

Regional News Roundup

AFRICA

Girls' education conference concludes with strong call to focus on the most marginalised children
Although great strides have been made to get more girls into classrooms, those still out of school are likely to be from families already suffering social neglect and deprivation, an international conference concluded, as delegates unanimously passed a declaration aiming to accelerate girls' access to education. The "Dakar Declaration on Accelerating Girls' Education and Gender Equality" was unanimously adopted by some 200 participants at the conclusion of the "Engendering Empowerment: Education and Equality," or E4 conference May 27. "Powerless and poor girls make up the most disadvantaged group in education," the declaration stated. "Achieving equity in education will entail putting in place a rights-based empowerment framework that will target the most vulnerable." The declaration warned that unless we do so, we will never give these children the chance to their right to education and an opportunity get them out of poverty and into a more stable and just society.

Read more: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_53741.html

UN Humanitarian Chief lauds renewed resolve to end LRA atrocities

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, has welcomed President Obama's approval of the bill The Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009. In a mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in April, Mr. Holmes visited Niangara, near where LRA massacres in December 2009 took place and where more than 280,000 people remain displaced under very difficult conditions. Since December 2007, in DRC alone, almost 1,800 people have been killed and 2,300 abducted, among them more than 800 children, under the most brutal circumstances, as a result of LRA activity. If the LRA's regional activities in Southern Sudan and Central African Republic (CAR) are included, an additional 98,000 have been displaced, 200 abducted and 250 killed, in the last 16 months. In northern Uganda, as a result of the conflict between the LRA and the Ugandan government, which lasted from 1987 to 2006, thousands of civilians were killed and nearly two million displaced.

Read more:

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/FBUO-85THZP?OpenDocument&clickid>

KENYA

Gang rapes on the rise in Kenya

Most cases of gender-based violence (GBV) reported to the Nairobi Gender Violence Recovery Centre between April 2009 and March 2010 occurred in the capital's city centre, according to the centre's annual report, which also recorded an increase in gang rapes. "A disturbing trend of GBV in the reported year is the continued number of gang rapes where the number of perpetrators per act increased from 2-11 to 2-20," Teresa Omondi, the centre's executive director said. The centre, at the Nairobi Women's Hospital, registered 2,487 GBV survivors between April 2009 and March 2010, 52 percent (1,285) of whom were women, 45 percent (1,125) children and 3 percent men (77).

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89315>

SOMALIA

Puntland helps IDPs integrate, learn skills

Authorities in Somalia's self-declared autonomous region of Puntland are offering hundreds of internally displaced persons (IDPs) skills training in a bid to integrate the growing influx of displaced, officials said. "We started with 250 people selected from the [IDP] camps and the host community and we are training them for four months," said Mohamed Said, head of DANDOR, a local NGO implementing the training in Bosasso, Puntland's commercial capital. Said said that 80 percent of the trainees were IDPs and the rest from the host community. Subjects include tailoring, welding, plumbing and electrical services, tie-dye and incense-making, some taught by IDPs. In the past 20 years of civil strife in south-central Somalia, thousands of IDPs fleeing the violence have settled in Puntland.

Read more: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89271>

One million displaced Somalis in need of aid are beyond reach

Almost one million displaced Somalis in need of aid cannot be reached by UN refugee and food agencies because of growing insecurity and the threat of kidnappings to staff. Fighting between government troops and Islamic rebel groups in the failed Horn of Africa nation has killed at least 21,000 people since the start of 2007 and driven another 1.5 million from their homes, triggering one of the world's worst humanitarian emergencies. According to Bruno Geddo, the UN refugee agency's (UNHCR) country representative for Somalia said around 900,000 people in south and central Somalia are beyond reach because of the insecurity. Kidnappings are common, with militia groups and gangs seeking to extract ransoms. According to Geddo, 42 aid workers have been killed in Somalia since 2008 and 33 have been kidnapped, with ten still in captivity.

Read more:

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/VVOS-85TLH7?OpenDocument&clickid>

SUDAN

UN Humanitarian Chief names factors leading to new humanitarian crisis

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes recently returned to Khartoum after visiting Southern Sudan and the western region of Darfur for the fifth time since 2007. Mr. Holmes noted a number of factors that have led to a new humanitarian crisis in Southern Sudan, in particular food insecurity and rising malnutrition brought on by poor rains and crop failure, as well as higher food prices. Severe food insecurity affects as many as 1.5 million people, with another 1.8 million facing moderate food insecurity. Tribal violence this year has caused the displacement of around 90,000 people and an estimated 700 deaths. Continued attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army have added to insecurity, displacements and deaths. "All this adds up to a very worrying situation against the background of high poverty and poor human development indicators in a number of areas, as well as the political uncertainties ahead of the 2011 referendum," Mr. Holmes said.

Read more:

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/RMOI-85XT47?OpenDocument&clickid>

UGANDA

WFP sees its Ugandan food purchases rise by 40 percent

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) will spend 40 percent more buying food in Uganda this year, as it uses low prices to shore up reserves, a senior WFP official said on May 26. Uganda harvested a bumper maize crop during late 2009 and the first quarter 2010, flooding markets and triggering a plunge in prices. Last year WFP bought 120,000 tonnes maize and beans in Uganda, and it aims to increase its annual local food purchases to USD 100 million by 2011. The UN food agency provided food to two million Ugandans last year, much of it imported, as two decades of civil war in parts of the country combined with droughts, to affect harvests. But for the last five years, the WFP has been increasing local food purchases, partly to boost farmers' livelihoods.

Read more: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE64P0VK.htm>