

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon encouraged leaders of the world's poorest countries meeting in Turkey to agree on a common position and send a strong political message to the rest of the world on the importance of investing in the least developed countries to eradicate global poverty.

HEALTH - In keeping with the fourth Millennium Development Goal (MDG4), nations have pledged to reduce child mortality by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. This calls for a scale-up of child survival interventions, whose global cost the UNWHO recently estimated for 75 countries that have a high burden of mortality among children aged less than five years. In an effort to support the countries in greatest need, UNWHO's Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development has identified 33 countries that together contribute 78% of all deaths among children under 5 years of age.

AFRICA

DEVELOPMENT - The rapid economic growth across Africa is at risk of being squandered by leaders who are more intent on clinging to power than promoting the health and welfare of their people, Kofi Annan, former UN secretary-general, said at a World Economic Forum meeting in South Africa. Growth across the continent is averaging 5.5%, he said, but too little is being done to create jobs for young people, or invest in manufacturing and infrastructure.

COTE D'IVOIRE - Insecurity has forced health officials in Côte d'Ivoire to delay a polio vaccine campaign in a southern region where at least three people have recently contracted the highly infectious disease.

GHANA is going high-tech to improve community-based vital registration, which is essential for the design and planning of health programmes.

ZAMBIA - The UNWHO and UNAIDS recommend provider-initiated testing and counselling as a cost-effective and ethical way of improving access to HIV testing during general epidemics.

ASIA & PACIFIC

VIETNAM - International health experts criticize Vietnam's estimated 70 compulsory drug treatment centres. The centres are part of a government strategy aimed at "correcting the illegal behaviours of drug use and sex work", according to UNAIDS.

WFWO's Communications Team