



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Several countries are on track to meet reductions in the number of people living in extreme poverty, but Millennium Development Goals associated with primary education, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS are likely out of reach for most countries ahead of the 2015 goal, United Nations figures show. Most of sub-Saharan Africa is struggling to reduce poverty levels, while across Africa, Asia and Latin America, countries have made scant progress on women's equality, maternal and child mortality and increasing access to sanitation.

The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called on world leaders to keep aid commitments made ten years ago despite the economic recession in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Mr. Ban spoke on Monday at the opening of a three-day UN summit on the MDGs in New York. The UN acknowledges difficulties but claims it is still possible to reach some of the targets by 2015. Meanwhile, the European Commission president, Jose Manuel Barroso, offered 1.3 billion US dollars to boost efforts towards achieving the MDGs.

Campaigners have warned that there still are 69 million children around the world who do not go to school. The Global Campaign for Education, a coalition of more than 100 organisations published a new report on Monday as world leaders met in New York for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals review summit. The report estimates that \$4.6 billion annually is being lost from education budgets in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of the global financial crisis. Of the ten countries pinpointed in the report as the most difficult for children to get an education in, all but Haiti are in Africa. The report claims that around 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all children learned just basic reading skills. It also recommended that developing countries devote 20 per cent of their budgets to education.

■AFRICA

KENYA - Home-based voluntary counselling and testing can help to diagnose HIV early among high-risk children, new research in western Kenya has found.

■ASIA

INDIA - The Indian government has used misleading figures to assess maternal health, giving a distorted picture about its progress towards achieving the fifth Millennium Development Goal, a rights watchdog said on Monday. Ms. Kashyap, the Asia women's rights researcher for Human Rights Watch, issued a statement claiming that using the number of women who give birth in health facilities as a measure of progress was "dangerously misleading the public". Instead the government should focus on how many women survive the delivery and post-delivery period, she said. India claims to be on track to meet the goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75 per cent by 2015 because 10 million women gave birth in health facilities in the past year. The country has the highest number of women who die during pregnancy and childbirth in the world - around 100,000 per year - according to the World Health Organization.

NEPAL - Farmers in Nepal face an acute lack of fertilizers that could aggravate food insecurity, experts warn.

PAKISTAN - A resurgence in political violence in Pakistan, after the floods had brought a lull, is causing the authorities concern over the well-being of aid workers, but the international aid community is worried that security restrictions will make it harder for them to operate in flood-affected areas.

TIMOR-LESTE - The government of Timor-Leste is struggling to implement a recently adopted law criminalizing domestic violence, amid scepticism that it is too much, too soon.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

VENEZUELA - Despite inclusion programs Venezuelan authorities tout as a means to promote income distribution for the country's estimated half a million indigenous peoples, tribes such as the Warao continue to eke out a meager living through begging, menial work or scavenging. Venezuelan President has made empowerment of indigenous communities a priority of his tenure, and government officials said earlier this year that equality is a reality for indigenous peoples.

WFWO's Communications Team