

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

FOOD - Global food prices rose overall last month for the first time in six months, demonstrating the volatility of international food markets, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, reported today. The UNFAO Food Price Index rose by four points or nearly two per cent to a measure of 214 points in January, with the price of oils increasing the most, followed by cereals, sugar, dairy products and meat.

CLIMATE - A new study has charted the worldwide glacier and ice cap melt over the past eight years, which has averaged about 150 billion tons of ice annually, or enough to cause sea levels to rise at an average of four-tenths of a millimeter each year. Scientists were stunned by the results of another study that showed virtually no meltwater from the Himalayas over the past decade.

AFRICA

BURKINA FASO / MALI - At least 8,000 Touaregs fleeing fighting in neighbouring Mali have found refuge in Burkina Faso, having arrived "in a dire humanitarian condition", the government said yesterday.

MALAWI's maize-growing central and southern regions have not had good rains, prompting concerns about possible shortages of the staple in the coming months.

SENEGAL - While it is clear that Senegal was one of the eight Sahelian countries to be hit by poor rains in 2011, unlike most of its neighbours, the government has not yet declared that parts of certain regions are suffering drought conditions.

SOUTH AFRICA - At the Beitbridge border post between Zimbabwe and South Africa, asylum-seekers from all over the continent used to jostle with Zimbabwean migrants to gain entry into a country widely perceived as a place of freedom and safety.

UGANDA - The indiscriminate felling of trees in northern Uganda for the production of charcoal the "black gold" on which, with wood, some 95% of Ugandans depend is decimating annually more than 73,000 hectares of private forest and more than 7,000 hectares of protected forest reserves. The timber and charcoal trade are seen by many as ways out of poverty.

ASIA & PACIFIC

AFGHANISTAN - A new United Nations-backed survey has found that most workers in Afghanistan's brick kilns are bonded child labourers, and calls for a strategy that will both provide relief to bonded families and help them escape the cycles of debt, dependence and poverty.

WFWO's Communications Team