



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - US President Barack Obama delivered a speech in which he said that providing aid to the poorest countries can directly contribute to the security and prosperity of the wealthiest countries - a framework for a new policy on aid that would provide for those countries most likely to help their own people. Mr. Obama said that philanthropy could not be the role of the state alone but that accountability should begin with national leaders. He also pledged that the US would lead a global effort to battle corruption, a major obstacle to the success of the Millennium Development Goals.

CLIMATE CHANGE - The catastrophic floods in Pakistan have added urgency to a high-level United Nations summit this week, with delegates from mostly South Asian nations convening Tuesday to call for increased technology transfer from richer countries and to compare strategies to avert the worst effects of climate change.

HEALTH - A plan to distribute 100 million clean-burning stoves to households around the developing world by 2020 was launched on Tuesday in New York. The World Health Organization estimates that nearly two million people die every year as a result of the toxic smoke released by burning wood or other solid fuel in indoor stoves.

ENVIRONMENT - By analyzing an untapped and heretofore unconsidered resource - pressed flowers - scientists have been able to perform the first long-term research on plants' natural flowering cycles. By studying orchids pressed as long as 162 years ago, scientists have been able to determine that flowers bloom earlier as the average temperature rises from year to year. The researchers believe that it will enable scientists to determine the effects global climate change will have on ecosystems by revealing insights as to how plants will respond to global warming.

■AFRICA

BURUNDI - The World Bank announced on Wednesday that it has given 43 million US dollars to Burundi to support the development of its agricultural sector.

D.R. CONGO - The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) revealed that 40,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) living in camps in Zambia had returned home since 2007.

KENYA - In an effort to stem the endemic violent banditry and cattle-rustling that plagues pastoralist areas in northern Kenya, professionals and community leaders from various ethnic groups have been criss-crossing the region in "peace caravans".

MALI - Destocking weak animals has long been considered part of the emergency and recovery response to help pastoralists survive, and protect their livelihoods in droughts, but experts say destocking must come sooner - before emergencies develop.

SOMALIA - The number of tuberculosis patients in Burao, in Somalia's self-declared independent republic of Somaliland, has increased because of khat use as well as rising displacement due to drought and conflict, say officials.

ZIMBABWE - It was 10 years ago that a cyclone hit remote rural communities in eastern Zimbabwe destroying much of the basic infrastructure, but in the absence of any reconstruction it may as well have been yesterday.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - Abundant global wheat stocks and unusually good wheat harvests in Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010 have kept prices in the country relatively stable so far. According the Ministry of Agriculture, Afghanistan will only need to import 14 percent of its wheat needs this year (about 700,000 tons) - down from recent levels of 25-33 percent.

INDIA - Heavy monsoon rains hit northern India this week, killing at least 17 people and affecting over three million others. Officials said on Thursday that around two million people had been evacuated in the previous 24 hours and that thousands of homes had been washed away by the floods.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

MEXICO - More bottled water is consumed per capita in Mexico than in any other country in the world, according to a consultancy - a fact that alarms non-governmental organisations because it highlights the lack of access to safe tap water.

WFWO's Communications Team