

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

SUMMIT RIO+20 - Only about 1.6% of the world's oceans have been designated as protected areas, well short of the goal of 10% by 2020 under the international Convention on Biological Diversity, according to the United Nations Environment Program. The latest data on the pace of protecting marine ecosystems, which are increasingly threatened by overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution and global warming, could make ocean conservation a hot topic at next month's Rio+20 sustainability conference.

AFRICA

REFUGEES - The United Nations is expected to launch a new appeal for aid to the drought-stricken Sahel region of Africa after an influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees deepened the burden on governments struggling to feed their citizens.

DRC - Renewed heavy fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) North Kivu Province has pushed some 3,000 Congolese refugees into northern Rwanda where they are in need of humanitarian assistance, says a senior UN official.

NEPAL - The needs of millions of indigenous mountain people across Nepal are overlooked, imperilling their food security and hindering their economic progress, activists and experts say. "People in the mountains of Nepal are worse off in terms of total poverty - food and non-food poverty," said the co-author of a recent study.

RWANDA - The large amount of donor funding that has gone into Rwanda's fight against HIV has not affected efforts to prevent and treat unrelated diseases, such as malaria and measles, and may in fact have improved overall healthcare, a six-year study has found.

SENEGAL - One day after being sworn in on 2 April, Senegal's new President Macky Sall reversed months of public denial of the hunger affecting over 800,000 of his people - part of the Sahel-wide crisis affecting 16 million inhabitants - by calling on partners to help the country get food to those in need.

ASIA & PACIFIC

HEALTH - A vaccine against one of the most neglected yet fatal tropical diseases is being tested for the first time in a clinical trial in India and the US. After malaria, leishmaniasis is the second largest parasitic killer, and the visceral form is the most deadly.

MALARIA - Conventional drug therapies are proving increasingly ineffective against malaria in regions of Thailand bordering both Cambodia and Myanmar. Malaria clinics have been set up in hundreds of villages to educate people on how to better protect themselves from the disease. About 1 in 5 patients is not doing well with artemisinin-based combination therapies.

MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN is heading for a major humanitarian crisis unless relief organizations quickly boost their response capacity, and donors, including wealthy neighbours, provide much-needed funding to contain rising malnutrition, disease and poverty.

WFWO's Communications Team