



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The US will reconsider its opposition to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice said. American officials objected to the 2007 effort over concerns the text on indigenous land rights was unclear and failed to reflect a consensus. Rice's announcement came a day after New Zealand indicated it would endorse the declaration.

CLIMATE CHANGE - Activists attending the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Bolivia, say there is growing opposition to financial compensation schemes for forest conservation in return for permits to emit greenhouse gases. Latin American campaigners also say the success of the climate change conference taking place in Cochabamba, Bolivia, will ultimately depend on how unified civil society is in its efforts to influence the United Nations climate summit in Mexico.

HEALTH - A vaccination campaign against polio in West Africa will be delayed in some countries because at least 15 million doses are trapped at airports in Germany and France, a UN official has said. Ash from an Icelandic volcano has paralysed air traffic in much of northern Europe since late last week. The delays have stoked concern that unsynchronised immunisations will allow the virus to spread within the region.

■AFRICA

EAST Africa - Organic agriculture using natural farming methods rather than fertilisers and pesticides has made significant gains in African countries – not just among farmers but among consumers too. Africa needs to triple agricultural productivity by 2050 to keep pace with population growth.

SOMALIA - Journalists under fire - There are few countries in the world more dangerous to be a journalist than Somalia, where nine were killed in 2009, and 22 since 2005.

SOUTH AFRICA - Poor people's movement draws government wrath - The rise of an organized poor people's movement in South Africa's most populous province, KwaZulu-Natal, is being met with increasing hostility by the ruling African National Congress government, which claims to be the legitimate representative of the poorest of the poor.

■ASIA

BANGLADESH - Rodent crisis leaves thousands hungry - More than 40,000 people in southeastern Bangladesh's remote Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are still food insecure despite a three-year battle against rats, aid officials say.

CHINA has held a day of mourning for victims of an earthquake, which devastated the Tibetan county of Yushu last Wednesday killing at least 2,064 people. Survivors are in desperate need of blankets and proper shelter to guard against freezing temperatures, with snow expected to bring more misery, aid workers say. Snowy weather is forecast for the days ahead, making conditions even harsher on the Tibetan plateau, where night-time temperatures plunge below freezing and strong gusts of wind whip the mountainous region at this time of year.

FIJI - Unofficial government figures presented at a workshop this week revealed that 45 per cent of Fiji's population is living in poverty, according to local media. The newspaper Fiji Times reported on Wednesday that the Poverty Eradication Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister has found increased poverty levels in the country despite the government spending around 775 million US dollars in poverty eradication programmes between 2000 and 2008.

PAKISTAN - Schools across the conflict-zone in Pakistan's northern areas are open, but many are damaged, and there are concerns about the quality of education and funding for schools for displaced children in camps.

VIETNAM - Lessons learned from SARS, bird flu, H1N1 - Several years ago, when patients arrived at hospital with pneumonia that did not respond to standard antibiotics, doctors in Vietnam began to get scared.

WFWO's Communications Team