

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

HIV/AIDS - The number of new HIV infections last year effectively remained unchanged from 2007 levels, while access to HIV treatment has led to more people than ever living with the AIDS virus, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the United Nations AIDS program said today. Even though new infections have fallen 26% since 1997 in the Sub-Saharan region, according to UNAIDS, the numbers have increased 250% over the past decade in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

CLIMATE CHANGE - Waffling by the world's richest countries over their commitments last year to finance a \$100 billion climate aid fund could cause next week's UN climate talks in Durban, South Africa, to collapse before they even get started, said Brazilian climate negotiator Luiz Alberto Figueiredo. The fund, slated to be up and running by 2013, is designed to raise up to \$100 billion annually by 2020 to help the world's poorest countries cope with climate change.

AFRICA

MDGs - Sub-Saharan Africa will need two centuries to meet Millennium Development Goals associated with access to sanitation at the current pace of progress. More than 40% of the world's population, some 2.6 billion people, is without access to toilets presenting serious public health concerns, water advocates say.

CLIMATE - African countries are leading the charge for international climate policy as they face a reality of millions of "food refugees" struggling to cope with the effects of climate change, says the head of the United Nations Environment Programme. African governments and their supporters are looking to hydroelectric dams, wind farms and other forms of renewable energy to increase the capacity to manage climate-related changes.

SOUTH AFRICA - Ten years ago, the Doha Declaration allowed countries to circumvent patent rights to access life-saving medicines, particularly those used to treat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. However, the South African government has failed to take advantage of these provisions, and increasingly important TB medication and second- and third-line antiretrovirals (ARVs) remain out of reach, activists warn.

ASIA & PACIFIC

VIETNAM - Growing numbers of Vietnamese labourers are being trafficked to factories and plantations in China where they are exploited, according to the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking.

MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT - Protesters calling for Egypt's military to hand over power have beaten back a new raid by security forces to evict them from Cairo's Tahrir Square after more than 48 hours of violence in the heart of the Egyptian capital.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

WATER - Five South American countries have launched a joint sustainable management programme for the Río de la Plata basin, to preserve one of the largest fresh water reserves in the world.

WFWO's Communications Team