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PRESS RELEASE

Global Hunger Index 2009: Empowering women and fighting hunger

Berlin, 14.10.2009. Women suffer most from hunger and poverty, and at the same time they play a key role in development. Bärbel Dieckmann, Welthungerhilfe' president, pointed this out at the presentation of the 2009 Global Hunger Index. This year for the first time, the Global Hunger Index measures the connection between equality of opportunity for women and hunger. The most important conclusion is: hunger is worse where women are more disadvantaged. "Empowering the cause of women is a key means of fighting hunger and poverty, and there is still not enough attention paid to it", Dieckmann says.

About a billion people are suffering from hunger worldwide, and women and children are the worst affected. About 70 percent of the 1.4 billion people living in poverty across the world are women, and they have to survive on less than one Euro per day. The Global Hunger Index shows that when women have influence and are properly respected in the household and at the local level, they themselves are better nourished, and their children's needs are better provided for.

As the president of one of the largest aid agencies in Germany, Dieckmann is calling on Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel to put the themes of combating poverty and of rural development at the heart of development cooperation. "Development politics must not be the continuation of the politics of national interest by other means", Dieckmann says. "Despite growing problems here at home, Germany bears a global responsibility."

The Global Hunger Index is being issued for the fourth time in conjunction with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington, and today it is being published simultaneously in the USA and Kenya. Its most important conclusions about the hunger situation are as follows: the hunger situation is serious or even critical in 29 countries. Whilst saying this, since 1990 considerable progress has however been able to be achieved in the fight against hunger in southern Asia, with at least limited progress in Africa. The countries with the worst figures are mainly in Africa: the Democratic Republic of Congo leads the bottom end of the table of rankings, followed by Burundi, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Chad and Ethiopia.

Current FAO data forecasts that the number of those suffering chronic hunger will for the first time exceed the one billion threshold this year: one out of every six people do not have enough to eat. "Countries with low income levels are particularly badly affected by the food- and financial crisis", explains Dr. Ousmane Badiane, the manager of IFPRI's African department. "We are therefore calling on the international community to make good the promises they have made at numerous summit meetings, and place reducing hunger at the centre of their crisis management measures."

Diagrams, photos and additional information can be viewed at:

www.welthungerhilfe.de

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