



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - One day closer to an ever-approaching deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced a Joint Action Plan to improve reproductive, maternal and newborn health on Wednesday, flanked by international leaders and development experts.

HEALTH - A tenfold hike in anti-malaria funding across the African continent since 2004 has dramatically cut the disease's rate of progress. A joint study by UN Children's Fund and the Roll Back Malaria Partnership found that 2010 levels for anti-malaria funding still fall short of the \$6 billion needed to implement malaria interventions throughout Africa. The report says that sustained and reliable development is necessary for African countries, particularly south of the Sahara, to make progress toward the Millennium Development Goals.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - African farmers are suffering as rain patterns become increasingly erratic as a consequence of climate change. Agriculture experts say immediate investment in irrigation, infrastructure and better farming supplies will help the continent's farmers adjust to the changes.

D.R. CONGO - The battle against sexual violence will likely suffer if the United Nations peacekeeping force pulls out from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN special representative on sexual violence in conflict Margot Wallstrom warns. DR Congo authorities are pushing for an end to the UN mission. The country's laws on sexual violence are poorly implemented, and thousands of rapes are committed with impunity every year.

MOZAMBIQUE's government learned some tough lessons from the devastating floods that hit the country a decade ago. Experts say the disaster management plans drawn up since are a model for other African countries.

SOUTHERN AFRICA - The river basin organisation people are gathered in Botswana again: the theme this year is "benefit-sharing", an approach to allocating water that, it is promised, will accomplish nothing less than to make more water.

■ASIA

Asia Region - East Asian countries can stabilize their greenhouse-gas emissions by 2025 if governments in the region act quickly, the World Bank says in a report. Prompt investment in renewable-energy sources and new technologies would help individual countries retain growth rates and help transition economies onto a sustainable track.

AFGHANISTAN's production of opiates and hashish is increasingly hurting its own people as well as damaging the health of millions across the world, officials and experts warn.

CHINA - Weather forecasts of snowfall amid freezing temperatures have aid groups concerned for the safety of the tens of thousands in China's Qinghai province left homeless by the April 14 earthquake. Chinese authorities and relief organizations are racing to get supplies into the remote area, but thousands of families are still sleeping out in the open.

INDIA - The Indian government revealed on Monday that a recalculation of poverty measurements has added 100 million people to its list of people living below the poverty line. India now officially has 372 million people the poor eligible for access to state welfare schemes and subsidies. This figure is equivalent to 40 per cent of India's population. The government said the previous estimate of 275 million was based only on calorie intake, while the new figure takes into account growth and spending on health, education and food. People on the list will be able to claim government subsidies, including a new food security law currently being drafted that would provide poor families with 25 kilograms of food grain at about six cents a kilogram every month.

■MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT - The Egyptian authorities say they have cleared landmines from 13,100 hectares of desert at Alamein, about 400km northwest of Cairo, paving the way for agricultural and housing projects.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

BOLIVIA - "Living Well" in harmony with the Environment - The philosophy of "Living Well" enshrined in Bolivia's new constitution is being put forward by the government as the basis for a global movement against consumerism, depredation of natural resources for profit, and current models of development.

VENEZUELAN authorities are currently investigating the deaths of six people from the Yanomami tribe in the Amazon believed to have been caused by mining pollution.

WFWO's Communications Team