



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The UN said that it will respond to Chile's request for aid in the wake of a massive 8.8 earthquake that rocked the country over the weekend. International aid groups were limited in their ability to send aid and experts before Chile officially made the request Monday, after government officials had assessed the damage.

HEALTH - The failure of governments around the world to reach out to drug users about HIV/AIDS is helping to drive infection rates, researchers warn in a study published in *The Lancet* journal. Less than 10% of the world's 16 million injecting drug users get help to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS, the researchers said.

Climate Change - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is seeking independent experts to review its process for creating reports after recent scandals over inaccuracies in its 2007 reports sparked fierce debate over climate change.

■AFRICA

BOTSWANA - Botswana is adopting a two-pronged approach to tackle abuse of its immigration system by increasing the sophistication of travel documents, visas and work permits, and putting more boots on the ground to apprehend undocumented foreign nationals.

D.R. CONGO / RWANDA - For the many thousands of people displaced by conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo's Kivu regions who have returned to their villages, home has its many hardships.

MOZAMBIQUE's dependence on foreign aid and investment has led to rising social inequality and discontent amongst the country's youth, a new report claims. Despite receiving US\$12 billion in aid since peace was established 17 years ago, the report says there has been no real poverty reduction. It claims high levels of aid have left the country's government accountable to donors rather than the people. The study, which is published in this month's edition of *Conflict, Security and Development*, argues that aid and foreign investment have not been targeted correctly. Although there has been an expansion in healthcare and education, there are not enough jobs for the population. Instead more money should be invested in the rural economy as 70 per cent of people live in rural areas. Instead foreign investments have been channelled into "mega-investment" projects, such as coal mines and an aluminium smelter, which have not created many jobs.

SOUTHERN AFRICA - When a crisis strikes, access to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs can be among the first casualties, particularly in countries where many people are on treatment.

TANZANIA - A Tanzanian project is integrating family planning and HIV messages via community health workers who teach HIV-positive couples how to avoid unwanted pregnancies or infecting their unborn children.

■ASIA

ASIA REGION - A 5.7 magnitude earthquake shook parts of Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan early on the morning of 28 February, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS). The epicentre was in the Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan, about 175 km northeast of Kabul, USGS said.

AFGHANISTAN - Up to 25 million tree seedlings will be planted in Afghanistan this year by the government, NGOs and private entities to combat soil erosion and desertification, and help improve air quality in urban environments, says the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

CHINA - In an unusual move, 13 Chinese newspapers ran identical front-page editorials calling for the end of the Chinese registration system, a tool used since the dawn of the Communist era for internal planning and to stymie internal migration. Hundreds of millions of rural Chinese who have moved to cities to take jobs in factories and other urban sites of industry remain second-class citizens because they cannot change their registration status, known as "hukou." Half of the 460,000 children born in Beijing over the past three years are not eligible for education and other amenities because they lack urban hukou registration.

INDIA's finance minister Pranab Mukherjee vowed to take the country's green revolution to its eastern dry lands as he announced the 2010-2011 national budget on Friday.

JAPAN - In only the fourth major tsunami alarm issued since 1952, Japan evacuated coastal communities and enacted contingency plans, fearing that a dramatic tsunami might follow the major 8.8 earthquake that struck Chile. The immediate waves were no cause for alarm, though authorities maintained a state of alert, warning that larger waves could be in store.

PAKISTAN - A dangerous mixture in Balochistan - Significant development and poverty challenges in Balochistan Province, southwestern Pakistan, are being exacerbated by growing security concerns, according to aid workers. Decades of nationalist unrest, underdevelopment and the scaling down of UN and NGO activity have left residents feeling neglected and fearful for their safety, they say.

PHILIPPINES - Contraception controversy central to elections - The controversial issue of family planning is taking a prominent role in campaigning for the general election in the Philippines.

■MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN - Saada schools reopen - Hundreds of schools in the northern Yemeni province of Saada have reopened after five months of closure following an 11 February ceasefire between Yemen's army and Houthi-led Shia rebels, according to local officials.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

CHILE - An 8.8 magnitude earthquake that struck central Chile on Saturday has killed at least 711 people, according to the government. Chilean president Michelle Bachelet said on Monday that the death toll was certain to rise as many people are still missing.

HAITI - The United Nations Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS is calling for increased support to rebuild Haiti's HIV AIDS services and programmes, which were severely disrupted by the January 12 earthquake.

WFWO's Communications Team