

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

FOOD - Computer modeling that has been accurately predicting food prices shows that investor speculation in commodity futures, combined with the conversion of crops into biofuels, will cause food prices to skyrocket in 2013, leading to widespread hunger, social unrest and death across the developing world.

BIODIVERSITY - It would cost some \$300 billion a year over the next eight years to preserve the global biodiversity in animal and plant life, said the new chief of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The figure, meeting which would require public-private partnerships, is about 10 times the amount now spent on the sustainable management of agriculture, forests, and fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems.

AFRICA

MALNUTRITION - Levels of malnutrition in areas of Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and northern Senegal are becoming dangerously high, warns the NGO, hovering between a rate of 10% and 15%. Some areas have exceeded 15%, which is considered the emergency threshold by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. Among the indicators used to determine famine conditions are when acute malnutrition rates exceed 30% and when recorded deaths are more than two per 10,000 people a day.

ASIA & PACIFIC

INDIA - Agriculture experts blame the crisis faced by India's small farmers on a highly inefficient supply chain for perishable farm produce, a situation exploited by traders and middlemen. India had targeted a four percent growth rate in agriculture in both its 10th Five-Year Plan (2002-2007) and its 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-12), but the sector instead declined steeply from the 'green revolution' of the 1970s to an approximate average of 2.6 – 3 percent. The stagnation coincides with a period in which India's economy has been growing steadily, with projections of a respectable growth of 7.7 percent expected in 2012 despite the prevailing global downturn.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

LAC Region - Central America, a narrow tropical isthmus flanked by the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, suffered 259 extreme weather-related events between 1930 and 2009, while the cumulative effects of innumerable smaller-scale events have not even been recorded. These disasters have increased in frequency by five percent a year over the past three decades, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

MEXICO - The United Nations criticised Mexico's food policy, a month and a half after President Felipe Calderón launched to great fanfare an alliance of agribusiness for sustainable development, which was welcomed by giant food corporations.

WFWO's Communications Team