

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS - A decade after world leaders adopted the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there is no consensus on what impact they have had on global poverty. The academics, policy-makers, civil society activists and development workers who gathered in Johannesburg on 16-19 January for a summit on global poverty agreed that the MDGs have made a difference, but have fallen far short of the ambitious targets on poverty, education, health, gender equality and global partnership that 189 countries committed to achieving by 2015. An estimated one billion people around the world regularly go to bed hungry and between 1.5 and two billion are thought to be living in poverty. HIV continues to claim thousands of lives every day and there has been little improvement in infant and maternal mortality rates. Meanwhile, inequality within and among countries has widened and foreign aid levels have declined during the past two years of the global financial crisis.

FOOD AND HUNGER - A senior official of the UN's food agency has played down concerns that tighter supplies of food could lead to a repeat of the 2008 food crisis because stocks were ample. Earlier, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation said global food prices had reached their highest levels since its records began in 1990 and that grains prices could climb further as adverse weather patterns give cause for concern.

AFRICA

Africa Region - High levels of unemployment, in addition to widespread malnourishment, will remain on the horizon throughout Africa because the continent's economy isn't expanding quickly enough, according to the United Nations. Per-capita income is expected to grow an average of 2.8% through 2012, below the 3% minimum the world body says is needed to reduce poverty substantially.

MALAWI - More mothers and pregnant women in Malawi are attending antenatal clinics since the increased training of health workers in paediatric HIV care improved services to prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV, and paediatric HIV testing and treatment.

SWAZILAND - The new school year opened with hope - and hunger - in Swaziland this week: an estimated 140,000 orphans and vulnerable children are among the small, eager faces in the mountain kingdom's classrooms. Poverty and the AIDS pandemic threaten to make an early mark on the next generation.

ASIA & PACIFIC

PHILIPPINES - Aid workers are struggling to help more than 1.7 million people affected by unseasonal rains that have resulted in massive flooding and landslides in large areas of the Philippines' eastern and southern coasts.

VIETNAM - Thousands of children in Vietnam continue to be killed or injured in motorcycle-related accidents each year, reinforcing the need for stricter enforcement and further revision of the country's mandatory helmet law. Despite near 100 percent compliance for adults, compliance among children is very low at an estimated 30 percent, health experts and activists say.

WFWO's Communications Team