Northern Africa

Subregional overview

Malnutrition burden

In the Northern Africa subregion, there has been some progress towards achieving global nutrition targets. The global targets for under-five overweight, under-five stunting, and infant exclusive breastfeeding each have one country on course to meet them. However, not a single country in the subregion is on course to meet the targets for under-five wasting, anaemia in women of reproductive age, low birth weight, male diabetes, female diabetes, male obesity, and female obesity. Six countries in the subregion have insufficient data to comprehensively assess their progress towards these global targets.

The Northern Africa subregion experiences a malnutrition burden among its under-five population. The average prevalence of overweight in under-fives is 10.6% - the second highest compared to other subregions in Africa. The prevalence of stunting in under-fives is 17.2%, this is less than the global average of 21.9%. Conversely, The Northern Africa subregion's prevalence of wasting in under-fives of 8.5% is greater than the global average of 7.3%.

Some 41.9% of infants under 6 months in the Northern Africa subregion are exclusively breastfed, while the subregion's average low birth weight prevalence of 12.2% is less than the global average of 14.6%.

The Northern Africa subregion's adult population also face a malnutrition burden. An average of 31.7% of women of reproductive age have anaemia, and 15.3% of adult women have diabetes, compared to 13.5% of men. Meanwhile, 33.2% of women and 18.3% of men have obesity.
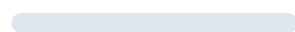
Progress against global nutrition targets 2019

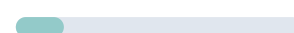**Under-five stunting**

1 On course
1 Off course
4 No data

Under-five wasting

0 On course
2 Off course
4 No data

Under-five overweight
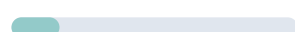
1 On course
1 Off course
4 No data

Low birthweight

0 On course
3 Off course
3 No data

Exclusive breastfeeding
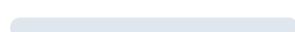
1 On course
1 Off course
4 No data

Adult female obesity

0 On course
6 Off course
0 No data

Adult male obesity
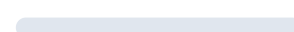
0 On course
6 Off course
0 No data

Adult female diabetes

0 On course
6 Off course
0 No data

Adult male diabetes

0 On course
6 Off course
0 No data

WRA anaemia

0 On course
6 Off course
0 No data

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

6.6%
63.4%
5.1%
7.3%
15.8%
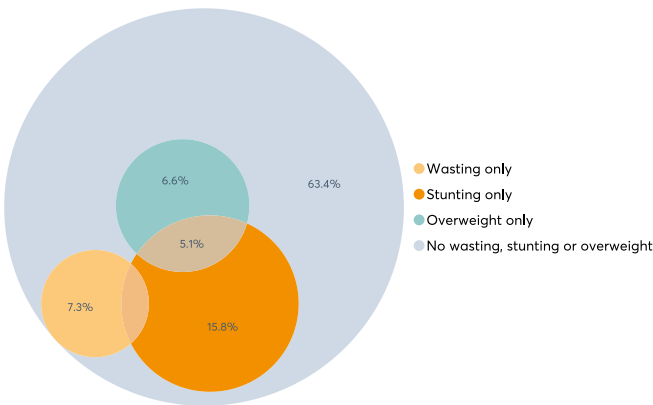
Sources: UNICEF, Division of Data Research and Policy (2019). UNICEF Global Databases: Overlapping Stunting, Wasting and Overweight, January 2019, New York.

Notes: Percentage of children under-five years of age who experience different and overlapping forms of malnutrition.

Low birth weight

No data
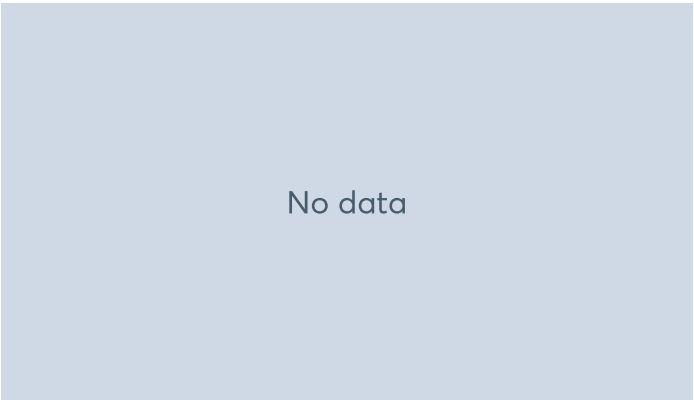
Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight estimates, 2019 edition.

Prevalence of under-five stunting

Stunting at subnational level

Stunting at 5km level

No data

No data

Stunting Prevalence (%)

≥ 50

40

30

20

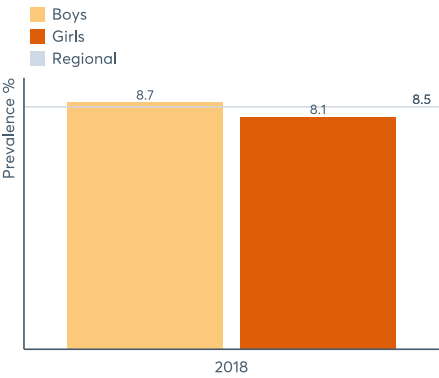< 10

Source: Kinyoki, D.K. et al. Mapping child growth failure across low- and middle-income countries. Nature 577, 231–234 (2020) doi:10.1038/s41586-019-1878-8.
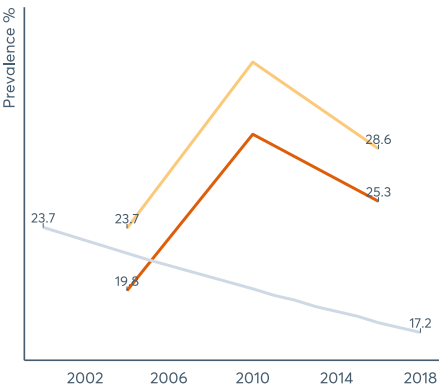
Notes: 5 km level map shows prevalence at the 5 x 5-km resolution. Prevalence is the 2017 estimated prevalence, based on a model using a range of surveys between 1998-2018. See source paper for full methods.

Child (under-five) nutrition status over time

Wasting by gender
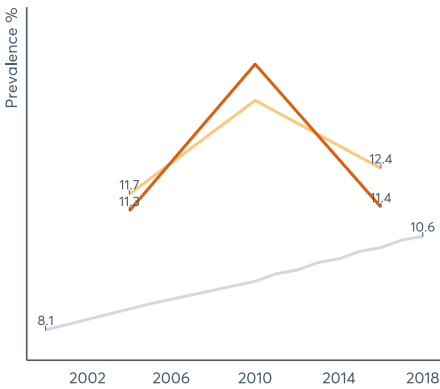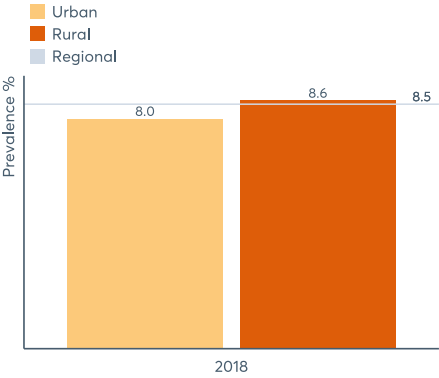
Legend: Boys, Girls, Regional

8.7 | 8.1 | 8.5

2018

Stunting by gender

23.7 | 23.7 | 19.8 | 28.6 | 25.3 | 17.2

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Overweight by gender

11.7 | 11.3 | 12.4 | 11.4 | 8.1 | 10.6

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Wasting by location

Legend: Urban, Rural, Regional

8.0 | 8.6 | 8.5

2018

Stunting by location

23.7 | 23.8 | 17.8 | 27.8 | 24.9 | 17.2

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Overweight by location

11.2 | 9.8 | 12.8 | 11.5 | 8.1 | 10.6

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Wasting by income

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

Values (2018): 9.1, 8.4, 8.3, 8.5, 7.3, 8.5

Stunting by income

23.7, 26.5, 22.7, 19.9, 17.3, 17.1 / 31.1, 30.5, 25.9, 24.9, 23.3, 17.2

Overweight by income

12.1, 11.9, 11, 8.7, 8.6, 8.1 / 14.6, 12.2, 12.1, 11.1, 10.2, 10.6

Wasting by mother's education

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

Values (2018): 10.0, 8.8, 8.5
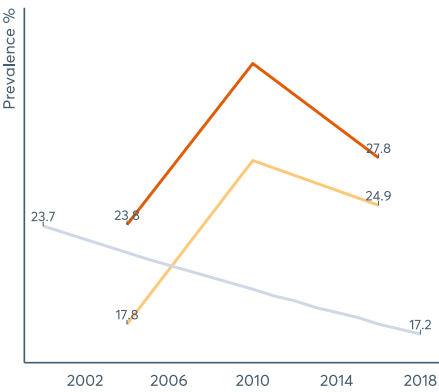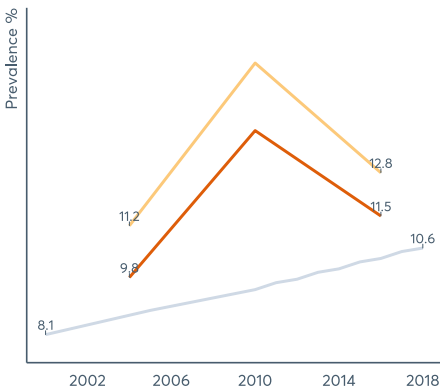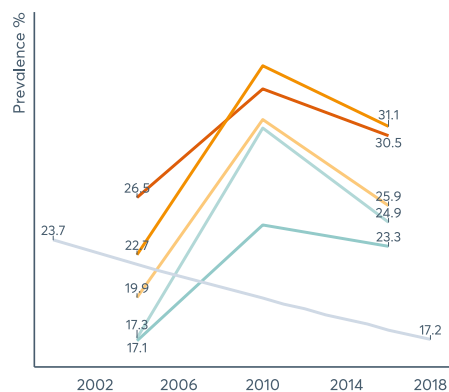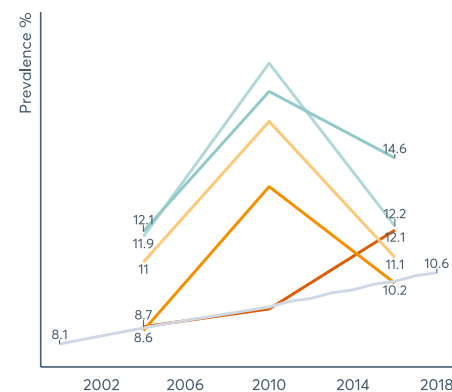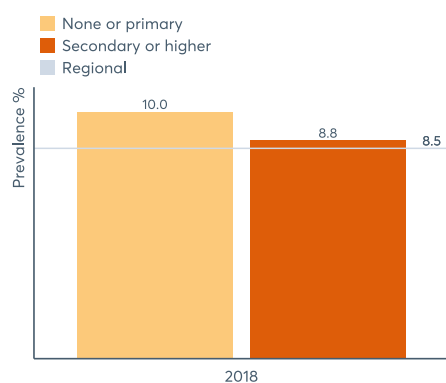
Stunting by mother's education

23.7, 22.4, 17.7 / 31, 22.2, 17.2
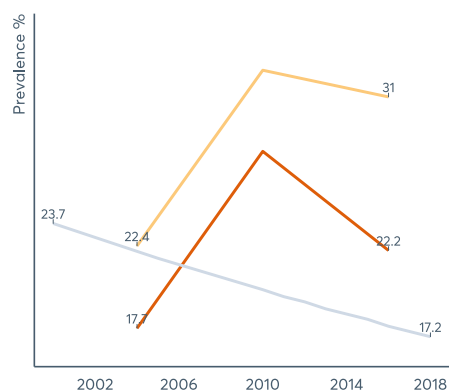
Overweight by mother's education

11.3, 10, 8.1 / 12.6, 11, 10.6

Wasting by age

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

Values (2018): 10.4, 7.9, 6.3, 5.9, 8.5

Stunting by age

23.7, 25.1, 23.3, 20.5, 14.7 / 30.7, 30.2, 26.5, 23.8, 17.2

Overweight by age

14.1, 11, 9.4, 9.2, 8.1 / 12.6, 12.4, 11.2, 11, 10.6
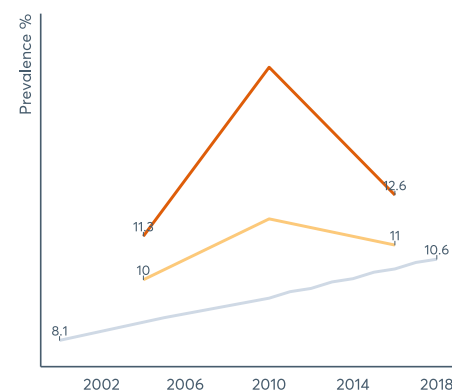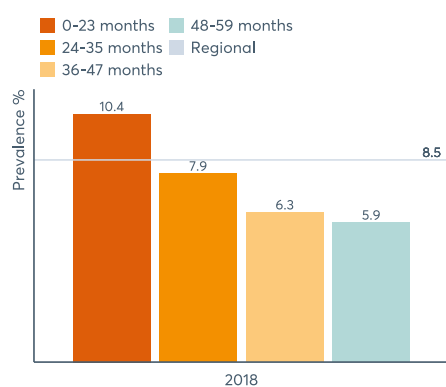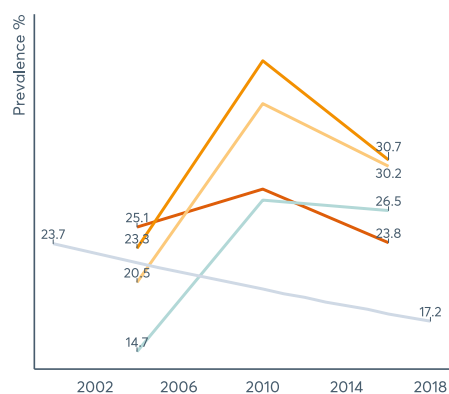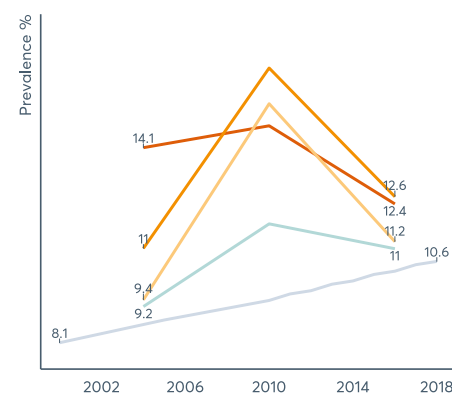
Sources: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group: Joint child malnutrition estimates.

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 2 and 5 countries.

Infant and young child feeding over time

Exclusive breastfeeding by gender

Prevalence %

Boys
Girls
Regional

29.2
27.7
41.9
40.5
39.8
41.9

2006 2009 2012 2015 2018
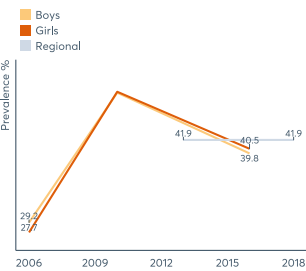
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by gender

Prevalence %

76.4
71.9
78.9
78.9
77
76.2

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018

Minimum acceptable diet by gender

Prevalence %

23.9
23.3
22.2
22.2

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

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

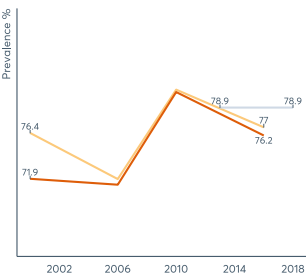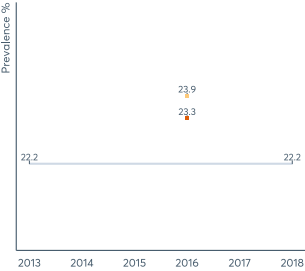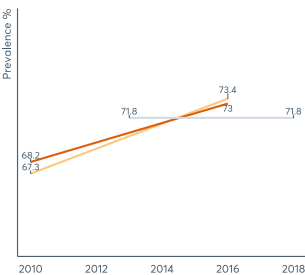Prevalence %

68.2
67.3
71.8
73.4
73
71.8

2010 2012 2014 2016 2018

Exclusive breastfeeding by location

Prevalence %

Urban
Rural
Regional

29.4
26.7
41.9
41.5
37
41.9

2006 2009 2012 2015 2018
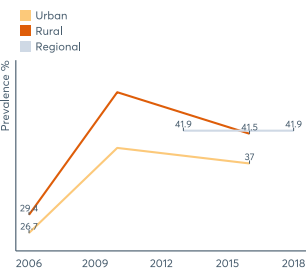
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by location

Prevalence %

79.3
67.3
78.9
80.2
78.9
72

2002 2006 2010 2014 2018
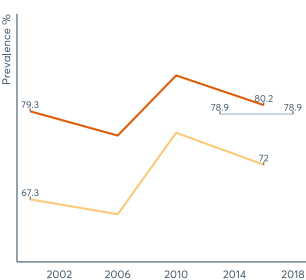
Minimum acceptable diet by location

Prevalence %

24.9
22.9
22.2
22.2

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018
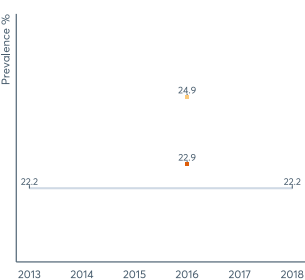
Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by location

Prevalence %

74.8
64.2
71.8
78.9
71
71.8

2010 2012 2014 2016 2018
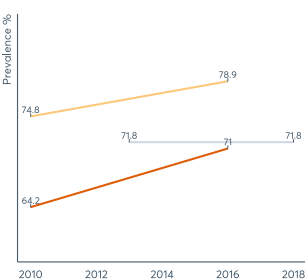
Exclusive breastfeeding by income

Prevalence %

Lowest
Second lowest
Middle
Second highest
Highest
Regional

33.2
31.5
29.1
29.1
27.7
45.1
42.4
42.4
38.7
38.5
41.9
41.9

2006 2009 2012 2015 2018
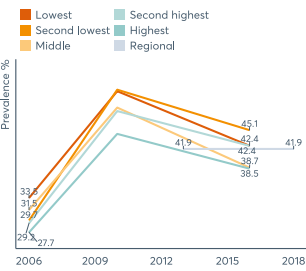
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by income

Prevalence %

80.3
77.5
75.9
67.9
64.9
84.7
84.6
78.9
77.7
75.7
75.4
78.9

2006 2009 2012 2015 2018
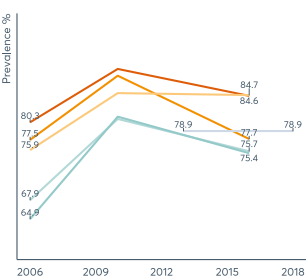
Minimum acceptable diet by income

Prevalence %

30.2
23.7
23.2
21.4
21.1
22.2
22.2

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018
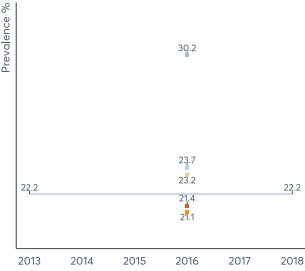
Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by income

Prevalence %

79.1
76.3
65.7
61.4
57.6
87
74.5
73.9
71.8
66.6
66.4
71.8

2010 2012 2014 2016 2018
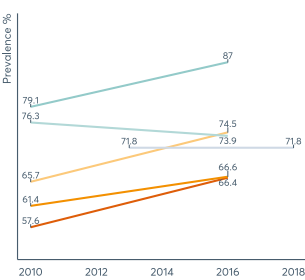
Exclusive breastfeeding by mother's education

Prevalence %

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

50.4
50.1
41.9
42.7
41.6
41.9

2010 2012 2014 2016 2018
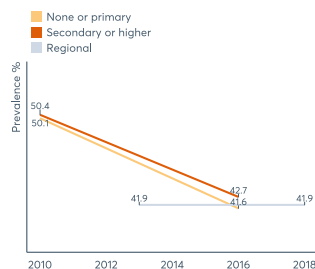
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by mother's education

Prevalence %

88
83
78.9
80.9
79.8
78.9

2010 2012 2014 2016 2018
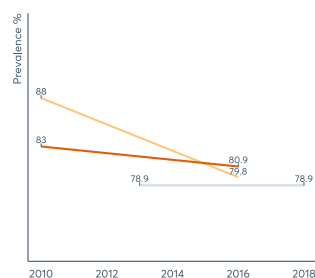
Minimum acceptable diet by mother's education

Prevalence %

27.4
22.2
22.2
20.3

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018
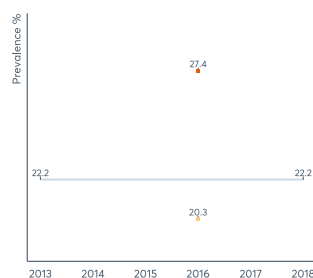
Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by mother's education

Prevalence %

79.9
75.7
71.8
71.8
64.6
58

2010 2012 2014 2016 2018

Exclusive breastfeeding by age

Prevalence %

Legend:
- 0–1 month
- 2–3 months
- 4–5 months
- Regional

74
67.6
53.7
41.9
44.1
41.9
25
19

2010 2012 2014 2016 2018
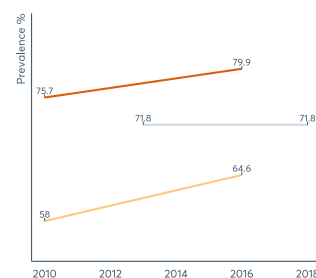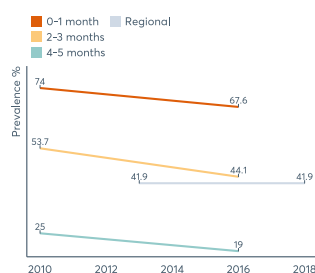
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year by age

No data

Minimum acceptable diet by age

Prevalence %

Legend:
- 6–11 months
- 12–15 months
- 16–19 months
- 20–23 months
- Regional

30.5
27.7
22.2
23.4
22.2
17.4

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018
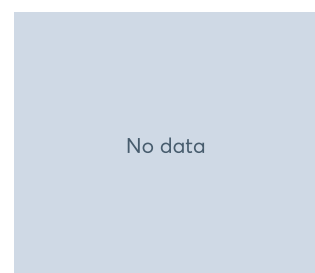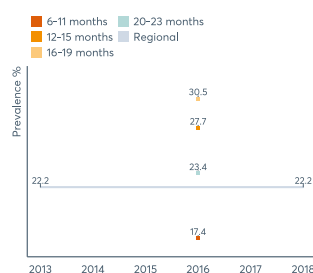
Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods by age

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: 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 2 and 4 countries.

Infant and young child feeding
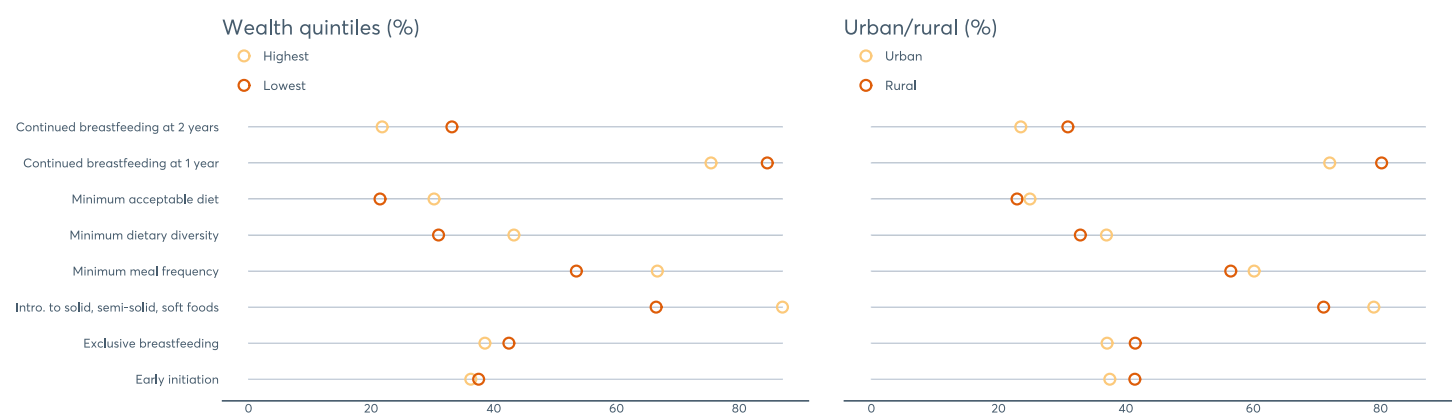
Wealth quintiles (%)
- Highest
- Lowest

Continued breastfeeding at 2 years	
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year	
Minimum acceptable diet	
Minimum dietary diversity	
Minimum meal frequency	
Intro. to solid, semi-solid, soft foods	
Exclusive breastfeeding	
Early initiation	

Urban/rural (%)
- Urban
- Rural

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 2 and 4 countries.

Child and adolescent (aged 5-19) nutrition status

Underweight by gender

Overweight by gender

Obesity by gender

- Boys
- Girls

Underweight by gender (Prevalence %)
- 27.1 → 21.1 (Boys)
- 19.2 → 15.9 (Girls)

Overweight by gender (Prevalence %)
- 15.7 → 28.1 (Boys)
- 19.7 → 30.1 (Girls)

Obesity by gender (Prevalence %)
- 5.7 → 11.8 (Boys)
- 6.3 → 13.1 (Girls)

Years axis: 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016

Sources: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Adult nutrition status

Diabetes by gender
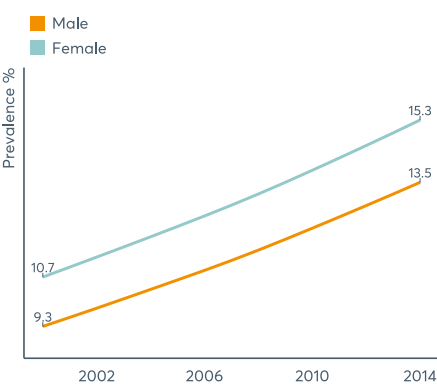
■ Male
■ Female

Prevalence %

15.3
13.5
10.7
9.3

2002 2006 2010 2014

Sources: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Overweight by gender

Prevalence %

62.1
52.4
50.8
40.5

2000 2004 2008 2012 2016
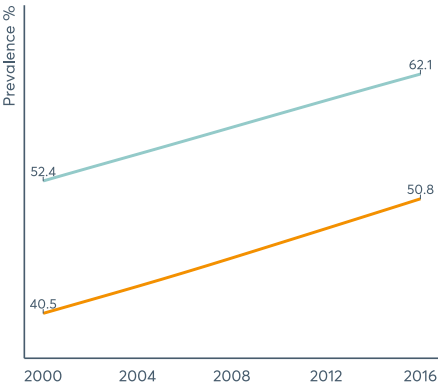
Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Obesity by gender

Prevalence %

33.2
24
18.3
10.5

2000 2004 2008 2012 2016
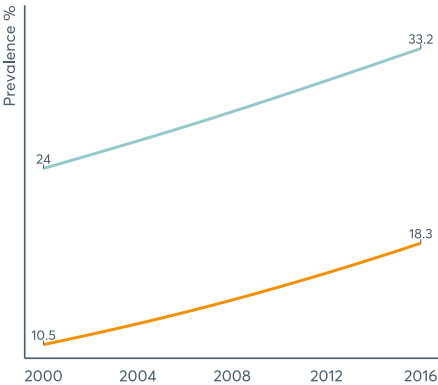
Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Raised blood pressure by gender
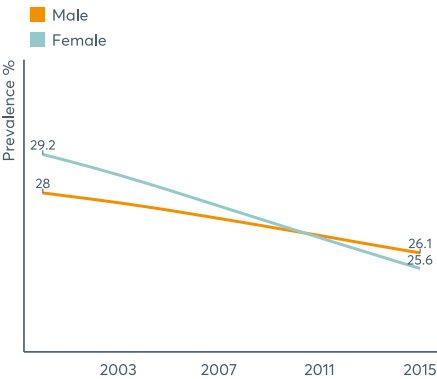
■ Male
■ Female

Prevalence %

29.2
28
26.1
25.6

2003 2007 2011 2015

Sources: NCD Risk Factor Collaboration.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Anaemia in WRA

Legend:
- All women
- Pregnant women
- Non-pregnant women

Prevalence %

35.3
35.3
34.8

31.7
31.7
31.4

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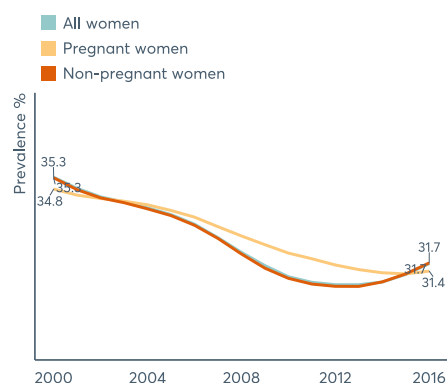
Source: WHO Global Health Observatory.

Notes: WRA = women of reproductive age. Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Salt intake (grams per day)

Legend:
- Northern Africa
- Global

3.9
5.6

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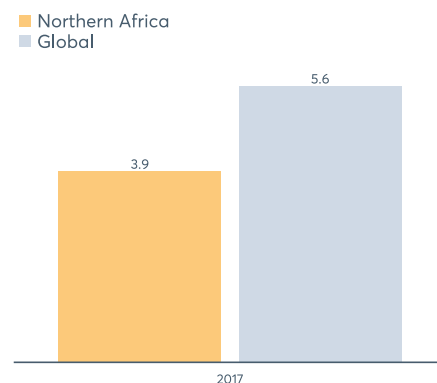
Source: Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Dietary needs

Consumption of food groups and components, 2016

Legend:
- Northern Africa
- Global

Midpoint of TMREL		
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%

Processed meat — 2g
Red meat — 22.5g
Salt — 2g / 5
Saturated fat — 7%
Sugar-sweetened beverages — 2.5g / 88 95
Trans fat — 0.5%
Vegetables — 360g
Whole grain — 125g
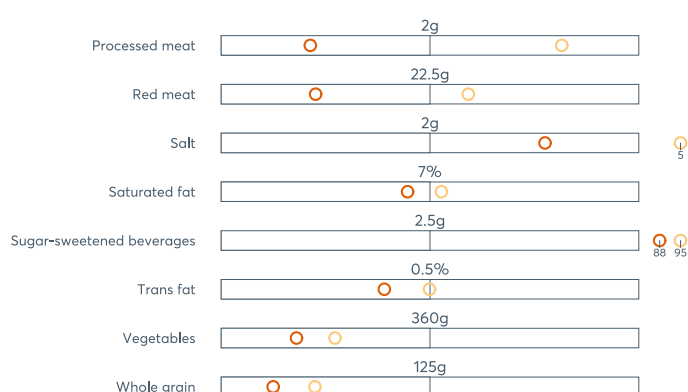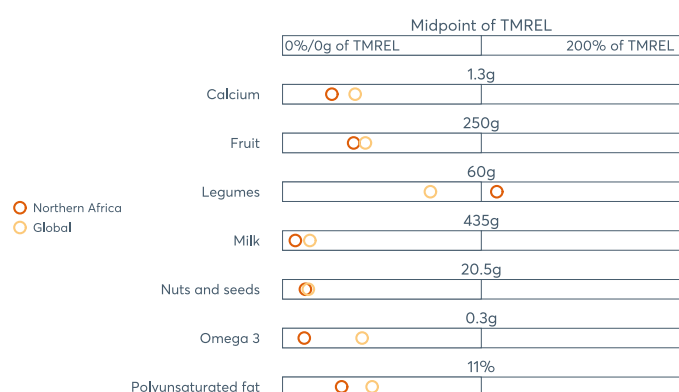
Sources: Global Burden of Disease, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

Notes: TMREL = theoretical minimum risk of exposure level. Men and women aged 25 and older. Based on population weighted means of 6 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

Source: FAOSTAT 2018.

Food supply
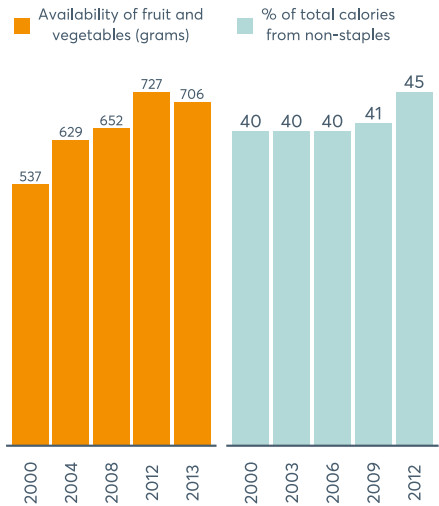
Source: FAOSTAT 2018.

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)
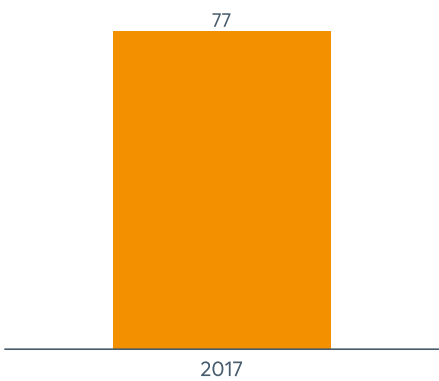
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2018.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 2 countries.

Drinking water coverage (% population)
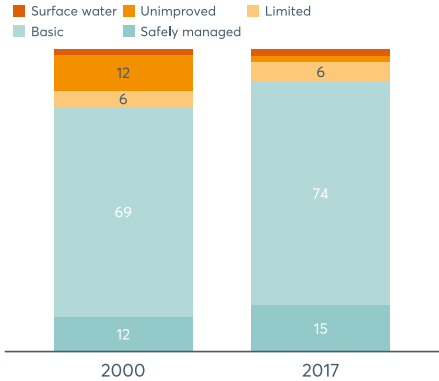
- Surface water
- Unimproved
- Limited
- Basic
- Safely managed

Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2019.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of between 2 and 6 countries.

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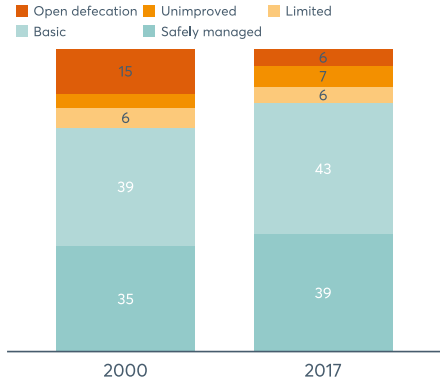
- Open defecation
- Unimproved
- Limited
- Basic
- Safely managed

Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2019.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of between 5 and 6 countries.

Resources, policies and targets

Development assistance

Basic nutrition ODA received

y-axis: ODA, US$, per 1,000 people (0, 25, 50, 75, 100)

x-axis: 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017
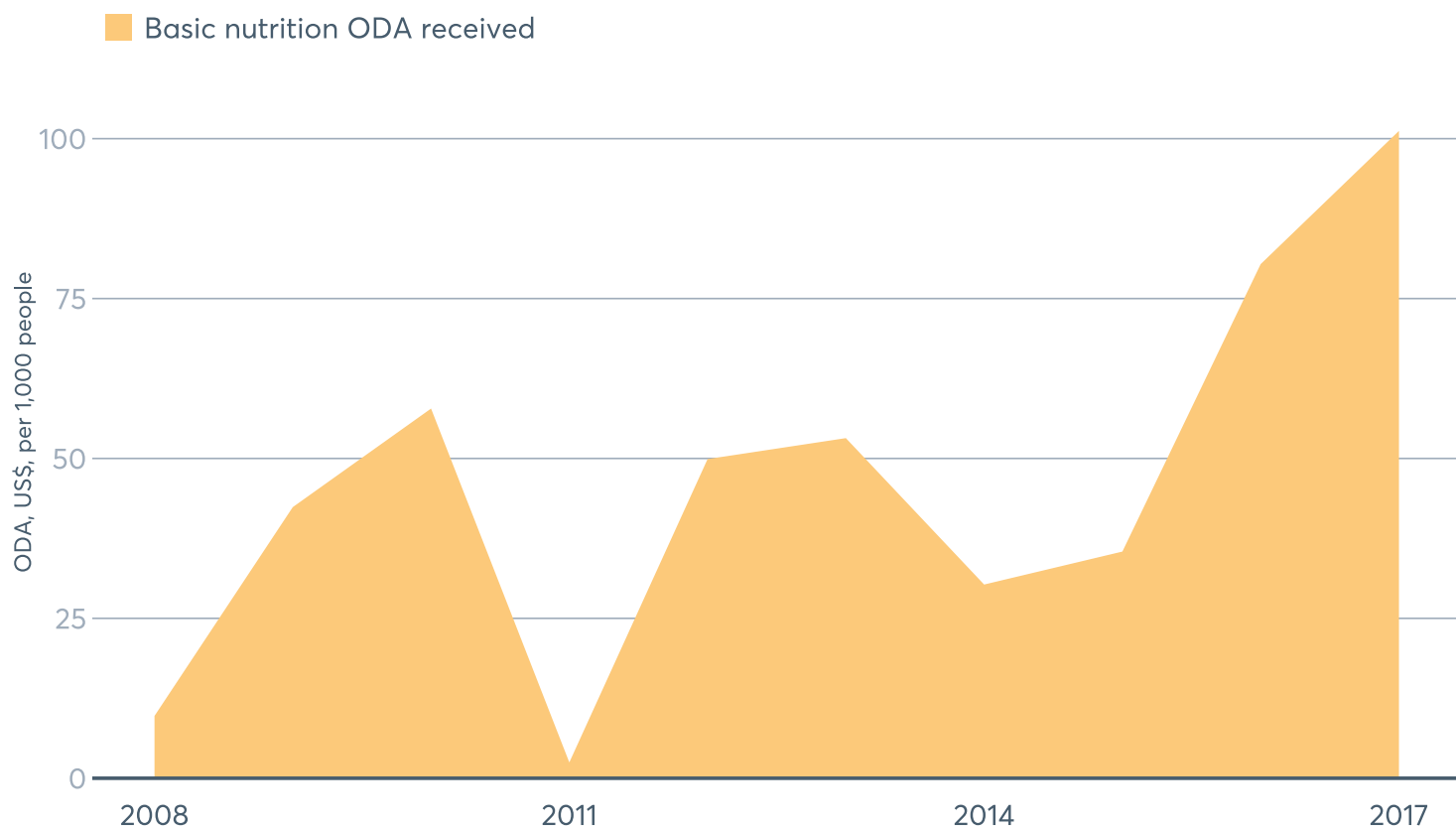
Sources: Development Initiatives based on OECD Development Assistance Commitee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

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	4/6
Sugar-sweetened beverage tax	2/6
Food-based dietary guidelines	0/6
Policy to reduce salt consumption	4/6
Operational policy, strategy or action plan to reduce unhealthy diet related to NCDs	4/6
Operational, multisectoral national NCD policy, strategy or action plan	0/6
Operational policy, strategy or action plan for diabetes	4/6
Policy to reduce the impact on children of marketing of foods and beverages high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars or salt	0/6
Policy to limit saturated fatty acids and virtually eliminate industrially produced trans-fats	2/6

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
5/6	3/6
Low birth weight	Child overweight
4/6	5/6
Exclusive breastfeeding	Wasting
5/6	4/6
Salt intake	Overweight adults and adolescents
4/6	5/6
Multisectoral comprehensive nutrition plan	
1/6	

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$)

Legend:
- $1.90/day
- $3.20/day
- GDP per capita

Poverty rates:
- 2005: $1.90/day = 7, $3.20/day = 30
- 2010: $1.90/day = 5, $3.20/day = 21
- 2015: $1.90/day = 3, $3.20/day = 16
- 2018: $1.90/day = 4, $3.20/day = 21

GDP per capita:
- 2015: 9,695
- 2016: 9,845
- 2017: 9,909
- 2018: 10,086
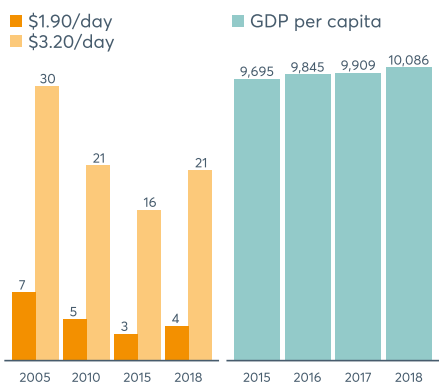
Sources: World Bank 2019, IMF World Economic Outlook Database 2019.

Notes: PPP = purchasing power parity. Based on population weighted means of between 5 and 6 countries.

Under-five mortality (per 1,000 live births)

- 2015: 31.0
- 2016: 30.1
- 2017: 29.1
- 2018: 28.3
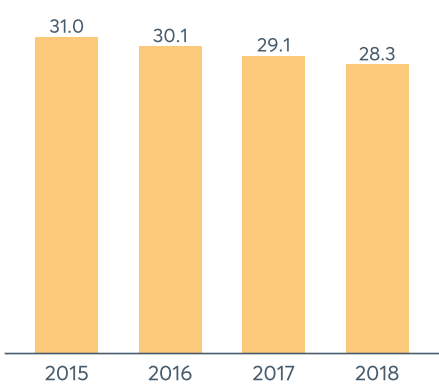
Source: UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation 2018.

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 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)	236,726	2018
Under-five population (thousands)	29,153	2019
Rural (%)	48	2018
>65 years (thousands)	13,659	2019

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

Notes: Based on population weighted means of 6 countries.

Population density of health workers per 1,000 people

Physicians	0.83	2016
Nurses and midwives	1.61	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 6 countries.