

# NEWS BULLETIN

28 July 2011



## GLOBAL

**HUMANITARIAN FUNDING** - The United Nations says it needs \$7.9 billion this year, \$500 million more than it had originally sought, to fund relief operations in the face of spreading humanitarian crises in Africa and Asia. The appeal was launched at a donor meeting in Geneva by UN emergency relief coordinator Valerie Amos.

**FOOD SECURITY** - The purchase of vast tracts of farmland in Africa by foreign countries looking to secure food supply for their own populations creates additional challenges for Africa in achieving food security, Worldwatch Institute says in a report. Countries from Asia and the Middle East have increased purchases in recent years, with 15 million to 20 million hectares of sub-Saharan African land sold between 2006 and 2009, often leaving local populations landless and unemployed.

**CLIMATE CHANGE** - Adolescent girls may end up bearing the biggest burden of climate change impacts, a new report says. In times of economic hardship – often caused by droughts, floods or other natural disasters – girls regularly suffer from a lack of educational opportunities, sexual violence, and early and forced marriages, all consequences of what the report calls “the double jeopardy brought on by gender and age.

**HEALTH** - About 2 billion people worldwide are infected with hepatitis and more must be done to raise awareness about the danger of the viral disease, the UN World Health Organization said Tuesday to mark the inaugural United Nations World Hepatitis Day. Most of the infected are unaware they carry the disease and can spread infection to others through bodily fluids.

## AFRICA

**EAST AFRICA** - The number of Kenyans who will need food aid due to drought will rise to 3.5 million by September, the United Nations says, while European officials have warned such crises will flare up again unless more money is directed at prevention efforts. The European Commission will increase its funding for millions hit by drought and famine in the Horn of Africa, the EU's crisis chief announced after visiting Kenya and Somalia. Some 11.6 million people are going hungry in the "triangle of death" that straddles Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, with pockets of famine existing in rebel-controlled southern Somalia, adding pressure on donors to respond.

**GHANA** hopes a \$53 million agreement with the World Bank to modernize the country's fishing industry will help boost the overall economy. About one-tenth of Ghana's population, 2.2 million people, rely on the industry for their livelihood but have seen production drop over the past decade due to overfishing while simultaneously missing out on economic benefits stemming from the inability to process successful catches.

**KENYA** - UN agencies in Kenya have called for the scaling-up of the drought response and mitigation interventions as more people will likely become food insecure amid funding gaps.

**NIGERIA** - Health workers say an apparent rise in contraceptive use in Nigeria stems largely from a willingness by traditional and religious leaders in some regions to use their influence in promoting reproductive health.

**SOMALIA** - The stream of refugees from drought-stricken Somalia to camps in Kenya is being met by efforts from UN Children's Fund to vaccinate more than 300,000 children so as to prevent a corresponding outbreak of disease. The two-week program to immunize children against polio and measles, while also providing them with vitamin A and de-worming tablets, targets four regions in northern Kenya.

UGANDA - Several districts in Uganda will need urgent relief aid to mitigate the risk of starvation following poor rains that have affected this year's harvest, the Minister for Disaster Preparedness warned.

#### **ASIA & PACIFIC**

MYANMAR's use and abuse of its ecosystems is destroying the environment and livelihoods, and is also fuelling conflict, a report by a coalition of exiled groups says. The environment faces threats from the irresponsible construction of large dams, oil and gas extraction, unregulated mining, rampant deforestation, massive agricultural concessions and the illegal wildlife trade, the coalition says.

#### **MIDDLE EAST**

EGYPT has stepped up efforts to curb the hepatitis C virus (HCV) by opening treatment centres, offering free drugs to the poor, and launching a massive public awareness campaign, say officials.

#### **LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN**

WATER - Civil society organisations in Latin America have begun to coordinate joint actions in the region to curb what they see as a tendency towards privatisation, while protesting what they call a range of "subtle" ways of undermining public control of water.

WFWO's Communications Team