



보도자료



보도시점

배포 즉시

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Global Food Security and Nutritional Inequality
- Global Food Disparities Caused by High Distribution Costs
and the Lack of Cold-Chain Systems -

According to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026, released by the United Nations, 2.69 billion people, or 32.7% of the global population, were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2025. In other words, nearly one in three people worldwide could not afford a balanced diet that included fruits, vegetables, and protein-rich foods. This widening nutritional gap across countries and regions was driven not only by high food prices, but also by rising processing and distribution costs.

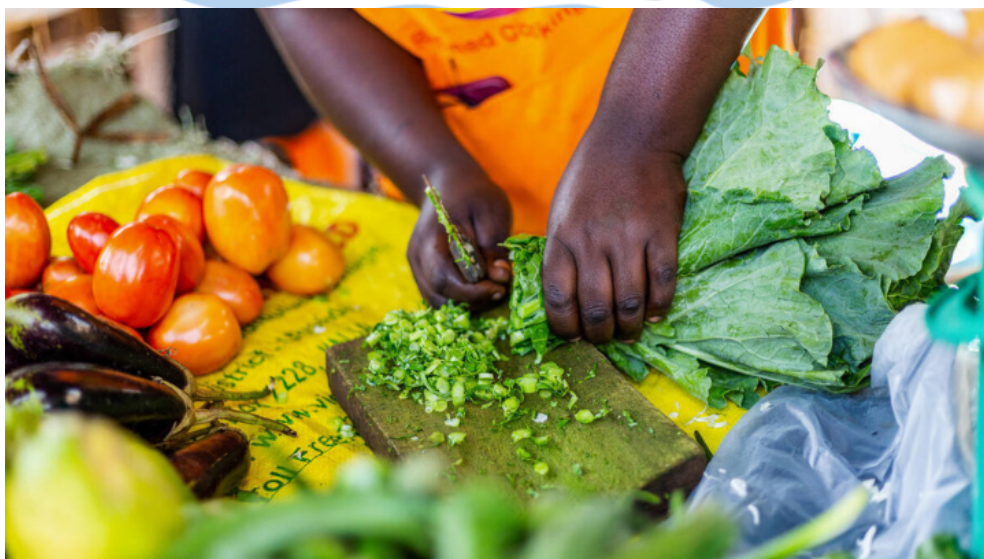


Photo: A Better Future (July 23, 2026)

Regional disparities were even more pronounced. Africa recorded the highest proportion, with 66.6% of its population unable to afford a healthy diet. This figure was more than twice the rates recorded in Asia, at 28.9%, and in Latin America and the Caribbean, at 25.7%. Although the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet declined globally, the proportion increased in Africa, indicating that food inequality in the region was worsening.

The report identified distribution costs as a major factor behind the rising cost of a healthy diet. Between 70% and 75% of the final price paid by consumers is generated after food leaves the production stage, while processing, logistics, and wholesale activities account for up to 40% of the retail price. In regions with inadequate roads and storage facilities, losses of fresh food increase, further raising the prices of fruits, vegetables, and animal-source foods.

The lack of cold-chain infrastructure was also identified as a major cause of widening food disparities. Currently, less than half of the food worldwide that requires refrigeration is transported through temperature-controlled supply chains. As a result of these gaps in cold-chain infrastructure, an estimated 526 million metric tons of food were lost in 2017 alone.

The report also highlighted imbalances in agricultural support policies. Although fruits, vegetables, and animal-source foods account for approximately 70% of the cost of a healthy diet, global agricultural support remains heavily concentrated on staple grains, sugar, dairy products, beef, and oil crops. The report found that lowering the production costs of inexpensive staple crops alone could widen the relative price gap between less nutritious diets and healthy diets.

It therefore recommended increasing the productivity and supply of fruits, vegetables, and legumes, while investing more heavily in post-production infrastructure, including cold-chain systems, roads, and storage facilities. The report also emphasized the need for region-specific solutions, such as expanding cold-chain infrastructure in Africa, improving transportation networks in Latin America and the Caribbean, and strengthening post-harvest storage systems in Asia.

The department in charge The 4rd HLMUN PRESS team	Team leader	Total management	CHOI DAIN
	Team member	Writer&Article translator	SONG YOONJIN, JANG SEOYEON
Hallym University Student Council hallym40th_chanlan@naver.com			
Hallym University 4rd HLMUN hallymmun@gmail.com			

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