

Free Education in Peril

As mega scandals rock the heavily funded public sector

By FAITH MUIRURI

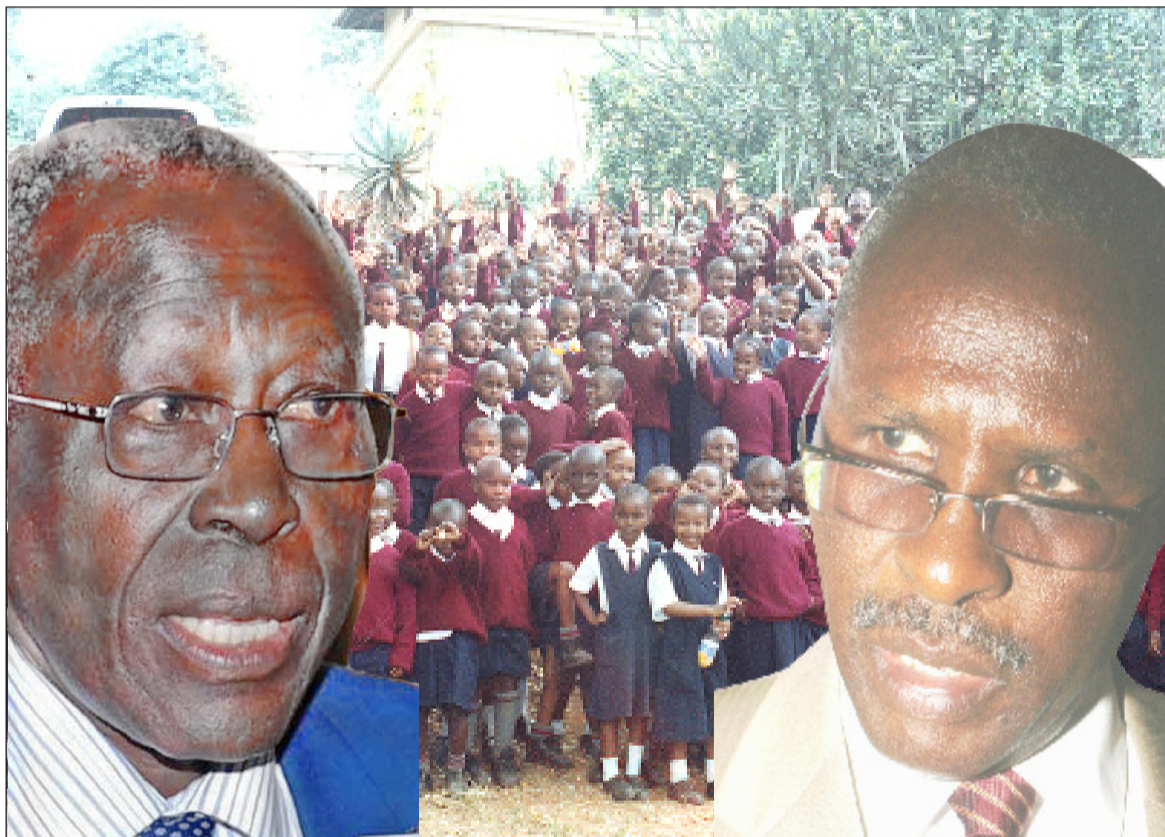
Massive theft of money meant for free education under the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) now threatens the legacy of the Kibaki administration.

The survival of the programme is in jeopardy as the impact of the mega scam trickles down to learning institutions, which are still grappling with failure to disburse over Kshs. 8 billion to support the Free Primary Education (FPE) last year.

At stake is the future of the programme as donors, led by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), threaten to withdraw funding in a drastic move aimed at pushing the government to recover the Kshs. 175 million lost in fraudulent deals.

The storm set off by a fiduciary risk audit report by the Ministry of Finance has turned into a volcanic landscape laced with hot red-hot lava as fresh audit queries pointing to a possible embezzlement of a whopping Kshs. 9 billion through questionable deals and accounting.

But that is not all. An additional Kshs. 2.7 billion allocated



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? *The FPE is in jeopardy and so is the fate of hundreds of children who have benefitted from the programme since inception in 2003.*

to 600 Primary Schools for the construction of classrooms, dining halls and dormitories has not been properly accounted for. The auditors could not find any evidence to show that the schools had requested for the money, let alone receiving it. And the rot

deepens: Kshs. 1.8 million was alleged to have been fraudulently allocated to seven ineligible private primary schools.

Even though the government remains adamant that the sector programmes, which cover the Ministry of Education and Min-

istry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST) were still on course, donors have vowed not to relent from their resolve to withhold funding until such a time when the money lost through fraudulent dealings is re-

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CoE urged to review proposed elections law

By WANJIKU NJUGUNA

THE Harmonised Draft Constitution has been faulted with critics citing the electoral system which they say did not reflect the wishes and aspirations of majority of Kenyans.

According to Muthoni Wan-

yeki who is the executive director of the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the draft did not give any directions for a more proportional system. She says that the draft largely borrows from the current system, despite provisions at three levels, with clear stipulations on po-

litical representation of women, people with disabilities and the youth.

She points out that the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) draft, the Bomas draft and the so-called Wako draft propose slightly different electoral systems.

The CKRC draft proposed mixed member proportional representation. The Bomas draft proposed direct representation (constituency-based), but with the direct representation of women from each district and

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Free Primary Education in Peril

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covered.

The KESSP programme largely draws its lifeline from development partners who have overwhelmingly supported it and injected funds to the tune of over Kshs. 22 billion since inception in 2005. Under KESSP Primary school enrolments have shot up from 5.9 million in 2002 to 8.6 million in 2008. In the current financial year, the government had allocated Kshs. 134,662,914,608 to the Ministry of Education, with Kshs. 17,654,646,708 being earmarked for development.

The UK which is Kenya's second biggest bilateral donor has been able to commit Kshs. billion towards the project since inception in 2005. An appraisal report by Chief Finance Officer at the Ministry of Education Alice Ngechu, the International Development Agency (IDA- World) has by the end of last financial year pumped in a substantive Kshs. 4.69 billion while the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) committed Kshs. 1.85 billion.

Belgium's (VVOB) has so far given funds totalling to Kshs. 0.38 billion, UNICEF channelled Kshs. 0.50 billion and Africa Development Bank (ADB /ADF) allocated Kshs. 0.07.

The financial support by Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) stood at Kshs. 0.58 billion, while Fast Track Initiative (FTI) gave Kshs. 8.59 billion. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) offered Kshs. 0.22 billion while the World Food Programme (WFP) Kshs. and Japan gave 0.20 billion and Kshs. 0.15 billion respectively.

Of the donors, the UK is emphatic that support for the second phase of the programme which is scheduled for July will squarely depend on whether officials implicated in the fraud are prosecuted, lost monies are recovered and financial management systems improved. It is however not clear if the other donors will follow suit.

In a swift move that has sent shivers in the spines of the ministry mandarins, DFID has immediately halted plans to disburse two further payments totalling to Kshs. 1.8 billion. They insist that release of the funds will depend on the government response to the audit report. This action is likely to cause serious headaches for the government because the state's contribution to the programme has been minimal. For instance allocation for the current financial year stood at Kshs. 4,930,204,367.

In the current financial year donors had pledged a staggering Kshs. 7.7 billion. Over Kshs. 2.4 billion was earmarked for infra-

The original KESSP 1 costing which has been the basis of planning is shown in Table 1 below:

Investment programmes	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
1 Primary Construction	857.95	1,055.38	1,654.87	1,237.86	1,215.90	6,021.87
2 ECDE	206.05	605.70	809.72	478.97	467.37	2,368.40
3 Non-Formal Education	368.90	411.10	381.80	398.70	418.70	1,948.20
4 Special Needs Education	302.00	265.00	262.50	317.80	328.10	1,503.40
5 HIV/AIDS	768.88	980.00	980.00	800.00	701.48	4,251.44
6 Adult Basic Education	186.00	307.00	251.20	304.50	418.00	1,397.20
7 School Feeding, health, (De-worming)	1,844.05	1,733.85	1,817.55	1,866.08	1,997.05	9,098.35
8 Instructional materials	7,813.22	8,850.07	8,899.88	8,984.88	7,054.44	35,618.70
9 Primary teachers pre-service training	310.00	233.48	267.91	370.37	300.18	1,379.90
10 Primary teachers (IN-SET)	316.40	582.60	607.60	643.00	623.00	2,752.40
11 ASAL mobile schools	9.00	18.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	117.00
12 Capacity Building (Training)	157.00	165.10	165.10	180.40	172.80	830.50
13 EMIS	160.80	115.80	80.60	80.80	80.90	518.70
14 ICT	63.45	78.45	112.00	72.70	61.66	401.36
15 Guidance & Counseling	71.70	111.30	111.30	09.40	59.40	421.10
16 Quality assurance	385.50	355.00	344.80	470.00	434.30	1,589.40
17 Secondary education - Bursaries	1,969.40	2,433.60	2,576.40	2,748.30	2,913.01	12,634.71
18 Secondary INSET mathematics & science	241.50	279.10	297.20	317.80	337.70	1,475.30
19 TVET less operational costs	485.00	403.00	805.00	840.00	655.00	3,370.00
20 Universities + ongoing student loans	1,822.00	2,402.30	2,814.80	3,004.82	3,083.80	12,798.62
21 Teacher Management	5.20	5.70	4.40	1.90	1.90	19.10
22 Gender programmes	11.00	11.40	153.20	165.40	139.70	483.70
23 Monitoring and Evaluation	38.00	33.00	36.30	40.00	44.00	193.30
Total	18,288.01	19,929.22	21,073.23	21,222.74	21,707.54	102,149.33

Table 3 below shows the JFA eligible categories list and the agreed levels of funding in the current FY (2009/10)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Investment Programme	Original KESSP Costing 2009/10	GoK funds (based on 2009/10 Printed Estimates)	2009/10 Proposed DP (regular funds) (6 Aug)	2009/10 Proposed DP (regular funds) (10 Sept)	special funds	special funds	special funds	special funds	special funds	Total Proposed DP Support (F, H, I, J)	Total GOK plus Proposed DPs
1	Primary school infrastructure	1,215.90	215.00	2,005.90	1,787.02	1,479.00		630.00		2,417.02	4,102.02
2	ECDE	467.97	188.00	800.00	800.00					800.00	988.00
3	Non formal education	419.70	100.00	250.00	250.00					250.00	350.00
4	Special needs education	326.10	420.00	120.00	120.00					120.00	540.00
5	HIV/AIDS	701.46	35.50	800.00	800.00					800.00	835.50
6	Adult basic education	418.00	190.92	300.00	300.00					300.00	490.92
7	School feeding, health & nutrition	1,997.05	607.35	70.00	70.00				675.00	745.00	1,392.35
8	Primary instructional materials	7,064.44	6,732.96								6,732.96
9	Pre-service primary teacher education	300.16	211.64								211.64
10	Primary teacher INSET	623.00	17.00	425.00	425.00					425.00	442.00
11	Educational opportunities in ASAL	30.00	475.00	20.00	20.00					20.00	495.00
12	Capacity development	172.80	124.80	350.00	350.00					350.00	474.80
13	EMIS	80.90	80.22	40.00	40.00					40.00	120.22
14	ICT in education	63.45	37.83								37.83

Table 3 continues

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Investment Programme	Original KESSP Costing 2009/10	GoK funds (based on 2009/10 Printed Estimates)	2009/10 Proposed DP (regular funds) (6 Aug)	2009/10 Proposed DP (regular funds) (10 Sept)	special funds	special funds	special funds	special funds	special funds	Total Proposed DP Support (F, H, I, J)	Total GOK plus Proposed DPs
15	Guidance and counselling	59.40	7.00	50.00	50.00					50.00	57.00
16(a)	Secondary education	2,913.01	14,180.00	77.67	77.67		550.00			627.67	14,787.67
16(b)	Secondary infrastructure	225.00				6,000.00					6,225.00
17	Secondary INSET	337.70	54.00								54.00
18	Quality assurance and standards	434.30	57.00	235.50	235.50					235.50	292.50
19	TVET	865.00	1,250.00	427.75	427.75					427.75	1,277.75
20	Teacher management	1.90	664.00	34.00	34.00					34.00	666.90
21	Gender and education	139.70	4.32	40.00	40.00					40.00	44.32
22	University education	3,853.80	40.00	20.00	20.00					20.00	60.00
23	Monitoring and Evaluation Communications Strategy	44.80	9.87	40.00	40.00					40.00	49.87
GRAND TOTAL	21,787.54	25,917.48	5,105.82	5,885.34	7,479.80	550.00	630.00	675.00	7,741.84	41,128.43	

structural development, Kshs. 800 million for Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs), Kshs. 250 million was to support Non Formal Education, Kshs. 120 million was set aside for special needs education, allocation to Adult basic education stood at Kshs. 300 million, while the School Feeding, Health and Nutrition was to be funded to the tune of Kshs. 745 million

Currently the programme which was set to wind up in 2010 has been operating in huge deficits with figures from the Ministry of Education indicating that the government is yet to remit an outstanding pledge of Kshs. 12 billion. In fact delay in

the disbursement of funds from both development partners and the government has had negative implications on the projects some of which are still running behind schedule.

The government unveiled the KESSP initiative in 2005 as a joint venture that comprised of development partners, civil society, communities and the private sector to help in the realization of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Education for All (EFA) by 2015.

The programme with an initial estimated cost of Kshs. 97 billion was to be implemented in a span of five years and sought to assist schools and communities to

construct and to renovate existing physical facilities and equipment in various public learning institutions in the country to increase access, equity and quality in Primary and Secondary Education.

At the end of the programme, 165 new classrooms were to be constructed during the implementation period. Distribution was to be based on priority needs across the country with the benefitting schools identified primarily on a comprehensive analysis of validated 2004 school mapping data.

But that was not to be. The only "official model" was turned into a conduit for siphoning money as Ministry officials blatantly defied the set guidelines

and instead channelled excess amounts of money to schools after which they would ask the schools to deposit the extra cash to private accounts.

And to validate their corrupt deals, the officers falsified claims using fabricated receipts to indicate that the money in question had been spent on workshops, hiring of training halls and laptops. They inflated prices of goods and services, authorized double allocation and disbursement of funds to undeserving schools. And as if that was not enough, they introduced of new programmes such as school nutrition and mobile schools in arid and semi arid areas.

But contrary to the numerous audit queries, the Ministry of Education's long-serving Permanent Secretary, Prof Karega Mutahi, categorically denied that funds were misappropriated at the headquarters. He insisted that the only money that goes to the Ministry directly is meant for monitoring, evaluation and capacity development activities. But even this too has queries over their utilization.

The PS explained that funds in the pool are deposited in an Exchequer Account under the Ministry of Finance at the Central Bank of Kenya. They are then released to the Ministry's Commercial Bank Account from where they are disbursed directly to individual school bank accounts within 48 hours of receipt from Central Bank through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

"Thus only School Management Committees (SMCs) with respect to Free Primary Education and Boards of Governors (BOGs) with respect to Secondary Education have access to the money at school level," he asserts

However, the stunning revelations are a case of reckless plunder that permeates the entire education sector. More damning reports indicate that the public has been losing an average of Kshs. 92 million every year since the programme was launched in 2003.

An analysis undertaken by the Kenya National Parents Association, indicate that ministry officials have been varying the amounts released to schools and pocketing the difference.

Although the PS tells Kenyans that all is well and that not child's education will be interfered with, Primary school head teachers countrywide have threatened to down their tools this term unless the government releases the money which was supposed to have been sent to schools in 2009.

And as pressure mounts on the government, focus shifts on the ongoing investigations and whether audit will be backdated to cover the entire five years when the scam is said to have begun.

Communities to have say on institutions

By **BILL ESSAU**

COMMUNITIES will starting next year have a hand in running of technical training institutions in their respective areas.

Government has started a community outreach programme to make the institutions relevant to the communities around them, according to Higher Education Minister Dr Sally Kosgei.

Kosgei says the programme, to be implemented in conjunction with civil societies in partnership with the private sector aims at involving the community on management of the institutions in their midst.

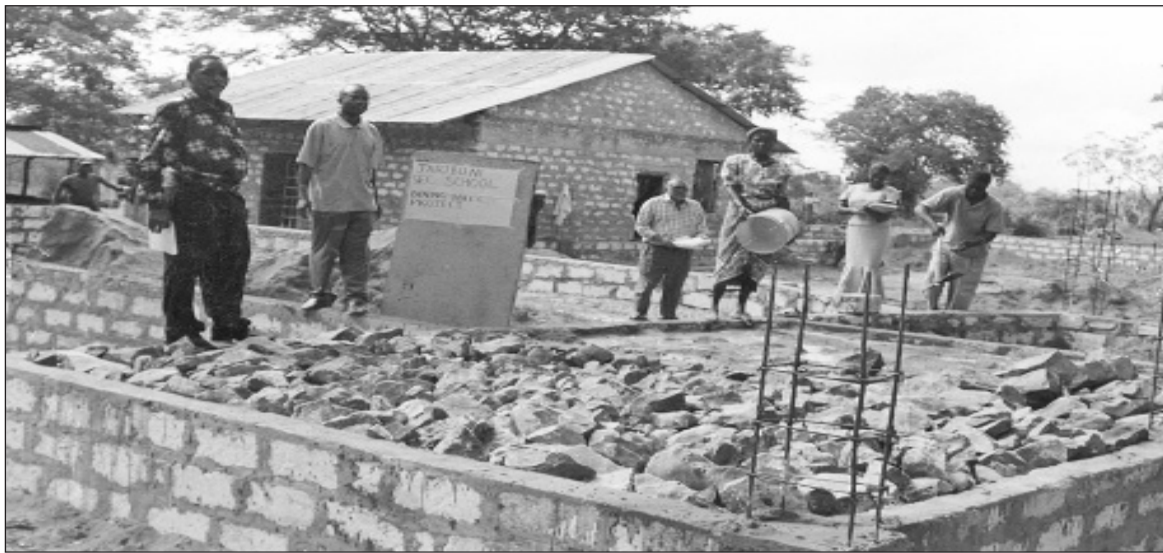
"The programme involves performing institutional and labour market involvement, designing and developing proportional activities that can effectively market the institutions and serve the community," she says.

Under the programme, all management boards of technical institutions are required to reserve one third of membership to the community, another third for women.

While presiding over the graduation of over 800 certificate and Diploma students at the Sigalagala technical training institute recently, Kosgei also said that the Government had involved private sector and development

Partners in addressing challenges that face high and tertiary education.

She notes that the ever increasing



Communities at work: They are part of a government outreach programme introduced recently

unemployment, threat due to globalization, HIV/Aids pandemic and high levels of poverty overstretched available resources. This, she adds, has made it difficult for the institution to expand.

Because of the overstretched resources in national institutions, she says, the Government has introduced performance contracting to improve in efficiency.

The ministry is preparing a policy on guiding and counselling on cross cut-

ting issues in technical training colleges, the minister said. Noting that the bursary scheme for technical institutions is meant to ensure access to technical education, Dr. Kosgei challenged women to take advantage of the bursary to join men-dominated fields.

She said that technical institutes played important role in producing the skilled manpower that will ensure Kenya becomes industrialized by 2030 as envisioned in the document.

She added that the Government had enhanced financial support for technical institutions with a view to improving the quality of training.

He said the focus was on improvement of library facilities, training equipment, infrastructure and capacity building at the management level.

Meanwhile, the Government will upgrade Sigalagala Technical Training Institute to a national polytechnic by the end of this financial year.

Technical Education Director Owate Wambai says the upgrading of the institution had been delayed by lack of funds.

He added that the Government has now received credit from the African Development Bank (ADB) and a grant from the Government of Netherlands to facilitate the elevation.

"We have been waiting for the needed support to create proper planning and teaching and we can now report that we are now able to equip the institution to levels that can capture the spirit of upgrading," says Wambai. Wambai said that upgrading will be done through the ministry's structured process. Bushiangala Shamberere and Matili village polytechnics have been upgraded technical status so as to feed upgraded Sigalagala.

He also says the Government had initiated construction of 13 new technical training institutes across the country. Saying that the ministry of Higher Education and Technology is keen on developing nuclear energy to address power crisis in the country, Wambai notes that the ministry is exploring ways through which Kenya can train her people on how to generate and use nuclear energy.

To this end, he says, that Government bursaries will now be skewed towards science engineering technology courses. This, he adds, will help ensure that Kenya has enough trained personnel in production of nuclear energy.

Teacher posing as abortion expert

By **MORRIS GITHENYA**

A QUACK who has been masquerading as a medical doctor has been cornered by police and public health officials for aiding back street abortions in a clinic he operates in Murang'a town.

The suspect a former high school teacher was caught red handed while he was inducing labour to two young women aged 18 and 26 in the clinic.

The police acting on a tip off from the public laid ambush at Fort Hall Clinic, which according to public health officials had not been licensed to operate.

The clinic used to operate like a private hospital only to be closed with a section turned to hostels for college students. The two girls, after they were rescued were rushed to Murang'a district hospital where they were admitted in a critical condition.

Murang'a East DC Mr. George Ntembeya said they there has been public outcry over the continued procuring of abortions at the facility hence making the government to carry out investigations.

"The facility has been under government watch after claims of carrying out illegal operations," said the DC.

In the year 2000, the premises used to operate a nigh club only to be closed following claims it had been turned to criminal and brothel dens before being converted to a private hospital.

Youth challenged to embark on productive activities

By **BEKADZO TONDO**

MOST educated youth in Coast province have come under criticism for failing to engage in meaningful work and instead opting for criminal activities.

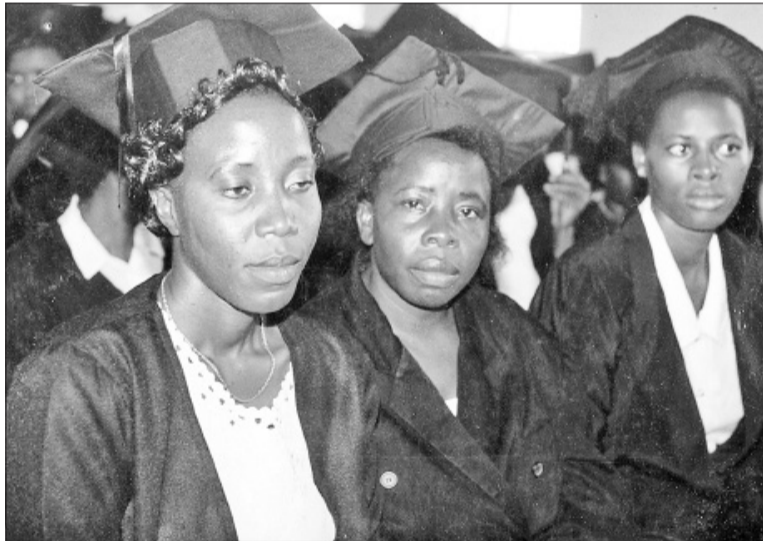
The administrative officer of Malindi Residents Forum (MRF) Mr Kashero Chinyaka noted with concern that youth apply in big numbers to work in civil society organizations but immediately abandon the jobs once they discover there are no payments.

Chinyaka said the trend had left the human rights organizations like the Kenya Red Cross and others under the guard of aged people who retire from the civil service and from the private companies.

"We are experiencing a problem where our learned youth in Coast refuse to work in civil society organizations which normally are aimed at educating the communities in their rights, promote development agendas because they do not pay salaries" said Chinyaka.

The official was speaking at Breeze point hotel in Malindi during an annual general meeting for the Malindi Residents Forum.

He at the same hit at women who shy away from contesting for leadership positions in the community Based organizations leaving the men to dominate in the groups.



Youth must engage themselves in other activities after education.

Chinyaka got shocked to see that none of the 13 elected people from the 13 elective wards within Malindi municipal council to form the board of Malindi residents forum was a woman.

He wondered how the affirmative law which seeks for equal representation for both women and men in parliament and in the local authorities could be retained if the women will not come out and contest for the seats.

And the newly elected chairman of the Malindi Residents Forum Mr Sonje Deche complained that frequent transfers of town

clerks at Malindi municipal had hampered quick development of the area.

Deche said it was becoming very difficult to follow up development matters with the council because the council gets new administrative officers in most cases.

He said since 2006 up to now the council has had more than four clerks and wondered how development projects could be monitored after implementation if there will be new administrative officers after a short period.

The chairman complained that when MRF started operations in

Malindi, the board members of the Forum and the council had agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding on the performance of the council especial on revenue collection, service delivery and accountability of the council expenditures.

He said though the former councillor had agreed to sign the document, they could not do so because their term in office had expired.

He said when the new lot of councillor came in the office after the past general elections, the councillors totally refused to sign the document.

Deche says most of the councillor led by their mayors felt that signing of the MOU could undermine their political operations and due to that they have refused to sign the important document.

However the executive director of the Ecumenical Center For Justice and Peace Rev Jephthah Gathaka urged the new board of Malindi Residents Forum to push the council and have the councillor to sign the MOU.

He said the main work of the Malindi Residents Forum was to push the council to improve on Revenue collection and expenditures, good service delivery to the members of the public and finally social auditing and transparent on project implementations.

Transparency and tracking Kenya's education sector budget

Financial and budget literacy needed to tame theft of education funds

EVEN though the Kenya government policy documents pledge adherence to the Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development goals (MDGs), policy objectives and priorities often do not necessarily find expression in Annual budgets. The Education Sector budget often represents the largest component of public expenditure in Kenya, but are those funds spent on the intended purposes? Does leakage of significant parts of allocated resources pose a serious threat to achieving the intended educational results? Opaque budget processes, off-budget activities (i.e. outside the formal budget), weak and poorly managed expenditure systems and a lack of public control provide manifold opportunities for corruption. As a result of a lack of financial accountability in many of our education institutions, resources often disappear.

Understanding and analyzing budgets is not an easy task. However, if parents and students, and school communities at large, are to hold schools and the education administration accountable, they have to be able to understand the budget. Budget transparency will only be useful if there is a broad base of knowledgeable observers. The legislature is also more likely to monitor the budget process effectively if there is a widespread public interest in budget issues. The media on the other hand will play a particularly important role with regard to generating interest and sparking public debate about the budget. Building budget literacy has been recognized globally as a prerequisite for engaging citizens in the budget process – this is the way out towards enhancing transparency and accountability in Kenya's education sector.

Open and democratic societies require an informed citizenry, public participation and governing processes that are transparent. Transparency is an important means of achieving participation and democratic control of budgetary processes – it allows an engaged and informed citizenry to have input into the budget process, and to monitor whether policies and political

COMMENT

By **DON BONYO**



commitments have indeed been translated into action. For instance, Parents who do not know that the government has released funds for textbooks for their children and for infrastructure are less likely to hold public education officials accountable than those who are informed.

Obviously, if the education sector budget were open to public for effective scrutiny, there would be less scope for deviation from policy. Budget transparency, while not a goal in itself, is a prerequisite for public participation and accountability: a budget that is not transparent, accessible and accurate cannot be properly analysed. Its implementation also cannot be thoroughly monitored, nor its outcomes evaluated. There are a variety of measures and tools that enhance budget transparency; most of them promote transparency not only in education budget planning and spending, but in all other social sectors.

The budget system if well designed will produce comprehensive and timely information – not only to the education administrators, but also to the consumers of the education services: pupils/students, parents, teachers, head teachers and the entire school communities. To be able to assess the transparency of Education finances, to identify priorities for reforms and to monitor progress, various interventions such as budget literacy and budget tracking must be promoted in Kenya. Budget based advocacy work is equally necessary to enhance clarity of roles and responsibilities in various players involved in education sector budget work; Public availability of education sector information by the Ministry of Education; and Open budget preparation, execution and reporting by the government among other desirable results is imperative.

We must also explore options for public budget hearings at local levels as this will raise citizens' awareness of goods and services that are supposedly delivered to them. Presenting education expenditure records in easy language to the public, or at schools, and confronting local politicians with the discrepancy between policy statements and actual delivery will definitely trigger civic action against corruption in the education sector, and thus contribute to accountability.

Report cards on education services are powerful tool that could also be used to mobilize the public if education funds go missing (A report card is a survey that assesses the performance of, for example, schools and school administrations. It measures both quantitative and qualitative indicators of service delivery through direct citizen feedback). If the results of report card surveys are fed back to schools and administrations, these will provide an incentive for increased accountability. If they are widely disseminated amongst the public, together with budget information, they will provide an opportunity for education stakeholders to get involved in the education budget allocation process, and to ensure that the national budget addresses their educational priority needs at the community levels.

Budget transparency and by extension tracking of public funds allocated to the Education sector annually is vital if the value for money for these programmes is to be realized. The education sector budget system should be designed in such a way that it "produces" comprehensive, timely information – not only to the education administration, but also to the "users" of the education service: pupils/students parents, teachers and school communities.

On the other hand, school community members' involvement in budget execution at school level is very important. School management committees are charged with the responsibility of administering school funds, among other tasks. Parents, children and teachers will be more likely to support school policies and protect financial resources

if they play a role in preparing the school plan and in managing implementation. Their levels of engagement in the whole process of School governance are critical. School governance involves making decisions on school goals, aims & objectives, management strategies, formulation of policies, plans & budgets, accountability & reporting mechanisms, generation, allocation & utilization of resources among other items. Participation by parents, teachers, community members and pupils is a key cornerstone of good school governance. Children being the beneficiaries of schools are also key stakeholders and thus require as much involvement & effective participation in school governance as adults (teachers & parents).

The Children's voice must be heard. Child participation in school governance is crucial in Kenya at this point in time when the Education sector is facing a crisis. This process requires the active involvement of children within the school and surrounding community in decision making on matters that affect their lives and to express their view in accordance with their evolving capacities. It also includes involving the children in identification of needs, tasks, problems within the school or the wider community, to ask appropriate questions and gather appropriate information, to discuss and negotiate possible courses of action, to share in planning, budgeting and decision making, to share the responsibility for implementing the plan, and to monitor and evaluate the outcomes and to communicate these to others. This therefore implies having parents, children and the entire school communities – all – participating in school governance.

For effective budget transparency and tracking of Education sector budgets (and other sectors' budgets), the State, the Private sector, the Media and the Civil Society Organizations in Kenya – in general – should scale up their investments in Budget Literacy programmes.

The writer is the Programmes Manager, Daraja Civic Initiatives Forum. donbonyo@gmail.com

Bungoma peace group praised

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

A BUNGOMA town based peace building organization is appealing to the ministry of education and the government to introduce a peace building curriculum in both primary and secondary schools in the country.

Bungoma Peace Makers Development Initiative, whose director is Dr. Isaac Misiko, a former primary school teacher, sensitizes people on the importance of proper coexistence in the larger Bungoma and its environs.

The teacher turned peace crusader observes that if peace building is introduced in our education curriculum it will promote coexistence and brotherhood among the 42 tribes residing in this country.

During the group's recent courtesy call on the Western Province Northern region Commissioner (RC) Mr. Rashid Mohammed, Dr. Misiko said that his organization managed to bring peace among tribes that were planning to attack each other following the flawed 2007 presidential election.

Dr. Misiko told the RC that his organization draws membership from all the tribes residing in the area adding that the group was now targeting learning institutions with a view to equipping pupils with knowledge on the importance of peace and coexistence.

"After Managing to restore mutual understanding and peace among all the tribes in the upper Western region our next target are schools and colleges", the director said.

Saying that the group does not want to see a repeat of what engulfed the country during the last general election because that could escalate to the Rwanda genocide of 1994, Dr. Misiko appealed to the provincial administration and the government through the RC's office to assist the group's endeavors.

He told the provincial administrator that lack of peace derails development and makes people to depend on well-wishers and donors for survival, something that should not be allowed to take root in Kenya.

Dr. Misiko who was accompanied by the organization's chief coordinator Mr. Charles Makokha among others narrated to the RC some of the cases the group has handled.

He named some of the cases as people fighting over pieces of land, marital problems and warring clans.

On his part the group's coordinator Mr. Charles Makokha, hailed the government for recognizing peace groups that have helped create awareness and restore stability in the region.

In response, Mohammed said that it was the government's intention to ensure that peace prevails in every part of this country.

He urged all peace organizations to work closely with the provincial administration in solving conflicts among the communities.

Othaya School faces closure over poor sanitation

By **JOSEPH MUKUBWA**

Birithia Primary School in Othaya Constituency is faced with imminent closure over poor sanitation.

Officials from the Ministry of Public Health have threatened to shut down the learning institution located along Nyeri-Othaya highway in Nyeri South district due to the pathetic conditions. The school has about 400 pupils.

A public health personnel, who did not want to be named told The Link that the toilets posed a health hazard to both the pupils and teachers. He expressed fears of an outbreak of a communicable disease if the school remains open.

Previous attempts by parents to raise funds to assist in the construction of new blocks have been futile mainly because of poverty and the drought that hit the country adversely affecting all sectors of our economy.

They lamented that they have not been able to raise funds to construct

the ablution block and the Free Primary Education funds have not been enough to help in school development.

But things may soon change for the better after an old boy intervened and volunteered to construct toilets for the pupils.

"There were only four functional toilets serving the more than 400 pupils, two for boys and two for the girls when I learnt of the dilapidated school infrastructure," says Mr Anthony Maina who mobilized resources for the work.

Maina adds "I was in shock when I visited the school and came face to face with the reality; the situation was pathetic of my former school."

He managed to mobilize over Kshs. 360,000 that was used to construct a modern ablution block that was commissioned yesterday.

The businessman/ICT specialist urges communities to mobilize resources to develop learning institutions to supplement government efforts in the provision of quality educa-



Mrs Mugo

tion to the children.

Noting that education was the key pillar to socio-political and economic development of any region, the specialist urged parents, teachers and pupils to sacrifice their time and re-

sources to better the sector. He warned pupils against anti-social behaviour that could jeopardize their lives and health. He also urges corporate organisations to divert some of their profits back to the community in areas of their operations.

Maina urged the local CDF committee to move with speed and help rehabilitate the leaking roofs and cracking walls saying this will save the school from total collapse.

The businessman at the same time emphasized on the importance of integrating ICT in schools to be able to cope with the dynamic world technologies.

The school head teacher Mr Cyrus Ngatia says the institution was in dire need of reconstruction to give it a face lift for a conducive learning atmosphere.

But the public health official maintains that the toilets are not enough and needs more sanitation saying the population of the school is more than the toilets built.

Most constituencies may miss CDF — Oparanya

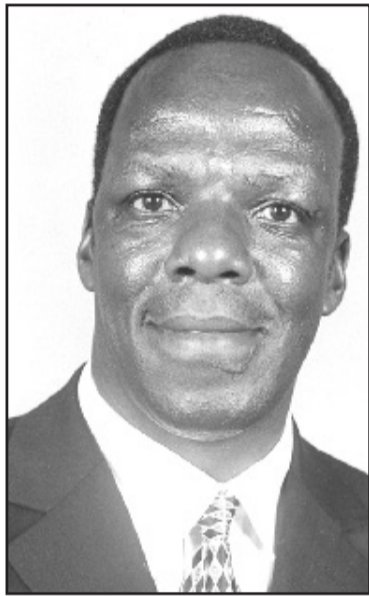
By WANJIKU NJUGUNA

ABOUT 110 constituencies in the country are likely to miss out on their allocation of Constituency Development Funds during this financial year.

This follows an apparent delay in remitting both their proposals for the current financial year and accounts in the last financial year.

Planning Minister Wycliff Oparanya made the revelations as it became clear that some legislators had failed to present their proposals on time, a move that is likely to cost their respective constituencies this year's CDF allocation.

Major gains have been realised since the introduction of CDF in 2003, with the fund being credited for spearhead-



Mr Oparanya

ing numerous development projects in various parts of the country.

CDF opened rare opportuni-

ties for semi skilled and skilled labour in infrastructure expansion and other areas as economic devolution and first real efforts at managing inequity that characterized marginalized areas.

Huge chunks of cash from development partners and international financial agencies were the only available options for money to trickle down to the grassroots.

Statistics may still not be available to show just how fundamentally CDF has transformed the lives of Kenyans. But the fact that for once, every corner of Kenya is being considered automatically for resource allocation is a huge improvement on how things have in the past been done.

The past where political

correctness largely determined whether an area got development allocation has been blamed for haphazard resource allocation with huge disparities defining who got and who was denied.

It is imperative that the current 2.5 percent of the revenue allocated to CDF is expanded to help realize meaningful transformation in our growth. But this will not make sense if MPs continue to play negative role with CDF.

Concern has been voiced with regard to nepotism and political interference in the allocation of funds to projects at the constituency level. Mechanisms should be put in place to enhance accountability and transparency in the utilization of funds.

CoE urged to review proposed polls law

From Page 1

the representation of 14 persons from marginalised groups elected from electoral colleges of the same. And the so-called Wako draft reverted to the CKRC proposal, with the addition of "special constituencies" for women's direct representation as well as the allocation of some seats in proportion to the votes received by political parties.

"The Committee of Experts has analysed the three proposals based on how best to ensure women's political representation and the political representation of other marginalised groups who include people with disabilities and the youth, as well as ethnic minorities," she asserts adding that despite the three different levels of legislature proposed by the draft, this need is clearly not addressed.

Judging from the report by CoE, she argues that proportional representation will not realized as responsibility for determining women's political representation still lies in the hands of political parties that are notorious for having reneged on their representation promises to women.

She notes that the report concludes that proportional representation ran the risk of being abused and argues that a political party required to nominate women could potentially nominate all women from the same ethnic community.

She says that these assertions however ignore the ways in which the CoE clearly addressed these concerns in other sections of the draft.

The provisions on political parties, for instance, stipulate that they must respect and promote gender equality and equity, and that they cannot be founded on a linguistic, racial, ethnic, gender or regional basis, implying that intersectionality would be taken into account. It further stipulates that they will not be eligible for financial support if more than two thirds of its registered national office holders are of the same gender, she explained.

The KHRC executive director further argued that the draft ignores mixed member proportional representation which was also proposed for reasons other than more equitable political representation. It was also proposed because citizens wanted both parliamentarians whose primary purpose was to respond to constituency-based needs as well as parliamentarians better suited to responding to national needs.

Coast MPs read riot act to their CDF committees

By BEKADZO TONDO

Kaloleni MP Kazungu Kambi has disbanded the local CDF committee citing misappropriation of funds running into Kshs.4 million.

The MP accused the committee led by Mr John Charo of corruption saying that it was unfit to remain in office to manage public funds.

According to Mr Kambi, the committee had failed to account for Kshs 4 million earmarked for one of the projects in the area.

The law maker argued that the committee failed to comply with the set guidelines on project implementation and ended up doing a shoddy job at the ground

He said the 15 member committee was forced to record a statement with the police on the alleged mismanagement of the devolved funds arguing that the committee ignored his order for it not to authorize the payment to the contractor.

The move received immediate applause from the residents led by Kaloleni district commissioner Mr. Fredrick Ayieko who argued that they had also noticed that something was wrong on the project implementation.

The committee members led by Mr. Elias Tsori later confirmed to have recorded some statements with the police over the alleged misuse of the CDF monies.

Malindi MP, Mr Gideon Mungaro, followed suit and dissolved his CDF committee one month later.

Mungaro also accused the project implementing committees of being corrupt in their work and for that case, he decided to disband their committee.

Meanwhile Bahari MP Benedict Fondo Gunda has also threat-



Members of a CDF committee in a past event.

ened to disband some project implementing committees in the constituency if they fail to observe transparency and accountability in their work.

This has become the trend adopted by some MPs in the Coast province who have of late shown a different approach on the management of their CDF funds with some going to the extent of firing the committee members, disbanding some before they elect new ones

Lack of transparency and accountability in the implementation and utilization of devolved funds on community based development projects has in the past

come under focus with critics questioning the capacity of constituency committees in the management of funds.

Though the government has established many devolved funds to support community projects in all corners of the country, little has so far been achieved at the grassroots level.

People entrusted with the powers to manage the relevant funds have been accused over their failure to change the development face in the grassroots.

Communities have in the past complained about the criteria used to appoint people in the devolved funds committees especially that

of the constituency Development Fund.

They have expressed a strong desire to have members of parliament powers to appoint people in the committees shelved and instead allowing them to elect members in their respective constituencies as a way of ensuring local involvement in decision making processes.

The lack of the same has resulted in residents complaining that funds are being misused by the committee members who were appointed by the MP and they have no powers as per the regulations to remove the corrupt members.

By FAITH MUIRURI

CIVIL society organizations (CSOs) are calling for immediate formulation of a policy to ensure effective and efficient management of devolved funds.

The CSOs say the policy will pave way for the creation of a harmonized framework to coordinate the management of substantial resources devoted to grassroots regularly through the devolution system.

They argue that the current scenario was chaotic and did not guarantee any form of public participation, accountability and transparency required in management of public resources.

The institutions include the Kenya Human Rights Commission and the Social and Public Accountability Network which comprises of Abantu for Development, Action Aid, Centre for Enhancing Democracy and Good Governance (CEDGG), Centre for Peace and Democracy (CEPAD), Ms Kenya, Social Economic Right Foundation, The Institute of Social Accountability (TISA) and World Vision.

They note that there are over ten distinct decentralized public funds available at Ward, Constituency and District level whose mode of alloca-

Devolved funds wasted due to lack of policy

tions to projects earmarked for implementation has not translated to any meaningful development.

They cited CDF which received a substantive Kshs. 33 billion despite lacking in technical capacity and widely relying on the 210 constituencies as units of development, most of which are not viable.

The government also disbursed Kshs. 10.4 billion in 2009/2010 Financial year to 175 Local Authorities in the country yet the Ministry of Local Government ranking currently approves 100 local authorities as viable service delivery units.

The Civil societies argue that despite such huge allocations there was very little to show since both agencies faced similar problems that range from a shortage of competent technical staff to under funding and cannot deliver

comprehensive services or development. None have a functional monitoring and evaluation framework.

"There is no mechanism to ensure the funds add incremental value to each other and there are numerous cases of duplication. Therefore by spreading resources across such units undermines the effectiveness of local development and it is thus unacceptable that new funds and directives in the sector are made on short term populist basis without due concern to effectiveness and efficiency," they add in a statement read on their behalf by the Outgoing MS Kenya Country Director Jesper Lauridsen.

They say the policy should outline among other things the level of citizen engagement and derive its mandate from existing structures to establish a viable number of development units,

staffing levels and accountability mechanism. The policy should further seek to retain, retrain and reallocate existing staff and assets and give a detailed transitional framework of the present institutions.

The history of decentralization in Kenya dates back to the period after independence. The government through "Sessional paper No. 10 of 1965 on African socialism and its application in planning" established the principle of state direction of development process and decentralization of planning based on local inputs as a means of improving socio-economic well being of the rural community.

In 1971, Kenya initiated an integrated decentralized planning under Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) in areas chosen to cover a cross section of the nation. SRDP was focused at the sub-district level (i.e. the division), covering six rural administrative divisions as an experiment on decentralization, with a primary objective of increasing the rural incomes, employment and welfare

The Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1975 on 'Economic Prospects and Policies' based more emphasis on rural development.

In the late 1970s/early 1980s, six Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) have been established with a common mandate to plan and coordinate the implementation of regional development activities, ensure mobilization of resources and promote regional socio-economic development through integrated planning and management.

In July 1983, the government attempted to extend decentralized development to all districts in Kenya through the adoption of a District Focus for Rural Development Strategy (DFRDS).

The proposed new constitution gives district governments more legislative autonomy and overall responsibility for planning and formulation of district policies, implementation and monitoring, and maintenance of the district's infrastructure.



Stalled Burumba Dispensary which has purportedly spent a total of Ksh1.8 million. The former local project development committee has been replaced for allegedly failing to exercise transparency and accountability. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo

Police hunt for Nyeri deputy mayor over assault

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

POLICE in Nyeri have launched a manhunt for the Nyeri deputy mayor over allegations that he assaulted a Kieni Constituency Development Fund (CDF) official.

Mr Ndirangu Kabai who is also the Ngonde ward councillor was being hunted yesterday over allegations that he allegedly assaulted Kieni CDF treasurer Miss Anastasia Wanjiru in her office.

Kieni East District Commissioner Mr Daniel Odambu said that the mayor went into CDF offices protesting over unfair disbursement of the funds and assaulted the official injuring her neck and face seriously. He was said

to be protesting that his ward was getting too little from the funds.

The treasurer who has since recorded statement at Kiganjo police station after acquiring a P3 form said she was at CDF offices at Chaka township when the mayor bounced on her. She was treated at a local dispensary and discharged.

Kabai allegedly uttered unprintable words unto the local CDF chairman Mr Daniel Kang'angi as other workers watched in disbelief. Sources said police have visited Kabai's home twice but have not found him.

When Kabai was reached for a comment, he denied the assault allegations saying he was beaten by some other people he didn't know.

Controversy rocks Webuye CDF office

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

THE Webuye constituency development committee has approved Kshs.3million to buy 24 brick making machines despite controversy over the procurement procedure.

The committee sitting to approve the supply was surprised to learn that the Kshs.98, 000 quoted per machine was way above what the company was selling the machines.

Sources at the CDF offices

said they had no alternative because they were under pressure to approve the contract despite the anomalies.

The tender committee sitting last November was forced to shelve the awarding of the contract to Makiga engineering services, to supply the equipment, as it emerged that prices had been inflated.

But they were made to go ahead and approve the supply, after being

convinced, that the interlocking machines in the country are, manufactured and supplied by Makiga only.

The revelations threw the committee in confusion as they started to question the motive of the person behind the company being awarded the contract without following the due process.

According to sources, which attended the meeting, CDF was allegedly going to lose Kshs.

250,000, if the company is awarded the tender without open tendering.

Complaints were said to have been raised about the nature in which the company was picked without advertisement as the money involved was huge.

But sources maintained that they were being coerced to approve the tender yet they have not been involved in the negotiations in pricing.

However, the area MP Alfred Sambu, sought to downplay the issue saying that any concerns can be resolved, adding that the most important thing is to ensure the constituencies benefited.

According to the CDF Act, to spend Kshs.3million open tendering is required from at least ten supplying firms. The CDF tender committee should also carry out market survey before adjudication on tender.

By **FAITH MUIRURI**

DESPITE steady decentralization of funds in the country, Kenyans are increasingly being alienated from development initiatives at the grassroots level.

A research conducted by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and the Social and Public Accountability Network (SPAN) revealed that ordinary Kenyans are less likely to be consulted on local development initiatives.

SPAN is made up of Abantu for Development, Action Aid, Centre for Enhancing Democracy and Good Governance (CEDGG), Centre for Peace and Democracy (CEPAD), Ms Kenya, Social Economic Right Foundation, The Institute of Social Accountability (TISA) and World Vision

The study established that Kenyans lacked access to information and that they are often sidelined from all levels of development from planning to the actual implementation process of projects at the grassroots level.

According to the findings of the research this has resulted in a widening gap between the demand and supply of services, with citizens losing confidence in decentralized development as an institution that can meet their needs and respond effectively to the challenges they face.

The study focused on seven funds namely the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), Lo-

Kenyans have no say on use of devolved funds-research



One of the CDF funded projects.

cal Authority Transfer Fund (LATF), Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF), Free Primary Education (FPE), Constituency Bursary Fund, Water Services Trust Fund and the Constituency Aids Control Fund that have direct impact on Education, Health, Water and Sanitation and Road sectors.

The research entitled Harmonization of Decentralized

Development in Kenya was undertaken in eight constituencies which included Nyeri Town, Mwatate, Baringo Central, Isiolo North, Mandera West, Makadara, Mumias and Kisumu Town East.

During the study, 44 percent of those interviewed expressed concern over the high cases of duplication with 16.1 percent indicating that the extent of du-

plication was high, 8 percent saying it was very high while another 9 percent saying that it was moderate.

Respondents revealed that interpersonal communication was the most reliable way of getting information on most decentralized funds. Other reliable sources of getting information about decentralized funds included Radio at 21 percent

while CDF and FPE at 20.8 percent. Public barazas also were valuable sources of getting information with CDF at 15.7 percent, LATF at 14.2 percent and Bursary 14 percent.

The level of awareness on decentralized funds ranked high with CDF polling 96 percent, Free Primary Education ranking second with 90 percent and the Bursary Fund followed with 88.3 percent. The Water Services Trust Fund was the least known at 40.7 percent among the seven funds studied.

The respondents came up with a raft of proposals geared towards enhancing public participation. They called for the development of a citizen charter to safeguard citizen involvement through proactive information dissemination, right to official records, regular reporting meetings, an effective citizen budgeting process and representation in local development committees.

They also suggested that politicians be removed from direct implementation of local development funds as their presence only served to undermine oversight and accountability and promoted political patronage over development goals.

Diffuse new agric methods through schools

By **WANJIKU NJUGUNA**

ALL learning institutions including Secondary and primary schools have been tipped as the most viable entities in the realization of Vision 2030 with a particular focus on addressing food insecurity.

Yatta MP Charles Kilonzo says that learning institutions should be used as central points where techniques that embrace modern farming methods are imparted to the surrounding communities.

The MP says that schools should explore possibilities of liaising with institutions that offer such services and cited Amiran Kenya which was currently implementing a similar project in 15 schools in his Yatta constituency.

Amiran Kenya has been providing agricultural education as well as installing farmers kits in various schools drawn from the constituency in

a venture that is jointly being undertaken with the local Constituency Development Fund.

The MP opposes the current scenario where universities are the only entities allowed to partake such tasks saying that most farmers cannot access institutions of higher learning owing to the long distances involved and the fact that they are few in number.

"Secondary schools are better placed to undertake such ventures as they are more closer to people than any other institutions," he adds.

This he says will also impact positively on students in targeted schools since they will be able to relate practically with what is taught in class and further replicate the ideas to their respective homes.

In his Yatta constituency, the 30 greenhouses installed in the 15 schools will also be used as demonstration centres

for farmers.

Started six month ago, the project is earmarked to have a tremendous effect on the lives of people around the constituency.

According to representative of Amiran Kenya Pauline Kavita, the organization is committed to giving to people the value of their investments.

She says the approach taken by Yatta MP will help to curb rural-urban migration in search of job opportunities as many youth will now be involved in agriculture.

In July a group of MPs, CDF chairpersons and committees drawn from over 50 constituencies joined representatives of Amiran Kenya at a Nairobi hotel to familiarise themselves with the Amiran farmers kit with the possibility of introducing modern agricultural methods to their constituencies.

LATF gives Kilifi Kshs 44.5m Council says only local contractors will benefit

The Kilifi County Council has received Kshs 44.5 Million during this financial year from the Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF).

The Council clerk Mr Leboo Ole Morintat said only local contractors would be given the contracts under the fund in a bid to the build their capacities financially.

Speaking during a consultative meeting to approve community recommended projects recently, Morintat said though the law empowered the local authorities to advertise the tenders for anybody to apply, the local authority had decided to restrict the tenders to the local contractors.

"One of the prime objectives of the LATF devolved funds is to bring development to the grassroots and empower the community financially and that is the reason why we in Kilifi county council have resolved to give the tenders to our local based contractors," said Morintat.

The clerk said the council had initiated about 140 development projects in all the 31 elective wards within the council jurisdiction since the LATF was established in

the country five years ago.

The council has been using its LATF money allocations in supporting educational, water, roads rehabilitation and health projects.

Mr Athnoy Kingi, the council chairman, dismissed claims that local councils have been misusing LATF monies.

Kingi instead said the councils have improved the development of projects in the community and totally differed with the argument by certain members of parliament who argue that chief officers have been misusing the monies for their own personal gains.

Recently the minister for Planning, National Development and Vision 2030, Mr Wycliff Oparanya, accused chief officers in the country's local authorities for misusing LATF monies.

Oparanya said the fund's management should be entrusted to the councilors like what happens to the CDF monies which are manned by the MPs.

The minister the government was planning to table a bill in parliament which will seek to hand over LATF management to civic leaders if approved.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

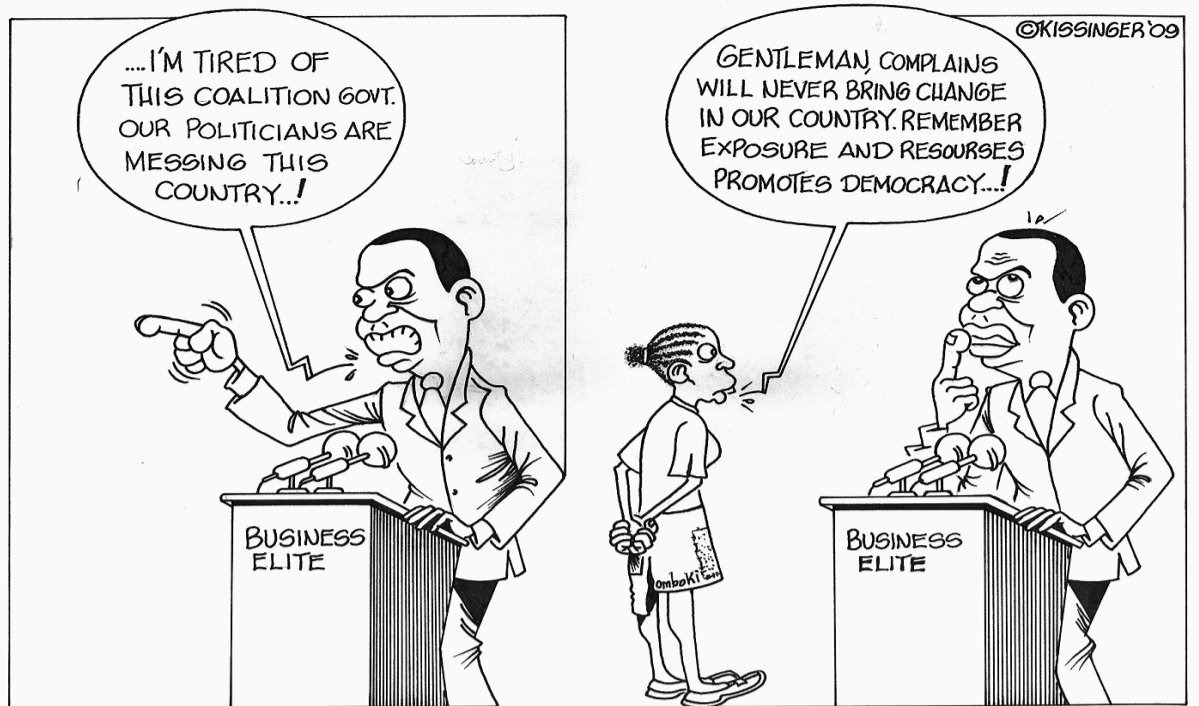
Leaders must stop digging-in culture

Mess in the education sector is serious enough to warrant the President and the Prime Minister to crack the whip against the two professors they have put in charge of the Ministry of Education. It is unbelievable that Prof Sam Ogeri and Prof Karega Mutahi are still in office more than three months after the financial mega scam was unearthed in the ministry. The President in particular must not eat his words simply because the two professors are his bosom friends or fellow allies in the PNU side of the grand coalition government. Kenyans still remember that recently on 12 December last year during the Jamhuri celebrations, the President pledged to the nation that he would not spare anyone involved in corruption and abuse of office. We believe that the rot in the education ministry is reason enough for the two principals to walk the talk by firing the minister and the PS. It is sickening to see the two old men trying to dig-in and publicly voicing their refusal to give way so that thorough independent investigations can take place. This decadent culture of refusing to resign from public office even if one is implicated in very high profile scandals, such those currently being unravelled in the ministry of education, must stop. Kenyans, especially those privileged to hold big public offices, must learn to take responsibility for their actions of commission, omission or both. It beats all logic for the two highly learned fellows to call press conferences to shamelessly proclaim their innocence, when it is clear that they are not. Even so, whether or not they stole is immaterial. The fact is that the atrocities against the children of this nation and tax payers both locally and internationally were committed under their watch. In fact in many cases, the PS being the accounting officer, signed off the fraudulent payments and have consistently been making fake returns to the government year in, year out. If it is not the PS's responsibility to safeguard public funds allocated to his ministry then whose is it? As part of the public watchdogs, we demand immediate drastic action to be taken against the officials to rescue the free primary education programme in the interest of children of this nation. It is a shame that primitive cultures of impunity and buck-passing by leaders faced with scandals have been allowed to continue four decades after independence.



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COMMENTARY

We must stop equating state power with chicken

In the African and in the Kenyan context, discourse on power is premised on whether it should favour the African tradition or modern systems. In Africa, power is still being looked at in relation to traditional poultry keeping.

In that set up, only one cockerel is kept and allowed to crow in a homestead as it lords it over several hens, chicks and minor cocks, regardless of its productivity ratio. Modern power structure is seen in this context, hence the argument that the center of power has to be one irrespective of productivity of the person who wield that power.

This mindset informed the thinking of the 'centralist nationalists' at Kenya's independence and to some extent the most Pan Africanists. The location of power not what power serves was the issue. The centre has to tower over everybody and everything within its jurisdiction. This is the foundation of strange fixation with the imperial presidency even when it is clearly that occupants have abused such powers with abandon. But for us the cockerel has to tower over the rest even when many hens produce utopic eggs so to speak.

On the other hand, the conventional understanding of power is service based. It is the productivity ratio that counts. It is to what extent harm is thinned out. It is utilitarian. It is to what extent happiness is spread out to the bigger majority. It is one cockerel to a maximum of 12 hens. It is an equation of more hens, more cockerels. It is not one cockerel to unknown number of hens. It is not a question of either one or two. It is the ratio that defines productivity.

Kenya has over the years experienced well enough the traditional African understanding of political power. Service has been skewed, abused and wasted. The one cockerel has never sufficed. Kenya's needs are diverse, stem from different geographical backgrounds, have no single approach, unlike what the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 and subsequent national planning prefecture arrangements including DDCs have always prescribed. Not all districts need what the centre constantly places on them.

POLITICS



By GIDEON OCHANDA

Mandera does not need the equivalence of District Cooperative Officers as Murang'a. Mandera has less than 5 societies against Murang'a's 4000 plus. Mwingi District with no single face of surface water does not need a platoon of fisheries officers similar to Malindi or Suba.

The tentacles of one cockerel has been unable to recognize this as it espouses uniformity all through to 'Provincial Administration' which is a semi unproductive cockerels that crows in the absence of the main one is listened to and herd of. It is simple unproductivity. No wonder the county cannot move forward regardless of the natural endowments including human resources.

The one cockerel phenomenon is well grounded in the current Kenya Constitution smarted since 1968. The imperial presidency- one power centre as it is called.

Majority of Kenyans have said loud, time and again, that it's the one centre of power phenomena that is harming the majority. We cannot attain the greatest happiness for the greatest majority. The one center has to be done away with constitutionally.

It is against this backdrop therefore, that one center of power is not enough, and neither are two if the diversity and needs of our society are considered. We are exceedingly diverse. Ethnicity cannot be fought in the manner some want us to. Instead, we have to recognize it and build it for the national good.

Does the Harmonized Draft take us anywhere?

If Kenyans were genuine, the draft has created many more centers of power. Myopia limits them to two. The draft has more beyond the Presidency and the Premier. Many more centers of power are created elsewhere. In its very raw ar-

rangement, those powers that Kenyans wanted removed from the imperial presidency must by necessity and practice vest somewhere.

The draft vests them beyond the President and the PM to the National Assembly, Senate, National Constitutional Offices and Commissions, County Legislature, County Executive and appropriately in the judiciary. The draft has created many centers of power as opposed to the theories being advanced.

The real powers are at the County- the County Executive and County Assembly in schedules 4 and 5. Everything and anything apart from education that the draft has pretended to place away from the county are in actual fact what we are. The counties as contained in the draft are Not County Councils as we ordinarily know them today.

The county proposed in the draft puts together in one all Local Authorities (County Councils, Town Councils and Municipal Councils), DC's together with all Districts (regardless of all the newly created Districts within Districts as at 15th March 2004), MPs governments as from 2004 i.e. the CDF government, and all the other decentralized funding arrangements that go direct to committees in Districts or constituencies.

The two centers talked of and the drive for yet another one cockerel in the homestead is anti people. The President and the PM in the draft are in all fairness very far from where we are and will be. We should not care even if they are all elected directly or indirectly. They are elite positions concerned with territoriality and nationality (principally legislations, policies and standards). It is important that they do all that to guide our governments not to be in charge of them.

Our governments (Counties) should be in our hands. The new constitution has no choice other than to give us small responsive county's instead of concentrating power in the hands of elite squads who at in Nairobi.

We need to jealously guard against the elitist squads taking away our lives again.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

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Time for clergy to lead from the front

COMMENT

By WESAYA MAINA



SINCE the signing of the National Accord, there has been a flurry of reform initiatives meant to right the wrongs of the past and steer the nation to prosperity.

However, what is emerging is that the political arm is taking us through a well-choreographed circus to frustrate our will and hope for a responsive government and leadership.

Looking at the menu of reform items upon reflection, one wonders whether we have the capacity to realise all we have planned for or the politicians are once again playing their monkey tricks to an unsuspecting nation.

Unwittingly, the President and the Prime Minister have driven us into a conundrum. The two principals know well we cannot realise most of what they have promised, but they have cleverly raised our hopes. As a result, we have what I will refer to as 'expectations capability gap' that is insurmountable under the current institutional arrangements.

The two principals are aware our institutional and

organisational capacities are inadequate and inefficient to facilitate the envisaged reforms.

Taking a cursory look, one will not fail to notice the police department is adamant on reforming any of its wings and the chief appointing officer keeps telling us we are steering well on the reform path. The Judiciary is clogged and unable to serve citizens efficiently.

Our education system has

been criticised on how it operates and is haggling with the giant national trade union for teachers over the hiring of 12,000 intern teachers. We are now opening up another talk shop in the name of the draft constitution. We are already in lobbying mode over contentious and non-contentious issues in the Draft Constitution as if we learnt nothing from the 2005 referendum.

The evangelicals are out there blazing hot at the mention of Kadhi's courts. Should we be doing this as a nation committed to seamless integration? Where have we taken our Sunday school and madrasa lessons on tol-

erance?

Political impunity being witnessed today is as a result of the reluctance and lacklustre leadership of the current clergy. Where are the Okullus, Gitaris, Balalas and Muges of the current crop of religious leaders?

This is the time for our religious institutions to redeem themselves. They need to individually show selflessness and forge alliances in the same manner they did under the Ufungamano Initiative.

These are the times for all religious leaders to literally salvage the nation from the brink of collapse. This must be done with a sense of urgency.

'This is the time for our religious institutions to redeem themselves. They need to individually show selflessness and forge alliances in the same manner they did under the Ufungamano Initiative.'

VP challenges writers to fight ethnicity

VICE President Kalonzo Musyoka has urged Kenyans to develop a reading culture to improve their linguistic skills and promote the works of local authors and writers.

Mr. Musyoka said there was need for Kenyans to embrace the habit rather than over indulge in watching westernized movies which in one way or another have contributed to the breakdown of moral values among teenagers.

"There is need for us to embrace the culture of reading instead of over indulging in watching westernized movies which can contribute to breakdown of moral

values among teenagers. In fact, television and film have made it difficult for families to interact," said Mr. Musyoka.

He challenged local literature writers to explore their potentials and exploit the opportunities for the ready readership market through publication of fictional books with African context.

Speaking at the University of Nairobi on Thursday evening, during the launch of a book 'My Native Roots' by Prof. Joseph Wanjohi, Chancellor, Nairobi University, the VP urged writers and authors to help fight the problem of nega-

tive ethnicity.

And at the same time, the VP blamed sub-division of lands into small farms on the famine ravaging the country.

He said the sub division of such lands into small pieces has greatly contributed to decrease in food supply in some parts of the country.

Mr. Musyoka noted that it was only through large tracts of land that extensive farming activities could be carried out, thus bring to an end the problem of food shortage.

He said that the small farms in

rural areas could no longer provide enough food to cope with the needs of the country's growing population.

"The sub division of the lands into small pieces as witnessed in many parts of the country has really contributed to the famine facing the country since farming activities carried in such farms cannot even sustain the family food needs," he said.

Mr. Musyoka who is also the Minister for Home Affairs said urbanization has also contributed to famine noting that many people had migrated to urban areas to look for employment opportunities at the expense of engaging in agricultural activities in rural areas.

Present at the function were Wanjohi, Vice Chancellor Prof. George Makokha and Chairman of Nairobi University Council Mr. John Simba among others.

'He challenged local literature writers to explore their potentials and exploit the opportunities for the ready readership market through publication of fictional books with African context.'

Sand harvesting, a disaster to Ukambani

COMMENT

By PETER MUTUKU

THE Nairobi sky scrappers have left more harm to Ukambani people.

None of us ever imagines that a lorry full of sand is a source of untold suffering to Ukambani residents.

Along Mombasa or Thika road, you witness numerous lorries transporting the commodity from Ukambani to Nairobi or the surrounding urban centres. Trucks full of sand pass by at intervals of half an hour.

The scooping of sand has left scars of environmental hazards to Ukambani region. The naked truth of the environmental disaster is witnessed at Thwake River, 12 kilometres from Machakos town along Machakos-Kitui road.

The deplorable scenery of environmental destruction at the dry river beds and excessive damage from soil erosion catches eyes of environmentalists passing by the river.

Thwake river, with a rich catchment area at Iveti hills, on the outskirts of Machakos town, was once a permanent river some years back, with beautiful evergreen vegetation at its banks, but now is deplorable scenery of emerging rocks and dry river beds.

Hundreds of thousands of residents, who used to depend on the river, are now beggars relying on famine relief food with no water even for domestic use.

Thwake river destruction is just a tip of the iceberg to numerous other rivers in Ukambani region facing environmental degradation. Rivers Muoni, Usi Unene, Ikolya, Isuuni, Kaiti, Kiboko, all in Makueni district, are some of the many others under excessive sand harvesting threat.

Streams around Machakos,

Yatta, Kangundo and Mwala districts have felt it hard due their closeness to Nairobi city and Thika town. The streams include upper Muunzu, Matundua, Mukuyuni and Nditha, all in Mbiuni location of the recently created Mwala district curved from the larger Machakos.

The suffering of Ukambani residents from recurrent water shortage occasioned by destruction of water sources has drawn environmental attention from the government and other development partners.

Makueni District Environment Officer, Mr. Stephen

Wambua, explains the importance of sand as a natural water reservoir on river beds in the arid and semi arid areas of the country.

"Local communities are able to access water during the dry spells by scooping sand wells. Unsustainable and excessive scooping of sand destroys this natural reservoir," he said.

The Government, in conjunction with several organizations involved in the environmental conservation crusade, have embarked on massive construction of sand dams at the rivers in Ukambani region to restore lost sand from the excessive sand harvesting.

The Arid Lands Resource Management Project in Makueni district is one of the environmental actors undertaking massive sand dams construction projects at various rivers to restore lost sand and water lost after sand scooping.

The Drought Management Officer, Mr. Daniel Mbuvi, noted that the government through the Arid Lands Resource Management Project has spent millions of shillings for the last two years in putting up ten sand dams in the district. Mr. Mbuvi further reports that, more project resources will be made available to communities for the same exercise in subsequent years.

He explained that the

management office, undertook in constructing the sand dam.

"The harsh experience was when we were forced to resort to violence to chase away sand harvesters and politicians involved in sand harvesting business" says Mr. Ndolo, adding that a local politician was receiving sh. 1,000 per track of sand from the harvesters.

The Muoni river, at Mulala division, passes near Emali town and is hard hit by the excessive sand scooping due to its nearness to Mombasa road. Several sand dams have been constructed along the river not only by government but also other development partners including Kenya Red Cross Society, Makueni County Council among others.

The sand dams do not only restore lost sand but also provide water for domestic use as well as for small scale irrigation of vegetables to the community groups, as income generating projects.

The District Environmental officer says that it would take several rain seasons before the lost sand is replenished. "Once the degraded river beds are restored, the respective groups will be allowed under stringent regulations of the National Sand Harvesting Guidelines to harvest the excess sand deposits that accumulate at the dams," says Mr. Wambua.

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), in consultation with other lead agencies and stakeholders, has developed the National Sand Harvesting Guidelines to provide direction

towards sustainable utilization of this resource. Awareness on these guidelines is being done by the authority with support of environmental stakeholders like the Arid Lands Project to promote compliance.

As conservationists engage in environmental restoration at the rivers, the political wing and local administration has never been friendly but have behaved like agents of destruction and frustrations.

Chiefs and their divisional bosses have reportedly been recipients of bribes from sand harvesters, scooping sand at their respective administration boundaries. They hardly enforced environmental laws or imposed a ban on sand harvesting but only chase away those sand harvesters who declined to give out a bribe.

Like the provincial administration, councils in Ukambani region have been enjoying fees charged on sand harvesting. Councilors never entertained forums that might forbid sand scooping as it meant stopping revenue collection of millions of shilling to the councils, obtained from sand scooping.

The Ukambani residents, under the mercy of unscrupulous administrators and corrupt councils, have not benefited from the very important raw material for expansion and beautification of Nairobi city.

The sand, which should have been a cash crop or a gold mine to poverty stricken Kamba people, has been taken away by sand harvesters and transporters from outside the region.

However, with the new sand harvesting guidelines and emerging community environmental conservation groups, the lost wealth to Ukambani residents might be realized.

"The group contributes up to thirty percent of the total cost of construction of a sand dam in form of providing labour and mobilization of locally available materials, with the Arid Land Management Project providing other construction materials."

project involves local community groups undertaking environmental conservation activities, who present their proposals to the District Steering Group (DSG) for funding the construction of sand dams.

"The group contributes up to thirty percent of the total cost of construction of a sand dam in form of providing labour and mobilization of locally available materials, with the Arid Land Management Project providing other construction materials," he says.

The chairman of West Sand Dam Group Project at Muoni river, Mr. Nicholas Ndolo, underscores activities the group, with assistance of the drought

What's next after debate on harmonized draft?

WHILE the window of opportunity provided by the Committee of Experts to engage the Harmonised Draft Constitution and give our informed views on the same came to a close in December, it is important that we reflect on the terms of references under which the committee was constituted and the solutions The Constitutional Review Process of 2008 was intended to achieve.

It may not look plausible at this point to be going back into the basics but for purposes of understanding the structure, spirit and content of the Harmonised Draft Constitution, and how it set out to reinvigorate the stalled constitutional process in Kenya.

For purposes of realising this objective, three critical organs were formed to take the process forward. These elements were: The Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC), which is a cross political committee with twenty seven members drawn from the various parliamentary political parties; The National Assembly and The referendum.

What we need to open our eyes to at this point is that these organs carry very specific mandates that are complementary to each other. The work of the Committee of Experts depended so much on the initial ground setting work undertaken by the National Assembly.

Now that we have a Harmonised

Draft Constitution, we can reflect upon the provisions of The Constitution Review Act (2008) and specifically more so Section four (4). The product of the Committee of Experts the new constitution was to enable Kenyans to: live in peace, enhance national unity and safeguard the welfare of all; provide a platform for democratic governance in Kenya; give Kenyans an opportunity to live in a country where divisions of responsibility among state organs are demarcated; the people have room to participate in affairs that affect them freely; there is respect for ethnic and regional diversity; there is a framework for equitable distribution of resources and the creation of a free

atmosphere for the free exchange of ideas. The greatest task the Committee of Experts was to undertake in piecing together the draft however comes last in the form of a statement that reads: commit Kenyans to peaceful resolution of national issues through dialogue and consensus.

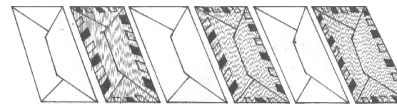
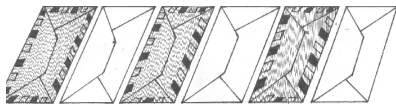
The Harmonised Draft Constitution as envisaged under The Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Act (2008) has its lifeline tied to this piece of legislation since this is the law that gives the procedure for the replacement of the current with the new one after the national referendum.

As we ponder over the hot political debate over the draft and our own

comments on the same; can these questions be answered by the work of the hands and heads of the team led by Nzamba Kitonga? Does the concept of sovereignty move from the rulers to the people? Are the new structures what the people of Kenya asked for?

What load comes with these provisions- the devolution and attendant structures of government? Is this a viable project economically- to take us to our hallowed land of 2030? Is this system going to curb official pilferage? Are we on a path of self destruction or reconstruction by engaging in this process at this point in

Turn to page 12, Col. 1



Climate change is already happening

SEEING the increased phenomenon of extreme weather – floods, droughts, extreme heat and cold – there is no doubt something extraordinary is happening with nature.

Climate change is real and is steadily having devastating effects on earth. Some of these effects are already evident in front of our eyes, at our backyard and all around.

There is the water scarcity, failed harvests due to poor rains and poor soil, loss of livestock, drought and even cracked earth.

There images of devastation should be a constant reminder of the need to take care of our environment.

We should search for solutions to the problems aggravated by climate change. It is a pity when leaders mix matters of environmental conservation with politics. It would be comical were it not so grave, to see a sound individual of respected stature convince his constituents that trees don't attract rain; that the environment has no connection with rain. God forbid! This is tragic.

Despite having senior offices for the global environmental agencies like Habitat, Unep and the World Agroforestry Centre (Icraf), Kenya is one of the several countries in Africa having deadly environmental degradation.

With the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen Denmark, one of the lucky prospects at the meeting was that Kenya stands to earn over Ksh30 billion per year simply as carbon credits from the nations that emit more carbon and other harmful greenhouse gases, into the earth's air. This is an equivalent of the money we borrow from donors to preserve the Mau.

Our forest cover has been depleted from over 12 per cent to about 1.7 per cent. Preserving the remaining cover has been a hard task due to politics; we may not even qualify to receive carbon credits.

Concerned Kenyan
Via e-mail

Draft Law could lead to more chaos

IF the proposal to have presidential and parliamentary polls on separate days sails through, the mayhem witnessed in December 2007 at the KICC vote tallying will look like a Christmas party.

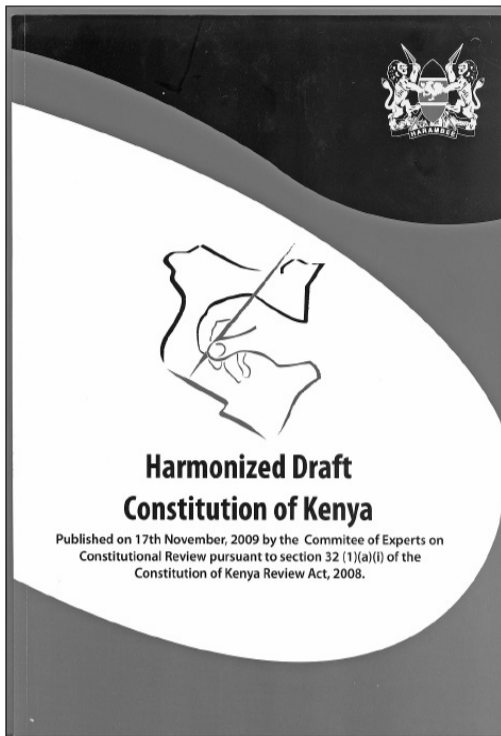
The rowdy and near fistfight episodes at KICC were fuelled by the drive among politicians to ensure victory for their presidential candidates.

Next time, the presidential battle might be more vicious and results highly disputed.

This is because victory for a presidential candidate of a given party could favourably influence outcome for parliamentary aspirants from the same party.

The Harmonised Draft Constitution proposes presidential elections "be held on the Tuesday immediately preceding the 28 days before the expiry of the term of the State President," while parliamentary polls "on the Tuesday immediately preceding the 21 days before the expiry of the term of the National Assembly".

This means the two polls shall be held seven days apart, with the presidential polls be-



Harmonized Draft Constitution

ing conducted first. While the notion behind separation of the two is destined to minimise confusion among voters, the proposal may translate to a huge rigging tool.

In Uganda, where voters elect a president a month earlier than MPs, the polls have been nothing but a democratic farce. In previous instances after Yoweri Museveni's victory, the political landscape changed drastically in favour

of the President's National Resistance Movement (NRM).

Held against a backdrop of Mr Museveni's countrywide victory celebrations, the month-long parliamentary campaigns have been riddled with defections, walkouts, intimidation and coercion from officials of the President's party.

Anyway, which voter will willingly back a losing horse?

Had that been the situation in Kenya with President Kibaki as victor, one would not have ruled out the possibility of a PNU MP from Kasipul-Kabondo or Shinyalu. Alternatively, had victory gone to Prime Minister Raila Odinga, ODM might have claimed victory in Nithi and Kibwezi constituencies.

Unlike in the current arrangement where elections are held simultaneously and "things fall in place practically", the proposed poll dates are fodder to a deceptive exercise and are bound to disenfranchise the people's right to vote as they wish.

Correspondent,
Mombasa

Noisy, arrogant priests a menace

DESPITE the new laws protecting wananchi from noise pollution, in most urban centres, the situation is getting from worse to worst.

Some very arrogant and selfish market and street preachers have become unbearable due to their irritating and deafening nocturnal noises.

The preachers have no sense of respect at all for the neighbouring learning and health institutions.

I think they urgently need the revelation that God is not deaf. I hope they will consider change before the full weight of the law is unleashed on them.

* * *

Though we are glad with what Nema is trying to do to control noise pollution in Kenya.

But, Kenya being a democratic country, the minister for Environment and Nema should have considered what they public think about the new rule.

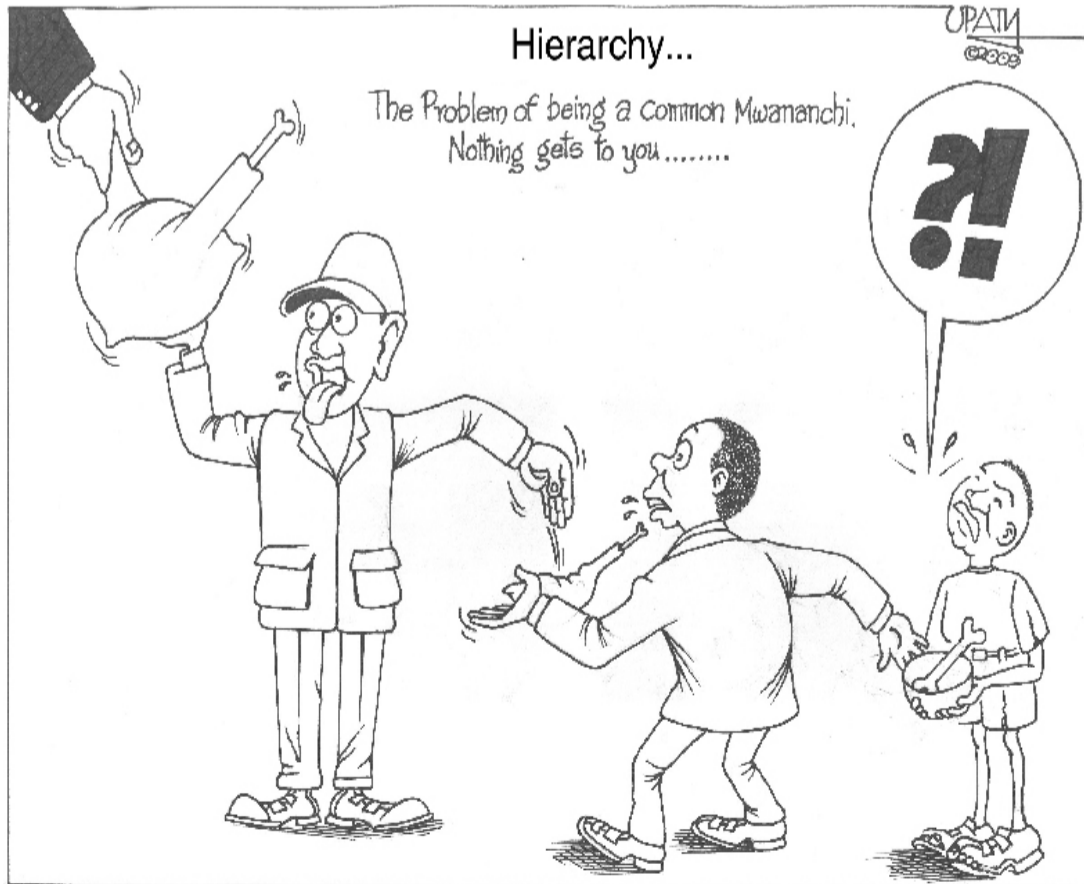
Nema should actually deal with more technical problems than pollute the environment, such as litter and the dump sites.

Because of poor sanitation, a lot of lives have been lost due to cholera and other airborne diseases.

The law, in my opinion should cover residential areas and not the city centre. At this crucial moment of saving the entire world from global warming, Nema should work hand in hand with the rest of the world to protect the environment and to save Kenya from climate changes, which have led to hunger and starvation, instead of wasting time with petty issues such as noise pollution.

In fact, if they succeed in dealing with the problem at hand, then we will agree with them 100 per cent with the new law of noise pollution.

Concerned Kenyan,
Via e-mail.



The editor welcomes letters and comments on a variety of issues. The letters should be brief, topical and issue based.

The editor reserves the right to edit for brevity or clarity.

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Give planners chance to save Nairobi

By LINK WRITER

PLANNERS are just like the biblical Noah. They have different titles: Town planner or Physical planner, but they have been reduced to prophets whose advice is never heeded until people drown.

The genesis of the aforementioned analogy is that most of the problems we are now finding ourselves in would have been averted if proper spatial planning had been adhered to. They give foresight but are ignored due to many factors like lack of funds and concentration on economic affairs.

In simple terms, spatial planning is a “process that determines the various land-use activities, now and in the future, and mitigate the same against any conflicts that may arise for purposes of achieving orderly development”. In their wisdom, spatial planners had advised on various issues that, had they been followed, would have steered this country into greater development. A few cases will suffice as examples:

(a) The Kenya national report on Human settlement 1972 – by the National Environmental Secretariat which, among other things, recommended a growth centre approach to urban development.

Its focus was on development of principal towns with a view to easing congestion in the main towns, especially Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Had the recommendations of this report been implemented, the much-talked about decongestion of the city and creation of new capitals would not have arisen.

(b) The Nairobi Metropolitan Development strategy of 1973. This plan was meant to



Part of the ongoing beautification programme in Nairobi.

see the development of Nairobi for a period of 20 years up to the year 2000.

The plan covered a wide range of issues among them was that the city should develop as a region, and particularly along specific corridors e.g. Nairobi, Thika, Nairobi – Athi River (Mavoko), Nairobi - Ngong/Ongata Rongai. To date, most of these development proposals have taken place outside any formal policy and development control.

Hence, the creation of the Nairobi metropolitan development region is not a new concept but an off-spring of a plan that was never implemented. However it is not too late to implement it. The metro strategy had also identified transportation routes and linkages. It is important to note that the

much-talked about by-passes and missing links are a product of this metro-strategy, which were never implemented.

(c) The District Focus for Rural Development. This policy was formulated in the early 1980s with the objective of developing rural areas with a view to accommodating local populations through employment and income creation and reducing migration to urban areas. Again this policy was never implemented to a conclusion.

The current Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a modified district focus strategy. For a long time, spatial planning has taken up the role of a passenger in the national development bus and any reference to it is normally casual.

The role of a passenger in a bus is only to board and alight

where necessary, otherwise he or she has very little control over how the bus is driven. In this situation, the importance of spatial/physical planning has always been downplayed. The mode of operation in planning, especially in our country, has always been focused on “economic planning” where after every five years, national development plans are faithfully rolled out, irrespective of whether the previous ones have been successful or not.

If any meaningful development is to be achieved, both economic and spatial planning have to move in tandem. The latter should act like an anchor on which socio-economic activities are supported. It is no wonder the developed world and second world have embraced the principles of spatial

planning as a key player in their development agenda.

And it is no wonder that the “Asian Tigers”, who were at par development-wise with Kenya in the 1960s, are today the envy of the Third World, simply because they embraced spatial planning as a key pre-requisite to all their national development agendas.

In conclusion, therefore, the process of spatial planning should be taken seriously if this country is to achieve competitive development and economic growth. This would call for more allocation of resources and building of requisite capacity for spatial planning at national, regional and local levels. Planners should lead from the front in articulating the need for spatial planning as a key element in national development.

What's next after debate on harmonized draft?

From Page 10

the history of Kenya? Are we creating too much government to block the development and expansion of the private sector? Are we getting more value for our taxes from these processes?

As we ponder over the litany of questions, we need also to peer into the next stages to appreciate what must be done before we either get or fail to embrace a new constitutional dispensation. After the views are pre-

sented as we have done, the Committee of Experts will take twenty-one days to incorporate the views of the public.

The Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) will be the next stop for the Harmonised Draft Constitution where twenty one days are provided for discussions. After the period, the Parliamentary Select Committee will then return draft to Committee of Experts to incorporate the proposed views and this takes another twenty one days. After the changes, the Parliamentary Select Committee will be

left with seven days to submit the draft to the National Assembly.

The National Assembly will approve the draft within thirty days and forward the draft to the Attorney General for publication but in areas where comments from the National Assembly are proposed the Committee of Experts will receive it from the Attorney General and work on it within seven days.

Any disagreements or failures to approve the draft at this point shall be attended to by the Committee of Experts, the reference Group, and the

Parliamentary Select Committee and be taken to the National Assembly for consideration within twenty one days.

The next stage is the publication by the Attorney General who cannot make any changes at this point save for editorial purposes in consultation with the Parliamentary Select Committee. Within seven days of publication of the draft laws, the Interim Independent Electoral Commission shall publish the referendum questions in consultation with the Parliamentary Select Committee.

Civic education by the IIEC shall

be undertaken for thirty days and the referendum held at the expiry of the thirty days. The results of the referendum shall be published within 2 days of holding the referendum. If Kenyans ratify the draft, the president shall proclaim the new

constitution to be law not later than 14 days after the publication of the final result of the referendum.

There you are. Are we close or still miles away from getting a new set of laws? Undertake your arithmetic and let us keep moving. How many days remaining? Keep counting

Sugar industry faces COMESA threat

By JOSEPH OJWANG

KENYA Sugar sector is headed for a crisis if the much awaited sugar sector reforms are not implemented ahead of the dead line issued within the COMESA safeguard period.

Kenya sugar cane millers association Chairman and Mumias Sugar Company MD Evans Kidero said that the repeal of the grace period is fast approaching and the anticipated reforms in the sugar sector are yet to be felt.

Kidero hinted that the country is not fully prepared for the expiry of the COMESA safeguard measures and that may impact negatively on the farmers and millers.

Kidero queried the privatization strategy as a way of getting the sector out of the woods, saying the process might be time barred as many hurdles are still facing it.

Speaking in Kisumu during Mumias Sugar company annual general meeting, the MD noted that the effects of the global financial recession coupled with generally diminished investor appetite may make it challenging to sell the target mills.

He said that whereas the government initiated measures towards privatization of the state owned Sugar mills to make them viable, the process has not kicked off in earnest as anticipated.

"Sucrose based payment which were to be undertaken under the reforms are yet to be implemented much to the disappointment of farmers, the recent price directives have seen farmers agitating for higher payments for weight delivered, this is not sustainable in the



A Sugarcane farm. The sugar sector is headed for a crisis if reforms in the industry do not meet deadline set by COMESA

long run hence the need to fast track the desired reforms", he said.

Kidero further noted that the influx of duty free sugar into the country will make Kenyan sugar less competitive due to the current high production costs.

He said the government has also failed to clearly regulate the sugar importation in the country.

"The sugar import auction rules have not made the situation any better," he said noting that undeclared sugar continues to come into the country through the Mombasa port and the porous Kenya-Somali border.

He reiterated that there is need for the government to focus its efforts on the survival initiatives for the sugar sector.

The MD said that cane production has hampered the per-

formance of many sugar factories including Mumias Sugar Company which experienced a 10 percent reduction in the total sugar tones.

The company posted a 33 percent increase in its post tax profit to Kshs. 1,610 million up from previous years Sh. 1, 214 million.

Kidero said the company

made a profit before taxation of Sh. 231 million in its first half as by end of June this year.

He said the results were attained despite tough operating environment that succeeded the 2008 post election violence.

The MD said that the results for the six months ended June 2009 were below expectations since the company experienced significant challenges in the period.

According to the Company Audit report prepared by Deloitte, the factory cane yields dropped by 65 tonnes per hectare on the nucleus estate and 68 tonnes per hectare on the out growers farms.

The drop was due to excessive arson attack which saw the company lose a total of 2,000 hectares of cane on nucleus estate and 5,000 hectares on out growers' farms.

The MD however announced plans to acquire stakes in other Sugar milling firms both locally and regionally as a part of preparedness programme.

He said the company will invest a lot in diversification programme such as cogeneration of electricity production of Bio fuels and Alcohol product.

Christian Network demands closure of dumpsite

CHRISTIAN groups in Nairobi now want Nairobi's biggest dumpsite in Dandora closed calling it a danger to a million residents.

The teams under KUTOKA Network, including four catholic parishes, claimed that in the last three months alone, the dumping site and its smoke have reached unprecedented high levels and immediate action is needed.

The campaign titled "Stop Dumping Death on Us. We have the Right to Live Too," is aimed to open a dialogue with relevant institutional actors which can solve this problem.

The campaign for its relocation started in 2001 when the site was declared full and a health hazard. Despite numerous promises by authorities nothing has happened.

The campaign proposes to: immediately close and relocate the Dandora dumping site to a non-residential area, create a policy for waste management, recycling infrastructures and formal employment for the people currently working around the dumping site, and finally reclaim and decontaminate the Dandora area on December 10, 2009, World Human Rights Day.

Dandora municipal dumpsite is the only one that serves Nairobi which has over 4,000,000 inhabitants.

More than 2,000 tonnes of rubbish are dumped there daily including chemical, hospital, industrial, agricultural and domestic waste and left unprocessed.

The KUTOKA Network aims to analyse the reality of the slums, share experiences, reflect together, and plan common initiatives and actions and to highlight positive aspects of the reality.

Individuals and organisations are invited to join the campaign.

Parents urged to help convict rapists

By BOB OMBATI

Parents of rape and defilement victims were conspiring with offenders to defeat justice in Kisii region, two District Commissioners told a task force on the implementation of Sexual offences Act, 2006

Kisii Central District Commissioner, Benjamin Njoroge and his South Masaba counterpart, Alfred Mwandale say defilers and rapists approach the parents and pay them money to evade justice as the victims suffer trauma silently. The meeting was convened by Justice Effie Owuor in Kisii to gather views on sexual offences act 2006.

The two administrators say that the victims and their parents are ignorant of the law on sexual offences, thus leading to most rape cases being heard and concluded in Kangaroo courts with the help of some unscrupulous provincial administrators.

The DCs want area residents to be sensitized on the sexual offences Act 2006 for quick and timely intervention to save the vulnerable girl-child from marauding rapists out to spoil their lives and ruin their future.

A Kisii-based court prosecutor Khendi Koech told the meeting that once the parents, clan elders, chiefs and witnesses are "settled" they fail to attend court to commence the defilement and rape cases, making the

prosecution difficult.

Khendi said that some lawyers shelved their professional ethics and approached victims of the parents to settle the matter out of court especially in cases involving teachers and other civil servants in a bid to save their jobs and faces.

Majority of the victims, especially school going children suffered quietly as they nursed illegal pregnancies as their defilers and rapists went Scot free and bragged in streets, ready to commit similar crimes with impunity.

Stakeholders told the Task force that the girl-child from broken or single parent families were more vulnerable and were easily trapped and their impoverished parents readily accepted little tokens from the criminals as the girls continued suffering, stigmatized, forcing some to drop out of school.

Participants, who included District Commissioners, senior police officers, Children, Education and probation officers said that victims were also threatened by their parents and relatives to leave the case, fail to testify or give contradictory evidence, delaying the hearings and determination of sexual related offences to defeating justice.

Ndhiwa Deputy District Education Officer, Elijah Ongere said that those who committed incest and other

sexual offences in the district should be subjected to open mass trials before being charged in court to deter others with the same intentions.

Ngere lamented that many defilement and rape cases were rampant and went unreported in the area before the district was split from Homabay. He said the impoverished victims could not afford traveling to Homabay to report the incidents of sexual offences, giving the suspects and the parents a field day to conduct their kangaroo courts.

The task force, detailed by the Attorney general's office to collect views on how to implement the Act recommended a multi-pronged approach besides litigation, saying the loopholes should be sealed to ensure that justice is done for the victims.

Milly Adongo, the Team's coordinator decried the offences involving the girls-child, observing that it denied her the right to access free primary and secondary education like the boy-child, giving the former an undue advantage in enrolment, completion rate and performance in national examinations.

She said the mass dropouts of the girl-child due to unwanted pregnancies could be stopped if the parents and stakeholders were sensitized on the Act and is implemented fully to save the endangered girl-child.

Busia DC urges residents to go for HIV tests

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUSIA district commissioner Mr Mwiandi Gitonga has called upon the residents of Busia to visit voluntary counseling and testing [VCT] centres in large numbers to know their status saying that 7.4percent of the district's population is infected by HIV/AIDS.

Addressing the public during the World Aids Day celebration that was held at the Busia township Youth polytechnic ground recently, the district commissioner urged the youths to engage in income generating activities that will uplift their standards of living instead of engaging themselves in criminal activities.

The DC said that the ban which has been slapped on 'Disco matanga' was still in force adding that it is during the discos that a large proportion of the people, especially the youth, contract HIV after engaging in risky sexual behaviours. Gitonga further expressed concern to the effect that it was during the night dances that criminals take advantage of the same to break into peoples' houses to steal their household items.

He urged the residents of Busia to take farming as a business venture to enable them reduce the high poverty levels adding that 68 percent of the district's population are living below the poverty line yet the district had adequate amount of rainfall and fertile soil.

People with disabilities to receive state funds

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Government has set aside Kshs 200 million to be disbursed to persons with disability in the country.

Gender Ministry PS Dr James Nyikal says people with disabilities will start receiving a monthly stipend of Kshs 1,500 anytime before June next year in the new programme to be launched soon.

Dr Nyikal who spoke in Mukurwe-ini town during presentation of cheques to various women groups, said those who have either physical or mental disabilities will benefit from the kitty.

This comes shortly after another Kshs 550 million kitty was set up recently to cater for the elderly and orphans.

Nyikal said that the elderly who are above 65-year-old will benefit from Kshs 1,500 per month and also those caring for the orphans will collect a similar amount per month.

The PS, who was accompanied by area MP who is also the Youths assistant minister Mr Kabando wa Kabando and area DC Mr Isaac Masinde, disbursed Kshs 617, 500 from the Women Enterprise Fund to 13 women groups in Mukurwe-ini and Tetu constituencies who qualified for loans from the Fund.

So far, Kshs 894 million has been disbursed to over 144, 120 women to either boost or start businesses. He said the fund will economically empower women as it was designed as a long term noble intervention that seeks to reduce

poverty by presenting opportunities to women to realize their full potential.

"To economically empower a woman, translates to multi benefits for the family, community, and nationally at large and hence improved household income leading to better nutrition, housing, clothing, health-care and education," he adds.

He says that it is imperative that the Government takes cognizance of the women's numerical power and put proper measures in place to ensure proper and sustainable utilization of fund and integrate the rural women into money economy.

Kabando urged the women to utilize the funds well in order to alleviate poverty in the area and mostly to invest locally.

He also urged the Government

to introduce insurance cover for the poor.

The 13 groups which benefited with Kshs 50,000 each include Wendani Women, Gikondi Kariiko, Happy Mothers Gakindu, Unjiru Wendani and Matundu Singles Casam Self Help Groups. Others are Ngamwa Karembu and Ngarariga Mwianga women groups, Karundu Tree Nurseries Network and Kwimenya Dairy Farmers Field all from Mukurwe-ini constituency.

Those from Tetu constituency include Kangaita Adult Education and Muhoya Wendani Women Groups, Uwezo Karundu Self Help Group and Kirurumi Bidii Yako Group.

The funds will be paid within one year but has three months grace period.

Ranch boss forced to 'resign'

THE chairman of a ranching company at the centre of a Kshs. 1 billion land row was recently taken hostage by unknown people and made to call two radio stations to announce his resignation from the firm.

Mr Joseph Mutua Kanyi of the Malili Ranching Company in Machakos was ambushed by the gang in the morning near Salama trading centre.

"They appeared friendly at first. But after a while, they demanded that I resign from the company. They then forced me to call two vernacular radio stations to announce my resignation," said a shaken Mr Kanyi.

But, as the stations aired the news of his departure, Mr Kanyi made his way into Machakos Town, where he explained his ordeal to his friends.

He then called the two radio stations to retract his resignation.

"I was forced to announce that I had quit the company," he said in an interview later. "I was under duress, but now I restate that I am still the chairman of the ranching company."

Mr Kanyi is embroiled in a dispute over the release of a Kshs. 286 million commission to a brokerage company that claims to have helped the ranching company enter into a deal for the sale of its 5,000-acre property to the government.

The Ministry of Information and Communication plans to build an ICT park on the land as part of the Vision 2030 development strategy.

Already, the brokerage firm, Gateway Logistics, has received a down payment of Kshs. 40 million and is demanding a further Kshs. 75 million from the first payment of Kshs. 400 million by the government.

The firm will also receive a Kshs. 178 million commission from the second payment of Kshs. 600 million.

Mr Kanyi has maintained that politicians own the firm, and that a local MP has been pushing him to release the monies. Last month, he was arrested together with another official of the company and charged with stealing Kshs.143 million, an incident he also blamed on the MP.

Church issues threat to withdraw services

By A CORRESPONDENT

The Catholic diocese of Maralal in North Eastern Province has threatened to withdraw their services in Maralal, Wamba and Archers Post areas unless the government puts in place stringent security measures to manage the rising cases of insecurity.

The diocese cites recent killings and robberies along the Maralal Wamba and Archers roads and accused government of abetting crime by failing to deploy security in the area which has been turned into a terror zone where gangsters attack with impunity.

Maralal diocese Vicar General, Fr Marko Prastaro says that gangsters rob and kill their victims at ease, a scenario which may soon force the diocese to withdraw its services including closing down its facilities until such a time when the security of its personnel and that of other travellers can be assured.

"Rarely does a month pass without personnel attached to the diocese being attacked and robbed violently at gun point. This has posed a serious challenge in terms of service delivery to the communities," Fr Prastaro notes.

He says that "It is sad that with all these attacks the government has been very reluctant to take measures to end the menace, which has left people at the mercy of these criminals."



Security personnel on patrol along Maralal Wamba road which has become a crime prone area.

"How many more lives should be lost for the government to act? We wish to reaffirm that security is a basic human right guaranteed by the constitution, and the robberies and killings are violating on the rights of the people in this area to live to their full potential. In this case the government must guarantee this right," adds the vicar general.

Recently, two cars belonging to the diocese of Maralal were attacked on their way to Wamba from Maralal where they had attended a church function. The first car was attacked and the people on board who included foreigners were robbed of their valuables and seriously injured.

The second car (An ambulance based in Archers Health centre) was

also attacked on the same spot. The driver was shot and pronounced dead on arrival to Wamba Catholic Hospital, while the second victim is still admitted in the hospital. The other people on board were robbed of their valuables.

In a separate incident 11 people were shot dead when a group of thugs raided an area a few metres from the

Minister on the spot over KMTC appointment

By LINK WRITER

Parliament has stepped up its oversight role on executive appointments, with the Speaker ordering another investigation into an appointment by a minister.

The order follows a complaint by Prime Minister Raila Odinga and other members of the Executive that House committees have been converted into a witch-hunt, subjecting ministers and public officials to harassment.

The Medical Service Minister Anyang' Nyong'o's appointment of

Dr Charles Olang'o Onudi as director of Kenya Medical Training College caused an uproar in Parliament.

MPs accused the minister of acting unilaterally in contravention of the KMTC Act, by disregarding advice by the board. But Prof Nyong'o said the appointment was above board and insisted Onudi is qualified to revive and lead the institution.

He said he didn't rely on the board's recommendation because "the board itself is not as clean as Caesar's wife".

Speaker Kenneth Marende di-

rected three committees – Delegation Legislation, Equal Opportunity and Health to conduct a joint probe and report to Parliament in four weeks.

Mutito MP Kiema Kilonzo sparked the debate when he accused the minister of tribalism and favouritism in picking Onudi and ignoring four names forwarded to him by the board from a short list of ten applicants vetted by a human resource firm.

The four – Dr Timothy Kingondu, Dr Mildred Amudany, Dr Jebich Maswan and a Dr Simiyu,

according to Nyong'o, scored between 74 and 75 per cent, which was not good enough. Kingondu is a former KMTC director.

Nyong'o said he decided to ignore the board's lists because none of the four scored 80 per cent of the threshold as expected. Nyong'o said the Act does not oblige the minister, who is the appointing authority for the director, to act on the board's advice.

This was, however, disputed by Gichugu MP Martha Karua. She said Nyong'o's act is "another appointment akin to that of Justice

Ringera," referring to the controversial September reappointment of Justice Aaron Ringera and two others to the Kenya Anti Corruption Commission later nullified by parliament.

Ikolomani MP Bonny Khalwale said the minister sidelined qualified doctors. Nominated MP Mohamed Abdi Affey accused the minister of subjecting the ministry to unnecessary financial cost in interviews he later ignored. Nyong'o refused to reverse Onudi's appointment but said he is ready to face the committees.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

A monthly supplement funded by European Union/Konrad Adenauer Stiftung under the Instrument for Stability

A note from the Project Manager

I have always considered Kenya to be a peaceful country. Kenyans which I have lived with, interacted with, and gotten to know during a span of 8 years have always been friendly, hospitable, accommodating and proud of their identity. Therefore, the post-election violence somehow came as a shock. I knew that elections usually generated violence but this time around I could not even have imagined the extent it would take.

When Swedish journalists started to call me to get a current update of the situation, they also insinuated with their questions that Kenyans were barbaric and of course this was what you could expect from a country with such diversity. I honestly felt offended and responded that my experiences of Kenyans are that they are a proud and peace-loving people.

But what is it then? What is it that makes people who have lived as neighbors for years to suddenly turn against each other? There is no simple answer to the question but we know that the general election of 2007 was not the root-cause of the violence. Under the surface,



By
HANNA CARLSSON

among many Kenyans, have emotions boiled for years like magma, in the inner of the earth, emotions which have been nurtured because of injustices of the past, and suddenly finds a volcano to spill it all out. The disputed election became the volcano and no one was prepared for the streaming lava that suffocated the common sense among people and turned individu-

als and communities against each other.

The experiences of the post-election violence are still fresh in our minds and it is time to heal but also make analysis about the root-causes of the violence and to find a way to prevent future violent clashes. It was in this spirit that the proposal "Strengthening non-state actors' capacities to prevent and resolve conflicts in areas affected by the post-election violence" came to being. Kenya is blessed with an active civil society that usually fills the gap where the government falls short. Also when it comes to prevent and resolve conflicts the civil society plays a major part but has sometimes not the right knowledge and tools. The project seeks to meet this need through different activities. First of all 120 civil society organizations will be identified and invited to join the project. Some of the staff of these civil society organizations will undergo systematic training in peace and conflict issues to prepare them to train people in their own organizations but also other citizens that they come in

contact with through their regular programs. A research has also been conducted focusing on the root-causes and trends of conflict in the target provinces, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western. This is to make sure that the trainings include tools to better deal with the actual issues on the ground but also to give us facts and reliable data to be used in field-based political analysis and policy dialogue.

This supplement is a part of the project and will be used to spread information, experiences and stories from the ground. It will hopefully encourage people to take not only own peace-initiatives on the ground but also contribute to the national debate. In this issue you will find more information about the project, its implementers, and the funders. Finally, from now on the project will be called Partnership for Peace because we do this as partners to realize a better future for every Kenyan.

The writer is the International Project Manager

EU funded peace project launched

By **THE LINK WRITERS**

THE European Union (EU) has allocated 750,000 Euros equivalent to Kshs. 75 Million for peace building activities in three Provinces.

The project is to be implemented by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), which is co-financing the activities with further 222,126 Euros (Kshs. 22.2M)

The project titled strengthening non-state actors' capacities to prevent and resolve conflicts in areas affected by post election violence in Kenya kicked off on July 1 and will run for 30 months.

"The project aims at contributing to the reduction of violent community conflicts in Kenya," says KAS country representative for Kenya Ms. Anke Lerch.

Launching the EC co-funded project, head of the EC delegation in Nairobi Amb. Eric Van der Linden noted that conflict resolution was very important for the country.

He said that while it was important to build roads and improve the capacity of ministries in service delivery, it is even more important to strengthen the capacity of non state actors as this would help in reforming

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In this issue:



Project takes root in Nyanza



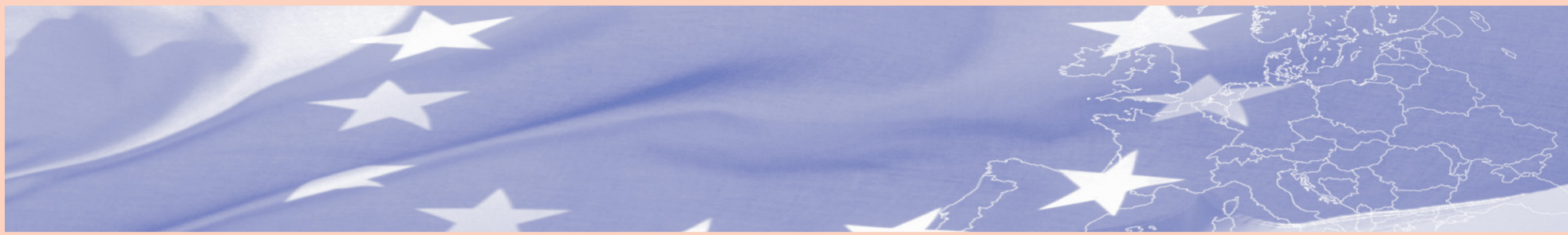
Project Summary



This project is funded by the European Union

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

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.



EU funded peace project launched



Residents watch in disbelief as houses go up in smoke after the post-election violence in 2007.

From Page 15

the society.

Van der Linden notes that the peace project is a first for Kenya under the European Community's instrument for stability, crisis preparedness component – peace building partnership support.

"The world is a nasty place but we have to make the most of it," the head of EC delegation in Kenya went on to say.

The programme will cover Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley provinces and is further aimed at strengthening the capacities of non-state actors in the three province as a means of mitigating community conflicts by improving their knowledge base and know how in early warning mechanisms, informal mediation, field based political analysis, policy oriented conflict research and policy dialogue.

Partners in the project include the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) of the Kenyan Episcopal Conference for Rift Valley Province; Mount

Elgon Residents Association (MERA) Western Province and the Community Initiative Action Group – Kenya (CIAG-K) is the associate partner in Nyanza Province.

The Link newspaper is the information dissemination strategy for the project that is targeting 360 representatives of local Civil Society Organisations, 80 volunteer trainees from 120 CSOs, 12 experts, 1440 divisional community leaders, 340 policy makers at local and 60 policy makers at national level.

The final beneficiaries are an estimated 16.1 million Kenyans, the population of the three regions that the project will cover over a 30 month period.

Amb. Bethuel Kiplagat who launched the project emphasised the role of the government in peace building.

He expressed concern over the perception by Kenyans of political leaders appealing for tolerance.

"Even though politicians are perceived to be the cause of the problem, they are also part of the solution to the problem and should not be isolated. We

need to work with them, engage with them," Kiplagat advised the non state actors involved in peace building.

He says there is a general trend of pessimism among Civil society organisations and among the general public that Agenda four of the National Accord has not been dealt with.

"Despite all the weaknesses that are there, the passing of all bills, have created institutions like the boundaries review commission, the independent interim electoral commission and the committee of experts on constitution review went through Parliament."

Kiplagat further noted that the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission bill was passed by parliament and all that is remaining is nominating persons who will constitute the tribunal.

He reminded Kenyans that everyone is innocent until proven guilty, "we need to ensure that justice prevails for all."

Ms. Hanna Carlsson, the International Project Manager who will be based in Kisumu said the main project activities are an inception meeting for project

personnel, partners and associates in Nairobi and a situational fact finding survey to establish the actual number and extent of activities of CSOs in each region.

The project will also undertake a research on conflict trends in the province; develop a training curriculum to define scope and content; establishment of three regional reference points for co-ordination, exchange and cooperation between CSO partners; establishment of expert pools; building of data and information banks on past conflict trends and cross regional exchange visits on best practice.

The project intends to build on current and past experiences of organisations and institutions that have been involved in peace work. Act of duplication and lone efforts are to be discouraged as the project will focus more in rolling the wheel than reinventing one.

Other activities include running of a monthly publication in cooperation with The Link Newspaper; conducting policy dialogue with government/state institutions and quarterly meetings by partners and networks for systematic conflict monitoring in each province.

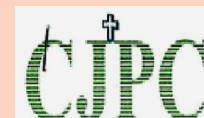
It is expected that once the project rolls out, there will be increased knowledge and improved know how on early warning and response mechanisms; reduced latent, confrontational and open conflict among communities; regular information and exchange on sources of anger, emerging conflicts and crisis through a monthly conflict resolution focused publication (The Link) to be distributed through network members and subscribers.

As a result of the activities, communication channels between the Civil Society Organisation networks in the three provinces, the different political forces and regional as well as national authorities on approaches, instruments and policies for reduction of tensions and prevention of violent conflicts will be established.

During the public launch of the EC co-funded project, Ambassador Van der Linden also said that the EC has set aside up to Kshs. 250 billion to help in prevention of conflicts. Key in the Kshs. 250 billion support is the bringing of all parties together to mend fences.



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One of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) feeds her child after 2007 post-election violence.

By **CHRIS OWALA**

Nyanza Province was one of the regions of Kenya that was heavily affected by the post-election violence that rocked the country in 2007/08 electioneering period.

With a population of about five million of different ethnic origins, high levels of poverty and widespread political awareness, the province is among the most highly susceptible to politically motivated violence in Kenya.

No wonder it, together with Rift Valley and Western Provinces, bore the brunt of the PEV. Nyanza's border with Rift Valley, especially the Kuria and Borabu/Sotik border, cattle rustling has led to sporadic conflicts.

To deal with such conflicts and prevent them from becoming full-blown violent ones, it is imperative to understand their root cause and to involve all stakeholders in resolving or preventing them.

A project funded by the European Commission and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) called Partnership for Peace that is currently being implemented in Nyanza, Rift-Valley and Western Provinces, seeks to build a lasting peace in the three regions.

The project is built around sound understanding that non-state actors' contribution to conflict resolution cannot be ignored not only in Kenya but all over the world. This is because seeking solutions to conflict tackling can-

EU-KAS peace project takes root in Nyanza

not be entirely left to the Government.

Under the two-year project, non-state actors will be strengthened to enable them to mitigate conflicts among the populace.

In Nyanza for example, the local project partner is Community Initiative Action Group-Kenya (CIAG-K). In the region, the project will not only look at visible violence akin to that often experienced in Kuria, but will also seek to address invisible violence such as historical injustices, which have been cited as one of the reasons as to why the skirmishes were so vicious. There is also rampant poverty, which has led to many idle youth resort to violence.

Based in Kisumu, CIAG-K will be the Nyanza regional focal point. It will be responsible for training and coordination of activities of the civil society organisations (CSOs) that will join the project as grassroots partners.

To ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the project in the province, CIAG-K working closely with KAS-Kisumu Office, will develop communication, education and information tools to support outreach and peacebuilding activities.

In addition, it will create strong linkages and networks

between the CSOs partnering for peace, other non-state actors and state actors. Involvement of political opinion leaders and decision makers of various shades will be accorded high priority. This is aimed at creating a better network for successful conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the region.

Further, such cooperative approaches would ensure and guarantee faster intervention in situations of tension and also for constant information exchange with the aim of forestalling conflicts from becoming violent.

The project will create, maintain and share a database of conflict management experts who will from time to time be called upon to serve as mediators and trainers as need arise.

To achieve lasting peace in the region, all stakeholders (both state and non-state) will have to work closely with each other for the purposes of early warning, prevention and resolution of conflicts.

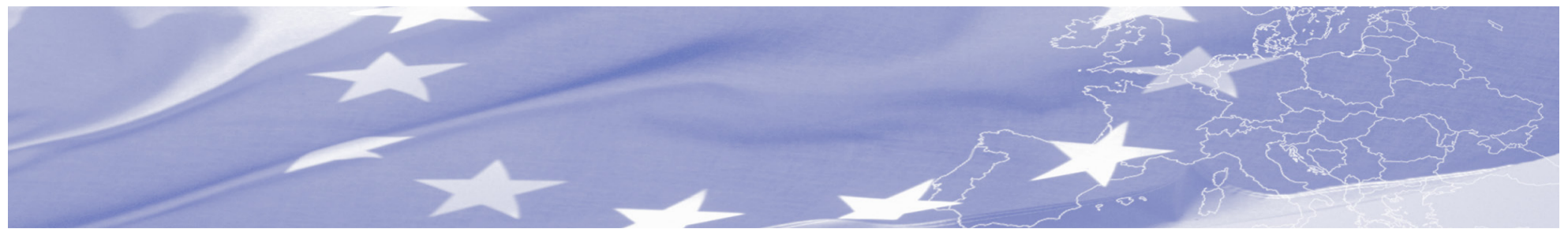
The Writer is the Coordinator of Community Initiative Action group-Kenya (CIAG-K). He can be reached on: 0737-470558/0716-384135 or grassrootlink@yahoo.com or ciag-kenya@hotmail.com



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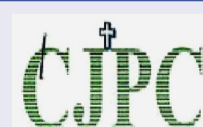


Summary of the Partnership for Peace Project

Duration of the action	30 months
Objectives of the action	The overall objective to which the project shall contribute is the reduction of violent community conflicts in Kenya. The specific objective of the project is the strengthening of the capacities of non-state actors in 3 provinces in Kenya as means of mitigating community conflicts by improving their knowledge base and know-how in early warning mechanisms, informal mediation, field-based political analysis, policy oriented conflict research and policy dialogue.
Partner(s)	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) of the Kenyan Episcopal Conference, Rift Valley Province; Mount Elgon Residents' Association (MERA), Western Province. Associate partner: Community Initiative Action Group - Kenya (CIAG-K), Nyanza Province
Target group(s)	360 representatives of local CSOs, 80 volunteer trainees from 120 CSOs, 12 experts, 1440 divisional community leaders, 340 policy makers at local and 60 policy makers at national level.
Final beneficiaries	An estimated population of 16.1 million Kenyans. This is the population of the three regions the project will cover.
Estimated results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased knowledge and improved know how on early warning mechanisms, informal mediation, field based political analysis and policy oriented conflict research at civil society organizations (CSOs); ● Established regional networks of CSOs in crisis prevention and conflict management in each of the provinces; ● Established conflict early warning mechanisms; ● Reduced latent, confrontational and open conflict among communities; ● Increased community interactions across the ethnic divide among communities that have previous experiences of violence; ● Established expert pools of four professionals for purposes of rapid conflict response in each province for each regional network; ● Regular information and exchange on sources of anger, emerging conflicts and crisis through a monthly conflict resolution focused publication to be distributed through network members and those who subscribe to the initiative; ● Established communication channels between the CSO networks in the three provinces, the different political forces and regional as well as national authorities about approaches, instruments and policies in the fields of economic development, social cohesion and culture relevant for the reduction of tensions and the prevention of violent conflicts and crisis between different ethnic and social groups in the population.
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inception meeting/training for project personnel, partners and associate in Nairobi; ● Situational fact finding surveys to establish the actual number and extent of activities of CSOs in each region; ● Research on conflict trends in the provinces; ● Development of a training curriculum to define and scope training content i.e. topics, approaches, case studies; ● Regional preliminary introduction and inaugural meetings to disseminate findings, build consensus of the need for partnerships/interventions for lasting solutions and to chart out structure of the project; ● Training of trainers in 12 regional capacity trainings and 3 follow-ups ● 24 divisional community leaders meetings for information and advocacy purposes (2 times); ● Establishment of 3 regional reference points for coordination, exchange and cooperation between CSO partners (one in each province) ● Establishment of expert pools; ● Building of data and information banks on past conflict trends/ conflict analysis in Kenya and in the provinces; ● Cross-regional exchange visits on best practice; ● Run a monthly publication in cooperation with the monthly philanthropic newspaper "The Link"; ● Development of a website for publication of conflict related issues; ● Conducting policy dialogue with government/ state institutions; ● Quarterly meetings by partners and networks for systematic conflict monitoring in each province.



This project is funded by the European Union



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This project is co-funded by the European Union

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Bogus AIDS NGOs put on notice

By BOB OMBATI

Non Governmental Organizations operating in Kisii Central district have been issued with an ultimatum to account for the donor funds in their disposal or face action.

Area District Commissioner, Benjamin Njoroge expressed concern over the numerous NGOs mushrooming in the area annually and yet their activities are invisible on the ground.

The Administrator expressed fears that the NGO operators could be pocketing millions of shillings from donors under the guise of conducting activities to mitigate the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region.

The DC says that some of the bogus NGOs are based in big cities where they forward falsified proposals to donors to get funding and continue leading lavish lifestyles in the cities while their purported beneficiaries wallow in misery.

"The government is concerned with the mushrooming in briefcase NGOs. It is high time they explained their mandate and stop operating from Nairobi with nothing to show on the ground," said the DC.

The Administrator, however lauded honest NGOs whose activities have helped alleviate suffering of the infected and affected

Njoroge at the same accused some men of frustrating the government's campaign on voluntary HIV counselling and testing, saying, they took it lightly and dismissed it as a women affair and challenged them to go for testing at night if they feared being seen by others.

Pregnant women, the DC noted could easily know their HIV/AIDS status through frequent vis-



Director of Nyumbani Children's home Father Augustino Angelo and treasurer Mary Owen are received by orphans during the launch of Amani Child Development Centre in Siaya. PHOTO/FILE

its to antenatal clinics where they were voluntarily counselled and tested unlike men who required persuasion to be convinced to undergo the test.

The DC warned parents against abdicating their responsibility of caring and guiding their teenage children to avoid indulging in immoral activities which contributed to the rise in HIV/AIDS infections, negating the stakeholders' effort to fight the scourge.

The Chair of Mwangetinge Care and Support Initiative, Mrs Magdaline Mwebi and African Girl International, Director Benjamin Onkoba also complained of

bogus NGOs in the area which had no impact despite being funded locally and internationally.

Mwebi urged the government to financially support aged people who were caring for HIV/AIDS orphaned children, saying, some had turned to begging in the streets for food and money to survive, making them more vulnerable.

The two deplored the culture where HIV positive people were sidelined from the management of resources allocated to them by donors and the government, adding, some HIV negative people had hijacked the management of the funds whose expenditure and

accountability was questionable.

The regional Director of medical services, Dr. Eric Abunga, revealed that 15 percent of people in Nyanza province were HIV positive and appealed to residents to be tested to know their status to avoid spreading the virus ignorantly.

National Aids Control Council Nyanza Regional Field Officer, Edwin Lwanya, assured those on ARVs that supplies were available and adequate up to 2013 despite the raging controversy pitting the government and the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.

Kisii Census officials cry fowl

By BOB OMBATI

About 250 census clerks from Kisii Central are demanding payments for their dues five months after a national census was conducted despite the numerous pledges by the ministry of Planning, National Development

A representative of the group, Mr. Ziporah Osoro, told The Link that they were tired of empty promises and would soon organize a demonstration to push for the payments. She said they will not give up despite frustration by the area's district administration.

"We are demanding for our money which we worked for. It was not charity work. This is unfair to us and it is a bitter lesson," said Osoro.

The infuriated officials asked the minister for Planning, National Development and vision 2030, Mr. Wyclife Oparanya, to

clarify on who was paid from the area, saying the report from his ministry claiming that all the census officials had been paid was misleading.

She claimed that initially they were told that they had submitted wrong Account Numbers and Identity Cards as the reasons why the payment was delayed. However, after re-submitting the documents, she claimed, the ministry went silent on the matter.

The groups suspect that ghost workers were being paid at their expense. They challenged the District Statistics Officer to publish the names of those who had been paid.

Mwalimu Sacco general manager, Charles Omwansa, told The Link teachers who participated in the exercise were bothering him to pay them, saying the money had not been remitted to their respective bank accounts in the Sacco.

Mombasa Dock-workers Union officials differ

By ANDERSON MRENJE

MEMBERS of Dock Union Workers have rejected calls by the secretary general to push for the resignation of the Kenya Ports Authority managing director James Mleiiwa.

They said that claims by secretary general Simon Sang' that the said officer had failed to honor an agreement with the union were false and driven by ulterior motives.

Mr. Sang' had told members that the union had frozen relations with KPA management and that the executive board should be sacked. "We demand that the managing director resign and half of the board be replaced," he said, adding "We also want payment of a 60 per cent allowance increase agreed last year or we will issue a

strike notice on December 18."

His strike threat was however rejected by members of the union, who argued that the allowance was not in the collective bargaining agreement of the current financial year.

Led by Mr. Musa Jaka and Mr. Solomon Were, the members stated that the demand had no legal backing and wondered why the executive board had not taken action on the secretary-general.

However Mr. Sang' admitted that the allowance was not part of the 2008/2009 agreement but said that the management had a memorandum of understanding.

Mr. Were dismissed Sang's demand for the MD's resignation, saying that his performance was above reproach and he had no genuine reasons to convince members to back his call.

Wetang'ula off the hook

By AGGREY BUCHUNGU

ONCE again, an election petitioner has lost a case on technical grounds. Mr. John Waluke's case against Foreign Affairs Minister Moses Wetang'ula was thrown out because the process server's license had expired by the time he served the minister.

Since the petition was filed the ministers' lawyers did everything to ensure that it never reached full trial. On 27th May 2008, the then Bungoma High Court Judge Justice W. Karanja dismissed an application to strike out the petition for non-service.

Justice Karanja ruled that the 1st and 3rd respondents Moses Wetang'ula and James Kulubi Omwangwe had been properly served with the petition dated 31st March 2008 by way of alternative service.

An earlier application dated 31st August, 2009 seeking to strike out the petition following disbandment of the Electoral Commission (ECK) had also been dismissed by Lady Justice Florence Muchemi in September 2009.

While delivering the ruling, Justice Muchemi said he was convinced that the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) had the mandate to take over pending election petitions, adding that there was no vacuum.

According to the ruling, the defense argued that the returning officer went home on disbandment of the ECK and that he would be replaced with people who were not presided over the elections. The bench was however not convinced by that argument. Justice Muchemi asserted that the returning officer who is a party to a pending election petition would continue in that capacity until the petition is fully heard and determined.

However, on appeal dated 19th October, 2009, the defense counsel A.B. Shah sought to reverse the ruling delivered by Justice W. Karanja on account that the process server Thomas Nduku was unlicensed when served the defendant.

It was established that Mr. Nduku indeed renewed his license on 25th July, 2008 after serving the minister and co-accused. Hence the judge ruled: "I am convinced that if this evidence was available at the hearing it would have changed the cause of ruling," he said.

Justice Muchemi agreed with Mr. Shah that had the evidence been presented before the court at the time the application was heard, the same would have influenced the court to reach a different decision.

Kalonzo faults Raila in law review row

By LINK WRITER

VICE-PRESIDENT Kalonzo Musyoka has faulted Prime Minister Raila Odinga's directive to civil servants to keep off debate on constitutional review.

Kalonzo said civil servants, just like any other citizens, were free to air their views on the Harmonised Draft Constitution and should not be discriminated against. "It is their right to give opinions," Kalonzo said.

Raila had opposed a move by Head of Civil Service Francis Muthaura to directly involve senior civil servants in the debate. He said civil servants should be neutral because they are implementers of Government policies. Raila said urging civil servants to present their views to the Committee of Experts amounted to inviting them to participate in divisive politics.

Speaking at Kenyena SDA Church in West Mugirango, where he presided over a funds drive in aid of the church, Kalonzo said permanent secretaries were free to air views on the draft.

"We should not jump into disciplining PSs for commenting on the constitution and yet the law affects them," he said. MPs James Gesami (host) and Daniel Muoki (Mwala) attended the event.

The VP advocated for the extension of the time given to the public to study and comment on the draft, saying 80 per cent of Kenyans are yet to access the document. "It is important for every Kenyan to study the document to make informed choice," he said. Later, addressing another fund raiser at Bosiango SDA Church, the VP said only a new constitution would avert a recurrence of election violence.

Kalonzo also challenged the media to engage Kenyans in the debate on the draft.

Meanwhile, Roads Minister Franklin Bett wants the Committee of Experts to present two sets of drafts at the referendum as suggested by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK). The lobby warned on Wednesday that the hybrid system of government proposed in the Harmonised Draft Constitution was a recipe for chaos and asked for two documents advocating either a parliamentary or presidential system be presented at the referendum.

Bett said there was need for Parliament to amend the Constitution of Kenya (Review) Act to mandate the CoE to work on two documents.

Speaking at a funds drive at Kericho on Friday evening, the minister said the raging debate on the Executive could derail the review process.

Elsewhere, Prime Minister Raila Odinga has said the Government will transform arid and semi-arid lands (Asal) into economic hubs. He told a consultative meeting for MPs from Asal regions in Mombasa yesterday that all parts of the country have potential to be productive.

During the meeting, members presented a memorandum to President Kibaki and Raila on progress and review of the Ministry for Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands. "There is sufficient mood in Parliament and in the country for us in the Coalition Government to effect some of the radical measures that will right some of the wrongs that have long held us down since independence," Raila said.

Asal members want the Government to allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of the national budget for the development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands. They further recommended that the ministry be made an implementing ministry with an adequate budget and not merely co-ordinating ministry.

Northern Kenya minister, Ibrahim Elmi Mohamed said the ministry needs Sh5 billion annually to spur development. Ministers Yusuf Hajj, Naomi Shaban (Special Programmes), Deputy Speaker Farah Maalim, Livestock Assistant minister Adan Duale and Malindi MP Gideon Mungaro were present

Family wants state to vacate their land

By JOHN NALIANYA

WHEN the family of the late Mzee Wambinga Mulati leased their 33 acres of land to the ministry of public works way back in 1979, they never new they were getting involved into deal that will lead them into losing of their ancestral land.

Thirty years down the line, the family still cannot occupy their ancestral land despite the fact that they have all the legal documents.

On the 1st of April 1979 Mulati Wambinga entered into a lease agreement with the government through the ministry of public works for three years and the sum to be paid was Kshs.7,200 on monthly basis according to the copy of lease.

The lease was signed by the then Provincial Works Officer Western, Wanyama Tatasi, and then the lands registrar of Bungoma district Elgon Nyanza.

But as soon as the lease agreement lapsed, other government ministries and private developers encroached. Efforts by the family to repossess the land have hit a snag, following the death of Mr. Wambinga. No one seems to listen to their quest regain their ancestral land.

Mr. Vincent and Kevin Wambinga, both the sons of the late Wambinga, narrated how they have tried in vain to reclaim their ancestral land, which is their only hope

and future.

In the year 2000, while accompanied by the then Kanduyi MP Lawrence Sifuna, they made several visits to the ministry of public works in effort to repossess their land.

On the 29th of June the provincial works officer in charge of western province, Eng.

P. Makori, wrote to them to confirm that indeed after the expiry of the lease period the ministry vacated the land, which according to him, the land was automatically reclaimed by the family.

The letter read in part, "This is in reference to several visits you have made to this office while in company with the MP for Kanduyi Hon Lawrence Sifuna inquiring about the above piece of land that was temporarily leased by this ministry for three years in the late seventies, after inquires from Bungoma it has been established that the ministry vacated the land after the expiry of lease period and the ministry stopped the monthly



Mr. Orengo

remittance then.

After vacating the land ministry assumed that the land owner automatically moved back to his land. The letter further says that the ministry never subdivided nor put up any permanent structures on the said land and vacated the whole piece as was leased."

Kundu and Vincent now

wonder why private developers and the government have continued developing on their private land while them who are the rightful owners have no land. The piece of land in question houses the Bungoma members club, Bungoma medical training college, part of the Bungoma airstrip, part of the Bungoma Hospital land the Bungoma AIC church

After receiving the letter from the ministry of works the family of Wambinga thought what was rightfully theirs had come back to them but that was not the case.

The battle is far from over for soon after the municipal council

of Bungoma started laying claim on the same piece of land, their journey to the council offices then began. A letter written to them by the Bungoma Municipal Town Clerk Ainea Indakwa on the 24 of June 2004, reads in part "You are herein informed that the said land currently occupied by the railways station, Members club, Airstrip and District hospital was procedural acquired by the government, unless you can prove by documentary evidence that you have a legal claim on the said land."

Although they have the legal documents to show that they are the rightful owners of the land, nobody seems to care. Instead they are now being intimidated by the authorities.

In the year 2004 one of their family members George Lutaso was arrested in what the family believes was ploy to intermediate them for fighting for their rights. Trouble started when he curved a piece of the land to cultivate before a private developer called in the police and was arrested for trespassing.

The family of Wambinga now wants justice done so that they can repossess their land.

"Why should we live in the slums while people and the government that is supposed to protect my rights have grabbed our land? Where on earth will we ever find justice?" they lamented.

Alcoholic village elders to be fired



Village elders taking brew

VILLAGE Elders in Bungoma South District who consume illicit brews will be relieved of their duties, according to area DC Wilfred Nyangwanga.

Nyangwanga attributed the escalating insecurity in the area to provincial administrators, especially the village elders who consume chang'aa and busaa.

The DC observed that the govern-

ment can not guarantee security and peace to its citizens if the grass root leaders are drunk and irresponsible.

He pointed out that village – elders who fail to report bad elements from their areas of jurisdiction to the law enforcers must quit and pave way for people who can assist the government to apprehend criminals.

"The people terrorizing you are your sons from the villages. How

come the village – elders do not know them?" The DC poses.

Nyangwanga also took a swipe at the area residents for allegedly encouraging corruption in the police force and warns that those who will be caught doing so will be arrested and prosecuted.

He was reacting to the residents' allegations that provincial administrators and police officers attached

to Sang'alo and Dorofu patrol bases were responsible for the insecurity in the area.

The residents had alleged that the police officers collect money from illicit brew brewers every month as protection fee, a factor they said had led to increased consumption of chang'aa and insecurity in the area.

They made the remarks recently at Mwibale market in East Bukusu location, Kanduyi division during a public meeting convened by the DC to address security matters.

Speaking at the same meeting the Officer Commanding Police Division (OCPD) Mrs. Mary Omari concurred with the DC that residents are to blame for corruption in the police force.

Mrs. Omari urged the residents not to bribe the police officers saying that it is illegal for one to give or receive a bribe. "Why pay the police more money than the law courts would fine you if taken there", the OCPD posed.

On police transfers, she promised that her office will consider transferring officers who have worked in one station for long as demanded by the residents.

"We will transfer the officers but not all of them at ago because we need to have officers in every station who are familiar with the vicinity so that whenever there is an attack they can know which area to take cover" she said.

The OCPD also cautioned her officers against raiding chang'aa dens at night and urged the residents not to open doors for the police at night unless there is something crucial.

New voting system underway

By FAITH MUIRURI

THE Independent Interim Electoral Commission of Kenya (IIEC) is exploring possibilities of adopting a digitalised electoral process in the country.

Flaws in the traditional polling system are widely believed to have been a key contributing factor to the 2007 disputed and volatile presidential election.

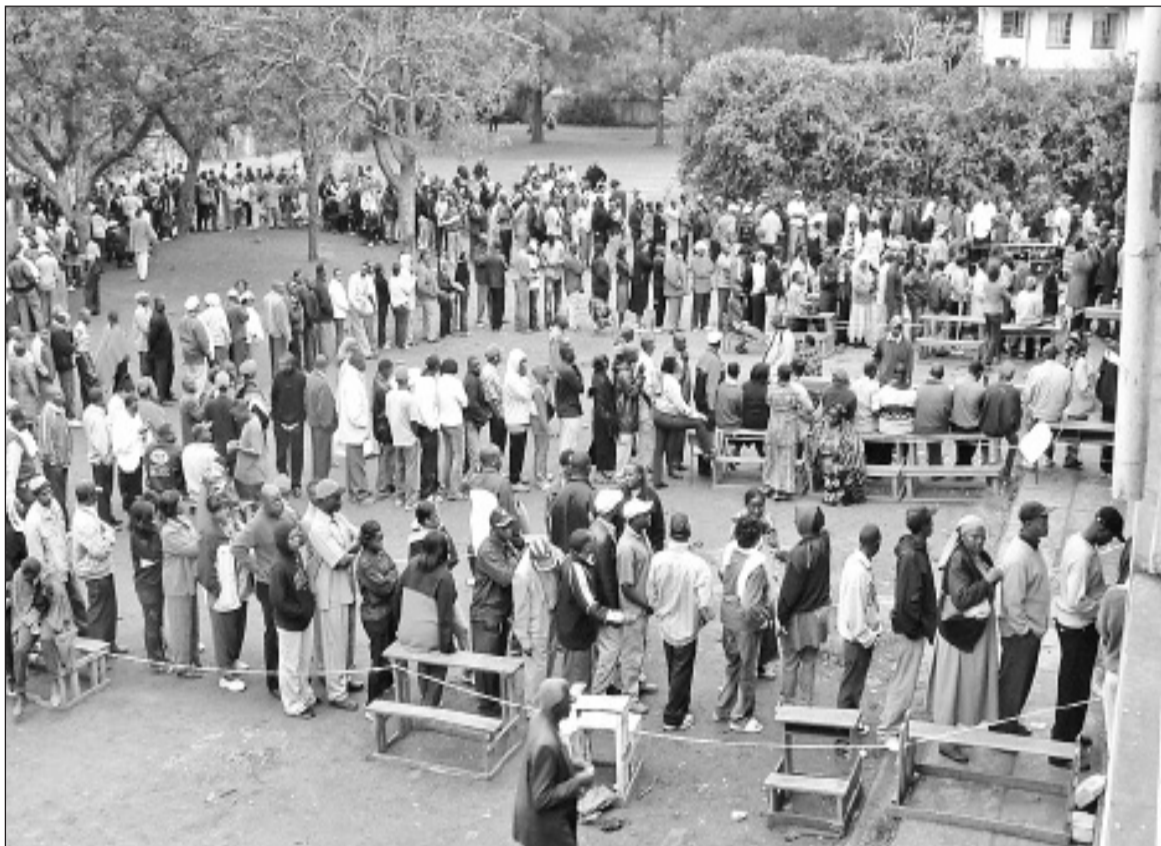
The Kriegler Commission report expressly declared that the election results were so bungled that it was hard to establish the winner of the presidential elections. The tallying of the vote cast was tampered with and some of the ballot papers were either not signed or even stolen.

This sparked off the post election violence which led to over 1,200 deaths and several hundreds of others injured and at least 300,000 people forcibly ejected from their homes.

To avoid a repeat of such ugly incidents, three highly reputed companies familiar with modern electronic voter registration and voting system have been invited to conduct a pilot project on voter registration using Electronic Voter Registration and Voting Machines.

The firms are drawn from Denmark, Britain, India and Canada. The electronic system contains the Mobile Voter Enrollment Kit and Electronic Voting Machine Unit.

The introduction of an electronic enumeration process is long overdue and will facilitate voter registration, photo image capture, biometric or finger print data capture and get rid of du-



Kenyans queue to vote during election. This will be a thing of the past once the new system is adopted.

plication of identification during registration.

The electronic units are highly portable and can be powered simply by batteries. The infallible fingerprint patterns are key identifying features in the system.

The system includes all the items required by an operator for enrollment purposes like the digital camera, the fingerprint reader, signature pad and laminator. This makes voter enumeration a one stop exercise. The instrument is designed for conditions where humidity is both low and high.

The Electronic Voting Ma-

chine is a microprocessor based instrument designed to modernise the election process.

A local representative of Copenhagen Election firm D. J Patel says that the system does not allow any scope for invalid votes. There is also total secrecy of voting data maintained. The machine ensures prompt and accurate counting and it is possible to declare the results on the same day, at the end of poll.

The electronic voting machine simplifies the election process for the benefit of both the election officials and voters. The huge ex-

penditure occasioned by printing millions of ballot papers, storing and transporting them to different polling stations will be a thing of the past once the use of Electronic Voting Machine becomes effective.

This means if the electronic voting machine is adopted, the logistics involved in transporting thousands of ballot papers over long distances, counting and verification process and delays will be history.

In the Electronic Voting Machine, one ballot per unit is used which is fixed below the trans-

parent acrylic sheet of the Ballot Unit and lists the names of candidates and their party symbols as in the traditional ballot paper.

The electronic voting machine can be reused in subsequent elections by simply pressing a button to erase the voters recorded in the earlier poll and changing the ballot paper in the box. This means that IIEC can hire the electronic voting machine units even for registration of different political parties during their party elections, students organizations in universities and colleges elections and any other politically organised group that wants accurate and efficient voting system.

The voter only has to press a button against the candidate of his or her choice to cast a vote. An audio visual signal confirms to the voter that the vote has been recorded. It is simple to vote as the machine contains all the party symbols just like traditional voting ballot papers.

The Copenhagen based firm representative says that his firm is ready to lend services to IIEC whenever required. The electronic unit he added is capable of displaying the total number of votes polled at any time during polling and the votes polled for each candidate. It is also capable of displaying operational and electrical errors.

The system has been successfully applied in India which has over 670 million voters. Already IIEC has visited India and South Africa to familiarize themselves with alternative voting systems and their strengths.

Shamba system coming back — Wekesa

By BILLESSAU

THE Government will soon reintroduce the controversial shamba system which was outlawed years back in a bid to reclaim the depleted forest cover.

Forestry and Wildlife Minister, Dr. Noah Wekesa, says the method will be used to assist in reforesting the destroyed parts of the Mau complex, which has been at the centre of debate over evictions of illegal settlers.

The evictions have sparked an uproar with lawmakers from the expansive Rift Valley province claiming the Government was violating rights of the residents despite a cabinet approval to carry out the evictions in accordance with the law and

humanely.

Speaking in Kakamega during a tour of Kakamega Forest, Wekesa said that communities living around Government forests will soon be allowed to plant tree seedlings alongside their crops for a period of three years before being asked to leave the forests.

We are not only going to use the system in reforesting the Mau complex but in all other destroyed parts of forest across the country," said Wekesa who was touring Kakamega Forest to assess the level of conservation.

Wekesa said that the Kenya Forestry Services would revert to the system so that communities living in the forest neighbourhoods participate in caring

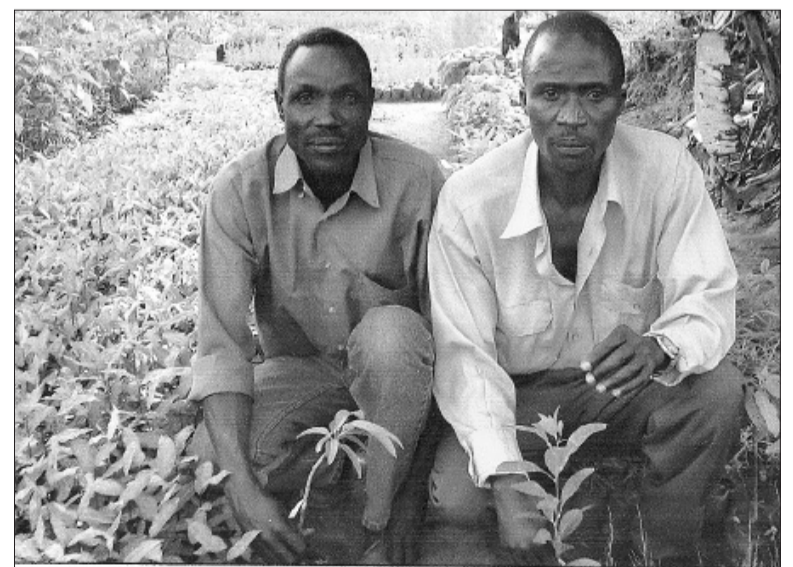
for the young trees to ensure they survived.

This, the minister said, is informed by the fact that earlier efforts by the Government to reforest destroyed forests have proved futile since its officers failed to protect the newly planted trees to ensure their growth.

The minister admitted that the Government has in the past planted trees which ended up drying out because they are not tended to after planting hence the use of the communities around forests.

He points out that the communities would also feel ownership of the natural resources by being involved in their management.

The communities, he said



A Tree planting exercise aimed at reclaiming the depleted forest cover.

that will be involved in the shamba system will be assisted by the Kenya Forest Services

(KFS) officers to care for the trees during the three year period.

New law to recognize come-we-stay underway

By **BEKADZO TONDO**

A MAN and a woman who cohabit for more than two years will be declared husband and wife if a marriage bill to be tabled in parliament becomes law.

The government sponsored marriage bill seeks to legalize marriage of a man and woman who stay together for more than 2 years and above.

The minister for Gender, Children and Social Development Esther Murugi notes with concern that women who stay with men for over two years and give birth to children, finally get kicked out by the men and there was no law in place to help the woman.

"I will table a marriage bill in parliament which will force a man to officially marry a woman whom they have stayed together for more than two years" said Murugi.

Murugi said women have been taken as sex tools by men who invite them on a "come we stay basis" and if they get tired of them they simply chase them from their homes and look for other women.

The minister was speaking in at Mnarani in Kilifi when she presided over the girls under 13 soccer finals coordinated by Moving the Goal Posts organization which promotes girls soccer.

The minister regretted that women only owned one third of the total land in the country and blamed the problem on the current constitution which did not allow women and children to own land.

"The time has now come that women and children in the country should be empowered to own land like men and said that could only be achieved if the new constitution will official allow them to own land," said Murugi.

Murugi at the same time said the government was still working out modalities to reunite about 2000 children with their parents who were displaced after the post elections violence in the country.

She said the children are living in different camps for the IDPs and said it is the obligations of the government to try and re-unite the children with their parents.

NCCK's proposals on draft law

THE National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) wants a constitution that guarantees protection and respect of human life.

NCCCK also wants the Committee of Experts (CoE) to produce two drafts highlighting the different systems of government.

In a press statement, titled: Kenyans, Build Consensus Genuinely issued at the end of its executive meeting, held in Limuru, the body argues the hybrid system as proposed in the Harmonised Draft Constitution (HDC) is not acceptable, noting "Kenya has experimented with it in the past with disastrous results".

NCCCK General-Secretary Canon Peter Karanja said: "We challenge the Committee of Experts to be bold and present to Kenyans a pure system that is workable. The proposed system (hybrid) appears more to serve political expediency than giving our nation a fresh start."



Mr. Nzamba Kitonga who incharge of the Committee of Experts spearheading the review process

"The proposed constitution should be clear from anti life issues such as abortion", stressed the church statement, read by the NCCCK General Secretary, Rev. Canon Peter

Karanja.

They stated that life begins at conception and ends at natural death. Children once conceived have a right to be born, added the NCCCK.

On the controversial Kadhi (Islamic) courts, the NCCCK said they (Kadhi Courts) should be removed from the constitution in total. And the NCCCK said its opposition was based on the fact that it contradicts the principle of equality of religions, principles of separation of state of religion and the understanding that the state shall treat all religions equally.

The NCCCK, founded in 1918, is the world's largest Council of churches and brings together all protestant churches and Christian organizations in Kenya. The Roman Catholic Church in Kenya with over 30% following of the population is not a member of NCCCK though the two work together often.

Atwoli dismisses draft constitution

The Cotu boss says Kitonga's harmonized draft is not based on reality

By **LINK WRITER**

THE Central Organisation for Trade Unions (Cotu) has criticised the Harmonised Draft over its proposal to scrap the Provincial Administration.

COTU Secretary General Francis Atwoli said the institution was critical in running Government affairs.

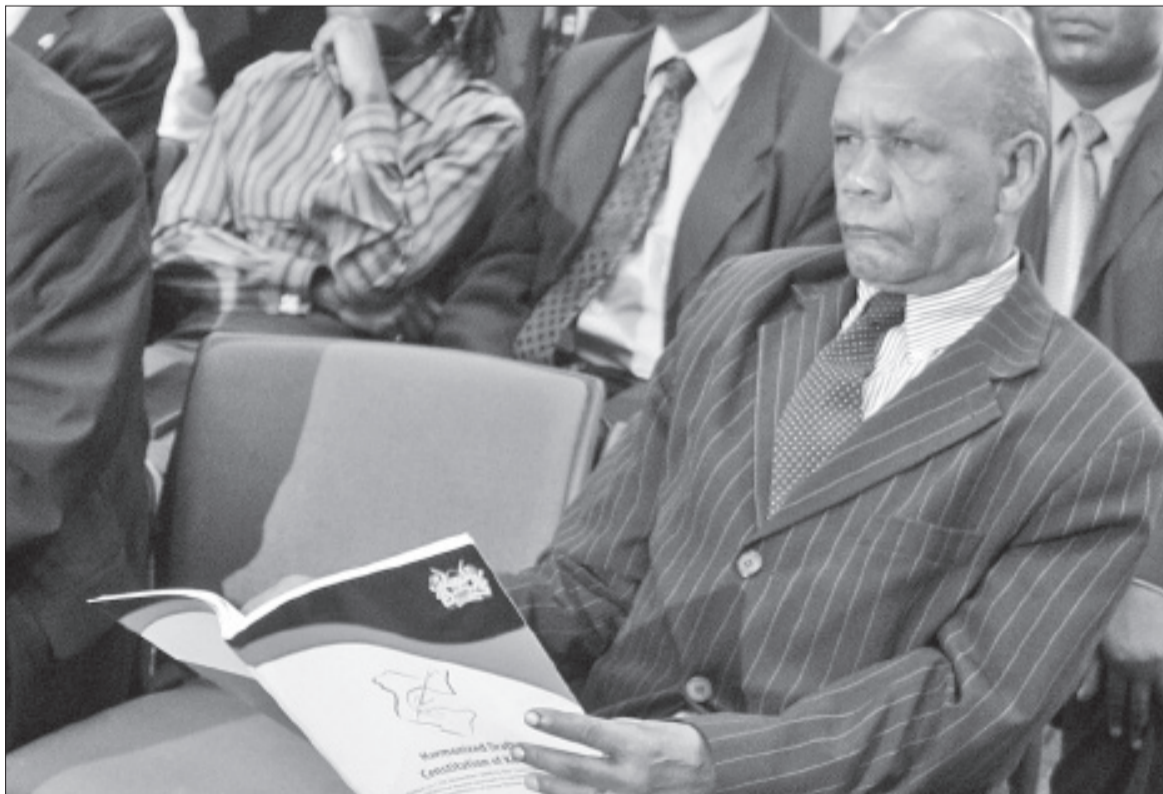
Speaking recently in Nakuru during a rally to sensitise workers on the Draft, Atwoli said the Provincial Administration only needed reforms to embrace democratic ideals.

Mr Atwoli also said the workers were opposed to two centres of power in the Executive.

"What we need is a powerful president directly elected, not sharing power," he added.

He described the arrangement where President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga are sharing power as the worst form of governance.

He said two centres of power was a recipe for chaos, citing the situation in the war-torn Congo, which resulted into the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba.



Kenyans attend a sensitization forum on the Harmonized Draft Constitution.

He claimed the Committee of Experts (CoE) headed by Nzamba Kitonga did not produce a draft based on reality.

Atwoli claimed the outcome of the committee's work was academic. The Cotu boss said problems in Provincial Administration started with the IPPG of 1997

when the Chief's Act was removed.

Atwoli, at the same time, said key sections should be amended in the Draft before it is subjected to the referendum.

He said the President and the PM should show commitment towards the reali-

sation of a new constitution by ensuring Parliament does not go on recess before it approves the Draft.

Atwoli also dismissed plans by Government to give the poor a monthly pay of Kshs.1, 500, saying it was a conduit for stealing from State coffers.

Mt Kenya coffee farmers sensitized



Progreso organization officer in charge of coffee programme in East African regional office Mr Charles Mbarire addresses coffee farmers from Central and Eastern provinces at Gikanda Coffee Farmers Cooperative Society in Mathira district . PHOTO/JOSEPH MUKUBWA

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

ABOUT 100 coffee farmers and the management staff of the coffee factories have been sensitized on how to improve quality and quantity of coffee.

The farmers from Central and Eastern Provinces toured Gikanda Coffee Farmers Cooperative Society in Mathira district where they were sensitized in the tour dubbed 'farmers exchange experience programme.'

The two day programme whose objective was to bring farmers together in order to share experiences was organized by a non-governmental-organization named Progreso Coffee Support Network.

The farmers were drawn from Ndumberi Coffee Growers from Kiambu district, Kangunu Farmers Cooperative Society from Murang'a North district and Riungagi Farmers Cooperative Society from Embu district.

Others included Kakuyuni Farmers Cooperative Society from Kangundo and Tekangu Farmers Cooperative society. Gikanda society hosted them. All of the visi-

tors were representing over 8,000 farmers.

Progreso organization officer in charge of coffee programme in East African regional office Mr Charles Mbarire says that Progreso Network is an NGO based in Netherlands which is aimed to eradicate poverty among small scale farmers who grows coffee, cocoa, palm oil, soybeans, tea and sugarcane.

The NGO which has nine regional offices the Eastern region

position as the highest average payment rate society in the district. It also been producing the best quality coffee and also put the highest rate factory wise." Said the chairman Mr Charles Kariuki.

The society is made up of three factories which include Gichathaini, Ndaroini and Kangocho. It has 2,729 members.

This year of 2008/2009, it paid an average of Sh 40.19 per Kilogramme of coffee which was the 84 per cent of payment of the product sold out.

Gikanda society is a fair-trade and UTZ certified and have been able to go for second widow in marketing of coffee. Its quality production has been very high.

The visitors lauded the society for its big effort in improving the quality and quantity of the farmers.

They were impressed that some societies are doing well locally more than factories outside the country.

They expressed their happiness during the visit saying they have learned much which they will duplicate in their societies.

The society is made up of three factories which include Gichathaini, Ndaroini and Kangocho. It has 2,729 members.

of Africa have been in coffee programme for more than five years in order also to do capacity building with societies which have been well managed.

Gikanda which was selected to be venue of the visit have in the past achieved much and has been recognized as one of the best societies in the larger Nyeri district.

"It has been awarded the first

Lake communities urged to diversify economic activities

By SAMUEL OTIENO

FISHING communities have been urged to diversify their economic activities in order to sustain the fisheries resources in Lake Victoria. Indigenous Fisher Peoples Network executive director Nyang'ori Ohenjo says pressure being exerted in the lake is a threat to the resources in the lake.

Ohenjo says communities along the lake should embrace plans by the government to support digging up of 4,800 fish ponds in the region to raise

different species as part of the national economic stimulus package.

He says the fish farming would also open up other opportunities for the fisher communities such as fish feed production and rearing of fish fingerlings.

Speaking in Kisumu a head of the World Fisheries Day to be celebrated in Usenge in Bondo district over the weekend, Ohenjo says there is need for concerted efforts between the government and civil society to improve on the sector.

He says the sector is poorly developed though it has huge potential.

Assistant director of fisheries Western Kenya Michael Obadha says currently there are 40,000 fishermen in the Kenyan side of the lake.

Obadha says there is need to regulate fish farming in an attempt to ease pressure on the lake. Over Kshs. 424million has been put in place by the ministry of fisheries to facilitate fish farming. Obadha also announced that

a similar amount had been set aside to assist in the construction of fish ponds in 53 constituencies in Western Kenya as part of the government's initiatives to stimulate economic growth in various sectors in the country.

He said, each of the constituency will receive a sum of Kshs. 8 million for fisheries to facilitate artificial fish rearing. He said, the programme is aimed at easing fishing pressure in Lake Victoria currently overstretched with fishing activities.

The assistant director instructed District Fisheries Officers to ensure that the projects are effectively implemented by the locals in abid to boost their economic stability.

He said the government was much concerned with the use of illegal fishing gears in the lake adding that only licensed fishermen will be allowed to use only the authorized gears which do not deplete the fisheries resource.

"The ponds are not only going to boost the financial base of the local community but they are also set to ease pressure currently being exerted on the lake as the many fishermen compete for the declining number of fish in the lake," said Obadha.

He said this is part of the Implementation of Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) on Lake Victoria.

The IFMP came up with joint patrol strategies known as the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) to ensure that the lake was ridden off of the illegal fishing gears.

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Oyugis councillors reject new clerk

By JOSEPH OJWANG

THE newly posted Oyugis town clerk Mr. Henry Momanyi was recently manhandled and physically thrown out of office by security details of the acting clerk Fanuel Onyango.

Momanyi had reported at the Town Hall waiting to be allowed in to take over the office in line with the regulations stipulated in the Local Government Act.

But that was not to be. The acting clerk who is said to have refused to allow him in with the blessing of councillors allegedly led him out as if he was to be introduced to councillors present in the chamber only to make an abrupt about turn.

The shocked and shaken officer rushed to the nearby Oyugis Police Station to report the incident.

"I don't know why these [guys] became violent and threw me out as if I'm a criminal, yet I've been duly posted by PS of Local Government to take over the office," he told reporters.

Oyugis deputy mayor Evans Omondi, however, said they have no apology to make claiming that the "Provincial Local Government Officer is to blame for the problems bedeviling most of local authorities in Nyanza.

Our position is clear and remains as we resolved that no new officer will be posted to Oyugi's town council until the disappearance of Kshs.8 million was unravelled and the former chief officers who were involved surcharged."

The deputy mayor alleged that the Nyanza local government office was busy transferring corrupt and rejected chief officers to various stations without regard to the principle of transparency and account-

Villagers mobilize resources to complete stalled council footbridge

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE residents of Burumba village within Busia municipality have threatened not to participate in the identification of projects under the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) process since Busia municipal council has failed to provide effective service delivery.

The irate residents have accused the local authority's chief officers of failure to monitor and evaluate the projects at the grassroots level with an aim of ensuring that the projects are completed and properly done before the contractors concerned are paid.

The residents have further complained saying that the proposed location of the footbridge had for a long time become prone to over-flooding especially during the rainy season thus blocking the road leading to Busia town during market days.

According to the LATF data in our possession, the local authority had allocated a total of sh0.3million during the financial year 2005/2006 which was to be spent on the construction of the footbridge in question, the area residents having accorded it first priority.

The Works Department embarked on the construction of the said footbridge but the project never took off the ground.

"The culverts the contractor had



Foot bridge built by villagers using money they managed to raise to complete the project. A villager is crossing the footbridge with his bicycle to Busia town. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo.

made soon developed cracks after staying in the sun for a long period of time even before the same could serve the purpose for which it was intended," one of the residents who spoke on condition of anonymity said, adding that they later sat down as villagers and unanimously resolved to contribute certain amount of money to facilitate the completion of the stalled footbridge instead of relying on the council which according to them has become a tooth-

less bulldog.

However, the area civic leader Cllr Wilberforce Ochuka has attributed the mess to lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the works department as well as the poor tendering system which in most occasion is based on "who is who" thus resulting into shoddy work to the detriment of the common mwananchi who is the taxpayer.

"There is urgent need to form an

independent monitoring and evaluation team at the grassroots level that will work closely with the local authority service delivery action plan(LASDAP) and the tendering committees so as to ensure that all the proposed projects are properly done and also that proper tendering procedure is followed to the letter," the civic leader said, adding that he will do everything at his disposal to fight impunity at the council for the sake of development.

Ahero traders get new stalls

By JONES MAGARE

AHERO Town Council has constructed 196 modern market stalls at a cost of Kshs.107 million in an initiative financed World Bank .

In an interview with The Link, Council treasurer Kiwanuka Otieno says the objective of the project is to economically empower small traders and stakeholders from the surrounding community of Ahero.

The project that was formally commissioned by ministry of local government last July 2009 is also part of the civic authority's poverty eradication strategy in the area.

He says the project that was initially started in 1998 was jointly being implemented by the stakeholders, Town council and the World Bank and later taken over by the ministry as part of the Kenya Urban Infrastructure Programme (KUIP).

"When the first phase of market stall project started, the World Bank wanted both stakeholders and the council to

Shs107m spent on construction of 196 market stalls

raise Kshs.. 1 million, with the balance of Kshs. 9 million being funded through the global financial institution," Otieno says.

He says stakeholders were required to contribute Kshs. 3,000 each and gradually increase their contributions to raise the targeted Kshs. 6 million with the council injecting its share.

The treasurer said the initial sum of Kshs. 3,000 from stakeholders was channelled and handled through the town's Jua Kali Association.

But, he alleges that the first phase of the project experienced poor financial management by the stakeholders association.

"Later when the NARC government came to power in 2002, it revised all World Bank funded projects, including the market construction project at Ahero township," he says.

Otieno explains that under this shift in the new government policy, the ministry of Local Government took over

the project and completed construction of 196 market stalls at a cost of Kshs. 107 million instead of the planned 300.

"The ministry engaged a contractor to build the stalls but oversaw its construction through its engineers and council officials," Otieno says.

He says the stalls which attract a monthly rental fee of Kshs. 1000 each have been allocated to stakeholders and traders in line with a list forwarded to the council for verification by the Jua Kali Association.

However, Otieno admits that the process of allocating the stalls has not been entirely transparent adding that "some council officials have benefited from the allocation."

The treasurer says the second phase of the project will involve construction of an additional 102 market stalls. But he was non committal on when their construction will commence, saying that the council was in the process of identify-

ing funds for the project.

However, Jua Kali Association official Silas Ondiek says the allocation of the market stalls has been irregularly undertaken.

Ondiek says of the 196 stalls council officials irregularly allocated themselves 38 units at the expense of the 300 stakeholders who contributed Kshs. 2,800 each for towards the project.

"We were told the stakeholders' contribution used to meet the cost of grading the site of the project, surveying and approval of the project plan," Ondiek says.

The Jua Kali official says stakeholders were required to gradually increase their contribution to Kshs. 6,000 each to meet the World Bank target of Kshs. 1.8 million.

They are now urging the government to ensure sound financial management and fairness in the allocation of completed stalls.

Kisii court nullifies Magara election

By BOB OMBATI

THE South Mugirango parliamentary seat currently occupied by Omingo Magara will soon be declared vacant following a court ruling that nullified his election.

High Court Judge, Daniel Musinga cited massive irregularities that marred the election and concluded that these had negated the principles of free, transparent and fair elections.

The Judge noted that though Magara, who is the Trade Assistant minister garnered 10204 votes against the petitioner, Manson Nyamweya Oyongo's 5,758 the exercise had serious flaws which negated the principles of a democratic election.

Delivering the verdict in a court packed to capacity, the Judge said the court was keen to ensuring that the electoral process was fair and accorded all parliamentary candidates and their electorate a level playing ground to exercise their democratic right.

He faulted the defunct Electoral Commission of Kenya for violating its own rules and regulations by hiring Joseph Omambia Sanganyi as a Returning officer for South Mugirango constituency despite surpassing the eligible age limit which currently stood at 55 years of age.

Omambia admitted before court that he was 65 years in 2007 and unqualified for the job, adding that he was called by the ECK and given the job though he never applied.

The Judge observed that the Returning officer, who was handpicked erred by failing to



Mr Magara

fill form 17 A and instead left it to the tallying Clerks who messed with the exercise and left.

Musinga noted that four boxes out of 116 brought to court were empty while others lacked voters marked register, signed form 16A and counterfoils, making it difficult to ascertain the votes for each candidate from some polling stations.

He said, during the recount and scrutiny of the ballot boxes,

some boxes were found stuffed with presidential, civic and parliamentary materials and faulted the presiding officers for the affected stations for being insensitive to the exercise.

Justice Musinga said the recount alone could not cure the anomalies amid the glaring irregularities, saying the court was not concerned with the number of votes but the electoral process which was key in declaring the election free and

fair.

Citing Bokimai polling station Number 051 where 74 illiterate voters were assisted, he noted their helpers failed to sign the oath of secrecy, a concern which compromised the principles of a free and fair elections.

The judge noted that though Magara led during the recount of the votes, there were vital documents missing to pack up his win, a basis in which the petitioner challenged his election.

Some presiding officers, noted the judge deliberately or inadvertently failed to sign form 16As and make statutory comments, adding it was an election offence as the forms could not be relied on in determining the winners or losers in given polling stations.

Magara, who is the second Mp from Gusii to lose an election petition after Bomachoge's Joel Onyancha last year sat pensively in the company of his wife and supporters as the Judge read the four-hour verdict in the packed court amid tight security.

Shortly after the ruling, Magara's lawyer, Katwa Kigen said he was headed to the court of appeal to challenge the judgment and asked the court for copies of the ruling for him to prepare his applications.

He also asked for a stay of execution of the orders pending the application which the judge rejected and ordered that he be given the ruling immediately to appeal.

Oyongo's lawyer, Omwansa Ombati also opposed the application, saying Kigen could directly appeal against the ruling within the thirty days without

being granted the stay of execution of the orders for the MP to surrender the election certificate to the Speaker.

Last year, the same court nullified the election of Bomachoge constituency elections after the then area Mp, Joel Onyancha lost a petition by Simon Ogari and Zephaniah Nyangwara, a move the petitioners termed the genesis of democracy.

During a hotly contested by-election, Ogari won the election on an Orange democratic movement (ODM) ticket against Onyancha who vied on party of National Unity (PNU), the election which proved that leadership emanates from the people and is not a product of a flawed process.

Magara who addressed his anxious supporters outside the court precincts after the ruling said he was ready for the by-election and urged them to stay put as he was sure of recapturing the seat owing to votes he garnered in the 2007 general poll, which, he noted were double that of the petitioner.

The courts, noted Magara could not choose a leader for people, alleging it had erred by going against the wishes of his constituents who voted for him overwhelmingly and which, the court proved during the recount and scrutiny of the ballot papers.

Oyongo, who contested the seat in 2007 on Ford People ticket lauded the ruling, terming it fair, historic and a sign that an opportunity had been created for the people of South Mugirango to elect a leader of their own choice freely, fairly and transparently.

Women asked to reject parachute politicians

By BEKADZO TONDO

MEMBERS of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization from Malindi have accused influential politicians in the country of misusing women during electioneering period to ascend to positions of power.

The women complained that politicians including the presidential aspirants in the country had turned their umbrella dody into a campaign tool to marshal support during elections after which they abandoned them.

Led by the branch chairlady Mrs Selina Chiraga, the members said time had come when women should reject politicians who used them as vehicles to propel into leadership positions.

"During elections period politicians from different polit-

ical parties come to the grassroots and look for the women support in the campaigns but soon after they get into power they forget them and I urge my fellow women to say enough is enough," advised Chiraga.

The official was speaking at Breeze point hotel in Malindi during an annual general meeting for Malindi Residents Forum where new board members were elected with Mr Deche Sonje being elected the chairman.

Chiraga said the principle objective of MYWO has been lost because the politicians have turned the organization as a political group.

She said the organization was started many years to bring together poor women and start small income generating business and some merry round to

get funds to sustain their lives but the objective has totally been eroded by the politicians.

The official said the politicians have now turned to civil society organizations which were formed to speak for the voiceless Kenyans which they now use as political avenues to ascend into power.

"Politicians are now looking for ways to be elected as officials of the Malindi Residents Forum and other civil society organizations to market themselves for political reason and such leaders should not be accepted," says Chiraga

The women civil society should stick to their agendas of fighting the rights of the vulnerable people in the grassroots and not to create avenues for potential politicians to market themselves.



Group of women in past function

They complained that politicians in the area have been fighting the operations of the civil society organization like

the Malindi Residents forum because they fear the organization will undermine them politically.

25M more malnourished children by 2050

By A CORRESPONDENT

THE impact of climate change on poor people can be averted with \$7 billion additional annual investments in rural development

Twenty five million more children will be malnourished in 2050 due to effects of climate change, according to a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). This study, the most comprehensive assessment of the impact of climate change on agriculture to date, compares the number of malnourished children in 2050 with and without climate change.

"This outcome could be averted with seven billion U.S. dollars per year of additional investments in agricultural productivity to help farmers to adapt to the effects of climate change. Investments are needed in agricultural research, improved irrigation, and rural roads to increase market access for poor farmers. Access to safe drinking water and education for girls is also essential," said Gerald Nelson, IFPRI senior research fellow and report lead author.

The study, "Climate Change: Impact on Agriculture and Costs of Adaptation," was prepared by IFPRI for inclusion in two separate reports from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, both released today in conjunction with international climate change meetings in Bangkok.

Without new technology and adjustments by farmers, climate change will reduce irrigated wheat yields in 2050 by around 30 percent in developing countries compared to a no-climate change scenario. Irrigated rice yields will fall by 15 percent.

Even without climate change, food prices will rise, but climate change makes the problem worse. Without climate change, 2050 wheat prices will increase globally by almost 40 percent. With climate change, wheat prices will increase by 170 – 194 percent. Rice is pro-

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Agriculture Provides Challenges and Solutions for Climate Change



Most farmers are affected during this season of climate change.

By GERALD NELSON

MEANINGFUL climate change discussions must address agricultural and land use practices. Agriculture, broadly defined, accounts for about one third of global greenhouse gas emissions. More sustainable, productive agricultural practices could contribute significantly to mitigation.

At the same time, the large majority of the world's rural poor people depend on small-scale farming for their food and income. Poor farmers are particularly threatened by climate change and will need support in

adapting.

The recent food price crisis demonstrates that a "business as usual" approach to agriculture is not an option. Over the coming decades, it will be necessary to increase food production dramatically to respond to population growth, changing diets, and chronic malnutrition. The negative effects of climate change on agricultural productivity and natural resources will only intensify the food security challenge.

A recent study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) found significant decreases in crop yields

due to climate change. Without new technology and adjustments by farmers, climate change will reduce irrigated wheat yields in 2050 by around 30 percent in developing countries compared to a no-climate change scenario. Irrigated rice yields will fall by 15 percent. Reduced yields will lead to significantly higher prices, resulting in 25 million additional malnourished children in 2050, compared to a no-climate change scenario.

Fortunately there are many techniques available to that would allow agriculture to reduce GHG emissions and

would increase farmers' ability to adapt. Most of these strategies would also help small-scale farmers to improve their incomes and food security, and would be necessary even without climate change.

Whatever the outcome of the meetings in Copenhagen, funding must be made available to assist farmers adapt to climate change, as well as to mitigate its effects. Too much is at stake to allow this opportunity to slip by.

Gerald Nelson, a IFPRI senior research fellow, is available for interviews in Copenhagen.

State set to reopen cashewnut factory

Faced with years of poor marketing and unproductive trees, cashew nut farmers are seeing a revived income generating opportunity where they can stay in their homes and still earn a living.

Revival of the cashew nut — a key cash crop in Coast Province — and the Kilifi Cashew nuts Processing Factory has been in the political talk and is one of the campaigning gimmicks for all times.

However, the Government appears to have started walking the talk in this revival mission, setting up a taskforce to look into ways of revamping the sub-sector, whose collapse is blamed on unplanned liberalisation of the agriculture

sector about 15 years ago.

The task force team has also been asked to develop the legal framework for the regulation of the industry and propose developments on the issue of export of raw nut versus local processing.

The cashew nut is an important cash crop for Coast Province and with a total plant population of over two million trees, the potential of the crop in improving the people's livelihood is great.

However, production of the crop has recently been on the decline from 14,000 tonnes three years ago to 10,000 tonnes last year.

The cashew nut sector met its

waterloo following a policy decision to allow the export of raw cashew nuts, in effect leading to the closure of the then vibrant Kilifi Cashew Nut Factor in Coast Province with others following suit.

The sector has currently two million trees that produce 10,200 tonnes of cashew nuts this translates into 5.1 kilogramme per tree, compared to 30 kilogramme per tree if well managed.

Over 80 per cent of the trees are said to be suffering from powdery mildew - a fungal disease that affects a wide range of plants.

Following the closure of the Kilifi Cashew Nut Factory in Mombasa, over 3,000 jobs were

lost together with revenue to the government. The cashew nut industry has the potential to employ more than 5,000 people and at the same time contribute over Sh5 billion to the exchequer.

The crop had a turnover of Sh2 billion 15 years ago and currently just manages only Sh160 million. The former MP and Managing Director of Kilifi Cashew nut Factory John Safari Mumba was appointed by the government to head the taskforce.

Members include Nancy Abisai (Programme Manager, Policy & Advocacy, Shelter Forum), Francis Muniu (cashew nuts researcher, KARI Mtwapa), Margaret

Masaku (agriculture) and Nasaro Hada from Kwale.

Among a raft of proposals the Government intends to regulate the cashew nut sector by first regulating the sale of nuts. To begin with traders will not be allowed to export raw cashew nuts, they will only be allowed to sell the produce from farmers to local factories for processing.

The directive was however opposed by the Kenya Cashew nuts Processors and Exporters Association who argued that the ban would reduce the number of commodity buyers leaving farmers at the mercy of unscrupulous middlemen.

Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture

By LINK CORRESPONDENT

AFRICAN countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change because of their dependence on rainfed agriculture, high levels of poverty, low levels of human and physical capital, and poor infrastructure.

The negative effects of climate change on crop production are especially pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa, as the agriculture sector accounts for a large share of GDP, export earnings, and employment in most African countries. Furthermore, the vast majority of the poor resides in rural areas and depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.

The crop model indicates that in 2050 in Sub-Saharan Africa, average rice, wheat, and maize yields will decline by up to 14 percent, 22 percent, and 5 percent, respectively, as a result of climate change.

Irrigation water supply reliability, the ratio of water consumption to requirements, is expected to worsen in Sub-Saharan Africa due to climate change.

Without climate change, calorie availability is expected



Climate change has had adverse effects on agriculture which remains the only source of livelihood for many households.

to increase in Sub-Saharan Africa between 2000 and 2050. With climate change, however, food availability in the region will average 500

calories less per person in 2050, a 21 percent decline.

In a no-climate change scenario, only Sub-Saharan Africa (of the 6 regional groupings of developing countries studied in the report) sees an increase in the number of malnourished

children between 2000 and 2050, from 33 to 42 million. Many of the adverse effects of climate change will further increase this number by over 10 million, resulting in 52 million malnourished children in 2050. Additional investments, the majority of that for rural roads, to increase agricultural pro-

ductivity can compensate for climate change. Sub-Saharan Africa needs 40 percent of the estimated 7 billion USD per year in additional global agricultural investments, the majority of that for rural roads. -IFPRI

25M more malnourished children by 2050

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jected to increase 60 percent without climate change, but it will go up 113 – 121 percent with climate change. 2050 maize prices will be more than 60 percent higher without climate change, but they will be 148 – 153 percent higher with climate change.

The first of its kind, this study combines climate models that project changes in rainfall and temperature and a crop model to capture biophysical effects with IFPRI's economic model of world agriculture. The latter projects changes in the production, consumption and trade of major agricultural commodities.

The modeling does not include:

- the effects of increased variability in weather due to climate change
- the loss of agricultural lands due to rising sea levels
- climate change-induced increases in pests and diseases
- increased variability in river flow as glaciers melt

All these factors could increase the damage of climate change to agriculture.

Developing countries will be hit hardest by climate change and

will face bigger declines in crop yields and production than industrialized countries, the study finds. The negative effects of climate change are especially pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Compared to the average biophysical effects of climate change on yields in the industrialized world, the developing countries fare worse for almost all crops.

"Agriculture is extremely vulnerable to climate change, because farming is so weather-dependent. Small-scale farmers in developing countries will suffer the most," noted Mark Rosegrant, director of IFPRI's Environment and Production Technology Division and report co-author. "However, our study finds that this scenario of lower yields, higher prices, and increased child malnutrition can be avoided."

In addition to increased funding for rural development, IFPRI recommends more open agricultural trade to ensure that food will reach the poorest populations in times of crises. "If governments and donors begin now to invest seriously in adaptation for poor farmers, we can avert this bleak future," said Rosegrant.

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Kilifi men use wives to know HIV status

By BEKADZO TONDO

MARRIED men in Kilifi are using their expectant wives to establish their HIV/AIDS status, a survey conducted by human health based organizations have revealed.

Sources within the organizations said that married men celebrate and openly declare their HIV/AIDS status soon after they get status reports from their expectant wives who are usually subjected to the test whenever they visit prenatal clinics.

The Technical director of Strengthen Community, Partnership and Empowerment (SCOPE) in Kenya, Mr Jasho Bomu, confirmed that surveys had shown that women form the majority of people visiting health centers to establish their status compared to men.

Bomu said it was after the tests when attending to the antenatal clinics that wives take the results to their husband where they also get chance to know their HIV/AIDS status.

But senior medical officer from Kilifi district hospital who declined to be named, said HIV/AIDS status of either the husband or the wife cannot be used as a basis to determine the disease status of each other.

The officer suggested that



Widows and orphans at a seminar.

husbands accompany their wives for the tests when they go for the antenatal clinics.

However Mr Bomu said his organization has started a campaign to sensitise married couples on the need to accompany each other and get tested on their HIV/AIDS status for the couple to be sure of their health status.

He said the plan was in the final stages of implementation and appealed to married cou-

ples to be cooperative in the process.

Bomu said his organization in collaboration with the officers from the ministry of health and other health concerned Non Governmental Organizations have been organizing moon light HIV/AIDS free testing and counselling.

He said a number of people, both married couples and youth, have been volunteering for the services and urged

more to come out.

"A very big number of married people and those aspiring for marriage and the youth have been coming out for the tests but I urge more to respond to the service," said Bomu. Records from the district hospital show that the HIV/AIDS prevalence in Kilifi district by end of last year stood at 7.1 percent with women and girls being affected more compared to men and boys.

Nanyuki District Hospital to be upgraded

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

NANYUKI District Hospital will soon be upgraded to a model regional referral hospital, it has been disclosed.

Medical Services Permanent Secretary Prof James Ole Kiyapi said recently that the hospital will be among the many hospitals in the country which will get a face-lift and upgraded to the level of regional referral hospitals since it serves several districts surrounding the larger Laikipia district.

Speaking after touring the medical facility, the PS said the hospital is among the 23 medical facilities that have been earmarked for upgrading and targets government and health facilities all over the country set for rehabilitation to cover a period of three years.

"The hospital will be among the hospitals which will benefit when the Government will be creating regional referral hospitals for specialized cases." He said.

He said that most of the projects in the country are already ongoing and the ministry would release funds by next financial year to put up a model maternity wing ward in the hospital.

Kiyapi who was accompanied by Water assistant minister who is also the area MP Mwangi Kiunjuri said that already the developments have already been ongoing in some hospitals such as Embu Provincial General Hospital which he said has used over Kshs. 700 million so far and Kisii General Hospital.

About 70 other hospitals and health centres are also currently under development according to Ole Kiyapi.

"The ministry is undertaking a major rehabilitation program in the next three years in most of the hospitals in the country since the wards are not enough, there is congestion and most equipment is not working. We want health services to be affordable and accessible to all." Said the PS

Others present during the function included the chief pathologist Dr John Njue and hospital medical superintendent Dr Leonard Mbuthia.

Kiyapi also noted that apart from the government funding, the hospital will get financial help from the Dutch government financing project.

Kiyapi said that the government would allocate about Kshs. 10 million to help finish the construction of the hospital's kitchen and laundry which have been left incomplete for several years.

"This hospital is among the 23 hospitals which will benefit from this financial year with the Kshs. 32 million which will be pumped in the facility. The Government will also hire five management team per hospital who will be manning the money." He added.

Kiyapi said the management team will include the human resource, finance and accounts, procurement and operation/ management which are aimed to manage well the funds.

He also said that the hospital would be reconstructed in a more planned manner as it lies on a 28 acre piece of land yet it is not utilized.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Do the drugs you buy from your local chemist bear a Kenya Bureau of Standard mark?

Beware. They could well be counterfeits.

The Kenya Bureau of Standards (Kebs) has made it clear that it does not certify drugs or pharmaceutical products. This means that any of its marks on these products are fraudulently obtained and affixed.

Kebs acting managing director Joel Kioko told a parliamentary committee that consumers may not be aware of this fact.

"There are lots of fraudulent people and cartels out there who do this," he said.

Kebs manager in charge of surveillance Mr Wilberforce Muthigani cited an incident last year when a purported Aids drug was detected bearing the body's quality mark.

Kebs formally wrote to the Ministry of Health alerting it of the fraud although those behind it escaped a trap laid by the former.

The case involving a purported Aids spray drug was detected by the Kebs surveillance unit.

The two and the Director of Industries Mr Erastus Kimuri appeared before the parliamentary committee on Health where they said Kebs had little involvement in

drugs importation and quality assurance as it can only affix stamps on documents released at the port upon shipment of the same.

"We can only do visual inspection and not quality," said Mr Kimuri. "We have little experience in drug testing," he said.

The committee chaired by Dr Robert Monda, the MP for Nyaribari Chache, is investigating the proliferation of counterfeits in the pharmaceutical industry in the country and is expected to start compiling its report in two weeks' time.

It has scheduled to meet the Medical Services Minister next week before winding up its investigations.

Dr Monda ordered the Kebs officials to forward to the Clerk of the National Assembly Wednesday, the letter that was sent to the Ministry of Health alerting about its mark on the purported Aids drug.

A committee member Victor Muniyaka (Machakos Town, ODM-K) said Kebs should be empowered to do testing on drugs and pharmaceutical products and affix its stamps as they were trusted by consumers.



Assorted drugs

The committee urged Kebs to work closely with the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and the Pharmacy and Poisons Board to find ways of fighting counterfeits in the industry.

The Pharmacy and Poisons Board was urged to set up a department at Kebs for this purpose.

Meanwhile, the committee was alarmed by a confession by the Kebs team that it is unable to detect counterfeits among about 70 per cent of goods meant for transit

but diverted to the local market.

The committee heard that there are about 30 per cent of goods meant for local use while the rest are meant for transit, but somehow end up in the local market.

According to the Kebs team, it has found it difficult to intervene at this point as it has no powers to inspect goods on transit.

The committee heard that cartels have discovered this loophole and are exploiting it to divert into local market goods meant for transit.

"We are now aware of dumping of transit goods for local use and that is now a big problem," said the Kebs director.

The team was, however, urged to collaborate closely with KRA which has better mechanisms of detecting the dumping.

Dr Boni Khalwale (Ikolomani, New Ford Kenya) said KRA tracks all goods on transit and once dumped, owners must pay VAT and import duty.

"It is possible for Kebs to work with KRA in its real time tracking system so that you are in a position to inspect and stamp those goods to ensure the safety of consumers," the member urged.

Alert over fake drugs

Nyong'o decries poor state of mental hospital

By MORRIS GITHENYA

MEDICAL Service minister Prof Anyang Nyong'o has decried pathetic state of country's mental hospitals, saying they are not conducive for treatment.

The minister cited Mathari Mental Hospital in Nairobi as the worst after having witnessed the poor state of the Kitchen and dining hall during his official visit.

Speaking at Kangema health centre during the celebrations to mark the 18th World Mental Health Day, the Minister also cited lack of psychiatrists in the

country as a stumbling block towards delivery of service to suffering from mental illness.

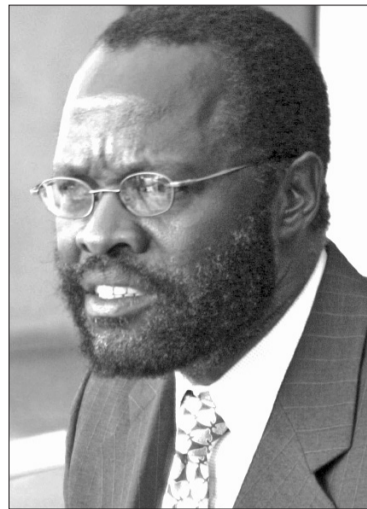
The Minister, who was accompanied by NACADA chairman Dr Frank Njenga, said 40 percent of patients seeking for medical services have underlying mental disorders that have not been diagnosed.

He said there were many doctors and nurses in the general practice who can provide adequate mental health support but they lack training to enable them to be attached in the psychiatrists wards

The Kisumu Rural MP said

many of the mental disorders had been caused by high intake of brews and substances at early stages of life. Murang'a district has more bars than schools and colleges put together. There were 163 bars in the district as compared to 46 primary and 23 secondary schools

Dr Njenga said the country was facing a severe shortage of mental health experts to cater for the 34 million people. There were only 75 trained personnel who are hardly enough to visit all the health centers in the country.



Prof Nyong'o

Prisoners receive free screening diabetes

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MORE than 500 prisoners of King'ong'o GK prison in Nyeri recently received free medical check up on diabetes disease.

During the screening tests to mark the World Diabetes Day, twelve new cases were established bringing to a total of 17 inmates who have been identified to be suffering from the disease.

A volunteer of the Regional Health care centre which is a community based organization Mr Kamau Gatwechi said that the exercise was meant to create awareness among the inmates in what they have to do in order to curb the disease.

Kamau said that those mostly affected are between the ages of 32-46 years but said the number may be high as they were only able to test 500 inmates out of 1,600 inmates who are in the prison.

He said that research has identified that 70 percent of people suffering from Diabetes type two are from developing countries a reason he attributed to poor feeding habits.

"This Diabetes type two is most common in Kenya especially in Central province as many foods they consume are carbohydrates based," Kamau said.

He urged Kenyans to go for regular check ups to ensure that they are healthy and ensure that they are eating a healthy diet as a way of preventing the quick spread of diabetes.

"But the society has not taken diabetes seriously because it is a silent disease and so we want the government to address it the same way they address diseases such as Malaria, HIV/AIDS among other diseases." He added.

He said according to a recent research, diabetes has been established as a leading cause of blindness, heart attacks, stroke and amputations.

"Though the inmates get the free tests, there lies a challenge of following up the identified cases due to lack of adequate resources." He concluded.

Several prison warders were also screened in the exercise that was carried out by the team of laboratories attendants from the NGO.

Voluntary programme on male Circumcision launched

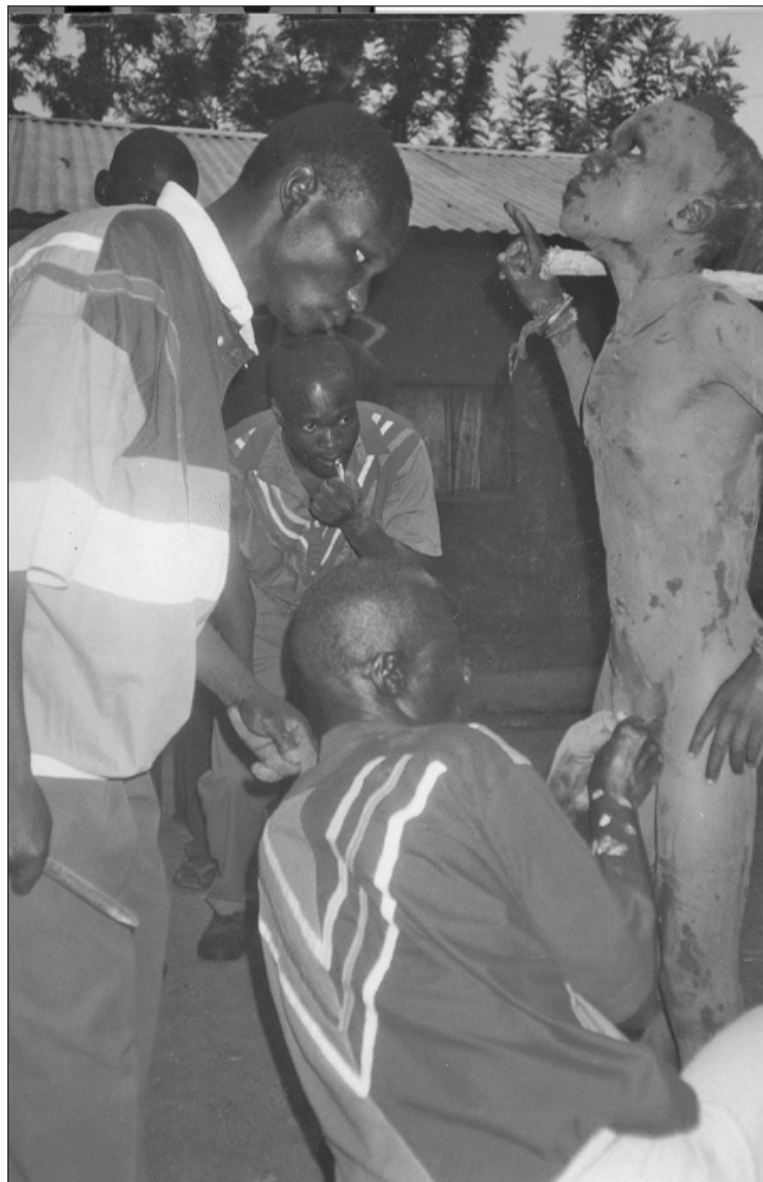
By GILBERT OCHIENG

Men in Busia who are yet to undergo circumcision process have been advised to take advantage of the newly launched voluntary male circumcision programme jointly supported by the National Aids Control Council (NACC) and a non-governmental organization [DEVIRUCO] within Busia township.

Addressing the public during the launch of the programme dubbed "Voluntary Male Medical Circumcision" at the Busia Township Youth polytechnic recently, a senior public health official Mr Richard Onyango commended the National Aids Control Council saying it has played a leading role in the fight against HIV/AIDS by ensuring that high standards of hygiene are maintained and that the implements used for the operation are not shared amongst those people undergoing the circumcision process.

Mr Onyango further said there were many health benefits associated with the circumcision such as the reduced risk of urinary track infections in childhood, reduced chances of contracting the sexually transmitted infections (STIs), reduced frequency of genital ulcers (wounds), prevention of a condition known as phimosis (inability to pull back the foreskin) and paraphimosis (inability to return the foreskin to its normal position).

"Thee research studies undertaken recently one of which in Kisumu have shown that circumcision lowers the risk of acquiring the HIV/AIDS



Male circumcision in progress.

by about 60percent," a senior public health officer said, adding that this does not, however, mean that those who have been circumcised are safe from HIV/AIDS.

The public health officer at the same time said that youths under the age of 18 must be accompanied by either their parents or guardians to the health

facility adding that parents and guardians must also give informed consent in person.

Onyango further pointed out the risks associated with the circumcision which include pain, excessive bleeding, excessive swelling, infection at the circumcised part, injury to the sexual organ and adverse reaction to the anaesthetic used

during the circumcision process.

Meanwhile, the government has embarked on an ambitious project that will enable vulnerable farmers in Busia district to acquire the farm inputs so as to empower them to increase the production of maize.

Addressing a stakeholders forum at the district information and documentation centre's boardroom recently, the Busia district agriculture officer Mr Samson Khachina said that under the programme 1,000 vulnerable farmers in the district will receive farm inputs to the tune of Kshs.5.8million aimed at jump-starting the maize production. "Each farmer will be given a 10kg bag of certified seed and 50kg DAP bag of fertilizer that will enable them to plant an acre of land," the district agricultural officer said, adding that the said farmers will receive the farm inputs at the onset of the long rains early next year.

The district agricultural officer further said that the vulnerable farmers are expected to harvest a total of 20,000 bags of maize worth Kshs.40million, adding that under the programme, the government intends to create a cereals bank that will enable the farmers to have adequate stock of maize for own consumption and a surplus for sale.

"In order to enable the Ministry of Agriculture to realize its main objective that is aimed at achieving food security in the district, farmers all over the district will undergo a marathon training in January 2010, the district agricultural officer said.

AG to decide the fate of officer arrested over bribe

By KAVYU KURA

THE fate of a senior ministry of education official caught red handed taking a bribe from a teacher in the newly created Kyuso district lies solely with the Attorney general.

The human resource officer at Kyuso district education office Mr. Muthengi Kanui who was arrested by CID officers in early December as he received a Kshs 17,000 bribe from a teacher in a Mwingi town pub is however free after he was released on a Ksh.10,000 police bail.

According to the Mwingi District CID boss Mr. Leonard Lutta Namatsi, police are currently awaiting committal bundles from the AG before they can proceed to court.

He however said that police were following crucial leads that could unravel more details in the case as the officer is alleged to have demanded more bribes from other teachers.

He said that even after being interrogated and set free, at least for the time being, the suspect will have to report to the CID offices regularly until a decision is made on his fate.

Mr. Namatsi said the CID officers had extended investi-

gations to find out whether the suspect had been involved in other cases of alleged bribery as the Kyuso Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) branch called for elaborate investigation.

The Kyuso KNUT executive secretary Ms. Agnes Kambua Musee said if the CID dug deeper into the bribery saga at the Kyuso education office they were likely to uncover unimaginable fraud.

She said that many teachers had on a number of occasions visited her offices with claims that officers had been demanding hefty bribes from them before effecting their (teachers) transfers from one school to another.

"In fact I have incriminating evidence showing that a certain teacher sent Ksh.5, 000 to an education officer who had demanded a Ksh.10,000 bribe to transfer her to the neighboring Mwingi district only for the lady teacher to be transferred to Kaghui in Kyuso after she failed to raise the bribe balance," claimed Ms. Musee.

She further alleged that some officers at the Kyuso education office had perfected the art of fault finding which they use as



Mr Wako

pretexts to demand bribes from teachers over petty disciplinary cases.

Many are the times when the officers threaten teachers with interdiction over petty offences unless they coughed up a bribe of not less than Kshs.10, 000, further claimed the teachers union boss.

She said that she was surprised that even as the officer was being investigated for a serious criminal offence of corruption against the public ethics Act, he continued discharging his duties in contravention of

the law.

The Knut boss consequently demanded that the ministry of education officials should interdict the officer just as he was interdicting teachers at will until he was cleared of any wrong doing by a court of law.

Mwingi Officer Commanding Police Division (OCPD) Mr. Kenneth Kimani said the suspect was arrested at the Mwingi Makuti pub as he received the bribe from the head teacher of Ndooni Primary School in Tseikuru District Mr Samson Mwangangi Munyoki.

Mr Kimani said that the officer had demanded Kshs.17,000 from the teacher so that he could quash a possible interdiction after the latter failed to register eight standard eight pupils during last year's Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination.

The OCPD said the officer was briefly held for interrogation as investigation got underway before he was released on cash. He stressed that he would subsequently be charged before an anti-corruption court either in Embu or Nairobi.

After the officer's arrest and owing to the gravity of the matter, the Mwingi CID boss per-

sonally took over the task of recording statements from the civil servant.

Mr. Namatsi told the press then that his office gave the Ndooni Primary School head teacher the treated Ksh17,000 currency notes to handover to the suspects after he complained that the officer had been pestering him (teacher) demanding a bribe.

The CID officer said as the teacher handed over the treated money to the officer at 5:30 pm at a pub where he was taking drinks, CID men pounced on him and whisked him to the Mwingi Police Station where he was locked up over night.

He said as intensive investigation were being conducted the suspect would remain out on police bail he was a civil servant and would be summoned to appear before an anti-corruption court once the AG gives the nod.

We are taking our time to thoroughly investigate whether other teachers may have given a bribe to this officer. We are also waiting for the parents of the children who failed to sit the KCPE examination to come forth and record the statements, said the CID boss.

Water project receives a major boost

By ANDERSON MRENJE

THE water crisis which has for long plagued Rabai location in Kaloleni District has finally been resolved. This follows the commissioning of a 12 kilometer water project jointly by Kenya and Italian governments at the cost of Kshs.18 million.

The Italian government approved the funding of the Mwele-Simakeni water and sanitation project through a proposal by the Kilifi- Mariakani water and sewerage board few months ago.

The funding comes as a big relief in the area which has for many years experienced severe water shortages which forced women to walk for long distances in search of the precious commodity.

The number of seasonal dams and boreholes which were the major water sources in the area were not adequate to give a sufficient supply of water to the over 25,000 residents.

When complete, the project will come as a reprieve for the residents in terms of domestic use and livestock as opposed to the past days when it was scarce.

The founder of the project Mr. Anthony Kenga Mupe, told The Link that the project sponsored by the Kenya Italy Department Development Program would help improve the living standards and hygiene of the residents.

The project will also entail the construction of toilets and bathrooms in most of the villages and other institutions in addition to the water extension within the area.



Rabai residents will thirst no more.

"We will have toilets and bathrooms put up in villages, schools, mosques and churches plus the extension of the tapped water to as close as the doorways of these institutions," said the pioneer of the project.

A recent survey carried out by the water board of Kilifi-Mariakani Water and Sewerage Company, revealed that most villages some of which were densely populated had one or no toilet at all.

The project will however be implemented in two phases where the first phase which commenced in December involved the excavation of trenches and fitting of 4-inch pipes all through the 12 kilometers.

This phase was expected to run for a month till the end of December last

year when households were expected to have access totapped water.

The second phase which will entail the construction of storage tanks at the selected sites will begin early this year with six tanks of different capacities of 45,000, 50,000, 50,000, 65,000, 75,000 and100,000 liters being earmarked for construction.

The project founder however noted that the excavation of the trenches was done by the community through participation in kind where youth and women groups and other welfare organizations were involved.

After the completion of the whole project, a community based management board will be put in place to oversee the smooth running of the services in the near future.

Programme launched to promote peace

By GILBERT OCHIENG

RESIDENTS of Busia municipality have embarked on an ambitious programme aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence among the different communities.

A series of peace-driven soccer tournaments will be held as part of teh initiative.

In an interview with *The Link* in Busia Township Youth polytechnic, the sponsor of the soccer tournament dubbed "nicky amollah peace cup" Mr Nick Ochieng said that the idea is to mobilize resources and sponsor the soccer event was motivated by the ugly incidents which marked the last general elections that saw innocent people losing their lives and properties.

About 12 teams drawn from Teso and Busia Districts took part in the peace soccer tournaments held in Busia Township Youth polytechnic ground last December.

During the tournamnet Otimong FC from Teso district emerged winners in a highly contested match after scoring four goals in penalty shoot out after the two teams failed to score within the official 90 minutes.

Otimong FC was rated as the best team whereas Busia Combine emerged the second best with Busia Youth Community and MUNDULUSIA FCs emerging third and fourth respectively.

Ojamii FC was rated as the most disciplined team whereas Home Boyz FC was rated as the most promising team. At the same time, Mr Peter Ogutu was rated as the best coach whereas Mr David Odhiambo Odimo was rated as the second best coach with players Danson Namasaka, Ayub Okwemba and Erick Wabwire being rated as the most promising mid-fielder, top scorer and best goal-keeper respectively.

The tournament sponsor underscored the importance of peace in the society saying that the soccer tournament will go along way in promoting peaceful co-existence in the community concerned taking into consideration the fact that Busia municipality was a cosmopolitan area.

"The main objective of the soccer tournament is none other than to sensitize the youths on the dangers of drug abuse by keeping them active through sports, HIV/AIDS awareness campaign as well as empowering them so as to discover hidden talents," he said. Ochieng further said that the soccer tournament will take place annually so as to ensure constant peaceful co-existence among the various communities within Busia municipality and its environs.

The winning teams were awarded prizes which included trophy, cash, uniforms and footballs.

More reliable power for Mt. Kenya

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

KENYA Power and Lighting Company has invested over Kshs1.8 billion in various projects in Mt Kenya region to reinforce and upgrade the power distribution.

The KPLC Managing Director Engineer Mr Joseph Njoroge says that to enhance reliability and dependability of the power distribution system and consequently improve service delivery in the region, the company is implementing various projects that will improve the quality of supply in the region.

The projects include the construction of the 122 Km 132/33 kV line from Kamburu sub station to Meru and establishing a 132/33kV 23MVA sub station in Meru at a total cost of Kshs 1.6 billion.

"Kiganjo, Othaya and Karatina sub-stations will also be upgraded to have two 7.5 MVA transformers each at an approximated total cost of Kshs 143 million among others. The new projects and upgrade of existing stations will also enable KPLC to connect more customers to the grid and supply them with quality power." He said.

Njoroge added that there are also over 30 ongoing reinforcement schemes in the region that are being upgraded by the company at a cost of Kshs 101 million.

"When complete, the schemes

will improve the power system's flexibility, improve reliability of power supply to both existing and expected new customers." The MD added.

At the same time, the region has benefited from 175 rural electrification schemes under the Government's Rural Electrification programme. Sixty six of these schemes are complete while 109 are under construction.

"These schemes have improved the social and economic status of the region to a great extent with 149 trading centres, 29 tea buying centres, 13 coffee factories, 13 health centres and 40 secondary schools now on power supply." The Chief Executive Officer noted.

The company which recorded a pre-tax profit of Kshs 4.78 billion during the 2008/09 financial year compared to Kshs 2.73 billion in year 2007/08 has continued to innovate and reengineer the business processes in order to make services more efficient by introduction of automatic meter reading for 4,000 large power customers.

Njoroge who was accompanied by the chairman board of directors, Mr Crowther Pepela, director Mr Esau Kioni and Deputy Central Provincial Commissioner Mr Ahmed Omar also decried the high incidences of vandalism of power equipment in the region and urged the members



Kenya Power and Lighting Company staff at work.

for the public to be vigilant and protect the system from selfish and hunger individuals.

He revealed that 463 transformers worth Kshs 231 million have been vandalized in the last one year in the region translating that in that rate about 2,000 transformers are vandal-

ized in the country per year.

"As much as I laud the provincial administration for helping in the fight against the vice, I urge the members of the public to brace for the community policing." The MD added.

In order to enhance customer service, Njoroge said the company

would shortly announce service level standards that would ensure customers benefit from prompt service.

The company has for the last two years supported projects benefiting various communities across the country through the Corporate Social Responsibility programme. In the last financial year, the company spent Kshs 17 million on various projects in the education, health and environment sectors as well as other social projects including the Mt Kenya region.

"Some of the projects in Mt Kenya region include the fencing of Mt Kenya and Aberdare forests through the Bill Woodley Trust and Rhino Ark Charitable Trust respectively, to which we contributed Kshs 2 million in the last two years as part of our environmental conservation initiatives." The CEO added.

KPLC connected 200,600 new customers in the last financial year that ended in June this year, surpassing the target of 200,000 set by the Government.

The company is targeting to connect 1 million more customers in a five-year period ending 2012.

The chairman Pepela said the company was working with other sub sector players and the Ministry of Energy to ensure that there is adequate supply of power from more and diverse sources even in situations of drought like the one experienced recently.

Influx of small arms a threat to Kenya's security

By ANDERSON MRENJE

THE influx of small arms in the hands of criminals in the country has caused the government to intensify internal security.

This follows the prolonged conflict in Somalia between government forces and militias which have complicated the country's security for decades where a larger number of inhabitants flee to Kenya.

Illegal immigrants armed with firearms have been sneaking through the Kenyan borders with many of them claiming to be refugees while they are part of the warring factions in Somalia.

The link established that many of the bad elements disguise themselves as escort for small vessels entering the country through the port and undermine security.

This has prompted the minister for internal security to order security officials to be vigilant and maintain surveillance along the 900-kilometer Kenya-Somalia border to keep out illegal intruders. "You have to be vigilant and keep out people who do not mean well, he said.

The security minister George Saitoti attending provincial security meeting at the Coast, chaired by the area PC Ernest Munyi, indicated that some elements are still

crossing the border even after the closure of the Kenya border with Somalia.

According to Saitoti, though closed, the 900-kilometer Kenya-Somalia border stretch was too wide and will require a more flexible strategy. Administration and regular police will now have to work together to ensure security is maintained, he urged.

The minister order comes at a time where more than 70 illegal immigrants were arrested in various parts of the Coast province.

Furthermore, six Somalis and a Tanzanian were seized in connection with a cache of weapons found on a ship on the Coastal waters.

However, the PC Munyi said that security in the province had improved in the recent months and that cattle rustling cases in Tana River and Tana Delta districts had reduced.

The link however established that the Coast provincial security agents had held meetings with their Tanzania counterparts with a view to addressing the security issues at the border.

This strategy will ensure adequate security is provided at the port and within establishments that cater for tourism activities in the region which the council anticipates greater returns from the same.

Kakamega municipality set to receive a facelift

By BILL ESSAU

KAKAMEGA municipality has embarked on an ambitious plan to clean the town and improve service delivery to its residents.

The council, which is famous for incessant wrangles between councilors and chief officers has this time round decided to settle on its core business.

To begin with, the council which has operated for over a decade without a dumpsite has set aside money for the purchase of land to establish a dumping site.

The project estimated to cost Kshs. 1.5 billion will draw most of its funding from the World Bank municipalities kitty meant for waste management. All councils are required to raise 20 percent of the total amount for them to become eligible for funding.

Further, the council intends to expand the current bus park to cover the open air market situated along the busy Kakamega-Webuye road to be able to handle more vehicles, according to town mayor Vincent Anjeche.

The open air market is to be relocated to the current fish market which reports indicate has been sold to a private developer through collusion between some councilors and

chief officers.

"We want to move the market to the plot in question so that we can rescue the same from being grabbed. As you know some people purported to have sold it but the sale is invalid since all trust land is only held on lease and cannot be sold," said Finance committee chairman Ponyochi Kunyobo.

Expansion of the bus park is meant to ensure all public service vehicles which had abandoned the facility and are now collecting passengers anywhere in town enjoy an operating base.

The council, members of the provincial administration and traffic police department have been holding meetings on how best to manage matatu operations in the town.

This has culminated in issuance of an ultimatum to the operators who have been forced to only pick and drop passengers from the bus park.

Also to be affected in the plans are owners of premises which have been constructed in various parts of the town without a full council minute approval as required by law.

Some of the houses have been built on top of sewer lines whereas others are standing on areas reserved for roads, according to Anjeche.

Developers of the houses were given green light to build by a cartel that has been operating at the town hall's engineering and planning departments.

All such buildings will be brought down regardless of who their owners are because besides the developers by passing the procedures, the structures are a risk because they can easily collapse," argues Mathias Sichele, the town planning committee chairman.

Sichele says that plots which have remained undeveloped for over 18 months since they were allocated are to be repossessed. Those whose owners have accumulated arrears in rates will also be repossessed.

The repossession of the plots, he says, is meant to create room for developers who are ready to develop the town.

"Many people have shown interest in investing in this town but have been unable because of lack of space whereas some people are holding land here for speculation purposes," adds Sichele.

The new council administration says it is keen to reintroduce public meetings through which the civic body would be able to collect views from the people on how best they want to be served.

Social and cultural factors need to be understood and respected when trying to get farmers to adopt new practices.

— Ismail S. Kimole

Peace initiatives in Mt. Elgon target militia group

By BOSCO MAGARE

FORMER Sabot Land Defence Force (SLDF) fighters comprising 306 youths have abandoned their militant activities and embraced peace building initiatives in war-torn Mt. Elgon region.

The peace building initiatives spearheaded by a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Actionaid and Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA) are aimed at restoring sanity in the area previously ravaged by violence which targeted local residents.

Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA) Western Provincial Co-ordinator Peter Chem Ngeywo in an interview with The Link says 306 SLDF militant youths have been trained in peace building initiatives among warring factions in the community.

Ngeywo says that under the programme the SLDF youths have equally been encouraged to abandon their warlike activities in favour of peace.

The Actionaid sponsored peace building initiative through MERA involves changing the attitude of the SLDF youth fighters whose past actions were ostensibly driven by a de-



Area Chief and residents receive iron sheets from Actionaid-Cheptais DI.

mand for land rights which had been flouted by foreigners perceived to have irregularly acquired the region's fertile parcels of land, Ngeywo explains.

Ngeywo says the youths were trained in the peace building initiatives at Manor House Agricultural In-

stitute in Kitale by Actionaid through MERA.

Under the peace initiative the SLDF youths have been trained in conflict resolution and reconciliation management skills and peace shattering early warning mechanisms including issues related to small arms

and light weapons, the co-ordinator says.

He says similar training programmes for the SLDF youths have been undertaken in various areas such as Chemondi Chesikaki, Kabero and Kaptoboi in Sasur locations.

Mt Elgon region has greatly been hit by the clashes sparked off by land related conflicts which has necessitating more NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) Youth Groups and the government to focus on this latest peace building initiatives in the region, Ngeywo says.

He says Actionaid and Mera have launched a number of mitigating programmes to address massive losses occasioned by persistent clashes some of which currently supports vulnerable groups who have borne the brunt of heinous activities occasioned by SLDF.

Actionaid and MERA support has been extended to 120 widows, widowers and other categories of affected people in Mt. Elgon district.

Ngeywo says Actionaid and MERA support and mitigating programmes for this vulnerable categories of people are focused mainly in Mt. Elgon district areas of Cheptais and Sasur locations in Cheptais divi-

sion.

This strategy has been used to support people left without houses during land clashes which preceded the post-election violence in Mt. Elgon.

Ngeywo says another 650 people in the region have benefitted from Trauma Healing presided over by both Actionaid and Cheptais Focus Youth Group in Cheptais division.

At the same time, under the programme, Actionaid and MERA with other partners of peace building support elders engaged in peace meetings adding that the initiative focused on 120 elders across the district.

He says MERA and The Link under its Rural Women Peace Link, equally supported 80 widows with micro-finance, to enable them engage in farming activities in areas in Bungoma and Mt. Elgon districts.

The co-ordinator says the widows are also trained as stakeholders on GBV in both Bungoma and Mt. Elgon areas. Widows in these two areas also substantially benefit from other forms of support such as provision of corrugated iron sheets to enable them rebuild their homes destroyed through land clashes and post-election violence.

Funding for the procurement of these support and other relief materials are extended to the affected and vulnerable groups in Mt. Elgon and neighboring Bungoma districts through a number of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs, Community Based Groups, Youth Groups and the government of Kenya (GOK).

By KAVYU KURA

MWINGI District hospital mortuary urgently requires Kshs 10 million to become fully operational.

Conditions at the District mortuary have deteriorated to alarming levels following the collapse of the cooling systems three years ago.

An awful stench emanating from the preserved bodies has become unbearable forcing local members of parliament to move fast to forestall protests by residents and ensure the situation is rectified.

Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka who is the MP for Mwingi north and his Mwingi south counterpart David Musila made separate impromptu visits to the hospital to question why the problem at the morgue had not been addressed three years after it developed.

But the visits by the politicians appear to have been prompted by protests by members of the public who were warming up for a demonstration over the sorry state of the morgue that served residents of both constituencies.

The VP had to personally admit that he visited the hospital to assess the situation and demand action after he got wind that residents of Mwingi town and neighbouring areas were planning a demonstration to protest against his long failure to

take action over the sickening state at the morgue.

The visits to the mortuary by the two legislators took place in mid December.

Mr. Musila who is an assistant minister for defense was the first to visit the district hospital where he caught hospital authorities off guard. A seemingly angry Musila ranted and raved at the district medical services officer Dr. Daisy Ruto for ignoring the morgue.

The MP became visibly bitter when Dr. Ruto insisted that all was well with the morgue with the former demanding to know where the pungent smell that was notable at a considerable distance from the hospital originated from.

But Mr. Musila would not hear anything of the explanations advanced by the medical officer. Unconvinced, he shelved his mission to tour the Morgue and left in a huff but not before asking Dr. Ruto to ensure the morgue was rehabilitated without further delay.

But during his visit two days later Mr. Musyoka appeared to mean real business. He had to endure a pungent smell of decomposing human bodies to venture right into the mortuary to see first hand the de-



Kalonzo listens to a point made by Dr. Simon Mueke as other leaders including Mwingi DC Peter Kinuthia (extreme left) and the Dr. Daisy Ruto (extreme right with black folder) looks on. —Photo/Kavyu Kura

plorable state of the facility.

Besides fighting the stench from rotting bodies that was powerfully assaulting his nostrils, the VP came face to face with rotting bodies piled on top of each other outside the collapsed cooling chambers.

So shocked was the VP after touring the facility that he curtly told the assistant director for medical services Dr. Simon Mueke that he had a challenging task to restore operations at the mortuary.

Inside the mortuary Dr. Ruto

showed Mr. Musyoka the cooling chambers whose systems had broken down in which some embalmed bodies were preserved.

She explained that the assaulting stench emanated from the 13 decomposing unclaimed bodies placed outside the morgue chambers that had not been embalmed and were awaiting court orders for them to be disposed off.

The VP was accompanied during the tour of the facility by the Mwingi DC Mr. Peter Kinuthia, the Mwingi town council chairman cllr. Festus Nzungu and Mwingi county council vice chairman cllr. Julius Maundu.

Mr. Musyoka confided that he planned the emergency visit to the mortuary after he got word that his constituents were planning to hold a demonstration over his failure to address the deplorable state of the facility that caters for residents of six districts.

He said since the cooling system at the morgue broke down a couple of years ago the locals have had to dip deeper into their pockets when one of their own died and had to take their bodies to far off places like Matuu morgue for preservation.