



■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council is slated to meet today with representatives from southern Sudan concerning the referendum to decide whether to secede from the northern part of the country after a 21-year civil war. Reports of a major troop buildup near the north-south border are false, a UN official said.

FOOD - If wheat and maize production do not rise substantially in 2011, global food security could be uncertain for the next two years, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization has warned.

Climate Change - Officials have colored the upcoming UN climate talks in Mexico with a sense of urgency. They say that continued inaction by world powers only translates into higher costs to combat global warming. A deal is seen as likely because the goals, such as creating a "green fund" to assist poor countries, are considerably more modest than those last year during similar talks in Denmark.

■AFRICA

CHAD - Scores of families recently displaced by flooding in the Chadian capital N'djamena face a daily struggle against local thugs, wild animals, a lack of toilets and night winds that knock down makeshift tents.

SWAZILAND - An economic meltdown in Swaziland, exacerbated by a major decline in revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), is unlikely to leave the national AIDS response unscathed, say local health officials.

■ASIA & PACIFIC

MYANMAR - The cyclone that struck the western coast of Myanmar at the end of October wiped out a large portion of the region's expected annual rice harvest, placing some 260,000 people at risk of hunger.

NORTH KOREA - The United Nations warned on Tuesday that North Korea will face a shortfall of 542,000 tonnes of grain during the 2010-11 period following poor weather that affected harvests. The UNFAO and UNWFP recommended the provision of around 305,000 tonnes of international food aid to assist the most vulnerable people. After visiting the country the agencies estimate that five million people - equivalent to around 20 per cent of the national population - are in need of food assistance. North Korea suffers regularly from famine and has relied heavily on international food aid.

PHILIPPINES - The Catholic Church and reproductive health campaigners continue to do battle ahead of hearings on what could become the first national family planning law in the Philippines.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - Health workers in Haiti are concerned about the spread of tuberculosis (TB) in the tent cities that have housed more than one million people since the massive earthquake in January.

WFWO's Communications Team