

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations is predicting that come Oct. 31, the world population will hit the seven billion mark - and keep expanding till it reaches 9.3 billion by the year 2050. Much of this increase, according to the Population Division of the UN DESA, is projected to come from 58 high-fertility countries: 39 in Africa, nine in Asia, six in Oceania and four in Latin America. These countries include some of the poorest of the world's poor: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Mali, Ethiopia, and East Timor, along with middle income countries such as Jordan, Pakistan, Honduras, Guatemala and the Philippines.

FOOD - World rice production is forecast to rise 3 percent this year, based on expected better weather and government support for farmers, the UNFAO said. The 2011 rice harvest is estimated to climb to 720 million metric tons from 699 million tons, or 480 million tons on a milled basis compared with 466 million tons a year earlier, UNFAO said.

HEALTH - Every minute, somewhere in the world, a child goes blind according to the UNWHO. Three in five poor children who go blind are likely to die within two years of losing their sight - yet half of cases of childhood blindness are avoidable. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest prevalence of blindness in the world - 1.24 per 1,000 children, compared to 0.8 in India and 0.3 in Europe.

AFRICA

HEALTH - The number of malaria-related deaths has dropped 50% in 11 African countries over the past decade. In order to maintain and build upon the progress, due in large part to the widespread distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, anti-malaria campaigners will need to maintain focus, target funding and continue building local capacity to prevent, diagnose and treat malaria.

BURKINA FASO / KENYA / NIGER / UGANDA - Governments are worried by soaring prices - and by newly confident and enraged civil society. Governments are being challenged to take decisive action, despite lacking the tools to address rising global oil prices. Their responses could have important consequences for their legitimacy and survival.

LIBYA - Medical specialists in the Libyan city of Benghazi are struggling to work as lack of funding for supplies and equipment seriously hinders their efforts.

ASIA & PACIFIC

NEPAL - As a country vulnerable to the next "big one", people in Nepal are abuzz with an age-old, earthquake-resistant method of constructing buildings out of straw that could save lives, experts say.

WFWO's Communications Team