



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

**UNITED NATIONS** - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is meeting with key members of the creative community in Los Angeles to mobilize support for the goals and mission of the United Nations, including its efforts to deal with climate change, global hunger and the financial crisis. The UN has collaborated with the entertainment industry on a number of projects under the Secretary-General's Creative Community Outreach Initiative, which aims to raise the profile of critical global issues in partnership with the international film and television industries. Projects include a starring role for the UN on the season premiere of the television comedy "Ugly Betty" which was filmed on location at the world body's Headquarters in New York. The episode highlighted the UN-backed campaign to raise awareness about malaria – which claims over 1 million lives annually.

**UNITED NATIONS** - 54th Session Commission on the Status of Women report - The Indonesian delegation is attending the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which now is being held in New York from March 1 to March 12, 2010. The issues raised were about women empowerment in the education, health, economic and political sectors as well as the women position in the decision-making process." . The minister also stressed the importance of poverty elimination and the strengthening of legal framework in building women empowerment and in reducing violence against women. In the CSW conference, the minister will among other attend several other meetings such as the High Level Plenary Session, the launching of UNAIDS Action Framework Addressing Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV, and bilateral meetings with ministers for women affairs of other countries.

**ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT** - The head of the United Nations-backed panel tasked with preparing regular scientific reports on the impact of climate change has announced the establishment of an independent review body to ensure that its procedures for producing assessments are closely followed, amid growing attacks from global warming sceptics. The measure comes after the disclosure that the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which confirmed that global warming is man-made, contained an error over the rate at which the Himalayan glaciers would melt.

**UNITED NATIONS** - The UN has launched a five-year action plan to help women protect themselves against HIV. The UN programme on HIV and AIDS says AIDS related illnesses have become the top cause of deaths for women between the ages of 15 and 49-years-old worldwide. The plan was launched at the start of a ten-day conference in New York on Tuesday. Highlighting the disproportionately high risk that HIV poses for women, UNAIDS said sexual violence and other abuses against women hamper their ability to negotiate safe sex. According to the organisation up to 70 per cent of women around the world have been forced to have unprotected sex. Women account for around 60 per cent of estimated HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa, it said.

## ■AFRICA

**NIGER** - The unusually large-scale migration of southern Nigerien farmers and pastoralists, heading north to look for work, has prompted concerns about food shortages in the northern Agadez region, according to local authorities.

**SUDAN** - Weeks of fighting in parts of Darfur have raised concern over the plight of civilians, as insecurity has prompted humanitarian agencies to suspend activities in some areas.

**TOGO** - This week's presidential election is a "crucial opportunity" for Togo to continue efforts to consolidate democracy, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said today, appealing for the poll to be unscarred by violence. The 4 March election also provides an occasion to "foster national cohesion, stability and sustainable development," according to "The Secretary-General calls on all political leaders and institutions to ensure that the election is credible and peaceful and reflects on the will of the people of Togo," urging all segments of society to refrain from moves that could exacerbate tensions before, during or after the poll. He also reiterated the support of the UN for the electoral process in the West African nation.

## ■ASIA

**BANGLADESH** - The United Nations system in Bangladesh is closely monitoring the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, which has been the scene of recent violence between different ethnic groups, and stands ready to assist those in need, a spokesperson for the world body said today. According to media reports, the clashes that began over a week ago between Muslim settlers and Buddhist tribals in the region has led to several deaths and many injuries. In addition, several hundred homes have been burned and thousands left homeless.

**PHILIPPINES** - Children's charities and non-government organisations (NGOs) in the Philippines face tough times ahead as major overseas funders cut back on financial support due to the global financial crisis, against a backdrop of donor fatigue. NGOs, including faith-based groups, have had to grapple with fewer aid funds in recent years for programmes for children – ranging from those working with blind children, sexual exploitation or anti-poverty efforts - in this South-east Asian country. At least 30 percent of the Philippines' 90 million population lives in poverty. Children are among the most vulnerable sectors because those aged under 15 years of age account for some 40 percent of the total population.

**INDIA** - This week's riots in two southern Indian towns highlight how communal tensions in this country of nearly 1.2 billion people simmer just under the surface, exploding at the slightest provocation. The riots led to the deaths of two people and saw vehicles burned and shops damaged, leading to a declaration of curfew that still remains in some areas. The federal government had to rush central forces to bring the situation under control.

**INDONESIA** - Small-scale disasters affect thousands of Indonesians every year, yet the floods and landslides that constantly hit the country are overshadowed by more devastating events, agencies say.

**INDONESIA** - The echoes of failure still sounding from the Copenhagen summit on climate change in December are spurring efforts to reform the international legal framework. Civil society groups are demanding a new, more agile system that is both influential and effective. A consultative group of ministers, created a year ago to explore changes to the multilateral system, met in late February in the Indonesian tourist destination Nusa Dua, on Bali, and proposed a series of initiatives with hopes that countries can reach an agreement in the medium term. Some governments and organisations are leaning towards establishing an umbrella group of United Nations agencies, while others are proposing the creation of new institutions altogether.

**MONGOLIA** - As temperatures in western Mongolia continue to hover around -40 degrees Celsius, the United Nations is sending woolen blankets, warm footwear, hygiene kits and other emergency supplies to nearly 4,000 school-age children living in poor rural areas of the country. "We are redoubling our efforts to provide essential emergency items and educational materials for school children who are living in remote dormitories as they lack access to heating facilities, food and medical treatment.

#### ■MIDDLE EAST

**SYRIA** - Thousands of people have fled drought-affected eastern Syria and those that remain are struggling to survive on limited food stocks, according to a UN report released at the end of February.

#### ■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

**BOLIVIA** - A social programme in Bolivia that prevents the deaths of two mothers a day from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth is making headway despite administrative difficulties, and has the potential to cut the alarmingly high maternal mortality rate in this country by up to 80 percent in just five years. "In Bolivia, the risk of dying from causes related to pregnancy, childbirth or the postnatal period is very high. Every year an average of 623 women die from complications during pregnancy," according to the Health Ministry's National Strategic Plan for 2009-2015 to improve maternal, perinatal and neonatal health.

**CHILE** - The request from the Chilean Government for assistance in the wake of Saturday's devastating earthquake, the United Nations and Member States are assisting the South American nation to assess the damage wrought and help people in need. The 8.8-magnitude earthquake occurred in the early hours of the morning on 27 February, and has claimed more than 700 lives, according to Government officials, with the death toll expected to climb as communications are restored to the most affected areas. Authorities in Chile have issued a request for supplies, including mobile bridges, satellite telephones, electric generators, water purification systems and dialysis centres. For its part, the UN is sending dozens of satellite telephones to Chile from New York and Geneva, said Alicia Barcena, Executive-Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which is headquartered in the capital, Santiago. The UN World Food Programme has offered 30 tons of food support, which is ready to be transported to Chile from nearby Ecuador.

**HAITI** - Seven weeks after a catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti, health needs remain great, the United Nations World Health Organization said today, emphasizing the need for stepped-up disaster risk reduction and early recovery efforts to help the devastated nation. The scale and complexity of the crisis in the wake of the 7.0-magnitude earthquake means the emergency response phase will continue for months to come, according to the latest health bulletin. "Many lives have been saved by the speed and generosity the world showed in its first response in the first days and weeks after the earthquake," it said. "Nonetheless, there is still a tremendous amount to be done." Of the \$1.4 billion called for in the revised humanitarian appeal launched last month, \$134 million is earmarked for health-related needs.

WFWO's Communications Team