



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations said that protracted food crises are affecting more than 166 million people in 22 countries. The figure represents around 20 per cent of undernourished people around the world, according to a new report from the two UN agencies. The report identified conflict, natural disaster and poor government institutions as some of the factors that contribute to protracted food crises marked by chronic hunger and food insecurity. The report claims Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan are among countries that have experienced a food crisis for at least eight years.

UNITED NATIONS officials have revised their recommendations on greenhouse-gas emissions cuts in a bid to pave the way for an international agreement to come into force when the Kyoto Treaty expires in 2012. The UN says countries should keep to individual commitments that they made to avoid the problematic issue of standard set targets for wealthy and developing countries - an issue that has dominated negotiations and threatened to derail the process.

UNITED NATIONS - A lack of trust between rich and poor countries, coupled with resistance among wealthy countries to curb carbon emissions, are hampering climate talks in Tianjin, China. The United Nations is looking for agreements on less contentious issues, such as the sharing of clean-energy technology and the protection of carbon-absorbing rain forests.

■AFRICA

NIGERIA - The estimated number of children who have died from lead poisoning this year in northern Nigeria has doubled from around 200 to at least 400, according to the United Nations. The UN environmental team sent to investigate the case in Zamfara state released its preliminary findings on Tuesday.

SUDAN - If there is one group that faces special challenges in Southern Sudan, it is women. Principal among them is gender-based violence, which is under-reported and spreading given the long history of conflict, certain traditional practices and weak judicial systems, say specialists.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - Hopes for a polio-free northern Afghanistan have been dashed after a case was reported in the northern Kunduz Province in August, almost a decade since the last one.

CHINA - The Chinese government is promoting the effects of traditional Chinese medicine worldwide through an initiative linking universities and industry. Pharmaceutical companies also are trying to make Chinese drugs more acceptable to Western consumers by providing information about their scientific efficacy, and packaging them in familiar forms.

NEPAL - In Nepal, 80 percent of people live in the mountains and are not easily reached, but efforts to improve access have led to an increase in landslide deaths because of poorly planned roads built on fragile, ever-shifting land, say specialists.

PAKISTAN - If the Indus delta in southern Pakistan were protected by mangroves, a few hundred villages would have been saved from the floods, say Pakistani environmentalists.

WFWO's Communications Team