

## Free primary education woes deepen

*US government suspends funding, calls for prosecution of staff who stole the cash*

By THE LINK WRITER

**THE ghost haunting the Free Education Program has refused to go away.**

In fact the controversy that surrounds the disappearance of over Kshs.100 million continues to sink deeper with each passing day.

And with the drastic measures taken by the donor community, the programme may soon be consigned to oblivion, despite the never-ending assurance by the government that the suspension of donor funds will not in any way affect the program, which remains a vital component in the achievement of the Universal Primary Education.

So far, the UK and US governments have halted plans to finance the programme until lost monies are recovered and those responsible brought to book. The British government is withholding up to Kshs.1.8 billion while the US government has frozen aid amounting to Kshs.525 million.

The latest development by the US government came as Transparency International (TI) released a report detailing widespread mismanagement and a general lack of accountability in the sector.

The report titled "The Kenya Education Sector Integrity Study Report 2010" reveals that schools have been losing colossal amounts of money to contractors in contravention of the set financial regulations and parliamentary approvals and cites a case where the government paid out Kshs6.5 million to the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) during the 2004/2005 Financial Year for onward payment to a contractor for new textbook lists apparently printed in 2003/2004 Financial year.

Although the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) could not ascertain whether or not this work was completed, it was regarded as an irregular payment.

The report further indicates that a contractor was overpaid by Kshs. 8,048,282 during 2002/2003 Financial Year for landscap-

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# 130 weak councils to face the knife



*Trimming the councils: Mudavadi's headache.*

## New bill proposes to dissolve non-performing local authorities to make 47 viable mega ones

By FAITH MUIRURI

**T**he future of 130 Local Authorities hangs in the balance once a raft of proposals outlined in the Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2009 become law.

Only strong and economically viable lo-

cal authorities will survive the bold plan contained in the bill which has been published by Local Government Minister Musalia Mudavadi.

Local authorities riddled with financial problems are among those earmarked for dissolution once the new law is enacted. Also facing the knife are non-viable entities conceived out of political consideration.

However some of the non-viable units will be merged based on recommendations by the Local Authorities Advisory Commission whose establishment is provided for by the Bill.

Already the Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya (ALGAK)

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## Free education woes deepen

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ing and constructing a sports facility at Bondo Teachers College. The government paid the contractor an additional Kshs.15,148,159 following recommendations by a task force set up to review pending government bills.

"The payments were made although the quality of work was deemed unsatisfactory or incomplete. No officer has been brought to book for this irregular payment, nor has the government recovered the excess payment from the contractor," the CAG report concludes.

A further Kshs.31, 299,052 was allocated for the construction of Mtihani House in June 2004 without the required parliamentary approval. Another Kshs. 28 million was irregularly paid to KNEC in 2005 for the construction of Mtihani house without issuance of the requisite certificate of work done by relevant authorities.

Reports obtained from Auditor General also revealed that most Ministry officials had failed to surrender imprests within the stipulated time and singled imprests worth Kshs.24.4 million which had not been surrendered by the end of 2004/2005 Financial Year out of which 54.5 percent was held by junior officers while senior officers accounted for 42.6 percent.

An analysis of various audit reports at the Ministry of Education further reveals that in some instances, officers were paid allowances in contravention of existing financial regulations.

In 200/2003 Financial Year, meal allowances totaling to Kshs.11,652,252 were granted to the staff in the ministry and charged to other vote heads. The allowances were apparently claimed to work that falls under the normal job responsibilities in disregard to the provisions of the Public Ethics Act.

Reports from the Auditor General also revealed that the Ministry of Education also lost money through irregular fuel purchases and cites a case where the Madera DEO paid Kshs.1.55 million for fuel purchases during the 2005/2006 financial year although no proof was tendered as evidence of delivery.

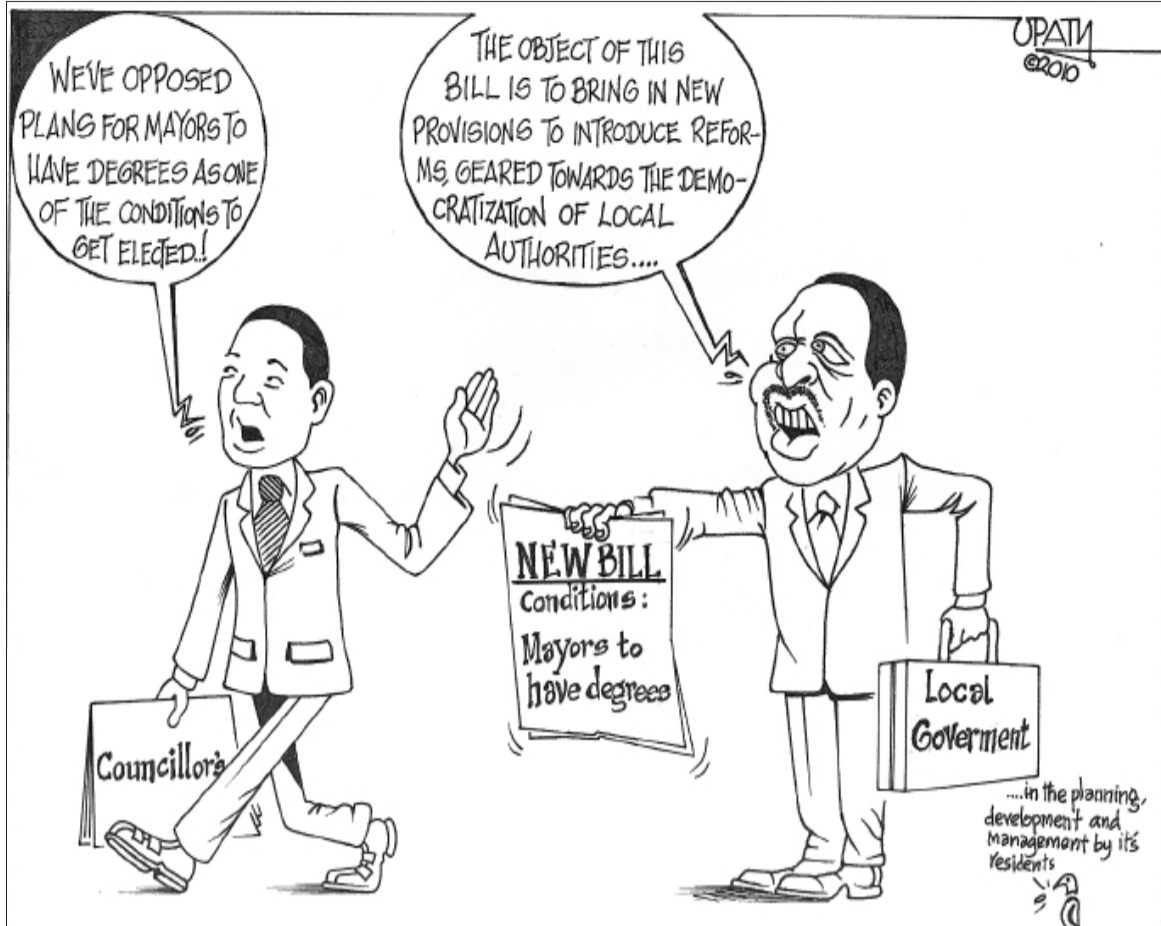
A spot check at schools indicated that there is no clear record of all funds received from multiple sources like the Constituency Development Fund, Local Authority Transfer Fund and other sponsors.

For instance, a primary school in Likoni Mombasa which was opened over 50 years ago with support from the community, continues to receive undisclosed amounts of money from a tourist touched by the plight of learners during a visit over five years ago. The only indication was that money from the sponsors and donors is used to pay six teachers employed by the school management committee.

Also there are no specific guidelines as to the maximum number of bank accounts a school is required to open and maintain. In Turkana District, some members of the school management committee with blessings from the area MP opened a second General purpose Account without involving the head teacher. This account is used to receive grants from the CDF, ostensibly to assist in the de-

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# 130 weak councils to face the knife



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is pushing to have the number of councils reduced from the current 175 units to about 47 units, in line with the County Governments proposed in the Harmonized Draft Constitution.

ALGAK Secretary General, Mr. Hamisi Mboga, says the current scenario was chaotic and did not guarantee any form of public participation, accountability and transparency required in the planning, development and management of public resources.

The secretary general says that despite huge allocations earmarked

for the sector, most local authorities were still unable to meet their financial obligations and cannot therefore be expected to deliver comprehensive services or accelerate development in the new dispensation.

"We are supporting the establishment of viable units as spreading out resources across moribund units undermines the effectiveness of local development," adds Mboga during an interview with The Link.

He says that funds channeled to local authorities will not add any incremental value to each other unless stringent measures are put in

place to streamline operations in the current structures.

He cites Kiambu County council, which, he says, should be restructured to incorporate Thika Municipal council, Kiambu Municipal council and Karuri Town council. "This will ensure that local authorities serve to accelerate development in their respective areas without wasting resources in projects which are not economically viable," asserts Mboga.

According to section 231 of the proposed law, a Local Authority will become insolvent if it is unable

to meet its financial commitments or fails to discharge its duties to the best interests of residents within its area of jurisdiction.

Councils will stand dissolved once the minister concurs with recommendations by the Local Authority Advisory Commission. The authority, which wields so much power in the new dispensation, has been charged with a clear mandate to advise the minister on the establishment, dissolution, merger and classification of councils.

Further, the authority will be instrumental in the designation, delineation, demarcation or alteration of boundaries, the amalgamation of two or more local authorities and delimitation of the total number of elected councilors in any local authority.

Prior to dissolution of a Local Authority, the Minister by order will institute an inquiry to accord the affected civic body an opportunity to be heard.

Based on the findings of the inquiry, the minister will publish his intention to dissolve the council in a gazette notice and in at least one newspaper circulating in the area.

Upon expiry of 14 days from the date of publication, a draft of the order shall be tabled in parliament. This will pave way for the appointment of an interim commission to discharge duties on behalf of the affected council for a period not exceeding two years from the date of appointment.

The commission will then take the necessary steps to ensure that the Local Authority is reconstituted before the expiration of that duration.

However in the event that the decision to suspend the civic body is irreversible, the minister will by order extend the term of the commission by a period not exceeding

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By JOSEPH OJWANG

OFFICIALS of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) allied to Nyanza province have absolved themselves from accusations that they were responsible for poor performance in the province.

Enraged union officials say the remarks attributed to an assistant minister for education Prof. Ayiecho Olweny were farfetched and an indication that he has lost touch with the reality on the ground.

Led by Rarieda district KNUT Executive Secretary Collins Oyu, the officials say the comments were in bad taste, irresponsible and demoralizing to teachers in the province.

His Kisumu East district counterpart Tom Olilo blamed the poor results to poor leadership by the political class.

Olilo noted that there is lack of motivation to teachers by politicians in the province.

But Rachuonyo district branch executive secretary Charles Owaka challenged Prof. Ayiecho to show his contribution to the regional's education standards.

"The remarks by Ayiecho are misplaced, irresponsible, demoralizing and most of unfortunate to teachers and pupils who are looking up at role models. What is the politicians' contribution to the region's education standards?" asked Owaka.

The row pitting KNUT and the as-

## Nyanza KNUT in self defense

Local officials say claims by Muhoroni MP Ayiencho Olweny that they are to blame for poor education performance in the province are far-fetched.

sistant minister came at a time when a member of Nyanza Education Board, dismissed those blaming teachers for the dismal performance following poor results posted by the province in the just released KCPE.

Mrs. Eve Obara said blame game by leaders must stop because it will never provide any tangible solution to the problems bedeviling education standards.

Obara who is the Managing director of Kenya Literature Bureau said it was wrong for leaders from the region to engage public in blame game rather than go back to the drawing board and lay strategies that will form the basis for future performance.

"It makes me feel sick when I hear respected leaders hurling insults to one another as this may worsen the situation since their remarks do not offer any solution," said Obara.

She said it was high time the provincial education board comes up with practical solutions to boost performance.

She called on all stakeholders from grassroots level to start identifying the root cause of the poor performance and

start working together to achieve the desired goals.

"We as leaders must ask ourselves where we went wrong instead of addressing education matters at public gatherings by pointing accusing fingers at one another," said Mrs. Obara.

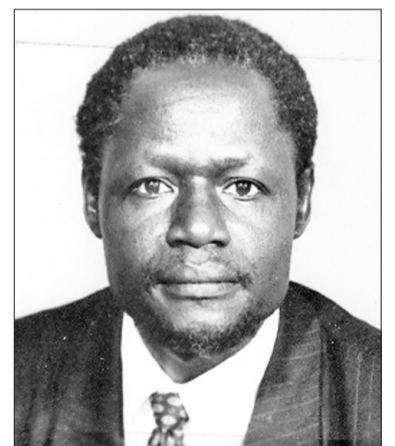
Meanwhile, Nyanza provincial director of education Geoffrey Cherongis has directed nine district education officers whose districts had their results cancelled in the just released KCPE to conduct thorough investigations.

Cherongis said the officers would be required to unearth parties who were involved in the cheating that saw 316 pupils miss their results.

"We will get to the bottom of this matter and I assure you that appropriate action will be taken on teachers who might have colluded with the pupils to cheat," he warned.

He said that nine districts were affected and singled out Nyando district as the worst hit by the vice which saw the results of 97 pupils cancelled due to cheating.

Other districts that were affected in the province include, Kuria West, Nyamira, Suba, Gucha South, Gucha,



Prof Olweny

Homabay and Rachuonyo.

Cherongis said that the province performed well last year and managed to have 8 pupils in the top 100 against 5 pupils in the previous year.

He announced that a team of education officials have been identified to look into what is ailing the education standard in the province and come up with desired solutions.

# Lobby wants institute board out

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE appointment of the Bungoma based Sang'alo Institute of Science and Technology (SIST) Board of Governors (BoG) without consultations has continued to attract condemnation with more forces joining the fray.

Human rights lobby groups have described the decision by the SIST BoG chair Mr. Njibwakale Murambi, to single handedly nominate board members as a violation of the law and denial of Bungoma people's rights.

The Centre for Human rights and Democracy (CHRD) regional coordinator, Mr. John Khaoya, has written a letter to the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Dr. Sally Kosgei, to register their dissatisfaction over the manner in which the Sang'alo issue was handled.

In the letter, Khaoya complains that despite an earlier appeal by the Bungoma County Council chair, Mr. Julius Bakasa, about the flawed board appointment, the board continues to remain in office illegally to the detriment of the institute.

Khaoya says that it has come to the attention of his organization that the appointment of the present SIST board was in many ways unconstitutional as it defeats the very purpose for which it was constituted.

## Group writes to minister to revoke the unlawful appointment of the board of governors



Dr. Sally Kosgei

He cites cap 211 of the Education Act which dictates that the nomination of board members be done by an authentic body and other stakeholders.

The rights group lobbyist consequently urges the minister of Higher Education and Technical training to dissolve the current board immediately.

Khaoya argues that the unilateral decision by Njibwakale to nominate

and forward his own name alongside that of his allies, defeats logic and is not in keeping with the tradition in the education sector.

In the earlier letter by council chair to the minister, the civic leader had pleaded with the minister to nullify the appointment arguing that it was illegal and instructed the principal Mr. Alfred Machuka to work with all stakeholders in nominating new board members.

Speaking separately, the area cllr. Boniface Namusasi lamented bitterly that apart from failure to involve the council, which is the main stakeholder, the board has continued to make decisions against the wishes of the majority.

Cllr. Namusasi disclosed that the council was preparing to move to court after it became apparent that the ministry had failed or refused to take appropriate action.

He observed that flouting of such an important process is in itself impunity of the worst order and vowed to fight for Bungoma People's Rights up to the bitter end.

However, when the besieged SIST board chair was confronted by the media with complaints against him, he de-

nied that he single handedly picked the current board members.

Njibwakale could not say anything when he was asked to avail minutes of the nomination panel and why he was part of it when he was an interested party.

Credible sources allege that Njibwakale was paid Kshs. 27,000 by the institute to travel to Nairobi, ostensibly to replace names that had earlier been nominated with those of his own choice.

The institute, according to our sources had earlier forwarded the names of Arch Bishop Eliud Wabukala, Ambassador Jack Tumwa, Mr. Wanjala former agriculture manager Mumias Sugar Company, Mr. Dismas Nyongesa former MD, Nzoia Sugar Company, Mr. Javan Masolo – a retired finance and audit specialist, Mr. Gaitano Opilo – a retired education Officer and Mr. Wabwoba Walinywa – a media and public affairs consultant.

Njibwakale allegedly replaced the above names with his own choices without regard to fair distribution and representation throughout the larger Bungoma as it has always been the case.

## Kisii parents demand action against teachers

By BOB OMBATI

It was drama in Kisii as schools reopened for the first term this year.irate parents mobbed teachers whose schools had performed dismally during the last year's Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination.

Learning was paralysed as the visibly angry parents stormed the affected schools and forcefully ejected teachers demanding for their immediate transfers or demotions.

In Chiengwe primary school, Nyamache district, parents locked the school and chased the head teacher, John Onyando away over the poor performances registered in KCPE.

The parents alleged the teacher had run down the school which only managed to produce 260 marks from the first candidate out of the possible 500 in last year's KCPE while the last candidate scored 131 marks.

At Endiba primary school, Nyamira North District, over 50 parents ejected the school head Teacher, David Gaeche and his entire staff over poor performance. The first candidate in the school only managed to score 256 marks and the last candidate had scored 101 marks in last year's KCPE examinations.

The teachers who were caught unawares were rescued by James Mogsu who told parents not to load the blame on teachers but instead meet as stakeholders to resolve the problems once and for all.

Their action came as it emerged that out of the 8694 candidates who sat the Exam in 260 centres, only 37 managed to score over 400 marks.

However, it was pomp at Schools which registered impressive results during the last Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination as enrolment figures shot up with hundreds of parents rushing to redeem their children's future.

A survey by The Link established that a big number of parents in the area had shifted their children from schools which performed dismally in last year's.

Parents enrolled their children in droves in public schools which performed better while others opted for private schools which outshone public schools in the KCPE results released by Education minister, Prof. Sam Onger. Most schools targeted by the rush were left reeling in confusion owing to the inadequate facilities and teaching staff.

The survey showed that some public schools like Kisii campus and Kisii primary both in Kisii central districts which performed better in the exam have been saturated with pupils from other schools, a situation that has overstretched their facilities.

Joel Nyangau who is the head teacher of Kisii primary says that his school is unable to cope with the influx of pupils from other schools, saying, he has few teachers and will be forced to increase the number of streams to cope with the upsurge, adding that currently he has over 1000 pupils.

Kisii campus Head Teacher, Rian-ga, says he has a small compound and few classes, and the small number of teachers cannot cope with the swelling number of children flocking his school.

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

# Kisumu Rural CBF mismanaged-Report

THE plight of hundreds of bright and needy students in Kisumu Rural Constituency who depend entirely on the Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF) in their pursuit for higher education may be in jeopardy unless stringent measures are put in place to ensure transparency in disbursement of the fund.

A social audit report by the Centre for Peace and Democracy (CEPAD) revealed that there were loopholes in the management of CBF that need to be sealed if the fund has to achieve its intended purpose and reach the target groups.

The audit revealed that cases of students from other constituencies benefitting from the CBF kitty were rife due to existing loopholes in the management of the fund.

The report also pointed out that undeserving cases were benefitting from the kitty and in some instances beneficiaries included students who never applied or made any attempts to apply for the bursary.

The applications were said to have been done by the teachers on behalf of students from other constituencies and even those from well off families without their knowledge at the expense of local and needy students.

School heads allegedly took advantage of the general cheques normally issued by the CBFCs to tamper with the original lists of beneficiaries' received from the DEO's office.

Some names of beneficiaries were reported to have been deleted by the school administrations and replaced with those who never applied for the money, an indication that the included beneficiaries come from well off families since



A section of students in rural schools who need the bursary.

*'The needy students are neglected as outsiders and the rich collude with corrupt officials to divert funds'*

in the first place they did not apply for the money.

Worse still, the amount allocated to some students by the CBFC was allegedly reduced by the schools administration and the reduced amount reallocated to students who never applied for the bursary.

For instance at Ngere High school 14 students who were awarded bursary by the CBFC did

not receive the cash because they had their names replaced by other students who never applied for the bursary by the school administration.

There were 23 students at the school who were allocated bursary by the institution's administration yet they were not on the CBFC beneficiaries list.

Other schools in Kisumu Rural Constituency where anomalies

were detected in the management of CBF includes:- Bishop Okoth Secondary School, Sinyolo Girls Secondary School, Huma Girls Secondary School, St. Georges Sianda Secondary School and Archbishop Miranga secondary School.

Tampering of the original lists of beneficiaries as received from the CBFC by the schools management defeats the purpose for which the fund was created.

If this practice is allowed to continue, it is likely to discourage needy students from applying for the bursary hence lead to the failure of the fund to meet its objectives.

## Varsity launches new programme

By PETER MUTUKU and FAITH MUIRURI

KENYATTA University has introduced a Bachelor of Law Degree Programme in its Parklands Campus to help address the increasing demand for legal services.

The first batch of 228 students is now in their second year while an additional 185 students enrolled during the 2009/2010 academic year.

Currently the law student population stands at 400 and the increase has been attributed to the rise in popularity of the school as a centre of excellence in legal education in line with the University's vision and mission to become a world class university.

The university's Vice Chancellor Prof Olive Mugenda, says that through face to face, group and individual sessions with friendly and dedicated teaching staff, students have already gained confidence that they will require to make representations in courts, corporate boardrooms and international forums.

"We at the school believe that sustained interactions between students and teaching staff both inside and outside of lecture halls, is key to impacting on the minds and attitudes of students," she adds.

She says that the law degree will offer students with a unique opportunity to take units that have currently become the cutting edge of law and development both in Kenya and internationally.

Students can now specialise in new areas which include electoral law. This comes barely a year after Kenya experienced political skirmishes that left over a thousand people dead following the announcement of presidential results in December 2007 general elections by the Electoral Commission of Kenya which has since been disbanded.

Other areas of specialization include East African Regional Law. This has been designed to capture the integration of East Africa Community and the signing of EAC protocol which aims at overseeing socio-economic development among five member states.

The University is also offering international criminal law as part of the expanded degree programmes to accommodate the rising demand for Diploma and Degree programmes in various disciplines.

The Vice chancellor says that two years ago, the university with support from Equity bank implemented the students community service programme that takes over 2,000 of students to their respective communities for one month service before they graduate. Under this programme, students in the law programme will give legal information, advice and interpretation.

Meanwhile, 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.

# Build more high schools

Bright children missing secondary education due to poor planning

The Kenya government has an the obligation under the international law to which it is a signatory to expand educational opportunities for all who remain deprived of primary and secondary education.

For example, Article 26 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948, clearly states that "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."

In addition, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reaffirms the right to education for all and highlights the principle of free compulsory education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified human rights treaty, on the other hand spells out the right of children not to be discriminated against and expresses commitments about the aims of education, recognizing that the learner is at the centre of the learning experience. This affects content and pedagogy, and

### COMMENT

By DON BONYO



- more broadly - how schools are managed.

But the goings-on in Kenya's education sector show gross breach of the international instruments above. More than a month since the release of the 2009 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), many qualified children are yet to get admission to Secondary Schools. Interestingly this is not the first time we are faced with such a shameful scenario as a country as this happens every year under the watch of the government.

The Children's Act of 2001 is clear that a child is "any person below the age of 18 years" and that the state has the responsibility to provide education to all children. Many of those who sit for KCPE exams are usually between the ages of 13 - 15 years; by definition these are children, who the Kenya government has made a commitment to provide education to. It is therefore unacceptable that we all know that some Kenya children, having sat for KCPE and passed, have missed opportunities in Second-

ary schools and we still do not have clear policies and plans to enhance their placement in secondary schools.

Going by the Ministry of Education's current facts and figures, the transition rate from primary to secondary schools increased from 45.8 per cent in 2003 to 59.9 per cent in 2008 and estimated at 64.1 per cent in 2009. This implies that slightly above 35 per cent of children who sat KCPE in the previous year would definitely miss out of secondary education. The Ministry further blatantly puts the target of attaining 70 per cent transition to secondary schools - this is a clear indication that the Ministry is well aware that close to 30 per cent of children who sit KCPE will miss secondary education.

Whereas we currently have about 26,000 primary schools (both public and private) in Kenya, there only 6566 secondary schools countrywide. And to make it worse, most of these schools have very few classrooms, are poorly equipped and lack teachers. The distribution of secondary schools in Kenya is equally wanting with disparities cutting across the urban and rural areas.

What options do children who miss form one places in Secondary schools have? Child

labour often leads the list of options! Insecurity follows closely as children out of schools get recruited to join criminal gangs. These options are not acceptable and we all must act decisively in the best interest of the children.

The government's plans for construction of more schools should therefore be speeded up to save the situation. Further, the plan should be subjected to public scrutiny ensure such schools are constructed in areas where there is most need. Construction and expansion ought to go hand-in-hand with posting of adequate number of teachers and installation of needed facilities.

As we put more pressure on the government to provide resources for construction of more secondary schools, we should not forget tracking the steps being taken to sort out the issues on Management of Kenya Education Sector funds. We also have a responsibility not only to monitor implementation of Education sector plans and budgets but also to be part of the processes of developing them in the best interest of the child and the nation at large. This is only possible if information is publicly availed for effective participation in such process. [donbonyo@gmail.com](mailto:donbonyo@gmail.com)

## Central education boss under fire

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Central Provincial Director of Education (PDE) has come under sharp criticism by education stakeholders who are accusing him of being a great impediment to improvement of education standards in the province.

In a protest letter dated 23 October 2009 to Education PS, Prof Karaga Mutahi, the stakeholders including KNUT accused the Central PDE Patrick Nyagosia of sidelining them in educational matters and for introducing illegal levies in schools.

The five paged letter availed to The Link has been signed by the chairman of the KNUT Provincial Council, Mr Chege Karatasi, and copied to all Central MPs, Head of the Civil Service, KACC, KNUT Secretary General and the Chairman Provincial Education Board.

According to the letter, the PDE had curtailed efforts by the stakeholders to address pertinent education issues affecting the students, such as the dwindling numbers of boy child in primary and secondary schools.

They alleged that they were being sidelined and denied representation in the Provincial Education Board and the board of governors in national institutions, such as Murang'a TTC and

*Stakeholders accuse him of high-handedness and imposing illegal school levies*

Kagumo Training Teachers College.

In the memorandum also addressed to the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, the PDE is accused of lacking accountability as witnessed in 2008 where 271, 205 secondary students contributed Kshs100 each totaling to Kshs.27 million in October and November when there were activities in schools.

In March 2009, a similar amount was collected before the other one was utilized totaling to Kshs 54 million.

They alleged that the PDE intends to introduce Kshs 10 per pupil in all primary

schools that will raise another Kshs 4 million. They demanded the tabling of statements of accounts and expenditure that has seen them complain to KACC.

At the same time, they accuse him of alienating the province from the Government established Kenya Education Staff Instate Training programme and currently implementing his own course under KSSHA which is normally held at Murang'a TTC at very high costs.

They claim that each of the 600

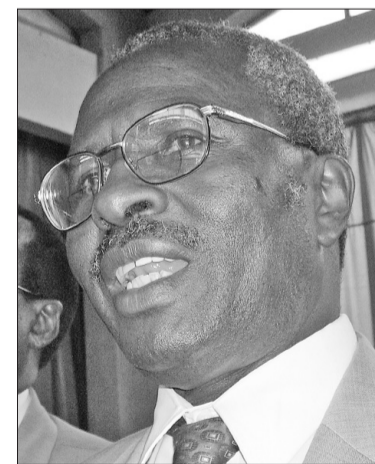
participants in the last training were charged Kshs10,000 which amounted to Kshs 6 million yet the college charges on Kshs 500 per day per participant.

"Teachers are wondering how the remaining amount which is approximately Kshs 4.5 million was spent. Another training for H.O.D was conducted in the month of August the same year where a total of 303 participants attended the seminar and they were charged Kshs8,000 per participant for only three days." Read part of the letter.

Nyagosia has also come under scrutiny for meddling with co-curricula activities and has allegedly refused to recognize the newly created districts in the 2009/2010 allocations adding 'this is making some D.E.O's to look inferior to their counterparts. It also negates the government idea of creating new districts.'

The KNUT officials who have vowed to ensure that the PDE is kicked out of the area as he is interfering in the schools staffing and promotions.

They claim that he does not follow sequence of promotion and takes in new ones in complete disregard of the



Prof. Mutahi

older ones who have been on the pending lists. Some deputies have served for over six years without promotions.

"This is portraying some level of corruption and teachers are really complaining about it. Some have been denied transfers by their principals after the promotion on the pretext that a replacement must be sought and the PDE's office does not assist." The letter said.

They appealed to the PS to compel the Central Provincial Education Board chairman and the PDE to call for a meeting with KNUT council to chat the way forward and stop him from collecting funds which are not in line with the national policy of Free Education for all.

# Neglected Kanduyi Library faces total collapse

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE future of the Kanduyi Community library facility that has been serving the people of Bungoma town and its environs is in jeopardy.

Operations at the library, which was built with money from the CDF kitty by former area MP Mr. Wafula Wamunyinyi, have ceased.

The MP formed a committee and gave it Kshs. 1.5 million disbursed from the CDF kitty for renovation of the building, furnishing and purchase of books and other materials to equip the community library.

The library was officially launched in 2006 by the then assistant minister for information, Mr. David Were, who is also the MP for the neighbouring Matungu constituency.

During the colorful ceremony the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) director, Ms Muthoni Kabandi, University dons, political and religious leaders, among others donated hundreds of books and other library materials to the community library.

Ms. Kabandi had even promised that KNLS would take over the library if Bungoma County Council agrees to donate the building that was leased by Kanduyi CDFC to KNLS. It is not clear whether the council agreed



Kanduyi Community Library

to the request.

According to the then librarian Mr. Ayub Mutanda, initially CDFC used to pay Bungoma County Council rent for using the building but this was stopped

after the then District development Officer DDO Mr. Boniface Otieno urged the council to stop collecting rent from CDFC since the library was not doing business but providing a vital service to the

community.

Mutanda discloses that the library which had over 4,000 volumes of books used to record over 200 readers per day. The readers, he adds, included professionals,

and university students doing research.

He says that apart from the books, a Bungoma business, Dr. Amin Said, had also donated computers to the library which were supposed to be connected to the internet.

However, it is alleged that the computers and other materials were taken away from the library by people associated with the present political leadership to sabotage the project.

Sources say that the present CDFC has refused to support the library in any way, a factor that has allegedly led to its closure. The unfortunate situation has left Bungoma residents without a place to quench their thirst for knowledge and information.

It is instructive to note that the town and its environs has about 10 high schools, several primary schools and middle level colleges which were dependent on the library for research and study.

The current Kanduyi MP, Mr. Alfred Khang'ati, resident say, is hostile and indifferent to CDF projects that were initiated by his predecessor.

But the MP categorically denied such allegation when he said "I have never abandoned any project initiated by my predecessor."

However, two years down the line Kanduyi CDFC has never allocated any single cent to the library and the MP has never taken trouble to find out why the facility is shut.

It is the height of irresponsibility and bad politics if it is true that facility with such immense intellectual value to the community can be left to collapse under the watch of leaders who are themselves highly educated.

## Nyando residents cry foul over missing CDF funds

By JONES MAGARE

RESIDENTS of Onjiko location in Nyando District are demanding for the immediate release of Kshs 4 million CDF funds earmarked for various development projects in the area during the 2007/2008 financial year.

The residents led by the Nyando District Residents Association (NDRA) say the location is yet to receive their share of allocation which had been approved more than three years ago.

The residents say the affected projects, which have since stalled, include Nyalenda Water Project which was to be funded to the tune of Kshs.700,000, Kolunga Water Project (Kshs.700,000), Kokuoyo Water Project (Kshs.700,000), proposed Onjiko Dispensary which was to be funded to receive Kshs.1, 093,681 and Masune Rice Irrigation Scheme for which Kshs.820,000.00 was set aside.

The demand follows revelations contained in an audit report compiled by NDRA detailing the alleged misappropriation of the CDF funds that had been set aside for various development projects in Onjiko Location of Nyando District

In an interview with The Link, NDRA secretary Ges Jason Ko-

tolo says although the social audit is an on-going process, a preliminary report on the status of CDF in Onjiko location is worrying and reveals fraudulent dealings which may have cost the kitty thousands of shillings.

According to details of the preliminary report, more than Kshs4 million allocated by the Nyando CDF to finance development projects in Onjiko location through the locational CDF has not been disbursed.

The NDRA report is backed by minutes compiled during a meeting for the locational development committee held at Ahero Youth Polytechnic (Boya), including financial expenditure details available on the Nyando District CDF Website.

Minutes of the meeting attended by chairman Victor Aduma, secretary Kotolo, assistant secretary Eliza Juma, member James Gori and Onjiko location Chief Odoyo Opere, indicate that CDF funding for five development projects in the area have either been misappropriated or diverted to other locations.

Onjiko Development Committee has now written a protest letter to Nyando District CDF committee to demand the immediate release of the funds as withholding

funding meant for local development did not augur well with existing frameworks that support the funding.

The NDRA secretary maintains that the funds have allegedly been misappropriated and a portion diverted to other locational projects within the district at the expense of the targeted beneficiaries.

"Although the three water projects Nyalenda, Kolunya and Kokuoyo in Onjiko were an initiative of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Living Waters which sunk the boreholes in conjunction with another NGO Sana, CDF funds were allocated to facilitate their completion," Kotolo reveals.

Kotolo says the two NGOs Living Waters and SANA had already funded the construction of water towers for the three projects.

"The locational development committee later applied for Kshs.2.1 million CDF funding to assist in the purchase of water tanks and pipes to facilitate distribution of piped water within Onjiko location," he adds.

Kotolo also blames the alleged misappropriation and diversion of the CDF funds meant for Onjiko on selfish political interests by local politicians led by Nyando Member of Parliament Fred Outa.

"We strongly believe the area MP has a hand in the diversion of funds meant for projects in Onjiko's because he hardly commands any political support in the area and this was evident during the 2007 general election when are residents overwhelmingly voted for the immediate former MP Eng. Eric Nyamunga," Kotolo says.

He adds that Onjiko residents pay taxes just like any other Kenyan citizen in other locations of the country and does deserve fair presentation by their area MP who he claims had concentrated development programmes in areas inclined as his political strongholds.

He further cites diversion of CDF funds set aside for the proposed Masune Rice Irrigation Scheme project in Onjiko location which was later renamed as Masune Ayweyo Rice Scheme in Wawidhi location.

He explains that the original Masune Rice Irrigation Scheme project was to cover 510 acre but the renamed project which benefitted from Kshs820,000.00 CDF funds diverted from the original project only covers a mere 70 acres.

Another project whose funds were diverted under dubious circumstances include Onjiko dispensary which has since stalled af-

ter funds were channeled towards the construction of Ahero Sub-District Hospital.

He says Ahero Sub-District Hospital is situated in Kakola location where the new CDF treasurer, a Mr Yogo appointed by local MP Outa hails from.

Kotolo alleges in other instances CDF funds meant for development projects in other locations in the district have been misappropriated.

He cites an education project at Kobura Girls Secondary School which was allocated Kshs1.2 million but only received Kshs800,000.00.

Kotolo says the on-going Social Audit in other locations of Nyando district is expected to unravel more rot in the management of public funds.

He reveals that once the Social Audit exercise is complete NDRA will organize a stakeholders forum to be dubbed as Partnership Interface Forum (PIF) where all government and various ministry duty officers and CDF Committees (CDFCs) in the district will be expected to analyze and update residents on use of public funds such as CDF.

Kotolo says the forum which was scheduled for November will take place in March this year.

# Controversy dogs VP's CDF kitty

By KAVYU KURA

THE Constituency Development Fund kitty in the Vice President's backyard is at the centre of controversy following claims that the treasurer had fraudulently withdrawn cash from the kitty without following the laid procedures.

The treasurer Ms. Angeline Mbula allegedly withdrew Kshs.396,000 between last October 16 and November 16 as imprest.

The various withdrawals, which according to the funds chairperson Eng. Job Mwangangi, were done behind his back had ultimately caused a frosty relationship between the two top officials and threatened to ground the Kitty.

Eng.Mwangangi has reportedly marshaled a group of CDF officials to push the VP who is also the patron of the kitty to punish Ms. Mbula and team that includes the secretary Peter Kimwele for undermining the Chairman.

The impact of the mistrust and suspicion among the CDF committee members came to the fore late last November when officials allied to Ms. Mbula snubbed a meeting called by the chairman on suspicion that the issue of the unaccounted money would be raised at the meeting.

Mwangangi says that he will not relent until action is taken against wayward members of the CDF committee who were also bent on undermining his leadership.

The chairman further disclosed that the wayward members of the CDF committee have been able to influence the removal of the CDF manager cum accountant Mr. Japheth Musee for his stance



VP Kalonzo addresses the press in a past function.

*“Kshs.396,000 withdrawn by the treasurer Ms. Angeline Mbula last October 16 last year is at the center of the row.”*

against improper handling of funds.

“They have initiated the transfer of the CDF manager for all the wrong reasons which included

having him out of their way so that they can misappropriate the CDF kitty,” adds the CDF chairman.

In an interview with The Link Mr. Musee confirmed that he had

been transferred to Mbooni constituency and his place in Mwingi north would be taken up by Paul Kimilu previously the CDF manager Machakos town constituency.

He says that he received his transfer letter a few days after he unraveled a dubious financial transaction amounting to Sh.396,000.

Ms. Mbula has however categorically denied her involvement in any irregular cash dealings and instead lashed out at the kitty's Chairman accusing him of ineffective leadership.

The CDF treasurer dismissed as open lies assertions by Eng. Mwangangi that there were fishy and unexplained withdrawals of up to Kshs.396,000 from the CDF kitty account as claimed by Eng. Mwangangi.

Ms Mbula contradicted her chairman insisting that not a single penny of the nearly Kshs. 400,000 which she personally withdrew from the CDF account had been misappropriated.

“The truth is that our Chairman has been too busy with his personal business to know what is happening in the management of the CDF and that is why he is spreading falsehoods all over that money has been misappropriated,” Ms Mbula charged.

She further accused the Chairman of paralyzing operations of CDF by failing to call committee meetings for up to five months.

Ms. Mbula confided that the claims about the theft were manufactured by the Chairman out of frustration after he was reprimanded by Vice President, Mr. Kalonzo Musyoka, who is CDF Patron for sleeping on the job.

The claims of the imprudent handling of the CDF money, comes against a background of incessant public admonition by Mr. Musyoka of the members of the CDF committee. He has variously accused some members of his Mwingi north CDF kitty committee of dipping the till.

At a number of recent public meetings in his constituency, Mr. Musyoka has called on the CDF committee members to mend their ways before he invoked police action.

## Nyanza CDF officials welcome audits

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

IN a rare gesture, two chairpersons of the constituencies Development Fund Committee (CDFCs) in Nyanza province have embraced the monitoring and evaluation of CDF projects by independent Social auditors.

Mr. Samuel Ochanda of Alego Usonga and Mr. Edwin Onyango of Kisumu Rural said regular, independent monitoring and evaluation of the usage of devolved funds would enhance transparency and accountability.

The duo says that since the emergence of the social audit exercise by organized groups in their constituencies there has been effective service delivery and efficiency in the management of Public resources in some areas.

*“They sometimes blame anomalies in project implementation and use on provincial administration”*

“We have managed through the social auditors to discover some anomalies during and after the implementation of some CDF projects and this has indeed helped us to take appropriate remedial measures”, says the Alego – Usonga CDFC chair.

Both CDFC chairs admit that some people entrusted with CDF monies at the grass root level especially Projects Management Committees (PMCs) do not use the cash prudently.

In separate interviews with the National Anti – Corruption Campaign Steering Committee (NACC-

SC) team, the two CDFC chairs, however blamed the mess in some PMCs on the Provincial administration.

They allege that in most cases some chiefs and their assistants hand pick their cronies to manage CDF projects adding that some of them have never handled huge sums of money.

The intention of the administrators, the devolved funds chairs continue to allege that is aimed at using the PMCs they have imposed on the communities to embezzle the funds with impunity.

Incidentally what happens in

Nyanza as far as the choosing of people who manage devolved funds projects is concerned is not unique to what happens in Western province especially Bungoma district.

For instance, in Mwikhupo sub – location in Kanduyi division of Bungoma South District the area assistant chief imposes his cronies on various projects.

Some of his known allies are currently serving on three different PMCs at the executive level.

To make matters worse the projects area a stone's throw from each other and two of them are

under probe for alleged misuse of funds.

The administrator is also scared of civic education and informed citizenry in his area of jurisdiction.

He at one time tried to suppress a pressure group within his administrative unit which was opposed to the manner some public resources were being managed.

To perpetuate his evil activities the assistant chief compromised one of the pressure group members who like the proverbial hunter's dog turned to his fellow members breathing fire.

The compromised fellow disassociated himself from the pressure group and even engaged a lawyer seeking to sue the group for allegedly listing him as one of the members without his consent.

# Depoliticise CDF projects – Khalwale

By **AGGREY BUCHUNJU**

POLITICISING the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) funded projects defeats the intended purpose for which the fund was created, an MP now says.

Ikolomani MP Dr. Bonny Khalwale notes with regrets that some CDF projects have been abandoned by sitting MPs because of political reasons.

Khalwale challenges his colleagues, especially those who made a debut to the August House after the last general elections, not to abandon any projects started by their predecessors courtesy of the CDF.

“CDF projects are beneficial to the communities which identified and prioritized them and abandoning such projects is tantamount to misappropriation of the taxpayer’s money and an abuse to the concerned communities”, the MP says.

The MP who is also the chairman of the watchdog Parliamentary Public Ac-

counts Committee (PAC), urges citizens to constantly push for the completion and operationalisation of projects funded by devolved funds.

“Leaders should know that the era of white elephant projects is long gone. What citizens want to see in this era of devolved funds is value for their money in terms of completed and used projects”, he says.

Khalwale was speaking recently at Sidikho sports ground in Navakholo division of Kakamega Central District during the 2009 soccer finals of Siovi Memorial Tournament Cup.

The tournament was sponsored by Jade Petroleum Manager Mr. Emmanuel Wangwe who was also present during the finals that were attended by hundred of soccer fans.

Area MP Manyala Keya appealed to the constituents to unite and lobby for the split of the constituency in order to accelerate development in the area.



Ikolomani MP Bonny Khalwale

## Gantanga CDF a shining example

By **MORRIS GITHENYA**

THE implementation of CDF funded projects in Gatanga Constituency is a resounding success.

The constituency which was voted the best in the management of Constituency Development Fund in 2007 has become a reference point where other CDF committees drawn from different parts of the country visit to get a tips on how to replicate the success story in their respective areas.

The committee has established a sound reputation in its management structure and institutionalized a mechanism that has helped transform the constituency through prudent utilization of funds in their disposal.

Data available at the Gatanga CDF offices reveal that over 16 CDF teams visited the area last year to learn how to come up with unified projects.

A number of cabinet ministers have led their respective CDF committees to Gatanga to get skills on how they can be able to properly utilize their allocation.

Mathioya MP Clement Wambugu led CDF officials from his constituency in touring a number of projects last year.

The Mathioya delegation was able to draw lessons on water management which included working with established water companies to ensure fair distribution of the commodity at affordable rates.

Also the delegation was sensitized on the need to allow local communities the opportunity to prioritize the projects based on the needs of the constituency without bias.

Under leadership of Gatanga MP Peter Kenneth, locals have directly been involved in decision making process as away of ensuring prudent utilization of CDF money.

Speaking to *The Link* at his Mambanda office, the MP who is also Planning and National Development Assistant Minister said his CDF committee was endorsed by the constituents.

Already, eight dispensaries have been completed with Kirwara health center being upgraded to a sub district hospital.

Also seven learning institutions, sixteen market centres, two tea buying centers and two coffee factories connected been connected with electricity supply through the rural electrification project.

In 2007, the assistant minister was voted as the best MP in the management of CDF projects. He attributes the success to public participation in decision making processes before allocating money to any projects.

“The committee also deliberates on the prioritized projects before releasing of finances. And for any project to qualify for funding, it must rank high in terms of benefits to the entire constituency as opposed to approving projects that only focus on village level,” said Kenneth

The MP says the constituency has since received a total of Kshs 110.2 million to fund CDF programmes.

## 130 weak councils to face the knife

From page 2

one year.

In order to facilitate winding up of the Local Authority, the minister by notice in the Gazette will place the council under receivership and order the transfer of all properties whether movable or immovable to another Local Authority operating from the same area as the affected council.

Also to be transferred are liabilities, contracts, suits and legal proceedings by or against the insolvent body. Licenses issued by the affected council shall remain in force for the period for which they were issued.

By laws and rules made by the Local Authority under receivership shall be deemed to be bylaws of the managing council.

Nevertheless, the Minister may direct the advisory commission to recommend for the establishment of a new civic body to replace the insolvent council.

“Where the Minister concurs with the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on the establishment of a new civic body, the law allows him to appoint a preparatory commission to facilitate the reconstitution process,” the bill which seeks to introduce the much needed reforms in the sector reads in part.



Mayor Majiwa

The preparatory commission will then complete the winding up process of the insolvent body including transfer or distribution of assets and liabilities. The commission will also notify the body responsible for elections to conduct civic elections with respect to the new local authority.

“The tenure of the reconstituted council will however not exceed the tenure of the dissolved council,” reads the bill set to transform councils into accountable outfits.

Unlike in the past where the minister in consultation with the electoral commission would create a local authority, the new law out-

lines the criteria that will be used to create county councils, municipalities, city councils and metropolitan councils.

The four levels will be determined by the amount of revenue they collect, the area size, the maximum expenditure the local authority is able to support, the infrastructure and potential for development including industrial business, commercial, residential and environmental planning.

Prior to the creation of any local authority, the advisory commission shall consult widely with residents, rate payers and interested persons within the target area and may conduct public hearings, receive written and oral submissions and consult with experts.

The new outfits will be headed by either a powerful mayor or a chairperson who will be elected directly by voters residing in areas where they seek to be elected and in accordance with the National Assembly and Presidential Elections Act.

This will in effect do away with ugly scenes and political intrigues which had previously become synonymous with elections in local authorities.

Under the new law, both mayors and chairpersons of county councils will serve for a five year term and enjoy executive powers

currently exercised a clerk to the council. However, there is a general feeling that duties and roles of mayors and clerks be redefined to avoid conflicts.

The bill further raises the bar for those aspiring to either become mayors, deputy mayors and chairpersons and demands that candidates be holders of university degree from a recognized university.

However section 51(1) states that the minister may lower the qualification after it emerges that the prescribed qualification may be unreasonable or generally unattainable.

The proposed law will be tabled in parliament in March once MPs resume business from holiday. And although councils have welcomed the Local Government Amendment Bill 2009, they are strongly opposed to the clause requiring mayors to have university education.

ALGAK Secretary General told *The Link* that it was wrong to peg leadership on one’s level of education. He points out that experience in management and being elected democratically should be the criteria for picking mayors.

He says that a running mate of the winning mayor should become deputy mayor instead of the current provision which leaves their fate to councilors in their respective local authorities through a secret ballot.

Area  
kitty was  
voted  
best in  
2007

# The Link

Enhancing governance for all

## Mudavadi verdict on councils timely

The Link fully supports the draft law aimed at drastic reformation of local authorities in the country. In mature federal democracies like the Federal Democratic Republic of Germany, the equivalent of our local authorities, are the center pieces of governance.

They are the pedestal where regional matters of development are decided. The more informed and rational the decisions made by the state assembly are, the better for the welfare of the people of that state. The state in Germany or USA has some semblances to the forty seven counties which have been proposed in referendum-bound draft constitution.

For these counties to be viable economically, they must have one central unit for managing its resources in terms of collection, planning and budgeting. The counties will need to effectively and efficiently administer security, education, infrastructure, agriculture, Medicare, tourism, the environment, energy and social welfare in general. Such kinds of responsibilities require a higher level of seriousness in governance of public affairs and resources.

The wanton fragmentation of local authorities for political expediency and patronage therefore must be corrected. And the Mudavadi law is the best start in the long road to revitalizing regional assemblies to act as strong, sustainable growth engines.

We know there is going to be heavy resistance to this noble idea whose time has come from the lords of impunity and corruption, but the good minister for local government must be ready to apply the time-tested principle of risk communication: anticipate, prepare and practice (APP), if his will is to prevail. We salute ALGAK for supporting this proposed positive change.

They know better than anyone else that most of the councils are incorrigible dens of corruption and chambers of shame where brawn had long given way to brain. The proposal to elect mayors and their deputies directly by the people is welcome. And the decision to raise the bar in terms of their educational and professional qualifications is brilliant.

It may be what we need to bring back sanity, decorum and prestige to the mayoral seat, especially in the metropolitan city of Nairobi, which has had several illiterate mayors in the past.



### COMMENTARY

## Of media and conflict

THE conflicts in Rwanda, Yugoslavia and Kenya shook the basic principles of modern journalism and opened new questions about the role of the media during conflicts.

One of the consequences of the wars in Kenya, Rwanda and Yugoslavia is the fact that the media have brought forward from the back burner discussions on the role of the media in conflict situations. Journalists and the media are expected to avoid the traps of propaganda and instigation and treat conflicts with neutrality. The current Afghan crisis only confirms the need to re-examine the role and position of the media in violent conflicts.

Most analyses that look at the role of the media and journalism in war-time almost always cite cases of media escalation of violence and conflict. This observation refers not only to local media, but also to deficiencies in the journalism of, for example, the BBC and CNN whose standards and loyalty to objectivity are commonly considered exemplary.

It was Martin Bell, a BBC journalist, came up with a warning that the well-intentioned BBC recipe for impartiality and objectivity loses meaning in the circumstances of war. Disappointed with the then reports from besieged Sarajevo, according to which both the victim and the aggressor deserved the same treatment, Bell renounced the ideal of absolute objectivity and proposed a counter-thesis of journalism of engagement.

Many decades ago, one of the most influential political scientists in conflict resolution, Johan Galtung, laid the foundations for the field of conflict transformation with his analysis of violence as the last stage of conflict. He categorized violence as physical, structural and cultural.

Galtung saw the media as both the cause and the consequence of cultural violence. Both Bell and Galtung agree that in war time, there is wanton destruction of a healthy journalistic sense, as they become departments of

the various warring parties.

In Kenya for example, many practicing journalists have admitted during journalism classes that when there is a political crisis, their newsrooms automatically divide into appropriate camps along ethnic lines. And this, they add, often reflect in the way they write about the crisis, such as the 2007/8 post-election violence.

Under these circumstances cultural violence leads to the phenomenon of war journalism, in which reporters focus exclusively on scenes of violence and the visible danger to the population. Violence is thus represented as the natural consequence of insurmountable cultural differences between 'us' and 'them'.

The cause of the conflict or violence is represented as a simple, linear cause-and-effect process: the problem is located on the side of the initiator, the perpetrator of violence - with the innocent victim, forced to defend himself, on the other side. For instance, when Mungiki went to kill people in Naivasha, it was seen in some quarters, including media, as self-defense.

This kind of media reporting is a universal phenomenon, embedded in almost all troubled societies. But what can be done to cure this conflict-insensitive reporting? One of the most compelling suggestions is peace journalism option. This kind of thinking neither negates the existence of conflict in the society nor ignores it; however, it denies the notion that violence is a natural continuation of the conflict.

Peace journalism advocates for conflict transformation through constructive discourse. The aim is not to eliminate the conflict but to avoid the stage in which the conflict turns into violence.

### CONFLICT

By DANIEL OTUNGE



In peace journalism, the only problem is violence. Thus the parties in conflict, including their objectives and needs, are placed under a magnifying glass within a cultural and historic context. Instead of delivering bombastic reports, a process of peace agreement generation is followed, and instead of a careful recitation of losses and damage caused, we follow human peril, regardless of ethnic affiliation.

This kind of journalism is openly inclined to peace discourse, and cannot be achieved through the ordinary distribution of information. Peace journalism is not satisfied with a passive role and is not about mere reactions to events. It requires a proactive approach to the constructs of reporting, and openly admits a bias towards peaceful conflict resolution.

Such a position, however, makes peace journalism an easy target of the critics who claim that it negates the very raison d'être of journalism - reporting facts. Taking that criticism into account, Ross Howard, Canadian journalist and author of many publications on the topic, proposes a different solution. He thinks that peace journalism cannot accomplish set goals without insisting that journalists take on the role of peace protagonists.

Howard proposes a model he calls "conflict sensitive journalism". This model implies the enhanced sensitivity of a journalist to a conflict climate, sources of information and information goals. In his view the greatest problem is the fact that journalists, who are an integral part of every conflict, do not have a basic knowledge of conflict resolution.

The model proposed emphasizes three elements of journalistic work: responsibility, truthfulness and impartiality. The conflict sensitive journalist must refuse to accept the dualism of war and peace journalism. He/she must work to change society not merely to reflect it as is often the case. To me it is a question of poor and good media. The poor media instigate violence: good ones contain it.

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Enhancing governance for all

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# Perspectives on electoral reforms in Kenya

## COMMENT

By **GEORGE KABONG'AH**

ON the 11<sup>th</sup> of February the Africa Peace Forum (APFO) will launch in Nairobi a booklet on post-election violence and what reforms the people would like to be put in place to ensure Kenya does not undergo such traumatizing experience again.

The booklet is a summarized version of a lengthy report based on a critical review of the country's electoral laws and recommendations made during public forums held in Isiolo, Eldoret, Kisumu and Nairobi to collect people's views on electoral reforms.

The forums revealed that the post election violence (PEV) in 2007/8 were as a result of years of refusal by the powers that be to reform the electoral system in Kenya. After the reintroduction of the multiparty politics in the country, proposals were made to reform the electoral system to reflect the emerging political, social and economic dispensation.

Consequently, notable changes came in the form of establishment of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) and the Inter Parties Parliamentary Group (IPPG) agreement. Unfortunately, the changes instituted by the ECK basically aimed at addressing procedural issues relating to elections rather than the fundamental and structural dimensions needed to ensure free and fair elections.

Hence, the electoral system could not withstand the pressure of the highly contested elections of 2007, which were held at a time when the society was extremely polarized. This was because political contests in Kenya had become more charged given

what was at stake: those who achieve political power benefit from widespread corruption.

In a belated attempt to reform the system, the so-called Kriegler Commission was established, which went on to expose several weaknesses of the electoral system. The commission thus recommended a raft of measures to bring back legitimacy to Kenya's electoral process, chief among them being the disbandment of the ECK, among other proposals.

To forestall opposition to the proposals APFO designed a conflict-sensitive strategy to assist the newly created interim independent electoral commission (IIEC) and other relevant statutory bodies to manage the reform processes in such a way that diminishes the prospect of escalation of tensions and violence between communities.

APFO believes that well planned, conflict-sensitive electoral reforms can contribute to community peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a process involving measures that address the root causes and effects of conflict, and strengthen capacities to manage conflict. The aim is to create conditions for sustainable peace.

Apart from addressing socio-economic causes of conflict, peacebuilding emphasizes the strengthening of interpersonal or inter-groups relationships through activities that promote cooperation; dialogue; participation; and strengthening of exist-

ing quasi-legal dispute resolution mechanisms.

By extension, electoral reforms could play a role, albeit minor, in reconciling the disparate groups that make up the nation. For example, a change in representation arrangement can make results more acceptable to a wider segment of the society as it will lead to a "win-win" situation and thus establish a process of cooperation, open channels of communication and demonstrate the benefits of collaboration over conflict. Likewise, electoral reforms will lead to identifying principles, best practices and approaches to make elections free and fair.

But electoral reforms should not be cast as 'peacemaking' on their own. Electoral reforms can't transform inter-communal conflict – but it can make sure that elections don't exacerbate existing tensions. If properly carried out, they could help, in a small way, to build community reconciliation.

Electoral reformers in Kenya cannot afford to be 'conflict-blind'. Like it or not, it is a highly charged political activity – namely restricting impunity to which many a Kenyan politician have become accustomed in the name of the higher goal of free and fair elections.

*The writer is a researcher on conflict issues with Africa Peace Forum. He can be reached on: [kabongah@yahoo.com](mailto:kabongah@yahoo.com) or [kabongah@amaniafrika.org](mailto:kabongah@amaniafrika.org)*



*Chaos after the post-election violence in 2007*

## Threats of gun violence still looms in Mt Elgon

By **PETER CHEM**

There are disturbing reports that some of the dreaded Sabotage Land Defence Forces (SLDF) may be rearming or are still holding onto their deadly weapons.

Residents say that towards the end of January 2010, a family conflict in Kamarang area in the newly created and gazetted Cheptais District almost turned tragic when one of the aggrieved parties removed his gun and threatened to shoot his brother.

What is worrying is that the 8.00 pm incident happened just a stone throw away from the former Military Camp, where armed forces set their command post during the disarmament campaign that led to the de-

feat of the SLDF militias.

Although the security agents reacted first to secure and arrest the people involved, it became clear to the community that new approaches are needed to bring lasting peace in the region.

The both non-state and state actors need to sit down and come up with comprehensive initiatives to promote peacebuilding and transformation of the society.

Community members say that a lot still needs to be done to rid the area of illegal guns as most of the guns that were surrendered to the forces may have been non-functional.

Other say that many militia members and those may have armed themselves purely for defensive purposes

against the group did not surrender their firearms.

Mt Elgon region have witnessed severe conflicts since independence. Hence once off moves like the recent operation okoa maisha

(Swahili for save life) may not bring in last solution to the problem.

The writer is the Mt.Elgon Residents Association (MERA) Western province coordinator



*Police officers on guard during clashes in Mt. Elgon.*

# State to rehabilitate 23 hospitals

THE government has rolled out an ambitious plan to rehabilitate 23 hospitals across the country in the next five years in an initiative supported by the Dutch government.

The project which is set to cost a total of Kshs.2.73 billion will be financed in three categories and aims at rehabilitating, equipping and strengthening the selected hospitals spread across six provinces.

According to the PS in the Ministry of medical services Prof James Ole Kiyapi, the first allocation is a grant of Kshs.1.23 billion from the Netherlands Government (represented by Stichting ORET).

Speaking during the launch of the project at the Meru District hospital, the PS says the second allocation is a concessionary loan of Kshs. 1.234 billion from the ING Netherlands Bank while the Government of Kenya will contribute Kshs. 261.5 million to the project.

The hospitals covered by the project include Kakamega and Busia (Western), Migori, Gucha, Bondo, Kisumu and Kehancha (Nyanza), Transmara, Kapsabet, Nanyuki, Kabarnet, Narok, Longisa and Nakuru (Rift Valley), Nyeri, Thika, Nyahururu, Murang'a and Kirinyaga (Central) while in Eastern Province the

## COMMENT

By PETER MUTUKU

selected hospitals include Kitui, Machakos and Meru Central District hospitals. "The project entails renovation of basic utilities in the selected hospitals except for Kisumu, Nakuru and Mombasa. The hospitals will be equipped with a reliable water and power supplies and oxygen and waste management systems," he adds.

Selected hospitals will also receive specialized equipments such as a CT diagnostic programme and breast cancer prevention programme.

Hospitals will also be equipped with X-ray, ultrasound, Mammography, computed tomography scanners, theatre equipment and incubators.

To secure proper functioning of the medical equipment, pre-installation works, room adaptations and minor rehabilitation works will be incorporated as part of the overall project.

New casualty and diagnostic services will be constructed in Gucha, Kilgoris, Kirinyaga, Longisa, Meru, Migori, Murang'a, Nanyuki

## *The Netherlands to give Kenya Shs. 2.5 billion for the five-year project*

and Nyahururu.

In addition, the project will involve the strengthening of institutional systems by training key staff on operation and maintenance of equipment.

The initiative is expected to transform the provincial general hospitals into referral hospitals in order to decongest The Kenyatta National Hospital and Moi Teaching and Referral hospital.

The five-year project,

country with a view to providing quality medical services to Kenyans in line with Vision 2030 and its Mid Term Strategic plan 2008-2012.

Other key projects include the strengthening of Kisii and Kericho District hospitals in an initiative funded by the International Cooperation Agency- JICA at a cost of Kshs 695 million.

Also the construction of Nairobi East District hospi-

hospital will have a 112 bed capacity and will result in increased access to healthcare services to the heavily populated Eastern Nairobi.

Further, the Embu Provincial hospital is set to receive a major facelift in a project which seeks to oversee construction of new structures, renovation and refurbishment of existing buildings and completion of stalled structures. The hospital has been funded to the tune of Kshs 384 million by the Arab Bank of Economic Development for Africa (BADEA) while government has pumped in Kshs 112m into the project aimed at improving the poor infrastructure to acceptable standards.

The Wajir district hospital is also undergoing major rehabilitation and will be equipped with specialized equipments in a project funded by Kuwait government at Kshs 800 million.

It is now upto the ministry officials and government oversight bodies to ensure that the goodwill of all the donors are used accountably and transparently for the benefit of Kenyans.

*"The project entails renovation of basic utilities in the selected hospitals except for Kisumu, Nakuru and Mombasa. The hospitals will be equipped with a reliable water and power supplies and oxygen and waste management systems,"*

which started from 2009/10 financial year, is part of the 36 projects the Ministry of Medical Services is implementing jointly with development partners across the

tal in Kayole is underway in a project jointly being funded by the Kenya government (Kshs.10m) and the Chinese government which has given Kshs 544 million. The new

# Catholic sponsors peace initiatives in Rift Valley

By JONES MAGARE

THE Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) has spent Kshs. 800,000 in a peace building mission in the Rift Valley province that was hit by the post-election violence (PEV).

CJPC Eldoret Catholic Diocese based co-ordinator James Kimisoi says the commission's model peace building initiative is currently working in various parts of Rift Valley, including the larger Nandi North, Nandi South and Nandi Central areas.

Kimisoi says the initiative implemented following the post-election chaos prompted by the 2007 disputed presidential election has also been implemented in the North Rift's and mainly targets Keiyo, Marakwet, Uasin Gishu and Nandi Districts.

In an interview with The Link, Kimisoi says that the CJPC peace programme has more specifically been implemented in Eldoret East, Eldoret South, Eldoret West including Marakwet East, Marakwet West,

Keiyo North and Keiyo South.

Kimisoi says although CJPC core activities include facilitating community awareness, social justice and development, conflict resolution, governance and democracy, the PEV peace building initiative has had more impact in several parts of Rift Valley.

"After the post-election violence CJPC concentrated most of its peace building and conflict management efforts in hot spot areas of Rift Valley like Burnt Forest, Eldoret Town and its surrounding environs.

He reveals that CJPC peace efforts have also covered Marakwet and parts of Trans Nzoia which were affected by the post poll violence.

"CJPC has facilitated the establishment of peace committees in hot spot areas which have in turn culminated in the formation of district peace committees," Kimisoi says.

Kimisoi says the CJPC peace initiative has registered a significant number of achievements in trouble spot areas of Rift Valley including the reduction of commu-

nity animosity between members of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin tribes who mainly reside in these violence prone areas.

Kimisoi CJPC has also worked with local communities to ensure integration and safe return of post poll violence Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) in the affected parts of Rift Valley.

The coordinator says that the CJPC uses creative development oriented strategies to facilitate peace building in these areas.

"Some of the development strategies we use include establishment of Peace Roads (PR) which are jointly constructed by members from the two communities mostly affected by the violence," Kimisoi says.

Kimisoi cites the establishment of a successful peace building initiative through Peace Road in Yamumbi and Kapteldom areas of Rift Valley.

He says in these particular areas CJPC managed to bring together 80 youths, 40 each from both the Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities to

construct a Peace Road.

"These youths have constructed an 8 kilometre murrum Peace Road in 3 months. During this period the youths also undertook excavation works and clearing of bushes along the roads," he says.

Kimisoi says the Yamumbi and Kapteldom CJPC peace building initiative provided the first interaction between youths of the then two warring communities Kikuyu and Kalenjin.

He details how the CJPCs peace building initiative has adopted practical solutions that have made it successfully work and achieve desired results. "The first week we deployed 20 peace committee elders from each community to work alongside the youth to ensure there is no ugly incident," he says.

He says during the first three days of the peace building initiative week the youths were able to interact freely and share water and foodstuff, among other essentials.

"During the second week of the initiative we saw Kalenjin youths represented by both gender mingle

freely," Kimisoi says.

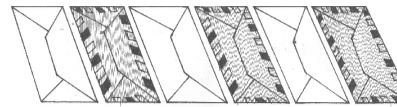
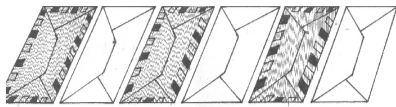
He says the interaction of the youths through the road projects made them realize that they had a lot in common to share as human beings and Kenyans living in one country.

During the third week, Kimisoi reveals that CJPC reduced the number of peace committees to just 20 with 10 representatives from each of the two communities.

Notable reservations in peace building was noted particularly among the elders during the tenure of the peace initiative," he says.

The CJPC coordinator says the organization's outstanding experience during this initiative was that it is easy to build peace with the youth than the elderly people of the two communities.

Kimisoi says there is need for the government and other organizations involved in conflict resolution in the country to borrow a leaf on peace building from the Eldoret Catholic Diocese CJPC successful initiative in parts of Rift Valley hit by violence.



## Church voice crucial in constitutional review

THE just ended discussions by the Parliamentary Select Committee on constitutional review were aimed at reaching consensus before the final drafting of the proposed new constitution. However, this cannot be achieved if all stakeholders are not accorded equal and fair audience.

I am concerned about the treatment the Church is being given. First was the issue of Kadhi's courts, which was never addressed. The Church has now teamed up with human rights activists to demand explanation over when life starts in relation to the Bill of Rights and the right to life but, again, nobody wants to listen.

The PSC should have listened and acted on the concerns to forestall jeopardising efforts made so far in achieving the new law.

Religious leaders would feel marginalised if all the issues they have raised are turned down. Consequently, they would have no reason to support the document during the anticipated referendum.

The Church and the human rights bodies must be heard on matters relating to abortion if the proposed constitution is to be enacted.

There is no need to force Christians into throwing out the baby with the bath water by opposing the final draft and campaign for its defeat at the referendum.

While it is true the Church has had its fair share of failures in the recent past, it does not deserve to be treated contemptuously.

**Kenyan, Eldoret.**

## The Mau forest saga not a tribal issue

The recent political rally in Kipkelion Town called by Agriculture minister William Ruto and other Rift Valley MPs did not fail to attack Prime Minister Raila Odinga and some local legislators supporting the Mau evictions.

The minister has reduced the national issue to a tribal matter, which is not advisable for a country trying to rebuild itself from the post-election violence destruction.

I applaud Mr Ruto for the good work he is doing at the ministry, but he is losing out because of personalising the Mau evictions. He is trying to popularise himself as the chieftain of a community, rather than a national leader, who should be above party and tribal politics.

It is unfortunate that the area MP was booed by his constituents for supporting the Mau cause.

**Concerned Kenyan, Nakuru.**

# New Constitution: Kenyans must watch on the prize

KENYA seems to be on its way to the enactment of a new constitution. Kenyans must keep their eyes on this prize. We should constantly ask one fundamental question: In what ways is the new constitution better than the current one?

As voting in the referendum takes place, we should remind ourselves of the fact that constitutions are always changed to make them better.

There ought to be a national commitment that the country will have better political leadership to ensure such changes in the constitution are made.

Kenya has had positive developments since the days of one-party dictatorship. Unfortunately, the people rarely focus on such developments because they invariably happen in the midst of fundamentally negative occurrences such as scandals, unimaginative leaderships and untold suffering.

We can only embrace progressive change if we build on, consolidate and glorify the gains that have been made. Consolidating progressive change also means being vigilant to ensure gains made are not erased.

As the debate on the constitution review goes on, let us reflect on the lessons drawn from the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) reforms in 1997.

IPPG gave the demand for minimal reforms a bad name. Such reforms came to be associated with the subversion of the writing of a comprehensive constitution.

The task of implementation of such concessions is rarely addressed. The country could have made significant progress in the constitutional



**Kenyans receiving draft constitution.**

and legal reforms if we implemented the IPPG proposals.

IPPG's failure to implement reforms resulted in President Kibaki, for example, violating the rules of appointing the Electoral Commission. The post-election violence was, in part, about an electoral commission, that was perceived to be representing PNU interests. Nor were cells at chief's offices closed down as envisaged by the IPPG changes. Northern Kenya could have benefited more from IPPG interventions if there was a deliberate follow-up on implementation.

Kenyans ought to be prepared for a slow process in the implementation of the new set of laws. It is possible to get a

good constitution that is shelved.

Debating the process and timelines of implementation, while prioritising which provisions need immediate activation, are what should engage us here and now. And yet, this kind of discussion and dialogue is totally absent. The time to start the conversation is now.

Constitution-making is fundamentally a political process. Political interests in the process have now come to the fore. It is the major political parties that are going to have a final say on the content of the new constitution.

It is these parties that have the capacity to mobilise and organise Kenyans for any political activity. The civic society and private sectors do not

seem to have that convening power at the moment.

What is encouraging in the political landscape, though, is the drive towards a patriotic political leadership for this country.

Equally positive is the fact that there is now such richness in the material available on the kind of progressive democratic constitution that Kenya deserves. Decades of constitution-making have not been vain.

With a leadership that displays the will to get the country the constitution it deserves, the material available will make such undertaking easier.

Credit goes to those civil society organisations that have archived this material meticulously in the hope that, sooner or later, Kenya will have a political leadership that will find a national resource in them.

There is wisdom in the old adage, do not throw the baby out with the bath water. Related to the new constitution, the adage teaches us to adopt a strategy of embracing those provisions of the constitution that are an improvement on the current one.

We should build on what is positive in the new constitution. And to do so, strategies for implementation are critical. So are processes of changing what we find negative in the new constitution.

Let Kenyans keep their eyes on the prize — the new constitution. To do so will require the framework laid down here that relies on the trajectory of building on all positive developments, however small.

The major prize is the eventual capturing of state power by a patriotic political leadership that is committed to championing Kenya's national interests.

**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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# Women leaders endorse draft constitution

By KAVYU KURA

WOMEN leaders in the country have unanimously endorsed the draft constitution saying it had captured their needs and aspirations.

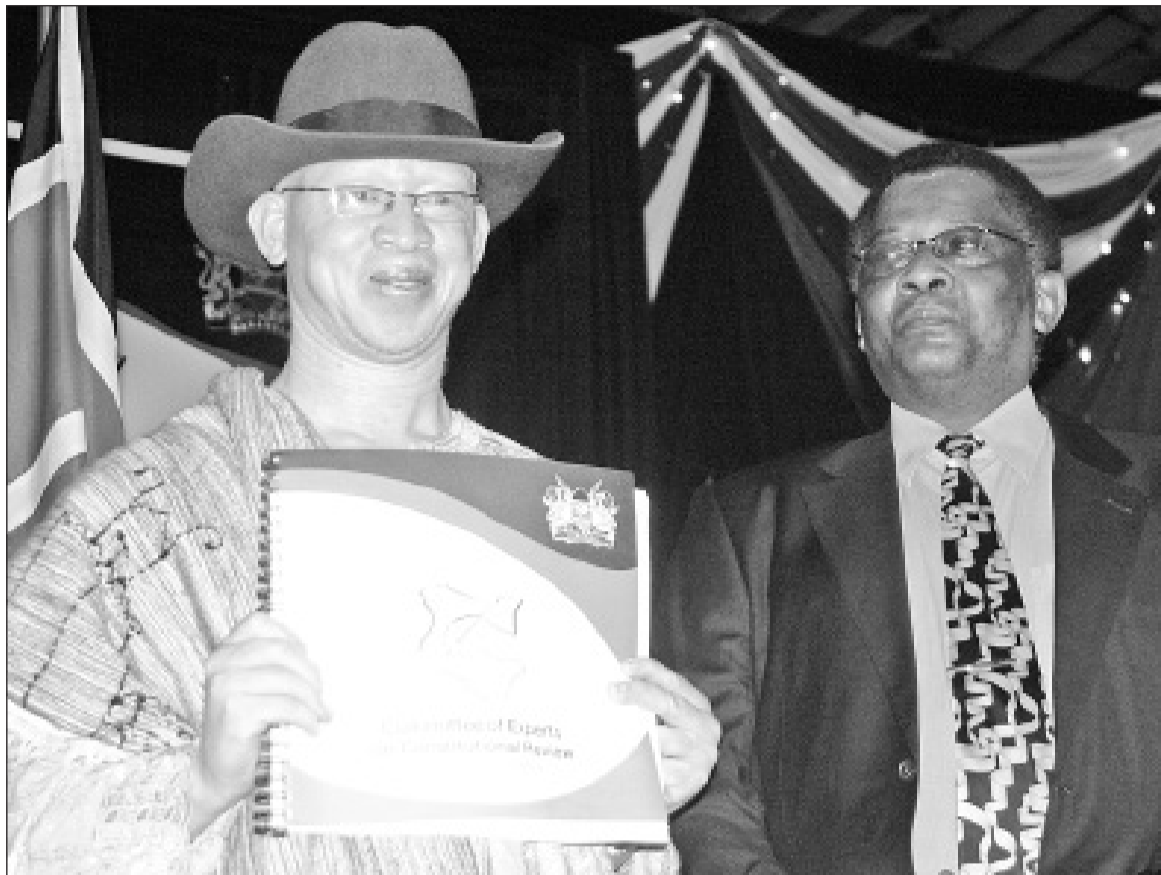
The women leaders who include seating and former members of parliament, law scholars and experts as well as women group leaders from across the country have vowed to oppose any move to delete or alter clauses touching on women issues as spelt out in the harmonized draft.

They are unanimous that women and gender issues as captured in the Committee of Experts (CoE) draft constitution have never been contentious even during the crafting of both the Bomas and the Wako draft that was rejected by Kenyans during the 2005 constitutional referendum.

The women who spoke during a conference dubbed "Amua! Katiba sasa (Decide! It is time for a Constitution) were candid that the draft constitution, whose public discussion lapsed in mid December, had given them insurmountable and far reaching gains.

They pointed out that the draft was a source of inspiration for the women of Kenya as it had addressed the historical injustices and discriminations that they have suffered over the years.

The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Executive director Patricia Nyaundi said the goodies for the women folk provided for in the draft constitution were a big win for the women of Kenya and more so women leaders and politicians



Harmonized Draft constitution launched.

who had sacrificed and fought relentlessly to ensure they were realised.

She mentioned singled out Prof Wangari Mathai, Grace Ogot, Martha Karua, Kaluki Ngilu, Jane Kiano and Rogo Manduli as some of the women whose valuable contributions at the national level had led to the entrenchment of fundamental rights and freedoms in the draft constitution.

Ms. Nyaundi noted that women should therefore support the draft in an unaltered form during the referendum scheduled for April since rejecting it would confine them to the dictates of the current constitution that largely discriminates

against them.

Ms. Alice Wahome the chairperson of the League of Kenyan women voters said the draft was sensitive to the plight of women and urged them to be on the guard to ensure clauses beneficial to them were not deleted by male chauvinists.

She noted that over the years women have held various meetings and conferences to push for the entrenchment of their rights and freedoms in a hostile environment which has left some them in police cells while others being sent away from homes for apparently being disloyal to their spouses.

She pointed out that the affirmative action they have

been clamouring for has been enshrined in the draft and that women can now enjoy equal leadership positions as their male counterparts.

Ms. Kanyi pointed out that article 6 on devolution creates a window for the growing participation of women in the running of the governments. "As a councillor in a county, you have the opportunity to aspire for leadership at a higher level," she told the women participants.

In the chapter six on the Bill of Rights article 42 on the Family, she said, indicates that all partners in a marriage have equal rights and adds that parliament need to enact legislation that recognizes marriages fash-

ioned traditionally, religiously or even grounds of personal and family law.

She added that the Bill of Rights chapter article 62 on health includes the right to reproductive health which would ensure women access contraceptives, ante-natal and post-natal services.

Ms. Kanyi said that article 37 of chapter six also removes the discrimination against any person on the basis of sex, pregnancy or marital status. She also disclosed that the Human rights and gender commission section (article 76) of the chapter on the Bill of rights proposes the setting up of a commission to take care of the two sectors leading to a body devoted solely to attending to women affairs.

She said to the advantage of the Muslim women, the draft constitution had allowed the Kadhi courts to remain as in article 209 of the chapter on the judiciary.

Ms. Salome Wanjiku, a disabled person who is also the chairperson of the United Disabled Empowerment In Kenya (UDEK) however says that it was wrong to lump disabled persons with the youth as they had their own peculiar needs.

She argues that putting the disabled who number up to 3.8 million together with the youth as suggested in article 125 on the membership of the senate in the chapter on the representation of the people was wrong.

The clause in the article in question states that the senate shall consist of persons with disabilities or falling within the category of youth which Wanjiku says will only serve to marginalize the disabled further.

By BEKDAZO TONDO

RESIDENTS of Coast Province have petitioned the government to intervene and stop the rising cases of land grabbing in the area.

The residents say the grabbers are well connected individuals who collude with lands officers to identify undeveloped plots after which they effect the illegal transfers.

A survey by The Link established that the grabbers were targeting undeveloped plots in public sites, such as beaches and educational institutions among others.

Last December, officials from the Muslim for Human Rights (MUHURI) lobby

group led members of the public in demolishing a perimeter wall erected by a private developer around Jomo Kenyatta beach plot.

However the developer ignored them and went ahead to rebuilt the wall soon after it was pulled down by the irate members of the public despite the existence of a court order.

And in a most recent case, a private developer is embroiled

in a row with Changamwe Secondary School after he fenced off a section of land belonging to the school in controversial circumstances.

The school Parents and Teachers Association chairman, Mr. Ahmed Mohamed, confirmed that a section of land belonging to the school had been illegally acquired by a private developer.

The chairman told The Link

that the developer had ignored a court blocking him from moving to the portion of land for development.

However, irate parents vowed to use all means possible to ensure that the developer does not take up the land.

They say the plot belongs to the school and wondered the circumstances under which the same was allocated to a private developer.

Mr. Mohamed accused land officers of aiding illegal acquisition of prime plots in the area and urged the Prime Minister Raila Odinga to intervene in the matter.

"We are happy with the way the media is helping us in fighting land grabbing in coast province but our concern is how government officers in the area are handling the matter" said Mohamed.

## Coast residents petition state over rising land grabbing cases

# Orphanage target vulnerable children

By GILBERT OCHIENG

A BUSIA based businesswoman has embarked on an ambitious project aimed at providing for the needs of orphans from newly created Butula district.

In a recent interview with The Link at God of Orphans Children Centre, Ms Rosemary Achieng, said that the idea to establish the orphanage occurred to her when she realized the number of orphans in the district had increased tremendously.

"The idea to establish a home for the orphaned children crept into my mind when I realized that there were a number of orphaned vulnerable children (OVCs) in almost every homestead left under the care of their aged grandparents after their parents passed on," Achieng said.

The orphanage which was registered with the department of social services in the year 2004 is currently handling a total of 120 OVCs.

"The orphanage management committee in collaboration with some well-wishers have been able to empower the grandmothers most of who are widows to set up small income generating activities such as basket weaving, cereals and groceries business," the orphanage coordinator said.

The orphanage has also



The orphans posing for a group photo outside the vocational training centre that is under construction. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo

embarked on the construction of vocational training centre where the orphans will be able to undertake various courses such as tailoring, motor vehicle mechanics, carpentry, hair-dressing, computer and dress-making among others so that they can be self-reliant.

"We also organize football matches to keep the orphans active and also to make them feel part and parcel of the community," the orphanage coordinator said.

Some of the beneficiaries interviewed by The Link thanked the orphanage management

committee for empowering them out of their meagre resources to enable them engage in income generating activities.

The committee, however, appealed to the Nambale CDF committee and other well-wishers to chip in to enable them complete the vocational training centre that is currently under construction so that the children can acquire the necessary technical skills that will in the long run enable them become useful members of the society.

She appealed to area MP Chris Okemo to come to the aid of the center to enable it to

complete the vocational training block which is currently under construction.

The committee chairman Mr. Jonestone Okello revealed that plans are also underway to organize a fundraiser in aid of the orphanage.

"We want to raise the cash to enable us construct a dining hall as well as dormitory facilities for those orphans who come from far," he said, adding that once the vocational training centre is completed and becomes operational, it will attract students from the larger Busia district and its environs.

## NACC alarmed by misuse of devolved funds

By SAMUEL OTIENO

The National Anti-corruption Campaign Steering Committee (NACC) has called for a proper audit on projects being implemented using devolved funds to help recover the huge amounts of money lost through dubious deals.

The committee says the country was losing millions of shillings channeled at the constituency and ward level through massive corruption, poor workmanship, political interest, ghost projects, stalled projects.

Speaking after conducting a survey on devolved funds projects in Kisumu Rural constituency, NACC's Vice chairperson, Rose Olenge disclosed that over Kshs.20 million could not be properly accounted for and allegedly went into financing stalled and ghost projects.

According to the survey, the constituency had spent over Kshs.10 million in projects which were not beneficial to the community.

Among the projects which came under scrutiny include Langi youth Polytechnic which was allocated Kshs.1.3 million, Urudi water Project which was funded to the tune of Kshs.1.7 Million and Kosawa spring which received Kshs 0.5m.

At Langi youth polytechnic, locals complained that although the project was not viable to them, the local CDF committee went ahead and allocated Kshs.1.3M to finance minor repairs. At the Urudi water project, the CDF officials drilled a borehole in private land which is currently under caveat.

The revelations came as another social audit conducted by local civil society organizations revealed that over Kshs.30 million disbursed to the constituency through both Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) programme and CDF project had been lost through irregular allocations.

The audit detailed how Constituency Development Fund (CDF), Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) and bursary funds were misused.

The report revealed that the CDF committee had disbursed millions of shillings to non-existent projects in the area.

Also in the report are details of how the constituency bursary fund committee has allocated millions of shillings to non-existent students, including primary school pupils who are beneficiaries of the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme.

The audit further unearthed the rot at Kisumu County Council which has been indicted for allocating millions of shillings to projects that have never taken off and violated the LATF Act by allowing civic leaders to take charge of the projects.

However, the Kisumu Rural constituency CDF Chairman Edwin Ochieng dismissed the findings as malicious propaganda since the community was involved in both implementation and management of CDF projects in the area.

He said the current committee cannot be held responsible for the misdeeds of the past committee which was solely to blame for some of the projects in question. The report covers the period from 2004 to 2008 financial year.

## Project brings rare opulence to villagers

By JOE OMBUOR

WHAT started humbly as an attempt at turning around the lives of a people in a poor set up using locally available resources, is today a major industry raking in millions of shillings.

Every week, over 15,000 sisal discs christened CD that measure no more than four inches in diameter are shipped to markets in the United States and Japan where they fetch sh30 apiece. Money earned amounts to over sh450,000 a week.

For the weavers across the dust washed villages of Migwani, pay day comes every week when they get cash either at the paying points in markets or through electronic M-Pesa and Zap.

Groups in the Aloe industry are equally buoyed financially, making over sh60, 000 every week. Result? Once hopeless folks are smiling all the way to the markets and the shops. Children are going to school and deaths from HIV/Aids have gone down due to better nutrition.

RISE Financial Director Mr Philip

*Migwani farmers earn Kshs.2 million monthly from aloe exports, thanks RISE*

Mwangangi says from a situation where people earned nothing prior to the advent of the project, approximately KShs.2 million is earned by ordinary villagers each month.

He says to diversify the people's economic activities, farmers are being trained in fruit tree farming. "We are training them in nursery management, grafting and water harvesting for irrigation. 400 have been targeted for the initial phase of this venture for which fruit tree nurseries are already in place," he says.

Other areas RISE has mapped out for future exploitation according to Mr Mutunga include green house horticulture and agro forestry. He says five pilot greenhouses have been planned for the growing of tomatoes by selected community based organizations (CBOs).

The agro forestry endeavor is visible in the tree nurseries tended by each of the 21 CBOs and tree planting taking place on Kwa Mulingo Hill

that has been rendered bare by illegal loggers and charcoal burners, says Mr Mwangangi.

The RISE experiment that has metamorphosed a community has part of its roots in the HIV/Aids scourge. Says founder Director Temi Mutemi: "The loss of a close relative to the scourge that I previously took for granted made me discover that poverty was contributing immensely to its devastation and I made poverty alleviation amongst our people the subject of my thesis for a PhD course.

"I found out that Aloe Vera that grew wild in our neighbourhood could be used to empower the people if well harnessed and exploited. I also decided to maximize on the natural Kamba talent of weaving, using the readily available sisal. My University at Utrecht in the Netherlands agreed to help me look for markets overseas and the CD project kicked off.

Mutia who did his Masters Degree in Entrepreneurship at the Jomo

Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) teamed up with Dr Patrick Kareru of the Chemistry Department who has done most of the training aspect for RISE

"With assistance from Agricultural sector Co-ordination Unit (ASCU) that supports private sector in agriculture and the Micro Enterprises Support Programme Trust (MESP) it has been possible to bring about reality from Community group dynamics. "The two agricultural sector organisations settled for RISE as one of the projects that deserved propping," says Mutia

The ASCU deputy coordinator in charge of monitoring and evaluation Mrs Anne Chele says RISE was identified for assistance because of the project's work to improve livelihoods through value addition.

The MESP Business Services Manager Ms Wanjiku Kimamo says the Migwani example should be emulated in other arid areas.

## New Mwingi District splits residents

By KAVYU KURA

LEADERS and residents of the newly created Mwingi East District are embroiled in a tussle over the current location of the District headquarters which they say defeated the very purpose for which the administrative unit was created.

The residents say the current location at Mathuki trading centre was ill advised and worked against the interests and aspirations of the local people.

The District which was carved out from the larger Mwingi district in March last year has split the residents into three opposing groups.

Although initially, leaders from the area agreed to have the district headquarters located at Mathuki trading centre in Mui division, after an apparently second thought, the leaders from Nguni and Nuu divisions felt shortchanged and started agitating for the reversal of the decision. This has degenerated into a protracted battle with leaders from each of the affected areas pulling all stops to have their position prevail.

The residents of Nguni division want the headquarters relocated from Mathuki to Nguni trading centre that is situated along the busy Mwingi-Garissa highway arguing that the area was centrally located and the most ideal.

But the inhabitants of Nuu division advance the argument that Nuu trading centre- about thirty Kilometers off the Mwingi-Garissa highway- has what it takes to be the district headquarters citing adequate infrastructural facilities, accessibility and round the year availability of sweet spring water.

And as the warring groups hold firmly to their different positions, those from Nuu and Nguni divisions have vowed not to recognize Mathuki as the official headquarters of their new district.

According to a few residents of the Nuu and Nguni, they would rather seek government services from the parent Mwingi Central district than their own at Mathuki.

The Nguni Civic leader Cllr. Peter Mulavu affirms that people of Nguni and Nuu division had unanimously agreed not to seek services from either the District Commissioner nor other Government heads of Departments as long as they were stationed at Mathuki market centre.

He pointed out that the resolve was unanimous among leaders from both Nuu and Nguni divisions that people from their respective areas should not

Turn to Page 19, Col. 1

By OJWANG OGOCH and BOB OMBATI

WATER supply in most parts of Kisii has become erratic following the disconnection of power supply over an accumulated bill that stands at Kshs.18 million.

Kisii town Mayor Samuel Nyangeso says the bill was allegedly inherited from the Ministry of Water in 2006 which was initially mandated to supply water prior to the privatization of the sector.

He accused the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) of sabotaging the services offered by the Gusii Water and Sanitation Company (GWASCO).

The mayor lashed at the KPLC West Kenya boss, Engineer Geoffrey Muli who he claimed harboured ulterior motives and was bent on frustrating the company's efforts in serving Kisii residents and the environs.

Nyangeso cited the manner in which KPLC was handling the matter observing that since the water firm has not breached the payment agreement they have no ground to disconnect the power.

## Gusii water body, KPLC in row

### Confusion over settlement of Shs.18 million outstanding power bills is to blame

He said that GWASCO has so far paid the power company Kshs.10 million and expected to clear the remaining Kshs.5 million by the end of May this year.

Nyangeso who was flanked in his office by GWASCO chairman Rosemary Obara and the Managing Director, Engineer Richard Onyari said that KPLC is out to sabotage the water company in order to taint its image and that of the municipality.

However Engineer Muli said that power had disconnected from several water firms in the region owing to pending bills which they must clear first.

He said that he was not aware that the water company had cleared the bills to a tune of Kshs.10 million.

Payment documents obtained by The Link had indicated that GWASCO had complied.

The Gwasco board has now written a protest letter to the KPLC Managing Director asking him to intervene in the standoff and resolve the matter, says Obara, adding that a copy had been sent to Water Minister Charity Ngilu.

Onyari says the company would gradually clear the bills and stressed that it cannot move without offering services to customers whose water bills were being used to pay the debt.

Water shortage has affected many residents with hotel operators opting to use unsafe water from streams, endangering the lives of people who flock their Eateries for meals.

Kisii central District Public health Officer, Francis Makau has warned of an outbreak of water borne diseases if the company fails to supply residents with treated and clean water and threatened to shut down hotels and bars until water was availed to their business premises.

The officer cautioned residents against drinking raw water from rivers, saying some waste from broken sewers contaminated the water and exposed consumers to risks of contracting cholera which was expensive to treat.

He urged them to boil water to ensure it was safe and report to the council or his office any broken sewers in the town for quick intervention to avert contamination of rivers by wastes from the leaking sewage system.

# Yatta Ranch faces imminent closure

Members claim current officials have rundown the society through mismanagement of funds

By KAVYU-KURA

THE B2 Yatta Ranching cooperative society in lower Yatta district is faced with imminent collapse.

This follows revelations by society's Chairman Mr. James Simba during their annual general meeting that operations at the facility were almost grinding to a halt after 80 percent of the cattle at the expansive facility perished following a three-year long severe drought.

The chairman says that the future of the Cooperative Society Limited remains bleak after another 50 percent of the goats at the ranch perished for lack of water and fodder.

The society had 2,322 head of cattle and 224 goats as at January last year, but following the drought spell, 1,845 head of cattle and 114 goats had died by December, he told the meeting also addressed by the Kitui District Cooperatives Officer George Nduto and the Society's General Manager Mr Stephen M. Katee.

Mr. Simba says the invasion of the 30,200 acre ranchland by 500 squatters further depleted the Society's financial resources due to the protracted court battles which ate into a cool Kshs 901,000 in a spirited attempt to push out the encroachers.

The ranching society which has a membership of 5,000 drawn from the larger Kitui and Mwingi districts is now



Co-operative Society: Most farmers lost their cattle due to the prolonged drought.

faced with difficulties as it struggles to restock and reclaim its dwindling revenue base. He said achieving the feat would be an uphill task considering the technicalities involved.

The farmers want the government to intervene to help rejuvenate the once profit making ranching group.

However some farmers blamed the

problems bedeviling the society to sheer mismanagement and indifferent leadership. They demanded a complete overhaul of the society's management and a probe into its affairs.

Farmers feel that unless a deliberate effort in made to assist in restocking the high number of livestock that died during

the drought, the society risk being shut down.

They also concurred that the government especially the Ministry of cooperative development should stop playing the role of a spectator as things go astray at the ranching society but move in to institute proper and prudent management.

A long time shareholder Benson M. Mutio says: "If this ranching society is allowed to go under, a good chunk of my investment will go down with it and it will amount to an enormous loss. I am among top investors in the ranching society since I have 200 shares."

However, Mutio who is a former long serving civic leader with the Kitui county and later Mwingi county council said that reports that the ranching society was facing collapse due to death of animals occasioned by drought were not convincing enough.

"A few animals may have died but the main reason behind the collapse is poor management which permeated theft and selling of the livestock. There is need to institute immediate probe into the affairs of this organisation if the truth is to be known," he said.

He pointed out that collapse of the ranching society would not only be a loss to the shareholders but also the country at large as it will lose a reliable source of beef cattle.

# Nyakach residents association launched

By JONES MAGARE

RESIDENTS of newly created Nyakach district carved out of the greater Nyando district have established a District Management Committee (DMC) to oversee and monitor utilization of public funds in the area.

The DMC was constituted in a forum sponsored by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung which also culminated in the establishment of the new Nyakach District Resident Association (NDRA).

Those elected as officials include Ismail Agan Obuon who is now the chairman. The position of the vice-chairman was taken by H. Denis Ojuok

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung sponsors formation of District Management Committee (DMC) to help monitor use of devolved fund

and secretary by Maurice Obonyo.

Other interim DMC officials are assistant secretary David K'Opiyo and treasurer Mrs. Martha Achieng Okano, who will serve for one year.

Nyakach has a total of 14 locations among them Asao, Rangul, North Nyakach, South Nyakach, Central Nyakach, Pap-Onditi, Thurduuro, Nyalunya, East Nyakach and West Nyakach, all of which took part in the election of officials to sit in both the association and the District management

committee.

At the location level, residents were allowed to elect 9 representatives, out of which 2 officials were endorsed to participate in the election of nine representatives to form the Constituency Delegates Council (CDC).

Another 2 representatives drawn from each location took part in the elections of 9 officials to form the District Management Committee (DMC).

However, the two separate groups of officials later proceed to vote at the

constituency and district levels and elected officials are allowed to participate in decision-making at their various locations.

In an interview with The Link, Nyando District Resident Association (NDRA) secretary Ges Jason Katolo says the new resident association has been mandated to educate the public on devolved funds, to act as a bridge between the public and government and help in the dissemination of development information.

"The Nyakach District Resident Association will be instrumental in overseeing and monitoring use of public funds such as Constituency Development Fund and Local Authority Transfer Fund ((LATF) in newly created Nyakach district," Kotolo says.

Kotolo says the establishment of Nyakach residents chapter follows the creation of three more constituencies namely Muhoroni, Nyakach and Nyando.

Kotolo explains that the three associations emerged from the parent Muhoroni Residents Association (MRA) in 2003 followed by establishment of Nyakach and Nyando resident associations.

# PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

A monthly supplement funded by European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

## MANAGER'S COLUMN

### New constitution needed for lasting peace

As I write this note discussions about the draft constitution are underway in Naivasha. My sincere wish is to see a qualitative and fair draft constitution to the people of Kenya. A new constitution is necessary for Kenya to achieve long-term and sustainable peace and justice. Therefore, every political leader in Kenya must realize that they have been elected for the common good for all Kenyans to achieve something that is greater than them.

While the political leadership in the country tries to reach consensus on contentious issues in Naivasha the work of civil society organizations continues on the ground. When you read this note, introduction- and inaugural meetings for the selected civil society organizations are carried out in the three provinces of Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley.

The organizations have been selected through a major procedure including an independent survey and assessment. Criteria for selection were



By  
**HANNA CARLSSON**

among others quality and quantity of access to the population in regions, capacity to being able, without extra human and financial resource, to conduct successfully and in a sustainable way peace-building activities in their area

of operations, and furthermore their readiness to include peace-building activities in their regular programs and to cooperate in this field with other civil society organizations.

The full list of organizations, which have accepted our invitation, can be got from the project office.

The objective of the introduction- and inaugural meetings is to build consensus on the need for partnership and interventions for lasting solutions in the regions. In a nutshell, we are trying to achieve meaningful peace that is devoid of ethnic prejudices.

Some few weeks ago, a stakeholder's meeting took place in Kisumu where a draft training curriculum for peace-building was discussed. The draft training curriculum, in its final version, will be used to build the capacity among the selected civil society organizations and their target groups in the regions. The participants at the stakeholder's meeting were drawn from civil society and universities around the country and all were experts within the

field of peace and conflict.

I really valued their contributions and one among other things they suggested were that the final version needs to be 'Afro-centric'. As the independent consultant in peace, social justice and development, Mr. Babu Ayindo, put it: "African indigenous knowledge should be the platform upon which the knowledge and skills are build."

This is a huge challenge for us being responsible to implement this project, but if the training curriculum can capture ideas, theories and skills that every Kenyan can identify themselves with I am sure this project will achieve an even greater impact than imagined.

In this issue you can read interviews of some of the selected civil society organizations, about the challenges they face in their communities, and how they think this project can contribute to sustainable peace on the ground.

*The writer is the International Project Manager  
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### 123 CSOs join peace project

By **DANIEL OTUNGE**

The EU-KAS funded partnership for peace project is progressing well. That was the verdict of the steering committee at a meeting held recently at the KAS head office in Nairobi.

All members attended the meeting. They include Ms. Anke Lerch, Project Director and KAS Resident Representative, Ms Hanna Carlsson, International Project Manager (IPM), John Oywa (CIAG-K), Daniel Otunge (The Link), John Cheptai (MERA) and John Ebonyo, representing CJPC.

The project's director, Ms Lerch, chaired the meeting which focused on a detailed review of progress made so far. She gave the first opportunity to IPM Ms. Carlsson to introduce a new member of the team, Daniel Otunge, who is also the Editor of The Link newspaper.

The IPM then went on to take the committee through the status report. Starting with Situational Fact Finding report, she explained how the survey was undertaken and shared the challenges the survey process had underwent. She said that 123 CSOs were selected to join the project after a very rigorous validation process to weed out briefcase organizations.

She said the provincial coordinators, also did additional assessment of the CSOs before they were invited to participate in the project. The steering committee directed that the final list should be standardized and that it should have the full names of the CSOs and not only abbreviations and contact addresses. The project team was able to keep the survey within the tight budget of Kshs.1.5 million.

Preliminary report on the research on conflict trends in the three project areas was also discussed. Though not ready for wid-

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#### INSIDE:

**CJPC in peace mission**



**SLDF youth for peace**



**Group to reduce dependency**



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# 123 CSOs join peace project



Anke (centre), Kiplagat and Eric van der Linden (right) EU representative curing launch of project last year.

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er circulation, the report titled Invisible Violence was used as background material when developing the training curriculum by the consultants. The committee recommended that a popular version of the report be produced and launched at a public

forum in Nairobi.

On the training curriculum, the committee was informed that three consultants including Dr. David Steele (USA), Mr. Babu Ayindo and Ms. Mabel Isiolio, were contracted to produce the document. After discussing the curriculum, the steering committee recommended that it should be simplified and pretested before im-

plementation.

Meanwhile, the project is ready to start inaugural meetings with the 123 selected CSOs. The IPM informed the committee that the meetings would take place from the February 1-20. The local experts to lead the process have also been identified. They include: Jonathan Wesaya Maina, Wesley Chirchir, Su-

sanne Shatikha Chuvusia and Titus Agwanda.

The objective of the meetings, she said, is to build consensus on the need for partnership to achieve sustainable peace in the provinces. Ms Carlsson said the inaugural meetings will be closely followed by capacity trainings that are set to start in the second week of March 2010.

## CJPC in joint peace mission

*Sporting tournaments meant to bring communities in Transmara/Kisii area together*

By **BOB OMBATI**

CATHOLIC Justice and Peace Commission ( CJPC) and Kisii Municipal Council have initiated sporting activities to foster peace between border communities in the area.

The first football tournament was held in December and a similar one will be held in Transmara town after which best teams participated in a joint final peace tournament

where the winners and losers were awarded.

During the tournament, a local team dubbed "Man U" FC trounced Bayern 5-3 in a match played at Kisii stadium where the mayor awarded the winners a trophy, new uniforms, a ball and Kshs.15,000 in cash while Bayern walked away with uniforms and Kshs. 10,000.

Nyangeso said best players from the two teams will form a team to play with their Transmara county council counterparts in competing for an annual peace Tournament cup between the two communities.

The mayor, accompanied with his Deputy Patrick Siro urged players to maintain high standards of discipline as this will help propel them to greater heights.

He said once the Transmara team is ready; he will sponsor the tournament and challenged other leaders especially along the border to start the same initiative to reunite and reconcile youths from communities torn apart during the chaos.

He decried wrangles dogging Kenya Football Federation and Kenya football Limited, saying they had created confusion in the industry and hampered the development of soccer in the country.

The peace tournaments, he said would help reunite both players and fans from various ethnic communi-

## CIAG-K ready to roll out project

By **JONES MAGARE**

EUROPEAN UNION (EU) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) are partnering with Community Initiative Action Group Kenya (CIAG-K) to develop peace building and conflict resolution and management capacities among residents in Nyanza province.

CIAG-K Nyanza province Co-ordinator Crispin Owalla says through the partnership the three organizations are exploring ways of strengthening peace building and conflict resolution capacities especially among non-state actors in the region.

Owalla says some of the conflict areas the partnership will focus on include resource conflict, political conflict, and cultural conflict among other

forms of conflict that disrupt peace and retard development.

"We are trying to determine how best society can confront these conflicts such as the recent post-lection violence in Kenya and at the same time strengthen peoples capacities to deal with them.

Owalla says the partnership between these three organization will build the residents capacities through developing data banks for civil societies and individual working on conflict and providing framework for province to respond to issues of conflict.

"EU-KAS and CIAG-K are also working with local experts to strengthen capacities of target communities in conflict management and resolution," he says.

The Link established that the EU-KAS and CIAG-K partnership equally aims at developing early conflict warning and

response mechanisms within the province.

Owalla says CIAG-K will be the focal point and implementing organization for these programmes in Nyanza province.

He says the EU-KAS and CIAG-K programme on peace building and strengthening of residents capacities which is scheduled to run for a period of 30 months started last July 1 and expected to conclude in the year 2011.

Owalla says that CIAG-K is now ready for implementation of the project now that selection of grassroots organizations to work with is complete.

During the month of February, he says, introductions and training of representatives of the CSOs will be conducted in central areas within the province such as Kisumu, Bondo, Kisii and Homabay.

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# Reformed SLDF youth roots for peace

By **JAMES BOSCO**

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.

Peacebuilding initiatives in the region recently ravaged by violence meted upon local residents by SLDF militants have been established by Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA) and partners.

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 war-like activities in favour of peace.

"The peace building initiative involves changing the attitude of the SLDF youth fighters fighting for alleged land rights against foreigners perceived to have irregularly acquired the region's fertile parcels of land," Ngeywo explains.

Under the peace initiative the SLDF youths 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 of EU-KAS partnership for peace in Western province, 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 ravages of land conflict necessitating more NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) Youth Groups and the government of Kenya to focus on this latest peace building initiatives in the region," Ngeywo says.

He says since the war in the region has ravaged local resident homes killing several in its wake and subjecting them into poverty conditions, Mera, EU-KAS and other partners like Actionaid have

launched a number of mitigating programmes.

*The Link* established that through the programmes Actionaid and MERA have supported the war's vulnerable groups who have borne the brunt of heinous activities occasioned by SLDF.

MERA support has been extended to 120 widows, widowers and other categories of affected people in Mt. Elgon district. "The strategy is to support people left without houses during land clashes in and post-election violence in Mt. Elgon," he points out.

Ngeywo says another 650 people in the region have benefitted from Trauma Healing prepared by both Actionaid and Cheptais Focus Youth Group in Cheptais division.

The programme also supports elders engaged in peace meetings with other partners of peace adding that the initia-



**Mr Chem Ngeywo: Project co-ordinator, Western province.**

tive is reaching over 120 elders across the district.

He says MERA under its Rural Women Peace Link, equally supported 80 widows with micro-finance, to enable them engage in farming in areas in Bungoma and Mt. Elgon districts.

They also benefit from other forms of support such as provisions of corrugated iron sheets to enable them rebuild their homes destroyed by the conflicts.

Some of the CSOs have been selected to participate in the two-year EU-KAS funded peace project in the province.

## CJPC in joint peace mission

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ties as witnessed during the 2007 poll.

Gusii and Masai communities, said the mayor co-existed peacefully save for few incidences of cattle rustling along the border which sparked off periodic clashes which were resolved by elders from both communities.

At the Kisii Catholic diocese, CJPC coordinator Agnes Obare said youths from Kipsigis and Kisii participated in a soccer tournament to enhance peace, healing and reconciliation.

She said the youths also interacted in forums held to cement their relationships which were severed at the height of post election

chaos which left 1133 people dead, over 600,000 people displaced and property worth billions of shillings destroyed.

Obare told *The Link* that members from the two communities along the border had also composed peace songs and dances which spiced up joint peace tournaments.

She said, elders from both sides had formed and strengthened peace committees which played a vital role in resolving conflicts arising from cattle rustling, land and conducted regular meetings where they spread peace messages.

The CJPC boss said that youths from far flung areas of Kericho district together with their counterparts residing along the Sotik-Bo-

rabu border, who bore the brunt of post election violence have been able to interact, socialize, share meals, play football, dance and sings peace songs to reconcile them.

Agnes noted that majority of the youth who were misused by unscrupulous politicians to cause mayhem and loot peoples properties were also accorded an opportunity to share their experience with others as a way of denouncing their acts.

During the chaos, affected communities sought refuge at the Catholic church and Seventh Day Adventist Church before they were relocated to their ancestral homes and internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camps.



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# PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

By **JONES MAGARE**

**C**OMMUNITY Initiative Action Group Kenya (CIAG-K) has made great strides in eradicating the dependency syndrome on hand-outs and development aid among residents in Nyanza province.

CIAG-K Nyanza province co-ordinator Crispin Owalla says the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established in 2006 and registered as a trust in 2008 has relatively minimized dependency on development aid by residents in three districts in Nyanza province and parts of Western province.

"In Nyanza province CIAG-K has had a positive impact on residents of four districts Bondo, Siaya, Kisumu West and Kisumu East, while in Western province we have positively contributed to the welfare of people Bunyala district."

He says through the organization's capacity building programme residents in these target areas have the requisite capacity to, monitor use of public funds, engage in business and other productive activities.

"Through the efforts of the team of professionals in CIAG-K we have been able to enhance the leadership, entrepreneurship and good governance skills especially among youths in greater Kisumu district," Owalla says.

He explains that through such CIAG-K capacity building programmes the youth in these areas have been able to access development funds from banks like Equity and the government youth fund comprising Sh. 2 million disbursed to every constituency in the country.

"CIAG-K has engaged in programme to reduce the dependency syndrome

## Group moves to reduce dependency in Nyanza

among residents after realizing such a gap existed in the regions and that NGOs that earlier started operating in the areas focused more on service delivery and establishment of infrastructures," he says.

He laments that the activities and programmes of these NGOs only served to deepen the dependency syndrome among residents in the two target provinces Nyanza and Western.

"We thus resolved to deviate from service delivery and instead focus on building the capacities of residents so that they can be able to demand for their rights especially in the allocation and utilization of public funds," Owalla says.

In an interview with *The Link*, Owalla says CIAG-K has also registered other achievements as the first organization in the two regions to conduct a social audit on devolved funds such as Constituency Development Fund (CDF), Local Authority Transfer Fund (Latf) and Free Primary Education (FPE), disbursed by the government.

"We have also effectively managed to engage and make residents participate in reform agenda issues such as the constitutional review debate that is ongoing in the country," Owalla says.

The Link established that CIAG-K in liaison with other NGOs and organiza-



Mr Owalla

tal Law and Governance, Seeds of Peace in Africa, Ugunja Community Centre, Mombasa-based Ujamaa Centre, Kitu Cha Sheria, Bondo Residents ASSOCIATION, Kenya Land Alliance, Reconcile based in Nakuru, Kenya Wetland Forum, Sustainability Watch (Suswatch) and CIAG-K.

Owalla says CIAG-K has also made achievements by establishing a mapping report of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) working in Bondo, Bunyala and Siaya districts.

He says CIAG-K's other achievements include organizing meetings with Civil Servants and departmental heads in the target districts to ensure government and organization's programmes are in tandem.

"Through such meetings CIAG-K aims at achieving a win-win situation for residents in its programme areas which are also tailored to resolve and manage conflict in the regions emanating from various sources such resource allocation and politics, among other reasons," he says.

In a parting shot, Owalla CIAG-K future plans in the regions include implementing the EU-KAS funded partnership for peace project in Nyanza province, not to mention a documentation of human rights abuses.

tions working in these regions they have played an important role in spearheading the campaign to conserve Yala Swamp which traverses three districts Bunyala, Bondo and Siaya.

"CIAG-K alongside 15 other organizations operating under the Friends of Yala Swamp continue to campaign against the environmental pollution of wetland by the U.S.A multinational firm Dominion Group of Company," he points out.

He says organizations that comprise the Friends of Yala Swamp include Action Aid Kenya, Institute of Environmen-

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## New Mwingi District splits residents

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dare visit the Muthuki district headquarters for purposes of seeking government services until headquarters was relocated to a mutually acceptable site.

"We want the headquarters here at Nguni. Period," says a Nguni businesswoman Ms. Esther Mwendu Musyoka.

Ms. Mwendu insisted that Mathuki district headquarters was inaccessible as the roads leading there were in a deplorable state and it took a person up to three days to travel from Nguni to Mathuki. She says the situation made the feat costly for the locals.

In the meantime, she adds that the people of Nguni and Nuu would continue seeking government services from the parent Mwingi Centra District.

The Mwingi county council Vice chairman cllr. Jacob Maundu who hails from Nuu division says the decision to place the headquarters of Mwingi East at Mathuki was erroneous and made hurriedly without due consideration to the fact that it would virtually affect the general populace in the area.

Cllr. Maundu says following the controversial decision the people of Nuu have found themselves on the receiving end as they have been ignored by government officials who hardly visit the area to give services thus slowing the pace of development.

"The people of Nuu have been disenfranchised. There has been no communication from government officials at Mathuki neither have they been visiting our people to hold developmental meetings or offer extension services to our people," charged cllr. Maundu.

Ms. Mwendu Kimanyi, a women group leader in Nuu calls on the government to dispatch an independent team in the area to make an independent assessment and recommend on the most ideal site for the district headquarters.

But even as the people of Nguni and Nuu put a spirited fight to oppose the current location their counterparts in Mui division where Mathuki is located appear at home with the current state of affairs. The Mui civic leader Cllr. Stanislaus Mulongo says the people of Mui were not in any way involved in the dispute over the district headquarters at Mathuki is within Mui division.

Similar sentiments are shared by two local women leaders Mary Kit-hunzi and Maua Mutia who have called on the residents of Nguni and Nuu division to reconsider their positions and join them in developing the new District headquarters at Mathuki.

The two women leaders lamented that the protracted wrangling over the district would continue to divide the residents and cause retardation of development in the poverty stricken area.

However, the Mwingi county council Chairman Cllr. Musyoka Wanzili has suggested that the District headquarters should be located at the point where the administrative boundaries of all the three divisions involved in the row converge.

A clergyman Petros Kalii from Nuu says there was need to review the initial decision over the district headquarters to arrive on a fair decision. "Let us revisit this issue in order to find a lasting solution," he adds.

But area DC Mr Martin Mwaro maintains that the issue was unlikely to be revisited and it thus remained a closed chapter. He reveals that the government has gazzetted Mathuki trading centre as the official district headquarters and that the decision cannot be reversed.

# Mwingi warned over Al-shaabab

By KAVYU KURA

OBLIVIOUS of the sheer danger to the country's security, some wayward residents of Mwingi district have reportedly been conniving with crooks to aid illegal and at times dangerous Somali nationals to enter into the country.

This has continued despite the fact that for a long time successive Mwingi district commissioners have relentlessly and publicly cautioned locals against abating the entry of illegal Somali immigrants fleeing their war torn country into Kenya.

The pleas by the administrators have largely been occasioned by frequent arrests of the illegal aliens in Mwingi as they travel in public service buses or use panya routes in a bid to travel to Nairobi.

Some of the aliens recently arrested in Mwingi reportedly included members of the dreaded Al-shaabab militia men.

The aliens have always found their way into Mwingi town along the busy Nairobi-Garissa highway and beyond with the assistance of wayward members of the public and even police officers.

Of course some police officers stationed in Mwingi have lost their jobs while others have been interdicted over the smuggling of the Somali aliens into the country. A former Mwingi OCPD Mr. John Onzere Sagala is already serving interdicted after he was allegedly implicated in the smuggling scandal.

The current Officer Commanding Mwingi Police Division Mr. Kenneth Kimani has once and again given assurance that police patrols had been intensified to ensure that Somalis fleeing their country do not enter the area to cause insecurity and destabilize peace.

He pointed out that the government was not against the bid by Somalis to flee from the volatile situation in their own country, but wanted them to abide by the Kenyan laws by registering as refugees instead of entering the country illegally.

As recent as during the last Jamhuri day celebration, the Mwingi DC Mr. Peter Kinuthia cautioned that the security situation in Mwingi area had become volatile due to recent arrests of Somali aliens who had infiltrated the area without legal documents.

Mr. Kinuthia consequently warned residents against conniving with crooks from the neighboring North Eastern Province to smuggle aliens into the country.

The DC said those involved in the il-

*Residents told to stop helping people from war-torn Somali to enter the country illegally as they are a security threat*



**Muslims riot in protest to have preacher al-Faisal released from the custody. He was finally deported to Jamaica. Photo/File**

legal scheme risked prosecution because police were rapidly zeroing in on them.

Mr. Kinuthia said police and other security apparatus in the area were on high alert following numerous arrests of Somali nationals within the district in the recent past.

Speaking at Musila gardens as he addressed members of the public, Kinuthia however assured the residents that the Government had intensified security patrols and checks along Nairobi-Mwingi-Garissa highway to nab aliens fleeing war torn Somalia.

"Police have intensified police patrols to ensure that Somalis fleeing their war ravaged country do not enter Kenya to cause insecurity and destabilize peace," said the DC.

He lamented that despite the Government's efforts to maintain peace a clique of disgruntled members of the society were frustrating police efforts by hosting the foreigners and aiding their way to

Nairobi through panya routes.

The administrator categorically warned those perpetrating the vice to cease immediately adding that the police were having valuable information that could lead to their arrest in no time if they did not mend their ways.

He gave the warning in the wake of the arrest of over forty Somali aliens who were intercepted at Kavaini sub-location within Mwingi district as they walked on foot in a bid to sneak into the country incognito.

The Somali nationals were later arraigned in a local court and fined for the offense of illegal entry into Kenya and consequently handed to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

But less than a forty night after the DC's warning, a hawk-eyed Officer Commanding Mwingi Police Station (OCS) arrested a Mwingi resident for attempting to help six Somali aliens entry into the country illegally.

Acting on a tip off, the OCS Mr. Jonathan Wafula raided a house belonging to the suspect who has since been jailed for six months, in Mwingi town and arrested the illegal immigrants as they prepared to secretly travel to Nairobi.

The OCS mobilized his officers and raided the premises of the suspect Ndele Nguliyah Habiki who is believed to be accommodating the aliens after receiving a phone call from a member of the public.

The aliens: Mohammed Abdullahi Ali, Bishar Abdul Abdullahi, Bashir Sarat Dahili, Najibu Mohammed Ali, Dahiri Abdullahi Saidi and Sare Ibrahim, were consequently fined for the offence and were handed over to the commissioner of refugees.

While their benefactor who admitted to the charge of contravening section 13 (2) of the immigration act cap 172 of the laws of Kenya was jailed for six months at the Mwingi GK prison, after he failed to raise a Kshs.10,000 fine.

## Kisumu Airport set to be international

*Muhoho says runway to be extended and widened to accommodate bigger planes like the 400 seater Boeing 767.*

By SAMUEL OTIENO

Kenya airports authority plans to upgrade Kisumu airport into international status.

The Authority's Managing Director George Muhoho says that KAA will pump in more funds to supplement Kshs.2.9 Billion allocated earlier to oversee the expansion programme.

He says that the expansion project will entail the extension of the 1.7km runway to three kilometers and widen it to accommodate bigger planes like the 400 seater Boeing 767.

The additional length which guarantees safety will enable the airport to accommodate even larger planes like the Boeing 777.

Muhoho says more funds will be required to finance the initial phase



**Mr Muhoho**

which will involve the expansion of the runway up from the current 3 kilometers to 3.3 kilometers so that

it can fully conform to international aviation standards.

The extension of the run way is in line with request by local leaders to have the airport done once and for all.

He says, KAA will not reveal the amount set for the second phase of the expansion works before the bidding process is complete.

"We will definitely add more funds but we can only release the amount after tendering has been done", added Muhoho.

Currently the airport runway can only accommodate light aircraft, with the largest being the 85-seater DC-9.

Once completed, the new airport would generate more revenue which currently stands at more than Ksh40 million per year in landing fees.

The airport will also have a new lounge to handle up to 280 passengers an hour, a spacious packing bay, a ter-

minal building, an apron and taxiway.

"On completion, the airport will handle giant Boeing 737 planes that will fly directly from Kisumu to other international destinations," adds transport permanent secretary Cyrus Njiru during the tour of the facility.

The initial work of the airport is schedule to be over by end of this year.

Muhoho further revealed that over Kshs27 million will be used in compensating members of the Kogony Clan surrendered their land to pave for the construction of the Kisumu International airport.

The delay in compensating the land owners had been caused by disputes among the beneficiaries, the director said.

He explained that they have given out some huge funds to the affected families but few have declined to pick up their share over family differences.

The funds should not be released until the family members come to a mutual agreement on how to spend the money.

# Deadly brews banned



**Government bans deadly brews illegally sold to Kenyans.**

By **MORRIS GITHENYA**

TWENTY eight brands of second generation brews have been listed as notorious after

causing adverse effects to consumers in various parts of the country.

In a circular to Provincial, District and Municipal public

health officers, Chief Public Health Officer Kepha Om-bacho said lethal substances used in brewing of wines have been smuggled into the coun-

try. The brews in the market, he said bear fake Kenya Revenue Authority and Kenya Bureau of Standard stamps.

“As you are aware these drinks do not meet the required quality and standards and pose a health risk to consumers and must be investigated without delay,” said the chief public health officer.

The circular comes a month after district liquor licensing courts in Central Province ordered closure of more than 700 bars after they were found stocking the second generation brews.

Muranga East DC George Natembeya and his Kigumo counterpart Omar Salat said second generation brews have caused more havoc owing to their affordability.

In Muranga East, the DC had ordered the liquor Court, to crack a whip on traders who continue to stock second generation brews to help restore sanity in the area.

He also instructed chiefs to list down outlets that would be found selling the outlawed brands.

Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation has warned its field officers to investigate the brands and take immediate action.

## Nyando resident in anti-graft training

*KACC, KAS join hands with area residents association to create corruption whistle-blowers in the district.*

By **JONES MAGARE**

NYANDO District Resident Association (NDRA) has taken the war against corruption to the grassroots and embarked on a training program which aims at equipping monitors at the local level with skills to scrutinize expenditure on devolved funds in their respective areas.

The initiative is a joint undertaking by NDRA and officials of the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) and has been sponsored by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Already 36 grassroots monitors have been trained at Ahero Multi-Purpose Centre. In an interview with *The Link*, NDRA secretary Ges Jason Kotolo says the training was conducted by three KACC officials who include L. Manyasi, M. Kamaara and E. Okello.

Kotolo underscores the need to train resident associations at the grassroots level on anti-corruption matters in order to bring them on board in the fight against the vicious and economically debilitating vice that has taken root in various public and private institutions in the country.

He says the 36 anti-corruption monitors were drawn from the neighbouring Nyakach and Nyando districts.

Kotolo points out that the objectives of the anti-corruption workshop for grassroots monitors was to enlighten participants on ways of monitoring expenditure of devolved funds including any corrupt activities in public institutions.

The NDRA secretary says the 36 grassroots anti-corruption monitors have been sensitized on features of graft in line with the concept of anti-corruption law and on issues of culture and corruption.

“The monitors have equally been trained on social accountability and issues related to community empowerment towards this end,” he says. Most importantly, Kotolo reveals that the grassroots graft busters are trained on corruption reporting.

Kotolo says with skills on corruption reporting, the monitors are able to gather information relating to this vice at the grassroots and file graft reports to KACC and other surveillance organizations such as the Public Complaints Committee also known as the Ombudsman. “Corruption is rampant in various grassroots public institutions such as local authorities and various government ministries involved in service provision to the public,” Kotolo says.

He says once empowered, the public will play a vital role in preventing graft which has pervaded public institutions that offer vital services such as health centres and hospitals. “The grassroots monitors are also well-equipped to fight graft among disciplined forces such as the police particularly traffic policemen,” he says.

Kotolo says the vice is also rampant among members of the provincial administration such as chiefs, assistant chiefs, District Officers, District departmental heads manning vital ministries and departments including District Commissioners (DCs).

“Cases of assistant chiefs and chiefs being implicated in diversion of public provisions such as relief food or seeds and fertilizers meant for planting by farmers take place at the grassroots and thus need monitors to report the same,” Kotolo says.

Kotolo says Nyando District Resident Association (NDRA) officials are planning to hold a series of anti-corruption training workshops to the lowest levels in the community. He lauds Konrad for sponsoring the initiative at the grassroots level and KACC officials for providing the technical expertise to combat graft at this level adding that through an enlightened public at the grassroots, the government will be able to save substantive amounts of public funds that are lost at this level.

The impact the anti-corruption training has had in the fight against corruption at the grassroots will become clear once the trained monitors undertake a social audit exercise on use of various public funds in Nyando district.

# Build more secondary schools - Onger

By **PETER MUTUKU**

*Minister wants CDF to be used to put up schools*

THE minister for Education Prof Sam Onger has appealed to communities and other stakeholders in the education sector to consider investing in the secondary sub sector to help absorb the growing number of primary school leavers.

The minister particularly urged legislators to use the CDF kitty to finance construction of new secondary schools and expansion of existing ones.

“This will help give many children from poor families a chance to acquire secondary education,” he said

The minister spoke as it emerged that more than 300,000 candidates who sat for last year’s KCPE examinations missed form one places due to the limited opportunities available in the secondary sub sector.

The figure shot up by a significant margin compared to the 250,000 students who were not absorbed in Secondary schools in the previous year. The increase was attributed to high enrolment figures in 2003.

The number of KCPE candidates in North Eastern Province for instance increased



**More secondary schools needed to give more bright students chance to excel.**

from 3,889 in 2002 to 10,398 in 2009 an increase of 167.37 percent.

In Coast Province, the candidature increased from 29,031 in 2002 to 53,005 in 2009 representing an increase of 85.58 percent.

The figures translated to increased enrolments when compared to the National average of 34.64 percent over the same period. The higher increase in North Eastern and Coast provinces were a reflection of the significant strides towards

equal access to primary education by all children but difficulties in absorbing them.

The situation has been aggravated by the government’s inability to improve infrastructural facilities in secondary schools.

# It is bumper harvest for Laikipia settlers

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE relatively green cover that surrounds the Solio settlement scheme in Laikipia East says it all. The area is a far cry from the persistent drought that previously became a dominant feature in the area. From an impressive maize production to alluring beans and potato fields, the area is abuzz with agricultural activity.

Healthy cows, sheep and goats comfortably graze the area oblivious of their new environment, thanks to a successful resettlement programme of squatters evicted from Mt Kenya forest. The Local farmers have become a beacon of hope by use of ordinary resources and the story resonates with an amazing success.

Elena Mutundu, 38, weeds her crops in a bid to secure herself a bumper harvest in the current season. Her timely intervention shortly before the El Niño rains has guaranteed the prolific results and is likely to increase her earnings with a significant margin once she harvests.

She is among 6,000 families from the larger Nyeri district who were evicted from Mt Kenya forests of Hombe, Chehe, Ragati, Ndathi and Zaina in Aberdare forest in 1989 following a Government's directive. For many years Mutundu survived as a casual labourer working tirelessly in the farms of other people.

But today her story is different. Lack came smiling when the government bought 10,000 acres of land in Laikipia East at a cost of Kshs.1.2 billion and settled the squatters with each of them receiving four and a half acres. The half acre was set aside to enable them build houses while

the remaining four acres would cater for their farming needs.

Mutundu is expecting a bumper harvest of potatoes from her farm and the future looks more promising.

"The food is almost ready and within no time we shall start harvesting potatoes, peas and beans. It has been a long and tiresome journey which saw some of our colleagues die while fighting for our rights," says Mutundu.

The families are happy that they will no longer have to rely on the Government for relief food as they expect to harvest enough food both for their domestic consumption and sale.

"We shall no longer be called squatters since we will be able to generate more income from our farms which have been transformed into a haven of agricultural activity," adds a joyful Mutundu.

For twenty years, the squatters were faced with myriad of problems including diseases such as diarrhea and cholera while others lacked food and suffered malnutrition. Others died due to stress and depression. They lived in squalid conditions characterised by anguish, congestion and agony.

Unlike in Mau forest where those being evicted are being treated in a human way, those who lived around Mt Kenya and Aberdare forests in Central Province were forcibly evicted and their houses burnt.

"Politicians would come in big numbers especially during the electioneering period with false promises to push for our resettlement once in power. But all was not lost as the Government finally fulfilled its pledge in 2008 following the intervention of the First Lady Lucy



A woman squatter busy in her farm in Laikipia.

Kibaki," explains Mutundu who is a mother of four children.

The squatters now want their compensation package revised if those being evicted in

Mau Forest will be compensated. They argue that they waited for over 20 years before being resettled and therefore should be accorded first priority.

Solio is divided into seven villages and identified with numbers so that the Government can serve them well and easily.

The government has put up several primary schools, a dispensary, cemetery, electricity, drilled boreholes. Land has also

been set aside for the construction of churches and shops while roads have been rehabilitated.

However, squatters are living in shanties because the compensation only catered for land.

Squatters say the tents given to them by the government were leaking.

"We have seen many people dying here since we are not used to this climate. The medical care is not very good and the water from the boreholes we are using is also very salty. The infrastructure here is also not good," says Martin Maina who is a beneficiary from Zaina in Aberdares

forest. "What we are wondering is whether those who are being evicted at Mau Complex will also undergo similar tribulations.

I'm telling you that it is a painful, bitter, tiresome and stressing journey," says 60-year-old Joram Mureithi.

But farmers are optimistic that if the rains continue they will be able to sell their food in large quantities and boost food production within the larger Nyeri district.

They say that generally, the economic situation will also experience a higher turn over.

# Brookside builds milk coolant in Taita

By BEKADZO TONDO

## *Survey showed huge amounts of milk in the area was going to waste*

DAIRY farmers in Taita have a reason to smile after a private milk processing company set up a milk cooling plant in the area.

The plant set up by Brookside dairy company is located at Mungu in Wundanyi and will help address huge losses that farmers previously incurred due to lack of a cooling system.

According to the officer in charge of milk procurement and extension services at Brookside Dairy Mr. Davis Mwangoma, the plant has a cooling capacity of 10,000 liters.

Mwangoma says the company decided to set up the plant after a survey revealed that huge amounts of milk in the area were going to waste.

The official says the firm will be paying farmers Kshs25 per liter of the fresh milk delivered and payments will be prompt.

In an interview with The Link, elated Dairy farmers say new cooling facility will address their longstanding problem that forced them to sell the product at throwaway

prices in fear that they would incur huge losses if their milk went to waste.

A dairy farmer Charles Mwashigadi says since the collapse of the local dairy farmers cooperative society many years ago, they have encountered difficulties in accessing the market.

Mwashigadi further says middle men had continued to exploit them and that they had been selling their product at throw away prices owing to the absence of a milk

processor in the area.

They say the plan will help revamp the dairy industry as the opening of the milk cooling facility in the area will directly solve the problem.

Sources revealed that the milk cooling plant was built by Wandunyi county council at a cost of Kshs2 million and Brookside Company has just acquired it through a lease.

Area residents thanked the council for having seen the importance of putting up the important facility as it will

enable reap highly from the proceeds of their produce.

Records from the district's livestock production office show that dairy farmers in the area are currently producing 17,000 liters of milk daily.

Agricultural Officials say though the cooling facility will allow farmers easy access to the market and urged more firms to set up cooling plants in the area to tap on the unexploited potential in the dairy sector.

# Bumper harvest for farmers in Nyanza, Western regions



**Maize harvesting: Farmers in Western Kenya have registered high crop yields.**

By **BILL ESSAU**

FARMERS in parts of Nyanza and Western Provinces have registered high crop yields in an initiative sponsored by Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

The initiative currently being implemented in Kabras in Kakamega North of Western and Segwa area in Siaya of Nyanza provinces has become the prime mover of agricultural activities in the region.

A study conducted by Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) Kakamega and Moi University revealed that farmers yields in Kabras and Segwa areas have improved tremendously and currently farmers were harvesting from six bags of maize per hectare.

AGRA has already disbursed Kshs.37 million to support the project which is currently being implemented on a pilot basis to help reduce poverty and attain food security in Western Kenya.

The project involves the use of agricultural lime to neutralize soils in areas which have over the years become acidic and contributed to the reduced food production by about 30 per cent annually.

A series of sensitization forums targeting farmers in the said regions have been held with

more emphasis on the use of agricultural lime to treat acidic soils and improve food production.

The initiative employs practical solutions to significantly boost farm productivity and income for the poor while safeguarding the environment.

AGRA is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK's Department for International Development and other donors.

The high soil acidity is due to the constant leaching of nutrients and overuse of fertilizer which is believed to contribute to acidity in soils in many other parts of the world.

In Western Kenya, farmers have formed Machemo Agro-Farming Network which supports use of lime and diversification. Emily Nunda, the network coordinator who grows beans, cassava and vegetables and practices dairy farming, is eager to strengthen her soil with lime and other supplements.

In September last year, the Project coordinator, Dr. David Mbakaya, a senior researcher at KARI Kakamega station, ordered 560MT of lime for 2009 short rains season from Homa Lime Company Koru near Kisumu.

The first consignment deliv-

ered 11,200 bags of lime which was distributed to 1,120 farmers, each getting 10bags. Five other trials out of the proposed 10 were planted alongside 450 out of proposed 800 baby trials. KARI is set to place another order this month for 2000MT of lime in readiness for the long rain season.

However, a new partnership funded by AGRA brings together farmers, researchers, banks, agrochemical dealers, fertilizer companies, government agencies and civil society organizations.

The association has created a system to get farmers' lime and other fertilizers to restore the soil's nutrient balance and structure, as well as knowledge about how to use conservation agricultural techniques to increase yields sustainably.

KARI is coordinating the project, which initially aims to get lime to 5,000 farmers in the Kakamega North and Siaya districts, and then widen their scope to reach 50,000 farmers through training.

Dr. Bashir Jama, Director of AGRA's Soil Health Program, says when extension workers train farmers in the use of lime, and banks finance agrochemical dealers to stock it, then farmers can access it at lower rates.

The AGRA funds have been used to purchase and transport

products, purchase soil testing equipment and to fund farm demonstrations.

Equity Bank's is expected to avail loans at 10 percent interest rates through the Kilimo Biashara program, which is currently charges low interest rates affordable to both farmers and agrochemical dealers while Moi University will provide technical support in soil laboratory, through research to get new acid tolerant maize seed to farmers.

In addition to improving food security, AGRA expects that the program will relieve pressure on the environment, especially in the nearby Kakamega Forest.

It is the only remnant of a rainforest in the area, but has been encroached by small scale farmers who struggle to grow enough food.

"Continued development not only threatens biodiversity but would ultimately alter the region's hydrology and affect the water supply for millions of people, from Lake Victoria all the way to the Nile River," Jama says.

While 90 per cent of farmers here grow maize, there is need to diversify in other food crops such as beans, sweet potatoes, cassava and soybeans to help improve the resilience of farms and enhance nutrition at family level," he adds.

## Plant drought tolerant crops —PS

*Kiome wants provincial administration to educate farmers on the benefits of the new seed varieties*

By **MORRIS GITHENYA**

AGRICULTURE PS Romano Kiome has urged the provincial administration to ensure Kenyans plant drought tolerant crops in a bid to fight hunger in the country.

Dr. Kiome says use of the chiefs would see farmers encouraged to plant drought resistant crops in all parts of the country.

He made the remarks during a tour of Gikindu location in Murang'a East district to assess the impact made by seedlings that government distributed to farmers before the onset of rains.

He regretted that more than 4 tonnes of assorted maize seedling distributed to farmers in the location had gone to waste due to poor rains.

Kiome said that all stakeholders and farmers must now turn to the orphaned and drought resistance crops suitable for the area.

Murang'a East DC George Ntembeya said 50,000 residents were in dire need of relief food and the situation was likely to persist until the next crop season in July.

Ntembeya said hunger stricken families were now surviving on mangoes. He said the area had not received adequate rain for over 3 years.

## New ferries in soon

**LIKONI** commuters will have to wait a little longer for delivery of new ferries from Dresden, Germany.

The new vessels are expected at the Kenya Ferry Services (KFS) anytime from February this year, according to Mr. Joseph Kingi, the chairman.

Meanwhile the government has released Ksh. 11 m to buy spare parts from Belgium to repair broken down ferries, KFS MD Isaac Kamau says.

# Nyong'o challenged to open clinics

*Nine dispensaries built with CDF remain idle and therefore could become white elephants, according to Kisumu rural residents.*

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

AT least 9 health facilities that have been constructed with the help of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Kisumu Rural Constituency are yet to become operational.

The facilities remain idle and are not beneficial to the residents after being certified complete by relevant authorities, including the area MP Prof. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, who is also the Minister for Medical Services.

Coincidentally, the immediate former long serving director of Medical Services Dr. James Nyikal also comes from the constituency.

The idle dispensaries are among 14 completed but not yet in use CDF projects in the constituency.

Since inception of the CDF, a total of 223 projects have been constructed in the constituency.

The status of projects in the constituency whose 2005/2006 projected population was 182,290 is as follows:-

Completed and in use – 122 projects, complete and partly in use – 2 projects, complete but not yet in use – 14 projects, incomplete but in use – 53 projects, incomplete and not yet in use – 15 projects, stalled – 5 projects and not yet started or nonexistent – 12 projects.

According to the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) chair Mr. Edwin Onyango Ochieng' and the CDF accounts manager Mr. Peter Achar the 9 dispensaries are not operating due to lack of personnel.



Prof Nyong'o

The duo however, accuses the former CDFC of failing to involve the line ministry during the planning and implementation of the facilities.

A total of 16 health facilities have since the inception of the CDF been put up in the constituency whose National poverty ranking stands at position 94 out

of 210.

The health facilities that were constructed using the CDF per location includes:

**South Central Seme**  
Asat dispensary, Bodi Health Centre and Kolenyo dispensary.

**East Seme**  
Kawino Langi dispensary, Kuoyo Kaila dispensary and Rodi dispensary

**North Central Seme**  
Korwenje dispensary

**West Kisumu**  
Lwala Kadawa dispensary and Riat Community Dispensary

**Otwenya**  
Miranga dispensary, Onyinjo dispensary and Rata dispensary.

**West Seme**  
Opapla dispensary

**South West Seme**  
Oriang' dispensary

**North West Kisumu Location**  
Sunga dispensary

Other projects that consumed a lot of tax payers' money and are complete but

not being used are in the water, education, agriculture and security sectors.

The 16 health facilities were constructed at the total cost of Kshs. 18,870,294 from the CDF kitty.

Despite the huge sums of money used to put up the facilities, only 7 health institutions are currently operating.

Unfortunately the health facilities are not operating when constituents trek long distances to seek medication.

This haphazard use of the CDF came to the fore during the recent Monitoring and Evaluation visit to the constituency by the National Anti – corruption Campaign Steering Committee (NACCSC), The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA), Open Society Institute for Eastern Africa (OSIEA) and the Media.

NACCSC delegation was led by the committee Vice Chairperson Rose Arungu Olende while TISA and OSIEA were represented by Dorah Nesoba and Wanjiru Gikonyo respectively.

During the Monitoring and Evaluation visit the team visited various development projects funded by the CDF and also interviewed the CDFC officials, Projects Management Committees (PMCs) and the Communities.

The ball is in Prof. Nyong'o' court to show leadership by ensuring that public funds meant for development of Kisumu Rural Constituency are used properly to benefit the people, not a few aspiring fat-cats.

## Home-based HIV testing lauded

By JOSEPH OJWANG

A NEW door-to-door HIV testing initiative may be just what Kenya needs to boost the fight against spread of HIV and Aids.

The Home Based HIV testing, which is being carried out in parts of Western and Nyanza province, has hit the region by storm.

In Kisumu East District, the initiative championed by a local Non Governmental Organization called Tuungane Youth Initiative (TYI), is attracting large numbers of targeted groups.

TYI programme coordinator Calisto Onyango says the approach is more proactive and more productive compared to the static VCT centers that have continued to register low testing figures since inception.

He says, the low reception of HIV voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), has continued to hinder the government attempts to prevent new HIV infections in the country.

The government had introduced large numbers of VCT centers in its primary healthcare facilities across the country to offer services and stimulate behavior change and provide an entry point for care and support services

Almost ten years down the line, a larger percentage of Kenyans still do not know their status despite the spirited interventions sponsored by the state to offer HIV counseling and testing.

Two reports launched recently indicate that a large number of Kenyans have not taken an HIV test and cannot make informed decisions on how to take care of their health.

The World Health Organization reported recently that only 37 percent of Kenyans aged between 15 and 49 years know their HIV status while the

*Youth group takes the know-your-status campaign fight to door-steps of Nyanza residents*

Kenya Aids Indicator Survey (KAIS) revealed that only 33.9 percent of Kenyans had gone for HIV testing.

The revelations paint a bleak future for the country as the government gears towards achieving 80 percent testing coverage by the end of next year.

Onyango said his team of trained VCT counselors who provide rapid HIV testing with pre- and post- test counseling in the villages, have, by visiting homes, discovered the magic bullet toward bringing in more people for testing.

Since its inception the home-based approach has seen over 54,000 people tested in their homes in one year alone.

Onyango says that they are going to give more emphasis on the new approach as compared to facility based VCT models. "Home based testing and delivery of HIV test results at home rather than in clinics appears to lead to higher uptake in testing," adds Onyango.

He said the idea allows them to target children who ordinarily do walk into VCT centers to be tested. With the consent of their parents or guardians, the counselors are able to test and counsel the minors.

Onyango noted that the approach has become more successful than the mobile testing which his organization also runs.

Dennis Willa, one of the counselors who have been involved in the programme, said the idea was first carried out as a pilot project in Suba district before Tuungane Youth Initiative tried it out in Kisumu East district.

Willa said programs in HIV and Aids are shifting more towards prevention. This has led to a bigger focus on methods that seek to increase the uptake of HIV testing. In that regard, home-based testing has come in handy as an effective avenue to get more patients on treatment and to prevent new infections.

James Otieno a resident of Nyalenda estate in Kisumu who benefited from the programme said the home based VCT is the best for a couple and their entire family.

Otieno aged 32 years old said he was tested alongside his wife and their 5 years old son.

I would recommend the initiative to be replicated in other areas, so that everybody can have a chance to know their status," said Otieno.

He said that he had never taken the VCT seriously until a team from Tuungane knocked at his door one day and listened to their counseling before he accepted the test.

Another beneficiary, Julian Mtembe, a widow who resides in Manyatta said his son aged 19 years declined to be tested.

Mtembe said she took the test after the death of her husband nearly five years ago. "I have been unable to go for the VCT due to fear but I took courage after the team came knocking. I was convinced after the counseling and I decided to take the test which was negative," she said.

She said the programme had enabled her to know her status and she will strive to live up to the teachings she got from the counselors.

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# All councils to get ambulance

*Metro minister Githae says Kshs.80 million set aside for project*

By MORRIS GITHENYA

LOCAL authorities in the country will be equipped with ambulances to boost their capacity in managing disasters within their areas of jurisdiction.

Already the government has spent Kshs. 80 million to acquire five ambulances which have been fitted with special features to attend to calamities of different nature.

Metropolitan Development Minister, Njeru Githae said millions of shillings will be spent to ensure each of the local authorities acquire ambulance to boost their capacity to attend to disasters.

Each of the first batch of five ambulances was bought at Kshs 16 million.

Githae spoke at Thika Municipal Council when he handed over an ambulance to the council. Thika is one of the local authorities located within the Metropolitan area.

The Minister said the local authorities with the ambulances will be expected to set up centres which will be manned by 30 people who will ensure that any fire alert is responded within 7 minutes as per international standards.

At the same time, the minister blamed red tape to delay

in the implementation of projects initiated by ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan.

Githae said unnecessary bureaucracy has delayed the construction of roads and other infrastructure within the metropolitan as the ministry has to always seek authority from concerned ministries.

"We have always wanted to dedicate a bus lane from Athi-River to Limuru so as to decongest the route but that too has been delayed by the bureaucracy," he said.

He said the ministry has been unable to provide sanitation, fire and ambulance services as the management of the same still lies with the local authorities.

"I look forward to the time when the development and administrative structures of local authorities report to the Nairobi Metropolitan," said Githae.

Metropolitan Ministry he said was planning to establish an emergency centre to be able to respond to emergencies promptly.

"At the moment, Kenyans rely on Kenya Navy to 'rescue' drowned people. We however intend to train people on how to respond to such emergencies within the



Mr Githae: Minister for Metropolitan Development

shortest time possible from our command centres," he said.

The Ministry, he said was

planning to provide fire engines to five local authorities namely Thika, Machakos, Tala, Kangundo and Kikuyu.

## Busia council unveils Kshs 12M plan

By GILBERT OCHIENG

THE municipal council of Busia has earmarked a total of Kshs12.1million for the implementation of projects during the current financial year.

According to the council expenditure estimates for the 2010/2011 financial year, the local authority will undertake various activities including the construction and rehabilitation of water points, construction and rehabilitation of rural access roads, bridges as well as the construction of classrooms in various primary schools within the municipality.

The local authority also intends to embark on a street lighting project, construction of health facilities and the preparation of the physical development plan within the municipality.

Busia deputy mayor, Lawrence Adungosi confirmed to The Link that the tendering process has already been done adding that the actual work on the projects is scheduled to take off soon.

The deputy mayor further said that the local authority plans to start monitoring and evaluating all the projects within its eight civic wards so as to ensure that they are properly done and completed within the stipulated time frame.

"The council has put in place measures to ensure that all the projects set to be undertaken during this financial year are completed and done well as per the expectation of the tax payers," he said, adding that no contractor will be paid before certifying that the projects are properly done.

The deputy mayor further disclosed that the municipal council of Busia has suspended three chief officers over the alleged embezzlement of Kshs7million that had been earmarked for the construction of a bridge by the Kenya Roads Boards during the 2007/2008 financial year.

The deputy mayor said that the decision to suspend the chief officers who included a former Town clerk, former council Treasurer and former council foreman was reached when the Kenya Roads Board (KRB) stopped funding the construction of rural access roads within the municipality after the alleged embezzlement of the project funds was exposed.

Adungosi further told The Link that the suspended chief officers had colluded with the contractor agreeing to pay him (contractor) the sum in question yet they knew well that he had done shoddy work on the bridge.

"The embezzlement of the project funds has put the local authority in an awkward situation. The council cannot divert part of the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) to complete the stalled bridge," the deputy mayor said, adding that the council is set to employ every means at its disposal to raise the embezzled fund and remit the same to the Kenya Roads Board before they can resume the funding.

The deputy mayor at the same time said that the council has already forwarded a proposal for a grant from the local government to facilitate the speedy completion of the stalled bridge.

"We have already done a proposal to the ministry of local government for a grant so as to facilitate the completion of the stalled bridge," the deputy mayor said, adding that lack of transparency and accountability on the part of corrupt council staffs will not be condoned.

# Gusii council unveils strategic plan

By BOB OMBATI

Gusii County council has rolled out a multi-million programme to revive moribund and open new markets to boost her dwindling revenue collection and offer effective and efficient services to the electorate.

The council Clerk, Isaac Githui, revealed that the civic body had earmarked Kshs. 10 million for the project, which is being implemented on a pilot basis under the Economic Stimulus Programme.

Already Nyakoe market which is the largest open air facility in the region is scheduled to benefit from the programme alongside other new markets at Nyamasibi, Eronge, Bobaracho markets which have been also commissioned after an assessment on their viability.

The initiative comes at an opportune moment to redeem the council whose revenue base declined drastically following the

*The Kshs. 10 million development project is being implemented on a pilot basis under the Economic Stimulus Programme.*

creation of new Districts as from 1990s, from the initial three to thirteen.

"The council covered the whole of Gusii but after the creation of the districts, Nyamira and Gucha county council were formed. The council had to share some of its most valuable assets, a scenario which impacted negatively on its financial base," adds the clerk.

The Clerk further explains that diversion of major roads, insecurity, non viability and lack of social amenities also resulted in the collapse of some markets but adds that the council new plan will help revamp and make them more vibrant

and viable to serve more traders in the region.

A spot check by the Link reveals that the council was forced to shut down some of the markets that were serving cross border communities at the height of post election chaos due to the decreased revenue collection as most traders fled the area in fear for their lives.

Githui says that under the Rapid Results Initiatives ( RRI) introduced by the government for effective service delivery to members of the public, the council has enacted new by-laws

to levy tax from dealers in sand, bricks and ballast to increase her revenue base and

plough it back through improved social amenities for traders from within and outside the region. The Clerk challenges contractors and residents to cooperate in paying taxes to enhance improved services, adding, negotiations are underway by the council to educate those affected by the by-laws to avoid conflicts.

The chief officer says that the council continues to rely on the Local Authority Fund ( LATF) to pay workers salaries and implement projects in her electoral wards but this will soon change once the council generates enough revenue to finance her operations.



# Nyeri women to access credit

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

*Loans of upto Kshs 100,000 will be given to individuals or group, thanks to grant from Gender ministry*

GENDER ministry has given Kshs 10 million to Biashara Sacco society in Nyeri to enable women in the area to access credit facilities.

According to the Society's chairman Mr Kamau Njamuku, the women will only be required to pay the loan at a rate of eight percent per year in reducing balance.

A lending programme will be rolled out soon and the society will advance credit from between Kshs5,000 to Kshs 100, 000 mostly to individuals but women groups will be given priority.

The repayment period will range from between 3 to 12 months and borrowers can use title deeds, guarantor's logbooks and market stalls as collaterals.

Njamuku said that they have already gone round the district educating the women so that they can be able to use the funds wisely once they receive them.

The chairman however said that the Sacco will be monitoring projects started by those who apply for the loans to manage any cases of misuse.

The Sacco has 2,500 members all over the district and for women who are not members of the Sacco and want to benefit from the loans will be required to



*A group of women group entertain guests at a past function.*

operate a women empowerment account in the sacco for one month before credit is approved.

Meanwhile the Central Bank will soon open its branch in Nyeri town. Cen-

tral Provincial Commissioner Mr Kiplimo Rugut says the branch will help businessmen in the province to invest and borrow heavily from the bank.

He said the bank has

agreed to open the branch in the New Year so that the province can benefit just like other towns where the bank has opened its branches.

Other towns where the bank has branches includes

Eldoret, Mombasa and Kisumu.

The bank adds to over ten financial institutions in the town. Recently Ecobank opened its own branch in town.

# Nyeri residents happy with revival of poly

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

ABOUT 500 residents of Gachika area in Nyeri Town Constituency have welcomed state efforts to revive a youth polytechnic in the area, saying the move will help local youths acquire basic skills and start income generating activities.

Speaking at Gachika trading Centre, the residents who were led by a representative of local resident association Mr Samuel Wamathai, urged the jobless youths to take advantage of the rehabilitated Gachika Youth Polytechnic which has now become operational.

Wamathai has been pushing the Government to revive all the youth polytechnics in the constituency in order for youths to acquire skills.

"This is what we have been praying for. The youth will now be able to acquire necessary skills and be able to start their own enterprises in future," says Wamathai.

Students who enroll in the institution will benefit from Kshs 15,000 which will be paid as fees by the government through the Ministry of Youths and Sports. So far 150 students have already enrolled and the number is expected to rise to 500 by the end of the month.

The move came as government announced plans to have communities run technical training institutions in their respective areas.

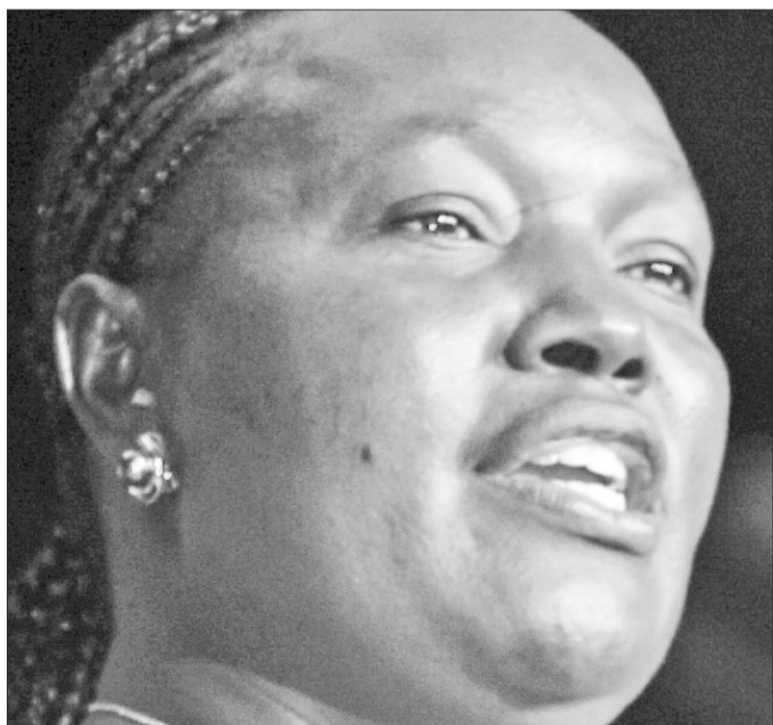
The Minister for higher education Dr Sally Kosgei says the programme to be implemented in partnership with the private

sector aims at involving the community on management of institutions in their midst.

"The programme involves auditing institutional and labour market needs, designing and developing proportional activities that can effectively market the institutions and serve the community," she adds.

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

She said that her ministry was preparing a policy that will guide the management of technical training institutions and cited the bursary scheme which is meant to ensure access to technical education.



*Dr. Sally Kosgei*

# Western water woes set to end

Construction of Tindinyo water project at Kshs. 2.5 billion has been commissioned by GoK and the Federal Democratic Republic of Germany

By BILL ESSAU

THE frequent water shortages that are synonymous with major towns in Western province will soon become a thing of the past.

This follows the commissioning of a multi million water project which is set to become operational by August this year.

The Tindinyo water project with an initial cost of Kshs. 2.5 billion has an impressive capacity of 15,000 cubic meters a day. The current capacity stands at a low of 5,000 cubic meters against a demand of 10,000 cubic meters.

According to Western PC Samuel Kilele, the project which is a joint venture between the government of Kenya and Germany will help resolve water problems that had continued to afflict area residents for decades.

He says that upon completion of the initial phase, water will be supplied to Kakamega District before being extended to Busia District where current supply is unreliable.

The new project comes as a big relief to the close to 2 million people in the targeted areas and will help end water rationing that Kakamega town residents have been subjected to in the past.

Western Water Services Company Managing Director Eng. Peter Njagah says the project is supposed to deliver uninterrupted supply until 2025 when implementation of the second phase will commence



Water Minister Charity Ngilu commissions a water project. Photo/File

Urban centres in the region have over the years suffered water outages that have, on many occasions forced residents to rely on untreated water drawn from streams that flow next to the towns for both their commercial and domestic use.

This has exposed residents to water borne diseases which have taken a high toll on productive members of the society.

The shortages have, in

the past been attributed to a strained piping system that has been in existence for over seventy years now with an initial capacity to serve a population of 5, 000 people but the number has scaled to close to one million at the moment.

The pipeline has had frequent bursts due to rusting. Outages had to sometimes last for months as most of the pipe sizes are not available locally and have had to be ordered from abroad to have the mess

fixed and restore supply.

However, in the recent past, the shortages have been linked to failure by local water companies to promptly pay their electricity bills, a scenario that has caused disconnection of power supply by the Kenya Power and Lighting.

But the good news is that the project will drastically cut electricity costs for water companies because water will be supplied from the Nandi escarpments by force gravity.

## Sugar farmers demand to own Nzoia

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

Campaigns to push for the privatization of Nzoia Sugar Company have begun in earnest.

Leaders in farmers outgrower organizations have embarked on a programme to sensitize farmers in the sugar scheme and called on their members to give them authority to have their cane proceeds deducted.

The farmer organizations led by the Nzoia out grower company (NOCO), are appealing to farmers to have 15% of their cane proceeds deducted towards purchase of the shares of the miller.

Despite the government saying that farmers are to own 30% of the share holding when the factories are privatized, the Nzoia zone still insist that they deserve more.

NOCO chairman, Joash Wamang'oli addressing a handful of farmers at Machakha market recently told them that they are opposed to the minister of Agriculture announced of giving them only 30 per cent of the shares.

"The minister of agriculture must agree to our demands of owning 35 per cent of the shares of the company," he said.

Warning that failure to revise the ministerial directive was likely going to affect local jobs at the firm.

"As farmers we stand firm and resolute that we shall only accept 35 per cent of the shares, failure of which, options are open to rethink continue being cane farmers," he warned.

He told farmers to be prepared even uprooting the crop should the government deny them more shares.

The benefits he said were enormous for share holders, which farmers as providers of raw materials should be involved.

Nzoia sugar company is heavily indebted to a tune of shs.26billion

Turn to page 27, Col. 1

# Poor working conditions in new district

By MORRIS GITHENYA

IMMIGRATION Minister Otieno Kajwang came face to face with the poor working conditions that his staff in the newly created districts in Muranga have to contend with in their daily routine.

Most workers in the new districts created by President Mwai Kibaki lack accommodation and have been forced to depend on their parent districts for basic necessities such as housing and transportation.

The minister who was in a

tour of Central and Eastern Province last month heard how officers in Kangema, Mathioya and Kahuro districts were operating from condemned houses that posed risk to their lives.

The minister accompanied by Kiharu Mp Muturi Mwangi and Murang'a DC George Natembeya was informed that some staff members were working from former colonial cells in Kangema while others have turned condemned staff quarters in Mathioya their abode.

The Minister however said that the government will soon

allocate funds to enable the affected officers to rent offices to enhance the delivery of services.

Murang'a DC said that most residents have been unable to access funds earmarked for both the women and youth due to lack of national identification cards. Many of the youth, Natembeya said fail to acquire finances from youth and women enterprise funds owing to lack of identity cards.

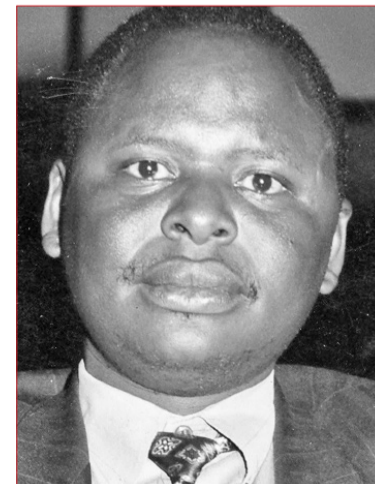
"Failure to get ID cards is largely to blame for stagnation in development matter in the region but efforts are being made

to educate the public on the need to be registered with the government," said the DC.

At the sametime, the Mbita MP said his Ministry was working to ensure visa application is done on line to lock illegal immigrants from accessing the vital document.

He said on line visa application would also assist in monitoring visitors on watch list from other countries.

"This will help the country security agents to be alert in establishing those living in the country illegally", said the Minister.



Mr Kajwang

# ADB funds Mau conservation efforts

By MORRIS GITHENYA

AFRICAN Development Bank (ADB) has earmarked Kshs 127.5 million to finance programs geared towards the promotion of environmental conservation in the country.

The program covering 24 districts targets small scale farmers who are being trained on ways to preserve the environment and the need to make a living from selling of tree seedlings.

The program covers five water towers which include Mau forest, Cherangany, Mt Elgon, Aberdare and Mt Kenya and will run until 2012.

According to a representative of the Green Zone Africa Mr. Francis Kariuki, a series of forums have been held to educate farmers on small scale agro forestry and how to make income out of selling tree seedlings to NGOs involved in environmental conservation.

“At the end of the program, it is expected that 170,000 farmers will have been trained to have the project trickle down to others,” Kariuki said.

Kariuki spoke at Muthigiri primary school in Gikindu location during graduation of 46 small scale farmers who were trained for a year under



Part of destroyed Mau forest.

the program funded by training in the Green Zone Africa.

During the occasion Murang'a East District Commissioner George Natembeya warned that action will be illegal loggers who were responsible for the wanton destruction of forests in the country.

The administrator revealed that in the past several culprits have been arrested and charged with illegal logging.

Natembeya through Kiharu DO Edward LEGLO said stern action will be taken against those flouting environmental guidelines.

## Sugar farmers demand to own Nzoia

From page 26

by last December.

And the government is working on ways to pull out of management of the mills, by wanting to sell shares.

This comes after a report by the Transparency International, released a report last November revealing rot in the sugar industry.

The report indicated that the local sugar industry was facing collapse due to lack of accountability.

Listening to farmers leaders, on the trail of privatization, the threat is not mismanagement now, as they insist ownership is the issue.

For Nzoia, they claim top jobs are held by locals who may lose them should shares be held by outsiders.

They are warning farmers not to go the Mumias way, saying that controlling stakes lies in allowing the deduction to go ahead.

Last month, the Nzoia sugar company managing director Saul Wasilwa wrote to the chairman of the local branch chairman of the Kenya National Sugarcane Growers Union about the need to establish the Trust Board.

The Letter notes that there is need for the formation of the

Trust Board, representing major stakeholders before deductions are done.

The MD also recommended for widely publicist farmers education forums on their need to buy shares and have them sign appropriate forms authorizing the deductions, for the exercise to begin.

“Unless this modalities are put in place deductions will not be allowed”, the letter says.

A director with Nozia sugar company, Margaret Nguti said as a board they are opposed to having shares of the company going to no-farmers.

Their wish as a board, she added, was to have 70 per cent of the shares taken up by suppliers of raw materials if they are given enough time to prepare.

The three months notice given by the government, she complained, was not adequate, but efforts have to be made by mobilizing farmers to use their own crop proceeds and secure the allocated percentage.

The leaders present prevailed upon farmers not to focus on the past differences, but work as a team to convince farmers to agree on the deduction formula.

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# Mass transfers of teachers in Kilifi

By BEKADZO TONDO

The government has transferred about 20 primary school head teachers in Bahari and Ganze Districts in a bid to address the declining educational standards in the area.

A representative of the Kenya National Union of Teachers in the affected Districts Mr. Patrick Rasi revealed that 30 other school deputy head teachers were affected in the transfers some of which were done on the basis of promotion.

The Knut executive secretary Mr. Rasi who talked to The Link in his office in Kilifi termed the transfers as normal and healthy for the improvement of the schools performance.

Rasi said all the teachers who were affected in the transfers politely picked their transfer letters and moved to their new stations something which showed that they accepted the changes.

"None of the teachers affected in the mass transfers has come to our office to protest and that was a clear sign that our teachers have welcomed them" says Rasi.

The official however urged the transferred head teachers and their deputies who had been promoted as heads to work hard in their new stations and assist



A section of head teachers being addressed in a past workshop in Mombasa.

improve the districts performance in the national examinations.

Rasi further noted that the district was faced with an acute shortage of teachers, a problem that also contributed to the poor performance in two Districts.

He said that at the moment the district was faced with a deficit of about 3,000 teachers and urged the government to deploy more teachers in the area to ad-

dress the shortage.

"How do you expect schools to perform well when the number of teachers in the schools is much lower compared to the enrollment of children per class," argues Rasi. He said the situation had been aggravated by the opening up of about 40 new primary schools in the two districts last year.

Rasi said that no additional teachers were deployed to teach

in the new schools but instead the ministry transferred some teachers from the existing schools to work in the new institutions.

Bahari District Education Officer (DEO) Mr. Dickson Ole Keis also confirmed the transfers saying that they were part of government efforts to improve performance in the schools.

"We decided to transfer head teachers from the schools which recorded poor results in last year's KCPE so that they can improve their performance adding that the transfers were a normal exercise within the ministry," added Keis.

The education officer however blamed poor performance registered in some schools during last year's KCPE to head teachers, deputies and teachers who had overstayed in one station. Parents on their part welcomed the transfers arguing that most of the head teachers had been sleeping on the job.

Most of the parents who talked to The Link complained on the massive misuse of the free primary education funds by the head teachers.

They demanded an audit of the funds and recommended that those found to have been involved in embezzlement of public funds be sacked.

## Disabled persons in Busia benefit from donation

By GILBERT OCHIENG

EIGHTY-FOUR persons with disabilities from Burinda location in Butula district have received farm inputs from the Association of the Physically Disabled Persons of Kenya [APDK] Busia branch.

Addressing the beneficiaries after presenting them with farm inputs at Burinda chief centre recently, the area Member of Parliament Mr. Alfred Odhiambo, urged them to make maximum use of the items they had been issued with so as to engage in active agriculture aimed at alleviating poverty in the district.

The area legislator commended the disabled association for providing the revolving loan facilities to the disabled persons in Butula district and particularly the larger Busia district, saying the same had empowered them to engage in income generating activities thus improving their standards of living.

"I am appealing to you to extend the good gesture to other locations in Butula district so that other needy persons who are yet to be identified and are suffering in silence could also benefit from the same," the legislator said.

Odhiambo called upon the beneficiaries to take advantage of the loan facilities being provided by the micro-finance organizations operating in the district so that they can invest in the activities of their choice adding that they should not fear taking loans.

"No meaningful development can take place without loan facilities. Successful people you see around here owning skyscrapers could not achieve their dreams had they feared taking loans," he said, adding that the only sure way out of poverty was to access the loan facilities for advancement.

The farm inputs comprised of hybrid maize seeds, sorghum seeds as well as fertilizers among others.

The occasion was also attended by the association's Busia branch coordinator Mr. Gideon Sagalla, the micro-finance officer Mr. Chrisnus Adome and the chairman of Burinda Disabled Self-Help Group Mr. John Omadwa among others.

By GILBERT OCHIENG

BUTULA District Commissioner Mr. Bosek Lang'at has appealed to area residents not to take the law into their own hands by killing suspected criminals saying they should instead hand them over to the police so that law can take its rightful course.

The provincial administrator made the remarks during a public baraza that was convened at Bumala trading centre recently aimed at addressing the rampant insecurity in Bumala location that has of late resulted into the death of innocent people especially the business community and loss of property.

The provincial administrator's call to the residents to hand over suspects to the police came in the wake of threats by residents that they would lynch suspected criminals. They claimed that police were colluding with criminals instead of protecting them from the armed thugs who carry out their evil missions with impunity.

"The police have failed to protect our lives. Whenever we alert them after we have been attacked, they take too long to come to our rescue despite the fact the police patrol base is situated a few metres away from the town centre.

The standoff between the police and area residents was sparked off when a 47 year old businessman from Murumba trading cen-

## Butula residents threaten to lynch criminals

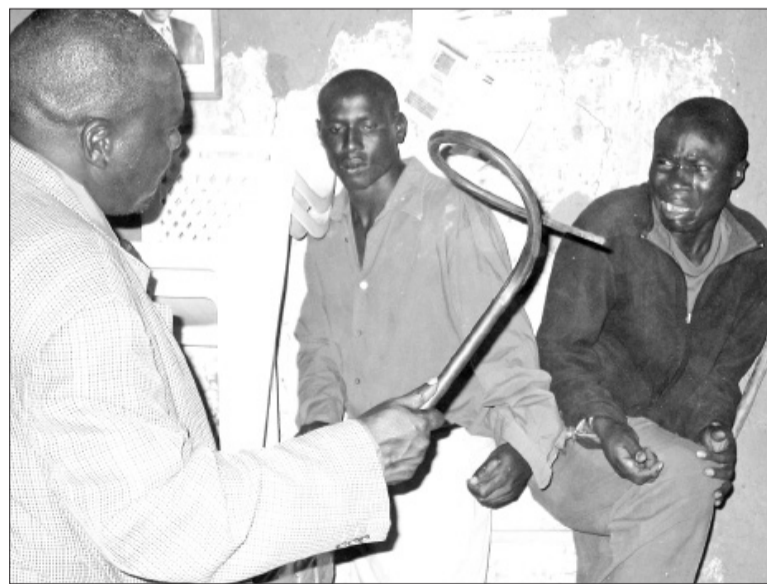
*But area DC urges them to respect rule of law by handing suspects to the police*

tre was waylaid and shot dead by unknown gunmen who escaped immediately after the shooting. The deceased was found the following morning a long a foot path leading to his home.

However, the district commissioner assured the residents that the government was committed to protect their lives adding that measures have already been put in place to provide additional security personnel as well as more patrol vehicles aimed at beefing up security even at the village level.

"Am appealing to you to pass information on suspected criminal elements to the police," the provincial administrator said, adding that most illegal firearms from neighbouring countries had been sneaked into the country through secret entry points.

Lang'at further expressed concern over the rising insecurity in Burinda, Bujumba and Marachi West locations saying chiefs and their assistants from the affected areas should hold barazas regu-



Suspects being disciplined by one of the security officers.

larly to lay the strategies on how to curb insecurity. The provincial administrator at the same time warned stern action would be taken on any police officer found

fueling criminal activities in the area by colluding with the criminal gangs as claimed adding that they risked being relieved of their duties instantly when caught

# Family alleges cover up in kin's death

By KAVYU KURA

THE family of a man who died under mysterious circumstances while in police custody last December has called for the immediate prosecution of police officers implicated in the heinous crime.

The family also wants an independent team to investigate the circumstances that led to the death of their 26-year old son Peter Ngundi Mwelenga.

The late Mwelenga allegedly died in the hands of police officers at Ngomeni police out post in Kyuso district as he was being interrogated over alleged stock theft and escape from lawful police custody.

The distraught family says that although a postmortem report had indicated that the deceased was hit with a blunt object before he died, the police officers who were inter-

rogating him at the time of his death have not been arrested.

According to the report compiled by a Dr. Peter Ndegwa, of City Mortuary Nairobi, the body of the deceased had multiple bruises covering shoulders, face, buttocks and both upper and lower limbs.

The pathologist also pointed out that the deceased was bleeding from the tissue organs an indication that he had been subjected to traumatic pain prior to his death. The autopsy report concluded that the cause of death was musculoskeletal injuries due to blunt force trauma.

But police have since discounted the report and maintained that the deceased collapsed and died while in police custody.

However the family expressed their disappointment over the manner in which the police were handling the matter and ruled out any

possibilities of ever realizing justice as police wanted to cover up the murder which is believed to be an extra judicial killing.

An uncle to the deceased Eliud Mainga who was accompanied by another relative Morris Ndoos says the ultimate failure to arrest the four officers who handled Mwelenga moments before he met his death was clear that the police authorities may not bring the culprits to book.

Mr. Mainga further complained that a police corporal who was with the deceased at the time of his death has allegedly threatened inmates who witnessed the killing against disclosing any information to investigators.

He claims attempts by the family to seek the intervention of senior police authorities at the Mwingi police divisional headquarters under whose jurisdiction Kyuso district

falls, have been fruitless since no action has been taken against the way ward officer. However, the Mwingi officer commanding police division Mr. Kenneth Kimani has dismissed allegations pointing to a possible cover-up saying things cannot happen that fast.

He said he had already taken action by transferring the officers suspected to have been behind the death to the neighbouring Nguni and Ukasi police stations and had also opened a file over the issue and was currently awaiting the AG to advise on whether to arrest the police officers or to open an inquest into the death.

The family through its lawyer has vowed not to relent until justice is realized. The lawyer says that there is overwhelming evidence that policemen were involved in the death of the late Mwelenga and would soon move to court to institute private prosecution against the officers once he compiles all the relevant documents.

The lawyer further demanded an assurance that investigations into the circumstances leading to the death of the deceased would be prompt, conclusive and professional.

## Free primary education woes deepen

From page 2

velopment of the school's infrastructure. However the money withdrawn from the account hardly reaches the school.

The report further indicates that the Primary School Infrastructure Investment Program (SIIP) established during the 2005/2006 Financial Year with a budget of Kshs.5,786,920,000 has grossly been abused with ministry officials using it a conduit to siphon funds earmarked for projects within the sector.

Questions are also being raised at the manner in which the computer for school project and the installation of fire and the laboratory equipment projects have been implemented. According to the report, the implementation of the said projects was shrouded in secrecy and flouted procurement procedures.

Further, the study reveals that in 2009, the Ministry launched the National Schools Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion Strategy 2008-2015. The programme which seeks to improve the learning environment in schools by providing safe water, sanitation facilities and hygiene promote was allocated Kshs7.955billion in a joint initiative by the government and donors.

However, the initiation of the programme was largely undertaken by the government and development partners leaving out parents who were expected to provide a significant portion of the funds.

The Ministry of Education has since hired a technical advisor through single sourcing to design public toilets and latrines for schools with support from an architect attached to the ministry of Public Works.

The study established that the sector was operating in huge deficits occasioned mainly by failure by donors to release funds entered as 'appropriations in aid', incessant delays by the treasury to release funds and delays in the signing of projects documents.

"The delay in receipt of funds has resulted in controversial payments of pending bills to contractors for education development projects. In some cases contractors have forced the government to incur financial penalties for delayed payments for projects that had been allocated funds," states the report.

The agency recommends the establishment of an education management authority to enhance accountability in the management of school funds in line with proposals by the Kamunge task force.

The proposed authority should ensure implementation of policy guidelines, supervise financial matters, enforce education standards, develop and implement education programmes in line with policy directives.

TI suggests that the Ministry retains policy making and guidance roles while the authority takes up the functions of most of the existing institutions, such as the Kenya Institute of Education, Kenya National Examination Council and Kenya Institute of Special Education to avoid duplication of roles.

# Justice Musinga is a cut above the rest

By BOB OMBATI

That a Kenyan High court Judge, Justice Musinga, has finalized two election petitions within two years shows strongly that the judges are capable of concluding cases rapidly.

In the first petition that the Justice Musinga, who is now rightly hailed as a paragon of virtue, handled, Bomachoge MP Joel Onyancha lost his seat due to a petition against his election that was filed by Zephaniah Nyangwara and Simon Ogari. The seat was later taken by Mr. Ogari through a by-election on an ODM party ticket.

Second in the line of fire was the former Assistant minister for Trade and South Murgirango MP Omingo Magara, who lost the fight to Manson Nyamweya, as the court ruled against him. Nyamweya had vied for the seat on a Ford People ticket during the 2007 general elections and lost to Magara.

Justice Musinga nullified the election of Magara citing glaring discrepancies in Form 16A and 17A, which created disparities in the final tallying of the votes though Magara won.

Though Magara garnered 10,000 votes against Oyong'o's 5000 during the recount of votes ordered by the court, the judge ruled that the process had serious flaws, which could not warrant a free, transparent and fair election. The by-election process has been set in motion, although Magara has appealed against the ruling.

As Musinga analyzed the



A section of Nairobi Law Courts

evidence adduced in court both from the recount and scrutiny of the ballot boxes, he occasionally differed with the counsels and made summary rulings which puzzled all and sundry.

During the hearing the Judge intervened and redirected the counsel to be relevant in their cross examination of witnesses, a move that surprised the lawyers and supporters of both parties who had turned up for the hearing.

Although it is too soon to start popping champagne, Musinga's swift justice is a sign that

local courts are beginning to change in the right direction and Kenyans may soon begin to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

It is worth noting that when Samwel Kivuitu, the then ECK chairman declared president Kibaki winner in the 2007 elections, Raila Odinga, who was presumed to have won the poll refused to go to court to challenge the result, believing the petition will drag for years and he may never get justice since the Judges were presidential appointees.

Now, the Judiciary is slowly but surely changing face and with the Rapid Response Initiative (RRI) policy and the impending constitution review process, the Judiciary is likely to be more independent and devoid of any political manipulations.

The two rulings are a clear pointer that courts can operate independently and serve all Kenyans fairly without fear, favor or any interference for monetary or political gain if judges refuse to bend backwards for lords of corruption and impunity to have their way.

# Migwani residents rise against hunger

By JOE OMBUOR

THE dry, rocky canyon that is Kanyaa River in Migwani District south of Nairobi carried water throughout in the distant past, say residents, most of whom are too young to have witnessed the phenomenon. Today, only air flows in it during the dry season.

Older folks talk nostalgically of rivers where the non-musical croaking of frocks never ceased and a verdant landscape replete with food, water and milk. Draught, hunger and thirst were a once in a lifetime phenomenon that one would be lucky to live long enough to experience.

Now, the elderly and the young are working towards that old past through a novel approach known as RISE, a multi pronged method involving soil conservation, re-forestation of denuded hill tops, exploitation of useful draught resistant plants to generate wealth and erection of weirs to create sand dams en route to water and crop yields and opposed to crop wilt.

"We are determined to rise and retrace our steps to the plentiful past of our forbears," says RISE founder director, Temi M. Mutia, his face aglow with hope. RISE is acronym for Regional Institute for Social Enterprise.

Institute? Mutia strives to alleviate my surprise with an explanation that RISE, the fledgling non-governmental organisation (NGO) that is imbuing the locals with hope for a better future has a training component to impart necessary skills.

"Our 10,000 or so members are divided into 21 groups of community based organisations (CBOs), each of which nominates five people to be trained in skills such as agro forestry, fruit tree grafting, weaving, chemical mixing for micro industries, crop and animal husbandry and the like to pass to their members," he elucidates as I nod, mesmerised.

"By social enterprise, we mean capitalising on the idle human resource for enterprising activities geared at uplifting their own economic well being," clarifies Mutia.

Rehabilitating the river where the construction of a weir is ongoing is an example of the social enterprise because folks are mobilised to be part of the project by ferrying construction stones, sand and other



River flowing through the dry area in Eastern province.

locally available material for the work. The NGO provides cement, steel and other hard ware. Once completed, the sand dam is expected to cost sh500, 000 will be an important water harvester.

"The water will be used to convert this waste land into a bread basket through irrigation," enthuses Mutia.

Already, part of the badly eroded land close to the weir in Kiandani village has been reclaimed by the Kanyaa Community Based Organisation with elaborate bench terraces and cropped with aloe vera that they expect to irrigate in future. Mutia says plans are under way to build similar weirs on dry rivers all over Migwani district to harvest rain water currently flowing to waste into the Indian Ocean as the Government watches. "We are determined to succeed where successive governments since independence have failed," he

stresses confidently.

To reverse the environmental degradation caused by charcoal burning as a short cut to livelihood, RISE is involving its members in sustainable exploitation of aloe vera, sisal and other readily available natural resources they have always taken for granted.

Group Aloe farms now dot the region, supported by micro industries making soap, creams, lotion and other products from the crop that grows wild here. Sisal, an exotic crop favoured by the local climate and used to mark boundaries is rivalling aloe vera as a source of income as its fibres come in handy for disc shaped coloured mats popular in the developed world for decorating handbags.

"It has dawned on our people that there is more money in manufacturing aloe based beauty products and weaving than burning charcoal. Our trees are now safe and we are plant-

ing more," says Mutia. "To that end, each of the 21 CBOs has a tree nursery to boot," he discloses.

Across the seared ridges and valleys of Migwani, the power of change fuelled by RISE can be seen in once sleepy shopping centres where life is slowly creeping back. Not only are the shops open again, but among the products on the shelves are locally produced soaps, lotions, creams and juice from locally grown mangoes and other fruits.

Housewives who once lived in boredom and hunger, scratching the barren earth to grow crops that never matured to harvesting age due to erratic and unreliable rainfall now happily tend the draught resistant Aloe Vera and sisal.

Together, they bleed the aloe to extract its green juice and, amid excited chats, spend their time mixing items such as silicate, caustic soda, coconut oil, ungaron, salt and colour

with the juice to make detergents, bar soaps, toilet soaps, lotion and cream. The industrial raw materials are initially supplied by RISE, after which they purchase their own with their profits.

Those in the weaving business are planting sisal to supplement what they get from fences and hedges and spend their time crocheting and colouring mats nick named CD from their round shape. The CDs, just like the electronic ones, are of a standard size that must be adhered to as dictated by the export market.

The weaving co-ordinator for all the 21 CBOs Mrs Juliana Kithyo Musyoka says more millions of shillings has accrued from weaving since the enterprise started about a year ago. Some members are making as much as sh1, 700 per week, she reveals.

A mother of six, Musyoka describes economically empowered women as the engines of development in any society. "That is what we are today. Our economic liberation has translated into healthier looking children in our houses, more attractive looking wives with the magnet to capture the attention of their husbands, and peace in the domestic front where quarrels were the norm whenever husbands failed to place food on the table," she says.

Gone are the days when her and other women gifted in singing entertained politicians at public functions for miserable hand outs, she boasts.

Musyoka, like all her counterparts in the Wasya wa Mwaitu (the voice of women) group of women, which she chairs, swears never to sing again in praise of politicians to receive handouts. She says proudly: "RISE has helped us reclaim our lost esteem, prestige and pride in a society that despises the poor to the extent of seeing them as unwanted scam.

"With money in my pocket, my husband and children consult me for advise while shop keepers and matatu touts who used to view me as a useless beggar handle with respect and care.

Musyoka says people in Migwani have been economically empowered to a point where famine relief, school dropouts among children and deaths from HIV/Aids due to food deficiency are receding to the background of memory.

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Busia DC Mr Mwiandi Gitonga has decried laxity among some heads of departments saying that they will be dealt with firmly.

The DC made the remarks during a District Executive Committee (DEC) forum that was held at the Busia district information and documentation centre's boardroom recently attended by all departmental heads.

The DC singled out the district lands department which, he noted, had failed to provide effective service delivery to

## Busia DC reads riot act to heads

the public in line with the recently initiated rapid results initiative[RRI]aimed at ensuring prompt and effective service delivery.

Gitonga further expressed concern saying that majority of clients, approximately 70 percent have been crowding in his office to complain over poor service delivery on the part of clerks based at the lands department.

"Serve members of the public with due respect and talk to

your staff to handle their clients well," the district commissioner said, adding that 95percent of the clients who have been seeking services from the survey department have on several occasions complained to him over harassment by a survey officer.

"The survey officer has always been rude to clients seeking his service telling them to go to whoever they feel would serve them well, but my patience has run out and I will have no alternative except to

take serious disciplinary action against him," the DC warned, adding that those who have overstayed in one station for long would be transferred elsewhere.

The district commissioner at the same time appealed to all the departmental heads to utilize their departmental allocations[AIEs] in a transparent and accountable manner aimed at providing effective service delivery to the public who are the taxpayers.

Complaints on corruption of the highest magnitude had been rife at the Busia lands department and surprisingly enough, as the district executive committee(DEC) meeting was in progress, the District Lands Registrar was recording a statement with the Busia District Criminal Investigation Officers from the Busia police station regarding alleged corrupt practices by some clerical officers at the lands department that is said to have seen several clients losing their parcels of land through the issuance of fake title deeds.

# Relentless peace ambassador

*Busia residents lucky to have Regina Omenge among them*

By GILBERT OCHIENG

RISPHER Regina Omenge, 36, will not relent until she succeeds in her campaign to promote peaceful co-existence among the various communities residing in Busia irrespective of their ethnic background.

Regina has every reason to undertake the spirited campaign as she was among thousands of people who were displaced at the height of the post election violence in 2007.

"I opted to venture into peace building initiative after I was subjected to a harrowing ordeal during the eruption of violence that saw innocent people lose their dear lives and properties for reasons best known to the perpetrators of the post election violence", says Omenge, adding that all her tools of trade were burnt beyond recognition whereas some were looted by armed youths.

Prior to the skirmishes, Regina was a successful businesswoman in Nakuru's Kiratina estate for over nine years. She recalls with nostalgia the good old days when she used to go about her poultry and detergent business in a peaceful atmosphere until hell broke loose as soon as the results of the disputed presidential votes were made public.

The internally displaced businesswoman who had contested the Nakuru East civic ward under the



**Regina Omenge (with handbag) receiving an award for promoting peace among various communities living in Busia.**

Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party ticket says she escaped death by a whisker and returned to Busia by one of the lorries hired by Compassion International (CI) where her husband worked as a volunteer parent representative in Nakuru's Free Area.

"The situation was so tense that

we had to call the Kenya Army personnel from Lanet Barracks from our hideout to guard us from bloodthirsty youths who were armed to teeth with all manner of crude weapons aimed at finishing us," the victim recalls, adding that they managed to save their dear lives when the armed forces quickly re-

sponded to their distress call and finally escorted them to safety.

The victim further says that prior to the post election violence she had been working as a volunteer supervisor at the Nakuru District Children's department under a programme known as Orphaned Vulnerable Children Cash Transfer

(OVC-CT). She was based at Lanet location.

However in Busia, she went through a training jointly organized by the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the Kenya Lands Alliance (KLA) and the Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA) which was to become a stepping stone.

"I was among individuals who were trained and later posted to their respective areas so as to sensitize and reconcile the victims of the post election violence," she says, adding that she is fully set to accomplish the responsibility bestowed upon her as a Community Coordinator in charge of the larger Busia district.

The post election violence victim further says she had also had the opportunity to train as a volunteer Home Based Care (HBC) as well as a Community Health Worker (CHW).

"I will fully utilize the training skills I have gained from the peace building workshops I have attended to promote peace building among the various communities residing in the larger Busia district which is a cosmopolitan area so that they are able to co-exist harmoniously as one people," Omenge quips and is emphatic that without peace no meaningful development initiatives can be realized.

Apart from the peace building responsibility, the post election violence victim is currently producing liquid detergents locally which she sells for a living in Busia town and its environs.

## Elderly, children in Busia get cash

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

GENDER Ministry has so far disbursed a total of sh4.5million in the 2nd quarter to the Busia District Social Development department during the financial year 2009/2010.

The money is meant for payment of the orphaned vulnerable children (OVCs) and the elderly persons aged between 65 and above under a cash transfer programme.

The Busia District Gender and Social Development Officer Margaret Ojago made the remarks during a District Executive Committee (DEC) forum held at the Busia district information and documentation centre's boardroom recently.

The Officer said that during the financial year 2009/2010, the department was given the go-ahead to scale up the program to other areas and cover a further 650 elderly persons and also increase on the cash allocation from sh1,000 to sh1,500 per month.

Ojago said that the pilot project has been implemented in Bukhayo West location in Matayos division of Busia district with 100 elderly persons on monthly of sh1,000 adding that the department has so far disbursed a total of Ksh1.2million during the financial year 2008/2009.

"The overall objectives of this

program is to strengthen the capacity of the elderly persons to improve on their livelihood and alleviate intergenerational poverty through sustainable social protection mechanisms," Mrs Ojago said, adding that the program is only targeting the elderly persons aged 65 and above who are most vulnerable.

The District Gender and Social Development Officer briefed the stakeholders on the implementation instruments for the elderly persons' cash transfer program which includes the older persons' draft policy, persons with disability policy, children Act 2001, national policy on gender and development, social protection draft policy, vision 2030, Livingstone Accord 2006 and the constitution of Kenya.

She noted that the specific objectives of the program was to provide regular and predictable cash transfer to the vulnerable older persons in identified households is aimed at building the capacity of the beneficiaries to improve their standards of living.

According to the data obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics, the poverty index for Budalangi division in Bunyala district is 67.57 against a household population of 45,655 of which the number of those living below the poverty line are 30,848.



**A group of children set to benefit from the donation**

In Butula division of Butula district, the poverty index is 67.68 against a household population of 89,571 of which 60,624 individuals are living below the poverty line. In Funyula division of Samia district, the poverty index is 68.12 against a household population of 71,991 out of which 49,041 individuals are liv-

ing below the poverty line.

In Matayos division of Busia district, the poverty index is 67.69 against a household population of 4,520 out of which 36,906 individuals are living below the poverty line whereas Nambale division has a poverty index of 66.94 against a household population of 5,386 out

of which 43,771 individuals are living below the poverty level.

Township division within Busia municipality on its part has a poverty index of 66.64 against a household population of 7,572 of which 5,046 individuals are living below the poverty level.

# Muhoroni squatters demand justice

*They claim that land meant for them ended up in the hands of 'mbutas'*

By JONES MAGARE

THE plight of seventy-nine families in the newly created Muhoroni District who have lived in squalid conditions over the last 45 years after having been displaced by the British government and white settlers is yet to be resolved.

The families now want the government to intervene and resettle them as they address past historical injustices committed by successive regimes.

A previous attempt to resettle the workers in 1997 was mired with controversy and ended up benefitting influential personalities and senior government officials.

Credible documents available at the Ministry of Lands and Settlement indicate that influential individuals were allocated between 3 to 4 hectares, while the landless and displaced workers and families received a paltry three quarters of an acre each.

Initially the fertile land was occupied by white settlers during the pre-colonial era. However when the country attained independence from the British colonial government, the bulk of White settlers also left, leaving behind their farms in Muhoroni.

Some of the White settlers who occupied these farms were popularly known by local residents as Bwana Sitiro, Gofa and Adeba.

According to a local civic leader, Willice Ogunyo, the first African government which came to power after the country attained independence under the leadership of the late President Jomo Kenyatta converted the white farms in Muhoroni into a settlement scheme in the 1960s.

He says the objective of establishing the scheme was to enhance agricultural activity, introduce sugarcane production as a cash crop and provide alternative land to landless Kenyans and local residents displaced by fierce floods ex-

perienced in neighbouring Kano plains in the 1950s and late 1960s.

Ogunyo explains that a portion of the scheme known as Muhoroni Livestock Holding was hived off between 1997 and 1998 to cater for the abandoned and landless workers of former White settlers while 33 hectares were allocated to Lake Basin Development Authority (LABDA).

"But soon the parcel also known as Jaber and Tonde settlement scheme that had been set aside for the multi-ethnic group of workers of former White settlers was grabbed and irregularly allocated to influential people," Ogunyo laments.

Ogunyo points out that in Tonde area, only 119 workers and their families were allocated land leaving out seven of the beneficiaries, while in Jaber non of the 72 cases benefitted from the land. Documents from former Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environment indicate that 45 senior government and influential personalities were illegally allocated the land.

Among the illegal beneficiaries include a former Member of Parliament Justus Aloo Ogeka (1.2 ha. plot no. 121), former Provincial Commissioner S. Oreta (1.1 ha. Plot no. 122), former Western Kenya director of physical planning Geffith Ndosio who was allocated 1.22 hectares in plot no.124. Major George A. Awino (0.6 ha. Plot no. 98), Major Alfred Buoke Ngonga (0.22 ha. Plot no. 58), Major Suleimani Nyamwa (1.2ha. plot no. 128), Councillor Christopher Opanga (0.9 ha. Plot no. 93), Senior Sergeant Yala (1.2 ha. Plot no. 130) and Dr. Thomas .O. Aroka.

Other alleged illegal allottees include John Aguya (0.3 ha. Plot no. 45), Otieno Ogingo (1.2 ha. Plot no. 59), W.O. Omom Okal (1.2 ha. Plot no. 91), Edward Juma (1.2 ha. Plot no. 92), Alice Adhiambo (0.48ha plot no. 94), Veronica Achieng (0.6 ha. (plot no. 95),



President Kibaki, Kofi Annan and PM Raila during mediation after post-election violence in 2007

Philip Ochanda (0.6 ha. Plot no. 96), Fabian Juma (0.6 ha. Plot no. 99), Hellen Nyongesa (plot no. 100), Andrew Akelo (0.5 ha.), Dorothy Oluoch (0.6 ha. Plot no. 102), James Opiyo (1.15 ha. Plot no. 116), Rachel Awuori Auma (1.2 ha. Plot no. 120), E.N. Opar (1.2 ha. Plot no. 125), O.N. Muga (0.6 ha. Plot no. 126), Roseline Maroko (1.2 ha. Plot no. 127), Leonard Otieno Womae (1.2 ha. Plot no. 131), Abdi Kombala (1.2 ha. Plot no. 129) and Ochieng<sup>TM</sup> Gombe (1.14 ha. Plot no. 132, among others.

The document further reveals that the illegal allottees have also been allo-

cated portions of the land set aside for a market centre (0.6 ha. Plot no. 102) and playing ground (1.22 ha. Plot no. 117).

The families say that although local leaders have petitioned the government through Muhoroni Member of Parliament (MP) Prof. Ayiecho Olweny to address the plight of the squatters, there has been no redress.

"In fact our local MP Prof Ayiecho raised the squatters issue in parliament in 2006 but no substantive answer came from the then lands assistant minister Asman Kimama, who represented the then minister Prof. Kivutha Kibwana," recalls the councillor.

Okal Muma who is a squatter from Tonde area has urged the government to revoke the title deed of illegal beneficiaries and resettle them.

"These people were illegally allocated huge chunks of our land ranging from 3 to 4 hectares and bust still went ahead and grabbed Tonde River Bank," Muma laments.

Muma alleges since the illegal allottees are afraid of facing the wrath of the squatters who have barred them from occupying the land, they have resorted to selling the parcels secretly to unsuspecting buyers with the connivance of a local chief.

By BOB OMBATI

# EU gives solar panels to families

IN an effort to alleviate poverty and reduce global warming due to climate change, the European Union (EU) has donated solar panels to 68 impoverished families in Bomariba location, South Kisii district.

Kisii District Environment officer Juser Omwenga, who distributed the panels to the families, says that the European Union funded project is being implemented in 12 locations from Nyanza province through Nyanza Community Development Environment Management Programme, a Non Governmental Organization (NGO).

He says the Union has funded the project to the tune of Kshs.500,000 and targets only poor families in the province. He says the project is being implemented on a pilot basis and will soon be rolled out to benefit more households in the country.

Maranga notes that majority of the rural folk use kerosene and candles which emit a lot of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, which in turn increases

global warming and leads to climate change, affecting people, animals and plants. The officer notes that many urban poor heavily use fuel for cooking since they cannot afford to use electricity with their little earnings.

Consequently, carbon gases from paraffin, wood fuel and emission of gases from vehicles and industries heighten global warming, affecting weather patterns, hampering accurate planning and implementation of socio-economic projects.

He says the gases are hazardous to people's health since they directly inhale them into their respiratory systems, leading to costly chest related diseases which affect their household income and impoverish them.

The gases, he notes contaminate rain water, making harvested water unsuitable for household use besides polluting rivers, adversely affecting fishermen,

who rely on aquatic life for their livelihood.

Maranga told *The Link* in his office the new technology is safe, clean, cheap and environmentally friendly adding that it is easier to maintain and its gadgets are easily available.

Children from poor families in rural areas use candles which emit a lot of carbon dioxide which affects their eyes and health. The new technology is safer and clean for any household," says the officer.

He says the children can study for long under a clean environment and use the solar powered gadgets to play music instead of using batteries which are expensive for majority households.

A solar panel, says Maranga cost Kshs. 7,500, is water proof, easy to assemble and unlike the lamp can last up to 50,000 hours without interruption while its battery can properly function for three

years without being replaced.

He challenges Kenyans to speedily adopt the new technology to reduce global warming and its effects which, he notes are being experienced through prolonged and harsh drought and raging floods which have claimed lives of several people and animals.

The officer says the unpredictable weather owing to the effects of global warming has affected farmers whose crops are washed away while their animals starve and die due to lack of water and pasture.

Maranga observes that the perennial drought has led to conflicts especially between nomadic pastoralists who often clash as they scramble for water for their animals and pasture.

He challenges Kenyans to plant more trees to absorb carbon and purify the air and rain water, which, he notes has been polluted by lethal gases which

affect people and contaminates rivers.

Hellen Ogega and Everlyne Ongau who are beneficiaries of the project told *The Link* the new technology was cheap, easy to maintain and had cut fuel cost by over 80 percent, leaving the household with some income to save and investment in other income generating projects.

The duo, who only see electricity poles and cables from a distance say they are yet to benefit from the rural electrification programme but insist that they will not abandon the solar lighting technology, which, they say is cheap compared to the cost of electricity.

Solar technology has been introduced at the grassroot level a month after world leaders assembled in Copenhagen, Denmark to deliberate on the climate change and ways to conserve the environment to reduce global warming and change of climate.