

Tropical crops feel the heat

Climate change is likely to undermine food production in the developing world, while industrial countries could gain in production potential, according to Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Speaking at a recent conference in Chennai, India, he stressed that rain-fed agriculture in marginal areas in semiarid and subhumid regions was most at risk—in fact, India could lose 125 million tons of its rain-fed cereal production, equivalent to 18 percent of its total product.

Diouf said that even small global temperature increases were likely to erode crop yield potential in seasonally dry tropical latitudes, increasing the risk of hunger. By contrast, a rise of up to 3 degrees Celsius in global average



Wheat harvest near Amritsar, India, where, FAO says, climate change could affect some cereal production.

temperatures could boost some potential crop yields in more temperate latitudes.

He added that climate change was already affecting forests and forest-dependent people, who were facing more numerous wildfires and outbreaks of forest pests and diseases. A variety of ecosystems, including grasslands, forests, and marine systems, would need to adapt to climate change. And science and technology would need to spearhead agricultural production in the next 30 years more rapidly than the Green Revolution had done during the past three decades.

Knowledge aid

The world's 50 poorest nations must harness science, technology, and innovation to be able to achieve the kind of economic growth needed to reduce poverty, says a new UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report. *The Least Developed Countries Report, 2007* says such countries must “innovate their way out of poverty.” The current pattern, it notes, appears to be economic liberalization without learning and global integration without innovation.

Map shows the way

North and central Asian countries plan to draft a regional road map for achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include reducing poverty and raising living standards, by 2015. Officials meeting this summer in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, at a UN-sponsored forum heard that central Asia was falling behind benchmarks for meeting the MDGs. Despite progress in reducing poverty and promoting education for girls, central Asia is failing to keep up in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis and providing access to drinking water and improved rural sanitation.

Events in 2007

September 27–28, Chicago, USA

10th Annual International Banking Conference:
Globalization and Systemic Risk

October 20–22, Washington, D.C.

Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank

November 11–15, Rome, Italy

20th World Energy Congress and Exhibition

November 19–23, Geneva, Switzerland

UNCTAD's Interregional Debt Management
Conference

December 4–20, Paris, France

International Conference of NGOs, UNESCO

e-Mongolia: click here

Information technology has become a powerful tool for integrating landlocked Mongolia with the global economy, according to a recent UN-sponsored Internet governance seminar in Ulaanbaatar. Saikhanbileg Chimed, chairman of Mongolia's Information and Communication Technology Authority, said the “e-Mongolia” strategy was set to capitalize on the service sector's growing share in the economy and on the population's high literacy rate. Mongolia's mobile telephone market has been growing at more than 100 percent annually since it embarked a few years ago on telecommunications reform.



Computer center in Kharkhorin, Mongolia, where “e-Mongolia” strategy aims to capitalize on a growing service sector.

Ask the Fund

The IMF has created a new mailbox on its website dedicated to debt-related issues in low-income countries, including debt sustainability and concessionality. The intent is to provide a platform to respond to policy and country-specific questions. Creditors have urged the IMF to set up a “one-stop contact” where they can get answers to questions on such debt-related issues. Now creditors can ask the IMF questions directly through the following web pages—for debt sustainability: www.imf.org/dsa; for concessionality: www.imf.org/concessionality.