



University of
BRISTOL

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Townsend Centre
for International
Poverty Research



FIRST UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR THE
eradication of poverty
(1997-2006)

Indicators of Poverty & Hunger

Dr David Gordon

Professor of Social Justice
School for Policy Studies
University of Bristol

Expert Group Meeting on Youth Development Indicators
United Nations Headquarters, New York
12th – 14th December 2005

Indicators of Poverty for Youth

MDG Target: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

MDG Indicators

- 1) Proportion of population below \$1 (1993 PPP) per day
- 2) Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty]
- 3) Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

Absolute and Overall Poverty

After the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, 117 countries adopted a declaration and programme of action which included commitments to eradicate “absolute” and reduce “overall” poverty.

Absolute poverty was defined as *"a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services."*

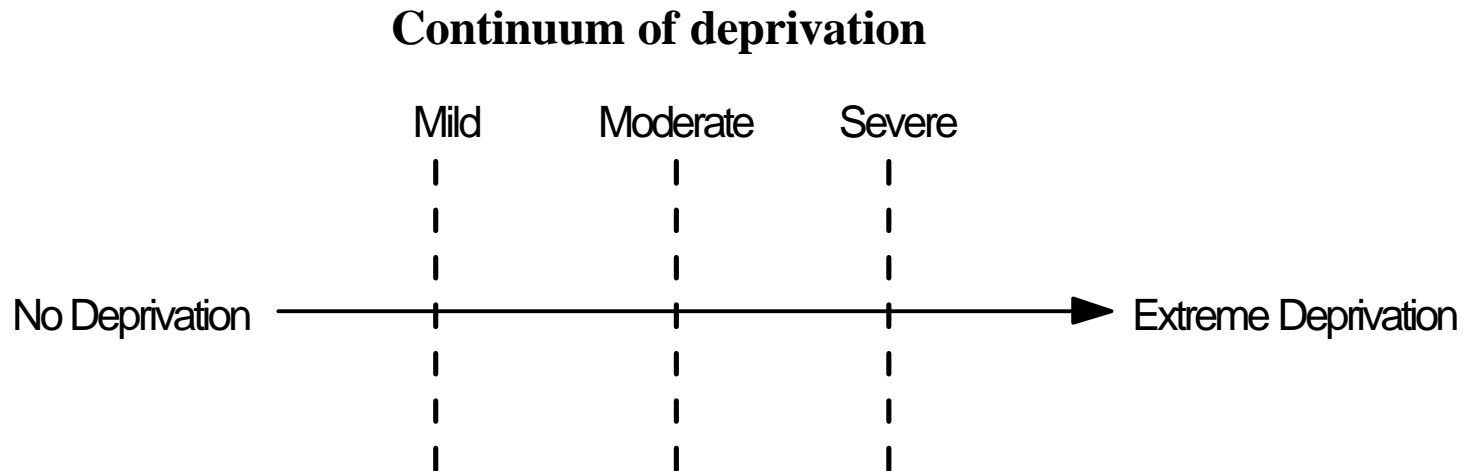
Overall poverty takes various forms, including *"lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life. It occurs in all countries: as mass poverty in many developing countries, pockets of poverty amid wealth in developed countries, loss of livelihoods as a result of economic recession, sudden poverty as a result of disaster or conflict, the poverty of low-wage workers, and the utter destitution of people who fall outside family support systems, social institutions and safety nets. (UN, 1995)*

UN Definition of Poverty

“Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and cloth a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation”

(UN Statement, June 1998 – signed by the heads of all UN agencies)

Deprivation can be conceptualised as a continuum which ranges from no deprivation through mild, moderate and severe deprivation to extreme deprivation.



In order to measure absolute poverty amongst children, it is necessary to define the threshold measures of severe deprivation of basic human need for:

1. food
2. safe drinking water
3. sanitation facilities
4. health
5. shelter
6. education
7. information
8. access to services

Proposed Operational Definitions of Severe Deprivation of Basic Human Need for Youth

- 1) Severe Food Deprivation– Body Mass Index of 16 or below (severe underweight).
- 2) Severe Water Deprivation - access only to surface water (e.g. rivers, ponds) for drinking or living in households where the nearest source of water was more than 15 minutes away – 30min round trip (e.g. indicators of severe deprivation of water quality or quantity).
- 3) Severe Deprivation of Sanitation Facilities – no access to a toilet of any kind in the vicinity of their dwelling, e.g. no private or communal toilets or latrines.
- 4) Severe Health Deprivation – Women who did not receive treatment for a recent serious illness or who did not receive any antenatal care or who did not receive any assistance with birth or who did not receive a tetanus inoculation during her pregnancy.
Men who did not receive treatment for a recent serious illness.
- 5) Severe Shelter Deprivation – living in dwellings with 4 or more people per room (severe overcrowding) or in a house with no flooring (e.g. a mud floor).
- 6) Severe Education Deprivation – youth who never attended school and who are also illiterate
- 7) Severe Information Deprivation – no access to newspapers, radio or television or computers or phones at home (e.g. no information sources).

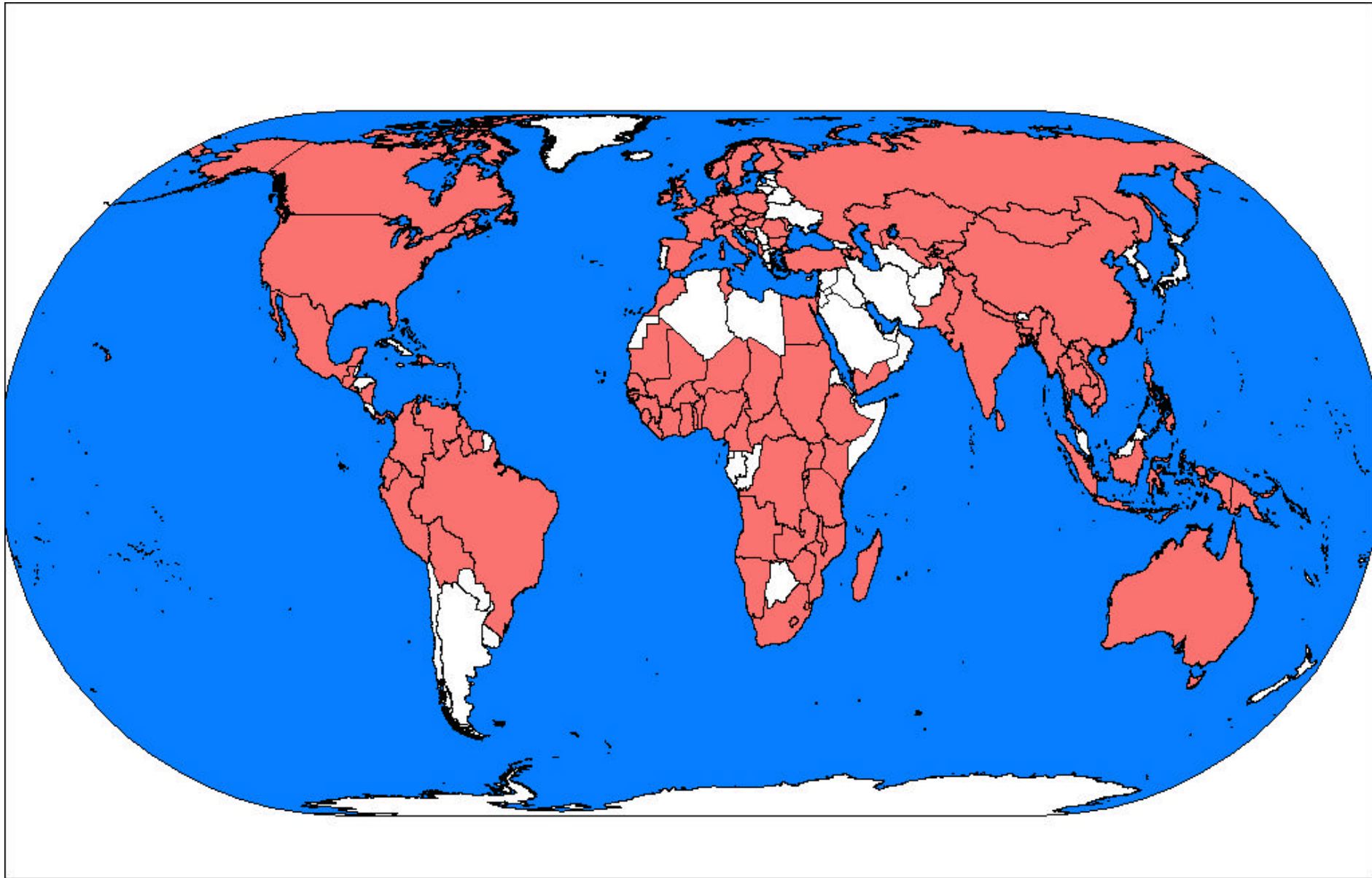
Absolute Poverty threshold is equal to 2 or more severe deprivations of basic human need

Proposed Operational Definitions of Deprivation of Basic Human Need for Youth

- 1) Food Deprivation– Body Mass Index of 18.5 or below (underweight).
- 2) Water Deprivation - access only to unimproved source such as open wells, open springs or surface water or who have to walk for more than 15 minutes to their water source (30 minutes round-trip).
- 3) Deprivation of Sanitation Facilities – access only to unimproved sanitation facilities e.g. : pour flush latrines; covered pit latrines; open pit latrines; and buckets or no access to a toilet of any kind.
- 4) Health Deprivation – Women who did not receive treatment for a recent serious illness or who did not receive the minimum standard of antenatal care from a person trained in midwifery or who do not know that a healthy person can transmit HIV/ AIDS or who do not know that using a condom during sex can prevent HIV/ AIDS transmission.
Men who did not receive treatment for a recent serious illness or who do not know that a healthy person can transmit HIV/ AIDS or that using a condom during sex can prevent HIV/ AIDS transmission.
- 5) Shelter Deprivation – living in dwellings with 3 or more people per room (overcrowding) or in a house with no flooring (e.g. a mud floor) or inadequate roofing (e.g. natural roofing materials)
- 6) Education Deprivation – youth who did not complete primary school or who are illiterate
- 7) Information Deprivation – no access to a radio or television (i.e. broadcast media) at home.

The Poverty threshold is equal to 2 or more deprivations of basic human need

Countries with income, expenditure or deprivation survey data which are available for download via the World Wide Web



Indicators of Hunger for Youth

MDG Target: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

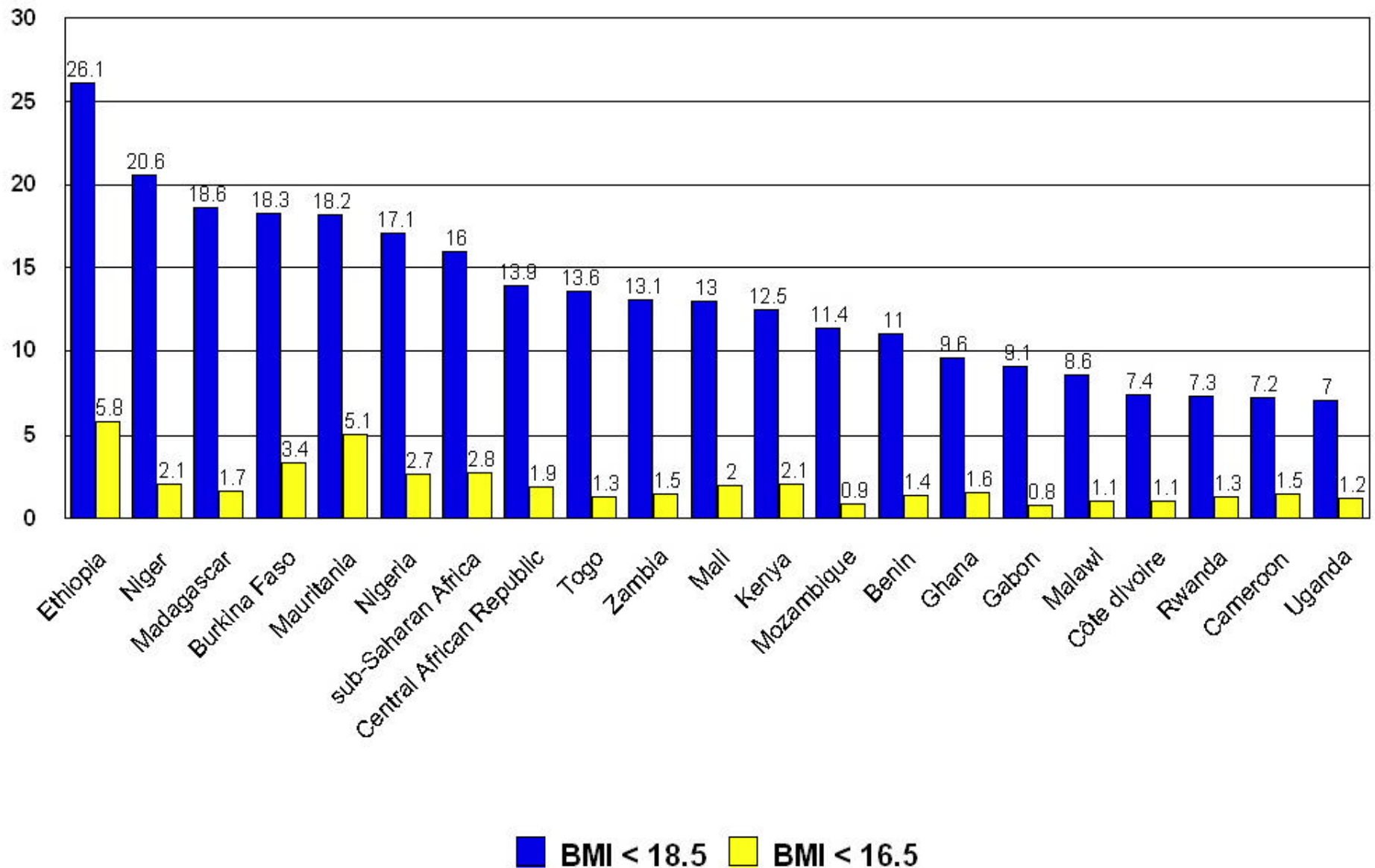
MDG Indicators

- 1) Proportion of children under five years old who are underweight
- 2) Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (FAO)

Body Mass Index Groups

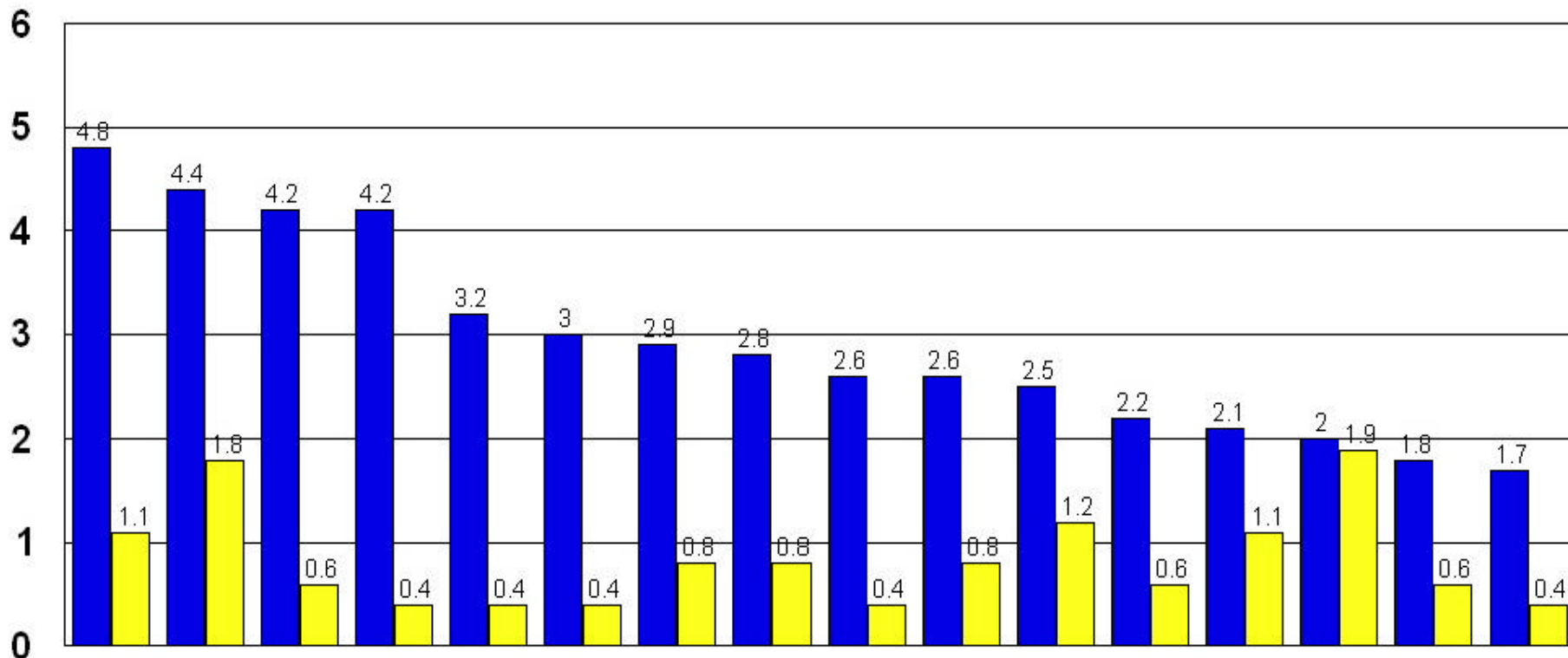
BMI	Weight Status
Under 16	Severe underweight
16-18.5	Underweight
20-25	Normal weight
25-30	Overweight
30-40	Obese
40+	Very Obese

Percent of Women aged 16 to 24 with BMI < 18.5 and < 16 in Africa



Percent of the population with BMI < 18 in the EU in 1996

%



■ Women ■ Men

Percent of adults with BMI < 18.5 in England in 2003

