



Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) Update 2019

The World Food Programme's (WFP) mandate in Armenia is to contribute to the eradication of food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030 in line with the SDG 2 Zero Hunger . With this report on the food security situation in Armenia, WFP sheds light on the socio-economic dynamics of the four components of food security namely, food availability, access, utilization and stability. The Armenia Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) 2019 Update has been produced by WFP Armenia using reports of the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (ARMSTAT), literature reviews, data from the Integrated Living Conditions Surveys (ILCS) 2016/17¹ and WFP relevant studies.

Highlights

Food insecurity and malnutrition in Armenia are mainly caused by the limited availability, access and utilization of nutritionally diversified food at all time;

15% of Armenians can't physically or economically access the food they need for an active and healthy lifestyle and are food insecure. 6% of Armenians cannot acquire the food they need to meet their daily needs and are undernourished.

The agricultural sector over the last 10 years has increased the availability of food in Armenia. However, this still lacks of diversification and low quality standards.

In Armenia food insecurity is closely linked to poverty (approx. 1 in 4 people live below the poverty line), with regional disparities and a widening gap between the rich and the poor worsening this effect.

Strong geographic and socio-economic disparities are observed in the prevalence of extreme poverty, undernourishment,

Armenians are malnourished as they don't eat diversified food nor consume nutritious products. Children are the most affected, 9% of them are stunted and 14% of those under 5 years old are overweight. This leads to increased levels of child mortality and morbidity, as well as a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

Figure 1 Armenia Country Context today²



¹ Methodology: ILCS 2016-17 database was used for calculating food security indicators. The ILCS is carried out each year by the National ARMSTAT. These indicators were created using the methodology developed for the "Armenia Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis" endorsed by key stakeholders in 2016.

² Data from multiple sources reflected in the document.

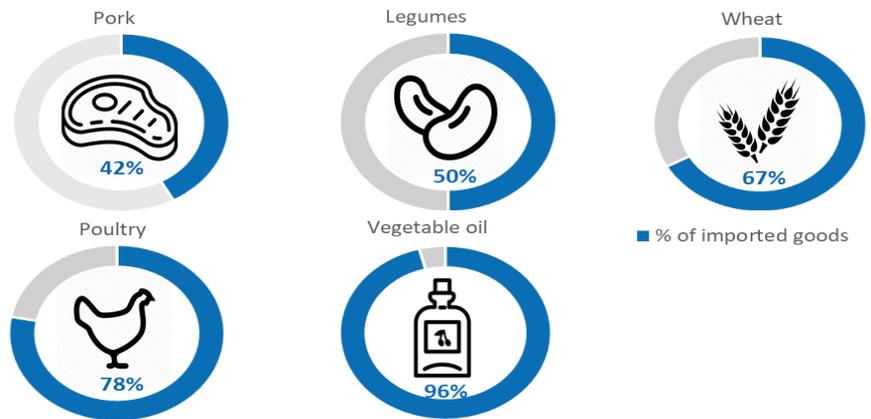
FOOD AVAILABILITY

Armenia is a net food importer which poses a risk to food availability, particularly in the event of an emergency.

Armenia's relatively strong agricultural performance since 2001 has increased the country's self-sufficiency in main food groups including grains, potatoes, vegetables and fruit, improving overall food availability.

However, Armenia remains highly dependent on food imports; this dependency is more visible in case of products demonstrated in the Figure 2.³

Figure 2 Percentage of the main goods imported to Armenia in 2017



FOOD ACCESS

The most vulnerable groups of the population experience higher obstacles to access sufficient food, leading to significant differences in food security, undernourishment and nutritional indicators among different population groups.

Despite the growth in incomes and in food availability in recent years, due to unevenly distributed growth according to national estimations nearly six percent of the Armenian population are undernourished, consuming an inadequate amount of calories needed to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. An analysis of the 2016-17 ILCS data indicated that 15 percent of households were still food insecure in 2017, which is further exacerbated by severe disparities, and uneven socio-economic development throughout Armenia (reaching the highest rate of 20.5 percent of food insecurity in Shirak).

FOOD UTILISATION

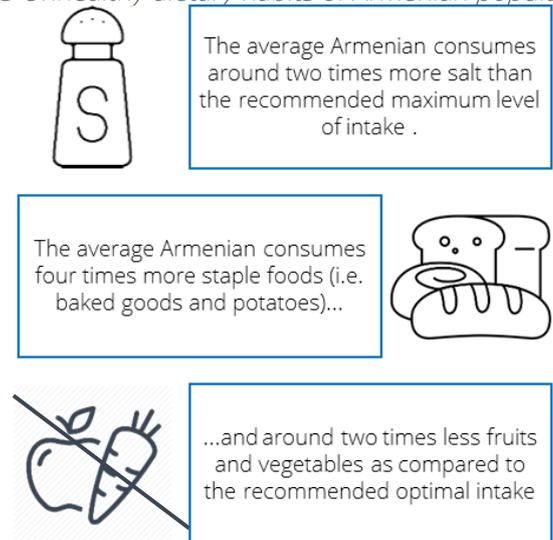
Unhealthy dietary habits and lifestyles are a norm in Armenia.

Based on the analysis of the consumption expenditure data⁴ and on the 2018 Global Nutrition Report,⁵ the Armenian population embraces unhealthy dietary habits.

The food consumption pattern and diet diversity of the average Armenian did not show any significant changes or increase in the consumption of nutritious foods during recent years.

Several unhealthy dietary habits of the Armenian population are summarized in the Figure 3. Based on the findings there is an urgent need not only to increase nutrition education and facilitate behavioral changes that enable nutritious choices for different population groups, but also to ensure that every Armenian has the minimum level of access to a diversified and nutritious diet.⁶

Figure 3 Unhealthy dietary habits of Armenian population



³ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia. *Food Security and Poverty*. January-March 2019. Available at: https://www.armstat.am/file/article/f_sec_1_2019_3.pdf

⁴ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia. *Social Snapshot Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia*, 2018. Available at: https://www.armstat.am/file/article/poverty_2018_english_3.pdf and WFP calculations

⁵ Development Initiatives, *2018 Global Nutrition Report. Nutrition country profile: Armenia*. Available at: <https://globalnutritionreport.org/nutrition-profiles/asia/western-asia/armenia/>

⁶ WFP. 2018. *Armenia Cost of the Diet*. Available at: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000062242/download/>

FOOD STABILITY

The most vulnerable groups within the population are under the highest risk of becoming food insecure due to natural, economic and political shocks.

These groups are identified as those living in poverty, children, the unemployed, the informally employed, large households with many children, and female headed households. After the global economic crisis, the level of food insecurity in Armenia almost doubled from 2008 to 2010. Armenia's high dependency on food imports renders food prices highly vulnerable to shocks from external markets. As reference, the domestic [food price volatility index stands at nearly 12 percent, demonstrating the high month-to-month fluctuation in food prices formulation.](#)⁷

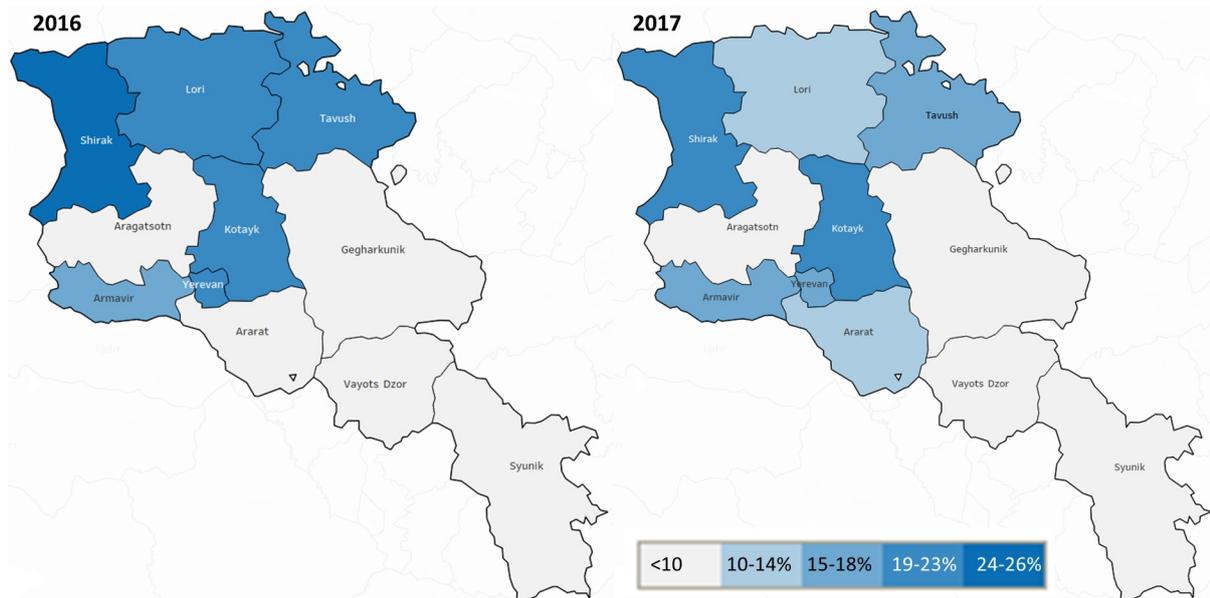
To that end, the "climate crisis" continues to negatively influence biological, natural and human systems alike and Armenia is not exempt from this phenomenon. Its impact is most felt by vulnerable groups; it worsens their food insecurity, drives poverty and increases the likelihood of natural hazards in already precarious environments. Rise of temperatures, the depletion of water resources, and overall biodiversity loss are posing an obstacle to development. Between 2000 and 2005, Armenia's agricultural sector, one of the key drivers of the country's economy, suffered \$107 million in economic losses due to drought, frost, flooding, and other extreme weather events, threatening rural livelihoods and food security.⁸

REGIONAL DISPARITIES

In Armenia conjunction of poverty, undernourishment, food insecurity and malnutrition have severe geographic and socio-economic disparities.

The Armenian GDP grew by 5.2 percent in 2018,⁹ 4.6 percent in 2019, and additional 4.5 percent growth is expected in 2020 as per the International Monetary Fund's forecast.¹⁰ However, poverty is still an issue in Armenia, in particular the level of extreme poverty is three times higher as compared to the national average in Shirak, which also houses the highest prevalence of food insecurity in the country. Stunting rates are almost double the national average in Aragatsotn and Shirak, the already high levels of overweight are almost three times higher in Ararat, and the same three-fold trend is witnessed with anemia rates among women and children in Gegharkunik.¹¹

Figure 4 Changes in food Insecurity prevalence from 2016 to 2017



⁷ See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Food Security Indicators (<http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-fs/ess-fadata/en/#.XlpFAyhKiUk>); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2015. The State of Food Insecurity in the World. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf>.

⁸ USAID. *Climate Risk Profile Armenia. Fact sheet*. June 2017. Available at: <https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-change-risk-profile-armenia>

⁹ The World Bank. *Annual DGP growth*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=AM>

¹⁰ International Monetary Fund. 2019. IMF DataMapper: Real GDP growth: https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOORLD/SWE/ARM.

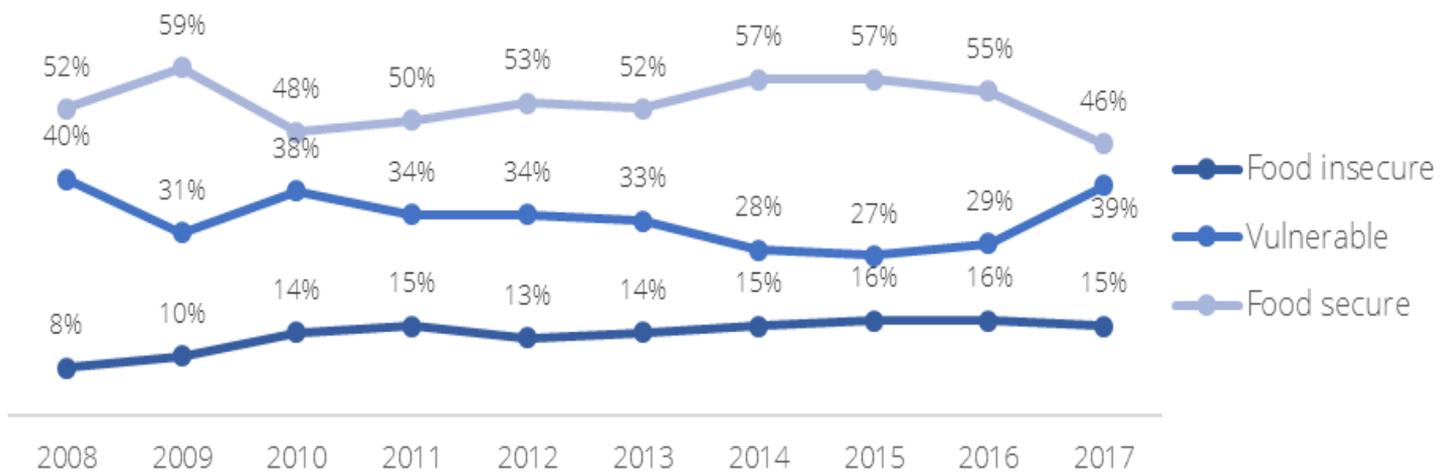
¹¹ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Health and ICF International. *Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015/16*. Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR325/FR325.pdf>.

FOOD INSECURITY TRENDS

Despite economic growth, levels of food insecure households almost doubled from 2008 to 2010 and remained high at 15 percent in 2017.

A widening gap between the levels of food security and vulnerability is presented in the Figure 5, indicating the need for resilience activities across different population groups.

Figure 5 Food security trends (2008-2017)



MALNUTRITION

The 2018 Global Nutrition Report identified the coexistence of two forms of malnutrition in Armenia namely, overweight and anaemia.¹²

In Armenia the prevalence of some forms of malnutrition presents a public health risk. Poor food utilization is reflected in nutrition indicators, such as 48% of adult population being overweight.¹³ This issue is also affecting children, in 2015, according to the Armenia Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS) 2015/16 data, nine percent of children under five were stunted, 14 percent of overweight, while 16 percent had any anaemia.¹⁴ The ADHS 2015/16 reported a significant decrease in the prevalence of stunting, which has raised questions among key stakeholders. However, even with the ADHS data, there are significant differences and concerning trends in nutritional indicators across the country.

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¹² Development Initiatives, 2018 *Global Nutrition Report. Nutrition country profile: Armenia*. Available at: <https://globalnutritionreport.org/nutrition-profiles/asia/western-asia/armenia/>

¹³ WHO, *NCD STEPS National Survey*, Armenia, 2018.

¹⁴ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Health and ICF International. *Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015/16*. Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR325/FR325.pdf>