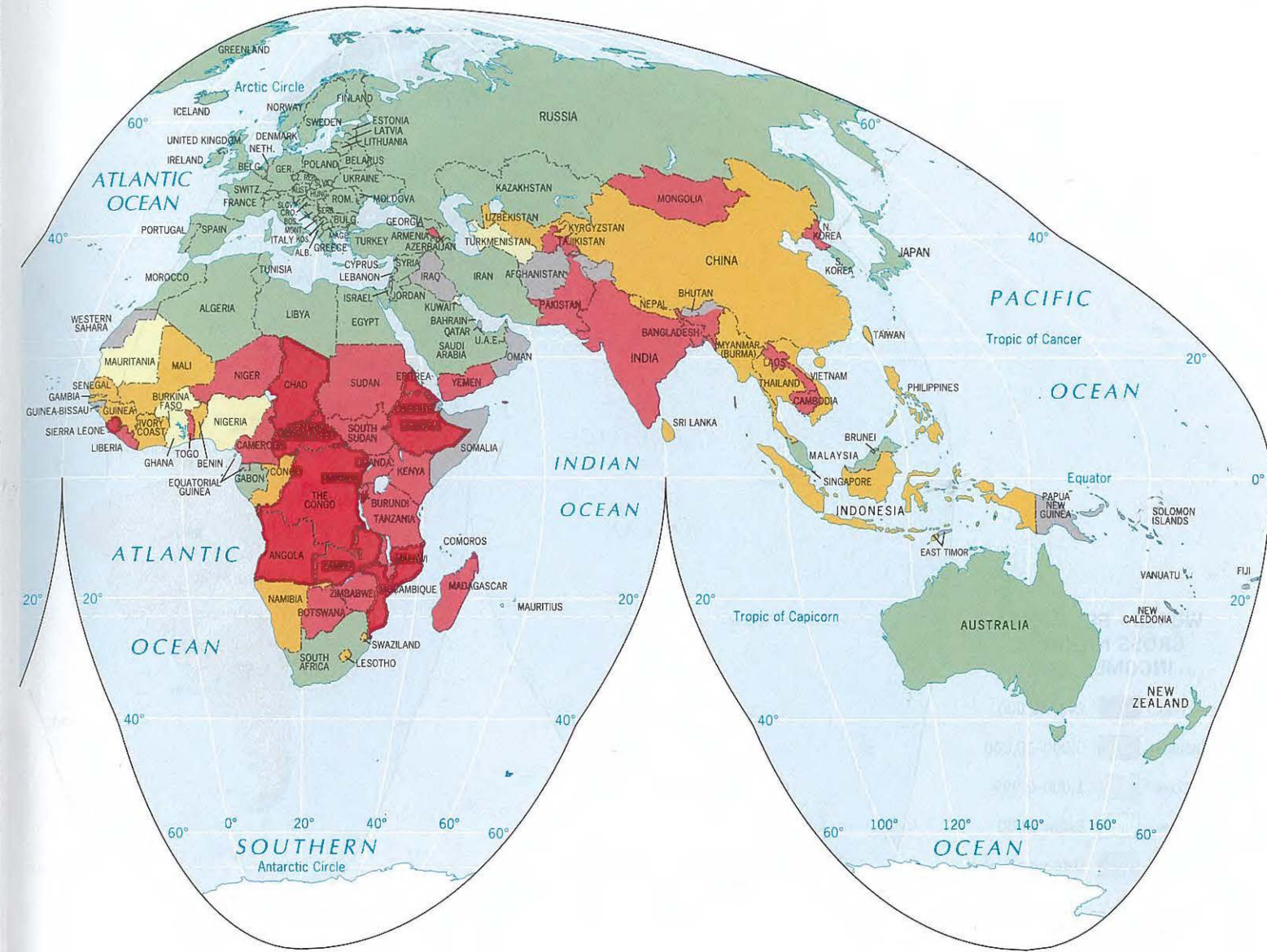


Figure 1.2 World Food Program Hunger Map, 2011. Classifications designate the proportion of the population malnourished. The World Food Program estimates just under 1 billion people worldwide are malnourished. *Courtesy of: United Nations World Food Program 2011.*

On its face, such a huge problem might seem easy to solve. Take the total annual food production in the world, divide it by the world's population, and we have plenty of food for everyone. Yet, one-seventh of the world's population is seriously malnourished. The vast majority of the 1 billion malnourished people on Earth are women and children, who have little money and even less power.

Figure 1.2 shows how food consumption is currently distributed-unevenly. Comparing Figure 1.2 with Figure 1.3 shows that the wealthier countries also are the best fed and that Sub-Saharan Africa (the part of Africa south of the Sahara Desert)



is currently in the worst position, with numerous countries in the highest categories of hunger and malnourishment.

The major causes of malnourishment are poverty (inability to pay for food), the failure of food distribution systems, and cultural and political practices that favor some groups over others. Where food does reach the needy, its price may be unaffordable. Hundreds of millions of people subsist on the equivalent of one dollar a day, and many in the vast shantytowns encircling some of the world's largest cities must pay rent to landlords who own the plots on which their shacks are built. Too little is left for food, and it is the children who suffer most.

Is solving hunger as simple as each country growing enough food to feed its people? Do the best-fed countries have the most arable (farmable) land? Only 4 percent of Norway is arable land, and more than 70 percent of Bangladesh is arable