

NEWS BULLETIN

13 May 2011



GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The top United Nations climate change official urged governments to step up the pace of negotiations on the further reduction of emissions of the hazardous greenhouse gases blamed for global warming, ahead of the next UN climate change conference in Durban, South Africa, in December.

HEALTH - The UNWHO has approved misoprostol for preventing excessive bleeding following childbirth - the leading cause of maternal deaths in the developing world. All women and babies need maternity care in pregnancy, childbirth and after delivery to ensure optimal pregnancy outcomes. However, around the world, one third of births take place at home without the assistance of a skilled attendant. UNWHO strongly advocates for "skilled care at every birth" to reduce the global burden of 536 000 maternal deaths, 3 million stillbirths and 3.7 million newborn deaths each year. Countries measure the proportion of deliveries assisted by skilled attendants frequently since it is one of the indicators of progress towards Millennium Development Goal 5, which aims to improve maternal health.

HIV/AIDS - United Nations agencies fighting HIV/AIDS lauded the results of an international study that shows that if an HIV-positive person immediately follows an appropriate treatment of anti-retroviral drugs, the risk of transmitting the virus to an uninfected sexual partner is nearly entirely eliminated. The trial, conducted by the HIV Prevention Trials Network, tracked more than 1,700 couples across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States and found that the risk of infection fell by 96 per cent.

AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE - Many public hospitals in Côte d'Ivoire are overflowing as people rush to benefit from a brief period of free medical services, announced by the government as part of the recovery from months of post-election chaos. But the health ministry has been quick to point out that this is a temporary measure and fees will be reinstated at the end of May.

DR CONGO - The United Nations envoy leading the world's body efforts to eliminate sexual violence during conflict has welcomed the release of a new study on sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that indicates the prevalence of the crime is much worse than previously reported.

ASIA & PACIFIC

AFGHANISTAN - The rising cost of imported wheat flour is contributing to food insecurity in Afghanistan because so many urban families rely on it, officials say. Farmers produced 4.5 million tons of wheat last year (more than 80 percent of the annual 5.2 million tons required nationwide), but failed to offer adequate wheat flour to urban markets, which are dominated by imported flour, said officials in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

WFWO's Communications Team