



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS - With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review summit just one week away, the World Bank is the latest international player to announce its strategy to help achieve those goals by their 2015 deadline. The new funding, totaling nearly 10 billion dollars, is meant to help overcome what have been termed the food, fuel and financial crises which the Bank says have added to the obstacles faced by developing countries. Progress toward the MDGs in some countries has been stalled or reversed in recent years, the Bank estimates, saying that 64 million more people are living in extreme poverty in 2010 as a result of these recent crises. Progress toward MDG one – to reduce by half both the number of people suffering from hunger and from extreme poverty – was almost completely reversed in 2008 as a result of the spike in food prices.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - A report released on Monday claims that although there has been "extraordinary progress" in Africa in the past five years, most African people have not benefitted from it. The Commission for Africa published the report ahead of a United Nations summit in New York this month that will review progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The report suggests that international donors need to increase aid to Africa by billions of US dollars to promote development because new challenges such as climate change and the economic crisis have made poverty reduction more difficult to achieve.

KENYA - Malnutrition levels in pastoralist districts of northeastern Kenya have remained high, despite recent rains that boosted livestock productivity, the mainstay of the local economy, officials said.

SOUTH AFRICA - Research by South Africa's University, has found that starting HIV-positive people on antiretrovirals (ARVs) earlier, and at a higher CD4 count (a measure of immune system strength), may be cheaper than previously thought.

ZIMBABWE - More than a million people will need food aid in Zimbabwe this year. As the government looks to boost agriculture production, one rural community is leading the way by using irrigation schemes to improve food security and income.

■ASIA

CHINA is working to access unexplored areas of the ocean floor in search of minerals, oil and other resources to mine, using a submersible able to travel deeper than any other craft in the world. China developed the submarine in secret over the past eight years and conducted a successful trial to the bottom of the South China Sea this summer. Observers worry the trials, scheduled to continue into 2012, may exacerbate territorial disputes with China's neighbors.

INDIA, the world's largest manufacturer of generic drugs, has emerged as major provider of counterfeit and substandard pharmaceutical drugs, damaging the country's \$8.5 billion industry. Worldwide fake-drugs cost an estimated 1 million lives a year. India's health officials altered drug laws to accelerate legal action, and have launched a program to offer cash rewards to those who provide information about illegal operations.

VIETNAM - A new report highlights Vietnam's performance in meeting the Millennium Development Goals of halving hunger and reducing poverty five years ahead of the 2015 target.

■MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT - Nile basin countries are locked in a water supply dispute with Egypt over development projects that would use water from the Nile. Egypt, which relies almost exclusively on Nile waters for its agriculture sector and general water supply, has veto power over any project under a colonial era treaty.

LEBANON faces a number of environmental threats, including air and water pollution, risks associated with climate change, and the impact of the 2006 war with Israel.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

CUBA - The elimination of half a million public sector jobs, starting immediately and lasting through the first quarter of 2011, is one of the most complex and sensitive aspects of the reforms announced by Cuban President.

WFWO's Communications Team