



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - In an interview, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres discusses ongoing refugee crises in Sudan, Chad, Afghanistan and other places - and testifies that many conflicts are growing worse. Guterres describes the refugee crisis in Central African Republic - where 200,000 people are displaced and much of the country is lawless - as particularly troubling, because so few people are aware of its existence. Guterres says that an "arc of crisis" extending from Afghanistan and Pakistan into Iraq and then on to Sudan and Chad and countries in the Horn of Africa account for two-thirds of the world's refugees.

CLIMATE CHANGE - The UN Food and Agriculture Organization is conducting additional analysis on the relationship between meat production and climate change after critics questioned the conclusion in a 2006 report that the industry creates more greenhouse-gas emissions than the transport sector.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - The Obama administration will put food security at the heart of its Africa policy, as it seeks to enhance ongoing U.S. efforts on trade, investment and HIV/AIDS on the continent, a top U.S. diplomat has said. "We want to see the food security initiative take on greater momentum as more African countries are drawn into this program," said Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson, the administration's top official for Africa. Meanwhile, relief groups responding to a worsening food crisis in West Africa's Sahel region are likely to face a shortage of funds because donor attention is focused on Haiti. At least 10 million people, particularly in Niger and Chad, risk severe hunger after irregular rainfall in 2009 led to poor harvests and fewer crops in parts of this arid region that runs south of the Sahara desert.

ETHIOPIA - More than 200,000 Ethiopians who rely on fishing and farming could become reliant on aid to survive if the government goes ahead with building Africa's biggest hydropower dam, an advocacy group said

MOZAMBIQUE - The worst of the floods are behind them, but now the communities along Mozambique's major rivers face other serious challenges: thousands are displaced and access to food and clean water is limited.

SOUTH AFRICA - The expected arrival of 350,000 football fans in South Africa for the World Cup in June has provoked fears of increased levels of human trafficking. A new study suggests that one major obstacle to preventing this is the lack of accurate information about the extent of the problem.

■ASIA

CHINA - Google's choice to publicly confront China over censorship issues exemplifies a growing change in the relationship between Western private-sector players and Chinese authorities. China's failure to open its markets more fully to foreign businesses, experts believe, has led to a greater willingness to challenge China on rights abuses.

NORTH KOREA - Refugees from North Korea report corruption, fatigue and hunger are driving resistance to authorities within the country's general population, according to a report being released by the East-West Center. The assessment comes at a time when Pyongyang watchers say deaths from starvation and anger over financial mismanagement are putting pressure on North Korean authorities.

PAKISTAN - Top U.S. and Pakistani officials meet in Washington on Wednesday to discuss a range of issues, from security cooperation to how best to deliver aid for water, power, agriculture and other projects.

PHILIPPINES - Tens if not hundreds of thousands of people are still homeless after a series of typhoons tore across the Philippines last year. Resettlement following a natural disaster is always a slow process, but aid agencies say scarce funding and a lack of suitable resettlement sites are added challenges in densely-populated Philippines which has 92 million people.

SRI LANKA - According to Sri Lankan military officials, more than 24,000 people or close to 30 percent of the town's original population have returned since December - many of whom are living in tents.

■MIDDLE EAST

SYRIA - Poor planning and management, wasteful irrigation systems, intensive wheat and cotton farming and a rapidly growing population are straining water resources in Syria in a year which has seen unprecedented internal displacement as a result of drought in eastern and northeastern parts of the country.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

CHILE - Aftershocks still rattle walls and nerves in Chile nearly three weeks after an 8.8 magnitude earthquake, intensifying grief and trauma for some while others find escape at the football stadium. Hundreds were killed and parts of south-central Chile lie in ruins from the Feb. 27 quake that set off tsunamis and powerful aftershocks.

HAITI - International donors are aiming to provide \$3.8 billion over 18 months to help Haiti rebuild after its Jan. 12 earthquake, according to officials and experts preparing a high-level donors conference. The initial short-term target figure came in a statement released late on Wednesday after a two-day meeting in the Dominican Republic of representatives of Haiti's government, donor nations, multilateral lenders, U.N. agencies and aid groups.

WFWO's Communications Team