



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - While a global climate-change agreement has been slow to proceed, countries will need to work informally outside the UN as well, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's special climate envoy Gro Harlem Brundtland said. "You will have more of a double track system," she said.

UNITED NATIONS - The Security Council will debate a recommendation from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to extend the UN mission in Afghanistan for another year. A recent report from Ban's office also supports the idea the UN should support Afghan government reconciliation efforts with the Taliban.

HEALTH - In countries where laws criminalize gay and lesbian relationships, HIV infections are on the rise and sufferers aren't seeking help, according to Michel Sidibe, the head of UNAIDS. Infection rates are also increasing among users of illegal drugs.

FOOD - Trying to make food cheaper - The price of maize, sorghum, wheat and other staple grains is likely to climb again in many food-importing east African countries, agricultural economists warn.

ENVIRONMENT - Decades of efforts to protect the world's wild tiger populations have left the giant cats on the verge of extinction, United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species officials said. Organized criminal rings are increasingly playing a part in the poaching and trade of tiger parts to provide ingredients for traditional remedies, according to CITES.

ENVIRONMENT - Organized poaching gangs are operating at a 15-year high, threatening to hunt endangered black rhino populations in Zimbabwe and South Africa to the point of extinction. According to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, just 800 rhinos remain in Zimbabwe, while 1,570 black rhinos live in South Africa - a number that may diminish by 200 rhinos this year alone

## ■AFRICA

AFRICA REGION - The failure of civil servants to deliver government-run health, education or agricultural services due to small-scale corruption may put long-term development in Africa at risk, the World Bank said.

AFRICA REGION - Mapping truckers' route to the health centre - New maps pin-pointing the exact location of "wellness centres" in sub-Saharan Africa are improving truck drivers' access to treatment and care for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

D.R. CONGO - Bicycles needed to fight "tied legs" syndrome - Authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are appealing for funds to combat a tropical disease associated with the consumption of insufficiently processed cassava in western Bandundu province, officials said.

MADAGASCAR - A year of crisis - Madagascar's political deadlock masks an increasingly fragile humanitarian situation that will keep deteriorating if no solution to the ongoing crisis is found.

## ■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - Marjah residents take stock after offensive - With the exception of small pockets of resistance, Taliban fighters have been driven out of Marjah town in Helmand Province, southern Afghanistan, but many local people are struggling to return to some kind of normality and are fearful of the future.

NEPAL - Ramping up the fight against child malnutrition - Nepal is boosting efforts to tackle child malnutrition, which is so widespread that every other child under five has been found to be malnourished.

PAKISTAN - Crime syndicates working with corrupt bureaucrats have established "mafias" to control the flow of essential goods in Karachi, Pakistan, including water, which generates tens of millions each year. Though water is not scarce in Karachi and plumbing is sufficient to provide water for every home in Karachi, the water mafia extorts the city's poorest slum dwellers for up to a quarter of their income each month. Trucks with illegal taps siphon off about 272 million gallons a day from Karachi's water mains.

VIETNAM - Vietnamese authorities released one of the country's most well-known dissidents, Father Nguyen Van Ly, from prison Monday three years into an eight-year sentence for spreading anti-government propaganda. Authorities gave no reason for his release, which comes amid a crackdown that has seen 16 democracy activists sent to prison in recent months.

## ■MIDDLE EAST

IRAN - Western countries' focus on concerns that Iran may be building nuclear weapons deflects attention from Iran's human-rights situation, Nobel laureate Shirin Ebad said. "Iran holds two sad records, that for the number of imprisoned journalists and that for the number of minors executed," Ebad said.

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