



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Nearly 50 government delegations spent the past week at UN headquarters in New York hashing over the progress that has been made and challenges that remain in pursuing gender parity worldwide, one of the crucial elements of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**. Officially called the 'High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) 2010 Annual Ministerial Review', the meet ended Friday with the adoption of a declaration re-asserting ECOSOC's commitment to achieving gender equality around the globe. Each year, the Review focuses on one topic, assessing the progress made towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as other goals and targets agreed upon at major UN conferences and summits. This year's theme was "implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender quality and empowerment of women."

UNITED NATIONS Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says the time is right for a shift away from aid for Africa toward investments and partnerships. Inflation is falling across the continent and political stability is increasing, Mr. Ban told the Gabon parliament.

FOOD - New strains of wheat rust, a fungal infection that destroys crops, are spreading across Africa, Asia and the Middle East threatening food supply for hundreds of millions of people. Wheat is the world's most common crop and provides a fifth of calories ingested by people around the world. Researchers are scrambling to craft a strategy to prevent mass crop destruction.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - Small-holder farmers, who make up almost all of Africa's agriculture sector, need more support to reduce over-dependence on increasingly costly food imports, states a new report.

MADAGASCAN female activists are asking that the right of women to participate directly in politics be included in a new draft of the country's Constitution, so that there can be 30 percent of female politicians in parliament by 2012 and 50 percent by 2015.

UGANDA - July 1 marked the moment when the East African Community common market protocol kicked into operation. But Ugandan women face several obstacles before they will benefit from the boost that the protocol gives to the free movement of goods, labour and capital.

■ASIA & PACIFIC

AUSTRALIA - Indigenous people inhabiting more than 200 islands in the Torres Strait north of Australia have won the ownership of more than 40,000 square kilometres of sea. The Australian Federal Court granted the rights to indigeneous communities after a nine-year legal case. The court ruled that the local communities must now be consulted about any future developments in the area. But the ruling does not mean that islanders have exclusive rights. Ships, fishermen and other businesses will still be allowed to operate in the Torres Strait.

BANGLADESH - Workers from Bangladesh have helped Mauritius to achieve the economic success and world market share that the Indian Ocean island state boasts about. But many live and work in conditions described as akin to "modern slavery", apart from facing discrimination, the denial of labour rights and even violence.

KYRGYZSTAN - Ethnic Uzbek Nigora Kamalova has been trying to come to terms with the ordeal she lived through over the past three weeks: violence, fear, displacement and the return to a burnt down home and uncertain future.

SRI LANKA - Communities in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province - a region of 1.5 million people still recovering from civil-war violence - fear they have been forgotten as humanitarian agencies shift recovery efforts to the north.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

URUGUAY - Women lawmakers in Uruguay have joined forces across party lines, in spite of criticism from colleagues in their own parties, and have built majorities to approve laws in favour of gender equality and other rights that have been denied for years.

WFWO's Communications Team