



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - In an ambitious plan designed to rebuild the Haitian government and then consolidate authority over reconstruction within its bureaucracy, the U.S. is pledging \$1.2 billion to the earthquake-damaged country. While Haiti had appealed for \$3.8 billion over two years, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that donors had responded with much greater generosity, pledging \$9.9 billion over three years. Canada pledged \$400 million, a mix of public and private aid as well as debt relief assistance with the World Bank.

CLIMATE CHANGE - Progress toward curbing smog in Mexico City has revealed the views of volcanoes looming nearby, as well as a model for crowded metropolitan areas looking to promote better air quality. Officials have worked to reduce vehicle emissions and promote low-emissions and hybrid buses. For his efforts - which has seen Mexico City fall off the top 10 most polluted cities list - President Felipe Calderón may be rewarded with a leadership position among developing countries looking to negotiate a global carbon-emissions regime.

FOOD AID - European Union raises the bar on food assistance - Handing out cash or vouchers for food, or buying food aid in or near the country in need of emergency food assistance, has become official policy, the European Union (EU) announced on 31 March, breaking the link between donors supporting their own farmers and foreign food aid.

ENVIRONMENT - A massive flood originating in North America unloaded massive amounts of freshwater into the Arctic Ocean and sparked a mini ice age in Europe 13,000 years ago, according to a study published in the journal Nature. Scientists fear glacier melt associated with climate change may soon lead to another sharp cooling period.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - East African countries risk not attaining the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on universal treatment of people living with HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases if the region's parliament adopts the anti-counterfeits policy and bill currently under consideration.

Africa Region - Putting science to work for food security - If farmers in Niger, West Africa, get poor yields in a dry year from a strain of pearl millet, the staple cereal, they can ask their representative organization to contact a research body to find a solution. The research body might consult a regional organization, and if the scientists then need funds to work on a solution, the farmers will have to approve the project before donors endorse funding.

GUINEA-BISSAU - Instability returns to capital - Bissau-Guineans have endured decades of coups and countercoups and many were hoping a peaceful presidential election in 2009 marked a step towards stability and development. But fear returned to the streets of the capital Bissau on 1 April, after the Prime Minister and Army Chief were detained by mutinous soldiers.

KENYA - Pregnant mothers who are HIV-positive could soon find it challenging to access life-saving HIV drugs because Kenya was denied 270 million dollars in funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

SOMALIA - Human trafficking on the increase - Officials in Somalia's self-declared independent state of Somaliland are concerned over a rise in human trafficking in the region. Children are mainly trafficked from south-central Somalia, because of the lack of government there, says a senior government official.

UGANDA - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are guilty of judging a palm oil project in Uganda on innuendo rather than its merits, the United Nations poverty agency supporting the controversial scheme said, as the project starts to bear fruit for smallholder farmers.

■ASIA

INDIA - Indian officials launched a massive census effort today to create a biometric database of every resident over the age of 15. Over the next year, Indians will be photographed, fingerprinted and classified using a set of criteria including gender and education level. Authorities will use the data to issue national identity cards.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - Women demand role in reconstruction - Women's civil society groups were noticeable by their absence from the landmark Haiti donor conference on 31 March, which secured pledges of US\$5.3 billion over the next two years to support the country's post-quake recovery.

WFWO's Communications Team