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Amnesty International Reports & Statements:

14 May: Sudan: AI has urged the Saudi Arabian authorities to intervene to halt the possibly imminent execution of a Sudanese man who was sentenced to death for "sorcery". Abdul Hamid Bin Hussain Bin Moustafa al-Fakki was sentenced to death by a Madina court on 27 March 2007, after he was accused of producing a spell that would lead to the reconciliation of his client's divorced parents. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/sudanese-man-facing-execution-saudi-arabia-over-sorcery-charges-2010-05-14>

11 May: Iraq: AI has condemned the killing of civilians in a series of suicide bombings and shootings by armed groups in Iraq, which left over 100 people dead and 350 wounded. The attacks on a textile factory, markets and police and army checkpoints were carried out in the town of Hilla, the southern city of Basra, the capital Baghdad and other cities. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/killing-civilians-iraq-attacks-condemned-war-crimes-2010-05-11>

11 May: Iran: AI condemned the executions in Iran of four Kurdish political activists and another Iranian man, all convicted of "moharebeh" (enmity against God). The four Kurds – Farzad Kamangar, Ali Heydarian, Farhad Vakili, Shirin Alam-Holi - along with Mehdi Eslamian, were hanged on 9 May at Evin prison in Tehran. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/iran-executes-five-political-prisoners-2010-05-11>

4 May: Taiwan: AI has condemned the execution of four prisoners by the Taiwanese authorities, the first since December 2005. Chang Chun-hung, Hung Chen-yao, Ko Shih-ming and Chang Wen-wei were executed in prisons in Taipei, Tainan and Taichun on the evening of 30 April. The

Taiwanese authorities stated that they are still considering alternatives to the death penalty, but such commitments are of little value while executions continue. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/taiwan-carries-out-first-executions-five-years-2010-05-04>

Children

Global: Most of the deaths of children under-5 worldwide are from infectious illnesses, with pneumonia (18%) as the leading cause, followed by diarrhoea (15%) and then malaria (8%). This is the conclusion of a major statistical exercise undertaken by Professor Robert Black from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore and colleagues, funded by the WHO and Unicef and published in *The Lancet* (for study, see publications section). The study is important because it gives us up-to-date information on the numbers of child deaths - 8.8 million under-5s die every year, they say - and the causes. *The Guardian* (12 May) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/sarah-boseley-global-health/2010/may/12/infant-mortality-millennium-development-goals>

South Africa: Researchers believe the level of teenage alcohol consumption in South Africa is alarming. "Alcohol is too readily available, because it is part of almost all social interactions," noted Aadielah Maker, senior executive of social mobilisation at The Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication. Apart from alcohol, intake of other drugs is also high. Almost a third of learners reported having smoked tobacco. In addition, 13 percent admitted they had smoked marijuana, 12 percent had tried inhalants and seven percent had used cocaine, methamphetamine or Mandrax (methaqualone). *IPS* (5 May) <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51323>

Uganda: Despite the large amounts and varieties of food produced in western Uganda, the region is faced with a child stunting crisis resulting from chronic hunger. Bundibugyo is the worst-affected district according to WFP. "Forty-five per cent of children aged under five in Bundibugyo have been left stunted because of poor diets," says Health Minister Stephen Mallinga. *Daily Monitor* (8 May) <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/914114/-/wyk6ke/-/>

Death Penalty

Taiwan: Taiwan recently executed four people, the justice ministry said, in the island's first cases of capital punishment since 2005 when the sentence became a sensitive political issue. Abolition of the law, which is widely supported, could hurt the government ahead of November local polls, according to *The Washington Post* (30 April) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001413.html>

India: The death sentence imposed on Pakistani national Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, 22, for his role in the 2008 attack on Mumbai that killed 166 people is being seen as a setback to a campaign to have capital punishment abolished in India. India was among 54 countries that voted against the December 2007 UN General Assembly moratorium on executions. The Indian Supreme Court ruled in 1983 that the death penalty may be resorted to only in the "rarest of rare cases". While death sentences have continued to be handed down, hangings, the only accepted mode of execution in this country, are rarely carried out for a variety of reasons, including successful appeals in higher courts. India's last hanging took place in 2004. *IPS* (10 May) <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51370>

USA: The national anaesthesiologists' organization has decided to revoke the certification of any member who participates in executing a prisoner by lethal injection. About half of the 35 states performing executions, including Virginia and North Carolina, require a doctor to be present. Other

states have also recruited doctors, including anaesthesiologists, to play a role in executions involving lethal injections. The loss of certification would prevent an anaesthesiologist from working in most hospitals. *The Washington Post* (2 May) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/01/AR2010050103190.html?hpid=topnews>

Environmental Health

China: Migrant workers come to Guiyu from across China to burn, smash and strip old television sets, computers, mobile phones and copy machines for their valuable metals and computer chips for one dollar an hour, 10 hours a day in the 5,000-plus workshops in the village. The price they may be paying is their long-term health, say Chinese researchers. The world's highest levels of dioxins have been recorded in Guiyu and are released into the air by burning of plastics and circuit boards coated with flame retardants to extract gold, platinum, copper and other metals, a 2007 report by the Chinese Academy of Sciences found. *IPS* (3 May) <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51287>

Health Services

Afghanistan: In Afghanistan, taking a sick child to the hospital is usually the last resort. Government hospitals and clinics are free, but travel is too expensive, or too distant. Few parents recognize the symptoms of disease. *Foreign Policy* (30 April) http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/04/30/in_the_children_s_ward?page=full

Pakistan: Sindh Health Minister, Dr. Saghir Ahmed, has said shortage of nurses persists in the provincial government's hospitals despite recent induction of 80 qualified nurses, through Sindh Public Service Commission. The health minister acknowledged that many of the nurse students may have discontinued with their studies and sought jobs in private healthcare facilities due to financial pressure. *Associated Press of Pakistan* (5 May) http://www.app.com.pk/en /index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=102323&Itemid=2

HIV and AIDS

Global: The *New York Times* details the current funding challenges facing the global effort to combat HIV and AIDS, using the country of Uganda as an example. The cuts in funding have been set off by the global recession's effect on donors, and by a growing sense that more lives would be saved by fighting other, cheaper diseases. Even as the number of people infected by HIV/AIDS grows by a million a year, money for treatment has stopped growing. *New York Times* (9 May) <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/10/world/africa/10aids.html?ref=health>

See also the MSF report, *Punishing success in tackling AIDS: Funders' retreat could wipe out health gains in HIV affected countries:*

http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=C34D1CE2-15C5-F00A-25AFA94BDAF99F59&component=toolkit.pressrelease&method=full_html

Swaziland: Mobile clinics for HIV patients have been benefiting entire communities in rural Swaziland, but tight budgets have halted plans to expand the project, or even sustain a fleet of just two vehicles. In theory, mobile clinics are unnecessary because the health ministry's goal of having a medical clinic within seven kilometres of every dwelling has been achieved for about 95 percent of the population. But in mountainous Swaziland, seven kilometres can mean travelling for several hours, and is "an infinity if you are ill and you can't walk" said Maphangisa Dlamini, a male nurse and mobile clinic driver. "Many people also cannot afford the bus fare." *IRIN* (11 May) <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/56c6278f17139394697f86f4a3f8323f.htm>

Tanzania: The Tanzanian government has deported several AIDS activists and cancelled a demonstration to protest decreasing funding for HIV at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam. *PlusNews* (7 May)
<http://www.plusnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89049>

Zimbabwe: Al Jazeera examines the effect of "almost 1.2 million children" orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe on the country's elderly population. Parents who have died from HIV/AIDS often leave their children in the care of the children's grandmothers, who have little to support the children. The article describes a program in the country created to help ease the burden on the country's grandmothers. Al Jazeera (7 May)
<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2010/05/20105713146812880.html>

Malaria, TB and Other Diseases

Bangladesh: Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries, is a leader in the fight against diarrhoea, which is the number two killer of children under age 5 worldwide after pneumonia. Diarrhoea claims 1.5 million children's lives annually — more than AIDS, malaria and measles combined — and the UN has projected the number of deaths will rise by 10 percent each year over the next decade. *AFP* (2 May)
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iLIRD4AKIDbW5cfMEETBNknCtZfWd9FE503G0>

Nepal: Aid agencies are urging Nepal to implement stronger water and sanitation measures to prevent diarrhoea outbreaks, which claim hundreds of lives each year. In 2009, there were more than 370 diarrhoeal deaths, mostly in western Nepal, according to figures from the government's Epidemiology and Disease Control Division. There were more than 67,000 diarrhoea cases reported last year, most of them in 18 of the country's 75 districts. *IRIN* (14 May)
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89133>

Maternal and Infant Health

Angola: About one in every 70 Angolan women dies in childbirth. The causes of maternal deaths -- of which about 80 percent are preventable -- range from haemorrhaging (25 percent), anaemia (13 percent) and tropical diseases like malaria (39 percent). Angola's three-decade civil war, which ended in 2002, established a routine of shunning clinics in favour of home births, but reversing this trend is seen as crucial. *IRIN* (14 May) <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89136>

Ecuador: The Law of Free Maternity and Child Care, which was approved in 1994 and codified in 2006 to harmonise laws within its scope, reinforces existing regulations and programmes, and provides financial autonomy. As a result, Ecuador has achieved a steep decline in maternal mortality, and United Nations agencies refer to its law as a model for other Latin American countries, where deaths of women in childbirth and the postnatal period are either stationary or rising. *IPS* (4 May) <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51310>

Mental Health

China: The signs of trouble should have been clear — the man who launched a deadly rampage through a Chinese kindergarten had been depressed and suicidal for weeks — but his behaviour raised no red flags in China's feeble mental health system. Sociologists say the recent attacks reflect the tragic consequences of ignoring mental illness and rising stress resulting from huge social inequalities in China's fast-changing society. At least three of the attackers had prior mental health histories and two committed suicide, after the attacks. Though the causes of the recent attacks remain unclear, experts say China has failed to adequately address the mental health needs of its citizens. *Associated Press* (14 May)
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gbb3SvwJWOF1Te35LxNwJDk2UBnQD9FM MQN02>

USA: A fight has erupted over rules issued by the Obama administration to enforce a 2008 law that requires equal insurance coverage for the treatment of mental and physical illnesses. Insurance companies and employer groups are lobbying the White House to delay and rework the rules on “mental health parity.” Insurers and many employers supported the 2008 law, but they say the rules go far beyond the intent of Congress and would cripple their cost-control techniques while raising out-of-pocket costs for some patients. Advocates for patients generally support the rules, saying they will eliminate many forms of insurance discrimination against people with mental illness. *New York Times* (9 May)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/10/health/policy/10health.html?ref=health>

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Africa: Lawmakers from 27 African countries ended a two-day conference in the Senegalese capital of Dakar , where they pushed for a United Nations ban on female genital mutilation, or FGM. *Radio France International* (4 May)

<http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20100504-african-countries-call-un-ban-female-genital-mutilation>

Global: The appearance of the contraceptive pill was a watershed moment for family planning in the United States and Europe. But it has also had a lasting effect in developing countries, where family planning is a critical issue. However, family planning experts say the birth control revolution has still not arrived in every part of the developing world. According to the UN, contraception prevents almost three million infant deaths a year. Birth control reduces poverty, slows population growth and eases pressure on the environment. *Deutsche Welle* (11 May) <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5538300,00.html>

Mexico: A pregnant 10-year-old, allegedly raped by her stepfather, has become the latest case in the country's heated abortion debate. *CNN International*, (20 April)

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/04/19/mexico.abortion/index.html>

Turkey: Three crisis centres for victims of rape and sexual assault will be opened in Istanbul to assist the small percentage of people who actually report a sexual assault and to encourage other victims to come forward. *Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review*, (4 May)

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=rape-crisis-centers-for-istanbul-are-on-the-way-2010-05-04>

USA: In a controversial change to a longstanding policy concerning the practice of female circumcision in some African and Asian cultures, the American Academy of Pediatrics is suggesting that American doctors be given permission to perform a ceremonial pinprick or “nick” on girls from these cultures if it would keep their families from sending them overseas for the full circumcision. *New York Times* (6 May)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/07/health/policy/07cuts.html?ref=health>

Also see Time’s article, ‘Has a US pediatrics group condoned genital cutting?’ (11 May)

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1988434,00.html> (See also *Publications* below.)

Courses and Conferences

Health and Social Justice Course organized by Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo (UIMP) in cooperation with Escuela de Salud Pública de Menorca

June 28 – July 2, 2010; Palacio de la Magdalena, Santander, Spain

Grants available - Deadline for applications: 24 May

Website: [http://www.emsp.cime.es/WebEditor/Pagines/file/Curso%20magistral%20Ruger\(1\).pdf](http://www.emsp.cime.es/WebEditor/Pagines/file/Curso%20magistral%20Ruger(1).pdf)

Registration at: <http://bit.ly/bzr3Gx>

Health Equity and Prevention Primer

Online Course created as part of Prevention Institute's project: Advancing Public Health Advocacy to Eliminate Health Disparities.

Health inequities are more than disparities or differences in health and safety outcomes. Inequity describes unfairness and the systematic nature of disparities. The Health Equity and Prevention Primer (HEPP) serves as a web-based training series for public health practitioners and advocates interested in policy advocacy, community change, and multi-sector engagement to achieve health equity. The Primer helps practitioners integrate a health equity lens into their initiatives in pursuit of overall health and safety.

Website: <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/tools/focus-area-tools/health-equity-toolkit.html>

Publications

Black RE et al (12 May 2010), 'Global, regional, and national causes of child mortality in 2008: a systematic analysis', *The Lancet*, Early online publication.

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2810%2960549-1/fulltext>

Braveman PA, Egerter S et al (April 2010), 'Socioeconomic Disparities in Health in the United States: What the Patterns Tell Us', *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (S1- I), pp. S186-S196, <http://bit.ly/cjCbUM>

Cook RJ and Dickens B. (2010), ' Special Commentary on the Issue of Reinfubilation', *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, Vol. 109, pp. 97-99, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1595019

Ford N, Calmy A, Hurst S (31 March 2010), 'When to start antiretroviral therapy in resource-limited settings: a human rights analysis', *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 2010, 10:6 <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1472-698X-10-6.pdf>

Goldie SJ, Sweet S, Carvalho N, Natchu UCM, Hu D (2010) Alternative Strategies to Reduce Maternal Mortality in India: A Cost-Effectiveness Analysis. *PLoS Med* 7(4) <http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1000264>

Kleinman A. (1 May 2010), 'Four social theories for global health', *Lancet*, 375 (9725), pp. 1518 - 1519, [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(10\)60646-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)60646-0/fulltext)

International Migration of Health Workers: improving international co-operation to address the global health workforce crisis, Joint *OECD/WHO* Policy Brief, www.oecd.org/health/workforce

Special issue addressing the theme of retaining health workers in remote and rural areas (May 2010), *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 88 (5), pp. 321-400. <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/88/5/en/index.html>

Orsi F et al. Call for action to secure universal access to ART in developing countries. *Lancet* 2010; 375:1693-4 (15 May) <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2810%2960737-4/fulltext>

Rajaratnam JK et al (30 April 2010), 'Worldwide mortality in men and women aged 15—59 years from 1970 to 2010: a systematic analysis', *The Lancet*, [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(10\)60517-X/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)60517-X/fulltext)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has revised their policy on FGM. Please see: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/pediatrics;125/5/1088?rss=1> This policy

statement is less absolute in opposition to FGM than the AAP's previous 1998 position, particularly restricting opposition now only to "harmful forms of FGC [female genital cutting]"

Tucker JD, Chen XS, Peeling RW, (6 May 2010)', Syphilis and Social Upheaval in China,' *New England Journal of Medicine*, 362 (18), pp. 1658-1661, <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/362/18/1658#R2>

Women on the Front Lines of Health Care: State of the World's Mothers 2010, *Save the Children*, <http://bit.ly/cT2wBE>

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