

New bill gives more powers to the TSC

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE Teachers Service Commission draft bill has been finalized and handed over to Education Minister Sam Onger (pictured), who is expected to submit it to the Constitution Implementation Commission (CIC).

However, before transmitting the draft bill to the Charles Nyachae headed CIC, Prof Onger is expected to make some inputs.

Among the measures outlined in the draft Bill include deregistration of teachers who fail to meet professional requirements.

On perks, the draft Bill simply states that members and staff of TSC shall be paid remuneration and allowances as determined by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission.

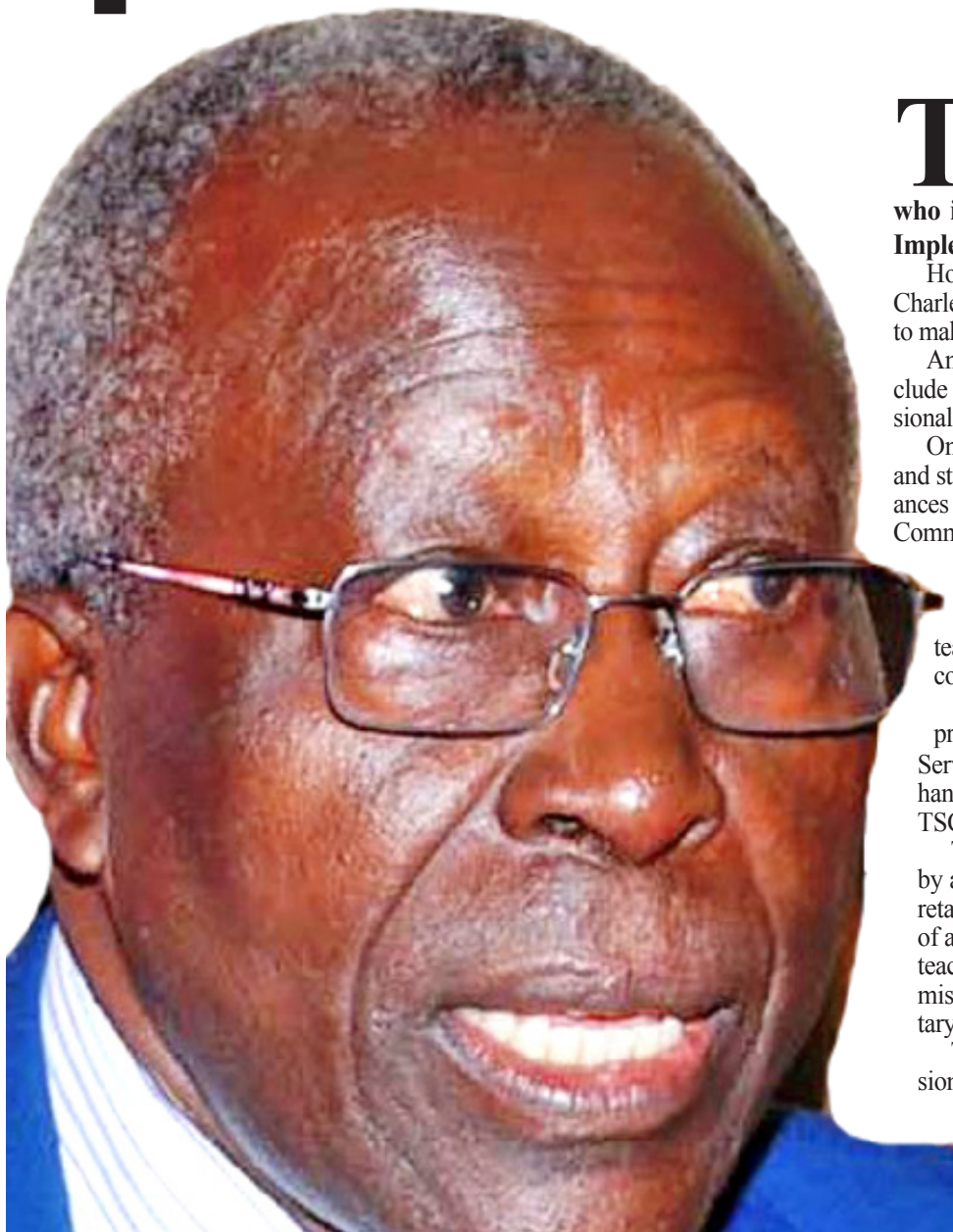
However, what was not clear is why the union proposals such as 'TSC be allowed to set and regularly review the salaries and remuneration of teachers in consultation with the SRC' were not incorporated in draft Bill.

The Kenya Union of Teachers (KNUT) had proposed that a committee known as the Teachers Service Remuneration Committee be established to handle remuneration of teachers serving under the TSC.

The KNUT proposed committee was to be headed by a chairman. Other members were to be TSC Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, four representatives of a trade union that represents majority of registered teachers, a representative of the Public Service Commission and a representative of the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Education.

The Union had also suggested that the Commission shall in consultation with other stakeholders make regulations on the Quality Assurance and Standards for teachers. These proposals, however, are not captured in the draft bill.

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CIC cautions against amending the constitution

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

THE Constitution Implementation Commission (CIC) is alarmed by the Cabinet decision of 13th September to propose an amendment to the Constitution of Kenya 2010 to alter the elections date from August to December. This act is a continuation of impunity, whose most recent manifestation is the recent illegal passing of two Acts namely the National Government Loans Guarantees Act and the Contingencies and County Emergency Funds Act in contra-

vention of the Constitution. This is a worrying trend with regard to the realization of the new dispensation which the Constitution of Kenya 2010 promises through the reform process.

Although CIC acknowledges that the Constitution contemplates the possibility of amendment, CIC is also aware that unnecessary amendments made this early would undermine the implementation of the constitution and achieving its intent. Kenyans must not support constitutional amendments which advance narrow and selfish political interests. Any amendments to the constitution must en-

hance, not claw back on the letter and spirit of the constitution. It is on this basis of the enhancing the application the provisions relating to the gender representation requirement in article 81(b) that CIC would consider supporting an amendment aimed at ensuring the full application of article 27 and the not more than two thirds gender principle. Even then CIC's desire would be to achieve the gender requirement without a constitutional amendment. Indeed CIC is gratified that the newly appointed Attorney General has publicly expressed his displeasure with amendments, indicating his

preference for other means to ensure the application of every constitutional requirement, including the one on gender. CIC looks forward to receiving proposals in this respect from the Attorney General.

CIC's concern about the proposed amendment of the election date by the cabinet is informed by several facts. First, the issue of an August election date has never been contentious. The August date was determined after consideration of the wishes

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On the other hand, the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) had proposed among other issues, that in appointing members of the Commission, the appointing authority shall ensure that at least six members of the Commission have experience in Education Administration and Management with a teaching background. This will shield the Commission from being taken over by individuals from other professions/sectors.

The KUPPET proposals which were handed to TSC several weeks back also suggested that unions representing the interests of teachers be allowed to appoint to the selection panel a person of their own choice who may be a member or official of

the Union. The justification being that other bodies nominating have not been gauged on the choice of the individual they will nominate.

It had further proposed that the Union be co-opted into the Committee on Terms and Conditions of Service, Discipline of Teachers, Recruitment and Promotion. This will help to get the input of the teachers through the Unions on such matters that concern their recruitment and discipline. Hence the clause should read: "The Unions shall be represented by two meKUPPET had also proposed the need to establish Teachers Licensing Board whose members would be two representatives appointed by TSC, four representatives appointed by trade Unions representing teachers, a representative of the Cabinet Secretary

in the Ministry in charge of Education, a representative of Kenya Private Schools Association, a representative of Kenya Primary School Heads Association and a representative of Kenya Secondary School Heads Association.

The functions of the Teachers Licensing Board were to: License teachers, protect the public from unscrupulous teachers and imposters, make code of regulations for licensing teachers, take legal action against those flouting the code of regulations and provide capacity building for teachers on professional issues.

However, the document which was presented to the Minister in its Memorandum of Objects and Reason states that the bill seeks to fulfill the constitutional obligations

imposed on the Commission under Article 237 of the Constitution.

The Article requires the Commission to register trained teachers, recruit and employ registered teachers, assign teachers employment by the Commission, exercise disciplinary, control, terminate the employment of teachers.

The Constitution also mandates the TSC to review the standards of education and training of persons entering the teaching services, review demand for and supply of teachers and advise the National Government on matters relating to the teaching profession.

The Bill provides for the registration and discipline of teachers and compliance with set teaching standards in the teaching service.

It contains provisions relating to

application for a certificate of registration, grant of a certificate of registration and specifies persons not eligible for registration. It also makes provision for disciplinary provisions and in particular, the power of the Commission in cases where a registered teacher is in breach of any of the provisions of the Act. It also provides for the compliance with set teaching standards including the requirement for registered teachers to take out a teaching certificate.

All in all, the Draft Bill having been presented to the Minister and being at the stage it has reached, it remains to be seen if the Unions and other stakeholders will be accorded yet another opportunity to give it a finishing touch considering that most of their proposals were not incorporated.

CIC cautions against amending the constitution

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of the people of Kenya. Submissions to the Committee of Experts that called for a change of date from December to August were based on addressing concerns that a December date interfered with the festive season when Kenyans travel to places where they may not have registered to vote, coincides with religious festivities and the prevailing weather conditions complicate the logistics of ferrying election materials. These reasons remain valid and any change to the date premised on the concerns of Kenyans ought to be initiated by them and not Cabinet.

Kenyans expressed a desire for an August date and voted overwhelmingly for it. They were aware of the budget cycle and the challenges of preparing for the elections in August 2012. Indeed, it is on this basis that the legislation relating to the IEBC and the elections was scheduled to be completed within the first year to ensure compliance with an August date. The framers of the Constitution deemed it possible that elections be held exactly one year from the enactment of the IEBC and Election Act. Until the issuance of the Cabinet statement, the only segment that has been in favour of a December date is a section of the political class. CIC would like to remind the Cabinet and at the same time appeal to Parliament to recognize the fact that the sovereign power of the people and the legislative authority of Parliament in line with Articles 1 and 94 of the constitution are to be exercised in accordance with the spirit of the constitution.

CIC is alarmed by the purported justification to amend the constitution on the basis of the budget cycle. The Committee of Experts must have considered several factors including the budget cycle before arriving at the August date. Kenyans were also aware of the budget cycle when they voted for the Constitution in August 2010. The Cabinet was also aware of the budget cycle



President Kibaki when he chaired Cabinet meeting.

Photo/File

when it appealed to Kenyans to vote in favour of the Constitution. If indeed the budget cycle does not fit into the constitutional framework, what requires alignment with the constitution is the budget cycle, not the constitution. The people of Kenya should know that if they accept that the constitution be amended to fit into what are essentially administrative issues, there is likely to be no end to the changes that will need to be made to the constitution to fit into administrative processes.

The contention that the review of boundaries shall have been completed twelve months before the election date is mischievous at the very least. Section 27(3) of the sixth schedule clearly exempts the first general elections from this requirement. Article 89(2) on the delimitation of electoral units can therefore not be a basis for the constitutional amend-

ment on the ground of preparation for elections. The same Cabinet in their capacity as members of Parliament gave IEBC through the IEBC Act, a maximum of four months to delimit boundaries and must be stopped from claiming that the period is inadequate.

The proposed amendments will have implications for the implementation of the Constitution including devolution. The wish of Kenyans to participate in their own governance through the devolved system of government shall by this proposal be delayed in violation of the Constitution. To the extent that the bill shall affect the devolution process and therefore implementation of the Constitution, CIC urges that in the event that the proposed amendment is to be processed, then it must follow the process required by the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

Equally worrying is the fact that the proposal by Cabinet will lead to uncertainty in the electoral process. As per the Constitution of Kenya 2010, an amendment to the Constitution requires a minimum of 90 days before passage by Parliament. Further, since the bill relates to devolution, under section 14 of the sixth schedule, it must be with CIC for at least 30 days for tabling in Parliament. Consequently for the next 4 months, the country will remain uncertain as to the election date and all consequential matters. This is unacceptable and not what Kenyans ultimately voted for in August 2010. The uncertainty on the date of the election is comparable to the days when the date of the election was based on the whim of a powerful unfettered presidency.

Under article 249(2), CIC is required like any chapter 15 commis-

sion to exercise its mandate to protect the sovereignty of the people, secure the observance by all state organs of democratic values and principles and to promote constitutionalism. Additionally, section 15(d) of the sixth schedule mandates CIC to monitor the implementation of the system of devolved government effectively. CIC wishes to remind Kenyans that what killed reform in this country were "convenience" amendments of the constitution soon after independence. Kenyans must be vigilant to ensure that we do not replay the 1963 scenario again. We have paid too heavy a price to get where we are. The 1963 (old) Constitution was rejected by the people of Kenya because it had been changed severally since its inauguration making it a pale shadow of its original self and taking away the gains. Between 1963 and 1965, 28 amendments were made to the Constitution leading to a total mutilation of the Constitution that Kenyans had adopted in 1963. It is such amendments that Kenyans wanted the CoK 2010 to be insulated against.

CIC reiterates that opening the door for miscellaneous amendments to the Constitution when there is no evidence that it is in the interests of Kenyans except a few and without wide consultation of the public violates article 10 on national values and principles. Further, decisions made must reflect that the principles on leadership comply with article 73(b,c,d).

If Kenyans accept amendments such as the one on the election date proposed by the Cabinet whose effect is clearly to claw back and undermine the constitution, the nation will have started on a slippery slope which could well sign the death knell of the new Constitutional dispensation. All progressive members of parliament and the people of Kenya must say NO, to the proposed amendment to the election date or forever remain liable to future generations for killing the reform dream and mutilating the CoK, 2010 just as was done to the 1963 Constitution.

Teachers protest over diversion of funds

By MALACHI MOTANO

ABOUT 200,000 teachers went on strike at the beginning of this term to protest against the diversion of funds earmarked for the hiring of more teachers to ease their workload.

The money was instead channeled to the ministry of defense, whose spending is not publicly scrutinized.

And although Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) maintained that the protest was meant to address the plight of children from poor background, the impact was devastating.

The protest affected more than 10 million children in primary and secondary schools.

Among issues teachers wanted addressed included having full-time jobs for the 18,000 teachers hired on temporary contracts and hire an additional 9,040 teachers.

Further an additional 79,000 teachers are required to enable the country realize the internationally recommended teacher to student ratio of one teacher to 35 students. Kenya's public schools have an average of 50 students for every teacher, though some classes have only one teacher for 100 pupils.

KNUT projects a shortfall of 115,000 teachers in the next couple of years as the population increases.

The union argues that the deficits deepen social divisions. Poor children in overcrowded public-school classes receive little time with teachers, while children in private schools are lavished with attention.

"Children of this country are not enjoying equal opportunities," says Wilson Sossion who is the KNUT chairman. "This is the struggle. Nearly 10 percent of 13-year-old Kenyan students cannot complete a math problem meant for 7-year-olds, according to research done earlier this year by Uwezo, a pressure group that aims to improve literacy among children in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Kenya received international praise when it made public primary school free in 2003. The program enrolled more than 1 million children

who had never entered a classroom. The country adopted a free secondary school policy for day students in 2008. But the influx of students led to severe overcrowding.

Parliament had allocated around \$53 million for hiring more teachers but the ministry of finance diverted the money to the ministry of defense, even though the ministry had not requested it.

Now taxes will have to be increased if the teachers are to be hired, said Joseph Kinyua, the permanent

secretary at the Ministry of Finance. Spiraling food and fuel prices are already causing great hardship for many Kenyans.

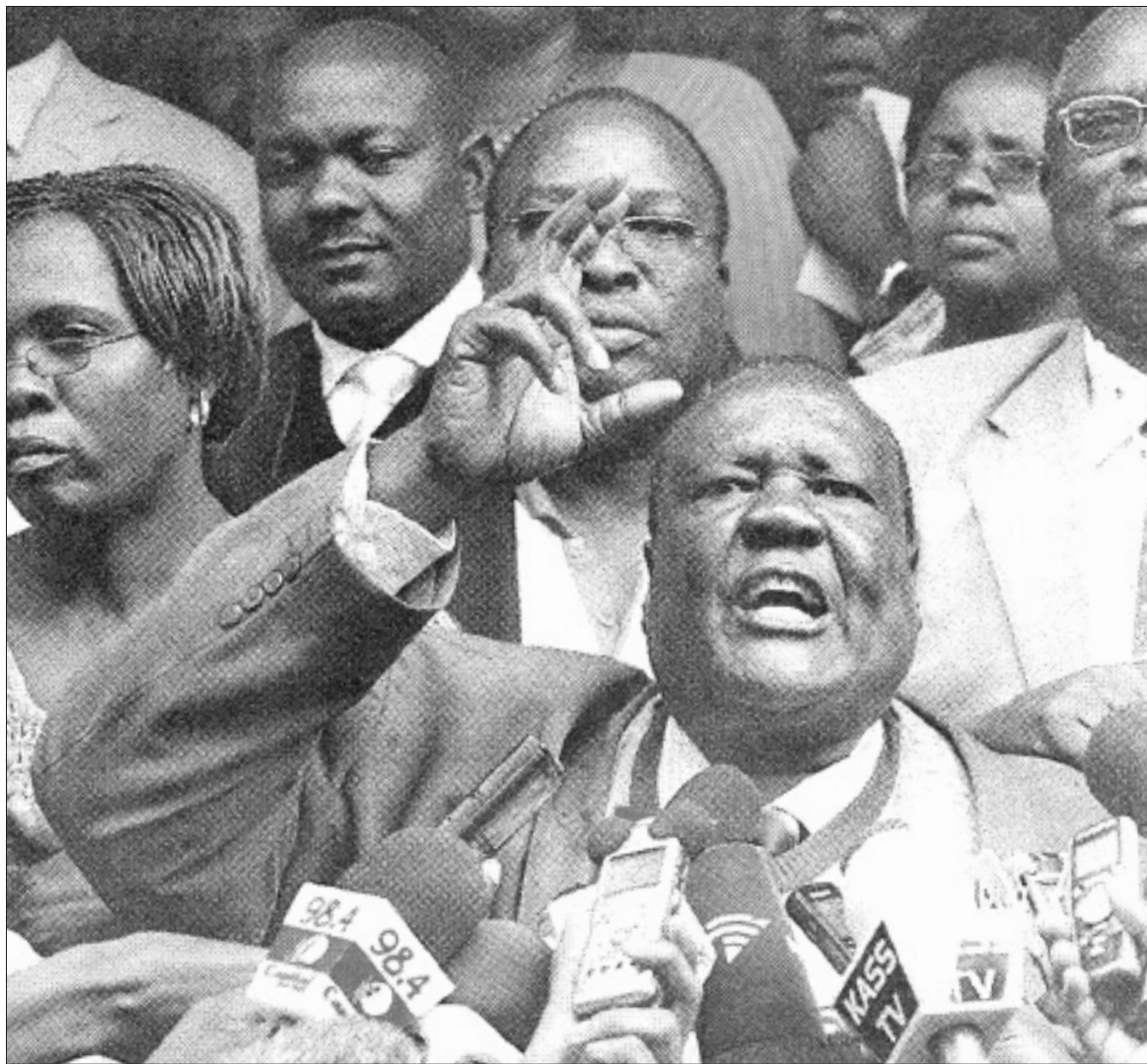
Kinyua however did not explain why the government decided to reallocate the money to the defense ministry.

The ministry of defense budget cannot be scrutinized for national security reasons, said John Mbadi, a member of parliament who is in the budget committee.

"The security docket is getting in-

creased allocation because there is no proper scrutiny and I repeat there is no proper scrutiny... I dare challenge them to explain to the public how this additional (money) is going to be spent," Mbadi said.

Britain suspended payments to the Kenyan government intended to help poor schoolchildren after \$45 million in international donor money went missing. The U.K., a major donor to Kenya, said the cash would be given to aid agencies instead.



Knut secretary-general Mr. David Okuta addresses teachers outside Knut offices in Nairobi where he announced a countrywide strike recently. Photo/File

State urged to protect rights of disabled children

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE government has been challenged to prosecute parents who deny their physically challenged children their right to education.

The chairman of the Kenya Society for the Deaf Children, Mr. Francis Ng'ang'a, said it was a breach of the constitution when parents deliberately fail to take their deaf and dumb children to school.

"It is a criminal offence for any parent or relative to deliberately lock their disabled children in houses and in some cases chain them in closed rooms. The government ought to arrest and prosecute such parents to discourage the trend," said Ng'ang'a.

Mr. Nganga was addressing parents of deaf children during a forum to train them on sign language skills, coordinated by Kenya Association of Parents of the Deaf (KAPD) held at Kibarani School for the deaf in Kilifi.

The former secretary general of Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) Francis Ng'ang'a said the new constitution guarantees access to education to all Kenyan children and this includes the physically challenged.

He said the government should crack the whip and apprehend parents violating the constitutional rights of their children.

"Although most of their actions are driven by stigma that is still associated with disability, this is in contravention of the constitutional rights of the child to access education," said the former KNUT official.

Mr. Nganga said that the Kenya Society for the Deaf Children plans to embark on a campaign trail to free all children chained in their homes and meet the costs of enrolling them to schools.

The society chairman at the same time underscored the need to establish a public university to enable the deaf and dumb people accomplish their career goals.

The chairman of KAPD Mr. Geoffrey Wathigo said it was crucial for parents with deaf children to acquire basic skills on sign language to enhance smooth communication between them.

Mr. Wathigo said currently his association has rolled out sign language training forums to equip parents with deaf children with the requisite skills for communication purposes.

"There has been a big challenge in communication between parents and their deaf children due to language barriers and to address the problem we have come up with the training program to enhance their communication skills," said Mr. Wathigo.

The chairman said the program is being implemented with support from the Ministry of Gender and Social Services and urged parents with deaf children to come out and benefit from the initiative.

Varsity in joint venture with EPZ

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Mt Kenya University (MKU) has entered into an agreement with the Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZ) that will enable the two institutions to implement common projects.

The new deal is a culmination of a series of meetings held both at EPZ, Athi River and the second at the institution's Thika campus.

The university Vice Chancellor, Prof Stanley Waundo, says the move follows plans by the University to introduce a Business Incubation Programme with a startup capital of Kshs4 million to help bridge the gap that most enterprising graduates face on graduation.

Waundo reveals that the Board of Trustees has earmarked Kshs5

million for research in order to enhance capacity in training to the doctorate level.

"We have received external funding of Kshs29 million to carry out collaborative research in food security," he said.

Simon Gicharu, the chairperson of the University's Board of Trustees, says the University seeks to remain a leading African role model of excellence in Science and Technology education and training.

He says the university will continue pursuing a learner centered teaching approach and student engagement to foster intellectual vitality and critical thinking among students and faculty.

Gicharu says the university had initiated a significant number of research, academic and industry

collaborative ventures that would nurture and sustain academic linkages that had enabled the sharing of intellectual resources for mutual benefit of the institution and other organizations.

"I am delighted to address you during this momentous occasion of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Mt Kenya University and EPZA. To us as MKU, the occasion is an eloquent statement of our endeavour to harness our homegrown intellectual and material resources in order to improve the social-economic lot of our country and her people," Gicharu said.

He notes that the memorandum will enhance capacity to train students in the context of a changing global economy and foster skills in creativity, innovation and entre-

preneurship.

Gicharu says the Board of Trustees had approved the construction of a regional research centre at a cost of Kshs400 million, adding that the institution was in the process of identifying strategic partners for the project.

The research and enterprise centre will strengthen theoretical foundation and practical orientation in the implementation of research findings.

Other guests who witnessed the ceremony included the Minister for Trade, Chirau Ali Mwakwere, PS Ministry of Higher Learning Prof Crispus Kiamba, Chancellor Mt Kenya University Prof George Eshiwani, Vice Chancellor Prof Stanley Waundo and Chairman Export Processing Zone Authority, Mathenge Wanderi.

How to end teacher shortages a challenge — Onger

THE mounting pressure to address teacher shortages in the country is likely to take more time because the hiring of new teachers heavily depends on the funds allocated to the ministry each year.

The government has plans to employ 10,000 teachers this financial year but lack of funds has put the process on hold.

However, with 245,000 teachers already on the payroll, increasing numbers now would be an additional financial burden for the government.

“No single country can be able to reduce the shortage at the current level of 75,000 within a single budget, so it has to be on a phased out three-year or four-year period before we come to the ground zero level,” says Education Minister Prof Sam Onger during the launch of the International Gold Award in Naivasha.

COMMENT

By MALACHI MOTANO

The Minister is urging teachers to go back to their classrooms considering the forthcoming national exams, that Ministry of Education is in talks with the Treasury over the last few days to resolve the issue.

The Permanent Secretary James Ole Kiyapi, mentions that the government would need to raise about Sh6 billion to transfer 18,000 teachers to permanent and pensionable status as well as hire an additional 10,000 teachers.

KNUT along with KUPPET had indicated that the Sh5.5 billion pledged to hire the 28,000 teachers was insufficient and that an extra Sh1.9 billion was needed but accord-

ing to the Minister, “This is the government policy. If you carefully read Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 it clearly stipulates that the teacher content would have attained by around this time total employment of 28,000 teachers,” he said.

Prof Onger further clarified that the ministry has been promoting the need for resources since last year which he said once made available would make way to employ the necessary number of teachers.

Last month, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) announced plans to recruit 988 primary school teachers.

TSC secretary Gabriel Lengoiboni says the new teachers would replace those who have left the service through natural attrition.

Five months ago, the commission replaced 815 post-primary teachers who had left the service.

He said 18,000 teachers who are currently serving on contract would be given priority in filling the positions.

The few vacancies involved, however, would provide little respite for the strike, which the teachers’ unions called to press for the employment of the contract teachers on a permanent basis and hiring of more to ease shortage in schools.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) and the Kenya Union of Post Primary Teachers (Kuppet) want another 10,000 teachers employed to bring the teacher student ratio, presently at 60, closer to the recommended 42.

Mr. Lengoiboni said the government had agreed that teachers be replaced only on exit.

The guidelines for replacement of the teachers, he said, had been sent to constituency panels, which would be the re-

cruting agents.

Teachers on contract who secure permanent employment would be replaced by new recruits.

The government concedes there is a shortage of 70,000 teachers in public schools, but says it has no money. About Kshs6 billion is needed to employ the 28,000 teachers.

Finance PS Joseph Kinyua said implementing the demand would be “difficult given emerging challenges like food shortage”.

Public primary and secondary schools in Migori, Rongo, Awendo, Uriri, Kuria West and Kuria East Districts remained shut as the teachers stayed away.

Only a few members of the support staff were spotted basking in the sun in some of the institutions.

The situation was the same elsewhere across the country.

Busia residents root for new education system

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUSIA residents want the Ministry of Education to revert to the 7-4-2-3 system of education which was more responsive to learners’ need in the rapidly changing job market.

Speaking during a stakeholders forum at the Busia district headquarters boardroom recently, the residents strongly opposed a proposal to bring on board the 6-6-3 system of education which they said would spoil the future for the pupils considering that most of them complete their formal education at a very tender age hence producing half baked graduates.

Led by the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) Busia County chairman Paul Namukuru, the residents argued that the reintroduction of the 7-4-2-3 system of education would help prepare learners to meet the needs of the ever changing job market.

Namukuru explained that under the 7,4,2,3 system of education, pupils will undergo seven years in Primary School, four years in Secondary school after which they will undertake specialized training for a period of two years before they can proceed to the university for a duration of three years.

The union official however rejected proposals to introduce the 6-6-3 system of education saying it is not viable at all because at the end of the day, the learners will not have the skills required to fit in the competitive job market



Prof. Sam Onger, Education minister. Photo/File

to reduce the high rates of unemployment.

“I am strongly opposed to the proposal to introduce the 6-6-3 system of education which seeks to replace the current 8-4-4 system of education. I am instead of the opinion that the current system of education be replaced with 7-4-2-3 system of education that

will at the end of the day produce strong academic giants.”

The union boss blamed the dismal academic performance in most primary and secondary schools in the country on failure by the Ministry of Finance to release funds to facilitate the recruitment of teachers to address the current shortfall.

“As much as the introduction of free primary and secondary education (FPE and FSE) is a big relief to parents, it has weighed down on both the students and the teachers considering that at the primary level the pupil-teacher ratio is 70 to 1,” said the union official.

The union official at the same time said that the Kenya Institute

of Education (KIE) should move with speed and consider coming up with a curriculum that will enable the learners to identify their talents and specialize in the same at a very early stage adding that majority of the learners had always found themselves in a situation where they are unable to make viable career choices hence leading to job dissatisfaction.

Busia district quality assurance and standards officer Parmenas Oendo on his part said the current proposals require more consultations before they can be implemented adding that there is urgent need on the part of the government to ensure there is free uninterrupted education up to secondary level considering that majority of pupils end up dropping out school in class eight.

“Primary schools in the district present about 1,000 candidates for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) every year but due to shortage of secondary schools only a few get the opportunity to join the said schools whereas the rest either repeat or drop out of school,” said the quality assurance officer, adding that forced repetition has also led to the high drop-out rates.

Oendo at the same time said parents and especially the local leaders have also contributed to the high drop-out rate because they have entirely placed the blame on school heads who now have to force weak students to repeat in order to attain quality mean score.

“The 8-4-4 system of education should be phased out completely because there is no need to have an education system that is not compatible to with other countries,” said Oendo, adding that KCPE has become a burden to both the government as well as parents.

Prof. Gichaga calls for expansion of colleges

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

JOMO Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) Chancellor Prof Francis Gichaga has urged universities to come up with mechanisms to expand middle level training.

Gichaga said that universities should be in the fore front of promoting the expansion of training capacity programmes.

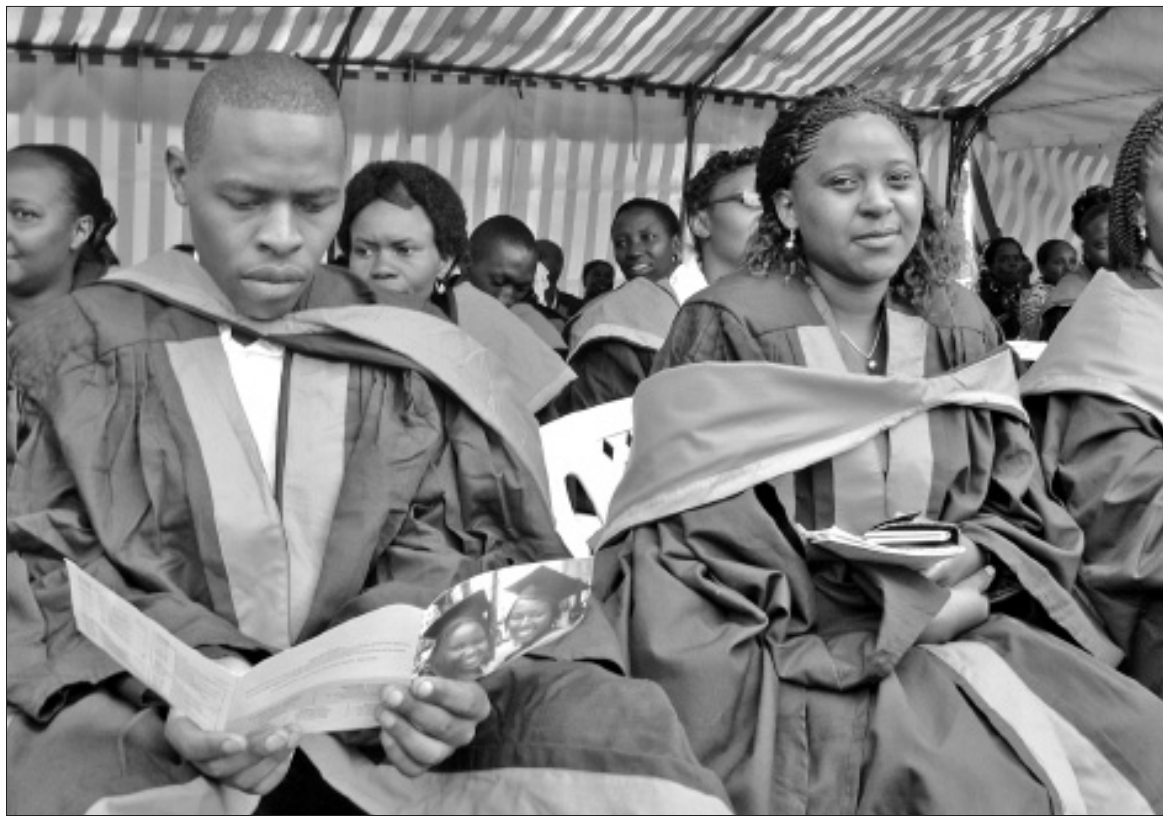
Speaking during the first graduation ceremony at Kimathi University College of Technology in Nyeri, the chancellor noted that though there are several concerns on the upgrading of middle level colleges in that they reduce opportunities for training of middle cadre resource, the colleges are a vital component of an industrialized economy.

"The Ministry of Higher Education should also support the programmes in order to come up with a workable arrangement which could be replicated in other institutions. This could provide a solution to the concerns often expressed at the middle level colleges," he added.

He commended Kimathi University for establishing a special unit (Institute of Technical and Professional Studies) that continues to offer training at Diploma and certificate level.

Gichaga was accompanied by his Vice Chancellor Mrs Mabel Imbuga, the university Chairman council Mr James Waibochi and Principal Mr Ndirangu Kioni among others.

"Universities are required to produce human resource in addition to carrying out research and development work for the benefit of society. It is important to recognize that today's global



Some of the students at a graduation ceremony.

trend towards knowledge based economies, whereby research institutions, including universities, must collaborate with industries and work in partnership," noted the chancellor.

The Chancellor at the same time urged the Government to recognize the potential contribution of universities of technology to national economic and technological development and to accept the special requirements of such institutions in the funding policies.

The university might very soon be granted a charter to become the 8th fully fledged public university in the country.

It was all joy as the university held its first graduation ceremony after it was established

five years ago.

Over 210 graduands were awarded with diplomas and certificates in a colourful ceremony.

The university in Nyeri County which was established in year 2006 is a constituent college of JKUAT.

Among those who graduated were 125 graduands who were awarded with Certificate in Information Technology, 73 graduands were awarded with Diploma in Information Technology and 16 graduands were awarded with Certificate in Coffee Technology and Quality Management.

The staffing level has also risen from the initial 100 workers in year 2007 to the current

285 permanent staff members.

Imbuga urged the graduands to demonstrate a high level of professionalism, commitment and dedication as they move into the next stage of their vocation.

"JKUAT has summed up into the core values that include quality, teamwork, professionalism, innovation, dynamism, accountability and integrity. These are values likely to assist you to overcome the many challenges that you are likely to encounter in the execution of your duties," she told the graduands.

Waibochi lauded the Government for its continued support of availing budgetary allocation for recurrent and development expenditure.

DC advices varsity students against rioting

By BOB OMBATI

KISII University College students have been warned against indulging in violence and immoral activities which will ruin their lives besides spoiling their educational records.

Kisii Central District Commissioner, Benjamin Njoroge told the students to embrace dialogue as a way of resolving their grievances instead of resorting to violence which in most cases disrupts their learning.

The administrator, who was addressing over 600 first year Joint Admissions Board (JAB) students at the College, urged the students to be wary of peer group influence, noting that it would disorient them and spoil their lives.

"You should not succumb to destructive peer group influence. You should rededicate your energies on excelling in your education to enable you contribute to the country's socio-economic and political development," the DC told the students.

The DC who was accompanied by area District Education Officer, Martin Mwalo said there were over 300 bars in Kisii County and warned the students against indulging in excessive drinking and irresponsible behaviors, saying it would lower their dignity and the reputation of the college. He advised them to work hard to excel in their studies and reciprocate the sacrifices made by their parents and the government in supporting their education, and act as mentors to be emulated by students aiming to join universities.

Mwalo called on the students to cultivate harmony with their neighbours to avoid conflicts with the local community.

School heads support early access to IDs

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Secondary Schools Headteachers Association (KSSHA) wants the Government to hasten issuance of National Identification cards to enable students willing to pursue higher education access loans.

The Association said plans to have the Government introduce double intake in universities was experiencing problems as many students who completed form four last year have not attained 18 years to qualify for an ID. "Let the Government tell us how such students will benefit from money from the Higher Education Loans Board without IDs," said the Western branch association branch chairman Kahi Indimuli.

Indimuli said the ministry of Registration of Persons and Immigration should design ways of hastening the issuance of IDs and also advise the loans board not to deny funds to students without IDs. "Many children are not able to apply as they can not get a Personal Identification Number (PIN) without an ID," said Indimuli.

He said that the Government should either adjust the age of issuing IDs to students from the current 18 to 17 to avoid such inconveniences.

Indimuli who was speaking to the press in Kakamega town also demanded that the Government releases funds to enable head-teachers prepare for the national examinations. The chairman said many students have not paid fees adding that some schools were straining in their operations. The Government promised to release the Free Secondary Education funds and those of Free Primary Education together but so far there is nothing on school accounts.

Varsity students to offer free tuition to pupils

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

UNIVERSITY students in Kakamega County have developed a strategy that seeks to boost Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) performance in the area.

The students have vowed to conduct tuition for all willing secondary school students during the April, August and December holidays.

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) Bachelor of Education (BED) student, Mr. Guylord Mang'oli says

learners will pay tuition fee of Kshs. 500 per vacation as a sign of commitment.

Mr. Mang'oli, who is spearheading the programme, claims that low number of students who qualify for direct university entry in the area prompted him and his colleagues to start holiday tuition programme.

According to Mr. Mang'oli, the programme targets form ones and twos who he alleges are left idle when three and four students form are back in class for tuition coaching during the school holidays.

He explains that the targeted learners from various secondary schools will be re-

quired to converge at a central primary school within a given sub-location for the holiday tuition.

For the purposes of identity and discipline Mr. Mang'oli says that all the learners will be required to put on their respective schools' uniforms through out the tuition period.

Mr. Mang'oli appeals to his colleagues in Kakamega County to turn up during school holidays and assist secondary students in their respective provincial administration units.

The MMUST BED student was speaking recently at Kharanda primary school in

Kakamega central district where 381 form ones and twos students from different secondary schools converged for the August holiday tuition.

During the holiday tuition, 15 University students; 7 from MMUST, 3 from Kenyatta University, 2 from University of Nairobi and 3 from Moi University turned up to coach the secondary school learners.

Last year 2464 students sat for KCSE in Kakamega central district. But only 173 students scored 62 points and above which translates to 7.021 percent of university qualifiers.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

IN a rare gesture, students of Michuki Technical Training Institute from Murang'a County have sacrificed their lunch of three weekends in order to help orphans.

The students forfeited their lunch which they donated to Huruma Children's Home in Nyeri town.

Speaking after they delivered the assorted foodstuffs to the children's home, their principal Mr John Gitonga Ndirangu said this was a good move by the students who have sacrificed themselves.

"I wish others can follow suit in order to remember the less fortunate in the society. The children will now feel as part of the society," said the principal.

The students delivered beans, maize, maize flour, cabbages and bananas all worth over Kshs 22,000 to the home based at the outskirts of Nyeri town which is over 50 kilometres away from Kangema.

The chairman of the student's council Mr James Kamani said the students were touched by the plight of orphans in the home some of whom are disabled and decided to visit them.

"Other students should emulate our gesture instead of engaging themselves in vices such as strikes which are not beneficial to the society," said Kamani.

The home's manager Mrs Nancy Wachira who could not hide her joy said the over 60 children's who are mostly orphans were impressed

Michuki Technical students' rare show of love



Manager of Huruma Children's Home in Nyeri Mrs Nancy Wachira (right) with children of the home who are orphans receive donations from students of Michuki Technical Training Institute from Murang'a County. The students sacrificed their lunch for three weekends so that they can donate foodstuffs to the children's home. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

by the donation.

"We are very grateful of the donations which will help the children to learn and stay well. We still need more donations to help the children stay in the home," said

the manager. The institute based in Kangema has over 550 students but others were on holiday.

State steps in to rescue tertiary colleges

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE government has set aside Kshs 5.7 billion to upgrade technical training colleges and enhance their capacity to admit tens of hundreds of young people seeking tertiary education.

The money will also be used to set up technical, industrial, vocational and entrepreneurship (Tivet) colleges in areas where there are none. The plan also involves setting up a national polytechnic in all of Kenya's eight provinces.

Higher Education Minister Professor Margaret Kamar says that the government was keen to uplift the infrastructure of colleges, besides reviewing the curricula to enable the colleges meet the needs of the vibrant labour market and Vision 2030.

That document seeks to transform

Kenya into a middle-income economy in the next two decades, a goal educationists have said can only be achieved by developing highly-skilled human capital with an appropriate mix of both technical and formative skills.

"The idea is to make Kenyan youths not only employable but also self-employing," said Kamar.

Once the technical institutions are well-equipped, some will be upgraded and allowed to offer degrees in areas like engineering, a departure from the current system where technical colleges and polytechnics only offer diploma and certificate courses. The fact that only a few universities offer technical degrees has resulted in a shortage of high-level technical skills.

Last year, The Netherlands government extended at least Kshs 2.4 bil-

lion to Kenya to help fund this project, which is also aimed at increasing access to higher education and fighting biting youth unemployment. The African Development Bank has also given Kshs 2.9 billion.

"We recognise the importance of technical training and that is why the government has provided adequate resources for the provision of facilities to our technical training institutions," said the Director of Technical Training, Wambai Oluate.

"We now have a very high number of youth seeking and accessing technical training because of the expansion of technical training institutions. Our focus is to further increase this enrolment," he said.

Statistics from the government's 2010 Economic Survey showed that

the number of students enrolled in polytechnics has been rising and stood at 31,344 in 2009, up from 29,700 in 2008. But the upgrading of the Kenya and Mombasa polytechnics last year led to a decrease of 14,000 students enrolled in technical courses country-wide.

This is the number of students that the higher education ministry wants to recoup with the planned expansion of technical colleges and opening of new ones.

Technical colleges have in the past few years also come under threat as universities sought expansion avenues to resolve an admission crisis plaguing higher education. This has seen universities collaborate with technical institutions and change the programmes they offer.

State told to teach patriotism in schools

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

RESIDENTS of Taita-Taveta County have asked the government to introduce a compulsory subject in schools on national values of patriotism, integrity and honesty among young Kenyans.

They made the proposal during a public hearing in Voi town organized by the task force that is collecting views from the public on policy, legislation and institutional framework for the National Values System in Kenya.

The task force which falls under the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs and is gathering data on what Kenyans would like included in the proposed policy.

"The most appropriate places to start planting such values in young people should be in schools," said Mr. John Mwadime, a resident of Voi.

A member of the task force and a Deputy Director in the Department of National Cohesion, Mr. Felix Juma Mugabe, assured residents their views would be included in the final paper. He was accompanied by Dr. Julius Malobe, another member of the task force.

"We are involving the people in policy formulation so that no one will complain of being left out," said Mr. Mugabe.

The National Values and Principles of Governance are contained in article (10) in Chapter Two of the Constitution that highlights the 17 qualities that form the foundation of a comprehensive structure on national values. Some of the values include patriotism, equality, human rights and rule of law.

The residents highlighted obstacles that frustrate the success of national integration, including poverty, inability to exploit resources and lack of information on national development issues.

"We hope the county government will address some of these problems," said Ms. Mary Mwambui, a human rights activist from Wundanyi.

The task force was requested to ensure there was intensive civic education to prepare Kenyans for the general elections.

"We need to be educated on what personal values to look for in the people who will be vying for various posts. Only then can we avoid the mistakes we have been making in the past," said Mr. Peter Malega of Taveta.

The county governance would constitute a committee whose mandate would be to carry out a survey on tri-annual basis to evaluate whether the implementation of the national values has been effective.

Dr. Julius Malobe urged residents to take a pro-active approach in national affairs and encouraged them to participate in decision making in county governments.

"It is up to you as Taita-Taveta residents to decide what kind of leaders you want to serve you. That is why we want to have views on the qualities of leadership you want," said Dr. Malobe.

School faces closure over lack of latrines

By JOEL JUMA

A PRIMARY school in Khwisero District, Kakamega County, has been given a seven-day notice to put up toilets or face closure.

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation said learning at Eshiyongo Primary will not continue after the expiry of the notice if the school will not have constructed 15 pit latrines.

The school is operating without toilets after its pit latrines were taken over by newly registered Eshiyongo Secondary School.

The parents at the secondary school fenced their compound making it difficult for over 600 pupils in the primary school to access the sani-

tary facilities.

Eshiyongo Primary head teacher Joseph Amenia admitted that the Ministry of Public Health served him with a notice, warning the school against operating in unhygienic conditions.

"We do not have toilets as the pit latrines are now on the secondary side, which is fenced off," said Amenia.

Councillor Geoffrey Omatera said they have since approached the Butere/Mumias County Council to assist them with funds to put up new toilets after efforts to get their MP Evans Akula proved fruitless.

"We cannot get our MP. Learning at the school may soon be paralysed

if we do not comply with the directive by the public health department," said Omatera who was speaking at Butere town after the launch of the Butere/Mumias County Council Rapid Results Initiative.

The Council Chairman Modekai Nandwa explained that civic leaders were shocked to learn that operations at the schools could be paralysed.

The area Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) branch executive secretary Shikhule Tungani and his Mumias counterpart John Wesonga said they will not allow pupils and teachers to operate in a filthy environment.

"We may push for the withdrawal of teachers from the school if the

Government cannot put up toilets for teachers and the pupils," said Tungani who was speaking during a tour of the school.

Western Provincial Public Health Officer Timothy Olubero said that a copy of the notice was in his office.

"We are monitoring health situations in schools. Any institutions without adequate toilets must be shut down," said Olubero.

Olubero explained that health officers were on the alert to prevent outbreak of water borne diseases during rainy seasons.

He added that the Government has supplied adequate mosquito nets to residents in the fight against malaria.

Bomb blast victims demand payment from US

By BEKADZO TONDO

SURVIVORS of the 1998 bomb blast at the former US embassy in Nairobi are demanding compensation from the American government.

The survivors through their Bomb Blast Victims Association said they have been patient over the last 13 years as they wait to be compensated for the property they lost and injuries they sustained at the blast which occurred at the Co-operative building.

According to the association chairman Mr. Ali Mwadama, most survivors in the blast are living miserable lives as the government had failed to push for their compensation from the American government.

"It is about 13 years since the bombing of the former US embassy in Nairobi but the Kenyan government and that of America have not shown any concerns in trying to assist the victims," said Mr. Mwadama.

Records from the government indicate that 243 Kenyans, 12 Americans and an Ethiopian died in the blast.

The records further show that 5,585 Kenyans, 14 Americans and one Congolese survived in the attack but sustained serious injuries.

The association is now seeking for the support of both international and local human rights organizations to come and aid the victims in demanding for their compensation.

"As an association of the bomb blast victims at the former US embassy building in Nairobi, we have sought for the support of international and local based human rights bodies to assist the victims demand for their compensation," said Mr. Mwadama.

Mr. Mwadama said they have officially written to the Coast Forum for Human Rights requesting their intervention in the matter.

The director of Coast Forum for Human Rights Mr. Alex Mwanza said the bomb blast victims both in Nairobi and Kikambala at the Paradise beach hotel in Kilifi have constitutional rights to get compensated and the American government has to carry that burden.

"Our forum has already taken up the matter and we have officially written to the American Ambassador to Kenya Jonathan Scott Gration seeking an appointment to discuss the plight of the victims.

In the letter, the human rights lobby group states that the blast ruined the lives of the victims who can no longer fend for themselves and their families.

Low wages to blame for sisal sector collapse

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

REPORTS on sisal growing in Kenya have blamed the collapse of the sector to poor working conditions and low wages.

Sisal is used in low-cost and specialty paper, dartboards, buffing cloth, filters, geo-textiles, mattresses, carpets, handicrafts, wire rope cores, and Macrame. Working conditions in sisal plantations are tough and inhuman, and considered as modern-day slavery where workers are trapped into servitude by being paid in kind.

Sisal is an agave that yields a stiff fibre traditionally used in making twine, rope and also dartboards.

Sisal farming initially caused environmental degradation because plantations replaced native forests, but is still considered less damaging than many types of farming. No chemical fertilizers are used in sisal production. Although herbicides are occasionally used, the impact may be eliminated, since most weeding is done by hand. The effluent from the decortication process causes serious pollution when it is allowed to flow into water courses.

Compared with the colonial days and soon after independence, production gradually dropped to a point where only a few Kenyans would count the crop as importance in the national economic development. Many Kenyans are even oblivious of the existence of the once vibrant Kenya Sisal Board (KSB) charged with the quality control and research on the crop.

The few large-scale sisal farmers who produce 90 per cent of the crop complain of poor fibre prices at the global market compared with production costs. Other farmers include small-scale growers mostly in rural areas



A section of a sisal estate. Photo/File

as who have lost hope of gaining any direct economic gain from the crop.

Though aware of the financial benefit that may be derived from sisal, rural farmers are still reluctant to embark on serious sisal business as poor market becomes a major setback. With the dormant Kenya Sisal Board still in existence, a few interested

farmers expect it to take a leading role in sensitizing farmers to grow a dying crop or look for better markets for the fibre and other related products.

But the Board says its role has only been regulatory, revolving around quality control and research and not development of the crop. The latter role has remained in the hands of private

farmers some of who have been discouraged by poor world market on the fibre.

Such slow development has been however blamed on an outdated policy and stakeholders have relentlessly been asking the Ministry of Agriculture to re-evaluate and change the policy for farmers to regain hope of addressing the current problems.

A few large-scale sisal farmers produce 90 per cent of the total crop complain of poor fibre prices at the international market compared with the production costs.

The small-scale farmers mostly in rural areas have completely lost hope of direct economic gains from the crop.

The world market is mainly controlled by the quality of the fibre and it is, therefore, farmers are required to produce high class fibre to attract global buyers, says Tipape. He says the quality of the exported crop and other products have been a major concern of the board to ensure Kenya's exports were recommended quality.

The crop plays a role in ensuring food security in rural areas as it prevent the top, rich soil from being carried away by running water, says an environmentalist Peter Okoth.

State to construct tech colleges in all Counties

By PETER MUTUKU

THE government will spend close to five billion shillings to construct and equip technical institutions in all the 47 counties.

Newly appointed minister for Higher education Prof Margaret Kamar says the initiative seeks to hasten the adoption of a devolved system of government by ensuring that all the 47 counties have middle level colleges that would train the technical skills needed at the grassroots in order to achieve the goals of Vision 2030.

Vision 2030 is the government's development blue print aimed at transforming Kenya into middle income, technology-driven economy by 2030.

Speaking at the official opening of the Kenya Association of Technical Training Institute (KATTI) 10th biannual conference, Prof Kamar said technical institutions at the County level would cater for the thousands of

both Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) graduates who fail to get admission to secondary schools and universities respectively.

She noted that only 32, 684 KCSE graduates of the 2010 class were absorbed in local universities through the Joint Admission Board (JAB) out of the total 96,940 candidates who scored Cplus and above who were eligible to join university.

This, Prof Kamar said means that the transition rate from secondary to university level through JAB was a mere 10 per cent, leaving out 90 per cent of candidates eligible for University education.

"Therefore, it is important to have technical institutions at the grassroots to cater for this large number of candidates who are left out of university admission," she said.

If not catered for, the Minister warned, these youth could easily be lured into criminal activities and drug abuse with disastrous consequences to the social fabric of the nation.

The minister said there is need to establish more youth polytechnics and upgrade others to widen the scope of Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET).

"Currently nine counties lack such colleges and there is need to expand institutions to accommodate more students," said Prof Kamar, adding that this will only be possible through public private partnership.

Prof Kamar said the Ministry has developed a new curriculum for TIVET programmes that will enable prospective students to pursue multiple competencies and return to upgrade skills after graduation.

She added that this would make TIVET programmes more

focused and tailored to meet the country's development needs besides increasing access to cheaper training opportunities for more resource poor people in flexible and friendly environment while integrating Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in learning.

Coast Province, she noted, has only two such institutions in Voi and Mombasa while areas like North Eastern have only one technical training institute in Garissa and other areas like West Pokot, Keiyo Marakwet, Turkana, Mandera and Wajir have none.

Prof Kamar, a former member of former member of faculty principal of Moi University's Chepkoilel Campus said hostility from various quarters towards upgrading selected national polytechnics into degree awarding institutions is misplaced, adding that it was being done to increase more people to attain higher qualifications.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Stop interfering with Aukot panel's work

PERHAPS legendary playwright William Shakespeare was right when he described a politician as one who would circumvent God. The Kenyan politician of today fits this description perfectly. Their refusal to pay tax is just one example.

In addition, the carping by senior politicians led by the Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka and Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta over the short list of commissioners for the proposed Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) at best illustrates how these politicians are hell-bent on perpetuating impunity by short-circuiting established systems.

The same politicians recently led their supporting cast of fellow lesser MPs in unanimously approving the seven-member panel to recruit commissioners for the much-anticipated commission. It is thus confounding why they are now turning against the panel for doing its work according to the laid down procedure.

No sooner had the panel prepared a short list of applicants than a section of politicians started issuing verbal threats accusing them of all manner of ills, including biasness and planning to rig elections in advance for certain unmanned presidential candidate.

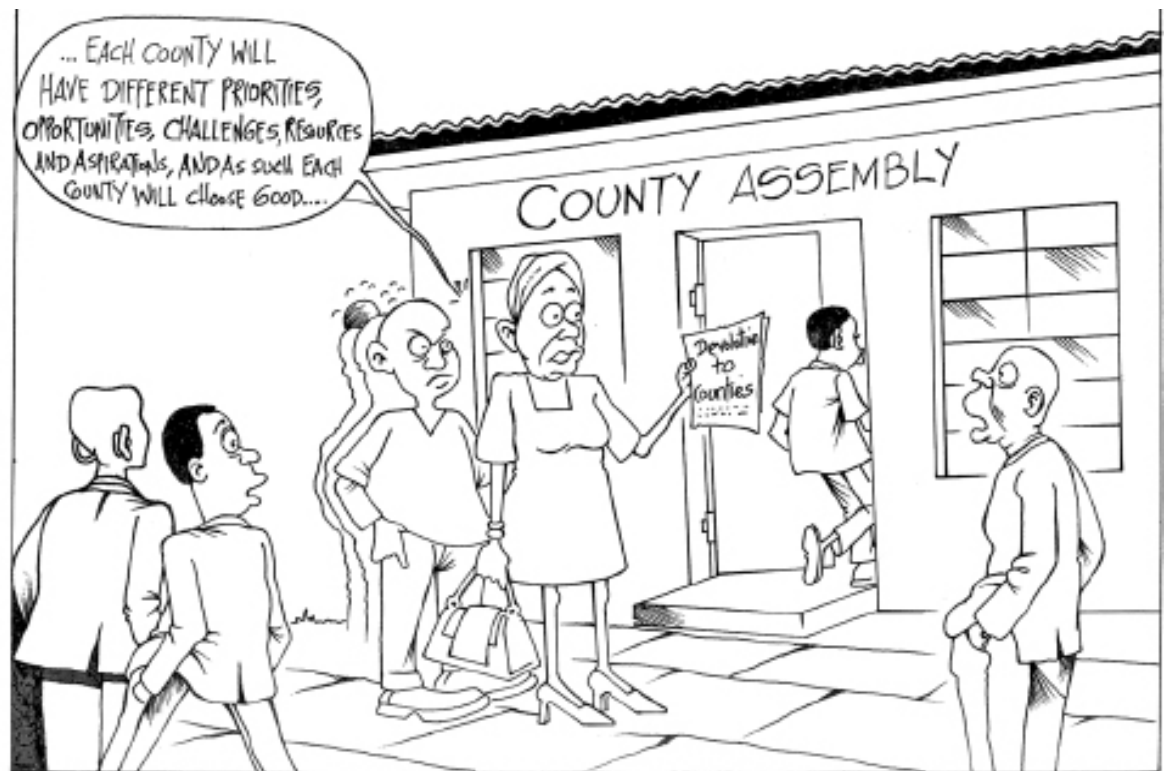
In fact the Vice President was very loud and clear in making such alarmist statement in public without shame. The main quarrel these dissenting hordes of MPs have with the panel is that they committed a cardinal sin of leaving out of the short list some members of the outgoing IIEC commissioners.

According to Kalonzo and his cohorts, these commissioners are qualified just because they were in IIEC. Why can't these MPs just come out clearly and tell the panel to simply transform IIEC into IEBC instead of beating about the bush!

As Ababu Namwamba aptly put it, the dissenting MPs are simply used to impunity which gives them false belief that the only way is their way. But they are forgetting that Kenya has changed dramatically over the years. As others have rightly argued, what is emerging is a deliberate attempt to weaken independent institutions through hate campaigns, intimidation, and blackmail so that the lords of impunity can continue to lord it over hapless Kenyans.

They did so with the Lumumba Commission when they realized that KACC was too close to uncovering their corrupt ways. KACC is now dead, buried and quickly inherited by weak and amorphous Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission.

The same parliament working in cahoots with the executive are working very hard to render irrelevant the Nyachaeled Constitution Implementation Commission by arbitrarily altering and or passing bills. Our MPs must stop trying to weaken constitutional offices if the country is to remain stable.



COMMENTARY

Trouble brewing at TSC over staff promotions

COMMENT

By MALACHI MOTANO

TENSION is brewing at the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Secretariat following a management decision to subject its middle-level and junior staff to interviews before awarding promotions.

The employees have been incensed by a circular dated August 30 this year which advised the staff that promotions shall be done competitively and that any such vertical movements shall only be possible once Treasury allocates funds to finalize the exercise.

The Ministry of State for Public Service approved a request by the TSC towards the end of last year to reorganize its management structure to align it with the practice in the mainstream civil service. The reorganization was also occasioned by the need to address the twin problem of stagnation of staff in one Job Group and succession management. Following the adoption of the new structure, the staff were to move a Job Group higher above their current grades across the board paving way for better salaries and allowances.

However, in a strange twist, the Commission only upgraded its topmost personnel with a rider that the low-end staff would be considered later once the Government allocated more funds for the exercise.

It is understood that the morale of the employees at the Commission has hit an all-time low as reality begins to sink that the anticipated promotions shall not be automatic after all. It is understood that the Kenya Union of Civil Servants (KUCS) has gone to court to seek redress on what they perceive as discrimination against a section of the TSC staff. Efforts to reach the union Secretary-General, Tom Odege to confirm the court action were unsuccessful as his phone went unanswered for most of the day as we went to press.

"In implementing the 2nd phase of the study, all officers will be subjected to interviews and the following requirements must be met; An officer must have served at their current grade for a minimum period of two years and over as at the date of interview, must have no adverse report on record for the past one year, must have a good performance record based on annual performance appraisal and must possess the requisite knowledge and the ability to perform the job at a higher level" wrote the TSC secretary/CEO, Gabriel Lengoiboni in the circular also copied to the KUCS.

The staff are now questioning why the stringent rules are being applied on the middle-level and junior staff yet the top managers were expressively offered the promotions immediately the Department of Personnel Management (DPM) gave out the green light without any qualms. They are also concerned that some of the top offi-

cial had been awarded two subsequent Job Groups in less than a year without being put into interviews under very questionable circumstances.

Those who immediately benefited from the quick promotions include the five Directors (previously known as Senior Deputy Secretaries (SDS) who run various departments. The Directors have since been moved to Job Group 'S' (Scale 16) from Job Group R (Scale 15) in what has attracted hue and cry at the TSC headquarters.

The Commission Secretary who is the Chief Executive of the organization had already been fast-tracked to Job Group 'U' from Job Group 'T' at the same league of Permanent Secretaries of Ministries after his previous appeal for promotion was granted.

But Deputy Secretaries now referred to as Deputy Directors who fall next after the Directors are yet to get the promotions and are currently yawning in frustration with the rest of the Commission staff. They were expected to enter the grade of Job Group 'R' from Q (Scale 14). The same applies to former Assistant Deputy Secretaries (ADS) who would now be identified as Senior Assistant Directors. They were to land at Job Group Q from Job Group P (Scale 13) in the new structure. Other senior officers were slated to move to the next grades in that order.

The new arrangement, adopted by the TSC after a nod from the Ministry of State for Public Service, further provided for the creation of one substantive deputy to the Secretary/Chief Executive of the Commission. For many years, the Commission boss had been without an official principal assistant and was mainly assisted in his duties by five senior officers who manned various departments.

Lengoiboni's deputy shall now be recognized as the Deputy Commission Secretary (DCS) who shall be graded at TSC Scale 17 (Job Group T), a scale below the Commission Secretary who is placed at Job Group 'U' (Scale 18). The position is yet to be filled and the Commission is due to advertise the post.

The TSC will now operate administrative structures similar to the Ministries of Education and that of Higher Education, Science and Technology, where Departments shall be renamed Directorates and shall be headed by Directors rather than Senior Deputy Secretaries (SDS) as was the case before.

In a circular dated November 3, 2010

addressed to all Secretariat Staff, Lengoiboni had advised his personnel that the Commission had already approved the upgrading of the Heads of Department first while the other affected groups would have to wait longer pending further funding from the Ministry of Finance.

"If the Commission has funds to promote five Directors, then it should have money to upgrade the rest of the staff. Policies cannot be applied selectively. The staff are unhappy with this discrimination," said Fred Odera, the then TSC Chapter Chairman of KUCS.

Odera has since been interdicted for allegedly inciting staff to go on strike. He is yet to appear before a disciplinary panel to defend himself. The frustrated employees of the Commission staged a momentary boycott early this year over what they as termed discrimination and poor working conditions at the beginning of the year. Security agencies were called in to quell the commotion that had brought the TSC into a standstill.

In a circular dated November 3, 2010 addressed to all Secretariat Staff, Lengoiboni further reveals the creation of two additional departments (now directorates) increasing the total number to seven in an effort to enhance service delivery in the large organization that employs well over 235,000 teachers and nearly 3,000 Secretariat Staff.

The new departments are Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Accounts. Initially, the two dockets fell under Administration and Finance departments respectively. The Administration department is headed by Simon Kavisi while the Finance department is under the prefecture of Cheptumo Ayabei. The Human Resource Department is headed by Ms Josephine Maundu while Internal Audit is under the ambit of Shem Motuka. Mrs. Nancy Macharia is in charge of the Staffing Department.

In the circular, Lengoiboni said the reorganization was brought about by the need to address stagnation and high staff turnover as a result of narrow opportunities for upward mobility and career growth within the TSC system. He also revealed that the move was also intended to cure disparities in the grading structure of Commission personnel in comparison to officers holding similar responsibilities in the mainstream Civil Service.

"The Commission adopted the recommendations of the study (Management Study by the Ministry of State for Public Service) on 28th October 2010 and agreed to implement it in phases due to the enormous cost implication which had not been factored in the budget for 2010/2011," Lengoiboni had said.



The Link is published monthly by the Institute for Civic Affairs and Development (ICAD)

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The Link

Enhancing governance for all

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This Newspaper appreciates the facilitation accorded by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in Kenya

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New Nairobi water project in danger

By MORRIS GITHENYA

PLANS to construct an additional dam in Murang'a to supply water to Nairobi have hit a snag after residents demanded an upfront compensation for their land.

Residents of Gatara village say they will not vacate their land as they have not been consulted on the rates of compensation.

The proposed Maragua dam will be the second to be constructed in Murang'a County after Ndaka ini dam in Gatanga that supplies water to Nairobi and its environs.

Already 480 plots of land have been earmarked for the development of the project which will approximately affect more than 2000 families.

Those set for relocation include residents of Gatara, Ichichi and Gacharage in the constituencies of Kiharu, Kangema and Kigumo respectively.

The dam is being constructed by the Athi Water Services Board on behalf of the Nairobi Water Company and is meant to increase water supply in Nairobi and its environs following population rise.

John Ndung'u Kanyi who is a consultant in the project was hard put to explain why community leaders had to wait for the completion of a feasibility study before they can determine the compensation rates.

"The study will help the government and other decision making organs to determine compensation rates among other community needs," said Kanyi.

A representative from Gatara Mr Peter Kariuki challenged the government to come clean saying over the



Kiharu MP Muturi Mwangi and Eng Moses Naivasha of Tana Water Services board scrutinise a survey map for Murang'a Urban Bulk Water Project. Photo/Morris Githenya

years they had been taken for a ride by various bodies.

He said that the plight of farmers in Ndaka ini area of Gatanga constituency was ignored after the construction of the dam and they have had to contend with false promises.

"We are not opposed to the construction of the dam but want the gov-

ernment to come clean on the matter instead of leaving consultants to handle the project singlehandedly without taking into consideration concerns raised by the residents," said the residents' leader.

Early this year, Members of Parliament from Murang'a County led by Planning and National Development

Assistant Minister Peter Kenneth advised residents who may be affected by the project to enter into a compensation agreement with the water services board.

MPs Muturi Mwangi (Kiharu) and Elias Mbau (Maragua) said only agreements will save them from being exploited.

NGOs urged to comply with new law

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka has called on non-state actors to amend laws governing their operations to align them with provisions of the new constitution.

The VP says the government was keen on having an updated legislative and policy framework to regulate the operations of NGOs.

"It is for this reason that the government seeks support of the NGOs Coordination Board to review the NGOs Act of 1990 in order to respond to the emerging needs of the vibrant sector and thereby ensure that it is in compliance with the provisions of the new constitution," the VP adds during a conference sponsored by the China NGO Network for International Ex-

change and Kenya's NGO's Coordination Board.

Mr. Musyoka acknowledged the crucial role that NGOs play in development and humanitarian assistance noting that the government has always partnered with them to achieve the goals specified in Vision 2030.

"NGOs operating from Kenya continue to offer a lifeline to communities in neighboring countries such as South Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo," he added.

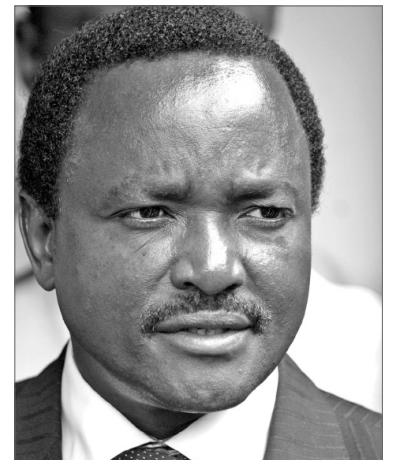
The VP appreciated the contribution of NGOs towards writing and approval of the new Constitution at the referendum, noting that they played a key role in drafting of the Bill of Rights and affirmative action clauses which have conferred upon Kenyans very robust fundamental rights and

freedoms.

Said he: "Indeed I trust that the sector has what it takes to play its role granted that in Kenya, it continues to make significant contributions to the development of this country and within the region.

The Vice chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Tang Jiwu assured that the cordial relations existing between China and Africa will be strengthened for the mutual benefit of their people.

The Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Mr. William Ole Ntimama, in a speech read on his behalf by assistant minister Wilfred Ombui noted that the NGO sector had grown tremendously in the last three decades to over 7,000 NGOs that control a



VP Kalonzo

budget of over 130 billion with over 100,000 employees.

In attendance was the chairman of the NGO Coordination Board, Mr. Peter Nkuraiya and the African Union representative Mr. J.K Shinkaiye.

Jirongo called to account for party funds

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

LUGARI legislator Cyrus Jirongo has been asked to account for Kshs. 22 million.

The amount, according to Kenya Africa Democratic Development Union (KADDU) party National Executive committee (NEC) Member Mr. Moses Wekesa Savimbi, belongs to the party.

Mr. Savimbi alleges that Jirongo together with the party treasurer, Mr. Amini Walji, and acting executive di-

rector Mr. Dennis Wendo, should explain to the party members the whereabouts of the cash.

He claims that out of the Kshs. 22 million, Kshs. 17 million was raised by members during 2007 general elections while Ksh. 5. Million is the party's share of allocation by the Government.

The cash, Mr. Savimbi says was supposed to be spent on party activities nationwide and with the approval of NEC. Mr. Savimbi however points out that NEC has never sat to sanction

how the Kshs. 22 million or part of it could be used.

"At no time did we sit as NEC to say how the money should be used," Mr. Savimbi claims.

The KADDU NEC member declares that Jirongo ceased to be the party supremo leader from the time he publicly declared that he was going to vie for the presidency on United Democratic Movement (UDM) Party.

He urged Jirongo to resign as Lugari MP and seek re-election on UDM party.

"Now that he has ditched KADDU and joined UDM the MP should resign as Lugari MP, give Kaddu its cash and other resources," Mr. Savimbi says

Mr. Savimbi adds that although Jirongo was within his democratic right to join any political party as the party chair he must tell members the position of the party in terms of finances and resources before he leaves.

"We wish him well in his new party but we are kindly asking him to give us back our money," concludes Mr. Savimbi.

CDF on its last budget

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Constituency Development Fund (CDF) may not be factored in the next financial year (FY), 2012/2013 Budget.

This fund may be disbanded as soon as county governments become operational after the next general elections. Projects under this fund will be inherited by county governments for the purposes of ownership and sustainability.

Several of these projects across the counties are either still on going or stalled. Some have even become white elephants.

It is in this light that the treasury allocated Kshs. 3.7 billion in the current financial year to oversee completion of projects under CDF.

This amount (Ksh. 3.7 billion) is on top of the Ksh. 16.9 billion that the treasury has allocated to the 210 constituencies this fiscal year.

However, most CDF Committees across the country contend that even with the additional grant, they may not be able to complete the projects within the remaining few months to the next general elections.

Kanduyi MP, Alfred Khang'ati attributes non-completion of projects in time to a delay in disbursement of the funds to constituencies by the CDF Board. The MP however, asserts that his CDFC is determined to complete all stalled projects as recommended by the National Tax Payers Association (NTA).

"In fact we have now completed quite a good number of projects. We will complete the remaining once we get cash from the CDF board," he adds.

The MP who is also an assistant minister in the office of the Prime Minister names some of the projects he claims are completed as construction of laboratory and home science room at Bungoma Baptist girls' secondary school and Bungoma Kenya Medical Training College (K.M.T.C).

In the citizens CDF report card for Kanduyi constituency, the NTA asked area MP to among other things finalize all incomplete CDF projects, trace and fully account for all missing funds, reduce by 80% badly implemented CDF projects and make available all records of CDF projects, plus bills of Quantities.

There are over 70 ongoing projects and over 30 complete projects in Kanduyi constituency. These are mainly classrooms, laboratory, library, and administration blocks in education institutions.

The projects that are likely to become white elephants if remedial action is not taken are water projects. These are:- Township Water Project, East Bukusu Water Project, Lwanda Wamukoya water project and Mukhaweli primary school borehole.

These water projects were funded to the tune of Kshs. 14,525,000 from the CDF Kitty but they are not in use.

Bungoma South District Development Officer (DDO) Mr. Daud Soransora also says that Kanduyi CDFC is committed to complete all on going projects by next year.

Mr. Soransora claims that Kanduyi is yet to receive this financial year's, 2011/2012 CDF allocation.

"We have also not gotten money from the additional grant of Kshs.3.7 billion which is meant to oversee completion of projects," the DDO adds.

A clergy's take on Ukambani Famine

By KAVYU-KURA

A PRELATE from Ukambani has voiced concern over the perpetual suffering by people of the area due to perennial food shortages.

Bishop Josephine Kitonga who is the wife of the head of the Redeemed Gospel Church Bishop Arthur Kitonga wondered why local MPs have not come up with a lasting solution to the food insecurity problem.

She at the same time blamed food scarcity in Ukambani to failure by the government to provide adequate water to help the residents become self reliant in food production through irrigation.

"The people of Ukambani have large tracks of land that have good fertile soils. If the government provided them with sufficient water for irrigation they could grow even vegetables and kick hunger out of this area," pointed the cleric.

She noted that through her church's Redeemed Integrated Development Agency (RIDA), she had in recent times made forays into Ukambani to

distribute relief food and experienced firsthand the hardships many families were going through due to the intensity of famine. She further wondered why local MPs had not been vocal about the sorry state of affair.

She was speaking recently during a famine relief food distribution exercise at Nzawa trading centre in Mwingi South Constituency in Migwani district where she distributed famine relief maize and beans rations worth Kshs1.3 million to about 4,000 hunger stricken residents.

She noted that even as Ukambani leaders feigned ignorance to the biting famine in the area, a church adherent Koki Musau who is also aspiring for the Mwingi South parliamentary seat requested RIDA to take the relief food consignment to the hungry people of Nzawa location.

"Reading the newspapers, one would form the impression that only the people of Turkana are faced with hunger while many in Ukambani are badly hit even as the MPs assume the hear no evil see no evil attitude," said

Bishop Kitonga who added that during a recent visit to Kibwezi she learnt that a child had died after the family cooked treated maize seeds due to hunger.

Musau who drew the attention of RIDA to the hunger situation in Nzawa location told the beneficiaries who had gathered at the Nzawa AIC church grounds that he would not relent but knock at many doors in search of food donations to cushion the locals from starvation.

"In the meantime, I will devote my energies towards mobilizing famine relief support to the residents who are hunger stricken. However if you elect me MP in the coming general election I will endeavour to put in place mechanism to address famine once and for all," said the Nairobi based businessman.

He said once installed as the local MP he would strive to initiate projects that would ensure provision of adequate water in the area to enable the locals engage in irrigation farming thus kick out famine and the associated poverty.



Bishop Josphine Kitonga (second right) and Koki Musau (pouring the ration) serve relief food ration to an elderly Nzawa resident as the others queue behind.
Photo/Kavyu-Kura

EAC moves to curb smuggling

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE East African Community member states have formulated new laws that are aimed at curbing smuggling at the Kenya-Uganda border.

According to the Permanent Secretary (PS), Ministry of the East Africa Community, Dr. David Nalo, smuggling at the border will automatically come to an end following the new policies.

Mr. Nalo expressed optimism that the new laws put in place would end smuggling activities that have been rampant at the Kenya-Uganda border for many years.

"Once the residents are sensitized about the EAC cross border trading laws, smuggling activities at the Kenya-

Uganda border will be something of the past," the PS said. He disclosed that goods which are below Kshs. 500,000 are not supposed to be taxed when traded within the EAC member states.

The PS, however, said that businessmen should always strive to get the certificate of origin from Kenya revenue Authority (KRA) in order to be on the safe side of the law.

He reminded the business community that the certificate of origin is issued free of charge by KRA. "No body should harass you while moving your goods within the five EAC Member states if you have the certificate of origin," he said.

Mr. Nalo noted that smuggling at the Kenya-Uganda border was as a re-

sult of taxes that were being imposed on businessmen by KRA and Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) "Smuggling at the border has been rampant because the business community has been trying to evade paying taxes to KRA and URA by moving out or in goods through panaya routes," he claimed.

The PS, however, noted with pride that time had come now for residents at the border to engage in legal trade by passing through the official KRA and URA gates without fear.

He urged Kenyans to take advantage of the new laws and engage in cross border trade and any other business within the EAC member states, reiterating that taxes have been waived on goods.

District board better placed to serve traders — experts

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE Crisis facing disbursement of Small Medium Enterprise (SME) fund can be resolved if Treasury enters into fresh agreements with the districts joint loans boards to ease the process of advancing money to traders.

The Districts' joint loans boards, that have been in charge of disbursing loans to small scale traders have the requisite capacity to serve small scale traders better as opposed to the current scenario where the funds have been channeled through financial intermediaries.

The chairman of the Muranga District Joint Loans Board Mr. Perminus Maina says that majority of traders have been unable to access the loans due to the fluctuating interests rates which have been hiked to 16 percent from 8 percent.

Speaking at the Murang'a Trade office, Maina says that the District joint loans board has structures that have over the years been used in disbursing loans to small scale traders at affordable rates of one percent per month with the defaulting rate being minimal.

He says that about Kshs 4.8 million has been disbursed to 69 traders this year after they were vetted and found fit to do business.

He faulted a recent move by Treasury to disburse the Kshs 3.8 billion earmarked for SME funding to banks, saying that it had failed to recognize the role played by the boards in disbursing loans to small traders since independence.

The district loans boards was established after independence with the core purpose of helping out African traders' access credit and expand their businesses by purchasing properties left behind by the white settlers.

Mr. Nalo disclosed that Kenya had earned more than Kshs. 10 billion since it started exporting its goods to the EAC member states after its official launch in July last year.

"People should know that they are free to do cross border trade within the EAC member states" said the PS.

The PS was speaking recently at Malaba, Uganda Revenue Authority customs yard during a one day EAC open stakeholders meeting.

He said that Misingo issue will not sever the integration of the EAC states since the matter was being handled with due care and respect by the authorities.

The five EAC member states are; Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Burundi and Rwanda. These EAC member States cover an area of approximately 1.85 Million square kilometers.



Kenya has made great in road infrastructure

WE have done reasonably well all-round and it makes most of us very proud to be Kenyans.

Our top leaders have also done their part. Only 10 years ago, the infrastructure of this country was in tatters, governance pillars had crumbled and accountability was a strange concept. It used to puzzle me that loads of cash would be returned to the Treasury yet for example roads were in such a sorry state.

In recent years, the tax man has been able to double revenue collection and make Kenya virtually self-reliant on internally generated resources. Something refreshing must have taken place. The seven per cent growth between 2003 and 2007 astonished financial analysts.

The promulgation of the new Constitution must have been the icing of the cake, coming as it did against a politically difficult coalition government arrangement. The other day, the President acknowledged that not everything his government would have wished to have in place has been achieved.

He, however, said Kenyans should look back with pride at what they have achieved.

The same theme was echoed by the Prime Minister who assured Kenyans that we are on the right course. The new law makes Kenya stand shoulder to shoulder with many other countries where democracy has been in practice for over a century.

When one weighs the objectives of such grand plans such as Vision 2030, then it does not require a rocket scientist to conclude that tremendous work has been done.

Projects such as the Nairobi Metropolitan rail network will revolutionise transport in the City. There is welcome change in the way the government works currently. There is significant responsiveness, innovative ideas such as performance contracting and a whole range of sweeping reforms are obvious with senior officials reporting to work at dawn and are often still at their desk at dusk. There is no doubt that once these gains are underpinned and enhanced by an independent judiciary and legislature, Kenya will be well on its way to a middle income economy.

I, however, worry that as much as they have facilitated the attainment of the gains, there are still occasions when MPs display self-serving interests.

The Kenya Revenue Authority needs everybody's participation and sacrifices. MPs should not be preoccupied with dodging paying tax. We must all feel the obligation to pay tax. Our legislators are generously paid so some arguments they have been using to avoid meeting this critical obligation do not add up.

Andrew Pesa,
Via e-mail.

Government should take full blame for Sinai tragedy

MY heartfelt condolences go to the families of those who lost their loved ones to worst fire tragedy that gutted Mukuru Sinai slum.

More than 100 residents lost lives. Most of them died on the spot and they were burnt beyond recognition while others lost the battle while undergoing treatment at various hospitals, with a huge number of them been admitted at Kenyatta National Hospital. The cause of the fire was super fuel spillage.

As expected, moments after sad news broke out, the top echelon of our leadership visited the scene pathos and condoled with those who lost their loved ones. In addition, they pledged that investigations be carried out to find out the root cause of the disaster.

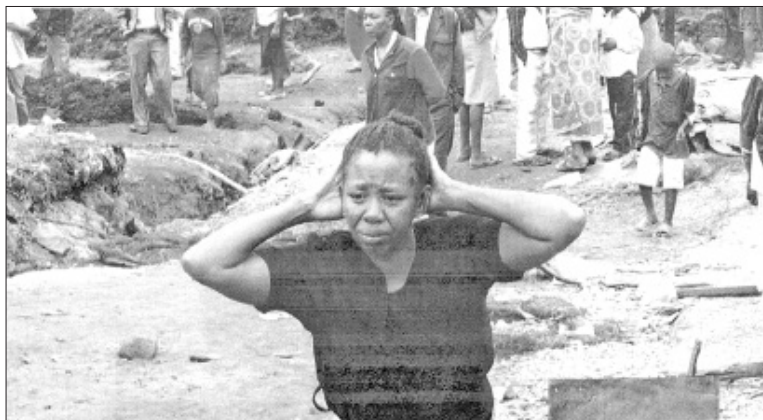
Once we get to the bottom of this tragedy, they assured, action would be taken against those responsible for the deaths. Thereafter, they visited those admitted at KNH and gave similar assurances.

The leaders announced that the government would offset the medical bill of the survivors, offset funeral expenses including buying the coffins and ensure the affected families were compensated.

Immediately after the Government statement, Kenya Pipeline Company issued theirs in which they ruled out the issue of compensation but made a bold admission that it was responsible for the tragedy.

Nobody, the pipeline passes beneath slum. According to slum residents, it was not the first time the spillage occurred but before it was a blessing because they used to scoop and sell the fuel.

Previously, the fuel discharged was diesel or Kerosene, which were



A resident of Sinai slum in tears during the search for more victims of Sinai fire tragedy in the Ngong River recently. Photo/File

less inflammable. Besides leaking pipes, the discharges usually occurred during the cleaning of fuel storage tanks and company emptied its contents to Ngong River passing through the slum. This time KPC discharged highly flammable super fuel.

Apparently, according to area residents' version, the fuel vendors, some of whom did not reside in the slum, had prior knowledge about the spillage. This is because they had long gone to source and were busy scooping the fuel at the time the fire broke out.

Other rumours indicated the company's officials might have deliberately discharged the fuel in large scale to conceal theft at the depots.

For now, the affected residents of Sinai whose makeshift shanties were burnt down and lost all their belongings are camping at the Tom Mboya Social Hall.

The Government and Red Cross Society are taking care of them by providing food, medical care, bedding and blankets.

It is not known how long they

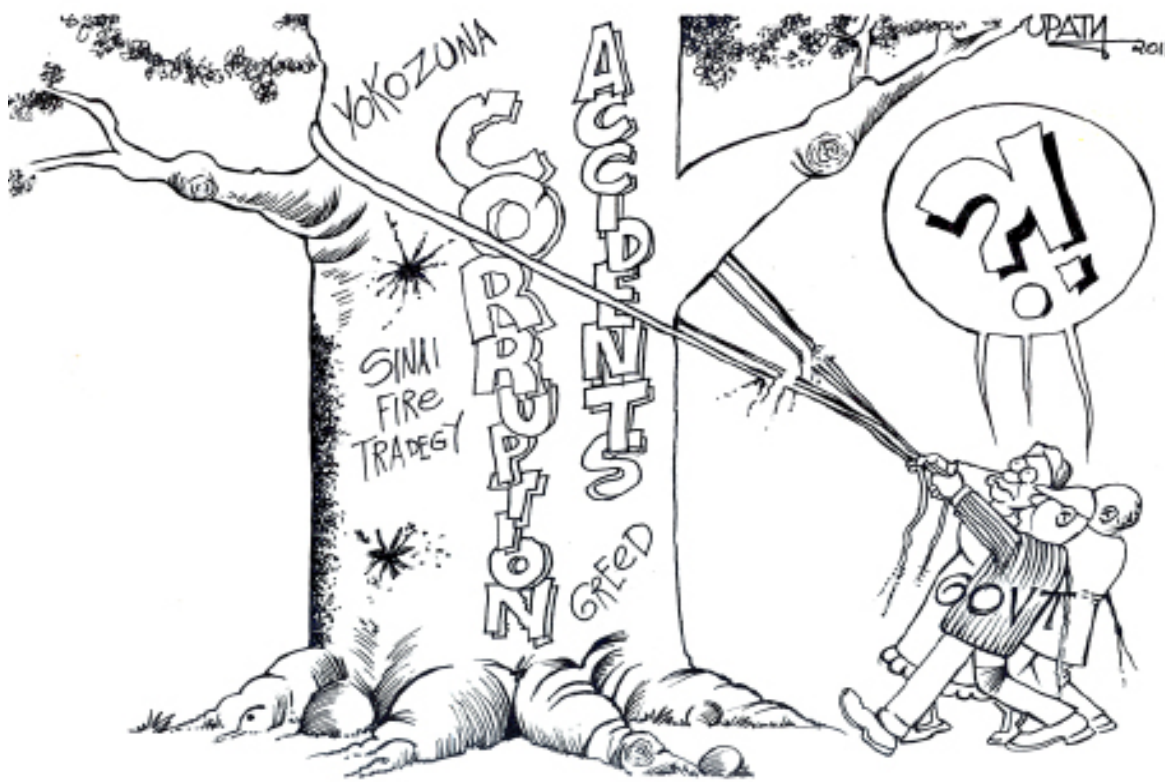
would stay at the camp because the political leadership is embroiled in a tussle on how to handle the issue. Some of politicians are opposed to the relocation of the slum dwellers until the Government provides them with an alternative that would see them get back to their normal life. For other politicians, it is time for them to leave.

However, as the politicians make political mileage out of the unfortunate incident, the question that comes to mind is 'who's to blame?' For me, the government shares the biggest blame because it knew it was only a matter of time before the disaster happen at the slums.

How come they failed to relocate them? Even if there were some resistance, the government would have addressed the issues raised and have its way.

It is wrong for a government worth its salt to allow its citizenry to live in an environment where they stare at death.

Joseph Mutua,
Nairobi.



Kenyan school system still has a lot to address

THE recent teachers' strike was a pointer that all is not well in our education system.

As a country, achieving quality and affordable education should be a priority. Unfortunately, though Education sector is one of the biggest beneficiaries of the national Budget, the amount falls far short of the required amount considering the country's demography.

Undeniably, the biggest strength of any nation lies squarely on her human resource. Great nations are made of their own people's innovations and creatively and to unlock this potential, education is the most critical cog. Therefore, any nation that has attained heights of development had to do a lot of social engineering in education and governance.

This is where Kenya needs to be extremely careful. Though the dispute between teachers and the Government revolved around a crucial element in ensuring quality education — bridging teacher deficit gap — there are many other underlying issues. Teachers are some of the poorest paid hard workers in the country. In fact, they, nurses and police officers are some of the civil servants who hardly attract enough attention on their economic and social needs.

Moreover, with so much wastage in our Government bureaucracy over time, there was going to come a time when provisioning for the rapidly growing population was bound to be a problem. Our school system requires fundamental changes. To start with, facilities for efficient schooling are quite inadequate. Teachers are not adequate and are not well remunerated to spur greater innovation and motivation for requisite services. Yet if you go through annual Government audits and anti-corruption drives by independent and government organisations, there is a lot of wastage in Government systems.

Besides reforming the governance, which is surely bound to happen with the heightened drives by various stakeholders, it is high time we design methodologies to deliver education to many children of this nation efficiently and to reach all.

Thankfully, the Government did notice the gap in delivery of education between the rich and the poor and came up with a revolutionary resolve to advance chances to pupils in public primary schools to attend national schools for secondary education.

Harrison Ikunda,
Nairobi.



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.

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Oparanya assures on completion of projects

By JOEL JUMA

The Government will soon disburse over Kshs11 billion to oversee completion of development projects in all constituencies in the country.

Planning Minister Wycliffe Oparanya says Treasury has already released the money to his ministry to facilitate disbursement to constituencies that meet the requirement for project funding.

"This is only 50 percent of the total amount allocated in the national budget for constituencies," said Oparanya who is Butere MP.

He disclosed that the Ministry of Planning and National Development has been allocated Kshs 22 billion to facilitate the completion of unfinished projects in the constituencies.

Oparanya explained that MPs should guide their Constituency Development Fund (CDF) management committees to ensure that all projects initiated in their areas are completed in the current financial year. He explained that the Government wants to ensure that the country goes to the next General Elections without stalled projects

Oparanya however explained that the Kshs11 billion meant for projects will however not be given out to constituencies that fail to submit their proposals. "We need proposals for projects to be vetted and approved by the board before money can be released," said Oparanya. The minister was speaking at Mautuma secondary school in Lugari constituency during inspection of projects.

He was accompanied by the area MP Cyrus Jirongo and the Western Provincial Planning Officer James Nyabochao.

Oparanya explained that he was going round to inspect projects so as to ensure that the funds are not misused by the management committees. He said his ministry had deployed auditors countrywide to assess cases of financial mismanagement. "We have always taken action in areas where we suspect cash has been embezzled," said Oparanya.

The National Tax Payers Association (NTA) has in the past audited the usage of public funds and in some provoked outrage with MPs dismissing their reports as unfounded.

Prisoners protest against Sexual Offenses Act

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

INMATES at the King'ng'o G.K. prison want the Sexual Offenses Act revised to avoid sending innocent people to jail.

The inmates say that the Act in its current form had loopholes which have been used to victimize innocent individuals.

They told the task force on the preparation of the victims of offense and bail information and supervision Bill that a significant percentage of convictions in law courts are sexually related offenses which include rape, defilement or indecent sexual assault.

Mr. Nathan Mariga who spoke on their behalf claimed about three quarters of these sexual offenses are founded on flimsy grounds built on mere fabrications or stage managed to victimize some individual for diverse reasons including love gone sour and refusal by men to give in to sexual advances.

"Non-custodial sentences need to be explored in order to ease conges-

tion in prisons. I recommend formation of a local tribunal headed by chiefs and community elders to determine minor and petty cases. This will also aid in easing up of the backlog of cases in courts," said Mariga.

The spokesperson added that all the days spent in remand need to be included upon conviction.

Mr. Charles Mwai who spoke on behalf of remandees said that lawyers should be provided for all accused persons given that 80 per cent of suspects come from poor families and cannot afford the services of an advocate.

"About 80 per cent of all cases represented by advocates are acquitted whereas those who are unable to secure the services end up languishing in prisons," he noted.

Mwai also proposed the determination of the duration between presentation of a case in court and the judgment noting that many suspects stay for too long before the conclusion of their cases.

He further recommended provision of bonds without sureties as

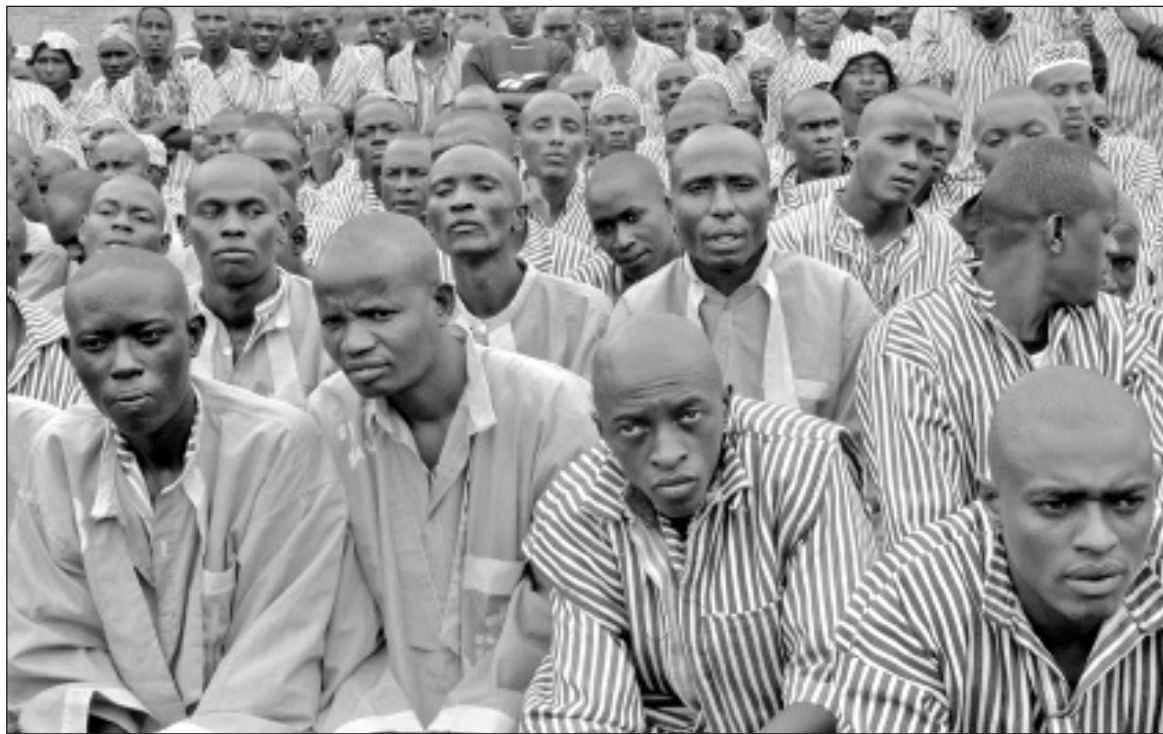
many end up behind bars for lack of guarantors.

Assistant commissioner of prisons and officer in charge of King'ng'o prison, Mr Patrick Aranduh asked the government to consider developing homes for prisoners released after serving many years in prison to help them cope with life out of prison.

Aranduh said that rehabilitation centers could come in handy for those prisoners who have spent better parts of their lives behind bars to help in their assimilation to the society.

"Many are unable to fit well in the society and end up as misfits. Some of the ex-convicts on returning to their homes find their parents and close relatives dead or their ancestral lands sold and starting up life becomes a tall order for them," said Aranduh.

Mr. Peter Maundu who is a task force member said that bond or bail awarding is a constitutional right for every suspect in any crime including robbery with violence which was not bailable and that denial of bail should only happen with compelling reasons.



Some of the prisoners at King'ng'o G.K. Prison in Nyeri.

Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Now West Kenya Sugar wants to relocate

By JOEL JUMA

THE West Kenya Sugar Company is seeking a license to relocate its operations to Busia County.

The management of the company, situated in Kakamega County, said it should be allowed to relocate to Busia to serve over 40,000 farmers who were currently suffering owing to an increase cane poaching in West Kenya sugar belt.

West Kenya Managing Director Tejveer S. Rai said in a letter to Kenya Sugar Board that it was ready to start a factory in Busia when issued with a license.

"We are aware that there is public land which was earmarked for a sugar mill around Nasewa area. We are willing to abide by legislations and policies that are in place regarding acquisition of such land for private investment purposes," read part of the letter to KSB acting Chief Executive Officer Solomon Odera.

Rai explained that Busia has the potential for a sugar factory adding that it was sad that the farmers in the region were suffering.

The Kenya Sugar Board Director Billy Wanjala and Mohammed Mukhwana said they were ready to assist West Kenya get a license to establish a factory in Busia.

"Busia is a big region and requires a sugar mill to avoid dependence of Mumias Sugar Company," said Mukhwana.

Mukhwana who is a director representing the region explained that the board wants the monopoly of Mumias to come to an end in the area to help create healthy competition and enable farmers reap highly from their produce.

Butali is currently paying its farmers over Kshs. 80 million every month for the cane delivered to the factory. West Kenya was against the introduction of Butali sugar company in the area due to lack of cane that could sustain the two factories.

It has now emerged that cane shortage has hit the area with most of the millers harvesting premature cane. The problem of premature cane has also hit Mumias Sugar Company forcing it to source from Nzoia Sugar Company. Butali Sugar Company General Manager Sohil Patel disclosed that the firm was also sourcing from Nzoia sugar zone.

By BOB OMBATI

Group urged to educate chiefs on human rights

HUMAN Rights groups and activists have been challenged to push for the protection of the rights of provincial administrators and security officers instead of focusing more on suspects.

Chief George Oponga from Kisii County faulted the lobby groups for ignoring the rights of the officers, saying this had in most cases curtailed investigations and dispensation of justice.

He told a Task Force on national values, policy and legislation at Gusii Institute of Technology (GIT) that most administrators are torn between enforcing the law and upholding the rights of their subjects.

Oponga proposed to the Task Force headed by Francis Owino that chiefs and security officers be sensitized on human rights to enable them execute their duties effectively without violating the rights of their subjects and individuals.

The Chief noted that whenever security agents arrest a suspect, human rights groups are quick at condemning the act without investigating circumstances surrounding the arrest.

"Chiefs and security officers are trained to use reasonable force to arrest suspects. When this is done, the Human rights groups intervene immediately to protect the suspects," Oponga noted.

Further, participants told the government to inculcate positive cultural values in the educational curriculum to help mould children into responsible and accountable citizens.

They lamented that Kenyans cultural values have been eroded by the influx of uncensored foreign films which poisoned the minds of youths and reduced them to puppets.

Omari Gichana noted that youths were blindly aping the western culture which was in conflict with the African

cultural values and had resulted in the breakdown of both family and societal values.

Gichana challenged the government to censure all foreign films imported into the country to ensure that they do not contravene our culture.

He urged the government to come up with a national dress that will help to identify Kenyans who had lost their identity due to the current mode of dressing inherited from the colonial masters.

Councilor Charles Nyagoto at the same time proposed that the government involve local residents in the management of public funds and the implementation of public projects to ensure that they are beneficial to the target groups.

He faulted the management of public funds in constituencies and civic wards, alleging that it was not transparent and projects were imposed

on people, thus affecting their support and sustainability.

"Communities need to be consulted prior to the implementation of projects in their jurisdictions so that they can own and support them," he suggested adding that the disbursement of constituency bursary funds to needy students is still wanting.

Kisii central District Officer one, Philip Soi urged County governments to formulate measures to ensure that the devolved funds channeled to their respective electoral areas were properly utilized.

Participants expressed their displeasure over the inability by the government to stem the culture of impunity and cited selective application of the law, noting that petty offenders were languishing in jails while individuals engaged in massive corruption have been spared.

Justin Omwenga, a youth repre-

sentative said that majority of graduates were still idling in the villages since employers demanded for prior experience as a qualification and therefore locked out graduates who had no experience.

He urged the employers to look out on qualifications and records of job seekers, saying it was illogical for employers to dwell on non-existent experience from graduates, adding they should be employed to gain it.

The task force chair who is also a director in the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion Constitutional affairs said recommendations will be included in the policy to actualize the relevant sections of the new law.

The officer said the proposals focused on gender equity and equality, governance and quality of leaders required in the current constitutional dispensation.

Oparanya gives directive to CDF committees

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

PLANNING Minister Hon Wycliffe Oparanya has directed CDF committees countrywide to clear all outstanding projects by the end of the current financial year.

The Minister says that the National Management Board on CDF will not accept new projects to be started until all pending projects are completed.

"We don't want new projects in this financial year until all others are finished before the general elections. The Government has this year allocated Kshs 22.9 billion for CDF kitty nationally which should be enough to finish all the ongoing projects," he added.

Oparanya adds that his ministry is recruiting a consultant committee which will be able to establish whether the funds and projects are beneficial at the local level.

He says implementation of the projects has been a big challenge as funds were thinly spread out to many projects which he blamed on the low completion rates.

Over Kshs 100 billion has been disbursed since inception of the fund to all the 210 constituencies in the country.

The minister who spoke after touring CDF projects in Mukurweini district recently, said he was very much satisfied with the work done by the local CDF committee in the district.

He said that the district has received Kshs 283 million since in-

ception and the funds have since been utilized well.

The minister who was accompanied by Youth assistant minister who is also the local MP Hon Kabando Wa Kabando said the district will further receive Kshs 80

million to assist in the completion of projects before the general elections next year.

The minister also commissioned Kshs.2.4 million Gatura Water Tank, which is capable of holding 58,000 litres of water. The water

will be used for domestic use by residents who have been walking for over two kilometers in search of commodity.

The water tank which has been fully funded by CDF funds will benefit over 600 households.



Planning Minister Hon Wycliffe Oparanya commissions the Kshs 2.4 million Gatura Water tank project in Mukurweini recently. Looking on is Youth assistant minister who is also the area MP Hon Kabando wa Kabando. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

NEMA reads riot act to Kakamega Hospital

By JOEL JUMA

A GOVERNMENT Environmental Agency has sounded a warning to hospitals in Kakamega County against disposing medical wastes to dumpsites established by councils.

National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) expressed concern over the flooding of dumpsites with medical waste which in an ideal scenario should be deposited at the Kakamega Provincial General Hospitals for proper disposal.

"The only place where used syringes can be disposed is at the Kakamega Provincial General Hospital. Other districts have no machines that can burn the waste syringes into ashes," said Nema Kakamega officer Vincent Mahiva.

Mahiva explained that the Rosterman dumpsite need to be expanded by the Kakamega Municipal Council as the site was getting filled up.

"We have notified the council to expand and fence the dumpsite at Rosterman as pigs are interfering with the waste which posed health risks to the residents," said Mahiva.

Mahiva made the remarks in Kakamega town during the celebrations to mark the World Clean up day. The exercise was used by students to clean the town.

Mahiva explained that Nema has also served a notice to Lake Victoria North Water Services Board to fill up the ponds in Maraba estate to avoid causing environmental degradation in Kakamega town.

The ponds have not been filled up after the board excavated soil in an effort to put up a sewerage system.

The sewerage system was opposed by the residents after it emerged that the board had not complied with Nema regulations apart from failing to compensate the residents before their eviction.

Mahiva and the area councilorl Ponyochi Kunyobo said that the board need to fill up the pond as it is becoming a breeding area for mosquitoes.

Ponyochi said the heavy rains pounding the region have made water to overflow to the neighbouring homes.

Assistant minister Manyala Keya while touring the town said that there was need for effective planning saying that some houses were not meeting the set standards.

He explained that the council needs to work with the Public Works department to ensure that housing units are of quality. Keya said buildings set up during colonial period need to be renovated as some of them have outlived their usefulness.

Keya said that the town population was growing at a higher rate and requires houses that can offer accommodation to the students and locals. Statistics from the ministry of Planning indicate that the population of the country was growing at one million people every year.

Kakamega County is the second largest in population in the country after Nairobi County.

Musalia upbeat about devolution

By HENRY OWINO

THE Task Force on devolution has finally completed its work. Already six bills to steer the implementation process are awaiting approval by Parliament.

Prof Mutakha Kangu who chaired the task force says that if all the six bills are adopted, then the stage will be set for a more inclusive process in the management of public affairs.

Prof Kangu: "Some people have been used to centralized government where they wield too much power while others are locked up in captivity as slaves. Removing captives from

such people is not easy because you deny them free services they are used to at the expense of others. Devolution is the only way."

At the same time, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government, Musalia Mudavadi, who spoke after he received the final report on devolution termed the timelines put in place by the Committee of Experts (CoE) as ambitious.

Mudavadi said the timelines set for the enactment of the laws were too short for the MPs to scrutinize and pass the six key laws on counties. He however said that measures are in place to ensure that the taskforce report is not

diluted but reflects provisions in the constitution.

Mudavadi said: "To assume that we can tinker with certain aspects of devolution during implementation and still hope to harvest the benefit of subsidiary is foolhardy. We should therefore avoid any attempts to dilute any aspect of devolution implementation as this will undermine and negate the historic gains that the Constitution proffers."

He urged the Parliament to pass key Bills that will bring into force the devolved units of government. According to Minister for Justice, Mutula Kilonzo, Parliament is set to resume this month and with the tight deadlines, MPs have to extend their session to the festive season to meet the set deadlines.

The Minister said the six Bills namely the Draft Devolved Government Bill, 2011, Draft Urban Areas and Cities Bill, 2011, Draft Intergovernmental Relations Bill, 2011, Draft Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations, 2011, Draft County Governmental Financial Management Bill, 2011 and Draft Transition to County Governments Bill, 2011 presented to him by the Task-force on Devolution were a clear testimony that the country is now moving steadily towards the full implementation of the Constitution.

"The taskforce has completed its work and will forward the bills to the CIC, Attorney General's office and the Law Reform Committee for action,"

said Mudavadi. The Constitution states that each county will have a county assembly and a county executive.

The new Urban Areas and Cities Acts 2011 is the brainchild of taskforce hence with this law, our cities and towns will be professionally managed with a focus on making them engines of economic growth for counties. This will be through proper planned infrastructure and service delivery.

According to the constitution, to be a governor in a County, one may be required to have a degree and members of County Assemblies must possess Form Four certificates.

Those holding leadership positions in County Governments must also produce certificates of good conduct and criminal-free record from the anti-crime agency. In the far-reaching proposals, the taskforce team wants about 1,500 wards spread in all the 175 local authorities currently, abolished or merged in order to make economic sense.

The Task Force also proposes the reduction of the number of councilors from 3,465 to 2,000. In addition to that, it is advising that each of the 290 constituencies to have a minimum of three and maximum of five wards in each of the 47 Counties.

Some of the proposed findings if adopted by parliament, will guide in the creation of offices for County Governments which become operational after the 2012 General Election.



From Left: Prof Mutakha Kangu, Hon. Musalia Mudavadi and PS Prof. Karega Mutahi. Photo/Henry Owino

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

A monthly supplement funded by the European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Tribute to Prof. Wangari Maathai

IT is with deep sorrows that we receive the news of Nobel Peace Laureate Prof Wangari Maathai's demise. She was not only a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, but a true African mother. Before many of us understood the important connection between peace and a sustainable environment, Prof Maathai had for long been in the forefront of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development in Africa. She introduced the idea of planting trees in 1976 when she saw the problems caused by deforestation in rural areas, especially for the women. Grazing areas for livestock were being destroyed. The women had to go further and further in search of firewood for cooking. From a humble beginning of planting nine trees in her backyard, the gallant Professor founded the Green Belt Movement to help restore Africa's forests and curb deforestation-related poverty. The movement has assisted women in planting more than 20 million trees on their farms and on school and church grounds. Prof Wangari Maathai took a holistic approach to sustainable development that embraced democracy, human rights and women's rights in particular. Professor Ole Danbolt Mjøs, Chairman of

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**HANNA
CARLSSON**

the Norwegian Nobel Committee, 2004, in his address to professor Maathai, at the ceremony of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, December 10, 2004, said: "You stand as an example and a source of inspiration to everyone in Africa who is fighting for sustainable development, democracy and peace. You are an outstanding role model for all women in Africa and the rest of the world."

Even if our beloved mother is not physically with us anymore, her well-lived life will continue to be a source of inspiration for all of us since her status of a true icon and role-model for peace will endure forever.

When Prof Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize she said, "I was surprised because I had no idea that anyone was listening". This is a feeling most peace-practitioners share. They always work hard within communities without seeking to know who else was looking. But as the life of Prof Maathai proved, a good work will always get noticed. Fare thee

well mother Africa.

Second policy dialogue

Meanwhile, the Partnership for Peace Project in close partnership with the department of National Cohesion and Integration at the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs, will organize another round of policy dialogue meetings in Western, Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces.

During the first round of policy dialogue meetings, four sources of conflicts were identified. In the second round we will address negative ethnicity, which was one of the sources of conflict identified during the first round of dialogues. A draft policy on National Cohesion and Integration has been developed and will be available for thorough review during the meetings. The recommendations will as much as possible be incorporated in the final version to be tabled in parliament.

Project nearing its end

Let me take this chance to inform our esteemed stakeholders that the Partnership for Peace Project in its current set up is coming to an end. Our initial funding was for 30 months (to December 2011) and the European Union, which is the main donor, cannot give us a cost-extension. From the specific instrument, the Instrument for

Stability, Crisis preparedness component - Peace-building Partnership Support, it is only possible to get a time-extension of 6 months which means that additional funding for activities need to be sourced from somewhere else. Owing to the weak shilling and Konrad Adenauer Foundation's willingness to continue the project we will at the moment be able to carry on up to the end of June 2012. It is indeed good news though there is a sad part of the story. The coordination office in Kisumu will be closed down by the end of this month, to reduce our spending on administration, and will move to Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Nairobi office. Even so offices of our regional partners: Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in Eldoret, Mount Elgon Residents' Association in Cheptais, and Community Initiative Action Group in Kisumu will remain open and operational. Further, the networks that have been established in the regions during the last two years have the capacity to carry on the work on the ground.

Proud to serve from Kisumu

Personally, I have always been proud working from Kisumu, to be close to the people we work with, and to be able in a couple of hours to visit trainings and meetings. However, remember that Partnership for Peace does not have its identity in a physical location but in the spirit we share in our untiring work to make Kenya a better place to live in.

The writer is the International Project Manager of the Partnership for Peace Project. For comments or suggestions write to:

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Saitoti leads in marking peace day with style

BY JOSEPH AWUONDO

ON the 21st and 22nd of September, Kenyans joined the world to commemorate the UN World Peace Day.

Once again private-public partnership on peace issues was exhibited as the Kenyan government partnered with a number of civil society organizations to make the event a success.

The two-day event started off with peace sensitive speeches by the representatives of government and civil society. There was a deep reflection on where the country has come from, especially following 2007-08 post-election violence. As the first day got momentum, there was thematic division of audience in five categories: Women and Youth participation in peace building and conflict management, Transitional justice, Peace and Security, Peace Media, Peace and Religion and finally Private Sector in Peacebuilding and Conflict Management.

There were resolutions from each



Prof. Saitoti (right) and Mr. Mutula during the International Day of Peace at KICC.

group which were discussed at the panel at the end of the day. The role of tradition in conflict issues was emphasized. There was a call for women and the youth to unite and work together not only to achieve political representation but also to own and affect peace initiatives. The business community was challenged to ensure they make profits with human face. The religious leaders were urged to mentor their flock for peace and development. For the entire media,

the need for conflict sensitive reporting was highlighted and they were asked to give blackout to political leaders who use violence and inciting languages during campaigns. The citizenry were reminded that success of the Vision 2030 was entirely pegged on peace and tranquility.

There was also a spectacular peace procession led by Nairobi Provincial Commissioner, Mr. James Muiru Waweru, at Uhuru Part. The celebration was held at the Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC) grounds. The occasion was marked with captivating cultural entertainment extravaganza. Most of the presentation demystified tribalism, poor governance, gender violence, political hatred and poverty. Justice Ministers Mutula Kilonzo and his Security counterpart George Saitoti graced the occasion with the latter giving the keynote address. All guest speakers conveyed one message, peace. The speakers were saddened by the ongoing public political utterances and called on their fellow politicians to stop dividing the country further along ethnic lines.

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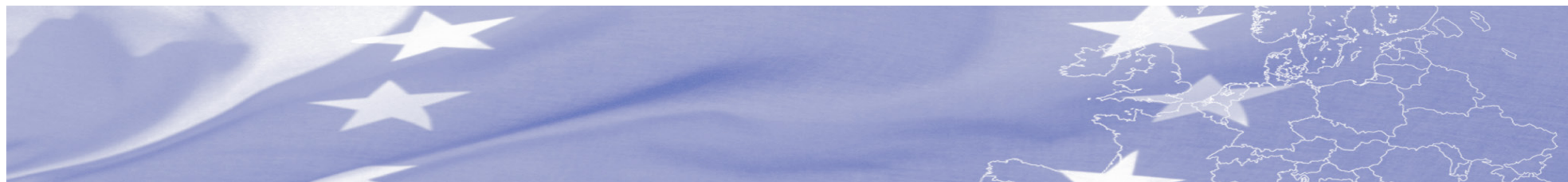
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BY MALACHI MOTANO

Civil society demands peace policy

THE civil society wants the government to hasten the process of formulating the National Peace Policy as the country gears up for next year's general elections.

"The developing of a National Peace Policy has taken unnecessarily too long. In light of past conflicts, there should be a co-ordinated and comprehensive peace framework before we go for the elections next year," says Kituo Cha Sheria programme officer Martin Onyango.

Onyango said "the deficiency in Kenya today is that we work on an ad hoc basis and conflict gets us by surprise. We want a comprehensive framework so that peace building and conflict management becomes core in government planning and execution."

He pointed out that despite the formation of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) and the National Cohe-

sion and Integration Commission (NCIC) coupled by many other initiatives by non-state actors in peace building, the government was best placed to curb the recurrence of violence witnessed after the disputed presidential poll results in 2007.

"There have been initiatives by government agencies and non-governmental organisations but there is no co-ordination and a focal point on these issues, a policy framework will guarantee government commitment to finance and coordinate these initiatives in one clear direction for greater impact," he noted.

Mr Onyango also said that the civil society was in the process of collecting views of the public and other stakeholders based on the peace policy draft of 2003 and reiterated that as non-state actors, they will not sit back and watch as government drags its feet.

"We are organising a stake-



Participants headed to KICC during the International Day of Peace.

holders workshop to discuss the draft and to start a nationwide drive to demand a policy from the government; we cannot wait for the government to give us a policy framework at its convenient time," he affirmed noting that the process which began in 2003 ought to have been effectively completed.

The meeting which was convened by the Kituo Cha Sheria brought together participants from the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission, National Cohesion and Integration Commission among other NGOs agencies like PeaceNet Kenya, the Usalama Forum and the Kenya Partners for peace and security.



Participants in procession from Uhuru Park to KICC during the International Day of Peace.

No short cut to peace

BY JANE MURUTU

SINCE 1981 the world has celebrated International Day of Peace, also known as the World peace day, which occurs annually on 21 September. According to Wikipedia, "It is dedicated to peace, and specifically the absence of war, such as might be occasioned by a temporary ceasefire in a combat zone. It is observed by many nations, political groups, military groups, and peoples."

To inaugurate the day, the "Peace Bell" is rung at UN Headquarters (in New York City, United States). The bell is cast from coins donated by children

from all continents apart from Africa. It was given as a gift by the United Nations Association of Japan, and is referred to as "a reminder of the human cost of war." The inscription on its side reads: "Long live absolute world peace."

To understand this day it is important to define Peace. Wikipedia defines peace as a state of harmony characterized by the lack of violent conflict. Commonly understood as the absence of hostility, peace also suggests the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal or international relationships, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves

the true interests of all. In international relations, peacetime is not only the absence of war or conflict, but also the presence of cultural and economic understanding and unity. There is also a sense of tolerance in international relations for the realization of true peace.

This year on its 30th anniversary - the UN Peace Day's theme is "Peace and Democracy: make your voice heard". In Kenya the day was marked against the backdrop of Sinai fire victims, and a host of other deaths brought about by illicit liquors branded "jamba, Yokozuna and

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Busia DC underlines the value of peace

BY NYAKWAR ODAWO

LOCAL leaders and stakeholders in the Busia County have been called upon to promote peaceful co-existence among the various ethnic communities from their respective areas.

Addressing peace committees drawn from seven districts in the entire Busia County on behalf of Western Provincial Commissioner at the Busia County Council Hall recently, Busia District Commissioner Mwiandi Gitonga underscored the importance of peace and called upon the peace committees from the respective districts to promote harmonious co-existence to avoid a repeat of the post election violence experienced in 2008.

"Peace is crucial to any development initiative without which no meaningful growth

can be realized," said the commissioner, adding that Busia district was really affected by the violence.

The DC lauded Busia District Peace Committee led by former Nambale legislator Philip Masinde for their in restoring peace among the various ethnic communities after the Post Election Violence considering that Busia is a cosmopolitan region.

Gitonga urged respective district peace committees to work closely with the security agencies in their areas of jurisdiction.

"There are inadequate police officers to maintain law and order. One police officer is assigned to protect 800 people. Therefore we want to engage you to assist the police officers in your respective areas towards the promotion of peaceful co-existence," said Gitonga.

The commissioner at the same time

urged politicians to refrain from utterances that may fan animosity in the area adding that the peace committees must be a reflection of the diverse communities at the grassroots level.

The provincial administrator cautioned the youths in the Busia County against being used by politicians to further their own political agenda at the expense of peace.

"There is need to engage the youth in the forum so that they are not exploited by politicians during the campaigns," said Gitonga. He instead called upon politicians to empower the youth to engage in various income generating activities hence improving on their livelihoods.

The DC at the same time urged the youths in the county to form groups and forward their proposals to their respective district poverty eradication committees for

funding to enable them undertake various income generating activities.

Gitonga at the same time said issues cannot be resolved through demonstrations but by embracing dialogue with the parties concerned so that a lasting solution can be reached. He cited a recent case where some local politicians in the county had mobilized sugarcane farmers to take to the street against a local sugar company that allegedly wanted to grab their land.

Among those who attended the peace forum sponsored by the Ministry of Special Programmes in collaboration with the Provincial Commissioner's office included Teso North District Commissioner Josephine Onunga, Teso South District Commissioner Dennis Omosa, Nambale District Commissioner Francis Lenyangume and Bunyala District Commissioner Khalif Abdi Ali among others.



This project is funded by the European Union



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NCIC
NATIONAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION COMMISSION
Kenya



JRC
JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
Kenya

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Role of women in peacebuilding underscored

By MALACHI MOTANO

THE role of the youth and women in national reconciliation and unity has been put into perspective months since the bungled general elections of 2007.

Speaking during a public forum on the future of Kenya on consolidating national cohesion and unity" as spelt out by the Kenyan National Dialogue and Reconciliation in Nairobi, Ms Jacqueline Anam-Mogeni, an advocate and gender consultant, said women have been marginalized by being oppressed, victimized and excluded from peace building yet they were the most affected during the post election crisis.

"The Beijing Experience of 1995 was phenomenal as the Kenyan Women who attended the conference returned home with a new sense of empowerment and began to clearly articulate the challenges women were facing in Kenya right to the grassroots and tackling discriminatory legislation head on. But the differences soon emerged and it apparently became clear that women are not homogeneous. They have their peculiarities, interests, social classes, cultural roots and ethnic tensions," she pointed out.

Ms Anam added that October 2000 saw the signing of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. The Resolution "1325," as it is referred, recognizes that civilians - particularly women and children - are the worst affected by conflict, and that this is a threat to peace and security as was witnessed during the January and February internal conflict and so women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution initiatives cannot be overemphasized

"Conceptually there are tensions on



Participants march to KICC through Uhuru Highway during the International Day of Peace

how women and women's concerns should be included in processes of peace building - the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Committee (TJRC) is a good example," she avers.

She cautioned that many agencies are focusing on preventing or recovering from the unrest though emphasis should be placed on direct violence between large groups of people which is still a great challenge to the structural origins of public violence and the private violence (often against women and children).

Kenyans own efforts to bring about peace have looked toward political and civil society leaders (mostly men) and

these have been the key people to include in dialogues and efforts to build peace and prevent conflict.

UNIFEM and women's civil society actors, she said, point to the need for examining the web of violence that accompanies public violence. This web, she observed, often begins with some form of structural violence where some ethnic, religious, class, or other identity groups receive unearned privileges while others are discriminated against and Kenyan women are caught up in this web and so it is important that women are engaged.

The gender expert revealed that women need to be engaged because they can-

stitute half of the Kenyan population and the tasks of peace building are so great; women and men must be partners in the process. "Besides, women are the central caretakers of our families in this country and right now everyone (men, women, and children) is suffering because women are excluded from peace building. So their centrality to communal life makes their inclusion in peace building essential."

Unknown to many, women have the capacity nurture peace, so they must be encouraged to use their gifts in building peace and it would be helpful if special programs could be created to empower women to use their gifts in the tasks of building peace.

She notes that since women and men have different experiences of violence and peace, women must be allowed and encouraged to bring their unique insights to the peace building process of peace.

Anam-Mogeni argues that sexism, racism, classism, ethnic and religious discrimination originate from the same set of beliefs that some people are inherently "better" than others. She posits that women's empowerment should be seen as inherent to the process of building peace. Because violence against women is connected to other forms of violence, women need to be involved in peace building efforts, she notes

Ms. Rita Njau, an advocacy officer and programmes coordinator with Jesuit Hakimani Centre said there is need to have positive relations in society for cohesion and peace to be sustained. Kenyans should embrace common vision and values as it is enshrined in the words of the National Anthem. She adds that Kenyans are seriously looking at issues of safety,

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Gusii, Kipsigis elders in joint peace initiative

BY BOB OMBATI

ELDERS and leaders from both Gusii and Kipsigis communities have vowed to conduct periodic peace meetings along the common border to help promote unity and peaceful-co existence ahead of the 2012 General Elections.

The joint initiative by the Abagusii Cultural and Development Council and Myoot Kipsigis Council of elders will spearhead meetings to avert inter-ethnic flare ups which are common occurrences during the electioneering period.

The chairmen of the councils, Araka Matundura, a Gusii and his Kipsigis counterpart, Mr. Joseph Sang, cite cattle rustling, incitement and land as factors which result in conflict and vowed to take measures to reverse the trend.

The two officials now want the community members to volunteer information to the security officers through the community policing programme to curb cattle

rustling along the Borabu-Sotik border to hasten the ongoing healing and reconciliation processes initiated after the disputed 2007 president poll which disrupted peace in the area.

During a peace meeting at Damside hotel in Nyamira County, the two elders asked both communities to discard retrogressive practices and collaborate with security officers in recovering stolen cattle to enhance peace.

The elders challenged politicians and their agents to refrain from uttering inflammatory statements that seek to whip up ethnic passions, stressing as public officers, they should be neutral on sensitive political issues to avoid creating conflicts.

"As elders we have a duty to ensure that our communities live peacefully and the country does not revert to the ugly incidents witnessed after the 2007 General Elections which left 1133 people dead, over half a million displaced and properties destroyed," said Matundura.

Sang said peace was an essential ingredient for any meaningful development to be realized, stressing that communities along Borabu-Sotik border have vowed to live in peace and were currently sharing schools, churches, markets and farming activities.

The elders advised the local community to shun politicians out to incite them to violence and instead expose them to the relevant government organs so that action can be taken against them.

"Most of these politicians will retreat to safe havens in the urban centres when violence erupts and therefore you are the ones to bear the losses."

They challenged dealers in land transactions from both sides to respect their part of the bargain adding that individuals evicted during the post poll chaos should be allowed back to their farms to help cement the relationship between the two border communities.

They dismissed claims that the two communities were still embroiled in boundary

dispute and advised whoever is aggrieved to contact relevant government agencies to help establish the truth to avoid misleading members of the public and causing unnecessary tension and conflicts.

During the meeting co-chaired by Sang and Matundura, the elders urged youths not to allow politicians to incite them into violence during electioneering period, saying that once they ascend to power, they abandon them to fend for themselves.

The elders noted that the two communities shared a common history and symbiotic relationship born out of the shared resources and businesses, emphasizing that they will not allow political leaders to divide them for their selfish interests.

The 2007 post election violence, noted elders disrupted socio-economic activities and led to untold suffering since businesses and transport industry were paralyzed besides the destruction of properties worth billions of shillings.



This project is funded by the European Union



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opportunity for all and people to feel that they belong and it is the youth and women who have mostly been affected and marginalised as the country moves forward in national reconciliation and unity.

Mr. Jillo A. Kasse, a development consultant, stated that following the announcement of a disputed election, a Grand Coalition Government was formed through the National Accord and Reconciliation Act 2008 which paved the way for rebuilding Kenya.

He said, the violence that rocked the country after the disputed presidential elections and nearly plunged the country into anarchy has more than ever shown what the youth can do, that is both for the good of the country if facilitated, both positively and negatively.

The land reform policy, he said, is an issue that should not be swept aside. The new lands Minister Mr. James Orengo agrees that there is a land dimension to the crisis he describes as "perennial", coming before or after General Elections.

Land and its ownership,



Prof. Saitoti and other participants at the International Day of Peace

Orengo says, is what will destroy Kenya, unless there is a change in the style of its sharing and ownership.

"The appetite for land is not limited to the poor and the landless. Even those who have land have an insatiable thirst for more. It is those who have land who keep looking for more," Orengo says.

Jillo stated that it is the youths who were easily used in this land related violence. However, "the youths can be positively harnessed in the process of reconciliation and uniting Kenya through civic education, healing, rebuilding, change agents, resource mobilization and peace makers," he added.

He noted that after the post election violence, women, children and men were traumatized. The youth, he said, can facilitate in the healing process either as peer educators and counselors in their communities and neighboring communities too. "They can also play an active role as change agents in the new dispensation-the Kenya we want," observed the Development Consultant. He pointed out that though the youth do not control many re-

sources, they form a large percentage of Kenya's population and they can play a lead role in resource mobilization as peace makers.

"In the end, reconciliation is a spiritual process, which requires more than just a legal framework. It has to happen in the hearts and minds of people. People have to repent and forgive," said Jillo adding that the youth, who are honest in their hearts, can lead in the process. They need to be incorporated in the community structures discussing peace.

Jillo was saddened that the political elite pay lip service to youth participation in governance citing how central the youth were in all the political parties during the elections compared to the percentage in terms of representation in decision making positions?

The youth, he proposed should become a strong voice and play their role as stakeholders in national reconciliation and unity. He called for affirmative action through a legal framework where a certain percentage of national resources are availed to youth initiatives and organizations.

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trigger" while leaving others blind.

Today as a country, we are grappling with the problem of the internally displaced persons who cannot only be found in tents but are spread all over Kenya with no source of livelihood. We cannot boast of a new constitution when we have majority citizenry who are not economically independent.

Commemorating the world peace day on Wednesday 21st September, 2011 in Nairobi was preceded with a procession from Uhuru Park to Kenyatta International Conference Center grounds. The participants were drawn from representatives of District peace committees from the different regions of the country, civil society organizations, government agencies and the United Nations Development Program- Kenya. The entertainers had strong messages on the need for upholding the rule of law and living harmoniously while discarding negative ethnicity.

Came the speeches and Madam Mary Onyango, the Deputy Chair of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission underscored the need for the government to pay attention to early warning lest history judges us harshly. Minister Mutula Kilonzo's speech was interesting with various meaningful quotes, such as 'if we want peace we need to talk to our enemies.' Peace is

No short cut to peace

a prerequisite to Prosperity. He told us about Switzerland, the most peaceful country in the world having lived in peace for the last six hundred years. Juxtapose this country with the many armed conflicts that are happening in Africa.

If only despotic governments would

literally set their people free and concentrate efforts and resources at improving standards of living, eradicate poverty, pay special attention to conserving the environment, as well as encourage cohesion and educate their populations, we would have a meaningful World peace day.

Citizens with full stomachs, a source of livelihood, decent shelter and guaranteed basic rights are generally peaceful and tolerant. Nobody may know the name of their President but that does not alter the fact that they are peaceful like the role model country of Switzerland. There is no short cut to peace, we have to work it out at our individual and collective levels. Remember always that peace begins with a genuine smile.

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This project is funded by the European Union

This project is implemented by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and her partners and associate

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Bungoma residents agree on conflict detection methods

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

MECHANISMS to assist in detection of conflict at an early stage in Bungoma County have been developed.

Participants in a workshop, organized by Pacts Peace in East and Central Africa, mapped out hot spots, identified early warning signs likely to indicate flare ups and measures to forestall conflicts in the county. The participants identified Kaptama, Cheptais, Chebyuk, Malakisi, Chesikaki, Changara, Kaptenai, Lwandanyi, Webuye town and Machakha as areas prone to violence.

District peace committees were urged to be proactive in diffusing tension and address underlying issues which could cause conflicts. The three-day meeting was meant to strengthen local processes for preventing election related conflicts. They resolved to strengthen the conflict resolution capacities available at the District Peace Committee networks.

They agreed to develop county based early response mechanisms to address conflict issues and dynamics. The Upper Western Regional Commissioner Rashid Mohammed said, "As we approach the elections, we need to equip ourselves with tools for conflict resolution".

He challenged the participants to understand causes of conflict, as they are diverse, and also ensure that local actors are given prominence in conflict resolution. The Commissioner urged residents to embrace community policing and strengthen the capacity of District peace committees.

"Peace committees at the grassroots level can help provide valuable information for early response and arrest the conflict in its early stages," he said. Early warning signs include regrouping on ethnic bias, hate speeches and incitement by leaders, denial of essential services, complaints of boundary disputes and talk of historical attachments to places.

Most of the conflicts arise out of fear of marginalization, loss of resources, lack of participation, unclear administrative structures, power rivalry and group identity. Hostilities heighten during the creation of new administrative units, electioneering period, festive seasons, ploughing seasons and installation of administrators.

Those present included district commissioners of Mt. Elgon, Cheptais, Bungoma East and Bungoma south, chairmen of peace committees of Cheptais, Mt. Elgon and Bungoma East districts and representative of youths, women, teachers, business community, civil society, political leaders and ex-military.

Co-curricular activities provide a good opportunity for the promotion of peace education. Teachers also facilitate community service and environmental conservation activities to enhance skills, values, and attitudes of harmonious co-existence.

Peace education is not a stand-alone subject, but is integrated in others. Teachers who receive training are expected to sensitise their colleagues while the materials provided serve to enhance delivery of peace education content within the curriculum.

To strengthen peace education in learning institutions, the ministry intends to develop a programme targeting pre-service teachers, finalise the policy on peace education, initiate public campaigns and carry out evaluation of the programme to assess its outcomes and impact.

As we celebrate the International World Day of Peace, there is a need for all of us to recognise that peace is sacred and facilitates fruitfulness, well-being, prosperity, absence of fear and profound joy.

For this reason, we should join hands in safeguarding the gains that we have made in enhancing peace and also put in more effort in promoting harmonious co-existence and national cohesion.

This is an opportunity for all learning institutions to initiate activities aimed at promoting peace.

Tetu residents facing starvation

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 7,000 people in Tetu District are faced with starvation.

Area DC, Mr. Herman Shambi, says that a majority of the affected residents include families evicted from the Aberdares forest over 25 years ago and have not been resettled to date.

The DC says other vulnerable groups in need of relief food include the integrated IDPs who are still being hosted by relatives and friends.

He was speaking at Ndugamano Chief's camp when he distributed an assorted foodstuffs donated by well wishers in the Kenyans for Kenya programme.

"Most of those facing starvation were evicted from the forest. The Government is yet to get land for their resettlement," adds the DC.

The assorted foodstuffs which included maize, bananas, pumpkins and cabbages among others were donated by people from the area for the past one week.

Over 300 families from the area benefited from the donation.

Red Cross Society volunteers helped in the distribution exercise.

Old people some whom are more than 80 years old and women with their children on the back braved for the morning chilly weather to get food.



Tetu DC Mr. Herman Shambi (left) distributes assorted foodstuffs to hungry residents of the district recently at Ndugamano Chief's Office in Tetu. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

He said the food was not enough and so appealed to well wishers to continue helping them.

"If we had enough food, we would have donated to those Kenyans in

North Eastern region but it seems it is not even enough for us," said the DC.

An 84-year-old John Muraya who is one of those who benefited said that they have been going without food

for many days and the Government should settle them immediately.

Mr Samuel Kiminda urged the Government to settle them so that they can be self reliant.

NYERI branch KNUT Executive Secretary Mr Mutahi Kahiga has decried the rising cases of insecurity in schools in Othaya.

Kahiga who was speaking during the 24th Nyeri DICECE graduation ceremony for the award of diplomas and certificates in Early Childhood Development and Education teachers at Othaya Approved grounds said that it was unfortunate that more than six primary schools in the area have lost text books worth millions of shillings due to insecurity saying this was sabotaging education in the area.

He said that in the last two months an unknown number of textbooks have disappeared as soon as they were delivered in the respective schools in the area.

The unionist said this has been attributed to lack of enough security and called on the Government to intervene and beef up security in the area.

He said the suspects must be brought to book and the books recovered.

Knut decries insecurity in Othaya

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

ered.

"This theft would lead to the decline of education standards as pupils have no text books to guide them and the parents are not able to replace the stolen books due to the escalating cost of living standards," said Kahiga.

Over six primary schools affected include Kagonye, Biriithia, Iria-ini and Kiria-ini among others.

Meanwhile, education has been termed as a crucial avenue to individual, community, national development and the realization of vision 2030.

Kenyatta University senior lecturer Dr Rachel Kamau noted that research findings in developed countries and worldwide have proved that education and training have a direct relationship with development.

"Education assists in the establish-

ment of a human resource base necessary for the generation of wealth and its application to the creation of higher living standards leading to poverty eradication," said the don.

She was speaking at Othaya Approved School grounds in Nyeri County during the Nyeri District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) 24th graduation ceremony where a total of 198 graduands were awarded with certificates and diplomas.

A total of 169 graduands were awarded with diplomas while 29 were awarded with certificates.

She said that education and training play a major role in implanting knowledge and skills that complement capital production of wealth.

The lecturer who was accompanied by Nyeri South DEO Mr Jackson Kaberia and Nyeri County Executive

Secretary Mr Mutahi Kahiga pointed out that the government spends more than 30 per cent of the national budget in the sector.

The lecturer cited the Free Primary and Secondary education, scholarships to the needy students like orphans and vulnerable children among others to underscore the importance the government attaches to the education sector.

She urged all stakeholders to work jointly to ensure education standards are improved and quality maintained for faster development and actualization of vision 2030.

Nyeri DICECE in Othaya town is one of the oldest ECDE institutions in Kenya which is now 25 years old.

It is now focusing on starting income generating projects which include dairy farming, start public library and a cybercafé among others.

Monda laments theft of CDF cash

By BOB OMBATI

A BIOGAS project management committee in Nyaribari Chache constituency has been asked to account for Kshs. 0.8 million allocated towards the project by the local Constituency Development Fund (CDF) or refund the money.

Area MP, Dr. Robert Monda, laments that the project has not taken off despite being allocated the funds eight months ago while committee officials have gone underground.

The MP, who spoke when he disbursed Kshs. 20 million to various CDF projects, said

he will deal firmly with corrupt project management committees who may now have to choose between accounting for the money and facing legal action.

Monda, who was addressing project committee members at Keumbu social hall warned that the constituency risked missing out on more disbursements from the CDF board if the funds are not accounted for.

"If we miss out on subsequent allocations, then most projects are likely to stall and thus the need for handlers of public funds to be transparent and make sure that funds are utilized for earmarked projects," he urged.

The legislator further asked the sub-location development committee members to submit a list of their priority projects for funding in the current financial year.

Monda at the same time disbursed a CDF cheque of Kshs 0.3 million to assist in the construction of the proposed Nyamemiso Secondary School in the area.

He however expressed dismay over the alleged misappropriation of Kshs. 150,000 awarded to Nyamemiso Primary School to repair leaking roofs by the former school management committee.

He issued an additional

Kshs0.5 million to the school to oversee the repairs and directed the newly elected management committee officials to recover the lost funds.

The MP challenged residents to monitor the projects being implemented in their respective areas to curb on wastage and theft.

Area councilor, Thomas Oresi lauded the CDF committee for allocating funds to Oresi health centre to built female and children's wards, saying once completed, the facility will be elevated to a sub district hospital and ease congestion at Kisii level five hospital.

KARI society to renovate school in Kisii

By BOB OMBATI

KENYA Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) Savings and Credit and Cooperative Society plans to equip the KARI public primary school in Kisii County with learning materials and renovate some of its buildings.

The chairman, Henry Muli says the Sacco will buy books, desks and renovate some buildings to complement the ongoing construction work under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP).

The school's head teacher, James Ndubi observes that the school's facilities are overstretched as enrollment figures have gone up owing to an influx of students mainly attributed to its remarkable performance in national examinations and proximity to the population.

He says the Kshs3.5 million administration block under the ESP is nearing completion, adding that the teachers will shift into the new building to create room for additional classrooms. "We are having a problem coping with the swelling number of pupils. Our classrooms are congested and teaching is becoming tedious," says Ndubi.

He says the school, with a population of 655 pupils is congested and lacks enough classrooms as parents had enrolled their children in the school owing to the good performance in last year's Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination.

The Head Teacher, flanked by the school patron, councillor Thomas Oresi lauded the government for funding the construction of the administration block and library, noting that it will help ease congestion.

He disclosed that Kisii branch KARI had donated land to the school and commended the Sacco for its intervention to aid the school as part of its social responsibility.

Ndubi expressed fears that if the school is not supported with additional funds to construct more classrooms, education standards and performance in national examinations will go down.

"Every year, we are getting over 100 new pupils. We have few teachers and classrooms. We need support to cope with the swelling number of learners," said the head teacher during an interview with *The Link*.

Mui residents take a common stand on coal mining

By KAVYU-KURA

ABOUT 20,000 residents of the coal-rich Mui basin have formed a local outfit that would cushion them from undue exploitation during the actual mining of the industrial mineral.

Recently, the Mui community representatives met under the aegis of the Regional Institute for Social Enterprise (RISE) NGO and formed the Mui Environment Protection Initiative (MEPI) to take care of the interest of the locals during the actual exploitation of coal.

MEPI, it was unanimously agreed would fight to ensure both the safety of the locals and their environment. The body would also ensure that there was sufficient compensation and proper resettlement of families that would be displaced besides other associated benefits for the locals.

The residents were prodded into forming MEPI by a development consultant, Temi Mutia and the Mui civic leader Cllr. Musee Mulongo both of whom said the formation of the outfit would ensure they reaped the full benefits from the huge coal

deposits in their area.

Addressing the meeting at the Miambani AIC church in Mui location of Mwingi East district, Mutia, told the locals to come up with a mechanism to ensure that they were neither shortchanged by the state or investors interested in coal mining.

He said exploration studies had shown that the coal found in Mui basin was more superior to the South African coal. He thus urged the community to ensure that the lion share of the royalties from coal proceeds went to them and their environment was not badly degraded during the actual coal mining.

As he waved a copy of the draft Minerals and Mining Bill, 2011, Mutia said, if passed, the bill would disadvantage the locals as the third schedule on the sharing of mineral royalties proposes that the Central government receives 80 percent, the County government 15 percent and the Community gets a paltry percent.

The participants at the meeting that was organized with support from Amkeni Wakenya, suggested the bill be revised to allow the setting up of a

state corporation to deal specifically with coal in which the input of locals would be encompassed.

At the same time Mutia noted that coal was a very hazardous mineral as it produced the highly corrosive and dangerous sulphuric acid and thus would put the lives and property of the residents at risk and reduce the area to a wasteland if the open mining method was used to exploit it.

"Although coal mining has the high potential to turn around the economy of this area for the better, it has its downside because it is extremely hazardous. We must be weary and ensure that the best systems are put in place to ensure we benefit and our environment is not devastated in the process," said Mutia.

Cllr. Mulongo pointed out that the coal deposits in the Mui basin were estimated at 400 million tons and would provide industrial energy for the country over the next 40 years once the mining commenced. He however said measures should be put in place to ensure the local community was not adversely affected during the mining of the mineral.



Consultant Temi Mutia (c) consults with Councillors Musee Mulongo (l) and Joseph Musyimi (r) at the meeting. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Poverty committee embarks on projects' inspection

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUSIA District Poverty Eradication Committee has started monitoring and evaluating projects being funded by the poverty eradication commission.

Among the groups being monitored include the Busia Urban women group, Neema Women Group, Bwapad, Kochwera Self Help Group, Kujitolea self-Help Group and fifteen other groups from Township Division.

In Matayos Division, the groups being monitored include Wekhonye Bulanda Women Group of Nasewa, Tuinane Upendo Women Group, Busiwabwo Disabled Self Help Group and seven others.

Kochwera which received Kshs 100,000 has 17 members and is chaired by Mr. Felix Oria. The group disbursed the money to 12 members.

The members, who are mainly fish vendors said that they formed the group in 2007 with a view to raising funds and expanding their businesses.

The loan was advanced based on the number of shares, hard work and one's ability to repay as well as attendance of group meetings.

"We could not give those who had less than Kshs. 2000 in shares and those who did not attend group meetings regularly since we had no assurance that they could repay the loan," said the group chairman.

Mr. Oria also highlighted the challenges encountered in their businesses such as price fluctuation due to inflation and lack of market for their fish.

The district poverty eradication committee disbursed between Kshs. 100,000 and Kshs. 150,000 to the approved groups.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

Taskforce on welfare of victims of offenses formed

THE task force mandated with the responsibility of proposing a Bill on victims of offense and bail information and supervision is in its final stages of collecting views and recommendations from various stake holders all over the country.

The 15 member task force working under the office of the Vice President and the Ministry of Home Affairs draws its mandate from article 59(9) of the new Constitution which directs Parliament to enact legislations providing for protection, rights, and welfare of victims of offenses.

The four member task force chaired by Mr Peter Maundu recently held its sitting in Nyeri to collect views, proposals and recommendations from various stakeholders who had attended the forum at Nyeri Municipal Council hall.

David Nitia, representing prisons department said that it is prudent that victims of offenses be awarded compensation from money collected from fines and bonds.

"I suggest that a kitty be established to meet the expenses incurred by the victims' of offenses for instance medical bills," said Nitia.

He also cited cases which have been dismissed in court because victims have failed to show up in court to testify after being intimidated and threatened by the plaintiffs.

Nitia suggested that a mechanism of victims' protection need to be established to curb this vice.

On bail information and supervision Bill, he recommended that a stringent mechanism be developed to ensure that those released on bail

pending determination of cases do avail themselves in court when required.

John Githinji, a victim of land injustice said that they were forcefully evicted from forest land they were cultivating during the colonial era after independence without being given alternative land. He said that they have been reduced to squatters as successive regimes have failed to address their plight.

Probation Officer Hannah Gitia asked for the empowerment of Probation Officers for they are the ones working directly as court officers and also with the suspects and victims.

"We are well placed to offer restitution to victims and provide solutions through constant evaluation of reasons behind repetitive crimes com-

mission," said the officer.

She further suggested that bailed persons should not have direct access to their victims unless through probation officers. This according to her, will go a long way in curbing coercion of victims by the suspects.

Nyeri Central District Probation Officer, Mrs Liberata Njue suggested sensitization of victims and public through establishment of a criminal justice system that will offer awareness lessons to all including students and pupils. It is through such advocacy forums, that victims and public in general will be made aware of their rights, she said.

"I propose adoption of restorative justice as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism to avert victimization of complainants. I also recom-

mend that bails be granted uniformly on cases that are similar as currently there are disparities in bails awarded by various courts even when the cases are similar," said Njue.

A task force member, Mr Peter Maundu said that the new Constitution in the preamble has given all people a stake in the law making process in the country and that is the reason they are traversing various parts of the country collecting views of all stakeholders.

A member of the task force Mr Ken Nyagudi and vice chair of the sitting in Nyeri said that the recommendations collected will be forwarded to the relevant commission for compiling and then returned to the stakeholders for validation before enactment into law in Parliament.

Matekwe leads team cycling for literacy

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

SOLOMON Matekwa, 56, and four other cyclists will cover a 500 kilometre bicycle trip from Kakamega to Nairobi as part of efforts to promote literacy programmes in Western and Nyanza provinces.

Matekwa, Joseph Otieno, Vincent Chanzu, Nixon Lijoodi and Boniface Nataminy, 25, who is the youngest in the group, hope to raise awareness on literacy programmes being undertaken by the Government in learning centres across the country.

A jovial Matekwa told The Link at Kiboswa, where the Nyanza team met the cyclists, the event was meant to "motivate other Kenyans to develop a reading culture and join numerous adult education centres to further their education."

Matekwa, who is an adult learner, says: "As we go into counties, all the new devolved units will require businesses and other economic ventures that make it necessary for residents to have basic education if they hope to offer quality services."

He recalls how funding President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta offered him a chance to pursue education free of charge but those who were charged with ensuring the directive was implemented "squandered the funds and so his hope for education was nipped in the bud."

However, Matekwa says he did not lose hope and believes he has another golden opportunity in his hands to pursue education through the Adult Education Programme.

Eliazar Osanya, the Nyando District Adult Education Officer (DAEO), who received the cyclist on behalf of his provincial boss, said the group comprises adult learners and teachers who have offered to promote the programmes using a unique approach.

Osanya, who was escorted to the Kiboswa venue by Kisumu North District counterpart, Ms. Dorothy Auma, and Muhoroni DAEO, Mr. Jimilaws Otieno said: "The event seeks to promote basic literacy, post-literacy, continuing education and community learning resource centres."

He says the event hopes to inculcate a reading culture among residents in the region and Kenyans in general "apart from centres alleviating poverty and crating wealth through various Income Generating Activities (IGAs)".

"Nyanza Province has about 3,000 adult learning centres with an enrollment of 45,869, whereas there are about 3,000 full time teachers and over 1,000 part-time teachers," he says. In Kakamega, the cyclists were flagged off by Western Deputy Provincial Commissioner, while Kakamega the Central DAEO, Ms. Lucy Kisanja, represented her provincial boss as she handed over the cyclists to Kisumu team on arrival.

Kenya urged to develop cultural tourism

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

CULTURE is not only a dynamic industry but forms a strong foundation on which other development programmes can grow.

In the absence of a stable base, a country stands on a shaky ground and may not withstand the test of time.

The Nyanza Provincial Director of Culture, Mr. Kenneth Otieno, says the industry has a huge potential which if properly nurtured may support millions of youth across the country.

Otieno says with good policies and proper implementation, Kenya's movie industry just like Nigeria's could grow faster and compete favourably with the tourism sector which has over the years proved to be a huge foreign exchange earner.

He says Kenya's culture has largely remained intact compared with the Western world, and there was therefore need to promote cultural tourism, especially in Western Kenya region. Otieno says it was vital to develop and market cultural tourism after identifying the abundant products available across Kenya's diverse ethnic backgrounds.

A section of stakeholders said poor staffing was to blame for failure to provide quality services in cultural offices after professionals leave in droves for greener pastures.

They have urged the Government to consider recruiting more staff and motivate them with competitive salaries, allowances and equipment.

Although the Provincial Director of Culture concurred with the view, he said insufficient funding and poor staffing pose serious challenges and frustrated efforts to tap into the existing potential, especially in Western Kenya region.

"There are only six districts out of 23 in Nyanza which are manned by District Cultural Officers (DCOs). Some officers are in-charge of three districts which also have a skeleton staff," he says.

Otieno says some cultural practices that were outdated and had outlived



Women artists weave various products. Photo/File

their purpose. "Such cultures need to be reviewed because the department does not support those kinds of practices which are not only repugnant but also retard development," he says.

He says the department had been at the forefront in campaigns against outdated practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) among the Kuria, Kisii and Kalenjin communities alongside wife inheritance common among the Luo community in the era of the HIV/Aids scourge.

He said positive cultural practices such as male circumcision that has been embraced by members of the Luhya, Maasai and other communities in Coastal region but shunned by the Luo have been accepted, and cited the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC).

The VMMC has scientifically been proven to reduce the spread of HIV/

Aids by 60 per cent. This has encouraged many youth to turn up in health facilities in Nyanza for the 'cut' unlike in the past when such practices were considered a taboo.

"To reinforce the importance of culture, the new Constitution dedicates a whole chapter on the culture because the government appreciates the role it plays in the African set-up and among our diverse communities," he said.

Otieno said the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture is charged with coordinating the promotion of cultural development programmes.

"This is being done in many ways through Community Cultural Festivals," he said pointing out that in Nyanza there are 13 cultural festivals there is Kogelo in Siaya which was initiated to commemorate the achievements of US President, Barack Obama, a descendant of Kogelo.

He said other community cultural festivals include Migwena (Bondo), Kisumu's Lake Victoria Cultural Festival of Arts (Lafesta), Nyakach Community Cultural Festival (Nyakach) and Kabondo Community Cultural Festival (Rachuonyo South).

Others as Rama (Rachuonyo North), Otenyo (Borabu), Nyamira (Nyamira) and Rongo (Rongo), Kagan (Homa Bay) and Rusinga (Mbita) all organized by respective communities.

However, Otieno says his department continues to offer technical advice to all groups, particularly displaying materials and providing Government grants and funds from other development partners.

Building of Malindi law courts to resume

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE construction of new law courts in Malindi, which had stalled after the government spent Kshs.286 million, will resume in November this year.

The project which is expected to cost Kshs.700 million ground to a halt early this year for lack of funds.

The Malindi Chief Magistrate, Ms. Lucy Gitari, says the construction work stalled due to rising costs of building materials.

The Chief Magistrate said Kshs.286 million had been spent but the funds were not adequate. The first phase of the project had spent Kshs.372 million against the Kshs.286 million that had been budgeted for.

Ms. Gitari said the project is expected to start in November this year and will take one year before completion when funds were available.

The ultra modern law courts are expected to accommodate two high court judges, six magistrates and a Kadhi court.

The court will operate in Malindi, Tana Delta, old Lamu and Kilifi districts.

The new building is the first of its kind in Malindi town. Residents and leaders say Malindi is ideal for county's headquarters because of its superior infrastructure.

Murang'a County water projects get support

By MORRIS GITHENYA

DEMAND for water in Murang'a County has forced water providers to finance projects valued at billions of shillings to serve Murang'a and Kandara areas.

Tana Water Services Board has secured Kshs 1.3 billion from African Development Bank and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to complete twin projects to serve the large number of people in Murang'a town and Kandara market.

Chief Executive Officer of Tana Water Services Board Eng. Moses Naivasha says more water programmes are set for implementation to ensure provision of clean water.

Murang'a Urban Bulk Water project is projected to cost Kshs 520 million and will take 18 months before completion

while the Kandara water project has been allocated Kshs 830 million.

After completion of Murang'a Urban Bulk project, Kayahwe water project that has been supplying water to Murang'a town will be diverted to Gikindu location and converted into an irrigation programme.

Accompanied by Kiharu Member of Parliament Muturi Mwangi, Eng Naivasha said another Kshs 20 million has been set aside to compensate farmers whose land will accommodate the Murang'a Urban Bulk Water project.

The Murang'a project water treatment plant will be constructed at Kiawambeu village where the local Primary school has been earmarked for a facelift and supply of clean water as part

of the compensatory package to the locals.

"Kiawambeu primary school will receive a facelift with the construction of new classrooms, modern toilets and supply of clean water," said Eng Naivasha.

Kiharu MP said the water project will have an economic impact in the area because by the year 2030 it is projected that it will serve about 113,040 of the population.

Currently Kayahwe water plant caters for a population of 769,200 and in next 10 years demand is expected to rise to an additional of 94,174 people.

"Availing irrigation water to residents in lower parts of Murang'a will have a great impact as the project will enhance farmers capacity to produce more food," said the MP.

Circus search for justice for Mwingi Family

By KAVYU-KURA

THE family of a 28-year-old woman who died in June last year after a botched operation at the Mwingi District hospital is demanding justice.

The late Mary Ndanu from Kiisu Village, Nguni Division, Mwingi East District died moments after a botched caesarean section done by a doctor who was said to have been tipsy as he performed the operation.

The husband Titus Emmanuel Yuma has embarked on a tasking and tedious search for justice as he believes he was unduly robbed of his wife and child due to negligence by the surgeon who was operating on her.

He is seeking compensation for his wife's death and the new born child both of whom he believes died during the botched CS. He has sought help from the Medical Practitioners and Dentist Board (KMPDB) all through to the office of the Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka.

Yuma who spoke to The Link recently said he was bitter that although the alleged culprit -Dr. William Odour- caused death due to alleged professional negligence, he was only suspended from duty. He said that he was almost giving up on his search for justice as the MPDB appeared to drag its feet on the matter.

"I am almost losing hope of ever getting justice because it has been costly for me and my witnesses to attend interrogation sessions with the MPDB that appear to have dragged for far too long. Early this year they promised that the matter had been referred to a tribunal that should make decision but no word has been forthcoming since March," said a depressed Yuma.

He said that early in July he sought the assistance of the VP who advised him to seek court redress.

Yuma has eventually moved to the office of the Ombudsman otherwise known as the Public Complaints Standing Committee (PCSC) whose action he feels would put the whole saga to rest.

He said that the office of the Ombudsman has already written to the MPDB.

In the letter from the PCSC Vice Chairperson Grace Madoka titled Complaint against Mwingi district hospital by John M. Yuma (on behalf of the family of the deceased), the MPDB's has been notified that the complainant is worried that the case has taken too long to resolve.

The PCSC indicates that the family of the deceased was worried that although the MPDB had interdicted the concerned doctor, the matter has not been resolved a year down the line as investigations had not been concluded and prevailing situation caused undue anxiety to the affected family.

"This delay is causing a lot of anxiety since he would want to know what exactly happened to his wife and child. He needs to know the truth and therefore your attention to this matter would be appreciated. Please could you respond to our inquiry as soon as possible?"



The orphaned children having a meal with their grandmother.

Photo/Kavyu-Kura

The letter that The Link accessed is dated July 25, 2011 and copied to the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Medical Services Mary Ngari and the complainant John M. Yuma.

When The Link spoke to Mr. Yumbya recently over the case he said the Yuma's family needed not to worry as the case has almost been concluded. He said that the MPDB after interviewing several people and witnesses had established that Yuma had a prima facie case and thus handed over the file to the Medical tribunal for a conclusive determination.

"The Board has established that Yuma's case has merit and has forwarded it to the Tribunal that would give the final verdict. At this point all the parties are expected to hire lawyers to represent them during the hearing of the cases before the Medical tribunal," said Yumbya.

He refuted claims that the case had dragged for unnecessarily too long saying that the Board had to establish whether the case had merit. He said the other problem was that the tribunal only met once a year and it had not convened any seating since the beginning of the year.

Yuma had launched a complaint

with the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentist Board (KMPDB) immediately after the death of his wife due to alleged negligence on the part of the doctor who operated on her.

Soon after the death a team of Medical experts from KMPDB led by Dr Dominic Mburu that visited the hospital on a fact finding mission recommended the interdiction of the errant doctor as an autopsy carried on the body of the deceased revealed that she died of excessive bleeding.

A later report to the KMPDB headquarters by the Medical superintendent in-charge of the Mwingi District Hospital Dr Daisy Ruto indicated that the doctor was "drunk and aggressive" when he went into the theatre.

Giving a report on the maternal death case that happened in the wee hours of last June 24, Ruto alludes to various mistakes of omission and commission by the doctor contributing to the death of the young mother.

She observes that although the doctor in question had reviewed the patient when she arrived in the hospital at midnight on June 23 and recommended an operation, he went missing soon thereafter.

At 1 am, Ruto wrote, when the

patient was wheeled to theatre, everybody was ready except the missing doctor. The driver who was sent to pick him could not find him.

She further claims that the medical officer could neither be reached on

phone.

The medical superintendent added that the doctor whom since the incident remained suspended from duty and was reported to be working in a private hospital in Nairobi, later to come to the theatre at 1.45 am "drunk and aggressive."

In the report that Ruto wrote to the Board, only hours after Ndanu's death, she indicated that even after operating to remove the still born child, the doctor left the theatre in a huff.

Ruto further concludes that the patient died of haemorrhagic shock and that there were delays by the doctor.

The medical superintendent adds that he (doctor) exhibited professional negligence by walking away without closing the abdomen and without assisting in the resuscitation.

She points out in her report that the morning after the death of the patient, all the Mwingi District Hospital staff converged at her office to protest the doctor's conduct.

But in his defence Dr. William Odour wrote to the Board claiming that the deceased was taken to the hospital too ill and efforts to save her life were futile.

He claimed that the patient was brought to the hospital too weak to be assisted.

In a report to the MPDB of which we have a copy, Odour says, in his opinion the cause of death could have been excessive bleeding prior to admission which led to severe anaemia and cardiovascular compromise.

He concludes: "Therefore, the patient was a poor anaesthetic candidate but attempts had to be made to save the life of the mother and baby."

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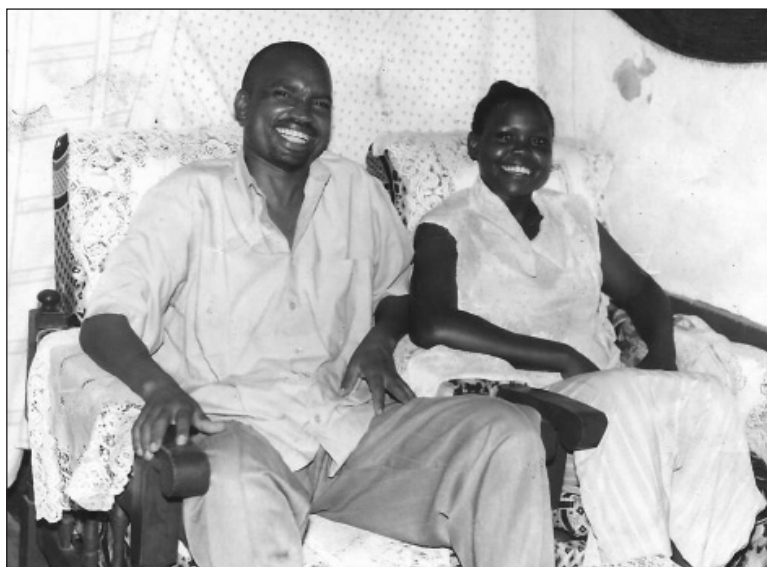
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Titus Yuma, with his wife, Mary Ndanu, before she passed on at Mwingi hospital. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Banking services at your doorsteps

By MALACHI MOTANO

MAINSTREAM banks have now taken their services to the townships and shopping centres in the city's suburbs to cater for businesses in those areas.

A survey by a business correspondent indicates that most of the big banks have invested in fast growing suburban towns including Ongata Rongai, Kitengela, Ngong, Athi River, Lang'ata, South C, Nairobi West, Donholm, Kangemi, Githurai, Eastleigh and Kariobangi, among others.

Leading banks including Barclays, Kenya Commercial Bank, Standard, National Bank, Cooperative Bank, I&M, Equity, Fina Bank, Family, K-REP and PostBank now have branches in almost all townships and major shopping centres in the city's outskirts.

According to Dickson Theuri a branch manager Equity bank in Pipeline estate, the trend is informed by the need to take services closer to thriving Small and Medium Enterprises which form a significant proportion of their client base.

Businesses in these areas he said were growing at higher rate due to vibrant industries including building and construction owing to real estate developments, timber and furniture dealers, salons, beauty product and cosmetics outlets, agro based industries such as horticulture, dairy farming as well as retail and wholesale businesses whose number are multiplying every other day.

"Banks in the city handle big businesses than these ones in the outskirts but they do realize there is a huge potential for growth in these areas considering that unlike the congested Central Business District (CBD), there is room for expansion. Furthermore many people are now moving to settle down in the suburbs some opting to venture into a variety of viable businesses, which makes establishment of banking institutions inevitable in these areas," said the banker.

He said many of the banks setting base in suburbs were keen on tapping into the SMEs and working class clientele residing in those ar-



Equity Bank, Pipeline Branch.
Inset: **Equity AutoBranch, Buru Buru branch.**
Photo/Malachi Motano

eas.

"The aim is to take service to the customers' doorsteps. Many people are now setting up businesses in the outskirts of the city once overlooked but are now promising because the resident population has grown making it viable for business.

According to another career banker Michael Kiserema, an area's population, business, economic activities, developed infrastructure as well as the potential for growth and expansion are some of the factors which determine whether or not a financial institution should establish in an area.

Michael concurs with Theuri that banks outside the town are not doing better than the ones located in towns but points out that in the suburbs they get to sensitize the public about the various services on offer at the banks thereby increasing their customers.

"Many of the customers outside the town are not aware of the services offered by our banks but we

make it easier for their customers to withdraw and deposit money thereby saving time.

"To help our customers to save their time, by for instance may be going just to withdraw or to deposit some amount in town; we have brought the services closer to their businesses so that they can devote a better part of their time to their businesses."

He added that the move by the business community to invest in towns in the outskirts



teach them about them for instance the various types of credit facilities among others," Michael said.

According to Michael their main aim is to tap into the unexploited market. "There is a lot of potential that we want to tap as the towns grow and every bank would like to win the hearts of these people," Michael added.

Some areas which were purely residential have transformed into commercial/residential hubs after business people converted some of the houses to business premises in areas like Nairobi West, Langata, parts of South B and C, Umoja 1 and 2 which has seen many businesses migrate to these areas.

By moving to the suburbs banks

further augurs well for the banks since it reduces congestion.

People investing in businesses in the outskirts also benefit from lower local government rates. Business in the Central Business District pay more rates as opposed to those in the suburbs.

"When people move to the new residential areas in the suburbs they still need to eat and therefore we business people come and start our business in such places," says James Ouma a cereal dealer in Mlolongo.

It is a well known fact that businesses support each other. Banks for instance exist because of other businesses to which they offer loans and upon repayment they can avail the same to other businesses.

Biashara Sacco opens new branch at Gakindu

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

BIASHARA Sacco Society Ltd has opened a new branch at Gakindu trading centre in Mukurwe-ini district.

This is the fifth branch of the Sacco after Karatina, Othaya, Gatarakwa and Nyeri town branches which have been operational for the last few years.

The Sacco will very soon open another branch in Nanyuki town according to the chairman Mr Joseph Njamuku. The Sacco also launched its website which is www.biasharasacco.com. During the ceremony, the chairman encouraged their members who are mostly farmers to insure their dairy animals through the Biasco Insurance Agency.

The chairman who was accompanied by the Chief Executive Mrs Rose Kimaru said the insurance agency which was started last year has been very beneficial to dairy farmers who have insured their animals against diseases and drought.

"Over 60 farmers have so far insured in this agency and today we issued a cheque of Kshs 60,000 to one of the farmers. The insurance has helped many farmers", he added.

The insurance also insures vehicles and property among others.

Njamuku noted that the rural Saccos are playing a crucial role in national development through eradication of poverty in rural areas.

"Rural people have started uplifting their living standards through Sacco activities by borrowing money to expand their business," he added.

The chairman encouraged rural people to practice the culture of savings to enable them borrow loans from the Sacco at low interest rates.

The Sacco which has a share capital of Kshs 180 million has over 8,000 members.

Last year, it registered Kshs 160 million loan portfolio and paid a dividend of 25 per cent with interest of 9 per cent.



Staff of Biashara Sacco Society Ltd celebrate outside the new Gakindu branch in Mukurwe-ini district recently.

Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Review of biased history syllabus —Kibunja

By JOEL JUMA

THE National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) is formulating a policy that will integrate all tribes in Kenya in the education curriculum.

NCIC said that it will present the report to the ministry of Education to have the history syllabus reviewed to ensure that all communities are captured in the curriculum by the learners.

"It is wrong for some communities to feature in the history curriculum taught in schools right from primary to university and yet others are not mentioned," said the commission Chairman Mzalendo Kibunja.

Kibunja explained that the all communities are equal and the syllabus should either capture all of them or have them removed from the literature materials used in schools.

He explained that it is unfair for learners to understand the culture of other communities through school books whereas others are missing.

"How do you expect such a student to be happy when his tribe is not recognised in the education system," wondered Kibunja.

He was speaking in Kakamega during a Regional Diversion Workshop organised by AHADI, NCIC and Sweden Government for the residents of Western province.

Educationists Prof Hellen Mwanzi, Egara Kabaji and Bobby Mkangi said it was necessary that the curriculum be redesigned to have the learners understand the operation of their Counties and the Central Government after the introduction of the new constitution.

Mwanzi explained that there was need for all students in class 4 to sit for County examinations to test their knowledge before they are examined at Standard Eight nationally.

This, Mwanzi explained will enable the learners understand the operations of County Government before moving to other levels of Government.

Kibunja also disclosed that the commission was against the formation of alliances among political parties. He said that alliances will discriminate other communities whose population cannot be used to propel larger ones to power.

"We are against discrimination by virtue of tribe during the formation of alliances as some communities may not ascend to the top seat if alliances have to be formed," said Kibunja.

He said leaders need to agree on how to share the positions in Counties to ensure that smaller tribes are not left out during the composition of County Assemblies in the next General Elections.

Kibunja also urged Kenyans to exercise their freedom of speech in order to criticise the Government and MPs without fear saying that the commission will not police them.

"Let hate Speech not be used to compromise the freedom of speech as we need people to express themselves freely," said Kibunja.

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE World Bank has granted Kshs200 million to assist in the installation of new, wider water pipes in Kilifi County.

The World Bank has released the funds to Coast Water Services Board to undertake the project set for completion within 18 months.

A consultant with the water board, Engineer Zablon Oonge said the funds will be used to purchase new water pipes with a bigger diameter to replace the old ones.

"We are going to undertake a major rehabilitation of the water pipelines by removing the old ones and replace them with new ones to address the frequent

water shortages in Kilifi town and

World Bank funds Kilifi water project

its environs," said Engineer Oonge.

Engineer Oonge from HP Gauff Engineers Company said the areas targeted for major rehabilitation of the dilapidated water lines include a 13 kilometer water line from Mnarani to Kilifi town.

Water lines at Mtwapa are also slated for rehabilitation to help provide clean water to industries and hotels.

"Coast Water Board Services is going to replace old water pipes covering 13 kilometers from Mnarani village to Kilifi town and also water pipes at Mtwapa and construction work will be undertaken concur-

rently," said Engineer Oonge.

He was speaking to residents of Kilifi town during a consultative meeting on the project.

The Engineer said that all houses built on water pipe lines will be demolished to pave way for the construction work.

"All houses, be they commercial or residential built on top of water pipelines will have to be pulled down to facilitate the rehabilitation process," warned Engineer Oonge.

He said it was wrong for residents to erect structures and put up buildings on the reserve of water pipelines and therefore all illegal

structures will have to be demolished but owners will not be compensated," added Eninerre Oonge.

Local residents admitted that some of them had built their houses on the

reserve land but blamed the Kilifi town councilors of having approved their building plans despite knowing the implications.

Engineer Mwamuye Makupe of Kilifi Mariakani Water and Sewerage Company lauded the World Bank for

the noble gesture saying that repairs on the dilapidated water lines in Kilifi town would enhance water

supplies in the area.

Eng Makupe said the repairs and replacement of the old water lines will improve the water flow and end erratic shortages caused by leakages due to old water pipes.

An aspirant for the position of senator Ms Naomi Sidi regretted that most towns within Kilifi County were going without water despite the fact that the main water source is within the county.

"It is not fair to supply water to Mombasa county from the langobaya water pumping station in Malindi and leave out urban centers within the Kilifi county," said Sidi.

Otuoma launches youth greenhouse plan

By MALACHI MOTANO

NATIONAL youth polytechnics in the country have embarked on a green revolution through a partnership between the government and Amiran Kenya.

The development will see the government spend an estimated Kshs.88 million to purchase small-scale greenhouses for youth polytechnics across the country in the next financial year.

Speaking at the launch of a programme dubbed Amiran -Kenya Polytechnics Next Generation Farmers Initiative at the Mang'u Youth Polytechnic, Minister for Youth Affairs Paul Otuoma said the government has embarked on a green revolution exercise that will see the country's 650 youth polytechnics equipped with greenhouses to train the young generation on modern methods of farming and change the perception that the activity is for the unskilled.

The first phase of the ambitious project that seeks to integrate the youth in the fight against poverty and hunger has installed greenhouses in 100 national polytechnics at a cost of Kshs19 million. The balance will be catered for in the 2011/12 financial year, Dr Otuoma said. The programme is being implemented through a Private Public Partnership between Amiran Kenya and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and will be implemented by the Youth Enterprise Fund, which will, in addition, place another 210 greenhouses in all the constituencies.

Amiran's head of administration Gilad Milo said the choice of the youth polytechnics as the launchpad for the programme seeks to create a generation of young commercial-minded



One of the greenhouses that was launched by the minister. Photo/Malachi Motano

farmers who can embrace agribusiness from an early age, thereby reducing rural unemployment.

The greenhouse kits partly account for some Ksh300 million the government has earmarked for capacity development in 150 youth polytechnics. Already Kshs215 million has gone into 37 new projects to revamp the polytechnics, targeting workshops, computer labs and hostels. In total, Dr Otuoma said, Kshs1.5 billion has been spent this year by the government for the development of youth polytech-

nic.

The green revolution programme also seeks to reduce idleness in rural areas and is being touted as one way of redeeming the youth from cheap local brews, engage them in productive activities, put money in their pockets and give them a chance to enjoy better lives. It is estimated that a single smallholder greenhouse can guarantee an income of not less than Ksh500,000 annually from a small piece of land, and with dwindling farm sizes, the government is out to promote the cul-

ture, which has seen Israel transform into one of the most productive countries in the world.

Mr Otuoma added that the greenhouses will return the shine to the national polytechnics which are beginning to recover from years of neglect. "The greenhouse project is one way our youth polytechnics could redeem

their image in the minds of Kenyans," he said. He added that training in modern methods of farming in addition to other skills taught at the polytechnic would equip the youth with diverse skills to create self employment.

He challenged corporate to come in and support the youth polytechnics programmes as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities so that "we can make them more relevant to the labour market".

The project comes nearly eight months after the Amiran Farmer's Kit (AFK) was recognised by the Millennium Goals Development Trust Fund as taking a leading role in eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the number one global pursuit, set to be achieved by 2015.

The development is a major boost to agriculture, which is identified as a key pillar for the attainment of the country's economic and social development blue print - Vision 2030.

Under the medium-term Agriculture Development Strategy 2010-2020 (ADS) launched mid last year, increasing area under irrigated farming forms the basis of transforming Kenya to an industrialised country in the next 20 years.

The strategy recognises that considering agriculture drives 70 per cent of the country's economy, accounts for 25 per cent of GDP and employs 60 per cent of the population, it would be impossible to develop unless modern farming methods and promotion of agribusiness is vigorously pursued.

Hospital starts cervical cancer clinic

By BOB OMBATI

KISII level five hospital has started offering treatment of cervical cancer to save lives of several women who succumb to the disease every year.

The hospital's Medical superintendent, Geoffrey Otumu said the hospital was partnering with the US-based Prevention International No Cervical Cancer (PINCC) organization which has donated the equipment for screening and treating cervical cancer. He was speaking at the hospital after US-based gynecologist, Dr. Kay Taylor and Dr Ondari Otieno conducted free screening and treatment of cervical cancer during a free medical camp attended by over 180 women. Dr. Taylor, noted that most cervical cancer victims delay treatment until when their condition worsens. She noted that 50 out of 10,000 women in Kenya suffer from the disease annually due to ignorance and lack of medi-

cal attention and challenged women to regularly undertake tests to know their health status to avoid complications.

Dr. Taylor said PICC had donated cancer screening and treatment equipment worth Kshs.720,000 to the hospital and challenged women to take advantage of the machines for routine check ups to benefit. Taylor, flanked by Otumu and Dr. Otieno, a gynecologist said they had trained 8 nurses, two doctors and one clinical officer to help in screening and treating the patients. She said the hospital requires equipment worth Kshs. 9 million to cope with the increased number of cervical cancer patients, adding PINCC and other organizations will support the facility with more equipment.

Dr. Otumu urged women to go for screening to know their status, saying treating full blown cervical cancer cost over Kshs.500,000 and asked women to go for early screening to avoid costly treatment.

Novartis set up plan to improve access to malaria drugs

By TITUS MAERO

SWISS company Novartis has set aside Kshs 10 million to pilot on a project meant to enhance supply of Malaria drugs in government health centres through electronic mapping technology.

The Novartis Operations Manager for Africa Dr Nathan Mulure said the project will use a combination of Short Message Service (SMS) text messages and electronic mapping technology to monitor the drug stocks.

Mulure said health workers in selected districts are being trained on data transmission on weekly basis with an objective that visibility of drugs would reduce stock outs and in the process

enhance disease the management.

Speaking during a training session for drug technologists drawn from Vihiga District, the official said the medicines would be provided with Smart Cell phones costing Kshs 16,000 each and loaded with airtime to provide malaria drugs data to the Division of Malaria Control in Nairobi.

He said if the programme succeeds, it would replace the manual system of transmitting malaria drugs information in hospitals adding that apart from SMS system, internet connectivity would be made available for e-mailing stock records with an aim of ensuring malaria drugs were readily available in pharmacies. He said the pilot project would be replicated in malaria prone districts such

as Machakos, Ijara, Msambweni and Manga saying that the project had proved successful in 142 districts in Tanzania.

Noting that the piloting would take six months, Mulure pointed out that Novartis Company was funding the project while Roll Back Malaria Company was implementing it in conjunction with the government. He said malaria being a killer disease, there is need for hospitals to be well equipped with drugs and records monitored to avoid stock outs previously registered in most parts of the country.

Among those present included Roll Back Malaria Company Programme Director Dr. Jim Barington, Western Provincial Pharmacist Dr Jacob Odhiambo and over 30 medical workers who were being trained on the new electronic system of keeping and transmitting malaria information.

Nyaga accuses coffee board of conspiracy

By BOB OMBATI

CO-OPERATIVES Minister Joseph Nyaga has accused the Coffee Board of Kenya (CBK) of a conspiracy to destabilize the coffee industry.

The Minister who spoke when he commissioned a coffee mill for the Gusii coffee farmers' cooperative union in Kisii town alleged that CBK officials were hoarding huge consignments of coffee which they later sell to cartels.

The minister noted that thousands of kilograms of coffee in the region had not been delivered to millers because unscrupulous CBK officials had denied societies transporting permits in a conspiracy that serves the cartels.

He directed CBK to issue the permits with immediate effect to enable farmers earn from their produce.

"Our farmers have spent a lot of energy in tending for the crop only to be denied their rights. Such moves were only sanctioned during the colonial era," stated Nyaga, adding it was unconstitutional to deny the poor farmers their rights.

"I will not condone any bid to exploit farmers and will use all means at my disposal to protect the interests of small scale farmers who have been left to wallow at the mercy of wealthy individuals," he said.

The minister who was accompanied by his Permanent Secretary Seno Nyakenyanya, Deputy Commissioner of Co-operatives Philip Gichuki, Nyanza Province Co-operative officer Mr. Zephaniah Osok among other local commissioners asked farmers to deliver their coffee at the new mill for better returns.

He said plans are underway to launch Co-operative Alliance of Kenya (ACK) which will cater for the interest of cooperators under the new constitution and challenged area residents to elect experienced professionals to the counties to strengthen the cooperative movement.

Mwingi farmers trained in entrepreneurship

By KAVYU-KURA

TWENTY peasant farmers in the famine prone Mwingi region recently ended a week-long training on entrepreneurship as a safe guard against food insecurity and poverty.

During the training organized by the Kengrow Non-governmental organization at a Mwingi hotel, the farmers were given skills on how to diversify in business to raise incomes for their families instead of relying solely on farming.

"This being a food scarce area we intend to give the participants with right knowledge and skills to address food insecurity and alleviate poverty," said Ms. Beth Kalundu Mutunga-Syengo at the closure of the training.

Ms. Mutunga-Syengo who is the chief executive of the Kengrow said since the participants had been equipped with adequate

entrepreneurial and credit management skills, they were in turn expected to set up and run viable income generating initiatives to boost family incomes.

"Those who participated will get financial support through small grants to set up business ventures in order to turn the knowledge and skills acquired into reality. The ultimate goal is to have a lasting solution to food insecurity and run away poverty," said Ms. Mutunga-Syengo.

Presenting a paper on entrepreneurship, credit management and business appraisal, an Agricultural economist Zacharia Mariara, noted that setting up a business was risky and required serious personal commitment and strong inner drive for the desired benefits to be realized.

"Total commitment and perseverance is central to the success of your business. Finish what you

start even under difficult circumstances and recognize that success does not happen overnight," said Mariara who is the head of Business Development in the ministry of Agriculture.

He noted that starting a business was not an easy task but the rewards are usually big. He further said the time and efforts infused into business is in the long run compensated in success and the returns that are eventually reaped.

Mariara said in order to succeed in business, one must have the ability to tackle problems by giving the right solutions as well as making decisions that involve complex and conflicting consideration.

He further said it was a good business virtue for an entrepreneur to not only be always on the lookout for new and emerging opportunities, but also have that willingness to act on them decisively when the time is ripe.



Some of the entrepreneurship trainees follow the proceeding at a Mwingi hotel.

Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Busia cane farmers petition state over land

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

CANE farmers in Busia County have appealed to the government to intervene as a matter of urgency and help them recover their 1,000 acres of cane land at Nasewa which has been illegally acquired by Mumias Sugar Company.

In a memo addressed to President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga through the provincial administration, the residents claim that in 1996, the government had persuaded the peasant farmers to relinquish the land to pave the way for the establishment of a sugar factory in the area.

The farmers claimed those who resisted the proposal were forcefully ejected from the land and that most of the locals were never paid their dues as agreed.

"Whereas an acre of land was fetching Kshs84,000 at the time, majority of us were paid a paltry Kshs34,000 an acre," stated the memo, adding that even today, some of the affected cane farmers are yet to be paid their dues 21 years down the line.

The irate farmers however said that the proposed sugar factory was never put up, adding that the Busia Sugar Company, which was privately owned, managed to operate for a few years as an agency between Mumias Sugar Company and the farmers. "To our surprise, we were shocked to learn later that Busia Sugar Company had been placed under receivership for undisclosed loans they allegedly owed Kenya Sugar Board and Mumias Sugar Company.

It has emerged that before the Busia Sugar Company went under, it signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mumias Sugar Company Limited, which meant that the Company was to cultivate cane on the land for a period of five years starting from 2006 in order to recover a debt of Kshs 56 million.

However the cane farmers led by Walatsi ward civic leader Jack Wambulwa said that they were perturbed following revelations that Mumias Sugar Company Limited had sold the 841 acres of the land to Kaplony Limited allegedly to recover its sh100million.

"Your Excellency, we seek your urgent intervention to stop the intended illegal transfer of our communal land since we have already identified a serious investor who is ready and willing to set up a sugar factory in the said cane land," said the stakeholders, adding that once he [investor] has exhausted the leasehold the land shall revert to the cane farmers.

The establishment of the said sugar company will in the long run create employment opportunities in the region hence addressing the current high rate of unemployment considering that Busia has no factory, a situation that has forced majority of the youth to join the boda-boda industry as their only source of livelihood.

"The identified investor, West Kenya Sugar Company limited will no doubt contribute good income for our people having promised to pay cane farmers a total of Kshs3,750 per tonnes unlike Mumias Sugar Company that pays a paltry Kshs3,200 per tonne.

Embu west takes action against middlemen

By PETER MUTUKU

EMBU West District has embarked on education of farmers about proper marketing strategies to ensure maximum income from the sale of their produce.

The District Development Officer, Johnson Njogu, says that currently farmers were being exploited by middlemen who bought their produce at throw away prices.

He expressed the need to sensitize farmers on the importance of selling their produce to cereal banks where they were assured of better prices.

"The poor rates at which farmers in this area are selling their produce to brokers is alarming and

this may dent our determination of being food secure in the coming days," he said.

He called on farmers to form strong organizations to enable them access credit that will ensure higher returns.

The DDO at the same time says the area has enough food reserves to sustain the residents over the next six months.

Njogu says the department attributes the adequate stock to proper land use and effective utilization of water resources.

Njogu, who gave a brief on the progress the department had made in ensuring food sustainability, says that a series of sensitization forums held with farmers on prop-

er utilization of land and farming methods was key to the increased production levels.

"In the current harvest, the region has produced over 16,120 bags of maize, 3,582 bags of beans, 120 bags of sorghum, 147.5 bags of cow peas, 184 tons of sweet potatoes, 91 tons of cassava and 36,000 tons of bananas," he said.

Njogu however says that both maize and beans had registered significant drops of 40 and 13 percent respectively from the long rains harvests experienced early this year, but the cereal banks had enough stocks to feed the population.

He attributes the drop in pro-

duction levels to erratic and poor distribution of rainfall, lower soil fertility due to continuous cropping, small land holdings of an average of 2.5 acre and environmental degradation especially through riverbank, encroachment and indiscriminate tree felling.

Njogu says the department had invested in horticultural irrigation schemes for the growing of tomatoes, carrots and greens adding that production from the schemes had created more job opportunities for the youth.

The official said the area was conducive to high coffee production and urged farmers to take advantage of improved prices to ensure better production.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

DAIRY farmers from Central Kenya earned Kshs.18 billion last year from the sale of their produce.

Director of Veterinary Services Mr Peter Maina Ithondeka said that Nyeri County alone earned Kshs 3 billion after the sales of milk.

The director was speaking at Karatina stadium in Nyeri County during the official opening of the one day field day/grand exhibition.

Ithondeka was representing Livestock Minister Hon Mohammed Kuti who was expected to be the chief guest during the occasion.

In the minister's speech, Kuti said the annual milk production countrywide has increased from 2.8 billion litres in year 2002 to almost 4 billion litres in the year 2008.

"The milk producer prices, with support from the Government, have also improved to the current average price of about Kshs.25 per liter. In the year 2008, the sub-sector exported dairy products worth over Kshs 1 billion in the East African Community and other countries," said the minister.

The volumes of milk processed and marketed have also increased to almost 400 million litres in the year 2008 compared to 145 million litres processed in 2002.

The Minister however decried the many challenges in the sector including the current drought which has severely affected livestock production and in some cases led to poor health and death of livestock.

"It is therefore becoming increasingly important for the farmers to embrace feed conservation technologies to ensure feeds from the rush season are conserved for lean times. The extension staff is training and building the capacity of farmers so as to improve service delivery," added the minister.

Kuti said his ministry is in the process of creating a legislative framework to address all matters of livestock feeds in the country.

"Other legislative framework

Central dairy farmers in booming business



From right Director of Veterinary Services Mr Peter Maina Ithondeka and Kenya Livestock Producers Association chairman Mr Geoffrey Gikungu among other leaders visiting one of the stands during a field day at Karatina stadium in Nyeri County. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

that my ministry is pursuing in order to improve the environment for livestock production in this country include the Livestock policy, Dairy policy, Dairy bill and Breeding policy among others," Kuti added.

The field day whose theme was 'Livestock Development for Socio-economic Prosperity' was organized by the Kenya Livestock Producers

Association.

The association chairman Mr Geoffrey Gikungu and CEO Mr Patrick Kimani also attended the function.

Gikungu lamented that the livestock production cost is becoming increasingly high with cost of feeds, disease control and animal breeding becoming high.

The field day attended by over 8,000 farmers from around the country and with about 50 exhibitors was aimed at creating an opportunity for learning and interaction among farming communities and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector such as agrochemical companies and livestock feed manufacturers.

Neglected traditional crops get major boost

By JOEL JUMA

FIVE universities have launched a research programme aimed at assessing the decline in production of several indigenous food crops.

The research launched at Bukura Agricultural Training Farmers centre in Kakamega County seeks to gauge the level of decline in production of such crops. Crops to be covered include cow-peas, mushroom, pumpkins, French beans and amaranths.

The ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Kenya Agricultural Productivity Programme (Kapp) will finance the three-year research at a cost of Kshs24 million.

Mt Kenya University Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof. John Nderitu and Dr Richard Mulwa of Egerton University are leading the research work. The two will make recommendations on how to improve production of the crops.

Over 10,000 farmers will be enlisted in the research that will also involve production of nightshades and spider wads in Homa Bay and Siaya Counties respectively.

Kakamega County headed by Dr Josephine Ongoma will recruit over 3,000 farmers to do research work in soya beans, cowpeas and mushrooms. Nderitu and Mulwa who were speaking during a one-day workshop at Bukura explained that experts from the universities of Nairobi, Bondo, Egerton and Chuka have been brought on board.

Prof Florence Olubayi who is the head of Plant Ecology Department at University of Nairobi explained that the project has been designed to ensure that farmers are given priority in the implementation of the exercise.

Olubayi, Nderitu and Ongoma said the quality of seeds would also be improved after the studies. They explained that production of some vegetables had declined as farmers were not planting quality seeds.

By JOEL JUMA

THE war between Nzoia Sugar Company (NSC) and Nzoia Out-growers Company (NOCO) has taken a new turn. Hundreds of farmers demonstrated to demand for the arrest of culprits behind the sale of their cane to private millers.

The angry farmers gathered at Sikata market from as early as 6 a.m before making a short trip to Noco offices, getting the staff by surprise.

They urged the Minister for Agriculture Sally Kosgey to intervene and de-register Noco because it was no longer serving their interests.

The staff at Noco hurriedly closed their offices and fled as the farmers attempted to gain entry by force but their efforts were thwarted by a contingent of anti-riot policemen that had been deployed at the premises.

As the situation threatened to get out of control, a combined team of administration and regular policemen was brought in from Bungoma town to try to contain the farmers who were baying for the blood of Noco General Manager Kingsley Mutali, who was however not in office.

Waving placards reading, Mutali Must Go! Kenya Sugar Board Killing Us! and Noco Have Become Cane Poachers!, the farmers opted to hold their meeting outside the Noco offices after trying in vain to go past the police cordoned compound. "We are calling upon the police to immediately arrest those people illegally selling our cane to private millers. We have a contract with Nzoia Sugar Company and not with any-

body else," charged the Chairman of the Nzoia Task Force on Privatization Wilson Webi.

He added that it is against the Sugar Act for Noco, which is an agency, to enter into any agreement regarding the sale of cane from farmers without the involvement of NSC which provides farm inputs to farmers as well as final payment for their produce.

They accused Mutali and former Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) Chairman Saul Busolo of working on a scheme to cripple NSC when the company resumes operations after its annual maintenance.

"They are engaged in a plan to finish the company through such schemes to give themselves a lee-way to buy it back under the guise of privatisation but we are the farmers and we will not accept the company to be sold without us being adequately prepared," said Webi.

The raging row erupted early this week when NSC security officers raided Noco and impounded two tractors packed with cane suspected to have been stolen before towing them away under tight security.

NSC Managing Director Saul Wasilwa accused Noco of breach of contract and threatened to end the 33 year-old relationship that has existed between the two firms.

"But Mutali and Busolo came out in defence of Noco's actions saying that the firm was only targeting farmers whose contracts with NSC had expired as it wants to assist them get a better market

for their cane.

The duo said that NSC cannot claim monopoly over cane that it has not contracted adding that while the latter was

paying a mere Kshs3,100 per ton of cane to its farmers, other millers were paying between Kshs4,100 to Kshs4,185, thereby attracting more farmers.



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By LUKE KAPCHANGA

PHYLLIS Lutomia Muricho, 42, is desperate to find money for sugar, yet a sugar plantation surrounds her homestead, in Maruti village of We-buye.

The mother of three, last harvested her sugarcane crop in July, and the management of Nzoia Sugar Company took two months to pay her dues from the proceeds.

"I do not understand why as a farmer, am not able to find sugar in the shops, yet harvesting of cane has been going on none-stop?", she asked

Indeed as she spoke, trailers transporting sugarcane from the farms to the factory were roaring past, as harvesting was going on in the neighboring village, which had destroyed the road to her home.

She explained that for the past two weeks, every time she goes looking for sugar the price keeps on increasing by the day, and at times it is not even available.

The scarcity of the commodity, she went on, has created panic and anxiety among farmers who depend on sugarcane growing as the main source of income, yet they cannot afford buying what they produce as raw material.

Cane framers are paid about Kshs 3,800 per tone for the cane harvested and delivered to the millers, and the price for a kilo of sugar is Kshs 300.

The prevailing market price for the 50 kg sugar to retailers stands at Kshs 12,500, and the commodity gets scarce by the day, forcing producers of raw material to rethink continued farming of cane.

"At this rate, we are not going to educate our children if we continue depending on sugarcane growing, and the prices for raw materials is not increased by the concerned stakeholders", Lutomia added.

The proceeds from cane farming, is peanuts compared to what traders get as farmers get more poorer and majority are now contemplating to abandon the crop.

Lutomia feels that the economic benefit of growing cane has dwindled, and was not profitable due to lack of services from out growers companies.

The farmer goes through a lot of tribulations, she admits, saying that the sugar companies rarely supplies required farm implements as they claim, but they deduct farmers af-

Sugar too costly for cane farmers



Sacks of sugar being off-loaded at the port. Photo/File

ter the harvest and they are not sure of the tonnage of their crops as they never witness the weighing which is suspect.

Lutomia represents almost 2million sugarcane farmers who supply an estimated 80% of unprocessed cane at the factories in Kenya.

There are five Parastatal owned sugar companies in the area namely Chemelil, Nzoia, Sony, Muhoroni and Miwani and privately owned Mumias, West Kenya, Kibos, Soin and Butali.

Sugar industry as a sub-sector in agriculture ranks third after horticulture and tea in Gross Marketed Agricultural Product, and supports the livelihoods of about 6million people indirectly. A source from Khetia su-

permarket, that has outlets in western Kenya said that they had gone for five days without getting the commodity from the millers.

The Kenya sugar board has attributed the scarcity to failure by the government to import the commodity from Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The acting chief executive of Kenya sugar board, Solomon Odera was quoted saying, "we do not have sugar coming to our region because producers have found a more lucrative market in Europe".

The government has been blocking sugar importation to protect local industry from competition, and with biting shortage, combined with declining global stocks and soaring food

prices, producers in Comesa region have opted to seek lucrative markets, making it hard for Kenya to source for sugar.

According to Odera, some of the local millers have shut down operations for annual maintenance while others are facing shortage of matured cane for harvesting and crushing, hampering production.

The combined production capacity of local millers stands at 520,000 metric tones annually against the consumption rate of 740,000 metric tones.

As the government remains silent over the matter, Lutomia and other farmers can only watch as they can hardly afford to buy the sugar so abundant in their fields in raw form.

Coconut production set to increase

By BEKADZO TONDO

KENYA Coconut Development Authority ((KCD) has rolled out a coconut seedling planting drive in coast region targeting about 1 million new seedlings per year.

The KCD managing director Dr Francis Fondo said a census survey carried on the coconut trees in the area established that there were about 7.4 million coconut trees planted mostly in coast region.

Dr Fondo said the move was aimed at assisting farmers with certified coconut plant seedlings to Increase production.

"Coast region has conducive weather conditions which allow coconut trees to grow and it is our obligation as an authority concerned with the good management of the cash crop tree to increase its production," said Dr Fondo.

The KCD MD was addressing coconut farmers at St. Martin primary school grounds in Chonyi during a gathering to discuss the benefits of the tree to the community.

Dr Fondo said the authority plans to encourage individual farmers and those in groups to keep nurseries of coconut seedlings which KCD will later buy at better prices and offer them to farmers to plant at their farms.

"We are encouraging coconut farmers in coast region to start their own coconut seedlings nurseries. KCD will later buy each seedling at Kshs 50 and give them to farmers to plant in their farms to increase the number of coconut trees in the region," said Dr Fondo.

At the same time, leaders in Kilifi County have petitioned the government to establish an independent cashew nut trees board to oversee the management of the crop and boost the economy of the coastal people.

Led by Ms Naomi Sidi an aspirant for the Kilifi county senate seat, the leaders said the cash crop has been neglected by the government which has failed to establish a specific board to oversee the management of the crop.

Speaking to *The Link* in Kilifi Ms Sidi many farmers had replaced the cash crop with other food crops like maize and cassias in protest of poor prices.

"This is a fact that many cashew nut farmers have abandoned the growing of the trees complaining that they are being paid peanuts by the middle men who buy the raw nuts because of lack of a regulatory body to manage the cash crop," said Ms Sidi.

She urged the government to speed up the process of repossessing the collapsed Kilifi cashew nut factory and hand it over to the locals for better management.

State social welfare plan nets more elderly

By JOEL JUMA

OVER 33,000 elderly people have been identified to benefit from the Cash Transfer Fund, the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs has disclosed.

Assistant Minister Manyala Keya revealed that over one billion shillings has been set aside to place the elderly people on the payroll.

He said the selection was done in over 40 districts across the country.

"The Government is still sourcing for more funds from partners so that the number of beneficiaries can go up," said Keya who is the Lurambi MP. He explained that initial requirements for beneficiaries had not changed noting that the age bracket of 65 is still intact.

He said elderly people with working children will not be allowed to benefit from the kitty as the fund was established to cater for the interests of the extremely needy.

The assistant minister was speaking at Navakholo market in the newly created Navakholo district where he distributed Constituency Development Fund (CDF) cheques worth Kshs2.2 million.

The cheques were distributed to schools, health centres and chiefs offices.

The Kakamega Central District Acting DC Hillary Mibeyi and the Kenya National Union of Teachers branch chairman Tom Ingolo and treasurer Nelly Maliatso also addressed the meeting.

Ingolo and Maliatso said newly registered schools should be factored during the budgetary allocations of CDF money.

The two said the introduction of County Governments after the next General elections may not favour new schools.

"CDF is going to be phased out and that it why a lot of money was al-

located to constituencies to complete projects," said Ingolo.

Keya however noted that his constituency got Kshs 60 million, which cannot be adequate to complete all projects.

Keya also added that he will ensure Parliament does not derail the creation of new constituencies.

Meanwhile, parents have rejected plans to raise funds for the completion of a Kshs30 million stalled Economic Stimulus Project (ESP) at Vokoli Girls high school in Vihiga County.

They protested at the move by the institution's management to impose Kshs 4,000 on every student to enable the school complete the project.

"We are opposed to the plan on grounds that the school is yet to utilise the allocated funds for the project as required by the Government," said a parent who sought anonymity.

The parents now want Education Minister Prof Sam Ongeri to dispatch

a team of auditors to the school to probe the use of the initial allocation.

"It is unfair that we are required to pay additional monies not recognised by the Government. Why are we being asked to pay more levies?" asked another parent.

They said that they never consulted when the school increased levies by about Kshs 10, 000 this year, adding that some of them were contemplating withdrawing their children from the school due to lack of funds.

The parents have reported the matter to the area District Commissioner William Kiprono and the Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers (Kuppet) for intervention.

A letter send to the parents indicated that they are required to pay Kshs2,000 to cater for employment of Non Teachers Service Commission (TSC) teachers and another Kshs1,000 to cater for quality Grades and Academic Awards.

Bett wants sale of scrap metals banned

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

ROADS Minister Hon Franklin Bett has urged the Government to ban the sale of scrap metal in the country.

Bett said that the scrap metal dealers have been buying and selling the metals which have been vandalised from the roads, an issue which has led to increase of road accidents due to lack of road signs and rails.

He appealed to the Ministry of industrialization to do so immediately.

"I want to warn those vandalizing road equipments that they will face the full force of the law. The Industrialization ministry should also shut down businesses trading in scrap metals as this is promoting the theft of the metals," he said.

The minister spoke when he launched the construction of Giakanja-Kigogo-ini road in Tetu district of Nyeri County.

The 60 kilometer road which he launched will be constructed at a cost of Kshs 2.5 billion.

The minister who was accompanied by his PS Mr Michael Kamau, area MP Hon Francis Nyammo, area DC Mr Herman Shambi and Central deputy PC Mrs Ann Ngetich, maintained that heavy commercial vehicles which exceed the required weight will not be allowed on the roads.

"We shall not turn back about the regulations on the weight. We shall not allow one vehicle to destroy the road of many road users. Overloading is illegal on our roads. Let those concerned ensure that the law is adhered to," said the minister.

Bett added that corrupt officers being compromised by the motorists

will face the consequences once arrested in the act.

The road which is being upgraded to Bitumen standard will greatly improve the development towards agriculture and livestock production, subsistence farming and also enable trade to flourish in a renewed vigour.

The minister said his ministry has expanded the rural road network under tarmac within Nyeri, Kirinyaga and Embu counties by some 78 kilometers at a cost of Kshs 3.5 billion adding that in the next three years, another 283 kilometers of tarmac will be added to the rural road network within

the three counties.

He also cautioned drivers to be very careful on the roads to save lives of Kenyans.

Nyammo lauded Government's efforts towards the rehabilitation of the roads to ensure the economic growth of the area.



Roads Minister Hon Franklin Bett (right) with his PS Mr Michael Kamau flag off the road construction machines during the launching of the construction of Giakanja-Kigogo-ini road in Tetu district of Nyeri County recently. INSET: Mr. Bett takes a jig with local women dancers during the launch. Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

Don't rush for Middle East jobs —Salama tells Kenyans

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE rush by Kenyans to secure employment in foreign countries has landed them in risky situations which jeopardize their lives.

In most cases, they have found themselves in awkward situations which leave them at the mercy of their employers.

Majority are mistreated while others get killed in unclear circumstances. But that has not deterred others from seeking employment in similar circumstances.

Juliana Salama moved to Saudi Arabia early this year after she secured a job as a house help. But life has been miserable to the 28 year old woman who has to work day and night nonstop.

"My employer has locked me in the house and I have to work even when I am not feeling well," she says during an interview on phone.

She wants the government to come to her rescue and help her return back to the country.

Salama says that she has not been paid her salary over the last two months now and efforts to protest to her employers have not yielded any fruits.

"I am fed up with this job and I am appealing to the government to intervene in the matter and take me home as I fear for my life in this country," said Salama.

Salama said she got the job through an agent she identifies as Amina Zani who assisted her to getting passport and a visa before she traveled.

"A woman approached me in Mombasa and asked me if I wanted to work in Saudi Arabia and I immediately accepted the offer because I wanted some money to educate my children," said Salama.

Salama who talked to The Link on phone said she moved to Saudi Arabia in April this year and started working for a couple in Basteen 361 street No 800 244 0076. Salama said she traveled along with other five Kenyan women but she has not been able to communicate with them.

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

"MANAGE money but do not let money manage you".

This is the challenge, the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) Arch Bishop; the Most Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala gave to businessmen in Bungoma, Busia and Kakamega Counties.

Wabukala spoke recently during a graduation ceremony of 2,734 small scale traders drawn from Mt. Elgon, Teso, Webuye, Kanduyi, Bumula, Sirisia, Kimilili and Lugari administrative units.

Wabukala who presided over the function said prudent financial management should be the norm for not only the business community but also the entire populace of western region.

The function held at the Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE) grounds was facilitated by Equity Bank and attended by Bungoma South District Commissioner (DC) Mr. Wilfred Nyangwanga.

Also in attendance was Mr. Gerald

Kabukala speaks on money matters

Warui who is one of the directors of Equity Bank. Mr. Warui represented the bank's Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O) Dr. James Mwangi at the function.

Arch Bishop Wabukala who was the chief guest urged the graduands not to engage in malpractices that are likely to ruin their chances to prosper economically. He reminded them that they can move away from dependence syndrome only if they manage funds at their disposal prudently no matter how little it may be.

Consequently the Arch Bishop asked the graduands to use the knowledge gained during the training adding that they need to grow both spiritually and economically in order to be independent and responsible citizen.

"The knowledge you have gained will make you manage your business efficiently and hence become inde-

pendent" the Arch Bishop said.

At the same time, the prelate cautioned parliament against tampering with institutions that fight corruption in the country.

Wabukala, who is also the National Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering Committee (NACCSC) chair said parliament, should not be allowed to mutilate the constitution to suit the MPs selfish interests. "Let the constitution remain in the current form. No body should be allowed to amend it," the Arch Bishop said.

Speaking at the same function, Bungoma South District Commissioner (DC) Mr. Wilfred Nyangwanga lauded Equity Bank for helping to minimize insecurity in the area.

Mr. Nyangwanga claimed that the rate of insecurity reduced after sugar cane farmers started to get their dues through the bank.

This, he added that was as a result of a memorandum of understanding (M.O.U) between the bank and sugar firms in the region.

The bank's C.E.O.'s representative Mr. Gerald Warui said that the free training project dubbed Financial Knowledge for Africa (FIKA) aims at equipping willing organized groups and individuals with business management skills.

Mr. Warui added that through the project, Equity group foundation in conjunction with the master card foundation are set to train more than 1 million Kenyans small scale entrepreneurs in the next three years.

He disclosed that the 2,734 graduands were trained by teachers employed by the bank on budgeting, debt management and other lessons geared at eradicating financial management illiteracy.

Unsafe sex blamed for high incidences of aids

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

AN HIV/AIDS official in Busia County has blamed the high infection rates among the youth in the region on their failure to practice safe sex.

Speaking at the close of a two day training forum for the groups that had been funded by the National Aids Control Council (NACC) in Busia municipality through the Total War Against HIV/AIDS (TOWAH) at the Busia district headquarter recently, Nambale Constituency HIV/AIDS

coordinator Wilfred Magoba said despite the fact that the youth are aware of HIV/AIDS, they still do not practice safe sex.

The HIV/AIDS coordinator pointed out that although in some cases the disease is acquired through breast feeding by HIV infected mothers, blood transfusion, contaminated piercing and injections, sexual transmission accounts for over 80 percent.

He said a study conducted by Dr. Arthur Obel in 1984 had indicated that HIV/AIDS infections among commercial sex workers

was 14.1percent whereas those acquired through health facilities through injections was 2.5percent.

The official at the same time said that 60 percent of those infected by HIV/AIDS are women adding that circumcision reduces infection rates by 60 percent.

The coordinator called for abstinence, faithfulness, correct condom usage and discussion, use of clean needles, avoiding drugs especially among the youth to help reduce the infection rates.

The HIV/AIDS coordinator said in order to avoid Mother-To-

Child Transmission (MTCT), there was need to encourage mothers to deliver at recommended health facilities instead of relying on traditional birth attendants (TBAs) most of whom are not qualified to handle complicated cases, adding that they should as well attend ante-natal clinics and avoid breast feeding.

Magoba at the same time urged the HIV/AIDS groups to carry out extensive guidance and counseling exercises within their respective areas especially in schools.

"There is urgent need to stick to your objectives. Carry out ex-

tensive guidance and counseling to ensure you reach as many people as possible in your respective areas especially schools," said the HIV/AIDS coordinator, adding that 50percent of primary school children have sexual partners.

Speaking at the same forum, the chairperson of Township Aids Control and Care Organization (TACCO) Rachael Omondi on her part said her organization had embarked on a campaign to sensitize locals on the need to discard retrogressive practices which undermined the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Odira proves necessity is the mother of inventions

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

FOR decades crop production in Suba district has been bleak due to prolonged drought. Every season farmers realize poor crop yields resulting to serious food shortage.

But one Alex Odira, 31, of Gembe village is struggling to turn the tide against all odds. Stunned by seasonal poor crop yields, Odira always wondered where the community would find respite.

"Poor yields worried me a lot. I always pondered how our future would be," he says.

He says parents always have been spending heavily on cereals imported from neighbouring areas. "So I kept asking when we will find an alternative means of eking a living?" he posed.

Out of the frustration, Odira chose to explore his talent. "I gathered used domestic metals and created a sisal production machine," he says.

Odira invented a sisal decorticator, a device that turns sisal plant into fibre and the Sisal Twinner, a device turning sisal fibre into rope.

"Initially, it cost a lot to produce 10 kilogrammes of sisal, he says.

Sourcing for mentors to explore new ideas and the chance to sell the idea for maximum business among peers was a nightmare.

Just as Shakespeare wrote in Twelfth Night, there are three ways it can happen: "some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them".

Odira says he has weathered his poor background as he scaled the challenges to success.

Sisal is largely grown in Suba district, with almost every household in the community involved in the trade.

During times of drought, the plant thrives with farmers selling in Suba and outlying areas.



Drought: Every season farmers realize poor crop yields resulting to serious food shortage. Photo/File

Suba district is a lead supplier of sisal whose end product is used in building traditional houses and making ropes. This realization drove Odira into inventing the gadgets to scale up sisal production.

"I struggled for years to come up with cheaper and more efficient tools to process sisal and make ropes," he says.

"My aim was to add value to the sisal by turning it into rope that can be sold for not less than Kshs.100. I earn about Kshs.95 profit per kilo, which is higher compared to what I used to earn without the plant," he says.

Odira is an example of the inventor-entrepreneur who won't just give

up, and is trying to build on business resilience. Last year, luck fell on his work during innovations exhibitions held at the University of Nairobi.

The event was organized by Maker Faire Africa and his innovation pulled many eyes from around the globe. Internationals experts picked his idea and won recognition.

The innovation rapidly spread around the world, especially the Bills Gates Foundation.

For many years, brilliant innovations were alien to Africa and ideas from the region were always relegated to the back burner with no one ever thinking anything good would come from the region.

But the trend is slowly changing if the latest and emerging viable ideas like Odira is anything to cite.

Odira like other Africans add to a list of people who have made it from impossible angles. His work was selected from among 1,200 others in an international competition.

Odira attended Nyabera Primary School between 1986 and 1997 before proceeding to Tonga Secondary School where he obtained a C- (minus) mean grade.

His hopes were never dashed despite failing to join a public university and advanced to Kisumu Polytechnic in 2001 to pursue a mechanical engineering production course.

Support Karua for president — women told

By BEKADZO TONDO

WOMEN politicians have been challenged to support Gichugu MP Martha Karua in her presidential bid in the coming general elections.

Former Mombasa councilor Margaret Olang said the next elections provide an opportune moment for women in this country to ascend to the Presidency.

"Narc Kenya party leader Martha Karua is the most prominent woman presidential candidate in the country and can ascend to the presidency if all women rally behind her bid," said Olang. She was speaking to journalists at a Mombasa hotel during a workshop on Media Colloquium on women's and property rights organized by African Women and Child Feature service (AWC).

She said that women account for the majority of voters in the country and must this time around support one of their own for the Presidency.

"Women should support female candidates vying for the Presidency, governors, senator, Mp and county representatives," said the former civic leader. She said that women should not bank their hopes on the one third gender rule in the constitution but should strive to garner more seats during the elections in a bid to boost their numbers. Journalists attending the meeting were urged to highlight women issues especially on land ownership and property inheritance.

Meanwhile, a Rotarian from Nairobi will lead a major drive to raise funds to construct boreholes and dams in Ganze District to help alleviate suffering occasioned by famine in the area. Ms Rita Rogers says the area is currently being ravaged by drought due to the unreliable rainfall pattern which has in most cases resulted in poor harvests. The areas hardest hit by drought include Mrima wa Kuku where she distributed relief food to the hungry stricken families.

"I am traveling to South Africa to join other Rotarians in that country and raise funds which I will later channel to water projects which include the drilling of bore holes and construction of dams," said Ms Rogers.

The Rotarian who is also a volunteer director of physically challenged persons organization, said long term solutions towards fighting hunger must be explored to save Kenyans from dying due to lack of food and drilling of bore holes could be one of the measures. She said she will work with other Rotarians in foreign countries like Germans to raise more funds for the water projects.

"There are many Rotarians in the world who are willing to raise funds and support projects which will go a long way in addressing problems facing other people such as hunger and am prepared to coordinate these people to get enough monies to undertake the projects," she said

The Rotarian regretted that the food bought using the funds raised by Kenyans have been directed to North Eastern province alone while other affected regions like Ganze in Coast province have not been considered.

Kilifi District Agricultural Officer Mrs Jane Kanamu said the area had registered total crop failure due to the unpredictable rainfall patterns.

The officer said most families this time round will need to rely on government and other donor relief food donations ratios for their survival.

Mwatate artisans lack safety gear

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

MOST Jua Kali artisans in Mwatate district, Taita Taveta County, lack the recommended safety and protective gear.

The artisans are at risk of dangers posed by constant exposure to high intensity ultra-bright welding flames.

Instead of the recommended safety glasses with side shields, the welders use the common dark shades which expose them to the bright flash.

Other protective gears include a welders' helmet, gloves, overalls and a leather apron among others.

Reasons given for failure to acquire the safety items range from ignorance to poverty, according to Mr. Mosee Mwendwa, a welder. He says welders who have been in the sector for a long time have gradually developed apathy towards maintaining personal safety.

"Some of us find donning that bulky welding helmet inconveniencing especially if it's a light task of welding works. Also, wearing aprons and heavy boots is cumbersome unless there is a definite job you are assured of," said Mr. Mwendwa.

While undertaking minor welding jobs, the artisans only close eyes or

put on dark glasses. "It might sound hard but we don't have to state directly at a spot t weld it back into place," he says.

Mr. Mwendwa the main problem is not the bright flashes but a stinging metallic smoke that irritates eyes and chokes lungs for which a simple prescription of painkillers solves such discomforts. "The eyes become red and itchy but after a while, one gets accustomed to such challenges," Mr. Mwendwa says.

Mr. Paul Ngao, an eye specialist at Kwale Eye Clinic, says working with the bright flames without proper protection is tantamount to courting early blindness.

"They don't get accustomed. It's just that they are unaware of the damage being done to the eye. The eye is a very sensitive organ. When exposed to the light, the light receptor cells in the eye become overstrained. This may result to blurred vision at an early age," said Mr. Ngao.

Mr. Ngao says blindness from such causes is irreversible and for operators of electric grinders, there is the added risk of having tiny metal fragments lodged in the eyes. When such an incident happens, the victim needs to seek a doctor's help. But this

is rarely the case.

Mr. Charles Gitonga, a grinder operator in Mwatate town, claims an eye-drop he buys from a chemist always works for him when the sparks scorch the eye-balls.

"Before sleeping, I place a drop or two in my eye and in the morning, I am okay," he says. Mr. Ngao says the operators should be properly clothed for the job and medical attention should be sought whenever eyes

feel itchy.

"Early blindness is a fact but when you are young, it looks like a remote possibility," he says.

The head of Jua Kali Association in Mwatate, Mr. Thomas Malobe, says proper protective clothing is a problem among welders.

"Most people in the sector lack sufficient finance thus buying the appropriate protective gear is not a priority," he says.



Jua Kali artisans at work.

Butere's race against stalled projects

By JOEL JUMA

BUTERE/MUMIAS County Council has launched a Rapid Result Initiative (RRI) programme that aims to net over Kshs43 million within three months as revenue. The council said it wants to beat the deadline of completing stalled projects in the four constituencies ahead of the next General Elections.

The funds will be sourced from the newly established sand harvesting centres along rivers Lusumu in Mumias constituency, Yala in Khwisero and Nzoia in Matungu constituencies.

"We want to avoid crossing over to County Government with stalled projects as the council will be under Kakamega County," said the council's Treasurer Reuben Wanyama.

Wanyama and the Council chairman Modekai Nandwa said they are taking inventory of all assets to ensure that no council property is lost during the transition period. Nandwa ordered workers to compile data on all assets before December to enable the council ascertain its financial strength as it moves its structures to the County level.

The Task Force on Devolved Government Chaired by Moi University Law Lecturer Mutakha Kangu indicated that workers in councils will not be sacked as the Country moves to the new system of governance. The task force report was submitted to the Local Government Minister Musalia Mudavadi and the Permanent Secretary Prof Karega Mutahi, outlining the functions of the Central and County governments.

Wanyama and the council Clerk Maurice Odundo said they have put in place measures aimed at ensuring debts are collected promptly. The two said the council was set to complete all the stalled projects before the next polls. They explained that over Kshs.68 million has been set aside for the exercise.

And, the controversial Kshs.9 billion dam project in Bungoma County took a new twist after a Cabinet minister told off leaders opposed to the project.

Planning Minister Wycliffe Oparanya told Bungoma MPs led by Kimilili legislator Eseli Simiyu to allow the project to take off as it will serve the entire region.

"This is our major project in Western province and MPs from Bungoma should stop blocking its implementation," said Oparanya. He explained that the Government was ready to relocate the over 40,000 residents in Tongaren area to pave way for its implementation.

He said the project aims at using waters from River Nzoia to transform the area into an economic hub that will serve the entire Western province and other parts of Nyanza province.

"We want the water to be used for irrigation and other agricultural activities so that the economy of the region can improve as the country moves its management at County level," said Oparanya. He was speaking in Lugari constituency during a funds drive meeting in aid of the construction of classrooms at St Peters Matunda secondary school.

Over Kshs1.2 million was raised with Oparanya donating Kshs300,000 while Lugari MP Cyrus Jirongo and Assistant Minister for Information and Communication George Khaniri donated Kshs 300,000 and Kshs 160,000 respectively. Simiyu has opposed the construction of the dam in Tongaren grounds saying it will result in the displacement of the residents.

Simiyu said he was opposed to the project because the Government has not given an alternative land for resettlement of the families set to pave way for the construction of the dam.

Drought turns Mwingi monkeys into goat eaters

By KAVYU-KURA

JOSEPH Muthangya Nguu of Nguni village in Mwingi Central district can easily be mistaken for a poacher going by the way he is armed to the teeth with a bow and poisoned arrows.

Nguu however asserts that he is not a poacher but adds as the adage goes, "desperate situation call for desperate measures". He has on daily basis been forced to arm himself that way for the past few months to protect his herd of goats and sheep from marauding monkeys turned cannibals.

The development is an aftermath of the biting drought that has caused a serious escalation of conflict between man and monkeys as the latter adapts to new feeding habits to cope with food scarcity.

The scenario aptly epitomizes what has become a daily undertaking to most residents of Yanyonge, Kamuamba, Esee, Kanzui and Ngunini villages that neighbour the Kanyunga and Mbaika Nziu hills of Kalisasi location about 20 kilometers east of Mwingi town.

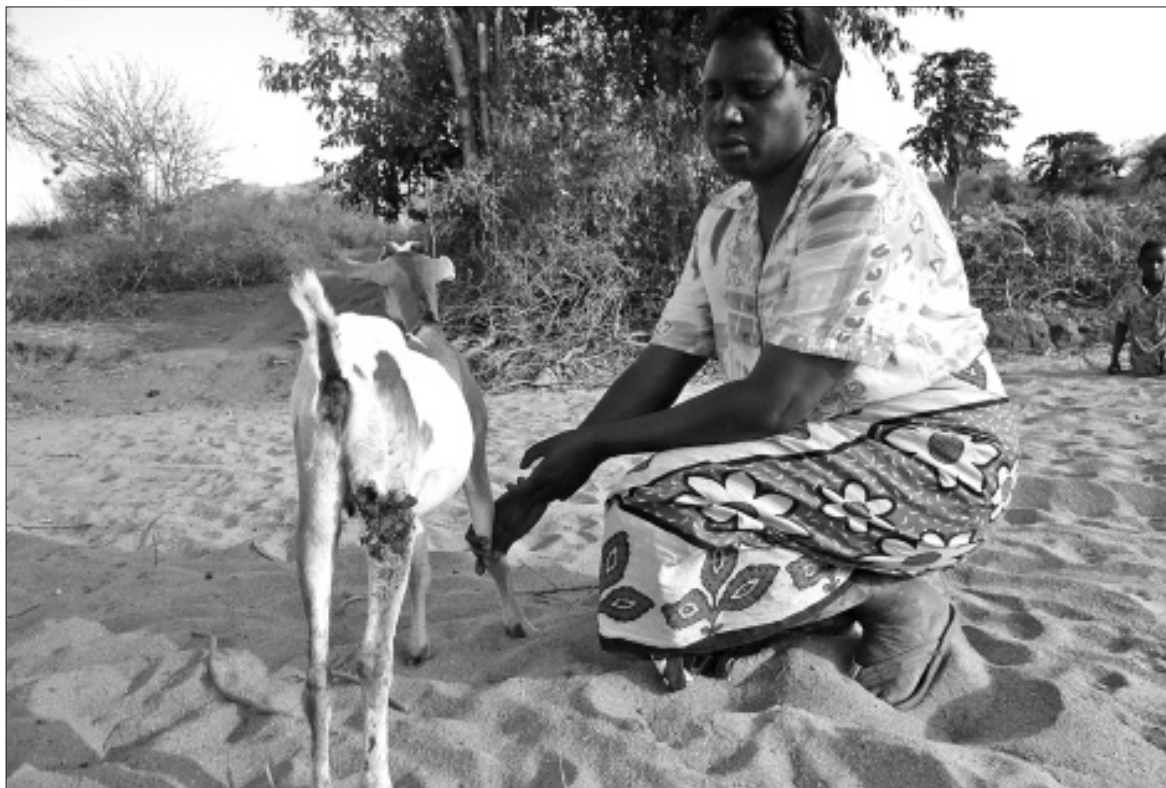
Here, it has been survival for the fittest for both man and monkey as the prevailing drought and famine bites hard. In this scattered villages human wildlife conflicts have become a daily occurrence as residents scare off hordes of monkey that have been preying on their goats for lack of food.

Villagers have reportedly lost hundreds of goats and sheep to the monkeys that are said to move in groups of about 100 as they descend from their hide out at the Mbaika Nziu and Kanyunga hills in search of food.

Nguu claims to have lost 50 goats in the past seven months. Thus he has found different use for his bows and arrows that he has been keeping in his house just in case bandits strike his home.

Just like Nguu most residents keep day long watch on their goats while armed with bows and arrows lest they be devoured by the hungry apes. However this strategy has not deterred monkeys as they still manage to attack and kill livestock.

In the week ending August 20, 2011, Ms. Wanza Kilonzo of Yanyonge village lost her three goats to the primates. The apes are said to have attacked her flock when she retired into her house to have lunch oblivious that the highly cunning monkeys had been



Ruth Kilonzi of Yanyonge Village shows wounds inflicted on one of her goats by monkeys. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

watching her moves and struck at that opportune time.

During a visit to the area that has literally turned into a battle field between the citizens and the baboons, The Link had an opportunity to talk to the victims and saw animals that had survived attacks by the monkeys.

The villagers were unanimous in that both the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) personnel and the Members of the provincial administrations have done nothing (at the time of our visit) to deal with the monkey menace as they continued to lose their livestock to the apes.

They complained that the monkeys have been attacking and killing hundreds of goats and sheep and ate them alive as pangs of the persisting drought continued to bite hard causing serious food shortage for man, livestock and wildlife.

A visibly bitter Nguu Muthangya says out of the 100 goats and sheep's in his herd a month ago, about 40 were remaining and expressed fears that unless the government through KWS intervenes, he will lose all his livestock's to the hungry monkeys.

When the media visited his home instead they found the furious man who

had been angered by the incessant monkey attacks, had armed himself with a bow and arrows ready to avenge for his decimated livestock.

A Furious Nguu who was initially hostile to the press after mistaking us for Kenya Wildlife Service officers who have not heeded calls to drive out the monkeys from the area vowed finish the primates with poisoned arrow.

"I have spent the whole day hunting for the killer monkeys that have stolen my wealth and lifeline. The primates have made me a very poor man while my pen was teaming with goats just a few months ago," lamented Nguu who vowed he would not rest until he killed all the menacing apes.

Nguu attributed the migration of the monkeys from their Kanyonga hills and Mbaika Nziu hills abodes to the current drought that has caused serious water, food and wild fruits shortage in the area.

"This human-wildlife conflict is as a result of the drought that has left most water sources dry and caused scarcity of wild fruits making the monkeys turn to livestock for survival," said the heartbroken Nguu who feared that the primates may soon turn on young school going children if the situation is not addressed by relevant government arm.

Ms. Ruth Kilonzi of Yanyonge village said she had lost 10 goats and three sheep in the past month. She showed the media some of her goats that had survived the attack.

Kilonzo pointed out that the goats that survived the attacks were left with ugly looking wounds and added that in the latest attack (before August 20), the monkeys killed three others belonging to Wanza Kilonzo who is her neighbour.

She told the press that that although the victims who have lost their livestock to the primates had reported to the Kenya Wildlife Service substation in Mwingi no action has been forthcoming.

Ms Koli Makau of Kanzui village had 10 of her goats killed by the primates within the month of July. She laments that with the prevailing drought

and famine, losing up to 10 goats was the most unbearable experience.

As a peasant farmer the attacks on her goats was tantamount to robbing her of a lifeline considering that her family has not harvested any crop for the last two years. "To ensure my family's survival through this period of food scarcity, I have been selling a goat and replenishing food stocks whenever they dry up," said Ms. Makau.

She said although the residents are famine stricken they do not usually feast on the carcasses left behind by the monkeys for fear of contracting strange lethal diseases. She said such remains area usually given to the dogs.

Crop farmers have not been spared by the invading monkeys. Munywoki David, a 30-year-old father of three, said he recently lost acres of his maize to the monkeys. He said the apes invaded his farm during his absence and devoured the crop. He had, at the time, taken his sick daughter to hospital.

He said he has been forced to spend every other day keeping watch at his farm to ensure that the remaining crops- that he had grown through simple irrigation-are not destroyed as the monkeys keep crisscrossing the area in search of water and food.

The Kalisasi chief Simon Musyimi said on phone that it was true that numerous complaints of Monkey attacks on goats and sheep had been reported to his office. However, he noted that the number of animals that were claimed to have been killed and eaten by the monkey were grossly exaggerated and did not reflect the truth.

"It is true that the monkeys have killed some goats, sheep and kids but for one to claim to have lost up to 50 goats, that is grossly misleading. No one keeps such a big herd of goat in my area," said chief Musyimi who said he had reported the same to KWS and was awaiting their action.

At the Mwingi KWS depot, the deputy officer in charge Fredrick Owino confirmed that the report about the monkey menace had reached the offices and plans were underway to visit the area and scare off the apes.



A goat belonging to Muthangya Nguu lay dead in the bush after it was killed by monkeys. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

By HENRY OWINO

THIS year's International Peace Day was marked as the country mourned Sinai residents in Nairobi who perished from fuel explosion.

The day coincided with a prayer meeting held for the victims of the tragic inferno that claimed lives of over 100 people.

Addressing participants who gathered to mark the day at Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) grounds in Nairobi, Prof George Saitoti, the Minister for Internal Security stated peace and security are essential ingredients in fostering development.

Prof Saitoti said Kenya has experienced various types of conflict in the recent past ranging from internal disputes between different communities to violent cross-border conflicts with groups from neighboring countries. He added that the causes of the conflicts are varied and complex ranging from political, poverty and competition over access and ownership of scarce resources.

Prof Saitoti reiterated that over time, the conflicts have been exacerbated by the prevalence of illicit small arms and light weapons and mushrooming of organized criminal gangs particularly in urban settings.

The Internal Security Minister said whenever conflicts manifest themselves violently, they have caused extensive damage to life, property and the economy in general. He pointed out that the Post Election Violence (PEV) experienced in Kenya in 2008 is a pointer to the fact that when unresolved, internal challenges can result in very severe consequences.

Kenya marked World Peace Day amid grief



Prof. George Saitoti at the World Peace Day. Photo/Henry Owino

He added that more than 300,000 people were displaced from their homes, over 1000

killed and property of huge value destroyed in less than three weeks.

The Minister said the violence destabilized the economy which dropped from an all time high of 7 percent to 1.7 percent within the same period. Though it was compounded by other factors such as climate change, prolonged drought, world economic down turn, influx of refugees and illicit weapons from neighboring countries, high rate of youth unemployment and slow pace of reconciliation among communities particularly in the Rift Valley, the effects of the 2008 conflict continue to pose challenges to the national progress.

Prof Saitoti said: "To mitigate these challenges and to address the operational, policy institutional and legislative weaknesses in our policing agencies, the ministry is implementing comprehensive police reforms to ensure the violence witnessed in 2007 does not recur. Already, the National Police Service Act is operational. The Act brings together the Kenya Police Service and the Administrative Police Service under one legislation which paves way for the appointment of Inspector Gen-

eral and two deputies who will command the two services."

The establishment of National Steering Committee on Peace and Conflict Management, the country has made great strides towards achieving sustainable peace, security and development as is demonstrated by three key initiatives among others.

The first and foremost initiative

is development of a complementary five year strategic plan for the period 2008/12 on peace building and conflict management. The second is establishment of streamlined and formalized operations of community based peace structures in districts of which to date there are 150 District Peace Committee operational countrywide.

The third initiative is facilitated community peace dialogues, reconciliation and social contracts for cohesion among warring communities namely the Pokot, Turkana, Samburu and Somalia.

that Kenya Vision 2030, Prof Saitoti said his ministry is currently carrying out a survey to mop out illegal small arms and light weapons countrywide as a strategy of establishing sustainable peace and security for all Kenyans. He assured Kenyans that the government is committed to the full implementation of the constitution to ensure that Kenyans enjoy its fruits in totality.

"Today the intercommunity conflicts have reduced greatly in the country and it can be attributed to the ongoing efforts by the government, civil society, private sector, development partners and communities in establishing a vibrant national peace infrastructure and support for various security sector reforms," he said.

He said that through the initiatives all the communities have been called upon to embrace peaceful coexistence and to initiate dialogue and reconciliation on any conflict situation among themselves without resulting to violence.



An official of International Day of Peace addresses the participants during the occasion.



Participants in procession during the International Day of Peace in Nairobi recently.

New law proposes stiff pen

INTRODUCTION

THE new law also bars presidential candidates from running for other elective positions, such as parliamentary, senate or governorship. The ban has also been extended to presidential running mates who cannot also contest for any other seats once their names are on the ballot as running mates. This means only serious aspirants, with high chances of making it in the bruising presidential race, will dare to put their names on the ballot. In the past, many presidential aspirants used their plan to ascend to the highest office in the land as a way of boosting their chances of winning lower seats to remain politically relevant.

The new law imposes stiffer penalties on electoral offenses. Candidates who unleash violence or intimidate their opponents risk being barred from participating in elections.

The Act (Section 64 (1)) directs that a candidate who commits the offence of personation, undue influence or bribery and publishes or disseminates false information with the intention of

(i) disrupting or preventing the election;
(ii) creating hostility or fear in order to influence the process or outcome of the election; or
(iii) influencing the process or outcome of the election is liable to a fine not exceeding Kshs 1 million or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years or to both.

The Act sets out that a person who is convicted of an offence under this section is

(a) not be eligible to be registered as a voter;
(b) not to vote at any election;
(c) not to be elected at any election; and
(d) if the candidate wins the election, their seat be declared vacant from the date of such conviction.

Further, the new law outlines that individuals who aid others in registering as voters more than once are liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs.100,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to both. Candidates who aid their supporters in multiple registration will not be eligible to contest in the election in addition to paying the fine.

Presidential election

The Constitution (Article 136 (2)) clearly stipulates that Presidential elections are to be held on the second Tuesday of August of every fifth year. And so are the elections for Members of Parliament and county representatives namely the Senator, Governor and Deputy Governor.

The Act mandates the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) with powers to publish the date of the election through a Gazette notice sixty days before elections. However, in the event that the office of the President becomes vacant, the Commission must publish the notice within fourteen days.

The Act (Section 14 (3) (a)) directs that the Commission publishes nomination dates for Presidential candidates, ten days after the date of publication of the notice.

However in the case where presidential elections are not held during a general election, the day or days in which the poll takes place, must not exceed sixty days after the declaration of a vacancy in the office of the President.

The Act (section 15 (1)) blocks a presidential candidate or a political party from replacing the person nominated as a deputy presidential candidate once the nomination of that person has been received by the Commission.

The legislation provides procedures to be followed in filling up vacancies at the National Assembly or the Senate. The Act states that the Speaker is to issue a notice as outlined in the Constitution (Article 101) which directs that the respective speaker notifies the IEBC and the political party on whose party list the member was elected or nominated in writing within twenty one days.

The new legislation on the hand provides that within twenty-one days, the IEBC

(a) transmits the notice to the relevant returning officer; and
(b) causes to be published in the Gazette and in at least two newspaper of national circulation,
(i) the day or days upon which each political party nominates candidates to contest parliamentary elections in accordance with its constitution or rules, within a period of twenty-one days after the date of publication of such notice and submit persons for a party list
(ii) the nomination day for the parliamentary election; and
(iii) the day or days for the election, which, must not exceed fourteen days after the day fixed for nomination.

The same process is to apply for the County governor elections.

Nomination of candidates

A person is to be nominated as a candidate for an election under this Act only if that person—

(a) is qualified to be elected to that office under the Constitution;
(b) has been issued with a certificate of clearance by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission;
(c) has been vetted by a body authorised to do so;
(d) holds a degree from a university recognised in Kenya or its equivalent.

Further, the Commission may apply affirmative action in an electoral area in order to promote representation of a marginalised community.

The Act directs that a political party submits its nomination rules to IEBC at least five months before the nomination of its candidates.

Nomination of political party candidates

The Act (section 27 (1)) states that a person qualifies to be nominated by a political party for presidential, parliamentary and county elections for the



The next General Elections will be held under a new law which introduces a relatively fresh concept in the entire electoral process. In a complete departure from tradition, the new law captures elections at the County level. Other than the usual presidential and parliamentary elections, Kenyans will now elect County representatives as outlined in the Constitution. Key milestones in the new legislation include the recognition of the national Identification Card as a valid document for those on the voters' roll to vote in an election, writes our Sub-editor FAITH MUIRURI.

purposes of the Constitution if that person—

(a) has been a member of that political party for at least three months preceding the date of nomination;
(b) is selected in the manner provided for in the constitution or rules of the political party concerned relating to members of that party who wish to contest parliamentary elections; and
(c) the party certifies the nomination to the Commission.

The new law obligates political parties with the responsibility of notifying the Commission of persons authorized by the party to certify to the Commission persons selected. The authorized person or persons can in writing, certify that a candidate has been nominated by the party.

The new law provides that a political party ensures that the nominated candidates do not exceed two thirds of either gender.

Participation in elections by public officers

The Act (Section 40(1)) makes it illegal for a public officer to

(a) engage in the activities of any political party or candidate or act as an agent of a political party in an election;
(b) publicly indicate support for or opposition against any party, side or candidate participating in an election; or
(c) engage in political campaigns or other political activity; or

(d) use public resources to initiate new development projects in any constituency or county three months before an election in that constituency or county.

A public officer who contravenes the provision commits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs1 million or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or both.

Further a person who knowingly aids in contravention of the provision commits an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine not exceeding Kshs1 million or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or to both.

The law further states that candidates who knowingly aid in contravention of the section are not eligible to contest in the election.

Election Offences

Offences relating to voter register and voter's cards.

A person who—
(a) without authority makes, prepares, prints or is in possession of a document or paper purporting to be a register of voters;
(b) without authority makes, prepares or prints a document or paper purporting to be a voter's card;
(c) uses a voter's card bearing the name of another person or which has not been written in the name of any person,
(d) without authority supplies a vot-

er's card to any person;

(e) without authority destroys, damages, defaces or makes any alteration on a voter's card;

(f) sells or offers to sell a voter's card to any person or purchases or offers to purchase a voter's card from any person;

(g) knowingly makes any false statement on, or in connection with any application to be placed on any register of voters; or

(h) aids, abets, counsels or procures the commission of or attempts to commit any of the offences referred to in paragraphs (a) to (f), commits an offence and shall be liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding Kshs1 million and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Offences relating to multiple registrations as a voter

A person who—
(a) being registered as a voter in a register of voters applies to be registered as a voter—

(i) in any other register of voters or
(ii) in the same register of voters; or

(b) having applied to be registered in a register of voters which has not been either granted or rejected, applies to be registered in the same register of voters or in another register of voters;

(c) simultaneously makes two or more applications to be registered as a voter; or

(d) having been disqualified by an election court, applies to be registered as a voter, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs100,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceed-



Voters queue to vote during a past general election. Photo/File

Liabilities for election offenses

ing one year or both.

In addition, those found guilty of multiple registration will not be eligible to vote in that election or in the next election.

Offences relating to voting

A person who—

(a) forges, counterfeits, defaces or destroys any ballot paper or the official perforation, stamp or mark on any ballot paper;

(b) without authority supplies any ballot paper to any person;

(c) sells or offers to sell any ballot paper to any person, purchases or offers to purchase any ballot paper from any person;

(d) not being a person entitled to be in possession of any ballot paper which has been marked with any official perforation, stamp or mark has any such ballot paper in their possession;

(e) puts into any ballot box anything other than the ballot paper which he is authorized by law to put in;

(f) without authority takes out of a polling station any ballot paper or is found in possession of any ballot paper outside a polling station;

(g) not being an election official and not being authorized, removes election materials from a polling station before, during or after an election;

(h) without authority destroys, takes, opens, disposes of or otherwise interferes with any election material in use or intended to be used for the purposes of an election;

(i) without authority prints any ballot paper or what purports to be or is capable of being used as a ballot paper at an election;

(j) for the purposes of an election, manufactures, constructs, imports, has in their possession, supplies or uses, or causes to be manufactured, constructed, imported, supplied or used, any appliance, device or mechanism by which a ballot paper may be extracted, affected or manipulated after having been deposited in a ballot box during the polling at any election;

(k) not being authorized to do so under this Act, makes any mark on any ballot paper issued to any person other than to themselves;

(l) votes at any election when they are not entitled to vote; commits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs 1 million or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years or both.

Undue influence

A person who, directly or indirectly by themselves or through another person on their behalf—

(a) uses slanderous, libelous or other harmful or offensive language in any form; or

(b) uses, threatens to use any force, violence including sexual violence, restraints or material, physical or spiritual injury, harmful cultural practices, damage or loss or any fraudulent device, trick or deception for the purpose of or on account of

(i) inducing or compelling a person to vote or not to vote for a particular candidate or political party at an election,

(ii) impeding or preventing the free exercise of the franchise of a voter;

(iii) inducing or compelling a person to refrain from becoming a candidate or to withdraw if he has become a candidate;



Youth go through civic education on voting process.

or

(iv) impeding or preventing a person from being nominated as a candidate or from being registered as a voter, commits the offence of undue influence;

The law states that a person who induces, influences or procures any other person to vote in an election knowing that the person is not entitled to vote in that election commits an offence.

A person who directly or indirectly by duress or intimidation—

(a) impedes, prevents or threatens to impede or prevent a voter from voting; or

(b) in any manner influences the result of an election, commits the offence of undue influence.

Bribery

A person who—

(a) directly or indirectly by themselves or by any other person agrees to give money or valuable as an inducement to any voter—

(i) to vote or refrain from voting for a particular candidate;

(ii) to attend or participate in or refrain from attending or participating in any political meeting, march, demonstration or other event of a political nature or in some other manner lending support to or for a political party or candidate;

(iii) corruptly does any such act on account of having voted for or refrained from voting at any election, for a particular candidate commits the offence of bribery.

Use of force or violence during election period

A person who directly or indirectly by themselves or by any other person inflicts an injury, damage, harm or loss on or against a person—

(a) so as to induce or compel that person to support a particular candidate or political party; or

(b) on account of such person having voted or refrained from voting; or

(c) in order to induce or compel that

person to vote in a particular way or refrain from voting, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs1 million or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to both.

Use of national security organs

A candidate, or any other person who uses a public officer, or the national security organs to induce or compel any person to support a particular candidate or political party commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs10million or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years or to both.

Offences relating to elections

A person who—

(a) prints, publishes, distributes or posts up

(b) makes or publishes, before or during any election, any false statement in relation to the personal character or conduct of a candidate;

(c) forges, defaces or destroys any nomination paper, or delivers to a returning officer any nomination paper knowing it to be forged;

(d) interferes with election material by removing, destroying, concealing or save on the authority of the Commission or under the provisions of this Act;

(e) directly or indirectly prints, manufactures or supplies of any election material in connection with the election save on the authority of the Commission;

(f) interferes with free political canvassing and campaigning by—

(g) using language which is threatening, abusive or insulting or engages in any kind of action which may advocate hatred, incite violence or influence the voters on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion, gender or any other ground of discrimination;

(ii) directly or indirectly, using the threat of force, violence, harassment or otherwise preventing the conduct of any political meeting, march, dem-

onstration or other event of a political nature or any other person from attending or participating therein;

(iii) creating a material disruption with the intention of preventing a political party from holding a public political meeting;

(iv) impeding or preventing or any representative of any political party from gaining access, in the manner and during the hours prescribed to voters in any particular area, whether public or private for the purposes of canvassing and campaigning and soliciting membership and support; or

(v) impeding or preventing threatening to impede or prevent a member of the Commission, a representative of the Commission or any other authorized person or organization engaged in voter education from gaining access, in the manner and during the hours prescribed, to voters in any particular area, whether public or private, for the purposes of conducting voter education.

(h) refuses or fails to give effect to a direction, instruction or lawful order issued by or on behalf of the Commission;

(i) refuses or fails to leave an election counting centre or any area designated by the Commission for electoral purposes when so ordered in accordance with this Act;

(j) enters or remains in an election centre or in any area designated by the Commission for electoral purposes in contravention of this Act;

(k) obstructs or hinders any electoral officer, candidate voting agent in the execution of their lawful duties;

(l) makes a false statement or furnishes false particulars in any statement which is required under this Act knowing the statement or particulars to be false or without reasonable grounds for believing the same to be true;

(m) with intent to affect the result of an election makes or publishes a statement purporting to be a statement of fact which is false and which the person knows to be false; com-

mits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs 500,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or both.

Use of public resources

The Act makes it illegal to use public resources during campaigns for election or a referendum.

A person who contravenes the provisions of this section commits an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding Kshs2 million or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years or to both.

A candidate, who after conviction under this section repeats the offence, stands—

(a) disqualified by the Commission and is not be eligible to participate in the ongoing election and the next election; and

(b) disqualified from holding any public office.

Campaign

A candidate, political party or any other person are barred from engaging in an election campaign except during the campaign period; or exceeding the prescribed limit for campaigning.

A person who contravenes the provision is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding Kshs 10million or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years or to both.

Limitation of political propaganda

The Act makes it illegal to supply any musical instrument or loud speaker to any person for the purpose of political propaganda during the campaign period. Those found guilty are liable to a fine not exceeding Kshs500,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to both.

Election offence by candidate or political party

The Act makes it an offence for a political party to knowingly nominate a candidate who does not meet the requirements of the Constitution. Political parties that commit the offence risk being disqualified from nominating a candidate to contest in that election or in the next election in that electoral area.

The new law provides that where the offence is discovered:

(a) after the candidate has been nominated to contest in an election, that candidate stands disqualified by the Commission and is not be eligible to contest in that election; or

(b) after the candidate has been elected, that candidate is to be disqualified by the Commission and is not be eligible to contest in the next election.

Where a political party commits an election offence which the Commission considers to be of a grave nature or continuously repeats the offence, the presidential candidate of the political party is not be eligible to vie for the presidential seat during the elections or subsequent elections as a result of any vacancy in the president's seat.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE