

# NEWS BULLETIN

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## GLOBAL

**FOOD & HUNGER** - Most families across the world will have felt the pinch from the rising cost of food in the past few years. But in poorer nations the health risks, particularly for young children, are far more severe. A special report and a factbox look into the issue of malnutrition caused by a lack of vitamins and minerals in the diet, commonly known as 'hidden hunger'.

**WOMEN & GIRL** - Rape, poverty and infanticide are rife in DR Congo, India, Pakistan and Somalia, but no country is worse for women than Afghanistan, a global survey shows. Women have a one in 11 chance of dying during childbirth in Afghanistan, where mortal dangers to women are exacerbated by poverty, non-sexual violence, economic discrimination and targeted violence against female public officials.

**CLIMATE CHANGE** - Public awareness about the dangers of climate change combined with a stronger global economic outlook are needed to help reinvigorate efforts to forge an international treaty to battle climate change, says the head of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Public concern is growing as extreme weather events increase around the globe, but many observers predict it will take years to reach agreement on an agreement to follow the Kyoto Treaty, which expires in 2012.

## AFRICA

**CONGO** - Almost 1,000 suspected cases of chikungunya, a mosquito-borne viral disease that causes fever and severe joint pain, have been recorded in the Republic of Congo's capital over the past two weeks.

**WEST AFRICA** - The roll-out of a revolutionary meningitis vaccination in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger has dramatically cut transmission rates, according to the UN World Health Organization, and if each country can find sufficient funds to co-finance the campaign, it will be extended to all 25 countries in the Africa meningitis belt by 2016.

## ASIA & PACIFIC

**INDIA** - The World Bank is lending India \$1 billion to cover the costs of the first major cleanup of the Ganges in more than two decades. The 1,560-mile-long river, revered as a means to cleanse oneself of sin, is notoriously contaminated with untreated sewage and industrial and agricultural waste. Some 400 million people use its water for drinking, cooking and washing.

**TAJIKISTAN** - Medical staff in Tajikistan have scrambled to vaccinate against polio some 95% of children under the age of 15, up from prior levels of about 87%, after a sudden outbreak of the disease last year caught health officials off guard, killing and paralyzing dozens of children.

**TIMOR-LESTE** - As one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with a stable political system and improving education infrastructure, Timor-Leste is gradually raising its profile in the region, leaders say.

## MIDDLE EAST

**SYRIAN** security forces stand accused of widespread human rights violations as part of the government's crackdown on pro-reform demonstrators, with more than 1,100 people killed and thousands detained, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay's office said in a report to the UN Human Rights Council.

## LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

**HAITI** - Aid agencies are stepping up their response to rising cases of cholera in Haiti, where days of heavy rain have killed more than 20 people and flooded tent camps sheltering hundreds of thousands of quake survivors.

WFWO's Communications Team