

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - With the financial crisis having reversed many development gains and the world once again facing rising food and energy prices, top United Nations officials today underscored the need for concerted action to advance development, equity and prosperity for all.

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Secretary-General called on the business community to continue working alongside the United Nations to empower women and especially to help break the proverbial 'glass ceiling.' Last year the UN launched the Women's Empowerment Principles – a set of seven steps companies can take to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community – as part of its broader campaign for empowerment and equality.

AFRICA

ETHIOPIA's government has come up with an ambitious plan to halve new HIV infections, quadruple its annual condom distribution and put 85 percent of people who need life-prolonging HIV medication on treatment within five years. An estimated 1.2 million Ethiopians are HIV-positive. According to the government, the country's national prevalence is 2.4 percent, with stark differences between urban HIV prevalence, which stands at about 7.7 percent and rural levels of under 1 percent.

KENYA - Women have been advised to take up positions in community forests associations to safeguard livelihoods while conserving forests.

NAMIBIA - Government will pump about 100 per cent more money into the development of agriculture, tourism, transport, as well as housing and sanitation this year as part of its grand plan to create 104 000 jobs within the next three years.

SOMALIA - Thousands of Somalis displaced by fighting along the Kenya-Ethiopia-Somalia border urgently need water and food, local officials say, as humanitarian workers in Kenya's northeastern town of Mandera continue to register refugees.

UGANDA - According to the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2006, Uganda's maternal mortality rate stands at 435 per every 100,000 live births, most of which results from frequent unintended pregnancies. This is way above the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target of 131 deaths per 100,000 live births to be achieved by 2015.

ZIMBABWE - A dry spell that has persisted for over a month, adversely affecting crops in many parts of Zimbabwe, could mean a lean year ahead for farmers.

ASIA & PACIFIC

AP Region - Following the approximately 8.9-magnitude earthquake that hit the northeast of Japan's capital, Tokyo, a Pacific tsunami alert has been issued for countries with coastlines in and around the Pacific Ocean, including Indonesia and the Philippines.

PHILIPPINES - Newly reported HIV infections among young people have increased 10-fold in the past three years in the Philippines, one of only seven countries worldwide where overall infections continue to climb, according to the government.

SRI LANKA - As the Sri Lankan government launches a cash-for-work programme in areas hit by recent flooding, following similar schemes in the former conflict areas in the north, experts warn of potential pitfalls of such schemes.

WFWO's Communications Team