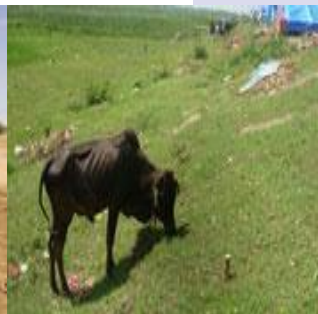




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## Humanitarian Assistance to IDP's in Pakistan

**Humanitarian crisis for Pakistan's displaced far from over – UN official**



Women and children in Pakistan's IDP camps face an especially tough time

9 February 2010 – The top United Nations humanitarian official in Pakistan has called on the international community not to forget the vulnerable civilians displaced in the country's northwest, urging donors to contribute to a \$537 million appeal launched to meet immediate relief needs.

### Inside This Issue:

**PAGE 3:** Widespread gender gap in land rights spotlighted by new online UN database

**PAGE 3:** More investment needed to ensure more sustainable livestock sector – UN report

**PAGE 4:** Lack of resources threaten gains in Pakistan's HIV response, warns UN agency

Continued...

The Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan for 2010, put together by the Government, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other aid actors, will enable continued assistance in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) for at least another six months. UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Pakistan Martin Mogwanja urged the international donor community "to keep up their invaluable contributions to enable the humanitarians to continue assisting the people in need in Pakistan."

A total of 3.1 million people from NWFP and FATA were displaced in 2009 due to Government operations against militants in these areas. The funds sought for the response plan just launched will not only respond to the needs of the internally displaced persons (IDPs), but also support those who have returned to their places of origin, those who never left and the families who opened up their homes to host the displaced.

"Considering that the number of IDPs from Orakzai Agency has risen nearly tenfold in the last two months, the emergency in Pakistan seems far from over," said Mr. Mogwanja. In addition to providing relief to the IDPs, the main humanitarian activities in 2010 will include the distribution of food, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and assistance to farmers who lost their crops due to hostilities and displacement.

The largest share of the requested funds – \$195 million – will be needed for food-related projects, since a large part of the affected population will continue to depend on food aid. Other priority areas include shelter and non-food items, health, water and sanitation, agriculture and the coordination and management of IDP camps, among others.

As of 31 December 2009, last year's \$680 million appeal was 71 per cent funded. Those funds enabled the humanitarian community to reach more than four million people in need of assistance with vital relief including food and drinking water.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33720&Cr=pakistan&Cr1=>

**PAGE 6:** Whales, dolphins and porpoises suffer high death rate as by-catch in fishing nets – UN

**PAGE 7:** Preserving world's biodiversity vital for economic development, UN official warns

**PAGE 8:** Prominent world figures in UN panel seek to bridge cultural divides to bolster peace

**PAGE 9:** Second Global Model UN of young people to be held in Malaysia in July

**PAGE 10:** UN stands ready to assist Pakistanis cut off by heavy snowfalls, avalanches

## UN stands ready to assist Pakistanis cut off by heavy snowfalls, avalanches



19 February 2010 – United Nations humanitarian agencies stand ready to help local authorities in Pakistan’s Upper Swat region where some 100,000 people need food, clothing, blankets and other non-food items after heavy snowfalls and avalanches blocked several roads and left some areas cut off from major towns.

So far the Pakistani Army has provided food supplies by helicopter and is clearing the roads, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) reported today.

Last week, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Pakistan Martin Mogwanja called on the international community not to forget the hundreds of thousands of vulnerable civilians displaced by fighting in the tribal areas in the northwest, urging donors to contribute to a \$537 million appeal to meet immediate relief needs.

This week, UN agencies continued their aid for internally displaced persons (IDPs), with the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) distributing hygiene kits to some 23,850 families – or about 135,000 people – from Orakzai who have sought refuge in Kohat and Hangu.

So far, 2,900 kits have been distributed to as many families in Kohat. In Hangu, OCHA and the UN High Commissioner for **Refugees** ([UNHCR](#)) facilitated the distribution of non-food items donated by a national non-governmental organization (NGO) at Mohammad Khawaja Camp, including quilts, clothing for children and women and kitchen sets for around 216 families.

The number of IDP families from South Waziristan remains unchanged at 38,524 – or about 280,000 people, most of them living in their winter accommodations or with host families nearby.

In Jalojai IDP camp, UNICEF has set up temporary learning spaces for 10 primary schools and started middle and secondary education in some parts of the camp, while the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) has started distributing fruit and forest plants to over 3,700 households in Buner, Lower Dir and Swat. They will also be trained in various planting techniques, such as budding and grafting.

[UN-HABITAT](#), the UN Human Settlements Programme mandated to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities to provide adequate shelter for all, continued its cash-for-work projects in Sultanwas village in Buner, removing the rubble of 68 houses. It has also conducted four training sessions on brick masonry and carpentry for 90 people in the same area.

In Mardan, Swabi and Charsadda, UN-HABITAT completed over 320 projects of community infrastructure repairs, such as street paving, drains, water channels, community guest houses, sheds and latrines.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33830&Cr=pakistan&Cr1=&Kw1=refugees&Kw2=&Kw3=>

## Agriculture, Rural Development, and Poverty Reduction

### More investment needed to ensure more sustainable livestock sector – UN report



18 February 2010 – The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) today urged substantial investments to ensure that the world’s livestock sector responds to a growing demand for animal products, contributes to livelihoods and mitigates environmental and health concerns. Livestock is essential to the livelihoods of around one billion poor people, providing income, high-quality food, fuel, draught power, building material and fertilizer, the Rome-based agency noted in its flagship **report**, the State of Food and Agriculture. It is one of the fastest growing parts of the agricultural economy, and greater investments and stronger institutions are needed to ensure that it continues to play a vital role in furthering food security and poverty reduction, **FAO added**.

“The rapid transition of the livestock sector has been taking place in an institutional void,” said FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf. “The issue of governance is central. Identifying and defining the appropriate role of government, in its broadest sense, is the cornerstone on which future development of the livestock sector must build.”

The agency noted that rising incomes, population growth and urbanization are the driving forces behind a growing demand for meat products in developing countries. To meet this rising demand, global annual meat production is expected to expand from the current 228 million tons to 463 million tons by 2050 with the cattle population estimated to grow from 1.5 billion to 2.6 billion and that of goats and sheep from 1.7 billion to 2.7 billion, according to FAO estimates. The strong demand for animal food products offers significant opportunities for livestock to contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction. However, many smallholders are finding it difficult to remain competitive with larger, more intensive production systems.

“A widening gulf is emerging between those who can take advantage of growing demand for livestock products and those who cannot,” the agency warned, stressing that smallholders need support to take advantage of the opportunities provided by an expanding livestock sector and manage risks related to increasing competition.

The report also pointed to the need to reduce the environmental footprint of livestock production, and ensure that its continued growth does not create undue pressure on ecosystems, biodiversity, land and forest resources and water quality and does not contribute to global warming. Livestock can play an important role in both adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects on human welfare, **FAO** said, calling for the development of new technologies to realize the sector’s potential to this important field.

**FAO** also called for investments in national animal-health and food safety infrastructure to reduce the risks of animal diseases to humans, and noted the need to keep poor livestock keepers more engaged in disease-control efforts.

## Health and Population

### **Lack of resources threaten gains in Pakistan’s HIV response, warns UN agency**



HIV prevalence among injecting drug users in Pakistan has steadily increased from 2005 to 2008

8 February 2010 – Although Pakistan has a plan of action to tackle HIV and AIDS, the country is facing a lack of resources that could jeopardize an effective and timely response to the epidemic, according to the lead United Nations agency on the issue.

"Pakistan has made substantial progress over recent years, including in addressing sensitive social issues and increasingly involving people living with HIV in the forefront of the AIDS response," says Oussama Tawil, Country Coordinator for the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (**UNAIDS**).

"However, it is now critical that a collective effort be made to sustain the momentum in these life-saving measures."

According to UNAIDS, the South Asian nation has an HIV prevalence rate of less than 0.1 per cent among its general population. But overall prevalence among injecting drug users has risen steadily from 10.8 per cent in 2005 to nearly 21 per cent in 2008.

There are an estimated 91,000 injecting drug users in Pakistan of which nearly one in four in large urban settings are infected with HIV, notes the agency.

The country needs \$293 million over five years to implement its national action plan, which includes measures to urgently address the rising levels of HIV infection amongst injecting drug users and other segments of society through sexual transmission and avoid a spill-over to the general population.

During 2006-2007, AIDS expenditure totalled nearly \$29.7 million, with prevention-related activities having been allocated the biggest share – 61 per cent. Despite the resources made available by the World Bank, bilateral donors and the Government, "these funds are insufficient to cover the current needs and to create a sustainable long-term capacity to address the HIV response in the future," **states** UNAIDS. The agency warns that HIV/AIDS could have a severe impact in certain communities over the coming decade. "Financial and human resources are urgently needed to scale-up the provision of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services in order to have a definite impact on the HIV epidemic and to mitigate its social and health consequences," UNAIDS said.

### Polio the target of UN-backed vaccination scheme in Afghanistan and Pakistan



Child being vaccinated against Polio

15 February 2010 – Millions of Afghan and Pakistani children will receive polio vaccinations this week as part of a coordinated effort by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN political mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to tackle the spread of the deadly disease.

A three-day immunization campaign started yesterday in Afghanistan and today a similar drive began in neighbouring Pakistan, focused on the regions closed to their common border. The two countries are among the four in the world where **polio** is still endemic.

In Afghanistan, an estimated 2.8 million children under the age of five will be targeted by the new campaign, which aims to build on a series of national immunization days and house-to-house vaccination schemes which ran last year,

At least 38 cases of polio were recorded by Afghan health officials last year, and while the number of affected districts in the impoverished country has fallen, the deteriorating security situation because of the Taliban is making it harder for health-care workers to reach all communities.

Some 3.5 million doses of bivalent oral polio vaccine have been provided for this campaign, which will focus on 14 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces – Farah, Uruzgan, Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, Nimroz, Kunar, Nuristan, Laghman, Nangarhar, Paktika, Khose, Paktia and Ghazni.

In Pakistan, the campaign is concentrated but not limited to high-risk border districts as a result of the polio outbreak last year close to the Afghan border.

Aside from **UNAMA**, **UNICEF** and **WHO**, the campaign in Afghanistan and Pakistan is being backed by national health officials as well as Rotary International, the Red Cross and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Polio cannot be cured but can be prevented through a vaccine given multiple times. The disease is now endemic to only Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. Caused by a virus, polio is highly infectious and can leave sufferers totally paralyzed.

## Environment

### Whales, dolphins and porpoises suffer high death rate as by-catch in fishing nets – UN



4 February 2010 – Large-scale fishing operations are seriously threatening the lives of the majority of toothed whale populations, which include dolphins and porpoises, warned a new United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**) report released today.

The report, launched on the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS) website, noted that some 86 per cent of all toothed whale species are at risk from entanglement and death in gillnets, traps, weirs, longlines and trawls.

Lack of food and forced changes in diet as a result of overfishing pose additional threats to 13 of the 72 toothed whale species.

“During the International Year of Biodiversity, the Convention on Migratory Species continues to address major threats such as by-catch, ship strikes, ocean noise impacts and climate change to safeguard these charismatic marine mammals,” said UNEP/CMS Executive Secretary Elizabeth Mrema.

“Governments need to enhance their efforts towards implementing targeted action plans under the Convention,” added Ms. Mrema.

UNEP said that toothed whales make their home in a wide range of marine and freshwater habitats, from the Arctic to the tropics, with some species living in large river systems such as the Amazon, Ganges, Indus and Yangtze. According to UNEP, the Baiji River Dolphin, which used to live in the Yangtze River, is probably extinct, and the Vaquita porpoise from the northern Gulf of California is facing the same fate with only 150 individuals remaining in the wild, with entanglement in fishing gear claiming an unsustainably high number of both species.

Many populations of toothed whales were at one point hunted almost to extinction and 50 species continue to be hunted, often at unsustainable levels. More recently, the ingestion of plastic debris or the effects of pollution by an ever-increasing cocktail of chemicals have been reported in 48 toothed whale species.

In addition, habitat degradation from dams and withdrawal of water from rivers and lakes threatens 18 species while ship strikes have a serious impact on 14 species, and noise caused by seismic explorations, marine construction projects and military sonar pose increasingly greater threats to these marine mammals, noted UNEP.

### Preserving world’s biodiversity vital for economic development, UN official warns



11 February 2010 – Saving the world’s myriad diverse species, which are being lost to human activity at an unprecedented rate that some experts put at 1,000 times the natural progression, is vital not just for environmental reasons but for the economic well-being of humankind, a senior United Nations official said today.

“Without preserving biodiversity and preserving our natural habitat, the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) just cannot be achieved,” UN Development Programme (**UNDP**) Environment and Energy Group Director Veerle Vandeweerd warned, referring to targets set by the 2000 UN summit to slash a host of social ills, from extreme poverty and hunger to maternal and infant mortality to lack of access to education and health care, all by 2015.

Stressing the importance of the UN naming 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, she cited former Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, who in 1993 said that the library of life is on fire. “And 17 years later the library of life, which is our biodiversity, is still on fire,” Ms. Vandeweerd told a news briefing in New York.

The reason why UNDP is “so involved in biodiversity and why we think it is so important is indeed because biodiversity is not about greenness, biodiversity is about the economy, and biodiversity is about the life of people at the community level.

“The loss of biodiversity and the degradation of natural resources impact first and foremost the poor and the women and the vulnerable and we should not forget that three quarters of the world’s population depend on natural resources for their daily living and their daily survival, from the food, the shelter, the recreation, everything; three quarters of the world population is directly related to biodiversity on this planet.”

In launching the Year, the UN has stressed that the variety of life on Earth is vital to sustaining the living networks and systems that provide health, wealth, food and fuel.

“Humans are part of nature’s rich diversity and have the power to protect or destroy it,” the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which is hosted by the UN Environment Programme (**UNEP**), says in summarizing the Year’s main message, with its focus on raising awareness to generate public pressure for action by the world’s decision makers.

The Convention, which opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, entered into force at the end of 1993 and now has 193 Parties, is based on the premise that the world’s diverse ecosystems purify the air and the water that are the basis of life, stabilize and moderate the Earth’s climate, renew soil fertility and pollinate plants.

Yet human activity is causing this diversity to be lost irreversibly at a greatly accelerated rate. As an example, Ms. Vandeweerd cited marine species. “In fact, the last frontier of the world lies in the ocean and it’s sad to see that we are destroying our oceans so quickly before we even know which biodiversity is harboured in the ocean,” she said.

“The deep sea biodiversity is something that we are just coming to know, is already being destroyed by all kinds of fishing. We are still discovering new species in the deep sea every single day and before we even discover them we are killing them.”

UNDP is working in two key areas in the field of biodiversity: to unleash the economic potential of protected areas (22 per cent of Earth) to help communities there achieve more sustainable livelihoods; and in the rest of the world to insert biodiversity in the economic sector such as agriculture, forestry, mining and tourism.

“For us there is no doubt that the Year of Biodiversity hopefully should become a year when we pay much more attention to biodiversity and conservation... where the world will pay at least as much attention to biodiversity as to climate change,” she concluded.

## Cross Cutting Themes / Other Issues

### Widespread gender gap in land rights spotlighted by new online UN database



Gender equality in access to land can boost food security.

17 February 2010 – A new online database produced by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) shines a light on how women lag far behind men in their access to land, major stumbling block to rural development.

The **Gender and Land Rights Database** offers up-to-date information on the legal rights of men and women differ in nearly 80 countries, allowing users to find the total number of women landholders and rural households headed by women, among other statistics, in these nations.

In most of the world, there is a widespread gap between men and women in rates of ownership of agricultural land and access to income from land, even though women are major producers of food crops and play a key role in providing and caring for their households.

The disparity in land access “jeopardizes food security at the household and community levels, and has an impact on national food security and development,” **said** Marcela Villarreal, Director of FAO’s Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division.

The new database seeks to provide a clearer picture of the social, economic, political and cultural factors impacting women’s land rights.

It features both national and customary laws governing land use; property rights and inheritance; international treaties and conventions; and land tenure.

“Decision-makers at all levels now have, on the one hand, a comprehensive source of information on the more relevant factors affecting the equality of land rights in their countries and, on the other hand, the possibility to make comparisons between trends and situations in their own and other countries,” according to Zoraida Garcia, a gender and development research officer with FAO.

### **Prominent world figures in UN panel seek to bridge cultural divides to bolster peace**



18 February 2010 – The United Nations today inaugurated a panel of prominent political, intellectual and religious figures from all regions entrusted with furthering peace founded on justice, respect for human rights, gender equality and solidarity in the context of an increasingly globalized world.

“This day marks the beginning of an intellectual journey throughout which we will reflect on ways to trace new perspectives for peace in the 21st century,” UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) Director-General Irina Bokova said at the launching ceremony in Paris of the High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures.

The ceremony also marked the launching of the of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, and the panel will take into account the challenges posed by climate change, management of resources and ethical and economic issues in regard to strengthening peace.

“The goal of the International Year is to help dissipate any confusion stemming from ignorance, prejudice and exclusion that create tension, insecurity, violence and conflict,” Ms Bokova said.

“Exchange and dialogue between cultures are the best tools for building peace,” she added, stressing that the main strategic lines of action entail strengthening quality education, including the teachings of the world’s great civilizations and cultures.

Panel members range from politicians such as former Icelandic president Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, to religious personalities such as Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel Laureate for Literature and France’s Simone Veil, the former president of the European Parliament and honorary president of the Foundation for the memory of the Shoah (Holocaust).

“In the context of globalization, which is also that of migrations, the parallel challenges of preserving cultural diversity and cultural identities and promoting intercultural dialogue take on a new importance and urgency, UNESCO said in a news release.

"Education is the key to success, especially for girls. However, it is also the key to learning to live together. The concept of peace has greatly evolved since the creation of UNESCO [in 1945] and particularly in the last two decades, including greater involvement for women and youth."  
Today's launch culminated in a conference on intercultural dialogue focused on 'The Power of Cultural Diversity and Dialogue' and 'Building peace – the role of shared values in a globalized world.'

### **New UNESCO panel seeks to identify how to bolster tolerance worldwide**



2010, International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

4 February 2010 – The head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) has set up an expert group to find ways to increase tolerance around the world, as part of her commitment to promoting a "new humanism" to pursue a rapprochement of cultures. The world, said Director-General Irina Bokova, is marked by a growing interdependence, but mistrust has also arisen in recent years.

"I am convinced that UNESCO has all the strengths needed to provide a humanist response to globalization and crisis," she said. "In response to the sense of vulnerability which permeates all levels, there is indeed a need to invent new forms of action to safeguard social cohesion and preserve peace."

The new panel will meet for the first time on 18 February in Paris. The gathering will also mark the launch of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which will kick off with a round-table discussion on the theme, "The Dialogue of Cultures: New Avenues for Peace."

"The objective of this International Year is to help dissipate any confusion stemming from ignorance, prejudice and exclusion that create tension, insecurity, violence and conflict," Ms. Bokova emphasized.

The task, she said, will be to promote mutual knowledge and to generate respect for other cultures.

"Exchange and dialogue between cultures are the best tools for building peace," the UNESCO chief said.

### **Second Global Model UN of young people to be held in Malaysia in July**



Global Model UN conference opening ceremony in Geneva in 2009

4 February 2010 – Some 1,000 of the best university-level students worldwide are expected to take part in a Global Model United Nations Conference in Malaysia in July as the world body seeks to harness the energy and intellect of Earth's younger citizens in achieving peace and development.

"It is crucial to engage young people," Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Kiyo Akasaka told a news briefing in New York today, announcing the upcoming meeting, which builds on the success of the inaugural [Global Model UN Conference](#) in Geneva last August.

"Student leaders are already coming up with solutions to global issues. We want to tap into this synergy... I have no doubt the United Nations will have much to learn from this year's model United Nations," he added saying the goal was to have 1,000 participants this year, compared with 350 in Geneva.

Organized by the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) together with the Malaysian Government, the **UN Alliance of Civilizations** and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the forum will be held in Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian capital, from 28 to 30 July under the theme *Towards an Alliance of Civilizations – Bridging Cultures to Achieve Peace and Development*.

“In response to the continuous and growing number of incidents and conflicts reflecting the clash of cultures around the world, the Global Model UN Summit aims to deliver a road map developed by youth that will move the world closer to a peaceful Alliance of Civilizations, DPI said in a [news release](#).

“The annual global Conference aims to serve as an exemplar of best practices for other Model UN meetings, to raise awareness of the Organization’s role in world affairs and to inspire involvement in global issues by the next generation of leaders.”

Participants will be chosen in transparent, inclusive and **gender**-balanced process that provides an equal chance for students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, and a quota system has been established for each region (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Western Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America) to ensure wide geographic representation.

They will take on the roles of diplomats, debating international crises, negotiating difficult global issues and drafting and adopting resolutions.

“It will not only be an opportunity for the young people, for the students taking part to reflect through simulation exercises to these challenging issues but also to get an input from them,” UN Alliance of Civilizations Director Marc Scheuer told the briefing.

Model UN student conferences are well established around the world, with an estimated half million or more students from primary school to university in more than 70 countries participating in national versions every year, simulating UN forums such as the General Assembly, Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (**ECOSOC**), as well as UN agencies, funds and programmes and regional economic commissions.

“Over the years, many ambassadors to the United Nations and UN officials have told me that they too took part in Model UNs in their cities and towns,” Mr. Akasaka said.

“It is our hope that participation in the Global Model UN Conference will inspire young people to become ambassadors, to work for the United Nations or become the experts and leaders that we in the United Nations look to as our partners in the global effort to support peace, development and human rights in countries around the world.”

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