



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - On the occasion of the Human Rights Day, 10 December 2010, WFWO and its partners will continue to be on front line as defender and to heard the voices against discrimination and injustice around the world – “Human rights defenders are the front line of efforts to confront discrimination and all violations of rights – their work is vital, yet they are frequently under threat and must be better protected,” said a group of 55 United Nations independent human rights experts in a joint statement to mark Human Rights Day, 10 December 2010. “They do not bear arms, they do not use violence - defenders use only their voices and persistence to challenge injustice peacefully. However, too often it is human rights defenders themselves who require protection from human rights abuses. “Because of their determination and their effectiveness in bringing to light human rights concerns, they endure threats, intimidation, stigmatization and harassment. In some cases they face arbitrary detention and may become the victims of torture, disappearance or execution.” In circumstances where it is safer to remain silent, such brave men, women and children have always spoken out – we must ensure that they always will. Their voices must not be silenced. “Human rights defenders have advanced the human rights agenda and brought the principles of Universal Declaration closer to reality in their societies, promoting equality, the rule of law and justice through their commitment and sacrifices. They have helped shape the laws and policies that establish that no-one should be the victim of discrimination. “Human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations are essential to the functioning of free and fair societies in which anyone, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, gender, politics or sexual identity, has the right to object to inequality or mistreatment and to seek justice and redress. In every sphere of human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political or social, the work of human rights defenders is crucial.

CLIMATE CHANGE - Some 200 negotiators from countries big and small are embroiled in efforts to reach a binding deal in Mexico that would reduce greenhouse gases, as well as preserve the very concept of multilateral talks as an effective means to solve the world's problems. Many observers say that it is important to focus on areas of consensus, even if a binding pact on emissions isn't attainable.

■AFRICA

Africa will be amongst the hardest hit regions of the world as the climate heats up, threatening the continent's food security, experts agree. If global temperatures rise 2.0 degrees C, southern Africa will warm an additional 1.5 degrees to a 3.5-degree increase on average.

GHANA - Improving the delivery of quality education was only possible by strengthening the governance framework in education management, an African Education Watch report has said.

NAMIBIA is among the top five countries in Africa that spend more on health and education in terms of budget. But there is a lack of budget analysis and public expenditure tracking that would allow better understanding of how social sector expenditure benefits Namibian children or foster their development.

SOUTH AFRICA - More than seven out of ten people in Limpopo consider HIV and AIDS services in the province to be available and good but less than five out of ten people share this view in KwaZulu-Natal. According to an opinion survey conducted in different municipalities in four provinces by African democracy institute Idasa, perceptions of availability and accessibility of HIV and AIDS services vary significantly from province to province.

UGANDA - About 75% of Ugandans have access to safe water, compared to only 53% 10 years ago, according to a report released by the Ministry of Finance. The report showed that Uganda had made significant progress towards many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

ZIMBABWE - An appeal for US\$415 million in humanitarian assistance to Zimbabwe in 2011 has been made by the government and humanitarian organizations.

■ASIA & PACIFIC

SRI LANKA - Some 19 months since the end of Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war, over 325,000 civilians displaced by the final bout of fighting between late 2007 and May 2009 have returned to live in their villages or with their relatives.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

BOLIVIA - Environmental organisations in Bolivia are waging a crusade to protect Madidi National Park against bids to tap into its petroleum reserves, build hydroelectric dams and promote human settlement in the country's largest nature preserve.

LAC Region - The economies of Latin America are caught on the horns of a dilemma: how to reduce their carbon consumption without sacrificing economic and social development. Subsidies for the development of renewable energies and for learning new technologies need to be increased urgently, experts say.

WFWO's Communications Team