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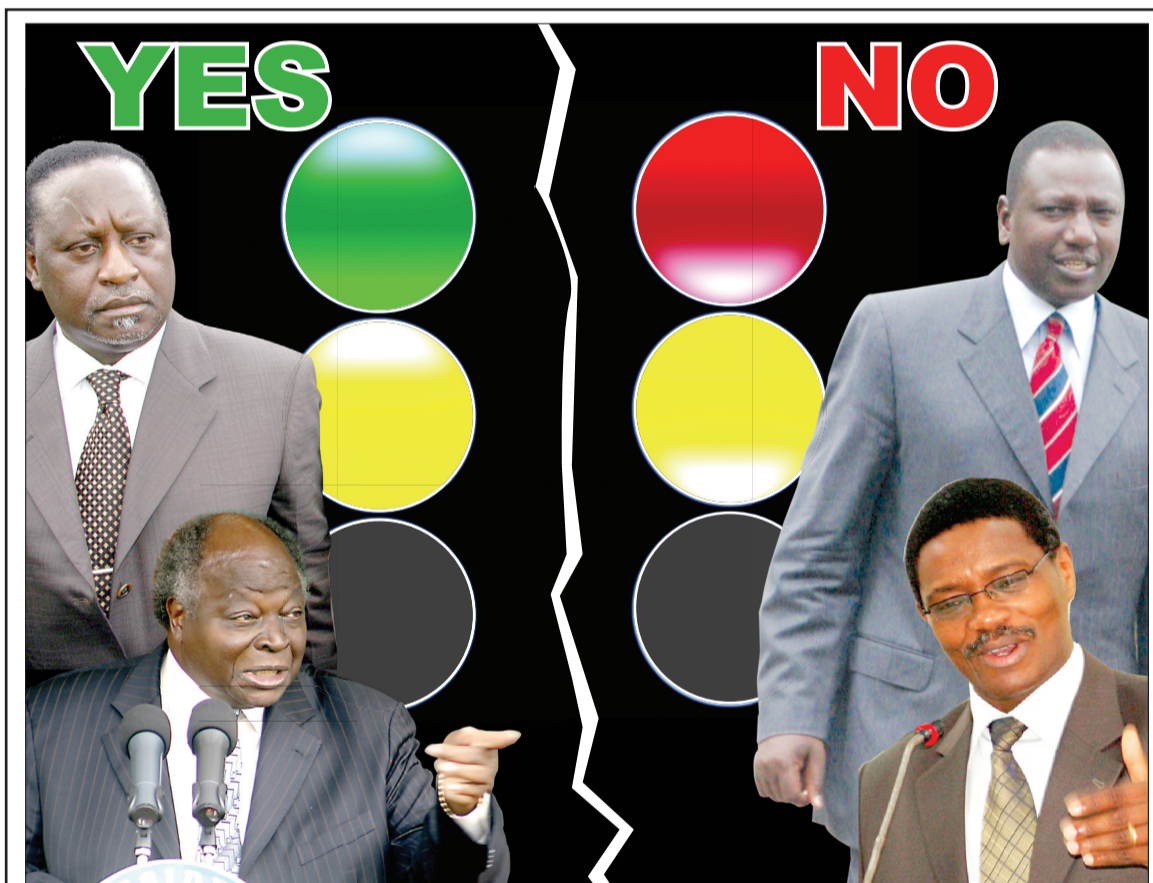
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Thousands denied their voting rights

Immigration ministry on the spot over delay in issuance of ID cards

By FAITH MUIRURI



The divide between the 'YES' and 'NO' camps on the constitutional referendum continues to widen and the controversial decision by the High Court to outlaw Kadhi courts, promises to increase the gap separating the 'GREENS' and the 'REDS'.

As Kenyans inch closer to getting a new constitution through a referendum, details have emerged that tens of hundreds of potential voters will not participate in the historic event due to lack of identity cards (IDs).

Information available from the directorate of registration of persons indicates that a total of 965,658 applications are still pending.

Among the hardest hit are new applicants who have been consigned to a dull oblivion as they wait for their IDs which are not forthcoming over the last five months.

This is despite assurances that the processing of new applications will take only 18 days in Nairobi, 28 days in other areas and 38 days in Arid and Semi Arid areas. And the same applies for the replacement of lost Identity cards.

However, the scenario on the ground is a far cry from the service delivery charter displayed at the Ministry of State for Immigration and Registration of persons.

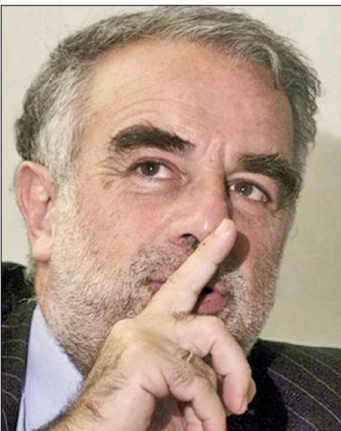
In various registration centres across the country, thousands of new applicants hang onto slipping hope as days turn into months of waiting.

Peter Kamau from Murang'a District says that he has been seeking for an ID over the last five months. "But I am yet to get an ID and now I have missed out on the opportunity to participate in the forthcoming referendum," he laments.

As if that is not enough, new applicants are being confronted with a number of conditions which they must fulfill even before they can be allowed to fill in the ID application form.

For a new ID, applicants re-

Human Rights witnesses critical to Ocampo's success



Mr. Ocampo

By TENNILLE DUFFY

The role of human rights defenders as witnesses in the International Criminal Court's (ICC) investigation into Kenya's post-election violence of 2007-08 is critical to any hope of ultimate prosecution, but protection of those witnesses has not been treated with corresponding gravity.

Recent violence against human rights defenders combined with the expected political fallout of the ICC prosecutor's allegations underscore the serious need for an effective witness protection plan. Such a plan has not been realised, despite reforms

to the Witness Protection Act. Government failure to act threatens to undermine the ICC investigation because witness risk could deter testimony.

Months of diplomatic wrangling ended recently with the decision that the International Criminal Court (ICC) will now open an investigation into the post-election violence that rocked Kenya in 2007-08. An advance team has already started laying the groundwork in Kenya and the ICC prosecutor will start the formal investigations this month. Now that he has been authorised to investigate the violence, Luis

Moreno-Ocampo has said he will try for an expeditious investigation with a focus on those most responsible. He has also spoken of witness protection and the duty of both the ICC and the Kenyan government to protect them.

There is, of course, cause for more than concern when it comes to the safety of witnesses in Kenya. There have been all-too-frequent reports of witnesses to the Waki Commission, and those who have simply reported crimes

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quire a Birth certificate, school leaving certificate, medical age assessment certificate, and a letter from the provincial administration to ascertain their names, background, age and place of birth.

Information available at the Immigration department indicates that in addition to the above documents, new applicants will have to produce a parent Identity Card, especially if you are a Kenyan by birth. However, those who are Kenyans by registration or naturalization are required to produce a Certificate of registration.

According to the deputy registrar of persons at the Kibera DO's office, Catherine Mwangi, those who do not have the specified documents are barred from filling in the application forms.

But for Veronica Akinyi, the documents are just not available. She says that she has been seeking the vital document over the last four months in vain.

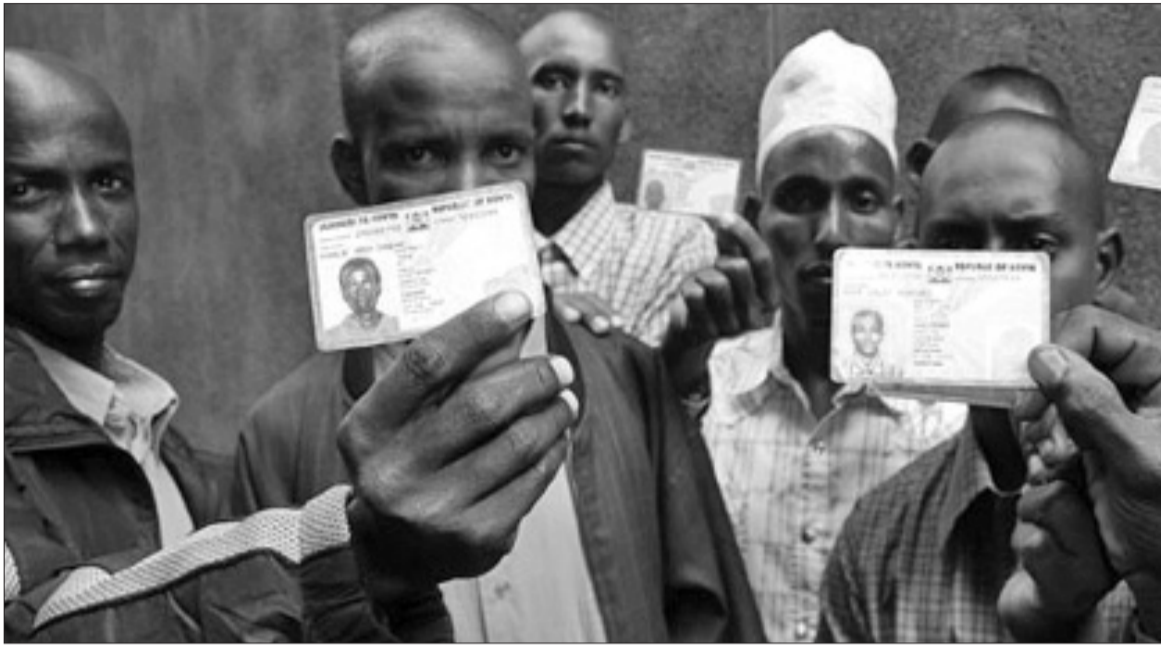
Akinyi, 19, is an orphan and does not have some of the documents required for registration.

She lost her mother at the age of two years and she has been unable to trace her birth certificate and the death certificate for her late mother. Officials at the Kibera DO's office where she has been seeking to be given an ID insist that she will not be allowed to apply for the ID unless she has supporting documents to ascertain her name, age and place of birth.

"They have been asking me to get a letter from the chief in our rural home in Bondo but I was born and brought up in Nairobi and I have never set my foot to the place where they are referring me to," she reveals.

She says that she has been locked out of the just concluded

Potential voters cry foul over lack of IDs



Kenyans displaying their ID cards after long waiting.

electronic voter registration in the area due to lack of national ID card as Interim Independent Review Commission (IIEC) on other hand insists that voters must have an ID card or a passport to be registered

"I am disappointed. An ID would have accorded me an opportunity to vote in the new constitution which to me represents a fresh start and a new phase for the youth of Kenya who live through its goodness and challenges.

And the two cases typify the hurdles new applicants routinely undergo before they can get Identity cards.

In Funyula, the constituency electoral coordinator Bernard Chienga laments that most of the youth had failed to register as voters due to lack of ID cards. "We have many youths who do not have identity cards and so cannot register as voters," he says, adding, only 26,000 voters had registered against a target of 38,000. "It is also sad that most women in Funyula do not have ID cards," he said.

Applicants seeking replacements have not been spared either. They include thousands of poll chaos victims who lost vital documents at the height of the skirmishes. They are yet to get

replacements and majority only have waiting cards.

"While Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) insists that voters must have an ID card or a passport to be registered, most of these victims who live in camps have yet to acquire the docs," adds the chairman of the Kenya Internally Displaced People Association (KIDIPA) Charles Kariuki in an interview with *The Link*.

Also set to miss out on the exercise are individuals who are yet to collect their Identity cards. Data available at the Ministry of Immigration indicate that about 301, 971 are still lying uncol-

lected in various centres in the country.

Nairobi has highest number of uncollected ID cards at 69,353, Rift Valley follows, 58,625, Nyanza 50,389, Central, 39,847, Western, 26,765, Coast, 26,164, Eastern, 25,908 and North Eastern, 4920

In Murang'a, the number of registered voters fell short of the target, with Kangema constituency managing to register only 37,700 voters out of the projected figure of 47,000 voters.

Kiharu constituency registered 82,000 people as voters out of the targeted figure of 106,000 and Mathioya got 41,000 out of the projected 60,000.

Officials say that the shortfall was exacerbated by large number of uncollected identity cards in all the districts.

In Murang'a East district, the office of the Registrar of Persons had more than 4,000 uncollected identity cards while in Kigumo there were over 2,000.

However, the IIEC insists that it is within the requirements of an international convention of electoral matters that says that for a referendum to be credible, two-thirds of eligible voters must be registered.

In 2007, 14 million Kenyans were registered as voters against a potential of 18 million eligible voters. So, what the Electoral Commission did was to use the lower limit to set their 10 million voter target.

The 10 million plus IIEC has registered comprise just part of the 18 million it is targeting for the 2012 General Elections. In 2007, there were at least 19.8 million people holding ID cards and eligible to register to vote. Census figures to be released later this year will give a clearer picture of how this has changed.

Human Rights witnesses critical to Ocampo's success

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to the police, being threatened. Numerous people have left the country, too afraid for their own lives and the safety of their families to stay in Kenya. The killing of a witness' cousin was reported earlier this year. And while parliament has recently passed amendments to the Witness Protection Act, they have not yet begun to fix the inadequate protection program. The debate over who can and should protect witnesses who give evidence in the course of Moreno-Ocampo's investigation and possible prosecutions fails to consider another, vital group of citizens who will be involved in this process – human rights defenders.

Kenya has already seen the slaying of two such citizens: Oscar Kamau Kingara, of the Oscar Foundation Free Legal Aid Clinic, and his colleague John Paul Oulo in March 2009. The clinic had published reports on police violence and abuses, and those men had cooperated with Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions during his ten-

day investigation in Kenya. There can be little doubt that their deaths were linked to the information and allegations they had published, and the assistance that they had provided to Alston.

With the impending investigation of the ICC, however, the stakes are much higher for some in power than when the special rapporteur visited Kenya in early 2009. It is clear that the prosecutor believes he will be able to collect sufficient evidence against a number of people to prosecute at least two cases. What will be a vital part of the ICC investigation – as it was also for the special rapporteur – is the assistance of human rights defenders and their organisations.

Many people do not report the simplest of crimes or seek the assistance of police in Kenya – distrust and fear runs deep. Add to this the involvement of police in the post-election violence and it is not surprising that the country's human rights institutions are some of the main repositories of complaints, witness details and other evidence. The team from the ICC

has already said it will meet with organisations such as the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Kenya Human Rights Commission during the course of investigations. With no arrest for the murders of the two men during the special rapporteur's investigation, and other human rights defenders having left the country, who then, will ensure that the people who speak out this time are protected?

The definition of a witness in Kenyan law – including in the bill that is currently awaiting presidential assent – extends only to cover those persons required to give evidence before a court, tribunal or commission. There is also provision to protect persons related to witnesses, those who might be in need of protection because of the evidence given by a witness and any other person who may require protection for reasons seen as sufficient by the director of the Witness Protection Agency, countenanced in the new bill. Yet this is clearly not enough to even seek to cover in law those persons who are not witnesses but rather assist

witnesses and the investigators.

The mechanisms of the ICC are also insufficient to protect human rights defenders. The court has a unit devoted to the needs and protection of victims and witnesses but it states that the protection of people such as human rights defenders is the responsibility of the state. In the case of Kenya this is something that the government has, thus far, absolutely failed to do. Even if the current bill becomes law immediately, new procedures and processes take time to become properly established – and the ICC team has landed in Kenya.

The authorities need to start the process of full and proper protection of both witnesses and human rights defenders now. Regardless of the status of the bill, the government should publicly state its commitment to the ICC investigation in general, as well as to the specific issue of protection. Those in power need to publicly declare that intimidation, threats and harm to those who assist the investigation will not be tolerated. Words, then, need to be supported by action – the government needs to put its support behind the human rights

organisations, as well as the ICC team. Reports note that security has been established for Moreno-Ocampo and his team as they travel throughout Kenya, but it is not apparent that this is for the protection of both the investigators and those citizens who assist them. Finally, in the event that there are reports of harassment or threats as the ICC process unfolds, there needs to be swift and decisive action by way of proper investigation and consequences for those found to have interfered with the law.

In this investigation the human rights defenders of Kenya will likely be essential intermediaries; without the information they have from their own investigations and the assistance they provide to witnesses, Moreno-Ocampo's task will be much more difficult, if not impossible. Human rights defenders should not be silenced, nor should they be left to face the threats, intimidation and danger that could follow.

Tennille Duffy is the programme officer for Access to Justice (East Africa), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

Gusii schools increase fees

By BOB OMBATI

SECONDARY schools in Gusii region have increased fees to ostensibly reflect the prevailing economic conditions in the country.

A spot check by The Link established that Sameta High school in Gucha District has increased fee from Kshs20,000 to Kshs25,000 in sharp contrast with approved guidelines by the government. The school's Principal, Fred Leo Sunda says the increment is not part of the fees but a levy agreed between Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and the school's board to raise money for the institution's short and long term objectives.

Sunda says that besides the general development like buying generators to complement erratic power supply, parents pay Kshs.1000 as motivation fee for teachers who sacrifice their time to offer tuition to students during preps.

He says that the school requires a generator and parents agreed that each will pay Kshs2000 towards the project. He however says that the money will be paid in bits until they complete the payments to facilitate the purchase of the generator.

The principal says that some schools charge up to Kshs100,000 and wonders why parents in the region cry wolf with the little increment meant to buy things to help their children perform well in national examinations.

The Principal observes that schools in the region will continue performing dismally in national examinations, adding some of the people who complain loudest have enrolled their children in schools outside the country and are only keen in advancing their selfish interests.

"Some parents are very eager to shout when schools perform poorly while they rejoice after their children perform well in the diaspora where they invest thousands of shillings for their education without raising an eyebrow," he adds.

At Nyanchwa mixed High school, the story is similar. The school management has not increased school fees but is charging extra levies to allow the school to implement projects which the principal Timothy Oboso says will be beneficial to the students.

Kisii Central Education Officer in charge of Examination, Jason Achika concurs with the Principals, saying they cannot increase fees without authority from the government. He adds that whatever is charged as levies is a local arrangement with the parents to improve facilities in the schools.

Achika, says that the government issues fee guidelines for each school based on respective categories. "Besides the Kshs10,000 the government offers each student, schools charge boarding fee and other expenses separately, leading to disparities in fees by each school," he explains.

The officer further reveals that schools in the area have not received the Free secondary Education Funds, and attributed the delay to logistics which were being addressed by the ministry.

He points out that little development funds levied by schools are not likely to affect retention of students in schools as most parents are willing to pay the money.

David Nyang'au who has a child in a secondary school admits that the increment is justified so long as the money is used to motivate teachers and buy some equipment to help students perform well.

Bungoma schools to undergo forensic audit to be known soon

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

SCHOOLS in Bungoma South District which are targeted in an expanded forensic audit exercise are yet to be known. The District Education Officer (DEO), Mr. Japheth Shitubi, says that the exercise is normally handled with a lot of confidentiality.

Mr. Shitubi claims that auditors from the headquarters do not give prior notice when they want to visit districts to inspect schools. "We will only know the schools and the officers' agenda when they come," the DEO says in an interview with The Link. He, adds that, if they happen to come, then they

will report to his office and request for vehicles to take them to the targeted schools.

The DEO, however, admits that some officers from Jogoo House have already reported to his office and had gone to the field on routine inspection of schools. Mr. Shitubi quickly points out that the officers have nothing to do with the forensic audit of funds for the education sector since all of them are from Ministry of Education.

About 220 auditors mainly from ministry of finance have been deployed to carry out forensic audit exercise on about 20,000 primary and secondary schools country wide. The district education boss, however, declines to name

the schools that are being targeted by the Jogoo House officials. He promises to disclose the schools after the ministry officers completes their work. About fee increment in secondary schools the DEO, is emphatic that no school in his area of jurisdiction has increased fees.

Mr. Shitubi says that fee increment in all public secondary schools must be sanctioned by the District Education Board (DEB) where he is the secretary, and adds that as far as he is concerned no secondary school has increased fees.

"So far no secondary school in my area of jurisdiction has sought permission of the DEB to increase fees for whatever reason," the DEO says.

However, the DEO, points out

that some schools especially boarding schools might be forced to increase fees in order to cater for the escalating food prices. Our independent investigation also reveals that no secondary school in Bungoma south District has increased fees this term. We have, however, since established that most secondary schools and even primary schools in the area did not close for the Easter holiday but continued with tuition to allegedly cover the syllabus.

Consequently, parents were asked to pay extra money ostensibly to cater for the teachers' tea and students meals which were reportedly not budgeted for in the institutions' initial budgets.

The schools were charging between Kshs.800 and Kshs.1500 for the three weeks holiday coaching. There were no complaints since parents were contented with the levies arguing that the amount is within reach and that holiday coaching has in the past born fruits.



Secondary school heads in a retreat seminar in Mombasa last year. Photo/File

Teachers decry delay in release of Free Secondary Fund

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

SECONDARY school heads in Busia district have expressed concern over the delay by the Ministry of Education to release funds meant for the free secondary education.

A spot check by The Link established that secondary schools in the district were grappling with huge financial deficits occasioned by delays or meagre allocations which were not enough to sustain students in schools.

In one of the schools whose student population currently stands at 750, only Ksh3,078 per student for the free secondary education was received during the first term this year. The school is yet to receive the remaining Kshs7,187 that had been budgeted for each student under subsidized programme at the beginning of the second term in May.

In another, the school principal has been forced to cancel orders and cut on the operational costs after receiving only Ksh2,010 in first term this year with a deficit of Ksh8,255.

The school heads say that they have been forced to revert to stringent measures which include sending away stu-

dents who are unable to pay their school fees. Majority of them say that the circumstances dictate that they remain strict as far as the payment of school fees is concerned as schools cannot operate effectively without funds.

"The schools have been receiving inadequate funds for the free secondary education since the year begun, a situation that has compelled us to send the students home for school fees as the school cannot operate effectively without funds," one of the secondary school heads said.

The school heads appealed to the Ministry of Education to allow them to discuss with parents and persuade them to agree to pay extra cash in order to bail the schools out of the financial challenges they are facing currently.

Majority of parents who talked to The Link appealed to the government to honour the pledge it had made in regard to the provision of the funds as children have been forced to stay out of school due to their inability to pay the extra levies being charged by most secondary schools in the district.

However, contacted for comment, Busia District Education Officer Mr John Owino maintains that it is an offence for

the school heads to overburden parents by charging extra fees, adding that they should restrict themselves to the recommended fees guidelines from the ministry.

"Stern action will be taken against school heads who have failed to operate within the recommended fee guideline from the ministry," warns the DEO.

The secondary school heads also expressed concern over the high shortage of teachers in the district, a situation they said has led to dismal academic performance in national examinations.

The data availed to The Link shows that Busia district has a total of 1017 primary teachers with a shortfall of 354 teachers whereas secondary schools has a shortfall of 220 teachers.

The District Education Officer on his part blamed the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) for the shortage saying they are taking too long to replace those who have either died or retired after attaining the mandatory retirement age.

"The shortfall of teachers has forced the schools concerned to employ form four leavers to assist the few teachers available to reduce the workload," he said.

Muhoroni bursary fund enables student to complete school — Awich

By JONES MAGARE

Although the government Bursary scheme has contributed 50 per cent towards the retention of beneficiaries in secondary schools in Muhoroni District, recent delays in the disbursement of funding threaten to derail programme.

In an interview with The Link, Muhoroni Constituency Bursary Committee (MCBC) secretary Joshua Awich says that through the bursary scheme, each student receives a total of Kshs12,000 every year, which in the case of boarding schools caters for half of their school fees.

Under the scheme, Awich explains that students receive Kshs8,000 each in the first term and another Kshs4000.00 in second term. The secretary says since the average fees in boarding secondary schools is Kshs25,000, the amount disbursed through bursary is able to meet about half the cost of the total school fees.

"Bursary therefore contributes to a very large extent in the retention of both total and partial orphaned students in secondary schools. Funds from the scheme meet half the boarding fee charged for each student", Awich says.

Awich says the retention capacity of the bursary scheme has enabled hundreds of thousands of orphaned students in Muhoroni constituency to access secondary education.

The bursary scheme plays a very significant role in increasing access to secondary school education for disadvantaged students such as orphans, Awich says.

He says the scheme has also enhanced access to education for majority of students from poor families in Muhoroni and elsewhere in the country.

Awich says wider student access to education through the government bursary scheme has significantly reinforced on the governments Free Primary Education (FPE) scheme aimed at achieving universal education and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

He says the bursary scheme builds upon one of the UN Millennium Development Goals, which is to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The UN MDGs include a commitment by member and signatory countries to achieve universal education, gender equality, improved child health, maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, put in place programmes for environmental sustainability and those that will ensure global partnership.

The need for quality assurance in schools

IN as much as we may not be having adequate public learning institutions in Kenya that can serve all our children, the youth and adults, as responsible citizens, we have a duty to interrogate what goes on in our schools, particularly in the low-cost private institutions of learning at all levels.

In the urban informal settlements, there are many Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) institutions that serve children below the primary school going age – many of which are privately owned. Some of these institutions have high enrolments with many children crowded in small rooms of sizes below the recommended standard size of a classroom. The kind of teaching and learning that takes place in some of these ECED centres should be studied for the purpose of developing policy options for improvement.

The teachers in some of our ECED centres are primary school graduates who missed opportunities to enrol in secondary schools and are therefore serving their communities as nursery school teachers. But to what extent are they prepared to teach at the ECED level effectively? Worse still is the fact that some of the ‘teachers’ in the nursery schools are persons below the age of 18 (children who should be in institutions of learning themselves) – It is a fact that we have children teaching children in nursery schools in Kenya’s urban informal settlements under the watchful eye of the government – what an injustice? If truly we are keen on providing quality early childhood education and development for our children, then we cannot continue to ignore the ‘cries’ from the urban informal settlements. The reason we have

some pupils not performing well in the primary schools – both at the lower primary and upper primary – is to an extent contributed to by the poor foundation we lay at the ECED level. Since we often get it wrong at this lower level, we spend more and extra time and resource to get it right at a higher level.

In the private primary schools – the so called low cost private schools – the situation is somehow similar. Many of the teachers at this level are not trained, majority of whom are form four graduates seeking for opportunities for raising incomes. This group struggles to develop schemes of work, lesson notes and lesson plans by themselves. For those who are lucky to have some few trained teachers as colleagues in their classrooms; they receive guidance and support from them so as to prepare adequately for their lessons. Unfortunately, setting exams such as the Continuous Assessments Tests (CATs), Mid-term test and even End-term exams continue to be a challenge to these groups of teachers.

Some of the proprietors of such schools purchase already set examinations – the teachers thus administer exams that are not generated as per their schemes of work and lessons taught to pupils; what an injustice to the learners?

It is worth noting that even some of our public primary schools that

COMMENT

By DON BONYO



have well trained teachers and receive Free Primary Education support also purchase exams. This practice is evident across both urban and rural public primary schools. What’s the logic of preparing schemes of work and lesson notes as per the subject syllabus then assess pupils’ performance based on exams being bought? (Exams set by people who sometimes no one has an idea about their professional backgrounds)? How would such a teacher measure learning achievements? This is a high level of irresponsibility among such teachers and their school heads; this culture must be stopped if we are keen on enhancing quality education for our children.

There is also the tendency of low cost private primary schools establishing secondary sections to accommodate their pupils upon sitting of the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams. Whereas it is true that we have limited public secondary schools in Kenya, this does not mean we compromise on the quality of Secondary Education in the low-cost private schools. Ba-

sic teaching and learning materials often lack in some of these schools. Some of the teachers at this level are form four graduates who use the same notes they wrote when they were students to teach; It’s no wonder the teachers carry along old exercise books – dubbed lesson notes – to classrooms. At this level, in some low-cost private schools, CATs and End term examinations are hardly set by the teachers as the same concept of “buying exams set by whoever nobody knows” is used.

A government committed to ensuring Education for All (EFA) must demonstrate commitment in ensuring quality education in all learning institutions – whether public or private. Parents and guardians spend a lot of resources in paying fees in some of our learning institutions while the end result cannot be matched with the amount of fees paid. Are we conning our parents and guardians? The responsibility of providing quality education for all lies squarely with our government; the Quality Assurance and Standards Directorate of the Ministry of Education has to rise up and highlight any challenges they face in enhancing the provision of Quality Education in our schools and at the same time propose options for addressing such challenges. In the spirit of partnership, the Civil Society Organizations equally must regularly collect data and gather evidence for

the purpose of advocating for quality education for all. The Citizens must demand accountability from all Lead Education Stakeholders; Government, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector.

In our major cities and towns, there are many private colleges that offer both certificate and diploma course; both local and foreign based examinations. Although a large number of these colleges are legally recognized since they are registered; what goes on in some of these institutions needs to be investigated. Students are being taught by notes photocopied by teachers or lecturers across institutions. Others rely on notes downloaded from the Internet. Many students in these institutions are raising an alarm that they have paid fees and are being given a terrible deal! Could someone listen! The students cite cases where their teachers read for them notes in class that they already have – having downloaded the same from the internet or photocopied earlier than the teachers – since this is a culture that they say they are forced to live with. They have evidence of lack of adequate preparation among their teachers and as such are forced to prepare for exams by themselves as if they never paid fees to be taught. Could our government listen and intervene. Let’s sort out the mess in our learning institutions.

donbonyo@gmail.com

Kilifi DEO warns against raising fees without approval

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE Ministry of Education has issued a warning to secondary schools who intend to hike school fees without following the set guidelines.

Kilifi District Education Officer Mr Dickson Ole Keis says he had received complaints from parents that they were being forced to pay extra fees, which is way above what had been recommended by the government.

Parents from St Georges High School, Ribe Boys, St John Girls among other schools in Kaloleni District protested against an additional Kshs2000 imposed on them by the respective schools.

Most of them termed the fees increases as unfair and urged the Minister for Education Prof Sam Ongeru to intervene and save them from what they termed as exploitation.

A parent from St John girls in Kaloleni District Mr Patrick Washe says he was shocked when her daughter was sent home to collect an extra Kshs2,000 for the second term despite the fact that he had cleared all outstanding fees.

“I was shocked when my daughter returned home a week



Prof. Ongeru: Education minister

after the schools reopened for the second term after she was sent away to collect Kshs2,000 which

the school was charging as development fee,” adds the parent.

However Kizurini secondary

school has resolved to stick with the specified regulation. The principal Mr Kilian Deche says the school will not charge any extra levies to allow more students to remain in class.

At Lutsangani Secondary School, PTA members resolved to increase the school fees by Kshs1,000 to undertake development projects which are in great demand.

The school’s principal Mr Raphael Diwani says the school need to built houses for teachers, a dining hall, laboratory and more classrooms for the students and adds that parents had a responsibility to raise the funds.

The DEO however insisted that schools intending to charge extra fee must seek approval from their respective DEBs after wider consultations with PTAs and Board of Governors.

“The law is very specific. The PTA and BOGS must be notified of the intended hike after which they forward their resolutions to the district education for consent,” explains the DEO.

Ganze DEO Charles Nyakundi shares similar sentiments and emphasizes on the need for schools to adhere to the set guidelines.

KESHO gives hope to poor students in Kilifi

By BEKADZO TONDO

A TOTAL of 180 bright students from poor families in Kilifi will now remain in school after a charitable organization in the area offered full sponsorship for their education.

Fourteen of the beneficiaries are enrolled in the national schools.

The children will benefit from free education right from nursery school to college level after they were shortlisted among beneficiaries set to be supported by KESHO, which is a charitable organization that sponsors education of the needy students in the district. According to the project coordinator Mr Mackinlay Mutsembi, the organization will not only offer full school fees for the needy students but also buy uniform for them.

Mr Mutsembi says that a survey conducted by his organization in Kilifi and Ganze districts revealed that many bright students from poor families dropped out of school due to lack of fees. The coordinator notes that most of the affected children are orphans and those whose parents are either single, aged or jobless.

He says his organization works jointly with the provincial administration to visit homes in the area and identify needy students before they start assisting them.

Protests in Murang'a over extra school levies

By MORRIS GITHENYA

SHARP protests have emerged in several secondary schools in Murang'a district following the introduction of extra levies against a government directive.

Many of the district education boards are in a state of confusion after many of the schools resorted to charging more than what had been recommended.

Early in the year, there was uproar in Mugoiri Girls secondary school after the parents were shocked to learn they were being required to part with more than what the district education board had recommended.

The school administration had issued a circular to parents ordering them to part with an additional Kshs4,150 against the DEB's approved Kshs2,000.

A fees structure dated Nov 25 last year and signed by the Principal Mrs. Virginia Waweru revealed that an additional Kshs6,150 would be paid by installments until end of this year.

District Education Board chaired by Murang'a East DC Mr George Ntembeya approved a request by the school to charge an extra Kshs2,000 per student to help complete a modern block.

The facility that had been termed as a white elephant stalled ten years ago after being dogged with a lot of controversies. Murang'a District Education Officer Mr. Kaugi Micheni ordered all schools in the area to ensure they abide by government fee structure failure to which action will be taken.

"Disciplinary measures will be taken against heads who contravene fee guidelines, as they must follow one that has been issued by the government unless directed otherwise by DEB," said Kaugi.

HELB loans extended to Kenyans studying in East Africa

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) will disburse Kshs3.2 billion to over 70,000 students in the current financial year, to increase access to higher education.

The board will also give an additional Kshs83 million in bursaries and Kshs160 million in post-graduate scholarships respectively.

According to HELB secretary Benjamin Cheboi, the loans will be made available to students pursuing higher education in various Universities in the East African region.

"The relevant organs within the region are also working towards harmonization of fees and other tariffs across member states of East African Community (EAC)," adds Cheboi during the launch of HELB 2009-2014 Strategic Plan ISO certification and service charter.

The revelations came as it emerged that the Board has supported 250,000 Kenyans with loans amounting to Kshs25 billion to access higher education since it was started in 1975.

During the 2008/2009 financial year, the board extended loans amounting to Kshs2.86 billion to 63,400 students while it recovered Kshs1.6 billion from past borrowers against a disbursement portfolio of Kshs2.86 billion.

Cheboi says that the Board projects to collect at least Kshs 700 million by July from past bor-



Kenyan students in Kampala University. Photo/File

rowers whose repayment efforts have increased significantly.

He points out that the success of recovering the outstanding debts which has gone up with significant margin over the years will enable the board to extend its loan programmes to other needy students.

"The Board performance in recent years has been quite outstanding. We have increased our loan collections from Kshs1.3 billion in 2007/2008 to Kshs 1.6 billion in 2008/2009 and this year we are projecting a debt recovery of Kshs2 billion," he explains.

He says that 95 percent of the students who apply for the loans do receive them and called upon borrowers not to wait for the board to crack the whip but rather comply with the Higher Education Act 1995 and start repaying their loans.

"If the repayment of loans is in

order, we will be able to give loans to more students. We will also be in a position to give an opportunity to students who are studying outside the country," he said.

Innovations for the lending processes so far introduced include computerized loans award based on information submitted by applicants as well as website loan information access.

HELB also intends to extend loan applications to Kenyan students studying outside the country as they are optimistic that the government will increase their funding.

Noying that there are Kenyan students studying in other East African countries, Cheboi explains that they should also be given support as the law does not discriminate against any of them enrolled within the East African universities.

"The government through the treasury should consider giving HELB more funds to not only meet the needs of the current students but students in other sectors including those in the private self sponsored programmes. We are growing and just as we need roads we also need funds for developing capacities."

Dead youth polytechnics to be revived, says PS

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs has announced plans to revive all the 753 collapsed youth polytechnics in the country.

Permanent Secretary James Waweru says that during the last financial year, the Ministry revived 46 youth polytechnics and adds that at the end of this financial year 30 others will be up and running.

The institutions which were previously referred to as village polytechnics will after their revival be manned by qualified tutors in relevant technical subjects and equipped with modern teaching equipment to match the new syllabus and curriculum that has been designed to respond to the current market needs.

Furthermore tuition for youths in these institutions will be subsidized to about Kshs15,000 per trainee, an incentive which the PS notes is expected to encourage many unemployed and idle youths to take up these courses and better their lives.



Students during graduation at Kenya Polytechnic. Photo/File

Waweru at the same time says that the ministry will also facilitate the establishment of youth empowerment centres that will be equipped with libraries, indoor games, computer labs, internet facilities and other relevant youth friendly facilities that will meaningfully engage them.

The empowerment centres will be established in all the constituencies to

ensure that youths in rural areas access these services.

The Chairman of the youth enterprise development fund board Mr James Gitau says that the country is currently experiencing high unemployment rates, especially among the youths, who should be assisted to start viable economic programs in order to lead financially independent lives.

Days of mixed secondary schools in Gusii numbered

By BOB OMBATI

THE fate of Mixed Secondary Schools in Gusii region hangs in the balance after stakeholders resolved to phase them out.

Already four mixed schools in the area have been phased out in a move aimed at addressing the declining standards of education.

Schools affected in the initiative include Riondonga, St. Pauls Amasago, Nyanchwa and Itierio in South Kisii have phased out the mixture in favour of either Boys or Girls school.

According to Kisii Central District Education officer, Joshua Kisuya, the move follows a unanimous decision by the community and the District Education Board which also came up with a raft of proposals to improve the declining standards of education.

The DEO however says that the implementation process will be gradual and based on capacity, infrastructure and availability of teachers to ensure that learning is not disrupted by the proposed changes.

Kisuya challenged managers of non performing schools to re-examine their approaches and take pro-active measures to improve academic standards and performance in national examinations.

Nyanchwa High school Principal, Timothy Atuti whose school has been affected in the exercise welcomed the initiative saying

that students will now have ample and conducive learning environment to enable them concentrate and improve on their performance.

"I believe that with the changes, the girls and the boys will be free to cope with the stage without any interference from the opposite sex," adds said.

The principal discloses that the New Nyanchwa Girls secondary school has been registered adding that at the beginning of next year, the school will be delinked from the boys section with its own Principal, staff and national examination centre.

Atuti further says that the school had set aside Kshs1 million to oversee the construction of a Girls dormitory. He says that the new school urgently requires funds to assist in putting up laboratories for computer studies, Biology, Chemistry and Physics to help students do better in science subjects, which, he noted were key in the attainment of vision 2030 and the Millennium development Goals (MDGs)

He at the same time points out that with globalization and fast changing technology, Principals of mixed secondary schools were faced with an uphill task to instill discipline to their students, some of whom indulged in illicit activities like drug abuse, immorality and truancy, affecting their studies and performance.

Bahari constituency complete projects

By BEKADZO TONDO

BAHARI Constituency will spend Kshs38 million to complete stalled projects in the area.

The area MP Benedict Fondo Gunda says that the CDF committee had resolved to allocate the money during this financial year to help complete all pending projects in the constituency including those started by former Bahari MP Joe Khamis and the ones initiated by his committee.

The projects include schools, health facilities, office blocks for the provincial administrators to host chiefs among others.

Gunda says the move was premised on the need to ensure that all started projects are beneficial to the community.

He, however, hit out at former CDF committee which he accused of poor planning and initiating new projects after every financial year, a factor that has contributed to the current



One of the stalled CDF projects. Photo/File

scenario and loss of public funds.

"I have resolved that the current CDF committee will only start new projects once all pending projects are complete to ensure that

the public gets value from the project," said Gunda.

Gunda who was accompanied by his fellow committee members went round the started projects, met with the projects im-

plementing committees and officially handed over cheques to oversee the final phase.

The MP said that CDF committee members will closely monitor the imple-

mentation process to ensure that projects are completed in the given time frame.

Among the projects allocated money include a social hall for women in Bahari known as JUWABA, which got Kshs1 million.

The cheque was handed over to the women leader Mrs Dorothy Chome and will help complete the project initiated by former Mp Mr Khamis four years ago.

On completion, the women intend to generate income from the hall which will be hired for seminars, weddings and other events.

Another Kshs1.3 million was channeled towards the construction of Kilifi township chiefs office.

The funds were handed over to the area chief Mr Athuman Matano to be used in the construction of a modern chiefs office.

The chief promised to work closely with the CDF committee to ensure smooth implementation of the project.

An additional Kshs60,000 was disbursed to oversee the completion of Zowerani chiefs office while Ngerenya secondary school was allocated Kshs2.9 million.

Gunda cautioned immediate former area MP against interfering with the smooth implementation of development in the area.

By MASABA ATARI

AUDITORS have been deployed to investigate corruption allegations involving Webuye constituency's CDF kitty.

The Link has learnt that the auditors raised a lot of queries in the mode of resource allocation, identification and funding of projects.

One of the project's mired in controversy was said to have been funded to the tune of Kshs2 million without informing beneficiaries.

The auditors also found that most of the project funding was not done according to the laid down procedure.

But as the auditors findings remained a secret, area MP Alfred Sambu is upbeat that the findings will exonerate his team from any wrong doings.

"The auditors were here, but already the recommendations are very positive about the work done so far", he said.

The auditors were dispatched to the area in pursuant of a letter written to the Permanent secretary ministry of Planning, National development and Vision 2030, by the CDF project monitor-

ing coordinator, Mr Eluid Kakai accusing the DDO of corruption and unethical conduct.

Mr Kakai requested thorough investigations by the Anti-Corruption Police Unit, with view to taking appropriate and deterrent disciplinary action against the DDO Stella Miriti who has allegedly presided over the loss of millions of shillings by colluding with contractors.

"The most intriguing and astonishing aspect of the DDO behavior is that she indulges in the malpractices with such glaring impunity with little fear of being detected", the letter says in part.

The letter says that in October 2007, she approved fictitious payments of Kshs.4.1m, to Kasimwaka Enterprises without due justification.

The money was for the drilling of five boreholes



Mr. Sambu: Area MP

at Sirwa, Wamangoli, Misemwa, Makuselwa and Lurare.

Of the five boreholes, the letter claims that only the one at Sirwa is operational. The ones in Wamangoli and Makuselwa have stalled while the other two in Misemwa and Lurare are ghost projects.

Webuye CDF under audit as claims of graft emerge

Claims of graft rock West Mugirango CDFC

By BOB OMBATI

WEST Mugirango lawmaker, Dr. James Gesami, is under siege over the alleged disappearance of Kshs7.5 million from the area Constituency Development Fund kitty.

Gesami, who has suspended CDF officials including the chairman Nicholas Ongaga and fund manager Atei Onsomu, is under pressure to explain the measures he is taking to recover the money. Civic leaders, his political rivals and the constituents have ganged up to demand that the lost money be recovered immediately failure to which they will insist that the CDF management board dispatch auditors to the area to unravel the mystery of the missing funds.

The leaders led by Fred Makamara, who lost the seat during the 2007 General Elections accuse the MP of being evasive by misleading the electorate that auditors from the national office are on the ground to investigate and trace the funds. The leaders are now wondering why it was taking too long for the MP to respond even after leaflets were circulated in Nyamira town condemning the rot in the CDF office with nepotism and clanism featuring prominently.

He said some MPs had perfected nepotism as evidenced in the skewed way they disbursed CDF by favoring their clans and supporters in a trend that was dangerous and detrimental to development.

The letter further points out that in October of 2008, the DDO in liaison with the then account manager, the treasurer and the water officer, paid out Kshs.610,000 to the contractor, yet the money could not be accounted for.

The letter concluded that the DDO had failed in her principle mandate as a key member of the district technical committee, projects committee and projects monitoring and evaluation committee.

"The DDO does not liaise with development stakeholders to reduce or eliminate duplication projects and to limit wastage of resources," the letter points in part adding that it had become very hard for the team to ensure accountability as both the Constituency Development Fund Committee and the Project Management Committee does not keep proper records.

Lugari residents fail to register as voters due to lack of IDs

By BILL ESSAU

HUNDREDS of the poor in Lugari district may not take part in the referendum on the proposed constitution after they missed out on voter registration exercise that closed on May 10.

Most of those affected either had their national Identity cards (IDs) lost or were displaced during the post election violence or have their IDs held by the Moi Teaching and Referral hospital for failing to pay their medical bills.

Most of those affected and would therefore not vote at the national referendum on the proposed new constitution are peasant farmers who could not be able to raise the medical fees immediately.

The Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) surpassed its target of netting 10 million voters for the plebiscite expected in August.

Former Lugari MP Dr. Enock Kibunguchy says that many poor people who surrendered their IDs to the hospital after failing to settle their bills will not participate in the referendum.

"I have been an MP here and many people have come to me seeking my intervention so they can be given their IDs to register but I do not have that mandate to do so," says Kibunguchy.

Lack of the essential documents for registration as voters has disfranchised the people of Lugari and as a result will not effectively take part in the exercise to decide the set of laws that govern them.

Attorney General Amos Wako has already published the draft constitution that is to be subjected to the referendum. This means no more voter registration can be conducted until after the referendum.

Kibunguchy says the Government should have unconditionally facilitated the release of these cards to their owners if it had envisaged every Kenyan to participate in the referendum on the new constitution.

He points out that social workers should be dispatched to assess the debtors with a view to waiving debts for those too poor to raise the fees.

This, he says, would enable those affected to register and vote in the General Election in 2012.

Most of those who lost their documents in the post-poll skirmishes were turned away after they produced police abstracts.



Mr. Jirongo: Area MP

Referendum causing tensions in Kakamega region

By BILL ESSAU

Differences between two communities over the proposed constitution threatens to derail a water project in Kakamega East District.

The project which is expected to become operational by August has turned into a contentious issue between Nandi Central and Kakamega East districts who share a common border.

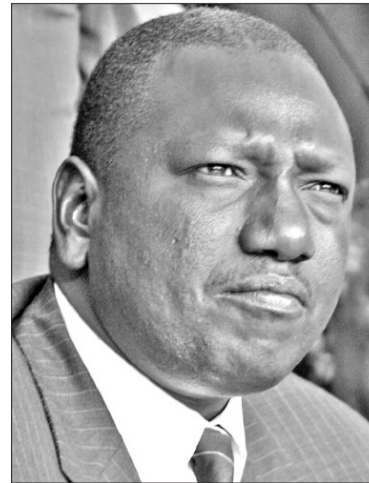
Whereas some Nandis are opposed to the proposed new constitution, their counterparts from the Kakamega side support the document, currently enjoying support from President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

"The fact that people from Shinyalu supports the draft and their counterparts in Emgwen who share the border are for the NO camp has given the simmering tension a tribal angling which must be defused quickly," adds a security source.

According to the source, the Nandis are now threatening to damage the donor sponsored water project on the Nandi escarpments



Mr. Raila Odinga: PM



Mr. Ruto

that is to supply Kakamega and Busia towns using gravity force from Tindinyo area because of the misunderstanding.

Intelligence sources say that the Nandi Central county council officials have visited the project on more than two occasions and asked the contractor to stop work.

This, the council argues, was because the Kshs6 billion wa-

ter project will not benefit people from Nandi side.

The town is currently receiving 5,000 cubic meters against a demand of 10,000 cubic meters, occasioning frequent water shortages in the town. The project is set to boost production to 15,000 cubic meters of water per day

Kakamega East District Commissioner Mohammed Birik says

the tension was a result of incitement and misinformation by politicians.

Birik says the water project is has nothing to do with the aggression by the Nandis. He points out it will be completed because it is a Government project.

Trouble started in the first week of May when seven people from Nandi side were arrested by the Kenya Forest Services authorities and handed over to police for prosecution for trespass.

The seven were arrested after they were found clearing a section of land on the Kakamega side for tea planting.

They were charged in court and a grader they had been provided with by the Nandi county council impounded and detained by the police in Kakamega.

Calm was restored after several meetings between the two sides under the auspices of the District Security Teams from both sides.

A team of ten people each from the Nandi and Kakamega side has been formed to address the border issue.

There is no perfect constitution

By L. MUTHONI WANYEKI

VOTER registration (the manual one) ahead of the referendum ended on 9 May. The good news is that the Interim Independent Electoral Commission's (IIEC) target of 10 million voters was exceeded – in fact provisional figures from the South Rift surpassed the number of registered voters for the 2007 General Election.

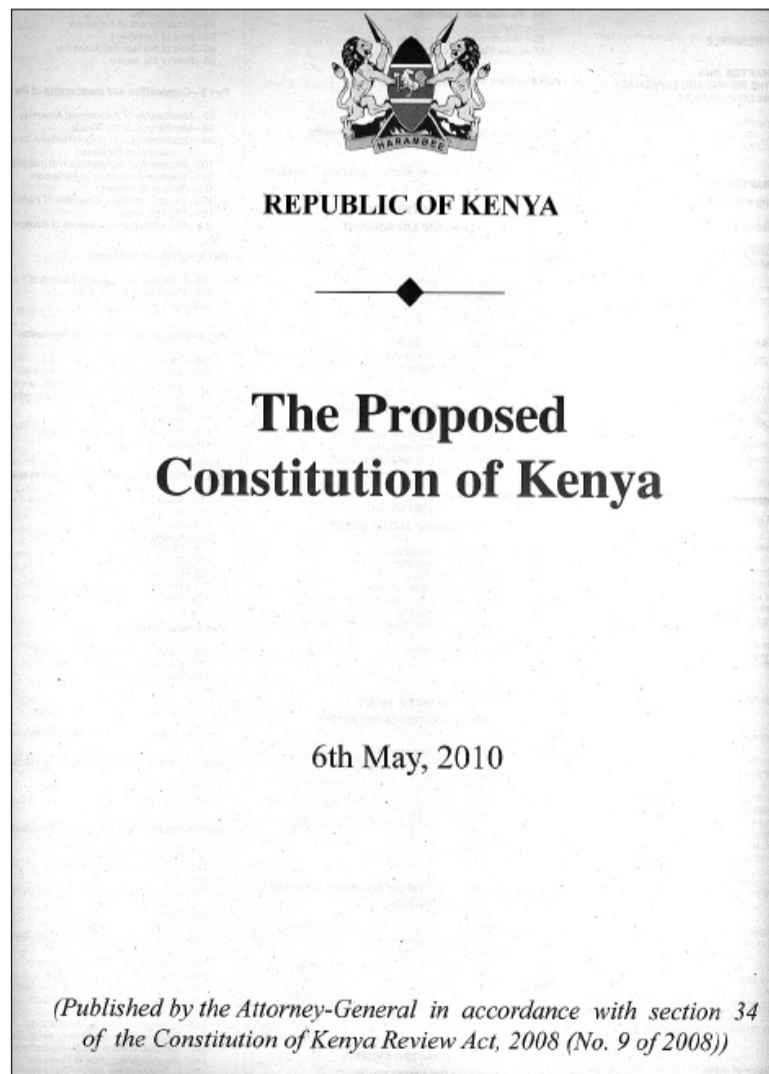
This is good news because the reality flies in the face of what we had all expected – voter apathy following the 2007 violence blamed on the disputed presidential election results.

And it will be both interesting and necessary to understand how sentiments changed – particularly in areas such as the South Rift that bore the brunt of the violence – from voter anger to renewed faith in the electoral system on which our 'democracy' is predicated.

Was it the public pronouncements about the importance of the referendum vote from the President and Prime Minister? Was it the voter registration drive advanced by the IIEC and supported by the media? Was it, more ominously, the canvassing and fear-mongering by political parties for the 'No' campaign – notably from most of the church leadership as well as politicians from Central and the North Rift?

Whatever it was, it worked. And that is a good thing. The vote is not the only means for expressing political opinions, but it is the most fundamental and most universally accessible.

For that reason we should be glad; this voter registration shows that the citizen's faith in our less-than-perfect voting system remains unshaken. But



just as every cloud supposedly has a silver lining, every up must apparently have its down. And the bad news is perhaps implicit in the questions above. People generally take stands not when they are in agreement with

something, but when they are in disagreement. It is when people disagree that the sense builds in them that they must do something.

In this vein the news is, if not bad, then at least mixed or not entirely

good. As several parties to the emerging 'Yes' campaign have put it, there seems to be a fundamental misunderstanding about the choice to be put before us during the referendum.

That choice is between something bad (the current constitution) and something better (the proposed constitution, with all its flaws). But the choice is being presented and apparently understood as though it is between something bad (the proposed constitution, from the 'No' camp and perfectionists) and something ideal (the perfect constitution).

Ideals however, can only be realised in the abstract – not in a negotiation between people with sometimes wildly divergent interests. The fact is that very few Kenyans will read the proposed constitution. Even fewer will understand the nuances in its provisions that may address the fears they have.

This means that many will rely on what they are told about it by politicians and religious leaders. It will be extremely difficult for the government Committee of Experts on Constitutional Review to counter the misinformation that already abounds.

It will be even more difficult for civil society to do so. The only hope really is in members of the media – those with national reach as well as local language radio stations. But even that hope is slim, considering media ownership patterns in the country.

What can we do? Be truthful ourselves. Expose untruth whenever we can. Be honest about our own subjectivity, ensuring it is based on truth.

—The writer is Executive Director of the Kenya Human Rights Commission.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Ministry should digitize Registration of persons

Our lead story on disenfranchisement of people due to lack of National Identity Cards has rekindled the debate on the need for the government to find new innovative ways of expediting issuance of this vital document.

We must say from the onset that we are tired of writing stories about this particular vexing matter year in and out. Kenyans have a right to be Kenyans and the government has a duty to ensure that they have the necessary documents to prove their citizenship.

We fail to understand why 45 years after independence we are still clinging to colonial prescriptions to identify ourselves. Does it mean we can't think for ourselves? Why should it take almost a year for one to get an ID card? Why can't issuance of IDs be made automatic upon attainment of age 18 years? Why can't ID be issued to students at school? Let us ask a more fundamental question many are asking. Do we really need the ID number, The Passport number, The Road License number, NHIF number, NSSF number, PIN, etc, etc in this digital age? Why can't we simplify services by agreeing to identify every Kenyan by one number then use the new technologies to implement that decision? We believe this will save the country and citizens a lot of time, space and resources.

And in the process no one will ever complain of his or her human right to vote being violated as is happening currently. The Ministry of Immigration and Registration of Persons must lead the way on this much needed change and leap us into the digital age in terms of modes of registration and identification.

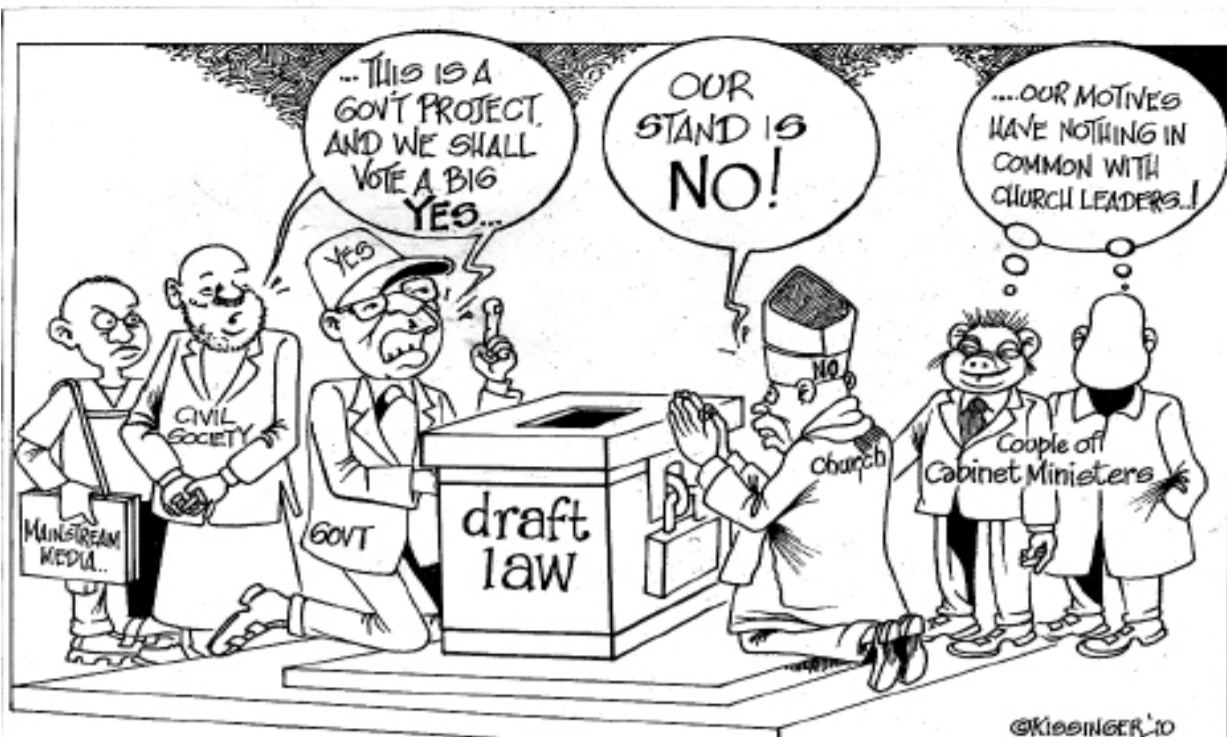
Whatever number we agree on as Kenyans after all reasonable security considerations have been taken into account should be given at birth, starting with the Birth Certificate, followed by the Passport and social security card respectively. The ID and Voting Card should be synchronized so that every Kenyan citizen of voting age is presumed to be a registered voter.

That would also mean changing the voting and representation systems.



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P.O. Box 7438, 00200 Nairobi.
Tel: 020 601776 / 020 601274
Email: thelink@wananchi.com



COMMENTARY

Judges erred on Kadhi's court

Monday's decision outlawing Kadhis' Courts has shocked many and some have branded it 'irresponsible, mischievous and politically motivated'. They have questioned its timing, in view of the ongoing debate on Kadhis' Courts and impending referendum. There are other reasons why this ruling is constitutionally incompetent.

The judgement lacks political savvy and is irresponsible for at least two reasons. First, in one fell swoop, it invalidates — on flimsy and badly argued legal grounds — a political arrangement that in 1963 created Kenya, as we know it today. History shows that the ten-mile coastal strip, previously under the Sultan of Zanzibar, would not be part of Kenya without the political compromise reached on land and Kadhis' Courts.

Secondly, while the judges pretend to articulate an artificial distinction between provisions on Kadhis' Courts in the current Constitution and the Proposed Constitution, by saying their ruling does not affect the latter, only a fool would believe them. It is difficult to believe that the judgement is not politically motivated, because, as lawyer Paul Muite put it, 'it muddies debate on the referendum'.

Simply put, it provides fodder for the 'No' camp. That is why the timing of this judgement in a suit filed on 2004 is not fortuitous: it could only have been calculated to point the debate in a particular direction. Let us turn to the legal aspects of the judgement.

First, to the extent that the judgement has a bearing on the constitutional review process, the judges should never have decided the case. They lack jurisdiction. As a result of the National Accord, the Constitution of the post-Accord era differs in one important respect to that of 2004.

In terms of the post-Accord constitution, all disputes touching on the review process can only be decided by the Interim Independent Dispute Resolution Court. It is a product of mistrust of our judges, and the judgement appears to vindicate that decision.

In the second place, the judgement is legally unsound. By purporting to

CONSTITUTION

By GODFREY MUSILA

declare provisions of the Constitution (creating Kadhis' Courts) 'unconstitutional', the judges portray a peculiar brand of legal reasoning unknown even to upstart lawyers.

One of the most basic constitutional principles is that you cannot declare a provision of the Constitution 'unconstitutional' or 'illegal'. Only Acts of Parliament as well as regulations and rules made under such Acts — are tested against the constitution, which is the foundational law. Any first year law student will tell you this is the case.

When a constitution is drafted, there has to be internal harmony and coherence between provisions of the same constitution. Where judges find disharmony, they have to interpret the provisions to bring internal coherence, while remaining faithful to the original objects and modern societal realities.

The judges ruled unconvincingly that inclusion of the courts and paying Kadhis from public coffers is 'discriminatory', 'sectarian' and advances one religion over others. The suggestion that Muslims don't pay taxes is baf-

fling.

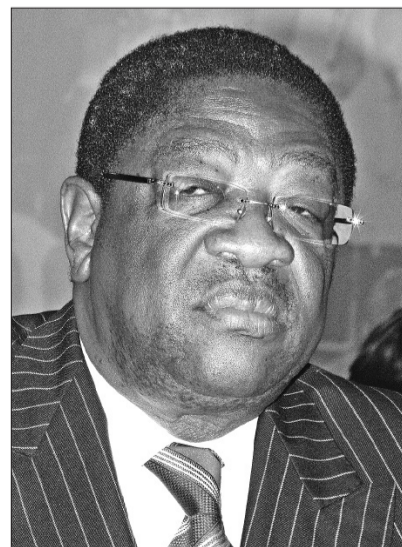
The suggestion that Kadhis' Courts be restricted to the ten-mile coastal strip is an argument living in the past. The interpretation is narrow, unrealistic and unjustifiable mechanical reading of the law.

If Muslims are Kenyans who deserve judicial services on matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance (only!), how else can that governmental objective and purpose be achieved if we don't create courts for Muslims all over Kenya? The limited number of Kadhis' Courts in Kenya should in fact be increased, not wiped from the map!

Judges occupy important offices. What they say matters. Therefore, they must be responsible. Judges called to adjudicate on our Constitution must be the first to know that a constitution is not — contrary to popular view — a consensus document.

It is a document forged on political compromise. Consensus means we all agree on particular issues, which is impossible. Compromise means different sectors of the body politic give and take in order to construct a diverse national whole. Kadhis' Courts best exemplify this. Judges cannot undo these political compromises on flimsy grounds. They have to provide compelling reasons.

The writer is an advocate and consultant.



Mr. Wako: AG



Mr. Gicheru: Chief Justice

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EDITOR
DANIEL OTUNGE

SUB-EDITOR
FAITH MUIRURI

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
OLOO JANAK

WRITERS

ANDERSON MURENJE Coast
0727 582135

BOB OMBATI Nyanza
0728 435255

NYAKWAR ODAWO Western
0726264153

MORRIS GITHENYA Central
0735855586

JONES MAGARE Nyanza
0721127511

BILL ESSAU Western
0721761408

BEKADZO TONDO Coast
0728341240

NEVINS BIKO Rift Valley
0723932857

JOSEPH MUKUBWA Central
0724 039787

LUKE KAPCHANGA Western
0723622136

AGGREY BUCHUNJU Western
0733 537002

OJWANG OGOCH Nyanza
0734 971205

PETER MUTUKU Eastern
0721 455048

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WALTON GRAPHICS
0725 903 938



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All correspondence and enquiries to the editor, P.O. Box 7438, 00200, Nairobi, Kenya Tel: 020 601274

Telefax: 020 601776

E-mail:
thelink@wananchi.com

Mwingi children orphanage closed

By KAVYU-KURA

A CHILDREN'S home in Mwingi has been shut down indefinitely following revelations that children in the facility were living in squalid conditions.

Children housed in the orphanage will now have to be reunited with their guardians and other relatives.

The Mwingi Area Advisory Council (AAC) on Children declared that the Kinyungu Child orphanage situated in the outskirts of Mwingi town is an illegal structure which was unfit for any human habitation.

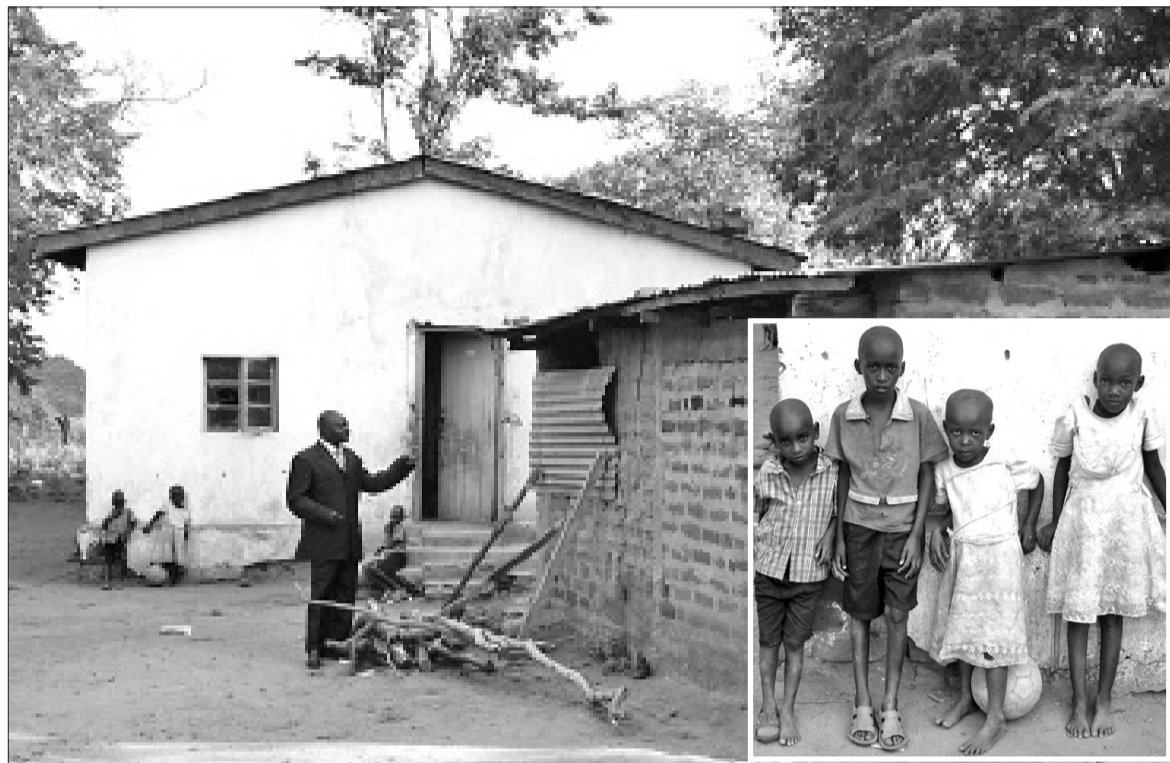
The council further states that owners of the evangelical church sect circumvented the law when they established the facility in May 2008.

The directive came even as the children homes administrator Pastor Paul Njiru told the meeting that he was in the process of rehabilitating the orphanage to make it more conducive for habitation.

However his pleas were rejected as the council insisted that the home must be closed

as lives of the children in the facility were in jeopardy. The chairman of the AAC meeting Mr. Festus Muli thus asked Mr. Njiru to oblige and shut the facility lest he invites trouble to himself.

The Kinyungu child orphanage was allegedly set up with support from two sisters who hail from the area but live in America. Eleven orphaned and vulnerable children were housed in an old building



A kitchen in the foreground and the main room that serves as the dormitory. Inset: Some orphans found at the children home soon after the closure was announced. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

nearly two kilometers to the north of Mwingi town.

Members at the AAC meeting were unanimous that the home was set up unprocedurally in 2008 and that an inspection had revealed that the orphans lived in awful and dehumanizing conditions. It was agreed that it should be closed down.

A children officer Ms. Wamaitha Kyule complained that during inspection of the facility, it was established that girls were

at the risk of sexual molestations as they lived in open rooms while a grown up man slept within the building.

She further said the sleeping arrangement at the facility was abhorrent since beds and bedding were not adequate and some of the children were forced to sleep on low density mattresses that were spread on the floor. She added that the rooms were stuffy, filthy and unsanitary and thus unfit for habitation.

And a public health officer in-charge of prosecutions and disease surveillance in Mwingi Joseph Kimwele said the communal but single ablution and toilet used by the boys and girls poses a risk to the girls as they could easily be assaulted as they answered calls of nature.

He noted that the facility was unsuitable for a children home until it was completely rehabilitated and new buildings to host the children put up.

From making military jets to peacebuilding

By JONES MAGARE

A FORMER military aircraft technician George Chacha with the Kenya Airforce has is now a peace missionary.

He is now a peace crusader who is the prime mover of initiatives to establish locational peace building committees.

Chacha has established People for Rural Change Trust (PRCT), a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which aims at managing inter-clan clashes in Kuria District.

"I decided to embark on a peace building mission in Kuria district after witnessing the chaos that resulted from the contested 2007 presidential and general election in Kenya," Chacha says.

"The chaos made him realize that the country had been polarised along ethnic lines which had undermined national cohesion," he explains during the interview.



Locals pose for a group photograph after a days work.

"I realized that the large majority of the Kenyan population was still enveloped in ethnic cocoons which seemed to define their identity,"

Chacha points out.

He explains that the urgency to embark on a peace building initiative was further prompted by eruption of inter-

clan clashes in Kuria district after the 2007 general elections.

Chacha says he felt there was need to go back to his rural home in Kuria and start the process of building peace among different clans particularly in the affected clans of Nyabasi and Bwirege.

"My resolve was informed Mahatma Gandhi who believed he must be part of change in the world. So I also resolved to spearhead peace campaigns in Kuria," Chacha explains.

He says PRCT's objective is to gradually and eventually spread peace building initiatives to other parts of the country, especially in hot spot areas following the contested 2007 presidential poll in Kenya.

He says the PRCT initiative is also influenced by the fact that Kuria district is increasingly becoming cosmopolitan.

Church leader roots for the poor

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) Western Kenya is working with poor farmers to boost their food security.

Speaking to *The Link* recently, regional coordinator Mr. Abraham Namukoa, disclosed that RCEA has this year spent about Kshs1.5 million to buy and distribute farm inputs such as seeds and fertilizers to about 400 destitute families.

Mr. Namukoa called on religious organizations in the region to join hands in assisting the less fortunate in society so as to uplift standards of living for all.

"It is the responsibility of the church to uplift the living standards of all members of the communities in which they operate," he noted

Mr. Namukoa regretted that some families who have land but lack money to buy farm inputs were exposed to perennial hunger as churches and government ignored their plight.

The RCEA regional coordinator challenged the church to support food security initiatives with a view to ensuring that no member of the community dies from starvation.

Busia MPs root for more seats

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

NAMBALE MP Chris Okemo has appealed to the Interim Independent Boundary Review Commission (II-BRC) to retain the boundaries of Busia municipality in their current status.

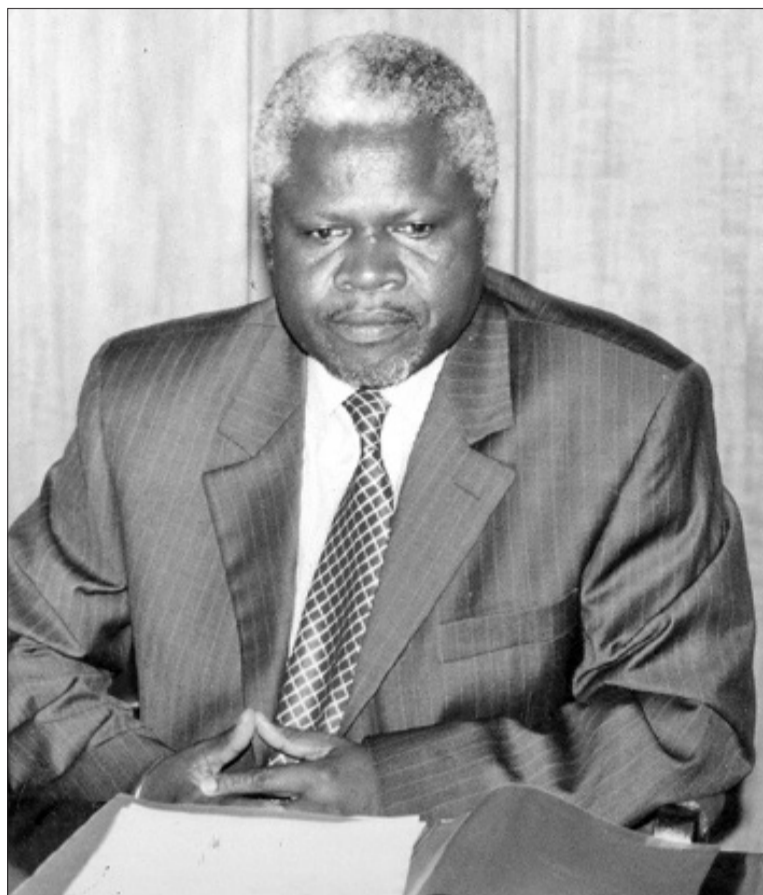
The MP told members of the Interim Independent Boundary Review Commission led by the commission chairman Mr Andrew Ligale that Busia is a cosmopolitan town where Kenyans from different ethnic backgrounds have co-existed harmoniously ever since.

"Busia town is a town which falls within two districts, one part falls under Teso South district whereas the other part falls under Busia district," the MP said, adding that there has never been any dispute between the indigenous tribes in the district.

Mr Okemo who spoke on behalf of the residents of Nambale district which is one of the four districts recently curved from the larger Busia district, asked the boundary review commission to consider splitting Nambale district into two constituencies for effective representation in parliament.

The legislator further said that the commission should be given a free hand to advice on creation of additional constituencies.

Okemo at the same time said it was important that parliament seeks guidance on matters pertaining to the creation of constituencies especially in respect to the



Mr Okemo: Nambale MP

constitution making process.

Butula MP Alfred Odhiambo also called upon the II-BRC to split the current constituency into Butula East and Butula West constituencies respectively.

The legislator however said his constituency had limited resources adding that there are inadequate health facilities within the constituency.

"Services in Butula constituency which has also been elevated to a district status do not meet the desirable standards due to poor

infrastructure. It is therefore my wish that more infrastructural facilities will be available once the new constituencies are in place," the MP said, adding that there was need for tarmac roads in the constituency.

Odhiambo at the same time said that residents have been unable to obtain birth certificates due to lack of transport as the exercise is done at the Busia district headquarters which is far away and the residents cannot afford to raise the transport required.

Give small tribes a chance — Nyagah

By JOEL JUMA

COOPERATIVE and Development Minister Joseph Nyagah took his 'Yes' campaign to Western province and urged members of the cooperative movement in the region to back the proposed constitution.

The Minister at the same time said Kenyans should carefully read the document and make an informed choice without being influenced by politicians and churches, who are currently fronting different views.

"There will be no intimidation for those who oppose the document at the referendum as it is a democratic exercise," said Nyagah, who was addressing a press conference in Kakamega after paying a courtesy call on the Western PC Samuel Kilele.

He was accompanied by the Western Provincial Director of Cooperatives Nathan Mukhweso and the Director of Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives Joseph Sagalla.

The Minister called for peaceful referendum campaigns, noting that both Yes and NO will need one another after the exercise.

He said views of small tribes should not be ignored when forming counties. "I was the chairman of the smaller tribes at Bomas of Kenya during the formulation of the previous draft. I will not like to see a situation where they are sidelined," says Nyagah.

He said that tribes such as Tesos and Saboats in Mt Elgon need to be given special slots during the formation of Bungoma County.

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

MOUNT Elgon District still remains volatile despite peace building efforts. The conflict is mainly between two sub-clans who have lived together for years.

The government's crackdown on the Saboat Land Defence Force (SDLF), was only a temporary reprieve which managed to save lives but did not solve any misunderstandings between the communities.

The Okoa Maisha Operation which was launched in the mountain on 15 March 2008 helped to restore normalcy in the area but did not address the issues which brought about the problem and are still simmering on.

Mr. Kipsang Ndiema chairman of the Chepyuk Farmers Group, notes that by the time the country experienced post election violence, the area had gone through hell, under the rag-tag militia.

He explains that the SDLF,

Mt. Elgon still volatile

who unleashed terror and mayhem by making unreasonable demands of land for resettlement changed tact with time.

"This group had a hidden agenda, as they started slowly by killing non Saboats who were not living in the settlement scheme, then evicted people they did not like and created a wider division between the Ndorobos and Soy communities", he stated.

His argument is that if they had remained focused on the demands for land resettlement alone, then healing process could be easier.

For healing and peace transformation to take place, then non-state actors from within the district and outside have to address specific issues, which may touch on the voting pattern in the past election.

Mr. Ndiema cites Cheptais division with registered voters of



Saboat Land Defence Force

12,000, yet those who voted for the Member of Parliament were 18,000 in total.

"The turn out was suspect,

because the area had been deserted due to insecurity, and most people had sought refuge in the neighbouring areas which they

considered as safe," he asked.

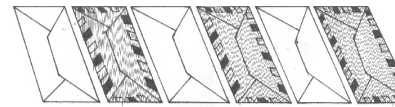
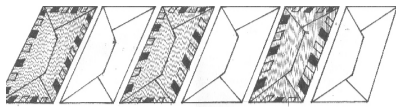
The SDLF, has managed to fan animosity among the neighbors and therefore non of them can trust the other without external intervention.

Politics he cautions has been polarized, and for any healing process to take place, then people have to come out and speak about lack of political openness and holding of divergent views.

The Laibons, who wield a lot of power, should be recruited in uniting the community as they are themselves a stumbling block to peace building.

Political leadership, according to Ndiema must acknowledge and accept past political mistakes to develop trust between the Sub-clans.

Areas which need to be addressed as a way of finding lasting peace in the area include initiating a deliberate land resettlement programme, recruiting independent mediators, disarming of militia to continue, dialogue among parties, increased arbitration by civil societies and civic education conducted.



What are the findings of FPE, maize probe?

THE circus of the maize importation saga and Free Primary Education programme almost came full circle recently with the reported return to work of Permanent Secretaries in the ministries of Agriculture, Education and the Prime Minister's office.

However, a note from the Office the Government Spokesman threw the matter into a spin when the PSs were denied opportunity to resume duty after their three month sojourn in the 'cold'.

Their impending return would mean investigation has been conducted and the ministry accounting officers had been given a clean bill of health, seeing as none of them have been arraigned before the courts.

The school funds that were unaccounted for were in the region of Ksh100 million, while the sale of subsidised maize was a whopping Ksh2 billion. This is by no means loose change.

Following the President's New Year's Eve address, acknowledging the Free Primary schooling initiative was a matter close to his heart and subsequent order to probe the matter and all monies recovered, this new turn of events is baffling.

What next Mr. President? The only action so far is the moving of former Agriculture minister William Ruto to another docket, but there are still no answers regarding the massive haemorrhage of public funds.

What about the integrity of Price-waterhouseCoopers, a private firm, whose frequent audit reports point to plunder, but whose recommendations are never acted upon? What is an executive order worth if its bark has no corresponding bite?

What does the probe report say? Will it also gather dust at another Harambee House shelf?
Concerned Kenyan,
via e-mail.

Police bosses need to supervise juniors

There is so much impunity on our roads nowadays that motorists and pedestrians can only wonder why police bosses don't supervise traffic officers.

For example, motorists who use Manyanja Road between Donholm and Tena estates are angry and frustrated. While the police keep vigil at Donholm roundabout, at around 6 am the road is normally jammed with Kayole matatus overtaking carelessly.

The touts walk about 100 metres ahead of their vehicles and direct their drivers to overtake recklessly when there is no police officer presence.

The Traffic Police Commandant should launch an investigation because motorists' agony has become unbearable.

A. Sangolo,
Nairobi.

New Nile treaty offers win-win deal

UNTIL the River Nile riparian states began negotiating a new treaty with Egypt and Sudan that were bestowed the exclusive rights to harness the water by the British colonial government, the cause of endemic food insecurity was scarcely understood.

The obstructionist 1929 Nile Treaty outlawed damming the water for irrigation, power generation and commercial livestock development.

Famine in the region — like the one Ethiopia witnessed in 1984 — is largely man-made and the result of the flawed colonial treaty is part of the cause.

The Nile Basin Treaty that the two downstream states have declined to sign fundamentally alters the agreement by giving upstream states the right to use the water for economic and social development.

Out of the Nile's total flow of 84 billion cubic metres, the colonial agreement allowed Egypt access to 55.5 billion cubic metres of the water annually and Sudan 18.5 billion cubic metres. The Nile stretches more than 6,600 kilometres from Lake Victoria to the Mediterranean, which makes it a vital water and energy source for the countries through which it flows.

It is against this backdrop that upstream riparian states have, over the past 10 years, been prodding Egypt and Sudan to negotiate a new treaty that allows them to use the water for agricultural production and hydropower generation to

no avail.

Yet these are the strong pillars of any economic and social development. Without food and power, little if any, development can take place.

Now these countries are demanding the sustainable use of the water for irrigation, power generation and livestock industry development. This demand was bound to come along because save for the Democratic Republic of Congo, the other nine Nile River riparian states are water-stressed. The irony of it all is that some of these countries like Kenya and Uganda are forced to import water from Egypt.

The eight states that have signed or promised to sign the new treaty therefore find it insulting to be held hostage by Cairo's intransigence and depraved diplomacy on matters conservation and sustainable utilisation of natural resources.

It is regrettable that Egypt is resorting to unorthodox manoeuvres to arm-twist Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Chad and the DRC into rescinding the new treaty. It has even threatened to go to war unless the new treaty is annulled. This is tantamount to blackmail and totally unacceptable.

While Sudan has shown it is amenable to the treaty so long as the Nile water regime is not interfered with, Egypt's foreign minister arrogantly declared in February that any interference with the water is cause of the next major war in

Africa.

The type of arrogance being displayed by Cairo is unfortunate and out of sync with modern day international relations.

Egypt should take into account that to reverse the effects of climate change, the onus of conserving the Nile ecosystem lies with the upstream states.

Therefore, for Egypt to use war threats, trade barriers or embargoes to bend the treaty in its favour is tantamount to denying upstream states their inalienable right. War, economic sanctions or protectionist trade tariffs ring hollow and are betray the skewed and unfair regime anchored by the retrogressive colonial treaty.

The new agreement signed on May 14, establishes principles governing the sustainable use, management, development and conservation of the Nile water resources and details the rights and obligations of Basin states.

It is unfair for Egypt to cite a minor aspect of an otherwise excellent document that guarantees freedom to water for nearly 300 million people who would be denied access to this valuable resource.

Egypt and Sudan would lose nothing by engaging in dialogue, but gain everything by working in concert with other Nile Basin countries. The new treaty provides a win-win situation for all the countries along the Nile.

Concerned Kenyan,
via e-mail.

Street battles no way to settle varsity business

Speaking at a recent graduation ceremony at the University of Nairobi, the Vice Chancellor started by acknowledging a major achievement of his administration — no student strike for years.

Though commendable and worth celebrating, events of recent days show he may have spoken too soon. The riots at the institution, sparked by the deeply divisive student body Sonu (Students Organization of Nairobi University) polls were a grim reminder of ghosts of years past when scenes of street mayhem were hip and even honourable.

Modern society, however, showers disdain and frowns upon running battles and clouds of tear gas in institutions of higher learning. Granted, elections are a pillar of representative democracy since the right to vote is widely recognised as a basic human right.

Allegations of a flawed electoral process due to interference by powerful, external forces linked to ethnic and political party interests, are troubling.

Of greater concern is the economic cost of property destroyed, learning hours spent in running battles with anti-riot police, manhours shed by disruptions to traffic, mockery of mentorship and role models, as well as degeneration into settling matters by brawn rather than brains and dialogue.

The resultant mistrust has seen calls for disbandment of Sonu and arrests of students leaders, which, in our experience, often leads to breakdown of law and order and is in no way part of the solution.

The cost of political interference in the student body polls is too high to absorb. Let sanity prevail, and all parties return to the negotiating table. That is the civilised thing to do.

Concerned Kenyan,
via e-mail



The editor welcomes letters and comments on a variety of issues. The letters should be brief, topical and issue based. The editor reserves the right to edit for brevity or clarity.

Write to:
The Editor,
The Link,
P.O. Box 7438 – 00200,
Nairobi.
E-mail: thelink@wananchi.com

Bungoma residents want more constituencies

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

THE review of electoral boundaries should address existing disparities based on numbers and services to the people.

According to the Western Kenya Human Rights Watch, there was a general disquiet over the existing electoral boundaries, distribution of resources and representation of the people that are likely to generate into violence if not addressed fully.

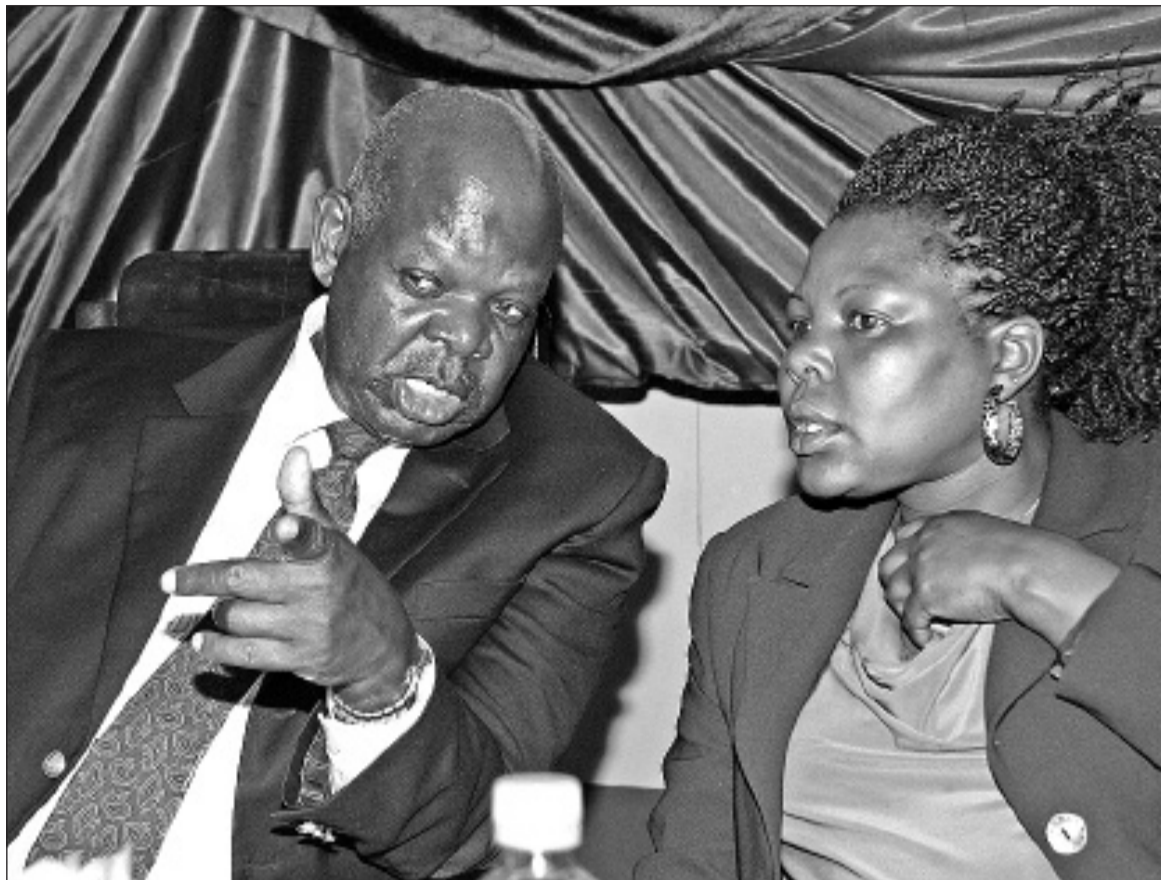
The lobby group's executive director, Job Bwonya, told the Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC) that units of governance and representation are currently used to take resources and services to the people and thus it would be retrogressive for them to ignore the population factor when creating new units.

He cites Bungoma District which he says is the most affected in the region in terms of representation.

"The case of underrepresentation has been exemplified in the 1999 census which indicates that Bungoma District, with a population of 876,491, has only 5 Members of Parliament compared to Busia district whose population stands at 370,609 and is represented by 4 Members of Parliament," he adds.

The wide disparity has further been cemented by the fact that the combined population of Busia and Butere/Mumias stood at 847,533, which again is less than Bungoma but represented by 8 members in the house.

"Using the current population estimates of Busia district, which is 92,500 to create new



IIBRC chairman Andrew Ligale (left) with Commissioner Irene Masit during the commissioners sittings at Kakamega Town Hall recently. Photo/Bill Essau

constituencies, then Bungoma would have had 9 members of Parliament by 1997 general elections," he argues."

Bungoma district has lost out in the national resource distribution, compared to its neighbours of Busia and Butere /Mumias, whose population is far much less.

Bungoma has received a paltry Kshs1,220,073,328 through the Constituency Development Fund over the last seven years while Busia, Butere/Mumias received Kshs 1,753,088,790 over the same period.

The lobby group notes that

some areas in the region have been underrepresented for more than three decades due to the complex patterns of repression in the poor electoral systems and individual political patronage.

The political elites were accused of manipulating electoral commissions to deliberately create more units in their strongholds.

Leaders however proposed the creation of more electoral areas, but maintained that the creation should strictly follow the current administrative boundaries.

In Webuye constituency

leaders differed on the proposals with area MP Alfred Sambu experiencing a rough time while persuading the people to have a section of Webuye division carved out and added to Ndivisi Division to form a new constituency.

But a section led by former minister and nominated MP Musikari Kombo, opposed the idea and instead urged to have the current Ndivisi division created as the constituency.

Leaders from Sirisia and Kimilili constituencies, agreed to have the New Tongaren and Chwele constituencies created without opposition.

Residents wants Kasipul, Kabondo split

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

KASIPUL-KABONDO residents have urged the Interim Independent Boundary Review Commission (IIBRC) to split the constituency into two. They want it broken into Kasipul and Kabondo constituencies without interfering with the existing boundaries.

Under the chairmanship of former MP Oloo Otula, the residents also told the Commission that was sitting in Kosele that it was high time all locations were converted to civic wards and creation of three more divisions in addition to the existing two.

They said if effected, it will ensure equitable distribution of resources, development, easy access to services and harmonious relations of the descendants of the two sons of Rachuonyo.

Area MP Oyugi Magwanga said Kabondo residents had been marginalized and called for their alleged independence.

He claimed the high population density and population trend, poor infrastructure vast geographical size and cultural aspect of the people of the two areas justified their demand for split.

The MP said calls for the split of the constituency has been presented ever since its creation in 1957 and proposals for split have been presented before four other similar commissions set up by the government, the first being in 1971. He noted that the constituency as it is today has over 250 primary schools, 70 secondary schools, 45 health centres and 24 dispensaries among other institutions which had necessitated the strong desire for competition of resources.

The speakers called on the Commission to come to the aid of Muksero community who live at the boundary of Rachuonyo South District and Kisii Central District and have endured marginalization since independence.

They said over 8000 people fall administratively in Kisii central whereas politically they vote in Kasipul Kabondo constituency despite the area falling under Rachuonyo South in the physical boundary map.

Kiambu courts need more magistrates

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

THE Kiambu law courts have been hit by lack of magistrates with only one out of five courts being operational over the last four months.

Cases are being since there are no magistrates to preside over their cases.

A spot check by The Link revealed that only one resident magistrate court is currently operational after other magistrates were transferred.

Civil cases have been adjourned for three months as the current work load did not allow for the hearing of the cases.

According to a source at

the court, the court executive officer has written to the Chief Justice Evans Gicheru informing him of the pathetic state of affairs which has sometimes led to the outsourcing of magistrates from Limuru. And to make matters worse, the senior principle magistrate posted earlier is on a sick leave.

Late last year three magistrates were transferred with one senior principle magistrate resigning in December. No replacements have been done, a scenario which has paralysed court proceedings.

The complainants and inmates are now petitioning the Chief Justice to come to their aid and post magistrates in the area.

Bill to compel institutions to disclose unclaimed assets drafted

By PETER MUTUKU

A BILL to compel financial institutions, investment companies, provident schemes and other asset managers to disclose unclaimed assets in their jurisdiction has been drafted.

The bill dubbed Unclaimed Assets Bill 2010 is in pursuant of recommendations by a task force appointed by the Ministry of Finance in August 2008 which came up with stunning revelations indicating that Kenya financial institutions are holding in excess of Kshs200 billion in unclaimed assets.

The report whose findings are yet to become public, gives a detailed account of how financial institutions, key among them banks, insurance companies, pension schemes such as NSSF and listed companies are holding the unclaimed financial assets in various accounts which they are unwilling to disclose to government over the years.

If enacted, the bill sponsored by

Laisamis MP Joseph Lekuton, will push financial institutions to disclose the unclaimed assets which will be surrendered to a Trust Account to be administered by the government for development activities.

The bill will help to put in place a legal framework, which according to the task force will help regulate unclaimed assets sector.

The bill will also provide for mandatory disclosure and reporting of unclaimed assets to treasury and establish an unclaimed assets authority and Trust Fund.

He says that the government is the sole custodian by law of the unclaimed assets and property and the bill once enacted will give it authority to expend the same for the good of Kenyans.

According to the task force report, there are 295,892 dormant bank accounts with Kshs6 billion and 62,152 unclaimed financial statements, drafts and cheques with an estimated Kshs1.8 billion.

All these cash is lying idle and in secret accounts in banks, building societies and mortgage institutions as at November 2008. The Task force indicates that deaths where there are no wills, lack of reporting, poor records and complicated judicial process had led to increased amounts of unclaimed assets in financial institutions.

The reports takes issue with the failure by banks to report the billions of shillings they hold in unclaimed monies to the government and proposes various mechanisms to consolidate and disclose the same annually.

The task force which sampled 40 out of 45 banking institutions disclosed that Kshs7.4 billion is dormant in their accounts and in unclaimed balances.

The report also criticizes the financial institutions for deliberately withholding information to the government, beneficiaries, owners and others who lay claim on the said assets therefore posting unjustified profits.

Kieni, Mathira need extra constituency each

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

LEADERS from the larger Nyeri district want both Kieni and Mathira constituencies to get an extra constituency each.

The leaders led by Mathira MP Ephraim Maina and Kieni MP Nemesys Warugongo argue that the additional constituencies will help enhance representation in the vast area which has for decades been deprived of development due to unequal distribution of resources.

The leaders told IIBRC commissioners who included Mrs Rozaah Akinyi, Mr Joseph Kaguthi and Mr Abdalla Mohammed that in the event that one constituency is created, then a section of Mathira and Kieni can be hived to pave way for the extra constituency to be called Mt Kenya constituency.

"We have lived under historical injustices which promoted under representation. This has entrenched the culture of impunity and unequal distribution of devolved funds such as CDF and LATF," complained John Kamau from Kieni West District.

The leaders also proposed that the larger Nyeri district have two counties which include Nyeri South and Nyeri North counties.

They suggested that the Nyeri South county serve Othaya, Mukurwe-ini, Nyeri Town and Tetu while Nyeri North county cater for Kieni and Mathira dis-



Mathira MP Hon Ephraim Maina giving his views to the IIBRC commissioners at Information Hall in Nyeri recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

tricts.

The leaders at the same time want the over 3,000 families settled in Laikipia East recently be part of Kieni East district due to

proximity.

The leaders proposed that the families settled on Solio Settlement Scheme be served by Central provincial administration

since Rift Valley was very far and cumbersome.

If the current scenario is maintained, the leaders argue that the residents will continue suffering.

Gusii leaders demand parliamentary seats

By BOB OMBATI

GUSII leaders want the number of constituencies in the area increased from the current 10 to 15 to ensure that representation was based on population and demand for services.

Education Minister, Prof. Sam Ongeru told the Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC) that leaders in the area had unanimously agreed that North Mugirango Borabu should be accorded the first priority followed by Kitutu Chache, Bomachoge and Bobasi when new constituencies are created.

According to the minister, North Mugirango Borabu constituency was not only expansive but cosmopolitan and therefore the current representation did not serve the electorate effectively. Nominated lawmaker Omari Nyamweya, told Commissioners Joseph Kaguthi (Vice chairman), Rosa Akinyi and Abdalla Mohamed that there was need to hive off part of Nyaribari Chache to create township constituency.

Bonchari MP, Charles Onyancha however differed with the proposal saying that Nyaribaru Chache was too small to be split into two, arguing that it would adversely affect the electorate who may be locked out of the busy and growing town.

On his part, George Nyamweya called for the elevation of the current Eastern Nyanza region to a province, arguing that the area has over 1 million people who are forced to travel for long distances to access services.

There was a heated debate when Kitutu Chache MP, Richard Onyonka proposed that the Central ward be split to pave way for the creation of the hospital electoral Ward to cater for the interests of Kitutu Chache people.

Margaret Atogo who unsuccessfully contested for the Kitutu Chache parliamentary seat complained that Kanga Ward (Jogoo) was under Kitutu Chache but the residents were represented by a councilor from Nyaribari Chache constituency.

She appealed to the Commission to revert the Ward to Kitutu Chache for the residents to fully enjoy the benefit of devolved funds like the local Authority Transfer Fund, roads fund, HIV/aids and education among others.

Atogo says that it was wrong for residents to belong to one area politically and another area geographically and therefore the need to correct past injustices through the boundary review process before 2012 General Elections so that residents may know where they belong and vote for their leaders democratically and confidently. Nyaribari Chache MP, Dr. Robert Monda called for the creation of two more Divisions- Ibeno and Bosongo alongside the current ones Kiogoro and Keumbu, to save residents time and money traveling to far flung areas to seek for services.

Commissioner Akinyi, who chaired the session lauded the Gusii leaders for having conducted stakeholders meeting ahead of the visit, saying the proposals and recommendations forwarded to the Commission reflected the needs of the area residents.

Bahari CDF to fund settlement of squatters

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

Bahari CDF is set to provide funds to oversee the process of land adjudication at Pingilikani settlement scheme in Kilifi district.

Area MP Benedict Gunda says the funds will go along way in assisting squatters who are currently disfranchised by lack of resources and therefore have delayed the settlement exercise on the pieces of land. He says disputes in some settlement scheme, including Pingilikani, had lasted for more than a decade to resolve, thereby delaying issuance of letters of offer and title deeds.

Gunda who spoke during a funds drive meeting at Mweza Ngombe Primary School in Mwarakaya location, says 450 land dispute cases at Pingilikani settlement scheme are yet to be heard. He told area clans to resolve land disputes before any adjudication exercise is done. More than Kshs160,000 was raised by land where the new school is to be built, with the MP giving a personal donation of Kshs20,000.

Meanwhile, Kilifi County Council will repossess all undeveloped council plots. A notice by Kilifi County Clerk Leboo ole Morintat, says idle council plots at Mt-wapa, Kaloleni, Bamba and Vitengeni will be allocated to investors for development. He says some developers were erecting buildings without the approval by physical planning department and warns that stern action will be taken against culprits. Leboo says those who fail to comply with Physical Planning Act risk a Kshs100,000 fine or five months in prison.

National Cohesion Chair calls for tolerance

Urges media to black out leaders who incite people into violence

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

MEDIA houses have been urged to shun leaders who use the debate on proposed constitution to divide the country nation along ethnic lines.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) chairman, Dr. Mzalendo Kibunja, said that some rogue politicians are likely to use the media to inflame tension ahead of the referendum.

He appealed to all Kenyans to work and stay together peacefully regardless of their tribe and party affiliations. "40 million Kenyans are all here to stay and none will be driven out to another country after the referendum, hence the need for all of us to co-exist," Dr. Kibunja said.

He observed that his commission can only achieve its agenda if Kenyans change their attitude and accept that they are one nation and one people. "Changing the attitude of Kenyans is not the work of the commission or the government alone but the work of all of us," he added.

Dr. Kibunja says that the proposed



Dr. Kibunja

constitution is an ideal tool towards strengthening national cohesion since leaders will no longer use their position to discriminate other people or areas while distributing national resources.

The cohesion chairman, however, urges Kenyans to go through the draft themselves and make an informed decision during voting.

Dr. Kibunja was speaking recently at Silver Spring hotel in Nairobi during a Media Diversity Centre (MDC) journalists' training on reporting ordinary people's concerns in Kenya.

Speaking at the same function, the Committee of Experts (CoE) vice chairperson, Atsango Chesoni, noted that there has been no independent media in Kenya for along time.

She lamented that the media in Kenya have always been dominated by leaders, adding that time has come for the media to create space for the alternative voices.

Atsango alleged that this country was polarized during the 2007 general elections campaigns because the media took sides. She noted that the current Constitution of Kenya has over the years been mutilated by the successive regimes to an extent that it no longer serves the interests of ordinary Kenyans.

She therefore urged Kenyans to support the proposed draft constitution arguing, that it would cater for their interests, especially those of women, elderly people and people with disability among others.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

A monthly supplement funded by European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Embrace tolerance during campaigns

This issue of the Partnership for Peace magazine tries to embrace the theme Tolerance with references to the Proposed Constitution of Kenya and the referendum. I believe tolerance is the basis for a prosperous and peaceful Kenya. In 1995, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, adopted a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance where the first article elaborates the meaning of tolerance:

1.1 Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty; it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.

1.2 Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tol-

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**HANNA
CARLSSON**

erance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. In no circumstance can it be used to justify infringements of these fundamental values.

Tolerance is to be exercised by individuals, groups and States.

1.3 Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. It involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.

1.4 Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means

that one's views are not to be imposed on others.

What if all of us could embrace this message in our daily lives?

The date for the referendum has finally been set and the YES and NO sides have been crystallized on a national level. When this column is being written the official campaign has not yet started, however, most politicians and church leaders are drumming support for their stand. As wananchi it can be hard to grasp the whole significance of the constitution and what different clauses would imply in real life. The Yes and the No sides emphasize only clauses that they think are of utmost importance and to win support the issues are simplified and argument biased.

This column could be a perfect platform for me to air my views about the contentious issues in the draft constitution, but that is not my mandate or the purpose of this magazine. I only want to encourage all readers to participate in the civic education about the draft Constitution, be open-minded and do not take a stand until you actually know what the proposal implies. If there are specific issues which are very important to you, read those paragraphs in the draft, attend civic educa-

tion, consult people who can give and explain the issues objectively, and base your position on facts. Do not blindly vote as your Member of Parliament because the constitution is the roadmap to your own and children's future and I believe that you and the Member of Parliament somehow have very different opportunities in life. When you have made up your mind, respect and tolerate the fact that others may have reached a different decision.

In this magazine you will find articles embracing the message of tolerance of different opinions. We have some new writers who give among others a youth perspective on the importance to vote and respect your neighbor's opinion and another article which gives you an insight of the Rwandan genocide and that the step to a similar outcome in Kenya is not that far.

As usual I am not only interested to hear your comments about the articles but also heroic stories from your life on how you embrace tolerance in your community.

*The writer is the International Project Manager
ms.hannacarlsson@gmail.com*

We should stop stoking ethnic fires

By **GIDEON OCHANDA**

The historical injustices, the unfair public resource distribution and continued reduced confidence in public institution in the country are a harbinger for chaotic elections witnessed over a period of time in Kenya. Instead of being a demonstration of democratic exercise that offers citizens the necessary opportunity to participate in their governance processes, elections have degenerated

to life and death contest, bitter rivalry and incessant vengeance. Permanent hate between contestants makes the act of elections to be very painful to a majority of people in the country. It keeps bad memories alive any time electoral contests are in site.

The coming referendum is no exception. Daggers are getting drawn and issues are put aside as politicians are isolating all manner of scapegoats to open raw wounds. Rich and sometimes weird imaginations are being advanced whereas the proposed constitution gives space for future legislations,

administrative restructuring and even clear cut typographical serialization oversight.

Whose wars are Elections?

The political elites in whatever direction in Kenya thrive on invoking ethnic feelings and biases to sell their parochial agenda. Many are times that they deliberately twist clear cut positions whether policy or legal to fit direction that are constantly lased with eth-

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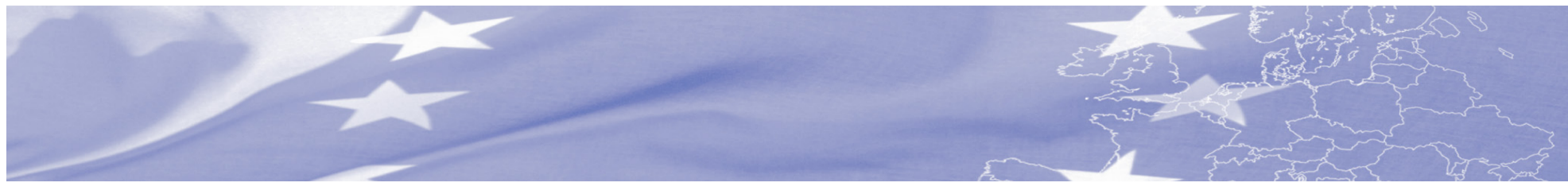
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Youth calls for peaceful referendum

By **FADHILI MSURI**

The constitution making process in Kenya dates back to over 20 years. During the process lives have been lost, tortured and exiled in the quest for a new dispensation. A lot of resources have been spent on this journey ever since it took a serious call in 2003 which led to the rejection of the presented draft in the 2005 referendum which also polarized the country along tribal lines. The result of the 2005 process was the post election violence in 2007-08 which almost led the country into collapse and one of the most manipulated age set in the entire process was the YOUTH.

The youth in Kenya have been subjected to abject discrimination in terms of economic empowerment and social transformation. Young people play a key role in the stability of a country as they are the most energized where if their energy is put into negative use the consequences can be far reaching as witnessed in the post election violence. Ever since the violence various peace building initiatives have been initiated targeting the youth. A rising wave of interested young people monitoring and participating in the reforms process is slowly witnessed in the country.

Notably, when the harmonized draft was presented to Kenyans young people

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Ethnic intolerance: Lessons from Rwanda

I am currently reading a book about the history of one Africa's darkest and saddest misfortunes – the Rwandan genocide. There is an interesting observation I've made just from carrying the book around with me – some people have noticed the author's Muslim names faster than they've been drawn to the book's content. It may perhaps be a demonstration of the current Christian-Muslim divide on the place of Kadhi's Courts in the proposed constitution.

Yet the book titled "When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda" explains in detail the developments in Rwanda that can shed light on aspects of Kenyan politics and inter-ethnic relations. It also warns us of how low we can sink if we are not careful.

The author – Mahmood Mamdani – examines root causes of conflict. By showing that the hatred between two groups was deep, he helps show that the genocide is imaginable. That should make us pause. Can genocide be thinkable? Is it possible that a group can set out to systematically eliminate an entire ethnic or racial group? About one million Tutsis were killed in the 1994 genocide, including about 50,000 Hutus considered moderate (in the sense that they embraced national unity and refused to participate in the mass killings).

In order to draw lessons on the extent of intolerance, it is necessary to consider ways in which a society slides into darkest and deepest pit of hatred – a hatred that makes us forget being humane and leads us to be willing



By **MANASSEH WEPUNDI**

to murder:

First, widespread violence that leads to targeted killings is initiated by unequal inter-group relations that feed individual and ethnic grievances. However shocking cycles of inter-group violence are they are neither just accidental

nor sudden. Ages of unequal relations often feed hatreds. Where one group, views itself as a special class, and their neighbours as subordinate (slaves), then the two groups are bound to have a conflict. For instance, in the Rwanda case, Tutsi dominance over the Hutu became increasingly unjust toward the latter, hence feeding conflict.

A similar argument can be made in relation to major and minor groups in a society: Where the majority view a minority group as having less of a say in the society's governance then the smaller group's marginalisation will feed conflict. The 1959 Hutu revolution brought change that only swapped circumstances for the two groups – the privileged became the Hutu while the Tutsi became increasingly marginalised. As such, while one group thought of themselves as having solved the problem, they in actual fact only perpetuated it – the conflict changed in nature.

For long, the two groups viewed each other in competitive rather than coopera-

tive terms. This leads to the second point: how groups view their rights to occupying their country relative to their neighbours determines whether relations are friendly or hostile. At the national level, it is important for a society to define citizenship in unifying terms – in post-1959 Rwanda, the Tutsi were viewed as a foreign race. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Tutsis lived as refugees in the region (predominantly in Congo and Uganda). Given that the Hutu viewed themselves as indigenous to Rwanda while the Tutsi were viewed as foreign, there was a crisis of citizenship in Rwanda for many years culminating in the Rwanda Patriotic Front's (RPF) invasion in 1990s.

Related to the issue of citizenship but tied to politics of indigeneity is the question of entitlement to land. As groups consider themselves indigenous and label others as foreigners (or aliens), this creates hostility towards members of the "alien" group as they compete for land ownership. The struggle for land in parts of Kenya has been fought on the platform of indigeneity – with groups in some areas citing their historical claims to land in different parts of the country as the rationale for seeking to displace the "foreign" groups.

Thirdly, in a socio-political environment characterised by inter-group mistrust, hatreds and long-running grievances (and/or injustices), reform efforts can be miscarried. It may sound contradictory, but Rwanda's genocide happened in the context of on-going political

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Kisumu East Peace Committee reconstituted

By **SHUBHA CHANDRA**

Beginning on Monday, April 26, 2010, The National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC) conducted a three-day meeting in Kisumu to reconstitute the Kisumu East District Peace Committee.

The meeting in Kisumu was one among many which will occur throughout the country as part of NSC's capacity building efforts to enhance and further support local peace structures through the creation and reconstitution of District Peace Committees (DPC). The meetings were conducted at Kisumu's Divisional and District Office and were led by Rachael Onyango from the National Steering Committee (appointed from PACT Kenya), Willis Cheboi from the District Office and Dominic Ouma Odipo, the Co-ordinator for Kisumu East's District Office, among others.

Kisumu East District was created in 2008 and consists of two administrative divisions: Winam and Kadibo. Winam represents eight



Rachel from NSC addressing the participants.

locations around Kisumu while Kadibo represents seven. At the height of post-election violence, Kisumu established a District Peace Committee.

However, the DPC's membership was not representative of the district as a whole

and failed to comply with certain rules promulgated by the NSC. The results of a mapping exercise conducted by the NSC indicated the need for a reconstitution of Kisumu East's District Peace Committee, prompting these meetings.

The first step in recreating a DPC was selecting new members. Chiefs and assistant chiefs from the fifteen sub-locations of Winam and Kadibo selected fifteen individuals each whom they believed were dedicated to peacebuilding and could serve as strong leaders. These thirty individuals were inducted as members of the Location Peace Committee (LPC).

On the second day, a division meeting was held at the Divisional Office in Kisumu where the District Officer and Ms. Onyango discussed the role of Division Peace Committees and their importance in mitigating conflict. By the end of the day, fifteen members among the thirty represented were nominated to serve in the Divisional Peace Committee (DvPC). Committed to representing all members of the community, the Winam division selected two women and four youth representatives to serve on their committee while the Kadibo division selected three women and two youth representatives.

On the final day of the meeting, the in-

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By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

Peace workers in volatile areas told to be impartial

ORGANIZATIONS and individuals charged with peace building initiatives have been urged not to commercialize their services if harmonious co-existence is to be achieved among different ethnic communities.

Speaking in Bungoma during a workshop, Kanduyi District Officer (DO) Mr. Ahmed Shabell, said that commercialization of conflict transformation activities will defeat the intended purpose of peace building, and deepen the rift within the warring parties.

The workshop was organized by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in collaboration with Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA). It was part of the on-going Partnership for Peace project funded by European Union (EU) and is being implemented by KAS, in conjunction with Catholic, Justice and Commission (CJPC) and Community Initiative Action Group (CIAG) and MERA.

"If you want to be taken seriously and respected in your conflict resolution endeavors always be firm, impartial and never take bribes," the DO told the participants.

He noted that peace is requisite for development and as result challenged the participants to use the skills they had acquired to promote harmony among ethnic communities in Western province in order for the area to achieve more and accelerated development.

"In Western province, land is the major cause of conflict, when you go out there be good ambassadors of peace so



Police officers trying to bring calm during post election violence in Kenya in 2007 after disputed presidential vote tally.

that you can assist the Government to solve land issues once and for all," he said.

The provincial administrator further told the participant that it was imperative for them to share experiences,

work in different communities and network with other organizations in order for them to gain more experience.

He pointed out that the society has a duty to control its people from doing wrong and expressed optimism that the

workshop will bring positive impact in terms of conflicts transformation in the area.

The International Partnership for Peace Project Manager Ms Hanna Carlsson expressed optimism that the four day workshop had equipped the participants with enough materials that will enable them resolve conflicts in their communities.

Ms Carlsson appealed to the participants to be in constant touch with the project implementers whenever there is a problem for immediate intervention.

During the four day workshop, the participants were sensitized on tenets of peace transformation by Dr. David Steel, a United States (US) based consultant in conflict transformation and Mr. Babu Ayindo, who is a researcher and a trainer in peace building.

The theme of the workshop was, "strengthening non-state actors' capacities to prevent and resolve conflict in areas affected by the post-election violence."

One of the participants Milly Wafula appealed to the communities in Bungoma West District to maintain peace during the referendum, noting that area resident had suffered enough during the post election violence.

Kisumu East Peace Committee reconstituted

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Individuals from the Divisional Peace Committees assembled at the District Office. After discussing the responsibilities, membership, and leadership of the peace committee, the group selected 14 individuals to serve as members of the Kisumu East District Peace Committee. Included in this group are four women and four youth representatives as well as three ex-official members from the private sector (Chamber of Commerce), Muslim community (SUPKEM) and civil society (Community Initiative Action Group – Kenya or CIAG).

During the week of May 3, 2010, all members of the Kisumu East District Peace Committee will participate in a four-day capacity training administered by members of the NSC and PACT Kenya. At the culmination of the training, the members will be asked to formulate a Constitution, elect members of the Executive and consider ways to appeal to civil society organizations for funding.

Ethnic intolerance: Lessons from Rwanda

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reforms. Prior to his assassination, President Habyarimana's government was in the process of expanding democratic space, integrating Tutsi refugees as Rwandan citizens and they had reached some agreements with RPF on a coalition government.

But the possibility of re-introducing the Tutsi elite in government and the RPF invasion raised fears about the implications of Tutsi re-emergence – a possible reversal of the gains of the 1959 revolution, a return to slavery for the Hutu.

Thus, in a delicate reform environment, propaganda is an extremely powerful tool that can brainwash a whole population. Many Hutus believed they would be victims of a resurgent Tutsi, and as such, the only option was to kill any Tutsi. This happened in the context of the RPF attack on Kigali and therefore killing Tutsis was considered a continuation of the war rather than a human rights violation.

In the Kenyan context, one justification

for the post-election violence has been it was mass action to denounce stolen elections (or "stolen victory"). In one peace building workshop in Eldoret (in 2008), a participant referred to the victims of the post-election violence as "collateral damage" in people's protest against stolen elections (meaning killing people was unintended and that the perpetrators only intended to reclaim the stolen victory). This shows how we lose our sense of humanity before we turn violent – people that are targeted or who come in the way no longer fellow human beings, but are threats or obstacles that have to be removed.

Kenya is in the middle of many reforms – the constitutional review, and electoral, land and security reforms, among other changes. The country is therefore ripe for a rebirth as it is open to destructive forces.

With change there is often the fear of the unknown. In such an environment, propaganda, which is often based on lies, can be a dangerous tool that can lead to wider conflict.

The change the country is working towards should unify us rather than dividing us. Similarly, the manner in which political and religious leaders campaign should protect our unity. This is part of being tolerant.

William Ury, an expert in peacebuilding, notes that "tolerance is not just agreeing with one another or remaining indifferent in the face of injustice, but rather showing respect for the essential humanity in every person." It is about appreciating diversity, and protecting that. Failure to appreciate others' lifestyles, beliefs and opinions would therefore show intolerance.

In this regard, we should seek reforms that protect our unity and our hopes. Further, Kenyans should avoid propagandists, since these have the potential to cause inter-group fears in citizens, which could feed tensions and violence.

—Manasseh Wepundi is a specialist in peace and security research and the design and facilitation of peacebuilding processes. This article was simplified for a general audience.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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converged in various parts of the country where they went through the document and came up with suggestions on their preferred contents in the constitution which was presented to the Committee of Experts in Nairobi. Since then various consultative forums and discussions have been held to consolidate the youth voice in the upcoming referendum and the continuing reform process.

However the number of youth registered as voters is still low due to high number of young people lacking identity cards. Due to various initiatives were held to mobilize the youth to register as voters and exercise their democratic right in deciding the destiny of their country.

Genesis arts creations a youth serving organization implementing the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) peace project mobilized youth organizations and youth leaders in Nakuru with support from Kenya Muslim youth alliance and in partnership with IIEC formed the Nakuru youth forum and held a voter mobilization and registration exercise on 19th of April and created awareness on the importance of voter registration and created grassroots youth forums to mobilize young people to get the voters card at their respective stations besides positioning themselves for civic education on the proposed constitution and seeks to educate fellow youth on the contents of the proposed constitution to enable informed decision making during the referendum period.

The voice of the youth to those who still believe that we are weapons of destruction is that we are now empowered and know our role in the society fully.

NO MORE MANIPULATION AND INDUCEMENT-Kenya will witness the rise of the youth who will be the catalyst for positive change that we have been crying for. The voice of the youth still continues to shout loudly in encouraging Kenyans to embrace peaceful dialogue and keep in mind that we are still healing a troubled nation and inflammatory remark could ruin the country.

The last message from the youth is:
VOTING IS A DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OF EVERY KENYAN AND IRRESPECTIVE OF OUR DIFFERENT OPINIONS AND STAND WE ALL HAVE ONE BABY TO TREASURE AND CARE our motherland-KENYA GOD BLESS KENYA

Fadhili Msuri is a global youth change maker and the convener of the Nakuru youth forum.

fadhilee@yahoo.com

We should stop stoking ethnic fires

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nic undertones. Ethnicity is the main source of relevance for our political elite.

The political elites are a product of cumulated history of distortion of the state. Rather than have the state as a trustee for all the people of Kenya, history is clear that the state has been used overtime for the benefit and enrichment of cliques. The clique is characterised by massive wealth accumulation, power pushers, entrenchment in core state enterprises and strategic consumable state supplies. The state is at their mercy. The clique is not homogeneous, constantly differ and often quietly fight amongst themselves.

There is a wing that is a beneficiary of the immediate post independence state. It had the education, thanks to the missionary work and the colonial chieftaincy. It took over the state during the africanization processes and the buy-out of the white farmlands. The clique was able to sustain their acquired wealth by virtue of their being in state positions. They are now advanced in age, majority being over 70 years but are systematically bequeathing the resources to their 'progressive' siblings with politics as the only everlasting guarantor.

The second group, learning at the behest of the first clique, acquired the state almost forcibly from the first. It used the state but where the state could not provide, it sold off state enterprises to themselves including public land.

The third clique started as pro-people youthful politicians. Their entry into politics particularly from the 90s was out of people's goodwill. They were seen as liberators with good intentions. However, the clique has grown to be the opposite of the expectations. They are more ruthless in the hunt for riches. They dot every corrupt transaction that the state is involved in.



IDPs camp after the post election in 2007

Common Denominator

The unfortunate scenario is that politics is their common denominator. It is in politics that they have safeguards. They play politics with anything, worse of people's lives. People died and keep dying in avoidable circumstances but that is secondary to the cliques. Many Kenyans are living in squalid, deplorable and pathetic camps but they would rather be in those situations for one clique to have a chance to pin it on the other.

The current constitution has worked to

the advantage of these cliques. I am fairly persuaded that none in the cliques want the constitution changed. They are manifesting a lot of pretence. In fact those showing opposition to the proposed constitution could be more genuine to their course in retaining the current constitution.

It is high time that the general public realised that the electoral wars are not really theirs. The hate is made up. Ethnic polarization is not the answer to historical injustices now and in future. Let the referendum not divide us as we look for how to get out of our historical sharks. We are captives.

CONTACT ADDRESSES:

EU-KAS Project Office in Kisumu, Varsity Apartments 3rd Floor,

P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu,

Telephone. +254 732 846 215

+254 711 358 013

e-mail: partnershipforpeace@gmail.com

PARTNERS

Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA)

Chem Ngeywo, Project Coordinator

Western Province

P.O Box 21-50201, Cheptais-Mt. Elgon

Mobile : 0720-744827; 0734-517489.

Email: pchem2007@yahoo.com

Community Initiative Action-Group (CIAG-K)

Mr. Chrispin Owalla, Project Coordinator

Nyanza Province

Varsity Apartments 3rd Floor,

P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu.

Tel: 0737-470558/0716-384135

grassrootlink@yahoo.com or

ciag-kenya@hotmail.com

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)

Mr. James Kimisoi, Project Coordinator

Rift Valley Province

The Catholic Diocese of Eldoret

P.O. Box 842 -30100, Eldoret.

Tel 2031272; 0722 448110

E-mail: jameskimisoi@yahoo.com



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Benefit sharing row threatens Isiolo Airport

By HUSSEIN SALESA

WRANGLES between the Isiolo, Nyambene and Meru county Councils over who is to get the lion's share of revenue from the proposed Isiolo International airport threatens to derail construction of the facility.

The project which was supposed to kick off five years ago is now the center of controversy as the three county councils openly disagree on how to share resources accrued from the airport.

The government has already allocated KShs200 million during this financial year to assist in the construction of the airport but serious work is yet to commence.

Civil society organisations and businessmen led by Hurison Kinywa are now threatening to mobilize area residents into mass action to petition the government to proceed with the proposed project.

The businessmen have already drafted a protest letter to the ministry of local government and line ministry to take action and ensure that the project is implemented to the later.

But even as the stand off continues unabated, Isiolo County council has finalised relocation of those affected by construction of the project.

More than four thousands people affected by the expansion of the airport have been relocated to Mwangaza, chechelese and Kiwanjani.

Two years ago, the government allocated KShs90 million towards the fencing of the proposed airport after evacuating those affected by the project.

The allocation came as the Government appointed a high-powered task force to develop the frontier town into a resort city. The 20-member team, chaired by Head of Public Service Mr Francis Muthaura, first met at Harambee House in Nairobi.

The task-force includes three permanent secretaries — from the Transport, Roads and Public Works, and Tourism and Wildlife ministries — as well as the heads of the Kenya Wildlife Services, Kenya Airports Authority, Kenya Tourism Board and Ewaso Nyiro North Development Authority. The chairman and clerk of Isiolo County Council are also in the team.

The project is part of pledges by the government during the past elections to develop the area into a bustling city with its own international airport serving the tourism, livestock sector and film industries.

Leaders who visited the areas prior to elections said the completion of the airport would facilitate easy transportation of beef and other livestock products from the regions and ensure products were timely processed and exported to other parts of the world.

Livestock Minister Dr Mohamed Kuti says the region has great potential to contribute to national development because of its strategic location and that the government would explore ways to tap in development especially in the livestock sector.

The Minister laments that while Isiolo is the leading tourist destination in the Northern Circuit, it is still considered a little off the beaten path.

With its three game parks, Central Isiolo has several luxurious safari camps and tourist-class lodges, among them Samburu Serena and Sarova Shaba. It is also adjacent to Samburu Game Reserve, Meru National Park and other private wildlife conservancies.

Dr Kuti says once the proposed airport becomes operational other new developments in the region would come up and help in improving infrastructure and keep the region at par with other areas in the country.

The proposed airport is also meant to further boost the growth of the town. With its proximity to towns around Mt Kenya, the proposed airport is expected to serve Meru districts, Laikipia, Embu and Nyeri.

Port Victoria to improve income base

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

PORT Victoria Town Council has embarked on the construction of various development projects within its jurisdiction in a move aimed at establishing a strong revenue base.

Among the projects earmarked for development include Mulukoba open air market that would enable the upcoming local authority to provide effective service delivery.

"The Local Authority and the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LAS-DAP) committee from Bukani civic ward identified and unanimously agreed to allocate funds for buying land for the establishment of Mulukoba open air market which draws clients from Uganda and Siaya district in Kenya and other areas thus bringing a lot of revenue to the local authority," the area civic leader councilor David Wanga said, adding that the local authority is drawing revenue to the tune of KShs20, 000 per week from the facility.

The local authority at the same time earmarked and disbursed a total of sh350, 000



An open air market where locals sell their wares.

from the local authority transfer fund kitty (LATF) during the financial year 2008/2009 that was used for the construction of a VIP latrine comprising six doors and two bathrooms at

Mulukoba beach.

The local authority has also constructed two classrooms at Lunyofu primary school at Singing civic ward, two classrooms at Bulemia primary school

within Bulemia civic ward, bought two parcels of land for the establishment of a sports ground and the construction of a pit latrines at Mundekwe and Rudacho beach respectively.

GTZ to help improve food security

By FRED MADANJE

THE German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has entered into partnership with the Kenyan government to embark on low input based agriculture aimed at reducing the soaring food insecurity in Western Kenya.

GTZ has already allocated Sh. 180 million to promote private sector development in Agriculture (PSDA) to facilitate the program that will be piloted in five districts in Western Kenya.

PSDA/GTZ program manager-Kenya Francis Muthami says under this project which is dubbed 'Conservation Agriculture' farmers will be required to use non tillage form of farming with little disturbance to the soil.

The 3 year program will be piloted in Homa-Bay, Migori, Kakamega, Vihiga and Molo districts with plans to scale up to other regions already underway.

Muthami said the project will be implemented through the PSDA programs to conform to the set targets that include elimination of extreme poverty and environmental conservation.

The implementation of the project will be done by Sustainable Agriculture Information Network (SUSTAINET) that has identified small scale farmers in the selected



Food insecurity has affected most of the residents in Western Kenya.

districts to work with.

The project coordinator of the implementing organization Tom Apina said that the districts were considered due to the ravaging hunger and the effects of post polls violence.

"There is an urgent need to implement this program, because food production in the country has not been keeping pace with the ever increasing population" he

said.

"We hope that this project will go along way in rebuilding the lives farmers who adversely affected the post election violence and get them on a steady economic generating activity." Apina asserted.

Speaking in Kisumu during the inception project workshop, Apina said the project will be implemented together with ministries of Ag-

riculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative development.

"Under this program, we will build the capacity of farmers to enable them tackle the issue of climate change and even train them on ways to harvest crops under minimal rainfall" Apina revealed.

He confirmed that the project will eventually increase household food security and enhance small-holder farmers' resilience to effects of climate change.

Apina said that this project which is also geared towards conservation of environment will reduce over reliance on wood as a source fuel to a number of households as farmers will be encouraged to use energy saving stoves.

"We hope to develop partnership with local media especially community radios to create awareness among farmers and sensitize them on the need o embrace the project" said Apina.

The conservation agriculture is currently being practiced in four African countries including Zambia, Ghana, Tanzania and now Kenya.

Apina said they will put strong policies in place for this particular program to enable them achieve high target and follow in the suit of other countries like Zambia and Ghana that have benefited through this project.

KFS set to launch forestry guidelines

By JOEL JUMA

PLANS are underway to introduce guidelines for management and conservation of forests across the country.

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is working closely with the Community Forest Associations (CFA) to come up with the guidelines.

They will outline roles of each partner in the management of the forests across the country as well as specify the activities to be undertaken over a period of five years.

"The plans are designed to specifically benefit communities living adjacent to forests by giving them an opportunity to draw benefits from the forest while they assist in its conservation," says Senior Deputy Director of Kenya Forest Service Mr Emilio Mugo during the launch of the plan at Githiuru forest which is part of the Mt Kenya forest.

He says that about Kshs28 million has been set aside to oversee the implementation of the larger Nyeri district during this financial year with Kshs12 million going towards financing the Kazi Kwa Vi-

jana projects.

Over 400 hectares in the region has been planted with trees in the past and the project targets to plant a similar number of hectares around the Kenyan forests.

This is in line with the new Forest act which notes that previous exclusion of 'forest communities' from the management of forests not only affected the livelihoods of thousands of Kenyans but was also counterproductive as the same people were responsible for the destruction of the forests in their quest to make a living albeit illegally.

So far KFS has approved 16 Management Plans and another 14 are awaiting the approval of the Director KFS in the next two months.

This will give thousands of people a chance to directly benefit from sustainable forest management.

Plans are underway to launch the Management Plans for Upper Imenti, Githiuru, Kabaru, Hombe, Kangaita and Castle forests in Eastern and Central Provinces.

Once the management plans become fully operational, CFAs will be entitled to set up eco-tourism sites within forests, plant trees in

degraded areas for the now emerging carbon markets, jointly manage important ecological areas among many other activities.

All these must, however, be done incognizance with the best environmental practices.

According to the Forest Act 2005, forest adjacent communities have been identified as crucial components in the sustainable management of forests.

The Act allows them to sustainably draw benefits from the forest they live in or adjacent to in order to empower them economically and also allow them to own forest conservation.

"This is a complete turn around from the past provisions of the Forest Act which to a large extent alienated local communities from the management of forests".

The new law however requires that communities and forest user groups be included in the management structure of the Service.

This will be achieved through the formation of Forest Conservancies and Forest Conservation Committees (FCC) to run them." The director added.

Members of the FCC are a rep-



Senior Deputy Director of Kenya Forest Service Mr Emilio Mugo addressing residents neighbouring Gathiuru forest during the launch. Photo/Joel Juma

resentation of a cross section of Kenyans in the public service, private sector and communities.

The new law also gives a larger mandate to KFS which is the sole organization charged with the overall management of forests in the country.

According to Mugo who was

accompanied by head of Highlands Conservancy Mr John Kinyua, participatory forest management is the way to go in forest conservation as communities are recognized as an integral part of conservation.

The project is being funded by the Community Development Trust Fund and the Government.

ADB, EU to fund Isiolo-Moyale road

By HUSSEIN SALESA

THE Africa Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union will jointly finance the construction of the remaining 526Km along Isiolo-Moyale road.

Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta says ADB and the European Union will fund the remaining two phases between Merille River Bridge and Marsabit town and between Marsabit town and Moyale town at a cost of Kshs10 billion.

The first phase which is scheduled for completion in September this year has been financed by ADB at a cost of Kshs4.3 billion and covers 136Km of the road.

The key road is expected to connect the port of Mombasa and the proposed Lamu port with landlocked Ethiopia that is keen to use Kenya as its export route to international market.

The Chinese firm tarmacking the first phase of the Isiolo-Moyale road is optimistic that it would complete its work by September, three months ahead of the stipulated schedule.

The construction of the road along Isiolo town to Merille River Bridge to a bitumen standard kicked off two years ago after the president commissioned the work in Isiolo.

An official with China Wu yi who spoke in Isiolo town says the firm will complete the work in September as opposed to the December deadline set out earlier.

"We expect to finish the work within September instead of December as earlier announced. This is because we work for 24 hours a day. Also improved security, co-operation by locals and availability of water has helped us a lot," said the officer.



Workers of China Wu Yi construction company tarmacking the 136 kilometer stretch of the Isiolo-Moyale road, which is projected to be complete in September three months before deadline in December 2010. Photo/Hussein Saleasa

A year ago the work almost collapsed following insurgence of insecurity in both Isiolo and Samburu districts and biting drought that forced the company to reschedule its completion timetable of the project from this May to December.

Leaders from Isiolo, Samburu East, Laisamis and Marsabit Central who recently inspected the road were told that actual tarmacking had reached the 70 km mark, pavement layer at 95 km and earth work at 118 km.

Last year residents of Samburu East took to the streets to block the firm's work demanding to be served

with water for both themselves and their livestock which the company was forced to oblige as part of its corporate social responsibility.

This year, said the official, the El-Niño rains that have resulted to floods in both Isiolo and Samburu East are likely to delay their work but adds that they have responded by fixing the bridge at Archers Post.

Heavy rainfall especially at the source of Ewaso Ng'iro River at the Aberdares caused massive damages in game parks in both Isiolo and Samburu East that damaged the key Archers Post Bridge and game lodges.

However the completion of the road between Isiolo town and up to Sereolipi in Archers Post, has improved transport in the upper Eastern and Samburu East considerably.

Beneficiaries include the tourism sector in game reserves in Isiolo and Samburu East where accessing the parks has reduced from about two hours in the past to about 30 minutes now.

With the ongoing electricity connection to Archers Post and Wamba in Samburu East coupled with an all-weather road, locals are now relishing the benefits of development in northern Kenya.

Nyaribari Masaba hospital to get facelift

By BOB OMBATI

Gesusus sub district hospital in Masaba South District is set to receive a face lift following an allocation of Kshs0.3 million by Nyaribari Masaba Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

The area MP who is also Education Minister, Prof. Sam Ongeri, says the funds will help transform the facility which currently The MP says that residents will not have to walk for long distances in search of X-ray services which will now be available at the facility.

He urged the hospital managers and administrators to use the cash prudently to ensure all essential machines were functional to save residents money and time traveling to far flung areas in search of services.

Medical Services Permanent Secretary prof. James Ole Kiyiapi directed managers at the facility managers to repair a defective mobile X-ray machine or return the dysfunctional equipment to its supplier since it has been grounded over the last five years due to lack of spare parts. The PS at the same time asked hospitals administrators to prepare a budget that will guide in the expansion and equipping of the hospitals theatre, constructing a morgue, building a paediatric Ward and expanding the maternity wing.

He announced that the government will soon dispatch engineers to the facility to fix the X-ray machine and equip the theatre. Kiyiapi who was flanked by the hospitals medical superintendent, Dr. Paul Borome, urged the managers to involve the Ministry of Public Works to design the morgue and a storey building for the facility.

Kalonzo to irrigate Mwingi North

By KAVYU-KURA

VICE-PRESIDENT Kalonzo plans to initiate a multi million irrigation scheme project in his Mwingi north constituency in a move aimed at eradicating poverty.

The Usueni-Wikithuki irrigation project in Tseikuru District is estimated to cost Kshs2.7 billion. The project is part of efforts geared towards alleviation of hunger which has become synonymous in the constituency.

In April, when the VP hosted celebrations to mark his 25 years as a Member of Parliament, he visited some of the areas earmarked to benefit from the irrigation scheme and told the locals to brace for good days ahead once the project takes off as they will usher a new era of bumper harvest.

The VP who spoke at Usueni Secondary school and Musavani trading centres where he inspected education and water projects implemented by the World Vision Non-governmental organization (NGO), introduced some members of an American church that he said was willing to offer technical support for the irrigation project.

The V-P said that at the moment he was engaged in high-level discussions with friendly donors and countries to see whether he could be able to clinch a deal for ample financial support which would kick off very soon.

The irrigation scheme projects is the brain child of a small group of local people who came together as a cooperative society-Usueni-Wikithuki irrigation self-help group-who were out to harness



Kalonzo introduces members of a church organization that has interest in the irrigation project at Musavani market. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

the waters of the nearby River Tana for crop production and food sufficiency.

River Tana forms the eastern boundary of the project area and is the main source of water for most members of the self help group who live in the lower slopes of the Mwingi north game reserve. Most of the households are found between one and two Kilometres from Tana River.

The Chairman of the self-help group Mr. Nzomo Kakuru told The Link in Mwingi recently that for technical support, his group

had approached the water department in Mwingi who undertook a feasibility study to come up with the actual costing and the design of the project.

"Due to frequent famine that visited our area, we decided that the only panacea was by establishing an irrigation scheme that would ensure that our families have food throughout the year regardless of the erratic rainfall pattern," said Mr. Kakuru.

The feasibility was carried out by a team of experts led by Mr. Paul Munyau Kaleve who is the

District irrigation officer in charge of the larger Mwingi area.

In an interview with The Link, Kaleve points out that the area earmarked for the projects has fertile soils and hot climatic conditions conducive to high value horticulture.

He notes that frequent crop failure due to erratic and unreliable rainfall has subjected the locals to frequent food shortages, unemployment, low household incomes and general food insecurity. The officer lauds the local community group for coming up

with the idea as it would go along way in supplementing and heavily subsidizing normal subsistence rain fed agriculture.

If well implemented, he says, the project would supplement the Government's fight against poverty and improve the income levels of the beneficiaries thus making a significant positive contribution to upping rural income.

Besides creating employment, Kaleve further says, the project that is projected to directly benefit 5,000 households and irrigate 3,205 hectares is also hoped to increase the food supply chain by increasing the acreage under effective farming

The 52-Kilometer gravity pipeline together with the resettling of members of the cooperative society near the irrigations scheme will approximately cost Kshs2,749,054,928 according to the feasibility report.

"It should be noted that the area is sparsely populated and should farmers who will be irrigating the farms not be settled near the project, most of them will be trekking over 4 Kilometres to their plots, therefore making effective farming impossible," reads the report in part.

The implementation of the multi-million project will entail the construction of the intake works, the laying of the main pipeline and the sub main and other distributions lines besides the infield system.

Other works will include the construction of roads and gullies, crossings and the creation of new settlements for the farmers. Eight percent of the total cost would go into supervision and contingencies.

Malindi Women Fund underutilized-official

By BEKDAZO TONDO

WOMEN in Malindi are yet to spend a single cent of the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) despite the money being readily available for borrowing.

The fund which seeks to empower women economically largely remains underutilized in the area as majority of the beneficiaries lack information on how they can access the credit.

According to an administrative officer in the area Mr Kashero Chinyaka, most women are not aware of the funds while the few who have been able to access the money are yet to repay the loans advanced to them.

He says that it is ironical that a huge chunk of the money lies idle while the same people targeted for the funds were wallowing in poverty.

He says that a deliberate campaign must be undertaken to sensitize women in the area on the need to access credit.

Last year, a study undertaken by the Kenyan Chapter of the Federation of Women Lawyers (Fida-Kenya)

revealed that Women in at least 12 constituencies in the country are yet to spend a single cent of the Women Enterprise Fund.

According to the report, women's groups in the affected constituencies are not aware the fund exists while those who have heard about it don't know how to apply for loans.

The women Enterprise Fund was conceived by the Government in 2006 and officially launched in 2007. The principal objective of the fund is economic empowerment of women.

Women Enterprise Fund loans reach the target beneficiaries through selected financial intermediaries and directly through Constituency Women Enterprise Scheme (C-WES).

As at February 28, 2010 a total of Kshs.914. Million had been loaned to women, with Kshs648.5 Million being channeled through Financial Institutions (FIs) and Kshs265.5 Million through C-WES. Over 186,190 women have benefited from the WEF through both the financial intermediaries and the C-WES.

Youth fund gets more cash

By PETER MUTUKU

THE government has earmarked Kshs500 million for the Youth Enterprise Development Fund during the current financial.

According to Youth Affairs PS, James Waweru, the allocation will be in addition to over Kshs2.5 billion disbursed to 79,000 youth enterprises in the country since inception of the fund three years ago.

Waweru says the fund reaffirms government's commitment in improving the lives of young people in the country and notes with satisfaction that the cash that has been disbursed has served to positively transform the lives of young Kenyans.

"This transformation has included training youth entrepreneurs, assisting others to obtain employment abroad through the labour export component and assisting the youth to engage in viable enterprise access markets for their products and services through organized trade fairs," adds the PS.

"Empowering the youth eco-



Mr. Waweru: Youth Affairs PS

nically is a critical component towards the realization of Agenda Four of the National Accord as well as vision 2030," adds Waweru.

Waweru who spoke during a retreat for board members challenged members to demystify the funds mandate to Kenyan youths and help dispel misconception that it

is an elitist loan program that only serves those with sophisticated business proposals.

Waweru says that on the contrary, all youth owned enterprises and registered groups are eligible adding that the fund has recorded great success including establishment of partnerships with four financial institutions which encouraged by the funds progress have leveraged its resources.

The PS who was accompanied by CEO Omuro Wario and chairman James Gitau Singh says in order to expand and reach out to more youths and increase the positive economic impact, the Ministry will require improved budgetary allocations from the current Kshs500 million annually.

The PS also encouraged youths who benefit from the fund to ensure they repay in good time so that more youths are able to access the revolving funds.

"All funds that are accessed as loans must be repaid since any defaults would deny thousands of other youths immense opportunities.

Kiambu to become referral Hospital

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

PLANS are underway to elevate Kiambu District Hospital into a referral hospital at a cost of Kshs 54m.

According to the District Medical Officer of Health Romano Kinyua, the funds will go towards the construction of a 90 bed capacity maternity wing which will be equipped with a post natal theatre.

The official says that the project will be implemented in two phases within a period of two years.

On completion the facility will boost the hospital capacity which currently undertakes 40 deliveries in a day and help decongest the maternity wing whose bed capacity currently stands at 37.

Kiambu District Hospital serves an overwhelming number of patients from Mathare, Nairobi West, Thika and Ruiru towns.

The DDO says that leaders from the area have unanimously agreed to support the elevation of Gathanga Dispensary into a health centre under Economic Stimulus Programme as part of efforts to decongest the District hospital.

The official says that the dispensary is set to receive Kshs20 million under the ESP package. He explains that Kshs16.2 million will go towards the upgrading of the facility while Kshs3.8 will assist in equipping the same.

He says that Gathanga dispensary

was selected under the ESP package because it is centrally located has been functional over the years with the work load currently standing at an impressive figure.

The dispensary will serve a population of over 10,000 people on completion.

The upgrading of the facility is geared towards realizing the Millennium Development Goals.

Meanwhile, conflict between former Kiambaa Mp Njenga Karume and the incumbent MP Stanley Githunguri over who initiated a CDF sponsored health facility has delayed operations of the dispensary.

Muchatha dispensary which has already been gazetted as Ministry of Health facility was set to become operational in February after having been funded to the tune Kshs4million.

Karume initiated the project during 2006/2007 financial year using CDF money and while Githunguri has overseen the completion of the whole facility.

Kinyua says that a clinical officer was sent but he could not start work. Drugs valued at thousands of shillings are lying idle in the facility as the conflict between the two leaders take center stage.

The DDO now says that the government will spend an additional Kshs1 million to equip the facility with drugs as the initial consignment has expired and was detrimental to the health of residents.



Kiambu District development officer David Kirimi says that talks are under way to ensure that the facility becomes operational by August.

Kiambu District hospital medical officer Romano Kinyua displays a layout of the ongoing construction of a Maternity wing interconnected with a theatre. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi

State to stem child labour in Bunyala

By GILBERT OCHIENG

THE government will soon embark on a major crackdown in Bunyala District geared towards eradicating the rising cases of child labour in the area.

A District Officer in Bunyala Mr Richard Ajwang says that an impromptu crackdown will be conducted at the grassroots level and along the beaches to help eradicate child labour once and for all, adding that parents allowing their children to work at the said beaches will also be arrested and charged in a court of law.

The administrator says that some parents and guardians have allowed children to access beaches in search of employment at the expense of education instead of taking advantage of the free primary education (FPE) to enrol their children in school.

The DO who spoke during the Area Advisory Committee forum at the Port Victoria Town Council Hall under the auspices of the Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children (KAAC), expressed concern over the increased cases of child labour, child neglect and child abandonment in the district.

"A spot check along the beaches has established that majority of the children who have attained the age of going to school and those who are already in school are being lured by commercial boat owners to ferry passengers between one beach to another at a fee at the expense of education," adds the provincial administrator.

The provincial administrator at the



It is an offence to overwork children at their tender age.

same time urged stakeholders to assist in the setting up of a children's home in the district where the orphaned vulnerable children (OVCs) can be housed and accorded proper care.

The Bunyala District Children Officer Mr Maurice Okiru, on his part called for the establishment of a Children Protection Unit (CPU) at the Port Victoria police station where the child offenders will be confined to avoid being molested by adult suspects.

The children officer at the same time said there was urgent need to

undertake a marathon sensitization of children and parents at the grassroots level on Children Act and how it can effectively be implemented and hence win the war on child abuse.

The regional programme officer (Western) of the Kenya Alliance and Advancement of Children (KAAC) Mr John Oduor on his part said his organization will host a training workshop for the members of the Area Advisory Committee to appraise them on their roles and objectives in the war against child abuse cases.

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Mwingi farmers accuse local NCPB of graft

By KAVYU-KURA

Mwingi National Cereal and Produce Board (NCPB) depot management has been accused of involvement in shady deals that denied maize farmers Kshs2 million in sales.

A prominent Mwingi farmer Jones Nzomo Muniyithya says that although treasury released Kshs2 million to the depot for purchase of maize from local farmers, there is nothing tangible on ground to reflect the desired results.

Mr. Muniyithya accused the depot manager of instead buying maize from traders who had sourced the same from as far as Busia effectively denying local farmers their rightful share of the government allocation to them.

Speaking to The Link on behalf of fellow farmers and cereal dealers, Mr Muniyithya said that failure by the NCPB depot to receive maize from local farmers had defeated the very purpose for which the government had released funds to buy surplus maize from Mwingi farmers.

"It is sad that when the then minister for agriculture William Ruto visited the Mwingi depot in mid March he ordered the release of the money to be used to buy maize from local farmers but instead the money went to foreign traders who got their maize from Busia," claims Mr. Muniyithya.

He said in order to avoid suspicion, the Busia maize was initially stored at hired stores in Mwingi town and other nearby markets centres like Mbondoni and were later allegedly offloaded at the depot under the cover of darkness.

But in a rejoinder, the Mwingi NCPB depot manager Mr. Paul Kiragu dismissed the allegations as baseless. He challenged those with evidence that the depot had bought



Lorries packed outside the Mwingi NCPB depot on the day buying of maize was suspended.

Photo/Kavyu-Kura

maize from Busia to come forth.

"We are expected to operate without being policed by the media or any other person. We do everything in a transparent manner and besides Kshs2 million is too little and not everybody could have got a share," explained Kiragu when we visited his office.

Meanwhile the abrupt suspension of the Purchase of Maize from local farmers by the NCPB Mwingi in late April, left farmers and cereal traders in a dilemma.

Those who had delivered their maize at the depot were taken aback when they were confronted with a notice pinned at the entrance indicating that the buying of Maize crop had been suspended indefinitely.

The move by the Board placed local farmers and small time cereal traders at the mercy of brokers and middlemen who had taken to exploiting the window of opportunity to make a quick buck.

The stranded farmers who have nowhere to sell their maize said the

decision to stop buying the crop was unfair and punitive considering that the farmer had not even sold a quarter of their harvest following the recent good yields.

Speaking on behalf of farmers Ms. Mumba Muna said that it was unfortunate that the farmers were being exploited by brokers and middlemen who buy the crop at a throw away price. She appealed to local MPs Kalonzo Musyoka (Mwingi North) and David Musila (Mwingi South) to come to their rescue.

"Farmers have huge quantities of maize which they expected to sell to meet their domestic obligations. Our MP Kalonzo Musyoka who is the Vice President and David Musila of Mwingi South should now step in and save us from this dilemma," said Muna who added that she had 500 bags ready for sale.

She lamented that at Kshs2,300 a bag, the NCPB was the best buyer of Maize as even a local maize miller bought a sack of maize for a paltry Sh. 1,450 while locals cereal dealers

paid awfully low for the crop.

A spot check at various areas in Mwingi and Kamwongo it was clear that dealers were buying the maize for as little as Kshs12 a kilogramme which translates to barely Kshs 1080 for a 90 kilogramme sack of maize.

A trader a Kamwongo Ms. Munanie Musyoka had this to say: "It is true the price is too low but we cannot buy the maize at a better price because we also have nowhere to sell it. The other day I took a big quantity to the millers at Mwingi but they declined to receive it.

The Mwingi NCPB depot manager Paul Kiragu defended his decision to stop the purchase of the maize crop saying he was obeying orders from his superiors and there was nothing he could do to help the situation.

"This is something beyond my powers. I cannot offer any explanation why it has happened or even say when buying will resume because I am just acting on instructions from my bosses," adds Kiragu.

100 fish ponds built in Kiambaa

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

A TOTAL of 100 fish ponds have been constructed in Kiambaa constituency under the Economic Stimulus Project at cost of Kshs59,000.

According to Kiambu District Fisheries Officer Raphael Kasiu the project is now on its second phase of implementation. The DDO says that the government has delivered 150 kg of feed per fish pond and fertilizer while each farmer is expected to inject another 80 kg of the same.

Speaking in Gathanga while visiting a fish farmer, Kasiu said that each pond has 1000 fingerlings which the Tilapia fish have been feeding on for the last 90 days before the commencement of the actual feeding programme. "This is because the fingerlings reproduce faster hence providing continuous food supply to the Tilapia," he adds.

The fisheries officer explains that the Tilapia was being fed with the fingerlings as Kiambaa ecosystem is not favorable to the fingerlings.

Kasiu says there implementation process was faced with a number of challenges including floods caused by the heavy rains that have hit most parts of the country.

The officer however says that the first harvest is expected to be in December. Harvesting, handling and marketing is set to be done by clusters of 18 farmers per harvesting. This will assist in terms of controlling market prizes and hygiene as the activities will be done by the farmers under the guidance of a competent aquaculture extension officer.

St Annes Lioki is set to benefit from a liner pond which will be constructed at a cost of Kshs90,000. This follows a resolved by leaders that the institution benefits with a liner pond as specified under the ESP programme.

Central farmers trained in fish farming

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

FARMERS in Central Province, who have traditionally relied on maize, coffee and tea production as their only source of livelihood, will soon be able to reap highly from fish farming.

This follows the training of 44 people among them farmers and government officials on fish farming at Sagana fish farm in Ndia constituency.

The introduction of fish farming in Central Province will enhance food security, create employment opportunities and guarantee healthy living among the people.

The training comes a year after the area suffered from massive drought due to over reliance on maize which was most affected by lack of enough rainfall.

The programme is expected to succeed since Kenya has a vast network of water bodies that favor farming of a wide variety of fish species for commercial and food value.

The 44 trainees will further be able to train some other 280 fish farmers in 140 constituencies, who will thereafter be deployed in short term as trainers of over 30,000 fish farmers country-wide.

During the training, participants learnt about fish farm designs, water quality management, fish culture and nutrition, tilapia sex reversal, catfish production, brood stock management, fish health management and economics of fish among others.

The training follows the launch of the fish farming enterprise productivity programme under Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) in which the government plans to construct 28,000 fish ponds in 140 constituencies country wide.

The ESP package is expected to increase the number of fish ponds in the country to 100,000 and raise aquaculture production to over 20,000 metric tones in the short term to over 100,000 metric tones in the medium and long terms.

A total of 13,700 fish ponds have been constructed in the first

phase of the programme while 350 ponds are in the final stages completion.

The stocking phase has also started where over 2,163 ponds have been stocked with certified tilapia and catfish seeds.

The programme has created demand for about 28 million certified tilapia and catfish fingerlings and of 14,000 metric tones of specified and formulated fish feeds. Demand for the two commodities is set to rise to 100 million and 100,000 metric tones in the medium term respectively.

Breeding facilities for certified fish seeds and commercial production of certified fish feed are thus great opportunities for private hatcheries that will act as distributors with the government only regulating them to ensure that quality seeds and feeds are distributed.

The minister has also instructed the aquaculture working group to institute measures that will address challenges such as lack of adequate fingerlings, fish feeds, stocking and operationalisation of the ponds and also lack of ad-



A fish pond in Gathanga.

Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi

equate liners so as to keep the efforts on track and to ensure sustainability.

He is also initiating measures that will help to zero-rate the liners so that farmers can obtain them at a cheaper price.

This programme is with the support of the Israel Government which is supporting the development of fisheries sector in Kenya and which had provided the trainers of the training.

By JOSEPH MKUBWA

OTHAYA coffee farmers in Othaya have acquired a coffee mill at a cost of Kshs 12 million.

The farmers, numbering 14,000 drawn from the 19 coffee factories affiliated to Othaya Coffee Farmers Cooperative Society, will now be able to mill their own coffee without relying on commercial millers.

The society produces an average of 3 million kgs of coffee per year and hopes to produce more now that they have a mill around.

The mill was delivered recently at Gatuya-ini Coffee Factory from Brazil.

"It is a dream come true since the plan to acquire the mill was mooted four years ago. We shall now save a lot of money by milling our own coffee," says the chairman of the society Mr Newton Mwangi.

Othaya Farmers society is the second farmer's society in the country to acquire their own mill after Komothai Farmers Cooperative Society in Kiambu district which has been operational for several months.

The project started in year 2006 when the society wrote a proposal to European Union requesting for Kshs50 million grant.

The bid was not successful but they later managed to get Kshs8 million from Taifa Sacco as loan. The farmers contributed Kshs5 million through shares. The minimum shares sold were 1,800 and maximum were 3,600. "The mill will benefit farmers and enable them to consolidate their earnings through reduced costs," says the chairman.

The society's current production stands at 3.6 million Kilogrammes but with their own mill, production is set to go up to over 20 million kilogrammes per year. Ten years ago, production stood at 9.5 million Kilogrammes but this declined to 1.4 million Kgs due to mismanagement.

Othaya coffee farmers acquires a new mill



Othaya Coffee Farmers Cooperative Society chairman Mr Newton Mwangi point at the new coffee mill at Gatuya-ini Coffee Factory in Othaya recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

The machine will provide employment opportunities among youth who can now help in the milling of different grades and packaging of clean coffee.

Once the milling of parchment

coffee is complete, clean coffee will be delivered to warehouses in Nairobi where it will then be marketed by the Kenya Cooperatives Coffee Exporters (KCCE) Ltd.

Farmers will also benefit from in-

come that will be generated from the sale of husks.

The society has also acquired a bone hauler which has been going round the 19 factories processing the dry coffee.

AFC to allocate funds to paying livestock farmers

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

LIVESTOCK farmers will soon start receiving payment for animals sold to the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) from the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC).

Livestock Development Minister, Dr. Mohammed Kuti, says his Ministry was working out modalities of payment with AFC to KMC.

"My ministry will sit down with AFC and see how they can help livestock farmers get paid in due time as the four month waiting period is unreasonable," adds Dr. Kuti during a farmers fields day in Kiambu.

Dr. Kuti at the same time revealed that milk production in the country has gone up from 2.2 billion liters to 4.2 billion liters due to the revival of new KCC. He says that the Ministry of Finance has allocated Kshs 300 million to the Kenya Dairy Board to compensate farmers.

"The ministry of finance has given the Kenya dairy board money to compensate dairy farmers on the wasted milk. Farmers also need to embark on value addition through establishment of cottage industries or small processing plants in their respective areas," adds Dr. Kuti.

Machira Gichohi who is the Kenya dairy board managing director says currently the board was encouraging the 25 processing units in the country to look for markets in other countries to address the milk glut.

"The board has also embarked on strategic food reserve which entails preservation of milk into powder and beef into canned beef," adds Gichohi.

Githunguri Member of Parliament Peter Baiya also in attendance asked the government to establish proper guidelines for the industry and take stern measures due to the global warming which might affect the sector which has contributed to the national economic growth.

"The livestock ministry should put in place mechanism to contain the influx of cheap imports of milk products in the country to protect the local industry," adds Baiya.



Dr. Kuti

Gusii tea growers opposed to new bill

By BOB OMBATI

SMALL scale tea growers in Gusii region have vowed to oppose the adoption of the proposed Tea (Amendment) Bill 2010, which seeks to liberalise the sector and improve on the welfare of small scale tea farmers.

The farmers, who have teamed up with fifty three Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) tea factory directors, are pushing for the withdrawal of the bill introduced by MP for Konoin, Dr. Julius Kones, terming it as retrogressive, draconian and meant to impoverish them.

Led by directors John Nyagarama and Ben Matonda, the farmers say the Bill was in bad faith, driven by ulterior motives and had by a large extent ignored the input of stakeholders who should now be allowed to recommend amendments necessary for the enhancement of reforms in the industry.

The two argue that if the proposed law becomes operational, then farmers will be left at the mercy of brokers and foreign investors who were currently reaping huge profits from the sector.



Dr. Julius Kones

"We are told that the Bill, when enacted would benefit farmers by opening up the tea industry, but a close scrutiny on the provisions of the bill reveal a deliberate attempt to place our factories in the hands of foreign firms, said Matonda.

Kones forwarded the Bill under private members motion a few months after a similar one was introduced by the immediate former Agriculture minister William Ruto which was designed to fully empower the minister to control licens-

ing, marketing and management of tea factories. The court overruled him.

The bill by Ruto had sought to empower Agriculture minister to pick five of the eleven Tea Board of Kenya (TBK) members, a move that was vehemently opposed on the basis that it intended to hand over the industry to powerful individuals for selfish interest.

And now the controversial Bill by Kones proposes that eight of the board members be appointed by the Minister and leaves only three for the tea industry as opposed to the current situation where the tea industry has seven seats on the board.

The directors cites section 8B which states as follows: "Notwithstanding the provision of this Act (Cap 343) or any other law, a tea grower may deliver green leaf to a factory of his choice"

"This means that the Tea Board can register individual farmers and de-link them from their individual factories and deny them the benefits of collective action," adds Matonda.

They say that savings and Credit cooperative societies (Saccos) stand to lose since it would be impossible to recover loans advanced to tea farmers.

The directors note that most factories have secured loans to expand and modernize their facilities while offering farmers fertilizer credit schemes which they recover through check off system. Currently, the factories are repaying a loan of Kshs6 billion.

They say in 2008/2009 financial year, KTDA managed factories recovered Kshs1.04 billion on behalf of the Saccos through check off system, stressing if the structures were destroyed, the Saccos would collapse.

The directors noted that if the Bill sailed through, the fertilizer scheme, whose value stand at Kshs2.1 billion in 2009 cannot be sustained under the new Bill. "The KTDA structure enabled farmers access quality fertilizer at competitive rates.

The tea industry, adds Nyagarama contributed 4 percent to Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2008/2009 financial year with exports valued at Kshs70 billion.

He says farmers in Gusii region owned less than 0.5 acres under tea bushes, noting without KTDA factories, the livelihood of over 500,000 Kenyans in the industry was at stake.

Miwani, Muhoroni sugar firms to be privatized

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

A PARLIAMENTARY watchdog committee met directors of Kenya Sugar Board and Government representatives to discuss privatization of Miwani and Muhoroni sugar companies.

The agenda of the meeting also included having KSB table a list of companies importing sugar into the country which is killing the production of the commodity locally.

Chairman of the Parliamentary Departmental Committee on Agriculture John Mututho expressed concern with the fate of the two sugar companies under receivership.

Farmers have criticized the Receiver Managers for failing to revive the factories and want the factories privatized altogether. KSB towards the end of February this year reviewed the performance of the receiver managers at Miwani and Muhoroni Sugar companies as their term ended. The KSB Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Rosemary Mkok, took the committee through challenges facing the sugar sector terming some historical with high costs of imports.

"We are small production farms while we are competing with large scales farms," she said and cited the Sudan's Kenana Sugar Company in Sudan which is capable of producing 300,000 MT of sugar per year.

Mrs Mkok also expressed concern that Kenyan sugar companies were relying on rain waters saying that was a challenge compared to others using irrigated water. She was accompanied by KSB chairman Okoth Obado and a director Soulo Busolo among other representatives from KSB and ministries of Agriculture and Finance.

Mututho was accompanied by his vice chairman Lucas Chepkitony (Keiyo North), and a committee member Itwiku Mbai (Masinga). Mumias MP Ben Washiali attended the meeting as an interested person to fight for the grievances of sugar farmers.

New law set to end KTDA's monopoly



A tea plantation

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE monopoly of Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) as a sole marketer and regulator of the tea industry in Kenya is set to end once the newly published Tea (Amendment) Bill 2009 is enacted into law by parliament.

Small scale tea farmers under the union of Small Scale Tea Owners (KUSSTO) have welcomed the proposed Private Members Bill drafted by Konoin MP, Dr Julius Kones, saying the proposed law will fully liberalize the tea sector and pass benefits to farmers.

The union leaders, who met with the MP to understand the provisions of the proposed law said the bill will reform the industry and maximize benefits to all members.

The Union, together with the MP hit out at KTDA accusing it of promoting misinformation in order

to sabotage reforms in the tea sector, which the bill seeks to address and challenged KTDA to come clean on their intentions. The MP said once the bill becomes law it will review the composition of the Tea Board from the current 18 to 11 members.

"The board will also be reviewed to ensure that those with direct interest mainly farmers, relevant ministries, marketers and other professionals are represented. The bill will provide the board with additional functions including licensing of management agents, brokers and parkers. It will also ensure value addition to enhance returns for the tea industry and growers as a whole," said Dr Kones.

The MP said the proposed law will ensure that the industry is fully liberalized with farmers having control in the management of factories and will be able to market their tea directly to highest bidders even abroad as opposed to the current tea

auctioning.

Dr Kones said farmers will be liberated from the KTDA oppression and will be at liberty to sell their produce to any factory or company provided they reap maximum returns.

"We are certain that the new law will guard against the increased charges and long supply chain and minimize corrupt cartels who are reaping billions from the tea sector and impoverishing small scale tea farmers," he said.

He tore into the KTDA management saying their pretense to be champions of farmers as opposed to real oppressors of over 420,000 farmers will end with the new legislation. The law, he added will repeal the existing Tea Act Cap 343 and ensure that only professionals in the areas of agriculture, law, finance and marketing without direct interest in the industry will sit in the Tea Board.

Nyagah urges farmers to buy New KCC

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government plans to privatize the New Kenya Co-operative Creameries (KCC) in the next six months

According to the minister for Co-operative Development Joseph Nyagah, the process of privatizing the dairy company was at an advanced stage. Thus he urged farmers to mobilise funds to buy shares to own the organisation.

Nyagah says the move is aimed at ensuring the organisation reverts back to its owners after a successful bid to revitalize the once moribund body.

The Minister adds that soon he will announce the new managing director.

"We are almost set to announce the results," says Nyagah who was speaking in Kakamega at a meeting of leaders of cooperative societies drawn from Western province. The minister was accompanied by Commissioner of Cooperatives Fred Odhiambo and Western PC Samuel Kilele.

Nyagah at the same time called on farmers in sugar cane growing zones to mobilise resources to purchase shares at Nzoia Sugar Company which is set for privatisation.

He urged farmers in Nzoia sugar belt to get funds from Cooperative Bank and other institutions in readiness for the purchase of shares.

The minister reaffirmed government's commitment in ensuring that all cooperative societies retain a sound financial base to avoid being displaced by commercial banks in mobilisation of resources. Harambee Sacco is doing well and it can even turn itself into a bank as it has the required share capital and members," said Nyagah.

He explains that that there was no need for one to be called a chairman whereas they are leading a tiny society. He adds that the Government was still opposed to the move by the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) to venture into micro finance services. He says KTDA should retain its original mandate as a tea manufacturer instead of venturing into financial sector as this could amount to double standards and lead to conflicts with cooperative societies.

Mukhweso says the Government was in the process of ensuring that the collapsed Webuye Pan Paper Mills remits over Kshs160 million it owes members of cooperative movement.

He says that the revival of the factory should see members getting their money from the new management.

KUSCCO calls for removal of mortgage taxes

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (Kuscco) wants the Government to waive taxes charged on mortgages to enable its members access credit facilities.

Kuscco argues that the benefits currently being advanced to investors in the insurance industry should be extended to members of cooperative movement to curb disparities in the provision of mortgage services.

The union's Managing Director George Ototo further says that

members should not pay duty for the importation of vehicles as they contribute 60 per cent of the country's economy.

"We hold over Kshs200 billion in terms of savings and deposits. We need to enjoy some benefits from the government," he says.

Ototo was speaking during a delegates meeting at a Kakamega hotel which was presided over by the Kuscco national chairman Fidelis Kimutai and director Joseph Sagalla. Western Provincial Director of Cooperatives Nathan Mukhweso also addressed the meeting.

Kimutai at the same time reveals that Kuscco will oppose any move by the Kenya Tea Development Authority to register as a micro finance organisation.

Kimutai says that KTDA should concentrate on tea processing instead of venturing into financial services.

"This is unwanted competition as it is the work of farmers to form cooperatives and not the manufacturing firms such as KDTA," said Kimutai.

He explains that his organisation has written to the Minister for Cooperatives Joseph Nyagah to invalidate the move to curb unnecessary con-

frontation.

Mukhweso explains that the Government will continue to advocate for the merging of societies that fail to comply with the new regulations being introduced in the cooperative sector.

He says Western province has less than 10 societies that may survive when the new regulation comes into operation.

"Majority of them may be forced to merge as they will not be approved by the regulatory authority," said Mukhweso.

He explains that societies that have

not computerised their services and failed to put in place proper banking facilities will be phased out when the new regulations become effective.

Mukhweso says the Government was also pursuing employers, who have failed to remit money meant for members of cooperative societies to curb delays in the provision of loans in the sector.

He explains that Teachers Service Commission and local authorities have been identified as major defaulters who had contributed to the poor performance of societies in provision of financial services to members.

Mwalimu SACCO worried over state directive

By KAVYU-KURA

A TEACHERS saving and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) Society is apprehensive that stringent provisions imposed on SACCOS would lead to reduced earnings due to the high cost of implementation.

The net effect according to the Mwingi Mwalimu SACCO Society Mr. Charles Munyoki Vira is that members would not reap the benefits they previously enjoyed as returns and dividends would be adversely affected.

Worse still, the SACCO boss points out that through the newly established SACCO Society Regulatory Authority (SASRA), societies that will not adhere to regulations would not be allowed to pay any dividends to members.

Mr. Vira made the stunning revelations during his organizations Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the Muithi Museo Catholic Church hall in Mwingi town where he however disclosed that the demanded standards applied to all deposit taking SACCOS in the country.

“My fellow cooperators, the minister for Cooperative Development and Marketing has instituted regulations to provide minimum operational regulations and prudential standards in all deposit taking SACCO Societies in the country,” said Mr. Vira.

He further told the SACCO members that with the imposed regulations, they must prepare themselves for a reduced rate of surplus to enable the society sufficiently meet the SASRA requirements.

He had earlier announced that last year, the SACCO realized a surplus of slightly over Kshs15 million with a dividend of 10 percent while 11 percent was interest on deposit.

The SACCO Chairman told members that under the new arrangement all saccos will be required to obtain an operating license that is renewable annually at Kshs50,000.

SACCOS will also be required to maintain a capital base of Kshs10 million that must translate to Kshs20 million in the fourth year of operation.

Mr. Vira also disclosed that through SASRA, the cooperative ministry had also demanded that all SACCOS must have an internal auditor and must maintain 15 percent of the savings deposits in liquid assets-notes and coins.

The non-optional requirement will no doubt be a tall order for the SACCO whose chairman says was faced with a loss of Kshs2.5 million in Kilimo loans defaulting. He notes that due to the high frequency of defaulting, the SACCO had made the hard decision of suspending the product altogether.

“The Kilimo loan facility was horribly abused by some dishonest members who borrowed substantial amounts of money and thereafter changed their pay points to deny the society the much needed income and hence



Mr. Charles Vira addresses the Mwingi Mwalimu SACCO AGM recently. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

affecting our projected surplus,” lamented the Chairman.

He says as the Kilimo loan was suspended to the chagrin of honest cooperators and guarantors, the SACCO management had set its eyes on putting in place stringent control measures to check defaulters and at the same time track down the guarantors and attach their salaries to recover loans.

Mr. Vira who had no kind words for the defaulters took the opportunity to caution members against guaranteeing loans for irresponsible and dishonest colleagues and fellow members.

“I advise you members that before you sign any loan form, gauge the trustworthiness of that teacher because you are taking a liability that shall cost you dearly if he or she fails to repay that loan,” cautions the SACCO chairman.

He further reveals that in 2009, the SACCO lost a cool Kshs14.4 million in members check off remittances and loan repayments as a substantial number of members sought loans with Commercial Banks where they sold off any loans that had been advanced by the society.

He regrets that the phenomenon had adversely affected the operations of the SACCO as well as subjected members who had acquired loans through Commercial banks in serious and unbearable financial strains. “Some of them had to withdraw their shares from the SACCO as they struggled to remain afloat,” he explains.

Mr. Vira urged SACCO members to resist the temptations of

seeking financial assistance from the Commercial banks as they would end up being exploited and left high and dry. “Please members, the solution to your financial problems is in your SACCO but not banks,” pleaded Mr. Vira.

Nevertheless, despite the setback, the Chairman says, the SACCO had continued to grow. The share capital increased with an impressive margin to stand at Kshs2.6 million in 2009 from Kshs2.4 million in the previous

year. Members deposits went up to a high of Kshs121.5 million from 11.3 million within the period under review.

He says that the SACCO membership stood at 1128 in 2008 but rose to 1205 last year.

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Mukurwe-ini water woes almost fixed

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 600 households in Mukurwe-ini district are set to benefit from a water tank which has been built through CDF.

The Kshs2.4 million Gatura / Matira-ini water tank has the capacity to hold 58,000 litres of water which will be available for domestic use to the local residents who have been walking for over two kilometers in search of water.

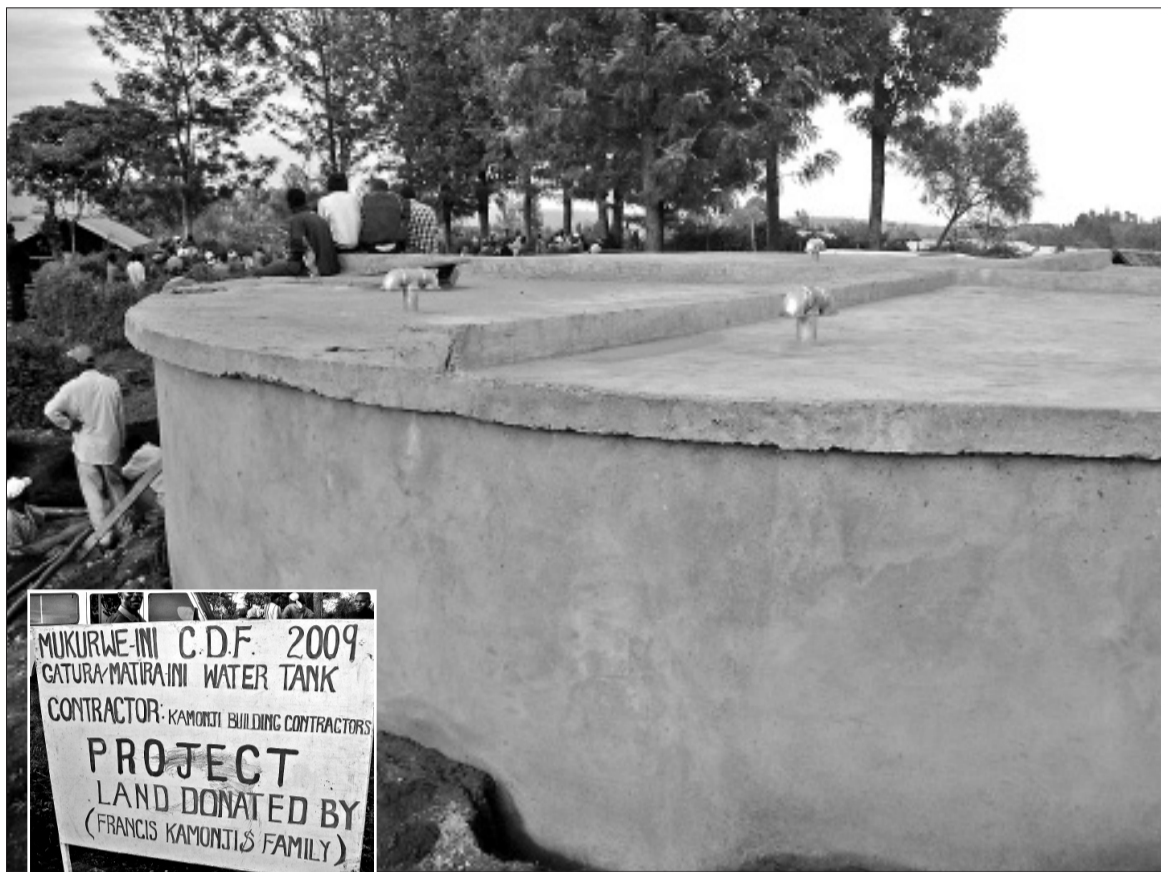
Local CDF coordinator Mr Wanjohi Maina says the tank will be connected with water from Chinga dam through Othaya Mukurwe-ini Water and Sanitation (Omwasco) next month.

“There has been an acute water shortage here especially during the dry season and now the residents of Gatura and Mbari ya Mwichi have a reason to celebrate as they will no longer waste time in search of water,” adds area MP Hon Kabando wa Kabando while commissioning the tank.

Already Kshs1.7 million have been spent in the project and another Kshs 600,000 will be channeled towards the completion of the tank by next month.

Meanwhile the Tana Water and Services Board has financed the construction of dams to the tune of Kshs45 million in Mathira district.

The Hombe and Ragati dams



The Kshs 2.4 million water tank which Mukurwe-ini CDF is building at Gatura area. Inset: Sign-board. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

have the capacity to produce 6million litres of water per day.

Hombe dam cost Sh 30 million while Ragati cost Sh 15 million. The projects started two years ago and are now fully operational.

Currently Hohwe dam is also being rehabilitated at a cost of

Kshs50 million by the National Water Cooperation and Pipeline Company and is expected to become operational by the end of the year.

According to the board Public Relations and Resource Mobilization Officer Mr Beato Migwi, over 80,000 will benefit

with the domestic water once the project is complete.

Other water projects are being implemented in Mwiyo and Warazo jet areas of Kieni district and will also ensure that residents of both Kieni East and West districts get access to piped water.

Gender Minister calls for protection of orphans

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

KENYA government is implementing a policy on the protection of the rights of the orphan and vulnerable children (OVCs), according Gender Minister Esther Murugi

She revealed that 2.4million children are orphans, with 48percent of them having been orphaned by HIV/Aids.

The minister regretted the death of extended family system that traditionally protected and cared for orphans.

“The practice is diminishing owing to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on adult population coupled with the adverse socio-economic effects which has eroded the family resources,” she said in Busia town on the World Orphans Day in a speech read on her behalf by Assistant Minister Atanus Manyala Keya.

The minister said that the government is encouraging the orphaned vulnerable children to be brought up in a family environment because it is the key to proper development and growth.

“It is imperative that we focus our effort in foster care so that they are brought up in a family set up,” the minister said, adding that there was need on the part of the stakeholders to work closely with the department of children and see how best the objective can be realised.

“To strengthen the child protection responses the ministry is operating the children rescue centres at the district level aimed at providing temporary shelters to children in need of protection as their cases are being addressed,” she said.

Murugi at the same time expressed concern over the alarming increase in the number of cases on physical and sexual abuse of children across the country, adding that this worrying trend must be stopped because such abuses affect the victims physically, mentally, socially thus lowering their confidence and self esteem.

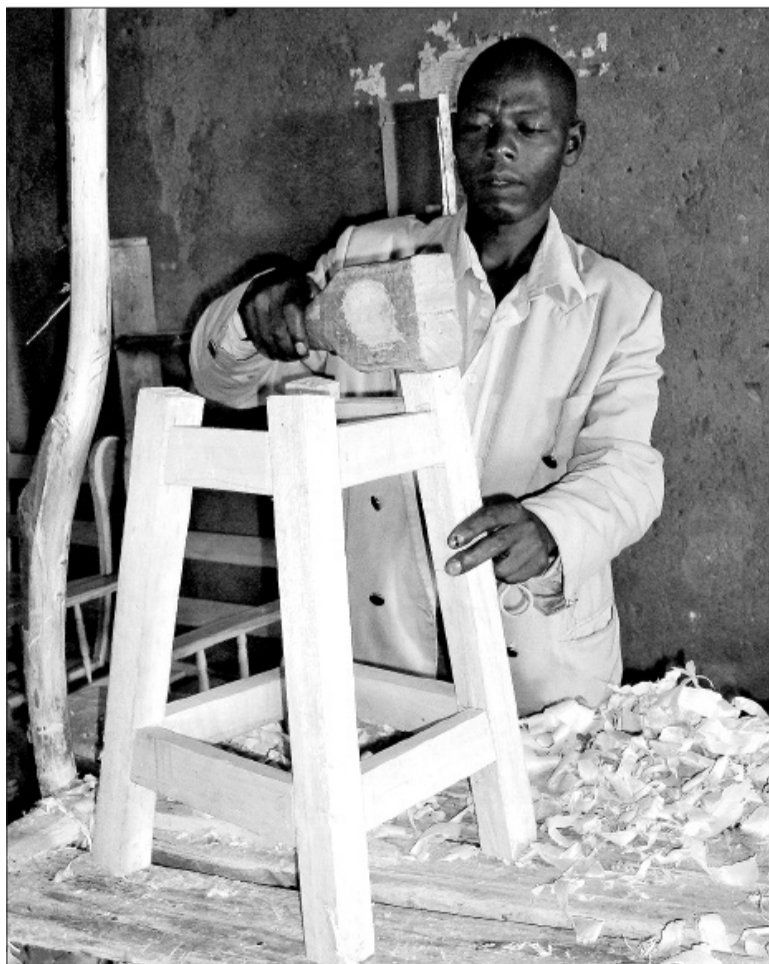
“The department is therefore urging the communities and neighbours to the affected children to report cases of child abuse to the law enforcement officers so that legal action can be taken against the culprits,” she said.



Ms. Murugi

Kaliluni Polytechnic facing collapse

By PETER MUTUKU



Kaliluni Polytechnic employee at work. The institution is on the verge of collapse due to lack funding. Photo/Peter Mutuku

A YOUTH polytechnic in Kathiani District is faced with imminent collapse and urgently requires financial support to reverse the situation.

The Kaliluni Youth polytechnic is grappling with financial constraints which threaten to ground the facility.

Parents now want the government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports to intervene and salvage the situation citing the enormous resources that went into its construction.

The institution which was started in 1983 by a German sponsor, Mrs JM Wember, in partnership with Africa Inland Church, has not benefitted from any government funding.

According to the institution manager, Mr. Jackson Wambua, tutors have gone for more than eight months without payments.

He says that although the institution serves four locations within its area of jurisdiction, it lacks physical structures and continue to register a drop in enrolment with current student population standing at a low of 24 .

A workshop that was set to equip students with invaluable skills on self reliance stalled mid way due to lack of funds and today is in a state of disrepair. “Facilities at the incomplete workshop have been vandalized and overgrown bushes have become an overbearing feature at the site, adds the manager during an interview with

The Link.

“We are wondering why the government is focusing more on the Kazi kwa Vijana initiative, which is a short term measure while ignoring long term ventures that could translate into personal development and address unemployment,” he wondered.

Situated in Iveti location the institution is ranked second in the newly created Kathiani district after Mitaboni youth polytechnic which has received a substantive allocation from the ministry.

The stunning revelations came as Youth and Sports assistant minister who is also the area MP Wavinya Ndeti nounced plans by the government to rehabilitate youth polytechnics to make them more attractive.

“We want to make them suitable choices for students who are inclined to technical subjects, rather than being turned into last resorts by those who fail to proceed to secondary schools,” she said.

She says the move aims at enhancing access to technical and vocational training and increasing enrollment in the Youth Polytechnics and targets existing public youth polytechnics.

Kenya’s youth polytechnic programme is widely regarded as having failed to meet its original objectives. The programme was supposed to provide a non-formal training to unemployed school-leavers in skills directly related to local income-generating opportunities.

Women called to support new constitution

By JOEL JUMA

AN assistant minister Elizabeth Ongoro has asked women to support proposed constitution.

Ongoro who was accompanied by Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organisation (MYWO) Secretary General Alice Kirambi says the draft published by Attorney General Amos Wako should be supported by women who stand to gain immensely once it is adopted at the referendum.

"We have been waiting for a new constitution and we should not waste this chance," adds Ongoro who is an assistant minister in the ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan.

Ongoro and Kirambi cautioned women against being misled by individuals out to advance their selfish agenda ahead of the referendum.

Ongoro was speaking during an Orange Women Democratic Movement meeting at a Kakamega hotel.

The women leaders meeting was also addressed by councillors from Western province led by Bibian Wandabwa of Kakamega municipal council and Mary Pasi of Butere/Mumias County Council.

Ongoro and the ODM Executive Director Janet Ongera told the meeting that the party will mount civic education pro-



Ms. Ongoro: Kasarani MP

grammes to ensure that the draft is converted into law for the

country.

They explained that campaigns for the draft have been designed to ensure that women in rural areas get the copies of the draft to enable them make informed choices.

"We are going to ensure that women are not used to campaign against the draft even if they are church leaders," said Ongera.

Ongoro explained that women holding positions in the churches opposed to the draft should not be used to campaign against the document.

"This draft will benefit women more compared to the current constitution," said Ongoro who is Kasarani MP.

Lamu AIDS patients' fate uncertain as USAid pulls out

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE future of more than 300 HIV/Aids infected persons and their families in five locations of Lamu archipelago is in jeopardy following a resolve by a donor to pull out from a project supporting them in the next six months.

The anticipated withdrawal of USAID funded APHIA II project by September this year, is likely to have far reaching ramifications to both the infected and affected families in the area. The Sauti ya Wanawake (Women's voices) which is a community based organization (CBO) which was implementing agency will no longer be able to sustain their activities which includes paying school fees for the orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC's) numbering almost 300 in the area.

Programs official Raya Famau says they have been forced to stop some of their activities in Lamu.

"With the withdrawal by USAID, the project will no longer be sustainable," she says adding that the infected persons and their families in Langoni, Mkomani, Shella/Manda, Mokowe in Faza west and Faza in Lamu East will be worst affected by the withdrawal.

Famau says that AIDS victims in the area still suffer from a lot of stigma, and therefore once the program collapses even those infected will no longer get assistance to live positively.

"When the program started two years ago, the Aphia II program was already in its third year, and since it is a five year project, it is set to end this year, hence throwing into jeopardy all our future activities," she added.

During the first year of the project in 2009, the CBO received Ksh4.8 million, the second year Ksh3.7 million which has been used to fund the group's activities to the infected persons.

"Our target was to recruit about 600 OVC's, but we are only catering for about 254 orphans at the moment where we assist them with their immediate needs such as health care, sanitary towels and school uniforms in addition to emergency nutritional support for three months," she adds.

They have now been forced to suspend activities such as provision of shelter and reduction of clients from about 80 per quarter to 30 at the moment.

Meanwhile, while soccer fans around the world will be glued on the TV sets watching their popular sport, football, a HIV/Aids organization, Altimate Management, will be out in public joints fighting the deadly disease.

According to a HIV/Aids campaigner and media celebrity, Walter Mong'are, Altimate Management Organization in conjunction with other organizations will crisscross pubs and restaurants conducting behavioral change talks and VCT. Nyambane, as he is popularly known, says Altimate Management Organization has embarked on a campaign to educate higher institutions of learning students on the need to abstain from sexual activities and the need for VCT.

By KAVYU-KURA

EVEN as the civic education on the proposed constitution got underway, civic educators in Mwingi want security guaranteed to facilitate voter education.

A Civic educator from Mbo-doni area in Mwingi Central district disclosed that educators were deeply concerned over their security as they embarked on a mission to counter myths and lies propagated by both the NO and YES camps.

John Ngito says many of them were concerned about their security because ahead of the 2005 constitutional referendum, some local politicians in opposing camps, had asked the public to lynch civic educators.

Speaking in Mwingi town during a training workshop for civic educators organized by the Lower Eastern Non-governmental organizations (LENGO) outfit, Ngito sought assurance that the civic educators would be safe as they went about their work.

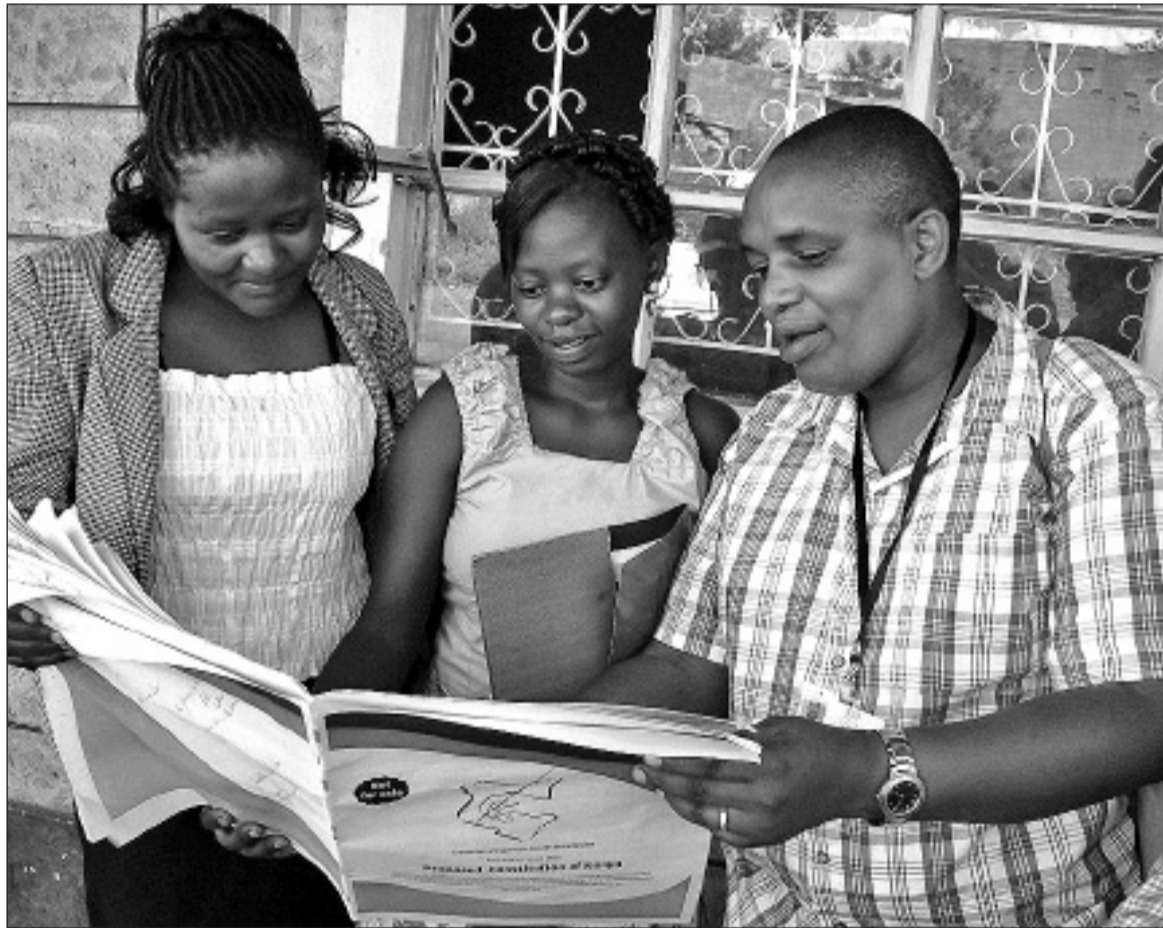
He recalled that in 2005 the civic educators ran into problems with the local politicians by seeking to correct assertions by the latter that a section of the draft constitution had a clause that allowed the deprivations of private land by a certain ethnic group.

"The politicians then held public meetings where they urged their electorates to lynch the civic educators for championing for the alienation of their land thus most of us (educators) had to go underground fearing for our lives," adds Ngito.

In response, lawyer Kyania Nzili who is also the Mwingi South constituency Committee of Experts (CoE) Civic educator told the grass-root educators that their safety was assured following the enactment of a law prohibiting incitement of any form during the referendum campaigns.

Nzili further assured the civic educators that this time round they had the good will of the local MPs Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka (Mwingi North) and

Civic educators express concerns over their security



Lawyer Kyania Nzili (right) scan details of the draft with Jacinta Mwoni (centre) and Monicah Kasyoka (left) during group discussion. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Defense assistant minister David Musila (Mwingi South) as they conducted civic education in the area.

He told them that as they embarked on their work, they should operate without fear or favour as they sought to dispel the myths and untruths being peddled by the anti-constitution group.

The Mwingi based lawyer stressed that it was within the civic educators mandate to counter strongly lies peddlers on the draft constitution and ensure Kenyans make the right decisions at the referendum based on the actual contents of the draft constitution.

"Locally I can assure you that not only MPs but also the local

populace is very enthusiastic about getting a new constitution and eager to be told the truth so that they can make informed choices and decisions as they cast their votes at the referendum," said Nzili.

He recalls that the agitations for a new constitution started about twenty years ago to check the excesses of the presidency that had become too authoritarian and usurped the role of the other two legislative and judicial arms of government.

"In order to ensure checks and balances on the increasing excesses of the presidency Kenyans started agitating for a new constitution and it is time you as civic educators did everything in

you power to ensure Kenyans get the constitution they have been craving for, said the lawyer.

He noted that the draft constitution could result to one of the best constitution as it matched international practices. He added opposition to the draft by the Kenyan clergy was uncalled for as the issues they raised stemmed from misinformation.

Nzili clarified that with a new constitution in place, the draft states that the provincial administration would be retained for purposes of public order and security and the propagation of government policies. He however said it would be restructured to fit well in a devolved system of government.

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

MOMBASA Polytechnic University College is to become a fully fledged university in the next three years.

The institution's Principal Prof. Josphat K. Mwatelah says the university college which was supposed to assume its status this year following a legal notice dated August 2007, is still in the formative stage due to delays in the establishment of the university college's council which took place towards the end of 2008.

"Despite these challenges, in three years time we should be able to take off through our parent university, the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology as an independent university," says Mwatelah, who was appointed and posted to head the institution of higher learning in March 2009.

He however says that the first batch of students who enrolled in degree programmes at the college are now in their third year of study.

Prof. Mwatelah believes that the Government will extend more support to the institution to help equip the relevant departments as the students moves to their fourth year. The university college offers Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Technology in Microbiology and Biotechnology as well as Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Electronics Engineering for its undergraduate students.

"Our four departments of Engineering are Building and Civil Engineering, Mechanical and Medical Engineering and Electrical and Electronics Engineering are in dire need of facilities. In Mechanical Engineering, we need Numerical machine called CNC which is only one in the whole country," he says.

In addition, he says Mombasa Polytechnic University College also plans to expand its workshop to ensure that it can accommodate the numbers anticipated to register "for the demand driven courses."

The Coastal region especially in Mombasa town has in the recent past attracted the presence of a number of universities both public and private including Moi University, Kenyatta University, University of Nairobi, Pwani University College, Daystar and Kenya Methodist University but still Mwatelah believes the programmes offered at the college can withstand the competition due to their popularity.

"But we cannot say that their presence is not a challenge to us because some of the programs offered in the said institutions are similar to what we have," he adds.

One unique feature about the institution is that it admits students directly from secondary school at first year, diploma holders at second year and higher diploma qualifiers at third year of study.

Initially the institution heavily relied on part-time lecturers from other univer-

Mombasa Poly set for full university status in 2012



Mombasa Polytechnic which is set for full university in 2012.

sities to administer the adopted Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) curriculum but from last year they have had their own senior members of staff.

"We have also embarked on a programme to continue training our TSC employed staff members so that they can be able to attain degrees," he says.

The university don discloses that six of his lecturers; five at local universities and one abroad, are pursuing further studies at doctorate of philosophy (PhD) level while 34 others with 31 at local and three at foreign universities are undertaking their Masters programs funded by the government through the university college.

Upon his arrival as the head of the institution, Prof Mwatelah can still remember a number of challenges that he has had to grapple with including human resource related issues, limited financial resources, inadequate laboratory facilities, insufficient classrooms and library facilities.

"When I came to this institution, one

major challenge that I encountered was that the staff here were not conversant with university management and even now I still have to rely on a skeleton of staff to run the facility," he laments.

We also experienced shortages in classrooms forcing us to convert some residential houses classes and with time we have managed to address the crisis.

He also expresses the need for the government to allocate more funds to oversee the establishment of a state of the art library to keep abreast with market needs.

"If we can be given what we have requested from the government, then it will be very possible for us to grow. Most importantly we need the government to provide us with more space for expansion considering that we only have 27.5 hectares of land which makes expansion a challenge," he adds with great expectations.

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (COPA) Dr George Afeti says the upgrading of polytechnics to degree

awarding status, has accorded higher education a diversified approach in terms of institution type, programme and content, course duration and cost of training.

"This will offer secondary school leavers and other learners a wider choice of higher education programmes of study that meet their training needs and financing ability," he notes.

If the polytechnics become degree-awarding institutions, the prospects for inter linkages and articulation with the universities will be enhanced adds Dr Afeti.

"By awarding degrees, polytechnics will be better prepared to meet the challenges that come with globalisation in the rapidly changing technological environment."

However, he also warns against merely elevating the status of the polytechnics without upgrading their teaching and learning facilities saying if the skills and degrees to be awarded by the institutions are to measure up to quality, human resource at the polytechnics must be raised to the required level.

140 teachers sacked over sexual affairs with pupils

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) says over 142 teachers have been interdicted over sexual offences.

Knut Deputy Secretary General David Okuta says out of the 200 cases that are pending before the disciplinary committee, 142 cases are sexually related involving both primary and secondary school teachers.

He reveals that most of the culprits are accused of defiling their pupils while others are accused of indecently assaulting the pupils by touching their private parts.

Okuta who spoke during an Annual General Meeting says that cases of sexual molestation have increased tremendously in the recent past and urged teachers to stop the ungodly acts.

The Knut official says that the fate of the interdicted teachers will be known this month when the disciplinary committee sits to deliberate on the cases. He termed the situation as serious and grave and warned the culprits that they may be summarily dismissed from the service if found guilty.

The union boss wondered why many teachers are turning against the students who they are supposed to nurture and protect adding that the union will not protect any teacher found guilty of the vice.

In March this year, First Lady Lucy Kibaki accused Knut officials of protecting amorous teachers who continue to destroy the future of young girls in schools.

She said that no deterrent action had been taken against such teachers and urged TSC to take severe action against such teachers.

In Kirinyaga district, a primary school head teacher went missing after seven pupils recorded statement with police accusing him of sexually molesting them.

The teacher according to the police has been forcing the pupils to have sex with him in his office.

Several girls from the school have dropped out after being impregnated by the suspect.

MPs want hospitals in Central Province fixed

By JOSEPH WAMBUGU

THE Parliamentary Select Committee on Health has expressed their dismay over the sorry state of hospitals in Central province.

The committee who spoke after touring Thika, Murang'a district hospitals and Nyeri Provincial General Hospital, expressed their shock at the bad state of medical facilities saying the level of infrastructure is wanting.

Briefing journalists at Nyeri PGH after the tour, the committee chairman who is also the MP for Nyaribari Chache Robert Monda said that the three hospitals faced a myriad of challenges that ranged from lack of equip-

ments, drugs to shortage of medical personnel and were congested.

"A hospital like the Nyeri PGH was built in 1930 and more than 70 years later they are still using the same facilities. Thika hospital was built in 1942 while Murang'a was built in 1950 and yet the hospitals are using the same facilities, an issue which has led to congestion," says the PSC chairman. The committee says that the hospitals are over stretched in terms of infrastructure and some machines had degenerated and become obsolete over the years. Their buildings are also old and condemned.

They say the working conditions are unacceptable and show the services are incomparable to other hospitals like

private hospitals. "Staffing level is very low and over strained. There is under staffing of nurses, doctors and paramedics. This is very unfortunate," laments Monda. Nyeri PGH alone has a shortage of 170 medical personnel after four doctors left the facility for greener pastures two months ago.

Those who accompanied the chairman included MPs Siplam Omollo (Uriri), Victor Munyaka (Machakos Town), Sheik Noor (Nominated MP) and Joseph Mawanga (Kasipul Kabondo).

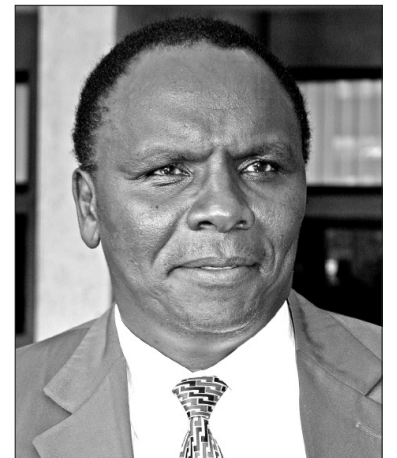
He added that the committee was very shocked that the supplies of drugs in the facilities are below 50 per cent including Thika district Hospital which is 40 kilometers from Nairobi.

"Somebody must explain to Kenyans why some hospitals are getting low supply of drugs. What else can a hospital do if it doesn't have drugs and medical staff?" he posed.

The committee has since urged the ministries of Medical services and Health and Sanitation to rectify the issue to improve services in the medical facilities.

The MPs also urged the Finance Ministry to increase budgetary allocations which must be reviewed regularly.

"The Ministry of Finance should redirect their efforts on health sector. The budget for health sector should be reviewed every now and then," insists the PSC chairman Monda.



Mr. Monda

By MORRIS GITHENYA

Central leaders call for more constituencies

LEADERS from Central Province are upbeat that vast and overpopulated constituencies would be split to bring services closer to the people.

They asked the Independent Boundary Review Commission to put into consideration the geographical size and populations of the respective areas.

Already, leaders have identified Kabete, Juja, Kiharu, Kieni and Mathira as the main constituencies which should be accorded priority as the boundary review commission compiles its report to be tabled in parliament.

In a similar exercise held in 1997, Mathioya constituency in Central was curved out from the vast Kangema constituency. However other areas were left out despite having larger populations which cried for representation.

However, the commission led by Andrew Ligale has assured the public that their requests will be considered since recommendations will also be guided by figures from the national populations census.

In Murang'a region, leaders requested the commission to ensure Kiharu constituency will be among the areas to benefit owing to vast area it covers.

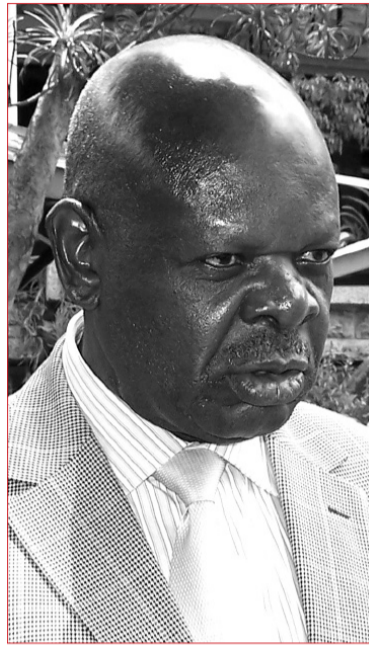
All the six Members of Parliament led by Kangema MP John Michuki, Peter Kenneth (Gatanga), Elias Mbua (Maragua), Clement Muchiri (Mathioya) Muturi Mwangi (Kiharu) and Jamleck Kamau (Kigumo)



Mr. Michuki: Kangema MP



Mr. Kenneth: Gatanga MP



Mr. Ligale: IBRC chairman

were unanimous that Kiharu be among the first to benefit in the boundary review exercise.

Kiharu MP Muturi says both Kangema and Mathioya constituencies combined could not compare to his vast constituency.

"Kiharu is the biggest constituency and neighbours Ndia and Mbeere constituencies on the lower part and Aberdare

Forest on the upper side," said Muturi when the commission held a sitting in Murang'a town.

In Murang'a South district, the sitting chaired by former Nairobi PC Joseph Kaguthi was dramatic after leaders differed with suggestions by Maragua MP Elias Mbau that parts of Muthithi and Kahumbu locations of Kigumo constituency be hived off to create Makuyu

constituency.

Later speaking to The Link, Mbau said he wanted an additional constituency in the area to enable the region enjoy more resources from the government.

He said the case of Kiharu constituency had been resolved and added that he was waiting for the commission to compile the report to be tabled to parliament.

Forest body to back beach hotels in mangroves production

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

KENYA Forest Association (KFA) will license and empower hotels to support mangroves established along coastal beaches.

KFA director, Mr David Mbugua says that there is need to protect and conserve mangroves as they were the breeding sites for marine species.

Mbugua who spoke in Kilifi notes that mangrove trees are an endangered species as people cut them for poles especially in the northern coast region with Kilifi being the most affected largely along the creel.

Mbugua says that the Kaya forests will in future be managed in partnership with the locals and the Kenya Forest Association.

He reveals that there was a plan to legalize the production and sale of charcoal on condition that the burners are established in organized groups. He says that in the new arrangement, organized groups will then be licensed to operate.

Meanwhile, Molo town residents want the council to stop using the source of River Molo as a dump site.

Representatives of the 600,000 residents argue that move was a great health risk as samples of the water taken from the river indicate that the water was contaminated with faecal waste.

The findings released by a consortium of NGOs in Molo, warns that the water was not fit for human consumption. A representative of the NGOs, Joseph Karangati says the communities living down stream face the danger of contracting diseases.

Nairobi to host World Youth Alliance meeting

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

ABOUT 100 youth leaders from more than 15 African countries are scheduled to gather in Nairobi for the World Youth Alliance.

The forum to be held between August 11 and 13 at Kenya High School is expected to address governance and development related issues.

The theme of the Africa Emerging Leaders conference is Uniting Africa Youth on Good Governance and Development.

A number of topics have been

lined up that would address Governance and development related issues.

The conference will feature group discussions, speeches and expert lectures from local and international speakers drawn from the private sector, civil society, government and the diplomatic community.

Among the topics lined up, including the role of good governance in development, corruption, democracy in Africa and Entrepreneurship, Climate change among others. The forum comes in the wake of Africa's revitalization in Socio-economical and a political projection as the con-

tinents has long been pinned down largely by poor governance.

According to the Director of Operations, World Youth Alliance Africa Region, Mr Hezborn Mogambi, the platform will arm leaders from the continent with facts to ensure building of free, just, peaceful and prosperous societies.

"We have put together a formidable conference that will jog minds of youth leaders and chart a new course for youth engagement in governance and development issues in their countries," he said.

The Alliance is a global coal-

ition of over one million youth from around the world between ages 10 and 30 years that promotes dignity of human race by building solidarity among youth from developed and developing countries. The organization that has been accredited to UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2004, works in three areas of focus including training, advocacy and culture.

World Youth Alliance operates in five regions including Europe-Brussels, Africa-Nairobi, Asia Pacific-Manilla, Latin America-Mexico City and North America-New York.

Murang'a leaders want college to become varsity

By MORRIS GITHENYA

Leaders from the larger Murang'a District want the Murang'a College of Technology elevated to a university status.

The leaders who included MPs Jamleck Kamau (Kigumo) Elias Mbau (Maragua) Maina Kamau (Kandara) Muturi Mwangi (Kiharu) say that it is unfair that the institution is still considered as a polytechnic when majority of such institutions have been upgraded to offer degree programmes.

They say many students from the area were being forced to enroll for degree programmes in far flung areas despite the fact that the institution was among the first polytechnics to be established in the country.

"It is a pity that a college that was established in 1970 remains in the same status for decades yet upcoming ones have been elevated to higher status," adds Jamleck Kamau (Kigumo).

They told the Vice President who recently visited the area to assist them push for the elevation of the college to help tap on the large demand for University education. Leaders also asked the government to consider waiving Kshs1.2 billion debt owed to coffee farmers from the area.

The leaders said the debt which has accrued over a decade now was the main cause of suffering among farmers.

By BONIFACE MULU

Solar Aid aids two Kitui schools

THE Syomunyu Girls and Muvitha Mixed Secondary Schools in Kitui District have benefited from two solar cells valued at Kshs900,000 from the London-based Solar Aid International Charitable Organisation.

The Syomunyu Girls Secondary School is in Kanyangi location, while the Muvitha Mixed Secondary School is in Nzongoni location of Yatta division.

According to a programme manager in the organization, Miguel D.Ramirez, each of the 360 watts solar panels are valued Kshs450,000.

He revealed that currently the project was being implemented on a pilot basis and Kitui West constituency will serve as a model constitu-

ency during the initial phase of the implementation period.

"This is the beginning of our relationship with Kitui West constituency. We want you to maintain and strengthen that relationship," he told the Kitui West constituents," said the programme manager when he handed over the solar panels in a ceremony that was attended by the chairman of board of directors in the organization Jeremy Legett, head of programmes John Keane and the Youth Entrepreneur Services (YES) Kenya country coordinator Emmanuel Dennis.

Area Member of Parliament Charles Mutisya Nyamai highly

thanked the sponsors for the gesture. He said he was very grateful for the events.

"We highly thank you for accepting to assist us after requesting you for help," the MP told the donors.

He further announced that Kwa Mutonga, Kiamani, Yalatani and Kaimu primary and secondary schools are set to benefit in the next phase which will also target selected dispensaries and churches.

The MP at the same time pointed out that the constituency requires Kshs4 billion to finance an elaborate electrification programme.

The area comprises of three vast administrative divisions namely

Yatta, Matinyani and Mutonguni. Nyamai said that the Yatta division alone requires half a billion shillings to supply it with electricity.

He said that the current allocation by the government was not enough to supply electricity in his constituency and appealed for more funds to help jumpstart the project.

The MP also said that plans are underway to drill a borehole at the Syomunyu Girls Secondary School by June this year to help address water shortages.

He disclosed that since his election in 2007, he had built 15 new secondary schools and 20 dispensaries in the constituency.

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

EAC urged to speed up integration to woo investors

AS the day set to ratify the East African Community Common Market Protocol draws near, member countries are being urged to step up efforts to promote the region as one viable investment destination.

In a statement EAC Deputy Secretary General for Planning and Infrastructure, Alloys Mutabingwa, says EAC countries must organize, unite, stand and be counted in order to stand global market competition.

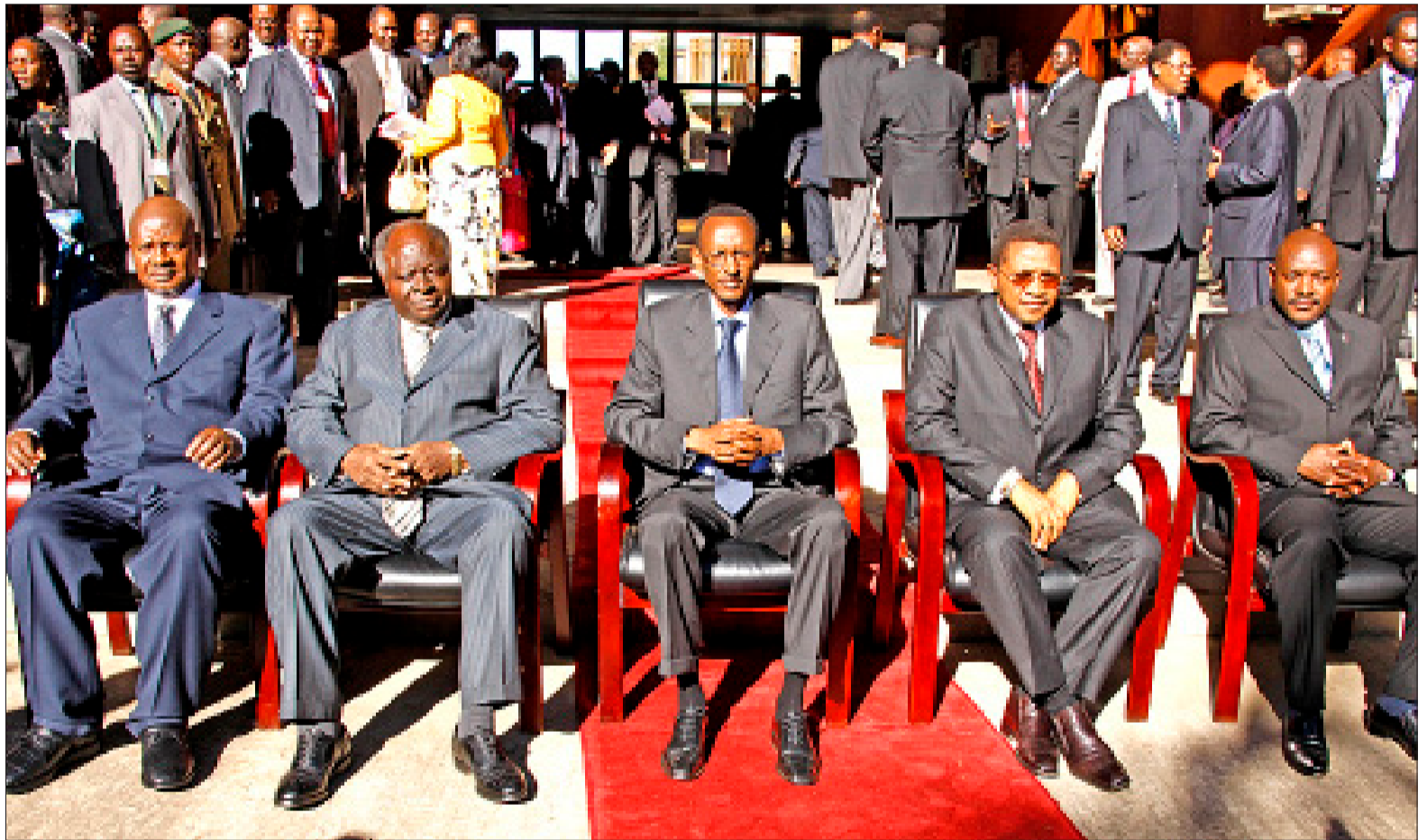
“Considering investment promotion, there are over 170 Investment Promotion Agencies the world over competing for scarce investment resources. Aggressive attempts have been made both at the regional and national levels, to attract and retain investors,” said Mutabingwa.

He noted that cross-border trade and investment is on the rise with Kenya registering an increase of over Ksh3.8 billion (US\$50 million). Uganda on the other hand has attained a cross border trade revenue amounting to US\$200 million; Tanzania US\$300 million and Rwanda US\$799 million.

Once in place it is expected that free flow of goods, services and capital within East Africa will herald a new era in the EAC integration agenda. The Customs Union has already registered improved trade and investment among the Partner States.

With the Common Market Protocol giving more freedom to investors, service providers and other ordinary East Africans; the stage is now set for more wealth creation. The firms will reap the benefits of economies of scale derived from a much larger market.

He notes that while Kenya remains the largest single source of cross border investment in the region, there are strong indications that Uganda peaks attraction of cross border investments fol-



EAC leaders in a group photograph. Photo/File

lowed by Tanzania and Rwanda.

Burundi is also on a steady rise given its magnificent tourist sites, strategic geographic position as well as natural resources. All the five countries acting together strive to be an international investment hub, implementing policies and strategies that are anchored on comparative advantages among them.

“We must recognize and encourage cross border investors in EAC as a way of strengthening

the bonds of integration, while enjoying the benefits of operating in a single market,” said Mutabingwa.

The EAC region has been acclaimed as one of the fastest reforming regions in the world in terms of doing business by internationally recognized institutions like the World Bank and UNCTAD.

Last year, Rwanda topped the world as the fastest reformer while Uganda, Tanzania and Ken-

ya have received accolades in this respect too. With the Republic of Burundi setting up an Investment Promotion Agency last year, the region is now destined to become the business destination of choice in Africa.

As the region moves towards a fully integrated economic community where goods, capital, labour and services move freely without borders, the 130 million East African citizens stand to enjoy the full benefits of cross bor-

der trade and investment while the region’s US\$73 billion worth of Gross Domestic Product is expected to rise.

All the five countries are striving to be an international investment hub, implementing policies and strategies that are anchored on comparative advantages among them, thus the operationalisation of the fully fledged Customs Union in January and the implementation of the Common Market Protocol in July this year.

Mt. Elgon residents demand own county

By AGGREY BUCHUJNU

POVERTY in Mt. Elgon District is as a result of so many factors, some of which are beyond the control of area residents.

During the stakeholders’ forum held at a Kimilili town hotel the participants, said that the area lagged behind in development since independence

due to factors such as idleness, overdrinking, lack of patience, hatred, political instability, insecurity and poor infrastructure.

The participants of the one day forum were categorical that even if the proposed draft constitution is adopted during the referendum, residents of Mt Elgon are not likely to benefit.

“We the people of Mt. Elgon need our own county in order

to adequately address issues of corruption and impunity,” said Mr. George Kwemioi.

Mr. Kwemioi added that though the proposed draft constitution is 95 per cent good, issues of land, Kadhis court and devolution, especially the counties need to be looked into a fresh.

However, the facilitators of the forum Mr. Kenneth Kogutu

from Ufadhili Trust and the regional coordinator Mr. Martin Wanyonyi, told the participants that land clauses in the proposed draft constitution are friendly to the ordinary citizen as compared to the current constitution.

“If the proposed constitution is passed during the referendum the president will not have the powers to allocate land arbi-

trarily as the case is now,” said Kogutu.

The participants were reminded that in order to adequately fight for their rights and make the government accountable, they need to form citizen assemblies, share information using opportunistic forums and network with other civil society organizations including the media.

The new authorities

Overview

The enactment of Kenya Roads Act (2007) gave way to the establishment of the Kenya National Highways Authority, the Kenya Urban Roads Authority and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority.

This in effect led to the adoption of a vertical arrangement in the management of roads sector in the country with funds being channeled directly to the villages

The authorities mandate include maintaining roads within their jurisdiction, providing an operational and organizational framework within which to construct roads based on classification as listed under each category.

The Highway Authority oversees the management, development and rehabilitation of national roads. The Rural Roads Authority is responsible for the maintenance of rural roads while Urban Roads Authority takes charge of roads in cities and municipalities.



The management of roads in Kenya has been undergoing changes since 2007. Rather than the Ministry of Roads transcending from Nairobi to the villages, the roads sector is now under three different public authorities. In this issue FAITH MUIRURI highlights of the authorities and their respective mandates.

Powers of the Authorities

- To construct new roads, bridge, building drainage structure, drain, river channeling
- To measure and assess the weights, dimensions and capacities of vehicles using any road and ensure compliance with rules and regulations relating to axle load control.
- With the approval of the Minister, to determine, impose and levy rates, tolls, charges, dues or fees for any of its services or for use by any person of its facilities
- To prohibit, control or regulate
- (i) The use by any person of the services performed or the facilities provided by the Authority

- (ii) The use of any vehicle on any road or on any premises occupied by the Authority
- To sell, let or otherwise dispose off any property, movable or immovable which in the opinion of the Board is not necessary for the purposes of the Authority
- To act as an agent for any person engaged whether within Kenya or elsewhere in the performance of services, or the provision of facilities, of a kind similar or complementary to those performed by the Authority
- To enter into agreements with any person
- (i) For the supply, construction, manufacture, maintenance or repair of any property, movable or immovable,

- on behalf of the Authority
- (ii) For the performance or provision of the services or the facilities which may be performed or provided by the Authority
- (iii) For the payment, collection or apportionment of any tolls, rates, charges or other receipts arising out of the performance or the provision by that person of any such services or facilities
- To establish or acquire any subsidiary corporation with the written approval of the Minister responsible for finance
- To enter into any arrangement with any state corporation or other entity which in the opinion of the Board is likely to promote or secure the provision, or im-

proved provision of any service or facilities which they may separately provide.

Each Authority is currently run by a Director General who is responsible of day today operations and administration of the Authority in respect of which he is appointed.

The Authorities are also managed by different Boards each comprising of

- A non executive chairman appointed by the President
- Permanent Secretaries in the

NATIONAL

CLASS	DESCRIPTION
CLASS A	International trunk roads, international import and export boundaries or terminations
CLASS B	National trunk roads and centres
CLASS C	Primary roads linking to each other or two

The Highway

Functions

- Constructs, upgrades, rehabilitates and maintains roads under its control
- Controls national roads and road reserves and access to roadside developments
- Implements road policies in relation to national roads.
- Ensures adherence to the rules and guidelines spelt out in the Traffic Act and under any regulations under this Act.
- Ensures that the quality of road works is in accordance with such standards as may be prescribed the Minister
- In collaboration with the Transport Ministry and the police department, oversees the

The Kenya Rural

Functions

- Constructs, upgrades, rehabilitates and maintains roads under its control
- Controls reserves for rural roads and access to roadside developments
- Implements road policies in relation to rural roads
- Ensures adherence by motorists to the rules and guidelines on



A number of roads in the country undergo reconstruction. Billions of shillings have been pumped to ensure implementation of reforms in the sector. Photo/File

es managing roads

Ministries of Roads, Transport and Finance

- The Director General is an ex-officio member
- Five other persons also sit in the board by virtue of their knowledge or experience in
 - (i) Industry
 - (ii) Highway engineering
 - (iii) Transport economies
 - (iv) Surveying
 - (v) Accountancy or law
 - (vi) Urban and regional planning
 - (vii) A member of an association affiliated to local government

AL ROADS

roads linking centres of commerce and crossing international boundaries at international ports
linking nationally important centres
g provincially important centres and higher class roads

ys Authority

- management of traffic and road safety on national roads
- Collects and collates all such data related to the use of national roads as may be necessary for efficient planning under this Act
- Monitors and evaluates the use of national roads
- Plans the development and maintenance of national roads
- Advises the Minister on all issues relating to national roads
- Liaises and coordinates with other road authorities in planning and on operations in respect of roads, and
- Performs such other functions related to implementation of this Act as may be directed by the Minister

Roads Authority

- axle load control prescribed under the Traffic Act or any regulations under this Act
- Ensures that the quality of road works is in accordance with such standards as may be defined by the Minister
- In collaboration with the Ministry of transport and the police department, oversees the



A section of the 136Km stretch of Isiolo Moyale road which is under construction. The road is expected to be completed by September this year. Photo/Hussein Salea

- management of traffic on rural roads and issues related to road safety
- Collects and collates all data related to the use of rural roads as may be necessary for efficient forward planning under this Act
- Monitors and evaluates the use of rural roads

- Plans the development and maintenance of rural roads.
- Liaises and coordinate with other authorities in planning and operations in respect of roads
- Prepares road work programmes for all rural roads
- Advises the Minister on all issues relating to rural roads.

RURAL ROADS

CLASS	DESCRIPTION
CLASS D	Secondary Roads linking locally important centres to each other, to more important centres or to higher class roads
CLASS E	Any link to a minor centre
CLASS F	Forest roads
CLASS G	Roads serving Government institutions
CLASS K	Roads accessing coffee growing areas
CLASS L	Roads accessing settlement scheme areas
CLASS P	National Park roads
CLASS R	Roads accessing rural areas
CLASS S	Roads accessing sugar growing areas
CLASS T	Roads accessing tea growing areas
CLASS U	Unclassified rural roads including mining roads
CLASS W	Roads accessing wheat growing areas

The Kenya Urban Roads Authority

- Functions
- Constructs, upgrades, rehabilitates and maintains roads under its control
 - Control urban road reserves and access to roadside developments
 - Implements road policies in relation to urban roads
 - Ensures adherence by motorists to the rules and guidelines on axle load control prescribed under the Traffic Act or any regulations under this Act
 - Ensures that the quality of road works is in accordance with such standards as may be defined by the Minister
 - In collaboration with the Ministry responsible for transport and the police department oversee the

- management traffic and road safety on urban roads
- Collects and collates all such data related to the use of urban roads as may be necessary for efficient forward planning under this act.
- Monitors and evaluates the use of urban roads
- Plans the development and maintenance of urban roads
- Prepares the road works programmes for all urban roads
- Liaises and coordinates with other road authorities in planning and operations in respect of roads
- Advises the minister on all issues relating to urban roads

URBAN ROADS

CLASS	DESCRIPTION
CLASS UA	Urban Arterials
CLASS UC	Urban collectors including primary distributors and district distributors
CLASS UL	Urban local roads including minor distributors, local streets, residential stand accesses, commercial and industrial stand accesses, shopping streets