

# EARLY WARNING FORECAST

2017



Lutheran World Relief  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

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# INTRODUCTION

As we at Lutheran World Relief anticipate the tremendous humanitarian challenges we might face in the coming year, a quote from Desmond Tutu comes to mind: “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.”

The world is trying to cope with what the U.N. is calling the highest levels of displacement on record, much of it fueled by conflict in Syria and Iraq. Off and on civil war threatens to intensify in South Sudan, which will impact and possibly draw in neighboring countries. Around the world we are seeing blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, with the indiscriminate bombing of hospitals, schools and other civilian targets, chemical warfare, and the use of food as a weapon. And we will continue to witness the effects of climate change, through unpredictable weather patterns, which wreak havoc with the harvests that are the lifeline of the rural poor.

Overall, these climate and conflict-driven crises are triggering simultaneous emergencies that are taxing the efforts of humanitarian agencies. Indeed more than three-quarters of people living in extreme poverty are in countries that are environmentally or politically fragile, or both.

LWR’s Early Warning Forecast singles out seven continuing or potential hot spots that may require humanitarian — and in some cases diplomatic — action in the next year.

As an organization that draws inspiration from our faith, we always embrace and maintain hope. We can clearly see that significant progress is being made in reducing global suffering and poverty. As measured by the Millennium Development Goals, the number of people living in extreme poverty and under-age-5 mortality has fallen by more than half. Continuing that work, the world community has adopted a set of Sustainable Development Goals that are truly aspirational, including reaching a statistical “zero” on extreme poverty, preventable child deaths and other targets.

That’s why we round out our list of humanitarian hot spots with signs of hope. For example, the power of information communications technology is feeding a rapid growth of the private sector and entrepreneurship in Africa, as well as in other parts of the developing world. This is helping us to reach a group — that has not reaped — many benefits from globalization, namely poor farmers, by helping them to be more productive, and gain access to more profitable local and export markets.

We are making real progress in reducing global poverty and now is not the time to turn inward or retreat. The international community must continue to engage, to fund humanitarian response and development, and to support the local communities bearing the brunt of these crises. Our commitment to long-term sustainable development, and the tangible results we are seeing, will sustain our hope.



**Ambassador Daniel Speckhard (rt.)**  
President and CEO

# 2017 EARLY WARNING FORECAST

The 2017 Early Warning Forecast is an analysis prepared by the staff of Lutheran World Relief that includes the regions we are monitoring to be prepared for potential crises, as well as the work we are doing in these areas.



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Photo: LWF / M. Renaux

## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING FOR: WAR, MASSIVE CIVILIAN DISPLACEMENT

The attempt by the Islamic State to create a caliphate straddling northern Iraq and Syria has resulted in escalating armed conflict and is causing widespread displacement of civilians. In northern Iraq, a military offensive led by the Iraqi security forces has led tens of thousands to flee to safety. In Syria, the fight against the Islamic State is but one dimension of the raging civil war that has led more than **6 MILLION PEOPLE** to leave the country, while testing the ability of the humanitarian system to deliver aid within the country. The vast majority of these refugees have resettled in five Middle Eastern countries – Turkey (which alone is hosting 2.7 million Syrians), Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt – where the influx is increasingly causing political, economic and social strain.

### KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ **10 MILLION PEOPLE** in Iraq are currently in need of humanitarian assistance.
- ▶ **70% OF SYRIAN REFUGEES** in Lebanon and **86%** residing in camps in Jordan live in extreme poverty.
- ▶ More than **2.5 MILLION SYRIAN CHILDREN** now live as refugees; children born during Syria's ongoing conflict are at risk for statelessness and violation of their fundamental rights due to challenges in obtaining legal documentation.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR and other local partners are responding to the needs of families displaced in northern Iraq, providing food, basic relief items and hygiene kits. LWR is supporting members of the ACT Alliance, a coalition of more than 140 churches and faith-based organizations, in providing food and relief supplies, emergency shelter, water and sanitation, and psychosocial support to Syrian refugees in Hungary, Serbia and Greece. In Syria, LWR is working with International Orthodox Christian Charities to offer cash-for-work activities, designed to ease the economic strain on internally displaced Syrians, who have few options to earn income to support their families, by providing them the opportunity to work on community development projects. And in Jordan LWR is working with a local partner to provide training to Syrian women on how to start their own businesses.



## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING FOR: NATURAL DISASTERS, POLITICAL INSTABILITY

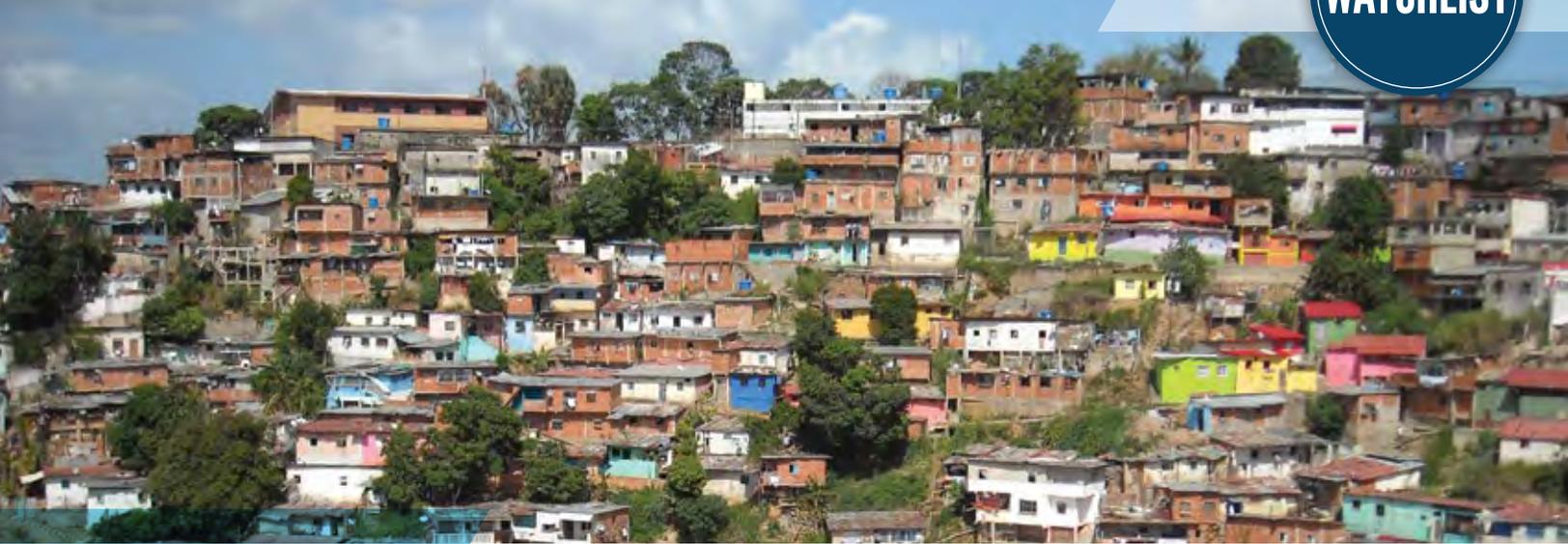
The Philippines — located in the Ring of Fire, a horseshoe-shaped belt in the Pacific Ocean where a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur — is constantly under threat of meteorological and geological disaster. Each year about **20 TYPHOONS** hit the country, the most devastating recent event being Typhoon Haiyan, which claimed more than 6,000 lives in November 2013. The U.N. cited effective disaster preparedness, including early warning systems and targeted evacuations, as a factor in reducing casualties in more recent storms. Currently, the country is focusing on preparing for a potentially devastating earthquake of a magnitude up to 8.0 that could hit metro Manila, home to 11.8 million people. A quake of this magnitude could cause as many as 30,000 deaths and would cripple an urban region that accounts for 37 percent of the country's gross domestic product. We are also keeping an eye on the country's political climate, as a new president has shaken up alliances and provoked controversy.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING:

Working within the local barangay municipal structure in Mindanao, LWR has helped establish several Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committees. LWR has assisted these committees in identifying potential risks, developing community-based disaster plans, and implementing strategies to minimize community vulnerability to disasters. LWR is continuing with our long-term recovery programs in response to Typhoon Haiyan, as well as the less-destructive Typhoon Hagupit from 2014.

### KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ **EIGHT OUT OF 10** of the world's cities most vulnerable to natural disasters are in the Philippines.
- ▶ Seismologists believe that the Marikina fault system, which runs through Metropolitan Manila, is due for major movement. An earthquake as strong as **8.0 MAGNITUDE** is considered a strong possibility.



## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING FOR: FAILED STATE, MIGRATION

Venezuela is a country on the brink, with major regional implications if it should fail, especially for neighboring Colombia. Venezuela is embroiled in an economic and political crisis that has included food shortages and runaway inflation. The Council on Foreign Relations reports that “basic food and medicine are in severely short supply.” There have been large public protests against the Maduro government.

In November alone, Venezuela’s currency **LOST 60 PERCENT** of its value on the black market. According to news reports, merchants have resorted to weighing the piles of cash needed to buy goods to determine their value, as there are too many bills to count individually. The government has announced that in mid-December it will begin circulating higher denomination notes, ranging in value from 500 to 20,000 bolivars.

## WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR is working in neighboring Colombia and is committed to supporting sustainable rural development in that nation’s countryside that will be key to maintaining peace and stability after five decades of conflict. As Venezuela’s economy falters, large-scale migration to neighboring countries becomes an increasing possibility, and northeast Colombia would likely have to absorb much of it. Development and peace in Colombia could act as a stabilizing factor in the region and an encouragement for Venezuela as it copes with its internal struggles, forestalling major migration in the region.

## KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ Despite being one of the top oil-producing nations, more than **30% OF VENEZUELANES LIVE IN POVERTY**.
- ▶ Oil accounts for nearly all of Venezuela’s export earnings and about half of government income, which is why low global oil prices have had a devastating effect on the nation’s economy. The country’s GDP contracted by 10% in 2015 and **INFLATION WAS FORECAST AT 1,640%** in 2017.



## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING FOR: REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE BOKO HARAM CONFLICT

Boko Haram, an Islamist militant group that is fighting to overthrow the government of Nigeria and establish an Islamic state, has wreaked havoc through a campaign of violence and kidnapping, and the effects have spilled outside Nigeria's borders. Massive displacement of **MORE THAN 2 MILLION PEOPLE** has ensued and livelihoods have suffered as Boko Haram has disrupted trade and farming. Due to lack of access and other factors, relief efforts have failed to reach all of those affected, and nearly a quarter of a million children are severely malnourished in northeastern Nigeria. In addition, nearly 200,000 people have sought shelter in neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. This regional destabilization is happening in the context of prolonged drought affecting these countries in the Sahel, exacerbated by the effects of El Niño, which has triggered a hunger crisis affecting more than 20 million people.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING:

In Niger, LWR has established an office in Zinder, less than 80 miles from the border with Nigeria. The region will likely be affected by the migration of Nigerian refugees, who are currently concentrated in the area just to the east of Zinder. Recognizing that communities that are strong economically are less vulnerable to violent extremists, LWR is working with the rural poor in Niger to improve their cultivation, processing and marketing capacity. LWR uses a climate smart agriculture approach to promote the introduction of environmentally sound practices with improved cultivation methods and crop varieties, such as higher-yield and drought-tolerant millet and legumes. LWR is engaged in similar work in neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali.

### KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ According to the U.N., **MORE THAN 20,000 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED** by Boko Haram-related violence since 2009, and countless women and girls abducted and children drafted as suicide bombers into Boko Haram.
- ▶ Boko Haram has the second highest death toll of all terrorist groups since 2000, exceeded only by the Taliban, according to the 2016 Global Terrorism Index.

# EAST AFRICA (KENYA, SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN & UGANDA)

2017  
WATCHLIST



LWF/ C. Kästner

## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING FOR: POLITICAL INSTABILITY, RESPONSE TO REFUGEES

Shifting political dynamics in East Africa are contributing to instability in the region. A resumption of fighting in South Sudan in June 2016 threatened to renew the nascent country's civil war. The fighting led to an influx of South Sudanese fleeing the violence by crossing the border into northern Uganda. Meanwhile, Kenya has grown weary of the presence of more than **260,000 SOMALI REFUGEES**, citing repeated attacks by al Shabaab militants, and has announced plans to close the Dadaab refugee camp, asserting that improved conditions in Somalia allow them to return. Human rights groups are accusing the Kenyan government of coercing refugees to return home, despite the continued insecurity in Somalia. Kenya holds elections in August 2017 and refugee issues have played into political debates. In Uganda, deadly clashes between government security forces and a militia loyal to a tribal king in the nation's Rwenzori region have raised tensions.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR has worked for many years with our partner, the Lutheran World Federation's Department for World Service, to provide ongoing assistance to refugees in the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya, serving refugees from Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and other neighboring countries. In South Sudan,

we are providing assistance to Sudanese refugees in camps in two of the hardest hit states that border Sudan: Unity and Upper Nile. Our programs focus on addressing child protection needs, ensuring boys and girls have access to quality basic education and develop life and vocational skills. In late 2016, LWR provided the Uganda Red Cross with \$250,000 of material aid for South Sudanese refugees who had recently entered the country. In refugee situations, it is important to take into account the burdens shouldered by the host communities in providing shelter to refugees. In both Kenya and Uganda, LWR works with farmers and farmer cooperatives to promote sustainable, long-term development by improving crop quality and productivity, increasing access to financial services, and facilitating access to markets to increase prices and improve incomes.

### KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ An estimated **1 million South Sudanese** have left the country over the past three years of sporadic war.
- ▶ Around **1 MILLION SOMALIS** are registered as refugees in the Horn of Africa and Yemen region, with more than 330,000 in Kenya. An estimated 1.1 million men, women and children are internally displaced within Somalia.



Thomas Lohnes/DKH

## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING FOR: RECOVERY FROM HURRICANE MATTHEW

Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti on October 4, 2016, killing hundreds, **DESTROYING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HOMES** and ruining life-sustaining crops. It was a tragic setback for a country that was still recovering from the January 2010 earthquake. As the rebuilding commences, the international humanitarian community faces an opportunity to make lasting progress in building resilience and reducing poverty. Failure to do so will reinforce a tragic pattern in Haiti: when disaster hits, aid pours in, but provides largely unsustainable, short-term relief. In the coming months, cholera will continue to be a threat. The loss of crops and livestock may lead to food shortages or a spike in prices, and a hunger crisis is a looming possibility. People who already lived in abject poverty have been left with little to no food to eat, because their minimal stocks and seed sources were destroyed.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR's \$1.3 million relief and recovery response after Hurricane Matthew targeted more than 16,500 people in the hardest hit areas and included distributions of community water purification units, as well as hygiene-kits and kits for fashioning temporary shelter. LWR's longer term response will focus on food security in the North West part of Haiti, a part of the country receiving little outside support, through the distribution of seeds, livestock and fishing equipment, and a cash-for-work program to continue the clearing of roads and irrigation canals.

### KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ In the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, more than **1.4 MILLION PEOPLE** required humanitarian assistance, nearly 13% of Haiti's population.
- ▶ The destruction of more than **90% of mature subsistence crops** means it will take several years for most families' primary food source to be sufficient again.

# THE NORTHERN TRIANGLE OF CENTRAL AMERICA (EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS AND GUATEMALA)

2017  
WATCHLIST



Morgan Arnold for LWR

## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING FOR: INCREASED VIOLENCE AND MIGRATION

The people living in Central America's Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala have long suffered from grinding poverty, widespread corruption and violent conflict, from the civil wars of the 1980s to the spike in gang violence in recent years. These social ills have acted as push factors, generating periodic waves of migrants fleeing danger and seeking protection and better lives in Costa Rica, Mexico and the U.S. However, U.S. investment in the region, in the form of conditional support for the Central American governments' Alliance for Prosperity plan, along with civil society demands for transparency and accountability, offer an opportunity to address root causes of poverty and insecurity, especially in rural areas.

### KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ In the 2016 fiscal year, nearly **409,000 PEOPLE** were apprehended while trying to illegally cross the southwestern border from Mexico into the U.S., a 23% increase over the previous year.
- ▶ The three Northern Triangle countries consistently rank among the most violent in the world. In El Salvador, gang-related violence resulted in a 2015 homicide rate of **90 PER 100,000 RESIDENTS**, making it the most violent country in the world that is not at war.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR works to address the root causes of migration and violence, improving livelihoods in communities in Central America so that people do not have to migrate to support their families' economic well-being. LWR partners with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers' cooperatives, community councils and local governments in Central America to advance rural development, increase food security and protect natural resources. We improve the incomes of coffee and cocoa farmers by linking them to local, regional and international markets. LWR also works to strengthen local communities' capacity to advocate for policies that support improved food security. And we work to diversify crop production for consumption and sale, providing farmers with increased resilience and economic protection.

# BUILDING PEACE IN COLOMBIA

2017  
SIGNS OF  
HOPE



Sara Fajardo for LWR

Photo: LWR/M. Renaux

## WHAT WE'RE SEEING:

The advent of peace in Colombia will bring an end to five decades of armed conflict that has **DISPLACED NEARLY 6 MILLION PEOPLE**. After a first peace accord failed to win public approval at referendum, the government and the main rebel group reached a new agreement in November that preserves the promise of peace in Colombia. And with peace comes tremendous opportunity. With almost a third of Colombia's population living in rural areas of the country, Colombia must address its "new rural reality" as part of the post-peace process. The effort presents a chance to tackle some of the most important root causes of the conflict and offers the best way to attain a lasting peace.

## KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ In addition to the nearly 6 million people who were displaced during the conflict, approximately **16 million acres of land** was abandoned or seized by state-affiliated or other armed actors over the past 30 years.
- ▶ Approximately 30% of the Colombian population, or **14 MILLION PEOPLE**, are members of the rural sector. Nearly 70% of the country's farms are less than five hectares and are cultivated by families.

## WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR is committed to advancing the dignified, safe and sustainable rural return and relocation for Colombia's internally displaced people as the country emerges from five decades of civil conflict. LWR has worked in Colombia since the late 1990s, supporting cooperatives and rural populations, including Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, to help increase their incomes and claim their rights under the Victims and Land Restitution Laws. LWR has been an active participant in the peace process at the highest levels, offering counsel and support. Our current focus builds on this work to promote innovative programs with the private sector, which link the promise of peace to family food security in former conflict areas. To achieve this, LWR works primarily with local NGOs, farming communities, Afro-Colombian community councils and indigenous governments to implement projects that strengthen the social fabric of communities weakened by violence, stimulate agricultural production (particularly in coffee and cocoa) for increased food security and higher incomes, and improve water systems.

# THE PROMISE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

2017  
SIGNS OF  
HOPE



Morgan Arnold for LWR

## WHAT WE'RE SEEING:

Information communications technologies — powerful, yet accessible tools such as mobile phones, laptop computers, the internet, radio and other technologies — allow people to more easily connect with each other. These technologies are becoming increasingly accessible in the developing world, as noted in a recent Pew Research Center survey that characterized cell phone usage in sub-Saharan Africa as pervasive (two-thirds or more of those surveyed across the continent said they owned a cell phone). And these mobile and internet technologies aren't just being used for simple text messages, emails and calls, but also for an increasing array of activities and services such as banking, knowledge sharing and education. These instruments of ICT4D (Information Communications Technology for Development) are increasingly being used as powerful tools in development. They can be used to share important information, helping farmers to increase agricultural productivity, aiding in the protection of the environment and facilitating the collection of vital information in disaster situations.

## WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR uses ICT4D extensively in projects around the world, such as conveying agricultural information to farmers in our Mobile Cocoa initiative in Nicaragua; using mobile banking with savings groups in Uganda; and collecting disaster data on tablets in the Philippines. The use of ICT4D enhances relief and development programs because it:

- Provides a cost-effective way to deliver agricultural extension services to farmers living in isolated communities;
- Offers a potent way to access financial and credit services, and manage money in a rural economy, where few banks exist;
- Allows producers a way to quickly and directly obtain accurate weather and market information, improving production and ensuring best commodity prices;

## KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ Out of the world's 7 billion mobile connections, **4.5 billion** are found in developing countries. The developing world is home to 2.5 billion Internet users, compared to 1 billion users in the developed world.
- ▶ Close to **ONE OUT OF TWO PEOPLE** (47%) in the world are using the Internet but only one out of seven people in the world's least developed countries.

# AFRICAN ECONOMIC GROWTH: GOOD AND BAD NEWS

2017  
SIGNS OF  
HOPE



## WHAT WE'RE SEEING:

Currently, there are what could be called two Africas, growing at different rates. Between 2000 and 2010, the GDP in Africa grew by an annual average of 5.4 percent, making it one of the fastest growing regional economies in the world. But recent years have seen a slowdown, with average GDP growing by 3.3% between 2010 and 2015. And the International Monetary Fund recently downgraded its 2016 forecast for growth in sub-Saharan Africa to 1.4 percent. This is a classic good news/bad news scenario. The bad news: economic growth in some countries has declined sharply, due in large part to the steep drop in commodity prices. Countries with economies dependent on commodities like oil, including Nigeria and Angola, have seen their growth plummet. The good news: countries with more diverse portfolios are continuing to thrive. Ivory Coast was on track for a growth rate of 8 percent in 2016; East African nations were also humming along, with Ethiopia's projected growth at 8.1 percent, Tanzania at 7.2 percent, Kenya at 6 percent and Uganda at 5.1 percent. The cloud hanging over this positive economic trend is that growth within these countries has failed to be equal and inclusive, with some sectors benefitting as large swaths of society are left out.

## WHAT WE'RE DOING:

LWR works to provide the rural poor with greater access to global and regional markets. By investing resources into improved practices for growing, processing and storing their harvests, farmers can increase the quantity and quality of their crops. These benefits are multiplied when farmers work together through farmer organizations, which can help access financial services and negotiate with buyers for better crop prices. At the household level, diversifying the crops farmers grow, as well as increasing sources of income, will increase resilience to economic downturns or other adversity.

## KEY INDICATORS:

- ▶ Extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has fallen from 57% in 1990 to 43% in 2012. However, the World Bank reports that because of population growth, the number of poor people has risen from 280 million in 1990 to **330 MILLION** in 2012.
- ▶ Factors that are expected to fuel future growth in Africa include a rapid rate of urbanization; a large, growing and young workforce; and rapidly accelerating technological change, including increasing use of mobile technology.



**Lutheran World Relief**  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

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