



# News Bulletin

## ■GLOBAL

**AIDS CONFERENCE** - A successful microbicide trial and the promise of HIV treatment as prevention have dominated the scientific breakthroughs making headlines at the International AIDS Conference in Vienna, but scientists working on a cure for HIV say they are making slow but significant headway in finding a permanent solution to the epidemic.

## ■AFRICA

**Africa Region** - Over the past six months, the levels of food insecurity and malnutrition in the Sahel belt of West Africa have increased at alarming rates, putting over 10 million people at risk across the region - particularly in Niger and Chad.

**COTE D'IVOIRE** - An outbreak of black pod disease in the southwestern cocoa-producing area of Côte d'Ivoire, is slashing harvests for thousands of local farmers.

**KENYA's Constitutional Court** is due to set a date on Jul 22 for a hearing on the application against the Anti-Counterfeit Act of 2008, of which clauses pertaining to medicines have been suspended pending the court's decision on whether the law violates the right to health and life.

**SOUTH AFRICA** - When women from the predominantly rural Vulindela district in KwaZulu-Natal first began participating in an HIV-prevention trial many were unable to negotiate the use of condoms or even discuss safe sex with their partners. But as they used the discreet antiretroviral (ARV) microbicide gel, for the first time women - who bear the brunt of the HIV epidemic in Africa - were in control of an HIV-prevention method.

## ■ASIA

**BANGLADESH** - Rising unemployment and food prices and a sluggish economy are taking their toll on Bangladesh, where a growing number of people are struggling to survive.

**CHINA** - Chinese authorities are scrambling to keep an oil spill caused by a pipeline explosion last week in the Yellow Sea from spreading into international waters. The spill, reportedly the largest in China's history, has spread to cover more than 165 square miles of water despite the efforts of cleanup crews.

**KYRGYZSTAN** - A senior World Health Organization (WHO) official has expressed concern that a new polio immunization drive in Kyrgyzstan may not be reaching some internally displaced persons (IDPs).

**TIMOR-LESTE** activists have rejected a controversial Australian plan to set up a refugee processing centre in Timor-Leste. The plan was also voted down by the Timorese parliament on 12 July.

## ■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

**LAC Region** - Many Latin American countries have made strides in legislation and policies that promote sex education and health services for young people, which are essential for fighting AIDS. But implementation has been slow and often faces opposition, warn experts.

**BRAZIL** - The Statute of Racial Equality, soon to be signed into law in Brazil, is at the centre of a controversy between those who consider it a historical achievement, like the abolition of slavery in 1888, and those who see it as failing to satisfy the demands of the black movement.

**HAITI** - The International Monetary Fund agreed Wednesday to cancel Haiti's \$268 million debt and approve a new \$60 million loan. The new three-year interest-free loan is intended for use by Haiti's central bank to maintain an international currency reserve and manage the flow of aid and reconstruction funds into the country.

WFWO's Communications Team