

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

DEVELOPMENT - Half the world's 48 least developed countries (LDCs) can "graduate" out of their impoverished status within 10 years if they benefit from better targeted development aid, duty- and quota-free access for exports and doubled farm productivity and school enrolment, according to a United Nations report released today.

HEALTH - The UN World Health Organization released its list of drugs and vitamins that should be stocked by every health care provider to ensure maternal and child health in the developing world. Oxytocin, saline solution, calcium gluconate, zinc and vitamin A are among the top 30 medicines that can improve maternal and child health, WHO says. More than 8 million children under 5 years of age die annually and 1,000 pregnant women a day die from largely treatable conditions, and availability of the drugs, according to UNWHO, would drastically improve the numbers.

AFRICA

NIGER - Six months before the start of the 2009 rainy season the government of Niger was warned the rains would fail. In the drought that followed, more than half the population - 7.8 million people - faced food shortages. It was the third food crisis in seven years.

SOUTH AFRICA - Among the latest technological developments in the fight against tuberculosis is a two-hour, computer-based test that cuts by three weeks the waiting period for results regarding possible infection by either TB or drug-resistant TB. The testing procedure, which costs about \$20 and is said to be more accurate than current procedures, recently was introduced in South Africa.

YEMEN-SOMALIA - Unrest in Yemen has prompted hundreds of Somali refugees to once again risk a deadly sea crossing, this time to return to their home country, say officials and migrants.

SUDAN - A United Nations-backed polio immunization campaign is under way in Southern Sudan, targeting children under the age of five in a region that experienced an outbreak of the sometimes deadly disease in 2008 after being free for the previous three years.

ASIA & PACIFIC

SRI LANKA - Thousands of older returnees to Sri Lanka's conflict-affected north feel marginalized and need medical care, experts say.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - Some 14 months after Haiti's earthquake, activists say there is an ongoing epidemic of rape and gender-based violence (GBV) in the country's more than 1,000 squalid displaced persons camps, where nearly a million people are still awaiting permanent housing.

WFWO's Communications Team