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News

New Drug May End Death From Malarial Infection 51secs.

An end to malaria, the age-long killer disease, is in sight. New, ongoing research in the United Kingdom is about to produce a drug that would render the symptoms of malaria relatively mild and make them unlikely to kill.

Although research into the drug is at an early stage, there are indications that it would be administered as a vaccine to children.

Malaria kills three million people yearly, mostly African children. The research builds on available evidence that only limited exposure to malarial infection in childhood is needed to acquire immunity. The vaccine is, therefore, not designed to prevent infection. But it will make the infection unlikely to kill its victim.

London Press Service

Cote d'Ivoire Solves Water Hyacinths Problem 55secs.

After 20 years of trying, Cote d'Ivoire has finally won the battle against rapidly multiplying water plants that overtook fishponds and threatened marine life and local economic activities. The plants include water hyacinths, salads and water ferns.

A biological control method introduced in 1997 finally won the war for Cote d'Ivoire. In a joint project with the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF, Cote d'Ivoire bred and introduced insects into ponds invaded by the water plants. These insects, whose names are undisclosed, fed on the plants and destroyed them.

Insect breeding stations were set up at four separate locations throughout the country for a co-ordinated attack against the water plants.

Africa News On Line

Builders and Woodworkers Support Certification 54secs.

Support for well-managed forests [forest certification] has come from the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers [IFBWW]. This follows an agreement in June with WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature, to promote forest conservation and eco-labelling guidelines for identifying products that come from well-managed forests.

"Forest workers and their labour organisations have a vested interest in sustainable forestry," said IFBWW General Secretary, Ulf Asp, "if there are no forests there are no jobs."

Over 10 million workers in 121 countries belong to IFBWW. The union will bring its skills and intimate knowledge of the forests to benefit conservation.

WWF aims to place 200 million hectares of forest under sustainable management by the year 2005.

WWF

New Approach to Rural Health Care Delivery 56secs.

Community health care funded by grants and the health ministry appears to be the model for health care delivery in Africa. A programme in Ghana has attracted the attention of experts.

The Navrongo Community Health and Family Planning Project [CHFP] was started in northeastern Ghana in 1993 as a pilot project to design appropriate community-based health and family planning services. The project was asked to address the major difficulties facing health care delivery in Ghana's rural areas. These include high cost, long distance, poor quality services, inefficiency and lack of community involvement. Experts believe that CHFP has succeeded in doing so. Health authorities from other countries have been visiting the project to learn from it.

The Navrongo project serves a population of 139,000 people. It is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development - USAID, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Health Ministry and Population Council.

Newslink Africa

Workshop Aims to Prevent Conflict Over Natural Resource 57secs.

Awareness of international conflicts that could arise from dwindling natural resources has been given a boost in southern Africa, following a workshop on resource sharing last June in Mozambique by the Finnish NGO, KUTI.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mozambican Minister for Environmental Co-operation warned of the possibility of conflicts in southern Africa over resource use.

"National policies on management and rational use of water resources should be co-ordinated among beneficiary countries," he said.

Most rivers in Africa cross international boundaries, and are often dammed upstream.

The workshop aimed at preventing future conflicts over natural resources use and management in Africa, was organised in collaboration with the Eduard Mondlane Foundation. It drew participants from Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Finland.

PANA

Campaign Launched to Save Freshwater Resources 59secs.

A campaign to conserve global freshwater resources was launched by WWF - the World Wide Fund for Nature at the 7th Ramsar Conference of Contracting Parties in Costa Rica - a meeting of nations legally agreed to protect freshwater resources in their domain.

The Living Waters Campaign is aimed at averting the global water shortage and conserving life forms of rivers, lakes, springs, marshes and other wetlands.

"[This] is part of our contribution to a larger goal of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources," said Claude Martin, WWF International Director General

The plan was announced on May 13, at the convention that ran from May 10 - 18. WWF also announced funding for the campaign, taking advantage of prolonged debates over budget constraints at the Ramsar convention.
WWF

Climate Change: Real or Exaggerated? 36secs.
The disappearance of 20 frog species in Costa Rica has been attributed to climate change. The phenomenon, described as "mysterious," was recently published in the journal *Science*. It was attributed to drier conditions in the forest of Monteverde in Costa Rica's highlands. This was intensified by last year's El Nino weather pattern.

An official of U.S. based Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force, Michael Lannoo, has described the incident as the first animal decline attributable to modern climate change.
WWF

World Bank Helps Four African Countries Fight Oil Pollution 56secs.
Four African countries on the Indian Ocean, seeking to address oil pollution of their waterways, have received assistance from the World Bank. The bank recently offered to finance a USD5 million regional programme against the dumping of hydrocarbons.

This information came in the wake of a workshop that opened in the Mauritian town of Quatre-Bornes, June 21, called to discuss the project which involves Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles.

According to reports, the project is the first of its kind funded by the Global Environment Fund, GEF, an affiliate of the World Bank.

The workshop discussed three international conventions that deal with compensations for oil spills. One-third of the 60 million barrels of oil produced daily is carried through the Indian Ocean.
PANA

Features

Cote d'Ivoire Demonstrates Readiness for Oil Disasters 1min. 29secs.
Hundreds of Ivorians, with several journalist among them, watched June 7th as the Ports Authority of Ivory Coast demonstrated its readiness to contain oil spillage on the Lagoon in its capital city, Abidjan.

The demonstration followed a recent fire at a petrol tank farm in Abidjan which caught the Ivorian ports authority completely off-guard. The authorities decided on a demonstration of their readiness in order to reassure residents of Abidjan who were shaken by the incident.

The exercise was co-ordinated by the Ivorian Anti-Pollution Centre to simulate fighting a 30,000 tonne oil spillage in the Lagoon. Pollumar, an independent firm specialised in the control of marine pollution was involved in the exercise.
The exercise involved five teams of firemen co-ordinated to achieve specific objectives in the event of an

environmental disaster of such magnitude. The objectives included the evacuation of all tourists from beaches, bays and factories; the prevention of a fire out break; contain and siphon off the oil spill; collect the oil at berth, clean up the coast and provide first aid to victims.

Thirty-seven firemen, 600,000 litres of liquid foam and three emulsifier motors were assembled for the exercise.
Africa News On Line

Economic Commission for Africa Plans for Development 1min. 18secs.
A unit within the Economic Commission of Africa [ECA] has been charged with the responsibility to speed up attainment of sustainable development in the economies of African countries by encouraging lower population growth rates. The unit, known as the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division [FSSDD] would work with governments to "harmonise population growth with the capacity of the land area to produce sustainable amounts of food."

Successes achieved in individual countries are documented, and the methods applied would be adapted progressively throughout the continent.

Emphasis is being laid on reducing fertility rate in Africa to about 2 percent, so that families would have about 2 children - down from between 5 and 7 children now. There are indications that fertility rate has started dropping in some countries. Recent reports by ECA also indicate that Africans are beginning to live longer as their living standards improve.

The ECA plans to intensify its awareness and lobbying programmes, as well as capacity building to achieve sustainable development in Africa.
Economic Commission of Africa

Food and Agricultural Organisation Warns of Mal-nutrition 1min. 58secs.
More than one-sixth of the people of the world is faced with malnutrition, as fishing trawlers in the world's oceans catch more fish each year than are replenished. More than 110 million tonnes of fish are caught yearly. But the maximum sustainable annual yield of the oceans is between 82 and 100 million tonnes.

Developing countries are most vulnerable to this threat of malnutrition. Fish is the only source of protein for more than 950 millions of their people. However, new information from the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations [FAO] shows that developing countries are participating increasingly in the international trade in fish and fishery products.

"While the exports earn them valuable foreign exchange, the diversion of fish and fish products from local communities and developing regions can deprive needy people, including children, of a traditionally cheap, but highly nutritious food," the FAO noted.

The pressure on the oceans is great because most of the fish eating come from oceans. Very little come from rivers and other freshwater sources. Besides, people eat more fish than any other type of animal protein.

Recent figures released by the FAO show that nearly 30 million poor people derive their income from fishing and several developing countries depend mainly on fish as their protein source.

Environmental organisations have devised various strategies for averting the imminent protein crisis. The strategies urge governments to remove subsidies to fishing firms. They also called for the establishment of no-fishing zones where fisheries will be protected as an insurance against over-fishing elsewhere.
FAO

United Nations Calls for Food Aid to Angola 2mins. 10secs.
The United Nations recently called for international emergency food assistance worth 180,000 tonnes of cereals to be sent to Angola to avert imminent, large-scale malnutrition in the war-torn nation.

According to a UN report in June, hundreds of thousands of Angolans face an increased risk of malnutrition due to reduced access to food, poor health and inadequate sanitation. The report issued jointly by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, FAO, and the World Food Programme, WFP, said that 180,000 tonnes of cereals will be needed over the next 10 months to avert the imminent crisis. 56,000 tonnes have been pledged, leaving a shortfall of 124,000 tonnes.

Most at risk are about 3 million people. Two million people are internally displaced, having fled their homes and farms for refuge in other provincial capitals and municipalities. Another one million, severely affected by the war, cannot continue normal farming practices.

"Hostilities have been experienced in virtually all provinces, but the areas worst affected have been the main maize growing central provinces," the report added.

An FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Mission to the country warns that food shortages in these areas will worsen in the coming months.

The conflict in Angola dates back to 1975 after the socialist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola [MPLA] formed the first post independence government. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola [UNITA] supported by apartheid South Africa and Western powers opposed the MPLA government. A peace agreement was signed in 1994. Both the parties have reportedly failed to implement its terms. Insecurity due to the civil war has reduced land available for farming, and prevented resumption of normal agricultural practices, the report said.
IPS

Special Features

Conservation Quotation 18secs.
"Modern man, often corralled in narrow corridor streets or conditioned to fitting into streams of noisy, smelly vehicles cannot hope, without some serious preparation and training, to be other than a misfit and a blot on the wilderness scene…"
Max Nicholson, Founder Trustee WWF-UK

Researchers Study Lightning Patterns **2mins. 36secs.**

Nearly 4,000 people were killed, and another 10,000 injured by lightning between 1959 and 1994! Lightning is that sudden streak of blinding light that strikes from the sky, during thunderstorms in the rainy season. This frightening weather condition also causes about USD35 million worth of damage annually.

People have tried for several centuries to understand lightning and harness its power. In the process man discovered electricity. Recently, scientists met at a conference in Guntersville, Alabama, to present new discoveries of global lightning patterns, with a view to increasing their understanding of how, where, when and why lightning strikes. The United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration - NASA - sponsored the meeting.

Information about global lightning patterns garnered from instruments that provide a view of lightning from above the cloud tops, were the highlight of the meeting.

"It looks like lightning is sensitive to changing weather patterns that evolve from year to year," said Hugh Christian of Global Hydrology and Climate Centre in Huntsville Alabama.

According to their findings, lightning is more common in storms over land than over oceans. In fact, 98% of all lightning occur over land. They occur more in the afternoons and vary from one season to the next. They also found a greater variation in lightning patterns over land. There is very little variation over the sea.

"We believe that this is due to the land absorbing heat [and releasing it more rapidly into the atmosphere]. On the other hand, water can store a lot more heat, [but] releases it more slowly," said Christian.

The scientists also reported that lightning appears to follow the sun. Lightning moves progressively north of the equator as summer progresses in northern, temperate, region. A similar pattern was observed in the tropical, southern region; but lightning was less pronounced because there isn't much land outside the tropics.

Scientists are analysing data that show that changing weather patterns affect lightning patterns. It is hoped, therefore, that lightning patterns may be one way of measuring the earth's weather trends.

Environmental News Network

Development Quotations **33secs.**

"In the transition from poor to better stewardship of the environment, all human endeavours which are not carried out in harmony with nature are not sustainable by definition over the long run. Many African nations today are faced with serious environmental problems which affect overall socio-economic development. The most important issues are deforestation, land [soil] degradation, water resource degradation, irrational use of land and water resources and losses of biological diversity."

Economic Community of Africa

Children's Section

Day of the African Child **1min. 7secs.**

This year's Day of the African Child commemorated world wide last month called attention to the violence that poverty has unleashed against African women and children. The Day, June 16, was set aside in 1976 following the brutal massacre of school children in apartheid South Africa. The children had risen to demonstrate against government's injustice in Soweto - the country's largest black township, and the brutal political system that colonised and oppressed Africans.

Four years after apartheid was dismantled, Africans continue to observe the day to encourage governments to renew their pledges to children, uphold their rights and allocate resources for their welfare. The theme for this year, "*Violence against children and the threat of HIV/AIDS Pandemic*" calls attention to the effects of poverty on women and children as a result of the tough economic reforms Africa has been put through by creditor nations.

UNICEF/IPS

Why the Lion Does Not Eat Fruit **2mins. 30secs.**

Bwawa, the Jackal, one day discovered the delicious fruit of the *udara* tree. But as he sat there enjoying his meal, he heard Lion roaring in the distance. He thought to himself "Lion sounds hungry. I hope he doesn't come this way and find all my lovely fruit." And he began to worry, since Lion, as everyone knows, has a huge appetite and being the King of Beasts, is entitled to steal anyone's meal.

Lion did come near, but crafty Bwawa had thought up a trick to stop Lion from eating his *udara* fruit. As soon as Lion was near enough, Bwawa began to eat the fruit as fast as he could, making sure that Lion was watching this display of greed. Suddenly, Bwawa collapsed in a heap on the ground, writhing and groaning, and then he lay still as if dead. Lion, of course, thought that the fruit must be poisonous, so he went on his way, and soon was out of sight. Now Bwawa, getting up, remembered where he had seen the skeleton of another jackal lying nearby. So he fetched it and placed it under the *udara* tree on the spot where he had pretended to die. Well satisfied with his clever trick, he went home.

A few weeks later, Lion passed by and saw the udara tree laden with juicy fruit. He walked over to the tree, but stopped when he saw the pitiful remains of a jackal. Its bones had been scattered by scavengers and Lion remembered seeing Bwawa eating the fruit of the *udara* tree. He vowed to himself never to touch fruit again.

Since that day, Lion has never eaten the fruit of the udara tree, or indeed of any other tree. This made the jackal and all the other small animals of the bush, very happy. Now they could eat as much fruit as they wanted without having to share it with the lion's enormous appetite.

When Hippo Was Hairy

How do Butterflies Eat? **22secs.**

Butterflies suck nectar from inside flowers. This is their food. They have a strange mouth like a long drinking straw, which curls up underneath the head. If you look carefully and quietly at a butterfly you will see it. Butterflies are beautiful insects with large colourful wings.

Chongololo

What is the Biggest Tree in the World? 1min. 24secs.

The biggest tree in the world is also the most massive living thing in the world. It is a giant sequoia tree called 'General Sherman' and it grows in North America [U.S.A. and Canada]. It is 83 metres tall and its trunk measures 24 metres around. You can imagine how large it is if you get 16 school children to hold hands in a big circle. That circle is how large it is. Can you believe it?

If you want to see what it looks like on top of the tree, you will have to stand on the thirty-first floor of a sky-scrapper built right next to it. Its weight is thought to be about 6,100 tonnes. This is the same as the combined weight of 1,000 full grown African elephants or of about 110,000 school children.

If General Sherman were cut down, it would make 5,000,000,000 [five billion] match sticks! However, would you believe that General Sherman is not the tallest tree in the world? No, it isn't. Another American sequoia tree is taller than General Sherman. It is over 110 metres long.

Chongololo

Women's Issues

Unicef Urges Creditor Nations to Cancel Africa's Debts 1min. 43secs.

Mrs. Parole Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, has called on the group of eight most industrialised nations [G8] to review the debt burden of African countries. She said that the burden denies African women and children their basic rights.

"It is no longer tolerable, on the eve of the new millennium that hundreds of millions of people be held in debt bondage to the world's rich countries," Mrs. Bellamy said, speaking in commemoration of the Day of the African Child last month.

Sub-Sahara Africa owes more than USD200 billion to governments and institutions of many G8 countries namely, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States of America. The international Heavily Indebted Poor Country [HIP] initiative launched in 1996 to provide relief to 41 poorest countries including Nigeria failed, Mrs. Bellamy said.

The result is bad for Africa. Child mortality is one-third higher than other regions of the world; six times more money is spent servicing debts than in educating the region's 300 million children; one in three children is not immunised; half the population is illiterate; and one in six working children world wide is African.

"No country has ever reached its development goals when the majority of its people are suffering the deep poverty facing hundreds of millions in the world today," said Bellamy.

IPS

Spirulina: The Wonder Alga 2mins. 39secs.

The growth of algae in ponds, rivers, streams or lakes may be indicators of pollution and are often destroyed. But in many parts of the world, one species of algae called spirulina, grown in one's backyard, is a welcome sight to malnourished people.

It can be cooked fresh and eaten as meat, or dried and used as a food additive in soups, porridge or drinks. Dried spirulina becomes powdery and smells like dried fish. But it loses the smell when added to food. It also tends to change the colour of food to green.

Spirulina is a green algae that is grown and eaten world wide as a source of first quality protein. According to a recent publication of *Intermediate Technology*, spirulina is the richest source of protein known to man. Almost every bit of it is protein and it contains all the essential amino acids. It is also rich in vitamins and iron including vitamins A, B12, and E, and has proven medicinal values, making it effective in fighting infections, skin diseases, anaemia, and diseases of the heart and nervous system.

The best news for mothers, however, is that its nutritional benefits have been proven in feeding programmes for malnourished children in India and Africa. And there are spirulina farms in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin Republic, Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic.

Spirulina is not a new food source. It has been around for centuries and has been used by various civilisations in Africa, the Americas and Asia. Although scientists discovered it only in 1939, it was already used in several countries including Chad, India, China, Japan and Mexico.

Spirulina can be grown domestically in a small water tight, salty pond of about 10 square metres wide and 20 centimetres deep. There are simple specifications for steering the pond periodically, feeding the culture, maintaining an optimum temperature range, and keeping out insects and rain while allowing access to the sun. For for more information, write to the Editor, CHANGE Radio, P.O. Box 56283, Falomo, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.
Intermediate Technology

Women in Bangladesh Lobby for Equality with Men 2mins. 46secs.

Bangladeshi women's rights activists are lobbying their government hard for a legal system similar to Nigeria's with regard to inheritance rights. But their government is responding cautiously, careful not to offend the faith of the majority Muslims and the minority Hindu population.

Women's groups are demanding equal rights to property and a uniform family code to give women equal access to property, marriage, divorce and guardianship of children.

Bangladesh still upholds the religious inheritance law that gives a daughter only half the share of property to which the son is entitled, or none at all.

But prominent lawyer Salma Khan, chairperson of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW] Committee, believes that making inheritance a subject of civil courts can change the practice in favour of women. She cited the example of Nigeria, Egypt and Tunisia as nations where civil courts guarantee women equality with men in matters of inheritance.

The activists trace other forms of gender discrimination in Bangladesh to religion, charging that discrimination is ingrained in the society.

For example, mullahs call out blessings in the mosques when a son is born, while families mourn the birth of a daughter. Her suffering continues throughout her life, thereafter. Research shows that a woman farm labourer

earns less than half of her male counterpart. And women work 21 hours more than men do weekly, according to research by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, BIDS.

The United Nations Children's Fund has also found that Bangladeshi boys who drop out of school spend only 12 minutes a day doing housework while girls out of school do five hours of housework daily.

The women activists believe that it is possible to reform Bangladeshi law without offending the people's religious awareness.

Last month, the country's Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru agreed, saying that his government is committed to affirmative action for women.

"But it is not possible for a democratic government to take a step that might hurt the religious faith of the people," he added.

Mr. Khasru said that first people have to be prepared to accept change before a decision is taken.
IPS

Useful Quickfacts

Which Animal has the Most Tribes? 36secs.

Did you know that there are over one million different insect species in the world? That is more than all the other species of animals put together. Some insects can do remarkable things. For example, a flea can jump 200 times the length of its own body. A mosquito can drink its own body weight in blood at one meal. There is even a species of fly in California, United States of America, which lives and breeds in petroleum.
Chongololo

Africa's Aids Scourge 40secs.

About 80 percent of hospital beds in Africa are occupied by cases of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome [AIDS]. This is according to recent reports by the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, painting a gloomy picture of the ravages of AIDS in Africa.

The situation is worse in East Africa. In Kenya alone, more than 600,000 children have been orphaned by the pandemic of which 240,000 have died already. The number will increase by the end of this year, given the projection of 200,000 more adult deaths.
UNICEF/IPS

Update on Forest Certification 17secs.

More than 16 million hectares of forests world-wide have now been certified so far by the Forest Stewardship Council, to be managed in ways that are economically viable, socially beneficial and environmentally appropriate.
WWF

Global Warming: The Indian Heat Wave. 27secs.

Last year more than 1,300 people lost their lives in parts of India due to a severe heat wave that swept through the country. Meteorologists are recording a similar trend this year as air temperature builds up again. Climate

experts have warned that these are early manifestations of global warming, but the Indian government plays down the phenomenon.
Down to Earth

Human Suffering Index **27secs.**
The southern African nation of Angola ranks among the nations that place lowest on the human development index. More than one third of its almost nine million people are either internally displaced or are severely affected by its civil war of 25 years. More than half of the population do not know any other form of existence besides war!
IPS

Habitual Polluters **21secs.**
Oil tanker crews loading up supplies at the Mediterranean Sea have formed a habit of cleaning their ship holds at sea. Research shows that they dump between 600,000 and 700,000 tons of crude oil annually into the Mediterranean Sea, near the Atlantic coast of West Africa.
WWF

A Global Movement for Debt Cancellation **26secs.**
Since 1996 several movements have emerged to advocate debt cancellation for poor nations by the year 2000. Jubilee 2000 coalition made up of religious institutions, non-governmental organisations, labour unions, humanitarian organisations and personalities is the most popular. African members of the coalition include Nelson Madela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana and Kenyan Environmentalist Wangari Maathai.
IPS

Waiting for the Disaster to Happen **30secs.**
More than 500 million tonnes of crude oil bound for Europe, Asia and North America are carried daily through the African countries located on the Indian Ocean. This traffic accounts for over 5,000 trips of oil tankers per year in the waters near Comoros and Madagascar and through the region's Aldabra islands, a very fragile marine ecosystem that has been declared a World Heritage site.
PANA

Glossary

SEQUOIA: A genius of conifers, the Californian big tree or mammoth tree and the red wood.

Acronyms

AIDS: Acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

BIDS: Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

CHFP: Community Health and Family Planning Project.

ECA: Economic Commission of Africa.

FAO: Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations.

FSSDD: Food Security and Sustainable Development Division.

G8: Group of eight most industrialised nations.

GEF: Global Environment Fund.

HIP: Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative.

IFBWW: International Federation of Building and Wood Workers.

MPLA: Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

NASA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.

UNICEF: The United Nations Children's Fund.

UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

USAID: U.S. Agency for International Development.

USD: United States Dollar.

WFP: World Food Programme.

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature.