



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Two years after Cyclone Nargis carved a path of destruction through Myanmar and left more than 140,000 dead, hundreds of millions of dollars in aid is still needed to help the affected areas recover, the United Nations says. UN coordinator in Myanmar, said the effort is underfunded, with about \$500 million still needed to fund a three-year plan for recovery.

ENVIRONMENT - BP, the oil giant that owned the lease to the Deepwater Horizon rig that sank in the Gulf of Mexico, has pledged to assume the costs for cleanup and recovery in the wake of what may prove to be the largest oil spill in history. BP officials have identified a worst-case scenario that would require the spill to be contained for three months, though the cleanup and recovery effort will take far longer. U.S. President Barack Obama - who has in the past expressed support for offshore drilling - described the spill as a "potentially unprecedented" disaster.

■AFRICA

AFRICA REGION - Eastern and South African countries are confident that a new technology to be tested by Tanzania will greatly enhance their ability to grow corn - a primary staple - despite drought. Tanzanian officials believe that by planting biotechnologically fertilized seeds, subsistence farmers will be able to sustain crops even through the country's terrific drought periods. The key to sustainability in this technology is its "scale-neutral applicability" - subsistence farmers may plant it as easily as large corporate farms.

D.R.CONGO - Hundreds of thousands of residents of Mbuji-Mayi, central Democratic Republic of Congo, are caught up in a water crisis since a landslide damaged the town's water supply in March.

ZIMBABWE - Bad roads lead to malaria outbreak - Decaying road infrastructure in Binga district, in Zimbabwe's province of Matabeleland North, prevented anti-malaria spraying teams from reaching the area, and is being blamed for an outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease.

■ASIA

LAOS - While many Lao believe sticky rice is the ideal baby food, health experts say just the opposite. Feeding the glutinous grain to babies can not only result in gastro-intestinal disorders and immune deficiencies but also contribute to malnutrition.

TAJKISTAN - Polio immunization campaign begins in Tajikistan - A nationwide anti-polio immunization campaign targeting thousands of children under seven is under way in Tajikistan, according to the Health Ministry.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

COLOMBIA - Around 20 million people in Colombia or almost half the country's population - were living below the poverty line in 2009, an official government report has revealed. The research also found that a further 16.4 per cent of the 43.7 million Colombians are living in "extreme conditions" of poverty, according to the country's state news agency. However, the Colombian government claims 500,000 people were lifted out of extreme poverty and that inequality rates had declined slightly in the last year.

WFWO's Communications Team