

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - In striving to improve the lot of the world's poorest people and achieve sustainable development for all, the international community must recognize that its far-reaching goals would remain elusive unless it tackled unemployment among the youngest members of society, the United Nations Commission for Social Development heard as it opened its forty-ninth session.

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations began laying the groundwork today for a global "social protection floor" that would guarantee food security, health services for all and old-age pensions, with a senior official stressing that all that is lacking is the political will for an initiative needing minimum investment.

AFRICA

Africa Region - The global action plan to achieve the eight anti-poverty goals by the year 2015 may have become a mirage in Africa in the face of unprecedented takeover of arable land across the continent by rich foreign countries and businessmen. In what is now dubbed 'land rush', the systematic takeovers are equally posing serious threat to major new commitments for women and children's rights and other initiatives against hunger and disease.

ANGOLA/NAMIBIA - Long years of armed conflict have obstructed development in the areas on either side of the Angola-Namibia border. Now a 45 million dollar infrastructure upgrade is set to improve access to clean drinking water and decent sanitation for one million people.

CHAD - The recruitment and use of children by armed forces and other armed groups in Chad persists, UN Secretary-General says in a new report, while noting that reduced tensions last year enabled many children to leave such groups.

DR CONGO - As part of its campaign against rape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations and its partners this week opened a centre in the eastern city of Bukavu to provide a safe haven and training programmes for survivors of sexual violence.

KENYA - Hundreds of infants in Kenya received their first shots against pneumococcal disease today at a special United Nations-backed event to celebrate the global roll-out of vaccines targeting the world's leading cause of child deaths – pneumonia.

SAHEL - Researchers are analysing dust from the Sahel to study its role in the spread of bacterial meningitis in this region hardest hit by the debilitating and often fatal disease.

ASIA & PACIFIC

INDIA's economy might be flaunting growth rates of some 9% annually, but the government is struggling to feed its 1.1 billion people decades after investments in agricultural technologies in the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Nearly half of the country's children age 5 or younger are malnourished, a figure that could worsen amid food shortages and drastic price increases.

PAKISTAN - The failure to communicate early data warnings of massive impending rainfall in Pakistan in early 2010 highlights the gaps in the existing global network of weather prediction systems. European weather simulation programs predicted the heavy rains, but the potential severity was not effectively communicated. Monsoon flooding subsequently killed 2,000 people and forced 20 million out of their homes.

WFWO's Communications Team