

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

HEALTH - Access to vaccines could save millions of lives a year, and more must be done to develop and deliver immunization to developing countries, health experts from around the world said in a series of articles published. Lack of funding, diminishing public confidence and costs are among the key reasons vaccines for disease such as smallpox, polio and the measles are not used more widely in 72 of the world's poorest countries.

HIV/AIDS - A new campaign called Countdown to Zero will treat some 15 million pregnant women infected with HIV in a bid to reduce to less than 5% the transmission of the virus to babies by 2015. The plan, targets expectant mothers in low- and middle-income countries, primarily sub-Saharan Africa, where some 370,000 children were infected with HIV at birth in 2009.

CLIMATE CHANGE - Farmers will soon be feeling the effects of climate change on their ability to produce crops, endangering the livelihoods of millions and the food supply for urban areas, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization says. Governments need to improve water-management systems, and farmers should consider more water-efficient planting patterns now to help mitigate the effects.

AFRICA

HEALTH - The introduction of an inexpensive meningitis vaccine has helped Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger post the lowest number of cases in decades, according to data from the UN World Health Organization. The vaccine was designed and priced specifically for poor countries.

COTE D'IVOIRE - The Ivorian government has extended a special period of free health care to help a population reeling from months of turmoil. But in a country where cost recovery for health services has long been the policy, an abrupt change to free care is posing challenges.

MALAWI - As government prepares to roll out the expensive new antiretroviral treatment regime recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) this month, there are fears about the programme's sustainability after two recent proposals for funding were rejected by the Global Fund.

SOUTH AFRICA - The road to prevention methods based on antiretroviral (ARV) drugs is still fraught with challenges, but recent groundbreaking trial results from this promising new field offer greater hope than previous efforts.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

COLOMBIA - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was deeply moved by the devastation he saw when he flew over the flood-affected areas of Colombia at the weekend and expressed the United Nations readiness to help the Government to continue providing succour to the estimated three million people affected.

HAITI - Floods caused by heavy rainfall and mudslides in Haiti claimed the lives of 23 people and damaged 470 homes earlier this week, the United Nations humanitarian office reported, citing information provided by the country's authorities.

WFWO's Communications Team