



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Queen Elizabeth II will make appeal to the 192 General Assembly members to strive for unity and world peace in a July 6 speech at the United Nations. This will be the first time the monarch has addressed the UN since 1957. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed hope that the queen will use the occasion to endorse efforts to meet Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNITED NATIONS - Ahead of a week-long meeting on gender equality starting Monday at the United Nations, women's rights activists have been pushing for concrete progress on a pledge made last September by the world body to create a new, better-funded UN agency for women.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (Goal 3) - The employment of a large number of women at the very front-line of public service delivery - teachers, nurses, agricultural extensionists, micro-finance providers - would make a significant contribution to speeding achievement of the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It is widely felt that good governance and improved basic service delivery are key for achieving the MDGs. Gender equality is also considered a key to achieving the MDGs, since the factor holding back achievement in so many of the MDGs is the serious discrimination against women and girls that keeps their enrolment and employment rates low, their maternal mortality rates high, and generally undermines their capacities to contribute to the economy and society in ways that would reduce poverty and speed growth.

## ■AFRICA

R.D. CONGO - In a development resembling the debate over "blood diamonds" sold by resource-rich countries with atrocious human-rights records, activists are beginning to organize against so-called conflict minerals: heavy metals whose use in products such as cell phones and computers contributes to the brutal conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

NIGER - Nearly 17 percent of Niger's children younger than five suffer acute malnutrition, a 5 percent increase over the same period last year, according to a national survey released by the government. More than 15 percent acute malnutrition is classified as a critical emergency by the UN World Health Organization (WHO). The report links this increase to the poor 2008-2009 harvests.

SWAZILAND has made remarkable progress in reducing HIV transmission from infected mothers to their babies, but health activists worry that this may be stalled or even reversed if lapses in basic health services are not addressed.

UGANDA - Hundreds of children injured during years of conflict in northern Uganda have been unable to obtain the specialist treatment they need for lack of funds or suitable facilities, according to a local advocacy group.

## ■ASIA

SRI LANKA - As residents of northern Sri Lanka piece together their lives a year after the end of a decades-long civil war, a communication gap between Tamil-speaking locals and a predominantly Sinhala-speaking police force threatens to hinder recovery in the region.

## ■MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT - Thousands of Gazans are taking advantage of an open border crossing with Egypt since 1 June to seek treatment for a range of illnesses in Cairo hospitals.

## ■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

ARGENTINA - Scientists told the International Whaling Commission that stranding deaths have soared among southern right whales - for reasons they cannot determine. The number of whales stranded on beaches around Argentina's Valdes Peninsula has risen dramatically in recent years, almost doubling between 2003 and 2009. The region is a breeding ground for the right whales, which explains why they are dying there, but not why they are dying. Reduced food sources, high biotoxin concentrations and disease have been suggested as culprits.

WFWO's Communications Team