Remarks by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim at the Fragility Forum 2016

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**World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim**

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**As Prepared for Delivery**

Good morning.  On behalf of the World Bank Group, let me welcome you and thank you for joining us here today at the “Fragility, Conflict, and Violence” Forum. Today’s gathering comes at a critical moment in global development.

We stand at the threshold of what was once considered an impossible goal:  the end of extreme poverty in our lifetime. In fact, our optimism and recent evidence has strengthened our resolve to be even more ambitious.  Just a few months ago, we estimated that in 2015 for the first time in history the percentage of people living in extreme poverty fell below 10 percent. We have strengthened our vision of a world free of poverty by 2030 by also resolving to boost the prosperity of the bottom 40 percent of the population in developing countries. This is the first time that the World Bank Group has set a target for income inequality.  Our optimism about the future is fueled by the political agreement that was reached in September of 2015 when UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon officially announced a shift from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals – moving from a narrower focus on eight specific goals to a much more comprehensive agenda.

But this hope for the future of development assumes a world where nation states are secure and stable and where citizens, rich and poor, are not confronted by fragility, conflict and violence. A look at the world today, regrettably suggests that security and stability are not the norm for many people and nations; at risk is our collective hope to end extreme poverty, boost shared prosperity, and secure sustainable development.

Recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, make this point disturbingly clear.  Over 2 million people have been forced to flee their homes in Syria and cross international borders into Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, increasing the population of these countries by millions of people. .

The visibility of the conflict in the MENA region today also should not obscure the historical reality that conflict and forced displacement have remained persistent issues in many parts of the world -- particularly in Africa.  Violent deaths due to conflict -- and violence against civilians in particular -- have again steadily risen in sub-Saharan Africa since 2012, after decreasing throughout the mid-2000s. African conflicts are increasingly morphing into “conflict systems” which spill over borders, especially in the Great Lakes, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and the Lake Chad Basin. Violent extremism is also on the rise: the incidence of terrorism in 2014 was up 80 percent from 2013 and 120 percent from 2012.

It should come as no surprise, then, that addressing the root causes of conflict and insecurity is a core priority of the World Bank Group.

We now have to admit that the paradigms and frameworks that have guided our perspective on fragility and conflict may be less relevant than we had hoped.  That is why this gathering over the next three days is so critical.  We are seeking your ideas to help rethink our collective responses to fragility and conflict.  Let me raise six questions and challenges that I’d like you consider.

First, fragility is no longer mostly limited to low-income states. How do we effectively operate in middle-income countries that are experiencing conflict and violence, or the spillovers from conflict?

Second, weak states have great difficulty delivering services to their citizens. How do we help improve service delivery and also help these states build capacity at the same time?

Third, development and humanitarian groups have long worked separately. How can we now work effectively together?  In this context, I applaud the UN Secretary-General for so clearly articulating the current challenges and the ways forward to tackle forced displacement in his report “One Humanity: Shared Responsibility.” His report calls on all of us, to quote, “transcend the humanitarian-development divide by working towards collective outcomes, based on comparative advantage.”

Fourth, refugees are no longer largely living in camps. Millions of people are being integrated into host communities. How can we make sure both the local residents and the refugees are well served?

Fifth, we now know that we will not have enough ODA – official development assistance – to pay for helping communities and refugees. What innovative financial tools should we be using to help refugees and host communities? One idea that we just launched is a partnership with the Islamic Development Bank Group, the United Nations, and the donor community to create a new MENA financing facility. This facility will support Jordan and Lebanon and other host countries. We aim to raise $1 billion dollars that will leverage another $3 to $4 billion dollars of concessional finance.

And lastly, sixth, we don’t know enough about the refugees themselves. How will we both get more information about them and then adjust our programs based on evidence to meet their needs? We need to build on our knowledge base, starting from our World Development Report on Fragility and Conflict.

This year provides us with a great opportunity to work more effectively together on these issues related to forced displacement – leaders from around the world will gather both in May at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, and then in September in New York at the UN General Assembly. I firmly believe that together with our client countries, the United Nations, civil society and faith-based leaders, and with all of us here, we will create a new vision of tackling the challenges of forced displacement. But please give us your input on the questions I just raised  -- helping both low- and middle-income countries, improving service delivery in weak states, encouraging development and humanitarian groups to work together, assisting communities that are hosting refugees,  using innovative financial tools, and gathering more knowledge about the refugees themselves.  My great hope is that this forum will produce new ideas, new collaboration, and new partnerships that will lead to concrete and effective action in the months ahead. Many thanks for being here, and I look forward to hearing your answers to our questions. Thank you very much.