



News Bulletin

■AFRICA

Africa Region - Many African countries struggle with debt and finding money for national budgets because they fail to recognise taxation as a sustainable source of funding. Moreover, multinational companies are too easily given tax breaks while siphoning off money through illegal tax evasion.

BURUNDI - Several mysterious killings in Burundi, where memories of civil war are still fresh, have spread fear and disrupted livelihoods, while authorities have sought to play down talk of renewed armed insurrection, blaming some of the deaths on bandits.

D.R. CONGO - Congolese security forces have failed to act against rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo guilty of carrying out hundreds of rapes against civilians, the United Nations Human Rights Office in Congo says.

■ASIA

CHINESE authorities will be pushing world leaders to sign an international climate treaty by the end of 2011, ahead of the 2012 expiration of the Kyoto Treaty, says Li Gao, a senior Chinese climate negotiator. Mr. Li, said China will back efforts to maintain pressure on rich countries to endorse deeper greenhouse-gas emission cuts.

INDIA's finance ministry is reportedly seeking to reduce the interest rates that local companies are charging poor borrowers. A newspaper, reported that the ministry has suggested that micro-finance institutions should not charge poor borrowers more than 24 per cent interest for a micro-loan. The ministry also requested that state-owned commercial banks introduce a cap to regulate the rates charged by micro-finance companies. However, India's Micro-finance Institutions Network said the directive is "very counter-productive" and could reduce poor people's access to formal funding. India's booming micro-finance industry has around 30 million borrowers who can be charged interest rates of up to 30 per cent.

INDONESIA - Almost one month after the unexpected eruption of the Mount Sinabung volcano in North Sumatra Province, thousands of residents who fled to emergency shelters have begun returning home, officials say.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

HAITI - The January earthquake that devastated Haiti put women and girls in the poorest country in the hemisphere at an increased risk of falling prey to people trafficking, activists and experts warn.

MEXICO - Mexican President has unveiled a plan to introduce legislation that would protect journalists from violence amid escalating attacks on the press. The government bill, which was revealed last week, proposes making the killing of a journalist a federal crime. It also suggests introducing an early warning system and an assistance centre for reporters under threat as well as creating a council to pinpoint the causes of violence against journalists.

WFWO's Communications Team