



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

ENVIRONMENT - Diplomats at the Convention on Biological Diversity say the future of the planet is at risk, yet they appear increasingly unlikely to hammer out a deal because rich countries do not want to pay poor countries for use of their marine and land resources. Targets for preserving the world's biodiversity are unlikely to be met until issues like access and payment are codified under international law.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - Inadequate access to water, recurring floods and droughts as well as a lack of political will to invest in small-scale agriculture perpetuate hunger across Africa, the continent's food security experts say.

BENIN - Three thousand emergency tents are due to be airlifted to Benin as the country tries to recover from its worst flooding since 1963. The UN refugee agency is trying to find shelter for an estimated 680,000 people displaced by months of rain. Around 800 cases of cholera have been reported in the West African country where drinking water has been contaminated by latrines. Officials say dozens of people have died in the past few weeks as a result of the flooding.

COTE D'IVOIRE - Residents of western Côte d'Ivoire are relentlessly subjected to brutal physical and sexual violence by armed groups as the region festers in a state of near lawlessness, according to a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW).

D.R. CONGO - Civil society in the DRC's eastern province of South Kivu is determined that meaningful action will follow from the publication of the UN's Mapping Project, a report detailing some of the most serious human rights violations by state and non-state actors in the DRC between 1993 and 2003.

MOZAMBIQUE - Delayed test results often mean HIV patients in Mozambique fail to get timely treatment, but new technology is reducing the need to send tests to far away laboratories, and speeding up test results and HIV treatment.

ZIMBABWE - Concern over reports of growing numbers of pupils dropping out of school due to pregnancy has rekindled debate over the link between intergenerational sex and HIV infection among Zimbabwe's youth.

■ASIA

THAILAND - Thai authorities say floods spreading across the country's northeast are the worst Thailand has experienced in decades, and have issued warning to Bangkok residents to prepare for rising waters.

■MIDDLE EAST

Across the Middle East, governments are taking an increasingly hard line on the online activities of their citizens as Internet usage soars in the region. Iran, Egypt, Morocco and Syria have all jailed "netizens" over their online presence, and many countries are considering legislation on permissible Internet usage.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI's cholera outbreak may be slowing with fewer cases now being reported, according to health officials. The official death toll has passed 250 with more than 3,000 cases recorded. Health workers have been trying to prevent the disease from spreading to the capital's overcrowded tent cities where hundreds of thousands of people live in unsanitary conditions. Five cases were recorded in the capital Port au Prince. Sufferers are believed to have travelled to the capital from the badly-hit Artibonite and Central areas of the country.

NICARAGUA - In an effort to stem rising rural poverty in Nicaragua, the European Union and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization have joined the government in supporting organisations of small-scale farmers boost the productivity of staple crops, like beans, maize and rice.

WFWO's Communications Team