



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a midyear appeal for \$5 billion in funding to provide help to 53 million people in 34 countries affected by conflict or disasters through the end of 2010. Haiti, Afghanistan, Somalia, Kenya and Sudan are among the countries currently receiving the most aid.

UNITED NATIONS - A new United Nations report warned on Wednesday that mangroves are being destroyed at a rate three to four times higher than land-based forests. The study commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and The Nature Conservancy estimated that one fifth of all of the world's mangroves have disappeared since 1980. Coastal construction and shrimp farming were pinpointed as the main causes of mangrove loss. Mangroves are forests straddling land and sea that are worth up to 9,000 US dollars per hectare by serving as nurseries for sea fish, storing carbon and providing defences against rising sea levels prompted by floods and cyclones, according to the report.

HEALTH - A cocktail of antibiotics taken as a preventative measure may help healthy individuals develop immunity against malaria infection, according to a study. This measure could only be implemented in high risk areas with short malaria seasons, and be part of a broader preventative strategy, the researchers said.

■AFRICA

ANGOLA/BURKINA FASO - Accusations of child witchcraft are on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa - spurred on by urbanization, poverty, conflict and fragmenting communities, creating a "multi-crisis" for already vulnerable children - says the UN Children's Fund.

D.R. CONGO - Tens of thousands of people in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have fled their homes amid an army offensive against Ugandan rebels, presenting fresh impetus to humanitarian agencies' efforts to adapt their response mechanisms to sudden displacement.

RWANDA/UGANDA - Uganda has begun "forcibly" deporting hundreds of Rwandans from two southwestern refugee camps, at gunpoint according to one witness, prompting the UN Refugee Agency to call for a suspension of the operation.

■ASIA

CAMBODIA - Fish are the primary source of income for residents of this sleepy, rustic border town in southwestern Cambodia, but when the area's sand dredging vessels prowl the waters to plough up the riverbed, the fish all but disappear.

INDIA - Indian authorities are offering pregnant women a \$30 incentive to abandon traditional birthing methods for safer hospital environments in a bid to curb the country's maternal mortality rates. India has worked to halve its maternal mortality numbers over the past two decades, but still has one of the highest rates in the world.

SRI LANKA completed its first ever mass tsunami evacuation drill this week. Over 14,000 people were evacuated in 14 coastal districts. A month ago a 7.7 magnitude earthquake off the Nicobar Islands near Indonesia prompted the Sri Lankan authorities to issue a tsunami warning along the eastern coast.

THAILAND - A group of international scientists is unleashing a swarm of wasps to thwart a pest decimating one of Thailand's largest food exports. Experts see the wasps as the fastest and most environmentally-friendly solution available.

■MIDDLE EAST

OPT - The worst place to be in the West Bank in terms of water and sanitation facilities is an Israeli-controlled stretch of land known as Area C, where the Palestinian Authority (PA) is technically responsible for water services, but simply unable to deliver.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

LAC Region - The environment remains a second-tier matter in Latin America and the Caribbean despite being interwoven with persistent poverty and stalled economic development in the region, according to a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme.

WFWO's Communications Team