



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

Development & Environment - Japanese officials say they will not comply with a proposed international ban of bluefin tuna trade that enjoys the support of the U.S. administration. More than 170 countries are scheduled to vote on the proposal later this month

Development & Environment - The failure to enact a legally binding carbon-emissions treaty as well as the absence of a carbon-trading scheme in the U.S. has diminished some investors' hope that a worldwide carbon-trading market will emerge. Trading in carbon markets produced \$136 billion in 2009

Development & Environment - EU approval for the development and commercial use of a genetically-modified potato, the Amflora breed developed in Germany, has met with skepticism in Germany and some European capitals. Critics continue to question the safety of genetically-modified crops for human consumption.

Human Rights concerns in Sri Lanka, Iran and Sudan were among United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay's top concerns during a presentation to the UN Human Rights Council today. Pillay reiterated a call on Sri Lankan authorities to investigate war-crimes allegations, and reported raising concerns over a current crackdown in Iran in conversations with authorities.

Human Rights - Nobel peace laureates and women's rights advocates will meet United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today as part of a bid to see Myanmar's leaders on trial at the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. Sexual violence, forced labor, use of torture and systemic persecution are among the issues campaigners are highlighting

## ■AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE - After weeks of protests, some which turned deadly, the opposition has joined a new government and called off any further demonstrations. Ivoirians took to the streets following the latest delay in legislative and presidential elections, scheduled to take place in March after six postponements in five years. Disputes over the electoral roll - and who is or is not a true Ivoirian and thus eligible to vote - continue, creating an increasingly xenophobic and violent atmosphere across the country, according to rights watchdog Amnesty International. Here is a timeline of events leading to the current political crisis.

DR CONGO - The United Nations is supporting a new Democratic Republic of Congo operation against Rwandan rebels in the form of logistics and supply support, says Alain Le Roy, head of the UN peacekeeping department. The UN suspended support for the DRC's military efforts in December after allegations of human-rights abuses by Congolese soldiers

KENYA - Warnings sounded before long rains - Health services in Kenya should prepare for above-average precipitation during the March-to-May rainy season, according to a government forecast.

UGANDA - The heavy rains that caused landslides in eastern Uganda, burying hundreds of people in Bududa district, have continued pounding the region, displacing thousands more in neighbouring lowlands, according to an official.

## ■ASIA

BANGLADESH - A whale entangled with a latch of fishing net on its tail fins was seen by a tourist group in the Swatch-of-No-Ground (SONG) of Bay of Bengal, the largest submarine canyon on the Bangladesh shelf. Kewkradong urges for a cumulative action to save the life of the wounded whale.

MONGOLIA - A deadly winter in Mongolia has killed off more than 2 million animals, crippling the livelihoods of tens of thousands of families that depend on their livestock to make a living, and restricting their access to basic necessities, such as food, fuel and medical care.

VIETNAM - Record drought threatens livelihoods - As temperatures rise in Vietnam, a nationwide drought has dried up riverbeds, sparked forest fires and now threatens one of the world's richest agricultural regions, upon which millions depend for their livelihoods. The water levels on the Mekong River are at an almost 20-year low, largely as a result of the rainy season ending early and a precipitous drop in water flow upstream. With virtually no rainfall in the north since September, fires have burned through the northern provinces of Lao Cai and Lai Chau. In central Vietnam, sustained temperatures of about 38 degrees Celsius have sent hundreds to local hospitals. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the heat and humidity have sparked a plague of insects and worms, which have eaten through thousands of hectares of rice paddies. The drought conditions in the delta are also being felt in other Mekong countries because of the early end to the 2009 wet season, as well as low monsoon rainfall.

## ■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

LAC Region - Caribbean countries are considering options like desalination plants and cloud seeding to confront a drought that threatens the regional economy and which experts warned about years ago. In St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, the authorities are warning of prosecution, including jail time, if consumers violate measures introduced to curb the use of water other than for drinking, cooking and bathing.

CHILE - Tremors continue to rock Chile as the government ramps up effort to provide aid to survivors of Saturday's powerful earthquake. Federal authorities are looking to address concerns of residents in affected areas on the pace and quantity of available aid.

CHILE - Chile will need international loans and three to four years to rebuild after one of the most powerful earthquakes in a century killed hundreds of people and demolished cities and towns, President Michelle Bachelet said. Saturday's 8.8-magnitude quake destroyed or seriously damaged hundreds of thousands of homes, wrecked bridges and highways and cracked open modern buildings in the capital's suburbs. It also shattered vats at Chile's famous vineyards and briefly shut down some of the world's richest copper mines. "We will undoubtedly need to turn to international lenders," Bachelet said on Thursday. "We are going to have to ask (for credit) and hope that via the World Bank or other mechanisms we can count on sufficient funds." The death toll from the disaster was thrown into doubt on Thursday when the government said it had identified 279 victims and backed off an earlier estimate of 802 deaths.

WFWO's Communications Team