



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

POVERTY - Purchase prices of drugs for common conditions such as asthma, high blood pressure and diabetes will push tens of millions of people in low- or middle-income countries below the poverty line, a study published warns. Researchers are calling for increased drug supply from the public sector and greater use of generic drugs.

■AFRICA

ETHIOPIA - More than a quarter of a million Ethiopians are at risk from severe flooding next month when heavy rain is expected in the country, according to government estimates issued by the United Nations.

MALAWI - A surplus production of maize, Malawi's staple food, will not prevent at least one million people from being food insecure, a forecast that has not pleased President Bingu wa Mutharika.

MOZAMBIQUE - At least four people were killed in violent riots triggered by rising food and fuel prices in Mozambique's capital Maputo on Wednesday, according to local authorities. But reports from local media based on police and hospital sources put the death toll as high as seven, including two children. Protesters reportedly continued to block roads and loot shops on Thursday amid sporadic gunfire. The government has declared the demonstrations illegal and claimed they were being organised through text messages and emails. The price of bread in Mozambique has increased by as much as 30 per cent in the past year, while fuel and water costs have also risen.

NIGERIAN health authorities have warned of a nationwide cholera risk after the death toll from an outbreak concentrated largely in the north of Africa's most populous nation rose to 352. The health ministry said 6,437 cases have been reported across 11 of the country's 36 states since June, fuelled by heavy rains and flooding in rural areas where safe drinking water and sanitary facilities are scarce.

SUDAN - Floods have displaced nearly 60,000 people in the last month in south Sudan with many at risk of malaria and other diseases, the semi-autonomous region's government says. The crisis is another hurdle for the war-ravaged south ahead of a referendum on independence in January, which some analysts fear will be hindered by a worsening humanitarian situation with almost half the region's 8 million population short of food

■ASIA

CHINA - A court in China's Anhui Province has agreed to consider the case of an HIV-positive schoolteacher who claims he was illegally denied employment on the basis of his health. This is the first time a Chinese court has considered an HIV/AIDS discrimination-related complaint, and health advocates hope the decision represents changing attitudes within the country's judiciary.

INDONESIA - Though the Indonesian government banned female genital mutilation/cutting four years ago, experts say religious support for the practice is more fervent than ever, particularly in rural communities.

PAKISTAN - Pakistani children affected by the recent massive flooding remain traumatized by the fear associated by flight from their homes and their current living conditions. United Nations officials have expressed concern for the children's mental and physical well-being as medical care systems in the country have been decimated by the disaster. Pakistani officials have warned citizens that the country faces steep economic challenges associated with the loss of jobs, loss of crops and soaring inflation that followed the floods.

■MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL - Thousands of Israelis have protested in a central park here demanding that their government revoke its decision to deport 400 children of migrant workers.

WFWO's Communications Team