



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

ENVIRONMENT - Research in geoenvironmental engineering - finding fixes for climate change instead of trying to prevent it - garnered renewed attention at the recent UN biodiversity talks in Japan. Small-scale experimentation is needed in order to determine the efficacy of some of the ideas, which range from liming the oceans to locking glaciers to mountains.

## ■AFRICA

Africa Region - As nearly 25 years of development of a malaria vaccine come to fruition, health authorities across Africa will need to come to grips with how to effectively introduce it.

CONGO - An epidemic akin to polio, which has raged for nearly two weeks in the main commercial city in southern Congo, Pointe-Noire, has already killed eight, and several dozen cases have been reported, say health officials.

KENYA - The Kenyan government is working to reduce health workers' risk of HIV infection but experts say there is a need for greater focus on providing health workers with proper safety equipment and education.

GUINEA - More than a year after their discovery, toxic and flammable chemicals stored throughout the Guinea capital Conakry remain in place - a UN plan to remove them repeatedly held up by political instability.

SUDAN - The January referendum on the future of Southern Sudan could create new humanitarian needs if violence breaks out, worsening an already precarious situation, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, warned.

## ■AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA is to hold a constitutional referendum to recognise its indigenous population. Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced on Monday that the vote would be a "once in 50-year opportunity" to improve conditions for the native Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. The referendum could be held before or in conjunction with the national elections due in 2013, according to Gillard. Australia's 550,000 indigenous people - equivalent to 2.7 per cent of Australia's population - suffer disproportionately high rates of unemployment, imprisonment, drug abuse, alcoholism and disease.

## ■ASIA & PACIFIC

INDONESIA - Demarcating the danger zone around an active volcano in Indonesia is far from an exact science, says the government volcanologist responsible for issuing alerts since the 25 October eruption of Mt Merapi in Central Java, which led to the evacuation of nearly 200,000 people.

MYANMAR - Cyclone Giri has left 86,000 farming households and thousands of casual labourers, who had depended on the now devastated annual harvest, without any hope of cash.

## ■MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT - Every year a noxious black smog hangs over Egypt as the seasonal burning of rice straw by farmers begins, and with it comes a surge in allergic reactions and lung infections.

SYRIA - The Syrian government and international agencies are focusing efforts on tackling child labour, amid concerns that rates in the country are rising.

## ■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - A few hundred of the estimated 6,000 residents of a tent camp in Haiti outside Port-au-Prince were evacuated by UN workers because of the threat of floods and mudslides from Hurricane Tomas.

WFWO's Communications Team