

# NEWS BULLETIN

27 July 2011



## GLOBAL

**HEALTH** - Public health officials are increasingly concerned over the growing opposition to immunization programs throughout the world. Anti-vaccine groups in both developed and developing countries are spreading fears and suspicions over vaccine safety, officials say, threatening the long-term prospects of eradicating diseases such as polio, and resulting recently in outbreaks of whooping cough and measles in several countries where people refused the vaccines.

## AFRICA

**DR CONGO** - Some 3.1 million children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have been vaccinated against measles in a United Nations-coordinated campaign to combat the disease outbreak which has claimed the lives of 1,145 children since the start of this year.

**HORN OF AFRICA** - After several appeals by the UN and other aid agencies, the international community is rallying to feed an estimated 11.6 million people facing starvation in the Horn of Africa.

**RWANDA** - The Rwandan government is encouraging men to undergo circumcision through a new, nonsurgical procedure that is cheaper, cleaner and more accessible than previous options, which often required sutures and anesthesia. The initiative is in response to UN World Health Organization findings that circumcision can reduce the risk of HIV infection by some 60% in high risk areas, such as sub-Saharan Africa.

**SOUTH AFRICA** - Obtaining HIV treatment in jail is becoming easier as about 9 percent of South African prisons now offer antiretroviral (ARV) drugs in-house.

## ASIA & PACIFIC

**AP Region** - Economic woes in the West and fallout from Japan's double disaster in March have left investors wary of the Asia-Pacific region, which helped lead recovery from the 2009 global financial crisis, the United Nations says in a new report. Export growth in the region may drop to 9% this year, down from 17.3% in 2010, according to the UN.

**BANGLADESH** - Heavy flooding in southeastern Bangladesh has forced more than 20,000 people from their homes in Cox's Bazar and Teknaf districts, say local authorities.

**CHINA** faces an impending economic slowdown if authorities do not act immediately to address surging costs associated with chronic noncommunicable diseases, the World Bank warns in a report. More than 80% of deaths in China are related to chronic conditions, and the country faces a severe shortage of qualified health workers as the overall population ages.

## MIDDLE EAST

**OPT** - The number of children with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other anxiety disorders including depression has increased in the occupied Palestinian territory where conflict continues with Israel, according to the NGOs specializing in mental health.

**SAUDI ARABIAN** authorities are drafting language for a law to set a minimum age for the marriage of girls, in response to a surge in child marriages. The proposed law, which would be the first in the region to explicitly set a minimum marriage age, reportedly already has the support of the country's parliament and King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz.

WFWO's Communications Team