

**TITLE:** Thought For Food

**WHO:** Government agencies, Policy makers, NGOs, International Organizations

**WHAT:** Solving the Global Food Shortage Problem: A Spotlight on Africa

**AUTHOR:** Kenneth Odoh

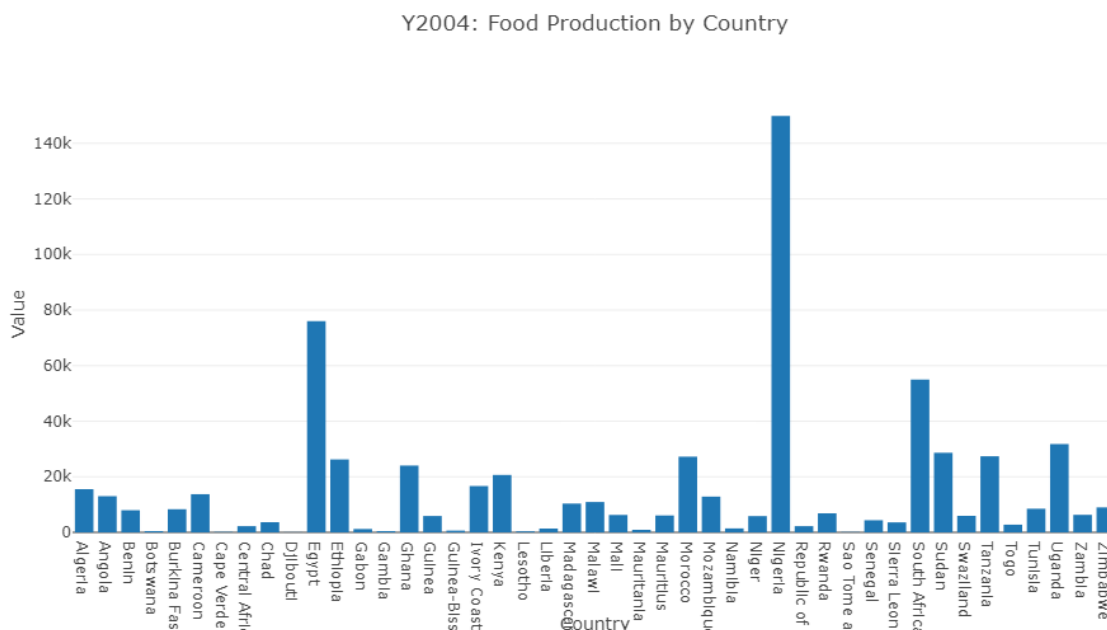
## 1.0 Introduction

Based on the 1996 World Food Summit, food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

This definition was further broken down into four necessary dimensions:

1. **Physical Availability:** This addresses the supply side of food security. Food must be produced in adequate quantities and available for purchase.
2. **Economic and Physical access:** Of course, we can have abundance of food production but still die of starvation if we lack the means to purchase the food that we need.
3. **Food utilization:** We are what we eat, thus, by how much our body system is able to utilize the food we consume also determines if we are food secure or not. This has to do with the quality of food we consume.
4. **Stability of the other three dimensions over time:** by this, food security goes beyond one having what they will eat/ drink at the present. It also accounts for the long term focus. All the above conditions must be met for any society to say they are food secure.

In this report, we have analyzed the year to year trends in food production and supply for 45 African countries. This study spans over a period of 10 years, that is, from 2004 to 2013. Our evaluation was done to see where Africa stands using three of the four criteria highlighted above (1, 2 & 4).

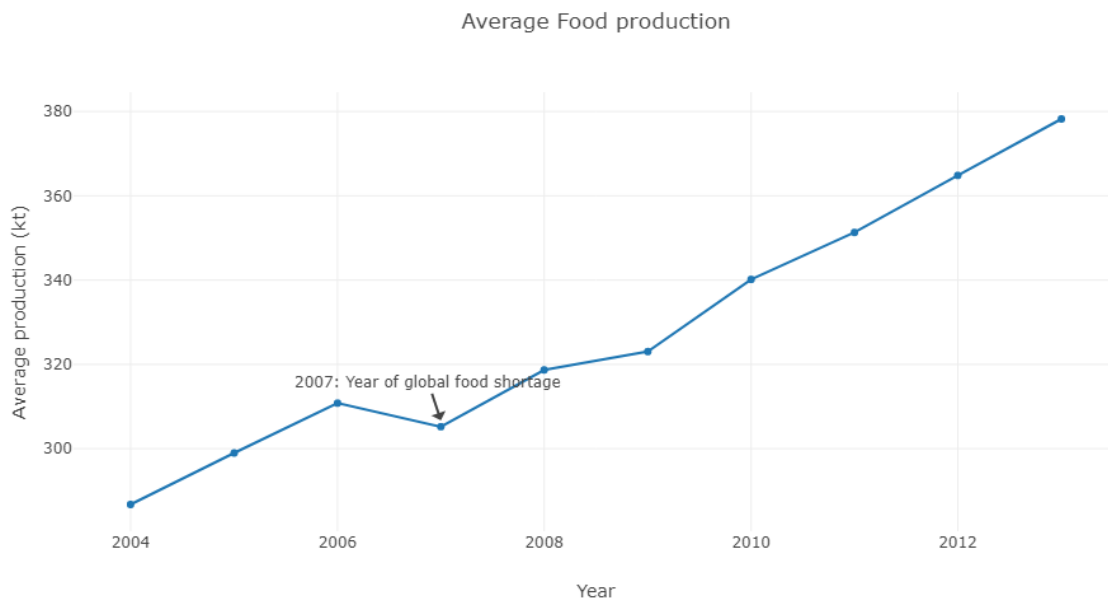


## 2.0 Historical Development

### 2.1 Progress made in raising food production and consumption per person

#### 2.1.1 Food production (Physical Availability)

Africa has made significant improvement in raising food production. Between 2004 and 2013, an upward trend in average food production from 288 kilotons in 2004 to roughly 380 kilotons in 2013



This overall progress has been decisively influenced by the significant gains made by some of the most popular countries among them. These are Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa. For all the years under study, these three countries consistently produced higher quantity of food than the 42 others. However, even after excluding these three countries, the upward trend did still remain, suggesting that the year to year rise in food production was recorded by many other countries outside of the three.

#### 2.1.2 The Downside

It is worthy of mention however, that this upward trend was broken in the year 2007 when the average food production dropped from 311 kilotons in 2006 to 305.2 kilotons in 2007.

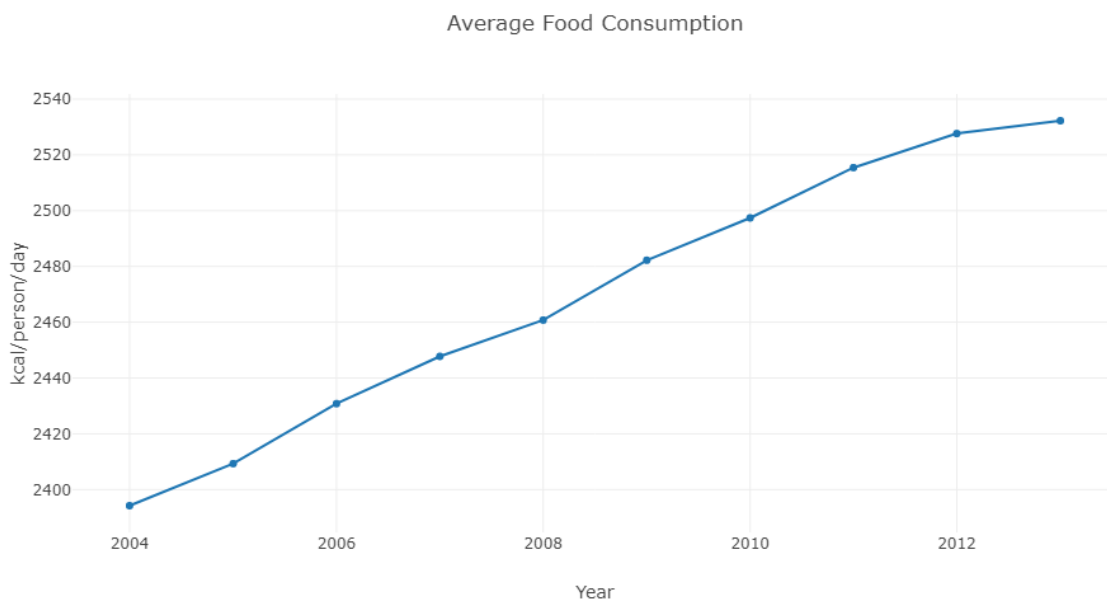
A quick research revealed that 2007 was a year of global food crisis. Between 2007 and 2008, there was a rise in global food prices which led to riots in various countries of the world, thus Africa was not left out. From 2008 onwards, even though the average food production regained the upward trend, the year to year rate of increase dropped.

The trend in production has been impressive but does increase in production correlate with increase in food consumption?

How has the lives of the people improved over time?

## 2.2 Per capita food consumption (Economic & Physical Access):

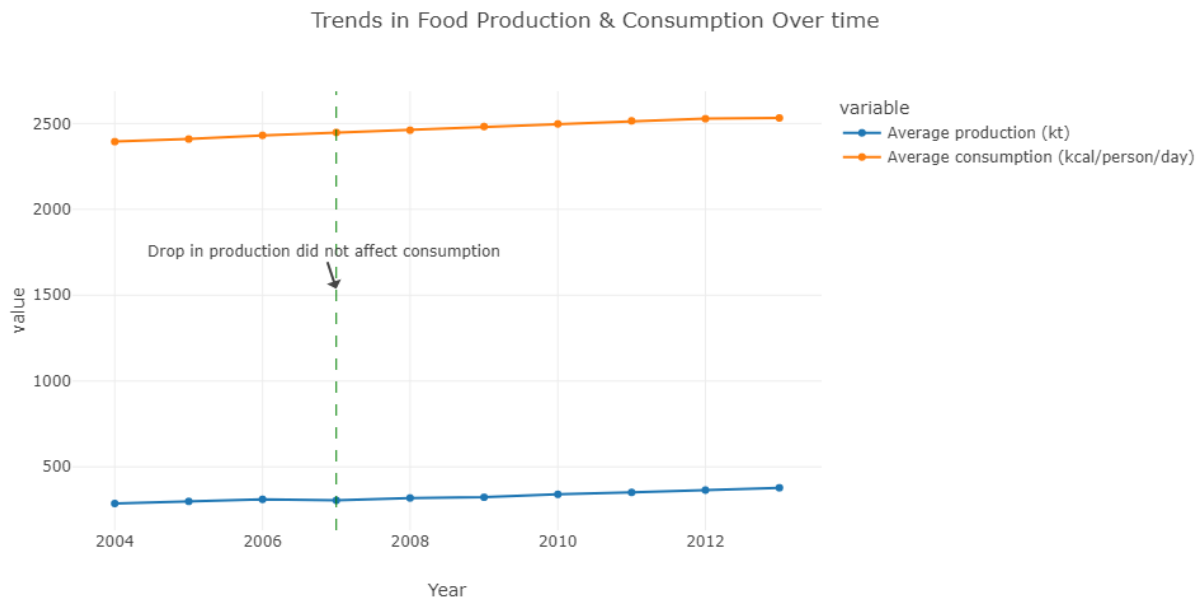
Similar to the food production statistics, an upward trend was also recorded in terms of average kcal/person/day of food consumed. Kcal/person/day is the key variable used for measuring the evolution of the food situation of a particular group of persons over time. Africa has made consistent efforts to maintain an upward increase in food consumption year on year, from 2390 Kcal/person/day in 2004 to about 2530 Kcal/person/day in 2013.



This is equivalent to 5.9% rise over a 10-year period. This is progress, even though more can still be done.

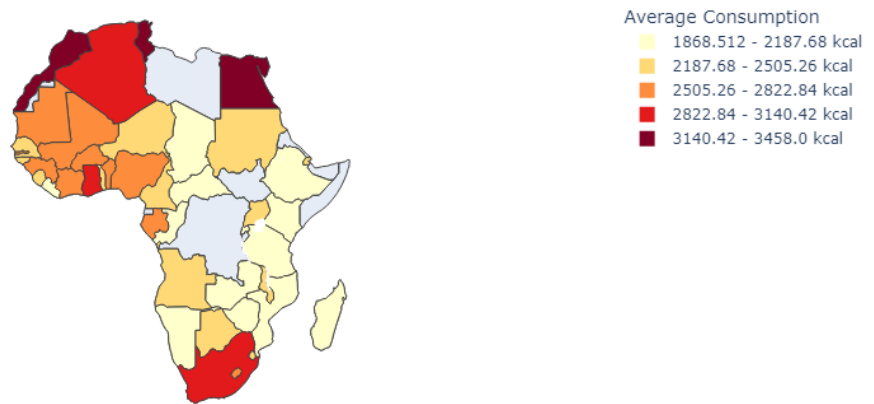
The following interesting observations are worth mentioning:

- i. The upward trend in average food consumption surprisingly, was not broken by the global food crisis of 2007



ii. For the year 2004, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco recorded significantly higher food consumption per capita than any other country.

Food Consumption by Country



iii. Except for the year 2007, Egypt remained the only African country that maintained consistently higher food consumption rate than any other country. More interestingly, the year to year food consumption per capita for Egypt did not only remain the highest but also continued to grow from 3309 kcal/person/day in 2004 to 3522 kcal/person/day in 2013.

iv. For the year 2007, no country recorded surplus food consumption rate. This could be due to a slight impact of the global food crisis. However, the upward trend in average food consumption remained unchanged.

### 3. Conclusion

While we applaud the efforts made so far by the governments, NGOs, farmers, international organizations and every other stakeholders, efforts still need to be put in. A recent study by Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has forecasted an increase in hunger in Africa and decrease in other regions that would make Africa the region with the largest number of undernourished people by 2030. Also, it is projected that sub-Saharan Africa's population will keep growing at 2.1% p.a in the period 2025 - 2030, despite the drastic downward revision made in recent years in the region's population projection. By that time, every third person added to the world population will be in that region. By 2050, every second person of the 43 million added to the world population will be in sub-Saharan Africa. In order to meet the present and future food demands by her rising population, all hands should be on deck to ensure a steady, affordable food supply.

Fighting food insecurity requires a long-term plan, thus all agencies and government parastatals need to come together to ensure a functional system wthat will enable food production to thrive.

Africa is characterized by terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and other security challenges. When security is not ensured, farmers will be kept out of farms, thus leading to escalations in food scarcity. This has a ripple effect on almost all other sectors of the economy. This further will lead to a spiraling of an endless loop of hunger and poverty which has deprived the continent of its pride of place in the comity of nations.