

Dominion Farms

The intricacies of foreign agricultural investment in the Yala swamp



SITUATED SNUGLY IN the North-eastern shore of Lake Victoria, the Yala swamp wetland is one of Kenya's biodiversity hotspots. The swamp also supports several communities that utilise the wetland's natural resources to secure their livelihoods.

Even more, many people recognise the swamp's extraordinary potential as agricultural land to significantly boost Kenya's food security. These are three widely diverse interests, which may seem to be difficult to reconcile. Yet, with proper management, sufficient investment and effective communication, a differentiated utilisation of the Yala swamp can be realised through a system of multiple land-use. This will be a difficult but certainly not unrealistic objective, argues *TIM SIEGENBEEK VAN HEUKELOM* (pictured).

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LOVE IT OR HATE IT. Dominion farms have turned Tse Tse fly infested swamps into prime harvests.

Counties to retain revenue sources

By FAITH MUIRURI

EVEN as devolution seeks to initiate a more profound impact on governance, County governments will still draw a large proportion of their revenue sources from the

traditional pool.

Counties source of revenue is expected to remain the same as what local authorities currently depend on.

This is albeit their capacity to promote social and economic development and increase access to services

as outlined in the Constitution.

Most local authorities mainly generate own revenue from property rates, single business permits, royalties, Contribution in Lieu of rates (CILOR) and entertainment taxes.

And although Section 190 (3)

clearly affirms that Parliament should enact a legislation to enable the government to intervene in the event that a county government is unable to perform its functions, scores of counties still do not have reliable sources of revenue to enable them to govern and

deliver services effectively.

Provisional profiles in the interim Task Force report on Devolved Government reveals that counties such as Garissa, Mandera, Marsabit, Narok,

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Truckers flouting axle load limits to be punished

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE Government will name and shame truck companies that flout axle load control limits.

The Kenya National Highways Director General Meshack Kidenda says the authority was concerned about abuse of axle load by trucks that deliberately carry excess tonnage and said time for action had come. "We are consulting our legal teams and other Government agencies. Once this is done, then we shall make the names public," he said.

KeNHA, he says, is working with the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA), the Kenya Police, Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission and the Judiciary to ensure that the menace of overloading is addressed once and for all.

"We have done enough lip service. The time to act is now. This impunity on our roads must stop," he said.

He said lorries will now be weighed at the port of Mombasa to ensure full

compliance and not at the designated weighbridges as has been the case in the past. "We expect resistance from those who have benefited from this vice. But we have to deal with it once and for all," he said.

Mr. Kidenda says trucks leaving the port of Mombasa will be weighed to determine compliance and those found non-compliant turned away impounded. He says truck companies, whose drivers continuously abuse axle load will be blacklisted and their licenses cancelled. "We are talking to other Government agencies. Truckers who have no intention of complying should look for other ways of eking out a living", he said.

He expressed concern that despite Government efforts to encourage self compliance, some transporters have continued to abuse axle-load with impunity.

"The time for rhetoric is over. We cannot allow a few greedy people to destroy roads that have costed the Kenyan

tax payers billions," he said.

At the same time, KeNHA has appealed to the judiciary to give stiffer penalties to transporters who abuse the law. He said some fines meted out by the courts were lenient and said there was a need to appoint special prosecutors to reign in these crooks.

"We are exploring ways of re-training special prosecutors to deal with this matter. It is a matter of great concern to the safety of road users," he said. He, however, noted that some transporters have complied with the stipulated axle load.

The new measures to enforce axle load is part of the reforms driven by the Government. It entails phasing manual inspection of vehicles by officers from the ministry of Roads and installs new computerized scales to remove manual ones.

Effectively, this will ensure that recommended axle weights on Kenya's highways are complied with to elimi-

nate collusion between officers manning these outlets and bulk transporters.

At the same time, the Government has contracted three companies to man Kenya's weighbridges in a bid to improve efficiency and congestion.

The three firms will begin operations by mid this month, as part of the World Bank and Government of Kenya driven road reforms.

It is understood that the ongoing major infrastructural development being undertaken by the Government are pegged on the effective management of axle load as stipulated by the Traffic Act and enforced by the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA).

To avoid collusion and enhance effectiveness to axle load, the contractor manning Mariakani weighbridge will have its work audited by the Mlolongo based contractor, who in turn will be checked by Gilgil.

In total, there are 13 weighbridges in Kenya, five of them fixed and the rest

portable. They are mounted at Mariakani, Athi River, Gilgil, Webuye and Isebania. The portable ones are stationed at Juja, Mai Mahiu, Eldoret, Malaba, Kisumu, Isinya and Mtwapa.

The role of the weighbridges is to ensure compliance to permitted axle load limits and gross vehicle weights for drivers, truck and bulk liquid tankers and loaders. This intervention will end collusion between various state agents based at weighbridges, ensure compliance, inculcate efficiency and effectively eradicate corruption.

Axle load is the recommended weight on tonnage of vehicles that ply various roads in Kenya. Different sections of roads have different tonnages. Weighbridges are used to ensure compliance to these.

Carrying excess load in trucks is the biggest contributor to the destruction of roads. Axle load control is recognized as a critical aspect of road operation and maintenance.

Counties to retain revenue sources

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Samburu, Tharaka-Nithi and Wajir hardly generate any revenue from the property tax.

This means that Garissa County which is slated to serve four constituencies will heavily rely on Kshs7,706 currently generated from the single business permit from its three local authorities. Similarly, Mandera County with three constituencies will largely depend on Kshs2,446,430 from its two local authorities while the Kshs 6,086,948 generated from the single business permits by the two councils in Marsabit will support the constituencies under the County (see table)

The Counties of Nyamira and Makueni also rank poorly in terms of revenue collection with a paltry Kshs 475,783 being generated from the four local authorities that make Nyamira County and Makueni's three local authorities managing a mere Kshs 478,566 from property tax.

According to the Task Force report, Nairobi which currently generates about Kshs.1,773,629,923 from property tax and other counties with more own revenue will receive more once the county structures become fully operational.

Counties that rank highly with Nairobi include Mombasa with income from property taxes accounting for Kshs.457,182,230 followed by Uasin Gishu with a property tax of Kshs.130,994,966 and Nakuru's Kshs.113,925,889 respectively.

Another notable feature in the report is Machakos County which generates a remarkable Kshs.105,293,008 from property tax as compared to Kisumu County which manages only Kshs.80,476,720.

Other stunning revelations in the report point to both Kiambu and Kakamega County which have been ranked among the largest in the country. Kiambu for instance with nine constituencies and eight local authorities generates Kshs.90,104,874 while Kakamega with nine constituencies

and six local authorities has a property tax of Kshs.23,562,853.

The report proposes that the envisaged legislation on County taxation should cover rating, valuation for rating, the criteria, steps and procedures for tax or fees calculation, tax collection procedures and should also specify the sanctions for non-compliance.

The report says that rating of properties in urban areas and cities should be based on both the improved and unimproved site values.

The report compiled by a task force headed by Mutakha Khangu further un-

derscores the need to legislate against exemptions for payment of rates, as this had previously served to deny local authorities substantial revenues.

"The law should instead require all the National Government institutions, Independent Commissions, Independent Offices, State Corporations and Non-State Institutions to budget and pay rates due to their respective County Governments," read the report in part. This, according to the report will result in the discontinuation of the contribution in lieu of rates (CILOR) system currently in operation due to its

ineffectiveness.

Possible additional taxes that counties can be allowed to levy under the envisaged legislation include Royalty taxes levied on minerals and other natural resources within the county. These would include minerals, game reserves, forestry and marine.

Article 66(2) obliges parliament, while regulating the use of land, to enact legislation that ensures that investment in property benefit local communities and their economies. Counties can impose charges and fees for its services and the legislation envisaged

under Article 209 (3) should provide a clear framework of how this can be done.

Fees and charges that counties can charge include: agricultural cess, livestock fees, house rents, market rents and fees, single business permits fees, traditional brew permits fees, service delivery charges, road maintenance levy, parking fees, rent for conference halls, county parks and related facilities, environmental conservation tax, anti-dumping taxes, charges and fees from public-private partnerships such as concessions, management contracts, leases, build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) build operate transfer (BOT) and build-own-operate (BOO) schemes; amongst others.

The report calls for the formulation and implementation of credible debt management strategies, in order to reduce excessive levels of debt and to ensure public sector indebtedness are maintained on a sustainable path. "Public debt management is the process of establishing and implementing a strategy and plan for managing a county government's debt in order to raise the required amount of funding and the achievement of desired risk, cost objectives and goals," adds the report.

The national government will assist in the establishment of county governments in three years. Article 190 (1) mandates Parliament to enact a law that will ensure that county governments have adequate support to enable them perform their functions

Further Article 190 (4) places an obligation on the part of the national government to take appropriate steps to ensure that the county government's functions are performed and that it operates a financial management system that complies with the prescribed requirements.

The task force mandate includes advising the government on policy and legal frameworks of devolving power, resources and responsibilities for effective local development.

The counties in the constitution will have to be primed to yield functional development for the estimated 64 million Kenyans in the year 2030.

County	Constituencies (No.)	Local Authorities (No.)	Total Pop. '09	Area in Sq. Km.	No. of Pop.	Pop. Density	Power	Property Tax	SRP	
Baringo	5	4	422,372	6,498.5	360,634	5,275.8	65.0	46.2	3,471,056	34,181,137
Bomet	5	4	585,072	1,592.3	499,456	8,528.8	367.4	56.3	9,252,396	36,781,355
Bungoma	6	9	1,375,063	3,082.2	1,098,590	27,634.4	453.5	62.3	17,824,412	49,071,714
Bururi	5	7	743,946	1,695.0	624,041	11,900.5	438.9	66.8	6,231,367	23,841,175
Embu	4	5	516,212	2,818.0	443,342	7,200.0	183.2	56.4	8,562,304	37,041,036
Garissa	6	6	366,420	1,369.9	307,327	5,929.3	313.4	32.7	4,086,713	6,841,030
Isiolo	2	3	143,204	25,361.1	90,487	5,287.7	5.7	52.4	1,306,837	1,546,200
Malindi	2	5	687,312	21,901.0	475,785	21,154.7	31.4	47.5	26,14,130	39,215,088
Mandera	3	5	897,463	3,368.0	632,538	26,493.5	267.3	46.3	18,351,035	21,634,904
Marsabit	5	6	1,109,735	12,609.7	838,594	27,114.4	68.0	67.3	60,336,373	49,142,072
Mt Kenya	4	5	528,024	1,479.1	444,630	8,340.4	357.0	51.9	7,946,310	49,841,067
Mt Witu	7	10	1,030,212	1,855.6	800,084	23,021.1	891.5	66.0	12,072,280	34,318,035
Mt Longonot	6	35	1,012,709	30,496.5	923,146	8,956.7	33.2	61.8	4,305,093	46,781,982
Muramba	3	3	649,081	8,270.2	545,889	10,406.2	78.6	66.3	12,119,800	13,946,302
Nairobi	2	5	399,227	946.19	319,489	7,976.8	42.2	56.5	36,021,009	36,318,003
Lamu	2	2	101,529	6,271.1	81,311	2,028.8	16.2	46.4	8,004,965	3,941,024
Machakos	6	8	1,096,384	6,208.2	579,236	14,930.0	177.0	60.5	10,292,008	36,711,173
Machakos	5	9	884,527	8,008.7	790,386	9,413.1	110.4	60.4	47,636	26,518,123
Makueni	4	4	369,908	3,088.6	316,370	5,368.8	122.1	46.6	2,515,038	6,118,440
Makueni	7	8	1,591,523	8,085.5	1,152,089	23,053.4	198.3	50.7	11,325,394	33,049,401
Makueni	5	7	1,131,623	3,059.1	874,368	25,724.1	309.3	56.2	1,226,333	22,081,767
Mandera	4	4	939,370	21.89	819,370	49,911.4	46.2	457,822,330	268,131,395	
Mandera	6	8	967,717	2,433.3	778,844	14,793.3	434.4	34.1	9,009,928	12,034,469
Mandera	8	9	3,514,612	3,739.7	274,369.0	3,340,244	942.3	46.8	1,778,629,983	632,081,752
Nakuru	6	9	1,227,082	4,460.5	724,252	20,263.0	275.1	46.5	13,858,889	19,638,704
Narok	4	5	752,065	2,884.2	679,645	7,335.0	261.1	46.0	9,237,412	34,718,060
Nyamira	3	4	720,322	1,361.3	601,736	11,654.4	678.7	49.2	47,532	6,501,466
Nyamira	4	7	596,388	3,245.3	488,231	10,803.7	183.7	46.2	6,009,098	41,601,254
Nyeri	6	8	693,358	3,337.1	529,082	16,447.6	207.8	39.0	22,185,961	38,428,813
West Pokot	3	4	645,079	13,006.2	607,808	3,897.6	47.2	55.2	9,567,070	6,594,006
Siaya	5	6	842,304	2,500.4	731,446	11,986.0	332.9	30.8	2,309,444	25,311,079
Taita / Taveta	4	4	284,057	17,084.0	213,734	7,092.3	16.7	56.9	5,495,467	17,101,989
Taita / Taveta	3	3	240,075	38,409.9	208,732	3,136.3	6.2	66.5	4,095,554	1,918,120
Trans Nzoia	3	3	1,093,289	5,353.9	952,967	14,022.2	204.2	47.6	15,220,061	26,121,813
Turkana	3	6	930,595	107,883.3	840,236	9,031.7	8.6	61.5	0	6,218,300
Wajir	4	4	554,622	50.09	401,138	15,352.0	1046.7	65.6	1,466,462	14,914,063
Wajir	2.20	2.86	275	36,420.87	582,303	27,986.68	11,524.67	2,542	1,228,748.83	2,582,737.86

Knut piles pressure on state over salaries

By JOEL JUMA

TEACHERS from Kakamega County want the remaining 20 per cent salary increment factored in the Budget.

The teachers have asked the Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut), to pile pressure on the Government to honor the salary increments.

They further asked acting secretary general Osiany Okuta to write to the minister for education Sam Ongeru to demand a 100 per cent hike in house allowance.

"We want the national office to assure teachers that they will get their 20 per cent salary increment by next month so that fresh negotiations can begin," said the union's Kakamega County secretary John Wesonga.

Wesonga said teachers house allowance should be raised from the current Kshs1,500 to Kshs3,000 to ease their suffering in the wake of the rising inflation.

"Majority of teachers are staying in kiosks because their a house allowances are peanuts," claimed Wesonga.

He said that the Government may not achieve policies of Vision 2030 because education sector has not been given priority.

He explained that delays in disbursement of Free Primary Education funds and lack of adequate teachers in schools compromises the quality of education.

Wesonga was speaking in a Kakamega hotel during elections of the County representatives. Wesonga captured the post of County Secretary while Kakamega East District executive Secretary Patrick Chungani was elected the County Chairman.

Butere Knut branch treasurer Patricia Ashilaka was elected the County treasurer while the Kakamega South District executive secretary Achedias Liyayi was elected to the post of Assistant County executive secretary.

Kakamega Central District branch executive secretary Laden Wakhisi will represent the teachers on the Kakamega Teachers Benevolent Fund while Douglas Akweya of Kakamega East District was seconded to the Kakamega Teachers Savings and Credit Cooperative Society.

Wesonga and Chungani said the national office should also push Ongeru to ensure the Budget includes funds to cater for the employment of nursery schools teachers.

"Okuta and his team will be seeking to be confirmed in this year's national elections but they must prove by putting the interest of teachers first before assuming the offices," said Wesonga.

Emuhaya Knut branch executive secretary Wycliffe Omucheyi has already declared that he will run for the post of second vice chairman during the national elections.

Omucheyi said he wants to contest for the seat to fill the gap left by the retirement of former national chairman George Wesonga.

Cash for school feeding program disbursed, says Ongeru

By HENRY OWINO

THE government has disbursed close to Kshs.800 million directly to schools to purchase food for 538,000 children under the Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) initiative over the last two years.

Education Minister Prof. Sam Ongeru says that most beneficiaries under the new initiative were previously under the regular school feeding program supported by the government and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Another Kshs.464 million will soon be disbursed to schools to mitigate against drought which is being experienced currently in the some parts of the country and will benefit 1.1 million vulnerable children.

According to the Minister, the new programme is an intervention proposed by the Millennium Hunger Task force as a quick win in the fight against poverty and hunger. It is further recognized by the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) as a key to food security intervention within the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP)

Prof. Ongeru who spoke during the Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) added that Kenya's Home Grown school feeding program had registered impressive results with enrolment figures in ASAL areas going up by fifty per cent.

Prof. Ongeru said the ministries of Education and Public Health and Sanitation launched the school health policy that provides a legal framework for implementation of Comprehensive School Health programs and recognizes the role the schools play and can play in enhancing the health of children.

He reaffirmed government's commitment in investing in Education Sector in order to increase access, retention, equity and transition rates from Primary to Secondary levels and achieve the



Education minister Prof. Sam Ongeru (left) and his PS Prof. James Ole Kiyiapi. Photo/Henry Owino

Education for All (EFA) goals by the year 2015 in conformity with International Declaration and conventions.

Agriculture Secretary, Dr. Wilson Songa, said the main advantage of the Home Grown Feeding program was that food sourced locally could provide a strong incentive to the local farmers to produce and sell to schools and get good returns.

"Local schools in return, can offer farmers impressive market prices for their produce, encourage them to improve on their production levels and also obtain credit for further development," Dr. Songa said.

In his key note presentation; Dr Song emphasized that Kenya's experience in linking school feeding to small holder Agriculture is under the 'Njaa Marufuku' Kenya Programme, (eradication of hunger programme) that was started in 2006 by the agriculture sector which has since then been a collaboration of ministries of Edu-

cation and Health, targeting high poverty areas with potential to grow food.

Dr. Wairimu Muita, a program manager, with an International NGO-Partnership for Child Development said she conducted a baseline survey that revealed that the Home Grown concept was a success story in most of the schools.

Delegates present represented countries like Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Zambia, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Chad, Rwanda, Madagascar, Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Tanzania, Botswana, Ethiopia, Liberia, Uganda and Kenya being the host country.

Ms Gene White the president of Global Child Nutrition Foundation {GCNF} told participants that her organization works with a range of organizations that are committed to ending child hunger. The partners include US Federal government agencies such as USAID, private foundations

such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and a host of corporate and individual contributors.

Prof James Ole Kiyiapi who addressed the conference said Universal Primary Education cannot be achieved with a hungry population. He called upon the countries represented to ensure that school meals are provided in the most sustainable way.

"You are all aware when the school meals are linked to local agricultural production, the program can benefit local farmers and producers by generating a stable, structured, and predictable demand for their products thereby building the local market," Prof Kiyiapi said.

The Home Grown School Meals initiative in Kenya was developed along the NEPAD in 2009 at a time when the World Food Programme could no longer support the high number of pupils in the regular school feeding programme due to high cost of food and transport.

Bahari schools lay plans for e-learning

By BEKADZO TONDO

SIX secondary schools in Bahari constituency are set for the launch of the highly anticipated e-learning programme in the country following a donation of computers valued at Kshs28 million.

The schools which include Lutsangani and St. Teresa Secondary schools in Chonyi division, Msumarini and Bahari Girls in Kikambala division and Kilifi township and Chumani secondary

schools in Bahari division have received 15 computers and 15 laptops each from Shamrock Development company in Ireland.

The company's Executive Director in Kenya Mr. Stephen Kalinga, says the computers will prepare the students for the highly competitive job market.

Mr Kalinga said the company will also service the machines to make them functional for the benefit of the students.

The director said his organi-

zation was running the program with support from the area MP as a way of ensuring close monitoring of the computers.

Bahari MP Benedict Fondo Gunda said the donors came in after the government sponsored e-learning program flopped due to logistical problems.

He thanked Shamrock Development company for the timely gesture and appealed to other well wishers to help equip local schools with computers.

The principals of the benefiting schools led Mr Simon Beja of Lutsangani secondary thanked the donor for the timely donation of the computer sets.

Mr Beja however said his school was in dire need of additional classrooms to cater for increased number of students.

He said he had approached Bahari CDF office for funds to put up more classrooms and a computer lab and said the school hopes to get the funds.

Let only good people manage CDF

THE introduction of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) kitty in 2003 was greeted with enthusiasm by Kenyans.

It ignited great interest among people at the grassroots because they were for the first time allowed to decide their development priorities. The noble initiative credited to the then Ol'kalou MP Eng. Muriuki Karue was unanimously endorsed by parliament to pave way for the CDF Act 2003 and the subsequent CDF Amendment Act 2007.

Kenyans across the country have since used the CDF kitty to build schools, health facilities, water projects, roads and to conserve the environment among other community projects.

Development has been spread out in all parts of the country including areas that have previously been marginalized by the KANU regime. However, Kenyans are bound to benefit more from the CDF and other devolved monies if people entrusted with the funds are of high integrity and politics is kept away from the management of the funds.

Beneficiaries should also be knowledgeable about utilization of funds and expected impact on their social-economic development. Currently, people at the grassroots are not involved in the identification, prioritization and implementation processes.

The MPs and their sycophants set up the projects without involving the community purposely to provide avenues to loot taxpayers money with impunity.

Since the inception of CDF in 2003, there have been alleged cases of corruption and wastage of the funds by people entrusted with the money and who are normally the MPs' diehard supporters and even concubines. Consequently, Eng. Muriuki's initiative to address inequalities in development across the country has been hampered by people entrusted with the devolved funds and lack of community participation.

The MPs' excessive power to hand-pick people to manage the funds without due regard to integrity and their capacity to effectively handle the funds has led to improper utilization of the funds.

In Kanduyi constituency for instance, the recent audit of CDF projects by the National Taxpayers' Association (NTA) speaks volumes about projects funded by public funds. The NTA's revelations have exposed the rot that revolves around the former and present political leadership as area residents equally blame both regimes for the mess.

Current area MP, Alfred Khang'ati's bid to exonerate himself from the NTA's report is being received with mixed reactions from the constituents. Some residents dismiss the MP's recent meeting at

COMMENT

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

Bungoma County Hall with the stakeholders and NTA National Co-ordinator Mr. Kizito Wangalwa as a fiasco.

They claim that the meeting was a public relations gimmick aimed at diverting the constituents' attention away from the current mess in the CDF Office.

A group of constituents that has been monitoring CDF expenditure is categorical that Khang'ati's CDFC is the worst in terms of corruption and service delivery.

The group led by Lumumba Wekesa and Philip Wekesa adds that the present CDFC lack best practices in terms of integrity, professionalism, commitment, procurement and accountability.

To lend credence to the claims, Lumumba handed a memorandum to Khang'ati seeking clarifications on a number of projects the group feels they are being used or were used to siphon money by the CDFC. The memo reads in Part, "We think it is unfair and dishonest to try and deviate efforts in pursuit of the truth given that there are many anomalies and incidents of impropriety affecting the

Kanduyi CDF as we know it to today".

The group's bone of contention is the money allocated to three health facilities, group/ organizations involved in the protection of the environment, cattle dips, bridges/ roads and sports activities.

Under bridges/roads and sports activities it is alleged that one of the CDFC members was paid of Kshs. 1,142,000 from the CDF kitty under unclear circumstances. Another CDFC member is also alleged to have been paid Kshs. 100,000 under the bridges and roads expenditure still under unclear circumstances.

The Kshs. 300,000 disbursed to Khaoya cattle dip is also reported to have been misappropriated with a senior CDFC member walking away Kshs. 80,000. First allocation of Kshs. 200,000 to Musikoma dispensary cannot be accounted for. The current CDFC treasurer pastor Godfrey Nyongesa is alleged to have walked away with Kshs. 162,000.

Pastor Nyongesa is reported to have presented somebody to the project management committee who he introduced as a contractor and ordered the PMC to pay him Kshs. 162,000 before the commencement of the work. After signing for and receiving the money, the contractor is alleged to have given the money to pastor Nyongesa to invest in business and asked to go underground.

When the PMC chair Mr. James Wekesa met the contractor in Webuye and asked him why he disappeared with the project money, the contractor is reported to have told him that he could not start work because the money went with pastor Nyongesa.

Mr. Wekesa and his entire committee members were sacked by the CDFC when he disclosed that he had actually met with the contractor who insisted that he could only start work after being paid back the money by the CDF C treasurer.

Most PMCs confirm that issues of kickbacks and unprocedural procurement processes are rife in Kanduyi CDFC. CDFC members coerce the PMCs to give them 15 per cent of the money allocated to the projects with impunity. The most notorious one is reported to have bought a pickup through coercion, and embezzlement of project funds through shoddy work or exaggerated costing.

Now Kanduyi constituents want the area MP to sack the present CDFC and constitute a new one.

If what has been brought forth does not amount to corruption of the highest order, then what can people say is happening?

Can the MP turn around and blame it on his political opponents when indeed indications are clear that his CDFC has embarked on a looting spree?

Shoddy work blamed for loses by schools

By KAVYU-KURA

MWINGI South Member of Parliament David Musila has attributed the Kshs10 million infrastructural losses incurred by three schools during a storm in Ukasi area in his constituency to poor workmanship by builders.

The MP who is also the Defense Assistant Minister lamented that shoddy work resulted in the destruction of vital structures at Ukasi Girls' and Ukasi Boys' secondary schools as well as Ukasi primary school which were brought down by strong winds.

"I do not want you to give building contracts to mediocre contractors who will do shoddy jobs that will lead to huge losses. Go for experts who can do superb and viable work," said Musila during a recent meeting at Ukasi primary school.

Musila who had earlier toured all the damaged infrastructure at the three institutions at one point directed the Principal of Ukasi Girl's school Jemimah Mutia to ask a contractor who was putting up a dormitory at the school to redo parts of the project at his own cost.

"This is the reason why at times I am against local contractors who claim to have a wealth of experience in building skyscrapers in Nairobi but end up doing inexplicably awful work," said the MP as he advocated for proper vetting of contractors

to ensure quality work

"You can understand what I am talking about by looking at the structures that were left standing in this school when the strong winds came blowing. It is because of the good quality of the workmanship and that is the way to go," Musila told the crowd of parents at Ukasi primary.

Remonstrating that the Kshs10 million losses was astronomical, Mr. Musila however said that his Constituency Development Fund (CDF) kitty would fund some rehabilitation works in the three schools to ensure learning was normalized.

"I do not want to see our children learning in unfavorable environment. Through CDF and in conjunction with the Ministry of Education I will do whatever is possible to ensure the damaged infrastructure is rehabilitated," pledged Mr. Musila.

He noted that smooth and quality learning at the primary level was vital as well as transition to secondary schools. He said it was thus the reason why he placed a lot of emphasis on well equipped secondary schools locally.

Musila also donated a cheque of Kshs280,000 to oversee the rehabilitation of a number Ukasi primary school classrooms that were ripped off by strong winds. He also added that 100 desks for the school being made at a cost of Kshs100,000 would be delivered soon.



David Musila, Mwingi South MP, is assisted to lift a timber plank to ascertain his claims that a wall of a dormitory under construction at Ukasi Girls' Secondary School was shoddily done and should be pulled down. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

VP advise Scott College on curricula

By PETER MUTUKU

VICE President Kalonzo Musyoka has urged the Scott Theological Colleges to diversify their curriculum in order to meet the high demand for higher education.

Mr Musyoka lauded faith based organizations for promoting educational activities in the country, pointing out that their involvement has made provision of higher education competitive and prompted stakeholders to expand educational institutions to meet the high demand.

Speaking during the 46 annual graduation ceremony at the Scott Theological College in Machakos, Mr Musyoka urged the institution to develop courses that will help students understand the psychology of people better and deepen their Christian faith.

"Once that happens, Kenya will cease being lumped as part of the African continent where Christianity is said to wide yet too shallow," the VP said.

He told the Christians that the epitome of God's exemplary leadership was in Christ himself and manifested in nothing but service to the Almighty.

"In a world of warped priorities, it is the Scott Theological colleges of our time that carry the burden of rerouting leadership back to the premise of service so that we build an abiding culture of true servant leadership," he said.

Mr. Musyoka called upon the graduands, especially those who studied theology and Christian education, to reflect as much on what they can do with Christianity even as they reflect on what Christianity can do for them.

He said there is need for theological colleges to focus more on how best to equip learners so that they become outstanding agents of change. Present were AIC Bishop Silas Yego and MPs Peter Kiilu (Makueni) and Daniel Muoki (Mwala).

Pre-school teachers graduate in Nyeri

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) wants the Government to employ all nursery school teachers within their own scheme of service.

Nyeri branch KNUT chairman Mr Karinga Munuhe said this will help streamline the early childhood education programme which was currently infiltrated by untrained personnel.

The official spoke at Nyeri Vineyard ECD College where 130 pre-school teachers graduated.

About 111 teachers were awarded diploma certificates while 20 were awarded with certificates after undergoing Early Childhood Education (ECD) training in a colourful ceremony held at St Mary Boys High School grounds recently.

The Director of Kenyatta University- Nyeri Campus Prof Wangari Mwai was the chief guest during the 5th graduation ceremony.

Prof Wangari said that Kenyatta University is opening doors across the country in Mombasa, Nyeri, Nakuru, Kitui, Kisumu and Nyeri campuses where the university is offering courses of Early Childhood Education.



The Director of Kenyatta University- Nyeri Campus Prof Wangari Mwai (right) accompanied by officials of Nyeri Vineyard ECD College arrives for the graduation ceremony held at St Mary Boys High School. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

"We are also ready to waive credits for those who perform well in their

diploma programmes. At the Nyeri campus, Institutional Based Programmes (holiday classes) begin in August for diploma and degree students," she added.

The director however noted that the preschool teachers are the most disheartened due to the prevailing conditions of unemployment, poor pay, diseases that affect the young ones especially in the cold season.

"For the number of years you have undergone, this training, you have been empowered with knowledge and skills on how to handle and teach young children. Time has come when you will have to apply this knowledge for the benefit of the child," She advised them.

The college was started in year 2005 with only 18 students, 15 Diploma and three in certificate with only two teachers and currently the college has eleven lecturers.

Vineyard College currently runs two programmes which include the Pre-Service Training Programmes which follow the normal school calen-

dar with entries in January, May and September of every year.

The other one is undertaken in an In-Service Training Programme which takes place during the normal school holidays with the main intake in April and a second intake in August of every year.

"Vineyard was among the first few colleges to offer the same country-wide. These made our first graduates leaving the college with a diploma in ECDE. Notably, this was the first time the course was examined by KNEC," said the principal Mrs Magdalene Githinji.

The college has witnessed steady growth and since its inception, the college has graduated a total of 338 diploma and certificate students.

In line with their motto, 'Education is Power' the college plans to diversify into guidance and counseling as well as Human Resource Development and Management Training.

The principal advised the graduands to better themselves and the community they serve.



An ECD teacher Mrs Mary Baragu is congratulated by her husband Mr Baragu Mutahi after she graduated during the 5th graduation ceremony of Nyeri Vineyard ECD College. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

State will only waive fees for arid schools — Olweny

By BOSCO MAGARE

THE Government school fees waiver will only cater for learning institutions in arid and semi-arid areas.

Assistant Minister for Education Prof. Ayiecho Olweny says only schools in arid and semi-arid areas of the country are to benefit from the government waiver on school fees.

Olweny singles out schools in North Eastern province, Eastern province, Coast

Province and parts of Rift Valley province as some of those slated to benefit from waiver.

In a telephone interview with The Link, Ayiecho also clarified that the government waiver

guidelines do not cover schools in well-endowed parts of the country.

Well-endowed parts of the country include Central province, Western province, Nairobi province and largely Nyanza province.

The Assistant Minister for Education confirms that the government is already extending school fees waiver to learning institutions in arid and semi-arid areas.

"Only schools in these areas are currently being supported by the government school fee waiver," Ayiecho says.

The government waiver on school fees waiver was announced by Prime Minister Raila

Odinga during the PM's briefing session in Parliament.

Raila pointed out that the waiver is supposed to benefit schools and learning institutions in drought stricken parts of the country.

The government move therefore is intended to cushion parents with children in schools in these arid and semi-arid regions which suffered massive crop failure and livestock loss during the drought that recently engulfed the country.

Ayiecho's clarification on the government school fees guidelines comes in the wake of confusion among stakeholders in the country's education sector who considered the government

school fees waiver meant to cover schools countrywide.

A section of Education stakeholders and parents in flood-prone parts of the country like Garsen in Coast province, Nyando, Nyakach and parts of Muhoroni in Nyanza province who experience perennial crop failure and livestock loss due to flooding have nonetheless appealed to the government to extend the school fees waiver to their regions.

Thomas Liech, a resident says flooding in parts of the area and the recent drought has equally reduced parents' economic muscle in the area adding that "the government should consider our plight too."



Prof. Olweny

Mt. Elgon residents vow to keep peace

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

COMMUNITIES living in Mt. Elgon region have vowed to embrace peace and shed off suspicion and rivalry.

Local leaders who attended a peace meeting organized by Peace and Rights Programme of the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya at Mabanga Agricultural Training Centre, in Bungoma County, resolved not to allow conflict to recur.

The over 250 delegates drawn from the Bok, Somek, Sabiny, Ogiek, Kony and Bongomek clans pledged to embrace peace and shed off suspicion and rivalry. The Peace Rights Programme Coordinator, Mr. Festus Mukoya, asked the community not to allow the region to degenerate into violence of the magnitude that left the region in ruins because of deep rooted hatred and suspicions.

Mr. Mukoya said the community should seek long-term solutions to the causes of the conflicts that have hit the region since independence. "Some skeletons of innocent souls who perished in the bloody violence remain unburied today," he said.

He said the region had witnessed clashes from 1963 and the recent 2007-2008 violence.

The official attributed the conflicts to unequal development, limited access to natural resources, especially land. He challenged residents to think of the loss of life, shattered economy, deep rooted mistrust and disunity among the Sabaot sub-tribes that led to the blood-bath. The conference brought together political leaders, elders, church ministers and professionals. Participants decried the breakdown in social-cultural values that had for long held the community as a unit.

Patrick Ndiwa Boiyo said the calamities that had been experienced by the community were due to failure by traditional seers to predict looming disasters. Mr. Boiyo claimed some prophets had mingled with ordinary people, leading to loss of spiritual power. By vying for political leadership, Mr. Boi-

yo said the prophets had abused their spiritual gift and failed to provide guidance during times of calamities.

He said bride price had been abused with no standardized amount of dowry a suitor is expected to pay. He said some parents were demanding for the settlement of the price rather than a token of appreciation.

Mr. Boiyo said while communities in Kaptama paid 16 head of cattle, those in Cheptais were paying nine cows for bride price. The dowry governed by cultural aspects used to be uniform among the Sabaots.

The Kalenjini Council of Elders chairman, Army Major (retired) Seii was the chief moderator assisted by Bungoma KUPPET chairman, Mr. Hillary Bokose.

The Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya Deputy National Overseer, Mr. Gabriel Ouma, who is the Nyam-

bane church minister, said the summit should seek healing of Mt. Elgon region residents. He said the organization had rehabilitated over 400 Sabaot Land Defense Forces fighters, adding that traditional ceremonies was an integral part of healing and reintegration of combatants back to society.

Mr. Mukoye said to achieve healing and reconciliation, psycho-social intervention was key in helping groups and individuals deal with post-trauma effects. He asked the Sabaot community to unite if they wished to bargain for equitable share in Bungoma and Trans Nzoia County resources.

A former assistant minister, Mr. Wilberforce Kisiero, said the Kalenjini had a common ancestry and condemned the violence that has been witnessed in the region.

A former assistant minister and immediate former Mt. Elgon MP, Mr.

John Serut, said conflict among members of the Sabaot community had been caused by failure to observe cultural values that held the community together.

He called for a task force to be put in place to advise on positive cultural practices and the rejection of aspects that undermine unity. The conference called for ways of dealing with challenges associated with the proliferation of light weapons in the region. They recommended a voluntary disarmament programme led by community elders.

Human rights and the distribution of resources among the Sabaot sub-tribes have been identified as a key setback to the realization of lasting peace in Mt. Elgon.

The meeting suggested that residents should be sensitized on the need to elect focused and visionary leaders so as to achieve Vision 2030 goals.



A contingent of Kenya Army soldiers drive into troubled areas affected by the post-election violence that had been orchestrated by SDF militia. Photo/File

Leaders decry poor performance of Kisii girls in exams

By BOB OMBATI

KISII Central District Education Officer, Martin Mwalo has decried the low standards of education in the area and urged students to work hard to excel in their national examinations.

Addressing Kereri Girls high school students during prize giving day at the school, Mwalo challenged the learners to shun negative peer influence and work hard to realize their dreams.

He said the transition rate for the girl-child from primary level to secondary schools in the area was 92 percent, above the national average rated at 70 percent and asked teachers and parents to mould the students holistically to make them better citizens.

"We want everybody to sacrifice and support the students morally, spiritually and materially to aid them pass their national examination," said the DEO.

St. Joseph Rapogi high school Principal, Thomas Kogolla deplored poor results posted by the girl-child in Nyanza province during the national examinations.

Kogolla noted that no girl from the province was ranked among the top 10 nationally in last year's Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), and urged stakeholders to jointly map out strategies to reverse the trend.

He said that education was key to poverty eradication and advised female students to consult their teachers and parents to overcome hurdles that afflict them in order to perform well like their male counterparts in other schools.

The school's Principal, Esther Ong'ondi said that teachers, parents and students have set targets for this year, saying that the school has started a programme to reward teachers who register impressive results in their respective subjects.

Mary Mogute, a lecturer at Daystar University told parents to support teachers, students and equip schools with basic facilities to enhance better performance in national examinations.

Pastor Eric Opingo, who was the chief guest, urged parents to accord equal opportunities to both girls and boys.

KPA records sharp growth

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE port of Mombasa recorded an impressive performance in 2010 with the facility registering significant growth in almost all the market segments. The port registered traffic growth in container traffic, exports, and transit and transshipment during the year under review.

Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) managing director Gichiri Ndua, almost announced that the total exports increased by 5.1 per cent while transshipment rose by 50.4 per cent.

"I am glad to announce that our transit market also recorded a significant growth in traffic with a total of 5.4 million tones handled through the port in 2010 up from 5.0 million tones in 2009, representing a growth of 8.0 per cent" said Mr. Ndua.

He noted that Uganda which accounts for almost 70 per cent of the transit traffic registered a 6.3 per cent growth with a total of 4.2 million tones of its cargo passing through Mombasa in 2010 compared to 4.0 per cent the previous year. The new and emerging market of South Sudan has registered a growth of 33.5 per cent during the year under review.

Mr. Ndua who was with chief operations officer Eng. Joseph Atonga, harbour master Twalib Khamis, finan-

cial controller Catherine Mturi and corporate development manager Mwanamaka Mbaruki attributed the good performance to the improved efficiency with the acquisition of new equipment and continued rolling out of newer and updated information communication technology.

Mr. Ndua said in maritime operations, the ship turn-round time increased

to 4.0 days in 2010 from 3.6 days registered in 2009 due to the ongoing rehabilitation of berths 16-18 and the increased number of bigger container vessels served at the terminal. He said KPA has lined up a number of projects towards vital infrastructure investment and equipment upgrading to expand capacity to accommodate future growth.

"The upgrading include purchase of

three ship-to-shore gantries, two mobile harbour cranes, 10 terminal tractors and 4 reach stackers from China," said Mr. Ndua. "The projects are geared towards creating more capacity and improving efficiency."

He said piracy along the Somalia Coast and the Gulf of Aden forcing Mombasa-bound containers to be transhipped to South Africa, the recent devastating tsunami in Japan and the Arab revolt, are unique challenges to the port operations.

Kakamega leaders fume over schools

By JOEL JUMA

LEADERS from Kakamega County are furious over rejection of their proposals on schools they wanted to be elevated to national status.

Led by an assistant minister Manjala Keya, Mumias MP Ben Washiali, Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) and Kenya Secondary Schools Headteachers Association (KSSHA), the leaders said they did not propose Kakamega High School for elevation.

They said the Government should collect fresh views from education stakeholders before implementing the proposals to curb conflicts.

"We never proposed Kakamega

High School during the District Education Board meeting," said Keya who is Gender and Children Affairs assistant minister.

Keya and Emuhaya Knut branch executive secretary Wycliffe Omucheyi and KSSHA Western branch committee member Hezekiah Akango said they had proposed St Peter's Mumias High School and Butere Girls for elevation.

Keya and Rev Akang'o said it would be unfair for schools in Mumias, Butere, Khwisero and Matungu districts to be excluded from elevation whereas Bungoma County has been given two chances.

Kakamega County is the second

largest in the country and requires more consideration," said Keya who is the Lurambi MP.

Keya said he was shocked that the Government had reduced funding for schools set to be elevated from the initial Kshs30 million to Kshs25 million.

St Peter's Mumias High school Principal Godfrey Owuori expressed concern that schools from Butere/Mumias districts were excluded from first phase of the programme.

Bishop Ben Salala of Mumias ACK Diocese faulted the Ministry of Education for not consulting local leaders.

"We are being discriminated because as a church, none of our schools

was chosen for elevation," said Salala, who was speaking in Mumias town.

Salala said the Government should have picked on district schools for elevation.

He explained that local students would be locked out from joining Kakamega, Bunyore, Friends School Kamusinga and Lugulu girls after their elevation.

He asked Education Minister Sam Ongeru to set aside slots for students from local schools arguing that the quarter system should not be overlooked during Form One selection.

Omucheyi said Vihiga County should have had two schools elevated not just Bunyore Girls.

Government waives coffee debts

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Government has waived debts amounting to billions of shillings owed by coffee farmers who are affiliated in the nine rural Saccos in the country.

Thousands of coffee farmers are set to benefit from the waiver according to the letter written by Finance PS Joseph Kinyua.

The Saccos which have received the letter from Treasury includes Taifa Sacco in Nyeri County, Murata Sacco Ltd and Kirinyaga District Farmers Sacco Society.

Others include Meru Central Cooperative Union, Meru South Cooperative Union, Embu Cooperative Union, Kagaari South Cooperative Union, Machakos Cooperative Union and Kisii Farmers Cooperative Union.

Through a letter from the Treasury and signed by the Finance PS Mr Joseph Kinyua dated February 3, 2011 and which is written to Cooperatives PS Mr Seno Nyakenyanya and copied to the Saccos, the Government intends to waive coffee debts owed to Rural Savings and Credit Cooperatives (Sacco) by the farmers.

In Nyeri County, it was celebrations for 12, 500 coffee farmers from Nyeri County as the Government moved to waive the debts valued at Kshs524 million.

The Sacco Marketing Man-

ager Mr Godfrey Ritho said the Sacco has since withdrawn all court matters and no more auctioning of properties and domestic animals.

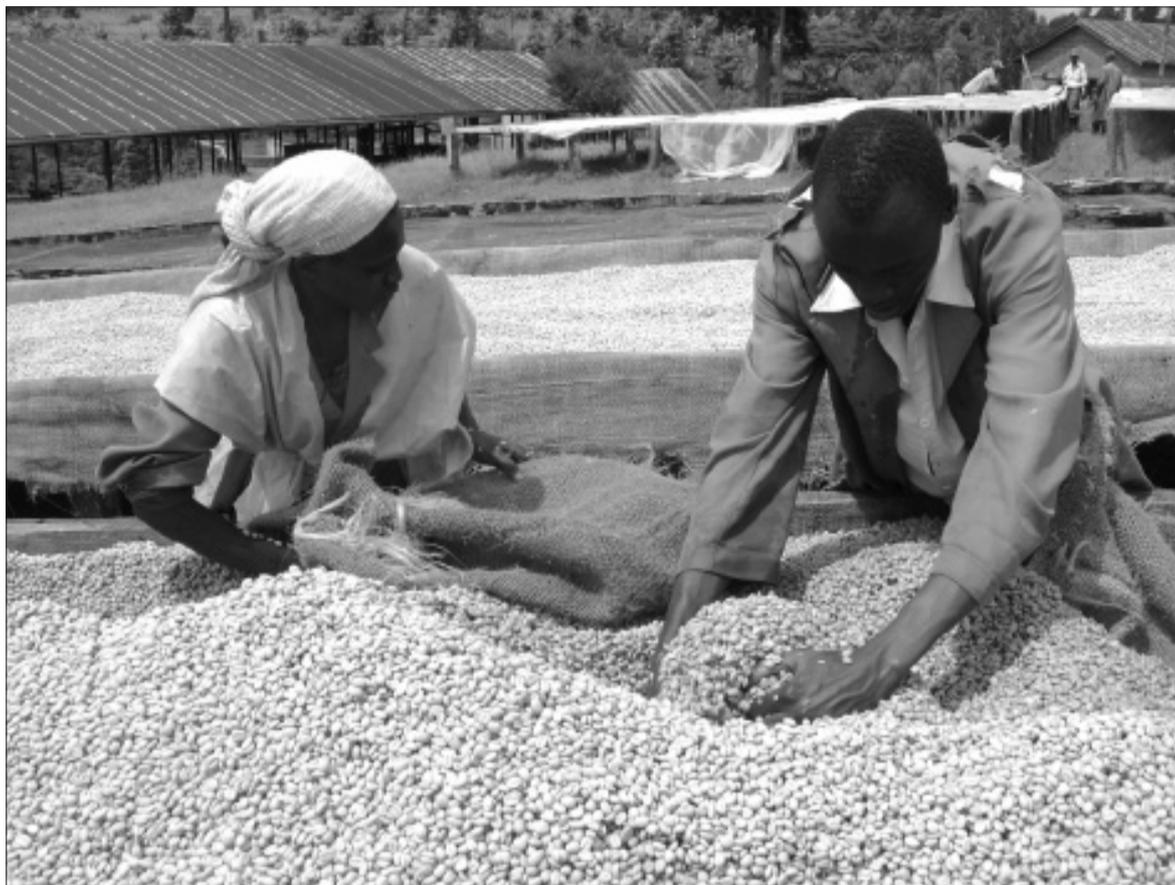
This is after the PS urged the Saccos and banks to immediately stop the recovery of the loans from the coffee farmers.

"To ensure that both the coffee farmers and the Saccos benefit from the Government decision as we await for the cabinet approval, this letter serves as Government undertaking to repay the loans that will be verified and confirmed payable," said the letter.

The two page letter continues, "The Saccos should immediately stop recoveries of the soft loans from the coffee farmers. Similarly, banks with other institutions with financial arrangements with relevant Saccos can rely on this letter and continue providing support awaiting the completion of this process. The audited and eligible loans for write off will then be factored in the 2011/2012 budget."

The letter adds that the debt waiver translates into the revival of the strategic sub sector so that it plays its rightful role in creating employment for the people, lifting the standards of living and will help in attaining the Vision 2030.

In Nyeri County, farmers hardest hit with debts were from Tetu, Othaya, Mukurwe-ini,



Coffee workers prepare coffee at a factory in Nyeri County recently. The Government has waived debts amounting to billions of shillings in the nine rural Saccos countrywide. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Mathira and Kieni West Districts with Tetu District carrying the biggest burden.

Ritho said this was a big boost for coffee farmers who now have a chance to increase production of their crop.

Taifa Sacco Society Ltd was started in January 1974 as a banking section of the Nyeri District Cooperative Union to offer banking services to the rural farmers in Nyeri District who were members of coopera-

tive societies and has branches in Laikipia, Nyandarua and Nyeri counties.

The SACCO has registered tremendous growth from the initial membership of 9, 500 to a membership of 97, 500 in 1998.

Row erupts over Kakamega water project

By JOEL JUMA

A ROW has erupted between residents of Maraba estate in Kakamega town and a water service provider over a Kshs200 million sewerage treatment project.

The residents have rejected the project by Lake Victoria North Water Services Board arguing that the sewerage system will expose them to water borne diseases.

The residents and human rights organisations have since demanded that the project is relocated to another site.

They expressed fears that the water company may discharge waste from the treatment plant to River Lwatingu where residents draw water for domestic use.

Western Centre for Legal for Aid coordinator Caleb Mukabwa said an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) test was not done to allow the construction of the plant.

Residents told officials of the board led by the chief executive officer Diru Magomere that they would not accept the project to

be imposed on them.

Mr. Magomere was, however, tongue-tied and did not give a satisfactory answer to the residents during a meeting held at Lwatingu area in Kakamega Central District.

Magomere who was shouted down left the District Officer Maurice Ogweni to handle the matter.

Ogweni managed to restore calm at the tension packed meeting when he asked the board to consult residents before embarking on the project.

"Concerns by the residents must be addressed to avoid confrontations," said Ogweni.

Isaac Ruto, an employee of the board, had to explain the procedures of constructing a treatment plant to the residents.

Ruto said the board was ready to ensure that clean water is supplied to the residents. He said the board was implementing the project in the area after constructing a similar one at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and at Shirere area all in Kakamega.

Ruto said the National En-

vironmental Management Authority (Nema) will approve the project if regulations and rules are adhered to.

Kakamega District Environmental Officer Vincent Mahiva blamed the board for not holding consultative meetings with residents prior to the implementation of the project.

Mahiva said Nema would not issue a license to the board until an assessment report is compiled and approved by the relevant authorities.

Lead Consultant Zablon Oonge of University of Nairobi claimed that residents were incited into rejecting the project.

Dr Oonge said that the residents should not have fear of contracting diseases because of the plant. "We have constructed such plants elsewhere and the final water from the sewerage plant is crystal clean," said Oonge.

Oonge said he had only prepared a draft that requires the input of the residents before it is approved. He noted that Kakamega town resident suffer from Malaria more than water borne diseases.

Kitutu residents cry foul over poor road

By BOB OMBATI

RESIDENTS of Kitutu Masaba constituency in Nyamira County are up in arms against a contractor who worked on the Motomomwamu-Manga Road.

The residents have threatened to move to court to seek orders to compel the contractor to redo the work as he had allegedly done shoddy work leaving many potholes on the way.

The residents among them, an official with the Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) Richard Kibagendi, said the road had now become impassable despite the huge amounts of money allocated for repairs.

The unionist lamented that the contractor had used loam soil instead of murram and therefore the road has become impassable especially during the rainy season.

Kibagendi took a swipe

at the area Member of Parliament Walter Nyambati who he accused of doing nothing despite the concerns raised by residents.

The official urged residents to monitor all public projects being implemented in the area to ensure that funds are not diverted into personal use.

Manga Ward civic leader, Peter Maroro said he was unaware when and how tendering was done.

Kibagendi also called for the formation of a project committee to oversee the construction and elevation of Manga School as a centre of excellence

He said that the current scenario where the contractor doubles up as a supervisor in the project set to cost Kshs30 million was counter productive and did not auger well for the community since they are likely to lose out in the event that funds are misappropriated.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Let's act now before politics derail new law

How much longer will we allow renegade party positions driven almost exclusively by political grandstanding and points scoring to obscure the voices of a majority of Kenyans whom they represent?

Is it not time for them to create a third force in Kenya's politics, a force that will ultimately provide a way out of the constant stalemates engineered by both the Party of National Unity and the Orange Democratic Movement, and which have ensured those who fought the passing of the current Constitution last year appear to be achieving what they couldn't deliver at the referendum?

It is a travesty of justice and a joke of the highest order to see who championed the fight against the new Constitution rising up to criticize nominations to key constitutional offices. How can they claim to fight for something they never had faith in right from the beginning, and which they fought so viciously to destroy?

Given that they held prayer rallies and swore to fight the new laws to the bitter end, could it be that they are simply fulfilling their promise by other means? The same could be said of a section of the clergy who are quick to judge a nominee simply because of his marital history and choice of jewellery, forgetting that they too live in glass houses and can hardly cast the first stone.

Incidentally, they too fought against enactment of the new laws. It is now clear that the forces that fought to stymie the new Constitution in August last year have been able to exploit the political differences in the Grand Coalition Government to their advantage.

If indeed they are keen to ensure fairness and justice and making the best of what they clearly believe is a bad Constitution, they should be courageous enough to initiate the arduous process of amending the same. What they are doing is not just cowardly, but puts them on the wrong side of history.

The only way the process will go forward is if both President Kibaki and Prime Minister Rail Odinga stop being two-faced in claiming to support implementation because they cannot be said to be unaware of the positions adopted by their parties yet they pretend to be above the fray while the fire rages.

History will judge Raila and Kibaki harshly if the implementation process fails due to political brinkmanship. The little victories either side hope to gain by controlling this and that committee is meaningless in the bigger picture of what will happen if Kenyans go to the next year's General Election without key Bills having been passed and implemented.

There is perhaps a darker side to all this: there are some eyeing the presidency who would be happy to go to the polls under the current status quo, because it would ensure they can use the same old rules of ethnic politics to get to State House.

The warning by the Commission for Implementation of the Constitution that time is running out for Parliament should be taken seriously. Very soon, someone will go to court to seek the dissolution of the House and, in the current scenario, it is very likely a judge would rule in their favour. In truth those fighting for the status quo and pushing against the spirit of compromise in the Government can be said to be key beneficiaries of the status quo, or have something more sinister afoot.



COMMENTARY

Wako must pull up socks in drafting of bills

COMMENT

By PETER MUTUKU

WILL the Constitution Implementation Commission (CIC) succeed in breathing life into the new supreme law?

This is the question that still bogs the reform process. While CIC is upbeat that it will deliver, there are a number of challenges that must be overcome to drive the reform process into course.

CIC admits that capacity constraints at the Attorney General's office to draft the necessary bills, as well as Parliament's ability to vet and pass scores of legislations within the set timelines presents major hurdles in the implementation process.

"The challenges in expediting the process initially revolved around the Attorney General's office which has its own procedures on developing legislation," observes CIC chair Mr Charles Nyachae. "That procedure has worked well in normal circumstances but it is not enough in terms of implementing the constitution."

Nyachae feels that it is necessary to come up with procedures that take cognizance of the volume of bills that are required. "We are addressing the challenge of how to cut red tape in terms of movement between the line ministries, the Attorney General's office and the Kenya Law Reform Commission (KLRC) and the Ministry of Justice by advocating for a joint formulae to handle the Bills."

Mr Nyachae's comment follows a meeting organized by the government for key stakeholders in the implementation process to discuss ways and means of fast tracking the process. The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Constitutional Implementation

Oversight Committee (CIOC), Mr Abdikadir Mohammed.

Implementation of the country's new constitution, experts say will only be achieved through the enactment of various pieces of legislations to activate essential institutions and processes and to remove any inconsistencies that may exist. In what has been widely seen as an effort to fast track the implementation process, the CIC recently disclosed that they intend to forward six bills to parliament for rapid enactment.

Despite the progress, the CIC has itself in the past expressed concern over the slow pace of drafting and enacting some of the Bills. In its quarterly report covering January to March, the body was however optimistic that faster progress will be made in the next few months to achieve the August deadline for some of the critical Bills.

Speaking during the Constitutional Implementation Oversight Committee meeting, Mr Nyachae himself was categorical that his body would move with speed on all matters touching on the implementation of the new law. In addition to the two judicial reform bills already passed by Parliament, he said, his commission was making final drafts of five Bills touching on police reforms.

The National Police Service Bill, The National Service Commission Bill, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority Bill, The Private Sector Industry Regulation Bill and the National

Coroners Service Bill are among the pieces of legislations currently being scrutinized by the Nyachae led Commission.

The CIC had earlier forwarded the Bills on the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and Salaries and Remuneration Commission to Parliament for debate. This is ongoing.

Both the CIC and other independent observers warn that any delays in enacting subsidiary legislations in line with the Constitution will have far reaching implications on the country's reform programme.

Next year's General Election, for example will depend on the formation of an Independent Boundaries and Electoral Commission (IBEC), whose Bill is currently being debated in Parliament.

Under the Constitution, the next elections should introduce devolved government through the formation of 47 county executives and legislative bodies, Governors and their deputies as well as county assemblies will have to be elected. None of the legislations on devolution have so far been brought to parliament, although a task force chaired by academician Dr Mutakha Kangu has released an interim report.

Judicial reforms, on the other hand are moving at steady pace following the recent passage of appropriate Act by Parliament, including the Judiciary Service Act, 2011. The process for the appointment of top judicial officials including the Chief Justice is almost complete.

The formation of the Supreme Court as outlined in the Constitution has to wait for the passage of appropriate law.



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Nyeri residents' pledge on election of leaders

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NYERI County residents have said that they want to elect leaders who will always be available to help them in time of need.

A forum by the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution (CIC) at the County heard that most of the leaders from the region especially Members of Parliament relocate to Nairobi immediately after they are elected and only return during the electioneering period to solicit for votes.

The residents said that the common mwananchi hardly access their MPs since they are never seen at the grassroots.

A priest Rev Hezekiel Gathirwa from Maragwa constituency and a councillor from Mathira constituency Mrs Rose Kamau said that the public

must now be very keen while electing their leaders since they suffer most.

"We want leaders who are sensitive to the plight of the ordinary man because the current crop of politicians have lost touch with issues bedeviling their constituencies. We want leaders who will be listening to us and who will sympathize with us in time of need," said Rev Gathirwa.

Councillor Kamau said that it was unfortunate that the MPs once elected they move to parliament where they serve in various parliamentary committees and are no longer available for the electorate.

"We only hear them being bribed in parliament to pass bills. Infact most people don't know their MPs since most of them disappeared after elections. We want those who will be available for us," said the councillor.

The residents were speaking to

commissioners Dr. Elizabeth Muli, who is the Vice Chairperson of the commission, Kibanya Laibuta and Peter Wanyande at Catholic Consolata hall in Nyeri town recently.

Narc-Kenya, Nyeri branch chairman Mr Duncan Maina Mathenge said that special voter registers should be prepared for the old and disabled so that they can vote freely during the election day.

He added that some polling stations are in far flung areas and so there is need to add more.

The special groups should queue in separate queues instead of clashing with others.

Miss Esther Wairimu who is deaf said that the physically disabled people face discrimination during the voting day as nobody understands their language and so there is need to put interpreters at every polling station.



Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution during the Nyeri County forum. From left commissioner Dr. Elizabeth Muli, Vice Chairperson of the commission, commissioners Mr. Kibanya Laibuta and Mr. Peter Wanyande at Catholic Consolata hall in Nyeri town recently. Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa

Many societies risk deregistration — KUSCCO

By JOEL JUMA

OVER 1,000 societies risk being phased out of the cooperative movement by the end of this month for failing to obtain licenses to offer banking services.

Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (KUSSCO) says the Sacco Societies Regulatory Authority (Sasra) has received only 131 applications. KUSSCO notes that there are over 1, 200 societies registered by the Ministry of Cooperatives.

Managing director George Ototo points out that Sasra wants all societies to be licensed and urged those that have not applied to make the necessary arrangements. Mr Ototo and Western Provincial Director of Cooperatives Nathan Mukhweso says societies that have not applied should remember that the application deadline is fast approaching.

The Minister for Cooperatives Joseph Nyagah set the deadline for the registration of societies to operate Front Office Service Activity (FOSA)

at June 30 this year.

Many societies are providing banking services illegally as they have not met the required standards for their Fosa operations. Ototo says Sasra will inspect societies before approving them.

Ototo was speaking in Kakamega town during a delegates meeting for the Kakamega Teachers savings and Credit Cooperative Society (Kateco).

Kenya National Union of Teachers Western Provincial Council Secretary John Wesonga and the Kakamega Central Branch chairman Robert Opwora also addressed the meeting at Shieywe Guest House.

Ototo said over 40 societies have already been issued with letters of qualification adding that processing of their licenses was at advanced stage.

"The Government will soon issue 7 licenses to societies that have met the requirements," said Ototo.

Ototo noted that Kateco is one of the societies whose license is set to be issued. Kussco director Joseph Sagalla and Kateco chief executive

officer Peter Vuhya said members of the cooperative movement should be exempted from some of the taxes.

The two said Teachers Service Commission (TSC) remits Value Added Tax (VAT) on behalf of teachers to Kenya Revenue Authority and that extending the same to societies amounts to double taxation. Kakamega Teachers Benevolent Fund secretary Francis Ometty and chairman Patrick Ongaya accused TSC of delaying remittance of members deductions.

They said the delays had made it difficult to handle emergency cases brought forth by members due to delays by TSC to remit funds.

Wesonga and Opwora said the Government rule to have workers to retain one third of their earnings on the pay slips should be revised.

They said teachers have been unable to get loans from their societies due to the rule.

Wesonga said the Minister for Labour John Munyes should table the matter in Parliament for amendment.

Authority reads riot act to saccos

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE National Sacco Regulatory Authority (NSRA) has issued an ultimatum to about 220 Saccos in the country to register by June 17, 2011 or face dissolution.

The Authority chairman Mr. Peter Gakumu says that societies which will not have been registered and issued with licenses by the Authority at the expiry of the deadline will be deemed as illegal entities with no mandate to discharge services to the public.

Mr. Gakumu says only 16 Saccos have been cleared and issued with licenses by the authority as at now.

The chairman however said 140 Saccos have applied for registration and their request was being processed by the authority.

He spoke at the Kilifi Teachers Sacco offices when he officially handed over a license to the board of directors headed by Mr. Richard Dzombo.

Mr. Gakumu dispelled the notion that the Authority was a major impediment to the operations Sacco saying that it seeks to streamline their operations.

He said Saccos were currently holding millions of member's savings and urged the managers to exercise high standards of transparency and accountability.

"For the Saccos to win the trust of its members, they ought to be transparent and accountable in the management of funds," said Mr. Gakumu.

He said Kenyans have in the past lost their money due to corruption and mismanagement of the funds by the Saccos adding that was the reason why the Sacco's Regulatory body was formed to oversee their operations.

The chairman said poor governance in the Sacco's has led to lose of members funds and singled out Saccos affiliated to the agricultural sector as the most notorious.

He said out of the 13 officially registered Saccos in Coast region, only two have obtained licenses and cited the Kilifi Teachers Sacco and Bandari Sacco in Mombasa county.

He said application of three other Saccos was still pending and that licenses will be issued soon after they satisfy the stipulated conditions.

The Kilifi Teachers Sacco chairman said the society was facing stiff competition from other financial service providers that have infiltrated the market

Mr. Dzombo said the situation posed a big threat to the survival of the society in terms of retaining its membership.

He said the society management was re-aligning the society towards fulfilling the new regulations.

KWS monkeys terrorize Taita residents

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

RESIDENTS of Taita-Taveta County have protested over increased attacks by monkeys translocated to the area to aid in research.

The residents accuse the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) of failing to contain the unfamiliar looking monkeys that were moved to the Taita Hills forest, escalating human/wildlife conflict.

The primates reportedly brought to the area for research purposes are said to be wandering everywhere and were a threat and menace to members of the public as they are fierce and dangerous. Besides allegedly terrorizing residents, the animals are destroying crops, thus compromising food security in the area.

The monkeys which allegedly move in large packs are not scared of man and will nonchalantly destroy crop with what residents say is astonishing impunity. Among the latest victims of their destructive exploits is an agricultural officer Evans Mbinga whose residence and kitchen gardens were recently invaded by the destructive animals.

"The monkeys destroyed all my passion and guava fruit trees in the garden besides terrorizing my family," Mr. Mbinga said. "Sometimes they climb to the roof top of my house and refuse to budge even if we try to scare them away. My house is now leaking after the monkeys ripped off part of the roof," he lamented.

Local residents said the animals are bigger in size and more vicious than the ordinary monkeys they are familiar with in the area. The most hit areas are Wundanyi and Iyale among others.

And Wundanyi District Officer David Boen noted that besides the destruction caused by big game like elephants, rodents too were very destructive in the area and called on KWS to intervene.

"I have lost my maize crop and French beans which I had planted in the compound to the monkeys. The animals have also destroyed my television aerial as they camped on the roof top of my house for



Wundanyi District Officer David Boen shows the destruction caused by monkeys on his garden.

hours on ends," the administrator said.

It has now emerged that some residents have resorted to poisoning the monkeys, accusing KWS of doing very little to protect them against the primates mischief and destructive behavior.

However, the Tsavo Conservation Area Assistant Director Julius Kimani dismissed as baseless and misleading, the residents' claims that KWS had moved the monkeys to Taita Hills.

Mr. Kimani asserted that the wildlife body did not relocate any wild animals to the area as claimed. "Our guiding principle has always been to undertake translocation of animals within our protected areas and not in human settlements as is being alleged," said Mr. Kimani.

The assistant director said there was no need to move animals to areas outside the protected areas and affirmed that the Tsavo ecosystem was big enough to accommodate them.

commodate them.

Mr. Kimani, however, admitted that baboons have been among the most troublesome animals in the area.

Baboons have been wreaking havoc especially in some parts of the county adjacent to the Tsavo Conservancy.

"Cases of baboons destroying crops, attacking smaller livestock like goats and chicken have been reported in the affected areas," said the director.

Kisii council rocked by graft —says mayor

By BOB OMBATI

CORRUPTION and poor leadership at the Kisii Municipal council has hampered effective service delivery, a mayor has disclosed. Mayor Samwel Nyangeso says that incessant wrangles pitting chief officers and workers on the one hand and councilors on the other hand over land grabbing and embezzlement of council funds had paralyzed council operations.

He says the situation has been aggravated by its inability to clear over Kshs250 million owed to statutory bodies which has cost the council its annual Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) allocation in the current financial year. Nyangeso points out that currently the council has suspended all its projects as there are no funds to either initiate or complete existing projects. The mayor laments that the council generates about Kshs30 million on a monthly basis in taxes but little is remitted to the council.

The mayor says the council was faced with imminent collapse as vested interests who included councilors, workers and chief officers were colluding with unscrupulous individuals to fleece the council of its revenue. "Some civic leaders had even allowed matatu operators to penetrate the Central Business District (CBD) despite existing regulations that ban such practices. Gusii County Council Clerk, Isaac Githui said that persistent wrangles at the council had undermined development besides creating unnecessary tension and anxiety among workers.

Union warns against sacking of workers

By JOEL JUMA

KENYA Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU) has cautioned chief officers attached to councils in Kakamega and Busia counties against sacking workers without following proper procedures.

The union said cases of workers being sacked illegally by chief officers were rampant in the two counties.

KLGWU asked Kakamega Municipal Council to reinstate eight workers sent home for allegedly protesting over inflammatory statements issued by a senior officer at the local authority.

The sacked workers included the Kakamega branch chairman Protus Ashiono and the branch secretary Samson Ananda.

KLGWU Western regional secretary Juvenas Orai said the matter will be taken to the Industrial Court if the council continues to ignore their request.

"The Finance and General Purposes Committee did not approve the sacking of the workers yet the chief officers terminated the services of the eight employees," said Orai.

Orai made the remarks in his Kakamega office when Ashiono paid him a courtesy call to seek intervention from the union's national secretary general Boniface Munyao.

The union officials were sacked for complaining after a senior officer said the town was not clean because most workers were victims of HIV/Aids.

Orai however explained that Minister for Local Government Musalia Mudavadi and the Permanent Secretary Karega Mutahi have already been served with letters asking them to intervene.

Orai said the union is considering paralysing services at the council by calling for a strike if its demands are not met.

He added that the union is pursuing other five cases at Busia County Council where the workers were allegedly interdicted for failing to submit records of revenue collection.

WWF marks anniversary in style

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

WORLD Wide Fund, one of the world's leading environmental organisations, has marked fiftieth anniversary.

WWF staff and supporters gathered in Zurich to celebrate their half-century, with guest of honour Archbishop Desmond Tutu — a long-time champion of fair and sustainable development warning, "we live in a world threatened by greed and consumerism".

"Our desire to consume everything of value, to extract every precious stone, every drop of oil and every creature from the sea knows no bounds," said the Archbishop.

"This quest for profit subverts our present and our future. There are too many people who are getting better and better at exploiting the environmental heritage which belongs to us all. We are not heading for an environmental disaster - we have already created one."

"We are meant to live in a world which we share, and we are meant to live as members of one family," said Archbishop Tutu. "And yet whenever we look around, isn't it devastating to see the inequities and levels of poverty? Our population is increasing, environmental degradation is increasing. How do we resolve these inequities when all we are told is growth,

growth, growth?"

However, the Archbishop sounded an optimistic note and said he believed humankind could learn to live within its limits.

"There is enough for everyone - but not enough for our greed," he said. "There's enough for us all to live a full life - so why do we want to destroy the only home we have?"

Since 1961, WWF has been instrumental in getting more than a billion hectares protected, several species brought back from the brink of extinction, and raising more than one billion dollars in conservation finance.

The organisation is now supported by more than five million people and is active in over 100 countries on five continents.

Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey highlighted WWF's record of achievements and said the organisation was vital in today's world.

"The protection and sustainable use of natural resources is one of the most pressing issues today. Thanks to WWF we have learned we have to take a holistic approach to the environment," she said. "Addressing environmental issues at global as well as local levels becomes ever more important."

Guests at the gala event in Zurich heard, WWF International President Yolanda Kakabde outline the advances made in conservation in the

past half-century.

"When WWF was founded there were no ministers of the environment and no environmental treaties. Today such ministries are found in governments worldwide, and treaties are increasingly used to govern and protect the environment," she said.

"Right from the beginning, this organisation has been built by individuals with a deep and inspiring passion: a commitment to stop environmental degradation and build a future where people live in harmony with nature," said Ms Kakabde.

She also joked that the Duke of Edinburgh — President Emeritus of WWF — would have been present were it not for a family wedding taking place in London. In a message Prince Philip said: "Perhaps its (WWF's) greatest achievement so far has been to make a significant number of people in all communities, in all parts of the world, aware of the serious threats facing the world's natural environment."

WWF International Director General Jim Leape reminded guests why they were there and of the work still to be done to achieve a fair and sustainable world for all.

"The world would be much poorer today without our efforts, yet it is a cruel irony that, for all that we have accomplished together, somehow we have to find a way to do even more.

We have to find a way to bend the curves that will define our future carbon, water, fisheries, erosion of biodiversity; fraying of the fabric of life. We have to find a new way to forge connections with nature."

"We live in an increasingly urbanised society that is largely ignorant of the wonders that inspire us. And we live in an economy that is still often stubbornly indifferent to the natural systems upon which it depends," said Mr. Leape.

WWF was founded in 1961 by a group of concerned naturalists and conservationists. WWF's 50th anniversary on 29th April 2011 marked the signing of the "Morges Manifesto", a document which led to the founding of the organisation and the first campaign to save endangered species.

Since then WWF has grown into one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations, with more than 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.



Until law is enforced, fires are here to stay

THE latest fire tragedy in the city is but a reminder that the Government continues to pay lip service to the law and Kenyans are dying as a result.

It beats logic how a company alleged to have been handling highly toxic and flammable chemicals was allowed to operate in the middle of a residential area that is heavily populated.

If true, it means that not one but several environmental and safety laws, as well as city by-laws, were broken with impunity, and the result is loss of life.

The matter is under police investigation, and those responsible could face serious charges.

Nevertheless, the fire in Kariobangi shows that unless serious action is taken to enforce the law, more tragedies are waiting around the corner.

There are clear guidelines on factory siting based on the nature of business among others.

Furthermore, any factory is supposed to have a fire escape exit that is clearly marked and easily accessible by both workers and fire fighters. They are also supposed to have fire extinguishers. Clearly the so-called factory in Kariobangi did not meet most of these conditions, otherwise the loss of lives would have been minimal, if at all.

The fact that this was a residential building implies that both the City Council of Nairobi and the National Environmental Management Authority failed in their duties.

How were the proprietors of the factory issued with business and safety permits, and were regular inspections of the premises carried out to ensure they were engaged in activities indicated in the permits?

While it is not the duty of this newspaper to tell police how to go about their work, suffice to say that one expects the officials involved in licensing the plant will be traced to assist with ongoing investigations.

It is an open secret that the area is dotted with many such factories located in flat where the residents go about their business blissfully unaware they living next to a ticking time bomb.

**Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail**

Police need new approach with threat on our borders

IN a rather feeble and helpless manner, Police Commissioner Mathew Iteere recently admitted that a large number of young Kenyans have been recruited into the al Shabaab militia, which wants to establish a Taliban-style Islamic regime in Somalia. Mr. Iteere was stating the obvious; it has long been common knowledge that some Kenyans had been radicalised to want to join such militant groups, sometimes with the aim not only of dominating Somalia, but also of expanding the Somali homeland to include those regions of Kenya and Ethiopia traditionally inhabited by ethnic Somalis.

Mr. Iteere is right to be concerned; despite the Kenya police's denials, there is ample evidence that the grenade attacks recently carried out in Nairobi against a Kampala-bound bus and a police patrol vehicle in the Eastleigh suburb before that were the work of al Shabaab. Further, few will have forgotten the attack by the group on a crowd in Kampala that was watching the World Cup finals. It gets even more worrying when one notes that al Shabaab appears to have started exporting its terror. The group is feeling the squeeze in Somalia after Ethiopian troops invaded the war-torn country again and will almost certainly be looking to destabilise regions outside its heartland.

On March 3, 2011, a top al Shabaab cleric, Sheikh Mahad Omar Abdikarim, called on Kenyan Muslims to "rise up" against Christian "domination" promising his group's support. Right on cue, al Shabaab forces engaged Kenya Army personnel in fierce battles as the Somali extremists attempted to take the border town of Mandera. They were beaten back — barely.

Sadly, concern is likely to be as far as the Kenya Police's action goes in this regard. It has not been lost on observers that Mr. Iteere has previously expressed concern



Riot police at work. Photo/File

at worrying security events, only to slink back into hiding and shirk his responsibilities. A few months ago, he promised that he would reveal the names of Kenya's notorious drug barons, "within a week". The week came and went. When he finally deigned to address the matter, it was to declare — with a straight face — that the "drug barons" were, in fact, innocent. This despite the open secret that Kenya is one of the largest drug smuggling points in Africa, and perhaps — due to the corruption of our Police Force — the most important transit point between drug producers in Asia and Latin America and their customers in Europe. That Mr. Iteere beat a hasty retreat in this matter does not inspire confidence in the ability of his force to confront security threats.

This is as shameful as it is dangerous. The recent WikiLeaks revelations claimed that Kenya's border with Somalia is so porous and the policemen manning it so corrupt that it might as well be an open frontier. It is impossible, *ceteris paribus*, for Kenya to secure this long border in any meaningful manner from the al Shabaab. This is why the approach used to tackle the threat is important, and it cannot be business as usual for the Kenya police. Indeed, it is doubtful that Mr. Iteere's demoralised, corrupt, underpaid, and poorly equipped forces can even begin to contain this threat. Considering that this is an external threat of significant proportions, perhaps the security powers that be might consider changing approaches.

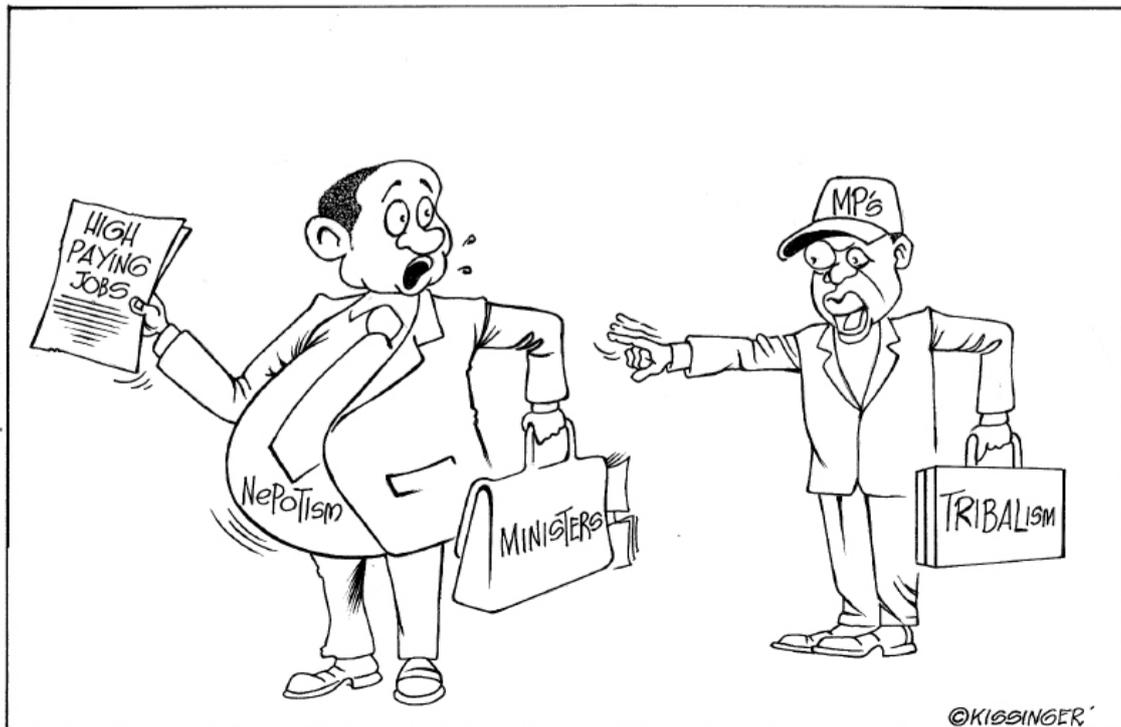
First, the usual "shoot 'em dead"

approach will clearly not work. Al Shabaab's fighters crave martyrdom, and new recruits will pop up like hydra-like to replace any foot soldiers who fall casualty to the officers' "shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later" approach to policing.

Secondly, it might help to try to understand the motivation behind al Shabaab's attraction to Kenyan recruits. It is no secret that the region bordering Somalia is one of the most impoverished in Kenya — a desert region with little or no educational, health, or employment facilities. It is no surprise that the region comes last in national examinations every year. It is difficult to study when you have no food or water and the al Shabaab are willing to pay you to fight.

Perhaps most important of all, the Kenya police really needs to tackle corruption in its midst. The shenanigans that drug lords have got up to while the police turn a blind eye are obvious. If Mr. Iteere really means business, this is where to begin. But does he?

**Peter Wanyonyi,
Via e-mail**



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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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Ministry moves to repose grabbed land

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Government has repossessed two parcels of public utility land within Bungoma Municipality in Bungoma County. According to lands officials in Bungoma District, the two parcels of land had been unlawfully allocated to private developers.

Mr. Henry Ondara who is the lands administration officer in both Bungoma and Busia Districts and Mr. George Obondo, the Bungoma and Mt. Elgon District lands Registrar, say that Bungoma Air strip and Bungoma District's hospital land had been irregularly allocated to individuals.

Messrs Ondara and Obondo, however quickly exonerated themselves from the scam saying that the arbitrary allocations were done during Moi era when impunity was the order of the day.

They claim that the two parcels of land, each measuring over ten acres, were arbitrary allocated to well connected individuals by the KANU regime.

Mr. Ondara reveals that the district lands office has already identified the original boundaries of the hospital land.

"We have completed work on the hospital land. We are also happy to note that the health ministry has fenced the plot and is currently constructing a medical collage on it," he says during an interview with The Link.

On the air strip land, Mr. Ondara says that three quarters of the plot's boundaries have been identified and fenced off.

He quickly points out that the remaining part is currently being worked on and expressed optimism that work will be completed soon. The duo asserts that they have not received any cases of multiple title deeds at the regional lands office.

About bogus land buying brokers and surveyors in the region, the duo says, "they may be there but it is difficult to know them since such characters may not have the courage to come to this office" They however, appeal to land owners/ buyers to deal directly with registered surveyors to avoid being conned by unscrupulous players in land transaction deals.

Mr. Obondo claims that the civil service has been transformed tremendously during the present regime adding that all Government offices are now wide open to the members of the public.

He consequently, appeals to members of the public to be wary of people who purport to have connections that can assist them to get quick service.

The District lands registrar reminds members of the public that the fee charged against all land transactions is displayed at the office entrance for public scrutiny. "You should therefore be wary of tricksters who inflate costs at the pretext that they will offer quick service in return," he adds.

Musila fumes at poor land-scaping in school

By KAVYU-KURA

THE Assistant Minister for defence David Musila recently turned down a request to officially commission an incomplete Kshs3.5 million project at the Senior chief Kasina primary school in Mwingi.

Musila who is the Member of Parliament for Mwingi South within whose jurisdiction Kasina Primary school falls had visited the school to inspect the progress of the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) sponsored projects only to find that they were running behind schedule.

The school was last year awarded Kshs3.5 million through the ESP programme to oversee the renovation of five classrooms and the construction of three new model classrooms and an ablution block with 24 toilets.

However, when Musila visited the school in the company of Mwingi Central District Commissioner Peter Kinuthia and the Mwingi town council Chairman Felix Nzung'u, he was shocked to find that only renovation work and the toilets had been

completed while the new classrooms had not been constructed.

The visibly angry Musila turned down the offer to commission the projects whose foundation bore a plague declaring the official opening of the building as May 9, 2011 by the assistant minister David Musila.

"I will only come back to officially open the facilities once they are done according to specifications in the Bill of Quantities," said Musila.

He also criticized the initial layout of the school saying the uneven ground put the lives of pupils in danger. He said the rugged steep slopes next to the renovated five classrooms posed a serious danger to the pupils and curtailed easy access to the classrooms.

"This school has a serious problem with the design which should be corrected as a matter of priority," said Musila who instructed the head teacher to liaise with a public works officer Mr. Peter Mbusya who was present to come up with the best way to address the problem.

The assistant minister's entourage had to go through steep slopes

to access classes during the inspection tour. Musila said since the school had been proposed as a model centre of excellence everything in the school should be superb and exemplary.

He called on the school management to not only concentrate its efforts on good classrooms and other infrastructure but to also plant trees in order to create a more hospitable learning environment.

The Mwingi central DC Peter Kinuthia lamented that the girls at the school were in danger due to the facility's proximity to Mwingi town.

"We have very serious cases of early pregnancies in this school. We must seriously guard against that. The District Education Officer's office must hold meeting here and take action against the problem because we are having up to 10 cases in this school," said the DC.

The new DEO Mohamed Godat said the school which had been earmarked as a centre of academic excellence should strive to uplift its academic performance to match its new status.



Assistant minister Musila (centre), is conducted in a tour of the school by headteacher King'ao. He is also accompanied by Mwingi town council Chairman Felix Nzung'u. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Youth urged to play active role in new law

By BEKADZO TONDO

YOUTH in the country have been challenged to play an active role during the implementation of the new constitution.

The 'Yes We Can' project country director Ms Joyce Wafula said the youth risk being locked out of the implementation process unless they push for a valid position that will thrust their agenda to the limelight.

Ms Wafula was speaking to youth in Kilifi County during the election of their representatives in the project funded by the US government. The director said that the youth can only be able participate actively in the reform process if they are empowered both politically and economically.

"The youth need to be brought on board when leaders are discussing reforms matters," she said. The director appealed to the media to highlight the many challenges that face the youth so that they can also have a say in the country development programmes.

Ms Wafula said the 'Yes You Can' project was mooted to help build the capacity of the youth on development matters and assist them with funds to embark on income generating projects. She said although many youth are educated, job opportunities are either scarce or sometimes distributed based on cronyism.

Youth present at the meeting said the Kazi Kwa Vijana initiative which was meant to provide jobs for them only served their well connected peers and urged for fairness. One of the youth Swaleh Sudi claimed that only youth whose parents were well connected had benefitted from the Kazi Kwa Vijana initiative in the area.

Raila petitioned over Pan Paper Mills

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

FORMER employees of Pan African Paper Mills want investigations launched to establish why the mill is still not operational despite having been allocated Kshs1 billion by the government to revamp its operations.

The employees have written a memorandum to the Prime Minister Raila Odinga asking him to intervene on their behalf and find out why there is still delay in reopening the mill.

"We also want the government to assist us get our terminal benefits," reads part of the memorandum. They accused politicians from the area of ignoring their plight and leaving them to wallow in misery.

In the memorandum the employees say that Pan Paper Mills was placed under receivership in April 2009 and services of all employees terminated without compensation. However, the employees claim that even after the government agreed to pump in money to salvage the mill from collapse, they have remained in the dark and attempts to meet the team leader dispatched to oversee the revival plans have been futile. John Munguti who is the team leader has declined to meet with the former employees insisting that the factory was under receivership.

In a letter dated April 19, 2011 and signed by James Ngosire, the former employees are demanding that the government which is the principal shareholder of the mill, pays their terminal benefits without delay. "For fairness and equity to prevail, all employees must leave the factory premises immediately until the government formulates a comprehensive return to work formula," they said.

The petition by former employees came even as the Minister for National Planning Wycliffe Oparanya said that the paper factory cannot be revived because the machines were obsolete and uneconomical to run.

Murang'a bar operators flouting Mututho laws

By MORRIS GITHENYA

BAR operators in Murang'a South district are reportedly flouting Alcoholic Drinks Control Act with some defying operating hours outlined by the law.

Local DC Ali Muktar said many of the bars have been operating outside the licensed hours with some stocking alcohol brands that have not been approved by Public Health.

The DC however directed police to arrest traders contravening the law as some establishments were entertaining patrons as early as 10 am in gross violation of the laid down

regulations.

Addressing members of the District Development Committee (DDC), the administrator said some of the premises have been opened without knowledge of his office and local authorities.

"Am directing the police to ensure those flouting the law are arrested and prosecuted," said the DC. He gave the order as scores of residents protested against claims that chang'aa was being hawked in Maragua and Kenol towns by known persons.

Police, he said, must crackdown on those breaking the law in efforts to restore sanity and respect to family

life.

He called on residents to report any establishments that act in contravention of the Mututho law.

He said new operators have emerged and some were renting premises without knowledge of the administration.

During the meeting, clerks of Maragua County, Makuyu and Maragua town councils came under attack for failing to attend the DDC meetings.

Maragua Member of Parliament Elias Mbau said that questions directed at the chief officers were deferred as they hardly attended development meetings.

"I am going to raise the issue with Local Government Minister Mr Musalia Mudavadi to find out if they are under instructions not to attend DDC meetings," said Mbau.

The meeting resolved that the government acquires 8 acres of land from Kakuzi farm to facilitate the construction of a road that will open up Kangangu area.

Mbau said residents of Kangangu area are forced to walk for more than 15 kilometres to seek government services in Makuyu town as the management of Kakuzi farm had denied them an access route through their farm.

Olweny wants CDF retained under new law

By BOSCO MAGARE

MUHORONI MP Prof Ayiecho Olweny wants the current Constituency Development Fund (CDF) structure and status retained under the new constitutional dispensation. "CDF facility provides the best example in Africa of initiating and entrenching development at the grass-roots level," Prof. Ayiecho says.

Ayiecho says due to the success of CDF facility and structure in Kenya, it has been the envy of many other developing and developed countries.

"Developed countries such as Canada and developing ones in Africa including a host of others elsewhere in the world have come to Kenya to borrow a leaf on how the CDF facility works," affirms Prof. Ayiecho. The MP affirms that due to the success of the country's CDF, he will fervently fight for its retention in the new dispensation.

"Although appropriate registration and other formalities on the administration of the CDF under the new constitution are yet to be discussed, I strongly vouch for retention of the current CDF status. There is no need dismantling something that performs," Prof. Ayiecho says. The MP says through CDF, many development projects have been initiated in various parts of the country.

Prof Olweny's sentiments are a testimony of the many development projects in his Muhoroni constituency which has received a total of Kshs. 63.1 million during the current financial year.

In an interview with The Link, Muhoroni CDF Project Coordinator Edward Onyango says the constituency has already received half of its 63.1 million CDF allocation for the financial year ending June, 2011. "We are waiting for the other half of the CDF disbursement from the board to fund the already identified and approved projects. Some of the projects have already been funded," Onyango says. He says CDF has been able to support and fund projects in various sectors within Muhoroni constituency.

The Muhoroni CDF Projects Coordinator says that among the projects that have been funded include construction of boreholes and shallow wells, footbridges & culvert construction sector, environment management, flood control, forestry & agro-forestry sector including the health centres, dispensary construction, renovation, equipping & sanitation facility construction sector.

Other sectors being funded include, construction and rehabilitation of class-



rooms, administration blocks, libraries and laboratories in secondary schools, desks, lockers, chairs & other furniture supply, construction of classrooms, staff houses & administration offices in primary schools.

The fund has also helped put up chiefs offices & police posts/stations, infrastructure development, education improvement & upgrading, livestock improvement, upgrading & agricultural production improvement, land purchase, electric power supply, sports & youth activities and community business enterprises development projects.

The Link established that projects under the water sector projects were funded to the tune of Kshs. 4.7.

"Out of 28 water projects funded by CDF, ongoing projects include Ngere Kagoro which has been funded to the tune of Kshs. 600,000.00 and a borehole at Got Ruke funded at Kshs. 400,000.00," Onyango says.

Footbridges & culvert construction have cost Kshs. 2,285,000.00 million, environment management, flood control, forestry & agro-forestry sector have received Kshs. 1,175,000 million, health centres, dispensary construction, renovation, equipping & sanitation facility construction sector 3,392,550.00

million.

Others are construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, administration blocks, libraries and laboratories in secondary schools Kshs. 14,700,000.00 million, (projects in this sector include construction of youth polytechnics). Infrastructural facilities in schools have cost Kshs. 1million. Some of the schools that have benefited include Kibigori Mixed Secondary School, Oginga Odinga Secondary Tamu Secondary, and Ngere Kagoro Secondary school.

The construction of classrooms, staff houses & administration offices in primary schools Kshs. 14,456,000.00, while chiefs offices & police posts/stations funding level is Kshs. 4,015,000.00 and include Kowawa Police Post, Kopere Police Post, God Nyithindo Chief Office and Tamu-Achecho Administration Police (AP) Lines.

The upgrading of infrastructure and grading of roads have been funded to the tune of Kshs. 3,000,000.00 million. The grading of roads has been done in the following locations Nyangoma, Ombeyi North, North East Kano and Muhoroni.

Education sector has been allocated Kshs. 860,000.00 which went into re-

pairing facilities at Oliko secondary School while funds channeled to Oliero Secondary School went into purchasing laboratory equipment. Kegoche College of Technology received funds for purchase of tools worth Kshs. 100,000.00 million. An additional Kshs 1 million was channeled towards the agricultural sector to oversee the rehabilitation of cattle dips at Masogo, Amilo and Ramula, while St Augustine Kandege has received Kshs. 500,000.00 for land acquisition.

Further, Kshs. 1,160,000.00 million went towards installing power supply to secondary schools and dispensaries such as Ngere Secondary, God Abuoro Secondary, St. Augustine Kandege, Ayiecho Obumba Secondary, Oduo Secondary.

Sports & youth activities benefitted from Kshs. 300,000.00 that was used in buying of football balls, equipment, volleyball balls and nets. A similar amount went towards financing of community business enterprises development projects funding stands at an equal Kshs. 300,000.00.

Some of the centres to be funded include Tamu trading centre, Masara centre, Kisuru centre, Kibigori Tarmac Road centre, and Menara Junction centre.

MDGs under threat, says IMF

By PETER MUTUKU

THE current food and fuel crisis facing the country and other developing countries at large could adversely affect the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

A statement by the International Monetary Fund calls on key players and stakeholders to explore ways of addressing the emerging threats to the world economy.

The latest World Economic outlook released by the Fund indicates that MDGs may be delayed as a result of the weaker employment incomes.

The MDGs include health, education, gender parity and empowerment, equity and social security issues and Kenya has done well in initiating free education for all. "The price shocks, coupled with the recovery, are likely to lead to higher inflation in most countries," adds the statement. The IMF revelation is bound to increase pressure on most Governments as unemployment figures soar and earnings plummet. "This was a critical pillar of the MDG. We must get a way of reversing these effects before they tip over," the report says. Kenya's unemployment rate stands at 40 percent with the youth accounting for 64 percent which translates to about 10.2 million youth.

To check on the increasing commodity prices, IMF wants fiscal intervention to be targeted on the incomes or primary spending items of poor households. Kenya has already moved to cut levies on basic household items such as kerosene. However, forecasts says the continent's growth will this year hit the high levels seen in the mid 2000 and average of between 5.5 and 6.0 percent next year.

And, the World Bank in collaboration with the Government has launched reforms that would make it easier to do business in Kenya.

The programme is based on four indicators that include starting businesses, dealing with construction permits, registering property and need to improve investments in Kenya, said the local Better Regulatory Office Chief executive, Mr. Graham Russell. He called for dialogue between the private and public organizations to help Kenyans compete globally.

The Head of Public Service Transformation Department, Mr Emmanuel Lubembe, said a number of local authorities have undertaken reform initiatives with the investment climate team of the World Bank Group providing support to the offices of Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers and ministries of Local Government and Finance.

Mr Lubembe said all the 47 counties should provide training on business regulations in a devolved government. Mrs Margaret Osidi who is the City Council to the Ministry of Local Government said the council was automating parking fees and tackling corruption in the authority. She said Kshs11 million has been set aside for payment of consultants to develop a networking web for the council for improved public relations.

The County has also been renovating the Eastland region and reconditioning the Dandora dumpsite that will eventually be moved to Ruai.

Meanwhile the government has assured parents that it has no intention to abolish middle level colleges in the county. Responding to rumours that middle level colleges will be abolished, a director in the ministry of higher Education, Science and Technology Dr Salome Gichura said middle level colleges continue to play a critical role in training middle level human resource, critical to the country's economic goals stipulated in vision 2030.

Dr Gichura assured that where middle level colleges have been upgraded into constituent colleges of universities, they will still continue to offer both certificate and diploma programmes even as degree programmes are introduced.

Body wants state to reduce lower fuel taxes

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry wants the Government to consider revising its tax regime on petroleum products to help reduce the cost of living.

The Mombasa branch, Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive officer, Mr. Felix Mogaka, said the recent move by the

Government to increase wages for the lowest paid workers by 12.5 per cent would hurt employers, while spurring inflation. He appealed to the Government to revise tax on petroleum products and excise duty to reduce manufacturing costs.

"This will bring down the high cost of essential goods such as sugar, maize and wheat flour, cooking oil and rice," said Mr. Mogaka.

"Imposing a huge wage bill on employers who are also struggling to stay afloat in the prevailing hostile economic situation would cripple many companies and even bankrupt others as it is unsustainable," he said.

He challenged the Government to create a conducive investment environment to encourage the sector to thrive for the expansion and creation of more employment opportunities for Ken-

nyans.

Mr. Mogaka said the Government must intervene to reduce fuel prices that are critical to reducing the high cost of living.

"Reducing tax on petroleum products would automatically bring down the cost of living as transporters will incur fewer expenses in moving goods from manufacturers to the consumers," he said.

By MORRIS GITHENYA

KENYANS have been challenged to discard empty rhetoric and instead embark on addressing issues facing the nation.

Planning and National Development assistant minister Peter Kenneth said Kenyans should shun leaders who engage in endless political bickering at the expense of pertinent issues that require immediate intervention.

Speaking at St John's Kahuhia ACK, the assistant minister said, Kenya has already plunged into an electioneering mood as leaders shift to pursue their own personal interests.

Kenneth challenges Kenyans

Accompanied by Kiharu Member of Parliament Muturi Mwangi, Kenneth said, Kenyans should embrace the opportunities available in the new constitution to bring in a new crop of leaders committed to their aspirations.

The clergy led by Mt Kenya Central Bishop Isaac Ng'ang'a called on the government to resettle the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). They expressed concern over delays in finding a lasting solution to the IDP problem.

"As the church we are concerned by the stalemate in the resettlement programme as innocent people are still languishing in tents," said Ng'ang'a.

Bishop Ng'ang'a urged Kenyans to elect visionary leaders with capacity to drive the country into greater heights of development.

Meanwhile, a swimming expedition turned tragic in Murang'a County when two died after a mine collapsed on them.

The two Stanley Makurathi and John Thiong'o aged 13 and 11 respectively were swimming in the abandoned mine when it collapsed in Rurii village in Kiharu.

The incident occurred in one of the pools that had been left open after National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) shut down mines considered risky two years ago. More than ten people from the area have died since the closure of the mines by NEMA.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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

Food insecurity the source of Turkana conflicts

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**HANNA
CARLSSON**

TOWARDS the end of April, I was privileged to attend a cross regional exchange visit on best practices in North Rift Valley. It had representatives from the Partnership for Peace network in Nyanza that visited different sites in Trans Nzoia and West Pokot districts to learn more about conflict management strategies. In a meeting with the District Peace Committee in West Pokot the Nyanza participants were surprised to learn that the Pokot and Turkana communities do not care much about politics. Their main concerns are their livestock and farming. Dependent on rain both for the livestock and farming, climate changes which causes droughts influences them more than what their political representatives says in parliament. With this knowledge the principals of Kenya and Ethiopia should understand that after the last month attacks against the Turkana community by people highly suspected to be the Merille bandits from Ethiopia, they want help to secure the borders. The Merille, is actually an ethic group of Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan by the name Daasanach, but it is foremost the Turkana of Kenya that calls them Merille. Over

the past fifty years the group has been excluded from their traditional Kenyan lands and from being a pastoral people by tradition has in recent years become primarily agro-pastoral. Like the Turkana they don't bother about boundaries or politics but how they will find water for their livestock and farming. The Merille community has therefore now moved 17 kilometers into Kenya and is now preparing land for cultivation in the Omo-Turkana delta. In the adjacent arid land, the Turkana are languishing for lack of food. This was recently stated in the parliament, however, the source of conflict seems not to have been analyzed. There is a food crisis in some parts of both Ethiopia and Kenya and communities such as Turkanas and Merilles are suffering. Therefore, the communities do whatever they can to secure food. Their respective governments have failed to uphold their basic human rights such as the right to food. It is not until the principals understand

the greater picture that they will be able to solve the conflict in North Rift Valley. When the Merilles have food security on their side of the boarder I think they would respect set boundaries between the countries and move back. It is actually among other things of my new knowledge that I gained during my visit in North Rift that I can make this kind of analysis. Otherwise, I would easily have read the reports in the newspapers and agreed with the prime minister that the borders of Kenya are not adequately protected. From my own experiences I would state that exchange visits are a very successful method in peacebuilding.

I know that many of our readers would like to participate in at least one as well, unfortunately it is not possible. However, our aim is to publish as many reports as possible not only in the magazine but also on our website from the participants that have so far been involved.

In line with the project policy dialogue meetings where among other things negative ethnicity was identified as one of the main sources of conflict I was invited to a consultative meeting with the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs in conjunction with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and the lead

consultants Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research (KIPPRA) to discuss the development of a policy on national cohesion and integration. It was agreed that the rationale for a policy on national cohesion and integration is based on the fact that Kenyan communities have been faced with the problem of negative ethnicity and competing ethnic, religious and class interests overriding the national interests. Through consultative meetings the hope is to develop a policy that will address deep rooted causes of disintegration, conflicts, inequality, marginalization, discrimination and unpatriotic tendencies well ahead of the 2012 general elections. Our readers are most welcome to share their views on what should be considered in the policy and we will forward them to both the department of National Cohesion and the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional affairs, and KIPPRA which is the leading institute to develop the draft. Please note that the first draft will be shared at the end of June 2011. In this issue of the Partnership for Peace you can also read a more elaborated article about the meeting which was attended by Honorable Mutula Kilonzo, the minister for Justice and National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs.

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

National cohesion policy to be ready by November

By **HANNA CARLSSON, IPM**

THE 17th May the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs in conjunction with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and the lead consultants Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research Analysis (KIPPRA) invited stakeholders to a consultative meeting on the development of a policy on national cohesion and integration. The Partnership for Peace project was invited as an important stakeholder in the field representing the project's 153 partner organizations in Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western. Through the project's policy dialogue meetings focusing on among other issues Negative Ethnicity the project has gathered important views from the ground to be included in the policy.

The consultative meeting started with a speech from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Ambassador Amina Mohamed. Thereafter, the department of National Cohesion shared the Ministry's progress towards developing the National Cohesion and Integration Policy. In the first phase, which started in April and will continue until the end of June, a draft will be developed with material gathered from stakeholders. The Partnership for Peace project shared with the Ministry the outcome from the regional policy dialogue meeting in that was held Nakuru where Negative Ethnicity was discussed at length and recommendations made. In the second phase, which starts in July the draft policy will be discussed, however, in which form has not yet to be

decided. The aim is to have a final policy by November 2011.

The meeting continued with a key note address by Honorable Mutula Kilonzo, the Minister for Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs. In his key note he emphasized the urgency of a policy on National Cohesion and Integration and said that for a long time, Kenyan people have been at odds with one another. Kenyan communities have been faced with the problem of negative ethnicity and competing ethnic, religious and class interests overriding the national interest. He ended with opening up the floor for questions and views from the audience. A gentleman raised the concern of use of vernacular saying that politicians use tribal languages to

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Rationale for national integration Policy

By **EUNICE MASIKA**

HISTORICALLY, cohesion among the different ethnic-nations was maintained and enhanced through constant communication and communal diplomacy. The communities' Council of Elders glued the different ethnic-nations together. This harmonious and peaceful coexistence among ethnic-nations collapsed with the advent of missionary sojourn and the establishment of colonial rule. The underlying causes of the PEV can therefore be traced back to the colonial period and to the policies pursued by the post-independence government that led to skewed development. The British colonialists perpetuated negative ethnicity by using the 'divide and rule' strategy. They heightened ethnic consciousness among communities who were living harmoniously with respect for each other. Colonial rule it may be argued, ushered in a new dawn in ethnic relations in which the negative element of ethnicity seemingly assumed prominence over positive ethnicity.

Indeed the nationalistic tendencies and feelings that emerge in Kenya from the indigenous people was a reaction to the colonial administration and settler presences in the colony and protectorate of Kenya. The need to establish a Kenyan nation was informed by the desirer to establish a new paradigm in the realm of governance – the establishment of post colonial governance regime that embodied African self rule, representation, and the government's accountability and respect of citizen's civil rights, individual freedoms, economic development and social welfare. However, with the gaining of independence, the post-independence government pursued policies which although well intended were skewed towards development of high potential areas thus marginalizing the low potential areas. Secondly the land question was never adequately addressed by the post-independence government hence some communities felt marginalized and left out by the central government.

Ethnicity poses a significant challenge in Kenya. Negative ethnicity has continued to be perpetuated for political gains with political parties have been organized along ethnic, religious, racial and regional lines. The country's politics, which pervades the daily lives of Kenyans, is mainly driven by ethnicity based party vehicles and coalitions. Moreover, values of tolerance, appreciation and embracing unity in diversity have completely been eroded. Kenya's future as a nation-state depends to a large extent on the need to recognize and celebrate diversity and the need to build a strong and cohesive national character.

Pursuant to the National Accord, parliament enacted the National Cohesion and Integration Act, 2008 which paved the way for the establishment of a National Cohesion and Integration Commission. However, the National Cohesion and Integration Act 2008, was not preceded by a policy as is the common practice. This was due to the



Delegates meeting with the Chief of Kehancha location.

prevailing circumstances at the time of its negotiation and subsequent enactment. Thus the act requires a policy frame work that will strengthen it operationalisation and inform its future amendments to align it to the current realities in promoting national cohesion and integration. Another Act of parliament established the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) to deal with historical injustices and other issues that have hindered the pursuit of truth and justice in Kenya since independence. The commission has since encountered a myriad of challenges that have threatened to derail operations. The national cohesion policy will be expected to continue with truth, justice and reconciliation process after the expiry of the commission's mandate.

The enactment of the new constitution has transformed radically the governing structures of the country. Among the many new provisions, the constitution provided for the establishment of forty seven (47) counties in Kenya. As the county governments prepare to play their respective roles as enshrined in the constitution, there is need to ensure that the component of national cohesion is ignored. Recent county caucus meetings raise the fear that enhancing cohesion and integration in counties may face a serious challenge since many of such meetings may inadvertently be promoting the spirit of exclusivity. There is thus a risk of nurturing gender, ethnic, religious, racial and age based discrimination as witnessed in the composition of number of county forums. This may eventually plant the feelings of marginalization, and mistrust amongst the section of the population, and in the long run hampering of the spirit of cohesion and integration which will eventually affect national unity.

The current debate about the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecution of PEV suspects at the Hague has started to heighten both the ethnic and political anxiety. Debates by those in support or against the ICC process threaten to polarize the citizenry. As the country approaches 2012

General Elections, there is need to put in place specific measures that will ensure that Kenyans will never again retreat to the ugly incidents witnessed after the 2007 general elections.

Today, there is no existing comprehensive national policy on national cohesion and integration. Rather, what is available are fragmented and uncoordinated efforts by a number of actors, aimed to promote social cohesion. It is in recognition of these facts that the Department of National Cohesion in collaboration with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission and other stakeholders is spearheading the development of a policy on national cohesion and integration to guide the process of national cohesion and address existing cohesion challenges.

The policy on national cohesion will be anchored in the collective aspiration of Vision 2030, which strives for better Kenya; a globally competitive and prosperous country with high quality of life in a clean and secure environment. It will be grounded in the spirit of the new constitution as expressed in the preamble, "proud of our ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and determined to live in peace and unity as one indivisible sovereign nation" (The Kenya Constitution, P.12). The policy on nation cohesion and integration seeks to unify Kenyans and rally them towards economic, political and social realization of the Vision 2030 in the new constitutional dispensation. It will also be blueprint for harnessing social capital towards good governance, cohesion, rule of law, justice and development.

Extracted from Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs Concept Paper page 5-8.

Western delegates exchange visit to Kuria

1. 0. Introduction

As part of the Partnership for Peace, a project funded by the European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, a one week ex-

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incite and turn communities against each other. At the same time, another participant said that South Africa had 11 national languages and India 80 national languages so he did not think that local languages were to blame for the prevailing situation in Kenya. Instead, local languages should be encouraged and protected by law. A representative from the Ministry of State for National Heritage and Culture was in the process to develop a language policy in line with the new constitution that recognizes that Kenya's cultural diversity is the foundation to the nation. Another participant highlighted the fact that Kenyans employ along ethnic lines which does not promote integration and national cohesion. The issue about land was another concern and source of negative ethnicity. Someone proposed that the government should own all land which then will be leased out citizens. By so, no one would be able to have a large plot of fertile land that only lays idle or argue that the land belongs to them because of ancestries. I note that the Kenyan government could explore the system used in Tanzania where all land is owned by the government and then leased out. The lease periods depends on what the land will be used for; housing, business or agriculture. If the Government needs the land to build something that benefits the general public or is of national interest, for instance a new public school or highway, the Government can cancel the lease against a small compensation.

It was concluded that impunity is another source fueling negative ethnicity and disintegration. According to a source, 25% of the national budget is stolen each year. However, Honorable Kilonzo thought the figure is closer to 50-60%. He concluded that Kenya is a rich country and if the public money was managed and used properly we would not have problem with high unemployment rates and that people don't know from where they will get food the next day. Instead we could focus on national cohesion which will generate a prosperous nation.





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change program for 16 peace delegates from Western Province to Nyanza province in the republic of Kenya was organised. The aim was for peace delegates working in Western Province to familiarize themselves with the issues of conflict and peace building in Nyanza Province and in particular Kuria District. The delegation of 16 people arrived first in Kisumu, the Nyanza provincial head quarters, where we had lunch. We had the opportunity to visit the Lake port, before proceeding to Isibania in Kuria District. When we arrived at the border town of Isibania we booked in to Summer Spring Hotel. From Western all the way to Isibania we used public vehicles on the roads. For me personally, this exchange visit also gave me the chance to step foot into Tanzania for the first time.

1.1 The theme of the exchange programme

The purpose of the exchange programme was to share experiences in peace building and conflict management, and to evaluate the conflict situations in Nyanza in order to understand the similarities with those in Western province. In addition, we hoped to share information on peace building and improve networking between Nyanza and Western Province organisations.

Our hosts in Nyanza were the partner organizations working within the Partnership for Peace network, which include: youth groups, NGOs, CBOs, women's groups and self-help groups.

1.2 Discussions with our Nyanza CSO colleagues

During the discussions with our Nyanza counterparts, we learned that the Province has three main communities; Luo, Kisii and the Kuria. There are also other Kenyan communities living in the province, including; the Luhya, Kikuyu and Maasai. The Kuria are agriculturalists, working in farming and rare cattle, they have relatively large farms. Many farmers make a living in tobacco farming. The Kuria's also traditionally practice cattle rustling. We learned that there are cases of cross-border cattle rustling as the Kuria people are spread across the Kenya and Tanzania border.

The issue of cattle rustling has pitted the Kuria against their neighbours, the Maasai, who also keep cattle and take part in cattle rustling. Their neighbours on the other side - the kisii - are purely agriculturists and live on the fertile hills in the province. The kisii area is densely populated and relatively developed compared to Kuria and Maasai. There are prejudices against the Kuria in Nyanza province, that they are lazy and thieves. They are accused of being the cause of ethnic tensions in the province by stealing the Maasai's cattle and disappearing across the border to their kin in Tanzania. This causes bitterness between the communities in the province retaliatory ac-



Meeting with the DPC members outside Kuria East District headquarters.

tions which can escalate into violent conflict.

Another source of conflict is the drawing administrative boundaries between the communities living in the province. In the new constitution, the Kuria people are in Migori County, but they wanted to have their own county for fear of dominance by the Luo in Migori County.

There are also intra-tribe conflicts between the Wakumbe and Waikira, clans of the Kuria tribe on the Western part of the Kuria district, and the Wairege and Nyambasi in the Eastern part of the Kuria. These disputes are also partly based on the drawing of district boundaries and location of district headquarters. The disputes clan-based disputes have resulted in the loss of life and destruction of property.

1.3 The scope of conflicts

● **Land-** The Maasai have a disproportionately large amount of land for their numbers. The neighbouring communities, particularly the Kuria communities, have much smaller plots of land which has led to land invasions of Maasai land.

● **Cattle rustling-** The Kuria are blamed for stealing cattle from the Maasai and crossing with them into Tanzania. The prevalence of this activity has caused the Maasai to arm themselves with guns in order to protect their herds. The Maasai claim that more than 277 heads had been stolen by the Kuria in the last six months. This

culture has greatly affected the community, especially youths who have lost their lives and have been forced to drop out of school.

● **Early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)-** At the age of 11-15 years girls in the Kuria culture are forced to undergo FGM to symbolize and affirm their transition to maturity and womanhood. After the circumcision, many of the girls are believed to be adults, capable of making informed choices by themselves. They are able to leave school and go to marry, which many families encourage in order to secure greater financial stability. For boys it is also thought that after circumcision they are old enough to marry. In order to pay the dowry needed for marriage, the boys will often steal cattle for both financial and cultural reasons.

● **Poverty-** This is brought about by idleness, lack of employment and negative cultural beliefs, such as cattle rustling. Generally, Kuria people have large areas of land compared to the kisii but they have not utilized this resource. They do little farming, are not hard working. The youths too are ever idle. Therefore, without any clear livelihood activity to keep them busy, they engage in theft and other negative activities that perpetuate their poverty.

● **Lack of education-** The rate of early marriage among the young girls in Kuria is very high, which leads to many girls hav-

ing little formal education. Similarly, the rate of boys dropping out of school is also high, as they leave school in order to earn an income for their family. The district peace committees (DPC) are trying their best to educate the youths on the importance of education.

● **Existence of Illegal firearms-** The proliferation of firearms in the region has meant that conflicts have become much more deadly. Homemade guns that are much more affordable than manufactured guns have made these weapons more accessible.

1.4 Visits

The Western delegates visited Mabera division Kuria West district, and shared views with the district officer (DO) Mr. Wycliffe Munanda. The DO gave us an overview of his experience of the Kuria people in Nyanza province, and the nature of conflict in his division. The Kuria have a population over 279,000 people. There are four major clans within the Kuria, who speak the same language and practice almost the same culture. They are spread over two Districts; Kuria West and East. Kuria West consists of the Wagumbe and Waikira clans, while Kuria East is composed of the Wanyambasi and Wairege clans. There are conflicts between the clans, who fight over land and internal clan boundaries. To resolve these

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conflicts, the local CBOs and NGOs have been closely working with DPCs at the grassroots level, using mechanisms such as peace caravans and early warning systems. The DO claimed that this work has contributed greatly to reducing conflicts in Kuria West District. He also claimed that the emphasis on youth education has also resulted in a reduction in the number of youths engaging in criminal activity.

The delegation also met with members of the local community who explained to us Ritongo. The Ritongo is a community court, formed by a council of elders to settle disputes among the Kuria West people. The community also came up with the Zunguzungu. These are groups of young vigilantes who are members of local community policing and work in cooperation with the police to stamp out criminals in the area. If you have committed a crime the Zunguzungu are sent to apprehend you. They will bring you before the Ritongo for disciplinary action.

What was interesting was that the Ritongo could administer Ekikhori, traditional herbs used to trap those who commit crime and then deny doing so. They force the suspect to drink the herbs as an acceptance that you have not committed any crime. These Ekikhori used to trap those people who committed crimes such as theft in the community. A person is forced to drink and if they are guilty the suspect will know and they will be cursed. Euguru is another herb which is placed on the ground and suspects are told to jump over it while necked, if the suspect is sure they have not committed any crime they will jump. If the suspect is guilty, they will be cursed by the victim's family.

The delegation also travelled to Kehancha, the headquarters of Kuria West district. We met with the District Commissioner (DC) and other community leaders at Ikerege market. The Ritongo members were scheduled to explain to us how they perform their work in disciplining the wrong doers. However, due to heavy rains, the DC was forced to postpone the meeting. The DC also told of how he had the residents over retaining illegal firearms rather than engaging in activities which can improve their living standards, and that he had managed to recover four AK-47 rifles and one homemade gun.

The delegates also visited Kegonga, in Kuria East district, and met the district peace committees (DPC), before meeting with the (DC) District Commissioner. There are 20 DPCs in Kuria East. The DPCs came up with a common goal to make peace, and earmarked the hot spots as areas between Kuria and the Maasai community. We talked to Mr. Mutindika the District Commissioner (DC) of Kuria East. He stated the District has four locations: Kegonga, Chinato, Ntimaru and Kwiho. Kuria East District had



Western delegates in a group photograph in Kehancha.

two clans; the Bwireke and Nyambasi and there are other Kenyans who stay here as professionals. He said that, the main cause of conflicts between the Maasai and Kuria is cattle rustling, though the same applies to the Kipsigis and the Maasai. There is also cross-border cattle rustling from Kenya into Tanzania, and vice-versa.

In order to see a reduction in the number of deaths, the DC believes, the residents must surrender any illegal guns. However, there is total fear and mistrust among the communities so this is a difficult task. There have been several meetings and ongoing dialogue between the Kuria people and trans-mara people, but the DC feels that the mission to resolve the conflicts is not finished.

The delegation then talked to the chief of the location, Mr. Samuel Chacha, who explained that FGM in Kuria district is very deep rooted in the culture. Kuria men believe that they cannot marry a girl who was not circumcised. Therefore, the girls in Kuria could not marry within the district if they did not pass through FGM. Today activists are trying their best to end FGM through education. Pastor Daniel Singo from Ministries of Kin Outreach told us that he has always provided accommodation for young girls who have refused to be circumcised. Last December he accommodated over 184 girls whom were forced to pass through FGM. He preached to them the word of god, some repented and got saved. The youths repented and decided to return the

guns as they prospered in the word of God.

We travelled to Rongo from Kahenchia town. The meeting was held at Rongo Catholic Church hall. The delegates talked to seven members of peace makers who highlighted the problems relating domestic violence and tribal clashes in Luo land. They said the root cause of violence between the Luo and Kisii, is land, with the Luo people invading the Kisii land, causing many problems. Another conflict comes from the political affiliations, where the Luos are for Raila Odinga while the Kisii are perceived to be for Mwai Kibaki. In these political squabbles arguments can lead to ethnic clashes. During election time it is particularly dangerous as youths are easily encouraged carry crude weapons and throw stones at opposition party supporters.

1.5 Challenges

The challenges people of Nyanza provinces are facing are, that the communities still own a large number of illegal fire arms and have not surrendered them all. The peace-makers are trying their best to carry out public education programs on peace keeping & conflict management, but there is total mistrust among the communities in the Province.

1.6. Recommendations

I learned a lot from the visit. The conflict situations in Kuria have similarities to those being dealt with in Western, perhaps with the exception of cattle rustling. The government of Kenya should put policy measures in place to strengthen the work of the DPCs and non-state actors in peace building. The youths should also be empowered in income generating projects so that they are not idle.

Report by Eunice Masika of Western Kenya Human Rights Watch (WKHRW)

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Eucalyptus guidelines finally released

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE government has issued fresh guidelines to help in effective growing of the controversial Eucalyptus tree in the country.

Minister for Forestry and Wildlife Hon Noah Wekesa launched the guidelines contained in a booklet named "Facts on Growing and Use of Eucalyptus in Kenya" at Kiawathanji area in Tetu District recently.

The booklet will contribute to effective growing of Eucalyptus tree leading to increased forest cover, carbon storage, and renewable energy, mitigating climate change, improved livelihood and creating wealth for the people of the country.

The trees will also boost economy by offering viable alternatives for income generation activities and also increase the forest cover in the country from the current two per cent to 10 per cent by 2030.

The Eucalyptus tree is the most economically viable option for farmers and studies show that a farmer can earn more by planting the species on their land compared to other crops.

The tree is among the most widely cultivated and commercial forest tree in the world.

Currently, most of the eucalyptus in the country is grown as an investment for financial gain.

"I urge farmers, stakeholders and private land owners to embrace the fast growing species for it provides wood fuels, plywood, timber, building materials, fencing posts, windbreaks and are also important in providing products that would otherwise be sourced from natural forests," said the Minister.

A recent scientific study carried out by the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) and the Kenya Forestry Service (KFS) has revealed that the best areas to plant the trees are marginal lands degraded through soil erosion and loss of soil fertility, planting as shelter belts and wind breaks on large scale farms, on areas with saline



Minister for Forestry and Wildlife Hon. Noah Wekesa walks in a farm of Eucalyptus at Kiawathanji area during the launch of Eucalyptus guidelines for growing of the tree in the country. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

soils and on farm lands as plantations and woodlots.

"The Eucalyptus species have a market niche which gives them a competitive edge over other trees species and contributes to the growth of the national economy. Different Eucalyptus trees are suitable for different agro-ecological zones and therefore, there are areas where the species should not be grown," said the Minister.

Wekesa said the trees should not be grown on wetlands and marshy areas, riparian areas, around lakes, ponds, swamps, along river beds, sea shores and other body of standing water, irrigated farm lands and areas with less than 400mm of rainfall.

Present during the launch included the PS in the Ministry M. Mwachai, KFS board Chairman Mr Richard Musangi, KFS director Mr David Mbugua, Central deputy PC Mrs Ann

Ng'etich and area DC Mr Herman Shambi among others.

The KFS and KEFRI both came with the guidebooks that contain information and facts on the Eucalyptus that they believe will help the farmers and technical officers understand the proper management of the trees.

"As the Kenyan's population continues to grow at a faster rate, immense pressure is now exerted on our scarce forestry resource and so there is need to avert future crisis of timber shortage by investing in the fast growing tree species such as Eucalyptus," added A ready market for Eucalyptus products has also motivated farmers to grow the species to improve their livelihoods through increased income.

In Kenya, the Eucalyptus species were introduced in the country in 1902 by the colonial government to provide energy for locomotives. Since then

about 100 species have been planted in the country.

Most of these were subjected to extensive research and currently less than 20 species have been recommended for wide scale planting.

The area under Eucalyptus species in the country is estimated to be about 100,000 hectares of plantations, 15,000 Ha in gazette forests, about 35,000 Ha planted by private companies and the rest planted by farmers.

The main reason for the introduction of the Eucalyptus was its fast growth, ability to re-sprout and the straight nature of its stems.

Other products such as firewood, charcoal, building materials, fencing posts, transmission poles, pulpwood, timber and plywood were obtained from the tree and this made the genus versatile.

As a result of these attributes, the

government promoted and supported extensive growing of the tree which culminated in the introduction of high yielding, shorter-rotation varieties through biotechnology between 1997 and 2003.

The recent past has therefore experienced unprecedented growth in Eucalyptus supported farm forests in various configurations throughout the country.

KFS board chairman Musangi said the launch of the booklet is part of the Kenya Forest Service sensitization and awareness creation programme to help the Kenyan public know the vital role that forests and indeed all kinds of trees play in the socioeconomic and environmental stabilization of a country.

"Currently, it is estimated that Kenya annually imports Kshs7 billion worth of timber. It will be remembered that a directive to get rid eucalyptus along river line areas was misinterpreted leading to massive excisions including on properly matched sites. This had a negative impact on farm forestry in this country especially in some areas of Central Highlands Conservancy. For a long time most farmers were growing Eucalyptus on their farms due to their high biomass value and wide diversity of products," said Musangi.

The KFS and KEFRI present scientific facts about Eucalyptus including information on species and site matching specifications for best results.

He said the tree is a primary candidate and is one of the fastest growing trees in the world.

Mr James Kimuri who is a local prominent farmer for the past ten years and who hosted the minister said he has made profits amounting to thousands of shillings as he grows the tree for commercial purposes.

Mr Ephantus Waweru Kariuki who is also a local farmer says that he has been growing the trees in his two acres of land and making good returns after harvesting.

Bifwoli roots for a poly in Bumula

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

BUMULA MP Bifwoli Wakoli is pushing for the establishment of a technical training institute in his constituency as a way of resolving the rising cases of unemployment among the youth in the area.

The MP has already managed to raise Kshs300,000 to purchase land and set up the institute at Musakasa area which he says will serve as an avenue to spur economic growth in the area.

The MP who is also an assistant Minister for Lands urged the electorate to support the project which seeks to prepare the youth for the labour market and make them self reliant.

He says it is unfortunate that the constituency had continued to lag behind in development because the area lacked vital facilities including institutions of learning critical for growth.

He notes that most middle level colleges are located away from the

constituency, and therefore parents have been unable to enroll their children upon completion of their secondary education.

Wakoli explained that starting the Technical institute was also timely as the four village polytechnics in the area have in the recent past registered remarkable growth in students population.

"Most of these students will join the polytechnic to hone their skills and improve their chances of getting better employment," adds the assistant minister.

Three village polytechnics have been established in the area over the past five years with the student population rising to an estimated 1000 students in each polytechnic.

The idea to start the college was mooted by the Catholic church, after it became

clear that the area was disadvantaged and may not compete effectively with other regions in Bungoma County.

Kilifi council rated best performer

By BEKADZO TONDO

KILIFI County Council has been rated among the best performing civic bodies in the country in the management of the Local Authority Transfer Funds (LATF).

According to the Parliamentary Committee of Local Authorities, the council's performance in both the management of LATF and implementation of community projects is highly commendable.

The rating came shortly after the 11 member committee led by Ainaoi MP Mr Benjamin Lang'at paid an impromptu visit to the council and inspected its financial records.

The team also visited projects that had been financed through LATF and gave them a clean bill of health. Among the projects the committee visited included Matsangoni health center and Mtomodoni primary school where the council had initiated some projects.

Langat praised the council for managing to pay its workers and councilors allowances in good time. The committee members said most local authorities they had vis-

ited were highly indebted and some could not account for the LATF funds allocated to them. They blamed the scenario to lack of qualified personnel that had currently been entrusted to manage councils.

Among other councils visited by the committee in Coast included Lamu County Council and both Malindi municipal and county council.

Meanwhile, the *Saidia Kwa Moyo* Orphanage in Kilifi is operating illegally despite being shut down by the government.

The home which caters for 28 children was closed down on April 29, this year but continues to operate albeit the closure by the government.

The District Officer in charge of Bahari Division Mrs. Florence Sitawa however says she has not received any formal communication to effect the closure.

Mrs. Sitawa however indicates that the matter had been forwarded to the head office for further action after proprietors failed to divulge information relating to the children being housed at the facility.

"The case was forwarded to the head office after the proprietors de-

clined to divulge details on the children, where they came from and their family status," she explained.

Also unaware of the new development is Kilifi District Children's officer Mr. Juma Mboga who said he had not received any official communication indicating that the home had been shut down.

Founder members Helmat Mueller and his wife Petra from German confirmed to have received a letter from the Director of Children Affairs in Nairobi ordering the closure of the center on grounds that it did not have license. Mrs. Mueller who talked to The Link at the center however accused the Kilifi District Children's Officer Mr. Mboga of frustrating their efforts to get registered.

The center has been embroiled in a row over its legitimate owners with locals who act as trustees claiming that they own the facility.

However the German couple has insisted that they own the home since they have been financing its operations. They claimed that some people in the government wanted to grab the home and were therefore unwilling to give them an operating license.

New sanitation project launched in Western

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

ALTHOUGH Kenya is listed among countries that may not meet a number of targets laid out by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a fresh project could place the nation on the path to making significant achievements. The Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is currently being implemented in six districts on a pilot basis before the programme is rolled out to other regions.

Half the population, an equivalent of 21 million Kenyans, may still be defecating in the bush, and the huge amount of the waste ends up in water sources. This is likely to increase deaths related to diarrhoea, typhoid and cholera infections.

Dr. Kamal Kar, who is behind the initiative says the programme has taken off in Nyando, Bondo, Siaya, Kisumu East and West and Busia and will be upscaled to other parts of the country. Dr. Kar said defecating in the bush is a mindset and expressed dismay that out of the 13 districts in Nyanza, only five had embraced the CLTS programme.

He praised Nyando DPHO, Mr. Nicholas Makotsi, and his Kisumu West counterpart, Hilda Ayieko for their exemplary performance on the CLTS initiative after encouraging many villages to fully embrace the project. The revelation emerged at a capacity building week-long workshop in Kisumu to facilitate the uptake of the "wonder sanitation initiative".

Makotsi received the team comprising of Deputy Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. John Kariuki, CLTS National Programme Manager, Mr. Ibrahim Basweti and Dr. Farooq Khan, Unicef WASH Programme Consultant. The DPHO said Nyando district is usually faced with many challenges during the months of April and July when many residents die of waterborne diseases such as Cholera, Typhoid, Pneumonia, Bilhazia, Malaria and HIV/Aids for living in tents.

He said there has been a sharp drop in deaths of children under five years following the "triggering" of CLTS in villages that fall under Kano plains. He said some stakeholders had often waited for disaster to strike before taking action.

Dr. Kar told the forum the team visited Kodhiambo village (Nyando) where a "natural leader", Tom Otieno Omullo, and a resident, Ms. Mary Monari, emerged as the driving force behind the success of the CLTS programme. "None of our mothers should shed tears from the deaths of children owing to diarrhoea, cholera or typhoid," Dr. Kar says.

Dr. Kar says DPHOs have only covered 18 districts (13 in Nyanza and 5 in Western) out of a total of 65 the programme targets to cover. He claims some provincial administrators were "sleeping on the job" considering that in districts where CLTS programme had not taken root, residents were experiencing enormous suffering.

Dr. Kar, who developed the CLTS model in 1999, said by the end of 2013 all 264 districts should be declared as "Open Defecation Free" (ODF) zones. He says the continent has overtaken Asia in embracing the CLTS initiative.

There has been serious political will among African leadership to scale up the

programme. This has mainly been attributed to the abundant human resources and the infrastructural development in rural areas targeted by the model", Dr. Kar said, adding that the programme should be mainstreamed in the Government development agenda. He said out of 264 DPHOs, only 10 were women."

"I'm overwhelmed by the progress made in the region and remain optimistic of the potential ahead," the founder of CLTS programme globally said. The question is: will the Kenyan team sustain the pace when UNICEF leaves?

The Deputy Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. John Kariuki, said the Government's Environmental Sanitation Policy projects that by 2015, all households should have a toilet.

Dr. Kariuki reassured participants that CLTS would ensure Kenya achieves MDGs through its environmental management strategy by 2013.

He said sanitation coverage is expected to rise to 73 per cent by end of July, 2011, up from current 63 per cent

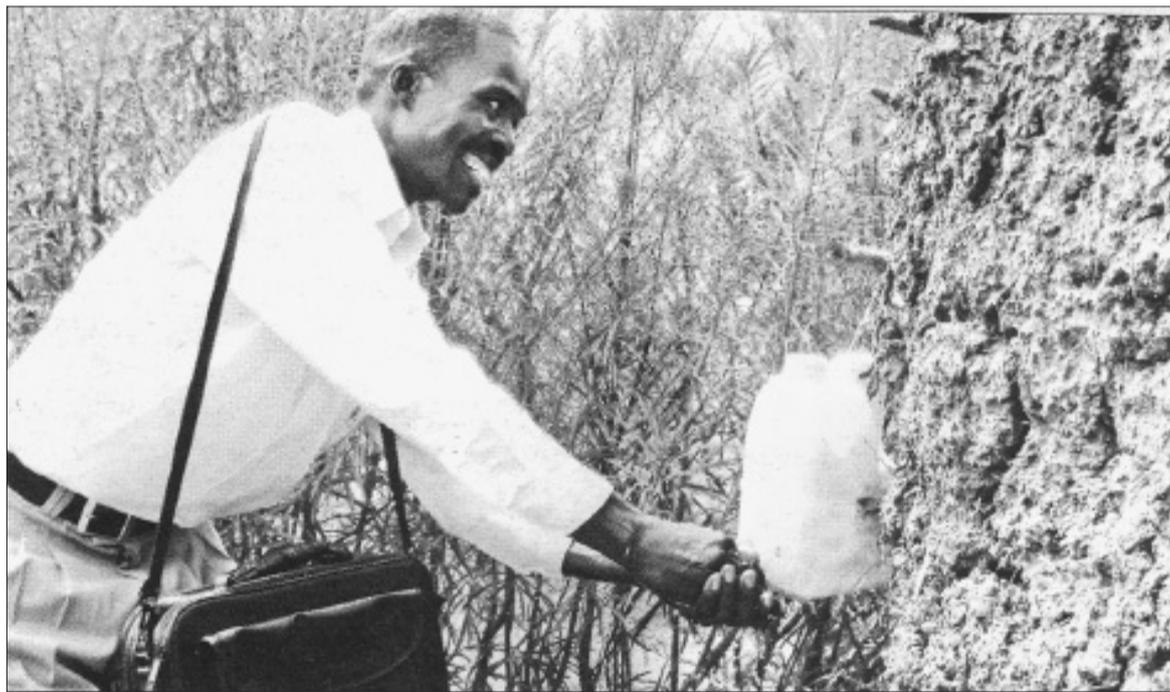
through the CLTS intervention.

"Through CLTS, we can achieve MDGs but it should not be business as usual. The ministry has organized a re-launch of the unique initiative to give impetus to scaling it up for coverage of the entire country," says Dr. Kariuki.

He says Nyanza and Western provinces have poor health indicators and must therefore invest heavily in the CLTS programme if they hope to reverse the number of deaths attributed to diarrhoea, typhoid and worms.

The Provincial Epidemiologist, Dr. Peter Okoth, says CLTS had reduced infant mortality and deaths among mothers. "Many children and mothers are dying unnecessarily but the Government has committed itself to reducing infant mortality and increase the survival of mothers," he said.

"Western Kenya (Nyanza and Western provinces) should not let more children die alongside parts of Rift Valley. This has to be reversed at all costs," he said.



Mr. Tom Otieno demonstrates how to wash hands after leaving a toilet constructed under the community-led total sanitation project. Photo/File

Madende dispensary set for upgrading

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

PLANS are underway to upgrade Madende dispensary into a fully-fledged health centre to serve the newly created in Nambale District.

Already the Ministry of Health through the Economic Stimulus Project (ESP) has disbursed Kshs21.2 million to facilitate in the construction of a maternity wing, paediatric ward, kitchen, laundry and septic tank.

Benjamin Cheboi, the clinical officer in charge of the health facility says the ministry is in the process of deploying more nurses at the health centre to serve the District whose population stands at 94,000 as per the 2009 population census statistics.

"The dispensary is in the final stages of completion. So far 85percent of the work has been done at a cost of Kshs13million with the remaining work expected to cost Kshs15 million," adds the project officer, Manase Obingo during the District Development Committee (DDC) meeting.

The Busia Water Officer Joseph Olubero who was also present during the district development committee forum, on his part said his ministry in collaboration with the United Nations Funds (UNICEF), International Child

Support (ICS), African Development Empowerment Organization (ADEO) and Public Health and Sanitation ministries have undertaken various development activities in the district especially in learning institutions.

Olubero said that his department has received a total of Kshs40 million from UNICEF which he went towards the construction of Malanga water project that is currently benefiting 2,500 communities from the area.

The water officer at the same time said that through UNICEF the department has drilled a borehole at Buyofu, adding that additional Kshs3million has been received from the non-governmental organization to initiate another project at Dulieng Primary School.

"UNICEF has also drilled 15 water pumps in Nambale serving 250 people," said the water officer, adding that the initiative will ensure the local community has access to clean drinking water.

The water officer further said the National Water Pipeline Corporation (NWPC) had also drilled a borehole at Munyasi primary at a cost of Kshs9million to serve the school and the neighbouring community, adding that in Bukhayo central, the

corporation plans to sink a borehole and put up a storage tank at a cost of Kshs3million. "The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has also drilled a borehole at Musokoto and Igara Primary schools at a cost of Kshs0.6million and Kshs3.7million respectively," said the water officer, adding that the whole project will consume a total of Kshs6 Million on completion.

The district water officer further said a proposal has been forwarded to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to fund another water project at Kapina in Bukhayo North location.

However, the water officer expressed concern over the persistent water shortages in the district caused by frequent power blackouts and theft of water pumps by the area residents.

Olubero at the same time advised the residents to draw water mainly from the boreholes instead of surface water which he said required a lot of treatment due to constant pollution.

He further cautioned people who wash their cars around the water catchment areas that they risked being arrested and charged in court.

During the meeting the area District Commissioner Francis Lenyangume called for the adoption of an inclusive approach in all matters of

development to help raise the profile of the newly created District.

The DC said that all departmental heads in the district will be required to attend District Development Committee (DDC) meetings and give satisfactory answers to matters touching on their respective departments.

The DC at the same time called upon the Nambale Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee to work closely with the relevant departments and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) including various parastatals operating within the district in identifying priority areas that require intervention.

Lenyangume said development is a collective responsibility by all stakeholders who must be incorporated to assist in the achievement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The administrator made the remarks during the District Development Committee (DDC) meeting held at the Nambale Town Council hall recently. He commended the Economic Stimulus Project (ESP) committee for their impressive work and cited the construction of science laboratories at Nambale Boys High School and Kisoko Girls at a cost of Kshs2million.

"As managers and leaders of public health institutions, you must feel challenged and ask yourself what role you have played to contribute to such deaths," he says. He says some of the District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) had failed to realize that failure to perform certain roles had led to serious consequences among the vulnerable in society. He said they had developed a maternal and child health framework for Nyanza and Western provinces with CLTS as one of the highly rated interventions.

"We are re-organizing the communities' strategies to fully embrace the CLTS programme and be in tandem with the rest of the world," he said.

Dr. Okoth said Malaria, Pneumonia and Diarrhoea are some of the leading killers of children below five years in Western Kenya, unlike in the 2007-2009 period when Cholera wreaked havoc. The media says with the implementation of the CLTS program, "cholera will be history."

Dr. Okoth said defecating in the bush must end if Kenya hopes to win the war against Malaria, HIV/Aids and diarrhoea, among other diseases.

Swiss body fighting diseases in Western

By TITUS MAERO

A SWISS-BASED organization has set base in western to help fight infectious diseases.

Vestergaard is focusing on initiatives that seek to eradicate extreme poverty, combat infectious diseases and reduce global warming in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Group CEO Mr Mikkel Frandsen says the organization is currently re-investing its profits in life saving technologies to help curb the spread of infectious diseases.

The CEO was speaking at the Kakamega Golf Hotel where he is coordinating a Kshs 2.5 billion water purification project which seeks to provide clean Water in the western region of the country.

He said close to one million life straw family water filters are being distributed free of charge by Vestergaard employees with support from the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation.

Frandsen said the door to door free distribution of the water filters targets to reach about 90 per cent of homes and schools without access to safe water sources. He said each life straw equipment used to filter water is enough to last for three years.

He observed that households and schools which receive the equipments would no longer have to treat water through boiling which in most cases uses wood fuel that generates green house gases. "The behavior change is expected to provide more than two million tonnes of carbon emissions reduction annually," he added.

He said Vestergaard is making the initial investment of more than USD \$25 million needed to launch the programme noting that more than 4,000 health workers and an equivalent number of drivers had been contracted to distribute the gadgets and educate are residents on proper usage of the water filters.

Nyando launches street lighting project

By BOSCO MAGARE

NYANDO County Council has launched a Kshs.7 million street lighting project at Awasi district headquarters to facilitate a 24-hour economy within the township which lies along the busy Nairobi-Kisumu-Kampala highway.

Council Chairman Samuel Ong'ou says the first phase of the project is set to cost the civic body a total Kshs. 2 million.

"We have already allocated Kshs. 2 million for the first phase of the council's street lighting project aimed at turning Nyando District's Awasi headquarter into a 24-hour economy," Ong'ou says.

The chairman says the second phase of the project will cost Kshs. 5 million to bring the cumulative project cost to Kshs. 7 million.

Ong'ou points out that the project has been funded through both the Local Authority Transfer Funds (LATF) and the council's own locally generated funds.

In an exclusive interview with The Link, Ong'ou says the council has decided on the project to take advantage of its location once the newly established Kisumu County becomes operational.

He further explains that Kisumu County which lies on the shores of Lake Victoria, is strategically placed as a gateway to the Great Lakes Region encompassing Uganda, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi and Southern Sudan, which recently overwhelmingly voted for separation from Northern Sudan.

"Top council civic officials

and the management of Nyando County Council are eager to take advantage of the strategic position of Kisumu County within the Great Lakes Region and the immense business opportunities that come along," Ong'ou says.

Ong'ou says among council stakeholders who will benefit from the street lighting project that will facilitate a 24-hour economy are farmers.

"Nyando area is suitable for horticulture especially the growing of fruits such as pineapples, tomatoes and other

fresh farm produce, which have a ready market in Kisumu City and beyond the region in Uganda and far-flung Rwanda," he points out.

Ong'ou says apart from taking advantage of the strategic location of the council in Kisumu County and along the busy Nairobi-Kisumu-Kampala highway, the civic body will also benefit in many ways from the street lighting project.

The chairman says the street lighting project will beef up security within the township that borders Kericho town in Rift

Valley's Nakuru County.

The council boss is also confident that the project will also serve to attract investors to Nyando District's Awasi headquarters adding that "the street lighting project will equally give a face lift to the town."

Ong'ou says upon completion of the street lighting project, the following areas like the District Commissioner's (DC) offices, entire Awasi Township, and roads leading to Chemelil Township, Katito and Nyangoma will be adequately lit.



Street lighting: Nyando County Council has launched a Kshs.7 million street lighting project at Awasi district headquarters

Ogongo outlines his vision for Sugar Board

By BOSCO MAGARE

KENYA Sugar Board (KSB) impending board election aspirant Tobias Juma Ogongo alias 'Sonko' has unveiled his manifesto, which seeks to empower sugarcane farmers and establish cane licensing in each location.

Onyango says if elected KSB growers director to represent Chemelil-Miwani-Nandi zone in the impending board polls, he will ensure licensing of cane harvesting by millers in each location of Nyando-Sugar-belt zone.

"I will empower sugarcane farmers by establishing licensing mechanisms for cane harvested by millers in each of their locations," Onyango says.

He said if farmers are empowered to license millers especially in Nyando Sugar-belt zone, they will be able to earn commissions from this transaction.

The aspirant, who is a reputed scrap dealer in Western Kenya,

says through the license commissions farmers earnings from for sugarcane will be enhanced.

The Link established that if farmers are allowed to control licensing of sugarcane by millers, they will guard against the current poaching of cane by factories, especially newly constructed ones that have not bothered to establish their own nucleus estate.

Onyango who was presiding the launch of the newly created Chemelil Round-About Community Umbrella Support Group (CRUSG) comprising residents and members of the business fraternity in Chemelil Township, urged farmers to elect KSB growers directors who have their welfare at heart.

During the CRUSG launch ceremony long time Chemelil Round-About resident and trader Michael Agao equally urged cane farmers to prepare themselves adequately for the anticipated privatization of the

local public sugar companies namely South Nyanza Sugar Company (SONY), Nzoia, Muhoroni, stalled Miwani and Chemelil Sugar Company.

Agao advised farmers in Nyando Sugar-belt to form and use their already established Sugarcane Co-operative Societies (Saccos)

"I want this Chemelil Round-About Community Umbrella Support Group (CRUSG) belt to emulate the example of residents of Kibuye in Kisumu City, who have formed a strong Sacco to venture into diverse business

interests," Agao advises.

Agao said plans are underway to establish Nyando Sugar-belt Co-operative Union, which will strategize on how to purchase shares in local public sugar firms like Chemelil Sugar Company once the privatization process kicks-off.

"Soon farmers drawn from all co-operative societies in Nyanza will meet at the Kisumu provincial co-operative office to strategize on how to purchase local public sugar factories such as Chemelil Sugar Company, Agao says.



Workers at a sugar plantation.

World Bank funds Busia communities

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE World Bank through the Kenya Agricultural Programme Agro-Business Productivity (KA-PAP) has disbursed a total of Kshs.75million to community interest groups (CIGs) in the larger Busia district in a project that seeks to uplift their living standards.

The Busia District Service Unit (DSU) coordinator Anne Mang'eni says 22 of the beneficiaries are drawn from Nambale constituency, 18 from Butula constituency, 16 from Funyula constituency and 15 from Budalangi constituency with addition of four groups totaling to 75.

The project coordinator says the programme has empowered the beneficiaries to embark on various income generating activities mainly geared towards enhancing food security in the region.

"The groups also face challenges key among them inability to account for the funds allocated to their respective projects," adds the co-ordinator, adding that despite the challenges, the programme is actively working to achieve its goals.

Meanwhile, the Government in collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock has disbursed a total of Kshs.5.6million to fund an ambitious indigenous chicken rearing project through 48 community based self-help groups in selected districts in Western province.

The Busia District Livestock Production Officer (DLPO) Rose Kahai says the project will be undertaken in Busia, Bungoma East, Mumias and Samia Districts.

The livestock production officer says beneficiaries have already embarked on chicken rearing projects adding that the project targets an additional 15 groups by the end of June this year.

Kahai at the same time said that the groups consist of young 4K clubs, youth groups and the elderly groups adding that the role of her department is purely to train the community on how to manage the project, construction of poultry sheds, selection of indigenous breeds as well as how to vaccinate the birds against bird flu.

"The twelve groups in Busia district have already constructed poultry houses and have been provided with 30 hens and 3 cocks," said the district livestock production officer.

Among the beneficiaries in Busia include the Vijana Tujipange Youth

Group, Burumba Victory Youth Group, Rehema Women Group, Neema Support Group, Sisimukha and Buyende Empowerment Youth Groups, among others.

The district livestock production officer however cited several challenges that have hampered the groups from achieving their objectives.

The identified challenges include shortage of staff to carry out effective monitoring and evaluation of the project, limited resources, inadequate capital and poultry theft which leads to huge losses.

Osera weavers set to go places

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

FOR years, they watched their elderly kinsmen weave as they played leisurely.

The fun would only be cut short if the old, sitting with legs crossed, summoned the young to bring one or two items for use in the process.

As young people, they considered the investment as a part time initiative for the elderly while they whiled away time, in lively gossip and laughter.

But what they mistook as leisure and a forum for killing time would later turn into a meaningful source of their livelihood in the future.

Thanks to entrepreneurship skills that have been passed down from the forefathers, they formed and registered a group.

What makes the grandsons of the old weavers excel in a venture where the forefathers didn't?

Part of it stems from the urge to learn better standards from a skill they easily acquired for free after completing primary school.

While starting up a business venture needs a lot of capital, the basket weavers (Osera Youth Group) at Aram trading centre, in Rarieda district, Siaya County did not need a lot of cash.

They started after each member purchased a bundle of Papyrus reeds.

The bundle of the reeds was weaved into baskets that the later sold during market days, setting the stage for their first cash deposit.

The project site is strategically placed next to the main stage at Aram trading centre along the Ndori-Luanda Kotieno road where passengers are drawn by art works

from the weavers.

The weavers are delighted by the fact that the trade has sustained them.

The group chairman, Mr. Nicholas Angoke, who was also the brain behind the project, says they inherited the art from their forefathers in 1980s. The group was registered in the year 2003 with only 15 members before the number grew to 22. With meager financial resources, they have secured raw materials from as far as Kisumu's Dunga beach, Kirindo in Seme and Yimbo in Bondo district.

Why do they still believe in manual art even as the country heads towards industrialization by 2030? "We're also entrepreneurs of the present generation and taking risks and believing in ourselves is what has taken us to be at par with others," says Angoke.

They hope to soon outwit their rivals in the industry by providing superior products.

With strong entrepreneurship skills, their market extends to Mbita in Suba district, Wich-Lum, Luanda Kotieno, Bar-Kogonya and Kunya beaches. What's their target market? It ranges from fishermen, poultry farmers and households.

He says manually made baskets vary in size depending on the intended use with prices varying from Kshs.40 for the smallest and Kshs.120 for the largest.

On a good day, the weavers can save over Kshs1000 each after setting aside pocket money for their daily use.

They plan to use the accumulated deposits in livestock farming to sustain the investment.

Mr. Angoke, who heads the group plans to create a training



Some of the finished products on display Photo/File

wing where youth can acquire skills to meet the anticipated demand. They have identified over 20 willing youth for the exercise.

The exercise will enable them increase output with a view to exporting the products as the business expands.

Plans are underway to relocate the weaving base to Aram Jua Kali sheds and leave the current site for displays and sales.

Mr. Angoke says some of the most successful entrepreneurs

have humble backgrounds. He says a business idea can be developed through mentoring, training and education and has asked the

Government to reduce the many licenses and fees for business so that many can venture into fields of choice.

AGRA funds finger millet research

By TITUS MAERO

THE Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the McKnight Foundation have disbursed Kshs 55 Million to promote production of Finger Millet in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia.

The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) Managing Director (MD) Dr Ephraim Mukisira said the funds would be used in the next four years after which an evaluation will be done for a possible extension of the programme.

Mukisira said AGRA and McKnight Foundation supports Agriculture Integrated programmes which are aimed at injecting changes in the finger millet production in the Eastern part of Africa.

Mukisira noted that out of the Kshs 55 Million, Kenya had received Kshs34 million while Uganda and Tanzania received Kshs 10.5 million each to assist in the development of high yielding finger millet in order to enhance food security in the region.

Mukisira was speaking at the Kakamega KARI regional offices during the launching ceremony of

McKnight and AGRA funded Finger millet and Legumes projects which was attended by stakeholders drawn from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The MD lauded AGRA and McKnight for the innovative funding which he said is aimed at triggering changes across the Agricultural sector in the Eastern horn of Africa adding that the finger millet project would enhance food and nutritional security in the region.

The official observed that despite finger millet being a strategic crop in the region it has largely been neglected in terms of research and development noting that the crop plays a major role in diets of many inhabitants of Eastern Africa region given its high level of Calcium and Iron plus By-sine, which is an amino acid, that is limited in most cereals.

He emphasized the role of finger millet as the food for infants, breast feeding mothers and people who are recuperating from diabetics and other illnesses noting that there is a major deficit of the crop in the area.

Mukisira outlined challenges facing the production of the crop in Kenya as diseases, poor post

harvest systems, weeds, competition from other crops, low government priority and limited resources attention including lack of processing equipments adding that with research and enabling policy environment the crop has great potential for expansion.

Mukisira said KARI provides full support for increased finger millet research through combination methods and cutting edge science and engagement of African countries in scientific research to assist increase the crop diversification and income among small holder farmers.

He said KARI finger millet agenda centers on breeding for yields, intrinsic good storage ability and insects resistance and through hybrid programme by using biotechnology tools and markets.

Present at the function included the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) in Charge of Research and Extension Professor John Shiundu, McKnight Foundation Representative Dr. L. Golole, AGRA Representative Dr J. Ininda among others.

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Chemelil Sugar posts impressive profit

By BOSCO MAGARE

CHEMELIL Sugar Company has registered Kshs 127million in profits during the 2010/11 financial year.

According to the company's third quarter 2010/11 performance review, production increased by 2% during the period under review.

The firm's Managing Director (MD) Eng. Edward Musebe says that production increased from 3,539metric tonnes in January to 3583 metric tonnes between February-March 2011.

The report indicates a mid-term third quarter increase of sugar sales from 3193 metric tonnes to 3724 metric tonnes which is also attributed to opening up of new sale outlets in Malaba, Busia, Port Victoria, Sio Port targeting the regional market.

Newly opened inland sugar markets include Nyeri, Nanyuki, Eldoret, Kericho, Nyamira, Keroka, Kitale and Kapsabet.

During the period under review out grower farmers delivered a total of 121,202.22 metric tonnes of cane to the plant for milling, while Factory Time Efficiency (FTE) increased from 69.32 per cent in January to 70.56 per cent by mid March 2011.

The improved FTE translated into enhanced Tonnes of Cane/Tonnes of Sugar from an unfavourable ratio of 12.22 to a favourable 11.93 ratio. "Any slight change in the TC/TS ratio due to improved FTE and factory extraction translates into significant increase in production, sales and revenue. The lower the TC/TS ratio the better" Musebe says.

Musebe says the improved factory performance has enabled the Company to maintain its newly



A tractor docks at the Chemelil Sugar Company Gantry Crane yard ready to offload cane for milling at the factory.

introduced weekly cane proceed payments to farmers and also to complete and implement a Job Evaluation (JE) exercise for Management Staff during the review period, which was mandated by the firm's board of directors.

The MD further attributes the improved Company performance to the introduction of a weekly factory maintenance programme, cost control and prudent financial management, coupled with doubled employee effort motivated largely by the Job Evaluation exercise.



An outgrower sugarcane farmer's tractor is weighed at Chemelil Sugar Company weighbridge before delivering cane to the factory.
Photos/Bosco Magare

Sauti Sacco posts increased profit

By KAVYU-KURA

THE Sauti Savings and Credits Society posted improved profits for the year ended December 2010 with a turnover of Kshs14.5 million compared to Kshs12.3 million in the year 2009.

The Society's national Chairman Elly Ndwiha has announced that during the year under review the Sacco gave loans to the tune of Kshs50.2 million compared to Kshs46.6 million in the year 2009.

He further observed that interest earned from the member's loans alone was Kshs11.6 million in the year under review compared to Kshs10.8 million in the year 2009 attaining an increment of 7.4percent. Ndwiha was speaking in early May at Bounty Hotel in Nairobi's South B area where he addressed the 35th Annual Delegates Meeting for the Sauti Sacco.

On dividends, the Chairman said the Sacco proposes a dividend and interest pay-out of 5percent to the members. He said he was optimistic of good tidings and assured the members of better dividends in the future.

In his bid to ensure the Sacco cuts a competitive niche in a competitive co-operative movement market, Ndwiha said new products such as the super loan initiative are set to be launched.

Ndwiha also announced the reduction of interests on normal loans from the current 1.25percent to 1percent. However interests on other loan products remain unchanged. He announced that the Sacco has cleared the loan backlog and refunds for retired members and therefore envisaged a reduction in the waiting period for the normal loans to 21 days.

"Although most of the objectives have been achieved within the five years, there are those that are yet to be achieved and which will be addressed under the now drawn up (next) five year strategic plan," he added.

The Sacco treasurer, John Wambugu informed the delegates that the society has invested a total of over Kshs 9.2 million to co-operatives apex bodies in form of shares.

Others who addressed the delegates include Patrick Lumumba who is the Nairobi East District Co-operative Officer and Emily Muli representing the Provincial Co-operative Officer and Dorothy Ouma also from the PCO's office.

Ms Muli challenged the Sauti management to invest members' savings on loans so as to earn maximum returns and increase members' dividends. She urged the management to introduce more savings scheme like school fees and Medicare which will earn the Sacco some interest.

Ministry releases funds to Busia youth groups

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE government through the Ministry of Youth Affairs has so far disbursed a total of Kshs6 million to 34 youth groups in Nambale Constituency in the Busia County under Constituency Youth Enterprise Fund Scheme.

In an exclusive with The Link at his office recently, the Busia District Development Officer, who is also the Busia County Coordinator, Patrick Wanyama said 20 groups are already in operation while the remaining 14 groups are currently undergoing training.

The District Youth Development

Officer said Kshs2 million was disbursed to 20 groups with each group receiving Kshs50,000.

"Out of Kshs.2 million loaned to the youth groups, only Kshs0.3 million has so far been repaid. This is due to lack of prior training on the terms and conditions of loan repayment hence leading to poor management of funds," added Wanyama.

He also said that the youth are faced with many setbacks in their groups with some of them becoming inactive after pioneer members leave for greener pastures. Other groups are bogus organizations that only convene to receive government funds, while others are family domi-

nated groups. Delays in the disbursement of funds by the government have also affected the performance of most groups.

Apart from the 20 groups, 14 identified groups are yet to receive the remaining Kshs4 million. Each group is slated to receive Kshs 50,000 and Kshs100,000 for individual members in the groups who have already cleared the initial loan.

Wanyama lauded the programme saying it has empowered the beneficiaries to undertake various income generating activities that have led to improved food production and made them self-reliant.

Among the activities and projects

carried out by the groups include fishing, poultry keeping, livestock keeping, pig rearing, boda-boda, car wash, vegetable growing and spare part shops among others.

He said that measures have been put in place to ensure that the funds disbursed to the groups are well managed.

The strategies include revising loan forms so that they are signed by guarantors and members of the vetting committee comprising of the area MP, two representatives from the youth groups, the District Commissioner, Chief, a religious leader and the District Youth Development Officer to eliminate fraudsters.

Nyando receives Kazi Kwa Vijana cash

By BOSCO MAGARE

NYANDO County Council has received Kshs. 3.9 million from the Government to oversee the Kazi Kwa Vijana programme in its area of jurisdiction.

Council chairman Samuel Ong'ou reveals in an interview with The Link that the Government through the Ministry of Local Gov-

ernment has disbursed funds for the youth programme.

Ong'ou at the same time says the council plans to construct eight dispensaries at Kshs. 20 million in various wards before end this month.

"The council is building the dispensaries at various places using funds disbursed from the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) and money locally generated by the

civic body," Ong'ou says.

Ong'ou identifies some of eight dispensaries as Wanganga, Milenye, Miranga, Rangol and Sangorota, which is located in Nyakach District.

In regard to the Kazi Kwa Vijana programme, Ong'ou says the council seeks to engage 200 youths to undertake work in various parts of Nyando, Nyakach and Muhoroni

districts, which formerly formed the dismembered greater Nyando District.

Ong'ou says the programme which began last May 2011, will involve hiring youth for work activities that will entail clearing of bushes and vegetation along road reserves and garbage collection at all market centres within the council's area of operation.

Samia youth groups get funding

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

FORTY youth groups from Samia district in the Busia County have received a total of Kshs.2 million from the Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

The Samia District youth development officer Gideon Masake Kwake says the fund has helped transform the living standards of beneficiaries most whom have embarked on income generating activities that have so far enabled them to be self-reliant.

Kwake at the same time reveals that a total of over Kshs.0.4 million has so far been repaid adding that two groups namely Funyula Disabled and Arise and Shine youth groups, have fully repaid their loans and have also forwarded another proposal for additional funding.

Speaking during the District Development Committee (DDC) forum at Funyula ACK church recently, the district youth officer, however, appealed to defaulters to repay outstanding debts as a matter of urgency so that others may also benefit from the revolving fund.

The Chairman of the County Council of Busia Mr Charles Wafula on his part told members of the DDC that the local authority has allocated a total of Kshs2.5million from its 2010/2011 Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) kitty to oversee the implementation of various development projects in Samia District.

The local authority chairman at the same time said that the council had disbursed a total of Kshs0.5million towards the improvement of Sio-Port beach in Funyula South.

Wafula added that the local authority has set up a monitoring and evaluation team that draws membership from all the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) committees at the ward level to be headed by the respective civic leaders.

The teams will ensure that all the proposed projects within their respective areas are fully implemented and satisfactorily completed before payment is made to avoid shoddy work by contractors.

"In order to ensure that all the proposed projects are properly implemented and done, we as a council have set up a monitoring and evaluation team which is composed of the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) committees from each ward in the greater Busia district to ensure that all the proposed projects are satisfactorily completed," said the chairman.

Matatu Sacco to build own petrol station

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE giant 2NK matatu Sacco will build its own petrol station at a cost of Kshs10 million in the current financial year.

Speaking during this year's Annual General Meeting at Nyeri Technical Training Institute recently, the chairman Mr James Kahiro said the petrol station which will be built in Ruring'u area in Nyeri town.

"We have been able to acquire the long sought and awaited change of land use from Agricultural to Commercial use. This will now enable us construct a petrol station. We have sought quotations for tanks and pumps," he said.

Over 325 members have bought shares for purposes of pooling up sufficient funds to start up the petrol station.

This will be the second petrol station to be owned by the Sacco.

The first one was started at Karatina town several years ago. The Sacco has also rented Mugumo Petrol Station situated in Nyeri town.

The Sacco has a fleet of over 650 vehicles which operate in Coast, Rift Valley, Central, Nairobi and Eastern regions among other areas.

"The Sacco has also joined the Mt Kenya Matatu Owners Association which is a body formed by Mt Kenya region matatu owners for purposes of lobbying the authorities for fair business terms," he added.

Kahiro who was accompanied by Central Provincial Cooperatives Officer Mutugi Mwenje said the man-



The 2NK Sacco chairman Mr James Kahiro (standing) addressing members during this year's Annual General Meeting at Nyeri Technical Training Institute recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

agement committee was proposing the distribute a surplus of Kshs13.8 million to be paid to members as rebates.

Last year, the Sacco disbursed loans valued at Kshs67.5 million which was a rise from Kshs55.3 million disbursed in year 2009.

In the last one year, the Sacco has

been able to open new routes which include Nairobi- Nanyuki, Nairobi-Kericho and Nairobi - Othaya.

The management of the Sacco has embarked on comprehensive plan that seeks to comply with the government directive to phase out 14-seater matatus.

Finance PS speaks on ESP

By TITUS MAERO

Finance PS Joseph Kinyua has said that the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) seeks to address the social-economic regional inequalities in the country.

Kinyua said the ESP is premised on the need to urgently address barriers in the social and economic fields.

"The ESP provides the impetus for building a cohesive, equitable and prosperous country," he said during a regional workshop for senior government officials and other stakeholders.

The workshop was officially opened by the Western Deputy Regional Commissioner in charge of lower region Mr Peter Okwanyo in a function held at the Kakamega Multi-purpose hall.

The PS said stimulus programme focuses on sectors that would generate maximum benefits, restore confidence among Kenyans and assist the business community while also protecting the poor and creating employment for the youths. "Some of the activities covered under the ESP include expansion of irrigation based agriculture, construction of

markets, fish ponds and jua kali sheds," he pointed out.

Other projects covered under ESP include the construction of social infrastructure such as schools, health institutions and roads.

Meanwhile, the Local Government Sector Reform Strategy (LGSRS) is a blue print meant to transform Local Authorities in the country into middle income entities providing high quality services.

An Economist in the office of the Prime Minister, Mr Mbera Orwoba said the LGSRS is meant to provide a framework for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Vision 2030 by Local Government Sector players. The Official was speaking at the closure of a two day seminar on Local Government reforms for Chief Officers drawn from Western Province at the Kakamega Golf Hotel.

He said Local Authorities had been weakened by the loss of local revenue sources combined with increased demand for services resulting in a situation where financial resources do not commensurate with services offered.

"A number of reform initiatives have been implemented under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Local Government to address resource constraints," he added. Orwoba cited the Local Authority Integrated Finance Operations Management System and Inter-Governmental Fiscal Transfers as part of the ongoing reforms. At the national level, he said, the reform initiatives are geared towards transforming the Local Authorities into modern, result focused public service as envisaged in the vision 2030.

He said the Vision 2030 covers the period between 2008 and 2030 and aims at transforming the country into a newly industrialized middle income country providing high quality service to all its citizens by the year 2030.

"The adoption of Vision 2030 comes after the successful implementation of the economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment creation which has seen the country's economy back on the path to rapid growth since 2002 when Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew from a low of 0.6 per cent to 6.1 per cent in 2006.

US launches peace initiative in Mt. Elgon

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

The US government has initiated a peace development project in Mt. Elgon District, Bungoma County.

The immediate former US ambassador Michael Ranneberger said the project that has been funded to the tune of Kshs150 million will be channeled through community based organizations (CBOs) to enable residents to carry out peace projects.

"Kenya is moving towards a brighter future which is why people of Mt. Elgon need not to be left behind," he said.

He urges other development part-

ners to come forward and assist to put up basic infrastructure in the region.

The diplomat at the same time asked the youth to vote in visionary leaders during the forthcoming general elections. Ranneberger cautioned Kenyans against electing leaders who propagate tribal animosity as some of the current political undertones are aimed at compromising the prevailing peace and stability in the country.

The American Ambassador urged Kenyans to elect visionary, dedicated nationalists and reformists who can steer this country to high levels of peace and prosperity. "I want you to use this time

properly to assess leaders with integrity so that come 2012 you will be in a position to elect good leadership," he says.

He observed that time has come for Kenyans to inject new blood in the political scene to help realize aspirations that have been underpinned in the constitution. "Many Kenyans are yearning for change and with the new constitution now in place, the country should have new crop of leaders come 2012 general elections," he says.

The former ambassador was accompanied by Cheptais District Commissioner Mr. Omar Salat during the launch of the peace project.

Kisaka: A lady with golden heart

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

A WOMAN'S philanthropic initiatives towards helping poor but bright children in Likuyani District have started yielding fruits.

Mrs. Ruth Kisaka, a mother of seven boys and a former primary school teacher at Nasianda Primary School, has helped over 20 orphaned children access education and get shelter.

"I appeal to other well-wishers to join me assist the children whose future was almost being shattered," she says.

With her ordinary salary, she has educated and accommodated over 20 children over the past 10 years. She has rescued most of the beneficiaries who have pursued education to university level.

Mrs. Kisaka has been housing four children whose parents cannot be traced. The beneficiaries include Gaylord Ngase whose parents sold off their piece of land and vanished, leaving the poor boy in school. "Ngase was my pupil at Nasianda Primary School. When he came to me with nowhere to go I took him in since then," she said. His parents have never resurfaced.

Kisaka says Ngase scored 374 points in last year's KCPE examination and was admitted to Kakamega High.

"I could not manage to raise his fees alongside others who required my assistance. I appealed to him to join Makuselwa Secondary in Bungoma district where he is a day scholar," she says.

Through her cooperative society, she acquired a bicycle for Ngase, which he uses at weekends and holidays as a taxi (locally known as 'Boda Boda') to generate some income for pocket money.

Mrs. Kisaka, who retired from a 30-year teaching career early this year, has appealed to other well-wishers to assist Ngase. She says the boy has a promising future. "My efforts to seek support from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) have failed as officials insist on official papers, such as a birth certificate, which I can't access," she says.

Another student under her care is Titus Shibanga, who scored 395 marks in 2007 KCPE exam but after his parents' death he could not join Form One at Kamusinga Boys'.

Mathira farmers get coffee boom

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 5,000 coffee farmers from Mathira district were recently paid over Kshs80 million for coffee delivered during the last season.

It was joy as the farmers who are affiliated to Mugaga Coffee Farmers Society which is at Konyu area were paid the proceeds recently.

The last season started in April last year and ended in January this year.

Mugaga Society is made up of five coffee factories which include Kagumo-ini, Kieni, Kimabara, Gathugu and Gatina.

The highest paid factory was Kieni Coffee factory which has paid its 900 farmers over Kshs18.9 million.

A kilogramme of cherry in this factory was paid at Kshs120.30 per kg while Mbuni was paid at Kshs 139.35 per kg according to the Chairman of the factory and Board member of Mugaga Society Mr Charles Mwai Ihatu.

The factory had delivered their coffee to Central Kenya Coffee Mills which is situated at Mathaithi in the same Mathira district.

Kagumo-ini factory paid Kshs112.80 per kg of cherry while Mbuni was paid at Kshs125.50 per kg.

In Kiamabara factory, a kg of cherry was paid at Kshs77.55 per kg while Mbuni was paid at Kshs124 per kg.

The farmers at Gathugu factory were paid at a rate of Kshs101.60 per kg of Cherry while Mbuni was paid at Kshs114.95 per kg.

Gatina Factory farmers were the least paid with a kg of cherry



Coffee farmers of Kagumo-ini Coffee Factory in Mathira district pick coffee recently.

paid Kshs.90 while Mbuni was paid at Kshs.113.70 per kg.

Each factory delivered to a different miller of their choice.

The payments were banked recently and farmers expressed their happiness that they were able to pay for the school fees of their children for second term.

This was the highest payment compared to previous years an issue they said was due to improvement of high quality and quantity of the crop.

Mr Simon Wambugu who is a local farmer at Kagumo-ini Coffee Factory could not hide his joy after receiving over Kshs100,000 which he said was the highest pay-

ment in his 20 years as a coffee farmer.

Previously the highest paid rate was less than Kshs50 per kg of Cherry.

However, the farmers decried of the high cost of farm inputs like fertilizers and chemicals.

They also took issue with millers and marketers who they accused of creating confusion in the market.

Mr Timothy Maina who is also a farmer at Kagumo-ini coffee factory urged the Government to intervene over high cost of fuel which has led to high cost of farm inputs.

Meanwhile, about 2,000 coffee

farmers from Thiriku Coffee Factory in Tetu district also received Kshs28 million for the coffee payments sold in the last season.

The factory chairman Mr Erasmus Mathenge who announced this during the Annual General Meeting held at the factory recently said each Kilogramme of Cherry was paid at Kshs112.00 while a kg of Mbuni was paid at Kshs153.00.

The coffee was sold to Central Kenya Coffee Mills situated in Mathira district in Nyeri County.

He however said that production figures went down to 258,000 kgs in 2010 compared to 950,000 kgs delivered to the factory in year 2009.

Taita irrigation project stalled

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

THE implementation of an irrigation project in Taita district allocated funds 10 months ago has stalled. The project that was allocated Kshs.2.5 million during the 2010/2011 budget has not taken off in what the District Agricultural Officer, Ms. Margaret Jefwa, blames on delays in the construction of a water pan that was expected to provide irrigation water to the targeted farmers.

Ms. Jefwa said the project conceived under the food security enhancement programme ran into problems from the word go after the earth moving machinery was unable to break through a hard basement rock at the initial site which had to be abandoned.

This forced the department of agriculture to move to an alternative site only for the latter to turn out to be steeped into ownership controversy. She, however, assured the District Agricultural Committee meeting chaired by Wundanyi DO, Mr. David Boen that everything was being done to ensure the project is implemented before the end of the financial year to avert a situation where the funds are returned to the treasury. "The land ownership dispute is being sorted out with the assistance from Ministry of Lands," she said.

Ms. Jefwa said four farmer groups have already been mobilized for the purposes of benefitting from the project noting that once implemented it would go a long way in alleviating hunger and poverty in the area. The project was expected to boost horticultural farming in the area which is one of those endowed with potential for irrigated farming in the County.

"Once completed the project will greatly help local farmers produce fruits and vegetables hence improve their income and ease poverty in the midst," said Jefwa.

Sukari Sacco lost millions due to graft

By JOEL JUMA

MUMIAS Sukari Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (Sacco) has lost about Kshs195 million in fraudulent dealings. An inquiry by the Ministry of Cooperatives claims that the immediate former officials of the Sacco embezzled over Kshs135 million.

The remaining Kshs60 million was allegedly loaned to members but has not been recovered due to lack of records. The inquiry reveals that members who took the loans have not only vacated their houses at Mu-

mias Sugar Company after retiring but some are dead.

Members of the Sacco now want the newly elected directors to recover over Kshs60 million lost due to lack of records. The members also want the Government to dispatch experts to ascertain the actual amounts of money lost through fraudulent dealings by former officials. The Ministry of Cooperatives on its part has asked members to forward the matter to the Cooperative Tribunal.

"The case should be tackled by the tribunal so that assets of those who

acted as guarantors can be attached," said Mumias District Cooperative Officer Stanlaus Wambani. Wambani was speaking at Booker Academy in Mumias during election of new officials.

The Government ordered fresh elections after it emerged that over Kshs60 million could not be recovered due to lack of records.

The report also recommended that money being lent out to members be reduced from over Kshs400 million to Kshs200 million during this financial year to curb misuse of members sav-

ings. During the elections, members elected the former chief security officer Isaac Shieunda, Protus Musumba, James Kitsukane and Moses Ambani to form the Central Management Committee.

Other members are Rukia Makokha, Rose Busolo, Dalmas Wala, Boniface Omondi and John Kiruka.

Wambani said he will set a date which the elected team will meet to elect chairman, secretary and treasurer.

"We shall carry out an inspection of the finances and human resource in

a move to improve the management of the society," said Wambani.

Members have already endorsed Shieunda for the chairman. Led by Abubakar Masai, the members said they want Shieunda to use skills acquired during his tenure in the police force to trace the money.

Shieunda resigned from the police force at the rank of chief inspector to join Mumias Sugar Company as the chief security officer. He has since been deployed in the department of Safety and Environment at the company.

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) four year safeguard period for importing cheap sugar is set to expire on December 31, this year.

Initially the safeguard period had been scheduled to expire in December 2007 but the Kenya government applied for a further four year extension period in order to allow the industry sufficient time to carry out reforms.

And as the clock ticks towards the COMESA deadline, some sugar mills in Western Kenya have started plans in earnest to diversify

Tough times ahead for the sugar industry

into new products.

The move is aimed at enabling them to remain relevant and competitive in the liberalized market.

In a bid to diversify its product range Nzoia Sugar Company has for instance, done a feasibility study aimed at establishing a mineral water bottling plant.

The Company Managing director (MD) Mr. Saul Wasilwa says the plant will be bottling 16,000 litres of mineral water daily when it starts to operate.

Mr. Wasilwa discloses that the

sugar mill project will make use of water from Chalicha spring within the sugar cane nucleus estate to manufacture the mineral water.

This project, Mr. Wasilwa says will be launched anytime soon to enable the company earn extra income.

Mr. Wasilwa at the same time points out that in a bid to increase its market presence the company has acquired a machine to enhance its capacity to produce branded products.

The MD says that the equipment worth Kshs.15million is being in-

stalled at the company premises to ensure that between 25 to 35 per cent of the company's total output are branded.

This, the MD says will enable the sugar factory to remain competitive in the face of many brands that are flooding the market.

"We want to increase our presence in retail outlets across the country and remain competitive in the liberalized economy," the MD says.

Although Nzoia Sugar Company strives to increase its market presence, a lot needs to be done in

terms of effective management of imports in order to ensure that the inflow of imported sugar does not adversely affect the local industry.

Kenya's production costs is nearly twice that of the world's major sugar exporters and ex-factory prices are about 50 per cent higher than import prices from COMESA and free trade area (FTA).

It remains to be seen whether the Kenya sugar will compete favourably with the cheap imports without additional imposed tariffs protection.

KFS to gazette all Tana forests

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

KENYA Forests Service (KFS) will soon embark on an ambitious plan to gazette all forests under respective local authorities in Tana River as outlined by the Forest Act of 2005.

Tana River County Zonal Forest Manager George Abuto Omolo, says only 2,665ha of mangrove forest found along the Tana Delta strips are gazette areas, while the remaining tract is under the trust lands manned by the Tana River County Council.

Forest areas under trust lands include Bangale forest block measuring 119,531ha, Hirimani block 97,813ha, Kokani block 61,600ha, Wayu block 4,195ha, Mbalambala block 3,910ha, Mwina block 3,357ha and Hewani block comprising 2,299ha.

He says Tana basin and Nyika plateau are the physical features within the Tana River County forest zone, which is rich in floral species that are both within inlands and the coastal ecosystem.

The upper zone is primarily dry land dominated by acacia and the invasive *Prosopis juliflora* (Mathenge).

He says the lower coastal part of the forest zone that is warm and humid is mainly dominated by *Laneastuhlmann*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Terminalia spinosa*, *Markhamia zanzibarica* *Delbergia quanzensis*. These contain prolific naturalized exotic species, including *Casuarina*, *casia*, *Gravellea* and *Azardirachta*.

The Zonal Forest Manager says the Government policy to have the country land mass be under forest cover of up to 10 per cent is almost viable in Tana River County but faces challenges.

He says deforestation was still rampant with cases of charcoal burning taking centre stage. The felling of trees is mainly experienced in parts of Bura, Madogo and Bangale divisions, in Tana North district.

He says mining activities in Hirimani and Nanigh locations of Bura division involves companies mining Gypsum mineral digging holes for the mineral.

He says parts of Kipini division includes massive destruction of forests by communities involved in timber poach-



The aerial view of the Hola irrigation scheme.

ing while others have invaded private ranches for occupation as squatters.

He says although Tana River County Zonal forest faces severe shortage of 29 workers, protection has been intensified.

Commercial charcoal burning and marketing will only be authorized by the District Environment Committee and intruders will be prosecuted.

He says the Environment Committee would ensure miners of gypsum minerals are licensed to comply with conditions that safeguard the environment. On the massive destruction in Kipini division, he says KFS has launched conservation measures to check the damage. KFS, he adds, plans to spend about Kshs.25 million in the conservation of Kipini conservancy considering economic significance to local communities.

Mr. Omolo says Kipini conservancy sits next to the community forest pockets along the deltaic estuaries in Kipini division the measures 167 ha and 2,265 ha respectively. The ecosystems are established biodiversity and birding

sanctuaries. He says KFS has identified threats to massive destruction of Kipini Conservancy ecosystems and has rolled out elaborate plans to declare the conservancy a provisional forest. It will also gazette other forests for restoration.

He says a provisional annual work plan under the Natural Forest Conservation and Management Programme has been developed for approval.

The Conservancy requires machines to be used in the implementation of the restoration activities. He says the area suffers banditry activities and firearms will therefore be acquired.

Two trained forest guards in Kipini division who protect mangroves will also protect the Conservancy as KFS plans to post more trained guards.

Mr. Omolo says KFS and the Kipini Conservancy Trust management will promote ecotourism by maintaining roads to facilitate recreational activities for enhanced revenue collection.

He says the Kipini Conservancy ecosystem consists of a diversity of high

canopied forest, wooded bush lands, thickets grasslands and wetlands.

The Conservancy will be brought under the administration of Kipini Conservancy for efficient control.

During the Conservancy protection exercise, about 110,000 tree seedlings will be planted and 40,000 others purchased. Between April and June 2011, about 100 ha will have been rehabilitated at a cost of about Kshs.1.5 million.

The forest cover at the Tana River County stands at 8.7 per cent of the total land area.

The forests are mainly found in basin and flood plains and are designated into an alienated trust land equivalent to about 333,540 hectares of the county.

A forest cover of 2.9 per cent of the landmass in the County is found in an alienated Government land that totals 110,531 hectares. About six per cent forest cover of the land mass is found in trust lands, while community owned land totals 221,234 hectares yet to be surveyed.

High cost of inputs hurting farmers

By TITUS MAERO

THE high cost of farm inputs has reduced profit margin of agricultural products in Western Province, Provincial Director of Agriculture John Cheruiyot has said.

Mr Cheruiyot expressed concern that if the cost of the farm inputs is not reduced, farmers will continue to incur losses.

He noted that there is need to reduce the cost of the farm inputs such as fertilizer and seeds as one way of encouraging farmers in the region to continue engaging in farming activities.

In a report, the official said the high cost of farm inputs had curtailed efforts by farmers to engage in farming as a business venture.

He recommended that farmers be supplied with quality farm inputs, allowed access to affordable credit facilities and encouraged to form co-operative societies in order to sell their produce at competitive prize.

He lauded efforts by the National Agriculture Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP) through the Swedish Development International Organization (SIDA) that had assisted the government through involvement in agricultural activities.

Cheruiyot also said NALEP and SIDA had assisted the government to offer extension services to farmers free of charge in the province with close to 4.2 million people.

He also said the government through the Kenya Agricultural Productivity Project (KAPP) and sponsored by the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) offered agriculture extension services to farmers.

The officer also said the organizations visited individual farmers and also convened public barazas and farmers field days on quarterly basis to create awareness on new farming methods in order to improve on crop yields.

Mwea farmers in diversification plans

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Mwea Irrigation Agricultural Development (MIAD) Centre has developed a programme where farmers will grow other crops in the rice fields.

Under the programme, farmers will be advised on specific crops that can prosper after rice harvesting.

Dr Raphael Wanjogu, the lead rice researcher at the Centre says research had shown legumes and maize could be grown in the off-season utilizing land that otherwise lies fallow.

Dr Wanjogu says the idea of introducing inter cropping programme was meant to enhance income for farmers.

He says the goal of intercropping is the production of a greater yield through the use of resources utilized by single crops by single crop. He however says careful planning was necessary by taking into account soil, weather, crop and varieties.

It is also important not to have crops that compete for physical space, nutrients, water or sunlight. Under the programme, farmers will be trained on new cultivation techniques.

Dr Wanjogu says inter planting deep rooted crops with those having shallow roots or planting a tall crop with shorter ones that require partial shade is advisable.

The expert says intercropping of at-

tuned plants also encourages biodiversity by providing habitat for a variety of insects and soil organisms that would not be present in a single crop environment. This biodiversity can in turn help to limit outbreaks of crop pests by increasing the diversity or abundance of natural enemies, such as spiders and parasitic wasps.

“Increasing complexity of the environment through inter cropping also limits places where pests can find optimal foraging or reproductive conditions,” he says. The degree of spatial and temporal overlap in the two crops can vary, but both requirements must be met for a cropping system to qualify for an intercrop.

Mixed intercropping as the name implies is the most basic form in which the component crops are totally mixed in the available space. At Mwea irrigation scheme, the fast growing crops are harvested before the slow growing ones start to mature.

Dr Wanjogu who spoke in Mwea during farmers field day to demonstrate the new technology, said besides enhancing food security, legumes also boost soil fertility and reduce farmers needs for artificial fertilization of the soil.

The farmers have been introduced to crops such as green grams, soya, black beans and cowpeas.

Dr Wanjogu says the crops can be

planted during the March June long rains. They can also be planted with minimum water in the September October dry period.

He says rotation of legumes with rice yields positive results for both crops because the legumes utilise residue fertilizer after the rice harvest.



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Cassava to fight famine in Migwani

By KAVYU-KURA

THE famine prone residents of semi arid Migwani district in Ki-tui County may be edging towards finding a panacea to the perennial food shortages through the widely neglected cassava tuber crop.

The district agricultural officer, Charles Ndung'u has been working on an ambitious project to promote cassava farming in the area by introducing its farming through organized women self-help groups in the relatively populous Migwani area.

As the climax of cassava growing trials gained momentum, the department held a cassava growing demonstration field day in May to entice the locals to take up the growing of the crop as means of mitigating hunger.

The local District Commissioner Were Simiyu who represented the area Member of Parliament David Musila as the chief guest, exhorted the locals to embrace the growing of traditional and drought tolerant crops as a means of fighting hunger and poverty.

He lamented that hunger and poverty were interrelated adding that little or no development takes place within any poor community least of it agriculture as farms are poorly managed resulting to poor yields and associated hunger.

Simiyu emphasized that the growing of indigenous crop such as cassava, cowpeas, green grams, sorghum and millet could be the panacea to perpetual food insecurity and squalor among the residents.

"Farmers are being encouraged to do seed bulking under seed



An agricultural officer, Charles Mugo, explains the many foods prepared from cassava to guests (from left) DC Were Simiyu, KARI Director Charles Kariuki and the Eastern province crops officer Patrick Maina among others. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

banking initiative for crops like cassava, cowpeas, green grams, sorghum and millet. When farmer bulk professionally it will be a potential opportunity to sell planting materials to others during times of need," said the DC.

Speaking at the function held at the A.I.C. Migwani Church compound, the DC lamented that unless the locals adopted the growing of drought resistant crops, famine

would continue hitting them.

"I don't want to continue appealing for famine relief food rations. I want also to boast of huge production of the cassava crop in my district," the DC said. He added that cassava growing would go a long way in mitigating the vagaries of drought and famine.

Speaking to the about 500 farmers from the district who attended the ceremony, the DC urged

them to be good ambassadors and spread the gospel of cassava farming to the rest of the population in the villages.

The DC wondered why the locals despised the cassava crop while it fetched good returns in the market in districts that grow it abundantly like Meru and Embu. He challenged the residents to take up cassava growing as business as the soils and weather conditions

were ideal for the crop.

He said areas like Nzauni, Kyome and Itoloni previously produced high cassava yields and further encouraged the farmers to revert to the growing of traditional food crops to ward off hunger and earn substantial income too.

The ceremony that was organized by Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) in collaboration with the area MP was aimed at sensitizing farmers on the need to participate fully in the growth and development of cassava farming.

In attendance were the KARI Katumani Centre Director Charles Kariuki, Researchers John Wambua and Maina Gichangi from the Eastern Provincial Director of Agriculture.

Kariuki dismissed the widely held notion that cassava was a poor man's food adding that the crop if well utilized and managed it could go a long way in eradicating poverty in Ukambani through its sale and value addition as a food stuff.

He said to successfully indulge in cassava growing, farmers only required land, sufficient labour and capital management and subsequently reap the sweet fruits.

The KARI Director said Kenya produced between 700-800 metric tons of cassava which was negligible compared to Uganda's 3 million metric tons. He noted that the current production was not adequate for the international cassava market.

He said local cassava market demand in Kenya has not been met. He appealed to the local farmers to take advantage of the opportunity and make a kill out of it.

Cane farmers want KSB dissolved

By JOEL JUMA

KAKAMEGA cane farmers County want Agriculture Minister Sally Kosgey to explain why she is yet to dissolve the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB).

The farmers have since asked the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture to summon the Minister for explanations.

They have vowed to strongly oppose further delays in the election of a new board of directors arguing that the current board was in office illegally since provisions of the Sugar Act are clear.

"The Minister for Agriculture should be grilled by the Parliamentary Committee because it appears she wants to mess up the election timetable," said Mumias Sugar Cane Growers Association chairman Simon Wesechere.

Wesechere said it would be unfair for the polls to be delayed until June whereas farmers are suffering in the hands of the current directors.

Wesechere and a cane farmer, Fred Lutta, said they will collect signatures of farmers to petition Prime Minister Raila Odinga to intervene.

"The directors know very well that their term has expired. Why should they be imposed on farmers for another two months," wondered Lutta who was speaking in Mumias town.

KSB directors Ewing Mwombe and Muhammed Mukhwana admitted that their term of office ended last month. They said that they were ready to face farmers in the ballot.

Mwombe has set up 16 bridges worth Kshs140 million in his West Kenya sugar zone. He has also played a role in seeing West Kenya Out Grower Company (Weko) acquire tractors worth Kshs150 million to ease cane transportation in the area.

Mwombe is also credited for having ensured that Butali Sugar Mills Limited is issued with an operating licence. West Kenya Sugar Company had opposed the licensing of Butali.

Mukhwana played a role in initiating bridges worth Kshs250 million in the Mumias sugar belt.

KSB chief executive officer Solomon Odera is reported to have said the elections will be held anytime this month. Odera said preparations for the elections were

in top gear.

A document giving details of the polls has already been forwarded to the Minister for approval.

Wesechere and Lutta have protested over the delays in holding the elections. They claimed some directors are involved in sugar importation while others are in business with millers.

Mumias Sugar Company managing director Evans Kidero, Mukhwana and Mwombe have so far called for the dissolution of the board.

Meanwhile, the farmers have petitioned Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) to explain the modalities used in disbursing Kshs500 million meant for cane development during this financial year.

They said the board should account for every single cent before Agriculture Minister Sally Kosgey disbands it for fresh elections.

"The money has not achieved its purpose. It would amount to corruption if the directors go home without telling the beneficiaries of the funds how the money was spent," said Mumias Sugar Cane Growers Association chairman Simon Wesechere.

Wesechere said auditors from

the Prime Minister's Office should be dispatched to the ground to probe how the funds were used.

Dr Kosgey is set to disband the board any time as the tenure for the current directors chaired by Saul Busolo has expired.

The directors three-year term expired early this month.

Farmers from Kakamega have already embarked on campaigns in readiness for the elections.

Farmers from West Kenya have maintained that they will re-elect their director Ewing Mwombe while those in Mumias and Busia zone are gearing up for major changes.

KSB director Mohammed Mukhwana who represents farmers in Mumias zone said the Kshs500 million in question, is still being withheld by the board.

"We are waiting for Equity Bank to agree on how to disburse the money to the farmers," said Mukhwana who was speaking during a meeting with farmers in Mumias town.

He explained that the delay to disburse the funds was occasioned by disagreement between the bank and farmers on the interest rates.

The bank wants to charge farm-

ers an interest of 15 per cent but the board wants it to be between 5 and 8 per cent.

Mukhwana said some directors were opposed to an interest of 15 per cent as it will amount to exploitation of farmers.

Wesechere however said that the directors had failed farmers and should quit instead of waiting to be voted out.

Mumias Out Growers Company chairman Ken Echesa asked the Agriculture Minister to assist the company access the Kshs3.5 billion being withheld by Mumias Sugar Company (MSC).

Echesa said the money was deducted from farmers and should be released to benefit the cane growers. Moco and MSC were running a joint account but the miller later denied the out grower institution access to the money.

Mumias MP Ben Washiali said the dispute over Kshs3.5 billion between Moco and MSC is being handled by the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture chaired by John Mututho.

Washiali said the matter will be debated in Parliament immediately Mututho tables the report on management of sugar industry.

Othaya coffee farmers retain committee

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE giant Othaya Coffee Farmers Cooperatives Society has retained its executive committee after competitive elections which were held recently at five coffee factories.

The chairman, Mr Newton Mwangi, was re-elected to serve for another three years after 271 coffee farmers re-elected him at Rukira Coffee factory. He closest rival Ephantus Muiru garnered 83 votes in the polls which were held under tight security.

The society's Vice Chairman Mr Andrew Githae was re-elected at Ichamama Coffee factory while the treasurer Mr David Mwangi was re-elected by farmers of Kiaguthu Coffee Factory.

Committee members Mr Francis Wanderi and Mr John Thumbi were re-elected at Iria-ini and Mahiga coffee factories respectively.

Mr Simon Gatheo was elected the honorary Secretary.

The elections were held under tight security with Othaya DOI Mrs Helen Chege monitoring the elections and over 20 armed police officers.

At Rukira Coffee Factory, Muiru's camp threatened to split from the factory after they were defeated in the polls.

They claimed there was rigging although the exercise was conducted in broad daylight using the queuing method.



Mr. Newton Mwangi addresses coffee farmers of Rukira Coffee Factory after his re-election as chairman of Othaya Farmers Cooperatives Society recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

When the five factories elected one member to represent their factory in the executive committee of the society, the executive committee endorsed the status quo.

That means that the committee will serve the 10,000 farmers from

19 coffee factories for another three years.

The chairman Mwangi urged the winners and losers to unite and now focus on improving the production of the crop in order for the farmers to get more returns.

"Since we have conducted peaceful elections, let us now return to the farms and improve the quality and quantity of the crop," he said.

He said the society is working hard to ensure that value addition of the farmer's crop is improved.

Mumias CDF officials fired over graft

By JOEL JUMA

THE secretary and treasurer of Mumias Constituency Development Fund (CDF) have been sacked for allegedly engaging in tendering malpractices.

Mumias MP Ben Washiali said he could not defend ousted treasurer Suleiman Khamisi and his secretary Donald Mumbo over the allegations.

Police in Mumias have since launched investigations after the two officials recorded statements following the accusations.

Khamisi and Mumbo are alleged to have solicited a Kshs100, 000 bribe from a consultancy firm to help them

win a tender to formulate a strategic plan to guide development projects in the area.

Washiali noted that the two were replaced to pave way for investigations.

The legislator said Abdul Jamal replaced Khamisi as the treasurer while former Indangalasia Secondary School principal Godfrey Odongo replaced Mumbo as the secretary.

"I could not allow the two to remain in the office after the matter came to my attention," said Washiali who was speaking in Mumias town.

Washiali said he received a report implicating the suspended officials in

the scandal.

Khamisi however said they differed with Washiali at the beginning of this year. "This was just a set up so that we could be fired," said Khamisi.

Khamisi noted that they had been overburdened with responsibilities, which included signing of cheques and approving of projects to be undertaken.

He regretted that the matter was in the hands of the police whereas there was no truth in the allegations.

But Washiali said the fight against corruption was in top gear. He cautioned contractors against engaging in corrupt deals.

"We have rules that must be followed before tenders are given out," said Washiali.

Recently, the National Tax Payers Association (NTA) called on Kenya Anti Corruption Commission to crack a whip on constituencies that are misusing public funds.

NTA National Coordinator Kizito Wangalwa and the Western Regional Coordinator Belinda Nekesa said cases of corruption in CDF were rampant in the region.

The two cited a case in which a constituency in Western Province is unable to account for over Kshs22 million.

Bahari MP to lead protest over land

By BEKADZO TONDO

BAHARI MP Benedict Fondo Gunda will lead over 200 fishermen from Kidundu area in a rigorous exercise that seeks to reclaim mangrove forest on a controversial six acre fish landing site encroached by a private developer.

The MP said the move was part of a wider strategy by local leaders to block the developer from grabbing the land.

"We are determined to stand firm and protect the beach reserve from being grabbed. We will replant the destroyed area afresh as part of our strategy," said Gunda.

He said Bahari people will not allow Lagoon Development Company which has been allocated the

fish landing site along the Kilifi Indian creek by the government to put up a housing project.

Speaking to the fishermen at the site, the MP wondered why the developer has continued to destroy mangrove forest despite a directive by National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to rehabilitate the site.

The MP pointed an accusing finger to some unidentified senior government officials whom he accused of approving the illegality.

He said the Kidundu Indian creek waters serves as the only source of livelihood for Majajani residents who are likely to suffer huge losses if the resource is taken away from them.

He said clearing the area to

pave way for a housing project will interfere with the marine environment and wondered why the government approved the project without consulting area residents.

Mr. Omar Kuta who spoke on behalf of the residents expressed dismay at the forest department which he accused of supervising the clearing of mangrove cover planted by environment conservation groups when the department is supposed to conserve forests.

Kilifi District Fisheries officer Mr. Namwell Onchonga said Kidundu Indian waters was a habitat of prawns which may migrate to other areas if their breeding zone is interfered with.

He said many families from Majajani area depended on fishing

business and wondered how they will survive if they are blocked from accessing the waters.

The Chairman of Central Beach Management Unit Mr Azziz Mohamed said private developers were targeting fish landing sites for grabbing along the Coast.

Mr Mohamed however accused government officers in Kilifi of colluding with the developers to take away public utility land.

The chairman said fishermen will stand firm to protect their fish landing sites from being taking by land grabbers.

He said they will forward the case of Kidundu fish landing site to Kenya Anti Corruption unit for assistance.

Cultures derail birth control — says Nyakwara

By BOB OMBATI

Some cultural norms continue to derail efforts to control population growth with the subsequent effects undermining socio-economic development.

A programme officer with the National Co-ordinating Agency for Population Development (NCAPD), Peter Nyakwara says that some cultural practices and norms discourage the use of contraceptives.

"This has led to uncontrolled pregnancies and births which have increased the population and resulted in the overstretching of social amenities and facilities," he adds.

Nyakwara told a one day workshop at IFAD Hall, in Kisii County plans are underway to train a cross section of leaders from the area including women, youths and departmental heads to spearhead awareness campaigns to eliminate the cultural barriers.

Nyakwara noted that although population was a resource, parents need to be sensitized on the importance of having manageable families which they can accord quality food, shelter, clothing and education.

During the workshop, the leaders concurred with Nyakwara that resources were dwindling and it was imperative for Kenyans to embrace small families.

The leaders deplored early marriages and unwanted pregnancies which led to maternal deaths and recommended for improved maternal health care through delayed motherhood and births spacing.

Row erupts in Mwingi council over project

By KAVYU-KURA

A KITUI based contractor and the Mwingi town council are embroiled in a tussle over a water pipe contract gone sour.

According to the contractor who is the proprietor of the Temwaka construction company Musyimi Mulatya, the firm has incurred huge losses running to over Kshs2 million after arbitrary variation of the project value by the council.

Buoyed by an advice by the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC), the proprietor is now contemplating moving to court to compel the Mwingi Town council to pay up the outstanding debt.

But the Mwingi town council clerk Eugene Kituku has refused to bulge and threatened to move faster and sue for defamation following the appearance of the story in the local media-setting the stage for a protracted court battle.

The Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) had in late April advised the Construction firm to sue the council for failing to honour their part of bargain in the contract. A letter from the KACC dated April 15, 2011 to the firm's MD, Musyimi Mulatya, and signed by P. M. Mwangi for director, the anti-corruption body also asked the contractor to also seek the intervention of the Local government permanent secretary before seeking legal redress.

KACC was responding to a letter of January 17 this year in which Mulatya had sought assistance to have Kshs202,643 debt paid by the Town council of Mwingi. The project initial cost stood at Kshs0.9 million but the council later revised the cost.

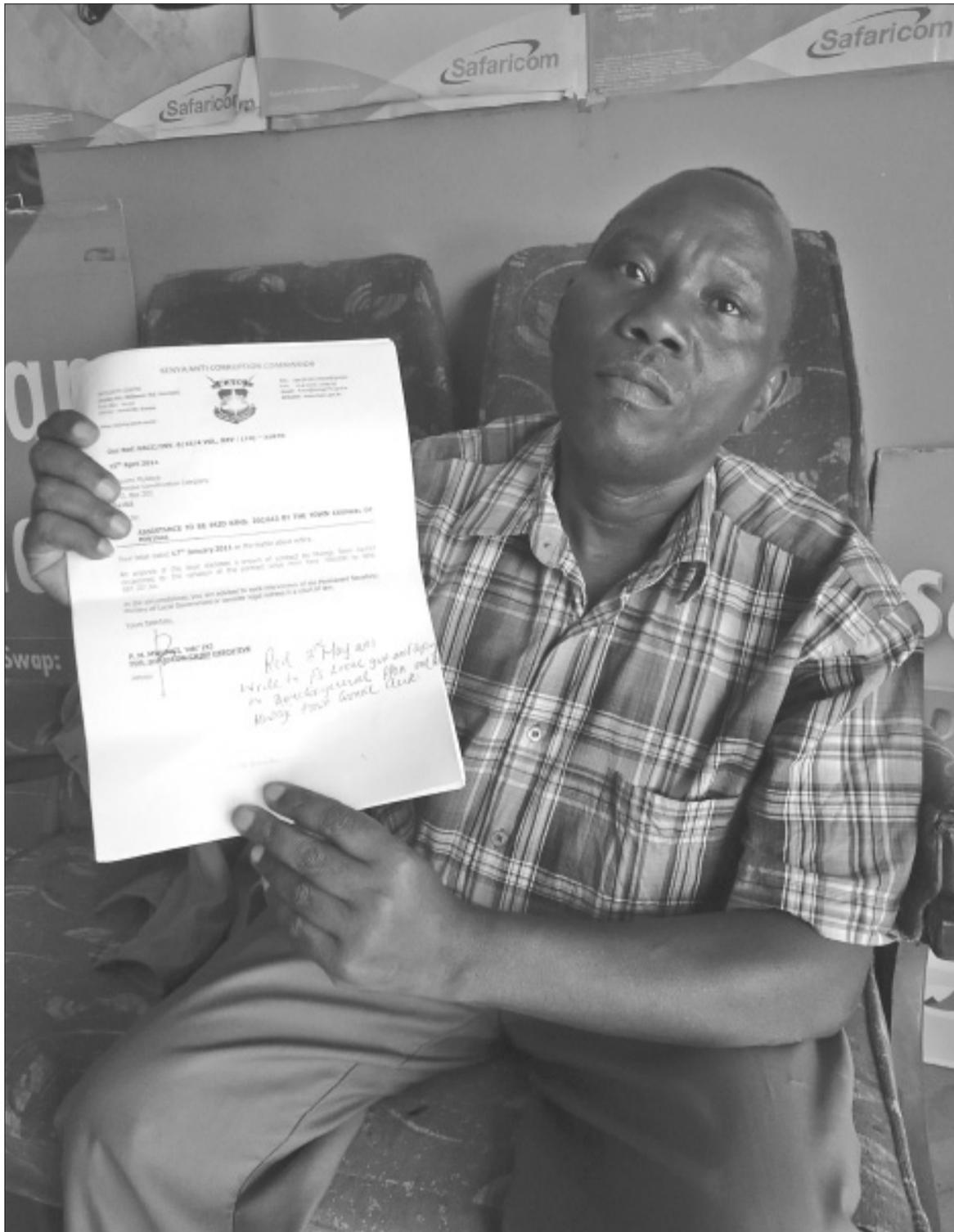
In its response, KACC noted, "An analysis of the issue discloses a breach of contract by Mwingi Town Council occasioned by the variation of the contract value from Kshs.900, 000 to Kshs. 697,357.60.

"In the circumstances, you are advised to seek intervention of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government or consider legal redress in a court of law."

But in his rejoinder, the Mwingi town clerk dismissed the allegation by the proprietor of the Temwaka firm as baseless and unfounded adding that the threatened court action did not shake him as he was sure it would be counter productive.

"There are a lot of falsehoods in the newspaper report. We paid the contractor more money than the work he did. I have already instructed the Council lawyer to sue for defamation. The writer should also have taken time to check facts with me before filing the report," said the town clerk in his office.

However, the clerk clarified that he did not vary the contract but the



Kitui contractor, Musyimi Mulatya, displays the KACC letter advising him to seek legal redress against Town council of Mwingi for breach of contract. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

cost of the contract because the contractor failed to complete the work in time and the rest of the two projects in question were completed by the local Constituency development fund (CDF) kitties.

But Mulatya told The Link in Mwingi that he had the bill of quantities outlining the contract he was awarded and was not scared as he would prove his case in court for justice to be done.

"If the council decides to sue KACC for advising me to sue them, let them go ahead but I have docu-

ments in my possession that I will use to shoot their case down. They have no choice but to pay up," said Mulatya as he flashed the letter from the KACC.

But in his January 17 letter to the KACC titled 'misuse of office by town clerk', Mulatya sought assistance to be paid Kshs202,643 for water pipeline extension work from Kitui Millers to Kwa Vira vide tender number 8 and extension of water pipeline works from Ngiluni to Kariombangi vide tender no 9.

The contractor remonstrates that

although the agreed total value of the two contracts was Kshs. 900,000, the clerk was to later arbitrarily downgrade the value to Kshs. 697,357.60. He however said that his firm went ahead to complete the works as per the provided Bill of quantity (BQ) but was paid the lesser amount.

But the town clerk insisted that the protesting contractor was sufficiently paid for the work he had completed and thus he had no business making unnecessary noise. He also said he had records to table in court to prove his case.

Mbeere dam faces imminent collapse

By PETER MUTUKU

Iviuva dam in Kiogogo area in Mbeere is faced with imminent collapse. The project, with an estimated capacity of 50,000 cubic meters of water now poses a threat to the lives of residents after it was left incomplete by a contractor in the semi arid division.

The residents through the area councilor, Mr Duncan Ileri Mbui, want the Government to intervene to avert a looming catastrophe.

Mr Mbui who spoke at the site said the facility was the only source of water for over 10,000 residents.

He warned that the collapse of the dam, which currently holds over 50,000 cubic meters of water, would be disastrous for the residents who are likely to be deprived of their only source of water.

He said efforts to get the contractor to rectify the problem have been fruitless after he insisted he had finished the project.

Mr. Mbui said the problem arose after the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation paid the contractor his dues before ascertaining he had completed the project.

The civic leader said the government should step in and save the project from imminent collapse.

He said the community had resorted to emptying the dam to reduce water levels as a way of checking its likely collapse.

"We feel that the compacting work was not done to the required standards with the continuous lose of soil almost giving way to the water in the dam," he explained.

A representative of the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation, Mr Fred Gathogo says the incomplete spill was initially designed to be 15 meters yet the contractor had only done four.

He said the completion of the spill was vital since it would facilitate the removal of water from the facility in case of flash floods that are widespread in the region.

Gathogo says the contractor was required to increase the width of the spill to the set standards and enhance embankments by one meter.

Gathogo who has been liaising with the company Chief Executive Officer for direction, said the Government will force the contractor back to the site for rectification of the anomalies.

The contract for the construction of the dam was awarded to Hardi Construction Company in June 2010. Gathogo said the dam was in danger of collapse unless action is taken to avert the crisis.

Closure of community library blamed on politics

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KANDUYI constituents are up in arms over the closure of a community library in Bungoma town.

The residents led by Mr. David Fwamba and Mr. Allan Sitati wonder why the current Kanduyi political leadership has abandoned the library despite the massive support it used to receive from the Kenya National Library

Services and a local businessman.

According to Mr. Sitati, the library was abandoned because it was initiated by former MP Mr. Wafula Wamunyinyi, as a CDF project.

He appeals to the present MP Alfred Khang'ati to exercise sobriety and assist the residents in this important area of human progress.

"The library was fully sup-

ported by KNLS through donation of books and other materials. It is a shame that the facility was shut down due to irresponsible leadership," Mr. Sitati says.

At the time of closure Mr. Sitati alleges that there were computers which were donated by a local businessman and many other materials some of which had been acquired through public funds.

"Nobody knows where these

properties were taken to when the library building situated in Bungoma County Council compound was recently converted into a constituency office," he says.

The uproar follows a report by the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) exposing the misuse of CDF in 28 constituencies across the country with Kanduyi constituency included.

Siaya residents gearing for a medical camp

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

OVER 2,000 residents of Ting' Wang'i in the Siaya County are slated to benefit from a medical camp organized by the Kenya Medical Research Institute (Kemri) in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation.

Personnel and researchers from Kemri and other health experts, including volunteers from the ministries of Public Health and Sanitation and Medical Services, World Vision, Red Cross and CARE Kenya are offering diagnosis and treatment for malaria and other common diseases.

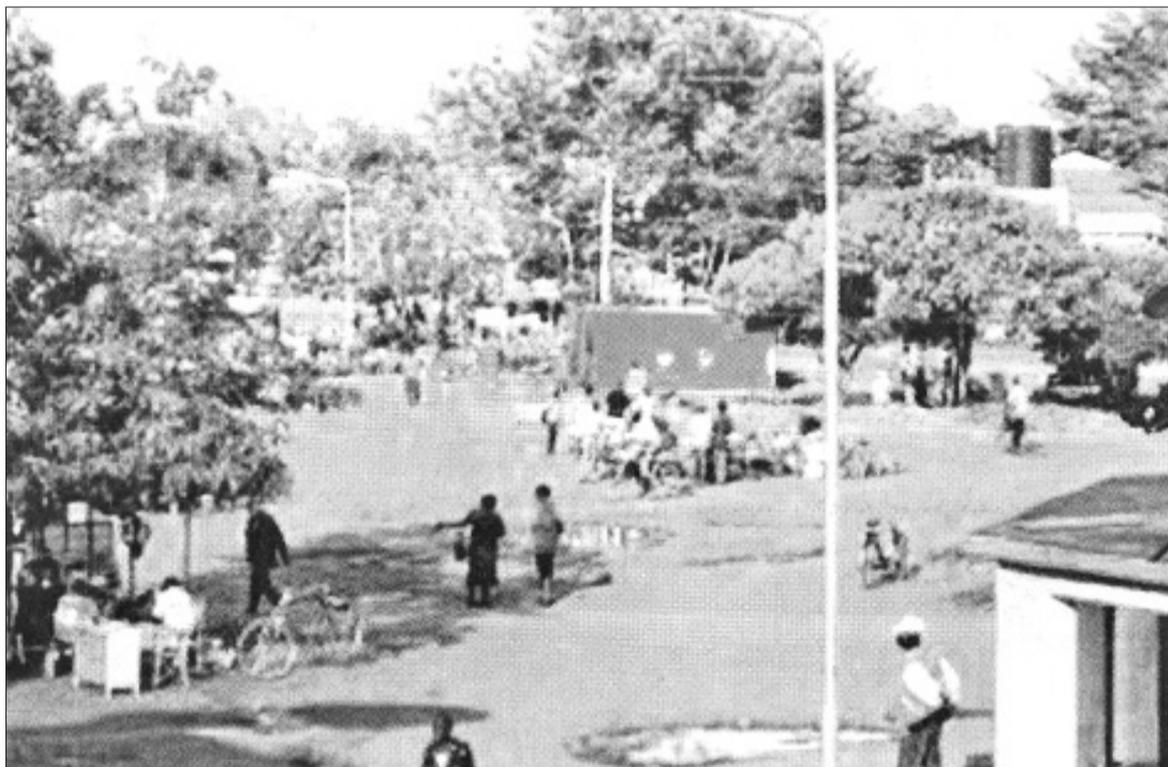
Malaria remains one of the leading killers in the Lake Victoria region.

According to Dr. Simon Kariuki the head of Malaria branch at Kemri/Centre for Disease Control (CDC), governments and stakeholders should take stock of the collective efforts towards malaria control with a view to eliminating the disease.

"Since its inception in 1979, Kemri and its partners have engaged the community in the larger Siaya County in research activities that focus on important infectious disease that continue to be a big health burden and an impediment to the economic development of this region, including malaria, HIV, Tuberculosis and other emerging infections," he says. Malaria remains a serious and often fatal disease with the World Health Organisation estimating that 300-500 million cases occur worldwide. More than a million sufferers die of the disease annually, especially in the Third World. Most Victims in Africa are young children. A child dies of Malaria every 30 seconds in the continent, with Nyanza Province bearing multiple burdens of high transmission, chronic poverty and the highest HIV/Aids prevalence rate in the country.

Dr. Kariuki says KEMRI and Kemri/CDC has placed malaria high in the research agenda. Vital ground-breaking research studies have been conducted and the results have been translated into national and international policy for the control of the disease.

The use of insecticide-Treated Bed nets (TINs) and sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (Fansidar) for prevention of infection in pregnant women are two examples of studies that have been conducted in the region and results adopted as policy internationally," he says.



Aerial view of Siaya township. Over 2,000 residents of Ting' Wang'i in the Siaya County are benefitting from a medical camp organised by Kemri
Photo/File

Kemri/CDC is engaged in a number of research activities, including the RTS, malaria vaccine study. Kemri/CDC is also collaborating with the Wellcome Trust and sites in six other countries across Africa to test a candidate malaria vaccine, developed by GSK pharmaceutical company and funded by the Malaria Vaccine Initiative. The study seeks to find out if the vaccine, known as RTS, can prevent malaria in children.

The trial is ongoing in Karemo Division in Siaya County where 1620 children have been enrolled. Kemri/CDC is assessing how well current strategies to prevent infection during pregnancy work in Siaya County and assessing if taking septrin together with mefloquine by HIV positive mothers could prevent infection in women infected with HIV. Together with the Division of Malaria Control, Kemri/CDC is also evaluating the strategy to improve the uptake of intermittent preventive treatment

of malaria in pregnancy.

Evaluation of the MoH Indoor Residual Spray Campaign in an area of high transmission: Kemri/CDC is assessing the effect of indoor residual spraying (IRS) in an area of high malaria transmission in Rachuonyo. IRS is considered to be a powerful addition to insecticide treated nets to fight Malaria. Through the entomology programme, Kemri/CDC is carrying out numerous activities related to the prevention of transmission through studying the biting habits and behavior of mosquitoes that transmits malaria.

These include evaluating all types of nets in the community to find out if they really work, monitoring and surveillance of the number of mosquitoes in the communities and if the insecticides used against them are still effective, mosquito control by applying insecticides to the mosquito breeding sites in the community, and many other projects that will stop the mosquitoes

from biting people.

Kemri/CDC is actively involved in studies that target to understand parasite resistance to anti-malarial drugs. In addition, there are ongoing studies to develop affordable, novel and simple tools for laboratory diagnosis of malaria.

"Since its inception in 1979, Kemri and its partners, particularly Kemri/CDC, has engaged the community in the larger Siaya County in the larger Siaya County in research that focuses on vital infectious diseases that continue to be an impediment to the economic development of the region, they include Malaria, HIV, Tuberculosis and other infections," he says.

Malaria remains a serious and sometimes fatal disease with the World Health Organization estimating that 300-500 million cases occur worldwide annually. More than one million people die annually of malaria. The disease mostly affects developing countries.

Knut officials told to vote as a block

By JOEL JUMA

LEGISLATORS from Western Province have appealed to Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) officials from the region to vote as a team in the forthcoming polls.

MPs Moses Wetangula, Bifwoli Wakoli, Simiyu Eseli and Ben Washiali said the province should not be divided during the national elections.

The legislators also said they will push the Government to ensure that the remaining 20 per cent salary increment for teachers is factored in the National Budget to avert a strike.

They said the unity displayed by branch officials should remain intact during the national polls.

The MPs were speaking at a Kakamega hotel during a meeting with the union officials drawn from Bungoma, Busia, Vihiga and Kakamega counties.

During the meeting, the officials endorsed the Emuhaya branch executive secretary Wycliffe Omucheyi for the post of second national vice chairman.

Mumias Knut branch executive secretary John Wesonga was endorsed to represent the four Counties as a Member of the National Executive Committee in the union along-side Fred Sichangi of Bungoma County and George Ekirapa of Teso branch.

"We want unity to start with the teachers so that the same can be reflected in the next General Elections," said Wetangula who is the Sirisia MP.

Wetangula explained that the four Counties should resist political influence during the national polls.

Wakoli explained that Knut should not relent in the fight for the welfare of teachers. He said MPs were ready to back the demands of teachers to get better terms and working conditions.

The Bumula MP asked teachers to play a key role in ensuring that the residents understand the contents of the new Constitution.

"We may approach the new elections wrongly if our people fail to understand the structures of the new Government," said Wakoli.

Omucheyi said he will ensure teachers rights are not violated.

He said the union had resolved to call a national strike if the Government fails to include the 20 per cent salary increment in this year's Budget.

Washiali said MPs channel a lot of Constituency Development Funds (CDF) money into education sector and called for closer monitoring by the union.

By TITUS MAERO

AN International Non-governmental Organization (NGO) that champions the rights and welfare of older persons in the country plans to set up Voluntary Counseling Centres (VCTs) to be managed by elderly people.

The Help Age Kenya-United Kingdom (UK) Programme Officer Mr Erastus Maina regretted that most VCTs in the country are managed by young people making it difficult for aged persons to visit the facilities to know their HIV/Aids status.

Speaking in Kakamega town, Maina said already the project had been rolled out in Central and Nairobi regions noting that

Group to open VCTs for old people

it was going on well with the older people having responded well to the project.

The official said there is need to promote and protect the rights, livelihood and Health needs of older people in the society as far as the first spreading deadly HIV pandemic is concerned.

He told a two-day-workshop held at the Sheywe Hotel in Kakamega, and attended by personnel from HIV/Aids organizations drawn from Kakamega County, that old people would be hired to jumpstart the VCT project in region.

Maina pointed out that the organization would also engage old persons in ad-

vocacy matters including their rights and entitlements in the society as far as HIV/Aids infection is concerned.

Further, the official said the old people would be encouraged to play a leading role in the elimination of cultural practices which are a hindrance to the fight against the Aids disease.

Quoting from the Kenya Aids Indicator Survey (KAIS) report prepared by the government, he pointed out that adults up to the age of 60 years residing in the rural areas have HIV infection of 6.7 per cent.

He said according to the report, 8.4 percent of the old people in urban areas are

infected with AIDS adding that the prevalence rate varied by marital status noting that HIV/Aids counseling and testing are key elements in the comprehensive response to the disease.

Maina said, according to the KAIS report, the proportion of adults who reported having been tested for HIV Aids increased from 15 per cent in 2003 to 36 per cent in 2007 among adults aged 15-49 years.

He, however, observed that the HIV prevalence in adults aged 50-64 was 5 per cent saying that most of the HIV infected adults in the country live in Nyanza and Western regions.

By JOEL JUMA

KENYA Anti Corruption Commission (KACC) has raised a red flag over mismanagement of public funds at Butere/Mumias County Council.

KACC has written to the Ministry of Local Government to demand that the council avails all financial documents.

"The commission requests to be availed with audit reports relating to the council's finances for the years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 to assist in its investigations," reads part of the letter written by David

Too on behalf of the chief executive officer Patrick Lumumba.

The letter was also copied to the Butere Community Cohesion and Development Forum.

The Link established that panic has since gripped chief officers following the turn of events.

The council's chairman Michael Keya said the move was political. He said it is unfair for the audit to target the period he has been in the office arguing that other years

should also be audited.

Keya explained that previous years should be included in the investigations claiming that the former chairman, Mondecai Nandwa, served as chairman as well as a contractor for the council.

"We need to do an audit dating back several years, not just the period I have been in office," he added.

Keya explained that a section of councillors were out to use the audit report to launch their campaigns in

the forth coming chairmanship elections.

The treasurer at the council Reuben Wanyama said he was ready to avail all the reports to KACC.

Councillors Johnstone Maloba urged KACC to investigate the finances in details.

He claimed that some areas were denied funding despite having been factored in the budget.

"Many projects have stalled because the chief officers and the

chairman have been colluding to deprive specific wards of funds," said Maloba who was speaking at Sabatia market in Butere district.

He said financial mismanagement was rampant in the council adding that the rate at which the chief officers and the chairman are becoming rich was suspect.

Keya however said he has worked hard to develop himself adding that he has not stolen anything from the council.

KACC breaths fire over Mumias accounts

FOCUS ON IKOLOMANI BY-ELECTION

Ikolomani vote marred by bribery, hate speech

By OYALO BENBELLA

THE just ended by-elections in Ikolomani was marred by massive voter bribery, hate speech and use of state resources by both the New Ford Kenya and ODM political parties.

Where as Prime Minister Raila Odinga used state vans including those bought by the constituency development fund together with his Deputy Musalia Mudavadi, Housing Minister Soita Shitanda used Government Vehicles with changed registration to campaign for Dr. Boni Khalwale.

The PNU national campaign team for Khalwale led by activist Stanley Livondo used Government vehicles with changed registrations to further state hooliganism by harassing ODM supporters in areas perceived hostile to Khalwale.

New Ford Kenya Party lined up voters in areas like Eregi, Malinya, Imuliru, Bushiangala and Mumbetsa polling stations. At one point we were intimidated and harassed by Dr. Boni Khalwale and his supporters as being spies from the government and asked us to leave the meeting or be ejected by the hostile supporters who were expecting a bribe.

Voters were removed from their homes and paid between Kshs 200 to KSh. 1000 by New Ford Kenya Party agents before being placed on motorbikes and vehicles to transport them to polling stations to cast their votes for Khalwale.

New Ford Kenya campaigners used a language that promoted both clanism and tribalism referring to Raila Odinga as an uncircumcised man incapable of leading people, that voting for Shinali translated into voting for an unclean per-



Residents of Ikolomani line up after a rally at Bushiangala polling station.

Photo/Oyalo Benbella

son.

ODM referred to Dr. Boni Khalwale as something else (Ishindu Shindi) and that his mother gave birth to a thief who keeps stealing from communities in Ikolomani, promoting a gang of youth in the name of bull fighters who break in people's houses at night cause insecurity in Kakamega county.

Ethnic based politics, if unchanged would inflame tribal animosities in 2012 and destabilise the already achieved peace and ethnic integration.

The conduct of the elections also indicated that IIEC does not have the capacity to control use of state resources and voter bribery. Commissioner Tiyah Galgalo who was in charge of the by election admitted the commission lacks legal structures to check against the ma-

son. The weaknesses IIEC displayed raised serious concerns among Kenyans as to whether they can be sure of peace after the elections in 2012 as it showed a lot of inconsistencies.

The security apparatus during the elections was wanting as security personnel were bribed by candidates to give a blind eye to the electoral offences that were committed in their full view. The OCPD in charge rubbed shoulders with both aspirants, a classic example was the arrest of two people who were found bribing voters at Malinya and Shitaha polling stations. It was evident that police were out to bungle the cases as they only arrested the bribe givers and not the recipients. In this manner, a charge cannot be sustained against them.

Some media houses took sides and were influenced by politicians, I personally saw a Citizen Radio reporter by the name of Harrison Olouch at two occasions airing live reports to Citizen Radio while party officials stood next to him directing him on the information to convey. This happened at Musolo Primary and Makhoho Secondary school.

The case is clear now to the nation and whole world. Institutions involved with election processes in Kenya needs overhaul before the 2012 general elections and accorded legislative powers to prosecute, punish and arrest political parties that abuse state resources during campaigns.

Security apparatus must arrest law violators come the next elections. Bribe givers and voters encouraging bribes

must face the arm of the law. Media houses should be objective in reporting. For Kenyans to achieve free and fair elections, IIEC in conjunction with civic organizations have to devote intensively in carrying out civic education/voter education to lessen cases of assisted voters which was rampant in the just concluded by-elections in Ikolomani.

International communities and observer organization ought to be present during campaigns to partner with the election body in monitoring campaign activities to restrain cases of violence, incitement and voter inducement by political parties.

The writer is an observer with Institute for Education in Democracy: benmundele@yahoo.com.

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

PLANNERS must include play grounds and other social amenities in all housing estates to curb idleness.

The National Agency for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse Authority (NACADAA) wants communities to set up pitches that could encourage participation in sporting activities.

Acting chief executive Aggrey Busena says the education system places too much empha-

Agency calls for more play grounds in estates

sis on examinations, leaving little room for recreational activities.

Mr. Busena, who spoke at Changamwe Primary School in Mombasa County during a youth sensitization sports day sponsored by a local non-governmental organization, Amka Kenya, said NACADA will liaise with the Ministry of Youth

and Sports to help fight drug abuse in low income estates in urban centres.

The agency boss also asked the Government to ensure consumption of traditional brews and other alcoholic beverages is governed by the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act 2010 that regulates consumption of alcohol.

He said unless the brews are controlled under the new law, sale and use of alcohol at odd hours to unauthorised persons will not be curtailed.

A senior official in the Ministry Youth Affairs, Mr. Jonathan Soi, said 50 youth empowerment centres have been constructed as a first step towards fighting idleness and drug abuse.

He said the ministry was also partnering with NACADA to ensure the youth are engaged in gainful employment as a way of fighting social ills in society.

The official said the ministry was also equipping all youth polytechnics to help create employment opportunities and paying Kshs.15,000 fees subsidy for each student.

Special focus on th

The intricacies of foreign agricultural investment in the Yala swamp

FROM PAGE 2

A brief history

THE most recent development of the Yala swamp is undertaken by Dominion Farms, a subsidiary of a privately held company from the United States investing in agricultural development. The reclamation and development of the swamp, however, is far from a new phenomenon.

The intention of the Kenyan government to transform parts of the Yala swamp into agricultural land for food production goes back as far as the early 1970s. Around that time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands was consulted extensively by the Kenyan government for technical assistance on reclamation of the swamp and the feasibility of agricultural production.

Throughout the 1980s numerous reports were commissioned by the Kenyan Ministry for Energy and Regional Development and the Lake Basin Development Authority to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Reports like the "Yala Integrated Development Plan" and the "Yala Swamp Reclamation and Development Project" focussed in depth on the potential of the development of the swamp and made recommendations on practical matters, such as drainage and irrigation, soil analysis, agriculture, marketing, environmental aspects, employment opportunities, human settlement, management and financial planning.

As a result, small-scale reclamation and development of the swamp land was undertaken throughout the 1980s and 1990s under the supervision of the Lake Basin Development Authority. The development of the swamp was partially successful, yet its scale was small and financial benefits were too marginal. Major investment was therefore required to extend the scale of the project.

Then, in 2003, an American investor expressed interest to make significant long-term investments into bringing parts of the swamp into agricultural production. Subsequently, a lease for 45 years was negotiated between Dominion Farms and the Siaya and Bondo County Councils to bring into agricultural production some 7,000 hectares of the Yala swamp. The whole Yala swamp wetland covers 17,500 hectares, which means that Dominion Farms is allowed to reclaim and develop roughly 40% of the swamp.

The protracted conflict



Yala Swamp: A world class biodiversity hot spot.

Since the early days of the arrival of the foreign investor in 2004, there has been lingering tension and occasional flares of conflict between the communities surrounding the project site, third parties (i.e. government officials, politicians, NGOs, CBOs, environmentalists) and the investor.

The most commonly touted complaint is that Dominion Farms has 'grabbed' the communities' land. While it is hard to trace back the exact procedures and individuals that were involved, there are clear contracts with the Siaya and Bondo County Councils that substantiate the transfer of land-use to Dominion Farms for a period of 45 years. Some claim, however, that the negotiation process for the lease was entrenched in bribery and corruption, yet no one has been able to show a single trace of evidence to substantiate these accusations. Similarly, there are complaints by local residents that they were never consulted in the negotiation process – where they should have been, as they rightly point out that the swamp is community trust land. However, the land is held in trust by the relevant County Council for the community. The County Council should therefore initiate consultations with the local communities and residents to get their approval to lease the land to third

parties. So it appears that some of the resentment over the 'loss' of parts of the swamp should not be directed at the foreign investor but rather target the local County Council and their procedures.

Alongside the procedural matters regarding the lease of the land, it remains understandable that some of the local residents find it difficult to understand why 'their land' is now in the hands of a foreign investor. Their tradition, culture and livelihood are often greatly entrenched in the land they live on, part of which they are no longer allowed to access. For many it is difficult to grasp that their County Council decided to bring foreign investment and development to some of the community trust land in order to affect greater food security, employment opportunities and infrastructural development of the region.

Besides the matter of the land, there are many other objections and concerns often raised with regard to the agricultural project of Dominion Farms. In a non-exhaustive fashion, some of these problems will be addressed here.

For one, there is discontent amongst local residents over a road constructed by Dominion Farms passing through the heart of Dominion's farm. Initially this road was open to the public and local residents were allowed to

make use of the road. However, when all of the land adjacent to the road came under production, Dominion Farms decided it was no longer safe to keep the road open since huge tractors and heavy equipment frequent the road on a daily basis. Still, it is understandable that some local residents were disappointed that they could no longer make use of this road. However, the private use of the road does not foreclose access for local residents to certain areas, and a good alternative road is available that goes around the farm. Incidentally, many local residents did express their gratitude for another road built by the investor passing through Lake Kanyaboli, which effectively connects the communities on both sides of the lake.

Water management and water quality is also a hot topic. Prior to the arrival of Dominion Farms there existed a canal from the river – which functions as the main water source of the wetland – to Lake Kanyaboli. Due to its small size and poor maintenance, however, it hardly allowed any water to reach the lake. Dominion Farms subsequently constructed a weir in the river to divert water to newly built canals for the purpose of irrigating their rice paddies but also to replenish Lake Kanyaboli.

Now, there seems to be a lot

of confusion about the management of the water diversion at the weir, the use of water for irrigation and the supply to Lake Kanyaboli. The most frequently heard concern and accusation is that too much water is extracted from the canals for irrigation, leaving little fresh water to replenish the lake. Allegedly, this has resulted in a serious drop of the water level in the lake and certain parts of the lake turning saline. One of the proponents of this view is the Kenya Wildlife Service, yet they did not substantiate these claims with factual reports. There are, however, periodic water quality analysis reports that Dominion Farms is required to produce together with an official from the Water Resources Management Authority. These reports show, on the contrary, that the water quality and water levels in the lake have seen significant improvements over the last years. Kenya Wildlife Service believes, however, that these analyses done by Dominion Farms together with the Water Resources Management Authority are 'compromised'. Interestingly, an independent researcher from the University of Nairobi, who spent vast amounts of time researching the lake area from 2002 to 2006, stated that since Dominion Farms built the weir and opened up the new larger canals the water quality and water level in the lake has improved dramatically. One could only wonder where the disparity in the reports on the water situation in and around the swamp comes from.

The Yala swamp and Lake Kanyaboli are important biodiversity hot spots in Kenya; so many people have serious concerns over the faith of the wildlife if the swamp is converted to agricultural land. In this respect, it may be important to note again that less than half of the swamp will be reclaimed for agricultural production, leaving some 60% of the Yala swamp wetland untouched. A number of people, however, believe that Dominion Farms' ultimate aim is to lease and reclaim the entire swamp area. A full reclamation of the swamp would indeed be disastrous for the wildlife and biodiversity of the Yala wetland. It appears however, from various discussions, documents and the current lease contracts, that there is no willingness on the side of the investor to develop more than the currently allocated hectares.

In addition, the Kenya Wildlife Service has recently gazetted Lake Kanyaboli and parts of the Yala swamp as the 'Lake Kanyaboli National Reserve' at the request of the Siaya County Council. The new reserve is a key effort in the conservation of the biodiversity in and around Lake Kanyaboli. Unfortunately, the gazetting has led to a serious disagreement between some of the communities, the County Council and Kenya Wildlife Services over the management of the

The Dominion farms:

reserve. While this is a regrettable situation, it does show that conflict over food, water and land in the Yala swamp is not restricted to foreign investment and development.

Finally, the development plans for the Yala swamp are essentially aimed at bringing employment, food security and hopefully agricultural education and knowledge transfer to the region. In a region with high levels of poverty, one would expect foreign investment to be a welcome avenue to realise this kind of development. Yet, some half-a-decade into the project there is a sense of disappointment and disbelief within parts of the communities. Some Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and local residents criticise the employment opportunities at Dominion Farms, the impact on the local food security and the potential for agricultural education.

The employment at the farm is partly seasonal, and consists for a large part of unskilled labour on casual or part-time basis. Critics argue that these kind of unskilled jobs, such as weeding rice paddies and scaring away birds, are degrading for the local people. Yet, upon questioning the local women in the rice fields there is an overall positive response to their employment and the opportunity it gives them to generate their own incomes. Moreover, skilled jobs and full-time positions are available to the local communities – however, perhaps not in the quantity that most of the communities had hoped or were promised by politicians.

Food security is also surrounded by wide confusion and misunderstanding. Many of the local residents allege they were promised free rice on a monthly basis by the investor. Yet they state to have never received any free rice, except for a one-off rice hand out sometime in 2008. The investor argues that most people would understand that it does not make any economic sense to give rice away for free, yet that indeed a free hand-out took place during the difficult times of the post-election violence in 2008 when many communities became food insecure. Instead of free rice, the rice is sold at affordable prices to the local communities so that they can feed themselves and even become small-scale entrepreneurs by selling the rice. Other concerns over the food production at the farm are based upon unsubstantiated claims that most of the rice produced by Dominion Farms is directly exported. However, there is no evidence available to support the claims that most of the rice is exported to the United States or to prove the allegation that it is used to 'feed prisoners of the United States in Iraq'. What can be verified, though, is the wide availability of Dominion Farms' rice in Kenya. Most major supermarkets carry their brand and small kiosks all over Nyanza province sell the rice.

The potential for agricultural edu-

cation and knowledge transfer by bringing in foreign investment and expertise is generally recognised. Over the years some trials and pilots have been conducted by Dominion Farms, which, however, have not yet generated structural long-term results. Nonetheless, the investor is in the process of building a Youth Education Centre on its farm grounds. Yet many of the local people do not believe they will get an opportunity to be educated once the centre is up and running. There is a wide spread belief under the local communities that access to education at the forthcoming Youth Education Centre will only be open to Americans. When asked though, the investor stated that their education centre and programs will be open to youth from anywhere in the world, including to local youth from the surrounding communities.

Structural problems

Most of the current and past conflicts over Dominion Farms' development of the Yala swamp can be traced back to three structural problems: poor communication, cultural and social misunderstanding and political involvement.

It is distressing to observe that communication between the investor, communities, government and third parties (NGOs, CBOs, media) remains even today as a key weakness in the appreciation and understanding of this agricultural develop-

ment project. On all sides of the conflict it seems that parties are not interested, motivated or willing to have a proper dialogue on the issues at hand. Either because they have tried before and did not achieve the desired results, or they just take for granted that the other side is not interested or unwilling to engage. This lack of communication becomes evident when one speaks to all parties. The communities generally lack factual information about the whole project; the size, plans, activities, investment, employment opportunities, and environmental approach – just to name a few. Some of the local residents very much rely on the information provided by CBOs, NGOs and environmental organisations working in the region. However, it appears that these organisations also occasionally lack some fundamental information and rely to some degree on hearsay. The investor seems to have given up on actively providing third parties with factual information on their operations, and appears to be no longer concerned with the ongoing stream of negative press. This is an unfortunate outcome, as a more active communication- and engagement strategy could clear up many of the misunderstandings. Finally, also the regular and digital media often do not seem to provide accurate accounts, most of their reports focus on undesirable and damaging consequences of the development of the Yala swamp but are hardly

ever substantiated by any factual evidence.

Cultural and social misunderstanding can take many forms. In the case of the development of the Yala swamp it appears that most of the parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict have a different cultural or social understanding of 'development'. The investor takes the perspective that large-scale economies and production are the most efficient way to run a business and at the same time increase food security in Kenya. This requires huge investment in infrastructure, which indirectly benefits the local communities. Local communities often respond that they favour the development of the region, yet they believe this should be done by their government. Their interest lies in infrastructural development, the availability and access to education and employment opportunities – while at the same time retaining a degree of self-sufficiency. Most of them find it difficult to accept that a foreign investor may be better equipped, or simply more willing, to provide this type of development. Wildlife conservationists and environmental organisations argue that any development should mean preserving the natural habitat and biodiversity of the wetland, and should therefore focus on stimulating and developing eco-tourism facilities. There is no wrong or right understanding of development. However, not respecting or ignoring other

perspectives can easily create tensions and bring about the types of conflict as illustrated above.

Political involvement has been an extremely volatile factor in the development of the Yala swamp by Dominion Farms. Some politicians were involved in the early days of negotiating the lease and development plans between Dominion Farms, the Lake Basin Development Authority and the County Councils. In one way this may have been a key factor in securing foreign investment to bring development to a poverty-stricken region of Kenya, however, the politicians involved seem to have made many promises to their constituencies, some of the promises even on behalf of the investor. Even worse, on the campaign trail politicians have been found to fire up their voters to either support agricultural production in the Yala swamp by making hollow promises or by vowing to shut down the whole project and get rid of the foreign investor. Their behaviour has been erratic, jumping forth and back from supporting to opposing the development of the Yala swamp. This appears to have been one of the factors underlying the mistrust and lack of communication as described previously. Interestingly, all of the parties affected or embroiled in the conflict mention political involvement as one of the main sources for the protracted conflict.

A way forward

The current status quo is a workable situation, yet not a desirable long-term outcome. As explained, there is a lot to gain from improving communication, disregarding hearsay, minimising political involvement and broadening cultural and social understanding.

It is clear that a balance must be sought between on the one hand the sustainable conservation of the wetland and its biodiversity as well as the reliance of the communities on the natural resources, and on the other hand the agricultural potential of the swamp to increase food security as well as bring development, education and employment to a region that is known for its high level of poverty. Dialogue and genuine engagement are essential tools to realise such a balance between conservation, sustainable rural livelihoods and economic and agricultural development.

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A section of Dominion farms rice plantations.