Political Instability and Climate Change Threaten Goal to End Hunger

Washington, D.C., November 21, 2016 – By 2030, two-thirds of the world’s poor will be living in fragile states, as reported by Bread for the World Institute in a new report released today.

“We will never be able to end hunger or extreme poverty unless the United States and the international community focuses attention and resources on the challenges facing fragile states,” said Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World Institute. “Hunger and poverty in these countries are only going to get worse due to climate change.”

Bread for the World Institute’s 2017 Hunger Report, Fragile Environments, Resilient Communities, explains how state fragility stands in the way of ending hunger and extreme poverty. Fragile states are countries where high rates of hunger and poverty are compounded by civil conflict, poor governance, and vulnerability to climate change.

“Fragile states are a national security issue for the United States,” Beckmann added. “Extreme poverty and hunger combined with a growing youth population in these countries can provide fertile ground for terrorism and trafficking. Helping fragile states deliver basic services to their citizens and create the conditions in which they can support themselves and their families will limit extremists’ appeal to new recruits. This reduces the threat of terrorism both here in the U.S. and around the world.”

The report also discusses fragility within the U.S. – communities of concentrated poverty, where 20 percent or more of the population lives in poverty. These communities reflect decades of neglect, and pose a set of challenges that contribute to fragility, including a weak job market, high rates of crime and mass incarceration, lack of services, and limited or no access to nutritious foods.

“President-elect Donald J. Trump has talked about rebuilding our inner cities, and strengthening the job market through investments in infrastructure,” Beckmann said. “Focusing much of the investment in communities of concentrated poverty, both urban and rural, will bring needed jobs and stability. We hope he fulfills his promise and works with Congress to make it happen. Continuing on with the divisiveness of the elections will only exacerbate the problems these communities face.”

Ending hunger and extreme poverty is within reach, but only if leaders and policymakers decide to make it a priority. Fragile Environments, Resilient Communities offers recommendations to address the long-term challenges of fragility, including implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Addressing fragility now will prevent future conflicts, save lives, build resilience, and put the world on a path toward ending hunger.

The 2017 Hunger Report, which has been published annually since 1975, is available at www.hungerreport.org.
Press Release

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Bread for the World (www.bread.org) is a collective Christian voice urging our nation’s decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad.