

## Higher Food and Energy Prices are a Burden, Says Global Poll

October 15, 2008

[Full Report \(PDF\)](#)



Nearly two-thirds (60%) of people in a new 26 nation poll commissioned by the BBC World Service say they are feeling the burden of recent rises in the cost of food and energy. They say that the rising cost of food, and of fuel and electricity costs, has affected them and their family 'a great deal'.

(Photo: [Okinawa Steve](#))

The poll suggests that the rise in food prices is leading to changes in people's behaviour, particularly in poorer countries. Many in the developing world say they are cutting back on what they eat because of the higher cost of food, with 63 per cent in the Philippines and Panama, 61 per cent in Kenya, and 58 per cent in Nigeria saying they are now eating less.

Coupled with this, nearly half (43%) of the 27,319 people surveyed say that the higher cost of food has caused them to change what they eat and again this was most apparent in the developing world with people in Panama (71%), Egypt (67%), Kenya (64%), and the Philippines (63%) among the most likely to have changed their diet.

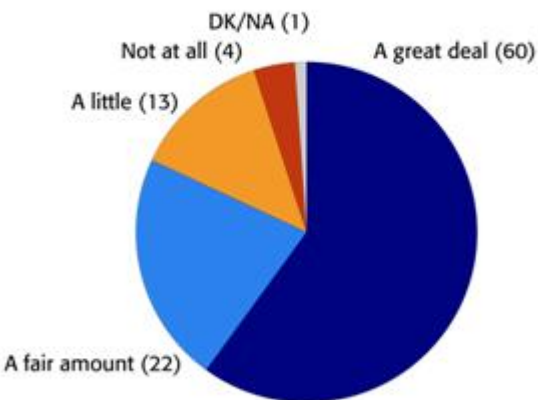
In developed countries like Australia (27%), the UK (25%), and Germany (10%), far fewer say that the rise in food prices has caused them to cut back on what they eat. In general, those in developed countries have also not changed what they eat in response to the higher prices - notably, only 17 per cent in Spain, 19 per cent in Poland, and 24 per cent in Germany say they have changed their diets.

The poll also shows that 70 per cent of people across the world are unhappy with what their national government is doing to keep food prices affordable. Very high proportions of dissatisfied citizens are found in Egypt (88% dissatisfied), the Philippines (86%) and Lebanon (85%) as well as in some developed countries such as France (79%), Russia (78%), and Italy (74%).

Respondents were asked how much the rises in the cost of energy, including petrol, had negatively affected them and their family. Overall 60 per cent say that increased energy costs are affecting them and their family a great deal, and again it is those in developing economies who seem to be feeling the effects most - 95 per cent in the Philippines, 93 per

## Extent to Which Public Has Been Negatively Affected by Rising Food Prices

Average of 26 Countries, 2008



Base: Representative sample of 27,319 adults in 26 countries

cent in Egypt, 84 per cent in Indonesia, 83 per cent in Kenya and Lebanon, and 81 per cent in Mexico. Majorities in several developed countries also say they have been affected a great deal - 61 per cent in Italy, 59 per cent in France, and 58 per cent in the United States.

GlobeScan Chairman Doug Miller commented: "While governments around the world are now preoccupied with the financial crisis, it is clear that many of their citizens feel they aren't doing enough to relieve the burden of high food prices, which is falling on those who can least afford it."

The results are drawn from a survey of 27,319 adult citizens across 26 countries conducted for the BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. GlobeScan coordinated fieldwork between July 8 and September 15, 2008.

### Participating Countries



Note: In Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Lebanon, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates urban samples were used. Please see methodology for details.

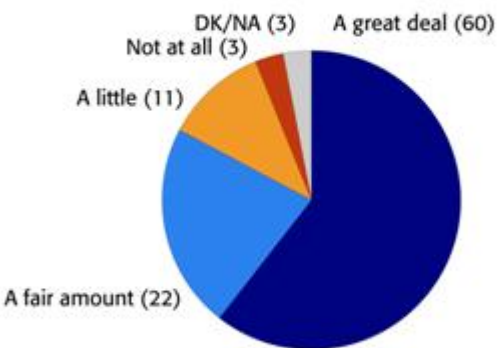
### Detailed Findings

Majorities in each of the 26 countries included in the poll, except China, say they have been negatively affected by rising food and energy prices 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount'.

# Extent to Which Public Has Been Negatively

## Affected by Rising Energy Prices

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Remarkably, close to 100 per cent of citizens in several developing countries have been affected 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' by rising food prices - examples include Egypt and the Philippines (98%), Kenya and Indonesia (96%), and Nigeria (95%). Among the 11 developed nations included in the poll, France, Italy, Poland, and Russia appear to have been most affected by rising food prices, with majorities (80 per cent and higher) saying they have been negatively affected 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount'.

Base: Representative sample of 27,319 adults in 26 countries

Three-quarters or more citizens in 22 of the 26 countries included in the poll say they have been negatively affected 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' by rising energy prices. Those in developing countries appear to be among the most affected, with over 90 per cent in the Philippines (98%), Egypt (97%), Indonesia (97%), Kenya (95%), Panama (95%), Lebanon (93%), Mexico (93%), and Nigeria (93%) saying they have been affected 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' by rising energy prices. Among the developed nations, citizens in Italy and Poland have been affected most by rising energy prices with about nine in ten in each country saying they have been affected 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' by rising energy prices.

There is considerable variation between countries in terms of how much people have changed their behaviour in response to rising food prices. In developed nations, most have neither changed what they eat, nor started to eat less overall. Among developing nations, majorities in Panama (71%), Egypt (67%), Kenya (64%), the Philippines (63%), and Mexico (57%) say they have changed what they eat. In other developing nations, however, most say they have not changed their diet (Turkey (75%), the United Arab Emirates (62%), China (61%), and Lebanon (58%).)

When it comes to eating less, majorities in all except four countries say they have not reduced the amount of food they eat because of rising food prices. The exceptions are Panama (63%), the Philippines (63%), Kenya (61%), and Nigeria (58%) where majorities say they are eating less overall because of rising food prices.

### Changes in Behaviour as a Result of Higher Food Prices

Average of 26 Countries, 2008



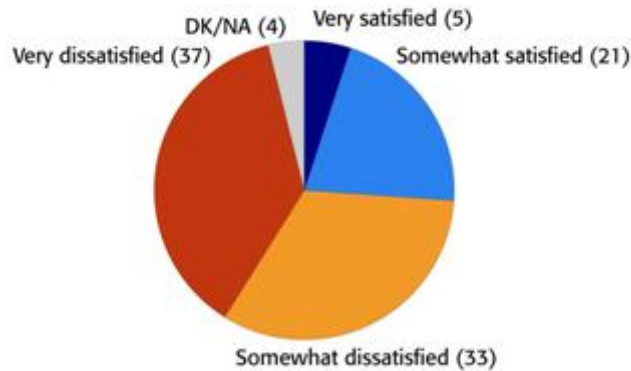
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Dissatisfaction with national government efforts to ensure food remains affordable is very apparent; majorities in 23 of the 26 countries included in the poll say they are 'dissatisfied'. China is an exception; where two-thirds are satisfied with their government's performance in this area (66%). In the United Arab Emirates and India, pluralities are dissatisfied with their government's performance (47% and 49%, respectively).

The 'most dissatisfied' citizens - countries where three-quarters or more citizens are dissatisfied with their government's performance on ensuring food remains affordable - include the developing nations of Egypt (88%), the Philippines (86%), Lebanon (85%), Indonesia (82%), Turkey (82%), and Nigeria (75%); as well as the developed nations of South Korea (81%), France (79%), and Russia (78%).

### Satisfaction with National Government's Performance on Keeping Food Affordable

Average of 26 Countries, 2008



Base: Representative sample of 27,319 adults in 26 countries