

Kenya's constitutional moment is finally here

By LINK WRITER

KENYA'S constitutional moment is here. And with it, is the opportunity to usher in a new constitution to address the inadequacies in the current one that has for decades allowed numerous injustices and set citizens upon each other after the disputed 2007 polls.

However at the centre of the national question is land. Kenya inherited a highly skewed system of land ownership at independence in 1963. British colonialism in Kenya was not merely administrative. Rather, it was accompanied by massive and widespread land alienation for the benefit of settler agriculture.

As a result the best agricultural land which included the white highlands and the adjacent rangelands were taken from the Africans, without compensation, and parceled out to white settlers. Colonial legislation was enacted to legalize this process. As a result, whole communities lost valuable land that they had occupied over generations. The customary land tenure systems under which Africans had guaranteed claims over the land they occupied were supplanted by the registration of individual title holders under the colonial system.

Independence failed to reverse this loss of African land. The colonial legislation protecting the rights of the land title holders was inherited by the first post-independence government of President Jomo Kenyatta.

The Constitution negotiated at Lancaster House in London, provided for an elaborate protection of private property without reference to the history of its acquisition.

The successive post-independence governments have continued to uphold the sanctity of privately owned land to

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Who should award CDF projects tender?

By FAITH MUIRURI

THERE is a simmering row between the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) and Project Management Committees (PMCs) over who should handle procurement

for the Constituency Development Fund's (CDF) projects.

Although the PMCs may have lost their legal mandate to award tenders for CDF projects years ago, investigations by The Link established that the PMCs are still procuring contrary to provisions of the Public Procurement and Disposal Act, 2005.

According to PPOA, PMCs have no legal mandate to award tenders under the current procurement law. But the PMCs insist that the CDF (Amendment) Act 2007, gives them express mandate to do so.

And the PMCs seem to have allies among members of parliament who are pushing to have the Public Procurement and Disposal Act, 2005 amended to allow the committees to carry on as procurement arms of the CDF at the constituency level.

According to the chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on CDF, Mr. Ekwe Ethuro, the committee is consulting with the Ministry of Finance to come up with a harmonized structure that will allow the PMCs to award tenders of up to a certain financial limit.

"We are seeking a legal interpretation of the Act that will see the law revised to allow the committees award tenders of projects below Kshs5 million," he explains during an exclusive interview with The Link.

In fact Ethuro questions the logic behind the resolve to have small projects tendered at a higher level, if the PMCs have the requisite capacity to successfully procure them.

Sources, who cannot be named due to sensitivity of the issue, say that the row stems from an unprecedented delay in the release of a task force report which was ready by December last year. The task force is believed to have come up with far reaching proposals to address the fundamental flaws in the CDF (Amendment) Act 2007.

Engineer Muriuki Karue who chaired the task force that was set up in June 2009, told The Link the delay has been caused by bureaucracies in the government but the findings are likely to be made public before the end of this month.

Currently the CDF procurement

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Chairman of the Parliamentary CDF committee who is also the MP for Turkana Central, Mr. Ekwe Ethuro, during an interview with The Link. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi



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Who should award CDF projects tender?

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regulations have set thresholds within which the various CDF tender committees may handle procurement.

The CDF Act specifies that bigger projects that require more technical input be managed by the District Project Tender Committee while smaller projects that have simpler procurement requirements can be managed by either the Constituency Development Fund Tender Committee or the Project Tender committee.

On the other hand, the Public Procurement and Disposal Act 2005 appears to contradict this provision and invalidates the role of PMCs as public entities mandated to establish tender committees under the Exchequer and Audit Act Cap 412.

"Section 143 of the Act amended the Exchequer and Audit Act Cap 412 by deleting of section 5A and in effect outlawed PMCs mandate to establish tender committees," explains Wanjiru Gikonyo, who is the National Coordinator of the Social and Public Accountability Network (SPAN).

In a report to evaluate the impact of CDF, Gikonyo argues that the continuous recognition of PMCs as procurement entities was a gross violation of the law.

"Section 5 (1) of the Procurement Act states that where there is conflict with any other Act or regulation, the Procurement Act shall prevail. It therefore appears that PMC's procurement under CDF is illegal," she adds.

Gikonyo says that procurement is a delicate exercise in both public and private institutions as some of the processes are open to abuse and corruption.

"Procurement is the process by which purchases are made for a project. It includes procurement of works, services, goods or property. It is therefore important to monitor procurement very closely at both the locational and constituency level," she says. She at the same time takes issue with discrepancies in section 43 of the Public Procurement and Disposal Act which, she says leaves room for abuse.

"Section 43 only provides that where a conflict of interest exists, the affected person should not take part in the procurement proceedings but fails to outlaw engagement as a supplier," she argues.

The SPAN coordinator points out that as a result, tendering and procurement procedures have become conduits through which some contractors, members of parliament and their cronies are fleecing millions of shillings from their respective CDF kitties.

"More critically, the subversion of CDF procurement processes in this way, pushes out genuine entrepreneurs and professionals, undermines standards and wealth creation prospects for the constituency.

Gikonyo further criticizes the Public Procurement Oversight Authority for failing to enforce financial discipline by blacklisting parties that contravene the Act and imposing a ban that will bar them from

participating in public transactions. She says the situation has been compounded by the absence of an accounting officer.

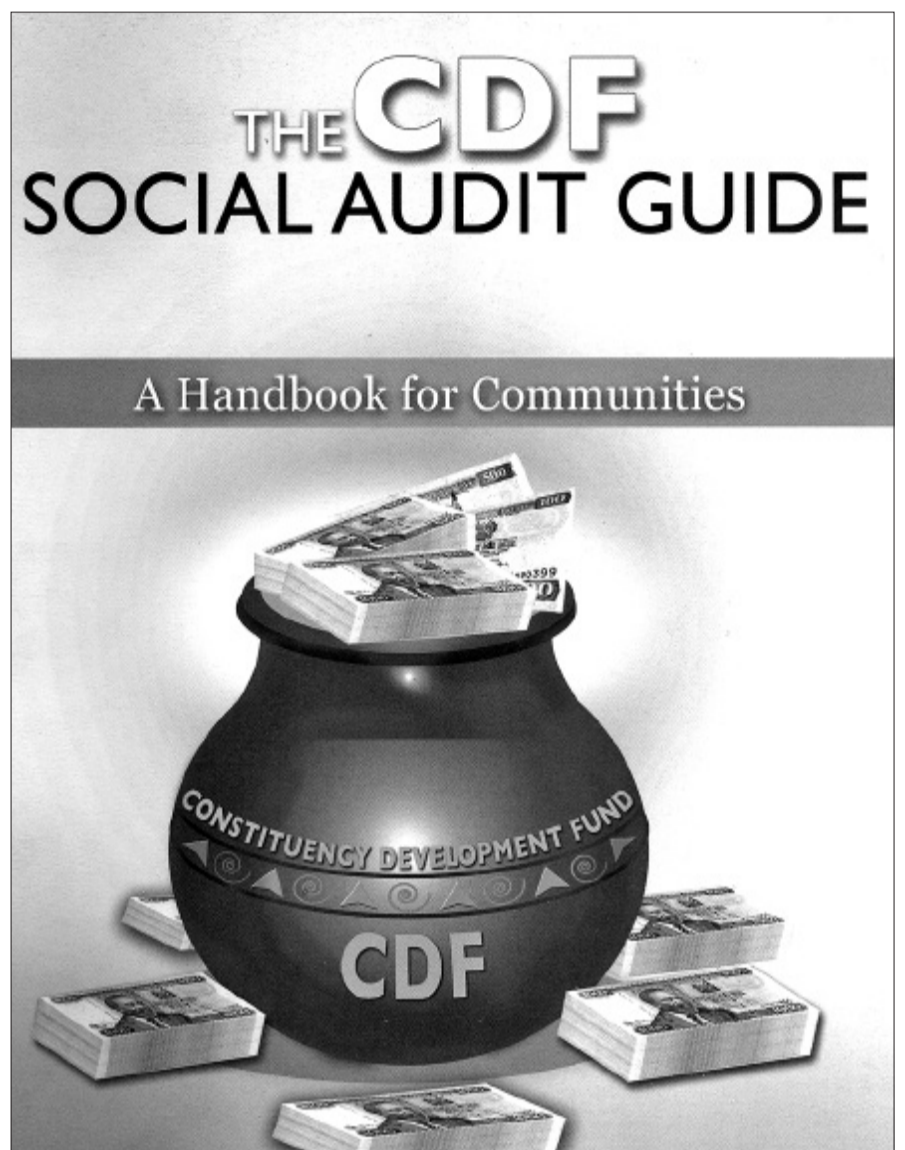
"Whereas the Ministry of Planning regulations indicate that the DDO is the accounting officer by virtue of being an AIE holder, the CDF Act does not recognize this office," she says.

She notes that Section 7 of the CDF Act 2003 had assigned the responsibility of the accounting to the then officer administering the fund, but the 2007 amendments removed this section and did not reassign the functions to any office.

"The CDF Act is again in contravention of the government Financial Regulations which require that every public fund have an assigned accounting officer.

Section 31 (1) of the CDF (Amendment) Act, 2007 states that all works and services relating to projects under this Act shall be sourced using existing government procurement regulations.

CDF is therefore governed by the Government Financial Management Act, 2004, Chapter Seven of the Constitution and the Public Procurement



A CDF pot.

and Disposal Act, 2005.

Further there are regulations including the latest through Kenya Gazette Supplement No.63 of September 18, 2009, where the Finance Minister made amendments further to the public procure-

ment and disposal regulations.

The report of task force should be released for public scrutiny and the recommendations implemented as soon as possible to strengthen CDF management for better service delivery.

Reunite Mathira district — Residents

By FAITH MUIRURI

MATHIRA residents want the government to revoke a gazette notice that allowed the creation of two districts in the area.

The residents argue that the creation of the Mathira East and Mathira West Districts undermined the ongoing efforts to reform Kenya's electoral and administrative boundaries by Interim Independent Boundary Review Commission (IIBRC).

According to the Nyeri North District Residents Association (NDIRA), Mathira Constituency has been split into two administrative units namely Mathira West and Mathira East District.

However the bone of contention is the fact that Mathira West District will only make up the two Divisions of Ruguru and Kirimukuyu while

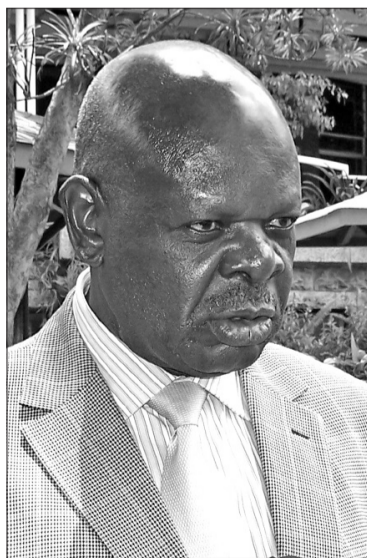
Mathira East will enjoy a vast area covering four Divisions of Konyu, Magutu, Kirimara and Karatina.

"What is the logic behind this kind of discrepancy which not only contravenes the principals behind devolution but also defeats the very purpose for which the administrative units are being created?" questions NDIRA chairman Fredrick Murage.

Further, the chairman reveals that Mathira East takes nine locations against the four locations earmarked for Mathira East.

He says that if the controversy is not resolved, Mathira East will command a larger population covering seventeen sub locations with Mathira West being confined to only eight sub locations.

"These are the injustices



Mr. Ligale: IIBRC chairman

that form the basis of the country's reform agenda. The creation of the two Districts is in sharp contrast with the recommendations made to

IIBRC and it is unfortunate that the same government that constituted the commission is going against our recommendations and pushing for an elitist stand," adds the chairman.

The chairman says that residents were never consulted in the process that preceded the split.

"We were never consulted when a section of our leaders endorsed the controversial plan to split the area into additional administrative units to advance their selfish agenda," laments Murage.

He says that creation of a new District was likely to have far reaching implications on people's socio political and economic well being and therefore it cannot be entrusted to the whims of a few individuals.

Murage says instead of promoting inclusion, equity, and opportunity, the move only serves to defeat harmony and promotes exclusion based on the alienation of rights of the majority.

"The government must intervene and initiate a more inclusive process to avert any possible flare-ups as people demand for their rights," suggests NDIRA chairman.

He calls on the government to dispatch an independent team to assess and make recommendations on the best way to resolve contentious issues arising from the development of additional administrative units in the area.

He says that creation of administrative units which were not economically viable did not auger well for the interests and aspirations of the local people.

Forensic audit of Busia schools faces challenges

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE ongoing forensic audit of usage of Free Education Funds in Busia District has been marred by several challenges, including inadequate personnel, floods and inaccessible roads among others.

Information available at the Busia schools audit department indicates that only five officers have been deployed from the ministry of finance to undertake the audit exercise in 233 primary schools in the district.

The exercise which was expected to be completed within a period of fifteen days has been extended to another two weeks due to inadequate personnel.

In Nambale constituency, the exercise began on April 1, 2010 and was to end on the 14th of the same month. In Funyula constituency, the auditors started work on the 15th to 23rd April, Budalangi constituency from 29th up to 31st of April 2010 and Butula constituency from 26th April to 3rd of May 2010.

The Busia District Education Officer (DEO) Mr. John Owino however said that the auditing of the free primary and secondary education (FPE/FSE) funds could not be accomplished within the stipulated period as most school heads had failed to prepare their books of accounts in good time.

"Majority of the school heads were reluctant to submit their books of accounts for scrutiny by the auditors," said the district education officer, adding that only a few learning institutions in the district had availed the same for scrutiny.

The district education officer instructed the head teachers who are yet to avail their schools books of accounts and financial statements to submit them to their respective area education officers (AEOs) who will then forward them to the Busia district education office for auditing purposes.

"Stern action will be taken against the school heads that are reluctant to submit their books of accounts and statements for scrutiny," the district education officer said, adding that they should as well have a receipt and issue register where they record all the text books received and issued to the learners to avoid losing track of the same.

The DEO at the same time expressed concern saying that majority of the newly appointed head teachers had no accounting skills and therefore could not maintain their books of accounts in a professional manner.

"We are appealing to the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to train them along that line to help equip them with knowledge of how to maintain the books of accounts," he adds.

Mr. Owino said that once the remaining school heads have submitted their books of accounts and statements, auditors will then compile their final report.

However, the DEO said out of the 197 audited, there was no embezzlement of school funds, adding that effective modalities have been put in place by the audit department to ensure transparency and accountability in the utilization of the school funds.

Muliro University in Kshs4b quest for development

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kakamega-based Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) is seeking Kshs4 billion from donors for construction of new facilities.

According to the Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Baraza Wangila, the money is needed to construct four engineering laboratories and a modern sports complex that will assist in development of talents among the students.

The VC told *The Link* that the Treasury and Ministry of Higher Education have requested the Governments of China and South Korea to finance the project.

"The university has submitted the proposal and plans of financing the projects are at advanced stage," adds Wangila.

Wangila was speaking during the start of a Scientific Engineering Conference at the university in Kakamega.

The function was also addressed by the University Vice Chancellor in Charge of Finance and Administration Prof Sibilike Makhanu and the former chairman of Engineers Institute of Kenya Chairman Isaiah Mutonyi.

Wangila explains that the Governments of China, Korea and Kenya were working on the projects jointly to ensure that facilities required for the training programmes are of high standards and quality.

Wangila points out that the university has set aside a piece of land where the sports complex will be constructed. He said that the field will give room for rugby, athletics and soccer trainings programmes apart from providing science and engineering related courses to the students.

Wangila notes that the admission rate was growing every year and therefore facilities at the institution had become over stretched.

He reveals that the number of students was set to rise to over 9,000 by this year from the initial 5,000 of last year.

He explained that accommodation was becoming a crisis and urged development partners to consider investing in the housing industry in Kakamega and other areas where colleges are being established.

Makhanu explained that housing units were not adequate in Kakamega. He said that the university has been forced to source for lecture halls in other parts of the province to curb congestion in Kakamega. "We are opening up campuses outside Kakamega to facilitate expansion of our academic programmes," said Makhanu.



Masinde Muliro main library. Top: University buildings.

Low education of girls in ASALs revealed

By PETER MUTUKU

INSPITE of the obtaining government policy that seeks to achieve Education for all, basic education remains elusive for many Kenyans, particularly girls in arid and semi arid areas ASALs.

A study carried out recently reveals that parents preferred educating the boy child due to perceptions borne out of the societal norms.

The study which focused on opinions held by the community and opinion leaders, teachers and learners about girls' education established that majority of girls are instead subjected to Female Genital Cutting (FGC), early marriage and child labour.

Given the prevalent high levels of poverty, provision of opportunities and material resources for girls is limited. The ministry of education came under sharp focus allegedly for projecting men as engineers, bank managers in the course books while women are identified as sales representatives or farmers.

This, the study argues has resulted in misinformation with girls in the rural areas who have little information end up with the impression that this is what women do and therefore lack motivation to work hard.

It is high time the Ministry of Education considers the image they represent in textbooks since it is the leading contributor to poor performance in girl child education.

However, the government is seen to have an important role to play by enacting policies committing parents to educate all their children and making schools more girl friendly.

In ASAL regions the transition rates are far much lowest between 10-40 percent. In Most schools visited, it is estimated that the transition of girls to secondary education is about 5 to 10 percent.

The numbers of boys and girls who register for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education has remained more or less the same for the past five years. IN 2003, there were a total of 597,961 KCPE candidates. Boys accounted for 51.69 percent and girls were 48.31 percent.

However, there exist varying gender disparities by different regions of the country. For instance in 2003, out of the 597,961 candidates nationally, 284,054 (48.31 percent) were girls enrolling for KCPE respectively.

North Eastern was hardest hit with only 26.93 percent of the candidates being girls.

School management committees urged to master role

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

SCHOOL management committees (SMCS) have been asked to ensure that they understand their role well in order to spur development in the institutions they manage.

An auditor of schools from Bungoma South District claims that SMCs which do not understand their roles have contributed immensely to the woes afflicting primary schools in the area.

Joan Oyamo reminds the SMCs that their major role is to prepare strategic plans, annual budgets, support curriculum implementation and ensure that all the monies received are used in line with the approved

budget.

She says that strategic plans and annual budgets are requisite for schools development, and as a result, urges the SMCs which are yet to prepare them to do so now.

"There can be no tangible development in schools if the SMCs cannot budget and plan for the monies they receive during their term in office", she says.

Oyamo says lack of advance planning and knowledge in accounts was solely to blame for misuse of funds in some primary schools in the area

The schools' fund auditor alleges that some primary schools head teachers in the area support their

expenditures with irrelevant documents.

"This is mainly because the said head teachers have failed to post expenditures of school funds in the cash book on daily basis or as soon as the cash is used.

"Some head teachers start to collect receipts when the DEO's office ask them to submit books for auditing and this is why it is very common to find a mixture of supporting documents in the accounts books," she claims.

The auditor at the same time challenges the head teachers to receipt all the monies their institution receive and post the figure on the notice board in order to enhance

transparency and accountability.

"All the monies disbursed to schools, be it from the CDF, Local Authorities, grants or donations by well-wishers must be acknowledged by issuing receipts," she asserts.

Oyamo was speaking recently at Kimugui Friends church in Kanduyi division of Bungoma South District during a one day workshop for SMCs and head teachers.

The participants were drawn from over twenty primary schools in Mwibale zone. Other speakers were the area schools inspector Mr. Francis Nalimae and the Zonal Kenya Primary schools heads association (KEPSHA) chairman Mr. Juma Nanjali.

Transparency needed in transfer of school funds

Access to budgetary information is critical for the citizenry to effectively engage in implementation of the country's budget.

Upon presentation of the 2010/2011 budget by Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, Treasury did well by posting it on its Website for the public. The media too did well by informing about how allocations were made to various sectors and justifications for the same as presented by the Minister.

In the Budget speech, Mr Kenyatta recognized that as a country we have invested a lot in education leading to improvement in access to education. He also noted that we must do more to produce more skilled workers to power the economy.

However, he fell short of guiding the nation in understanding "what we must do more" and "who should do what". I want to believe the assumption was that the people are conversant with education policy and regulatory frameworks.

However, most education sector stakeholders continue to face challenges in accessing relevant policy and budgetary information for effective engagement with a view to improve service delivery.

For instance, in reference to the Free Primary Education programme and Free Tuition in Secondary schools, school heads continue to complain of inconsistency in the disbursement of funds.

If we know how much has been allocated for schools, for example, it should not be difficult to develop and share a disbursement schedule early enough. This would not only enable the schools to realign their plans and budgets as per the disbursement schedule but also enable the public to effectively monitor the utilization of funds.

Parents and students hardly know when funds are to be disbursed to

COMMENT

By DON BONYO



schools. They rely on the management committees for that information contrary to ministry's directive that schools should display on notice boards details of funds received and what they are meant for.

In my view, the Ministry too should publicly display the disbursement schedule through the Media. In fact the civil society and other stakeholders should demand that disbursement schedules be publicized regularly.

Since education funds for the new financial year have been allocated, it is imperative for the ministry to publish in local media the disbursement schedule.

That will enable the public to track utilization of funds and ask questions why previous allocations to improve education standards have not been used well since same problems persist in most schools in the country.

Although finance ministry has done well by posting online education sector reports and the Human Resource Development Sector report, those reports hardly indicate the previous expenditures in the sector for public scrutiny.

Interestingly too, in the last two years the education sector reports

ceased to include information from all the education sub-sector's performance and achievements, especially those under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

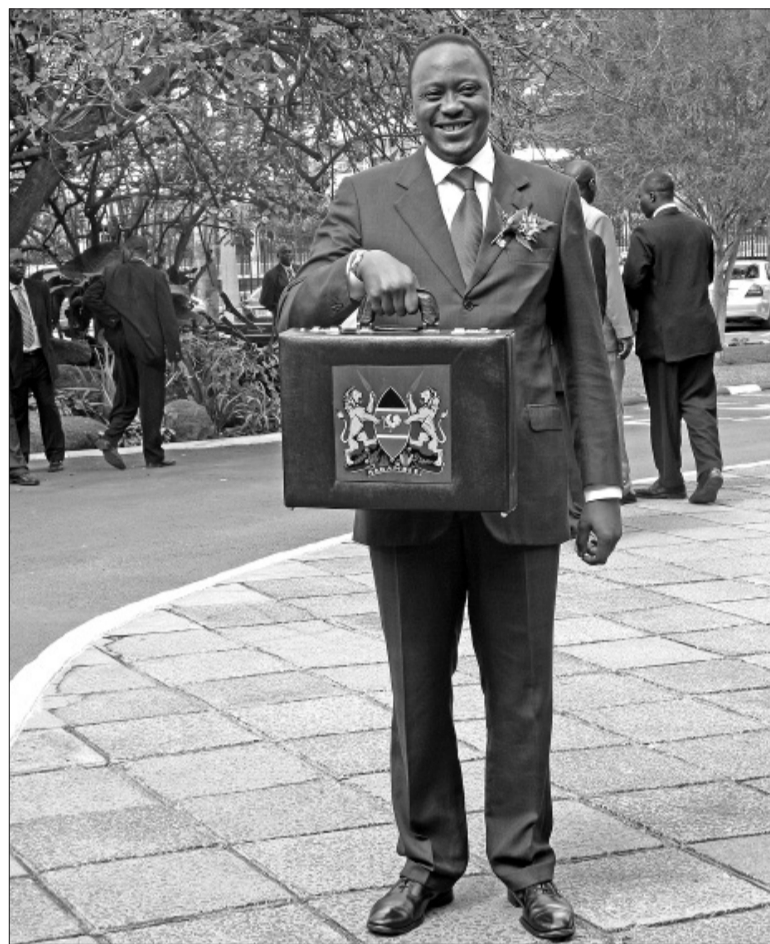
There needs to be a review of how these reports are developed, including what necessary and sufficient details should be presented to the public.

The public should press the state to provide them with accurate and current data on budgetary allocation to schools so that they can exercise their democratic rights by auditing the use of such funds.

The good news is that in some schools, parents are already developing community score cards for the services they receive from schools. This is a great exercise and the outcome of such a process would provide useful feedback to education official. It is time the officials reciprocated by giving communities adequate information that would make their work easier.

What is shocking is that some education officers are also not aware of specific allocations to the sector yet they refer people who seek such information to read government estimates – copies of which are hardly available. There is need to provide detailed budgetary information in an "easy to read" and "understand" version to grassroots communities.

It is notable that availability of budgetary and policy information is not an end in itself. Capacity building initiatives should be conducted to en-



Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, Minister for Finance, during presentation of budget day. Photo/File

able communities to utilize such data effectively. Civil society and the government should team up to educate the

public on budgetary issues. The time to act is now.
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Two Mathira schools to become centers of excellence

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

A TOTAL of Kshs30 million has been set aside to oversee the elevation of two Secondary schools in both Mathira East and West districts into centers of excellence under the Economic Stimulus Programme.

Kirimara and Ruthagati Secondary Schools will receive Kshs20 million and Kshs10 million respectively to facilitate their upgrading. Also set to benefit from ESP package are two primary schools namely Ragati and Wakamata which will receive Kshs3.5 million each for the upgrading of school infrastructure.

Mathira East District Education Officer Mr Samuel Githongo says part of the money has been disbursed in the four schools and implementation is at an advanced stage. Seven other primary schools are earmarked to benefit from School Infrastructure Improvement Programme (SIIP). The DEO who spoke during the Mathira Education Day at Karatina stadium reveals that 20 primary schools have received Kshs60,000 each for establishment of tree nurseries as specified under the ESP programme.

Mr Githongo at the same time reveals that the constituency received Kshs1.9 million for the bursary kitty during the 2009/2010 financial year for disbursement to the needy students in boarding secondary schools. "These funds have impacted positively in the provision of education in the constituency," adds Githongo.

Mathira MPEphraim Maina who was in attendance disclosed that over the last

three years about Kshs12 million bursary has been disbursed from the Constituency Development Funds kitty to about 4,000 needy students.

The DEO who was accompanied by his Mathira West counterpart Mrs Jane Ngari however complained that they lacked transport for their officers and urged assistant minister for Higher Education Kilemi Mwiria who was the chief guest to intervene to help resolve the problem.

Speakers at the function listed shortage of teachers in both primary and secondary schools, inadequate personnel in the district education offices, inadequate facilities in schools like laboratory, I.T equipments and office equipment and furniture are some of the challenges facing the education sector in the two districts.

Other challenges include few Boys Secondary Schools in the constituency, low transition rate from secondary to university which stood at 29 per cent and delays in disbursement of Free Primary Education and Free Secondary Education funds to schools.

Mathira constituency borders Ndia constituency to the East, Mukurwe-ini constituency to the South, Kieni constituency to the West and Mt Kenya to the North. It has 164 ECD centres, 100 primary schools, 2 special schools, six special units and 37 secondary schools.

ECD centres have 6, 954 children, primary schools have a population of 29,022 pupils while secondary schools have 11,483 students. Primary schools teachers are 694 against a deficit of 118 teachers with Mathira East facing a short-



Mathira East DEO Mr Samuel Githongo (right) with his Mathira West counterpart Mrs Jane Ngari at Karatina stadium during the Mathira Education Day recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

fall of 67 teachers and Mathira West district 51 teachers respectively. Secondary schools have 425 teachers and require approximately 73 more teachers of which 43 will go to Mathira East and 30 in Mathira West district. Both districts have an acute shortage of education officers and support staffs and currently needs

about 80 staffs.

Last year, the constituency presented a total of 3, 914 candidates during the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and managed a mean score of 252.61. About 37 schools registered an improvement while 60 schools dropped in the exam. In overall private schools

performed better than public schools.

The best private school was Gachugu Academy with a mean score of 369.33 while the best public primary school was Karatina DEB with a mean score of 300.80. Out of the total candidature 1,958 attained a mean score of 250 points and above which accounted for 50.03 per cent. This in effect means that half of the candidates failed to attain pass mark.

In the KCSE results, 2,409 candidates sat for the exams from the 33 schools. There was no school within the constituency that was involved in any irregularity. The constituency's mean score stood at 4.1313 which translated to a mean grade of D plus. Out of the 33 schools that presented the candidates 20 schools registered an improvement while 13 registered a drop.

"However, it was noted that most of the drop was registered by Day Secondary Schools and therefore there was need to focus on how to improve the academic standards in those schools by improving learning and teaching facilities," noted the DEO.

The best performing schools were Bishop Gatimu Ngandu with a mean score of 9.670 (B+) followed by Kanjuri High School with a mean score of 8.648 and Tumu Tumu Girls with a mean score of 8.323. Provincial schools performed extremely well while district schools performed relatively poor.

Meanwhile, Cooperative Bank will sponsor 10 best students from both Mathira districts to university level this year while Equity Bank will also sponsor three best students from the area.

Nyeri TI seeking highest quality standards

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Nyeri Technical Training Institute has launched a Quality Management System based on ISO 9001:2008 to join other technical institutions that have the certification.

The director of Technical Education Ogate Wambayi says the system has been designed to guarantee customer satisfaction.

"It is apparent that by implementing the standard, the customer's current and future needs shall be determined and met. I assure the institute of support as they implement the system," he adds.

The director who spoke during launch of the system was accompanied by the institute principal Francis Mbogo.

Mbogo says that the Quality Management System documents that they received are living examples of hard work and commitment by the entire fraternity at the institute.

"This journey began in year 2008 following inclusion of ISO certification as a target in the performance contract. We started by having our board sensitized on the process by KEBS.

In January 2010, we engaged a consultant (Alpex Consulting Africa Ltd) who took our team of implementers through three days intensive training on the implementation of the system," he explains.

The consultant also guided us in defining the system through documentation.

The principal says this was followed by general staff awareness training session whose objective was to sensitize the staff on the change in the management system and the expectations.

"The trainings and documentation process took a short period of two months thanks to the staff commitment and the support of the BoG in



The administration block of Nyeri Technical Training Institute. Photos/Joseph Mukubwa

their timely resource provision," says the principal.

He says the Quality Management System documents reflect the institution in its unique ways.

"We are glad to celebrate the birth of a Quality Management System that seeks to ensure customer satisfaction in both objective and subjective aspects. This shall come with other benefits just to mention but a few, operational efficiency, improved financial returns, sustainability of the institute and continual improvement.

The institute was started as a National Technical Secondary School in 1977 when the first group of students was admitted with a population of 250.

The construction of the institute was financed by the Kenya Govern-

ment with funding from the World Bank (International Development Association) IDA. By 1983, the institution was a fully fledged National Technical Secondary School.

With the advent of the 8.4.4 system of Education in 1984, the secondary technical education policy and practice was abolished. Technical secondary schools were transformed into Technical Training Institutes.

In 1986, the institute admitted its first post secondary students as a technical training institute. Over the years, the institute has grown tremendously and it is in the process of being converted into a National Polytechnic.

Currently, the institute has a population of 1,662 students; 922 male and 740 female with a staff establishment of 94 Teachers Service Commission

teaching staff, 21 BoG teaching staff and 51 non-teaching employees.

The institute has three Higher National Diploma courses, 25 Diploma courses and 11 Craft courses currently being offered at the institute in the following departments:

Automotive engineering, Mechanical engineering, Electrical and Electronics engineering and electrical and electronics engineering.

Others are Applied Sciences, Business and Managerial Studies, Health Sciences, Institutional Management and ICT. The institute has embarked on several development initiatives in the last several years.

Their aim is to expand and enhance the training capacity in order to meet growing student's population, needs and demand for technological

Teachers demand return of caning in schools

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

WESTERN Province branches of the giant Kenyan National Union of Teachers (Knut) wants the Government to reintroduce corporal punishment in schools.

The union says that Education Minister Prof Sam Ongeru should allow corporal punishment as a way of instilling discipline in schools.

Led by the union's branch executive secretaries John Wesonga (Mumias), Shadrack Doboko (Kakamega North), Amos Ombayo (Kakamega Central) and Wycliffe Omuchei (Emu say discipline in schools had deteriorated to alarming levels due to the ban on corporal punishment. "With improved discipline, performance of students will also get better," adds Wesonga.

The unionists said many public schools are unable to compete with their private counterparts because of the different systems employed to mould students. They spoke at Shitoto Girls Secondary School in Mumias District during the East Wanga Division Education Day.

Wesonga at the same time called on the Government to allocate adequate funds to assist expand existing public schools in order to meet the high enrolment rate. He said the shortage of teachers in schools should also be addressed by the Government before the end of this year.

Mumias District Education Officer Mohamed Kamaya and East Wanga DO Kariuki Ngare said the Government will not tolerate teachers who are engaged in love affairs with their students. Kamaya said the Ministry of Education has intensified supervision of schools to ensure parents do not conceal such cases.

NGO assists poor students in Malindi

By BEKADZO TONDO

POOR students in Malindi district have been awarded Kshs7 million to support of their education requirements.

The allocation will benefit a total of 170 students who are now assured of completing their studies, thanks to Aiducation, a local Non Governmental Organization.

Mr Jeremiah Kiponda who is the organization's coordinator, says that it is unfortunate that a large number of bright students from the area have dropped out of school due to lack of fees.

Kiponda says most needy students from the area hardly benefit from the bursaries set aside by both the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF).

Malindi District Education Officer Mr Arthur Mugira thanked the organization for responding to the plight of the needy students as the support will make sure they continue with their education.

Mugira also expressed concern over the large number of students dropping out of school in the area due to financial problems.

An administrative officer with the Malindi Residents Forum Mr Kashero Chinyaka on his part sought to know why needy students from the area were not benefiting from bursaries currently distributed through the CDF and LATF.

Chinyaka said the government had initiated bursary fund to be distributed through the ministry of education, the CDF and LATF to support the education of the needy and wondered why children should drop out of school for lack of fees.

He urged parents to take advantage of the bursary fund to maintain their children in schools.

"No officer or CDF personnel will come to you to give you bursary and therefore as parents you are duty bound to seek support for your children's education," said Chinyaka.

Nambale CDF funds evaluation tests

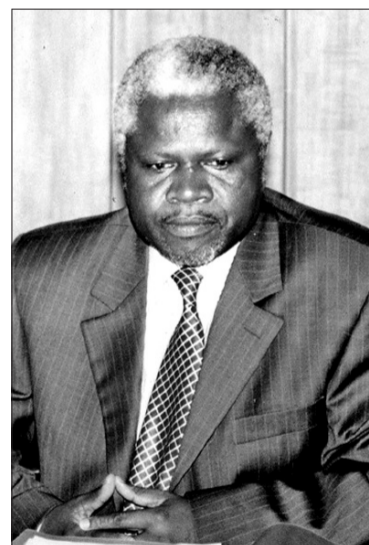
By NYAKWAR ODAWO

NAMBALE CDF committee has disbursed Kshs 900,000 to primary schools in Busia district to assist in the preparation of evaluation tests in an effort to uplift academic performance.

The funds were given to the Busia District Education Officer (DEO) Mr. John Owino by the Area MP Chris Okemo through his Personal Assistant (PA) Mr. Shaban Wandera during the official release of the district's first evaluation test result at the Busia Teachers Resource Centre recently.

The legislator's personal assistant underscored the importance of education and assured all the primary school heads in the district that Nambale Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee will continue to allocate more funds to academic programmes so as to improve the district's academic performance in national examinations.

"The Nambale Constituency Development Fund committee will work closely with the department of education to pro-



Mr. Okemo

mote the standards of education in the district," the personal assistant said, adding that Nambale constituency has so far received a total of Kshs257million since the introduction of the CDF kitty in the year 2004 of which Kshs163million has been spent on education.

Speaking after receiving the cheque, the Busia DEO thanked

the Nambale CDF committee for their continued support towards the improvement of academic performance in the district.

He said that the committee has done much in relation to the construction of new classrooms and the renovation of old ones in most primary and secondary schools since the introduction of CDF in 2003 to date.

"The introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) had led to overcrowding in most learning institutions due to lack of adequate infrastructure; but the committee chipped in and assisted in the construction of new classrooms to accommodate the high pupil population," the district education officer said.

The DEO at the same time called upon education stakeholders in the district to work as a team in order to improve the dismal academic performance in national examinations.

"To realize good academic performance in national examinations, there is urgent need on the part of all the stakeholders to work as a team for quality academic outcome," Mr. Owino said.

Plans needed to stem high school dropout rates

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

LACK of a friendly learning environment both at home and school has been blamed for high dropout rates.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education shows that Kenya is far from translating its education from an elite to a mass system, where more than 80 per cent of adolescents aged 14-18 would be enrolled in and complete secondary education.

The problem is critical in rural areas, where schooling is marked by factors that make it hard for pupils to gain access to education beyond the primary level.

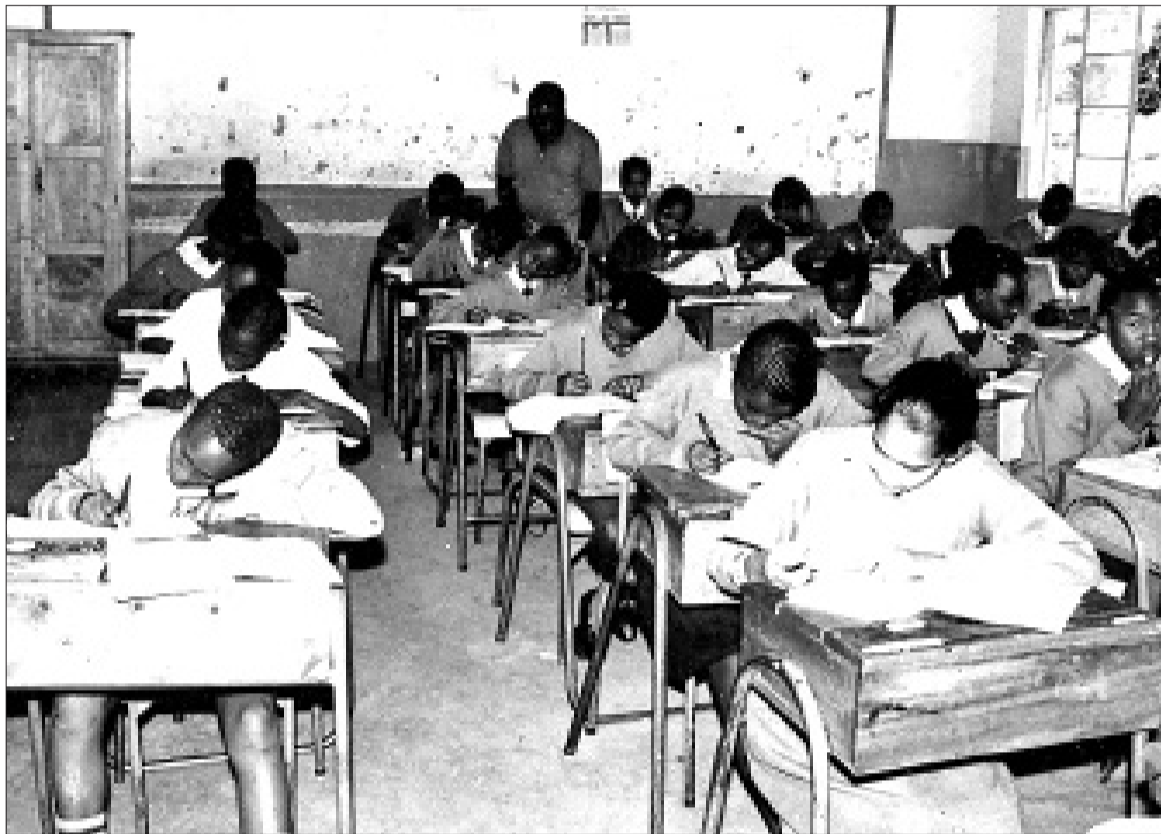
Standards of education are low and repetition and drop out rates are high. Chronic absenteeism among teachers and pupils in rural schools has significantly contributed to loss of instructional time and impacted negatively on pupils' learning capacity.

According to a World Bank study by Prof Paul Glewwe, an economist at Stanford University and other researchers, pupils fail to perform well in KCPE because they have fallen behind the official curriculum as a result of absenteeism.

The study that was partly carried in 300 schools in Busia district noted low achieving pupils eventually dropped out of school or performed poorly in KCPE examination.

The researchers said most of the pupils who repeated classes or dropped out of school were weak in English, the language of instruction. The report noted that textbooks written in English benefited only the bright students. "There was no evidence that textbooks had any impact on weaker pupils," concluded the researchers.

Contrary to many countries in Sub-Saharan African where English or French is the second language, in Kenya, the principal language of instruction has been relegated into fourth position after the mother tongues, Sheng and Kiswahili. The outcome is that many children in pri-



Students in one of the learning institutions.

Photo/File

mary schools cannot read and comprehend textbooks written in English.

Recent studies carried by the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) encompassing 15 African countries in eastern, central and southern Africa, indicate many pupils have trouble using textbooks.

SACMEQ results show on average, the scores of Kenyan pupils in mathematics are relatively higher than in reading. The situation is understandable in that mathematics requires limited reading skills.

Many pupils are performing badly in KCPE and even the Kenya Certifi-

cate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination, not necessarily because they have low IQ, but because of their limited capacity to read textbooks written in English. Heavily disadvantaged are children in rural areas and urban slums where children rarely use English until they go to school.

Under such circumstances, the Ministry of Education must find ways and means of addressing the mismatch in the primary and secondary school education. Understandably, the traditional role of secondary education as a mechanism for the selection of a limited number of candidates for the university education is not only too costly but outdated.

Towards this goal, the country has no alternative but to develop primary

and secondary education systems that lay emphasis on learning without comprising quality for quantity. Currently most schools in the country are overcrowded have leaky buildings and insufficient classrooms and lack basic facilities such as desks and latrines.

According to UNESCO, the official instruction time in Kenya's primary schools is the lowest in the world, making it difficult for pupils to cover the school curriculum. For now the task that confronts the Ministry of Education is to find out how relevance and quality of the school curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment can be improved and standardized in both primary and secondary schools across the country.

Bunyala head teachers cautioned over graft

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

Bunyala DC John Korir has warned that school heads implicated in corruption will soon be prosecuted.

The DC says the move follows a series of complaints that some school heads have diverted the Free Education funds into personal use.

The provincial administrator notes that most schools in the area lack vital facilities such as science laboratories and books due to embezzlement of funds. The situation, he noted, had resulted in to dismal academic performance in national examinations.

Korir expressed concern saying that without quality education, Bunyala community was bound to lag behind and languish in poverty as other areas progressed.

In addition, the provincial administrator urged teachers to improve on their productivity. He at the same time advised students to be focused and avoid engaging in activities that will interfere with their education.

The DC at the same time called upon the local community to take keen interest in education to help improve education standards in the area. He assured the school heads that all learning institutions will be provided with adequate security personnel.

The DC further expressed concern over the high poverty levels in the district coupled with the perennial flooding in Budalangi area as well as the high HIV/AIDS prevalence. "All these factors have caused poor school fees payment which has made it difficult to run the schools effectively thus adversely affecting the schools performance in the national examinations," said the DC during the District education day.

Korir said that in order to address the challenges, the government has embarked on constructive measures through free primary, free day secondary education, constituency development bursary fund to help boost education in the district adding that the said measures have improved access, retention, transitional and completion rates in the schools.

The provincial administrator however appealed to the government and education stakeholders in the district to assist in the establishment of school lunch programmes to enable the pupils especially the candidates to have ample time for studies thus improving their academic performance.

Parents spending a fortune on private tuition

By PETER MUTUKU

PRIVATE tuition offered in public schools has almost been accepted as part of the normal learning process.

Parents are now spending a fortune as they strive to remain relevant to the emerging trends in schools.

And since the investment is paying off when students pass well in national examinations, it has become an alternative learning activity.

Parents are now more than ever investing in the provision for all children especially those in elementary schools.

In Kenya, the syllabi under the 8-4-4 education system are considered to be so wide that teach-

ers are not able to cover them in time, hence the needed extra tuition.

While this is a noble idea on the face value, legal, professional and ethical concerns arise. The teachers offering these tuitions are employed by the Teachers Service Commission to teach and cover the syllabi within the stipulated period.

In my view it is unethical and unprofessional for the same teachers who are paid salary by TSC to receive payments from students for the same services they have been compensated by their employer.

The tuitions are conducted either after normal class time, weekends or during school holidays.

Some teachers have argued

that those are not their normal working hours and any service offered must be paid.

Parents know that they pay school fees for their children covering the whole period they are in school. Why then charge the students for services they have paid for?

This calls for the TSC and the teachers to reexamine the terms of their contract to ascertain the actual working hours that teachers are compensated for.

The extra earnings from the tuition have encouraged some teachers to deliberately delay completion of the syllabi on time so they can offer private tuition. A noble idea as it is, it has been abused and seen as a source of extra income for teachers.

If it is an extra service not

covered by the contract between TSC why are students in most schools forced to buy the service?

The schools should allow individual students to decide if they want the tuition service or not.

Those who want and can afford should enter into a new contract either with the school or individual teachers.

But the norm today is that the schools force students to buy the service even against their wishes. Infact those who do not pay are surcharged from their school fees.

This unethical and unprofessional act should not continue at all. In my opinion, a better way should be negotiated by the education stakeholders on how to cover the syllabi in time without taking advantage of poor and unsuspecting parents.

Kanduyi youth gets state aid

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

OVER 350 youths in Kanduyi constituency have this year benefited from the Government's Kazi Kwa Vijana programme.

Bungoma South District Youth officer (DYO) Mr. Augustine Mayabi discloses that Kanduyi constituency received a total of Kshs2.7 million in February this year for the programme.

The money was meant to create job opportunities for the youth under the Government's Environment conservation initiative.

Mr. Mayabi discloses further that upon receiving the cash, his office engaged 352 youth from Kanduyi constituency in the tree planting exercise.

"We engaged the youth to plant the trees and nurture them until they are mature enough for transplanting", the DYO says. He says that each one of the 352 youths worked for 25 days and was paid Kshs. 250 per day which translated to Kshs. 6,250 for the period worked.

The DYO adds, that the 352 youths covered 26 sites a cross the constituency where they allegedly planted 37,577 seedling during the period.

He reveals that once the seedlings are ready for transplanting they will be handed over to schools in the area.

Mr. Mayabi, however, quickly points out that twenty primary schools which were allocated Kshs 60,000 for tree planting in the constituency under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) will not benefit from his programme.

About the Kshs4.6 billion expected from the World Bank to boost the youth empowerment programmes in the country Mr. Mayabi, will fund the project.

Fraudulent contractors to be blacklisted

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE government will soon blacklist contractors who inflate costs of projects awarded to them.

Kigumo DC Omar Salat says investigations are underway to expose firms that have a tendency of over charging their work.

The administrator cites a case where a contractor is charging government Kshs1.83 million for the construction of a single classroom at Kigumo Girls High School.

"In average, the construction of a classroom in Murang'a, cannot go beyond half a million shilling," the DC argues saying projects funded by the government will be inspected and costs revised to stem fraud.

The DC at the same time reveals that the construction of Kaharati-Kangari road will start in a month's time.

He however warned the public against politicizing development projects in the area but instead support them.

Meanwhile, projects established with funding sourced from constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) in Murang'a East District will be investigated following claims of massive graft.

Teso residents to keep up fight against graft

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

MEMBERS of Teso District Residents Association (TEDREA) have been urged not to relent in their fight against corruption.

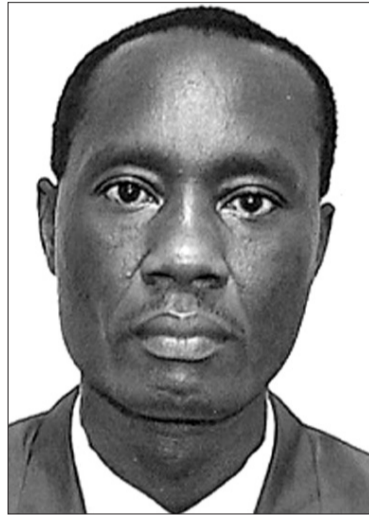
Teso North District youth chairman Mr. Odour Oyengo, appealed to Tedrea to constantly monitor and evaluate development projects in the area.

Mr. Oyengo observed that for people entrusted with public funds to be more transparent and accountable Tedrea should monitor them very closely.

"As an organization involved in social audit you are duty bound to monitor and evaluate all public projects in the area in order to enhance transparency and accountability," he said

He claimed that so far Amagoro constituency has received a total of Kshs. 172,981,896 as the constituency development fund (CDF).

The youth council chairman asked Tedrea officials to ensure



Mr. Ojamoong

that every project in the area that was funded by CDF is evaluated with a view to establishing whether the projects add value to the money the constituency received.

To make their work easy, Mr. Oyengo asked Tedrea officials to link up with the chiefs and their assistants who are conver-

sant with CDF funded projects in their areas of jurisdiction.

Mr. Oyengo made the remarks recently at Kakapel community learning resource centre in Angurai division of Teso North District, during a one day civic education forum for Tedrea officials, chiefs and their assistants.

The participants proposed that the present Member of Parliament (MP) Mr. Sospeter Ojamoong should include Tedrea officials into various public projects committees in order to enhance transparency and accountability.

They claimed that most of the beneficiaries of devolved funds especially bursary are civic leaders, chiefs and other prominent people in the area.

This, they argued was happening because there is no independent voice for the common Mwananchi on the various committees.

In attendance were Tedrea chairman Mr. Moses Omanyala, Secretary Mr. Ismael Masake and Treasurer Mr. Eric Karot.

Construction of Kigumo Girls put on hold

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE construction of Kigumo Girls Secondary School under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) has been put on hold following revelations that the contractor was charging Kshs1,830,000 for a classroom.

Members of Kigumo District Development Committee now want explanations why the contractor was charging high as compared to similar projects in other areas. The school once completed will be a centre of academic excellence and the only Girls Secondary School in the entire district.

The school is being constructed with funding from the government ESP Programme where Kshs17 million has already been released to the school's board of governor.

Kigumo DC Omar Salat has ordered a review of the contract saying construction costs were on the higher side. On average a classroom in Murang'a region cannot cost beyond Kshs600,000 with availability of building materials.

On other projects being funded by the economic stimulus, construction of fish ponds continued to lead the pack with more than 300 fish ponds awaiting supply of fingerlings.

In each of the six constituencies of Murang'a, youth have participated in the digging the ponds and paid Kshs20,000 per each constructed pond.

Murang'a residents demand justice from TJRC

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE brutality meted out on Murang'a residents as police intensified the crackdown on members of the outlawed Mungiki sect three years ago is part of the injustices that area residents want addressed by the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC).

The residents told TJRC commissioners led by their chairman Amb Bethwel Kiplagat that police officers that were deployed in the area to root out the Mungiki adherents instead became their tormentors.

Kahuro turned into a security zone after sect members went into frenzy and beheaded members of the public who failed to part with protection fee as demanded.

Police officers mounted an intense operation in the area that saw hundreds of young men being rounded up on suspicion that they were members of the outlawed sect and mercilessly killed under hail of bullets.

Houses were burnt and majority of their children fled the area as they sought cover from the trigger happy police officers.

"We were subjected to harrowing ordeals and tortured by security agents as they pursued members of the outlawed Mungiki sect in 2007," recalls Josphat Karanja

Karanja, 60, was unable to hold back his tears as he recounted how one afternoon security officers led by a district officer raided his home and razed down his property as they searched for his son who they claimed belonged to the proscribed sect.

Martin Wakira who confessed to be a reformed member of the Mungiki



Mungiki sect members during a demonstration. Photo/File

sect told the commission how they suffered brutality in the hands of security agents.

Wakira who says that he was lured into the sect immediately after completing standard eight says that today youth from the area have been shunned and are unable to secure any for of employment including the recently launched Kazi Kwa Vijana initiative as government officers still view them with suspicion.

His sentiments are supported by Elizabeth Ngotho who said youth in the area had resorted to criminal activities after having been turned away from any formal of employment.

During the session Peter Muthaka gave a chilling confession to the commission how he was sacked from Ministry of Livestock in 1992 on suspicion of being a supporter of the then opposition leader Kenneth Matiba.

He said he was sacked after his colleagues at Kabete Artificial Insemination department accused him of being a Kikuyu from Murang'a and an advocate of political reforms.

Atrocities committed by the British government did not escape the attention of residents who told TJRC that many people from Central Province were ejected from their homes to create room for its former military officers who fought in the First World

War.

Paul Kara said the British government should be held responsible for instigating human rights violations as Kenyans recruited into the war to fight along side their troops returned home without any reward unlike the Britons.

Kiplagat told the public that views collected will help unearth the truth and reconcile the country to help forge ahead after years of misery.

"I have heard about cases of killings by police officers from this area but the commission will give its recommendations to the government," said the chairman who was flanked by two other commissioners.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

Take measures to curb theft of CDF

Decentralization of Kenya's economy is now an official government policy. In fact the policy started with the then President Moi's District Focus for Rural Development.

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and even the latest Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) are just building on the noble ideas of the Moi era that were never effectively implemented.

The Proposed New Constitution is even more blatant in its proposal for regional governments called counties which will receive 15% of the national budget.

What all that means is that without proper checks and balances, the government is not helping the grass-roots people but simply creating fiefdoms for corruption tsars to rule.

That is why we are saying that the people should even be more vigilant against corruption because if they don't they will have no one to turn to for certain services that the 15 per cent of the national cake was supposed to do for them.

What economic devolution means theoretically is that the people in every constituency (CDF and ESP) and county (New Constitution) will be given the Yam and the Knife so that they can slice and share it as they wish.

If they allow one glutton in the name of MP or Governor to pocket it all then they will have themselves to blame. Again that is why we say that transparency and accountability in utilization of the devolved funds ought to have started yesterday rather than today.

If most of our leaders cannot keep their greedy hands off the little money for the constituencies (about 2 per cent of the national budget) how can they be trusted with the 15%. Which is why we join hands with those democratic voices out there that are calling for the release of the CDF Review Taskforce Report so that appropriate action can be taken now to seal the loopholes and correct the challenges facing the fund?

As it is currently, CDF is like a bottomless pit in some constituencies. Every month we report countless cases of irregularities in administration of CDF, ESP, Constituency Bursary Fund and LATF among other developed monies.

Our contention, therefore, is that under the devolved economic and political systems the people will be left more destitute if necessary steps are not taken to ensure efficient and effective management of the resources at the grassroots levels.



COMMENTARY

Discovering Africa's drug potential

AFRICAN scientists must create a database and physical collection of traditional medicines and their active ingredients

Africa's biodiversity has the potential to be a major resource for developing pharmaceuticals to treat endemic diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. It is already the source of a wealth of traditional medicines used by at least 80 per cent of people on the continent.

But unfortunately, much of Africa's biodiversity remains unexploited for health and economic benefits. Decades of research into African traditional medicines by Africans have yet to translate into modern pharmaceutical products.

There are several reasons for this lack of progress. Drug discovery and development efforts are fragmented across the continent. African researchers, in addition to lacking the finance and infrastructure to tackle the disease burden, are also challenged by a limited skills base and poor access to the technological platforms needed for drug research.

The result is that the chemistry of traditional medicines is rarely sampled in modern drug discovery efforts.

It is time to bring the two worlds together.

A critical first step must be for African scientists to create a biomedical resource in the form of a database and physical collection (chemical repository) of purified and characterised natural products from various biodiversity sources, including traditional medicines and their pharmacologically active ingredients, from across the continent.

My colleagues and I have already begun work on this by establishing the Pan-African Natural Products Library (p-ANPL), a consortium of scientists across the continent, with the aim of creating the database and physical collection.

A springboard for action

Such a biomedical resource would provide a much-needed tool for attracting investment in the scientific expertise

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

By KELLY CHIBALE

needed for the next steps of screening, medicinal chemistry and preclinical pharmacology that are vital to creating commercial pharmaceutical products.

But it would have other benefits, not least accelerating the development of sustainable infrastructure for drug discovery from traditional medicines in Africa. It would encourage the establishment of supply and extraction enterprises and could create a culture of collaboration and cooperation between scientists and traditional practitioners.

Benefit sharing programmes could also enable the local cultivation of medicinal plants in appropriate cases. And the process would help to recover or preserve species that might otherwise be lost.

What makes drugs work?

There are other ways in which recent scientific and technological developments can be used to improve the drug discovery process from traditional medicines. These include tapping into data on the genomes of disease vectors and using advances in biochemistry and molecular biology to identify and validate proteins crucial to the survival of disease-causing organisms.

A particular priority should be integrating drug metabolism and pharmacokinetic (DMPK) studies into research on traditional medicines. Such studies evaluate how a drug is processed by the human body and have important implications for the efficacy and toxicity of drugs.

Those engaged in translational research acknowledge that there is a strong interplay between genetics, the socioeconomic environment in which people live and effective treatment of diseases. African scientists must similarly recognise these connections and seek to relate them to traditional medicines.

Improvements in the platforms used

for DMPK studies over the past two decades have reduced the failure rate of potential medicines in the pharmaceutical industry from 40 per cent before 1990 to less than ten per cent today.

Using new DMPK tools to re-assess historical traditional medicines and evaluate potential new ones could also help identify treatment failure and toxicity from interactions between drugs — this is particularly important where patients may be using traditional medicines with conventional drugs. The herb ginseng, for example, is known to reduce the anticoagulant effect of warfarin, used to prevent thrombosis and embolism.

China shows how

Experience from other developing regions has already shown the power of modern drug discovery methods in exploiting traditional medicines for health and economic gain. China, for example, has given the world artemisinin — the active ingredient of the Chinese plant *Artemisia annua*, which is now the preferred treatment, in combination with other antimalarial drugs, for malaria across the globe.

Although *A. annua* has been used in China for several hundred years in anti-malarial herbal remedies, it was not until the chemical structure of artemisinin was revealed that the plant gained international scientific recognition and was accepted into modern medical practice to become a life-saving pharmaceutical.

The development of artemisinin has also spurred agricultural activities across the world to cultivate *A. annua*, with attendant economic and health benefits.

Integrating modern drug discovery and development practices — including a biomedical database and physical collection of resources — into research on African traditional medicines could provide the foundation for similar successes to emerge from our continent.

Kelly Chibale is a professor of organic chemistry at the University of Cape, South Africa and director of the South African Medical Research Council's Drug Discovery and Development Research Unit. Source: SciDev.



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The Link

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Mwingi residents scared by Aflatoxin poisoning reports

By KAVYU-KURA

EVEN after Mwingi was listed among the 25 plus districts in the country whose maize stocks are infected with Aflatoxin fungus, no traces of the deadly poison has so far been found in the local maize.

Mwingi Central District Commissioner Peter Kinuthia says that tested samples have not been found with traces of the deadly Aflatoxin poison.

The DC was however quick to point out that locals needed not celebrate until the results of intensive tests being carried out were made public.

"The good news is that samples tested have not been found with traces of the deadly Aflatoxin poison but you never know; at the end of the testing exercise some maize may be found with the poison," Kinuthia told a news conference in his office in second week of June.

The DC's assertion were in contrast with the previous week's announcement by the minister for public health Beth Mugo that Mwingi was among the nearly 30 districts in the country whose maize stocks were found contaminated with Aflatoxin.

Kinuthia said that in spite the fact that local maize had so far been found to be safe, there were fears that some stocks had a high poten-



Infected maize cobs. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

tial of having been infected thus the reason for the launching of a door to door Aflatoxin testing to ensure all the maize was safe.

He said Aflatoxin infection was likely to hit Mwingi due to the un-

sual heavy rainfall in the area which resulted to a bumper maize harvest.

He at the same revealed that areas like Mumbuni, Kiomo, Kyethani and those bordering Tana River which are prone to Aflatoxin con-

tamination have been isolated.

"We have launched a serious Aflatoxin testing campaign throughout the district after receiving testing kits from the ministry of public health whose personnel are teaming up with those from the department of agriculture and provincial administration to ensure the exercise succeeds.

He pointed that while in the long run virtually all homes would be visited for the Aflatoxin testing exercise, testing officers have already been stationed at the National cereals and produce board depot, the local maize milling factory and all the major cereal stores in Mwingi town.

The DC pointed out that maize found to be contaminated with Aflatoxin should be delivered to the NCPB depot where the bad grain will be bought at Kshs1,000 for a 90 Kilogramme bag while the same quantity of good maize would be bought at Kshs1,500.

He noted that families whose entire maize stock would be found infected with Aflatoxin will have the bad grain replaced besides being paid for it once it is delivered to the NCPB depot.

Kinuthia said that all medical health personal in the district had been put on high alert to look out for symptoms associated with Aflatoxin and report them to the authorities for mitigation.

Ombui wants North Mugirango split

By BOB OMBATI

NORTH Mugirango Borabu lawmaker Wilfred Ombui wants the expansive and cosmopolitan constituency split into two to bring services closer to the people.

Ombui notes that Gusii leaders have agreed that out of the three constituencies- Bobasi, Bomachoge and Kitutu Chache proposed to be divided, North Mugirango Borabu be given priority.

Names of the four electoral areas, noted the Mp have been forwarded to the Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC) during a recent stakeholder's meeting at Gusii county council and the Commission promised to honor the wish of the residents by prioritizing the constituency.

Ombui told an education day-cum prize giving day meeting at Menyanya High school that he would visit all

mud-walled schools in the area to assess their needs and pump funds from the Constituency Development Fund to construct permanent classrooms.

He urged the government to declare Borabu district a hardship area due to its harsh climatic conditions like the neighboring Transmara and Sotik districts whose teachers were paid hardship allowances to cope with the situation.

The legislator noted that the area had harsh weather and the road were impassable, noting, teachers who worked along the border schools had difficult time accessing them and therefore the wasted time had affected education standards and performance in national exams.

He said insecurity along the border,



Mr. Ombui

posed a threat to learners and teachers, noting incessant cases of cattle rustling caused fear and tension.

Ombui, who is also an assistant minister for National Heritage and Culture asked the area District Commissioner, Mohamed Noor Hassan to beef up security along the border to end the cattle rustling menace and enhance peaceful co-existence along the borders.

The lawmaker, at the same time said that he will not condone lazy head teachers who mismanaged schools and sought protection from the Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut).

The DC on his part reassured residents that security officers had intensified patrols along the borders, saying they had managed to arrest cattle rustlers and recover stolen cattle to stem the vice.

Central PC says insecurity a threat to investments

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

INSECURITY and high cost of energy are the main challenges facing investors in Central province.

Central PC Mr. Kiplimo Rugut told a workshop on investment and business opportunities that the high cost of energy due to over reliance on hydro power generation had continued to affect investment opportunities in the area.

The PC however said the Government is trying to address the issues adding that Kengen Company is now

making efforts to generate more geothermal power. "We are also encouraging people to use solar energy and bio-gas plants

as other sources of energy to make more energy available for industrial purposes. On security concerns, we have strengthened community based policing aspects and the members of the public are giving us information to help prevent occurrence of crime," said the PC. Speaking during the forum which was attended by business community, political leaders and government of-

ficials and organized by Export

Processing Zone Authority (EPZA), the PC also lamented over the poor state of the rural road infrastructure which he said was in bad shape but said the

Government is trying to use the CDF and LATF to rehabilitate the roads.

"Also the Government has increased expenditure in tarmacking road construction network in the region. These roads include Kabati-Mariera, Murang'a -Marua, Thika- Gakoe and Gatanga- Kimandi roads," he added.

Election body to computerize voter registration

By BOB OMBATI

THE interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) is set to computerize voter registration and elections nationally to curb cases of rigging.

Ambassador Yusuf Nzibo, a commissioner with IIEC, says the initiative is being implemented on a pilot basis and cites the just concluded electronic voter registration exercise conducted in various constituencies in the country.

Nzibo says once the technology is adopted, provisional poll results will be relayed simultaneously from the polling stations to the tallying centres and at the Commission's headquarters in Nairobi.

The Commissioner said Form 16A will be filled and signed by the party agents and the officers before it is fed into the computer and transmitted to the Commission's central system in Nairobi to ensure that nobody tampers with the figures. Nzibo says the Commission wanted to continue testing the technology in subsequent by-elections, referendum and in the general elections.

He deplored violent activities witnessed during the campaigns in South Mugirangoby elections and the violation of the political Parties Act, saying the Commission had received complaints from the Orange Democratic Movement leaders and was taking action.

The Commissioner said that he was puzzled that some political leaders had abandoned their candidates and were supporting their rivals, stressing, it was strange.

MP asks constituents to monitor projects

By BOB OMBATI

KITUTU Masaba MP Walter Nyambati has urged his constituents to monitor the implementation of the CDF projects in their respective locations to ensure they are done well.

Nyambati says CDF is funded by tax payers and it was imperative that members of the public are fully involved in the project implementation process so as to take ownership once they are completed.

"The projects are not for the committee members and you should monitor and take them to task whenever you spot shoddy job," said the MP.

The MP told area residents that he will not condone corrupt project committee members who embezzled public funds with impunity.

"The members are paid allowances. I want you to monitor them and report those who misuse project funds so that action can be taken against them," said Nyambati.

He said the rural electrification programme was on-going in the constituency's seven locations and urged former parliamentary losers to stop politicizing the projects to gain undue political mileage. Nyambati said CDF projects were all over the constituency but lamented that some were taking long to be completed due to inadequate funds but assured the residents that they will be completed gradually.

The MP appealed to stakeholders in the education sector to assist him improve the dwindling education standards in the constituency, saying he was set to change the face of the constituency for the better.

The MP said it was difficult for him to visit all projects and assess their progress, saying the projects were funded from the public coffers and the residents should ensure that they were properly implemented to benefit them. Area District Commissioner, Onesmus Kyatha assured civic educators of their security as they educate members of the public on the proposed Draft constitution.

He warned political leaders against using hate speeches and peddling lies on the constitution to mislead people, stressing they should allow them to read, understand and decide on the Draft in the August 4 referendum.

Kyatha told proponents and opponents of the proposed constitution to treat each others opinion with respect, and shun engaging in unnecessary argument which would create tension and chaos. The administrator said that any political leader found harassing civic educators would face the law, stressing that the educators were neutral and only mandated to educate the public on the document objectively.

Some clans in the area, lamented the DC, were re-aligning to support or reject the Draft, saying it was likely to rob the residents their democratic right to read, understand and vote for the Document freely.

The DC challenged chiefs from Kiogutwa sub-location, Kitutu Masaba constituency to be alert and arrest individuals who incite members of the public to cause chaos for their political interest, saying the alarmists were derailing development in the area.



Tseikuru DC Mr. Stephen Mumanyi (left) and Mwingi acting OCPD Simon Birir. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

Teacher arrested for rape in Ukambani

By KAVYU-KURA

THE Education office in Tseikuru District is on the spot following attempts to cover up for a teacher accused of defiling a pupil at Katilinge Primary School.

The girl's plight only went public after a blind Volunteer Children Officer (VCO) in Tseikuru district helped in the arrest of the errant teacher.

The teacher was arrested on June 7 after the VCO Christopher Syengo sought the intervention of the district Commissioner Mr. Stephen Mumanyi slightly over a week after the errant teacher attempted to defile the standard seven school girl.

The volunteer Children's officer who also doubles up as a community paralegal in Tseikuru says he sought the intervention of the DC after local education officials attempted to cover up the incident and sought an out of court settlement with the victims parents.

"When I learnt that there was an attempt to defeat justice, I sought the assistance of the DC who acted with speed and had the culprit arrested," Syengo said.

But even after the DC sent administration police officers to arrest the Katilinge primary school teacher, he was not taken to court immediately as the negotiations to have the matter settled out of

court entered another level.

Sources told The Link that police authorities were yielding to demands to have the matter settled out of court to secure the teacher's job and save his face.

"It is unfortunate that even after I made personal efforts to see to it that the teacher was arrested for attempting to rape his own pupil some people are working to defeat justice by ensuring that he is not taken to court," lamented Syengo as he spoke to the Link in Mwingi town.

He said he would have expected the Education authorities to interdict the teacher ever before the issue of taking him to court arose.

High dropout of boys alarms gender ministers

By MORRIS GITHENYA

GENDER Minister Esther Murugi has blamed the decline in enrolment of boys in secondary schools in Central Kenya to abuse of drugs and alcohol.

She spoke at Rurii grounds in Mathioya during the district education day where more girls schools were awarded with trophies for their excellent performance.

The Minister called on men to embrace their traditional role of moulding their sons into responsible citizens.

She reaffirmed government's commitment to improving education standards in the area and ensuring the region reclaims its lost academic glory.

During the function that was also attended by local MP Clement Muchiri, area DC Kamunyang Chedotum threatened to impose a curfew to clear men out of trading centers.

He said that the liquor licensing court has managed to reduce the number of bars from 200 to only 91.



Ms Murugi

Tana Delta district still waiting for ESP projects

By BEKADZO TONDO

EVEN as projects implemented under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) take off in earnest in most parts of the country, Tana Delta District in Coast province will have to wait a bit longer before the launch of the process.

Investigations by The Link established that procurement process threatens to derail the implementation of ESP in the area.

Projects set to benefit from the programme but have stalled include the construction of the district headquarters offices which got an allocation of Kshs30 million.

The District Commissioner Mr. Elias Kithaura says that the District did not qualify for the recruitment of 20 trained nurses under the programme since most of the applicants did not meet the qualifications outlined in the



One of the fish ponds that has been established. Photo/File

guidelines.

The administrator however said that 200 fish ponds had been established in Garsen, Tarassa

and Kipini Divisions

The D.C said though construction work of the fish ponds have been completed fish species

were yet to be taken to the sites.

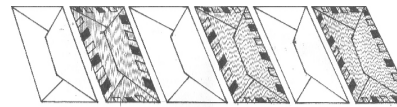
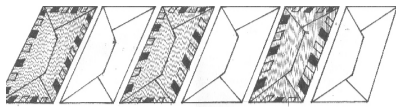
The administrator said that construction work is yet to begin in Chamwanamuma, and Kipini secondary schools and Garsen primary school which are earmarked for upgrading into centres of excellence.

According to the District Education Officer Mr. Ali Abdalah each of the selected schools in the area received Kshs3.5 million to supplement the construction work.

Among projects identified for construction include a new library, laboratory and teachers houses, water tanks, classrooms and toilets.

The DEO says that teachers in the selected schools have undergone special training to ensure smooth implementation of the projects.

The officer urged school children to take education seriously to help raise the profile of the District in the national arena.



Teachers shortage will only get worse

THE shortage of teachers in the country is threatening to get worse due to natural attrition and other causes.

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) says that each district loses a considerable number of teachers with many others incapacitated by HIV/Aids.

Still, many more teachers are exiting the profession and option for greener pastures. The situation deteriorated to the extent that TSC has banned paid and unpaid study leave as a way of retaining teachers in classrooms.

Considering that the number of school-going students is projected to increase sharply, it is inevitable that by 2015 the country will have to contend with a large demand for new teachers.

But the problem is that teaching is one of the lowest-paying jobs. A visit to most teachers training institutions indicates that teaching as a career has hit an all time low.

Ironically, there appears to be no commitment on the part of the Government to improve teachers' welfare. Policy makers need to put themselves in the shoes of newly qualified teachers. Would they want to spend their lives in a career that saps a lot of their energies but which offers very little pay with no social mobility at all?

Even as desperation sets in, the Government appears preoccupied with micro-managing schools through an overloaded curriculum and testing mandates without realising that schooling will continue to fare badly where there is inadequate investment meant for the improvement of this important human capital.

In virtually all public schools, many teachers have had to contend with problems such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate or dilapidated facilities, students suffering from malnutrition and other manifestations of poverty, poor parenting, increased drug and substance abuse and inadequate funding.

The worst bit is that teaching is bedeviled with poor teaching recruitment efforts and poor administrative practices that typically saddle teachers with the most challenging and demanding tasks.

To overcome these problems the Government must remunerate teachers well to make the profession appealing to newly qualified teachers.

It must also ensure that it pays practising teachers a lot more in order to lure them to regions considered 'hardship areas'.

Tome Francis, Bumula

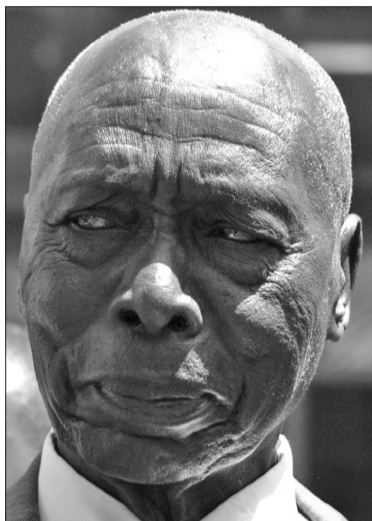
Moi, Michuki not sincere in rejecting proposed constitution

IT is my utter disgust and discontent to note that top citizens of this country among them former president Moi and environment minister among others have discarded the proposed draft constitution by the CoE that was passed by parliament without any amendments.

It is also notable that the minister for environment John Michuki was ostensibly out of parliament when amendments were being subjected to amendments. His efforts of calling for its rejection can only be seen as sabotage. In any case it is not unusual for the old guards to reject the constitution since they are not ready for change.

My fears are confirmed that such cronies, who are well endowed with resources which they allegedly grabbed from the public coffers and the poor populace, may use them to block this country from realizing a new constitution that we have been looking for over the last twenty years.

Their opposition to the draft is not unexpected for obvious reasons. One, they are the top clique of the status quo and secondly they hold together the fabrics that control the economy and three the huge tracts of land that they acquired illegally that they fear clauses in the proposed document will force them surrender part of their land to the common Kenyans



Mr Moi



Mr Michuki

or the government.

I am calling upon all Kenyans to vote for the proposed constitution with their conscience. They should ignore these voices of discord by all men as. The media should also be very objective as these enemies of Kenyans could be stakeholders of the fourth estate and use their influence to rally against the proposed constitution.

Categorically, former president Moi should be the last Kenyan to object the draft constitution since he had the best opportunity to give us a new constitution since he was not pursuing any power, but as history had it, he did so little and took Kenyans once step ahead with two

others backwards.

This journey has been so dreadful, lives have been lost, huge sums of money have been wasted while the common populace is suffering in the abyss of poverty; we still got the courage to go on, we should make it this time round. All problems that have faced this nation have had a bad constitution to blame, this should end if we are to go ahead as a nation. By rejecting the proposed constitution, we shall have demonstrated to the world that we are so resistant to change and that we are better off with our devil.

Concerned Kenyan, Nairobi.

Laxity at security roadblocks is horrendous

THE laxity at security roadblocks is appalling. It is common knowledge the more expensive a private car is, the more unlikely police officers would wave it down for random security checks. Even when they stop Public Service Vehicles, the checks leave a lot to be desired as money almost always exchanges hands.

Last month, police, acting on a tip-off from members of the public, stopped a Nairobi-bound bus at a roadblock in Matuu and arrested a gunrunner who was transporting seven guns and bullets from Garissa. Police admitted that they had been after the suspect and the information they had was that he had been transporting arms to Nairobi fortnightly.

If the police had not been tipped that the bus was carrying someone with dangerous weapons, the bus would probably have been stopped as a routine measure before being flagged on, and the man would have continued with his illegal trade. The bus must have gone through other security checkpoints before Matuu without the guns being detected.

With lawless Somalia supplying guns for criminals for a song, the police should be more vigilant to squeeze the routes the gunrunners use and reduce the number of guns available to criminals.

Because of laxity at roadblocks, emboldened drug traffickers are stashing bhang in tinted window-cars and driving to their markets. Police at roadblocks must be more meticulous.

Concerned Kenyan, Via e-mail.

Could the serial killer be a cultist?

Cases of kidnapping and rape are increasing at an alarming rate. And claims of their connection to cults are very worrying. The Government should probe the claims.

Members of these secretive cults believe in human sacrifice as they kidnap, kill and drink people's blood in strange rituals to get rich.

The recently arrested serial killer should tell the police the identities of his fellow cultists and help police in their investigations. This vice of senseless killings will have to be stopped somehow.

The government should step up its fight against cults in the country.

Isaac Oganga, Nairobi.



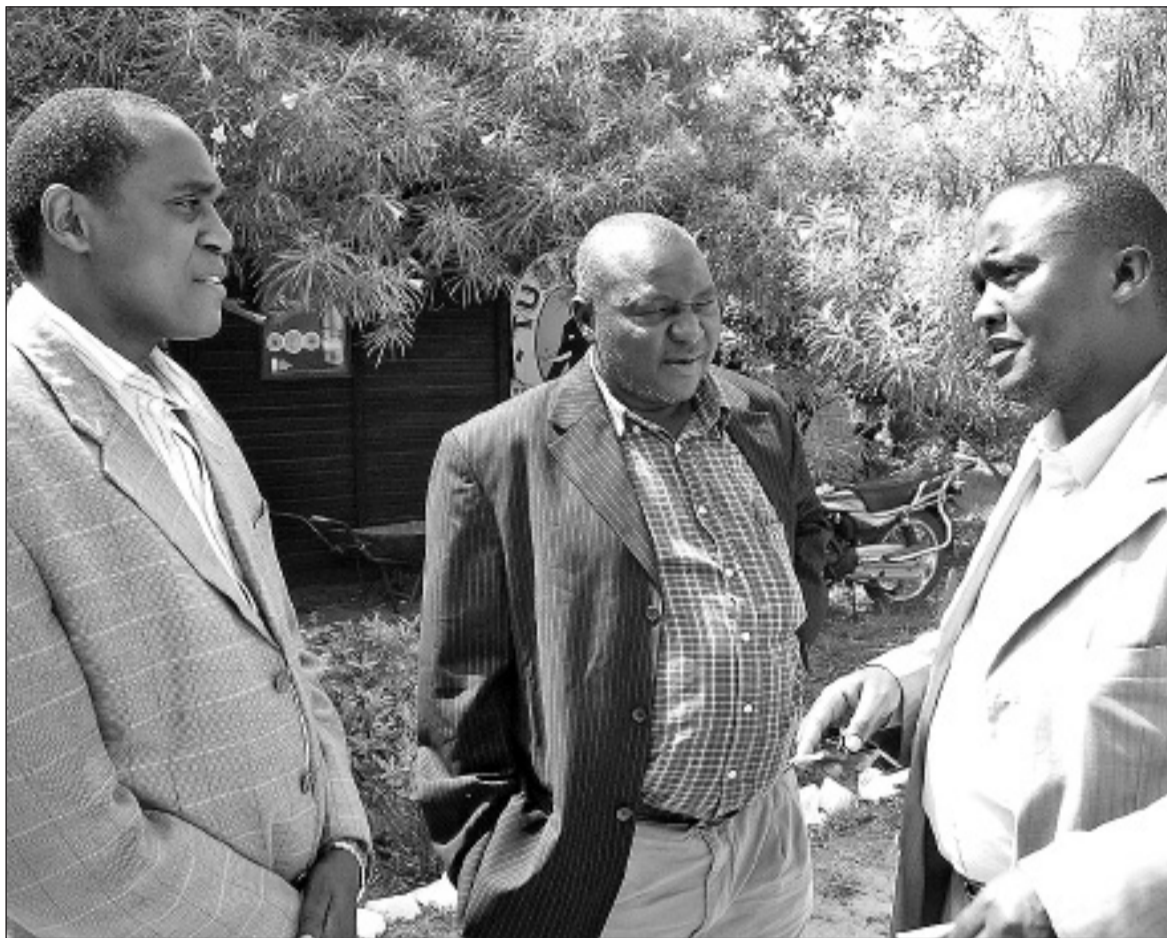
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The editor welcomes letters and comments on a variety of issues. The letters should be brief, topical and issue based. The editor reserves the right to edit for brevity or clarity.

Write to:
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Italy funds water project in Mwingi



TANATHI Water Services Board (TAWSB) MD, Mr. Joseph Nzesya (Left), consults with Mwingi contractors Nzomo Munyithya (Centre) and Robert Ngeana (right) after the meeting. Photo/Kavyu-Kura

By KAVYU KURA

THE Italian government has agreed to fund phase two of the Kiambere-Mwingi Water Supply project to the tune of Kshs1.4 billion.

Among areas earmarked to benefit from the project include Mumoni, Kyuso and Tseikuru as well as most Secondary schools and health facilities within the water line.

According to the Managing director of the TANATHI Water Services

Board (TAWSB), Eng. Joseph Nzesya, the project will entail the laying of water distribution pipes to cover a distance of nearly 200 Kilometres.

Eng. Nzesya says although colossal amounts of money will be spent in the project, Kenyan contractors will not bid for the project since the contract agreement specifies that only Italian firms qualify for the project.

"Only contractors from Italian will be awarded that job because the government has already agreed to that as a condition to merit for the loan. That

is the position agreed between the two governments," explains the TANATHI boss.

He however notes that once the contractor was at site, unskilled labour would be sourced locally so that the area residents could also benefit.

The TANATHI boss says that the amount of money provided by the Italian government for the project would ensure water is supplied to most areas in the larger Mwingi District including the new Mwingi west District.

"By the time phase two of the

Kiambere-Mwingi water project is complete populations in areas like Kyuso, Tseikuru, Migwani and Nguni will have clean tap water and modern sewerage systems.

The widespread distribution of water to many areas, he says will ensure that the project also generates enough revenue to sustain itself. He says due to the low revenue base, the Kiambere Mwingi Water and Sanitation Company (KMWASCO) that was covered in the first phase of the project was currently struggling to remain afloat.

He laments that KMWASCO has only managed to raise monthly revenue of Kshs1.3 million against a budget of Kshs4.5 million. He notes that in order for the company to survive, it had to up water tariffs so as to be able to foot essential bills and staff salaries.

The liquidity problems facing the KMWASCO have often been manifested in the frequent disruption of water supply to residents either due to power disconnections at the water intake pump or pipeline leaks or bursts.

Speaking at the stake holders meeting, the Kyuso District Commissioner Peter Maina notes that securing funding for the phase 2 of Kiambere-Mwingi water project was a daunting task that saw Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka make several trips to Italy to impress on the government to fund the project.

"We have managed to get financial support for this project due to the relentless efforts by the Vice-President to try to convince the Italian government to give the support," says Mr. Maina.

He points out that since the ultimate goal was for the local people to get clean drinking water, the agreement that a contractor must come from Italy was inconsequential and should be ignored.

The DC says the issue of water scarcity in the area was very sensitive and had in the past been used as a political weapon by aspirants to hit at elected leaders.



Bishop Alice Mengele

Mwingi gospel singer to help fight drug abuse

By KAVYU-KURA

AS the Mwingi Central district Commissioner Peter Kinuthia strives to eradicate the consumption of illicit brews within the 100 days specified in the Rapid Result Initiative, he has found support from a Christian Singing group.

The DC's launch of the RRI drive coincides with a campaign by a group of gospel musicians in Mwingi which aims at fighting alcohol and drug abuse in the area.

Even as it becomes clear that the DC has intensified efforts to bring the consumption of alcohol to a stop, the Singers' group motivation is purely moral and borne out of empathy for those enslaved by alcohol and drugs.

Through Music concerts, extravaganzas and road shows, the newly launched Mwingi Gospel Artistes Association (MGAA) is seeking public support in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse.

But it was not until the group paid a courtesy call in his office to seek his approval that the DC learnt of the existence of the gospel singing troupe.

The group's patron Bishop Alice Mengele told the DC that his group had been touched by the raising numbers of mentally ill people loitering local urban centres as a result of the smoking of bhang, abuse of drugs and the chewing of khat (miraa).

Bishop Mengele of the Triumph Christian Church told the DC that the organization was also concerned about the frequent family break-ups in the area due to over indulgence in Karubu (illicit traditional brew) by spouses.

"All our 15 members came to an agreement that we should use our talents as singers to seek public support in the war against harmful drugs and alcohol," Bishop Mengele told the DC.

The Bishop further pointed out that her group would also visit local schools to create awareness on the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse among students and also discourage the girl students against pre-marital relationships and early marriages.

On his part, the DC lamented that consumption of illicit traditional brews and hard drugs in the area was worrying adding that the singers' initiative was highly welcome.

Mugirango's Goti Chaki polytechnic assisted

By BOB OMBATI

THE government has given Kshs5.2 million to construct a hostel at Goti Chaki polytechnic in South Mugirango constituency in a bid to improve learning standards at the institution.

According to Youth Affairs and Sports assistant minister, Wavinya Ndeti, the government intends to pump money into the polytechnics to enable them to offer quality education.

She says the institutions were no longer village oriented, adding that the government was equipping, staffing and offering a subsidy of Kshs15000 to each student annually.

The minister urged youths to take advantage of the sponsorship and acquire skills from the institutions which have now adopted a new curriculum to help learners improve their skills and advance to university level.

Ndeti directed instructors to start using the curriculum module as the government plans re-train and equip them with requisite skills that will enable them effectively and efficiently perform in the new dispensation.

Ndeti says the Goti Chaki polytechnic has been upgraded to offer both certificate and diploma market oriented

courses to help students who graduate from the facility venture into formal or informal sectors and uplift their standards of living.

She blamed the project's contractor, Kabeo General contractors for demanding more payments before completing the project. "We have already paid him over half of the money and he has no justification to demand for more," she adds.

The assistant Minister warns that the government will not be held hostage by contractors who dragged their feet on projects awarded to them.

She gave Andrew Ogari, the company's director, two weeks to complete the project or risk legal action and accused Public Works Officers of working in cahoots with contractors to derail government projects.

The local community led by Samson Nyandoro and provincial administration had complained that the project's implementation had been unnecessarily delayed despite the contractor having been paid huge sums of money.

Area District Officer Moses Chepkorom, deplored low enrolment at the institutions, advised parents to enroll their children at the facilities to ensure that they benefit from the government's subsidized training.



Ms. Wavinya Ndeti

State urged to ban power saws to save forests

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE government has been urged to impose a ban on the use of power saws to reduce the destruction of forests.

Kenya Society for Agricultural Professionals (KESAP) argues that the 2 per cent forest cover would be lost unless the use of power saw is banned throughout the country.

"Power saw is disastrous equipment that should be outlawed in the country if our forests are to survive and meet the international expectations," says the organisation's national chairman Paul Mbuni.

Mbuni explains that the society was opposed to the Government's move to allocate land to families in Mt Elgon arguing that some of the families were seeking double allocations. The chairman was speaking at Bishop Nicholas Stam Patoral Centre in Shimalabantu in Kakamega during a provincial delegates meeting.

Mbuni explains that the society was concerned that agriculture has been placed under Counties in the Proposed Constitution instead of being categorised in the National Government. He says matters concerning food production should be addressed nationally to curb hunger in regions prone to food insecurity.

Some regions are endowed than others. There is need to have a central point where food matters can be discussed without looking at the Counties," insists Mbuni.

The meeting was also addressed by Western Provincial Director of Agriculture (PDA) John Cheruyiot and the National Environmental Management Authority (Nema) s Kakamega District Environmental Officer Anthony Aura. Cheruyiot says farmers should desist from planting crops along the river banks.

"We are facing difficulties in controlling floods along river Nzoia because the banks have been destroyed by farmers," adds Cheruyiot.

Don't fund the 'NO' team — Khalwale

By JOEL JUMA

THE chairman of the Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC) has opposed calls to fund the No campaign team on the proposed constitution by the Government.

Dr Bony Khalwale says the 'NO' activists led by Higher Education minister William Ruto should not be funded from the Treasury, as they are an obstruction to the review process. The budget was approved by Parliament to see a realisation of the new constitution and not to defeat the process," says Khalwale.

Khalwale explains that the No team should seek financial support from other corners of the world and not from the Treasury. The No team led by Ruto and Lugari MP Cyrus Jirongo have demanded that they be funded from the treasury as they were also educating the public on the contents of the draft.

Jirongo who is leading the team from Western province in rejecting the draft is reported to have said that the draft requires to be reviewed before being passed at the referendum.

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 200,000 residents of Mukurwe-ini district are set to benefit from the Kshs10 million market project initiated through the Economic Stimulus Programme.

On completion the open air market will serve residents of Rutune, Thanu and Giathugu locations.

It will also serve the residents of the neighbouring Kiharu constituency as it is near the border of Kiharu and Mukurwe-ini constituency.

The mitumba traders will also benefit from the market which will be operational by the end of this year.

Local Government assistant minister Mr Lewis Nguyai who was the chief guest in the ground breaking ceremony of the market said that he will ensure a better drainage system is built in the area to increase accessibility during the rainy season.

Nguyai who also the Kikuyu MP instructed Nyeri County Council clerk Mr Sammy Njuguna who was present to table quotations of the drainage system so that the project can be funded.

Nyeri County Council is the trustee of the three acre land of the market.

Nguyai who was flanked by the area MP Mr Kabando wa Kabando decried increased cases of consumption of illicit brews in Central province.

The two said that it is unfortunate that despite the massive campaigns by provincial ad-

Mukurwe-ini residents set to benefit from upcoming market



Workers lay foundation at the Kshs10 million construction of Thaara Market in Mukurwe-ini district initiated through the Economic Stimulus Programme. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

ministration, the cases are still rampant.

The assistant ministers who were speaking at Thaara market in Mukurwe-ini district during the groundbreaking ceremony of the Kshs10 million market, said they will soon storm illicit liquor dens and destroy the brews.

Kabando lamented that the

area has lagged behind economically since most of the youths spend their time taking the brews which have resulted to impotency and death.

The leaders who were accompanied by Kiharu politician Nelson Kenda and a cross section of councilors vowed not to rest until the illicit liquors are wiped out.

State urged to speed up registration of Pan Paper

By JOEL JUMA

DELAYS by the Government to register the revived Pan Paper Mills afresh is hindering delivery of services at the factory.

Shinyalu MP Justus Kizito says the factory is experiencing problems as it can no longer issue cheques or vouchers because it is not registered.

The MP now threatens to mobilise legislators from the region to storm the Ministry of finance to protest against delays in registering the factory as Webuye Mills.

He says Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta and his PS Joseph Kinyua should facilitate the registration of the factory to avert confrontation with MPs from the region.

"The two should understand that the factory is a major source of income for people from the region. We do not want to drag behind on development matters," adds Kizito.

He further urged President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga to move quickly and address the problem.

"Our roads are in bad shape. We



Pan Paper industry in Webuye. Photo/File

will not sit and watch as the area receives a raw deal. The Government is taking us for a ride, especially the Ministry of Finance, adds Kizito.

Pan Paper was reopened mid last month after operations at the facility ground to a halt for over a year. The factory had stopped operations on January 28 last year following power disconnection by the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) due to Kshs100 million in un-paid elec-

tricity bills.

The factory was reopened after President Kibaki instructed Finance Uhuru to release Kshs500 million that had been set aside to revive the factory.

The pulp and paper manufacturing company was a joint venture between the Government, International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private sector lending arm and Orient Paper of India.

Hue and cry as thugs have a field day in Mwingi

By KAVYU-KURA

LEADERS in Mwingi town are up in arms over the rising cases of insecurity in the area.

The leaders cite the spate of robberies within the town and demand that residents be assured of their security.

The leaders led by Mwingi Town civic leader Jonathan Mvinga want the Mwingi Central district security team led by DC Peter Kinuthia to stop the frequent robberies and killings currently being witnessed in the town.

Cllr. Mvinga says it is disheartening to note that in the recent times up to eight prominent traders have been attacked by robbers with some being killed.

He urged the district security team to hunt for the criminals to help restore sanity in the area.

A representative of the business community Mr. Jones Nzomo Munyithya says that a lot more needed to be done to ensure peace and tranquility.

However the DC assured the residents that his team was doing everything possible to ensure that criminals were weeded out of the area. He called on members of the public to volunteer information on criminal elements in their midst.

The DC further assured that night patrols by the police would be intensified in a bid to pre-empt any robbery or attack on innocent residents

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

A monthly supplement funded by European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Beware of tricks by campaign propagandists

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**JANE
MURUTU**

As a project team, partners and our associates, we are very much elated that we have successfully completed our twelve capacity trainings that took place in the three provinces of Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza that we have been working in for the last three months. The experiences shared by participants drawn from the CSOs were enriching and we hope that all the participants will use the skills and knowledge learned to build a "learning community" at the grass root that will be a panacea to mitigate conflicts at the grassroots level.

Currently, community meetings are taking place in the districts with a history of ethnic tension and violence. The Provincial Coordinators and civil society organizations in the Partnership for Peace project will be discussing among other things the role of community leaders in gauging community feelings, formulating strategies for intervention, communication sharing information and cooperation for joint ventures.

In this issue, I will share my thoughts around the forthcoming referendum and the ever increasing propaganda within our national environment. As the clock ticks towards the referendum date, we must be aware about the propagandist agenda and the amount of misinformation doing circles. We as a nation must seek to see through the

thin veil of lies being peddled through the constitution making process.

We must engage actively and purposefully. My heartfelt condolences go to the victims of the Uhuru park grenade blast, their families and friends. It is disturbing

that people are quickly engaging in a lot of speculation and finger pointing without any solid facts and investigation. More time should be spent in consoling the families of the victims, helping pay the bills of the victims as we wait for the investigation that is underway to give us answers to the questions that are lingering in many peoples' minds.

According to New World Encyclopaedia, propaganda is a specific type of message presentation directly aimed at influencing the opinions or behavior of people rather than providing objective information. An appeal to one's emotions is an obvious propaganda method, but much more it involves deception of the audience, for a purpose that benefits the propagandist rather than the society as a whole. As such, propaganda is a distortion of true communication among people who interact in a trusting manner.

What separates propaganda from "normal" communication is the ways by which the message attempts to shape opinion or behavior, which are often subtle and insidious. The method of

propaganda is essential to the word's meaning as well. A message does not have to be untrue to qualify as propaganda. In fact, the message in modern propaganda is often not blatantly untrue. But even if the message conveys only "true" information, it will generally contain partisan bias and fail to present a complete and balanced consideration of the issue.

Another common characteristic of propaganda is its quantity. For example, a propagandist may seek to influence opinion by attempting to have a message heard in as many places as possible, and as often as possible. The intention of this approach is to reinforce an idea through repetition and exclude or "drown out" any alternative ideas. This you are going to see more and more as we move closer to the fourth of August, 2010.

The propagandist seeks to change the way people understand an issue or situation for the purpose of changing their actions and expectations in ways that are desirable to the interest group. Some Techniques of propaganda transmission that you can easily identify during these polarized campaigns include but are not limited to the following;

- **Scapegoating:** Assigning blame to an individual or group that isn't really responsible, thus alleviating feelings of guilt from responsible parties and/or distracting attention from the need to fix the problem for which blame is being assigned.

- **Demonizing the "enemy":** Projecting a person or idea as the "enemy" through suggestion or false ac-

cusations.

- **Common man:** The "plain folks" or "common man" approach attempts to convince the audience that the propagandist's positions reflect the common sense of the people. It is designed to win the confidence of the audience by communicating in the common manner and style of the target audience.

My appeal to fellow Kenyans is simple; stand up and be firm. Do not be swayed by anything other than facts. Be it from the NO or YES camp. Most of us can read and write do not insult your intelligence by allowing somebody else to think for you. Why should matters concerning the supreme law of the land, which has a direct bearing on your life and generations, be relegated to someone else to think for you?

Stand up and be counted, take responsibility for your decisions. History will judge you harshly or fairly on the decision that you will make. During the referendum vote peacefully, use your heart to think before you vote. Don't vote with your head, leg or stomach! Remember, it is very important that you cast your VOTE.

The writer is the co-manager for partnership for peace project. In case of any comments or suggestions write to partnershipforpeace@gmail.com.

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EU delegation visits Peace Project in Nyanza

BY JONES MAGARE

THE European Union (EU) and Konrad Adenauer has co-funded peace training for 40 Kenyan non-state actors to be deployed in various conflict prone parts of the country.

Participants at the partnership for peace four-day training in Bondo town were drawn from various parts of Nyanza province.

The objective of the training was to strengthen the capacities of Kenyan Non-State Actors in Peace building and Conflict Transformation.

Training facilitators included a Consultant in Conflict Transformation David Steele and Mr. Babu Ayindo, who has taught peace and conflict in war torn countries like Sudan.

The participants were trained in theories of conflict, violence and peace and equally being equipped with vital peace. They were also coached in

conflict transformation skills on approaches for handling cycles of victimhood, grievances and changing a revenge mentality.

Other key elements of the EU-Konrad funded Partnership for Peace training include skills in identifying elements of 'cultural violence', and 'cultural peace' from indigenous pools of knowledge.

The training is also equipping the

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BY DAVID STEELE

Reconciliation in Kenya

Reconciliation involves bringing together people or groups of people who have been alienated from one another due to distrust, animosity and sometimes hostility. In the "cycles of victimhood and transformation" diagram which was presented in all of the trainings that I helped to lead over the past three months, reconciliation was shown as the culmination of a long journey, reached only when people have worked through many stages along the way.

This journey of reconciliation requires an encounter with oneself as well as the "other." It necessitates facing and changing the attitudinal and behavioral patterns that block successful engagement on interpersonal, social and political levels. The toxic narratives that have too often dominated social intercourse, leading to biased perspectives and sometimes a revenge mentality, need to be unveiled and replaced with transformative attitudes and behaviors.

Many of the topics covered during the twelve weeks of trainings – identity issues, handling of trauma, active listening, clarifying and correction perceptions – are all critical to the reconciliation process. There are three important steps, however, that require special attention if reconciliation is to succeed. They include: acknowledging responsibility for wrongdoing, choos-



A victim of post-election violence wails after her property were reduced to ashes.

ing to forgive, and envisioning restorative and operational justice. I would like to focus on the first of these as I reflect on my time among you in Kenya and hope and pray for the future of your country.

I believe that one of the most important attitudinal changes required is that of avoiding one-sided blame, where the result is frequently a "blame game." Group A blames group B, while

B blames A. However, if two parties can both examine their own contribution to the problem (both their attitudes and their behavior; on the part of both individuals and groups) there is a much greater likelihood that they will be able to turn their attention jointly to building a common future.

Such honesty, however, is difficult within any society. The tendency to reject criticism, deny responsibility

and hide any weakness or shortcoming is often seen as a necessary part of protecting one's self-esteem or the honor of one's people. However, it also frequently plays a part in prolonging and exacerbating latent or hidden conflicts. The intense competition inherent within battles for tribal honor, or even personal reputation, help explain how tensions which appear to be resolved publicly, through norms of superficial cordiality and ritualized reciprocity, can suddenly erupt in suspicion and antagonism. Projecting all the blame, responding defensively to criticism of oneself or one's people, and refusing to openly discuss accountability on all sides, simply pushes the conflict further beneath the surface. While it is important to find ways to help people save face and maintain deserved honor and respect, responsibility cannot be avoided if we are to restore relationships between peoples in conflict. I believe the task of addressing and eliminating, not just masking, adversarial relationships must begin with those of us who call ourselves peacebuilders.

I wish all of you, among whom I have worked these past three months, all the best in facing these challenges with honesty, creativity, and compassion.

Causes of pastoral conflict in Africa

BY MAURICE ONYANGO

Pastoral conflicts in Africa is largely confined to pastoralist communities especially those found in the Horn of Africa region (Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan). Major causes of pastoral conflict are cattle rustling, competition for pasture, land and watering points. However, the most potent cause of pastoral conflict for many years has been cattle rustling. This is because traditionally cattle rustling was regarded as a means of raising dowry and restocking especially after loss of large herds of cattle due to droughts, floods and diseases. But like any other armed conflicts, care was taken during raids to minimize deaths more so among the non-combatants.

Pastoral conflicts normally take ethnic and clan dimensions, with most affected communities in Kenya being Turkana, Pokot, Samburu, Maasai and Marakwet. But inter-ethnic conflicts arising from cattle rustling is not confined to pastoral communities only. Recently even agricultural communities such as Kipsigis, Luo, Kisii, and Abakuria communities of South Rift and Southern Nyaanza have experienced sporadic conflicts associated with cattle rustling. Similarly the country has reported

many cases of cross border conflicts involving the Turkana- Karamojong on the Kenya-Uganda border and Turkana -Toposa on the Kenya – South Sudan border.

Whereas most of the present day pastoral conflicts occur in Africa, its historical roots go beyond this continent. Historians trace pastoral conflicts to 628 B.C's Celtic Ireland where it was regarded as a social institution. Successful cattle raiders were highly venerated in society and newly appointed kings were required to organize successful cattle raids before their inauguration into office. Cattle rustling was even embraced by the religious community. A lot of literature on cattle raiding reveals that some saints demanded a share of the proceeds from cattle raids while others were patrons of the raiders.

Although cattle raiding induced conflict is no longer a problem in America and the Caribbean, countries such as Mexico, Chile and Argentina experienced violent pastoral conflicts until two centuries ago. Several measures among them fenced grazing and construction of trenches- to control the movement of cattle, military conquest and border treaties helped much in the elimination of pastoral conflicts in the region.

Pastoral conflicts in Africa took a differ-

ent dimension in the 1960s with the deployment of automatic weapons such as AK-47s in the conflicts. Political instability leading to armed conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region provided a major source of these weapons. This effectively transformed pastoral conflict into armed combat, which required response from well equipped and trained security personnel. However, this has not been possible given limited funding to internal security agencies in the region.

Although the use of conventional weapons has exacerbated pastoral conflicts in recent years, experts have blamed rising cases of cattle rustling on the commercial angle it has assumed lately. Some pastoralists believe that some of their stolen animals have actually found their way to leading abattoirs in the country. Accounts of some pastoralists have even revealed their opposition to expansion of road networks in their regions as this they believe may fuel commercial cattle rustling.

Given the failure of reactionary mitigation measures, recent focus on pastoral conflict has shifted to early warning indicators. Conflict experts believe that understanding the root causes of contemporary pastoral conflicts is key to a durable solution to the problem. Studies on early warning indicators

of pastoral conflicts have revealed the link between conflict on the one hand, and environmental degradation and changing land use patterns on the other hand.

While pastoral migrations in search of pasture and water are still common among pastoralism, it has considerably been curtailed by emerging land use patterns. The establishment of large settlements, plantation farming, and wild life sanctuaries in areas previously considered as pastoralists land, has not only closed migratory corridors and diverted water from livestock to irrigation agriculture but has also considerably reduced grazing lands to sizes that cannot support traditional pastoralism. The result has been intense competition for available pastoral resources, with some pastoralists moving their livestock beyond their traditional boundaries. This has seen the escalation of conflicts relating to competition for pasture, land and watering points.

But what has confounded experts is the rapid rate of environmental degradation of pastoral lands, which pose a lot of threat to pastoral livelihoods. Consequently pastoralists continue to lose entitlement to environmental resources such as land, water and

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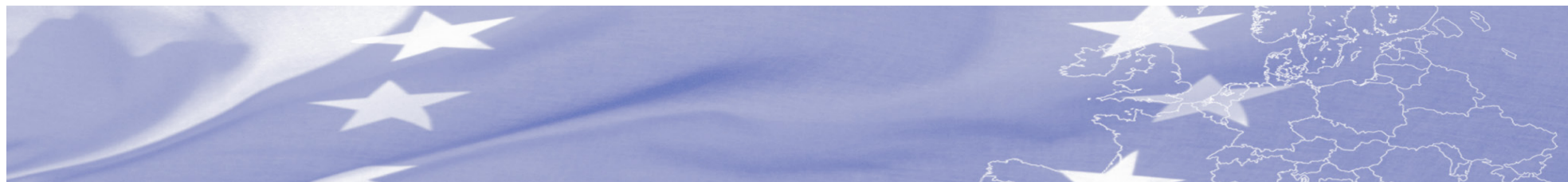


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Bondo DC asks EU to help revive district peace committees

By JONES MAGARE

BONDO District Commissioner Mohamud Salim has urged the European Union (EU) to facilitate revival of grassroots peace committees in the area and other conflict torn parts of the country.

The DC made the call during a courtesy call in his Bondo office by an EU and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung delegation.

Salim said there is need for EU to participate in the revival of grassroots peace committees in Bondo District and other strife torn parts of the country, which are currently dormant. "We in government are so far happy with EU's support in various development programmes in the country which include funding of water projects. However we urge the EU to also strengthen the peace committees," Salim urged.

He pointed that there are existing good working relationship between the government's provincial administration wing and Konrad Deputy Country Director Gideon Ochanda and other officials like the organization's Kisumu office International Project Manager –Partnership for Peace Hanna Carlsson.

Other officials whom we have had a cordial working relationship include Community Initiative Action Group-Kenya (CIAG-K) director cum Nyanza province co-ordinator Chris Owalla.

The DC noted that there is need for the EU to fund the revival of the peace committees and strengthening them by first reconstructing the committees by identifying capable members at the grassroots level.

Salim said apart from supporting revival of the peace committees, EU should also consider strengthening the organs through capacity –building, training and sensitizing identified committee members



Bondo DC Mahamud Salim (facing camera) addresses the European Union delegation led by Alesandro Liamine (third from left) and Konrad Adenauer Stitung Resident Representative Anke Christine Lerch (second from left) as Konrad Kisumu office International Project Manager –Partnership for Peace, Hanna Carlsson, looks on at the DC's office. Photo/Jones Magare

on the functions and objectives of these organs.

"It is important to sensitize the peace committee members on conflict, security and related issues, since they will be in-charge of very vital peace maintenance organs at the grassroots" Salim said.

The DC lamented that at the moment peace committees at the grassroots level are dormant in all various parts of the country, such as Bondo and other flash-points.

"Reviving peace committees at the grassroots is necessary because it is at this

level that members of the organs need to monitor issues of security in advance before matters deteriorate and spill over to other parts of the districts and country," The DC warned.

Salim explained that grassroots peace committees are important in resource-conflict areas like Bondo District.

"In Bondo District conflict issues are resource-based. You will find fishermen from Bondo entangled in conflict with their counterparts from Busia region. But, once you have these committees at the grassroots it becomes easy for members to monitor

emerging conflicts," the DC advised.

The district boss lamented that at the moment peace committees are only active at the district level in the country.

Speaking in his office, the DC reminded the EU delegation to take note that the process of reviving and strengthening the peace committees also entails incorporating funds for facilitation of members.

Salim recalled that while serving as DC in Molo District at the height of the 2008 post-election violence it was difficult to actively maintain peace committees in the area due to lack of facilitation. "Some times members of the peace committees would fail to attend meetings and when you ask them why, they would respond. Bwana DC you need to consider giving us even a cup of tea during our committee sitting and working sessions," Salim points out.

He said facilitation of the committees also entails supporting them in terms of transport and other requisite items and logistical needs. Responding to the DC's request, EU's Regional Crisis Response Planner Alessandro Liamine was positive: "I fully share the sentiments on the need to strengthen peace committees at the grassroots level".

Present during the courtesy call were EU Regional Crisis Response Planner Alessandro Liamine, Governance Advisor Bazikanwe Sotirios, Konrad Resident Representative Anke Christine Lech and Konrad's Kisumu Office International Project Manager – Partnership for Peace, Hanna Carlsson.

Others included Konrad Deputy Country Director Gideon Ochanda, CIAG-K Director Chris Owalla and Catholic Justice and Peace Commission's Peace Building and Conflict Resolution (CJPC) Programme Officer John Ebenyo Ewesit and The Link Editor, Daniel Otunge.

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natural vegetation. Unpredictable climatic conditions have resulted into prolonged droughts, floods and re-emergence of threatening animal diseases such as rift valley fever. But this problem has been compounded by the fact that pastoralists on their own are unable to maintain or restore degraded resources without external assistance.

Kenya's pastoralists occupy 80% of the country's land mass, areas commonly called Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL). They comprise about 15% or six million people who derive their livelihood directly from livestock and livestock products. The role of pastoralists in national develop-

Causes of Pastoral Conflict in Africa

ment cannot thus be over emphasized. Yet changing land use pattern, unpredictable climatic conditions and dwindling grazing lands have fuelled pastoral conflict thus rendering pastoralism a difficult source of livelihood. Confronted with these some pastoralists have moved to towns in search of alternative livelihood, at a time when urban centres are already overburdened by unemployment, congestion and social pathologies.

It is thus imperative that efforts be geared toward conflict prevention among pastoral communities. Previous state inter-

vention to pastoral conflict involved military and other armed personnel. The creation of paramilitary institutions in the form of anti-stock theft units has done very little to reverse the tide against pastoral conflicts. In recent years the government of Kenya embarked on disarmament programs to mop out all illegally held firearms. Regrettably, not much has been achieved by these efforts given the reluctance of some pastoralists to surrender their arms for fear of being left vulnerable to cross border attacks. Similarly cross border arms trade between Kenya and neighbouring countries has al-

ways ensured prompt re-arming, thus rendering disarmament exercises almost futile. Pastoral conflict in the form of cattle rustling, competition for pasture, land and watering points have not only persisted but become even more brutal. This persistence in the face of numerous security operations is indicative of the need to explore alternative approaches to pastoral conflict management.

The writer is an MA Student, Egerton University, Department of Peace Security and Social Studies



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

The Kenyan new story

By JOSEPH OWUONDO

The Partnership for Peace Project, CSO's Training Programme is coming to a closure. There has been several trainings across the three provinces: Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western.

I had the privilege of attending all the Nyanza's training courtesy of CIAG-Kenya, an implementing organization in the province. The training sessions were well coordinated and conducted. The methods of trainings have been instrumental in building the strengths of individuals and their respective organizations on do's and don'ts in peace building and conflict resolution processes.

I have been particularly overwhelmed by the cultural exchanges and celebrations sessions which have perfectly presented the peace processes and mitigations focusing on traditions and cultural methods. All African traditional celebrations and performances have captured numerous aspects of peace in relation not only to development but to entertainment and integration as well. As a young person living in province of multiethnic outlook, where stereotyping and negative ethnicities have dominated, this facet of entertainment, theater and drama in peace building processes have been very striking.

The training courses have been facilitated by knowledgeable people. Babu Ayindo and David Steele have kept the spirit going.

I need however revisit the title of this passage "The Kenyan New Story"

It is vital that I refer to a few speeches which to me are reflections of the new stories. Ronald Wilson Regan came out to speak about "A Time for Choosing" during one of his campaigns forums. He talked about peace and prosperity, the freedom and relationship between his countrymen, cross neighbor relationship and finances. This was a new story for his people at that time. Malcolm X spoke about "The Ballot or the Bullet". His new story managed to change the beliefs and the views of his followers and created a new history for his country. "I have a Dream" story has lived with the world for tens of years. Obama gave his people the spirit to carry on by amplifying the new story "yes we can" and yes he did it.

In the context of reframing our identity, it is imperative that all citizens define their own new story. The new concept should aim at uniting our various differences into commonalities, which we can all forge together towards. The new story should be able to inspire the people, across tribes all alike, unite them in their diversities and uniqueness. And as Chris, The Project Coordinator CIAK-Kenya puts it, we may never agree on opinions, or views or characters or principles, but there is always that one thing that amalgamates us – the social responsibility, the struggle for liberation and freedom of the common person.

EU delegation visits Peace Project in Nyanza



European Union Governance Advisor Bazikanwe Sotirios (right) flanked by Konrad Deputy Country Director Gideon Ochanda, signs the visitors book at Bondo DC Mohamud Salim during a courtesy call by the EU and Konrad delegation. —Jones Magare

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participants with knowledge and techniques in peace-building and conflict transformation, among a host of other valuable related skills.

In an interview with *The Link*, Community Initiative Action Group-Kenya (CIAG-K) director cum Nyanza province co-ordinator Chris Owalla, said the training was the final one and a culmination of 12 weeks of similar sessions EU-Konrad co-funded that have been held in various districts in the three conflict prone provinces Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley.

Owalla said CIAG-K is one of the

EU-Konrad implementing partners of the peace programme and other development projects in the three provinces.

The other implementers are Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and Mount Elgon Residents Association in Rift Valley, based in a region that has until recently been besieged by violence from the Kenya army subdued Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF) militia.

"The Bondo workshop marks the last phase of our training of scores of Kenyan Non-State Actors to become peacekeepers who can handle peace and conflict in the country's hot-spots.

"Owalla says.

Owalla pointed out that the training workshops have been held in Nyanza province's Rodi Kopanya township in Homabay District, Isabania in Kuria District and Bondo.

He said in Western province the peace-building training workshops have been held in Bungoma town and at the provincial headquarters Kakamega, among other towns in the region.

In Rift Valley, the trainings were conducted at the SLDF hit conflict Mount Elgon area, Nakuru and Eldoret which witnessed the 2008 post-election violence and bore the brunt including several other areas within this districts and province.

Owalla and the training facilitators Ayindo and Steele were confident the peace-building skills Kenyan Non-State Actors have acquired from the training will greatly enhance their capacity to handle conflict situations in various strife prone parts of the country.

The trio advised the participants and others who have benefited from the training sessions to be change agents and advocates for peace.

Attending the training as observers were representatives of EU and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung officials. The delegates included EU Regional Crisis Response Planner Alessandro Liamine, Governance Advisor Bazikanwe Sotirios, Konrad Resident Representative Anke Christine Lech and International Project Manager – Partnership for Peace, Hanna Carlsson.

Others included Konrad Deputy Country Director Gideon Ochanda, CJPC Programme Officer John Ebenyo Ewesit and The Link Editor, Daniel Otunge.

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Western PDA decries loss of crops to floods

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

WESTERN Provincial Director of Agricultural (PDA) John Cheruyiot has expressed concern over destruction of crops by floods in the area.

He called for urgent measures to contain the situation fearing that it will result into a decline in food production in Teso and Bunyala districts after River Malakisi burst its banks.

In Nambale, 12 houses and a church collapsed following the ongoing heavy rains. No injuries were reported.

Cheruyiot explains that farmers in Budalangi will experience decline in food harvests this year following the on going heavy rains. "We had distributed relief maize and fertilizers to farmers in some parts of flood prone areas but they will not harvest anything," reveals Cheruyiot.

He continued: "Livestock will be swept away if the trend is not checked."

Cheruyiot, who spoke after touring Budalangi explains that the damage needs to be controlled to save farmers from suffering. The Kenya Red Cross Society area branch says that they have intensified monitoring of the water level to give early warnings to residents. The society has donated blankets and tents to families displaced from their homes.

Nicodemus Okango, an official of Red Cross notes that submerged houses destroyed in Teso were reported in Singe, Kiriamisi, Ngelochom and Amon areas.

"We have visited the families and the situation is wanting," adds Okango.

Okango says water levels of rivers Machakus and Malakisi have risen adding that families along the banks need to be relocated.

The Government has however assured locals that there are adequate foodstuffs for displaced families.

Save sugar sector from certain collapse

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE sugar industry requires over Kshs55 billion to save it from imminent collapse.

According to the Kenya Sugar Board Chief Executive Officer Rosemary Mkok, the funds will oversee the expansion and modernisation of irrigation projects to give sugar millers a new lease of life.

She says that the board is currently pursuing a proposal which seeks to mobilise funds from investors who are likely to come up once the privatization process is complete.

"The situation has been bad partly because of weather and old and obsolete machines which are being used by local millers," she says.

Mkok spoke at St Peters Mumias Catholic Church during a funds drive meeting presided over by assistant minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Alfred Khang'ati and area MP Ben Washiali.

She reveals that the industry is grappling with a deficit 8 million tons in production of sugarcane and warns that the ailing industry may not be able to stand on its own once the COMESA safeguards comes to an end in June 2011.

She encouraged farmers to embrace new farming techniques and current cane seed varieties such as recently introduced T8484.

She says the variety, developed by the Kenya Sugar Research Foundation (Kesref), is readily available.



A section of sugar industry in Western Kenya. Photo/File

"It is early maturing and highly yielding variety that we encourage our growers to try on their farms so that we can unite in reviving our sugar industry as stakeholders," adds Mkok.

She says the variety has the potential of improving the yields in Mumias, Nzoia and West Kenya sugar belts.

Nyanza region should also benefit from the variety if cane production is to be high," said Mkok.

She explained that cases of cane shortage will be reduced if the right varieties are planted. She noted that the recent drought has affected cane production in the country.

Mkok says although expensive, irrigation will ensure sugarcane growth

cycle reduces to at least 12 months in Western Kenya especially where farmers rely on rain fed farming unlike at the coast where irrigation is practiced. According to her, the board has identified areas that need strengthening and is working around the clock to revamp the industry.

The CEO points out that the privatisation of local millers was favoured by the board due to the financial constraints that had made it difficult to expand and strengthen the factory capacities.

"Our production is too low we therefore need to redouble our efforts to be able to realize some positive change," says Mkok.

New seeds for Western Province released

By JOEL JUMA

THE Government has released new seed varieties of maize and beans suitable for planting by farmers in Western Kenya.

Kakamega Striga Tolerant maize variety (KSTP 94) is resistant to major foliar diseases such as Grey leaf spot, according to assistant minister for Agriculture Kariuki Mbiuki.

Mbiuki says experts from Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) who include soil and crop scientists have developed a beans variety that is resistant to root rot.

Mbiuki reveals that the three new beans varieties released by the Government are KK 8, KK15 and KK 20.

The assistant minister, who spoke during the Kakamega's Kari farmer's field day, says the Government wants these seeds to be planted by farmers to reduce food shortage in the country.

Mbiuki points out that the ministry is set to distribute 3 million seedlings of sweet potatoes and another 1.8 million cuttings of cassava to farmers in 33 districts of Western and Nyanza provinces.

He says that the ministry will not allow farmers whose maize was affected by aflatoxine to incur losses.

He intimates that 2.3 million bags of maize would be purchased from the affected farmers. He adds that farmers demanding to be paid Kshs2, 300 for the bad maize are being misled by their leaders.

"We can only purchase at Kshs2,300 if the maize is still valuable, but in this case we are only bailing you out of the suffering," explains Mbiuki.

Ministry clears milk processor of corruption

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

AN audit report compiled by the inspectorate department in the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing has cleared the management of the giant Githunguri milk processing plant of corruption allegations.

The inspectors told a special Annual General Meeting held at Githunguri stadium and attended by close to five thousand members, that their investigations had proved beyond any reasonable doubt that Kshs42 million in the facility's VAT account had not been embezzled besides some 10 million shillings in its fixed account.

Central Province Co-operative boss Stephen Mutugi who officiated the meeting said that the government would do everything possible to ensure that the facility which is the fastest growing in East and Central Africa was safeguarded from political interference.

He said that Githunguri dairy was the pride of the country and had greatly improved the lives of many farmers adding that out of the Kshs3.1 billion paid to dairy farmers in the country this year, Kshs1.4 billion went to those from Githunguri.

In May, Githunguri MP



Police teargas members of the Githunguri dairy during an AGM at the Githunguri stadium. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi

Njoroge Baiya had expressed fears that the fast growing Githunguri milk processing plant was likely to collapse due to poor leadership, corruption and mismanagement.

He said that it was unfortunate that the plant which is currently doing a capacity of 185,000 litres of milk daily was being run down thereby exposing its members to the vagaries of milk glut

and untold losses.

In a letter addressed to both the management and milk farmers, the MP alleged that the major problem the company was facing was a situation whereby senior managers were trading with the society.

He said that the vice had negatively impacted on the day to day running of the facility noting that conflict of interest in

any business endeavor was tantamount to vouching for its collapse.

The letter alleged that the company chairman Charles Mukora owned two transport vehicles at the milk plant and that he was personally distributing milk in Kawangware..

Further, the MP claimed that most of the committee members were competing to trade with the facility thereby compromising its productivity.

Saying that conflict of interest was likely to lead to the collapse of the society, the MP noted that the firm's competitors were keenly watching and praying for the downfall of the same to scramble for its vast market.

Baiya noted that he had tirelessly and productively served as the milk plant chairman for 8 years before he voluntarily resigned after he was elected as the area MP and challenged the current management to salvage the firm from imminent collapse.

However, the company chairman Charles Mukora while addressing shareholders at Githunguri stadium dismissed all the allegations levelled against him and his team and accused the MP of using the facility as a political launch pad.

Former Kisii prisoners appeal for help

By BOB OMBATI

MORE than 50 former prisoners from Kisii central have appealed to the government to help them start small scale businesses so that they can rebuild their lives through honest means.

The ex convicts say that they had acquired valuable skills while in jail and wanted funds that would allow them to venture into income generating projects.

Christopher Ogechi, who was convicted for manslaughter says he trained in carpentry and Joinery and needed tools to practice the trade.

Ogechi says he had reformed and was willing to start a business to enable him support his family and the orphans left behind by his victim.

He said after being freed, he got a job at a local secondary school where he was doing repair and maintenance. He however felt that his skills were being underutilized and wanted assistance to venture into carpentry and Joinery business.

He urged the government to address the plight of ex convicts, majority of who are still working in government institutions.

"Poverty drives people to committing crime and therefore ex prisoners should be empowered financially so that they can start income generating activities to boost their incomes and live better lives," he adds.

ESP to boost economic recovery — Otuoma

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

SUCCESSFUL implementation of the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) will pave way for a long term solution to the myriad economic challenges facing the country, says Fisheries Minister Dr Paul Otuoma.

Otuoma notes that lack of proper information flow from the treasury to the constituency in regards to the economic stimulus programme implementation was still a problem.

He however assures stakeholders that the issue was being addressed and that very soon everything will be clear, adding that seven ministries which include education, health, industrialization and fisheries are involved in the programme.

The minister spoke during a district development committee meeting held at the Funyula ACK church recently.

The District Fisheries Officer Mr. Charles Ondu on his part told stakeholders that the department has so far received a total of Kshs8 million for the construction of 200 fish ponds in the constituency.

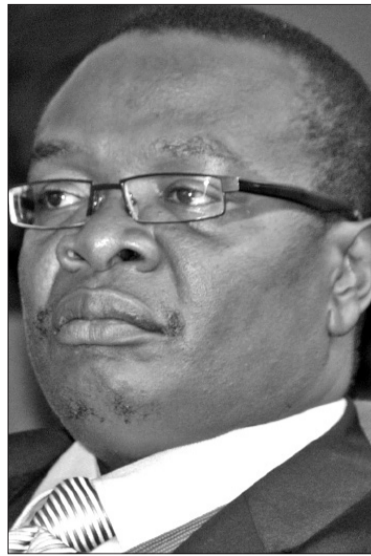
The district fisheries officer at the same time said that a total of 9,500 acres of land have already

been set aside for the venture adding that 2,000 youths will be recruited at a rate of Ksh250 per day to undertake the construction of the fish ponds and that the government will provide the initial seed and feed.

The District Commissioner Mrs. Josephine Onunga who is also the district development committee chairperson on her part underscored the importance of the forum and appealed to the stakeholders to attend the same whenever a meeting is called to help tackle issues affecting the district.

“The district development committee forum is part of the structure the government has put in place to help achieve vision 2030,” the provincial administrator says, adding that the government is implementing policies to tackle the high poverty index in the district.

Onunga who is also the District Education Board [DEB] chairperson at the same time expressed concern over the high cases of unwanted pregnancies reported in primary schools and instructed the District Education Officer Mr. Michael O. Mugawo who was also present to work closely with the children’s department and the police to arrest the



Mr. Otuoma: Fisheries Minister

culprits and charge them in a court of law.

“There is urgent need on the part of the stakeholders to protect the girl-child by declaring total war against those out to spoil our young school girls thus denying them the chance to learn,” the DC said, adding that their days are numbered as they will soon be brought to book.

The district development committee members said that the Dis-

trict Tender Board should take into consideration the qualification of the contractor as opposed to the current scenario where the lowest bidder takes the day as these will help avoid shoddy work on the development projects in the district.

They suggested that districts should be allowed to identify for themselves the right contractor to undertake the projects, arguing that too much centralization of resources has led to the marginalization of other areas in terms of development.

However, the district procurement officer Mr. Peter Ondusu explained to the stakeholders that any project which is over and above the Ksh5million is tendered only at the headquarters and nowhere else.

The Funyula North civic leader Councilor Charles Olemu who is also the Busia county council chairman on his part expressed concern over the poor state of the rural roads especially the one from Matayos to Ganjala and appealed to the Kenya Rural Roads department in the district to consider upgrading the same arguing that during the rainy season the road is impassable thus subjecting the road users to a lot of problems when transporting their wares through the same road.

Pass new law if you want local tribunal — Shitanda

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

SETTING up of a local tribunal to investigate and try crimes committed during the post election violence, will largely depend on adoption of a new constitution, according to Housing Minister Soita Shitanda.

He says that Parliament’s resolve to reject the bills to introduce the local tribunal was largely borne out of fear that the executive was bound to interfere with the affairs of the tribunal.

“However, the draft constitution if passed, creates independence for tribunals and completely removes the legislature from control of the executive as their roles are executed separately,” he adds. The Minister says the draft if passed will instill a level of confidence in MPs that the tribunal will operate without bias.

In the past, Foreign Affairs Moses Wetangula and Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo have expressed their support in setting up the local tribunal.

The first bill which sought to push for the formation of a local tribunal was sponsored by the government, but rejected by MPs and later Mr. Gitobu Imanyara introduced a private members bill which was also rejected.

The International Criminal Court prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo, has told Kenyans not to expect much from him as he was likely to deal with just two cases of six people.

“Do not expect everything from me. I will only prosecute two to six cases and the rest is up to you,” asserted Ocampo during a media briefing recently.

The chief prosecutor who asked civil societies to push Parliament to establish a local tribunal also urged leaders to start a mechanism for resolving the cases.

New law will increase funds to regions

By JOEL JUMA

PLANNING Minister Wycliffe Oparanya has assured the nation that passing of the new Constitution will not lead to the scrapping of CDF contrary lies peddled by the NO camp.

The minister said adoption of the new law will instead see projects get more funds. He cited the creation of Counties that will get 15 per cent of the national revenue as specified in the new political and economic dispensation proposed by the new law.

The minister explains that the devolved funds will continue to be channeled at the grassroots level to help communities initiate development projects.

Oparanya spoke in Butere when he disbursed Kshs1 million CDF cheque to Shinamwonyuli Girls Secondary School. He explained that the CDF Act will only be revised to comply with the new dispensation. He said the CDF Act will be required to finance tourism, agriculture and other community based projects.

“The fund which currently focuses on projects within health, education and environment sectors will be spread out to other areas as per the wishes of the communities,” says Oparanya.

Oparanya notes that the Government has so far disbursed over Kshs100 million to fight poverty with priority being given to hard hit areas.

World Bank funds reform of councils

By PETER MUTUKU

LOCAL authorities have received Kshs12.5 billion grant from the World Bank to facilitate reforms and enhance service delivery.

The funds will also oversee the implementation of youth empowerment projects.

The World Bank Kenya Country Director Johannes Zutt says that Kshs7.7 billion will be used to reform and improve performance of municipalities while Kshs 4.6 billion will fund youth empowerment programmes.

Among the local authorities earmarked to benefit from the funding include Eldoret, Embu, Garrissa, Kakamega, Kericho, Kitui, Kisumu, Malindi, Mombasa, Machakos, Nakuru, Nyeri, Naivasha, Thika and City of Nairobi.

The World Bank Director says the funding will help boost economic growth and regional equity.

He notes that though Kenya’s municipalities are critical to economic growth and regional equity, they have been operating below their potential due to infrastructure bottlenecks, weak financial base and poor management.

The World Bank Director underscores the need to improve the viability of municipalities to enhance their contribution to national development.

He says that rapid urbanization had resulted in huge gaps in the provision of infrastructure and basic services, a scenario that had undermined business growth and resulted in poor living standards.

The Kenya youth empowerment project is aimed at complementing government efforts to increase access to youth targeted temporary employment programmes.

Tana families turn to farming to fight famine

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

REMOTE villages in Tana River district whose inhabitants have for long relied on relief food are now actively engaged in agricultural activities.

This follows the successful implementation of a pilot farming project in the area by the Arid Lands and Resource Management Programme (ALRMP), which has helped boost food security.

Mikinduni village, which is situated about 20 kilometres south of Hola town, has over the years suffered from food shortages occasioned by failed rains and subsequent crop failure.

However scenes of thousands of the poverty stricken residents queuing to receive relief maize, beans, rice and cooking oil from the provincial administration are now history.

As they go about their activities, fear of starvation is no more following their recent bumper harvests of maize, bananas, green grams and mangoes.

An estimated 1,000 inhabitants of Mikinduni village have now been weaned off this long time dependence, an achievement they never thought possible, that they could actually find home grown solution to food insecurity challenges. The residents are now using silt laden waters of the river Tana for their farming.

The project, at the banks of River Tana, is a clear example that once a community is empowered, it is capable of moving out from a dependency scenario to one that can produce surplus for the locals as well as urban markets, notes an official from the District ALRMP Mr. Yahya Ali Said.

Mr. Ali, who is the Mobile Extension Team leader, says under the project, community leaders from 15 se-



Despite the persistent drought all year round in Malindi, farmers have a reason to smile after ALRMP revolutionized the ways of giving them boom as a result of bumper harvests. Photo/File

lected groups were trained on modern farming methods (Agriculture farming) and sustainable utilization of River Tana water resources for crop production.

Under the programme, the community contributes 30 per cent of the initial funding while the ALRMP provides 70 per cent of the costs, including training the farmers on modern farming methods, financial management and procurement procedures, resource mo-

bilization and proposal writing.

“Of critical importance is the fact that we help beneficiaries to have a positive attitude in the journey towards transforming their lives from their current status to a more food secure future,” he says, adding that they usually use a concept called Participatory Integrated Development training where they train communities to find solution to their problems within themselves and then chart the way forward.

State to unveil mega projects in western Kenya — Gumo

By JOEL JUMA

THE government is set to unveil ambitious development projects in Western Kenya, especially in Yala, Nzoia and Sondu catchment areas.

According to the Minister for Regional Development Fred Gumo, the project will cost over Kshs100 billion and will be implemented in phases for a period of 10 years. The project will be carried out in three provinces Western, Nyanza and Rift Valley, which are under the Lake Basin Development Authority (LBDA).

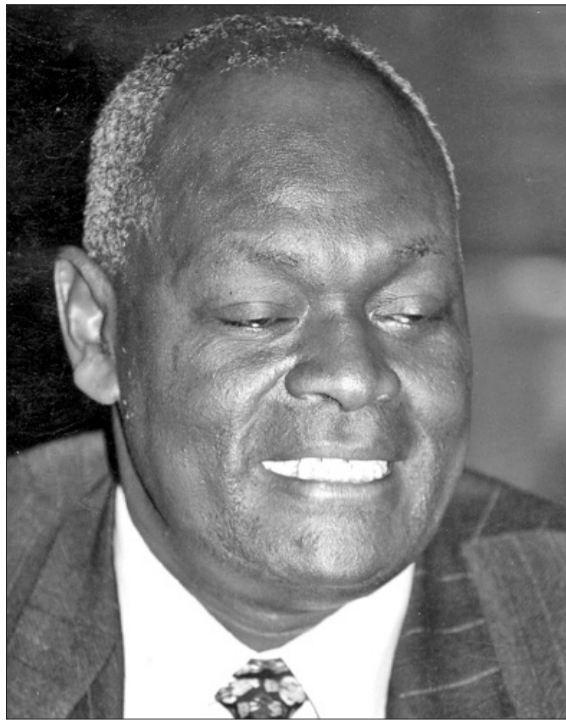
The Webuye multi-purpose project covering River Nzoia, Magwagwa project along River Sondu, and Nandi multipurpose dam projects will help create sustainable development and alleviate poverty. The components will include construction of dams along the three rivers, use water from the river for both domestic and industrial purposes and power generation.

Other initiatives will entail the use of water from the rivers to irrigate thousands of acres of land and also to help in environmental conservation.

The minister was speaking at Busagwa Primary School in Bunyala Districts, when he toured LBDA projects in the area.

Gumo says the projects are geared towards helping people in the region attain the desired levels of development both socially and economically by exploiting the water from the rivers. Once the project is complete, residents will be saved from the perennial problem occasioned by floods because water flowing in the rivers will be controlled," adds Gumo

He says the project will also create employment opportunities for Kenyans, stimulate industrial development in the region and provide reliable source of water for domestic, agricultural and industrial use.



Mr. Gumo

Gumo notes that farmers in the area have for a long time failed to get better harvest due to unreliable rainfall but with the construction of dams, there will be enough water to irrigate their farms. The Minister adds that the projects will be able generate over 200 megawatts of electricity on the national power grid thus helping to improve the country's economy by stimulating development.

He says the projects will be carried out in phases to avoid overlapping and holdups. So far LBDA has already initiated talks with International Spain and Abdul Mullick and Associates (TYPASA), a local company to carry out feasibility studies on the Nandi project to be completed in 20 months.

Gumo revealed that a memorandum of understanding was signed in July last

year between LBDA and SYNOHYDRO Corporation from China which has already submitted a revised project proposal for negotiation to carry out the Magwagwa project.

LBDA managing director Peter Aguko says LBDA is at the moment undertaking both Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Test in the area to facilitate compensation and resettlement of families that will be displaced by the constructions of dams along the rivers.

The Authority is working with other government departments and has already obtained parcels of land for those who will be affected, said Aguko. He said the project implementation will largely depend on the availability of funds which he said will be sourced



Mr. Ababu Namwamba

from the government, multilateral donor organisations and public-private partnership.

Budalangi MP Ababu Namwamba says the move will help improve the economic status of people from the region and appealed to LBDA to work closely with farmers so as to help them improve their farm produce.

He says the decision by the Authority to buy 850 paddy tons of rice at Kshs25 million from local farmers was timely as it helped farmers not to incur losses.

"Our farmers were at risk of losing their harvest due to lack of storage facilities," said Namwamba adding that before LBDA intervention, rice farmers had already lost over 500 bags of rice due to lack of storage facilities.

Bungoma people get cash from state

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

A TOTAL of 4,291 households with Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in larger Bungoma are being supported through the Government's Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) initiative.

Bungoma District Children's Officer (DCO) Mrs. Alice Wanyonyi reveals that the households being supported are spread out in the five constituencies of the district.

Mrs. Wanyonyi further reveals that the beneficiaries of the Government humane programme come from two locations of each constituency.

She claims that the two selected locations from every constituency have high poverty index according to statistics obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The DCO says that each household care giver is paid Kshs1,500 per month through the post office regardless of the number of OVC's under their care.

"This noble programme is, therefore costing the government a total of Kshs. 6,436,500 every month in the district's five constituencies," adds the DCO.

The district children's boss, points out that the money is meant to buy uniform, food, and meet medical and registration of birth certificates costs for the OVC, besides other basic needs.

"Care givers who misappropriate the fund are upon discovery immediately denied further funding" the DCO says.

She adds that once a care giver of a certain household has been denied receipt of the money another member of the household is appointed to take charge based on the recommendations of the locational committee.

Following are the location where the CTP is currently running:-

- Kimilili Constituency**
- a. Kimilili Township Location
- b. Naitiri Location

- Kanduyi Constituency**
- a. Bungoma Township Location
- b. East Bukusu Location

- Webuye Constituency**
- a. Webuye Township Location
- b. Misikhu Location

- Sirisia Constituency**
- a. Namubira Location
- b. Malakisi Location

- Bumula Constituency**
- a. Kabula Location
- b. South Bukusu location

Oparanya puts road contractor on notice

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

PLANNING minister Wycliffe Oparanya has challenged a contractor working on Ekeru-Buyangu road to ensure the Kshs1.2 billion project is completed without further delay.

Accompanied by MPs David Were and Evans Akula on a tour of the road, Oparanya told the contractor to speed up the tarmacking process to avoid being dragged behind by long rains expected in the region soon.

"We are disappointed that the contractor is on and off instead of concentrating on the tarmacking exercise," the minister said.

The tarmacking exercise kicked off three years ago but it has not been finalised. President Kibaki while touring the area last year said that the tarmacking should be extended from Sabatia Market to Butere district headquarters.

Oparanya who was speaking during inspection of development projects in his Butere constituency said he will notify his counterpart in the Ministry of Roads Franklin Bett on the state of the project.

Katulani residents welcome water project with smiles

By PETER MUTUKU

RESIDENTS of Yakalia village in Katulani Division of Kitui District have a reason to smile following the successful completion of a water project, which has been funded to the tune of Kshs17.5 million.

The project with about 185 shallow wells comes as a great reprieve for approximately 38,700 people in the area who will now have access to clean water.

The project was funded by the Latter Day Saints (LDS) Charities, which is an international non governmental organization. The NGO is the humanitarian arm of the Church of Jesus Christ which is based in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the United States of America.

The NGO's Africa Southeast Area Public Affairs director, Mr. Gene Puckett, handed over the project to the community at a ceremony held at the Yakalia Primary School.

Hundreds of residents led by their

Member of Parliament Charity Kaluki Ngilu and the District Commissioner Joshua K. Chepchieng were present.

Puckett said that the shallow wells have been dug by community members, sanitized with chlorine, reinforced with concrete and fitted with hand pumps. "This project will provide clean affordable water to the people and their livestock. The wells will also save lives by decreasing cases of cholera, typhoid and other water-borne diseases," Puckett said.

MPs raise alarm over use of women, youth fund

By BEKDAZO TONDO

MILLIONS of shillings meant for youth and women enterprise fund in Kilifi and Ganze Districts may have been misappropriated.

According to a Parliamentary Select Committee on Labour and Social Welfare headed by nominated MP Sophia Bi Noor, the funds channeled to them through banks and other microfinance organizations cannot be properly accounted for.

The team says that even government departments which have an obligation to monitor the disbursement and recovery of the loans advanced

through the funds hardly keep records.

"It is therefore very difficult to know how much money has been disbursed to their respective areas within a particular period and how much has been loaned to the targeted groups," adds Bi Noor, who led the team during a fact finding mission in Kilifi and Ganze Districts.

In Kilifi the team was given contradicting information when they sought to know the actual amount that had been disbursed to the youth and women groups in Bahari constituency since inception of the funds in question.

The Provincial Director of Gender and Social Service James Osoro was unable specify the amount of money

that had been disbursed to the province through the Women Enterprise Fund.

"I am not in a position to say exactly how much money was spent by the Government through the Women Enterprise Fund because the money is channeled directly to the banks and micro finance institutions who do not divulge information on the amount received, loans advanced and balances in the account," he said

Mr. Osoro said there were about eight financial institutions in Mombasa where the funds are directly channeled and his office is hardly informed on the amount they get from the government.

The committee chairperson Bi

Noor further pressed Mr. Osoro to give details of how many elderly people had benefited from the aged persons cash transfer program, how many vulnerable children households had benefited from the orphaned children cash transfer program and that of the physically challenged people.

"It appears madam committee chairperson you have deliberately come to Coast province to grill us over the management of the devolved funds falling in our line ministries, but the fact remains that we are never furnished with any information by financial institutions who act as intermediaries in the programmes," explains Osoro.

Purchase of tractors haunts former Ganze CDF team

By BEKADZO TONDO

Former Ganze CDF committee is on the spot over the alleged irregular purchase of three tractors which cost the CDF kitty Kshs30 million.

The committee headed by former Assistant Minister and Ganze MP Mr. Joseph Kingi is alleged to have destroyed documents that effected the transaction in question to conceal any evidence of misappropriation.

According to the area MP Francis Baya, the tractors meant to support local farmers have since ground to a halt.

The MP reveals that the National Management Board on CDF has now written to the current committee to demand more details as to how much money was spent to buy the tractors.

The demand letter follows another request by Baya who sought approval from the Board to have his committee allocate funds to facilitate the repair of the tractors.

The MP who is also an assistant minister for Immigration says the tractors were grounded three years ago due to mechanical problems.

"These tractors were bought with a purpose of assisting local farmers engaged in serious farming but they did not last long."

The MP has vowed to follow up the matter and establish the exact amount of money used to buy the tractors and their conditions.

How Githunguri CDF was used

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

IN the last financial year, Githunguri Constituency spent Kshs51m to complete CDF projects in the area.

Among the projects funded included initiatives in the education sector which were funded to the tune of Kshs10 million Mukuyu Secondary School received the lion's share of Kshs 2.5 million, which went into the completion of the dining hall.

Kiaria High School received Kshs1.6 million to complete a dining and multi purpose hall while Kamondo Secondary school got Kshs1 million to oversee the construction of a laboratory.

An additional Kshs10million was allocated to 2,180 students as bursaries.

The road network was allocated Kshs8 million while another Kshs3.5 million went into financing projects in the health sector, majority of which lacked basic facilities with residents being forced to walk long distances to access medical care at Kiambu District hospital. "This necessitated the upgrading and equipping of existing health centers and dispensaries," says the Area MP Njoroge Baiya who is also CDF chairman.

Githunguri health centre received the largest share of Kshs 1.8m for the upgrading and equipping of facilities. Other health Centres that were funded included Mbari-igi Dispensary which was allocated Kshs700,000, Miguta Health Centre received Kshs500,000 while Kiababu Health Centre was



Mr. Njoroge Baiya MP for Githunguri Constituency. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi

awarded Kshs300,000.

A total of Kshs 20 million went into financing stalled projects which included Ikinuriuki water project. The water project started almost four years ago was awarded Kshs1 million to aid in the completion of a borehole. Also earmarked for funding was Ihiga Gat-

itu Ikinu and Keria A water projects which were financed at a cost of Kshs1.2million.

On completion the projects will benefit thousands of families in areas where water has been a major

problem. The CDF offices received Kshs1,165,248 to assist in the completion of the office.

Other stalled projects which benefitted from the allocation included Ngemwa police post which was awarded Kshs1 million to aid in the completion of the project while Gathanje police post received Kshs200,000 for plastering.

The MP says projects that have been financed within the period under review were based on need assessment drawn from strategic plans, local leaders and the constituents.

He says that the constituency had come a long way after its accounts were frozen during the 2006/2007 financial year due to misappropriation of funds through stalled and ghost projects after the then member of parliament Arthur Magugu was hospitalized. However, the MP was quick to point out that contractors have been conspiring to defraud the CDF kitty by inflating prices of supplies and using substandard materials.

He cites a contractor who has done upper Githiga water intake at a cost of Kshs1.3m while the same intake at lower Githiga was done by Athi Water Services Board at a cost of only Kshs650,000. The MP says the contractor has threatened to move to court and declined to take the cheque paid to him by the CDF committee.

The MP however says that he has reported the case to the National CDF board saying that contractors who do shoddy job should be blacklisted.

Budalangi focuses on technical training

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUDALANGI youths are set to benefit from newly established technical training institutes using CDF.

The technical training facilities are the Bunyala Institute of Technology, which was funded to the tune of Kshs 4.5m, and the Busagwa Youth Polytechnic that was constructed at a cost of Kshs6.2m.

At Bunyala Institute of Technology, the project management committee told The Link that they had used part of the cash to buy land where the learning institution currently stands.

The technical training institute, which is almost complete, is expected to become an affiliate college of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology as well as a parent college to the newly established Busagwa youth polytechnic.

The Principal of the newly established Busagwa youth polytechnic, Mr. Cornel Makokha Otula, said that the technical training institute began with only 48 students but the student population has grown to the current 213 following the introduction of the subsidized tuition programme by the government.

He at the same time said that the technical training institute is currently offering three courses namely garment making, building and construction as well as carpentry adding that more courses would be brought on board as soon as funds are available to facilitate the acquisition of tool kits. "The project management committee has so far constructed an ad-



Some of the youth set to benefit from the project.

ministration block as well as a workshop which are currently at the fitting level," the polytechnic manager said.

During the period under review (2009/2010 financial year) Budalangi CDF Committee spent a total of Kshs13.2m on three major development projects during the.

Kshs2.5m was spent on development of the Bunyala rice irrigation scheme. The Budalangi constituency account manager Mr. Wilson Okumu who had accompanied the project monitoring and evaluation team said that the decision by the committee to allocate part of the CDF kitty towards the development and extension of the

Bunyala rice field was purely to boost the scheme and ensure a bumper harvest aimed at addressing the high poverty level in the region.

"The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee had allocated the fund which enabled the rice farmers to acquire an additional parcel of land from 500 acres to 1,500 acres to enable them to harvest more rice," the accounts manager said, adding that the CDF committee will consider allocating more funds that will facilitate the acquisition of additional tool kits for the technical training institute possibly during the next financial year.

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Ganze to build more schools — MP

By BEKADZO TONDO

GANZE Constituency will use a huge chunk of its Constituency Development Fund (CDF) allocation to construct additional secondary schools in the area.

Area MP Francis Baya says that the CDF committee will ensure each location has at least one secondary school to accommodate the high demand.

His announcement comes even as other leaders in the area decry the poor performances registered mainly in national examinations.

The leaders who include the area DC Ibrahim Diba say stakeholders in the education sector need to engage meaningfully to help find a lasting solution.

The board secretary who is also the District Education Officer Mr. Charles Nyakundi reveals that none of the secondary schools in the district, including Godoma, Sokoke, Jaribuni, Ganze, Vitengeni, Mwanagea and Ganze were able to produce a University student in last years Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE).

Nyakundi intimates that only one student managed to secure a weak B plus while the rest did poorly in the examination.

The district education officer wondered how the district could be developed if students continued to perform poorly in the national examination.

Statistics at the District Education office indicate that all the 25 students set to join public universities from the area, enrolled for their KCSE exams outside the district.

Building of new school in Kiambaa hits a snag



Mr. Githunguri, Kiambaa MP, touring a CDF project in the constituency. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

CONSTRUCTION of Kawaida Primary School in Kiambaa constituency of Kiambu District has stalled after a contractor withdrew from the project citing underpayment.

Controversy emerged after the contractor, namely Rawford Construction Company, demanded that the current CDF committee review the costs, saying that the money quoted in the Bill of quantities (BoQ) in 2006 could not apply in 2009/2010 due to the high cost of building materials.

Information available to The Link indicated that the current committee declined to revise the rates and instead terminated the contract insisting that the tendering process will be opened for advertisement to

other contractors

The project was initiated in 2007 by the former CDF committee under the chairmanship of former MP Njenga Karume at an initial cost of Kshs 16 million. Safaricom Mobile Subscriber donated an additional Kshs5 million to the project.

According to the Kiambu District Development Officer David Kiriimi, Rawford Contractors qualified for tender after successful bidding.

However the contractor was unable to finish the project within the stipulated time frame of one year and therefore had to seek the consent to extend construction period from the incoming CDF committee after the then MP lost the seat during the last General Elections.

The DDO says that both parties were unable to agree after the new CDF committee declined to revise

the rates to reflect the current economic status.

The school is being relocated to a new site as it currently stands in a colonial cowshed that has become dilapidated, with the leaking roofs and muddy surfaces making it unfit for human habitation.

The whole project entails the construction of a new modern school equipped with a computer laboratory and modern classrooms.

The Ministry of Public Works has however offered to arbitrate the standoff and is working on a new guideline to revise the rates for the work not done.

The DDO says the project will hopefully be complete and operational by the end of this year and they are looking forward for a multi lateral company to do phase two of a secondary school.

Kshs100m spent on poverty reduction — Oparanya

By JOEL JUMA

THE government has this year disbursed over Kshs100 million towards fighting poverty under the Poverty Eradication Commission (PEC).

According to Planning minister Wycliffe Oparanya PEC has disbursed money to various parts of the country with priority being given to areas hard hit by poverty.

The minister at the same time says that beneficiaries should repay the money on time to avoid being black-listed by the Government. "The money is meant to circulate to other groups and it is important that beneficiaries refund the money as specified or risk being auctioned, adds Oparanya who is the Minister for Planning and Vision 2030.

Oparanya spoke at Buchenya primary school where he distributed cheques worth Kshs3.8 million to 72 groups drawn from his Butere constituency.

Oparanya says the poverty eradication funds aim at empowering recipients to engage in income generating projects that can improve their livelihoods.

He also urged farmers to take advantage of the newly introduced flights by the Kenya Air Ports Authority (KAA) at the Kakamega Airstrip to export goods to foreign countries for the economic stability. Oparanya advised residents to venture into flower production industry saying that the sugar industry had contributed to their high poverty level.

Ndaragwa CDF gives education lion's share

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

AT least Kshs60m has been spent on CDF projects in Ndaragwa constituency during the last financial year.

Among the projects that have been funded include education, health, water, security and the roads Sector.

According to the area MP Jeremiah Kioni, education has received the largest share with Kshs22, 889,254 going to fund various projects in the sector.

Kiriogo Secondary school has been funded to the tune of Kshs 1million to aid in the construction of a laboratory while Ndururi Primary School has been allocated Kshs813,450 to help in the refurbishment of classrooms.

Ndaragwa Boarding Primary school received Kshs700,000 which went into renovation of boarding facilities, classrooms and installation of electricity. In addition, six primary boarding schools have been constructed in the constituency to cater for the orphaned and needy children to increase their access education.

A further Kshs1,152,590M has been allocated to Mathingira, Leshau and Shamata youth polytechniques to

help equip them with learning materials.

Seven secondary schools are set to benefit each with 15 computers. The MP says that another Kshs17,889,000 million has been spent in the construction of boreholes, dams and water projects in the constituency.

In Shauri Sub- Location, a total of Kshs3,979,000M was used in the completion of Shauri Kianda borehole drilling project. An additional Kshs3,757,800 was pumped into Nyakinyua bore hole drilling project in Mbuyu sub -location and was used in equipping and construction of power house and a water tank.

Wambuku water project on the other hand was funded to the tune of Kshs900,000 which helped in the construction of a water intake and buying pipes. A total of Kshs 4,539,039 was channeled to the Health sector. Area MP says that Shauri dispensary block which was allocated Kshs 1,200,000 has been completed.

A further Kshs800,000 has been used to complete Matsoo dispensary block while Sumbuku dispensary in Muruai sub-location received Kshs519,893 to boost health facilities in the area.



Mr. Jeremiah Kioni, MP for Ndaragwa constituency. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi

An additional Kshs3,928,464 went into supporting security projects in the constituency.

Leshau and Mairo-inya sublo-

cations which have suffered from wildlife menace in the past received Kshs1,563,429 to aid in the construction of an electric fence in Rachiri and

Ziwani Manguo forest to curb human wildlife conflict.

The Kanyagia chief's camp was constructed at a cost of Kshs700,000 while the construction of a cell, water tank, fence and toilets at Mairo-ikumi police post cost Kshs5,474,000.

Rural access roads were also rehabilitated at Kshs7.6M. The MP says by the end of 2010/2011 financial year he targets to have done 500km in the whole constituency.

The MP said that farmers in the constituency benefitted from Kshs3.2 million which went into the construction of green houses in every sub-location to increase on their productivity and maximise their earnings.

The MP says the CDF has used an extra Kshs4,194,000 to finance stalled projects that were initiated by the previous CDF committee during the 2007/2008 financial year.

Among the projects set to be revived include Kiriogo counseling centre which had initially been condemned and has received Kshs700,000 to help in the reconstruction exercise while an additional Kshs2 million has been used to reconstruct four classrooms in Nyakinyua primary school.

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

Kenya can now treat multi-drug resistant TB

KENYA has made significant progress in Tuberculosis control and can now effectively treat Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) TB, at a specialized facility.

The unit, which is the only one in East and Central Africa, is based at the Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH). Public Health and Sanitation minister Beth Mugo says the move marks a very important milestone in TB control in the country.

"Few countries in our region have been approved to treat Multi-Drug Resistant TB and therefore, this marks a new beginning in the manner in which we are going to manage our patients who need isolation facilities," she said when she inspected the Multi-Drug Resistant TB isolation facility at the Kenyatta National Hospital.

The minister at the same time reveals that plans are underway to put up four additional sites in Eastern and Western provinces where MDR TB will be treated.

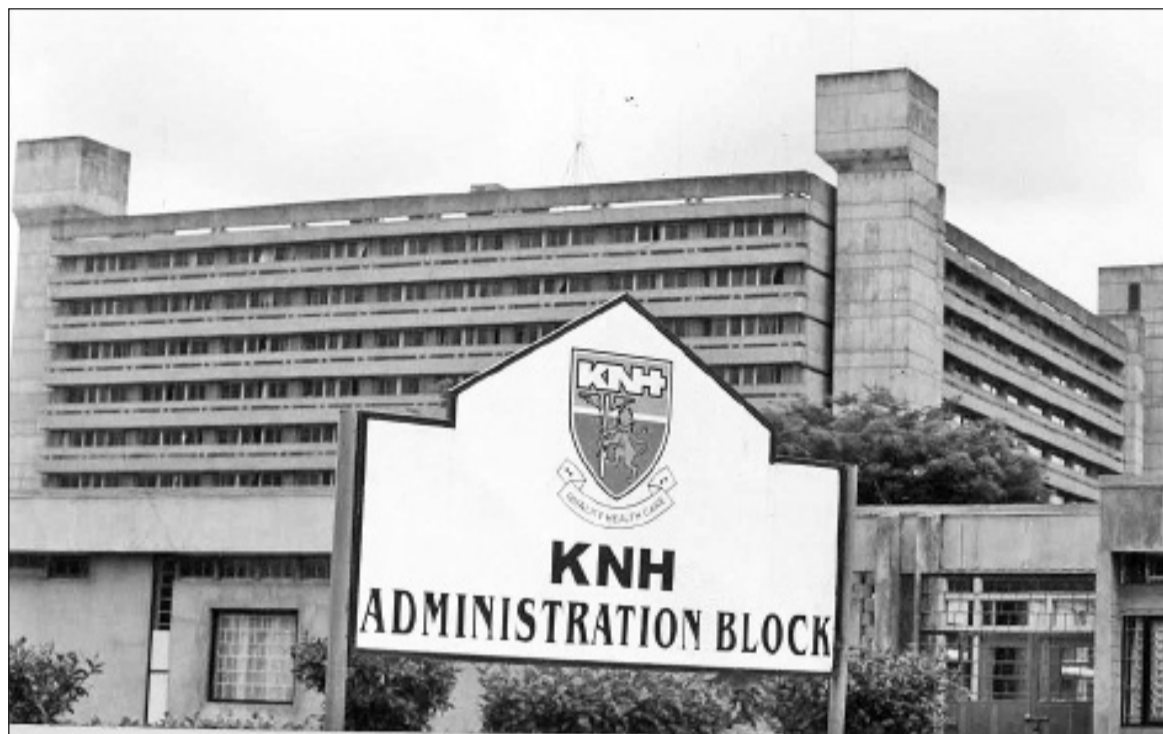
She says that two other isolation facilities at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital and at Homa Bay district in Nyanza province will be upgraded.

Multi-Drug Resistant TB has gradually become a major public health problem in Kenya. The country began surveillance for MDR TB in 2003 when the emergence of Multi-Drug Resistant TB was detected in about 502 cases.

The annual cases have been on the increase with a total of 150 cases reported in 2009.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that Kenya is able to detect 80 per cent of TB cases, putting the country among the few countries in the world that have achieved the global targets and are on course to meet the Millenniums Development Goals

WHO's Green Light Commit-



Kenyatta National Hospital is the only referral facility within East and Central Africa that has been approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to acquire a special treatment unit for Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) TB.. Photo/File

tee (GLC) has authorized Kenya to expand the MDR TB project to treat 390 cases from the current 112 MDR TB cases, a clear indication that the GLC has confidence in the systems that have been put in place in Kenya to treat these patients.

The commonest cause of MDR TB in the country has mainly been attributed to man made issues mainly poor diagnosis by health workers, poor adherence by patients and low quality medicines.

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation has put in place measures to ensure that all TB medicines in the country are sourced by the government to stock all hospitals and health centres with drugs.

In addition, it has ensured post marketing surveillance of all TB medicines is routinely carried out so that any medicines that do not conform to standards are withdrawn from the market.

The high cost of MDR TB medi-

cines can however be a hindrance to treatment with the cost of medicines to treat a single case of MDR TB being about Kshs1.3 million, while that of medicines to treat an Extensively Drug Resistant TB (XDR TB) at about Kshs2.3 million, a cost way beyond a common man.

These calls for the implementation of patient support mechanisms in hospitals to ensure that the patients started on treatment complete their medication.

Kenya to restore glory as leader in family planning

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

A BLUE print aimed at restoring the lost glory of Kenya as a haven for family planning has been unveiled.

Chief Executive Officer of the National Co-ordinating Agency

for Population and Development, Dr Boniface K'Oyugi, recalled past success of the programme, and regretted the programme had suffered a premature death.

"Contraceptive use has stalled and fertility has remained the same for nearly ten years," Dr

K'Oyugi said during the launch of the plan at a Nairobi hotel.

The official also singled out the emergence of Human Immune-deficiency Virus (HIV), decline in donor funding and lack of political goodwill as major factors that have resulted in the worrying trend.

Dr. K'Oyugi who unveiled "Kenya Leading the Way" advocacy campaign strategy also defended a section of church leaders against accusations that they were opposed to family planning by use of condoms.

He said religious leaders in their teachings emphasize on the need for parents to have a high quality life by either applying natural or modern life.

He said the same applied to Muslims in arid and semi-arid areas.

"Here child survival is very low. All religious organs are represented at the board level of my organization. If they are opposed to the concept, they would not be with us," he said.

He said the sector requires Kshs.5.3 billion to oversee the campaign which will help save the country Kshs.20 billion in the near future.

"The saved money would go into addressing the needs of the population like health service delivery, education, housing and many more, he said.

Pathfinder International Non-Governmental Organizations' Pamela S.A. Onduso said due to the total size of the population, the number of Kenyans living in poverty had increased. The number, she said, rose from 15 million in 1999 to 17.9 million last year.

"One way to make sure that Kenya's families are better off and that few people are living in poverty is by addressing the reproductive health needs of women and families," said Onduso.

She said one reason why fertility remains high, at 4.6 births per woman today, is due to the un-met need for family planning, which she said went beyond the use of condoms.

"One out of every four married women says that she would like to space her next pregnancy by two years or more, or not have any more children, but she is not using family planning.

This according to the experts is the un-met need that needs to be addressed.



A baby being breastfed by a mother. Planned families will boost quality of health. Photo/File

Kahoro: Ardent peace crusader

By FIDELIS KABUNYI

REVERED Margaret Wanjiku Kahoro is ardent peace crusader. She has managed to convert over 500 youth who had been initiated into the proscribed Mungiki sect through an elaborate peace project which has earned her accolades from far and wide.

Today Rev Kahoro serves as the chairperson of Kiambu Peace Initiative for sustainable development under the Ministry of National Cohesion and Integration after being appointed by the Central Provincial commissioner Japther Rugut to coordinate peace in the larger Kiambu district.

Kahoro is also among the thirteen elders spearheading activities geared towards the realization of cohesion and integration in Central province

Rev Kahoro of Rehoboth Outreach Ministry says that her peace initiative dates way back to 2006 when she felt that there was need to end the merciless killings of young people in Kiambu District on the pretext that they were Mungiki followers.

After the 2007 post election violence she intensified her peace programme by embarking on a door to door campaign and to prisons.

During her numerous visits to Kamiti prison, Rev Kahoro met the then Mungiki leader Maina Njenga and started preaching the gospel to him.

Maina then linked her to followers of the sect and she was able to persuade them to denounce the illegal sect.

That was her turning point and she started receiving numerous calls from Mungiki followers who wanted to convert into Christianity.

"I joined them at Mukuru kwa Njenga where over sixty youths defected from the sect," she adds during the interview with The Link.

She says she was able to introduce the youth to income generating projects.

"I was able to equip them with skills that enabled them to make organic fertilizer to help make ends meet as they were initially engaging in criminal activities as their only way of survival.

At the beginning we faced a lot challenges as police were still hunting for some of them not knowing that they had reformed. "I had to sit with the Kiambu District security committee and elders to convince them that this people had really changed.

Rev Kahoro says that she later organized a meeting between the provincial administration and the reformed youth to work out modalities to integrate them to society.

"The provincial administration responded positively and has since accepted them in the society but under supervision.

Kahoro says the major challenge is that majority of the youth lack of employment as the community around them still treats them with contempt.

She says that Kiambu District Commissioner Albert Kiamathi, District officer Kiambaa Patrick Kilonzo and District youth officer have been very supportive and always ensure that some of the reformed youths are recruited in the 'Kazi kwa vijana initiative.

Employ Molo youth to stem insecurity

By ELIJAH K. MWAURAH

THE youth in Molo are either unemployed or underemployed thus become a serious deterrence to economic growth and threat to national security. The unprecedented violence following the 2007 presentational elections is an example since youth participated as combatants partly due to their inability to get into the mainstream economic production system.

Negative ethnicity and stereotypes: Adults and some politicians among the target communities (Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Kisii among others) have over the years cultivated negative ethnicity against each other due to varied reasons ranging from hate feeling marginalized and political affiliations. Stereotyping has taken root where different names and characters have been preferred on various communities. This cultivates prejudice that negatively affected relations among individual communities.

Other challenges in the constituency include:

- Resource constraints
- Lack of inadequate skills.
- Increased poverty rate

Youth play a vital role in shaping the present and the future of all societies. Their transition to independent adulthood and contribution to development are crucial in our country.

There have been varied factors impinging on youth and thus inhibiting them to take their rightful role in contributing to national development process.

The youths require civic education so as to acquire civic knowledge, civic skills and civic virtues. It is commendable that organizations such as MEAP (Maendeleo Education Action Program), NECOFA (Network for Eco-farming in Africa) among other players have engaged in the three aspects of civic education as stipulated.

Civic knowledge: Consists of fundamental ideas and information that the youth must know and use to become effective and responsible.

These covers:

- Civic life
- Politics and Government
- Foundation of the political system
- How Government is established by the constitution, purposes
- Values and principles of democracy

Civic skills: includes the intellectual skills and explain, compare and evaluate principles and practices of government as well as critical thinking skills that help the youths to distinguish end and means, facts from opinions, and the ability to describe, analyse, identify and evaluate and take defending positions on public issues.

Civic virtues which includes the traits of character, dispositions and commitments necessary for preservation and improvement of democratic governance and citizenship. Examples of civic virtues are respect to the working and dignity of each person, civility, integrity, self discipline, tolerance, compassion, patriotism among others. Commitments include a dedication to human rights, the common good, equality and rule of law.

With this regard, the key players in Molo as mentioned there earlier have engaged in participatory dialogue and civic education to liberate the youth within Molo, a prone area to gradual violence. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung is also a key player in peace building and enhancing a harmonious and prosperous constituency i.e. Molo. We really appreciate their efforts to empowering non-state actors.

JICA funds Nyando floods project

By JOSEPH OJWANG

THE Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is financing an ambitious project that aims at cushioning Nyando residents from effects of floods.

The project which has been funded to the tune of Kshs170 million targets the community around River Nyando Basin. JICA's country representative, Masao Soejima, says the project will entail providing safe evacuation routes besides putting up dams along the river to ease pressure.

"We are keen on putting up water reservoirs upstream to regulate the flow of water and in the long term address the threat posed by floods in the region," adds Soejima. Soejima explains that the water reservoirs will help provide water for farming and domestic use during the dry spell.

A total of 24 villages of the flood prone parts of Nyando and Kisumu districts will be covered in the one and a half years project. He said that evacuation centers will be equipped with toilets and clean water to contain any possible outbreaks of water borne.

Speaking in Kisumu town when he signed the contract with Gogni

Rajope Construction Company, that is set to undertake construction work at the proposed evacuation centers and routes, Soejima expressed optimism that upon completion, the project will relieve the locals of the menace that has befallen them in the past.

The Kenyan Water Resources Management Authority chief executive officer Patrick Olum appealed to the government of Kenya to consider adopting community based flood management approach currently being implemented on a pilot basis along River Nyando Basin to help manage effects of flooding in the country.

Olum emphasized that through assessment, the approach is no doubt effective in minimizing the effects of floods in communities living along major rivers in the country.

He called for the incorporation of water resource users associations along the major rivers in the management of the floods. "The government must act quickly to avail funds to help train resource users associations so that they can help in the rehabilitation of roads within their areas and plant trees along the rivers as part of efforts geared towards mitigating the effects of floods," said Olum.

He noted that perennial flooding

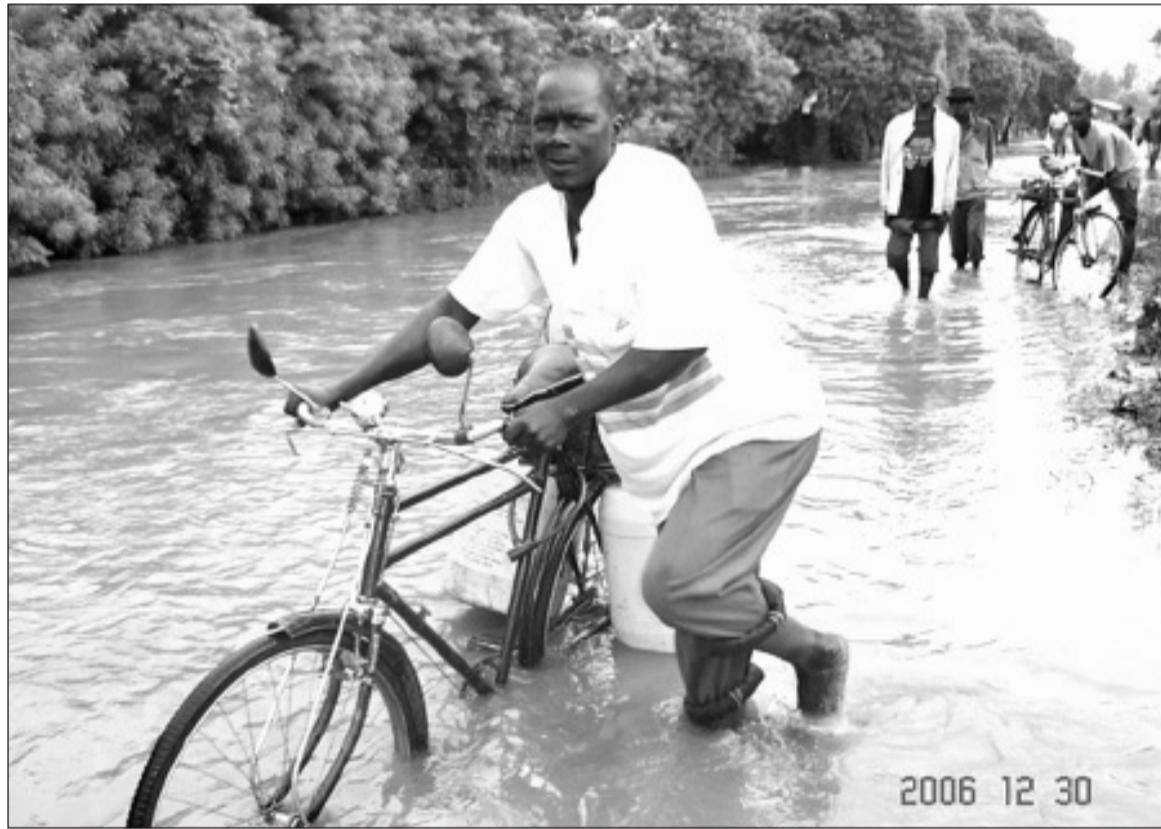
poses a major challenge to the people living along the river basins that annually burst their banks and called for support to strengthen the communities in flood management to counter threats posed on their lives and dignity. He also announced that the government plans to enlist the support of Japan in monitoring the country's weather patterns.

Olum said that the talks are still at the initial stages and if successful, the meteorological department will be able to use Japan's satellites to give early warning signals on floods possibilities.

"The government is unable to adequately predict flooding and is facing major challenges in dealing with the flooding menace in areas of Nzoia, Budalangi and Nyando River Basins," said Olum.

He said that the authority is set to develop a catchment management strategy to bring floods to manageable levels rather than setting up permanent structures to control floods.

Olum attributed the high population pressure on the environment as one of the undoing factors in floods control adding that more people continue to move to lower grounds thus being exposed to effects of floods.



A man pushes his bicycle through overflowed area in Nyando district. Photo/File

Kigumo elites say no to garbage dumpsite

By MORRIS GITHENYA

Professionals from Kigumo have opposed plans to convert land earmarked for a youth resource centre to a garbage dumpsite.

They called on Maragua County Council to revoke the resolution they had passed to use the two acres of land at Kiriangoro village as a garbage dumpsite after having failed to secure land in Murang'a South district.

The professionals led by John Irungu asked Kigumo DC Omar Salat that there were plans to mobilize funds from the residents to construct an ultra modern youth resource centre on the land in question in a bid to empower the youth.

Salat on his part termed the proposal by the council as unfortunate saying the area was productive to be converted to a dumpsite.

"The land at Kiira Ngoro is fertile and any bid to turn it into a dumpsite will not auger well with ongoing efforts to empower the youth by putting up essential facilities," said the DC.

Two years ago, the council proposed to convert the area to a dumpsite after residents of Kenol and Kangari market protested over the lack of a refuse site.

DC bans bars near schools

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MATHIRA West District Commissioner Mr Abdullah Galgalo has ordered for immediate closure of bars operating near schools and hospitals.

Addressing a gathering at Kaiyaba grounds recently, Galgalo noted that consumption of alcohol in the area has increased

drastically adding that the vice has impacted negatively on the education standards.

He revealed that the number of bars which are in operation stand at 169 compared to 68 education institutions in the area adding that if the district intends to register any significant progress in development, the beer outlets must be reduced

by half.

Galgalo called upon the youth to desist from consuming illicit brews saying that the third generation brews are harmful to their health.

Galgalo at the same time lamented over the decline in the number of male students joining secondary schools in the area which he said stood at 40 percent

compared to that of females and warned that men in the District face extinction if the trend is not reversed.

He urged parents to instill discipline their children leaving the burden to teachers who cannot manage without their support instead ruining them into cheap liquor.

Lake Victoria set to regain its freshness

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

LAKE Victoria Environmental Management Project II (LVEMP II) has received Kshs18.7 billion from the World Bank for cleaning the choking Lake Victoria for the next 8 years.

The project was launched at Tom Mboya Labour College, Kisumu and attended by 21 ministers and assistant ministers and senior government officials from the five East African Community countries.

It will focus on specific interventions to check on the lake's environmental problems including pollution and the receding water level.

LVEMP II will bring Rwanda and Burundi on board this time round but the stakeholders attending the occasion had one clarion call to the bank to approve the funding for Rwanda and Burundi for the project to begin on the same note.

The World Bank will take the lead with other financiers being the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Swedish International development Agency (SIDA) and other contributions from the borrowers (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi governments).

Former hydro-biologist expert at Makerere University, Uganda once said that Lake Victoria may disappear in the next 150 years unless siltation and load of nutrients that drain into the lake is checked. Two other lakes, Chad and Eerie have since disappeared due to similar problems.

Prof. John Okidi, a leading consultant on environment and Natural Resources said the activities of man must change to check on pollution, siltation and use the lake responsibly and sustainably for its survival.

LVEMP II will be implemented through distinct loan phases, according to the project documents. The first one known as Adaptable Programme Loan (APL 1) has been approved to benefit Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and run until 2013. The second one to be known as Adaptable Programme Loan 2 (APL 2) will benefit Rwanda and Burundi and will begin from late 2010 to 2017.

The final phase (APL 3) will also benefit Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania from 2013 to 2017 so as to scale up the interventions of APL 1 in these three countries, the project document says.

Uganda Water and Environment minister, Ms Maria Mutagamba feels that Rwanda and Burundi should start together with other three countries due to pressing issues of food security and climate change in the five East African Community states.

She said, LVEMP II interventions will not be complete until the project becomes effective in all the partner states including Rwanda and Burundi. Uganda, therefore, looks forward to the expeditious effectiveness of the project in the remaining two partner states so that the entire region moves together in the endeavor to stop and reverse



Lake Victoria: The second largest fresh water lake in the world has over the years witnessed receding water levels and declining fish stocks. Photo/File

environmental degradation of the Lake Victoria Basin.

LVEMP I that took more than seven years was funded by the same institutions and benefited the three East African countries before the admission of Rwanda and Burundi into the East African Community. The LVEMP II was to explore issues that emerged during the first phase and complete part of the work earlier done during the phase I in cleaning Lake Victoria and its basin.

Kenya's Minister for Environment and Mineral Resources, Mr. John Michuki, says Lake Victoria basin continues to face a wide range of environmental threats and challenges that need to be addressed. Among them, he says, is destruction of water catchments areas, discharge of agro-chemicals, waste and refuse into the water bodies, loss of biodiversity, increasing incidences of poverty and declining quality of life among the people.

The situation, Mr. Michuki says, is bound to get worse in the light of the current energy, food, water and financial crises. During the final negotiations by the World Bank, Lake Victoria Basin commission (LBVC) was directed to finalize the Water Release and Abstraction Policy and develop legal mechanism to ensure compliance with the Agreed Covenant limit, and abstraction from the basin that are equitable and reasonable.

The covenant on monitoring mechanisms for the Environmental Management of the Lake Victoria waters will be included in the EAC-World Bank Grant Agreement for the LVEMP II.

The eight-year project will be

implemented through four main components including strengthening institutional capacity for managing shared water and fisheries resources; point source pollution control and prevention; watershed management and project coordina-

tion and management.

The question in the mind of many environmentalists and the local communities is: "Will the initiative clean the choking Lake Victoria and its basin this time round?" LVEMP I was said to have identi-

fied several areas of interventions hence the funding of LVEMP II by the same financial institutions and it's the hope and aspirations of all and sundry that the coordination's work is already cut out for the experts.



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More tea farmers oppose bill

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MURANG'A small scale tea farmers have dismissed the bill sponsored by Konoin MP Julius Kones and termed it as retrogressive, draconian and driven by ulterior motives.

The over 54,000 tea farmers from the four KTDA factories in the larger Murang'a region say proposals in the Tea (Amendment) Bill 2010 were neither reformist nor liberating.

The small scale tea farmers drawn from Kiru, Gatunguru, Kanyenya-ini and Githambo tea factories say the ultimate beneficiaries of the Bill, would be foreign firms and brokers who have been exploiting tea farmers through tea hawking.

"While the MP has tried to pass off the Bill as an innocent piece of legislation that will deliver tea farmers from poverty to riches, a critical look at the clauses in the Bill reveals that the MP could be acting at the behest of certain powerful individuals and not in the interest of small scale tea farmers that he claims to represent," adds Chege Kirundi who is a board member of KTDA.

Kirundi who read the three page statement during a zonal meeting at Kiru Tea Factory protested that the farmers read



Murang'a tea directors who have opposed the Tea Amendment bill 2010. INSET: Kangema tea farmers pick tea in their farm. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa



mischief and bad faith in the drafting of the Bill.

"The bill in the real sense is a weak-kneed attempt to hand over control of the tea industry to certain unnamed individuals. The Bill, if passed into law

would introduce "tea without boarders" leading to the collapse of the small scale tea industry," adds the director.

The farmers argue that a law that purports to allow small scale tea farmers who

produce 62 per cent of Kenya's total tea output, to deliver their tea to any factory without any form of organization is unacceptable.

They say the expansion and modernization of factories,

which they have done over the years through bank loans, will stall.

They wondered how the new law is expected to cushion farmers from loans amounting to Kshs6 billion which were currently being serviced as a collective bargain for the modernization of their factories.

"Our farmer's fear that without the organization provided by factories and the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA), the tea industry in this region will collapse and jeopardize the livelihoods of millions of people," said the farmers.

They now want the government through the ministry of Agriculture and the Attorney General Amos Wako to take over the Bill and ensure that a new bill is drafted with full representation and input from all key stakeholders in the tea industry.

Over the years, tea factories and small scale tea farmers have relied on cess to develop and improve infrastructure. The roads built through cess have benefited not just the tea industry but all other sectors in the catchment areas. However, the Bill proposes to transfer the management of cess funds from the Kenya Roads Board, the local authorities and the tea factory companies to the Tea Board of Kenya.

Kakamega revises laws to suite the times

By BILL ESSAU

KAKAMEGA Municipal Council has revised its bylaws to reflect trends that have emerged since its inception thirty years ago.

The new law targets motorbike taxi operators popularly known as Boda boda, who were not in place at the inception of the council in 1972.

Operators will now be required to apply for a permit from the Town Clerk before being allowed to engage in the business.

The bylaws were formulated on early this year and approved by the Deputy Prime Minister and Local Government Minister, Musalia Mudavadi, recently.

The operators will also be required to acquire good conduct certificates to rid the trade of criminals.

Further, those willing to engage in the trade will have to undergo medical tests to establish they are not either suffering from contagious or venereal diseases before being admitted into the business.

The town engineer has been mandated to inspect and certify that all bicycles and motor bikes are in good working conditions and serviceable before being allowed to operate.

The new guidelines will also validate the working hours, from 5.00am to 7.30pm as a safety measure aimed at ensuring that they are not used by criminals at night.

"Those who engage in the trade

will be required to conduct themselves with decorum while handling their passengers. Operators will also be required to be smartly dressed while on duty," reads the bylaws.

Operators who contravene the bylaws shall be liable to a Kshs2,000 fine or six months imprisonment for first offenders and Kshs3,000 fine or nine month jail term for subsequent offenders.

Also targeted in the new by laws are taxi operators and public service vehicles, who will face stiffer penalties if found collecting and dropping passengers outside designated areas.

Taxis found to have contravened the law will be impounded and only released upon payment of Kshs5,000 besides paying court fines under the Traffic Act.

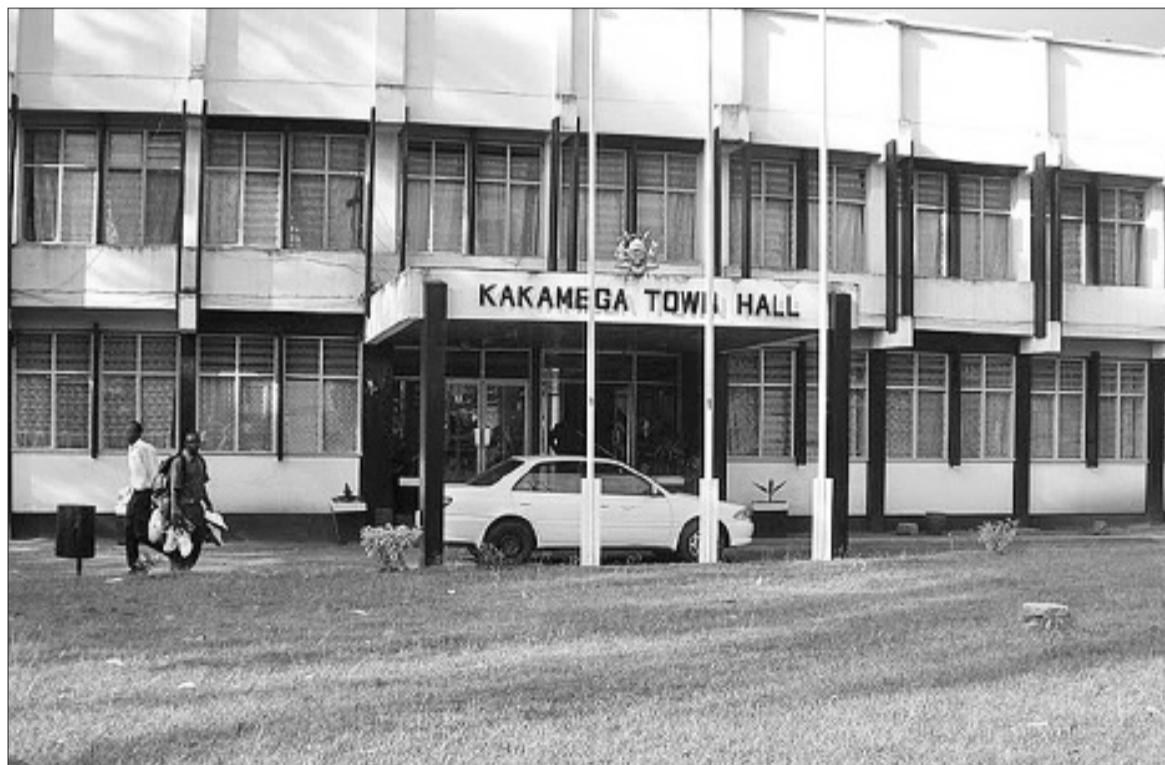
Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) on the other hand will pay Kshs10,000.

All taxis, like the PSVs will be required to adorn the yellow line to differentiate them from other salon cars in town, according to the laws.

People who have kept domestic animals within the municipality are also set to be affected by the new laws and will be required to obtain a license from the town clerk which shall specify the number of animals one may keep.

Residents wishing to keep dogs will now have to be licensed by the council and the dogs issued with badges.

Licenses will only be granted



Kakamega Town Hall.

to dog owners upon paying a fee on proof that the said dogs have been inoculated against rabies by producing valid certificate.

However, owners of dogs kept by blind people or for purposes of guiding blind persons have been exempted from paying license fees.

Any one who contravenes the by laws is liable to a six months imprisonment or a Kshs2,000 fine for a first offender or nine months imprisonment or Sh 3,000 fine for subsequent offenders.

Town clerk Ali Apidi says the council will kill all dogs found in town

without budes.

Apidi also says that all business premises in the town will be inspected by the council to ensure they comply with the fire fighting and extinguishing by laws. The laws require every business premise to be fitted with fire extinguishers.

Youth polytechnics under repair

By PETER MUTUKU

THE government is revamping youth polytechnics so that they can provide quality technical education to attain vision 2030 according to the director of youth training, Dr. Dinah Mwinzi.

"This has been done through equipping of the youth polytechnics with modern tools and equipment, infrastructural developments, introduction of the new curriculum, subsidized youth polytechnic tuition, capacity building for instructors among others," she said during a graduation ceremony at Mulango Youth Polytechnic in Kitui District.

She noted that youth polytechnic education in Kenya plays a crucial role in the national development and points out that the Youth Affairs and Sports Ministry through its youth training department prides in offering programmes that are market driven.

"We in the ministry remain

committed to this mission," the director adds.

Dr. Mwinzi urged students in youth polytechnic to use the skills and knowledge gained for the benefits of humanity. "I encourage you to use the skills you have acquired to impact positively on the societies where you will be living and working."

Mwinzi told the students that the skills acquired will help them to develop outstanding social and life skills while at the same time enhancing their capacity to handle varying demands in their professional life.

Mwinzi further said that the many initiatives undertaken by the Mulango Youth Polytechnic will mean better recognition and opportunities for the graduands. "I would therefore like to thank the great team that has made all this possible," the director said.

Mulango Youth Polytechnic was started in 1973 and it is one of the oldest youth polytechnics in Kenya. The student's population currently stands at 175, with 98 boys and 77 girls.



Artisans at work in a youth polytechnic site.

Kisii Mayor lifts ban on Boda boda

By BOB OMBATI

Kisii Municipal Council has lifted a ban on boda boda taxis operating within the town after three people perished during a crackdown to arrest those flouting the directive.

Area mayor Samuel Nyangeso, his deputy Patrick Siro and Town Clerk Maina Wachira also announced the withdrawal of youths engaged by the council to enforce the order.

Nyangeso said the move was meant to mainstream the boda boda business after it was realized banning them from the central business district was hurting other business concerns within and outside the Council.

The mayor told boda boda operators at the council grounds that some civic leaders had also capitalized on the ban to get political mileage while some unscrupulous police officers colluded with council askaris to harass the riders unfairly.

He said the council had allocated the motorbike riders a parking bay at the old bus park in the heart of the town from where they will pick and drop passengers in a bid to ease the month long unrest among the operators, police officers and the council.

The ban was revoked following an incident where a rider and a passenger were crushed to death as they tried to evade arrest while another person succumbed to injuries sustained when a policeman hit him with a baton while being ferried on a boda boda within the town.

Nyangeso asked the riders to adhere to law and report council workers or policemen who harassed them as they carried out their businesses.

Bodaboda spokesman Richard Ragira, said the area had over 3000 boda boda riders who complained that council askaris in plainclothes had in the past harassed them even when they adhered to the regulations.

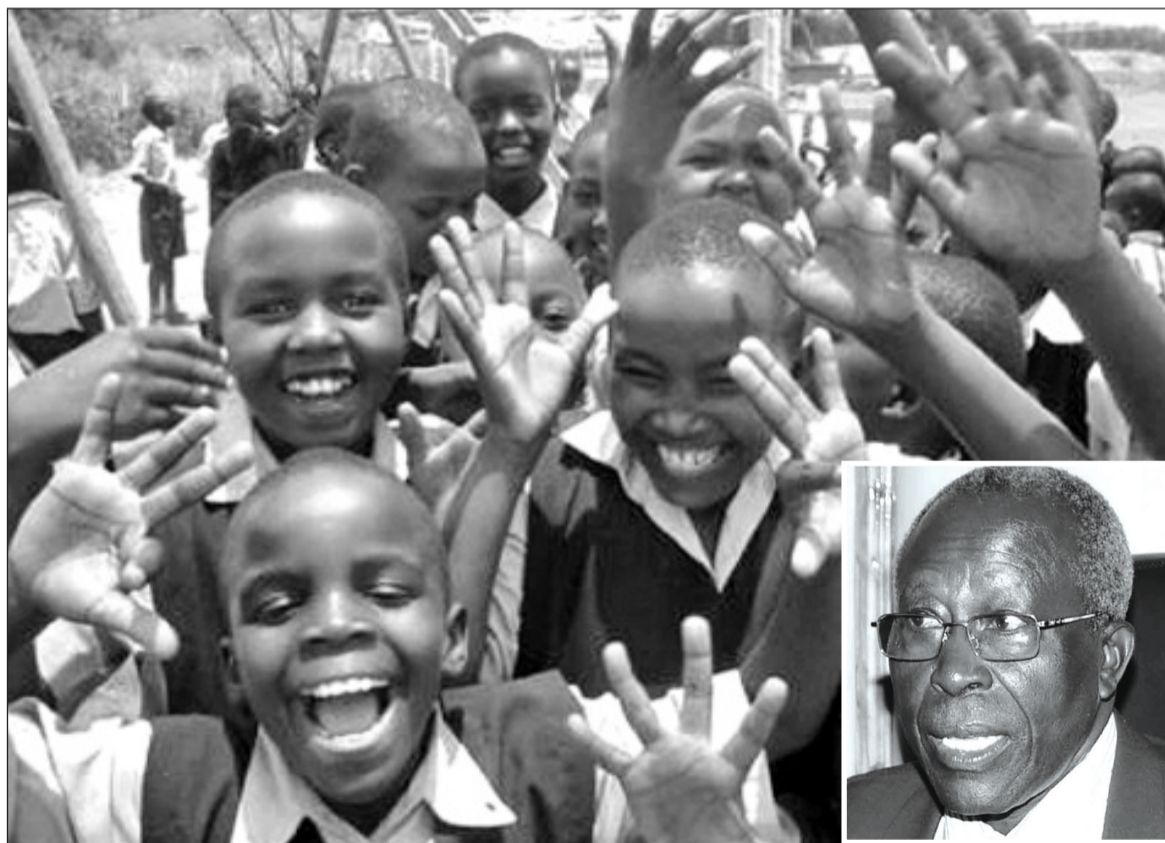
"They always apprehended us on framed up charges and demanded for bribes before releasing us," said the spokesman.

He revealed that the askaris would emerge from drinking dens and force them to settle their bills.

The mayor acknowledged that the industry was growing fast and assisted in creating employment opportunities for the youth besides reducing insecurity.

Traffic police officers had declined to enforce the ban on grounds the council had no by-law to support their move forcing the civic body to enlist services of the youths who patrolled and nabbed the lawbreakers.

Parents to monitor use of free education fund



Students celebrate after the declaration of Free Education in Kenya in 2003. INSET: Prof Sam Onger, Minister for Education

By BILL ESSAU

PARENTS will soon be able to monitor the use of the Free Education Funds to ensure proper utilization of the money.

The move to involve parents follows the loss of over Kshs100 million meant for financing free education launched in 2003 by the government.

Several officials at Jogoo House have since been charged with fraud.

The National Tax Payers Association (NTA) says report cards for use

by parents in assessing the usage of free education funds in their respective areas have been developed.

"We have now formed a partnership with parents who are tax payers and will work closely with the ministry of education officials and other stakeholders in ensuring children immensely benefit from the FPE funds," says Michael Otieno, the outgoing NTA national coordinator.

Free education funds, says Otieno, were misused in the past because parents did not question how the money

disbursed to their schools was spent.

Under the new arrangement, parents will be provided with information on amounts allocated to their schools.

"We have already met with the District Education Officers to lay strategies on how monitoring by parents will be implemented," reveals Otieno.

Otieno spoke in Kakamega during the launch of NTA call centre and information hotline for Western province. The call centre hotline is a joint

venture between NTA and provincial administration.

The centre will enable members of the public to give information on misuse of devolved funds and service delivery by Government workers.

Several officials at the Ministry of Education have been charged in court with the theft of over Kshs100 million FPE funds. The theft led to freezing of donor support for the free education programme which was launched in 2003.

Western Provincial Commissioner Samuel Kilele, who presided over the launch commended the partnership between NTA and his office in establishing the call centre and a hot line for reporting misuse of devolved funds.

"The centre will enhance citizen to citizen and citizen to Government relationship that will encourage transparency and accountability in service provision by Government departments," avers Kilele.

According to Kilele, the centre will provide the missing link between citizens and Government service providers and bridge existing communication gap.

The administrator underscored the need to form partnerships between stakeholders that will help monitor and ensure proper use of resources especially devolved funds and service delivery by Government.

He said that information through the centre will be channeled to the relevant departmental heads that will check, follow up or obtain information regarding the subject of inquiry.

"I expect wananchi to authoritatively and accurately provide feedback regarding various government services including education, health, security, water and devolved funds such as CDF, bursary and LATF," said Kilele.

The NTA is currently working in partnership with the CDF Board, the Ministry of Education, and the Lake Victoria North Water Service Board to improve the delivery of services and the management of devolved funds.

Funds for education lying idle in Nyanza

By JONES MAGARE

A WHOOPING Kshs1.84 billion earmarked for education projects in Nyanza province, under the economic stimulus package has not been utilized due to the intricate procurement procedures and political meddling.

Community Initiative Action Group-Kenya (CIAG-K) director Chris Owalla claims the funds released by the government during the 2009-2010 financial year, remains unutilized, hence not benefiting the target grassroots communities in the province.

Owalla blames the current situation to the prohibitive government procurement procedures and alleged interference by local politicians.

He explains that the funds were released by the government to oversee the establishment of centres of excellence under the economic stimulus package in the region's 32 constituencies.

"Under the government's economic stimulus package, each constituency has been allocated Kshs37 million to assist in the construction of a one model secondary and two primary schools," Owalla says.

He explains that the allocation includes Kshs30 million for construction of a model secondary school and Kshs7 million for building of two similar primary schools in each constituency, bringing the total for each electoral unit to Kshs37 million, "Owalla says.

He, however, regrets that since these funds were released, they have not been utilized and lie idle in the various District Education Board (D.E.B) treasuries.

Owalla laments that the situation on the ground, is startling and disturbing and requires urgent intervention measures to speed up implementation of the package in Nyanza province.

However, more disturbing Owalla says is the issue of political meddling. "Instead of working on programmes



Chris Owalla: Director of Community Initiative Action Group-Kenya (CIAG-K)

to build new model secondary and primary schools in each constituency, D.E.B's are being arm-twisted by politicians and other partisan interest groups to divert the funds towards improving already established schools in their constituencies," Owalla alleges.

Owalla cites Alego Usonga and Bondo as constituencies where the D.E.Bs have been influenced by partisan and interests to allocate these funds towards improvement of established schools, instead of building new model schools.

"The essence of the economic stimulus package for education is to

enable grassroots communities in each constituency build completely new model secondary and primary schools which community members can identify with," Owalla points out.

Ironically, Owalla says the D.E.Bs which have District Education Officers (DEO) as the board secretary also include membership which comprises schools Board of Governors (BOGs) and politicians.

"BOG members and politicians in virtually all constituencies have instead conspired and decided to allocate the Kshs37 million towards improvement of existing schools in their areas.

In Alego Usonga and Bondo the D.E.Bs have identified established schools like Ngiya Girls Secondary School and Maranda High School respectively, "Owalla says.

He says the situation is replicated elsewhere in other constituencies within Nyanza province.

"The decisions by the various D.E.Bs to allocate these education funds to already established schools amounts to education, economic, political disfranchisement of the grassroots communities," Owalla laments.

He says ideally grassroots community members should be consulted and involved in the decision making process in the implementation of this economic stimulus package programme on education.

"You don't expect the grassroots community members to benefit when such funds are allocated to already well established schools, which mostly benefit students and pupils from other parts of the country," Owalla says.

He says instead the grassroots community members feel detached, marginalized and are forced to compete for vacancies in these established schools with other well endowed parents from other parts of the country.

"This is not fair considering that one of the underpinning objectives of the government's economic stimulus package is to alleviate poverty among grassroots communities, which is also in tandem with the United Nations MDGs," Owalla points out.

Owalla says there is need to allow participation by local community members in the decision making process over allocation and utilization of the economic stimulus package funds for education.

The CIAG-K director also wants radical changes in the D.E.Bs and speedy government intervention to salvage situation and enable the region's residents and others elsewhere realize and benefit from the noble idea behind the economic stimulus package initiative.

Probe unearths theft of Lugari CDF

By BILL ESSAU

A FORENSIC audit of the Lugari CDF kitty has revealed massive misuse of funds running into millions by the committee and senior civil servants.

The audit found that senior civil servants and committee members drew over Kshs10 million in irregular allowances and supervision fees. It also uncovered suspicious loss of cheques books.

The probe indicates that over Kshs3.36 million was irregularly paid to a ministry of works official, Charles Nyaberi as supervision fee contrary to government regulations guiding subsistence allowances.

"This was besides additional cash that was paid to him for drawing plans at the rate of Kshs4000 to Kshs6000 for each project," the report says.

The report further reveals that Nyaberi demanded 3percent of the total cost of all projects funded by CDF from project management committees.

Other officers who benefited from the illegal payouts include the District development officer James Nyabochoa and the CDF account manager Bitange Bogonko.

The report further reveals that the monitoring and evaluation committee on which Nyabochoa and Bogonko are members was paid Kshs2.57 million in form of allowances for monitoring.

The audit was carried out two months ago by a team of auditors led by Western Provincial Internal Auditor P.O. Abwaku.

The inspection followed a letter from the CDF national management committee raising audit queries.

"The monitoring and evaluation was carried out on various dates but projects visited are not disclosed to confirm validity of payments," the report reveals.

The report also reveals that over Kshs800,000 was irregularly paid to contractors for unfinished works at the Matete, D.O's office and Lukova Primary school.

The report says that a further Kshs300,000 was disbursed by the CDF for completion of the offices but physical verification revealed that the project was still incomplete.

Under unclear circumstances a contractor for Lukova primary school was paid Kshs500,000 to construct two classrooms but he disappeared before completing the project.

Two cheques worth Kshs300,000 written to Lukusi primary school and Vinyenya secondary school disappeared in unclear circumstances.

By BOB OMBATI

Gusii council chocking in debt

GUSII County Council is indebted to the tune of Kshs100 million.

According to the council's chairman Kennedy Nyakundi, the council inherited millions of shillings in liabilities and assets after the council was split.

"The move left behind a heavily indebted council that is still struggling to repay the debts," he adds.

The chairman says councilors have as a result been unable to fully implement the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) projects under Local Authority Service Action delivery Action Plan (LAS-DAP) due to inadequate funds.

Nyakundi was speaking recently at the council town hall during the presentation of the council's 2010/2011 budget by Finance

committee chairman, Richard Ogata.

Ogata says the civic body however intends to raise Kshs100 million during the financial year against a planned expenditure of Kshs127 million to finance staff salaries, councilors allowances and improvement of infrastructure within the council.

To bridge the deficit, Ogata points out that the local authority had increased annual plot rates from Kshs1000 to Kshs4000 and plans to open up bus parks, markets and streamline the single Business permit licenses.

The council, notes Ogata also plans to impose levies on lorries which ferry sand, food stuffs and raw materials within its jurisdic-

tion to help generate more revenue and has raised targets for revenue collectors to Kshs30 million.

He appealed to the government to aid in the collection of Kshs101 million as per the agreement to collect money on its behalf from the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) poles levy to help the council settle its huge debts.

The town Clerk, Isaac Githui appealed to the residents to pay their taxes on time to help the council implement development projects in its 24 electoral Wards.

Githui says that the council was losing money through tax evasion by unscrupulous businessmen who closed their premises on spotting council's vehicles or tax collectors

only to open after they have left.

The government, says the Clerk had increased council workers salaries from between 40 and 60 percent while allowances of councilors had shot up by Kshs5000 and appealed to the public to pay taxes to enable the council meet its financial obligations.

Githui at the same time reveals that last year, the council disbursed Kshs480000 in bursaries to the 24 electoral wards within its area of operation.

This, the clerk says translated to Kshs20,000 for each and that the amount is likely to go up to Kshs50,000 per Ward next year to help cater for the growing demand by students from impoverished families.

By BOB OMBATI

Kisii town twins with Bradford, Shanghai Cities

KISII Municipal Council has partnered with Bradford city, United Kingdom (UK) and Shanghai city, China in a bid to improve on service delivery.

Mayor Samuel Nyangeso says Tongji university, Shanghai, has offered the council's Planner, Justine Mayaka Maroo, a scholarship to pursue a masters degree in urban planning at the University this September, saying once he is through he will help the council plan and manage the town better.

Similarly, Councillor Thomas Oresi of Kanga Ward presented the mayor with a recognition certificate and a trophy he was awarded by UN at Bradford, UK, for his role in contributing to the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals slated for 2015.

The Award, said Oresi is given under the auspices of the African Achievers International MDGs through the Nile African development Organization to outstanding individuals and groups who are vetted and voted for through the internet.

Oresi said he was recognized for his role in revamping Oresi Health centre which, he noted has helped ease congestion at Kisii level five hospital.

Besides the Health Centre which he wants elevated to a district hospital to serve more patients, Oresi has protected over 20 water springs in his ward besides assisting orphaned children with uniforms and examination fees in schools within his ward.

Oresi said he was among 11 qualifiers out 230 applicants drawn from UK, Europe, Africa and the USA, adding that only him and a Christian group from Uganda were selected in the East Africa region.

He lauded the council and Nyaribari Chache constituency Development Fund (CDF) management for supporting his initiative, adding that the award would motivate him to



Kisii Town which is set to benefit from Bradford city, United Kingdom (UK) and Shanghai city, China partnership in a bid to improve service delivery.

serve people more and better.

Oresi said that in the past he had been forced to use his own money to ensure that the projects initiated in his ward were completed and benefited his electorate.

"It requires a sacrifice and determination for a councillor to use his own money to supplement public funds during the implementation of development projects in his area of representation," Oresi told The Link shortly after the presentation of the certificate to the mayor at the council town hall.

Nyangeso who was accompanied by Town Clerk, Maina Chira, challenged other councillors to follow suit and leave a legacy to be emulated, saying, once they retired, they should

be proud to be associated with tangible development in their Wards

The mayor said the civic body was seeking partnership with other countries to improve on roads, housing and garbage collection.

The mayor said Town planning chairman, Edward Nyamweya and the council's planner had undergone a two week Training in urban planning at Tongji University which was facilitated by UN-Habitat.

He revealed that the training opportunity was awarded to the council by Yangpu district government, Shanghai city following a bilateral agreement between the donor and towns along the lake Victoria region.

Yangpu district said

Nyamweya had agreed to partner with the council's housing department to enable residents access better and affordable houses while Tongji University would offer annual scholarships to the council staff to enable them undertake short courses on urban planning and design.

Shanghai city, noted the civic leader, had also agreed to support the council with non-motorized transport to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles and ease movement.

Nyangeso urged them to utilize the Local authority Transfer fund well to ensure that practical projects were implemented in their electoral areas to benefit the electorate.

Oparanya pressured to release CDF report

By BILL ESSAU

CIVIL society organizations (CSOs) have written to Planning Minister Wycliffe Oparanya demanding release of CDF taskforce report.

The societies want to know why the report which was to be released in December last year had delayed without any explanation to the public.

They say the report is crucial to the management of local development in the country and should be released as the government was gearing up to a new financial year.

"We request your Ministry to publish the report as previously indicated. We also request a public stakeholder forum to share the Task Force recommendations to enable the public to review the recommendations and validate the findings of the report," reads the letter signed by Wanjiru Gikonyo who is the national coordinator of the Social and Public Accountability Network (SPAN).

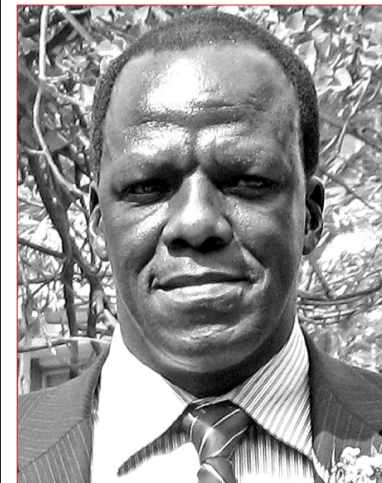
Gikonyo says failure to harmonize planning, implementation and monitoring in local development is grossly undermining the country's development as well as the attainment of Vision 2030 through duplication of Local Development Structures.

The letter dated June 6 and copied to President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga says that delay in publishing recommendation of the report was raising concern among Kenyans owing to contradictions in CDF management.

The letter is also copied to Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo, Speaker of the National Assembly Kenneth Marende, Attorney general Amos Wako, Head of the civil service and Secretary to the Cabinet Francis Muthaura and all MPs.

The task force was established early last year by President Kibaki and chaired by former Olkalau MP Eng. Muriuki Karue, who was the force behind the establishment of CDF.

The committee went round the country to collect views from Kenyans on how best the funds would be managed.



Mr. Oparanya

Kenya's constitutional moment is finally here

From page 1

the frustration of the large number of Kenyans who had been dispossessed through colonialism leaving them squatters on their ancestral land or landless poor. This situation demands an equitable land distribution process that is capable of providing livelihood opportunities to the landless poor as well as redressing colonial wrongs and re-establishing justice in the land sector.

As the struggle for independence ensued and the colonial rule looked destined to a sad chapter of history, a new ruling class with interest in landed property was quickly recruited from amongst

African collaborators.

With the help of the colonial state, the new gentry quickly occupied land belonging to entire communities – that had been herded into detention camps and concentration villages – and were awarded titles by the colonial authorities.

Upon the attainment of independence, the new rulers could not relinquish their claim to these lands but came up with a scheme of settling the new landless in former settler areas (which had been alienated through force or treachery).

It is instructive to observe that the epicentre of land-related clashes has been the agricultur-

ally-rich Rift Valley region. This is no accident. Rift Valley is the most settled region of Kenya. It is also in the Rift Valley where communities like the Maasai, the Pokot and the Nandi have unresolved grievances over land ownership centred on historical injustices traceable to colonial occupation.

It was in the Rift Valley where British settlers alienated huge tracts of land from indigenous Kenyans (paying a mere 10 cents per acre to the crown, not to the owners). It was in the Rift Valley where the Maasai community was duped into signing a 100-year agreement with the British in 1904 and denied a hearing by Kibaki

government (a successor to the colonial administration) in 2004 when the agreement had elapsed. It is in the Rift Valley where the Pokot were forcefully pushed out of their communal land.

Land grabbing, which has been used for political patronage, combined with land tenure reform, has concentrated mainly in freehold title registration without regard to distributive justice and has escalated further the oppression and marginalisation of the indigenous Rift Valley and coastal people.

The proposed constitution provides the people of Kenya with an opportunity to once for all address the issue of injustice in land ownership, tenure and utilization.

By JOSEPH OJWANG

JICA donates boats to EAC countries to improve patrol

THE Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has donated six patrol boats to the three East African states to help curb smuggling of goods and tax evasion in Lake Victoria.

JICA country representative Masaaki Kato said the boats valued at Kshs 40 million will be used in a pilot project to facilitate joint water surveillance across Lake Victoria.

He said that JICA is also implementing another project to oversee capacity development of the custom departments in the Eastern Africa region that could pave way for cross border trade facilitation in the region.

He said that smuggling is rampant across the waters of Lake Victoria and it is estimated that 50 percent of smuggling in Uganda is via Lake Victoria.

Speaking in Kisumu when handed over the boats to the three customs administrations, Kato said that there is need to minimize impediments that undermine cross border movement of people and goods.

He said that the long and porous land border in the region has in the past served as a safe haven for smuggling of contraband goods and tax evasion, which in most cases resulted in the rise of criminal activities and substantive losses in revenue collection.

He said that it is in this context that JICA decided to contribute to the fight against smuggling on Lake Victoria by providing a pair of fully-equipped high speed surveillance boats to each customs administration.



Boats in Lake Victoria.

"JICA is determined to help develop a healthy, equal and fair trade environment in the region by supporting the partner customs administration," he said.

He also announced that marine operational training has been held for enforcement officers in the three customs administrations to guarantee safety and

effective operations.

The training equipped them with skills on how to share information, monitor the trends of smuggling, ensure well coordi-

nated operations and prepare operational guidelines for the safe, effective and well coordinated operations across the vast Lake Victoria.

The deputy commissioner of Kenya Revenue Authority Kennedy Onyoni said that the smuggling of illegal goods in and out of the Lake Region is set to reduce with the introduction of the patrol boats.

Onyoni said that Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have suffered huge economic losses through illegal trade.

He said that the patrol boats will enhance the legitimate trade and boost confidence among the three African states.

"The boats will carry out joint operation in the region covering the three partner states to help combat illegal trade and apprehend those who evade taxes," he said.

The head of delegation from Uganda James Kisaale said the move is set to reduce smuggling of goods as partner states approach the realization of the common market.

He said that the three countries have continued to incur losses that amount to billions of shillings adding that 50 percent of the economic activities on the Lake are illegal.

Council under pressure to establish waste facility

By JOEL JUMA

PRESSURE is mounting on Kakamega Municipal Council to establish a solid waste disposal site or face prosecution.

The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation has warned the council to put up a solid waste management site without delay or face the law.

In a letter dated May 26, 2010, the department says the council is acting in contravention of the Public Health Act cap 242 section 115, 116 and 118 of the laws of Kenya.

District Public Health Officer Fred Amudavi asked the council to move with speed and avail a site for the purpose of solid waste disposal. The warning came as residents of Rosterman area where the council

has established a new dump site protested at the move citing the health risks involved.

The residents complained that the site, which has been in operation for almost a month now, posed a major health risk to them.

"We have complained to the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and the Ministry of Public Health but nothing is forthcoming," says Fridan Mugaisi, former area councillor.

Mugaisi said that the move by the council would have far reaching implications to the residents since rainwater from the new dump site flows directly into River Isikhu.

"Hundreds of people in the area use water from the river for domestic purposes. There is also fish in the river," he added.

Protus Jamhuri, a resident, said

flies have now become a common site in their homesteads.

He noted that the site is surrounded by four churches- Rosterman Baptist Church, Pentecostal Church of God and Pefa Church and Africa Divine Church.

"Also nearby is Rosterman Primary School, Riverside Early Childhood Development centre (ECD) and a cattle dip which is under construction," he added.

He lamented that the number of stray dogs in the area has shot up since the council started operating the dump site in the area.

The local residents protested as a local businessman threatened to move to court to seek compensation from the Council, which he accused of using his parcel of land as a waste disposal site for over 10years. Peter Imbaali said he is

seeking Kshs10 million from the council in compensation.

Mr Imbaali said the council has been disposing garbage on his three acre piece of land in Lwesero area in Kakamega since 1998.

Imbaali noted that his parcel of land is now immersed with garbage and cannot serve any meaningful purpose," he added.

National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) accused the council of operating the waste disposal site at Imbaali's land without following the laid procedures and regulations.

NEMA pointed out that the council had acted in contravention of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act, 1999, Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2003 and Environmental Management and Coordination

Regulations, 2006.

Kakamega District environment officer Anthony Saisi in a letter to the Town Clerk dated May 19, 2010 directed the council to stop dumping at the site.

"You are directed to stop dumping waste at the said site until you get a valid Environmental Impact Assessment license," said the letter. Saisi said failure to abide by the orders would amount to an environmental offence.

But, Imbaali insisted on seeking legal redress since the council is still dumping waste at the site.

"Accessing my home is difficult because it is littered with garbage. The waste also poses a health risk to my family and neighbours at large," he added.

Efforts to get a comment from the council were fruitless.

Focus on Kenya Nation

THE road network is critical to socio-economic development. The sector has been undergoing reforms which have culminated in the enactment of Kenya Roads Act, 2007 and establishment of the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA).

The authority is headed by the board of directors and the Director General, Eng. Meshack Kidenda, who oversees the implementation of policies, programmes and develops an operation plan which helps achieve the objectives of the Authority.

The Authority has regional offices in Nairobi, Nyeri, Mombasa, Kisumu, Kakamega, Eldoret, Nakuru, Isiolo and Machakos.

The Authority which oversees the management, development and rehabilitation of national roads under class A, B and C, has embarked on an intense programme aimed at prioritizing roads that enhance trade and regional integration.

Among the major projects being undertaken by the authority include

the Nairobi – Thika Highway Improvement Project and the Northern Corridor Transport Improvement Project (NCTIP).

The Nairobi Thika Highway Improvement Project
The project is jointly financed by the Government of Kenya and loan from the African Development Bank (ADB).

The objectives of the project are:

- Improving road transport services along the Nairobi-Thika corridor and enhancing urban mobility within the metropolitan area by reducing traffic congestion
- Contributing to the development of a sustainable urban public transit system for the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

Northern Corridor Transport Improvement Project (NCTIP)

The project is jointly being financed by the World Bank through a Development Credit from the International Development Association (IDA) and the Nordic Development Fund (NDF).



In our continuing coverage of the new Authorities managing Kenya's roads, FAITH MUIRURI takes a look at the activities of the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA)

The project covers both road and air transport programs. The roads component is administered by Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) while air transport is administered by Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCA) and Kenya Airports Authority (KAA).

The Project Development Objectives are:

- To enhance domestic and regional trade and create job opportunities in the construction industry through improving the Northern Transport Corridor which connects the port of Mombasa with Nairobi, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Ethiopia.

- To enhance the safety and security status of Civil Aviation and major airports and to enable direct flights to and from USA, which would promote tourism and increase trade under the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Road projects implemented under NCTIP include the following:

- (i) Road Rehabilitation works (civil works)
- (ii) Consultancy Services

In addition to civil works for Road Rehabilitation, the projects involve works for Socio-Economic Enhancement and construction of Roadside Amenities at important market centres and weighbridges along the routes.

These facilities include service roads, cycle tracks and Pedestrian walkways, market improvement, heavy goods vehicles, parking, weighbridges, improvement and grade separation junctions

Further, the Authority has signed two contracts for the rehabilitation of the Mau-Summit-Kericho-Kisumu Road, as an effort towards rebuilding main roads in the country.

The contracts will be implemented in two sections; the Mau Summit-Kericho Road from the Kericho/Sotik junction to Mau Summit junction.

The total length of the road is about 58km and approximately 21 km of additional climbing lanes in steep sections of the road. The contract is worth

Kshs6.8 Billion.

The other section involves the Kericho-Nyamasaria road, from Nyamasaria River Bridge to Kericho Sotik junction. The Road is about 76 kms in length and will cost over Kshs8 billion

The contracts, which have been funded jointly by the World Bank and the Government of Kenya, will be undertaken by SBI International Holdings.

The two projects are part of the larger Northern Corridor Transport Improvement Project which links Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC. The works are set to commence next month, and is estimated to take 24 months.

In addition to the above projects, KeNHA is overseeing



Eng. Meshack Kidenda, Director of the Kenya National Highways Authority (KENHA).
Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi



A section of the 31 km road

National Highways Authority

the rehabilitation of the Machakos Turn-Off-Masii (C97) Road.

The project which covers 76kms, is divided into four sections namely Machakos Turnoff-Machakos Town (C97) Road, Machakos-Masii (C97) Road, Machakos- Ngelani Kamuthanga (C99) Road.

The sections between Machakos Turnoff-Machakos Town and some 9Kms of Machakos Town- Kaseve have been completed.

The C97 road, whose total cost of rehabilitation was approximately Kshs1.4 billion, was funded by the exchequer through the Road Maintenance Levy Fund.

The Authority has also earmarked Kshs20 billion in the next financial year for periodic maintenance of Kaseve-Masii section of the road, that had been omitted due to fund constraints.

The scope of work entails reconstruction, repair and re-sealing worn out sections of the road.

The Lanet - Fortenan - Muhoroni Road (C35) is set to receive a facelift after the Kenya National Highways Authority signed a contract for its rehabilitation and construction.



President Mwai Kibaki during the official opening of the Lanet -Njoro turn off in April this year. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi

The project covering 63km is funded to the tune of Kshs.4.3 billion by the government.

The works are expected

to commence in mid July 2010 and to be carried out over a period of 24 months.

It will entail earthworks, construction of pavement layers, and construction of pipe and box culverts, improving the drainage, construction of bridge and installation of road signs where necessary. The contractor will also widen the carriageway between Fortenan to Muhoroni town.

It aims at increasing regional trade and promoting economic sustainability as the road serves the sugar belt region as well as the tea producing area of Kericho.

The road starts at Londiani Junction (B1) through Kipkelion to Fortenan Town (approximately 43kms) and from Fortenan to Muhoroni Town (approximately 20kms).

Upon completion, this agriculturally productive area will be more accessible and the road will ease transportation and marketing of the produce.

Other projects earmarked for rehabilitation include the upgrading of Homa Bay Mbita road at Kshs3.38billion and the 38Kilometer stretch of Kendu Bay- Homa Bay at Kshs3.35billion.

Also set for reconstruction include Lanet - Ndundori Road (C 69), Kisii-Gucha-Keroka (B3) road, Eldoret(Maili Tisa) - Nangili (B2)road, Nangili - Moi's bridge (B2)road, Nanyuki-Lewa road (A2), Kisumu-Kakamega road (A1), Rodi Kopany - Karungu road and (C18) Thika - Magumu road (C66).

Further, the rehabilitation of the 16kilometre stretch of the Lanet-Nakuru Njoro Turnoff road has been completed.

The road, whose rehabilitation works commenced in July 2006, is a link in the Northern Corridor route that joins Kenya at the port of Mombasa, to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Southern Sudan and the Democratic

Republic of Congo (DRC).

The Lanet-Nakuru Njoro Turnoff that initially had a 2.4km dual has been upgraded into a dual carriageway covering a total of 16kms.

At the same time, KeNHA is taking stock of all roads damaged by the heavy rains and is drawing emergency measures to ensure the roads are repaired with minimum inconvenience to the public.

Some of the roads affected include Logologo section of A2 road. The part that was most affected is the section between Laisamis and Marsabit towns, 50km from either town. The section is 4.5km long and was initially not prone to flooding.

The floods also washed out parts of Isiolo to Modogashe road (B9) on several locations and repairs will focus on the drainage structures, spot gravel and heavy grading to reinstate the road.



stretch of the Njoro-Lanet Highway. Photo/Fidelis Kabunyi