



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - International donors have only funded about a third of an appeal for \$190 million to help with food aid for Niger, as food insecurity and malnutrition rates worsen, United Nations agencies warn. Niger's food crisis has prompted mass migrations and increased school dropout rates, and has left more than 50% of the population in dire need of immediate assistance, the agencies said.

ENVIRONMENT - Russia and Norway agreed on parameters for their Arctic maritime border today paving the way for oil and gas exploration in the area. The deal, which comes after four decades of negotiations, will see the disputed area roughly split in half.

■AFRICA

SIERRA LEONE - Donors and NGOs welcomed the Sierra Leone government's launch on 27 April of free health care for some 1.5 million women and children, but health experts say it is just one step in a long, complex process as critical gaps in the health system remain.

SOMALIA - Rains displace hundreds in Somaliland - At least 200 families have been displaced and 185 houses destroyed following heavy rains and strong winds, which also killed six people in Hargeisa, capital of the semi-autonomous Somaliland region, officials said.

ZAMBIA - Drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis and HIV have been found to be spreading at an alarming rate in Zambian jails. A new report released on Tuesday by three human rights groups - including Human Rights Watch - warns that poor living conditions and a lack of proper medical care are exposing Zambian inmates to the deadly diseases. There are only 14 healthcare workers serving 15,300 convicts in the country, according to the report. The researchers also found that only 15 of Zambia's 86 jails have clinics or sick bays. The report claims there is almost no HIV prevention in prisons as condoms have been banned to discourage intercourse and homosexuality. However, the report claims that sexual abuse and the trade of sex for food are widespread in Zambian jails.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - Three weeks after President Hamid Karzai promised better security and government services in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar Province, escalating armed violence has killed dozens of people, according to human rights organizations.

BANGLADESH - Bangladesh is making significant headway in its efforts to control malaria, health officials say. The country's Malaria and Parasitic Disease Control Unit of the Directorate General of Health Services reports that the number of deaths due to the vector-borne disease dropped to 47 in 2009, from 154 in 2008.

INDIA - Nationwide strikes were held across India on Tuesday to protest against high food and fuel prices. Flights, rail services, road traffic, schools and businesses are reportedly badly affected. Low levels of agricultural output due to floods and drought have caused food prices to rise by as much as 20 per cent in India over the past year. Fuel and energy costs have also soared by almost 13 per cent, according to government data. India's annual inflation rate hit 9.9 per cent in March, the highest level in 17 months.

■MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN - Protests threaten stability - A wave of protests in cities throughout Yemen earlier this month is prompting concerns that if the government does not react appropriately, the country's stability and unity could be at risk.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

NICARAGUA - Non-governmental organisations in Nicaragua are questioning data on the maternal mortality rate released by the government, which is claiming a historic decline in the indicator, and they warn that the reduction target that the country has committed itself to by 2015 is still out of reach.

WFWO's Communications Team