The 2013 Global Hunger Index (GHI) is calculated for 120 countries for which data on its three component indicators are available and where measuring hunger is considered most relevant.

The GHI combines three equally weighted indicators into one score: the proportion of people who are undernourished, the proportion of children under five who are underweight, and the mortality rate of children younger than age five.

An increase in a country’s GHI score indicates that the hunger situation is worsening, while a decrease in the score indicates improvement in the country’s hunger situation.

At the time of writing, this year’s GHI reflected the most recent available country-level data for the three component indicators spanning the period 2008 to 2012.

The three indicators contributed differently to the decline of 7.0 points in the world GHI score since 1990. A decline in child underweight lowered the world GHI score by 3.0 points, whereas changes in the share of undernourished people in the population and the child mortality rate contributed reductions of 2.7 and 1.3 points, respectively.

The 2013 world GHI, however, remains “serious.” Nineteen countries still have levels of hunger that are “extremely alarming” or “alarming.”

The number of the hungry in the world has remained unacceptably high: In 2010–2012, about 870 million people were chronically undernourished, and according to FAO, this number declined only slightly to 842 million in 2011–2013.

The 2013 world GHI fell by close to 34 percent from the 1990 world GHI, from a score of 20.8 to 13.8. South Asia has the highest 2013 GHI score, although it witnessed the steepest absolute decline in GHI scores since 1990, amounting to almost 11 points.

From the 1990 GHI to the 2013 GHI, 23 countries reduced their scores by 50 percent or more. Forty-six countries made modest progress. Their GHI scores dropped by between 25 and 49.9 percent, and 21 countries decreased their GHI scores by less than 25 percent.