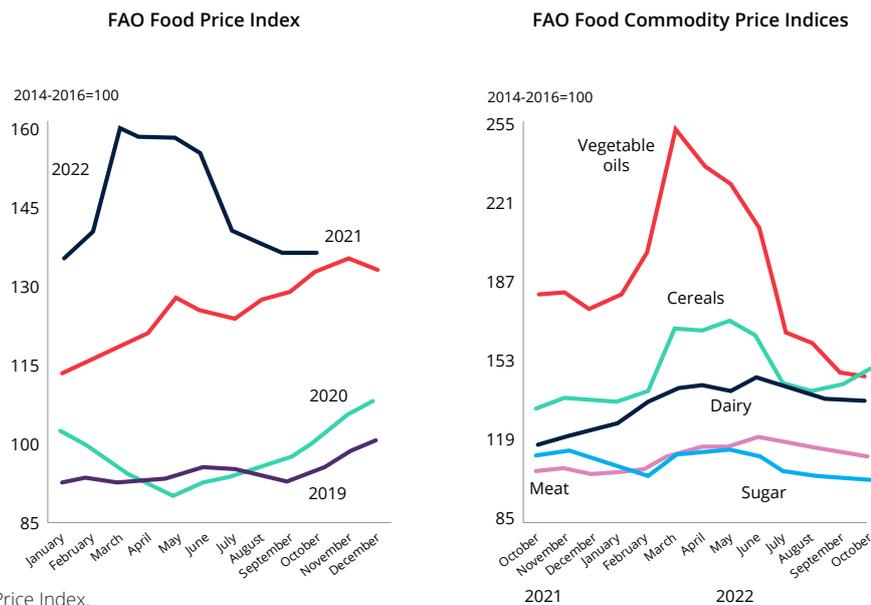
Real Food Inflation Heat Map



Source: International Monetary Fund, Haver Analytics, and Trading Economics.

Note: Food inflation for each country is based on the latest month from April to July 2022 for which the food component of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and overall CPI data are available. Real food inflation is defined as food inflation minus overall inflation.

Figure 8: FAO Food Price Index



Source: FAO, Food Price Index.

¹⁰ World Bank. Food Safety Update.

¹¹ ECLAC. 2022. Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean 2022: Trends and challenges of investing for a sustainable and inclusive recovery

Food Security

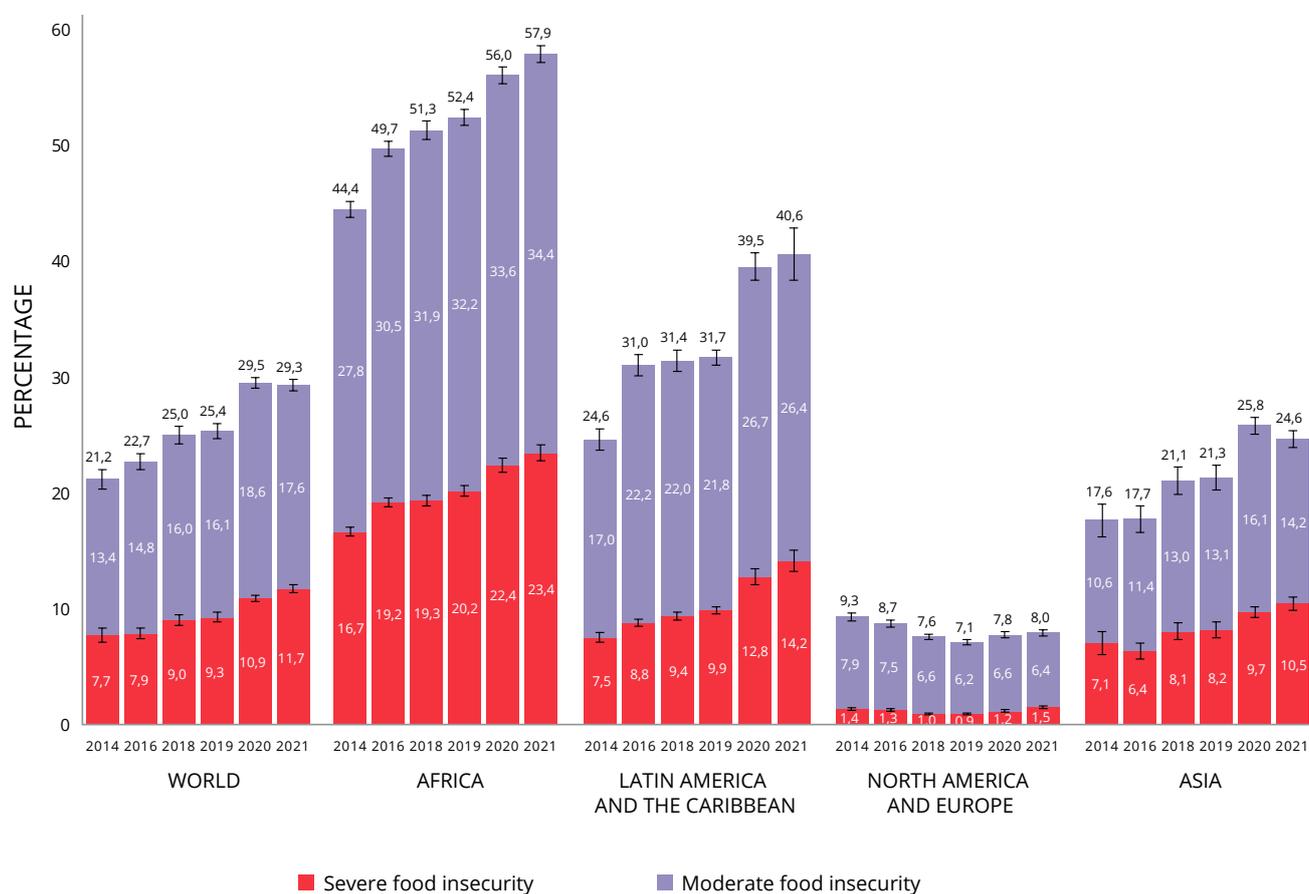
In its report *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022*, FAO provides detailed information on the state of food security in 2021 and simulations for 2022. FAO¹² notes that in 2021, hunger affected 768 million (9.8%) of people globally, of which 56.5 million were in Latin America and the Caribbean (8.6% of people in the region).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 40.6% of people are moderately or severely food insecure, being the region with the second highest percentage after Africa. Severely food insecure people reach 14.2%, almost double those reported in 2014 (Figure 9).

- **The Caribbean:** presents the highest percentage of severely food insecure people, reaching 30.5% (13.3 million). However, it also shows a decrease in the number of hungry people.
- **South America:** from 8.5% (33.1 million) in 2019 to 15.1% (65.6 million) in 2021.
- **Central America:** presented an increase, but more moderate than South America, from 7.3% (13 million) in 2019 to 8% (14.5 million) in 2021.

The gender gap in relation to food insecurity increased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and widened further by 2021. LAC is the region with the greatest inequality between men and women.

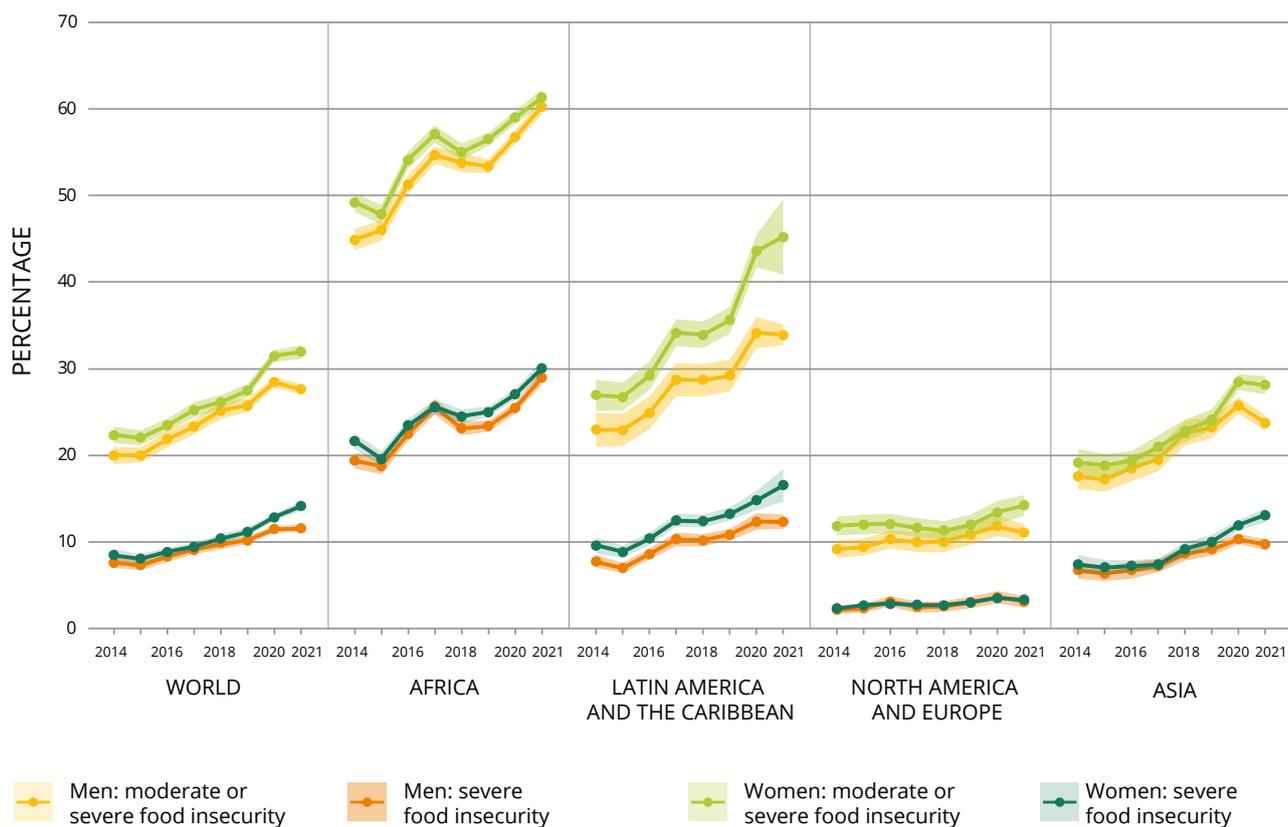
Figure 9: Moderate or severe food insecurity in percentages



NOTE: Differences in totals are due to rounding to the nearest decimal place.
Source: FAO.

¹² FAO. 2022. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*

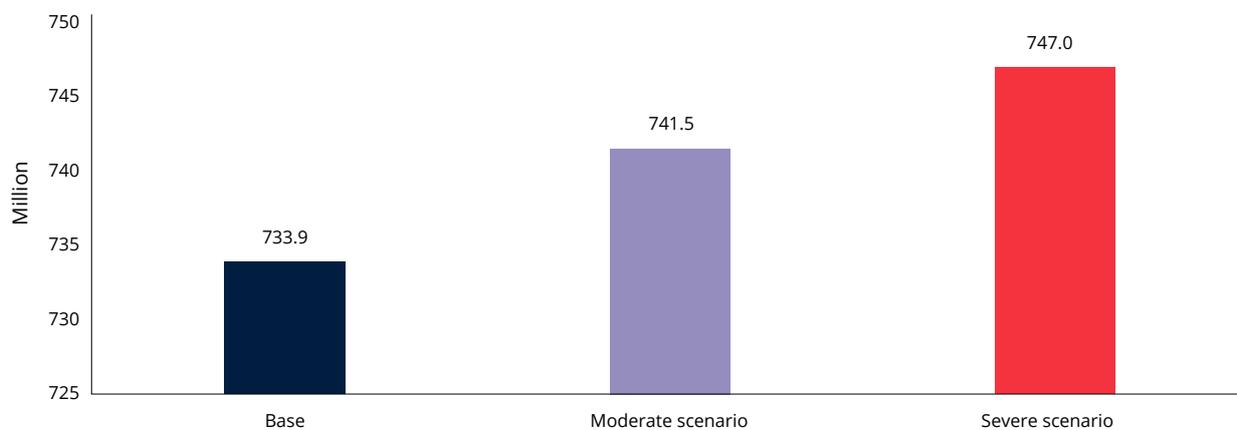
Figure 10: Food insecurity between men and women in percentages



Source: FAO.

Considering the conflict in Ukraine, FAO simulations suggest 3 scenarios, base, moderate and severe. In a moderate scenario, by 2022 and at the global level, the number of hungry people would increase by 5.5 million compared to a simple scenario, while in a severe scenario it would amount to 13.1 million people above the base scenario.

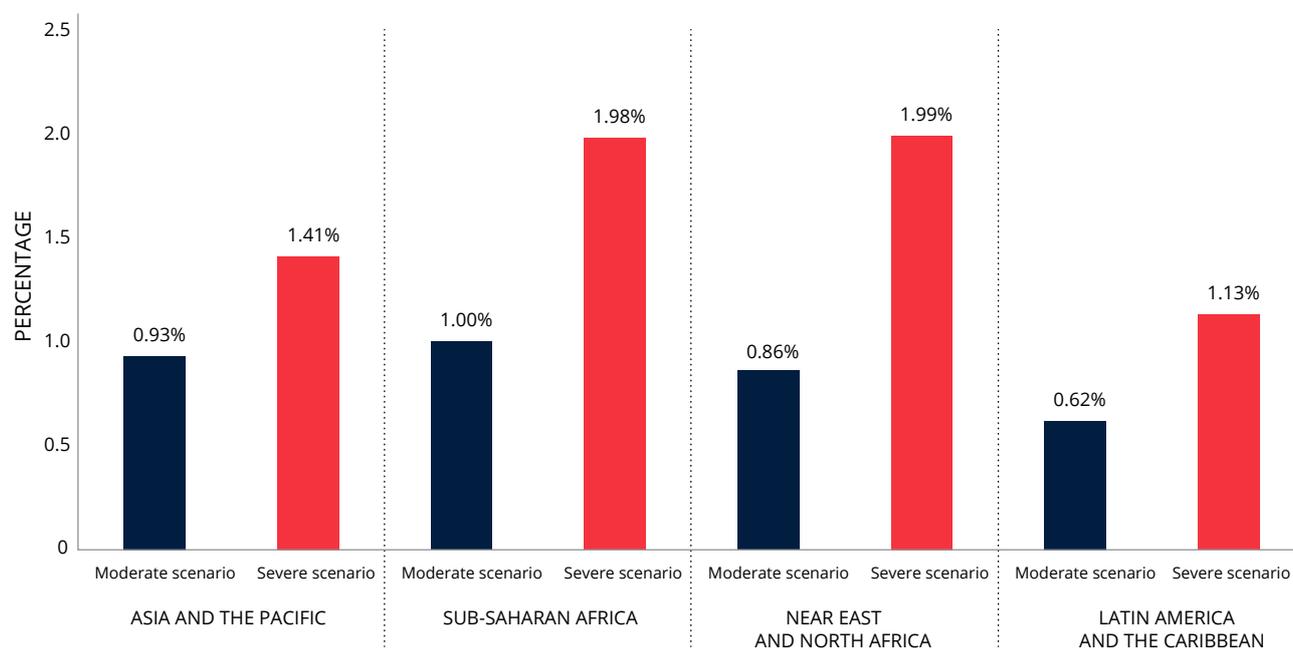
Figure 11: Estimated impact of the war in Ukraine on the global number of hungry people in 2022



NOTE: Base refers to a projected NoU in 2022 that does not consider the start of the war in Ukraine.
Source: FAO calculations

FAO simulates a third scenario that considers severe export shortages from Ukraine and the Russian Federation in 2022 and 2023, and assuming no global production response, suggests an increase in the number of hungry people by about 19 million in 2023.

Figure 12: Estimated increase (in percentages) in the number of hungry people in 2022 by region



NOTE: The percentage change in NoU is calculated as the difference between the moderate and severe scenario results and the projected NoU in a reference scenario for 2022.
Source: FAO calculations.

Risks if the conflict in Ukraine continues

FAO noted the following risks if the conflict continues¹³:

- If it results in a prolonged reduction in food exports by Ukraine and the Russian Federation, it will put additional pressure on international food prices, with detrimental effects on economically vulnerable countries. FAO simulations suggest that, under this scenario, the number of undernourished people globally could increase by between 8 and 13 million people in 2022 and 2023.
- Agriculture requires large direct energy consumption of fuel, gas, and electricity, and indirectly through agrochemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides and lubricants.
- With the increase in prices of fertilizers and other energy-intensive products due to the conflict, overall input prices are expected to increase significantly. Higher input prices will translate into higher production costs and ultimately higher food prices.
- They could also lead to lower input use, reducing yields and harvests in the 2022 and 2023 season, risking further price hikes and threatening global food security in the coming years.
- The rise of energy prices also makes agricultural feedstocks, especially corn, sugar, and oilseeds/vegetable oils, more expensive to produce bioenergy. The rise of fuel prices increase pressure on fertilizer prices.
- The most vulnerable countries and populations are expected to be hit hard by slowing economic growth and rising inflation at a time when the world is still trying to recover from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A lasting appreciation of the U.S. dollar relative to other currencies would have negative effects on developing countries, including their agri-food sector. In addition, the possible reduction in GDP growth in several parts of the world will affect global demand for agrifood products with negative consequences for global food security.

¹³ Informative note: *The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agricultural markets and the risks associated with the war in Ukraine*

A shrimp vendor in Middle Quarters, St. Elizabeth Jamaica displays her product for sale. Shrimp vendors were among those whose economy was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They also received livelihoods support from the Jamaica Red Cross. Photo: Jamaica Red Cross



Proposed actions

This new scenario will deepen the crisis for vulnerable people, delay socio-economic recovery, increase inequality and increase the risk of food insecurity.

The proposed action outlined in the report Readjusting the Road to Equity: Challenges and Actions for a Sustainable and Equitable Recovery from the Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean remain fully valid:

- Support the safe reincorporation of children and adolescents into the education system.
- Strengthen food security at the household and community level.
- Support the incorporation of environmentally sustainable production practices and natural resource management.

- Support the reincorporation of women into the labor market.
- Support micro entrepreneurship and labor market reinsertion.
- Promote access to technology and technological skills at all levels of people's lives
- Support the livelihoods of migrants and returnees
- Prevent and provide protection for victims of discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence

The IFRC recommends emphasizing three of the above points considering the situation presented:

1. Strengthen food security at the household and community level

The crisis generated by COVID-19 affected food security fundamentally due to issues of access and availability. The current global and regional context has not allowed overcoming these problems; on the contrary, it has aggravated them in the most vulnerable groups. The priority actions that the Red Cross can implement are:

a) Climate Smart Livelihoods (CSL) activities: Promote and implement livelihood recovery, strengthening and diversification activities that incorporate climate and environmental aspects as a way to increase the sustainability and resilience of the assisted communities. An example of this is the Climate-Smart Livelihoods Micro-projects under development in Colombia, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, which aim to foster sustainable recovery from the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.



b) Promote the strengthening of the livelihoods of women's groups: The region is one of the most unequal in the world, particularly in terms of gender. Thus, women in LAC have the greatest gap with respect to men in terms of food insecurity. One way to strengthen food security is to support microenterprise or self-employment initiatives of women and their organizations.



c) Food assistance through vouchers, Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA): Facilitate access to food in communities, promoting the market, food production and local economy.



d) Promote fresh food production at the local level: This is done by supporting the strengthening of productive capacities, as well as the diversification of livelihoods. Examples of these activities are the production of community gardens, school gardens and family gardens.



e) Promote adequate and low-cost nutritional food: Programs can be created to provide nutritional information and food preparation with elements that are more accessible and available in the communities.



2. Incorporate environmentally sustainable production practices and natural resource management

Current conditions put the environment and the fulfilment of the SDGs at high risk in this area. Higher fuel prices increase the pressure to overexploit forests or fields to access wood for cooking and heating homes. The rising cost of fertilizers also increases pressure on soils and areas not currently used in agriculture. Some proposed activities include to:

a) Foster the incorporation of environmental assessment tools: it is important to strengthen capacities and facilitate access to environmental assessment tools for volunteers and communities. One example is the Nexus Environment Assessment Tool or NEAT+.



b) Incorporate nature-based solutions to address social challenges and integrating effective management of the ecosystems on which communities depend.



c) Promote green response to avoid generating or exacerbating permanent damage through humanitarian action.



d) Facilitate access to technology to increase energy efficiency in homes: This includes the promotion and incorporation of solar energy, among others, as well as the use of more energy-efficient elements for actions such as cooking, heating, and lighting homes, among others.



3. Support the livelihoods of migrants and returnees

The deepening of the socio-economic crisis in the region as a result of the current context hinders the living conditions of migrants, host communities and those who decide to return; therefore, the following initiatives are proposed:

a) Shelter income assistance for recovery: support in the recovery of the means of migrants, host community and returnees with assistance to ensure access to safe housing while they remain focused on their recovery.



b) Support the recovery, strengthening and diversification of the livelihoods of migrants and their host community.



c) Generate activities to support the reactivation of the livelihoods of returnees.



Guadalupe, a visually impaired participant in livelihood projects implemented by the Red Cross of El Salvador, walks towards her therapeutic massage business, which she was able to maintain after the socio-economic blow of the pandemic. Photo: Salvadoran Red Cross

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THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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