



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - A UN pilot programme that has boosted education and healthcare for women farmers in Burkina Faso is to be rolled out on a national scale. The energy and food processing programme provided 441 rural women with electric generators. These diesel-run generators can be used to power processing equipment, such as mills, freeing the women from time-consuming jobs such as grinding rice by hand. As a result it was found that on average the women had an extra two to four hours a day to devote to education, childcare and health care, the UN said. An evaluation found that literacy rates have risen from an average of 29 per cent to 39 per cent after the generators were installed in 14 villages in the Eastern region of Burkina Faso. The same project is already in place in Mali and Senegal, while pilot versions have been launched in a further six West African countries.

DEVELOPMENT - A common and edible variety of cactus could become a sustainable and affordable method for purifying water in rural communities in developing countries. Scientists previously knew that the prickly pear cactus - commonly found in Africa, Mexico and other developing countries - was able to purify water but their understanding of how it worked was limited.

■AFRICA

KENYA - Thousands of security personnel have been deployed across northern Kenya to confiscate weapons after a voluntary disarmament exercise netted only a small fraction of the 50,000 guns thought to be in civilian hands.

MALI - Villagers in the interior delta of the Niger River, already experiencing the harsh impacts of climate change, have a good understanding of the need to restore forests decimated by drought. Where forest cover has been rehabilitated, it is already reshaping the surrounding environment - and economy.

SOMALIA - Nearly half of all women and children in Somalia have anaemia and Vitamin A deficiency, a recent study indicates.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - Flash floods have killed over 80 people, wounded 240 and damaged more than 5,000 houses in 12 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces over the past 18 days, the Afghanistan National Disasters Management Authority said.

NEPAL - Maoists using children in general strike - Child rights activists have urged the Maoists of Nepal to stop endangering children by using them for political purposes, including the current general strike crippling the country.

TAJIKISTAN - Mudslides and floods kill 15, dozens missing in the south - Mudslides and floods have killed at least 15 people and 40 others are missing in the southern Tajik town of Kulob, according to the Tajikistan Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

BRAZIL has become an agricultural power in recent decades as a result of know-how that is now an important export item and part of its international cooperation programme. But the technology developed does not reach the vast majority of farmers within the country itself.

ECUADOR - Indigenous organisations in Ecuador opposed to a water reform bill that they say would give mining companies and agribusiness privileged access to water have threatened to extend their protests around the country in order to keep the legislature from passing the bill without certain modifications.

WFWO's Communications Team