



News Bulletin

■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS continues drive to combat violence against women; Violence against women is widespread in every corner of the globe: from the bedroom to the battlefield. Women and girls suffer many forms of violence, including genital mutilation, rape, beatings by their partners, families or killings in the name of honour. It is shocking that in women's lifetime, up to 76 per cent are subject to physical and/or sexual violence within intimate relationships.

CLIMATE CHANGE - The withering prospects of passing a climate bill in the United States are causing the government to re-evaluate its pledges to cap greenhouse gases and help developing countries preserve their natural habitats, especially tropical forests. Already the US domestic concerns are dimming hopes for a meaningful accord at UN climate talks starting this month in Cancun, Mexico.

■AFRICA

CHAD - The flood relief effort in the Chad capital N'djamena includes water purification tablets, antibiotics and tents, but also hydraulic engineers and urban planning meetings. The worst floods in decades from an overflow of the River Chari have the government, NGOs and residents hammering out plans to avoid such disasters in future.

SUDAN - Sudanese authorities are using the referendum on South Sudan's independence due in January as a cover for a mounting crackdown on human rights activists in the war-ridden Darfur region, according to a human rights activist.

■ASIA

AFGHANISTAN - Humanitarian work and civilians in need of aid are under threat in Afghanistan because of a spike in the government's use of local armed groups to counter insurgents. More armed groups mean more complicated security negotiations amid a backdrop of more complex agendas, aid workers say.

INDONESIA - Concurrent disasters experienced in Indonesia in the week of 25 October - a volcano in central Java and an earthquake and tsunami off the southern coast of Sumatra - underscore the unique challenges this archipelago nation faces.

MYANMAR - Younger generations in Myanmar are using mediums such as hip-hop music and community theaters to sidestep official censors and express their hopes for change. About one-third of Myanmar's population is in the 15 to 24 year age range, and despite being cut off from the world by a repressive military regime they are taking aim at HIV/AIDS, poverty, political freedom and other challenges they see for their country.

■MIDDLE EAST

Middle East Region - Women's rights activists are raising concerns over the expected election of two Islamic states, Iran and Saudi Arabia, to the board of the new UN agency dedicated to women. Some say that the countries, long criticized for their treatment of women, will cool efforts to improve women's rights worldwide.

YEMEN - Health workers are finding worrying levels of child malnutrition in Yemen's conflict-hit northern governorate of Saada, particularly in districts that have seen the worst of the fighting.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

ARGENTINA - Agricultural analysts are predicting a strong grain harvest for Argentina, where soy, maize and wheat are among the engines driving the national economy. But farmers are more circumspect as they plant this year's crops in the southern hemisphere spring season.

WFWO's Communications Team