



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

HEALTH - A new vaccine that tackles two strains of the polio virus at the same time has proven to be more effective in protecting against the crippling disease than vaccines currently in use. A medical journal published a new study which found that the new oral polio vaccine helped to reduce the number of cases of polio by more than 90 per cent after being used in Afghanistan, India and Nigeria. The researchers carried out a trial with 830 newborn babies in India and found that the new vaccine was more effective than vaccines used in the past. The UN World Health Organisation believes the new vaccine may help to finally eradicate polio from the four countries where the virus is still found.

BIODIVERSITY - Ongoing talks in Japan are inching closer to securing \$4 billion to help developing countries preserve their biodiversity even as rich countries increase trade in their genetic resources. The funds, part of a plan for new targets for the protection of plant and animal species by 2020, would go primarily toward the preservation of tropical forests.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - Health officials are employing "defaulter tracers" in increasing numbers across sub-Saharan Africa as the number of HIV/AIDS patients abandoning medical treatment rises. In many cases, costs associated with child care and transportation to facilities cause patients to miss treatment. The health care community is experimenting with strategies to reduce patient loss such as home deliveries of medicines.

BENIN - As the floodwaters begin to recede in parts of Benin, the new threat is an explosion of infectious diseases, particularly cholera and malaria.

SUDAN - Women in the Sudanese region of Darfur have been raped with impunity since the start of the conflict there in 2003. Now a campaign to reform the rape law is gaining momentum in the country, promoted by Alliance 149, a national coalition born in late 2009.

■ASIA & PACIFIC

Countries in Asia and the Pacific are more prone to natural disasters than those in other parts of the world, with people in the region four times more likely to be affected by natural catastrophe than those in Africa and 25 times more vulnerable than Europeans or North Americans, according to a United Nations report.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

Over the past decade, more than 1,200 new species of animals have been discovered in the rain forests of the Amazon at the same time their very existence is under serious threat from human activities such as logging, ranching and farming. Some 17% of the rain forest has been lost over the past several decades, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

HAITI - The number of deaths resulting from a cholera outbreak in Haiti is dropping, but local and international health officials warn a countrywide outbreak affecting tens of thousands remains a substantive threat. Haiti has been scrambling to contain the outbreak, which has seen more than 3,300 confirmed cases and at least 259 deaths.

WFWO's Communications Team