



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

**UNITED NATIONS** - The challenge for Wednesday's international donor meeting for Haiti is not to merely help the country rebuild, but to jump-start a renewal for the battered island, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon writes. "Haiti's leaders are committing to a new social contract with their people. That means fully democratic government, grounded in sound economic and social policies that address extreme poverty and deep-rooted disparities of wealth," Ban explains. Haiti needs more than \$4 billion over the next 18 months to begin the process in earnest.

**HEALTH** - HIV/AIDS measures need continued support - Economic and climate-related concerns should not take the focus off of HIV/AIDS efforts, executive director of UNAIDS said. Budget cuts to treatment and prevention projects would reduce gains of the past decade and lead to a "universal nightmare," Sidibe warned.

**ENVIRONMENT** - Forests may depend on survival of native people - After the failures in Copenhagen to agree on a new climate protection treaty, and more recently at the Doha meetings on trade in endangered species to prevent bluefin tuna from going extinct, indigenous forest communities may offer examples of sensible governance for shared resources on a small planet.

## ■AFRICA

**Africa Region** - Antibiotic plus ARVs could halve HIV mortality - A cheap, widely available antibiotic given to patients when they start taking life-prolonging antiretroviral (ARV) drugs could reduce HIV mortality in resource-limited settings by up to 50 percent says a new study published in the scientific journal.

**D.R. CONGO / UGANDA** - Hundreds of thousands of people displaced by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo are still afraid to return to their villages, despite a lull in attacks, a UN spokesman said.

**EAST AFRICA** - East African armies should be used as a resource to fight HIV/AIDS in the general population, a workshop on HIV/AIDS in the peace and security sectors heard in the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

**MOZAMBIQUE** - Extensive flooding along the rivers of central and southern Mozambique during March, in tandem with persistent drought in other parts of the same areas, have left 465,000 people in need of food assistance, but aid agencies warn that they do not have the resources to help.

**RWANDA** has launched its first bio-diesel-powered bus service. The Biodiesel Express made its first trip from the capital Kigali to the town of Akanyuru last week. It took three years to develop and it can run on oil crops, animal fats and used cooking oil from restaurants. The Rwandan government hopes that bio-diesel will reduce the country's reliance on fossil fuels. For bio-diesel to fuel the whole of Rwanda, 225,000 hectares would be need to plant oil crops such as moringa. This represents 8.5 per cent of the country's land area and some doubt whether the country has enough spare land to make bio-diesel a real alternative to fossil fuels.

**SOMALIA** - As more aid groups pull out of camps for internally displaced people and more people flee Mogadishu to escape the violence, the plight of IDPs is at its most extreme, says a doctor-turned-relief-worker in Mogadishu.

**SOUTH AFRICA** - Low HIV prevalence rates on campus - HIV prevalence rates among South Africa's university students remain low, but risk is never far off according to one of the largest surveys ever conducted in the country.

## ■ASIA

**MONGOLIA** - It has emerged that nearly 10 per cent of Mongolia's livestock died as a result of the severe winter. Mongolia's economy depends heavily on livestock farming and agriculture. Temperatures have dropped well below -40C in recent months. The previous summer was very dry and the bitter winter has meant that reserves of fodder are low. The weather will not improve until mid May and the herders expect that the next few weeks will be the toughest yet.

**SRI LANKA** - The latest UN figures show that 160,000 houses in northern Sri Lanka have to be repaired or rebuilt as the conflict-displaced return to their home areas.

**NORTH KOREA** - North Korean defectors and South Korean human-rights activists are using cellular telephones to circumvent official controls and get information on North Korea out to the world. North Koreans traveling to China are approached to smuggle phones into the reclusive country, and supporters then post text and voice messages to Internet sites.

## ■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

**HAITI** - The aftermath of the Jan. 12 earthquake has laid bare the stark contrast between Haiti's small population of wealthy individuals and the impoverished majority. Wealthy Haitians, foreign aid workers and diplomats are pumping money into certain sectors of the economy, but some observers worry the spending does not trickle down to benefit the overall economy.

WFWO's Communications Team