

NEWS BULLETIN

11 JULY 2012



GLOBAL

WORLD POPULATION DAY, 11 July - Marking World Population Day, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called for more to be done to help those who most need access to reproductive health care. "I call for urgent concerted action by Member States to bridge the gap between demand and supply for reproductive health care," Mr. Ban said in a message. "Reproductive health and rights are integral to sustainable development and poverty reduction. Investing in universal access to reproductive health is a crucial investment in healthy societies and a more sustainable future," he added.

AFRICA

NIGER - Nearly half of girls in Niger marry before 15, the highest global rate of child marriage. Such marriages could become more pervasive as the hunger crisis deepens in the Sahel region of West Africa, where parents in need of cash and animals exchange girls for dowries.

NIGERIA's health services halved the maternal mortality rate between 1990 and 2010, but in parts of the predominantly Muslim north, which is less socio-economically advanced, women are 10 times more likely to die in childbirth than in the oil-rich, predominantly Christian south. Maternal health personnel are calling for more appropriate interventions to bridge the gap.

SOUTH AFRICA - As South Africa moves towards universal healthcare, health policy experts warn that the country has grossly underestimated the number of health workers it will need to ensure access to health services for everyone.

ASIA & PACIFIC

WOMEN - Reporting from Nepal and Pakistan spotlights practices in which girls are effectively sold into slavery. In Nepal, the system of "kamlari" sentences girls as young as 6 to lives of indentured servitude. In Pakistan, the practice of "swara" requires that girls be transferred to rivals to end conflicts.

BANGLADESH - Malnutrition in Bangladesh is costing the government an estimated US\$1 billion a year in lost economic productivity, according to two recent US-funded studies.

SRI LANKA - Donor assistance is waning in northern Sri Lanka, where the critical priorities of food, shelter, protection and nutrition are not being covered, and many displaced people still need outside assistance more than three years after a decades-long civil war ended.

WFWO's Communications Team