

# NEWS BULLETIN

6 April 2011



## GLOBAL

Though the UN World Health Organisation (WHO) has focused this year's World Health Day Apr. 7 on prioritising the struggle against the global spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), scores of international researchers and scientists fear this decision is coming too late, with 2011 already shadowed by the failure of pharmaceutical antibiotics to curb the proliferation of diseases. AMR refers to resistance of a microorganism to an antimicrobial medicine to which it had previously been vulnerable. For several years, resistant organisms like bacteria, viruses and even some parasites have become increasingly able to withstand attacks by antimicrobial medicines, such as antibiotics, antivirals, and antimalarials, rendering standard treatments - which had hitherto been effective - totally obsolete and allowing infections to persist and spread to vast swathes of at-risk populations.

## AFRICA

DRC - The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) added the vaccine against pneumonia to its national immunisation programme in a United Nations-backed initiative to drastically improve the chances of survival for children under the age of five.

KENYA - Kenyan AIDS activists are furious about a plan by the government to implement a 2 percent tax increase on medicines, which they say will hurt poor people living with HIV.

## ASIA & PACIFIC

AFGHANISTAN - A pioneering drug substitution programme in conflict-wracked Afghanistan has been hailed as a resounding success as local doctors and international health organisations battle soaring heroin addiction rates and an HIV/AIDS epidemic.

BANGLADESH - Despite various government and non-governmental initiatives to stem child marriage in Bangladesh, parents are continuing to marry off their underage daughters, health experts say.

## MIDDLE EAST

Middle East Region - Several Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq and Yemen are unlikely to achieve the education-for-all Millennium Development Goals by 2015 because of insecurity and conflict, according to a new report by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

WFWO's Communications Team