



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - WFWO and international community ready to commemorate **World Population Day** Sunday; the United Nations is reviewing the state of the world's women - and how they stack up against the risks of maternal mortality and the lack of universal access to reproductive health. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wants 2010 to be "a turning point for women's and children's health". Hundreds of thousands of women - 99 percent of them in the developing world - die annually as a result of pregnancy or childbirth, he said, adding, "We know how to save their lives. We can do it with quality health systems, qualified medical staff, information and tools for preventing and treating diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS." A UN report on the status of the eight **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, including drastic reductions in hunger and poverty, says there has been slow progress in expanding the use of contraceptives by women primarily for two reasons: poverty and lack of education.

WORLD ECONOMY - The world economy is on track to post 4.6% growth this year, but significant risks remain and the pace is likely to slow in 2011 as governments roll back stimulus measures, the International Monetary Fund says. Debt worries continue to plague Europe, raising the specter of additional tumbles for the euro and stock markets

DEVELOPMENT - Agriculture investments in Asia and the Pacific will need to increase to address hunger and contain food prices, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and Asian Development Bank warn. The region is already home to more than 640 million undernourished people, the organizations said, with 25% of children under 5 moderately to severely underweight.

■AFRICA

GUINEA-BISSAU - Staff from NGOs and the health authorities are going house-to-house to distribute thousands of bottles of bleach to residents in the Bafata area of central Guinea-Bissau, to prevent another cholera outbreak. An epidemic in 2008 claimed at least 225 lives and infected more than 13,000 people.

NIGERIA - In an incident that the World Health Organization describes as an "unprecedented environmental emergency," some 2,000 Nigerians have been exposed to lead poisoning as a result of gold-extraction activities. More than 100 children in the state of Zamfara suffer from lead concentrations 12 times higher than the level considered dangerous enough to cause brain damage. NGOs established two units to coordinate chelation therapy to treat children suffering from toxin exposure.

MOZAMBIQUE - A government report released on Monday in Mozambique revealed that nearly 12 per cent of the country's population is infected with HIV and AIDS. The study found that the prevalence rate among people aged 15 to 49 years was higher among women: 13.1 per cent, compared to 9.2 per cent among men. Women and children in Mozambique are five times more likely to contract AIDS than adult men, according to the report. The study, conducted by the health ministry and the national statistics department in 2009, involved a sample of 16,600 people from across the country. It is Mozambique's first comprehensive report on the prevalence of HIV.

SOMALIA - At least 21 people were killed and 42 wounded in fighting in Somalia according to a human rights group. Somalia has had no effective central government for 19 years and has become a safe haven for Islamist militants and clan fighters. More than 21,000 people have been killed in the violence since the start of 2007 and 1.5 million forced from their homes.

■ASIA

SRI LANKA's housing and construction minister, Wimal Weerawansa, began a hunger strike "unto death" today in protest over UN plans to launch an official inquiry into human rights abuses during the government's decisive 2009 battle against Tamil Tiger rebels. Sri Lankans associated with Weerawansa's party have threatened mass hunger strikes and nationwide strikes if Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon fails to dismantle the investigation panel.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

LAC Region - The Latin American economy based on exploitation of natural resources does not create social well-being and is unsustainable in the context of climate change, says Uruguayan Eduardo Gudynas, lead researcher at the Latin American Centre for Social Ecology.

BOLIVIA - An early warning system to alert people living in the lowlands of the northern Bolivian department of Beni about imminent flooding of the mighty Mamoré and Ibare rivers is saving lives, food and goods, and overcoming the uncertainty that led to enormous losses in the past.

WFWO's Communications Team