

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

FOOD - After years of criticism, the UNFAO has announced it is exploring new ways to measure "hunger", "undernourishment" and "food insecurity" - terms used interchangeably - which will dramatically alter the number of people believed to be going hungry.

AFRICA

FOOD - Whether Africa can scale-up wheat production to meet growing demand will depend on governments' support of local producers. A key test is whether they are willing to take on wheat import subsidies, which keep bread prices low and urban consumers happy, said experts at a recent five-day conference on African wheat production.

EDUCATION - Rising numbers of children out of school in sub-Saharan Africa, significant numbers of children spending six years in primary school and still not being able to read a complete sentence - the latest report by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) paints a gloomy picture of the state of the world's education.

BURUNDI / TANZANIA - The imminent return of more than 35,000 Burundians from Tanzania poses major logistical challenges to aid agencies and the densely populated country they fled amid civil war almost 20 years ago. The return could degenerate into a "humanitarian disaster" if they ignore a 31 December deadline to leave willingly and end up being deported en masse.

KENYA - The Kenyan government has issued an alert over possible flash floods in parts of the country following the start of the country's October-to-December short rains, which may be exacerbated by possible mild-to-moderate El Niño conditions.

MALAWI - To keep its mostly maize-growing small farms productive through cycles of drought, Malawi spends 60 percent of its agricultural budget subsidizing fertilizers. But the findings of a 12-year study, suggest farmers in Malawi and elsewhere could increase yields consistently without applying fertilizers, using instead 'fertilizer trees'. To thrive, maize requires phosphorus and nitrogen, large quantities of which have been depleted from African soils, where fertilizer application is the lowest in the world.

SOMALIA - Rising food costs, poor 'Gu' seasonal rains earlier in the year and continuing insecurity in parts of southern Somalia are affecting the nutritional status of vulnerable people there - a situation that could worsen in the coming months amid the risk of flooding, warn experts.

ZIMBABWE - Faced with the ambitious target of reaching 85 percent of people in need of HIV treatment by the end of 2012, the Zimbabwean government has announced that nurses will be trained to prescribe and manage antiretroviral (ARV) drug treatment.

ASIA & PACIFIC

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - Environmental damage caused by copper mining in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has affected thousands of refugees from the neighbouring Indonesian province of West Papua who have not received any support from PNG or the mining company, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and NGOs.

WFWO's Communications Team