



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations should work to include tougher measures to control the transport of arms and assign responsibility for arms' supply chains as part of its effort to craft an international arms trade treaty, a NGO says in a report. Weak shipping procedures are allowing the illegal transport of arms to continue across borders, in spite of countries' commitment to halt the transfers of weapons to countries where they might be used to commit abuses.

HEALTH - Government cuts to funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and health infrastructure programs have limited the number of people receiving lifesaving drugs, falling short of world leaders' goal of universal treatment by 2010, said officials at an international HIV/AIDS conference. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Michel Kazatchkine, head of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, urged governments to refrain from trimming their AIDS budgets.

HEALTH - Genetically modified mosquitoes that cannot be infected by malaria-causing parasites may be the key to eradicating the disease, US scientists report. Researchers say they successfully bred mosquitoes with an altered insulin-production gene that subsequently demonstrated 100% immunity to malaria parasites.

■AFRICA

Africa Region - Using HIV treatment to drastically reduce transmission of the virus is the big issue at the International AIDS Conference in Vienna; scientists and health workers are optimistic but recognize that scaling up treatment will not be easy, especially for poor countries.

ZIMBABWE's government has adopted new guidelines set by the World Health Organization (WHO) for treating people living with HIV, but there may not be enough money to implement them.

■ASIA

CAMBODIA/VIETNAM - The Vietnamese government granted naturalization certificates during a ceremony in Ho Chi Minh City on Friday to 287 former refugees who escaped Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia in 1975. They are the first of a total of 2,357 former Cambodian set to become Vietnamese citizens by the end of 2010. The citizenship papers will entitle the former refugees to rights and services such as health and social insurance and higher education. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees welcomed the move as "an excellent example in the region for resolving statelessness".

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

GUATEMALA - Large portions of the Guatemalan rain forest are under threat from poachers, cattle ranchers and other illicit enterprises, endangering conservation efforts and President Álvaro Colom's plan to make the region a prime eco-tourism destination. Guatemalan authorities have had limited success dismantling squatter camps and illegal airstrips, but need more personnel and equipment to enforce the law and challenge organized criminal enterprises.

WFWO's Communications Team