

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

FOOD - After a year of severe droughts in major cereal-supplying countries, crop projections for 2013 bode ill for global stocks of wheat, maize and soybeans, warned the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. But the harm may be limited by a system established to prevent a repeat of the 2007-2008 food price crisis.

CLIMATE CHANGE - As temperatures soar and droughts increase in frequency, scientists around the world are working to create food crops tolerant of extreme temperatures - often an expensive and laborious process. But a cheaper and quicker alternative could be in sight, new research suggests.

AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE - Cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest producer, began the 2012-2013 season in October with a minimum price guaranteed by the state. This measure, part of the government's sector-wide reforms, should stem corruption and make farmers less prone to the vagaries of international cocoa prices, giving them more financial stability so they can invest in their cocoa plantations.

KENYA - Scourge. Plague. Killer disease. All are terms still routinely used by Kenya's media to describe the HIV epidemic more than thirty years after it was first identified. Experts say the media needs to step up to promote a better understanding of the illness.

NIGERIA - Efforts to repair infrastructure and restore livelihoods destroyed by Nigeria's recent flooding - the worst in five decades - require urgent funding and will take six months or longer, say aid agencies.

SIERRA LEONE has come a long way since the brutal 1991-2002 civil war, which left thousands dead, countless numbers displaced, and the country's economy and institutions in tatters. Youth unemployment was a major cause of the conflict, so it is worrying that despite significant economic growth at a macro-level and large-scale foreign investment, up to 70 percent of youths are underemployed or unemployed, according to the World Bank.

SOUTH AFRICA grants almost every patent application it receives, making its patent regime one of the world's most lenient. While pharmaceutical companies cash in, patients face staggering healthcare costs, and medicines like cancer treatments, third-line antiretrovirals (ARVs) and treatments for drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) are often priced out of reach.

SOUTH SUDAN - Rights groups are calling for an end to the death penalty in South Sudan and for improvements to the squalid prison conditions where people languish for years, often without due process.

SOMALIA - An estimated 135,000 children are at risk of polio in Somalia's port city of Kismayo, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

SWAZILAND - Land reform has been recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of the solution to deepening economic decline in Swaziland, a country where more than two-thirds of the population lives in poverty.

UGANDA - More than 380,000 Ugandan men have been circumcised in the last two years as part the government's HIV-prevention efforts, new statistics reveal.

WFWO's Communications Team