

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

CLIMATE - The European Union could be on the verge of changing its policies on biofuels amid claims that some renewable sources, such as diesel fuel made from vegetable oil and waste animal fat, are no better for the climate than conventional fuels. This could mean that demand for biofuels would drop, potentially undercutting many investments, as well as EU efforts to ensure that 10% of the total energy used in transport comes from renewable sources by 2020.

HEALTH - Ten little-known but debilitating diseases will be high on the agenda of the world's pharmaceutical chiefs, health ministers and donor governments after they pledged their support for a UN World Health Organization initiative to wipe out guinea worm, river blindness, trachoma, leprosy, bilharzia and intestinal worms, among other "neglected" diseases.

AFRICA

MAURITANIA - Scientists in Mauritania are using technology in a bid to better predict the behavior of locusts. Swarms of the bugs have been decimating crops in the country for thousands of years, and scientists hope to discover a way to help break the cycle.

NIGER - Women have been left in charge of many of the households, in western Niger, as food shortages have driven male family members to leave in search of work elsewhere. A national survey of vulnerable households shows that 5.4 million people face food insecurity across Niger.

NIGERIA - Dozens of governors across Nigeria have signed up to support the Nigeria Immunization Challenge started by the B&MG Foundation to combat polio. The immunization initiative is part of the foundation's efforts to support Nigerian efforts against top priority public health concerns such as HIV/AIDS prevention and safe drinking water.

SAHEL - This year donors are stepping up more quickly to meet Sahel's humanitarian needs compared to 2010, when they were slow to respond. However, they are still at fault for taking a quick-fix approach rather than addressing long-term disaster prevention and resilience needs, say aid groups.

SOMALIA - The UN Food and Agricultural Organization today formally downgraded the humanitarian crisis in Somalia from a famine to a humanitarian emergency after an exceptional harvest and a massive influx of assistance over the past year. However, the Director-General warned that some 2.3 million people, or one-third of the country's population, still could die if they do not receive food aid over the next three months.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

ARGENTINA - With a steady growth in production and exports, fair trade in Argentina is proving that socially and environmentally sustainable practices can be much more than a refuge from external crises.

WFWO's Communications Team