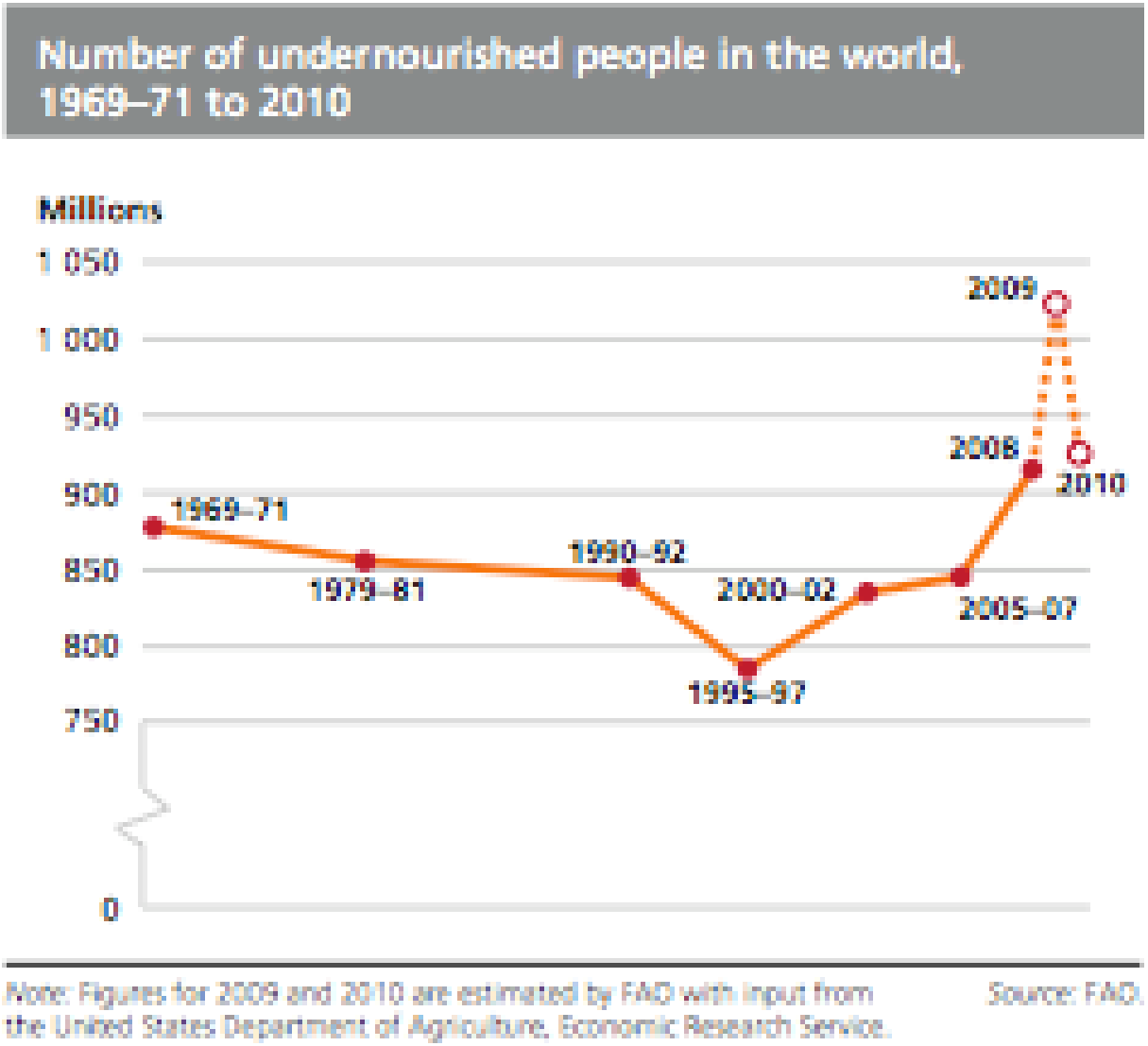
Sustainable food systems and the right to food

Olivier De Schutter

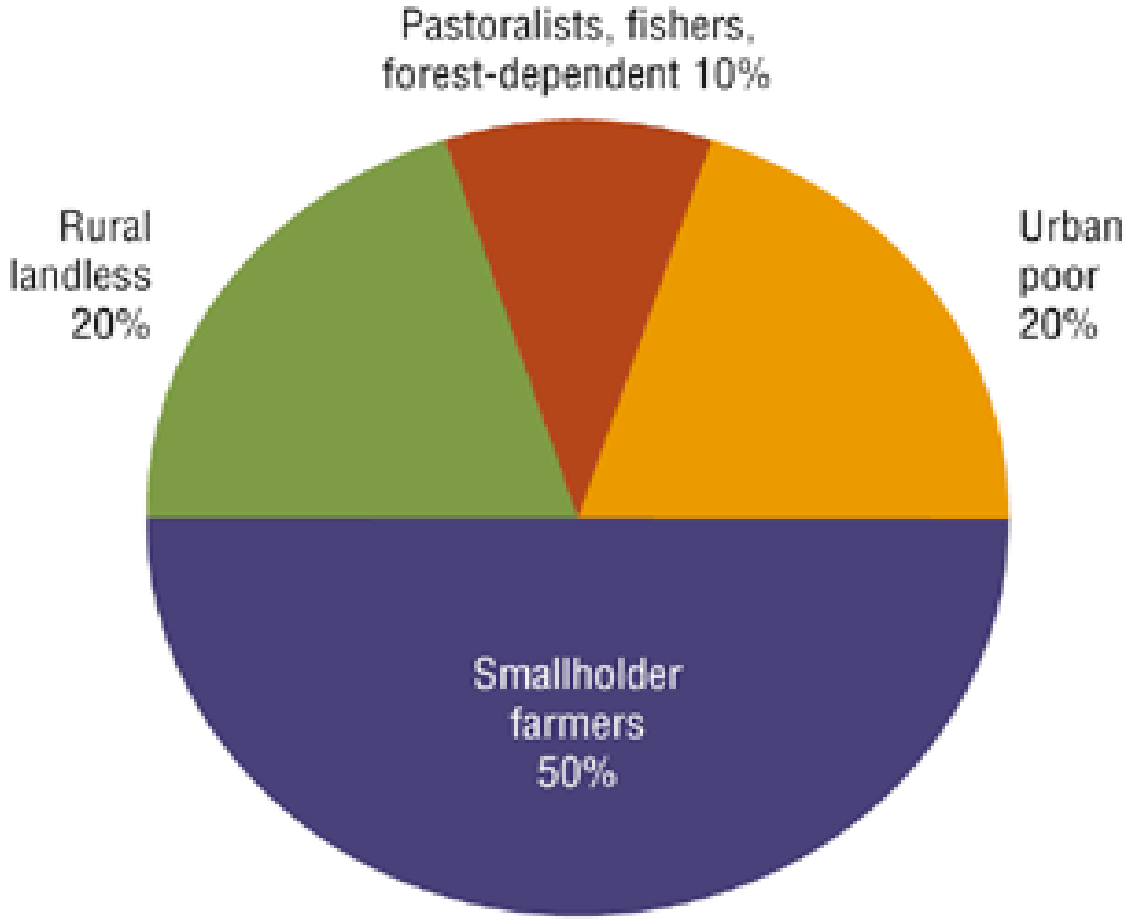
UK Food Group, London, 24 September 2010

The situation of hunger - 2010



The question of entitlements : Amartya Sen

Breaking down the problem: who are the hungry?



The stages of the production of hunger

Farmers deprived of means of production

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Impoverishment and inequalities in rural areas

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Family farming non viable

Expansion of labor on large plantations

Rural flight

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Slums / working proletariat in the cities

THE TWO CRISES

The poverty crisis

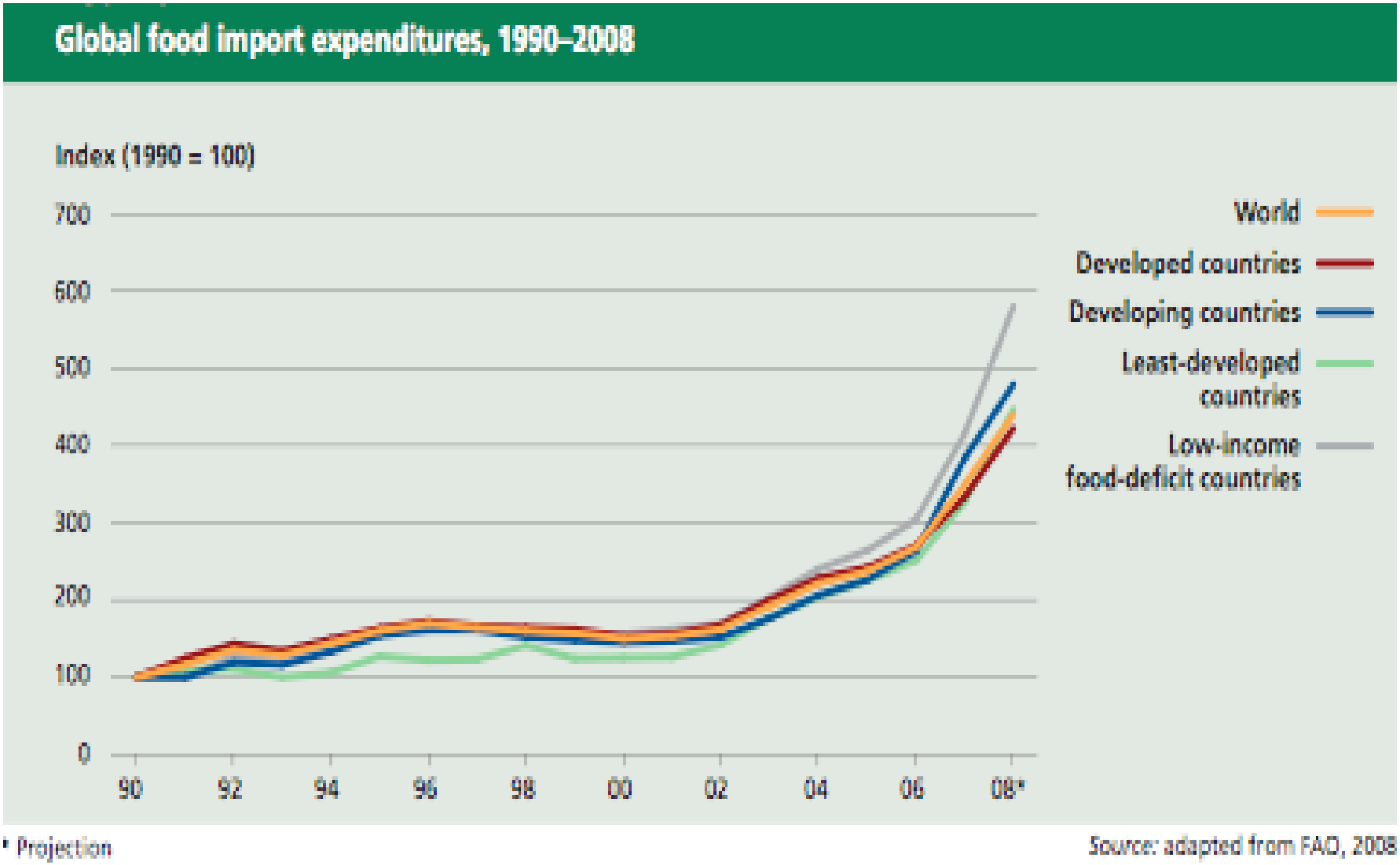
The ecological crisis

THE POVERTY CRISIS

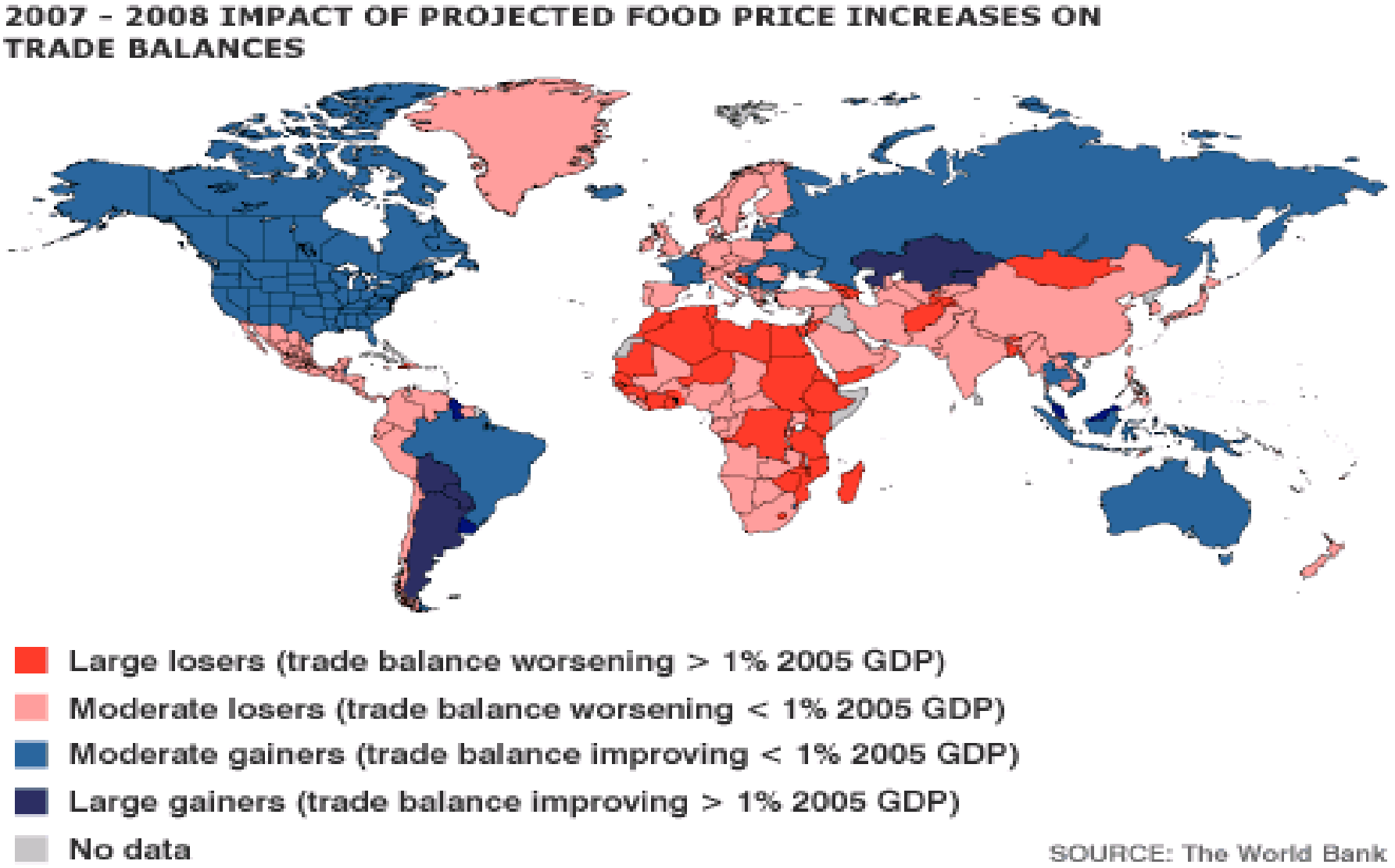
The 1960s and 1970s : State-led agriculture, and the 'Green Revolutions'

The 1980s and 1990s : liberalization of agriculture and the shock of competitiveness

An increased dependency on food imports



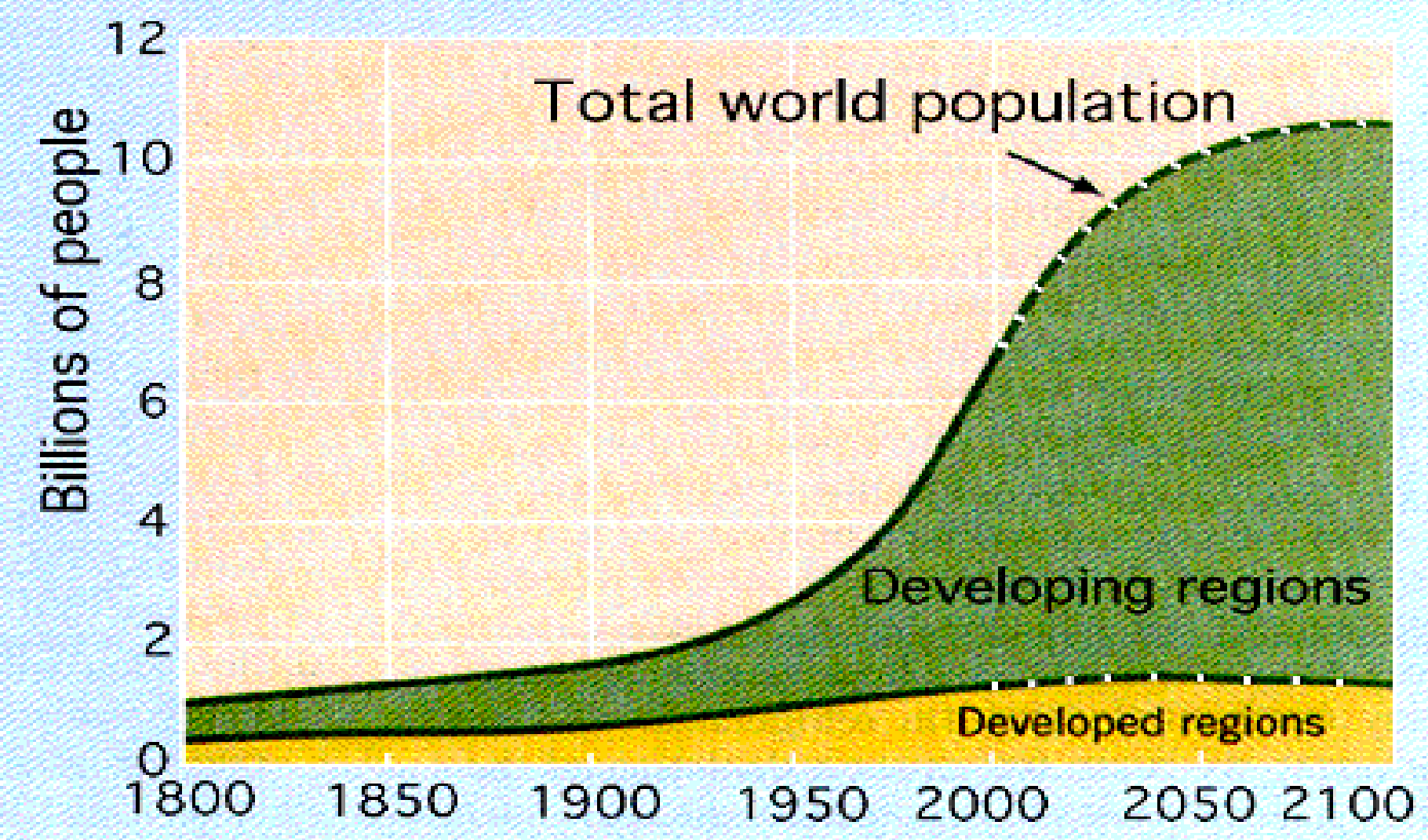
The vulnerability of net-food importing countries



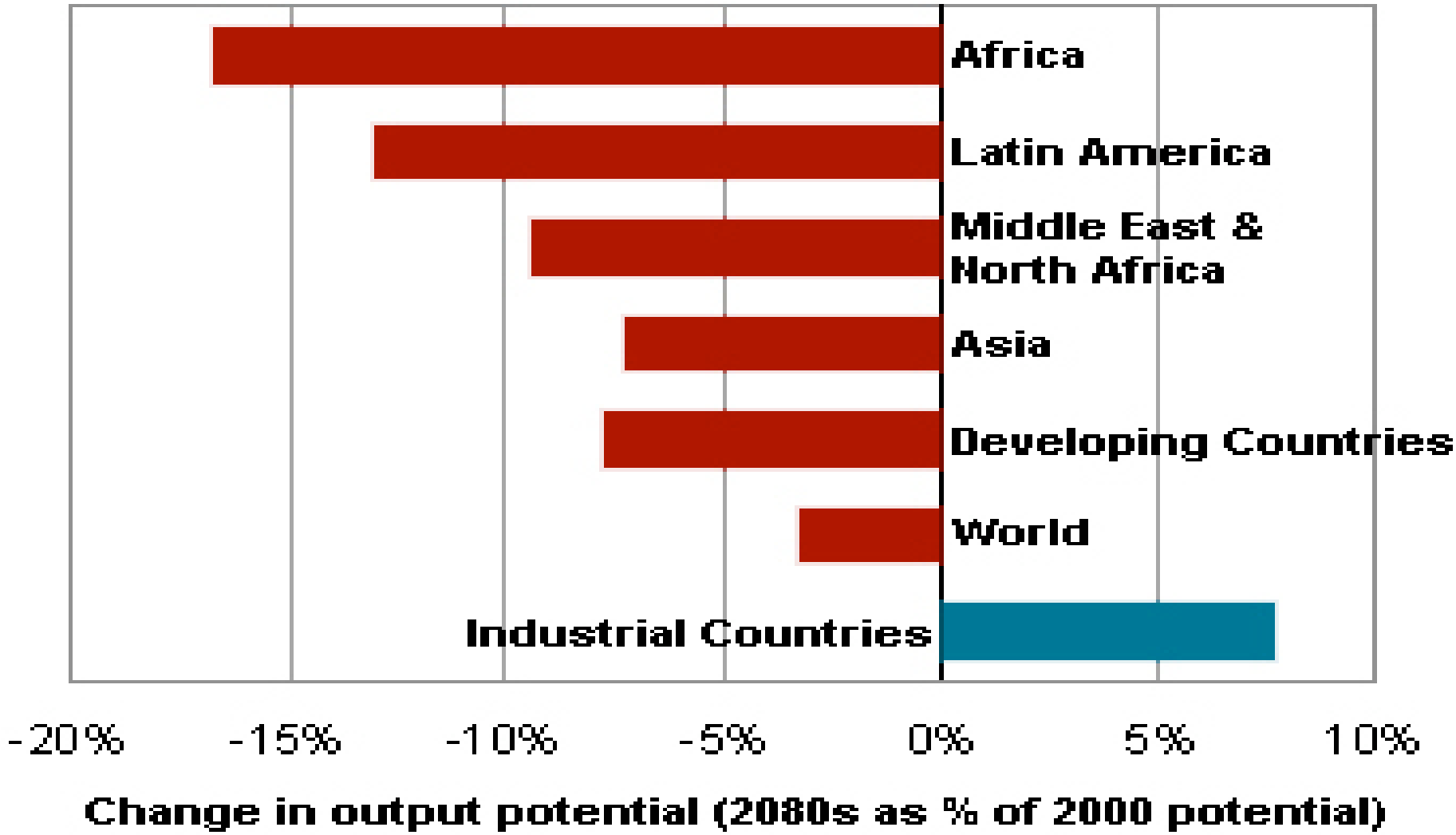
THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

- Population growth
- The impact of climate change on agricultural production
- The decline of growth of agricultural productivity
- Soil erosion and degradation
- Depletion of freshwater reserves

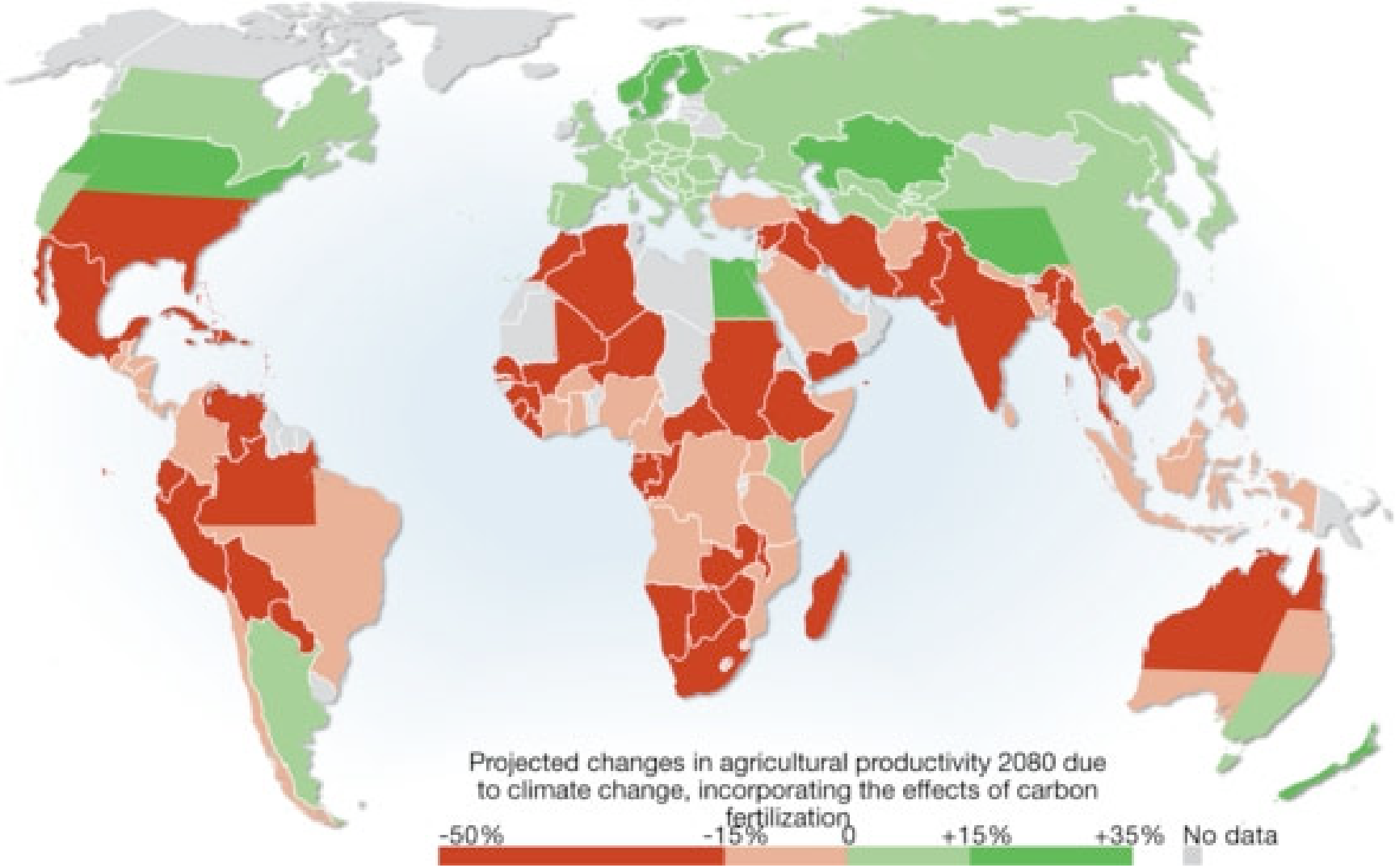
Population growth



The impact of climate change

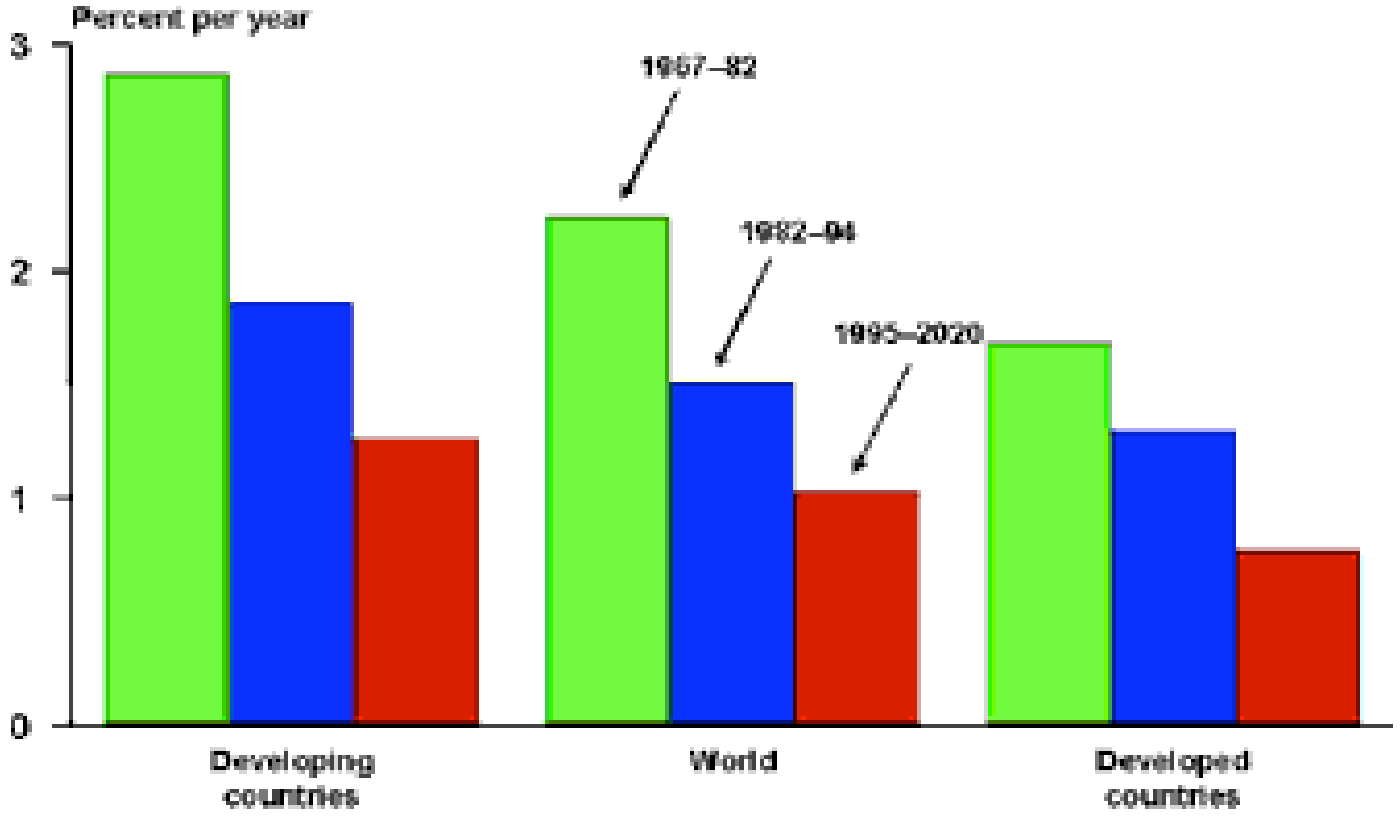


The impact of climate change



Declining growth of agricultural production

Annual growth in cereal yields, 1967–82, 1982–94, and 1995–2020



Source: P. Pinstrup-Andersen, R. Pandya-Lorch, and M.W. Rosegrant, *World Food Prospects: Critical Issues for the Early Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: IFPRI, 1999).

ADDRESSING THE CRISES

- Different pathways to agricultural development: the role of agro-ecological approaches
- Allowing smallholders to prosper
- The role of local food systems
- The role of national strategies for the realization of the right to food: a tool to provoke systemic change

CAN AGRO-ECOLOGICAL MODES OF PRODUCTION FEED THE PLANET?

International Assessment of Agricultural Sciences and Technologies for Development (IAASTD)(April 2008)

- agro-industrial modes of production lead to negative environmental (depletion of soils, overuse of groundwater, loss of biodiversity) and social (dualization of farming, greater dependency) impacts
- investment and research in agriculture must be redirected towards more sustainable modes of production

Jules Pretty et al. (2006), 'Resource Conserving Agriculture Increases Yields in Developing Countries', Environmental Science & Technology, vol. 40 No. 4 : review of 286 projects in 57 countries show an increase of productivity of 79% on average with low ue of external inputs (comp. use of improved varieties : high yields maintaine only by relying on external inputs)