



■GLOBAL

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations is calling for a cease-fire in the conflict-ridden eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to try to stem a sudden outbreak of polio. Millions of children are at risk of the disease, say officials, who last month launched a vaccination campaign aimed at reaching some 72 million children under 5 in 15 countries across Africa.

CLIMATE CHANGE - The global poor are already paying a heavy price for the effects of climate change, forced to take action independently to protect their families and livelihoods while governments continue to wrangle over a battle plan and the necessary funding. Observers warn that impoverished farmers' efforts are hamstrung by a lack of access to information on weather patterns and access to climate-resistant crops.

DEVELOPMENT - Food production will have to increase by 70 percent to feed the expected world population of 9 billion by 2050, says a report released by the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Agricultural output in developing countries will have to double, the report says. This will have to be done when rural poverty is still widespread across many developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly a third of the world's extremely poor rural people live, the number of rural poor has risen from 268 million to 306 million over the past decade, says the report.

■AFRICA

ETHIOPIA - Everywhere in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, modern buildings are popping up and wide roads are being built. The country's booming construction sector is attracting thousands of labourers, and government officials are increasingly recognizing the need to target these workers with HIV prevention services.

SOUTHERN AFRICA - The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is moving to support its member countries to tap into benefits from the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) framework.

WEST AFRICA launches a massive campaign today to inoculate tens of millions of people against bacterial meningitis with a new vaccine. Supporters hope to save 150,000 lives by 2015 as a result of the effort and bring an end to annual meningitis epidemics that sweep across the continent.

ZIMBABWE - Zimbabwean women reported significantly less risky sexual behaviour than their counterparts in Tanzania, despite being almost four times more likely to be HIV-infected, a comparative study has found.

■ASIA & PACIFIC

AFGHANISTAN - Politics are trumping humanitarian issues in Afghanistan, where one in four people still do not have enough food to eat according to a UN official. "The humanitarian situation seems to be a second thought," UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Catherine Bragg said in an interview.

CHINA - As China's economy continues to soar, many experts here remain only cautiously optimistic about the country's future growth, confident that its fundamentals remain strong but concerned that a real estate bubble and rising inflation could slow economic growth.

■LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

LAC Region - Some of Latin America's major cattle-producing countries will begin working as a team in 2011 to quantify the greenhouse-effect gas emissions from their bovine industry - and to come up with options for reducing them.

WFWO's Communications Team