Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional overview

Malnutrition burden

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, there has been some progress towards achieving global nutrition targets. The global target for under-five wasting has 12 countries on course to meet it, under-five stunting has eight countries on course, under-five overweight has seven countries on course, while infant exclusive breastfeeding has three countries on course. However, not a single country in the region is on course to meet the targets for anaemia in women of reproductive age, low birth weight, male diabetes, female diabetes, male obesity, and female obesity. 25 countries in the region have insufficient data to comprehensively assess their progress towards these global targets.

Although it performs relatively well against other regions, Latin America and the Caribbean still experiences a malnutrition burden among its under-five population. The average prevalence of overweight in under-fives is 7.5%, this is greater than the global average of 5.9%. The prevalence of stunting in under-fives is 9%, this is significantly less than the global average of 21.9%. The Latin America and Caribbean region's prevalence of wasting in under-fives of 1.3% is also less than the global average of 7.3%.
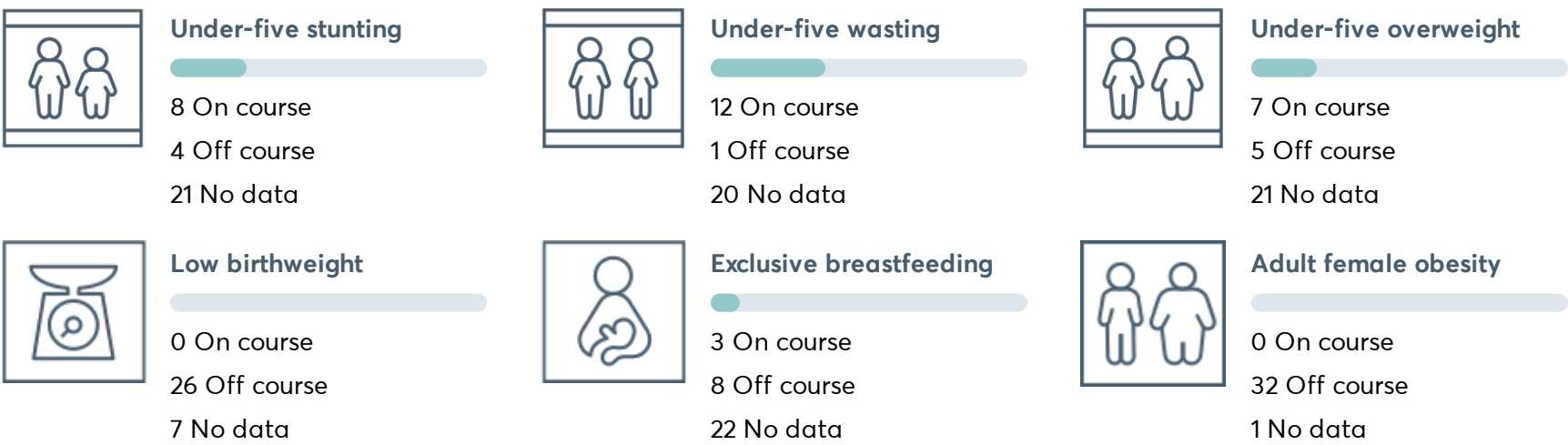
Some 46.4% of infants under 6 months in the Latin America and Caribbean region are exclusively breastfed, while the region's average low birth weight prevalence of 8.7% is less than the global average of 14.6%.
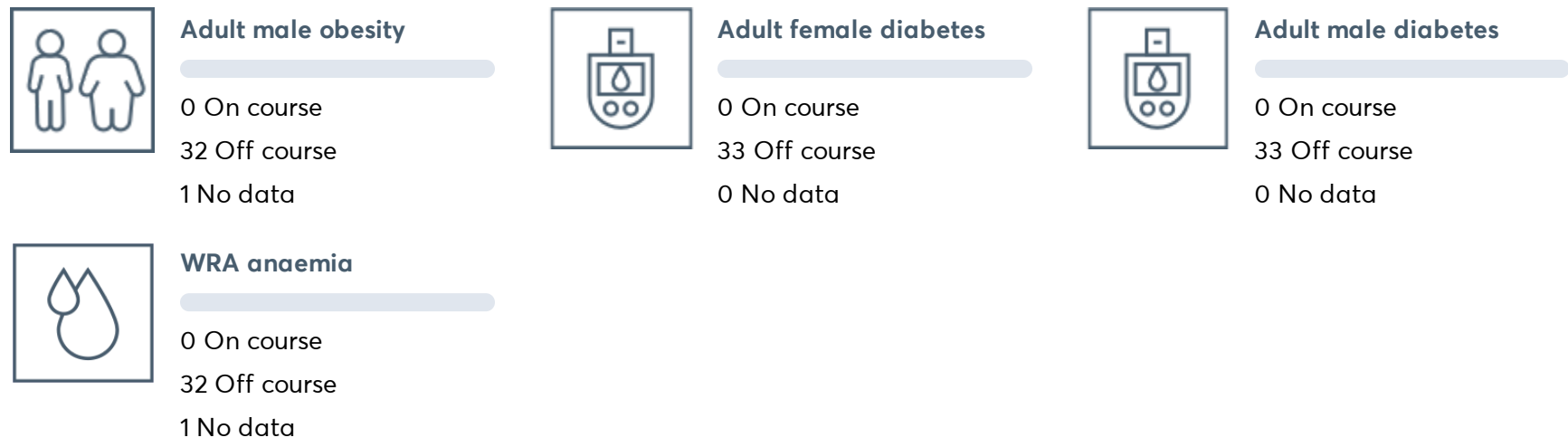
The Latin America and Caribbean region's adult population also face a malnutrition burden. An average of 22% of women of reproductive age have anaemia, and 9.6% of adult women have diabetes, compared to 8.8% of men. Meanwhile, 28% of women and 20.1% of men have obesity.

Sources: UNICEF global databases Infant and Young Child Feeding, UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates, UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight estimates, NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, WHO Global Health Observatory.

Notes: Data on the adult indicators are based on modelled estimates.

Progress against global nutrition targets 2018

Under-five stunting
8 On course
4 Off course
21 No data

Under-five wasting
12 On course
1 Off course
20 No data

Under-five overweight
7 On course
5 Off course
21 No data

Low birthweight
0 On course
26 Off course
7 No data

Exclusive breastfeeding
3 On course
8 Off course
22 No data

Adult female obesity
0 On course
32 Off course
1 No data

Adult male obesity

0 On course
32 Off course
1 No data

Adult female diabetes

0 On course
33 Off course
0 No data

Adult male diabetes

0 On course
33 Off course
0 No data

WRA anaemia
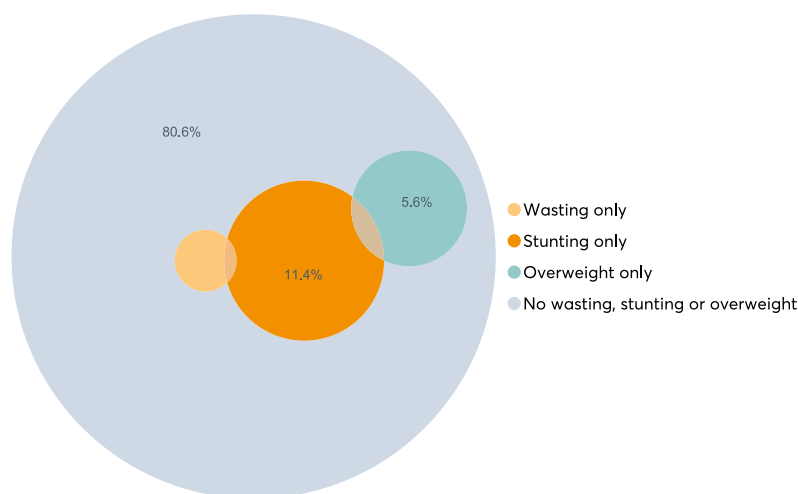
0 On course
32 Off course
1 No data

Sources: UNICEF global databases Infant and Young Child Feeding, UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates, NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, WHO Global Health Observatory and Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

Notes: WRA = Women of a reproductive age; NA = not applicable. The methodologies for tracking differ between targets. Data on the adult indicators are based on modelled estimates.
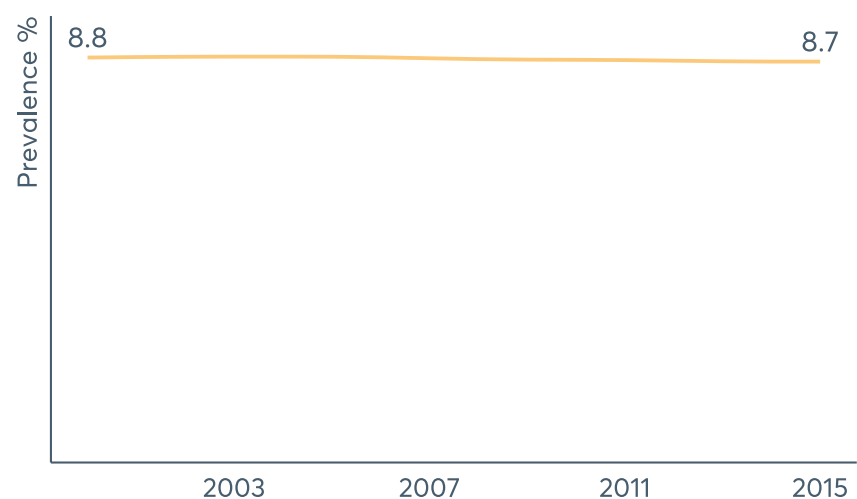
Child (under-five) nutrition status

Coexistence of wasting, stunting and overweight

- Wasting only
- Stunting only
- Overweight only
- No wasting, stunting or overweight

80.6%
5.6%
11.4%

Low birth weight

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight estimates, 2019 edition.

Sources: UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019). UNICEF Global Databases: Overlapping Stunting, Wasting and Overweight, January 2019, New York.

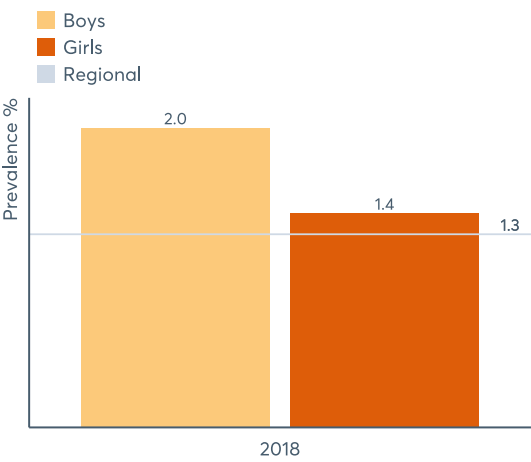Notes: Percentage of children under-five years of age who experience different and overlapping forms of malnutrition.
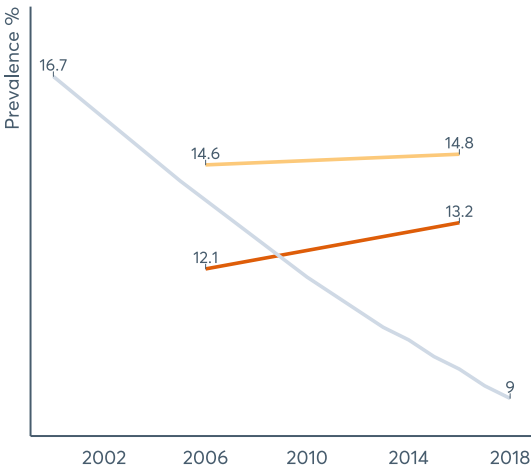
Child (under-five) nutrition status over time

Wasting by gender

Legend: Boys, Girls, Regional

- Boys: 2.0
- Girls: 1.4
- Regional: 1.3

(2018)

Stunting by gender

Prevalence %

- 16.7
- 14.6 → 14.8
- 12.1 → 13.2
- 9

2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018

Overweight by gender

Prevalence %

- 6.6
- 6.8 → 6.7
- 6.4 → 6.1
- 7.5

2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018

Wasting by location

Legend: Urban, Rural, Regional

- Urban: 1.7
- Rural: 2.0
- Regional: 1.3

(2018)

Stunting by location

Prevalence %

- 16.7
- 18.3 → 21.2
- 10.4 → 10.8
- 9

2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018

Overweight by location

Prevalence %

- 6.6
- 7.1 → 7.1
- 5.6 → 4.7
- 7.5

2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018

Wasting by income

Legend: Lowest, Second lowest, Middle, Second highest, Highest, Regional

- Regional: 1.3

(2018)

Stunting by income

Prevalence %

- 16.7
- 25.4
- 15.3
- 11.1
- 7
- 5.7
- 9

2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018

Overweight by income

Prevalence %

- 6.6
- 8.3
- 7.5
- 6.9
- 6.7
- 6.5
- 3.8

2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018

Wasting by mother's education

Legend:
- None or primary
- Secondary or higher
- Regional

1.3 — 2018

Stunting by mother's education

Prevalence %

16.7 ... 9

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Overweight by mother's education

Prevalence %

6,6 ... 7,5

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Wasting by age

Legend:
- 0-23 months
- 24-35 months
- 36-47 months
- 48-59 months
- Regional

Prevalence %

2.9
0.9 0.9 1.2 1.3

2018

Stunting by age

Prevalence %

16.7
14.8
14.4
14.4
14.2
14.1
13.2
12.7
12.1
9

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Overweight by age

Prevalence %

8
7,5
7
6,7
6,8
6,6
6,3
6,2
5,3
4,8

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018
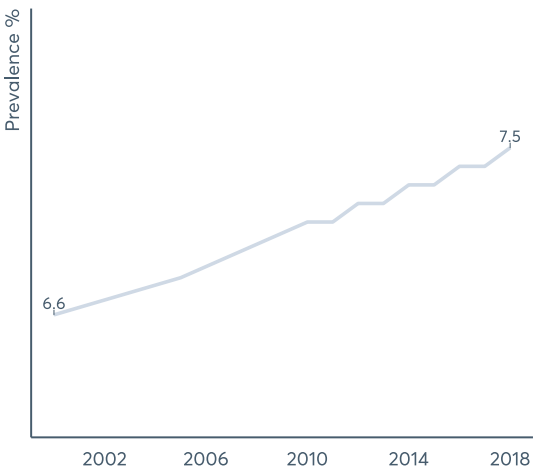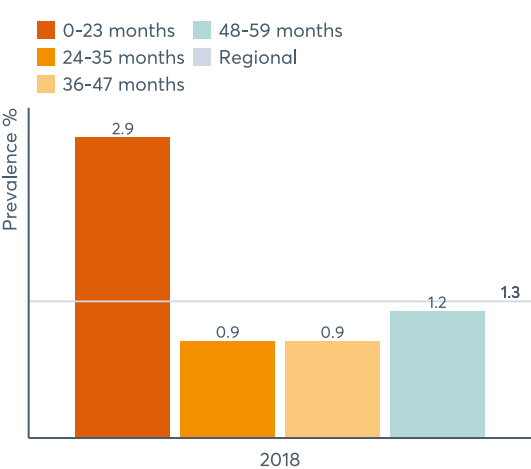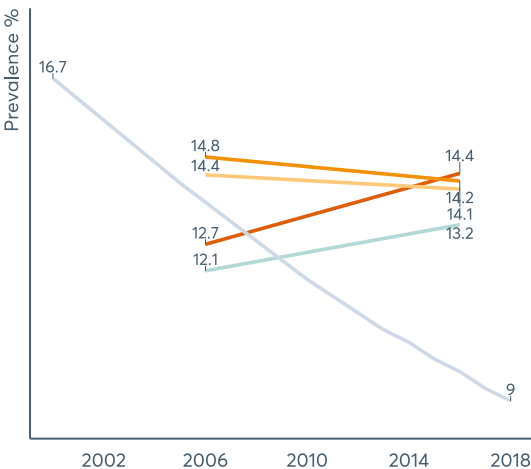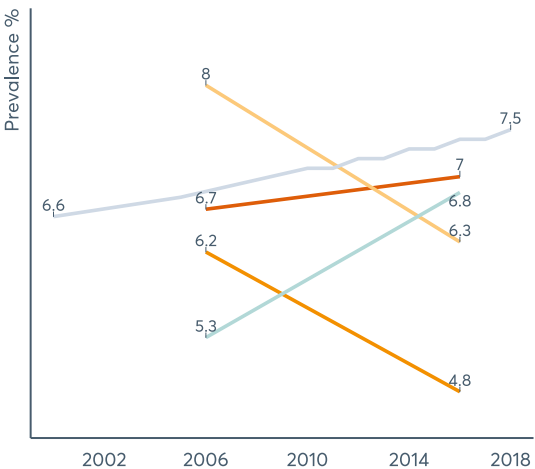
Sources: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates.

Notes: Regional trends (grey line in charts) refer to estimates from UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates. Disaggregated data (coloured lines/bars in charts) is based on population weighted means. Estimates are presented only where available data represents at least 50% of the regional population. Based on population weighted means of between 8 and 21 countries.

Infant and young child feeding over time

Exclusive breastfeeding by gender

Prevalence %

Boys Regional
Girls

46.4

2016
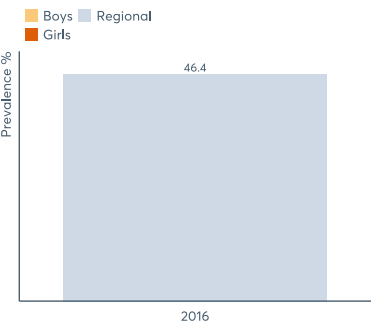
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by gender

Prevalence %

55.0

2012
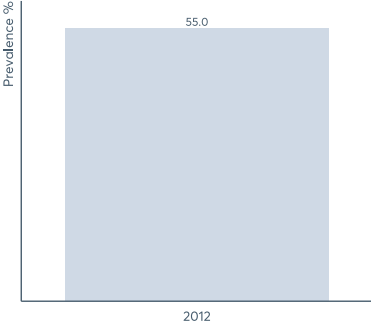
Minimum acceptable diet by gender

No data

Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by gender

No data

Exclusive breastfeeding by location

Prevalence %

Urban Regional
Rural

46.4

2016
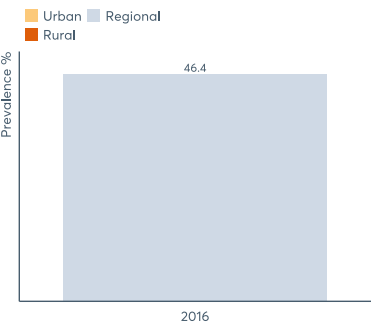
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by location

Prevalence %

55.0

2012
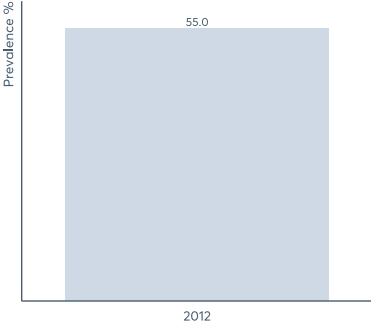
Minimum acceptable diet by location

No data

Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by location

No data

Exclusive breastfeeding by income

Prevalence %

Lowest Middle Highest
Second lowest Second highest Regional

46.4

2016
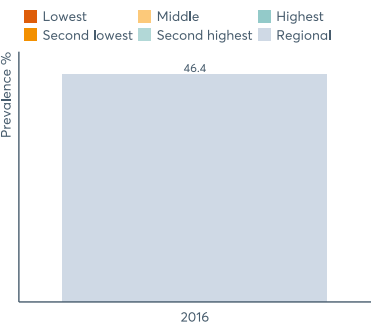
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by income
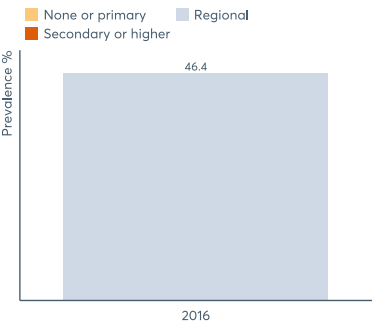
Prevalence %

55.0

2012
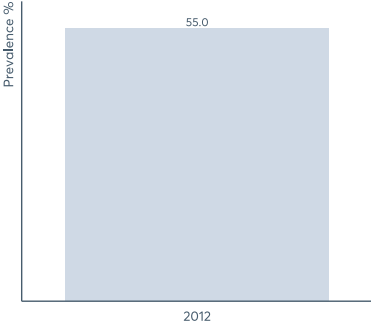
Minimum acceptable diet by income

No data

Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by income

No data

Exclusive breastfeeding by mother's education

Prevalence %

| None or primary | Regional |
| Secondary or higher | |

46.4

2016

Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by mother's education

Prevalence %

55.0

2012
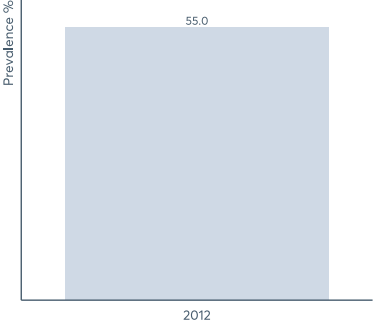
Minimum acceptable diet by mother's education

No data
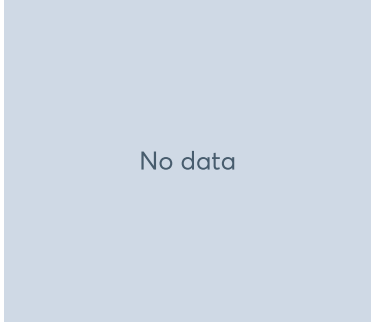
Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by mother's education

No data

Exclusive breastfeeding by age

Prevalence %

| 0–1 month | 4–5 months |
| 2–3 months | Regional |

46.4

2016

Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by age

No data

Minimum acceptable diet by age
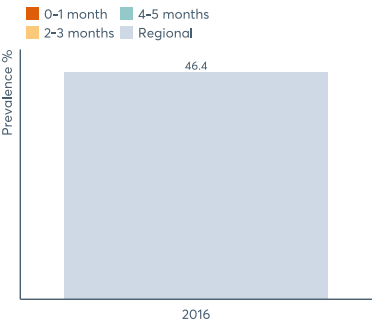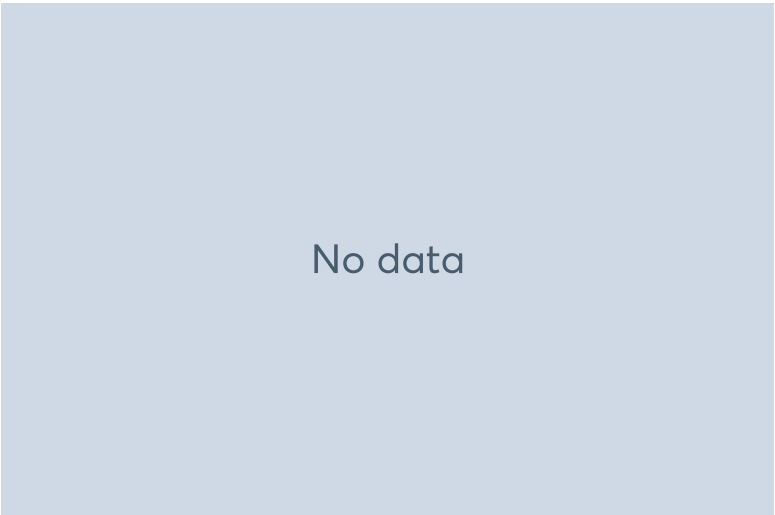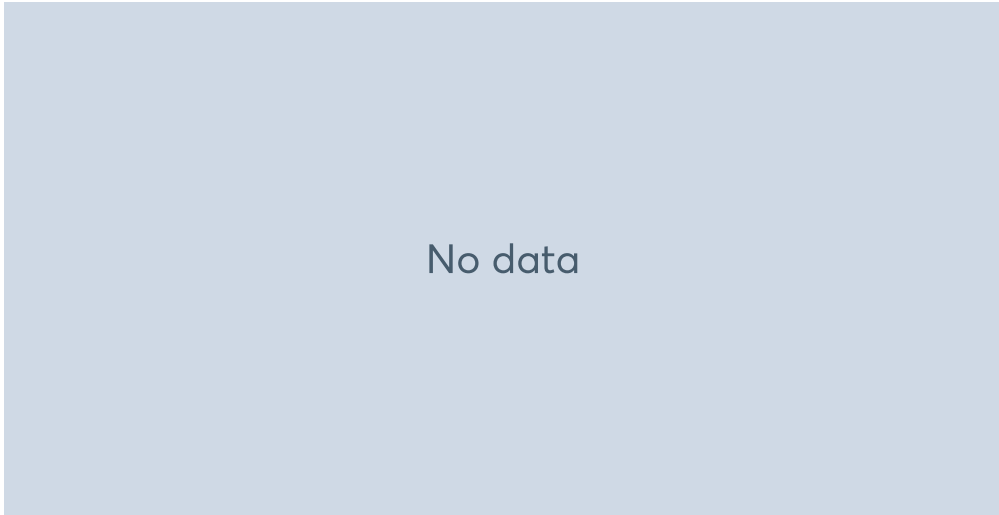
No data

Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by age

No data

Sources: UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019). Global UNICEF Global Databases: Infant and Young Child Feeding, New York, May 2019.

Notes: Disaggregated data (coloured lines/bars in charts) is based on population weighted means. Estimates are presented only where available data represents at least 50% of the regional population. Based on population weighted means of between 11 and 14 countries.

Infant and young child feeding
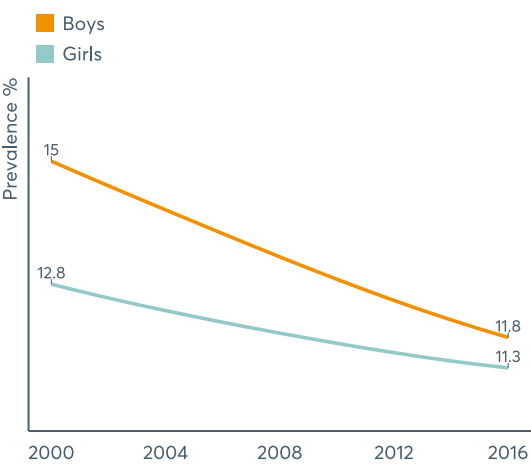
No data

No data

Sources: UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019). Global UNICEF Global Databases: Infant and Young Child Feeding: Exclusive breastfeeding, Predominant breastfeeding, New York, May 2019.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of between 11 and 16 countries.

Child and adolescent (aged 5-19) nutrition status

Underweight by gender

Prevalence %

- ■ Boys
- ■ Girls

15

12.8

11.8

11.3

2000   2004   2008   2012   2016

Sources: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Overweight by gender

Prevalence %

31.2

29.9

22.4

20.9

2000   2004   2008   2012   2016

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Obesity by gender

Prevalence %

13.5

10.4

7.1

6

2000   2004   2008   2012   2016
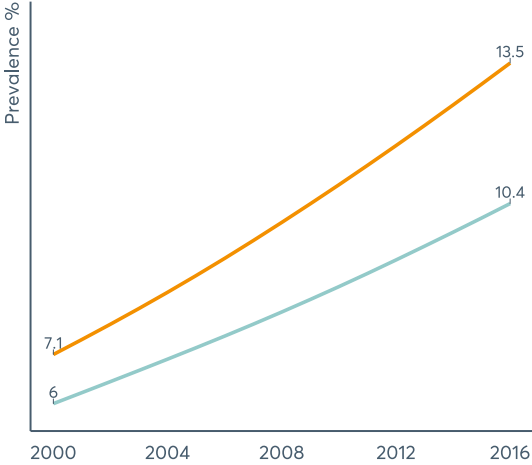
Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Adult nutrition status

Diabetes by gender
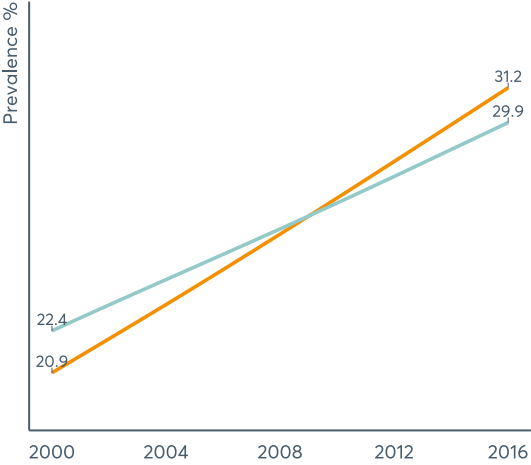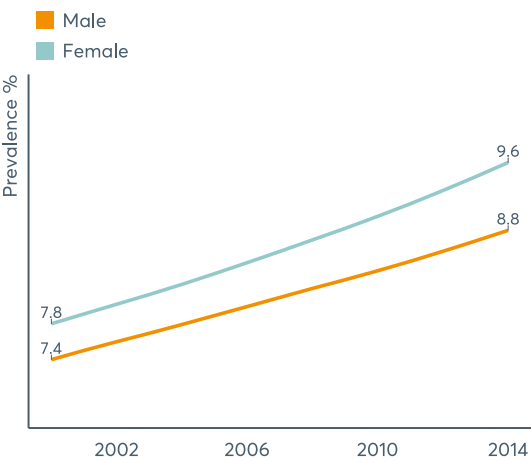

Prevalence %

- Male
- Female

7.8
7.4
9.6
8.8

2002   2006   2010   2014

Sources: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Overweight by gender

Prevalence %

51.8
47.1
60
58.8

2000   2004   2008   2012   2016

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Obesity by gender

Prevalence %

20.2
12.5
28
20.1

2000   2004   2008   2012   2016
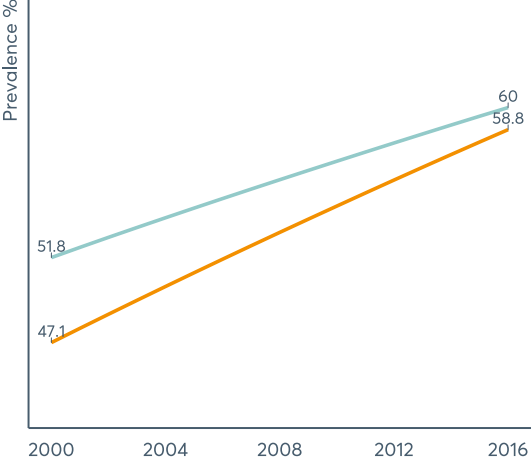
Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Raised blood pressure by gender
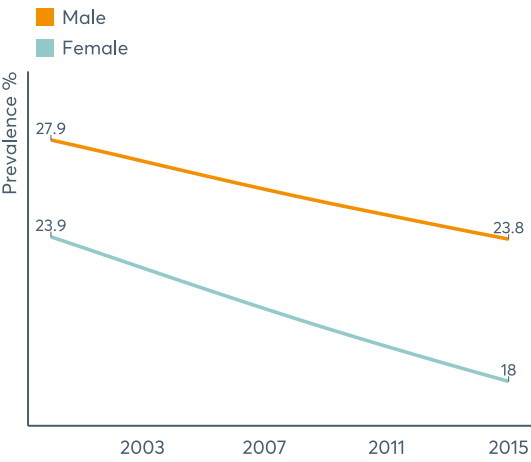
Prevalence %

- Male
- Female

27.9
23.9
23.8
18

2003   2007   2011   2015
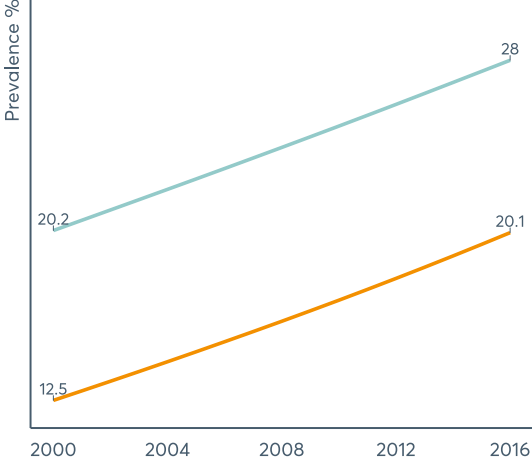
Sources: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Anaemia in WRA

Prevalence %

- All women
- Pregnant women
- Non-pregnant women

35
27.2
26.9
29.7
22
21.7

2000   2004   2008   2012   2016
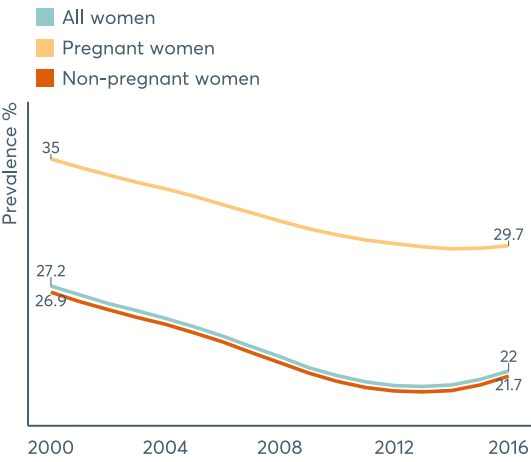
Source: WHO Global Health Observatory.

Notes: WRA = women of reproductive age. Based on population weighted means of 32 countries.

Salt intake (grams per day)

- Regional
- Global

3.6
5.6

2017
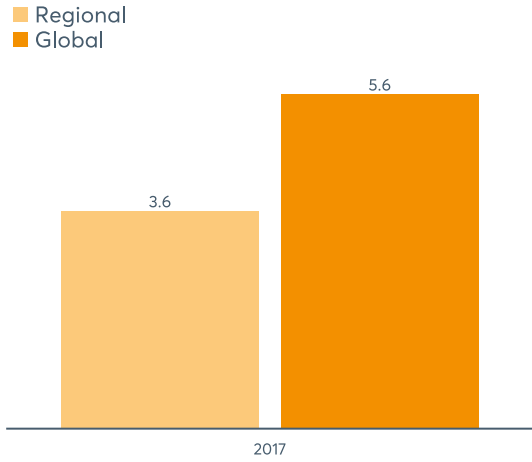
Source: Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 32 countries.

Dietary needs

Consumption of food groups and components, 2016

Key:
- Regional
- Global

Midpoint of TMREL

Food group	0%/0g of TMREL ... 200% of TMREL
Calcium	1.3g
Fruit	250g
Legumes	60g
Milk	435g
Nuts and seeds	20.5g
Omega 3	0.3g
Polyunsaturated fat	11%

Food group	value
Processed meat	2g
Red meat	22.5g
Salt	2g
Saturated fat	7%
Sugar-sweetened beverages	2.5g
Trans fat	0.5%
Vegetables	360g
Whole grain	125g

Sources: Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

Notes: TMREL = theoretical minimum risk of exposure level. Men and women aged 25 and older. Based on population weighted means of 32 countries.
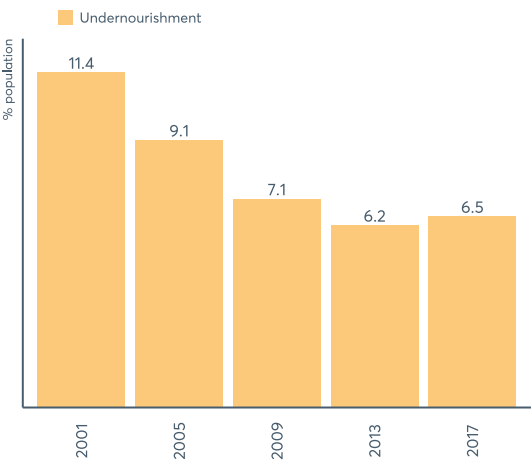
Intervention coverage

Coverage/practice indicator	Total (%)	Boy (%)	Girl (%)	Year
Children 0-59 months with diarrhoea who received zinc treatment	No data	No data	No data	No data
Children 6-59 months who received vitamin A supplements in last 6 months	No data	No data	No data	No data
Children 6-59 months given iron supplements in past 7 days	No data	No data	No data	No data
Women with a live birth in the five years preceding the survey who received iron tablets or syrup during antenatal care	No data	NA	NA	No data
Household consumption of any iodised salt	No data	NA	NA	No data

Notes: NA = not applicable. Data is compiled using STATcompiler and taken from country Demographic and Health Surveys for 2005-2018.
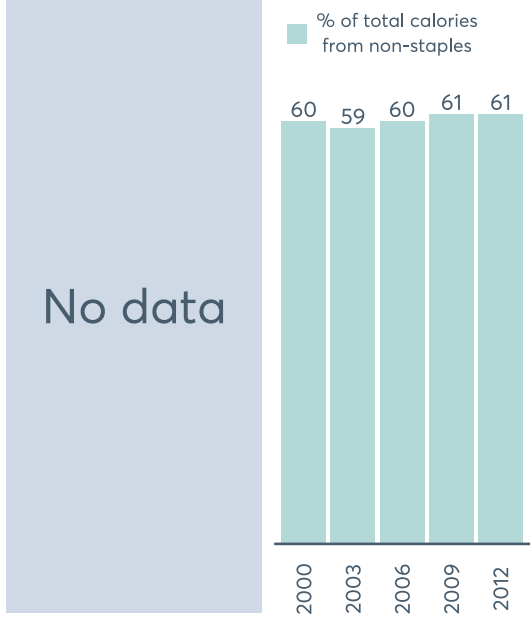
Determinants

Undernourishment

Undernourishment

% population

11.4 (2001)
9.1 (2005)
7.1 (2009)
6.2 (2013)
6.5 (2017)

Source: FAOSTAT 2018.

Food supply

% of total calories from non-staples

No data

60 (2000)
59 (2003)
60 (2006)
61 (2009)
61 (2012)

Source: FAOSTAT 2018.

Gender-related determinants

Early childbearing births by age 18 (%)[1]	NA	NA
Gender Inequality Index (score *)[2]	NA	NA
Gender Inequality Index (country rank)[2]	NA	NA

Sources: [1] UNICEF 2018; [2] UNDP 2018.

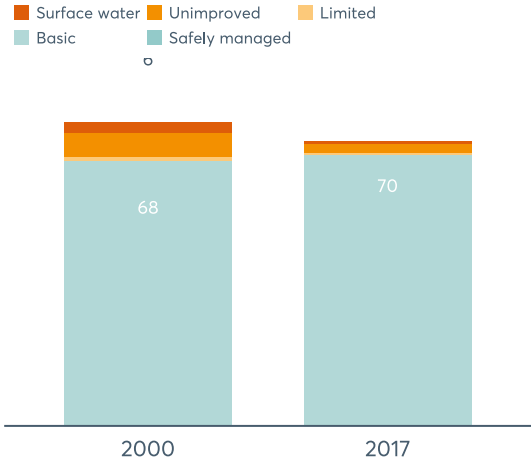Notes: *0 = low inequality, 1 = high inequality.

Female secondary education enrolment (net, % population)

80 (2014)
80 (2015)
81 (2016)
77 (2017)
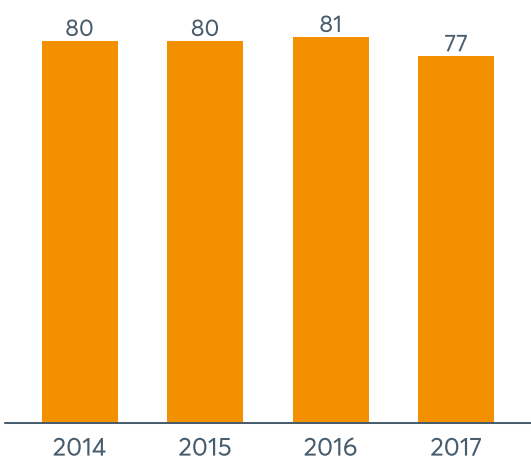
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2018.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of between 16 and 25 countries.

Drinking water coverage (% population)

Surface water • Unimproved • Limited • Basic • Safely managed

68 (2000)
70 (2017)

Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2019.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of between 27 and 33 countries.

Sanitation coverage (% population)
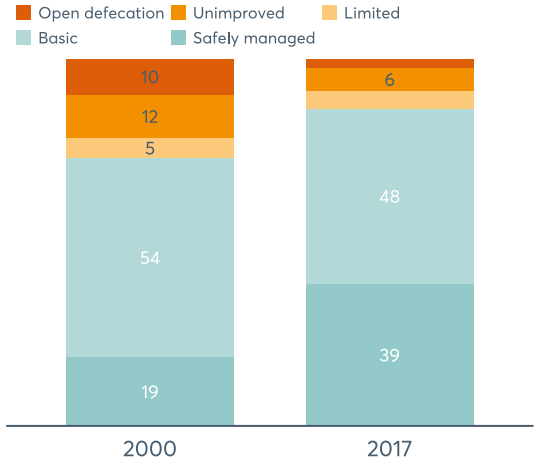
Open defecation • Unimproved • Limited • Basic • Safely managed

2000: 10, 12, 5, 54, 19
2017: 6, 48, 39
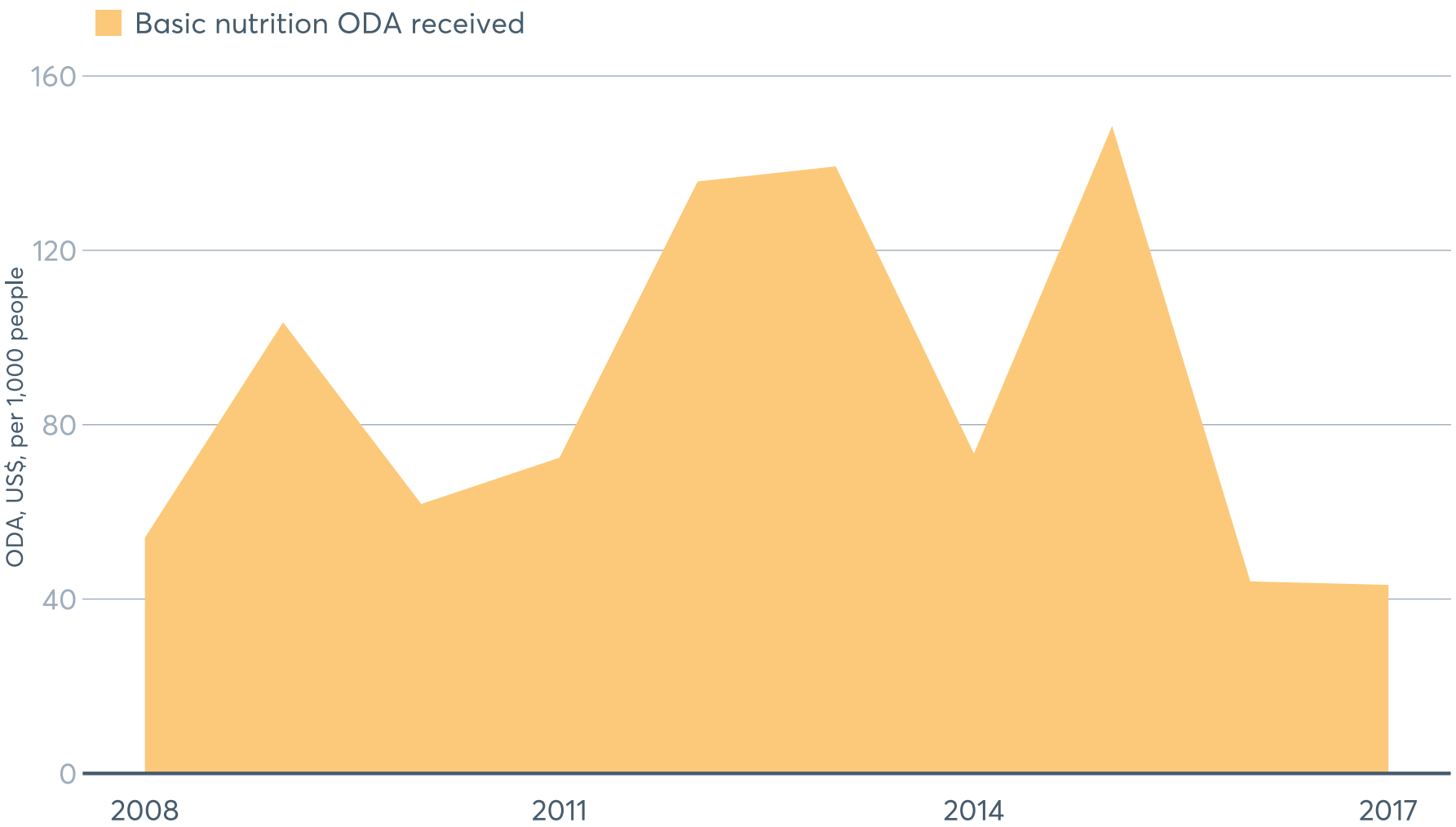
Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2019.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of between 9 and 33 countries.

Resources, policies and targets

Development assistance

Basic nutrition ODA received

Sources: Development Initiatives based on OECD Development Assistance Commitee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Notes: ODA = official development assistance. Amounts based on gross ODA disbursements, constant 2017 prices. Figure includes ODA grants and loans, but excludes other official flows and private grants.

National policies

Mandatory legislation for salt iodisation	19/33
Sugar-sweetened beverage tax	21/33
Food-based dietary guidelines	28/33
Policy to reduce salt consumption	12/33
Operational policy, strategy or action plan to reduce unhealthy diet related to NCDs	24/33
Operational, multisectoral national NCD policy, strategy or action plan	18/33
Operational policy, strategy or action plan for diabetes	25/33
Policy to reduce the impact on children of marketing of foods and beverages high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars or salt	7/33
Policy to limit saturated fatty acids and virtually eliminate industrially produced trans-fats	7/33

Sources: Global Fortification Data Exchange 2018; Sugar-sweetened data prepared using data from the NOURISHING database, academic references and market reports; FAO 2018; WHO Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA), 2nd Global Nutrition Policy Review, WHO Global Health Observatory.

Notes: Value refers to the number of countries with policy. NA = not applicable; NCD = non-communicable disease.

# Targets included in national (nutrition or other) plan

Stunting	Anaemia
24/33	14/33
Low birth weight	Child overweight
21/33	26/33
Exclusive breastfeeding	Wasting
25/33	20/33
Salt intake	Overweight adults and adolescents
22/33	26/33
Multisectoral comprehensive nutrition plan	
20/33	

Sources: WHO Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA), 2nd Global Nutrition Policy Review.

Notes: Value refers to the number of countries with target.

Economics and demography

Poverty rates (%) and GDP (PPP$)
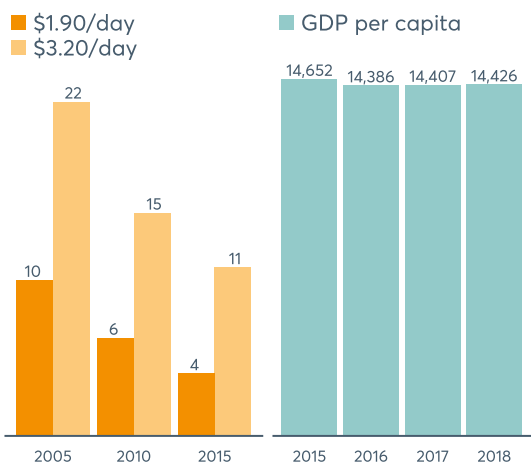
Sources: World Bank 2019, IMF World Economic Outlook Database 2019.

Notes: PPP = purchasing power parity. Based on population weighted means of between 23 and 32 countries.
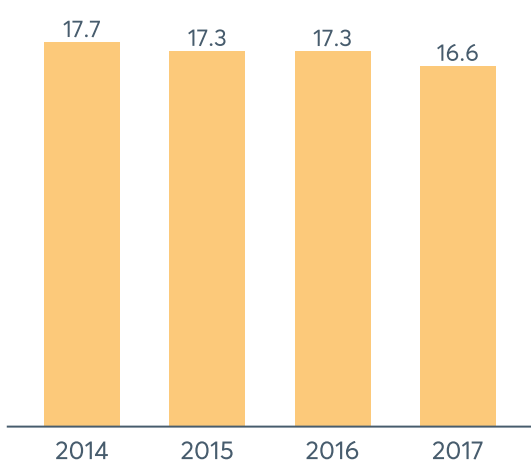
Under-five mortality (per 1,000 live births)

Source: UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation 2018.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Government revenues ($m)

No data

Sources: IMF Article IV staff reports (country specific) and IMF World Economic Outlook Database (April 2019).

Income inequality

Gini index score[1]	Gini index rank[2]	Year
NA	NA	NA

Sources: World Bank 2019.

Notes: [1] 0 = perfect equality, 100 = perfect inequality. [2] Countries are ranked from most equal (1) to most unequal (159).

Population

Population (thousands)	106,382	2018
Under-five population (thousands)	51,971	2019
Rural (%)	19	2018
>65 years (thousands)	56,411	2019

Sources: World Bank 2019, UN Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 33 countries.

Population density of health workers per 1,000 people

Physicians	2.03	2016
Nurses and midwives	4.0	2016
Community health workers	No data	No data

Sources: WHO's Global Health Workforce Statistics, OECD, supplemented by country data.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of between 30 and 31 countries.