



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS Convention on Biological Diversity executive secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif has warned that global climate change is closing to pushing several sensitive ecosystems over tipping points - after which damage will be irrevocable. Deforestation in the Amazon, algae growth in many freshwater lakes and rivers, and coral reef decline due to increased ocean acidification and warmth were named as three potential tipping points. Djoghlaif chided UN member nations for failing to meet a 2002 pledge to curb the loss of biodiversity.

Progress toward the Millennium Development Goals has seen far fewer deaths among children due to malnutrition, HIV and tuberculosis, according to a report published by the World Health Organization. Child mortality has improved in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Rwanda, though some countries may still struggle to meet the MDGs by the 2015 target. Annual deaths of children fell to 8.8 million in 2008, down 30% from 1990 levels.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - Though the number of people taking AIDS medication in Uganda has doubled in the past decade, the global economic crisis has undermined donor support for the fight against AIDS - while some philanthropists have gone on to support cheaper, more successful efforts against other diseases. Uganda clinics have begun turning away people who have relied on AIDS medication, while Nigeria and Swaziland have reported drug shortages and Tanzania and Botswana are cutting services. In Uganda, some 500,000 require treatment and just 200,000 receive medication - but each year 110,000 more people are infected.

SENEGAL - Improved access to reproductive health services and the availability of basic supplies like beds for patients to lie on are among the needs medical service providers in Senegal cite as critical in the battle against maternal mortality. One out of every 21 Senegalese women dies during childbirth or as a result of pregnancy complications.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - It is well known that the Taliban, local criminals and international drug cartels profit enormously from the drug trade; that corruption is rife; and that huge amounts of aid money are pouring into Afghanistan. Less clear is the effect of all this on government power and the rule of law on which humanitarian aid organizations depend to carry out their mandate.

CHINA/INDIA - Bilateral relations between China and India have improved dramatically as a result of close coordination of negotiating positions during the December 2009 Copenhagen climate summit to counter demands from Western countries, an Indian official notes. "We were critical to China at Copenhagen. The Chinese know, in their heart of hearts, that we saved them from isolation," Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh said.

PAKISTAN - Flooding caused by an overflowing lake, formed after a landslide blocked the River Hunza in northern Pakistan in January, has forced hundreds from their homes, and threatens to displace thousands more.

THAILAND - Inequality gap stains Thailand's MDGs achievements - Thailand may have earned praise for meeting national targets to slash poverty and hunger ahead of a global deadline, but the two-month long street protests in Bangkok exposes a troubling fact - economic inequality.

■MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN - A rebel occupation of a number of schools in the northern Yemeni governorate of Saada is preventing thousands of children from attending classes and threatening to undermine a recently signed ceasefire between the government and Houthi-led rebels, according to local officials.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

GUYANA - Plans under consideration to pave a mud road that traverses Guyana's rain forest connecting the capital Georgetown with boomtowns along the Brazilian border pit the country's desire for development and poverty alleviation against environmental conservation. Opponents claim 2 million acres of the biodiverse South American rain forest would be adversely affected by a paved road.

HAITI - Hospitals and orphanages in Haiti have been inundated by children in need of services since the Jan. 12 earthquake left tens of thousands of already impoverished families homeless and unemployed. Some are orphans, caregivers say, but many of the new arrivals are left by parents simply unable to care for the children.

WFWO's Communications Team