

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations is intensifying its global campaign to eliminate one of the most widely-condemned religious and cultural rituals in the world today, mostly in Africa and Asia: female genital mutilation/cutting.

FOOD - Poor regions of the world thus far spared the shock of rising food prices should be prepared for hikes in costs of basic food staples, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund warn. Only a few years after the last food crisis, governments - especially those in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean - should expect long-term, weather-related increases.

AFRICA

EAST AFRICA - Thousands of people with albinism in Tanzania and Kenya have left their home villages out of fear of persecution and moved to live in urban areas where they believe they are safer, according to activists defending the rights of albinos.

NIGERIA - Illegal bush burning by some deviants in Nasarawa State has cleared a wide expanse of vegetation and thereby contravenes the State's environmental laws. Environmental authorities are said to have continued to look the other way as if there was nothing wrong with the development, some observers said.

SOUTHERN AFRICA - Above average rainfall across many parts of Southern Africa is prompting concern "about the food security of the affected population in the poorer parts of the sub-region over the coming months," the UNFAO said in a new report.

UGANDA is unlikely to meet Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) four and five which call for a reduction in child and maternal mortality respectively due to malaria and malnutrition which are largely responsible for the mortalities. Health experts say that the situation is getting worse with the government not getting committed to spending in the health sector.

ASIA & PACIFIC

PAKISTAN - Pakistan is still reeling from flooding that caused one of the world's costliest natural disasters in 2010, with millions of people lacking shelter, infrastructure in ruins and donations falling short of appeals. The United Nations' disaster coordination agency announced on Jan. 24 that the Pakistan floods caused damages of at least 9.5 billion dollars - the world's third costliest natural disaster in 2010 - and killed 1,985 people - the fourth deadliest in a year of cataclysmic events.

SRI LANKA will lose over one million tons from its upcoming paddy harvest due to recent flooding, officials say.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

LAC Region - Latin America returned in 2010 to the strong economic growth it enjoyed over the past decade, after only a minimal slowdown during the global crisis that broke out in 2008. But the weakness of the dollar relative to local currencies is a cause for concern among governments and sectors that produce goods for export.

WFWO's Communications Team