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BURMA - World weekly news round-up 7 July – 14 July 2007

Inside Burma

Floods

Floods proceeded the torrential rain in Burma. Flood waters have left thousands homeless, closed schools and hospitals, suspended rail services, contaminated drinking wells with mud and blocked latrines. UNICEF has begun distributing emergency supplies such as medicines, clothing, cooking utensils and water purification tablets in the wake of flooding that has struck the country. (9-12 July 2007. Source UNICEF Press http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/myanmar_40327.html & <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2007/07/09/agence-france-presse-thousands-homeless-in-myanmar-floods/>)

Health

The risk of dengue fever is on the rise across South East Asia. The most recent outbreak in Burma has left an estimated 3000 people infected and 30 (mostly children) dead. (Date 10 July 2007. Source: The Irrawaddy http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=7831)

According to a report from the local 'Myanmar Times', 2.5 million children under the age of five in Burma were vaccinated against polio during the country's third round of polio vaccination campaigns which ran from 4 to 8 July. Infant and under-five mortality rates in Burma are very high - the country is estimated to have about 130 000 deaths of children under five annually. (Source: Myanmar Times http://www.mmtimes.com/no374/n_brief.htm on Monday 9 July)

Earlier this month, the findings of a joint research project on infectious diseases in Burma were published. The report highlights the factors that have contributed to Burma's dire health situation and to the spread of infectious diseases in the country and across its borders. The report also considers the delivery of international aid to combat infectious diseases in Burma and implies how aid can be delivered in a manner that would not only reach the most in need but also promote accountability and respect for human rights. (Date July 2007. Source: The Gathering Storm: Infectious Diseases and Human Rights in Burma <http://www.hrcberkeley.org/download/BurmaReport2007.pdf> by the Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley and the Center for Public Health and Human Rights, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health).

World Bank Governance Report

According the 1996-2006 Worldwide Governance Indicators, published by the World Bank on 10 July, Burma is failing on the corruption index. The report measured factors like corruption control, government accountability and absence of violence and reveals little overall global improvement in governance, although a number of African countries had demonstrated progress. While Finland to the lead when it came to the fight against corruption, Burma, North Korea and Somalia came in last. (Date 10 July 2007. Source The World Bank <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/>)

UN and Asia

Ibrahim Gambari, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's special adviser on Burma visited China, India and Japan this week in order to seek support in encouraging progress on democracy and human rights in Burma. At the beginning of the week (9 July) he met with Chinese government officials in Beijing, then moved on to New Delhi for consultations with Indian officials, and finished his tour meeting senior Japanese officials on Friday (13 July) in Tokyo. (Date 9-13 July. Source: UN News Centre <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=23173&Cr=myanmar&Cr1=&> & <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=23217&Cr=myanmar&Cr1=>)

Venezuela

The government of Venezuela and the Burmese military have agreed to establish a Mixed High Level Commission to strengthen bilateral political, economic and commercial relations. (Date 10 July 2007. Source: <http://www.vheadline.com/readnews.asp?id=74562>)