



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS agencies are reviewing agreements with Somali contractors after a UN report charged some with diverting food aid to militant groups. UNWFP officials have said the agency would welcome independent investigations into any irregularities associated with the delivery of hundreds of millions of dollars in food aid.

UNITED NATIONS - Fifteen years after the landmark Beijing Declaration on women's rights, the gender gap is not narrowing in most developing countries, according to the "Gender Equity Index 2009, Beijing and Beyond: Putting Gender Economics at the Forefront".

CLIMATE CHANGE - Most food crop cultivation in Africa is rain-fed, but climate change is affecting vital rainfall patterns and pushing up temperatures, diminishing yields that could halve in some countries by 2020. This warning has been widely quoted since it first appeared in a synthesis report for policy-makers in 2007 by the authoritative UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

CLIMATE CHANGE - Fewer but more intense cyclones - As the level of carbon dioxide increases in the atmosphere, we will probably see fewer but more intense storms, a group of the world's top experts on tropical cyclones and climate change have concluded.

## ■AFRICA

AFRICA REGION - Up to 33 billion US dollars in food imports a year and a further three billion US dollars worth of food aid have failed to prevent one third of the African population from being chronically hungry, the United Nations has warned. The Director of Food Security and Sustainable Development at the UN's Economic Commission for Africa, declared that much of the money that Africa spends on food imports could be better used in supporting domestic production for regional and global trade. Dione told an agribusiness conference in Nigeria that this would contribute to reducing poverty and repositioning Africa in the global economy. The International Red Cross said on Thursday that 2.2 million Zimbabweans urgently need food aid as the country's harvest is expected to fall short this year. Aid agencies have also warned of a severe food and malnutrition crisis looming in Niger.

D.R. CONGO - Government troops - the FARDC - in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are to blame for much of the epidemic of sexual violence in the east of the country, according to US and UN reports detailing war crimes and possible crimes against humanity by various groups there.

NIGERIA - Interceptions and convictions of human traffickers and smugglers have risen year-on-year in Nigeria since the government passed legislation to ban the trade in 2005, but the volume of trafficking is still high and progress on convictions needs to speed up, say government officials.

WEST AFRICA - Fewer meningitis cases but more deadly - This year there are less than half the reported meningitis infections than in the same period in 2009, but more patients are dying - 13 percent in 2010 versus 8 percent in 2009 - according to the World Health Organization (WHO) Multi-Disease Surveillance Centre in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, which tracks 14 countries prone to meningitis outbreaks between Senegal and Ethiopia.

## ■ASIA

MYANMAR's military leaders should be investigated over alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes against civilians, a senior UN official said on Wednesday. The special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Quintana, submitted a draft report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva that described a long-established "pattern of gross and systematic violation of human rights".

PAKISTAN - Human Rights - Pakistani women are fighting back against acid attacks and the stigma of disfigurement by pursuing perpetrators in the country's courts, increasing public awareness and petitioning legislators for action. A piece of legislation that would limit acid sales and impose harsh penalties on those who use acid as an attack weapon was submitted to Parliament, on the heels of the first Supreme Court decision in favor of an acid attack victim.

## ■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - Given the level of widespread devastation in Haiti after the earthquake - in which more than 220,000 people were killed, more than 1 million were displaced, and much of the government and infrastructure was totaled - the disaster response has been largely described as a success. Officials acknowledge that sanitation and shelter remain a problem, but food, water and medical-aid delivery have prevented further deaths from starvation or dehydration. The burden on surviving Haitians has fallen disproportionately hard on the elderly, who make up roughly 7% of the displaced and find themselves increasingly vulnerable.

HAITI - Donors have funded less than 50% of the United Nations' \$1.4 billion appeal to support post-earthquake relief work in Haiti, UN humanitarian chief says. UN officials will raise the need for urgent funding efforts at an international donor conference for Haiti later this month.

WFWO's Communications Team