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CDF looting deepens

By MUSA RADOLI

MORE than Kshs.400 Million allocated to 28 constituencies during the 2007/2008 financial year cannot be accounted for.

An audit of the funds by the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) has ranked Ugenya constituency among the worst performing constituencies in the management and usage of the funds with losses running to more than 50 per cent.

However, the best performing constituency out of the twenty-eight audited was Rift Valley's Tinderet, which recorded the least amount of losses due to misuse compared to the rest. Others rated highly included Matuga, Kilome, Bura, and Makueni.

Leading in the pack of worst performers included Ugenya with losses amounting to 52.5 per cent, Bumula 50 per cent, Kanduyi 48 per cent, Msambweni 38 per cent and Lamu East 37.5 per cent.

The revelations were made when the NTA officially launched its National CDF and Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF) Citizens Report Cards (CRS) annual report findings based on the social audits conducted in the twenty-eight constituencies beginning January last year to determine how the devolved funds from the two national kittyes were used in the targeted areas.

The findings are supposed to give an insight in the management of the funds that annually get budgetary allocations from the central government

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BEST PERFORMER



Tenderet MP Henry Kosgei

WORST PERFORMER



Ugenya MP James Orenge

Education: Kenya faces big challenges

By MALACHI MOTANO

OVER a decade ago (2000) the world governments rolled out Education For All (EFA) programme at a conference in Dakar-Senegal, hoping to achieve the noble goal by 2015. As the clock ticks towards the deadline, the big question is, what has Kenya achieved?

According to the education minister Prof. Sam Ongeri, the ministry has made strides in most of the six EFA goals.

"The gross enrolment rate for early

childhood care and education (ECCE) stood at 60.9 per cent in 2010, which was a marked improvement from 57.9 per cent in 2005, while primary school's net enrolment rate increased from 82.9 per cent in 2005 to 91.4 per cent in 2010. The gender parity index increased from 0.94 in 2007 to 1.02 in 2010."

Other statistics from the ministry show that secondary enrolment rate also improved from 28.8 per cent in 2005 to 47.8 per cent in 2010. Adult education in 2010 stood at 266,200

surpassing the projected target by 37,319. Education of most vulnerable children stood at 325,000 against the projected target of 728,000 as enrolment in special schools increased from 91,770 in 2005 to 221,995 in 2009 and the transition rates improved from primary to secondary from 56 per cent in 2005 to 72 per cent in 2010.

While the country celebrates the improvement of increased enrolment in primary and secondary schools, the dream remains elusive for communi-

ties in the ASAL regions

John Lengoine is a head teacher at Kametusa, a community primary school Samburu. "This is just a school that was put up by parents living in this area. Although it was started 11 years ago, it has never recorded steady growth because we do not have adequate facilities."

"Because we have not registered with the ministry, the government



Prof. Ongeri

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of more than Kshs. 2.5 billion, but the NTA findings over the last three years indicate that losses in the management of the funds is escalating.

The NTA National Coordinator, Kizito Wangalwa said: "We are very dissatisfied with the way these funds are being used. Over the last three years the situation is not getting any better. In fact the looting, bad use and wastage of these funds is escalating and getting worse."

Mr. Wangalwa went on: "We have also established that a lot of the CDF money allocated to the constituencies, running into hundreds of millions of shillings is still lying in bank accounts without being used. Out of the Kshs. 444 million Kshs. 136 million was CDF cash while Kshs 170 million accounted for LATF allocations to various projects in five local authorities."

He says that the money that disappeared during a single fiscal year was capable of employing 20,000 P1 teachers and paying them handsome salaries of Kshs. 20,000 per month and ably run 150 schools to provide quality education to at least 500 pupils in each of these schools. "The level of financial leakages in the CDF and LATF funds is simply too high and escalating annually at alarming proportions and this demands for drastic action from the government law enforcement agencies, particularly the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission, otherwise the country and its people are simply being milked dry," says Mr. Wangalwa.

He says that even in those five constituencies like Tinderet which were rated as having used the monetary allocations fairly, a total of Kshs. 4.05 million was not accounted for or found to have been wasted or badly used on the projects the monies were meant for.

The five worst performing constituencies alone, more than Kshs. 10.8 million was not accounted for or was wasted and badly used on projects which did not meet quality specifications or were simply not worth the money which was already spent on them as per the time of the social audit.

Says the NTA boss: "The CDF has succeeded both as a means of fiscal decentralization and also as a means

of decentralizing ineptitude, corruption and absence of synergy in the delivery of public services. We don't seem to be learning better, more effective, more efficient, smarter ways of delivering," devolved funds

He says increasingly, Local Authorities and CDFCs are excluding the community from participating in the implementation of projects. This denies the community the opportunity to create capacity in project management and also reduces the amount of information in the community on the financing status of projects. This creates a major opportunity for corruption.

Mr. Wangalwa observes that there is a general delay in the disbursement of CDF funds that postpones the enjoyment of basic rights and achievement of value for money in the short-term. For avoidable reasons, there are still resources assigned in the FY 2007/2008 that remain unutilized.

"We wish to see full compliance with the law in terms of allocating sufficient resources to complete a project, preferably, within a financial year, but this is unfortunately not what is happening on the ground, a situation that has simply turned these noble funds into avenues of outright looting and financial mischief, he says.

The NTA boss argues that deliberate efforts must be made to de-politicize LATF and CDF and opening them up for public scrutiny. The hand of the MP and Councillor is seen in most of the decisions made. Public officers, charged with the execution of the Kitties, are in most cases helpless.

The KACC assistant director Prof. Jane Onsongo says the commission has turned its full focus on the CDF and LATF with already a number of officials having been charged in court, at least four cases pending prosecution at the attorney general's chambers and scores of investigations still going in all corners of the country since February.

"It is our determination at KACC to partner with other stakeholders to build the capacities of the members of the public to empower them with abil-

ities, identify and report on corruption in public funds and projects as well as all facets of our life," says Prof. Onsongo.

She says that at the moment KACC was busy identifying all the loopholes and weaknesses in the CDF management structures right from the national level to the grassroots through which corrupt characters were exploiting to fleece the funds.

The KACC assistant director says that some of the most glaring loopholes so far identified by the commission include failure to maintain books of accounts, lack of project files, lack of monitoring and evaluation structures, lack of Project Management Committees (PMCs) and a litany of ghost projects all over the country.

The other loopholes identified are failure to involve the stakeholders right from project identification and prioritization, through the implementation process to completion. Failure to involve government technical experts in project implementation processes. Con-



One of the abandoned CDF projects.

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lict of interest on projects especially as far as members of the Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) are concerned, multiple funding from different agencies. "We are extremely concerned that with the devolved governments and the extinction of the CDF and LATF among other devolved funds, the country may be devolving corruption to the counties from the national level," says Prof. Onsongo.

To counter this, she says the commission was also going to devolve its operations from the national level to the regions, particularly the current provincial headquarters from where it can counter those who are involved in corruption at the county levels.

She says one of the major reasons why there are so many corruption loopholes in the CDF and LATF funds is bad legislation that established especially the CDF and which the sitting legislators were fully aware of but were extremely reluctant to make amendments that will seal the loopholes.

Education: Kenya faces big challenges

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cannot send us teachers. We do not benefit at all from the free primary education programme. I am a class eight dropout from Webera and the nearest primary in Isiolo town is 54 km away"

Francis Wamalwa is 28, and is the acting assistant chief. "We are a pastoral community our sons normally help us move with our animals as the girls remain with their mothers taking care of our homes. We only send our children

to Kametusa primary to go and learn how to read and write. Going to school does not help us much compared to our animals that tend to receive a lot of our attention.

A part from not valuing education, continuous migration (Pastoralism), inadequate learning facilities, poor infrastructure, constant conflict have also challenged the achievement of the EFA 2015 goals

According to the EFA global monitoring report released last week by

UNESCO in Nairobi, armed conflict is robbing 28 million children of an education by exposing them to widespread rape and other sexual violence, targeted attacks on schools and other human rights abuses.

The report, The Hidden Crisis: Armed conflict and education, cautions that the world is not on track to achieve by 2015 the six Education for All goals that over 160 countries signed up to in 2000. Although there has been progress in many areas, most of the goals will be

missed by a wide margin – especially in regions afflicted by conflict.

Northern Kenya is no stranger to violence, says Mohamed Elmi, Minister for the development of northern Kenya.

"At any given time a school somewhere in this region will be closed as a result of armed conflict. And long after the conflict has ended, its impact may still be felt. To cite just one example: the Turbi massacre 2 in Marsabit in 2005 left nearly 100 people dead. More than 6,000 people were displaced by the violence, twelve hundred of whom were children. Eleven primary schools in the area were affected. Twenty-two of the dead were children at Turbi Primary School, who were killed just before starting their morning class."

The Minister regrets that the loss of innocent life on such a scale is heart-breaking, that is further compounded by the trauma which the surviving friends, students and teachers of those children must still feel today.

"In the last few days we have seen how the conflict in Somalia continues to spill over our borders, most recently into Mandera. For many years Kenya has hosted large refugee populations from Somalia, Sudan, and other countries in Africa. Dadaab, near Garissa, is one of the largest refugee camps in the world. Its population has more than doubled in four years. As a result, an education system that was designed to provide for 30,000 children is now struggling to provide for double that number."



The Link writer Malachi Motano interviews one of the teacher in Isiolo. Photo/Malachi Motano

Varsity admission of girls below average —Kaane

By JOEL JUMA

ADMISSION of female students into universities is still below average, the commission of higher education has said.

The commission said the trend is unfortunate as only 200,000 female students are pursuing education in colleges instead of 800,000 as envisioned in Vision 2030.

According to the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Secretary Prof Harry Kaane, female students only occupy 39 percent through the Joint Admission Board (JAB) where as only 3 percent take up positions in the engineering faculties.

Kaane said that the slow pace by the female students to pursue engineering course was contributing to their inability to participate in the implementation of policies towards Vision 2030.

Kaane explained that the Government has so far allocated Kshs3. Billion to promote Engineering faculties in universities in the country.

Kaane also said that the Government was giving university lecturers time to register as members of the Engineering Regulatory Board. "Some are not registered and therefore they are not recognised as lecturers for Engineering courses," said Kaane.

The Secretary was speaking during the official opening of the ninth University Exhibition Fair at Kakamega Golf Hotel.

Kaane demanded that each university should identify areas of excellence in order to attract scholars and researchers.

The Commission Chief Executive Officer Prof Everest Standa challenged other universities to emulate the efforts made by University of Nairobi by introducing on line studies.

This, he said had improved access to education among the scholars in both

private and public sectors. Standa added that the universities should also formulate courses that address the current market trends and challenges of technology.

He explained that Vision 2030 policies need to be integrated into the university programmes as the Government relies on education for implementation of the policies.

Standa and Kaane added that the University Bill set to be tabled in Parliament will be able to put all universities on equal terms.

Illegal tuition hampering Free Primary Education

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

DESPITE the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme seven years ago, most children especially those from poor backgrounds within Busia municipality and its environs have opted out of school due to the extra tuition levied by school managers.

A survey by the Busia based Institute of Human Rights and Civic Values (IHR/CV) established that more girls than boys have registered a high incidence of dropout rates.

The organization's coordinator Andrew Odongo Nyangweso says the survey had sought to find out the impact of tuition on the overall rights to education for children from poor households.

"The survey undertaken in five public primary schools within Busia municipality has established that the school heads still compel parents to pay tuition levy for their children with most schools charging Kshs200 per month per child," says Nyangweso, adding that children whose parents have failed to comply are in most occasions sent back home to bring the same, a situation that has caused most of them especially those from poor family background to desert school.

The survey further states that in some of the learning institutions visited, class eight candidates are required to pay a total of Kshs8,000 each which is mandatory before the candidate can be allowed to attend class.

"Even if a child did not attend the weekend tuition due to non-



The Coordinator of the Institute of Human Rights and Civic Values Mr Andrew Odongo Nyangweso who conducted a survey on illegal tuition by head teachers in Busia. Photo/ Nyakwar Odawo

payment of the same, the parent of the child concerned still has to pay," says the survey report, adding that the practice has demoralized the pupils most of whom opt to drop out of school instead of being sent away from time to time to collect the levies which most parents cannot afford to get.

However, contacted for com-

ment, Busia District Education Officer (DEO) John Owino said no school head is allowed to extort money from parents in the form of tuition fees, adding that the same had been abolished by the government purposely to ensure all children especially those from poor family background had access to education.

"I have no option to but to deploy the quality assurance team to the said public primary schools in the entire district to establish the authenticity of the allegation and take appropriate action on those involved," said the DEO, adding that no child should be sent out of school for non-payment of illegal levies.

Kuppet wants principals paid allowance

By JOEL JUMA

A TEACHERS union wants the Government to introduce responsibility allowances for principals and deputies in secondary schools.

The Kenya Union of Post Primary Education of Teachers (Kuppet) said heads of department in secondary schools should also be included in the packages as they play a key role in education affairs.

The union's national chairman Akello Misori and treasurer Njenga Mwethi said it is unfair for the Government to pay primary school heads and their deputies the allowances and leave out their secondary counterparts.

Primary heads and their deputies earn Sh200 and Sh175 respectively as responsibility allowances on monthly basis.

Misori and Mwethi demanded that the same benefits be applied to the secondary heads and their deputies to curb discrimination.

"We are recommending that the principals and their deputies earn at least Sh700 and Sh500 as responsibility allowances to motivate them, especially for those heading boarding schools," said Akello.

Akello urged the Minister for Education Sam Ongeri to liaise with his Finance counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta to factor the money in this year's Budget.

The two said the process of creating national schools in each county should be de-linked from politicians.

The union officials were speaking to the press in Mumias town after attending the elections of the Bungoma branch at Kanduyi stadium.

During the elections, Masai arap Bokose was elected as the County branch chairman while Kundu Lukeko was elected Executive Secretary.

Catherine Wambilyanga was elected the woman representative while Fred Mangingi was elected the branch assistant secretary for tertiary. Dorcas Simiyu was elected as branch treasurer.

KNUT opposes move on teachers

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) wants the government to stop hiring teachers on contractual basis as this undermined the education sector.

The union acting National Chairman Mr Wilson Sossion who spoke in Nyeri town noted that the government has enough funds to hire the teachers permanently and so hiring them on contract should be abolished as it is ruining the quality of education in the schools.

The chairman said that such form of employment is even against the International Labour Laws (ILO) and so should be opposed.

At the same time, the union also wants the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to absorb the 18,000 teachers who were hired last year on contract terms.

Sossion who was accompanied by Acting Deputy Secretary

General Mr Xavier Nyamu said that the union would no longer allow hiring of teachers on contractual basis from the next financial year noting that those teachers hired on contracts are being denied chances to join sacco and so cannot get loan facilities.

"We have written to TSC to stop contract hiring. We are no longer going to allow government to hire more teachers on a contract basis as it has done before. We believe the government has enough funds to hire teachers permanently and this is the only way that the quality of education can be improved," he said.

Sossion also urged the government to implement the remaining phase of salary increment adding that teachers' allowances were last reviewed in 1997.

He said the clearing of the remaining phase should be done immediately without further delay.



KNUT acting National Chairman Mr Wilson Sossion (left) with Acting Deputy Secretary General Mr Xavier Nyamu speaking in Nyeri town. —Photo/Joseph Wambugu

Varsities to phase out redundant courses

THE Public Universities Inspection Board (PUIB) report recommending the gradual phasing out of programmes which are not responsive to the market needs would be enforced, according to the Vice Chairperson of the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Professor Judith Bahemuka.

Prof Bahemuka said the PUIB report recommended that the senates of all the public universities should identify academic programmes that do not attract students, are cost effective to run and not responsive to market needs, be gradually phased out.

She said constituting the PUIB followed mis-guided perception that quality education and training in universities had declined as a result of increased student enrolment, inadequate and outdated equipment and facilities hence measures to counter such notions.

Addressing Secondary School Students at the Kakamega Golf Hotel, Bahemuka, who is also a sociology lecturer at the University of Nairobi, said the quest

for responsiveness to economic imperatives has not obscured the needs for a vibrant intellectual community engaged in social and cultural development.

The Don, said notwithstanding the above mis-conception about public universities, the main challenge being faced by the government with respect to university education is how to increase access to cater for the ever growing number of school leavers and others who desire university education while at the same time maintaining quality education and ensuring equity and affordability.

She pointed out that the number of students who sat for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Exams last year was 337,404 noting that of this figure 90,000 scored a mean grade of C+, which is the minimum university entry grade.

Bahemuka observed that this year the Joint Admission Board (JAB) selected 24,000 students to join the seven public universities adding that going by such number, over 60,000 eligible stu-

COMMENT
By TITUS MAERO

dents are likely to miss an opportunity to join a public university of their choice.

She further said about 10,500 students who miss out to join the public universities end up being absorbed into the fourteen (14) Private Universities. She said such universities are fully accredited by the CHE.

The scholar, however, expressed regret that while university education has continued to expand with the opening up of new universities, constituent colleges, campuses, vocational and technical education and skills training have not followed suit.

Bahemuka pointed out that the expansion and modernization of these institutions had been paramount to increasing access and also making training relevant and adequate to the demand of the economy.



A section the University of Nairobi.

She said the government's effort of systematic planning and development of middle level colleges, as well as up grading of the existing ones has been done as a prerequisite for modernization innovation and industrialization of the country.

Then official said the 21st century vision needs to be encouraged to emerge from the ashes of Kenya's beleaguered academies if they are to partici-

pate effectively in the transformation and re-invigoration of the Kenyan society.

Such paradigm shift, she said, entails transformation of higher education in the context of meeting natural challenges of socio-economic development, innovation, creativity and adaptation of scientific and technological change and to confront challenges brought about by competition in the knowledge economy.

Muliro keen on partnership with US varsities

By TITUS MAERO

THE US Ambassador Mr. Michael Ranneberger has promised to help Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) forge partnership and linkages with some universities in the US.

Ranneberger said such education exchange programmes would assist address global emerging research issues associated with the first expanding world technological advancement.

He said a university that is relevant is the one which sensitizes the various upcoming advanced research and technological education issues and needs that guarantee rapid change in education.

Speaking at the MMUST graduation square in Kakamega during the institution's career week the envoy further said research is critical in enhancing productivity and improvement of standards of education.

The Diplomat said that there is need to equip the university with modern technological equipments to assist students under take research in laboratories and through field works and exchange of notes with other universities undertaking similar programmes.

He further said education has a social role not only in employment but in personal life reduction of illiteracy levels and decreasing criminal activities by students who graduate but they do not get employment opportunities.

He stressed that collaborative exchange programmes if adopted by the university with others in the USA would be instrumental in identifying existing and untapped potential in education abilities.

Ranneberger noted that Kenya is among many countries in the world that which are currently experiencing a youth bulge noting that the situation does not auger well as demonstrated after the 2007 post election violence by idle youths. He said the challenge becomes even greater considering that university keep churning out thousands



Masinde Muliro University building.

of graduands who look upon the government and the private sector for white collar employment.

The Ambassador asked the MMUST University to ensure students who graduate exhibit good character formation to be able to be respected in the society and be good citizens in the community.

Ranneberger also asked the Government to consider floatation of Higher Education Bond in order to make funds available to the university to enable it undertake expansion of student capacity and other physical infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the government is committed to provide quality education to students in the country's learning institutions at all level in the wake of enhanced reforms initiated in the education sector said Deputy PM Musalia Mudavadi.

Mudavadi said the education sector has undergone accelerated reforms in order to address the overall goals of the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) for Empowerment and Wealth Creation (EWC).

Addressing teachers at the Chavakali Secondary School in Vihiga County, Mudavadi who is also the Local Government Minister, said the government is also determined to achieving the International Development Commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA).

Enumerating to the teachers the major reforms the education sector has achieved, the DPM pointed out that the launch and implementation of the Free Secondary School Education and Free Primary Education are good examples and described them as milestones which took the lead in the reform process.

The DPM also singled out the Development Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research plus adoption of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) in the Planning and Financing of Education and Training as other successful reform initiatives.

The Sabatia MP further singled out

the Development and Implementation of the Kenya Education Sector Programme (KESSP) which, he said, is an important programme that allow different stakeholders to support the education sector.

Mudavadi, while applauding the teachers of Chavakali Boys Secondary School for ensuring that students for posted good results in last year's Kenya Secondary Certificate of Education (KCSE) Exam, informed them that the government initiatives such as the development of the Education Governance and Accountability plan production of financial management and procurement manuals had facilitated provision of free education.

The Legislator added that the year 2006, Kenya was evaluated and endorsed for Education Support from the Fast Track Initiatives (FTI) on the basis of the credibility of the Basic Education for All (BEA) policy as formulated in the KESSP which was launched in the year 2005.

Mumias School lays grand plans

By JOEL JUMA

A SECONDARY school in Kakamega County requires over Kshs100 million to expand its facilities to qualify for a national schools' status in the country.

St Peter Mumias High school needs the funds to put up modern hostels and construct science laboratories for it to absorb a higher number of students who qualify for admission.

The school management led by Principal Mr Godfrey Owuor said there was adequate land for expansion but requires additional facilities and teachers to meet the status of national schools.

Owuor said already Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) has pledged Kshs1.5 million to assist in the construction of one of the dormitories. "We have started getting assistance after the school was proposed to be elevated from provincial to national status," said Owuor.

Owuor was speaking during a party to thank teachers and the workers for their efforts in ensuring that the performance of the school remained at the top. The school Parents Teachers Association Chairman Charles Lwole and the Deputy Principal Mr F. Ogola were present.

The school was ranked position 88 nationally during the last Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations. MSC Managing Director Dr Evans Kidero said the company will continue supporting education in the area to ensure that there is improved performance in national examinations.

He said that MSC will donate 20 computers to the school to boost the performance of the students in national examinations.

The Western Provincial Director of Education (PDE) Keneth Misoi said that St Peters is one of the schools that have been inspected by the Government for consideration during establishment of National schools in Counties.

"Each County will have at least two national schools and currently inspectors are visiting selected schools which will be funded based on their recommendations," said Misoi.

School rekindles hope of a destitute mother

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

A SPECIAL school in Kilifi has rekindled hope for a desperate mother abandoned by the community because of her disabled son.

"When my child was a baby, he got sick and after a medical examination, he was found to have Yellow fever and for some time, he was unable to sit or feed from my breasts," says Mwajuma Maingu.

After repeatedly taking the baby to hospital, doctors informed her baby's legs were weak and advised her to take him regularly for exercises with a physiotherapist.

"Visits to several other hospitals did not improve conditions of my child. In desperation, I even sought help from traditional medicine men and herbalists hoping for effective treatment of the son, all in vain," says Mwajuma of her son, Salim Omar.

Abandoned by the husband on the fourth month of pregnancy, Mwajuma was determined to pursue curative measures to improve her son's condition while seeking court action to force her former husband to support the child.

Things started turning for the better when she brought Salim to Sahajanand Special School at Mtwapa in Kilifi County.

"While he could not sit on his own, he can sit, eat and scroll using his legs after training at the school, she says.

"This is precisely why I have never lost hope that someday Salim can stand up and walk," says Mwajuma.

The Sahajanand Special



Disability is not inability: Persons with Disabilities should be given formal education like the rest.

School, formerly known as Mtwapa Primary School, is part of the County's Education Institute complex that practices inclusive learning. Regular and physical challenged learners interact without discrimination.

Since it was set up in 2006, the school welcomes all children with physical or mental disabilities, especially those referred by the Kilifi Educational Assessment and Resource Centre (KEARC).

The Principal, Mr. Patrick Mzungu Koba, says: It is no coincidence Salim's mother is an active mother of the Mtwapa Community Based Organization

(CBO) which I head."

The coordinator of Educational Assessment and Resource Centre, Mrs. Dorothy Randu, commends Mwajuma for her tireless effort to ensure her some lives like other children in society.

She has also hauled Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Jolee and the Ministry of Education for facilitating the resource centre in Kilifi where children such as Salim were identified for their disabilities.

Parents of children with disabilities are enjoined to participate in Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and community

mobilization, identify and the training of CBR workers, parents and care givers.

They also conduct exchange visits that offer relief to parents such as Mwajuma, who has realized she is not alone as she raises a child with disabilities.

"Raising a child like Salim needs patience and humility as you face the community who will often mocks you and feel low in their presence," says the co-ordinator.

Mwajuma, who has made several exchange visits to Kwale and Taita Taveta Counties, says: "It made me realize that I am not alone in my suffering."

Coaching rampant in coast schools despite ban

By BEKADZO TONDO

DESPITE the government ban on extra hours of coaching in public primary and secondary schools in the country, parents in Coast province are still forced to pay tuition fees for their children.

A spot check by The Link established that head teachers collude with the schools Parents and Teachers Associations (PTA) to convene parents meetings where they introduce the illegal levies.

The teachers in most cases argue that schools have been performing poorly in national examinations due to lack of extra coaching despite the explicit ban on the same by the Ministry of Education.

Most senior education officials say that schools managers have been exploiting the provision that allows them to introduce extra levies with the approval of parents.

Kilifi District Education Officer Mr. Dickson Ole Keis however says the ban on extra levies was still in force as they undermined efforts to increase access and retention levels in schools.

Mr. Keis says some teachers absconded duty in order to earn extra money during the tuition hours.

"The ministry will soon crack the whip on culprits who neglect their duties in order to gain from extra coaching," he said.

The district education officer further says that in some cases, the teachers are only quick to collect money from parents but hardly taught the extra hours.

Speaking to the teachers of central zone at Kilifi primary school Mr. Keis told parents to report any cases where children are sent away for failing to pay tuition fees.

Mr. Keis noted with regrets that the district posted a mean score of 245 in last years KCPE which was bad for the region.

Some parents who talked to The Link in Kilifi said they are forced to pay Kshs450 for each child they have in the schools to enable them attend to the extra coaching hours per term.

Ongeri urged to build more special schools

By JOEL JUMA

KENYA Special Schools Head Teachers Association has underscored the need to set up national schools that target students with special needs to avoid discrimination of physically impaired students. The association also demanded that the government sets aside funds to establish centres of academic excellence for special children at the constituency level.

The association told education minister Sam Ongeri should to ensure each region gets a national school to cater for the needs of physically challenged children to curb their isolation.

"We should not be left out during the expansion of schools by the Government in the same way we were left out during creation of centres of excellence last year," said the association national

Chairman Arthur Injenga.

Injenga said that the proposal by the Government to elevate two secondary schools from each County to national status should ensure that special schools are not left out.

Schools earmarked for elevation will benefit from Kshs100 million that will finance the expansion of their facilities. Inspection of the schools set to be elevated is already being done in the country. However, none of the special schools have been considered for elevation as well as receiving funds for expansion as centres of excellence in Counties of Western province.

Western Provincial Director of Education (PDE) Kenneth Misoi said that several schools which include Butere Girls, St Peters Mumias and Kakamega high schools have already been inspected.

Misoi said inspection reports will be used by the Government to ascertain the schools that will merit for elevation.

The head teachers meeting also faulted the Kenya National Examination Council (Kneec) for not ranking special candidates who sat for national examinations in their own category.

"The students from special schools need to be ranked alongside their schools the way it is done for others," said Injenga.

Injenga explained that MPs should be forced to identify special schools for expansion in their respective constituencies to cater for the needs of special children.

Mumias MP Ben Washiali and his Lurambi counterpart Manyala Keya supported demands from the association.

Washiali and Keya explained that Ongeri should allocate funds



Mr. Manyala

for expansion of the special schools and ensure that they equipped like others.

Kisii varsity principal advises parents

By BOB OMBATI

KISII University College principal, Prof. John Akama has urged parents to shun negative attitudes towards technical education which he says plays a vital role in development.

Akama says the sector should be strengthened to spur socio-economic and technological development in the country.

The Don, who officiated the opening of the Technical Institutes vocational and Education Training (TIVET) third exhibition at Gusii Institute of Technology (GIT), deplored the high rate of brain drain in Kenya as graduates pursued greener pastures elsewhere and urged the government to provide conducive working conditions to reverse the trend.

He said the government was investing heavily on education but the rate of turnover was not commensurate to the huge allocations in the sector.

The three-day exhibition theme was "Science and technology for enhancing wealth creation". About 14 institutions participated in the exhibition jointly organized by Western region Kenya Association of Technical training institutions and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

Akama proposed that the government increases the number of full-time researchers in science, technology and engineering in all universities and training institutions and establish international need based partnerships with private sector to address development challenges.

He challenged the government to launch awareness campaigns on the importance of innovation for wealth creation and national welfare through mass media and support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to promote technologies through innovations.

The Don observed that it was imperative for the government to assist technical institutions and universities in their efforts to enhance their innovation capacities through funding, training and workshops.

He noted that technical institutes were sources of manpower for industries unlike universities which trained managers who worked closely with technicians and artisans to produce quality products and services.

"In this regard, institutions of higher learning shall continue to play an important role in training of scientific and technological manpower because they are often the suppliers of high level of scientific and technological personnel," said Akama.

Nyanza Provincial Technical Training officer (PTTO),



Academic staff at the Kisii University College.

Kipngetich Misoi said the exhibition demystified what takes place in the Institutes and accorded both parents and members of the public an opportunity to see what their children were doing in those institutions.

He urged students to patent their work

to avoid cases where unscrupulous people take credit of their innovations. The officer said that the Trade Fairs will be organized periodically noting that the best exhibitors in each category will compete nationally and be rewarded.

Kuria community told to value education

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

NYANZA Provincial Director of Education (PDE), Mr. Geoffrey Cherongis, has told members of the Kuria Community to discard retrogressive cultures that interfere with the education of their children.

"It is very unfortunate that the Kuria community still puts a high premium on circumcision of both boys and girls at the expense of the education of school-going children." Mr. Cherongis said during a stakeholder's forum held in Kehancha town.

The provincial education boss expressed dissatisfaction with the overall performance of schools in last year's KCPE examination, in which the area was ranked poorly nationally.

He said no district could register good performance if parents, teachers and leaders ignored the spirit of cooperation in handling education matters.

He said the Government was aware of the plight of many schools in the area which he cited as including shortage of teachers, the lethargy exhibited by some teachers who fail to do their work effectively, leading to pupils sitting for examinations without having completed syllabuses.

The two districts of Kuria have a total teacher-deficit of 660 in primary and 150 in secondary schools.

As a measure to ensure accountability, Mr. Cherongis warned head teachers against misappropriating school funds, calling upon them to be good managers of the institutions for better results.

He said some 28 head teachers in the region had been demoted because of financial mismanagement and failing to ensure that syllabuses are completed within the required period of time. The education boss also cautioned head teachers against forcing pupils to repeat classes, saying the move has occasionally led to unwarranted drop-outs.

During the meeting attended by area MP, Dr. Wilfred Machage, participants blamed cattle rustling, feuds between teachers and schools committees, poor inspection and supervision of schools and retrogressive culture for the poor performing in last year's KCPE.

Dr. Machage said he would prevail upon the community elders to change the December circumcision calendar, which he said interferes with preparation of students for national exams.

A harvest of books in Kakamega

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

BOOKS donated to schools are not just meant for stocking libraries but for pupils to read in order to improve their intellect.

A Kakamega town based businesswoman Joan Ahinda made the remarks recently at Bright Academy in Kakamega County.

Ahinda was the chief guest during the institution's books harvest day where 176 text books worth Kshs. 79,313 were harvested, besides Kshs. 30, 870 in cash. She challenged pupils to reciprocate efforts by the parents and well-wishers by ensuring that they make good use of books.

"We did not come here to donate

books that will be left to gather dust in the library. The books we want to donate are for you to borrow and read in order to gain knowledge that brought you here", she told the pupils.

Miss Ahinda told the pupils that they should start to plan for their future now adding that if they do not plan now then they are planning to fail. She asked the directors of the school to buy computers in readiness for the e-learning programme which she said was in the offing.

The lady, who is a book seller, disclosed that already publishers had started to print books on CDs in readiness to e-learning and due to piracy.

"As a wakeup call, one of the books I am going to donate here is

on a CD", the chief guest told the directors. Ahinda at the same time challenged parents to provide requisite facilities and materials in order to enable teachers to achieve their set targets in National exams.

On discipline, Ahinda asked parents to closely monitor their children's movement for early intervention and appropriate guidance.

Speaking at the same function the proprietor of the school Mr. Kodgers Nato said that his dream to start the school was not commercial but to provide quality and affordable education.

"Low academic standard in our public schools prompted me and like-minded individuals to start this

school," Mr. Nato said.

Mr. Nato likened Bright Academy to the Biblical Noah's Ark saying the school was not established for certain people but the entire community regardless of one's status and denomination.

The school which is set to sit for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) for the first time this year has been leading in the Zonal trial exams.

Public Primary schools have over the years been trailing private schools in National exams in the region.

The poor performance in public primary schools is blamed on the over stretched facilities and under-staffing of teachers.

Shinyalu modern boy school nearing completion

By TITUS MAERO

THE construction of an ultra modern boys' secondary school in Shinyalu Constituency under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) is nearing completion.

The Shanderema Boys Secondary which will serve as a centre of excellence has eight class rooms, one administration block, one laboratory and a toilet.

The Shinyalu Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Kitty has al-

located Kshs 1 million to help the new school buy desks and other facilities in a bid to create a conducive learning environment.

The area Member of Parliament (MP) Mr Justus Kizito said that another Kshs 2.5m has been disbursed to the school to oversee the construction of the school's fence and a modern dormitory in order to accommodate the large number of students who have enrolled at the learning institution.

The MP who spoke when he of-

ficiated a function to commission the new facility, challenged teachers and students to set high academic standards as a show of gratitude for the huge investment.

Kizito, at the same time, promised to liaise with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to ensure that enough teachers are posted in the school which currently relied on 12 TSC teachers and six others employed by the Board of Governor (BOG).

He told the School's Head Teacher Mr Frederick Wamisiko and his Dep-

uty Mr Omari Jaffer that their stay at the school would depend on the school's performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Examination.

The Legislator said the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) which was initiated by the Ministry of Finance in 2009 aims at upgrading the infrastructure and quality of education in order to give students a better foundation consistent with the requirements of the modern labour market.

Teachers blamed for poor education in Othaya



Nyeri South District Education Officer Mr. Jackson Kaberia (right) chatting with Othaya District Officer Mrs Helen Chege at Kiaguthu Primary School in Othaya during the prize giving day. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

LOW level of commitment by some teachers and poor syllabus coverage are some of the major challenges affecting education sector in Othaya.

Nyeri South District Education Officer Jackson Kaberia says that unwillingness by teachers to plan their work is

also a major challenge ailing the sector.

Kaberia added that weak managerial skills witnessed in some schools and un maintained physical facilities had aggravated the situation

However, the district has very committed stakeholders, there is little political interference and conducive environ-

ment for learning in terms of climate and road network.

"We also have adequate trained teachers, adequate learning facilities, willing students, supportive parents and stakeholders and adequate text books," he added.

The DEO said many learning institutions have access to piped water and electricity and access

to Free Primary Education funds and Free Secondary Education.

Nyeri South district is one of the eight newly created districts carved from the larger Nyeri district.

The district has 78 primary schools out of which 56 are public while 22 are private schools.

There are 34 public secondary schools.

Finance PS speaks on education

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

TEACHERS have a critical role to play in shaping the future of the education sector in the country, says Finance Permanent Secretary Joseph Kinyua.

While addressing teachers in Othaya during the education awareness workshop, Kinyua said that teachers should be committed to their work for the success of this sector.

"As teachers and of course as leaders who shape the destiny of education in this country, your personal commitment to the success of this sector is critical. You are the role models to all the pupils and students who pass through your hands from pre-school to the secondary school level," the PS told teachers who attended the workshop.

He urged teachers, parents and students to have a shared vision on what is required of them as a measure towards reversing the worrying trends of education in their zone.

Kinyua who was accompanied by Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority Managing Director Mr Stephen Githaiga challenged teachers to guide students towards good behavior and mannerisms to avert the indiscipline often associated with school going pupils and students.

On free education, the PS reaffirmed government's commitment in providing quality education for all.

He said that already the government has set up a taskforce to review education policies in line with the new constitution.

"This taskforce will make recommendations on how to deal with issues such as quality, relevance, equity and access as well as public-private relationship," he said.

Yatta schools pioneer greenhouse farming

By MALACHI MOTANO

ABOUT thirty secondary schools in Yatta Constituency are set to adopt greenhouse farming to produce their own food and improve student nutrition.

Each school has been allocated Kshs 300,000 from the CDF Kitty to establish at least two greenhouses. The package includes drip irrigation technology system, fertilizers, agro-chemical, water tanks and sprayers.

"We decided that the entry point for passing on the knowledge to the farming community would be via secondary schools as they are the next generation of farmers. The schools will double up as demonstration centers for both parents as well as locals and bring people together," says Charles Kilonzo, the area Member of Parliament.

This, according to the MP, will enable schools to produce their own food and enrich student's diet. The surplus will be sold to generate rev-

enue for buying other requirements in the schools.

"We have been importing tomatoes in the recent past but today the project has enabled us to produce sufficient quantities for use in schools while the surplus is sold. Once many people invest in the technology, the local economy will improve," says the Member of Parliament.

The programme seeks to make Yatta, a leading producer in tomatoes which will be sold to the rest of the country.

He further said that the project is modeled as 'one village one product' in an initiative by the government and through which, Yatta would be known for its prowess of exporting tomatoes.

The MP adds that the programme targets the middle class in the area who can afford the cost of the technology, and then provide employment to the locals by engaging them on the day today management of the greenhouse. He also plans to have 16

primary schools provided with the green houses to enhance the feeding programme in 1200 primary schools in the area.

Mr. Kilonzo was speaking at the launch of a farmers kit in Matuu Secondary in his Yatta constituency.

At Languni secondary, where two green houses were constructed with the support of the Kenya Red cross, the Head teacher Ms Florence Kimeu said that the site has become a training centre for locals and teaching aid during agriculture lessons.

"The main challenge has been dealing with diseases affecting crops for which the schools are liaising online with agro-support services.

Mr. Albert Kiiri, a head teacher in the neighboring Kilandini secondary school said the school's green house farm, set up in December 2009 with support from CDF had focused on two tomato varieties, Nours and Nemoneta.

This, Kilonzo says comes with long life search for permanent solu-

tions to ravages of drought and poverty in Yatta.

"Due to lack of water, there is need for farmers to be trained on new farming technologies. That is why we are approaching leaders in the industry for the provision of greenhouse.

Speaking at the same function Planning and National Development Minister Wycliffe Oparanya regretted that Agriculture, the subject that provided learners with practical skills and knowledge had been scrapped out of the Primary school syllabus, only to be introduced sparingly in secondary education.

According to the Minister, Agriculture is the second highest earner of the country's income after tourism and therefore school curriculum designers (KIE) should promote it at all levels of learning.

"By not teaching the subject in primary schools, we deny the pupils an opportunity to view Agriculture as a source of livelihood," adds the



Hon. Charles Kilonzo

minister.

Oparanya says introducing the subject late in secondary schools has caused learners to perceive the subject as an archaic practice suited for the poor and the old.

"The scrapping of agriculture has completely polluted the minds of young scholars who do not want to be associated with agricultural practice," he says.

The Link

Enhancing governance for all

The push for deferral of ICC cases lacks merit

THE government, or a faction within it, is trying to have the International Criminal Court process on Kenya suspended with the argument that it could destabilize the country.

Letters sent to the UN Secretary-General, the President of the UN Security Council and the President of the Assembly of State Parties to the ICC warn that the Court action will result in a return to the climate of violence it is meant to cure.

The Hague has already issued summonses to six individuals its prosecutor has already publicly identified as key suspects in the violence.

Lest we forget, the ICC only came in as a last resort after the government, and Parliament, on several occasions failed to establish a local tribunal to try the suspects. In fact allies of the opponents of the local mechanism composed a rallying song: Don't be vague, it is The Hague. One wonders who they thought would be summoned to The Hague!

Belated efforts to convince the world that Kenya is reforming its Justice and Security systems to pave the way for the establishment of a credible and independent local tribunal did not convince many.

Persisting with political pressure outside the ICC courtrooms is an exercise in futility. And the arguments being advanced can only backfire because they can be interpreted as threats.

The letters posit that ICC trials present a "real and present danger" to the maintenance of peace and security.

They warn of the "potential risk to ignite violence, breakdown of law and order and result in loss of human life" and go ahead to extend the risk to "disruption of economic peace and security activities in the fragile and volatile sub-region".

It is true that the threat of punishment against the key suspects of the post-election violence comes with inherent risks in a polarized society where people have perfected the art of seeking protection from their ethnic communities whenever they are mentioned in adverse circumstances. What is most chilling about the message, however, is that it recalls our history self-fulfilling prophecies.

It is still fresh in our minds that at the beginning of the campaigns against Kanu dictatorship in 1990, President Moi ominously predicted that a multiparty system would ethnic violence. And soon after the country was on fire, literally! Youths in Rift Valley were armed to the teeth with bows and arrows and went on the rampage to rid the region of ethnic groups they were told were considered to be outsiders.

The so-called ethnic clashes spawned then were not spontaneous outbreaks but carefully plotted State-sponsored responses aimed at retaining a dictatorial one-party kleptocracy.

The infamous ethnic clashes (tribal genocide) leading up to the historic 1992 multiparty elections were repeated in all subsequent general elections as a desperate regime sought to hold on to power.

To cut the long story short, it is instructive to note that condoning violence to prove appoint will only end up putting more of the government's blue-eyed boys into deeper trouble with the ICC.

Impunity must be stamped out of Kenya, and if it will take The Hague to do it, so be it.



COMMENTARY

Biting poverty affects education in North Kenya

COMMENT

By MALACHI MOTANO

"Poverty is malnourishment. Poverty is homelessness. Poverty is inability to access medical care. Poverty is lack of an informed mind, lack of basic general knowledge and basic literacy skills. Poverty is lack of savings and inaccessibility to credit... living from hand to mouth by the day... merely existing, scraping through life, groping for a meaningful co-existence with others, including nature," Humanity United Against Poverty-Cultural link Kenya website.

SINCE Kenya attained independence in 1963, Northern Kenya has arguably remained sidelined and marginalized. The region is generally underdeveloped as compared to the rest of the country. Sixty-four percent of the inhabitants live below the poverty line. The infrastructure is pathetic, with its more than 1800km road stretching from Nairobi to Mandera. More than ninety percent of households in the province have no access to power. There is a persistent lack of water and food in the region.

"Three meals a day is a luxury" says Fatuma Hussein who ekes out a living as a milk vendor at Orahey market in Wajir town.

Fatuma who moved into town after their livestock perished in the 2005 drought feeds her family with such meager income and the predicament is the same in the entire Northern Kenya.

In most parts of region, the majority of households live in makeshift homes locally called herio made of inferior materials for roofing, flooring, and walls.

The people who mainly depend on humanitarian aid have not known other alternative source of livelihood apart from pastoralism and this has become too risky due to recurrent drought.

More than half of the country's 38.6 million people are poor, and 7.5 million of the poor live in extreme poverty. The poorest are found in the barren zones of the country, mainly in the north eastern region. One and a half million Kenyans living in arid and semi-arid lands are food insecure, resulting in acute malnutrition especially in children below the age of five years.

"Response to hunger and vulnerability through ad-hoc food relief is often very costly to deliver and has no flexibility in terms of extending family expenditure beyond food consumption. Many times, families receive food relief, sell part of it to obtain cash to meet other non-food needs," statement by Minister Elmi - ministry of northern Kenya and other arid lands.

The ministry was specifically formed to handle the myriad challenges the region is facing but little can be written home about since its inception.

"The so-called ministry of Northern Kenya and other arid lands is a whitewash, a little more than a public relation exercise to hoodwink the residents," says Bilow Kerrow an economic analyst and former Member of Parliament for Mandera Central.

A recent study by Hunger Safety

Net shows that Turkana, Marsabit, Wajir and Mandera districts which all fall under northern Kenya have the highest poverty rates of more than 80 per cent.

Northern Kenya has experienced frequent livelihood setbacks, mainly related to droughts that have contributed to losses of livestock. Livestock production is the principal means of livelihood for most households in northern Kenya.

Poverty and illiteracy are typically concurrent and are synonymous with Northern Kenya. The inhabitants who are mainly livestock keepers give less precedence to education. The official illiteracy rate in the North Eastern region is unbelievably at 92 per cent. Many people here have never had an opportunity to go to school. The few lucky ones grapple with poverty and hopelessness

"I withdrew my children from school because I could not afford to pay their school fees," says Hassan Ali a resident of Wagberi village in Wajir.

The North Eastern Province is faced with acute shortages of learning institutions and relies heavily on poorly equipped government schools. Persistent droughts have not made the grave situation simpler as nomads withdraw students from schools to cater of the livestock.

Educational enrolment, retention and performance in Northern Kenya are significantly lower than the rest of the country. For example, primary enrolment in North Eastern Province is still below 30%.

"Even as the government subsidized the cost of secondary education in Kenya the situation is still too much to bear for many here," states the district education officer, Abdi Goto.



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P.O. Box 7438-00200, Nairobi, Kenya.

Tel: 020 6001776 / 020 6001274

Email: thelink@wananchi.com

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Enhancing governance for all

EDITOR
DANIEL OTUNGE

SUB-EDITOR
FAITH MUIRURI

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
OLOO JANAK

WRITERS

MORRIS GITHENYA Central
0735855586

JOSEPH MUKUBWA Central
0724 039787

BEKADZO TONDO Coast
0728341240

PETER MUTUKU Eastern
0721 455048

BOB OMBATI Nyanza
0728 435255

OJWANG OGOCH Nyanza
0725 690223

NYAKWAR ODAWO Western
0726264153

LUKE KAPCHANGA Western
0723622136

AGGREY BUCHUNJU Western
0733 537002

JOEL JUMA Western
0723622136

LAYOUT AND DESIGN:

WALTON DESIGNS

0725 903 938

kasserahw@yahoo.com



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All correspondence and enquiries to the editor, P.O. Box 7438, 00200, Nairobi, Kenya.

Tel: 020 6001274

Telefax: 020 6001776

e-mail: thelink@wananchi.com

Slow work at Othaya hospital annoys Ngare

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE PS for Medical Services, Mrs Mary Ngare, has expressed her disappointment over the slow pace of work being done at Othaya District Hospital.

The PS who toured the facility recently was shocked to learn that the project is four months behind schedule.

The hospital is being upgraded into a referral hospital at a cost of Kshs436 million.

She therefore told Jaswan Sign Construction Company who is the contractor to quicken the ongoing work which is behind schedule by 16 weeks.

Ngare said the contractor started his work in June last year and is supposed to have completed by February 2 this year.

"I'm very disappointed to see that very little work has been done. I blame the Ministry of Public Works officials for failing to supervise the project regularly," said the PS.

Ngare said the Ministry of Works is supposed to review the works and its design so as to enable the contractor to carry on with his work which she said is behind schedule.

The PS said she would soon convene a meeting with Ministry of Public Works, Finance and Medical Services to ensure the time delayed is recovered and



Medical Services PS, Mrs. Mary Ngare, inspects the hospital accompanied by the project committee. Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa

projects completed on time.

A project committee board member Mr Githinji Wang'ondy blamed the Ministry of Public Works for the delay adding that since the construction work started it has visited the site only

once.

Wang'ondy said the officials do not attend meetings when invited and they tend to ignore them without any explanations or apologies.

Medical Services Minister

Hon Anyang Nyong'o laid the foundation stone in August last year when he toured the facility.

The Government has pumped Kshs436 million for the rehabilitation and modernization of the facility.

Gusii leaders root for stronger counties

By BOB OMBATI

GUSII leaders want the provincial administration scrapped and county governments made autonomous and provided with adequate resources to run effectively.

Even so, they feel that the lower levels of provincial administration should be retained in the new order to aid in the resolution of conflicts at the grassroots.

They told the task force on devolution led by Ken Nyaundi who is a commissioner with the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) at Nyansiongo that Provincial Commissioners and District Officers should be phased out while clan elders, chiefs, their assistants, District Commissioners and regional commissioners be retained.

Under the new constitutional dispensation, the residents suggested that the DC serves as a governor's representative at the District level, the chief as the location representative, assistants

chiefs as sub-location representatives, clan elders represent the villages while the Regional commissioners oversee their operations and be accountable to the Governor.

Borabu District's Kenya National Union of Teachers (Knut) Executive Secretary, John Matiang'I says that the administrators should be answerable to the governor and offer administrative services required at the grassroots level.

The area District Commissioner Hassan Noor said it was important to assimilate administrators in the county governments who he said are better placed to arbitrate and resolve local disputes as the judicial system alone has no capacity to solve conflicts on a day today basis.

Noor observed that police alone cannot be charged with the responsibility of enforcing law, providing security and indeed social discipline as this will amount to transforming Kenya into a police state.

The DC added that the two levels

of government will be interdependent hence the need to have organs that integrate their work, besides coordinating functions at the lowest levels.

They suggested that clan elders be paid from the exchequer like other administrators and their mandate be expanded to cover areas that foster unity.

Speakers were unanimous that administrators be referred to as county administrators under the Governor and be engaged in civic education to sensitize the public on county and government policies.

"They can assist in advising the county government on courses of administration besides offering services at the grassroots," said George Mogaka, a chief in Kisii town.

Samwel Bosire of the Abagusii culture and development council said that they can be assimilated in the county governments as officers in the civil service within the county, adding that majority of the officers should be from within the county.

Kisii mayor calls for merger of LATF, CDF

By BOB OMBATI

MEMBERS of the public in Gusii County want the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) harmonized with the proposed system of funding at the County level.

Kisii Municipal council mayor, Samwel Nyangeso, whose council missed out on Kshs250 million LATF allocation for the 2010/2011 financial year over its inability to clear statutory debts says that once the councils are scrapped or merged to fit in the new order, it is imperative that the funds are put together for transparency and accountability.

Kisii University College Principal, Prof. John Akama echoes Nyangeso's sentiments, saying CDF, LATF, Roads funds and other monies channeled through the districts, councils and constituencies should be harmonized and sent to the counties to develop them.

Akama told a task force on devolution at Gusii county council that all public funds should be wired to the counties and managed by transparent and responsible professionals.

Speaker after speaker told the task force headed by the Interim Independent Electoral Commission commissioner, Ken Nyaundi said that some councilors misused public funds and falsified reports to include projects which were nonexistent.

They accused the councilors of taking credit on projects financed by Non Governmental Organizations in their respective wards and diverting funds into private use.

Residents pick Busia as county headquarter

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

BUSIA town will now serve as the county headquarters following a unanimous resolve by residents during a forum organized by the Ministry of Public Works.

The forum was attended by stakeholders drawn from Nambale, Samia, Butula, Teso North, Bunyala and Teso South districts that form the county.

Among other sites that had been proposed by the stakeholders for the establishment of the county offices included Matayos and Bumala but Busia town

was unanimously endorsed owing to its central position and better infrastructure in the region.

The residents recommended that the County Assembly, County offices and the Governor's residence be put up at the Busia Agricultural Training Centre [ATC], Busia Airstrip, Posta ground and a parcel of land belonging to the forestry department respectively.

The stakeholders at the same time said Busia has a strong revenue base generated from single business permits, market fees, property rates, Bus park and

vehicle parking as well as cess revenues among others. Local authorities in the region which include Busia County Council, Municipal council of Busia, Nambale Town Council, Funyula Town Council and Port Victoria Town Council are considered economically viable.

The forum was attended by Labour Assistant minister who is also Amagoro Member of Parliament (MP) Sospeter Ojaamong, Sports minister Dr Paul Otuoama who is also Funyula Member of Parliament and Busia DC Mwiandi Gitonga among others.

KACC pitches tent in Nyeri lands office

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) has dispatched its officers to investigate numerous corruption allegations at the Nyeri lands offices.

The team of five researchers has interrogated the Nyeri District Land Adjudication and Settlement Officer Mr Japheth M'Nkanata and District Land Registrar Mrs Agnes Kuria among other officers.

The team said the objective of the visit was to assess the extent of corruption and its impact on the service delivery in the lands sector.

"Specifically, the visit sought to establish factors that hinder the access to quality and timely provision of services in the sector. We also wanted to determine the nature, extent, magnitude and causes of corruption in the sector," said a research officer who did not want to be named.

The officer added that they also wanted to assess the effectiveness of existing policies and regulations in preventing corruption within the sector and also assess the effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures and other on-going reforms in addressing



KACC research team leaves Nyeri Land offices after visiting the offices recently Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

corruption in the sector.

Allegations of corruption cases in the offices have been rampant in the recent past with members of the public sending up to Kshs20,000 using the Mpesa

services to the officers in order to get prompt services at the offices.

Other allegations include issuing of multiple title deeds for same plots, non-issuance of title deeds, interference from corrupt

and bogus land-buying brokers.

Futa Magendo Action Network coordinator Mr Maina Mugo complained that some land documents still bear signatures of people who died many years ago blaming it on the Land registrars in the offices.

"We have had many cases where people who died many years ago still append their signatures in the current documents in glaring cases of corruption and so some people are left in trouble. There are many bribes involving stamp duty and the Government is losing a lot of tax and also issues of illegal lands transfer are many here," said the coordinator.

Some staffs have also overstayed in this office an issue which has led to poor services.

The researchers said after the visit, the data collected will be processed so that the commission can act.

However, while addressing the press later, the local lands Settlement Officer and the District Land Officer vehemently denied that there are corruption cases in the offices.

This was the first visit in the area by the KACC team.



Nyeri district Land Adjudication and Settlement Officer Mr Japheth M'Nkanata (left) and District Land Registrar Mrs Agnes Kuria speaking to the media later where they denied corruption allegations. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

Phase out provincial administration —Kilifi leaders

By BEKADZO TONDO

KILIFI County leaders have supported proposals to phase out the provincial administration in line with the new constitution.

The leaders told a Task Force on Devolved Government sitting at Kilifi County hall that the provincial administration has to be restructured if the county governments are to run effectively.

A member of Kilifi County Leaders Assembly (KICOLA) Mr. Peter Ponda said the role of the P.Cs, D.Cs and D.Os should be relegated to the chiefs' and the village elders in collaboration with the executive arm of the county government.

Another member of the assembly Mr. Ken Chonga proposed that the county governments mandate be expanded to include the land adjudication process.

Mr. Chonga said this will help address the land grabbing menace that had been perfected by influential people in the country.

Speaking to the team led by Mr. Khamisi Mboga, Mr. Chonga said a board to be in charge of land allocation needs to be formed at the county level to oversee the land allocation process.

He said establishment of the land board at the county levels will enable the officials to identify genuine landless people with a view to resettling them.

Former Bahari MP Mr. John Safari Mumba said the services of the public service commission should be decentralized to oversee the recruiting and sacking of county workers.

The leaders spoke even as it emerged that they had failed to agree on the location of the proposed County.

Leaders at Kaloleni want the County located at the Kilifi district headquarters due its rich historical background. They also argued that Kilifi was the centrally placed and it should remain the headquarters.

But leaders in Malindi district are opposed to the suggestion and want Malindi District to become the headquarters of Kilifi County which has the necessary infrastructure for the county government.

Unicef to help improve water supply in western

By TITUS MAERO

THE United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has re-affirmed its commitment to partner with the Lake Victoria Water Services Board (LVWSB) in improving water services infrastructure in the western region.

The UNICEF Kisumu Office Programme Officer, Mrs Margaret Gwada, said the organization was working closely with the LVWSB to replace old infrastructure to improve distribution of water in the re-

gion

Gwada said lack of efficient water services in urban and rural areas impacts negatively on the living standards of the people and hampers many development activities.

Speaking at the Kakamega Golf Hotel during the LVWSB Annual Stakeholders meeting, the official said UNICEF would continue working in partnership with organizations involved in the water sector in order to make the product accessible to the people especial those in informal settlements

in urban areas.

She said such water programmes had been initiated to reduce the distance of water points which pose a challenge particularly to women and children whom, she said, bear the greatest responsibility of fetching water.

"Most time is spent on fetching water hence compromising the girl's education and time to do other productive activities," Gwada pointed out adding that inadequate water distribution is responsible for the many diseases which af-

fect people in areas facing inadequate water supply.

Gwada said the quality of water had deteriorated over time due to a number of factors such as increased industrialization noting that in most cases effluents and chemical waste is discharged directly into water bodies.

She further said poor planning in urban areas coupled with the proliferation of unplanned settlements is a big challenge to the efforts to provide safe and clean water by the water providers.



Museveni was wrong in defending Gaddafi

THERE is an odious smell in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is coming from the mouth of Uganda President Yoweri Museveni.

The president's assertion that the West has a double standard in attacking Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi is ludicrous. Museveni claims that America and its European allies are only interested in democracy when oil is at stake. He argues there is no interest in places like Somalia.

Does not Museveni see the brutal slaughter of the thousands of Libyan citizens at the hands of Colonel Gaddafi? Does he not see the large American military flotillas off of the shores of Somalia to keep the shipping lanes free of pirates.

Museveni has served for two decades and is a friend of Gaddafi. It's true that he's brought a sense of peacefulness to the red-coloured hills around Kampala.

But peace has been purchased with a gun, not a system of justice. Museveni is, in the view of many, a dictator for life.

While there is plenty of oil to fuel Museveni's misconstrued conclusions about America on Iraq, there is little in Afghanistan to back up his argument.

Forgotten, too, by Museveni, is the massive amount of humanitarian aid that flows into his country from Western Europe and America to fight everything from famine to Aids. There are student groups on virtually every college campus in America that work daily to care for Ugandan war orphans.

Museveni sees the world through old eyes. In his world, dictators are proposed up or overthrown depending upon their alliances with the West or other countries and forces. In this world, they can blow up civilian aircraft, like Gaddafi has done, and hide in their countries for decades from justice.

But there is a new world order emerging, which will be determined more by citizens and the tenants of democracy. It is a place with little room for the brutality of terrorists and dictators who masquerade as legitimate rulers.

America is changing, too. The main manufacturing activity in the US remains petroleum production. But a rapid transformation is happening. There are more electric hybrid cars than ever on the road.

Too, there is change in America's foreign policy. We have a plan to end our involvement in Afghanistan and have left Iraq. We are making strict rules about what we'll do in the future. Witness the argument this week among the Europeans about President Obama's demand that America take a secondary role in Libya.

One thing will continue. America encourage freedom abroad, and not sit idly — when others are being harmed in great numbers. Who knows what would have happened if we had this policy when the Rwandan genocide had occurred?

There will also continue to be concern with rulers like Museveni. If he's right and the West only cares about countries that sit upon large deposits of oil, he should be wary.

Uganda has a massive amount of oil. But it's more likely that he'll find out from his own citizens that his time is up.

Via e-mail,
letters9876@gmail.com

Political procrastination may prove to be costlier than The Hague option

FEW hear the horses coming. In the face of the unexpected, however, a virtue so in politics must be capable of improvisation. But improvisation may not stave off failure.

Procrastination is even costlier. The game usually ends in tears. That's the absurdity of the six on trial at The Hague.

When three years down one recalls the turmoil that led to this comedy, one is shocked - indeed stunned - by the manner in which some of the six are still swaggering about. Why run scared. If you are innocent? Now we know what scares politicians the most: jails and bullets.

Indeed, our politicians work in strange ways even at the best of times. Kenya's politics is once again a cesspool, and the political stage is a comedy, peopled by clowns. It has grown so deplorably low that it has lost the power to shock. New levels of cynicism are reached by the day.

Our politicians (like evangelists) like to talk, not because they have anything resourceful to say, but for the mere love of speech whose unrestricted volubility and wantonness is the chief cause of numberless vexations.

Talking should be an exercise of the brain rather than of the tongue.

Some among them have fallen prey to a genetic fallacy - to believe that an account of something's origin is a full account of its nature. Others betray their



Parliament in session. Now there are fraudsters, cheats, rapists and perhaps murderers in the House. Photo/File

chief falling - intolerance. It is surprising how paleolithic tribalistic instincts are still firmly installed in our politicians. They have too much arrogance and stray talk. They speak with contempt for the public - citizens they seem to take for idiots.

Change is needed, not just in leadership but also in our perception of inter-ethnic relationships. There is nothing more to be proud of in inheriting great ability, than a great estate. The only credit in either case is if they are used well.

As far as the nation's future is concerned, the option is The Hague: it may mean more work for lawyers for now, but it cer-

tainly means much less for soldiers in future.

What State House is pursuing resembles a story a colleague from a former Soviet country once told me, on how police once dealt with alarming rates of train robberies in a notorious region.

Statistics had indicated that almost all robberies occurred in the last carriage and that, when the train slowed at a curve, the robbers would jump off and make a getaway.

A meeting of top law enforcement officers came up with a unique solution to the problem. "We have decided to get rid of the last carriage in the train".

Who does not know that our legal system long became a joke, unable to convict anybody resourceful? And that reform is an ongoing word for deceit?

The decision facing us as a nation is paradigmatic of political judgement at its most difficult. There are no quick fixes around justice; we lost the opportunity.

At such times, it has been my view that it is the intellectuals who should provide alternative conceptions of the meaning and purpose of a nation.

Bystanders proverbially see most of the game; and you can notice what is going on just as well, if not better, when you are not noticed yourself.

Intellectuals have a responsibility to demystify power and media deceptions. "History," the French philosopher Julien Benda once remarked, "is made from shreds of justice that the intellectual has torn from the politicians".

The challenge is to keep people out of government who have no business being in it. Many laws need changing, laws that will work to root out criminals from politics.

The Constitution may have been the least of our problems. For our system has created huge incentives for criminals to enter politics.

Allegations in Parliament about drug trafficking are enough to convince us that that dirty money is needed in hordes and criminals have a huge comparable advantage in politics.

Now we have fraudsters, cheats, rapists and perhaps murderers populating the seats of Parliament and local councils.

Dr. Kalambuka teaches physics at the University of Nairobi.

Angeyo H. Kalambuka,
Via e-mail



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

Write to:
The Editor,
The Link,
P.O. Box 7438 - 00200, Nairobi.
E-mail: thelink@wananchi.com

Nepotism ripe in local councils — MPs

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

LOCAL Authorities in the country are riddled with nepotism, according to the Parliamentary Committee on Local Authorities and Funds Accounts.

While visiting Nyeri County, the committee said it was unfortunate that some of the councils have members of one family working in the same council.

Wundanyi MP Thomas Mwaideghu, who chairs the Committee, said for example that in Limuru County Council out of the six out of ten 10 members of staff are close relatives.

The committee which visited projects of Nyeri Municipal

Council and Nyeri County Council at the same time warned clerks and treasurers of the councils that they must ensure fairness in the local authorities.

The committee also noted that some councils did not keep proper records and books of accounts have not been audited for a long time.

"Poor recording, misappropriation of funds by many local authorities are some of challenges facing the various councils. This, we are taking very serious," he said.

He was accompanied by the Vice chairman of the committee who is also the MP for Ainamoi Mr Benjamin Lang'at and Kieni

MP Mr Nemesysu Warugongo.

Mwaideghu said that councils are having a field day when it comes to record keeping saying proper accountability must be adhered to.

He said that most councils had misappropriated LATF funds while others had diverted funds to projects that were never proposed in Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) meetings and warned that stern action will be taken against those found culpable.

He said the committee plans to push for regular transfers of chief officers to avoid cases where they form cartels to fleece councils of funds.

"We shall also not tolerate corrupt cartels in the councils that resisted transfers of chief officers in order to perpetuate corruption," said the chairman.

He said in Western Kenya, a council was given funds to buy shovels but they were never bought.

The committee which comprises of 11 members is a watchdog committee established by the New Standing Orders two years ago to examine the accounts of local authorities and other devolved funds.

The committee examines all areas of expenditure in Local Authorities and how efficiently the devolved funds are utilized.

State owes Taveta millions in unpaid water bills

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

GOVERNMENT institutions and offices owe Taita Taveta Water and Sewerage Company millions of shillings in unpaid water bills.

The chairman of Taveta Town Council, Councillor Kihara Hussein, said the Manyani Government Prison had an accumulated bill of Kshs.23 million followed by police stations and hospitals.

In a meeting convened for political leaders and Coast Water Services Board recently, the chairman said the body could not disconnect water in Government offices such as hospitals and prisons.

The Voi Mayor Councillor Hope Sanguli Mwakio told Coast Water Services Board to demand that departments pay up the pending bills so as to allow TAVEVO offer improved services to its consumers.

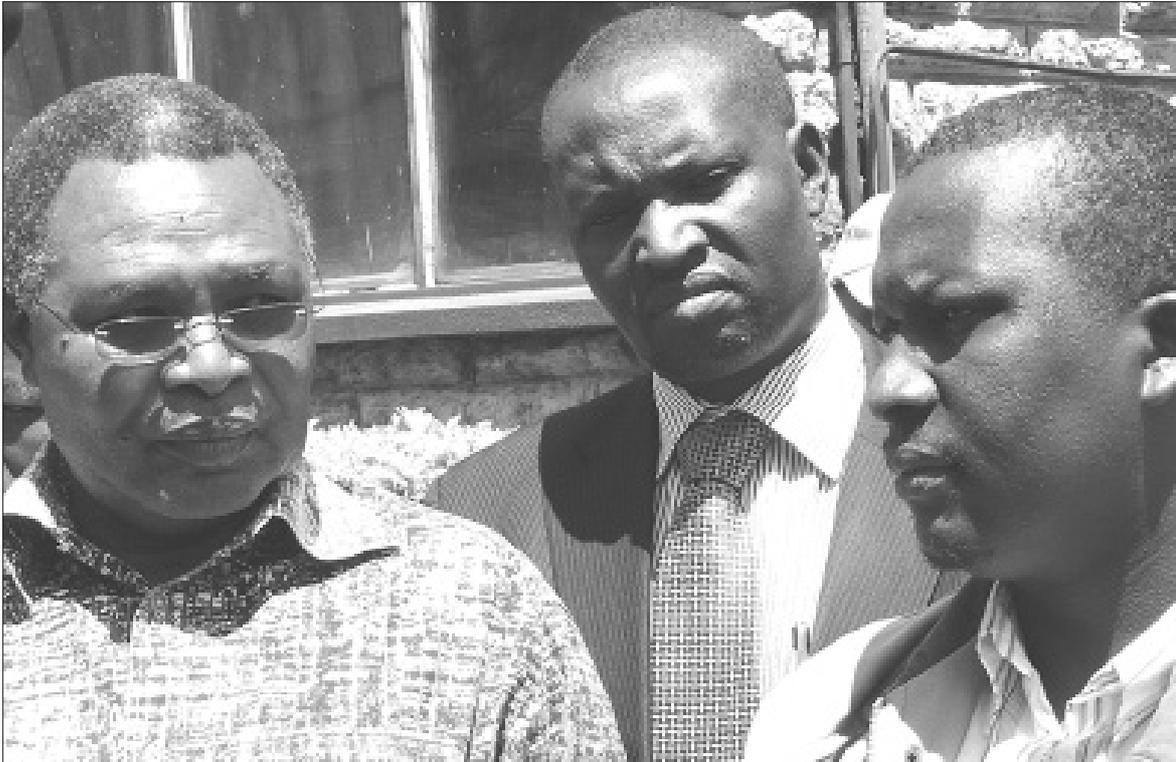
The Technical Services Manager of Coast Water Services Board, Mr. Chihanya Dubi Donda, said the water systems were dilapidated and called for their immediate overhaul.

The official said though TAVEVO had a total of 9,290 connections, only 5,600 were active. He said while unaccountable water was at 63 per cent, revenue collected by the water company was at 55 per cent.

Voi MP Dan Mwazo has asked the two boards to hold regular meetings to streamline operations and ensure consumers get quality service.

He proposed for alternative water sources instead of relying entirely on Mzima Springs water and asked the three authorities to educate the public on the importance of harvesting rainy water and construction of dams along major rivers.

The assistant minister for Education, Mr. Calista Mwatela, who is also Mwatate MP, said the four legislators will campaign for the inclusion of the county in the list of areas affected by drought for Government intervention.



From left chairman of the parliamentary committee who is also the MP for Wundanyi Mr Thomas Mwaideghu, Kieni MP Mr Nemesysu Warugongo and the Vice chairman of the committee who is also the MP for Ainamoi Benjamin Lang'at when they visited Nyeri County Council offices recently. Photo/ Joseph Mukubwa

The future of Kilifi fish project in doubt

By BEKADZO TONDO

THE future of the government sponsored fish farming programme under Economic Stimulus Programme in Kilifi County hangs in the balance due to lack of reliable water sources.

Kilifi District Fisheries Officer Mr. Nemwell Onchonga laments that the prolonged drought period has resulted in the drying up of dams, water pans and seasonal rivers thus making it difficult to get reliable water sources to fill the ponds.

Mr. Onchonga said the government through the

ministry of fisheries has released Kshs7.5 million to construct fish ponds in Magarini, Malindi, Bahari, Ganze, Kaloleni, and Rabai constituencies in the County.

He said 300 fish ponds are supposed to be established in each constituency by end of June this year and expressed fears that the objective may not be met if a solution on water is not found.

"We have received many applications from farmers, schools and groups who are ready to set up ponds in their respective areas but we do not have reliable water sources," said Mr. Onchonga.

Speaking to The Link in Kilifi town Mr. Onchonga said a feasibility study carried out recently revealed that there are no reliable water sources to support the programme.

He said though some farmers' have opted for tap water, the option is not viable due to the high costs involved.

The officer however said his office was ready to put up fish ponds in areas where water is not a problem.

At the beginning of last month, the minister for Fisheries Development Mr. Amason Kingi officially launched the fish farming project earmarked for Kilifi County.

Mr. Kingi urged residents to fully exploit the opportunity in order to address food shortages occasioned by perennial drought.

Bahari Mp Benedict Fondo Gunda now wants the government to defer the implementation process until the expected rainy season takes off.

MP Gunda says the funds should not be returned to treasury at the expiry of the implementation period set for June this year since the project has not taken off due to the hitch that is beyond their control.

KWS to fence Kitui park

By BONIFACE MULU

THE Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has embarked on the fencing of the South Kitui National Game Park Reserve.

The project set to cost more than Kshs100 million is being financed by the International Fund for the Animal Welfare (IFAW).

The Kitui County Council Clerk, Mr. George Wambua said the fencing project will help end illegal activities in the park and manage human wildlife conflict.

The clerk who spoke during a full council meeting said that as the fencing and resource mapping get underway, many people especially those herding their livestock, will be removed from the game reserve alongside those involved in charcoal burning.

He said the game reserve if well maintained can generate enough revenue to the residents. "We are encouraging investors to put up lodges at the game reserve as we expect tourists to start visiting the park," he said.

Nyeri fish ponds dry up

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

SEVERAL fish ponds in Nyeri Town constituency which a high powered delegation toured almost three months ago have dried up.

Mid January this year, Special Programmes Minister Esther Murugi led Fisheries PS Micheni Ntiba to tour some of the fish ponds in her Nyeri Town Constituency.

By that time, the fish ponds were full of water and some had fish but now some of the ponds have dried up after the visit.

Some of the affected ponds are at Rurigi-ini area in Nyeri town where the Minister, PS and area DC Mary Muchene toured. The ponds which appeared to have been rehabilitated ahead of the PS tour were full of water but have since dried up.

The ponds are now dried land and one can comfortably walk through the ponds which were full of water barely three months ago. It was not clear whether there were some fish which perished when the ponds dried up.

This development has brought to the fore, questions as to how the billions of shillings disbursed by Government through the Economic Stimulus Programme to build 300 fish ponds per constituency have been utilized.

Nyeri Town constituency is among the 140 constituencies which benefited in the Kshs 1.12 billion disbursed during the 2009/2010 financial year to build 200 fish ponds.

Some additional funds were later



From left Nyeri Central DC J. Muchene, Special Programmes Minister Esther Murugi and Fisheries PS Micheni Ntiba when they toured fish ponds in Nyeri Town constituency. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

pumped in during this financial year to oversee the construction of 100 other fish ponds.

Kshs 22 billion was released by the government two years ago through the programme which was largely aimed at boosting the country's economy through identifying key sectors that

were under-performing with a view to reviving them.

Fish farming was a key intervention mechanism. Under the programme, the government was to spend Kshs 1.12 billion to construct fish ponds in over 140 constituencies to boost fish production in the country

in the face of dwindling stock.

But things are now taking a negative turn.

Efforts to contact Nyeri town MP were fruitless as she could not be reached on her mobile phone and the fisheries officials in the Ministry were said to be out of the office.

Lumumba warns of misuse of devolved funds

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

THE Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) Director Prof. Patrick Lumumba has expressed fears that the new devolved governance structures may be turned into dens of corruption.

Prof. Lumumba says that the enormous resources set for disbursement once the devolved structures become operational risk being diverted for private use if proper checks and balances are not put in place. He notes with fear that the county Government leaders may take advantage of existing loopholes to loot the cash with impunity.

The KACC director wants Kenyans in respective counties to be vigilant and custodians of their devolved resources.

Prof. Lumumba, however, discloses that KACC will open more offices in the 47 counties to deter losses that may accrue from such acts. "I think if we open more offices, the fear factor may reduce corruption in the counties drastically," the KACC director says.

He asserts that KACC being a custodian of leadership and integrity will be always on the look-out to safeguard public resources in all the counties.

Prof. Lumumba, notes with regrets that some chief officers were secretly disposing off assets in their respective local authorities as their future is uncertain in the new dispensation.

Prof. Lumumba reveals that he has already written to the Ministry of Local Government asking relevant organs to take stock of properties owned by all the 175 councils in the country.

The anti-graft agency director says that the devolved governance structures will help accelerate equitable and rapid development if efficiently managed.

Prof. Lumumba made the remarks recently at Hotel Tourist Bungoma, in Bungoma County during a workshop on the management of Bungoma County.

The workshop was organized by Bungoma professional led by Kenya Residents Alliance director Mr. Stephen Mutoro and former commissioner with the defunct electoral commission of Kenya (ECK) ambassador Jack Tumwa.

Speaking at the same workshop former trade minister Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi underscored the need to identify programmes that may uplift communities that have been marginalized in the past. It is imperative to note that in Bungoma County, the Bukusu ethnic community is predominant while the Sabao, Tachoni, Iteso and Batura are the marginalized communities.

Bungoma County comprises of seven districts namely Bungoma North, Bungoma South, Mt. Elgon, Bungoma East, Bungoma West, Bungoma Central and Bumula. The county currently has six constituencies but will have three (3) more after the next general elections.

Jostling for the senator and Governor seats has begun in earnest with the Bungoma Citizens watch lobby group calling for fair and balanced distribution of the five elective seats in the county.

The lobby group proposes that the senator should come from Bungoma North, Governor from Bungoma South, deputy governor Mt. Elgon, speaker from Bungoma East and Women leader from Bungoma West.

Consequently, the lobby group is asking residents from the districts concerned to identify people with good track records and who are team players for the posts.

Former cabinet minister Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi from Bungoma North has declared interest in the senator seat while Kanduyi MP Alfred Khang'ati, former MPs Maurice Makhanu and John Munyasia and a Media Consultant Wabwoba Walinywa from Bungoma plan to contest for the governor's seat.

Leaders agree on Kisii as county headquarters

By BOB OMBATI

GUSII leaders have unanimously endorsed Kisii town as the most appropriate location for the county headquarters and asked the government to avail funds to build the county assembly, offices and the Governor's residence.

The leaders, who assembled at Gusii Institute of Technology (GIT) during a leaders meeting recently urged the government to repossess all grabbed land in the town to create room for the County's growth and expansion.

Led by Public Works minis-

ter Chris Obure, the leaders who included Members of Parliament resolved to come up with a strategic plan for the county to hasten the proposed development plan ahead of the 2012 general elections.

Obure told the leaders to shelve their leadership ambitions to allow the government put structures in place to make the county operational, stressing jostling for slots in the county would generate a lot of heat and delay its construction.

During the meeting attended by councilors and opinion leaders from the seven constituencies that make up the county, the lead-

ers agreed to hive off part of Kisii branch Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) land for the building of the county parliament, offices and the governor's residence.

The MPs who included Dr. Robert Monda (Nyaribari Chache), Richard Onyonka (Kitutu Chache), Charles Onyanacha (Bonchari) and George Nyamweya (nominated, PNU) urged local and foreign investors to invest in the county to fast track its socio-economic development.

The Mps called on the investors to set up industries in the county to help create employment for the locals and uplift their liv-

ing standards, saying the area is endowed with untapped and underutilized resources.

Obure, who conveyed a message from Prof Sam Ongeri challenged the residents to tap on the existing resources and invest in areas with underlying potential for growth.

The minister noted that poverty was a major hindrance to development in the midst of diminishing land area and challenged local people to diversify their economic activities by engaging in the production of both food and cash crops to realize meaningful growth.

Give more to poor counties —state told

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE Government has been urged to consider allocating more resources to boost growth in Counties that are less endowed with resources.

The areas include North Eastern and flood prone regions in Nyanza and Budalangi in Nyanza and Western regions respectively.

Members of the public told a Task Force on Devolution at Port Victoria, Bunyala District, in Busia County, that apart from suffering from inequitable distribution of resources, marginalized areas require preferential treatment.

The Task Force Commission-

ers, Mr. Kibisu Kabatesi and Dr. Nehemiah Ng'eno, were informed that employment at the Counties should not be based on tribal considerations.

The team was told the bulk of 15 per cent of national budgetary disbursement should be directed towards the development of marginalized and rural areas.

But the Commissioners told the residents that the County governments only control 15 per cent of the national budget, while 85 per cent of the allocation is determined by the central Government in Nairobi.

The commissioners were told

that 15 per cent of the funds should be distributed to regions based on the needs of respective Counties.

"Depending on prioritized needs, the 15 per cent should go towards funding strategic projects like industries, agricultural activities and health projects," members of the public were told.

The speakers included Councillor Steven Osogo, Major (rtd) Bonny Mahaga, Oscar Mutere, Gaudensia Rukia, John Bocha and Joseph Wandera.

Mr. Kabatesi asked Abanyala community to ensure they elect into leadership people from diverse background.

"Respective governors and senators should take up the responsibility of ensuring such regular briefs in their calendar on what goes on in the national and County Governments for wananchi to keep abreast of whatever developments taking place in their areas," they said.

The forum was also attended by the Bunyala District Commissioner Mr. John Korir.

The DC told the national task force chaired by Commissioner, Mr. Mutakha Kangu to ensure a board is instituted to help streamline the formation of respective County governments.

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By
**HANNA
CARLSSON**

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

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

Grassroots peace efforts bear fruits

THE month of March was preoccupied by divisional community leaders' meeting that was attended by about 20 leaders. It was a follow up to last year's meetings that were held in July and August just before the referendum.

Partnership for Peace project held 24 meetings in Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley. The objectives of the meetings were to exchange experiences and to discuss necessary adaptations of the peace-building and cooperation activities in line with the reality in the different areas. One key lesson I learnt after attending the meetings in each province is, if you want to achieve lasting peace, do not talk only to your friends, talk to your enemies too.

The results of the meetings will be published in the next edition of this supplement and on our newly developed website:

MANAGER'S COLUMN



By **JANE MURUTU**

www.partnershipforpeace.eu.

It's exciting to know that people at the grassroots levels have their

homegrown solutions to each and every conflict facing them. Essentially, participants appealed to the government and politicians to tone down the rhetoric and instead work towards common goals, such as justice, peace and education.

As an antidote to provocative narratives passed on from one generation to the next, all participants agreed in principle that raising children properly and teaching them to respect and love their neighbors would play a great role towards eradicating negative ethnicity. As the saying goes, "a gram of prevention is

worth a kilogramme of cure."

It was agreed that parents should advocate for Youth development strategies that can help them into responsible adults irrespective of ethnic backgrounds. For instance, building polytechnics at every village to cater for those who didn't make it to secondary schools in would be ideal.

During the Kolongolo meeting in Trans Nzoia County, we had nine reformed warriors under the auspices of Tegla Leroupe Foundation. The former warriors who had surrendered their weapons asked for support to get alternative ways of earning a living. They challenged participants to keep holding onto peace. See their story in this issue. It is imperative to note that weapons are the tools of violence that all decent people should detest.

While the coordination office of the Partnership for Peace project is planning the national policy dialogue meeting which will take

place in April, we want to encourage our readers to visit our newly launched website www.partnershipforpeace.eu. The website is loaded with resource materials, reports from our activities, all the former magazines of Partnership for Peace and much more. If you have any stories or reports that you want to be accessed by the general public, please email them to us and we will publish them on the website. Together we can develop the website to a useful tool in peacebuilding and conflict management.

Finally, it is important to note that finding peace is not just about learning how to obtain it but also learning how to hold onto it without slipping back to angry ways. Let us all follow the road taken by the reformed warriors. Remember, peace is the highest value.

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

Partnership for Peace launches new website

AS part of the Partnership for Peace Project's aim of strengthening non-state actors' capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts, a website has been created which contains first and foremost key resources from the project. The new website (www.partnershipforpeace.eu) is intended for use by individual members of the public, the CSO network partners, as well as local authorities and ethnic communities, who are interested in the work of peacebuild-



By **HANNA CARLSSON**

ing. The website will be developed into a major knowledge and resource tool of the action by uploading the results

of the conflict pattern study, the training curricula and collection of case-studies, the monthly editions of the peace-building publication and reports from all introduction, awareness building, capacity building and coordination activities of the project. Also material related to the objective of the project, Peaceful communities in Kenya, from other actors and stakeholders will be uploaded.

On the homepage of Partnership for Peace website the user can find all navigational links for the entire website. The logos along the banner at the top of the page are links to the corresponding organisation's page. These are either external, in the case of the EU and KAS., or to sub-domains of the main website, which open in the same window. These can also be found along the left-side menu (as indicated by the textbox and arrow. At the top of the left-side menu are links to a page containing upcoming activities which the project is undertak-

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission. The Partnership for Peace Project is responsible for the views reflected in this supplement.

Conflict situation in Kuria West District

BY MALACHI MOTANO

THE government of Kenya must boost the capacity of the Provincial Administration in Kuria to safeguard the provision of security for people's property, an independent and objective assessment of the conflict situation in Kuria West District recommends.

That the government must also resolve Administrative & Political boundary disputes at the County, Constituency, Inter-District, Division, and Location, also work with the community and other stakeholders to ensure that a proper way sharing communal resources is in place, and must also recognize and empower Traditional Authority Systems to be effective e.g. Non Conventional Courts, Peace Initiatives at [DPC, LPC, SLPC] Levels.

This, according to the assessment must be done in line with these Peace Committees at different levels be empowered through capacity building and funding for implementation of peace programs and Investigate/Prosecute Politicians who incite people to cause havoc disrupting Peace Initiatives.

The mission/assessment team undertook the assessment mainly through open forums with key informants from the community leaders, government officials, individuals, politicians, opinion leaders, Women, Youths, Religious Leaders, and Professionals. Focused individuals and group discussion also used to gather information covering the conflict.

Through its formal and informal



Taking the cattle out for the day to graze is an important task. Taking shifts throughout the week, boys act as both herdsmen and guards. Solomon Maluk (left), 18, with a loaded AK-47 is ready for both his duties. Protection is necessary, as cattle-rustling is common. As Solomon cocks his AK-47 he says: "Being a guard is my favorite job"

—Photo/Malachi Motano

interventions with the community also managed to collect views from the people, though limited a number of secondary sources of information are used in this report on information concerning the history of the District and its Social, Geographical, Economical and Political activities that that result to the current conflict.

Currently, at least Peace is prevailing though tension is still high in areas such as Isebania [Bugumbe / Bukira], Nyamaharaga [Kenya/Tanzania boarder], Kombe, Bugumbe

North/Bukira North, Kehancha, and Bugumbe central, Sagegi, Richota, Ngochoni and Karamu.

Since the conflict begun, over 50 people have been killed and several displaced, four home made arms have been recovered and G3 original gun returned, provincial Administration and/DPC has relatively calmed the situation, and in consultation with stakeholders in Peace Building and Conflict Management has decided to employ traditional mechanism of handling crime.

According to the assessment, a deep and intense polarization has occurred along ethnic lines, people are demanding heavy presence of government in the District in terms of security, and there are still unresolved issues that could trigger the conflict i.e. Compensation of lost livestock, human life, and Administrative Boundaries. Quite a big number of homesteads are affected.

Causes of conflicts: Ethnic rivalry, cultural identity, and fight for supremacy are the main causes of the conflict. Also politics incitement, Hate speech, and Unequal distribution of resources e.g. CDF, CBF, LATF, Administrative & Political Boundaries, access to opportunities like education employment: Politicians are already eyeing 2012 elections.

Marginalization by Central Government, NGOs, Development Agencies, Local Leaders and Economic Disempowerment and Cross boarder infiltration by thugs and criminals from Tanzania, Policy gaps in land allocation, Utilization and Succession, Resource Management, Peace Building Conflict Management, Weakening of the traditional peace institutions leaving a vacuum that has not been filled by the weak formal systems according to the report are also contribute to cases of conflicts in the area;

Other factors accelerating conflicts in the area include the retrogressive Cultural practices; Cattle rustling, Human killing to chop private parts for use in rituals, Human trafficking as an economic activity & FGM and availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons with ease.

The chilling story of Pokot warriors

BY JANE MURUTU

"IT was on November 20th July 2008 a day still lingering in my mind. Jovial as usual I had arranged for a raid at the nearby Karamoja community with my fellow warriors..." starts the reformed warrior while narrating his life story as a warrior.

Today he has turned away from engaging in raids and is now engaging in constructive livelihood production activities, sports as well as taking front role in peacemaking process through what is popularly referred to as 'warrior to warrior peace building activities'. Together with his friends they have formed the reformed war-

rior group which to help bring peace to their communities.

Warriors or so called Morans are the frontline executors of violence during cattle rustling. The act of cattle rustling is common practice in arid and semi arid lands (ASAL) and particularly in West Pokot, it serves a wide spectrum of purposes namely revenge, dowry, or heroic gesture or "sapan".

Isolated cases of cattle raids are also prevalent and these are executed by individuals who have commercialized cattle rustling. The predisposing factors that make the morans engage themselves in the raids include unemployment and therefore measures aimed at providing them with alterna-

tive livelihoods would help deter them from participating in the raids. Cattle rustling are traditionally sanctioned by traditional religious leaders so called Laibons or seers in the pastoral communities.

One warrior who got reformed in 2009, name withheld on request, testified that he was in the company of fifteen warriors and seven of them were killed in a single attack in Karamoja, Uganda, at a place called Lorenged-wat.

He also said that on another occasion they went for a raid in Turkana and in the mid way, during the night, before arriving at the spot of the raid something happened which confused

the warriors and they thought they were being attacked by their enemy and, therefore, they started shooting at each other.

Four of his colleagues died among many others. Thereafter, they decided to respond to the call by the friendly Assistant Chief Alany, that they should abandon their warrior hood and surrender their guns to the local District Commissioner North Pokot Mr. Motari. To date they are 129 reformed warriors. Since then they have decided to join adult education classes and business. SIKOM, which translated in pokot language as "coming together

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Partnership for Peace launches new website

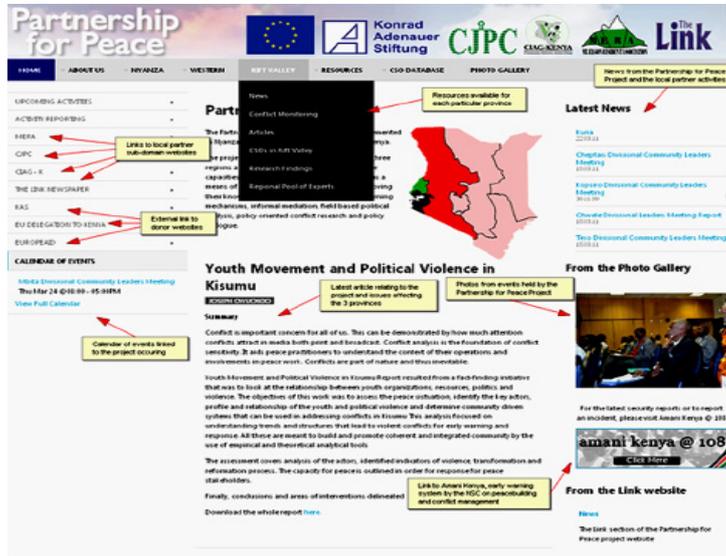
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ing, as well as one's which have already passed. At the bottom of the left-side menu is a link to the calendar where the user can find upcoming events by the month or year.

The main navigational menu along the top of the homepage gives the user access to all resources which the Partnership for Peace has. These are divided by relevant province. There is also a tab labelled 'Resources' which gives access to all other resources relating to the project as a whole.

A slideshow of photos appear on the right-hand side of the homepage, and the full gallery can be accessed by clicking on the photo. Above this is a 'Latest News' component which contains headline news from the project, clicking on which will take the user to the full article.

These articles can also be



Outline of the website developed by Ms. Hannah Clifford, intern at KAS

viewed by using the drop-down menu for the relevant province along the main menu bar, and se-

lecting 'News'. Below the photo component is a link for 'Amani Kenya 180', which takes the user to an

external website for the National Steering Committee for Peace-building and Conflict Management. Here the user can report incidences of tensions or be updated on conflicts around in the country. There is also a newspaper monitor which gives the latest news reports about sources of conflicts, tension, peace-building initiatives among others.

At the bottom of the right-hand column is a link to the Link Newspaper sub-domain. In the centre of the homepage is a short introduction to the project. Below this appears the most recent article written by one of the partner CSOs.

The Partnership for Peace project hopes that this resource website will be easily accessible for all positive peace-forces in Kenya and elsewhere.

The writer is the International Project Manager of the Partnership for Peace project.

The chilling story of Pokot warriors

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for a purpose" peace network, a CSO member in our partnership for Peace project supported them with food-stuffs and money to initiate alternative livelihoods.

Another reformed warrior from West Pokot who sought anonymity said, "It was on November 20th July 2008 a day which will be lingering in my mind. Jovial as usual I had arranged for a raid at the nearby Karamoja community with my fellow warriors. The night before the raid I had laid down all the required weapons, my plans were well organized and all the prescribed ritual was performed. As a commander every warrior was to report on the evening a day before the raid. None of them missed the call. And I laid bare all my plans to them. As the sun set we started our journey to the planned village, all my warriors were well armed, we reached our destination by 8:00 pm and we successfully accomplished the mission. On return we organized another one as before, it was well prepared but all was not well.

From the first raid which was successful I became a wanted person in Uganda as I was walking around one village in Uganda, I was arrested and was not taken to court for trial, instead they took me to the UPDF (Uganda's Peoples Defense Force) and taken to frontline to fight with Kony in Gulu. It was like I was being sentenced to death penalty without the court verdict. While at the war they brought in many warriors who we were together at the front line of war, many of them died. Through God's grace I was transferred to Pokot land. I packed all my belongings and escaped upon arrival at the Pokot land. From that day I joined my family. I promised them not to go to raids again. I am now a reformed warrior and attending an adult education class, I even own a posho mill at Asilong. Furthermore I know how to read and write."

The formation of reformed warrior groups have helped the government and local communities greatly with information on cattle raids, impending raids and also detecting the movement of planned raids. They can also

easily identify the suspected stolen animals from the market and report to the Administration. They have even helped to stop planned raids by talking to the planners as they know when raids are being planned. For example recently in Lodwar, at a water point in Lotkum sub location livestock raid plans were thwarted and there were intervention from staff of SIKOM and the coordinator for reformed warriors Mr. Peter Alany. Through their sensational testimonies many have been transformed but the challenge lies in providing them with alternative livelihood.

Faced with this SIKOM has started to undertake capacity building, and also introduced Adult classes for the reformed warriors as in Saasak, but there's still a lingering problem as they have to be involved in other livelihood activities.

Another organization that is also involved in helping the reformed warriors is Tegla Leroupe Peace Foundation. The foundation runs a project of providing support to warriors to engage in competitive sports, business

enterprises and small scale agricultural business and facilitating them in the warrior-to-warrior peacemaking. The project anticipates reduction in raids in terms of its magnitude and frequency which will in turn increase opportunities for poverty reduction and creating environment for development to engage communities in development and other social change process such as women and girl-child rights advocacy. The surging numbers needs to be supported by well wishers and other development partners. For further information on this subject please visit <http://teglapeacefoundation.org/index.php>

The major challenge to the reformed warriors is in terms of livelihood. It is a fact that the gun was their source of livelihood. Now that they have downed the "jembe" as it's popularly referred what is in the offing for them? This is the most challenging part of demobilizing the morans. Is there any development partner out there who can assist them? Please get in touch with partnershipforpeaceproject@gmail.com.



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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

TJRC has no capacity to deliver any results soon

BY MAURICE N. AMUTABI

I HAVE nothing against the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission or any of the commissioners or employees, but I believe that so far, it has been a waste of funds and time.

What we see and hear are excuses as to why the commission has not delivered, nine months before its mandate expires.

The TJRC has wasted two years and lots of resources on a process that has been trapped in procedural squabbles and sideshows at the expense of the urgent business of correcting historical injustices, omissions and more. The mandate of this commission should not be extended. Instead it should be dissolved.

Those who watched and read about the proceedings and impact of the work of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission under Archbishop Desmond Tutu would agree that it was exemplary. Our TJRC is a far cry from the South African commission. The success with which Archbishop Tutu handled the South African situation, which was more complicated and delicate, has been praised all over the world as an excellent example of the work such a commission should do.

One wonders why the TJRC could not draw lessons from such success and improve on it.

It has been frustrating to see TJRC commissioners sit back and earn allowances for doing nothing or merely taking statements in the past two years. What does taking statements amount to? This is a clerical engagement for which you do not need a commissioner. The last time I checked, taking statements was not the only mandate of the TJRC.

Many expected the commission to bring about some semblance of justice, to apportion blame and responsibility for past crimes and abuses. They wanted it to bite, or at least bark and pounce, to discourage future impunity. Instead, what Kenyans have seen are useless workshops. The TJRC started on a bad footing. Of course part of its misfortune was the legitimacy question raised over the chairmanship of Mr Bethuel Kiplagat. But the poor performance of the TJRC has nothing to do with whether Mr Kiplagat had a past that did not give him the moral authority to lead it or not.

But rather, the commissioners have had over two years to be seen to be acting and show the will to deal with past injustices.

The commissioners have wasted a lot of time. They have spent most of it at press conferences, lamenting over non-issues, such as their former chairman, lack of power and funds. The TJRC has not shown potential to deliver. The important process of the TJRC should be the public hearings, which have not even started.

Many Kenyans were happy to see the commission's former deputy chairperson, Betty Murungi, step down. That is when the entire commission should have followed suit.

Many Kenyans supported Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo's suggestion that Parliament should institute the process of dissolving the TJRC. This was a good idea that was not followed through. It would have gone down as a lesson to non-performing entities in which people keep quiet and hope to earn allowances for doing nothing.

Prof. Amutabi teaches history at Central Washington University, USA.

Bunyala youth told to avoid violence

BY NYAKWAR ODAWO

A PEACE crusader has appealed to the youth in Bunyala district to shun politicians out to incite them to violence for their selfish ends.

Addressing peace building committee members in Budalangi constituency recently, the co-manager of the Partnership for Peace Project, Ms Jane Murutu, who was accompanied by the Mount Elgon Residents Association [MERA] chairman John Ochemo and the project coordinator, Western Province Chem Ngeywo, called upon parents to encourage their children to engage in viable activities so as to make them self-reliant and avoid being misused by politicians.

"As parents, the only worthwhile gift to your children is education; therefore take advantage of both the free primary education [FPE], free secondary education [FSE] and the subsidized tuition programme at the youth polytechnics and enroll them so that they can actively participate in nation building instead of relying on handouts from politicians," said Murutu.

The Co-Manager at the same appealed to various FM radio stations including the Budalangi based Bulala FM, to actively participate in the promotion of peace by discouraging acts of violence as the only valuable tools to resolve issues.

"Let us be role models as far as the promotion of peace is concerned in our respective areas," she said, adding that there is urgent need to sensitize the local community and especially the youth to embrace peace.

A follow up peace building forum has been convened to find out how elders managed to resolve the conflicts and the progress so far made in the promotion of peace among the residents of Budalangi following the post election violence in 2008 that pitted Orange Democratic Movement [ODM] and Party of National Unity [PNU] supporters leading to bloodshed and death.

The elders peace committee lauded efforts by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and the European Union (EU) in promoting



Youth rioting during post-election violence in 2008

peaceful co-existence among the residents of Budalangi who turned against each other during the post poll chaos.

One of the elders peace committee Alex Ndieri from Khajula location said conflicts erupted when some residents invaded Migingo area [Southern Bunyala] and acquired land which had not been demarcated.

In Khajula location allotment has not been done up to date and this is most likely to cause conflicts unless the issue is addressed as a matter of urgency," said Ndieri.

The elders peace committee also expressed concern over continuous harassment of fishermen in Bunyala by the Uganda fisheries officials who claim they have trespassed into their territorial waters.

The elders peace committee at the same time appealed to the provincial administration to ensure that clan elders in their respective areas are doing their job satisfactorily, adding that there is need to look at the credibility of people selected as members of the peace committees.

"Kenya is one and therefore we must work as a team including men, women and the youth as well as the provincial administration," said the elders peace committee, adding that there is need on the part of each

and everyone to preach peace.

The Mount Elgon Residents Association [MERA] chairman John Ochemo, on his part called upon the residents of Budalangi to put their past behind and dwell on the promotion of peace in the community stressing that without peace, no meaningful development can take place.

Pastor Samson Midi on his part said he had formed a non-political income generating group which has really empowered the youth in the area economically and socially.

The peace committee resolved during the peace building forum that any person in the district engaging in any sort of violence will be reported to the authorities so that stern legal action can be taken against them.

The committee further said that measures should be taken as a matter of urgency to address poverty and unemployment which they noted were primary causes of violence exploited by politicians.

"Hate speech should be avoided and stern action taken against those behind it," they said, adding that there is urgent need to summon the local leadership in the district so as to chart the way forward and facilitate the promotion of peace in the district.

CONTACT ADDRESSES:

EU-KAS Project Office in Kisumu, Varsity Apartments 3rd Floor,

P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu,

Telephone: +254 057 2023 484

+254 711 358 013

e-mail: partnershipforpeace@gmail.com

PARTNERS

Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA)

Chem Ngeywo, Project Coordinator

Western Province

P.O. Box 21-50201, Cheptais-Mt. Elgon

Mobile : 0720-744827; 0734-517489.

Email: pchem2007@yahoo.com

Community Initiative Action-Group (CIAG-K)

Mr. Chrispin Owalla, Project Coordinator

Nyanza Province

Varsity Apartments 3rd Floor,

P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu.

Tel: 0737-470558/0716-384135

grassrootlink@yahoo.com or

ciag-kenya@hotmail.com

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)

Mr. James Kimiso, Project Coordinator

Rift Valley Province

The Catholic Diocese of Eldoret

P.O. Box 842 -30100, Eldoret.

Tel 2031272; 0722 448110

E-mail: jameskimiso@yahoo.com



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Help us find Kimathi—Mau Mau veterans tell Queen

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

MAU MAU freedom fighters have appealed to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to help them locate the remains of the former freedom fighter Dedan Kimathi.

Over 2,000 former freedom fighters who met recently under Mau Mau War Veterans Association said that the Government should approach the British Government to secure an audience with the Queen who will help them to locate the grave of Kimathi.

Speaking during a meeting held at Ruring'u stadium in Nyeri County, the freedom fighters urged the British Government to tell the world whether Kimathi is still alive or whether he was buried in Kamiti or King'ong'o Prison.

The association chairman led by national chairman Mr Elijah Kinyua Ng'ang'a alias General Bahati said that it was time to know the truth about Kimathi.

"We want queen Elizabeth to help us trace the remains of Kimathi since it is still not clear where he was buried after all those years," said the chairman.

The chairman who was accompanied by the Secretary General Mr Mwai wa Muthigi at the same time resolved that the Ocampo six should be tried here and not taken to the ICC which is



Mau Mau War Veterans Association national chairman Mr Elijah Kinyua Ng'ang'a alias General Bahati (left) chatting with the association Secretary General Mr Mwai wa Muthigi at Ruring'u stadium in Nyeri County after they held a meeting recently. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

at the The Hague.

They said all those accused of the post election violence should be tried here in the country and justice must prevail.

The Government was also called upon to immediately resettle all IDPs as thousands of

internal refugees continue to suffer. He said it will not be good if the long rains will find them at the camps in April.

Those who attended the meeting came from Central, Eastern, and Rift Valley regions.

The former freedom fighters

at the same time urged fellow fighters to remain united as they wait for compensation from the Government and of course the British Government as many were maimed, killed and tortured while others lost land and properties.

Ministry petitioned over Embu-Kiritiri road

By PETER MUTUKU

RESIDENTS of Embu and Mbeere districts have petitioned the Ministry of Roads to repair the Embu-Kiritiri road that is in deplorable condition.

The road is heavily potholed and does not have a single road sign, bump or guard rail.

This has raised alarm among motorists and other road users.

The chairman of the Embu County Matatu Association, Mr. John Kithinji, said efforts to have the facility improved have been futile.

He said controlling vehicles down the dilapidated and steep road is difficult and motorists are incurring heavy losses due to frequent maintenance costs.

Kithinji says matatu owners had appealed to the Government to take action but without success.

Many residents have lost their lives through accidents as they try to avoid the potholes," he said.

But Embu West District Commissioner, Mr. Maalim Mohammed has pleaded for patience among motorists, saying the situation was being addressed.

Maalim said the Government through the Kenya National Highways Authority has set aside Kshs64 million for the improvement of the road.

Speaking to matatu operators at Kiritiri bus stage, the DC said improvement of the road would

start in Embu town towards Kiritiri. The project will initially cover eight to nine kilometers, while other parts of the facility will be improved once money is provided in the following financial year.

Meanwhile International donors have been commended for helping Kenya towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

National planning and Vision 2030 PS, Dr Edward Sambili, singled out Finland and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their support and appealed to more Western donors to chip in.

Dr Sambili said the MDGs objectives were aligned towards the achievement of universal education for all, equal rights,

reduction of mortality rate for children aged five years and below and reduction of HIV/AIDS and Malaria infections.

The PS was speaking when he and Lower Eastern Regional Commissioner, Mr. Joseph Otieno, commissioned three community water projects in Masinga and Yatta districts.

The three Kshs10 million modern boreholes were undertaken under the MDG initiative.

Dr Sambili launched the Kshs4 million solar driven Mutwamwaki borehole in Masinga District, as Otieno commissioned Mekilingi and Yaanguni boreholes at Kyua and Ndalani locations, in Yatta District.

Dr Sambili pledged desks for Mutwamwaki Primary school.

Masinga MP Itwiku Mbai and



A vehicle going through a damaged road.

Coast residents decry bad land laws

By BEKADZO TONDO

FOR decades now, coastal people have protested the unequal land tenure system which has discriminated against indigenous people.

Local leaders feel that bad land laws and discriminative type of governance by successive regimes was to blame for the problem. They are now upbeat that the new constitutional dispensation will pave way for reforms to change ownership of or control of land from individuals to government.

The leaders claimed the old constitution perfected the alienation of Coastal people majority of who remained squatters as prominent personalities in the country owned huge chunks of land in the area which remained unutilized. They say although the anticipated benefits in the new order may not immediately be realized, the allocation of 15,000 acres of land by the government to resettle squatters in Taita Taveta County was a move in the right direction.

They, however, feel that genuine people may be left out of the resettlement programme since a list of beneficiaries was crafted without prior consultations. Mr. Branton wants the exercise made public to ensure that only genuine squatters benefitted from the exercise.

But the area D.C Mr. Nkaduda Hiribae allays the fears saying that the allocation process was still ongoing and therefore there was not cause for alarm. Mr. Hiribae cautions leaders against politicizing the process and calls for patience and cooperation with the lands officers. At Malindi in Kilifi county area couloirs are opposed to the allocation of a five acre of beach land to an Italian investor.

And, hunger stricken families in Coast province are up in arms against the slow pace at which relief supplies are being distributed in the area.

The affected families led by Ganze MP Francis Baya further claim that the food ratios being given to them was insufficient to last them during the drought period.

Speaking to The Link Mr. Baya says it was unfortunate that huge consignments of relief food lies utilized at stores manned by local chiefs when hunger stricken residents have nothing to eat.

He wants the government to deploy the military and the National Youth Service to promptly distribute relief food in famine stricken areas.

According to the Coast Provincial Commissioner Mr. Ernest Munyi, over 200,000 people in Coast region are adversely affected by hunger.

Mr. Munyi says the prolonged period of drought had resulted in total crop failure and drying up of local water sources especially dams, water pans and seasonal rivers.

He says the hardest hit areas include Ganze, Kaloleni, Kinango, Tana River and Lamu districts.

He however says the government has supplied 88,000 bags of maize, 16,000 bags of beans, 16,000 bags of rice and 8,000 cartons of cooking oil to the affected families in the entire coast region.

He spoke as Ganze District Education Officer Mr. Charles Nyakundi revealed that hundreds of children had dropped out of school due to the ravaging drought.

The officer appeals to the government to introduce the school feeding program in the district to ensure children remain in school.

"The road is heavily potholed and does not have a single road sign, bump or guard rail."

Voi Bus Park needs urgent repair

By BRIGHTON KADZUNGU

VOI bus-park in the Taita Taveta County needs immediate attention.

Located on the busy Nairobi-Mombasa highway, the bus-park which is currently ranked among leading commercial hubs in the country is without a public toilet.

The situation is appalling in one of Kenya's oldest towns, which was thrust to prominence by the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway. Without such an essential facility and no nearby bushes, life has become a real nightmare.

The only available land set aside for the public toilet was allocated to a private developer during the Kanu era while the old toilet was demolished and the plot fenced off by the new owner.

Some residents were now avoiding the termini because of its stench and poor sanitary conditions. The demolition of the old toilet and the poor state of hygiene has been a source of concern for traders as it has adversely affected their businesses.

Voi town is a major rest point for many travelers as it is on the railway crossroads for the Mombasa-Nairobi and Voi-Taveta and Moshi (Tanzania) lines. The alternative public toilet site is inaccessible as it is far from the bus stop and exposes users to the risk of being mugged at night.

Travellers have also been avoiding the toilet adjacent to the town's open air retail market for fear of their security.

Despite pleas by residents over the lack of proper sanitary services at the bus park for almost two decades now, nothing much has been done to give the facility some semi-balance of decency until a year ago when the Voi Municipal Council was ordered by a



A section of Voi Bus Park

court to act.

"Now the residents and visitors have caused to smile after the town finally got a public toilet. But the council only acted after we pressurised it to do so and yet provision of sanitation is part of its mandate," says Mr. Abednego Elikuda, the public health officer in the municipality.

Indeed it was with a sigh of relief that the residents welcomed the council's belated decision to construct the new toilet at the bus park about 200 metres from the previous site that was grabbed.

Efforts by the council to repossess the plot appear to have hit a snag

hence the decision to build it on a different site. Mr. Elikuda said there was need to keep the town clean to promote public health and to attract investors as well as visitors. He, however, believes that for the town to effectively address sanitation it also needed a sewerage treatment plant.

"Disposal of waste water is still a challenge and the council should strive to put in place remedial measures as part of its efforts to maintain high sanitary standards and cleanliness," the official said. Owing to its strategic position next to the Tsavo National Park, the town is the ideal stopover for many on Safari adventures and nature lovers.

tures and nature lovers.

"We have longed for the construction of the toilet because we believe it should be part of the environment at the park," says a teacher, Ms. Anne Wairimu. "The toilet is clean as it's well maintained and always has water. I no longer suffer the headache of going to hotels to beg for the service," she says.

"The project was long overdue and we appreciate as it will bring about improvement in hygiene at the park," says Clarissy Wambuga.

The facility is well maintained and members of the public can even take a shower at a Kshs.20 fee.

Plans afoot to uplift Kakamega Airstrip

By JOEL JUMA

KAKAMEGA Airstrip requires Kshs74 million to have it expanded to the required standards as set out by the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA).

A study conducted by the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) established that essential facilities are urgently required to have the airstrip comply with the international standards that can attract more airlines.

The airstrip lacks a fire fighting engine, weather centre, electricity and land that can be used as a safety landing site for aircrafts during emergency period.

KAA Manager in charge of Eldoret Airport Peter Wafula said during a tour

of the Parliamentary Committee on Transport that a runway covering over 150 meters was required at the facility to avoid take off problems for the aircrafts. "We need a parking yard and taxi ways that are far from the run ways," said Wafula.

This, Wafula told committee members who included Committee Chairman David Were, MPs Yusuf Chanzu, Dr Wilbur Ottichillo, Walter Mbatia, Edwin Yinda, Clement Wambugu that water supply was required at the airstrip.

"We need a fire fighting engine to be on stand by as part of complying with the standards for airports," said Wafula who oversees the airstrips in Western province and Rift valley regions.

Kakamega Airstrip started operating last year after it was officially launched by the Deputy Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi with 540 airlines being the first users of the facility. The number of passengers using the facility has since grown to 983.

Were urged the Government to source for an alternative land where the community around the airstrip can be settled before evicting them to pave way for expansion of the airstrip.

Over 20 acres of land is required from the community during the expansion.

Area DC Mohammed Birik and Shinyalu MP Justus Kizito said the Government was still sourcing for land

before the families can be issued with notices of movement.

Kizito who is the area MP said compensation for the families whose trees were brought down last year should not be delayed by the Government authorities. "The Government should also lure more airlines to fly to Kakamega as part of improving tourist flow in the region," said Kizito.

Kizito explained that the road to the airstrip needs to be tarmacked to improve accessibility to the facility.

Were however said that the committee will make its recommendations to the ministry of Roads and that of Transport to have the money included in their annual financial year budgets.

Mwingi residents cry foul over birth certificates

By PETER MUTUKU

RESIDENTS of Mwingi District have raised concern over delays in the acquisition of birth certificates for their children.

The residents have been camping at the Registrar's office for days, complaining that they have not received attention from the officers, especially in the issuance of identity cards.

The residents have incurred heavy expenses while pursuing the document besides time lost in queues the whole day.

The issuance of identity cards to residents has also been affected by the long process of accessing and filling necessary forms.

A resident says it took him nine months before receiving his card following numerous trips to the registrar's office.

Registration clerks say the workload was too heavy and urged the Government to deploy more workers.

But the residents accused some of the workers of laxity.

Meanwhile, the lack of safe drinking water and poor sanitation are the major contributors to the death of children under five years, Eastern Provincial Director of Public, Dr John Thiong'o has said.

Dr Thiong'o says that research shows that majority of the children who die each year could be saved by cost effective measures such as vaccines, micronutrient supplementation, insecticide treated bed nets, improved family care and breast feeding practices are enhanced.

He said that mothers should be trained on ways of making simple changes to their living conditions such as improving hygiene to safeguard their children's health.

He said educated mothers had shown increased confidence in the ability to take care of children and providing healthier environment for the young ones.

He said there were huge disparities in the under five mortality rate between educated and illiterate households in developing countries.

The official said children from poor households are three times more likely to die before their fifth birthday than those in richer households.

Malnutrition is estimated to contribute to more than a third of all child deaths.

Row erupts in Kakamega Municipal Council

By JOEL JUMA

A ROW has erupted between Kakamega Municipal Council and a workers union after the local authority sacked eight employees.

Workers issued with dismissal letters include chairman of the Kenya Local Government Workers Union Kakamega Municipal Council branch chairman Protus Ashiono, secretary Samson Ananda and woman representative Mildred Khatenye.

The officials are being accused of having incited workers to demonstrate against Kakamega mayor Vincent Anjeche.

Anjeche had allegedly said workers at the council were inefficient because of the high prevalence rate of HIV/Aids at the local authority.

The Kenya Local Government Workers Union Western branch Secretary Juvenus Orai has since moved to court to intervene.

Mr. Orai has written to the council

clerk Newton Mukabwe asking him to immediately revoke the dismissal of the eight workers.

"You cannot sack a worker for being a member of a union. This is against the International Labour Laws as well as the Collective Bargaining Agreement signed between the council and the union," said Orai.

Orai's letter was copied to the Minister for Local Government Musalia Mudavadi, PS Karega Mutahi and the union secretary General Boni-

face Muniyao. Minister for Labour John Munye and the Western Provincial Labour Officer have also been issued with a copy of the letter.

The sacked workers claimed that the mayor insulted the staff by publicly claiming that the town was not clean because most of the employees were HIV/Aids victims. They further claimed that the council's finance and staff committee had not met to approve the move to sack them.

Orai said the council had no option

but to reinstate the workers. "Even if it takes long, the workers will be reinstated as they did not commit any crime," said Orai.

Ashiono claimed workers suspected to be HIV/Aids positive are being sacked at the council. He explained that some of the victims are being paid half salary by the council.

Orai regretted that local authorities are not observing the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) they sign with trade unions.

Kenyan villages set to go online

By PETER MUTUKU

KENYANS living in remote outposts will soon be able to access information without necessarily having to visit the capital or other urban centres.

The benefits from the proposed ICT Shared Service Centre (SSC) are expected to trickle down to the remotest villages in line with the devolved government structure in the new constitution.

These centres are expected to save money by ending the duplication of services, besides facilitating the greater sharing of information within government offices.

Regionalising the SSCs will also be in line with Government's objective to narrow the digital divide. Information and Communication Minister Samuel Poghiso says Kenyans will benefit from the utilization of modern ICT facilities.

"Information is recognized as a resource which must be generated, collected, organized, leveraged, secured and preserved for national prosperity. It is the basis upon which our future economic growth must be based," the minister said.

ICT will be used to remove barriers of time and distance and has been recognized as a tool to accelerate social cohesion and economic development, while increasing productivity in the education, health, finance, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism sectors.

The PS in the Ministry of Information and Communication, Dr Bitange Ndemo, says Kenya will become a modern economy with a vibrant and innovative industrial sector through ICT.

In 2007, as the Vision 2030 socio-economic development blueprint was being formulated, the government established the Kenya Information and Communications Technology Board (KICTB) under the Ministry of Information and Communication in order to help Kenya to leverage technology and to market the country as an ICT and Business Process Outsourcing destination. BPO is a subset of outsourcing that involves the contracting of the operations and responsibilities of specific

business functions to a third party service provider. Since its establishment the KICTB has focused its efforts on improving ICT connectivity and e-services at a reduced cost.

When the KICTB conducted its first studies of all government services, it found out each of the 42 ministries had its own IT platform. This led to a duplication of services, inefficient spending and little sharing of information within the government.

The study noted that the structure lacked fully automated systems to manage core Government functions such as finances, procurement and human resources for better efficiency and effectiveness.

Under the World Bank's Transparency Communications and Infrastructure Programme (TICP), the KICTB engaged a private company

Accenture Development Partnerships (ADP) in April last year to develop a programme in which different government entities would be able to share information.

While the initial scope of the World Bank funded project was limited to the 42 government ministries, additional funding from the Rockefeller Foundation of the United States expanded the scope to include 175 local authorities.

Findings by ADP on impediments to shared information include cultural inhibitions, poor strategies, little investment in technology and budget gaps in most ministries. There were also levels of ICT staffing and skills, lack of standard processes, inadequate automation and outdated technology.

The study by ADP also found out that ICT spending was only 0.3 per-

cent of total spending within the government as compared to the average at 6.5 percent. Only one percent of government employees were in ICT compared to the industry average of five percent.

In the next five to seven years, the KICTB intends to have a clear roadmap for the establishment of a government shared services business centre.

Under the devolved system of governance prescribed under the new constitution, shared ICT services are expected to make information more readily available to all Kenyans.

"Enhanced ICT will enable the Government to extend its reach, especially to the remote parts of the country that currently do not have easy access to essential public and commercial services," says a KICTB report.



Computer Class: Kenyans in remote areas will soon be able to access information without necessarily having to visit the capital or other urban centres.

All counties to get varsity colleges —CHE

By TITUS MAERO

THE Commission for Higher Education (CHE) would accredit public university constituent colleges in all the 47 counties in the country in order to cope with the increasing number of students who qualify to pursue further education.

The CHE Secretary Professor Everett Standa said adequate research funds would be provided to such higher learning institutions.

Noting that there are only 15 public universities which have 14 constituent colleges, Sitanda said the commission endeavours to effectively operationalize its mandate of making better provision for the advancement and quality assurance of university education. He said the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) operates

on the principles of best practices which emphasize that quality assurance is a continuous process requiring flexibility and adjustments.

Speaking during the closure of the ninth exhibition of the Kenyan universities held at the Kakamega Golf Hotel, the official said the commission is committed to ensuring increased access to sustainable quality education and training through resource mobilization and planning.

He said while accrediting more public university constituent colleges there is need to ensure that quality education of graduates from the colleges is in line with the country's realization of the economic blue print of vision 2030. The scholar also said the CHE together with the government is in the process of introduc-

ing e-learning programme in the university constituent colleges to make higher education closer to the people.

Sitanda further noted that accreditation of universities is a process undertaken by the commission to establish the status and legitimacy of an institution to offer programme of study, to ensure they are not compromised by vetting resources in the learning institutions.

The official said so far Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and the Eldoret based Moi University leads in the constituent college establishment which stand at four (4) each.

He said Egerton has three (3) constituent colleges, University of Nairobi (1), Kenyatta University (1) noting that constituent univer-



Prof. Standa

sity colleges were established after the requisite verification of academic resources by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE).

Child internet safety project launched

By PETER MUTUKU

TWO non-governmental organizations have partnered in a child internet safety and security awareness project.

The project by Cradle Kenya and Plan International seeks to raise awareness on the benefits of ICT for children, identify emerging problems and take initiatives to address challenges that would ensure safer environment for children using the internet.

A report by the two NGOs on children's safety while using the internet shows information and Communication technologies (ICT) are an integral part of development.

The internet has grown into one of the most widely used and fastest growing media in Kenya due to opportunities it presents.

The report says children have embraced ICT, especially internet as an essential communication tool. The internet has changed the ways children communicate and can be communicated with and has affected how they interact socially, learn and entertain themselves.

This is manifested by the popularity of social networking sites that enable them to engage in diverse ways of entertainment options.

But despite the gains brought about by the internet, there are emerging concerns on the risks that children face through use of new technologies, particularly the internet and mobile phones and the potential harmful impact on a child's development as a whole.

The report says children can be exposed to illegal or harmful materials that they are ill prepared to deal with that can cause psychological harm. Others can lead to physical harm or be detrimental to children or the youth such as pornography, violent content and other poisonous content such as hate speech. This often the case when the children lack guidance from caretakers.

Cradle in partnership with Plan International undertook a rapid assessment project in 2010 on the use of ICT by children. The project was among many initiatives Cradle was undertaking to address the problem of child abuse in cyberspace.

The assessment examined the issue of child safety in the internet by assessing children's engagement online, the risks involved and the level of awareness among users of the risks.

The survey targeted children, parents, cyber cafes and internet service providers. The findings reveal key issues that the internet was popular among children and that the mobile phone was one of the most widely used means of accessing internet.

Topping the list of what children do online includes viewing and downloading music (54 percent), playing games (51 percent), communicating with friends through mobile phones (50 percent), chatting (29 percent) and social networking at 28 percent.

Most parents (66 percent) are aware children access the internet but most do not appear to understand the full threat of what children are doing online.

Parents were accused of failing to exercise their responsibilities as they claim to be busy oblivious of risks involved and the digital gap between the younger and older generation.

Mbita girls' club cares for their own

By A CORRESPONDENT

WITHIN the Rusinga Island of Mbita district, a Club of girls is steadily and surely playing their cards right in emancipating their peers from shackles that expose them to HIV prevalence by providing information and giving care to those who need it.

Unlike many Clubs that are formulated to advance an interest but fall off-track along the way, this one is steadfast to its course. It is like a run-away train with broken brakes at full speed.

Panama Girls Peer Club is their name and they can be found at the Panama Youth Center situated on the island just a stone's throw away from the mausoleum of the late Tom Mboya, a political icon in Kenya's first government.

Their impact into the livelihoods of their community is no debate. Legend is also quickly being formed around them and already, word has it that they are your one-stop-shop for reliable information and quality community based consultancy on teen-age mentorship.

The Club stands out courtesy of a dynamic twist they have incorporated in their consulting approach. Being within the community they serve, they do not charge consultancy fees. In essence it is not corporate but community social responsibility since theirs is not a commercial enterprise.

According to Faith Achieng, the Club's team leader, they are simply using their efforts to give back to their community and in the process setting high standards for their peers and other young girls to emulate. This new dimension takes them to a whole new level and amongst peers, they stand tall and proud.

And so, one may ask, how do they meet their administrative functions or even sustain this goodwill? Faith reported that the Club had established a sustainability strategy which involves small level income generating activities including a food kiosk where they make and retail snacks to visitors and cinema viewers at the Panama Youth Centre.

She says the Club has also begun rolling-out its new mentorship plan where successful graduates are expected to also recruit their own sets of mentors. This makes the process to replicate

itself with ease.

Principally, this Club was formed by Impact Research Girls Intervention Program to help mentor out-of-school-girls and young women, but it was after the wrap-up of the project that a larger team came together to sustain their friendship and efforts for a worthy course.

During the formative process, the Club faced a lot of turbulence in trying to organize, manage and cut a niche for itself and this saw the exit of a number of its members. However, and according to the remaining seven who termed the exits a positive step, since it created ample room for the committed few who were strong-willed to achieve the arduous task that lay ahead.

Three years on, the Club has built strong values that help to push them through and these includes commitment, obedience, respect for rules and regulations, understanding and support for one another and community.

The Club managed to raise their initial capital in various ways including contributions by members, Club savings and loaning system.

Stella Odhiambo, the Club's Treasurer said that each member is responsible to the Club and contributes Kshs100 every month towards the Club's kitty.

The Club has given itself a collective task that focuses on promoting health education, sharing of ideas and brainstorming on how to overcome challenges, fighting stigma, confidentiality and sustaining respect to one another. They also use the community to identify out-of-school-girls and enroll them into their mentorship programs.

An evidence based success indicator for their performance is the ever increasing numbers of girls from their program that are trooping back to schools for enrollment to continue their studies. The club's leader says that the program is a success since none of the girls who undergo training in their program drop out of school.

Ten minutes into a discussion with them on how they strategize and coordinate their affairs and you get to appreciate the meticulous nature in which they operate. Faith argues that horizontal learning advanced in the peer-to-peer approach has close to 80percent



Panama Girls with IRDO Girls Intervention Coordinator, Vallery Akoth (centre standing). Photo/A Correspondent

guarantee of effectiveness since all normative barriers are broken as learning commences.

Some of the challenges the Club has been faced with include lack of seriousness by some recruits as some are cheeky and only enroll to test the team's patience and strength. Also challenging are the constraints that come with logistics especially when they have to conduct home visits as a follow-up on their recruits.

They have managed to overcome some of the challenges through a variety of approaches including working closely and openly with the community to understand their needs better, being polite and treating them with respect. They are now seeking to strengthen their partnership with government offices and with some development partners for improved support for their efforts.

The community on its part appreciates them, has bought into their intervention and is supporting them by providing them with a platform to

disseminate their messages and do advocacy and by making contributions in support of the Club's efforts.

An acknowledgement for this team of progressive and visionary young girls is that having come a long way to help advance the health interests of their community, they have indeed succeed-

ed to this end but, and more importantly, they have opened-up space for young girls voices to be heard on the island.

This has led them to a new challenge, to keep the fire burning by continuing to do what they do best. Thumbs up and congratulations for the good job well done.

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Kenyan elderly are endangered species

By AGREY BUCHUNJU

AT 65, one needs financial and medication support from the government in order to face challenges that come with old age. The extremely poor and vulnerable older persons are the most endangered species in the human race in terms of quality life, medication and nutrition.

In developed countries people above 65 years are paid a small token every month for their up-keep.

The amount no matter how little it may be, enables the aged people to feel a sense of belonging in the society besides minimizing poverty levels in this generation. Aware of the myriad challenges that aged people have to contend with on a daily basis, some third world countries have also introduced stipend programmes for old persons.

Kenya is one of the third countries that introduced older persons cash transfer programme on a pilot basis during the 2006/2007 financial year under the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI). The programme which began in only three (3) districts is currently being implemented in 44 districts across the county.

Although the programme has good

plans for the older persons in the society it has not received enough publicity by the implementing organs.

Majority of people from the Western region including those who deserve to be covered by this programme claim that they learnt about the programme through our special report in the February issue of this publication. The detailed special report on the old persons support programme was published at a time when a new wave of disquiet was simmering in Western Province with people aged above 65 years protesting at the criteria adopted by the Government to implement the programme.

In Kakamega County for instance, the Navakholo division above 65 years old forum chair Mr. John Wakhanu accuses the Government of allegedly concealing the criteria used to identify the districts and beneficiaries.

"We did not know who should benefit from the programme until we saw the publication of the special report on the old persons support programme by the Link Newspaper," Mr. Wakhanu says. Mr. Wakhanu asserts that the Government was deliberately depriving them of their right to access the cash by keeping

the criteria used to identify beneficiaries' secret. He urges the Government to conduct civic education first whenever it wants to implement a new programme so that the people can know who is supposed to benefit. This, he adds would enhance transparency and accountability during the identification and implementation processes of all Government programmes.

Mr. Wakhanu censures the Government for implementing the programme in 44 districts only when there are more poor and vulnerable old persons in the rest of the districts whose state of livelihood should be improved too.

"This programme is meant to spur economic growth and to achieve this good intended goal it should be implemented in all districts", he says.

The introduction of the stipend programme in Kenya is long overdue. If properly co-ordinated and implemented the programme will not only make old people to lead dignified lives but also prolong their lives.

Selection of beneficiaries is however raising quarries in some areas, an issue the Government must address lest the programme becomes a fiasco.

PCEA opens new hospital in Kieni

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE Presbyterian Church of East Africa (P.C.E.A) has established a Kshs21 million hospital in Kieni East District.

The Honi hospital dubbed 'Healing Centre' targets cancer patients and lies on a 50-acre piece of land at PCEA Honi Farm Centre where Kshs48 million has been pumped to oversee completion of other projects.

The church moderator of the 19th General assembly Rev. David Gathanju officially opened Honi Hospital recently.

"This project has been possible through generous contributions from Christians, friends and partners from both church of Ireland and Yang-Rim church in South Korea through our missionaries Rev Chan-Sup- Park and his wife Soon -Ja- Lee," said Rev Gathanju.

The land and the farm house were donated to the church in 1990 by a Christian family namely Mr James Kanyita Nderitu.

The centre is situated 18 Km North of Nyeri town and 3Km off Kiganjo- Nanyuki road up along Chaka-Mweiga road.

The moderator urged the government to deploy doctors



and nurses to the hospital.

The facility also urgently requires Pharmacist, clinical officer and laboratory technician.

The church is looking forward to initiating other projects which include a vegetable processing plant, drug abuse rehabilitation centre and tented camp and expanded guest wing.

Other projects which have been started by the church include a demonstration farm for crops viable in the region, tree planting nurseries and a Kshs 6.2 million water project.



The Kshs 21 million Honi Hospital initiated by PCEA church in Kieni East district. INSET: PCEA moderator Rev David Gathanju (centre) with other priests during the function of opening the Honi Hospital in Kieni East district. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

USAID funds potato project in Kabondo

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has earmarked funds for the development and marketing of sweet potatoes in Kabondo Division, Rachuonyo South District.

USAid East Africa Regional Agricultural Trade and Policy Advisor, Dr. Kenneth Kambona, said Kshs 800,000 has been set aside to be used in developing and marketing the crop to ensure better returns for the farmers.

Speaking to The Link, Mr. Kambona said sweet potato farmers should be assisted to earn better prices as a way of eradicating exploitation by unscrupulous traders who have capitalized on marketing loopholes.

He said contract farming will be initiated in the production of the crop to eradicate persistent marketing problems that have affected farmers' earnings.

He said structured trade will also be adopted to address marketing problems and ensure better returns for the growers.

"We cannot say middlemen be eliminated because they have a role to play in the marketing of the crop but this will be effective once we adapt structured trade," Dr. Kambona said.

He challenged professionals to participate in economic empowerment programmes that benefit the community.

"Professionals with capacity to invest have not supported local farmers. We can buy a lorry to transport the potatoes to market where it can fetch better prices," he said.

He said research by the organization had shown that the area produces the best quality and most nutritious sweet potato species in the world.

Kabondo Division in Rachuonyo South District is the highest producer of sweet potatoes in the country but farmers have accused brokers of offering cheap prices to resell at higher rates.

The farmers have also complained of poverty due to poor pricing and exploitation despite the crop's potential to change their economic status. The crop fetches between Kshs.600 and Kshs.1,200 as lowest and best price per sack.

KWS, Israel sign agreement

By BRIGHTON KAZUNGU

ISRAEL has entered into a partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to boost training of staff in First Aid, enhanced security for parks, search and rescue missions.

In a signed press release Israel Deputy Ambassador to Kenya, Mr. Mayor Elbaz Starinsky, says the programme would be carried out through Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV).

The Deputy Ambassador said the officers will receive training in Kenya and Israel. The project is welcome news for KWS as security at the parks, especially Tsavo, has been severely tested by poachers who have killed elephants for tusks.

Several poachers have been arrested with elephant tusks as concerns grow over wardens capacity to protect the parks.

Cases of human/wildlife conflict have also increased in Taita Taveta County where many people have died. Only two weeks, ago

a farmer was killed by a herd of elephants he had attempted to drive out of his shamba at Sagalla location. The dry spell prevailing in many parts of the country has forced animals to stray into human settlements in search for water and pasture.

Meanwhile, the Government has sponsored two de-

velopment groups at a cost of Kshs.3.8 million to buy equipment for processing of cashew nuts and cassava, Kaloleni District Commissioner, Mr. Fredrick Ayieko, has said.

Addressing a baraza at Nyalani trading centre recently, Mr. Ayecko said Mkorosho and Muhogo

groups had each received Kshs.1.9 million to buy processing plants and other materials.

He said out of the 26 groups initiated with assistance of the Government and World Bank, only 14 have survived due to poor management and lack of coordination.



KWS has entered into a partnership with Israel to boost training of staff in First Aid. INSET: Mr. Ng'etich, KWS MD.

USAid to fund health projects in central

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

THE US government has earmarked Kshs7.2 billion to support health projects in several parts of the country in the next five years.

USAid representative Mrs Linda Archer said the US government had committed 91 million dollars (about Kshs7.2 billion) to finance AIDS, Population and Health Integrated Assistance (APHIA) Plus zone 4 Kamili project in the next five years.

Speaking during the launch of the APHIA Plus – Zone 4 Kamili Project in Nyeri town recently, Archer said USAid, the government and Non-governmental organizations will work together to ensure Kenyans access better health services and combat challenging health issues.

APHIA plus –zone 4 will cover Mt Kenya region, parts of Eastern and Isiolo with a life span of five years.

“The new Constitution has afforded Kenyans an opportunity to generate health programmes aligned to the needs and solutions with the expected changes in the new Document,” she added.

At the same time, Central PC Mr Kiplimo Rugut said the gov-



Some of the participants who attended the APHIA zone 4 Kamili project launch recently at Green Hills hotel in Nyeri town. Photo/Joseph Mukubwa

ernment will continue to partner with other organizations in the provision of health services to the people.

Rugut noted that the partnership has tremendously improved health indicators in the country

to the benefit of the citizens.

In a speech read on his behalf by the Upper central regional commissioner Mrs Ann Nge'tich, the PC said the project will enhance the country's capacity to improve the lives of

mothers, children and their families in areas of HIV/AIDS.

APHIA Plus is a non-governmental organizations operating in Central province and supported by USAid in areas of combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria, Family

Planning, Reproductive health and tuberculosis.

“The US government has assisted Kenya to improve health in Central province for 15 years which led to improved health services during the period under review,” he added.

He noted that during the same period, the percentage of women delivering in health facilities increased from 68to-78percent in the year 2003 and 2008 while family planning improved from 39 to 60 per cent in the same period.

The administrator added “key health indicators have also improved particularly those related to HIV.

In 2007, HIV prevalence among adults aged 15-49 in the province was well below the national 7.8 per cent: Central was 4.2 per cent.”

He cautioned that though statistics show progress and positive trends in the area, there are disparities among the districts adding that in some cases, the situation has remained unchanged or worsened.

He asked APHIA plus to work with district health management teams to provide tailor made packages of interventions in worsening districts to achieve its set objectives.

Rachuonyo rice farmers get state support

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

FOOD security and the fight against hunger got a boost when the Government donated rice milling machine and seeds to a farmers' group in Rachuonyo North district.

The District Agricultural Officer, Mr. Shem Ipomai, said the move is among mitigating measures aimed at eradicating hunger.

“Growing the rain fed rice is just one of the many planned

programmes the government has embarked on in the district,” the official said.

Speaking during the handing over ceremony of a rice milling machine to East Karachuonyo rice growers and traders, Ipomai said the crop was an effective weapon against hunger.

He said the rice variety to be grown in the area does not need much water and requires only 72 days to mature, making it suitable for growing in the area.

He noted that the maize planted dried in the field due to poor rain but now with the fast maturing rice, farmers had a better choice. He asked farmers to prepare land for planting at the onset of the rainy season to enhance production of adequate quantities to ensure effective utilization of the equipment.

He said other intervention measures include the establishment of cassava processing fac-

tory at Wang' Chieng' location and the expansion of irrigation activities in both divisions.

Also in the pipeline is the establishment of modern farmers trading floor in Western Karachuonyo with the support of International Fund for Agricultural development (IFAD) to address issues related to marketing of the produce.

The trading floor provides farmers with a delivery point for the produce for sale at a central point. Large-scale buyers are contacted through the auction.

“At farmers traders floor, we can talk to large scale buyers like the United Nations World Food Programme, tell them we have such tones of produce and at the same time compare prices all over the world and sell through auction,” he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ipomai said the rice programme was a Government initiative with the support by the Japan International Corporation (JICA) where farmers groups are given input as revolving fund to start agri-business projects.

He said the group will repay the funds for onward donations to other organizations to ensure the initiative is sustainable and continues to contribute to food safety.

Rachuonyo North is a perennial food insecure area that receive minimal amount of rainfall.



Rice farmers at work: The Government has donated milling equipment to growers in East Rachuonyo.

KU student welfare bus service

By TITUS MAERO

The Kenyatta University (KU) has introduced cheap shuttle bus transport for its over 30,000 students which would operate daily on four routes commonly used by the students in Nairobi.

The KU Director Professor Fredrick Gravenir said Holiday Cars and Tours Company (HCTC) Limited had been contracted to provide the services noting that students would be required to pay sh 15 only per day.

Gravenir said the introduction of the student's shuttle bus services aims at minimizing waste of time by students reporting to the learning institution and also to enable them travel safely apart from minimizing on their transport cost of traveling.

Speaking at the Kakamega Golf Hotel after the official closure of the Kenyan University's 9th Exhibition, the official said to curb cases of members of the public sneaking into the student's shuttle buses students have been provided with identification cards to be scrutinized before boarding the buses by contracted private security officers. He said the transport is one way of ensuring that security is provided to students especially those who leave the university compound late at night and also to ensure that there is consistency in attending to their lessons.

In March last year, the KU procured mini buses to cater for the transport of the staff members and salon vehicles had also been bought for the senior staff members at the learning institution. During the launch of the newly acquired vehicles at the KU Vice Chancellor Professor Olive Mugenda commended the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) in charge of Administration by expediting the process of procuring the vehicles.

KU has achieved milestones in its academic circles which saw it being selected by the Kenya Military to train eligible military personnel in the course leading to the award of Bachelor of Science Degree in Military studies. This followed competitive bidding process which was initiated in the way of tender by the Department of Defense (DOD) and where KU beat other public universities to win the bid.

Nyanza residents endorse public health campaigns

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

NYANZA residents overwhelmingly support the campaign to safeguard public health through preventive and proactive action.

Part of the campaign involves emphasis on personal hygiene and ensuring clean environment as means of checking diseases such as typhoid, cholera and diarrhea at bay through construction of pit latrines.

Sample this scenario: A 52-year-old mother at Kokoth Katta, Rachuonyo North district, who refused to build a latrine. She was not only named and shamed by members of the public, she also received lashes of the cane and was then forced to construct a pit latrine. Within the next three days, she had dug and constructed the pit latrine. Proper sanitation is fundamental to human health and so is safe and hygienic disposal of human waste.

Lack of proper disposal of faecal matter is the cause of several diseases, including cholera, dysentery, typhoid and other diarrheal diseases which can be lethal.

To mitigate the trend, where a big number of residents in the province were suffering from the killer diseases, the Government through the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation as well as other partners rolled out the Community Led Total Sanitation Programme (CLTS). The programme was adopted to fast track other interventions measures that did not preclude coercion. The Government had through the Chiefs Act previously directed that every household must have a pit latrine and chiefs mandated to enforce the law.

People complied but not everybody used the latrines and continued using the bushes to relieve themselves. The latrines were branded "chief's latrines".

The new strategy that is part of



One of the modern toilets. Photo/File

ministerial community strategy on approach to health and sanitation leaves it up to the community to drive the process. The approach is conducted through general consent and free will of all based on information and knowledge.

Hilda Ayieko, the Kisumu West District Public Health Officer, says the programme starts with the identification of villages in a district.

This is done through social mobilization conducted through the opinion leaders in the village. "At the village level, a leader who is also a respected member of the village

is identified to lead the process. Ms. Ayieko said the triggering process is delicate as it determines the success of the intervention. During the triggering stage, a meeting of villagers is convened by the Public Health Officer. Those in attendance include old men, old women, young men, women and children to ensure free flow of information to all. The villagers are asked to explain their sanitation system and to suggest ways of handling waste disposal.

"At this point, the officer leads the gathering in a walk through the village, bushes and areas that are

concealed keenly looking for evidence of open defecation, says Ms. Ayieko.

"Once any faecal matter is noticed it is scooped and taken to the meeting venue," she says.

"At this point, the officer conducting the triggering must demonstrate to the community that open defecation is practiced in the village and demonstrate to community members that they have been eating human waste.

Ambrose Fwambo, the Busia District Public Health Officer, who also attended the programme status

reporting meeting at a Kisumu hotel recently, says: "at this point, an officer takes two glasses of clean water". Using a stick, he scoops some faeces which he drops into one glass and stirs. He then asks for a volunteer to drink the murky mixture!

"Obviously no one wants to touch the contaminated water," he says. After this demonstration, members of the public unanimously agree that open defecation facilitates faecal matter going down the drain into rivers and other water points like lakes and ponds from which water is drawn and used for consumption. This demonstration shows villagers how they put their lives in danger of diseases.

Since the inception of the programme last year in five districts in Kisumu West, Rachuonyo, Siaya, Bondo, Rarieda, Nyando and Busia in Western province, a total of 495 villages have been declared "open defecation free".

Community members have taken upon themselves to ensure they dig latrines for waste disposal.

The latrine are constructed using locally available materials, including tree logs, banana or sisal leaves. The average cost of constructing a pit latrine is between Kshs.750 and Kshs.2,500 in the project area.

The head of the programme at the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, who is the Deputy Chief Public Health and Sanitation Officer, Mr. John Kariuki, says: "The programme has had huge impact since inception as members of the public community have become keenly aware of the dangers posed by unhygienic practices

Members of the public who earlier said it was better to wash in the open river and lake, since the water is cool and feels smooth oblivious of the health hazards have had a change of heart.

By PETER MUTUKU

PLANS are underway to construct an ultra modern fresh produce market in Mwala District of Machakos County.

The market funded to the tune of Kshs 10 million under the government's Economic Stimulus Package is expected to enhance agri-business in the area.

According to the Machakos County council chairman Mr. Stanley Mang'eli, the facility to be set up at Masii trading centre will help spur growth for rural economies. Mr. Mang'eli said the council will soon hand over the land on which the facility will be set up.

"The site is where the town's old slaughter and livestock market stood," he said. The authority settled on the location following extensive consulta-

tions between the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and other relevant agencies.

Mr. Mang'eli lauded the government for motivating farmers through the creation of reliable markets. "The proposed market will provide farmers with an outlet for delivering harvest hence boosting their incomes," he said.

Area MP, Mr. Daniel Muoki, urged residents to focus on agribusiness by targeting drought resistant crops.

The region produces high quality mangoes that are suitable for export but farmers have not been able to reap higher benefits of their investment owing to poor market. He said farmers will benefit from an expanded market

that is expected to enhance production and improved earnings.

Apples, Tommyatins and Ngowe are high quality mango varieties that are produced in the District but which lack reliable market.

This has exposed farmers to continued exploitation by agents. Other drought resistant crops which flourish in the area include cassava, water melon, millet, sorghum and cow peas.

The revival of the neighbouring Kabaa small scale horticultural project for which the government and the African Development Bank (ADB) will spend Kshs79.4 million is further expected to boost farm production in the marginal area.

The Masii District Officer Metrin Wafula, hailed the Government for reviving the project. "The market will boost economic opportunities for farmers once it becomes operational soon," she said during the meeting that was attended by Councillor Charles Mutinda.

"Mango farmers will not wait for long as the situation is set to change for better once the markets become operational," Ms Wafula said.

Mr. Muoki said the government was planning more projects at grassroots in a bid to devolve resources and spur economic growth as envisioned in Vision 2030 blue print. "The market will accommodate more than 1,000 farmers from the entire District, the

MP said. The County Council Surveyor, Mr. Daniel Makau, said the land was well suited for the project due to its proximity to the main road and better drainage facilities.

The Makau cautioned residents against politicising the project's location in Masii town, saying it will serve farmers from all parts of the region.

The chief officer was reacting to disagreements between residents of Yathui, Mwala, Kibauni and Masii on where the project should be located.

Mr. Paul Mbatha, a prominent mango farmer, thanked the government for helping farmers realize higher earnings through practical solutions to their challenges.

KSB to construct bridges in Kakamega County

By JOEL JUMA

THE Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) has rolled out a project that will see over 20 bridges constructed in Kakamega County at a cost of Kshs178 million.

KSB said tenders for the construction works are out adding that a study for the bridges was carried out by the board's technical team which identified cities.

"We want Mumias sugar zone to get another 10 bridges to ease cane

transportation in the area," said the KSB Director Billy wanjala.

Wanjala and his colleague Mohammed Mukhwana noted that the project paves way for implementation of the second phase of the programme.

They further noted that the board spent over Kshs260 million in the first phase where more than 10 bridges were constructed. The directors were speaking at Butula market where they addressed farmers during an inspection of bridges.

They explained that the move to put up more bridges is aimed at reducing transportation costs incurred by farmers. "We are reducing the distance being covered by tractors transporting cane from the farms to the millers for farmers to realise better returns," said Mukhwana.

Mukhwana and Wanjala said the board is also exploring the possibility of putting up three cane weighing centres in Mumias sugar zone. They noted that the Nambale weighbridge

has proved to be beneficial to farmers as there is minimal cane spillage on the road.

They said cane buying centres will be installed at Butere and Lurambi areas. Mumias Sugar Cane Growers Association Executive Director Simon Wesechere recently accused Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) of underpaying farmers.

He noted that Butali Sugar Mill pays Kshs4, 000 per tonne whereas MSC has stagnated at Kshs3, 300 per

tonne. Wesechere said sugar companies should be forced to pay a uniform amount.

He said the board should take up the matter to ensure milling companies do not exploit farmers.

He added that the Government should now dissolve KSB as the term of office for the directors had expired.

"Let the minister for Agriculture Sally Kosgey dissolve the current board as its term has ended," said Wesechere. Wanjala however said they are ready to face farmers to seek another term.

Women told to stop illegal brewing

By JOEL JUMA

PRISON authorities have told women to stop brewing illicit liquor, lamenting that the offence is congesting reformatory facilities in Kakamega County.

Kakamega G.K. Prison Officer In Charge Rodah Anyim and the Director of Women and Development Against Distress in Africa Habiba Mohammed urged women to engage in acceptable income generating activities.

Anyim and Mohammed explained that the Government is being forced to create more women prisons to cater for increasing numbers of women convicts.

"Most inmates are victims of alcohol and domestic disagreements. Women need to avoid prisons for our society to develop," said Mrs Anyim.

Anyim regretted that convicted women subject their children to prison life at early stages of development, as some delivered while serving sentences.

The Government has already established a women's prison in Busia in a bid to decongest the Kakamega facility.

Mohammed said the new Constitution has given women more powers in leadership positions and cited the 30 per cent of slots in both private and public sectors.

The two were speaking at Kakamega G. K Prison during celebrations to mark World Women's day. The function was presided over by the Western Provincial Director of Social Services Ben Makotsi and Kakamega Main Prison Officer In Charge Angus Masoro.

Anyim also told women to educate



Local brew: Women urged to stop brewing illicit liquor.

their children irregardless of their sex.

"Education should be given to all children as both boys and girls are equal," she added. Mohammed led other inmates to undergo cervical cancer check ups. Over 100 women were tested.

Health officers from the Kakamega

Provincial General Hospital also carried out breast check ups.

Mohammed said women should wake up and seek positions created by the new Constitution instead of drumming up support for men.

"We should be active in politics. We should not be seen as voters for men

during elections," said Mohammed.

Makotsi noted that the Government has released over Kshs20 million for investment projects targeting women in the region. He said women should take advantage of the Women Enterprise Fund and the Kenya Women Finance Trust to get loans for their investments.

Food prices increase sharply in Kisumu

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

KISUMU residents have been hit hard by high food prices because as a result of the prevailing drought conditions.

A survey by The Link at Jubilee market established that prices of grains had risen, leading to lower food supply.

Two kilos of maize are retailing at Kshs.50, up from Kshs.45, while Rose Coco beans are selling at Kshs.240. Two kilogrammes of groundnuts are going for Kshs.360, from Kshs.270, while pishori rice was selling at Kshs.260 up from Kshs.180.

Prices for green peas, simsim, millet and cana (Indian beans) have risen to Kshs280, Kshs.260, Kshs.100 and Kshs.250 respectively, an increase by 40 per cent for each variety within the last month.

In the same market, a bag of Kales (sukuma wiki) was selling at Kshs.1,300, while a box of tomatoes sold at Kshs.3,500.

Prices of carrots had gone up to Kshs.40 per kg, a bag of Irish potatoes Kshs.3,500, while a kilo of onions sold at Kshs.50.

Fruits prices have also gone up, with a 50-kilo sack of mangos selling at Kshs.5,500, pineapples Kshs.4,500, paw paws Kshs.2,500, while passion and a bunch of bananas sold at Kshs.1,500 each.

However, prices of chicken had dropped, with small sizes selling at Kshs200, medium sized Kshs300, up from Kshs330, bigger ones at Kshs.500 from Kshs.550, while the largest cock sold at Kshs600, from the Kshs650.

Mr. William Onyango, a trader at Jubilee market, said increased prices have been linked to higher cost of transportation with traders forced to import the commodities from Busia, Nairobi or from as far away as Malawi.

Most traders expressed optimism that the prices would fall with the onset of the long rains season.

NGO assists farmers to access better storage facilities

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

POOR storage and marketing strategies of cereals by farmers in Western and North Rift regions has had adverse implications in their trade.

The farmers have over the years incurred heavy losses due to lack of ready market and fair prices for their produce.

It is also estimated that farmers loose between 30-40 percent of their produce after harvest to weevils due to poor storage.

However, the scenario is likely to change following the timely launch of an initiative that seeks to save farmers from post-harvest losses.

The initiative is currently being spearheaded by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) known as the Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange

(KACE).

KACE director Dr. Adrian Mukhebi says that his organization has launched a Warehouse Receipt System in Western and North Rift regions to assist cereal farmers to access proper storage facilities.

Dr. Mukhebi who is also a member of the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) discloses that through the newly launched system, cereal farmers will send their produce to NCPB immediately after harvest for storage.

The NCPB, Dr. Mukhebi, adds will then issue the farmers with receipts and undertake to store the produce until the prices go up.

This system, the KACE director says will save farmers from huge losses incurred through spoilage by weevils, theft, fire and unfavorable prices.

He points out that the farmers can at the same time use the receipts issued to them by the NCPB as collateral to access cash from financial institutions such as Equity Bank as they await the prices to improve.

Dr. Mukhebi observes that if loss of cereals can be prevented through proper storage facilities, then this country will have enough food for domestic consumption and sale to other countries.

The director notes that with the East Africa Community (EAC) common market protocol now in place, the launched Warehouse Receipt System will link cereal farmers to better markets in the neighbouring countries.

He argues that although cereal farmers have been complaining about lack of

profit due to high prices of farm inputs, their inability to penetrate markets in the neighbouring countries had compounded the situation.

"Maize farmers have been complaining that inputs are higher than the production because of the poor marketing strategies," he says.

Dr. Mukhebi claims that the newly launched storage and marketing strategies will improve National food security since the farmers will be encouraged to grow the crops in large quantities due to the now wider market and expected better prices.

The KACE director made the remarks recently at a Bungoma hotel during an exclusive interview with *The Link*.

Mung'aria farmers' rebellion pays off

By JOSEPH MUKUBWA

OVER 800 coffee farmers affiliated to Mung'aria Coffee Farmers Factory recently celebrated their achievements three years after they split from the giant Aguthi Cooperative Farmers Society.

The factory which initially comprised of Thage-ini, Gititu, Gaki and Kagumo was formed seven years ago in pursuit of a government's directive to redeem the sector.

But the split came as a blessing and the farmers are reaping highly with a kilo of cherry fetching Kshs48 in 2009/2010 season, compared to Kshs19 at Aguthi. "We have also been able to clear all debts of over Kshs1.3 million to our creditors including employees

salaries," said the secretary Mr Douglas Githaiga.

Githaiga adds that there has been proper utilization of 20 percent meant for operations adding that they are able to operate without loans from banks compared to Aguthi which is highly indebted.

Early last month, the factory advanced payments to farmers to help them pay school fees. The factory has also joined other neighbouring factories in the formation of the district coffee working group which has helped farmers to enjoy their rights.

During the meeting held recently to account the achievements, the farmers were also educated on better crop husbandry and how to produce quality crop.

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Joy as Mariakani Dairy revived

By BRINGTON KAZUNGU

DAIRY farmers in Kilifi and Kwale Counties in Coast Province have received a new lifeline following the revival of Mariakani Milk Scheme.

The Government, through the Coast Development Authority (CDA), has revived the Scheme at a cost of Kshs.70 million.

The new-look Mariakani Dairy Cooperative plant sits on a 12-acre plot in Mariakani town, Kilifi.

The society offers dairy farmers, who had lost their source of income when the union collapsed in 1978, a chance to bounce back.

The plant began operations in March last year with the supply of 150 litres per day. Although it has a capacity for 5,000 litres, it is only processing 1,000 litres every day.

It has been a long road for the processor, whose collapse three decades ago, due to poor management, visited misery on thousands of cattle farmers in the region.

The plant traces roots back to 1934 when the colonial authorities set it up under the Veterinary Department of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Before it collapsed, the scheme had transformed the lives of Kwale and Kilifi residents who were able to educate their children from the proceeds of milk sales.

At the time, it had daily production capacity of 40,000 litres and generated income for more than 2,000 farmers.

When the Narc government took over in 2002, the factory was among other collapsed projects that were lined up for revival.

The revival was initiated by the Ministry of Co-operative, the CDA and some local authorities, says the Mariakani Dairy Co-operative Limited chairman, Dr. Rita Lugogo.

"From the funds we got from the ministry, CDA and councils we purchased processing equipment from Israel," she says. "We also rehabilitated the building that was in bad condition



Dairy Cattle: Dairy farmers in Kilifi and Kwale counties have received a new lifeline following the revival of Mariakani Milk Scheme.

and reinstalled power and water."

Despite the development, the plant still faces a number of challenges.

For instance, the Government needs to make good pledge to release Kshs100 million for the expansion of the production unit, says the general manager, Mr. Bernard Simiyu.

The Government, through CDA, was expected to fund the expansion of the plant to boost daily production from 5,000 to 50,000 litres.

Speaking to The Link recently, the official said the project would help create a market for more than 10,000 farmers, who for long have been exploited by agents.

"Plans for the expansion of the Mariakani are geared towards improved processing capacity so that

farmers can get ready market for raw milk," says Simiyu.

Mr. Simiyu, who has been seconded from the New KCC to assist in the plant's revival, says the institution lacks capacity to collect milk from farmers for supply to wholesalers and retailers with processed products.

The plant also lacks sufficient funds to pay for raw supply and maintenance of cooling facilities at collection points.

Money to buy generators as power back-ups in case of power interruption has not been forthcoming and the plant has often been forced to stop processing during blackouts," he says.

The factory is also embroiled in an ownership dispute between Kwale

County Council which owns 70.20 per cent of the assets, and Mariakani Town Council that was curved out of the larger Kilifi County Council.

The Mariakani council claims the factory's assets belong to farmers who formed it in 1970 under what was then Kwale/Kilifi Dairy Co-operative Union.

Mr. Hussein Sweidan, who used to collect supplies from farmers for onward transmission to the scheme, says the decision by Kenya Dairy Board that distribution be left to KCC, was the final nail on the scheme's coffin.

He says through earlier efforts by the late Cabinet ministers Ronald Ngala and Robert Matano, the farmers formed a union in 1970 that tried to take over the scheme ahead of

KCC. Reports indicate that in 1934, the Veterinary Department started a milk scheme to tap supply from Mariakani and its hinterland.

As Mariakani was the focal point for sale of cattle and milk, a cooling plant was launched that gradually grew into a processing factory.

A training centre for technicians was built to train staff from Kenya and other African countries.

In 1950, the Government handed over the project to Kwale and Kilifi councils as the project trustees and eight primary societies affiliated to the union formed.

The handing-over led to increased milk production due to better terms offered by the councils under the supervision of the Veterinary Department. The societies included Bamba Rumba, Mwereni, Ndavaya, Samburu, Macknon Road, Tsangastini and Madzimbani Dairy Farmers Co-operative Society.

As a result, the processor could no longer cope with increased production, leading to huge volumes of delivered milk going to waste.

The Government later approached the United Nations Children Fund (Unicef) for assistance and received a \$58,877 dollar loan (Kshs.4.8 million). The money was tied to a condition that the Government takes over running of the factory during the loan period.

The Government would also be charged with producing powdered milk for supply to nursery school children. As a result, a new machine was installed and the factory upgraded.

The loan was repaid between 1974 and 1976 by livestock farmers who collected excess by taxing 20 cents for every litre sold to the scheme.

But the collected funds were not delivered to Unicef headquarters and instead used by the agency to provide free milk in a scheme targeting nursery school children in Coast Province. The project's goal was to minimize cases of malnutrition-related infections.

By TITUS MAERO

THE Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Vice Chair Professor Judith Bahemuka has challenged universities in the country to intensify research on the dreaded HIV/Aids disease.

Bahemuka urged the institutions of higher learning to step up such research on the terminal disease which, she said, remains a major impediment to social and economic development.

She said the HIV/Aids epidemic is intricate and dynamic and called upon universities to fast track research on establishing its origin and scale up research on its complexities on the various causes of the Aids disease with a view of finding a lasting solution in combating it. "Research remains a component in our universities. The Commission of Higher Education (CHE) facilitates research by administering a special fund provided by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology," she added.

Speaking at the Kakamega Golf Hotel, the scholar said the government has shown serious concern on the HIV / AIDS through the formation of the Kenya National HIV / AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP) establishing a response to the epidemic through partnering with the government.

She said the government's role is to reduce the spread of HIV / AIDS to improve the quality of life of the peo-

Public varsities urged to intensify HIV research

ple who are infected and affected by the disease and to mitigate the economic effects of the epidemic.

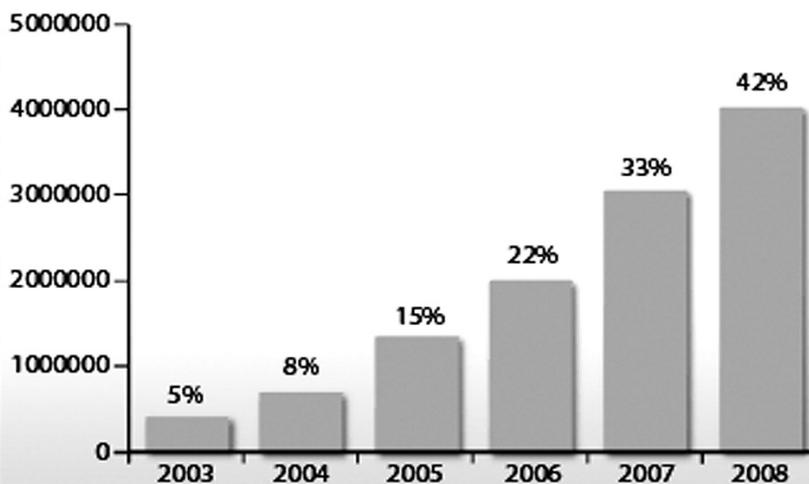
Bahemuka said the Code of Kenya National HIV/Aids Strategic Plan includes a Multi Sectoral Approach to encourage advocacy, building partnerships and making HIV programmes mainstreamed in the country's research institutions.

The official further said the government had witnessed considerable increase in funding its HIV/Aids National Programmes from Major Global Initiatives noting that the resulting growth and diversification in HIV/Aids highlights the need for commensurate expansion of the disease surveillance systems.

Bahemuka noted that the government established policy guidelines for the HIV and Aids in the Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1997 and in 1999 the Aids epidemic was declared a national disaster and created the National Aids Control Council (NACC) under the Office of the President to co-ordinate a Multi-Sectoral response to the terminal disease.

She said the health sector is one of the key components that appeals to the equity and social-economic agenda enshrined in the pillar of the country's economic blue print paper thus vision 2030.

Number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy (end of year, lower- and middle-income countries)



New power plant turns Teso on

By JOHN NYAMBUNE

THE establishment of a community power centre in Teso North District has transformed the village into a fast growing business hub.

The project funded to the tune of Kshs 3.5 million has transformed Changara village into a beehive of economic activity.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) launched the project in 2008 in liaison with the Ministry of Trade.

The project targets to address problems of unemployment among women and the youth.

The project is part of the UNIDO energy programme, dubbed Lighting up Kenya "to eradicate poverty and create wealth".

Speaking during the official launch of the centre recently, newly appointed UNIDO representative to Kenya, Mr. Ola Aiteka, said access to energy was a critical component of economic growth and poverty reduction.

He said with more than one billion of the world's population lacking access to power supply, more reliable energy sources to reduce poverty in rural areas are needed.

Mr. Aiteka said by establishing power centres, UNIDO focuses on electricity supply to rural areas to stimulate growth of micro and small enterprises.

The centre at Changara at the border of Teso and Bungoma has changed Changara trading centre into

an investment hub for small business investments.

The electricity enables users to engage in activities that drive businesses, create new services and links the area to the outside world.

The power centre will utilize between 15-20KW to offer services such as mobile phone charging. Residents will be able to communicate with the outside world and open Internet services, barber shops and welding shops.

Other services that are expected to benefit from the power supply include soap making, hatchery and entertainment spots.

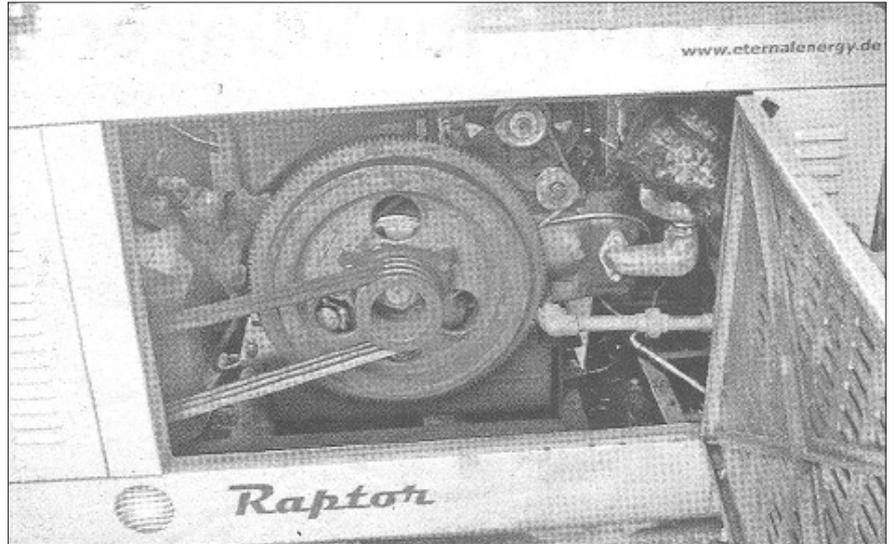
The success of the project has proved that huge amounts of energy are not necessarily mandatory to jump-start rural economies.

Mr. Aiteka says the centre can tap into local renewable energy resources instead of relying on rural electrification from the national grid that may take longer.

He says the community power centre model has successfully been implemented in Europe, Asia and US because it is efficient, renewable, smarter and more profitable.

A community power centre allows for replacing of kerosene lamps with lighting emitting diodes or lead lamps that can illuminate an entire room.

UNDP Resident Coordinator in Kenya, Mr. Aeneas C. Chuma, says the Government was committed to the creation of jobs, adding that the centre initiative was in line with what was happening globally and Kenya



The power source used to light up many shops at Changara village, Teso North District.

should not be an exception.

The centres were a component of the district business solution centres set up in the nine millennium districts countrywide and funded by UNDP.

Bungoma is one of the nine Millennium districts and Changara was identified for the project before the area was enjoined with Teso after a boundary review exercise.

UNIDO was mainly involved in the technical work to ensure the centre was operating and providing serv-

ices to the community.

He expressed optimism that such centres would be opened in all 47 counties to encourage the creation of employment opportunities.

"This is an initiative that will bring change to the people of Changara and surrounding areas and we appeal to the people to support it," he said.

He said apart from the internet café that has led to training of out-of-school youngsters, the phone charging unit had eased communication

and brought money transfer services closer to rural communities.

The chairlady of Maringo women group, a beneficiary of the project, Mrs. Margaret Isokoli, said the centre has created a viable environment for business.

With machines donated by UNIDO, the 15-member group ventured into a soap making enterprise that has facilitated the establishment of liquid laundry and toilet soap products that are sold locally.

Disquiet in Masimba Society

By BOB OMBATI

OVER 500 pyrethrum farmers affiliated to Masimba Farmers Co-operative Society in Kisii County have ousted the Society's management Committee officials for allegedly misappropriating over Kshs10 million accruing from a building they own in Kisii Town.

The shareholders who held a peaceful demonstration at Masimba town recently appealed to the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission(KACC) to intervene, and apprehend the errant officials to enable farmers recover the funds. The farmers, who were led by Johnson Oirere, asked the government to revoke the lease of the building to a prominent businessman as farmers were never consulted as provided for in the cooperative Act.

Oirere said that the process of leasing the property to the businessman was not sanctioned by the farmers, saying the officials acted illegally.

He alleged that some of the officers from the Ministry of cooperative development and Marketing and relevant government organs had allegedly been compromised by the officials and the tycoon and were reluctant in addressing the farmers plight.

Talking to *The Link* Oirere said they informed the Ministry officials to stop the businessman from demolishing and reconstructing their building to no avail.

Kerema/Ruri Ward Civic leader, Kennedy Nyaboga challenged the Government to speedily take action against individuals leasing or disposing off co-operative societies' assets and property with impunity, saying they were crippling the Societies.

Kiunjuri changes CDF officials

By MORRIS GITHENYA

TWO embattled officials of Laikipia East Constituency Development Fund Committee have been replaced.

The secretary Mr David Gachucha and the treasurer Leah Ngiri were replaced in what the area MP Mr Mwangi Kiunjuri claimed was a normal procedure.

Mr Paul Mwangi Maina, who served as the committee's secretary between 2005 and 2008 took over from Gachucha, while Rev. Anthony Miano succeeded Ngiri.

Kiunjuri, who is also the Public Works Assistant Minister intimated that the duo's three-year term had expired, hence the replacements.

"The CDF Act is very clear that the committee will serve for a three year term and it also leaves a discretion to replace them or renew their term," he said.

However, Kiunjuri absolved the officials from any claims of irregularities, saying they served within the law and conducted their work diligently.

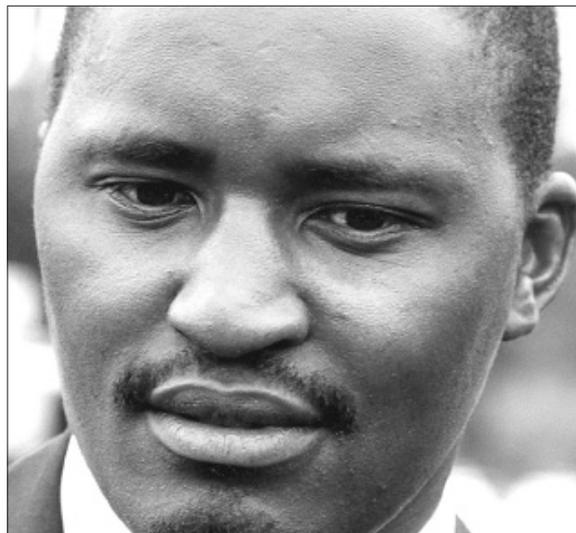
"I want to insist and make it clear that no irregularities have been reported in Laikipia East CDF operations.

The committee carried out their work within the law, and the changes are just a normal replacement as per the CDF Act," said Kiunjuri.

When contacted, Gachucha said the reshuffle was normal.

"This is a normal procedure. The replacement is normal and we even opted to have the new officials take over before the official expiry of our term which is scheduled for May to enhance transition," said Gachucha.

The officials took over office in



Mr. Kiunjuri

2008 under the chairmanship of former Nanyuki Town Mayor Councillor Wamae Murathimi, whose position has not been taken over.

Gachucha told The Press that the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission had late last year been deployed to probe the committee, but they gave it a clean bill of health. "KACC detectives came twice to probe our operations and they indeed praised our work.

We suspect their visit was prompted by the intrigues that cropped up between our MP (Kiunjuri) and his former Min-

ister Ms Charity Ngilu," Gachucha said. Last year, Kiunjuri was involved in public spat with Ngilu, whom he accused of condoning corruption and nepotism within the ministry.

The Assistant Minister exposed the rot in the ministry that saw the loss of hundreds of millions, after his transfer from the water ministry to public works.

"We want to tell Kenyans that even after the KACC investigators came, they said we were one of the best managed CDF in the country," said Gachucha.

Kisii environ boss warns over illegal buildings

By BOB OMBATI

KISII District Environment Officer (DEO) Samson Bokea has threatened to shut down hotels and bars constructed next to rivers as they contravened the set environmental standards. The environmental officer says that most facilities have been built too close to the river, flouting the rules that require such facilities be built 30 metres away from the riparian sites to avoid contamination.

The Officer has now ordered hotel managers to avail environmental audit reports to his office within two weeks to assess their compliance to National Environmental Management Authority's (NEMA) rules and regulations on environmental protection.

"I suspect that a lot of effluent is being discharged into the river endangering the lives of people and animals," said Bokea adding that some hotel operators lacked litter bins and opted to pour solid kitchen wastes into rivers at night, making it difficult to detect them.

He says that all bar and hotel operators bordering rivers will now have to conduct environmental audits and submit their findings to the Authority to show their compliance levels, saying he will not hesitate to close down facilities which have not complied with the rules.

NEMA, said the officer was mandated to safeguard, protect and enhance a clean environment and challenged car washers to shun polluting rivers by washing vehicles near rivers.

NYS to build roads in Webuye —MP

By LUKE KAPCHANGA

WEBUYE Member of Parliament Alfred Sambu says he will enlist the services of the National Youth Service (NYS) in the construction of roads in his constituency.

The MP says that he had sought assistance from the National Youth Service (NYS) in the construction of the five roads set to cost Kshs.58.2million because local contractors were corrupt.

Mr. Sambu claimed local contractors, given tenders through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) were disappearing with the money before completing the work.

"I have already entered an agreement with the NYS who will be coming soon to start work on

the specified roads immediately," he added.

The roads set to benefit include, Matisi- Bokoli- Teremi, Lugusi- Makuselwa, Misikhu-Kibisi, Misikhu-Magemo and Kuywa-Mangana.

This were the roads, captured under the plan classified as physical infrastructure sector- specified for funding through internal and external sources. The plan implies specific veritable indicators to be used to monitor project implementation and setting up of medium term impact assessment.

Sambu at the same time accused the district departmental heads of frustrating his development efforts by refusing cooperate with him.

"Most of my work plans are

being deliberately frustrated by people who talk of Rapid Result Initiative (RRI) on the one word but end up doing exactly the opposite in their work stations," he complained.

He said a significant proportion of projects in the area had stalled as funds allocated towards the projects and channeled through implementing ministries were lying idle in the banks due to laxity by those charged with the responsibility of disbursing the cash.

He particularly singled out the MOH Dr. J Ekal for not approving the upgrading of health facilities put up by CDF to enable them benefit from additional staff and drugs supply.

"I want the MOH, to give the list of all health centres in the

constituency, and if not he should explain what he is doing, as I am tired of his lack of cooperation", he warned

But, Dr. Ekal, refused to be intimidated by the MP and told him in the face that there are procedures to be followed before a facility is approved for upgrading , and this largely depends on the set guidelines.

The MOH blamed the CDF committee of putting up structures haphazardly without seeking technical input before identifying the projects for funding.

He insisted that he will be guided by regulations set by the Ministry of Health and not political pressure in regard to the staffing and supply of drugs in health facilities.

Bishop warns politicians against loose talk

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

A CHURCH minister is calling on Kenyans to shun loose tongued political leaders saying their recent utterances are a disgrace as they could fan tribal animosity.

Bishop Samuel Sicheni of Church of Christ in Africa (C.C.A) says tribal clashes may erupt again if the behaviour of some senior political leaders of this county is not checked.

The prelate consequently appeals to the masses to avoid divisive leaders and especially those who advance hate speech saying the victims of irresponsible leadership are the common people.

He notes with regrets that corruption, cheating, ethnicity and name calling were fast ruining the country and urges the citizenry to turn to God for divine intervention.

Reading 2 kings chapter 4 verses 38 to 44, Bishop Sicheni believes that none other than the Almighty God can save the Kenyan people from irresponsible leadership.

"The trend this county is currently taking is worrying and it is only God who can save us from the anticipated untold suffering," he says.

Bishop Sicheni accuses political leaders of being myopic and deliberately refusing to learn a lesson from the 2007/2008 skirmishes that left over 1000 people dead and about 6,000 others displaced.

The prelate was speaking recently in Sidikho sub-location in Kakamega County during the burial service of Rev. Wilson Malaba who until his death was pastor in charge of Wecheka Area in Bungoma County.

The Bishop's remarks come at the time when the National Cohesion and Integration Commission is accusing the office of the Attorney General of failing to take legal action against people who allegedly make hate speeches.

As we approach the next general elections, this county needs leaders who can unite the people regardless of their ethnicity and party affiliations.

Name-calling and dictatorial behaviour will polarize the political temperatures further and hence make this country become un-governable.

Peace being paramount for any development to take place, all Kenyans regardless of their social status should embrace it in order for this county to move forward.

Public varsities urged to establish centres of excellence

By TITUS MAERO

THE Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology has called on the seven Public Universities in the country to establish units of speciality within their colleges.

The Education Secretary Professor Harry Kaane said such units would serve as role models to be emulated by other academic units and churn out high quality graduates required to compete in the Global market.

Kaane said there is need to offer high quality university programmes which are attractive to the increasingly competitive technological world that require highly qualified professionals.

Addressing lecturers and students during the opening of the ninth Exhibition of Kenyan Universities at the Kakamega Golf Hotel, the scholar commended the Commission of Higher Education (CHE) for convening the event that which show cased programmes and products produced by the universities.

Kaane also lauded the seven (7) public universities and the fourteen (14) Private universities which exhibited their products at the fanfare noting that the occasion enabled the learning institutions gauge each other's programmes and products.

The official at the same time dismissed allegations that some public universities in the country were producing sub-standard graduates noting that the notion was misplaced and



University of Nairobi Fountain. One of the leading public universities. Photo/File

urged prospective employers to disregard such cheap utterances.

"There have been claims that some universities churned out inferior graduates. It is not true. Such sentiments are damaging to the learning institutions which had continued to produce competent graduates who are taught by highly qualified lecturers," he added.

He observed that just as much as

some of the courses offered are regarded as inferior, the government has tried to address the concerns of such courses, adding that Kshs3 Billion would be pumped into the public universities in the next two years to boost courses such as engineering to improve on theory and practical aspect of the courses which would also include enhancement of the physical infrastructure.

Kaane also announced that the government would offer scholarships to lecturers in science oriented courses to advance their studies to be in a position to handle complex courses.

He said the government would also provide a budgetary allocation of Kshs2.5 Billion in form of scholarships to enable lecturers teaching in science oriented courses advance their education to the Doctorate level.

Nyaga tells off banks over coffee loans

By MORRIS GITHENYA

THE government has directed financial institutions and auctioneers to stop harassing management of coffee societies in their bid to recover loans advanced to farmers as the government had waived the debts.

Cooperative Development Minister Joseph Nyaga said that it is unfortunate that even after the government's pledge to waive the debts, some errant auctioneers have continued harassing the cooperative of-

officials. Speaking in Murang'a after a round table meeting with officials from Murata Sacco and Mugama union following a dispute over who was to receive over Kshs1.2 billion cheque by the government.

The Minister was accompanied by Equity Bank Chairman Peter Munga and Chairman to County Council of Murang'a Peter Kihungi.

Nyaga said many of the management committees have reported being harassed by the auctioneers

hired by banks to recover the debts owed by farmers. At the same time, the Ministry of Finance has sent a team of auditors in Murang'a to verify whether the loans are genuine.

In a letter addressed to Cooperative Development PS Seno Nyakenyanya, his counterpart at the Treasury Joseph Kinyua said a high level of accountability is required when dealing with huge sums of money.

The letter dated February 3, 2011 and copied to societies is a reflection of the government's un-

dertaking to repay the loans that will first be verified to ascertain the actual amounts.

"Banks and other institutions that advanced loans to farmers must make reference to the letter and stop harassing farmers," said Kinyua in a letter to his counterpart in the Ministry of Cooperatives.

The debt waiver, Kinyua said, should translate into revival of the strategic coffee subsector and help create employment and improve living standards.

Embu special teachers appeal for help

By PETER MUTUKU

SPECIAL education teachers in Embu has appealed to the Government and other well wishers to help set up a classroom for over 20 mentally challenged pupils.

The Kianjokoma Day Primary School teacher says by setting up a modern classroom, the government and well wishers would have made immense contribution to the achievement of universal literacy for all. The teacher says the pupils were forced out of their previous classroom to pave way for a nursery class.

She says that the mentally challenged pupils are now using a small store for a classroom. Ann Kingora, the teacher in charge of the pupils, said the learners have been forced to use tiny room in order to remain in the institution.

Ms Kingora says at one time, the 22 mentally challenged pupils had to study under a tree within the compound as all the 20 classrooms in the institution were occupied. Kingora says the problem would be minimized if the Government makes funds available to the institution.

She says if the government was consistent in the allocation of Kshs3,020 per each mentally challenged pupil under the Free Primary Education, the situation would be better. She says the current situation is linked to the negative attitude towards persons with disabilities.

The head of the school, Ms Eustace Njau, said since the inception of the integrated programme at the school in 2003, the institution had thrice received funds for mentally challenged pupils.

Efforts were being made to put up a temporary classroom where pupils can be accommodated, she says. Ms Njau Kshs3 million was required to set up a modern spacious classroom for all pupils. She says she has sent an appeal to Runyenjes Constituency Development Fund for consideration. The 22 mentally challenged pupils represent hundreds of other children in similar conditions still grappling with other physical, mental, emotional or social challenges. Other experiences include stigmatization, biases and abuse.

And even with the intensified sensitization and mobilization programmes that seek to ensure equal and humane treatment for all children, stigmatization is still rampant. In rural and conservative communities, disability and related challenges, especially physical are perceived negatively. Such perceptions affect the treatment, growth, development and opportunities of the disadvantaged children in all aspects of life.

Extreme cases of mistreatment have been manifested through the exclusion and denial, segregation and hiding of challenged children from the public. In some cases, the learners suffer outright neglect. And for the girl child, the experience is even worse.

In some instances, however, efforts have been made to include and integrate physically, behaviourally, emotionally and mentally challenged children into the mainstream education system with some success. But some are often forced out of the system by prevailing environmental challenges. This makes it difficult to respond to the children's specific emotional, physical or social needs. Children manifesting behavioural and social problems, including physical, mental and emotional have been referred to approved schools or remand homes.

Others have been taken to special schools that are few and ill equipped to handle their challenges. Since independence in 1963, the rapid growth of the education sector in Kenya has not been extended to the disability related areas.

The sector has not received adequate attention to ensure equal access to education that is responsive to specific learners needs.

Kirinyaga residents call for CDF audit

By MORRIS GITHEYA

RESIDENTS of Kirinyaga Central want the Constituency Development Fund kitty audited to ascertain whether the previous committee headed by immediate former MP Ngata Kariuki had embezzled any money.

The constituents argue that owing to the dissolution of all committees set up by the former MP shortly after his election in 2007, it would prudent to carry out a thorough audit.

The newly elected MP Joseph Gachoki Gitari announced the dissolution of the committees and even opted

to open his CDF office than occupy the one that served his predecessor for the two years he was in office.

They claimed the immediate former CDF committee had looted the kitty and would expose the new officials to litigations if they agreed to take over without raising questions.

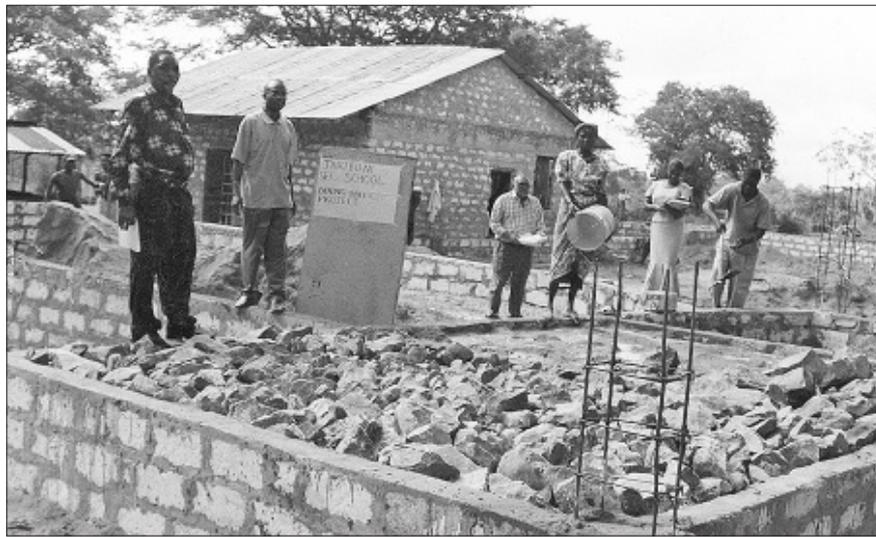
Gitari has since indicated he will give the residents an opportunity to choose whom their CDF committee members should be in order to avoid a repeat of what Kariuki did.

He said he was committed to restoring confidence among residents by employing an all inclusive ap-

proach and allowing them to choose their leaders.

Kariuki whose term of office ended prematurely after the High Court nullified his elections as the area MP has been discredited as the poorest performer in the history of the CDF kitty.

"Kariuki did not care what his henchmen did with the CDF kitty hence we fear millions have been embezzled at the expense of development in the area and no wonder it is the only constituency which does not have its own office and depended on private premises," Karimi said



A project installed by CDF

KACC asked to probe CDF

By JOEL JUMA

KENYA Anti Corruption Commission (KACC) has been challenged to shift its focus to the auditing of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) kitties.

Reports compiled by an organisation dealing with public accountability said the war on corruption should be taken to CDF kitties. The National Taxpayers Association (NTA) said corruption was rampant in CDF and called for urgent action.

NTA said a constituency in Western province is unable to account for over Kshs22 million disbursed during the last financial year.

"Some MPs always blame the Min-

ister for Planning Wycliffe Oparanya for delays in the release of CDF money and yet they fail to account for the fractions given to them earlier," said NTA National Coordinator Kizito Wangalwa.

Wangalwa explained that NTA backs calls by Oparanya to let KACC to investigate MPs who have failed to utilise money as per set requirements.

NTA has carried out auditing in Butula, Sirisia, Kanduyi and Lurambi constituencies. Reports from these constituencies will be released before end of this month.

NTA team landed in Lurambi after area MP and assistant minister Manyala Keya invited the organisation to audit

projects in the area. Keya said he wants to know the impact of the money in Lurambi.

"We must know which projects have been beneficial and those that have been ignored by allowing external auditing to be done," said Keya. Speaking in Butula market during a stakeholders meeting, Wangalwa said the Government should base CDF allocation on the poverty index.

Recently, Oparanya said some constituencies will not be given CDF money because they failed to submit returns to the National CDF Board.

Wangalwa said it was shocking that some MPs are against auditing of their CDF money.

"There is resistance by some MPs to have the CDF money audited," said Wangalwa. He however noted that auditing will soon be done in Butere, Khwisero and Ikolomani constituencies.

Busia staff sacked over graft

By JOEL JUMA

SIX employees of Busia County Council have been sacked over alleged graft.

The workers were accused of double collection of levies at markets in Sio Port and Matayos in Busia County.

The Kenya Local Government Workers Union protested over their sacking arguing that the process was illegally undertaken.

The union's Western Regional Secretary Juvenus Orao wants the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government Karega Mutahi to address the matter.

"There is corruption and nepotism at the council and that is why some of the victims were not given a chance to defend themselves," said Orao.

Orao said members of the Finance Staff and General Purposes Committee engaged in witch hunting while disciplining "rogue" workers.

He alleged that documents indicate that committee members who included councillors Josephat Wandera, Henry Nyongesa, Charles Otete and Peter Odundo did not follow laid down procedures before the workers were issued with dismissal letters.

The committee chaired by councillor Wandera indicates that the workers were not given time to defend themselves over the allegation as the Clerk at the Council George Maruti rushed to issue dismissal letters.

Orao explained that the union wants the sacked workers reinstated immediately.

Orao who was speaking in Mumias town said corruption in local authorities should be stopped.

He explained that many councillors were out to defraud councils as they wind up their term in preparation for the next General Elections.

He expressed shock that employees of Malakisi Town Council in Bungoma County had gone for 11 months without salaries and yet the Government disbursed funds to the local authority.

Orao said despite the Government having disbursed Local Authority Transfer Fund (Latf), workers welfare had not been addressed.

He said the situation is similar in Webuye Municipal Council where workers are contemplating going on strike to demand for seven-month salary arrears.

Shoddy Nyaribari contractors put on notice

By BOB OMBATI

NYARIBARI Cache lawmaker, Dr. Robert Monda, has warned contractors implementing the Constituency development Fund (CDF) projects in his constituency against doing shoddy work.

The MP, who inspected CDF and Economic Stimulus Projects (ESP) in his constituency, took issue with schools' Heads who misused public funds by allowing contractors to do shoddy work in their institutions, saying

he will not condone it.

Monda, who toured Amariba primary school expressed dismay that a CDF funded toilet at the institution which cost Kshs500,000 was on the verge of collapsing.

The lawmaker directed the school Head, Fred Ombiro to invite experts to certify it before pupils can start using since its current state posed a great danger to the learners and community members.

"The toilet should not be used until experts have advised the school management," he said add-

ing that it was unfortunate that a toilet that had cost such colossal sums of money will not last long.

The MP at the same time directed the CDF committee to allocate Kshs. 100,000 to help renovate the school's dilapidated verandah and faulted the former school committee members and the Head teacher, who has since been transferred for the shoddy work.

The lawmaker, who addressed students of Nyanguru secondary school, urged them to take advantage of the Free education and im-

proved infrastructure to perform better in exams.

Monda challenged youths and women to form groups to access millions of Youth and Women Enterprise Funds channeled to the area to alleviate poverty.

The MP instructed the area CDF committee and the Poverty Eradication committee to organize seminars for the electorate to sensitize them on loans, business and project management to enable them seek and utilize funds appropriately.

Kenya, ADB sign loan agreement

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

THE Government of Kenya and African Development Bank (ADB) have signed a five year loan agreement of 20.933 million US dollars under a Community Empowerment and Institutional Support Project (CEISP).

According to the Busia deputy district development officer Ms Georgina Musembi, the goal of the project is to empower poor communities to access socio-economic services in order to reduce poverty.

Musembi said the project has two components namely capacity building which seeks to empower communities and other stakeholders to be more focused in the utilization of devolved funds, increase demand for accountability and participate equitably in local development.

The other component will focus on strengthening the planning aspect of decentralized development and financing through facilitating effective people-centred decentralized development planning and management.

The development officer said the outcomes of the project will increase ability of local stakeholders to demand for accountability and transparency and to participate equitably in local development planning and implementation, taking into consideration the needs of all community members including women, youth, elderly and other



Busia Deputy District Development Officer Ms. Georgina Musembi during the interview with *The Link* at her office recently. Photo/Nyakwar Odawo

socially disadvantaged groups.

"The project will also go a long way in informing and educating the target population on the purpose of the devolved funds, the rules and procedures governing them and how to access the resources and

account for them through campaigns, suitable delivery outlets and audience tracking system to access outreach, reaction, perception and attitudes towards specific communication messages.

Musembi at the same time

said the project will lead to an enhanced gender participation in public decision-making and recognition of women needs and potentials by training them to assume roles in communities and in project management.

KCSE holders urged to join colleges

By AGGREY BUCHUNJU

KAKAMEGA Central District Education Officer (DEO), Mabale Indiatasi, has appealed to the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) holders to enroll for professional courses.

Indiatasi said KCSE is just a skeleton document that does not warrant the holder to get a senior post in either the public service or the private sector.

He challenged KCSE leavers who do not qualify for direct degree courses to enroll for middle level or certificate courses in order to favourably compete in the labour market.

The DEO reminded Form Four leavers that days when one could get a senior post in the civil service or parastatal body without a professional certificate are long gone.

"Hundreds of job opportunities are advertised in the media daily but for one to qualify he/she must have a professional certificate besides the KCSE certificate," the DEO said.

Indiatasi was speaking a couple of days ago at Chebuyusi high school in Kakamega County during a new bus reception ceremony.

Speaking at the same function, the school principal, Boniface Okoth said the newly acquired bus will add value to the institution's academic performance. "With the new bus, Communication to other institutional and academic tours will now be easy and this will enhance academic standards," the principal said.

Okoth assured all the school's stakeholders that the bus is for all of them adding that as the chief executive officer (CEO) he will ensure that the bus is properly utilized and maintained.

By NYAKWAR ODAWO

Nambale Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committee has allocated a total of Kshs25million during this financial year 2010/2011 towards the implementation of various development projects in the constituency.

According to data availed to *The Link* by the Busia district development office recently, the funds will oversee the construction of ten new shallow wells at various points namely Kisoko at a cost of Kshs 150,000, Nasikina (Kshs250,000), Mulwakari (Kshs120,000), Makunzo (Kshs250,000), Kapina (Kshs200,000), Lupida (Kshs200,000), Mumukhuyu (Kshs250,000), Budokomi (Kshs200,000), Muyafwa (Kshs200,000) and Forest shallow well at a cost of Kshs254,000.

On education, the funds will aid in the construction of new classrooms in 29 learning institutions namely Emukhuyu primary school at a cost of Kshs0.4million, Khayo secondary school (Kshs0.8million), Sibembe primary school

(Kshs0.3million), Esidende primary school (Kshs0.2million), Musoma early childhood education centre (Kshs0.3million), St Paul's Igara secondary school (Kshs0.2million) for construction of dormitory.

Katira primary school has been funded to the tune of Kshsh0.5million which will finance the construction of two classrooms, St Paul's Mabunge secondary has been allocated Kshs0.3million to oversee the construction of the administration block, Indoli primary school Kshsh0.2million for construction of new kitchen, Lung'a primary school (0.1million for electrical wiring of a new classroom), Lung'a secondary school (Kshs0.8million for the construction of new laboratory), Lwanya Special school (Kshs0.4million for the construction of a new classroom), St Paul's Busende secondary school (Kshs0.2million for construction of new classroom), Bukalama primary

school (Kshs0.2million for construction of new classroom), Mujuru primary school (Kshs0.3million for construction of new classroom).

Esirisia secondary school (Kshs0.3million-administration block), Mundulusia primary school (Kshs0.4million -renovation of two classrooms), Buderie primary school (Kshs0.4million-classroom), Budokomi primary school (Kshs0.2million-classroom), Alung'oli primary school (Kshs0.1million-purchase of desks), Busibwabo secondary school (Kshs0.4million -construction of laboratory), St Pius Lukonyi primary school (Kshs0.8million-construction of two classrooms), St Joseph's Busia Girls primary school (Kshs0.8million-construction of two classrooms), Our Lady of Mercy Girls secondary school (Kshs0.4million-construction of library), Siteko primary school (Kshs0.4million-class-

room), Mabale primary school (Kshs0.4million-classroom), St Peter's Buyosi secondary school (Kshs0.8million-laboratory) and Musokoto Boys primary school Kshs0.5million for the construction of one classroom.

The constituency project implementation committee has also embarked on the construction and rehabilitation nine health facilities namely Nambale Health Centre which has been allocated a total of Kshs0.2million for the purchase of equipments, Segero dispensary (Kshs0.2 million for further construction), Lupida health centre (Kshs0.4million for the renovation of the maternity wing), Nasewa health centre (Kshs0.2million for the purchase of equipments), Matayos health centre (Kshs0.4million for construction of male wards), Burumba dispensary (Kshs150,000 for construction of the septic tank) and Mayenje dispensary which was al-

located a total of Kshs0.7million for further construction.

The project committee also allocated a total of Kshs270,000 to facilitate the construction of Bulanda-Bwamani cattle dip.

Other projects to be undertaken include the construction of Walatsi chief's office at a cost of Kshs0.3million, the construction of Buyama assistant chief's office at a cost of Kshs0.2million, the construction of Mundika assistant chief's office at a cost of Kshs0.2million and the construction of electricity at Matayos DO's office at a cost of Kshs5.3million.

The project committee at the same time has earmarked a total of Kshs1.5million to facilitate the purchase of land for the construction of a sports centre as well as Kshs0.4million for the purchase of land for the expansion of Esikulu primary school.

“The crop production was high due to the favourable climatic conditions and about 70 per cent of the total revenue was paid to the farmers.”

Provisions of new law

INTRODUCTION

THE new law is largely premised on the new constitution which not only provides for adequate and equal opportunities for appointment, training and advancement at all levels of the public service but empowers parliament to approve appointments to constitutional offices. The proposed legislation echoes ongoing efforts by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) to audit all public institutions to establish how ethnicity has been used to as a tool to reward jobs to kinsmen.

Powers of appointment

Under the proposed law, parliament must approve all constitutional appointments. Any appointments that contravene this Act will be nullified and fresh nominations done.

The proposed law provides in very clear terms that any advertisement inviting applications for appointments under this Act must indicate that nominated candidates are to appear before a committee of Parliament for vetting.

Equally important is the fact that an appointing authority who nominates a person under this Act is under obligation to notify the relevant House committee accordingly.

Section 5 (2) affirms that the notification be done either in writing or lodged with the clerk of the relevant House committee.

Approval hearing

Upon the receipt of a notification of appointment, the clerk is to summon the committee in question to approve or reject the nomination.

The proposed law provides that the committee informs the clerk the time and place for holding the approval hearing.

Section 6 (3) provides that the clerk notifies a candidate of the specified time and place for holding an approval hearing. The committee on the hand notifies the public of the time and place at least seven days prior to the hearing.

Subject to this Act, all committee proceedings in public appointments are to be open and transparent.

However the new law vests powers on the committee or on



Appointments to constitutional offices have for decades been mired in controversy with successive regimes awarding their kins and cronies with plum jobs in the public service. The often eulogized meritocracy has been sacrificed at the altars of nepotism, cronyism and ethnicity. This has denied other genuine cases mobility into the higher echelons of the labour market. However with the proposed Public Appointments (Parliamentary Approval) Bill, 2011, the scenario is likely to change, writes FAITH MUIRIRU, our Sub-editor and staff writer.

the application of a candidate or any other concerned person, to hold the entire or part of the hearing in camera.

An approval hearing is to focus on a candidate's academic credentials, professional training and experience, personal

integrity and background.

The new law further places an obligation on the part of the citizens who have a leeway to contest in a sworn affidavit, the suitability of candidates they consider as unfit for appointment in particular jobs.

A candidate may at any time by notice in writing addressed to the Clerk, withdraw from the approval process after which the candidate's nomination lapses automatically.

The issues for consideration by the relevant House Committee of Parliament in relation to any nomination include

- The procedure used to arrive at the nominee
- Any constitutional or statutory requirements relating to the office in question
- The suitability of the nominee for the appointment proposed having regard to whether the nominee's abilities, experience and qualities meet the needs of the body to which nomination is being made.

Unless otherwise provided in any law, the Committee has been mandated to make the necessary recommendations based on the suitability of the candidate and table its report in parliament for debate and resolution of the matter within fourteen days from the date to which the notification was served.

Section 9 provides that in the event that Parliament is unable to approve or reject the nomination of a candidate after expiry of the period for consideration, the candidate is deemed to have been approved.

Where the nomination of a candidate is rejected by parliament, the appointing authority is given a

“The law explicitly states that the clerk must notify the appointing authority of the decision by Parliament within seven days after the ruling.”



President Mwai Kibaki accompanied by the Prime Minister Raila Odinga present trophies to best performing institutions in May 2008.

Photo/File

on state appointments

leeway to submit to the relevant house committee the name of another candidate and the procedure for approval specified in this Act is to apply accordingly.

The law explicitly states that the clerk must notify the appointing authority of the decision by Parliament within seven days after the ruling.

Powers of the Committee

The committee has powers to summon any person to give evidence or provide information during approval hearing.

The committee has been vested with the same powers as the High Court to

- (a) Enforce the attendance of witnesses and examine them on oath, affirmation or otherwise
- (b) Compel the production of documents
- (c) Issue a commission or request to examine witnesses abroad

Any person who

- (a) Disobeys any order made by a committee for attendance or for production of papers, books, documents or records
- (b) Refuses to be examined before or to answer any lawful and relevant question put by a committee commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Kshs200,000 or to



Prime Minister Raila Odinga countersign the Performance contract for the Ministry of Housing, 2008.

Photo/File

imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or both.

Vetting Criteria

The vetting procedures are to be used by respective parliamentary committees to approve nominations to constitutional offices.

Under the new law candidates are expected to fill in a questionnaire and submit it to the committee with a stipulated

time frame set out by the committee. Schedule 6 (8) provides that submission of false information is an offense that may result in prosecution.

The questionnaire seeks to establish the candidate's education background, employment record and Honours and Awards in special recognition for outstanding service. Other areas of interest are to include public office, political activities and affiliations where a candi-

date must:

- (a) List chronologically any public offices held or are currently holding including the terms of service and whether such positions were elected or appointed.
- (b) List all memberships and offices held in and services rendered, whether compensated or not, to any political party or election committee. If you have ever held a position or

played a role in a political campaign, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, dates of the campaign, your title and responsibilities. Also include any linkage you may have to a political party at present.

- (c) Have you ever been dismissed or otherwise removed from office for a contravention of the provisions of the Constitution.
- (d) Have you ever been adversely associated with practices that depict bias, favouritism, nepotism in the discharge of public duties



A police officer at a customer care desk attends to a member of the public. There is a drive to make the police more user-friendly.

Photo/File

“The vetting procedures are to be used by respective parliamentary committees to approve nominations to constitutional offices.”