

**FY'16 Testimony by Rev. David Beckmann  
President, Bread for the World**

Thank you Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Our network of thousands of individual members, churches, and denominations ensures Bread's presence in all U.S. congressional districts. Through the support of these members around the country and in partnership with faith groups and churches, we have worked for over 40 years to help ensure that no person faces the burden of food insecurity.

Madam Chairwoman, U.S. poverty-focused development assistance helps build secure, healthy, and productive nations, and all for less than one percent of the federal budget. Moreover, the part of the foreign aid budget that is humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance is nearly only six-tenths of that 1 percent.

For close to 20 years, Bread for the World has helped mobilize the faith community at both the national and local levels in support of strong U.S. commitments to poverty-focused development assistance, a term referring specifically to untied assistance within the 150 Account that specifically address issues of human needs among the world's poorest populations: issues like agricultural development and nutrition, emergency humanitarian assistance, global health, education, gender equality, and water and sanitation. In fiscal year 2015, poverty-focused development assistance, or PFDA, accounted for roughly \$27 billion, a little over half of the total International Affairs entire budget.

Thanks in part to this committee's bipartisan support for these programs, along with the combined efforts of other governments, civil society organizations, world leaders, and especially hungry and poor people themselves, extreme poverty has been cut in half and 100 million people have escaped from hunger in just the past decade alone. Based on UNICEF estimates, six million fewer children died before their fifth birthday last year than did just 25 years ago. And, in only 12 short years, annual deaths from preventable diseases have fallen remarkably with 700,000 fewer children dying of pneumonia, 600,000 fewer children dying from diarrhea, and 100,000 fewer children dying from AIDS. Undeniably, U.S. foreign assistance has played a leading role in achieving these results, which has been championed by you and this committee, as well as across multiple Administrations and previous Congresses.

I recognize such support is often difficult amidst pressing demands from constituents, as well limited resources due to federal budget constraints. Yet, the international affairs accounts, and particularly humanitarian, poverty-focused development assistance, and global health programs are in our national interest. In addition to promoting a positive image of the U.S. around the world, these programs help keep our country safe and advances our economic interests, helping to build sustainable trading partners for the U.S. and supporting jobs here at home. In fact, more than 1 in 5 American jobs and 1 in 3 manufacturing specific jobs are tied to international trade, and, America's fastest growing markets are in developing countries.

However, in the last five years (since 2010) international affairs funding for ongoing, non-war related programs has been cut 16 percent. Any further cuts would have a devastating impact, particularly for the 805 million people who do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life and for the 3.1 million children under five who die annually from the causes of poor

nutrition. Thus, Madam Chairwoman now is not the time to relax our focus. U.S. leadership in humanitarian, global health and development programs leverages other nations to act as well, and it is through this shared commitment that we see even greater progress.

Progress on issues like food security and agriculture development. When it comes to cost-effective, high-impact investments that help move people out of poverty and address global hunger, there is no greater role than agriculture and nutrition. There are more than 500 million smallholder farmers worldwide, and altogether, small-scale producers feed more than 2 billion people, yet they themselves suffer disproportionately from hunger. This is particularly true for women, who make up to 50 percent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to well over 50 percent in parts of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

U.S. agriculture and food security investments through initiatives like Feed the Future are critical to helping small-holder farmers increase their productivity and catalyze development, and the Administration's particular focus on gender has helped spotlight the unique challenges and opportunities when women are prioritized as economic drivers and familial leaders. Last year, the Bread for the World Institute highlighted this specific issue of women's empowerment in our 2015 Hunger Report which included a joint statement issued by both the Chairwoman and Ranking Member on the crucial role of U.S. assistance in women's empowerment around the world.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue, and urge your Committee to robustly support programs like Feed the Future that invests in women through programming that increases their access to financial and extension services, seeds, proper tools, and other key inputs. Also, while we know that nearly half of small-scale producers are women, an average of just 15 percent of them are agricultural land owners. According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization estimates, if women in Africa and elsewhere, had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase farm yields by 20 percent to 30 percent. Such gains could lift some 100 million to 150 million people out of hunger and poverty.

We need to further support specialized gender analysis programming in initiatives like Feed the Future. And, it's imperative that Congress use its authority to pass legislation to make Feed the Future a permanent program. Since its creation in 2010, Feed the Future has achieved impressive results in its 19 focus countries, helping more than seven million small farmers increase crop production and providing nutritious foods to more than 12.5 million children in 2013 alone. We must not retreat from these historic gains, but rather recommit our efforts especially by including greater programming in support of female small-scale producers.

As it relates to nutrition, we know that empowering women is critical, particularly during the 1,000 days from pregnancy to a child's second birthday. This is when adequate nutrition has the greatest impact on a child's cognitive and physical development. Malnutrition especially during the 1,000 days window limits cognitive abilities, stunts growth and increases susceptibility to both chronic and infectious disease. Today, malnutrition is a root cause of 45 percent of all deaths among children younger than 5 annually which amounts to 3.1 million preventable deaths every year. These consequences of poor nutrition have lasting ramifications throughout adulthood and are passed on to the next generation. On a broader scale, under-nutrition costs billions of dollars in lost productivity annually, reducing a nation's GDP anywhere from 2 percent to 16 percent, and resulting in higher mortality and higher health and education costs. Conversely, by investing in nutrition, individuals and countries are able to

prosper, and recent analysis shows that for every \$1 invested in improving nutrition, \$16 is returned to the economy.

Thanks in part to this evidence, and Administrative and Congressional support, U.S. leadership has helped to spur global efforts to improve nutrition. Today, fifty-four countries are now part of the of the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, ensuring nutrition is a higher priority in countries national development plans. And, we are encouraged by the development of our own U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan to maximize the impact of U.S. investments, which builds upon USAID's multisectoral nutrition strategy released this past year. In order to meet World Health Assembly targets and other U.S. Government global commitments including reducing child stunting by 20 percent over the next five years, the U.S. must continue its global leadership in fostering the political momentum to reduce hunger and malnutrition.

We must also ensure our foreign assistance dollars are being spent as efficiently and effectively as possible, with proper transparency and accountability measures. There are a number of opportunities for us to improve. One such area is our international food aid system -- allowing greater flexibility and increasing efficiency so that food aid reaches millions more people. The practice of buying food aid on local and regional markets for distribution can be both quicker and more cost effective than traditional in-kind food aid. Two independent evaluations by the Government Accountability Office and a Congressionally-mandated study by Management Systems International found that local and regional procurement (LRP) programs have an average cost saving of at least 25 percent compared with similar in-kind food aid programs. In some cases, these savings can increase to over 50 percent, as a Cornell University study documented, along with a 62 percent gain in timeliness of delivery. In difficult budget circumstances, when all programs must be justified, proposals to increase cost effectiveness, save time and costs, and potentially reach more people should be strongly considered.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) serves as another example of an innovative development agency that has ushered in measureable and remarkable sustainable economic growth in the developing world. Created by Congress in 2004 with bipartisan support, MCC's model relies on rigorous, objective analysis of data and evidence to select partner countries, design cost-effective investments, and measure results. Additionally, these high impact poverty-reduction compacts often incentivize reform of laws, policies, and institutions, and coupled with private sector investment, this ensures the sustainability of results. In noting the funding boost MCC received in the President's budget this year, I urge this Committee to support this agency particularly as it seeks to deepen partnerships in Africa and Asia, form regional compacts, as well as share innovation across the U.S. government through data and evaluation sharing.

Additionally, we have learned that by not adequately addressing global long term development and security challenges, such problems can and often do reach U.S. shores. From weak to virtually non-existent healthcare systems in West Africa that significantly contributed to the recent Ebola epidemic, to the insecurity, hunger, and lack of economic opportunities in the Northern Triangle that led to the child migrant humanitarian crisis this summer, we must make the critical long term investments today to thwart future catastrophes from emerging tomorrow. We urge this Committee to provide resources to strengthen healthcare system rebuilding and resiliency efforts in West Africa, as well as any potential food emergency assistance that may be needed. Further, we call on Congress to fund the President's FY16 development assistance

budget request particularly as it relates to addressing the root causes that have forced thousands of Central America youth to migrate northward in recent months.

In closing, the United States has been an unprecedented spirit for good in the world, leading the way on some of the world's greatest challenges – smallpox, polio, HIV/AIDS, and global hunger. This committee places a crucial role of ensuring that the U.S. fulfills its commitment on those who Jesus called the "least of these" (Matthew 25). Bread for the World and many others in the faith community have been right there with you, helping to ensure that 500 million fewer people go hungry every day and contributing to a reduction in the number of undernourished people living in the world from 1 in 5 in 1990 to 1 in 9 today. Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains it best when he says our own humanity is inextricably linked to that of others, and it is this fundamental interconnectedness which guides our conscience and lends our compassion to others. It is this compassion by which we, as people of faith, move uniquely closer to God, and it is God who moves people to act, especially on behalf of the poor, marginalized, hungry, and suffering. Thank you.