



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Aid efforts on behalf of tens of thousands of internally displaced Afghans are at risk from the country's deteriorating security situation, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres warns. UNHCR's foreign staff is unable to travel to more than 50% of the country, leaving the agency to rely on local staff and other organizations to reach populations in need.

CLIMATE CHANGE - Governments must confront risks that the UN's Kyoto Protocol for fighting climate change will collapse because of splits about a successor treaty, the United Nations' top climate official said. Yvo de Boer also said that 194-nation climate negotiations in 2010 were likely merely to lay the "groundwork" for a new legally binding pact to slow global warming after a UN Summit in Copenhagen in December fell short with a non-binding accord. Unusually heavy rainfall brought about by the El Nino season has killed hundreds and displaced thousands in the east and the Horn of Africa, worrying aid agencies who say the weather is becoming more unpredictable and destructive. Since the beginning of the year, the rains have caused flooding and landslides in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia.

WATER - Iraq is planning to import 80 percent of its wheat and rice requirements in 2010, according to the government. Rising imports are being triggered by low water levels in the Euphrates and the Tigris, which is causing reduced production, a worrying situation ahead of the summer. Iraqi agriculture has been paralysed by decades of war and insecurity, underinvestment and the unchecked cutting down of trees for firewood, which has worsened salinity and desertification. In China, police have seized a farmer who doused himself in gasoline and threatened to blow himself up to stop the demolition of his house, in the latest showdown over a controversial hydropower project in Hanyuan. Some 12.5 million Chinese citizens have been moved for 86,000 dams since 1949, according to one recent study. These dam migrants have long fanned unrest.

■AFRICA

DJIBOUTI - Half rural population need emergency food aid - About half of Djibouti's rural population will need emergency food assistance this year due to the combined effects of drought, livestock losses, unfavourable livestock-to-cereal terms of trade and high staple food prices, according to an assessment by the government and UN agencies.

D.R. CONGO - Minor rebels, major terror - They may number as few as 100 men, women and adolescents, but Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) units scattered across the forests of northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo's Orientale Province have sown sufficient terror to make some 318,000 people take flight, abandoning their homes and fields, in many cases to the uncertain sanctuary of urban centres.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - Private hospitals to the rescue of TB patients - Eight private hospitals will soon provide free tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis and treatment in Kabul in an effort to curb the disease which kills thousands of people every year in Afghanistan, according to the Ministry of Public Health.

CHINA - Headaches for HIV-positive travellers - China recently became the latest country to lift travel restrictions on people living with HIV, following in the footsteps of the United States.

PAKISTAN - Thousands of people displaced from South Waziristan in northwestern Pakistan oppose efforts by the authorities to persuade them to return, saying it is not safe to do so. Some seem prepared to stay away for months, or even years, till they are convinced it is safe to go back.

SRI LANKA - Moves to boost livelihoods in former combat-zone - Reviving the farming and fishing sectors in northern Sri Lanka's former combat zone is vital for returning residents to regain their livelihoods, experts say.

■MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN - One in every three people is suffering from chronic hunger in Yemen where growing food shortages could spark further unrest or mass migration, United Nations aid agencies warned. Despite widespread hunger, life-saving food rations have been slashed again in the fractious country due to a lack of donor funding. Some 7.2 million people, one third of Yemen's population, suffer from chronic hunger, according to the UN agency. About 3.4 million of them require food aid, but only 475,000 are getting rations it was forced to halve in May.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - U.S. authorities are preparing to give tens of thousands of unemployed Haitians a boost in their job searches. American legislators are expected to endorse a legislative update today that will pave the way for long-term investments in the country's textile and garment industries by tripling the amount of duty-free access for products. Haitian authorities project the move will pave the way for tens of thousands of new jobs.

WFWO's Communications Team