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Africa Brief

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

STALLED PROGRESS AMID RISING PRESSURES: ADVANCING ZERO HUNGER THROUGH CAADP AND INTEGRATED ACTION

March 2026



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Multiple Crises are stalling Progress toward Zero Hunger in Africa

The 2025 Global Hunger Index (GHI) shows that persistent and overlapping crises continue to undermine progress in reducing hunger across Africa.

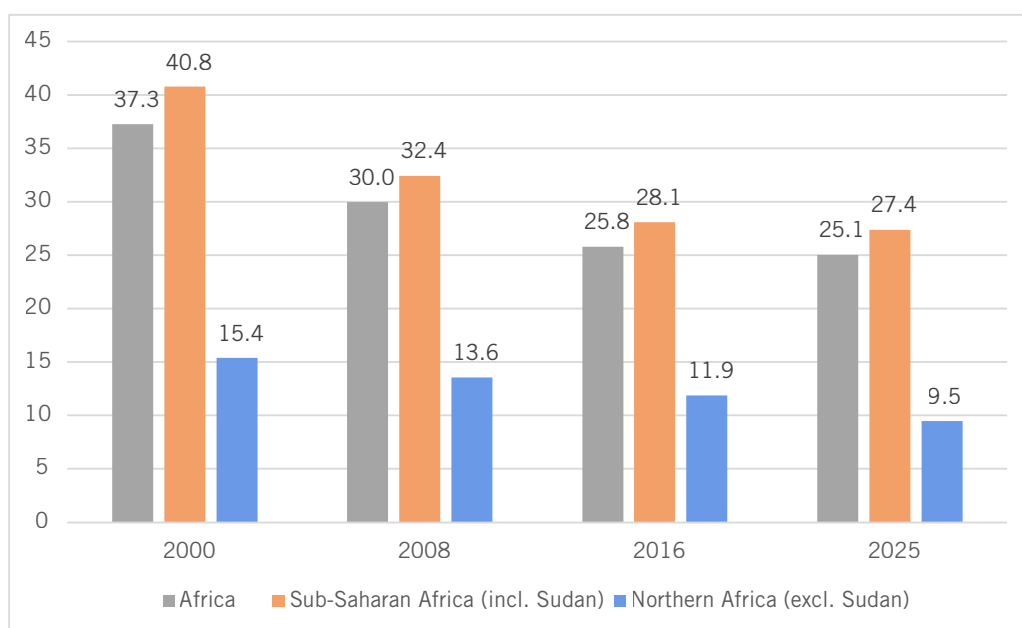
Since 2016, advances have slowed, and hunger levels on the continent remain serious. The combined effects of armed conflict, climate change, economic instability, rising food prices, high debt burdens, and protracted displacement have constrained further improvements. Although the continent made measurable gains between 2000 and 2015, the goal of Zero Hunger by 2030 will remain out of reach unless accelerated and coordinated action aligned with continental frameworks and national priorities is taken.

Serious Hunger persists amid Stagnating Progress

The 2025 GHI score for Africa is 25.1, categorized as *serious*. Although this reflects improvement from the alarming levels recorded in 2000, progress has slowed considerably since 2016, mirroring global trends described in the 2025 GHI report.

Africa South of the Sahara continues to drive the continent's overall score and records significantly higher hunger levels than the African average. Northern Africa maintains *low or moderate* hunger levels. Several African countries remain among those with the highest hunger levels globally, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, and Madagascar.

FIGURE 1 GHI SCORES FOR AFRICA IN 2000, 2008, 2016 AND 2025



WHAT EXPLAINS AFRICAS GHI SCORES?

BOX 1 ABOUT THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX SCORES

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels over recent years and decades. GHI scores are calculated based on a formula combining four indicators that together capture the multidimensional nature of hunger:



Undernourishment: the share of the population that is undernourished, reflecting insufficient caloric intake



Child wasting: the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (low weight-for-height), reflecting *acute* undernutrition



Child stunting: the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (low height-for-age), reflecting *chronic* undernutrition

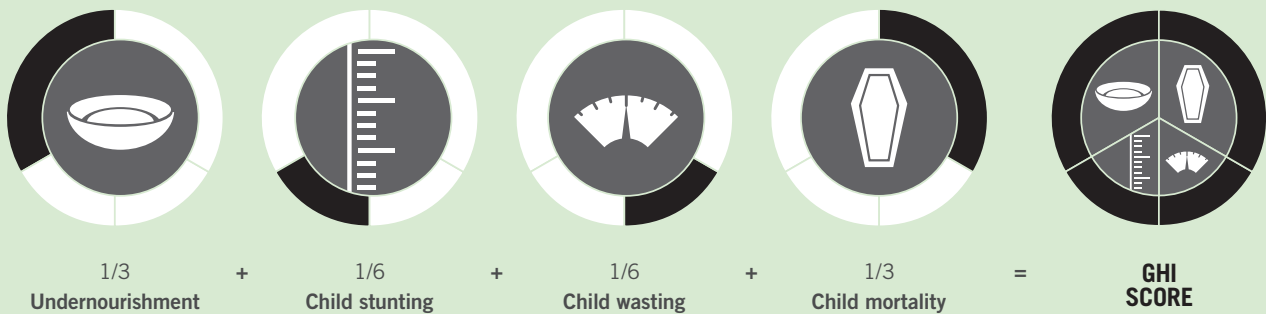


Child mortality: the mortality rate of children under the age of five

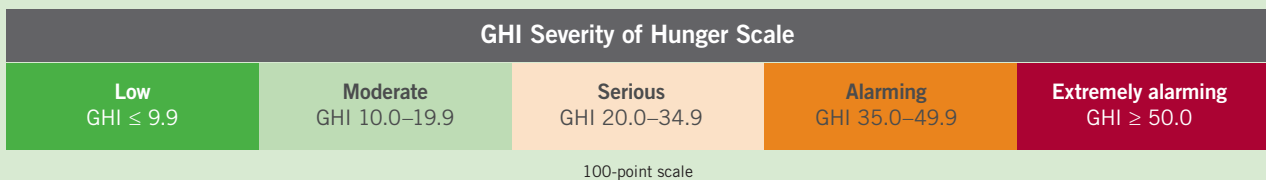
The data used to calculate GHI scores come from published UN sources (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation), the World Bank, and the Demographic and Health Surveys Program.

The GHI categorizes and ranks countries on a 100-point scale: values of less than 10.0 reflect *low* hunger; values from 10.0 to 19.9 reflect *moderate* hunger; values from 20.0 to 34.9 indicate *serious* hunger; values from 35.0 to 49.9 are *alarming*; and values of 50.0 or more are *extremely alarming* (Figure 1.1).

FIGURE 1.1 COMPOSITION OF GHI SCORES AND SEVERITY DESIGNATIONS



Note: All indicator values are standardized.



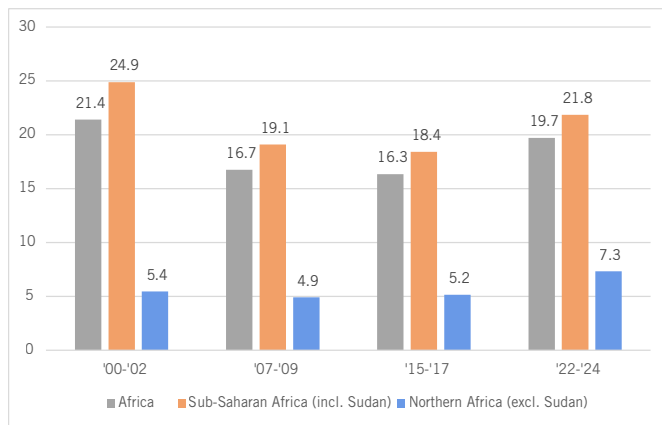
TRENDS IN THE FOUR GHI INDICATORS

Rising undernourishment, alongside high levels of child stunting, is the principal factor contributing to the slowed decrease in Africa's overall GHI score.

Undernourishment

After declining from 21.4 percent in 2000 to 15.6 percent in 2013, undernourishment has risen again, reaching 19.7 percent (Figure 3; FAO et al. 2024). Nearly one in five Africans lacks sufficient caloric intake to live a healthy and productive life.

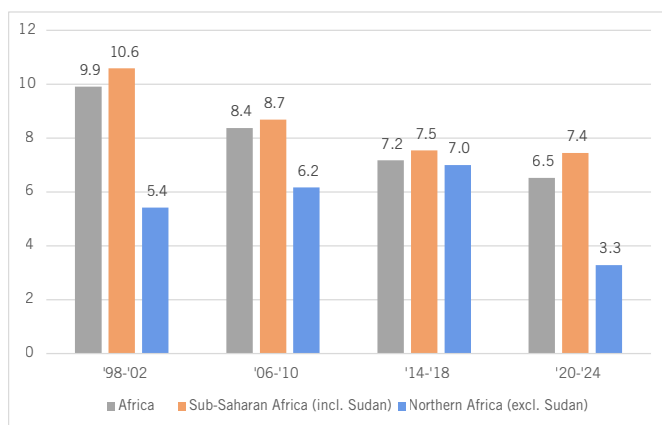
FIGURE 1.2 UNDERNOURISHMENT (% OF POPULATION)



Child Wasting

Child wasting declined from 9.9 percent in 2000 to 6.5 percent in 2024. Although improvement is notable, acute malnutrition remains prevalent in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

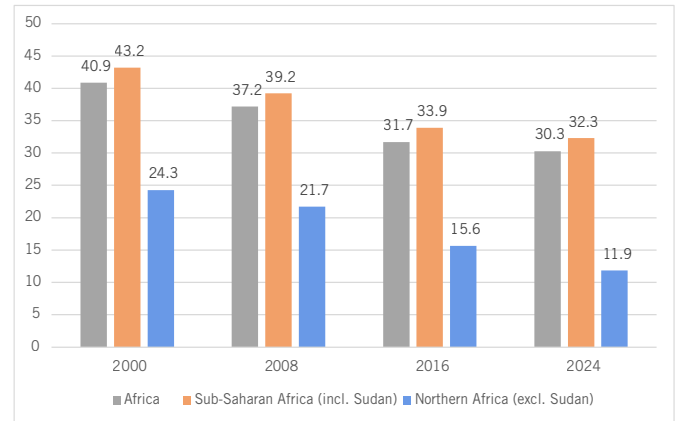
FIGURE 1.3 CHILD WASTING (% OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OLD)



Child Stunting

Child stunting declined from 40.9 percent in 2000 to 30.3 percent in 2024. Despite progress, chronic undernutrition remains at a very high level in many countries.

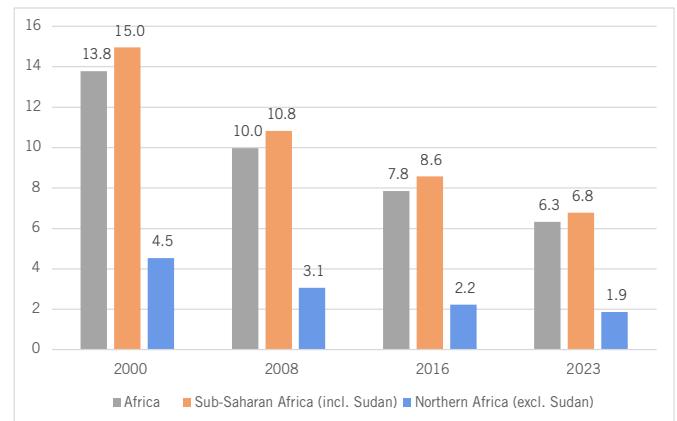
FIGURE 1.4 CHILD STUNTING (% OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OLD)



Child Mortality

Child mortality fell from 13.8 percent in 2000 to 6.3 percent in 2023, reflecting improvements in healthcare access and child survival interventions. However, Africa South of the Sahara continues to record the highest child mortality rates globally (Zerfu 2024).

FIGURE 1.5 CHILD MORTALITY (% OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OLD)



WHY HAS PROGRESS STALLED SINCE 2016?

BOX 1.1

Conflict and Fragility

Escalating conflicts in Sudan, the Sahel, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Horn of Africa have disrupted food systems and livelihoods. Famine conditions were confirmed in parts of Sudan in 2024 (IPC 2024).

Climate Change

Climate change has reduced the growth of agricultural productivity in Africa by 34 percent since 1961 (IPCC 2022). Severe droughts in Southern and Eastern Africa have devastated rain-fed agriculture and pastoral livelihoods (Kimutai et al. 2023).

Economic Shocks and Debt Distress

Many African countries face shrinking fiscal space due to high debt burdens. Limited public investment capacity constrains countries from making the changes needed to transform food systems and expand social protection (FAO et al. 2024).

Food Import Dependence

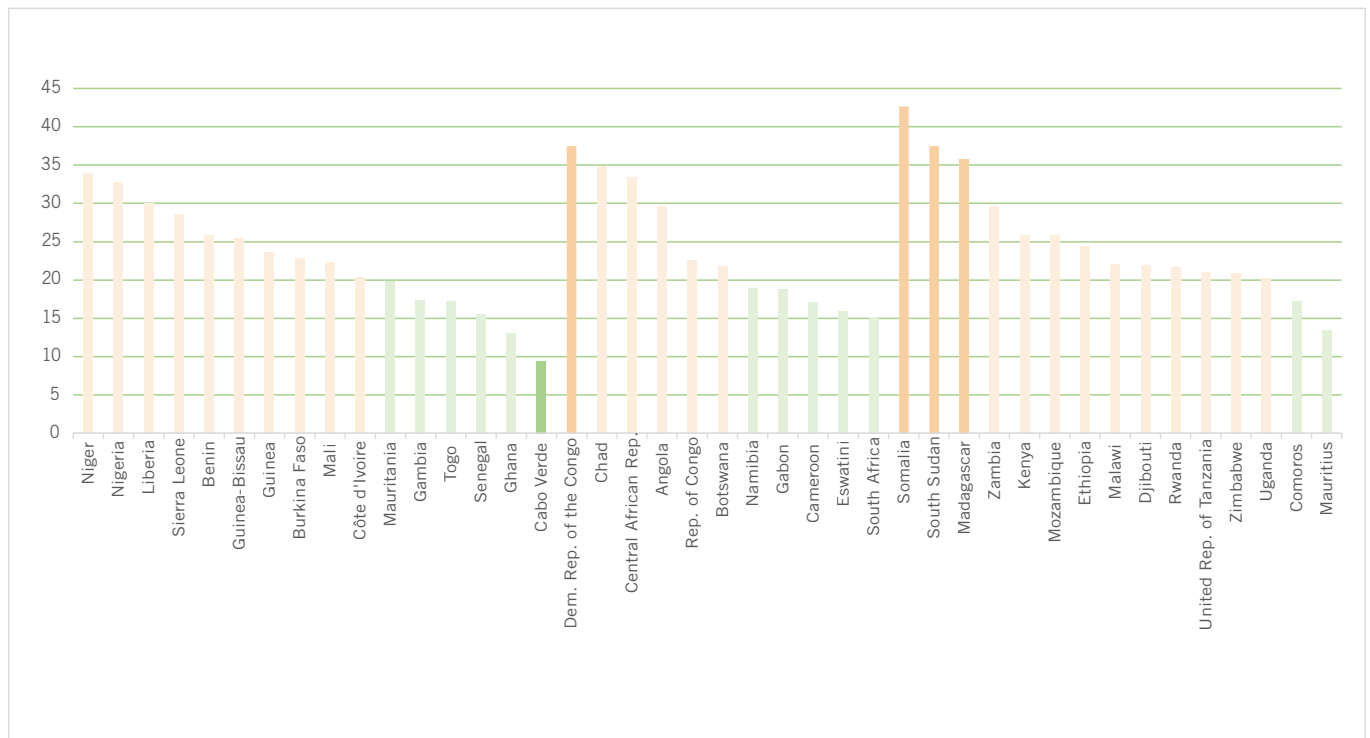
Global trade shocks and price volatility have exposed the vulnerabilities facing countries that depend on food imports, particularly in Northern Africa (IFPRI 2024).

Africa South of the Sahara: Hunger Remains Serious

Africa South of the Sahara records the highest undernourishment rate of any world region. Acute food insecurity remains widespread. According to the 2024 Global Report on Food Crises Mid-Year Update

(FSIN and GNAFC 2024), millions continue to face Crisis, Emergency, or Catastrophe (IPC Phase 3–5) conditions. Several countries in the region maintain alarming hunger levels.

FIGURE 1.6 GHI SCORES FOR COUNTRIES IN AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA



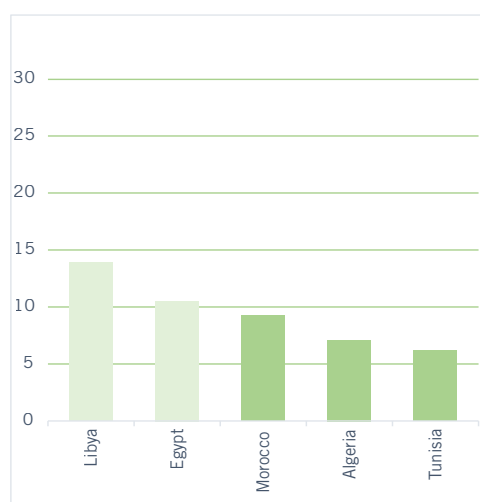
Northern Africa: Climate, Trade and Political Pressures threaten Progress

Northern Africa records moderate hunger levels but faces growing vulnerabilities due to:

- > water scarcity and climate stress
- > conflict spillovers
- > trade shocks and inflation
- > high reliance on food imports

These pressures threaten to reverse gains if not addressed through structural reforms.

FIGURE 1.6 GHI SCORES FOR COUNTRIES IN NORTHERN AFRICA



CAADP as a Potential Driver of Zero Hunger

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), under the leadership of the African Union, remains Africa's flagship framework for agricultural transformation and food security. Since its launch, CAADP has elevated agriculture on national development agendas, strengthened planning and peer accountability through National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs), and institutionalized monitoring through the Biennial Review process.

Under the Malabo Declaration (2014–2025), member states committed to allocating at least 10 percent of public expenditure to agriculture and achieving 6 percent annual agricultural growth. While these commitments have improved policy coherence and political attention to the sector, the 2025 Global Hunger Index findings show that agricultural growth alone has not translated into sufficient reductions in undernourishment and child malnutrition. Hunger levels have stagnated since 2016, and climate shocks, conflict, and economic instability are eroding earlier gains.

The Africa Union member states recently transitioned from the Malabo Declaration to the Kampala Declaration (2026–2035). With six commitments encompassing key agrifood system levers, the new agenda presents a critical opportunity to shift African efforts from a

more production-oriented framework to a food systems transformation agenda centered on nutrition, resilience, equity, and sustainability.

While the new CAADP Results Framework (i.e. the final set of indicators) is still under development, the Kampala Declaration and its Action Plan mention 22 different targets which include the following:

- > Reduce stunting, wasting and overweight by 25%, respectively.
- > 60% of the population can afford a healthy diet
- > Increasing agrifood output by 45%
- > Mobilizing US\$100 billion in public & private sector investments in African agrifood systems and 15% of agrifood GDP reinvested annually
- > Ensuring that at least 10% of annual public expenditure is allocated to agrifood systems
- > Tripling intra-African trade in agrifood products
- > Raising the share of locally processed food to 35% of agrifood GDP
- > Empower 30% of youth, women and vulnerable groups.
- > At least 30% of land under sustainable management
- > 40% of households protected from shocks
- > Adopt best practices in agrifood systems governance

While key principles related to the right to food (e.g. accountability, participatory governance, empowerment of vulnerable groups) are mentioned in the Kampala Declaration, realizing the right to food is, unfortunately, not a central pillar of the agenda. A very positive aspect of the new agenda is its participatory development process which, although not perfect, included many diverse perspectives and was a significant improvement to the processes leading up to previous CAADP agendas. The agenda's success greatly depends on how committed government leaders are to implementing it. The 2025 GHI policy recommendations therefore also apply to the CAADP Kampala Declarations' implementation: Promote high-level ownership, create multisectoral coordination and inclusive accountability mechanisms, strengthen data management and empower local governance.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the 2025 Global Hunger Index findings and Africa's current realities, the following priority actions are critical to reverse stagnation and accelerate progress toward Zero Hunger:

1 Strengthen Accountability to the Right to Adequate Food

- > Governments should formalize the right to food in national legal frameworks and ensure its enforceability through transparent monitoring and accountability systems. Hunger early warning systems must be directly linked to automatic financing and rapid response mechanisms to prevent food crises from escalating into famine.
- > In conflict-affected contexts, states and international actors must strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law and prevent the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

2 Reorient Food Systems toward Nutrition and Healthy Diets

- > Agricultural growth must translate into improved diet quality. Governments should prioritize diversified, nutrition-sensitive production systems and invest in value chains that increase the availability and affordability of healthy foods.
- > Public procurement, school feeding, and social protection programs should support local smallholder production while improving dietary outcomes. Regulatory frameworks must also address unhealthy food marketing and food environments.

3 Integrate Climate Adaptation, Resilience and Food Security

- > Given the growing impact of climate shocks across the continent, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Post-Malabo CAADP strategies must explicitly integrate food and nutrition security objectives.
- > Investments should prioritize climate-resilient crops, water management, pastoral systems, and locally led adaptation—particularly in drought- and conflict-prone regions. Climate finance should reach communities directly, especially women and youth.

4 Promote Gender-Transformative Food Systems

- > Women and girls bear disproportionate burdens of hunger and climate stress. Policies must go beyond participation to address structural inequalities in land rights, access to finance, extension services, technology, and decision-making power.
- > Gender budgeting, social audits, and sex-disaggregated data collection should be embedded in agricultural, climate, and nutrition policies. Reducing women's time poverty through investments in water, care systems, and infrastructure is essential to strengthening household resilience.

5 Protect Fiscal Space and Reform Financing for Food Security

- > Debt distress and shrinking fiscal space are constraining public investment in agriculture, health, and social protection. Debt

restructuring and relief mechanisms should be linked to investments in realizing the right to food and achieving Zero Hunger.

- > Development partners should honor commitments to increase official development assistance and expand grant-based climate finance. Domestic resource mobilization and transparent public expenditure tracking are equally critical.

6 Scale Up Adaptive and Shock-Responsive Social Protection

- > To prevent repeated reversals, countries must strengthen adaptive social protection systems that can expand rapidly during droughts, conflicts, or price shocks.
- > Linking social protection with early warning systems and livelihood recovery programs will help protect vulnerable households from falling deeper into food insecurity.

7 Strengthen Data, Accountability, and CAADP Alignment

- > Robust, timely, and disaggregated data systems are essential to guide evidence-based policymaking. Governments should strengthen national statistical capacities.
- > Given the strong alignment between the 2025 GHI policy recommendations and the CAADP Kampala Declaration, we call for full implementation of both, including high-level ownership, multisectoral coordination and inclusive accountability mechanisms, strengthened data management, and the empowerment of local governance.

8 Integrate Climate Adaptation, Resilience and Food Security

- > Countries should fast-track the AfCFTA by eliminating tariffs and nontariff barriers within Africa, harmonizing standards and rules of origin, strengthening phytosanitary systems, expanding digital trade systems, and investing in trade-enabling infrastructure.
- > Strengthening the institutional capacity of regional economic communities and the AfCFTA Secretariat would improve the coordination, monitoring, and implementation of trade reforms and promote deeper regional integration.
- > These measures will strengthen regional value chains, enhance value addition, and increase Africa's competitiveness.

Outlook

Despite considerable progress against hunger since 2000, progress has stalled since 2016, and hunger levels in Africa remain serious. Without accelerated political commitment, financing, and integrated action aligned with CAADP and national priorities, the continent risks missing the Zero Hunger target.

However, the progress achieved in several countries demonstrates that sustained investment, accountable governance, and integrated policy approaches can drive meaningful hunger reduction. The urgency is clear. The opportunity remains.

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