



Seminars of the Greater Mediterranean

FOOD SECURITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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Three major problems are at the forefront of world attention and debate:

Economic crisis

Rising food prices

Climate change

Starting with the assumption that sustainable human development (SHD) and well being is the finality of socio-economic growth and development, an attempt is made to show that all development programmes share the goal of being in the service of the health, development and well being of man.

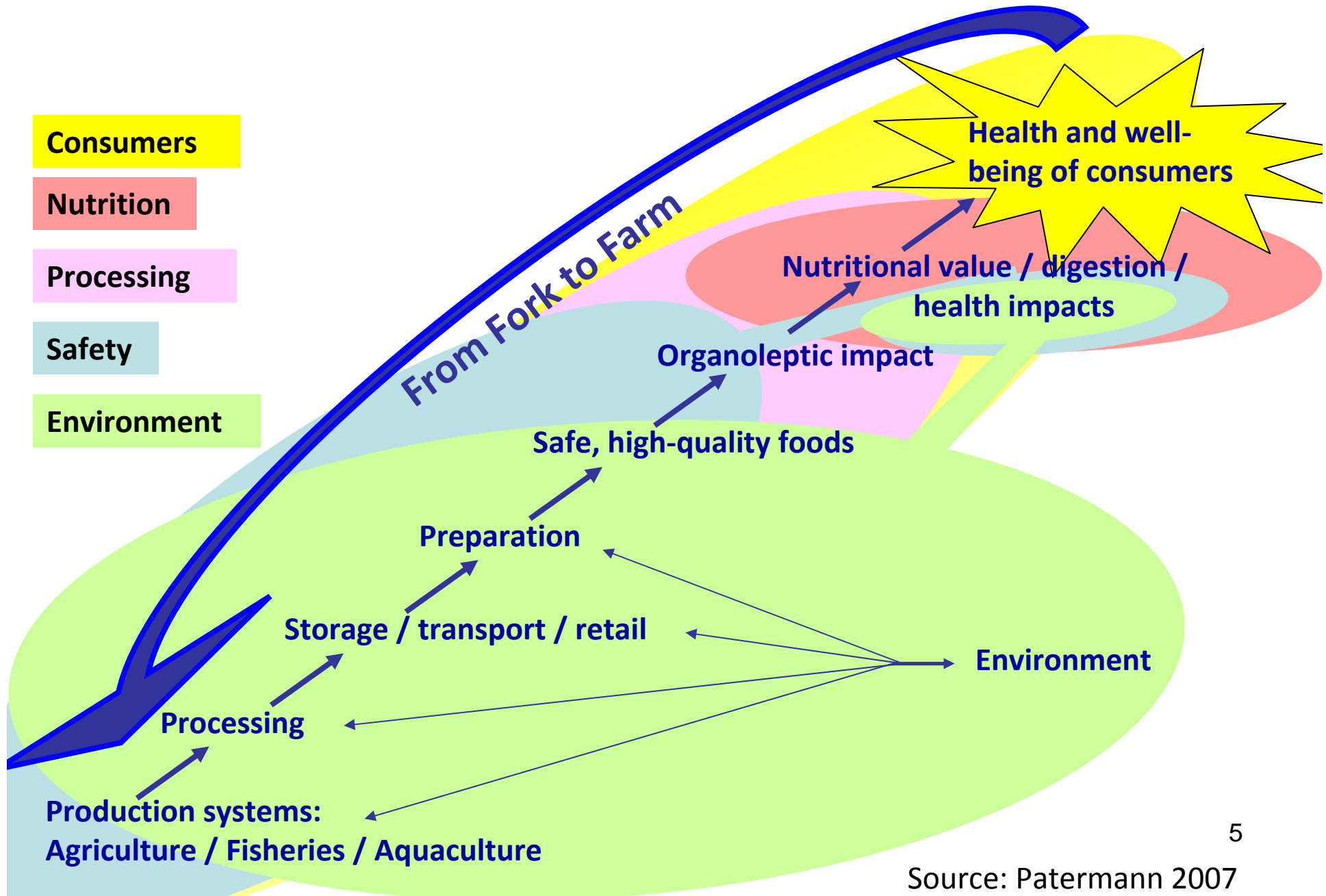
The Human Capital

- Food, health and nutrition are taken as the example that connects all three together, being impacted by all three.
- The example of Egypt and its compromised human capital is given to highlight the challenges that are met with and review the missing elements that bring the human being to the forefront of development efforts.
- The element often missed, is for directing resources and efforts to preserve and protect the human capital of a nation, without which development cannot take place.

The Food Chain

- All the participants in our meeting can find where they fit in the following slide which is a representation of the different domains or activity areas that together make up the FOOD CHAIN.
- They all contribute to the shared objective of providing “man” with a safe and equilibrated diet.

“Fork to Farm”



The Environment, Health and Wellbeing

- The following three slides illustrate the relations and inter-relationships between the health and wellbeing of man and the different types of global environmental change and the impact of the ecosystem on diet and health in the context of global change.

FIGURE 1.5 Pathways by which climate change affects human health, including local modulating influences and the feedback influence of adaptation measures.
Source: adapted from Patz et al., 2000 (22).

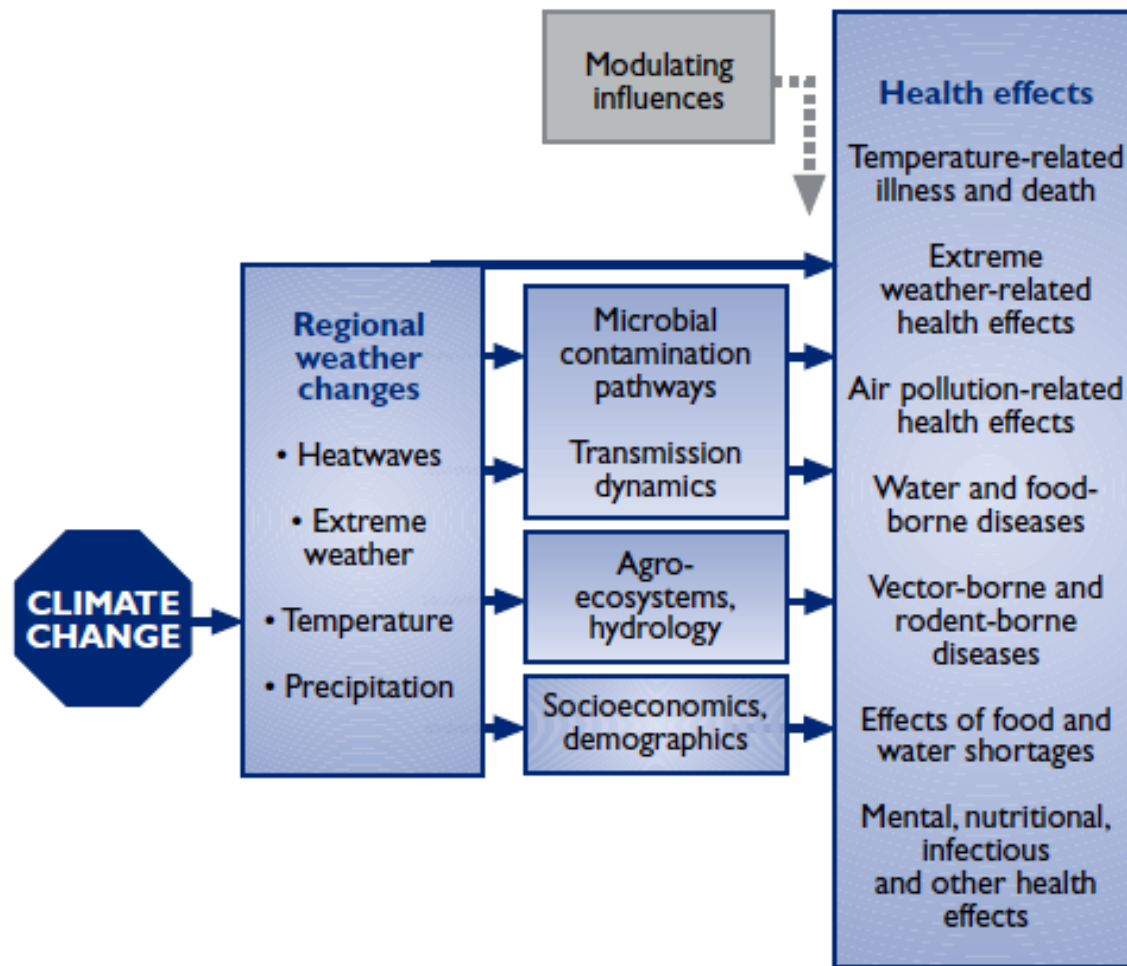
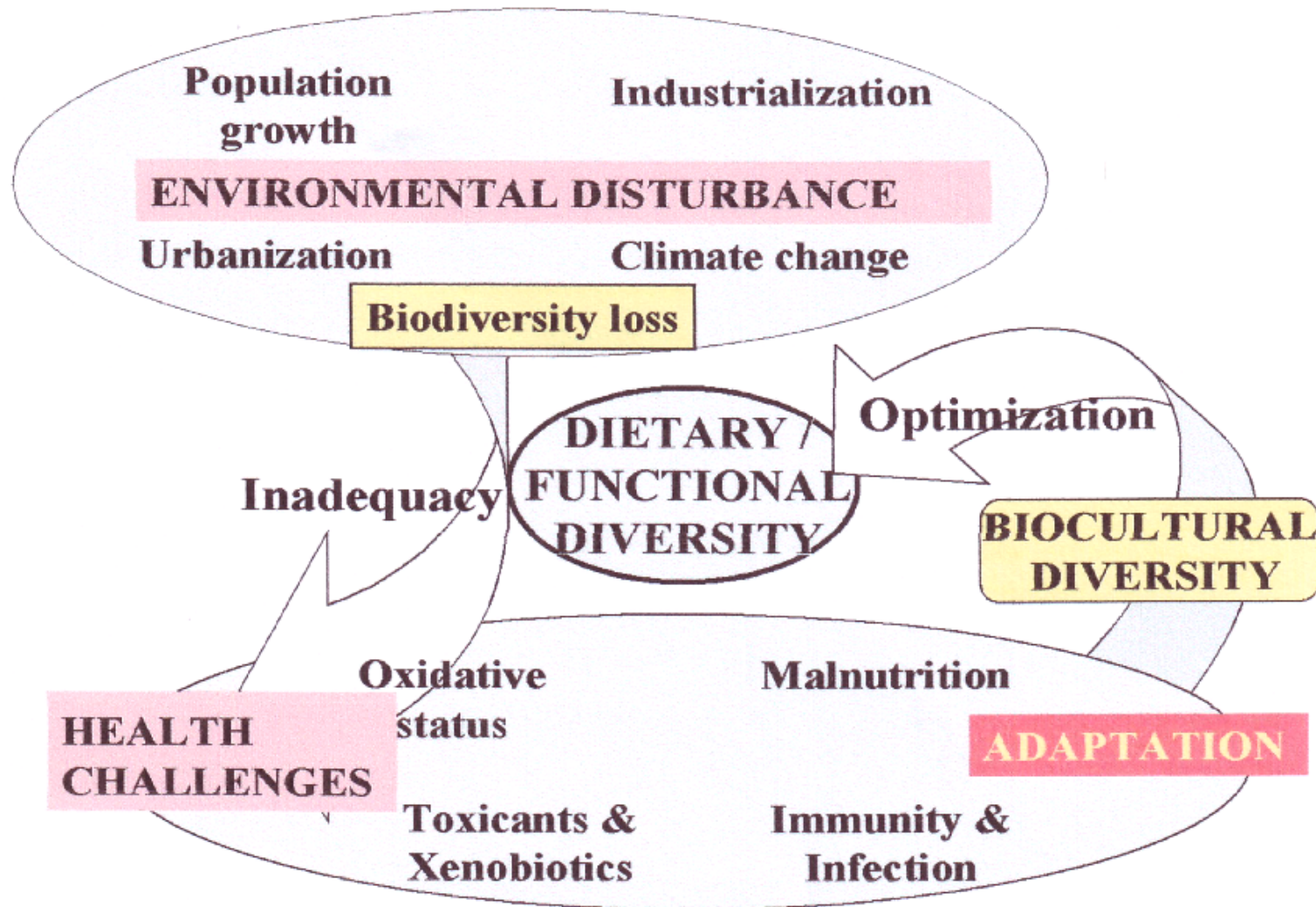


Figure 1: Model of Biodiversity, Diet and Health in the Context of Global Change



Source: Timothy Johns, 2001

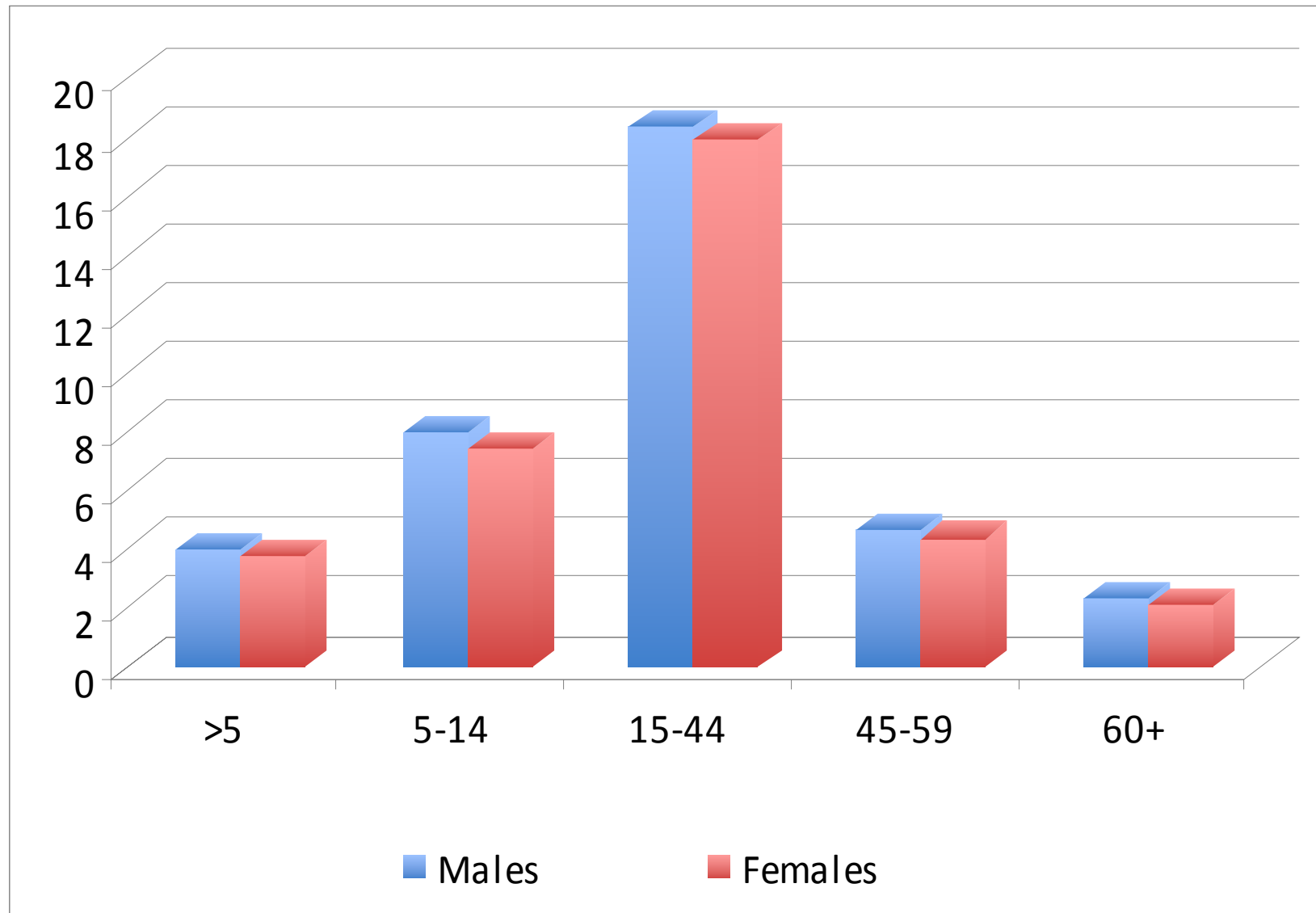
The case of Egypt

- The population census of November 2006 in Egypt showed *a de facto* population of 72.2 million.
- At the beginning of 2008 the population had increased by around one and half million to reach 74.3

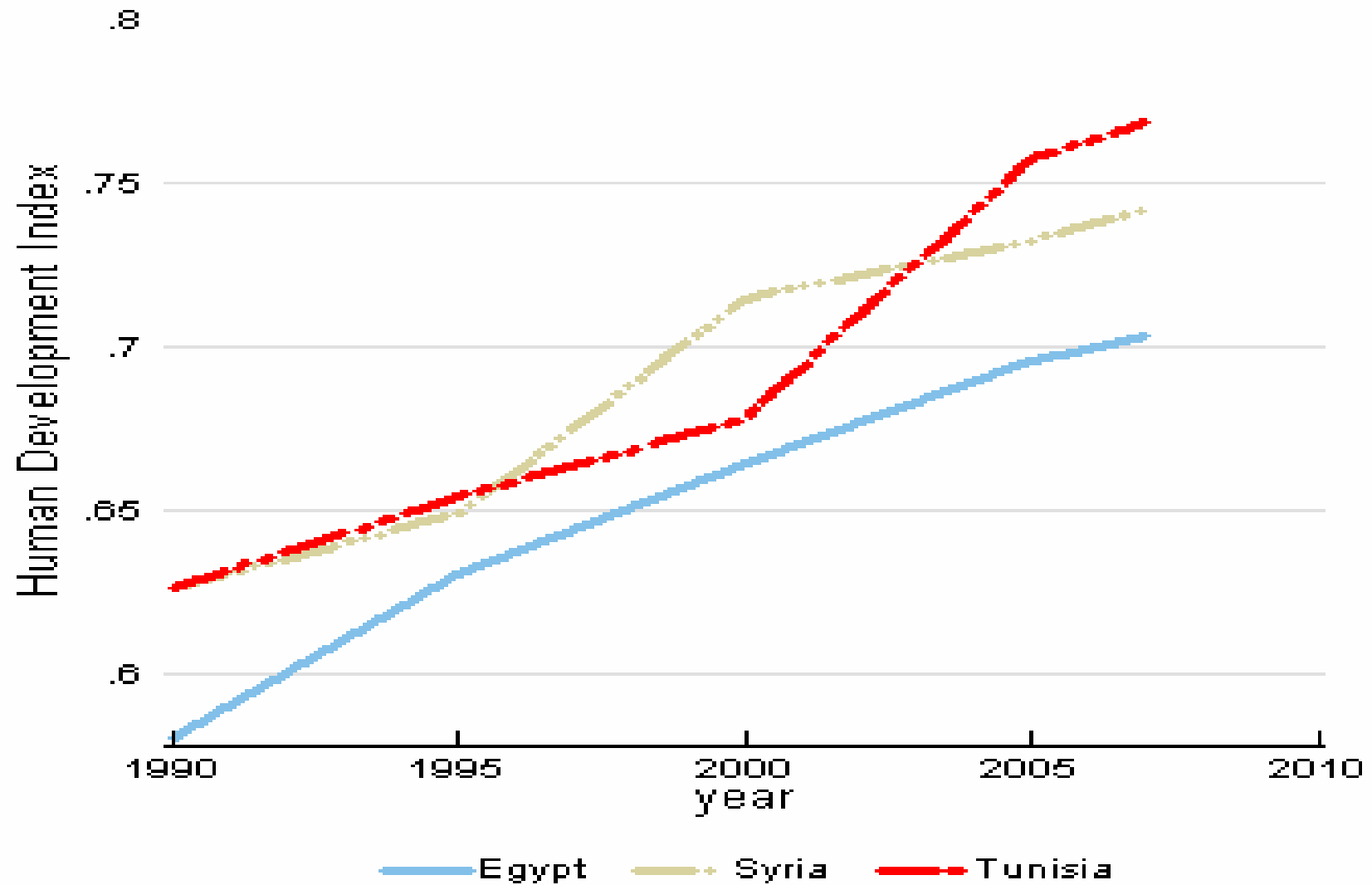
(source: CAPMAS 2008)

Age structure of the population (in millions), by sex, 2006

(source: CAPMAS 2006 census)



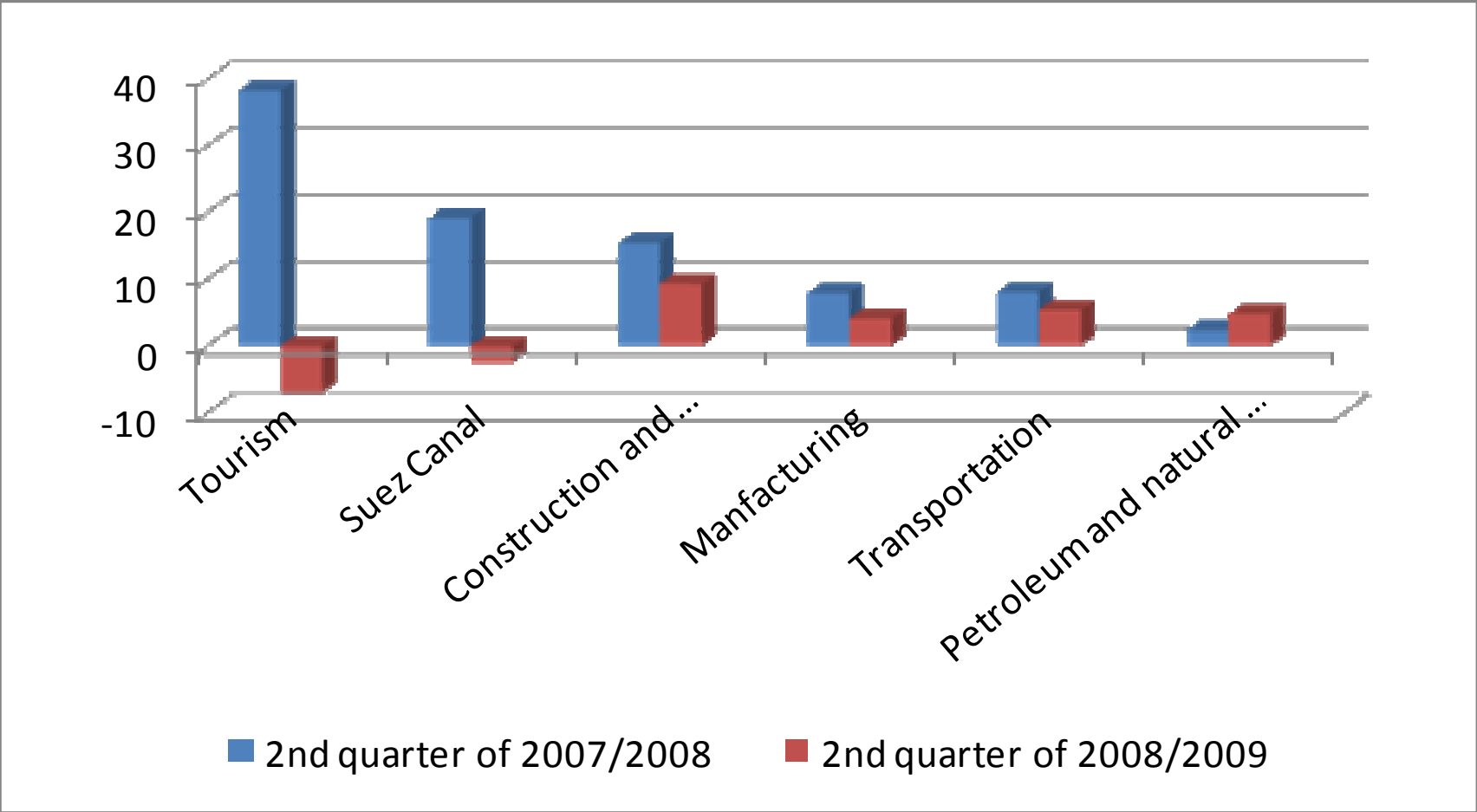
Trends in HDI 1990-2007 (UNDP)



Egypt and the global economic crisis

- The Growth rates for 2009 are estimated to slow down to around 4.5 percent.
- The financial crisis has heightened Egypt's vulnerabilities and exposed weaknesses in its competitiveness.
- The crisis contributed to an inflation rate that reached an unprecedented level at 23.6 percent in August 2008.
- Overall food inflation reached 35.5 percent.
- Consumer prices for wheat flour, rice and maize increased by more than 100 percent those for vegetable oils increased by 70 percent.
- As global commodity prices started to fall, Egypt's inflation rates gradually started to come down.
- The overall inflation rates stood at 11.8 percent in April 2009.

Growth rates in economic sectors, 2007-2009



Source: Ministry of Economic Development, Follow up report of the economic and social plan performance, 2008/2009

Household food security

In Egypt, household food security has been gravely affected by the **increase in food and fuel prices** that is superimposed on **increasing poverty and unemployment rates**. Rising food prices have hit the country at a time when the rates of malnutrition reported in the Egypt DHS in 2003, 2005 and now again in 2008 are on the rise. Already affected by the socio-economic impact of the **avian influenza epidemic** (now turned endemic) the segments of the population with limited incomes are in urgent need of protection and help, in particular the children. Manifestations of malnutrition are emerging, in the wake of **loss of dietary diversity** and **reduction in food intakes**. (loss in quality and quantity), progressive **environmental pollution**; increase in **food borne risks**; poor sanitation and environmental hygiene (habitat).

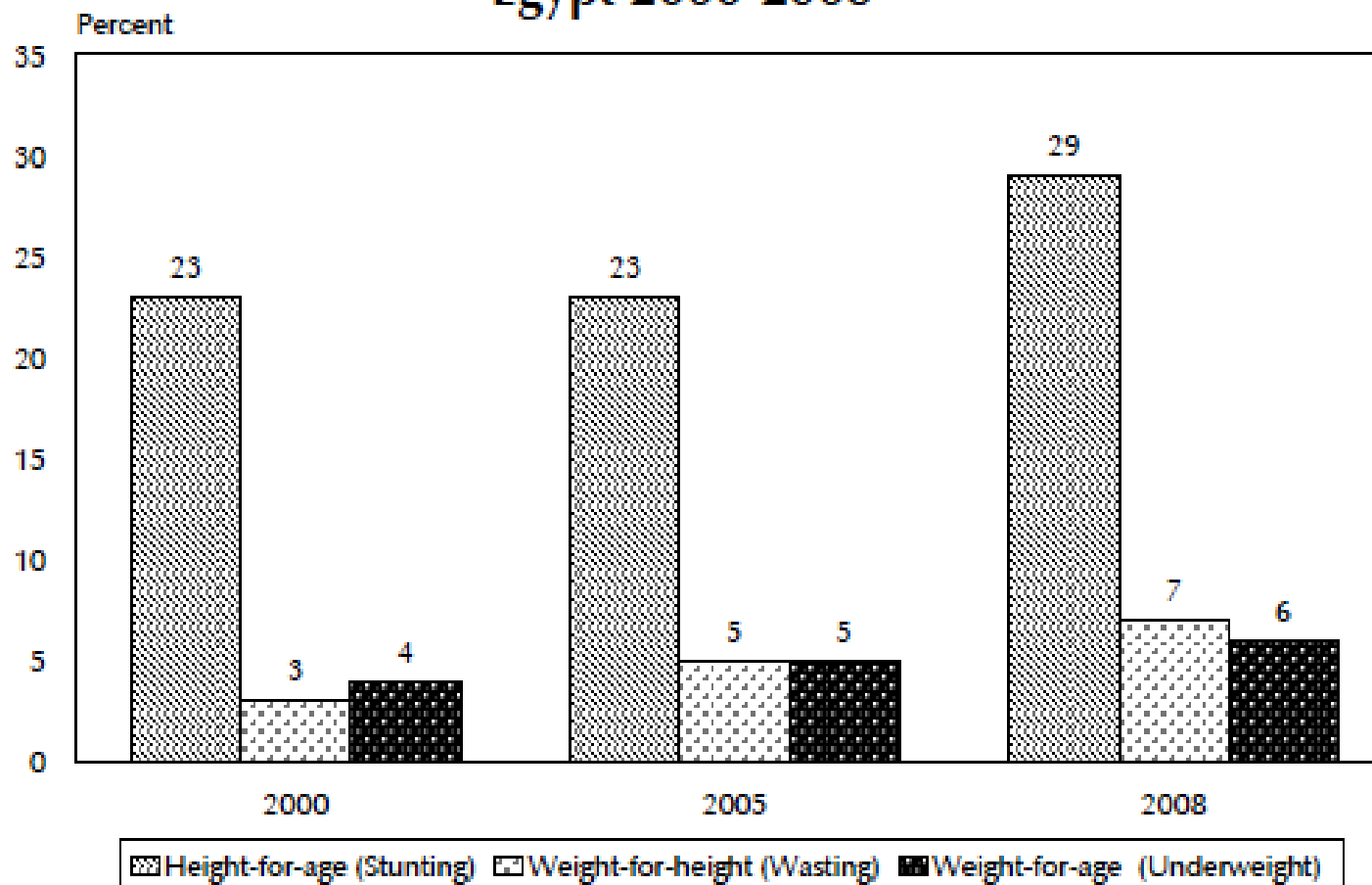
Some factors influencing quantity and quality of food

- Population pressure in a **food deficit country**
- Economic crisis and rising food prices
- Avian influenza epidemic
- Rising poverty
- Rising unemployment
- Diminished purchasing power
- Incomplete basic infrastructure systems and services
- **Alarming increase in environmental pollution**
- **Natural resources poorly managed and degrade**
- **Growing food safety problems**
- **Impact of CC on food, nutrition and health not yet fully analyzed / addressed**
- Agricultural reform policy not yet in full implementation, priority directed to supporting agricultural exports
- Agricultural policy conceived in isolation from the health sector, equation of food production and balanced food consumption not calculated
- Disruption of traditional dietary system and slow programme for valorization of locally produced food products, loss of dietary diversity

Child malnutrition in Egypt

- The downward trend in malnutrition has recently reversed.
- Malnutrition is one of the few childhood indicators that have shown deterioration (El-Zanaty and Way, 2009) .
- Six percent of Egyptian children are underweight in 2008, compared with 5 % in 2005.
- Stunting rates reached 29 % in 2008. Comparison of the results with the 2005 EDHS show that the stunting level increased by 26 % between the two surveys (23 % in 2005) and wasting rates reached almost 7% (5% in 2005).
- Disparities are moderate for wasting and underweight, but significant in terms of stunting.
- Stunting levels range from 22.3% in urban governorates to 39.3 percent in urban Lower Egypt. This is almost 20% higher than rural Lower Egypt, where most child well-being indicators are worse than the national average.

**Figure 14.2 Trend in Nutritional Status of Young Children
(WHO Child Growth Standards)
Egypt 2000-2008**



Note: Data are for children under age five for whom the nutrition status measure fell below -2 SD from the WHO Child Growth Standards reference population median.

Source: Egypt DHS 2008

Food deprivation in Children under 5 years

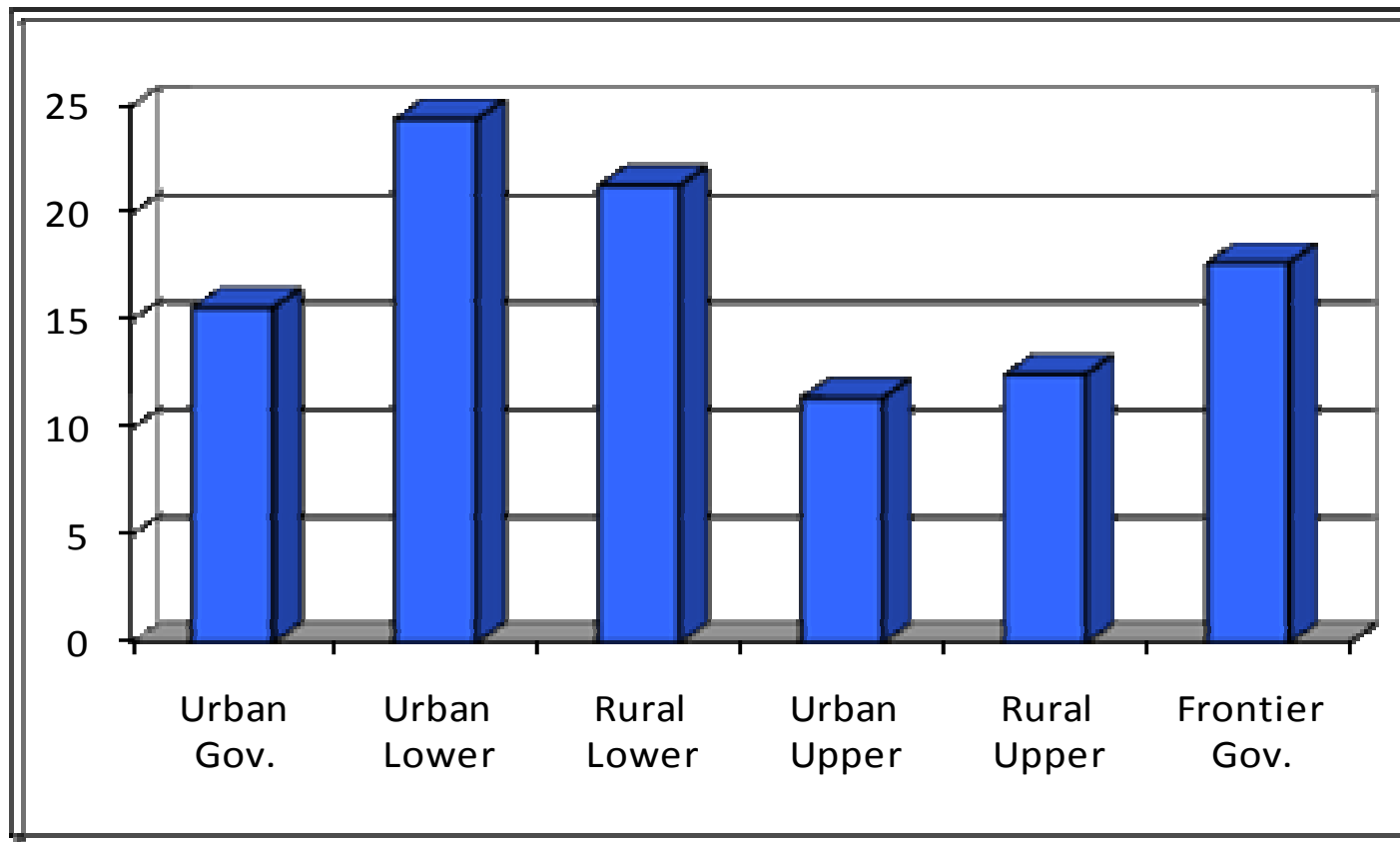
- Severe food deprivation is measured using data on severe anthropometric failure in children under the age of five.
- The severe deprivation indicator is the proportion of children under five years of age whose height and weight for their age are more than minus three standard deviations below the median of WHO Child Growth Standards -2006.
- It is estimated that 17 % of children under five years old (representing 1.5 million children under the age of five) are severely food deprived.

Protecting and preserving the health and nutrition of children: an investment in the human capital of the nation

- The critical importance of the early childhood years, from conception to 18-24 months of age and its contribution to the realization of the full developmental potential of children so that they can grow into healthy, active and productive adults
- Nutritional problems of early childhood are at the origin of most of the nutrition related chronic non communicable diseases of adult life

Percentage of children under 5 years severely food deprived by Regions

source: Egypt DHS 2008



Some current national efforts

- Creation of a Ministry for the Family
- Adoption of a Child Law
- Creation of high level inter-ministerial policy coordination committee to implement accelerated action to apply the national nutrition policy and plan
- Social protection reform for families in need
- Poverty alleviation programs and well targeted social safety nets, ex.: food subsidy, conditional cash transfer program
- Health and Education reforms
- Economic policy favoring economic growth and DFI
- Fiscal reform
- Agricultural Policy – AGR sector regarded as vibrant with great potential for growth
- Programmes for adapting/ mitigating/ coping with CC

What are the missing ingredients?

- Information systems,
- Governance,
- Integrated Policies, and
- Coordination

Actions that can bridge the missing elements:

- and monitoring and evaluation.
- Institutional design that can allow effective trans-sectoral collaboration.
- Policy level dialogue between the sectors
- Joint conception/planning of integrated strategies
- Agricultural food and nutrition to be placed on the national/international climate change (CC) agendas
- Sustainable economic development and poverty reduction to remain top priorities
- Adaptation of food security to the impact of CC strategies developed in function of local contexts

The challenge for successful realization of development action that serves the prosperity of nations and the well being of people lies in integration, in synergy, in complementarity of effort that are coordinated together to build and preserve **the human capital** and serve the shared objective of **Sustainable Human Development**.

THANK YOU