



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - A United Nations preparatory conference to work toward crafting an international arms trade treaty is under way in New York. Representatives are looking to begin creation of the world's first binding treaty on conventional arms to control the \$55 billion-per-year arms trade and prevent arms from entering conflict zones. The UN will hold four such meetings before a four-week conference in 2012 to finalize an agreement.

ENVIRONMENT - Increased awareness has done little to stem the pace of biodiversity destruction, with one-third of the world's habitats adversely affected by human activity, the United Nations Environment Program warns in a new report. UNEP is looking to associate economic costs with the loss, highlighting multinational companies' contributions to the pace, in a bid to give the issue economic value and more visibility.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - An increase in safer sex practices by African youths is helping to drive down infection rates in 16 out of 25 countries, UNAIDS says in a new report. Many African countries - including Kenya, Botswana, Ethiopia and Malawi - are on track to reduce infection levels among 15- to 24-year-olds by 25% or more as compared with 2000 levels by the end of 2010.

ETHIOPIA - A new report by the UN finds that Ethiopia will likely meet its **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, of cutting its poverty rate by half before 2015 - a result of progress in education, health and targeted infrastructure spending. Rising inequality remains a threat in a country where half of all children are malnourished, and Ethiopia's progress toward its Millennium Development Goals is susceptible to weather and global financial conditions.

SOUTH AFRICA - In a bid to ease pressure on South Africa's over-burdened public health sector, the government has given hospitals and clinics permission to give patients on HIV/AIDS treatment a three-month supply of their antiretroviral medication (ARVs).

■ASIA

BANGLADESH - Over 600,000 river island residents have been marooned and thousands of hectares of crops destroyed due to heavy monsoon flooding in Bangladesh. Heavy monsoon rains throughout the Himalayan region tend to cause rivers flowing southwards into low-lying Bangladesh to overflow.

INDIA - A government-backed study claims that two thirds of women in India's capital have been subjected to some form of sexual harassment. The report, carried out by two UN agencies and the local NGO, surveyed 5,010 women between January and March this year. It found that teenage women and women working in the informal sector are most at risk but that all women face sexual harassment in both crowded and secluded places.

TIMOR-LESTE, one of the world's newest and poorest nations, has achieved significant declines in infant mortality, under-five mortality and fertility rates, according to the country's latest Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).

WFWO's Communications Team