



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Around the world, the gender gap between women and men is closing in areas such as health and education, but increased efforts are needed to address gaps in public life and gender-based violence, the United Nations says in a new report, the World's Women 2010. Primary school education is now even for boys and girls, and women now make up the majority of those seeking higher education, the report found, even though the majority of females still earn less than their male counterparts.

DEVELOPMENT - A new system for growing rice uses less water, yet results in 50% higher yields, a development group says. The system, held out as a remedy to regions afflicted by drought, entails weeding by hand, planting seedlings farther apart and keeping rice paddies moist but not flooded.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - Researchers have discovered that two strains of malaria mosquitoes responsible for spreading most of the disease throughout sub-Saharan Africa are evolving into new species. The scientists found that two strains of the mosquito were rapidly diverging in their genetic make-up, despite maintaining an identical physical appearance. The World Health Organization estimates that around 20 per cent of child deaths in Africa are caused by malaria.

KENYA - An initiative that encourages men to visit exclusively male clinics is gaining popularity in western Kenya and increasing male participation in prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT) programmes.

MALI's crisis early warning system is lauded in the sub-region for its accuracy and efficiency but some say good, timely information warning of the impact of poor rains on grazing land and water availability this year, did not necessarily translate into a swift response by the government or international community.

■ASIA & PACIFIC

INDIA - The Indian government announced on Friday a new 223 million US dollar welfare scheme that it said will benefit more than one million pregnant and breast-feeding women across the country. In order to be eligible for the programme women must receive regular health checkups. They will then be given about 270 US dollars over six months, sent directly into their bank accounts. The scheme aims to fight maternal mortality in India, which has one of the highest rates in the world. The United Nations estimates that 1,000 women die every day in India due to pregnancy-related problems.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA has granted a license to the world's first deep-sea ore mine, sparking environmental concerns from scientists and indigenous people. The excavation will occur near hydrothermal vents 1,600 metres below the surface and scientists fear the site's very distinctive fauna will be affected. Indigenous communities tried to halt the project by petitioning the government in 2008 over concerns that the mine would threaten their marine resources.

WFWO's Communications Team