

NEWS BULLETIN

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GLOBAL

FOOD - Drought and famine are not unexpected events but rather a predictable result of a global food system riddled with inequality and imbalance, says the United Nations special rapporteur on the right to food. Recalibrating how the world views such events is key to putting systems into place to act pre-emptively to avoid widespread health crises and death associated with food insecurity.

CLEAN ENERGY - Growth of global clean-energy industries are at risk of a slowdown as a result of Chinese dominance of the market for rare minerals, which has led to soaring costs, as much as 10 times the levels in 2010, for hard-to-find metals widely used in the manufacture of wind turbines, solar panels, electric car batteries and energy-efficient light bulbs. "There are so far not many alternatives," said the author of a report urging companies to focus on recycling and reusing resources.

AFRICA

CHAD - Poor-quality emergency immunization campaigns and low routine polio immunization coverage are helping the polio virus to spread in Chad, with 132 cases reported in 2011 - five times the number in 2010. More commitment is needed across the board, especially from local health authorities, to try to get immunizations right, say aid agencies.

SOMALIA - The UN has expressed concern over a ban by Somalia's Al-Shabab insurgents on aid distributions by the ICRC, with the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia saying the move would reverse gains made in the country's food security.

TANZANIA - A pilot community programme to improve TB detection in northern Tanzania has shown good results and could be replicated nationwide as the country seeks to improve its TB treatment and prevention systems.

ASIA & PACIFIC

THAILAND - The Thai government is pressing ahead with efforts to mitigate the risk of flooding during the upcoming rainy season, but greater coordination is still needed, flood experts say.

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

MEXICO - Some 2 million people in rural communities in 19 of Mexico's 31 states are in need of water and food assistance as a result of what the government is characterizing as the worst drought in the country's history. Already an estimated 7% of the farmland in the country's north and center has been wiped out, while land elsewhere is too dry to grow any crops, officials say.

WFWO's Communications Team