

NEWS BULLETIN

17 March 2011



GLOBAL

FOOD & HUNGER - Surging global prices of basic foodstuffs are raising the risk of another food crisis like the one that hit developing countries in 2007-2008, the head of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization has said.

AIDS - UN agencies fear for the future of successful HIV/AIDS treatment programs as donor countries, under economic strain, scale back funding. Some 5.2 million people in developing countries take the anti-retroviral medication that suppresses the disease and allows them to live normal lives, but they represent only a third of the estimated 15 million in need of the drugs.

AFRICA

Africa Region - As donors retreat from funding HIV prevention and treatment, the vulnerability of national programmes reliant on external funding has become apparent. Without long-term sustainability, the lives of millions could be at risk. In the run-up to this year's U.N. High-Level meeting on HIV/AIDS, activists from East and Southern Africa are calling on governments to take increased ownership of these programmes to ensure treatment continues after donor funds have gone.

ZAMBIA - With less than four years before the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Zambia has continued to record remarkable progress in the achievement of the MDGs and in particular goal number two which targets to ensure the achievement of universal primary education.

ASIA & PACIFIC

AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN - Tens of thousands of impoverished Afghans and Pakistanis have been driven into indentured servitude as they struggle to feed their families. Workers borrow from their employers to meet immediate needs only to find themselves trapped in a cycle of permanent debt.

INDIA - Health workers, vaccines, unusual transportation methods and villages feature in this photo essay chronicling India's massive January polio vaccination campaign. Officials hope the campaign - which vaccinated 172 million children - will result in the eradication of the disease from the country.

SRI LANKA - For the first time in two years, reports of dengue fatalities and infections in Sri Lanka are falling, which officials attribute to aggressive island-wide public awareness campaigns and measures to wipe out mosquito breeding grounds.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - The effects of the deadly cholera outbreak in Haiti have been severely underestimated, with numbers of those affected by the disease likely to be about 779,000, or double the initial estimates, according to US researchers. The adjusted numbers also predict 11,100 deaths by the end of next fall.

WFWO's Communications Team