



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon used a weekend visit to the Gaza Strip as an opportunity to call on Israeli authorities to end new settlement activity in contested areas and lift the blockade on the area. Ban also called on Palestinians to resolve political differences and return to peace negotiations.

UNITED NATIONS - Helping Afghans take full charge of their country's development, political affairs and peace-making efforts will be a top priority for Staffan de Mistura, the newly appointed special representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

DEVELOPMENT - Despite numerous factors that threaten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 - a global financial crisis, a food crisis, climate change, natural disasters – U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said this week that his main concern is "political will".

DEVELOPMENT - Every 20 seconds a child dies from a water-related disease - 1.8 million children younger than five years each year. This alarming figure is from a new report by the UN Environment Programme, which says millions of tonnes of solid waste are being flushed into water systems every day, spreading disease.

HEALTH - A new research strategy could reduce the time it takes to develop and deliver new effective tuberculosis (TB) combination therapies to the developing world from 24 to six years, according to experts.

■AFRICA

R.D. CONGO - Most fled the fighting with little more than the clothes on their backs. Now, insecurity and poor access are hampering efforts to address the most basic needs of more than 114,000 refugees in northern Republic of Congo.

KENYA - After torrential rains and floods claimed lives in Kenya's North Rift region, hundreds of displaced people are now in dire need of relief aid.

KENYA / SOMALIA - Clashes between government troops and Islamist insurgents have displaced more than 55,000 people from Mogadishu since the beginning of February, with many of them heading out of Somalia to neighbouring Kenya, according to the UN Refugee Agency.

TANZANIA - Education crucial to lowering prevalence - HIV prevalence among Tanzanians who attended secondary school fell sharply between 2004 and 2008, while remaining stable among the country's least educated people, a new study has revealed.

■ASIA

INDIA - A recent UN report finds that some 638 million Indians lack access to adequate sanitation facilities - a significant health hazard that causes the deaths of 1.5 million children annually. In advance of the Commonwealth Games, officials in New Delhi will build 250 new toilet facilities, one of a number of piecemeal solutions to the toilet crisis. Many Indians feel that a lack of civic pride and misplaced government priorities contribute to the problem.

PAKISTAN - Awareness raising and the consequent widespread adaptation of toilets and latrines has significantly reduced the number of people relieving themselves outdoors in Pakistan, according to a World Health Organization report.

■MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN's capital, Sanaa, may run out of economically viable water supplies by 2017 as available groundwater is unable to keep pace with the needs of a fast-growing population, experts warn.

WFWO's Communications Team