



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - Investments in measures to promote a green global economy are lagging despite promises of \$500 billion in funding from countries around the world, the United Nations Environment Programme says. UNEP urged world leaders to commit 1% of gross domestic product, or \$750 billion, to a "Global Green New Deal" in 2008. UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner is calling on the G20 leaders to act decisively on the green economy, particularly in the fields of energy, water, forestry and agriculture.

UNITED NATIONS - Sudanese authorities must act to identify, apprehend and prosecute those responsible for attacks on aid workers, as increasing security concerns have forced relief organizations to cut or suspend aid deliveries in Darfur, the United Nations says. Aid workers and peacekeepers have faced a surge in attacks and kidnapping since last year. The UNWFP estimates as many as 400,000 people will go without food aid in June as a result.

■AFRICA

COTE D'IVOIRE - About one dozen people, including women and children, have been confirmed dead in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, after heavy rain storms this week caused mudslides in some of the most run-down areas of the country's main port.

LIBERIA - Poor sanitation and bad hygiene cause the deaths of one in five Liberians, according to the World Health Organization, but despite NGO efforts to put clean water and sanitation high on donors' and the government's agenda, the sector still faces a "deadly financing gap".

LESOTHO - Life is mostly hard in the mountainous kingdom of Lesotho, but the chronic droughts that seem to signal the unfolding impact of climate change are projected to become more severe, and could squeeze cultivable land from an already slim 10 percent to a mere three percent in 25 years.

SOUTH AFRICA - The world's largest antiretroviral (ARV) programme may be operating in the dark most of the time, according to a long-awaited review of the HIV/AIDS national strategic plan (NSP) released by the South African National AIDS Council.

■ASIA

BANGLADESH - A fifth of all deaths in Bangladesh are linked to drinking water contaminated by arsenic, while up to 77 million people - half the population - have been chronically exposed to the poisonous metalloid, according to a new study.

PAKISTAN - Thousands of people displaced by conflict in Bajaur Agency, one of seven tribal territories on the Pakistani-Afghan border, have returned to find damaged homes, limited services, sporadic fighting and little assistance from the government or UN agencies.

■MIDDLE EAST

SYRIA - More rain has signalled the end of three years of a devastating drought in Syria's north-eastern region but it is not falling consistently enough to benefit this year's harvests, UN agencies have warned.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

PERU - Peruvian President Alan Garcia rejected a law to give indigenous people greater rights over their lands on Wednesday. The decision prompted outcry from opposition politicians and indigenous groups. The proposed legislation would have given Indians in Peru more power to fight against the development of mining, oil and road projects on tribal lands. But Mr Garcia argued he could not allow indigenous communities to halt developments which could benefit the entire country. Indigenous tribes claim such development projects threaten their traditional ways of life and do not bring any benefits to their communities.

MEXICO - Access, cultural concerns, and affordability and quality of care are helping to keep Mexico's maternal-mortality rate, particularly among indigenous and poor communities, the highest in Latin America. More than one-third of maternal deaths are the result of malpractice, mistakes during operations or administration of improper medications.

WFWO's Communications Team