

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

CHILDREN - The United Nations envoy for children and armed conflict today called for universal ratification of a treaty protocol that outlaws the use of minors to fight wars and encourages States to set 18 years as the minimum age for recruitment.

CLIMATE - Opposition to the new European Union carbon tax on airlines could trigger a tit-for-tat trade war, argue planemakers, putting pressure on the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization to devise a global plan for carbon pollution that one analysis shows could amount to an EU bill to airlines of 505 million euros (\$670 million) for 2012. EU representatives say that, while they are open to compromise, they will not suspend the tax, which is seen as critical to fighting climate change.

TECHNOLOGY - The spread of mobile phones throughout the developing world, which has reached some 70%, according to the UN, represents an opportunity for mHealth to support public health initiatives in remote, underserved areas without access to electricity, clean water and basic preventive care. Already mHealth-based programs are helping to reduce contagious disease, improve banking and boost malaria recovery rates.

AFRICA

MADAGASCAR - A category four tropical storm, Cyclone Giovanna, is expected to make landfall on 14 February close to the Madagascan east coast town of Toamasina and thereafter head for the capital Antananarivo.

ASIA & PACIFIC

POPULATION - With 60 percent of the world's population, Asia has one of the largest concentrations globally of aging persons, creating a host of potential challenges, experts warn.

BANGLADESH - An outbreak of the Nipah virus in northern Bangladesh has killed 30 people since the start of 2011, prompting national health warnings against the fatal pathogen spread by fruit bats. Everyone who got infected, died.

INDIA - The quality of vaccines being manufactured by some drug companies in India is hurting the country's image, overall, especially in the developing markets for which India is currently a significant source. The UN World Health Organization recently suspended procurement of a Hepatitis B vaccine from a Hyderabad-based company after finding deficiencies in manufacturing and management during an audit.

PHILIPPINES - Faced with mounting casualties every year due to powerful storms and floods, the Philippines will raise its 2012 spending on infrastructure that can withstand disasters, officials says.

WFWO's Communications Team