



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon led a remembrance ceremony for the 101 UN staff members killed during the January Haiti earthquake at UN headquarters Tuesday. "Gratitude fills this chamber - profound thanks that our world and our lives were touched by the grace and nobility of these 101 UN heroes," Ban said. "We will never forget you. We will carry on your work."

UNITED NATIONS Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon should open an investigation into the distribution of food aid intended for civilian populations affected by violence in Somalia, a new Security Council report recommends. Contractors, local UN staff and Islamic militants are diverting as much as half of the aid and the entire aid system for Somalia need to be redesigned, the report says.

CLIMATE CHANGE - China and India officially joined the Copenhagen climate-change agreement Tuesday, the last two of the world's major greenhouse-gas emitting countries to do so. More than 100 countries have now backed the agreement, which calls for \$100 billion in annual climate aid to poor countries and is meant to serve as the basis for the development of a binding treaty on climate change.

HEALTH - HIV/AIDS - Progress on tackling HIV and AIDS could go into reverse as the global economic downturn pinches poor countries' budgets and donors show signs of backing away from their promise to provide universal access to AIDS treatment, the British government and an aid group have warned. At an "emergency meeting" in London to reinvigorate international efforts to fight the pandemic, the British government urged countries in the G8 group of industrialised nations to live up to their financial pledges to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and called on other G20 countries, including emerging economies, to put money into the fund.

■AFRICA

AFRICA REGION - Health - Senegal has been polio-free since December 1998, but with two new cases became the latest West African country to be re-infected with polio since the second half of 2008, when an outbreak originating in northern Nigeria began spreading west. The outbreak had already hit Nigeria's neighbours to the north and east - Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The highly infectious disease is caused by a virus, which invades the nervous system, and can lead to total paralysis in a matter of hours, and at worse, death. The new cases have prompted U.N. agencies and their local partners to embark on a cross-border vaccination campaign aimed at immunizing more than 85 million children under the age of five in 19 countries in West and Central Africa.

D.R. CONGO - The United Nations is asking rich nations to help raise \$59 million to support refugees who have fled clashes in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thousands of Congolese have fled fighting in the northern province of Equateur and taken refuge in neighboring Congo Republic, also known as Congo-Brazzaville, which has assisted refugees from the outset of the crisis, the United Nations said in a statement.

NIGER needs \$123 million in international aid to combat the risk of food shortages this year, the northwest African country's prime minister says.

■ASIA

ASIA REGION - Health - A province in Cambodia is the epicentre of strains of malaria that have baffled healthcare experts worldwide and raised fears they could spread across borders and beyond. Three drug-resistant malaria parasites have originated in the province, Pailin, over the past five decades. Few can say why it is a hotbed for drug-resistant malaria but experts point to a combination of sociological factors and a complicated history spanning the Khmer Rouge era. Meanwhile, an international organisation that funds the treatment and prevention of killer diseases said on Monday that malaria could be eliminated as a public health problem within a decade in most countries where it is now endemic. The elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV - the virus that causes AIDS - is within reach by 2015, the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria said. And the prevalence of tuberculosis is also declining in many countries, the fund said in its 2010 report.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - The United Nations is confident there will be no security vacuum in Haiti as U.S. and other foreign troops withdraw from the earthquake-struck Caribbean country, a top U.N. official has said. The U.N. police and military force has a mandate to provide security in Haiti, but U.S. and other foreign troops took over humanitarian security, notably safeguarding the delivery of food and water, after the magnitude 7.0 quake on Jan 12.

CHILE - Homeless and desperate survivors of the 8.8 magnitude earthquake in central Chile have voiced anger and frustration at outgoing President Michelle Bachelet's handling of the disaster, saying her administration has been too slow to react to the disaster. In Constitucion, a coastal city that was engulfed by massive waves, 25 percent of the population remained without running water a week after the quake.

WFWO's Communications Team