



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

DEVELOPMENT - Bad water kills more people than wars or earthquakes, declares Anders Berntell, executive director of the Stockholm International Water Institute.

HEALTH - Dental care or die - Women with gum disease are almost three times more likely to give birth prematurely than those with healthy gums, according to more than a decade of research. But scientists are still uncertain how significant a risk dental bacteria is to healthy pregnancies - or how to save foetuses from potentially deadly exposure.

BIODIVERSITY - As climate change transforms the acidity and oxygen levels of the world's waters with devastating effects for some marine species, others are facing an even more immediate threat from human consumption.

■AFRICA

AFRICA REGION - Hunger knows no borders - West Africa can meet its food needs through regional trade, most agricultural experts say, if countries keep their borders open for the free flow of staple grains, especially in times of heightened stress, whether climatic, economic, or brought on by conflict.

AFRICA REGION - Poverty is on the rise in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and various forms of corruption threaten to undermine the impact of investments made to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the continent, said the World Bank in a report released on Africa's development.

RWANDA / UGANDA - Refugees face hunger as farming ban bites - A farming ban imposed on Rwandan refugees in southwestern Uganda is raising concerns for their food security, while proposed cash transfers could boost both food prices and theft, warn aid workers and local officials, who are urging the government to rescind the directive.

WEST AFRICA - Stopping the Polio Virus - The World Health Organisation and its partners hope to eliminate the circulation of the polio virus in West Africa as soon as June by launching the first round of national synchronised immunisation days against the debilitating disease.

■ASIA

CHINA - Environment - As the water level in the Mekong River dips to a record 50-year low, a familiar pattern of fault-finding has risen to the surface. China, the regional giant through which parts of South-east Asia's largest waterway flows through, is again at the receiving end of verbal salvos from its neighbours.

MYANMAR - Damaged embankments threaten Nargis recovery - A failure to repair crucial flood embankments damaged by Cyclone Nargis could undo recovery efforts and lead to more loss of life if another major storm hits, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization warns.

■MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT - Literacy programmes are teaching millions of Egyptians to read, but are struggling to keep up with the country's high population growth.

IRAN has released four opposition prisoners, including a top reformist politician, a film maker, a journalist and an activist, according to local media reports.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

CHILE - Inadequacies in technical equipment, specialised human resources, institutional coordination, land zoning and citizen awareness were all laid bare by the major earthquake and subsequent tsunami on Feb. 27 in central and southern Chile.

WFWO's Communications Team