

NEWS BULLETIN

21 January 2011



GLOBAL

FOOD - 2010 ended with food prices at their highest since 2008, when the world was in the grip of a crisis sparked by very expensive staple grains. It led to riots in some countries, toppled at least one government and drove more than a billion people to hunger.

HEALTH - The global health community needs to address persistent "mistrust" in vaccine safety as illnesses such as the measles and the H1N1 influenza surge, says Margaret Chan, head of the World Health Organization. WHO reports show that the rate of incomplete vaccinations for children stand at 44% due in a large part to parents' opinions of the associated benefits.

AFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - Continuing violence in some regions of the Central African Republic (CAR), including the southeast where Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army rebels are active, could affect general elections due on 23 January, aid workers and observers warned.

MOZAMBIQUE - Flood alert levels are on orange in parts of Mozambique as disaster management services mobilise to respond to flooding potentially as bad as the catastrophe in 2000.

SOUTHERN AFRICA - Heavy rains and localized flooding across southern Africa from Angola to Madagascar are raising fears that the devastating floods of 2000 will be repeated. Then, thousands of people were plucked from rooftops by helicopter, several hundred died, and Mozambique's agricultural production was severely impacted.

TUNISIA - United Nations has announced that it is sending a human rights team to Tunisia to investigate violence and advise the nascent government, which has been freeing political prisoners. Nearly three dozen relatives of ousted leader Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali have been arrested while trying to leave the country, while demonstrations were continuing in the capital, Tunis.

WFWO's Communications Team